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## **Basic intransitivity : a typologically relevant feature of Indo-Aryan**

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### **Abstract**

The paper deals with the status of intransitivity in the global economy of the language in Hindi/Urdu. While arguing for the basic character of intransitive basis (on morphological and syntactic grounds), in the first section, I also show (second section) that the behaviour of reflexive pronouns and emphatics in Hindi/Urdu is typical of languages which display a single base for both uses (reflexive /emphatic) and never use it for decreasing verbal valence, as opposed to languages which use the reflexive to form an middle voice derived from transitive verbs. The argument structure in Hindi/Urdu (including the reshaping of arguments and roles in modal statements), analysed in the third section, suggests that semantic roles are strictly constrained in transitive sentences, and that intransitive sentences allow for a variety of “atypical” agents, apart from the well-known non agentive patterns (experiencer, localizer, etc.). It can be concluded from such facts that the basic pattern for simple sentences is not the transitive one but the intransitive one, in contrast with the prototypical transitive event with cause and result (represented by the canonical two place predicate (with agent and patient) as it is usually assumed on the basis of European languages.

### **Résumé**

L'article traite du statut de l'intransitivité en hindi/ourdou. La première section montre que les bases intransitives sont primaires par rapport aux bases transitives, sur la base d'arguments d'ordre morphologiques et dérivationnels. La seconde section résume le comportement des pronoms réfléchis et emphatiques et montre que, si un morphème réfléchi n'est jamais utilisé comme opérateur de réflexivation du verbe et de voix moyenne (s'amuser, se laver, s'imaginer, se casser), comme dans les langues qui ont la même forme pour le réfléchi et l'emphaque, c'est que la base intransitive en hindi/ourdou sert précisément à représenter les procès médio-passifs, anticausatifs, réfléchis. La structure argumentale des verbes transitifs et intransitifs est par ailleurs strictement contrainte par les rôles sémantiques du ou des participants, y compris dans les restructurations modales (section 3), qui impliquent un « agent » atypique en ce qu'il est dépourvu du trait de volonté, ou de contrôle, ou, quand il n'y a pas procès d'action, un expérimenté ou un possesseur à l'oblique. On peut conclure de tels faits que le modèle de base de la phrase simple à deux participants n'est pas la phrase transitive en hindi, en contraste avec le prototype de la phrase d'action à agent – patient, invoqué comme basique dans les énoncés à deux participants sur la base des langues européennes

keywords: transitivity, intransitivity, reflexive, middle voice, emphatic, focalization

## **Basic intransitivity : a typologically relevant feature of Indo-Aryan**

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It is assumed that the contrast between reflexive (middle) verbs and transitive (active) verbs in romance languages for instance, or in German, point to the basic character of

transitivity: in morphologically related pairs, the simple verb is transitive, and the intransitive with middle meanings is derived, by using a reflexive (*laver* ‘to wash-tr, *se laver* ‘to wash-intr’)<sup>1</sup>. Such are the results of Kemmer’s (1993)<sup>2</sup> study of the middle voice, with a semantic approach, as well of Genusiene (1987)<sup>3</sup> with a formal approach. One of the implicit consequences of such results is to conceive the basic pattern of predication as a transitive sentence, a representation of the ‘typical’ event with source and goal. According to semantic postulates with cognitive ground, a prototypical event is supposed to be conceived of as a process with two participants and binary opposition of agent (cause of the process) and patient (goal undergoing result). The middle or reflexive voice would then constitute a way of expressing, by reference to the ‘prototypical’ event, an event with single participant, whether one single participant cumulates both roles of agent and patient or is simply treated alike although there is no proper cumulation (medio-passive, decausative). In such a view, the middle voice acts as a device for relating the single participant statement to the prototypical statement, in describing an event. (hence relating a “non-typical” event to the “typical” event). The fact that some languages exhibit evidence in their verbal lexicon for the primary character of intransitivity and not transitivity is a counter evidence for the above mentioned hypothesis. In such languages where transitive verbs are derived from basic intransitives (Comrie 2001, Haspelmath 1993), the class of intransitives expresses all the meanings usually associated to reflexive and middle voice, while the reflexive morpheme is restricted to the clear coreference of two distinct roles and are never made a voice marker. This is the case of Hindi/Urdu, and generally of Indo-Aryan languages.

## 1. Morphologically related pairs of transitive /intransitive predicates

### 1.1. Forms

Both series of verbal pairs a) and b) below display a formal alternation (Umlaut, *-â* suffixation respectively) which is semantically (middle or passive meaning) and syntactically (increased valence) significant, as shown by translations. Series a) contrasts intransitive verbal basis (I) with lax/short radical vowels and transitive basis (T) with tensed/long vowels, while series b) contrasts the same by means of a suffix (*-â*) with or without modification of the radical vowel (shortened/laxed)<sup>4</sup>:

Series a): **intransitive verb + Umlaut → active transitive**

<i>mar</i> die	<i>mâr</i> kill
<i>chap</i> be printed	<i>châp</i> print
<i>kaT</i> be cut	<i>kâT</i> cut
<i>Dal</i> be thrown	<i>Dâl</i> throw
<i>sâvar</i> get made up	<i>sâvâr</i> make up, decorate
<i>banT</i> be shared	<i>bânT</i> share
<i>bigaR</i> be wasted	<i>bigâR</i> waste
<i>Tût</i> break(I)	<i>toR</i> break(T)

<sup>1</sup> In such languages the reflexive verbal pattern (*se*) represents most of the meanings attached to the middle voice: quasi passive, medio-passive (*le verre se casse* ‘the glass breaks’), middle (*le soleil se lève* ‘the sun rises’), autocausative (*se promener*: ‘to stroll’), decausative (*se user* ‘wear out, get worn out’), apart from the truly reflexive meaning (*se regarder* ‘look at oneself’).

