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Postpositions in Bangla

With special reference to Prepositions in English

Anwesa Bagchi, M.A.

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the concept, origin and functional behavior of Postpositions in Bangla with special reference to Prepositions in English. It has been often observed Postpositions in Bangla function as case endings that develop syntactic relationship between different syntactic units. Furthermore, Postpositions carry valuable semantic information about the relationship between the noun and the verb syntagm. This study concentrates on these aspects of the Postpositions in Bangla with special reference to similar functions performed by Prepositions in English.

1. Introduction

Bangla is spoken by almost 100 million people in Bangladesh, and by 171 million worldwide. The total number of native and second language speakers of Bangla is estimated to be around 211 million [1], making it one of the Ten most spoken languages in the world.

Bangla is a 'head-final language'² that exhibits 'subject object verb' word order, although variations to this word order are very frequent in the language.[2] Unlike English and other European languages, Bangla features the use Postpositions instead of Prepositions.

2. CONCEPT: Postpositions in Bangla

Postpositions in Bangla, occur after the nominal or the pronominal where the nominal or the pronominal function as their object.

For example: 1. rAma tomAra **pAshe** baseChe
(Ram has sat beside you.)

2. tAra kAjaTA karAra **Age** tAra anumati nin
(Take his permission before you begin to do his work)

¹Bangla [baŋla], popularly known as Bengali, belongs to the eastern group of Indo-Aryan family of languages. Bengali is the official language of the state of West Bengal, a co-official language of the state of Tripura and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India. It is the official language of Bangladesh.

²In Head-final languages, the 'head' often occurs at the end of their phrases, with a resulting tendency to have the adjectives before nouns, to place adpositions as postpositions after the noun phrases they govern, to put relative clauses before their referents, and to place auxiliary verbs after the action verb.

They never precede the nominal or the pronominal [3] excepting in few colloquial uses and in interrogative sentences.

Postpositions perform functions similar to Inflectional markers³ or ‘Vibhakti’⁴ as they often indicate different relation between noun and verb. But unlike inflectional markers, Postpositions in Bangla are free forms⁵.

For example: 1. taroYala **diYe** ghAsa kATA uchita naYa.

(It is not appropriate to trim grass with a sword)

2. tA.Nra jIbana **theke** aneka kichhu shekhAra Achhe.

(There is much to learn from his life)

However, these postpositions sometimes demand inflectional markers such as *-ra*, *-era*, *-dera*, *-ke*.

Table: - 1.

Inflectional Marker	Example	Remarks
<i>-ra</i>	tomAra dbArA e kAJaTA habe nA. (It is not possible for you to do this work)	This genitive/possessive marker is used when there is a vowel in word final position
<i>-era</i>	chAra dinera madhye kAJaTA kore deba. (I will do this work within four days)	This genitive/possessive marker is used when there is a consonant in word final position
<i>-dera</i>	tomAdera dbArA e kAJaTA habe nA. (It is not possible for you to do this work)	This marker when followed by a postposition acts as a plural marker.
<i>-ke</i>	rAmake diYe ei kAJaTA kariYe neba. (I will get this work done by Ram)	This marker is used in an accusative sense.

From the semantic perspective, postpositions carry significant information regarding spatial, temporal, comparative, content, causal, manner related, locative and other aspects of the noun or pronoun in relation to the finite verbal elements of the sentence.

3. ORIGIN: Postpositions in Bangla

Postpositions in Bangla can be divided into two basic categories depending on their origin, namely, the Nominal Postpositions (nAmajAta) and the Verbal Postpositions (kriyAjAta).[4]

3.1. Nominal Postpositions-The nominal postpositions have originated from nouns, adverbs, and conjunctions while the verbal postpositions have originated from verbs.

³ Inflectional markers or case endings are directly added to the word. They perform the same function as prepositions in English.

⁴ Case endings

⁵ Free morphemes ,a unit of meaning which can stand alone or alongside another free or bound morpheme

Nominal Postpositions can be further divided into Tatsama⁶, Tatbhava & Deshi⁷ and Bideshi⁸ Postpositions.[5]

3.1.1. Nominal Postpositions: Tatsama – These postpositions originated from Tatsama, is the term used for referring to borrowed words which retained their Sanskrit form. [6] They belong to an educated and more erudite register than simple common words.

