Pretense constructions in English and Urdu: The case of the inchoative and middle constructions[1] [2]

Las construcciones de fingimiento de inglés y urdu: el caso de las construcciones incoativas y medias

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ABSTRACT: This article compares the inchoative and middle constructions in two typologically separate languages, English and Urdu. These constructions, which are closely related, have been discussed in formal and functional accounts of language, mainly with respect to English. They have not received much attention in Cognitive Linguistics, much less in cross-linguistic terms. In this regard, the present article shows that the cognitive and cross-linguistic perspectives can combine fruitfully to cast additional light on the usage constraints of these constructions, which determines their meaning potential. The choice of Urdu and English is significant. English is an accusative language, whereas Urdu is a split-ergative language that combines features of ergative and accusative languages. This difference definitely affects the way in which the inchoative and middle constructions are handled by language users. In addition, understanding the motivation behind this aspect of language use is central to our understanding of the nature of these constructions and how they relate. The inchoative and middle constructions are a type of *pretense constructions*, i.e., those involving the re-construal of states, situations, and events (Ruiz de Mendoza & Miró, 2019), which are often motivated by such phenomena as metaphor and metonymy.

The crosslinguistic study of the examples in both languages has allowed us to search for the principles that underlie the expressions. The analysis, besides contributing to the understanding of conceptual differences between English and Urdu, has identified and accounted for relevant constraining factors that stem from typological differences (e.g., use of light verbs in Urdu) and grammatical constraints (e.g., promotion of an element depends on the prominence of its enabling condition in Urdu). The point of convergence has always been the pretense nature of the constructions.

Key words: Cognitive Linguistics, high-level metaphor, high-level metonymy, inchoative and middle constructions, cross-linguistic analysis.

RESUMEN: Este artículo compara las construcciones incoativas y medias en dos lenguas tipológicamente diferentes, inglés y urdu. Estas construcciones, que están estrechamente relacionadas, se han tratado en estudios formales y funcionales del lenguaje, principalmente en inglés. No han recibido mucha atención en Lingüística Cognitiva, y mucho menos desde un punto de vista inter-lingüístico. Por esta razón, el presente artículo muestra que las perspectivas cognitiva e inter-lingüística pueden combinarse fructíferamente para mostrar las restricciones de uso de estas construcciones, lo que determina su significado potencial. La elección de urdu e inglés es significativa. El inglés es una lengua acusativa, mientras que el urdu es una lengua 'split-ergative' que combina características de los idiomas ergativo y acusativo. Esta diferencia definitivamente afecta la forma en que los hablantes manejan las construcciones incoativas y medias. Además, comprender la motivación del uso del lenguaje es fundamental para comprender la naturaleza de estas construcciones y cómo se relacionan. Las construcciones incoativas y medias son un tipo de construcciones de fingimiento, es decir, aquellas que involucran la reconstrucción de estados, situaciones y eventos (Ruiz de Mendoza & Miró, 2019), que a menudo están motivadas por fenómenos como la metáfora y la metonimia. El estudio inter-lingüístico de los ejemplos en ambas lenguas nos ha permitido buscar los principios que subyacen en las expresiones. El análisis, además de contribuir a la comprensión de las diferencias conceptuales entre el inglés y el urdu, identifica y tiene en cuenta los factores limitantes relevantes que se derivan de las diferencias tipológicas (p. ej., el uso de verbos ligeros en urdu) y las restricciones gramaticales (p. ej., la promoción de un elemento depende de su condición habilitante en urdu). El punto de convergencia siempre ha sido el carácter de fingimiento de las construcciones.

Palabras clave: Lingüística Cognitiva, metáfora de alto nivel, metonimia de alto nivel, construcciones incoativas y medias, análisis inter-lingüístico.

1. INTRODUCTION

The inchoative and middle constructions have been widely studied over the years. Formal and functionalist approaches offer extensive literature on the topic (cf. Levin 1993; Levin & Rappaport, 1995; Piñón, 2001; Enghels & Comer, 2018, and the references provided therein). However, the English inchoative and middle constructions

have not received much attention within cognitively-oriented approaches to Construction Grammar. Constructions are highly conventional or cognitively entrenched form-meaning pairings where form gives access to meaning and meaning is realized by form (Goldberg, 1995, 2006; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013). The meaning pole of constructions consists of combinations of idealized cognitive models (Lakoff, 1987; Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2014). Idealized cognitive models are internally coherent conceptual structures capturing relevant aspects of our experience of the world (Lakoff, 1987). Metaphor and metonymy are two such structures. The study of idealized cognitive models and their impact on the understanding of constructional phenomena has given rise to an array of principles and categories which are ubiquitous across levels and domains of linguistic organization. A comprehensive, although still preliminary account, is found in Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014).

Among the organizing categories put forward within this theoretical architecture is the concept of pretense constructions (Ruiz de Mendoza & Miró, 2019). Pretense constructions reflect different kinds of re-construal of experience, usually achieved through high-level metaphor and/or metonymy, where there is no one-to-one match between the semantic and syntactic functions of their elements (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2021, chapters 2 & 3) . Inchoative (Levin, 1993, 2015) and middle constructions are examples of such constructions. Constructions of this type also involve the backgrounding of the agent of the action. They thus fall under the category of agent-deprofiling constructions (Goldberg, 2006), whose function is to draw the hearer's attention to a non-agentive element of a state of affairs (e.g., the patient, the instrument, the location), while endowing it with agent-like qualities (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Miró, 2019, and section 4.2. herein).

