

Disagreeing in Hindi-Urdu

We show that Hindi-Urdu has a presuppositional negation *thorī*: along the lines of Italian *mica* (Cinque 1976, Frana & Rawlins 2015). Like *mica*, it is elsewhere in the language a nominal modifier that denotes a small quantity with meaning ‘a few/little’. We demonstrate its presuppositional nature, delimit its distribution, and compare it to Italian ‘mica’ with which it shares a number of properties but from which it differs in its inability to appear in questions. *Thorī*: imposes a requirement that its prejacent have been entertained in the context and that the utterance it appears in expresses a disagreement with the entertained prejacent.

The distribution of *thorī*: to a first approximation tracks that of the default negation *nahī*: – like *nahī*:, *thorī*: appears in the verbal complex when it negates the sentence and is right adjacent to a constituent that it negates when it functions as constituent negation.

- (1) a. sentential negation:

Mona=ne Gita=ko dā:t-a: thorīi thaa
 Mona=Erg Gita=Dat scold-Pfv little be.Pst
 ‘Mona hadn’t scolded Gita.’

- b. constituent negation:

[[Mona=ne] thorīi] Gita=ko dā:t-a: thaa
 Mona=Erg little Gita=Dat scold-Pfv be.Pst
 ‘It wasn’t Mona who scolded Gita. (Someone else had.)’

But differences emerge when we consider the demands that *thorī*: puts on the preceding context. Consider a situation where I ask you to tell me something about your friend Mayank, who I don’t know anything about. Then to tell me that Mayank does not like lazy people, you can use the default negation but not *thorī*:

- (2) Mayank=ko aalsi: log pasand nahī:/#thorī: haī
 Mayank=Dat lazy people like Neg/little be.Prs.Pl
 ‘Mayank doesn’t like lazy people.’

The intuition is that no proposition involving Mayank has been under consideration as far as I am concerned and this is what makes *thorī*: infelicitous here. The relevance of the preceding context and prior expectations is also shown by the following sequence used by Frana & Rawlins 2015 for *mica*.

- (3) Background: S and A live in Amherst and want to go to a party in NYC.

- a. no prior expectation that my sister has a car:

A: How are we going to get there?
 S: pata: nahī:. aajkal meri: behen=ke paas car nahī:/#thorī: hai
 know Neg these.days my sister=Gen near car Neg/little is
 ‘I don’t know. These days my sister does not have a car.’

- b. prior expectation that my sister has a car:

A: How are we going to get there? Couldn’t your sister give us a ride?
 S: meri: behen=ke paas car nahī:/thorī: hai.
 my sister=Gen near car Neg/little is
 ‘My sister does not have a car.’ (response is ‘emphatic’ with *thorī*:)

In (3b), the preceding question shows that a discourse participant presupposes that my sister has a car. But it is not necessary for the proposition negated by *thorī*: to be explicitly articulated/presupposed. Here are two cases where *thorī*: is infelicitous even though the proposition it negates has not been explicitly articulated/presupposed by any discourse participant.

- (4) a. context: S tries to pick up a cat. The cat looks scared (from Frana & Rawlins 2015).
 ɖaro mat! mĕ̃ tumhĕ ma:rūga: thoṛi:
 fear not I you.Dat hit.Fut.1Sg little
 ‘Don’t be afraid. I’m not going to hit you.’
- b. context: at dinner with my mother, I assert that making a certain kind of cake at home is difficult. Then I realize that she has made this very cake and she will interpret my comment to mean I think her cake is bad.
 aap=kaa kek kharaab thoṛi: hai
 you.Hon=Gen cake bad little is
 ‘Your cake isn’t bad.’

In both (4a, b), *thoṛi:* can be used to negate a proposition which is not ever expressed but which the speaker has reason to believe is held by a discourse participant. To an initial approximation, the presuppositional semantics suggested in Cinque 1976 and articulated in Frana & Rawlins 2015 for *mica* work for *thoṛi:* – it is felicitous only if the proposition is negated is assumed by some discourse participant.

Apart from its presuppositional nature, *thoṛi:* differs from *nahī:* in how it interacts with PPIs: PPIs can normally outscope *nahī:* and hence ‘rescue’ themselves, they cannot do so with *thoṛi:*. The intuition that we are pursuing is that *thoṛi:* takes highest scope within its clause making it impossible for the PPI to scope over it. *thoṛi:* does not differ from *nahī:* wrt NPI-licensing; both license NPIs.

- (5) Ram=ne [kuch kita:bĕ]PPI nahī:/#thoṛi: paṛhī:
 Ram=Erg some books.F Neg/little read-Pfv.FPI
 ‘Ram didn’t read some books.’

Finally, we turn to the distribution of *thoṛi:* in questions and in embedded clauses. Unlike *mica*, *thoṛi:* is categorically ruled out in questions, both Y/N questions and *wh*-questions. This follows from the presuppositional nature of *thoṛi:* – there is a conflict between the information seeking properties of questions and the presuppositional requirements of *thoṛi:*.

- (6) kyaa Mohit=ne Rina=se baat nahī:/#thoṛi: kii?
 Q Mohit=Erg Rina=Inst talk.F Neg/little did.F
 ‘Did Mohit not talk to Rina?’

The distribution of *thoṛi:* in embedded clauses is also very limited – it is not possible in *if*-clauses, *when*-clauses, *because*-clauses, or relative clauses. It is, however, possible in complements of verbs like *think* but not emotive factives like *be happy/sad* (see Frana 2016 for similar restrictions on *mica*).

- (7) context: A: It’s raining.
 B: mujhe lagtaa hai ki baarish thoṛi: ho rahii hai
 me.Dat seem Prs that rain little be Prog.F is
 ‘I think that it is not raining.’

We believe that these restrictions on embedding reveal a further aspect of *thoṛi:* - in addition to its presuppositional requirements by which the prejacent of *thoṛi:* must have been entertained in the discourse, an utterance in which *thoṛi:* appears must be used to express disagreement with the entertained proposition. The disagreement requirement holds in (7) - B disagrees with A, but it would not hold for *if/when/because*/relative clauses even if the presuppositional requirement held. Note that we need both components – emotive factives would have disagreement but the factivity would be incompatible with the presuppositional requirement.