

A Descriptive Study of Explicator and Reverse Compound Verbs in Magahi - The Case of a Less-resourced Language

Shivek Kumar Sick, Ph.D. Scholar

Centre for Linguistics, SLL & CS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

loveshiv89@gmail.com

Pitambar Behera

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt. College, Sundargarh, Odisha
Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Linguistics, SLL & CS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

=====

Abstract

The phenomena of Reversed Compound Verbs (RCVs) and Explicator Compound Verbs (ECVs) have attracted a great deal of attention and focus recently by Linguistics and Computational Linguistics, as they are one of the salient features in almost all the South Asian languages. An ECV refers to the sort of constructions wherein the two different verbs i.e., v1 and v2 are sequentially arranged in order to form a meaningful expression. Here v1, which is the main verb of the sentence, is being followed by an auxiliary verb v2, which is later de-lexicalized.

On the other hand, an RCV is a type of compound verb formation in south Asian languages that was first noticed by Hook in 1974. An RCV is the reordered structuring of the same Compound Verb (CV), which is found in almost all south Asian languages as a special feature. The present paper is an attempt to examine the formation of both of these types of verbs and analyze their functions in Magahi. One could also find it interesting in investigating what happens to other linguistic properties of Magahi like syntactic, semantic and morphological properties when the structure is rearranged. It will also be interesting if both of these verb forms namely ECVs and RCVs show any sort of resemblance among them in Magahi once formed and how well they are accepted in the society. The present paper is also an attempt at making an aerial survey of Magahi language, which is one of the regional variations of Bihari languages and to figure out if there are any issues or challenges faced while reshuffling, reordering or restructuring CVs.

Keywords: Magahi, Bihar, South Asian Languages, Reverse Compound Verb, Explicator Compound Verb, Compound Verb.

1. Overview

This paper is an attempt at tracing the forms of the Reverse Compound Verbs and Explicator Compound Verbs in Magahi. It is an attempt to trace such verbs in a very less

resourced vernacular of Bihar, which is not much popular among the masses. In this paper, it has been attempted to identify whether such expressions like RCVs and ECVs can be formed or found in Magahi (Kumar et al., 2017), unlike in Hindi and other vernaculars like Odia (Jha, et al., 2014; Behera, 2015; Ojha et al., 2015; Behera, 2017), Sambalpuri (Behera & Dash, 2017; Behera et al., 2021), Bengali and also other foreign languages like English, Arabic, Persian etc. The term ‘verb construction’ in languages is a well-known phenomenon with a well-established fact that such constructions help in the internal advancement of a language or a sentence of a vernacular in particular. There has been abundant availability of research in the past focusing on verb constructions in general.

It is due to this reason that one can not only find a lot more upon constructions of verbs or compound verbs in Hindi but also in all other standard forms of languages. However, it is almost difficult to find something concrete over the processes of verb constructions or anything similar to that in any regional vernaculars of India, including Magahi. It is this sole rationale which inspired us to bring something brainstorming that bears the core concept of verb constructions and something experimental to put forward some puzzling aspects of creating some new forms by reversing or re-ordering the structures of the verbs in Magahi, similar to that of Hindi.

Referring to the above discussions, one can deduce that the idea of restructuring or reordering is quite new to all forms of Indian languages and regional vernaculars. It is, in fact, a new terminology for the entire linguistic field. There is no denying the fact that Hook (1974) was the first one to note such re-constructions and bring them into the world of language sciences. Since then, it has become a very interesting topic for the linguists to carry forward their work in this regard.

For many languages like Hindi, English, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Arabic and so on, there is a number of research works conducted in this regard. When it comes to Magahi, as a less-resourced language including some other such languages like Sambalpuri, Kui and others, there is no availability of such works done. Therefore, it was the need of the hour to conduct a research concerning CVs.

The sole objective of this research is to examine as to how the ECVs and RCVs function in Magahi and investigate what linguistic changes it inherits in the structure of the Magahi sentences during the process. This paper will also pave a pathway for the future researchers of Magahi and help them find out what linguistic principles dominate the structures of RCVs and ECVs in Magahi and how these can be reversed. In short, this paper is a well undertaken attempt which not only aims at answering all possible doubts and

questions which come as a hindrance in framing the structures of RCVs and ECVs in Magahi but also to describe briefly if there is any resemblance or similarities in their structures as compared to that of Hindi or other standardized form of languages. This will be helpful and set a milestone for future researchers who dare explore more about their mother tongues on a broader level.