Constructions vary across languages in their syntactic and semantic composition because of differences in typological, cognitive, pragmatic, and socio-cultural factors. However, as noted by Boas (2010), it is often the case that much cross-linguistic work ignores the power of constructional accounts to shed light on the phenomena under analysis. This is a situation that should be addressed. Cross-linguistic studies can provide analysts with a better understanding of specific phenomena by contrasting the various realization patterns and defining the conditions that motivate them. From a heuristic perspective, noting a pattern in one language that is absent in another for no particularly apparent reason can provide clues for the researcher to enquire into still unexplored constraints on relevant phenomena in the languages under analysis. The accumulation of different cross-linguistic studies on a phenomenon can ultimately lead linguists to the formulation of wide-ranging linguistic generalizations of a typological nature.

In this spirit, the present study contrasts the cognitive-linguistic perspective on English inchoative and middle constructions with data from Urdu. Although members of the Indo-European family, Urdu and English are conceptually and grammatically distant languages. English, a Germanic language, falls within the category of accusative languages, whereas Urdu, an Indo-Aryan language, is an ergative language. In accusative languages, the subjects of intransitive (Si) and transitive verbs (St) behave similarly, assigning special marking to the object (O). In ergative languages, Si behaves as the O of a transitive verb, and the St is given special ergative case marking (Dixon, 1994; McGregor, 2009; Polinsky, 2016; Haspelmath, 2019). These alignments are not clear-cut because some languages that mix nominative-accusative and absolutive-ergative types of marking. Within the class of ergative languages, the latter situation is precisely the one that characterizes Urdu, which is thus considered a split ergative language (Butt, 1993;

Mahajan, 2017; see Coon, 2013 for a detailed description on this phenomenon). Ergative marking is operational in Urdu when the verbal predicate is both transitive and perfective (with some exceptions to be discussed in 4.1). Otherwise, the subject does not carry any overt case-marking, which points to a default covert nominative case. The study of the inchoative and the middle constructions (as intransitive alternates of the causative construction) sheds light on the typological characteristics of this split ergative system, which has significant convergences with and divergences from the accusative system.

Three potential goals of cognitively-oriented cross-linguistic analysis emerge from these considerations: (i) to reveal cross-linguistic differences and similarities between comparable or equivalent constructions; (ii) on the basis of (i), to use the convergences and divergences between the two languages to gain a greater understanding of the behavior of the selected constructions within each language; and (iii) to formulate high-level generalizations (cf. Goldberg, 2002, 2006) that are both sensitive to the postulates arising from (i) and (ii). Additionally, the present study benefits from contemplating these goals within the context of the notion of pretense construction, which, as argued here, applies to the English and Urdu inchoative and middle constructions.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 provides a brief outline of the working assumptions underlying the present analysis. Section 3 discusses the role of metaphor and metonymy in the inchoative and middle constructions. Sections 4 and 5 address the syntactic and semantic properties of the inchoative and the middle constructions from a cognitive-linguistic perspective. Finally, the last section provides the reader with a summary of the main findings of the present research, emphasizing the main analytical conclusions.

2. INITIAL WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

Our first step has been to determine how metaphor and metonymy act as constraining factors for the inchoative and middle constructions. To find such metaphoric and metonymic activity, the logical step was to collect examples of these constructions, observe potential mismatches between syntactic and semantic roles, and determine their meaning implications in as many usage contexts as possible. The examples, taken from iWeb, Google searches, and previous literature on the topic, were selected on the basis of their analytical productivity, with multiple occurrences of the same pattern being discarded. The result was the manual compilation and study of 100 expressions of linguistic manifestations of the inchoative and middle constructions in English and Urdu, with 25 examples of each construction in each language. These expressions were organized into crosslinguistic equivalences that were then used to formulate the principles that underlie the expression of the meaning dimension that such equivalences profile. The adequacy of each formulation was ensured on the basis of a careful analysis of the context of use and of other potentially related phenomena within the related domains of transitivity and intransitivity. The equivalences showed that the English inchoative construction allows the integration of a smaller number of predicates compared to Urdu. Thus, Levin's (1993) *fill verbs* (e.g., *The bags filled with medical items*)*, cessation of existence verbs* (e.g., *The buildings destroyed*)*, cut verbs* (e.g., *The fingers cut*), and *hit verbs* (e.g., *The door hit*) cannot be used with the inchoative construction in English. Interestingly, this is not the case with their Urdu equivalents, as will be evidenced by the analysis later (section 4.2). However, regarding middles, both languages follow a similar

syntactic pattern so the same verb types can be integrated into this construction in both languages. The examples provided in the article are those that are analytically productive.

One of the fundamental working hypotheses for this analysis is the assumption that the apparently arbitrary absence of a theoretically possible expressive pattern in one language, which is, however, present in the other, is but a clue to the underlying activity of potentially interacting cognitive, cultural, communicative, or typological constraints. Other expectations depend on the nature of the conceptual domains involved. In this regard, the present article works under the assumption, mentioned in section 1, that conventionalized metonymic and metaphoric mappings based on high-level idealized cognitive models, like the action and perception frames, play an important role in accounting for pretense constructions, such as the inchoative and middle constructions.

