

Verb phrase ellipsis in Hindi complex predicates

[short abstract, ichs2015]

While complex predicates in Hindi-Urdu have received significant descriptive and analytical attention (Hook 1974; Bashir 1989; Mohanan 1994; Butt 1995, 2003, 2010; Butt and Ramchand 2005; Mahajan 2012), not yet addressed in the literature are the ways in which these constructions interact with processes of verb phrase ellipsis (VPE). This is a significant lacuna, as VPE has famously revealed much about the features of the English verbal domain (as early as Ross 1969). New evidence and careful testing presented here (following Goldberg 2005; Simpson, Chowdhury and Menon 2013; and Gribanova 2013a,b) demonstrates that Hindi-Urdu does indeed exhibit true verb-stranding verb phrase ellipsis (VVPE) and thus regular verb movement outside the vP-layer (in (1b) below). This is an important discovery, since up to this point relatively little empirical evidence has been brought to bear on the question of verb movement in this head-final language. In a potentially surprising result, I show that unlike Persian (Toosarvandani 2009) Hindi-Urdu complex predicates resist VPE in which the light verb is stranded (vVPE), indicating that the inflected light verb may not move out of the verb phrase independently of the main verb (in (1c)).

- (1) a. Nadiya-ne xat pehele baar likh liiy-aa
Nadiya-ERG letter first time write take-PRF.M
'Nadiya wrote a letter for the first time.'
b. Samir-ne bhi __ likh liiy-aa.
Samir-ERG also write take-PRF.M
'Samir also wrote (a letter for the first time).'

c. ?*Samir-ne bhi __ liiy-aa.

I build on the approach to complex predicates featuring decomposed verbal structure found in Butt and Ramchand (2005) to develop an account of the verbal domain in Hindi-Urdu that captures the strong syntactic connectedness between the components of the complex predicate we find in VVPE, while also predicting a range of other properties of complex predicates in the language.