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Syntax of Standard English and Bangla: A Bilingual Study of Simple Declarative Sentences

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores much of the basic and background knowledge of English and Bangla sentence patterns or structures as well as tries to compare and contrast between these two very languages, English and Bangla at the sentential levels. As it is known the concept of basic sentence structures is necessary for classroom teaching and learning to perceive the subtleties of language at the highest unit of grammar, this study is expected to facilitate the understanding of bilingual relationships between them (may be as a native or a foreign language) for researchers, teachers, learners and/or speakers of both the languages. The ideas drawn from the findings in this paper will also help one in the field of translating amid these two languages which is pedagogically very significant as well. For a few dissimilarities, we often notice greatly faulty grammatical constructions both in English and Bangla, when learners or users shift from one to another. So, this study of the two types of sentence patterns along with their components will be of considerable use to many, specially to those who teach, learn or use these languages.

INTRODUCTION

It is evident in the history that the origin of both English and Bangla is Indo-European family of languages. However, with the passage of time, these languages underwent a lot of changes in various ways and aspects. English was by and large dominated by Greek and Latin whereas Bangla was greatly influenced by English, specially in some areas of grammar during the British regime in the Indo-Pak-Bengal subcontinent. Moreover, Bangla grammar was based on Sanskrit grammar. In English, the term 'grammar' comes from Greek meaning 'study of words' and its Bangla synonym is 'ব্যাকরণ' /bækɔrɔn/ which receives the meaning 'analysis'. It is worth mentioning that the sentence pattern in the two languages is well-fixed. This study aims at the comparative analysis of the structure of simple declarative sentences (i.e. statements) of the English and Bangla languages in the standard variety. The necessary phonetic transcriptions are incorporated in this study for non-native speakers of Bangla also.

Research Questions

The innermost objective of this research is to find the answers to the following questions within the domain of comparative linguistics:

- 1. How to attain a good solution for English and Bangla word order discrepancy
- 2. How to find out appropriate Bangla modifiers for English
- 3. How to solve the gaps between the inflexions of verbs in the two languages
- 4. How to show the function of grammatical terms in English and Bangla

Method of the Study

The grammar of English and Bangla shares some noticeable common features. But if we compare and contrast between English and Bangla sentences, we can find some similarities and various differences too. To define a sentence in both the languages is almost the same. In English, the 'sentence' refers to a group of words arranged in such an order so that it makes a complete sense. And in Bangla, the 'sentence' is a collection of words (or inflected words) that expresses a complete sense about a topic. Nevertheless, the sentence in the both languages varies largely in terms of their structures— in the sequences or order of words. For instance, to compare and contrast between typical English and Bangla sentences, we can show it by representing in the following structure. e.g.

English: Subject+ Verb(vt) + Object: Najin tells fables.



Bangla: Subject + Object + Verb (vt): নাজিন উপকথা বলে ৷ Ⅱ nadʒin upokɔtʰa bɔle Ⅱ

Here, we can see that the position of the transitive verbs (vt) and the objects in both the languages is exactly the opposite though the two subjects remain in similar places. This is also the same for intransitive verbs (vti) and complements. Moreover, for English the subject being the third person singular number and in the simple present tense, the verb receives a suffix '-s' or '-es' and the Bangla verb has also some suffixes like '-1/-\epsilon' /i/, '-c1/-\epsilon' /o/, '-c/-\eq '/e/, '-\epsilon' /n/ etc for different persons and numbers in the simple present tense which is discussed later in 'conjugation of verbs'. Let us look at the other structures of English and Bangla sentences:

Structure: Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object

e.g. Najin tells us fables. (without any prepositions)

Here, since 'tell' is used as a causative verb, the Bangla verb 'বলে' /bɔle/ becomes 'শোনায়' /ʃonae/.

