

# Atypical Compound Verb Constructions in Hindi/Urdu The Case of Transitive Polar Verbs with Intransitive Vector Verbs

Andrea Drocco  
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia

Neha Tiwari  
Independent Scholar

**Abstract** While a lot of research has already been done on defining compound verb constructions and understanding their semantic and pragmatic usages, there is still a gap when it comes to our understanding of atypical compound verb constructions where transitive polar verbs are paired with intransitive vector verbs and vice versa. In this paper we focus on atypical constructions with two intransitive vector verbs: *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*. We collate and review the different meanings that scholars have ascribed to these constructions and present our own analysis. We conclude that the main reason behind using an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb is to reduce the transitivity of the action by implying reduced agency on the part of the Agent-like argument of the sentence. In addition to that, the use of an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb also tells us which argument in the sentence is affected by the action from the point of view of the speaker. However, sometimes atypical constructions are also used by the speaker to express his/her shock or astonishment over a particular event, thus imposing his/her own ideas about agency, volitionality, and affectedness on the action being observed.

**Keywords** Hindi. Urdu. Transitivity. Involuntary agent.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 What Are Atypical Compound Verb Constructions? – 3 Reduced Transitivity of Atypical Compound Verb Constructions. – 4 Negative Surprise. – 5 Conclusion.



#### Peer review

Submitted	2020-02-11
Accepted	2020-06-01
Published	2020-06-30

#### Open access

© 2020 | Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License



**Citation** Drocco, Andrea; Tiwari, Neha (2020). "Atypical Compound Verb Constructions in Hindi/Urdu. The Case of Transitive Polar Verbs with Intransitive Vector Verbs". *Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale*, 56, 307-334.

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The compound verb construction in Hindi/Urdu (hereafter H/U) is a widely studied and discussed phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> However, so far, a conclusive understanding of the factors or conditions under which compound verbs are used still evades us. The semantic implications, like 'completeness' or 'perfectivity', of these constructions have already been studied and discussed in detail (see, among others, Pořízka 1967-9; Hook 1974, 1978, 1991, 1993; Kachru 1979, 158-9; Butt, Ramchand 2001; Poornima 2012). However, some scholars agree on the fact that there are other factors that govern their usage and these are more pragmatic in nature and depend on the informational context of the action (Kachru 1979; Jagannathan 198, 264-5; Hook forthcoming; Drocco, Tiwari forthcoming).

Moreover, compared to the studies concerning the semantic difference between using a compound verb as opposed to a simple verb, there are not many studies on the use of different vector verbs with the same polar verb, especially when a polar transitive verb is compounded with an intransitive vector verb (Drocco 2018). Indeed, as has been pointed out by many scholars (see, for example, Hook 1974, 1978; McGregor 1977, 99-105; Caracchi 2002, 163-9; Jagannathan 1981, 266; Shapiro 1989, 145-60; Nespital 1997, vii-xxvii), in compound verb constructions we typically see the use of intransitive vector verbs with intransitive polar verbs and transitive vector verbs with transitive polar verbs. However, the same scholars maintain that there are certain instances where a transitive polar verb is used with an intransitive vector verb and vice versa. In this paper our aim is to study some of the instances when transitive polar verbs are used with intransitive vector verbs, what we are referring to as an 'atypical compound verb construction'.<sup>3</sup>

This paper is divided into four sections. In section two we define both typical and atypical compound verb constructions and present a proof of the 'atypicality' of the latter. We also discuss semantic implications of atypical compound verb constructions that use *jānā*, 'to

---

**1** Our thanks first and foremost to Pinuccia Caracchi, Giuliano Bernini, Peter Hook, V.R. Jagannathan, Ali Taqi and other teachers at the Zabaan School of Languages for their insights. All errors and inadequacies are our responsibility. For all the abbreviations see the list at the end of this article.

**2** For an overview of the study on compound verbs in Indo-Aryan, from both a synchronic and diachronic point of view, see Slade 2016, who also provides the reader a useful listing of studies on this topic, with respect to the Indo-Aryan group, selected by language (Slade 2016, 567). For a diachronic perspective see especially Slade 2013.

**3** This title for these particular constructions is based on the work of Montaut 1991, Ch. 5; 2004, 125-6).

go' and *baiṭhnā*,<sup>4</sup> 'to sit' as intransitive vector verbs when paired with transitive polar verbs. In section three, we briefly review how different points on the transitivity continuum (Hopper, Thompson 1980; Tsunoda 1985; Lazard 2002; Kittilä 2002; Næss 2007) are realized morpho-syntactically in H/U and we discuss the implications atypical compound verb constructions have on the transitivity of the clause. In particular we show that the use of atypical compound verb constructions can change the transitivity parameters for the main verb. In section four we build further from the analysis of Kachru (1979) and Drocco (2018) and discuss the idea of negative surprise and astonishment associated with the use of atypical constructions with *jānā* as a vector verb.<sup>5</sup> We conclude with our main findings in section five.

## 2 What Are Atypical Compound Verb Constructions?

As mentioned above, in atypical compound verb constructions<sup>6</sup> certain transitive polar verbs are paired with intransitive vector verbs and vice versa. Following Montaut (1991, Ch. 5; 2004, 125-6) in calling these constructions 'atypical,' we think the main reason behind the use of this nomenclature is the fact that, above all, they are encountered less frequently in texts and spoken language<sup>7</sup> compared to their 'typical' counterparts. This fact can be demonstrated by comparing the search results for typical and atypical compound verb constructions in a Hindi corpus developed by Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.<sup>8</sup> We will do this for two transitive polar verbs: *karnā*, 'to do') and *kahnā* ('to say').

The transitive polar verb *karnā* is normally seen compounded with *denā*, *lenā*, *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, where *denā* and *lenā* are transitive and

<sup>4</sup> While *jānā* is commonly paired with intransitive polar verbs in typical constructions, *baiṭhnā* only occurs in atypical compound verb constructions where it is paired with transitive polar verbs (McGregor 1977; Caracchi 2002, 168; see also Nespital 1997, 936-40).

<sup>5</sup> See also Kachru, Pandharipane 1980, 119-21 as regards the use of *baiṭhnā* as vector verb.

<sup>6</sup> We think that it is not necessary here to introduce the reader of what is a H/U compound verb construction and thus to the meaning of polar and vector verb. See the well-known definition offered by Hook (2001, 101), recently adopted in Drocco (2018, 266) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> While we have provided evidence of the infrequent usage of compound verbs in texts, the claim about that being the case for spoken language as well is based on the authors' own experience speaking, learning and teaching H/U and on the opinion of the majority of H/U scholars (see references in the text). One of the anonymous reviewers of the paper thinks that "such combinations are used to generate particular kind of nuances. I would say that in spoken Hindi the combination is used more than in written Hindi".

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cfi.lt.iitb.ac.in/~corpus/hindi>. The search results are from 21 December 2019, 25 January 2020 and 28 January 2020.

*jānā* and *baiṭhnā* are intransitive.<sup>9</sup> If we look at the frequency of the occurrence of these pairs in the simple perfect, *kar diyā*, *kar liyā*, *kar gayā* and *kar baiṭhā* in the corpus we get the following results:<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1** Simple Perfect

Typical			Atypical				
<i>kar diyā</i>	1935	<i>kar liyā</i>	669	<i>kar gayā</i> <sup>i</sup>	29	<i>kar baiṭhā</i> <sup>ii</sup>	9
<i>kar dī</i>	733	<i>kar lī</i>	299	<i>kar gayī</i> <sup>iii</sup>	13	<i>kar baiṭhī</i> <sup>iv</sup>	4
<i>kar dīm</i>	17	<i>kar līm</i>	16	<i>kar gayīm</i>	1	<i>kar baiṭhīm</i>	1

**i** After excluding 10 occurrences of the conjunctive participle verb stem + *kar jānā*, for example, *lekar jānā* (to take and go).

**ii** After excluding 29 instances of the conjunctive participle stem + *kar baiṭhnā ā*, for example, *ākar baiṭhā* (came and sat).

**iii** After removing occurrences of the conjunctive participle and the verb *mukar jānā*, and 4 strings that were wrongly pulled up in the search results.

**iv** After excluding 16 occurrences of the conjunctive participle and one occurrence of the plural *kar baiṭhīm*.

As is evident from these search results, *kar diyā* and *kar liyā* are encountered over 60 and 20 times more (respectively) when compared to *kar gayā* and over 200 and 70 times more compared to *kar baiṭhā*. While these results are based on one corpus, they are indicative of the relative infrequency of atypical constructions.

