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Polar *kyaa*: Y/N or Speech Act Operator

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1 Identifying Polar *kyaa*

Hindi-Urdu polar questions do not require any overt syntactic cues. Rising Intonation suffices to indicate interrogative status (without the bias associated with rising declaratives in English).¹

- (1) a. Y/N question: H%
anu=ne uma=ko kitaab [dii]_{H%}
Anu-Erg Uma=Acc book.F give.Pfv.F
'Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?'
- b. Declarative: L%
anu=ne uma=ko kitaab [dii]_{L%}
Anu-Erg Uma=Acc book.F give.Pfv.F
'Anu gave a/the book to Uma.'

They can, however, optionally co-occur with the *wh*-word *kyaa*.

- (2) a. H%, *kyaa* → Y/N question
kyaa anu=ne uma=ko kitaab [dii]_{H%}
what Anu-Erg Uma=Acc book.F give.Pfv.F
'Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?'

¹We are using H% to mark the intonation that we think is associated with matrix Y/N questions and L% to mark the intonation associated with declaratives. However these claims are preliminary and await proper testing.

- b. L%, *kyaa* → ungrammatical
 **kyaa anu=ne uma=ko kitaab [dii]_{L%}*
 what Anu-Erg Uma=Acc book.F give.Pfv.F
 intended: ‘Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?’
 note: H% is obligatory for matrix Y/N questions.

The *wh*-word *kyaa* can also function as an argument.

- (3) *wh*-question:
anu=ne uma=ko kyaa [diyaa]_{L%}?
 Anu-Erg Uma=Acc what give.Pfv
 ‘What did Anu give to Uma?’

We dub the *kyaa* in (2a) polar *kyaa*, which we distinguish from the homophonous thematic *kyaa* ‘what’. in (3). In (3), *kyaa* is the theme argument of the verb *diyaa* ‘gave’. The same has been argued for the scope marking construction, at least under the indirect dependency approach (Dayal 1994 among others). The preverbal position has been argued to be the unmarked position for *wh*-words in Hindi-Urdu (Kidwai 2000, among others).

In addition to their distinct semantic contributions, the two *kyaa*’s can also be distinguished on the basis of their syntactic distribution. The sentence initial position is a default position for polar *kyaa*. But it can also appear in a number of other positions:

- (4) distribution of polar *kyaa*:
 (*kyaa*) *anu=ne (kyaa) uma=ko (kyaa) kitaab (%kyaa) [dii]*
 what Anu-Erg what Uma=Acc what book.F what give.Pfv.F
 (*kyaa*)?
 what
 ‘Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?’
 (We are not indicating the boundary tone on the verb as we are not sure that a H% appears on a verb immediately followed by *kyaa*.)

Of these possibilities, the immediately preverbal one deserves some discussion. It seems at first pass to be unacceptable but it is not actually so. It is acceptable but only if there is a clear prosodic break before it.

In an almost mirror image pattern, thematic *kyaa* is natural in the immediately pre-verbal position but odd/marked elsewhere.

(5) *wh*-question:

(??kyaa) anu=ne (??kyaa) uma=ko (kyaa) [diyaa]_{L%} (??kyaa)
 what Anu-Erg what Uma=Acc what give.Pfv what

‘What did Anu give to Uma?’

Thematic *kyaa* does not appear clause-finally in normal information-seeking contexts (Mahajan 1997, Bhatt and Dayal 2007, Manetta 2010). The same holds for the thematic *kyaa* in the scope marking construction.

Polar *kyaa* does not occur with constituent questions.

- (6) a. *kyaa anu=ne uma=ko kyaa diyaa?
 what Anu=Erg Uma=Acc what give.Pfv
 intended: ‘What did Anu give to Uma?’
 b. *kyaa kis=ne uma=ko kitaab dii?
 what who=Erg Uma=Dat book.F give.Pfv.F
 intended: ‘Who gave Uma a/the book?’

Polar *kyaa* is not possible in embedded clauses when the embedding verb is extensional/responsive. ‘Rogative’ predicates allow for polar *kyaa*.