<sup>2</sup> Kemmer (1993 : 3-4) gives for middle voice a “purely semantic” definition, similar to Lyons (1979: 313), and only “refining it” so as not to include the categories of passive and true reflexive, not to restrict middle to the property of “subject affectedness”, and make middle a “cross-linguistically valid semantic category available for potential grammatical instantiation”.

<sup>3</sup> “The reflexive marker is broadly defined here as an element in the verb (affix, ending, etc.) or its environment (particle, pronoun, etc.) which has (or once had) a reflexive meaning (of coreference of two semantic roles) as its only or one of many functions”.

<sup>4</sup> For the rules of these alternations, see Shapiro (1976) and Singh & Agnihotri (1999?).

<i>chûT</i> leave(I)	<i>choR</i> leave(T), abandon
<i>phûT</i> burst	<i>phoR</i> make burst
<i>ruk</i> stop(I)	<i>rok</i> stop(T)
<i>khul</i> open(I)	<i>khol</i> open(T)
<i>dhul</i> get washed	<i>dho</i> wash
<i>sûjh</i> be thought, come to mind	<i>soc</i> think
<i>muR</i> turn(I)	<i>moR</i> turn(T)
<i>sinc</i> be watered	<i>sînc</i> water
<i>piT</i> be beaten	<i>pîT</i> beat
<i>bhind</i> heave/crack(I)	<i>bîndh</i> heave/crack(T)
<i>juR</i> join(I)	<i>joR</i> join(T)
<i>bik</i> be sold	<i>bec</i> sell
<i>dîkh</i> être vu/sembler	<i>dekh</i> regarder (dikhâ faire voir, montrer)

series b): **intransitive verb + suffix -â (and Umlaut) → active transitive**

<i>saj</i> be decorated	<i>sajâ</i> decorate
<i>hil</i> move (I)	<i>hilâ</i> move(T)
<i>uR</i> fligh(I)	<i>uRâ</i> fligh(T), make stg fly
<i>haT</i> move away	<i>haTâ</i> push away
<i>baiTh</i> sit	<i>biThâ</i> have sby sit
<i>uTh</i> rise	<i>uThâ</i> raise
<i>jhûk</i> bend(I)	<i>jhukâ</i> bend(T)
<i>gir</i> fall	<i>girâ</i> make fall
<i>jâg</i> wake up (I)	<i>jagâ</i> wake sby up (T)
<i>bît</i> pass(I)	<i>bitâ</i> pass (T)
<i>bûjh</i> be extinguished	<i>bujhâ</i> extinguish(T)
<i>dab</i> be suppressed	<i>dabâ</i> suppress
<i>laR</i> fight(I)	<i>laRâ</i> fight(T)
<i>phans</i> be stuck	<i>phansâ</i> stuck
<i>pak</i> be cooked	<i>pakâ</i> cook
<i>paRh</i> study	<i>paRhâ</i> teach
<i>ban</i> be made	<i>banâ</i> make
<i>lag</i> be stick, touch	<i>lagâ</i> apply, stick
<i>bac</i> be-saved/escape	<i>bacâ</i> save/protect
<i>bhûl</i> forget	<i>bhulâ</i> make forget/deliberately forget

Series b) is clearly derivational if one believes in derivation: the derived form is phonologically heavier, morphologically more complex than the basic form. Series a) etymologically too involves derivation since both forms of the alternation stem from the Sanskrit contrast between passive or medium with a weak vowel degree of the word (zero) and causative with augmented in the right column (*guna*, *vriddhi*)<sup>5</sup>. Note on the pbl (active: both). The few exceptions to this derivation, like *dikh* « appear » considered as derived from *dekh* « see/look », or *Dal* « be poured », derived from *Dâl* « pour », are sometimes treated as “anticausatives”. The main argument in favour of a derivation from basic intransitives, since derivational nouns with zero suffix do not lead to any significant conclusion<sup>6</sup>, is, besides the

<sup>5</sup> Length and vowel tension is noted by ^ on *a* and *i*, otherwise by *ai* and *au*. The radical flexion by Umlaut is originally from Sanskrit which had a weak degree for passive and long degree (*vriddhi*) for causative, although not all I base in Hindi comes from a Sanskrit passive and not all T base comes from a Sanskrit causative.

<sup>6</sup> If derivational nouns are frequent on the transitive base (*rok-Tok* “obstacle”, *mâr-pîT* “beating”, *moR* “turn”), so are derivational nouns on the intransitive (*chûT* “exemption”, *phûT* “dissension, burst”, *sûjh* “perception”,

phonological weight mentioned above, the fact that the second derivation (“double causative” or factitive *-vâ*) is most of the time based on the intransitive form: *rukâ* “make X stop Z” is from *ruk* “stop”(I), *kaTvânâ* “make X cut Z” from *kaT* “cut”(I), *banTvâ* “make divide(T)”, from *banT* “be divided”, *piTvâ* “make Z beat X”, from *piT* “be beaten”, *dikhvâ* « make show” from *dikh* “appear”<sup>7</sup>. Either we recognize no derivation at all as Singh & Agnihotri (1997) but only bi-directional relations between words, in the whole morphology of the language, or the derivation if any emphasizes the primary status of the intransitive verbs, most of the time with a medio-passive meaning.

