

Alternative Questions in Kashmiri

1 Introduction

While wh-questions have been at the forefront of research into the shape of the clausal periphery and the nature of A-bar dependencies in Indic languages (Simpson and Bhattacharya 2003; Malhotra and Chandra 2007; Manetta 2010, 2011; Bhattacharya and Simpson 2012; Simpson and Choudhury 2013), considerably less attention has been paid to non-wh question structures (though very recently Bhatt and Dayal 2014 have made some inroads here...).

Among the structures of interest today:

Alternative questions in Kashmiri are in (1)-(2); (3) contains a finite embedded polar interrogative; (4) is a so-called negated polar imperative:

- (1) Me chu nI pataa [ki səliim coffee cey-aa yaa caay]
1SG AUX NEG know that Selim coffee drink.FUT-Q or tea
- (2) Me chu nI pataa [ki səliim cey-aa coffee yaa caay]
1SG AUX NEG know that Selim drink.FUT-Q coffee or tea
'I don't know whether Selim will drink coffee or tea'.

- (3) toh' chiv pritsh-aan ki kyaa me per-aa kitaab.
2SG AUX ask-PRT that Q 1SG read-Q book
'You are asking whether I read the book.'
- (4) kyaa tsI m-aa gatsha-kh pagaah garI
Q 2SG NEG-Q go-2SGPS tomorrow home
'Aren't you going home tomorrow?'

This paper begins to explore:

- What do non-wh questions in Kashmiri have to tell us about divergent approaches to Kashmiri clause structure? About comparative Indic syntax?
- What can Kashmiri tell us more generally about Q-markers crosslinguistically (as in e.g. Cheng 1997, Cable 2010) and their role in establishing/markings interrogative syntax/semantics, mediating long distance dependencies, and elucidating the fine structure of the left periphery?

2 Word order in alternative questions in Kashmiri and Hindi-Urdu

Relevant facts about Kashmiri word order:

- verb-second word order in both main and embedded tensed clauses (if tensed aux is in second position, main V is final)
- verb-final in non-tensed clauses, as well as in isolated tensed domains such as relative and adverbial clauses (Wali and Koul 1997, Munshi and Bhatt 2010)

- (5) *aslam-an por akhba:r*
 Aslam-ERG read.MSG newspaper.NOM
 ‘Aslam read the newspaper.’
- (6) *bI chu-s lark-as kitaab divaan*
 1SG AUX.PRS-1SG boy-DAT book give-PRP
 ‘I give a book to the boy.’ (Bhatt 1999)
- (7) [*yosI kita:b sami:r-an ra:j-as dits*] [so kita:b.....]
 which book Samir-ERG Raj-DAT give.PST.FSG that book....
 ‘The book that Samir gave to Raj, that book...’ (Munshi and Bhatt 2010)

Verb-final domains have proven vital in revealing underlying word-order patterns in the language. A purported verb-final domain that appears to have gone unanalyzed to this point is the only one also compatible with yes/no interrogative morphology: alternative questions.

Alternative questions feature the yes/no Q-marker *-aa* suffixed to the verb, which may optionally appear clause-finally, adjacent to the disjunction: “It should be noted here that in this construction the subordinate verb may be optionally placed at the end of its clause...this behavior of the verb contrasts with the one in the regular finite subordinate clause...” (Wali and Koul 1997:9).

- (8) *Me chu nI pataa [ki səliim coffee **cey-aa** yaa caay]* VERB FINAL
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selim coffee drink.FUT-Q or tea
- (9) *Me chu nI pataa [ki səliim **cey-aa** coffee yaa caay]* v2
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selim drink.FUT-Q coffee or tea
 ‘I don’t know whether Selim will drink coffee or tea’.

Both (8) and (9) (like the English translation) permit the yes/no or alternative question reading.

This contrasts with Hindi-Urdu, in which the alternative question reading is only available when the verb appears adjacent to the disjunction *yaa*, as in (10).

