

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EASTERN
INDO-ARYAN CLASSIFIERS AND DEFINITENESS,
NUMBER, AND NUMERALS:**

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAITHILI, MAGAHI, AND BANGLA

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

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by

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis – **“Exploring the Relationship Between Eastern Indo-Aryan Classifiers and Definiteness, Number, and Numerals: A Comparative Analysis of Maithili, Magahi, and Bangla”** – submitted by Chandni Dutta to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a record of bona fide research work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance, and it is in conformity with the rules and regulations of IIT Delhi.

She has fulfilled all the requirements for the submission of this thesis which has, in my opinion, reached the standard of fulfilling the requirements for the degree.

To the best of my knowledge, the material contained in this thesis has not been submitted, in part or in full, to an other University or Institute for the award of another degree or diploma.

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Chandni Dutta

ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the syntactic representation of Numeral Classifiers in Eastern Indo-Aryan (EIA) languages- Maithili, Magahi, and Bangla. The two primary objectives of this study are to analyze (a) the representation of the classifier as a syntactic item and (b) the interaction of the classifier with other syntactic items like Definiteness (D), Number, and Numeral. The first objective discusses the headedness of the classifier- is it a syntactic head, or is it part of some other syntactic head? This objective also involves studying the properties of the classifier as a syntactic item- a lexical, semi-lexical, or functional item. These questions have been debated in the literature for long. Nevertheless, no one has done a comparative study of them taking closely related languages.

The novelty of the present work comes from the fact that these questions are taken up together in this study, with the empirical evidence deriving from the three sister languages.

The study claims that the numeral classifier is a syntactic head with a CIP projection in all three languages. Variation, however, appears while investigating the categorial status of the classifier. The study shows that the classifier behaves like a semi-lexical head with the properties of both lexical and functional items in Maithili and Bangla. In contrast, the classifier in Magahi behaves like a purely functional item. The investigation into the relationship between the classifier and other syntactic components reveals a story of meso-level variation. The interaction of D and classifier suggests that while the general classifier in Bangla plays the role of D when attached directly to the nominals, the general classifier in Maithili and Magahi does not. The other significant generalization this study concludes is that the structure of D in DP in these closely related languages differs. The present study shows that the DP of the Maithili, Magahi, and Bangla is extended. They all have extra D layers inside the DP that exhibit different

meanings of definiteness. In Maithili and Magahi, extra layers of D are attached lower in the tree- between NumP and NP. They have their morphological forms expressing the meaning of inclusivity and familiarity. In Bangla, the definiteness layer is higher up in the structure, manifesting semantics of identifiability, which raises the nominals in this language. Regarding the interaction of classifiers and Number (plurality), the present thesis attests that plurals exist in classifier languages (contra. Chierchia, 1998 a,b). The EIA classifier languages, especially Magahi and Bangla, have productive plural markers. Magahi has a plural marker that co-exists with classifiers. Bangla has two plurals, an additive, and an associative plural. These plurals are structurally different from the canonical head plural and merge as adjuncts. Bangla additive plural, however, behaves like a head and a modifying plural. This inquiry thus confirms that classifiers and plurals have separate functions of individuation and plural formation, respectively. The interaction of the classifiers with the numerals opens up the functional and structural differences within the numerals in these languages. The comparative study reveals that the numerals lower in the range combine with the classifier to count individual items. They do not have the measure property to individualize items (in terms of Krifka, 1995; Bale & Coon, 2014). Hence, they require the help of the classifier. The numerals in the higher range used for quantifying large approximate quantities have the measure function inherent to them. Therefore, they do not require a classifier. However, the range at which the classifier gets omitted varies in these languages.

This thesis demonstrates that syntax-internal interactions play a significant role in how syntactic elements (e.g., classifiers, D, Number, and Numeral) operate in a language. This thesis also reveals the layers of variation that can be available in closely related languages

सार

यह थीसिस पूर्वी इंडो-आर्यन (ईआईए) भाषाओं- मैथिली, मगही और बांग्ला में न्यूमरल क्लासिफायर के सिंटैक्टिक रिप्रजेंटेशन की जांच करती है। यह इन तीन संबंधित भाषाओं में क्लासिफायर का तुलनात्मक विवरण प्रदान करती है। यह कार्य ये दिखाने का भी प्रयास करता है कि अन्य सिंटैक्टिक घटक न्यूमरल क्लासिफायर से कैसे संबंधित हैं, जिससे इन भाषाओं में मेसो-स्तरीय भिन्नता उत्पन्न होती है।