The verbo-nominal predicates (series *c*), which alternates stative (I) and active (T) verbal forms after the same noun for the verbal notion, may formally appear as a case of equipollence in the classification of Haspelmath (1993) and Comrie (2001), yet its syntactical behaviour relates it to a) and b) series<sup>8</sup>.

**série c : verbo-nominal predicates:** stative V (*honâ* to be) → active V (*karnâ* to do)

<i>intazâm honâ</i> to be organized	<i>intazâm karnâ</i> to organize
<i>garam honâ/ho janâ</i> to be/get warm	<i>garam karnâ</i> to warm (T)
<i>khaRâ ho janâ</i> to be standing / stand up	<i>khaRâ karnâ</i> to make x stand up, erect
<i>alag ho janâ</i> to be separated	<i>alag karnâ</i> to separate
<i>talâsh honâ</i> to be looked for	<i>talâsh karnâ</i> look for
<i>khâlî honâ</i> to be empty	<i>khâlî karnâ</i> to empty
<i>shâdî honâ</i> to be married	<i>shâdî karnâ</i> to marry
<i>dikhâî denâ</i> , to be visible, appear	<i>dekhnâ</i> to look
<i>sunâî denâ</i> to be audible, heard	<i>sunnâ</i> to listen
<i>pâtâ honâ</i> to know	<i>pâtâ karnâ</i> to get to know
<i>cintâ honâ</i> to be worried	<i>cintâ karnâ</i> to worry

## 1.2. Basic organization of arguments and semantic roles

The contrast between intransitive and transitive is illustrated by example (1): it contrasts a) a transitive (perfect, ergative marking of agent) with active meaning, “I broke” b) an intransitive with medio-passive meaning and patient as single argument (glass broke), and c) the morphological passive of the transitive: semantically the role Agent is present even when non represented with the T verb (c), whereas the role Patient is the single argument of the I verb. Example (2) contrasts a spontaneous process (a: I verb) which is auto-caused, as emphasized by the use of the emphatic-reflexive *apne âp*<sup>9</sup> and a process deliberately caused in the imperative (b: T verb).

1	<i>a mainne gilâs toRâ</i>	<i>b gilâs TûTâ</i>	<i>c. ek gilâs toRâ gayâ</i>
	I-ERG glass broke(T)-3MS	glass-MS broke(I)MS	one glass break(T) PASSIVE-MS
	I broke a glass	the glass broke	a glass has been broken

*sûjh-bûjh* “reason, consciousness”). As for the terms derived by suffixation, both from I and T exist (*baNTvârâ* “partition”, *sincâî* “irrigation”, *rukâvaT* “obstacle”, *paRhâî* “studies”, *joRan* “junction”, *joRâ* “couple”).

<sup>7</sup> Hindi verbs have usually three bases (I, T, causative: *nikal*, *nikâl*, *nikalvâ*), or T, causative, double causative: *paRh*, *paRhâ*, *paRhvâ*) but some have only one (*talâsh* “look for”), others two, others four (*dikh*, *dekh*, *dikhâ*, *dikhvâ*).

<sup>8</sup> Apart from the two types of derived basis (T → I, I → T) and equipollent verbs (with two distinct sets of affixes for T and I), Comrie and Haspelmath (1993) recognize a fourth category, the labile verbs (same form for T and I), quite important in English (cut, break, etc.) and very limited in Hindi/Urdu (*bhar* “fill”, *baRh* “grow”, *badal* “change”).

<sup>9</sup> *Apne âp* used as an emphatic of subjects indicates that the process is performed without external action/help, as opposed to *khud* or *swayam*, which emphasize the identity of the subject (and would not be allowed in such example as (2a) with this meaning. See PILC



- |      |   |    |  |
|------|---|----|--|
|      | he likes like colours   |    | what colour will you chose?  |
| 6 a. | <i>mujhe (*dhyân se) âvâzen sunâî dîn</i><br>1S-DAT (*attentively) voice-fp was-heard-fp<br>I could hear voices | b. | <i>mainne dhyân se âvâzen sunîn</i><br>1S-ERG attention with voice-fp heard/listened -fp<br>I listened to the voices attentively |
| 7.   | <i>usko laRkî acchî nahîn lagî</i><br>3S-DAT girl good NEG seemed   |    | he did not like the girl   |
| 5c   | <i>usko film pasand âî</i><br>3S-DAT film-fs taste came-fs  |    | he did not like the film   |

In all cases, the intransitive series alone can express a markedly non deliberate process. Besides, the use and meaning of the reflexive pronoun in Hindi sharply contrasts with the meanings of intransitives.

