

FOCUS-PARTITIONING IN HINDI-URDU: THE VIEW FROM A LOW ADVERB

MAIN POINT This paper presents novel (native speaker linguist) data to show that focus-partitioning as observed with polar *kya*: in Hindi-Urdu (HU) is a more general phenomenon, visible when any suitable adjunct overtly demarcates the left-edge of the “Focus zone”. We argue for this position based on an investigation of *vaapas* ‘back’. Existing accounts cannot capture the proliferation of felicitous options for positional Focus.

BACKGROUND It is well known that in several South Asian languages the immediately preverbal position tracks Focus (Jayaseelan 1989; Butt & King 1996, Kidwai 2000; Manetta 2011; a.o.). Widely accepted is a FocP above VP, whose single specifier hosts the F-marked constituent. Here we will see that this position is only one of many that tracks “positional” Focus (Kidwai 2000; as opposed to prosodic Focus). The seeds of this idea come from recent work about HU polar question particle *kya*: (Bhatt & Dayal 2014, 2020; Biezma *et. al* 2018): *kya*: partitions the clause such that only material following it is open to challenge.

- (1) raam-ne siita-ko kyaa kal kitaab dii thii?
 Ram-ERG Sita-DAT PQP yesterday book give be.PST
 ‘Had Ram given a/the book to Sita yesterday?’

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| a.#nahiN, shyam-ne
no Shyam-ERG
#‘No, Shyam did.’ | b.#nahiN, uma-ko
no Uma-DAT
#‘No, to Uma.’ | c. nahiN, parsoN
no day.bef.yest
‘No, the day before.’ |
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A constituent, when challenged, is F-marked (constituents which *can* be F-marked are shown in a box). In addition to the expected (DO can bear F because it is immediately preverbal), there’s other options, like (1c), a case of positional Focus that the SpecFocP analysis cannot account for. Bhatt & Dayal argue *kya*: is in ForceP, so for them the “Focus zone” is “below ForceP”. Given material can move out of ForceP. Where previous work looked only at cases of argument scrambling creating order other than canonical *S IO DO*, here we see that covert argument scrambling can trigger positional Focus. Neither for *kya*: nor for *vaapas* does it seem motivated to say they are themselves undergoing overt scrambling.

PROPERTIES OF *vaapas* The adverb *vaapas* ‘back/in return’ (3) in HU is a presupposition trigger, defined only when its “counterdirectional” presupposition is met (“there is a preceding reverse event”), underlined in (2). As *vaapas* operates on events, we can definitely say it is in VP or higher. It is in the same class as Kutchi Gujarati (KG) *pacho*, which is in FocP (Patel-Grosz & Beck 2014, 2019). Since it does not interact with clause type (presupp. projects through questions), thus can’t be in ForceP.

$$(2) \llbracket vaapas \rrbracket = \lambda P_{\langle s,t \rangle}. \underline{\lambda e_s. \exists e'_s [\tau(e') \prec \tau(e) \ \& \ P_C(e')]} . P(e) \ (P_C = \text{reverse of } P)$$

- (3) biinaa-ne ali-ko taalaa **vaapas** diyaa
 Bina-ERG Ali-DAT back lock give.PFV
 ‘Bina give Ali the lock **back**.’ (*Ali had given Bina the lock earlier*)

The order *DO vaapas V* is the *neutral* order; in *non-neutral* orders, *vaapas* is Focus-sensitive: the sentence containing it cannot be all-Given, it must contain something new/contrastive. In a context like (4), the sentence (4a) is all-Given (apart from the adverb), and it can

feliculously host *vaapas* only in neutral position. In any non-neutral order, the sentence is *required* to contain some F-marking, which must follow *vaapas* (4b good, 4c bad).

- (4) ek din ali-ne biina-ko caabii dii. (baad meN...)
 one day Ali-ERG Bina-DAT key give.PFV later in
 ‘One day Ali gave Bina a key. (Later...)’
- a. (#vaapas) biina-ne (#vaapas) ali-ko (#vaapas) caabii **vaapas** dii
 Benu-ERG Anu-DAT back key give.PFV
 ‘...Bina gave Ali the key back.’ *All-Given, only neutral order good*
- b. New material after *vaapas*, good
 b-ne a-ko **vaapas** taalaa V
 B-ERG A-DAT back key V
 ‘...Bina gave Ali a lock back.’
- c. New material before *vaapas*, bad
 #b-ne arjun-ko **vaapas** caabii V
 B-ERG Arjun-DAT back key V
 ‘...Bina gave Arjun the key back.’