The two compound verbs *kar jānā* and *kar baiṭhnā* commonly occur in the perfect because the specific meanings they convey, the realization of ‘going beyond’ or ‘making a mistake’,<sup>11</sup> are probably possible only after the fact. However, we are also including search results for the simple future for comparison. Also, note that the instances of *kar denā* and *kar lenā* (cf. table 2) in the simple future are also relatively much fewer. This could be because one of the semantic implications of using compound verbs is emphasizing the perfective aspect (cf. § 1), which, while possible in the simple future (it will be done/completed), is less frequent.

<sup>9</sup> For differences in meanings amongst these different pairings see Snell, Weightman ([1989] 2010, 189, 190, 278), Hook (1974, 1978) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> We have removed the results for the masculine plural simple perfect forms as the search results were also returning strings for masculine singular forms on the corpus.

<sup>11</sup> As we will see below, this is the specific meaning that *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* add respectively when adopted as intransitive vector verbs of transitive polar verbs.

**Table 2** Simple Future

Typical		Atypical					
<i>kar degā</i>	67	<i>kar legā</i>	33	<i>kar jāegā<sup>i</sup></i>	1	<i>kar baiṭhegā</i>	1
<i>kar deṅge</i>	38	<i>kar leṅge</i>	40	<i>kar jāeṅge<sup>ii</sup></i>	0	<i>kar baiṭheṅge</i>	1
<i>kar degī</i>	38	<i>kar legī</i>	12	<i>kar jāegi<sup>iii</sup></i>	2	<i>kar baiṭhegī</i>	0
<i>kar degīm</i>	8	<i>kar legīm</i>	1	<i>kar jāeṅgī</i>	0	<i>kar baiṭheṅgī</i>	0

**i** After excluding one string that did not contain the search phrase.  
**ii** After excluding one occurrence of the conjunctive participle.  
**iii** One search result was repeated.

We can repeat the same search for *kahnā*, ‘to say’ which is also transitive. The polar verb *kahnā* is normally only paired with *denā*, as a transitive vector verb. This is due to the fact that the object of the verb ‘to say’, which are the things said, are meant for the listener. Comparing the occurrences of *kah denā*, *kah jānā* and *kah baiṭhnā*, we get the following results in simple perfect (cf. table 3) and in simple future (cf. table 4) respectively:

**Table 3** Simple Perfect

Typical		Atypical			
<i>kah diyā<sup>i</sup></i>	137	<i>kah gayā<sup>ii</sup></i>	4	<i>kah baiṭhā<sup>iii</sup></i>	3
<i>kah dī</i>	62	<i>kah gayī<sup>iv</sup></i>	2	<i>kah baiṭhī<sup>v</sup></i>	1
<i>kah dīm</i>	4	<i>kah gayīm</i>	1	<i>kah baiṭhīm</i>	1

**i** Both the simple verb *kahnā* and the compound verb *kah denā* have the meaning ‘to tell someone to do something’ (Nespital 1997, 716). Some of the search results have this meaning instead of ‘to say’, but this meaning of *kahnā* is not relevant for the present paper.  
**ii** After excluding 3 results that did not contain the search string, one result that was repeated and one other where *kah gayā* can be seen as a verb in combination, *kah-kar gayā* (see footnote 13). Also, as mentioned in footnote 18, some of the search results also had *kahnā* in the sense of telling someone to do something.  
**iii** After excluding 2 results that did not contain the search string.  
**iv** Excluding one occurrence of the plural *kah dīm*, one repeated search result and three results where *kah gayā* can be seen as a verb in combination, *kah-kar gayā* (see footnote 13).  
**v** After excluding 8 occurrences that did not contain the search string and one occurrence of the plural *kah baiṭhīm*.

**Table 4** Simple Future

Typical		Atypical			
<i>kah degā<sup>i</sup></i>	8	<i>kah jāegā<sup>ii</sup></i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhegā</i>	0
<i>kah demge<sup>iii</sup></i>	6	<i>kah jāemge</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhemge</i>	0
<i>kah degī</i>	0	<i>kah jāegī</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhegī</i>	0
<i>kah degīm</i>	1	<i>kah jāemgī</i>	0	<i>kah baiṭhemgī</i>	0

**i** After excluding one repeated result.  
**ii** After excluding one result that did not contain the search string.  
**iii** After excluding 4 occurrences that did not contain the search string.

Thus, we can see that atypical constructions occur less frequently with respect to typical compound verb constructions.

One of the reasons why these constructions are less frequently encountered is because they encode a very specific meaning.<sup>12</sup> Let us consider the vector verb *baiṭhnā*, ‘to sit’ for example. It is adopted in this function when the Agent-like argument of the sentence commits (or might commit in the future) what is often seen by the speaker as an action with an undesirable result, that is to say, a mistake or something done foolishly (Snell, Weightman [1989] 2010, 278; McGregor 1977, 102-3; Kachru, Pandharipande 1980, 119-21; Nespital 1997, 936-40; Caracchi 2002, 168). For example:

- vah**            **kaisā**    **kām**        **kar**        **baiṭh-ā**. (\**us ne*)  
 3SG.DIR    which    work        do        sit.VV-PERF.M.SG  
 ‘What kind of mistake/sin/crime has he committed?’ (adapted from Caracchi 2002, 168)
- oho**            **choṭū**    **kyā**        **kar**        **baiṭh-ā**            **h-ai**. (\**choṭūne*)  
 oho        Chotu    what        do        sit.VV-PERF.M.SG    be-3SG  
 ‘Oh! What has Chotu done?’ (adapted from Snell 2016, 225).

While all scholars agree on the semantic nuance expressed by the vector verb *baiṭhnā* we just discussed, the same is not true for *jānā*, ‘to go’ when it is compounded with transitive polar verbs.<sup>13</sup> Accord-

<sup>12</sup> Another reason that can partially account for the infrequent usage of atypical constructions, especially with the vector verb *jānā*, is that the set of polar transitive verbs that can form meaningful pairings with *jānā* is limited. For this last statement see, for example, Nespital 1997, 554-9 and Drocco 2018. More research is needed to understand the precise reasons behind this fact.

<sup>13</sup> Another interesting instance of atypical usage of *jānā* as a vector verb is often seen when it is used along with *kahnā*. The different meanings discussed in this paper that are typically associated with using *jānā* do not explain all the instances where *kah jānā* is encountered. For these cases sometimes it is possible to look at *kah jānā* as a verb

ing to the majority of scholars, the intransitive vector *jānā*, when compounded with transitive vector verbs, signals lack of volitionality of the Agent-like argument (cf., among others, Pandharipande 1981, 168-70; Kachru 1981, 187; Mohanan 1994).

3.     **vah**            **kām**     **kar**            **ga-y-ā.**     (\**us ne*)  
3SG.DIR    work.M    do            go.VV-PERF-M.SG  
'He did the work unintentionally'.<sup>14</sup> (adapted from Pandharipande 1981, 169)

However, as we just said, not all of them agree on this additional semantic implication of *jānā* when used as intransitive vector verb of transitive polar verbs (see, among others, Nespital 1997, 556-9; Montaut 1991, 2004). For example, Shapiro simply maintains that:

in combination (i.e. *kahkar jānā*) and not as a compound verb. However, it is important to point out that this is not always the case. To illustrate this last point, see the examples in (a) and (b) below:

- a.     *jānī*    *log*    *pahle hī kah*    *ga-e*                    *haiṁ ki*    *satya kā*  
learned    men    already say    go.VV-PERF-M.PL    be    that    truth GEN  
  
       *mārg*    *māyā*    *se*    *ḍhakā*    *rah-t-ā*            *hai*  
way    illusion    by    covered    stay-PRES-M.SG    be  
'Knowledgeable/learned men have already said (and gone) that the way of truth stays covered by illusion'. (adapted from one of the examples on the Hindi Corpus 2004a)
- b.     *lekin bhābhī*    *to*    *tīn mahīne se*    *apne maike*    *merṁ haiṁ*  
but    bhābhī    PTC    three months since    her    parent's place    LOC    be  
  
       *aur kah ga-ī*            *haiṁ ki*    *ab kabhī na*    *ā-ūṁ-g-ī.*  
and say    go.VV-PERF.F    be    that    now    never    come(back)-1SG-FUT-F  
'But *bhābhī* is at her parent's place since three months and has said that I will never come (back) now'. (adapted from *Devī ek aur kahānī* by Premchand see <http://web.bookstruck.in/book/chapter/11129>)

In sentence (a), if we analyze *kah ga-e haiṁ* as *kahkar ga-e haiṁ*, 'have said and gone', it does not have the same meaning. The latter sounds as if the subject said something and then left (or passed away) intentionally in that particular order. But in reality, the original compound form, by which we mean the meaning expressed by *kah ga-e haiṁ* in (a), is less volitional or planned when it comes to how the two actions *kahnā* and *jānā* were temporally realized. These constructions are typically used when the Agent-like argument is no longer around to confirm what he/she said or is deceased. Other verbs like *karnā* and *banānā* are also sometimes seen used with *jānā* in this way.