## 2. The reflexive : anaphoric pronoun and « emphatic »

### 2.1. Anaphoric pronouns : two clearly distinct roles in the statement

The reflexive pronoun, used when a second argument co-refers with the main argument, has three forms (*apne*, *svayam*, from Skr, *khud*, from Persian). Only the first one, *apne* (always followed by a postposition because it is never in the subject position) may form a reflexive possessive (*apnâ*, with gender-number variation like adjectives). Both pronoun and adjective are strictly required in simple sentences to co-refer with the main argument (nominative, 'dative subject', genitive, locative, instrumental subjects). They are locally bound as any A form in the GB model, and in complex sentences may be long-distance bound under logophoricity or empathy constraints (Montaut 1998, 2003)<sup>13</sup>. But in no case can the reflexive suggest the non-distinction of participants in the role they implement in order to simplify the structure of the event (« low elaboration » in Kemmer: 'se laver, wash [oneself]').

- |     |  |    |   |
|-----|--|----|---|
| 8a  | <i>tum keval apne (*tumhâre) lie kâm karte ho</i><br>you only REFL (*PRO) for work do pres<br>you work only for yourself   | b. | <i>tum apnâ (*tumhârâ) kâm karte ho</i><br>you REFL (*PRO) work do pres<br>you do your work |
| 9a  | <i>mujhe apne (*mere) lie Dar nahîn hai,</i><br>1S-DAT REFL (*PRO) for fear NEG is<br>I don't fear for me (myself), I fear for my friend                                       | b. | <i>mujhe apne dost ke lie Dar hai</i><br>1S-DAT REFL (*PRO) friend for fear is              |
| 10a | <i>donon laRkiyân apne/svayam/khud ko dekh rahî thîn</i><br>the-two girl-FP REFL ACC look PROG IMPFT<br>both girls were looking at themselves (*at each other) (in the mirror) |    |   |

In Hindi the reflexive clearly behaves as a pronoun (in the matter a true anaphoric A pronoun) replacing a distinct argument and not as a valence operator. In no case it is used to decausative a verb or make it a reciprocal or associative (10a), as also shown by (10b) which we can contrast with example in note 11 with intransitive.

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 10b | <i>laRke apne âp se jûjh rahe the / kah rahe the ki</i><br>boy-MP REFL EMPH with struggle PROG IMPFT / say PROG IMPFT that<br>the boys were fighting (each against oneself) / were saying each to oneself...that |
|-----|--|

The Intransitive, not the reflexive, is used for decausative processes (11a), the Transitive alone accepts a reflexive as its object, in order to represent two distinct roles (11b), the distinctivity being optionally emphasized by the use of the emphatic<sup>14</sup>:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 11a. | <i>vah ThaND aur bâgh se bac saktâ thâ</i> |
|------|--|

<sup>13</sup> Empathy (in Kuno's meaning) may even prevail over A binding in simple statements *merâ man uskâ virodh kar rahâ thâ* « my mind was opposing [doing opposition against] itself » with the pronoun and not the reflexive, vs *merâ man apnî kitâb men lagî thî* "my mind was engulfed in my book" with reflexive and not pronoun.

<sup>14</sup> In the emphatic *apne âp*, *apne* is originally the inflected form of *âp* (Montaut 1998). Examples (11a) and (11b) are from Thapliyal.

3S cold and tiger from be-saved(I) can IMPFT  
he could escape both the cold and the tiger (I.)

11b *vah apne (âp)ko bâgh aur ThaND donon se bacâ saktâ thâ*  
3S REFL (EMPH)ACC tiger and cold both from save(T) could IMPFT  
he could protect (save) himself both from the cold and the tiger (T)

Only a transitive verb, and never the cognate intransitive, can appear in a reflexive statement in Hindi. Transitives in Hindi are clearly correlated with role distinction, which is further evidenced by role focalization.

## 2.2. *Emphatics or « reflexive emphatics » as role focalizers*

### 2.2.1. *Focalizing the first argument*

The strong form *apne âp*, and the simple form *svayam* ou *khud*, can be used for emphasis when adjoined to a subject (in the nominative, ergative or dative case). Such focalizers, compatible with reflexives (13), are often yet not always contrastive and always rule out the intervention of another entity in the process (13a) as is the case with –vâ causatives (13b):

12 *main apne âp /swayam / khud jâûngâ*

I will go myself

13a *main apne âp /swayam /khud (apnâ) kapRâ dhotî hûn*  
1s EMPH (REFL) clothe wash PRES

I wash my clothes myself

13b *apne kapRe dhobî se nahîn dhulvâtî hûn*  
REFL clothes washerman INSTR NEG make-wash PRES

(I) don't have my clothes washed by the washerman

However, the three forms are not absolute synonyms, and only *apne âp* emphasizes the autonomy of the subject (14), hence ruled out in stative predications (15a) and strange with predicate referring to processes usually performed with no help: (15b) with emphatic and 'sit' predicate would be meaningful only for a sick person for instance who recovers the use of his legs and spine, and with 'drink' predicate, for a baby which is performing the process for the first time alone:

14 *gâRî apne âp (\*svayam/khud) calî gâî*  
the car left by itself

15a *main svayam (\*apne âp) DakTar hûn*  
I myself am a doctor

15b *vah apne âp baiTh gayâ / pânî pitâ hai / DâkTar ban gayâ*  
he sat alone / drinks water by himself / has become a doctor by his own means<sup>15</sup>

Reversely, *svayam/khud* tends to mark a contrastive or restrictive focus (using *swayam* in 15b would mean for instance that others drink whisky). As such, it is sensitive to logophoricity and empathy constraints, which attach to what is built by the speaker / hearer as a focus of empathy Kuno (1987): in (16) for instance, Ram only, and not Ram's brother, can be focalized by *svayam* because the context builds Ram and not his brother, who is represented as related to Ram) as the empathy focus:

16a *mainne Râm ke bhâî se bât kî; Râm svayam vilâyat calâ gayâ thâ*  
I spoke to Ram's brother; Ram himself (*swayam*) had left for England

16c *mainne Râm se bât kî; uske bhâî \*svayam vilâyat calâ gayâ thâ*  
I spoke with Ram; his brother \*himself had left for England

When not marking a contrastive focus, *svayam/khud* adjoined to an entity marks the crucial role played by the entity in the event, within a scalar hierarchy of possible other participants.

