Wh-expletives in Hindi-Urdu: the ν P phase

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1. Introduction

This paper brings together three current strands of work on wh-dependencies:

- The specifier of ν P may be as much a crucial intermediate stopping point in long wh-movement as is the specifier of CP (Chomsky 2005, Richards 2005)
- Wh-expletives are featurally deficient, and when merged into the specifier of a functional head, leave that head free to Agree with an unraised wh-phrase (Simpson 2000, Manetta 2005)
- Significant intra-language variation can be attributed to the featural properties of the phase-defining heads (C, ν , D) (Chomsky 2005)

Goal: Bringing together these strands of research provides an understanding of small but fundamental contrasts brought out in a micro-comparison of the syntax of wh-dependencies in Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri

There are two ways to form a long-distance wh-dependency in Hindi-Urdu:

Wh-displacement

- (1) Sita-ne **kis-ko** socaa ki Ravii-ne _____ dekhaa?
Sita-erg who-acc thought that Ravi-erg saw
'Who did Sita think that Ravi saw?'

Wh-expletive construction

- (2) Sita-ne **kyaa** socaa ki Ravii-ne **kis-ko** dekhaa?
Sita-erg expl thought that Ravi-erg who-acc saw
'Who did Sita think that Ravi saw?'

Long-distance wh-dependencies in Kashmiri appear superficially quite similar, but we will see in the next section that there are deep differences:

Wh-displacement

- (3) tse **kem'** chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as dits ____ kita:b
you who aux think that Mohan gave book
'Who do you think gave Mohan the book?'

Wh-expletive construction

- (4) tse **k'a:** chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as **kem'** dits kita:b
you expl aux think that Mohan who gave book
'Who do you think gave Mohan the book?'

Core proposal:

- The sets of features that drive wh-constructions in the two languages are the same
- The crucial features appear on different phase-defining heads in each language: on C in Kashmiri and on ν in Hindi-Urdu

2. Wh-dependencies in Kashmiri

2.1 Basic facts

Kashmiri is V2, with any constituent potentially appearing before the verb¹:

- (5) a. aslaman dits mohnas kita:b ra:mini kh':trÆ ra:th
aslaman-erg gave Mohan-dat book Ram-dat for yesterday
'Aslam gave Mohan a book for Ram yesterday.'
b. mohnas dits aslaman kita:b ramini kh':trÆ ra:th
c. kita:b dits aslaman mohnas ramini kh':trÆ ra:th
d. ra:mini kh':trÆ dits aslaman mohnas kita:b ra:th
e. ra:th dits aslaman mohnas kita:b ra:mini kh':trÆ

Wh-phrases immediately precede the second-position verb. A topic may also appear preverbally just when a wh-phrase is present (Bhatt 1999).

- (6) a. rajan kÇmis he:v nev kita:b?
Raj whom showed new book
'To whom did Raj show his new book?'
b. kÇm' he:v shi:las nev kita:b ra:th
who showed Sheila new book yesterday
'Who showed a new book to Sheila yesterday?'

Kashmiri finite complement clauses have identical word order to matrix clauses. I repeat here the two types of long-distance wh-dependencies.

- (7) Mira: **k'a:** chi yatsha:n ki su gotsh anun ____.
Mira what aux wants that he should bring
What does Mira want that he should bring?
(8) Mira: **k'a:** chi yatsha:n ki **k'a:** su gotsh anun.
Mira expl aux wants that what he should bring
What does Mira want that he should bring?
(9) tse **kem'** chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as dits ____ kita:b
you who aux think that Mohan gave book
'Who do you think gave Mohan the book?'
(10) tse **k'a:** chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as **kem'** dits kita:b
you expl aux think that Mohan who gave book
'Who do you think gave Mohan the book?'

- In both Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri wh-material (wh-expletives and full wh-phrases) appears preverbally
- In Kashmiri the verb is in second position, so the wh-material is in Spec, CP

2.2 Accounting for wh-expletives in Kashmiri (Manetta 2005)

¹ All Kashmiri data is from Wali and Koul (1997) unless otherwise indicated.

This is an approach that has as its goal a unified account of the A and A-bar expletives, and therefore relies on the valuing of features via the operations Move and Agree.

