

1 **Dialogue**

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1 **Bengali Determiner Phrase Revisited: A Response**
2 **to Dasgupta and Ghosh**

3
4 *Shishir Bhattacharja*
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10 Dasgupta and Ghosh (henceforth DG) published in this journal in 2007,
11 is, to some extent, the continuation of the classical generative study of the
12 structure of B(engali) D(eterminer) P(hrase), inaugurated in the pioneering
13 work by Dasgupta (1983) and then followed by works like Bhattacharya
14 (1999) among others. In this intervention we intend to focus, rather selec-
15 tively, on those claims of theirs which attempt to answer the following two
16 questions which are, in our view, the most pertinent ones in the study of
17 BDP structure:

- 18 1. Why does (3a) have an indefinite reading whereas (3b), (3c) and (3d)
19 have a definite one?
20
21 2. Why does the NP move in (3c) despite the presence of an overt Dem
22 whereas in (3d) it does not?

- 23 3a. /*tin-TA boi*/ (three-Cl-book) ‘Three books’ (Indefinite)
24
25 3b. /*boi tin-TA*/ (book-three-Cl) ‘The three books’ (Definite/Specific)
26
27 3c. /*ei boi tin-TA*/ (Dem-book-three-Cl) ‘These three books’
(Definite)
28
29 3d. /*ei tin-TA boi*/ (Dem-three-Cl-book) ‘These three books’
(Definite)
30

31 Bhattacharya (1999) claims, along the line of Chomsky (1995), that in (3b)
32 a NP carrying a feature [+specific] moves, in order to check the feature,
33 to Spec Q(uantifier) P(hrase), a fused head combining both Q(uantifier)/
34 Num(eral) (henceforth Q) and Cl(assifier).

- 35 4. $DP[Spec D' D_{QP}[NP_i Q' Q t_i]]$
36

37 However, DG point out the following facts which are not compatible with
38 Bhattacharya’s account:

1 5. With some classifiers some NPs are not allowed to move, as illustrated in
2 (6) and (7) below:

3 6. */chelejon/ (boy-Cl) ‘The boy’ or

4 7. */chele-du-jon/ (boy-two-Cl) ‘The two boys’

5 (but note that /upacarjo-du-jon/ (Vice-chancellor-two-Cl) is accept-
6 able) (see Dasgupta in the present volume)

7
8 8. The NP movement beyond Q depends on the content of the quantifier,
9 as exemplified in (9) below:

10 9. */boi egaroTA/ (book-eleven-Cl) ‘The eleven books’

11
12 In order to analyze BDP structure DG adopt what it refers to as the Sub-
13 stantivist theory (elaborated in Dasgupta et al. (2000) and Dagupta
14 (2005)).¹ Unlike the majority of works on DP structure this approach does
15 not consider the classifiers and demonstratives as distinct morphosyntactic
16 entities. It involves W(ord) E(xtension) S(trategies) like (11) which are ex-
17 tentions of W(ord) F(ormation) S(trategies) like (10) of the Whole Word
18 Morphological model of word formation elaborated in Ford et al. (1997).
19 According to Dasgupta (2005: 61) a WES “maps words onto extended
20 words by attaching a clitic.” DG do not formally define either the term
21 ‘clitic’ or the term ‘extended word’. However, in the context of Bengali, we
22 can see the former as an entity concatenated to the input of a WES and the
23 latter as phrases or syntactic sub-trees that merge at particular sites in a
24 syntactic structure. This said, we will avoid the term ‘clitic’ in this text and
25 will designate the cliticised entities like /tin-Ta/ in (11) as ‘constants’ of
26 WES.²

27
28 10. /X/Unclassified Q ↔ /XTA/Classified Q
29 /tin/ ‘three’ ↔ /tinTA/ ‘three-Cl’
30 /koyek/ ‘a few’ ↔ /koyekTA/ ‘a few-Cl’

31 11. /X/N(oun), Indefinite, Unquantified → /XtinTa/NP, Definite, Quantified, Plural³
32 /boi/ ‘book’ → /boi-tin-TA/ (book-three-Cl) ‘the three books’
33

34 According to DG we can handle (3b) with (10) and (11). The righthand
35 outputs of (10) appear as constant in (11) and if /boi/ ‘book’ is mapped
36 onto this WES, it outputs (3b). In absence of an overt Dem, the outputs of
37 (11) merge at Q and then Q moves to SpecDemP. Subsequently, the null
38 Dem moves to D in order to check the [+definite] feature, because, as (13)

1 shows, Dem alone cannot yield definiteness in a good number of cases. DG
 2 assume that head-movement is allowed for functional heads like Dem and
 3 Q.

