PPIs and Movement in Hindi-Urdu

Rajesh Bhatt & Vincent Homer, UMass Amherst

Typically, Positive Polarity Items (PPIs), e.g. *would rather*, cannot be interpreted in the scope of a clausemate negation (barring rescuing or shielding) (Baker 1970, van der Wouden 1997, Szabolcsi 2004 a.o.):

(1) a. John would rather leave. b. *John wouldn't rather leave.

The scope of most of them is uniquely determined by their surface position. But PPI indefinites are special: they can surface under negation and yet yield a grammatical sentence under a wide scope interpretation:

(2) John didn't understand something. ✓SOME≫NEG;*NEG≫SOME

Here we address the question of the mechanism through which a PPI of the *some* type takes wide scope out of an anti-licensing configuration. One possibility is (covert) movement, another is mechanisms that allow indefinites to take (island-violating) ultra-wide scope such as choice functions (Reinhart 1997). The relevant configurations that have motivated choice functions for other languages can be set up for Hindi-Urdu too.

(3) logõ=ko lagtaa hai [ki Saima aur kuch tabalcii gaayab ho gaye haĩ]
people=DAT seem is that Saima and some.PL tabla.player disappear be go.PFV.MPL are
'People think that Saima and some tabla players have disappeared.' (ok: SOME≫THINK)

We can therefore assume that a device that generates wide-scope for indefinites without movement is available in Hindi-Urdu too. We show that in Hindi-Urdu at least, this device is unable to salvage PPIs in the relevant configuration. Only good old fashioned overt movement does the needful. If we think of overt movement in Hindi-Urdu as being the analogue of covert movement elsewhere, then the Hindi-Urdu facts are an argument that it is movement, albeit covert, that salvages PPIs in English too, not alternative scope-shifting devices.

Trapping: Hindi-Urdu displays the following trapping configuration. In (4a), we see that NPI-subjects are licensed by sentential negation, (4b) shows us that PPI-objects can escape the scope of sentential negation.

(4) a. NPI is bold-faced:
ek-bhii laṛke=ne yeh kitaab nahĩ: paṛh-i:
one-even boy=ERG this book.F NEG read-PFV.F
'Not even one boy read this book.'

b. PPI is italicized:
Ram=ne *kuch kitaabẽ* nahĩ: paṛh-ĩ:
Ram=ERG some book.FPL NEG read-PFV.FPL
'Ram didn't read some books.' (only: SOME≫NEG)

But when we combine the NPI and the PPI in this configuration in (5), we get ungrammaticality.

(5) *__ek=bhii laṛke=ne__ *kuch kitaabẽ* nahĩ: paṛh-ĩ:
one=even boy=ERG some book.FPL NEG read-PFV.FPL
Lit.: 'No boy read some books.'

The existence of the trapping configuration tells us that a choice function-style scope taking mechanism is unable to save the 'trapped' PPI from negation. This mechanism can in principle give indefinites (including PPI-indefinites, see (3)) wide-scope but this is not enough.

Here is a way to think about the trapping configuration: only overt movement can salvage the PPI. Let's assume that the subject NPI is in the surface scope of Negation; we can thus use the surface position of the subject NPI as an indicator of the location of Negation. (Note that the surface position of *nahĩ:* in the verbal

complex is unrevealing as to its scope, Mahajan 1990.) Specifically, this means that in (5), the object PPI is in the surface scope of Negation, leading to ungrammaticality. The way to avoid this ungrammaticality is for the PPI to overtly move out of the scope of Negation by moving to the left of the subject NPI (6):

(6) *kuch kitaabẽ* **ek=bhii laṛke=ne** nahĩ: paṛh-ĩ:
some book.FPL one=even boy=ERG NEG read-PFV.FPL
'There are some books such that no boy read them.'

An alternative approach is to think of the trapping effect in terms of scope rigidity. Let's assume (setting aside the issues raised in Anand & Nevins 2006) that there is an isomorphism between the word order of unscrambled XPs and their LF-scope. Then the trapping effect would also follow – the isomorphism requirement would force the NPI-subject to take scope over the PPI-object. This would result in negation taking scope over the PPI-object, leading to ungrammaticality. We also need a ban on string-vacuous scrambling to block (7). This structure if permitted could allow the scrambled subject-NPI to reconstruct into the scope of Negation at LF. Note that (7b) is not blocked by scope-rigidity as the XPs have been scrambled.

(7) a. String-vacuous scrambling: *[TP NPI-Subject$_i$ [vP PPI-Object$_j$ [vP [vP t$_i$ [VP V t$_j$]] Negation]]]
b. After Reconstruction: [TP . . . [vP PPI-Object$_j$ [vP [vP NPI-Subject [VP V t$_j$]] Negation]]]

Evidence from Adverbs: an argument against viewing the trapping effect in terms of scope rigidity comes from the interaction of adverbs like *ek/do/. . . baar* 'one/two times' and indefinite objects. These adverbs seem to have two distinct structural locations – a high location where they quantify over events of a certain kind and a low location where they indicate that an event has sub-parts. The two adverbs can be combined.

(8) Situation: John is getting very forgetful. He keeps locking doors multiple times.
tiin baar Ram=ne do baar ek darwaazaa band kiyaa
three times Ram=ERG two times a door close do.PFV
'On three occasions, Ram locked a door twice.' Primary reading: A_DOOR≫TWICE

What is interesting here is that the indefinite object takes scope over *do baar* 'twice'. It is not clear that a narrow scope interpretation is even available here. This appears to be a violation of scope rigidity. Furthermore this violation of scope rigidity is not accompanied by a corresponding lifting of the trapping configuration: we can make the low 'n times' into an NPI – 'ek=bhii baar' 'one=even time/once$_{NPI}$', which allows us to identify the scope of negation. Even though a plain indefinite has no problem scoping over the NPI 'once', if we replace the indefinite by a PPI the structure is degraded.

(9) Situation: John is a security guard who is becoming very careless and leaving doors unlocked, when in fact we want each door to be locked multiple times.

a. NPI boldfaced:
tiin baar Ram=ne **ek=bhii baar** ek darwaazaa band nahĩ: kiyaa
three times Ram=ERG one=even times a door close NEG do.PFV
'On three occasions, Ram didn't lock a door even once.' A_DOOR≫NEG≫ONCE

b. **trapping:** NPI boldfaced, PPI italicized:
*???tiin baar Ram=ne **ek=bhii baar** *kuch darwaaze* band nahĩ: kiye
three times Ram=ERG one=even times some doors close NEG do.PFV.MPL
Intended but unavailable: 'On three occasions, there were some doors that Ram did not close.'
(available if 'some doors' is scrambled to the left of 'once')

We have shown that PPI cannot be salvaged through a choice-function like scope shifting device; instead the polarity system insists upon movement, which can be overt or covert depending upon the language.