- (7) a. bad with embedded Y/N reading:
 *anu jaan-tii hai [ki kyaa tum cai piyoge].
 Anu.F know.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that what you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 intended: ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea.’
 b. rogative predicates, good with embedded Y/N reading:
 anu jaan-naa caah-tii hai [ki kyaa tum cai
 Anu.F know-Inf want.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that what you tea
 piyoge].
 drink.Fut.2MPI
 ‘Anu wants to know whether you will drink tea.’

For predicates like *know*, the only way to get an embedded Y/N reading is to embed a polar Alternative-Question by using explicit *or not* disjunction in the embedded clause.

- (8) a. anu jaantii hai ki tum cai piyoge ya nahī:
 Anu.F know.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you tea drink.Fut.2MPI or Neg
 ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea or not.’
- b. rising intonation on matrix clause: only matrix Y/N reading.
 anu [jaan-tii hai]_{H%} ki tum cai piyoge?
 Anu know-Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 ‘Does Anu know that you will drink tea?’
- c. rising intonation in embedded clause: bad
 anu jaan-tii hai ki tum cai [piyoge]_{H%}?
 Anu know-Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 intended: ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea or not.’

Polar *kyaa* can also appear in matrix Alternative Questions.

- (9) (kyaa) Ram=ne caai pii yaa coffee
 what Ram=Erg tea drink.Pfv.F or coffee
 ‘Did Ram drink tea or (did he drink) coffee?’

2 The Distribution of Polar *kyaa*

2.1 Polar *kyaa* as a Force Head

We claim that the basic structure of a polar/alternative question in Hindi-Urdu is similar to that of English. With Han & Romero (2004) and Larson (1985) we assume that there is a mobile *wh*-element like English *whether*. The only difference is that the relevant operator is null in Hindi-Urdu.

- (10) a. [_{CP} Null-Yes/No-Operator [IP]]
 b. [_{CP} Null-whether_i [t_i [IP or not]]]

The null Y/N operator is licensed by (a) intonation (b) an overt polar alternative *ya nahī*:. Polar *kyaa* is not related to this null operator and cannot license it:

- (11) a. ‘know’:
 anu jaan-tii hai [ki tum cai piyoge.]
 Anu.F know.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 ‘Anu knows that you will drink tea.’

- b. ‘know’:
 anu jaan-tii hai [ki tum cai piyoge yaa nahĩ:].
 Anu.F know.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you tea drink.Fut.2MPI or not
 ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea or not.’
- c. *anu jaan-tii hai [ki kyaa tum cai piyoge].
 Anu.F know.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that what you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 intended: ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea.’

In embedded position, where intonational support is missing, *kyaa* is not sufficient to mark the embedded clause as a question. The overt polar alternative is needed for that.

So where is polar *kyaa* located? We claim that it resides in a functional projection above the C-domain where the null Y/N and Alt-Q Operator are located. We can take the higher CP projection to be ForceP:

- (12) a. [_{CP2} polar-*kyaa* [_{CP1} Null-Yes/No-Operator [IP]]]
 b. [_{CP2} polar *kyaa* [_{CP1} Null-whether_i [t_i [IP or not]]]]

2.2 Topicalization and the Positions of Polar *kyaa*

Different positions of polar *kyaa* obtain due to topicalization of expressions from inside IP to above ForceP.

- (13) distribution of polar *kyaa*:

(*kyaa*) anu=ne (*kyaa*) uma=ko (*kyaa*) kitaab (%*kyaa*) [dii]_{H%}
 what Anu-Erg what Uma=Acc what book.F what give.Pfv.F
 (*kyaa*)?
 what

‘Did Anu give a/the book to Uma?’

Subject *kyaa* Object Verb

← [Subject_i [CP₂ *kyaa* [CP₁ ___ C⁰ [Y/N] [IP t_i . . .]]]]

Subject Object *kyaa* Verb

← [Subject_i Object_j [CP₂ *kyaa* [CP₁ ___ C⁰ [Y/N] [IP t_i t_j . . .]]]]

