

Bengali

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### **Volume 18**

Bengali

by Hanne-Ruth Thompson

# Bengali

Hanne-Ruth Thompson

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## Preface

This book aims to give a linguistic description of the Eastern Indo-Aryan language Bangla. In the West the language is perhaps better known as Bengali, but when one of the leading Indian linguists Probal Dasgupta refers to it as “Bangla (also known by its colonial name Bengali)”,<sup>1</sup> we ought to take the hint and change to “Bangla” as the more appropriate name for the language. In this book the region where Bangla is spoken as a mother tongue (Bangladesh and the Indian province of West Bengal) is referred to as Bengal and the speakers of Bangla as Bengalis. Bangla is a fascinating and colourful language which provides a rich field of engagement for linguists and researchers.

Bangla is a diglossic language (more on this in the Introduction under (4), p. 4). Bengalis on the whole are still very much in awe of high literary language as superior to the language they themselves speak. European and American scholars whose primary interests have been Bangla literature or Bengali history have sometimes inadvertently contributed to this value judgement on language. It is time to do away with this hierarchical thinking. In order to keep the connection with the living language, I have stayed away from traditional grammar examples in this book and have instead taken sentences from spoken language, letters, contemporary journals, newspapers, adverts, high and low literature and non-fiction.

The language described in this book is, quite deliberately, a non-specific Standard Colloquial Bangla. While the divide between Bangladesh and West Bengal is an undeniable political reality, there is no significant divide on the linguistic front. Existing differences have been indicated in the relevant sections.

My own involvement with Bangla goes back more than twenty years to when I moved to Bangladesh for three years in the early 1990s. The language with its beautiful sounds and rhythms almost instantly cast its spell over me and has not let me go since. Although its structures are not particularly complicated – there is, unlike in Hindi, no grammatical gender and verbal conjugation is wonderfully regular – Bangla has a number of characteristics which remind us that a language is much more than the sum of its dissectable categories and mechanisms, and that even a precise and systematic analysis of a language is still a long way from capturing its energy and momentum. On the one hand, Bangla operates with minimal redundancy: plural indication occurs only once in a noun phrase, *many birds* in Bangla is *onek pakhi many bird*; pro-drop occurs regularly with subject pronouns where the verb endings give

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1. Probal Dasgupta, *Some Non-Nominative Subjects in Bangla*, Centre for Applied Linguistics & Translation Studies University of Hyderabad, 2000.

us the necessary information: *se ki bôleche? kichu boleni. What did he say? Didn't say anything.* Tense use is intuitive and directly related to real time rather than to other tenses. Non-finite verb forms and their combinations play a crucial role in reducing the need for complex sentence structures. On the other hand Bangla has extensive reduplication and a rich inventory of onomatopoeic expressions which add a playful element. The bounce and tensions between these and other characteristics create the dynamics which give the language a power of expression far beyond word-formation and sentence structures.

It is impossible to give adequate thanks to all the people who have helped me to learn, teach and research this language but I want to express my gratitude to William Radice, Probal Dasgupta, Monsur Musa, Mina Dan, Swarocish Sarkar, Niladri Shekhar Dash, Anisuzzaman, Fazlul Alam, Hayat Mamud and Protima Dutt for their various contributions to my journey, their Mitdenken and their challenges.

My particular thanks also go to Thea Bynon for her faith in my ability to write this book and her invaluable comments and suggestions during the editing process. My work on Bangla will go on but for the moment I am in the process of leaving academic life at SOAS in London, not entirely without regret but with new horizons to explore.

Hanne-Ruth Thompson  
Freetown, Sierra Leone, 30 May 2012



## Abbreviations

ADJ	adjective	NUM	numeral
ADV	adverb	O	object
baVN	ba forms of the verbal noun, eg kɔrbar do.baVN.GEN, debar give.baVN.GEN	OBJ	objective (case)
C	complement	ONOM	onomatopoeia
CL	classifier	ORD	ordinary
CM	compound maker	PC	pro-copula
CON	consonant	P.C	past continuous
CONC	concessive	P.HABIT	past habitual
CONJ	conjunction	P.PERF	past perfect
CP	conditional participle	P.S	simple past
CR	correlative	PL	plural
CV	compound verb	POL	polite
EMP	emphaser	POS	positive/affirmative
F	familiar	POSS	possessive
FUT	future	POSTP	postposition
FUT.IMP	future imperative	PP	perfective participle
GEN	genitive	PR	present
H, HON	honorific	PR.C	present continuous
HABIT	habitual	PR.IMP	present imperfective
I	intimate	PR.PERF	present perfect
IMP	imperative	PR.S	present simple
INAN	inanimate	PRED	predicate
INT	interjection	PRON	pronoun
IP	imperfective participle	PS	person
LOC	locative	R	relative
N	noun	S	subject
NEG	negative	SG	singular
NOM	nominative	V	verb
NP	noun phrase	VA	verbal adjective
		VN	verbal noun

An asterisk \* indicates that an example is ungrammatical.



# Glosses

## Nouns

ṭa, ṭi, jṛn, khana, ṭuku are marked as .CL (classifiers), gulo and guli as .CL.PL (plural classifier) ra and der are marked as .PL (plural) and .PL.CASE (plural-case) respectively.

## Pronouns

Grammatical information in the glosses is kept to the minimum. This means that if a 3rd person pronoun is present in the gloss, only the 3H (honorific) label is marked. In all other cases, the pronoun is ordinary. With second person pronouns tumi is unmarked, apni and tui are marked 2H and 2I respectively. Singular is unmarked, plural is marked. Case is only given where case endings are present.

Bangla does not distinguish gender in its personal pronouns. In the translations, gender has to be assigned and I have variously assigned he, she or it.

In cases where a genitive pronoun is clearly attributive and followed directly by a noun phrase, I have given my, your, our rather than I.GEN, you.GEN etc.

## Verbs

For conjugated verb forms, the following abbreviations are used:

1	first person	ami, amra
2I	second person intimate	tui, tora
2	second person familiar	tumi, tomra
3	third person ordinary	se, o, e, tara, ora, era
2H, 3H	second person polite	apni, apnara and third person honorific
		tini, uni, ini and tāra, ōra, ēra

tenses	PR.S	present simple
	PR.C	present continuous
	PR.IMP	present imperative
	PR.PERF	present perfect
	FUT	future tense
	FUT.IMP	future imperative
	P.S	past simple

	P.C	past continuous
	P.PERF	past perfect
	P.HABIT	past habitual
non-finites	VN and baVN	verbal noun, eg bojha: understand.vN, dekhbar: see.baVN.GEN
	VA	verbal adjective
	IP	imperfective participle
	PP	perfective participle
	CP	conditional participle

Verb glosses are always given in full except with some particular forms of incomplete verbs: forms of ach- [exists] or [is present], the invariable nei [is absent] and ন্য [is not], chilô [was] are given in square brackets. The different persons are marked as follows:

1st	achi	[is present].1 or [exists].1	chilam	[was].1	nôï	[is not].1
2nd familiar	achô	[is present].2 or [exists].2	chile	[was].2	নক	[is not].2
2nd intimate	achis	[is present].2I or [exists].2I	chili	[was].2I	nôs	[is not].2I
3rd ordinary	ache	[is present] or [exists]	chilô	[was]	ন্য	[is not]
2nd and 3rd honorific	achen	[is present].2H or [is present].3H or [exists].2H or [exists].3H	chilen	[was].2H or [was].3H	নক	[is not].2H or [is not].3H

Verb forms with a following ni (negation of present and past perfect) are given as not verb.PERSON.TENSE rather than verb.PERSON.TENSE not to show the close connection between the verb and the negation.

For conjunct verbs the noun/adjective and verb are linked with a hyphen, eg

pôriṣkar kôrle  
clean- do.CP

Pro-copula forms of হওয়া be, become are given as PC.PERSON.TENSE

## Correlatives

Relative (R) and correlative (CR) pronouns and conjunctions are marked as such only where they are the topic of discussion.

## Emphasisers

o, to and i are all given as .EMP (emphasiser) except when they are the topic of discussion. When o is used as a conjunction it is given as also or even.

Glosses are given where they are deemed helpful in understanding sentence structures.



# Transliteration

The transliteration used in this book is based on the standard system for Sanskrit with the few extras required for Bangla. A transliteration represents the spellings of a language. This means that for every Bangla letter a distinct symbol is given in the transliteration. Below are the symbols with their Bangla letters. They are given in alphabetical order. Read the columns from top to bottom, left to right.

vowels		kh	খ	th	থ
ɔ/ô	অ	g	গ	d	দ
a	আ, া	gh	ঘ	dh	ধ
i	ই, ি	ñ	ঙ	n	ন
ī	ঈ, ি	c	চ	p	প
u	উ, ঊ	ch	ছ	ph	ফ
ū	ঊ, ং	j	জ	b	ব
r̄	ঋ, ৃ	jh	ঝ	bh	ভ
e/æ	এ, ঐ	ñ̄		m	ম
oi	ঐ, ঔ	t̄	ট	y	য
o	ও, ে cons †	ṭh	ঠ	ÿ	য়
ou	ঔ, ে cons †	ḍ	ড	r	র
other symbols		r̄	ড়	l	ল
m̄	ং	ḍh	ঢ	ś	শ
ḥ	ঃ	rh	ঢ়	ṣ	ষ
~	্	ṇ	ণ	s	স
consonants		t	ত	h	হ
k	ক	t̄	ৎ		

	additional symbols	
v	ব	bophola
y	ঈ	yophola

### the inherent vowel

The inherent vowel (see also Chapter 2.5) has two different pronunciations, either ɔ as in British English *pot* or ô as in Italian *Roma*. The pronunciation of ô is identical to that of o (Bangla letter ঔ). These distinctions are given in the transliteration.

### aspirates:

Some authors choose to give aspirate letters as k<sup>h</sup>, c<sup>h</sup>, b<sup>h</sup> etc. to indicate that these are single letters in Bangla. I have decided to use kh, ch, bh etc instead as I find that the system with superscripted letters creates a rather restless textual image. Readers therefore have to keep the existence of aspirated letters in mind. There are very few instances in Bangla where h follows another consonant without an intervening vowel. In those cases I have given an apostrophy before the h, eg

abha = আভা *glow, shine* but ab'haoya আবহাওয়া *weather*

### “silent letters”:

b ব, m ম and y ঈ can appear as second components in conjuncts where they do not retain their own pronunciation but are either silent or serve to double the preceding consonant, eg আত্মা *atma* is pronounced *atta*. The bophola (“silent” b) gains an extra symbol v because it is derived from a different Sanskrit letter and because *svamī* looks better than *sbamī*. The pronunciation of the word *husband* in Bangla is, in fact, *shami*.

## Transliteration and Pronunciation (Quick Reference)

### Vowels

Bangla vowels are pure single sounds that can be open (or short) as in *pat, pet, pit, pot, put*, or closed (long).

ɔ	open as in <i>hot</i>	bɔla
ô	closed as in Spanish <i>como</i>	môn
a	short a as in <i>samba</i>	ranna



	long a as in <i>llama</i>	am
i	open i as in <i>hit</i> or closed i as in <i>bee</i>	jinis id
ī	open i as in <i>hit</i> or closed i as in <i>bee</i>	dīrghô nīl
u	short u as in <i>put</i> or long u as in <i>moon</i>	mukti dudh
ū	short u as in <i>put</i> or long u as in <i>moon</i>	mūllô dūr

The distinction in writing between ‘short’ and ‘long’ i and ‘short’ and ‘long’ u respectively is no longer mirrored in the pronunciation of these vowels. For both sets the ‘short’ letters are much more common in writing than their ‘long’ counterparts.

ī	ri	prīthibī <i>pron</i> prithibi
---	----	-------------------------------

Note that, even though this letter counts as a vowel for historical reasons, its pronunciation is always ri.

e	open e as in <i>met</i> closed e as in French <i>née</i>	kena se
æ	open æ as in <i>cat</i>	dækha

The pronunciation of as æ is given in the transliteration as distinct from e. Note that the jophola y or the combination of jophola plus a can have the same pronunciation as æ (see below).

oi	diphthong: closed o followed by i as in Italian <i>boicotto</i>	toiri
o	closed o as in Spanish <i>como</i>	lok

Note that the same pronunciation (closed, long o) can also be produced by the inherent vowel ô.

ou	diphthong: closed o followed by u	poune
----	-----------------------------------	-------

### Consonants

Bangla distinguishes between aspirated and unaspirated, as well as voiced and voiceless consonants. It also distinguishes between palatal and dental sounds.

k	soft k, no aspiration	kôla
kh	aspirated k, k + h	khæla

g	soft g, no aspiration	gɔla
gh	aspirated g = g + h	ghɔr
ṅ	ng as in <i>singer</i> or <i>finger</i> The pronunciation of this consonant as either ng <i>singer</i> or ngg <i>finger</i> can vary from speaker to speaker . There is also, however, a conjunct ṅg whose pronunciation is always ngg.	bhaṅa <i>pron bhanga</i>
c	ch as in <i>chip</i>	cabi
ch	ch + h	chôbi
j	j as in <i>jam</i>	jɔl
jh	aspirated j, j + h	jhal
ñ	nasal n, only used in conjunction with other letters, eg (ñ)+(c)=(ñc)	cɔñcɔl
ṭ	palatal t, similar to English t as in <i>top</i> , but with the tongue slightly further back in the mouth	ṭ aka
ṭh	aspirated palatal t	ṭ hæla
ḍ	palatal d, similar to English d as in <i>day</i> , but with the tongue slightly further back in the mouth	ḍal
ṛ	flapped r	aṛai
ḍh	aspirated palatal d	ḍhala
ṛh	aspirated flapped r	gaṛhò
ṇ	pronounced as n	karòṇ
t	dental	tumi
ṭ	pronounced as dental t, occurs at the end of syllables where no inherent vowel is pronounced	sɔṭ
th	aspirated dental t + h	thama
d	soft dental d as in Italian <i>dio</i>	dɔl
dh	aspirated dental d + h	dhan
n	n as in <i>not</i>	na
p	as English p, but without aspiration	pan
ph	pronounced as pf or f	phɔl

These are regional variants between West Bengal (pf) and Bangladesh (f).

b	as English b in <i>bit</i>	baba
bh	aspirated b, b + h	bhul
m	as English m in <i>man</i>	mama

y	The symbol y essentially represents three different uses of the same Bangla letter.	
	1. pronounced as j in <i>jam</i>	yôdi <i>pron</i> jodi
	2. the shortened form of this letter is called <i>jophola</i> . It appears after consonants and has a doubling effect except when it (rarely) follows the initial consonant of a word where it has no effect on the pronunciation, eg <i>jonyo</i> is pronounced <i>jonno</i> , but <i>jyôtsna</i> is pronounced <i>jôtsna</i>	jônyô
	3. As a vowel it is pronounced æ or, when followed by a high vowel, e.	bytha <i>pron</i> bætha bykti <i>pron</i> bekti
ya, yæ	Followed by a: pronunciation varies between a and æ – this difference is incorporated into the transliteration, ie the symbols ya and yæ both stand for <i>jophola</i> plus a.	bidya <i>pron</i> bidda byæpar <i>pron</i> bæpar
ÿ	semivowel (glide) used between vowels, pronounced y as in <i>mayor</i> or w as in <i>away</i> , ÿ also appears at the end of words following a vowel and is pronounced /e/ after o, a or /æ/, eg <i>hoy</i> , <i>yay</i> , and <i>dæy</i> are pronounced <i>hœ</i> , <i>jae</i> , and <i>dæe</i> respectively.	meÿe haoÿa <i>pron</i> haowa  hoy yaÿ dæÿ
r	rolled r, similar to Italian r	rag
l	as English initial l <i>line</i> , formed at the front of the mouth	lal
ś	pronounced as sh in <i>shine</i> , in some conjuncts as s in <i>sun</i>	śak
ș	pronounced as sh in <i>shine</i>	șolô
s	pronounced as sh in <i>shine</i> , in some conjuncts as s in <i>sun</i> Both ś and s can change their pronunciation to /s/ as in <i>sun</i> when they occur as the first element of a conjunct.	sap
h	h as in <i>hot</i>	hat

**extra symbols**

ṁ	ng as in <i>sing</i> , used instead of ñ when no vowel follows	ঞগ্‌শো <i>pron</i> ɔŋgshô
ḥ	a spelling convention with little effect on pronunciation: sometimes the preceding vowel is shortened, sometimes the subsequent consonant is doubled.	বাহ দুহ্‌ক্‌হো <i>pron</i> dukkho
~	nasal: indicates nasalisation of the vowel as in French <i>pain</i> , <i>bon</i>	চাঁদ
v	<i>bophola</i> , underneath a consonant, doubles the sound of this consonant. When used with the initial consonant of a word or with a conjunct, it has no effect on pronunciation.	বিস্বো <i>pron</i> bisshô
m	<i>mophola</i> , underneath a consonant, doubles the sound of this consonant. When used with the initial consonant of a word, it has no effect on the pronunciation.	শ্বর <i>pron</i> jôr শান্ত্বোনা <i>pron</i> shantôna
m		াত্মা <i>pron</i> atta
		শ্মরোণ <i>pron</i> shôrôn

**conjuncts**

Consonant sequences are pronounced in the expected way: k + t = kt with the following exceptions:

transliteration	pronunciation	
k + ṣ	kh, kkh	kh initially: ক্‌ষমা <i>pron</i> khɔma; kkh between vowels: ঠক্‌ষো <i>pron</i> okkhor
j + ñ	g, gg	g initially: জ্‌নান <i>pron</i> gæn; gg between vowels: ক্‌র্ত্তজ্‌নো <i>pron</i> kritɔggo When jñ is followed by the vowel a, the pronunciation of the sequence varies between g(g)a, eg জ্‌জ্‌নাসা <i>pron</i> jiggasha and g(g)æ, eg জ্‌নান <i>pron</i> gæn. These pronunciations are indicated in the transliteration.
h + n	nh	nh, as in চিহ্নো <i>pron</i> cinho
h + y	jyh	jyh, as in সোহ্যো <i>pron</i> sojjho

## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

### 1.1 Bangla and its speakers

Bangla is a world language. In terms of numbers of speakers it ranks fifth or sixth among the world's languages. Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh with a population of over 150 million people. It is one of the official languages of India with about 80 million speakers in West Bengal. There are substantial Bengali communities in the USA, Europe, Australia and the Middle East. Although Bangladesh has been politically separated from West Bengal for over sixty years, the Bangla language belongs to both Bangladesh and West Bengal equally.

Bengal is situated in the low-lying Ganges–Brahmaputra river delta, the world's largest delta and one of the most fertile areas on earth. Bengal is densely populated but its lush vegetation, its villages, vast rivers and open fields make it a place of great natural beauty. Bengal has borders with Assam, Sikkim, Bhutan and Myanmar (Burma) in the east and Orissa, Bihar, Jharkand and Nepal in the west. In terms of land use most of both Bangladesh and West Bengal are rural, with the main crops rice, jute, tea, wheat and sugar-cane. The two capitals are Kolkata in West Bengal with a population of almost eight million and Dhaka in Bangladesh with a population of six and a half million. Poverty and illiteracy are still pressing problems in both Bangladesh and West Bengal.

What Bengal lacks in material wealth it makes up a hundredfold in the richness of its literature and culture, the energy and zest for life of its people and the enchanting beauty of its language. Bengalis are very aware of this beauty, and pride in their language is an inalienable part of their identity. This is equally true for West Bengal and for Bangladesh, but it was particularly visible in the early years after Indian independence in 1947.

India was split into two countries, India and Pakistan. East Bengal – then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh – became one of the provinces of the new Muslim state of Pakistan. This was at first welcomed by East Bengali Muslims but the geographical distance between them and the rest of the country – with the whole of India between the two halves of the country – as well as economic inequalities soon started to cause discontent and resentment in East Pakistan. Much more divisive, however, was the language question.

Having Urdu as the only state language in Pakistan imposed on them by the Pakistan government woke East Bengali Muslims up to their own identity. From 1948 onwards a language movement started, led by students and professors of Dhaka University, with the express purpose of making Bangla a state language. This movement culminated in a violent clash between protestors and the police on 21 February 1952 in which five students were killed. This was the first time in Bengali history that lives were lost in the cause of a language. In the immediate wake of these events, all throughout the province, a new Bengali consciousness emerged, based on language and culture rather than on religion. Bangla became a state language of Pakistan in 1956 but it was another 15 years later, in 1971, that Bangladesh became an independent country with a secular constitution. 21 February is still celebrated in Bangladesh every year and in 1999 it was made International Mother Language Day by the UNESCO in memory of the events in 1952 and to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

## 1.2 History (language and literature)

The Bangla language is, like most other Indian languages, a descendant of Sanskrit, one of the oldest known languages with records dating back as far as 1500–1000 BC. It is not very clear where Sanskrit originated, but scholars place it in the Indus Valley, in what is now Pakistan and northwestern India. Sanskrit is an Indio-Aryan language and the relationship between Bangla and Sanskrit in terms of grammar and vocabulary is comparable to the relationship between French and Classical Latin. Although Sanskrit still counts as one of the official languages of India, it was always more a scholarly and devotional language rather than a means of communication. The Rig Veda, the oldest sacred writing of Hinduism, was written in an early form of Sanskrit, now called Vedic Sanskrit.

Sometime around the fifth century BC the grammarian Panini standardised the language into a new form, referred to as Classical Sanskrit, and wrote what we now consider the first scientific grammar. In addition to this, many religious works, influential poetry and drama, and early scientific and mathematical documents were written in Sanskrit.

From this mainly written and scholarly language, spoken or vernacular forms developed between 500 BC and 500 AD. While Sanskrit *sṛṅkitô put together, composed* was described by Panini as correctly and perfectly formed in all its elements, roots and suffixes, these off-shoots are called Prakrits (*prôkîti = nature*), indicating that they were closer to actual language. They are divided into three major branches Sauraseni, Magadhi and Maharashtri. Bangla, alongside Assamese, Oriya and Bhojpuri (Bihari) developed out of the Magadhi branch, also known as Eastern Indo-Aryan.

The Bangla language can be dated back as far as 1000 years ago. The oldest texts which can be identified as being written in Bangla were found in Nepal by the Bengali scholar Haraprasad Shastri and published in 1909. They are Buddhist devotional songs known as *Charyapada* and dated between 900 and 1100 AD. It was during this period that Assamese, Oriya and Bangla split off from Sanskrit and from one another. The reasons for claiming the Charyapada for Bangla rather than for Assamese or Oriya are related to word formation, pronouns, case endings and emerging postpositions which seem to point the way for later forms in Bangla. This period, between 900 and 1400 AD, is called Old Bengali. Verb inflections were starting to appear and pronouns like *ami* and *tumi* were formed. Also around that time the Bengali script started to develop its own characteristic features, separating it from Devanagari. Both Devanagari and the Bangla script were designed and used primarily for writing Sanskrit.

Following the 13th century invasion of Bengal (and other parts of India) by Muslim Turks whose court language was Persian, many Arabic and Persian words were absorbed into the speech of the people of Bengal, and Bengal as a region developed further in commercial importance.

The Middle Bengali period is dated between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century. The earliest examples of Middle Bengali literature are *Sri Krishna Kirtan* and Vaishnava religious love poems by Chandidas and Vidyapati. During the later middle period Mangal Kabya and Persian-influenced romances were written.

With the advent of the British and the start of British Rule in India after the Battle of Plassey in 1757, a new era began which changed not only the political and educational system but also brought about a significant growth of literature in Bangla. The British established themselves first in Kolkata and then expanded their sphere of influence and power throughout the whole of the sub-continent during the 18th and 19th century.

During the 19th and 20th century a large portion of India's most celebrated works of poetry were created in Bangla during a literary renaissance led by figures such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1834–1873) and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838–1898), the founders of modern Bangla literature. Madhusudan was a great admirer and diligent student of European literature, from Dante, to Milton to Shakespeare and, in a great leap of faith, set out to create comparably great literature in Bangla. He was the first to compose sonnets in Bangla and he also introduced blank verse. An endeavour of this kind at that time required, above all, faith in the potential of the Bangla language. Madhusudan's masterpiece Meghnadbadh Kabya is not only the greatest epic that has ever been written in Bangla but also world class literature.

As Europeans, we tend to underestimate the influence individual writers and poets have on the development of a language. But there is no doubt that for Bangla it was people like Bankim Chandra, Madhusudan Dutt and soon after them Rabin-dranath Tagore (1861–1941) who not only gave the language status and credibility

through their literature but had a tremendous and lasting effect on the structure and vocabulary of the language.

Tagore was a poet, novelist, short-story writer, dramatist, essayist and educator as well as a musician and a painter. The sheer volume of his work remains an unprecedented achievement, and he continues to occupy an almost God-like status among Bengalis due to the profound understanding of human nature displayed in all his writings. Poetry and song have always played a central role in Bengali cultural life and Tagore provided the nation with countless haunting and expressive songs that spoke, and still speak, to people in a personal way. Tagore was the first non-European ever to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was largely responsible for Bangla literature gaining considerable international prestige and for Bangla being accredited a unique standing among the languages of India. What is, among all these achievements, less well known about Tagore is his deep interest in and engagement with his language. In his book *Bangla bhasha poricoy* (1938) he combines systematic description with intuitive observation in a way that is more congenial to the language than a purely analytical approach.

Standard Colloquial Bengali (*calit bhasha*) took over from *sadhu bhasha* (see under (4) below) as the main version of written as well as spoken Bangla during Tagore's lifetime in the early years of the 20th century. This move helped to standardise and unify the language.

Tagore was such a giant figure in literary terms that the writers and poets who were his contemporaries or who came after him were inevitably influenced, inspired or, in some cases, overwhelmed by him.

Some important writers and poets of the 20th century are Jibanananda Das (1899–1954); Kazi Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh (1899–1976); Buddhadeva Bose (1908–1974); Syed Waliullah (1922–1979); Shamsur Rahman (1929–2006); Sunil Gangopadhyay (born 1934); Syed Shamsul Haque (born 1935); Hasan Azizul Haq (born 1939); Akhtaruzzaman Ilias (1943–1997).

### 1.3 The Bangla lexicon

Bangla has a vast vocabulary. The great majority of lexical items are derived more or less directly from Sanskrit. Linguists distinguish two different kinds of derivations. Sanskrit words which are used in Bangla in their pure form are called *tatsama*. About half of the Bangla lexicon consists of Sanskrit *tatsama* words. A further quarter are words which come from Sanskrit but have undergone some changes or have been adapted to the phonological patterns of Bangla. These words are called *tadbhava*. These facts establish without doubt that the relationship between Bangla and Sanskrit is not one of cross-linguistic borrowing but one of direct descent.

These figures do not, however, reflect actual language use. Many *tatsama* words are archaic and so formal that they are not suitable for communication. It is estimated



that in actual use today the percentages for tatsama and tadbhava words are reversed. About 65% of the active vocabulary are tadbhava and only 25% tatsama words.

The rest of the Bangla lexicon is made up of so-called *deshi* (indigenous) and *bideshi* (foreign) words. Neighbouring languages like Hindi and Assamese have contributed to the Bangla lexicon. Through centuries of contact with and/or invasions by Turks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans and Europeans Bangla has absorbed words from all of these languages and made them an integral part of the language as it stands today. They are no longer felt to be foreign in any way by the ordinary speaker.

The lists below give an impression of where some everyday Bangla words come from. Bangla words are given phonetically, not in the transliteration which is used throughout the book.

#### deshi (indigenous)

alu	<i>potato</i>	khōj	<i>search</i>	ṭhæng	<i>thigh</i>
kala	<i>deaf</i>	cal/caul	<i>rice grain</i>	ḍhol	<i>dhhol, drum</i>
kuṛi	<i>twenty</i>	cingṛi	<i>shrimp</i>	peṭ	<i>belly</i>
khuki	<i>girl</i>	cula	<i>oven, stove</i>	boba	<i>mute</i>
khoka	<i>boy</i>	jhinuk	<i>shell</i>	maṭh	<i>field, open land</i>
khōca	<i>stab</i>	jhol	<i>gravy</i>	muṛi	<i>puffed rice</i>

#### Hindi

accha	<i>OK</i>	kahini	<i>story</i>	caca	<i>father's brother</i>
cahida	<i>demand</i>	ṛochondo	<i>like</i>	phaltu	<i>useless</i>

#### Arabic

akkel	<i>wisdom</i>	khæyal	<i>consideration</i>	phokir	<i>poor person</i>
alada	<i>separate</i>	gorib	<i>poor</i>	boi	<i>book</i>
ashol	<i>real</i>	jōbab	<i>answer</i>	bōdol	<i>exchange</i>
elaka	<i>area</i>	jōma	<i>collect</i>	baki	<i>remainder</i>
ojon	<i>weight</i>	jinish	<i>thing</i>	mōshla	<i>spice</i>
kōbor	<i>grave</i>	tarikh	<i>date</i>	shaheb	<i>sir</i>
khōbor	<i>news</i>	dunia	<i>world</i>	hishab	<i>calculation</i>
khali	<i>empty</i>	nōkol	<i>imitation</i>		

#### Persian

aoyaj	<i>sound</i>	aste	<i>slowly</i>	gōrom	<i>hot</i>
andaj	<i>guess</i>	kagoj	<i>paper</i>	cōshma	<i>glasses</i>
ayna	<i>mirror</i>	kharap	<i>bad</i>	cakri	<i>job</i>
aram	<i>comfort</i>	khub	<i>very</i>	cador	<i>blanket</i>

jayga	<i>place</i>	pārda	<i>curtain</i>	maja	<i>fun</i>
dām	<i>breath</i>	bād	<i>bad</i>	rasta	<i>road</i>
deri	<i>late</i>	bagan	<i>garden</i>	roj	<i>everyday</i>
dokan	<i>store</i>	bacca	<i>child</i>	shōsta	<i>cheap</i>

## Turkish

kāci	<i>scissors</i>	dada	<i>paternal grandfather</i>	baba	<i>father</i>
korma	<i>karma</i>	nani	<i>maternal grandmother</i>	baburci	<i>cook, chef</i>
çakmak	<i>sparkle</i>			begom	<i>lady</i>

## Portuguese

almari	<i>cupboard</i>	tamak	<i>tobacco</i>	balti	<i>bucket</i>
istri	<i>iron</i>	toyale	<i>towel</i>	behala	<i>violin</i>
kamij	<i>shirt</i>	perek	<i>nail</i>	botam	<i>button</i>
cabi	<i>key</i>	phita	<i>ribbon</i>	shaban	<i>soap</i>
janala	<i>window</i>	baranda	<i>verandah</i>		

## English

apish	<i>office</i>	ceyar	<i>chair</i>	bas	<i>bus</i>
injin	<i>engine</i>	ṭibhi	<i>TV</i>	biskut	<i>biscuit</i>
iskul	<i>school</i>	ṭebil	<i>table</i>	bænk	<i>bank</i>
iṣṭeshon	<i>station</i>	ṭeliphon	<i>telephone</i>	masṭar	<i>master</i>
kopi	<i>coffee</i>	ṭren	<i>train</i>	moṭor	<i>motor</i>
kap	<i>cup</i>	ḍaktar	<i>doctor</i>	rel	<i>rail</i>
kek	<i>cake</i>	pulish	<i>police</i>	sharṭ	<i>shirt</i>
gelash	<i>glass</i>	pæntṭ	<i>trousers</i>	hoṭel	<i>hotel</i>

Bangla has absorbed all these and many more foreign words easily into its vocabulary and has made them part of the language. They use the same classifiers and case endings as nouns derived from Sanskrit and ultimately enrich the language.

## 1.4 Sadhu bhasha

Bangla counts as a diglossic language. This means that the language has a high level used in formal writing and a low level for ordinary spoken language. The gap between these

two levels of Bangla was particularly visible and actively promoted in the 19th century when the so-called *sadhu bhasha* = *pure language* came to be used for literary writing.

Soon after the publication of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's first Bangla grammar (1778), this new style of literary writing emerged. Halhed had expressed the view that the Arabic and Persian vocabulary used in Bangla was having a detrimental effect on the language and that Bangla would be strengthened by a closer association with Sanskrit. The new literary style was taken up and developed by writers like Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, who felt that high literature needed a more elevated style of writing. The characteristics of the *sadhu bhasha* were a flowery style of writing, a highly Sanskritised vocabulary, fuller forms in pronouns and verb conjugation (see below) and a number of archaic postpositions. The style of writing was modelled on the Middle Bengali of the sixteenth century.

At the beginning of the 20th century the influence of *sadhu bhasha* started to wane. Writers felt that the gulf between the language they used in writing and their own spoken language was too big. They changed over to a simpler style of writing, the *calit bhasha colloquial language*. The *calit bhasha* was first seriously taken up by Pramatha Chaudhuri at the suggestion of Rabindranath Tagore in around 1914–15. Tagore himself changed over to *calit bhasha* in the course of writing his short stories and novels. While *calit bhasha* was at first also a particular style of writing, it paved the way for a closer link between written and spoken language. The so-called Standard Colloquial Bengali (SCB), based on the educated speech of Kolkata, gradually emerged from it.

*Sadhu bhasha* is not dealt with in this book but the differences in pronouns and in verb-formation are given below.

### **sadhu bhasha pronouns**

<b>nominative</b>	singular		plural	
1st ps	ami, mui	<i>I</i>	mora	<i>we</i>
2nd ps familiar	tumi	<i>you</i>	tomra	<i>you</i>
2nd ps intimate	tui	<i>you</i>	tora	<i>you</i>
2nd ps polite	apni	<i>you</i>	apnara	<i>you</i>
3rd ps inanimate near	iha	<i>this</i>	ihara	<i>they</i>
3rd ps inanimate far	uha	<i>that</i>	uhara	<i>they</i>
3rd ps inanimate neutral	taha	<i>that</i>	segulo	<i>they</i>
3rd ps animate	se	<i>he, she</i>	tahara	<i>they</i>
3rd ps honorific	tini	<i>he, she</i>	tāhara	<i>they</i>
<b>genitive</b>	singular		plural	
1st ps	amar	<i>my</i>	amadiger	<i>our</i>
2nd ps familiar	tomar	<i>your</i>	tomadiger	<i>your</i>

2nd ps intimate	tor	<i>your</i>	todiger	<i>your</i>
2nd ps polite	apnar	<i>your</i>	apnadiger	<i>your</i>
3rd ps near	ihar	<i>his/her</i>	ihadiger	<i>their</i>
3rd ps far	uhar	<i>his/her</i>	uhadiger	<i>their</i>
3rd ps neutral	tahar	<i>his/her</i>	tahadiger	<i>their</i>
3rd ps honorific	tāhar	<i>his/her</i>	tāhadiger	<i>their</i>

<b>objective</b>	singular		plural	
1st ps	amake	<i>me</i>	amadigôke	<i>us</i>
2nd ps familiar	tomake	<i>you</i>	tomadigôke	<i>you</i>
2nd ps intimate	toke	<i>you</i>	todigôke	<i>you</i>
2nd ps polite	apnake	<i>you</i>	apnadigôke	<i>you</i>
3rd ps ord near	ihake	<i>him/her</i>	ihadigôke	<i>them</i>
3rd ps ord far	uhake	<i>him/her</i>	uhadigôke	<i>them</i>
3rd ps ord neutral	tahake	<i>him/her</i>	tahadigôke	<i>them</i>
3rd ps honorific	tāhake	<i>him/her</i>	tāhadigôke	<i>them</i>

**locative**

1st ps	amaÿ, amate	<i>in me</i>
2nd ps familiar	tomaÿ, tomate	<i>in you</i>
2nd ps intimate	tote	<i>in you</i>
2nd ps polite	apnate	<i>in you</i>
3rd ps ord near	ihate	<i>in it/him/her</i>
3rd ps ord far	uhate	<i>in it/him/her</i>
3rd ps ord neutral	tahate	<i>in it/him/her</i>
3rd ps honorific	tāhate	<i>in him/her</i>

**sadhu bhasha verb conjugation**

Here is a sample verb chart for the contemporary verb *lekha* (then *likha*) *write*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	se	apni,tini
present simple	likhi	likhô	likhis	likhe	likhen
present continuous	likhitechhi	likhitechô	likhitechis	likhiteche	likhitechen
present perfect	likhiÿachi	likhiÿachô	likhiÿachis	likhiÿache	likhiÿachen
future	likhibô	likhibe	likhibi	likhibe	likhiben
past simple	likhiam	likhile	likhili	likhilô	likhilen
past continuous	likhitechiam	likhitechile	likhitechili	likhitechilô	likhitechilen
past perfect	likhiÿachiam	likhiÿachile	likhiÿachili	likhiÿachilô	likhiÿachilen
past habitual	likhitam	likhite	likhitis	likhitô	likhiten

verbal noun (VN)	ba verbal noun	imperfective participle (IP)	perfective participle (PP)	conditional participle (CP)
likha	likhba	likhite	likhiya	likhile

and here are some lexical comparisons:

	sadhu	calit		sadhu	calit
<i>boy</i>	putrô	chele	<i>tree</i>	bîkşô	gach
<i>give</i>	dan kôra	deoya	<i>take</i>	loya	neoya
<i>hot</i>	tôptô	gôrôm	<i>bite</i>	dômşôn	kamôr
<i>eye</i>	côkşu	cokh	<i>arrival</i>	agômôn	asa
<i>moon</i>	côndrô	cād	<i>hand</i>	hōstô	hat
<i>wheel</i>	côkru	caka	<i>towards</i>	prôti	dike
<i>goose, swan</i>	hômşô	hās	<i>except, without</i>	byætireke	çara
<i>light</i>	iyoti	alo	<i>near</i>	sônnidhane	kache
<i>snake</i>	sôrpô	sap	<i>with</i>	sôhit	sônge

sadhu	calit	
amadigôke dan kôriyachen	amader diyechen	<i>he gave us</i>

## 1.5 Bengali linguistics

In 1778, *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* was written by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, a British philologist. The title of the book suggests that the name Bengali for the language was not yet entirely fixed. It was for the production of this book that the first printing press was developed for writing Bangla. The New Bengali period starts around this time.

Earlier in the 18th century, between 1734 and 1742 Portuguese missionaries, notably Manuel da Assumpção, compiled a Bengali-Portuguese dictionary with some grammar notes. It was written in Portuguese and published in Portugal, so it was much less known in India than Halhed's book. Assumpção's interpretation of Bengali has been criticised for being overly influenced by his reliance on Greek and Latin language structures.

Halhed, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of Sanskrit for the structures of Bangla. This spurred Bengali linguists into action and possibly also had an influence on the promotion of the sadhu bhasha for literary purposes at the end of the 18th century.

The production of grammars in the first half of the 19th century quickly divided into two distinct categories: books written in English with the aim to help foreigners

learn the language, and those written in Bangla by Bengali writers for use as school texts. Prominent among the English grammarians were William Carey (1761–1834), Graves Chamney Haughton, William Yates and John Wenger. The first Bengali to write a grammar in 1826 was the social reformer Rammohun Roy (1772–1833).

The second half of the 19th century saw a great increase in the numbers of Bangla grammar books. Of special significance was Shyamacharan Sarker's (1814–82) *Introduction to the Bengalee Language* (1850) and the Bangla version *Bangala byakoron* (1852). Shyamacharan followed Rammohun in focusing on the Bangla language rather than on its Sanskritic origins. Shyamacharan was the first to discuss the local dialects of Bangla and the presence of foreign loan words. Other grammars were written by Nandakumar Roy (1852), Rajendralal Mitra (1862), Krishnakishore Banerji (1877) and Haraprasad Shastri (1882).

The Bangla word “byakoron” (*grammar*) refers to a field of study which differs considerably from what we today understand grammar to be. Not only does it focus mainly on phonology and morphology but it is almost exclusively historic, tracing developments from earlier to later forms of the language, and it is largely canonical. The patterns and rules of the language, identified and fixed in the second half of the 19th century, have found their way into the school syllabi and have remained largely unchanged until today. The teaching of “byakoron” to Bengali school children is rarely anything more than an acquisition of difficult terminology and an exercise in memorisation.

Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay produced his momentous and ground-breaking *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* in 1926. This opus constitutes the most comprehensive systematic analysis of the development of Bangla phonology and morphology even to the present day but it contains little syntax and even less semantics.

Modern Bengali linguists (from about the 1970s onwards) have taken a giant leap away from traditional, historic, Sanskrit-oriented grammar and have adopted Western formal grammar models to test the structures of Bangla. This has resulted in a considerable body of impressive work on particular features of Bangla, which however is highly technical in its language and largely inaccessible to non-linguists.

Some of the important Bengali linguists of the last two decades are Humayun Azad, Probal Dasgupta, Pabitra Sarkar, Swarocish Sarker, Abul Kalam Manjoor Morshed, Animesh Kanti Pal, Uday Narayan Singh, Monsur Musa, Maniruzzaman, Mahbulul Haque, Rashida Begum.

The Bangla Academies in Dhaka and in Kolkata have just published a new standardised grammar as a joint effort (Promito bangla bhashar byakoron, published January 2012) and it is hoped that collaborative efforts of this kind will encourage and inspire future linguists to work on this language.

CHAPTER 2

# Sound system

## 2.1 Phonemes

Before we go into the details of individual sounds, here is an overview of how and where in the mouth the sounds of Bangla are produced. The positioning of consonants in the mouth also gives us a way to classify these sounds.

### Bangla phonemes

#### vowels

	front		mid			back	
high	i						u
high mid		e				o	
low mid			æ		ɔ		
low				a			

#### consonants

front of the mouth \_\_\_\_\_ back of the mouth

		labial	dental	retroflex (cerebral)	palatal	velar	post-velar
plosives (stops)							
voiceless							
	unaspirated	p	t	ʈ	c	k	
	aspirated	ph	th	ʈʰ	ch	kh	
voiced							
	unaspirated	b	d	ɖ	j	g	
	aspirated	bh	dh	ɖʱ	jh	gh	
nasals		m	n	ɳ	ɲ	ŋ (ɳ, ɳ̃)	
flaps			r	ɽ			
lateral			l				
spirants			s	ʃ	ʃ		h

**stops (plosives) only** – this is an extract of the previous chart, arranged according to the Bangla alphabet

	voiceless		voiced	
	unaspirated	aspirated	unaspirated	aspirated
velar	k	kh	g	gh
palatal	c	ch	j	jh
cerebral	ʈ	ʈh	ɖ	ɖh
dental	t	th	d	dh
labial	p	ph	b	bh

The individual phonemes of Bangla are given in the following order:

- 2.1.1 single vowels (listed by their position in the mouth)
- 2.1.2 vowel sequences
- 2.1.3 nasalised vowels
- 2.1.4 semivowel (glide)
- 2.1.5 consonants
- 2.1.6 consonant sequences (clusters)

The phonetic transcript in this section represents the sounds of Bangla. For the remainder of the book a transliteration is used which reflects the spellings.

### 2.1.1 Single vowels

**Note on pronunciation:** Bangla vowels are pure single sounds which can be open (short) as in *pat*, *pet*, *pit*, *pot*, *put* or closed (long).

Bangla has seven single vowel phonemes:

- /i/ i as in *bin*                      i: as in *seen*
- /e/ e as in *pen*                      e: as in French *chez*
- /æ/ æ as in *can* (Southern English accent)
- /a/ a as in *samba*                      a: as in *llama*
- /ɔ/     as in *pot*
- /o/     as in French *mot*
- /u/ u as in *put*                      u: as in *rude*

The variation between i and i:, e and e:, a and a:, u and u: is distributional, i.e. in monosyllabic words the vowel is lengthened, e.g. a:m *stuttering* but a:m *mango*. This does not affect the phonemic status of these vowels.



/i/ a high front vowel which can be either short as in *kintu but* or long as in *di:n day*.

/i/ can form minimal pairs with /e/ (*ki: what – ke: who*) or /a/ (*di:n day – da:n gift*) but the distinction between i and i: is purely distributional. /i/ can appear at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of words:

initial	medial	final
iti <i>end</i>	ciṭhi <i>letter</i>	tumi <i>you</i>

/e/ a mid-high front vowel which can be open as in *kena buy* or closed as in *ke: who*.

/e/ can form minimal pairs with /a/ (*cepe having suppressed – cape under pressure*). The distinction between e and e: is distributional.

initial	medial	final
ekṭi <i>one</i>	cena <i>know</i>	mejhe <i>floor</i>

/æ/ a mid-low front open vowel as in *kænô why*. /æ/ forms minimal pairs with /e/ (*mæla fair – mela open*). It occurs in initial and medial position.

initial	medial
æk <i>one</i>	kæmon <i>how</i>

/a/ a low vowel which can be long as in *a:m mango* or short as in *badam nut*.

/a/ can form minimal pairs with /ɔ/ (*kal time – kɔl machine*). The difference between long and short /a/ is distributional. Monosyllabic words take long a: (*ma:l goods*), two-syllable words take the short vowel (*mala string*). /a/ can appear in all positions.

initial	medial	final
amar <i>mine</i>	bhalo <i>good</i>	mɔja <i>fun</i>

/ɔ/ a mid-low mid-back open vowel as in *pot*. *ɔla say, speak*, *ɔnna flood*. This sound represents one of the two possible pronunciations of the inherent vowel in Bangla. It forms minimal pairs with /a/ (*ɔla move – cala thatch*) and with /o/ (*mɔja fun – moja socks*). It can occur in initial and medial position.

initial	medial
ɔlpo <i>a little</i>	gɔlpo <i>story</i>

/o/ a mid-high, closed, mid-back vowel as in French *mot*. *chôbi picture*, *moṭ total*, *môdhu honey*. This sound can be produced by either the inherent vowel ô or by o. It can form minimal pairs with /ɔ/ (*mon mind – mɔn maund*) and /u/ (*goṭ base, root – guṭ molasses*). Can occur in all positions.

initial	medial	final
oti <i>too much</i>	kobi <i>poet</i>	goto <i>last, previous</i>
ojon <i>weight</i>	bon <i>sister</i>	alo <i>light</i>

/u/ a high back vowel which can be pronounced either open (as in *put*): mukti *freedom* or closed (as in *food*): mu:kh *face*. It can contrast with /o/ tula *cotton* – tola *lift* and can appear in all positions. The distinction between open /u/ and closed /u:/ is not phonemic but distributional. This vowel can occur in all positions.

initial	medial	final
unun <i>oven</i>	kukur <i>dog</i>	goru <i>cow</i>

### 2.1.2 Vowel sequences

The following vowel sequences appear in Bangla.

vowel sequence	sound	English
i – i	dii	<i>give.1.PR.S</i>
i – e	niye	<i>take.PP</i>
i – a	kriya	<i>work</i>
i – o	priyo	<i>dear</i>
i – u	iyurop	<i>Europe</i>
e – i	ei, nei	<i>this, is absent</i>
e – e	meye	<i>girl</i>
e – a	kheyal	<i>care</i>
e – o	deor	<i>brother-in-law</i>
e – u	keu	<i>someone</i>
æ – e	næe	<i>take.3.PR.S</i>
a – i	jai	<i>go.1.PR.S</i>
a – o	dao	<i>give.2.PR.IMP</i>
a – u	kauke	<i>someone.OBJ</i>
a – y	khæe	<i>eat.3.PR.S</i>
ɔ – y	hɔe	<i>be.3.PR.S</i>
ɔ – o	hɔo	<i>be.2.PR.IMP</i>
o – i	boi	<i>book</i>
o – o	shoo	<i>lie down.2.PR.IMP</i>
o – u	bou	<i>wife</i>
o – y	dhoe	<i>wash.3.PR.S</i>
u – i	dui	<i>two</i>
u – e	dhue	<i>wash.PP</i>

u – a	cuallish	<i>forty-four</i>
u – o	shuor	<i>pig</i>

### 2.1.3 Nasalised vowels

Nasalisation is a distinctive feature in Bangla. Although it is impossible to produce minimal pairs for each vowel separately, all vowels in Bangla can be nasalised and there are plenty of minimal pairs to be found. Nasalisation as a whole is therefore a phonemic factor. /a/ is by far the most common vowel in Bangla to be nasalised.

Here are some examples for minimal pairs:

/bōti/	<i>curved knife</i>	/boṭi/	<i>pill</i>
/gā/	<i>village</i>	/ga/	<i>body</i>
/kāṭa/	<i>thorn</i>	/kaṭa/	<i>to cut</i>
/bādha/	<i>bind</i>	/badha/	<i>obstruction</i>
/āṭa/	<i>fix, stitch</i>	/aṭa/	<i>flour</i>
/khāra/	<i>sword</i>	/khaṛa/	<i>erect</i>
/kāda/	<i>weep</i>	/kada/	<i>clay</i>
/kāca/	<i>unripe, green</i>	/kaca/	<i>wash</i>

and here are some nasalisations with each vowel:

ī	īdur <i>rat</i> , shīri <i>stairs</i> , pīpra <i>ant</i> , hīcraṇo <i>drag</i>
ē	pāca <i>twist</i> , pēyaj <i>onion</i> , tētul <i>tamarind</i> , shāetshāet <i>damp</i>
ā	phāki <i>deception</i> , hāṭa <i>walk</i> , shātar <i>swimming</i> , dāraṇo <i>stand</i>
ō	pācashi <i>eighty-five</i> , gōd <i>gum</i> , shōpa <i>dedication</i>
ō	chōya <i>touch</i> , khōj <i>search</i> , jhōk <i>tendency</i> , dhōya <i>smoke</i>
ū	jhūki <i>risk</i> , kūkra <i>curly</i> , gūra <i>powder</i>

### 2.1.4 Semivowel/glide

ŷ which is derived from the consonant y is called ontostho ৓. It is used between vowels as a glide or semivowel.

ŷ has two different pronunciations, based on location in the mouth. In the following examples it is pronounced like the English y in *layer*:

di-ŷe, shi-ŷal, di-ŷo, me-ŷe, khe-ŷal, je-ŷo, bæ-ŷam, stha-ŷi, ga-ŷe, ma-ŷa, a-ŷo-to, a-ŷu, a-ŷo-jon, ho-ŷe, dhu-ŷe

Between o and a, u and a, u and o it is pronounced like the w in *lower*:

kha-o-ŷa (khaowa), de-o-ŷa (deowa), ju-ŷa (juwa),

In some words the pronunciation of ŷ is practically non-existent: shu-ŷor (shuor)

ŷ also occurs at the end of words following a vowel but without another vowel following. In these cases it forms a diphthong with the previous vowel and is pronounced more like e:

upaŷ = upae, næŷ = næe, daŷ = dae, shoŷ = shoe

ŷ never appears at the beginning of words.

### 2.1.5 Consonants

Voice and aspiration are two distinctive features in Bangla consonants. We distinguish:

- i. voiceless, unaspirated
- ii. voiceless, aspirated
- iii. voiced, unaspirated
- iv. voiced, aspirated

The systematic layout of the alphabet reminds us of these distinctions. What follows are the consonants with their phonemic features. For each consonant the transliteration is followed by a description of the sound.

The sounds are listed in the groups they form in the alphabet.

#### Velar plosives plus nasal

These sounds are similar to English.

symbol    sound

k	voiceless, unaspirated velar, k as in <i>asking</i>
kh	voiceless, aspirated velar, aspirated k as in <i>king</i>
g	voiced, unaspirated velar, g as in <i>good</i> , no aspiration
gh	voiced, aspirated velar, aspirated g: try: গ্ৰহ
ñ	velar nasal, ng as in <i>singer</i> or ngg as in <i>finger</i>

minimal pairs: k and kh: *kali ink* – *khali empty*, *kɔbor grave* – *khɔbor news*  
 g and gh: *ga body* – *gha wound*, *goṛa root, base* – *ghoṛa horse*

#### Palatal plosives plus nasal

symbol    sound

c	voiceless, unaspirated, as in <i>chap</i> with little aspiration
ch	voiceless, aspirated, as in <i>chap</i> with more aspiration
j	voiced, unaspirated, as in <i>jam</i>
jh	voiced, aspirated,
ñ	palatal nasal, pronounced as n

minimal pairs: c and ch: *capa press* – *chapa print*, *curi stealing* – *churi knife*  
 j and jh: *jal net* – *jhal spicy*, *jɔra pickle* – *jhɔra shed*

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### Retroflex (cerebral) plosives plus nasal

These sounds are not very different from English t and d but are produced further back in the mouth. The tongue is curled back and the underside of the tongue touches the hard palate. This should produce a slightly hollow or echoey sound.

symbol	sound
ʈ	voiceless, unaspirated retroflex
ʈʰ	voiceless, aspirated retroflex
ɖ	voiced, unaspirated retroflex
ɖ̆	retroflex flap
ɖʱ	voiced, aspirated retroflex, try: <i>dohol</i>
ɖʱ̆	aspirated, retroflex trilled flap
ɳ	pronounced n

minimal pairs: ʈ and ʈʰ: *ʈik tick* – *ʈik right, correct*, *paʈ jute* – *paʈʰ lesson*  
 ɖ and ɖʱ: *ɖaka call* – *ɖhaka cover*, *ɖala wicker-tray* – *ɖhala pour*  
 ɖ̆ and r: *ɖɔra fall* – *ɖɔra wear*, *kɔra harsh* – *kɔra do*

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### Dental plosives plus nasal

symbol	sound
t	voiceless, unaspirated dental
tʰ	voiceless, aspirated dental
d	voiced, unaspirated dental
dh	voiced, aspirated dental
n	dental nasal: n

minimal pairs: t and tʰ: *tama copper* – *thama stop*, *tala lock* – *thala plate*  
 d and dh: *dan gift* – *dhan paddy*, *dɔrshon seeing* – *dhɔrshon rape*

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### Bilabial plosives plus nasal

These are similar to English sounds.

symbol sound

p voiceless, unaspirated bilabial

ph voiceless, aspirated bilabial or velar fricative as in fun or German pff

b voiced, unaspirated bilabial

bh voiced, aspirated bilabial

m bilabial nasal

minimal pairs: p and ph: paṭa *plank* – phaṭa *burst*

perano *cross* – pherano *cause to return*

b and bh: bar *time* – bhar *weight*, bat *rheumatism* – bhat *rice*

### Semivowel, flap, lateral, sibilants, spirant

symbol sound

ŷ palatal or labial semivowel y or w as in *lawyer* or *lower*

r dental flap r

l dental lateral l, as in *luck*, at the front of the mouth

sh or s sibilant sh, as in *shine*

h spirant, h as in *hot*

minimal pairs: r and l: kar *whose* – kal *time*, raga *get angry* – laga *attach*

#### 2.1.6 Consonant clusters or sequences

Consonant sequences occur at the beginning or in the middle but not at the end of words. Bangla words which end in a consonant sequence will automatically be followed by the inherent vowel ô. The exception to this are some foreign words like port *port* or byænk *bank*. Only one example is given for each sequence.

Initial clusters:

kr kriya *work*

kl klantô *tired*

kṣ kṣôti (*pron: khoti*)

gr gram *village*

gl glani *weariness*

jñ jñæn (*pron gæn*) *wisdom*

ṭr ṭren *train*

tr tribhuj *triangle*

dr drutô *quick*

dhr dhruh *pole star*

pr prôcur *plenty*

pl	plabôn <i>flood</i>
br	brôtô <i>vow</i>
bhr	bhru <i>eyebrow</i>
ml	mlan <i>pale</i>
śr	śrôddha ( <i>pron sroddha</i> ) <i>admiration, respect</i>
śl	śliṣṭô ( <i>pron slishṭo</i> ) <i>connected, joined</i>
sk	skāndhō <i>shoulder</i>
sṭ	sṭeśôn ( <i>pron sṭeshon</i> ) <i>station</i> (This cluster only occurs in English words.)
sṭr	sṭriṭ <i>street</i>
st	stōr <i>layer</i>
str	strī <i>wife</i>
sth	sthan <i>place</i>
sn	snan <i>bath</i>
sp	spōṣṭô ( <i>pron spōshṭo</i> ) <i>clear</i>
sph	sphôṭik <i>crystal</i>
sr	srot <i>current</i>
hr	hras ( <i>pron hrash</i> ) <i>reduction</i>

Mid-word:

All initial sequences can also occur mid-word. In addition to them Bangla has the following sequences which occur only mid-word.

kk	cōkkôr <i>wheel, circle</i>
kt	mukti <i>freedom</i>
ks	baksô ( <i>pron baksho</i> ) <i>box</i>
gdh	mugdhô <i>fascination</i>
nk	cōnkô <i>maths</i>
ng	aṅgul <i>finger</i>
cc	bacca <i>child</i>
cch	iccha <i>wish</i>
jj	lōjja <i>embarrassment</i>
ñc	cōñcōl ( <i>pron cōncōl</i> ) <i>area</i>
ñj	geñji <i>vest</i>
ṭṭ	ṭhaṭṭa <i>mockery</i>
ḍḍ	aḍḍa <i>informal discussion group</i>
ṇt	ghōṇṭa <i>hour</i>
ṇṭh	kōṇṭhō <i>throat, voice</i>
ṇḍ	ṭhaṇḍa <i>cold</i>
tt	uttôr <i>north</i>
dd	uddesyô <i>purpose</i>

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ddh	siddhantô <i>decision</i>
db	udbignô <i>worried</i>
dbh	udbhôb <i>origin</i>
nṭ	pyæṭ <i>trousers</i> (this sequence occurs only in foreign words)
nt	śanti <i>peace</i>
ntr	môntri <i>minister</i>
nth	grônthô <i>book</i>
nd	mândô <i>bad</i>
ndr	tandra <i>sleep</i>
ndh	bândhô <i>closed</i>
nn	ranna <i>cooking</i>
nh	cinhô <i>sign</i>
pt	praptô <i>received</i>
pp	thappôṛ <i>slap, blow</i>
bd	śôbdô <i>word</i>
bdh	lubdhô <i>greedy</i>
bb	abba <i>father</i>
mp	kômpô <i>tremor</i>
mb	kômbôl <i>blanket</i>
mbh	sômbhôb <i>possible</i>
mm	amma <i>mother</i>
rk	târkô <i>argument</i>
rg	durgô <i>fortress, tower</i>
rj	arji <i>request</i>
rṭ	śarṭ <i>shirt</i>
rḍ	karḍ <i>card</i> (Both this and the previous sequence (rṭ) occur with lexical items derived from English.)
rt	artô <i>sick, distressed</i>
rth	ôrthô <i>meaning</i>
rd	sôrdi <i>cold, flu</i>
rdh	ôrdhek <i>half</i>
lp	ôlpô <i>a little</i>
ll	palla <i>strip</i>
śc	pôścim ( <i>pron</i> poshchim) <i>west</i>
şk, sk	pôrişkar ( <i>pron</i> porishkar), purôskar ( <i>pron</i> purôshkar) <i>prize</i>
şṭ	kôşṭô ( <i>pron</i> kôshṭô) <i>trouble</i>
şṭh	onuşṭhan <i>ceremony</i>
şṇ	uşṇô ( <i>pron</i> ushnô) <i>warm</i>
hm	brahmô <i>Brahman</i>



## 2.2 Syllable structure

A vowel can form a syllable on its own but consonants need an accompanying vowel. Where no vowel sign is written, the inherent vowel steps in but is often dropped at the end of words.

Single syllables can have the following sound sequences:

v = vowel, c = consonant,  $\hat{y}$  (semi-vowel, glide)

v	e <i>this</i>
vc	oṭh <i>rise.2I.PR.IMP</i>
v $\hat{y}$	a $\hat{y}$ <i>come.2I.PR.IMP</i>
cv	ba <i>or</i>
cvc	kan <i>ear</i>
cv $\hat{y}$	ca $\hat{y}$ <i>want.3.PR.S</i>
ccv	bhru <i>eyebrow</i>
cccv	stri <i>wife</i>
ccvc	praṇ <i>life</i>

Linking syllables: Clusters in the middle of words are a convenient way of linking one syllable to the next.

rɔk-to, shan-to, mish-ṭi, jɔn-gol, ṭhaṇ-ḍa

A single consonant in the middle of a word counts as the start of a new syllable, eg

gɔ-rom, tha-ma, be-shi, a-gun, ma-tha

When two vowels follow one another directly there are two options in writing:

- the second vowel will constitute a new syllable and be written as a full vowel, eg da-o, ke-u, du-i, ni-u
- the semivowel (glide)  $\hat{y}$  serves as the linking element, eg pri- $\hat{y}$ o, me- $\hat{y}$ e, ba- $\hat{y}$ u, o- $\hat{y}$ ala

Bangla words of more than four or five syllables are likely to be compounded of smaller units and contain pre- or suffixes or reduplications. Here are some examples of longer words:

pung-kha-nu-pung-kho *minutely*  
 pu-no-ruj-ji-bi-to *revived*  
 sthi-ti-stha-pɔ-ko-ta *elasticity*  
 ɔ-po-ri-bor-to-ni- $\hat{y}$ o-ta *constancy*  
 ɔn-o-dhi-kar-cɔr-ca *unlawful interference*  
 ut-tor-ou-po-ni-be-sho-bad *post-colonialism*

### 2.3 Vowel harmony

Vowel harmony is the principle of inertia applied to language in general and to the pronunciation of sounds in particular. It means that vowels in adjacent syllables have a tendency to move closer together so that less effort is needed to produce the sounds. A phonetic transcript is used in this section.

The process of vowel sounds moving closer together takes place slowly and is not entirely predictable but we can see its effect in word pairs where the following shifts take or have taken place:

- a. a preceding i pulls up a following a to e:  
mittha → mitthe *lie*, iccha → icche *wish*, hishab → hisheb *account*, bilat → bilet *abroad*, bidae → bidey *farewell*, jiggash → jiggesh *question*
- b. a preceding high vowel pulls a up to o:  
ghumano → ghumono *sleep*, jirano → jirono *rest*  
juta → juto *shoe*, buṛa → buṛo *old*, rupa → rupo *silver*
- c. a following high vowel pulls æ up to e:  
ækṭa but ekṭi *one*.CL and ekṭu *a bit*, khælaheli *playing*, ghæshaghēshi *crowding*
- d. following i pulls e up to i:  
lekha *write*.VN but likhi *write*.1.PR.S, cena *know*.VN but cini *know*.1.PR.S, meshamishi *socialising*
- e. following high vowel shifts the pronunciation of the inherent vowel up from ɔ to o  
dhōra hold.VN but dhori hold.1.PR.S, mōra die.VN but moru desert  
kōbe *when* but kobi *poet* and kobutor *pigeon*  
tōbe *but* but tobu *but*  
pōytallish *forty-five* but pōytrish *thirty-five*  
bōlaboli *conversation*
- f. a following i pulls o up to u: bojha *understand*.VN but bujhi *understand*.1.PR.S, kholakhuli *embrace*

On the basis of these forms it is not surprising that sadhu bhasha verb forms like giṽachi with their jumps from high to low vowels have settled into a medial form giṽechi or gechi.

- g. a following a pulls a high vowel down. The first form of each pair is an older version.

shikha → shekha *learn*, khuda → khoda *God*, bhula → bhola *forget*,  
 shuna → shona *hear*, khela → khæla *play*, dekha → dækha *see*,  
 piyaj → peyaj *onion*, biral → beral *cat*, shiyal → sheyal *fox*

Vowel mutation runs like a thread through much of the Bangla lexicon. It means that morphologically related words show a systematic change between adjacent vowels or vowels and diphthongs as follows. This applies to the entire verbal system but also to a considerable number of nouns and adjectives.

u – ou	mu:kh <i>mouth</i> – moukhik <i>verbal, oral</i> mu:l <i>root</i> – moulik <i>fundamental, basic</i> sundor <i>beautiful</i> – soundorjo <i>beauty</i> bhu:t <i>ghost</i> – bhoutik <i>ghostly</i> bhumi <i>land</i> – bhoumik <i>landlord</i> tu:l <i>balance</i> – toul <i>weight</i> guru <i>master</i> – gourob <i>glory, dignity</i>
o – u	jog <i>link</i> – jukto <i>linked</i> shosh <i>dryness</i> – shushko <i>dry</i> dosh <i>fault</i> – dusha <i>accuse</i> dol <i>swing</i> – duluni <i>rocking</i> khosh <i>delightful</i> – khushi <i>happy</i> rodh <i>obstruction</i> – ruddho <i>shut, closed</i>
ɔ – a	shɔhae <i>helper</i> – shahajjo <i>help</i> shɔbhab <i>nature</i> – shabhabik <i>natural</i> prɔthom <i>first</i> – prathomik <i>primary</i> rɔng <i>colour</i> – rangano <i>dye, colour</i> tap <i>heat</i> – tɔpto <i>hot</i>
a – e	ashe <i>he comes</i> – eshe <i>having come</i> majh <i>middle</i> – mehjo <i>middle-born</i> ʈak <i>baldness</i> – ʈeko <i>bald</i>
i – e	dishi – deshi <i>local</i> gilagela <i>swallow</i> nishiddho – nishedh – <i>forbidden</i>
i – oi	di:n <i>day</i> – doinik <i>daily</i> shikota <i>sand, gravel</i> – soikot <i>sandy beach, gulf</i> giri <i>mountain</i> – goirik <i>dyed with red ochre from the mountain</i>
e/æ – oi	sena <i>soldier</i> – soinik <i>soldier</i> deho <i>body</i> – doihik <i>physical</i>

cetona *consciousness* – coitonno *consciousness*  
 bækoron *grammar* – boiyakoron *grammatical*

## 2.4 Consonant assimilation

In the area of sound assimilation we can also find consonants merging, moving closer together or doubling, particularly in spoken language. Some of these are well-established, others border on slang:

bipod *danger* + jɔnok adj ending → bipɔjjɔnok *dangerous*  
 kut *bad* + sit *white* → kucchit *ugly*  
 dhormo < dhɔmmo *religion*  
 bɔɔ < bɔɔɔ *big*  
 kichu < kicchu *something*  
 shɔɔbai < shɔɔbbai *everybody*  
 shɔɔboneshe < shɔɔbboneshe  
 kādna < kannā *weeping*  
 jɔtodi:n < jɔddi:n *how long*, also jɔtodur < jɔddur *how far*  
 kagojɔɔtro < kagojɔɔttor *papers*  
 gɔɔpo < gɔppo *story*  
 shɔɔgo < shɔggo *heaven*  
 korcho < kɔcco *do.2.PR.C*

## 2.5 The inherent vowel

The inherent vowel presents two separate issues, firstly that of its presence or absence and secondly its pronunciation. There are few hard-and-fast rules for either but there are some regular patterns. The transliteration given in this book indicates the absence or presence as well as the pronunciation of the inherent vowel throughout, so the section below is purely for academic interest. As in the previous sections, the phonetic transcript given here represents sounds. The closed/long realisation of the inherent vowel is given as ô throughout the rest of the book to show its spelling. Here it is given as o to show its sound.

### 2.5.1 Presence or absence of the inherent vowel

- a. We can generally assume that the inherent vowel is pronounced **between** consonants that have no other vowel attached to them: g + r + m = gɔrom, ke + b + l = kebol, b + la = bɔla etc.

There are, however, some words where two consonants follow one another directly without (a) forming a conjunct or (b) allowing the inherent vowel between them, eg cakri, ajke, shamne, capkan, aṭkano, lagsoi and in conjugated verb forms korbo, boshlen etc. These words contain distinct and separate morphological units which resist the forming of conjuncts.

- b. There are three indicators that the inherent vowel is **not** pronounced:
- i. ṁ (onushor), pronounced ng never has a vowel after it: bṛong, shutorang, kingba, mimangsha, shṅgbad
  - ii. ʔ (khṅḍo ʔ) which appears at the end of words and syllables and stops the inherent vowel from being pronounced: pṛshcat, ʔrthat, hṅṭhat, utshob
  - iii. hasanta. This symbol is optionally attached underneath consonants where the inherent vowel might otherwise be pronounced. It is not frequently used: hoshcinho *hasanta*, udbhranto *confused*, shekspiyar *Shakespeare*. Since this is purely a graphical convention, it is not dealt with in this book.

The inherent vowel is normally **not** pronounced at the end of words after single consonants. Here are some examples of one-, two- and three-syllable words.

ḍak, nṅkh, jug, megh, rṅg, kac, mach, kaj, majh, moṭ, maṭh, der, bhat, pṅth, chad, dudh, din, jhol, laph, khub, labh, prem, ghṛ, lal, dṅsh, shesh, mash, golap, bīral, peyaj, ʔntor, kuṛal, bisram, kukur, chagol, onubhṅb, protirodh, dhonnobad, mṅnggolbar etc

The inherent vowel is pronounced:

- c. when a word ends in a conjunct: porjonto, kṛmo, shṅpno, shanto, rṅkto, gṅlpo, patro, kṅmpo, rikto

The only regular exception to this are foreign words like eyarport, park, kaṅṅonment, riport, pṅent, lanch.

- d. after a final h: deho, sneho, shingho, shṅdeho, prodaho, shṅho, dṅho
- e. after (rḥ): gaṛho, driṛho, muṛho, prouṛho but ashaṛh
- f. after ŷ preceded by i, u or e: priṅyo, jatiṅyo, proṅyoniṅyo, bidheṅyo, agneṅyo
- g. when the final consonant is preceded by a combination with (ri) ṛ: bṛisho, mṛigo, ghṛito, mṛito
- h. when the final consonant is preceded by ḥ or ṁ: dukho, shingho, mangsho
- i. in noun- or verb-derived adjectives or adverbs ending in t

likhito, ahṅto, bibahito, niscito, pṅtito, jibito, cintito, adrito, sṅmbhṅbṅto, nṅto, bisheshṅto, sthito

- j. in the following very common adjectives, quantifiers, conjunctions and question words (this list is not exhaustive): *choṭo*, *bṛo*, *bhalo*, *gṛto*, *kṛto*, *æto*, *tṛto*, *jæno*, *ṛthoco*, *kæno*

*m + t* and *ka + l* both have double interpretations:

*mṛto* is a postposition meaning *like* – *mṛt* is a noun meaning *opinion*

*kalo* is an adjective meaning *black* – *kal* is a noun meaning *time, season*

- k. in comparative and superlative adjective forms

*priyotṛmo*, *drutotṛro*, *shṛhojjotṛro*, *gurutṛro*

- l. in the following verb forms (this applies to all verbs)

1st person future tense:

eg *jabo*, *debo*, *korbo*, *likhbo*, *thakbo* etc

2nd person (fam) simple present, present continuous, present perfect:

eg *kṛo*, *lekho*, *phælo*, *thako*, *korcho*, *korecho*, *khelcho*, *khelecho*, *jaccho*, *giyecho*, *gecho* etc

3rd person (ord) simple past, past continuous, past perfect, past habitual:

eg *chilo*, *gælo*, *dilo*, *khacchilo*, *namchilo*, *korechilo*, *bhalobeshechilo*, *bolto*, *bhabto*, *calato*

### 2.5.2 Pronunciation

The pronunciation of the inherent vowel fluctuates between open *ɔ* and closed *o*.<sup>1</sup>

Here are some of the regular patterns:

- a. In words of two syllables with two inherent vowels, the first inherent vowel is pronounced *ɔ*, the second *o*.

<i>khṛbor</i>	<i>news</i>	<i>shṛhor</i>	<i>town</i>
<i>gṛrom</i>	<i>hot</i>	<i>shṛkol</i>	<i>all</i>
<i>ṛntor</i>	<i>inside</i>	<i>kṛlom</i>	<i>pen</i>
<i>bhṛbon</i>	<i>residence</i>	<i>mṛto</i>	<i>like</i>
<i>gṛto</i>	<i>last</i>	<i>nṛrok</i>	<i>hell</i>
<i>shṛgo</i>	<i>heaven</i>	<i>nṛrom</i>	<i>soft</i>

1. Bengali scholars are still debating whether the closed pronunciation of the inherent vowel (*ô*) is in fact identical to that of /*o*/ or whether the sound falls somewhere between /*ɔ*/ and /*o*/. If it turns out that there are three distinct sounds we will need another phonetic symbol /*ô*/ for the closed pronunciation of the inherent vowel.

ɬkʰon	<i>then</i>	ʃɔŋɡɡol	<i>jungle</i>
dhɔmɔk	<i>rebuff</i>	ɬɔkʰol	<i>skill, knowledge</i>
ʃhɔrol	<i>honest</i>	ɬɔŋɬo	<i>rod, pole</i>

The inherent vowel is pronounced as closed o:

- b. in **all** the above instances (c to l) when the inherent vowel is the final sound in a word.
- c. when the following syllable contains an i or an u:

kobi, chobi, probhu, bhakti, goli, dhoni, shoru, modhu, bondhu, koṭhin, shonibar, robibar

This also affects the following prefixes:

proti-, oti-, onu-, obhi-, pori-

Note however that the negative prefixes অ and অন are pronounced ɔ, irrespective of what follows them:

ɔ-niyom, ɔ-niscito, ɔn-iccha, ɔn-upojukto, ɔn-uposthit

- d. when preceded by a conjunct with r
  - pro, porisrom, hrossho, agroho, ɔgrogoti, mɔntrona
- e. when followed by kʃ: lokkho, lokkhyo, mokkhika, bokkho, dokkho, okkhor
- f. when followed by a conjunct with jophola

bonna, shotto, ɔbossho, ɔhossho, shossho, rommo

It is clear from these examples that the pronunciation of the inherent vowel depends on the environment it occurs in. The distinction between ɔ and o however, is phonemic:

mɔja	<i>fun</i>	moja	<i>sock</i>
ʃɔr	<i>fever</i>	ʃor	<i>strength, power</i>
ɬol	<i>group</i>	dol	<i>swing</i>
ɬɔsh	<i>ten</i>	dosh	<i>fault</i>

## CHAPTER 3

# The Bengali script

Bangla/Bengali has its own script which is related to but distinct from the Devanagari script used for Hindi, Nepali, Sanskrit and other Indian languages. It is written from left to right, does not distinguish lower and upper case letters, and is characterized by a distinctive horizontal line running along the tops of the letters to link them together.

The crucial difference between the Bangla script and the Roman system of writing is the way the letters are arranged with one another. While in European languages we have consonants and vowels following one another as individual letters, the Bangla script is syllabic. This means that each consonant has a vowel attached to it and the two together form a syllabic unit. This also explains why Bangla vowels have two symbols each, a full vowel which forms its own syllable and a vowel sign which is attached to consonants.

When a consonant appears without a visible vowel attachment, the first vowel of the alphabet, i.e. the inherent vowel, steps in.

The Bangla script has eleven vowels, 39 consonants and a great number of conjunct letters.

The symbols used in the chart below represent the transliteration used in this book.

### Alphabetical order of letters

The arrangement of letters in the Bangla alphabet is remarkably systematic. The vowels come before the consonants. The consonants are arranged as follows: (1) plosives (stops) in the order (i) voiceless, unaspirated (ii) voiceless, aspirated (iii) voiced, unaspirated (iv) voiced, aspirated. (2) nasals are added at the end of the row of the stops they go with. (3) semivowels, flaps, laterals, sibilants and spirant.

অ, া	আ, া	ই, ি	ঈ, ি
উ, ি	ঊ, ি	ঋ, ি	
এ, ি	ঐ, ি	ও, ি	ঔ, ি

ং	ম	ঃ	হ	ঁ	ঁ
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ক	k	খ	kh	গ	g	ঘ	gh	ঙ	ṅ
চ	c	ছ	ch	জ	j	ঝ	jh		ñ
ট	ṭ	ঠ	ṭh	ড	ḍ	ঢ	ḍh	ণ	ṇ
ত	t	থ	th	দ	d	ধ	dh	ন	n
প	p	ফ	ph	ব	b	ভ	bh	ম	m
য	y	য়	ṃ	র	r	ল	l		
শ	ś	ষ	ṣ	স	s	হ	h		

and here are the numbers in Bangla

১	1	২	2	৩	3	৪	4	৫	5	৬	6	৭	7	৮	8	৯	9	০	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

### Spellings and sounds

This chart gives both the standard transliteration (TL) and the sound each letter produces. A colon: indicates a long or closed pronunciation of vowels. ɔ (an open o sound as in English *hot*) is given as the transliteration for the inherent vowel and is also one of the two sounds it produces. con = consonant

vowels		TL	sound	TL	sound	TL	sound	TL	sound
অ	ɔ	আ, ɔ	a	ই, ি	i	ঈ, ি	i, i:	ঐ, ি	i, i:
উ	u, u:	উ, ি	ū	ঋ, ি	r	ঊ, ি	rī	ঋ, ি	ou
এ, ঐ	e, æ	ঐ, ঐ	oi	ও, ঐ	o	ঔ, ঐ	o	ঔ, ঐ	ou
consonants									
TL	sound	TL	sound	TL	sound	TL	sound	TL	sound
ক	k	খ	kh	গ	g	ঘ	gh	ঙ	ṅ
চ	tʃ	ছ	tʃ+h	জ	j	ঝ	jh	ঞ	ṅ
ট	t	ঠ	tʰ	ড	d	ঢ	dʰ	ণ	ṇ
ত	t	থ	tʰ	দ	d	ধ	dʰ	ন	n
প	p	ফ	ph, f	ব	b	ভ	bʰ	ম	m
য	j	য়	y	র	r	ল	l		
শ	ʃ	ষ	ʃ	স	s	হ	h		
additional symbols									
ৗ	ṅ	৘	h	৙	~	৚	TL sound	৛	TL sound
ড়	t	ঢ়	v	৞	~	য়	r	ৠ	rʰ

## positioning of vowels

full vowel	vowel sign	pronounced	position	demo	translit
অ	– (inherent)	ɔ, o	no vowel sign is written	ক-	k
আ	া	a	after the consonant	কা	ka
ই	ি	i, i:	before the consonant	কি	ki
ঈ	ী	i, i:	after the consonant	কী	kī
উ	ু	u, u:	underneath the consonant	কু	ku
ঊ	ূ	u, u:	underneath the consonant	কূ	kū
ঋ	্	ri	underneath the consonant	ক্	kr
এ	ে	e, æ	before the consonant	কে	ke
ঐ	ৈ	oi	before the consonant	কৈ	koi
ও	ে conা	o	around the consonant	কো	ko
ঔ	ে conী	ou	around the consonant	কৌ	kou

The names of the letters and additional symbols.

## vowels

অ	অ	ɔ			
আ	আ	a	া	আ-কার	a-kar
ই	ব্রহ্ম ই	hrɔsvô i	ি	ব্রহ্ম ই-কার	hrɔsvô i-kar
ঈ	দীর্ঘ ঈ	dīrghô ī	ী	দীর্ঘ ঈ-কার	dīrghô ī-kar
উ	ব্রহ্ম উ	hrɔsvô u	ু	ব্রহ্ম উ-কার	hrɔsvô u-kar
ঊ	দীর্ঘ ঊ	dīrghô ū	ূ	দীর্ঘ ঊ-কার	dīrghô ū-kar
ঋ	ঋ	ṛ	্	ঋ-কার	ṛ-kar

এ	এ	e	ে	এ-কার	e-kar
ঐ	ঐ	oi	ৈ	ঐ-কার	oi-kar
ও	ও	o	ো া	ও-কার	o-kar
ঔ	ঔ	ou	ৌ	ঔ-কার	ou-kar

### consonants

Most consonants are called by their sound with the inherent vowel following (ক, khɑ, গ) but some have descriptive names to distinguish them from one another:

ক kɑ, খ khɑ, গ gɑ, ঘ ghɑ

ঙ উঁয়ো ũyo (pronounced ũo)

চ cɑ, ছ chɑ, জ বর্গীয় জ bɔrgiýô jɑ, ঝ jhɑ

ইঁয়ো iyo

ট tɑ, ঠ tɑ, ড dɑ, ঢ ðɑ, ঢ dhɑ, ঢ় rɦɑ

ণ মূর্ধন্য ণ murdhônýô ñɑ

ত দন্ত্য ত dɑntyô tɑ, থ খণ্ড থ khɑᅇᅇô tɑ, থ thɑ, দ dɑ, ধ dhɑ

ন দন্ত্য ন dɑntyô nɑ

প pɑ, ফ phɑ, ব bɑ, ভ bhɑ, ম mɑ

য অন্তঃস্থ য ɑntɔᅇsthô yɑ (pronounced j)

য় অন্তঃস্থ য ɑntɔᅇsthô ɔ (pronounced y)

র rɑ, ল lɑ

শ তালব্য শ talôbyô śɑ, ষ মূর্ধন্য ষ murdhônýô śɑ, স দন্ত্য স dɑntyô sɑ, হ hɑ

### additional symbols

ঁ	m	অনুস্বর	ônusvôr			র	র-ফলা	rɔphɔla
ঃ	ᅇ	বিসর্গ	bisɔrgô			্	রেফ	reph
্	~	চন্দ-বিন্দু	cɑndrôbindu			্য	য-ফলা	yɔphɔla

## conjuncts

When two (or more) consonants come together without an intervening inherent vowel, they are written as conjunct letters. Many of the common conjunct letters have symbols which do not reveal their components in their shape. Others are easily recognisable. Below is a list of the common conjuncts in Bangla with their component parts. There is now a move in both West Bengal and Bangladesh to simplify conjunct letters by simply writing the component parts, eg instead of **ক্ৰ** for **ক** (k) + **ত** (t) some modern books write **কত** from which the two components can easily be recognised. However, Bengali schoolchildren still need to learn the original (and often more elegant) forms in order to read older texts.

ক + ত (k + t) = <b>ক্ৰ</b> (kt)	মুক্তি mukti
ক + র (k + r) = <b>ক্র</b> (kr)	শুক্ৰবাবৰ śukrôbar
ক + ষ (k + ṣ) = <b>ক্ৰ্ষ</b> (kṣ)	অপেক্ষা opekṣa
ঙ + ক (ñ + k) = <b>ক্ঙ</b> (nk)	অক্ঙ onkô
ঙ + গ (ñ + g) = <b>ক্ঙগ</b> (ñg)	সক্ঙে soñge
চ + চ (c + c) = <b>চচ</b> (cc)	বাক্চা bacca
চ + ছ (c + ch) = <b>চছ</b> (cch)	ইছা iccha
জ + জ (j + j) = <b>জ্জ</b> (jj)	লজ্জা ljja
জ + ণ (j + ñ) = <b>জ্জ্ণ</b> (jñ)	বিজ্জ্ণান bijñan
+ চ (ñ + c) = <b>ক্ণচ</b> (ñc)	অক্ণচ onñcxol
+ জ (ñ + j) = <b>ক্ণজ</b> (ñj)	গেক্ণজ ge ñji
ট + ট (ṭ + ṭ) = <b>ট্টি</b> (ṭṭ)	ঠাট্টি ṭhaṭṭa
ণ + ট (ṇ + ṭ) = <b>ণ্টি</b> (ṇṭ)	ঘণ্টি ghaṇṭa
ণ + ঠ (ṇ + ṭh) = <b>ণ্ঠ</b> (ṇṭh)	কণ্ঠ kaṇṭhô
ণ + ড (ṇ + ḍ) = <b>ণ্ড়</b> (ṇḍ)	ঠাণ্ড়া ṭhaṇḍa
ত + ত (t + t) = <b>ত্ৰ</b> (tt)	উত্ৰ uttôr
ত + র (t + r) = <b>ত্র</b> (tr)	মাত্র matrô
দ + দ (d + d) = <b>দ্দ</b> (dd)	উদ্দেশ্য uddesyô
দ + ধ (d + dh) = <b>দ্ধ</b> (ddh)	যুদ্ধ yuddhô
দ + ব (d + v) = <b>দ্ব</b> (dv)	দ্বন্দ্ব dvandvô
দ + ভ (d + bh) = <b>দ্ব্ভ</b> (dbh)	অদ্ব্ভ adbhut
ন + ত (n + t) = <b>ন্ত</b> (nt)	অন্তর ontôr
ন + ত + র (n + t + r) = <b>ন্ত্র</b> (ntr)	মন্ত্ৰী monṭrī

ন + থ (n + th) = হ্ণ (nth)	গ্রহ্ণ grônthô
ন + দ (n + d) = ন্দ nd	মন্দ mândô
ন + ধ (n + dh) = ঙ্ধ ndh	অঙ্ধ aŋdhô
ন + ন (n + n) = ন্ন (nn)	ভিন্ন bhinnô
প + ত (p + t) = প্ত (pt)	ত ত্প্তô
প + প (p + p) = প্প (pp)	গহ্ণ gôppô
প + র (p + r) = প্রা (pr)	প্রাণ praṅ
ব + দ (b + d) = ব্দ (bd)	শব্দ śabdô
ব + ধ b + dh) = ব্ধ (bdh)	লুব্ধ lubdhô
ম + প (m + p) = ম্প (mp)	কম্প kômpô
ম + ভ (m + bh) = ম্ভ (mbh)	সম্ভব sômbhob
র + ক (r + k) = র্ক (rk)	তর্ক tarkô
র + ত (r + t) = র্ত (rt)	মূর্তি mûrti
শ + চ (ś + c) = শ্চ (śc)	পশ্চিম pôścim
ষ + ট (ṣ + ṭ) = ষ্ট (ṣṭ)	মিষ্টি miṣṭi
ষ + ঠ (ṣ + ṭh) = ষ্ঠ (ṣṭh)	শ্রেষ্ঠ śreṣṭhô
ষ + ণ (ṣ + ṅ) = ষ্ণ (ṣṅ)	উষ্ণ uṣṅô
স + ক (s + k) = স্ক (sk)	স্কুল skul
স + ত (s + t) = স্ত (st)	রা † rasta
স + ত + র (s + t + r) = স্ত্র (str)	মিস্ত্র mistri
স + থ (s + th) = স্ঠ (sth)	ব্যবস্থা bybôstha
স + ব (s + v) = স্ভ (sv)	স্বর্গ svargô
হ + ন (h + n) = হ্ন (hn)	চিহ্ন cihnô
হ + ম (h + m) = হ্ম (hm)	ব্রহ্ম brôhmô

### consonant vowel combinations

গ + উ (g + u) = গু (gu)	গুহা guha
ত + র + উ (t + r + u) = ত্রু (tru)	ত্রুটি truti
ন + ত + উ (n + t + u) = ত্তু	কিন্তু kintu
র + উ (r + u) = রু (ru)	রুটি ruti
র + উ (r + ū) = রূ (rū)	রূপা rūpa
শ + উ (ś + u) = শু (śu)	শুক্ৰবার śukrôbar

স + ত + উ (s + t + u) = স্ত (stu) প্রস্তুত prôstut	
হ + উ (h + u) = হু (hu) বা হু (huh)	
হ + ঝ (h + r̥) = হ্র (hr̥)	হ্রদয় hr̥dôy, pronounced hridôy

In order for readers to see the Bangla script in continuity, here is a passage about the start of the rainy season by Sri Pramath Choudhuri. The transliteration, gloss and translation of this passage are given under No 3 in Chapter 10.

বর্ষা শ্রী প্রমথ চৌধুরী

আজ সকালে ঘুম থেকে উঠে দেখি যে, যদিকে যতদূর দৃষ্টি যায় সমগ্র আকাশ বর্ষায় ভরে গিয়েছে। মাথার উপর থেকে অবিরাম অবিরল অবিচ্ছিন্ন বৃষ্টির ধারা পড়ছে। সে ধারা এত সূক্ষ্ম নয় যে চোখ এড়িয়ে যায়, অথচ এত স্থূল ও নয় যে তা চোখ জুড়ে থাকে। আর কানে আসছে তার একটানা আওয়াজ, সে আওয়াজ কখনো মনে হয় নদীর কুলুধ্বনি, কখনো মনে হয় তা পাতার মর্মর। আসলে তা একসঙ্গে ও দুইই, কেন না আজকের দিনে জলের স্বর ও বাতাসের স্বর দুই মিলে-মিশে এক সুর হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে।

এমন দিনে মানুষের মন অন্যমনস্ক হয় তার কারণ তার সকল মন তার চোখ আর কানে এসে ভর করে। আমাদের এই চোখ পোড়ানো আলোর দেশে বর্ষার আকাশ আমাদের চোখে কি যে অপূর্ব সিঁগু প্রলোপ মাখিয়ে দেয় তা বাঙালি মাত্রেই জানে। আজকের আকাশ দেখে মনে হয়, ছায়ার রঙের কোনো পাখির পালক দিয়ে বর্ষা তাকে আগাগোড়া মুড়িয়ে দিয়েছে, তাই তার স্পর্শ আমাদের চোখের কাছে এত নরম, এত মোলায়েম।

তার পর চেয়ে দেখি গাছপালা মাঠঘাট সবারই ভিতর যেন একটা নূতন প্রাণের হিল্লোল বয়ে যাচ্ছে। সে প্রাণের আনন্দে নারকেল গাছগুলো সব দাঁড়িয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে দুলছে, আর তাদের মাথার ঝাঁকড়া চুল কখনো-বা এলিয়ে পড়ছে, কখনো-বা জড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে। আর পাতার চাপে যেসব গাছের ডাল দেখা যায় না, সেসব গাছের পাতার দল এ ওর গায়ে ঢলে পড়ছে, পরস্পর কোলা-কুলি করছে ; কখনো-বা বাতাসের স্পর্শে বঁকেচুরে এমন আকার ধারণ করছে যে দেখলে মনে হয় বৃক্ষলতা সব পত্রপুটে ফাটকজল পান করছে। আর এই খামখেয়ালি বাতাস নিজের খুশিমত একবার পাঁচমিনিটের জন্যে লতাপাতাকে নাচিয়ে দিয়ে বৃষ্টির ধারাকে ছড়িয়ে দিয়ে আবার খেমে যাচ্ছে।

## CHAPTER 4

# Word formation

The following four sections present some of the typical features of word formation in Bangla as they appear to a present-day user of the language, without trying to go into any depth of historical development. For the history of morphological features of Bangla, Suniti Kumar Chatterji's *The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (1926) is still the most comprehensive and detailed work.

### 4.1 Prefixes and suffixes

Prefixes are regularly occurring attachments (bound morphemes) at the start of words which have a semantic impact on the words they precede. They can change the meaning of a word altogether, they can intensify the meaning or they can change the word class and so on. Suffixes do the same at the end of words but they are more systematically employed to change word classes. More on suffixes can be found in the following two sections.

#### 4.1.1 Prefixes

Bangla has a great number of prefixes. With many of them their semantic impact is quite varied but an awareness of them can be of considerable help in trying to work out the meaning of new words.

Here is a list from Rabindranath Tagore which shows the variability of Bangla prefixes. He accompanied this list with the statement: 'There is a race between a rule and its exceptions'.<sup>1</sup>

with the adjective গৱত *gone*

prefix ôdhi-	ôdhigৱত	<i>mastered, acquired</i>
prefix ônu-	ônugৱত	<i>obedient</i>
prefix ঞৱ-	ঞৱগৱত	<i>withdrawn</i>
prefix ঞব-	ঞবগৱত	<i>informed, aware</i>
prefix a-	agৱত	<i>just arrived</i>

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1. Rabindranath Tagore, *Bangla bhasha poricoy* (p. 66).



prefix dur-	durgṭō	<i>miserable</i>
prefix nir-	nirgṭō	<i>ejected</i>
prefix bi-	bigṭō	<i>past, dead</i>
prefix स०म-	स०मगṭō	<i>proper, just</i>

Prefixes are traditionally divided into three groups: Sanskrit prefixes, Bangla prefixes and foreign prefixes. This is not immediately helpful to the foreign learner but there is a marked difference in their use. Sanskrit prefixes can occur in clusters for instance: ङन-upō-yuktō *unsuitable*, ङन-ōdhi-kar *unauthorised*, whereas Bangla and foreign prefixes occur one at a time.

Here are some Farsi and Arabic prefixes:

**Farsi** be negating *un-*

be-ain	<i>unlawful</i>
be-adōb	<i>unmannerly, impudent</i>
be-imam	<i>perfidious, unfaithful</i>
be-ojōr	<i>admitting no excuse</i>
be-kar	<i>out of work</i>
be-cara	<i>helpless, wretched</i>
be-cal	<i>misbehaving, dissolute</i>
be-tar	<i>radio (wireless!)</i>
benami	<i>anonymous</i>

dār *sub-*. This semantic feature is not very visible in the examples.

dārkhastō *application*, dārkar *need*, dārpōttōn *sublease*, dārbar *court*

na- negating

nacar *helpless*, naraj *unwilling*, nabalōk *under-age*, nakhoś *displeased*

bōd- *bad*

bōdmejaj *bad temper*, bōdkheṅal *evil intentions*, bōdnam *bad reputation*

**Arabic** gār- negating *un-*

gārṭhikana	<i>wrong address</i>
gārrajī	<i>unwilling, reluctant</i>
gārmil	<i>disagreement, disharmony</i>
gārhajir	<i>absent</i>
am- <i>common</i>	
amdārbar	<i>place for public audience</i>
ammoktar	<i>attorney</i>
amdani	<i>import</i>

#### 4.1.1.1 Sanskrit and Bangla prefixes

Traditionally, Sanskrit prefixes are permissible only on pure Sanskrit roots. As the living language develops and changes, however, purity is not its main concern and Sanskrit prefixes are, in fact, often attached to Bangla words. I have therefore, in the list below, given

examples of reasonably common words with both Sanskrit and Bangla prefixes together. There is a fair bit of overlap between the two. The indications of semantic impact in this section are taken mainly from the Samsad dictionary and are often inadequate.