4 12. $DP[Spec D' D_{DemP}[Spec Dem' Dem_{QP}[Spec Q' Q]]]$

5 13. **/ei bhalo nOy/* (this-good-not) 'this is not good'

6
 7 DG claim that (3d) can be handled with two WES: (14) and (15). The out-
 8 put of (14), a DemQ sequence, appears as constant in (15) which outputs a
 9 quantified, definite and plural NP. This NP merges at Q and then, Q moves
 10 to Spec DemP in order to check the [+definite] feature, and consequently,
 11 its left most element, Dem /ei/ 'this' is niched in D.
 12

13 14. $/XTa/Q, Classified \rightarrow /eiXTa/Q, Classified, Definite, Plural$
 14 $/tin-TA/$ (three-Cl) 'the three' $\rightarrow /ei-tin-TA/$ (Dem-three-Cl)
 15 'these three'

16 15. $/X/N, Indefinite, Unquantified \rightarrow /ei-tin-TaX/NP, Quantified, Definite, Plural$
 17 $/boi/$ 'book' $\rightarrow /ei-tin-Ta-boi/$ (Dem-three-Cl-book) 'these three
 18 books'
 19

20 DG attempt to answer (1) and (2) and try to account for (5) and (8). How-
 21 ever, some of the examples which are problematic for Bhattacharya (1999)
 22 are also problematic for DG. The present intervention aims to draw our at-
 23 tention to those examples. Subsequently, in order to account for (3c) on the
 24 one hand, and to handle some different data on the other, we propose some
 25 modifications in the WES structure and also in the syntactic structure of
 26 BDP *à la* DG.

27 According to DG (5) and (8) can be handled (13) "by constraining the
 28 Strategies." The formation of (6) can indeed be avoided by claiming that
 29 there exists no strategy like (16). We can form (7) with (17) although some
 30 speakers may find it less acceptable than other outputs of this WES. Se-
 31 quences like (9) can be formed with (18) or (19) but as we can see below,
 32 speakers are far from being unanimous about the acceptability of their
 33 outputs. The general rule in this respect seems to be the following: Ns de-
 34 noting objects of comparatively smaller size are allowed to precede a bigger
 35 Num. However, the acceptability of the sequences in which the N precedes
 36 Q depends, as (18) and (19) show, both on the size of the Num and the na-
 37 ture of the N. Therefore, if we want to constrain these WES, we must make
 38 a list of the Ns that are not allowed to be mapped onto them, but this is

1 indeed a very difficult task. In our view, idiosyncratic examples like (7) and
 2 (9) are difficult to handle both in the classical generative approach and in
 3 the substantivist one. This said, as idiosyncrasies are rather unusual in syn-
 4 tax these examples should in principle be better handled in approaches like
 5 DG.

- 6 16. /X/N, Human, Indefinite, Singular ↔ /Xjon/N, Human, Definite, Plural
 7 /chele/ ‘boy’ ↔ */chelejon/ (boy-CL) ‘the boy’
 8 /shikkhok/ ‘teacher’ ↔ */shikkhokjon/ (teacher-CL) ‘the teacher’
 9
- 10 17. /X/N, Unquantified, Indefinite, Singular → /Xdujon/NP, Quantified, Definite, Plural
 11 /chele/ ‘boy’ → ?/chele-dujon/ (boy-two-CL) ‘the two boys’
 12 /Dakat/ ‘bandit’ → /Dakat-dujon/ (bandit-two-CL) ‘the two
 13 bandits’
- 14 18. /X/N, Indefinite, Unquantified, Singular →
 15 /XegaroTa/NP, Definite, Quantified, Plural
 16 /boi/ ‘book’ → ?/boi-egaro-Ta/ (book-eleven-CL) ‘the eleven
 17 books’
 18 /Taka/ ‘money’ → /Taka-egaro-Ta/ (money-eleven-CL) ‘the
 19 eleven rupees’
 20
- 21 19. /X/N, Indefinite, Unquantified, Singular →
 22 /XpOncashTa/NP, Definite, Quantified, Plural
 23 /licu/ ‘lichi’ → /licu-pOncash-TA/ (lichi-fifty-CL) ‘the fifty lichis’
 24 /desh/ ‘country’ → ?/desh-pOncash-Ta/ (country-fifty-CL) ‘the
 25 fifty countries’