Some support for the topicalization proposal comes from the fact that *kyaa* is

difficult after weak indefinites and idiomatic expressions, which are plausibly elements whose topicalization leads to deviance.

(14) a. weak indefinite object:

(kyaa) Ram=ne (kyaa) kuch (??*/kyaa) [khaayaa]_{H%}?
 what Ram=Erg what something eat.Pfv

‘Did Ram eat something?’

b. idiomatic object:

(kyaa) Rina=ne (kyaa) vyaapaarii=ko (kyaa) 45 lakh=kaa
 what Rana=Erg what businessman=Dat what 45 lakh=Gen
 cuunaa (??*/kyaa) [lagaayaa]_{H%}?
 lime what apply.Pfv

‘Did Rina cheat the businessman to the tune of 45 lakhs?’

- Clause-final *kyaa* could be derived by topicalization of the entire IP. (We will return to this later; disjunctive questions allow initial but not final *kyaa*.)²

2.3 Support for Topicalization with Polar *kyaa*

The topicalization account is supported by facts about favored continuations in gapping:

(15) initial/absent *kyaa*:

(kyaa) Ram=ne Sita=ko kitaab dii....
 what Ram=Erg Sita-Dat boo.F give.Pfv.F

‘Did Ram give a/the book to Sita,...

- yaa Mina=ne
 or Mina=Erg
 ‘or did Mina?’
- yaa Vina=ko
 or Vina=Dat
 ‘or to Mina?’

²Miriam Butt has suggested to us that clause-final *kyaa* may be an instance of a tag question.

- c. yaa magazine
or magazine
'or did he give Sita a magazine?'

(16) *kyaa* follows subject:

Ram=ne *kyaa* Sita=ko kitaab dii....
Ram=Erg what Sita-Dat boo.F give.Pfv.F

'Did Ram give a/the book to Sita,...

- a. #yaa Mina=ne
or Mina=Erg
'or did Mina?'
- b. yaa Vina=ko
or Vina=Dat
'or to Mina?'
- c. yaa magazine
or magazine
'or did he give Sita a magazine?'

The contrast between (15) and (16) can be represented schematically as in (17) and (18):

- (17) [kyaa [S IO DO V]
a. or [S IØ DØ V]
b. or [S IO DØ V]
c. or [S-IØ DO V]

- (18) [S_i [kyaa [t_i IO DO V]]]
a. *or [S IØ DØ V]
b. or [t IO DØ V]
c. or [t-IØ DO V]

The topicalization account is also supported by Y/N question congruence facts. (19) lists possible follow-ups to a negative response with clause initial *kyaa*; (20) to post-subject *kyaa*:

- (19) [kyaa [S IO DO V]]
 [kyaa [ram-ne anu-ko kitaab dii]]
 What ram-ERG anu-ACC book gave
 ‘Did Ram give Anu the/a book?’
- a. nahī:, Shyam-ne dii (Subject negated)
 no, Shyam-ERG gave
 ‘No, Shyam did.’
 - b. nahī:, Uma-ko dii (IO negated)
 no, Uma-Acc gave
 ‘No, to Uma.’
 - c. nahī:, magazine dii (DO negated)
 No, magazine gave
 ‘No, he gave her a magazine.’

- (20) [S [kyaa [IO DO V]]]
 [ram=ne_i [kyaa [t_i anu-ko kitaab dii]]
 ram-ERG what anu-ACC book gave
 ‘Did Ram give Anu the/a book?’
- a. *nahī:, Shyam-ne dii (Subject negated)
 neg Shyam=ERG gave
 ‘No, it was Shyam.’
 - b. nahī:, Uma-ko dii (IO negated)
 neg Uma=Dat gave
 ‘No, it was Uma.’
 - c. nahī:, magazine dii(DO negated)
 neg magazine gave
 ‘No, it was a magazine.’