3. HIGH-LEVEL METAPHOR AND METONYMY

One of the areas of emphasis in Cognitive Linguistics is the cognitive motivation of formal linguistic phenomena (cf. Panther & Radden, 2011). Metaphor and metonymy have been noted to play an important role in this respect (e.g., Kövecses & Radden, 1998; Barcelona, 2008, 2009), with one of the areas being constructional coercion. Coercion is a well-known constructional phenomenon, regulated by the Override Principle, whereby a construction imposes part of its meaning structure on a lexical configuration (Michaelis, 2003). In other words, the meaning of a lexical item has to be adapted to the structure in which it is embedded. A well-known example of constructional coercion over a lexical predicate is the use of the verb sneeze with the caused-motion construction, provided by Goldberg (1995): *She sneezed the napkin off the table*. The verb sneeze is an intransitive predicate. The caused-motion construction requires a transitive predicate involving causation. However, it is possible to conceive of a situation where someone's sneeze causes a napkin to fly off a surface. As a result, *She sneezed the napkin off the table* becomes possible. Note, in this regard, that, outside the caused-motion construction, the transitivization of the verb is impossible: **She sneezed the napkin*. The reason for this is that in English sneeze is conceived as an activity with no object within its scope. Therefore, it is naturally intransitive. This canonical situation, however, can be overridden by focusing on the role of sneezing as a potential causer of motion (for a view of coercion in terms of a continuum, see Langacker, 2009; Leclercq, 2019).

It has been argued that some cases of coercion are the consequence of other underlying processes. Two such processes are high-level metaphor and high-level metonymy, as initially discussed in Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2007). High-level metaphor results from reconstruing one high-level cognitive model in terms of another such model, whereas high-level metonymy places perspective constraints on how a high-level cognitive model is accessed. A high-level cognitive model is a conceptual structure that arises from abstracting away structure that other conceptual items have in common. For example, such notions as action, process, object, result, and instrument are high-level cognitive models and/or elements of high-level cognitive models (cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2014, p. 74, for a more detailed account of high-level cognitive models).

High-level metonymy has been studied as a cognitive licensing factor for several constructions. A straightforward example is provided by result for action in English (Panther, 1999). This metonymy licenses the use of stative predicates in syntactic frameworks denoting dynamicity. For example, the sentence How to be rich in ten days is possible if we interpret 'to be rich' as the result of whatever implicit action (e.g., making

an aggressive high-risk investment) is necessary for the purpose of becoming rich. If the result for action metonymy is not applicable, the stative predicate will not be licensed into the construction. Thus, the utterance #*How to be tall in ten days* is more likely to be ruled out as anomalous on the grounds of the greater difficulty in finding a context where people can control their growth in such a brief period.

High-level metaphor is a generic-level conceptual mapping that constrains some grammatical phenomena. Consider the example She laughed him out of the room. This example builds a verbal predicate expressing a target-oriented action involving no physical impact (laughing at someone) into the caused-motion construction, which requires a verb of physical impact causing motion (cf. *She pushed Peter out of the room*). This use is made possible because of the mind's ability to see psychological impact in terms of physical impact and the different action-result scenarios associated with these kinds of impact as being relatable. The correspondence between psychological impact (which is experiential) and physical impact is part of a system that maps the causer of motion (a type of effector) onto the actor of a target-oriented action, the object of caused motion (a type of effectee) onto the target of the experiential action, and the effectual action itself onto the experiential action. This metaphorical system, which can be labeled an experiential action is an effectual action, is a high-level one since the domains involved are generic (cause-effect structure) and its activity is of grammatical consequence (see Ruiz de Mendoza & Luzondo, 2016).

Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez (2004) have postulated that high-level metonymy motivates the organization of the inchoative/causative alternation (*The door opened/John opened the door*), the middle construction (*This bread cuts easily*), and the characteristic property of instrument construction (*This knife cuts well*). Ruiz de Mendoza and Pérez (2001) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Peña (2008) have also applied high-level metonymy to cross-linguistic analysis between English and Spanish. Peña (2015) and Ruiz de Mendoza and Luzondo (2016) have studied the licensing role of high-level metaphor in fake reflexive resultatives and of high-level metonymy in caused-motion constructions. Related work is found in Ruiz de Mendoza and Baicchi (2007), Luzondo (2011), and Rosca (2012), among others. Although high-level metaphor and metonymy have been previously accounted for in some of the constructionist literature, these phenomena have not been dealt with in Urdu, which is a morphologically ergative language.

