The typology of apprehensives in South Asian languages and their geolinguistics

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 languages 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'. The source of fear is almost always expressed in the complement as a negative undesirable event.

3. 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 ḍāl-* '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.

4. 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 (Chattisgarhi, 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*, Panjabi's *kidhare / kite,* or Gujarati's *kyāṅk* '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, nī̃* in Indo-Aryan languages spoken across the Indo-Gangetic Plain [similar to the expletive negative particle in English 'I wonder if he isn't already here'] indicates doubt.

Does the geographic distribution of the absence 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 the more thoroughly left-branching Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian languages spoken to the north and to the south have had the effect of promoting the loss of explicit markers of fear such as Hindi-Urdu's otiose *na* and its particle of doubt *kahī̃* in languages spoken on the margins of the Indo-Aryan heartland? In what order are they lost in the transition from fully endowed independent clause (1h) showing all four constructional traits to stripped down constructions showing none of the traits?

Hindi-Urdu: full set of traits ('lest', compound verb, negative of doubt, subjunctive)

A partly filled search string or translational prompt: " डर था कि कहीं * गिर न "yields:

(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 mãĩ gir na jāū̃ 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 … a threat ever present in the speaker's mind." J. Forsyth 1970:257.

This obligatoriness of the compound verb in fear-clauses in Hindi-Urdu, Punjabi, 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 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.

Search strings / prompts: (X) was afraid Y might kill you; опасалась, как бы он **не** убил тебя

All four explicit traits or features (**'lest'**, **compound verb**, expletive **negative of doubt** (**EN**), **subjunctive**):

Hindi-Urdu: मुझे डर था कि कहीं वह तुम्हें मार न डाले

Awadhi: हमका डर रहा कि कहूँ ऊ तोहका मार न दे

Bhojpuri: हमरा डर रहे कि कहीं ऊ तोहरा के ना मार देव

Punjabi: ਮੈਨੂੰ ਡਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਭਾਰ ਨ ਦੇਵੇ

Gujarati: ḍar hato ke [te kyāṅk ātmahatyā na kari le]

Marwari: mha-nāĩ ḍar ho kæ kaṭhæī bo thā-næ nĩ̄ mār devæ

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

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

Two explicit features [**compound verb**, **subjunctive**]

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

Two explicit features [compound verb, a 'lest'-like particle]

Telugu: [atanu ninnu tsamp-ēs-tā-ḍ-ēmō.**n**]   an-i nēnu bhaya-paḍ-ḍā-nu
  he you.ACC kill-DROP-FUT-M3sg-"कहीं"/lest? SAY-GER I fear-feel-PST-1sg

Tamil: [avan uṉṉaik koṉru-viṭuv-āṉ-**ō**]-eṉru nāṉ payantēṉ (with the assistance
  he you.ACC kill-LEAVE-3sgM-**PCL**-SAY.GER I feared.1sg of Neela Bhaskar)

One explicit feature (**compound verb** [or **perfective**]):

Pashto: zə wed-ed-am če haǧá bə tā wə́-waʒən-i
    I fear-PRES-1sg that he FUT you.OBL PRFCTV-kill.PRES-3sg

Chattisgarhi: मोला डर रिहिस के वो तको मार देही।

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

One explicit feature (**'lest'**):

Dogri: डरदा हा कि कहीं ओह तुहानू मार सगदा

No explicit feature:

Marathi: [to ātmahatyā kar-el] aši bhiti vāṭat hoti

Konkani: [तो तुका मारूं येता] असो भंय आशिल्लो

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

Assamese: ভয় হৈছিল সি তোমাক হত্যা কৰিব পাৰে bhoy hoisil si tumak hotya karib pare
    fear was he you.ACC killing do can

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

Tibetan: ŋa [kho-s khyod bsad srid] pa bsam nas ʒed soŋ
    I he-ERG you.ABS kill might NMLZR thinking CAUS fear WENT
  'I was afraid, thinking he would kill you.' (with assistance of N. Sihle)