3 Polar *kyaa* as a Speech Act Operator

3.1 Restriction to Direct Questions

The claim that polar *kyaa* is in ForceP and that it is not the spell-out of Y/N or Alt-Q operator, suggests that it is a the realization of an operator encoding the

- (23) a. rising intonation on matrix clause: only matrix Y/N reading.
 [_{ForceP} QUEST [_{CP} Y/N [anu [jaan-tii hai]_{H%} [_{CP} ki tum
 Anu know-Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that you
 cai piyoge]]]]?
 tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 ‘Does Anu know that you will drink tea?’
- b. rising intonation in embedded clause: bad
 *[[_{ForceP} ASSERT [_{CP} anu jaan-tii hai [_{CP} ki Y/N
 Anu know-Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that
 tum cai [piyoge]_{H%}]]]]?
 you tea drink.Fut.2MPI
 intended: ‘Anu knows whether you will drink tea or not.’

3.2 Polar *kyaa* as a Root Phenomenon

In this section we consider embedded contexts that allow polar *kyaa*. One such context, is the complement of a rogative predicate like want to know. This suggests an analysis of (24a) as in (24b):

- (24) a. rogative predicates, good with embedded Y/N reading:
 anu jaan-naa caah-tii hai [ki kyaa tum cai
 Anu.F know-Inf want.Hab.F be.Prs.Sg that what you tea
 piyoge].
 drink.Fut.2MPI
 ‘Anu wants to know whether you will drink tea.’
- b. [[_{ForceP} ASSERT Anu wants to know [ki [_{ForceP} *kyaa* [_{CP} Y/N [_{IP}
 you will drink tea]]]]]

We analyze such cases as instances of what is known as ‘root phenomena’, phenomena typically associated with matrix clauses but sometimes manifested in embedded clauses (see Hooper and Thomson 1973, Krifka 2001, 2013, Dayal and Grimshaw 2009, Simons 2007 among others). We present two facts from English to show the difference between ‘know’ and ‘want to know’ with respect to root phenomena. Inversion, standard in direct questions, is selectively possible in embedded clauses (McCloskey 2006):

- (25) a. *John knows/found out [where should he go].
 b. John asked/wondered/wanted to know [where should he go].

Though both ‘know’ and ‘want to know’ are canonically associated with the speech act ASSERT, the following (based on Dayal and Grimshaw 2009) shows it can sometimes associate with QUEST:

- (26) *know* versus *want to know*
- a. [speaker: department secretary to faculty member]:
 The chair wants to know whether you can teach Semantics 2 next semester.
- response of faculty member: Yes, I can/No, I can’t/#Great! I am happy he has such desires.
- b. [speaker: department secretary to faculty member]
 The chair knows whether you can teach Semantics 2 next semester.
- response of faculty member: #Yes, I can/#No, I can’t/Great! I am happy he is so knowledgeable about my abilities and desires.

While both ‘know’ and ‘want to know’ embed questions, the latter allows the embedded question to have the status of a direct question. This promotion of the embedded question to ‘root question’ is mediated by a process of identification between the speaker and the matrix subject. The matrix subject’s desire for information about the embedded proposition, encoded in ‘want to know’, functions as the speaker’s desire for that information. The same cannot hold when the matrix subject is already in possession of the relevant information, as encoded in ‘know’:

- (27) a. A Speech Act of questioning whether p requires that the speaker not know whether p and that they want to know whether p.
 b. [ASSERT subject know/want to know [whether p]]
 Speaker/Subject want to know [whether p] → direct question
 Speaker/Subject knows [whether p] → *direct question

3.3 Quest under Quest

Our proposal for polar *kyaa* as a speech act operator is supported by a further division with embedding under responsive predicates. In order to get this contrast, we need to read the matrix predicate with a Y/N question interpretation:

- (28) Context 1: The speaker and hearer both know that John wrote the note under discussion, and the speaker is afraid others have found out too. She asks, ‘does Bill know whether John wrote this note?’

[QUEST-1 . . . [QUEST-2 [whether p]]]

*Bill=ko pataa [hogaa]_{H%} ki john=ne kyaa yeh note likhaa
 Bill=Dat known be.Fut that John=Erg what this note write.Pfv
 thaa.
 be.Pst

intended: ‘Will Bill know whether John had written this note?’