4. THE INCHOATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN ENGLISH AND URDU

4.1. THE INCHOATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS FROM A SYNTACTIC PERSPECTIVE

The English inchoative construction has been extensively studied in the formalist literature (Alexiadou et al., 2006; Chierchia, 2004; Haspelmath, 1993, 2016; Koontz-Garboden, 2009; Levin, 1993; Levin & Rappaport, 1995; Levin, 2015; Piñón, 2001; Rappaport & Levin, 2012; Rappaport, 2014). Within the domain of transitivity, Levin (1993, pp. 26-30) discusses the *causative/inchoative* alternation, as illustrated in (1):
  (1) (a) Peter broke the glass (transitive)
     (b) The glass broke (inchoative)

Example (1a) follows an SVO structure using a transitive verb in which the subject is the doer of the action denoted by the verb. Evidently, this is not the case for the construction in (1b), where the glass is only presented as undergoing a process of breaking

and, from a pretense perspective, as if the process had taken place by itself. From a syntactic perspective, the inchoative construction has two characteristics: valency reduction and object-to-subject promotion. Valency reduction (Dik, 1997: 90) removes arguments from the canonical structure of a predication. A consequence of reduction is the direct deprofiling of the affected argument by making it implicit in syntactic realization. This can be done when the reduced argument can be retrieved from world knowledge or the context of situation and it does not fill a completely obligatory syntactic position (e.g., subject), as in *Predators kill to eat*, where the object (e.g., *other animals*) has been removed. In the inchoative construction, as illustrated by (1b), the causer is "deprofiled" through valency reduction, but here reduction is subservient to syntactic object-to-subject promotion, which consists in endowing the semantic object with syntactic subject status (cf., Van Valin, 1980: 316). In (1b), the *glass*, which is the semantic object, works as the subject of the inchoative construction. We shall return to this point in 4.3 below.

Urdu has an inchoative construction too, which, like English, makes use of an intransitive verb. The verbal predicate and the construction disagree in the English inchoative construction. But in Urdu, the intransitive allomorphy of the verb enables speakers to convey the impression that the activity occurred on its own. There are two methods to create this allomorphy: either by adding auxiliary verbs or by altering the predicate's root. The following examples serve to clarify the first method:

Sew (intr.)	Silna
Sew (tr.)	Silana
Dry (intr.)	Sukna
Dry (tr.)	Sukana

The second method is exemplified as follows:

Heat (tr./intr.)	Garam hona (intr.)/garam karna (tr.)
Cool (tr./intr.)	Thanda hona (intr.)/thanda karna (tr.)
Ease (tr./intr.)	asaan hona (intr.)/asaan karna (tr.)
Close (tr./intr.)	band hona (intr.)/band karna (tr.)
Fold (tr./intr.)	teh hona (intr.)/teh karna (tr.)

These examples evidence that English verbs remain the same when they go from being causal to inchoative. Instead of altering the verb's morphology, intransitivization in Urdu is accomplished in the second set of examples by switching the auxiliary verb from *karna* ('do') to *hona* ('be'). This is an effective way to express intransitivity in Urdu.

Moreover, in Urdu, unlike English, syntactic promotion in the inchoative construction is conditioned by the split ergative nature of the language. Urdu has splits conditioned by the aspect of the main verb, i.e., ergative marking is operational when the predicate is transitive and perfective in aspect. In coherence with this fact, the causative construction uses ergative marking, as in (3a), whereas the inchoative construction does not, as in (3b).

(3) (a) *Sohail=ne*   *glass=ko*   *tora*   *tha*
        Soahil=ERG glass=ACC   break.TR.PFV.3SG.M   AUX.PST
        'Sohail broke the glass'

(b) *Glass= Ø*   *toot*   *gaya*   *tha*
    Glass=NOM   break.INTR   go.PFV.3SG.M   AUX.PST
    'The glass broke'

As expected, the subject of the causative construction (3a) has an ergative marker (*ne*) and the object takes accusative marking (*ko*). The verb is in the transitive form (*tor-na*) and the auxiliary (*tha*) designates a past action. The fact that the verb is in the transitive form is consistent with the idea that the subject takes the ergative case marker. In (3b), the intransitive version of the verb is used (*toot-na*) and the subject lacks any case marking, which is a feature of the subjects of intransitive verbs. However, sometimes intransitive verbs also allow the use of the ergative marker:

(4) (a) *Me=Ø*   *chikha*   *tha*
        I=NOM   scream.INTR.1SG.M   AUX.PST
        'I screamed'

(b) *Me=ne*   *chikha*   *tha*
    I=ERG   scream.INTR.1SG.M   AUX.PST
    'I screamed' (purposefully)

Example (4a) is an intransitive construction in which the subject does not have any control over the action. On the other hand, (4b) illustrates an intransitive action under the control of the subject. This evidences the fact that the ergative marker does not generally apply to subjects of intransitive verbs, but, when it does, this happens because the subject has control over the situation. Thus, sentence (5) is not possible in Urdu since the subject does not have any control over the situation:

(5) *Glass=ne   toot   gaya   tha
    *Glass=ERG   break.INTR   go.PFV.3SG.M   AUX.PST
    *'The glass broke'

Taking these facts into account, the Urdu inchoative construction has the following features: 1) the verbal predicate is morphologically marked as an intransitive verb; 2) there is a lack of control over the situation (impossibility of adding an ergative marker); 3) the intransitive marking of the verb is licensed by the promotion of the syntactic object (ACC) to syntactic subject (NOM), as illustrated by examples (3ab).