- ৯-, ৯ন-, ৯না- (Bangla) negating (there are a great number of these)  
 ৯cena *unknown*, ৯কন্তô *endless*, ৯নador *neglect, slight*, ৯নাযাস *ease*, ৯নিশ্চিতô *uncertain*, ৯নুপôsthit *absent*, ৯bhab *lack*, ৯সম্ভবô *impossible*, ৯sthir *restless*
- ôti- (Sanskrit): *too*  
 ôtikrôm *transgression*, ôtiriktô *excessive*, ôtiśôy *excessive*, ôtyacar *oppression*,
- ôdhi- (Sanskrit): *over*  
 ôdhikaṁsô *most*, ôdhikar *right, claim*, ôdhibôrșô *leap-year*, ôdhyapôk *professor*
- ônu- (Sanskrit): *after, expansion*  
 ônuকôrôn *imitation*, ônugrôhô *preference, partiality*, ônujña *order, command*,  
 ônutap *repentance*, ônubad *translation*, ônubhôb *perception, feeling*,  
 ônurôdh *request*
- ৯pô- (Sanskrit) *mis-, off, away*  
 ৯pôkôrômô *misdeed*, ৯pôkar *harm, injury* ৯pôcôy *waste, loss*,  
 ৯pôprôyog *misappropriation*, ৯pôbhrômșô *corrupt language*, ৯pôman *insult*
- ৯bô- (Sanskrit) *down, inferior*  
 ৯bôkaś *leisure*, ৯bôkșôy *decadence, ruin*, ৯bôghat *fatal blow*, ৯bôstha *situation*, ৯bôhela *neglect*
- ôbhi- (Sanskrit) *excess*  
 ôbhidhan *dictionary*, ôbhipray *desire, intention*, ôbhiman *hurt pride, vanity*,  
 ôbhiyog *complaint*, ôbhișap *curse*, ôbhisar *secret tryst*
- a- can be a Sanskrit or a Bangla prefix which implies either *non-* or *starting from*  
 akaś *sky*, agamî *next*, agrôhô *interest*, abar *again*, amod *amusement*,  
 alap *introduction*, ahar *food*
- an- (Bangla) negating  
 anmôna *absentminded*, anari *inexpert*, ancan *anxious, restless*
- uț, ud (Sanskrit) *above, excessive, beyond, contrary*  
 uțsahô *encouragement*, uțpôtti *origin*, udahôrôn *example*,  
 uddam *incontrollable*,
- upô- (Sanskrit) *over, under, sub-*  
 upônâ *nickname*, upôgrôhô *satellite*, upôbhașa *dialect*, upôjela *district*,  
 upôșrgô *symptom, prefix*, upôșagôr *bay, gulf*
- du-, dur- (Sanskrit) *bad*  
 dușcinta *worry*, durdôșa *adversity, misery*, durbhagyô *misfortune*, durnam *bad reputation*, durghôțôna *accident*, durnîti *corruption*

ni-, nir- can be either a Sanskrit or a Bangla prefix, usually with a negating effect  
 nirakṣôr *illiterate*, nikhût *faultless, perfect*, niraśa *despondency*, nirdoṣ  
*innocent*, niśartô *unconditional*

Both these prefixes du and ni are also found with ḥ (bishorgo) duḥ and niḥ. The bishorgo is still in place in words like duḥkhô *regret* and niḥśvas *breath*.

pra- (Sanskrit) *other*  
 prajây *defeat*, pradhîn *subject, dependent*, pramarsô *advice, counsel*,  
 prabartô *exchange, return*

pôri- (Sanskrit) *thoroughness, excessiveness, opposition*  
 pôrimap *measurement*, pôrimaṇ *amount*, pôribes *environment*,  
 pôrisôm *hard work*, pôrisodh *revenge*, pôribartôn *change*

prô- (Sanskrit) *abundance, excess, intensity, inception*  
 prôbhab *influence*, prôkaś *revelation* prôkîti *nature*, prôgôti *progress*,  
 prôkôlpô *hypothesis*

prôti- (Sanskrit) *against, substituting*  
 prôtikriyâ *reaction*, prôtirodh *prevention*, prôtibad *protest*,  
 prôtiṣṭha *foundation, establishment*, prôtinidhi *deputy*, prôtidvândvô *rivalry*,  
 prôtiyogita *competition*

bi- can be either a Sanskrit or a Bangla prefix with the effect of: *anti, opposite,*  
*mis-* or an intensifier  
 binaś *destruction*, bikôlpô *alternative*, bikriyâ *chemical reaction*, bitarkô  
*debate*, bipakṣô *opponent*, bipôrit *opposite*, bikîtô *perverted, corrupted*, bikaś  
*display*, bicitrô *various*

সা-, সম-, সম- can be either a Sanskrit or a Bangla prefix *together, with*  
 samkṣep *abbreviation*, sôñit *music*, samgram *struggle*, sambad *news*,  
 samyam *temperance*, samyog *junction*, samśodhôn *correction*,  
 samśad *parliament*, samśar *world*, samskar *purification*, samôtal *plain, level*,  
 samman *respect*, samôrthôn *support*

su- *good*, either a Sanskrit or a Bangla prefix  
 suyog *opportunity*, subidha *advantage*, subuddhi *good sense*, sulôbh *cheap*,  
 subicar *good judgment*

#### 4.1.2 Suffixes

It is not easy to separate out suffixes from postpositions, adjectival attachments or from independent nouns. Word-class altering suffixes are given in the following two sections. Here, then, are just a few suffixes which have not been listed elsewhere in the book.

noun suffixes

-oḡala is a noun ending indicating a particular job, task or designation:

baṛioḡala *landlord*, rikśaoḡala *rickshaw driver*, phuloḡala *flower-seller*,  
mṛślaoḡala *seller of spices*, janala-oḡala dṛja *a door containing a window*

This suffix is very productive and can be added to just about anything in order to identify particular people or things.

ôk- or ik for people: calôk *driver*, sebôk *carer*, lekhôk *writer*, śikṣôk *teacher*, naḡôk *actor*, kṛṣôk *farmer*, yabôk *priest*, malik *owner*, sambadik *journalist*

i or ī people and professions. The spellings of these words fluctuates between i and ī.  
śilpī *artist*, mistri *carpenter*, baburci *cook*, dōrji *tailor*, mali *gardener*,  
majhi *boatman*

adjectives:

ḡnôk *generating*: bipôḡḡnôk *dangerous*, kṣṡḡḡnôk *erosive*, amodḡnôk *delightful*,  
delightful, duḡkhôḡnôk *distressing*, bedôḡnôk *painful*

kṛ assigning a quality: svasthôkṛ *healthy*, kṣôtikṛ *harmful*, kṣṡmakṛ *forgiving*,  
kṣṡôkṛ *troublesome*

hīn *without*: maḡahīn *devoid of compassion*, aśahīn *hopeless*, kṣṡmahīn *unforgiving*,  
tulônahīn *incomparable*, praḡhīn *lifeless*

## 4.2 Adjective derivations

When adjectives are derived from nouns or verbs they usually have distinctive endings.

A list of derived adjectives is given below to show the patterns in Bangla.

Here is an example of how many ways an adjective can be formed from the same noun:

śṛddha *respect*:

śṛddhaśīl, śṛddhalu, śṛddhambitô, śṛddhaban all: *faithful, respectful*,  
śṛddheḡô *reverend, venerable*

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| i.       | -ik adjectives derived from nouns, often with vowel change: i > oi, u > ou, ɔ > a |
| doinik   | <i>daily</i> from din <i>day</i>  |
| antôrik  | <i>heart-felt, cordial</i> from antôr <i>heart, inside</i>                        |
| manôsik  | <i>mental</i> from môn <i>mind</i>  |
| añcôlik  | <i>regional</i> from añcôl <i>area</i>  |
| śaririk  | <i>physical</i> from śôrīr <i>body</i>  |
| prakṛtik | <i>natural</i> from prôkṛti <i>nature</i>   |

- ii. -sôî, -mây adjectives attribute a particular characteristic
- |             |                             |  |  |  |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| ɟɟl-mây     | <i>waterlogged</i>          |  |  |  |
| jut-sôî     | <i>advantageous</i>         |  |  |  |
| tek-sôî     | <i>durable</i>              |  |  |  |
| lag-sôî     | <i>fitting, appropriate</i> |  |  |  |
| rɔhôsýô-mây | <i>mysterious</i>           |  |  |  |
| snehô-mây   | <i>loving, tender</i>       |  |  |  |
| dɔya-mây    | <i>kind, compassionate</i>  |  |  |  |
- iii. from a noun to e adjective: they look like perfective participles from nouns.
- |          |                      |      |          |                             |
|----------|----------------------|------|----------|-----------------------------|
| ækghêye  | <i>boring</i>        | from | æk gha   | <i>one beat (on a drum)</i> |
| kele     | <i>blackish</i>      | from | kalô     | <i>black</i>                |
| sekele   | <i>old-fashioned</i> | from | se kal   | <i>that time</i>            |
| paɾagêye | <i>rural</i>         | from | paɾagâ   | <i>countryside</i>          |
| barômese | <i>perpetual</i>     | from | barô mas | <i>twelve months</i>        |
| rojgere  | <i>earned</i>        | from | rojgar   | <i>income</i>               |
- iv. -o adjectives with vowel change a – e, o – u. Some of these adjectives have a pejorative nuance.
- |       |                               |      |      |               |
|-------|-------------------------------|------|------|---------------|
| mejho | <i>middle</i>                 | from | majh | <i>middle</i> |
| kejo  | <i>active, efficient</i>      | from | kaj  | <i>work</i>   |
| ɔkejo | <i>disabled, unservicable</i> | from | kaj  | <i>work</i>   |
| bheto | <i>rice-eating</i>            | from | bhat | <i>rice</i>   |
| keþho | <i>wooden</i>                 | from | kaþh | <i>wood</i>   |
- v. -i adjectives
- |          |                  |      |         |                       |
|----------|------------------|------|---------|-----------------------|
| bhari    | <i>heavy</i>     | from | bhar    | <i>weight</i>         |
| manî     | <i>respected</i> | from | man     | <i>honour</i>         |
| dami     | <i>expensive</i> | from | dam     | <i>price</i>          |
| upôkarî  | <i>helpful</i>   | from | upôkar  | <i>favour</i>         |
| dɔrkarî  | <i>necessary</i> | from | dɔrkar  | <i>need</i>           |
| ɔpôradhî | <i>guilty</i>    | from | ɔpôradh | <i>crime, offence</i> |
- vi. -itô, -tô (and variations) adjectives – some of these are old passive participle forms
- |          |                  |      |        |                       |
|----------|------------------|------|--------|-----------------------|
| anônditô | <i>delighted</i> | from | anôndô | <i>joy</i>            |
| jibitô   | <i>alive</i>     | from | jibôn  | <i>life</i>           |
| niyômitô | <i>regular</i>   | from | niyôm  | <i>rule</i>           |
| şiksitô  | <i>educated</i>  | from | şikša  | <i>education</i>      |
| cintitô  | <i>worried</i>   | from | cinta  | <i>thought, worry</i> |
- vii. -nto from nouns and verbs, some of these are adverbs
- |           |                           |      |         |                        |
|-----------|---------------------------|------|---------|------------------------|
| ɔphurôntô | <i>unending, endless</i>  | from | phurôno | <i>finish, run out</i> |
| uþhônntô  | <i>rising, growing</i>    | from | oþha    | <i>rise, get up</i>    |
| urônntô   | <i>flying, fluttering</i> | from | ora     | <i>fly</i>             |
| cɔlônntô  | <i>moving, going</i>      | from | cɔla    | <i>move, go</i>        |
| pɔrônntô  | <i>declining, falling</i> | from | pɔra    | <i>fall</i>            |

- viii. -īyô, -eīyô, -nīyô These forms suggest a potential. Compare ঞ৞৞৞৞৞৞ *undefeated* and ঞ৞৞৞৞৞৞ *unconquerable*.
- |             |                    |      |          |                        |
|-------------|--------------------|------|----------|------------------------|
| akañkṣôñīyô | <i>desirable</i>   | from | akañkṣa  | <i>desire, wish</i>    |
| manôñīyô    | <i>respected</i>   | from | man      | <i>honour, respect</i> |
| jatīyô      | <i>national</i>    | from | jati     | <i>race, nation</i>    |
| prôyôjônīyô | <i>neccessary</i>  | from | prôyôjôn | <i>need</i>            |
| ৞bhabôñīyô  | <i>unthinkable</i> | from | bhab     | <i>thought</i>         |
- ix. -śīl adds a quality
- |            |                     |      |         |                            |
|------------|---------------------|------|---------|----------------------------|
| kṣ৞maśīl   | <i>forgiving</i>    | from | kṣ৞ma   | <i>forgiveness</i>         |
| śrômôśīl   | <i>painstaking</i>  | from | śrôm    | <i>labour</i>              |
| ৞hônôśīl   | <i>tolerant</i>     | from | ৞hôn    | <i>patience, endurance</i> |
| snehôśīl   | <i>affectionate</i> | from | snehô   | <i>love, affection</i>     |
| śr৞ddhaśīl | <i>respectful</i>   | from | śr৞ddha | <i>respect</i>             |
- x. ban, man, mañ add a quality
- |           |                                |      |          |                      |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------|----------|----------------------|
| hīrd৞yban | <i>magnanimous</i>             | from | hīrd৞y   | <i>heart</i>         |
| mūlyôban  | <i>precious</i>                | from | mūlyô    | <i>value</i>         |
| buddhiman | <i>wise, intelligent</i>       | from | buddhi   | <i>wisdom</i>        |
| k৞mpôman  | <i>shaky</i>                   | from | k৞mpô    | <i>tremor</i>        |
| kṣīyômañ  | <i>decaying, waning</i>        | from | kṣ৞y     | <i>waste, loss</i>   |
| gh৞ṭôman  | <i>progressive, continuous</i> | from | gh৞ṭa vb | <i>happen, occur</i> |
- xi. -u, -lu, -lo adjectives
- |          |                         |      |         |                        |
|----------|-------------------------|------|---------|------------------------|
| jijñasu  | <i>questioning</i>      | from | jijñasa | <i>question</i>        |
| d৞yalu   | <i>kind, charitable</i> | from | d৞ya    | <i>mercy</i>           |
| t৞ndralu | <i>drowsy</i>           | from | t৞ndra  | <i>drowsiness</i>      |
| pipasu   | <i>thirsty</i>          | from | pipasa  | <i>thirst</i>          |
| joralo   | <i>forceful</i>         | from | jor     | <i>strength, force</i> |
- xii. -uk adjectives
- |        |                            |      |        |                      |
|--------|----------------------------|------|--------|----------------------|
| lajuk  | <i>shy</i>                 | from | lajja  | <i>embarrassment</i> |
| icchuk | <i>desiring, willing</i>   | from | iccha  | <i>wish, will</i>    |
| peṭuk  | <i>greedy</i>              | from | peṭ    | <i>stomach</i>       |
| uṭsuk  | <i>eager, enthusiastic</i> | from | uṭsahô | <i>enthusiasm</i>    |
- xiii. k৞r, p৞r adjectives
- |             |                             |      |          |                            |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------|----------|----------------------------|
| kolyaṅk৞r   | <i>good, beneficial</i>     | from | kolyaṅ   | <i>benefit, welfare</i>    |
| ৞vôsthik৞r  | <i>uncomfortable</i>        | from | ৞vôsthi  | <i>discomfort</i>          |
| k৞ṣṭôk৞r    | <i>difficult, hard</i>      | from | k৞ṣṭô    | <i>trouble, difficulty</i> |
| hitôk৞r     | <i>good, beneficial</i>     | from | hitô     | <i>benefit, well-being</i> |
| svasthyôk৞r | <i>beneficial to health</i> | from | svasthyô | <i>health</i>              |
| svarthôp৞r  | <i>selfish</i>              | from | svarthô  | <i>self-interest</i>       |

- xiv. gʷtô obtained, held  
 mûlgʷtô basic, fundamental bybôhargʷtô customary, practical  
 tʷttvôgʷtô well-grounded, sound ônuḡʷtô obedient  
 ɔntôrgʷtô enclosed in bhaṣagʷtô related to language  
 thiori-gʷtô theoretical this suggests that gʷtô is productive
- xv. hīn is a suffix meaning *without, devoid of* and can be added to a great many abstract nouns. Here are just a few.  
 aśahīn *hopeless*  
 kṣmôtahīn *powerless*  
 kṣmahīn *unforgiving*  
 dhṛmôhīn *blasphemous*  
 nītihīn *unscrupulous*

### 4.3 Noun derivations

Just as adjectives can be derived from nouns, so nouns can be derived from adjectives. Sometimes we find three-step derivations from concrete noun to adjective to abstract noun:

jṛṭ *knot* → jôṭil *complex* → jôṭilôta *complexity*

The following is an impression of noun derivations in Bangla.

- i. -a nouns from adjectives
- |            |                     |      |         |                    |
|------------|---------------------|------|---------|--------------------|
| ɔślilôta   | <i>obscenity</i>    | from | ɔślil   | <i>obscene</i>     |
| uccôta     | <i>height</i>       | from | uccô    | <i>high</i>        |
| ækôta      | <i>unity</i>        | from | æk      | <i>one</i>         |
| kôṭhinôta  | <i>difficulty</i>   | from | kôṭhin  | <i>difficult</i>   |
| dɔkṣôta    | <i>skilfulness</i>  | from | dɔkṣô   | <i>expert</i>      |
| nirapṛtta  | <i>safety</i>       | from | nirapṛd | <i>safe</i>        |
| bastôbôta  | <i>reality</i>      | from | bastôb  | <i>real</i>        |
| bystôta    | <i>rush, hurry</i>  | from | bystô   | <i>busy</i>        |
| śreṣṭhôta  | <i>excellence</i>   | from | śreṣṭhô | <i>best</i>        |
| sɔrôlôta   | <i>honesty</i>      | from | sɔrôl   | <i>honest</i>      |
| svadhīnôta | <i>independence</i> | from | svadhīn | <i>independent</i> |
- ii. -na nouns (many of these are derived from other nouns)
- |           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| bhabna    | <i>thought</i>           |
| prarthôna | <i>prayer</i>            |
| kôruṇa    | <i>mercy</i>             |
| kɔlpôna   | <i>imagination</i>       |
| kamôna    | <i>desire</i>            |
| ghoṭôna   | <i>event, occurrence</i> |

ghoṣôna	<i>announcement</i>
cetôna	<i>consciousness</i>
tulôna	<i>comparison</i>
dharôṇa	<i>idea</i>
bibecôna	<i>consideration</i>

iii. abstract jophola and bophola nouns (often with vowel change in stem)

alôsyô	<i>laziness</i>	from	ɔlôs	<i>lazy</i>
oucityô	<i>propriety</i>	from	ucit	<i>proper</i>
oikyô	<i>union, unity</i>	from	æk	<i>one</i>
cañcôlyô	<i>restlessness, agitation</i>	from	côñcɔl	<i>mobile, moving</i>
caturyô	<i>intelligence, dexterity</i>	from	côtur	<i>intelligent, clever</i>
capôlyô	<i>restlessness</i>	from	cɔpôl	<i>restless, fickle</i>
dhoiryô	<i>patience</i>	from	dhir	<i>slow</i>
pracuryô	<i>abundance</i>	from	prôcur	<i>plenty</i>
boiśiṣṭyô	<i>characteristic</i>	from	biśeṣ	<i>special</i>
madhuryô	<i>sweetness</i>	from	môdhu	<i>honey</i>
soundôryô	<i>beauty</i>	from	sundôr	<i>beautiful</i>
sthairyô	<i>firmness, steadiness</i>	from	sthir	<i>still</i>

iv. -i nouns from -o adjectives

unnôti	<i>development</i>	from	unnôtô	<i>developed</i>
klanti	<i>tiredness</i>	from	klantô	<i>tired</i>
gôti	<i>passage, movement</i>	from	gôtô	<i>gone, departed</i>
calaki	<i>cleverness</i>	from	calak	<i>clever</i>
tuṣṭi	<i>satisfaction</i>	from	tuṣṭô	<i>satisfied</i>
tīpti	<i>satisfaction</i>	from	tīptô	<i>satisfied</i>
druti	<i>speed</i>	from	drutô	<i>quick, swift</i>
prôjati	<i>species</i>	from	prôjat	<i>produced, grown</i>
birôkti	<i>annoyance</i>	from	birôktô	<i>annoyed</i>
birôti	<i>desistence, break</i>	from	birôtô	<i>ceased</i>
bhokti	<i>devotion</i>	from	bhoktô	<i>devoted</i>
sôtyi	<i>truth</i>	from	sotyô	<i>true</i>
śôkti	<i>strength</i>	from	śoktô	<i>hard, strong</i>
śanti	<i>peace</i>	from	śantô	<i>peaceful</i>

v. -ami, -aki nouns (these tend to imply a deliberately assumed attitude)

itrami	<i>joke, taunt</i>	from	itôr	<i>base, vile</i>
nyækami	<i>pretense of honesty</i>	from	nyæka (n)	<i>pretender</i>
duṣṭami	<i>naughtiness</i>	from	duṣṭu	<i>naughty</i>
bhōṇḍami	<i>hypocrisy</i>	from	bhōṇḍô	<i>deceitful</i>
paglami	<i>madness</i>	from	pagôl	<i>crazy</i>
pakami	<i>precociousness</i>	from	paka	<i>ripe</i>
matlami	<i>drunkenness</i>	from	matal	<i>drunk</i>



#### 4.4 Verbal patterns

Bangla has the following types of verbs:

##### i. simple verbs

All verbs with a monosyllabic stem and a verbal noun ending in -a are classed as simple verbs. Monosyllabic stems ending in a vowel add -oÿa for the verbal noun.

kɔr-a *do*, thak-a *stay*, bɔl-a *say*, lekh-a *write*, khōj-a *search*, as-a *come*, śon-a *hear*, bojh-a *understand*, hɔ-oÿa *be, become*, ya-oÿa *go*, de-oÿa *give*, pa-oÿa *get*, śɔ-oÿa *tolerate*

are examples of simple verbs.

##### ii. extended verbs

Extended verbs have a two-syllable stem ending in -a and a verbal noun ending in -no. Many extended verbs are derived from nouns or adjectives. Extended verbs are discussed in Chapter 6.3.2.

kamṛano	<i>bite</i>	>	kamôṛ	<i>bite</i>
ghumano	<i>sleep</i>	>	ghum	<i>sleep</i>
chɔṛano	<i>scatter, sprinkle</i>	>	chɔṛ	<i>bunch, cluster</i>
takano	<i>look at, gaze</i>	>	tak	<i>target, aim</i>
taṛano	<i>chase away</i>	>	taṛa	<i>hurry</i>
dāṛano	<i>stand</i>	>	dāṛ	<i>upright</i>
douṛano	<i>run</i>	>	douṛ	<i>run, spurt</i>
śukano	<i>dry, wither</i>	>	śukno	<i>dry</i>
samlano	<i>manage</i>	>	samal	<i>steady, controlled</i>

##### iii. causative verbs

Causative verbs are derived from simple verbs. They follow the same pattern as extended verbs, ie they add -a to the simple verb and have the verbal noun ending in -no. They change the meaning of the simple verb from *do* to *cause to do*, as in

śekha <i>learn</i> -	śekhano <i>cause to learn = teach</i>
bojha <i>understand</i> -	bojhano <i>cause to understand = explain</i>
jana <i>know</i> -	janano <i>cause to know = inform</i>

Morphologically, causative verbs are a subgroup of extended verbs. Causative verbs are dealt with in Chapter 6.3.3.

##### iv. conjunct verbs

Common simple verbs like kɔra *do*, kaṭa *cut*, mara *hit*, khaoÿa *consume*, deoÿa *give*, neoÿa *take* combine with nouns and adjectives to form new verbs. These verbs are called conjunct verbs. Conjunct verbs expand the range of verbal

expression in Bangla considerably and are useful for new word creations, particularly with foreign words:

kōtha deoḡa, lit: *word give = promise*, ṭhik kōra, lit: *correct do = decide*, ḡub mara, lit: *dive strike = dive*, i-meil kōra *to e-mail*, rikorḡ kōra *to record*, enjōy kōra *to enjoy*

Conjunct verbs are discussed in Chapter 6.3.5.

v. **verbal sets**

Apart from the systematic extension from simple to causative verbs, we find groups of verbs which are morphologically linked through stem vowel mutation.

A full set contains four verbs:

- i. simple intransitive verb with stem vowel ɔ
- ii. causative/extended verb with stem vowel ɔ
- iii. simple transitive verb with stem vowel a
- iv. causative/extended verb with stem vowel a.

In actual language use each of these verbs takes on quite specific meanings, eg

- i. sōra *move over, shift, move out of the way* (intransitive)  
tumi ekṭu sōrte parō? *Can you move over a bit?*
- ii. sōrano *move* (transitive, causative of sōra)  
amra ceḡargulo sōriḡe debō. *We will move the chairs.*
- iii. sara *finish, be healed, restored* (intransitive and transitive)  
ami tarataṛi dōrkari kajgulo sarlam. *I finished the urgent jobs quickly.*
- iv. sarano *cure, repair* (causative of sara)  
śōirṭa age sarano dōrkar. *The body needs to be healed first.*

vi. **verbs derived from onomatopoeia**

In many cases only the perfective participle of these verbs is in regular use. Here are just a few:

ṭḡṭḡlano *stagger, waver*; jhōkjhōkano *sparkle, glisten*; jhōṭṭḡṭḡano *flap*;  
jhōlmōlano *sparkle, glitter*; tōṛṭḡṭḡano *hurry excessively*; niśpiśano *itching to do something*;  
phisphisano *whisper*; hōkōkano *be nonplussed, be taken aback*;  
hōnhōnano *walk fast*

## CHAPTER 5

# Morphology

### 5.1 Parts of speech (overview)

Bangla distinguishes between inflected and non-inflected word classes. Inflected word classes are nouns, pronouns and verbs. Non-inflected word classes are adjectives including quantifiers, adverbs, postpositions, conjunctions, emphasisers, particles and interjections.

#### i. Nouns

Bangla nouns have the following categories:

- number (singular – plural)
- animacy (animate – inanimate)
- definiteness (definite – indefinite)
- formality (honorific – non-honorific)
- count – non-count
- case (nominative, genitive, object, locative)

In order to distinguish these categories, nouns take classifiers (ṭa, gulo), modifiers and case endings. There are no articles in Bangla. Genitive nouns can operate as attributive adjectives to modify other nouns: sona-r aṅṭi *golden ring*, cād-er alo *moonlight*. Locative nouns assist in forming adverbs and postpositions. Genitive nouns can form sentence subjects in impersonal structures.

#### ii. Pronouns

Bangla has the following types of pronouns:

personal, inanimate, relative, interrogative, indefinite, reflexive and deictic (demonstrative).

Personal pronouns distinguish person, formality (ordinary – honorific) and number, but not gender. Deictic pronouns can be used attributively to modify nouns: ei chele *this boy*. Relative pronouns overlap with adverbs and conjunctions to assist in the formation of correlative structures: ya – ta *that which*, yæmôn – tæmôn *how – so*, yṅkhôn – tṅkhôn *when – then*. Interrogative pronouns overlap with adjectives and adverbs in the formation of questions: ki *what*, kon *which*, kṅkhôn *when*.

### iii. Verbs

Verb conjugation distinguishes person, formality and tense but not number or gender. Verbs have eight tenses:

simple present, present continuous, present perfect, future, simple past, past continuous, past perfect and past habitual.

Bangla verbs have second and third person imperatives. Each verb has four non-finite verb forms: verbal noun, imperfective participle, perfective participle and conditional participle. Non-finite verb forms add aspective features to verbal processes and also play a crucial role in the formation of sentences. Verbal nouns can be the subjects of sentences and they can also be used attributively before nouns as verbal adjectives.

Bangla has causative verbs. The relatively small inventory of Bangla simple verbs is augmented by noun-verb or adjective-verb combinations (conjunct verbs) with the capacity to bring new verbs into the language.

A small number of high-frequency verbs provide the basis for the different types of sentences in Bangla (see Chapter 7.4).

Negation occurs on the sentence level and the negative particle *na* or its variants occur at the end of sentences. Negation can be restricted by placing the universal negator *na* before certain verb forms. Bangla has two incomplete negative verbs. The invariable *nei* which negates the existential verb *ach-* *exist*, *be present*, and *no-*, the negator in copular structures.

### iv. Adjectives, quantifiers, adverbs

Bangla adjectives are indeclinable. They occur attributively before nouns and predicatively in copular sentences. Many adjectives can be used nominally by taking a classifier (*bṛō-ṭa* *the big one*, *gol-gulo* *the round ones* and many adjectives can also be used adverbially. A special sub-group of adjectives are quantifiers, which behave differently from other adjectives within noun phrases. Adverbs are treated separately from adjectives in this book. This enables us to classify them according to their functions in sentences.

### v. Postpositions

Postpositions are mainly derived from nouns and verbs but have moved away from their nominal and verbal origins to form a word class by themselves. There are also some underived postpositions. Many postpositions can also be used adverbially.

### vi. Conjunctions

Conjunctions divide into coordinating, subordinating and correlative conjunctions. Much of the work done by English subordinating conjunctions such as *although*, *because* or *afterwards* is done in Bangla by non-finite verb forms. Two-part correlatives are the real basis for subordination, embedding, relativisation and complex sentence formation.

### vii. Interrogatives

Pronouns, adjectives and adverbs participate in the formation of interrogatives. Since interrogatives do not form a distinctive word class, there is no section on them in this chapter. They are, however, dealt with extensively in Chapter 7.3.2.2.

### viii. Emphasisers, particles and interjections

These word classes provide commentary or attitude in sentences. Some of their uses are syntactically determined, others are more flexible. It is largely due to these word classes, as well as to features like reduplication and onomatopoeia, that language can move from being an abstract system to living communication.

### ix. Reduplication and onomatopoeia

Reduplication is an important device in Bangla which pervades not only the lexicon but is also an integral part of sentence formation. Duplicated adjectives and nouns can convey plural meanings. Doubled verb forms provide aspectual features. Bangla has a great number of onomatopoeic expressions which add flavour and colour to the language. They are discussed in Chapter 9.1.9.

## 5.2 Nouns

Nouns function as subjects and objects but also give us place *bagane in the garden*, time *sokale in the morning* and circumstances *onicchaÿ against one's will* of actions or events.

### 5.2.1 Types of nouns

Bangla nouns can be divided into the following semantic subgroups:

type of noun	examples
a. proper names	nɔjrul <i>Nazrul</i> , gɔŋga <i>Ganges</i> , bharôt <i>India</i> , taj mɔhòl <i>Taj Mahal</i>
b. common nouns	nɔlküp <i>tubewell</i> , gaɾi <i>car</i> , kukur <i>dog</i> , camôc <i>spoon</i>
c. generic nouns	manuŝ <i>person</i> , pakhi <i>bird</i> , phɔl <i>fruit</i> , gach <i>tree</i>
d. collective nouns	dɔl <i>group</i> , pal <i>flock</i> , gada <i>heap</i> , ŝreŋi <i>class</i>
e. materials	jɔl <i>water</i> , loha <i>iron</i> , kaṭh <i>wood</i> , reŝôm <i>silk</i>
f. singular nouns	sūryô <i>sun</i> , cād <i>moon</i> , allahô <i>Allah</i> , ĩŝvôr <i>God</i>
g. abstract nouns	sukh <i>happiness</i> , sômôÿ <i>time</i> , kɔlpôna <i>imagination</i> , bhaŝa <i>language</i>
h. verbal nouns	gona <i>counting</i> , ŝekha <i>learning</i> , dækha <i>view</i> , chaɾa <i>releasing</i>

These divisions are quite flexible and individual words can switch from one group to another according to context. The categories are useful in the distinctions of count – non-count and singular – plural issues.

Bangla nouns have no uniform shape but many nouns are derived from adjectives or verbs and have distinctive endings: *সম্ভব possible* – *সম্ভাবনা possibility*, *সরল honest* – *সরলতা honesty*, *সুন্দর beautiful* – *সুন্দর্য beauty* etc. A list of these is given in Chapter 4.1.

Bangla nouns have the following grammatical distinctions:

singular – plural  
 definite – indefinite  
 animate – inanimate  
 ordinary – honorific  
 count – non-count  
 case (nominative, genitive, objective, locative)

Bangla has no articles but operates with a small number of classifiers which are added to nouns to make them definite or indefinite, singular or plural. The use of these classifiers differs according to whether a noun is animate or inanimate, count or non-count, ordinary or honorific. Classifiers work together with numbers, quantifiers and case endings to make noun phrases. Not only is this system of marking nouns quite different from what we know in English, it is also rather fluid in itself in that the same classifiers are used for different purposes. This makes the classification of nouns one of the more complex chapters of Bangla grammar.

### 5.2.2 Bare nouns

A bare noun is a noun on its own, without any classifiers or other modifiers such as possessives, deictics, quantifiers or qualifiers. We consider the bare noun as the basis of our analysis. Since Bangla operates on a need-to-know principle, distinctions between singular and plural or between definite and indefinite are only made where they are necessary. Where the context makes the reference clear, classifiers can be dropped.

The following types of nouns regularly occur without any classifiers or modifiers:

- names and titles: *rokeya Rokeya*, *baba father*, *syar Sir*, *memsaheb madam*
- natural phenomena: *pūrṇima full moon*, *akaś sky*, *bṛṣṭi rain*, *sagôr*, *sômudrô the sea*, *nôdi river*
- generic nouns: *manuṣ human being*, *jībjôntu animal*, *gach tree*, *dhan paddy*, *am mango*
- abstract nouns: *itihās history*, *সমাজ society*, *বহালোভা love*, *রাজনীতি politics*

- non-count nouns and materials: jɔl, pani *water*, mɔ̃yda *flour*, paṭh *jute*, kac *glass*, mɔd *alcohol*,
- verbal nouns: kɔra *do*, yaõya *go*, deõya *give*, ghumono *sleep*

Taking these and all other types of nouns into account, a bare noun can be:

a. definite singular

ma cheleke ɖakche                    *Mother is calling the boy.*  
 sūryô aj dækha dæ̃ỹni.                *The sun didn't appear today.*

b. definite plural

bichana ke pate?                      *Who makes the beds?*  
 tara aj dækha yãỹ na                    *The stars are not visible today.*

c. indefinite plural (count nouns)

bagane gach ache                        *There are trees in the garden.*  
 upônyas tar sɔbcẽye bhalô lage.      *He likes novels best.*

d. definite non-count:

jɔl bere gæche.                            *The water has risen.*  
 sɔrbônãs hỗye gælo bybsãỹ.          *The business has gone bankrupt.*

e. indefinite non-count:

ei dẽse dhan paṭ hɔ̃ỹ.                    *Rice and jute grow here.*

f. Bare nouns are used generically, ie in simple present tense statements, often labelled universal truths.

(1) sūryô pubdike                      oṭhe, pỗscime ɖube yãỹ.  
 sun east.direction.LOC rise west.LOC sink.PP go.3.PR.S  
*The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.*

(2) mãyer                    bhaike                    mama bɔle,                    babar                    bhaike  
 mother.GEN brother.OBJ mama say.3.PR.S father.GEN brother.OBJ  
 kaka bɔle.  
 kaka say.3.PR.S  
*A mother's brother is called mama, a father's brother kaka.*

g. A bare noun cannot be singular indefinite. However, the very clear dividing line between a definite *the song* and an indefinite *a song* that exists in English is often less important in Bangla. The following two examples translate into indefinite noun phrases in English:

ami am khacchi.                      *I am eating a mango.*  
 uni sakṣatkar deben.                *he will give an interview.*

### 5.2.3 Gender

A section on gender is added to show that what has often be considered to be a grammatical feature of Bangla nouns is, in fact, nothing more than a lexical distinction between male and female humans.

There is no grammatical gender in Bangla. Natural gender refers to the distinction between male and female living beings. Bengali pronouns distinguish person (1st, 2nd, 3rd) but not gender. The 3rd person pronoun *se* can refer to men, women and inanimates equally. Predicative adjectives do not make a gender distinction, ie *meḃeṃi ʒsusthō the girl is ill* and *cheleṃi ʒsusthō the boy is ill*, *meḃeṃi sundōr the girl is beautiful* and *gramṃa sundōr the village is beautiful*.

There are some remnants of natural gender distinction in a handful of nouns and attributive adjectives which are directly derived from Sanskrit but these distinctions have become lexicalised.

adjectives with feminine forms endings in a

	male	female		male	female
<i>best</i>	śreṣṭhō	śreṣṭha	<i>first</i>	prōthōm	prōthōma
<i>complex</i>	jōṭil	jōṭila	<i>second</i>	dvitīyō	dvitīya
<i>respected</i>	manōnīyō	manōnīya	<i>third</i>	tṛtīyō	tṛtīya
<i>dear</i>	priyō	priya	<i>skilful</i>	cōtur	cōtura

nouns with feminine forms endings in i

	male	female		male	female
<i>student</i>	chatrō	chatrī	<i>leader</i>	neta	netrī
<i>old person</i>	buṛa	buṛī	<i>deity</i>	deb	debī
<i>donor</i>	data	datrī	<i>adolescent</i>	kiśor	kiśorī
<i>man/woman</i>	nṛ	narī	<i>deer</i>	hōriṇ	hōriṇī

There are also a great number of kinship terms with a systematic a (male) – i (female) distinction, such as *pisa father's sister's husband*, *pisi father's sister*, *caca father's younger brother*, *caci father's younger brother's wife*, *mama mother's brother*, *mami mother's brother's wife*.

nouns with feminine forms endings in nī, anī and inī

	male	female		male	female
<i>tiger</i>	bagh	baghinī	<i>mad person</i>	pagla	paglinī
<i>beggar</i>	bikharī	bikharini	<i>laundry-person</i>	dhopa	dhopanī
<i>servant</i>	cakōr	cakōranī	<i>gardener</i>	mali	malinī



nouns with feminine forms endings in ika

	male	female		male	female
<i>singer</i>	gaÿôk	gaÿika	<i>writer</i>	lekhôk	lekhika
<i>lover</i>	premik	premika	<i>teacher</i>	şikşôk	şikşika
<i>nurse</i>	sebôk	sebika	<i>actor</i>	naÿôk	naÿika
<i>boy/girl</i>	balôk	balika	<i>reader</i>	paṭhôk	paṭhika

There are some irregular forms such as *bôndhu male friend*, *bandhôbi female friend*, *śvôśur father-in-law*, *śaśurī mother-in-law*. In the majority of the above cases, the masculine form can be used for both genders.

#### 5.2.4 The classifiers – overview

Classifiers are attachments. They never occur alone but can be attached to nouns, pronouns, quantifiers or adjectives with varying modifying effect. The classifier is positioned between the noun and its case ending. This means that the case ending is always the final noun attachment.

*chele-ṭa-r of the boy*, *meÿe-ṭi-ke to the girl*, *gach-gulo-te in the trees*

Bangla classifiers divide into singular and plural as follows:

singular: ṭa, ṭi, khana, khani

plural: gulo, guli

All of these, when suffixed to a bare noun, will make the noun definite.

Added to these are the *bit of classifier* ṭuku for non-count items and the animate classifier jṇ, which has some restrictions in its use. A detailed description is given in 5.2.5.

singular definite:

*kôlôm-ṭa the pen*, *śôbdô-ṭi the word*, *boi-khana the book*,

plural definite:

*chele-gulo the boys*, *meÿe-guli the girls*, *śômôśya-guli the problems*

Singular classifiers, added to the numeral *æk/ek one* before the bare noun, make the noun indefinite, eg:

*æk-ṭa kôlôm a pen*, *ek-ṭi śômôśya a word*, *æk-khana khata a note-book*,

Plural indefinites are usually without a classifier.

### 5.2.5 The classifiers – one by one

#### 5.2.5.1 *ṭa*

*ṭa* can be considered the default classifier in Bangla. Its uses go far beyond that of an article and also affects word classes other than nouns. Although *ṭa* is by itself, a singular classifier, it also combines with numbers and quantifiers.

Here are the functions of *ṭa*.

- a. *ṭa* is added to nouns to make them definite. It is predominantly used with inanimate nouns but can, somewhat less respectfully, follow non-honorific human nouns. It cannot be added to nouns that take a honorific verb ending.
- b. *ṭa* is added to *æk one*, preceding the noun, to mark a count noun as indefinite.
- c. *ṭa* is added to numbers with count nouns:

*carṭa śari four sarees, hajarṭa prôśnô a thousand questions, pōciṣṭa narikel gach twenty-five coconut trees*

*ṭa* has two allomorphs *ṭo* and *ṭe* which are used, mainly in West Bengal, for vowel harmony.

*duṭo two, tinṭe three, carṭe four*

- d. *ṭa* can be added to quantifiers with count nouns, non-count nouns and adjectives:  
*kôyekṭa sômôśya a few problems, saraṭa din the whole day long, ætoṭa hoicoi so much fuss kichuṭa bhalô moderately good, cnekṭa sômôṭ a lot of time*
- e. With low numbers only and with some quantifiers, the order of noun and number/quantifier plus *ṭa* is reversed to produce a definite noun phrase:  
*chele duṭo the two boys, kôlôm tinṭe the three pens*
- f. *ṭa* is optionally added to deictic noun phrases with no obvious function.  
*ei dokanṭa this shop, o kôṭhaṭa that statement*
- g. *ṭa* is added to numbers for time references.  
*tinṭa baje three o'clock, sare carṭa half past four*
- h. *ṭa* can be added to most parts of speech to make them into nouns:  
deictic pronouns: *eṭa this (thing), oṭa that (thing), seṭa that (thing)*  
adjectives: *lalṭa the red one, bôṛôṭa the big one*  
possessive pronouns: *amarṭa my one, nijerṭa one's own,*  
adverbs, quantifiers, postpositions, conjunctions: *kichuṭa somewhat, agerṭa the previous one,*  
Once these derived nouns are formed they can take case endings like other nouns, eg  
*bâdiker-ṭa-ke sôriye dao. Move the one on the left.*  
*amar-ṭa-te cini deoṭa hôṭeche. There is sugar in mine.*
- i. *ṭa* can be added to verbal nouns to make them definite, sometimes in conjunction with deictics:

- (3) ɔsusthō hɔɔʔaʔa ei sōmōʔe khub ɔsubidher.  
ill be.VN.CL this time.LOC very inconvenience.GEN  
*It is very inconvenient to fall ill at this time.*
- (4) tomar ei prōtibad kɔraʔa ɔprōʔojɔn.  
your this protest do.VN.CL unnecessary.  
*This protest of yours is unnecessary.*

### 5.2.5.2 ʔi

ʔi is more limited in its use than ʔa but, unlike ʔa it can be used with honorific verb endings. We can say manuʔi esechen *The man has come*, but with ʔa the only possible verb ending is the ordinary manuʔa esече. Traditionally, ʔi is said to have a less neutral, more sympathetic or affectionate overtone than ʔa. This is generally true in the context of human beings. However, there are many factual contexts where ʔa and ʔi are used equally without any emotional content. Authors switch from one to the other freely; and nouns can be assigned first one, then the other, classifier even in the same sentence. Here is a typical example from a scientific article:

- (5) sona ar ækʔa niʂkriʔō pɔdarthō – tai seʔi kono kichur  
gold more one.ʔa inactive material – so it.ʔi any something.GEN  
sɔŋge bikriʔa kɔre na.  
with reaction do.3.PR.S not  
*Gold is another inactive material – that is why it does not react with anything else.*

ʔi shares functions (a) to (f) with ʔa.

examples with ʔi:

- dinʔi *the day*, mukher hasiʔi *the smile on her face*
- ekʔi gan *a song*, ekʔi biʂeʂ manuʂ *a special person*
- tinʔi boi *three books*, pācʔi camôc *five spoons*
- kɔʔekʔi *a few questions*, arekʔi aʂcôryô ghɔʔôna *another amazing event*
- pakhi duiʔi *the two birds*, meʔe carʔi *the four girls*
- se kahiniʔi *that story*, ei chôbiʔi *this picture*

### 5.2.5.3 jɔn

jɔn can only be used with human beings and rarely follows a noun. It does not have the definite singular properties of ʔa or ʔi. Adding jɔn to nouns such as lok *person* or manuʂ *human being* results in definite or indefinite plural noun phrases:

- (6) o lokjɔnke bɔʔô sɔhōje biʂvas kôrtô.  
he person.jɔn.OBJ big easily belief do.3.P.HABIT  
*He believed people very easily.*

- (7) স্যমর্থহন পেঁচেচিলেন      অনেক বিদগ্ধহঁজনের কাছ থেকে।  
 support    receive.3H.P.PERF    many learned.jn.GEN    near from.also  
*He also had the support of many learned people.*

jñ comes into its own with numbers and quantifiers preceding nouns:

ækjñ kôbi *a poet*, tinjñ naÿôk *three actors*, dâsjñ chatrô *ten students*,

and also in being able to make numerals and quantifiers into animate nouns:

bôhujñ *many (people)*, dujñe *the two of them*, amra tinjñ *the three of us etc.*

ætojnke bôsanor matô jaÿga chilô na.

*There wasn't the space to seat so many people.*

kaÿjn asben? *How many people will come?*

jñ is the only possible classifier with indefinite honorific nouns: ækjñ raja *a king*, ækjñ ðaktar *a doctor*, duijn môntrî *two ministers*. Of the common quantifiers *onek much, many* is the only one that does not combine with jñ. This is most likely due to the fact that there is another form *oneke* meaning *many people*.

#### 5.2.5.4 khana and khani

khana and khani are traditionally said to be restricted to *inanimate, square, thin, flat objects*, which is to a foreigner at first rather baffling. The following two statements give us a more specific understanding:

ækkhana mach means fish on the plate, ækta mach can also refer to live fish.<sup>1</sup>

When we say nôdikhana we think of the river as something seen in a picture.<sup>2</sup>

khana shares with ta and ti the uses (a) to (f) and is not, as the examples show, entirely restricted to inanimate flat objects. khani can also be used with non-count nouns and adjectives to imply not individually counted pieces but amounts – these examples are given under (d)

examples with khana and khani:

- a. byæparkhana *the matter*, bhabkhana *the attitude*
- b. ækkhana jômi *a piece of land*, ækkhana ciñhi *a letter*
- c. adhkhana apel *half an apple*, tar duikhani hat *both her hands*,  
 adhkhana matrô strilok *a slip of a woman*
- d. amounts: onekkhani śanti *much peace*, onekkhani spôşô *much clearer, quite clear*
- e. cadôr duikhana *the two sheets*, khata carkhana *the four notebooks*
- f. se sôru gakhani *that slim body*, ei mukhkhana *this face*

1. Probal Dasgupta, Kothar kriakormo, p. 5.

2. Rabindranath Tagore, Bangla bhasha poricoy, p. 61.

5.2.5.5 gulo, guli (*occasionally gula*)

These are plural classifiers. They are used mainly with inanimate nouns but can also be used with non-honorific humans. They can add definiteness as well as plurality. They are added to nouns, possessive and deictic pronouns, quantifiers and other adjectives, but never to numbers. guli similarly to ʈi, can indicate sympathy or smallness.

- a. definite phrases with nouns, adjectives and possessive pronouns:  
 ôbhinetaguli *the actors*, hârigulo *the pots*, bakigulo *the remaining ones*,  
 bɔɾôguli *the big ones*, amargulo *my ones*
- b, c, d. quantifiers followed by gulo, guli can make indefinite or definite noun phrases  
 kɔtôgulo jaÿga *so many places*, sɔbgulo lok *all the people*
- e. gulo, guli are never added to numbers
- f. se prôsnôguli *these questions*, o cakagulo *those tyres*
- i. gulo and guli like ʈa can nominalise adjectives and take case endings accordingly.

nôtunguli *the new ones*

nôtungulir ghɔrgulo aro sundor. *The rooms in the new ones are more beautiful.*

lalgulo *the red ones*

lalgulor svad beşi mişti. *The red ones are too sweet.*

## 5.2.5.6 ʈuku

ʈuku (with its variants ʈu and ʈuk) gives us *a small part of or a little bit* of something. It is separated from the other singular classifiers because it is predominantly used with non-count nouns and specifies amount rather than number. ʈuk, ʈuku could also be considered a quantifier but, like the other classifiers, it is a noun suffix and does not stand alone. ʈuku can occasionally combine with distinct singular units se barandaʈuku *that smallish verandah*, but its main use is with non-count nouns.

- a. definite phrases:

sabañtuku *the bit of soap*, hasiʈuku *the trace of a smile*

- (8) śɔrbôtʈuku khaiÿe dhire dhire pakhar batas kôrte laglô  
 sherbet.ʈuku feed.PP slowly slowly fan.GEN wind do.IP start.3.P.S  
 svamîr mathaÿ.  
 husband.GEN head.LOC

*Having fed him the sherbet she slowly started fanning her husband's head.*

- b. indefinite phrases are formed with ekʈu  
 ekʈu tel *a bit of oil*, ekʈu kali *a bit of ink*, ekʈu ca *a little bit of tea*
- (c) and (e) ʈuku is never added to numbers.

## d. indefinite with quantifiers:

- (9) etoṭuku meṃeke biṃe diṃe dis tora.  
 so.much.ṭuku girl.OBJ wedding give.PP give.2I.PR.S you.I.PL  
*You arrange the weddings of so many young girls.*

## f. ṭuku differs from all the other classifiers in its combinations with deictics. All other classifiers can only appear after the noun in deictic phrases: e chôbiṭa, sei gach-gulo, not following the deictic directly. With + ṭuku we find both [deictic + noun + ṭuku] and [deictic + ṭuku + noun] with no difference in meaning:

se jaṃgaṭuku or seṭuku jaṃga *that bit of space*  
 ei sômôsyatuku or eiṭuku sômôsy *this little problem*

- (10) eṭuku buddhio tomar hólô na?  
 this.ṭuku wisdom.also you.GEN be.3.P.S not  
*You didn't even have that little bit of sense?*

## h. ṭuku can turn deictic and relative pronouns into nouns:

- (11) yṭôṭuku can phoner khôrôc ṭhik tṭôṭuku.  
 how.much.ṭuku want.2H.PR.S phone.GEN expense exactly so.much.ṭuku  
*Your phone expenses will be just as little as you want them to be.*

## 5.2.6 Plural formation

Bangla nouns distinguish between a single unit/entity (singular) and multiple units/entities (plural) in the following ways. Plurals are formed by:

## a. dropping the indefinite singular classifier:

singular	plural
ækṭa meṃe <i>a girl</i>	meṃe <i>girls</i>
ekṭi prôśnô <i>a question</i>	prôśnô <i>questions</i>

manuṣ dekhle kumir palaṃ. *When crocodiles see people they run away.*

## b. adding a plural marker or a plural classifier:

bare noun	plural	
chele	chelera	<i>boys or the boys</i>
siddhantô	siddhantôgulo	<i>the decisions</i>
ceṃar	ceṃargulo	<i>the chairs</i>

For animate nouns we have the plural marker -ra with its variants -era and -ṃera. This can create definite or indefinite noun phrases, depending on the context.

-ra follows vowels:

from meÿe *girl*                    meÿera *girls or the girls*  
 from môhila *woman*            môhilara *women or the women*

-era follows consonants:

from lok *person*                    lokera *the people or people*  
 from bon *sister*                    bonera *the sisters or sisters*

-ÿera follows monosyllabic nouns ending in a vowel or diphthong

from ma *mother*                    maÿera *the mothers or mothers*  
 from bhai *brother*                bhaiÿera *the brothers or brothers*

-ra does not display the flexibility of a classifiers as it cannot be followed by case markings. It is therefore classified as the nominative plural case marker for animate nouns.

c. adding a plural quantifier or number, either before or after the noun:

bôhu lok                    *plenty of people*  
 nana sômôsyā            *various problems*  
 duṭo beṛal                *two cats*  
 gach tinṭa                *the three trees*

d. adding a plural possessive noun or pronoun:

amader jibôn                *our lives*  
 môhilader ôdhikar        *women's rights*

e. adding a collective noun either before or after the noun:

pakhi sôb                    *all the birds*  
 amra sôbai                *all of us*  
 gôlpôguchô                *a collection of stories*

f. doubling words. This can be the same word repeated, a rhyming word added or an accumulative noun-pair.

sari sari gach                *rows of trees*  
 kapôṛ-copôṛ                *clothes*  
 gachpala                    *trees and plants*  
 bôndhubandhôm            *friends*

g. doubling preceding adjectives:

ûcô ûcô baṛi                *high houses*  
 moṭa moṭa boi                *thick books*  
 kono kono lok                *some people*

h. adding -ra and -der to animate nouns

-ra is added to animate nouns as a nominative plural ending. It can also be added to the deictics *e this* and *o that* to form animate plurals: *era these people, ora those people*. The non-deictic form is *tara*. -ra is never added to quantifiers or possessive pronouns but it can turn adjectives into people: *bɔʀôra adults* from *bɔʀô big*, *choʃôra children* from *choʃô small*. Equally *gôribra the poor*, *dhônîra the rich*. -ra as a plural ending can, but does not necessarily, imply definiteness. In many cases, Bangla simply does not make the distinction and relies on the context to clarify the situation. In the genitive and object case -ra changes to *der*. There is no locative case.

ajker chelera      *boys of today*  
nagôrikra        *town people*

- (12) tar cinta tar sɔntander bhôbiṣṣṭ niye.  
his worry his child.PL.GEN future about.  
*His worries are about his children's future.*

#### i. plural formation of names

In English we add a plural ending to last names to refer to a family or a group of people: *the Johnsons, the Smiths*. In Bangla we add -ra to someone's first name or to the name we call them to refer to that person plus his family or his group *s̄hel-ra Shohel and his friends*, *dipendu-ra Dipendu and his family*, *kaka-ra uncle and his family*.

#### 5.2.7 Definite – indefinite

In English every noun phrase is either definite or indefinite. The distinction is built into the language at a basic level and contributes to the difficulties foreign learners have with English articles. Bangla is perfectly capable of making a definite – indefinite distinction when the need arises but in many cases the distinction is not expressed because the reference is clear from the context.

Apart from adding a classifier after a noun, definite noun phrases are created through deictic and/or possessive adjectives:

amar cɔśma      *my glasses*  
sei môhila      *that woman*  
tar svamī        *her husband*  
tomar ei kaj    *this work of yours*

As shown above, an indefinite classifier **before** the noun becomes a definite classifier **after** the noun.

ekṭi chele *a boy*                      – cheleṭi *the boy*  
ekṭu jaṅga *a bit of space*        – jaṅgaṭuku *the bit of space*



This also works with low numbers:

duṭo pakhi <i>two birds</i>	– pakhi duṭo <i>the two birds</i>
tinkhana ciṭhi <i>three letters</i>	– ciṭhi tinkhana <i>the three letters</i>

### 5.2.8 Animate – inanimate

The natural distinction between living (animate) beings and non-living (inanimate) things is relevant in respect to Bangla nouns in the following ways:

The classifier *jɔn* and the plural suffix *-ra* are reserved for animate beings.

The classifier *-khana* is reserved for non-animate things.

The lines between those two groups can be crossed as in *adhkhana matrô strilok* *just a slip of a woman* and in *tasera the cards*, used in a magic trick where the cards appear to change colour of their own will. The animate plural ending *-ra* can turn adjectives into people: *gôrib poor* → *gôribra the poor*. It can also turn a verbal noun into people: *ciṭkar kôrara those who were shouting* but such occurrences are rare. For animals, the neutral *gulo* plural is the norm but when a farmer talks about his cows he may well use *gôrura*.

### 5.2.9 Ordinary – honorific

Bangla distinguishes people on the basis of their status. Honorific pronouns and verb endings are used for respected people. These can be professional people like doctors, teachers, lawyers, politicians and professors or they can be parents, grandparents and other relatives. There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between the speaker's personal relationship with someone and the way he/she talks about that person or, in grammatical terms, between 2nd and 3rd person honorific. We can address someone as *apni* (polite) and still talk about them as *se* (ordinary) or we can address someone as *tumi* (familiar) and still talk about them as *tini* (honorific). In contemporary novels the main characters are quite often referred to as *se*, most likely because this creates a more familiar relationship, but there are also novels in which all but the children are referred to as *tini*.

Nouns with *-ṭa* and *-gulo/-guli* call for an ordinary verb form whereas nouns with *-ṭi*, *-jɔn* or *-ra* can go either way. This also means that *ṭa* is never used with honorific nouns. *ṭi* is used with either honorific or non-honorific:

môhilaṭi esechen.	<i>The lady has arrived.</i>
meṭeṭi ekhôno aseni.	<i>The girl has not arrived yet.</i>

Some nouns such as *raja king*, *môntri minister*, *ḍaktar doctor*, *kôbi poet* etc are always honorific and do not take classifiers at all:

- (13) prôdhan môntrī bikale bôktīta deben.  
 main minister afternoon speech give.3H.FUT  
*The Prime Minister will give a speech this afternoon.*

### 5.2.10 Count – non-count

The distinction between count and non-count is, in the first place, a semantic one. Items that can be counted such as people, marbles, rivers, stars, radios and elephants are count nouns; rice, milk, identity, silk, patience, love and sunshine are non-count nouns. The distinction matters because non-count nouns use measuring words or quantifiers to measure them:

æk liṭar dudh	<i>one liter of milk</i>
dui kilo cal	<i>two kilos of rice</i>
ɔnek bhalôbasa	<i>much love</i>

With count nouns ækṭa, duiṭa etc can be used for indefinite phrases, and a classifier can be added to the noun itself in order to make it definite except with honorific nouns (see above 5.2.9).

With non-count nouns ækṭa is replaced by ekṭu: ekṭu cini *a little bit of sugar*. Although many quantifiers can go with either count or non-count nouns, some of them are more selective. kôyek *a few* and kôyṭa *a few* can only go with count nouns, ekṭu can only go with non-count nouns.

### 5.2.11 Case

Case is a characteristic feature of nouns which identifies the role of a particular noun within a sentence. Case adds to the inherent meaning of a bare noun the equipment it needs to function in a sentence.

There is some disagreement among linguists about the number of cases in Bangla. This is mainly due to the desire to preserve Sanskrit patterns and to the application of semantic criteria in the definition of cases.<sup>3</sup>

In order to present a clear picture, this grammar defines case by syntactic criteria alone. Case is a category of nouns and pronouns which is usually, but not always, identified by case-endings and marks grammatical relationships within a sentence.

We have four cases in Bangla, each with its own set of case endings. All case endings are added **after** classifiers such as ṭa, ṭi, khana, gulo or guli.

3. For a discussion of these issues see my article *Panini's Magic – Towards a clearer picture of the Bengali case system* in *Rainbow of Linguistics*, T Media Publications Kolkata, 2007.

Case endings for pronouns are given in Chapter 5.3. Case is dealt with in detail in Chapter 8.1.

### 5.2.11.1 Nominative

The nominative is unmarked without case endings and it is the main case for subjects of sentences. Nominative nouns and pronouns often appear at the beginning of sentences.

br̥ṣṭi p̥oṛche.	<i>It is raining.</i>
sohel bajare yacche.	<i>Sohel is going to the market.</i>
cheleṭi gan gaṽ.	<i>The boy sings.</i>

**Nominative plurals** are formed either with classifiers or, for animate nouns only, with a plural marker (see 5.2.6.2).

### 5.2.11.2 Genitive

The genitive ending is added to nouns that modify other nouns, and genitive nouns by themselves often act as experiencer subjects in existential and impersonal structures (see 7.4.2 and 7.4.4).

nili-r aṽna	Nili.GEN mirror	<i>Nili's mirror</i>
ceṣṭa-r phoḷ	effort.GEN result	<i>the result of the effort</i>

It has the following case endings:

For nouns of more than one syllable ending in any single vowel except the inherent vowel -r is added to the nominative form:

bare noun	genitive ( <i>of</i> )	bare noun	genitive
baba <i>father</i>	baba-r	jhamela <i>trouble</i>	jhamela-r
baṛi <i>home</i>	baṛi-r	t̥oṛkari <i>curry</i>	t̥oṛkari-r
bōndhu <i>friend</i>	bōndhu-r	balu <i>sand</i>	balu-r
mejhe <i>floor</i>	mejhe-r	alo <i>light</i>	alo-r

For monosyllabic nouns ending in a single vowel and nouns ending in a diphthong (ai, aṽ, oṽ, oi or ou) -yer or -er is added, though simple -r endings are also found.

bare noun	genitive	bare noun	genitive
ga <i>body</i>	gaṽyer	ghi <i>ghee</i>	ghi-ṽer
strī <i>wife</i>	strīṽyer	phu <i>puff of air</i>	phuṽyer
bhōṽ <i>fear</i>	bhōṽyer	me <i>May</i>	me-er

The -er ending is preferred for foreign words and in order to distinguish it from meṽe-r *of the girl*.

Nouns ending in the inherent vowel drop the o and add -er

bare noun	genitive	bare noun	genitive
kɔʃtô <i>trouble</i>	kɔʃter	tɔrkô <i>argument</i>	tɔrker
rɔktô <i>blood</i>	rɔkter	pɔtrô <i>letter</i>	pɔtrer

For all nouns ending in a consonant the genitive ending is -er

bare noun	genitive	bare noun	genitive
uttôr <i>north</i>	uttôrer	tel <i>oil</i>	teler
jahaj <i>ship</i>	jahajer	deoŷal <i>wall</i>	deoŷaler
deś <i>country</i>	deśer	pôribɔrtôn <i>change</i>	pôribɔrtôner

The plural ending for animate nouns-ra changes to -der for the genitive.

nominative	genitive
meŷera <i>the girls</i>	meŷeder
môhişra <i>the buffaloes</i>	môhişder

A small group of time and place adverbs retain an older genitive form by adding -kar to the nominative. This formation is well established for some lexical items, particularly ekhankar *of here* and ækhônkar *of now* but with other words the -er genitive is also in use. The genitive form -ker in ajker *of today* and kalker *of yesterday, tomorrow* is a variant of the -kar form. Here are some examples:

nominative	genitive	English
aj	ajker	<i>of today</i>
kal	kalker	<i>of yesterday, of tomorrow</i>
age	agekar	<i>of before, ago</i>
ækhôn	ækhônkar	<i>of now</i>
tɔkhôn	tɔkhônkar	<i>of then</i>
roj	rojkar	<i>of everyday</i>
ekhan	ekhankar	<i>of here</i>
sedin	sedinkar, sediner	<i>of those days</i>

Verbal nouns can form the genitive either by adding -r to the verbal noun ending or by dropping the verbal noun ending and adding -bar to the low stem of the verb (see 5.4.2)

verbal noun	-r genitive	-bar genitive
bɔla <i>speak</i>	bɔlar	bɔlbar
śekha <i>learn</i>	śekhar	śekhbar
paoŷa <i>receive</i>	paoŷar	pabar
hɔoŷa <i>be, become</i>	hɔoŷar	hɔobar
ghumano <i>sleep</i>	ghumanor	ghumabar

### 5.2.11.3 Objective

The objective is used to mark both direct and indirect animate objects. With inanimate objects the case ending is usually dropped but it can be used in more complex sentences to clearly mark the different sentence parts.

The case ending for the objective is -ke:

bare noun	objective ( <i>to</i> )	bare noun	objective
ômuk <i>someone</i>	ômuk-ke	dhai <i>midwife</i>	dhai-ke
bon <i>sister</i>	bon-ke	ma <i>mother</i>	ma-ke

The singular object case ending -ke is also added to the plural classifiers gulo and guli:

cheleguli <i>the boys</i>	cheleguli-ke
chatrôgulo <i>the students</i>	chatrôgulo-ke

The plural marker for animate nouns -ra changes to -der for the objective, which makes the plural forms for genitive and objective identical.

nominative	objective
môhilara <i>the women</i>	môhilader
lokera <i>the people</i>	lokder
bôndhura <i>the friends</i>	bôndhuder

In order to distinguish the two forms, an additional -ke is sometimes added to the -der ending for the objective.

- (14) śikṣika baccaderke gṛlpô śonan.  
 teacher child.PL.OBJ story tell.3H.PR.S  
*The teacher is telling the children a story.*

### 5.2.11.4 Locative

The locative marks physical or abstract positions, directions and processes and corresponds to English prepositions such as *on, in, by, at*. The locative has some specific uses with animate nouns (see 8.1.4).

nôdite	<i>on the river</i>
śakale	<i>in the morning</i>
mône	<i>in the mind</i>
hate	<i>by hand, with the hand</i>

The locative has the following endings:

For nouns ending in a consonant or in a diphthong -e is added.

bare noun	locative
ꠘndhōkar <i>darkness</i>	ꠘndhōkare
ꠘnyaŷ <i>wrong-doing</i>	ꠘnyaŷe
kagôj <i>paper</i>	kagôje
bôî <i>book</i>	bôîye (note the additional glide -ŷ)

Nouns ending in a and occasionally nouns ending in ô add -ŷ or -te

The -ŷ ending is the more traditional form but -te endings on nouns ending in a are on the increase. Undoubtedly the extra syllable is felt to be more effective by many people.

bare noun	locative
kôlkata <i>Kolkata</i>	kôlkataŷ or kôlkatate
kaŷda <i>method</i>	kaŷdaŷ
tulôna <i>comparison</i>	tulônaŷ
sꠘndhya <i>evening</i>	sꠘndhyaŷ
photo <i>photo</i>	photoŷ
eṭa <i>this (thing)</i>	eṭate
oṭa <i>that (thing)</i>	oṭate

Nouns ending in i, u, e, o add -te

baṛi <i>home</i>	baṛite
śanti <i>peace</i>	śantite
śuru <i>beginning</i>	śurute

Nouns ending in the inherent vowel drop the o and add -e

bare noun	locative
pūrbô <i>east</i>	pūrbe
bakyô <i>sentence</i>	bakye
muhūrtô <i>moment</i>	muhūrte

The locative has no distinct plural forms but the singular endings can be added to plural classifiers.

gachgulote	<i>in the trees</i>
se dingulote	<i>in those days</i>
tar smṛtigulote	<i>in his memories</i>

Personal pronouns do not usually take the locative case but the following forms exist:

nominative		locative
ami	<i>I</i>	amate
tumi	<i>you, familiar</i>	tomate
apni	<i>you, polite</i>	apnate

### 5.2.12 Multiple noun attachments

When two or more nouns occur together in sentences, the required attachments such as classifiers and case-ending are, in most cases, added to the final item only.

genitive case ending:

- (15) ami baba, ma ar bhaibonder sãnge chuṭite yacchi.  
 I father mother and sibling.PL.GEN with holiday.LOC go.1.PR.C  
*I am going on holiday with father, mother and my brothers and sisters.*

objective case ending (with nouns, but not with pronouns):

- (16) ṭhakurma prôdip, biplôb o bikaške ḍaklen.  
 grandmother Prodig, Biplob and Bikash.OBJ call.3H.P.S  
*Grandmother called Prodig, Biplob and Bikash.*

locative case ending:

- (17) amra cãṭṭôgram, noyakhali, bôrisal ar khulnaÿ giyechilam.  
 we Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Khulna.LOC go.1.P.PERF  
*We went to Chittagong, Noakhali, Barisal and Khulna.*

-ṭa and -ṭi:

- (18) tumi ghôṛi, kôlôm, kâci, cabiṭa ṭebiler upôre rekhe yao.  
 you watch, pen, scissors, key.CL table.GEN on put.PP go.2.PR.IMP  
*Put the watch, pen, scissors and the key on the table before you go.*

-gulo

- (19) tara am, kôla kômlagulo sãb kheÿe pheleche.  
 they mango banana orange.CL.PL all eat.PP throw.3.PR.PERF  
*They ate up all the mangoes, bananas and oranges.*

### 5.3 Pronouns

Pronouns are a sub-category of nouns and their main function is to stand in for proper nouns or whole noun phrases. This does not apply to 1st and 2nd person pronouns as neither *ami I* nor *tui, tumi, apni you* actually stand for anything else. Possessive pronouns are often referred to as possessive adjectives because they can appear attributively before nouns, but they are still pronouns, e.g. *this is Hemingway's chair* becomes *this is his chair* with the possessive pronoun *his* standing in for *Hemingway's*.

Bangla pronouns distinguish the following categories:

- a. person: 1st for the speaker, 2nd for the addressee and 3rd for everyone and everything which is neither the speaker nor the person addressed.
- b. number: All pronouns distinguish singular and plural.
- c. status: 2nd person pronouns distinguish three degrees of politeness: intimate, familiar and polite.  
3rd person pronouns distinguish two degrees of status: ordinary and honorific.

The second person polite *apni* is the usual form of address between strangers, acquaintances, and work colleagues, but also for particularly respected members of the family. Many Bengali women go through their whole adult lives addressing their parents-in-law as *apni* even if, as is usually the case, they live with them.

The second person familiar *tumi* is used between husband and wife, friends and relatives, although it is not unusual for younger members of the family to address their elders as *apni* and be themselves addressed as *tumi*.

The second person intimate *tui* is used between siblings and classmates. Parents sometimes address their young children as *tui* but as the children get older a change to *tumi* is the norm. For anyone outside the immediate circle of mutually close relationships, the use of *tui* is derogative rather than intimate and should therefore be avoided by foreigners.

It is unusual for adult Bengalis in Bangladesh to change from *apni* to *tumi* amongst themselves or to address foreigners with *tumi*, but in West Bengal a more informal attitude prevails and the use of *tumi* among colleagues and acquaintances is more common.



The 3rd person honorific is used to speak about people in a respectful way, regardless of the speaker's relationship with them. It is usual for a married woman to refer to her husband as *uni* when she is speaking to anyone outside the immediate family.<sup>4</sup>

- d. proximity: 3rd person personal pronouns distinguish three degrees of proximity: near, far and unmarked. 3rd person ordinary pronouns also serve as deictics. Deictic distinctions also apply to some adverbs and quantifiers.
- e. case: Personal pronouns distinguish all cases. They are rarely used in the locative case though some of the forms exist. Inanimate pronouns distinguish nominative, genitive and locative forms. Objective case inanimates are identical to nominatives, though an objective case ending can sometimes be added for clarity.
- f. gender, animacy: Bangla pronouns do not distinguish gender. All 3rd person pronouns can refer to either male or female animates. 3rd person ordinary pronouns can, with some restrictions, also refer to inanimates, i.e. the nominative pronoun *se* can mean *he*, *she* or *it*, the genitive pronoun *tar* can mean *his*, *her* or *its*. Although there is some overlap between animate and inanimate pronouns, there are also some distinctions. This is set out below.

The plural forms for genitive and objective are the same.

Here is an overview of the types of pronouns we find in Bangla.

### 5.3.1 Personal and possessive pronouns

Personal pronouns (nominative and objective) can function as subjects or objects of sentences. Possessive pronouns often modify nouns but they can also function as sentence subjects in impersonal structures.

singular	nominative		genitive	objective
1st ps	<i>ami</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>amar</i>	<i>amake</i>
2nd ps fam	<i>tumi</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>tomar</i>	<i>tomake</i>
2nd ps int	<i>tui</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>tor</i>	<i>toke</i>
2nd ps pol	<i>apni</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>apnar</i>	<i>apnake</i>

4. These delineations are not definitive but are based on my own experience. They are meant as a guideline.

3rd ps ord, U	se	<i>he, she</i>	tar	take
3rd ps ord, N	e	<i>he, she</i>	er	eke
3rd ps ord, F	o	<i>he, she</i>	or	oke
3rd ps hon, U	tini	<i>he, she</i>	tār	tāke
3rd ps hon, N	ini	<i>he, she</i>	ēr, enar	ēke, enake
3rd ps hon, F	uni	<i>he, she</i>	ōr, unar	ōke, unake

plural	nominative		genitive and objective	
1st ps	amra	<i>we</i>	amader	
2nd ps fam	tomra	<i>you</i>	tomader	
2nd ps int	tora	<i>you</i>	toder	
2nd ps pol	apnara	<i>you</i>	apnader	
3rd ps ord, U	tara	<i>they</i>	tader	
3rd ps ord, N	era	<i>they</i>	eder	
3rd ps ord, F	ora	<i>they</i>	oder	
3rd ps hon, U	tāra	<i>they</i>	tāder	
3rd ps hon, N	ēra	<i>they</i>	ēder, enader	
3rd ps hon, F	ōra	<i>they</i>	ōder, unader	

fam = familiar, int = intimate, pol = polite, ord = ordinary, hon = honorific  
U = unmarked, N = near, F = far

examples:

nominative:	<u>ami</u> bajare yacchi.	<i>I am going to the market.</i>
genitive:	tara <u>amar</u> babar bôndhu.	<i>They are friends of my father's.</i>
objective:	tumi <u>take</u> jijñasa kôrecho?	<i>Have you asked him?</i>

### 5.3.2 Inanimate pronouns

Inanimate pronouns refer to non-human objects, facts and circumstances. Of the two pronouns given here, *se* can also refer to animates meaning *he* or *she*. *ta* is always inanimate. In most cases the objective is formally the same as the nominative. Occasionally the objective case ending can be used. There are no plural forms, but plurals can be formed with plural classifiers *gulo* and *guli* added to deictic pronouns.

nominative		genitive	objective	locative
ta, se	<i>it, this, that</i>	tar	ta, take	tate

examples:

nominative:	ta hōbe na.	<i>That won't happen.</i>
genitive:	<u>tar</u> môddhe ekṭa śekha ache.	<i>There is a lesson in that.</i>
objective:	ami <u>ta</u> jantam na.	<i>I didn't know that.</i>
locative:	<u>tate</u> tomar ki?	<i>What's it to you?</i>

### 5.3.3 Relative pronouns

Relative pronouns are used in correlative structures and follow the same morphological pattern as 3rd person personal pronouns. For animate nouns the distinction between ordinary and honorific forms remains in place.

	nominative		genitive		objective		locative
	<b>animate</b>						
singular	ord	hon	ord	hon	ord	hon	–
	ye	yini	yar	yār	yake	yāke	–
plural	yara	yāra	yader	yāder	yader	yāder	–
<b>inanimate</b>	ya		yar		ya		yate

examples:

se ya amake bôleche ta ami bhulbô na.	<i>I will not forget what he told me.</i>
ye cabiṭa rekhe giyeche se nite asbe.	<i>Whoever left the key behind will come to pick it up.</i>
tumi yār cakri kārô tini ke?	<i>Who is the person you work for?</i>

### 5.3.4 Interrogative pronouns

Bangla distinguishes between singular and plural interrogatives for animate nouns. This distinction cannot be rendered accurately in the English translation.

<b>animate</b>	nominative	genitive	objective	locative
singular	ke <i>who</i>	kar	kake	
plural	kara	kader	kader	
<b>inanimate</b>	ki <i>what</i>	kiser	ki	kise

examples:

nominative:	ke ei kōtha bôleche?	<i>Who said this?</i>
genitive:	eṭa kar baṛi?	<i>Whose house is this?</i>
objective:	tumi kake ṭeliphon kōrchô?	<i>Whom are you phoning?</i>
inanimate:	okhane ki ki dækha yaÿ?	<i>What is there to see there?</i>

### 5.3.5 Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns follow on from interrogatives as their formation is based on interrogative pronouns. Bangla has no negative pronouns so indefinite pronouns carry more weight in Bangla than in English. There are, logically, no plural forms for indefinite pronouns but the distinction between animate and inanimate remains. Indefinite pronouns translate as *someone/anyone* or *something/anything*.

<b>animate</b>	nominative keu <i>someone</i>	genitive karo	objective kauke	locative
<b>inanimate</b>	kichu <i>something</i>	kichur	kichu	kichute

examples:

nominative:	keu asbe na.	<i>No one will come.</i>
genitive:	ami karo soᅅge kotha bôlini.	<i>I didn't talk to anyone.</i>
objective:	tumi ki kauke dakte parô na?	<i>Can't you call someone?</i>
inanimate:	amra kichu jani na.	<i>We don't know anything.</i>

### 5.3.6 Deictic pronouns

Deixis is a dimension which, in Bangla, extends beyond pronoun formation. It is found in personal pronouns as well as inanimates and time, place and manner adverbials and quantifiers.

The basic three deictic forms *se* (unmarked), *e* (near) and *o* (far) can stand on their own as animate as well as inanimate pronouns. They can function as adjectives with all nouns, singular and plural nouns and they can combine with singular and plural classifiers to form independent pronouns. An emphatic *i* is often added to the basic forms.

Here is an overview of the types of deictics found in Bangla:

pronouns	UNMARKED	NEAR	FAR	
personal, singular, hon	tini	ini	uni	<i>he, she</i>
personal, plural, hon	târa	êra, enara	ôra, unara	<i>they</i>
inanimate	ta, se	e	o	<i>it, that</i>
inanimate, CL sg	seᅅa	eᅅa	oᅅa	<i>that, this</i>
inanimate, CL pl	segulo	egulo	ogulo	<i>these, those</i>
<b>adverbs</b>				
time	takhôn	ækhôn	o sômôy	<i>then, now</i>
location	sekhane	ekhane	okhane	<i>there, here</i>
direction	sedike	edike	odike	<i>that way</i>
manner	tæmôn	æmôn	omôn	<i>such</i>
type	se råkôm	e råkôm	o råkôm	<i>that kind</i>
<b>quantifiers</b>	tâtô	ætô	otô	<i>so much</i>

For inanimate deictics we have the following distribution: nominative and genitive forms can stand alone as pronouns as well as appear attributively before nouns, ie as

adjectives. Nominative and objective forms are the same but the objective case ending -ke is sometimes added. The locative forms are not used attributively.

	nominative		genitive	objective	locative
UNMARKED	se, seṭa	<i>that</i>	tar, seṭar	ta, seṭake	tate, seṭate
NEAR	e, eṭa	<i>this</i>	er, eṭar	e, eṭake	ete, eṭate
FAR	o, oṭa	<i>that</i>	or, oṭar	o, oṭake	ote, oṭate

examples:

nominative:	eṭa amar boi.	<i>This is my book.</i>
genitive:	seṭar bhitoro ki?	<i>What is inside that?</i>
objective:	e to bôlechi.	<i>But this is what I said.</i>
locative:	ote amar agrôhō nei.	<i>I have no interest in that.</i>

## 5.4 Verbs

If nouns provide the building blocks of sentences then verbs supply the dynamics. Every verb form used in speech and writing consists of a verb stem and a verb ending. While the stem gives us the meaning, the verb ending gives us either the person and tense or the mode of the action.

### 5.4.1 Verb classes

Bengali verbs can be classed into six groups according to their conjugation patterns. These are determined by the stem formation of the individual verb. The stem of a verb is the base form which remains when verb endings are taken away.

Class 1 – 4 below contain simple verbs, Class 5 and 6 contain extended verbs.

C = consonant, V = vowel (this includes all vowels with the exception of a):

<b>Class 1</b>	CVC/ VC	eg	lekh- <i>write</i> , dækh- <i>see</i> , kōr- <i>do</i> , oṭh- <i>rise</i> .
<b>Class 2</b>	CaC, aC	eg	thak- <i>stay</i> , as- <i>come</i> , an- <i>bring</i> .
<b>Class 3</b>	CV	eg	hō- <i>be</i> , śo <i>lie down</i> , de- <i>give</i> , ne- <i>take</i> .
<b>Class 4</b>	Ca	eg	ya- <i>go</i> , pa- <i>get, receive</i> , kha- <i>eat</i> , ca- <i>want</i> .
<b>Class 5</b>	CaCa/CVCA/VCa	eg	cala- <i>drive</i> , ghuma- <i>sleep</i> , oṭha- <i>lift</i> .
<b>Class 6</b>	extended o conjugation	eg	ego- <i>advance</i> , bero- <i>go out</i> .

### 5.4.2 Vowel mutation

Bangla verb conjugation is very regular but almost all verbs have a systematic vowel mutation, so there are no irregular verbs. In order to understand the way Bangla verb forms change from one person to another, we postulate a high stem and a low stem for

all verbs, except for those whose stem vowel is -a. The stem of a verb is the fragment we are left with when the verb endings are dropped.

If we take the form *ami likhi* *I write* with its verbal noun *lekha* and drop off the endings we are left with two stems: high: *likh-*, low: *lekh-*. These are the two base forms for all other forms of *lekha*.

Vowel mutation occurs between two adjacent vowels as set out in the diagram:

i						u	i – e	ami likhi	tumi lekho
	e					o	e – æ	ami dekhi	tumi dækho
		æ		ɔ			u – o	ami bujhi	tumi bojho
			a				o – ɔ	ami kori	tumi kɔro

The alternation in pronunciation from *e* to *æ* and *ô* to *ɔ* is not reflected in the Bangla spelling. Here are the simple present verb forms of two representative verbs:

*bôla speak*:        *ami boli, tumi bôlo, tui bolis, se bôle, apni, tini bôlen*  
*phæla throw*:      *ami pheli, tumi phælo, tui phelis, se phæle, apni, tini phælen*

**Class 1 (CVC) and Class 3 (VC) verbs** have a regular vowel mutation between high and low stem as follows:

The verbal noun, the simple present verb forms for 2nd person familiar and polite, 3rd person ordinary and honorific as well as the present imperative take the low stem. All other verb forms take the high stem.

Here is the stem pattern of Class 1 with the verb *bojha understand* (high stem *bujh-*, low stem *bojh-*) as an example:

tenses	persons				
	1st	2nd fam	2nd int	3rd ord	2nd and 3rd hon
	ami	tumi	tui	se	apni, tini
simple present	high bujhi	low bojhô	high bujhis	low bojhe	low bojhen
all other tenses	high bujhlam	high bujchô	high bujhbi	high bujhbe	high bujhlen
imperative (pr)	--	low bojhô	high bujh	high bujhuk	low bujhun, high bojhen
imperative (fut)	--	high bujhô	high bujhis	--	high bujhen
verbal noun: low bojha, bojha			imperfective participle: high bujhte		
perfective participle: high bujhe			conditional participle: high bujhle		

Class 3 verbs (CV) differ from Class 1 (CVC) verbs in the formation of the future tense forms. All but the 2nd person intimate have low stem in the future. Other tenses and non-finite verb forms follow the same patterns as Class 1 verbs.

Here is the stem pattern with the verb *śoṃa lie down* (high stem *śu*, low stem *śo*) as an example

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	se	apni, tini
simple present	high śui	low śoo	high śus	low śoṃ	low śon
future	low śobô	low śobe	high śubi	low śobe	low śoben
all other tenses	high śulam	high śuṃechô	high śutis	high śuchhe	high śuten
imperative (pr)	--	low śoo	high śu	high śuk	low śon
imperative (fut)	--	low śobe	high śus	--	low śoben
verbal noun: low śoṃa, śoba			imperfective participle: high śute		
perfective participle: high śuṃe			conditional participle: high śule		

In Class 2 and 4 verbs with a in the stem, vowel mutation does not occur, but the -a in the stem changes to -e in present and past perfect in all persons and in the perfective participle. Verbs of this type in class 4 (*ya go kha eat*, *ca want*, *pa get, receive* etc) change their stem from -a to either -e or -ai in the simple past, past habitual, imperfective participle and conditional participle. The individual patterns are shown below. *yaoṃa go* is the only verb in Bangla with some real irregularities in that it has a perfective stem *gi-* and *ge-*. The verb chart for *yaoṃa* is given in Appendix 1.

In Class 5 (extended) verbs vowel mutation does not occur in verbs with either a, u or ou in the stem. In all other extended verbs the present and past perfect in all persons as well as the perfective participle have the high stem. Charts are given below.

Class 6 are a small group of extended verbs with an alternative second vowel o instead of a, ie *ghumôno* instead of *ghumano sleep*. All of these verbs can also appear with o-kar in the second syllable (*ghumono*). This conjugation pattern is standard in West Bengal.

### 5.4.3 Verb forms

There are eight tenses:

present simple (PR.S), present continuous (PR.C), present perfect (PR.PERF), future (FUT), past simple (P.S), past continuous (P.C), past perfect (P.PERF) and past habitual (PHABIT). Tense use is discussed in Chapter 8.2.

There are five verb endings for six persons:

(1)	1st person	ami
(2)	2nd person familiar	tumi
(2I)	2nd person intimate	tui
(3)	3rd person ordinary	se
(H)	2nd person polite and 3rd person honorific	apni, tini

Bangla does not distinguish gender, either in its pronouns or in its verb endings.

Verb conjugation is the same for singular and plural, ie.

amra *we* has the same verb endings as ami *I*.

tomra *you* (fam, pl) has the same verb endings as tumi *you* (fam, sing).

tora *you* (intimate, pl) has the same verb endings as tui *you* (intimate, sing).

tara, era, ora *they* (ord) have the same verb endings as se *he, she* (ord).

apnara *you* (hon, pl) and tāra *they* have the same verb endings as apni *you* (hon, sing) and tini *he, she* (hon).

There are two forms for the third person, ordinary and honorific (→ section on pronouns).

There are three forms for the 2nd person, familiar, honorific and intimate (→ section on pronouns).

Note that all honorific forms have the same endings. For neuter *ta it* and all other third person uses the ordinary forms (as for *se he, she*) are used.

verb endings:

		1	2	2I	3	H
	PR.S	-i	-ô	-is	-e	-en
	PR.C	-chi	-chô	-chis	-che	-chen
	PR.PERF	-echi	-echô	-echis	-eche	-echen
	FUT	-bô	-be	-bi	-be	-be
	P.S	-lam	-le	-li	-lô	-len
	P.C	-chilam	-chile	-chili	-chilô	-chilen
	P.PERF	-echilam	-echile	-echili	-echilô	-echilen
	P.HABIT	-tam	-te	-tis	-tô	-ten

A complete set of conjugation charts is given in Appendix 1. Other verb forms such as imperatives and non-finites are included in these charts.



#### 5.4.4 Imperatives

Bangla verbs have two imperative forms, present and future for the following persons:

2nd person familiar, 2nd person intimate, 2nd person polite, 3rd person honorific. Many of these forms are identical to the simple present and future tense verb forms. The 2nd person intimate present imperative is identical to the low verb stem, the 2nd person intimate future imperative identical to the simple present verb form.

3rd person ordinary (present imperative only)

#### 5.4.5 Non-finite verb forms

Every verb has four non-finite forms:

- a. verbal noun: -a is added to the low stem of Class 1 and Class 2 verbs, -oÿa to Class 3 (Ca) and Class 4 (CV) verbs and -no to Class 5 and Class 6 (extended) verbs
- b. imperfective participle: -te is added to the high stem of the verb.
- c. perfective participle: -e is added to the high stem of the verb.
- d. conditional participle: -le is added to the high stem of the verb.

#### 5.4.6 Incomplete verbs, isolated verb forms and verbal fragments

- a. The incomplete verb ach- *be present, exist* has only simple present and simple past tense forms. For all other forms, including the non-finite forms, the verb thaka *stay* is used.
- b. The invariable nei *is absent* functions as the negation of ach- for all persons in the simple present tense. The past tense of nei is formed with the past tense forms of ach-, the future tense is formed with either thaka *stay* or hcoÿa *be, become* and na *not*.
- c. The incomplete verb n̄ *is not* has only simple present tense forms (n̄oi, n̄o, n̄ô, n̄n) and the conditional participle n̄oile. This verb is used to negate copular statements which have the zero verb in affirmative sentences.
- d. b̄oÿte *of course, no doubt* is the only remnant of an extinct verb b̄oÿta *be*. It is no longer used as a 3rd person simple present verb form but as a sentence adverb, often at the end of the sentence.

- (20) ta    s̄chôje    cokhe    p̄oÿe        na    b̄oÿte.  
 that easily    eye.LOC    fall.3.PR.S    not    b̄oÿte  
*That is of course not immediately obvious.*

- e. *hôbu*, related to the verb *hoÿa be, become* is used as an attributive adjective meaning *future, to be*:

tar *hôbu* *śvôśur*  
*her future father-in law*

- f. *gælô* the 3rd person simple past form of *yaoÿa go* is used as an attributive adjective to mean *past, gone by*: *gælô bôchôr last year*. The use of *gælô* is more restricted but very similar to that of the adjective *gôtô last*.
- g. *asche* is the 3rd person present continuous form of *asa come*. It is used as an attributive adjective meaning *next, the following*: *asche mase next month*.
- h. *bujhi* is the 1st person simple present of *bojha understand*, a fully functioning verb, but *bujhi* is used as a sentence adverb meaning *I suppose, no doubt*. Sentences do not need to have a 1st person subject.

(21) o *bujhi chuÿite gæche*.  
 he *bujhi holiday.LOC go.3.PR.PERF*  
*He has gone on holiday, no doubt.*

- i. *bôle*, the perfective participle *bôla speak* functions as a conjunction meaning *that* or *because*. Examples are given in Chapter 7.6.1 and 7.6.5.

## 5.5 Adjectives

Adjectives have no uniform morphological features. *lal red* is an adjective, *mal goods* a noun, *kôşô trouble* is a noun, *nôşô spoilt* is an adjective, *calak clever* is an adjective, *talak divorce* is a noun, *dôkşô expert* is an adjective, *kôkşô chamber* a noun.

There are, however, quite a few specific endings for adjectives which are derived from nouns or verbs. So, even though we cannot know for sure that a new word is **not** an adjective, these endings can identify words as adjectives. A list of these is given in Chapter 4.2.

### 5.5.1 Types of adjectives

Bangla adjectives are non-declineable. The main types of adjectives in Bangla are:

- a. qualifying (descriptive) adjectives. They can express:
- i. physical attributes, such as size, shape, age, material, colour:
- bôrô big, purono old, kana blind, gôrôm hot, tita bitter, nîl blue, śôktô hard, bichinnô varied, sonali golden, phækase pale, dharalo sharp, pracîn ancient, spôşô clear, paka ripe, nôkôl artificial*

## ii. non-physical characteristics:

lajuk *shy*, manôbik *humane* sôhøj *simple*, sadharôn *ordinary*, buddhiman *wise*, bhrantô *deluded*, diêhara *confused*, bhinnô *different*, maṇi *honourable*, mitô *temperate*, prôbɔl *strong, powerful*, baki *remaining*, daṅṅi *responsible*

## iii. opinion, comment:

ɔprôyɔjɔnîyô *unnecessary*, kôṭhin *difficult*, baje *worthless*, sundôr *beautiful*, bipɔjjɔnôk *dangerous*, ɔnupôjuktô *unsuitable*, bikhyatô *famous*, biśvôstô *faithful*, brtha *futile*, mônorɔm *delightful, pleasant*, ɔdbhut *strange*, yogyô *worthy*, daruṅ *excellent*

- b. quantifying, numeral, ordinal: sɔb *all*, ɔnek *much*, kichu *some*, ɔlpô *a little*, duiṭo *two*, pāçta *five*, hajarṭa *a thousand*, prôthôm *first*, dvitîyô *second*...
- c. possessive: amar *my*, tomar *your*, tader *their*, tar nijer *his own*, nijôsvô *one's own*  
These are pronouns used as adjectives.
- d. distributive: ɔnyô *other*, prôti *each*, prôtyek *each*, ækmatrô *only*
- e. interrogative ki *what*, kon *which*, kæmôn *how*, kɔtô *how much* ...
- f. deictic (demonstrative) e *this*, ei *this*, o *that*, oi *that*, se *that*, sei *that*  
These are pronouns used attributively.

Attributive adjectives appear before the noun, e.g. ækṭa sundôr sɔkal *a beautiful morning*, yɔtheṣṭô karôn *sufficient cause*, kɔra kɔtha *harsh words*. Predicative adjectives occur as complements, e.g. pani pôriṣkar. *The water is clean*. amra khub klantô. *We are very tired*.

Here is a sentence with both an attributive and a predicative adjective:

- (22) tar nôṭun gaṛi khub choṭô.  
his new car very small  
*His new car is very small.*

Most descriptive adjectives can be used both attributively and predicatively.

## 5.5.2 Attributive uses

## a. qualifying, descriptive adjectives

sôbuɔ amgulo	<i>the green mangoes</i>	bɔṛô harîṭa	<i>the big pot</i>
basi bhat	<i>stale rice</i>	ækjɔn bikhyatô	<i>a famous writer</i>

## b. quantifiers and numbers

ɔnek kaj	<i>much work</i>	kichu sɔmôsyā	<i>some problems</i>
ôdhikamśô ksetre	<i>in most fields</i>	aro dôi	<i>more yoghurt</i>

## c. possessives

amar saikel	<i>my bicycle</i>	tar ôbhijñôta	<i>his experience</i>
amader jibôn	<i>our lives</i>	tader baṛite	<i>at their house</i>

## d. distributive

onyô manuṣ	<i>other people</i>	tar ækmatrô iccha	<i>his only wish</i>
prôtyekṭi chele	<i>each boy.</i>		

## e. interrogative

kôṭṭa prôśnô	<i>how many questions</i>	kon dike	<i>which way</i>
kôtô tarikh	<i>what date</i>	ki rôm	<i>what colour</i>
kar ôdhikar	<i>whose right</i>	kæmôn rasta	<i>what kind of a road</i>

## f. deictic

sei môhila	<i>that woman</i>	e bôchôr	<i>this year</i>
æmôn mejaj	<i>such a temper</i>	oi dharôṇaṭa	<i>that idea</i>

Separating the different types of adjectives gives us an overview of the structures involved. In actual language use all these subgroups can combine with one another to form noun phrases. The combinability and order of these will be discussed in Chapter 6.1 The noun phrase. Here are just a few examples. Distributive and interrogative adjectives are included under quantifying adjectives. Possessive and deictic adjectives combine easily in Bangla.

possessive	deictic	quantifying	qualifying	noun	
amar		soḅ		jinis	<i>all my things</i>
tomar	ei		bôṛô	ceṭarṭa	<i>that big chair of yours</i>
tar		prôti		chatrô	<i>each of his students</i>
	oi		alada	skule	<i>in this separate school</i>
	e	soḅ	baje	kôtha	<i>all this nonsense</i>

## 5.5.3 Predicative uses

Qualifying adjectives (a) move easily into predicative positions. All other types of adjectives are much more restricted. The particular restrictions are set out below:

- descriptive, qualifying: no restrictions
- quantifying, numeral, ordinal adjectives become nouns.