26 It seems that (3c) cannot be formed with a WES *à la* DG because the input
 27 of a WES must be a word. We cannot input Dem because DG prefer to
 28 treat categories like Dem as constants in WES rather than as inputs because
 29 there are fewer Dems than members of other categories like Q and N. If we
 30 decide to input N, then, (3c) will involve two ‘circumfixal’ constants: Dem
 31 and Q. We can however overcome this problem if we are allowed to map
 32 ‘extended words’ like the outputs of (11) onto a WES like (21), or activate
 33 P(hrase) F(ormation) S(trategies) like (22) or (23).⁴

34 A PFS involves several variables and can perhaps be better formulated
 35 as:

- 36 20. /X/α → /X’/β
 37 where α is a lexical or phrasal category and β is a phrasal category.
 38

- 1 21. /XTa/_{NP, Non-deictic definite} → /ei/XTa/_{NP, Deictic definite, Plural}⁵
 2 /boi-tin-Ta/ (book-three-Cl) ‘the three books’ → /ei-boi-tin-TA/
 3 (this-book-three-Cl) ‘these three books’
 4 22. //X/_{N/Y/Q/Z/Cl/NP, Non-deictic definite} →
 5 //W/_{Dem/X/N/Y/Q/Z/Cl/NP, Deictic definite, Plural}
 6 /boi-tin-Ta/ (book-three-Cl) ‘the three books’ → /ei-boi-tin-TA/
 7 (this-book-three-Cl) ‘these three books’
 8 /ciThi-shat-khana/ (letter-seven-Cl) ‘the seven letters’ → /shei-
 9 ciThi-shat-khana/ (that-letter-seven-Cl) ‘those seven letters’
 10 23. /X/_N → //W/_{Dem/X/N/Y/Q/Z/Cl/NP, Deictic definite, Plural}
 11 /boi/ ‘book’ → /ei-boi-tin-TA/ (this-book-three-Cl) ‘these three
 12 books’
 13 /ciThi/ ‘letter’ → /shei-ciThi-shat-khana/ (that-letter-seven-Cl)
 14 ‘those seven letters’
 15

16 Following Bhattacharya (1999) DG consider Q as a fused head. However,
 17 examples like (24–25) make us suspect such a decision. If we compare (24)
 18 with (3a), it becomes clear that when Q follows Cl the NP lacks number
 19 specification. We can note in (26–27) that M(easure) W(ord)s also behave
 20 like Cl in this respect.⁶

- 21 24. /goTa tin boi/ (Cl-three-book) ‘more of less three books’
 22 25. /goTa koyek boi/ (Cl-a few-book) ‘a few books’⁷
 23 26. /bOsta dui cal/ (MW-two-rice) ‘about two bags of rice’
 24 27. /dui bOsta cal/ (two-MW-rice) ‘two bags of rice’
 25
 26

27 DG seem to consent to the claim by Bhattacharya (1999) that (3b) has a
 28 specific meaning. In our view, (3b) cannot have a specific reading because,
 29 in this sequence, N precedes Q and such an order, as we can see below (28–
 30 31), is unacceptable in a context of specificity but acceptable in a context of
 31 definiteness. We consider (29–30) as contexts of specificity and (31) as a
 32 context of definiteness because in (29–30), the BDP substitutes its anteced-
 33 ent (28) partially whereas in (31), it substitutes it completely. We assume
 34 with Enç 1991 and Campbell 1996 that a specific NP must substitute its an-
 35 tecedent partially, and the definite one, completely.
 36

- 37 28. /Tebile [shatTa boi] ache/ (on the table-seven-Cl-book-are)
 38 ‘there are seven books on the table’