<sup>15</sup> The statement *vah svayam/khud pânî pitâ hai* would mean "he himself drinks water" (cf. 15a), either in a contrastive context where other people drink alcohol or with open focus meaning such as (17).

It either emphasizes the improbability of the participant's involvement in the event ('even X') such as in (17), or its crucial relevance in the event: in the latter case such as (18), the postman is the crucial actor in a problem of stolen mail and that is why it is marked as "open focus" (Baker 1995).

17 *savâl baRpa mushkil thâ, bare paNDit svayam use hal nahîn kar pâe*  
the question was very difficult, the great pandit himself could not solve it

18 *Dâkiyâ svayam bulâyâ gayâ*  
the postman himself was summoned

In both cases of restricted or open focus, *svayam/khud* mark the most salient entity.

### 2.2.2. Focalizing other roles

A possessor can also be focalized by the adjunction of *apnâ* to the possessive pronoun (mostly in the first person). This adjunction differs from the restrictive particle *hî* (restrictive focus: 19) by the fact that it emphasizes a subjective relation between possessed and possessor rather than the factual relation, which it may even contradict in (20)<sup>16</sup>:

19 *ye merî apnî / merî hî kitâben hain*  
these mine EMPH / mine only books are  
these are my own books / my books (not yours)

20 *vah merâ baccâ nahîn hai, mainne use god le liyâ, par ab merâ apnâ ban gayâ hai*  
3s my child NEG is, 1S-ERG 3S-ACC adopted, but now my EMPH has become  
it is not my (real) child, I adopted it, but it has now become my own

Finally, the reflexive itself can be focalized (long form *apne âp* + postposition, vs simple *apne* + postposition): this emphatic reflexive is not totally 'expressive' or 'stylistic' (as it is in (10b supra) but marks that the conjoined reference implied by the use of the reflexive is particularly improbable. If optional in statements like "to look at oneself in the mirror" or "to consider oneself as", it is required in statements like "to fight against oneself" (10b), "to speak to oneself" where the process is not likely to involve the same participants in both roles (*apne âp se* (?*apne se*) *bât karnâ*).

### 2.3. The relation between reflexives and emphatics in Hindi : distinctiveness

Both morphologically related forms of the reflexive (*apne*) and focalizer (*apne âp*, *apne*, *âp*) behave as markers for apparently very different relations<sup>17</sup>: as a reflexive, the form marks the identity of the participant involved in two roles and arguments (coreference). As a role focalizer, it marks the distinctiveness of the role. However, the role marked by the reflexive as well as the role focalized by the emphatic never tend to lose their distinctiveness as roles. The meanings of statements involving reflexives never shifts towards a reduction of valence (cf. supra) with a merging of subject and object into a single role, a fusion sometimes referred as "semantic edulcoration" of the event, made by the operation less complex (Kemmer). Such a merging is typical of languages using the reflexive to reduce the valence, like French, romance languages, German, and is generally accompanied by a formal reduction (atonicity, morphological erosion) of the lexical item used for reflexivation. Besides, such languages never use the reflexive marker as a marker for focalization: French like romance languages has "se" for the reflexive but the adjunct "même" for focalisation, German has respectively "sich" and X "selbst". English has no specific reflexive and forms it by the adjunction of the

<sup>16</sup> In concordance with the meaning of the derived lexical items, which all retain the feature 'self', 'the self linked to the group, family or clan (*apne*: those close to self, *apnânâ* "integrate, make something ones own", *apnâpan* "subjective integration, communion" (as opposed to *parâyapan*, "otherness"). As for the etymology of the form (*apnâ* < *âtmana*, center of the body, then, absolute principle, cosmic principle (cf. *khud/khudâ*-'God'), the body, or main body part, main person, is a common source of reflexives.

<sup>17</sup> *apnâ* alone is used as a substitute for the 1st person in 'empathic' uses.

focalizer to the pronoun (“him-self”). This obviously shows an affinity between reflexives and focalizers (Koenig 1991), usually interpreted as a historical derivation of the reflexive function from the focalizing function (Zribi Hertz 1990, 1995, Montaut 1998). Milner (1982) already suggested that the Latin reflexive essentially marks “distinguished” nouns, made distinct by syntax or discourse. When this affinity still prevails in a given language, there is no room for contamination between reflexive and middle. When it does no longer, then the reflexive more and more marks the identify of roles in coreference and can shift towards middle voice (valence reduction), while a different lexical item is used for focalization. French, Spanish, Italian, Russian (‘sja’) and German are in the second case, Hindi is in the first case, which is consistent with the structure of the verbal lexicon, since instead of using a reflexive voice marker Hindi/Urdu uses basic intransitives.