1.1. The Magahi Language

Languages in general play a prominent role in depicting the regional identities in India. When a language is spoken, a region is reflected or can be easily smelled through its structures and tones. A language not only refers to its origin but also to its cultures and traditions of the people living in that particular region at large. Depending on the language and culture Bihar today can be grouped into three broad distinct regional categories such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Magahi. To this grouping of language areas and regions Grierson has described it as Bihari language (Grierson, 1927). According to him, all such classifications are the regional variations of standard Hindi.

So far as the origin of Magahi in Bihar is concerned, it is a deviant of Sanskrit word Magadha, which means the Magadha region in the ancient times (Grierson, 1921). The region today where Magahi is chiefly spoken is majorly the Patna region, some parts of Jharkhand and the northern half of Gaya district. Like Hindi, Magahi also belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family. According to the census report of 1881, the estimated population of Magahi speakers all over India was 6,504,817.

2. Related Literature

As Magahi is a very less resourced and less recognized language in India, there is not much research that has been done in this regard, but in recent years people have paid a lot of attention towards this and have started working on the same as well. Verma (1985) has written a major book focusing upon the structure of the Magahi verb. This book was a major turn into the field of Magahi. Along with the structures of Magahi in detail, this book also focuses upon ancient forms, traditions, cultures and the detailed geographical distributions of the regions of Bihar wherein this very lesser-known vernacular is broadly spoken. There are also several other research that have been carried forward concerning the structures of Complex Predicates and other morphological and syntactic aspects of Magahi.

Das (2009) has worked upon the complex predicate structures; it is form and functions and also as to how they behave once they are reversed. This work of him was a major turn in this accord, which has formed the basis of understanding the basic phenomenon as to how such reversals are possible and created in languages such as Hindi.

=====

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **22:12 December 2022**

Shivek Kumar Sicky, Ph.D. Scholar and Pitambar Behera, Ph.D. Scholar

A Descriptive Study of Explicator and Reverse Compound Verbs in Magahi -- A Case of a
Less-resourced Language

Butt (1995) has worked upon the structural patterns of **CPs (Complex Predicates)** in Urdu. Out of several types of CPs in Urdu, this work majorly focuses upon the two major sorts of CPs namely the permissive CPs and the aspectual CPs. With this research, Butt has proposed a detailed differential explanation of the two undertaken CP structures of Urdu. There were further many other possible attempts made in the past concerning further research in CP which led to its expansion to south Asian languages (Abbi, 1991). In addition, Linguists like (Bashir, 1993) and (Verma, 1993) have also carried their works further to identify the CPs in Hindi. Alsina (1997) discusses the general theory of CPs.

Despite the heightened interest of the linguists in some of the foreign languages like English, German, Arabic, etc. there were also some of the Indian languages which received the linguists' attention. On the other hand, at the same time Indian languages along with their regional variations are the ones which still have to suffer and go through a long way of higher research in order to bring them on to a broader platform. So far as the question of conducting research in Magahi is concerned, there was much research that focused on Magahi not only as a language but also the entire Magadha region being the most culturally rich and a well-established region during the ancient period. Atreya and others (2015) have worked on different aspects of Magahi that pay a major attention towards Magahi language and its grammatical pattern. Attreya and others (2014) focused mainly upon how the passive forms are being constructed and used in Magahi.

Apart from Magahi, there were also many other languages concerning which linguists have dedicated their work. Sarkar (1975) and Mohanty (1992) have carried out their works forward for the clear identification of CPs in Bengali and Oriya respectively. Sinha (2009) has also induced his best effort in detecting CPs in a parallel corpus of Hindi and English by applying simple methods. It is due to him today that the classifications of CPs in different grammatical categories like verb-verb (VV), Adjective-Verb (AV), Adverb-Verb (Adv-V), Noun-Verb (NV) etc. are possible to identify. All the categories here that are mentioned above together make a CP only when they are clubbed together in order to form one single expression. As per the afore-mentioned facts, this work is also primarily motivated by the need of the time to represent lesser-known languages like Magahi on to a broader platform of language and linguistics.

3. A Brief Descriptive Sketch of Compound Verbs, Explicator Compound Verbs and Reverse Compound Verbs in Magahi

This section deals with a descriptive sketch of Compound Verbs (CVs), Explicator Compound Verbs (ECVs) and Reverse Compound Verbs (RCVs) in Magahi language.

