



Restructuring and Agreement in Urdu-Hindi

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Objective

The objective of this research is to uncover the process by which, in certain Urdu-Hindi (hereby referred to as Urdu) restructuring constructions, both the matrix verb and embedded non-finite (infinitive) verb can agree with the embedded object in gender and number. In other languages with restructuring, such as German, Dutch, and Spanish, the embedded non-finite verb does not undergo any agreement relation. Therefore, it appears that there is some alternate or additional mechanism at play in the Urdu restructuring process.

Background

Restructuring: Restructuring is a process that occurs in some languages, wherein certain constructions join two clauses so that they behave syntactically as one. Only select verbs allow restructuring, so while the German *versuchen* ('to try') may introduce a restructuring predicate, *beschlossen* ('to decide') may not. As shown in figure i, a full clause is assumed to consist of at least a CP, TP, vP, and VP layer, however, the restructuring clause, being more closely associated with the matrix clause, has been shown to consist only of a VP (Wurmbrand 2001).

An example of restructuring in German (Wurmbrand 2001, also see fig. ii.):

- a. Weil Hans den Traktor_{ACC} zu reparieren
Since John the tractors_{ACC} to repair
versuchte
tried
'Since John tried to repair the tractor'

In Urdu restructuring sentences, both the main verb and the infinitive verb can agree with the object in the past-tense:

- b. Ranveer-ne roti khaanii chaahii
Ranveer_{ERG} roti.f. to eat.f. wanted.f.
'Ranveer wanted to eat (a) roti'

Agreement: In generative syntax, the agreement of a verb in gender, number, and person is taken to be a relationship between the T node and some noun phrase (subject or object). The T node obtains gender/number/person features from the noun phrase, and the verb displays those features after moving to T from its base-generated position at V.

Split Ergativity: Urdu is a split-ergative language. This means that in the past tense, the subject will be marked with the morpheme *-ne*, and the verb will agree with the object instead of the subject.

- Past tense: c. Ali-ne.m. kitaab paDhii
Ali_{ERG}.m. book.f. read.f.past.
'Ali read a book'

Process

Because Urdu displays the unusual property of agreement on both the matrix and embedded non-finite verbs in restructuring constructions, our first objective was to apply commonly used restructuring diagnostic tests to Urdu. In doing so, we hoped to determine the size of the Urdu restructuring clause. While the restructuring predicate is assumed to be a bare VP in most languages, it could be the case that it is of some other configuration in Urdu.

To try to determine the size of the Urdu restructuring predicate, we tested:

1. The long passive
2. Embedded negation
3. Embedded temporal adverbs

Fig. i.

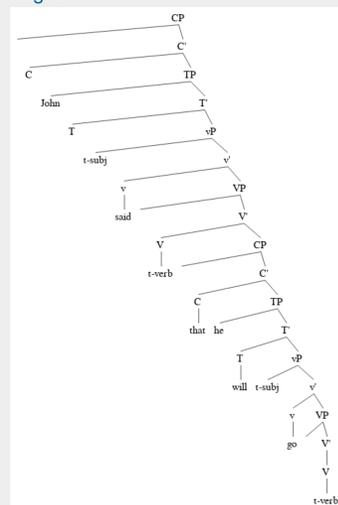
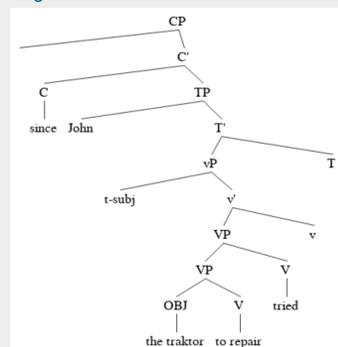


Fig. ii.



Tests

The Long Passive: In a passive sentence, the passivized verb loses its ability to assign accusative case. As a result, the object moves to the subject position and receives nominative case. In some languages, it is possible to form a "long passive" from restructured sentences, so that the object moves across both verbs and receives nominative case from the matrix verb. It is assumed that accusative case is assigned at the level of vP, so the inability of the embedded infinitive to "take over" and assign accusative case indicates that the restructured predicate lacks a vP layer.

An example of the long passive in German (Wurmbrand 2001):

- d. Dass [der Traktor_{NOM}] zu reparieren versucht wurde
That the tractor_{NOM} to repair tried was
'That (someone) tried to repair the tractor'

Embedded Negation: In typical restructuring constructions, embedded negation is not permissible. Therefore, one would see the following contrast:

Matrix negation (permissible): e. You didn't try to read

Embedded negation (prohibited): f. *You tried to not read

Embedded Temporal Adverbs: It is typically ungrammatical to include a temporal adverb in the embedded clause when it clashes with the tense of the matrix clause. This is taken to show that the embedded restructuring predicate lacks a TP layer, the layer responsible for tense, and therefore relies on the TP layer of the matrix clause.

Test Findings:

The Long Passive: In Urdu, it is possible to passivize over multiple verbs, like the German example sentence g, however, the object must retain accusative case:

- g. [Murghiyo-ko] khaane kii koshish kii gayii
[Chickens_{ACC}] to eat GEN try did pass.morph.

This is evidence that Urdu restructuring predicates are bigger than the typical bare-VP size found in most languages, and may contain a vP layer.

Embedded Negation: Unlike German, it is also marginally possible to embed negation in restructuring constructions. This is evidence for NegP, another layer above the typical bare-VP structure.

- h. ?Main-ne kursii naa toDnii chaahii
I_{ERG} chair.f. not break.f. wanted.f.
'I wanted to not break the chair'

Embedded Temporal Adverbs: Test sentences demonstrate that it is ungrammatical to embed in a restructuring sentence an adverb which clashes with the tense of the matrix clause (Keine 2016):

- i. #Pichle hafte raam-ne ye kitaab kal
last week Ram_{ERG} this book yesterday
paDhnii chaahii thii
to read wanted past participle
'Last week Ram wanted to read this book yesterday'

Conclusion

The tests we have conducted indicate that the Urdu restructuring predicate is, in fact, of a larger size than is typical. We have found that its structure may include a vP and NegP layer.

We additionally propose that the Urdu restructuring clause contains an anaphoric TP layer, meaning a TP layer that is reliant on the featural information of the matrix TP. This would explain both our findings about embedded temporal adverbs, as well as why the embedded infinitive agrees with the object. We suggest that the matrix T undergoes feature sharing with the embedded object, and the embedded T behaves as a "clone", automatically receiving the same features. This results in agreement on both the embedded infinitive and the matrix verb.

Additional Support

The subjunctive in Urdu exhibits several properties that indicate that it, too, contains additional structure that is not found in the subjunctive of other languages. Many syntacticians assume that the typical subjunctive clause is a TP, an intermediate size between indicative clauses and restructuring predicates.

Obviative Phenomenon: In many languages, such as French and Spanish, the subject of an embedded subjunctive clause must be different from the subject of the matrix clause. This is often explained as a result of binding restrictions between coreferential noun phrases; the amount of structure between the matrix subject and the embedded subject is not sufficient for them to be co-indexed when the embedded subject is only contained in a TP (relatively small) layer. Urdu, however, does not exhibit an obviative phenomenon:

- j. *Je voudrais que je finisse cet article
I would like that I finish this article
(Rochette 1978)

- k. Main chaahii huu kih main
I.f. want.f. pres.participle that I
kitaab paDhii
book read.subj.

This finding suggests that the Urdu subjunctive clause may contain more structure than just a TP. Taken together with our findings about restructuring predicates, this adds weight to our suggestion that certain Urdu clause types may consist of more structure than their counterparts in other languages.

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