(23) tomar sukh      amar soḅ.  
 your happiness my all  
*Your happiness is my everything.*

- (24) eṭa prôthôm.  
this.CL first.  
*This is a first. or This comes first.*
- (25) atmôśasôn tar ɔnek kichu.  
self-discipline he.GEN much something  
*Self-discipline means a lot to him.*

c. possessive and (f) deictic adjectives revert back to being pronouns.

lekhaṭa amar nijer. *The writing is my own.*  
kôlômṭa tomar. *The pen is yours.*  
sômôśyaṭa ei. *The problem is this.*

d. distributive adjectives are not used predicatively.

e. interrogatives

There are three interrogative adjectives: *kon* *which*, *kôṭô* *how much* and *kôṭy*, *kôṭya* *how many* *kon* is not used predicatively on its own, but when a classifier is added *kon* is turned into a noun:

tomar ceṭyar konṭa? *Which one is your chair?*

Both *kôṭô* and *kôṭya* can be used predicatively in specific contexts:

tomar bôṭôs kôṭô? lit: your age how much = *How old are you?*  
dam kôṭô? lit: price how much = *What is the price?*  
alu kôṭya? *how many potatoes?*

Sentences with predicative adjectives can be copular when the adjective stands on its own. Adjectives can also go with verb phrases in non-copular sentences:

copular: duiṭa jinis alada. *The two things are separate.*  
non-copular: duiṭa jinis alada hôṭe gæche. *The two things have become separate.*

copular:

- (26) eśob ganer ɔrthô khub pôriṣkar nôṭy.  
this.all song.GEN meaning very clear [is not]  
*The meaning of all these songs is not very clear.*

Adjectives with *hōṭya* *be, become* describe a process.

- (27) tar pa duṭi ɔsaṭ hôṭe gæche.  
her leg two.CL numb be.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*Both her legs became numb.*

#### 5.5.4 Verbal adjectives

The verbal nouns of many verbs can be used as adjectives. In English these can often only be rendered with relative clauses. Here is a beautiful sentence that shows the potential of descriptive adjectives. Verbal adjectives are underlined.

- (28) soundôryô bhōra baṃladeś, saper mātô ākabāka śot  
 beauty fill.VA Bangladesh, snake.GEN like bend.VA hundred  
 śot nōdī choṭô choṭô sôbuḷ pahāre ghera  
 hundred river small small green mountain.LOC surround.VA  
 kācer mātô svacchô jle bhōra jalāśy bṛṣṭite  
 glass.GEN like clear water.LOC fill.VA net rain.LOC  
bheja bōnbhūmi sundor sôbuḷ dhape dhape neme  
 moisten.VA forest.land beautiful green step.LOC step.LOC descend.PP  
 yāoyā caḷer bagan pṛithibīr sōbceḷe bōṛô ḷtano gacher  
 go.VA tea.GEN garden world.GEN all.than big extend.VA tree.GEN  
 jōṅgôl bōnyô pōśupakhi ar rōḷel beṅgôl ṭaigarer basôsthan.  
 jungle wild animal.bird and royal Bengal tiger.GEN habitation.  
*Bangladesh is filled with beauty, hundreds of criss-crossing rivers like snakes, small nets of water clear as glass, surrounding the green mountains, forests moistened by the rain, beautiful green tea gardens descending step by step, the world's biggest creeper forest, the home of wild animals, birds and the Royal Bengal tiger.*

Verbal adjectives are discussed in 6.3.6.1.5.

#### 5.5.5 Comparison of adjectives

Bangla comparative structures are relatively simple in that they do not usually involve comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. A few Sanskritic forms are still in use with comparative forms in -tōro and superlative forms in -tōmo but they are only used with a few specific adjectives. Here are some of them:

base form (positive)	comparative	superlative	
guru	gurutōro	gurutōmo	<i>important</i>
bōhu	bōhutōro	bōhutōmo	<i>abundant</i>
uccô	uccôtōro	uccôtōmo	<i>high</i>
bijñô	bijñôtōro	bijñôtōmo	<i>learned, erudite</i>
ghcñô	ghcñôtōro	ghcñôtōmo	<i>dense</i>

There are a few other remaining superlative forms which are used as independent adjectives and often do not imply any overt comparison.

*śreṣṭhō best from śreyô good, kôniṣṭhō youngest, jyeṣṭhō eldest, ghôniṣṭhō close from ghônô dense.*

Here is a sentence which shows that the old superlative form has lost its superlative connotation:

se dingulote jâyôntô ar malôti ghôniṣṭhō theke ghôniṣṭhôtôrô hócche.  
*In those days Jayanta and Maloti were growing closer and closer.*

a. with *aro more*

For simply stating that something is *more difficult, beautiful, stressful*, the adverb *aro more* is placed before the adjective:

eṭa aro kôṭhin.	se aro sundôr.
<i>This is more difficult.</i>	<i>She is more beautiful.</i>
konṭa aro sṣta?	amarṭa aro damī.
<i>Which one is cheaper?</i>	<i>Mine is more expensive.</i>

*aro* can be used as an adjective with nouns:

or aro ṭaka ache	amar aro kagôj dārkar.
<i>He has more money.</i>	<i>I need more paper.</i>

and as a noun by itself:

(29) *sulekhar hâyto aro janbar iccha chilô.*  
Sulekha.GEN perhaps more know.bavN.GEN wish [was]  
*Perhaps Sulekha wanted to know more.*

*aro* can be expanded by *ṅnek much* or by *beṣi too much* or by both.

(30) *tar pôriprekṣitta aro ṅnek beṣi biraṭ.*  
his perspective.CL more much too.much big  
*His perspective is vastly bigger.*

b. with *ceýe than*

For: *He is taller than I am* Bangla simply says *He than me* (genitive) *is tall*, except that the word for *than* is a postposition and follows *of me* and, as usual in copular sentences, there is a zero verb.

se	amar	ceýe	lamba.
he	of me	than	tall

- (31) amader gram tomader gramer ceýe choṭô.  
 our village your village.GEN than small  
*Our village is smaller than yours.*

When something is very much *more than*, *bigger* or *better* we can use *onek much* or *onek beśi very much*

- (32) tumi tar ceýe onek bhalô likhte parô.  
 you he.GEN than much good write.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*You can write much better than he can.*

This is also useful for comparing amounts:

- (33) tader amader ceýe onek beśi ṭaka ache.  
 they.GEN we.GEN than much too.much money [is present]  
*They have much more money than we do.*

*aro more* can also be used for amounts:

- (34) tar amar ceýe aro bôndhu ache.  
 she.GEN I.GEN than more friend [is present]  
*She has more friends than I do.*

*kôm less* is used for comparing down.

- (35) se tomar ceýe kôm bojhe.  
 he you.GEN than less understand.3.PR.S  
*He understands less than you do.*

Three other postpositions *theke*, *caite* and *hôte* can be used instead of *ceýe*. *caite* and *hôte* are the imperfective participles of *caoýa look* and *haoýa be* respectively. *ceýe* and *theke* are originally the perfective participles of *caoýa look* and *thaka stay* respectively. They have moved a long way from their verbal origins, particularly in their case use.

In the following sentence the genitive noun phrase comes first:

- (36) khabarer hôte jol khaoýa gurutvôpūrñô.  
 food.GEN than water drink.VN important  
*Drinking water is more important than eating food.*

### c. negated comparison

Since most comparative sentences are copular in structure, they are negated with *nô-*

- (37) tomar ranna tar rannar ceýe kharap nôý.  
 your cooking her cooking.GEN than bad [is not]  
*Your cooking is no worse than hers.*



With verbal structures *na* is added at the end:

- (38) se tomar ceýe sçhòje bamla kòtha bòlte pare na.  
 he you.GEN than easily Bangla word speak.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S not  
*He cannot speak Bangla more easily than you can.*

d. superlative – sçbceýe

When we compare three or more items we use a superlative (*biggest, best*). In Bangla we simply use *ceýe* with the word *sçb* *all* before it.

- (39) eða sçbceýe bhalò.  
 this all.than good  
*This is the best.*
- (40) bamladeşer am sçbceýe mçjar.  
 Bangladesh.GEN mango all.than delicious.  
*The mangoes of Bangladesh are the most delicious.*

For comparing amounts *beşi* *much* is used.

- (41) tumi sçbceýe beşi kòtha bòlechile.  
 you all.than much word speak.2.P.PERF  
*You talked the most.*

For comparing people the word *sçbai* *everyone* is put into the genitive *sçbar* *of everyone*

- (42) dadu sçbar ceýe bhalò gçlpò bòlte paren.  
 Dadu everyone.GEN than good story tell.IP be.able.to.3H.PR.S  
*Dadu can tell the best stories out of anyone.*

superlative with *mòdhye* *among*

If we want to specify the group which is being compared we can use the postposition *mòdhye* *among*.

- (43) himalçý sçmòstò paharçr mòdhye ucco.  
 Himalaya all mountain.GEN among high  
*The Himalayas are the highest of all mountains.*

e. comparing equals

When two items are equal we can use the postposition *mçtò*.

- se tar babar mçtò. *He is like is father.*  
 se tar babar mçtò lçmba. *He is as tall as his father.*  
 se tar babar mçto kòtha bçle. *He talks like his father.*

or, for more complex structures, the correlative pair *yæmòn – tæmòn* *as – as*

- (44) sɔndhyabela jɔŋgôler môdhye diye hête gele yæmôn  
 evening.hour jungle.GEN in through walk.PP go.CP as  
 jhāke-jhāke mɔśa ese chēke dhôre, tar cintao  
 swarm.LOC(x 2) mosquito come.PP encircle.PP hold.3.PR.S his thought.also  
 take tæmôni chēke dhôre dɔmśate laglô.  
 he.OBJ AS.EMP encircle.PP hold.PP sting.IP start.3.P.S  
*Just as the mosquitos on his evening walk in the jungle were encircling him in swarms, so his thoughts were crowding in on him, eating away at him.*

f. genitive comparisons

A graceful but somewhat restricted method of comparison is with the genitive only. It works only with a few adjectives:

se amar bɔrô. (This can only be used with age.)  
 he I.GEN big  
*He is older than me.*

- (45) ɔnyôdin er ɔnek age ghum theke uṭhe pɔre.  
 other.day this.GEN much early sleep from rise.PP fall.3.PR.S  
*On other days he gets up much earlier than this.*

g. non-comparative ceṅe

tar ceṅe *than that* can be used in the sense of *rather* or *instead*. This is an additional use of ceṅe which is not directly comparative and does not involve adjectives.

- (46) tar ceṅe rannabanna śikhe nao.  
 that.GEN than cooking learn.PP take.2.PR.IMP  
*Learn to cook instead!*

### 5.5.6 Quantifiers

Quantifiers are distinct from other adjectives by their ability to take a classifier without turning into a noun. When the classifier *ṭa* is added to any other adjective, that adjective becomes a noun and can no longer be used attributively. *ei laṭa this red one* but not \**ei laṭa kôlôm*. Quantifiers, on the other hand, can be used attributively with or without a classifier: *ɔnek jôl* and *ɔnekṭa jôl* both mean *a lot of water*. Here are the important quantifiers and their uses.

a. ɔtô, ætô and kɔtô *so much*

These can function as adjectives or adverbs. They can be used with count and non-count nouns and can take singular and plural classifiers. The use of *kɔtô* is restricted to exclamative and interrogative sentences.

kɔtô pakhi, kɔtô poka *How many birds, how many insects!*

- (47) ɔtô balu tomar kapôrer môdhye kotha theke?  
 so.much sand your clothes.GEN in where from  
*Where is all that sand in your clothes from?*

as adverbs

- (48) kichu manușer kɔpal etôta kharap ye...  
 some person.GEN fate so.much.CL bad that  
*Some people have such bad luck that...*
- (49) nijeke ɔtô choțô mône kôri kænô?  
 self.OBJ so.much small mind.LOC do.1.PR.S why  
*Why do I think of myself as so insignificant?*

as nouns

ami etôta caini. *I did not want this much.*  
 tumi kɔtô khete parô. *How much you can eat!*

b. ɔnek much, many

ɔnek can be used with count and non-count nouns. It can take ța or gulo and it can function as an adverb meaning *very*.

se ɔnek kahini. *That's a long story.*  
 ɔnek rat hôye gæche. *It is very late.*

with ța:

- (50) tader ɔnekța dũre yete hɔbe.  
 they.GEN much.CL distance.LOC go.IP be.3.FUT  
*They have a long way to go.*

with gulo/guli:

- (51) gramer opôr prantô theke ɔnekgulo byaňer đak śona yaŷ.  
 village.GEN other end from many.CL frog.GEN call hear.VN go.3.PR.S  
*From the far end of the village the croaking of many frogs can be heard.*

as an adverb:

- (52) tar lekhața amar ɔnek bhalô legeche.  
 his write.VN.CL I.GEN much good feel.3.PR.PERF  
*I liked his writing very much.*

with khani as a time adverbial:

- (53) se ganțio ȳkhôn ɔnekkhani śekhano hôye gæche  
 that song.CL.also when much.time teach.VN be.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*When that song also had been practised for quite some time...*

with an -e ending ঁnek becomes a noun meaning *many people*:

- (54) amra ঁneke take svagôtôm janate dvidha kôri ni.  
 we many.people she.OBJ welcome inform.IP quarrel not.do.1.PR.PERF  
*Many of us were not unwilling to welcome her.*

c. ekṭu *a bit, a little*

ekṭu can be used as an adjective or an adverb. It is the non-count version of ekṭa *one* and as such does not take ṭa or gulo but combines only with khani.

as an adjective:

- (55) take ekṭu sômôy dite hōbe.  
 he.OBJ a.little time give.IP be.3.FUT  
*He needs to be given a bit of time.*

as an adverb:

- (56) ami ar ekṭu ghumabô.  
 I more a.little sleep.1.FUT  
*I will sleep a bit more.*

doubled as an adverb with kôre: *bit by bit*

- (57) rater gôbhîrôta ekṭu ekṭu kôre baṛte thake.  
 night.GEN depth a.bit (x 2) do.PP increase.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*The night was gradually getting deeper.*

with classifier

- (58) ekṭukhani gṛôm ca dite paren?  
 a bit.CL hot tea give.IP be.able.to.2H.PR.S  
*Can you give (me) a little bit of hot tea?*
- (59) ekṭukhani cintao kôre na se.  
 a bit.CL thought do.3.PR.S not he  
*He does not think even a little bit.*

d. kôy, kôyṭa *a few*

kôy is a question word for numbers of count nouns. As a quantifier kôyṭa or kôṭa is a shortened, colloquial form of kôyekṭa *a few* (see below). kôy does not combine with plural classifiers and is not used adverbially.

kôyṭa bhat *a few mouthfuls of rice*  
 kôyṭa chele *a few boys*

The question words kôy and kôyṭa are given in Chapter 7.3.2.2 (h).

e. kôyek *a few*

This is a quantifier for individual items of count nouns. Since it is essentially plural in form, it combines with singular classifiers only.

- (60) tader akôrşôn bişeş kôyekjɔn kôbike ghire.  
 they.GEN attraction special a.few.CL poet.OBJ encircle.PP  
*They are fascinated by a few special poets.*
- (61) kôleje bhôrti hobar prôthôm kôyek diner môdhye  
 college.LOC enrolled be.baVN.GEN first few day.GEN within  
*within the fist few days of enrolling in college*

f. kichu *some, something*

kichu has the following uses

i. in affirmative sentences as a noun or pronoun: *something*

- ami kichu bôlte cai. *I want to say something.*  
 ei jaÿgaÿ kichu hôÿeche ɔbôşyô. *No doubt something happened here.*

ii. in negative sentences kichu na means *not anything, nothing*

- (62) tumi yôdi jege theke kichu na şune thakô...  
 you if be.awake.PP stay.PP something not hear.PP stay.2.PR.S  
*If you didn't hear anything while you were awake...*
- (63) tara kichu jane na.  
 they something know.3.PR.S not  
*They don't know anything.*

## iii. kichu can be modified by other quantifiers or adjectives:

- (64) ami ɔnek kichu chere dite raji achi.  
 I much something leave.PP give.IP agreed [I am]  
*I am prepared to give up a lot.*
- (65) sɔb kichu ækhôn tar hate.  
 all something now his hand.LOC  
*Everything is now in his hands.*
- (66) tar kono kichu khete iccha kore na.  
 he.GEN any something eat.IP wish do.3.PR.S not  
*He doesn't feel like eating anything at all.*
- (67) na tumi ɔnyô kichu mone kôrô?  
 or you other something mind.LOC do.2.PR.S  
*Or are you thinking something different?*

iv. *kichu* is used as a quantifying attributive adjective meaning *some* or *an indefinite amount*:

- (68) amake *kichu* ṭaka dite parô?  
 I.OBJ some money give.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*Can you give me some money?*
- (69) apnar sãnge amar *kichu* kãtha ache.  
 you.H.GEN with I.GEN something word [is present]  
*I want to talk to you about something.*

v. when *kichu* is doubled it indicates a smaller, less significant amount:

- (70) hindi bhaṣar *kichu kichu* śãbdô śikhechi matrô.  
 Hindi language.GEN some some word learn.1.PR.PERF only  
*I have only learnt a few words of Hindi.*

vi. *kichuṭa* can be used as an adjective, indicating a more well-defined small amount than *kichu* on its own. *kichuṭa* is also used as an adverb to modify adjectives, meaning *somewhat*.

- (71) sôjib *kichuṭa* itôstôtô kôrlô.  
 Sojib some.CL hesitation do.3.P.S  
*Sojib was somewhat hesitant.*
- (72) somake *kichuṭa* ahãtô dekhacche.  
 Soma.OBJ some.CL hurt show.3.PR.C  
*Soma is looking somewhat hurt.*

vii. *kichute* can have the normal locative use *in something* but it is also often used as an adverbial phrase meaning *at all*.

- (73) tar môn bôsbe na *kichute*.  
 his mind sit.3.FUT not some.LOC  
*He can't concentrate at all.*
- (74) seṭa ami bhabte cai na. *kichutei* na.  
 that.CL I think.IP want.1.PR.S not. some.LOC.EMP not  
*I don't want to think about that, not at all.*

g. *khanik* *some, somewhat*

Both an adjective and an adverb, *khanik* can take *ṭa* and is used mainly with non-count nouns.

- (75) *khanikṭa* hoi-coi hólô.  
 some.CL uproar be.3.P.S  
*There was some uproar.*

Here is a count-noun use:

- (76) raimohôn ɣɔp ɣɔp kôre beś khanikṭa bryaṇḍi ḍhele  
 Raimohan gulp.gulp.ONOM do.PP quite some.CL brandy pour.PP  
 dilô tar mukhe.  
 give.3.P.S his mouth.LOC  
*Raimohan gulped down quite a few brandies.*

as an adverb:

- (77) ei meḃe khanikṭa alada.  
 this girl some.CL separate  
*This girl is a bit different.*
- (78) khanikṭa cena, khanikṭa ɔcena kəṇṭhôsɔr.  
 some.CL known.VA some.CL unknown.VA voice  
*a somewhat familiar yet unknown voice*

h. ɔɔb *all, everything*, ɔɔbai *everyone*

ɔɔb *all*, like ɔnek *much* and kichu *some* belongs to the type of quantifier that can do anything and be everything. The only job it does not do is to function as an adverb with adjectives. While we have ɔnek ɔɔrô *very big* and kichuṭa nɔrôm *somewhat soft*, ɔɔb stays with its role as a quantifier and leaves the modification of degrees to the adverb khub *very*. ɔɔb goes with count- and non-count nouns and combines with singular and plural classifiers. It can function as an adjective or a noun and it teams up with kichu for the all-inclusive ɔɔb kichu *everything*.

ɔɔb jaḃga *everywhere*, ɔɔb sômôḃ *always*, ɔɔb ɔkôm *all sorts*, ɔɔb dhɔrôner *all kinds of*, amader ɔɔb jinis *all our things*, sesɔɔb manuṣ *all those people*, e ɔɔbɣulo *all these*, ɔɔb manuṣ, ɔɔb lok *everybody*. As well as ɔɔb lok there is the animate noun ɔɔbai *everybody* (see below).

- (79) ami ɔɔbguli khata alada rekhechi.  
 I all.CL.PL notebook separate put.1.PR.PERF  
*I have put all the notebooks away separately.*

- (80) cheleṭi ɔɔbṭa bhat kheḃe pheleche.  
 boy.CL all.CL rice eat.PP throw.3.PR.PERF  
*The boy has eaten up all the rice.*

ɔɔb can also be used as a collective noun:

- (81) ækhôn ɔɔbṭa na bujhleo ɔɔrbôrti jibône  
 now all.CL not understand.CP.even later life.LOC  
 ei ɔɔb kôṭha oder mône ɔɔrbe.  
 this all word they.GEN mind.LOC fall.3.FUT  
*Even if they don't understand everything now, they will remember all this later in life.*

sɔbai *everyone*

Animacy and plurality are inherent in the meaning of this word so no other plural indicators such as -gulo or -ra are needed. No classifiers are used. Case endings are singular, i.e. the genitive is sɔbar, the objective is sɔbaïke.

- (82) sɔbai tar sɔnge kɔtha bɔlte caý.  
 everyone he.GEN with word speak.IP want.3.PR.S  
*Everyone wants to speak to him.*
- (83) sɔbar khabar deoýa hõyeche.  
 everyone.GEN food give.VN be.3.PR.PERF  
*Everyone has been given their food.*
- (84) ami sɔbaïke ðak diýechi.  
 I everyone.OBJ call give.1.PR.PERF  
*I have called everyone.*

i. sɔmõstõ *whole*

sɔmõstõ can be used with count- and non-count nouns. Due its all-inclusive meaning, it combines only with ɽa. It does not function as an adverb.

- (85) bamla sɔbar bhaða, sɔmõstõ barialir bhaða.  
 Bangla everyone.GEN language whole Bengali.GEN language  
*Bangla is everyone's language, the language of all Bengalis.*
- (86) sɔmõstõta ghar bherie pòrlõ.  
 whole.CL building break.PP fall.3.P.S  
*The whole building collapsed.*

j. sara *whole*

sara is almost exactly equivalent to sɔmõstõ. It is very commonly used in saradin *all day*. sara can combine with ɽa.

- (87) sara sóhõre bidyut bõndhõ.  
 whole town.LOC electricity closed.  
*The power is off in the whole town.*
- (88) saraða din ghumiýe kañiýeche jýdip.  
 all.CL day sleep.PP spend.3.PR.PERF Jaydip.  
*Jaydip spent the whole day asleep.*

k. amounts (ar – aro *more*, ñek – beði *much, many*), affirmative – negative contrasts

These pairs complement one another in affirmative and negative sentences. They can be used as adjectives, adverbs or nouns. Apart from the uses given below ar is also a



coordinating conjunction meaning *and* and an adverb in combination with indefinite pronouns and adjectives. These uses are given in Chapters 5.8.1 and 6.2.2.4 respectively.

*aro* *more* and *ɔnek* *much* are used in affirmative sentences, *ar* *more* and *beši* *much* in negative sentences.

affirmative	negative
ami aro bhat khabô. <i>I will eat more rice.</i>	ami ar bhat khabô na. <i>I won't eat any more rice.</i>
tar ɔnek ʔaka ache. <i>He has a lot of money.</i>	tar beši ʔaka nei. <i>He does not have a lot of money.</i>
se ɔnek kɔtha bɔle. <i>He talks a lot.</i>	se beši kɔtha bɔle na. <i>He doesn't say much.</i>

### 5.5.7 Distributive adjectives

#### 5.5.7.1 *prôti* *each*

*prôti* is a distributive adjective which shares with quantifiers the ability to take a classifier when it is used attributively. *prôti* is not used predicatively or adverbially and it cannot take plural classifiers.

- (89) *prôti* *ci* *hite* *bacca* *ʔir* *nam* *ullekh* *kɔra* *hôyeche*.  
 each.CL letter.LOC child.CL.GEN name mention do.VN be.3.PR.PERF  
*The baby's name was mentioned in every letter.*

#### 5.5.7.2 *prôtyek* *each*

This is quite similar to *prôti* in its attributive use but it also forms an animate noun in -e *prôtyeke* *each person*.

- (90) *amra* *prôtyeke* *eki* *sɔnge* *tɔthagɔto* *ebɔm* *prôbɔhoman*.  
 we each same with gone.there and flowing  
*We are each of us at the same time past and ongoing.*
- prôtyek* *garir* *nambarta* *likhe* *rakhte* *hɔbe*.  
 each car.GEN number.CL write.PP put.IP be.3.FUT  
*The number of each car has to be written down.*

## 5.6 Adverbs

The work of an adjective is to modify a noun. The work of an adverb is to modify anything other than a noun. The word class of adverbs contains a considerable mixture

of lexical items from time adverbials *ækhôn* *now*, *tɔtkʂônət* *immediately*, *abar* *again* to adverbs of degree such as *khub* *very*, *moṭei* *at all*, *ɔmpūrṇô* *completely*.

In traditional Bangla grammar adverbs are treated as a subgroup of adjectives. This is not merely due to a lack in linguistic terminology but lies in the somewhat fuzzy nature of adverbs themselves. The following word classes contribute to the formation of adverbs:

- locative noun forms: all adverbs with *bhabe* and many other adverbs in *-e*: *gopône* *secretly*, *dûre* *far away*, *ekhane* *here*, *jore* *forcefully*, *majhe-majhe* *sometimes*, *moṭei* *at all* and so on
- adjective plus nominative noun combinations: *ætôdin* (so much day) = *for so long*, *ækhôn* (this moment) = *now*, *ebar* *this time*, *ækdôm* (one breath) = *completely* etc
- perfective participles: all adverbs with *kôre*
- adjectives proper: *ɔrô* *big*, *bhari* *heavy*, *ætô* *so much*, *ôti* *too much*, *yoṭheṣṭô* *sufficient* and so on

If we follow the traditional division of adverbials into adverbs of time, place and manner, we detect a close relationship between pronouns and adverbs.

pronouns		adverbs					
		time		place		manner	
neutral	ta, se	tɔkhôn	<i>then</i>	sekhane	<i>there</i>	tæmôn	<i>so</i>
near	e	ækhôn	<i>now</i>	ekhane	<i>here</i>	æmôn	<i>this way</i>
far	o	--		okhane	<i>there</i>	omôn	<i>that way</i>
relative	ye	yɔkhôn	<i>when</i>	yekhane	<i>where</i>	yæmôn	<i>how</i>
interrogative	ke	kɔkhôn	<i>when</i>	kotha	<i>where</i>	kæmôn	<i>how</i>

These represent only a small portion of existing adverbs but they show an underlying arrangement of the Bangla lexicon which is logical and elegant in its simplicity.

### 5.6.1 Formation of adverbs

There are many independent adverbs and there are a great number of adjectives and also locative nouns which can function as adverbs. Examples of these can be found in the lists below. There are also some systematic ways of forming adverbs.

#### 5.6.1.1 With *kôre*

The perfective participle of *kôra* *do* can be added to adjectives, interrogatives and to some nouns. Some Bangla adverbs will not come out as English adverbs in the translations.

- (91) se bhul kôre amar chati niye gæche.  
 he mistake do.PP my umbrella take.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*He took my umbrella by accident.*
- (92) ei pray niścītō kôre bōla yaī.  
 this.EMP almost certain do.PP say.VN go.3.PR.S  
*This can be said almost with certainty.*

Adverb combinations with *kôre* are particularly common with onomatopoeia (see 9.2)

- (93) ora phisphis kôre kōtha bōllō.  
 they whisper.ONOM do.PP word speak.3.P.S  
*They spoke in whispers.*
- (94) kōtha bōlle dāt jhikmik kôre othe.  
 word speak.CP tooth sparkle.ONOM do.PP rise.3.PR.S  
*When he speaks his teeth sparkle.*

#### 5.6.1.2 With *bhabe*

Adding the locative of *bhab manner, mode* to many adjectives creates adverbs. The first example allows a nominal reading of *bhabe in such a/this way*. *bhabe* is often attached to the adjective.

- (95) se ækhônō tæmônibhabe kōtha bōle.  
 he still such.way.LOC word say.3.PR.S  
*He still talks in just the same way.*
- (96) loktir byktigṭobhabe cnek sōmōsya.  
 man.CL.GEN private.way.LOC much problem  
*The man has a lot of personal problems.*

#### 5.6.1.3 Adding *-e* (a locative ending) to some adjectives and nouns

This is the same locative process by which postpositions are formed from nouns (*bhitōr – bhitōre inside*, *upōr – upōre above*, *paś – paśe beside*) and most of these postpositions can also be used as adverbs. It is noteworthy that some adjectives participate in this process.

*ṭkatōre patiently*, *ṭkarōṇe for no reason*, *ṭnaṃase easily*, *ṭbōśeṣe finally*, *asōle actually*, *gopōne secretly*, *jore forcefully, loudly, fast* *dūre far away*, *sōhōje easily*.

This pattern also provides the standard way of using onomatopoeia in sentences (see Chapter 9.1.9).

*ṭṭṭṭe sticky, cloying*, *kṛkṛe stiff, crackling*, *ṭṭṭṭe sparkingly*, *thṭpṭhṭe heavily*.

#### 5.6.1.4 Adverbs in *-tō*

Some adverbs are formed by adding *-to* to adjectives and nouns.

ontô-tô *at least*, prôthôm-ôtô *firstly, at first*, prôdhan-ôtô *mainly*, bişeş-ôtô *especially*, şambhâb-ôtô *probably, possibly*, sadharôn-ôtô *usually*.

### 5.6.2 Uses of adverbs

Adverbs can be classified according to the word classes they modify. The lists below include adjectives acting as adverbs as well as quantifiers. Many adverbs and adjectives acting as adverbs have multiple uses.

#### 5.6.2.1 Adverbs modifying verbs

chôṭṭphôṭe *quickly*, taratarî *quickly* dhîre *slowly*, anmône *absentmindedly*, ṭhik *properly, exactly*.

- (97) se taratarî côle gæche.  
he quickly move.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*He left quickly.*
- (98) ami ṭhik şunte paini.  
I properly hear.IP not.get.1.PR.PERF  
*I couldn't hear properly.*
- (99) dhîre côlun.  
slowly move.IMP.PR.H.  
*Proceed slowly.*

#### 5.6.2.2 Adverbs modifying adjectives or other adverbs

khub dami	<i>very expensive</i>
beşi calak	<i>too clever</i>
beş bṛô	<i>quite big</i>
praý şambhôb	<i>almost impossible</i>
ækebare pagôl	<i>completely crazy</i>
ækdôm gopône	<i>totally secretly</i>
onek jore	<i>very fast</i>

#### 5.6.2.3 Sentence adverbs

Sentence adverbs are quite distinct from other adverbs in that they do not have multiple functions. Here are some examples:

çbôşyô *of course*, ômni *just like that*, çrthaṭ *namely*, aşôle *actually*, ityadi *etcetera*, æmôn ki *even*, emni *just like this*, çjjônyô *for that reason, therefore*, tçdôrthô *for that purpose*, nehat *of course, necessarily*, bôî ki *of course*, bṛte *just so, true*, bçrôm *rather*, bodh hçy *perhaps*, çṭha *for instance*, yehetu *because, since, namely*, şambhâbôtô *possibly*, hçyto *perhaps*, henô-tenô *etcetera*

- (100) ami emni khub sɔkale uʒhi.  
I like.this very morning.LOC rise.1.PR.S  
*I get up very early anyway.*
- (101) tumi niścɔy̆ bhule gæchô.  
you of.course forget.PP go.2.PR.PERF  
*You have undoubtedly forgotten...*
- (102) kɔthaʒa asôle keu bɔleni.  
word.CL actually someone not say.3.PR.PERF  
*No-one actually said that.*

### 5.6.3 Semantic groups

Adverbs can be divided into the following semantic subgroups:

(1) time adverbials, (2) adverbs of frequency, (3) adverbs of place, (4) adverbs of manner, (5) adverbs of vagueness and (6) adverbs of degree.

Only a few examples in each group are given in the lists below.

#### 5.6.3.1 Time adverbials

There is some overlap between adverbials of time and of frequency, for instance sɔb sômôy̆ *always* refers to a period of time with stative verbs and to repeated processes with active verbs. Adverbs of frequency are given below in 5.6.3.2.

Common time adverbials (in alphabetical order) are:

ɔnekʒɔŋ *a long time*, ɔbôʒeʒe *finally, at last*, age *before, earlier, in front of*, aj, ajke *today, this day*, ajkal *nowadays*, apatɔtô *at present, for now*, abar *again*, itimôd-hye *in the meantime*, idanîm̄ *at present, nowadays*, ei bar *this time*, eimatrô *just now*, ekʒôŋi *right now*, ækhôn *now*, ætôkʒɔŋ *for so long (within a day)*, ætôdin *for so long*, kɔkhônɔ *ever*, kɔtôkʒɔŋ *for how long*, kɔtôdin *for how long kal tomorrow, yesterday*, kalke *tomorrow, yesterday*, ɔtôkal *yesterday*, ɔtôpôrʒu *day before yesterday* cirôkal *forever, eternity*, tɔtʒɔŋaʒ *at once, immediately*, tarpɔr *then, afterwards*, pûrbe *formerly, previous*, prôthôme *at first, in the beginning*, ʒeʒe *finally, ultimately*, sɔŋge sɔŋge *immediately*, sɔb sômôy̆ *always*, sɔmprôti *recently, lately*, se din *then, on that day*.

- (103) dui bɔchôr age *two years ago*
- (104) tumi age kothay̆ chile?  
you before where [was.2.P.S]  
*Where were you before?*

- (105) ækhôn ar ki kōra yaý?  
now more what do.VN go.3.PR.S  
*Now what else can be done?*
- (106) prôdīp ki ækhônô eki cakri kōre?  
Prodīp what still same job do.3.PR.S  
*Is Prodīp still doing the same job?*
- (107) dujōne prôthōme beśi kōtha bōleni.  
two.CL at first much word not.speak.3.PR.PERF  
*At first the two of them did not talk very much.*
- (108) amra hōyōto śeśe abar eki rastaý cōle yabō.  
we perhaps finally again same road.LOC move.PP go.1.FUT  
*Perhaps we will finish up on the same road again.*
- (109) sei lōjja take sōb sōmōy raniye rakhtō.  
that.EMP shame he.OBJ always colour.PP keep.3.P.HABIT  
*That shame would always make him blush.*

se sōmōy, seka, sedin *then, on that day* can all be used to talk about the distant past:

- (110) se sōmōye mōhilader baṛir baire kono bhūmika chilō na.  
that time.LOC woman.GEN.PL home.GEN outside any role [was not]  
*In those days, women had no role outside the home.*

### 5.6.3.2 Adverbs of frequency

Adverbs are given in alphabetical order:

ōnek bar *many times*, æk bar *once*, kōkhōno kōkhōno *sometimes*, kōkhōno na *never*, kōm *rarely*, prōtidin *daily, every day*, praýi *usually, often*, barbar *repeatedly, again and again*, majhe majhe *sometimes*, rītimōtō *regularly, properly*, roj *daily, everyday*, sōb sōmōy *always* sōmōy sōmōy *sometimes*, sadharōṇōtō *usually, generally*

- (111) amar kōkhōno kōkhōno nijer bhaṣar kōtha  
my ever ever own.GEN language.GEN word  
mukhe ase.  
mouth.LOC come.3.PR.S  
*Sometimes I accidentally speak my own language.*

kōm *rarely*. kōm is used as a noun, adjective or adverb. The semantic impact of kōm is *less than expected* or *deficient* in some way. kōm is also used in comparisons (see 5.5.5.2)

- (112) æmōn ghōṭōna khub kōm ghōṭe.  
such event very rare occur.3.PR.S  
*Such events happen very rarely.*

- (113) majhe majhe amar take khun kôrte iccha hây.  
middle.LOC (x 2) I.GEN he.OBJ murder do.IP wish be.3.PR.S  
*Sometimes I feel like murdering her.*
- (114) se amake sôb sômôy ðeliphon kore.  
she I.OBJ all time telephone do.3.PR.S  
*She is always phoning me.*

### 5.6.3.3 Adverbs of place

Some place adverbs are also postpositions and are discussed in 5.7. The remaining common adverbs are given here.

çtrô *in this place, here*, upôre *upstairs*, ekhane *here*, ætôdûr *so far*, edik, odik *this way, that way*, epar, opar *on this/that side*, okhane *there, in that place*, kôi *where*, kachakachi *close by*, kache *nearby*, kothây *where*, kothao *somewhere*, çandike *to the right*, tçtrô *there, in that place*, tçtha *there, in that place*, dûre *far away*, nice *downstairs*, paše *at the side*, pichône, piche, pechône *at the back*, bôhudûr *far away*, bâÿe, bãdike *to the left*, baire *outside*, bhitôre *inside*, môdhye *in between*, majkhane *in the middle*, majhe *in the middle*, sôb jaÿgay *everywhere*, samne *in front*, sekhane *there*, soja *straight on*.

ekhane *here*, okhane *there*, sekhane *there*. These three adverbs can indicate either location or direction.

- (115) okhane keu nei.  
there someone [is absent]  
*There is no one there.*
- (116) amra sekhane yacchi.  
we there go.1.PR.C  
*We are going there.*
- (117) tara ekhane ese bhat khabe.  
they here come.PP rice eat.3.FUT  
*They will eat when they get here.*

dûr *distance* is a noun with some adverbial uses:

- (118) baÿi pôryôntô ækhôno bôhu dûr.  
home until still much distance  
*Home is still a long way away.*
- (119) ætô dûrer pçth ki kôre hâÿbô?  
so.much distance.LOC way what do.PP walk.1.FUT  
*How can we walk such a long way?*

soja *straight ahead* is an adjective meaning *straight, honest, plain, simple*. As a place adverb it is used for directions.

- (120) soja giye iṣṭeśōne yaoṣa yaṣ.  
 straight go.PP station.LOC go.VN go.3.PR.S  
*Going straight will take you to the station.*

#### 5.6.3.4 Adverbs of manner

Adverbs of manner answer to the question *how kāmôn?* Out of the great number of adverbs of manner, here is just a small selection:

ḳatôre *patiently*, ḳarôṇe *for no reason*, ḳḳotyô *perforce*, puṅkhanupuṅkhôbhabe *minutely, thoroughly*, ômni *just like that*, ḳlpe ḳlpe *little by little*, aṛa aṛi *cross-wise, diagonally*, anmône *absent-mindedly*, aśatirikṭô *beyond expectation*, aste, aste aste *slowly*, iniye biniye *elaborately*, æksaṅge *together* æka, ækla *alone*, æmôn, emni *so*, kaktaliyôbhabe *by coincidence*, chḳṭphḳṭe *quickly*, jore *loudly, strong*, ṭhik *exactly*, ṭhikṭhak *correctly*, taṛataṛi *quickly*, tæmôn *such, so*, drutô *quickly*, dhikidhiki *continuously*, dhîre *slowly*, mômnomôdhye *inwardly, secretly*, sḳḳḳgopône *secretly*, sḳjore *forcefully*, sadôre *cordially*, svḳcchônde *freely, easily*, svḳbhabôtô *naturally*, hḳṭhat *suddenly*, hôbuhô *exactly, literally*

The important adverbs of manner are æmôn, tæmôn and ḳmôn meaning *such, in such a way, so*.

The difference between them is the deictic near-far distinction, with tæmôn the neutral element. æmôn is more common than ḳmôn. They are adjectives but can also act as adverbs modifying adjectives (æmôn kahil *so exhausted*) or other adverbs (æmôn taṛataṛi *so quickly*). In order to modify verbs they can combine with bhabe: æmônbhabe, tæmônbhabe *in such a way*. They are also occasionally used as nouns:

- (121) tæmôni ami age dekhini.  
 such.EMP I before not.see.1.PR.PERF  
*I have not seen such a thing before.*
- (122) æmôn ḳḳḳḳkha upaṣe  
 such uncounted way.LOC  
*in so many ways*
- (123) se doṣ ḳodhrano ḳmôn ḳḳṭô ḳḳy.  
 that fault correct.VN such hard [is not]  
*It is not so difficult to rectify that mistake.*

Adding *i* to these words gives them emphasis but the use of emni and ômni goes beyond mere emphasis. They are often used as a sentence adverbs meaning *just like that, for no particular reason*. The equivalent temni can mean *in the same way*.



- (124) kænô ei kɔ̃tha bôlle? emni.  
 why this word say.2.P.S? such.EMP  
*Why did you say that? Just because...*
- (125) ami o take temni dekhechi.  
 I also he.OBJ such.EMP see.1.PR.S  
*I also thought of him in the same way.*

### 5.6.3.5 Adverbs of vagueness

The following are adverbs with an inbuilt vagueness factor.

æk rɔ̃kôm *more or less*, kæmôn jani *somewhat*, kæmôn yænô *somehow*, kono rɔ̃kôm *somehow*, yænô *as if, somehow*, yæmôn *as if*, yæmôn tæmôn *so so*.

yænô *as if, so that, like*

yænô is a conjunction as well as an adverb. As a conjunction it can be quite clear where it is headed:

- (126) keu yænô na jane  
 someone so.that not know.3.PR.S  
*so that know one knows*

but as an adverb its particular role is to fill an undefined gap. The Samsad gives among its definition for yænô *I am failing to recollect just now, what's his name* and so on.

- (127) abar ækhôn ki yænô ækta hɔ̃be.  
 again now what yænô one.CL be.3.FUT  
*Something or other is going to kick off again.*
- (128) ei hat yænô ar tar nɔ̃y.  
 this hand yænô more his [is not.3]  
*It was as if his hand was no longer his.*

kæmôn (*how*) yænô *strange, uncomfortable*

- (129) ki jani kæmôn yænô mône hólô.  
 what know.1.PR.S how yænô mind.LOC be.3.P.S  
*I don't know what came over me.*

kæmôn jani (lit: *how I know*) is often used mid-sentence as a fixed lexical item to indicate uncertainty or vagueness. The sentence does not have to have a first person subject.

- (130) gañta sune kæmôn jani kannar mɔ̃tô  
 song.CL hear.PP how know.1.PR.S weep.VN.GEN like  
 lagche tar.  
 feel.3.PR.C she.GEN  
*The song somehow made her feel like crying.*

5.6.3.6 *Adverbs of degree*

ôti *too*, ôtiriktô *excessively, too much*, ôtyôntô *excessively*, çntôtô *at least*, ækdɔm *totally*, ækebare *completely*, kɔmpɔkʃe *approximately*, kɔmbeʃi *about, approximately* kichute *at all*, kebôl *only*, khali *only*, khub *very*, praÿ *almost*, beʃ *quite*, bhîʃôᅇ *extremely*, matrô *only*, moᅇ *at all*, śudhu *only*, çampûrᅇᅇ *completely*

khub *very* is one of the most common and most versatile adverbs in Bangla. It can modify

- a. adjectives: khub bɔᅇ *very big*, khub bhalô manuʃ *a very good person*, khub gɔrôm *very hot*  
 b. adverbs:

(131) se khub jore hâᅇlô.  
 he very fast walk.3.P.S  
*He walked very fast.*

(132) se khub çhôjᅇbhabe bôllô  
 he very easy.way.LOC speak.3.P.S  
*He spoke very easily...*

- c. verbs:

(133) ami khub kheÿechi.  
 I very eat.1.PR.PERF  
*I had a lot to eat.*

(134) meÿeᅇi khub kâdchilô.  
 girl.CL very cry.3.P.C  
*The girl was crying a lot.*

(135) ar se suyogo khub niche se.  
 and that chance.also very take.3.PR.C he  
*And he certainly takes advantage of that.*

5.6.4 *Order of adverbs*

The order of different types of adverbs is usually time, place, manner:

(136) ora sedin tader baᅇrite khub sundôrbhabe gan kôrechilô.  
 they that day their house.LOC very beautiful way.LOC song do.3.P.PERF  
 subj adv (t) adv (pl) adv (m) obj verb  
*They sang very beautifully at their house that day.*

But adverbs can also appear at the beginning and end of sentences and the order they appear in is relatively free.

Adverbs of the same type go from the more general to the more specific:

- (137) aj      sɔkale      nɔŷtaŷ  
 today morning.LOC nine.CL.LOC  
*at nine o'clock this morning*

where English goes from the specific to the general. Here is an example for place adverbs which shows the opposite arrangement of elements in the two languages:

- (138) 1            2            3            4            5  
 rɔmpur    jelar    paŷrabɔndɔ    gramer    ækta baŷite  
 Rongpur    district    Payrabondo    village.GEN    one.CL house.LOC  
  
 5            4            3            2            1  
*at a house      in the village of Payrabondo      in the district of Rongpur*

## 5.7 Postpositions

Where English has prepositions before a noun, pronoun or noun-phrase, Bangla has postpositions which follow the noun-phrase:

tomar	sɔŋge	
you.GEN	with	
	<i>with you</i>	
tebiler	nice	
table-GEN	under	
	<i>under the table</i>	
ta	niŷe	
that	about	
	<i>about that</i>	
gɔtɔ rater durghɔtɔnar	ɔre	
last night.GEN accident.GEN	after	
	<i>after last night's accident.</i>	

Bangla postpositions are not a closed word class. With a few exceptions, they are nouns in the locative case or perfective participle verb forms, and the dividing line between what should or should not count as a postposition is by no means clear. It is, however, useful to treat postpositions as a word-class in Bangla, not only because of the few underived postpositions in existence, but also because many of the locative noun forms or perfective participles concerned change or expand their meaning considerably in their use as postpositions.

## 5.7.1 Common postpositions – overview

The general rule is that nominal postpositions require a preceding genitive, verbal postpositions do not. There are, however, some exceptions to this (see below).

## a. underived postpositions:

ɔbôdhi <i>since, until</i>	(NOM) jɔnmô ɔbôdhi <i>from birth</i>
jônyô, jônje <i>for</i>	given below (5.7.2.5)
dvara <i>through</i>	(NOM, GEN after animate nouns and pronouns)
	ei śɔbdô dvara bojhanô
	<i>explain through this word</i>
	cheleṭir dvara kajṭa kora hobe.
	<i>The work will be done by the boy.</i>
nagad <i>until, up to</i>	(NOM) epril mas nagad <i>until April</i>
pôryôntô <i>until</i>	given below (5.7.2.8)
prôti <i>towards</i>	(GEN) tar nijer strîr prôti <i>towards his own wife</i>
bina <i>without</i>	(preposition with following locative)
	bina ceṣṭaÿ <i>without effort</i>
mâtô, mâtôn <i>like</i>	given below (5.7.2.9)

## b. postpositions derived from verbs:

ceÿe <i>than</i> from caoÿa <i>look, see</i>	(GEN) tomar ceÿe bɔṛô <i>older than you</i>
çara <i>without, except</i> from çara <i>leave</i>	given below (5.7.2.4)
theke <i>from</i> from thaka <i>stay</i>	given below (5.7.2.6)
diÿe <i>by, through</i> from deoÿa <i>give</i>	given below (5.7.2.7)
dhôre <i>during</i> from dhora <i>hold</i>	(NOM) tin mas dhôre <i>for three months</i>
niÿe <i>with</i> (instrumental), <i>about</i> from neoÿa <i>take</i>	(NOM, OBJ for animates)
	ami ta niÿe cinta kôri na.
	<i>I am not worried about that.</i>
	târ nôṭun bouke niÿe tini beś sukhe
	achen
	<i>He is very happy with his new wife.</i>
hôte, hôite <i>from, since</i> from hoÿa <i>be</i>	(NOM) ɔnadikal hôte
	<i>since time immemorial</i>
hôÿe <sup>1</sup> <i>through, via</i> from hoÿa <i>be</i>	(NOM) amra mirpur hôÿe esechi.
	<i>We have come via Mirpur.</i>
hôÿe <sup>2</sup> <i>on behalf of</i> from hoÿa <i>be</i>	(GEN) se amar hôÿe tomar sôṅge
	kôṭha bôleche
	<i>He spoke to you on my behalf.</i>

## c. postpositions derived from nouns:

## i. spatial

Spatial postpositions retain their locative noun status almost entirely but usually gain non-locative dimensions of meaning, e.g. *tar pichône ænek duħkher kōtha*. *There is a sad story behind it.*

upôre <i>on, above</i>	given below (5.7.2.2)
kache <i>near, at, to</i>	given below (5.7.2.3)
dike <i>towards</i>	(GEN) śchôrer dike <i>towards the town</i>
nice <i>under, below</i>	(GEN) bařir nice <i>underneath the house</i>
paše <i>beside</i>	(GEN) amar paše <i>next to me</i>
pichône <i>behind</i>	(GEN) baganer pichône <i>at the back of the garden</i>
baire <i>out, outside of</i>	(GEN) amar cintar baire <i>beyond my imagination</i>
bhitôre <i>in, inside of, within</i>	(GEN) thôlir bhitôre <i>inside the bag</i>
môdhye <i>between, among</i>	(GEN) tader dujçner môdhye <i>between the two of them</i>
majhe <i>between, among</i>	(GEN) nôdîr majhe <i>in the river</i>
samne <i>in front of</i>	(GEN) baccader samne <i>in front of the children</i>

## ii. temporal

çntôr <i>within, at an interval of</i>	(NOM) tin mas çntôr <i>every three months</i>
age <i>before</i>	given below (5.7.2.1)
pçre <i>after</i>	(GEN) břřtir pçre <i>after the rain</i>
bade <i>after</i>	(NOM) dui bçchôr bade <i>two years later</i>

## iii. circumstantial

pôkçe <i>for, on behalf of</i>	(GEN) amar pôkçe seřa sçmbhçb kçy. <i>That is not possible for me.</i>
pôribôrte <i>instead</i>	(GEN) cinir pôribôrte lçbôn diyeche. <i>She added salt instead of sugar.</i>
bçdôle <i>instead</i>	(GEN) geñjir bçdôle sarř pôreche. <i>He wore a shirt rather than a vest.</i>
biruddhe <i>against</i>	(GEN) yara amar biruddhe oře <i>those who rise against me</i>
madhyôme <i>through</i>	(GEN) ingit kçrar madhyôme kçtha çla <i>speak through sign language</i>
sçnge <i>with</i>	given below (5.7.2.10)
sçmpôrke <i>about</i>	(NOM) sei sçmpôrke jante cailam. <i>I wanted to know about this</i>
sçmbôndhe <i>about</i>	(NOM, GEN with animates) tar sçmbôndhe ækça kçtha <i>a word about him</i>

### 5.7.2 Individual postpositions in context

This section deals with just ten important postpositions in more detail. With every entry below, the following points are given:

- meaning or range of meaning
- case ending of the preceding noun phrase
- occurrence and other uses
- derivation

#### 5.7.2.1 age

(a) *before, ago, in front of* (b) genitive (c) very common, also used as an adverb (d) nominal

tar	age	rôbibarar	age	tar	asar	age
that.GEN	before	Sunday.GEN	before	his	come.VN.GEN	before
<i>before that</i>		<i>before Sunday</i>		<i>before his arrival</i>		

#### 5.7.2.2 upôre (also upôr, opôr)

(a) *on, on top of, above, on the topic of, more than, in addition to* (b) genitive (c) very common, also used as a noun meaning *top*, also used as an adverb meaning *above, upstairs* (d) nominal

tar opôr is used in statements to mean *in addition to that*.

- (139) țebiler upôre kichu bôî ache.  
table.GEN on some book [is present]  
*There are some books on the table.*
- (140) bôyôs sôttôrér upôr  
age seventy.GEN above  
*more than seventy years old*
- (141) tar kôthar upôr kôtha bôlar sahôs karo nei.  
his word.GEN on.top.of word say.VN.GEN courage anyone.GEN [is absent].  
*Nobody had the courage to contradict him.*

#### 5.7.2.3 kache

(a) *close to, near, by, to, from* (b) genitive (c) very common (d) nominal, also used as a noun in connection with theke *from*: tar kach theke *from him*, also used as an adverb

- (142) bařir kache ese gařita kharap hôye gælô.  
home.GEN near come.PP car.CL bad become.PP go.3.P.S  
*When we got near the house the car broke down.*

- (143) tomar kache sahayyô caichi.  
 you.GEN near help ask.1.PR.C  
*I am asking for your help.*

#### 5.7.2.4 chaṛa

(a) *without, except, apart from* (b) all cases, depending on the part of the sentence accompanied by chaṛa (c) very common (d) verbal, from chaṛa *leave, abandon, leave behind, let go*. Unlike most other verbal postpositions in the perfective participle form, chaṛa is in the verbal noun form.

nominative

- (144) ami chaṛa s̄bai c̄ôle gæche.  
 I except everyone move.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*Everybody has left apart from me.*

genitive

- (145) amar chaṛa s̄bar s̄ordi legeche.  
 I.GEN except everyone.GEN cold attach.3.PR.PERF  
*Everyone, apart from me, caught a cold.*

objective

- (146) k̄oṭhaṭa ami tomake chaṛa kauke b̄olini.  
 word.CL I you.OBJ except someone.OBJ not say.1.PR.PERF  
*I have told no-one but you about this.*

locative

- (147) s̄kale chaṛa ye kono s̄ômôy aste par̄ô.  
 morning.LOC except any which time come.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*You can come anytime except in the morning.*

ta chaṛa *apart from that, also* is often used as a conjunction at the beginning of sentences to introduce additional information. It is often best translated by *and*.

- (148) t̄akh̄ono ekhane niȳômit̄ô pr̄ôd̄ôr̄s̄ônī h̄ôt̄ô na. ta  
 then.also here regular exhibition be.3.P.HABIT not. that  
 chaṛa ya ekhane d̄ækhano h̄ôt̄ô take ṭhik  
 except that.R here show.VN be.3.P.HABIT that.OBJ.CR right  
 sinema b̄ola s̄aṅḡôt̄ô n̄ȳ.  
 cinema say.VN proper [is not]

*At that time there were no proper exhibitions. And what was shown could not rightly be called cinema.*

5.7.2.5 jônyô, jônye (*there is no difference in meaning or use between the two forms*)  
 (a) with animate nouns: *for, on behalf of, about*; with inanimate nouns: *due to, because of*;  
 with verbal nouns: *in order to*; with stretches of time: *for, for the duration of* (b) genitive  
 (c) very common (d) underived.

sejônyô (where jônyô is preceded by a nominative) as well as erjônyô and tar jônyô are used as conjunctions meaning *so, therefore*.

with preceding pronoun: tomar jônyô *for you*

with preceding noun: tin diner jônyô *for three days*

- (149) esôb jhamelar jônye amar ðhikmôtô ghum hây na.  
 this.all upheaval.GEN for I.GEN right.like sleep be.3.PR.S not  
*Due to all this upheaval I can't sleep properly.*

with preceding verbal noun:

- (150) ei chôbi toiri kôrar jônye ðeknišiyân ante hôyechilô.  
 this picture ready do.VN.GEN for technician bring.IP be.3.P.PERF  
*In order to make the film, a technician had to be brought in.*

### 5.7.2.6 theke<sup>1</sup> (kach theke)

(a) *from, since* (b) nominative, genitive after verbal nouns (c) very common, also used as verb form (d) verbal, perfective participle of the verb *thaka stay*

In combination with animate nouns *kach theke* is more common than *theke* on its own. This use can be considered a double postposition but syntactically the postposition *kache* reverts back to its nominal function. More on combined postpositions at the end of this chapter.

inanimate noun: rasta theke *from the road*

animate noun: babar kach theke *from father*

*theke* is often used in conjunction with *pôryôntô until*:

sôkal theke rat pôryôntô *from morning till night*

- (151) baire theke takale ta sôhôle cokhe pøre na.  
 outside from look.CP that easily eye.LOC fall.3.PR.S not  
*This is not easily detected from the outside.*

- (152) tar hat theke kagôjer ðukroða pôre gælô.  
 his hand from paper.GEN piece.CL fall.PP go.3.PR.S  
*The piece of paper fell from his hand.*



In some cases *theke* can be used temporally meaning *after*:

- (153) *se theke ki ye hôyechilô tar ke jane.*  
 that from what that occur.3.P.PERF he.GEN who know.3.PR.S  
*Who knows what happened to him thereafter.*
- (154) *amerika yaoÿar theke se mœd khaoÿa çere diÿeche.*  
 America go.VN.GEN from he alcohol drink.VN give.up.PP give.3.PR.PERF  
*After going to America he gave up drinking alcohol.*

*kach theke* lit: *near from*

- (155) *tomar kach theke ami ki peÿechi?*  
 you.GEN near from I what receive.1.PR.PERF  
*What have I received from you?*
- (156) *phiroj tader kach theke bidaÿ niÿe...*  
 Firoz they.GEN near from farewell take.PP  
*Having said good-bye to them, Firoz...*

In the following example *kach* is a noun:

- (157) *ektu kach theke dekhle...*  
 a.bit near from see.CP  
*When you look at it closely...*

*theke* is used with *nije self* meaning *of his/her own accord*

- (158) *se nije theke ei kœtha bœllô.*  
 she self from this word say.3.P.S  
*She said this of her own accord.*

*theke*<sup>2</sup>

(a) *than, compared to* (b) genitive (c) common, equivalent to *ceÿe* (d) verbal

- (159) *ami ki tar theke beÿi jani?*  
 I what that.GEN than much know.1.PR.S  
*Do I know anything more than that?*
- (160) *golaper theke jui phuler gœndhœ beÿi tibrœ.*  
 rose.GEN than jasmine flower.GEN smell much intense  
*The smell of jasmine is more intense than that of roses.*

Comparative structures are given in Chapter 5.5.5.

### 5.7.2.7 *diÿe*

(a) *with* (instrumental), *through, by, via, from, by means of* (b) nominative, object case with animate nouns (c) very common, from verb *deoÿa give*, also used as verb form (d) verbal

(161) khoka dudh diye bhat mekhe kheyeche.  
 boy milk with rice mix.PP eat.3.PR.PERF  
*The boy ate rice mixed with milk.*

(162) amra hat diye bhat khai.  
 we hand with rice eat.1.PR.S  
*We eat rice with our hands.*

following animate nouns in the object case: *with the help of, through, from*

(163) take diye asbab s̄rano hôyeche.  
 he.OBJ through furniture move.CAUS.VN be.3.PR.PERF  
*The furniture was moved with his help.*

Here is an example where the function of *diye* hovers between postposition and verb:

(164) kono kono s̄ndhya se gan diye bhôre rakhtô.  
 any any evening she song with fill.PP put.3.P.HABIT  
*Some evenings she used to fill with song.*

### 5.7.2.8 p̄ryôntô

(a) *until, up to, as long as*, used spatially and temporally (b) nominative, occasionally locative, can also follow verb forms (c) very common, often used in combination with *theke from* (d) nominal

The use of *p̄ryôntô* as a noun in the sense of *limit, extreme* is rare but the nominal meaning pervades many of the postpositional uses:

(165) amar p̄ryôntô côle esechi.  
 my until move.PP come.1.PR.PERF  
*I have reached my limit.*

As a postposition *p̄ryôntô* is extremely flexible and wide-ranging. What has sometimes been perceived as an adverbial use of *p̄ryôntô* in the sense of *even* or, in *śeş p̄ryôntô finally*, is largely a translation issue. The phrase internal structure is that of a postposition firmly attached to whatever precedes it.

aj theke rôbibar p̄ryôntô *from today until Sunday*  
 pahaṛ theke sagôr p̄ryôntô *from the mountains to the sea*

preceding locative:

(166) biyer age p̄ryôntô s̄b bhai-bon baba-maṛer s̄nge  
 wedding.GEN before until all brother.sister father.mother.GEN with  
 bas kôrbe.  
 living do.3.FUT  
*Until they get married all the siblings will live with their parents.*

- (167) ækphōṭa ʝl pōryōntō khanni.  
 one.drop water until not.drink.2H.PR.PERF  
 lit: up to one drop of water you didn't drink  
*You didn't even have a drop of water.*
- (168) bhabte bhabte šeṣ pōryōntō se bujhte perechilō.  
 think.IP think.IP end until he understand.IP be.able.to.3.P.PERF  
*After a lot of thought he finally managed to understand.*

Verbal nouns preceding pōryōntō are often, but not always, either followed or preceded by the negative particle na. In these cases pōryōntō conveys the meaning *as long as*:

- (169) jinīṣṭa bheṅge yaoṃa na pōryōntō abar nōṭun æṭṭa kine  
 thing.CL break.PP go.VN not until again new one.CL buy.PP  
 anbō kænō?  
 bring.1.FUT why  
*As long as the thing isn't broken, why should I buy a new one?*

#### 5.7.2.9 ʎṭō, ʎṭōn

- (a) *like, as, suitable for, according to* (b) genitive, nominative (c) very common (d) underived

ʎṭō is one of the most frequent and versatile postpositions in Bangla. The examples below show its structural features and semantic range.

comparisons, with preceding genitive *like, as*

ager ʎṭō *as before*  
 tar babar ʎṭō *like his father*

with preceding verbal noun in the genitive: *suitable, appropriate*

- (170) surmake pṛabar ʎṭō kono meṃe koleje nei.  
 Suroma.OBJ teach.VN.GEN like any girl college.LOC [is absent]  
*There is no girl at the college to teach Suroma.*
- (171) ei śḥōre tar duḥkhō bojḥbar ʎṭō manuṣ  
 this town.LOC his sorrow understand.VN.GEN like person  
 nei æḥḥṇo.  
 [is absent] one.CL.also  
*There was not even one person in this town who would understand his sorrow.*

with abstract nouns in the nominative and some adjectives *according to, to*:

- (172) gḥre amar prōṃojṇ ʎṭōn śḥbi ache.  
 house.LOC I.GEN necessity like all.EMP [is present].  
*I have all I need at home.*

subidha-mṛtô	<i>at one's convenience</i>
kṛtha-mṛtô	<i>as per instruction</i>
iccha-mṛtô	<i>as desired</i>
ṭhik-mṛtô	<i>properly</i>
bhalô-mṛtô	<i>well</i>
khuśi-mṛtô	<i>according to whim</i>

mṛtô, with a preceding genitive, is used for approximate time references:

- (173) dui ghṛṅṭar mṛtô lagbe.  
 two hour.GEN like attach.3.FUT  
*It will take about two hours.*

#### 5.7.2.10 sṅge

(a) *with* (b) genitive (c) very common, also used as an adverb (d) nominal

sathe is a common variation of sṅge, particularly in Bangladesh.

Although sṅge is predominantly used with animate noun phrases to mean *in company with*, it can also take on instrumental dimensions.

- (174) tar sṅge amar kono jhṅgra nei.  
 he.GEN with I.GEN any quarrel [is absent].  
*I have no quarrel with them.*
- (175) becu ṅnicchar sṅge uṭhe dāṛalô.  
 Becu reluctance.GEN with get.up.PP stand.3.P.S  
*Becu stood up reluctantly.*

#### 5.7.3 Postpositions other uses

Other uses of postpositions draw on the fact that the majority of postpositions are themselves locative noun forms. In the uses below they regain their nominal character. Underived postpositions such as mṛtô *like*, dvara *through*, jṅnye *for* or postpositions derived from verbs theke *from*, diṅye *by*, *through*, dhôre *during*, niṅye *with* do not occur attributively or as adverbs.

##### 5.7.3.1 Attributive uses

nicher pōrisṁkhyane	<i>in the statistics below</i>
bairer manuṣ	<i>outside people (strangers)</i>
ṅnekdin ager kṛtha	<i>events from long ago</i>
amar kacher manuṣ	<i>people close to me</i>

5.7.3.2 *Adverbial uses*

pɔre and bade *later*

- (176) ɔnekdin bade abar dækha hólô.  
 much day later again see.VN occur.3.P.S  
*Many years later (they) met again.*
- (177) byæpaɾta pɔre alocôna kôrbô.  
 matter.CL later discussion do.1.FUT  
*We will discuss this matter later.*

age *earlier, ago, first*

- (178) upôharɾa age dao.  
 present.CL before give.2.IMP.PR  
*Give me the present first.*

All spatial postpositions can be used as adverbs.

- (179) se baire kothao yaÿ na.  
 he outside somewhere go.3.PR.S not  
*He doesn't go out anywhere.*
- (180) bhitôre keu nei.  
 inside someone [is absent].  
*There is no one inside.*

upôre and nice as adverbs usually mean *upstairs* and *downstairs* respectively:

- (181) se upôre thake.  
 he upstairs live.3.PR.S  
*He lives upstairs.*
- (182) nice ar ækɾa phlyæɾ ache.  
 below more one.CL flat [is present]  
*There is another flat downstairs.*

sɔŋge *with, alongside*

- (183) lokɾa ye súdhu ɔsɔɿ tai nɔÿ, abar mithyabadio  
 man.CL that only dishonest that.EMP [is not], again liar.also  
 sei sɔŋge.  
 that.EMP with  
*It's not just that the man is dishonest. He is also a liar.*

5.7.3.3 *Double postpositions*

When two postpositions occur together, the first one reverts to its nominal status. The second postposition determines the case ending of the first.

pɔr theke *ever since*

- (184) abbar      ɔŋge kɔtha bɔlar      pɔr theke tar mɔn khub kharap.  
 father.GEN with word say.VN.GEN after from his mind very bad  
*Ever since talking to father he has been very down.*

kach theke *from close*

- (185) jiniṣṭa    ekṭu kach theke dekhle...  
 thing.CL a.bit close from see.CP  
*if you look at it from close-up...*

With doubled spatial postpositions, the first one often gives the position, the second one the direction.

bhitôr diye *through*

- (186) lal kacar      bhitôr diye      takalô.  
 red glass.GEN inside through look.3.P.S  
*He looked through the red glass.*

upôr diye *above*

- (187) biman megher    upôr diye    yaÿ.  
 plane cloud.GEN on along go.3.PR.S  
*Planes fly above the clouds.*

#### 5.7.3.4 Modified postpositions

Now that we have seen the postpositions that can function as adverbs, it is not surprising that these same postpositions can be preceded by modifying adverbs.

tar asar ɔnek pɔre	<i>a long time after his arrival</i>
amar khub kache	<i>very close to me</i>
babar ækebare samne	<i>directly in front of father</i>
tar mɔrar tin mas age	<i>three months before his death</i>

## 5.8 Conjunctions

Conjunctions link together individual words, parts of sentences or whole sentences. They determine whether the two joined elements are equal (coordinated) or whether one element is dependent on the other one (subordinated). On the sentence level this distinction is equivalent to compound (coordinated) versus complex (subordinated) syntactic structures. The uses of individual conjunctions in context are demonstrated in the syntax Chapters 7.5 to 7.7. Below is a list of the common Bangla conjunctions (in alphabetical order), each with its syntactic role indicated on the right.

Here is an overview of the Bangla coordinating (cc) and subordinating (sc) conjunctions:

ɔ̃thôcô	<i>yet, still</i>	cc
ɔ̃thôba	<i>or</i>	cc
ɔ̃rthət̃	<i>that is, namely</i>	cc
abar	<i>again, on the other hand</i>	cc
ar	<i>and, also, else, more</i>	cc
ebɔ̃m̃	<i>and</i>	cc
o	<i>and</i>	cc
kajei	<i>so, therefore</i>	cc
karôṅ	<i>because</i>	cc
kimba	<i>or, alternatively</i>	cc
kina	<i>whether or not</i>	cc
kintu	<i>but</i>	cc
kænôna	<i>because</i>	cc
tôbu, tôbuo	<i>in spite of, yet, still</i>	cc
t̃be	<i>but, however</i>	cc
tai	<i>therefore, for that reason</i>	cc
tarp̃r	<i>after that, then</i>	cc
tahôle	<i>then, in that case</i>	cc
to	<i>then, but</i>	cc
nôile	<i>if not, otherwise</i>	cc
ñỹto	<i>if not, otherwise</i>	cc
naki	<i>or, alternatively</i>	cc
pache	<i>so that not, in order not to</i>	sc
ph̃le	<i>therefore, as a result</i>	cc
b̃rôṃ	<i>rather</i>	cc
bôle	<i>because of, on account of, that</i>	sc
ba	<i>or, instead, whether</i>	cc
ỹkhôn	<i>when</i>	sc
ỹtô	<i>as much as, until</i>	sc
ỹtôk̃ṣôṅ	<i>as long as</i>	sc
ỹôdi	<i>if, in case</i>	sc
ỹôdio	<i>although</i>	sc
yate	<i>so that</i>	sc
ye	<i>that, which, the one who</i>	sc
yænô	<i>so that</i>	sc
yæmôn	<i>how</i>	sc
yehetu	<i>because, since, as</i>	sc
sutôram̃	<i>so, hence, consequently</i>	cc

Here are the common correlative pairs. Note that this list contains pronouns as well as conjunctions. Examples in context can be found in Chapter 7.7.

ꠘꠗꠗhôn	ꠘꠗꠗhôn	<i>when</i>
ꠘꠗꠗô	ꠘꠗꠗô	<i>as much</i>
ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗôꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗôꠗ	<i>as long as</i>
ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗin	ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗin	<i>for as long as</i>
ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗür	ꠘꠗꠗôꠗꠗür	<i>as far</i>
yôdi	tahôle	<i>if – then</i>
yôdio	tôbuo	<i>although</i>
ya <i>pron</i>	ta	<i>what</i>
ye <i>pron</i>	se	<i>who</i>
ye <i>pron</i>	ta	<i>what – that</i>
yæmôn	tæmôn	<i>such</i>
yekhane	sekhane	<i>where</i>
yedin	sedin	<i>that day</i>
yebhabe	sebhabe	<i>in that way</i>
yerꠗꠗôm	serꠗꠗôm	<i>in that way</i>

In addition to these, Bangla has two coordinating correlative pairs, comparable to English pairings such as *either – or*, *neither – nor* etc. Examples are given in Chapter 7.5.8.

æke to – tar upôr	<i>not only – but also</i>	cc correlative
hꠗꠗ – na hꠗꠗ	<i>either – or</i>	cc correlative

## 5.9 Emphasisers, particles, interjections

This section gives the remaining word classes of Bangla, divided in the following way:

1. emphasisers      i, o and to

Each of these words has particular syntactic tasks and uses but can also be employed to express attitude or emphasis.

2. particles      ta, ba, na, kænô, kôî, ki, ye

These are syntactically loose items which are used to express attitude. All of them also have other functions.

3. interjections      accha, aha, bah, ogo, are, oma

These words are designed with the sole purpose of expressing feelings and attitude. As the name suggests, they are thrown into conversations or narrative and have no syntactic role. It is impossible to do justice to these words by taking them out of context



and putting them into an analytical environment, but a representative selection is given to show what they do. The translations in this section are, by necessity, based on intuition more than on accuracy. Glosses are given for many examples.

### 5.9.1 Emphasisers

#### 5.9.1.1 *i*

*i* is a specifier which is attached to the end of words, after case endings with nouns, and can go with almost anything. *i* emphasises the item it goes with but we find plenty of sentences with more than one *i*. While *i* is glossed as EMP (emphasiser) in the rest of this book, in this section it is given as *i* to show its occurrence.

- (188) *muškil to seikhanei.*  
 problem EMP that *i* place.LOC *i*  
*There precisely is the problem.*

The most regular use of *i* is with the deictics *se* < *sei*, *e* < *ei* and *o* < *oi*. These combinations are so commonplace that they have largely lost any emphasis by themselves but this emphasis can be resurrected with the right tone of voice:

*sei* is used idiomatically on its own to say *Quite right!* or *Exactly!*

Some uses of *i* are lexicalised: *ta that* – *tai so, therefore*, *æk one* – *eki same*, *praÿ almost* – *praÿi often æmôn such* – *emni* (or *emôni*) *just like that*, *ækhôn now* – *ækhôni right now, at once*

The role of *i* is built into the syntax of particular structures and implies *as soon as*:

with imperfective participle:

- (189) *kothaṭa bôlṭe na bôlṭei*  
 word.CL say.IP not say.IP.i  
*as soon as he said this*

with conditional participle:

- (190) *baire gelei tar sôṅge dækha hólô.*  
 outside go.CP.i he.GEN with see.VN be.3.P.S  
*As soon as I went outside I saw him.*

with perfective participle:

- (191) *bhorbela uṭhei kintu mône pôrlô ...*  
 dawn.hour rise.PP.i but mind.LOC fall.3.P.S  
*But immediately on waking up at dawn he remembered...*

In some contexts the emphatic impact is quite pronounced compared to the version without *i*.

without i

o bôse bhat khete laglô.  
*He sat down and started eating.*

tumi sôb janô.  
*You know everything.*

ami to jani na.  
*But I don't know!*

with i

o bôsei bhat khete laglô.  
*He started eating as soon as he sat down.*

tumii sôb janô.  
*You (of all people) know everything.*

ami to janii na.  
*But I have no idea!*

This example shows that i and to can go together, whereas i and o do not usually occur together.

In other contexts the impact can be sensed but often not translated very well.

(192) tar *cokh* duṭi amar dike praṅ sthir hôṅei ache.  
 her eye two.CL I.GEN towards almost fixed be.PP.i [is present]  
*Her two eyes are almost constantly fixed on me.*

(193) sekhane oṅyô kichuri kôtha oṭhe na.  
 there other something.GEN.i word rise.3.PR.S not  
 lit: the word of anything else doesn't arise there.  
*Nothing else at all matters there.*

### 5.9.1.2 o

The basic difference between i and o is that i singles out, o includes. i is a dissociative emphasiser, o an associative emphasiser.

Whereas i is an emphasiser and nothing but an emphasiser, o has a number of different functions.

- a. o forms indefinite pronouns and adverbs from question words

kar *whose* – karo *someone's*, ke *who* – keu *someone*, kon *which* – kono *any*, These are discussed in Chapter 6.2.2.

- b. o changes *now* ækhôn to *still* ækhôno and *if* yôdi to *even though* yôdio

tara ækhôn kothây?  
 tara ækhôno eki jaṅgây.  
*Where are they now?*  
*They are still in the same place.*

tumi yôdi amar kôtha sunte...  
 tumi yôdio amar kôtha sônô na...  
*If you listened to me...*  
*Even though you don't listen to me...*

- c. o is a conjunction meaning *and*, *also* and sometimes *or*

ami o tomar sǎnge yabô.      *I will also go with you.*  
 nao    hôte    pare  
 not.o   be.IP   be.able.to.3.PR.S  
*or maybe not*

- d. Added after the conditional participle and the perfective participle o introduces a concessive element.

břŝti hôle      *if it rains*      –    břŝti hôleo *even if it rains.*  
 kǎrtôbyô kôre    *having done her duty* – kǎrtôbyô kôreo *even though she did her duty.*

- e. After the imperfective participle o is more likely to mean *and*, *in addition to that*, *even*:

(194) hǎyto    aste    aste    tader    sǎnge    mímamsa  
 perhaps slowly slowly they.GEN with    reconciliation  
 kôrteo    parbô.  
 do.IPO    be able to.1.FUT  
*And perhaps slowly we will even be able to make peace with them.*

The positioning of o in sentences is not always obvious to foreign learners. Here are some sentences to show this.

- (195) ǎbôsyô    tar      sǎngeo    strī    ache.  
 of.course he.GEN with.o wife [is present]  
*His wife was of course also with him.*
- (196) pôrichǎnnô    nīl    akaše    cokhe    pôrlô    du-æktǎ    pakhio.  
 clear            blue sky.LOC eye    fall.3.P.S two-one bird.o  
*In the clear blue sky a few birds could be seen.*
- (197) tini    ta    janteno.  
 he.H that know.3H.P.HABIT o  
*And he knew it!*

### 5.9.1.3 to

to is one of the most interesting single lexical items in Bangla, partly because of its variability but also because it requires careful listening and intuition more than learned analysis. Apart from its emphatic function, to can act as the correlative partner of yôdi *if* (see Chapter 7.7.1) or introduce the second half of a sentence with a conditional participle:

(198) kal yôdi ase to bhalô hobe.  
 tomorrow if come.3.PR.S to good be.3.FUT  
*It'll be good if he comes tomorrow.*

(199) côle gele to csubidha ki?  
 move.PP go.CP to problem what  
*If she leaves, what's the problem?*

a. to has some idiomatic uses:

On its own to is used in conversation much like the English *Well? So what? What then?*

"amar kintu take bhalô lage na." "to?"

"But I don't like him." "So what?"

tai to! Quite so! Exactly! ðhik to! Quite right!

ta to bçte or ta to cçbôsyô *That's obvious! Of course!*

na to *of course not!* or, with a questioning tone *not as far as I know.*

ache to! *It's available, it's there.*

"ca nei?" "ache to!"

"Is there no tea?" "Of course there is."

b. to can be asking for reassurance or confirmation:

(200) tumi kichu bôlbe na to?  
 you something say.2.FUT not to  
*You won't say anything, will you?*

(201) moç kôtha tumi ækhôn biye kôrte cao na, ei to?  
 total word you now marriage do.IP want.2.PR.S not this.EMP to  
*So basically, you don't want to get married now, right?*

c. to can stand for an emphatic *but*:

(202) ami kichui bujhi na to.  
 I something.EMP understand.1.PR.S not to  
*But I don't understand a thing!*

(203) ami to manuṣ.  
 I to human.being  
*But I am a human being!*

d. to adds a cajoling element to an imperative:

(204) ekṭu kache ese dækhô to  
 a.bit close come.PP see.2.PR.IMP to  
*Look at it a bit more closely.*

- (205) ki byæpar bɔlô to.  
 what matter say.2.PR.IMP to  
*Do tell me what the matter is!*

e. to can remind the listener of something he/she should know already:

- (206) amader gaṛi nei to.  
 we.GEN car [is absent] to  
*But we don't have a car.*
- (207) ami to sɔb sômôy baṛite thaki na.  
 I to all time home.LOC stay.1.PR.S not  
*But I am not always at home.*
- (208) kintu tumi to dekhechô tar ki çbôstha.  
 but you to see.2.PR.PERF he.GEN what state  
*But you saw the state he was in.*

### 5.9.2 Particles (also called Discourse Markers)

Particles are lexical items which are taken out of their regular contexts and sprinkled into the conversation to add a twist or express attitude. That Bangla is a language with attitude<sup>5</sup> is particularly visible in these particles, in the way they unobtrusively combine with emphasisers and question words, turn up in unexpected places and often add a note of sarcasm, humour, hesitation, hedging, irony or doubt.

#### 5.9.2.1 *ta*

*ta* is, first of all, the nominative and objective inanimate pronoun meaning *it, that*. It can stand on its own as the subject or object of a sentence and is used in correlative structures. But it can also act as a particle with no effect other than a slight hesitation or looking for the right word. In its role as a particle, it occurs at the beginning of questions and statements. Although it conveys a sense of *so* or *then*, it is often best left untranslated.

- (209) ta ar duṭo bhat nebe?  
 ta more two.CL rice take.2.FUT  
*Will you have a bit more rice?*
- (210) ma kɔbe mara gæche amar. ta æk dada ache.  
 mother when die.go.3.PR.PERF I.GEN. ta one older.brother [is present]  
*My mother died a long time ago. Still, I have an older brother.*

---

5. Rabindranath Tagore, *Bangla bhasha poricoy*, Dhaka, 2002, p. 25.

5.9.2.2 *ba*

*ba* is a coordinating conjunction meaning *or*. As a particle it is often used with question words adding a note of doubt or helplessness. It can follow or precede the interrogative directly or appear elsewhere in the sentence. In these contexts *ba* is difficult to translate.

(211) *ɔbôśyô ei niye ækṭa kôbita na likhe ba se kore ki?*  
 of course this with one.CL poem not write.PP *ba* he do.3.PR.S ki  
*Of course, what does he do but write a poem about it!*

(212) *kænô ba esôb kôtha?*  
 why *ba* this.all word  
*What's the point of all this talk?*

*ba* often follows *hâyto* *perhaps*:

(213) *ekṭu khaṭo hâyto ba chilô se.*  
 a.bit short perhaps *ba* [was] he.  
*Perhaps he was a bit short.*

*ba* can follow *yôdi* *if*.

(214) *yôdi ba ora bujhtô...*  
 if *ba* they understand.3.P.HABIT  
*If they could begin to understand...*

5.9.2.3 *na*

Apart from being the universal negator in Bangla, *na* has the following uses:

a. as a conjunction *or*.

(215) *eṭai to? na aro kichu?*  
 this.CL.EMP EMP *na* more something  
*This is it, isn't it? Or is there anything more?*

(216) *kôthaṭa sôtyi na ṭhaṭṭa bujhte na pere*  
 word.CL truth *na* joke understand.IP not be able to.PP  
*uncertain whether this was true or a joke...*

b. as a connector between indefinites or interrogatives:

(217) *sara kôlkatar pranîi kothao na kothao*  
 whole Kolkata.GEN living.beings.EMP somewhere *na* somewhere  
*aṭke ache.*  
 stick.PP [is present]  
*All over Kolkata living beings are confined somewhere or other.*

c. as a connector between imperfective participles:

- (218) abar bhor hôte na hôtei côle ase.  
 again dawn be.IP na be.IP.EMP go.PP come.3.PR.S  
*And she comes back first thing in the morning.*

d. as a particle following second person present and third person imperatives. These uses are given in Chapter 7.3.3.

#### 5.9.2.4 kænô *why*, kôi *where*

Both kænô *why* and kôi *where* are used as rhetorical question words, expressing disbelief or doubt, or a challenge. Translations can only be approximate.

- (219) “dekhechô to?” “kôi na to.”  
 see.2.PR.PERF EMP where not EMP  
 “You’ve seen it, haven’t you?” “No, I certainly haven’t!”
- (220) “oder dujñke ðak debô?” “dujñke kænô? sɔbaike  
 they.OBJ two.CL.OBJ call give.1.FUT? two.CL why everyone.OBJ  
 aste bôlô.”  
 come.IP say.2.PR.IMP  
 “Should I call them both.” “Why those two? Tell everyone to come!”

#### 5.9.2.5 ki *what*

ki has a variety of uses (see Chapter 7.3.2.2 b). In addition to these we find some combinations with ki as a filler word or a *wait-a minute-while-I decide-what-to-say* stop-gap. These combinations do not take kindly to being taken out of context.

- (221) ora ki naki ajke thakbe?  
 they what not.what today stay.3.FUT  
*They are staying today, are they?*
- (222) sôtyii bôlte ki.  
 true.EMP say.IP ki  
*You don’t say!*

ki jani *what do I know?* is widely used, also on its own, to mean exactly what is says. Sentences do not have to have a first person subject.

- (223) o ki jani kar kache suneche.  
 he ki jani who.GEN near hear.3.PR.PERF  
*He heard that from who knows where.*

ar ki *what more?* has a shoulder-shrugging effect.

- (224) yabo ar ki.  
go.1.FUT more what  
*Might as well go.*
- (225) bhôye môre gechilam ar ki.  
fear.LOC die.PP go.1.P.PERF more what  
*I nearly died with fear.*

ki yænô *what as if* indicates vagueness.

- (226) lokṭi eiṭuku bôle ki yænô bhabte thake.  
man.CL this.bit say.PP what as if think.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*The man said this much and then remained thinking about who knows what.*

### 5.9.2.6 ye that

When used as a particle *ye* often has a softening or mollifying effect. It is usually attached to the end of sentences and tends to resist translation. It is similar to *but* weaker than *to*. More often than not it implies *so*, *that* or *because*. It has been left untranslated in the glosses.

- (227) æmôni kôre tini dekhte can ye.  
such do.PP he.H look.IP want.3.H.PR.S ye  
*He just wants to see it.*
- (228) etô sôkal sôkal ele ye aj?  
so morning morning come.2.P.S ye today  
*You have come so early today?*

### 5.9.3 Interjections

Interjections express emotions such as joy, amazement, surprise, dismay, disgust, fear, disdain, indignation, outrage, despair, pain or well-being. An indication of their emotional content is given for each of the following examples.

accha *OK, fine, well*

- (229) accha, tahôle to bhalô.  
INT that.be.CP EMP good  
*OK, that's good.*

aha *oh, well now*

- (230) aha, ami to tai mône kôrechi.  
INT I EMP that.EMP mind.LOC do.1.PR.C  
*Well now, that's just as I thought.*

baḥ *wow*, expressing amazement, joy, surprise



- (231) bah, ki sundôr kôtha bôlthe śikheche meyeṭi.  
 INT what beautiful word speak.IP learn.3.PR.PERF girl.CL  
*Wow, how beautifully the girl has learnt to speak.*

ogo, mago expressing: despair, regret

- (232) ogo amar jībônṭa charkhare gælô go.  
 INT my life.CL ruin.LOC go.3.P.S INT  
*Oh, my life has gone to ruin.*

uḥ expressing: revulsion

- (233) uḥ, ar śunte cai na!  
 INT more hear.IP want.1PR.S not  
*Ugh, I don't want to hear any more!*

ajñe, are expressing: exasperation, helplessness

- (234) lokṭi bôllô, ajñe, amar sômôrthôn kichui nei.  
 man.CL say.3.P.S INT my support something EMP [is absent]  
*The man said, 'I have nothing at all to support me.'*

are na *no way* or mild contradiction

- (235) "se yabe na apnar sônge?" "are na!"  
 he go.3.FUT not you.H.GEN with INT  
*'Won't he go with you?' 'No way!'*

oma expressing: consternation, surprise

- (236) oma, ke bôleche se kôthaṭa?  
 INT who say.3.PR.PERF that word.CL  
*Well I never. Who said that?*

chiḥ expressing: disgust

- (237) chiḥ, ei rākôm kôtha bôlchô kænô?  
 INT this.EMP kind word say.2.PR.C why  
*Argh, why are you talking like that?*

is expressing: pain, sympathy

- (238) is, tomar bytha lagche na?  
 INT you.GEN pain feel.3.PR.C not  
*Uh, doesn't that hurt?*

haḥ, haḥre expressing sympathy, regret

- (239) haý, haý, etô choṭô bacca!  
INT INT such small child  
*Oh Lord, such a small child!*

dūr, dūr hɔ expressing anger, impatience, rejection

- (240) dūr hɔ, ar kɔtô bar bôlte hɔbe?  
INT more how.much time say.IP be.3.FUT  
*For goodness' sake, how many more times do I have to say it?*

## CHAPTER 6

# Phrase structure

In this chapter we are taking a closer look at the functions, uses and contexts of the inflected word classes of Bengali, namely nouns, pronouns and verbs.

### 6.1 The noun phrase

The structure of Bangla noun phrases ranges from bare nouns or even a single deictic e *this!* to quite complex formations. In sentences noun phrases occur as subjects, objects, complements or locative phrases but their internal structure is the same. For the present purpose we take the noun phrase out of its sentence context. The term MODIFIER in connection with noun phrases is used to describe the categories (a) to (d) below. Apart from classifiers (ṭa, ṭi etc), which are attached to nouns, quantifiers or numerals, all the remaining modifiers function as attributive adjectives and come before the noun. When they come together, they appear in the following order.

#### 6.1.1 The modifiers

- a. possessives: amar *my*, tomader *your* (pl), maḡer *mother's*
- b. deictics: e, ei *this*, o, oi, se, sei *that*
- c. quantifiers or numerals: ñek *much*, kichu *some*, sãb *all*, kãtô *how much*, æk *one*, dui *two*, hajar *a thousand* etc
- d. qualifiers (attributive, qualifying adjectives): bãṛô *big*, sundôr *beautiful*, kharap *bad* etc.

The sequential order of modifiers is quite stable. The way they occur with one another and their relationships with classifiers (x) within noun phrases is set out below. Noun phrases do not necessarily have a classifier at all, as we saw earlier. There can never be more than one classifier in a noun phrase.

(x) classifiers (CL): ṭa, ṭo, ṭi, khana, jãn, ṭu, gulo...

Here are two typical patterns:

(a)	(b)	(c)	(x)	(d)	noun
amar	e	tin	ṭa	choṭô	chele
my	this	three	CL	small	son
<i>these three small sons of mine</i>					

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	noun	(x)
tomar	se	jôruri	kagôj	guli	
your	that	urgent	paper	CL.PL	
<i>those urgent papers of yours</i>					

### 6.1.2 Possessives

These range from simple attributive pronouns such as *amar, tomar* *my, your* to strings of genitives:

(a)			(c)	NOUN
maÿer	biÿer	sômôÿkar	dukhana	cuÿi
mother.GEN	wedding.GEN	time.GEN	two.CL	bracelet
<i>two bracelets from the time of mother's wedding</i>				

Possessives can take a classifier and form a noun phrase by themselves: *amarÿa mine, tomarÿa yours*.

Possessives appear with nouns alone: *amar svamî my husband, agneyôgirir sômkhya the number of volcanoes, pôribôrtôner karôn the reason for the change*.

Possessives combine with deictics, quantifiers and qualifiers and precede them all. with deictics:

(a)	(b)	NOUN	(x)
amader	e	prôkôlpô	ÿa
our	this	project.	CL
<i>this project of ours</i>			

When the order of possessives and deictics is reversed, the deictic inevitably becomes a noun phrase of its own:

(a)	(b)	NOUN
amar	ei	chele
<i>this son of mine</i>		

**but** (b) = NOUN (a) NOUN  
ei amar chele  
*This is my son.*

with quantifiers or numerals:

(a)	(c)	(x)	NOUN
tar	dui-	jôn	bou
his	two	CL	wife
<i>his two wives</i>			
tader	sômôstô-	ÿa	sômpôtti
their	total.	CL	property
<i>the whole of their property</i>			

with qualifiers:

(a)	(d)	NOUN	(x)
rimar	sundôr	bagan-	ṭa
Rima's	beautiful	garden.	CL
<i>Rima's beautiful garden</i>			
tar nijer	ɔsthir	môn-	ṭa
his own	restless	mind	CL
<i>his own restless mind</i>			

### 6.1.3 Deictics

In combination with other modifiers, deictics follow possessives and precede quantifiers and qualifiers.

Deictics are selective with quantifiers or numerals. They easily link up with numbers, with *kɔ̃yek* *a few*, and with *sɔ̃môstô*, *sɔ̃kôl*, *sɔ̃b* *all*. *ætô* and *ɔtô* are themselves deictic quantifiers. Combinations with indefinite quantifiers such as *kichu* *some* or *ɔnek* *much* are unlikely. Pre-nominal quantifiers and numbers usually produce an indefinite noun-phrase such as *ækṭa chele* *a boy*, *tinṭe chôbi* *three pictures*. With a deictic these noun phrases become definite *ei ækṭa chele* *that one boy*, *ei tinṭe chôbi* *these three pictures*.

(b)	(c)	(x)	NOUN
se	sɔ̃b	jhamela	
that	all	fuss	
<i>all that fuss</i>			
ei	kɔ̃y	ṭa	lain
this	few	CL	line
<i>these few lines</i>			

Deictics combine with qualifiers:

(b)	(d)	NOUN	(x)
se	ɔbhabônîyô	ghɔ̃ṭôna-	ṭa
that	unthinkable	event.	CL
<i>that unexpected event</i>			

### 6.1.4 Quantifiers and numbers

As we have already seen, quantifiers and numbers have a special status in noun phrases. Numbers almost automatically claim the classifier: *păçta bôî*, never *\*păc bôîṭa*. Quantifiers are a bit more varied but they also take the classifier away from the noun. Measure words such as *kilô* *kilo*, *mail* *miles*, *gɔ̃j* *yard*, *mɔ̃n* *maund* can stand in for classifiers in that they follow a quantifier directly.

duiṭa anarṣ two pineapples – dui joṛa anarṣ two pairs of pineapples

Quantifiers and numbers combine with qualifiers:

(c)	(x)	(d)	NOUN
kichu		paka	am
<i>some ripe mangoes</i>			
hajar-	ṭa	biraktôkr	prôšnô
<i>endless annoying questions</i>			

As the examples show, quantifiers before the noun, with or without a classifier, result in indefinite noun phrases.

### 6.1.5 Qualifiers

Qualifier- noun combinations without a classifier are likely to produce non-count or plural noun phrases.

non-count:

- (1) sôbuj sabaner dam kṭô?  
green soap.GEN price how much  
*How much is green soap?*
- (2) moṭa caul kinte hṭbe.  
coarse rice buy.IP be.3.FUT  
*Coarse rice has to be bought.*

plural: kṛa kṭha *harsh words*      kâca kôla *green bananas*  
dami kapôr *expensive clothes*      dhônî lok *rich people*

A qualifier plus a noun with a classifier gives us definite noun-phrases:

(d)	NOUN	(x)
bṛô	baṛi-	gulo
big	house	CL.PL
<i>the big houses</i>		
kalo	kôlôm-	ṭa
black	pen	CL
<i>the black pen</i>		

### 6.1.6 Reversed order quantifiers

Quantifiers and qualifiers can swap places. This occurs in order to give the qualifying adjective a more prominent position or sometimes just to create a different rhythm. It is particularly common when the qualifier is modified by *khub* *very* or *onek* *much*.

examples	(d)	(c)	(x)	NOUN
	birat̪	æk-	ʈa	nôdī
	huge	one	CL	river
	<i>a huge river</i>			
	bhīṣôn	bɔ̃rô du-	ʈi	hati
	extremely big	two	CL	elephant
	<i>two huge elephants</i>			

These reversals occur much more often with the unobtrusive ækʈa than with other numbers and they do not occur at all with sɔb *all*, ɔnek *much* or kichu *some*.

