

Adjectives in Bengali Language

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Linguistics, Assam University, and Silchar as a part of academic requirements for the fulfilment of Master in Arts Degree in

Linguistics

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DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

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ASSAM UNIVERSITY SILCHAR

788011, INDIA

YEAR OF SUBMISSION: 2020

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5.10.20



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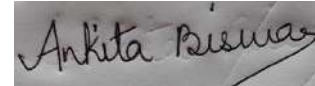
Department of Linguistics

DECLARATION

I bearing Roll- ..042018....No-...2083100011... Registration No.....20180016659.....-
hereby declare that the content of the dissertation entitled Adjectives in Bengali Language is
a genuine and the result of my work. The content of this work has not been submitted in part
or whole, to any institution, including this University, for any Degree or Diploma.

The dissertation is being submitted to the Department of Linguistics, Assam
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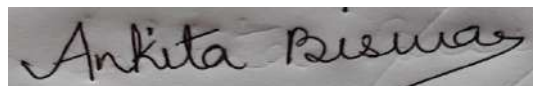
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby offer my express my sincere gratitude towards Assam University for providing a course on Linguistics and giving me the chance to write a dissertation. I offer my earnest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Paramita Purkait, Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics, Assam University, Silchar for giving me the opportunity to undertake this research work under her supervision, and for her all the support, encouragement, patience, constant, guidance valuable suggestions, feedback and cooperation, without which this dissertation would not have been possible.

I am also thankful to all the other faculty of the department for their constant guidance and valuable suggestions. I would also like to thank my friends for their cooperation with me all the time, while I was collecting data and conducting the field work.

I am also grateful to my parents and family for their unfailing and unconditional support and constant encouragement.

Besides, my special thanks to all my classmates for all the help they provide through discussion and cooperation. I am also thankful to my seniors for the help and guidance which they provide me. I offer my sincere thanks to the Librarian, Central Library of Assam University, silchar.



Date: 5/10/2020

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M A in Linguistics

4th semester

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Chapter-1

Bengali Language and community

1.1 Geographical Location-

Bengali /bɛŋgoli/ also known by its endonym Bangla is an Indo- Aryan Language primarily spoken by the Bengalis in South Asia, specifically in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent, presently divided between Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam's Barak Valley (lower Assam). It is the official and most widely spoken language of Bangladesh and second most widely spoken language of the 22 scheduled languages of India, behind Hindi.

1.1.1 Map-

WEST BENGAL DISTRICT MAP



1.2 No. Of speakers-

With Approximately 228 million native speakers and another 37 million as second language speakers, Bengali is the fifth most- spoken native language and the seventh most spoken language by total number of speakers in the world.

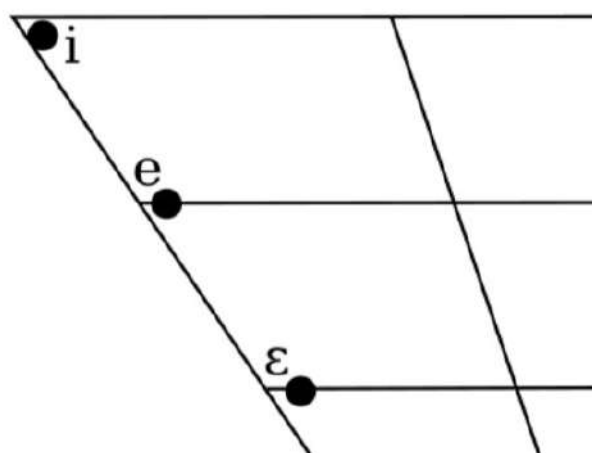
1.3 Dialects of Bengali language-

The dialects of the Bengali language are part of the Eastern Indo-Aryan language group of the Indo- European language family widely spoken in the Bengal region of South Asia. Although the spoken dialects of Bengali are mutually intelligible with neighbouring dialects. Bengali dialects can be thus classified along at least two dimensions: spoken vs. literary variations and prestige vs. Regional variations.

1.3.1 Bengali Phonology-

The Phonology of Bengali, like that of its neighbouring Eastern Indo-Aryan languages, is characterised by a wide variety of Diphthongs and inherent back vowels (both /ɔ/ and /o/). /ɔ/ corresponds to and developed out of the Sanskrit Schwa. This is retained as such by almost all other branches of the Indo-aryan language family.

