

Desire Predicate *icche* in Bangla

An Individual-level and Stage-level Dichotomy

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by

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Statement of Originality

I, Debadatta Roychowdhury registered on 25.09.2019 do hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Desire Predicate *icche* in Bangla: An Individual-level and Stage-level Dichotomy” contains literature survey and original research work done by the undersigned candidates as part of Doctoral studies.

All the information presented in this thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with existing academic rules and ethical conduct. I declare that, as required by thesis rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referred all materials and results that are not original to this work.

I also declare that I have checked this thesis as per the “Policy on Anti Plagiarism, Jadavpur University, 2019”, and the level of similarity as checked by iThenticate software is 2%.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Desire Predicate *icche* in Bangla: An Individual-level and Stage-level Dichotomy”, submitted by Debadatta Roychowdhury, who got registered (D-7/ISLM/78/19 dated 25.09.2019) her name under the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Law & Management for the award PhD (Arts/Science/Engineering/Pharmacy) degree of Jadavpur University is absolutely based upon her own work under the supervision of Dr. Samir Karmakar and that neither her thesis nor any part of the thesis has been submitted for any degree/diploma or any other academic award anywhere before.


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Synopsis

Introduction

Desire predicates are a broad category of expressions relating to human wants, wishes, and desires that have long captivated linguists and semantic theorists. Desire predicates serve as linguistic tools for people to express their intentions and desires, making them a crucial part of human communication. The study of desire predicates has received much attention in linguistics, still, most of the research done so far has concentrated on Indo-European languages, leaving a large gap in our understanding of these constructs in non-Indo-European languages. In this study, we focus on desire predicates in the Bangla language context.

This thesis seeks to investigate the meaning concerning capacity of Bangla desire predicate *icche* with a focus on its distribution in different structural compositions. More specifically, the work is concerned about the way desire predicate *icche* remains crucial in categorizing its content either as individual-level or as stage-level phenomena. We will concentrate on the role of the desire predicate *icche* both alone and in conjunction with the light verbs *ache* ‘have/exists’ forming *icche ache* meaning ‘the desire exists’, *hOwa* ‘happen’ and *kOra* ‘do’, forming *icche hOwa* ‘the desire happens/occurs’ and *icche kOra* ‘the desire happens/occurs’. To attain this research objective, the current work investigates various constraints imposed by the contexts of its occurrences. This, in turn, has enhanced our understanding of compositionality in general and the roles of relevant linguistic/conceptual intensions in particular.

Theorizing the contribution of a verbal predicate in a language is challenging because of the underlying conceptual intricacies. These intricacies have bearings not only on the meaning and the usage patterns but also on the structure. When we talk about verbal predicate

constructions and their significance in the language, it should be noted that the studies on ‘desire predicates’ in Bangla (Bengali) remain a bit drifted with very little exploration. In this thesis the major avenue of interest revolves around the predicate *icche* because it has four separate occurrences in Bangla. Each occurrence implies a semantic anomaly in the sense of desire communicated. The predicate *icche* can occur independently in a sentence and also combines with the light verbs *ach-* ‘have/exists’, *hO-* ‘happen’, and *kOr-* ‘do’ forming a complex predicate construction. The examples below show the occurrences.

(1) Source: Tagore, R. (1941). *Sesher Kobita, Bichitra*.

Background: The context is about a conversation between Amit and Labanya. While conversing, Amit in order to describe himself mentions his friend Sobhonlaal and says that he is an eminent researcher and his work is to explore the past and bring out the history, but Amit desires to establish the path of the future. Amit says the following to Labanya.

<i>amar</i>	<i>icche</i>	<i>bhobiSSOt-er</i>	<i>pOth</i>	<i>sriSTi</i>	<i>kOr-a¹</i>
I.GEN	desire	future-GEN	path.ACC	create	do-SBJV

‘It is my desire that I create the path of future.’

(2) Source: Newspaper – Bangla News 24. Date – 7th March, 2023

Section: Sports desk.

Background: This section concentrates on sports news and updates. They publish an interview with Lionel Messi about the PSG (Paris Saint-Germain) Football club.