Structure: Subject + Indirect Object + Direct Object + Verb (No preposition)

e.g. নাজিন আমাদের উপকথা শোনায়∥ nadʒin amader upokɔt̪ʰa ∫onaeৣ ∥

Though the same Bangla sentence is shown without any prepositions but in English, it could be shown as:

Structure: Subject + Verb + Direct Object + Preposition + Indirect Object

e.g. Najin tells fables to us. (with a preposition 'to')

To construct a grammatically correct and complete sentence in English, there must be an explicit or expressed verb but in Bangla, there are some sentences where the verbs (usually linking verbs, not exactly the verb 'to be') are often omitted or understood from the context. e.g.

English: Najin is fabulous.

Bangla: নাজিন চমৎকার | I nadzin t∫omotkar | I

Here, the implicit or unexpressed verb in Bangla is 'হয়' / he/. The other forms of the same verb 'হন' /hon/ can be used here to show respect to the 3rd person subject 'Najin', but 'হও' /hou/ is used in the second person and 'হই' /hoi/ is in the first person. Now, we may have a very clear comparison between the English verb 'to be' and its Bangla equivalent verbs 'হই', 'হও', 'হয়, 'হন' etc in conjugation in the diagram below:

Present Tense: Verb 'to be' vs. Verb 'হই/হও/হয়/হন'

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I am	We are	1 st	আমি হই	আমরা হই
2^{nd}	You are	You are	2^{nd}	তুমি হও	তোমরা হও
$3^{\rm rd}$	He/She/ Najin is	They are	$3^{\rm rd}$	সে/নাজিন হয়	তারা হয়

The past forms of the verb 'to be' in English and the Bangla verb 'হওয়া' /hɔa/ (with some suffixes like '-লাম' /lam/, '-লো' /le/, '-লা' /lo/, and '-লেন' /len/ (i.e. to show respect)

could be shown in the following diagram with illustration:

Past Tense: Verb 'to be' vs. Verb 'base + -লাম/-লে/-ল/-লেন'

	English			Bangla			
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural		
1 st	I was	We were	1 st	আমি ছিলাম	আমরা ছিলাম		
2^{nd}	You were	You were	2^{nd}	তুমি ছিলে	তোমরা ছিলে		
3 rd	He/She/ Najin was	They were	$3^{\rm rd}$	সে/নাজিন ছিল	তারা ছিল		

Like English, Bangla has no exact equivalent to English modal auxiliary verbs. But some words or expressions are often used in Bangla such as 'পারাট /para/ for 'can', 'হয়তোট heto/ for 'may' and a few Bangla suffixes like '-বেট/be/, ট-বো'/bo/, '-বা'/ba/ or '-বেন'/ben/ for 'shall' or 'will', 'উচিং' /uʧit/ for 'must', 'have to' or 'ought to' etc. The English modals have corresponding past forms which cannot show past tense in any ways by themselves. Let us have a look at the diagram below with English and Bangla examples:

Future Tense: Verb 'to be' vs. Verb

'base + -বো/-বা/-বে/-বেন-বেন'

	English			Bangla	
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I shall be	We shall be	1 st	আমি হবো	আমরা হবো
$2^{\rm nd}$	You will be	You will be	2^{nd}	তুমি হবা	তোমরা হবা
3 rd	He/She/ Najin will be	They will be	3 rd	সে/নাজিন হবে	তারা হবে

The English verb 'to have' (indicating possession or ownership) is almost the same in usage and meaning for Bangla too. They are shown in the following diagram:

Present Tense: Verb 'to have' vs. Verb 'base + -ছে/-ছেই

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I have	We have	1 st	আমার আছে	আমাদের আছে
2^{nd}	You have	You have	2^{nd}	তোমার আছে	তোমাদের আছে
3 rd	He/She/ Najin has	They have	3 rd	তার/ নাজিনের আছে	তাদের আছে

Past Tense: Verb 'to have' vs. Verb 'base + -ছিল/-ছিল্ছে -ছিলো'

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I had	We	1 st	আমার ছিল	আমাদের
		had			ছিল

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2^{nd}	You had	You have	2^{nd}	তোমার ছিল	তোমাদের ছিল
$3^{\rm rd}$	He/She/ Najin had	-	$3^{\rm rd}$	তার/নাজিনের ছিল	তাদের ছিল

