Honor and number agreement in Hindi-Urdu —— Rajesh Bhatt & Christopher Davis

Basic contrast   In Hindi-Urdu, the honorific marker *ji:* can be added to a third person nominal to signal honorification of the nominal referent. As shown in (1/2), the use of *ji:* triggers plural agreement, despite the nominal itself being singular.

(1)   Ra:m   lamba: hɛ
       Ram.M tall.M.SG be.PRS.3SG
       'Ram is tall.'

(2)   Ra:m-ji: lambe   hɛ̃
       Ram.M-HON tall.M.PL be.PRS.3PL
       'Ram, who I respect, is tall.'

ji: expresses the morpheme HON, attaching to an NP and signaling the speaker's respect toward the NP referent. HON in turn brings in a PL feature which triggers PL agreement. This PL feature does not signal semantic plurality, but instead marks honorification of the subject. The interpretation of PL is subject to <u>contextual allosemy</u> (Wood 2016).

Number of the honorific NP   The data in (3/4) suggest that *ji:* selects for a <u>singular</u> NP complement, despite triggering <u>plural</u> agreement.

(3)   a.   laṛki: lambi: hɛ
             girl.F.SG tall.F   be.PRS.3.SG
             'The girl is tall.'

      b.   laṛkiyã: lambi: hɛ̃
             girl.F.PL tall.F   be.PRS.3.PL
             'The girls are tall.'

(4)   a.   laṛki:-ji: lambi: hɛ̃
             girl.F.SG-HON tall.F   be.PRS.3.PL
             'The girl, who I respect' is tall.'

      b.   *laṛkiyã:-ji: lambi: hɛ̃
             girls.F.PL-HON tall.F   be.PRS.3.PL
             int.: 'The girls, who I respect' are tall.'

But this conclusion seems to be contradicted by the data in (5/6):

(5)   a.   laṛka: lamba: hɛ
             boy.M.SG tall.M.SG be.PRS.3.SG
             'The boy is tall.'

      b.   laṛke   lambe: hɛ̃
             boy.M.PL tall.M.PL be.PRS.3.PL
             'The boys are tall.'

(6)   laṛke-ji: lambe   hɛ̃
       boy.M.??-HON tall.M.PL be.PRS.3.PL
       'The boy, who I respect, is tall.'
       unavailable: 'The boys, who I respect, are tall.'

(6) has what looks like plural marking on the NP but has only a singular meaning. (6) is also in conflict with (4), which showed that morphological marking of plurality on the noun was incompatible with *ji:*. The contrasting behavior correlates with gender: feminine nouns + HON appear in a 'singular' form, while masculine nouns + HON appear in a 'plural' form.

We argue that the solution to this apparent paradox lies in the distinction between direct and oblique forms. In Hindi-Urdu and many other Indo-Aryan languages nominals have two distinct forms: (i) a direct form that appears when the nominal is not the complement of a P, e.g. *laṛka:* 'boy.M.SG', and (ii) an oblique form that appears when the nominal is the complement of a P, e.g. *laṛke ko* 'boy.M.SG.OBL DAT'. The realization of the direct/oblique distinction depends upon the particular nominal, as shown in Table 1. For feminine nouns, there is a syncretism between direct and oblique singular forms. For masculine nouns, there is a syncretism between plural direct and singular oblique forms. Looking back at the data above, (4) shows that *ji:* selects for a singular nominal, but is uninformative as to the direct/oblique distinction. By contrast, (6) shows that *ji:* selects for either a plural direct form, or for a singular oblique, given the syncretism pattern for masculine nouns. But

Table 1: Direct/Oblique × SG/PL × MASCULINE/FEMININE

(a) FEMININE nouns

	DIRECT	OBLIQUE
SG	**laṛki:**	**laṛki:**
PL	laṛkiyã:	laṛkiyõ:

(b) most *-a:* ending MASCULINE nouns

	DIRECT	OBLIQUE
SG	laṛka:	**laṛke**
PL	**laṛke**	laṛkõ

since (as shown by feminine nouns) *ji:* selects for a <u>singular</u> nominal complement, we can conclude that the form selected in (6) is in fact the singular oblique form. Putting the data from these two paradigms together, we conclude that *ji:* selects for singular oblique nominal complements.

