

Wh-scope in Finite CP Clauses in Bengali

This paper explains the differing scope of *wh* elements in Bengali preverbal and postverbal finite CP clauses. I argue on the basis of extraction, VP-ellipsis and verb linearization that preverbal CP clauses are complements of the verb. Under this analysis postverbal finite CP clauses are extraposed adjuncts, with the adjunction resulting in islandhood for scope. I also demonstrate that extraction and binding theoretic arguments can refute criticisms of the extraposition account.

The basic word order of Bengali is SOV, but constituents can scramble to a certain extent to yield pragmatically marked word orders. In particular, CP clauses without an overt complementizer can occur on either side of the verb (1):

1. *kalam* ([*jolil khetē geche*]) *bollo* ([*jolil khetē geche*)
Kalam [_{CP} Jolil eat.Inf go.Past] said [_{CP} Jolil eat.Inf go.Past]
Kalam said that Jolil has left to eat.

However, the scope of *wh*-phrases varies depending on the position of the CP clause with respect to the verb. A *wh*-element in an embedded CP clause that precedes the verb has both matrix and embedded scope, whereas a *wh*-element in a postverbal CP clause has only an embedded scope (Simpson and Bhattacharya 2003).

Preverbal CP: Sub [_{CP} ..*wh*..] V

2. *ora* [_{CP} *ke ashbe*] *shuneche*
they who come.Fut hear.Past.3
i) Who have they heard will come?
ii) They have heard who will come.
(examples from Bayer 1996)

Postverbal CP: Sub V [_{CP} ..*wh*..]

3. *ora shuneche* [_{CP} *ke ashbe*]
they hear.Past.3 who come.Fut
i) *Who have they heard will come?
ii) They have heard who will come.

Since Bengali is a *wh*-in-situ language and covert movement would allow *wh*-elements in postverbal CP clauses to take matrix scope, such scopal freezing is unexpected.

Previous analyses have proposed different mechanisms to account for the lack of matrix *wh*-scope in postverbal CPs (Mahajan 1990, Srivastav 1991, Bayer, 1996, Lahiri 2002, Simpson and Bhattacharya 2003, Bhatt and Dayal 2007, Manetta, In press). In this paper I concentrate on distinguishing between two of them: the antisymmetric account (Simpson and Bhattacharya 2003) and the extraposition analysis (Mahajan 1990, Srivastav 1991). The antisymmetric account claims that Bengali is underlyingly SVO, and that the postverbal CP is in its base position; the preverbal CP raises to a non-subject *wh*-licensing position, resulting in overt *wh*-movement and matrix scope. As Bhatt and Dayal (2007) argue, an antisymmetric approach is not necessary to account for CP clauses in Bengali, and it is implausible given that Bengali behaves as a head-final SOV language in every other respect. I revive the extraposition account, which base-generates CP clauses in the canonical preverbal complement position and extraposes them as adjuncts to a higher postverbal position, where they are islands for extraction.

I support the extraposition account with evidence from extraction, VP-ellipsis and verb linearization. The analysis predicts that preverbal CPs should allow extraction (4), and postverbal CPs, being adjuncts to a higher position, should disallow extraction (5). My data, based on elicited judgments, shows this to be the case, contrary to what Simpson and Bhattacharya (2003) claim.

4. *malariate_i krishno* [*ram t_i mara geche*] *bhablo*
malaria.Loc Krishna [Ram die go.Past] think.Past
Krishna thought that Ram died of malaria.
5. *malariate_i krishno bhablo* [*ram t_i mara geche*]
malaria.Loc Krishna think.Past [Ram die go.Past]
*Krishna thought that Ram died of malaria.

The ellipsis test is a *v*-stranding VP ellipsis (Toosarvandani 2009) based on eliding the CP and the matrix verb of a complex predicate, while stranding the light verb (*v*). The second preverbal CP is elided along with the matrix verb and the elided constituents mirror the antecedent (6). In (7) the postverbal CP and the matrix verb in the antecedent are on either side of the light verb, and if the eliding constituents mirror the antecedent then two disjoint constituents are eliding. If instead we consider the ellipsis in the postverbal case to take place before extraposition then we can claim one constituent to be eliding. These data indicate that CP complements are initially merged preverbally and subsequently extraposed.

6. *Sima [ke ashbe] fash koreche kintu Mina <[ke ashbe] fash> koreni.*
 Sima [who come.Fut] loose.Inf do.Perf.3 but Mina do.3.Neg
 Sima disclosed who will come but Mina did not.

7. *Sima fash koreche [ke ashbe] kintu Mina <fash> koreni <[ke ashbe]>.*
 Sima loose.Inf do.Perf.3 [who come.Fut] but Mina do.3.Neg
 Sima disclosed who will come but Mina did not.

Finally, the inability of the CP to occur between the matrix verb and the light verb (8) once again shows us that the postverbal CP cannot be a complement of the selecting verb.

8. **Sima fash [ke ashbe] koreche*
 Sima loose.Inf [who come.Fut] do.Perf.3
 Sima has disclosed who will come.

Furthermore, one of the main arguments against the extraposition account is that it is possible for a matrix-clause indirect object to bind a pronoun in the post-verbal CP clause (Bayer 1996). Such a bound-variable interpretation should not be available if the CP clause is extraposed and adjoined to a position higher than the indirect object (9).

9. *tumi prottekta cheleke_i bolecho [_{CP} ke take_i durgo pujo-y notun jama kapor debe]*
 you each.DEF boy.Acc say.Past.2 who he.Acc Durga Puja.Loc new shirt cloth give.Fut.3
 You have told each boy_i who will give him_i new clothes in Durga Puja.

A similar argument is posited by Mahajan (1997) for Hindi against his own extraposition analysis (Mahajan 1990), which ports over to Bengali. He notes that an R-expression in the post-verbal CP appears to be bound by an indirect object in the matrix clause. I invoke the rightward scrambling approach of Mahajan (1988), elaborated upon by Bhatt and Dayal (2007) and Manetta (In press), which accounts for the correlation between scope and linear order of Hindi-Urdu DPs, and extend it to Bengali CPs. I show that, under such an analysis the binding arguments against the extraposition account do not hold and in fact, the binding data is consistent with an extraposition analysis.

References:

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