Future Tense: Verb 'to have' vs. Verb 'base + -@/be/'

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I shall have	We shall have	1 st	আমার থাকবে	আমাদের থাকবে
$2^{\rm nd}$	You will have	You will have	$2^{\rm nd}$	তোমার থাকবে	তোমাদের থাকবে
3 rd	He/She/ Najin will have	They will have	$3^{\rm rd}$	তার/ নাজিনের থাকবে	তাদের থাকবে

Bangla has no English like auxiliary verbs to denote the progressive and perfective tenses and aspects. These are done in Bangla with the help of adding some suffixes such as '-ছি'/tʃhi/, '-ছো'/tʃho/, '-ছে $\hat{0}$ /tʃhe/, '-ছেন $\hat{0}$ /tʃhen/ (to show respect) etc to the verb base (present tense) and $\hat{0}$ ছিলাম $\hat{0}$ /tʃhilam/, $\hat{0}$ ছিলা/tʃhila/, $\hat{0}$ ছিলো $\hat{0}$ /tʃhile/, $\hat{0}$ ছিলো $\hat{0}$ /tʃhilo/ '-ছিলো $\hat{0}$ /tʃhilen/ (to show respect) etc to the verb base (past tense). e.g.

English (Present progressive): Najin is telling fables.

Bangla (Present progressive): নাজিন উপকথা বলছে

Bangla (Present progressive): নাজন উপকথা বলছে | ∥ nadzin upoko<u>t</u>ha bolt∫he ∥

Here, 'is' in English is the auxiliary verb to help show present progressive tense along with adding the suffix '-ing' to the verb base 'tell'. But this is not needed or found in Bangla. For Bangla, it is usually done by adding only some suffixes such as '- \mathbb{R}^{1}/t \mathbb{N}^{1} , '- \mathbb{R}^{1}/t \mathbb{N}^{1}), '- \mathbb{R}^{1}/t \mathbb{N}^{1} , '- \mathbb{R}^{1}/t \mathbb{N}^{1}) (to show respect) etc to the Bangla verb base ' \mathbb{R}^{1}/t \mathbb{N}^{1}).

In both the languages, the function of adjectives is attributive and predicative though it differs in adverbs. In English, the adverb follows the principal verb, on the contrary in Bangla, the adverb precedes the verb. e.g.

English: Najin tells (sth) fabulously.



Bangla: নাজিন চমৎকারভাবে (ংঃয) বলে।

| nadzin tsamo<u>t</u>karbhabe bole |

The order or sequence of persons in English is usually as second, third and first (e.g. You, He and I), but in Bangla, it is as first, second and third. e.g. 'আমি' /ami/, 'তুমি' /t̪umi/ and 'সে' /ʃe/. In English, the negative conversion of sentences are formed, when there is no verb 'to be', verb 'to have' or modal auxiliary verbs, with the help of 'Do'-operators (shown below with underlines). But for 'negative conversion' in Bangla, there is neither any need nor any existence of such operators like English. e.g.

English Declaratives (Neg): Najin does not tell fables. Bangla Declaratives (Neg): নাজিন উপকথা বলে না| ∥ nadʒin upokɔt̥ʰa bɔle na ∥

In the above negative sentences, the negative word 'not' is placed after the auxiliary verb (e.g. do, be, have and all the modals) in English, but at the end of Bangla sentences. It should be well noted that English has another 'do' verb

which is categorized as a principal verb meaning 'performing some action' or 'doing something'. e.g.

English: Najin does his home work at night.

