

Non-Decompositional Processing of Compound Verbs in Hindi: An Experimental Study

SAMIKSHA BAJPAI

National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, India

GAUTAM SENGUPTA

University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India

ABSTRACT

Through this experiment we demonstrate that compound verbs (henceforth CV) in Hindi are singular lexical units that are not decomposed into their constituents during access. CVs are a V1 + V2 complex predicate construction, in which the first verb, the V1, explicates the meaning of the construction whereas the second verb, the V2, adds some nuance to the construction and bears the grammatical desinence of the construction. Through a masked priming experiment, a paradigm developed by Forster & Davis (1984) that is commonly used to investigate the effect of one word on another without the subject's awareness, we elucidate on how CVs are stored in the mental lexicon. In this paradigm, a stimulus (the prime) is presented for a very short duration and is immediately followed by the mask which hides the prime. The combined effect of the two stimuli and the extremely short duration the prime is displayed for causes a consciously imperceptible stimulus that the subject is not aware of and cannot therefore develop any response strategies to.

Keywords: Compound verbs, psycholinguistics, hindi verbs, masked priming, non-decomposition, mental lexicon

1. INTRODUCTION

In this experiment, we consider a specific type of complex predicate, the compound verb (henceforth CV). Compound verbs