- 1 29. **/er moddhe [boi tinTa] ami cai/* (of this-among-book-three-Cl-I-
2 want)
3 ‘I want three books among them’ (Definite Specific) (see endnote-
4 5)
5 30. */er moddhe [tinTa boi] ami cai/* (of this-among-three-Cl-book-I-
6 want)
7 ‘I want three books among them’ (Indefinite Specific)
8
9 31. */[boi shatTa] ami cai/* (book-seven-Cl-I-want)
10 ‘I want those seven books’ (Definite)

11 Bhattacharya (1999) considers Dem as an XP adjoined to QP because for
12 him examples like (32–33) are unacceptable. As he (77) argues, “If the
13 Dem is a head, then it is difficult to see how it can act as a barrier to XP
14 movement.” In our view, (32–33) are acceptable and therefore, Dem is a
15 barrier to no head or XP other than Q and Cl.⁸

- 16
17 32. */boi ei tin-Ta/* (book-this-three-Cl) ‘These three books’⁹
18
19 33. */nutan ei tin-TA boi/* (new-Dem-three-Cl-book) ‘These three new
20 books’

21 If the objection against Dem heading a projection is overruled, then, we can
22 propose (34) as the structure for BDP which has, as we can see, a D(emon-
23 strative) P(hrase) between DP and CIP.

- 24 34. $DP[Spec\ D'\ D_{DemP}[Spec\ Dem'\ Dem_{CIP}[Spec\ Cl'\ Cl_{QP}[Spec\ Q'\ Q_{NP}[Spec\ N'\ N]]]]]$

25
26
27 DG propose to merge the outputs of WES at Q. In our view, they can
28 also merge as the complement of Q and then move to particular sites in
29 order to check their features. In (3a) the output of (35) moves to Spec
30 CIP in order to check number specification and then */tinTa/* (three-Cl) is
31 nicked in Cl and */boi/* ‘book’ in N. In (3b) an output of (11) moves to
32 Spec DP (via Spec DemP) to check the non-deictic definite feature and
33 then */tinTa/* (three-Cl) is nicked in Cl. In (3c) and (3d) the outputs of
34 (22) and (15) respectively move to Spec DemP to check the deictic definite
35 feature and then */ei/* ‘this’ is nicked in D and */tinTa/* in Cl. The differ-
36 ence between (3c) and (3d) is that in the former N is nicked in Spec
37 DemP whereas in the latter, it is nicked in N (via Dem, Cl and Q). We
38 note that in our approach i) no extra movement is required for checking

1 [+definite] feature and ii) the head movement constraint does not need to be
2 violated.

3 35. $/X/N, \text{Indefinite, Unquantified} \rightarrow /tinTaX/NP, \text{Quantified, Definite, Plural}$
4 $/boi/ \text{ 'book'} \rightarrow /tin-Ta boi/ \text{ (three-Cl-book) 'the three books'}$
5

6 (3c) and (32) are problematic for the classical generative approach because
7 in these examples N moves overtly when it does not have to. In presence of
8 an overt Dem [+ definite] feature should be checked lexically and/or covertly
9 through *Probe-Goal* (cf. Epstein and Seely 2006). Now, it is not impos-
10 sible that some speakers find these examples 'more definite' than (3d) and
11 we can account for this fact by claiming that it is so because unlike in (3d),
12 in (3c) and (32) the N is niched in Spec DemP and Spec DP respectively –
13 the two sites that are responsible for checking definiteness.

14 (33) is also problematic for the classical generative approach because
15 the motivation behind AP movement is not clear. If we compare (36) with
16 (37), then it become clear that if AP precedes Q the NP has a definite read-
17 ing. Now, the question we may ask is whether it is possible for the NP in
18 (33) and (37) to check its [+definite] feature by sending one of its ad-
19 juncts to Spec DP. (33) and (37) are problematic for the Substantive
20 approach as well because it is not yet clear whether we can handle in-
21 stances of adjunction and complementization with PFSs like (38) and (39)
22 respectively.¹⁰

23 36. *tin-TA nutan boi* (three-Cl-new-book) 'Three new books'