Bangla: নাজিন রাতে তার বাড়ির কাজ করে।

| nadzin rate tar barir kadz kore |

English has only two tenses, in contrast Bangla has three. For example, the English verb 'tell' has only two tensed forms: 'tell/tells' (present tense) and 'told' (past tense). But in Bangla, there are three tensed verb forms for 'tell' such as the verb base plus suffix: বলা//bol/+ '-/কি' /i/, ি ে গ্/-ও' /০/'-‹/-এ' /e/, '-ন' /n/ (to show respect) for present tense, বলা//bol/+ '-লাম' /lam/, '-লা' /ঘধ/, '-লে' /le/, /bo/ '-লো' /lo/, '-না// n/ for past tense and বল্ /bol/+ '-বে' /be/, '-বো' /bo/, '-না' /ba/, '-ন' /n/ (to show respect) for future tense. The diagrams below will show:

Present Tense: Verb 'to tell' vs. Verb 'বল্ + -ি/ই,-ো/ও, -হু -হু

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I tell	We tell	1 st	আমি বলি	আমরা বলি
2^{nd}	You tell	You tell	2^{nd}	তুমি বলো	তোমরা বলো
$3^{\rm rd}$	He/She/ Najin tells	They tell	3^{rd}	সে/নাজিন বলে	তারা বলে

Past Tense: Verb 'to tell' vs. Verb 'বল্ + -লাম/-লো/-লা/-লেন '-লেন

English			Bangla			
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural	
1 st	I told	We told	1 st	আমি বললাম	আমরা বললাম	
2^{nd}	You told	You told	$2^{\rm nd}$	তুমি বললা	তোমরা বললা	
3^{rd}	He/She/ Najin told	They told	$3^{\rm rd}$	সে/নাজিন বললো	তারা বললো	

Future Tense: Verb 'to tell' vs. Verb 'বল্ + -বো/-বা/-বো/-বেন'

English			Bangla		
Person	Singular	Plural	Person	Singular	Plural
1 st	I shall tell	We shall tell	1 st	আমি বলবো	আমরা বলবো
2^{nd}	You will tell	You will tell	2^{nd}	তুমি বলবা	তোমরা বলবা
$3^{\rm rd}$	He/She/ Najin will tell	They will tell	$3^{\rm rd}$	সে/নাজিন বলবে	তারা বলবে

The sentence is broadly divided into subjects and predicates or noun phases (NP's) and verb phases (VP's) in the two languages. The subject and predicate can be a single word or a group of words. It is shown (items in brackets are optional) in the diagrams 1 and 2:

The structure of the English and Bangla NP's are quite different. Though in Bangla, there is no such NP's like English, we can represent it as follows:

In both the languages, the Head of a noun phrase could be pre-modified by a present or past participle as optional. The English NP can be shown in the diagram below:

Similarly, the Head of a Bangla noun phrase (NP) may be premodified by any number of present or past participles. It could be graphically represented in the following diagram:

Unlike the Bangla NP, the English NP has to accompany some determiner(s) with a singular common noun as mandatory. e.g.

English: a/the book
Bangla: – বই /bɔi/

With the plural determiner(s) or premodifier(s), the NP in English takes plural nouns (Head) on the other hand, the NP in Bangla usually has the same structure for both singular and plural determiner(s) or premodifier(s). e.g.

English: three books Bangla : তিনটা বই /tinta boi/

But in singular form also, there is no change in Bangla. e.g. একটা বই /ɛkta bɔi/

The structure of the predicate (VP) in the two languages is different. But in both the languages, the predicate must contain at least one finite verb or 'সমাপিকা ক্রিয়া' /sɔmapika kria/. But the number of non-finite verb or 'অসমাপিকা ক্রিয়া' /ɔsɔmapika kria/ may be present or absent as it does not matter for a structure to be correct. The structures of the English and the Bangla VP's are shown in diagrams 5 and 6:

The Bangla verb phrase (VP), on the contrary to English verb phrase (VP) can be demonstrated with Bangla examples in the following diagram No. 6:

Thus, the simple sentence of English and Bangla is defined as having only one subject and one finite verb. But sometimes in Bangla, the finite verb may be unexpressed or implied. e.g.

English: Najin is fabulous. (Number of verbs is one)

Bangla: নাজিন Ø চমৎকার∥ nadʒin t∫əmotkar $\|$ (Number of verbs is $\emptyset = zero$)

Again, there may be more than one verb in the predicate or in the VP's of the languages (certainly with one finite verb). So, the total number of verbs in English VP's may be from one to five (in the passive mode); but in Bangla, it is from zero to four and all other verbs in the predicate or the VP are non-finite verbs. e.g.