➤ Phonemic inventory-



Phonemically, Bengali features 29 consonants and 7 vowels. Each vowel has examples of being nasalized in Bengali words, thus adding 7 more additional nasalized vowels.

Although the standard form of Bengali is largely uniform across west Bengal and Bangladesh, there are a few sounds that vary in pronunciation..

➤ Consonant clusters-

Native Bengali words do not allow initial consonant clusters, the maximum syllabic structure is CVC. Many speakers of Bengali restrict their phonology to this pattern, even when using Sanskrit or English borrowings, such as geram(CV.CVC) for gram(CCVC) meaning ‘village’ or iskul/ishkul (VC.CVC) for skul(CCVC)’ school”. Sanskrit words borrowed into Bengali, however, possess a wide range of clusters, expanding the maximum syllable structure to CCCVC. Final consonant clusters are rare in Bengali. However, final clusters do exist in some native Bengali words, although rarely in standard pronunciation.

➤ Diphthongs-

Magadhan languages such as Bengali are known for their wide variety of diphthongs, or combinations of vowels occurring within the same syllable.

1.4 A Brief about Bengali language-

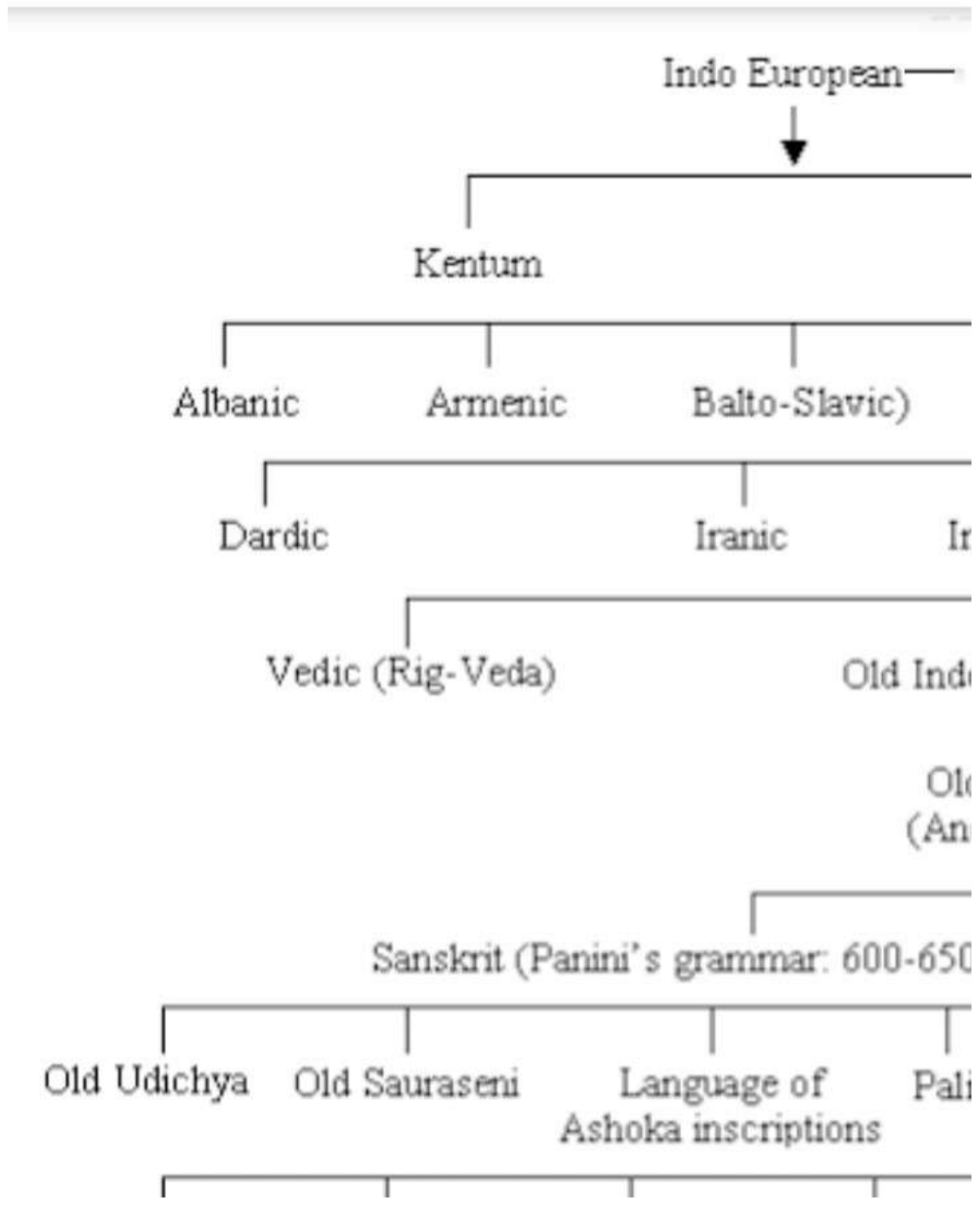


Fig:2

Bengali language, Bengali Bangla, member of the Indo- Aryan group of the Indo- Iranian branch of the Indo- European language family. It is spoken by more than 210 million people as a first or second language, with some 100 million Bengali speakers in Bangladesh; about 85 million in India, primarily in the states of west Bengal, Assam, and Tripura; and sizable

immigrant communities in the United Kingdom, the United States and the Middle East. It is the state language of Bangladesh and one of the languages officially recognised in the constitution of India.

1.4.1- History-