In *all* non-neutral orders, only post-*vaapas* constituents can bear Focus; (5) is one example (compare (1) with *kya:*). Stress can’t save other constituents: prosodic Focus is ungrammatical pre-*vaapas* (6), because only one instance Focus is possible, and there it violates the requirement that Focus follow *vaapas*. Note: in neutral order, prosodic-F can go anywhere.

- (5) biinaa-ne **vaapas** ali-ko taalaa diyaa
 Bina-ERG Ali-DAT back lock give.PFV
 ‘Did Bina give Ali a lock back...’
- a. #ya bipaasha-ne? b. ya arjun-ko? c. ya lifaafaa?
 or Bipasha-ERG or Arjun-DAT or envelope
 ‘or did Bipasha?’ ‘or to Arjun?’ ‘or an envelope?’
- (6) *[BIPASHA]_F-ne **vaapas** ali-ko taalaa diyaa
 Bipasha-ERG back Ali-DAT lock give.PFV

CONCLUSION Above data show a VP-adverb marking the left edge of a Focus zone (and letting Given material out) just like *kya:*. A conclusion from this is *vaapas* can’t be in FocP itself (*contra* Patel-Grosz & Beck’s account for KG *pacho*), because in a system where only Spec,FocP hosts positional Focus, FocP *vaapas* erroneously predicts adjacency between it and whatever is F-marked as in derivation (7).

- (7) [_{FocP} **vaapas** [_{VP} binaa-ne ali-ko taalaa diyaa]]
 ⇒ *[_{FocP} **vaapas** [ALI]_F-ko [_{VP} binaa-ne *t*_{ali} taalaa diyaa]]

If we assume all the Given material then evacuates yielding the grammatical *binaa-ne taalaa vaapas* [ALI]_F-ko diyaa, we always end up with the F-bearing element immediately following *vaapas* and also in the immediately preverbal position. Even going through every single permutations of Given material optionally evacuating/staying *in situ*, there is no way to generate orders where the F-marked constituent is neither adjacent to *vaapas*, nor immediately preverbal. The way forward involves finding a method to reconcile the erroneous prediction above, which will most likely be achieved by (a) precisely pinning down the position of *vaapas*, and (b) examining how far we can get in capturing the facts using optionality of Given material to move to the left periphery. The paper explores these ways forward.

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

Confirmation of focus-partitioning using rising intonation to signal polar question, then follow-up.

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| <p>(8) b-ne a-ko vaapas taalaa V↑
 B-ERG A-DAT back lock V
 ‘Did Bina give Ali a lock back...’
 a.#ya bipaasha-ne?
 or Bipasha-ERG
 ‘or did Bipasha?’
 b.#ya arjun-ko?
 or Arjun-DAT
 ‘or to Arjun?’
 c. ya lifaafaa?
 or envelope
 ‘or an envelope?’</p> | <p>(9) vaapas b-ne a-ko taalaa V↑
 Bina-ERG Ali-DAT back lock V
 ‘Did Bina give Ali a lock back...’
 a. ya bipaasha-ne?
 or Bipasha-ERG
 ‘or did Bipasha?’
 b. ya arjun-ko?
 or Arjun-DAT
 ‘or to Arjun?’
 c. ya lifaafaa?
 or envelope
 ‘or an envelope?’</p> |
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Neutral order; underlining marks all constituents that are able to bear prosodic Focus.

- (10) biinaa-ne ali-ko taalaa **vaapas** diyaa
 Bina-ERG Ali-DAT back lock give.PFV
 ‘Did Bina give Ali a lock back...’
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>a. ya <u>bipaasha-ne</u>?
 or Bipasha-ERG
 ‘or did Bipasha?’</p> | <p>b. ya <u>arjun-ko</u>?
 or Arjun-DAT
 ‘or to Arjun?’</p> | <p>c. ya <u>lifaafaa</u>?
 or envelope
 ‘or an envelope?’</p> |
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