English: The bandit will have been being caught by the police. 1 2 3 4 5

(Number of verbs is five)

Bangla: পুলিশ কর্তৃক ডাকাত থােফতার হয়ে যেতে থাকবে।

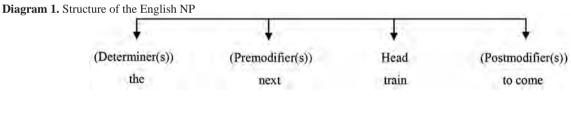
1 2 3 4 (Number of verbs is four)

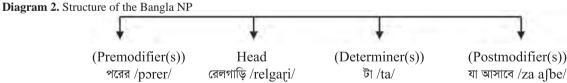
∥ puli∫ kotrik dakat greftar hee zete thakbe ∥

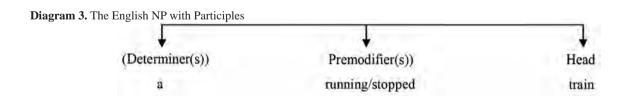
An Analysis of Simple Declaratives with Extended NP's & VP's: English vs. Bangla

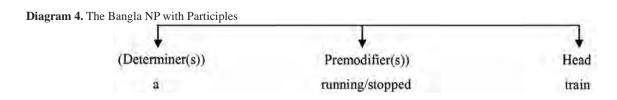
English Declarative: Our farmers lead a very poor life.

Bangla Declarative: আমাদের কৃষকরা অতি দরিদ্র জীবন যাপন
করে।

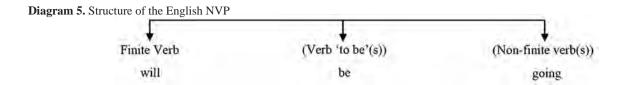








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l amader krisokra oti doridro doibon zapon kore l

Here, the affirmative sentences are shown below as Subject & Predicate forms

	Subject	Predicate			
Subject/Headword		Attributes/ Adjuncts	Verbs	Adjuncts of Predicate	
English:	farmers	Our	lead	a very poor life.	
Bangla:	কৃষকরা /kri∫ɔkra/	আমাদের /amader/	যাপন করে। /zapon kore/	অতি দরিদ্র জীবন /oti dəridro dzibən/	

English Negative (Conversion): Our farmers do not lead a very poor life.

Bangla Negative (Conversion): আমাদের কৃষকরা অতি দরিদ্র জীবন যাপন করে না

lamader krijokra oti doridro dobon zapon kore na l

Here, the above negative sentences are shown below as Subject & Predicate forms

	Subject			Predicate		
Subject/Headword		Attributes/ Adjuncts	Verbs	Adjuncts of Predicate		
English:	farmers	Our	do not lead	a very poor life.		
Bangla:	কৃষকরা /kri∫ɔkra/	আমাদের /amader/	যাপন করে না। /zapɔn kɔre na/	অতি দরিদ্র জীবন /oti dəridro dzibən/		

Outcomes of the Study

This study is intended for helping the researchers, teachers as well as the learners of English as a second (ESL) or a foreign language (EFL) to understand the bilingual relationship of the two languages, English and Bangla at their sentence levels. So, it will be of a great value to the teachers and course designers for classroom techniques in language teaching and learning process. If one knows the similarities and differences of the sentence system of these two languages, one will be able to translate to and from one language into another effectively. This study, in fact, offers a contrasting picture of the sentence in the two languages. Nevertheless, a few researches have been conducted so far to efficiently recognize natural English and Bangla sentences.

CONCLUSION

A sentence is the largest unit of grammar. Since we use it as the instrument of expression in our day to day life, it is very essential to have the comparative knowledge of the sentence in the two languages in order to make our communication as clear and accurate as needed. It is hoped that both the Bangla speaking English learners as well as English speaking Bangla learners will be immensely benefited from this research because this comparative study will reveal some remarkable features of the two languages. However, a further researcher could provide us with some more useful material in this field.

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