3.1. Compound Verb

Compound Verbs (CV), in general, are one of the syntactico-semantic phenomena that are most common today in almost all the south Asian languages including Hindi at large. This is mainly formed by the combination of two different verbs v1 and v2 wherein v1 is polar and v2 vector. Both these verbs, when clubbed together, result into a single entity. It is found widely in all the Indian languages, regardless of their genetic affiliations (Massica, 1976). Due to its most enriching properties and common inheritance, it is studied in detail in almost all the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages. A CV in general is something that inherits some instances of Multiword Expressions in it. This means to say that it is not much different but is quite similar and identical to multiword expressions that are composed of more than one linguistic item. Therefore, in other words, one can state that a CV is nothing but a multi-word compound.

Like Hindi, Magahi also has compound verbs, the formation process of which is exactly the same as that of Hindi. In order to explain that in detail, we can refer to the following examples.

(1) चभीया रख

'cabhIyA rakha'
cabhIyA-key-1.F.S.
rakhakeep(v) 'Keep the
Key'.

(2) चभीया अपन जेबी में रख

'cabhIyA apana jebI meM rakha' *cabhIyA-key-1.F.S. apana (self)*
jebI-pocket meM-LOC Rakha(keep)v.
'Keep the key in your pocket'.

(3) चभीया अपन जेबी में से टेबुलवा पर रख दे

'cabhIyA apana jebI meM se TebulavA para rakha de' *cabhIyA-key-1.F.S. apana*
(self) reflex. jebI (pocket). meM(in)prep. Se-ABL TebulavAtable, para-LOC rakha
(main verb, v1), de (Aux.verb, v2).
'keep the key from your pocket on the table'.

Here in sentence (1), there is no use of a compound verb, as it is the simplest form of sentence, wherein a person is instructed to simply keep the key somewhere or someplace whose direction or place is not exactly specified. If we move on to another sentence, we can notice that an action over the subject i.e., key, is directed and the key is directed to be kept in the pocket. Hence, here in sentence (2) the direction and place are specified for the subject.

But as soon as we look at the pattern of the sentence (3), we can easily notice an action is performed which is denoted away from the subject. This denotation of action is shown by the addition of a v2 i.e., an auxiliary verb which is दे, /de/. This de-specifies the action of the main verb i.e., /rakha/ of the subject key into a specific place i.e., /jehl/, which means pocket.

Therefore, with this one can deduce that a CV is sometimes used as a supporting element in order to clearly denote or specify the correct and accurate action of the verb. Without these, the completion of the above sentence structure is absolutely impossible.

3.1.1. Explicator Compound Verb (ECV)

The predicative constructions, like Explicator Compound Verbs (ECVs), have been of great attention in the field of linguistics since it has been found as one of the major or the aerial features of most of the south Asian languages (Abbi, 2001). An ECV is a sequential arrangement of two different verbs i.e., v1 and v2 unlike all other compound verbs. The sequence is designed in such a way that the first verb i.e., v1 is generally followed by another verb i.e., v2, whose meaning gets de-lexicalized in the process. This means that v1 is the main predicating verb and v2, which gets dependent on v1 that does not appear independently on its own meaning. In short, it is a clubbing technique of both the verbs into one. For instance, if, in Hindi one says, चलो आओ /calo Ao/, then the meaning of /calo/ is predicated or being explained here by /Ao/.

In the aforementioned instance, one can observe that v2 bleaches v1 in such a great fashion that it clarifies the entire meaning of the compound quite beautifully and undoubtedly. Magahi also has some ECVs like all other Indian languages. These are very similar to that of Hindi. The below demonstrated examples will further explain the ECVs of Magahi in detail.

(4) राम के पिता जी ओकरा मार बइठलथीन

'rAma ke pitAji okarA mArA baiThalathina'.

Ram-1.M.S ke-gen. pitAji-Father okarA-he-3.M.S mArA-beat baiThalathina-sit.

'Ram's father has beaten him.'

In the above illustration, one can observe how beautifully and effectively a normal verb /mArana/, which means 'to beat', is transformed to produce an ECV. After examining the example closely, one can also observe that it is not only similar to that of Hindi but also follows the same process of formation. In the above instance, the meaning of the verb, मारना, /mArana/, beat, is explained through the second verb i.e., v2 बइठलथीन, /baiThalathina/. The

v2 i.e., /baiThalathIna/ is the one that explains the role of the verb /mArana/ in the sentence quite beautifully. Without this second auxiliary verb or a vector verb in compound verbs that acts as an explicator here, the meaning of the verb /mArana/ is not explained. It is so because the meaning of the verb /mArana/ was not clear and specified in the sentence due to which the sentence formed could also be meaningless.