In sentence (b), however, *kahkar ga-ī haiṁ* comes close to the meaning of *kah ga-ī haiṁ*. Interestingly, sentence (a) is semantically in between 1. 'Verbs in Combination', where both verbs retain their full meaning and 2. 'Compound Verb Construction', where the vector verb loses its original meaning. While more research is needed on this topic, we believe that this could be one of the ways in which compound verbs slowly evolved and became grammaticalized (cf. Hook 1991).

**14** This translation and interpretation of unintentionality expressed by *karnā* + *jānā* is from Pandharipande (1981, 169). We do not fully agree with this interpretation (see below). This is also the view of one of the reviewers of this paper.

With transitive verbs indicating ingestion, जाना (i.e. *jānā*) adds a sense of totality or thoroughness of the acts of ingestion. (Shapiro 1989, 146)

He supports this statement with the following sentence as an example:

4. *kām se lauṭ kar vah ghar kā sab khānā*  
work ABL come back CP 3SG.DIR home GEN all food  
*khā jā-t-ā h-ai.*  
eat go.VV-PRES-M.SG be-3.SG  
'He eats up all the food in the house when he comes home from work'.  
(adapted from Shapiro 1989, 146)

Starting from these different and inchoate ideas about the use of *jānā* as a vector verb of (some) transitive polar verbs, Drocco (2018, 276-82) advanced the hypothesis that this particular construction encodes the negative attitude of the speaker/narrator about some unintended, unwanted, unpleasant, and irrevocable effect/result of the action expressed by the transitive polar verb. He explains in detail this particular use of *jānā* when compounded, especially, with ingestive verbs *khānā*, 'to eat' and *pīnā*, 'to drink'. Here is an example from his paper (taken originally from Montaut 2004):

5. *māim zarurāt se zyādā khā ga-y-ā, peṭ*  
1SG.DIR need than more eat go.VV-PERF-M.SG belly  
*phūl ga-y-ā, jhapkī lag gaī.*  
swell go-PERF-M.SG doze be attached go.VV-PERF.F  
'I ate (gulped) more than needed, my belly swelled up, I fell asleep'. (adapted from Montaut 2004, 126)

According to Drocco (2018, 278), in (5) *jānā* is used as an intransitive vector verb for the transitive polar verb *khānā*, because the speaker's intention (a 1st person singular pronoun) is to emphasize a particular negative affect of the act of eating too much on the Agent-like argument, that is, on himself. In particular Drocco continues giving the following explanation:

With the use of *zarurāt se zyādā*, "more than needed", the action of *khānā*, "to eat" results in an unintended, unwanted, unpleasant, unexpected, and irrevocable effect. This result is in fact explicitly mentioned in the same sentence with the expression *peṭ phūl gayā, jhapkī lag gaī*, "(my) belly swelled up, (I) felt sleepy". (2018, 278)



Therefore, it must be noted that while previously scholars have mainly emphasized the semantic implications of the atypical usages of *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, we think that it is also important to pay attention to the fact that these meanings are associated to the speaker's perception of the event (who, sometimes, can be the Agent-like argument of the sentence, as in the last example). This is because the speaker also has at his/her disposal at least one alternative phrasing of the event which does not use this construction<sup>15</sup> and thus the fact that the speaker chooses to use an atypical construction also shows his/her attitude or opinion about the action in question. While this may not appear to be an important distinction to make at this stage, we will discuss its implications in section four.

To sum up, we have seen that *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, when used with transitive polar verbs, have very specific meanings and that, in part, could explain why they are encountered less frequently in the language. Also, as we have reported above, while there is a general agreement among scholars when it comes to the semantic implications of *baiṭhnā* as a vector verb, this is not the case with *jānā*.

In the next section we will try to understand how the different semantic meanings associated with the usage of *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* in atypical constructions are related to the effect they have on the transitivity parameters of the clause/sentence they are used in.

### 3 Reduced Transitivity of Atypical Compound Verb Constructions

While the grammatical categories of 'transitive' and 'intransitive' are centuries-old,<sup>16</sup> the linguistic understanding of what 'transitivity' is has become more refined in the decades after Hopper and Thompson's seminal paper (1980). Linguists now view 'transitivity' as a spectrum, where a certain verb under a certain construction is 'more' transitive, while the same verb under a different morphosyntactic setting can be 'less' transitive (Tsunoda 1985; Lazard 2002; Kittilä 2002; Næss 2007, Ch. 2).

Different languages have different ways of encoding information about transitivity seen as a scalar notion. In H/U we typically see it expressed in one of the following main ways:

---

<sup>15</sup> For example, another way in which (1) can be reported is: *usne kaisā kām kar diyā*. In this example the transitive polar verb *karnā*, 'to do' is compounded with the transitive vector verb *denā*, 'to give' and, for that reason, the Agent-like argument is followed by the ergative postposition *ne*. For our explanation on why *baiṭhnā*, instead of *denā*, is used in (1) as an intransitive vector verb of *karnā*, 'to do' see § 3.

<sup>16</sup> As regards the Indian grammatical tradition see *Vākyapadīya* by Bhartṛhari (5th century CE) (Bhate, Bronkhorst 1997), while for the Western grammatical tradition see Hopper, Thompson 1980 and Lazard 2002.

1. The use of the postposition *ne* in the perfect with transitive verbs (Hock 1985, 250; Bashir 2016, 450-3);<sup>17</sup>
2. Indirect constructions with the subject followed by the postposition *ko* that are used for encoding the experiencer (for an overview on this topic see Masica 1991, 346-56 and Hock 2016);
3. The use of passive derivation in negative sentences to express the inability to do an action by the agent (see Masica 1991, 356-8, but especially Pandharipande 1979);
4. The use of intransitive/anticausative verbs with the Agent-like argument expressed by adding the postposition *se*, as an Instrument through which the action happened;<sup>18</sup>
5. The use of compound verbs (Drocco 2018).<sup>19</sup>

The first three features just listed have been widely studied in H/U and Indo-Aryan linguistics in general. On the contrary, the transitivity implications for compound verbs have so far only been studied by a few scholars.<sup>20</sup> Thus, as said above, the goal of this section is in part to fill this gap.

In the previous section we mentioned that the speaker's choice of using a polar transitive verb compounded with an intransitive vector verb is linked to his perception of the event. In these cases, the speaker perceives the result of the action done by the Agent-like argument of the sentence as either:

- unwanted, unintended contrasted against what is wanted, intended in accordance with a socio-cultural norm or a personal habit, or
- a mistake made by the Agent-like argument of the sentence.

This specific attitude of the speaker is realized in H/U by means of compounding transitive vector verbs with *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* respectively. The resulting atypical constructions taken into examination here are very interesting, because they change the syntactic status

---

**17** Some linguists question the view that *ne* can be seen as a marker of transitivity (see, among others, Mohanan 1994).

**18** An example to illustrate this usage is the following sentence found in the web: *ek dīn mujh-se kap ṭūṭ gayā*, 'One day the cup broke 'through' me'. This kind of meaning can also be expressed by the simple verb *ṭūṭnā* and similar verbs. Cf. <https://www.bhaskar.com/news/JHA-RAN-HMU-MAT-latest-ranchi-news-034003-736146-NOR.html>.

**19** A small category of verbs in H/U can be used both transitively and intransitively, like *khonā*, INTR 'to get lost', TR 'to lose (something)' and *badalnā*, INTR 'to be changed, to change', TR 'to change (something)'. When these verbs are paired with *jānā*, the resulting compound form becomes definitively intransitive (Snell, Weightman [1989] 2010, 189; Caracchi 2002, 165-6).

