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#### 1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to show that genitive subjects induce **derivational islands** in Hindi-Urdu in that they block extraction of any DP that they c-command in both (short/long-distance) scrambling and sluicing structures. Additionally, with regard to sluicing, we argue - based on the data from island-effects with genitive subjects - that there is syntactic structure in the ellipsis domain that is deleted at PF (contra Culicover & Jackendoff 2005).

#### 1.1 Mahajan (2005)

Mahajan (2005) shows that genitive subjects can scramble out of Complex Noun Phrase (CNP) and adjunct islands (ex. 1-2, respectively), but non-genitive DPs cannot (ex. 3-4). Similarly, only genitive DPs can be 'extracted' out of sluicing structures (see the contrast between ex. 5 and 6).

- (1) Geetaa-ki, Ravii-ne [ \_\_ Mohan-ko dii hui kitaab] phaar dii (par Salmaa kii nahii) Geeta-gen Ravi-erg Mohan-dat given book tore gave but Salma-gen neg 'Ravi tore up the book that Geeta gave to Mohan (but not the one that Salma gave to Mohan)'
- (2) ?Raam-ke, Salmaa [\_\_ Sitaa-se milne par] bahut naaraz hogii Ram-gen Salma-nom Sita-with meet-inf upon very angry become-fut 'Salma will become very angry upon Ram's meeting with Sita'
- (3) \*Mohan-ko, Ravii-ne [Geetaa-ki \_\_ dii hui kitaab] phaar dii Mohan-dat Ravi-erg Geeta-gen given book tore gave 'Ravi tore up the book that Geeta gave to Mohan'
- (4) \*Sitaa-se, Salmaa [Raam-ke \_\_ milne par] bahut naaraz hogii Sita-with Salma-nom Ram-gen meet-inf upon very angry become-fut

'Salma will become very angry upon Ram's meeting with Sita'

- (5) mE jaantaa hu ki Ravii-ne [kisiki ek larke-ko dii hui kitaab] phaar dii I know be that Ravi-erg someone-gen a boy-dat given book tore gave par mujhe nahii pataa (ki) kis-ki but I-dat neg know (that) who-gen 'I know that Ravi tore up the book that someone gave to a boy but I don't know who'
- (6) \*mE jaantaa hu ki Ravii-ne [Salmaa-ki ek larke-ko dii hui kitaab] phaar dii I know be that Ravi-erg Salma-gen a boy-dat given book tore gave par mujhe nahii pataa (ki) kis-ko but I-dat neg know (that) who-dat 'I know that Ravi tore up the book that Salma gave to a boy but I don't know who'

This leads Mahajan to conclude that CLAUSES containing genitive subjects are islands for movement for both scrambled elements and wh-phrases in sluicing structures. Structurally lower DPs hence fail to move across such clauses, as examples (3), (4) and (6) illustrate.

# 1.2 Our Proposal

We take issue with this observation and argue that genitive subjects themselves (and NOT the clauses containing them) block extraction of embedded DPs. The first piece of evidence for our claim comes from structures where genitive subject extraction fails to invoke any kind of ungrammaticality. Since the genitive subject itself is within the allegedly island-inducing clause, its extraction must also yield ungrammatical structures. Since this is not the case, it follows that the clause containing the genitive subject is not an island. The question then arises: what underlies the unacceptability of (ex. 3- 4) and (ex. 6) with non-genitive DP extraction. Our answer to this is: genitive subjects themselves block extraction of non-genitive phrases. Genitive subjects intervene movement of DPs they c-command, as represented in the following schema (7).

Two possible reasons for such intervention that we would like to test in this paper are given below:

- (i) minimality violations: the genitive subject is in an A-bar position, and it blocks A-bar movement of all DPs that it c-commands,
- (ii) double topic restriction: The genitive subject is itself a topic and Hindi-Urdu does not permit any clause/structure to host more than one topic.

### 2. Empirical Evidence for Genitive Subject Induced Islands

In this section, we put forward some novel empirical evidence corroborating our claim that genitive subjects, and not the clauses containing them are islands for movement. To begin, it is observed that in the presence of c-commanding genitive subjects, non-genitive DPs are barred from even short distance scrambling to the left periphery of the intermediate clause. As shown in (ex. 8), the non-genitive DP cannot move past the genitive subject to the clause periphery indicated by a low-reading adverbial.