There is general agreement that in the distant past Oriya, Assamese and Bengali formed a single branch, from which Oriya split off first and Assamese later. This is one reason that the earliest specimens of Bengali language and literature, the Charyapadas, are also claimed by speakers of Oriya and Assamese as their own. The Bengali linguists Suniti Kumar Chatterji and Sukumar Sen suggested that Bengali had its origin in the 10th century CE, deriving from Magahi Prakrit through Magahi Apabhramsha. The Bengali scholar Muhammad Shahidullah and his followers offered a competing theory, suggesting that the language began in the 7th century CE and developed from spoken and written Gauda.

Dominant in the last group was Persian, which was also the source of some grammatical forms. More recent studies suggest that the use of native and foreign words has been increasing, mainly because of the preference of Bengali speakers for the colloquial style.

1.4.2 Varieties-

There are two standard styles in Bengali: the Sadhubhasa (elegant or genteel speech) and the Chaltibhasa (current or colloquial speech). The former was largely shaped by the language of early Bengali poetical works. In the 19th century it became standardised as the literary language and also as the appropriate vehicle for business and personal exchanges. Although it was at times used for oration, Sadhubhasa was not the language of daily communication. Chaltibhasa is based on the cultivated form of the dialects of Kolkata and its neighbouring small towns on the Bhagirathi river. It has come into literary use since the early 20th century, and by the early 21st century it had become the dominant literary language as well as the standard colloquial form of speech among the educated. There is also a marked difference in vocabulary. The four main dialects roughly approximate the ancient political divisions of the Bengali speaking world, known as Radha; Pundra or Varendra; Kamrupa and Bangla. In addition, two cities, Sylhet and Chittagong, have developed dialects with lexical and phonological characteristics that are mostly unintelligible to other speakers of Bengali.