### 6.1.7 bɔ̃rô ækʈa and khub ækʈa na *not much*

Two off-shoots of this reversal are bɔ̃rô ækʈa big one.CL and khub ækʈa very one.CL, used as adjectives or adverbs, always negated and meaning *not much*, *hardly*, *hardly at all*. They can have a noun following but often also appear with verbs.

as attributive adjective:

- (3) tate amar khub ækʈa ɔsubidha hɔ̃ni.  
 that.LOC my very one.CL inconvenience not be.3.PR.PERF  
*That didn't bother me much.*

as adverb:

- (4) tɔkhôn theke kôtha ar bɔ̃rô ækʈa bôle ni.  
 then from word more big one.CL not.say.3.PR.PERF  
*Since then she has not said much.*

### 6.1.8 Numbers with and without classifiers

ʈa or ʈi are added to numerals almost as an automatic procedure. There are some specific situations which cause the classifier to be dropped:

- a. when the numeral is followed by a measure word, a collective noun or a *type* word.

car mail dūre	<i>four miles away</i>	æk gɔj kapỗr	<i>a yard of cloth</i>
dui peyala kôphi	<i>two mugs of coffee</i>	æk phỗta ghum	<i>a wink of sleep</i>
æk jora juta	<i>a pair of shoes</i>	ækɔkôm ɔsukh	<i>a kind of illness</i>

- b. when the numeral is followed by a stretch of time:

tin mas	<i>three months</i>	æk din	<i>one day</i>
dɔ́s miniṭ	<i>ten minutes</i>	car bɔ̃chôr age	<i>four years ago</i>

- c. when the numerical element is the focus or the number is considered a total:

tader tin chele	<i>They have three sons.</i>
amader dui meyê bharôte	<i>Both our daughters are in India.</i>

- d. at the beginning of stories and for emphasis, when a new subject is introduced, in titles or headlines:

pāc boner gɔlpô *the story of the five sisters*  
 æk bindu sīdur *a drop of vermillion*  
 æk sundôr sɔkale *on a beautiful morning*

### 6.1.9 æk and ækṭa

In addition to the above, æk is used without a classifier when it means *the same* rather than the number *one*:

- (5) tara æk ɔphise kaj kɔre.  
 they one office.LOC work do.3.PR.S  
*They work in the same office.*
- (6) bhalô bôlte sɔkôle æk jinis bojhe na.  
 good say.IP everyone one thing understand.3.PR.S not  
*Goodness is not the same thing to everyone.*

## 6.2 Pronouns in use

The following sections bring together some further aspects of pronouns and their uses in sentences.

### 6.2.1 Independent deictics

The spatial properties of *se* neutral, *e* near and *o* far deictics, which are set out in 5.3 become almost irrelevant in actual language use. This means that the role of deictics as pointers is more important than where they point. We find instead that, when used as free-standing items, *e* is predominantly used with inanimate, *o* with animate referents.

Here are some examples with *e* and *ei* as independent pronouns.

- (7) ei to ami tomake bôlechi.  
 this.EMP EMP I you.OBJ say.1.PR.PERF  
*I have told you this.*
- (8) choṭô theke to ei śikheche.  
 small from EMP this.EMP learn.3.PR.PERF  
*They have been learning this since they were small.*
- (9) e theke ɔnek kichu bojha yaý.  
 this from much something understand.VN go.3.PR.S  
*One can draw a lot of conclusions from that.*



se could be used instead of e in these examples, but the use of o is less likely since o on its own is almost invariably used with human referents.

In attributive uses such as *ei bôî this book* and *oi śhōre in that town*, the near-far dimensions are again restored.

### 6.2.2 Indefinites

This section deals with uses of indefinite pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. The dividing line between pronouns on the one hand and adverbs and adjectives on the other is not helpful in the consideration of these structures. All the items listed below will therefore be understood as indefinites.

Indefinites are formed by adding o (or its variants) to question words.

interrogative		indefinite	
ke	<i>who</i>	keu	<i>someone</i>
kar	<i>whose</i>	karo	<i>someone's</i>
kake	<i>to whom</i>	kauke	<i>to someone</i>
ki	<i>what</i>	kichu	<i>some, something</i>
kotha	<i>where</i>	kothao	<i>somewhere</i>
kăkhôn	<i>when</i>	kăkhôno	<i>sometimes, ever</i>
kon	<i>which</i>	kono	<i>any</i>

A list of indefinite pronouns was given in 5.3.5. The remaining indefinites are *kothao somewhere*, *kăkhôno ever*, *kono any*. *kichu* counts as a quantifier and is given under 5.5.6.(f).

Bangla has no negative nouns, pronouns or adverbs such as *nobody*, *nothing*, *never* or *nowhere*. Negation in Bangla happens on the sentence level instead. Indefinites in connection with a sentence negator such as *na*, *ni*, *nô* or *nei* result in these negative items. Indefinites are also essential in interrogative contexts.

Here are some examples:

- a. *kothao somewhere, anywhere* – *kothao* + negative *nowhere*  
affirmative:

- (10) *ami take age kothao dekhechi.*  
I he.OBJ before somewhere see.1.PR.PERF  
*I have seen him somewhere before.*

interrogative:

- (11) *cabîta kothao paoÿa gæche?*  
key.CL somewhere find.VN go.3.PR.PERF  
*Has the key been found anywhere?*

negative:

- (12) ætô bɔʃô ʃebil kothao rakha yetô na.  
 such big table somewhere put.VN go.3.P.HABIT not  
*We have nowhere to put such a big table.*

b. kôkhôno *ever, sometimes* – kôkhôno na *never*

kono din *any day* is used as well as kôkhôno in questions. The phrase kono dino na can replace kôkhôno na for *never*.

affirmative:

- (13) se kôkhôno astô.  
 he sometimes come.3.P.HABIT  
*He used to come occasionally.*

interrogative:

- (14) tumi ki kôkhôno cimʃi mach kheýechô?  
 you what ever shrimp.fish eat.2.PR.PERF  
*Have you ever eaten shrimp?*

negative:

- (15) ta kôkhôno hobe na.  
 that ever be.3.FUT not  
*That will never happen.*

c. kono *any* – kono + negator *not any, none*

affirmative: The use of kono in affirmative sentences is rare, unless it is modified by çnyô *other* or ye *what* (see 6.2.2.4) or if kono precedes kichu *something* (see 5.5.6.6)

- (16) se kono choʃô śhôre thake.  
 he any small town.LOC live.3.PR.S  
*He lives in some small town.*

interrogative:

- (17) kono kichu khabe?  
 any something eat.2.FUT  
*Will you have something to eat?*

negative:

- (18) amar kono apôtti nei.  
 I.GEN any objection [is absent]  
*I have no objections.*

d. indefinites with *ar more* and *ɔnyô other*

When *ar more* precedes indefinites it implies *in addition to* and is best translated as *else*. It contrasts with *ɔnyô other* which in connection with indefinites implies *instead of*.

with *ar more*

- (19) ar keu asbe na.  
 more someone come.3.FUT not  
*No-one else will come.*
- (20) ar kɔkhôno ei kɔtha bôlbe na.  
 more ever this.EMP word say.2.IMP.FUT not  
*Don't ever say this again.*

with *ɔnyô other, different*

- (21) ɔnyô karo ɔrɔŋe ami yetam na.  
 other someone.GEN with I go.1.P.HABIT not  
*I wouldn't have gone with anyone else.*
- (22) tara ɔnyô kothao thakte parto na.  
 they other somewhere stay.IP be.able.to.3.P.HABIT not  
*They wouldn't be able to live anywhere else.*

*ɔnyô* does not link up with *kɔkhôno ever*. Instead *ɔnyô kono sômôy* (lit: other any time = *any other time*) is used.

e. indefinites with relative pronouns *ye* and *ya what*

*ye* and *ya* preceding an indefinite increase the indefiniteness. More precisely, they change an indefinite *some* to an indefinite *any*.

- (23) ye keu tomake eki kɔtha bôlbe.  
 what.R someone you.OBJ same word say.3.FUT  
*Anybody will tell you the same thing.*
- (24) ami ye kono sômôy aste parbô.  
 I what.R any time come.IP be.able.to.1.FUT  
*I will be able to come at any time.*

*ya* precedes *kichu something*.

- (25) se ya kichu khay.  
 he what.R something eat.3.PR.S  
*He eats anything.*

## f. double indefinites

Double indefinites have a plural meaning.

keu keu *some people*, kōkhōno kōkhōno *once in a while*, kothao kothao *in various places*, kono kono *some*

- (26) bagane kothao kothao rater môdhye nôtun  
 garden.LOC somewhere (x 2) night.GEN within new  
 phul phuṭeche  
 flower blossom.3.PR.PERF

*In some places in the garden new flowers have come up overnight.*

- (27) kono kono chatrô śikṣôker ceṃe beśi bojhe.  
 any (x 2) student teacher.GEN than much understand.3.PR.S  
*Some students understand more than their teachers.*

## g. double indefinites linked by na

Literally these structures mean *if not one then the other* and has an accumulative effect *one or the other*.

- (28) ya-i kôrte yaben, keu na keu  
 what.R EMP do.IP go.3.H.FUT someone not someone  
 tar kono na kono mane kôrbe.  
 it.GEN any not any meaning do.3.FUT

*Whatever you do, someone or other will interpret it in one way or another.*

## h. indefinites with æk one

This structure can either increase the indefiniteness or imply *a certain*.

- (29) keu ækjôn phon kôreche.  
 someone one.CL phone do.3.PR.PERF  
*Someone has phoned.*
- (30) tar mône kono æk dhôrôner tolpaṛ cōlchilô.  
 his mind.LOC any one kind agitation move.3.P.C  
*Some kind of agitation was going on in his mind.*

## i. multiple indefinites

Indefinites readily occur together. In negative sentences the sentence-final negation covers them all.

- (31) keu kōkhōno ekhane eseche?  
 someone ever here come.3.PR.PERF  
*Has anyone ever come here?*

- (32) kauke kothao paini.  
 someone somewhere not.find.1.PR.PERF  
*I didn't find anyone anywhere.*

### 6.2.3 Pronoun combinations

Both relative and indefinite pronouns occur in conjunction with personal pronouns.

#### 6.2.3.1 Personal pronouns plus

Nominative personal pronouns combine with relative, interrogative and indefinite pronouns as well as with *sɔbai* and *sɔkôle* *everyone*.

The verb-ending agrees with the nominative personal pronoun.

- |                     |                          |   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| with relative:      | tomra yara age esechô... | <i>Those of you who came first...</i>     |
| with interrogative: | apnara ke raji achen?    | <i>Which one of you agrees?</i>           |
| with indefinite:    | amra keu bajare yabô na. | <i>None of us is going to the market.</i> |
| with <i>sɔbai</i> : | tomra sɔbai côle yaccho? | <i>Are you all leaving?</i>               |

When the personal pronoun is changed to the genitive it becomes essentially a modifier of the relative, interrogative or indefinite pronoun: *tomader ke* *which one of you*, *amader keu* or *amader ækjɔn* *one of us*. The verb endings can stay with the genitive personal pronoun or change to third person.

- (33) tomader ke yete parô?  
 you.PL.GEN who go.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
 or tomader ke yete pare?  
 you.PL.GEN who go.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S  
*Which one of you can go?*

On the basis of these combinations we also get the occasional sentence with the personal pronoun dropped and only the verb ending indicating the subject:

- (34) keu kauke cinte parchi na.  
 someone someone.OBJ recognise.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S not  
*(We) didn't recognise one another.*

#### 6.2.3.2 ke yænô someone or other

*yænô* is a conjunction and an adverb. As an adverb it can create an impression of vagueness. In connection with *ke* *who* it produces a structure very similar to the English *what's his name* in place of the sentence subject.

- (35) bhitôr theke ke yænô cēciye uṭhlô.  
 inside from who yænô shout.PP rise.3.P.S  
*From inside someone started shouting.*

6.2.3.3 *Relative pairs*

When a relative is directly followed by its correlative we get a *whatever* element:

- (36) se yæmôn tæmôn kaj kɔre.  
 he how.R so.CR work do.3.PR.S  
*He is unreliable in his work.*
- (37) ora yænô tænô kôre phlyæter bhara dæy.  
 they how.R so.CR do.PP flat.GEN rent give.3.PRS  
*They pay the rent for the flat on and off.*
- (38) yake take ya ta sonate yaoya tomar ucit  
 who.OBJ.R he.OBJ.CR what.R that.CR tell.IP go.VN you.GEN proper  
 hɔy na.  
 be.3.PR.S not  
*You ought not to tell just anybody anything.*

6.2.3.4 *Double relatives*

Relative pronouns can combine with other relatives to create *each to his own* structures.

- (39) sɔbai ye yar barite côle gælô.  
 everyone who.R who.GEN.CR home.LOC move.PP go.3.PS  
*Everybody returned to their own home.*
- (40) se yar ya iccha  
 that who.GEN.R what.CR wish  
*each to his own*

ye and ya can be doubled for a *whatever* or *whoever* effect:

- (41) se ya ya bɔle ta sɔb mithya.  
 he what.R what.R say.3.PR.S that.CR all lie  
*Whatever he says, it's all lies.*

6.2.4 Reflexivity – *me, myself, on my own*

The reflexive pronoun *nije* and its case variations *nijer* (genitive) and *nijeke* (objective) are used for reflexive structures. The genitive *nijer* as well as its more formal alternative *nijôsvô* means *own* rather than *self* and will be given as *own* in the glosses.

Unlike in English, Bangla reflexive pronouns can stand on their own without a preceding noun or pronoun. Reflexive pronouns can either describe interactions with oneself or they can reinforce personal pronouns.

Here is an example for each:  
interactive:

- (42) prômi nijeke samle næý.  
Promi self.OBJ control.PP take.3.PR.S  
*Promi took hold of herself.*

reinforced:

- (43) ami nizei yabô.  
I self.EMP go.1.FUT  
*I will go myself.*

Plural pronouns can be followed by singular reflexives, though plural – plural combinations also occur. This is the same phenomenon we find with relative pronouns.

plural – singular

- (44) amra nize sɔb kaj kôri.  
we self all work do.1.PR.S  
*We do all the work ourselves.*
- (45) tara nijer jônje ɔnek beši cinta kore.  
they self.GEN for much too.much worry do.3.P.S  
*They worry far too much about themselves.*

plural – plural

- (46) chelera ghorer baire keřarim bybsa ya kôruk,  
boy.PL home.GEN outside catering business what.R do.3.PR.IMP,  
nijeder bařite rannaghorer kaj kore na ba kôrte  
own.GEN.PL home.LOC kitchen.GEN work do.3.PR.S not or do.IP  
caý na.  
want.3.PR.S not  
*Whatever catering business men carry on outside the home, in their own home they don't do or don't want to do any work in the kitchen.*
- (47) amra nijeder nijera ktô ye bhalôbasi.  
we self.PL.OBJ self.PL how.much that love.1.PR.S  
*How much we love ourselves!*

genitive example:

- (48) nijer cokhke yænô bişvas hólô na.  
own eye.OBJ as.if belief be.3.P.S not  
*It was as if she didn't believe her own eyes.*

Here is an example with the reflexive use of *apôn self*:

- (49) *bonyôprôkrti ekhane atmôhara, lîlamçy, apnar soundôryô*  
 forest.nature here self.possessed playful own beauty  
*o nibir pracurye apni mugdhô.*  
 and dense abundance.LOC self fascinated

*The nature of the forest here is self-absorbed, playful, engrossed in its own beauty and dense abundance.*

### 6.2.5 Reciprocity (mutuality) – *one another*

Reciprocity is expressed with the help of three lexical items, shown here:

- (50) *We help one another.*

- (a) *çpôr other* amra æke çpôrke sahayô kôri.  
 we one.LOC other.OBJ help do.1.PR.S  
 (b) *çnyô other* amra ækjçn çnyôjçnke sahayô kôri.  
 we one.CL other.CL.OBJ help do.1.PR.S  
 (c) *çrôspçr mutual* amra çrôspçrke sahayô kôri.  
 we one.another.OBJ help do.1.PR.S

- (51) ar ei çap yçkhôn çrôme pôuche yaÿ  
 and this.EMP pressure when.R maximum.LOC reach.PP go.3.PR.S  
 tçkhôni pleçgulo æke çnyôke aghat kçre.  
 then.CR.EMP plate.CL.PL one.LOC other.OBJ hit do.3.PR.S

*And when this pressure reaches its maximum the plates push against one another.*

- (52) *şôrîr çhûye yænô môn çhûye niÿeche æke çpôrer.*  
 body touch.PP as.if mind touch.PP take.3.PR.PERF one.LOC other.GEN  
*It was as if through physical touch they touched one another's minds.*

with *çrôspçr mutual*

- (53) tara çrôspçr çrôspçrke yçtôçta bhalôbase tçtôçtai  
 they mutual mutual.OBJ how much.CL.R love.3.PR.S so much.CL.CR.EMP  
 çmalocôna kçre.  
 criticism do.3.PR.S

*They criticise one another as much as they love each other.*

The following sentences use repetition to convey mutuality. The noun *dujçne the two people* is commonly used.



- (54) amra dujɔne dujɔner kache moʃei bastôb nôi.  
 we two.CL two.CL.GEN near at.all real [is not].1  
*We are not at all real to one another.*
- (55) æk jaʃga theke ar æk jaʃgake p̄rthôk kôre  
 one place from and one place.OBJ separate do.PP  
 cine nebar kono cihnô nei.  
 know.PP take.bavN.GEN any sign [is absent]  
*There are no clues to distinguish one place from another.*

Two locative animate nouns make for a reciprocal structure. This structure is no longer very common.

- (56) tomate amate ki kôtha bôlar niʃedh ache?  
 you.LOC I.LOC what word speak.VN.GEN prohibition [is present]  
*Are you and I not allowed to talk to one another?*

### 6.3 Verbal parameters

The following sections look at the different types of verbs in Bangla as well as the uses of non-finite verb forms.

#### 6.3.1 Verbs of being

The concepts of *being* and *having* employ four basic Bangla verbs, each with its own semantic and syntactic domain. The types of sentences these verbs produce will be dealt with in detail in Chapters 7.4.2 and 7.4.3. This section gives an overview of the verbs themselves.

##### 6.3.1.1 Zero verb

The zero verb is the copula in copular/equational sentences such as *He is my friend?* *Who are you?* *Today is Wednesday.*

- (57) se amar baba.  
 he my father  
*He is my father.*
- (58) batas svacchô ebom biśuddhō.  
 wind clear and pure  
*The wind is pure and clean.*

Present tense copular sentences in Bangla have no verb, but rather than considering this an omission we postulate a zero verb on the grounds that the negation of the zero

verb has its own distinctive verb. The negation of the zero verb is formed with the incomplete verb নো *not be*. Here is the pattern:

	affirmative		negative:	
1st ps	ami tar chatrī. <i>I am his student.</i>		ami tar chatrī nôi. <i>I am not his student.</i>	
2nd ps fam	tumi baburci. <i>You are the cook.</i>		tumi baburci নো. <i>You are not the cook.</i>	
2nd ps int	tui ঢলস. <i>You are lazy.</i>		tui ঢলস নো. <i>You are not lazy.</i>	
2nd ps pol	apni doṣi. <i>You are guilty.</i>		apni doṣi নো. <i>You are not guilty.</i>	
3rd ps ord	amṭa miṣṭi. <i>The mango is sweet.</i>		amṭa miṣṭi নো. <i>The mango is not sweet.</i>	
3rd ps hon	tini ukil. <i>He is a lawyer.</i>		tini ukil নো. <i>He is not a lawyer.</i>	

In the past tense the zero verb takes the forms of chil-, which is also the past tense of ach- (see 6.3.1.2)

1st ps	ami tar chatrī chilam <i>I was his student.</i>		ami tar chatrī chilam na. <i>I was not his student.</i>
2nd ps fam	tumi baburci chile. <i>You were the cook.</i>		tumi baburci chile na. <i>You were not the cook.</i>
2nd ps int	tui ঢলস chili. <i>You were lazy.</i>		tui ঢলস chili na. <i>You were not lazy.</i>
2nd ps pol	apni doṣi chilena. <i>You were guilty.</i>		apni doṣi chilena na. <i>You were not guilty.</i>
3rd ps ord	amṭa miṣṭi chilô. <i>The mango was sweet.</i>		amṭa miṣṭi chilô na. <i>The mango was not sweet.</i>
3rd ps hon	tini ukil chilena. <i>He was a lawyer.</i>		tini ukil chilena na. <i>He was not a lawyer.</i>

Future tense copular sentences are formed with হকোঁয়া *be, become*,

uni amar śaśuṛi হকেন. *She will be my mother-in-law.*

### 6.3.1.2 ach- exist, be present

This is an incomplete verb with only simple present and simple past tense forms. The forms for ach- are given at the end of the verb charts (Appendix 1). ach- in the simple present is negated with the invariable verb nei. ach- combines existential, locative and possessive uses (see Chapter 7.4.2).

Bangla has no separate verb to express the concept of *having*. Instead of *I have a brother* in Bangla we say *Of me a brother exists*.

- (59) amar bhai ache.  
 I.GEN brother [exist.3]  
 of me a brother exists  
*I have a brother.*

In English the concept of possession on the one hand and of location or existence on the other are quite separate. In Bangla, due to the existence of the verb ach-, they merge together.

The above sentence amar bhai ache can, according to the context mean:

*I have a brother. or My brother exists. or My brother is here.*

Here is an overview of the forms. pos = affirmative (positive), neg = negative

	simple present		simple past		
	pos	neg	pos	neg	
ami	achi	nei	chilam	chilam na	<i>I am (not), I was (not)</i>
tumi	achô	nei	chile	chile na	<i>you are (not), you were (not)</i>
tui	achis	nei	chili	chili na	<i>you are (not), you were (not)</i>
se	ache	nei	chilô	chilô na	<i>he is (not), he was (not)</i>
apni, tini	achen	nei	chilen	chilen na	<i>you are (not), you were (not), he is (not), he was (not)</i>

These are purely existential sentences: *I am, you are* and so on. When we add a genitive noun or pronoun at the beginning, the sentences become ‘possessive’ in the sense that we can translate them with possessive sentences in English. In the Bangla structures the thing or person being possessed is the grammatical subject of the sentence. The possessor is always in the genitive. The only difference in Bangla between possessive and locative/existential sentences is, therefore, the presence or absence of a genitive possessor. Here are some more sentences.

- (60) tar chelemeÿe ache? hæ, ache.  
 he.GEN boy.girl [exist.3] yes [exist.3]  
*Does she have children? Yes, she does.*
- (61) tumi kothay achô.  
 you where [is present.2]  
*Where are you?*
- (62) apnar ækta ciñhi ache.  
 you.H.GEN one.CL letter [exist.3]  
*There is a letter for you.*
- (63) manußer ki pɔrjɔnmô ache? hɔÿto thakte pare.  
 human.GEN what afterlife [exist.3]? perhaps stay.IP be possible.3.PR.S  
*Do human beings have an afterlife? Possibly.*
- (64) tara gɔtôkal ekhane chilô.  
 they yesterday here [exist.3.P.S]  
*They were here yesterday.*

### 6.3.1.3 thaka stay

thaka steps in for all the forms ach- does not have, ie the future tense, 3rd person imperatives and all non-finite verb forms. For each form a sentence with ach- is given first to show the connection.

future tense:	amader bagan ache. amader bagan thakbe. se ekhane ache.	<i>We have a garden. We will have a garden. He is here.</i>
verbal noun:	tar ekhane thakar uddeśyô ki?	<i>What is the purpose of him being here?</i>
perfective participle:	se ekhane theke biye kôreche.	lit: He, having been here, got married. <i>He got married while he was here.</i>
imperfective participle:	cabiṭa tar kache ache. cabiṭa tar kache thakte pare na. tomar sahôs ache.	<i>He has the key. He can't have the key. You are brave.</i>
conditional participle:	tomar sahôs thakle tar gaṛi ache.	<i>If you are brave... He has a car.</i>
conditional with yôdi <i>if</i> :	tar gaṛi yôdi thake... tumi bhalô achô.	<i>If he has a car... You are well.</i>
2nd person imperative:	bhalô thakô. se bhalô ache.	<i>Be well. He is well.</i>
3rd person imperative	se bhalô thakuk.	<i>May he be well.</i>

#### 6.3.1.4 হোয়া *be, become, happen, occur*

হোয়া is the most common and the most versatile verb in Bangla. For the concept of being, হোয়া provides a dynamic quality which none of the other verbs have. Translations into English do not always contain the verb *be*, but the example sentences show the wide range of হোয়া. Many হোয়া sentences have a genitive EXPERIENCER. হোয়া is a full verb with all tenses and non-finite verb forms. Its conjugation is given in Appendix 1, (e). হোয়া

Here is the contrast with *ach-*:

tar c̣sukh ache.	<i>He has an illness.</i>
tar c̣sukh hôyeche.	<i>He has become ill.</i>
tar bacca ache.	<i>She has a child.</i>
tar bacca hôyeche.	lit: of her a child has become → <i>She has had a baby.</i>

Here are some typical contexts for হোয়া:

- (65) ami khub khuśi hôyechi.  
I very happy be.1.PR.PERF  
lit: I have become very happy  
*I am very happy.*

- (66) ᵛsubidha hᵛbe na to?  
 problem be.3.FUT not EMP  
*There won't be any problems, will there?*
- (67) dudḥṭa nᵛṣṭō hōṽeche.  
 milk.CL spoiled be.3.PR.PERF  
*The milk has gone off.*
- (68) seṭa kichutei pūrṇō hōcche na.  
 this.CL at.all.EMP fulfilled be.3.P.C not  
*This is not at all coming true.*
- (69) ekhane gᵛm hᵛy.  
 here wheat be.3.PR.S  
*Wheat grows here.*
- (70) tomar ki hōṽeche?  
 you.GEN what occur.3.PR.PERF  
*What has happened to you?*
- (71) tar jōnyō amar duḥkhō hōcche.  
 he.GEN for I.GEN sadness occur.3.PR.C  
 lit: for him of me sadness occurs  
*I feel sad for him.*

### 6.3.2 Extended verbs

Extended and causative verbs (6.3.3) are identical in morphological form (with a two-syllable stem and verbal noun in -no) and conjugation, but they differ in their derivation. Many extended verbs are derived from nouns and adjectives.

ulṭano *turn, turn upside down* from ulṭa (*adj*) *opposite*

- (72) se bōiyer pata ulṭacche.  
 she book.GEN page turn.3.PR.C  
*She is turning the pages of the book.*

aṭkano *obstruct* from aṭōk (*n*) *obstruction, hindrance*

- (73) tini rastaṽ aṭkiṽe gāchen.  
 he.H road.LOC obstruct.PP go.3H.PR.PERF  
*He got stuck in traffic.*

ghumano/ghumono *sleep* from ghum (*n*) *sleep*

- (74) se tᵛkhōn ghumocchilo.  
 he then sleep.3.P.C  
*He was asleep at the time.*

takano *look at* from tak (*n*) *aim*

- (75) mōnsur nōdir dike takiye rôilô.  
 Monsur rive.GEN towards look.at.PP remain.4.P.S  
*Monsur remained looking at the river.*

samlano *manage, check* from samal (*n*) *control, check*

- (76) se tar khôrôc samlate pare na.  
 he his expense manage.IP be.abl.to not  
*He can't manage his expenses.*

### 6.3.3 Causative verbs

Causative verbs are extended verbs which are derived not from nouns or adjectives but from simple verbs. By extending simple verbs, eg jana *know* to janano *cause to know*, the valency of the simple verb is increased by one and a causative verb is created.

Here is how it works:

- |            |                   |                                  |
|------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| simple:    | ami kajta kôrbô.  | <i>I will do the work.</i>       |
| causative: | ami kajta kôrabô. | <i>I will get the work done.</i> |

We can extend the sentence by giving the agent, ie the person who is doing the work for us with the postposition diye:

- ami take diye kajta kôrabô. *I will get him to do the work.*

A more specific example:

- |             |                           |  |
|-------------|---------------------------|--|
| simple:     | ami çata anhô.            | <i>I will bring the tea.</i>                     |
| causative:  | ami çata anabô.           | <i>I will arrange for the tea to be brought.</i> |
| with agent: | ami take diye çata anabô. | <i>I will make him bring the tea.</i>            |

Alongside the standard simple-causative pairs, there are a great number of causative formations for just the purpose of making someone do something. These are commonly used in spoken language. Here are some examples. The translations reflect the colloquial style. For the sentence structure involving the conditional participle in example (77) see Chapter 8.5.3 (a) and (b).

- (77) 'ma, or ya bhalô lage na, kæno tumi  
 mother he.GEN what.R good feel.3.PR.S not why you  
 oke ta kôracchô?' 'bhalô na lagle côlebe kæno?  
 he.OBJ that.CR cause.to.do.2.PR.C good not attach.CP move.3.FUT why?  
 bhalô lagate hobe'  
 good cause.to.attach.IP be.3.FUT  
*"Mother, why are you making him do something he doesn't like?"*  
*"What's liking got to do with it? He's got to be made to like it."*

- (78) "ei ami bhulbô na." "ajker dini  
 this.EMP I forget.1.FUT not. today.GEN day.EMP  
 tomake bholabel!"  
 you.OBJ cause.to.forget.3.FUT  
 "I will not forget this." "Today will make you forget it."

These examples show that the formation of causatives is a productive pattern in Bengali. Below is a selection of simple verbs with their commonly used causative counterparts:

simple verb	causative verb
oṭha <i>rise, get up</i>	oṭhano <i>raise, lift</i>
ami khub sôkale uṭhi. <i>I get up very early.</i>	ma amake ghum theke oṭhay. <i>Mother wakes me up.</i>
kôra do	kôrano make do
"ki kôrô?" "kichu kôri na." "What are you doing?" "I'm not doing anything."	"tahôle ami ki tomake diye ækṭa kaj kôrabô?" "Well then, shall I give you something to do?"
kâda <i>cry, weep</i>	kâdano <i>cause to weep</i>
baccaṭa kâdche. <i>The baby is crying.</i>	ganṭa take kâday. <i>The song makes him cry.</i>
kaṭa <i>cut, (with time) pass</i>	kaṭano <i>spend</i>
aro dui din keṭe gæche. <i>Two more days went by.</i>	amra sundôr ækṭa din kaṭiyechi. <i>We spent a beautiful day.</i>
khaoṭa <i>eat</i>	khaoṭano <i>feed</i>
amra ki khabô? <i>What will we eat?</i>	ya khaoṭano hobe ta khabô. <i>We will eat what we are being fed.</i>
ghoṭa <i>happen</i>	ghoṭano <i>cause to happen</i>
kichu bodh hoy ghôṭeche. <i>Perhaps something has happened.</i>	keu iccha kôre eksidēt ghôṭay na. <i>No one causes an accident on purpose.</i>
côla <i>move, go</i>	calano <i>drive</i>
ekhane gaṛi côle. <i>Cars move along here.</i>	gaṛi calabe ke? <i>Who will drive the car?</i>
jaga <i>awake, wake up</i>	jagano <i>cause to wake up, rouse</i>
rat duiṭay ami jege gechi. <i>I woke up at 2 o'clock.</i>	ami take jagate caini. <i>I didn't want to wake him up.</i>
jana <i>know</i>	janano <i>inform</i>
tumi sob janô. <i>You know everything.</i>	amake sônge sônge janabô. <i>Let me know immediately.</i>

jvôla <i>be lit, burn</i> unune agun jvôlche. <i>The fire is burning in the oven.</i>	jvalano <i>set alight, light</i> batigula jvalao. <i>Light the lamps.</i>
dækha <i>see</i> tomra ki dekhechô? <i>What did you see?</i>	dækhano <i>show</i> se amake gramṭa dekhiye dilô. <i>He showed me the village.</i>
nama <i>get down, descend</i> ekhane nambô. <i>I will get off here.</i>	namano <i>drop off</i> amake ekhane namate paren. <i>You can drop me off here.</i>
ṛṇa <i>read</i> ami ta ṛṇte pari na. <i>I can't read this.</i>	ṛṇano <i>teach</i> tini biśvôbidyalye ṛṇan. <i>He teaches at the university.</i>
ṛa <i>wear</i> tumi ki śari ṛbe? <i>Will you wear a saree?</i>	ṛano <i>dress, put on someone</i> ami śariṭa ṛiye debô. <i>I will put the saree on you.</i>
phera <i>return</i> amra kalke phirbô. <i>We will return tomorrow.</i>	pherano <i>cause to turn, cause to return</i> ḍak śune meṭeṭi mukh pheralô. <i>When the girl heard the call, she turned around.</i>
bôsa <i>sit</i> kothay bôsbô? <i>Where should I sit?</i>	bôsano <i>set, put on</i> tumi take bipḍe bôscchô. <i>You are putting him in danger.</i>
bāca <i>live, survive</i> se ar beśi din bācbe na. <i>He will not live a lot longer.</i>	bācano <i>save, rescue</i> tini take oṣudh diye bāciye tullen. <i>She gave him medicine and saved his life.</i>
baja <i>ring, strike</i> phonṭa beje uṭhlô. <i>The phone rang.</i>	bajano <i>play (instrument)</i> se piṇano bajaṭ. <i>He plays the piano.</i>
baṛa <i>increase</i> nôdir jḷ beṛe yacche. <i>The river is rising.</i>	baṛano <i>cause to increase</i> tini abaro bhaṛa baṛacche. <i>He is increasing the rent again.</i>
bojha <i>understand</i> ami tomar kṛtha bujhi na. <i>I don't understand what you are saying.</i>	bojhano <i>cause to understand, explain</i> seṭa tomake bojhate parbô na. <i>I can't explain this to you.</i>



bhaba <i>think</i>	bhabano <i>cause to think</i>
ki niye bhabchô?	upônyasta take khub bhabalo.
<i>What are (you) thinking about?</i>	<i>The novel made him think a lot.</i>
mana obey, honour, admit	manano <i>suit, benefit</i>
tar kôtha mene nite hobe.	ron̄ta tomake manā na.
<i>He has to be obeyed.</i>	<i>The colour doesn't suit you.</i>
laga <i>be attached</i>	lagano <i>plant, employ</i>
pa kadar môdhye lege yā.	tara saradin gach lagiyeche.
<i>Our feet get stuck in the mud.</i>	<i>We planted trees this morning.</i>
śekha <i>learn</i>	sekhanô <i>teach</i>
tumi ki bamla śikhechô?	uni amake śekhacchen.
<i>Have you learnt Bengali?</i>	<i>He is teaching me.</i>
śona <i>hear</i>	śonano <i>cause to hear</i>
ækta gôlpô śunbe?	tumi ki ækta śonabe?
<i>Do you want to hear a story?</i>	<i>Will you tell (me) one?</i>
śōya <i>lie down</i>	śōyano <i>cause to lie down</i>
tumi śute yao.	ami take bichanā ūiye dilam.
<i>Go to bed.</i>	<i>I put her to bed.</i>
śora <i>move</i>	śorano <i>cause to move, shift</i>
tumi ek̄tu sôrte parô?	ami amar bôi sôriye diyechi.
<i>Can you move a bit?</i>	<i>I have moved my books.</i>
hara <i>be defeated</i>	harano <i>defeat</i>
eibar niścô̄ here yabô.	keu amake harate pare na.
<i>This time for sure I will be defeated.</i>	<i>No one can defeat me.</i>
hasa <i>laugh, smile</i>	hasano <i>amuse</i>
se śob sômô̄y hase.	mēyēti śobaike hasā.
<i>She is always smiling.</i>	<i>The girl makes everyone smile.</i>

#### 6.3.4 Conjunct verbs

Conjunct verbs are an open group of noun–verb or adjective–verb combinations. A limited number of common, high-frequency verbs participate in these combinations, above all the verb *kôra do*. We restrict the term conjunct verb to combinations where the link between noun/adjective and verb form one semantic concept. The combination of *upôhar present* and *deōya give = give a present*, for instance, is not considered a conjunct verb because there is an actual process of giving involved whereas *pôrik̄ṣa*

deoḡa *take an exam* is considered to be a conjunct verb. The dividing line between conjunct verbs and verbs with direct objects is not very clearly drawn. There is, however, one feature which distinguishes conjunct verbs grammatically as well as semantically from verbs with direct objects.

The conjunct verbs in the following few examples are preceded by genitive modifiers where the object case or postpositional structures would be expected. The first example:

- (79) ঞপôrḡa bôḡô hôḡeche, tar biḡe dite hôbe.  
 Aparna big become.3.PR.PERF she.GEN wedding- give.IP be.3.FUT  
*Aparna has grown up. Her wedding has to be arranged.*

shows that this is not about giving the girl, not *meḡeḡike dite hôbe* but that *biḡe deoḡa* means *arrange a wedding* and the preceding genitive is quite logical. Here are some more examples.

uttôr deoḡa *answer, reply*

- (80) esôb ciḡhir uttôr dite hôbe.  
 this.all letter.GEN reply- give.IP be.3.FUT  
*All these letters have to be answered.*

upôkar kôra *do a favour, help*

- (81) apnara amar ñnek upôkar kôrlen.  
 you.H.PL I.GEN much favour- do.2H.P.S  
*You did me a big favour.*

khôj kôra *search*

- (82) amra tomar khôj kôrechi.  
 we you.GEN search- do.1.PR.PERF  
*We have been looking for you.*

ceḡḡa kôra *try, attempt*

- (83) o ñnek din dhôre cakrir ceḡḡa kôrche.  
 he many day during job.GEN attempt-do.3.PR.C  
*He has been trying for a job for a long time.*

This class of verbs is considered open because all new verbal creations in Bangla are likely to be conjunct verbs. People who pepper their Bangla with English words tend to use conjunct verbs: *miḡ kôra meet*, *ḡiskas kôra discuss*, *ḡiliḡ kôra delete*, *phil kôra feel*, *plyæn kôra plan* etc.

The conjugation of these verbs is the same as that of the simple verbs. Here are some more conjunct verbs in context. In the glosses conjunct verbs are marked with a hyphen between the noun/adjective and the verb.

with *kōra do*

ɔpōman *kōra offend, insult*

- (84) ki bōle take ɔpōman kōrle?  
 what say.PP he.OBJ insult- do.2.P.S  
*What did you say to offend him?*

ɔsvīkar *kōra deny, refute*

- (85) se ye bhalō manuṣ ami ɔsvīkar kōri na.  
 he that good person I denial- do.1.PR.S not  
*I don't deny that he is a good man.*

abiṣkar *kōra discover, invent*

- (86) uni nōtun ækrākōm pensil abiṣkar kōrechen.  
 he.H new one.kind pencil invention- do.3H.PR.PERF  
*He has invented a new kind of pencil.*

kheṣal *kōra take note, notice*

- (87) bela kōtō hōṣeche amra kheṣal kōrini.  
 hour how much be.3.PR.PERF we notice- not.do.1.PR.PERF  
*We didn't notice how late it was.*

jijñasa *kōra ask, question*

- (88) se tomake ki jijñasa kōrlō?  
 he you.OBJ what question- do.3.P.S  
*What did he ask you?*

ṭhik *kōra decide*

- (89) aj baṣite thakbō ṭhik kōrechi.  
 today home.LOC stay.1.FUT right- do.1.PR.PERF  
*We have decided to stay at home today.*

dækha *kōra meet*

- (90) se amar sōṣige dækha kōrte caṣ.  
 he I.GEN with see.VN- do.IP want.3.PR.S  
*He wants to meet up with me.*

nirbhōr *kōra depend on*

- (91) puroṣai nirbhōr kōrche apnar dōkṣōtar opōr.  
 whole.CL reliance- do.3.PR.C your.H skill.GEN on  
*All of it depends on your skill.*

bãndhô kora *close*

- (92) dørja sãb sômôy bãndhô kôre rakhte hãbe.  
 door all time close- do.PP keep.IP be.3.FUT  
*The door has to be kept closed at all times.*

sahayô kora *help*

- (93) tara tomake ãnek sahayô kôreche.  
 they you.OBJ much help- do.3.PR.PERF  
*They have helped you a lot.*

with deoÿa *give*kotha deoÿa *promise*

- (94) ami tomake kichute kotha deini.  
 I you.OBJ something.LOC word- not.give.1.PR.PERF  
*I didn't promise you anything at all.*

doş deoÿa *blame*

- (95) karo doş dicchi na.  
 someone.GEN fault- give.1.PR.C not  
*I am not blaming anyone.*

bidaÿ deoÿa *say goodbye*

- (96) kauke bidaÿ dite bhalô lage na tar.  
 someone.OBJ farewell- give good attach.3.PR.S not he.GEN  
*He doesn't like saying goodbye to people.*

môn deoÿa *concentrate*

- (97) môn na dile kaj bhalô hãÿ na.  
 mind- not give.CP work good be.3.PR.S not  
*If you don't concentrate the work will not turn out well.*

laph deoÿa *jump*

- (98) pul theke laph deoÿa nişedh.  
 bridge from jump- give.VN prohibition  
*It is forbidden to jump from the bridge.*

with kaṭa *cut/kaṭano cause to cut*sātar kaṭa *swim*

- (99) se sātar kaṭte jane na.  
 she swim- cut.IP know.3.PR.S not  
*She can't swim.*

with *mara strike*

ũki mara *peep*

- (100) cheleṭi dərjar paś theke ũki marlô.  
 boy.CL door.GEN side from peep- strike.3.P.S  
*The boy was peeping from the side of the door.*

Despite the neutral appearance of the verbs involved in these structures, the combinations are very precise. If a foreigner, wanting to offer some assistance, politely asks someone,

- (101) ami ki apnake sahayyô dite pari?  
 I what you.H.OBJ help- give.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S

he may be appalled at the reaction he gets. The sentence means *Can I give you some money (alms)?* whereas the correct phrase for *help* is sahayyô kōra. Similarly, bidaṅ deoṅa means *to say goodbye* to someone, bidaṅ kōra means to *dismiss* or *sack* them.

### 6.3.5 Compound verbs

Compound verbs are a very common and idiomatic type of verb formation in Bangla. They consist of a main verb in the perfective participle and a compound maker. Only a limited number of verbs can act as compound makers. They are:

monovalent compound makers:

yaoṅa	go	asa	come	cola	move
oṭha	rise, get up	poṅa	fall		
bōsa	sit	dāṅano	stand		

bivalent or trivalent compound makers:

deoṅa	give	neoṅa	take
phæla	throw	tola	lift
rakha	keep		

Compound makers are marked with (CM) in the glosses of this section.

Compare: single verb

- (102a) se gach theke pōreche.  
 he tree from fall.3.PR.PERF

with compound verb

- (102b) se gach theke pōre gæche.  
 he tree from fall.PP go.3.PR.PERF (CM)

Both sentences mean *He/she fell off the tree*, but the second sentence sounds more natural, more idiomatic, more complete and adds, if anything, the bump of the landing.

In many compound verbs the link between the two verbs is so close that they form one semantic unit:

- (103) *ṭreṅṭa theme gæche.*  
 train.CL stop.PP go.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*The train has stopped.*

The effect of the compound maker on the main verb (the perfective participle) varies considerably. Sometimes the compound maker loses its own meaning, sometimes it adds an aspectual or intensifying element and sometimes it changes the meaning of the main verb altogether. The impact of the compound maker on the main verb varies not just from verb to verb but also from instance to instance. Here is an example with *pôre yaoÿa* which, in example (102), meant *fall down*.

- (104a) *rajar môn theke rag pôre gæche.*  
 king.GEN mind from anger fall.PP go.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
 lit: The king's anger has fallen from his mind.  
*The king is no longer angry.*

- (104b) *pôrte śikhei bôï pṛar neśay pôre yai.*  
 read.IP learn.PP book read.VN.GEN addiction.LOC fall.PP go.1.PR.S (CM)  
 lit: Learning to read I fall into an addiction of reading books.  
*Ever since learning to read I can't get enough of reading books.*

- (104c) *dupure dækha chuṭe asa bṛô ḍheuÿer kôtha*  
 midday.LOC see.VA run.PP come.VA big wave.GEN word  
*mône pôre yaÿ.*  
 mind.LOC fall.PP go.3.PR.S (CM)  
 lit: The big wave, seen at midday, rolling towards him, falls into his mind.  
*He remembers the big wave that he had seen rolling towards him at midday.*

- (104d) *tini mōha bibhrôme pôre gelen.*  
 he big infatuation.LOC fall.PP go.3H.P.S (CM)  
*He became totally infatuated.*

Compound verbs must have at least one of the following features.

i. The compound maker loses its own meaning.

- (105) *ami bhule gechi.*  
 I forget.PP go.1.PR.PERF (CM)  
*I have forgotten.*

- ii. The compound maker adds an aspective or intensifying component to the main verb.

(106) *ami tomake dekhe phelechi.*  
 I you.OBJ see.PP throw.1.PR.PERF (CM)  
*I have (already) seen you.*

- iii. The connection between main verb and compound maker is so strong that in negative structures the negation applies to the main verb only.

(107) *se tomake niye yabe na.*  
 he you.OBJ take.PP go.3.FUT (CM) not  
*He will not take you with him (when he goes).*

- iv. The compound maker changes the meaning of the main verb.

*mara = hit, strike      mere phæla = kill*

(108) *se tar bhaike mere pheleche.*  
 he his brother.OBJ strike.PP throw.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*He killed his brother.*

The connection between the two verbs that make up a compound verb does not change when the compound maker is in non-finite form: If we compare *ami côle yabô I will go away* with *amake côle yete hobe I will have to go away* we see that the connection between the two verbs is very stable.

Two other traditional assumptions about compound verbs can now be refuted:

- v. The two verb forms cannot be separated.

counter-example:

(109) *phete se æk din pôrbe.*  
 burst.PP he one day fall.3.FUT (CM)  
*One day he will explode.*

- vi. The compound maker has to follow the main verb.

counter-example:

(110) *majhkhane duṭo bōchôr gæche keṭe.*  
 mid.time.LOC two.CL year go.3.PR.PERF (CM) cut.PP  
*In the meantime two years passed.*

Here are the compound makers one by one. Only a few examples can be given for each one.

### 6.3.5.1 *yaoṃa go*

*yaoṃa* is the most common and the most versatile compound maker in Bangla. Its semantic impact on the perfective participle ranges from adding direction, finality,

completion to no impact at all. The combinations with *yaoôa* given below are examples, not a complete list.

*yaoôa* combines with

- i. verbs of motion. *yaoôa* retains its own meaning and directs the movement away from the speaker.

*côle yaoôa* go away, leave, occasionally carry on, be sufficient

(111) ekhan theke côle yan.  
 here from move.PP go.2H.PR.IMP (CM)  
*Go away from here.*

(112) oikhanatei amar côle yabe.  
 that.CL.LOC.EMP I.GEN move.PP go.3.FUT (CM)  
*That one will do for me.*

*ghure yaoôa* wander about, travel

(113) se sara deşe ghure yaÿ.  
 he whole country wander.PP go.3.PR.S (CM)  
*He travels around the whole country.*

*phire yaoôa* go back, return

(114) tini gôto bôchôre tar nijer deşe phire gelen.  
 he.H last year.LOC his own.GEN country.LOC return.PP go.3H.P.S (CM)  
*He returned to his own country last year.*

*paliÿe yaoôa* flee

(115) tara bhorbelaÿ paliÿe giÿeche.  
 they dawn.hour.LOC flee.PP go.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*They fled at dawn.*

*hête yaoôa* go walking, walk

(116) o prôtidin tin mail hête yaÿ.  
 he everyday three mile walk.PP go.3.PR.S (CM)  
*He walks for three miles every day.*

- ii. verbs which describe a change of state. In these compounds *yaoôa* can add a note of completion but often it does nothing more than improve the rhythmical flow of the sentence.

*hôÿe yaoôa* finish, happen, occur

(117) bişôÿta ækgheÿe hôÿe yacche.  
 subject.CL boring become.PP go.3.PR.C (CM)  
*The subject is getting boring.*



(118) tahôle    sɔb    šeş    hôye    yaŋni.  
 that.be.CP all end be.PP not.go.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*In that case it wasn't all over yet.*

(119) gachta    beşi    bɔrô    hôye    yabe    na.  
 tree.CL much big become.PP go.3.FUT (CM) not  
*The tree will not grow very big.*

môre yaoŋa *die*

(120) môre    geleo    ami    bamla    chôbi    dekhbô    na.  
 die.PP go.CP (CM).CONC I Bangla film see.1.FUT not  
 lit: Even if I die, I won't see a Bangla film.  
*Under no circumstances will I go to see a Bangla film.*

uŋhe yaoŋa *come off, get up, be dissolved, be closed down, fade*

(121) panite    bhijale    dagta    uŋhe    yabe.  
 water.LOC soak.CP stain.CL rise.PP go.3.FUT (CM)  
*If you soak (it) in water the stain will come off.*

theme yaoŋa *come to a stop*

(122) hɔŋhaŋ    tar    kothar    dhara    theme    gælô.  
 suddenly his word.GEN flow stop.PP go.3.P.S (CM)  
*Suddenly he stopped talking in mid flow.*

pôre yaoŋa *fall down, decrease, descend*

(123) choŋô    baccara    to    sɔb    sômôy    pôre    yaŋ.  
 small child.NOM.PL EMP always fall.PP go.3.PR.S (CM)  
*But small children fall over all the time.*

(124) sara    şeşône    hôicôi    pôre    gælô.  
 whole station.LOC chaos fall.PP go.3.P.S(CM)  
*The whole station erupted into chaos.*

şukiye yaoŋa *dry, wither, age*

(125) maŋer    cehara    ɔnekta    şukiye    gæche.  
 mother.GEN appearance much.CL age.PP go.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*Mother has aged a lot.*

khôse yaoŋa *come off, become detached*

(126) deoŋal    theke    cunbali    khôse    yacche.  
 wall from plaster detach.PP go.3.PR.C (CM)  
*The plaster is coming off the wall.*

- iii. bivalent (transitive) verbs. In these structures *yaoÿa* tends to provide nothing more than an end point.

*caliÿe yaoÿa continue*

- (127) eirākôm kôre caliÿe gele...  
 this.way do.PP continue.PP go.CP  
*If you carry on this way...*

*niÿe yaoÿa take*

- (128) p̄r̄thibī cheṛe amra kichu niÿe yete parbô na.  
 earth leave.PP we something take.PP go.IP (CM) be.able.to.1.FUT not.  
*When we leave this earth we won't be able to take anything with us.*

*phele yaoÿa abandon, throw away*

- (129) erp̄r tār strike phele yete siddhantô nilen.  
 this.GEN.after his wife.OBJ throw.PP go.IP (CM) decision take.3.P.S  
*After that he decided to leave his wife.*

*bhule yaoÿa forget*

- (130) d̄s̄ b̄chôr p̄reo amader phon numbar̄ta  
 ten year after.CONC our phone number.CL  
 bhule yaoni.  
 forget.PP not.go.2.PR.PERF (CM)  
*Even after ten years you haven't forgotten our phone number.*

*rekhe yaoÿa leave behind*

- (131) ma- baba kichu s̄ñcitô ṛthô rekhe giÿechilen.  
 mother father some saved wealth put.PP go.3H.P.PERF (CM)  
*Mother and father left their accumulated wealth.*

### 6.3.5.2 *asa come*

Like *yaoÿa*, *asa* combines with verbs of motion or verbs of change and indicates direction towards the speaker or the moment of speaking: (132) and (133). *asa* as a compound maker with bivalent verbs implies a continuous process or state from the distant past to the present: (134) and (135).

- (132) tara eimatrô côle eseche.  
 they this.EMP.only move.PP come.3.PR.PERF  
*They have only just come back.*

- (133) tader s̄rige yogayog s̄mprôti kôme eseche.  
 they.GEN with contact recently reduce.PP come.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*Recently the contact with them has become less.*

- (134) ɔnek bɔchôr dhôre uni ei eki khɔbôrer kagôj  
 many year during he.H this same newspaper  
 pôre aschen.  
 read.PP come.3.H.PR.C (CM)  
*He has been reading this same newspaper for many years.*
- (135) se bhaşake ami nitantô amar nijer moulik bhaşa  
 that language.OBJ I thoroughly my own original language  
 bôle ɔnekdin bhebe esechi.  
 say.PP many.day think.PP come.1.PR.PERF (CM)  
*For a long time I have considered this language my very own, original  
 language.*

### 6.3.5.3 ɔla move

ɔla as a compound maker can combine, much like yaoÿa go and asa come with verbs of motion or verbs of change: (136) and (137). With bivalent verbs ɔla retains its own meaning and adds a note of continuity or iterativity to the main verb: (138) and (139).

- (136) tomar bhôbişɔter dike egiÿe côle thekô.  
 your future.GEN towards advance.PP move.IP (CM) stay.2.FUT.IMP  
*Keep moving towards your future.*
- (137) bɔÿôs ɔtô hɔuk, ekɕu ghure côle  
 age so.much be.3.IMP a.little walk.around.PP move.IP (CM)  
 hɔÿ prôtidin.  
 be.3.PR.S every.day  
*Whatever one's age, one needs to walk around a bit every day.*
- (138) se ɔɔb sômôÿ eki kɔtha bôle ɔle.  
 he all time same word say.PP move.3.PR.S (CM)  
*He is always saying the same thing.*
- (139) tader ɔɔnge tomar ekɕu bujhe ɔla ucit.  
 they.GEN with you.GEN a.bit understand.PP move.VN (CM) ought  
 lit: with them you ought to move having understood a bit  
*You ought to tread a bit carefully with them.*

### 6.3.5.4 oſha rise, get up

With verbs of sound or verbal utterance oſha adds a component of suddenness or of completed action (Examples 38, 39). With verbs denoting a gradual change oſha provides an endpoint:(140) and (141). hôÿe oſha with a preceding adjective means

*become*, with a preceding noun *occur, happen, arise*. *hôye oṭha* is the most common compound verb with *oṭha*: (144) and (145).

- (140) cheleṭi hese uṭhlô.  
boy.CL laugh.PP rise..3.P.S (CM)  
*The boy burst out laughing.*
- (141) tahôle kôthaṭa bôle uṭhte parche na kænô?  
so word.CL say.PP rise.IP (CM) be.able.to.3.PR.C not why  
*So why is he unable to say this?*
- (142) ucchvôsitô jôraṣi dekhe anônde o bhôye  
swollen wave see.PP joy.LOC and fear.LOC  
amar môn dule uṭhechilô.  
my mind sway.PP rise.3.P.PERF (CM)  
*Seeing the high, rolling waves, I was torn between excitement and fear.*
- (143) tar kôtha bhabte bhabte môner môdhye kæmôn  
he.GEN word think.IP think.IP mind.GEN within how  
maṣa ar bhalôbasa jege uṭhlô.  
pity and love wake.PP rise.3.P.S (CM)  
*How moved she was by love and pity at the thought of him.*
- (144) aste aste šeṣ pôryôntô sobi spôṣṭô hôye uṭhlô.  
slowly slowly end until all.EMP clear become.PP rise.3.P.S (CM)  
*Slowly, in the end, everything became clear.*
- (145) strilok sundôr hôye oṭhe kebôl æk karôṇe.  
woman beautiful become.PP rise.3.PR.S only one reason.LOC  
*Women become beautiful for one reason only.*

### 6.3.5.5 pôra fall

*pôra* as a compound maker is the downward counterpart of *oṭha*. It can add suddenness, downward motion, negative effect or just an endpoint. It combines with verbs of motion or with verbs of change. *pôra* does not combine with bivalent verbs. Sentence (146) contains an interesting double compound verb with *oṭha rise* followed by *pôra fall*.

- (146) khaoṣa šeṣ kôre uṭhe pôre bôle  
food end do.3.PP rise.PP (CM) fall.PP (CM) say.3.PR.S  
ækhôn tomar sômôṣ ache?  
now your time [is present]  
*Finishing his meal he got up and said, 'Do you have time now?'*

- (147) hɔʔto ba sɔmbhaʃɔŋʔa kɔkhôno kɔkhôno dîrghô  
 perhaps or greeting.CL ever ever long  
 hôye pòrtô.  
 be.PP fall.3.P.HABIT (CM)  
*Occasionally perhaps the greeting was drawn out.*
- (148) ar karo kache ʃunle ami gôriye pòrtam.  
 more someone.GEN near hear.CP I roll.PP fall.1.P.HABIT (CM)  
*If I heard it from someone else I would fall about laughing.*

### 6.3.5.6 bɔsa sit

bɔsa as a compound maker is not as frequent as either oʔha or pɔra. It shares with them the semantic component of an endpoint and combines mainly with bivalent verbs. Compounds with bɔsa sometimes have a negative *now look what you have done!* component.

- (149) tumi ya kôre bôsechô ta schôje ʃodhrano  
 you what do.PP sit.2.PR.PERF (CM) that easily rectify.VN  
 yabe na.  
 go.3.FUT not  
*What you have done cannot easily be rectified.*
- (150) ciŋhiŋa likhe bôsle ar æmôn cintay thakbe na.  
 letter.CL write.PP sit.CP (CM) more such worry.LOC stay.2.FUT not  
*If you get the letter written, you won't have to worry so much anymore.*

### 6.3.5.7 dāraŋo stand

dāraŋo combines with hôye *having been* and with uʔhe *having risen* only. It provides an end-point or a result. The two compound makers oʔha and dāraŋo in the following sentence express the same nuance.

- (151) manuʃer hrdɔy majhe majhe kæmôn nistɔbshô  
 man.GEN heart sometimes how still  
 hôye oʔhe - bɔrô niguʃh hôye dāray  
 become.PP rise.3.PR.S (CM) big secretive become.PP stand.3.PR.S (CM)  
*The human heart sometimes grows so still – becomes very mysterious.*
- (152) arekti biʃɔyer dike dʃʃi na dile mahômudul hɔkke  
 more.one.CL subject.GEN towards view not give.CP Mahomudul Haq.OBJ  
 bojha kôthin hôye dāraŋe.  
 understand.VN difficult be.PP stand.3.FUT (CM)  
*It will be difficult to understand Mahomudul Haq without looking at one additional aspect.*

## 6.3.5.8 deoṅa give

deoṅa has either an intensifying effect or it directs the action away from the agent: (153) and (154). As a *trivalent* verb, deoṅa is particularly suited to acting as a compound maker with causative verbs: (155) and (156).

- (153) tumi amake ækṭa śari kine debe?  
 you I.OBJ one.CL saree buy.PP give.2.FUT (CM)  
*Will you buy me a saree?*
- (154) ma ācōl chīre byanḍaj bēdhe diyechē.  
 mother end.of.saree tear.PP bandage tie.PP give.3.PR.PERF  
*Mother tore off the end of her sari and put a bandage on.*
- (155) tomake ki sōb kichu alada kōre bujhiṅe  
 you.OBJ what all something separate do.PP explain.PP  
 dite hōbe?  
 give.IP (CM) be.3.FUT  
*Does everything have to be explained to you separately?*
- (156) ta paṅer nic theke maṭi sōriṅe diṅeche.  
 that foot.GEN below from ground move.PP give.3.PR.PERF  
*That pulled the rug out from under him.*

## 6.3.5.9 neoṅa take

Like deoṅa *give* neoṅa combines predominantly with bivalent verbs. It indicates the completion of an action and directs it towards the speaker.

- Compare: with deoṅa: ami ca baniṅe diṅechi. *I have made the tea (for someone else)*  
 with neoṅa: ami ca baniṅe niṅechi. *I have made the tea (for myself)*  
 with deoṅa: ami ta bujhiṅe dilam. *I explained this.*  
 with neoṅa: ami ta bujhe nilam. *I understood this.*  
 with deoṅa: ami take śikhiṅe debō. *I will teach him.*  
 with neoṅa: ami ta śikhe nebō. *I will learn this.*  
 dhōre neoṅa yak... *Let us assume...*  
 toiri hōṅe ne! *Get ready!*  
 bhat kheṅe nao! *Eat first!*

- (157) ḍcenake cine neoṅar mōdhye  
 unknown.OBJ know.PP take.VN.GEN (CM) within  
 to abiṣkarer anōndō ache.  
 EMP discovery.GEN joy [is present]  
*To get to know the unknown surely has the joy of discovery in it, doesn't it?*

- (158) inamer k̄oṭha śuneī dibak̄ôṛ asôl byæpaṛṭa  
 Inam.GEN word hear.PP.EMP Dibakor true matter.CL  
 bujhe niṣeche.  
 understand.PP take.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*Listening to Inam, Dibakor got to understand the real situation.*

### 6.3.5.10 phæla throw

phæla is, in many ways, the most developed of all the compound makers. The semantic scope of phæla ranges from changing the meaning of the main verb entirely to adding a completive aspect or having no impact at all. In some contexts phæla is best translated with *already*. phæla combines predominantly with bivalent verbs but there are also the idiomatic kēde phæla *burst into tears* and hese phæla *burst out laughing*.

- (159) tara toke dekhle cine phelte pare.  
 they you.I.OBJ see.CP know.PP throw.IP be able to.3.PR.S  
*If they see you they may recognize you.*
- (160) ækhôn ulṭopaṭa k̄oṭha bōle phælaṭa  
 now opposite word say.PP throw.VN.CL (CM)  
 bipōjj̄nōk hōte pare.  
 risky be.IP be.possible.3.PR.S  
*Telling him the opposite now could be risky.*
- (161) tar atmar ækṭa ɔm̄sô se hariṣe pheleche.  
 his soul.GEN one.CL part he lose.PP throw.3.PR.PERF (CM)  
*He has lost a part of his soul.*

### 6.3.5.11 tola lift, raise

tola is the bivalent counterpart of oṭha *rise*. Like oṭha it sometimes implies an upward motion or improvement. tola only combines with bivalent verbs.

- (162) tini take oṣudh diṣe bāciṣe tullen.  
 she.H he.OBJ medicine give.PP save.PP raise.3H.P.S (CM)  
*She gave him medicine and saved him.*
- (163) bam̄la sahiṣyōke r̄itim̄tō adhunik kōre  
 Bangla literature.OBJ properly modern do.PP  
 tulechilen bōṛkim̄c̄ndrō.  
 lift.3.P.PERF (CM) Bankimchandra  
*Bankimchandra made Bangla literature properly modern.*
- (164) ɔm̄s̄yaguloke baṛiṣe tolar tar jhōk ache.  
 problem.PL.CL.OBJ increase.PP lift.VN.GEN his inclination [is present]  
*He has a tendency to exaggerate the problems.*

6.3.5.12 *rakha keep*

*rakha* can only marginally be considered a compound maker as it often retains at least some of its own meaning. It is for combinations like *jene rakha remember, take note of* that it is included here. *rakha* combines with bivalent verbs.

- (165) byæparṭa cepe rakha s̄ombhōb h̄ȳni.  
 matter.CL suppress.PP keep.VN possible not be.3.PR.PERF  
*It was not possible to keep the matter under wraps.*
- (166) stōmbhitō kanuke sekhane dār kōriye rekhe  
 stunned Kanu.OBJ there standing cause.to.do.PP keep.PP (CM)  
 radha cōle gælō d̄rptō pāye.  
 Radha move.PP go.3.P.S proud foot.LOC  
*Radha left the bewildered Kanu standing there and walked away proudly.*

6.3.5.13 *Same sense compounds*

Apart from these regular compound makers, some verbs form compound-like combinations between semantically related verbs. Some of these can be considered idiomatic uses.

*cēye dækha, takiye dækha, cēye takano to look at*

*caoyā look at, dækha see and takano look at* combine with one another. There is no fixed order but *dækha see* is less likely than the other two to appear as the first (perfective participle) verb.

- (167) h̄ṭhaṭ ami cēye dekhi amader samne ese  
 suddenly I look.PP see.1.PR.S we.GEN in.front.of come.PP  
 dāriyeche ekṭi yubōk.  
 stand.3.PR.PERF one.CL young.man  
*Suddenly I saw a young man standing in front of us.*
- (168) r̄tōn takiye dekh̄lō akaṣer aj c̄nek tara phuṭeche.  
 Roton look.PP see.3.P.S sky.GEN today many star appear.3.PR.PERF  
*Roton looked and saw that many stars had appeared today.*

*ghure beṛano wander about* from *ghora move around* and *beṛano visit, go out* in this order.

- (169) tumi saradin kon jāygāy ghure beṛao?  
 you all.day which place.LOC wander.PP go.out.2.PR.S  
*Where do you wander around all day?*

*jōriye dh̄ra embrace* from *jōṛano embrace* and *dh̄ra hold* in this order.

- (170) se niṣake jōriye dh̄re bōllō...  
 he Nisha.OBJ embrace.PP hold.PP say.3.P.S  
*He took Nisha into his arms and said...*



khūje paoṅa *find* from khōja *search* and paoṅa *get, receive* in this order.

This is by rights a verbal sequence *having searched, find* but the combination is so common that it should be included here.

- (171) kṛtṅjñotar      bhaṣa      khūje      paṅni.  
 gratitude.GEN language search.PP not.find.3.PR.PERF  
*He couldn't find the words to express his gratitude.*

Combinations of perfective participles with *thaka stay* and *ach- be, be present* contain aspective elements and will be dealt with in Chapter 8.3.

### 6.3.6 Non-finite verb forms

The following four sections deal with the non-finite forms of Bangla verbs. Non-finite verb forms are the parts of the verb which are not subject to tense and person.

All Bangla verbs have four non-finites forms, a verbal noun, an imperfective participle, a conditional participle and a perfective participle. These four verb forms set the pace, illuminate the meaning and play a crucial role in the way Bangla sentences operate. All non-finite verb forms are employed in creating modal structures. These are dealt with in detail in Chapter 8.5.3 but some examples for specific uses are also given in this chapter. In all cases these uses are marked as modal.

In traditional Bengali linguistic analysis non-finite verb forms have no particular syntactic significance, i.e. a simple sentence can contain a number of non-finite forms and still remain classed as a simple sentence, as long as it contains only one finite verb form. This analysis has been accepted by Bengali linguists for many generations without any serious challenge. We will come back to this in the syntax Chapter 7.2.1.4. Here we are concerned primarily with phrase structure and, on the phrase structure level, we deal with non-finite verb forms within the restraints of the traditional definitions. This means that we refer to multiple-word verbal noun structures as verbal noun phrases, but we do not postulate a change in status for these structures until we have had a close look at the syntactical realities of Bangla.

#### 6.3.6.1 *The verbal noun*

The verbal noun is the form of verbs given in dictionaries and can therefore be considered the most basic of the non-finite verb forms. The verbal noun can be used liked any inanimate non-count noun. It declines for case and takes modifiers and classifiers but due to its inanimate status the objective case ending is rare. Verbal nouns have no plural forms. The verbal noun also has a variety of special uses.

##### 6.3.6.1.1 Nominative verbal noun

Nominative verbal nouns can act as subjects of sentences. This occurrence is particularly commons in copular sentences but is not restricted to them.

- (172) eke mene neoŷa kṣṭōkṛ.  
this.OBJ accept.PP take.VN difficult  
*It is hard to accept this.*
- (173) pṛthibīte kar ye ki bhalō lage, bojha muṣkil.  
world.LOC who.GEN that what good feel.3.PR.S understand.VN difficulty  
*It is difficult to understand who in the world likes what.*
- (174) karo sathe gṛpō kṛaṭa rītimṭō birōktikṛ amar kache.  
someone.GEN with chat do.VN.CL regular annoying I.GEN close.to  
*I find chatting to anyone downright annoying.*

Here is a non-copular sentences.

- (175) pṛōśnō jagano ṁbōśyōi sahityer pṛōdhan  
question raise.VN of.course.EMP literature.GEN main  
uddeśyer mōdhye pṛe.  
purpose.GEN among fall.3.PR.S  
lit: to raise questions does of course fall under the main purposes of literature  
*Raising questions is of course one of the main purposes in literature.*

Nominative verbal nouns can appear in postpositional phrases:

- (176) se mṛd khaoŷa chere na deoŷa pōryōntō  
he alcohol drink.VN leave.PP not give.VN until  
*until he gives up drinking alcohol*
- (177) deoŷalgulote rṁi deoŷa chaṛa kono upaŷ nei.  
wall.PL.CL.LOC colour give.VN except any way [is absent]  
*There is no other way but to paint the walls.*

Nominative verbal nouns are used in impersonal passive structures with hōŷa *be, become, occur* and yaoŷa *go* (see Chapter 7.4.3). Sentence (179) is modal.

- (178) ekhane gach lagano hōŷ.  
here tree plant.VN happen.3.PR.S  
*Trees get planted here.*
- (179) ekhan theke kichu dækha yaŷ na.  
here from something see.VN go.3.PR.S not  
*Nothing can be seen from here.*

More on these structures in Chapter 7.4.4 impersonal structures.

Nominative verbal nouns are used with matrō *only* meaning *as soon as*. The subject of the verbal noun can be different from that of the main verb. This is the only structure where the nominative ba-verbal noun is still in use.

- (180) tar mukh dækhbamatrô bujhte parlam  
 she.GEN face see.VN.only understand.IP be.able.to.1.P.S  
 kichu hôÿeche.  
 something happen.PR.PERF  
*As soon as I saw her face I understood that something had happened.*

### 6.3.6.1.2 Genitive verbal noun

The genitive verbal noun can precede postpositions.

- (181) etô rege yabar pôribôrte  
 so.much get.angry.PP go.VN.GEN instead  
*instead of getting so angry*
- (182) môner bhab prôkaś korbar jônÿe sobai caÿ  
 mind.GEN mood expression- do.VN.GEN for everyone want.3.PR.S  
 tar môner manuş.  
 his mind.GEN person  
*(We) all want a soul-mate to whom to reveal our secrets.*

The verbal noun can take a nominative subject in these uses:

- (183) tini kichu bolar age meÿeÿi abar kôtha bôlte laglô.  
 he something say.VN.GEN before girl.CL again word say.IP start.3.P.S  
 lit: he before saying something, the girl started talking again  
*Before he had said anything, the girl started talking again.*
- (184) brşti arômbhô hcoÿar pcr amar sôrir bhalô hôÿeche.  
 rain start be.VN.GEN after my health good be.3.PR.PERF  
*I got better after the rains started.*

The postposition *mâtô* like following genitive verbal nouns takes on the meaning *suitable for, appropriate for*.

pçar mâtô bôî	<i>a book worth reading</i>
etôjnke bcsanor mâtô jaÿga	<i>space to seat so many people</i>

Genitive verbal nouns modify other nouns in much the same way as attributive adjectives do.

possessive adjective: tar sôkti	<i>his strength</i>
genitive verbal noun: tar lege thakar sôkti	
his attach.PP stay.VN.GEN strength	<i>his staying power</i>

Here are some simple verbal noun phrases. The last three examples in the list below show that this structure is very productive.

b̄sar	gh̄r		<i>sitting room</i>
lekhar	kaḡj		<i>writing paper</i>
rakhbar	jāyga		<i>storage space</i>
dudh	anar	lok	
milk	bring.VN.GEN	person	<i>milk-man</i>
ghas	kātar	mesin	
grass	cut.VN.GEN	machine	<i>lawn-mower</i>
k̄phi	bananor	mesin	
coffee	prepare.VN.GEN	machine	<i>coffee-maker</i>

The (modified) nouns are often abstract and can function as subjects, objects or locatives. In (185) the subject *mane* *meaning* is modified by the preceding verbal noun phrase.

- (185) æm̄n ɔ̄sr̄ôbhabe khūi h̄te parar mane ki?  
 such immeasurably happy be.IP be.able.to.VN.GEN meaning what  
*What is the meaning of being able to be so immeasurably happy?*

In (186) the basic copular sentence is *uddeśyô ki? What is the purpose?* The verbal noun phrase *tomar ekhane asar of your coming here* modifies the noun *uddeśyô purpose*.

- (186) tomar ekhane asar uddeśyô ki?  
 you.GEN here come.VN.GEN purpose what  
 lit: what is the purpose of your coming here?  
*What have you come here for?*

The same modifying function of the genitive verbal noun is common in existential sentences with *ach- exist, be present* and its negative *nei be absent* as the main verb.

- (187) take rodh k̄rbar k̄sm̄ta karo nei.  
 that.OBJ resistance do.VN.GEN power someone.GEN [is absent]  
*No one has the power to stop that.*

In sentence (188) the verb *thaka stay* stands in for *ach- be, exist* (see Chapter 6.3.1.3).

- (188) apnar m̄n kharap k̄rar kono kar̄ni  
 you.H.GEN mind bad do.VN.GEN any reason.EMP  
 thakte pare na.  
 stay.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S not  
 lit: of making your mind bad any reason cannot exist  
*There can be no reason for you to feel depressed.*

Sentence (189) is a typical example for a shift in word order which separates *sadhyô* *ability* from its verbal noun modifier *lɔ̄rai kɔ̄rbar* *of making fight (of fighting)*.

- (189) bhagyer biruddhe kar sadhyô ache lɔ̄rai kɔ̄rbar?  
 fate.GEN against who.GEN ability [is present] fight do.VN.GEN  
 lit: against fate whose ability exists of fighting  
*Who has the ability to fight against fate?*

Translating these structures into English often produces infinitives: *the ability to fight, the chance to work*. Sentence (190) contains the indirect object *amake me*. The conjunct verbal noun *kaj kɔ̄rar* *of doing work* modifies the direct object *suyog chance*.

- (190) apni dɔ̄ya kôre amake kaj kɔ̄rar suyog den.  
 you.H mercy do.PP I.OBJ work do.VN.GEN chance give.2H.PR.IMP  
 lit: you please me work of doing chance give  
*Please give me a chance to work.*

- (191) amra cith̄iṭa na paōyar karôṇ bujhte pari na.  
 we letter.CL not get.VN.GEN reason understand.IP be able to.1.PR.S not  
 lit: the reason for not getting the letter we don't understand  
*We can't understand why we didn't get the letter.*

When the genitive verbal noun is followed by *kɔ̄tha word* the structure often implies either *supposed to, previously arranged* or *the fact that*. Negation in present tense sentences is done with *nɔ̄y*. This structure is modal and is discussed in Chapter 8.5.4. Here are just two examples.

- (192) amar ki ætô kɔ̄ṣṭô sɔ̄hyô kɔ̄rar kɔ̄tha chilô?  
 my what so.much suffering endurance do.VN.GEN word [was]  
 lit: was there word of me enduring so much suffering?  
*Was I supposed to endure so much suffering?*
- (193) ya ghôṭechilô ta to nɔ̄yô karo janar  
 that.R happen.3.P.PERF that.CR EMP other someone.GEN know.VN.GEN  
 kɔ̄tha nɔ̄y.  
 word [is not]  
 lit: the word is not that of someone else knowing what happened  
*But no one else was supposed to know what had happened.*

The genitive verbal noun is used independently in conjunction with the zero verb and its negative *nɔ̄y* to create a modal structure implying what must or must not happen (see also Chapter 8.5.3 (f)).

Structures with *ach-* and *nei* were given above. Compare the following two sentences:

- i. *bɔlar kichu nei. There is nothing to say.*  
 ii. *kichu bɔlar kɔ̃y. Nothing must be said.*

While sentence (i) merely states an absence, sentence (ii) contains a strong imperative element.

- (194) *ya hɔbar hɔbe.*  
 what.R be.VN.GEN be.3.FUT  
*What has to happen will happen.*
- (195) *ta hɔɔ̃yar kɔ̃y – hɔbeo na.*  
 that be.VN.GEN [is not] – be.3.FUT.also not  
*That must and will not happen.*
- (196) *na, jibôn kɔ̃ʂtô kɔrbar kɔ̃y.*  
 no life waste do.VN.GEN [is not]  
*No, life must not be wasted.*

### 6.3.6.1.3 Objective verbal noun

The verbal noun can be the object of a sentence. As with other inanimate nouns, the objective case ending is usually not attached, but in sentences giving definitions or paraphrases the ending can be used.

- (197) *amar bôï lekhaṭa e pôryôntô śeṣ*  
 my book write.VN.CL this until end  
*kôrte parini.*  
 do.IP not.be.able.to.1.PR.PERF  
 lit: my writing that book I have been unable to finish so far.  
*I have not yet been able to finish writing my book.*
- (198) *kaj phele jṭṭla kɔra ami sɔhyô kôrbô na.*  
 work throw.PP clique do.VN I tolerate-do.1.FUT not  
 lit: I will not tolerate forming cliques having thrown away work  
*I won't stand for (people) neglecting their work and forming cliques.*

The whole verbal noun phrase in (198) can be replaced by *ta* *that* to show the structure of the sentence. The verbal noun structure contains its own object *jṭṭla clique*.

- S O V  
 ami ta sɔhyô kôrbô na. *I will not tolerate that.*  
 O S V  
 kaj phele jṭṭla kɔra ami sɔhyô kôrbô na.

Here is an example with the objective ending added:

- (199) amader bēce      thakake      kaktalīyô      soubhagyô  
 we.GEN survive-PP stay.VN.OBJ coincidental good.luck  
 bôlte to      parbô.  
 say.IP EMP be.able.to.1.FUT  
 lit: our surviving we will certainly be able to call a lucky coincidence  
*We can surely call our survival a lucky coincidence.*

#### 6.3.6.1.4 Locative verbal noun

Locative verbal nouns often express cause. In order to understand the logic behind this, we compare them to ordinary locative nouns:

- loc noun: grame jhōgra      hōcche.      *Quarrels are occurring in the village.*  
 loc VN:    tomar asaŷ jhōgra hōcche. lit: Quarrels are occurring in your coming.  
*Quarrels are occurring because of your coming.*

The example shows that it is only a small step from the original locative reading to a causal interpretation. The subject of the locative verbal noun can be different from that of the main verb. The locative verbal noun structure often precedes the main clause.

- (200) gacher pata na thakaŷ      o      paŷer      baŷighōrgulo  
 tree.GEN leaf not be.VN.LOC that side.GEN house.house.PL.CL  
 spōŷṭō dækha yaŷ.  
 clear see.VN go.3.PR.S  
 lit: in there being no leaves on the trees the houses on the other side can be clearly seen  
*Because there were no leaves on the trees the houses on the other side could be clearly seen.*
- (201) kaj ye peŷechis      ta      tor      ṭaka  
 work that find.2I.PR.PERF that you.I.GEN money  
 paṭhanote jenechi.  
 send.VN.LOC know.1.PR.PERF  
 lit: that you have found work that I found out from your sending money  
*I knew that you had found a job from the money you sent.*

Some of these structures raise the question of whether or not a verbal noun with its own subject, as in example (200) should be considered a clause. These questions are discussed in Chapter 7.2.1.4.

## 6.3.6.1.5 Verbal adjective

Many verbal nouns can act as adjectives. They take neither classifiers nor case endings. Verbal adjectives are usually passive in meaning (*bagane tola chôbi a photo taken in the garden*) but active meanings also occur:

- (202) kono æk ækla jege- thaka manuṣ  
 any one alone wake.PP stay.VA person  
*anyone who stays awake alone*

The occurrence of verbal adjectives ranges from single items to complex phrases. In many cases the translations require relative clauses in English. Human agents with active verbal nouns are in the genitive case (*tar lekha bôî his written book = the book he wrote*, *maÿer deoÿa harṭa the necklace mother gave*).

The passive potential of verbal adjectives adds an interesting dimension to verbal nouns and means that active verbs like *chaṛa leave, abandon* can equally mean *being left, abandoned*. This explains, for instance, the somewhat unexpected use of *chaṛa* as a postposition: *ta chaṛa that being left behind*. It also explains convincingly the composition of *mara yaoÿa die*. *mara* is a verbal adjective here, meaning *having been hit*.

## a. verbal adjectives used attributively

- (203) malôti bhôÿanôk capa meÿe.  
 Maloti frightfully squeeze.VA girl  
*Maloti is a highly-strung girl.*
- (204) hat baṛiÿe tar kôlôm dhôra hatṭa cepe dhôrlam ami.  
 hand reach.out.PP his pen hold.VA hand.CL squeeze.PP hold.1.PRS I  
*I reached out and grabbed hold of his hand which was holding the pen.*
- (205) tar bheñe- pôṛa atmôbiśvas phiriÿe ante ceṣṭa  
 his break.PP – fall.VA self-confidence return.PP bring.IP attempt-  
 kôrche çbirôtô.  
 do.3.PR.C incessantly  
*He is constantly trying to regain his broken self-confidence.*

## b. verbal adjectives used predicatively

These structures occur less frequently than attributive verbal adjectives and are restricted to relatively simple sentences.

- (206) ghôrer janalagulo khola.  
 room.GEN window.PL.CL open.VA  
*The windows in the room are open.*
- (207) pura baṛi sundôrbhabe sajano.  
 whole house beautiful.way.LOC decorate.VA  
*The whole house was beautifully decorated.*



- (208) sômudrô kuÿaśaÿ ðhaka.  
 sea fog.LOC cover.VA  
*The sea is shrouded in fog.*

c. verbal adjective compounds

Some verb combinations, which fall somewhere between conjunct and compound verbs, are formed with verbal adjectives. These structures are not as common as perfective participle compounds and in many of them the verbal adjective takes on a passive meaning. Here are just a few examples.

dhōra pōra *get caught, be detected, be noticed*

- (209) ekhane tar mōner kōnphiuśōn sōb theke beśi dhōra pōre.  
 here his mind.GEN confusion all than much hold.VA fall.3.PR.S  
*Here the confusion in his mind is particularly noticeable.*

mara pōra *die an accidental death*

- (210) ònek lok beghore pōre bōner mōdhye mara pōre.  
 many person senseless.LOC fall.PP forest.GEN within strike.VA fall.3.PR.S  
*Many people become disoriented and die in the forest.*

dækha deoÿa *appear*

- (211) sūryō sekhane ækṭana dækha diÿe baki chōÿ  
 sun there one.pull see.VA give.PP remaining six  
 mas ækebarei dækha deÿ na.  
 month completely.EMP see.VA give 3.PR.S not  
*There the sun appears for six months and the remaining six months it can't be seen at all.*

mara yaoÿa *die*

- (212) tumi mara gele ami kothaÿ yetam?  
 you strike.VA go.CP I where go.1.P.HABIT  
*Where would I go if you died?*

dækha paoÿa *manage to see, get to see*

- (213) ònek ceṣṭa kōreo tar dækha pelam na.  
 much attempt do.PP.CONC he.GEN see.VA get.1.P.S not  
*I tried very hard but I didn't get to see him.*

### 6.3.6.2 Imperfective participle

The imperfective participle has the general feature of something that has not yet happened, is anticipated or in the process of unfolding. In some cases the imperfective participle is equivalent to the English infinitive with *to*, eg

- (214) ami yete cai.  
 I go.IP want.1.PR.S  
*I want to go.*

The term INFINITIVE is also in use for this form, but for a language with multiple non-finite forms the term INFINITIVE seems too vague.

The imperfective participle has the following functions:

**a. direct object of bivalent verbs**

The imperfective participle can function as the direct object of a great variety of verbs such as *para be able to*, *caoÿa want*, *laga begin*, *bôla tell*, *deoÿa allow*, *jana know*, *paoyÿa get*, *dækha see*, *sona hear*, *bhule yaoÿa forget*, *bhalo laga like*, *bojha understand*.

- (215) ami kichu dekhte pacchi na to.  
I something see.IP get.1.PR.C not EMP  
*But I can't see anything.*
- (216) se aro dÿre hÿte yete pareni.  
he more distance.LOC walk.PP go.IP not.be.able.to.3.PR.PERF  
*He couldn't walk any further.*
- (217) ami ar ektu thakte ceÿechilam.  
I more a bit stay.IP want.1.P.PERF  
*I wanted to stay a bit longer.*
- (218) tarpÿr ghÿtôna ôti drutô ghÿtte laglô.  
that.GEN.after event very fast occur.IP start.3.P.S  
*Then everything started to happen very fast.*
- (219) babake e dhÿrôner kÿtha bôlte tini  
father.OBJ this kind.GEN word say.IP he.H  
er age kÿkhôno sonenni.  
this.GEN before ever not.hear.3H.PR.PERF  
*He had never heard his father talk in this way before.*

The structure in sentence (219) can be reduced to the simple:

- tini babake sonenni  
he.H father.OBJ not.hear.H.PR.PERF  
*He didn't hear (his) father.*

The unexpected word order in sentence (220) is determined by the weighty imperfective participle phrase (see also Chapter 7.1.3.2).

- (220) hemônte sukno pata guchiÿe byæge bhôrte dekhechi take.  
autumn.LOC dry leaf collect.PP bag.LOC fill.IP see.1.PR.PERF she.OBJ  
*In the autumn I saw her collecting dry leaves and put them in a bag.*
- (221) tini chatrôder dÿstây aste bôlechen.  
he.H student.PL.OBJ ten.CL.LOC come.IP say.3H.PR.PERF  
*He told the students to come at ten o'clock.*

- (222) se bhan kôrte bojhe na.  
 he pretense do.IP understand.3.PR.S not  
*He doesn't know how to pretend.*
- (223) muktô alo batase gachke barte dite hây.  
 free light wind.LOC tree.OBJ grow.IP give.IP be.3.PR.S  
*The tree must be allowed to grow in the free light and wind.*

**b. expressing purpose with verbs of motion**

- (224) aj kænô michimichi amake jvalate esechô?  
 today why for.nothing I.OBJ annoy.IP come.2.PR.PERF  
*Why have you come to wind me up today for no good reason?*
- (225) seo take bhulte bôseche.  
 she.also he.OBJ forget.IP sit.3.PR.PERF  
*She had also intended to forget him.*
- (226) amra môric tulte yabo.  
 we chili pick.IP go.1.FUT  
*We will go to pick chili.*

**c. expressing iterative aspect**

thaka *stay* adds an iterative aspect to the imperfective participle (see also Chapter 8.3)

- (227) se sôb sômôy ei baje gan gaithe thake.  
 she all time this stupid song sing.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*She keeps singing this stupid song all the time.*

**d. as subject in combinations with nouns and adjectives**

- (228) sesôb diner kôtha bhabte ekhônô amar kôşţô hây.  
 that.all day.GEN word think.IP still my suffering be.3.PR.S  
*Thinking about those days is still painful for me.*
- (229) apnar lÿja kôre na amar ţaka khete?  
 you.GEN embarrassment do.3.PR.S not my money eat.IP  
*Doesn't it embarrass you to feed off my money?*
- (230) meÿeţike dekhthe khub sundôr.  
 girl.CL see.IP very beautiful.  
 lit: to see the girl is beautiful  
*The girl looks very beautiful.*

Some contexts contain a time component:

- (231) bujhte deri hólô na.  
 understand.IP delay is.3.P.S not  
*It didn't take (him) long to understand.*
- (232) môn ðhik kôre phelte moñei sômôy lage na.  
 mind right do.PP throw.IP at.all time take.3.PR.S not  
*Making a decision does not take any time at all.*

**e. expressing simultaneous events, providing a time frame**

The imperfective participle can indicate processes that occur simultaneously to those expressed by the main verb. It can often be translated with *while*. In some studies this use of the imperfective participle is treated separately as a present participle. In order to express iterative or continuative properties, the imperfective participle is sometimes doubled. In these uses the imperfective participle can take its own subject as in sentences (233) and (234) and provide a time frame for the main verbal action.

- (233) rod thakte bhût beroý na.  
 sunshine stay.IP ghost go.out.3.PR.S not  
*Ghosts don't come out while the sun shines.*
- (234) gramer kachakachi aste choðô bçrô sobai chuñe elô.  
 village.GEN close.to come.IP small big everyone run.PP come.3.P.S  
*As he came close to the village everyone, young and old, came running.*

Here are two examples with a doubled imperfective participle:

- (235) rastar odik theke ækña mçstô nomira kukur  
 road.GEN that.direction from one.CL big ugly dog  
 hãpate hãpate chuñe elô.  
 pant.IP pant.IP run.PP come.3.P.S  
*A big, ugly dog came running across the road, panting as it ran.*
- (236) pçlaś śunlô, śunte śunte tar rçktô ðhañða  
 Polash listen.3.P.S listen.IP listen.IP his blood cold  
 hõye elô.  
 become.PP come.3.P.S  
*Polash listened and as he was listening his blood ran cold.*

A doubled imperfective participle connected by *na* indicates events which are about to happen or parallel to another event. This structure is often best translated with

*as soon as* in English. The second imperfective participle usually has an emphatic *i* following.

- (237) *gaṛi theke namte na namtei tīrthōsthaner*  
 car from get.down.IP na get.down.IP.EMP holy.place.GEN  
*paṇḍader mātôn oder ghire dhôrlô majhira.*  
 guide.GEN like they.OBJ surround.PP hold.3.P.S fisherman.PL.NOM  
*As soon as they got out of the car the fishermen, like guides in a holy place,*  
*surrounded them.*

Modal structures with the imperfective participle are dealt with in Chapter 8.5.3 (c) and (d).

### 6.3.6.3 Conditional participle

The conditional participle provides a concise and convenient way of forming conditional or temporal sentences. All conditional participle structures are modal (see also Chapter 8.5.3 (a), (b) and (e)).

As a non-finite, tenseless form it can be used in place of *yôdi*-structures in all types of conditional sentences (see Chapter 7.7.1). The tense and translation of the conditional participle is determined by the finite verb form in the main clause. Conditional participles usually precede the finite verb form. For sentences with *ach- exist, be present* the conditional participle of *thaka stay* steps in. *thaka* is also used for perfective conditionals when the conditional participle *thakle* is preceded by a perfective participle.

present conditional for *ach-*:

- (238) *tomar kono sãndehô thakle cepe rakhbe na.*  
 you.GEN any doubt [exist].CP suppress.PP keep.2.FUT not  
*If you have any doubts, don't keep (them) concealed.*

perfective conditional:

- (239) *tumi prôbãndher lekhaṭa šeṣ kôre thakle ami ar*  
 you essay.GEN write.VN.CL end do.PP stay.CP I more  
*kono mãntôbyô kôrbô na.*  
 any comment do.1.FUT not  
*If you have finished writing the essay I won't comment anymore.*

past conditional:

- (240) *tar chelemeṃe thakle se khub bhalô baba hôtô.*  
 his children stay.CP he very good father be.3.P.HABIT  
 lit: if his children existed he would be a very good father  
*He would have been a very good father if he had had children.*

হোয়া *be, become* supplies the conditional participle for copular sentences:

- (241) tomar môn kharap hôle ekṭu gan śune bhalô  
 your mind bad be.CP a.bit song hear.PP good  
 kôre dao.  
 do.PP give.2.PR.IMP

*If you are sad you can cheer yourself up by listening to some music.*

Conditional participles are negated with a preceding *na*. Sentence (242) has an additional modal element in the combination of an imperfective participle with *হোয়া be, become* to express obligation (see Chapter 8.5.3 (c)).

- (242) se na ele ei kajṭa amakei kôrte hôtô.  
 he not come.CP work.CL I.OBJ.EMP do.IP be.3.P.HABIT  
*If he hadn't turned up I would have had to do this job myself.*

Here are the common uses of the conditional participle:

#### a. *if*-conditionals

- (243) or sôrige pôricôṅ na hôle ki ghṛṭṭô  
 he.GEN with acquaintance not be.CP what happen.3.P.HABIT  
 bhablei ga śirśir kôrche.  
 think.CP.EMP body shudder.ONOM do.3.PR.C

*I shudder to think what would have happened if we hadn't met him.*

- (244) tumi na thakle iuganḍar tr̥ṅbhūmite amar haṅgulo  
 you not stay.CP Uganda.GEN wasteland.LOC my bone.PL.CL  
 śada hôye astô etôdine.  
 white be.PP come.3.P.HABIT by.now

*If you hadn't been there my bones would be turning white in the Ugandan wasteland by now.*

#### b. temporal *when*-conditionals

- (245) tar mukher dike takale ami ñek kichu  
 he.GEN face.GEN towards look.CP I much some  
 bujhte pari.  
 understand.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S

*Just from looking at his face I can understand a lot.*

- (246) tomar môtô chele bilet yete parle ñek kichu  
 you.GEN like boy abroad go.IP be.able.to.CP much something  
 kôrte parbe.  
 do.IP be.able.to.3.FUT

*When a boy like you can go abroad he can achieve many things.*

c. **conditional participle followed by o also, even**

When the conditional participle is followed by the concessive o it takes on the meaning of *even though, even if*.

- (247) şolô hajar gopinîr sârige lîlakhæla kôrleo se bhçgôban.  
 sixteen thousand cowgirl.GEN with dalliance do.CP.O he god  
*Even though he dallied with sixteen thousand cowgirls he is (still) a god.*

d. **conditional participle followed by emphatic i**

i following a conditional participle can express simple emphasis but it often adds the meaning *just, immediately, as soon as*.