¹ According to traditional grammar of Bangla, -a suffix is added with a verbal root to derive a verbal noun (Chattopadhyay, 1939). Because of being infinite, derived verbal nouns are useful in expressing the sense of subjunctivity.

Lionel Messi says the following sentence.

Onek kichu jeta-r icche ach-e
many things.ACC win.GER-GEN desire have.PRS-3

‘I have a desire to win a lot more in my life.’

- (3) Background: The sentence below is borrowed from a conversation between Shrish and his friend Bipin. They are talking about their interest in music and while discussing that Shrish says the following sentence.

ajkal majhe majhe kobita-e Sur bOSa- te icche
nowadays sometimes poems-LOC melody.ACC put-INF desire

kOr-e

do.PRS-3

‘Nowadays, sometimes, the desire to put melody in poems happens or occurs to me.’

- (4) Source: Newspaper – Bangla News 24. Date – 10th December 2022

Section: Lifestyle desk

Background: This section concentrates on lifestyle health. They talk about how can we consume sweets and still keep a check on our health and weight.

miSTi dekh-le-i khe-te icche hO-e
sweets.ACC see-COND-EMPH eat-INF desire happen.PRS-3

‘The desire of eating sweets happens to me whenever I see it.’

As mentioned above, the current work investigates various constraints imposed by the contexts of its occurrences and the significant context where these predicates behave differently is the spatiotemporal context. This heterogeneity among the predicates *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa*, and *icche kOra* has raised the research objectives of this thesis.

Research Objectives

The principle objective of this work is to investigate the meaning construing capacities of desire predicates in Bangla while focusing on the predicate *icche* and its interaction with light verbs. Since the act of desiring involves wide ranges of interpretations, relevant from the viewpoint of spatiotemporal constituencies, compositional factor needs to be explored to identify the lexical interdependencies. These objectives are central in understanding the semantic heterogeneity involved in desire predicate. The examples presented in this section highlight key challenges in understanding how the combination of *icche* with light verbs like *hOwa* and *kOra* introduces semantic shifts, especially when temporal adverbs are incorporated. A semantic anomaly is generated by the predicate *icche* while appearing as the first member of a construction with light verbs *ach-* ‘exists/have’, *hO-* ‘happen’ and *kOr-* ‘do’. The semantic complexity arises when temporal modifications such as *majhe majhe* ‘sometimes’, are introduced into these constructions. The sentences in (1-4) are modified with temporal adverbs in (5-8). Let us observe the situation in (5-6) where *icche* and *icche ache* are paired with with the temporal adverb *majhe majhe* ‘sometimes’.

- (5) * *amar majhe majhe icche bhobiSSOt-er pOth sriSti kOr-a*
 I.GEN sometimes desire future-GEN path.ACC establish do-SBJV
- (6) * *Onek kichu jeta-r majhe majhe icche ach-e*

many things.ACC win.GER-GEN sometimes desire have.PRS-3

Examples (5) and (6) show how incongruent the temporal adverbs are to the semantics of *icche*, when used in isolation or with the light verb *ache*. This indicates a semantic anomaly when temporal adverbs like *majhe majhe* ‘sometimes’ are applied. On the other hand examples (7)–(8) show that while occurring in a complex predicate construction with the light verbs *hOwa* ‘happen’ and *kOra* ‘do’, *icche* can accommodate temporal modifications. Consider the following:

(7) *miSTi dekh-le-i majhe majhe khe-te icche hO-e*
 sweets.ACC see-COND-EMPH sometimes eat-INF desire happen.PRS-3
 ‘Sometimes, the desire of eating sweets happens to me whenever I see it.’

(8) *amar majhe majhe bhari icche kOr-e oi*
 I.GEN sometimes strongly desire do-PRS.3 that
pahar-Ta par hoye col-e ja-i
 mountain-CLF.ACC cross over-INF leave-INF go-PRS.1
 ‘Sometimes, the strong desire of going beyond the mountain by crossing it occurs to me.’

The predicate *icche* in all its occurrences holds exclusivity in Bangla and the heterogeneity is observed both at the syntactic (clausal) level and the semantic level. The problem can only have a conclusive solution when we establish the intrinsic semantics of the predicates *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa*, and *icche kOra*. This exploration leads the thesis to answer the following research questions:

- (a) How does the meaning potential of *icche* (with the light verbs) vary across the contexts?
- (b) How and what types of contextual constraints are interacting with each other in curving out the senses of individual and stage-level interpretations in *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa* and *icche kOra*?