Table: -2

Postposition	Examples
apexA	mAnuShera nijera jlbana apexa priYa Ara kichhui nei. (There is nothing more important to man than his life.)
abhimukhe	sai nadI chalechhe samudra abhimukhe . (That river is flowing towards the sea.)
upara/upare/opera	gAchhatAra upare bA.NdaraTA base Achhe. (The monkey is sitting on the tree.)
kartika	debatA kartika dAnabadera nidhana haibe. (The demons would be killed by the Gods)
kAraNe	banyAra kAraNe saba school chhuti. (On account of flood, all the schools are closed.)
janye/janya	se sabAra janye chintA kare. (He is concerned for everyone)
dike	tumi bAjArera dike Aja yeYa nA (You should not be going towards the market today.)
dbArA	rAmera dbArA ei kAJaTA habe nA. (This work can not be done by Ram)
nikaTe	nagarera nikaTe tAra bAsasthAna. (His residence is around the town)
nyAYa	sei sbapna marIchikAra nyAYa udhAo haiYA gela. (The dream had vanished like a mirage)
pashchAte	andhera mato arthera pashchAte chhuTiYo nA (Donot run after money like a blind man)
prati	tA.Nra prati AmAra kartabya Achhe.

⁶Tatsama(Sanskrit tatsama) where ‘tat’ means ‘its’, belonging to Sanskrit, and ‘sama’ meaning akin.

⁷Tatbhava (Sanskrit ‘tadbhāva’) where ‘tad’ means ‘from’, from Vedic and Sanskrit words, and ‘bhāva’ meaning ‘product of’.

⁸ Foreign words

	(I have a responsibility towards him)
madhye	chAra dinera madhya kAjaTA kare dite habe. (You have to do the work within four days)
sa~Nge	rAmera sa~Nge Ami jhaga.DA karini. (I did not quarrel with Ram)
sahita	rAmera sahita sItA chale gelena. (Sita went away with Ram)
sammukhe	bipadera sammukhe nirbhaYa theko (Be fearless in the face of Danger)

3.1.2. Nominal Postpositions: Tatbhava and Deshi-This category of postpositions originated from Sanskrit, but has undergone changes to fit the phonology of Bangla. These words can not be traced back to Sanskrit.[7]

Table:- 3

Postposition	Example
Age	tAra kAjaTA karAra Age tAra anumati nin (Take his permission before you begin to do his work)
kAchhe	AmAra duto bai rAdhAra kAchhe Achhe. (Two of my books are with Radha)
chhA.DA	e chhA.DA Ara kono upAYA nei. (There is no other alternative apart from this.)
tare	kisera tare tomAra naYana ashru jhare? (For what reason do you cry)
pAne	tini sai chhabira pAne cheYe Achhena (He is staring at the painting)
pAshe	rAma tomAra pAshe baseChe (Ram has sat beside you.)
bai	AmAra ekati bai duti ghara Achhe (Not only do I have one room but also another.)
binA	parishrame binA kono kAja saphala haYa nA. (Without hardwork , no work can be successful)
bhitara/bhitare/bheto re	gharera bhitare se lukiYe Achhe (He is hiding inside the room)

mAjhe	Ami era mAjhe rAdhAra sAthe dekhA karabo. (I will be meeting with Radha within few days)
sAthe	Ami era mAjhe rAdhAra sAthe dekhA karabo. (I will be meeting with Radha within few days)
sAmne	AmAra ba.Dira sAmne jala jamechhe. (Water has accumulated in front of my house)

3.1.3. Nominal Postpositions: Bideshi-These postpositions originated from a category of foreign words borrowed from different languages due sociological, cultural and political changes.

Table:- 4

Postposition	Example
daruna	kharAr daruna Agera bachhara phasala bhAlo haYani. (Last year the yield was not good because of the drought.)
badale	tumi penera badale pencil dite pAro. (You can give a pencil instead of a pen)
banAma	East Bengal banAma Mohan Baganera khelATA bhAloi jamechhe. (The match between East Bengal and Mohan Bagan has become interesting)
bAbada	ApnAke jAmAra dAma bAdada kata TAKA deba? (How much money should I give you for the price of the shirt?)
barAbara	pashchima dika barAbara michhila egobe. (The procession would proceed towards the west)