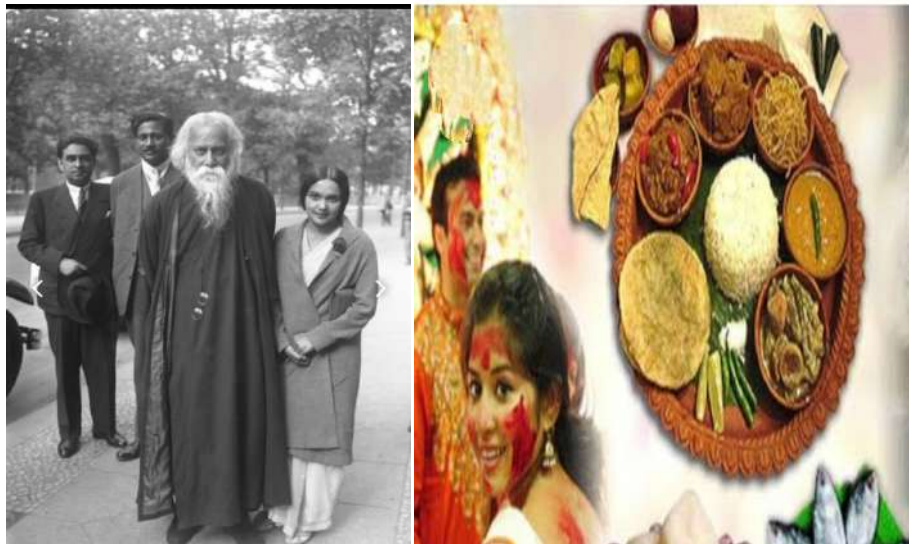
1.4.3 Grammar-

A simple Bengali sentence usually follows subject-object-verb word order. When present, the negative particle comes at the end of the sentence. The copula, or verb linking the subject and predicate, is often omitted. Six cases are generally recognised. Compound verbs, comprising a stem or root and a suffix, are a special feature. There are 3 verb tenses, but their subdivisions make them 10. There are two moods, indicative and imperative and two numbers, singular and plural. The first, second and third persons are expressed through six forms because they have both ordinary and honorific referents. Gender is natural. Adjectives are usually not modified according to the number or case of the nouns they qualify.

1.4.4 Writing systems-

The Bengali Script is derived from Brahmi, one of the two ancient Indian scripts, and particularly from the eastern variety of Brahmi. Bengali script followed a different line of development from that of Devanagari and Oriyan scripts, but the characters of Bengali and Assamese scripts generally coincided. By the 12th century CE the Bengali alphabet was nearly complete, although natural changes continued to take place until the 16th century. Some conscious alterations were also made in the 19th century.

1.5 Culture and traditions :



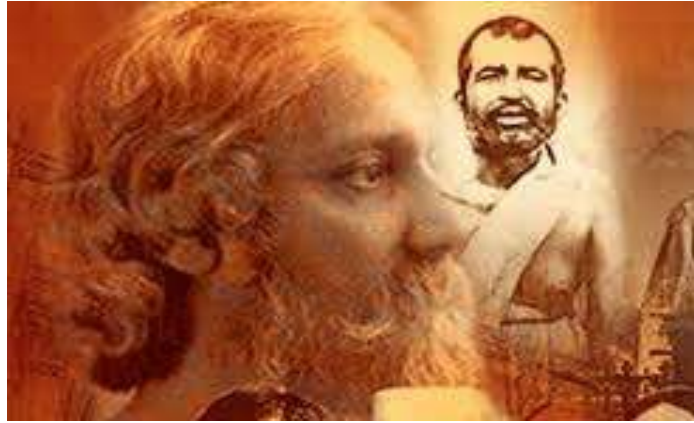


Fig: 3

The culture of west Bengal is an Indian Culture which has its roots in the Bengali literature, music, fine arts, drama, and cinema. West Bengal’s capital Kolkata as the former capital of India- was the birthplace of modern Indian literary and artistic thought, and is referred to as the “cultural or literary capital of India”. Bengal has a long tradition of popular literature, music and drama largely based on Bengali folklore and Hindu epics and Puranas.

Religion, specifically Hinduism, the principal and predominant religion of the state, plays a vital role in the culture of west Bengal. Durga puja, a five day annual autumnal celebration in honour of Hindu goddess Durga, is the biggest festival of majority Bengali Hindus. Since Bengal is a part of India, its culture has been an amalgamation of predominant Hindu culture with the secular Bengali culture drawing inspiration from contemporary Western sources.

1.5.1 *LITERATURE*

:



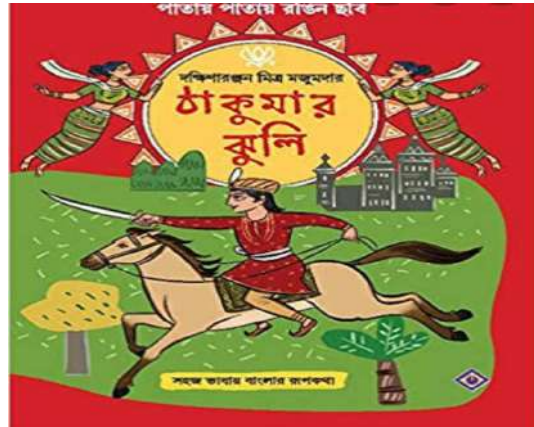


fig: 4

The Bengali language boasts a rich literary heritage, shared with neighbouring Bangladesh. West Bengal has a long tradition in folk literature, evidenced by the Charyapada, Mangalkavya, ShreekrishnaKritana, ThakumarJhuli, and stories related to Gopal Bhar. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, Bengali literature was modernised in the works of authors such as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Michael MadhusudanDutt, Rabindranath Tagore, KaziNazrul Islam, and sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. Coupled with social reforms led by Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, and others this constituted a major part of the Bengal Renaissance.