Methodology

Data Collection

To answer the aforementioned questions of this thesis, data is collected from (i) the standard conventional sources as well as from (ii) the conversational discourses. The standard conventional sources include soft and hard copies of texts whereas the conversational resources are collected from real-time interactions.

The primary sources of the data are as follows:

Table I: Sources of the data employed in the thesis

Sources:	
	a. Digital Sources (i) Bichitra Corpus (ii) Newspapers
	b. Books and journals.

Additionally, we have conducted a series of linguistic tests to investigate and understand how these predicates behave syntactically and semantically. The primary tests involved:

- Temporal modifications test
- Clausal embeddability test

The collected test results are then used for further exploration.

Representation of Data

The data gathered from these sources is presented in a structured schema comprising four layers as shown below:

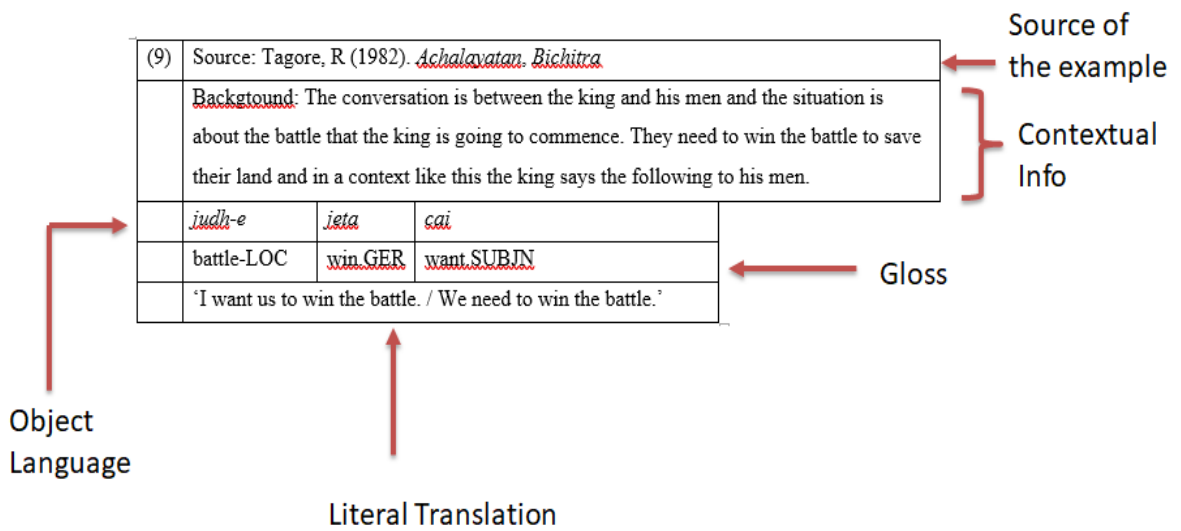


Figure I: Data Representation

We expressed the data, gathered from digital sources, in a schema that is divided into four layers: (i) Source, (ii) Background (iii) Object language and (iv) Gloss. For data extracted from the Corpus, the source indicates the title of the book, the author's name and the year of publication. For data sourced from newspapers, the source specifies the name of the newspaper and the date of publication. Similarly, for data obtained from research papers, the source indicates the title of the paper, the author's name(s), and the year of publication. The background describes the context. In data representation, we have followed the interlinear Leipzig Glossing Rules developed jointly by the Department of Linguistics of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and by the Department of Linguistics of the University of Leipzig. In the thesis, we have used (*) to represent ungrammaticality, (?) or (??) to represent inconsistent data. In certain situations we have used (✓) to represent

correctness or applicability. Throughout the thesis instead of IPA, we have incorporated the following technique for the representation of the data. This work emphasizes the syntactic and semantic aspects and aims to analyze the constructs from these two perspectives. We have not used the IPA as phonology and phonetics don't play a major role in our study. The Table II below represents the framework of symbols and sounds adapted. In the table below we have represented the symbols that we have incorporated in the thesis for the respective sounds while transcribing the other Bangla phonemes using the English alphabets in smaller cases following the standard practices of the current times.