- (248) suyog pelei kukurçi paliye yaý.  
 chance get.CP.i dog.CL flee.PP go.3.PR.S  
*The dog runs off whenever he gets the chance.*

More modal structures with the conditional participle are given in Chapter 8.5.3.

#### 6.3.6.4 *Perfective participle*

The perfective participle (also called past participle or PAP = past active participle) is by far the most frequent non-finite verb form in Bangla. It is an active verb form and English equivalents to kôre, bôle, giye are *having done, having said, having gone*.

Its general task is to give a previously completed verbal action. Unlike other non-finite verb forms, perfective participles can follow one another to describe strings of actions and events. In narrative or spoken sequences, where one event follows another, all but the last verb form can be in the perfective participle form. All verbs can be used in such sequences and the finite verb, which refers to the last event in the sequence, can be in any tense. There is one subject for all these verbal actions although there are some exceptions to this (see under 5). For temporal sequences with different subjects, the conditional participle can be used.

The perfective participle is used for the formation of compound verbs. They are discussed separately in Chapter 6.3.5.

Here is a sentence with multiple perfective participles:

- (249) bhaiyer kôtha sune saida matha tule æk pçlçk tader  
 brother.GEN word hear.PP Saida head lift.PP one glance they.GEN  
 dike takiye salam diye abar matha nicu kôre  
 towards look.PP salam give.PP again head below do.PP  
 çôle gælç.  
 move.PP go.3.P.S

*When Saida heard her bother's words, she lifted her head, looked at them for a moment and greeted them. Then she lowered her head again and went away.*

The main uses of the perfective participle:

**a. sequence of events**

It will be apparent from the following sentences that the use of the perfective participle is so varied and so common that, except in very short or stylised sentences, compound verb occurrences of the perfective participle are bound to appear. For the present purpose these should be ignored.

- (250) tarpər jmkalo pośak pôre sara gaÿe dami senṭ  
 then sparkling garmet wear.PP whole body.LOC expensive scent  
 ḍhele purono amôler ekṭi phorḍ gaṛite cepe  
 pour.PP old era.GEN one.CL Ford car.LOC squeeze.PP

beriyê poren.  
 go.OUT.PP fall.3H.PR.S

*Then they put on their glamorous clothes, doused themselves in expensive scent, piled up into an out-dated Ford and left.*

- (251) ei bôle tara yar yar kaje côle gælô.  
 this.EMP say.PP they who.GEN.R (x2) work.LOC move.PP go.3.P.S  
*Having said this, they each returned to their work.*

- (252) hōṭhat ækṭa jor jhapṭa ese bhijiyê diÿe  
 suddenly one.CL strong gust come.PP make.wet.PP give.PP  
 gælô rômitake.  
 go.3.P.S Romita.OBJ

lit: suddenly a strong gust having come, having made Romita wet, left  
*Suddenly Romita was drenched by a strong shower of rain.*

**b. simultaneous events**

- (253) meÿeṭi base bôse puraṭa upônyas pôreche.  
 girl.CL bus.LOC sit.PP whole.CL novel read.3.PR.PERF  
*The girl read the whole novel while sitting on the bus.*

- (254) amra hat dhôre yacchilam.  
 we hand hold.PP go.1.P.C  
*We were walking hand-in-hand.*

**c. expressing manner, cause or circumstances**

- (255) ora chetuk lōjja prôkaś kôre sômôÿ nōṣṭô kôre.  
 they superfluous embarrassment reveal do.PP time waste do.3.PR.S  
*They waste time by displaying superfluous modesty.*



- (256) kukurṭa cômke cokh mellô.  
 dog.CL startle.PP eye open.3.P.S  
*The dog opened its eyes in fright.*
- (257) tumi jinista bujhe esob ar ullekh kôrbe na.  
 you thing.CL understand.PP this.all more mention do.2.FUT not  
*You understand this matter, so you won't mention all this again.*

#### d. negated perfective participle

When the perfective participle is negated it expresses the condition or cause of the main verb. It is often appropriately preceded by *without* in the translation:

- (258) manuṣ na kheye thakte pare na.  
 human being not eat.PP stay.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S not  
*Human beings cannot survive without eating.*
- (259) chôbigulo na dekhe ami take cintam na.  
 picture.PL.CL not see.PP I he.OBJ recognise.1.P.HABIT not  
*I wouldn't have recognised him without seeing the pictures.*

#### e. perfective participle with o

When the perfective participle is followed by the concessive *o* it corresponds to *even though, although*

- (260) esob gan śikheo se ækṭao bhalô gaitē  
 this.all song learn.PP.O she one.CL.even good sing.IP  
 pare na.  
 be.able.to.3.PR.S not  
*Even though she learnt all these songs she can't sing one of them well.*
- (261) aśa nei bujheo amra aśa kôri.  
 hope [is absent] understand.PP.O we hope do.1.PR.S  
*We hope even though we understand that there is no hope.*

#### f. perfective participle with different subjects

In the majority of sentences containing a perfective participle the subject for all the verb forms in the sentence is the same. This rule can be waived when we have

- i. a mixture of personal and impersonal structures with the same referent.

- (262) tar biman giye osukh hoý.  
 he.GEN plane go.PP illness be.3.PR.S  
*He gets ill when he goes on a plane.*

The full sentence with conjunctions reveals the structures:

se yɔkxon biman yaŷ tɔkhôn tar ɔsukh hɔy̆.  
 he when.R plane go.3.PR.S then.CR his illness occur.3.PR.S  
*He gets ill when he goes on a plane.*

In the underlined main clause ɔsukh *illness* is the subject, while in the preceding subordinate clause se *he* is the subject. The use of the perfective participle facilitates the merger of the two clauses. The same goes for sentence (263a) whose underlying structure is (263b).

(263a) take ei ɔbôsthaŷ dekhe amar khub kharap lage.  
 he.OBJ this situation.LOC see.PP I.GEN very bad feel.3.PR.S  
*I feel very bad seeing him in this state.*

(263b) ami yɔkxon take ei ɔbôsthaŷ dekhi  
 I when.R he.OBJ this situation.LOC see.1.PR.S  
 tɔkhôn amar khub kharap lage.  
 then I.GEN very bad feel.3.PR.S

ii. abstract nouns like upaŷ *way*, labh *profit*, phɔl *result* where the reference is clear from the context:

(264) kēde kono labh nei.  
 cry.PP any profit [is absent]  
 lit: having cried there is no profit  
*There is no point in crying.*

### g. doubled perfective participles

Doubled perfective participles create a continuous or an iterative effect.

(265) miṣṭi caṭni hôle thalaŷ ceṭe ceṭe khaŷ.  
 sweet chutney be.CP plate.LOC lick.PP lick.PP eat.3.PR.S  
*If there is sweet chutney (he) licks (his) plate clean.*

(266) nikhilɔñjôner môner cokher samne chaŷa  
 Nikhilronjon.GEN mind.GEN eye.GEN before shadow  
 phele phele côleche tār deśer  
 throw.PP throw.PP move.3.PR.PERF his country.GEN  
 baŷir jñætiguṣṭhi.  
 home.GEN family

lit: his village's family-people have moved, having thrown (x2) a shadow in front of Nikhilronjon's mind's eye

*The thought of his family in the village was casting a shadow on Nikhilronjon's mind.*

## h. individual verbs

### i. *kôre having done*

The perfective participle of *kôra do* when added to some adjectives or nouns is used to form adverbs of manner:

(267) uni kôthaṭa rag kôre bôlechen.  
 he.H word.CL anger do.PP say.3H.PR.PERF  
*He said this in anger.*

(268) se amta amta kôre kôtha bôle.  
 she stutter stutter do.PP word say.3.PR.S  
*She speaks with a stutter.*

More examples are given in Chapter 5.6.1.1

### ii. *hôye having become*

The perfective participle of *hōyâ be, become* can give the manner, underlying reason or accompanying circumstance of the main verbal action and can often be translated with an adverb in English.

(269) tôbu ami śantô hôye thakbô.  
 but I calm be.PP stay.1,FUT  
*But I will remain calm.*

### iii. *bôle having said*

The perfective participle of *bôla speak, say* can follow directly after a finite verb form and ranges in meaning from cause to *considering* to *on account of the fact = having said*. The finite verb can be in any tense. Because of its syntactic potential *bôle* has to be considered an independent conjunction (see Chapter 7.6.1 and 7.6.5) but here is an example which retains the verbal character of *bôle*.

(270) ami take tomar bôndhu bôle jantam.  
 I he.OBJ your friend say.PP know.1.P.HABIT  
 lit: I, having called (him) your friend, knew him.  
*I had considered him your friend.*

### iv. perfective participles as postpositions

The following perfective participles have taken on an independent existence as postpositions without losing their verbal functions.

*diye having given* → *with, through*:

amra hat diye khai. *We eat with our hands.*

*theke having stayed* → *from, since*:

sôkal theke brṣṭi hōcche. *It has been raining since morning.*

niye *having taken* → *with, about*:

ami take niye cinta kôri. *I worry about him.*

dhôre *having held* → *via, along*:

ora ei rasta dhôre asbe. *They will come along this road.*

hôte<sup>1</sup> *having become* → *as, on behalf of*

ami tar hôte kôtha bôlte pari. *I can speak for him.*

hôte<sup>2</sup> *having become* → *via*

ami bajare hôte esechi. *I came via the market.*

## CHAPTER 7

# Sentences

### 7.1 Sentences and their components

From word classes and phrases we move on to the way these structures interact with one another to form sentences. Before we look at different types of sentences in detail, here is an overview of what goes into sentences, ie the components of Bangla sentences and the order they occur in.

Sentences have a subject and a predicate as their main components. The subject is very often a noun or pronoun. The predicate can be:

1. a verb plus any objects or locatives the verb requires, or
2. a complement

For the purpose of this overview we distinguish two main types of simple sentences according to their shapes:

1. active/agentive, existential and impersonal structures and
2. copular structures.

A detailed description of these sentence types is given in Chapter 7.4.

#### 7.1.1 Verbal predicates

In active/agentive, existential and impersonal sentences the predicate is a verb, with or without one or more objects. Active/agentive sentences have a nominative subject with verb agreement. Existential and impersonal sentences often have a genitive subject which does not govern the verb.

The basic word order in Bangla is SOV: subject – object – verb. The subject at the beginning of the sentence and the verb at the end provide a frame for all the other parts of the sentence. A direct object is an extension of the verb and stays close to it in sentences. The space straight after the subject is therefore the most likely space for any extras in the sentence.

subject	object	verb
ami	bhat	khai.
I	rice	eat.1.PR.S = <i>I eat rice.</i>

In existential sentences there is a location in place of the object. The two adjectives *bhalô* *good* and *ṭhik* *correct* can also appear in this position.

subject	location/adj	verb	
tara	khulnaÿ	thake.	
they	Khulna.LOC	[exist].3	= <i>They are in Khulna.</i>
tumi	bhalô	achô.	
you	good	[exist].2	= <i>You are well.</i>
sôb	thik	ache.	
all	correct	[exist].3	= <i>Everything is fine.</i>

In existential and in impersonal structures the subject is in the genitive.

subject	object	verb	
tar	bhaibon	ache.	
he.GEN	siblings	[exist].3	= <i>He has brothers and sisters.</i>
amar	take	bhalô lage.	
I.GEN	he.OBJ	like.3.PR.S	= <i>I like him.</i>
amar	bhoy	kôrche.	
I.GEN	fear	get.3.PR.C	= <i>I am scared.</i>

Negation is a sentence function and comes after the verb at the end of the sentence.

subject	object	verb	negation	
tara	bhat	khaÿ	na.	
they	rice	eat.3.PR.S	not	= <i>They don't eat rice.</i>
amar	cheletake	꠆꠆hondô hây	ni.	
I.GEN	boy.CL.OBJ	like-be.3.PR.PERF	not.	= <i>I didn't like the boy.</i>

In existential sentences the verb and the negation come together.

subject	location/adj	negative verb	
tara	barite	nei.	
they	home.LOC	[is absent]	= <i>They are not at home.</i>

In sentences without an object the verb can come straight after the subject.

subject	verb	
meÿeṭi	kādche.	
girl.CL	cry.3.PR.C	= <i>The girl is crying.</i>
bṛṣṭi	pôrche.	
rain	fall.3.PR.C	= <i>Rain is falling.</i>
am	ache.	
mango	[is present]	= <i>There are mangoes.</i>

In sentences with both an indirect and a direct object, the indirect object usually comes before the direct object.

subj	ind obj	dir obj	verb
ami	take	phɔl	dicchi.
I	he.OBJ	fruit	give.1.PR.C = <i>I am giving him fruit.</i>

Adverbial elements usually come straight after the subject.

subj	adv	obj	verb
se	prôtidin	tar baccake	niye ase.
she	every day	her.baby.OBJ	bring = <i>She brings her baby every day.</i>
amar	khub	khide	peýeche.
I.GEN	very	hunger	get.3.PR.PERF = <i>I am very hungry.</i>

With more than one adverbial, the time adverbial comes first.

subj	adv (time)	adv (place)	verb
se	ratre	tar bichanaý	ghumay.
he	night.LOC	his bed.LOC	sleep.3.PR.S =
<i>He sleeps in his bed at night.</i>			

subj	adv (time)	adv (manner)	verb	
tar baba	gɔtɔkal	hɔʃtaɫ kôre	ese	pôrechen.
his father	yesterday	suddenly.do.PP	come.PP	fall.3H.PR.PERF
= <i>His father suddenly arrived yesterday.</i>				

Postpositional phrases can come straight after the subject or follow adverbials.

subj	adv (time)	postp	adv (duration)	obj	verb
ami	sɔkale	tar sɔŋge	ɔnekkɔŋ	kɔtha	bôlechi.
I	morning.LOC	he.GEN with	many.moment	word	speak.1.PR.PERF
<i>I had a long talk with him this morning.</i>					
amar	aj	tar upôre	saradin	rag	hólô.
I	today	he.GEN on	all.day	anger	be.3.P.S
<i>I was angry with him all day today.</i>					

Interrogatives can come straight after the subject or follow adverbials.

subj	adv	interrogative	verb
tumi	aj	kæmôn	achô?
you	today	how	[is present].2
<i>How are you today?</i>			
tomar	sekhane	ki	hôýeche?
you.GEN	there.LOC	what	happen.3.PR.PERF
<i>What happened to you there?</i>			
tara	kôlkataý	kothaý	thake?
they	Kolkata.LOC	where.LOC	stay.3.PR.S
<i>Where in Kolkata do they live?</i>			

subj	interrogative	postp		obj	verb	negation
tumi	kænô	tar	সহে	kôtha	bôlbe	na?
you	why	he.GEN	with	word	speak.1.FUT	not

*Why won't you talk to him?*

subj	adv	postp	ind obj	dir obj	verb
gachta	ekhane	cirôdin	theke	amader	chaya
tree	here	forever	from	we.OBJ	shade

*The tree had given us shade here since forever.*

This gives us the basic outline with simplified sentences. We saw earlier that noun phrases, which can act as sentence subjects or objects, can be a lot more complex than the one-word items we have seen in these examples. Before moving on to word order variations, here is the basic pattern for copular sentences.

### 7.1.2 Complements

Copular sentences consist of a subject and a complement. The simplest type of copular sentence is of the eṭa ki? *what is this?* o ke? *Who is he?* type. Copular sentences in the simple present have a zero verb copula. In the following examples the zero verb is marked with 0 between the subject and the complement.

eṭa	0	sôbuj.	<i>This is green.</i>
eṭa	0	kar?	<i>Whose is this?</i>
seṭa	0	khub bipôjjônôk.	<i>That is very dangerous.</i>
se	0	ke?	<i>Who is she?</i>
konṭa	0	amar?	<i>Which one is mine?</i>

Both the subject and the complement in copular sentences can range from single pronouns (as above) to complex noun phrases, but the underlying copular structure and the word order remain the same.

Here are some more complex examples:

- (1) nirakṣôrôta 0 manôb jibôner sabceye bṛô ôbhiṣap.  
illiteracy human life.GEN all.than big curse  
*Illiteracy is the biggest curse in human life.*
- (2) bhagôlpurer prakirtik soundôryô 0 sadharôn.  
Bhagolpur.GEN natural beauty unusual  
*Bhagolpur was a place of unusual natural beauty.*
- (3) sei andhokare æk pa agrôsôr hoya 0 sambhob.  
that.EMP darkness.LOC one foot progress- be.VN impossible  
*In this darkness it was impossible to move forward even one step.*



When copular sentences are negated the negative copula comes at the end of the sentence.

- (4) tumi amar bôndhu nco.  
 you my friend [is not].2  
*You are not my friend.*

in the past tense:

- (5) uni manôber strî chilen.  
 she.H Manob.GEN wife [was]3H  
*She was Manob's wife.*

and in past tense negative:

- (6) gachṭa khub bṛṛô chilô na.  
 tree very big [was not].3  
*The tree was not very big.*

Copular sentences can contain a procopula in place of the zero verb. These uses are given in Chapter 7.4.3.

### 7.1.3 Word order flexibility

Word order flexibility refers to the mobility of sentence components such as subjects, verbs, adverbial phrases and objects within a sentence. In grammar books we can take sentences like

*I will go tomorrow.* and show that the following arrangements are possible in Bangla:

S	adv	V
ami	kalke	yabô.
I	tomorrow	go.1.FUT = <i>I will go tomorrow.</i>
adv	S	V
kalke	ami	yabô.
S	V	adv
ami	yabô	kalke. and
adv	V	S
kalke	yabô	ami.

Due to case marking and unambiguous verb endings in Bangla, word order is not an essential factor in determining the meaning of sentences. Add to this the fact that Bangla verbs with their same-sounding endings (gælô *went*, hólô *happened*, dilô *gave*, chilô *was*, giýeche *has gone*, hôýeche *has happened*, pôreche *has fallen*, eseche *has come*)

as the final element in sentences can result in a monotonous style. A common device for getting around this situation is variation in arrangements. While in some cases the reasons for a deviation from the norm is determined by balance within a sentence, there are a variety of other factors at work.

### 7.1.3.1 Sentence-final subject

Subjects occur at the end in many descriptive contexts. Here are some examples from a popular introduction to nature for children.<sup>1</sup>

- |     |  |     |                        |          |           |
|-----|--|-----|------------------------|----------|-----------|
|     | adv  |     | V                      |          | S         |
| (7) | ei   | সব  | miliye toiri হয        | cini ba  | স্বকোঁরা. |
|     | this.EMP   | all | mix.PP ready be.3.PR.S | sugar or | gravel.   |
|     | <i>From the mixture of all these sugar or gravel are prepared.</i> |     |                        |          |           |

- |     |   |          |            |               |      |                |
|-----|---|----------|------------|---------------|------|----------------|
|     | adv   | postp    |            | V             |      | S              |
| (8) | তখোঁন   | পাতৰ     | bhitore    | ghote         | aro  | অেক কিছু.      |
|     | then  | leaf.GEN | inside.LOC | happen.3.PR.S | more | much something |
|     | <i>Then a lot more happens inside the leaf.</i> |          |            |               |      |                |

- |     |   |            |              |                  |       |
|-----|---|------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
|     | postp   |            | V            |                  | S     |
| (9) | eguloঁr   | bhitore    | ache         | pani ar jibontô  | jeli. |
|     | this.CL.PL.GEN                                  | inside.LOC | [is present] | water and living | jelly |
|     | <i>Inside these are water and living jelly.</i> |            |              |                  |       |

Placing these subjects at the end gives them focus.

Weighty subjects (ie those containing multiple modifiers or extended verbal adjectives) can move to the end of the sentence:

- |      |   |        |          |            |                              |
|------|---|--------|----------|------------|------------------------------|
|      | postp   |        | V        |            | S                            |
| (10) | phuler  | মতô    | phuțe    | uțbe       | অেক অেকদিন ধোঁre lukono      |
|      | flower.GEN  | like   | bloom.PP | rise.3.FUT | much much.day during hide.va |
|      | sei   | suryô. |          |            |                              |
|      | that.EMP  | sun    |          |            |                              |
|      | <i>The sun which had been hidden for many, many days, would unfold like a flower.</i> |        |          |            |                              |

Single word subjects can move to the end of a sentence when they are already the topic of discussion.

- |      |                                 |      |               |     |       |          |
|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------|-----|-------|----------|
|      | adv                             |      | V             |     | OBJ   | S        |
| (11) | ki                              | ye   | jvalay        | na  | amake | cheleta. |
|      | what                            | that | bother.3.PR.S | not | I.OBJ | boy.CL   |
|      | <i>How that boy bothers me!</i> |      |               |     |       |          |

1. Siddika Sultana et al. amader nil grôhó, pôribes o prôkfti (Our blue planet, Environment and Nature, Dhaka, 2002.

- (12)      adv                      V                      S                      V                      postp  
 drutôbege      chuṭe    yaÿ              jîbôn.    keṭe    gælô    bôchôrer  
 quick.speed.LOC run.PP go.3.PR.S life.    cut.PP go.3.P.S year.GEN
- S  
 pɔr bôchôr.  
 after year  
*Life was just flying past. Year after year went by.*

### 7.1.3.2 Sentence-final object

Objects can move to the end when they are already part of the scenario.

- (13)      S                      V                      OBJ  
 kôṭṭaṭa    bîdhlô    pîṭhviške.  
 word.CL sting.3.P.S Pritish.OBJ  
 lit: the word stung Pritish  
*Pritish was stung by the remark.*
- (14)      adv                      V                      OBJ  
 se sômôÿ    cheṛe    diÿeche              bôuṭake.  
 that time leave.PP give.3.PR.PERF wife.CL.OBJ  
*At that time he left his wife.*

Here are two examples for emphatic objects at the end:

- (15)      S                      V                      OBJ  
 ami    peÿechi              hajar    hajar    upôkar.  
 I receive1.PR.PERF thousand thousand favour  
*I have received countless favours.*
- (16)      conj                      adv                      S                      V  
 kintu æk    ɔdbhut    karôṇe              se    nije    bheṇe    diÿechilô  
 but one strange reason.LOC he self break.PP give.3.P.PERF
- OBJ  
 ei                      ɔmpôrkô.  
 this.EMP relationship  
*But for some strange reason he himself had destroyed this relationship.*

### 7.1.3.3 Initial objects

Objects can occur at the beginning of sentences for emphasis.

- (17)      OBJ                      S                      V  
 ei    rɔkôm    ækṭa    kɔlôm    ami    cai.  
 this kind one.CL pen I want.1.PR.S  
*This is the kind of pen I want.*

- (18) OBJ S adv V  
 æmôn bɔdmejaji manuṣ ami kɔkhônô dekhini.  
 such angry.tempered person I ever not.see.1.PR.PERF  
*I have never seen such a bad-tempered person.*

#### 7.1.3.4 Participles, locatives, adverbials and postpositional phrases

As we have already seen, perfective and imperfective participles often precede the subject.

- (19) IP S postp  
 ki bhabte bhabte tini moher mətô kon dike  
 what think.IP think.IP he.H fascination.GEN like which direction.LOC  
 V  
 pa baṛalen.  
 foot extend.3H.P.S  
*He walked around aimlessly in a daze.*

- (20) PP S adv V  
 palabar aśa cheṛe diṛe pṛ thviś bhetôre elô.  
 flee.baVN.GEN hope leave.PP give.PP Pritish inside.LOC come.3.P.S  
 lit: having given up the hope of fleeing Pritish came inside.  
*Pritish gave up the hope of escape and came inside.*

Locative at the beginning for emphasis:

- (21) adv S adv V  
 haspatale ami kichutei yabô na.  
 hospital.LOC I something.LOC.EMP go.1.FUT not  
*I will certainly not go to the hospital.*

Adverbials or locatives can move to the end of the sentence:

- (22) S V adv  
 se bādha pôṛe gælô ekhankar din-ratrir ôti  
 he bind.VA fall.PP go.3.P.S here.GEN day night.GEN very  
 śantô abôrtône.  
 calm routine.LOC  
*He got caught up in the exceptionally calm routine of this place.*
- (23) postp S V adv  
 kichudin age pôryôntô se chilô kôlkataṛ.  
 some.day before until he [was] Kolkata.LOC  
*He was in Kolkata until a few days ago.*

7.1.3.5 *Copular sentences*

In past tense copular sentences the verb normally comes at the end. Here we have a long complement (C) following the verb:

- adv    S    V    C
- (24) ar    ekhane    tini    chilen    buddhijibi    śreṇī    theke    alada,    sadharôṇ  
 and here    he.H [was]    intellectual class from separate, ordinary  
 manuṣer    kachakachi    ba    tader    ækjɔn.  
 person.GEN close    or their one.CL.

*And in this he was different from the intellectual elite, close to ordinary people, one of them.*

## 7.1.4 Pro-drop

Pro-drop (short for pronoun drop) is a phenomenon which occurs in languages whose conjugated verb forms give a clear reference to the sentence subject. Bangla is such a language. When we hear *kôrechilô* we know that the subject of the sentence is in the third person. In situations and contexts where the reference is clear, nominative pronouns can be dropped at the beginning of sentences. There are three main occurrences of this.

7.1.4.1 *Subject and object pronouns*

The subject of a sentence is mentioned once. In subsequent sentences with the same subject the pronoun can be dropped.

In the following sequence about a young woman recovering from childbirth,<sup>2</sup> the subject is mentioned by name in sentence (a), by pronoun in sentence (b). Sentences (c) and (d) have no explicit subject – they are examples for pro-drop in Bangla.

- (25) a. rukhsana    beś    kichudin    pɔr    nijer    dike    ceṽe    dekhlo.  
 Rukhsana quite few.day after self.GEN towards look.PP see.3.P.S  
*After quite some time Rukhsana turned her attention towards herself.*
- b. helake    ghumate    dekhe    se    niḥśɔbdô    pɔdôkṣepe    ɔnyô  
 Helal.OBJ sleep.IP see.PP she silent footfall.LOC other  
 ghɔre    gælô.  
 room.LOC go.3.P.S  
*Seeing Helal asleep she crept noiselessly into the other room.*

---

2. Khaleda Hanum, *kôtha ar kôtha*, p. 37.

- c. subasitô saban niye cnekksɔŋ gosôl kôrlô.  
 fragrant soap take.PP many.moment bath do.3.P.S  
*(She) had a long wash with a fragrant soap.*
- d. ækkhana golapī rōher śarī beche nilô  
 one.CL pink colour.GEN saree choose.PP take.3.P.S  
 pôrbe bôle.  
 wear.3.FUT say.PP  
*(She) chose a pink-coloured saree to wear.*

First or second person subject and object pronouns can be dropped. The omitted pronouns are given in brackets in the translation.

- (26) a. ete kichu ṭaka ache, tomar śodh kōrar  
 this.LOC some money [is present], you.GEN repay- do.VN.GEN  
 samôrther hiseb kôrei dicchi.  
 ability.GEN account do.PP.EMP give.1.PR.C
- b. dicchi lon hisebe.  
 give.1.PR.C loan account.LOC.
- c. ki, kichu bôlbe na?  
 what, something say.2.FUT not.  
*There is some money here. (I) have calculated it according to your ability to pay it back. (I) am giving it( to you) as a loan. Won't (you) say something?*

#### 7.1.4.2 Spoken dialogue

In spoken exchanges pronouns are regularly dropped when the reference is unambiguous. The following exchange has only one explicit pronoun where the referent changes.

- (27) a. ca khaben?  
 tea drink.2H.FUT  
*Will (you) have some tea?*
- b. hyæ, khabô.  
 yes, drink.1.FUT  
*Yes, (I) will have (some tea).*
- c. o ki khabe na?  
 he what drink.3.FUT not  
*Will he not have (some)?*
- d. hyæ, khabe.  
 yes, drink.3.FUT  
*Yes, (he) will.*

## 7.2 Sentence classification

A sentence is a structured linguistic unit which is usually defined as a group of words communicating a complete thought. Sentences range from one word statements “No!” to complex syntactic constructions.

We can classify sentences according to three different criteria: A: their internal structure or complexity, B: their intention or direction (mode) and C: the relationship between subject and predicate.

A internal structure	B sentence mode	C verbal pattern
1. simple	1. declarative	1. active
2. complex	2. interrogative	2. existential
3. compound	3. imperative	3. impersonal/passive
	4. exclamative	4. copular

### 7.2.1 Internal structure (A)

Sentences classified according to their internal structure.

1. A simple sentence consists of one or more subjects but only one predicate.
2. A compound sentence consists of two or more independent sentences which can be linked by a coordinating conjunction. Complex sentences can occur within compound sentences.
3. A complex sentence consists of at least one main clause and one subordinate clause. The two clauses are usually, but not always, linked by a conjunction. A complex sentence contains two or more finite verb forms.

This is the traditional way of classifying sentences in Bengali grammar books. Here are some examples:

#### 7.2.1.1 Simple sentences

(28) ækjɔn namkɔra jadukɔr jadu dækhaben.  
 one.CL famous magician magic show.3H.FUT  
*A famous magician will show his magic.*

(29) amra tār sɔŋge dækha kôrte esechi.  
 we he.H.GEN with see.VN do.IP come.1.PR.PERF  
*We have come to see him.*

Because of the role non-finite verb forms play in the construction of Bengali sentences, simple sentences can contain a fair amount of complexity. We will come back to this in 7.2.1.4.

## 7.2.1.2 Compound sentences

The first two sentences below are without conjunctions.

- (30) cup kôre thakbô, nɔɾacɔɾa kôrbô na, tomake kɔʃtô  
 quiet do.PP stay.1.FUT move do.1.FUT not you.OBJ trouble  
 debô na.  
 give.1FUT not

*I will be quiet. I won't move. I won't cause you any trouble.*

- (31) bɔsô amar sɔŋge ca khao.  
 sit.2.PR.IMP I.GEN with tea drink.2.PR.IMP  
 Sit and have a cup of tea with me.

Sentence (32) contains two instances of pro-drop (7.1.4), a verbless existential first clause (7.4.2) (d) and a conjunct verb *dækha kɔra* (6.3.4) in the second clause.

- (32) tar sɔŋge ætôdiner pôricôy, ɔthôcô tar  
 he.GEN with so.much.day.GEN acquaintance, but his  
 ma-babar sɔŋge dækha kôrte dæy ni.  
 mother-father.GEN with see.VN do.IP not.give.3.PR.PERF

lit: with him so many days acquaintance, but with his parents seeing to do did not give

*(I) have known him for such a long time but (he) hasn't let me meet his parents.*

- (33) make tumi æmôn bɔɽô kɔtha bôlte parô ar  
 mother.OBJ you such big word say.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S and  
 babar samne giye tomar bhôy pay.  
 father.GEN in.front.of go.PP you.GEN fear get.3.PR.S

*You speak so boldly to mother, yet are afraid to face father?*

## 7.2.1.3 Complex sentences

- (34) a. ami jani ye tumi asbe.  
 I know.1.PR.S that you come.2.FUT  
*I know that you will come.*

The same sentence can occur without the conjunction *ye* *that*.

- (34) b. ami jani tumi asbe.  
 I know.1.PR.S you come.2.FUT

- (35) ei môsjid dekhle cena yaý ye, eṭi sultanī amôle  
 this mosque see.CP know.VN go.3.PR.S that this.CL Sultanīc rule  
 toiri hōy ni.  
 prepared not.be.3.PR.PERF

*It is clear from looking at this mosque that it was not built under Sultanīc rule.*



Here are two correlative structures:

- (36) bhadrôlok yātôṭa strīr mukher dīke takacchen,  
gentleman how.much.CL.R wife.GEN face.GEN towards look.3H.PR.C  
tātôṭa anyô kono dīke takacchen na.  
so much.CL.CR other any direction.LOC look.3H.PR.C not  
*As long as the gentleman is staring at his wife's face, he is not looking at anything else.*
- (37) kintu pṛthibīr maṭīr saṅge ye amar naṛīr yog ache, ta to  
but world.GEN earth.GEN with that my pulse link [exist] that EMP  
malôṭīr kache na gele bujhte parini.  
Maloti.GEN near not go.CP understand.IP not.be.able.to.1.PR.PERF  
*I would not have understood that there was a link between my pulse and the earth if I hadn't gone near Maloti.*

#### 7.2.1.4 Simple – compound – complex revised

The following paragraph offers some additional thoughts and questions on sentence classification.

Non-finite verb forms do not count as sentence-structure-determining elements in traditional analysis which is based solely on the number of finite verb forms. Consider the following three sentences:

- (38) a. ami šeṣ kṛa na pōryōntō tader opekṣa kōrte hōbe.  
I end- do.VN not until they.OBJ wait- do.IP be.3.FUT  
lit: I finish not until they wait have to do  
*They will have to wait until I am finished.*
- b. janala khulte andhōkar kichuṭa halka  
window open.IP darkness something.CL light  
hōye ase.  
become.PP come.3.PR.S  
lit: to open window darkness something light become  
*When (I) open the window the darkness becomes a bit lighter.*
- c. keu tār icchar birodhita kōrle sōhyō kōrte  
someone his.H wish.GEN opposition- do.CP endurance- do.IP  
paren na.  
be able to.3.PR.S not  
lit: someone his wish if go against tolerate cannot do  
*(He) cannot tolerate someone going against his wish.*

Is the internal structuring in these sentences syntactically insignificant?

To demonstrate the limits of the simple-compound-complex analysis, here is a sentence which is constructed without a conjunction and would count as a simple sentence in the traditional method of analysis. The complexity of this sentence lies entirely in its non-finite verb forms.

- (39) tomake aj khūje bar kôrte na parle tumi gôbhîr theke  
 you.OBJ today search.PP out do.IP not be.able.to.CP you deep from  
 gôbhîrôtôrô môruprantôrer môdhye giye pôre,  
 deeper desert.edge.GEN in go.PP fall.PP  
 kal dupur nagad tr̥ṣṇay̐ praṇ harate.  
 tomorrow midday until thirst.LOC life lose.2.P.HABIT

lit: you (OBJ) today having found to get out if not be able to, you from among deep to deeper desert having gone having fallen, by tomorrow midday from thirst life would lose.

*If I had been unable to find you today, you would have gone deeper and deeper into the desert and would have been dead of thirst by midday tomorrow.*

The discussion of different types of sentences will focus on B (mode) and C (predicate structure) and then move on to compound and complex sentences. I will, for this context, consider non-finites with their own subjects as capable of creating subordinate clauses. They are:

a. the conditional participle. It seems to me that

- (i) tumi yakhôn yabe  
 you when go.2.FUT  
*when you go*

- (ii) tumi yôdi yao  
 you if go.2.PR.S  
*if you go*

and (iii) tumi gele  
 you go.CP  
*when you go or if you go*

should all have the same syntactical weight.

b. temporal independent imperfective participles (see Chapter 6.3.6.2 (e))

baba bēce thakte keu cheleṭake kono kṣôti kôrtô na.  
 father live.PP stay.IP someone boy.CL.OBJ any harm do.3.P.HABIT not  
*While his father was alive no one would have harmed the boy.*

c. genitive verbal nouns with a preceding nominative subject and a following postposition (see Chapter 6.3.6.1.2)

runa bhitôre đhokar age garđ take dekhe pheleche.  
 Runa inside.LOC enter.VN.GEN before guard she.OBJ see.PP throw.3.PR.PERF  
*Before Runa had got inside, the guard spotted her.*

### 7.3 Sentence modes

A description of predicate patterns, ie active/agentive, existential, impersonal and copular structures, is given in 7.4 but first we will briefly look at the salient features of sentence modes (B), ie declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences.

#### 7.3.1 Declarative sentences

Declarative sentences are in syntax what the nominative is within the case system, namely the most common, the least marked and the most important type of sentence. Declarative sentences make statements.

- (40) maikeler sãŋge supūrṇa praḃi bibhinnô jaḃgaḃ  
 Michael.GEN with Supurna often.EMP various place.LOC  
 berate yetô.  
 visit.IP go.3.P.HABIT  
*Supurna often went to visit various places with Michael.*

- (41) ñek rate ciṭkar-cēcameci o đrja dhakkanor śbde  
 much night.LOC shouting.screaming and door knocking.GEN noise.LOC  
 ghum bhanlô.  
 sleep break.3.P.S  
*From all the shouting, screaming and door slamming late at night his sleep was ruined.*

- (42) amra sãkale uṭhe dibyi arame niścinte bôse  
 we morning.LOC get.up.PP heavenly comfort.LOC unperturbed sit.PP  
 khãbôrer kagôje sãmbad pôṭlam.  
 newspaper.LOC news read.1.P.S  
*We got up in the morning in heavenly comfort and sat down unperturbed to read the newspaper.*

- (43) kintu bhaginiṭir opṛ tini rag kôrte paren na.  
 but niece.CL.GEN on he.H anger do.IP be.able.to.3H.PR.S not  
*But he cannot bring himself to be angry with his niece.*

Declarative sentences can contain all of the following:

indirect questions:

- (44) se jante caŷ tumi ca khabe kina.  
 he know.IP want.3.PR.S you tea drink.2.FUT what.not  
*He wants to know whether you will have some tea or not.*

indirect speech:

- (45) uni amake bôlechen ye târ kalke asa sômbhôn  
 he I.OBJ say.3.PR.PERF that he.H.GEN tomorrow come.VN possible  
 hobe na.  
 be.3.FUT not  
*He has told me that he will be unable to come tomorrow.*

imperatives:

- (46) ami, yæmôn kôriŷe hok, tomar okhane yabô.  
 I how cause.to.do.PP be.3.IMP you.GEN there go.1.FUT  
 lit: I, how having caused to do let be, will go (to) your there  
*I will come to see you, whatever it takes.*

modals:

- (47) ya kôrte hobe ta se kôrbe.  
 what.R do.IP be.3.FUT that.CR he do.3.FUT  
*He will do what needs to be done.*

The overall shape of these sentences remains declarative despite these embeddings.

### 7.3.2 Interrogative sentences

Questions are asked in order to elicit information but they can also be used to make statements, express doubt or to show attitude.

#### 7.3.2.1 Yes-no questions

The simplest type of question is the one that can be answered with yes or no.

In Bangla questions the word order (subject, object, verb) does not change from statements but the question marker *ki* is inserted straight after the subject. In spoken language this *ki* is often omitted and the only difference between a statement and a question is in the rising intonation of the question.

- |                  |                            |                     |                               |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| se ekhane thake. | <i>He lives here.</i>      | se ki ekhane thake? | <i>Does he live here?</i>     |
| tumi take cenô.  | <i>You know him.</i>       | tumi ki take cenô?  | <i>Do you know him?</i>       |
| aj budhbar.      | <i>Today is Wednesday.</i> | aj ki budhbar?      | <i>Is it Wednesday today?</i> |

Occasionally the question marker *ki* is moved to the end of the sentence with no effect on the meaning.

- (48) tumi take cenô ki?  
 you he.OBJ know.2.PR.S what  
*Do you know him?*

Answers to these questions can be a straight *hyæ* *yes* or *na* *no*, but more often the reply takes up some part of the question.

question	reply affirmative	reply negative
tumi ki take dekhechô?	hyæ, dekhechi.	na, dekhini.
Did you see him?	Yes, I did.	No, I didn't.
tar ki çukh hôÿeche?	hyæ, hôÿeche.	na, hõÿni.
Is he ill?	Yes, he is.	No, he isn't.
tomar ki take bhalô lage?	hyæ, lage.	na, lage na.
Do you like him?	Yes, I do.	No, I don't.
ora ki kalke côle yacche?	hyæ, yacche.	na, yacche na.
Are they leaving tomorrow?	Yes, they are.	No, they are not.

These are rather simple example sentences but they show that Bangla retains the verb forms in answers of this kind.

There is a difference between affirmative and negative questions in that negative questions usually have an underlying expectation. *na* *no* confirms this expectation, *hyæ* *yes* refutes it.

gança ki bhalô lage na?	na, bhalô lage na.	hyæ, bhalô lage.
Don't you like the song?	No, I don't.	Yes, I do.
tomar ki chele nei?	na, nei.	hyæ, ache.
Don't you have a son?	No, I don't.	Yes, I do.

*tai na* or *tai naki?* *Is this not so?* and *naki* lit: not what *no?* are fixed phrases seeking reassurance or confirmation. They can stand alone in response to something the speaker has just been told, meaning *Is that so? Really?* They can, but do not have to, imply doubt.

- (49) 'eça ðune khub khuşi hôÿechi.' 'tai naki?'  
 this.CL hear.PP very happy become.1.PR.PERF. that.EMP not.what  
*'I am very happy to hear that.' 'Really?'*
- (50) 'tara bujhi chuÿite gæche.' 'tai na?'  
 they understand.1.PR.S holiday.LOC go.3.PR.PERF that.EMP not  
*'I think they are away on holiday.' 'Is that so?'*

*tai na* and *naki* can be added to or embedded in affirmative or negative statements. They are equivalent to English tag questions.

- (51) eçar dam ekçu beşi, tai na?  
 this.CL.GEN price a.bit too.much that.EMP not  
*It's a bit too expensive, isn't it?*

- (52) soja byæpar naki?  
 straight matter not.what  
*It's quite straightforward, isn't it?*

na *not* on its own can be attached to short copular and incomplete sentences:

- (53) ganṭa khub sundôr, na?  
 song.CL very beautiful no  
*The song is very beautiful, no?*

### 7.3.2.2 Question words

Question words can be pronouns, adjectives or adverbs. This section gives an overview of what basic question words there are, how they expand and how they are used. All question words in Bangla start with *k*.

Here are the basic question words with their word classes:

ke	<i>who</i>	pronoun
ki	<i>what</i>	pronoun
kænô	<i>why</i>	adverb
kæmôn	<i>how</i>	adverb
kôtha	<i>where</i>	adverb
kôbe	<i>when</i>	adverb
kôkhôn	<i>when</i>	adverb
kon	<i>which</i>	adjective
kôṭô	<i>how much</i>	adjective
kôy, kô	<i>how many</i>	adjective

#### a. ke *who*

ke and its case and number variations *kar whose*, *kake to whom*, *kara who* (pl), *kader whose*, *to whom* (pl) are quite straightforward in their use. Since they are pronouns they will appear where their equivalent nouns would be:

for	baba esechen. → ke esechen? <i>Father has come. → Who has come?</i>
or, as the complement in copular sentences:	
nominative sg	ini bilu. → ini ke? <i>This is Bilu. → Who is this?</i>
genitive sg	eṭa bilur nôṭun bôî. → eṭa kar nôṭun bôî? <i>This is Bilu's new book. → Whose new book is this?</i>
	tumi babar sôṅge thakbe. → tumi kar sôṅge thakbe? <i>You will stay with father. → Who will you stay with?</i>
objective sg	ma sujônke khūjche. → ma kake khūjche? <i>Mum is looking for Sujon. → Who is Mum looking for?</i>
nominative pl	ôṭithira kalke asbe. → kara kalke asbe? <i>The guests will come tomorrow. → Who will come tomorrow?</i>

genitive pl	ôtithider sǝnge gǝlpô kôrbô. → kader sǝnge gǝlpô kôrbô? <i>We will chat with the guests. → Who will we chat with?</i>
objective pl	ôtithider ca dite hǝbe. → kader ca dite hǝbe? <i>The guest will have to be given tea. → Who will have to be given tea?</i>

ke and its case variants can be placed at the end of sentences for emphasis:

- (54) kintu ei ɔbôsthaÿ ðuÿe pǝrbe ke?  
but this situation.LOC lie.down.PP fall.3.FUT who  
*But under these circumstances who will go to bed?*
- (55) kǝthaða bǝleche ke?  
word.CL say.3.PR.PERF who  
*Who said that?*
- (56) mere phelbe? mere phelbe kake?  
strike.PP throw.3.FUT strike.PP throw.3.FUT who.OBJ  
*Kill? Kill whom?*

Although the use of these interrogative is usually restricted to animates, the object case kake is also used for inanimates in copular structures.

- (57) ðhǝr kake bǝle?  
town who.OBJ say.3.PR.S  
*What is meant by 'town'?*

#### b. ki what

ki as a question marker has been dealt with under yes-no questions (7.3.2.1).  
ki is both the nominative and the object case inanimate interrogative pronoun:

nom: byæge ki ache? *What is in the bag?*  
obj: poka ki khaÿ? *What do insects eat?*

ki combines with a great number of nouns to form interrogatives:

with nouns indicating *kind* or *type*:

kibhabe *how, in what way*, kirǝkǝm *what kind*, ki dhǝrǝner *what type*

with other nouns:

- (58) tomar ki ɔsubidha ache?  
you.GEN what problem [is present]  
*What's your problem?*
- (59) tar ki dǝrkar?  
he.GEN ki need  
*What does he need it for?* or with ki as the object of dǝrkar *need*:  
*What does he need?*

- (60) aj ki bar?  
today ki day  
*What day is it today?* The expected answer is a day of the week.
- (61) tader ki labh?  
they.GEN ki profit  
*What's in it for them?*
- (62) tomar ki ôdhikar?  
you.GEN ki right  
*What right do you have?*
- (63) śariṭa ki rōm?  
saree.CL ki colour  
*What colour is the saree?*

ki combines with some perfective participles to form interrogatives.

ki kôre	<i>how</i>	tumi ki kôre janô?	<i>How do you know?</i>
ki diÿe	<i>with what</i>	ki diÿe khaoÿa hōÿ?	<i>What is it eaten with?</i>
ki niÿe	<i>about what</i>	ki niÿe cinta kārô?	<i>What are you thinking about?</i>
ki bôle	<i>saying what</i>	tomake ki bôle ðakbô?	<i>What should I call you?</i>

Both *ke who* and *ki what* can be doubled to indicate plural.

c. *kænô why*

*kænô* is usually pronounced with the final *ô* but when it is used by itself as a plaintive *Why?* the *ô* ending is sometimes dropped.

*kænô* is a sentence adverb. It does not combine with nouns or adjective. *kænô* can be positioned:

a. at the beginning of the sentence:

- (64) *kænô* şeṣ kôrbô na?  
why end do.1.FUT not  
*Why should I not finish (it)?*
- (65) *kænô* esōb kōṣṭô kôrechi?  
why this.all trouble do.1.PR.PERF  
*Why did I go to all this trouble?*

*kænô* lends itself to rhetorical questions and accusations, particularly when it occurs at the beginning of the sentence. Its unmarked position straight after the subject gives a more neutral impression.

b. after the subject

- (66) phuler *kænô* æmôn sundôr ghraṇ hōÿ?  
flower.GEN why such beautiful scent be.3.PR.S  
*Why do flowers smell so nice?*



- (67) tumi kænô esechô?  
 you why come.2.PR.PERF  
*Why have you come?*

c. at the end of the sentence

Putting kænô at the end of sentences adds emphasis.

- (68) tumi kichu bôlôni kænô?  
 you something not.say.2.PR.PERF why  
*Why didn't you say something?*
- (69) tar ætô deri hócche kænô?  
 he.GEN so.much delay be.3.PR.C why  
*What is making him so late?*

d. kæmôn *how*.

kæmôn is both an adjective and an adverb and can mean *how* as well as *what kind*, *what sort*.

as an adjective:

- (70) uni kæmôn manuṣ?  
 he how person  
*What kind of a person is he?*
- (71) rastaṭa kæmôn?  
 road.CL how  
*What is the road like?*
- (72) eṭa kæmôn kōtha?  
 this.CL what.kind word  
*What kind of a comment is that?*

as an adverb:

- (73) apni kæmôn achen?  
 you.H how [is present.H]  
*How are you?*
- (74) gramṭa dekhte kæmôn?  
 village.CL see.IP how  
*What does the village look like?*

Adding the perfective participle of *kōra do* to kæmôn (*having done how*) expands its scope as an adverb.

kæmôn kôre *how*

- (75) pahar kæmôn kôre hólô.  
 mountain how do.PP become.3.P.S  
*How did mountains come into being?*

- (76) kǎmôn kôre chīre gǎche?  
 how do.PP tear.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*How did it get torn?*

e. kotha *where*

kotha occurs with its locative ending kothaḡ more often than it does without it. The nominative appears in combinations with some postpositions: kotha theke *from where*, kotha pōryōntô *up to where*. kôî and ko are colloquial versions of kothaḡ. It can appear straight after the subject or follow the verb at the end of the sentence.

- (77) tar ma-baba kothaḡ thaken?  
 his mother.father where.LOC live.3.PR.S  
*Where do his parents live?*
- (78) ṭren kotha theke chaṛbe?  
 train where from leave.3.FUT  
*Where will the train leave from?*
- (79) cabiṭa kothaḡ?  
 key.CL where  
*Where is the key?*

f. kōbe and kōkhôn *when*

These two interrogatives differ according to the time frame they occur in, seen from the present moment either into the past or the future.

kōbe has a time frame of more than a day and less than, say, twenty years. It can be replied to with either a point in time or with the stretch of time that has passed or is still to come.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| tini kōbe mara gǎchen?<br><i>When did he die?</i>                 | gṭô bōchôr.<br><i>Last year.</i>                  |
| tara kōbe esechē?<br><i>When did they arrive?</i>                 | gṭôkal.<br><i>Yesterday.</i>                      |
| tomar pōrikṣa kōbe?<br><i>When is your exam?</i>                  | aro du mas pōre.<br><i>In another two months.</i> |
| tumi take śeṣ dekhechô kōbe?<br><i>When did you last see him?</i> | bṛôdine.<br><i>At Christmas.</i>                  |

kōkhôn has the same range of answers but within the time frame of a day.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| o kōkhôn esechē?<br><i>When did he arrive?</i>              | sōkale.<br><i>This morning.</i>              |
| tumi kōkhôn uṭhe gǎchô?<br><i>What time did you get up?</i> | kichukṣôṅ age.<br><i>A little while ago.</i> |

kəkhôn khete həbe? <i>What time do we have to eat?</i>	chəȳtar dike. <i>Around six o'clock.</i>
kətha həbe kəkhôn? <i>When can we talk?</i>	khabarer pəre. <i>After the meal.</i>

It is important to note, however, that of the two words, kəkhôn is the one that can leave the present time frame and be used to talk about the distant past.

In a context of about a thousand years ago:

- (80) kintu ʔhik kəkhôn tāra deś charlen, ta niścitô nəȳ.  
but exactly when they<sub>H</sub> country leave.<sub>3H.P.S</sub> that certain [is not]  
*But exactly when they left the country is uncertain.*

In addition to these two, the following terms, involving other question words, are used for asking about points of time:

kon din <i>which day?</i>	
ônuşʔhanʔa kon dine? <i>Which day is the ceremony?</i>	samner rôbibare. <i>Next Sunday.</i>

kətô tarikhe <i>on which date?</i>	
tumi kətô tarikhe yacchô? <i>What date are you leaving?</i>	terô tarikhe. <i>On the thirteenth.</i>

ki bar <i>which day (of the week)?</i>	
aj ki bar? <i>What day is it today?</i>	şukrôbar. <i>Friday.</i>

kon sômôy, kəʔar sômôy or kəʔaȳ ask for a more or less precise time:

sinemaʔa kon sômôy şeş hôteche? <i>What time did the film-show finish?</i>	praŷ æk ghənta age. <i>Almost an hour ago.</i>
bas kəʔar sômôy çarbe? <i>What time will the bus leave?</i>	ʔhik duʔaȳ. <i>At two o'clock precisely.</i>
tomar klas kəʔaȳ? <i>What time is your class?</i>	sare dəsʔaȳ. <i>Half past ten.</i>

To ask about stretches of time we use combinations with kətô *how much* (see below).

**g.** kon *which*

kon is an adjective and always used in conjunction with a following noun. The only way it can be used on its own is with a classifier: konʔa *which one?* or kongulo *which ones?*

Unlike ki in connection with nouns (ki çubidha *what problem?*, ki prôšnô *what question?*) kon presupposes a choice of options and asks for a specification.

	jamaṭa kon dokane kena?	<i>In which shop was the shirt bought?</i>
	tomar kon kôbita bhalô lage?	<i>Which poem do you like?</i>
for place:	hoṭelṭa kon dike?	<i>Which way is the hotel?</i>
for time:	tomar kon sômôḡ subidhe?	<i>What time is convenient for you?</i>

Doubling of kon implies plural:

tumi kon kon dokane giḡechile? *Which shops did you go to?*

#### h. kôṭô *how much* and kôḡ *how many*

These two adjectives ask about amounts.

kôḡ is used with countable items only and often appears with a classifier, mainly with ṭa, but also with ṭi, khana, jṇ or ṭuku. It does not take plural classifiers. kôḡ appears without a classifier in combination with measure words. kôḡ combines with æk *one*: kôḡek *a few*. kôḡ is often shortened to kô.

with measure words:	kôḡ din?	<i>how many days?</i>
	kôḡ keji?	<i>how many kilos?</i>
with classifier:	kôjṇ lok?	<i>how many people?</i>
	kôḡṭi śôbdô?	<i>how many words?</i>
	kôḡṭa cabi?	<i>how many keys?</i>

kôḡṭa is also used with time on the clock. kôḡṭa baje lit: *how many does it ring = what time?*

With the locative ending kôḡṭaḡ, or shortened kôṭaḡ, means *at what time* and is asking for a specific time, given in figures.

kôṭô *how much* can be used with all non-count nouns but it is also used with many count nouns and measure words. While kôḡṭa looks at individual items kôṭô looks at sums.

kôṭô with measure words and nouns denoting time and space:

kôṭô dam lit:	how much price = <i>how much</i>
kôṭô dūr lit:	how much distance = <i>how far</i>
kôṭô ṭaka	<i>how much money</i>
kôṭô din lit:	how much day = <i>for how long</i> (longer than two days)

to compare:

se ar kôḡ din thakbe? *How much longer will he stay?*

expects an answer in figures, counting individual days:

aro tin din	<i>Another three days.</i>
se ar kôṭô din thakbe?	<i>How long will he stay?</i>

expects a less precise answer:

tar icchar môtô	<i>As long as he likes.</i>
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kɔtô can function as an adverb with adjectives and other adverbs:

jaÿgaṭa kɔtô bɔɾô?           *How big is the place?*  
 kɔtô age côle gæche?           *How long ago did he leave?*

kɔtô is also used as a quantifier and can combine with ʦa and gulo to form a noun. These uses are given in Chapter 5.5.6.

as a noun:   kɔtôʦa sunechô?           *How much have you heard?*  
               kɔtôgulo niÿe yabô?       *How many should I take?*

### 7.3.2.3 Embedded questions

Questions can be embedded in declarative sentences or in other questions. Some more examples are given in Section 7.6.5 (content clauses).

- (81) se ki kaj kɔre ami take prôsnô kôrini.  
 he what work do.3.PR.S I he.OBJ question not.do.1.PR.PERF  
*I did not ask him what work he does.*
- (82) tumi yabe ki thakbe ta sùdhu tumi janô.  
 you go.2.FUT what stay.2.FUT that only you know.2.PR.S  
*Only you know whether you are going or staying.*
- (83) tumi ki cinta kɔrô na tara tomake kæmôn mône kɔre?  
 you what worry do.2.PR.S not they you.OBJ how mind.LOC do.3.PR.S  
*Are you not worried what they think about you?*

### 7.3.2.4 Rhetorical questions

These are questions with attitude which do not expect a reply. Some of them contain sarcasm, others imply criticism. Here are just a few examples. As these sentences depend heavily on context, the translations are often inadequate.

- (84) cup kôre thakte parô na?  
 quiet do.PP stay.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S not  
*Can't you shut up?*
- (85) ɣɔtô doś sɔb sùdhu amar?  
 how.much fault all only I.GEN  
*Is everything just my fault?*
- (86) are dhyuṭ, ami ki e kɔtha bɔlar jônyô  
 INT INT I what this word say.VN.GEN for  
 apnake dekechi?  
 you.H.OBJ call.1.PR.PERF  
*Dammit, did I call you to talk about that?*

Many question words are also used as exclamative expressions. More examples can be found below (7.3.4)

### 7.3.3 Imperatives

Imperatives are forms of direct address with the intention of making the hearer act in certain ways. Present tense imperative verb forms are identical to the verb forms in declarative sentences and the only difference between a declarative and an imperative structure lies in the omission of the personal pronoun. Imperatives can be formed from active/agentive, existential and copular verbs.

agentive	2F	declarative:	tumi bajare yao.	<i>You go to the market.</i>
	3F		se bajare yaý.	<i>He goes to the market.</i>
	2F	imperative:	bajare yao!	<i>Go to the market!</i>
	3F		bajare yak!	<i>Let him go to the market!</i>
existential	2H	declarative:	apni baṛite achen.	<i>You are at home</i>
	3H		uni baṛite achen.	<i>She is at home.</i>
	2H	imperative:	baṛite thakun!	<i>Stay at home!</i>
	3H		baṛite thakun!	<i>Let her stay at home!</i>
copular	2F	declarative:	tumi bhalô manuṣ.	<i>You are a good man.</i>
	3F		se bhalô manuṣ.	<i>He is a good man.</i>
	2F	imperative:	bhalo manuṣ hõo!	<i>Be a good man!</i>
	3F		bhalô manuṣ hok!	<i>May he be a good man!</i>

Just as in English, the impact and intention of imperatives ranges from curt commands to polite requests. Where Bangla differs from English is in its sheer numbers of imperatives due to the distinction between persons (intimate, familiar and polite), 2nd and 3rd person and between present tense and future tense. The actual difference in use between present and future imperatives is not very pronounced in affirmative sentences as far as the time element is concerned. In many cases, the future imperative is less direct and, therefore, more polite.

Two other general points need to be made before we look at the examples.

#### a. reinforced imperatives with na and ge/ga

Both the second person present imperative (identical to simple present verb forms) and the third person ordinary imperative can be reinforced or made more polite with the particle na. This is not a way of negating the imperatives.

yao na!	<i>Do go!</i>	ar ekṭu khan na!	<i>Go on, eat a bit more!</i>
sôî kôrun na!	<i>Do sign!</i>	thak na!	<i>Let it be!</i>
ṭaka dik na!	<i>Let him pay!</i>	thamô na!	<i>Please stop!</i>

- (87) alur caṣ ṣuru kôrun na.  
 potato cultivation start do.2H.PR.IMP na  
*Start growing potatoes!*

This reinforcing *na* is kept in the gloss to distinguish it from the negative.

Another particle *ge* (undoubtedly a short form of *giye* *having gone*) appears frequently with third person imperatives and often adds a dismissive tone.

<i>hok-ge</i>	<i>Let it happen, who cares?</i>
<i>kôruk-ge</i>	<i>He can do what he likes, it's nothing to me!</i>
<i>môruk-ge</i>	<i>He can die for all I care!</i>
<i>yak-ge</i>	<i>Let it go, it doesn't matter!</i>

It can also occur with second person imperatives and is sometimes realised as *ga*:

*taɾataɾi kɔrô ga! Hurry up!*

- (88) *amake biş ene dao ga, amake puriye mere*  
 I.OBJ poison bring.PP give.2.PR.IMP ga I.OBJ cause.to.burn.PP hit.PP  
*phælô ge.*  
 throw.2.PR.IMP ge  
*Go on, get me some poison, set me on fire and kill me!*

### b. negative imperatives

In order to negate second person imperatives, the future tense imperatives or, quite often, the future tense indicative forms are used:

<i>ei kɔtha bôlo/bôlbe na</i>	<i>Don't say that!</i>
<i>ætô sɔkale côle yeÿo/yabe na</i>	<i>Don't leave so early!</i>
<i>rag kôro/kôrbe na!</i>	<i>Don't be angry!</i>

In order to negate third person imperatives the negative is placed before the verb.

<i>na asuk!</i>	<i>Let him not come!</i>
<i>ɕaka na nik!</i>	<i>Let him not take the money!</i>
<i>kɔthaɕa na bôluk!</i>	<i>Let him not say this!</i>

- (89) *dekhte na pak, jante na paruk, ami nije*  
 see.IP not get.3.IMP know.IP not be.able.to.3.IMP I self  
*to jani.*  
 EMP know.1.PR.S

lit: let (them) not get to see, let (them) not be able to know, I myself know  
*Even if no one else saw or knew, I know!*

- (90) *amar chele ache. ar keu aşrÿ na dik,*  
 my son [is present] more someone shelter not give.3.IMP  
*sei debei.*  
 he.EMP give.3.FUT.EMP

*My son is there. He will offer shelter, even if no one else does.*

It is not unusual in everyday conversations for imperatives to contain:

- a direct address:            sujɔn, eidike asô!        *Sujon, come this way!*  
 or a general exclamation: oi ye, ekɕu śune yan!    *Hey there, listen a moment!*  
 or the pronoun:            tumi kichu bôlbe na!    *Don't say anything!*

An imperative like *tumi cup kôre thakô!* *Keep quiet!* differs from a declarative sentence only in the tone of voice.

### c. second person imperatives

- (91) aj ar bṛṣṭite bhijo na. aj baṛi yao.  
 today more rain.LOC get.wet.2.FUT.IMP not today home go.2.PR.IMP  
*Don't get wet in the rain anymore today. Go home!*
- (92) śita, toiri hōye thakis!  
 Sita ready be.PP stay.2I.FUT.IMP  
*Sita, get ready!*
- (93) tomar gōyna nite bhule yeo na kintu.  
 your jewellery take.IP forget.PP go.2.FUT.IMP not but  
*But don't forget to take your jewellery.*

### d. third person imperatives

Third person imperatives often require a different mode in English and do not come out as imperatives at all. They have a wide range of uses, from blessings to curses, from encouragement to *couldn't care less* pronouncements. The regular *thakuk* for the third person imperative of *thaka stay* is usually shortened to *thak* when it has an inanimate subject:

- o thakuk.        *Let him stay!*  
 byæparṭa thak. *Let the matter rest!*

In addition to turning active/agentive sentences *se yabe he will go* into imperatives *yak!* *Let him go!* there are many instances of impersonal verbal noun plus *yaoṛa* imperatives which really make statements about the speaker rather than any third person.

A very common phrase in introducing an assumption is:

- (94) dhôre neoṛa yak...  
 hold.PP take.VN go.3.IMP  
*Let us assume...*

More examples:

- (95) ekɕu ca khaoṛa yak.  
 some tea drink.VN go.3.IMP  
*Let us have some tea!*



- (96) aj ar nɔ́y, tābu phæ̀lò, bísrám kɔ́ra yak.  
today more [is.3] tent throw.2.PR.IMP rest do.VN go.3.IMP  
*No more today, set up the tent, let's have a rest!*
- (97) sara bísvò hok śantimɔ́y.  
whole world be.3.IMP peaceful  
*May the whole world be at peace!*
- (98) tini tomar mɔ́ngól kòrun.  
he.H your.GEN good do.3H.IMP  
*May he bless you!*
- (99) ya mòne kòrbe kòruk.  
what mind.LOC do.3.FUT do.3.IMP  
*Let them think what they want.*
- (100) pòruk bhéne!  
fall.3.IMP break.PP  
*Let it break!*

#### e. expanded imperatives

Simple imperative verb forms can be expanded to give specific instructions or to indicate the desired result. *yænò* *so that* is often used in these expansions. The imperative clause is the main clause in these structures.

- (101) dækhò yænò haraý na.  
see.2.PR.IMP so.that lose.3.PR.S not  
*Make sure it doesn't get lost!*
- (102) oder likhe dao yænò kal ase.  
they.OBJ write.PP give.2.PR.IMP so.that tomorrow come.3.PR.S  
*Write to them and ask them to come tomorrow!*
- (103) oke bɔ̀lò yænò tarataɾi kɔ́re.  
he.OBJ say.2.PR.IMP so.that quickly do.3.PR.S  
*Tell him to hurry up!*

#### f. embedded imperatives

The following sentences have third person imperatives embedded in them. This means they are not imperative in their overall structure, but the imperatives are crucial components in these sentences. These uses go far beyond the usually expected scope of imperatives. The distinctive structure

relative + imperative + *na kænò* *not why*  
yɔ̀tò bhalò hok na kænò  
*however good it may be*

has a *whatever* meaning, much like a relative preceding an indefinite pronoun (*ye keu anyone*).

The following sentence is copular in structure:

- (104) lekha na thak, tar mukher kothai yctheṣṭō.  
 write.VN not stay.3.IMP his mouth.GEN word.EMP sufficient  
*Never mind about writing, his spoken word is enough.*

In the following sentence the imperative functions as a content clause.

- (105) amar kṣōti hok æmōn kaj o kōrtei pare na.  
 I.GEN harm be.3.IMP such work he do.IP.EMP be.able.to not  
 lit: let harm occur to me, such work he is unable to do.  
*He is incapable of doing anything to harm me.*

And here is a correlative structure:

- (106) ora śunuk, śikhuk, yctōṭa bujhte  
 they hear.3.IMP learn.3.IMP how.much.CL understand.IP  
 pare bujhuk.  
 be.able.to.3.PR.S understand.3.IMP  
*Let them also hear, learn and understand what they are able to understand.*

caoyā *want* often triggers a third person imperative:

- (107) amra cai na ye se amader gaṛi calak.  
 we want.1.PR.S not that he our car drive.3.IMP  
 lit: we don't want that that let him drive our car  
*We don't want him to drive out car.*

### 7.3.4 Exclamations

Exclamative sentences are usually short. They can make use of question words, relative pronouns or deictics:

ki ye khuśi lagche!	<i>How happy he felt!</i>
kōtō bhalō manuṣ!	<i>What a good man!</i>
ki lōjja!	<i>What an embarrassment!</i>
kōtō khete parō!	<i>How much you can eat!</i>
se lok!	<i>That man!</i>
ya dekhechi!	<i>What I have seen!</i>
ætō ṭaka!	<i>So much money!</i>

Exclamations can consist of incomplete declarative sentences, sometimes with the emphatic particle *to*. Often just a change of tone indicates the change in mode.

ṭhik ache!	OK!	cômôṭkar dī śyô to!	<i>Fantastic view!</i>
khub anônder khôbôr to!	<i>Wonderful news!</i>	ækmas dhôre!	<i>A whole month!</i>

They can consist of interjections:

haÿre!	<i>Oh dear!</i>	chi chil!	<i>Yuk!</i>
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Examples for interjections were given in Chapter 5.9.3.

## 7.4 Verbal patterns

The four sentence patterns we have identified (1) active/agentive, (2) existential, (3) impersonal and (4) copular) are based on the predicates we find in them. There are sub-groups in each category and there is also some overlap between the groups. The description of each sentence pattern moves from simple to more complex structures, using mainly declarative examples.

### 7.4.1 Active/agentive sentences

Active/agentive sentences have a nominative subject which determines the verb. Animate as well as inanimate noun phrases can act as subjects in active/agentive sentences. All verbs in Bangla can be used actively with a nominative-agentive subject but some verbs have a preference for impersonal structures. They will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### a. with animate subjects

- (1) se ghumacche.  
she sleep.3.PR.C  
*She is sleeping.*
- (2) amra hese uṭhlam.  
we laugh.PP rise.1.P.S  
*We laughed.*
- (3) meÿeṭi kâdche.  
girl.CL cry.3.PR.C  
*The girl is crying.*
- (4) tara nac kore.  
they dance do.3.PR.S  
*They dance.*
- (5) se ekhôno môrbe na.  
he yet die.3.FUT not  
*He will not yet die.*

- (6) ora ruṭi banaṅ.  
they bread prepare.3.PR.S  
*They make bread.*
- (7) tumi ækṭa gan gaitē parô?  
you one.CL song sing.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*Can you sing a song?*
- (8) ami likhte laglam.  
I write.IP start.1.P.S  
*I started writing.*
- (9) ami take sahayyô kôrechi.  
I he.OBJ help do.1.PR.PERF  
*I helped him.*
- (10) ciṭhiṭa tumi kar kache diṅechô?  
letter.CL you who.GEN near give.2.PR.PERF  
*To whom did you give the letter?*

#### b. with inanimate subjects

- (11) biṣṭi hōcche.  
rain be.3.PR.C  
*It is raining.*
- (12) megh ḍakche.  
cloud call.3.PR.C  
*It is thundering.*
- (13) biṣṭi namte laglô.  
rain descend.IP start.3.P.S  
*It started raining.*
- (14) nôḍir jâl kôme yacche.  
river.GEN water decrease.PP go.3.PR.C  
*The water-level in the river is going down.*
- (15) eisōb rasta śohôrer dike gæche.  
this.all road town.GEN towards go.3.PR.PERF  
*All these roads go into town.*
- (16) cād amar dīṣṭir baire côle gæche.  
moon my view.GEN outside move.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*The moon has moved out of my sight.*
- (17) chôbiṭa amake khub bhabalô.  
picture.CL I.OBJ very cause.to.think.3.P.S  
*The picture made me think a lot.*

- (18) prôsnôṭa oṭheoni.  
question.CL not.rise.3.PR.PERF.EVEN  
*The question did not even arise.*
- (19) kothao kono alo jvleni.  
somewhere any light not.burn.3.PR.PERF  
*There was no light on anywhere.*
- (20) byæpaṭa ghôṭlô ṭhik tṭkhôn.  
matter.CL occur.3.P.S exactly then  
*The incident happened just then.*

We see from these sentences that the English translations do not always match the Bangla active/agentive sentence structures.

#### 7.4.2 Existential structures

Existential sentences are formed with the incomplete verb *ach- be, be present*. Existential sentences have two main sub-groups: (1) locative existentials and (2) possessive existentials. The difference between the two types is the presence of a genitive human experiencer (possessor) in possessive-existential sentences. Other existential sentence types (3) include *bhalô good* and *ṭhik right*, verbal adjectives and stative adjective structures. What all existential sentences have in common is that they are negated with *nei*.

A chart for the forms of *ach-* is given in Appendix 1. For more on the relationship between *thaka* and *ach-* see Chapter 8.3 Aspect.

##### a. locative existentials

Locative existentials have nominative subjects and verb agreement. They usually include a location, which can also be a time, but there are also purely existential sentences such as

*bhūt ache? Do ghosts exist?*

- (21) sagôrgulo ache bôle amader pṛthibī ar sṭb grôhō  
sea.C.PL [is present].3 say.PP our earth more all planet  
theke alada.  
from different  
*Our earth is different from all other planets because of the existence of oceans.*
- (22) svārgô o nārôk e duṭi sthan pṛthibir môdhyei ache.  
heaven and hell this two.CL place world.GEN within.EMP [is present].3  
*Heaven and hell, these two places are situated within the world.*
- (23) aj sṭkale apni æk bicitrô mejaje achen.  
today morning.LOC you.H one varied mood.LOC [is present].H  
*You are in a funny mood this morning.*

- (24) æk jaŷga theke ar æk jaŷgake pithôk kôre cine  
 one place from more one place.OBJ different do.PP know.PP  
 nebar kono cihnô nei.  
 take.bavN.GEN any sign [is absent]

*There were no features to distinguish one place from another.*

### b. possessive-existentials

The word ‘possessive’ is used in the widest possible sense in this context. The minimum requirement for these structures is a genitive animate noun-phrase. These animate noun-phrases do not, however, act as subjects in existential structures. Bangla has genitive subjects in impersonal structures (7.4.3) but in existential contexts there are nominative subjects with verb agreement, eg

- (25) amar baba achen.  
 I.GEN father [exists].3H  
*My father is alive or My father is here.*

baba *father* is the subject of sentence (25).

#### i. personal-possessive

- (26) amar ækta nôtun ceŷar ache.  
 I.GEN one.CL new chair [is present]  
 lit: of me a new chair exists  
*I have a new chair.*

#### ii. personal-relational

- (27) amar svamî achen.  
 I.GEN husband [is present].3H  
*I have a husband.*

#### iii. personal-characteristic

- (28) tar dhoiryô nei.  
 he.GEN patience [is absent]  
*He has no patience.*

#### iv. personal-experiential

- (29) tar esôb tōttver jana ache.  
 he.GEN this.all theory know.VN [is present].3  
*He knows all these theories.*

Here are a few examples:

- (30) jibôner šeşdin pôryôntô kaj kôre yaoÿar iccha amar ache.  
 life.GEN end.day until work do.PP go.VN.GEN wish I.GEN [is present]  
*I want to carry on working until the last day of my life.*
- (31) apnar ginnir sônge parar kşçmôta  
 your wife,GEN with be.able.to.VN.GEN power  
 apnader karo nei.  
 you.PL.GEN someone.GEN [is absent]  
*None of you can compete with the competence of your wife.*
- (32) kôtha bôlbar çbôstha tar chilô na.  
 word speak.bavN.GEN state he.GEN [was] not  
*He was in no fit state to talk.*
- (33) çnyer strî kere nebar çbhyas târ nei.  
 other.GEN wife snatch.away.PP take.bavN.GEN habit heH.GEN [is absent]  
*He is not in the habit of snatching away other men's wives.*

### c. adjectives, verbal adjectives, abstract nouns

The majority of structures with a noun and a predicative adjective are copular, but the two verbs *bhalô* *good* and *ţhik* *correct* have additional idiomatic uses with *ach-* and *nei*.

copular		existential	
ami bhalô	<i>I am good.</i>	ami bhalô achi.	<i>I am well.</i>
ami bhalô noi.	<i>I am not good.</i>	ami bhalô nei.	<i>I am not well.</i>
eţa ţhik.	<i>That is correct.</i>	eţa ţhik ache.	<i>That is fine.</i>
eţa ţhik nçy.	<i>That is not correct.</i>	eţa ţhik nei.	<i>That is not right.</i>

The phrase *ţhik nei* is also used to mean *it is uncertain*.

- (34) kôţô din bybôhar kôra hçyeni tar ţhik nei.  
 how.much day use do.VN not.be.3.PR.PERF it.GEN right [is absent]  
*(We) don't know for sure how long it has been out of use.*

Other adjectives, verbal nouns and abstract nouns are used in existential structures. They sometimes correspond to *there is* structures in English:

- (35) bhitôrer baÿur çap çpôribôrtitô ache.  
 inside.GEN air.GEN pressure unchanged [exist].3  
*The air pressure inside is constant.*
- (36) tar asar çambhabôna ache.  
 his come.VN.GEN possibility [exist].3  
 lit: the possibility of his coming exists  
*It is possible that he will come.*

(37) sobai ager matô chilô.  
 everyone before.GEN like [was].3  
*Everyone was the same as before.*

(38) ar kono upây chilô na.  
 more any way [was].3 not  
*There was no other way.*

#### d. omission of ach-

ach- can be omitted in simple present tense sentences only if there is no scope for misunderstanding.

in simple locative-existential sentences:

tara dillite.	<i>They are in Delhi.</i>
bôit̃a tebile.	<i>The book is on the table.</i>
haspatal oidike.	<i>The hospital is that way.</i>

in possessive-existential sentences when a numeral or quantifier is present:

tader tiña chele.	<i>They have three sons.</i>
tar c̃nek ĩñ.	<i>He has big debts.</i>
or dũti matrô jama.	<i>He has only two shirts.</i>

The potential omission of ach- also depends on the context. It is not unusual to hear:

apnar ki chele ba mẽye?	
you.GEN what boy or girl	
<i>Do you have a son or a daughter?</i>	or
tar aj pôrik̃sa.	
he.GEN today exam	
<i>He has an exam today.</i>	

The deciding factor for the omission of ach- is comprehensibility.

### 7.4.3 Impersonal structures

The characteristic feature of impersonal structures is that they do not have agreement between a nominative agent and the verb. Impersonal sentences have third person verb forms and often, though not always, genitive experiencer subjects.

Impersonal structures are commonly used in Bangla for expressing like and dislike, feelings, physical sensations, attitudes, permission, prohibition and suchlike.

The verbs involved in producing impersonal structures are ach- *be present, exist, laga come in contact with*, h̃õỹa *be, become*, yaõỹa *go*, paõỹa *receive*, k̃ora *do*, p̃ora *fall*.

Structures with ach- are given separately under existential sentences (7.4.2)

A sub-category of impersonal structures are impersonal passive structures with h̃õỹa *be, become* and yaõỹa *go*. They will be discussed in 7.4.3 (d) below.



Before we look at the impersonal uses of individual verbs, here is a different type of structure:

**a. no subject structures**

These sentences are usually short. They always have a simple present third person verb form and no subject. They can often only be translated with an impersonal *one*:

- (39) eṭa khaŷ na.  
that.CL eat.3.PR.S not  
*That is not edible.*
- (40) bɔrô bhaike dada bɔle.  
big brother.OBJ dada call.3.PR.S  
*An older brother is called Dada.*
- (41) agune hat dæŷ na.  
fire.LOC hand give.3.PR.S not  
*One does not put one's hand in the fire.*
- (42) ſītkale ɠɔrôm geñji gaŷe dæŷ.  
winter.LOC warm T-shirt body.LOC give.3.PR.S  
*One wears a sweater in winter.*

**b. laga**

*laga* has a number of different uses, including an active use with a preceding imperfective participle meaning *start*. The impersonal uses of *laga* are given here.

*attach, take root*

- (43) baṛite agun legeche.  
house.CL fire laga.3.PR.PERF  
*The house has caught fire.*
- (44) tader tɔrkô legei thake.  
they.GEN argument laga.PP.EMP stay.3.PR.S  
*They are always arguing.*
- (45) ete bɔrô dag legechilô amar mône.  
this.LOC big mark laga.3.P.PERF my mind.LOC  
*That made a deep impression on me.*

*feel, seem*

This use of *laga* has a genitive experiencer subject which is not always expressed. *laga* can also take a direct object.

- (46) prôthôme bɔrô ɔdbhut legechilô tar.  
first.LOC big strange laga.3.P.PERF he.GEN  
*At first it felt very strange to him.*

- (47) oṣudh tita lage.  
 medicine bitter laga.3.PR.S  
*The medicine tastes bitter.*
- (48) bhīṣōṇ cena lagche loktake.  
 extremely know.VN laga.3.PR.C man.CL.OBJ  
 lit: to the man extreme knowing attaches  
*The man looks very familiar.*
- (49) tomake aj ekṭu susthō lagche.  
 you.OBJ today a.bit well laga.3.PR.C  
 lit: to you today a bit well attaches  
*You are looking a bit better today.*

*like, dislike*

In combinations with *bhalô good* and *kharap bad* laga can express like and dislike. There is always a genitive experiencer subject and usually a direct object. Note that when an object pronoun is dropped, we can get two identical-looking structures:

- i. amar bhalô lagche. *I am feeling well.*      amar kharap lagche. *I am feeling ill.*  
 and ii. amar (ta) bhalô lagche. *I like it.*      amar (ta) kharap lagche. *I dislike it.*

Sentences (ii) with the dropped *ta it* are less likely to occur in continuous tenses. That and the context of these types of utterances make misunderstandings rare but the similarity of the structures needs to be kept in mind.

- (50) gramṭa tomar kæmôn legeche?  
 village.CL you.GEN how laga.3.PR.PERF  
*How did you like the village?*
- (51) diner p̄r din baṛir môdhye bōndhō hōye kaṭate bhalô  
 day.GEN after day home.GEN in closed be.PP spend.IP good  
 lage karo?  
 laga.3.PR.S someone.GEN  
*Does any one like being stuck at home day after day?*

*need, require, take (time), use*

This use is very common with money or amounts of time.

kotôksôn lagbe? *How long will it take?*

- (52) śnaktô kôrte æk p̄lôko sômôy lageni.  
 identity do.IP one moment.even time not laga.3.PR.PERF  
*It didn't take a moment to identify (them).*

- (53) mōne pōrlō snan kōrte pōlaśer ki ɔsɔmbhōb  
 mind.LOC fall.3.PS bath do.IP Palash.GEN what impossible  
 sômōy laglō.  
 time laga.3.P.S.

*She remembered how incredibly long it took Palash to have a shower.*

### c. genitive experiencer subjects

In the sentences:   ami siddhantō kōrechi.   *I have decided.*   and  
                           ami ciṭhiṭa peyēchi.   *They received the letter.*

the two bivalent verbs *kōra do* and *paoṽa get, receive* appear in their normal active environment with a nominative agent and a direct object. In the structures below the verb changes to third person, the agent to the genitive and the objects are a range of physical sensations and feelings. Sentences all follow the same pattern. The present and past continuous are very common in these structures but all tenses are possible. Some of the nouns and adjectives below can combine with more than one verb.

with *paoṽa get, receive*

- (54) amar ghum pacche.  
 I.GEN sleep get.3.PR.C  
 lit: I am receiving sleep  
*I am feeling sleepy.*
- (55) mīrar hasi pacche na. hasi paoṽar mətō gɔlpō nōy.  
 Mira.GEN laugh get.3.PR.C not. laugh get.VN.GEN like story [is not]  
*Mira didn't feel like laughing. It was not a very funny story.*
- (56) tar ermōdhye bōrō khida peyēche.  
 he.GEN by.now big hunger get.PR.PERF  
*By now he was very hungry.*

with *kōra do*

subject (gen)	sensation	3rd person verb form	
tar	ɔsukh	kōreche.	<i>He is ill.</i>
amar	lɔjja	kōrche.	<i>I feel embarrassed.</i>
tar	śit	kōrche.	<i>He is feeling cold.</i>
tomar ki	bhōy	kōrche?	<i>Are you afraid?</i>
amar	nacte iccha	kōrche.	<i>I feel like dancing.</i>

with *asa come*

baccaṭir	ghum	asche.	<i>The baby is falling asleep.</i>
amar	jvōr	asche.	<i>I am getting a fever.</i>
tar	kanna	asche.	<i>She feels like crying.</i>

with *oṭha rise*

tar	jvr	uṭheche.	<i>He has a fever.</i>
amar	rag	uṭhe gæche.	<i>I got angry.</i>

with *hcoṭya be, become*

tar	ṣukh	hōyeche.	<i>He is ill.</i>
tomar	bhul	hōyeche.	<i>You have made a mistake.</i>
amar	ṣondehō	hōcche.	<i>I am having doubts.</i>
tomar ki	himṣa	hōyeche?	<i>Were you jealous?</i>
tar	kṣṭō	hōcche.	<i>He is having trouble.</i>

#### d. impersonal passives

Bengali passives are structurally different from passives in European languages in that there is no object raising and all full verbs in Bengali can be passivised. Syntactically the verb (as a verbal noun) becomes the subject of the sentence, which is why the term impersonal passives seems appropriate. The two verbs *hcoṭya be, become* and *yaoṭya go* supply the finite forms in these sentences.

Passive structures take the attention away from the agent towards the event itself, so in practice the agent is often left unmentioned. The process from active to impersonal passive can be seen in an example with an animate object:

tara	cortake	dhôrlô.	→	cortake	dhōra	hôlô.
they	thief.OBJ	catch.3.P.S		thief.OBJ	catch.VN	be.3.P.S
<i>They caught the thief.</i>			→	<i>The thief was caught.</i>		

The object of the active sentence remains the object of the passive sentence and verbs without a direct object can also appear in passive structures:

active	ami kalke yabô.	<i>I will go tomorrow, can be rendered as</i>
impersonal passive	amar kalke yaoṭya hōbe.	lit: <i>My going will be (occur) tomorrow.</i>

with *hcoṭya be, become*

Impersonal passives with *hcoṭya be, become* express actual occurrence. In sentences containing a direct object the agent is almost invariably suppressed. The syntactic shape of these sentences is

[object + verbal noun + 3rd person form or non-finite form of *hcoṭya*].

*hcoṭya* can be part of a compound verb.

- (57) tar    ṅek    ḡṣpô    lekha    hōye    yacche.  
 he.GEN    much    story    write.VN    be.PP    go.3.PR.C  
*He is getting a lot of stories written.*
- (58) baṭumṅḍôlke    moṭamuṭi    pāṭṭi    stōre    bhag    kōra    hōy.  
 atmosphere.OBJ    more.or.less    five.CL    level.LOC    division    do.VN    be.3.PR.S  
*The atmosphere is divided roughly into five levels.*

- (59) amader kache řṅ caoṅa hócche.  
we.GEN near loan ask.VN be.3.PR.C  
*We are being asked for a loan.*
- (60) egulo ghórer bhitóre niṅe lukiṅe rakha hócche.  
this.CL.PL house.GEN inside.LOC take.PP hide.PP put.VN be.3.PR.C  
*These are being taken into the house and stored secretly.*

with yaoṅa go

The verbal noun with a third person form of yaoṅa expresses possibility. yaoṅa can be in any tense.

This is a thoroughly impersonal structure in that it never has any kind of human agent, either nominative or genitive. Semantically this structure is comparable to the imperfective participle with para *be able to, be possible*. The para structure offers a non-impersonal alternative.

- personal with para: amra kalke yete parbô. *We can go tomorrow.*  
impersonal with yaoṅa: kalke yaoṅa yabe. *It will be possible to go tomorrow.*
- (61) ganṅa śune saradin khuśi hoṅa yaṅ.  
song.CL hear.PP all.day happy be.VN go.3.PR.S  
*Listening to that song can make you happy for the whole day.*
- (62) ebare cup kôre thaka yaṅni.  
this.time.LOC quiet do.PP stay.VN not.go.3.PR.PERF  
*This time it was impossible to keep quiet.*
- (63) sthanbôdôl dekhe bojha yaṅ tãkhôn sômôṅta kôṅ.  
place.change see.PP understand.VN go.3.PR.S then time.CL how much  
*Seeing the shifting location (we) can understand what time it is just then.*

Although verbal noun structures with yaoṅa do not take agent-subjects, they are perfectly capable of taking objects.

- (64) ki kôra yabe?  
what do.VN go.3.FUT  
*What can be done?*
- (65) ei durbôl śôrire take barbar kôlkataṅ ana  
this.EMP weak health.LOC he.OBJ again.again Kolkata.LOC bring.VN  
yaṅ na.  
go.3.PR.S not  
*He can't be brought to Kolkata again and again in his weak state of health.*
- (66) na, æmôn ækṅa smṅti harano yaṅ na.  
no such one.CL memory lose.VN go.3.PR.S not  
*No, it is not possible to forget something like that.*

## 7.4.4 Copular sentences

The structure of copular sentences is given in Chapter 7.1.2.

Although many copular sentences are ostensibly in the simple present, ie with a zero verb copula, in the translations they are often given in the simple past as they are part of past tense narratives.

## a. nominal complements

- (67) ei għɔɾʈa amar kache svɔɾgô.  
 this.EMP room.CL I.GEN near heaven  
*This room is heaven to me.*
- (68) strilok tar kache śudhu śôṛīr.  
 woman.person he.GEN near only body  
*A woman for him is just a body.*
- (69) mɔnôramar sɔb kaj kôler mɔtô.  
 Monorama.GEN all work machine.GEN like  
*All of Monorama's work is like clock-work.*

## b. adjectival complements

- (70) bhagôlpurer prakītik soundôryô çadharôṇ.  
 Bhagolpur.GEN natural beauty exceptional  
*Bhagolpur was a place of exceptional natural beauty.*
- (71) pɔrôspɔrer bhalôbasaÿ ækhôno tara atmôhara.  
 one.another.GEN love.LOC still they self-obsessed  
*They are still wrapped up in their love for one another.*
- (72) oindrilar bhôṅgi khub dhīr, niḥsôṅgô śantô.  
 Aindrila.GEN manner very slow detached calm  
*Aindrila's manner was slow, detached and calm.*

## c. genitive noun complements

Just as genitive nouns can be used attributively in place of an adjective, they can also be used as complements in copular sentences.

- (73) kôthaṭa çnek dūrer.  
 word.CL much distance.GEN  
*This is a long way off.*
- (74) byæpaṛṭa to khubi duścintar.  
 matter.CL EMP very.EMP worry.GEN  
*This matter is very worrying.*

## d. negated copular

The forms of the incomplete negative verb  $\kappa\text{-}$  which are used to negate copular sentences are given in Chapter 6.3.1.1.

- (75) kichu na kôre thakar mətô kôthin ar kichu  $\kappa\hat{y}$ .  
 something not do.PP stay.VN.GEN like difficult more something [is not]  
*Nothing is more difficult than staying idle.*
- (76) eṭa bholbar  $\kappa\hat{y}$ .  
 this.CL forget.VN.GEN [is not]  
*This is unforgettable.*

## e. past and future tense, non finite forms

Copular sentences do not occur in the past or the future tense as often as other sentences do for two reasons. Firstly, Bangla has much flexibility in its tense use and a present tense sentence in a past tense context is perfectly normal. Secondly, the past tense of the zero verb is identical to that of *ach-* and, although there is rarely any scope for confusion between the two types of sentences, copular sentences lose some of their specific impact in the past or future tense. For future and non-finite forms of *həyā be, become* are used.  $\kappa\text{-}$  does not appear in any but simple present tense contexts.

simple past (with *chil-*)

- (77) tini tomar priyô naŷôk chilen.  
 he.H your favourite actor [was].H  
*He was your favourite actor.*

## past perfect with a verbal noun subject:

- (78) se dhôre niyechilô se b̄rab̄r eki r̄kôm thakbe,  
 he hold.PP take.3.P.PERF he forever one.EMP kind stay.3.FUT  
 ei dhôre neoȳatai h̄yechilô c̄rôm bhul.  
 this hold.PP take.VN.CL.EMP be.3.P.PERF big mistake  
*He had assumed that he would always stay the same. That assumption had been a huge mistake.*

future tense (with *həyā be, become*)

- (79) meyēṭi tar strī h̄be.  
 girl.CL his wife be.3.FUT  
*The girl will be his wife.*
- (80) e gan h̄be amar ækar, nijōsvô.  
 this song be.3.FUT my alone.GEN own  
*This song will be mine alone, my very own.*

non-finites (with হওয়া *be, become*)

- (81) tumi tar baba hôte parô na.  
 you his father be.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S not  
*You can't be his father.*
- (82) caṭa beśi gṛôm hôle se khabe na.  
 tea.CL much hot be.CP he drink.3.FUT not  
*If the tea is too hot, he won't drink it.*

f. pro-copula (PC)

Copular sentences in the simple present usually have a zero verb. In order to give copular zero verb sentences a bit more structure and weight, a pro-copula can be inserted between the subject and the complement. This is always a 3rd person form of হওয়া *be, become* in the present continuous, the simple past or occasionally the simple present. In their pro-copular uses these verb forms lose their tense component and take on a tenseless quality. The defining characteristic of this structure is the positioning of the verb between subject and complement.

Here is an ordinary copular sentence:

tar baba ei biśvôbidyalôyer ḍhyapôk.  
 her father this university.GEN professor

Here is the same sentence with a pro-copula:

tar baba hōcchen ei biśvôbidyalôyer ḍhyapôk. or  
 tar baba hōlen ei biśvôbidyalôyer ḍhyapôk.  
 her father PC this university.GEN professor  
*Her father is a professor at this university.*

If the verb form is placed in its normal position at the end of the sentence, we get quite a different kind of sentence:

tar baba ei biśvôbidyalôyer ḍhyapôk hōcchen.  
*Her father is becoming a professor at this university.*

tar baba ei biśvôbidyalôyer ḍhyapôk hōlen.  
*Here father became a professor at this university.*

The pro-copula has subject verb agreement and there is free variation between present continuous and simple past verb forms. There are no explicit rules for when the pro-copula should or should not be used. As we see from the examples, even a simple pronoun as a subject can be followed by a pro-copula. The pro-copula adds some emphasis and weight.

- (83) ei hōcche jibôner chōndô.  
 this.EMP PC life.GEN rhythm  
*That is life's rhythm.*



- (84) ei neme asar nami hócche bhūmidhōs.  
 this sink.PP come.VN.GEN name.EMP PC landslide  
*This sinking is called a landslide.*
- (85) asōl byæparta hōlō oi nimtōlar bhōdrōlok hōlen  
 actual matter.CL PC that.EMP downstairs.GEN gentleman PC  
 baṛir malik.  
 house.GEN owner  
*In fact, the gentleman downstairs is the owner of the house.*

### 7.5 Compound sentences – coordination

We now turn our attention to the question of coordination and subordination. Compound sentences are produced by linking two main clauses with a coordinating conjunction or simply by placing two main clauses next to one another. Here are some sentences to consider:

- (86) beainio bōṭe karōṇ ta deśer sōmpōd.  
 illegal.also of.course reason that country.GEN treasure  
*It is also of course illegal because it is a national treasure.*
- (87) cinta kōrchi tar jōnye, tai ei kōtha bōllam.  
 worry do.1.PR.C he.GEN for that.EMP this word say.1.P.S  
*(I) am worried about him. That's why (I) said that.*
- (88) kichukṣōṇ age ami dhakar baire theke phirechi, khub  
 some.time before I Dhaka.GEN outside from return.1.PR.PERF very  
 klantō. phōle ṁpō sōmōy theke ami cōle asi.  
 tired result.LOC little time stay.PP I move.PP come.1.PR.S  
*A little while ago I returned from outside Dhaka and was very tired. Therefore I stayed only a short time and then came home.*
- (89) tar khub matha dhōreche. kajei ar baire  
 he.GEN very head catch.3.PR.PERF work.LOC.EMP more outside  
 yaoṅa hōy ni.  
 go.VN not.be.3.PR.PERF  
*He had a bad headache. So (he) didn't go out anymore.*

The connecting elements in these four examples are nouns and pronouns: karōṇ *reason*, tai *that* + emphasiser, phōle *result* +locative and kajei *work* + locative + emphasiser. The fact that they are used as conjunctions shows the minimal fuss with which Bangla

structures its sentences. The sentences below are a selection of compound sentences with a variety of coordinating conjunctions.

