Some Observations on Relativization in Hindi

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The aim of this report is to investigate the relative clause forming strategy in Hindi.

In Hindi, we find only one relative pronoun, i.e. $Jo$. The relative pronoun is normally accompanied with the pronoun, which is homophonous to the demonstrative pronoun. This pronoun is called "the correlative (pronoun) of $Jo$. Note that in Hindi both the relative pronoun and its correlative are inflective according to number and case, but not gender.

(1) illustrates inflectional derivation of the relative pronoun and the correlative pronoun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Relative Pronoun</th>
<th>Correlative Pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dir.</td>
<td>jo</td>
<td>jo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obl.</td>
<td>jis</td>
<td>jin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obj.</td>
<td>jise</td>
<td>jinhē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the sake of convenience, we will henceforth use abstract elements such as $J$ and $U$, which indicate the relative pronoun and correlative pronoun respectively.

It is the commonest construction in relative clause (Henceforth: RC) that the embedded S precedes the head NP in Hindi as in (2).
It is noteworthy that NP which is relativized by $J$ in the embedded $S$ is not changed into the relative pronoun or deleted by Equi, but retained. Furthermore, the head NP attached by $U$ is pronominalized or optionally unrealizable in certain cases.

Now, the following question arises. Why does RC in Hindi appear before the head NP?

The fact involving self-embedding which contributes to unacceptability seems a plausible motivation for solving the question that I raised above. Chomsky stated that an optimal perceptual device cannot handle self-embedded structures, for these structures go beyond its memory capacity. Cf. Chomsky (1965).

On the same ground, Kuno (1974) explored the position of relative clauses in SVO, SOV and VSO languages, and gave very insightful generalization on human perception of the comprehensibility of sentences. Observe the following:

(3) *ra:m [jo vah choṭa: teļi:vizan [jo Shi:la:ne is sa:l
Ram rel. this small television rel. Sheila this year
bought be- watching is my brother is Present

'Ram who is watching the small television set which Sheila has bought this year is my brother.'
(3) is an example of successive center-embedding, which is almost unintelligible.

The embedded S precedes its head NP in Hindi, which is regarded as a traditional RC construction, however, Hindi involves a relative clause that is essentially the same construction as English type relative clause. Notice, however, that English type RC is an innovative construction for Hindi. Thus, there are rich variations as to surface RC configurations. The crucial data is as follows:

(4) a. [jo mera: bha:i: daftar se der se lauta:] vah kal ra:t rel. my brother office from late returned correl. last night bilkul nahi: soya: at all not slept
b. [jo mera: bha:i: daftar se der se lau:at:]— kal ra:t bilkul nahi: soya:
c. vah mera: bha:i: [jo daftar se der se lau:ta:] kal ra:t bilkul nahi: soya:
d. vah mera: bha:i: [jo daftar se der se lau:ta:] vah kal ra:t bilkul nahi: soya:
e. mera: bha:i: [jo daftar se der se lau:ta:]— kal ra:t bilkul nahi: soya:
f. mera: bha:i: [jo daftar se der se lau:ta:] vah kal ra:t bilkul nahi: soya:

'My brother who returned late from the office did not sleep at all last night.'

(4a) is a traditional RC in Hindi. (4b) involves a relative clause which is essentially the same construction as (4a) except that the correlative vah is unrealizable. (4c) and (4e) both are English type RCs which may be an innovative construction for Hindi. The only difference between (4c) and (4e) is that vah of [NP vah mera: bha:i:] in (4c) represents the re-
strictive clause while in (4e) *vah* is not introduced, then the clause becomes nonrestrictive. (4d) and (4f) are the same as (4c) and (4e) except that the correlative *vah* is introduced.

It is assumed that Hindi in transitional stage contains the intermediate (mixed-up) construction such as (4d) and (4f) by composing Hindi type RC and English type RC.

Thus, we will assume the following rules to account for Hindi RC constructions.

(5) a. J + NP Preposing

\[ X - \text{COMP} - [s \ldots J+NP \ldots] - X \]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
1 & e & 2 \\
2 & 3 & t \\
1 & 2 & 3
\end{array}
\]

where \( X \) is a variable, \( t \), trace.

b. (i) J + NP \( \rightarrow \) J (its appropriate inflected form) in the context of J+NP being preceded and commanded by NP such that an anaphoric relation holds between NP and J+NP.

(ii) U + NP \( \rightarrow \) \{ U (its appropriate inflected form) \( \hat{\phi} \) : null \} (Optional.)

The surface interpretive rules, which play a central role involving semantics in the EST (cf. Chomsky (1972)), have been extensively investigated. Among the surface interpretive rules, the anaphoric relation between pronouns and their antecedents has been taken up as a main theme. (for detailed discussion of anaphora, see Lasnik (1976), Reinhart (1976), Bresnan (1978), etc.)

We will formulate the following rule so as to rule out ungrammatical outcomes in the possible surface structures generated by rules in (5).

(6) Anaphoric Relation Rule in RC (ARRRC) If NP\(_1\) and NP\(_2\) are in a sentence such that NP\(_1\) precedes and commands NP\(_2\), and NP\(_2\),
is not a pronoun, then NP₁ and NP₂ are noncoreferential and the sentence is marked ungrammatical.

Due to the limited space, the explicit data cannot be provided here.

What we know from the data is that Hindi is in transition, thus, it has quite flexible variations in surface structures. Hindi RCs can be beautifully explained by applying the interpretive rules which are in effect more general rules.

References