QUEST-1: Speaker wants to know [whether Bill knows [whether p]]

QUEST-2: Speaker/Subject wants to [whether p] (**unavailable in the context**)

The identification between speaker and subject does not hold in the context (cf. 28), there is no embedded QUEST that polar *kyaa* can be the phonetic realization of. We are left with the embedded Y/N question which requires licensing by the polar alternative in (29):

- (29) Context 1: The speaker and hearer both know that John wrote the note under discussion, and the speaker is afraid others have found out too. She asks, ‘does Bill know whether John wrote this note?’

[QUEST-1 . . . [whether p]]

Bill=ko pataa [hogaa]_{H%} ki john=ne yeh note likhaa thaa yaa
 Bill=Dat known be.Fut that John=Erg this note write.Pfv be.Pst or
 nahī:
 not

‘Will Bill know whether John had written this note?’

The same question asked in a slightly different context is compatible with the embedded speech act of questioning and now polar *kyaa* is acceptable (or at least much improved), as expected. Remember that the matrix must have the Yes/No intonational contour.

- (30) Context 2: The speaker tells the addressee: I need to find out if John wrote this note. I wonder who I can ask. Shall I ask Bill, will he know whether John wrote this note?

Bill=ko pataa [hogaa]_{H%} ki john=ne kyaa yeh note likhaa
Bill=Dat known be.Fut that John=Erg what this note write.Pfv
thaa?
be.Pst

‘Will Bill know whether John had written this note?’

[QUEST-1 . . . [QUEST-2 [whether p]]]

QUEST-1: Speaker wants to know [whether Bill knows [whether p]]

QUEST-2: Speaker/Subject wants to [whether p] (**available in the context**)

QUEST-2 is licensed based on the information state of the speaker. Since the identification between speaker and subject can hold in the context, embedded QUEST is possible and polar *kyaa* can phonetically realize it.

4 Extending Polar *kyaa* to Alt-Q

4.1 Mea culpa re: Han & Romero 2004

Han & Romero (2004) note the following contrast.

- (31) a. S O or O V: only Y/N
Ram=ne caai yaa coffee [pii]_{H%}
Ram=Erg tea or coffee drink.Pfv.F
‘Did Ram drink tea or coffee?’

b. S O V **or** O: only Alternative Question

Ram=ne caai [pii]_H yaa coffee

Ram=Erg tea drink.Pfv.F or coffee

‘Did Ram drink tea or (did he drink) coffee?’

rough sketch of their analysis:

the ‘SOV **or** O’ order involves gapping

→ what we have is clausal disjunction

→ leading to the alternative question interpretation.

A problem raised by a reviewer of Han & Romero, footnote 16, page 560:

Why can’t ‘S [O₁ **or** O₂] V’ also be given a clausal disjunction parse using Right

Node Raising: S [O₁ e_i] **or** [O₂ e_i] V_i

Since they were told by their informants that this reading was unavailable, Han & Romero needed to complicate their analysis.

However at least one of those initial informants now finds that with appropriate intonational support, Alternative Question readings are in fact available with this word order.

(32) S O **or** O V: Alternative Question available with the right intonation

kyaa Ram=ne caai_F | yaa coffee_F (|) [pii]

what Ram=Erg tea or coffee drink.Pfv.F

‘Did Ram drink tea or coffee?’

note: **obligatory** *kyaa*

This still feels like an odd way to ask this question but the Alternative Question interpretation is available.

The other point, that the gapping word order does not allow for a Y/N question reading, still holds. This is discussed in footnote 14, page 558 of Han & Romero. A pragmatic explanation is suggested there. In addition, in Hindi-Urdu, a prosodic explanation might also be at play.

- (33) a. Did John throw up or Jack cry? (If so, let me know right away. I'll have to notify their parents.)
(declarative: John threw up or Jack cried.)
- b. Will John give a book to Mary or a magazine?
(declarative: John will give a book to Mary or (John give) a magazine (to Mary).)

It is very easy to get an alternative question reading for (33b). Is it possible to get a Y/N question reading?

Yes, **but** we have to be very careful with the prosody. Pruitt & Roelofsen (2013) identify a final fall as crucial in Alternative Questions and a final fall is easy with Gapping. But if one is vigilant against the final fall, we can keep the intonation flat at the end and Y/N question reading becomes available.