4.2. THE INCHOATIVE CONSTRUCTION FROM A SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE

From a semantic perspective, the English inchoative construction describes scenarios in which an entity is affected to the extent that it changes its composition internally or externally. This means that the inchoative construction involves a change of state or location that, at the same time, encodes a telic event. *Break verbs* or *roll verbs* are cases of verbal predicate that typically fit into the inchoative construction. Consider the following examples:

    (6) (a) The glass broke
       (b) *The city destroyed
       (c) *The bread cut

According to Ruiz de Mendoza and Galera (2014: 35), the verbs in these three examples denote a caused telic process (X CAUSES Y TO BECOME Z). They differ in the lexical class to which their verbal predicates belong. The inchoative construction inherently captures pure changes of state, as in (6a). However, the verb *destroy*, in (6b), despite its apparent similarity in meaning to *break* (both involve physical damage), denotes the cessation of existence of its object due to the different lexical class that it belongs to. Similarly, in many situations, the verb *cut*, as in (6c), may not be seen as bringing about a clear change of state. In addition, the focus of the inchoative construction is on the apparently non-deliberate nature of the action but cutting in (6c) is clearly a deliberately controlled action. This feature can even block change-of-state predicates from fitting into the inchoative construction. Consider now the examples below:

    (7) (a) Economic poverty has emptied the countryside of people.
       (b) The countryside has emptied of people because of poverty.

    (8) (a) The landlords emptied the countryside of people.
       (b) The countryside emptied of people because of the landlords.

Examples (7a) and (8a) illustrate non-volitional and volitional causativity respectively. The alternates of these constructions, (7b and 7b), are intransitive configurations. Thus, the causative construction can alternate not only with the inchoative construction (see example (1) above) but also with the intransitive construction as in (7b) and (8b).

Regarding the telic nature of the Urdu inchoative construction, it is important to emphasize the use of the perfective marker *gaya* ('go'). Consider the following examples:

    (9) (a) *Chawal= Ø*   *pakey*   *the*
          Rice=NOM   cook.INTR.3PL.M   PST.AUX
          'The rice cooked'
       (b) *Chawal= Ø*   *pak*   *gen*   *the*
          Rice=NOM   cook.INTR.PFV   go.PFV.3PL.M. PST.AUX
          'The rice cooked'

The Hindi-Urdu literature distinguishes between simple and compound verbs (Kachru, 2006). Simple verbs consist of a main verb and auxiliaries (e.g., *cook AUX* as in (9a)). Compound verbs consist of a main verb, a light verb,[3] and the subsequent auxiliaries (e.g., *cook go AUX* as in (9b)). A light verb is one whose function is to mark perfectivity. It is for this reason that Hook (1991) encompasses light verbs under the broad rubric of perfective markers. This explains the possibility of (10):

    (10) *Chawal=Ø* *gantoo=me*   *pakey*   *the*
         Rice=NOM hours=LOC   cook.INTR.3PL.M   AUX.PST
         'The rice cooked in hours'

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[3] Verbs of this kind are also called *vector verbs* or *auxiliary verbs*. However, in the most recent literature on Urdu-Hindi (Butt, 2014) the term *light verb* is preferred.

It also explains the impossibility of (10):

(11) *Chawal=Ø gantoo=me   pak   gen   the
     Rice=NOM hours=LOC   cook.INTR go.PFV.3PL.M AUX
     '*The rice has cooked in hours'

Butt and Geuder (2001: 333) observed that light verbs not only have that function but they also add lexical and/or grammatical meaning to the overall meaning of the sentence. These authors stick to the idea that light verbs can mark volition, benefaction, forcefulness, etc., in compliance with the traditional notion of *semantic bleaching*, according to which words that undergo a grammaticalization process still preserve and highlight some of their initial lexical features (Sweetser, 1988: 400). Thus, the meaning of *jana* 'go' should be intrinsically related to its original meaning. It denotes a change of location. Locations are seen in terms of states through the metaphor states are locations, initially proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1999). We can expand the metaphor to a change of state is a change of location. This metaphor allows us to decompose the meaning of the verb *jana* into process and result since change requires these two steps. However, the verb *jana* activates only the result. This is evidenced by the impossibility of negating the inchoative construction with the light verb *jana* in Urdu. Thus, the activation of the result is licensed by the metonymic chain a process of change for change for the result of change (see Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña, 2008, for parallel metonymic analyses within the action frame). Thus, using the verb *jana* as a change marker is a fact grounded in experience that activates the feature of change of state, which is essential for the inchoative construction. Whenever the light verb *jana* appears as a telic marker, it denotes change. This feature of the Urdu inchoative construction allows the integration of a wider range of verbal predicates than English in the inchoative construction. Consider some Urdu examples that are not possible in English:

(12) (a) Basti= Ø   tabah   ho   gayi   thi
         Village=NOM   destroy.INTR go.PFV.3SG.F AUX.PST
         'The village destroyed'

     (b) Us=ki   ungliaan=Ø   kat   gayin   thin
         His=GEN fingers=NOM   cut.INTR   go.PFV.3PL.F AUX.PST
         'Her fingers cut'

     (c) Us=ka   khana   ban   gaya   tha
         His=GEN meal=NOM   make.INTR go.PFV.3SG.M AUX.PST
         'His meal made'

The English inchoative construction applies to change-of-state verbs, which constrains the use of cessation of existence and *cut* predicates. By contrast, Urdu can apply the inchoative pattern to any kind of verb that denotes change (12abc). This means that the result of the action is not relevant in the formation of the inchoative construction in Urdu. The main reason for this is typological. It lies in the use of the light verb *jana*, which involves change *per se*, thus making the nature of the class of the main verb immaterial. In this way, whereas the English inchoative construction is only used with change-of-state verbs, the Urdu inchoative construction takes predicates that involve any kind of change licensed by the light verb, independently of the result that they bring about.