A-system:

- A head (Probe) may Agree with a nominal (Goal) in a mutual valuing of features
- Move (Agree + pied-piping + internal Merge) occurs if the EPP is present
- If a DP-expletive happens to be in the numeration, it can merge to satisfy the EPP; the features on the probe are valued via interacting with another DP in its domain
- Operations are limited to the phase (the unit in which derivations proceed)

A-bar system:

- Heads and wh-XPs will possess interpretable and uninterpretable features
- If EPP is present, an accessible wh-XP will undergo Move
- If a wh-expletive is in the numeration, it can merge to satisfy the EPP
- The uninterpretable features on the A-bar probe will be valued by interacting with an accessible wh-XP via static Agree over some distance.

For a single-clause Kashmiri constituent question:

(11) *rajan kemis he:v nev kita:b?*

Raj whom showed new book

‘To whom did Raj show his new book?’

- In Kashmiri C will always have the EPP: C
[wh-features]
[EPP]

Full wh-movement from an embedded clause:

(9) *tse kem' chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as dits kita:b*

you who aux think that Mohan gave book

‘Who do you think gave Mohan the book?’

Partial wh-movement (wh-expletive construction):

(10) *tse k'a: chu-y ba:sa:n ki mohn-as kem' dits kita:b*

you expl aux think that Mohan who gave book

‘Who do you think gave Mohan the book?’

3. Wh-expletive Constructions in Hindi-Urdu

Major differences between Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri

- Hindi-Urdu is not V2 like Kashmiri, but verb-final
- Wh-material is not found at the clause edge (Spec, CP)

3.1 Basic Facts of Hindi-Urdu

Hindi-Urdu is verb final, and the subject typically precedes the object:

- (14) Hamid-ne pani piya
 Hamid-erg water drank
 ‘Hamid drank water.’
- (15) bacci-ne mehmaan-ko phul pesh kiye
 child-erg guest-acc flowers present aux
 ‘The child presented flowers to the guest.’ (Schmidt 1999)

Hindi-Urdu is often described as a *wh-in-situ* language. There is a preference/tendency for the *wh-* word to appear immediately before the sentence-final verb (Bhatt 2003, Schmidt 1999, Kidwai 2000).

- (16) kitaab-ko kis-ne paṛhi?
 book-acc who read
 ‘Who read the book?’
- (17) Hamid-ne kyaa paṛha?
 Hamid-erg what read
 ‘What did Hamid read?’
- (18) aap chai kab pite haiñ?
 you tea when drink aux
 ‘When do you drink tea?’

Hindi-Urdu is a scrambling language; other word orders are possible for (16-18).

I will assume the phrase-structure in (19) for simple clauses.

Finite embedded clauses appear to the right of the verb in linear order.

- (20) Vo jaantii hai [ki anu aayii]
 She know aux that Anu come
 She knows that Anu came.

We will follow Bayer (1996) in saying that finite clauses are complements in Hindi-Urdu, and that they are exceptionally taken on the right. I won't try here to resolve issues of word order that arise as a result of this structure.

- (21)
- vP

3.2 Wh-dependencies in Hindi-Urdu

- Movement at LF is one conceptual solution to the problem of *wh-in-situ* (Dayal, 1996, Mahajan 1990)
- An alternative is the operation Agree (Chomsky 2000) through which heads can interact with *wh*-material over a distance

Hindi-Urdu *wh-in-situ*

The C head at which the *wh*-material is interpreted need not possess the EPP property

(8) Hamid-ne kyaa paṛha?

Hamid-erg what read

‘What did Hamid read?’

(22) [_{CP} C [_{TP} Hamid-ne kyaa paṛha]]
 [wh-f] [wh-f]

Questions about (2):

(2) Sita-ne **kyaa** socaa ki Ravii-ne **kis-ko** dekhaa?

Sita-erg expl thought that Ravi-erg who-acc saw

‘Who did Sita think that Ravi saw?’

- How do the features on the matrix C get valued? The *wh*-phrase in the embedded clause remains in some position lower than the left periphery. It cannot be the *wh*-expletive *kyaa*, which has no interpretable features.
- What is the role of the *wh*-expletive *kyaa*?
- Why is there no *wh*-material of any kind in the intermediate Spec, CP?

Conclusion: The analysis of Kashmiri in section 2 cannot be extended to Hindi-Urdu without modification. What is missing? An understanding of the preverbal position of *wh*-phrases and *wh*-expletives.

A Case for [Q]-bearing *v*:

- Rackowski and Richards (2005) are among those who have considered Spec, *v*P as a potential intermediate stopping point for *wh*-movement
- They show that matrix verbs in Tagalog must exhibit specific morphology agreeing with a finite complement clause in order for *wh*-extraction be possible from that clause
- If *v* (in addition to interrogative C) has features and the EPP which must be valued via *wh*-movement, *wh*-material will move through Spec, *v*P.

