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Implications of Feature Realization in Hindi-Urdu: Copular Sentences and Fake Indexicals

(joint work with Sakshi Bhatia, UMass)

Bejar & Kahnemuyipour (2017) and Keine, Wagner & Coon (2018) have documented the existence of person hierarchy effects in copular sentences in Eastern Armenian and German respectively. In addition, Keine, Wagner & Coon (2018) point out the evidence of number hierarchy effects in this domain in German. We investigate copular sentences in Hindi-Urdu where we find hierarchy effects similar to the ones identified for German. But the distribution of the hierarchy effects is sensitive to not just the hierarchy but the realization of the agreement. In particular, person hierarchy effects disappear/weaken in the past tense which in Hindi-Urdu does not code person. Person hierarchy effects are also weakened in environments such as gapping and right node raising if the elliptical process in question allows for the offending agreeing head to go unrealized. We relate our results to Preminger (2019) which argues against agreement relationships that would lack realization.

Our second case study concerns fake indexicals in Hindi-Urdu. Work by Kratzer (2009), Sundaresan (2013), Messick (2016), Wurmbrand (2017) and Ivan & Mirrazi (2019) reveals a landscape where the morphosyntactic resources of a language influence the realization of the semantic structures that underlie fake indexicals and shifty agreement. Within Hindi-Urdu, we find that the availability of subject oriented reflexives leads to pronominal possessors being anti-subject oriented and this in turn blocks the possibility of fake indexicals in structures like 'Only I did my homework on time' and also in structures like 'I am the only one who did his/my homework on time.' To find fake indexicals, we need to put distance between the putative fake indexical and its binder. When we do this, we find that fake indexicals are possible but only in attitude contexts (possible in: Only I think that my children are smart, but not in: Only I met the guy who teaches my children violin) suggesting that in these cases, the binding is mediated by a logophoric operator.