

## The typology of complements of expressions of fear in South Asian languages: A cross-linguistic, cross-constructional study of apprehensives

Fear may be seen as composed of three elements: uncertainty, mental image, and negative desire. Individual languages choose two or three of these constituents to represent the totality of fear. This paper compares and contrasts constructional manifestations of fear in sixteen Indo-Aryan languages (see data on page 2) from geographical and typological points of view.

An informal survey was carried out by examining Google's translations into Indo-Aryan of the Russian sentence *опасалась, как бы он не убил тебя* and English '(X) was afraid he might kill you.' The accuracy of the resulting versions was verified by searching for examples of them on-line or, if those were unavailable, by searching for examples of closely related utterances.

1. In all languages negative desire is expressed lexically by words meaning 'fear'.
2. Mental images in Hindi-Urdu and many other Indo-Aryan languages can be made sharper or more vivid by the use of compound verbs: *mār de-* 'kill GIVE', *mār dāl-* 'kill THROW' or *mār čhaḍ-* 'kill LEAVE' instead of their non-compound counterpart *mār-* 'kill'. Use of the compound verb instead of the non-compound in the complements of expressions of fear and anxiety is found in a nearly continuous band across the Indo-Gangetic Plain from Sindh to Punjab to Awadh and in Marwari, Sindh, and Gujarati as well.
3. Uncertainty. Expression of this element shows typological and geographic variation.
  - a. Use of the subjunctive allows the speaker / writer to avoid commitment to either occurrence or non-occurrence of the feared event. Alternatives less specific in this regard include the future (Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi) or modals such as Dogri's *sag-*, Oriya's and Assamese's *pār-* 'be able to' and Konkani's *ye-* 'come; be able to'.
  - b. The inclusion of an adverb explicitly signaling doubt such as Hindi's *kahī̃* or Panjabi's *ki-dhare / kite* 'somewhere' => 'lest'. These adverbs occur in languages spoken in the Indo-Gangetic Plain west of Bengal.
  - c. The presence of a seemingly otiose negative particle *na*, *nā*, *nī* in Indo-Aryan languages spoken across the Indo-Gangetic Plain, similar to the pleonastic negative particle in English 'I wonder if he isn't already here' indicates doubt.

Does the geographic distribution of these traits reflect Dravidian influence on the more southerly languages of the Indo-Aryan group (Marathi, Konkani, Oriya) and Tibeto-Burman influence on those spoken to the north of the Indo-Gangetic Plain (Kashmiri, Dogri, Dawoodi, Nepali, Assamese)? Perhaps a related question: May more thoroughly left-branching Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian languages have had the effect of promoting the loss of explicit markers of fear such as Hindi-Urdu's expletive *na* and its adverb of doubt *kahī̃* in languages spoken on the margins of the Indo-Aryan heartland? Can we determine the order in which these traits are lost in the transition from the fully endowed dependent clause in (1h) showing all four constructional traits to stripped down constructions showing none of the traits? Are the four traits that are present in (1h) in some way tied together?

A Hindi-Urdu example showing a full set of traits (कहीं 'lest', compound verb, negative of doubt, subjunctive)

(1h) हर कदम पर मुझे डर था कि कहीं मैं गिर न जाऊं या कोई बाधा मुझे रोक न दे।

har kadam-par mujhe ḍar thā ki [kahī̃ māī gir na jāū] yā [koī bādhā mujhe rok na de]  
each step-at me.DAT fear was that lest I fall NEG GO.SBJN or some obstacle me stop NEG GIVE.SBJN  
'At every step I was afraid I might fall or some obstacle might stop me.' [dlrs.bihar.gov.in]

From searches of on-line sources it is apparent that in Hindi-Urdu's fear-clauses the compound verb is preferred to its simple verb counterpart. In fact, apart from modal and phasal auxiliaries, the use of the compound verb in such clauses is obligatory. In this respect Hindi-Urdu conditions the

compound verb for the same reasons that inform one of the defining uses of the perfective aspect in Russian: "The total event with its undesirable consequences, is as it were a threat ever present in the speaker's mind." Forsyth 1970:257.

This obligatoriness of the compound verb in fear-clauses in Hindi-Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and other languages spoken in the central and western Indo-Gangetic Plains opens the question of speakers' mental states in other areas of South Asia where the compound verb in *fear*-clauses is optional or absent altogether. Is a postulating a general typological distinction between speaker-responsible vs. hearer-responsible languages tenable? If so, can geographical accessibility and an uneven history of settlement be considered as partial explanations?

The completed paper will test the findings presented in this abstract with parallel data sets sourced from independent translators such as Bing, Яндекс, on-line searches, and personal judgments.

#### Presenting traits grouped by number

Search strings: I was afraid he might kill you.  
опасалась, как бы он **не** убил тебя '(She) was afraid he might kill you.'

All four explicit features ('lest', compound verb, negative of doubt, subjunctive)

Hindi-Urdu: मुझे डर था कि कहीं वह तुम्हें मार न डाले  
Awadhi: हमका डर रहा कि कहीं ऊ तोहका मार न दे  
Bhojpuri: हमरा डर रहे कि कहीं ऊ तोहरा के ना मार देव  
Punjabi: ਮੈਂ ਡਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮਾਰ ਨ ਦੇਵੇ

Three explicit features ('lest', compound verb, negative of doubt)

Maithili: हमरा डर छल जे कहीं ओ अहाँकेँ नहीं मारी देत

Three explicit features (compound verb, negative of doubt, subjunctive)

Marwari: म्हनै डर लाग्यो कै वो थाने मार नी देवै

Two explicit features (compound verb, subjunctive)

Sindhi: mu-khe ḍap ho ta ho to-khe mār čhaḍ'ě  
me-DAT fear was that he you-ACC kill LEAVE.SBJN

One explicit feature (compound verb):

Gujarati: મને ડર હતો કે તે તને મારી નાખશે  
Marathi: मला अशी भीती वाटली की [तिला मिळविण्याकरिता तुम्ही कोणीही मला मारुन टाकाल].  
'I was afraid that in order to get her any one of you would kill me.'

Chattisgarhi: मोला डर रिहिस के वो तको मार देही

Bengali: āmi bhaya peyechhilāma. ye se āpanāke mere phelabe  
I fear received that he you.ACC kill.GER THROW.FUT

Tamil: [avan unṅaika **konru-vituv-āṅō**]-enru nāṅ payantēṅ  
he you.ACC kill-LEAVE-xx. -SAY.GER I feared.1st.sg

One explicit feature ('lest'):

Dogri: डरदा हा कि कहीं ओह तुहानू मार सगदा

No explicit feature:

Konkani: [ तो तुका मारूं येता ] असो भंय आशिल्लो.

Nepali: डर थियो की उसले तिमीलाई मारन सक्छ ḍara thiyo ki us-le timī-lāi mār-na sak.čha  
fear was that he-ERG you-ACC kill-INF can

Oriya: ମୁଁ ଭୟ କରୁଥିଲି ସେ ତୁମକୁ ମାରିଦେଇପାରେ mun bhaya kali se tumaku hatya kari pare  
I fear did he you.ACC killing do can

Assamese: ভয় হৈছিলি সিতোমাক হত্যা কৰবি পাৰে bhoy hoisil si tumak hotya karib pare  
fear was he you.ACC killing do can

Tibetan: ṅa [kho-s khyod basd srid] par zhed soṅ

I he-ERG you.ABS kill believe NMLZR fear WENT 'I was afraid he'd kill you.'