### 7.5.1 No conjunction

- (90) tar cul uṛche kṛpale, ācōl khōse pōṛche  
 her hair fly.3.PR.C, forehead.LOC end.of.saree come.off.PP fall.3.PR.C  
 khuṣite, pōriśrōme, pṛrōntō rode jvṛljvṛle lalce  
 joy.LOC effort.LOC sinking sun.LOC bright.bright reddish  
 tar mukh.  
 her face

*Her hair is flying around her forehead, the end of her saree is coming loose in enjoyment and effort. In the waning sunlight her face is bright red.*

### 7.5.2 Conjoining, adding

o *and, also*

- (91) ami yabo tumio yabe.  
 I go.1.FUT you.also go.2.FUT  
*You and I will go.*

ebṛm *and*

- (92) khete giye khabar bhōrti ṭebil dekhe mōṅṭa anōnde nece  
 eat.IP go.PP food filled table see.PP mind.CL joy.LOC dance.PP  
 oṭhe ebṛm ami nargiser dike ceye na  
 rise.3.PR.S and I Nargis.GEN towards look.PP not  
 hese pari na.  
 smile.PP be able to.1.PR.S not

*When (I) went in to eat and saw the table filled with food (I) felt so happy I couldn't help giving Nargis a big grin.*

ar *and, more*

- (93) se ækbar bhablō na kothay yacche ar kænō ba yacche.  
 he once think.3.P.S not where go.3.PR.C and why EMP go.3.PR.C  
*He didn't think once where he was going or why he was going there.*

abar *and, again, then*

- (94) uṭhe dāralen ḍaktar moitrō, paṅcari kōrlen, abar bōslen,  
 get.up.PP stand.3H.P.S Dr Mitra walk do.3H.P.S again sit.3H.P.S

abar uṭhlen.  
again get.up.3H.P.S

*Dr Mitra got up, paced up and down, sat down and stood up again.*

### 7.5.3 Alternative

ɔthôba *or*

- (95) karo jônyo ranne kôre diye asten ɔthôba  
someone.GEN for cook do.PP give.PP come.3H.P.HABIT or  
karo hôye ciṭhi-potrô likhten.  
someone.GEN on.behalf.of letter write.3H.P.HABIT

*(She) would come back after doing the cooking for someone or writing letters on someone's behalf.*

kina *whether or not*

- (96) ora khuṣi hôyeche kina ta jante ceṣechi.  
they happy be.3.PR.PERF what.not that know.IP want.1.PR.PERF  
*I wanted to know whether they were satisfied or not.*

naki *or*

- (97) se hêṭe yabe naki rikśa kôre yabe ṭhik nei.  
he walk.PP go.3.FUT or rickshaw do.PP go.3.FUT fixed [is absent]  
*Whether he will walk or go by rickshaw is not certain.*

bɔrôm *instead, rather*

- (98) ete choṭôder pôriśrôm kōmeni,  
this.LOC small.PL.GEN effort not.reduce.3.PR.PERF  
bɔrôm beṛeche.  
rather increase.3.PR.PERF

*But this did not reduce the children's effort, rather it increased it.*

### 7.5.4 Causal

karôṇ *because*

- (99) kajṭa khub sçhøj nçy karôṇ sahayyô kɔrar mçtô  
work.CL very easy [is not] because help do.VN.GEN like  
keu nei.  
someone [is absent]

*The work is not very easy because there is no-one who could help.*

kænôna *because*

- (100) murgir bacca beśi yctner môdhye palôn kôrte hây  
 chicken.GEN young much care.GEN within rearing do.IP be.3.PR.S.  
 kænôna sct̥hik p̥oddhôti jana na thakle murgir bacca  
 because proper method know.VN not be.CP chicken.GEN young  
 pala sct̥hōj nây.  
 breeding easy [is not]

*Breeding baby chickens has to be done with much care because it is not easy to rear baby chickens when you don't know the proper method.*

- (101) mōne ct̥bôsad ase, kænôna etôdine kono  
 mind.LOC exhaustion come.3.PR.S because so.much.day.LOC any  
 unnôti dækha yacche na.  
 improvement see.VN go.3.PR.C not

*One gets exhausted because after all this time there is no progress to be seen.*

### 7.5.5 Contrasting, concessive

ct̥hôt̥cô *however, yet*

- (102) abar akaśer ct̥nek upôre uṭhe gele baṅupun̄jô  
 again sky.GEN much up.LOC rise.PP go.CP air.mass  
 śitôl hôye yaṅ, ct̥hôt̥cô nicekar baṅupun̄jô  
 cold be.PP go.3.PR.S but below.GEN air.mass  
 thake uṣṇô.  
 stay.3.PR.S warm

*When the air mass goes up high in the sky it gets cold, but the air mass below stays warm.*

kintu *but*

- (103) ami ct̥b sômôy ei dike asi kintu cheleṭike ajke  
 I all time this way.LOC come.1.PR.S but boy.CL.OBJ today  
 prôthôme dekhlam.  
 first see.1.P.S

*I always come this way but I saw the boy for the first time today.*

t̥cbe *but*

- (104) p̥c̥re kina jani na t̥cbe p̥c̥rar  
 read.3.PR.S whether.or.not know.1.PR.S not but read.VN.GEN  
 to k̥tha.  
 EMP word

*I don't know whether he studies or not but study he should.*

tôbu *but, nevertheless*

- (105) basagulo cinte parche na tôbu rastata  
house.CL.PL know.IP be.able.to.3.PR.C not but road.CL  
mône ache.  
mind.LOC [is present]

*He doesn't recognise the houses but he remembers the road.*

nôile, nôtuba, nâyto *if not, otherwise*

These conjunctions are all more or less synonymous. nôile is formally the conditional participle of the incomplete verb nɔ- *is not* but it does not have the syntactic scope of na hôle *if this is not so*. nôile is used as a simple conjunction giving an alternative scenario.

- (106) kagôjgulô ekhoni ɔphise niye esô.  
paper.PL.CL now.EMP office.LOC take.PP come.2.FUT.IMP.  
nôtuba babar ɔsubidhe hɔbe.  
otherwise father.GEN problem be.3.FUT

*Bring the papers to the office right now. Otherwise father will have a problem.*

- (107) amar strī or maÿer kache beÿate gæche. nôile or  
my wife her mother.GEN near visit.IP go.3.PR.PERF otherwise she.GEN  
sɔnge apnader pôricɔÿ kôriÿe ditam.  
with you.PL.GEN acquaintance cause.to.do.PP give.1.P.HABIT

*My wife has gone to visit her mother. Otherwise I would have introduced her to you.*

### 7.5.6 Resultative

ɔtôeb *therefore*

- (108) tumi to samsuddin saheber baÿite thakbe. ɔtôeb  
you EMP Samsuddin Mister.GEN house.LOC stay.2.FUT.SO  
khaoyā-thakar khɔrɔc lagche na.  
eat.VN stay.VN.GEN expense attach.3.PR.C not

*But you will be staying at Mr Samsuddin's house, so you won't need any money for food and board.*

sutôram *therefore, consequently*

- (109) choṭô cakri theke prômošôn peÿe iarḍ-maștar pôÿyôntô uṭhlô.  
small job from promotion get.PP yard-master until rise.3.P.S  
sutôram betôner dike o ar cinta chilô na.  
therefore salary.GEN towards also more worry [was] not

*(He) got promoted from a small job to station master. Hence there was no more worry about his salary.*

kajei *therefore, so*

- (110) amar to țakar ɔbhab nei. kajei tomar ɔjja  
 I.GEN EMP money.GEN lack [is absent]. so you.GEN embarrassment  
 kɔrar ki ache?  
 do.VN.GEN what [is present]  
*But I am not short of money. So why would you be embarrassed?*

tai *so*

- (111) ami ækhôn okhan theke paliye esechi, tai ɔbhai amake  
 I now there from flee.PP come.1.PR.PERF so everyone I.OBJ  
 kapuruş bhabbe.  
 coward think.3.FUT  
*I have now fled from there and come here, so everyone will consider me a coward.*

sejônyô *for this reason, therefore*

- (112) manuşı ektu ɔnyôrkôm. sejônyô tar bôndhu kôm.  
 man.CL a.bit different. therefore his friend few  
*The man is a bit strange. That is why he has few friends.*

tahôle *if this is so*

tahôle is a conditional clause which operates as the correlative in conditional structures yôdi – tahôle *if – then* but is also used as a preclause at the beginning of sentences tahôle ami yabô na *in that case I won't go*. What distinguishes it from purely temporal conjunctions like tarpɔr *then* is that it always needs a precursor, something to follow on from. Examples for tahôle in conditional sentences are given in Chapter 7.5.3.

na hôle *otherwise, if this is not so*

- (113) țarațari toiri ho. na hôle tomake rekhe yabô.  
 quickly ready be.2.PR.IMP otherwise you.OBJ leave.PP go.1.FUT  
*Get ready quickly. Otherwise I will go without you.*

phole *as a result*

- (114) e deşe sthapôtyer ônuke rônnyogyô kono adôrsô  
 this country.LOC architecture.GEN worth.following any ideal  
 chilô na. phole yuge yuge sthapôtyer adôl.  
 [was not].3 result.LOC age.LOC age.LOC architecture.GEN sameness  
*There was, in this country, no ideal for architecture to follow. Hence there is a sameness in the architecture through the ages.*

## 7.5.7 Temporal

tarpɔr, tarpɔre *then, afterwards*

- (115) amra age bhat kheýe nei, tarpɔre tas  
 we before rice eat.PP take.1.PR.S, afterwards card  
 khelbô, kæmôn?  
 play.1.FUT how

*How about we eat first and play cards afterwards?*

Temporal sequences in Bangla are more often rendered with perfective participle structures (see Chapter 6.3.6.4).

## 7.5.8 Coordinating correlatives

There are only very few coordinating correlative structures, ie sentences where two parallel main clauses appear side by side, connected by coordinating conjunctions. These structures are comparable to English *either... or, on the one hand... on the other hand* type sentences.

hɔý – na hɔý *either – or*

- (116) dækhô ma hɔý tumi e baři çeře côle yabe, na hɔý  
 look mother hɔý you this house leave.PP move.PP go.2.FUT na hɔý  
 ami yabô.  
 I go.1.FUT

*Look, mother, either you leave this house or I will go.*

æke to – tar pɔre or tar upôre *not only – but also*

- (117) æke to tařataři mɔslar gamla gôrte deoýa hôýechilô,  
 one.LOC EMP quickly spice.GEN basin make.IP give.VN be.3.P.PERE,  
 tar opôr abar gɔřbar sômôý ekți meýe amar bařir  
 that.GEN on again make.VN.GEN time one.CL girl my house.GEN  
 samne diýe çeře yete yete amake æmôni cômke dilô  
 in.front.of along run.PP go.IP go.IP I.OBJ such startle.PP give.3.P.S  
 ye patrôřar gɔřôni kharap hôýe gælô.  
 that pot.CL.GEN shape bad be.PP go.3.P.S

*The basin for the ingredients had to be made quickly and, on top of that, just as I was making it a girl ran past my house and startled me so much that the container was spoilt.*

## 7.6 Complex sentences – subordination

There are only a few single subordinating conjunctions in Bangla as the great majority of subordinating structures are formed by two-part correlatives.

Subordinate clauses can either precede or follow the main clause.

### 7.6.1 Causal

Subordinate **causal sentences** can contain either *yehetu because* or *bôle having said*. *yehetu* appears, as expected, at the beginning of the subordinate clause. *bôle*, the perfective participle of *bôla speak*, appears at the end of the subordinate clause, often directly following a finite verb form.

*yehetu because*

- (118) ar take ki šeṣ pōryōntō biye kōrte hōbe yehetu  
 and he.OBJ what end until marriage do.IP be.3.FUT because  
 ranna kōrbar jōnye ækjon lok dōrkar? yehetu  
 cooking do.ba.VN.GEN for one.CL person need because  
 sōkale tar ghum bhañbar age ca toiri kōrbar  
 morning.LOC his sleep break.ba.VN.GEN before tea ready do.ba.VN.GEN  
 jōnye keu na thakle cōle na?  
 for someone not stay.CP move.3.PR.S not

*And in the end he would have to marry her because he needed someone to do the cooking? Because there had to be someone to get his tea ready before he woke up in the morning?*

*bôle because*

- (119) dehō theke kichuṭa med jhōre gæche bôle apnake aro  
 body from some.CL fat fall.PP go.3.PR.PERF say.PP you.H.OBJ more  
 śoktiman dækhaý.  
 strong show.3.PR.S

*You look fitter because you have lost some weight.*

- (120) kumir marbar niyōm tader chilō na bôle  
 crocodile kill.ba.VN.GEN practice they.GEN [was] not speak.PP  
 kumirer sōmōkhya bere bere pukur ækebare bhōrti  
 crocodile.GEN number increase.PP.(× 2) lake completely filled



hôye giyechilô.  
be.PP go.3.P.PERF

*Because they were not in the habit of killing crocodiles, the number of crocodiles kept increasing and the lake was full of them.*

### 7.6.2 Resultative

Resultative clauses make use of the conjunctions *ye that* and *yate so that*.

*ye that*

- (121) sɔb kichu æmôn bhabe jɔʔ pakiye gæche ye ækhôn  
all something such.way.LOC knot involve.PP go.3.PR.PERF that now  
ar tini ki kôben?  
more he.H what do.3.FUT

*Everything had become so complicated that he didn't know what else to do.*

- (122) nôtun nɔksaʔa tar mathar æmôn phiksešôner mɔtô aʔke  
new design.CL his head.GEN such fixation.GEN like fixed.PP  
ache ye ɔnyô kono dike sebhabe lôkšô  
[is present].3 that other any direction.LOC that.way.LOC notice  
chilô na.  
[was].3 not

*The new design became such an obsession in his head that he did not take notice of anything else anymore.*

*yate so that*

- (123) ɔniccha sɔttveo ɔnek æmôn kɔtha ese gæche yate  
unwillingness despite much such word come.PP go.3.PR.PERF so that  
keu hɔyto duhkhôo pete pare.  
someone perhaps sadness.also receive.IP be.able.to.3H.PR.S

*So much has been said that perhaps unintentionally someone may have been offended.*

### 7.6.3 Purpose

Subordinate structures expressing purpose employ the conjunctions *yænô so that*, *yate so that* and *pache so that not, lest*. These are modal structures and will be demonstrated in Chapter 8.5.

#### 7.6.4 Concessive

Complex concessive structures are correlative. They usually contain the subordinating conjunction *yôdio even if, even though* with a variety of correlative counterparts. This structure is discussed in Section 7.7.2.

#### 7.6.5 Content clauses

A subordinate clause which tells us something or asks a question and is commented on or introduced by the main clause is called a **CONTENT CLAUSE**.<sup>3</sup> Subordinate clauses often precede the main clause.

Content clauses in English are often preceded by *that*. In Bangla we have two conjunctions *ye* and *bôle that*. In both languages the conjunctions can occasionally be left out.

*I knew you would come.*                      ami jantam                      tumi asbe.  
I    know.1.P.HABIT you    come.2.FUT

*ye* is the nominative animate relative pronoun *he who*. In analogy to *se*, which can be used for animates and inanimates *ye* has expanded its repertoire to *that, which* or simply to *what*. As such we expect to find it in correlative structures, but it also appears without a correlative partner. Verbs of saying or perception followed by *ye* produce content clauses. The clause following *ye* is the direct object of the main verb. From a formal point of view, many sentences containing content clauses in Bangla have an underlying correlative *ye – ta that which* structure.

Unlike other conjunctions, which are placed straight after the subject, *bôle*, the perfective participle of *bôla speak* comes after the finite verb of the subordinate clause.

with *ye*: tumi ye    amar sônge yabe    kôtha diyechô.  
you    that I.GEN with    go.2.FUT word    give.2.PR.PERF

with *bôle*: tumi amar sônge yabe    bôle    kôtha diyechô.  
you    I.GEN with    go.2.FUT speak.PP word    give.2.PR.PERF  
*You promised that you would go with me.*

Content clauses are particularly suited for indirect speech, including indirect questions.

(124) tumi ye    gôtôkal asôni                      kænô ora jante    ceýeche.  
you    that yesterday not.come.2.PR.PERF why    they know.IP want.3.PR.  
*They wanted to know why you did not come yesterday.*

3. These types of subordinate clauses are also called complement clauses. The term **CONTENT CLAUSE** was coined by Otto Jespersen and seems more appropriate for Bangla in view of the fact that the term complement is used in the context of copular structures. I am grateful to W. L. Smith for suggesting this term in his *Bengali Reference Grammar*, Stockholm, 1997.

Main clauses of content clauses contain verbs of reporting, questioning, cognition or perception. Apart from structures with *ye* and *bôle*, content clauses occur with interrogatives, including *kina* *whether or not* and with *ta nçy* or *æmôn nçy* *it is not so*. In these occurrences no conjunction is needed.

a. with *ye that*

- (125) amar mône hōyechilō ye apni hçyto amake biśvas kōrte  
 I.GEN mind.LOC be.3.P.PERF that you.H perhaps I.OBJ belief do.IP  
 parchen na.  
 be.able.to.2H.PR.C not

*I thought that perhaps you could not believe me.*

- (126) maÿer dhūmpane gçrbher śiśur ye kçōti hōte  
 mother.GEN smoking.LOC uterus.GEN baby.GEN that harm be.IP  
 pare, se kōtha tāra cinta kçren na.  
 be possible.3.PR.S that word they.H thought do.3H.PR.S not

*They don't think about the fact that the mother's smoking can harm the unborn baby.*

b. with *bôle that*

- (127) take khub sçhōje bidaÿ kçra yabe bôle mōne hçy na.  
 he.OBJ very easily dismiss do.VN go.3.FUT that mind.LOC be.3.PR.S not  
*I don't think it will be very easy to get rid (of him).*

- (128) meÿer pçre meÿe hōlō bôle ekçuo birçktō hōlō na keu.  
 girl.GEN after girl be.3.P.S that a.bit.even annoyed be.3.P.S not someone  
*No one was in the least annoyed that the second child was also a girl.*

c. without conjunction

- (129) ami bhebechilam apni amake mithye santvōna dicchen.  
 I think.1.P.PERF you.H I.OBJ lie comfort give.2.H.PR.C  
*I thought that you were giving me false hope.*

- (130) tumi choçōbælaÿ bhalō çbhincÿ kōrte jantam.  
 you childhood.LOC good acting do.2.P.HABIT know.1.P.HABIT  
*I knew that you were good at acting when you were a child.*

## d. with question words

- (131) tumi ki cao ba na cao amar tate ki?  
 you what want.2.PR.S or not want.2.PR.S I.GEN that.LOC what  
*What do I care what you want or don't want?*
- (132) ṭhik kondik theke alo asche se kichutei dhôrte  
 exactly which.direction from light come.3.PR.C he at.all.EMP catch.IP  
 parlô na.  
 be.able.to.3.P.S not  
*He could not work out at all where exactly the light was coming from.*

## e. with ta nây it is not the case that... and æmôn nây it is not such...

- (133) dîrghô bibahitô jîbôner sôbṭa ye môdhumakha chilô ta nây.  
 long married life.GEN all.CL that.R honey.smear.VA [was] that.CR [is not]  
*The whole of his long married life had not entirely been a bed of roses.*
- (134) mône mône ekṭu phurti, ekṭu uttejnao ye  
 mind.LOC mind.LOC a.bit merriment a.bit excitement.also that.R  
 ônubhōb na kôrchilam ta nây.  
 feeling not do.1.P.C that.CR [is not]  
 lit:It was not that I didn't secretly feel any merriment or even excitement.  
*Secretly I felt rather pleased and excited.*
- (135) æmôn nây ye tader môdhye ækjôner tulônây  
 such [is not] that they.GEN between one.CL.GEN comparison.LOC  
 çnyôjôner bhage kichu kôm pôrechilô.  
 other.CL.GEN share.LOC something less fall.3.P.PERF  
*It was not that the share of one of them was less than that of the other.*

## f. with kina whether or not

- (136) jani na se okhane giye khuśi hôyêche kina.  
 know.1.PR.S not he there go.PP happy be.3.PR.PERF what.not  
*I don't know whether he liked it there or not.*
- (137) o rākôm bôï ache ki nei ta niścîtôbhabe  
 that type book [exists] what [is absent] that certain.way.LOC  
 janaṭa yænô khub jôruri.  
 know.VN.CL as if very urgent  
*It seemed to be very important to find out whether this kind of book existed or not.*

## 7.7 Complex sentences – correlation

We have seen the preference Bangla has for doublings and pairings. Correlative structures demonstrate this preference on the sentence level. Some correlative pairs are pronouns, others are adjectives or adverbs. The relative, which always starts with *y-*, governs the subordinate relative clause, the correlative governs the main clause. Correlatives make for sentence structures that differ considerably from English, so much so that the translations often do not mirror the Bangla structures. The list of correlative pairs is given in Chapter 5.8.3.

Although each relative has a designated partner, there are plenty of instances of non-matching pairs. Bangla relative clauses often precede the main clause but they can also follow or be embedded in the main clause. Examples are given in 7.7.3.2 (following) and 7.7.3.3 (embedded).

### 7.7.1 Conditional sentences

Conditional sentences have some structural features, such as sequence of tense, which set them apart from other correlatives. This is why they are treated separately here. All conditional sentences are modal.

There are two ways of forming conditional sentences: with a conditional participle (see Chapter 6.3.6.3) or with a correlative structure using *yôdi* *if* in the subordinate clause and *tahôle* *then* in the main clause. Conditional sentences with *yôdi* are among the very few structures in Bangla with a strict time sequence. The choice between the conditional participle and the *yôdi*-structure is one of emphasis more than of sentence length. Here are two parallel sentences.

conditional participle: khub sɔkale gele tomra dupurer age  
 very morning.LOC go.CP you.PL midday.GEN before  
 pōuche yabe.  
 arrive.PP go.2.FUT

correlative structure: khub sɔkale yôdi yao tahôle tomra  
 very morning.LOC if go.2.PR.S then you.PL  
 dupurer age pōuche yabe.  
 midday.GEN before arrive.PP go.2.FUT  
*If you go very early you will get there before lunchtime.*

We distinguish three types of conditional sentences with *yôdi*.

- |   |                                      |                                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| i. present conditional (realis)                   | <i>if you go by bus</i>              | tumi yôdi base yao               |
| ii. perfective conditional                        | <i>if you have (already) decided</i> | tumi yôdi siddhantôṭa kôre thakô |
| iii. past conditional (hypothetical and irrealis) | <i>if you came/had come</i>          | tumi yôdi aste                   |

ach- and nei are replaced by forms of thaka *stay, remain* in conditional sentences. Copular conditional sentences are formed with হোয়া *be, become*. Negation in the yôdi clause precedes the verb. yôdi usually appears straight after the sentence subject but it can also come at the beginning of the sentence. Although yôdi – tahôle can be considered the standard correlative pair, the conjunction তবে *but* is frequently found in place of tahôle. Other options are the emphasiser তো or no correlative partner at all.

### a. present conditionals

The yôdi clause has a present simple tense verb form, the main clause is in the present simple, the future tense or an imperative.

Here is the sentence structure for simple conditionals:

subject + yôdi (+ na) + verb: present simple + tahôle + verb: IMP, PR-S or FUT (+ na)

- (138) bikale yôdi bṛṣṭi hōy tahôle amra phire asbô.  
 afternoon.LOC if rain occur.3.PR.S then we return.PP come.1.FUT  
*We will come back if it rains this afternoon.*

- (139) tomar yaoṅar yôdi dārkar hōy, tahôle yete parô.  
 you.GEN go.VN.GEN if need be.3.PR.S then go.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*You can go if you need to.*

The following sentence contains an additional correlative structure:

- (140) yôdi æmôn kichu thake, ætôkṣoṅ dhôre amake ya bôlte  
 if such something stay.3.PR.S so.long during I.OBJ what.R say.IP  
 ceṅechen, ækhôn ta bôlte paren.  
 want.2H.PR.PERF now that.CR say.IP be.able.to.2H.PR.S  
*If there is anything that you have been wanting to say to me for a long time, you can tell me now.*

### b. negated conditionals

- (141) phirôz yôdi ekantô na ase, tahôle tar ṭhikana  
 Firoz if at.all not come.3.PR.S then his address  
 niṅe asbe.  
 take.PP come.2.FUT  
*If Firoz is determined not to come, then bring his address with you.*

- (142) jibône yôdi mômônctô sôṅgī na paoyā yaṅ tahôle æka  
 life.LOC if like.minded partner not get.VN go.3.PR.S then alone  
 basi jibôner sôbceṅe kôm duḅker karôṅ hōy.  
 abode.EMP life.GEN most less sadness.GEN reason be.3.PR.S  
*If a soulmate can't be found in life, then staying alone causes the least grief.*

### c. perfective conditionals

In place of present simple verb forms in the *yôdi* clause, the perfective conditional is composed of a perfective participle and a present simple form of *thaka stay*. Sentences of this type are used when something has already happened, eg

*If you have told him...*  
 tumi *yôdi* take bôle thakô...  
 you if him tell.PP stay.2.PR.S

Here is the sentence structure:

subject + *yôdi* (+ na) + verb PP + *thaka.PR.S* tahôle + verb: IMP, PR-S or FUT (+ na)

- (143) *yôdi* be<sup>y</sup>adôpi kôre thaki, tahôle kş̣ma kôrben.  
 if impudence do.PP stay.1.PR.S then forgiveness- do.2H.FUT  
*Forgive me if I have been impudent.*
- (144) amar kono ḳtha<sup>y</sup> *yôdi* tomar mône kş̣tô di<sup>y</sup>e thaki  
 my any word.LOC if your mind.LOC pain give.PP stay.1.PR.S  
 ṭbe cirôtôre yabar age ama<sup>y</sup> bôle yao ye tumi ama<sup>y</sup>  
 then forever go.VN.GEN before I.OBJ say.PP go.2.PR.IMP that you I.OBJ  
 map kôrechô.  
 forgiveness do.2.PR.PERF  
*If anything I have said has hurt you, then tell me, before I die, that you have forgiven me.*

### d. past conditionals

subject + *yôdi* (+ na) + verb: P-HABIT tahôle + verb: P.HABIT (+ na)

Past conditional sentences convey hypothetical and counter-factual or unfulfillable events. Sentences (8) and (9) are examples for hypothetical conditionals, sentences (10) and (11) for counter-factual conditionals. Bangla makes no structural distinction between them.

- (145) *yôdi* ami susthô thaktam tahôle côle yetam kothao.  
 if I well be.1.P.HABIT then move.PP go.1.P.HABIT somewhere  
*If I were well, I would go away somewhere.*
- (146) ta *yôdi* çere dite hôtô, tahôle ami ar bāctam na.  
 that if leave.PP give.IP be.3.P.HABIT then I more survive.P.HABIT not  
*I wouldn't survive if I had to give that up.*
- (147) *yôdi* tar strī na hō<sup>y</sup>e çnyô eḳi me<sup>y</sup>e hôtô, tahôle  
 if his wife not be.PP other one.CL woman be.3.P.HABIT then  
 šamim nişçây tar bipôde beşi sçhanubhūti dækhatô.  
 Shamim of.course her misfortune.LOC much sympathy show.3.P.HABIT  
*If it had been any woman other than his wife, Shamim would have shown much more sympathy for her misfortune.*

Occasionally we also find perfective past conditionals:

- (148) *ṭren yôdi se muhūrte theme giye thakto tahôle eirākôm*  
 train if that moment.LOC stop.PP go.PP stay.3.P.HABIT then this.kind  
*aghat hôtô na.*  
 impact be.3.P.HABIT not

*If the train had been stationary at that moment, there would not have been such an impact.*

### e. incomplete conditionals

yôdi clauses sometimes occur without a correlative clause. They can be *what if?* questions, *if only!* exclamations or simply unfinished statements. Incomplete yôdi statements usually occur as afterthoughts.

- (149) *se yôdi aste caÿ.*  
 he if.come.IP want.3.PR.S  
*If he wants to come.*
- (150) *tomar yôdi apôtti na thake.*  
 you.GEN if objection not stay.3.PR.S  
*If you have no objections.*

### f. yôdi-clause following

- (151) *ætô sôb tōthyô jene ki hōbe yôdi na sôcetôna*  
 so.much all data know.PP what be.3.FUT if not consciousness  
*gôre oṭhe?*  
 build.PP rise.3.PR.S

*What is the use of knowing all these facts if no awareness has been built up?*

- (152) *apnake ami æk lakh ṭaka ṣphar kôrechilam yôdi apni amar*  
 you.H.OBJ I one lakh Taka offer do.1.P.PERF if you.H my  
*svamîr sôndhan ene dite paren.*  
 husband.GEN trace bring.PP give.IP be.able.to.2H.PR.S

*I offered you 100.000 Taka on the condition that you can find some trace of my husband.*

### g. yôdi with other tenses

Tenses other than the simple present or the past habitual can sometimes occur in yôdi clauses.

present perfect:

- (153) *ami ætôdin yôdi ṣpekṣa kôrechi, to aro din kōyek yænô*  
 I so.much.day if wait do.1.PR.PERF then more day a.few so.that



ɔpekša kôri.  
wait do.1.PR.S

*If I have waited this long, I may as well wait a few days longer.*

- (154) ar tar jɔl yôdi ækbar kheÿechen, tahôle ar  
and it.GEN water if once drink.2H.PR.PERF then anymore  
rɔkše nei; baki jibôn ɔnyô kono jɔl apnar  
protection [is absent] remaining life other any water your  
mukhe rucbe na, ar se jɔler ɔbhabe aste aste  
mouth.LOC taste.3.FUT not and that water.GEN lack.LOC slowly slowly  
gɔla súkiÿe mara yaben.  
throat dry.PP get.hit.VN go.2H.FUT

*And once you have tasted its water, there is nothing you can do. For the rest of your life, no other water will be to your taste and the lack of it will gradually make your throat go dry and kill you.*

future:

- (155) tomar bôu-chele-meÿeke yôdi khete dite na parbe  
your wife son daughter.OBJ if eat.IP give.IP not be.able.to.2.FUT  
to biÿe kôrlei ba kænô?  
then marriage do.2.P.S.EMP or why  
*If you can't feed your wife and children then why did you get married?*

simple past:

- (156) ar majhe majhe yôdi bichanaÿ súÿe caÿer ɔpekša  
and sometimes if bed.LOC lie.PP tea.GEN wait  
kôrte na parlô, tahôle ar manuſer choÿô bhai  
do.IP not be.able.to.3.P.S then more person.GEN young brother  
thake kænô?  
stay.3.PR S why  
*If one can't lie in bed sometimes waiting for some tea, then what is the point of having younger brothers?*

#### h. conditionals without yôdi

Occasionally conditional sentences occur with neither yôdi nor a conditional participle in them. Essentially, two main clauses appear side by side and the underlying conditional is understood.

- (157) tumi oke bācate cao to ekšôni tarao.  
you he.OBJ save.IP want.2.PR.S then right.now chase.away.2.PR.IMP  
*If you want to save him, then kick him out right now.*

- (158) bhorbæla sarṭer gṛlay̐ ṭai thake na, kæmôn yænô khali  
 dawn.hour shirt.GEN throat.LOC tie stay.3.PR.S not how as.if empty  
 ga mône hōy tār.  
 body mind.LOC be.3.PR.S he.H.GEN

*If he does not have a tie round his neck by dawn, he feels somehow naked.*

### 7.7.2 Complex concessives

Complex concessives are found in correlative structures with *yôdio* or with the conditional participle followed by *o*. Note that *yôdio* is quite different in use from *yôdi if*. *yôdio* clauses can contain *ach-*, the verb in the *yôdio* clause can be in any tense and *na* follows the verb. *yôdio* can have the following correlatives: *tôbuo*, *t̃thapi nevertheless*, *tao even so*, *t̃be but*, *kintu but*. It can also occur without a correlative.

*yôdio* is given as even though in the gloss.

with *t̃thapi nevertheless*

- (159) *yôdio* se saradin kaj k̃re t̃thapi tar p̃raṣona ṭhikm̃tô  
 even.though he all.day work do.3.PR.S still his study properly  
 caliye yacche.  
 continue.PP go.3.PR.S

*Even though he works all day, he continues with his studies conscientiously.*

with *tôbuo nevertheless*

- (160) *yôdio* t̃rkarite khub jhal hōyeche t̃buo s̃b  
 even.though curry very spicy be.3.PR.PERF but all  
 kheye phellam.  
 eat.PP throw.1.P.S

*Even though the curry was very spicy, I ate it all up.*

with *tao that also*

- (161) *yôdio* rag k̃rechi tao tomake na kheye thakte  
 even.though anger do.1.PR.PERF that.even you.OBJ not eat.PP stay.IP  
 debô na.  
 give.1.FUT not

*Even though I was angry, I wouldn't let you go hungry.*

with *kintu but*

- (162) *yôdio* tini g̃orib kintu c̃nek s̃ṭkaryyô k̃orechen.  
 even.though he.H poor but much charity.work do.3H.PR.PERF  
*Even though he is poor, he has done a lot of charity work.*

no correlative

- (163) se yôdio kichu bôlte pareni, tar bhitôre  
 she even.though something say.IP not.be.able.to.3.PR.PERF her heart.LOC  
 khub maÿa lagchilô.  
 very pity feel.3.P.C  
*She was stirred by great pity, even if she was unable to express it.*

with conditional participle

- (164) thakte caileo côle yete hôÿeche.  
 stay.IP want.CP.EVEN move.PP go.IP be.3.PR.PERF  
*Even though I wanted to stay, I had to leave.*

### 7.7.3 Correlatives

Relative and correlatives are marked with R and CR respectively in the gloss of this section.

#### 7.7.3.1 Relative clause preceding

ÿakhôn – takhôn *when*

- (165) ækbar ÿakhôn ôr mône kâÿa phuÿeche, takhôn hajar  
 one.time when.R his mind.LOC thorn grow.3.PR.PERF then.CR thousand  
 koiphiÿôteo ta upre phæla yabe na.  
 explanation.LOC.also that uproot.PP throw.VN go.3.FUT not  
*Once he gets a bee in his bonnet, a thousand explanations can't uproot it.*
- (166) amar hate ÿakhôn or jônyô kichu kôrbar sôkti  
 my hand.LOC when.R he.GEN for something do.VN.GEN strength  
 nei takhôn ar ki hÿbe phâka schanubhûti dekhÿe?  
 [is absent] then.CR more what be.3.FUT empty sympathy show.PP  
*When there is nothing I can do for him, then what is the point in showing empty sympathy?*

ÿatô – tatô *as much*

- (167) ÿatô uttôre yao tatô dekhbe gachpala yæno  
 how.much.R north.LOC go.2.PR.S that.much.CR see.2.FUT tree.plant as.if  
 khubi kôm cokhe pôrche.  
 very.EMP few eye.LOC fall.3.PR.C  
*The further north you go, the fewer trees and plants you will see.*
- (168) deş ÿatô bÿô hÿÿ, deşer manuş ÿatô  
 country how.much.R big be.3.PR.S country.GEN person how.much.R

dūre dūre            chōriḷe    thake,    t̄t̄oi            bhaṣar  
 distance.LOC (× 2) scatter.PP stay.3.PR.S so.much.CR language.GEN  
 bibhinnōta ase.  
 variety            come.3.PR.S

*The bigger the country and the further away people are scattered, the greater the variety in the language.*

ya – ta *that which* (inanimate)

As pronouns *ya* and *ta* are subject to changes in case. Relative and correlative pronouns in one sentence do not have to agree in case. Object case endings for inanimate pronouns are not unusual in correlative contexts. *seṭa* is a frequent correlative for *ya*.

(169) ya        chilô    ta        sobi    ache.  
 what.R [was] that.CR all.EMP [is present]  
*All that used to be there is still there.*

(170) aro        tara    ya        bhablô    ta        mukhe    ana        sobhôn.  
 more.also they what.R think.3.P.S that.CR mouth.LOC bring.VN improper  
*It would be improper to mention what else they were thinking.*

ya – seṭa *that which* (inanimate)

(171) se    ya        abiṣkar    kôrche    seṭa        onyô    manuṣ    keu  
 he what.R invention do.3.PR.C that.CL.CR other person someone  
 cintao        kôrtô        na.  
 thought.even do.3.P.HABIT not  
*No other person would even think about the things he invents.*

ye – se *he who* (animate)

*ye* and *se* are the nominative singular forms. Other cases, plurals and the honorific *yini-tini* also occur in these structures. Sentence (172) contains a content clause as well as a *ye – se* correlative structure.

(172) k̄t̄ô        ye        k̄ṣ̄ôti    h̄ôy,        ta        yar        bhalô    cakri  
 how.much that.R harm be.3.PR.S that.CR who.GEN.R good job  
 nei,        se        k̄k̄h̄ôno    bujhbe        na.  
 [is absent] he.CR ever        understand.3.FUT not  
*Someone without a good job will never understand how harmful a good job can be.*

(173) yader        hôye    k̄tha    b̄lbar        keu        nei,        tara  
 they.GEN.R be.PP word speak.bAVN.GEN someone [is absent] they.CR

prôtibad kôrte pare na.  
 protest do.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S not

lit: Those who have no one speaking on their behalf are unable to protest.  
*People are unable to protest if they don't have anyone to speak on their behalf.*

ye preceding a noun

ye manuş means *the person who*. In the same way ye can precede any other noun in correlative structures. The correlative can also contain a noun.

- (174) tomar ba ɔnyöder ɔŋge amar ye atmîyôta, se  
 you.GEN or other.PL.GEN with I.GEN that.R relationship that.CR  
 atmîyôta ɔrjôn kôrte hôyeche du pɔkşei.  
 relationship earning do.IP be.3.PR.PERF two side.OBJ.EMP  
*The relation I have with you or with others had to be earned from both sides.*

- (175) ye meyeţi ekla thakte caý se paşcatyô ɔmajje  
 that.R girl.CL alone stay.IP want.3.PR.S she.CR Western society.LOC  
 ɔbôşyô ɔnek beşi subidha pete pare.  
 of.course many much advantage get.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S  
*A girl who wants to live alone will of course have many more advantages in a Western society.*

ye (+ noun) – ta (inanimate)

- (176) ye uttôr se ceyeçhilô ta pelô na.  
 that.R answer he want.3.P.PERF that.CR get.3.P.S not  
*He did not get the answer he had hoped for.*
- (177) tren theke ye jɔl deý, tate ranna-khaoýa kono  
 train from that.R water give.3.PR.S that..LOC.CR cooking.food any  
 rɔkôm ɔle snan ar hɔý na.  
 way go.3.PR.S wash more be.3.PR.S not  
*The water they give on the train is just about enough for cooking and food, but not for washing.*

ye – ta *that*

This combination produces content clauses which are given in Chapter 7.5.2.4.

- (178) ei rɔkômta ye ghôtte pare ta  
 this kind.CL that.R happen.IP be.possible.3.PR.S that.CR  
 ami bujheçhilam.  
 I understand.1.P.PERF  
*I have understand that something like this can happen.*

yæmôn – tæmôn *such – such, as – as*

- (179) ami yæmôn chilam tæmôni achi.  
 I as.R [was].1 so.CR.EMP [is present].1  
*I am still the same as I was.*

More complex sentences of this type are often best translated as two parallel sentences in English.

- (180) bakyer môdhye ôtiriktô śbdô bçsano yæmôn ækta ku-çbhyas,  
 sentence.GEN in excessive word put.VN as.R one.CL bad.habit  
 tæmôni śbdder modhye barti æk-adhṭa bçrṇô amdani kçrao  
 so.CR.EMP word.GEN in extra one.half.CL letter import do.VN.also  
 ækta ku-çbhyas.  
 one.CL bad.habit

*Putting too many words in a sentence is a bad habit, and importing the odd extra letter into words is also a bad habit.*

ye plus

ye combines with common nouns of time, place, direction, manner, cause etc.

- (181) ami yerçôm bhabi, kichui serçôm kçkhôno  
 I what.way.R think.1.PR.S something.EMP that.way.CR ever  
 hçy na, hôte pare na.  
 be.3.PR.S not be.IP be.possible.3.PR.S not

*Nothing is ever, or can ever be, the way I imagine it.*

- (182) yedik diye dḥukechilam sedik diye baire  
 what.direction.R through enter.1.P.PERF that.direction.CR through outside  
 çôle elam.  
 move.PP come.1.P.S

*I came back outside the way I had entered.*

- (183) yedin biye hôyeche sedin theke tar çsukh.  
 whatday.R marriage be.3.PR.PERF that.day.CR from her illness  
*She has been ill from the day she got married.*

- (184) yekhane jḥçrna gôriye çle, paharç buker upôr  
 where.R fountain roll.PP move.3.PR.S mountain.GEN breast.GEN on  
 diye uccôhasir śbdô çḥriye, bôner sôbuçer phâke  
 along loud.laughter.GEN sound scatter.PP forest green.GEN gap.LOC  
 citabagh jḥçlmçl kôre oṭhe, sekhane mukti, sekhane dipti,  
 cheetah glimmer do.PP rise.3.PR.S there.CR freedom there.CR splendour

sekhane rakter môdhye sûryer spôndôn.  
 there.CR blood.GEN in sun.GEN touch

*Where waterfalls cascade, where the sound of laughter rings out over the mountains, where the cheetah flickers through the gaps in the green of the forest, there is freedom, there is splendour, there the blood is touched by the sun.*

non-matching pairs

We commonly find examples of non-matching pairs as well as omitted correlatives.

Here are just a few.

- (185) yekale ei caryagulo rôcitô hôyechilô tãkhôno  
 that.time.LOC.R this carya.CL.PL composed be.3.P.PERF then.CR.even  
 bamla bhaşa bôle kono bhaşa toiri hãyni.  
 Bangla language say.PP any language ready not.be.3.PR.PERF

*At the time when the Caryas were composed, no such thing as a Bangla language was in existence.*

- (186) eibhabe yãkhôn jibônṭake bhabte śuru kôre purano  
 this.way.LOC when.R life.CL.OBJ think.IP begin- do.PP old  
 chãṭphãṭani theke rehai pacchi ṭhik sei sômôye  
 restlessness from exemption get.1.PR.C exact that.EMP time.LOC.CR  
 ðlkar sãnge amar trtiyôbar dækha hôye giyechilô.  
 Olka.GEN with I.GEN third.time see.VN be.PP go.3.P.PERF

*Similarly, just at the time when I was beginning to think that I was redeemed from my old restlessness, I met Olka again for the third time.*

- (187) nijeke tumi yãtôṭa çôriharyô mône kãrô ta  
 self.OBJ you how.much.CL.R indispensable mind.LOC do.2.PR.S that.CR  
 tumi não.  
 you [is not].2

*You are not as indispensable as you think you are.*

The following three examples have no explicit correlatives.

- (188) tini ya ya bôlechen bhebecinte çgrôpãsaṭ  
 he.H what (×2).R say.3.H.PR.PERF think.think.PP forwards.and.backwards  
 bibecôna kôre bôlechen.  
 consideration do.PP say.3.PR.PERF

*All that he said was said thoughtfully and with due consideration of the pros and cons.*

- (189) ঢটô বড়ô চোরা রাস্তা় যতঁদূর কখ যা়, kono লক্জন  
so big wide road.LOC as.far.R eye go.3.PR.S any person.CL  
কখে পঢ়ে না.  
eye.LOC fall.3.PR.S not

*On this big wide road there was not a single person to be seen anywhere.*

- (190) যতঁ subidha tomar carpaśe thakuk, ম্চহঁ ষিল্পঁ  
how.much.R convenience you.GEN four.side.LOC stay.3.IMP big art  
সঁষ্টি kono সঁম্গ্রাম চা়া সঁম্ভহঁব ন্যঁ.  
creation any fight without possible [is not]

*However many advantages you have all around you, the creation of great art is impossible without a struggle.*

### 7.7.3.2 Relative clause following

Preceding main clauses (as below) usually contain an indefinite subject which is then defined by the relative clause. The main clause often contains the word *æmôn* *such*.

- (191) প্রঁকঁটঁ বঁন্দহু sei ye বঁন্দহুদেৰ পেচঁনে পঁরঁচঁরঁচা  
natural friend he.EMP.CR who.R friend.PL.GEN behind gossip  
কঁরে না, মিথ্যা গুজঁব চা়া়া় না.  
do.3.PR.S not lie rumour spread.3.PR.S not

*A true friend is one who does not gossip about his friends behind their backs or spread rumours about them.*

- (192) æmôn ækta ghçţna ghôţlô ya theke সঁনঁকঁরেৰ জঁবঁনেৰ  
such.CR one.CL event.CR occur.3.P.S what.R from Sankar.GEN life.GEN  
গঁটঁ মো় গঁহুে ঞ্যঁও পঁথে চঁলে গঁএলঁ.  
passage crossing turn.PP other path.LOC move.PP go.3.P.S

*Something happened to alter the direction of Sankar's life and take it on a different path.*

- (193) manuş æmôn kôtôgulo guner ôdhikarî ye  
human.being such how.many.CL characteristic possessor that  
গুণ্গুলো ঞ্যঁও kono prañiri nei.  
characteristic.PL.CL other any living.being [is absent]

*But human beings possess some characteristics that are absent in other living beings.*

### 7.7.3.3 Embedded relative clauses

Embedding of relative clauses produces non-defining relative structures. This means that the relative clause offers additional information which could also be left out.



- (194) gɔ́ɲnagulo, ya bakser môdhye ache, ta mɔ́ɲnar.  
 jewellery what.R box.GEN in [is present] that.CR Moyna.GEN  
*The jewellery, which is in the box, belongs to Moyna.*
- (195) amar mɔ́tô ɔ́neke, yara nísar sɔ́ŋge prem kɔ́reni kimba  
 I.GEN like many who.R Nisha.GEN with love not.do.3.PR.PERF or  
 kɔ́rar suyog paýni, tæmôn kichu ghôniş̄tôtao  
 do.VN.GEN chance not.get.3.PR.PERF such something closeness.also  
 hɔ́ɲni tôbu nísar rūp o bybôhare mugdhô  
 not.be.3.PR.PERF but Nisha.GEN beauty and manner.LOC fascinated  
 thekeche, tara sɔ́bai gôbhîr aghat peýechilô ei sɔ́mbade.  
 stay.3.PR.PERF they.CR all deep shock get.3.P.PEF this news.LOC  
*Many like me, who didn't make love with Nisha or didn't get chance or weren't  
 that close to her but were still in awe of her beauty and her manner, were all  
 deeply shocked by this news.*

#### 7.7.3.4 Complex correlatives

Sentences can contain multiple relative pairs:

- (196) ei s̄rş̄tite yeṭi prôkaś peýeche take  
 this.EMP creation.LOC that.R.CL expression find.3.PR.PERF that.CR.OBJ  
 yɔ́khôn cārôm bôle mene nei, tɔ́khôn se hɔ́y  
 when.R highest say.PP accept.PP take.1.PR.S then.CR that.CR be.3.PR.S  
 amar kache tæmôni sôtyô yæmôn sôtyô oi bɔ́ɟgach.  
 I.GEN near such.EMP.CR true such.R true that.EMP banyan.tree  
*When (I) accept what has been expressed in this creation to be of the highest order,  
 then it becomes to me as real as this banyan tree.*

or other complex structural features can be embedded in the correlative frame. Sentence (197) contains a non-relative yate *so that*, expressing purpose. Sentence (198) contains two imperative insets.

- (197) gɔ́tôkal se ya bôleche tate ami yate  
 yesterday she what.R say.3.PR.PERF that.LOC.CR I so.that  
 dh̄ra na pôri se jônye se ye sɔ́jag  
 catch.VN not fall.1.PR.S that for she that.R alert  
 ta bujhechilam.  
 that.CR understand.1.P.PERF  
*I understood that she was making sure that I would not get caught up in what she  
 had indicated yesterday.*

- (198) kôyla yæmôn śotbar dhuleo tar kalo rôm ghoce  
coal as.R hundred.time wash.CP.even it.GEN black colour shed.3.PR.S  
na, tæmôni bañalira yekhane thakuk ar ye meýe biýe  
not SO.EMP.CR Bengali.PL where.R stay.3.IMP and what.R girl marriage  
kôruk, tader bañalivô ghoce na.  
do.3.IMP their Bengaliness shed.3.PR.S not

*You can wash coal a hundred times but it will not shed its blackness. Bengalis are the same. Wherever they live or whatever girl they marry, they never shed their essential Bengaliness.*

## CHAPTER 8

# Perspectives and functions

This chapter presents some of the important and fundamental linguistic features which determine the meaning of words, phrases, sentences and texts. We go from case use (1) tense (2), aspect (3) to negation (4) and modal structures (5).

### 8.1 Case use

Case is a category of nouns and pronouns. It is one of the basic ways in which language conveys meaning and expresses relationships between the different parts of a sentence. We have made the considered decision to postulate four cases in Bangla: nominative, genitive, objective and locative.<sup>1</sup> In the following sections we look at the particular features of each of these four cases.

#### 8.1.1 Nominative

The nominative is the unmarked case in Bangla. The nominative plural of animate nouns ends in -ra (see Chapter 5.2.11)

The nominative is used for the subject of agentive sentences and for the subject and complement of copulative sentences.

- (1) baccara bagane khelche.  
child.PL garden.LOC play.3.PR.C  
*The children are playing in the garden.*
- (2) śikṣôk chelemeẏeder pōran.  
teacher boy.girl.PL.GEN teach.3.H.PR.S  
*The teacher teaches the boys.*
- (3) baire ghughu ḍakchilô.  
outside dove call.3.P.C  
*Outside the doves were cooing.*

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1. A discussion of this can be found in my article *Panini's Magic – Towards a clearer picture of the Bengali case system* in *Rainbow of Linguistics*, T Media Publications Kolkata, 2007.

- (4) tumi amar bôndhu নো.  
 you my friend [is not].2  
*You are not my friend.*
- (5) ekhane sôbceÿe bôṛô bipôd hócche sap.  
 here of.all big danger be.3.PR.C.PC snake  
*The biggest danger here is snakes.*

In addition to the unmarked nominative there is a plural with a locative e/te ending, mentioned in Chapter 5.2.6.8. There are two distinct uses of this. When the animate classifier jôn is added to a number and given an -e ending we get definite people:

dujone *both of them*, carjone *the four of them* and so on. This can be done with any number.

- (6) gôti bariÿe dilô dujone.  
 speed increase.PP give.3.P.S two.CL.e  
*The two of them increased their speed.*
- (7) carjone garite bôste parbe.  
 four.CL.e car.LOC sit.IP be.able.to.3.FUT  
*The four of them can sit in this car.*

The other purpose of locative endings in nominative contexts is to create indefinite generic animate plurals. Some quantifiers participate in this process. They are cnek *much*, sôkôl *all*, prôtyek *each* and ubhây *both*.

cneke <i>many people</i>	cneke côle gæche.	<i>Many people have left.</i>
sôkôle <i>everyone</i>	sôkôle bujhe gælô kôthaṭa.	<i>Everybody understood this.</i>
ubhây <i>the two of them</i>	ubhây aro æk rat thakbe.	<i>The two of them will stay another night.</i>
loke <i>people</i>	loke ki na bôle.	<i>People will say anything.</i>
manuṣe <i>people</i>	manuṣe bhalôbasa caÿ.	<i>People want love.</i>
pakhite <i>birds</i>	pakhite ki birôktô kôre na?	<i>Aren't birds a nuisance?</i>
baghe <i>tigers</i>	baghe diner môdhye ghumaÿ.	<i>Tigers sleep during the day.</i>

The nominative subject of a sentence usually has verb agreement. This means that the finite verb in the sentence governs the subject ami yabô *I go* but tumi yabe *you (fam) go* and apni yaben *you (hon) go*.

Non-finite verb forms can govern a nominative subject.

## a. with verbal nouns

A genitive verbal noun followed by a postposition can have its own nominative subject:

(8) tumi asbar age mōne hōcchilō ami ar bācbō na.  
 you come.bavN.GEN before mind.LOC be.3.P.C I more live.1.FUT not  
*Before you came I thought that I might not survive.*

(9) tini yog deoÿar dudiner môdhye khælar niÿôm  
 he.H joining give.VN.GEN two.day.GEN within game.GEN rule  
 palte gælō.  
 change.PP go.3.P.S

*Within two days of his joining, the rules of the game were changed.*

## b. with conditional participles

(10) sūryō uþhle kuÿaśa keþe yabe.  
 sun get.up.CP fog disperse.PP go.3.FUT  
*When the sun comes up the fog will disperse.*

(11) tumi ele salim gan gaibe.  
 you come.CP Salim song sing.3.FUT  
*Salim will sing when you come.*

## c. with imperfective participles

(12) amra thakte khabar ese gælō.  
 we stay.IP food come.PP go.3.P.S  
*The food arrived while we were there.*

## 8.1.2 Genitive

The genitive has a great variety of uses and is the only case which allows multiple, additive occurrences as in:

tar babar lal gaṛir cakar sōmōsya  
 he.GEN father.GEN red car.GEN tyre.GEN problem  
*the problems with the tyres of his father's red car*

## 8.1.2.1 With postpositions

Noun-derived postpositions (see Chapter 5.7) usually require a preceding genitive:

tomar sōṅge	tar upōre	baccader jōnye
you.GEN with	that.GEN on	child.PL.GEN for
<i>with you</i>	<i>on top of that, additionally</i>	<i>for the children</i>

Postpositional phrases also lend themselves to strings of genitives:

- (14) amader gramer baṛir paśer pukurer môdhye  
 our village.GEN home.GEN side.GEN lake.GEN within  
*in the lake next to our village home*
- (15) tar yaoṛar ager diner kaṇḍô  
 he.GEN go.VN.GEN before.GEN day.GEN commotion  
*The commotion on the day before he left...*

### 8.1.2.2 Genitives connecting nouns

A classification of genitive uses according to semantic or functional components can only be an approximation and there is a fair bit of overlap. *tîr bank* in *nôdîr tîr bank of the river* can be considered a spatial or a partial component. In *câder alo moonlight* the light can be either the effect of the moon or the moon can be the source of the light. The scent of a rose can be its defining quality or originating from it.

Here then is an approximate list:

possessive-belonging:

	tar baṛi <i>his home</i>	rôhimer ma <i>Rohim's mother</i>
spatial:	gramer lok <i>village person</i>	deśer nôdî <i>the country's rivers</i>
temporal:	diner bæla <i>in the daytime</i>	bidaṛer sômôṛ <i>time for farewell</i>
part of:	mathar cul <i>hair on the head</i>	gacher chal <i>treebark</i>
origin:	bôner kaṭh <i>wood from the forest</i>	pukurer mach <i>fish from the pond</i>
type, characteristic:		

	duḥkher byæpar <i>a sad affair</i>	premer gan <i>love-song</i>
quality:	golaper gôndhō <i>scent of roses</i>	ôubhūtîr prôkhôrôta <i>strength of feelings</i>

purpose:	jôper mala <i>prayer beads</i>	bôsar ghôr <i>sitting room</i>
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material, ingredient:

	macher torkari <i>fish curry</i>	amer acar <i>mango chutney</i>
effect, result:	aguner uttap <i>heat of the fire</i>	jhôrêr kṣôti <i>storm damage</i>

measurement, extent:

	dudiner chuṭi <i>two days' holiday</i>	prôtidiner khadyô <i>daily bread</i>
metaphor:	premer kâṭa <i>the thorns of love</i>	lohar sôrîr <i>body of iron = strong constitution</i>
aim:	kîrtir lobh <i>desire for fame</i>	prôśner uttôr <i>answer to the question</i>

cause or consequence:

bagher bhōy *fear of tigers*      abişkarer anōndō *joy of discovery*

amounts (with numerals)

dōśer æk *one out of ten*      pāc bhaiyēr ækjōn *one of the five brothers*

### 8.1.2.3 Genitives preceding adjectives

Genitive nouns can modify some adjectives. The adjective determines the semantic component.

amar bōṛō	<i>older than me</i>
tar sōman	<i>equal to him</i>
sōbar priyō	<i>best liked</i>
hukumer badhyō	<i>obedient to the order</i>
pōrbar upōyuktō	<i>suitable for wearing</i>

### 8.1.2.4 With abstract nouns

Genitive nouns, including verbal nouns, can modify abstract nouns. We have already seen some examples of this in Chapter 6.3.4 (conjunct verbs) and in Chapter 6.3.6 (verbal noun). Verbal noun examples are not given here.

- (16) ɔnekdin dhōre cakrir ceṣṭa kōrche.  
 many.day during job.GEN attempt do.3.PR.C  
*(He) has been trying for a job for a long time.*
- (17) ami ei pōryōntō apnar ciṭhir uttōr  
 I this.EMP until your.H letter.GEN reply  
 dite parini.  
 give.IP not.be.able.to.1.PR.PERF  
*I have not been able to reply to your letter so far.*
- (18) tar baccar jōnmō dite haspatale gæche.  
 her baby-GEN birth give-IP hospital go-3-PR-PERF  
*She went to the hospital to have her baby.*

### 8.1.2.5 Genitive subjects

The genitive is used for experiencer subjects in impersonal and existential structures with the following specific verbs: ach- *be present, exist, have, laga feel, need, like, experience*, hōyā *be, become*, paoṛyā *get, receive*, kōra *do*, asa *come*. Examples can be found in Chapter 7.4.2 and 7.4.3. Below are a few simple examples to show the semantic role of these genitive subjects.

possessor	tader tinti bari. tar bhaibon nei.	<i>They have three houses. He has no brothers and sisters.</i>
experiencer	amar bhôy kôrche. tader khuśi legeche. tar tomake bhalô legeche.	<i>I am scared. They felt happy. He liked you.</i>
recipient	tar bacca hôyeche.	<i>She has had a baby.</i>

### 8.1.2.6 Genitive complements

Sentences like

- (19) tar jibôn khub kôṣṭer.  
his life very hardship.GEN  
*His life is hard.*
- (20) chôbigulo se diner.  
picture.CL.PL that day.GEN  
*The pictures are of that day.*

transpose connecting genitives (see above 8.1.2.2) into copular structures. More examples of genitive complements are given in Chapter 7.4.4.

### 8.1.3 Object case

The object case marks both dative and accusative, realised in indirect and direct objects. Indirect objects mark the recipient, direct objects the instrument or goal of the verbal action. *deoṅa give* is a trivalent verb which takes indirect as well direct objects.

In:

- (21) ami tomake ækṭa upôhar diṅechi.  
I you.OBJ one.CL present give.I.PR.PERF  
*I have given you a present.*

*upôhar present* is the direct object, *tomake you* is the indirect object.

In sentences with trivalent verbs the direct object is not always expressed.

In: *ma tar cheleṭake chôbi dækhacche. The mother is showing her son some pictures.*

*chôbi picture* is the direct object, *tar cheleṭake her son* is the indirect object.

If his little sister comes along and wants to see the pictures too, she is likely to say: *amakeo dækhao! Show me, too!* and the direct object is dropped.

Bivalent verbs with a direct object are considerably more common than trivalent verbs with both kinds of object. Indirect objects (usually humans) always have the object case marking. With direct objects the case marking varies, as set out below.



## 8.1.3.1 Indirect objects (humans)

- (22) gôtibabuke esɔb kɔtha bɔlaʔa se pɔchôndô kɔre na.  
 Gotibabu.OBJ this.all word say.VN.CL he enjoyment do.3.PR.S not  
*He doesn't enjoy saying all this to Gotibabu.*
- (23) baba amake ônumôti denni.  
 father I.OBJ permission not.give.3H.PR.PERF  
*Father did not give me permission.*
- (24) ôbhijñôta manuʂke kichu ʂekhaÿ na.  
 experience person.OBJ something teach.3.PR.S not  
*Experience does not teach people anything.*
- (25) era bharôt ebɔm amerikake e deʂer tel, gyæs sɔmôstô  
 they India and America.OBJ this country.GEN oil, gas all  
 diÿe debe.  
 give.PP give.3.FUT  
*They will give away all this country's oil and gas to India and to America.*  
 (see also 5.2.12)

In the following sentence, akaʂtake *the sky* is the direct, take *him* the indirect object. khola *open* is a bivalent verb here. The object ending on the inanimate sky is noticeable in this sentence:

- (26) abida yænô sɔmôstô akaʂtake khule dilen take.  
 Abida as.if whole sky.CL.OBJ open.PP give.3H.P.S he.OBJ  
*It was as if Abida had opened the whole sky for him.*

## 8.1.3.1.1 Indirect object (animals)

If an animal is the indirect object, the case ending is used.

- se hatiʔike jɔl dicche. *He is giving water to the elephant.*  
 se môhiʂder khaoÿaÿ. *He feeds the buffalos.*  
 se kukurke lathi marlô. *He kicked the dog.*

## 8.1.3.2 Direct objects

Direct objects are more closely linked to the verb than indirect objects. Bivalent (transitive) verbs often require an overt direct object.

## 8.1.3.2.1 Specific humans

The direct object case is always marked for nouns denoting individual human beings, mentioned by name, pronoun or a descriptive term, whether singular or plural.

- (27) se amake cene.  
he I.OBJ know.3.PR.S  
*He knows me.*
- (28) uni tār bôuke cheṛe côle gæchen.  
he.H his.H wife.OBJ leave.PP move.PP go.3H.PR.PERF  
*He has left his wife.*
- (29) cintaṭa amake peṛe bôseche.  
thought.CL I.OBJ get.PP sit.3.PR.PERF  
lit: the thought, having got me, has settled  
*I can't get the thought out of my head.*
- (30) yṭôdin bêce ache e bhabna ar chaṛbe na take.  
as long.R live.PP [is present].3 this thought more leave.3.FUT not he.OBJ  
*This thought will never leave him as long as he is alive.*

### 8.1.3.2.2 Animals

Direct object case markings for animals are optional:

- se gôruder ante gæche.  
he cow.PL.OBJ bring.IP go.3.PR.PERF  
or se gôruguloke ante gæche.  
or se gôru ante gæche.                      can all mean *He has gone to get the cows.*

### 8.1.3.2.3 Non-specific humans

The object case ending is dropped when human beings are referred to in general or as representatives of a particular role or profession.

The following sentence (31) shows the contrast:

- (31) ñek meṛe ami dekhechi, tar mṭô ækṣṇkeo  
much girl I see.1.PR.PERF she.GEN like one.CL.OBJ.even  
dekhlam na.  
see.1.P.S not  
*I have seen a lot of girls, but I have never seen anyone like her.*
- (32) amar dharôṇa chilô ami manuṣ cini.  
my idea [was].3 I human.being know.1.PR.S  
*I had the idea that I knew human beings.*
- (33) ḍaktar ante hṭbe na.  
doctor bring.IP be.3.FUT not  
*There is no need to fetch a doctor.*

The object case is always marked when the sentence subject is inanimate and the direct object animate, irrespective of whether the object is a particular person or has a general reference:

- (34) ɔhômkar manuške nijer ɔjante durbɔl  
 pride human.being.OBJ own.GEN unknowing.LOC weak  
 kôre deÿ.  
 do.PP give.3.PR.S

*Pride makes people weak, even if they don't know it.*

#### 8.1.3.2.4 Inanimate – no ending

Object case endings are generally not used with inanimate objects. Glosses are not given in this section.

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ami bôiti pôrini.        | <i>I haven't read the book.</i> |
| se ɔrjaɕa khule diÿeche. | <i>He opened the door.</i>      |
| se tar jibôn bhalôbase.  | <i>He loves his life.</i>       |
| ami gaři thamabô.        | <i>I will stop the car.</i>     |
| se amar ɔlôm niÿe gæche. | <i>He has taken my pen.</i>     |

#### 8.1.3.2.5 Copular structures

There are certain cases where the direct object case ending is added to inanimate nouns. In extended copular sentences with an overall active sentence pattern the object ending must be used. This is a structural requirement and applies to physical objects, abstract ideas and also to verbal nouns. The subject of the copular sentence becomes the object. Sentences of this type are often used for definitions or explanations of terminology.

- (35) hisab kɔra kake bɔle ta tini janten na.  
 account do.VN who.OBJ say.3.PR.S that he.H know.3H.P.HABIT not  
 lit: What is called accounting he did not know.  
*He didn't know what was meant by keeping account.*

The underlying copular sentence here is: hisab kɔra ki? *What is accounting?*

It is noteworthy that kake (object case interrogative pronoun) is used for inanimate objects here. This is the only way the object can be clearly marked, as the inanimate ki can be either nominative or object case. The object case ending is always used in these structures, for verbal as well as for other inanimate nouns. In example (36) the simple copular sentence is given first.

- (36) a. *tār kaj bybsa nçy.*  
 his.H work business [is not].3  
*His work is not a business.*
- b. *çneke hçyto bişvas kôrte caibe na ye tār kajke*  
 many perhaps belief. do.IP want.3.FUT not that his.H work.OBJ  
*tini bybsa mône korten na.*  
 he business mind.LOC do.3H.P.HABIT not  
*Many will perhaps not believe that he did not consider his work a business.*

Similar to these structures are questions and relative clauses with inanimate objects. The object pronouns *kake* and *yake* *whom* are used for inanimate nouns in these cases.

- (37) *sukh amra kake bôli?*  
 happiness we who.OBJ say.1.PR.S  
*What do we mean by happiness?*
- (38) *ei jaÿgaça, yake amra ætô sundôr mône kôri...*  
 this place.CL who.R.OBJ we so beautiful mind.LOC do.1.PR.S  
*This place which we consider so beautiful...*

#### 8.1.3.2.6 Optional object case ending

Direct object case markings are added to nouns denoting things or abstract concepts if the endings help to make the sentence structure clear. They can indicate a treatment of inanimate things as animates or show an author's personal engagement. In many cases these endings are optional.

- (39) *ækjøn cikiççk hisabe khub kach theke jibônke dækhar*  
 one.CL doctor as very close from life.OBJ see.VN.GEN  
*suyog ghçte.*  
 opportunity occur.3.PR.S  
*As a doctor he has the opportunity to see life from close up.*
- (40) *çcenake cine neoÿar môdhye to abişkarer*  
 unknown.VN.OBJ know.PP take.VN.GEN in EMP discovery.GEN  
*anôndô ache.*  
 joy [is present].3  
*In getting to know the unknown there is the joy of discovery.*

Here is a sentence with a whole row of direct objects. The object ending is added only to the last item.

- (41) *begum rokeÿa bañali musôlman çmajer nana rçkôm çndhôtâ,*  
 Begum Rokeya Bengali Muslim society.GEN various kind blindness  
*gôrami, kusçmşkar, narïder prôti çbôhela o bidveş*  
 fanaticism superstition woman.GEN towards disrespect and malice

ityadike tibrô bhaşây s̄malocôna kôre gæchen.  
 etcetera.OBJ strong language.LOC discussion do.PP go.3H.PR.PERF

*Begum Rokeya exposed various kinds of blindness, fanaticism, superstition, disrespect and malice towards women in Bengali Muslim society and discussed these things in strong language.*

Abstract concepts are treated as animate in the following two examples.

(42) amar b̄lbar k̄thaṭike s̄ṣṭi k̄orte h̄be h̄rd̄ȳ theke.  
 my say.VN.GEN word.CL.OBJ creation do.IP be.3.FUT heart from  
*My words have to be created from the heart.*

(43) tomar duḥkhôke bhalôbaso na, duḥkhô bhalôbasar jinis n̄ȳ.  
 your sorrow.OBJ love.2.PR.IMP not sorrow love.GEN thing [is not].3  
*Don't love your sorrow. Sorrow is not a thing to be loved.*

#### 8.1.3.2.7 Object case experiencer

There is just one structure in Bangla with a subject-experiencer in the object case. When the imperfective participle combines with a third person form of h̄c̄ōya *be, become* to express obligation, the animate experiencer is usually in the object case.

(44) sara j̄b̄ôn take duḥkhô pete h̄lô kar j̄onyô?  
 whole life he.OBJ grief get.IP be.3.P.S who.GEN for  
 lit: whole life to him grief to get occurred for whom?  
*For whom did he have to suffer grief all his life?*

(45) taderke basa chere dite hô̄yechē.  
 they.OBJ house leave.PP give.IP be.3.PR.PERF  
 lit: to them house to give up occurred  
*They had to give up the house.*

This is a modal structure which will be discussed in Chapter 8.5.

#### 8.1.4 Locative

The locative gives us the where and when and often also the why and how of events in sentences. Locative endings are rarely used for animate nouns, but the forms exist and we get occasional structures like:

(46) ami yænô ar amate nei.  
 I as.if more I.LOC [is absent]  
*It is as if I were not (in) myself anymore.*

There is also a regular reciprocal structure which uses locative endings on humans.

(47) bhūte manuşe k̄k̄h̄ono bīye h̄ȳ?  
 ghost.LOC human.being.LOC ever marriage be.3.PR.S  
*Do ghosts and people ever marry one another?*

To start with, here is a sentence which combines temporal, spatial and causal locative uses:

- (48) baṣôṭṭi sale amar svamīr kṛacite cakri śuru hōṃāy  
 62 year.LOC my husband.GEN Karachi.LOC job start be.VN.LOC  
 amio kṛacite yete badhyô hōi.  
 I.also Karachi.LOC go.IP obliged be.1.PR.S

*Due to my husband starting a job in Karachi in 1962 I was also obliged to go to Karachi.*

#### 8.1.4.1 Spatial locatives

Both *kothāy* *where* and *ekhanē* *here* are locative forms.

Spatial locatives indicate position, area, destination and direction. They can often replace postpositional phrases. Most of these postpositions are also locatives.

Instead of a postpositional phrase we can use a locative:

ṭebiler upôre	ṭebile	<i>on the table</i>
akaśer mōdhye	akaśe	<i>in the sky</i>
hat diye	hate	<i>by hand</i>
ghṛer dike	ghṛe	<i>towards the building</i>

The locative uses are more flexible but also less precise than their postpositional alternatives. Here are some real examples which show the very wide spatial application of the locative. They include

locations

- (49) tara śiligurite thake.  
 they Siliguri.LOC live.3.PR.S  
*They live in Siliguri.*

directions

- (50) amra jadughṛe yacchi.  
 we museum.LOC go.1.PR.C  
*We are going to the museum.*

place of origin

- (51) tar paṃye bytha kṛe.  
 her foot.LOC pain do.3.PR.S  
*Her feet hurt.*

idioms

mōne hōy lit: it is in the mind = *I think*

abstract spaces

- (52) sat bəchôr bəyôser təphate dui chele  
 seven year age.GEN difference.LOC two boy  
*two boys with an age difference of seven years*

More examples:

- (53) gəlay hate prôcur sonar gəyina.  
 throat.LOC hand.LOC much gold.GEN jewellery  
*There was much gold jewellery around her neck and on her hands.*
- (54) se kətha mukhe ante parbe na hajra.  
 that word mouth.LOC bring.IP be.able.to.3.FUT not Hajra  
 lit: Hajra could not bring that word into his mouth  
*Hajra couldn't bring himself to say that.*
- (55) ei ghərtay amar chelebəlar əkək smrti jôriye ache.  
 this room.CL.LOC my childhood.GEN much memory link.PP [is present]  
*Many of my childhood memories are connected to this room.*
- (56) mayer gəthone, cəlapheray kothao bəyôser  
 mother.GEN figure.LOC movement.LOC anywhere age.GEN  
 chap pəreni.  
 imprint not.fall.3.PR.PERF  
*There is no sign of ageing either in mother's figure or her movements.*
- (57) se cheletir preme pərche.  
 she boy.CL.GEN love.LOC fall.3.PR.C  
*She is falling in love with the boy.*

The locative ending is sometimes dropped with very common phrases and with place names:

ami bari yacchi.  
*I am going home.*

#### 8.1.4.2 Instrumental locatives

This includes instruments, implements, forms of transport, components, origins and materials, both physical and non-physical.

*filled with:*

- (58) ar kono duhsəpne ratri bhôre uṭhbe na.  
 more any nightmare.LOC night fill.PP rise.3.FUT not  
 lit: With any nightmare the night will not be filled any more.  
*The night will not be filled with bad dreams anymore.*
- (59) se uttejənay bhəra, pərbar agrôhe bhəra.  
 he excitement.LOC fill.VA study.VN.GEN interest.LOC fill.VA

yar mane, sukhe bhōra.  
that.GEN meaning happiness.LOC fill.VA

*He was full of excitement and the interest in studying. In other words, full of happiness.*

- (60) kamruler bhitôrṭa dōyāṅ uthle uṭhlô.  
Kamrul.GEN heart.CL compassion.LOC surge.PP rise.3.P.S  
*Kamrul's heart overflowed with compassion.*

*by means of:*

kôre, the perfective participle of kōra *do*, combines with all sorts of implements and forms of transport in the locative to produce adverbial phrases. The locative noun forms alone do the same job.

- (61) se tar ciṭhigulo hate kôre lekhe.  
he his letter.CL.PL hand.LOC do.PP write.3.PR.S  
*He writes his letters by hand.*

- (62) ora base kôre asbe.  
they bus.LOC do.PP come.3.FUT  
*They will come by bus.*

noukaṅ kôre *by boat*, bimane *by plane*, gaṛite *by car*,  
sohel name ækʃɔn lok *someone called Sohel*

other instrumentals

- (63) tate tor hōṭhat dōrkar pôrlô?  
that.LOC you.GEN suddenly need fall.3.P.S  
*Why do you suddenly need this?*

- (64) er sahayye se bheṇe phelte pare kôṭhin bij.  
this.GEN help.LOC it break.PP throw.IP be.able.to.3.PR.S hard seed  
*Using this it (the bird) can break up hard seeds.*

- (65) kintu etô sabdhanôtateo kono phol hōlô na.  
but so.much caution.LOC.even any result be.3.P.S not  
*But all this caution did not bring any results either.*

- (66) apnar kache ækṭa dōrkare esechi.  
you.GEN to one.CL need.LOC come.1.PR.PERF  
*I come to you with a request.*

- (67) emnite tara khali paṅei cōla- phera kôrtô.  
normally.LOC they bare foot.LOC.EMP move.VN return.VN do.3.P.HABIT  
*Normally they would walk about barefoot.*



8.1.4.3 *Temporal locatives*

- (68) amra sɔkale esechi.  
we morning.LOC come.1.PR.PERF  
*We arrived this morning.*
- (69) šeşe sɔbhapôti bôllen...  
end.LOC chairman say.3H.P.S  
*In the end the chairman said...*
- (70) bhôbişyôte ki hɔbe keu jane na.  
future.LOC what be.3.FUT someone know.3.PR.S not  
*No one knows what will be in the future.*
- (72) kâţay-kâţay saře chɔţay şiliguri pōuche gelam.  
on.the.dot half six.CL.LOC Siliguri arrive.PP go.1.PS  
*We arrived in Siliguri at half past six on the dot.*

kâţa is the *hand of a clock*. kâţay kâţay (another locative!) is an idiom meaning *exactly, on the dot*.

**dropped locative endings**

Locative endings with expressions of time can sometimes be dropped, eg

- (73) tader gɔtô bɔchôr biye hôyeche.  
they.GEN last year marriage be.3.PR.PERF  
*They got married last year.*
- (74) ækdin yabô.  
one.day go.1.FUT  
*I will go one day.*
- (75) kintu edeşe sara bɔchôr bşşti hɔy.  
but this.country.LOC all year rain be.3.PR.S  
*But in this country it rains all year round.*

8.1.4.4 *Locative of manner*

- (76) susthō mathay bôlchi.  
healthy head.LOC say.1.PR.C  
*I am speaking with a clear head.*
- (77) maine hólô æk laphe aŗai-šo theke saře car-šo.  
salary be.3.P.S one jump.LOC 250 from 450  
*His salary went from 250 to 450 in one leap.*

- (78) ôti kôṣṭe uccarôṇ kôrlô.  
 extreme effort.LOC pronunciation do.3.P.S  
*He spoke with extreme effort.*

#### 8.1.4.5 Locative of cause

- (79) ṭhaṇḍay tar dâte dât lege yetô.  
 cold.LOC his tooth.LOC tooth attach.PP go.3.P.HABIT  
*His teeth used to chatter with the cold.*
- (80) bhôye tar gôla aṭke aschilô.  
 fear.LOC his voice obstruct.PP come.3.P.C  
*He could not speak for fear.*
- (81) tôbe śamimer jide se majhe majhe yaÿ.  
 but Shamim.GEN insistence.LOC he sometimes go.3.PR.S  
*But he sometimes goes because of Shamim's insistence.*

Verbal nouns in the locative often imply cause:

- (82) br̥ṣṭi p̥rate khælaṭa hólô na.  
 rain fall.VN.LOC game.CL be.3.P.S not  
*The game didn't happen because it was raining.*

More examples are given in Chapter 6.3.6.1.4.

## 8.2 Tense use

As in most languages, tense is built into the Bengali verbal system. Every finite verb form contains a tense element.

Bengali does not have particular rules for sequence of tense except in a very limited range of structures such as conditional sentences. This means that all tenses can freely interact with one another.

Here is an example with a past perfective and a future tense verb. In the English translation the future tense *kôrben* *will do* has to be rendered with a *would* structure.

- (83) uni ṭhik kôrechilen tār bôndhur bidhôbake biye kôrben.  
 he right do.3H.P.PERF his.H friend.GEN widow.OBJ marriage do.3H.FUT  
*He decided that he would marry his friend's widow.*

Bangla tense use is largely guided by actual time rather than by correlation between the tenses. It takes into account common sense, the need-to-know principle and phonaesthetic considerations. In the absence of subjunctive forms, Bangla tenses, especially the future tense, also take on modal functions. This explains the translation above.

Before we look at individual tenses there are three important considerations about the Bengali tense system as a whole.

a. tenseless elements

Bengali has some common structures which are, to all intents and purposes, tenseless. The two negative verbs *nei* is *absent* and *no-* is *not* as well as zero verb copular structures and the existential verb *ach-* are essential and tenseless phenomena which regularly occur in past tense contexts without having to change to a less expressive tensed version of themselves.

Compare: amra sobai sômôymctô upôsthit chilam kintu tumi nei.  
 we all time.like present [was].1 but you [is absent]

with amra sobai sômôymctô upôsthit chilam kintu tumi chile na.  
 we all time.like present [was].1 but you [was absent].2  
*We were all present on time but you were not there.*

The sentence with *nei* has considerably more impact, immediacy and expressiveness than the past tense version. *chilô* is indispensable as the past tense not only of *ach-* but also of the zero verb, but it is precisely because of this overload of past tense duties that the employment of *chilô* is kept, very sensibly, to the necessary minimum.

b. non-finite verb forms

One of the main tasks of non-finite verb forms is to provide time relationships within sentences. The perfective participle takes care of preceding events, the imperfective participle can cover simultaneous events as well as future intentions. A genitive verbal noun followed by *sômôy* *time* (rɔna deoʔar sômôye *at the time of departure*) specifies points in time. The conditional participle can provide a time frame for whichever tense the finite verb occurs in. These readily available devices not only reduce the need for conjunctions in Bangla but also make a significant contribution to the flexibility of the Bengali tense system.

c. phonaesthetic principles

Due to the regularity of Bengali verb endings, a string of verbs all in the same tense can sound quite monotonous. Flexible word order as well as frequent tense changes liven up narrative texts and provide pleasing variety to the ear. For examples of this see the recipe for pulao (Chapter 10, Text 1) with its uniform sentence-final verb phrases: *dite hɔbe has to be added*, *kôrte hɔbe has to be done*, *nite hɔbe has to be taken* and compare it with the elegance of the rain passage (Text 3) with its fluctuating tenses.

Each tense in Bangla has particular designated tasks. Here are the tenses one by one.

## 8.2.1 Present simple

The present simple is used

a. for general, timeless statements:

- (84) sūryô pūrbe oṭhe.  
sun East.LOC rise.3.PR.S  
*The sun rises in the East.*
- (85) śitkaler pāre bāṣōntô ase.  
winter.GEN after spring come.3.PR.S  
*Spring comes after winter.*
- (86) se maṁṣô khay na.  
he meat eat.3.PR.S not  
*He does not eat meat.*

b. for regularly occurring events:

- (87) amra rate bhat khai.  
we night.LOC rice eat.1.PR.S  
*We eat (rice) at night.*
- (88) se ñek bôṁ pāre.  
he much book read.3.PR.S  
*He reads a lot of books.*

c. for ongoing states, feelings or experiences:

- (89) se tomake bhalôbase.  
she you.OBJ love.3.PR.S  
*She loves you.*
- (90) ami take cini na.  
I he.OBJ know.1.PR.S not  
*I don't know him.*

d. for ongoing states with explicit starting points in the past (English uses the present perfect here)

- (91) ami tin bāchôr age theke ekhane achi.  
I three year before from here [is.present].1  
*I have been here for three years.*

e. for present activities. English uses the present continuous here.

- (92) tara bhat khay.  
they rice eat.3.PR.S  
*They are eating rice.*

f. for dates of births and deaths, historical events with a year given.

- (93) rɔmpur jelaŷ aṭharo-śô aśi sale begum rokeŷar  
 Rongpur district.LOC 1880 year.LOC Begum Rokeya.GEN  
 jɔnmô hɔŷ.  
 birth be.3.PR.S  
*Begum Rokeya was born in the district of Rongpur in 1880.*

Past tense narratives invariably jump to the present simple for sentences of this kind. The logic of this is clear: the year gives us what we NEED TO KNOW so the tense of the sentence becomes unimportant.

The present simple is used in modal clauses with *yôdi if, yænô so that, yate so that, pache lest, so that not*.

Other modal uses of the present simple are given in Chapter 8.5.

### 8.2.2 Present continuous

The present continuous is the tense for present ongoing actions and events as well as for regularly intermittent events in the present. Note that Bangla uses the present continuous with verbs like *para be able to, bojha understand, caoŷa want, bhaba think, hɔoŷa be, become, laga feel* where English would often use the present simple.

- (94) bṛṣṭi hōcche.  
 rain occur.3.PR.C  
*It is raining.*
- (95) ami niḥśvas nite parchi na.  
 I breath take.IP be.able.to.1.PR.C not  
*I can't breathe.*
- (96) tar bhɔŷ pacche.  
 he.GEN fear get.3.PR.C  
*He is scared.*
- (97) saradin ghṛer môdhye theke theke esɔb dekhe  
 all.day house.GEN in stay.PP stay.PP this.all see.PP  
 tomar môn aro kharap hôŷe yacche.  
 your mind more bad be.PP go.3.PR.C  
*Staying in the house all day and seeing all this just makes you more depressed.*

The present continuous is used for imminent future events:

- (98) baba aj aschen.  
 father today come.3H.PR.C  
*Father will be coming today.*

- (99) ora basa bôdôl kôrche.  
 they house change do.3.PR.C  
*They will be moving house.*

for events and states that started in the past:

- (100) kôdin dhôre côleche esôb?  
 how.long during go.3.PR.C this.all  
*How long has this been going on?*

The present continuous is used in compounds with *asa* *come* to refer to a process which has been going on for a long time.

- (101) dôs bôchôr dhôre ami bôrabôr sei dokan theke  
 ten year during I always that.EMP shop from  
 khôbôrer kagôj kine aschi.  
 newspaper buy.PP come.1.PR.C  
*For the last ten years I have always bought the newspaper from this shop.*

Like the present simple, the present continuous can turn up in past tense contexts to provide liveliness.

### 8.2.3 Present perfect

The present perfect is one of the past tenses in Bangla. It combines the ability to relate (a) past events which happened fairly recently and (b) past events whose effects are still felt in the present. In negation the present perfect verb forms change to present simple verb forms followed by *ni*.

- affirmative: ami kapôṛ dhuṛechi. *I have washed the clothes.*  
 negative: ami kapôṛ dhui ni. *I have not washed the clothes.*

a.

- (102) tar gôtôkal eksidentṛ hôteche.  
 he.GEN yesterday accident occur.3.PR.PERF  
*He had an accident yesterday.*
- (103) ami se din tar sôṅge dækha kôri ni.  
 I that day he.GEN with see.VN not.do.1.PR.PERF  
*I didn't meet with him that day.*

b.

- (104) rastây cnek jôl jômeche.  
 road.LOC much water collect.3.PR.PERF  
*A lot of water has collected on the road.*

- (105) apni ɔnek bɔdle giʔeche.  
 you.H much change.PP go.3H.PR.PERF  
*You have changed a lot.*

The present perfect is used in some contexts to describe an event where English is more likely to give the after-state in the simple present, particularly with things coming to an end or to fruition:

- (106) ɔndhya hōʔe gæche.  
 evening become.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*It is evening.*
- (107) dokanʔa bɔndhō hōʔeche.  
 shop.CL closed become.3.PR.PERF  
*The shop is closed.*
- (108) tar ɔsukh hōʔeche.  
 he.GEN illness become.3.PR.PERF  
*He is ill.*
- (109) amra ekhane nôtun esechi.  
 we here new come.1.PR.PERF  
*We are new here.*

#### 8.2.4 Future tense

The future tense covers everything that comes after a given point in time, whether we start in the present or in the distant past. This is one of the reasons why Bangla tense use seems capricious at times, when it is, in fact, remarkably consistent. The future tense has an in-built modal potential in the sense that everything we say about the future is, in effect, a prediction, an intention, a promise or some such.

##### a. future actions, events and states

- (110) rastar kajʔa kalke arômbhō hɔbe.  
 road.GEN work.CL tomorrow start be.3.FUT  
*The roadworks will start tomorrow.*
- (111) abar nôtunbhabe phul phuʔbe.  
 again new.way.LOC flower blossom.3.FUT  
*New flowers will blossom again.*
- (112) ami pura dui mas thakbô.  
 I full two month stay.1.FUT  
*I will stay a full two months.*

The future tense is used for predictions, assumptions, intentions, requests and probabilities. Many of these uses are modal.

- b. predictions, probabilities, assumptions, sometimes formed with a perfective participle.

- (113) se erimôdhye basây giye thakbe.  
 he by.now house.LOC go.PP stay.3.FUT  
*He will be home by now.*
- (114) 'kôjjon esече?' 'moṭ æksô hobe'  
 'how.many come.3.PR.PERF' 'total one.hundred be.3.FUT'  
 'How many came?' 'About a hundred in total'
- (115) tader mone hólô meyeṭir bôyôs bôchôr barô hobe.  
 their mind.LOC be.3.PS girl.CL.GEN age year twelve be.3.FUT  
*They thought that the girl must be twelve years old.*

More examples on the modal use of the future tense are given in Chapter 8.5.

- c. intentions, requests, wishes, expressions of politeness etc

- ki bôlbo? *What can I say? or What should I say?*  
 pani khabô. *I would like some water.*  
 ar ki lagbe? *What else do you need?*  
 aste parbô? *Can I come in?*

A few examples of mixed tenses are given below but here is one to show the ease with which the future tense combines with other tenses.

- (116) tini ar kono din bîrôsimhô yaben na prôtijña kôrechen.  
 he.H more any day Birsingho go.3H.FUT not promise do.3H.PR.PERF  
*He promised that he would never return to Birsingho.*

### 8.2.5 Past simple

The past simple is the usual tense in narrative contexts. Of the five past tenses (present perfect, past simple, past continuous, past perfect and past habitual), the past simple is the least marked. It can be used for events and actions in the distant or the recent past and it can be accompanied by a time adverbial specifying the time of the event.

- a. past actions, events and states:

- (117) sob miliye gælô aste aste.  
 all mix.PP go.3.PS slowly slowly  
*Everything gradually fell into place.*
- (118) se biye tiklô na.  
 that marriage last.3.PS not  
*That marriage did not last.*
- (119) hōṭhaṭ sômôstô śôrirer bhitôr ækṭa kâpuni uṭhlô tar.  
 suddenly whole body.GEN inside one.CL shivering rise..3.PS she.GEN  
*Suddenly she started shivering all over.*



## b. immediate past or immediate future events

This is an idiomatic use of the past simple which is common in spoken language and is always restricted to informal, simple, single remarks. Very often these uses refer to immediately imminent actions.

- (120) *ami còllam.*  
I move.1.P.S  
*I'm off!*
- (121) *khuśi hòlam.*  
happy become.1.P.S  
*I am delighted.*
- (122) *kichu na kheÿe gelen?*  
something not eat.PP go.3H.P.S  
*Are you leaving without having anything to eat?*

c. *chil-* was

*chil-* is the past tense of *ach-* and also of the zero verb.

- (123) *amar kintu sahôs chilô na.*  
I.GEN but courage [was] not.  
*But I did not have the courage.*
- (124) *kôthaṭa tar mône chilô.*  
word.CL his mind.LOC [was]  
*He remembered.*
- (125) *amra γakhôn choṭô chilam*  
we when small [was].1  
*when we were young*
- (126) *amra meÿeder sônge kôtha bôlte çbyôsthô chilam na.*  
we girl.PL.GEN with word speak.PP used.to [was].1 not  
*We were not used to speaking to girls.*

## 8.2.6 Past continuous

The past continuous either accompanies another past tense, or a perfective participle, to describe events that were occurring simultaneously, or it can describe ongoing processes or events in the past. The past continuous is also used to make requests or demands more polite.

## a. with another past tense

- (127) *se γakhôn elô tōkhôn amra tas khelchilam.*  
he when come.3.P.S then we card play.1.P.C  
*We were playing cards when he arrived.*

- (128) ganṭa śune tar kanna aschilô.  
 song.CL hear.PP she.GEN crying come.3.P.C  
*When she heard the song she felt like crying.*

b. past processes

This is a very common use with verbs describing mental activity, ability and such like. They are often equivalent to the simple past in English.

- (129) bhabchilô kibhabe se pôricôy kôrbe tar  
 think.3.P.C what way.LOC she acquaintance do.3.FUT her  
 babar sôṅge.  
 father.GEN with

*She was wondering how to introduce herself to her father.*

- (130) ঙসম্মাṅta ekebare bhulte parchilen na.  
 insult.CL entirely forget.IP be.able.to.3H.P.C not  
*She could not entirely forget the insult.*

c. politeness

This use is equivalent to the English shift from simple present *I want* to the more polite *I would like*. It is restricted to first person and is very common with caoṅa *want*.

- (131) ami tar sôṅge ekṭu kôtha bôlte cacchilam.  
 I he.GEN with a.bit word speak.IP want.1.P.C  
*I would like to speak to him for a minute.*

### 8.2.7 Past perfect

The past perfect is used for completed events or actions in the past which no longer have a direct bearing on the present. Events described in the past perfect do not have to be in the distant past:

- (132) o sôkale esechilô.  
 he morning.LOC come.3.P.PERF  
*He came this morning.*

and they do not need to be linked to subsequent events:

- (133) ami se din bhul kôrechilam.  
 I that day mistake do.1.P.PERF  
*I made a mistake that day.*

What distinguishes the past perfect from both the past simple and the present perfect is the completedness of the related event.

For the sentence: *He came this morning*. Bengali has the following options:

- present perfect: se sɔkale esече. implies that he is still here.  
 past simple: se sɔkale elô. relates the event without any inferences.  
 past perfect: se sɔkale esechilô. implies that he came and left again.

The use of the past perfect implies that the event is over.

- (134) kôlkataÿ tin bɔchôrer môdhye pãcbar basa bɔdôl kôrechilô.  
 Kolkata.LOC three year.GEN within five.time house change do.3.P.PERF  
*In Kolkata he moved five times within three years.*

- (135) goṭa duniÿake hajar hajar bɔchôr dhôre  
 whole earth.OBJ thousand thousand year during  
 himsîtôl bɔrôphe ḍheke rekhechilô bɔrôph yug.  
 freezing ice cover.PP keep.3.P.PERF ice age  
*The ice age kept the whole earth covered in freezing ice for thousands of years.*

The past perfect shares its negation with the present perfect.

- (136) kichu ækṭa bôlte ceṣṭa kôrechilen tini kintu gɔlar  
 something one.CL say.IP attempt do.3H.P.PERF he.H but throat.GEN  
 svôr phoṭe ni.  
 voice not.rise.3.P.PERF  
*She tried to say something, but her voice failed her.*

### 8.2.8 Past habitual

The past habitual has two distinct uses.

- a. habitual actions or events in the past, equivalent to the English *used to*. This use of the past habitual often includes a fairly precise time frame.

- (137) tar choṭôbelay sɔbai take adôr kôrtô.  
 his childhood.LOC everyone he.OBJ love do.3.P.HABIT  
*Everyone loved him in his childhood.*
- (138) se dingulote amar æmôn rag uṭhtô na.  
 that day.CL.PL.LOC I.GEN such anger rise.3.P.HABIT not  
*In those days I did not get so angry.*
- (139) svamîke tini cirôdini daruṅ bhôÿ ebɔm  
 husband.OBJ she.H always.EMP great fear and  
 lɔjja kôrten.  
 embarrassment do.3H.P.HABIT  
*She was always very afraid of and shy with her husband.*

The past habitual is rarely the main tense in narrative contexts but it mixes easily with *chilô* and its variants.

- (140) amader jɔgôṭ̣ tɔkhôn strilokhîn chilô, kono  
 our world then female.without [was] any  
 meyer spɔrsôgɔndhôbibôrjitô ɔbôsthatei amra  
 woman.GEN touch.smell.deprived situation.LOC.EMP we  
 amader youbôn saṅgô kôrtam.  
 our youth complete do.1.P.HABIT

*At that time our world was without females. We spent our youth removed from a woman's touch or smell.*

b. The past habitual is used for hypothetical (modal) language use.