In Hindi-Urdu, preliminary investigation suggests that while it is (marginally) possible to get a Y/N reading with clausal disjunction of full clauses and reliably with clausal disjunction plus Right Node Raising, it is impossible with gapping.

- (34) a. clausal disjunction, with or without gapping:
Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita (gaa-egii)
Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg
'Ram will dance or Sita (will sing).'
- b. questioning the clausal disjunction:
kyaa Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita gaa-egii
what Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg
Y/N question: ?? (if at all possible, requires flat prosody, would require *kyaa*)
Alt question: rise on 'dance', easy to get, *kyaa* optional
- c. questioning clausal disjunction + gapping:
(kyaa) Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita
what Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg
Alt question: rise on 'dance', easy to get.
unavailable: **Y/N question**

- d. questioning clausal disjunction + Right Node Raising 1, Y/N question:
 (kyaa) Ram aaj yaa Ravi kal [gaaegaa]_{H%}?
 what Ram today or Ravi tomorrow sing.Fut.3MSg
 ‘Will Ram sing today or Ravi tomorrow?’ (under Y/N Question interpretation)
- e. questioning clausal disjunction + Right Node Raising 2, Alt question:
 kyaa Ram aaj_F yaa Ravi kal_F [gaaegaa]?
 what Ram today or Ravi tomorrow sing.Fut.3MSg
 ‘Will Ram sing today or Ravi tomorrow?’ (under Alternative Question interpretation)
 note: **obligatory** *kyaa*, possibly forced due to prosodic considerations.

4.2 Final *kyaa* with disjunctive questions

We discussed earlier that *kyaa* can appear clause-finally. Given our general syntactic assumptions, one way to think of this order would be to analyze it as involving fronting of the entire TP to the [Spec, ForceP]:

- (35) [_{ForceP} TP_i Force[*kyaa*] [_{CP} C⁰[Y/N] t_i]]
- a. Kyaa tum caai yaa cofee pi-yoge?
 what you tea or coffee drink-Fut.2MPI
 ‘Will you drink coffee or tea?’
- b. tum caai yaa cofee pi-yoge kyaa?
 you tea or coffee drink-Fut.2MPI what
 ‘Will you drink coffee or tea?’

But two facts cast doubt on this simple analysis.

- Clause-final polar *kyaa* does not allow for Alt-Q readings.

Recall that with the right intonation, ‘S O **or** O V’ orders do allow for Alternative Question interpretations.

- (36) *kyaa* S O **or** O V: Alternative Question available with the right intonation
- kyaa Ram=ne caai_F | yaa cofee_F | [pii]_{H%}
 what Ram=Erg tea or coffee drink.Pfv.F
 ‘Did Ram drink tea or coffee?’

However, if the *kyaa* is final, then an Alternative Question reading is unavailable even with the prosody and the structure in fact feels ungrammatical.

(37) S O or O V *kyaa*: ungrammatical with Alternative Question intonation!

Ram=ne caai_F | yaa coffee_F | [pii] kyaa
 Ram=Erg tea or coffee drink.Pfv.F what

‘Did Ram drink tea or coffee?’

• Clause-final *kyaa* cannot combine with clear cases of clausal disjunction.

(38) unreduced clausal disjunction:

a. initial *kyaa*: ok

kyaa Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita gaa-egii
 what Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg

‘Will Ram dance or will Sita sing?’

b. final *kyaa*: *

*Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita gaa-egii kyaa
 Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg what

intended: ‘Will Ram dance or will Sita sing?’

(39) clausal disjunction with gapping:

a. initial *kyaa*: ok

kyaa Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita
 what Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F dance-Fut.3FSg

‘Will Ram dance or Sita?’

b. final *kyaa*: *

*Ram naac-egaa yaa Sita kyaa
 Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or Sita.F what

intended: ‘Will Ram dance or will Sita sing?’