24 37. */nutan tin-TA boi/* (new-three-Cl-book) 'The three new books'

25 38. $//X/N/Y/Q/Z/Cl/NP, \text{Non-deictic definite} \rightarrow$
26 $//W/A/X/N/Y/Q/Z/Cl/NP, \text{Non-deictic definite, Plural}$
27 $/boi-tin-Ta/ \text{ (book-three-Cl) 'the three books'} \rightarrow /nutan-boi-tin-$
28 $TA/ \text{ (new-book-three-Cl) 'the three new books'}$
29 $/ciThi-shat-khana/ \text{ (letter-seven-Cl) 'the seven letters'} \rightarrow /purono-$
30 $ciThi-shat-khana/ \text{ (old-letter-seven-Cl) 'the seven old letters'}$
31

32 39. $/X/NP \rightarrow //Y/Pronoun/X/NP/Z/Inflected\ verb/IP/S$ ¹¹
33 $/boi-tin-Ta/ \text{ (book-three-Cl) 'the three books'} \rightarrow /ami-boi-tin-$
34 $TA-porechi/ \text{ (I-book-three-Cl-have read) 'I have read the three}$
35 $books'$
36 $/boi-Ta/ \text{ (book-Cl) 'the book'} \rightarrow /tumi-boi-TA-porecho/ \text{ (you-}$
37 $book-Cl-have read) 'You have read the book'$
38

1 Unlike the weak lexicalist approaches of the Generative school which put
 2 Syntax at the service of Morphology, the Substantive approach puts, to
 3 some extent, Morphology at the service of Syntax. In our view, DG offer a
 4 better account of the syntax of BDP as compared to previous analysis done
 5 in light of the classical generative theory. However, some problems like (8)
 6 persist and they should be taken care of in the future research.

7

8

9 **Abbreviations**

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11 BDP	Bengali Determiner Phrase;	MW	Measure Word;
12 Cl	Classifier;	Num	Numeral;
13 CIP	Classifier Phrase;	QP	Quantifier Phrase;
14 Dem	Demonstrative;	PFS	Phrase Formation Strategy;
15 DP	Determiner Phrase;	Q	Quantifier;
16 DemP	Demonstrative Phrase;	WES	Word Extension Strategy;
17 IP	Infectional Phrase;	WFS	Word Formation Strategy.

17

18

19 **Notes**

20

- 21 1. According to Dasgupta (2005: 60) “The substantivist approach operates on the
 22 assumption that levels of linguistic characterization must converge on formal
 23 objects. Morphology and Syntax co-specify a word. Syntax and pragmatics
 24 co-characterize a sentence.”
- 25 2. According to Ford et al. (1997) some words can be analyzed into two sub-
 26 components: i) *variable* and ii) *constant* by mapping it onto a relevant WFS.
 27 For example, an English word like *friendly* can be analyzed into the variable
 28 (*friend*) and the constant (*ly*) or an Arabic word like /kitab/ ‘book’ can be an-
 29 alyzed into the constant /i/-/a/ and the variable /k/-/t/-/b/. Constants can
 30 be represented by any phonic element: stress, phonemic change, single pho-
 31 neme, meaningless sound cluster, simple or complex word, discontinuous and
 32 inseparable segmental as well as supra-segmental means. Quite coincidentally,
 33 when a constant is represented by a continuous sequence of phonemes, it can
 34 have phonic resemblance to word parts which some grammatical traditions
 35 would label as *affixes* (see Singh and Agnihotri 1997 or Bhattacharja 2007b
 36 for details).
- 37 3. The lexical relatedness between the inputs and the outputs of a WFS is shown
 38 by a bidirectional arrow \leftrightarrow in order to symbolize its bidirectional implication.
 In a WES on the other hand, the rather ‘syntactic’ relatedness between the
 input and the output is shown with a unidirectional arrow \rightarrow . Although the