### 3. Argument structure and ‘atypical agents’

Predicates express middle voice by their morphological structure or by the use of stative verbs in verbo-nominal predicates, not by reflexivation. The argument structure then seems to be strictly associated to the semantic roles required by the predicate, itself dictated by the morphological structure of the predicate. If we take simple verbs (series a and b), the morphological alternation in the verbal base alone makes it possible to predict its argument structure and semantic roles. In both classes we may find primary transitives (drink, eat, read) and intransitives (walk, stop), whose difference in argument may only be lexically assigned.<sup>18</sup> But the relevant fact is that the alternation in cognate pairs makes it possible to predict the argument structure of the “augmented” item from the basic item (cf. 1.2.). Interestingly, intransitives may undergo several “special” or “modal” constructions in Hindi, and the various possible and non possible argument structures all derive from the semantic roles attached to the valence of the predicate. It is the nature of the first role which accounts for the possible passivation of intransitives, and for the modal constructions of “active” intransitives.

#### 3.1. Intransitive containing the role Agent and the « modal passive » : inhibited agent

Only passive intransitive with a first role Agent undergo passivation in Hindi<sup>19</sup>, with *jânâ* auxiliary, in a construction which not only does not background the agent as frequently claimed for the passive function (Shibatani 1985), but makes it hardly omissible. In this construction, with instrumental marking of the agent (and not the regular *ke dvârâ* for passive agents) and negation, the meaning is always capacitive. The incapacity involved in such negative (or paranegative: interrogative, counterfactual) statements relates to inner dispositions, close to repulsion, and does not always entail the non realisation of the process<sup>20</sup>. Examples with *uThnâ* « get up », *calnâ* « walk », *baiThnâ* “sit down”, with a human participant (21a) are expected, but even processes ordinarily involving non agents, such as *girnâ* “fall”, may in the required context, be requalified +Agent and passivized, for instance in a game if the player has to fall or in karate training when you have to learn how to correctly fall (21b) :

21a *lekin mujhse uThâ nahîn gayâ*  
 but 1S-INSTR get-up NEG PASSIVE-PAST-MS  
 but I was totally unable to get up, could not bring myself to get up

<sup>18</sup> *PaRhnâ* “study” and *calnâ* “walk”, with the same morphological structure, respectively have two arguments (agent patient) and a single argument (agent).

<sup>19</sup> Transitives in Hindi/Urdu passivise because they always contain an Agent as their first role. Rare cases of non agentive transitives such as *pânâ* “to find”, or *mahsûs karma* “to feel”, *jannâ* “know”, as well as *dekhnâ* and *sunnâ* in the meaning of “see” and “hear” with only conscious assumption but no control/volition, will be dealt in the conclusion. The passive of *sonâ* ‘sleep, get to sleep’ is a problem which deserves a study.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Shibatani 1985.

21b *nahîn, nahîn, mujhse girâ nahîn jâegâ*

no, no, I-INSTR fall NEG PASS-FUT-MS

no no, impossible to fall, I cannot bring myself to fall

Passivable intransitives in Hindi contain an Agent or at least a conscious subject identifiable with an Agent. The same meaning is found with passivized transitives in the same construction (instrumental *se*, negation), because what triggers this argument structure is the prominence of the role Agent in the argument structure of the predicate.

22 a. *mujhse is tarah kâ kâ nahîn kiyâ jâegâ* / b. *apnâ sâmân uThâyâ nahîn jâegâ*

1S-INSTR this kind of work NEG do PASS-FUT /

REFL things lift NEG PASSIVE-FUT

I can't bring myself to do such a thing /

to lift up my luggage

In the class of intransitive verbs, only those with a meaning of middle autocausative can be passivized, whereas those corresponding to the decausative or medio-passive middle cannot.

Passivation in this case results in modal meanings, namely a conflict between conscious control and unconscious drives.

### 3.2. Intransitive verbs with the role patient

Decausative or medio-passive such as (*darvâzâ khulâ* “the door opened”) have the role patient as their single participant. Also such verbs require only one argument, they may optionally represent other participants such as the inanimate cause with the instrumental marker (non argument, non actant, or “circonstant” in Tesnière’s terminology), like *havâ se* “because of the wind”. A process with an animate cause will ordinarily require a transitive cognate verb (*kholnâ*) with a nominative (or ergative) agent and unmarked patient, both typical arguments for the typical roles of transitive verbs. If the human cause appears with the intransitive (without the valence operator +â/+Umlaut), then it results in a reshaping of the roles in the configuration Agent-Patient: the human participant is represented as a non typical Agent, devoid of its typical features.