(8) \*mE jaantaa hu ki Ravii-ne [do din pahle Johnko Salmaa-ki \_\_ dii hui kitaab] I know be that Ravi-erg two days ago John-dat. Salmaa-gen given book phaar dii tore gave

'I know that Ravi tore up the book [that Salma gave to John two days ago]'

'I know that Ravi tore up the book [that Salma gave to John two days ago]'

Under the assumption that short-distance scrambling involves DP-movement to a position in the embedded sentence, movement of 'John' to the periphery of the embedded clause is predicted to be acceptable as it does not cross the alleged island. This is however not what we see in (8), where movement of the lower DP to a position beyond the genitive subject is obligatorily ruled out. The second piece of evidence is that when there is a genitive DP that does not c-command the lower phrase, both sluicing and scrambling become acceptable. A scrambled DP (ex. 9) or a wh-phrase (ex. 10) in a sluiced structure can occupy a position outside the clause containing the genitive DP.

- (9) Sueko me jaantii hu [Johnke betene \_\_ kitaab di he] Sue-dat. I know be John-gen son-erg book give be 'I know that John's son gave a book to Sue'
- (10) me jaantii hu [ki Johnke betene kisiko kitaab dii he], par pataa nahii I know be that John-gen. son-erg. someone-dat. book give be, but know not kisko.

who-dat.

'I know that John's son gave a book to someone, but I don't know to whom'

Yet another piece of evidence corroborating our claim that Genitive Subjects induce barriers comes from island-insensitive sluicing sentences. Sluicing in Hindi-Urdu is insensitive to strong islands (ex. 11).

(11) me [yeh baat ki John kisiko pyaar kartaa he] jaantii hu, par pataa nahii I [this fact that John-nom someone-acc loves do be] know be, but don't know kisko.

who

'I know the fact that John loves someone, but I don't know who'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Mahajan (1990), contra Kidwai (2000) argues for both A and A-bar properties for short-distance scrambling in Hindi-Urdu. We elaborate on this issue in a later section.

As illustrated in the above example, sluicing is permissible out of strong islands like a complex noun phrase. Sluicing out of adjuncts is also undertaken with similar ease. These cases stand in direct contrast to the cases that Mahajan discusses, where DP extraction is rendered impossible across clauses containing genitive subjects. It therefore becomes all the more pertinent to look at the properties of these subjects in order to explain the aforementioned contrast.

Another phenomenon where genitive subjects act as interveners is Long Distance Agreement (LDA) cases in Hindi-Urdu. For some speakers (as reported in Bhatt 2005, though see Chandra 2007 for different judgments and one potential explanation for the dialectal variations), LDA across clauses containing genitive subjects is rendered impossible. This is illustrated below (ex. 12), with (ex. 13) providing its sole acceptable counterpart.

- (12) \*Firoz-ne [Shabnam-kaa roTii khaa-nii] chaah-ii Firoz-Erg Shabnam-Gen bread.F eat-Inf.F want-Pfv.FSg 'Firoz wanted Shabnam to eat bread.'
- (13) ?Firoz-ne [Shabnam-kaa roTii khaa-naa] chaah-aa Firoz-Erg Shabnam-Gen bread.F eat-Inf want-Pfv.MSg 'Firoz wanted Shabnam to eat bread.'

Perhaps as expected, in cases where a genitive subject goes missing from the infinitival (ex. 14), LDA becomes completely acceptable.

(14) Firoz-ne [roTii khaa-nii] chaah-ii Firoz-Erg bread.F eat-Inf.F want-Pfv.FSg 'Firoz wanted to eat bread.'