यह कार्य क्लासिफायर के अध्ययन में दो प्रमुख क्षेत्रों पर केंद्रित है- (i) डीपी (DP) में क्लासिफायर का मानसिक वर्णन- इसकी श्रेणीगत संरचना और प्रमुख स्थिति; (ii) अन्य डीपी- आंतरिक तत्वों के साथ इसका संबंध- डिटर्मिनेर (D), संख्या (बहुलता), और अंक। इस अध्ययन में यह दिखाया गया है कि न्यूमरल क्लासिफायर की तीन भाषाओं में व्यक्तिगतकरण में सामान्य प्राथमिक भूमिका है। हालाँकि, इन सहयोगी भाषाओं में, यह, डी (D), बहुवचन, और न्यूमरल के साथ कैसे संबंधित है इसमें भिन्नता है। ईआईए भाषाओं में प्रत्यक्ष विभक्तिपूर्णकरण नहीं होता। इस प्रकार इन अन्य सिंटैक्टिक विशेषताओं के साथ क्लासिफायर का संबंध इन भाषाओं में वाक्यात्मक तत्वों के वर्णन और कार्य को समझने के लिए आवश्यक है। उदाहरण के लिए, आइए हम D को लेते हैं। बांग्ला में सामान्य क्लासिफायर गैर-संख्यात्मक संदर्भों में एक निश्चित मार्कर है, परंतु मैथिली और मगही क्लासिफायर इस तरह का व्यवहार नहीं दिखाते। इस संबंध से यह भी पता चलता है कि इन भाषाओं में डी की परत (D-layer) कितनी विविध है। संकेतवाचक सर्वनाम और बेयर नोमिनल्स से डेफिनिट संदर्भ के अलावा, जो सभी भाषाओं में सामान्य है, मैथिली और मगही की डी परतें समावेशिता और परिचितता के शब्दार्थ को स्पष्ट रूप से प्रदर्शित करती हैं।

इसी तरह इन भाषाओं में बहुवचन के साथ क्लासिफायर के संबंध के अध्ययन से पता चलता है कि इन टाइपोलॉजिकल रूप से 'संख्याहीन भाषाओं' में बहुवचन मौजूद है। इस अन्वेषण से यह भी पता चलता है कि मगही में संशोधित योगात्मक बहुवचन है। बांग्ला में दो प्रकार के बहुवचन हैं- एक साहचर्य और दूसरा योगात्मक बहुवचन, जो न्यूमरल क्लासिफायर के साथ विद्यमान हैं।

इसके अलावा, क्लासिफायर और न्यूमरल के संबंधों के अध्ययन से इन भाषाओं में न्यूमरल की संरचना में शामिल जटिलताओं को समझने में मदद मिलती है। यह अध्ययन इन भाषाओं में न्यूमरल की विविध जटिल संरचना (निम्न या उच्चतर) के लिए साक्ष्य प्रदान करता है। यह संरचनागत भिन्नता इस बात को प्रभावित करती है कि न्यूमरल क्या व्याकरणिक भूमिका निभाते हैं और वे क्लासिफायर से कैसे संबंधित हैं। माप के लिए उपयुक्त होनेवाले उच्च अंकों को क्लासिफायर की आवश्यकता नहीं होती है। इनका उपयोग अस्पष्ट अनुमानित मात्राएँ मापने के लिए किया जाता है। निचले अंकों को अनिवार्य रूप से क्लासिफायर की आवश्यकता होती है क्योंकि उनका कोई अंतर्निहित माप कार्य नहीं होता और वे सटीक, असतत, व अलग-अलग वस्तुओं को संदर्भित करते हैं।

इस कार्य में यह समझने की कोशिश की गई है कि किस तरह व्याकरण-आंतरिक सिंटैक्टिक संबंध किसी एक घटक को प्रभावित करते हैं और भाषा में उसकी क्या भूमिका है। उदाहरण के लिए, साहित्य में क्लासिफायर को बाहरी वातावरण में अनंत उद्दीपकों को वर्गीकृत करने की हमारी संज्ञानात्मक क्षमता का भाषा उद्दीपक माना जाता है। इस अध्ययन से पता चलता है कि केवल क्लासिफायर ही यह कार्य नहीं करता है। इसका कार्य इस बात पर निर्भर करता है कि यह अपने आस-पास के सिंटैक्टिक तत्वों से कैसे प्रभावित होता और करता है। ये संबंध मेसो-स्तर पर भी भिन्न होते हैं और वंशावली (जिनियोलॉजिकली) से संबंधित भाषाओं में क्लासिफायर के प्रतिनिधित्व और संचालन को प्रभावित करते हैं।

इस प्रकार यह शोध प्रबंध (थीसिस) हमारी वर्गीकरण प्रक्रिया के अंतर्निहित व्याकरणिक क्रियाविधि की गहरी समझ में योगदान है।

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ABBREVIATIONS

1- 1st Person
2- 2nd Person
3-3rd Person
ABS- absolutive
Acc- Accusative
Cl- Classifier
D- Definite
EIA- Eastern Indo-Aryan
Emp- Emphatic
Erg- Ergative
F- Feminine
Gen- Genitive
Hab- Habitual
Hon- Honorific
IA- Indo-Aryan
Imperf- Imperfective
Inf- Infinitive
Loc- Locative
Obl- Oblique
M-Masculine
NMLZ- Nominalizer
Neg- Negative
Nom- Nominative
P- Person
Perf- Perfective
Pl- Plural
Prs-Present
Prog-Progressive
Pst- Past
Poss- Possessive
Sg.- Singular
Q- Quantifier
WIA- Western Indo-Aryan