**20** And this is true also for the use of intransitive/anticausative verbs with the Agent-like argument followed by the postposition *se*.

of a transitive construction to an intransitive one, even if the result is still a bi-actant construction that can be translated as a transitive clause in other languages such as English. According to some scholars (see, among others, Pandharipande 1981, 168-9 and Kachru 1981, 182-3, 186-7), the intransitive status of this particular construction is proven by the fact that the use of an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar one:

- changes in the perfective the canonical case-marking of an original ergative construction with the Agent-like argument followed by the postposition *ne* and the Object-like argument in agreement with the verb (if not followed by the ACC postposition *ko*) to a non-ergative one;
- moreover, the passivization of this particular type of construction is not possible.

So, the main goal of this section is to answer the following question: Given the fact that using an intransitive vector verb with a transitive polar verb changes the transitivity parameters for the latter, how does this fact relate to the speaker's perception of the underlying action? In particular, how does an atypical construction with *jānā* and *baiṭhnā* bring about the different semantic nuances associated with their use as previously discussed in section 2. The sentence in (6) with vector verb *jānā* is a good starting point to answer these questions:

6. *harī mirc aur dhaniyāpattī kī caṭnī ke sāth*  
green chilli and coriander EN.F sauce.F GEN.OBL with  
*cār-pāmc roṭī-yām khā ga-y-ā.*  
four to five roṭī-PL.DIR eat go.VV-PERF-M.SG  
'(Agent-like argument) ate four to five *rotīs*<sup>21</sup> with the green chilli and coriander sauce'. (adapted from *Ātmārām kī ātmakathā* 2018)<sup>22</sup>

In (6), the Agent-like argument who probably does not eat four/five *rotī* normally because that may be too much for him, ended up eating these many because he found the combination with the sauce tasty. When *jānā* is used with transitive polar verbs, it often gives the sense of the Agent-like argument 'going beyond' and this can mean, specifically, 'going beyond a certain norm or habit', thus performing an action or realising a result that was, at first, unwanted and sometimes even unpleasant. It is important to point out and to add that, in many instances, this can be linked by the speaker's perception that the Agent-like argument 'lost control'. This is clear in sentence (6)

21 Indian bread.

22 <https://bit.ly/3ffM4gX>. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the Authors.

where, while the Agent-like argument was intentionally eating, he lost control over how much he wanted or originally intended to eat, as he came under the control of his senses and was no longer completely in control of the action he was performing. Thus, when *jānā* is compounded with a transitive polar verb, we see that the reduced grammatical transitivity of the construction is, in this case (cf. 6), linked to the Agent-like argument's reduced agency (as discussed in § 2).

However, the loss in agency perceived by the speaker, when using an atypical construction with *jānā*, could also result from the fact that the Agent-like argument is forced to do something either by another person or by the circumstances in which he finds himself. This can be seen in one of the examples mentioned in Drocco's paper (2018, 279):

7.     **un-hoṁ-ne**     **glās**     **le**     **li-y-ā**     **aur**     **(ve = 0)**  
           3PL-OBL-ERG     glass.M     take     take.VV-PERF-M.SG and     [...]
- sir**     **jhukā-kar**     **ek**     **sāṁs**     **meṁ**     **pī**     **ga-e.**  
           head bow-CP     one     breath     LOC     drink     go.VV-PERF.M.PL  
           'He took the glass, bowed (his) head [...] drank down (the liquor) in one breath [...]' (Premchand [1936] 1966, ch. 6, 74)

Thanks to the fact that this example is taken from a bigger text, we can look at the context in which this sentence was said. In (7) the Agent-like argument (*unhoṁne, ve*) is Paṇḍit Omkārnāth. Because of his religious observances he has never had a glass of liquor before. But in this particular situation, when he is in a modern setting, he cannot refuse it. Thus, in the context of chapter six of *Godān* (Premchand [1936] 1966), where the sentence is reported, the Agent-like argument can be seen as not completely volitional while engaging in the act of drinking liquor, because he was forced by the circumstances to do an action that was unpleasant and not 'right' according to his convictions.

The aspect of 'losing control' as discussed in the case of sentence (6) above, is also seen when *jānā* is paired with other transitive polar verbs like *kahnā*, 'to say'. The latter is often used with *jānā* when the Agent-like argument is being quoted by the speaker as having said something in excess of perhaps what they had intended to say. Consider the following example:

8.     **maze**     **kī**     **bāt**     **yah**     **hai**     **ki**     **yah**     **bāt-bāt**     **meṁ**  
           fun     GEN     thing this     be     that     this     all the talking     in
- mujh-e**     **bevqūf**     **bhī**     **kah**     **ga-ī**  
           1SG.OBL-ACC     idiot     PTC     say     go.VV-PERF.F
- khair**     **maiṁ-ne**     **us-kī**     **bāt**     **kā**  
           anyway     1SG.DIR-ERG     3SG.OBL-GEN     saying     GEN
- burā**     **nahīm**     **mān-ā.**  
           offence     NEG     believe/accept-PERF.M.SG

'The funny thing is that in the midst of all the talking, she ended up calling me an idiot. Anyway, I did not take offence at her saying that'. (adapted from Hindi Corpus 2004b)<sup>23</sup>

In (8) the Agent-like argument ended up saying something they should not have. However, in this particular example the impact of doing that is quite low. But look at example in (9):

9. *us-ne turamṭ anubhav ki-y-ā ki*  
3SG.OBL-ERG immediately realization.M do-PERF-M.SG that  
*yah maim kyā kah ga-y-ā par ab to*  
this 1SG.DIR what say go.VV-PERF-M.SG but now PTC  
*bāṇ pratyamcā se chūṭ cukā thā.*  
arrow bow-string ABL leave have already-PERF.M.SG be  
'He immediately realized, 'What did I end up saying', but not the arrow had already left the bow-string'.<sup>24</sup> (adapted from *Rājsūya yajña* by Manu Sharma 2004)<sup>25</sup>

In (9), in contrast to (8), it is clear that the Agent-like argument, who is also the speaker of the sentence, realizes that he said something he probably should not have. However, unlike (8) where the Agent-like argument was let off the hook by the speaker, in (9) we can see that he is filled with remorse.

This last observation leads us to another important and correlated aspect associated to the use of intransitive vector verbs like *jānā* or *baiṭhnā* with a transitive polar verb. In an atypical compound construction, the focus of the speaker is often not on the resulting state of the Object-like argument, as normally happens in typical transitive clauses, but on the consequences of the action on the Agent-like argument. Thus, the transitivity of the sentence is 'lower' not only because of reduced agency, but also because the action affects the Agent-like argument. Indeed, this is obvious in (9), where the speaker, who is himself the Agent-like argument, regrets what he has done and possibly foresees a negative consequence linked to that in the future.

However, it must be noted that for ingestive verbs (Næss 2007, Ch. 4), where the normal effect of the action is already on the Agent-like argument, the impact of using *jānā* instead of *lenā* as a compound verb, is to make the effect on the Agent-like argument 'neutral' or even more 'negative' (see sentence in 6) as opposed to 'beneficial'

<sup>23</sup> <https://bit.ly/2V3TP16>.

<sup>24</sup> 'The arrow had left the bow-string,' is an idiom in H/U that means that words once said cannot be taken back.

<sup>25</sup> <https://bit.ly/326FnK2>.

which is often the implication of using *lenā*. This is evident in (10) below:

10. *cūhe ne soc-ā - maim̄ bāhar nīkī-ā*  
mouse(M) ERG think-PERF.M.SG - 1SG.DIR outside comeout-PERF.M.SG  
*to billī mujh-e khā jā-e-g-ī.*  
then cat(F) 1SG.OBL-ACC eat go-3SG-FUT-F  
‘The mouse thought: ‘If I come out, the cat will eat me up’’. (adapted from:  
<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/mideast/hindi/stories/mouse.html>)

In this sentence, the ‘mouse’, who is also the speaker, is not so much concerned by the benefit the cat might derive from eating him. He is rather worried about the fact that he might get eaten and it would not be good for him. Consequently, using *jānā* with *khānā* in this sentence takes the focus away from how the action of eating would impact the Agent-like argument, the ‘cat’, positively.

