MERGER VERSUS CONTRAST SLUICING IN HINDI-URDU

INTRODUCTION  This paper compares the behaviour of merger sluicing and contrast sluicing with respect to islands and intervention effects. We observe that while contrast sluicing behaves like wh-in situ in Hindi-Urdu, merger sluicing unexpectedly differs in its island sensitivity. Further, we demonstrate that this differential behaviour cannot be reduced to properties of wh-scrambling.

HINDI-URDU SHOWS ISLAND EFFECTS  Hindi-Urdu is a language that does not have English-like obligatory wh-fronting (1), but allows wh-scrambling (2). Additionally, constructions which block wh-movement in English, e.g. complex NP islands, block both matrix wh-interpretation (3) and overt wh-scrambling (4) in Hindi-Urdu (Dayal 1996).

(1)  vo miThaaii kis-ne banaayii thii?
that sweet who-ERG make.PFV be.PST
‘Who made that sweet?’
(2)  kis-nei vo miThaaii ti banaayii thii?
(3)  *giita-ko vo miThaaii [jo kis-ne banaayii thii] pasand hai
Gita-DAT that sweet [REL.PRON who-ERG make.PFV be.PST] like be.PRES
INTENDED: ‘Gita likes a sweet that was made by who?’
(4)  *kis-nei giita-ko vo miThaaii [jo ti banaayii thii] pasand hai
Merger sluicing and contrast sluicing are both available in the language (5), but show differential behaviour with respect to islands. While merger sluicing does not show island effects, contrast sluicing does (6). Under the reading shown, trying to create a contrast sluice out of an island causes ungrammaticality.

(5)  giita-ne {koi miThaai | halwa} khaayii lekin mujhe nahi pata {kaunsii | aur kyaa}
Gita-ERG {some sweet | halwa}eat.PFV but I-DAT NEG know {which | else what}
MERGER SLUICE: ‘Gita ate some sweet but I don’t know which.’
CONTRAST SLUICE: ‘Gita ate halwa but I don’t know what else.’
(6)  giita-ne vo miThaaii khaayii jo {kisi-ne | jon-ne} banaayii
Gita-ERG that sweet eat.PFV REL.PRON {someone-ERG | John-ERG} make.PFV
thi, par mujhe nahi pata {kis-ne | *aur kis-ne}
be.PST but I-DAT NEG know {who-ERG | *else who-ERG}
MERGER SLUICE: ‘Gita ate a dish that was made by someone, but I don’t know who Gita ate a dish that was made by.’
CONTRAST SLUICE: ‘Gita ate a dish that was made by John, but I don’t know who else Gita ate a dish that was made by.’

INTERVENTION EFFECTS IN SLUICING  HU shows intervention effects, as exemplified by (7), where focus marking is ungrammatical in a question. As has been shown for other languages (e.g. Japanese), intervention effects in HU are ameliorated by wh-scrambling (8).
In a minimally different sentence, but with merger sluicing (9), there is no amelioration of the intervention effect. This is surprising under a wh-movement analysis of the sluice (Bhattacharya & Simpson 2012). Such an analysis would predict the structure in (10), which should ameliorate the intervention effect just as in (8) above. The fact that there is no amelioration in (9) shows that there is no movement in merger sluicing in Hindi-Urdu.

(9) *sirf giita-ne-hi kisi-ko tohfaa diiaya, par mujhe nahi pata kis-ko only Gita-ERG-FOC someone-DAT gift give.PFV but I-DAT NEG know who-DAT INTENDED: ‘Only Gita gave a gift to someone, but I don’t know to who.’

(10) *sirf giita-ne-hi kisi-ko tohfaa diiaya, par mujhe nahi pata
    [ kis-ko; sirf giita-ne-hi t_1 tohfaa diiaya ]

In the contrast sluicing construction (11) we observe the same lack of amelioration, showing the impossibility of a wh-movement structure (12), parallel to (10).

(11) *sirf giita-ne-hi jon-ko tohfaa diiaya, par mujhe nahi pata aur kis-ko only Gita-ERG-FOC John-DAT gift give.PFV but I-DAT NEG know else who-DAT INTENDED: ‘Only Gita gave a gift to someone, but I don’t know to who else.’

(12) *sirf giita-ne-hi jon-ko tohfaa diiaya, par mujhe nahi pata aur kis-ko
    [ sirf giita ne hi t_1 tohfaa diiaya ]

The full sentence version of (12), with wh-scrambling, is perfectly grammatical. This is further evidence of the type in (8) that shows that in general, wh-scrambling in Hindi-Urdu can ameliorate intervention effects. The absence of amelioration in merger and contrast sluicing therefore shows that these constructions do not involve wh-movement.

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<th>ESCAPES ISLANDS</th>
<th>AMELIORATES INTERVENTION EFFECTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>WH-SCRAMBLING</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>WIDE SCOPE WH-</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>MERGER SLUICING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
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**Conclusion** With respect to both islands and intervention effects, contrast sluicing behaves the same as wide-scope wh-interpretation. While Hindi-Urdu merger sluicing patterns with contrast sluicing and wh-interpretation with respect to amelioration of intervention, it is unique in its ability to escape islands. Since wh-movement in this language cannot escape islands, the ability of merger sluicing to do so must arise from some independent property of merger sluicing itself.