However, notice that the predicate has to be an intransitivized version of a transitive predicate so that it can fit into the inchoative configuration. Otherwise, it would simply be an intransitive construction.

4.3. THE INCHOATIVE CONSTRUCTION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Levin and Rappaport (2012), Rappaport (2014), and Levin (2015) argue that the predicates that can work in the causative alternation have to be "lexically associated with their patient only," and not with the causer of the action. By patient they refer to the object of the causative construction that has been promoted to subject status in the inchoative construction. This promoted object determines the nature of the causer of the action. It does not govern any action predicate and is controlled by an implicit agentive causer, although it is presented as if involved in a non-instigated process. This happens on the basis of constructional coercion, which, as noted above, takes place when the conceptual structure of the verb and the construction do not match. Ruiz de Mendoza and Peña (2008) postulate that coercion in the English inchoative construction is licensed by the high-level metonymy process for action. By means of this metonymy a process (the source domain as directly supplied by the linguistic expression) stands for a telic action (the implicit target domain). For example, the sentence *The door opened* presents the door as if it had opened by itself, but there is a causal factor which can be retrieved by the hearer as part of the target meaning of the sentence. This target action, because of the metonymy, is seen from the perspective of its processual (rather than resultative) aspect; that is, the focus is on the change of state rather than on its cause. From a syntactic perspective, the inchoative construction involves the intransitivization of the verbal predicate, which triggers the acceptance of the semantic object as a syntactic subject. Therefore, a verbal predicate can fit into the inchoative construction only when, while being inherently causal and transitive, it is used non-causally and intransitively (Ruiz de Mendoza, 2013). This mismatch between the syntax and the semantics of the construction places the English inchoative construction under the rubric of pretense constructions (Ruiz de Mendoza & Miró, 2019).

In the case of Urdu, the promotion of the object to subject status gives rise to a misalignment between the syntactic and semantic functions of the construction. This misalignment is also licensed by the metonymy process for action, as in English. In *Glass toot gaya tha* ('The glass broke'), the *glass* is presented as if broken by itself, that is, as a process. However, the breaking of a glass is an action, carried out by an agent, even if it is non-intentional. This semantic-syntax mismatch also affects the morphology of the verb, which takes the intransitive form. Note, however, that the intransitivization of the predicate is an incidental fact. The pretense nature of the inchoative construction ultimately depends on the mismatch between semantic roles and syntactic functions.

5. THE MIDDLE CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH AND URDU

5.1. THE MIDDLE CONSTRUCTION FROM A SYNTACTIC/SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE

The middle construction has been discussed by formalist and functionalist linguists over time (Davidse & Heyveart, 2004; Fagan 1998; Hale & Keyser, 1987; Kemmer, 1993; Keyser & Roeper, 1984; Levin, 1993; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004; Maldonado, 2012). Levin (1993: 26) characterizes the middle constructions by "a lack of

specific time reference and by an understood but unexpressed agent" with modal or adverbial elements (*The meat cuts easily*). Halliday and Mahtiessen (2004: 552) distinguish two voice systems: *effective* and *middle*. The effective system is either *operative* (active) or *receptive* (passive) and the middle system is considered agentless (e.g., *Thai ferry sinks*). This idea of a middle voice system is largely consistent with the constructionist perspective if we think of constructions as being part of a network of relationships determined by inheritance mechanisms, among other factors (cf. Goldberg, 1995, 2006). An example of constructional relatedness is found in the following characteristics shared by the English inchoative and middle constructions: both are agentless and both involve the intransitivization of the verbal predicate with object-to-subject promotion.

An important point of contrast between the inchoative construction and the middle construction is the enabling component of the latter. This component is also referred to as a "facilitating" or "letting" property, as discussed, for example, in Fagan (1992), Levin (1993), and Kemmer (1993) (see also Davidse & Heyveart, 2007, who offer a semantic typology of the middle construction based on its enabling condition and the agent-like features of its subject). Radden and Dirven (2007: 289) have noted that "enabling conditions are causal in the sense that some internal quality makes them apt to let a situation occur". Thus, the enabling component of the middle construction allows the action to be performed. Take the example *The Bible always sells well.* The subject of the construction, which is the semantic object (the Bible), lacks agentive features. However, there are inherent properties in the Bible that facilitate its sale. Everyday experience allows us to correlate the possibility of performing an action involving an object with the object having the specific properties that make this action possible. The middle construction captures this aspect of our experience by requiring the presence of an enabling condition in the semantic object. In our view, the enabling condition works hand in hand with the use of the habitual aspect in the verb. Again, from an experientialist perspective, which is consistent with the cognitive perspective in section 5.2 (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1999), this happens because, in everyday thinking, the regular association on an action and an object leads us to think of the object as allowing the action to occur; that is, the habitual aspect directs our attention to the enabling nature of the semantic object. The inchoative construction has different properties. Take the sentence *Our new edition of the Bible sold well* as an example. In this sentence there is a specific time range in which the action was possible. But this does not necessarily mean that this will always be the case (cf. *Our new edition of the Bible sold well at first, but then sales slowed down*) since there can be many other factors besides any inherent property of the new edition of the Bible that can contribute to the good sales. That is, as noted above, the inchoative construction is agentless, like the middle construction, presenting an action as if it were a process, but only the middle construction has an enabling component that is enhanced by the habitual aspect of the verbal predicate.

