

Compound Verb Structure and Conceptualization of Perception in Bangla

Tanima Bagchi¹ & Sanjukta Ghosh²

¹Indian Institute of Management Indore, ²Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi,
¹tanimabagchi12@gmail.com, ²sanjukta.hss@iitbhu.ac.in

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of perception has a primary function – “to recognize and identify objects and events and their spatial and temporal arrangements and to provide the environmental input for the construction of a model or cognitive representation of the external world.” (Viberg, 2001, p. 1294) The present study utilizes compound verb structure (Abbi & Gopalakrishnan, 1991; Paul, 2003) to analyze conceptualization of senses in perception verbs in Bangla.

2. Objectives

This study aims to analyze how emerging senses of perception verbs – visual perception, auditory perception, olfactory perception, gustatory perception, and haptic perception (Galotti, 2014) – in Bangla is a testimony to the event integration theory (Talmy, 2000). For this purpose, it employs three objectives: a) to categorize perception verbs in Bangla using Viberg’s typology, b) to verify applicability of the Viberg’s modality hierarchy in Bangla, c) to investigate “how the semantic content of the lexical items (perception verbs and arguments) interact and contribute to the creation of each semantic extension.” (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2006, p. 236)

3. Methods

Being qualitative in nature, this study has adopted the technique of elicitation to collect data about perception verbs from two sources: i) a group of 10 videos of conversational data in Bangla available on the social media platform, YouTube; ii) a group of 7 animated short films available on YouTube. To complement this corpus of data, a few other sentences were constructed based on authors’ knowledge of Bangla as a native language and have been heard in daily conversations of other native speakers.

4. Results

In order to illustrate conceptualization of perception in Bangla, this section provides some results about visual perception verbs in Bangla. There are two verbs of sight in the basic paradigm – a) /dæk^hal/, an action of scanning the entity which is either intentional or unintentional in nature; b) /ʃakanol/, an action of focusing on the entity which is only intentional in nature. The resulting CV sequences of visual perception verbs are mentioned in the following table and are discussed in the next section:

Sl. No.	Main Verb (V1)	Vector Verb (V2)	Meaning (V1+V2)
1.	/dæk ^h el/ (lit. to see)	/neoal/ (lit. to take)	to take a look of
2.	/dæk ^h el/ (lit. to see)	/rak ^h al/ (lit. to keep)	to have a look at / to keep a watch over
3.	/dæk ^h el/ (lit. to see)	/deoal/ (lit. to give)	to give a look at
4.	/dæk ^h el/ (lit. to see)	/p ^h ælal/ (lit. to throw)	to end up watching
5.	/dæk ^h -te/ (lit. see-IPFV.PTCP)	/paoal/ (lit. to get)	to get to see
6.	/dæk ^h -te/ (lit. see-IPFV.PTCP)	/lagal/ (lit. to feel)	to seem

Table 1. CV sequences of visual perception verbs in Bangla

5. Discussion

In Bangla, usually linguistic expressions for visual perception follow the hierarchy of activity>experience>phenomenon based on Viberg’s typology. When visual perception is expressed using CV constructions in Bangla, there is a combination of two schemas in the mental lexicon. While V1 (or the main verb) provides information about the act of perception, V2 (or the vector verb) provides information about the process or manner or result of the act of perception. Although both the verbs exist independently manifesting different senses and different schemas, on combining together as a CV sequence one of the senses along with the schema moves to the figure and the other relegates to the background. However, it is noteworthy that V2 schema is retained in the meaning of visual perception verbs in Bangla. To conclude, expression of perception involves a complicated linguistic process in Bangla.

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