If we were to assume following Mahajan (1990) and Chandra (2005, 2007) that agreement (long-distance or otherwise) is a result of overt movement, the unacceptability of (12) would imply that the embedded DP 'bread' fails to move to a position (possibly the specifier of the matrix verb) over the c-commanding genitive subject. In the absence of a genitive subject however, the embedded DP is free to move across the subordinate clause to trigger agreement with the main verb (as in ex. 14).<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Genitive Subjects at A-bar Positions

Before we go on to explain why genitive subjects act as interveners, let us contemplate over their A/A-bar status. First of all, let us compare them with other (nominative/ergative) subjects in the language to understand how they pattern with regard

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The authors predict that for the group of speakers represented by Bhatt, a non-c-commanding genitive subject would fail to block LDA. Since none of the authors have any native authority over the said dialect, they choose to leave this topic open for future work.

to binding and control. Davison (to appear) for instance, convincingly demonstrates, that canonical subjects (nominative/ergative) are mainly characterized by their ability to (a) A-bind reflexives and (b) control PRO-subjects (among some other properties). Some representative examples are given below (ex. 15 to ex. 16).<sup>3</sup>

- (15) John-i apni-i kitaab paRh rahaa he. John-nom. self's book read prog be. 'John is reading his book'
- (16) John [PRO ghar jaanaa] chaahtaa he. John PRO home go want be 'John wants to go home'
- (17) Johnne-i apni-i kitaab paRhii. John-erg self's book read 'John read his book'
- (18) Johnne [PRO ghar jaanaa] chaahaa. John-erg PRO home go want 'John wanted to go home'

These structures indicate that nominative and ergative subjects are placed at Apositions from where they may bind reflexives as well as control PRO-subjects. Extending these diagnostics to genitive subjects will thus allow us to place them on par with the former, at some A-position at the clause periphery (of the subordinate clause for the latter). However, a closer look at genitive subjects defeats such intentions. Hindi-Urdu speakers that we have consulted so far in our study have failed to come to any consensus regarding their A-status. While some of our informants allow A-binding (ex. 19) and control by genitive subjects (ex. 20), the rest find these impossible configurations. <sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, speakers who reject structures like (19)-(20) find (ii) good, suggesting that even for this group of speakers, genitive subjects are not obligatorily placed at A-bar sites.

Movement of the reflexive over the genitive subject in this case (unlike what we find in several of the other cases cited by Mahajan) is indicative of the fact that the latter is not necessarily in an A-bar position. In (i) for instance, the genitive subject occupies an A-position from where it binds the reflexive, whereas in (ii), the reflexive can overly A-bar move over it and reconstruct for appropriate binding relations at LF.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Nominative and ergative subjects can also appear in finite embedded contexts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> There are counterexamples to these cited cases. Consider the following sentence taken from Davison which shows the genitive subject of a sentential subject A-binding a reflexive, in direct contrast to the examples we provide above.

<sup>(</sup>i) [kumaar-kaa apne aap-ko/khud-ko acchaa lag-naa] swabhaavik he.

Kumar-gen self's-self-dat/self-dat. good strike-inf. natural is.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;It is natural [for Kumar to like himself]'

<sup>(</sup>ii) ?[apne aap-ko/khud-ko kumaar-kaa acchaa lag-naa] swabhaavik he.

Self's-self-dat/self-dat Kumar-gen good strike-inf natural is.

- (19) ?/\*mujhe [Gitaakii mohanko apniii kitaab denaa] pasand nahii aayaa. I-dat Gita-gen Mohan-dat. self's book give like not come 'I did not appreciate Gita giving her book to Mohan'
- (20) ?/\*mujhe [Gitaakaa [PRO chale jaanaa] chaahnaa] pasand nahii aayaa. I-dat Gita-gen go-away want like not come 'I did not appreciate that Gita wanted to leave'

Note that for the group of informants who reject the above structures, genitive subjects cannot hold A-positions, which results in their inability to A-bind and control c-commanding DPs. Therefore for this group, islandhood could as well result from the A-bar status of genitive subjects, as will be argued below. However, keeping in mind the dialectal variation observed above, this solution is not adequate since genitive subjects display A-properties for some speakers. Hence there must be a second potential cause for these islands. The next section discusses one such property of genitive subjects that transforms them into islands under certain conditions.

# 4. Genitive Subject Topics

Genitive subjects are generally attributed with topic interpretation. Though generic DPs may appear as genetic subjects as well, they too are (most often than not) imparted specific/referential semantics. That genitive subjects are topics could also be confirmed by another test showing their affinity with topics from other languages. It is commonly observed in English that topicalization cannot affect quantificational DPs (ex. 21). In more concrete terms, quantified DPs cannot overtly move to a topic position to the matrix clause periphery.