3.2. Verbal Postpositions-These postpositions originated from verbal forms.

Table: -5

Postposition	Example
kare/kariYA	tumi taxi kare bA.Di chale eso. (You should come home by a taxi)
cheYe/chAite	dAdAra cheYe Ami aneka chhoTo. (I am much younger to my brother)
theke	dAdAra theke Ami aneka chhoTo. (I am much younger to my brother)

diYe	rAmake diYe ei kAjaTA habe nA. (This work could not be done by Ram)
dhare/dhariYA	eka TAnA dui dinA dhare baropha parachhe. (Its been snowing continuously for two days)
hate/haite	kothA hate se ba.Dite upasthita haila. (Suddenly,he came to my house from nowhere)

4. Functions and Behavior of Postpositions in Bangla

4. 1.Inflexional Behavior

In Bangla, the syntactic unit of nominal expression is either inflected with inflexional markers or has a postpositional segment. Sometimes, these postpositions demand inflexional markers such as *-ra*, *-era*, *-dera*, *-ke*. Postpositions almost perform functions similar to the inflexional markers and play a significant role in “the relation subsisting between a noun and a verb in a sentence”. [8]Kale refers to this relation as ‘Karaka’. In principle, Karaka corresponds to the term ‘case’ but may be in a complex notion. In English, the case forms are established on the basis of modification to nouns. [9] In Sanskrit, Bangla and other Indian languages Karaka determines the syntactic function whereas in English, it is often the position in the sentence that plays the deciding role. Bangla has five cases or Karaka. [10] An in depth analysis of the Karaka would assist further understanding of the inflexional behavior of Postposition better.

Table: -6

Karaka in Bangla	Function and Inflexional marker	Cases
<i>karṭṛ</i>	Agent(Subject) No inflexional marker	Nominative
<i>karma</i> -Direct(mukhya karma) -Indirect(gauNa karma)	Direct object- No inflexional marker Indirect object- <i>-ke,-re</i>	Accusative
<i>karāṇa</i>	Instrument <i>-ke diYe,</i> <i>-ra dbArA</i>	Instrumental
<i>apādāna</i>	Ablative, Cause, Origin, Source-only postposition	Ablative
<i>adhikarāṇa</i>	Locational, Spatial, Temporal - <i>-e,-te</i>	Locative

In Bangla, almost all the Karaka’s exhibit signs of the presence of inflexional markers as well as postpositions. [11]

Table: - 7

Karaka in Bangla	Inflexional Behavior of Postpositions
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<i>kartr</i>	<p>debatA kartika dAnabadigera nidhana haibe (The demons would be killed by the Gods)</p> <p>Note:-Generally, in this karaka, no postposition or inflectional marker is used. The above example is an occasional usage.</p>
<i>karma</i> -Direct(mukhya karma) -Indirect(gauNa karma)	<p>Indirect (gauNa karma)-banyAra kAraNe saba school chhuti. (On account of flood, all the schools are closed.)</p> <p>Note: - In this karaka, the postpositions demands the inflectional marker <i>-ra</i> in the word final position of the preceding segment. However, Direct (mukhya karma) doesnot have any postpositional form.</p>
<i>karana</i>	<p>rAmake diYe ei kAjaTA habe nA. (This work can not be done by Ram)</p> <p>Note:-In this karaka, the postposition doesnot demand any inflectional marker. But in many cases the postposition does demand the inflectional marker <i>-ra</i>, <i>-ke</i>.</p>
<i>apādāna</i>	<p>dAdAra cheYe Ami aneka ba.Da. (I am much elder to my brother)</p> <p>Note: - In this karaka, the postposition generally demands the inflectional marker <i>-ra</i>.</p>
<i>adnikarana</i>	<p>rAma tomAra pAshe base Achhe (Ram is sitting beside you.)</p> <p>Note:-In this karaka, the postposition generally demands the inflectional marker <i>-ra</i>.</p>

Prof. S.K.Chatterjee believed that the Karaka relationship is to be understood as the semantic relationship at the sentence level. This relationship, similarly, determines to a significant extent, the syntactic behavior of the constituents in the sentences.

4. 2. Semantic Behavior

In the sentence level, Postposition carries a significant amount of semantic information with it. It expresses quintessential information regarding the spatial, temporal, causal, comparative, manner related, source related and locational aspects of noun with respect to the verb. Prepositions in English reveal similar information about place, time, instrument, cause and other relation between two entities. [12]Both preposition and postposition carry out certain vital semantic function or 'roles' in the environment of different verbs. Although Fillmore and Langendon believed that there are few other 'roles' as well [13] but in the broad spectrum, all the 'roles' can be summed up under these basic semantic

'roles' namely, Directional, Manner related, Content related, Causal, Comparative, Locational, Spatial and Temporal aspect.