3.1.2. Reverse Compound Verb (RCV)

Being one of the major features of most Indian languages, RCVs are firstly introduced and noticed by Hook in 1974. It is one of the most unique properties of most of the south Asian languages. This unique property of verbs is being used in Indian languages mostly while telling fairy tales, fictional stories etc. The structures of this very unique verb are not very difficult to form instead it is just a reshuffling of the two verbs that together constitute a compound verb construction. The two verbs, i.e., v1 which is polar and v2 i.e., vector when reshuffled their positions, led to the formation or creation of RCV (Hook, 1974). For instance, बैठ जाओ, /baiTha jAo/, in Hindi when reordered becomes, जाओ बैठो, /jAo baiTho/, which means the same but, as one can see that the positions of both the verbs i.e., polar and vector which are v1 and v2 interchanged. Therefore, this interchangeability results into the formation of a new structure, to what we are discussing here as RCVs. However, this property of interchangeability of positioning of verbs does not alter the meaning. But it is quite evident and puzzling to note that the case does not remain the same all the time. Sometimes, the meanings are also liable to change after reordering. This reordering of structures of RCVs in Magahi is quite identical to that of Hindi.

For instance,

- (5) सुनील जी हमरो ले मरलथिन
'sunIla jI hamaro le maralathina'
Sunil-I.M.S. myself take-v2 kill v1-perf.
'Sunil ji has killed me also'.

Here, in this sentence, one can witness that the compound verb मार डालना, /mAra DALana/, which means to kill is a simple compound verb that has been reversed to ले मरलथिन, /le maralathina/, in Magahi. This is a good piece of evidence to show the reversible property of the compound verbs of /mAra DALana/, in Hindi, that takes an agent /le/ in Magahi. In addition, it is interesting to note here that the reversible property of Magahi requires an extra element in such cases in order to reverse the verb. Also, with this reversible process, the meaning or the semantic property of the sentence remains unchanged. It has shown no negative effect over the sentence due to this reversal. It is due to this reason

=====

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 **22:12 December 2022**

Shivek Kumar Sicky, Ph.D. Scholar and Pitambar Behera, Ph.D. Scholar

A Descriptive Study of Explicator and Reverse Compound Verbs in Magahi -- A Case of a Less-resourced Language

that the study of such verbs in linguistics has become a major area of research for the linguists. This will not only help the languages like Hindi to develop as a standard form, but also the other less resourced languages like Magahi, Bhojpuri, Sambalpuri, Rajbhongshi and others that are not very much studied as less-sourced languages will develop in the field of linguistics from a research point of view.

4. Conclusion

To conclude the undergoing discussions about the explicator and reverse compound verbs in Magahi, we would like to recall some of the key points with which we have started this paper. The first and foremost point is, as to why we need to investigate ECVs and RCVs in Magahi. If one reads this paper one can find quite easily that Magahi, being very less popular among the masses, was one of the most prominent reasons for conducting and undertaking this very specific study. We have also tried our best to do justice with the sentence and the structural patterns of Magahi, which can be easily identified as similar and identical to Hindi. The reason for the similarity could be ascribed to the fact that Magahi belongs to the same Indo-Aryan language family. We have further demonstrated how easily and naturally the reversal of Magahi verbs is possible. However, there is no denying the fact that there are certain verbs, mostly the explicator verbs, which cannot explain their meanings without the help of any auxiliary verb in the sentence.

In the foregoing discussion, it can be stated that these compound verbs are mostly used by the writers including while narrating stories. This is done in order to induce some metaphorical effects into the stories or fictions. But at the same time, the addition of such metaphorical effects does not hamper the originality of the meaning that the sentence carries. In addition, we have also attempted to provide a detailed account of compound verbs in Magahi. Furthermore, this paper provides a brief description of the construction of RCVs and ECVs in Magahi, considering all the possible pragmatic, syntactic and morphological factors.

References

1. Abbi, Anvita and Devi Gopalakrishnan. 1991. Semantic Typology of Explicator Compound Verbs In South Asian Languages. In The Third International Symposium on Language and Linguistics, Bangkok, Thailand, 687-701. Chulalongkorn University.
2. Abbi, Anvita. 2001. A Manual of Linguistic Fieldwork and Structures of Indian Languages. Lincom Europa, Muenchen, Germany.