(21) \*[everybody else] we told his wife that we had called.

If genitive subjects were to display similar behavior, that should count as evidence for their topic status. This is exactly what we find with these subjects: they cannot be moved when they are quantificational DPs.

??har laRke-kii, Ravii-ne [\_ Mohan-ko dii hui kitaab] phaar dii (par Salmaa-kii Every boy-gen Ravi-erg Mohan-dat given book tore gave but Salma-gen nahii)

neg

'Ravi tore up the book that every boy gave to Mohan (but not the one that Salma gave to Mohan)'

Even more interestingly, quantificational DPs do not appear particularly appealing in base-generated positions either, as the following example (ex. 23) illustrates.

??Ravii-ne [har laRke-kii Mohan-ko dii hui kitaab] phaar dii par Salmaa kii nahii Ravi-erg every boy-gen Mohan-dat given book tore gave but Salma-gen neg 'Ravi tore up the book that every boy gave to Mohan but not the one that

Salma gave to Mohan'

# 5. Explaining Islands

# **5.1** Minimality Violations

Recall that for some Hindi-Urdu speakers, genitive subjects fail binding and control tests, canonically associated with subjects holding A-positions. One may conclude from this that they occupy A-bar sites, unlike their nominative and ergative counterparts. We suggested above that this could be one of the reasons why these subjects bar scrambling of lower DPs across them. However, we still haven't investigated the nature of movement involved in scrambling such that the moved DPs fail to cross the A-bar sites of genitive subjects. In this section, we aim to answer this very question.

## 5.2 The A-bar Properties of Short and Long-Distance Scrambling

Mahajan (1990) was the first comprehensive study of Hindi-Urdu scrambling, which noted A-bar properties underlying both long and short distance scrambling. It is the former type that however obligatorily exhibits A-bar properties; short-distance scrambling in some cases has A-properties as well. Since A-bar properties of long-distance scrambling have till now remained uncontested, we focus here only on the properties of short-distance scrambling whose exact nature still remains a point for debate.

Mahajan (1990) argues for A-properties of short-distance scrambling based largely on the existence of sentences like the following (ex. 24-27).

- (24) \*apne-i bacco-ne mohan-ko-i ghar-se nikaal diyaa.

  Self children Mohan house-from threw gave

  'Mohan was thrown out of the house by his own children'
- (25) ?mohan-ko-i apne-i bacco-ne ghar-se nikaal diyaa. Mohan self's children house-from threw gave 'Mohan was thrown out of the house by his own children'
- (26) \*uski-i behen kisko-i pyaar kartii he his sister who love does be 'Who does his sister love?'
- (27) kisko-i uski-i behen pyaar kartii he who his sister love does be 'Who does his sister love?'

Sentence (24) is a typical instance of Condition A violation, with the reflexive contained within the subject remaining outside the c-command domain of the antecedent object 'Mohan'. With object scrambling however, as shown in (ex. 25), the status of the sentence changes. The object 'Mohan', Mahajan suggests scrambles to an A-position

from where it A-binds the reflexive, making the sentence felicitous. Further evidence for A-scrambling in the language is provided by the next two sentences. It is commonly assumed in the literature that A-movement obviates Weak Crossover (WCO) violations. In (ex. 26), the pronominal subject cannot be co-indexed with a wh-phrase lower in the structure. In the following example (ex. 27), we move the wh-phrase over the co-indexed pronominal and unexpectedly, the said movement does not trigger unacceptability for the sentence. One of the obvious conclusions to draw from this is that the wh-phrase in the last sentence must have A-scrambled.

Though Mahajan's arguments are quite convincing, the issue is far from settled. Kidwai (2000) for instance challenges his observations, drawing on some very interesting cases that had hitherto not been discussed in the literature. Below, we discuss some of the data she cites to argue her case that short-distance scrambling in Hindi-Urdu is always to an A-bar position.

