

Abstract

Peripheries in Kashmiri and Hindi-Urdu

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This dissertation is an investigation of wh-movement and wh-expletive constructions in the Indic language Kashmiri. Through this investigation, we develop a theory of the periphery, or the clausal positions which mediate A-bar movement. In particular, a detailed study of wh-expletives and wh-expletive constructions reveals underlying similarity of design between the A and A-bar systems, and indicates that the two can be understood as driven by the same basic set of mechanisms. Empirically, this work addresses the lesser-studied language Kashmiri, bringing to the fore linguistic data not yet discussed in formal syntactic literature.

The dissertation advances our understanding of the A-bar system in three core areas. First, we present the basic facts of the rich left periphery of the Kashmiri clause, and provide an account of this periphery that employs a single functional head. This account seeks to build on the empirical advances of the so-called “cartographic” hierarchy of projections, while offering an analysis of the left periphery that is compatible with the notion of the phase.

Second, the dissertation presents the wh-movement and wh-expletive constructions of Kashmiri, and offers an account of wh-dependencies which in which the mechanisms driving the A and A-bar systems emerge as being parallel – in a way that does not emerge so clearly from the more closely-studied languages.

Finally, the dissertation offers a micro-comparison of the syntax of wh-questions in Kashmiri and in Hindi-Urdu. This detailed comparative work yields an important result: we can understand a set of systematic contrasts between the two languages in terms of the properties of specifically the phase-defining heads C and *v*. In effect, what we see is the same clausal topology in Kashmiri and Hindi-Urdu, but occurring lower in the clause in Hindi-Urdu (at the *v*P layer) and higher in the clause in Kashmiri (at the CP layer). This lends support to the claim that the specifier position of *v*P may play the same role often attributed to the specifier position of CP in wh-movement: it can be a position for wh-expletives and partially moved wh-phrases.