- In a significant break with previous approaches, Rackowski and Richards claim that it is unnecessary for non-interrogative C to Agree with any wh-material at all.

(23) Who did you say Bush appointed __?

- (24) a. [C_[Q] [v [C [v who]]]]
 b. the matrix v agrees with the embedded C
 c. [C_[Q] [v [C [who v ~~who~~]]]]
 d. [C_[Q] [who v [C [~~who~~ v ~~who~~]]]]

Note: Rackowski and Richards assume that once a probe P has Agreed with a goal G, P can ignore G for the rest of the derivation (see Richards 1998, Hiraiwa 2001).

What about languages with wh-morphology in non-interrogative CPs?

Hybrid proposal:

- For some languages (Kashmiri, Irish), non-interrogative CPs are wh-positions
- For others Spec, vP is the only stopping off point for long wh-movement, and we might see languages in which wh-material can remain in Spec, vP (Hindi-Urdu)
- If this is so, we can understand the contrast between Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri in these terms

Reexamining Hindi-Urdu wh-expletive construction in (2) in light of this approach:

(2) Sita-ne **kyaa** socaa ki Ravii-ne **kis-ko** dekhaa?

Sita-erg expl thought that Ravi-erg who-acc saw

‘Who did Sita think that Ravi saw?’

Of note:

- Line above the derivation represents an Agree relation between v and C – this enables v to probe through the CP phase to the edge of the vP phase
- For more on the origin point of the wh-expletive, see Manetta (2005)

Questions answered:

- The syntactic position of preverbal wh-material in Hindi-Urdu: the specifier of vP.

This account implies that wh-material in Hindi-Urdu is not *in-situ*, as is commonly assumed, but instead in Spec, vP. This is surprising, and not obviously correct. In this section I offer three kinds of empirical support:

- Position of Focus constituents
- VP/vP adjoined adverbs
- Sluicing

Focused Constituents

Hindi-Urdu:

The grammaticalized focus position in Hindi-Urdu is the preverbal position in linear word order (Butt and King 1996, Kidwai 2000).

- (27) mai-ne kamre-me [inhii tiin larkon-ko] bheja
 I -erg room-to [these-foc three boys-acc] sent
 I sent THESE three boys to the room.

- (28) kitabeN kal maiN laya tha
 books yesterday I brought aux
 I brought the books yesterday (It is I who brought the books yesterday)

This suggests that there is a fixed syntactic position for focused constituents, interrogative and non-interrogative.² It is consistent with the view of Spec, vP as that fixed position in Hindi-Urdu.

Kashmiri:

Similarly, Spec, CP is the canonical position for both interrogative and non-interrogative focus in Kashmiri (Bhatt 1999, Manetta 2005).

Pre-verbal constituents are generally interpreted as focused. For instance, the focus-particle *-ti* can only appear suffixed to constituents in this position (Bhatt 1999).

- (29) bi ti go:s gari vakhtas peth
 I foc went home time-dat on
 I too went home on time.

Adverbs

² Hindi-Urdu has very flexible word order, and much work has been done on scrambling in this language, though I won't discuss it here. Clearly these constituents can scramble following the satisfaction of criteria in this position.

Adverbs that are typically analyzed as adjoining to the *vP*, such as ‘always’, appear before the verb and the direct object in an unmarked Hindi-Urdu sentence (Schmidt 1999). It is also possible for the adverb to follow the object (32); this demonstrates that the *wh*-word cannot be *in-situ*.

- (30) Vo mujhe hamesha cai pilata hai
 He me always tea drink-cause aux
 He always has me drink tea.
- (31) Vo aap-ko hamesha kya pilata hai
 He you always what drink-cause aux
 What does he always have you drink?
- (32) Vo aap-ko kya hamesha pilata hai
 He you what always drink-cause aux
 What does he always have you drink?

This suggests that in Hindi-Urdu, these adverbs can adjoin to *vP* either before or after the *wh*-phrase has merged into Spec, *vP*.³

Kashmiri:

Contrast this with Kashmiri, in which these adverbs follow the second-position verb.

- (33) akh'kis sÆ:t' chi hame:shÆ lada:n
 one another with aux always fight
 ‘(They) always fight with each other.’
- (34) tÇmis nishi Çs hameshÆ no:kar
 He near have always servants
 ‘He always has servants.’
- (35) su cha: za:nh sÇ:ras gatsh-a:n
 She aux ever walk go
 ‘Does she ever go for a walk?’
- (36) kÇmis chi hame:shÆ lada:n.
 who aux always fight
 Who always fights?