Thus, we have seen that in cases where *jānā* is used as an intransitive vector verb along with a transitive polar verb, the speaker is able to express his perception of the action and/or the result of the action, that it was originally unwanted, due to the fact that *jānā* implies a loss of agency either because the Agent-like argument was forced to perform the action or because he lost control during the performance of the action.

Let us now consider the case of *baiṭhnā*. As we pointed out in section 2, *baiṭhnā* is used as a vector verb when the speaker thinks that the Agent-like argument made a mistake (sentence (1) above). The reason behind the fact that this point of view of the speaker is verbalized through the use of the intransitive vector verb *baiṭhnā* is because, according to the speaker, the Object-like argument of the sentence is sometimes the result of an unconscious state of mind of the Agent-like argument. As a consequence, the speaker confers reduced volitionality<sup>26</sup> to the Agent-like argument, as mistakes are (hopefully) non-intentional. Let us see this with an example:

11. *gaṁv k-e kolī pāgal ho uṭh-e haim̄*  
villageGEN-M.PL weavers mad be VV-PERF.M.PL be  
*kah-ā jā-t-ā hai ki āj*  
say-PP.M.SG go.PASSIVE-PRES-M.SG be that today  
*unhōm-ne ek khūn kar dī-y-ā*  
3PL.OBL-ERG one murder do give.VV-PERF-M.SG

<sup>26</sup> In this paper we use the terms ‘volitionality’ and ‘intentionality’ and the adjectives associated with them in their broadest sense - when the Agent acts with a goal/purpose in mind. For a more nuanced understanding of ‘volitionality’ in agentivity theory, see Dowty 1991, DeLancey 1984, Grimm 2011 and Levin 2019.

---

**patā nahīm kal kyā kar baiṭh-em-g-e.**  
knowing NEG tomorrow what do sit.VV-3PL-FUT-M.PL  
'The weavers of the village have gone mad. It is said that today they murdered (someone)! Who knows what they might end up doing tomorrow'. (adapted from *Āmne sāmne kī khinchatāni*).<sup>27</sup>

In this sentence, the Agent-like argument (the weavers) seem to have lost their ability to think rationally (they have gone mad) and have already demonstrated that they could do something as extreme as killing someone. So, the speaker is worried they might do something even more extreme in this altered mental state which they or others would regard as a mistake later. Hence, according to the speaker, the Agent-like argument is not fully aware of the actions they are currently performing and might perform in the future.<sup>28</sup>

To better understand the different possible attitudes of the speaker towards the action performed by an Agent-like argument of a clause compare the constructions below:<sup>29</sup>

12. **us-ne kām meṁ galtī kar d-ī.**  
3SG.OBL-ERG work LOC mistake make give.VV-PERF.F  
'He made a mistake in (his) work'.
13. **us-se galtī ho ga-ī.**  
3SG.OBL-INSTR mistake.F become go.VV-PERF.F  
'The mistake happened through/by him'.
14. **vah galtī kar baiṭh-ā.**  
3SG.DIR mistake.F make sit.VV-PERF.M.SG  
'He ended up making a mistake in a hurry'.

In (12) the speaker chooses to use the transitive vector verb *denā* because according to the speaker, regardless of whether the Agent-like argument was aware or unaware of his mistake while making it, he is still responsible for it to an extent because he caused it. It is possible that the speaker thinks that the Agent-like argument causes the mistake intentionally. On the contrary, in (13) and (14), the speaker chooses to use the intransitive vector verbs *jānā* and *baiṭhnā*, because he wants to emphasize the fact that the Agent-like argument made the mistake unintentionally and perhaps he regrets it. It is also important to note that the volitionality in these cases is reduced

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://bit.ly/2DpAx0h>.

<sup>28</sup> See Kittilä 2005 and Fauconnier 2011, 2012 for additional nuances on accidental events, Agent's awareness and control.

<sup>29</sup> Example sentences by Neha Tiwari.

only when we are looking at the mistake as the direct object. It is not a comment on the state of the mind of the Agent-like argument with respect to the work he was intentionally performing. He could have been engaged in his task with full volition and awareness, but the same cannot be said about the mistake he made, because that was not intentional (Kittilä 2005).

While (12) is in contrast to (13) and (14) when it comes to the Agent-like argument's parameters of volitionality, we can see that (13) and (14) also differ with respect to how the speaker perceives the action impacting the Agent-like argument. In (13), where an anticausative construction is used, the focus of the speaker is on the mistake that is made, while in (14), the focus shifts back to the Agent-like argument and the impact the mistake might have on him. While both the sentences are reporting that a mistake was made, and to reiterate, this mistake was unintentional, in (14) the speaker is more concerned about the impact the mistake has (or could have) on the Agent-like argument or somebody else. If he realizes its impact, he is already feeling very sorry (or should feel so according to the speaker). If he doesn't realize it yet, he most likely would in the future and would probably feel contrite at the point. So, while in (13) he is just an 'instrument' that leads to the mistake coming into existence, in (14) he does have to shoulder some responsibility for it and 'pay for it' in some sense. Let us look at another example that brings out this aspect of *baiṭhnā*:

15. *vah śighrata se kah baiṭhā – maim cāhtā huṁ ki yahām se kahīm bhāg caleṁ aur vahām jākar donoṁ vivāh kar leṁ. rājiv jin vicāroṁ ko prakṛt karnā cāhtā thā, vicār to usne ṭhik vahī pragaṭ kie; kintu jo bhūmikā vah banākar lāyā thā, vah na jāne kahām gum ho gai? uske vicār bilkul rashīn aur nirarthak siddh hue so to ṭhik hai hī, lekin sunne meṁ bhī bhadde aur aṅīb-se lage.*

'He blurted out (*kah baiṭhā*) in a hurry – I want that we elope from here and go to some other place and get married there. The thoughts that Rajiv wanted to express, he expressed them, but the introduction to these thoughts that he had come prepared with, who knows where that got lost? His thoughts proved to be completely dry and meaningless and that was still okay; however, they also felt uncouth and strange when he (himself) heard them'. (adapted from *Avgunṭhan* by Ravindranath Tagore)<sup>30</sup>

As is clear from the context of the sentence, the speaker is reporting that the subject ended up saying something contrary to what he had planned, and this caused him a lot of embarrassment and perhaps also regret. Thus, in this sentence, we can see both the aspects of loss in volitionality and affectedness of the Agent-like argument coming into play.

30 <https://hindisamay.com/kahani/avgunthan.htm>.



A final remark is in order about the volitionality of the Agent-like argument in atypical constructions with *baiṭhnā*. While the examples we have seen so far clearly have Object-like arguments that can be classified as a mistake, often, whether something is/was a mistake or not can only be determined from the context or after the fact. For example:

16. ***hām vah pyār thā ek taraf, use***  
 yes 3SG.DIR love.M be one side/way 3SG.OBL-DAT  
***doṣṭī cāhie thī aur main pyār kar baiṭh-ā.***  
 friendship.F wanted be-F and 1SG love do sit.VV-PERF.M.SG  
 ‘Yes, that was one-sided love, she wanted friendship and I ended up falling for her’. (adapted from *Jānu tum jān ho merī* 2020)<sup>31</sup>

The word ‘love’ (*pyār*), which is the Object-like argument in (16), need not always be a mistake and, in fact, is not so, when used in an affirmative sense as in *main tumse pyār kartā hūm*, ‘I love you’. However, due to the fact that it is used along with *baiṭhnā*, and because of the context (it was one-sided), it is clear that the speaker and the Agent-like first person argument thinks of this as a mistake. Also notice that since this is a narration, it is quite likely that he concluded that it was a mistake not in the moment of falling in love, but only later when he realized that it was one-sided. Earlier in this section we established that with *jānā*, the agency of the Agent-like argument is reduced from the point of view of the speaker during the performance of the action itself, either because he/she loses control (cf. example in 6) or because he/she is forced (cf. example in 7). However, in the case of *baiṭhnā*, the lack in volitionality with respect to the result of the action is sometimes ascribed after the fact, in particular, after looking at the result of the action in its broader context – this is the case in sentence (16) where the narrator thinks that being in one-sided love is foolish and he reinterprets the action of falling in love in that light and concludes that it was a mistake and that the result was not what he intended. Hence, many times it is translated into English using adverbs like “by mistake” or “foolishly” (Shapiro 1989; Snell 2016, 225) emphasising the fact that the Agent-like argument was not fully aware of the result of his actions. Let us look at this final example that illustrates this difference:

17. *rām ne is bār uskā mārg rok liyā aur bolā – “vākyā purā kijie na – yūm kisī bhī bāt ko adhūrā choṛna thīk nahīm hai”.*  
*“rahne dijie. āp kaheṅge – gaṅgā bahut adhik boltī hai”.*  
*“viśvās kijie – mujhe āpka adhik bolnā bhī acchā lagegā. kahie na”.*

<sup>31</sup> <https://bit.ly/2W0ZWnn>.