(40) clausal disjunction with *or not*:

a. initial *kyaa*: ok

kyaa Ram naac-egaa yaa nahī:
 what Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or not

‘Will Ram dance or not?’ [Biezma’s ‘cornering effect’ applies]

- b. final *kyaa*: *
- *Ram naac-egaa yaa nahī: kyaa
 Ram.M dance-Fut.3MSg or neg what
 intended: ‘Will Ram dance or not?’

Interestingly, this restriction does not apply to clear cases of Right Node Raising, which presumably involve clausal disjunction.

- (41) a. *kyaa* S₁ Adv₁ **or** S₂ Adv₂ V
 kyaa Ram aaj yaa Ravi kal [gaaegaa]?
 what Ram today or Ravi tomorrow sing.Fut.3MSg
 ‘Will Ram sing today or Ravi tomorrow?’ (under Alternative Question interpretation, with stress on the adverbs)
 ‘Will Ram sing today or Ravi tomorrow?’ (under Y/N Question interpretation, with rise on the verb)
- b. S₁ Adv₁ **or** S₂ Adv₂ V *kyaa*
 Ram aaj yaa Ravi kal [gaaegaa] kyaa?
 Ram today or Ravi tomorrow sing.Fut.3MSg what
unavailable: Alternative Question interpretation
acceptable under Y/N Question interpretation

Preliminary description: final *kyaa* cannot combine with clausal disjunction; Right Node Raising cases presumably involve sub clausal disjunction.

4.3 Unifying Y/N and Alternative Questions in Hindi-Urdu

Y/N questions and Alternative Questions use the same morphosyntactic resources in Hindi-Urdu and in many other languages.

One way to bring them together is through an analysis of disjunction as in the work of Roelofsen and associates.

- (42) a. Y/N questions: Did John drink tea (or not)?
 propositions = {John drank tea, John did not drink tea}
- b. Alternative questions: Did John drink tea or Mary?
 propositions = {John drank tea, Mary drank tea}

One could imagine that a silent *or not* is freely available. This would work for matrix clauses. Unfortunately this does not work for embedded clauses in Hindi-Urdu.

- (43) a. no embedded *or not*, no embedded question
 Ram jaan-taa hai ki Sita aa-egii.
 Ram.M know-Hab.MSg be.Prs.3Sg that Sita.F come-Fut.3FSg
 ‘Ram knows that Sita will come.’
 unavailable: ‘Ram knows whether Sita will come.’
- b. embedded *or not*, embedded question
 Ram jaan-taa hai ki Sita aa-egii yaa
 Ram.M know-Hab.MSg be.Prs.3Sg that Sita.F come-Fut.3FSg or
 nahī:.
 not
 ‘Ram knows that Sita will come or not.’
 ‘Ram knows whether Sita will come.’ (note: no cornering effect)

Here’s a way to rescue the idea:

- (44) a. The intonation associated with matrix Y/N questions makes a covert *or not* available to the semantics.
 (note: this *or not* is not visible in the syntax or else clause-final *kyaa* would complain.)
- b. In embedded clauses, intonation is unavailable. Hence no covert *or not* is available. If we need one, we need to supply it overtly.

5 Unconditionals and the impossibility of *kyaa*

- (45) Polar *kyaa* is not possible in unconditionals.

In English, *whether* appears in unconditionals leading to the expectation that one might find *kyaa* in Hindi-Urdu unconditionals too.

- (46) Whether John comes or not, Mary will go to the party.

This turns out to be not the case.

(47) Hindi-Urdu unconditionals and *kyaa*:

(**kyaa*) vo aaye yaa naa aaye, anu=to jaaegii.
what he come.Sbjv or Neg come.Sbjv Anu=Topic.F go.Fut.F

‘Whether he comes or not, Anu will go.’

(48) (from Rawlins 2013)

- a. Whether or not Alfonso goes to the party, it will be fun.
(alternative unconditional)
- b. Whoever goes to the party, it will be fun.
(constituent unconditional)
- c. No matter who goes to the party, it will be fun.
(headed unconditional)

relational indifference: It doesn’t matter who goes to the party, it will still be fun.

The indifference is not general - the speaker might care very much about who goes to the party; they are just asserting that they think that the answer to that question is not relevant to the party being fun.