1.5.2 THEATRE AND FILMS:

Among other types of theatre, West Bengal has a tradition of folk drama known as jatra. Kolkata is the home of the Bengali cinema industry, dubbed “Tollywood” for Tollygunj, where most of the state’s film studios are located. Its long tradition of art films includes globally acclaimed film directors such as Academy Award- winning director Satyajit Ray, RitwikGhatak, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sen, BuddhadebDasgupta, GoutamGhose, KoushikGanguly, Srijit Mukherjee.

1.5.3 FINE ARTS:



fig :5

Jor Bangla Temple

There are significant examples of fine arts in Bengal from earlier times such as terracotta art of Hindu temples, Kalighat paintings etc. Bengal has been the harbinger of modernism in fine arts of India. Abindranath Tagore, called the father of Modern Indian Art had started the Bengal School Of Art had started the Bengal School of Art which was to create styles of art outside the European realist tradition which was taught in art colleges under the colonial administration of the British Government.

1.5.4MUSIC AND DANCE:



fig:6

Baul singer



fig:7

GaudiyaNritya and Chhau dance

The Baul tradition is a unique heritage of Bengali folk music, which has also been influenced by regional music traditions. Other folk music forms include Kabigaan, Gombhira, Bhawaiya, Kirtanas and Gajan festival music. Folk music in west Bengal is often accompanied by the ektara, a one-stringed instrument. West Bengal also has a heritage in north Indian classical music. The state is recognised for its appreciation of rabindrasangeet(songs written by Rabindranath Tagore) and Indian classical music. NazrulGeeti is another classical music of Bengal, which is written and composed by poet KaziNazrul Islam. He was person in Bengal music who created the first Bengali Ghazals.

Bengali dance forms draw folk traditions, especially those of the tribal groups, as well as the broader Indian dance traditions. Chhau dance of Purulia is a rare form of mask dance. GaudiyaNritya is a classical Bengali school of Indian dance, originating in Gaur, west Bengal the ancient capital of the Bengal region. Various forms of the Indian classical dances are patronised, as are dances set on the songs of Tagore and Nazrul. The people of West Bengal, in the first day of Bengali new year or poyelaBoishakh organises a rally known as MongalShobhajatra with a view to resist and fight against all sorts of evils of the world in order to welcome the goodwill of the masses.

1.5.5 MASKS AND MASKS DANCE:



fig:8

Mask or Mukhosh of West Bengal, as it known has mysterious histories is a true culture of Bengal. Mostly it uses for the Mask dance, the folk dance of west Bengal. The wearing of these masks is connected with early types of folklore and religion. There is various type of masks made up of clay, wood, sponge wood or shoal, pith paper metal etc. Generally half masks are made up of clay, pith and paper and wooden masks are very rare. Some of the masks came from the Tribal of west Bengal comes well within this mask using cultural zone. Mask in west Bengal is mostly used in folk dance.

The Bengali people are its dominant ethno linguistic tribe. The region has been a historical melting point, blending indigenous traditions with cosmopolitan influences from pan-Indian sub continental empires. Bengal was considered to be the richest part of Islamic medieval India and during the era of the Bengal Sultanate it was described to be a world major trading nation, while during Mughal times, having triggered the proto-industrialization, its economy was worth 12 % of global GDP.

1.6 Attire:



fig:9

Bengali women commonly wear the /sari/ (sari), often distinctly designed according to local cultural customs. In urban areas, many women and men Western- style attire. Men also wear traditional costumes such as the kurta. Lungi, a variant of the sarong, is widely worn by Bangladeshi men.

Though Bengali women traditionally wear the sari and salwar kameez, western attire has gained acceptance among younger and professional women. Western style dress has greater acceptance among men, although the traditional costumes like dhoti, Panjabi, kurta, sherwani, pyjama and lungi are seen during weddings and major festivals.

