Understanding Control and Modality: Comparative study between English and Bangla Modals

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In cognitive linguistics, modality is deemed to be one of many manifestations of Talmy's force dynamics. But Langacker (2013) made an attempt to study modality from a unique theoretical perspective, namely 'control'. He proposes that processes are initiated by some **actor**, who is situated in a **dominion** of his own where its relation with all other elements in the dominion is (although momentarily) static and stable. The actor has a **field** of control. Now when a **target/ T** (a thing or a process) enters that field, the stasis is undone by a struggle for control. This paper attempts to compare the unfolding of 'control' through the modals of English and Bangla, a South Asian Language spoken mainly in Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal in India. The distinction (and ambiguity) between *root/deontic* and *epistemic* modalities have been widely discussed in literature and there is consensus among academics on the basic definitions of these categories. Langacker (2013) propounds that *effective control* seeks to 'produce some effect, to have some influence on the world' (e.g. You must take good care of your patients) while *epistemic control* designates 'knowledge of the world as opposed to influence over it' (e.g. Oh its almost seven! He must have reached the concert already). Langacker (2017) also designates evidentials as grounding elements. But this paper sheds light on two specific aspects of modality – first, in a language like Bangla where (unlike English) modality is not expressed by highly grammaticized 'grams', effective and epistemic controls unfold in an elaborate discursive fashion and secondly, this paper attempts to show that the semantics of the Bangla evidential 'naki' cannot be interpreted in terms of 'egocentric' evidential control if we take into consideration its discursive distribution. One needs to recognise that *evidential* is a means to 'assert evidence' (Haan 1999) and cannot be interpreted only in terms of epistemic distance. *Evidentials* hint at shared loci of control by asserting an external source of information. The schema of control requires to expand beyond *subjective* and *objective control*.

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