In Kashmiri, the verb is clearly in a position higher than the edge of *vP* (usually analyzed as C or the equivalent), and the *wh*-phrase above that (Spec, CP).

³ Similarly, Mahajan (1990) observes that for adverbs ambiguous between a ‘process’ and ‘event’ reading, the ‘event’ reading is available at either position.

- (i) sita kam jaldise karthii thii
 sita work quickly did aux
 Sita worked quickly.
- (ii) sita jaldise kam karthii thii.

Chandra (2005) adds that the direct object *kam* in this case must receive focal stress. This suggests in our account that *kam* is in Spec, *vP*, and when the adverb has the ‘event’ reading, it must be adjoined to Spec, *vP* either before or after the object. I won’t go into the larger discussion of specificity and agreement from which this data was taken here.

Sluicing

Whether or not you would expect to find sluicing in Hindi-Urdu depends on your account of sluicing. In fact, sluicing is generally possible in Hindi-Urdu (Mahajan 2005, Merchant 2001).

- (37) Aisha-ne ek ciiz khariidii leken mujhe nahii pataa (ki) kyaa.
Aisha-erg a thing bought but I not know (that) what
Aisha bought something, but I don't know what.
- (38) Khadija jaldii calii jaaegii leken mujhe nahii pataa (ki) kyon
Khadija early leave go-fut but I not know (that) why
Khadija will leave early, but I don't know why.

However, recent work (Mahajan 2005) has given us reason to question whether the sluicing we see in Hindi-Urdu is precisely like the sluicing we see in a language like English. It appears that Hindi-Urdu sluicing does not repair island violations.

Complex NP island⁴:

- (39) *mE jaanta huN ki Ravii-ne [Salmaa-ki ek larke-ko dii hui kitaab] phar dii
I know aux that Ravi-erg Salma-dat a boy-dat gave aux book tore gave
leken mujhe nahiiN pataa (ki) kis-ko.
but I not know (that) who.
'I know Ravi tore up the book Salma gave to a boy, but I don't know to whom.'
- (40) I believe the claim that he bit someone, but they don't know who. (Ross 1969)

Adjunct island:

- (41) *Salmaa [Raam-ke ek larkii-se milne par] bahut naaraaz hogii leken mujhe
salma ram-dat a girl-with meet upon very angry become but I
nahiiN pataa (ki) kis-se.
not know (that) who-with.
'Salma will be angry upon Ram's meeting with a girl, but I don't know with whom.'
- (42) Ben will be mad if Abby talks to one of the teachers, but I don't remember which. (Merchant 2001)

Coordinate Structure island:

- (43) *Ali-ne Aisha or ek larke-ko saath saath dekhaa, leken mujhe nahiiN pataa
Ali-erg Aisha and a boy-acc together saw but I not know
(ki) kis-ko.
(that) who.
'Ali saw Aisha and a boy together, but I don't know who'.
- (44) Bob ate dinner and saw a movie that night, but he didn't say which.
(Merchant 2001)

⁴ Judgments here are Mahajan's; I have confirmed these with native-speaker informants, who report significant contrast between sentences like (37)-(38) and sentences like (39), (41), and (43).

- It appears that Hindi-Urdu sluicing patterns with English VP-ellipsis in not amnestying islands. Though the results are preliminary, this suggests that the constituent being sluiced may be smaller than a full clause (TP) .
- This observation correlates with proposals by Merchant (2002) and Fox and Lasnik (2003) which claim that the size of the gap is crucial in island amnestying
- These results would be consistent with an account in which the wh-phrase preceding the sluice is not in Spec, CP, but instead lower, in Spec, vP

While much work remains to be done, we would expect a to see the contrast between Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri borne out in this domain as well.

5. Conclusion

We understand the contrasts between Hindi-Urdu and Kashmiri long-distance wh-dependencies as follows:

- vP may play the same role often attributed to CP in wh-movement: it can be a position for wh-expletives and partially moved wh-phrases
- We can attribute the position of wh-material in each language to the properties of the phase-defining heads C and v (for instance, the presence or absence of EPP). In effect, what we see is the same clausal typology in Kashmiri and Hindi-Urdu, but lower in Hindi-Urdu and higher in Kashmiri.
- The role of the wh-expletives in Hindi-Urdu is resolved: to satisfy the EPP on a given head so that the head may value its features with some other element in its domain. This is now unified with the role of wh-expletives in Kashmiri and with that of the better-studied expletives of the A-system.

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