“kyā?”

“man kī bāt”.

“uhūn – mere andar itnā sāhas nahīm. laṛkī jo ṭhahrī”.

“to mairī kahūm?”

“kahie”.

“mairī āpko cāhne lagā hūm. mairī-mairī āpse prem kartā hūm gaṅgā jī”. rām ne kahā aur apne śabdōm kī praktikriyā jāne ke lie dhyān se gaṅgā kā cehrā dekhne lagā.

gaṅgā ne kuch nahīm kahā. usne ek bār palakerī uṭhākar rām ko dekhā aur ise paścāt muṁh meṁ cunrī kā chor dabākar vah śighrata se rasoi meṁ calī gāi.

rām use der tak jāte dekhā rahā aur soctā rahā ki kahīm **vah kuch anucit to nahīm kah baiṭhā hai**.<sup>32</sup>

This time, Ram stopped her and said – Please finish what you were saying, it’s not right to leave something unsaid like this.

– Please let it go. You will say Ganga talks a lot.

– Trust me. I would like it if you talk a lot. Please tell me.

– What?

– What’s in your heart.

– Umh – I don’t have that much courage. I am a girl, that’s why.

– So, can I say (that)?

– Please do.

– I have started loving you. I love you Ganga ji.

Ram said and, in order to know her reaction to his words, he started looking at Ganga’s face intently.

Ganga did not say anything. She lifted her eyelids and looked at Ram once and then with one end of her stole in her mouth she quickly went to the kitchen.

Ram kept on watching as she left and kept thinking, **what if he has said something inappropriate (kuch anucit to nahīm kah baiṭhā hai)**.’ (adapted from *Rām kī Gaṅgā* 2016)<sup>33</sup>

This example is interesting because the Agent-like argument is deliberating whether he has made a mistake by speaking out his heart. From the context we can see that he was in control of the situation to a great extent and he knew that he wanted Ganga or himself to express certain feelings. However, having done that and after looking at Ganga’s reaction, he is now wondering if that was appropriate or not. Thus, the use of *kah baiṭhnā* shows that Ram is wondering if what he just said to Ganga was a mistake.

In conclusion we can say that with atypical constructions, where transitive polar verbs are used along with intransitive vector verbs, there could be a reduction in the overall transitivity of the construction due to:

<sup>32</sup> The use of the present perfect, as per Montaut’s analysis (2006), also confirms the fact that the present perfect can have experiential and resultant connotation. Ram in this case has integrated the possibility that he made a mistake into his information set and is not astonished by it.

<sup>33</sup> <https://bit.ly/2VZ04UI>.

1. Reduced agency of Agent-like argument either because of a) loss of control or b) reduced volitionality;
2. Affectedness of the Agent-like argument.

In the following section, we will look at cases where the speaker chooses to talk about certain astonishing negative events in a way that they were 'unexpected' using atypical constructions with *jānā* as the vector verb. Even though the speaker in talking on these astonishing negative events sometimes ascribes a loss in agency to the Agent-like argument, we will see that this does not always correspond to reality.

#### 4 Negative Surprise

While in section three above, we looked at how in atypical compound verb constructions the use of the intransitive vector verb draws attention to the fact that the transitivity of the action, from the point of view of the speaker, is reduced, but there are also instances where this may not be the case.<sup>34</sup> To demonstrate this, we will first analyze an example from Drocco (2018, 281) in terms of the 10 well-known parameters related to the "transitive continuum" introduced by Hopper and Thompson (1980).

18. *apn-e pāṛṭnar k-ī sahamti se yah*  
REFL-M.OBL partner.M GEN-F agreement with 3SG.DIR
- vyakti us-e khā ga-y-ā.*  
person/individual.M 3SG.OBL-DAT/ACC eat go-PERF-M.SG  
'This person ate up his partner with his consent'. (adapted from Drocco 2018, 281)<sup>35</sup>

1. Agent is human (or at least animate): *Yes*.
2. Agent is conscious: *Yes*. The Agent first obtained the permission of the Object before performing the act. So, he was conscious and in control.
3. Agent has as goal a change in state of patient: *Yes*.
4. Change of state is physical: *Yes*.
5. Agent has ability to effect change in patient: *Yes*.
6. Agent is responsible for the change in patient: *Yes*.
7. Agent is source of energy required: *Yes*.
8. Agent touches patient with self or instrument: *Yes*.
9. Agent succeeds in effecting change in patient: *Yes*.
10. Change of state in patient is perceptible: *Yes*.

<sup>34</sup> In this section we restrict our analysis to *jānā* as we have not come across such usages with *baiṭhnā*.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.gazabpost.com/cannibal-from-germany>.

Drocco (2018, 276-82) concluded that in many instances similar to (18) even if there is volitionality on the part of the Agent-like argument and he/she in no way is affected by the action, *jānā* can still be used. Indeed, according to the same author, atypical constructions with the vector verb *jānā* are often used when the speaker, as a consequence of the fact that the Agent-like argument 'went beyond', expresses a negative reaction (astonishment, shock, etc.) towards a particular action or event. This 'negative reaction' can be explained as a 'negative surprise' or also as a 'shock'.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it is not always clear if 'volitionality' and 'affectedness' are the only factors correlated with the use of *jānā* in an atypical construction.

In general, and also to anticipate some of our conclusions, we can say that very often atypical constructions are used for talking about 'unexpected events'. By 'unexpected events' we mean events that should not have happened according to the speaker. In (18) for instance, cannibalism is seen as something not morally correct and desirable. One of the ways in which the speaker/writer (and also the reader) can make sense of an event like this is by reducing the agency of the Agent-like argument while reporting it. Even though the Agent-like argument acted consciously with respect to the goal he wanted to achieve (by taking the consent of the person he ate), in a broader sense, when his actions are judged in contrast to another 'normal' or 'mentally sound' agent, he is classified as being 'out of his mind' by the speaker.

Thus, it seems that there is some other parameter associated with this use of *jānā* which impacts the transitivity category in H/U and which is apparently not included in Hopper and Thompson's transitivity parameters. This parameter seems to be normative in nature, where the speaker, after looking at an action, asks himself whether a 'normal' agent would act in this way or not. This helps the speaker to somehow rationalize an extreme event which perhaps was too shocking to understand. Let us look at another example from Drocco (2018, 282) to illustrate this point further:

19. *machlī*            *pakaṛ rahe*    *yuvak*    *ko*    *zimḍā*    *khā*    *ga-y-ā*  
fish            catch PROG    man    ACC            alive    eat            go.VV-PERF-M.SG

*magarmacch.*  
crocodile. M

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'. (adapted from Drocco 2018, 282)<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> This is in contrast to our analysis of the usage of compound verbs (Drocco, Tiwari forthcoming) where we talk about how 'typical constructions' with vector verbs *jānā*, *denā* and *lenā* - and thus contrary to the 'atypical constructions' examined in the present paper - are used when the speaker and the listener share information about the event in question, therefore not in a context of 'surprise.' See footnote 38.

<sup>37</sup> <http://khabar.ibnlive.com/news/city-khabrain/crocodile-ate-young-man-in-indore-377047.html>.