- (10) *kyaa Chandra-ne coffee **p-ii** yaa chai*
 Q Chandra-ERG coffee drink-PRF or tea
 ‘Which of these two things did Chandra drink: coffee or tea?’
- (11) *kyaa Chandra-ne coffee yaa chai **p-ii**?*
 Q Chandra-ERG coffee or tea drink-PRF
 ‘Is it the case that Chandra drank coffee or tea?’¹

Three (linked) questions arise at this point concerning (8)-(11):

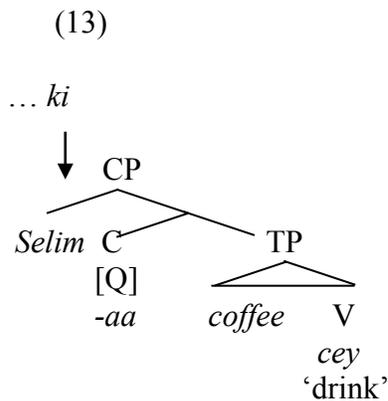
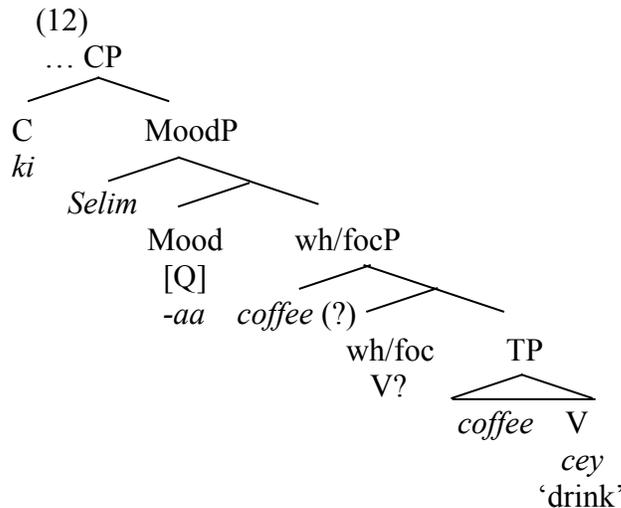
- A. Why do both word orders in Kashmiri permit both readings, whereas in Hindi-Urdu the alternative question reading is not available in the case in which the verb is not adjacent to the disjunction *yaa*?

¹ I will gloss over what appears to be some complexity about the availability of an alternative question reading here with strong multiple focus intonation and obligatory *kyaa*, likely derived via a right node raising structure. The observation stands that given unmarked intonation, the yes/no reading is the most natural.

- B. Is this indeed a verb final environment in Kashmiri? If so, how is it related to other finite verb final environments (e.g. relative clauses)?
- C. Where does the Q-marker *-aa* originate and how does it come to be suffixed on the verb in each configuration?

The configuration in (8) appears at first challenging for accounts of Kashmiri that posit the Q-marker *-aa* to be generated relatively high in the clausal structure, since the verb to which it is suffixed seems to have remained low.

Compare the two approaches to the Kashmiri left periphery below:



(12) posits an expanded CP that includes Mood and Wh/Focus projections and permits the second position verb to appear in varying heads depending on the nature of the preverbal material (Bhatt and Moon 1992, Bhatt 1999, Munshi and Bhatt 2010).

(13) posits a structure that requires multiple specifiers of CP and greater complexity of feature organization on functional heads (Manetta 2006, 2011).

(14) $[_{CP} \emptyset [_{C} ki] [_{MoodP} Top/Foc [_{Mood} V+Q] [_{WH/FocP} Wh/Foc [_{WH/Foc} V] [_{TP} \dots]]]]$

(15) $(ki) [_{CP} Top [_{CP} Wh/Foc [_{C} V(+Q)] [_{TP} \dots]]]]$

Note: functional heads on left (Bhatt 1999)

Neither approach would permit a final position verb to be inflected and to combine with the Q morpheme under the assumed head-movement combinatory mechanisms. So questions B-C above are even more tangled than we thought.

3 Deriving alternative questions (Han and Romero 2004)

Han and Romero's (2004) ellipsis/scoping account of alternative questions in Hindi-Urdu proposes that *yaa* in (16) disjoins clausal constituents. Gapping in the second disjunct leaves behind a focal remnant.

- (16) *kyaa* [NullOP_i [*t_i* [Chandra-ne coffee p-ii] *yaa* [~~Chandra-ne~~ chai p-ii]]]
 Q Chandra-ERG coffee drink-PRF or Chandra-ERG tea drink-PRF
 'Which of these two things did Chandra drink: coffee or tea?'

This contrasts with the structure of (17), in which two DPs are disjoined:

- (17) *kyaa* Chandra-ne [[coffee] *yaa* [chai]] p-ii?
 Q Chandra-ERG coffee or tea drink-PRF
 'Is it the case that Chandra drank coffee or tea?'