- (28) nur-i apne-aap-i-ko pyaar kartii he Noor self love does be 'Noor loves herself'
- (29) apne-aap-ko-i nur-i pyaar kartii he self Noor love does be 'Noor loves herself'
- (30) \*apne-aap-ne mohan-ko maaraa self Mohan hit 'Self hit Mohan'
- (31) \*mohan-ko apne-aap-ne maaraa Mohan self hit 'Self hit Mohan'
- (32) \*ek dusre-i-ne [mohan aur sita]-i-ko maaraa Each other Mohan and Sita hit 'Each other hit Mohan and Sita'
- (33) \*[mohan aur Sita]-i-ko ek dusre-i-ne maaraa Mohan and Sita each other hit 'Each other hit Mohan and Sita'

As illustrated in the first sentence (ex. 28), the subject A-binds the reflexive object. There is no degradation in felicity even when the reflexive is moved to a position preceding the antecedent subject (see ex. 29), suggesting that scrambled elements – on par with other A-bar elements – reconstruct at LF, in the process establishing correct interpretations. Sentence (30) is a typical case of Condition A violation and unlike what we find in the examples provided by Mahajan, the problem cannot be fixed by

scrambling the antecedent to a c-commanding position (ex. 31). The next two sentences repeat the pattern with reciprocals (ex. 32-33).

Kidwai further argues that examples with scrambling obviating WCO violations are also not strong enough to warrant an A-status to the movement. She reminds us of sentences like the following (ex. 34-35) where pronominals obligatorily obviate from the closest c-commanding subject.

- (34) sitaa-i uski-\*i/j gaaRi laayii Sita her car brought 'Sita brought her car.'
- (35) sitaa-ne uske-\*i/j piche dekhaa Sita her behind looked 'Sita looked behind her'

If this is a general property of Hindi-Urdu pronominals, it is unclear as to why the same is not observed in the examples provided by Mahajan. Assuming that in (ex. 27), the scrambled DP has moved to an A-position (the same as that held by a canonical subject), it is expected – contra facts – that the pronominal resists co-indexation with it. Therefore Mahajan's contention that short-distance scrambling is A-movement needs further substantiation. In the absence of any further proof, we would therefore like to maintain Kidwai's claims for the remainder of this paper – short-distance scrambling (on par with long-distance scrambling) is movement to an A-bar position.

## 5.3 Barring A-bar Scrambling Over A-bar Genitive Subjects

With some of the properties of genitive subjects and scrambling now in place, it is appropriate to ask: what makes scrambling and wh-movement over the former impossible? We will explore one of the possible reasons here and the argument comes from minimality restrictions in grammar (as redefined in Hornstein 2005).

We argue that since genitive subjects occupy A-bar positions, they bar the A-bar movement of any DP that they c-command. This makes it impossible to wh-move or (short or long-distance) scramble over the genitive subject as both kinds of movement target A-bar positions. The genitive subject, being closest to the said target, is the most likely candidate for movement. Schematically:

(36) ... 
$$[CP ... C^o ... [xP] SUB_{Gen} ... DP/WH ...]]$$

As illustrated in (36), the genitive subject is located in an A-bar position, marked as the specifier of xP. We fail to elaborate on the exact nature of this projection, but

evidently it is situated above the vP hosting direct or indirect objects (as evidenced by ex. 37). Results from adverbial tests also suggest that xP lies beyond the vP-layer (ex. 38).

- (37) mujhe [Johnkaa kisikobhii kitaab denaa] pasand nahii he I-dat John-gen someone-IO book-DO give like not be 'I don't like John giving books to everyone'
- (38) mujhe [Johnkaa chupke-chupke maryko kitaab denaa] pasand nahii he I-dat John-gen clandestine Mary book give like not be 'I don't like John giving books to Mary on the sly'

The genitive subject then goes on to block A-bar movement of all lower DPs over it. In the specific cases under discussion, the scrambled DP or the wh-phrase must target a position beyond xP, namely a specifier of CP. This movement is however rendered impossible due to the structurally higher DP (genitive subject) in the structure that acts as a closer goal for movement.