3. Alsina, A., Bresnan, J. W., & Sells, P. 1997. Complex predicates. Center for the Study of Language and Information.
4. Bashir, Elena. 1993. Causal chains and compound verbs. In M. K. Verma ed. (1993) *Complex Predicates in South Asian Languages*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi.
5. Behera, Pitambar. "Odia parts of speech tagging corpora: suitability of statistical models." *Diss. M. Phil. Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India* (2015).
6. Behera, Pitambar. "An experimentation with the CRF++ parts of speech tagger for Odia." *Language in India* 17 (2017): 2940.
7. Behera, Pitambar, and Biswanandan, Dash. Documenting Sambalpuri-Kosli: The Case of a Less-resourced Language". *INDIAN JOURNAL, OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS*, 43(1-2), 2017.
8. Behera, Pitambar, and Biswanandan, Dash. & Deibi Prasanna Pattanayak. An Exploratory Study of Lexico-Syntactic Variations in Sambalpuri and Odia. *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics (IJDL)*, 50(1), 2021.
9. Butt, Miriam. 1995. The Structure of Complex Predicates in Urdu. Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University.
10. Butt, Miriam, and Ramchand, Gillian. 2002. Complex Aspectual Structure in Hindi/Urdu. UMIST, Oxford University.
11. Butt, Miriam, King, Tracy Holloway, and Ramchand, Gillian, eds. 1994. Theoretical Perspectives on Word Order in South Asian languages. Stanford, California: CSLI Publications.
12. Das, Pradeep Kumar. Compound Verb. Available at <https://www.pkdas.in>.
13. Das, Pradeep Kumar. 2008-09. The present status and future prospects of Computational linguistics in India. Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Research.
14. Grierson, G. A. 1927. Linguistic Survey of India, 1, pt.
15. Hook, P. 1979. Hindi Structures: Intermediate Level. University of Michigan: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.
16. Hook, P. E. 1974. The Compound Verb in Hindi. Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies: The University of Michigan.
17. Hook, P. E. 1991. The emergence of perfective aspect in Indo-Aryan languages. In E.
18. Traugott and B. Heine (Eds.), *Approaches to Grammaticalization*, 59–89. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
19. Hook, Peter E. 1988. "Paradigmatization: A Case Study from South Asia,": *Berkley Linguistic Society* 14. 1-11.

20. Jha, G. N., Hellan, L., Beermann, D., Singh, S., Behera, P., & Banerjee, E. (2014). Indian languages on the TypeCraft platform—the case of Hindi and Odia. *WILDRE-2, LREC*.
21. Kachru, Y. 1981. Transitivity and volitionality in Hindi-Urdu. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 11(2):181–193.
22. Kachru, Y. 1987. Ergativity, subjecthood and topicality in Hindi-Urdu. *Lingua* 71:223–238.
23. Kachru, Y., and R. Pandharipande. 1978. On ergativity in selected South Asian languages. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 8(1):111–127.
24. Kachru, Yamuna and Rajeshwari Pandharipande. (1980). Toeward A Typology of Compound Verbs In South Asian Languages. In *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, Volume 10, Number 1, pp. 113-124. Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois.
25. Khan, B. 1987. The ergative case in Hindi-Urdu. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences* 17(1):91–101.
26. Kumar, Shivek, Pitambar Behera, and Girish Nath Jha. "A classification-based approach to the identification of Multiword Expressions (MWEs) in Magahi Applying SVM." *Procedia computer science* 112 (2017): 594-603.
27. Mahajan, A. 1989. Agreement and agreement phrases. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 10:217–252.
28. Masica, C.P. 1976. *Defining a Linguistic Area: South Asia*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
29. Ojha, Atul Ku, et al. "Training & evaluation of POS taggers in Indo-Aryan languages: a case of Hindi, Odia and Bhojpuri." *the proceedings of 7th language & technology conference: human language technologies as a challenge for computer science and linguistics*. 2015.
30. Verma M.K. 1993. "Complex Predicates in-South Asian Languages." New Delhi.
31. Verma, M. K. 1991. Exploring the parameters of agreement: the case of Magahi. *Language Sciences*, 13(2), 125-143.
32. Verma, S. 1985. The structure of the Magahi verb. Manohar.