The parallel derivation of "verb final" context in Kashmiri might look like (18):

- (18) *Me chu nI pataa* [ki [səliim coffee cey-aa] *yaa* [~~selim~~ caay eey-aa]]
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selim coffee drink.FUT-Q or Selim tea drink.FUT-Q
 'I don't know which of these Selim drank: coffee or tea.'²

In Kashmiri, an alternative question reading remains possible in (19) (unlike the parallel non-verb-final string in Hindi-Urdu) because the surface string in (19) is compatible with two possible derivations: NP disjunction (19a) or clausal disjunction of a V2 clauses followed by gapping (19b).

- (19) a. *Me chu nI pataa* [ki səliim cey-aa [[coffee] *yaa* [caay]]
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selim drink.FUT-Q coffee or tea
 b. *Me chu nI pataa* [[ki səliim cey-aa coffee] *yaa* [~~selim~~ eey-aa caay]]
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selim drink.FUT-Q coffee or Selim drink.FUT-Q tea
 'I don't know whether Selim drank coffee or tea'

We now have an answer to question A above.

4 Verb final or a full left periphery?

But is (1) really a verb-final domain as Wali and Koul suggest? It appears not. When we consider embedded alternative questions with auxiliary verbs, as in (20), we see that they behave quite differently from other verb-final domains, as in (21):

- (20) a. *Me chu nI pataa* [[ki raja Srinagar **cha**a gatshaan] *yaa* [Dili]]

² Given the approach to embedded alternative questions that I suggest below in (24), the derivation of the yes/no reading for (18) would be as in (i):

(i) *Me chu nI pataa* [ki səliim [coffee]_i cey-aa [[*t_i*] *yaa* [caay]]]
 1SG AUX NEG know that Selimcoffee drink.FUT-Q or tea
 'I don't know whether Selim drank coffee or tea'

1SG AUX NEG know that Raj Srinagar AUX go.IMPV or Delhi
 'I don't know whether Raj goes to Srinagar or Delhi.'

b. *Me chu nI pataa [[ki raja Srinagar gatshaan **chaa**] yaa [Dili]]

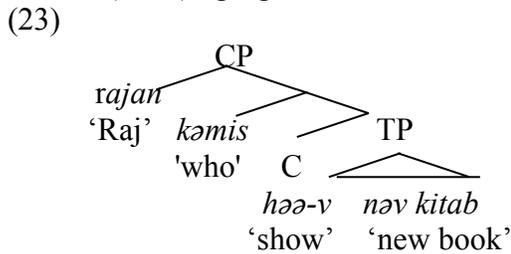
c. *Me chu nI pataa ki raja Srinagar yaa Dili gatshaan **chaa/chaa** gatshaan

(21) [yeli(-yeli) raaja dili gatshaan **chu**]...
 when(-when) Raja Delhi go.IMPV AUX.MSG.
 'Whenever Raja goes to Delhi...'

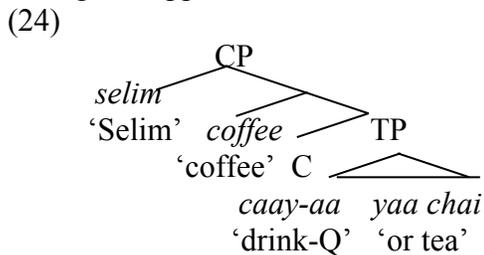
So if (1)/(20) is not indeed verb final, how is it derived and why does a V3 environment arise? Other V3 context in Kashmiri include wh-questions, which have the unmarked order TOPIC-WH-V:

(22) Raj-an kəm-is həə-v nəv kitaab?
 Raj-ERG who.DAT show.PST-FSG new book
 'To whom did Raj show his new book?' (Wali and Koul: 12)

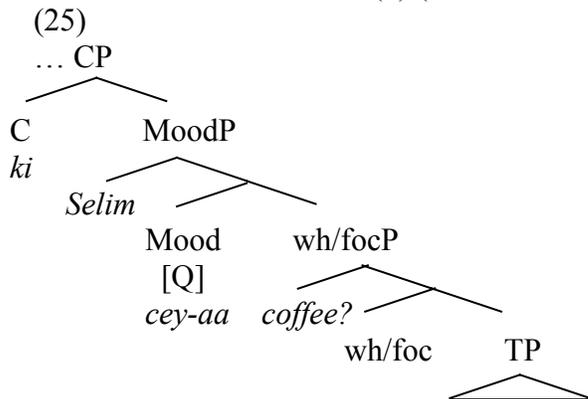
In Manetta (2011) I proposed that the V3 order in (22) had the following structure:



Extending this approach to the V3 order in (1), we have:



Notice that the alternative MoodP approach to the Kashmiri left periphery as in (12) above requires the verb suffixed with the Q-marker to appear in the Mood head. Since the Mood head may only have only a single specifier and C hosts the subordinator *ki*, it can't accommodate the V3 order in (1) (Munshi and Bhatt 2010).



coffee? V

Question B now seems to be answered. What about C?

5 Q particles and more questions

Kashmiri has two overt phonological markers of yes/no and alternative questions:

- a verbal suffix *-aa*
- a clause peripheral particle *kyaa* homophonous with the wh-word *what*

This section asks:

- Where do these two particles appear in the syntax?
- What underlying syntactic features do they spell out?
- What does the presence of two such particles reveal about Kashmiri in a comparative perspective?

5.1 Two more question types

Further support for the structure above in (24), as well as more information about the nature of Q particles in Kashmiri, comes from two other curious polar question constructions in Kashmiri:

EMBEDDED POLAR QUESTION

- (26) *toh' chiv pritsh-aan ki kyaa me per-aa kitaab.*
2SG AUX ask-PRT that Q 1SG read-Q book
'You are asking whether I read the book.'

NEGATED POLAR IMPERATIVE

- (27) *kyaa tsI m-aa gatsha-kh pagaah garI*
Q 2SG NEG-Q go-2SGPS tomorrow home
'Aren't you going home tomorrow?'

These questions have several interesting characteristics:

- the optional clause-initial Q-marker *kyaa* appears in addition to the verbal suffix Q-marker *-aa*
- The clause-initial subordinator *ki* also appears in (26), preceding *kyaa*
- Preverbal (second position) negation surfaces in (27) in contrast to typical postverbal negation in (28), and bears *-aa* instead of the (now third position) verb

- (28) *su pari-n-aa kitaab*
he read.FUT.3SG-NEG-Q book
'Will he not read the book?'

An aside:

(27) is a challenge to generate under a view that the NEG head is suffixed to the verb and Q in turn to NEG. It appears that mI must take over the "second position" role here. But the verb and negation *mI* cannot be separated (so it cannot be the case that the verb remains in the wh/foc head in the MoodP account):

- (29) **tsI mI kitaab par!*

2ND.SG NEG book read.IMP
 ‘Don’t read a book!’

Also, mI can be suffixed with the precative mood marker as well, in addition to the verb (so it is most likely that mI moves all the way up to Mood in the MoodP account):

- (30) a. Kitaab par-tI
 Book read.IMP-PREC
 ‘Please read the book.’
 b. Cith’ ma-tI leekh-tI
 Letter NEG-PREC write.IMP-PREC
 ‘Please don’t write a letter.’

It appears that mI and the verb must form a complex head of some kind. I won’t go into more detail here except to point out that this can’t be captured well in the MoodP account.

5.2 Logistics

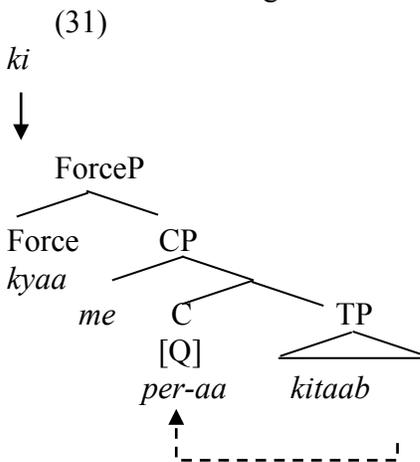
The MoodP approach unmodified cannot accommodate clauses with both particles:

- *-aa* must go in the Mood head in order to be suffixed to the verb as above
- *kyaa* could go in C, but since *ki* goes there and they must be co-present (with *ki* preceding) that can’t work either

What about the approach proposed above?

If C has multiple specifiers occupied by DPs that are displaced to the left for the purposes of information structure (topics, focus, wh-focus) and V is in C, then *-aa* must be in C.

