

The passive and the structure of the verbal complex in Hindi-Urdu

The locus and derivation of passive participial morphology has been a subject of increasing interest, in particular as a driving argument for approaches assuming that syntax is the sole derivational component as in Distributed Morphology (Halle 1990, Halle and Marantz 1993, Embick and Noyer 2001, Embick 2004, and related work). The Hind-Urdu analytic passive employs a participial form of the main verb (homophonous with the perfective participle) alongside a passive auxiliary (1).

- (1) *yeh kavita Radheshyaam-dwaaraa **likh-ii** **ga-yii** hai*
 this poem.f Radheshyaam-by write-Pfv.f Pass-Pfv.f be.Prs.Sg

‘This poem has been written by Radheshyaam.’ (Hook 1979:121 from Bhatt 2003)

Interestingly, in Hindi-Urdu compound predicates of the V-VSTEM variety (Bashir 1993, Butt and Geuder 2001, Butt and Ramchand 2001), it is the so-called light verb that appears in participial form, not the main verb, which appears in its root form (2).

- (2) *mez **haTaa** **di-i** **jaa-egii***
 table remove give-Pfv.f Pass-Fut.f

‘The table will be removed’ (Hook 1979:120 from Bhatt 2003)

This is in contrast to constructions with the modal *sakna* ‘can’, in which it is the main verb that appears in passive participial form (3), despite the fact that the main verb appears in the uninflected root form in active voice constructions with light verbs and modals alike.

- (3) *mez **haTaa-ii** **jaa sak-tii** hai*
 table.f remove-Pfv.f Pass can-Hab.f be

‘The table is being/can be removed.’ (Bhatt 2003:3)

The contrast between (2) and (3) is surprising given that modals often group with light verbs and not with auxiliaries in their response to syntactic and distributional tests, including control of the ergative case on subject (4), reduplication, and position of negation (Butt and Ramchand 2001, Kumar 2006).

- (4) *Vo (*us-ne) ciTThii likh sakaa.*
 he.nom he-erg letter write could

‘He could write a letter’. (Koul 2008)

In a theoretical framework in which the passive is constructed in the syntactic component and adjacency is crucial to the attachment of dependent morphemes (Marantz 1988, 1989, Bobaljik 1994, Embick and Noyer 2001), the locus of passive morphology provides important information about the structure of the verbal complex. In this paper we propose that an analysis of the passive participial form in Hindi-Urdu follows from (a) a revised understanding of the structure of the verbal complex in Hindi-Urdu and (b) an account of the passive participle couched in the Distributed Morphology framework following Embick 2000, 2003, 2004.

The unmarked order of the verbal complex in Hindi-Urdu is: Main Verb (Light Verb) (Passive auxiliary) (Modal) (Progressive) (Be Auxiliary). Assuming Aspect to be the locus of passive participial morphology in Hindi-Urdu and taking as its complement an unsaturated vP (Embick 2004), the structure of a simple passive is in (5).

- (5) [[[[[*yeh kaviita* *likh* _{vP}] v _{vP}] -ii _{AspP}] *gay* _{FP}] -ii _{AspP}] *hai* _{TP}]
 this poem.f write -Pfv.f Pass -Pfv.f be

The passive auxiliary heads a functional projection above the Aspect head containing the passive morpheme, the sentential aspectual morphology appears in a higher Aspect head, and the tensed auxiliary is found in T. Butt and Ramchand (2001) and Butt and Geuder (2001) argue that the

light verb in complex predicates is found within the vP. In the passive, this means that the light verb intervenes between the main verb and the Aspect head (6).

(6) [[[[mez haTaa_{vP}] di_{vP}] -i_{AspP}] jay_{FP}] -egii_{TP}
 table.f remove give -Pfv.f Pass -Fut.f

In the morphological component, the passive morphology must undergo a form of Morphological Merger (Marantz 1988) called Lowering (Embick and Noyer 2001) to adjoin to the head of its complement. The main verb in (1)/(6) is too embedded to combine with the passive morphology, and so it will therefore attach to the light verb. In contrast, we propose that the modal cannot be in this configuration with the Aspect head in a passive clause because it dominates the Aspect head, and the passive auxiliary intervenes (7).

(7) [[[[mez haTaa_{vP}] v_{vP}] -ii_{AspP}] jaa_{FP}] sak_{ModP}] -tii_{AspP}] hai_{TP}
 table.f remove -Pfv.f Pass can -Hab.f be

For this reason the modal does not combine with passive morphology, and does not appear in passive participial form. Interesting, there exists a marginally grammatical passive in which the modal does appear in participial form; this is in the marked instance in which the order of the modal and passive auxiliary is reversed. In this case, we will argue that a structure in which the lower Aspect dominates the functional projection headed by the modal is marginally available.

Hindi-Urdu sentential negation appears immediately preceding or following the main verb. Current approaches either locate NEG just below TP and require “snowballing” head movement and multiple reorderings (Kumar 2006), or locate NEG lower, between vP and Aspect, predicting that NEG should block lowering of passive/aspectual morphology to the verb, contrary to fact (Bhatt and Dayal 2007). We propose that NEG is found between Aspect and the functional head hosting the passive auxiliary. This, combined with the structure of the verbal complex argued for here (as in (7)), allows us to understand V-NEG-PassAux as the basic order and NEG-V-PassAux as derived by a single instance of head movement of the main (or light) verb.

This paper presents a new argument for a particular architecture of the functional heads in the verbal complex in Hindi-Urdu based on evidence from the formation of the passive. Previously mysterious distinctions between passive voice constructions with modals and with light verbs, as well as the interaction between sentential negation and the passive, find explanation in a widely-assumed DM account of passive morphology. In particular, it is the requirement, under this account, that the passive morpheme lower onto the head of its complement which prompts a revision of the structure of the Hindi-Urdu verbal complex.

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