Bengal has produced several of South Asia's leading fashion designers, including Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Bibi Russell and Rina Latif.

1.7Cuisine:



fig: 10

Bengali food that originated and evolved in the region of Bengal situated in the eastern subcontinent of India is rich and varied in its platter starting from snacks to main courses to sweets. Although the food habits, tastes, preferences and choice of items vary with different districts, communities and religions, the basic course generally remains the same with rice and fish playing a dominant role. Probably this is why a Bengali is often typed as a ‘Maache-Bhaate- Bengali’ where Maach means fish and Bhaatmean boiled rice in Bengali. A Bengali meal follows a multi- course tradition where food is served as course-wise usually in a specific format, marking it as the only meal of the subcontinent to have evolved such convention. Generally a Bengali meal starts with a ‘shukto’ followed by ‘shak’, dal, variety of vegetables, fish/mutton/chicken/egg curry, chutney and ends with sweet dish like curd and other traditional sweets like sandesh or rosogulla.

1.8 Festivals and celebrations:



fig: 11

Bengal is a land of festivals. There is a popular saying in Bengali “BaroMasheTeroParban”. It literally means thirteen festivals in twelve months. Almost all festivals of all religions are celebrated here with equal religious sentiment and fervour. The people of Bengal strive hard to maintain the tradition and culture of its land in the festivals they celebrate. A great number of fairs are also organised. The most popular festival celebrated in west Bengal are Durga puja, Basant Panchami, Dushera, BahiDooj, Holi, MahavirJayanti, Buddha Jyanti, Rathayatra and Christmas. Other events which have almost taken the form of festivals are RabindraJayanti, Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Some of them are described as-

1.8.1 DURGA PUJA:



fig:12

Durga Puja, held in September-october, is the biggest and most important festival of west Bengal. It marks the victory of ten armed goddess Durga over the buffalo demon

Mahishashur and signifies the victory of good over evil. The festival commences on Mahalaya, a week before the actual Puja celebrations begin on Sashthi and continue through Saptami, Ashtami, Navami and Bijaya Dashami when the festival comes to an end.

On Bijaya Dashami, the day of the festival, people bid adieu to goddess Durga offering her sweets and sindoor. Before bidding adieu to the goddess Durga, the married women assemble near the idol, apply vermillion on her feet or forehead and then smear vermillion on each other. People distribute sweets and visit their friends, family members and relatives to exchange the Bijoya greetings.

1.8.2 PoilaBoishakh:



fig:13

The first month of the Bengali calendar, Baishakh, marks the starting of the crop cycle in Bengal. A lot of Bengali weddings are held in this month, and new business started. The first day of this month is celebrated as New Year and called as PoilaBoishakh. Visitors to homes are greeted with sweets, and trade establishments are decorated with auspicious garlands of marigold and aam(mango) leaves.

1.8.3 Posh Mela:



ig:14

PoushMela held at Shantiniketan in Birbhum district depicts the quintessential Bengali culture. The fair is hosted between 7th and 9th of the month of Poush, near about the time when the present Gregorian year is to bid farewell and preparations are made to welcome the New Year, with its new hopes and new promises. Ashantiniketan, the famed land from where the renowned Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore drew his inspiration abounds in cultural and intellectual festivals throughout the year.

1.8.4 Weddings:

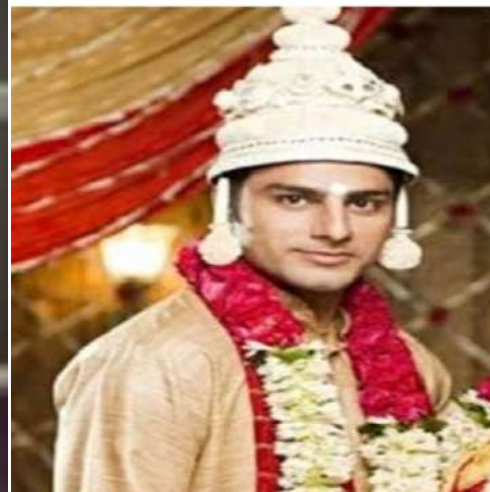




fig:15

Like many traditional and non- liberal societies, in Bengali culture, marriage is seen as a union between two families rather than just two people. Bengali weddings are traditionally in four parts: the bride's Gaye holud, the groom's Gaye Holud, The biye and the boubhaat. These often take place on separate days.