The grammatical features of the verbal part of (19) are:

- use of transitive verb + *jānā* (*khā jānā*);
- use of the aorist (perfect without auxiliary);<sup>38</sup>
- atypical word order with the subject coming after the verb.<sup>39</sup>

In this sentence as well, we can see that while the crocodile would have, in all probability, acted fully volitionally, the speaker reports the action using *khā jānā*, thus rendering the sentence intransitive grammatically. As Drocco points out, the use of the atypical compound construction in (18) and (19) above demonstrates a feeling of shock and astonishment. We can compare (19) to the sentences below:

20. *machlī pakar rahe machuāre ko magarmacch ne*  
fish catch PROGR fisherman ACC crocodile.M ERG

*khā li-y-ā.*

eat take.VV-PERF-M.SG

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'.<sup>40</sup>

21. *machlī pakar rahe yuvak ko zimdā khā-y-ā*  
fish catch PROGR man ACC alive eat-PERF-M.SG

*magarmacch ne.*

crocodile.M ERG

'A crocodile ate a man catching fish alive'.<sup>41</sup>

In (20) we can see that while the event in itself is shocking for most people, the speaker is talking about it in a way where it benefitted the crocodile because he has used the transitive vector verb *lenā* which is often used when the actions affects or, as in this case, benefits the Agent-like argument. This is another way to look at the same event where the positive effect of the action on the Agent-like argument is being emphasized. The way the action is phrased (*kha liyā*) is also transitive, thus the speaker ascribes full agency to the Agent-like argument and makes it sound like the action was premeditated. This is in contrast to (19) where the focus is more on the action of eating itself and on its impact on the Object (the 'man'). By reducing the Agent's volitionality, the speaker increases the astonishment ex-

<sup>38</sup> See Montaut 2006 for the link between 'mirativity' and the aorist in H/U; as regards the grammatical category of 'mirativity' see DeLancey 1997, 2001, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> The word-order in H/U plays an important role in determining where the pragmatic emphasis in sentence falls. Although in many cases where a surprising or unexpected event is reported we find that the sentence ends with the Agent-like argument and the word order becomes, as a result, OVS, this has to be analysed further in detail.

<sup>40</sup> <http://khabar.ibnlive.com/news/city-khabrain/crocodile-ate-young-man-in-indore-377047.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Example sentence by Neha Tiwari.

pressed by the sentence by taking away from him his capacity to act intentionally and in a planned manner.

Another way in which (20) differs from (19) and also (21) is the informational context. Hook (forthcoming), Jagannathan (1981) and Drocco, Tiwari (forthcoming), have talked about how the use of typical compound verb constructions is linked to prior information.<sup>42</sup> While in (20), it is hard to say without the context whether there was something expected about the action,<sup>43</sup> *prime facie*, the use of a typical compound construction has the inverse effect of making the event sound like it was somehow expected. In (21) however, the simple verb does not have any such implication and hence increases the element of surprise over (20). However, compared to (19), (21) expresses less astonishment regarding the event. This is because, as we have seen in sections 2 and 3 above, when *jānā* is used as a vector verb with transitive polar verbs, it often shows that the speaker regards the event as 'unexpected' because it goes against a particular habit or norm or it is seen as excessive. Thus, *khā jānā* already carries this flavour of being 'unexpected' and this implication can be carried over to cases of unexpected events in general even when they may have been volitional and transitive and the basic transitivity parameters were not in question.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, based on the analysis above, we can say that the element of surprise/astonishment increases in the order below:

1. *khā liyā* (cf. 20)
2. *khāyā* (cf. 21)
3. *khā gayā* (cf. 19)

This does not mean that the three constructions are interchangeable in the sense that the speaker can choose one over the other purely based on how much surprise he wants to express. On the contrary, the informational context in which the event takes place and who he is speaking to, also impacts this choice.

<sup>42</sup> In the context of any sentence (or utterance), 'prior information' is that state of the world in which the speaker and the listener both already have some information about the event that is being spoken of in the sentence and they both know this to be true for the other person as well: i.e., the speaker knows that the listener is aware of the event and vice versa. In H/U, 'prior information' is encoded by the use of compound verb constructions with vector verbs *jānā*, *denā* and *lenā* restricted as follows: 1. *jānā* is used with intransitive verbs; 2. *denā* is used with transitive verbs; 3. *lenā* is used with transitive verbs and some intransitive verbs. Therefore, the concept of 'prior information' is applicable for 'typical' compound verb constructions and not for 'atypical' constructions.

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, the article from which (19) is taken, opens with (19) as the headline and reiterates it with *khā lenā* in (20), which is similar to (19), but, as already pointed out, with a typical compound verb construction. This could be because once the reader has read the headline, what follows is expected by him/her.

<sup>44</sup> But perhaps should not be so from the point of view of the speaker.

However, more often than not, *jānā* performs both the functions – encoding reduced transitivity and expressing shock or negative surprise. For instance:

22. *mām kā galā kāṭ khūn pī ga-y-ā beṭā.*  
mother GEN throat cut blood drink go.VV-PERF-M.SG son.M  
'A son having slit his mother's throat drank up her blood'. (adapted from:  
<https://www.livehindustan.com/news/national/article1-story-493560.html>).

The context of this sentence is that the Agent-like argument asked his mother to give him some money to buy alcohol. When she refused, he slit her throat and drank up her blood. As is clear from the sentence and the context, the Agent-like argument was not completely in control of his actions and got carried away either under the influence of alcohol or anger or both. Thus, *jānā* here encodes loss in agency and also captures how shocking the incident was.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we have analyzed the usage and semantic and pragmatic implications of atypical compound verb constructions in which transitive polar verbs are paired with two intransitive vector verbs, *jānā*, 'to go' and *baiṭhnā*, 'to sit'. In section 2, we demonstrated that these constructions can be called 'atypical' because they are encountered less frequently as opposed to their typical counterparts. As we have seen in the rest of the paper, this is primarily due to the fact that these constructions encode a specific attitude or evaluation of the action and/or its context by the speaker.

While in the case of *baiṭhnā*, scholars agree on what specific meaning is encoded, this is not the case with *jānā*, for which we have listed several implied meanings in section 2, concluding that it is necessary to shed more light on this topic. We then investigated why this particular construction is used by the speaker in H/U for expressing a particular perception of the situation. In languages like English and Italian, the same effect is realized by either the use of expletives or by a change in intonation or both (see Kittilä 2005 and Fauconnier 2011, 2012). On the contrary, we showed that this effect is realized in H/U through an atypical compound construction with intransitive vector verbs where in many cases the meaning conveyed is that the Agent-like argument either acted foolishly, or unconsciously, or lost control over his actions, or was even forced to do something against his wishes. In addition to agency and volitionality, another attribute of these constructions is the fact that the Agent-like argument is of-

ten affected by his own action, losing control and saying or doing something unacceptable and later regretting it. Thus, the Agent-like argument in an atypical construction is often not the ‘fully volitional’ and ‘unaffected agent’ of a prototypical transitive verb. The reason we have qualified the last statement by saying ‘often’ is because as discussed in section 4, sometimes these constructions are also used to express shock or negative surprise on the part of the speaker about an action that was otherwise typically transitive. Building further from the analysis in Drocco (2018), we showed how the element of negative surprise is realized in H/U by using an atypical construction in the simple perfect. In these cases, even though the Agent-like argument could have acted fully volitionally (like in the case of the crocodile in (19) or the man in 18), the speaker still chooses to use the intransitive construction which interestingly betrays the need of the speaker to enforce his view of the world (crocodiles and humans should not be eating humans, at least not fully volitionally) on the true state of affairs (crocodiles and sometimes also humans eat whatever they want to eat and can find to eat in their vicinity). In most of the examples we have seen above, it was possible to talk about the action in question using a typical compound verb construction. Thus, the choice to use an atypical construction comes down to the speaker and his understanding and perception of the action.

While in this paper we have looked at atypical constructions with intransitive vector verbs, we have not covered cases where intransitive polar verbs are paired with transitive vectors like in *cal denā* where the intransitive polar verb *calnā* means ‘to walk’ and *denā* means ‘to give.’ We hope to do so in a future paper.