- 1 pattern underlying a WFS and a WES must be repeated, we give only one ex-
2 ample for each WES to save space, unless required otherwise.
- 3 4. In Dasgupta et al. (2000: 171), one of the expositions of the Substantive
4 approach (DG 2007 being a different exposition), a PFS has the following
5 form:
- 6 40. $[X]_{\text{properties}} \rightarrow [X+f]_{\text{properties}}$
- 7 According to the authors (171) PFSs are expected to underwrite syntagms
8 which are “permitted by the syntax, to which they are accountable – to be
9 tighter than normal syntactic constructions and to exhibit other opacities. The
10 unidirectional arrow of (40) “derives a functor-headed phrase X+f (linear
11 order of f, X immaterial) from a word X and simultaneously maps the set
12 Properties into the set of Properties’. The authors claim (171) that “this map-
13 ping and the substantive (phonological and semantic) relation between f and
14 X are continuous with and accountable to morphology. X+f as a formal struc-
15 ture is continuous with and accountable to syntax.”
- 16 5. Following Bhattacharja (2007a) we claim that both definiteness and specificity
17 are based on the familiarity which can be: i) Deictic, or ii) Non-deictic (ana-
18 phoric, relational, pragmatic, etc.). We also claim that specificity can be i) Def-
19 inite and ii) Indefinite.
- 20 6. One of the differences between the syntactic behavior of Cls and MWs is that
21 unlike the former, the latter are not generally concatenated to N: /chele-Ta/
22 (boy-Cl) ‘the boy’, /boi-khana/ (book-Cl) ‘the book’, but not */gom-bOsta/
23 (wheat-bag) ‘a bag of wheat’ or */ca-kap/ (tea-cup) ‘a cup of tea’. This said,
24 as we have seen in example (6), not all Cls are allowed to be concatenated to
25 N either. Ns are allowed to move beyond Q-MW sequence (41–42), and this
26 movement yields, as with the QCl sequence (3b), definiteness to the NP:
- 27 41. cal dui-bOsta (rice-two-bag) ‘the two bags of rice’
28 42. ca tin-kap (tea-thre-MW) ‘the three cups of tea’
- 29 7. The semantic difference between (25) in which Q follows Cl and (43) in which
30 Q precedes Cl is not reflected in their common English gloss.
- 31 43. /koyekTa boi/ (Q-Cl-book) ‘a few books’
- 32 8. We can propose the following syntactical constraints for the structure of BDP:
- 33 i. Q-Cl (or Cl-Q) sequence must not be interrupted;
34 ii. Q must not precede Dem;
35 iii. Cl must not precede Dem.
- 36 9. We are aware of the fact that (3b) and (32) can be pronounced with a pause
37 (represented with ‘-’ in (44–45)) after the N and also probably with some
38 variation in the stress pattern. We agree with DG that in examples like (44–
45) /boi/ is not a constituent but a DP which (22) “begins its career as a DP

1 adjoined to a DP and then moves from that site to a non-argument position in
 2 the clause ...” We assume that the semantic reading of (3b) and (32) is differ-
 3 ent from the semantic reading of (44) and (45) respectively.

4 44. /*boi – ami ei tin-TA porechi*/ (book – I-Dem-three-Cl-have read) ‘As for
 5 books, I have read these three’

6 45. /*boi – ami tin-Ta porechi*/ (book – I-three-Cl-have read) ‘As for books, I
 7 have read three of them’

8 10. The PFSs we propose here are compatible with the minimalist approaches like
 9 Epstein and Seely (2006) in the sense that they can be used as tools for deriva-
 10 tional operations untill spellout. Epstein and Seely claim, consonant with the
 11 Minimalist program, that the operations *merge* and *move* each takes two ob-
 12 jects, join them together (as a set) and then project one or the other, hereby
 13 creating a label for the resulting object. Hence, if X and Y are merged creating
 14 C, then C is necessarily the input to both LF and PF, which interpret as
 15 much of C as possible, while C may serve as input to subsequent derivational
 16 operations.

17 11. It is conceivable that an output of (39) can be mapped onto the syntactic tree of
 18 IP (46) and then, the subject pronoun (/ami/ ‘I’) is niched in Spec IP, and the
 19 inflected verb (/porechi/ ‘I have read’) in I.

20 46. IP[Spec (ami) I' VP[Spec V' V_{DP}[Spec D' D_{DemP}[Spec Dem' Dem
 21 C_{IP}[Spec Cl' Cl_{QP}[Spec Q' Q_{NP}[Spec N N]]]]]] I (porechi)]

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