#### 3.2.1. Negative context : ‘agent’ reshaped as inefficient

In a negative or paranegative (counterfactual, virtual-indefinite, interrogative) environment, a human actor represented in the instrumental is re-qualified as devoid of efficiency: the series (23) shows a person (I) who cannot correctly perform the process (open the chain) because of lack of strength or cleverness and has to ask for help (simple intransitive 23a, from V.K. Shukla), a person (I) who could manage and can no longer manage to act because of exhaustion (23b: intransitive verbo-nominal expression, from Shivani) and a person (I) declining a job because of incompetence or inability:

23a *bâhar se darvâzâ khînc lo, sânkâl mujhse nahîn khul rahî hai*  
outside by door pull take, chain 1S-INSTR NEG open-I PROGR-PRES  
pull the door by outside, I cannot open the chain

23b *mujhse jo kuch banâ, kiyâ ; jahân tak mujhse banâ, kiyâ, ab mujhse nahîn banegâ*  
1S-INSTR REL-INDEF be-done, did ; where till 1S-INSTR was-done, did, now 1S-INSTR NEG will-be-done  
whatever I could do, I did, to whatever extent I could, I did, now I will no longer be able

23c *mujhse yahkâm nahîn hogâ*  
1S-INSTR this work NEG will-be  
I won't be able to do that, it's not in my possibilities

#### 3.2.2. Non negative context : inadvertant ‘agent’

In positive statements, the optional argument referring to a human agent re-qualifies this agent as devoid of volitional control: the series (24) represent actors who apologize for what they have done, claiming that they did not act deliberately or

consciously by using the simple intransitive (*girnâ* “fall”, *TûTnâ* “be broken”) or the verbo-nominal intransitive (*galtî honâ* “be wrong”, *khûn honâ* “be killed”<sup>21</sup> :

24a *mujhse gilâs girâ / TûTâ*

1S-INSTR glass fell / got-broken

I let the glass fall / I broke the glass inadvertently

24b *yah daftar kê kaTahal hai ; mujhse galtî huî.*

this office jackfruit is ; 1S-INST fault was

*daftar ke ahâte men lagâ huâ thâ, mujhse TûT gayâ* (V.K. Shukla)

office of yard in planted was, 1S-INSTR break-intr went

it is the jackfruit of the office, it was a mistake on my part. It was planted in the office yard, I picked it by mistake, without noticing it

24c A *tumhîn ne uskâ khûn kiyâ hai.*

2-EMPH ERG his blood has done

B *sâhab, mainne khûn nahîn kiyâ, vah to mujhse ho gayâ.*

Sir 1S-ERG blood NEG die this but 1S-INSTR be went

*Khûn mainne jân-bûjhkar kiyâ thâ ? Vah to mujhse ho gayâ*

blood 1S-ERG consciously had done ? this but 1S-INSTR be went

It’s you who killed him. – Sir, I did not kill, the killing I did by mistake. Would I have consciously killed ? But no, it was done by mistake (I am not responsible)

### 3.3. Difference between incapacity in passive and intransitive pseudo-agents

The difference between statements in sections 3.1 and 3.2.1, all restricted to negative contexts, may seem irrelevant, and is often obliterated in translations which express in both cases incapacity (X is unable to V). Both types of pseudo-agents are indeed devoid of the capacity of performing the process. However they are devoid respectively of the feature free will (morphological passives) and efficiency (intransitives). Hence the unacceptability of (25a): ask somebody else to help making the process effective suggests that one is willing to have it performed, and the passive, which reshapes in a negative context a typical agent into an inhibited agent (instrumental) is ruled out, since the inefficient agent alone is compatible with the context. Reversely, an inhibited agent (passive, negation) may, with a strong effort of willpower, manage to realise the act he conceived as unrealisable for reasons largely psychological<sup>22</sup>.

25a *bâhar sedarvâzâ khînc lo, \* sânkâl mujhsenahîn kholî jâtî*

outside from door pull take, chain 1S-INSTR NEG open-T PASSIVE-PRES

pull the door by the outside, \* I cannot bring myself to open the chain

25b *usse calâ nahîn jâ rahâ thâ. Phir bhî calne lagâ*

3S-INSTR walk PASSIVE PROG IMPFT. However walk INCEPTIVE

he could not bring himself to walk. However he manage to make it

The difference between both types of lack (lacking features among those required by the prototypical role) is explained by the semantic (and morphological) structure of the predicate. The verbs in 3.1 (passive with inhibited agent) contain an agent as the single or main role (obligatory argument) whereas those in 3.2. contain a patient as the main or single role. Negation in this last series bears respectively on the control of the process (what is invalidated is the relation agent-verb) and on the feasibility of the process (what is invalidated is the relation patient-verb, hence the reaching of a result). The following contrast, on the same verbal radical (*uTh-*) within the same syntactic

<sup>21</sup> *Galtî karnâ* (mistake do), transitive, would suggest that the agent (nominative) consciously assumes a mistake, like *khûn karmâ* above (“kill” in 24c).

<sup>22</sup> (25a) is my addition on Shukla’s data above, (25b) is borrowed from Davison 1980.

context (negation, *se*-agent), displays the distinctive behaviour of the intransitive (*uThnâ* “get lifted, rise”, a decausative with inanimate patient) and the transitive (*uThânâ* “lift, raise”, a causative with an Agent as the main role). The narrative context of both examples is the same: in a train just before Partition between India and Pakistan, a young Hindu is first regarded by his neighbour, a robust Muslim, as unable to help a lady get her luggage (26a: intransitive “get lifted/rise”), then he himself feels terrorized by his neighbour to such an extent that he wants to change compartment but does not have the courage to lift his luggage (26b: passive of the transitive) from above the Muslim traveller nor even the box of ghee (which weighs less than a kilo):

26a *bîbî terî gaThrî main uThâ lûngâ, is gûnge se nahîn uThegî*  
 lady, your package 1s lift take-FUT, this mute INSTR NEG rise-FUT  
 lady, your package I will take(lift) it, this mute is quite unable of lifting it

26b *mujhse apnâ Trank nahîn uThâyâ jâegâ, na hî ghî kâ Tîn*  
 1S-INSTR REFL suitcase NEG lift PASSIVE-FUT NEG just ghee of tin-box  
 I won't bring myself to lift my trunk, not even the tin-box of ghee

It should be noted that the same intransitive base, *uThnâ*, may behave as a medio-passive or decausative as well as an autocausative according to the role, patient or agent: *sûraj uTh gayâ* “the sun rose” is decausative, whereas *main uTh gayâ* “I got up/rose” is autocausative. The first one accepts an inefficient actor(26a), the second one an inhibitive passive (21a).