Table II: The framework of symbols and sounds adapted

Symbols	Sounds
E, O	æ, ɔ
S	ʃ
M	Nasalization
N	ŋ
T, D	t, d

Overview of the chapters

The thesis presents itself in six chapters. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork by investigating the lexical expression of desire through predicates such as *icche* and *cawa*, while also addressing the challenges posed by temporal adverbs like *majhe majhe* ‘sometimes’, which can create semantic anomalies.

Building on this foundation, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on desire predicate and complex predicate structures. This chapter discusses concepts like ‘individual-level and stage-level predicates’, ‘event semantics’, and ‘interval semantics’. These three notions form the core of our analysis. The debate heavily relies on complex predicate structures, notably nouns and verbs in conjunct verb forms.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the distribution of the predicate *icche* in Bangla; the situation where it occurs as a lexical predicate in isolation and the situation where the predicate takes the shape of a conjunct verb by occurring with the light verbs *ache*, *hOwa*, and *kOra*. The chapter also incorporates a cross-linguistic viewpoint while indulging itself in a comparative study with the desire predicates of Odia and Hindi. Clausal and lexical level dependencies are discussed in detail; *icche* in isolation implies selection restriction towards a particular clausal complement structure and *icche* with the light verbs *ache*, *hOwa* and *kOra* exerts different clausal dependencies.

Chapter 4 provides an explanation and analysis of the structure in which contents are contained. We explain the structural innards of *icche* when it occurs independently and when it appears with the light verbs. From a syntactic standpoint, we discuss the argument structure of the predicates and the theta-assigning power of the light verbs. Although from a semantic perspective, the meaning construing capacities of the light verbs in composition with the host noun *icche* adds a new meaning in the entire eventuality of desire. This phenomenon builds up the basis of our investigation outlined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 contains discussions on the interval and subinterval properties of *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa*, and *icche kOra* in the spatiotemporal context. Then the chapter establishes the bifurcation of the meaning potential of the predicate *icche* (with the light verbs) into individual and stage-level interpretations. The ‘individual and stage-level’ phenomena are the

framework within which the semantic composition of *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa*, and *icche kOra* is developed.

Finally, Chapter 6 provides an overview of the entire work concerning the structural and semantic insights, and temporal and aspectual properties. The findings of the work are mentioned with the future scope.

Findings

One of the primary contributions of this thesis is to the study of complex predicates in South Asian languages from a semantic standpoint. The detailed analysis of desire predicates such as *icche*, *icche ache*, *icche hOwa*, and *icche kOra* within this framework has expanded the understanding of how such constructions function in Bangla. By focusing on the interaction between desire predicates and light verbs, this study has illuminated how these verbs influence the semantic interpretation of a sentence by analyzing the difference in the sense of desire communicated. The research has shown that light verbs are not merely grammatical tools for tense and aspect marking but play a significant role in shaping the meaning and function of the predicates they accompany. They add a semantic flavour to the whole eventuality from the standpoint of semantics.

This thesis conveys a distinction between individual-level and stage-level predicates in the context of Bangla desire predicates. In the analysis presented in this thesis, the predicates *icche* and *icche ache* ‘possession of a desire’ are classified as individual-level predicates. On the other hand, the predicates *icche hOwa* and *icche kOra* ‘the occurrence of desire’ are identified as stage-level predicates. We have supported this claim through semantic tests involving locative and temporal adverbial modifications. We have determined their interval and subinterval properties to investigate the individual-level and the stage-level properties.

Finally, this thesis adds to the typological understanding of South Asian languages by situating Bangla within the broader context of Indo-Aryan languages. The findings show that while Bangla shares many features with other Indo-Aryan languages, it also exhibits unique characteristics in its use of light verbs and aspectual markers. This typological contribution is important for linguists interested in the diversity and commonality among South Asian languages, particularly in the domain of complex predicates and the expression of mental states. By providing a detailed analysis of one specific area of Bangla grammar, this study opens the door for further research on other areas of the language and other related languages.

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