In a default interpretation, objects that do not have inherent properties are ruled out of the middle construction[4]. Consider the following examples:

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[4] Contextualization may affect the acceptability of non-prototypical middle constructions (cf. Yoshimura & Taylor, 2004). For example, in *That corner over there sells well*, the corner is not the object of selling but the location where selling takes place. This example thus qualifies as a case of the location-subject construction, which, shares properties with canonical middle configurations. The location-subject construction is, from this perspective, a non-prototypical middle configuration.

(13) (a) It's a way to make sure that work gets done (Google)
      (b) *This work does easily
(14) (a) This building builds quickly (Google)
      (b) #Buildings build quickly

Example (13a) is a passive construction whereas (13b) is a grammatically incorrect middle construction. *Work* is an abstract element which cannot feature concrete properties. The lack of specific properties blocks the enabling condition, which at the same time blocks the possibility of using the middle construction. Moreover, the action is also generic (*do*), which is not common in the middle construction (not even in the inchoative construction). The difference between generic and specific properties is also clarified in (14). When we refer to a certain building, as in (14a), the middle construction is possible. This happens because we can ascribe a specific property to a concrete building. By contrast, (14b) is odd, since it has a generic subject, which, in terms of the enabling condition, is not clearly consistent with ascribing a specific property to it.

Another point of divergence between the inchoative and the middle construction is the frequent use of the evaluative component in the latter. Consider now the example *This bread cuts well.* This kind of middle construction introduces an evaluative element. The function of this element is also to activate the enabling component of the construction. Note the oddity of removing the evaluative adverb in this sentence in a default context: #*This bread cuts.* By contrast, the negative variant of the same construction is possible, especially if we use the future auxiliary, which conveys an idea of figurative reluctance on the part of the semantic object to allow for the action to take place: *This bread won't cut.* This figurative reluctance activates the enabling component of the construction. Notice also that the verb *cut* is not possible with the inchoative construction, since this construction focuses on (non-habitual) change, whereas the middle construction focuses on (i) the properties of the semantic object (syntactic subject) that enable the verbal process, and (ii) assessing either the processual or the resultative aspects of the semantic characterization of the verb. This different kind of change is revealed by the impossibility of using the (primary) processual predicate 'become' to paraphrase *He cut the bread* as **He caused the bread to become cut.* By contrast, *He opened the door* can be rendered as *He caused the door to become open.*

It should be noted that the evaluative component is not necessarily explicit in the middle construction. Its presence depends on how easy or difficult it is to identify the enabling component. Consider these examples:

(15) (a) My clothing fits easily into small suitcases. (iWeb)
     (b) Nothing breaks easily that I see. (iWeb)

In (15a) the adverb can be removed from the realization of the construction without any serious loss of meaning (cf. *My clothing fits into small suitcases*). The reason for this is, again, that, although the evaluative adverb (*easily*) can realize the enabling component, the prepositional phrase in (15a), by specifying the scope of the verbal action, also allows us to evaluate the feasibility of performing the action (i.e., the clothing cannot "fit" anything in the world, but only some specific item). However, in (15b) the evaluative adverb *easily* is somewhat more necessary to activate the enabling condition of the construction (cf. #*Nothing breaks that I see*) because of the non-specific nature of the object (*nothing*).

Let us now consider some Urdu examples:

(16) (a) *Mere abbu=Ø*   *is*   *gosht=ko*   *asaani se*
       My father=NOM   this   meat=ACC   easily
       kaaTte   *hen*
       cut.TR.HAB.3SG.M   AUX.PRS
       'My father cuts this meat easily'

     (b) *Ye gosht=Ø*   *asaani se*   *kaTta*   *he*
       This meat=NOM   easily   cut.INTR.HAB.3SG.M   AUX.PRS
       'This meat cuts easily'

Example (16a) describes a habitual situation in which an agent *cuts* something easily. Example (16b) shows that there is object-to-subject promotion (i.e., ACC in (16a) is null-marked in (16b)). The verbal predicate has been intransitivized too. These features do not differ from those that we have identified for the inchoative construction. However, note that the light verb *jana* is absent in both examples since it denotes telicity (see section 4.2) and the middle construction is not telic. This fact also eliminates the use of the ergative marker in (16a) since this marker is used in perfective constructions. The use of the adverb (*asaani se*) can be eliminated if an immediate context is available. Otherwise, it is odd, just as its English counterpart.

The enabling component is also a feature of the Urdu middle construction. Meat can have specific properties that allow people to cut it easily. This enabling ingredient licenses the use of a constructional variant featuring the modal *sakta* 'can':

(17) *Ye gosht=Ø*   *asaani se*   *kat*   *sakta*
       This meat=NOM   easily   cut.INT   can.MOD.3SG.M
       he
       AUX.PRS
       'This meat can cut easily'

The modal construction in Urdu (17) adds a possibility factor which is lacking in the bare middle construction. There is a difference between a possibility and an enabling condition. The former relates to properties that are external to the object (e.g., the place of cutting, the person who is cutting). It thus contrasts with the enabling condition, which is based on the inherent properties of the object. In English there is no room for a possibility condition when a middle construction is used. Regarding this aspect of the English middle construction, Fagan (1992: 54) has noted, that there is an alternation between the middle and the modal construction, where the modal has to be passivized:

(18) (a) [about a kind of siding:] It nails easily. It cuts easily.
     (b) It can be nailed easily. It can be cut easily. (Fagan, 1992: 54)

This is not the case in Urdu, as evidenced by (17) above. This suggests that the possibility condition in English is a property of the agent, not of the object, even if in a pretense role as an actor in a pseudo-process.