However, this solution does not suffice. Recall firstly, that genitive subjects also block LDA for some speakers of Hindi-Urdu. If we adopt Mahajan's (1990) and Chandra's (2005, 2007) analysis of LDA, then this prohibition is not on long-distance Agree triggered by some defective intervener (as discussed in Bhatt 2005), but rather a ban on the A-movement of the agreement triggering DP to the specifier of matrix vP. However, once we adopt their analysis, intervention effects by genitive subjects cannot be explained by appealing to minimality restrictions alone. Since genitive subjects are situated in A-bar positions, they must, in principle, be invisible to A-moving elements. Minimality also cannot explain how genitive subjects with A-properties become islands for the second group of speakers we had consulted. If genitive subjects bind and control lower DPs, they must be placed in A-sites. Hence, there must be a second factor that generates islands out of these subjects; we elaborate on it below.

# **6.** Exploring Double Topic Restriction

Hindi-Urdu topics can optionally appear with overt *-to* markers, as the following sentence (ex. 39) shows:

(39) Peterko-to me jaantaa hu ki sitaa bahut pyaar kartii he Peter-top I know be that Sita very-much love do be 'I know that Sita deeply loves Peter'

However, there is a restriction on the occurrence of multiple topics in the same structure. This is shown in (40).

(40) \*Sitaa-to Peterko-to me jaantaa hu ki bahut pyaar kartii he Sita-top Peter-top I know be that very-much love do be 'I know that Sita deeply loves Peter'

We claim that 'double topic restriction' could be a second, possible reason for why genitive subjects block LDA as well as induce islands for scrambling and sluicing structures. Moved DPs in both LDA and scrambling structures are interpreted as topics; they are objects that are previously identified in the discourse (see Mahajan 1990, Chandra 2005, 2007 for elaborate discussion). The following sentences (ex. 41-42) illustrate this point from LDA sentences. In the former (LDA structure), the agreement trigger gets a topic/specific interpretation, whereas in the latter (non-LDA case), it is always a non-specific/non-topic interpretation that is imparted to the embedded object.

- (41) Johnne [kuRsii toRnii] chaahii John chair break want 'John wanted to break the/a specific chair'
- (42) Johnne [kuRsii toRnaa] chaahaa John chair break want 'John wanted to break chairs'

In previous sections, we presented some evidence suggesting that genitive subjects are interpreted as topics. If agreement triggers in LDA and scrambling structures are also topics, it is expected that the ban on multiple topics must also prevent them from co-occuring with genitive subjects in the same clause.

# 7. Implications for Sluicing Theories

In the end, an interesting result of this study is that it presents evidence for 'invisible structure' in sluicing sentences. Minimality violations in sluicing is suggestive of the fact that clause structures containing genitive subjects are present in narrow syntax, which are later deleted at PF. Culicover & Jackendoff (2005) claim that there is neither an internal structure (ex. 43) nor an empty category (ex. 44) in ellipsis. These structures are generated in the same form as they are produced (ex. 45); i.e. there are no transformations involved in their generation.

- (43) John is talking to somebody, but I don't know who<sub>1</sub> < John is talking to  $t_1$
- (44) [John is talking to somebody]<sub>2</sub>, but I don't know who *pro*<sub>2</sub>
- (45) John is talking to somebody, but I don't know who

Our data is therefore incompatible with Culicover and Jackendoff's 'WYSWYG' (What You See is What You Get) approach to sluicing because if there were no syntactic structure, extraction of the wh-phrase would not be blocked by a genitive subject.

Another theoretical implication of the blocking effect of genitive subjects is that there are cross-derivational constraints, which cannot be repaired by ellipsis (Lasnik 2007). Since the intervention of the genitive subject in the movement of the wh-phrase to be sluiced over is a cross-derivational constraint, ellipsis cannot repair that violation.

#### 8. Conclusion

To conclude, in this paper, we have presented some evidence suggesting that the intervention effects observed with clauses containing genitive subjects are either a consequence of their A-bar properties or their topic interpretations. For some Hindi-Urdu speakers, genitive subjects are placed at A-bar sites and being closer to higher heads, they block the movement of structurally lower wh-phrases and DPs. For a second group of speakers, intervention effects, we claim, arise from the restriction on placing two or more topics in the same structure. Since genitive subjects are topics, they cannot co-occur with scrambled or LDA topics.

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