Bhatt and Dayal (2014) in recent work on yes/no questions in Hindi-Urdu have proposed that *kyaa* is NOT an overt realization of the yes/no operator but instead an optional marker of Force on the clause edge. If this is taken in combination with the assumption in Manetta (2011) that *ki* is a clause boundary marker, not a complementizer, we could assume the following structure for the second clause of (26):



5.2 Thinking comparatively

Bhatt and Dayal 2014 call yes/no *kyaa* “polar *kyaa*”:

- Unlike in Hindi, in Kashmiri, polar *kyaa* after the 2nd position verb is unacceptable (Wali and Koul 1997) – this fits well with Bhatt and Dayal’s proposal that non-left-peripheral *kyaa* in Hindi-Urdu results from topicalization
- Location of *kyaa*: CP2 = ForceP

(32)

YES/NO Q: [CP2 polar-*kyaa* [CP1 Null-Yes/No-Operator [IP]]]
 ALT Q: [CP2 polar *kyaa* [CP1 Null-whether_i [t_i [IP or not]]]]

This would mean that *-aa* could be viewed as the (optional?) overt realization of the Yes/No/AltQ operator in Kashmiri on the C head.

What does this tell us about Kashmiri?

The lexicon and syntax of Kashmiri conspire to require overt phonological realization of operators/dependencies that are not overtly realized in Hindi-Urdu across the board. Compare yes/no questions, wh-movement contexts, and multiple wh-movement contexts (also wh-expletive contexts).

YES/NO-QUESTIONS

- (33) **kyaa** me per-**aa** kitaab. KASHMIRI
 Q 1SG read-Q book
 ‘Did I read the book?’
- (34) **Kyaa** anu-ne uma-ko kitaab dii HINDI-URDU
 Q Anu-ERG Uma-ACC book give.PFV.F
 ‘Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?’

WH-QUESTIONS

- (35) Raj-an **kəm-is** həə-v nəv kitaab? KASHMIRI
 Raj-ERG who-DAT show.PST-FSG new book
 ‘To whom did Raj show his new book?’ (Wali and Koul: 12)
- (36) Vo aap-ko hamesha **kyaa** pil-aa-ta hai? HINDI-URDU
 3SG 2PL-ACC always what drink-CAUSE-PRF.M AUX
 ‘What does he always have you drink?’ (Schmidt 1999)

MULTIPLE WH-QUESTIONS

- (37) **kəm kəm-is** dits kitaab? KASHMIRI
 who who-DAT gave book
 ‘Who gave whom a book?’
- (38) Sita-ne **kis-ko kab** dekh-aa? HINDI-URDU
 Sita-ERG who-ACC when see-PRF.M
 ‘When did Sita see whom?’

5.3 Even more broadly

The oft-flogged horse:

Cheng 1991:28 “No language has yes/no particle (and thus *wh*-particles) and also syntactic *wh*-movement”.

This is ok for Hindi-Urdu, but not so for Kashmiri -- anyway there many well-known exceptions (Bruening 2007 – 30 langs?; also Dryer’s (2004) typology).

Given the present account, though, we might actually say that a language with a yes/no/alt. question particle and with *wh*-movement is not so surprising. Indeed, both represent overt realizations of scope and of dependencies at a distance – a language with an “active” left (or right) periphery might well be expected to have both.

6 Conclusions

Take away thoughts are as follows:

- Tensed verb position in Kashmiri
 - V2 orders are those in which there is a single specifier of CP and V is in C [garden variety declaratives]
 - VN orders are those in which there are multiple specifiers of CP and V is in C [(multi)*wh*-foci, (multi)non-interrogative foci]
 - V1 orders are those without specifiers of CP, but V in C³
- CP approach better accommodates the morphological richness of yes/no/alt question structures
- Kashmiri is less exceptional than it might at first appear in the way in which its grammar constitutes and marks interrogatives

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³ V1 is available to some degree in yes/no questions in Kashmiri:

- (1) ch-aa samir dohay tsuunTh’ khEw-aan
AUX-Q Samir everyday apples eat-IMP
'Does Samir eat apples every day?'

But according to my informants *kyaa* is not possible/heavily dispreferred here:

- (2) **kyaa* ch-aa samir dohay tsuunTh’ khEw-aan
Q AUX-Q Samir everyday apples eat-IMP
'Does Samir eat apples every day?'

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