The adverb *asaani se* in Urdu, just as its English equivalent (*easily*), can be eliminated only if the context facilitates the identification of the enabling condition. Otherwise, the construction will sound odd: #*Ye gosht katta he* (#'This meat cuts').

5.2. THE MIDDLE CONSTRUCTION FROM A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Ruiz de Mendoza and Mairal (2007) have dealt with the middle construction, within the domain of (in-)transitivity, in terms of its grounding in the metonymy process for action. Like the inchoative construction, the middle construction presents an action as if it were a process. This pretended process, which is expressed linguistically, stands for the underlying action. However, the middle construction involves a more complex cognitive grounding, which relates to the fact that its enabling element can often take the form of an evaluative adverb. In both English and Urdu, the evaluative adverb can focus on the process or on the result of the action. Let us contrast the following examples:

(19) (a) *This bread cuts easily/well*

    (b) *Ye band=Ø   asaani/achey se   katta   he*
       This bread=NOM easily/well   cut.INTR.HAB.3SG AUX.PRS
       'This bread cuts easily/well'

The adverb *easily* highlights the process of the action as revealed by the following paraphrase: *It is easy to cut this bread (Ye band kaatna assan he)*. The adverb *well* focuses on the result of the action. This prevents us from using a process-oriented paraphrase: **It is well to cut this bread* (**Ye band kaatna acha he*) (Ruiz de Mendoza & Mairal, 2007: 46; cf. Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña, 2008). These two different readings call for an extension of process for action into the double metonymy process for action for result, where either the process or the result receives focal attention depending on the type of evaluation (Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña, 2008). Thus, both languages offer the same conceptual layout despite their typological differences.

6. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of data from Urdu and English, two typologically distant languages, the present paper has made a cross-linguistic analysis of the inchoative and the middle constructions within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics. As the analysis has shown, relevant aspects of the typological nature of Urdu, in contrast to English, combine with cognitive processes, like metaphorical and metonymic re-construal, to provide a comprehensive picture of the constraints working on syntactic promotion associated with these constructions. The resulting analysis goes beyond providing a better understanding of conceptual (and consequent grammatical) differences between English and Urdu, where typological and re-construal phenomena acquire the status of constraining factors not previously identified in the literature.

In this regard, the object can be promoted to the syntactic function of subject in the inchoative construction of both languages. The promotion process in English depends on the syntactic position of the elements in the construction, whereas in Urdu it depends on case marking. The promotion of the object to subject status and the consequent intransitivization of the verbal predicate assigns Urdu and English inchoative constructional patterns their pretense nature. Moreover, the use of the light verb *jana* in Urdu broadens the number of predicates that can fit into the inchoative construction, since this light verb, besides working as a perfective marker, is also a conceptual marker of change. By contrast, English only accepts change-of-state predicates in the inchoative construction.

The pretense nature of the middle construction in English and Urdu also lies in the promotion process and the intransitivization of the verbal predicate. Interestingly, in both languages the middle can alternate with the modal construction with *can*. Both constructions highlight the idea that an action can be carried out. However, the middle construction features an enabling component whereas the modal construction only denotes possibility. Moreover, in English, unlike Urdu, the modal construction, when functioning as the equivalent of the middle construction, must be passivized.

The inchoative construction differs from these other pretense constructions in its inherently telic nature, i.e., the inchoative construction not only focuses on the process as change, but also involves an end-point and an accompanying resultant state. Telicity, while central to the inchoative construction is only incidental to the middle construction (cf. *This machine works well*). In this construction, the focus is not on the end-point of the action but on the perception of the agent-like nature of the instrument which allows someone to carry out the action.

Cross-linguistic analysis has shed light on certain aspects of the middle and the inchoative constructions, thus evidencing the value of this perspective as a heuristic strategy for their in-depth study. Among the findings arising from this strategy, we have the following: promotion of the elements in the inchoative and middle constructions affect their conceptual structure; sometimes the alternations of these constructions are not equivalent in the languages under analysis due to their typological nature (see section 4.1); these constructions are not only influenced by the nature of the main predicate (as in English) but also by potential light verbs (as in Urdu); telicity is a differentiating factor between both constructions.

The differences among the constructions are a matter of grammatical constraints and typological factors, whereas the point of convergence has always been the pretense nature of the constructions. In this way, the present study, besides highlighting the role of the inchoative and the middle constructions as pretense constructions in Urdu and English, has established a network of relationships among constructions within the same language and across the two languages under analysis.

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List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accusative
AUX	auxiliary
ERG	ergative
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual
INS	instrumental
INTR	intransitive
LOC	locative
M	masculine
MOD	modal
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
SG	singular
TR	transitive