## List of abbreviations

ABL	Ablative
ACC	Accusative
CP	Conjunctive participle
DAT	Dative
DIR	Direct
EMPH	Emphatic
ERG	Ergative
F	Feminine
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive
HON	Honorific
IMPF	Imperfective
IMPV	Imperative
INF	Infinitive
INSTR	Instrumental
INT	Interrogative
INTR	Intransitive
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
MIR	Mirative
NEG	Negation
OBL	Oblique
PART	Participle
PAST	Past
PAST.PART	Past participle
PERF	Perfect
PL	Plural
PP	Past Participle
PRES	Present
PROG	Progressive
PTC	Particle
REFL	Reflexive
REL	Relative
SG	Singular
TR	Transitive
VV	Vector verb

## Bibliography

- Bashir, Elena (2016). "Agent Marking". Hock, Bashir 2016, 450-9.
- Bhate, Saroja; Bronkhorst, Johannes (eds) (1997). *Bhartrhari. Philosopher and Grammarian = Proceedings of the First International Conference on Bhartrhari* (University of Poona, 6-8 January 1992). New Delhi: Motilal Barnasidass Publishers.
- Butt, Miriam; Ramchand, Gillian (2001). "Complex Aspectual Structure in Hindi/Urdu". *Oxford Working Papers in Linguistics. Philology and Phonetics*, 6, 1-30.
- Caracchi, Pinuccia (2002). *Grammatica Hindī*. Torino: Magnanelli.
- DeLancey, Scott (1984). "Notes on Agentivity and Causation". *Studies in Language*, 8(2), 181-213. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sL.8.2.05deL>.
- DeLancey, Scott (1997). "Mirativity. The Grammatical Marking of Unexpected Information". *Linguistic Typology*, 1(1), 33-52. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ty.1997.1.1.33>.
- DeLancey, Scott (2001). "The Mirative and Evidentiality". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(3), 369-82. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(01\)80001-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(01)80001-1).
- DeLancey, Scott (2012). "Still Mirative after All These Years". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33(3), 529-64. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ty.2012-0020>.
- Dowty, David (1991). "Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection". *Language*, 67(3), 547-619. <https://doi.org/10.2307/415037>.
- Drocco, Andrea (2018). "An Attempt to Understand the Encoding of Reduced Transitivity in Hindi. The Case of Compound Verbs with *jānā*". Sharma, Ghanshyam; Bhatt, Rajesh (eds), *Trends in Hindi Linguistics*. Berlin; Boston: Mouton De Gruyter, 265-86. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110610796-011>.
- Drocco, Andrea; Tiwari, Neha (forthcoming). "A Pragmatic Approach to Compound Verbs in Hindi/Urdu. The Case of Prior Information". *Linguistica e Filologia*.
- Fauconnier, Stefanie (2011). "Involuntary Agent Constructions Are not Directly Linked to Reduced Transitivity". *Studies in Language*, 35(2), 311-36. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sL.35.2.03fau>.
- Fauconnier, Stefanie (2012). *Constructional Effects of Involuntary and Inanimate Agents. A Cross-Linguistics Study* [PhD Dissertation]. Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit.
- Grimm, Scott (2011). "Semantics of Case". *Morphology*, 21, 515-44.
- Hindi Corpus (2004a). <http://www.cfilt.iitb.ac.in/~corpus/hindi>.
- Hindi Corpus (2004b). <http://www.cfilt.iitb.ac.in/%7Ecorpus/hindi/find.php?word=%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%B9+%E0%A4%97%E0%A4%88&submit=Search&limit=20&start=0>.
- Hock, Hans Henrich (1985). "Transitivity as a Gradient Feature? Evidence from Indo-Aryan, Especially Sanskrit and Hindi". Zide, Arlene R.K.; Magier, David; Schiller, Eric (eds), *Proceedings of the Conference on Participant Roles. South Asia and Adjacent Areas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club, 247-63.
- Hock, Hans Henrich (2016). "Complex Verbs. Introduction". Hock, Bashir 2016, 549-50.
- Hock, Hans Heinrich; Bashir, Elena (eds) (2016). *The Languages and Linguistics of South Asia. A Comprehensive Guide*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hook, Peter Edwin (1974). *The Compound Verb in Hindi*. The University of Michigan: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.

- Hook, Peter Edwin (1978). "The Hindi Compound Verb. What It Is and What It Does". Singh, Kripa Shanker (ed.), *Readings in Hindi-Urdu Linguistics*. Delhi: National Publishing House, 130-57.
- Hook, Peter Edwin (1991). "The Emergence of Perfective Aspect in Indo-Aryan Languages". Traugott, Elizabeth C.; Heine, Bernd (eds), *Approaches to Grammaticalization*, vol. 2. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 59-89. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.19.2.05hoo>.
- Hook, Peter Edwin (1993). "Aspectogenesis and the Compound Verb in Indo-Aryan". Manindra K. Verma (ed.), *Complex Predicates in South Asian Languages*. New Delhi: Manohar, 97-114.
- Hook, Peter Edwin (2001). "Where Do Compound Verbs Come From? (And Where Are They Going?)". Singh, Rajendra (ed.), *The Yearbook of South Asian Languages and Linguistics 2001. Tokyo Symposium on South Asian Languages. Contact, Convergence and Typology*. New Delhi: Thousand Oaks; London: Sage Publications, 101-31. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110245264.101>.
- Hook, Peter Edwin (forthcoming). "Births, Earthquakes, Meteors, and Other Autogenous Expressions. The Hindi-Urdu Compound Verb and Its Covert Semantics".
- Hopper, Paul J.; Thompson, Sandra A. (1980). "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse". *Language*, 56(2), 251-99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/413757>.
- Jagannathan, Veeravalli R. (1981). *Prayog Aur Prayog. Handbook of Modern Hindi Usage*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kachru, Yamuna (1979). "Pragmatics and Verb Serialization in Hindi-Urdu". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 9(2), 157-69.
- Kachru, Yamuna (1981). "Transitivity and Volitionality in Hindi-Urdu". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 11(2), 181-93.
- Kachru, Yamuna; Pandharipande, Rajeshwari (1980). "Toward a Typology of Compound Verbs in South Asian Languages". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 10(1), 113-24.
- Kittilä, Seppo (2002). "Remarks on the Basic Transitive Sentence". *Language Sciences*, 24(2), 107-30. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0388-0001\(00\)00043-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0388-0001(00)00043-7).
- Kittilä, Seppo (2005). "Remarks on Involuntary Agent Constructions". *Word*, 56(3), 381-419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.2005.11432555>.
- Lazard, Gilbert (2002). "Transitivity Revisited as an Example of a More Strict Approach in Typological Research". *Folia Linguistica*, 36, 140-90. <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin.2002.36.3-4.141>.
- Levin, Beth (2019) "On Dowty's 'Thematic Proto-Roles and Argument Selection'". <http://web.stanford.edu/~bcllevin/dowty19fin.pdf>.
- Masica, Colin P. (1991). *The Indo-Aryan Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McGregor, Ronald Stuart (1977). *Outline of Hindi Grammar. With Exercises*. Second Edition. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mohanan, Tara (1994). *Argument Structure in Hindi*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- Montaut, Annie (1991). *Aspects, voix et diathèses en hindi moderne*. Louvain; Paris: Éditions Peeters.
- Montaut, Annie (2004). *A Grammar of Hindi*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Montaut, Annie (2006). "Mirative Extensions of Aorist in Hindi/Urdu". Singh, Rajendra (ed.), *The Yearbook of South Asian Languages and Linguistics 2006*. Berlin; New York: Mouton De Gruyter, 71-86. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110186611.71>.

- Næss, Åshild (2007). *Prototypical Transitivity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Nespital, Helmuth (1997). *Dictionary of Hindi Verbs*. Allahabad: Lokbharti Prakashan.
- Pandharipande, Rajeshwari (1979). "Postpositions in Passive Sentences in Hindi". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 9, 172-88.
- Pandharipande, Rajeshwari (1981). "Transitivity in Hindi". *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 11(2), 161-79.
- Poornima, Shakthi (2012). *Hindi Aspectual Complex Predicates at the Syntax-Semantics Interface* [PhD Dissertation]. New York: State University of New York.
- Pořízka, Vincent (1967-9). "On the Perfective Verbal Aspect in Hindi". *Archiv orientální*, (1967), 35, 64-88, 208-31; (1968), 36, 233-51; (1969) 37, 19-47, 345-64.
- Premchand [1936] (1966). *Godān*. Ilāhābād: Sarasvatī Press.
- Shapiro, Michael (1989). *A Primer of Modern Standard Hindi*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Slade, Benjamin (2013). "The Diachrony of Light and Auxiliary Verbs in Indo-Aryan". *Diachronica. International Journal for Historical Linguistics*, 30(4), 531-78. <https://doi.org/10.1075/dia.30.4.04s1a>.
- Slade, Benjamin (2016). "Compound Verbs in Indo-Aryan". Hock, Bashir 2016, 559-67.
- Snell, Rupert; Weightman, Simon [1989] (2010). *Teach Yourself Complete Hindi*. London: Hodder Education.
- Snell, Rupert (2016). *Teach Yourself Complete Hindi*. London: Hodder Education.
- Tsunoda Tasaku (1985). "Remarks on Transitivity". *Journal of Linguistics*, 21, 385-96.