Table: - 8

Postposition Bangla	in	IPA	English Correspondence	Semantic role
1. abhimukhe		ob ^h imuk ^h e	towards	Directional-Source Destination
2. Age		ege	before/in front of	Temporal/Locational
3. antare		ɔntore	inside	Locational/Spatial
4. apexA		ɔpekk ^h e	than/in comparison to	Comparative
5. AshepAshe		eʃepəʃe	near by/near/around	Locational
6. atirikta		otirikto	above	Manner related/Content
7. bAbada		bebod	for/on account of	Causal
8. badale		bɔdole	instead/instead of/opposite to/in place of	Comparative
9. bai		boi	instead	Causal
10. baire		beire	outside/beyond/out/out of	Locational
11. banAma		bɔnem	between	Comparative
12. barAbara		bɔrebor	towards/in	Directional- Source- Destination
13. bhitara/bhitare/bhetare		b ^h itor b ^h itore b ^h etore	inside	Locational/Spatial
14. biruddhe		birudd ^h e	against	Causal

15. byatita	bætito	apart/unlike	Manner related/Content
16. chAite/cheYe	tʃeite tʃeje	than/in comparison to	Comparative
17. chhA.DA	tʃʰeɽe	besides/except/without/ aside/apart from/from	Manner related/Content
18. chhe.De	tʃʰeɽe	without	Manner related/Content
19. daruna	dorun	because/for	Causal
20. dbArA	dere	by/for/through	Instrument
21. dhariYa/dhar e	dʰorije dʰore	for(time)	Temporal/Causal
22. dike	dike	towards/for/at/to/into	Directional- Source- Destination
23. diYe	dije	by/over	Instrument
24. haite	hoite		Directional
25. hate	hote		Directional
26. hisAbe/hisebe	hiʃebe hiʃebe	in this respect	Manner related/Content
27. janye/janya	dʒonne dʒonno	for/because/due to/because of	Causal
28. kachhAkAch	ketʃʰeketʃʰi	near/near by/close to	Locational/Spatial

hi			
29. kachhe	kəʈʰe	near/near by/from/to	Locational/Spatial
30. kariYA/kare	korije kore	by means of /by	Causal/Instrument
31. kAraNe	kerone	on account of/for/because/since	Causal
32. kartika	kortrik	by	Instrument
33. laiYA	loiye	including/with	Manner related/Content
34. madhye	modd ^h e	amid/amidst/between/in the middle of/among/amongst/in the meanwhile/within	Locational/Spatial
35. mAjhakhAne	məɖʒ ^h k ^h ene	in the middle of/sometime back/in between	Locational/Spatial
36. mAjhe	məɖʒ ^h e	in the middle of	Locational/Spatial
37. mata	mɔto	as/like	Manner related/Content
38. niChe	niʈe	below/beneath/underne ath/down/under	Locational/Spatial
39. nikaTe	nikɔʈe	near by/near	Locational/Spatial
40. niYe	nije	including/with/along/alo ngwith	Manner related/Content
41. nyAYa	næj	in comparison to	Comparative
42. pane	pene	at	Directional- Source- Destination
43. para/pare	pɔr pɔre	after/next	Temporal

44. paryanta	pordzonto	until/till	Temporal
45. pashchAte	pɔstʃete	after/behind	Locational
46. pashe	pɛʃe	beside	Locational
47. paxe	pokk ^h e	for/in favor of/on behalf of	Manner related/Content
48. pichhane/pechhane	pitʃ ^h ɔne petʃ ^h ɔne	behind	Locational
49. prati	proti	for	Causal
50. sa~gNe	ʃɔŋge	with	Manner related/Content
51. sahita	ʃohit	with/including	Manner related/Content
52. samandhe	ʃɔmɔnd ^h e	about/regarding	Manner related/Content
53. sAmane	ʃɛmne	in front of	Locational/Spatial
54. sammukhe	ʃɔmmuk ^h e	in front of	Locational/Spatial
55. samparke	ʃɔmpɔrke	about	Manner related/Content
56. sAthe	ʃɛt ^h e	with/along/alongwith/	Manner related/Content
57. tare	tɔre	because/for	Causal
58. theke	t ^h eke	from/away from/	Directional-Source-Destination
59. upara/upare/opara	upor upore opor	above/onto/upon/on/over/up/on top of	Locational/Spatial