1.9 Houses:



fig:16

Bengali Architecture includes ancient urban architecture, religious architecture, rural vernacular architecture, colonial townhouses and country houses, and modern urban styles. The bungalow style is a notable architectural export of Bengal. The corner towers of Bengali religious buildings were replicated in medieval Southeast Asia. Bengali curved roofs, suitable for the very heavy rains, were adopted into a distinct local style of Indo Islamic architecture, and used decoratively elsewhere in north India in Mughal Architecture.

Bengal is not rich in good stone for building, and traditional Bengali architecture mostly used brick and wood, often reflecting the styles of wood, bamboo, and thatch styles of local vernacular architecture for house

1.10 Topic of the study

The topic of the dissertation is *Adjectives in Bengali language*. This is a very brief descriptive study with ample scope for further research.

Chapter- 2

REVIEW OF LIERATURE

Some of the Researchers or Linguists have already studied the adjectives in Bengali language and some research work is still in progress. Therefore the development of Bengali language is becoming more static and popular in the recent past.

“The Origin and Development of the Bengali language” by S.K. Chattererjee describes that Bengali belongs to the Indo Aryan family of languages that evolved from Sanskrit. It has been highly influenced by the vocabulary and syntactic structure of Persian as well. There are more than 100 different dialects of Bengali being spoken in parts of West Bengal, Tripura and Bangladesh.

“Morphology and Syntax: A comparison study between English and Bangla” by Haspelmath (2002) states that morphology is both the oldest and one of the youngest sub-disciplines of grammar. It is the oldest in a sense that the first linguists were primarily morphologists.

Chapter- 3

Research methodology

Sources of data:

The basic purpose of this work is to present the various types of adjectives in Bengali language. There are many dialects of Bengali language but my research will solely be confined to the different types of Adjectives in standard Bengali language.

Primary data: Being a native speaker of Bengali, data has been collected through self-information sources. I have been provided the necessary data for this study by acting as an informant. I have also collected data from persons like my parents, teachers, friends, relatives and so on who speak the same variety this has helped me to run a cross check on my own data.

Secondary data: Most of the other required information has been collected from secondary sources. Data has been collected from existing literature available in the form of books, journals, e-books, thesis, articles, novels and so on. Further more data from the internet, social media etc.

Chapter- 4

Adjectives in Bengali Language

4.1- Bengali Language is very rich in grammar. Adjectives do not inflect for case for case, gender, or number in Bengali and are placed before the noun they modify. In general, adjectives are words which define or modify or qualifies a noun. Adjective is the one part of noun. For example- /goromdudh/ "hot milk".

Here 'gorom' is an adjective used in the phrase. In Bengali, adjectives are classified into the following categories. They are-

4.1.1- Adjectives of Quality.

4.1.2- Adjectives of Quantity.

4.1.3- Demonstrative Adjective.

4.1.4- Comparatives and superlatives.

4.1.5- Numeral Adjectives.

4.1.6- Possessive Adjectives.

4.1.7- Interrogative Adjectives

4.1.1- **Qualitative:**

These are the words that describe Qualities of a noun or pronoun such as texture, appearance, shape etc. For example-

/dustɔ lok/ "naughty man"

Examples are as follows-

	<i>gloss</i>
/lal ʃəri/	"red saree"

/puratɔŋh̄ɔr/	“old house”
/e-mɔn/	“in this way”
/e-mɔtɔ/	“like this”
/o-mɔtɔ/	“like that”
/kemɔn/	“like what”
/tomɔrmɔtɔ/	“like you”
/purānomɔtɔ/	“like oldish”

Table:1

4.1.2- Quantitative:

Quantitative adjectives are those adjectives which describe measurement or amount of any living beings or non-living beings.

For example-

I. /katɔ holo/“how much”
II. /ônek gulo taka/ “lots of rupees”
III. /etogulɔkapɔr/“so many clothes”
IV. /ônekbesh̄i/“much more”
V. /Ektigh̄ɔr/ “one house”
VI. /bɔrɔ āām/“big mango”

Here, in the above examples- ‘katɔ’, ‘ônek’, ‘atɔ’, ‘ekti’ are adjectives describing quantity.