- (141) ei kɔtha se khɔkôno bôltô na.  
 this word he ever say.3.P.HABIT not  
*He would never say this.*
- (142) keu ekhane ratre thaktô na.  
 someone there night.LOC stay.3.P.HABIT not  
*No one would spend the night there.*

The past habitual is used with *jana know* to convey a past simple meaning.

- (143) ami ta jantam na.  
 I that know.1.P.HABIT not  
*I didn't know that.*

The past habitual is used in conditional sentences. Examples are given in Chapter 7.7.1.

Here is a comparison of conditional participle structures with the simple past and the past habitual to show the differences in meaning. The only difference between the respective sentences is the tense.

- (144) a. past simple: tumi mône kɔṣṭô pabe janle ei kɔtha  
 you mind.LOC suffering get.2.FUT know.CP this word  
 bôllam na.  
 say.1.P.S not  
*I didn't tell you because I knew that it would upset you.*
- (144) b. past habitual: tumi mône kɔṣṭô pabe janle ei kɔtha  
 you mind.LOC suffering get.2.FUT know.CP this word  
 bôltam na.  
 say.1.P.HABIT not  
*I wouldn't have said this if I had known that it would upset you.*

## 8.2.9 Mixed tenses

The following few examples give an impression of the way tenses combine with one another.<sup>2</sup> Compare also the use of tenses in content clauses (Chapter 7.6.5)

present simple, past continuous, past simple

- (145) ta bôlei choṛôda boudir dike arçokhe ceÿe  
 that say.PP.EMP Choroda sister.in.law.GEN towards sidelong look.PP  
 nen. boudi etôkşon môn diÿe bunei yacchilen.  
 take.3H.PR.S sister.in.law so.long mind give.PP knit.PP.EMP go.3H.P.C  
 ebar bona thamiÿe gɔlaða tullen...  
 this.time knit.VN stop.PP voice.CL lift.3H.P.S

*Having said that Chorada looked at his sister-in-law with a sidelong glance. Up till now she had been concentrating on her knitting. Now she stopped knitting and said...*

zero verb, past continuous, present perfect

- (146) amar bôÿôs tãkhôn praÿ cõlliş, kintu amar mone hõcchilõ  
 my age then almost forty but my mind.LOC be.3.P.C  
 ami abar amar aṭharõ bõchõre phire giÿechi.  
 I again my eighteen year.LOC return.PP go.PR.PERF

*I was almost forty years old then, but I felt as if I had returned to my eighteen year old self.*

present perfect, ach-, past perfect

- (147) e baṛite pãñcaş bõchõr keṭeche ye bimɔl-prõtibhar  
 this house.LOC fifty year pass.3.PR.PERF that Bimal.Protibha.GEN  
 biÿe pôÿyontõ tar mone ache, nek ghõṭõna  
 wedding until his mind.LOC [is present] much event  
 o rõṭõna se dekhechilõ ba şunechilõ.  
 and circulation he see.3.P.PERF or hear.3.P.PERF

*Fifty years had passed in this house so that he could even remember Bimal and Protibha's wedding, had seen and heard a lot of comings and goings.*

2. Readers will have noticed that this book contains no chapter on direct and indirect speech. This is because speech can be seamlessly inserted into narrative texts and the only difference between indirect and direct speech is the change of person (se bõleche ye se yabe. *He said that he would go* rather than se bõleche 'ami yabõ'. *He said 'I will go.'*), the optional insertion of a linking ye *that* and the absence or presence of quotation marks.

### 8.3 Aspect

Aspect is a grammatical feature of languages which contrasts with tense. While tense positions the verbal action in time, aspect considers the internal shape of this verbal action. Tenses are clearly marked features of the verbal system; aspect is often less precise. The aim of this chapter is to see what types of aspect there are in Bangla and how they are built into the language.

#### 8.3.1 Aspect and tense (grammatical aspect)

Even though tense (when) and aspect (how) are clearly distinguished from one another in some languages, the tense system in Bangla has aspectual features built into it in, for instance, continuous tenses.

The difference between:

- |                        |                   |                              |     |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| i. present continuous: | ami chôbi tulchi. | <i>I am taking pictures.</i> | and |
| ii. simple present:    | ami chôbi tuli.   | <i>I take pictures.</i>      |     |

is aspectual much more than it is temporal. In (i) we have a progressive aspect. In (ii) we have either a habitual or an iterative aspect. But the overlap between tense and aspect goes a lot further than that.

The characteristics of present perfect, past perfect and simple past, given in Chapter 8.2.7 are aspectual distinctions. In fact, any language with more than one present tense or more than one past tense is likely to have aspectual features built into its tense system.

Here are the types of grammatical aspect languages display with some Bangla examples.

#### a. stative or continuative – ongoing non-active events

- (148) take saradin súye thakte hây.  
 he.OBJ all.day lie.down.PP stay.PP be.3.PR.S  
*He has to stay in bed all day.*

- (149) śrôte kono kono gacher pata lal rôm dharôñ kôre.  
 autumn.LOC any any tree.GEN leaf red colour shape do.3.PR.S  
*In autumn the leaves of some trees turn red.*

#### b. progressive – ongoing active events

- (150) sekhane ora bôse gôlpô kôrchilô.  
 there they sit.PP story do.3.P.C  
*They were sitting there talking.*

## c. perfective – completed events

- (151) kajta šeş kôre phelechi.  
 work.CL end do.PP throw.1.PR.PERF  
*I have finished the work.*

## d. imperfective – incompleted events

- (152) daktar take cikiṭsa kôrchen.  
 doctor he.OBJ treatment do.3.PR.C  
*The doctor is treating him.*

## e. habitual – regularly occurring events

- (153) pakhira sadharôṇôtô bəṣôntôkale basa toiri kore.  
 bird.PL usually spring.time.LOC house ready do.3.PR.S  
*Birds usually build their nests in spring.*

## f. iterative – repeated events

- (154) meṣeṭi ciṭkar kôre thake.  
 girlCL shout- do.PP stay.3.PR.S  
*The girl keeps shouting.*

## g. inceptive (inchoative) – focussing on the beginning of an event

- (155) se jnôpriyô hôte laglô.  
 she popular be.IP start.3.P.S  
*She started to become popular.*
- (156) sada hôte ūru kôrche cul.  
 white be.IP start do.3.PR.C hair  
*(His) hair has started to turn white.*

## h. telic – focussing on the endpoint of an event

- (157) kajta hôye gæche.  
 work.CL be.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*The work is done.*
- (158) se nişar jibôn nəşṭô kôre diyeche.  
 he Nisha.GEN life spoilt- do.PP give.3.PR.PERF  
*He has ruined Nisha's life.*

We see from these examples that

- continuous tenses produce progressive and imperfective aspects (b and d).
- the simple present tense contains the potential for habitual as well as for stative aspects (a and e).

- an iterative aspect can be produced by an imperfective participle plus a form of *thaka stay* (f).
- the beginning of events (inceptive aspect) are expressed through imperfective participle plus *laga start*, *śuru kōra* and *arōmbhō kōra begin* (g)
- the endpoint of events (telic aspect) usually involves compound verbs in the present perfect tense (h).

### 8.3.2 Lexical aspect

Lexical aspect deals with the internal structure of specific verbs. In Bangla this is particularly relevant for the distinction between *ach- be, be present* and *thaka stay*, the use of *ach-* and *thaka* with preceding perfective participles, the imperfective participle with *thaka stay* and for some aspective features of হওয়া *be, become*.

#### a. *ach-* and *thaka*

We have seen that *thaka* steps in for the missing forms of *ach-* (see Chapter 6.3.1.3).

But we also have simple present tense uses of *thaka* in contrast with *ach-*.

se kōlkataġ ache. *He is in Kolkata.* gives us his actual current location

se kōlkataġ thake. *He lives in Kolkata.* gives us his place of residence but makes no comment on his present whereabouts.

In terms of tense and aspect, *ach-* represents the here-and-now, so much so that in effect it creates its own unique reference-point in Bangla. Rather than thinking of *ach-* as incomplete and in need of supplementary forms, we can now see that the existence of this verb adds a dimension of immediacy to the language. This explains why *ach-* does not appear in contexts such as conditional sentences or correlative structures with যখন – তখন *when -then* where the immediacy factor is taken away. *thaka* gives us a longer-lasting habitual aspect. Simple sentences with *thaka* often contain time adverbials such as সব সঁমঁয় *always*, প্রাঢি *often*, সাধারঁনঁতঁ *usually*. Here are some sentences to show the contrast:

with *ach-*

cabiṭa amar kache ache.

*I have the key (with me here now).*

kōthaṭa mōne ache.

*I am aware of this.*

tader beśi ṭaka nei.

*They don't have much money (right now).*

tomader jōnye thakar bybōstha ache.

with *thaka*

cabiṭa amar kache thake.

*The key stays with me (though I may not have it with me right now).*

kōthaṭa to mōne thake.

*I am not likely to forget this.*

tader praġi ṭaka thake na.

*They often don't have much money.*

thakar bybōstha সব সঁমঁয় thake.



*Your accommodation is arranged.*

d̄rjaṭa khola ache.

*The door is (standing) open (now).*

se bhalô ache. *He is well.*

baṛiṭa eki ache. *The house is the same.*

*Accommodation is always available.*

d̄rjaṭa khola thake.

*The door (usually) remains open.*

se baṛir baire gele bhalô thake.

*He is well when he leaves the house.*

baṛigulo to eki thake na.

*The houses don't stay the same.*

#### b. aspective compounds

Perfective participles of many verbs can combine with both *ach-* and *thaka* to form aspective compound verbs. The aspectual difference between the two structures in the simple present tense is the same as in the structures above, ie *ach-* implies immediacy, *thaka* a habitual action or event. *thaka* is used for the future and the past habitual tense. For the past simple, forms of *chil-* *was* are common. Neither continuous nor perfect tenses occur in these structures. The verbs used are predominantly stative.

ami jege achi.

*I am awake.*

ami ñek derite jege thaki.

*I stay up very late.*

Here are the examples:

with *ach-*

(159) paṛaṭa ækebare cupcap pôṛe ache.  
village.CL entirely silent fall.PP [is present]  
*The village is lying in total silence.*

(160) saradin se lege ache er- or pichône.  
all.day he attach.PP [is present] he.GEN he.GEN behind  
*He is always running after someone or other.*

(161) amra kan pete achi.  
we ear stretch.IP [is present].1  
*We are eager to hear.*

(162) tumi kon sômôy theke ekhane bôse acho?  
you which time from here sit.PP [is present].2  
*How long have you been sitting here?*

with *chil-*

(163) kachakachi ye kôyekjôn dāṛiye chilô.  
close.by that a.few.CL stand.PP [was]  
*A few people were standing close by.*

(164) tar sãnge jhãgra cirõtakal lege chilô.  
 he.GEN with fight forever.CL attach.PP [was]  
*The fight with him had been going on forever.*

(165) prôstut hôye chilô se.  
 ready be.PP [was] she  
*She was ready.*

The following sentence shows how easily *ach-* fits into past tense contexts without the need for a tense change:

(166) śãbdô kôre dhôya urïye dhãrônibabu moțôr hãkiye côle  
 noise do.PP smoke make.fly.PP Dharanibabu car drive.PP move.PP  
 gelen kintu tãkhôno indrônath sekhanei  
 go.3H.P.S but still Indranath there EMP  
 dãriye ache.  
 stand.PP [is present]  
*In clouds of smoke and with much noise Dharanibabu drove off in his car, but Indranath was still standing there.*

with *thaka*

(167) eirãkôm yãkhôn hãý tãkhôn mina dãrjar tala diye  
 this.kind when be.3.PR.S then Mina door.GEN lock give.PP  
 cup kôre tar ghãre lukiye thake.  
 quiet do.PP her room.LOC hide.PP stay.3.PR.S  
*When this happens, Mina locks the door and hides quietly in her room.*

(168) tãbe jïbône æmôn ôdbhut ghãtôna majhe-majhe ghôte thake.  
 but life.LOC such strange event sometimes happen.PP stay.3.PR.S  
*But sometimes such strange things keep happening in life.*

(169) se sãb bhule thakbe.  
 he all forget.PP stay.3.FUT  
*He will have forgotten everything.*

(170) amra jege bôse thaktam tar khaoýar gãlpô  
 we wake.PP sit.PP stay.1.P.HABIT his eat.VN.GEN story  
 śunbô bôle.  
 hear.1.FUT say.PP  
*We used to sit up awake because we wanted to hear his food stories.*

Unlike other compound makers (see Chapter 6.3.5) with their varying semantic properties, these two verbs consistently add a continuative or stative aspect to the preceding verb.

## c. imperfective participle plus thaka

thaka combines with preceding imperfective participles of active verbs and of *həoʔa* *be, become* to produce a progressive or iterative effect. This structure does not occur with *ach-* (but see also section 8.5.3(d)). *thaka* in this structure appears only in simple tenses (present simple, past simple, future and past habitual).

- (171) *bhiṣōṅ hime se kāpte thaklô.*  
 extreme cold.LOC he shiver.IP stay.3.P.S  
*He was shivering in the extreme cold.*
- (172) *tarpɔr caka ghurte thake.*  
 then wheel turn.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*After that the wheels keep turning.*
- (173) *er phɔle upôrer pani śukiye yete thake.*  
 that.GEN result.LOC above.GEN water dry.PP go.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*As a result the water on the ground keeps drying up.*
- (174) *tɔbe ya ɔnek ghôṭte thake, ta æk sômôy sadharôn*  
 but what much happen.IP stay.3.PR.S that one time normal  
*hôye dāraṅ.*  
 be.PP stand.3.PR.S  
*But things that happen a lot will at one point become normal.*
- (175) *meṃeder dekhle tomar cena cena mōne hôte thake.*  
 girl.PL.OBJ see.CP you.GEN know.VA (x2) mind.LOC be.IP stay.3.PR.S  
*When you see girls, you keep thinking that you know them.*

d. becoming properties of *həoʔa* *be, become*

The verb *həoʔa* in many of its uses has an element of *emerging, becoming, developing*. This may not be a traditionally recognised aspect but it pervades the Bangla language in many contexts.

When *həoʔa* is used in place of a zero verb copula or in place of *ach-* it conveys a process rather than a state. It is not always possible to reflect the difference adequately in the translations.

stative with zero verb or *ach-*  
*tara bôndhu. They are friends.*

*becoming* with *həoʔa*  
*tara bôndhu hôyeche. They became friends.*

*manuṣṭa ɔnyô rakôm.*  
*The man is strange.*

*manuṣṭa ɔnyô rakôm hôye gæche.*  
*The man has changed.*

*baccara ɔb ɔɔrô.*  
*The children are all grown up.*

*baccara ɔb ɔɔrô hôyeche.*  
*The children have all grown up.*

tar ôbhijñôta ache. *He has experience.*

tar ôbhijñôta hôyeche.  
*He has gained the experience.*

piṭhaguli mɔjar.  
*The cakes are delicious.*

piṭhaguli mɔjar hôyeche.  
*The cakes have turned out delicious.*

ete kono kṣôti nei.  
*There is no harm in that.*

kono kṣôti hɔyni.  
*No damage occurred.*

tar môn kharap.  
*He is sad.*

tar môn kharap hôyeche.  
*He became sad.*

## 8.4 Negation

Bangla has no negative pronouns like *nobody*, *no one*, *none*, *nothing* or adverbials like *never*, *nowhere*. This means that all negation in Bangla happens on the sentence level.

In English we say *Nobody will come*. In Bangla we can only say:

keu	asbe na.
someone	come.3.FUT not
<i>someone</i>	<i>will not come.</i>

Bangla has four main sentence negators. Their uses and positioning in sentences are set out below.

### 8.4.1 na

na is the universal negative particle which is placed after the finite verb and is therefore usually the last word in a sentence.

affirmative  
ora kaj kɔre  
*They work.*

negative  
ora kaj kɔre na.  
*They don't work.*

ami take cini.  
*I know him.*

ami take cini na.  
*I don't know him.*

se tomar sɔnge kɔtha bôlbe.  
he you.GEN with word say.3.FUT  
*He will talk with you.*

se tomar sɔnge kɔtha bôlbe na.  
he you.GEN with word say.3.FUT not  
*He will not talk with you.*

tara bajare gelo.  
they market.LOC go.3.P.S  
*They went to the market.*

tara bajare gelo na.  
they market.LOC go.3.P.S not  
*They did not go to the market.*

When answering yes-no questions in the negative, *na* stands independently at the beginning of the sentence and again follows the verb at the end.

se ki ta jane?	na, se jane na.
he what that know.3.PR.S	no he know.3.PR.S not
<i>Does he know that?</i>	<i>No, he doesn't know that.</i>

Negative questions are answered with *na no* to confirm the question, with *hyæ yes* to contradict it.

tumi ki amake cenô na?	na, ami tomake cini na.
you what I.OBJ know.2.PR.S not	no I you.OBJ know.1.PR.S not
<i>Don't you know me?</i>	<i>No, I don't know you.</i>
	<i>hyæ, ami tomake cini. Yes, I know you.</i>

More on question and answer patterns can be found in Chapter 7.3.2.1.

#### 8.4.2 Negation and tense (ni)

All except two tenses in Bangla negate with *na*. Present perfect and past perfect negatives are constructed with the simple present verb forms followed by *ni*.

	affirmative	negative
simple present	ami bôî pôri. <i>I read books.</i>	ami bôî pôri na. <i>I don't read books.</i>
present continuous	ami bôî pôrchi. <i>I am reading books.</i>	ami bôî pôrchi na. <i>I am not reading books.</i>
present perfect	ami bôîṭi pôrechi. <i>I have read the book.</i>	ami bôîṭi pôrini. <i>I haven't read the book.</i>
future tense	ami bôî pôrbô. <i>I will read books.</i>	ami bôî pôrbô na. <i>I will not read books.</i>
simple past	ami bôîṭa pôrlam. <i>I read the book.</i>	ami bôîṭa pôrlam na. <i>I didn't read the book.</i>
past continuous	ami bôîṭa pôrchilam. <i>I was reading the book.</i>	ami bôîṭa pôrchilam na. <i>I was not reading the book.</i>
past perfect	ami bôîṭa pôrechilam. <i>I had read the book.</i>	ami bôîṭa pôrini. <i>I hadn't read the book.</i>
past habitual	ami bôî pôrtam. <i>I used to read books.</i>	ami bôî pôrtam na. <i>I didn't use to read books.</i>

The fact that *ni* is used with simple present tense verb forms means that it has tense as well as negative properties and that there is no distinction between present perfect and past perfect in the negative.

Unlike *na*, *ni* never stands on its own and is often attached directly to the simple present verb form. This is just a spelling convention and does not mean very much. Some authors, eg Satyajit Ray, also attached *na* to his verb forms. *ni* cannot be added to tenses other than the present simple. In some cases the English translations require a simple past tense.

- (176) ekhane æmôn kichu ækhôno ghçteni.  
 here such something yet not.happen.3.PR.PERF  
*Nothing like this has happened here yet.*
- (177) apnake to bçla hçyni.  
 you.H.OBJ EMP say.VN not.be.3.PR.PERF  
*You have not been told.*
- (178) tini ar kçtha baçanni.  
 he more word not.increase.3H.PR.PERF  
*He did not elaborate.*
- (179) tçbe ya bhule yanni ta hçlô gopal mukharji  
 but what forget.PP not.go3H.PR.PERF that be.PC.3.P.S Gopal Mukherji  
 mukhbuje prôñôbeßer akrômôn sçhyô kçrenni.  
 mouth.shut.PP Pranabesh.GEN attack endure- not.do.3.PR.PERF  
*But what he had not forgotten was that Gopal Mukherji did not suffer  
 Pranabesh's attack in silence.*

#### 8.4.3 ন- (nôï, নস, নস, নç, নç) is not

Copular sentences are negated with ন-

- (180) 1st person amar kaje ami moçei trçptô nôï.  
 my work.LOC I at.all.EMP satisfied [is not].1  
*I am not at all satisfied with my work.*
- (181) 2nd familiar tomra to mistri নç.  
 you.PL EMP carpenter [is not].2  
*But you are not carpenters.*
- (182) 2nd intimate tui ætô boka nôs.  
 you.I such stupid [is not].2I  
*You are not that stupid.*
- (183) 3rd ordinary amar baçi ekhan theke beçi dçre নç.  
 my home here from much distance.LOC [is not]  
*My home is not very far from here.*
- (184) 2nd honorific apni apnar strîr yogyô নç.  
 you your wife.GEN worthy [is not].H  
*You are not worthy of your wife.*

- (185) 3rd honorific uni samiyar baba ኦኦ.  
 he.H Samia.GEN father [is not].H  
*He is not Samia's father.*

Since the 3rd person ordinary is used for all inanimates as well as *he*, *she* and *they*, the form ኦሃ appears much more frequently than any of the other forms.

ኦ is used to negate modal verbal noun structures with *ucit* *ought* and *kotha* *supposed to*

- (186) ei kotha boḷa ucit ኦሃ.  
 this word say ought [is not]  
*This ought not to be said.*
- (187) karo ei byæpar niye kichu janar kotha ኦሃ.  
 someone.GEN this matter about something know.VN.GEN word [is not]  
*No one is supposed to know anything about this matter.*

Past tense negation of the zero verb is shared with *ach-*:

*chilam* (1st), *chile* (2nd familiar), *chili* (2nd intimate), *chilô* (3rd ordinary), *chilen* (honorific).

Future tense and past habitual uses are formed with ኦሓ *be*, *become*. Conditional and non-finite verb form uses are also done with ኦሓ.

simple present:

- (188) a. tar asa aj sambhôb ኦሃ.  
 he.GEN come.VN today possible [is not]  
*He is not able to come today.*

future tense:

- (188) b. tar asa kalke sambhôb hoḷbe na.  
 he.GEN come.VN tomorrow possible be.3.FUT not  
*He will not be able to come tomorrow.*

simple past:

- (188) c. tar asa gçtôkal sambhôb chilô na.  
 he.GEN come.VN yesterday possible [was] not  
*He was not able to come yesterday.*

past habitual:

- (188) d. tar asa se din sambhôb hôtô na.  
 he.GEN come.VN that day possible be.3.P.HABIT not  
*He would not have been able to come that day.*

Note that in informal contexts, particularly in Bangladesh, all forms of ኦ- can be replaced by *na*.

8.4.3.1 *Contrasting* কঁয

কঁয can be used as a contrasting negative:

(189) kalke কঁয, ajkei ʈaka dite hobe.  
tomorrow [is not] today.EMP money give.IP be.3.FUT  
*Not tomorrow, the money has to be paid today.*

(190) amake কঁয, babake bôlô!  
I.OBJ [is not] father.OBJ say.2.PR.IMP  
*Don't tell me, tell father!*

8.4.3.2 *ta* কঁয

(191) ta কঁয.  
that [is not]  
*It's not that.*

*ta* কঁয is used to evade an affirmative statement and to keep sentence structures simple. It is usually added after negative and occasionally after affirmative statements. Structurally *ta* কঁয forms the main clause of content clauses. (Chapter 7.6.5)

(192) ta śudhu কঁয.  
that only [is not]  
*It's not just that.*

*æmôn* *such* sometimes takes the place of *ta that*.

(193) æmôn to কঁয.  
such EMP [is not]  
*It's not like that.*

(194) bhaira sahayyôo na kôreche æmôn কঁয.  
brother.PL help not do.3.PR.PERF such [is not]  
*It was not that the brothers didn't help.*

(195) duḥkhô ye hây na ta কঁয.  
sadness that be.3.PR.S not that [is not]  
*Not that there wasn't any sadness.*

Here is a nice example of a triple negation:

(196) na gele ye cōltô na, ta কঁয.  
not go.CP that move.3.P.HABIT not that [is not]  
lit: it's not that not going wouldn't move  
*It is not absolutely necessary to go.*

More examples of *ta* কঁয structures are given in Chapter 7.6.5 (content clauses)

Although all of these are overtly simple present tense negations, this structure can be used for past and future as well as present tense contexts. The existence of the two



negative verbs *nɔ-* and *nei* which are tense-neutral in use, contributes significantly to the flexibility Bangla displays in its tense use.

#### 8.4.4 *nei* – negation of existential sentences

*nei* is used in negation of *ach-*, whether used in an existential/ locative or in a possessive context.

*nei* like *nɔ-* is a negative verb but it is unchangeable for all persons and is very flexible in its tense use.

*nei*, in a nutshell, denotes absence. The use of *nai* for *nei* is common in spoken language in some areas.

	affirmative	negative
existential/locative:		
(197)	uni basaŷ achen. he house.LOC [is present].H <i>He is in the house.</i>	uni basaŷ nei. he house.LOC [is absent] <i>He is not in the house.</i>
(198)	am ache. mango [is present] <i>There are mangoes.</i>	am nei. mango [is absent] <i>There are no mangoes.</i>
possessive:		
(199)	tar rŋ ache. he.GEN debt [is present] <i>He has debts.</i>	tar rŋ nei. he.GEN debt [is absent] <i>He does not have debts.</i>
(200)	tader kichu ache. they.GEN something [is present] <i>They have something.</i>	tader kichu nei. they.GEN something [is absent] <i>They have nothing.</i>

Sentence (201) shows the relationship between *nei* and *ache*:

- (201) are nei nei kôreo ya ache na!  
INT [is absent] (x 2) do.PP.even what [is present] EMP  
lit: well, even though they go don't have, don't have, what don't they have!  
*Although they keep saying they do not have this or that, how much they do have!*
- (202) apnader pôricɔŷ ðhik jana nei.  
you.PL.GEN acquaintance correct know.VN [is absent]  
*We don't exactly know who you are.*
- (203) kothao yabar nei, kichu kôrbar nei.  
somewhere go.bavN.GEN [is absent] something do.bavN.GEN [is absent]  
*There is nowhere to go, nothing to do.*

- (204) er kono bikalpô nei.  
 this.GEN any alternative [is absent]  
*There is no alternative to this.*

The following sentence from Buddhadeva Bose shows the distinction between *no-* and *nei* perfectly.

- (205) kintu sukher d̥heu γakhôn mōne ese lage,  
 but happiness.GEN wave when mind.LOC come.PP touch.3.PR.S  
 tar mətô kichu n̄ȳ, s̄mōstô pr̥thibite  
 that.GEN like something [is not] whole world.LOC  
 tar mətô kichu nei.  
 that.GEN like something [is absent]  
*But when the wave of happiness reaches the mind, it is unlike anything else. In the whole world there is nothing like it.*

#### 8.4.5 Positioning of *na*

When *na* follows the verb at the end of a sentence, the whole sentence is negated. In order to get around this, there are certain cases where *na* precedes the verb.

##### a. subordinate clauses

The following subordinate conjunctions call for a reversed order of verb and negative in the subordinate clause they govern.

*yôdi if*

- (206) eṭa yôdi sôtyi na h̄ȳ t̄be ke amake janabe?  
 this.CL if true not be.3.PR.S then who I.OBJ inform.3.FUT  
*If this is not true then who will tell me?*

*yænô so that*

- (207) tar ghum yænô bheṇe na yaý, ami baccader baire  
 his sleep so.that break.PP not go.3.PR.S I child.PL.OBJ outside  
 niye gechi.  
 take.PP go.1.PR.PERF  
*I took the children outside so as not to disturb his sleep.*

*yate so that*

- (208) æmôn kichu kaj tomar niśc̄ȳ nei,  
 such something work you.GEN of.course [is absent]  
 yate k̄ȳek̄ṭa din n̄ç̄ṭô k̄ôrte na parô?  
 so.that a.few.CL day waste do.IP not be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*Surely you don't have so much work that you can't take a few days off?*

## b. relative clauses

In subordinate relative clauses with conjunctions indicating time (yɔtôdin, yɔtokʂôn *as long as*) na can either follow or precede the finite verb form without any change in meaning.

(209) a. tar thakaÿ yɔtôdin tomar birəktô lage na,  
his stay.VN.LOC as.long you.GEN annoying feel.3.PR.S not  
tɔtôdin thakuk. or  
so.long stay.3.IMP

(209) b. tar thakaÿ yɔtôdin tomar birəktô na lage,  
his stay.VN.LOC as.long you.GEN annoying not feel.3.PR.S  
tɔtôdin thakuk.  
so.long stay.3.IMP

*He can stay as long as having him here does not become a nuisance to you.*

## c. non-finite verb forms

na precedes non-finite verb forms in order to restrict the negative impact to the particular verbal action following it.

## i. verbal noun

(210) ya cokher samne tar dike majhe majhe na  
what eye.GEN in.front.of that.GEN direction.LOC sometimes not  
takanor dərkar.  
look.VN.GEN need

*Sometimes it is necessary not to look at what is in front of one's eyes.*

(211) a. ajke na yaoÿa ucit.  
today not go.VN ought  
*Today it would be appropriate not to go.*

If we compare this with the usual sentence negation:

(211) b. ajke yaoÿa ucit nɔÿ.  
today go.VN ought [is not]  
*Today it would not be appropriate to go.*

we see that subtle distinctions can be made in Bangla through the positioning of na.

With pōryôntô *until, up to* na is often added either before the verbal noun or before pōryôntô. The translation is often best done with *before* or *as long as ...not*.

(212) na dækha pōryôntô tumi ba mōnôsthir kôrbe ki kôre?  
not see until you INT decision- do.2.FUT what do.PP  
*How can you decide before you have seen it?*

- (213) kajta šeş kora na poryôntô taka paoÿa yabe na.  
 work.CL end do.VN not until money get.VN go.3.FUT not  
 lit: it won't be possible to get paid as long as the work is not finished  
*There won't be any payment before the work is finished.*

ii. imperfective participle

As the imperfective participle is concerned with future or on-going processes rather than past events, it is rarely negated but emphatic uses and doubled negatives do exist.

- (214) chôbîta tomar bhalô nao lagte pare.  
 film.CL you.GEN good not.also feel.IP be possible.3.PR.S  
*You may not like the film.*
- (215) ami ki na kôrte pari? ami ki  
 I what not do.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S I what  
 na hôte pari?  
 not be.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S  
*What is there that I can't do, that I can't be?*

An imperfective participle before a negated *para be able to* changes to a perfective participle in negative structures:

- (216) ami kajta na kôre pari na.  
 I work.CL not do.PP be.able.to.1.PR.S not  
*I can't not do the work. (→ I have to do the work.)*

In contrast to this, sentence (217) contains the conjunct verb *na kora refuse, deny*.

- (217) ami take na kôrte pari na.  
 I he.OBJ not do.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S not  
*I can't refuse him.*

iii. conditional participle

- (218) somôsyâ na hôle nçar age aste parbe?  
 problem not be.CP nine.CL.GEN before come.IP be.able.to.2.PR.S  
*Could you come around nine, if it's not a problem?*

iv. perfective participle

- (219) kono uttôr na diÿe tini takiÿe thaken.  
 any answer not give.PP he.H look.PP stay.3H.PR.S  
*He kept staring without giving an answer.*
- (220) ekÿuo ca na kheÿe gælô.  
 a.little.bit tea not drink.PP went.3.P.S  
*He left without having even a little bit of tea.*

## d. finite verb forms

na usually follows finite verb forms, but can precede them for special emphasis. As these occurrences are relatively rare they have a marked impact.

- (221) cəʃtôgrame nai atmiyô, nai sɔʒn, na ache  
 Chittagong.LOC [is absent] family [is absent] relative not [is present]  
 kono thakar jaÿga.  
 any stay.VN.GEN place

*In Chittagong she has no family, no relatives, nowhere to stay.*

- (222) sekhane na ache ghɔr-dɔr, na ache kichu.  
 there not [is present] house.hole not [is present] something  
*There are no houses or huts there, there is nothing.*

## 8.4.6 Double negatives

Double negatives often contain adjectives with negative prefixes such as ɔsɔmbhôb *impossible*, ɔjana *unknown*. The impact of double negatives is much the same as in English:

seʃa ɔsɔmbhɔb nɔÿ. *That is not impossible.*

Example (223) shows another pattern with kɔm *little, less*, which produces phrases like: *That is not nothing*. Bangla double negatives are often best translated with affirmative structures in English.

- (223) tomar esɔb pôrisrôm ba kɔm kɔtha nɔÿ.  
 your this.all hard.work INT little word [is not]  
*All this hard work of yours is quite remarkable.*
- (224) nijer ôdhikarer sîma kɔtôdûr pôryôntô ʃana,  
 OWN.GEN right.GEN limit how.far until stretch.VA  
 seʃao tar ɔjana nɔÿ.  
 that.CL.also he.GEN unknown.VN [is not]  
*He was not unaware of how far he could stretch the limits of his privileges.*
- (225) æmôn din bɔʃô yaÿ na yedin ɔntôtô du ækbar  
 such day big go.3.PR.S not what.day at.least two one.time  
 ʃaʃi pɔra halka ekʃu haoÿa makhônlake anômône  
 saree wear.VA light a.bit air Makhlanlal.OBJ absent.minded  
 kôre na dæÿ.  
 do.PP not give.3.PR.S

*Hardly a day goes by on which Makhlanlal does not get distracted at least once or twice by a light breeze, dressed in a saree.*

#### 8.4.7 Negation of compound verbs

The negation of compound verbs is a crucial factor in their definition. As the following sentences show, a sentence final *na* negates the perfective participle and leaves the compound maker unnegated, making the two an indivisible unit.

- (226) se kichu bôle yañni.  
 he something say.PP not.go.3.PR.PERF  
*He didn't say anything (before he left).*

- (227) kintu Alkananda ki etôï kâca meÿe?  
 but Alkananda what such.EMP immature girl  
 tini se bişoye toiri hôÿe asenni?  
 she that subject.LOC ready be.PP not.come.3H.PR.PERF  
*But was Alkananda such an immature girl? Did she not come prepared for this subject?*

### 8.5 Modality

Anything in a language that goes beyond the factual, anything that expresses intention, purpose, wish, attitude, prohibition or any other kind of directedness or illocutionary force can be considered modal. In many languages modal structures have subjunctive verb forms which stand in contrast to the verb forms of the indicative (factual) mood. Bangla has no separate verb forms for modals but employs a range of devices to express modal meaning. This chapter gives an overview of how modals are formed systematically in Bangla. It does not take into account lexical items such as adverbials expressing possibility and likelihood or verbs like *para* *be possible*, *caoÿa* *want*. Examples for *para* and *caoÿa* can be found in Chapter 6.3.6.2 (imperfective participle).

The past habitual has a modal reading in specific context, so the following sentence

- ami tader sañge thaktam.  
 I they.GEN with stay.1.P.HABIT

can mean either *I used to stay with them.* or *I would stay with them,* depending on the cotext.

- (228) amio tomar sañge yetam.  
 I.also you.GEN with go.1.P.HABIT  
*I would also have gone with you.*
- (229) kichu cîne basôn bhañte parle bhalô lagtô.  
 some china container break.IP be.able.to.CP good feel.3.P.HABIT  
*(I) would have enjoyed being able to break some crockery.*

Apart from the past habitual, Bangla has the following ways of making modal structures:

1. subjunctive-triggering conjunctions (yôdi, yate, pache, yænô)
2. changes in tense
3. impersonal structures with certain non-finite verb forms which are modal in meaning
4. verbal noun with dərkar, ucit, kōtha

### 8.5.1 Subjunctive-triggering conjunctions (yôdi *if*, yate *so that*, pache *so that not*, yænô *so that, as if*)

Of these four subordinating conjunctions yôdi *if* is almost always used in correlative structures (see Chapter 7.7.1). A non-correlative use is given in sentence (232) below. The other three conjunctions can act as single subordinating conjunctions. These usually demand a certain tense structure and na preceding the verb:

- a. yôdi *if* usually comes straight after the sentence subject

- (230) apatôtô amar upôsthiti yôdi bahulyô mōne hây ami bōrôm  
 now my presence if superfluous mind.LOC is.3.PR.S I rather  
 baire theke ek̄tu ghure aste raji achi.  
 outside from a.bit turn.PP come.IP agreed [is present].1

*If my presence is considered superfluous at this time, then I have no objection to taking a little turn outside..*

- (231) ami yôdi bharôtbôrșer raja hôtam, prôti mase  
 I if India.GEN king be.1.P.HABIT each month.LOC  
 țikițer rôm bōdlatam.  
 stamp.GEN colour change.1.P.HABIT

*If I were the king of India, I would change the colour of the stamps every month.*

yôdi can form clauses that express *if only* wishes. For these uses it is not followed by a correlative.

- (232) ya chilô, ta yôdi abar phire asto.  
 what [was] that if again return.PP come.3.P.HABIT  
*If only things returned to the way they were.*

- b. yate *so that*

yate is the locative form of the relative pronoun ya *that*, literally meaning *in that*. The verb in the subordinate yate clause is in the simple present, na precedes the verb. The modal element in yate-sentences varies from locative uses (233) to a thoughtful planning of future events.

- (233) hōyto onyô kono rākôm sukh tara peyêche,  
perhaps other any kind happiness they find.3.PR.PERF  
yate sômôstô puṣiye yaÿ.  
that.LOC all nourish.PP go.3.PR.S

*Perhaps they have found some other kind of happiness which fulfils them.*

- (234) bīna æmôn bhabe hese uṭhlô yate bāṛôdir kôthaṭar  
bina such.way.LOC laugh.PP rise.3.P.S so.that big.sister.GEN word.CL.GEN  
côrôm çsarôta prômaṇ kôra hōÿ.  
highest absurdity proof- do.VN be.3.PR.S

*Bina burst into laughter in order to prove the total absurdity of her big sister's statement.*

- (235) ar yate duiṭi sôntaner beṣi jôn môgrôhôn na kôre  
and so.that two.CL offspring.GEN much birth.acceptance not do.3.PR.S  
se dikeo nājôr rakhte hōbe.  
that direction.LOC.also observation keep.IP be.3.FUT

*And care must also be taken that no more than two children should be born.*

c. *pache lest, in order not to, so that not*

The finite verb in the *pache*-sentence is in the simple present and *na* would come before the verb but negation in *pache*-sentences is unlikely from a logical point of view.

- (236) taṛataṛi se cokh namiye nilô, pache pôlaś mukh pheraÿ,  
quickly she eye lower.PP take.3.P.S in.case Polash face turn.3.PR.S  
pache tader cokhacokhi hōÿ.  
so.that.not their eye.contact be.3.PR.S

*She quickly lowered her eyes in case Polash turned his head, in order to avoid eye-contact.*

- (237) tini cōṭ kôre kichu bôllen na, pache bhul kôtha  
he quick do.PP something say.3H.P.S not so.that.not mistake word  
bôle phælen.  
say.PP throw.3.PR.S

*He didn't say anything immediately so as not to say the wrong thing.*

d. *yænô*

*yænô* has two distinct uses (i) meaning *as if* with no tense restrictions and (ii) meaning *so that* used with simple present verb forms and *na* preceding the verb.



i. *as if*

*yæmôn* and *kæmôn yænô* are also used with the same semanti scope. The example sentences below include all three variants.

- (238) ar amra sukher pichône chuṭi yænô  
and we happiness.GEN behind run.1.PR.S as.if  
yṭheṣṭô jore chuṭte parlei take dhṛa yabe.  
sufficient force.LOC run.IP be.able.to.CP.EMP it.OBJ catch.VN go.3.FUT  
*And we chase after happiness in the illusion that if we run fast enough we can grab hold of it.*
- (239) bṅchôr dui yabôṭi udâyâraýôṇ kæmôn yænô ñyôrkôm  
year two since.EMP Udaynarayan as.if other.way  
hôiye gæche.  
be.PP go.3.PR.PERF  
*It was as if Udaynarayan had somehow changed over the last two years.*
- (240) kintu ækhôn – nichôk klanti çara ar kichu sômbôndhe  
but now utter tiredness except more something about  
se yæmôn sṅcetôn nây.  
he as.if aware [is not]  
*But now it seemed as if he was unaware of anything but his utter exhaustion.*

ii. *yænô so that* (simple present, na before verb)

These sentences express intention or purpose.

- (241) nijer môdhye yṭôi ñyôrkôm laguk,  
self.GEN within how much other way feel.3.IMP  
manuṣer samne yænô mejaj bhalô thake.  
person.GEN before so that temper good stay.3.PR.S  
*However strange you feel, make sure you are even-tempered with other people.*
- (242) beś bhalô kôre khūṭiye khūṭiye dekhe nin.  
quite good do.PP examine.PP (x 2) see.PP take.2H.PR.IMP  
şeṣkal yænô na bṅlen ye ami apnake  
end.time so.that not say.2H.PR.S that I you.H.OBJ  
dhappa diṣechi.  
trick give.1.PR.PERF  
*Take a good, thorough look, so that in the end you won't say I was tricking you.*
- (243) chatrôra yænô bôhukal apnake mône rakhe.  
student.PL so.that long.time you.H.OBJ mind.LOC keep.3.PR.S  
*May the students remember you for a long time.*

## 8.5.2 Tense changes

Unexpected changes in tense provide an elegant and unobtrusive method of incorporating modals. There are no established rules for these changes but the examples below give an impression of the range of possibilities. More important than the actual tense is the fact of the change. The deviating verb forms are underlined.

future tense

The future tense has the modal element of intention, speculation or prediction built into it and is therefore perhaps the most obvious tense for modal expressions.

- (244) ar tor mamababur sãnge se-sešõn, svãpnõ bişãye sei ye  
 and your uncle.GEN with that session dream subject.LOC that that  
 re, yekhane ami amar jãler svãpnõtar mane jigyes  
 INT where I my water.GEN dream.CL.GEN meaning question  
 kôrechilum. unio khule bôlben na, amio na jene  
 do.1.P.PERF he.also open.PP speak.3H.FUT not, I.also not know.PP  
charbô na. ækhõn to maneta jani, uh, ætô  
 leave.1.FUT not now EMP meaning.CL know.1.PR.S INT so.much  
 hasi paÿ sedinkar kotha bhable.  
 laughter get.3.PR.S that.day.GEN word think.CP

*And that session with your uncle on the subject of dreams, when I asked him about the meaning of my water-dream. He wouldn't tell me straight and I wasn't willing to let it go without knowing... Now I know the meaning but, oh, how much I laugh when I think about those days.*

The modals in the above paragraph are the two underlined future tense occurrences in a past, even a past perfect context.

- (245) svamî take caÿ- kænõi ba caibe na?  
 husband she.OBJ want.3.PR.S why.EMP INT want.3.FUT not  
*Her husband wants her – why would he not want her?*
- (246) ghõri dekhlam. rat aṭṭa. ækhõn kôlkataÿ phirte  
 watch see.1.P.S night eight.CL now Kolkata.LOC return.IP  
 caile barõta beje yabe.  
 want.CP twelve.CL ring.PP go.3.FUT

*I looked at my watch. Eight o'clock. If I wanted to return to Kolkata now it would be midnight.*

present simple

- (247) tar nijer iccha hõlõ, se sãbaike śantõ kore.  
 his own.GEN wish be.3.P.S he everyone.OBJ peaceful do.3.PR.S  
*He wanted to calm everyone down.*

The positioning of *na* before the verb is an indication of modality in (248).

- (248) *aśiś caḡ ye ekhane beśi lok na ase.*  
 Ashish want.3.PR.S that here much person not come.3.PR.S  
*Ashish wants to stop too many people coming here.*

past simple

- (249) *pōnerō bōchōr dhōre ækṭa kṣōtōsthan ye ækhōno*  
 fifteen year during one.CL wound that still  
*æmōn kāca chilō, ke jantō?*  
 so raw [was] who know.3.P.HABIT  
*Who would have thought that after fifteen years a wound could still be so raw?*
- (250) *okhane jōmi kinte partō, baḡi kōrao ṣōmbhōb*  
 there land buy.IP be.able.to.3.P.HABIT home do.VN.also impossible  
*chilō na.*  
 [was] not  
*There they could have bought land and it would't have been impossible to make a home there.*
- (251) *icchamṭō pakhi hōte parle kṭō subidha chilō.*  
 wish.like bird be.IP be.able.to.CP how.much convenience [was]  
*ækbar akaśe uḡal dile pōth cenar kono ṣōmōsya*  
 one.time sky.LOC flight give.CP way know.VN.GEN any problem  
*nei. pakhider ṣōmaje loklōjja bōleo*  
 [is absent] bird.PL.GEN society.LOC public.disgrace say.PP.also  
*kichu nei. æmōn hōle to beś hṡḡ, śōrīṛta ar*  
 something [is absent] such be.3.P.S EMP quite be.3.PR.S body.CL more  
*rōilō na, atmaṭa pakhir mṭōn ṣōrbōtrō pōribhrōmōḡ*  
 stay.3.P.S not soul.CL bird.GEN like everywhere roaming  
*kōrte laglō.*  
 do.IP start.3.P.S  
*How convenient it would be to become a bird! Once up in the sky there would no problem in finding the way. There was no such thing as public disgrace in bird society. How good it would be if this could happen. The body would be no longer there, the soul could roam about freely like the birds.*

past perfect

- (252) *ar ekṭu hōle ami cēciḡe uthechilam praḡ.*  
 more a.bit be.CP I shout.PP rise.1.P.PERF almost  
*A little bit more and I would have started screaming.*

past habitual

Examples below show the modal uses of the past habitual. There are no unexpected tense changes involved here.

- (253) e sarṭṭa na pôre sada ṭi-sarṭṭa pôre asle hôtô.  
 this shirt.CL not wear.PP white T-Shirt.CL wear.PP come.CP be.3.P.HABIT.  
 oṭa nôṭun chilô ebom daghîn.  
 that.CL new [was] and spotless

*It would have been better to come wearing the white T-Shirt instead of this shirt.  
 That would have been new and spotless.*

- (254) hōyto se na ele bhalô kôrtô.  
 perhaps he not come.CP good do.3.P.HABIT  
*Perhaps it would have been better if he hadn't come.*

- (255) tumi khuśi hôte tar sōṅge alap kôre.  
 you happy be.2.P.HABIT he.GEN with acquaintance do.PP  
*You would have been happy to meet him.*

- (256) jante pere tar rag hôtô, duḥkhô hôtô.  
 know.IP be.able.to.PP his anger be.3.P.HABIT sadness be.3.P.HABIT  
*If he knew he would be angry and upset.*

### 8.5.3 Non-finite modal structures

Non-finite verb forms in connection with some of the very common verbs produce modal meanings such as prohibition, possibility, sufficiency, obligation. All Bangla verbs can participate in these structures, which are all impersonal, ie they have a third person finite verb form. In some cases a genitive experiencer subject can be expressed. Here is an overview of the structures with the verb *yaoṅa go* as an example.

	non-finite	example <i>yaoṅa go</i>	affirmative	negative	modal meaning
a.	CP	gele	hōy	hōy na	sufficiency
b.	CP	gele	cōle	cōle na	sufficiency
c.	IP	yete	hōy	hōy na	obligation
d.	IP	yete	ache	nei	acceptability
e.	CP negative	na gele	-	nōy	compulsion <i>must go</i>
f.	VN.GEN	yaoṅar	-	nōy	compulsion <i>must not</i>
g.	VN	yaoṅa	yaṅ	yaṅ na	possibility

Some of these structures have already appeared earlier in the book. Here are just a few examples for each of them, focussing on their modal properties.

(a) and (b) conditional participle with *cōla go*, *move* and *hōṅa be*, *become*

These structures express sufficiency in affirmative and interrogative contexts, *not enough* or *not good enough* in negative structures. Third person verb forms of *cɔla* and *hɔɔya* can be in any tense. There is no significant difference between *hɔɔya* and *cɔla* in these structures.

- (257) *śudhu tar sɔŋge kɔtha bɔlle hɔbe na.*  
 only he.GEN with word speak.CP be.3.FUT not  
*It is not enough just to talk to him.*
- (258) *ætô ɔlpô khele hɔy?*  
 such little eat.CP be.3.PR.S  
*Will eating so little be enough?*
- (259) *kɔkhôno kɔkhôno jor na kôrle cɔle na.*  
 sometimes (x 2) force not do.CP move.3.PR.S not  
*One has to use force occasionally.*

c. imperfective participle followed by a 3rd person form of *hɔɔya* *be, become*

This very common structure expresses obligation or what has to be done. What distinguishes it from all other impersonal structures in Bangla is the fact that the experiencer subject is usually in the object case, though genitive appearances also occur.

Sentences are structured like this:

experiencer subject in object or genitive case (can be omitted)	+	imperfective participle	+	3rd person of <i>hɔɔya</i> (any tense)	+	na
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The third person form of *hɔɔya* can be in any tense but the future tense is by far the most common for anything that is not in the past or has a habitual connotation.

When this structure is negated the obligation is taken away, ie there is *no need to...*

*hɔɔya* in future tense

- (260) *amake nijer hate hal dhôrte hɔbe.*  
 I.OBJ own.GEN hand.LOC control hold.IP be.3.FUT  
*I will have to take control myself.*
- (261) *ɔtôeb alo ar ɔndhokarer môdhyei ækta pɔth amader*  
 so light and darkness.GEN between.EMP one.CL path we.OBJ  
*beche nite hɔbe.*  
 choose.PP take.IP be.3.FUT  
*So we have to choose a path midway between light and darkness.*
- (262) *e niye masimake bystô kôrte hɔbe na.*  
 this about aunt.OBJ anxious do.IP be.3.FUT not  
*Aunt doesn't need to worry about that.*

হুওঁয়া in present simple for recurrent or habitual events

- (263) *śôrîr bhalô rakhar jônye bhalô khabar khete হুঁ.*  
 health good keep.VN.GEN for good food eat.IP be.3.PR.S  
*In order to be healthy one has to eat well.*
- (264) *roj to tar jônye alada ranna kôrte হুঁ.*  
 daily EMP he.GEN for separate cooking do.IP be.3.PR.S  
*But his food has to be cooked separately every day.*

হুওঁয়া in past simple for specific events in the past

- (265) *kajei thikanata caite hôlô.*  
 therefore address.CL ask.IP be.3.P.S  
*So (we) had to ask for the address.*
- (266) *nandinike rag gilte hôlô.*  
 Nandini.OBJ anger swallow.IP be.3.P.S  
*Nandini had to swallow her anger.*

হুওঁয়া in present continuous for ongoing, repeated events

- (267) *bôuke onek mithya bôlte hôcche.*  
 wife.OBJ many lie say.IP be.3.PR.C  
*He is having to tell his wife many lies.*
- (268) *amake to barbar erakôm baje kagôj philap*  
 I.OBJ EMP again.and.again this.kind pointless paper fill.up  
*kôrte hôcche.*  
 do.IP be.3.PR.C  
*I keep having to fill in all these pointless forms.*

হুওঁয়া in present perfect for unspecified events in the past

- (269) *prôtiți tamar pâyasa gunte hôyêche.*  
 each.CL copper.GEN penny count.IP be.3.PR.PERF  
*Each copper penny had to be counted.*

হুওঁয়া in past habitual for hypothetical contexts or habitual events in the past

- (270) *ta janle amake ætô kôştô kôrte hôtô na.*  
 that know.CP I.OBJ so.much trouble do.IP be.3.P.HABIT not  
*If I had known that, I would not have had to go to so much trouble.*

The obligation factor is sometimes weak or altogether absent.

- (271) *beśidin dhôre ya khuśi tai kôrte thakle ækdin*  
 many.day during what happy that.EMP do.IP stay.CP one.day

muškile pôrte hōy.  
 problem.LOC fall.IP be.3.PR.S

*If (she) carries on doing as she likes for a lot longer then one day she will get into trouble.*

When the conditional participle of hōyā is used, the obligation factor is absent in the conditional clause.

- (272) kōmti pete hōle prōtidin kagōjta kinte hōy.  
 discount get.IP be.CP every.day paper buy.IP be.3.PR.S  
*In order to get the discount one has to buy the paper every day.*

d. imperfective participle with ach- and nei

The nei version of this structure is common. The version with ach- appears occasionally in questions. The structure expresses acceptability or the lack of it. Forms of ach- are always in the third person and there is no animate subject.

Here are two examples with ache:

- (273) ekhane ki juta pôrte ache?  
 here what shoe wear.IP [is present]  
*Is it OK to wear shoes here?*
- (274) ete kichu khuśi hôte ache, ache na?  
 this.LOC something happy be.IP [is present] [is present] not  
*This is something to be happy about, isn't it?*

and the more common negative occurrences:

- (275) amar ki ækjɔn bon thakte nei naki?  
 I.GEN what one.CL sister be.IP [is absent] not what  
*I am not eligible to have a sister, is that it?*
- (276) æmōnbhabe nijeke prōśm̄sa kôrte nei.  
 such.way.LOC self.OBJ praise do.IP [is absent]  
*This kind of self-glorification is unacceptable.*
- (277) pōrikṣar mōdhye kōtha bōlte nei.  
 exam.GEN within word speak.IP [is absent]  
*No talking is acceptable during the exam.*

e. negated conditional participle with nōy is not

This structure has a strong compulsive force. The conditional participle is always negated, so we have a natural double negative. No animate subject is present. For the translation an affirmative structure with an emphatic *must* is usually appropriate; and an animate subject often needs to be added.

- (278) ajke baṛi na gele nōy.  
today home not go.CP [is not]  
*Today I simply have to go home.*
- (279) cālôccitrôṭa dekhechô? eṭa na dekhle nōy.  
film.CL see.2.PR.PERF this.CL not see.CP [is not]  
*Have you seen the film? You must see it.*
- (280) byæparṭar taṛataṛi siddhantô na hôle nōy.  
matter.CL.GEN quickly decision not be.CP [is not]  
lit: It won't do not to make a quick decision about this matter.  
*A quick decision must be made in this matter.*

f. genitive verbal noun plus nōy

This is another structure expressing what should or should not be done. In comparison to (e) this is less categorical but more gently dissuasive. Again this is an impersonal structure without an animate subject.

- (281) take amader ekhane thakte deoṅar nōy.  
he.OBJ our here stay.IP give.VN.GEN [is not]  
*He can't be allowed to stay at our house.*

amader ekhane lit: *our here* is a common colloquial alternative to amader baṛite *our house*.

- (282) ei byæpare rag kṛbar nōy.  
this matter.LOC anger do.bavN.GEN [is not]  
*This is nothing to get angry about.*
- (283) ekhane mōyla phele deoṅar nōy.  
here litter throw.PP give.VN.GEN [is not]  
*This is not a place for throwing away litter.*

g. verbal noun plus yaoṅa go to express possibility

This is one of the main impersonal structures in Bangla with the modal component of possibility. It is discussed with examples in Chapter 7.4.3 (d).

- (284) bôla yaṅ æksôṅge æk nôṭun pṛthibī amra gṛa  
say.VN go.3.PR.S together one new world we build.VN  
śuru kôri.  
start do.1.PR.S  
*You could say that together we are starting to build a new world.*

The expression bôla yaṅ *it is possible to say* is very commonly used in the search for the right expression: ki bôla yaṅ? *What can one say?*



- (285) cīṭhīṭa peṃye to ar cup kôre bôse thaka yaṃ na.  
 letter.CL get.PP EMP more quiet do.PP sit.PP stay.VN go.3.PR.S not  
 lit: after getting the letter it is not possible to stay sitting quietly.  
*After getting the letter he couldn't just keep quiet and do nothing.*
- (286) ei mōhilake bōla yaṃ na ye laine dāriṃe  
 this.EMP woman.OBJ say.VN go.3.PR.S not that line.LOC stand.PP  
 tharḍ klaser ṭikiṭ ami keṭe rekhechi.  
 third class.GEN ticket I cut.PP put.1.PR.PERF  
*It was impossible to tell this woman that I had stood in line and bought a third class ticket.*
- (287) bhabchilen sei chādṭake bamladeśer prôkītir sōṅge  
 think.3.P.C that.EMP style.CL.OBJ Bangladesh.GEN nature.GEN with  
 khap khaoṃano yaṃ kina.  
 agreement feed.VN go.3.PR.S what.not  
*He wondered whether or not that style could be brought in harmony with the natural features of Bangladesh.*

#### 8.5.4 Verbal noun with dārkar *need*, ucit *should ought*, kōtha *supposed to*

Of the non-finite structures given in 8.5.3 above, the imperfective participle with hōṃya (c) and the verbal noun with yaoṃya (g) far outweigh the other structures in terms of frequency of occurrence. Verbal noun structures with dārkar, ucit and kōtha are only a little less frequent than they are.

##### 8.5.4.1 dārkar *need*

This is an impersonal structure with a genitive experiencer subject. dārkar is a noun with an unresolved peculiarity in its case use.

When it stands on its own, preceding verbal nouns, other inanimate nouns and pronouns as well as non-specific animate nouns, are in the nominative. Personal pronouns and specific people (names) are in the object case.

##### a. dārkar alone, no case ending

- (288) tomar ekṭu biśram dārkar.  
 you.GEN a.bit rest need  
*You need some rest.*
- (289) tader ar ki dārkar?  
 they.GEN more what need  
*What else do they need?*

- (290) tar tomake dārkar.  
he.GEN you.OBJ need  
*He needs you.*
- (291) alocōnar śurute aro mōne rakha dārkar ye...  
discussion.GEN beginning.LOC more.also mind.LOC keep.VN need that...  
*At the beginning of the discussion we need to remember that...*
- (292) caraguloke bṛṣṭir hat theke rōkṣa kōra dārkar.  
plant.CL.PL.OBJ rain.GEN hand from protection do.VN need  
*The plants need to be protected from the rain.*

b. dārkar followed by a finite verb

When dārkar is followed by a finite verb, animate nouns and pronouns retain their objective endings:

amar take dārkar nei. *I don't need him.*

Verbal and other nouns change into the genitive.<sup>3</sup>

dārkar can link up with *ache is present*, with *pāra fall*, with *hōyā be* and, occasionally, with *kōra do*. Negation is very often done with *nei*, although the other verbs can, of course, also provide negations.

The expression dārkar nei! *no need!* is commonly used on its own to ward off over-eager sales-people.

- (293) śasōner ki dārkar nei?  
control.GEN what need [is absent]  
*Is there no need for control?*
- (294) tar sōnge majhe majhe kōtha bōlar dārkar pōre.  
he.GEN with sometimes word speak.VN.GEN need fall.3.PR.S  
*I sometimes need to speak to him.*
- (295) śeṣe ar bhabbar dārkar hōlō na.  
end.LOC more think.VN.GEN need be.3.P.S not  
*In the end there was nothing to worry about.*

3. There is no convincing agreement yet on the reason for the different cases used with dārkar. I have at times wondered whether dārkar preceded by a nominative verbal noun could be taken as a complement in a copulative sentence but the semantic relation between dārkar and its precedent is so clearly one of governing noun and direct object that this interpretation does not stand. More headway can probably be made in comparison with other abstract nouns like *karōṇ reason*, *suyog chance*, *uddeśyō purpose*, *ṁbōstha condition* and their preceding genitive verbal noun complements.

- (296) esɔb tarataɾi phele deoɣar dɔrkar ache.  
 this.all quickly throw.PP give.VN.GEN need [is present]  
*All of this needs to be thrown away quickly.*

#### 8.5.4.2 Verbal noun with ucit ought

The situation with ucit is much simpler. ucit is an adjective, the preceding verbal noun is in the nominative, animate subjects in the genitive. It is negated with nɔɣ̃, future and past tense are formed with hɔɔɣ̃a *be* and chilô *was* respectively. The translation of ucit in dictionaries is usually given as *proper*, which fits with the word class but is a bit weak in reflecting its modal features. ucit is used in situations where external moral codes or questions of propriety are under discussion.

ucit is used as an attributive adjective in two phrases:

ucit kɔtha reflects a whole world of political correctness, social acceptability and conventions, *what should be said or done* and ucit bybôhar *proper behaviour, the done thing*.

- (297) amar ki kichu bɔla ucit?  
 I.GEN what something say.VN proper  
*Should I say something?*
- (298) tar bhɔɣ̃ hɔcchilô meɣ̃eɣ̃i æmôn kichu bôle phelbe  
 his fear be.3.P.C girl.CL such something say.PP throw.3.FUT  
 ya tar šona ucit nɔɣ̃.  
 what.R he.GEN hear.VN proper [is not]  
*He was afraid that the girl might suddenly say something which he ought not to hear.*
- (299) apnake bišeş dhɔnyôbad dite asa ucit chilô amar.  
 you.H.OBJ special thanks give.IP come.VN proper [was] I.GEN  
*I should have come especially to thank you.*
- (300) kintu se nijeke yebhabe dekhe sebhabe  
 but he self.OBJ what.way.LOC.R see.3.PR.S that.way.LOC.CR  
 dækhbar amader ceşta kora ucit chilô.  
 see.bavN.GEN our attempt do.VN proper [was]  
*But we ought to have tried to see him in the way he sees himself.*

#### 8.5.4.3 Genitive verbal noun with kɔtha supposed to

The noun kɔtha has so many meanings and far-reaching uses that it is difficult to gauge whether the particular structure given here should count as a special use. There is no doubt, however, that it is modal, implying expectations, arrangements and the failure of the two. kɔtha is preceded by a genitive verbal noun, the structure is negated with nɔɣ̃

and formed with *chilô* in the past tense. There can be a genitive subject and there seem to be no future tense uses. Translations are quite varied, but the *supposed to* or *meant to* factor is fairly consistent.

- (301) eṭa śune tomar anôndô hōṣṭar kōtha.  
 this.CL hear.PP you.GEN joy be.VN.GEN word  
*You are supposed to be happy to hear this.*
- (302) karo janar to kōthao nōy.  
 someone.GEN know.VN.GEN EMP word.even [is not]  
*No one is even supposed to know about it.*
- (303) niyômer bytikrôm hōbar kōtha nōy.  
 rule.GEN violation be.VN.GEN word [is not]  
*The rule is not meant to be broken.*
- (304) ye manuṣ ghōṛir kaṭar nirdeś mene cōlen  
 that person clock.GEN hand.GEN directive obey.PP move.3H.PR.S  
 tār ohetuk bilōmbô hōṣṭar kōtha nōy.  
 he.H.GEN without.reason delay be.bavN.GEN word [is not]  
*Someone who lives by the dictates of the clock is not meant to be inexplicably delayed.*

## CHAPTER 9

# Lexical features

### 9.1 Pairings, Doublings, Onomatopoeia

Bangla has a great number of word pairs. The following is an overview of the types of doublings we find in Bangla with some examples.

#### 9.1.1 ... etcetera

The first word, either a noun or an adjective, is echoed by a meaningless rhyming word with a different initial consonant. This consonant is often *ɕ* but other consonants also occur. Some of these pairs are well established, others are spontaneous creations.

The purpose of these combinations is not to make short words longer but to add a note of nonchalance, casualness or depreciation: *and things like that*. Here are a few examples:

ɔŋkô-ɕŋkô	<i>maths etc</i>	prem-ɕrem	<i>love and romance</i>
ɔlpô-ɕlpô	<i>bits and pieces</i>	bôndhu-ɕôndhu	<i>friends</i>
alap-salap	<i>familiarity</i>	brɕti-ɕiɕti	<i>bad weather</i>
elomelo	<i>disorder</i>	byæpar-syæpar	<i>matters</i>
kaj-ɕaj	<i>work</i>	lɕja-ɕjja	<i>airs and graces</i>
kek-ɕek	<i>cakes</i>	ŕeŕ-meŕ	<i>end, conclusion</i>
gan-ɕan	<i>songs and such</i>	saban-ɕaban	<i>soap, cleaning materials</i>
cakri-bakri	<i>job</i>	hen-ɕen	<i>and so on</i>

This phenomenon can extend to verb-forms:

- (1) ekɕu bujhe-            sujhe            ɕlô.  
a bit understand.PP RHYMEWORD go.3.PR.IMP.  
*Tread a bit carefully.*
- (2) amra take pëcate-    ɕëcate            caini.  
we he.OBJ involve.IP RHYMEWORD not.want.1.PR.P.  
*We didn't want to involve him.*

### 9.1.2 Synonyms and near-synonyms

Two nouns, verbs or adjectives with the same or very similar meanings are paired up with an accumulative effect:

kothabarta	<i>discussion</i>	kagôj-pôtrô	<i>papers</i>
gôlpô-gujôb	<i>gossip</i>	gan-bajna	<i>music</i>
ghôr-baṛi	<i>buildings</i>	cithi-pôtrô	<i>correspondence</i>
chelepule	<i>offspring</i>	jôntu-janoṅgar	<i>animals</i>
jvak-jômôk	<i>pomp</i>	ṭaka-pôṅsa	<i>money</i>
ṭhaṭṭa-tamaśa	<i>mockery</i>	bôn-jôṅgôl	<i>woods</i>
bôla-kôṅya	<i>request</i>	bhabna-cinta	<i>thought</i>
mamla-mokôddôma	<i>court proceedings</i>	mayamômôta	<i>sympathy</i>

### 9.1.3 Accumulative

Two meaningful lexical items are combined to create an cumulative meaning

akar-iṅgit	<i>gestures and postures</i>	alap-pôricôṅ	<i>familiarity</i>
khal-bil	<i>waterways</i>	khun-kharapi	<i>bloodshed</i>
khæla-dhula	<i>sports</i>	cokh-mukh	<i>facial expression</i>
jñæn-bijñæn	<i>arts and science</i>	ḍal-bhat	<i>rice and lentils</i>
duḥkhô-daridrô	<i>distress and poverty</i>	dena-paona	<i>assets and liabilities</i>
dhôra-chôṅya	<i>reach, proximity</i>	nac-gan	<i>song and dance</i>
pôṅra-śona	<i>study</i>	phupiṅye-phâpiṅye	<i>exaggeratedly</i>
bôl-bhôrsa	<i>strength and support</i>	bach-bicar	<i>discrimination</i>
bicched-bedôna	<i>pains of separation</i>	bili-bybôstha	<i>orderly arrangement</i>
môṅi-rôtnô	<i>precious stones</i>	maṭh-ghaṭ	<i>field and wharf</i>
ma-baba	<i>parents</i>	mal-môsla	<i>ingredients and spices</i>
roga-patla	<i>emaciated</i>	luko-curi	<i>hide and seek</i>
lekha-pôṅra	<i>study</i>	śak-sôbji	<i>vegetables</i>
haṭ-bajar	<i>markets</i>	haṅi-patil	<i>pots and pans</i>
hat-pa	<i>hands and feet</i>	hasi-khuśi	<i>happy</i>

### 9.1.4 Echo words a-i pattern

The first component (often but not always a verbal noun) has a distinct meaning and is followed by an echo word.

aṅa-aṅi	<i>cross-wise</i>	from aṅa	<i>n</i>	<i>cross-beam</i>
kanakani	<i>secret whisperings</i>	from kan	<i>n</i>	<i>ear</i>
khôjakhôji	<i>continuous searching</i>	from khôja	<i>vb</i>	<i>search, look for</i>
kholakhuli	<i>frank, open</i>	from khola	<i>vb</i>	<i>open</i>

gɔlagôli	<i>close intimacy</i>	from	gɔla	<i>n</i>	<i>throat</i>
ghoraghuri	<i>wandering about</i>	from	ghora	<i>vb</i>	<i>turn about, revolve</i>
caṭacaṭi	<i>mutual flattery</i>	from	caṭa	<i>vb</i>	<i>lick</i>
culaculi	<i>scramble, quarrel</i>	from	cul	<i>n</i>	<i>hair</i>
ṭhækaṭheki	<i>contact</i>	from	ṭhæka	<i>vb</i>	<i>touch</i>
taṭataṭi	<i>hurry, quickly</i>	from	taṭa	<i>n</i>	<i>rush</i>
dɔladôli	<i>partisanship</i>	from	dɔl	<i>n</i>	<i>group</i>
damadami	<i>bargaining</i>	from	dam	<i>n</i>	<i>price</i>
pakapaki	<i>settled, finalised</i>	from	paka	<i>adj</i>	<i>ripe, mature</i>
baṛabaṛi	<i>excess</i>	from	baṛa	<i>vb</i>	<i>increase</i>
moṭamuṭi	<i>more or less</i>	from	moṭ	<i>n</i>	<i>total</i>

### 9.1.5 Opposite terms combine to give a comprehensive meaning

akaś-patal	<i>heaven and hell, everywhere</i>
aga-gora	<i>beginning and end</i>
alo-ādhar	<i>light and darkness</i>
alo-chaṛa	<i>light and shadow</i>
asôl-nakôl	<i>true and false</i>
asa-yaoṛa	<i>coming and going</i>
iccha-ṅiccha	<i>willy-nilly</i>
oṭha-nama	<i>up and down</i>
kena-beca	<i>selling and buying, trade</i>
ghore-baire	<i>home and abroad</i>
cɔla-phaṛa	<i>coming and going</i>
cena-ṅcena	<i>known and unknown</i>
choṭô-bṅṛô	<i>big and small</i>
jɔle-sthɔle	<i>on sea and land</i>
tola-pṅṛa	<i>rise and fall</i>
din-rat	<i>day and night</i>
pap-puṅṛô	<i>vice and virtue</i>
bhalô-mṅndô	<i>good and bad</i>
labh-loksan	<i>profit and loss</i>
sukh-duḥkh	<i>joy and sorrow</i>
har-jit	<i>victory and defeat</i>

### 9.1.6 Reduplication

Doubled adjectives, nominative and locative nouns have a variety of effects such as approximation almost (jvɔr-jvɔr *feverish*), intensity *very* (kache-kache *very close*),

gradual build-up (tile-tile *bit by bit*), multiplicity (sari-sari *in rows*), pervasiveness (yuge-yuge *through the ages*)

aste aste	<i>slowly</i>
æka æka	<i>lonely</i>
κ̣ọthạỵ κ̣ọthạỵ	<i>by the way</i>
ḳạ̄ṭạỵ ḳạ̄ṭạỵ	<i>on the dot, punctually</i>
cupe cupe	<i>secretly</i>
jore jore	<i>forcefully</i>
ṭukro ṭukro	<i>broken to pieces</i>
ṭonṇô ṭonṇô	<i>thoroughly</i>
dine dine	<i>day by day, gradually</i>
dhire dhire	<i>slowly</i>
nijinij	<i>respectively</i>
p̣oṛp̣oṛ	<i>one after another</i>
bar bar	<i>again and again</i>
ṃône ṃône	<i>secretly</i>
ṣokal ṣokal	<i>very early</i>
ṣọṅge ṣọṅge	<i>immediately</i>
hare hare	<i>to the bone</i>

### 9.1.7 Doubling of interrogatives and indefinite pronouns

The doubling of indefinites is discussed in Chapter 6.2.2 (f) and (g).

### 9.1.8 Doubling of verb forms

Doubled imperfective participle is discussed in Chapter 6.3.6.2.

ṃôrte ṃôrte ḅāca	lit:	survive on the point of dying = <i>have a lucky escape</i>
dekhte dekhte	lit:	seeing seeing = <i>immediately</i>
ḥôte ḥôte ḥôlô na	lit:	becoming becoming did not happen <i>a near miss</i>

Doubled finite verb forms are less common. When they occur they are used like adjectives.

yai yai çbôstha lit: I go, I go state = *on its last leg*

- (3) kiḍni yeṭa chilô seṭao yai yai çbôsthạỵ.  
 kidney that.CL [was] that.CL.also go.1.PR.S (x2) state.LOC  
*The kidney he still had was also failing.*

Doubling of finite verb forms often occurs as embedded direct speech, followed by *kôre having done*.



- (4) cōli cōli kôre bôse thakbe.  
 go.1.PR.S (x 2) do.PP sit.PP stay.3.FUT.  
*She will sit there saying that she is leaving.*

### 9.1.9 Onomatopoeia: dhv̄nyatm̄k (words whose soul is in their sound)

Onomatopoeia add colour, flavour and spice to the Bangla language. In one of Upen-drakishore Raychaudhuri's stories a farmer, Buddhur Bap, is desperately trying to chase away a flock of hungry birds from his rice fields. He shouts to them:

- (5) ebar ĩri-nĩri kĩri-bādhôn dekhiye debô.  
 this.time ĩri-nĩri kĩri-bādhôn show.PP give.1.FUT  
*This time I will show you ĩri niĩri kĩri bādhon.*

Of course there is no such thing as ĩri-nĩri kĩri-bādhôn but:

- (6) buddhur bap ar kono bh̄yanôk gal khūje na peye e  
 Buddhur Bap more any scary abuse search.PP not find.PP this  
 k̄tha b̄le.  
 word say.3.PR.S  
*Buddhur Bap couldn't think of a scarier term of abuse so he said it.*

This is the way onomatopoeia come about – when nothing else is quite expressive enough. The range of onomatopoeia in Bangla goes far beyond sound-imitating words and Rabindranath's<sup>1</sup> coinage of dhv̄nyatm̄k *soul in the sound* is probably the best way to describe them. The Greek word *ονοματοποιέω* (*onomatopoeio*) actually means name-making and has, by itself, no connotation of imitating sounds. I will therefore continue to use this word but in its expanded sense of word-creations, sound-pictures or sensory words.

Onomatopoeia are an open word class: new creations are added to the language all the time but there is a long list of well-established specimens. In order to increase our understanding of Bangla onomatopoeia they need to be recorded in context. Onomatopoeia can be interpreted as nouns or adjectives – many of them are used with *kôre having done* to make adverbs. The Samsad dictionary marks onomatopoeia as *interjection denoting* or *interjection expressing...* which is syntactically rather unsatisfactory. They constitute a distinct and coherent word class in Bangla and should be treated as such.

1. Rabindranath Tagore gives a comprehensive and fascinating account of onomatopoeia in his two books *Sobdototvo* (1885) and *Bangla bhasha poricoy* (1938).

There are a number of onomatopoeic variations such as the following:

কককক – ককাকক	<i>cutting, chopping</i>	কত্কত – কতাকত	<i>painful throbbing</i>
কহককহক – কহকাকহক	<i>haste</i>	গগগগ – গগাগগ	<i>rapid eating</i>
ত্কত্ক – ত্কাত্ক	<i>ticking</i>	ধহকধহক – ধহকাদধহক	<i>thudding etc</i>

The additional a between the two rhyming syllables does not change the meaning but adds an iterative or continuous aspect to the expression: কত্কত describes a painful throbbing, কতাকত an ongoing throbbing pain. Tagore says in *Shabdatattva Knowledge of words* (p 55): “The fact that an a-kar is inserted in some onomatopoeia and the change it causes to the meaning of that word is difficult to explain to a foreigner in meaningful language: When we say ত্কাত্ক we mean that after giving one ত্ক (rap) there is, after collecting all our strength, another ত্ক. The a expresses the momentary pause of getting ready for the repeated action.”

Tagore’s list of onomatopoeia is probably the most complete anyone has ever compiled, but what is more remarkable are his comments on the characteristics of particular sounds and the impact these sounds have. Here is an example:

“luci, nimki, kôcuri are delicious sounding items of food, but when we say luciphuci then the whole thing sounds unappetising”.<sup>2</sup>

Tagore also draws our attention to an important difference between descriptive adjectives and onomatopoeia. While adjectives like *loud* (sound) and *sweet* (taste) almost inevitably extend their meaning to other sensory contexts (*loud colours, sweet music*) onomatopoeia give one and only one sensory impression. They stand like soldiers ready to jump into action when their turn comes.

Bangla onomatopoeia are an absorbing field of study. Below is a list of just a few common onomatopoeia followed by a random mix of example sentences.

lexical item	semantic content	lexical item	semantic content
aiṭai	<i>uneasy</i>	agṛôm-bagṛôm	<i>idle talk</i>
ajebaje	<i>nonsense</i>	amta amta	<i>stuttering</i>
iniṣe biniṣe	<i>exaggerating</i>	uśkhuś	<i>restive, fidgeting</i>
কত্মত	<i>angry</i>	করকর	<i>rumbling</i>
kickmic	<i>grating</i>	kirimiri	<i>gnashing (teeth)</i>
khōskhōs	<i>rustling</i>	khākhā	<i>empty, desolate</i>
khicimici	<i>peevishness</i>	khilkhil	<i>giggling</i>
গগগগ	<i>rumble (thunder)</i>	গগগগ	<i>blazing</i>
gāgā	<i>bellowing</i>	guguj	<i>muttering</i>

2. Tagore, *Sobdotottvo*, Rabindra roconaboli, 4th volume, p. 37.

ghuṭghuṭ	<i>dark, black</i>	ghinghin	<i>loathsome</i>
cəkək	<i>bright, glittering</i>	cəṭcəṭ	<i>sticky</i>
cəṭpəṭ	<i>quick, prompt</i>	cəncənc	<i>smarting</i>
cirḃir	<i>itching, irritation</i>	cincin	<i>mild pain</i>
chəmcəmc	<i>eerie</i>	chəpəchəp	<i>splashing</i>
jhājhā	<i>severe heat</i>	jhījhī	<i>pins and needles</i>
jhilimili	<i>sparkling</i>	jhurjhur	<i>rapid drizzle</i>
ṭəgbəṭ	<i>bubbling (water)</i>	ṭəntənc	<i>sharp pain</i>
ḃəṭgməṭ	<i>brimming, overflowing</i>	ḃhulḃhul	<i>drowsiness</i>
təṛbət	<i>rapid, hurried</i>	tirḃirḃirḃ	<i>quick jumping</i>
thəsthəc	<i>wet, moist</i>	thurthur	<i>unsteady</i>
dəpədəp	<i>blazing</i>	dəldəld	<i>excessively soft</i>
daudau	<i>burning fiercely</i>	duldul	<i>dangling</i>
dhikdhik	<i>smouldering</i>	dhumdhum	<i>grand</i>
nadus-nudus	<i>podgy, plump</i>	nispis	<i>restlessness</i>
pəipəi	<i>repeatedly</i>	phəṛphəṛ	<i>buzzing</i>
phəṣṭinəṣṭi	<i>banter, witticism</i>	phikphik	<i>giggle</i>
phitphəṭ	<i>spick and span</i>	phisphis	<i>whispering</i>
phurphur	<i>gently blowing</i>	phyælfhyælf	<i>vacant look</i>
birḃir	<i>mumbling</i>	bəbəb	<i>whirring</i>
michimichi	<i>useless</i>	minmin	<i>mumbling</i>
ləklək	<i>lolling, dangling</i>	ləṭləṭ	<i>supple, pliant</i>
səpsəp	<i>wet</i>	sirsir	<i>tingling</i>
həmbi-təmbi	<i>bullying, intimidation</i>	həkəhək	<i>shouting</i>
hapus-hupus	<i>noisy eating</i>	hijibiji	<i>illegible</i>

Here are some examples in context. The Bangla onomatopoeia have been kept in the glosses. The English translations are often rather more prosaic than the originals.

ri ri expr: *disgust, abhorrence*

- (7) sara śōrīr yæ nō ri ri kōre uṭhlō.  
 whole body as.if ri ri do.PP rise.3.P.S  
*My whole body recoiled in abhorrence.*

thəṛthəṛ expr: *violent shaking*

- (8) amar hat-pa bhīṣṭṇ bhəyē thəṛ thəṛ kōre kəpte laglō.  
 my hand foot extreme fear thəṛ thəṛ do.PP shiver.IP start.3.P.S  
*In great fear I started shivering all over.*

ঢ়ঢ় ঢ়ঢ় expr: *smacking, slapping sound*

- (9) tar choṭô duṭi cōṭi ঢ়ঢ়-ঢ়ঢ় kôrche tar bhabnar  
 her small two.CL sandal ঢ়ঢ়-ঢ়ঢ় do.3.PR.C her thought.GEN  
 chōnder tale tale.  
 rhythm.GEN beat.LOC (x2).  
*Her two small sandals were slapping to the rhythm of her thoughts.*

khā khā expr: *gaping emptiness.*

- (10) paṛar ṭhik prantôbôrti prôkaṇḍô ækṭa  
 village.GEN exact border huge one.CL  
 bōṭgach chilô, sekhanṭa ækhôn khā khā kôrche.  
 banyan.tree [was present] there.CL now khā khā do.3.PR.C  
*Right at the border of the village there used to be a huge banyan tree.  
 That place is now empty.*

jhōmjhōm expr: *booming*

- (11) tarpṛ elô brṣṭi. sōmôstô bôn beje uṭhlô  
 then come.3.P.S rain whole forest sound.PP rise.3.P.S  
 jhōmjhōm kôre.  
 jhōmjhōm do.PP  
*Then came the rain. The whole forest reverberated with its sound.*

kiṛkiṛ expr: *grinding, gnashing*

- (12) rage dāt kiṛkiṛ kôrche.  
 anger.LOC tooth kiṛkiṛ do.3.PR.C  
*He is gnashing his teeth in anger.*

jhōkjhōk expr: *sparkling*

- (13) du kane dul jhōkjhōk kôrche.  
 two ear.LOC earring jhōkjhōk do.3.PR.C  
*Earrings are sparkling on both her ears.*

khōcmōc expr: *fuss, carping*

- (14) šeṣe pācumama khōcmōc kôre beñcite uṭhe bôslô.  
 finally Pachumama khōcmōc do.PP bench.LOC get up. PP sit.3.P.S  
*Finally, with a big fuss, Pachumama climbed onto the bench and sat down.*

tənnô tənnô expr: *thoroughness*

- (15) prôthôme sara baři tənnô tənnô kôre khûje dekhlô.  
 first.LOC whole home tənnô tənnô do.PP search.PP see.3.P.S  
*First they searched the whole house thoroughly.*

jhiri jhiri expr: *drizzling rain*

- (16) joralo haoÿar sənge jhiri jhiri brşti şuru hólô.  
 strong wind.GEN with jhiri jhiri rain start be.3.P.S  
*With the strong wind a drizzly rain started.*

gurgur expr: *rumbling*

- (17) radhar buker môddhe gurgur kôre uşlô.  
 Radha.GEN breast.GEN within gurgur do.PP rise.3.P.S  
*Radha was getting upset.*

gijgij expr: *overcrowding*

- (18) şohôrţi ıctôi gjigije o dūşitô hok na kænô,  
 town.CL so.much.EMP gjigije and polluted be.3.PR.IMP not why  
 eke çere kothao giÿe beşidin  
 it.OBJ leave.PP somewhere go.PP many.day  
 thakte pari na.  
 stay.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S not  
*However crowded and polluted the town may be, I can't bear to be  
 away from it for very long.*

The final sentence (19) contains three doublings:

- bařighor (synonyms) *houses*
- gachpala (accumulative) *trees and plants*
- dhuÿemuche (perfective participles of dhoÿa *wash* and of mocha *wipe*)

as well as an onomatopoeic expression.

phitphat expr: *spick and span*

- (19) cardike bařighor gachpala sɔb kichu  
 four.direction.LOC house.building tree.plant all everything  
 dhuÿemuche phitphat.  
 wash.PP.wipe.PP phitphat  
*The houses and trees all around, everything was immaculately clean.*

## 9.2 Idioms

This section brings together the idiomatic features of some frequent and heavy-duty lexical items, adding the traits which have not been dealt with elsewhere in the book. Section 9.2.1 deals with special uses of common verbs, 9.2.2 with nouns and 9.2.3 with adjectives. Only a small selection can be given here. No glosses are given.

### 9.2.1 Verbs

The following section shows special features and idiomatic uses of some very common verbs.

They are (a) *asa* come and *yaoÿa* go (b) *oṭha* rise, get up (c) *kaṭa* cut and *kaṭano* cause to cut (d) *khaoÿa* eat (e) *caoÿa* want (g) *jana* know (h) *dækha* see (i) *paoÿa* get (j) *para* be able to (k) *bola* say, speak (l) *mana* accept and *manano* fit, suit.

a. *asa* come and *yaoÿa* go

i. directionality

Both these verbs are more restricted than their English equivalents in their directions towards and away from the speaker. The speaker cannot *come* to a place where he is not:

“I will come to your house tomorrow” will be “*ami kalke tomar baṛite yabô.*”

If you are going somewhere and want your brother to come with you, you will say:

tumi ki amar sãṅge yabe? (not asbe)

*Will you come with me?*

ii. *ese-yaÿ.*

kichu *ese-yaÿ* na.

*It makes no difference.*

This is an idiomatic use expressing indifference. It is common in negative sentences and in questions. Examples were found in the simple present, simple past, present continuous and future tense. Occasionally we find *ase-yaÿ* both simple present 3rd person verb forms, or the reversed order *yaÿ-ase*. The topic whose significance is under discussion is in the locative case, animate nouns or pronouns in the genitive.

tate kichu *ese-yaÿ* na.

*That doesn't matter.*

A genitive experiencer subject can be added in these structures:

sôrmita kar tate amar ki *ese-yaÿ*?

*What does it matter to me who Sharmita belongs to?*

amar raji ɔrajite ese-yaŷ ki?  
*Does it matter whether I agree or not?*

Occasionally affirmative statements occur:

“tate ki ese-yaŷ?” “khubi ese yaŷ.”  
*‘What does it matter?’ ‘It matters a great deal.’*

b. oṭha *get up, rise*

oṭha is one of the important compound makers and combines with a great number of other verbs. Here we look at some of its other uses.

prôsnô oṭhe *questions arise* and kôtha oṭhe *word arise* are often used in negative structures to imply that something was *out of the question* or too absurd to consider.

æka æka kothao yaoŷar to prôsnô oṭhe na.  
*(Her) going out on her own is out of the question.*

The use of oṭha can be tricky as it has two diametrically opposite meanings.

On its own it means *arise, come up, appear*:

sûryô (cād) uṭheche.	<i>The sun (moon) has come up.</i>
baccar dāt uṭheche.	<i>The baby is teething.</i>
jhɔɾ uṭhe.	<i>There will be a storm.</i>
tar nam oṭheni.	<i>His name did not come up.</i>

In compounds with yaoŷa *go* it means *disappear, be dissolved, come off, fade*:

tar cul uṭhe yacche.	<i>His hair is falling out.</i>
śarir kapôrer rɔm uṭhe gæche.	<i>The colour of the saree has faded.</i>
purono niŷômṭa uṭhe gæche.	<i>The old system has been abolished.</i>

oṭha-pɔra as a noun-pair means *rise and fall* but it can also imply confusion or aimlessness:

lokṭi uṭhi-pôri kôre chuṭe yacche. *The man is running haphazardly.*

c. kaṭa *cut* – kaṭano *cause to cut*

Both kaṭa and kaṭano have a variety of idiomatic uses. The most common is in relation to time:

kaṭa (with sômôŷ *time*) means *pass, go by, elapse*

bɔchôr derek emni keṭe gælô.	<i>One and a half years passed just like that.</i>
sômôŷ ar kaṭe na.	<i>Time hangs heavy.</i>

se sômôŷṭa amar mar bhalô kaṭeni.  
*My mother was not having a good time then.*

tar dingulo kaṭbe kono apiser ꠘndhōkar khuprite.  
*His days will be spent in a dark corner in some office.*

sômōy kaṭano *spend time*

amra khub sundôr ækṭa din kaṭalam.      *We spent a beautiful day.*  
 bikhari gachṭolāy rat katay.              *The beggar spends the night under the tree.*  
 tini ôti kōṣṭe kal kaṭiye esechen.      *He has had a very rough time.*

other idiomatic uses of kaṭa:

*sell, make an impact*

humayun ahōmeder bōi bajare beś kaṭche.  
*Humayun Ahmed's books are selling quite well.*

*clear, disappear*

akaśṭa ækhôn pôriṣkar, megḥ keṭe gæche.  
*The sky is clear now, the clouds have disappeared.*  
 kuṣāśa kaṭche. *The fog is clearing.*

*destroy, kill*

pokaṣ bōiṭi keṭeche. *Bookworms have eaten through the book.*  
 ꠘnek soinyô kaṭa pôreche. *Many soldiers were killed.*

dag kaṭa *mark, hurt*

tar kōṭhaṭa kintu mōne khub dag keṭeche.  
*But his words hurt me deeply.*

jibh kaṭa *bite tongue, be embarrassed*

kōṭhaṭa śune meṣeṭi jibh keṭe sôre gælô.  
*When she heard this, the girl left in embarrassment.*

bhōy kaṭa *dispel fear*

tar sōṅge kōṭha bōlar ꠘr bhōy keṭe gæche.  
*The fear went away after I talked to him.*

with bipꠘd (phāra, sōṅkōṭ) *danger: pass by*

bipꠘd keṭe gæche. *The danger has passed.*

bipꠘd (phāra, sōṅkōṭ) kaṭano *avert danger*

æk phāra kaṭiye ar æk bipꠘde ꠘra.  
 lit: having averted one danger fall into another danger  
*go from the frying pan into the fire*

d. *khaoṣa eat*

khaoṣa includes all types of oral consumption such as breathing, drinking, smoking and kissing and often expands to *be at the receiving end of*.



achre khaoÿa *fall, tumble*  
 khabi khaoÿa *gasp*  
 gali khaoÿa *be rebuked*  
 gota khaoÿa *fall headlong*  
 ghurpak khaoÿa *spin around*  
 ghuş khaoÿa *take a bribe*  
 cakri khaoÿa *get someone sacked*  
 cumu khaoÿa *kiss*  
 ʔaka khaoÿa *use up money*  
 thətmət khaoÿa *be disconcerted, be embarrassed*  
 mar khaoÿa *get beaten up*  
 loksan khaoÿa *make a loss*  
 hōcōt khaoÿa *stumble, trip*

e. caoÿa *want, look at*

caoÿa has two separate meanings.

i. *look at*

In the sense of *looking* caoÿa is used with dike *towards*.

se nôdir dike ceÿe dāracche.

*He is standing looking towards the river.*

caoÿa in this use often appears in compound verbs, verbal sequences or in imperfective participle structures:

meÿeṭi amar dike ceÿe rôilô. *The girl kept looking at me.*

se chōbiṭar dike ar caite pareni.

*She could not look at the picture anymore.*

ar ækbar janalar bairer dike ceÿe ratṭa kōtô dūr andaj kōrlô.

*One more time she looked out of the window to guess how late it was.*

But we also find sentences like:

tini cokh mele cailen. *He opened his eyes and looked.*

ii. caoÿa meaning *want* can appear in all tenses when it is preceded by a direct object or an imperfective participle.

nili kōlsiṭa cacche.

*Nili wants the water-jug.*

ami tader sōnge yete ceÿechilam.

*I wanted to go with them.*

tara am khete cacche.

*They want to eat some mangoes.*

Simple present tense occurrences have an added decisiveness:

apni ki can bôlun to. *Just tell me what you want.*

amra prôtyek manuṣke nijer sãnge mapsôï kôre dekhte cai,  
tarpər ekṭu gɔrmil hôlei cyãcameci kôre uṭhi.

*We want every human being to conform to our own standards  
and then if they don't we make a big fuss.*

An idiomatic structure is the use of the simple present of caoṡa with an imperative subordinate content clause:

apni ki can se ei kotha bôluk?  
*Do you want him to say this?*

f. jana *know*

jana has some peculiarities in its tense use – in fact its tense use splits the verb into two quite distinct meanings. To a lesser extent this split can also occur with verbs of comprehension like bojha *understand* or dækha *see* but it is particularly poignant with jana.

i. past simple

In the past simple jana is often used with fixed points of time in the past and means *learn, find out about, come to know*

ami ta prôthôme janlam se din.  
*I first found out about this that day.*

byæparṭa yãkhôn janlen tãkhôn tar môner śanto bheṇe pôrlô.  
*When he found out about this matter his peace of mind was shattered.*

aj janlam ye se ar phirbe na.  
*I found out today that he wasn't coming back.*

ii. past habitual

The past habitual is used to indicate a past awareness: *know, be aware of*

amra śudhu tar nam jantam.  
*We only knew his name.*

This means that the past habitual of jana operates as the normal past tense form when jana means *know, be aware of*

tini ye gɔtô bõchôr mara gæchen tumi ki jante na?  
*Didn't you know that he died last year?*

ami ye cakriṭa kôrchi ta dada çbôśyô jantô.  
*Of course Dada knew that I had this job.*

ækhôno ætô raktô jhôrte pare, ke janto?

*Who would have guessed that so much blood could still flow?*

Here is a sentence which combines the two uses:

age jantam na, ækhôn janlam.

*I didn't know this before but now I have found out.*

iii. present perfect

The present perfect uses of jana again split into the two different meanings:

affirmative: *find out, learn*

pore jenechi...

*Later we found out...*

er môdhya amra jene gechi...

*By now we have come to know...*

kaj ye peyechis, ta tor ÷aka pañhanote jenechi.

*We knew that you had found a job because you were sending money.*

negative: *know, be aware of*. It seems that the use of the present perfect can provide a time element which is absent with the past habitual. All the example sentences contain kakhôno *ever*.

eri age kakhôno ami janini ba jijñes kôrini...

*Up until now I had never known or never asked...*

æmôn çompürñô çpôrûp řaririk řanti se kakhôno janeni.

*He had never known such complete and incomparable physical peace.*

iv. verbal noun

jana is also frequently used as a verbal noun with *ache be, exist*. This structure implies *awareness of*:

tader biye ye hôyeche tomar ki jana nei?

*Were you not aware that they got married?*

se ye çõ kôre e rçkôm ækta laisens peye yabe se kçtha jana chilô na amar.

*I was not aware that he would get this kind of licence so quickly.*

g. dækha *see*

dækha is similar in scope to the English *see* but its actual uses are quite specific as dækha on its own tends to refer to the specific physical act of seeing.

dækha with a direct object:

ami prôdôrsônîça dekhechi.

*I have seen the exhibition.*

amra ækṭa sap dekhlam.

*We saw a snake.*

in connection with meeting and seeing human beings:

direct object:

ami take dekhlam.