Rawlins (2013)’s proposal for unconditionals: they are a kind of conditional.

- (49) a. if p, q
LF: [if p]₁ λr [[Modal r] q]
- b. whether or not p, q
‘whether or not p’ - creates a Hamblin set: {p, ¬p}
Next we do point-wise function application:
‘if p, q’ and ‘if ¬ p, q’
unconditionals - correlatives over propositions

The way the partition is made is important:

- (50) a. Whether or not the moon is made of cheese, the picnic will be fun.
b. Whether there is a hurricane and an earthquake or not, the picnic will be fun.
c. Whether we get attacked by a mountain lion or not, the picnic will be fun.

Unconditionals in English are argued by Rawlins to involve a question operator/question semantics that introduces exhaustivity and mutual exclusivity. This is not the case in all languages: in Hindi-Urdu, relative pronouns and question pronouns look different - the former are based on *j*-initial stems while the latter are based on *k*-initial stems. This allows us to determine that Hindi-Urdu unconditionals are in fact correlatives and not questions.

(51) a. relative pronoun

caahe **jo** ho, swiss bank ke dhankuberō ke naam
 CAAHE Rel be.Sbjv.3Sg Swiss Bank Gen moneybags Gen name
 chupaa-egaa kendra
 hide-Fut center

‘No matter what happens, the center will hide the names of the moneybags of the Swiss Bank.’

b. interrogative pronoun: * (note: thematic *kyaa*, not polar *kyaa*)

*caahe **kyaa** ho, swiss bank ke dhankuberō ke naam
 CAAHE what be.Sbjv.3Sg Swiss Bank Gen moneybags Gen name
 chupaa-egaa kendra
 hide-Fut center

‘No matter what happens, the center will hide the names of the moneybags of the Swiss Bank.’

It is also possible to create unconditionals using disjunctions (A or not A, A or B) and with indefinites.

(52) a. A or not A:

yeh asliyat hai caahe vibhaag maan-e yaa naa
 this truth is CAAHE department believe-Sbjv.3Sg or Neg
 maan-e
 believe-Sbjv.3Sg

‘This is true, whether the department believes (it) or not.’

b. *barii pyaarii ho-tii hai yeh Maggi, caahe simpal*
 very lovely be-Hab.F be.Prs.Sg this Maggi.F CAAHE simple
tariike se banaao yaa caahe us-mē ṭamaṭar ḍaal kar
 way with make.Sbjv.2Pl or CAAHE it-in tomato put CP

‘Maggi is very lovely, whether you make it the simple way or by putting in tomatoes.’

(53) indefinite + Polarity Sensitive Item

caahe koi bhii bhaashaa ho, unicode pratyek akshar ke
CAAHE some even language be.Sbjv.3Sg Unicode every word Gen
liye ek vishes nambar pradaan kar-taa hai
for a special number provide do-Hab is

‘No matter what language it is, Unicode provides a unique number for every letter.’

Curiously, it is sometimes possible to use *wh*-words in Hindi-Urdu unconditionals. This is possibly exactly when the *wh*-word lacks a corresponding indefinite as is the case with *kidhar* ‘where’, *kitnaa* ‘how much’, and *kaisaa* ‘how’.

(54) man-me use caahe kitnaa hii dukh huaa ho, use
mind-in he.Dat CAAHE how.much only sadness be.Pfv be.Sbjv he.Dat
kisi-ne ro-te nahī: dekhaa.
someone-Erg cry-Impfv.Obl Neg see.Pfv

‘No matter how sad he might have felt inside, no one saw him crying.’

In ordinary question, *wh*-phrases cannot combine with *hii* ‘only’ or *bhii* ‘even/also’. However, when *wh*-phrases appear in unconditionals, they can combine with these elements.

- *kyaa* does not contribute alternatives by itself. It is a speech act operator and cannot appear inside adjuncts.
- Y/N intonation does not do the trick either as we are in an embedded clause.

→ An overt clausal disjunction is needed. Gapping/RNR can apply on top.

General moral: question semantics is not essential; alternatives are.