Table:2

4.1.3-Demonstrative adjectives:

This and That correspond to “ei” and “oi” respectively, with the definite article attached to the following noun. Thus, this book would translate to /oi-boiti/ “this book” while /oi-boigulo/ would translate to “those books”.

	<i>Gloss</i>
/oi- boiti/	“this book”
/oi-āāmgulo/	“those mangoes”
/ei- g ^h orti/	“this house”
/ei- g ^h orata/	“this horse”
/oi- lokgulo/	“those men”

Table:3

4.1.4- Comparatives and Superlatives:

Bengali adjectives from their comparative forms with /aro/ “more” and their superlatives forms with /shōbcheye/ “than all”. Comparisons are formed by using genitive form of the object of comparison followed by the postpositions /cheye/ “than” or the postposition /mōto/ “like” and then by /aro/ “more” or /kōm/ “less”. The word for “more” is optional, but the word for “less” is required, so in its absence “more” is inferred. Adjectives can be additionally modified by using /ōnekbes^hi/ “much more”, which are especially useful for comparing quantities.

	<i>gloss</i>
/or- mōto/	“like her”
/kōmb ^h alo/	“less good”
/ʃōbʃōjō b ^h alo/	“more good than all”
/ōnekbes ^h ib ^h alo/	“much more good”
/ʃoi-mōto/	“like that”
/or-mōto	“like him”

/ek-rɔkɔm/	“same”
------------	--------

Table:4

4.1.5- Numeral Adjectives-

A numeral adjective is an adjective that tells us about how many or how much or in what order the noun is in.

Examples-

	<i>Gloss</i>
/ek/	“one”
/anekgulo/	“many”
/tinta/	“three”
/prɔtek/	“each”
/ʃɔb gulo/	“all”

Table:5

There are three kinds of numeral adjectives. They are-

Definite Numeral Adjectives-

They are the set of cardinal and ordinal numbers. The word definite itself tells us the exact number of people or things.

Examples-

	Gloss
/ekti/	“one”
/duto/	“two”
/ʃɔt/	“seven”

Table:6

Indefinite Numeral Adjectives-

Indefinite numeral adjectives unlike definite numeral adjectives only give tentative numeral idea of nouns. They donot give us the exact number.

Examples-

	Gloss
/ɔlpô/	“less”
/ʃɔbgulɔ/	“all”
/anekgulɔ/	“several”

Table 7

Distributive Numeral Adjectives-

Distributive numeral adjectives are same as distributive adjectives denote singular number of noun.

Example-

/Prɔtek/ “Each”

4.1.6- Possessive Adjective-

A possessive form is a word or grammatical construction used to indicate a relationship of possession in a broad sense.

Examples-

	Gloss
/amar/	“my”
/tomār/	“yours”
/āmāder/	“ours”
/odɔr/	“their”
/kɔr/	“Whose”

Table: 8

4.1.7- Interrogative Adjectives-

The interrogative adjectives are whose, what, which modifies noun and are used in interrogative sentences.

Examples-

	Gloss
/ki/	“What”
/kontā/	“which one”
/Kemne/	“how”

Table: 9

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Bengali language, Bengali Bangla, member of the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo- European language family. It is spoken primarily in the states of West Bengal. It is the state language of Bangladesh and one of the languages officially recognised in the constitution of India.

Adjective in Bangla is a very wide topic and there is ample scope for research to be carried out. Bangla adjectives are indeclinable. They occur attributively before nouns and predicately in copular sentences. Many adjectives can be used nominally by taking a classifier.

Adjectives have no uniform morphological features. Lal red is an adjective. Bangla adjectives are non- declinable. The main types of adjectives in bangla are: Qualifying adjectives which express attributes such as size, shape, age, material, colour. Comparison of adjectives- here in Bangla comparative structures are relatively simple in that they do not usually involve comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. A few Sanskrit forms are still in use with comparative forms. There are a few other remaining superlative forms which are used as independent adjectives and often do not imply any overt comparison. Quantifiers are distinct from other adjectives by their ability to take a classifier without turning into a noun. Another is demonstrative adjectives then numeral adjective which denotes numbers then another type is possessive adjective denoting possession of something or somebody and an interrogative adjective which means asking questions.

Research in this field is left open and given the proper encouragement and opportunity. I'd be very keen to take it up and contribute to the field of research in Bengali.

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