*I saw him, maybe from a distance, but did not speak to him.*

dækha hōṃa *meet*, whether by design or chance

tar sōṅge dækha hōyeche.

*I met him, perhaps by chance, and talked to him.*

kalke tar sōṅge dækha hōbe.

*I will see him tomorrow.* (we work in the same place or we are going to the same event). Not necessarily a deliberate meeting.

tar sōṅge praṃi dækha hōṃ.

*I often see him.* (our paths cross)

abar dækha hōbe.

*See you again!* This is a common phrase for saying goodbye.

dækha kōra *meet*, by design

amader dækha kōrte hōbe.

*We need to meet.* (we have something to discuss)

tar sōṅge dækha kōrbō na.

*I will not meet up with him.*

other uses of dækha:

dækha yaoṃa *become apparent*

tarpore sujatar sōtyikarer cehara dækha gælō.

*After that Sujata's true nature became apparent.*

Examples for dækha deoṃa *appear* and dækha paoṃa *manage to see* are given in Chapter 6.3.6.1.5.

Both dækha *see* and its causative dækhano *show* are used to talk about physical appearance. The object of seeing goes into the object case, except in connection with an imperfective participle. This structure is given first.

kintu ki sundōr ækhōno tini dekhte.

*But how beautiful she still looks!*

take khub khuśi deklam.

*He looked very happy to me.*

se amake kōkhōno mōnmāra dekheni.

*He has never seen me depressed.*

The structures with *dækhano show* are impersonal.

beś sōtej o susthō dækhacche gachguloke ækhôn.

*The trees look quite alive and healthy now.*

se blauje çpūrbō dækhacche ônuradhake.

*Onuradha looks wonderful in that blouse.*

lokṭike khub uttejito dækhacchilō.

*The man looked very worked up.*

As with *bōla say* the perfective participle of *dækha* can follow a subordinate clause in a linking function.

se rajmōśaika deri kōrar kono karōṇ dite pare na dekhe bōllō, bairer pṛthibike khubi nirmōl dekhacche.

*Realising that he could not give the king any reason for his delay, he said, 'The weather looks very nice.'*

*dekhte-dekhte* is an adverb meaning *in an instant, immediately*

tai amra dekhte pai sthōlbhūmite asar pōr ghūrṇijhōṛ

dekhte dekhte durbōl hōye yaṅ.

*So we see that on reaching dry land the cyclone immediately weakens.*

h. *paoṅa get, receive*

With verbs of sensual perception *paoṅa* replaces *para be able to* to express ability. The preceding verb is in the imperfective participle.

megh chilō bōle amra pahārgulo dekhte paini.

*Because of the clouds we couldn't see the mountains.*

ṭeliphon lainṭa æmōn kharap kichu śunte paoṅa yaṅ na.

*The phone-line is so bad that one can't hear anything.*

In the following sentence the role of *paoṅa* has been expanded, following on from the first *dekhte paoṅa be able to see*:

tomake saradin dekhte pabō, tomar kache thakte pabō,

tomar sōṅge kōtha bōlte pabō.

*I will be able to see you all day and to be with you and talk to you.*

paoḳa is used idiomatically with a number of abstract nouns:

bhḳḳ paoḳa *get scared*

o kichute bhḳḳ paḳ na.  
*He is not afraid of anything*

sahḳs paoḳa *muster the courage, be brave*

ami ækla yete sahḳs pacchi na.  
*I don't have the courage to go by myself.*

ḳobha paoḳa *be seemly, be fitting, be proper*

meḳecheler ḳḳḳge jhḳgra kḳra puruḳder ḳobha paḳ na.  
*It is not seemly for men to argue with girls.*

amod paoḳa and mḳja paoḳa *be amused*

er mḳdhye ækḳa ḳḳke dekhe ami bhari amod pelam.  
*At that time I saw a group that caused me great amusement.*

tara mḳja pelḳ.  
*They were amused.*

svḳsti paoḳa *be comforted, be relieved*

boner kache giḳe jḳḳdḳp svḳsti pelḳ.  
*When he went to see his sister Jaydip was relieved.*

paoḳa is used with the perfective participle of khḳja *search* (see Chapter 6.3.5.13).

It is also used in negative contexts with the perfective participle of bhaba *think*:

bhebe na paoḳa *not be able to think, imagine*

prḳnḳbeḳ ki uttḳr deben bhebe pacchilen na.  
*Pranabesh had no idea what to reply.*

o bhebe paḳ na sei drḳḳi kothaḳ gælḳ.  
*He couldn't understand where that vision had gone.*

i. para *be able to, be possible, may*

para can combine with a preceding imperfective participle to express ability, permission or possibility:

ability:	ami ranna kḳrte parḳ	<i>I will be able to cook.</i>
permission:	tumi ækhḳn yete parḳ.	<i>You may go now.</i>
possibility:	se baniḳe bḳlteo to pare.	<i>He may be lying.</i>

Unlike the English *can*, *para* is a full verb which can stand on its own without a preceding imperfective participle:

ami babar sōṅge pari na.  
*I can't (compete) with father.*

se khub bhalô sâtar pare.  
*He is a very good swimmer.*

When a negated *para* is preceded by a negation, the imperfective participle changes to a perfective participle. The semantic impact of this structures is *unable to resist*, *can't help doing* or, in impersonal structures *be inevitable*.

sucitra kêde na uṭhe pareni.  
*Suchitra couldn't help crying.*

śeṣ pōryōntô prôdīp kichu na bôle parlô na.  
*In the end, Prodig couldn't remain silent.*

e prôśnô mōne na ese pare na.  
*This question comes to mind inevitably.*

Both the imperfective participle with *para* and the verbal noun with *yaoṅa* can express possibility, but while the imperfective plus *para* is a personal structure, the verbal noun plus *yaoṅa* structure is impersonal.

personal:	tomra oidike yete parbe.	<i>You can go that way.</i>
impersonal:	oidike yaoṅa yaṅ.	<i>It is possible to go that way.</i>
personal	ami bôlte parbô na.	<i>I am unable to say.</i>
impersonal:	bôla yaṅ na.	<i>It is impossible to tell.</i>

These two structures, particularly with the verb *bôla* *say*, often get linked together for a stronger impact. There are two ways of combining them:

1. imperfective participle + verbal noun of *para* = *para* + third person of *yaoṅa* or
2. verbal noun + imperfective participle of *yaoṅa* = *yete* + third person of *para*.

(1) kōthaṭa bôlte para yaṅ.      or (2) kōthaṭa bôla yete pare. *It is possible to say this.*

Note that the impersonal character of the verbal noun + *yaoṅa* structure remains in place and neither of these sentences can take a personal subject.

ajker bhaṣaṅ bôla yete pare ye...  
*In modern language it is possible to say that...*

sei manuṣer samne giye dārate para yabe?  
*Is it possible to go and stand in front of that man?*

se ætô cōñcōl ye take samlate para yaṅ na.  
*He is so restless that he can't be restrained.*

j. bōla *say, speak, tell*

The Bangla verb *bōla* is always bivalent and has a direct object except in elliptical uses like.

ami bōlbô na. *I won't tell.*

For the English *talk* Bangla uses *kōtha bōla* lit: *speak word*.

ætô kōtha bōlbe na.  
*Don't talk so much.*

aste aste kōtha bōlte hōbe.  
*(We) will have to talk quietly.*

For all other contexts the direct object is equivalent to English uses:

se ki bōleche?  
*What did he say?*

se kichu bōleni.  
*He didn't say anything.*

*bōla* can become a trivalent verb with an indirect as well as a direct object:

ami tomake sob bōlbô.  
*I will tell you everything.*

The imperfective participle of *bōla* is used to explain terminology and word use. It can occur with forms of *bojhano* *explain* or as an independent clause.

ai i bōlte ki bojhaṅ?  
*What is meant by i.e?*

jōler dame bōlte bojhaṅ binamūlyô.  
*Saying "for the price of water" means that it comes free.*

sahôsi bōlte ekhane cōnek chele ache.  
*There are many boys here who could be called courageous.*

lōjja bōlte tader kichu nei.  
*They have no such thing as shame.*



k. *mana* respect, accept and *manano* suit, fit

*mana* ranges in meaning from *pay heed, listen, believe* to respect and an acceptance of particular rules.

ei dhɔrôner kono tɔrkô uɥhle šés pôryôntô amake har mante hɔy.

*When there is an argument of this kind, in the end I will have to admit defeat.*

tar kɔtha ami mene nite parchi na. *I can't accept what he is saying.*

sɔmajer ain-kanun mene côleche. *They followed the rules of society.*

yænô ghôrir kâtao æmôn niyôm mene cɔle na.

*It seems as if the hands on the clock don't follow such a system either.*

ei rɔkôm kusɔmskarer kɔtha amra mani na.

*We don't listen to this kind of superstitious talk.*

*manano* fit, suit

bokar mɔtô kɔtha bôlben na. bokar mɔtô kɔtha bɔla apnake manaŷ na.

*Don't talk like a fool. Talking like a fool does not suit you.*

šariṭa take khub manaŷ.

*The saree suits her very well.*

rɔmṭa tomake manaŷ na.

*The colour does not suit you.*

## 9.2.2 Nouns

l. *kɔtha* statement, utterance, fact

*kɔtha* is quite possibly the most widely used noun in Bangla and covers everything from an individual statement to a whole philosophy or theory.

*kɔtha* can be used with personal pronouns to talk about people, particular in connection with memories and opinions about these people. Where in English we say directly *I remember him*, in Bangla we are likely to say *tar kɔtha amar mône ache*.

tar kɔtha bad dao.

*Stop talking about him.*

tomar kɔtha ami kichui jani na.

*I know nothing about you.*

amar kɔtha ki bôlechen?

*What did he say about me?*

se s̄ob s̄omôȳ tar nijer k̄otha b̄ole.  
*He is always talking about himself.*

noun-verb combinations:

k̄otha deōya *promise*

se amake kono k̄otha d̄ēȳni.  
*He did not promise me anything.*

k̄otha rakha *keep a promise*

se c̄nek kichu b̄ole kintu k̄otha rakhe na.  
*He says a lot but he does not keep his promises.*

k̄otha baṛano *elaborate*

ami ar e niye k̄otha baṛai ni.  
*I didn't elaborate any more on this.*

k̄otha cheṛe deōya *drop a subject*

ar ki b̄olte h̄obe? k̄othaṭa cheṛe dao.  
*What else needs to be said? Drop the subject!*

m̄ôner k̄otha *private thoughts*

tar m̄ôner k̄otha ami ar kichui jani na.  
*I don't know any longer what he really thinks.*

baje k̄otha *nonsense*

lokṭi c̄nek baje k̄otha b̄ole.  
*The man talks a lot of nonsense.*

ucit k̄otha *appropriate talk*

ucit k̄otha chaṛa kichu b̄ola h̄obe na.  
*Nothing will be said apart from what ought to be said.*

uṛo k̄otha lit: flying words = *rumours*

uṛo k̄othate kan diyo na.  
*Don't listen to rumours!*

tucchô k̄otha *unimportant matter*

seṭa kichu kc̄ȳ, tucchô k̄otha.  
*That's nothing, a mere trifle.*

dürer kɔtha (1) *something a long way off*

nije hätte para ækhôno dürer kɔtha.  
*Being able to walk by himself is still a long way off.*

(2) *something not to be mentioned, out of the question, taboo*

ækhôn khete bôse kæmôn yænô lɔjja paý. rannar sɔmalocôna to dürer kɔtha.  
*Now when he sits down to eat he feels embarrassed. Discussing the cooking is out of the question.*

bɔɾô kɔtha *important matter, real issue or big words*

bɔɾô kɔtha pôryôntô bɔla hɔýni.  
*The real issue was not talked about.*

rakhô rakhô bɔɾô kɔtha!  
*Spare me your sermon!*

Uses of kɔtha with a preceding genitive verbal noun are given in Chapter 8.5.4.3.

m. kaj *work, deed, action, result*

kaj is not just work but any deed or action that human beings undertake.

eg: tar kach theke bidaý niýe asar kajti sɔhøj hɔýni.  
*It was not easy to say good-bye to him.*

fixed phrases:

kajer manuş, kajer lok *someone who works hard*  
 kajer lok can also mean *servant or employee*  
 kajer jinis *something that serves a particular purpose*  
 kajer neşa *workaholic*

kaje bystô *busy*

se sɔb sômôý kaje bystô  
*He is always busy*

kaje laga *use*

jinişta caka bɔɔdlanor kaje lage na.  
*That thing is useless for changing a tyre.*

eða phele diyo na, ækhôno kaje lagbe.  
*Don't throw this away – it will still be useful.*

kaj hcoÿa *get a result*

take ðakle kaj hôÿe yabe.  
*If we call him the job will get done.*

n. ga *body*

gaÿe makha lit: apply to the body *accept, take to heart*

meÿeÿi bçrô jedi. karo kôtha gaÿe makhe na.  
*The girl is very headstrong. She doesn't listen to anyone.*

gaÿe hat tola *raise a hand to, hit*

choÿô baccader gaÿe hat tola amader niÿôm nçÿ.  
*It is not our custom to hit small children.*

gaÿe kâÿa deoÿa *get goose bumps*

se diner kôtha mône pôrte amar gaÿe ækhôno kâÿa diÿe oÿhe.  
*When I think about that day, I still get goose bumps.*

ga ðhaka deoÿa *go undercover*

kono jhamela hôle lokÿa ga ðhaka dæÿ.  
*Whenever there is any trouble, the man goes undercover.*

ga jvala kçra *be vexed, be irritated*

tader dujçne æksçnge dekhe tomar æmôn ga jvala kçre kænô?  
*Why are you so vexed at seeing those two together?*

ga juçrano *relax, refresh*

aj khub sundôr, ga juçrano batas hôcche.  
*There is a lovely, refreshing breeze today.*

gaÿe phû deoÿa *relax*

çbôşeşe gaÿe ekÿu phû dite parbe.  
*Finally he will be able to relax a bit.*

gaÿe pçra *be intrusive, officious*

gaÿe pçra lok keu pçchôndô kçre na.  
*No one likes intrusive people.*

o. cokh *eye*

cokh oÿha *get an eye-infection*

cheleÿir cokh uÿheche. *The boy has an eye-infection.*

cokh photo *realise, wake up to something*

kɔbe ye tar cokh phuṭbe ke jane?

*Who knows when he will wake up to the situation.*

cokh khola *open eyes, begin to understand*

kintu tar kotha śune amar kɔtôkhani cokh khule gæche ta se jane na.

*But he doesn't know how much I understood from what he told me.*

cokh dækha *do an eye examination*

ḍaktar saheb rogīr cokh dekhe cɔśma nite bôlchen.

*The doctor examined the patient's eyes and prescribed glasses.*

cokhe dhūlo deoṡa *cheat, lit: throw sand in the eye*

pɔrer cokhe dhūlo diṡe ar kɔtôdin cōlbe?

*How much longer will he go on cheating others.*

cokh ṭaṭano *be envious, lit: eye inflamed*

pɔrer mōngôl dekhle tomar ætô cokh ṭaṭaṡ kænô, bôlô to?

*Why are you so envious of other people's good fortune, tell me.*

cokh ṭhara *wink, signal*

ami ye tomake tar dike cokh ṭharte dekhechi.

*I saw you winking at him.*

cokh pakano, cokh raṅano *express anger*

se tomar sɔṅge kɔkhôno cokh raṅiṡe kotha bɔle na.

*He never speaks to you in anger.*

cokh rakha *keep an eye on*

cheleṭīr dike ekṭu cokh rekhô.

*Keep an eye on the boy.*

cokher matha khaoṡa *fail to see*

ei ye tomar cɔśma! cokher matha kheṡechô?

*Here are your glasses! Are you blind?*

cokhe aṅul diṡe dækhano *show in great detail, spell out*

apnake ki cokhe aṅul diṡe dækhiṡe dite hɔbe?

*Do I really have to spell it out for you?*

cokher upôre *in front of*

se tomar cokher upôre ki kôre eirakôm kôrlô?  
*How could he do this right in front of your eyes?*

cokher neśa *infatuation*

eṭa śudhu cokher neśa, emni ṭhik hôye yabe.  
*This is just an infatuation. It will blow over.*

p. môn *mind, heart*

môn is the part of a human being concerned with moods, emotions, memory, inclination, thought, attention, character, concentration and will. *Heart* is a more suitable translation for môn than *mind*. môn is not used for intellectual processes except in the basic sense of mônē kōra = *think*. For the origin of human intelligence matha *head* or medha *brain* are used.

To begin with, here are the thinking properties of môn.

mônē kōra *think, consider, imagine*

tumi ki mônē kōrô? *What do you think?*  
 ami kichu mônē kôri na. *I don't mind.*  
 ami seṭa mônē kôrte pari na. *I can't imagine that.*  
 amra take khub bhalô manuṣ mônē kôri.  
*We consider him a very good person.*

môn deoṃa *concentrate, pay attention*

se khub môn diye pōre. *He reads with great concentration.*  
 ami ajke kaje môn dite pari na. *I can't concentrate on my work today.*  
 se kichute môn dæy na. *He doesn't pay attention to anything.*

mônē hoṃa *think, be under the impression*

In comparison to mônē kōra, this is a less active or deliberate process, often implying that something comes to mind unbidden.

seṭa dekhe hoṭhaṭ bhaibonder kotha mônē hôyeche.  
*Seeing that, I suddenly thought of my brothers and sisters.*

mônē pōra *occur (in one's mind), remember, recall*

tar nam amar mônē pōrche na.  
*I can't recall his name.*

ganṭa yakhôn śuni, takhôn crūper kōtha mōne pṛe.  
*When I hear this song, it reminds me of Orup.*

mōne rakha *remember, keep in mind*

ami esṅb mōne rakhte parbō na.  
*I won't be able to remember all this.*

mōne ache, mōne thaka *stay in one's mind, remember*

ma ya bōleche, ta tomar mōne thakbe to?  
*You will remember what mother said, won't you?*

dokaner namṭa amar mōne nei.  
*I can't remember the name of the shop.*

môn oṭha *be satisfied*

yṭō biśeṣ bybōstha kōrbe, tar mō tate uṭhbe na.  
*Whatever special arrangements you make for him, he won't be satisfied.*

môn kāmôn kōra *feel out of sorts*

sṅkal theke môn kāmôn kōrche.  
*I have been feeling out of sorts since morning.*

môn kharap hōyā *be depressed*

khṅbōrṭa śune môn kharap to hṅbei.  
*On hearing this he is bound to be depressed.*

môn khule kōtha bōla *speak frankly*

môn khule kōtha bōlar tar keu nei.  
*He has no one to whom he can speak frankly.*

choṭō môn *petty, small-minded*

āmôn choṭō mōner loker mṅtamṅt śonar dṅrkar nei tomar.  
*You don't need to hear the opinions of such small-minded people.*

môn bōsa *attract attention, concentrate*

pōriṅṅar khatagulo dekhchilen, tateo môn bōse na.  
*He was looking at the exam papers, but he could not concentrate on them.*

mōner manuṣ *kindred spirit, soulmate*

mōner manuṣ paoṅyā hōcche jībōner cōrôm sukh.  
*To find a kindred spirit is the greatest happiness in life.*

môner mil *good understanding*

oder dujner môdhye môner mil chilô khub.  
*The two of them had a good mutual understanding.*

q. matha *head*

matha is predominantly the human head but it can also signify the top of a mountain (paharer matha), the end of a road (rastar matha), the tip of a finger (añuler matha) or similar objects, the head of a family (pôribarer matha), the beginning of a narrative (golper matha) and so on.

matha ghamano *worry, fret*

matha ghamano kono labh nei.  
*There is no point in worrying.*

matha dhora *headache*

rodre hête gele tar matha dhore.  
*He gets a headache when he goes walking in the sunshine.*

matha khaoya *spoil, ruin*

ôti adôr diye cheleṭir matha kheyo na.  
*Don't spoil the boy with too much loving.*

matha guliye deoya *confuse, bewilder*

alocônaṭa amar matha ækebare guliye diyeche.  
*The discussion totally confused me.*

matha ghora *feel dizzy*

paharer dike takale amar matha ghore.  
*When I look at the mountain my head spins.*

matha kharap *crazy, insane*

śoke çbôśyô manuṣer matha kharap hôye yete pare.  
*People can, of course, go crazy with grief.*

matha kaṭa yaoya *be mortified*

tader baṛite tomar hyæṃlami dekhe amar matha kaṭa gælô.  
*I was mortified to see your greediness at their house.*

matha deoya *help, care*

bipôd-apôde ye matha dæy, sei prôkrṭ bôndhu.  
*A true friend is someone who helps in difficulties.*



matha ɟɾôm kɔra *become agitated, angry*

ætô ɔlpe matha ɟɾôm kɔra ki labh?

*What is the point in getting worked up about such a minor matter.*

r. mukh *face, mouth*

mukhcora *shy, embarrassed*

tar mukhcora manus ɾɔchôndô hɔy na.

*He does not like shy people.*

mukhe khôi phoṭa *prattle, talk too much*

mône hɔy bɔktar mukhe khôi phuṭche.

*It seems that the speaker is just prattling on.*

mukh samlano *speak guardedly, be polite*

mukh samle niye kɔtha bôlte kɔṣṭô hócche, tai na?

*You are finding it difficult to stay polite, aren't you?*

mukher upôr kɔtha bɔla *contradict, defy*

tar mukher upôr kɔtha bɔla tomar ṭhik nei.

*It is not right for you to defy him.*

mukh cun hɔoṭa *be embarrassed*

choṭô bhaiyer ɔbhɔdrô bybôhare amar mukh cun hôyeche.

*I was embarrassed by my younger brother's rude behaviour.*

mukher kɔtha *mere words, empty talk*

tomar mukher kɔtha śunte amar ar iccha kôrche na.

*I don't want to listen to your empty words anymore.*

mukh caoṭa *be dependent on*

tara ɟɾɔrer mukh ceṭe bôse thake na.

*They don't sit around depending on others.*

mukh gôj kɔra *be down in the mouth*

tomake æmôn mukh gôj kɔrar ɔbôsthaṭ dekhe karo bhalô lage na.

*No one likes to see you sitting around with a long face.*

mukhe ana *bring oneself to say*

se ya bôleche ta ami mukhe anteo pari na.

*I can't even bring myself to say what he told me.*

mukhamukhi *face to face*

mukhamukhi kōtha bōlar suyog to kōm.  
*There is little chance of speaking face to face.*

s. hat *hand*

hat tali deoṅa *clap, applaud*

ei jāygaṅ hat tali deoṅa cōlbe na.  
*In this place clapping is not approved of.*

hatṭan *light-fingered*

cheleṭir hatṭaner ṅbhyas ache.  
*The boy is prone to stealing.*

hat deoṅa *become active, set to, take control*

tumi hat na dile kajṭa aj sere yete partam.  
*If you had not got involved, we would have been able to finish the work today.*

hat kōra *bring under one's control, take possession of, bribe*

cakōṭtake hat kōre cor ghōre ḍhukeche.  
*The thief bribed the servant and entered the house.*

hat thaka *have influence*

ei byāpare amar kono hat nei.  
*I have no influence in this matter.*

hat calano *be quick about something*

ekṭu hat calao, ṅnek kaj ye baki.  
*Hurry up a bit, there is lots of work left.*

hat joṅ kōra *aplogise, ask forgiveness*

ghaṭ hōṅeche, bhai, ar bōko na, tomar kache hat joṅ kōrchi.  
*It was my fault, brother, don't be cross anymore, I ask your forgiveness.*

hat pakano *become adept, become expert*

ceṣṭa kōrle hat pakate parbe.  
*You can become good at this if you try.*

hatchani deoṅa *beckon*

se kise tomake hatchani dilō.  
*What did he signal to you?*

khali hate *empty-handed*

ami khali hate tomar kache esechi.

*I come to you with nothing.*

### 9.2.3 Adjectives

t. *kāca* *raw, unripe* and *paka* *ripe*

These two adjectives form a contrasting pair and can be used with many items as a comment on the stage of their development. Here are just a few examples:

<i>kāca</i>	<i>paka</i>
<i>kāca phɔl unripe fruit</i>	<i>paka phɔl ripe fruit</i>
<i>kāca gach young, green tree</i>	<i>paka gach fully grown tree</i>
<i>kāca rasta mud road</i>	<i>paka rasta tarmacked road</i>
<i>kāca iṭ unburnt brick</i>	<i>paka iṭ burnt brick</i>
<i>kāca kaṭh untreated wood</i>	<i>paka kaṭṭh seasoned wood</i>
<i>kāca baṛi mud house</i>	<i>paka baṛi brick house</i>
<i>kāca kɔtha unfinished ideas</i>	<i>paka kɔtha firm promise</i>
<i>kāca bɔyôṣ young age</i>	<i>paka bɔyôṣ ripe, old age</i>
<i>kāca lok inexperienced person</i>	<i>paka lok skilled, experienced person</i>
<i>kāca lekha rough draft</i>	<i>paka lekha finished copy</i>
<i>kāca buddhi immature brain</i>	<i>paka buddhi wisdom</i>
<i>kāca rɔm non-fast colour</i>	<i>paka rɔm durable, fast colour</i>

Here are some individual terms:

<i>kāca mal raw material</i>	<i>paka cul grey hair</i>
<i>kāca maṃsô raw meat</i>	<i>paka dhan ripe paddy</i>
<i>kāca môric green chili</i>	<i>paka matha wise, experienced person</i>
<i>kāca ṭaka cash</i>	<i>paka cor inveterate, hardened thief</i>
<i>kāca ghum first, light sleep</i>	<i>paka cakri permanent job</i>

As a verb *pakapaki kɔra* means *settle, finalise*, *pakano* *cook* or *complicate*.

tar yaoṅar tarikh ækhôno pakapaki hoṅni.

*The date of his departure has not been finalised.*

byæparṭa diner pɔr din aro pakiye yacche.

*The matter is getting more complicated every day.*

u. *bɔṛô* *big*

Apart from indicating physical size, *bɔṛô* has the following idiomatic uses.

as an adjective:

se amar bẏrô bhai.  
 baccara bẏrô hôye gæche.  
 eṭa bẏrô kṭha nṭy.  
 æmôn bẏrô byæpare  
 se nek bẏrô gṭpô bôlte pare.  
 amra bẏrôdine kothaṭh thakbô.  
 tar bẏrô cakri hôyeche.  
 tar môn khub bẏrô.  
 se bẏrô betôn paṭ.  
 se bẏrô gṭlaṭ kṭha bṭe.  
 tini khub bẏrô lok.  
 kṭhaṭa śune se bẏrô duḥkhô peṭeche.

bẏrô mṭja hôyeche.  
 tar bẏrô iṅ ache.  
 se bẏrô pôribarer chele.  
 æmôn bẏrô saḥôs tar!

as an adverb *very*

cheleṭi bẏrô lajuk.  
 ganṭa bẏrô bhalô lage.  
 cheleṭike bẏrô cena lagche.  
 ækṭa bẏrô cdbhut byæpar

manuṣṭa bẏrô cṭ, bẏrô binṭyī, bẏrô bhṭdrô, bẏrô ṭpe tuṣṭô.

*The man is very honest, very modest, very polite, satisfied with very little.*

bẏrô ækṭa na is an idiomatic use meaning *hardly, barely*. This use is explained in Chapter 6.1.7.

#### 9.2.4 Numbers

This is just a small selection of idiomatic expressions involving numbers.

bṭlamatrô ekśo yukti.  
 lit: only saying one hundred logic  
*makes total sense*

mejaj cṭptôme cōre gæche.  
 lit: temper climbs up to seventh  
*His temper reached boiling point.*

hajar hok  
 lit: let it be a thousand  
*be that as it may*

*He is my older brother.  
 The children have grown up.  
 This is not what matters.  
 in such an important matter...  
 He can tell long stories.  
 Where will we be at Christmas?  
 He has got an important job.  
 He is very broad-minded.  
 He gets a substantial salary.  
 He talks in a loud voice.  
 He is a very influential man.  
 He was deeply saddened when he heard  
 this.  
 It was great fun.  
 He has severe debts.  
 He comes from an upper class family.  
 He is very impudent!*

*The boy is very shy.  
 I like the song very much.  
 The boy looks very familiar.  
 a very strange affair*

нчы-ччы кѡра lit: do nine-six waste

сѡbgula ʒaka нчы-ччы кѡре уриѣе диѡ na.  
*Don't fritter all the money away.*

сѡмѡстѡ ye нчы-ччы хѡѣе yaѣ.  
*Everything goes to pot.*

apnar barѡʒa bajjѣe debѡ.  
lit: I will make it strike twelve for you  
*I will finish you off.*

satsѡkal  
lit: seven morning  
*very early morning*

### 9.3 Figures and numerals

A full list of cardinal numbers is given in Appendix II.

This section brings together some remaining numerical topics, collective and approximate numbers.

#### 9.3.1 Fractions and percentages

half, a half $\frac{1}{2}$	adh, adha, ѡrdhek
a third $\frac{1}{3}$	tehai
a quarter $\frac{1}{4}$	poѣa
three quarters $\frac{3}{4}$	poune
one and a quarter $1\frac{1}{4}$	soѣa
one and a half $1\frac{1}{2}$	deʒ
two and a half $2\frac{1}{2}$	aʒai
three (four, five etc) and a half	sare tin, car, pѡc

For all other fractions use *of x parts y parts*:

tin bhager dui bhag  
three part.GEN two part  
*two thirds*

pѡc bhager car bhag  
five part.GEN four part  
*four fifths*

aʒ bhager ѡek bhag  
eight part.GEN one part  
*one eighth*

For multiples the word *gun* times is used:

pāc du guṇe dās.  
*Five times two is ten.*

praṅ tin guṇ bṛō  
*almost three times as big*

kintu cṅñæn manuṣ yænō dviḡuṇ bhari hōḡe yaḡ.  
but unconscious person so.that twice heavy be.PP go.3.PR.S  
*But an unconscious person becomes twice as heavy.*

For percentages use *śōtkṛa* or *śōtaṃśō* parts of one hundred:

moṭ ṛṇer pṛñcaś śōtaṃśō  
total debt.GEN fifty percent  
*fifty percent of the total debt*

śōtkṛa matrō dās bhag  
*only ten percent*

### 9.3.2 Weights and measures

#### distances

jṇ, suto	<i>one quarter of an inch (6.35 mm)</i>
iñci	<i>inch (2.54 cm)</i>
bighṇt	<i>span, about nine inches (22.5 cm)</i>
phuṭ	<i>foot (30.48 cm)</i>
hat	<i>half a yard</i>
gṇj, duhat	<i>yard (91.4 cm)</i>
miṭar	<i>metre</i>
kilomiṭar	<i>kilometre (1000 metres)</i>
mail	<i>mile (1.6 km)</i>
kroś	<i>about two miles (3 km)</i>

#### area

bṛgōiñci	<i>square inch</i>
bṛgōphuṭ	<i>square foot</i>
bṛgōhat	<i>about half a square yard</i>
bṛgōgṇj	<i>square yard</i>
bṛgōmiṭar	<i>square metre</i>
bṛgōmail	<i>square mile</i>
chṇtak	<i>4.18 square metres</i>
kaṭha	<i>720 square feet</i>
bigha	<i>0.13 hectares (about one third of an acre)</i>
kuṛō	<i>about 13 hectares (33 acres)</i>

## weights

gram	<i>gramme</i>
bhōri	<i>about 11 grammes (180 grains)</i>
tola	<i>about 12 grammes</i>
maṣa	<i>about 15 grammes</i>
chṛṭak	<i>about 60 grammes</i>
poṃa	<i>quarter of a seer, 230 gr</i>
ser	<i>seer, 0.9 kg</i>
kilo, keji	<i>kilogramme, 1000 g</i>
mān	<i>maund, 37.5 kg</i>
ṭān	<i>tonne, 1000 kg</i>

## 9.3.3 Collective numbers

ḍjōn	dozen, 12	æk ḍjōn amgach <i>twelve mango trees</i>
hali	4	dui hali kōla <i>eight bananas</i>
joṛa	a pair, 2	æk joṛa rajhās <i>a pair of swans</i>
dista, diste	25	æk diste kagōj <i>about 25 sheets of paper</i>
gaṇḍa	4	æk gaṇḍa bacca <i>a group of four children</i>
ṛōṇ	80 = 20 ganda	
muṣṭi	handful	æk muṣṭi bhat <i>a handful of rice</i>
raṣi	heap	æk raṣi prōśnō <i>a heap of questions</i>

## 9.3.4 Approximate numbers

For approximate numbers or vague figures Bangla employs the following techniques:

1. Two numbers are given together. The two numbers need not be consecutive. Note that when a number precedes a measure word the classifier ṭa is usually dropped.

pāc-sat kap ca	<i>five, seven cups of tea</i>
ḍāś-barō mail	<i>ten, twelve miles</i>
du-tin śo ṭaka	<i>two or three hundred Taka</i>

tākhōn tar bāyōś ṛōnerō-śolō bāchōr.  
 then his age fifteen sixteen year  
*He was then about fifteen, sixteen years old.*

du-ekṭa din  
 two one.CL day  
*one or two days*

du-aṛai śo mail dūre  
 two two. and.a.half hundred mile distance.LOC  
*about 200 to 250 miles away*

tin- carṭe rūpor phôrsi  
 three four silver.GEN hookah  
*three or four silver hookahs*

praÿ ṣaṭ sôttôr bighe dhanī jômi  
 almost sixty seventy bigha rice field  
*almost sixty or seventy bigha of rice fields*

2. adding æk *one* after a number or quantifier:

ɔnek = ɔn *not* + æk *one* = *many*

kôÿek = kôÿ *some* + æk = *a few*

kôÿekjɔn chatrī *a few students*

The number can precede or follow the noun it modifies.

bôÿôs bôchôr pācek	<i>about five years old</i>
hajarek	<i>about a thousand</i>
carek bôchôr pōre	<i>about four years later</i>
mas tineker jônyô	<i>for about three months.</i>
praÿ miniṭ aṭek bade	<i>after about eight minutes</i>
mas pācek age	<i>about five months ago</i>
goṭa satek meÿe tar.	<i>He has seven daughters in total.</i>

3. khanek

khanek on its own means *about one*.

er bôchôr khanek pōrei tar biÿe hôÿe gælô.  
*He got married about a year later.*

bibaher bôchôr khaneker môdhÿe  
*within a year of getting married*

hajarkhanek *about a thousand*

9.3.5 Indefinite big numbers

sôt sôt *hundred hundred*

ora sôṅge kôre enechilen sôt sôt baburci.  
*They brought with them hundreds of cooks.*

hajar hajar *thousand thousand*

ta sôttveo hajar hajar meÿeder susthô bacca hôÿ.  
*In spite of this thousands of girls have healthy babies.*



## Beyond the sentence

### Sample texts

Grammatical interpretation tends to end with the sentence as the biggest linguistic unit. From there one can move to discourse analysis, but the boundaries between discourse analysis, text linguistics and pragmatics are not yet sufficiently well defined. I have chosen instead to present a small selection of texts, ranging from a recipe to a short passage from a novel, spanning topics like language, food, love, rain and tea-drinking. All the translations are mine.

#### 10.1 Recipe for Pulao rice (from popular Bangladeshi magazine Sanônda, 2008)

upôkrôn  
ingredients

gobindôbhog cal	500 gram		
Govindabhog	rice	500 gr	
ṭak dôi	200 gram	jôytri	50 gram
sour yoghurt	200 gr	nutmeg	50 gramme
adabaṭa	50 gram	tejpata	4 – 5 ṭa
ginger.mash	50 gr	bayleaf	4–5 CL
cini 1	ṭebôl camôc	keşôr rôm	2 cimṭi
sugar	1 tablespoon	Keshor colour	2 pinch
jol	1 liṭar	kajubadam	100 gram
water	1 liter	cashew nut	100 gr
gôrôm môsla	10 gram	kişmiş	50 gram
hot spice	10 gr	raisin	50 gramme
jire	haph ca camoc	kaṭhbadam	25 gram
cumin,	half teaspoon	almond	25 gr
gaoṭa ghi	200 gram	posta	25 gram
Gawa ghee	200 gr	poppypeed	25 gr

prônali:  
method

cal	dhuÿe	kagôje	adha	ghoṇṭa	rekhe	şukiÿe
uncooked rice	wash.PP	paper.LOC	half	hour	rest.PP	dry.PP

jhৗrjhৗr kôre nite hৗbe.  
dry- do.PP take.IP be.3.FUT

cale adabaṭa, ṭkđôi keśôr rৗm makhate hৗbe.  
rice.LOC ginger.mash, sour.yoghurt keshor colour coat.IP be.3.FUT

kukare ghi samanyô gৗrôm kôre ḍhime āce rekhe  
pressure.cooker.LOC ghee a.little hot.do.PP slow heat.LOC rest.PP

tate tejpata phele gৗrôm mৗśla, jৗytri, jire dite hৗbe.  
that.LOC bayleaf throw.PP hot spice, nutmeg, cumin give.IP be.3.FUT

ebar caṭa kukare diṅe neṛeṇe mapa  
this.time rice.CL pressure.cooker.LOC give.PP stir.PP measure.VA

jḷṭa diṅe jḷ ekṭu gৗrôm hôle cini, nun,  
water.CL give.PP water a.little.bit hot be.CP sugar, salt,

kaju, kiśmiś, kācalৗnka diṅe kukarer mukh bৗndhô kôrte hৗbe.  
cashew, raisin, raw.chilli give.PP cooker.GEN lid closed do.PP be.3.FUT

kukarer chipite bhap jômte śuru kôrle gyas bৗndhô kôre  
cooker.GEN stopper.LOC steam collect.IP start do.CP gas closed do.PP  
dite hৗbe.  
give.IP be.3.FUT

দৗś miniṭ oi ৗbôsthaṅ kukar bৗndhô rekhe dৗme  
ten minute that.EMP state.LOC cooker closed rest.PP breath.LOC  
ranna hôte dite hৗbe.  
cooking be.IP give.IP be.3.FUT

kukar namiṅe pôribesôner age ar ekṭu kaju, kiśmiś,  
cooker take.down.PP serving.GEN before more a.BIT cashew, raisin,  
posta badam chôṛiṅe dite hৗbe.  
poppy nut scatter.PP give.IP be.3.FUT

*Ingredients:*

500 g Govindabhog rice	
200 gr sour yoghurt	50 gr nutmeg
50 gr mashed ginger	4 – 5 bayleaves
1 tablespoon sugar	2 pinches Keshor colour
1 liter water	100 gr cashew nuts
10 gr hot spice	50 gr raisins
one half teaspoon cumin	25 gr almonds
200 gr Gawa ghee	25 gr poppyseeds

*Method:*

*Wash the uncooked rice and let it rest in paper for half an hour to dry out thoroughly.*

*Add the gingerpaste to the rice and coat it with yoghurt and colouring.*

*Heat a little Gawa ghee in the pressure cooker and, keeping it hot, add the bayleaves, hot spices, nutmeg and cumin.*

*Now add the rice and stir continually while gradually adding the water. When the water is hot, add sugar, salt, cashews, raisins, raw chillies and close the lid of the cooker.*

*When steam starts to form at the stopper of the cooker, turn the gas off.*

*Keep the cooker closed and leave it standing like this for another ten minutes, allowing the rice to cook.*

*Before serving the food, sprinkle a few more cashews, raisins and poppyseeds over the rice.*

## 10.2 A love song to a language

This is a very popular, nostalgic song which can be heard on youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjFjzsRopX4>

The lyrics are believed to have been written by Julia Choudhury. The words play on various case endings, which makes the song ideal for beginner learners of the language.

ami baṁlaṁ gan gai,           ami baṁlar    gan gai  
I   Bangla.LOC song sing.1.PR.S, I   Bangla.GEN song sing.1.PR.S

ami amar amike cirôdin ei       baṁlaṁ    khûje    pai.  
I   my    I.OBJ always this.EMP Bangla.LOC search.PP find.1.PR.S

ami baṁlaṁ   dekhi    śvɔpnô,   ami baṁlaṁ   bādhi    sur  
I   Bangla.LOC see.1.PR.S dream, I   Bangla.LOC bind.1.PR.S tune

ami ei       baṁlar    maṁa    bhɔra   pɔthe   hêtechi  
I   this.EMP Bangla.GEN fascination fill.VA path.LOC walk.1.PR.PERF

ætoṭa       dûr.  
so much.CL distance

baṁla amar jibônânôndô,   baṁla praṅer sukh,  
Bangla my life.joy,       Bangla life.GEN happiness

ami ækbar dekhi,       barbar dekhi,   dekhi   baṁlar    mukh.  
I   once see.1.PR.S, time.time see.1.PR.S, see.1.PR.S Bangla.GEN face

ami baṁlaṁ   kôtha koi,       ami baṁlar    kôtha koi,  
I   Bangla.LOC word say.1.PR.S, I   Bangla.LOC word say.1.PR.S

ami baṁlaṁ   bhasi,       baṁlay    hasi,       baṁlay  
I   Bangla.LOC float.1.PR.S, Bangla.LOC laugh.1.PR.S, Bangla.LOC

jege roi.

wake.up.PP stay.1.PR.S

ami bamlaȳ mati ullase, kôri bamlaȳ hahakar,  
I Bangla go.mad.1.PR.S delight.LOC, do.1.PR.S Bangla.LOC lament

ami s̄ob dekhešune khepe giye kôri bamla çikar.  
I everything see.PP.hear.PP go.mad.PP go.PP do.1PR.S Bangla.LOC shout

bamlaȳ amar drptô slogan, k̄iptô tirdhônuk,  
Bangla.LOC my proud slogan, thrown bow.arrow

ami ækbar dekhi, barbar dekhi, dekhi bamlar mukh.  
I once see.1.PR.S, time.time see.1.PR.S, see.1.PR.S Bangla.GEN face

ami bamlaȳ bhalôbhasi, ami bamlake bhalôbhasi  
I Bangla.LOC love.1.PR.S, I Bangla.OBJ love.1.PR.S

ami tari hat dhôre sara p̄rthibir manușer kache asi.  
I her.EMP hand hold.PP all world.GEN person.GEN towards come.1.PR.S

ami ya kichu m̄chan b̄croṅ korechi bin̄mrô sr̄oddha  
I what.REL something big acceptance do.1.PR.PERF humble respect

meše tærô nodī sat sagôrer j̄l ḡhgar p̄dda.  
mix.PP thirteen river seven sea.GEN water Ganges Padma

bamla amar t̄r̄nar j̄l drptô šeș cumuk,  
Bangla my thirst.GEN water proud final sip

ami ækbar dekhi, barbar dekhi, dekhi bamlar mukh.  
I once see.1.PR.S, time.time see.1.PR.S, see.1.PR.S Bangla.GEN face

*I sing in Bangla, I sing of Bangla.*

*In this Bangla I find my own identity forever.*

*I dream in Bangla, I compose my songs in Bangla.*

*On the magical paths of Bangla I have walked so far.*

*Bangla is my life's pleasure, the joy of my existence.*

*I've seen it once, I've seen it many times, I've seen the face of Bangla.*

*I speak in Bangla, I speak of Bangla,*

*I float in Bangla, I laugh and wake in Bangla.*

*Bangla is my frenzy of excitement, the expression of my grief.*

*When I go mad with all that I have seen I shout in Bangla.*

*Bangla is my proud slogan, my poised bow and arrow.*

*I've seen it once, I've seen it many times, I've seen the face of Bangla.*

*I love in Bangla, I love Bangla,  
With Bangla by my side I approach the people of the world.*

*Whatever great things come to me I accept with humble respect  
As the waters of thirteen rivers and seven seas mix with the Ganges and the Padma.  
Bangla quenches my thirst to the last welcome sip.  
I've seen it once, I've seen it many times, I've seen the face of Bangla.*

### 10.3 Monsoon by Sri Pramath Choudhuri

The following is a typical textbook passage for schoolchildren in West Bengal. The annual monsoon with its usual onset in early June, comes after a period of dry heat, when the river-beds are dry, the leaves on the trees are covered in dust, and humans and plants are gasping for rain. The monsoon is a symbol for joy and renewal.

bṛṣa  
monsoon

aj sṛkale ghum theke uṭhe dekhi ye yedike  
today morning.LOC sleep from rise.PP see.1.PR.S that which.direction.LOC.REL  
yṛtṛdūr drṣṭi yaḡ sṛmṛgrṛ akāś bṛṣar bhṛe giḡeche.  
how.far.REL view go.3.PR.S complete sky monsoon.LOC fill.PP go.3.PR.PERF

mathar upṛ theke ṛbiram ṛbirṛl ṛbichinnṛ bṛṣṭir  
head.GEN above from incessant non.stop continuous rain.GEN  
dhara pṛeche.  
flow fall.3.PR.PERF

se dhara etṛ sṛkṣnṛ nṛy ye cokh eṛḡe yaḡ, ṛthṛcṛ etṛ  
that flow so fine [is not] that eye escape.PP go.3.PR.S but so  
sthṛl o nṛy ye ta cokh jure thake.  
thick also [is not] that it eye fill.PP stay.3.PR.S

ar kane asche tar ekṛana aṛḡaj, se aṛḡaj kṛkhṛno  
and ear.LOC come.3.PR.S its continuous sound, that sound sometimes  
mṛne hṛy nṛdir kuludhvṛni, kṛkhṛno mṛne hṛy  
mind.LOC be.3.PR.S river.GEN murmur.sound, sometimes mind.LOC be.3.PR.S

ta patar mṛmṛ.  
it leaf.GEN rustle.

asôle ta æksər̥ŋeo duii kænôna ajker dine j̥ler sv̥r  
 actually that together.also two.EMP because today.GEN day.LOC water.GEN tune  
 o bataser sv̥r dui mile-miše æk sur hôye dāriyeche.  
 and wind.GEN tune. two mix.mix.PP one voice become.PP stand.3.PR.PERF.

æmôn dine manușer môn ônyômônôskô h̥y tar karôn  
 such day.LOC person.GEN mind absent-minded become.3.PR.S its reason  
 tar s̥kôl môn tar cokh ar kane ese bhôr kore.  
 its all mind its eye and ear.LOC come.PP full do.3.PR.S

amader ei cokh pořana alor deše b̥rșar akaś amader  
 our this eye fill.VA light.GEN country.LOC monsoon.GEN sky our  
 cokhe ki ye çp̥rbô snigdhô prôloḡ makhiye deḡ  
 eye.LOC what that. incomparable pleasant coating smear.PP give.3.PR.S  
 ta bañali matrei jane.  
 that bengali only.LOC.EMP know.3.PR.S

ajker akaś dekhe mône h̥y, çhaḡar r̥ner kono  
 today.GEN sky see.PP mind.LOC become.3.PR.S shadow.GEN colour.GEN any  
 pakhir palôk diye b̥rșa take agagořa muriye diyeche,  
 bird.GEN feather with monsoon it.OBJ beginning.end wrap.PP give.3.PR.PERF,  
 tai tar sp̥r̥sô amader cokher kache ætô nrôm, ætô molaḡem.  
 so it.GEN touch our eye.GEN near so soft, so smooth.

tar p̥r ceḡe dekhi gachpala maḡghaḡ s̥bari bhitôr  
 it.GEN after look.PP see.1.PR.S tree.plant field.wharf everyone.GEN.EMP inside  
 yænô ækta nôtun praṇer hillol bôye yacche.  
 as.if one.CL new life.GEN wave blow.PP go.3.PR.C.

se praṇer anônde narkel gachgulo s̥b dāriye dāriye dulche,  
 that life.GEN joy.LOC coconut tree.CL.PL all stand.PP stand.PP swing.3.PR.C

ar tader mathar jhākra cul k̥khôno-ba eliye p̥rche,  
 and they.GEN head.GEN shaggy hair sometimes.or loosen.PP fall.3.PR.C,

k̥khôno-ba j̥riye yacche.  
 sometimes.or embrace.PP go.3.PR.C.

ar patar cape yes̥b gacher ḡal dækha yaḡ  
 and leaf.GEN pressure.LOC what.R.all tree.GEN branch see.VN go.3.PR.S  
 na, ses̥b gacher patar ḡal e or gaḡe ḡhôle  
 not that.CR.all tree.GEN leaf.GEN group this that.GEN body.LOC lean.PP

p̥rche, p̥r̥osp̥r kolakuli k̥rche.  
 fall.3.PR.C, each.other embrace do.3.PR.C

kəkhôno- ba bataser spɔrse bēkecure æmôn akar dharôṅ kôrche  
 sometimes.or wind.GEN touch.LOC bend.twist.PP such shape assume.do.3.PR.C

ye dekhle mōne hɔȳ br̥k̥s̥ôl̥ɔta sɔb pɔtr̥ôpuṭe  
 that see.CP mind.LOC be.3.PR.S tree.creeper all leaf.cup.LOC

phôṭikjɔl pan kôrche.  
 crystal.clear.rainwater drink do.3.PR.C.

ar ei khamkheyalī batas nijer khuṣim̥tô ækbar pāc  
 and this.emp wayward wind own.gen happy.like once five  
 minīṭer jōnye l̥ɔtapatake naciye diye br̥ṣṭir dharake  
 minute.gen for creeper.leaf.obj cause.to.dance.PP give.PP rain.GEN flow.OBJ

chôriye diye abar theme yacche.  
 scatter.PP give.PP again stop.PP go.3.PR.C.

*Monsoon by Sri Pramath Choudhuri.*

*Waking up this morning I see that the whole sky all around and as far as the eye can see is filled with rain. From above the rain is falling continuously, incessantly, steadily. The flow of rain is not so thin that you can evade it but also not so wide that it fills the vision. And with it comes the constant stream of sound. At times it sounds like the murmur of a river, at other times like the rustle of leaves. In fact it is both together, because today the sound of the water and the sound of the wind come together as one voice.*

*It is on days like these that a man's mind becomes preoccupied because it is wholly concentrated in his eyes and ears. Only Bengalis can understand how in this light-filled country of ours the rain-laden skies envelop us in an incomparable sweetness. The sky today looks as if it has been wrapped up completely by the monsoon with some ash-coloured bird feathers, and that is why to our eyes it appears so tender and lovely.*

*And then it seems as if a wave of new life is flowing through all the trees and plants, the fields and the wharfs. All the coconut trees are swaying in the joy of this new life and their shaggy tops are at times blown apart, at other times entangled together. All the tree branches, obscured by the weight of their leaves, are blowing against one another, leaning together and embracing. Sometimes the wind grips and bends them in such a way that it looks as if trees and creepers are all drinking crystal clear water from a cup of leaves. And sometimes this mischievous wind wilfully makes the creepers and leaves dance. It shakes them up in the flow of the rain and dies down again.*

#### 10.4 From a linguist

The following passage is from an interview with the well-known Bangladeshi linguist and writer Humayun Azad (1947 – 2004). The interviewer is Robayet Ferdous.

From Robayet Ferdous and Firoz Zaman Choudhury, ed bisheshjoner bishesh shakhatkar, Prithish Prottoy, Dhaka, 2005.

Robayet Ferdous:

oneke bolen orthoniti, bijnaen kimba cikitsabijnæn bişcyer  
many say.3.PR.S economics, science or medicine subject.GEN

jõtil prõkaşbhõngir yogyõta bañla bhaşar nei.  
complex expression.style.GEN suitability Bangla language.GEN [is absent].

e dharõña kotoçuku youktik?  
this idea how.much.part logical?

Humayun Azad:

eçi hõcche sei sob manuşer kotha, yara põrişrõm kõrte  
this.CL be.3.PR.C that.EMP all person.GEN word, they.REL effort do.IP

caý na ebõrn nijera moulikbhabe cintao  
want.3.PR.S not and self.NOM.PL basic.way.LOC thought.also

kõre na.  
do.3.PR.S not

ei pñthibir kono bhaşai sũcõnaý moulikbhabe prõkaşer  
this world.GEN any language.EMP beginning.LOC basic.way.LOC expression.GEN

sõmõstõ şõkti niye aseni.  
whole potential take.PP not come.3.PR.PERF

bañla bhaşay põdarthõbijnaen, rõsaýõnşastrõ ba orthonitir  
Bangla language.LOC physics, chemistry or economics.GEN

cõrca hõyni, eder prõkaş şõkti thakbe ki kõre?  
study not.be.3.PR.PERF, their expression potential stay.3.FUT what do.PP

amader jñænira yõdi eguloke bañlay likhten, tahõle  
our scholars if they.CL.PL.OBJ Bangla.LOC write.3.H.P.HABIT, then

er şõkti õnek bařto.  
this.GEN potential much grow.3.P.HABIT.

yæmõn bařiyechen amader sahityikõra.  
as cause.to.grow.3.H.PR.PERF our literary.writers.

amader sahityikõra kõkhõno bolen na bañla bhaşar şõkti  
our literary.writers ever say.3.H.PR.S not Bangla language.GEN potential

nei, tai sahityõ rõcõna kõra sãmbhõb hõcche na.  
[is absent] so literature compose.do.VN possible be.3.PR.C not



kintu ei dh̄rôner kôtha ðnyôra bôlechen, tar karôn h̄lo  
 but this.EMP kind.GEN word others say.3.H.PR.PERF that.GEN reason be.3.P.S  
 tara udyogī h̄nni.  
 they active not.be.3.PR.PERF

ete pôriśrômer byæpar rôyeche, sadhônar byæpar  
 this.LOC effort.GEN matter remain.3.PR.PERF, practice.LOC matter  
 rôyeche. er môdhye anôndôo kintu k̄m na.  
 remain.3.PR.PERF, this.GEN within pleasure.also but less not

t̄be t̄ara e anôndo upôbhog na kôre im̄rejir kichu  
 but they.H this pleasure enjoyment not do.PP English.GEN something  
 dh̄rabādha boi p̄ṛen o p̄ṛan. segulo bhulbhabei  
 fixed book read.3.H.PR.S and teach.3.H.PR.S that.CL.PL mistake.way.LOC.EMP  
 p̄ṛan o ðnyanyô kaje liptô thaken.  
 teach.3.H.PR.S and other work.LOC engaged stay.3.H.PR.S

baṁla bhaṣaȳ tader bidyake kaje lagate ye pôriśrôm  
 Bangla language.LOC their study.OBJ work.LOC employ.IP that.REL effort  
 d̄rkar se pôriśrôm t̄ara kôrte can na.  
 need that.REL effort they.H do.IP want.3.H.PR.S not

kôtha h̄ocche, kono bhaṣai bikaśitô ðbôsthaṣ̄ ase na.  
 word be.3.PR.C any language.EMP developed state.LOC come.3.PR.S not

im̄rejir ye prôkaś s̄ôktir kôtha amra bôli ta  
 English.GEN that.REL expression potential.GEN word we say.1.PR.S that.REL  
 kintu śurute æmôn chilô na.  
 but beginning.LOC such [was not]

yekono bhaṣa bybôhar kôrte kôrtei prôkaś s̄ôkti bare.  
 any language use do.IP do.IP.EMP expression potential grow.3.PR.S

im̄reji bhaṣaȳ p̄rthibir yabôtîyô j̄ñæner c̄rca h̄ôyeche,  
 English language.LOC world.GEN throughout science.GEN study be.3.PR.PERF  
 ph̄le seṭa bikaśitô h̄ôyeche.  
 result.LOC that.CL developed become.3.PR.PERF.

baṁla bhaṣaȳ yôdi eṭa k̄ra h̄oto t̄be eṭao  
 Bangla language.LOC if this.CL do.VN be.3.P.HABIT but this.CL.also  
 bikaśitô h̄oto.  
 developed be.3.P.HABIT

amader dharôṇa h̄ôye gæche nôṭun kono prôkaśbhôngi  
 our idea become.PP go.3.PR.PERF new any expression.style

sirṣṭi kōrar                      prôṃojōn nei.  
 creation.do.VN.GEN necessary [is absent].

bhaṣa    hôlo    ekṭi    goṣṭhīr    prôṭibar    prôkaś;    sei    ghoṣṭhī    yôdi  
 language be.3.P.S one society.GEN genius.GEN expression; that.EMP society if  
 niṣkrīyô hōy,              oḃôś hōy,              tōbe kibhabe  
 inert    be.3.PR.S, weak be.3.PR.S then what.way.LOC

tar bhaṣa    bikaśitô    hōbe?  
 its language developed be.3.FUT?

*Robayet Ferdous interviews Humayun Azad.*

RF:        *Many people say that the Bangla language does not have the expressive potential for complex scientific, economical or medical discussion. To what extent is this belief reasonable?*

HA:        *Such beliefs are expressed by people who don't want to make an effort and who don't think very deeply. No language in this world brings its full expressive potential with it from the start. Physics, chemistry and economics are not studied in Bangla, so how can the language develop the necessary vocabulary? If our scholars wrote about their research in Bangla, the expressive potential of the language would increase considerably. This is what happened in literature. Our literary writers never claimed that Bangla had insufficient expressive potential and therefore they were unable to write literature in Bangla. When other people talk like that, it is purely because they are not proactive. To develop the language requires effort and practice. But there is also a lot of pleasure in it. Instead of experiencing this pleasure, these people read and teach some fixed English texts. They teach these texts in the wrong way and turn their attention to other things. They do not want to make the effort it would take to use Bangla for their work. The thing is that no language comes fully developed. The expressive potential we ascribe to the English language was not always there. Whatever language we use: its potential increases with use. The English language has been used throughout the world in all areas. That is why it is highly developed. If we used the Bangla language in the same way, it would become equally refined. We tend to think that there is no need to create new styles of expression. Language reveals the creative faculty of a particular society. But how can this language develop if the society is inactive or weak?*

## 10.5 The girl

This is an extract from Buddhadeva Bose's novel *Moner moto meye* (*My kind of girl*). Buddhadeva Bose (1908 – 1974) was one of the great Bengali poets, novelists and literary

personalities of the 20th century. He taught comparative literature at Jadavpur University and was a prolific publisher and editor as well as a writer of novels, poetry, plays and short stories. Much of his work is as yet untranslated.

from Buddhadeva Bose, *môner mato meÿe*, buddhadeb bôsur *rôcônasôm grôhô*, Vol 9, p 415.

e råkôm choôô choôô jhöggra praÿi hôtô amader.  
this kind small small quarrel often.EMP be.3.P.HABIT we.GEN

æmôn din yaÿ na yedin oke niÿe kono kôtha  
such day go.3.PR.S not that.REL.day she.OBJ take.PP any word  
hoy na, ar æmôn kono kôtha hoy na yate  
be.3.PR.S not, and such any word be.3.PR.S not that.REL.LOC

tinjonei ækmot hôte pari.  
three.CL.EMP one.opinion be.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S

se din ye nîl śari pôrechilô tate bhalô dækhacchilô, na,  
that day that.REL blue saree wear.3.P.PERF that.LOC good show.3.P.C, or,  
kalker begôni rônerta;  
yesterday.GEN purple colour.GEN.CL;

sakale yakkhôn bagane dāriÿechilô takkhôn piÿther upar beñi  
morning.LOC when.REL garden.LOC stand.3.P.PERF then back.GEN on plait  
dulchilô, na, cul chilô khola;  
swing.3.P.C, or, hair [was] open;

bikale barandaÿ bôse koler upar kagôj rekhe ki ciÿhi  
afternoon.LOC verandah.LOC sit.PP lap.GEN on paper rest.PP what letter  
likhchilô, na, āk kôşchilô –  
write.3.P.C, not, sum tighten.3.P.C –

emôni sôb sômôsyā niÿe cēcamēci kôre amra gôla phaṭatam.  
such.EMP all problem take.PP shouting do.PP we throat explode.1.P.HABIT

sôbceÿe beśi torkô hôtô ye kôtha niÿe seṭa  
all.than much argument be.3.P.HABIT that.REL word take.PP that.CL

ekṭu ḍdbhut:  
a.little strange

or mukher sônge 'mona lisa'r mil ki khub beśi, na, ḍpô  
her face.GEN with Mona.Lisa.GEN similarity what very much, not, a.bit  
ekṭu, na, kichu na.  
a.little, or, something not

ami tãkhôn prôthôm mona lisar chapa chôbi dekhechi ebãñ  
 I then first Mona.Lisa.GEN print.VA picture see.1.PR.PERF and  
 bôndhuder dekhiyechi;  
 friend.PL.OBJ show.1.PR.PERF

hãthat æk din amari mukh diye berolô kotha –  
 suddenly one day my.EMP mouth through come out.3.PS word.CL –  
 bôllam, ‘or mukh ñekta mona lisar mãtô.’  
 say.1.P.S ‘her face much.CL Mona.Lisa.GEN like.’

tarpar e niye ñãmkhyô kotha khãroc kôrechi amra,  
 that.GEN,after this about innumerable word spending do.1.PR.PERF we,  
 kono mimañsa hãñi, tãbe ækta subidhe hólô ye  
 any agreement not.be.3.PR.PERF but one.CL advantage be.3.PS that

amader mukhe-mukhe or nam hôye gælô ‘mona lisa.’  
 our mouth.LOC.mouth.LOC her name become.PP go.3.PS Mona.Lisa.

ñtôrate yãtôi sur kôruk, tôrute  
 Ontora.LOC how.much.REL.EMP voice do.3.PR.IMP, Toru.LOC  
 yãtôi tôruñôta, ye- name oke  
 how.much.REL.EMP freshness that.REL name.LOC she.OBJ

ñãbai ñake, se name to amra oke  
 everyone call.3.PR.S that name.LOC EMP we she.OBJ  
 bhabte parini- ñnyô ekti nam,  
 think.IP not.be.able.to.1.PR.PERF – other one.CL name

ya amra súdhu jani ar keu jane na,  
 what.REL we only know.1.PR.S more someone know.3.PR.S not,  
 æmôn ekti nam peye amra yænô okei pelam  
 such one.CL name find.PP we as.if she.OBJ.EMP find.1.P.S.

*We often had these kinds of trivial arguments. Not a day went by that we did not talk about her and the three of us could never agree with one another. Did she look better in today’s blue saree or in yesterday’s purple one? When she was standing in the garden this morning, did her hair lie in plaits over her back or was it down? As she sat on the verandah this afternoon, was the paper on her knee for writing a letter or for doing sums? We debated all of these issues hotly and loudly until our throats were sore. Many of these argument were on a strange topic: whether her face resembled that of the Mona Lisa a lot, or just a little bit or not at all. I had just seen a printed photo of the Mona Lisa for the first time and showed it to my friends. Suddenly one day I just blurted it out, ‘She looks a lot like the Mona Lisa.’ Then we argued about this endlessly without coming to an agreement.*

*But one good thing came out of it. By talking about it so much she became ‘Mona Lisa’ to us. ‘Ontora’ sounded melodious and ‘Toru’ quite lively, but we couldn’t think of her by the names everyone else called her. By finding a name for her that only we – and no one else – knew, it was as if we were making her ours.*

## 10.6 All kinds of tea

Satyajit Ray, *γakhôn chotêô chilam* (When I was small), p 41, first published 1982, translation by Lila Ray.

Satyajit Ray (1921 – 1992) was India’s first internationally recognized film-maker and, almost twenty years after his death, still remains one of the best-known Indian film directors on the world stage. He also wrote extensively, notably a series of detective stories and novels. The following extract is from his delightful childhood memoirs. Bengali, as other South Asian languages, has precise kinship terms. *kaka* is one’s father’s younger brother and a *chotô* (*small*) *kaka* is the younger or youngest of the father’s younger brothers. In the translation I have kept the Bengali term *Chotokaka*.

æka manuʃ, nijer dhandaÿ thaken, olpei sɔntuʃtô,  
alone person, own illusion.LOC stay.3.PR.S, little.LOC.EMP satisfied,.

tai choṭôkakakeo majhe majhe æk rɔkôm sɔnnyasī bôlei  
that.EMP little.uncle.OBJ.also sometimes one kind hermit say.PP.EMP  
mône hôtô.  
mind.LOC be.3.P.HABIT

tachaṛa ôr kichu batik chilô yetā sadharôn  
that.except he.HON.GEN some obsession [be.present.3.P.S] that.R.CL ordinary  
manuʃer môdhye bɔrô ækṭa dækha yaÿ na.  
person.GEN within big one.CL see.VN go.3.PR.S not

mukhe gras niÿe bôtriśbar cibonor kôtha to  
mouth.LOC bite take.PP 32.times chew.VN.GEN word EMP  
agei bôlechi.  
before.EMP say.1.PR.PERF

khaoÿa, biśram, kaj, beṛano, gɔlpô kɔra – sɔb kichuri  
food, rest, work, visit.VN, story do.VN – all something.GEN.EMP  
phāke phāke cōltô chotôkakar ḍayri lekha.  
gap.LOC gap.LOC move.3.P.HABIT small.uncle.GEN diary write.VN

eṭa jor diÿe bôlte pari ye æmôn ḍayri keu kono  
this.CL force with say.IP be.able.to.1.PR.S that such diary someone any  
din lekheni.  
day not.write.3.PR.PERF

ete thaktô sokale kagôje pɔra jôruri khôbôrer  
 this.LOC stay.3.P.HABIT morning.LOC paper.LOC read.VA urgent news.GEN

šironam theke šuru kôre praÿ prôti ghôṅṅṭaÿ ki kôrlen,  
 headline from start do.PP almost every hour.LOC what do.3H.P.S,

ki pôrlen, ki khelen, kothaÿ gelen, ki dekhlen,  
 what read.3H.P.S, what eat.3H.P.S, where go.3H.P.S, what see.3H.P.S,

ke elô – sob kichur bibôron.  
 who come.3.P.S – all something.GEN description.

ṭrene kôre baire gele enjiner ki taip seṭao  
 train.LOC do.PP out go.CP engine.GEN what type that.CL.also

likhe rakhten.  
 write.PP keep.3H.P.S

enjiner ye šreṅibibhag hɔÿ seṭao chotôkakar kachei  
 engine.GEN that class.division be.3.PR.S that.CL.also small.uncle.GEN near.EMP

prôthôm jani.  
 first know.1.PR.S

XP, HPS, SB, HB – esob hôlô taipar nam.  
 XP, HPS, SB, HB – this.all be.3.P.S (PC) type.GEN name

tăkhônkar diner kôÿlar enjiner gaÿe seṭa lekha thaktô.  
 then.GEN day.GEN coal.GEN engine.GEN body.LOC that.CL write.VN stay.3.P.S

kothao yete hôle choṭôkaka štešône hajir hôten  
 somewhere go.IP be.CP small.uncle station.LOC present be.3H.P.HABIT

hate khanikṭa somÿ niÿe karôṅ kamraÿ mal  
 hand.LOC some.CL time take.PP reason compartment.LOC luggage

tulei jhṭ kôre giÿe enjiner taip jene aste hobe.  
 lift.PP.EMP quick do.PP go.PP engine.GEN type know.PP come.IP be.3.FUT

yôdi kono karôṅe deri hôÿe yetô, tahôle prôthôm bôṛô  
 if any reason.LOC late be.PP go.3.P.HABIT, that.be.CP first big

jamšôn elei kamra theke neme se  
 junction come.CP.EMP compartment from get.down.PP that

kajṭa sere asten.  
 work.CL finish.PP come.3H.P.HABIT

ei daÿri lekha hôtô car rôkôm rôner kalite – lal,  
 this.EMP diary write.VN be.3.P.HABIT four kind colour.GEN ink.LOC – red,

nîl, sôbuĵ ar kalo.  
 blue, green and black.

eki bakye car rəkôm rən bybôhar hócche, ei nômuna  
 same sentence.LOC four kind colour use be.3.PR.C, this pattern  
 chotôkakar đayrite ònek dekhechi.  
 small.uncle.GEN diary.LOC much see.1.PR.PERF

ei rən bəddôler ækta niyôm chilô, tbe seța konodini amar  
 this colour change.GEN one.CL system [was], but that.CL any.day.EMP I.GEN  
 kache khub pôrișkar hâyni.  
 near very clear not.be.3.PR.PERF

eițuku jantam ye praktik bərrôna sôbuț kalite lekha  
 this.bit know.1.P.HABIT that natural description green ink.LOC write.VN  
 hobe, ar bișeșyô hôle tate lal kali bybôhar hobe.  
 be.3.FUT, and noun be.CP that.LOC red ink use be.3.FUT

yæmôn 'aj tumul brști. manikder baři yaoța hólô na.'  
 as 'today terrible rain. Manik.PL.GEN home go.VN. be.3.PS not

ei yôdi hây duțo pcr pcr bakyô, tahôle prôthômța lekha  
 this if be.3.PR.S two.CL after after sentence, that.be.CP first.CL write.VN  
 hobe sôbuț kalite, dvițiyôtar prôthôm duțo kôtha hobe  
 be.3.FUT green ink.LOC second.CL.GEN first two.CL word be.3.FUT

lal, ar bakița kalo kimba nîl.  
 red, and remaining.CL black or blue

khațer upcr couki, ar tar upre kali kólômer dokan sajiye  
 bedstead.GEN on bed, and that.GEN on ink pen.GEN shop tidy.PP  
 yckhôn bhîșôn mônoyog diye chotôkaka đayri likhten,  
 when.R great concentration with small.uncle diary write.3H.P.HABIT

seța hôtô ækta dækhbar môtô jinis.  
 that.CL be.3.PS (PC) one.CL see.VN.GEN like thing.

ekhane đayrir ar ækta jiniser kôtha na bôllei nây.  
 here diary.GEN more one.CL thing.GEN word not say.CP.EMP [is not].3

choțôkaka pețuk na hôleo, kheten khub trpti kôre.  
 small.uncle greedy not be.CP.CONC eat.3H.P.HABIT much satisfaction do.PP

roj ebaři obaři giye ca khaoțar byaparța chilô ækta  
 daily this.home that.home go.PP tea drink.VN.GEN matter.CL [was] one.CL  
 bișeș ghôțôna.  
 special event.

ḍāyrite er ullekh thaktô, t̃be mamulibhabe ñy.  
diary.LOC this.GEN mention stay.3.P.HABIT, but trivial.way.LOC [is not].3

ye caṭa khelen tar ækṭa biṣeṣôn, ar bryakeṭer  
that.R tea.CL drink.3H.P.S that.GEN one.CL adjective, and bracket.GEN  
môddhe sei biṣeṣôṇer ækṭa byakhya cai.  
within that.EMP adjective.GEN one.CL explanation need

ækmaser ḍāyri theke k̃yēkṭa udah̃rôn dicchi. byaparṭa  
one.month.GEN diary from few.CL example give.1.PR.C. matter.CL  
pôriṣkar h̃be –  
clear be.3.FUT –

1. ñsim̃h̃ôbhogyô ca (bhoir̃b̃ôkantij̃ñôk, huhuṅkar pr̃ôsdh̃ôk  
Narasimha.worthy tea (tremendous.valour.causing, roar dressing  
joralo ca)  
strong tea)
2. boiṣṇôbbhogyô ca (nirih̃ô sumiṣṭi, sukomôl, çhim̃sôk ca)  
Vaishnav.worthy tea (innocent good.sweet, good.soft, non.violent tea)
3. bibekanôndôbhogyô ca  
Vivekananda.worthy tea  
(k̃arm̃ôyogôspr̃hab̃rdh̃ôk, bagbibh̃ut̃ipr̃ôd, t̃ttṽôniṣṭar,  
(work.worthy.inducing, speech.grace.giving, philosophical,  
ônuk̃ul upadeyô ca)  
benign enjoyable tea)
4. bh̃ṭacaryôbhogyô ca (bij̃ñôtab̃rdh̃ôk, gambh̃iryôpr̃ôd, ônuḡrô,  
Bhattacharya.worthy tea (wisdom.inducing, solemnity.promoting, mild,  
hr̃dyô ca)  
heartly tea)
5. dh̃ñṽônt̃ôribhogyô ca (arogyôb̃rdh̃ôk, aḡuṣyô,  
Dhanvantari.worthy tea (health.inducing, rejuvenating,  
r̃s̃aỹôṅguṅ-ç̃mpônnô ca)  
mineral.rich tea)
6. paharadarbhogyô ca (s̃t̃r̃k̃ôtab̃rdh̃ôk, uttej̃ôk,  
watchman.worthy tea (watchfulness.inducing, inciting,  
t̃ndranaśôk ca)  
sleep.preventing tea)
7. m̃aj̃lis̃i ca (m̃ç̃gul-m̃ç̃gul bhab̃ôdrekõkar̃i ca)  
get.together tea (absorbed absorbed thought.furthering tea)



8. keran̄ibhogyô ca (hisaber khata dækhaÿ uṣahôb̄rdhōk,  
 clerk.worthy tea (account.GEN book see.VN.LOC encouraging,  
 badamī, svadu ca)  
 nut-brown, tasty tea)

*Chotokaka was a loner who lived in his own world and was content with little. Sometimes it seemed that he was himself a kind of hermit. He had some quirks which are not often found in ordinary people. I already mentioned that he chewed each mouthful of food thirty-two times.*

*Food, rest, work, visiting and chatting, everything was recorded diligently in Chotokaka's diary. I can say with certainty that no one else ever kept a diary such as this. From the important news in the morning papers to almost all his activities during every hour of the day, what he did, what he read, what he ate, where he went, what he saw, who came, all of it went into the diary. When he went on a train journey, he had to list the number of the engine type. I learnt from him that there were different classes of engine types. XP, HPS, SB, HB – all of these were engine types. On the coal engines in those days the type number was given. Chotokaka used to go to the station a bit early so that, once he had deposited the luggage in the compartment, he had enough time to check out the engine type number. If for some reason he cut it too fine, he would get off the train at the next big junction to get the job done.*

*The diary was written in four different colours of ink – red, blue, green and black. All four colours occurred together in the same sentence. I saw a lot of instances of this in Chotokaka's diary. There was a logic to changing from one colour to another, but I never understood this logic very clearly. The little bit I knew was that descriptions of nature had to be done in green and nouns in red. For instance, if he wrote, 'Torrential rain today. Didn't go to Manik's house.' Of these two consecutive sentences, the first would be written in green, the last two words of the second sentence in red and the rest in blue or black. Seeing Chotokaka sitting on his bed in deep concentration, writing his diary with his warehouse of pens and ink tidily arranged around him was quite an experience.*

*I must add one more thing about the diary.*

*Chotokaka was not exactly a greedy eater but he derived great satisfaction from his food. Particularly important was his custom of visiting the neighbouring houses in order to drink tea. Each tea he tasted was described, first by an adjective, then by an explanation given in brackets. From one month of diary-entries I am giving a few examples to demonstrate:*

1. tea worthy of Narasimha (emboldening, roar-inducing, forceful tea)
2. tea worthy of a Vaishnav (innocent, sweet, soft, mollifying tea)
3. tea worthy of Vivekananda (energising, eloquence-enabling, philosophical, benign, enjoyable tea)

4. *tea worthy of a Brahmin (innocuous and hearty tea that increases intelligence and promotes seriousness)*
5. *tea worthy of Dhanwantari (all-healing, life-prolonging, mineral-rich tea)*
6. *tea worthy of watchmen (tea that increases watchfulness, stimulates, and defies sleep)*
7. *tea for get-togethers (tea that aids concentration and provokes thought)*
8. *tea worthy of clerks (nutbrown and tasty tea that instils the desire to check account-books)*

# Appendices

## Appendix I

### VERB CONJUGATION TABLES

#### overview

The following complete conjugation charts are given below:

C = consonant, V = vowel other than a.

#### Class 1

- (a) CVC vowel mutation o – ɔ      kôr – kɔr *do*  
(b) CVC vowel mutation i – e      likh – lekh *read*

#### Class 2

- (c) CaC                                      thak      *stay.*  
(d) aC                                        as        *come*

#### Class 3

- (e) CV vowel mutation o – ɔ      hɔo – hɔ *be, become*  
(f) CV vowel mutation i – e      di – de *give*

#### Class 4

- (g) Ca                                        kha      *get, receive*  
(h) Ca                                        ya        *go*

#### Class 5

- (i) CuCa                                    ghuma   *sleep*  
(j) CaCa                                    cala      *drive*

#### Class 6 o-conjugation.

- (k) variation without o-kar      egô      *advance*

(l) incomplete verb ach – ach *be present, exist, have*

abbreviations:

ba.VN	verbal noun in -ba
CP	conditional participle
FUT	future
FUT.IMP	future imperative
PR.IMP	present imperative

IP	imperfective participle
PC	past continuous
P.HAB	past habitual
PP	perfective participle
P.PERF	past perfect
PR.C	present continuous
PR.PERF	present perfect
PR.S	present simple
P.S	past simple
VN	verbal noun

(a) Class 1 (CVC) *kora do*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	kôri	koro	kôri	kore	koren
pr c	kôrchi	kôrchô	kôrchis	kôrche	kôrchen
pr perf	kôrechi	kôrechô	kôrechis	kôreche	kôrechen
fut	kôrbô	kôrbe	kôrbi	kôrbe	kôrben
p s	kôrlam	kôrle	kôrli	kôrlô	kôrlen
p c	kôrchilam	kôrchile	kôrchili	kôrchilô	kôrchilen
p perf	kôrechilam	kôrechile	kôrechili	kôrechilô	kôrechilen
p hab	kôrtam	kôrte	kôrtis	kôrtô	kôrten
pr.imp	–	koro	kôr	kôruk	koren
fut.imp	–	kôro	kôris	–	kôrun
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	kora	kôrba	kôrte	kôre	kôrle

(b) Class 1 (CVC) *lekha write*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	likhi	lekhô	is	lekhe	lekhen
pr c	likhchi	likhchô	likhchis	likhche	likhchen
pr perf	likhechi	likhechô	likhechis	likheche	likhechen
fut	likhbô	likhbe	likhbi	likhbe	likhben
p s	likhlam	likhle	likhli	likhlô	likhlen
p c	likhchilam	likhchile	likhchili	likhchilô	likhchilen
p perf	likhechilam	likhechile	likhechili	likhechilô	likhechilen
p hab	likhtam	likhte	likhtis	likhtô	likhten
pr imp	–	lekhô	lekh	likhuk	lekhen
fut imp	–	likhbe	likhis	–	likhun
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	lekha	lekhba	likhte	likhe	likhle

(c) Class 2 (CaC) *thaka stay*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	thaki	thakô	thakis	thake	thaken
pr c	thakchi	thakchô	thakchis	thakche	thakchen
pr perf	thekechi	thekechô	thekechis	thekeche	thekechen
fut	thakbô	thakbe	thakbi	thakbe	thakben
p s	thaklam	thakle	thakli	thaklô	thaklen
p c	thakchilam	thakchile	thakchili	thakchilô	thakchilen
p perf	thekechilam	thekechile	thekechili	thekechilô	thekechilen
p hab	thaktam	thakte	thaktis	thaktô	thakten
pr imp	–	thakô	thak	thakuk	thaken
fit imp	–	thekô	thakis	–	thakben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	thaka	thakba	thakte	theke	thakle

(d) Class 2 (aC) *asa come*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	asî	asô	asis	ase	asen
pr c	aschi	aschô	aschis	asche	aschen
pr perf	esechi	esechô	esechis	eseche	esechen
fut	asbô	asbe	asbi	asbe	asben
p s	elam, aslam	ele, asle	eli, asli	elô, aslô	elen, aslen
p c	aschilam	aschile	aschili	aschilô	aschilen
p perf	esechilam	esechile	esechili	esechilô	esechilen
p hab	astam	aste	astis	astô	asten
pr imp	–	asô	as	asuk	asen, asun
fut imp	–	esô	asis	–	asben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	asa	asba	aste	ese	asle

(e) Class 3 (CV) *hɔɔya be, become*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	hôi	hɔɔ	hôs	hɔy	hɔn
pr c	hôcchi	hôcchô	hôcchis	hôcche	hôcchen
pr perf	hôyechi	hôyechô	hôyechis	hôyechे	hôyechen
fut	hɔbô	hɔbe	hôbi	hɔbe	hɔben
p s	hôlam	hôle	hôli	hôlô	hôlen
p c	hôcchilam	hôcchile	hôcchili	hôcchilô	hôcchilen
p perf	hôyechilam	hôyechile	hôyechili	hôyechilô	hôyechilen

p hab	hôtam	hôte	hôtis	hôtô	hôten
pr imp	–	hɔ	hoo	houk	hɔn
fut imp	–	hɔbe	hôs	–	hɔben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	hɔɔya	hɔoba	hôte	hôye	hôle

(f) Class 3 (CV) deoÿa *give*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	dei/dii	dao	dis	dæy	den/din
pr c	dicchi	dicchô	dicchis	dicche	dicchen
pr perf	diÿechi	diÿechô	diÿechis	diÿeche	diÿechen
fut	debô/dibô	debe/dibe	debi/dibi	debe/dibe	deben/diben
p s	dilam	dile	dili	dilô	dilen
p c	dicchilam	dicchile	dicchili	dicchilô	dicchilen
p perf	diÿechilam	diÿechile	diÿechili	diÿechilô	diÿechilen
p hab	ditam	dite	ditis	ditô	diten
pr imp	–	dao	de	dik	den, din
fut imp	–	diÿô	dis	–	deben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	deoÿa	deba	dite	diÿe	dile

(g) Class 4 (Ca) khaoÿa *eat*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	khai	khao	khas	khaÿ	khan
pr c	khacchi	khaccho	khacchish	khacche	khacchen
pr perf	kheÿechi	kheÿechô	kheÿechis	kheÿeche	kheÿechen
fut	khabô	khabe	khabi	khabe	khaben
p s	khelam	khele	kheli	khelô	khelen
p c	khacchilam	khacchile	khacchili	khacchilô	khacchilen
p perf	kheÿechilam	kheÿechile	kheÿechili	kheÿechilô	kheÿechilen
p hab	khetam	khete	khetis	khetô	kheten
pr imp	–	khao	kha	khak	khan
fut imp	–	khabe	khas	–	khaben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	khaoÿa	khaba	khete	kheÿe	khele

(h) Class 4 (Ca) yaoÿa *go*. This verb has some irregularities.

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	yai	yaô	yas	yaÿ	yan
pr c	yacchi	yacchô	yacchis	yacche	yacchen

pr perf	giyechi	giyechô	giyechis	giyechê	giyechen
fut	yabô	yabe	yabi	yabe	yaben
p s	gelam	gele	geli	gelô	gelen
p c	yacchilam	yacchile	yacchili	yacchilô	yacchilen
p perf	giyechilam	giyechile	giyechili	giyechilô	giyechilen
p hab	yetam	yete	yetis	yetô	yeten
pr imp	–	yao	ya	yak	yan
fut imp	–	yeo	yas	–	un
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	yaoÿa	yaba	yete	giyê	gele

(i) Class 5 (CVCa) *ghumano- sleep* (extended verb)

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	ghumai	ghumao	ghumas	ghumay	ghuman
pr c	ghumacchi	ghumacchô	ghumacchis	ghumacche	ghumacchen
pr perf	ghumiyechi	ghumiyechô	ghumiyechis	ghumiyeche	ghumiyechen
fut	ghumabô	ghumabe	ghumabi	ghumabe	ghumaben
p s	ghumalam	ghumale	ghumali	ghumalô	ghumalen
p c	ghumacchilam	ghumacchile	ghumacchili	ghumacchilô	ghumacchilen
p perf	ghumiyechilam	ghumiyechile	ghumiyechili	ghumiyechilô	ghumiyechilen
p hab	ghumatam	ghumate	ghumatis	ghumatô	ghumaten
pr imp	–	ghumao	ghuma	ghumak	ghuman
fut imp	–	ghumiÿô	ghumas	–	ghumaiÿen
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	ghumano	ghumaba	ghumate	ghumiÿe	ghumale

(j) Class 5 (CaCa) *calano- drive* (causative verb)

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	calai	calao	calas	calaÿ	calan
pr c	calacchi	calacchô	calacchis	calacche	calacchen
pr perf	caliyechi	caliyechô	caliyechis	caliyeche	caliyechen
fut	calabô	calabe	calabi	calabe	calaben
p s	calalam	calale	calali	calalô	calalen
p c	calacchilam	calacchile	calacchili	calacchilô	calacchilen
p perf	caliyechilam	caliyechile	caliyechili	caliyechilô	caliyechilen
p hab	calatam	calate	calatis	calatô	calaten
pr imp	–	calao	cala	calak	calan
fut imp	–	calaiÿô	calas	–	calaben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	calano	calaba	calate	caliÿe	calale

(k) Class 6 o-conjugation egono- *advance*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	egoi	egoo	egis	egoÿ	egon
pr c	egochi	egochô	egochis	egoche	egochen
pr perf	egiÿechi	egiÿechô	egiÿechis	egiÿeche	egiÿechen
fut	egobô	egobe	egobi	egobe	egoben
p s	egolam	egole	egoli	egolô	egolen
p c	egocchilam	egocchile	egocchili	egocchilô	egocchilen
p perf	egiÿechilam	egiÿechile	egiÿechili	egiÿechilô	egiÿechilen
p hab	egotam	egote	egotis	egotô	egoten
pr imp	–	egoo	ego	eguk	egon
fut imp	–	egiÿô	egos	–	egoben
	VN	ba-VN	IP	PP	CP
	egono	egoba	egote	egiÿe	egole

(l) incomplete verb ach *exist, be present*

tenses	ami	tumi	tui	she	apni/tini
pr s	achi	achô	achis	ache	achen
p s	chilam	chile	chili	chilô	chilen

## Appendix II

## Numbers

by digit:

1 æk, 11 ægaro, 10 dás, 100 ek só

21 ekuś, 31 ektriś, 41 ækcôlliś, 51 ækannô, 61 ækşôṭṭi, 71 ækattôr, 81 ækaśi, 91 ækanɔbbôi

2 dui, 12 baro, 20 biś/kurṛi

22 baiś, 32 bôtriś, 42 biÿalliś, 52 bahannô, 62 başôṭṭi, 72 bahattôr, 82 biraśi, 92 biranɔbbôi

3 tin, 13 tero, 30 triś

23 teiś, 33 tetriś, 43 tetalliś, 53 tippannô, 63 teşôṭṭi, 73 tiÿattôr, 83 tiraśi, 93 tiranɔbbôi

4 car, 14 couddo, 40 côiïś

24 côiïbiś, 34 coutriś, 44 cuÿalliś, 54 cuÿannô, 64 couşôṭṭi, 74 cuÿattôr, 84 curaśi, 94 curanɔbbôi



5 pãc, 15 pɔnero, 50 pɔñcaś  
 25 pǔciś, 35 pǔytriś, 45 pǔytalliś, 55 pɔñcannô, 65 pǔyşôţti, 75 pǔcattôr, 85 pǔcaśi, 95  
 pǔcanɔbbôi

6 chɔy, 16 şolo, 60 şat  
 26 chabbiś, 36 chôtriś, 46 checôlliś, 56 chappannô, 66 cheşôţti, 76 chiyattôr,  
 86 chiyaśi, 96 chiyanɔbbôi

7 sat, 17 sɔtero, 70 sôtôtôr  
 27 sataś/sataiś, 37 sãitriś, 47 satcôlliś, 57 satannô, 67 satşôţti, 77 satattôr, 87 sataśi, 97  
 satanɔbbôi

8 aţ, 18 aţharo, 80 aśi  
 28 aţaş/aţaiś, 38 aţtriś, 48 aţcôlliś, 58 aţannô, 68 aţşôţti, 78 aţattôr, 88 aţaşi/ɔşţôaśi, 98  
 aţanɔbbôi

9 nɔy, 19 uniś, 90 nɔbbôi  
 29 unôtriś, 39 unôcôlliś, 49 unôpɔñcaś, 59 unôşat, 69 unôşôtôtôr, 79 unôaśi,  
 89 unônɔbbôi, 99 niranɔbbôi

by decade:

1 æk, 2 dui, 3 tin, 4 car, 5 pãc, 6 chɔy, 7 sat, 8 aţ, 9 nɔy, 10 dɔś  
 11 ægaro, 12 baro, 13 tero, 14 couddo, 15 pɔnero, 16 şolo, 17 sɔtero, 18 aţharo,  
 19 uniś, 20 biś/kuři  
 21 ekuś, 22 baiś, 23 teiś, 24 còbbiś, 25 pǔciś, 26 chabbiś, 27 sataś/sataiś, 28 aţaş  
 /aţaiś, 29 unôtriś, 30 triś  
 31 ektriś, 32 bôtriś, 33 tetriś, 34 coutriś, 35 pǔytriś, 36 chôtriś, 37 satriś, 38 aţtriś,  
 39 unôcôlliś, 40 còlliś  
 41 ækcôlliś, 42 biyalliś, 43 tetalliś, 44 cuyalliś, 45 pǔytalliś,  
     46 checôlliś, 47 satcollis, 48 aţcôlliś, 49 unôpɔñcaś, 50 pɔñcaś  
 51 ækannô, 52 bahannô, 53 tippannô, 54 cuyannô, 55 pɔñcannô,  
     56 chappannô, 57 satannô, 58 aţannô, 59 unôşat, 60 şat  
 61 ækşôţti, 62 başôţti, 63 teşôţti, 64 couşôţti, 65 pǔyşôţti,  
     66 cheşôţti, 67 satşôţti, 68 aţşôţti, 69 unôşôtôtôr, 70 sôtôtôr  
 71 ækattôr, 72 bahattôr, 73 tiyattôr, 74 cuyattôr, 75 pǔcattôr  
     76 chiyattôr, 77 satattôr, 78 aţattôr, 79 unôaśi, 80 aśi  
 81 ækaśi, 82 biraśi, 83 tiraśi, 84 curaśi, 85 pǔcaśi,  
     86 chiyaśi, 87 sataśi, 88 aţaşi/ɔşţôaśi, 89 unônɔbbôi, 90 nɔbbôi  
 91 ækanɔbbôi, 92 biranɔbbôi, 93 tiranɔbbôi, 94 curanɔbbôi, 95 pǔcanɔbbôi  
     96 chiyanɔbbôi, 97 satanɔbbôi, 98 aţanɔbbôi, 99 niranɔbbôi, 100 æk śô

200 du só, 1000 æk hajar, 100.000 æk lakh

one and a half      deṛ

two and a half      aṛai

### **fractions and time**

kilo is used for kilometres, the word mail *mile* is also in use.

keji (*kg*) is used for kilograms.

adha/adh	<i>half</i>
adh ghõṇṭa	<i>half an hour</i>
adha keji	<i>500 grams</i>
poṽa	<i>a quarter</i>
tin poṽa	<i>three quarters</i>
tehai	<i>a third</i>
saṛe	<i>plus one half</i>
saṛe choṽ mail	<i>six and a half miles</i>
saṛe tin ghõṇṭa	<i>three and a half hours</i>
saṛe pãṇṭa	<i>half past five</i>
poune	<i>minus one quarter, three quarters, eg poune ghõṇṭa 45 minutes</i>
poune keji	<i>750 grams</i>
poune satṭa	<i>quarter to seven</i>
saoṽa pron showa	<i>plus one quarter</i>
saoṽa ghõṇṭa	<i>an hour and a quarter</i>
saoṽa car mail	<i>four and a quarter miles</i>
saoṽa doṣṭa	<i>quarter past ten</i>

### **ordinal numbers**

prõthôm	<i>first</i>	dvitîyô	<i>second</i>	ṭṛtîyô	<i>third</i>
cõthurthô	<i>fourth</i>	pañcôm	<i>fifth</i>	ṣaṣṭhô	<i>sixth</i>
saptôm	<i>seventh</i>	ṣṭôm	<i>eighth</i>	naḅôm	<i>ninth</i>
daśôm	<i>tenth</i>				

### **days of the week**

rõbibar Sunday, sombar Monday, maṅgõlbar Tuesday, budhbar Wednesday,  
brõhõspõtibar Thursday, súkrõbar Friday, sónibar Saturday

### Bengali months and seasons

The Bengali calendar is still in use with monolingual publishers and newspapers. The Bengali new century 1400 began on 15 April 1993 – the second half of the year 2012 is therefore 1419 in Bengali counting. Bengalis count six seasons, lasting two months each.

#### months

boiśakh	<i>April – May</i>
jyoiṣṭhō	<i>May – June</i>
aṣaṛḥ	<i>June – July</i>
śrabôṇ	<i>July – August</i>
bhadrô	<i>August – September</i>
aśvin	<i>September – October</i>
kartik	<i>October – November</i>
ᵛgrôhaṣṭhōṇ	<i>November – December</i>
pouṣ	<i>December – January</i>
magh	<i>January – February</i>
phalgun	<i>February – March</i>
coitrô	<i>March – April</i>

#### seasons

grīṣmô	<i>summer</i>
bᵛrṣa	<i>rainy season</i>
śᵛrôt	<i>early autumn</i>
hemôntô	<i>late autumn</i>
śīt	<i>winter</i>
bᵛsôntô	<i>spring</i>

# Bibliography

This bibliography is restricted to material that is directly relevant to Bangla and does not include generic or theoretical linguistic works.

In order to simplify the transliteration for this bibliography and to reduce the need for diacritics, the following substitutions have been made:

ɔ, ô, o: o  
r: ri  
m̃, ñ: ng  
y, ŷ: y  
ś, ș: sh

This means that the word bhaṣa *language* will appear in the bibliography as bhasha, the word pṛithibi as prithibi.

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# Index

This index contains the keywords and grammatical terms used in this book, general grammatical terms which readers may be looking for and semantic headwords such as *cause*, *comparison*, *purpose* etc. It does not contain Bangla or English lexical items.

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