Analysis: Our analysis is schematized in (7). Number agreement is driven by T, which probes for the <u>closest</u> [PL] feature. The [PL] feature itself can be born under the HON head or the NUM head. HON, when present, selects for a singular NumP, reflecting its semantics (which requires a singular complement). The interpretation of [PL], meanwhile, is subject to contextual allosemy: (i) NUM-[PL] contributes plural meaning, while (ii) HON-[PL] contributes the semantics of honorification.

(7) a. "Regular" PL under NUM: DEM[uPL] [A[uPL,uGen] [Num[**PL**] [N[Gen$_1$]]]]
     →   DEM[u̶PL] [A[u̶**PL**,u̶Gen$_1$] [Num[**PL**] [N[Gen$_1$]]]]
     b. Honorific PL under HON: DEM[uPL] [A[uPL,uGen] [Hon[**PL**] [[Num[**SG**] [N[Gen$_1$]]]]]
     →   DEM[**PL**] [A[u̶**PL**,u̶Gen$_1$] [Hon[**PL**] [[Num[**SG**] [N[Gen$_1$]]]]]

Additional points: (i) demonstratives in *ji:*-marked nominals appear with plural morphology, showing that *ji:* occurs between Dem and N, (ii) HON can be expressed by other morphemes (e.g. *saahab*), or be phonologically null or bundled with inherently honorific nouns (e.g. *auntie*).

Second person pronouns Hindi has three pronominal forms used for second person reference. The formal features of these pronouns (inferred from the agreement patterns they trigger) and their semantics (as inferred from their referential possibilities) are summarized in Table 2. The three second person singular pronouns are honorifically distinguished: (i) *tu:* is rude/familiar, (ii) *tum* is neutral, and (iii) *a:p* is honorific. Along with these pragmatic differences, the three pronouns are distinguished in their formal features

Table 2: 2nd person pronouns

	SEMANTICS	FEATURES
tu:	2.SG.RUDE	2.SG
tum	2.SG	2.PL
a:p	2.SG.HON	3.PL

(as evidenced by agreement). Both *tu:* and *tum* are formally second person, but differ in their formal number features: *tu:* is formally singular, while *tum* is formally plural. *a:p*, meanwhile, is formally a third person plural. None of these pronouns on their own can be used with plural reference; for the formally plural pronouns *tum* and *a:p*, plural reference requires an additional marker of plurality such as *sab* 'all', *log* 'people', or a plural NP. These pluralization strategies are unavailable for *tu:*, which is strictly singular, both semantically and formally.

There is thus a divergence in formal and interpreted features on two dimensions. The plural feature on *tum* and *a:p* is a 'dummy' feature, whose function seems to be tied to honorification, as we saw with third person honorific subjects. For second person subjects, however, the 'dummy' plural feature on *tum* does not mark honorification; instead, the <u>lack</u> of the plural feature on *tu:* marks anti-honorification (along with semantic singularity). In order to get an honorific interpretation similar to that signaled by *ji:*, one must use *a:p*, which is formally third person and plural. PL agreement with *a:p* can thus be attributed to a lexically-bundled HON-[PL], as with honored third person subjects. But what about PL agreement with *tum*? Since *tum* is not honorific, PL can't be a reflex of HON. And since *tum* is singular, PL can't be a reflex of NUM. In the full talk, we show that the non-number PL feature on *tum* (which signals neither number nor honorification) is morphosyntactically distinct from that on *a:p* (which signals honorification). Our evidence for this claim comes from cases where *tum*, but not *a:p*, fails to trigger plural agreement (Bhatt & Keine 2018, Sinha to appear); this happens when the exponent of plural agreement is a non-portmanteau nasal segment, as seen in (8) (cf. (9), where *a:p* triggers PL agreement):

(8) tum khush thi:/*thĩ:
     2.SG happy be.PST.F.<u>SG</u>/PST.F.<u>PL</u>
     'You were tall.'

(9) a:p   khush thĩ:/*thi:
     2.SG.HON happy be.PST.F.<u>PL</u>/PST.F.<u>SG</u>
     'You were tall.'

References

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