## Conclusion

The semantic structure of the verb is largely constrained by its morphological structure in Hindi/Urdu and it largely predicts its argument structure. The reflexive morph never allows a reshaping of the roles and arguments of a predicative base, a job performed by the intransitive/transitive alternation. Transitives always involve an agent (exceptionally with only the feature ‘conscious subject’) and a patient whereas intransitives may involve various types of non binary relations, including atypical agents in modal constructions. This redistribution of roles and arguments along with the morphological alternation of the verb, make it clear that the features ‘control’ and ‘conscious assumption’ are crucial in defining the role agent in Hindi: a human entity in a two place predicate is not treated as agent if one or the other of these features is lacking. Reversely, an experiential process consciously assumed is no longer expressed by the canonical experiential pattern (intransitives, dative of experiencer in 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a), but by a transitive pattern with agent (27)

27a *us samay main acchî tarah jântî thî ki tumse irSyâ kartî thî*  
 that time 1s good way knew that you-of jealousy did  
 at that time I knew very well that I was jealous of you<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of these facts, we may propose the hypothesis that languages with basic intransitivity use transitive patterns in a more restricted way than languages with basic transitivity, while they display a greater variety of intransitive patterns (most of them corresponding to the semantics of the reflexive/middle voice) and never use the reflexive marker in order to decrease the valency of a predicate. The intransitive/transitive alternation is also a significant pattern of the verbal lexicon in Dravidian which contrasts “affectedness” to

<sup>23</sup> A pattern ruled out in the absence of consciousness, as shown by the following contrast (commented in Montaut 2004):

*us samay mujhe tumse irSyâ thî, par (mujhe) iskâ bodh nahîn thâ*  
 that time 1s-dat 2-from jealousy was, but (1s-dat) this-of consciousness neg was  
 \**us samay main tumse irSyâ kartî thî, par (mujhe) iskâ bodh nahîn thâ*  
 that time 1s-nom 2-from jealousy did, but (1s-dat) this-of consciousness neg was

“effectedness” (Paramasivam 1979) in a similar way for expressing middle vs active meanings (Pilot Raichor 1997)<sup>24</sup>.

28 a *avanu talai tirumb-in-adu* b *avan talaiyai tirupp-in-aan*  
 3MS-GEN head-NS turned-3NS 3MS head-ACC turned-3MS  
 his head turned he turned his head

It then seems reasonable to argue that in those languages where verbal valence is constrained by the morpho(no)logical structure of the predicate and where the simple verbal base is minus CAUS, lexical morphology realizes what reflexivation or middle voice realize in the languages where causatives are primary. As for the primary or derived character of intransitivity in Hindi/Urdu, while morphonological arguments will never be entirely convincing, syntactic arguments are more important. In terms of frequency, an important criterium for deciding the basic character of a structure (Haspelmath 2003), intransitive patterns undoubtedly dominate<sup>25</sup>: besides single participants statements, there is a rich variety of intransitive two-place participants (main argument in the dative, in the genitive, in the locative, in the instrumental, possibly in the ergative if we agree to consider ergative pattern as a localizing pattern too as does Montaut 2003). The fact that the transitive pattern is only one of the seven other elementary patterns for simple sentences suggests that in Hindi/Urdu the typical scenario for representing events is not the binary relation of source and goal (agent and patient with transitive predicates). Rather, in similar languages with basic intransitivity, the “typical” syntactic pattern emphasizes non binary relations and non agentive sources, pointing towards a notion of “typical event” devoid of a volitional controlling source . A look at the so-called “active” languages would confirm such conclusions since their preferred argument structure consist in backgrounding (mostly by genitive marking) the main participant (Durie 1988).

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<sup>24</sup> Significantly, the so-called verbal reflexiver is not a cognate of the reflexive pronoun but an eroded form of the verb ‘take’ (koL). *Raama tanannu hogal-i-koNDanu*, Ram refl-acc boast-VR-p3s “Ram boasted” (Kannada) ; *amma paTTuc ceelai uTTutik-kondaal* mother silk sari put-koL-past-3fs “Mother put on a silk saree” (Tamil) ‘Take’ verb is used in Hindi/Urdu (*lenâ*) to produce benefactive meanings, another subset of the middle semantics: *pâth paRh lenâ* lesson read take “read for one’s benefit”, *bâl kaTvâ lenâ* hair cut-caus take “have one’s hair cut”, vs *sir katvâ denâ* head cut-caus give “get one’s head cut” (as an offering to God for instance).

<sup>25</sup> Although no quantitative study has yet been carried out, and is highly desirable.

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