4.3. Postpositional Phrase and Adverbial Phrase

A postpositional segment with their head, as a postposition behaving either a functional adverb or postposition is a very common occurrence in Bangla. The postpositional segments which reveal spatial, temporal or locational information can be categorized under the name of Adverbial phrase [14] since they carry vital information regarding the time, place and manner in which the activity has taken place. Whereas other postpositional segments disclosing information regarding other aspects such as causal, content, directional, comparative, manner related and other aspects can be grouped under the category of Postpositional phrases in Bangla. In English, prepositional phrases often perform almost similar functions. [15]

For example: Adverbial Phrase: - rAma rAdhAra **pAshe** baseChe
(Ram is sitting **beside** Radha.)

Postpositional Phrase- tA.DatA.Di ekhAna **theke** chale JAo
(You should, quickly go away **from** this place.)

5. Further scope of work

A number of postpositions are identical to certain non-finite verbs. This at times leads to a lot of ambiguity since identifying such postpositions from non-finite verbs becomes very difficult. These postpositions are **chAite, cheYe, haYe, haite, hate, theke, diYe, diyA, tare, dhare, dhariYA, kare, kariYA, chhA.DA, and chhe.De**. Initial study has revealed that when these syntactic units occur as non-finite verbs they are immediately followed by a finite verbal form. In the absence of the finite verb, they function as postpositions. For example:-

1. tAke **diYe** kAJaTA **habenA**.
(This work **can not be done by** him)

2. tumi tAke baiTA **diYe** AmAra bA.Di **chale eso**.
(You **give** him the book and **come** to my place.)

However, this study requires further analysis for providing better solution to this problem and accounting for the exceptions.

6. Conclusion

During the course of this paper, the concept, and the origin as well as the functional role of Postpositions in Bangla has been carefully studied. A thorough analysis of Postposition in Bangla has been conducted with the concept and behavioral aspects of Preposition in English, in mind. Like Preposition in English, Postposition in Bangla secures a quintessential position and plays a vital role in the understanding of the language. In this paper, the functional behavior of postposition in Bangla has been one of the major areas of focus. An in depth analysis of these area with the help of Karaka theory has enabled a better understanding of the myriad facets of Postpositions and Prepositions in their respective languages.

7. Appendix

Table: - 9

Bangla script in ITRANS notation (<http://www.aczoom.com/itrans/beng/beng.html>)

<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS						
অ	অ	a						
আ	আ	aa or A						
ই	ই	i						
ঈ	ঈ	ii or I	<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS	<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS
উ	উ	u	০	০	০	গং	গং	ga.n
ঊ	ঊ	uu or U	১	১	1	গাঁ	গাঁ	gaa.N
ঋ	ঋ	RRi or R^i	২	২	2	আঁ	আঁ	aa^r
এ	এ	e	৩	৩	3	ম্	ম্	m.h
ঐ	ঐ	ai	৪	৪	4	ত্	ত্	t.h
ও	ও	o	৫	৫	5	দুঃ	দুঃ	duh
ঔ	ঔ	au	৬	৬	6	জ্জ	জ্জ	GYa
			৭	৭	7			
			৮	৮	8			
			৯	৯	9			

Vowels

Numerals

Accents/Specials

<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS	<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS	<i>bwti</i>	<i>ItzBeng</i>	ITRANS
ক	ক	ka	চ	চ	cha	ট	ট	Ta
খ	খ	kha	ছ	ছ	chha	ঠ	ঠ	Tha
গ	গ	ga	জ	জ	ja	ড	ড	Da
ঘ	ঘ	gha	ঝ	ঝ	jha	ঢ	ঢ	Dha
ঙ	ঙ	^Na or N^a	ঞ	ঞ	^na or n^a	ণ	ণ	Na
ত	ত	ta	প	প	pa	য	য	Ja or ya
থ	থ	tha	ফ	ফ	pha	র	র	ra
দ	দ	da	ব	ব	ba	ল	ল	la
ধ	ধ	dha	ভ	ভ	bha	ব	ব	ba
ন	ন	na	ম	ম	ma	শ	শ	sha
ষ	ষ	Sha	ক্ষ	ক্ষ	kSha or xā			
স	স	sa	য়	য়	Ya			
হ	হ	ha	ড়	ড়	.Da			
			ঢ়	ঢ়	.Dha			

Consonants

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