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Polar Question Particle *Ke* in Bagri

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide an account for the unique properties of the polar question particle (PQP) Ke in Bagri. Being a dialect of Hindi, this PQP is similar to its Hindi counterpart Kyaa in many aspects: optional occurrence in polar (Yes/No) questions, selectiveness in embedded polar questions, information structural effects. However, unlike Hindi, it is restricted to only polar Y/N questions and cannot occur in a clause-initial position, similar to PQP Ki in Bangla and Odia. Since Ke in Bagri meets all the necessary conditions explicitly laid out in Bhatt and Dayal (2018), we argue that this lexical item qualifies as a PQP residing in ForceP and has a presuppositional requirement that its complement must be a singleton-set question. Moreover, Ke is enclitic in nature requiring some phonological element to be present to its left.

***Keywords*— alternative questions, constituent questions, polar questions, polar question particle, prosody.**

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent studies on syntax and semantics of interrogatives, a distinction is drawn between two types of question particles, namely Q-morpheme and polar question particles (PQP) [2]. Under this approach, Q-morpheme is taken to be an overt realization of C[+Q] and is exemplified by Japanese *–ka* and *–no*. The second particle, PQP, is exemplified by Hindi-Urdu polar *Kyaa* and Bangla-Odia *Ki*, and it resides in ForceP projection above CP (Bhatt and Dayal 2018). The goal of this paper is to study the distribution and properties of the lexical item *Ke* in Bagri, a dialect of Hindi, spoken mainly in border regions of Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana, and provide an account of its syntax and semantics. We observe that *Ke* in Bagri is restricted to only polar questions. It has also selectiveness in embedded polar questions and information structural effects based on its position in a clause. We argue that *Ke* is a polar question particle `a la Bhatt & Dayal (2018) that resides in a projection above CP called the ForceP, and thus is mainly limited to matrix clauses. It also has a presuppositional requirement that its complement must be a singleton-set question. This condition relegates its occurrence to polar questions only.

In section 2, we discuss marking of polarity in Bagri and its association with the distributional properties of *Ke*, especially its position in a clause, its behaviour with matrix vs. embedded contrast, and its information structural effects. In section 3, we attempt to come up with a syntactic and semantic analysis of the data we have discussed in the previous sections using cross-linguistic data, especially from Hindi. In the final section, we summarize our key findings and state a broad explanation of the signature properties of the polar question particle *Ke*.

II. DISTRIBUTION OF KE IN BAGRI

Like Hindi-Urdu, polar questions in Bagri can also be framed by uttering a declarative sentence with a rising tone on the verbal complex [3].

(1) Marking of polarity

a. Y/N question: H%

Ram+Φ Sita+nə chaabi [dii]H%

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita?'

b. Declarative: L%

Ram+ Φ Sita+nə chaabi [dii]L%

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F

'Ram gave a/the key to Sita'

Throughout this paper, H% indicates rising tone and L% indicates falling tone. Use of rising tone in polar Y/N questions and of falling tone in sentences with declarative force is quite standard in the literature. These polar questions can also be accompanied by an optional lexical item *Ke* at the canonical clause-final position. However,

presence of this particle doesn't dismiss the need for a rising tone at verbal complex; it is still required.

(2) a. Rising tone with *Ke*: Y/N question

Ram+ Φ Sita+nə chaabi [dii]H% *Ke*

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F PQP

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita?'

b. Falling tone with *Ke*: ungrammatical construction

*Ram+ Φ Sita+nə chaabi [dii]L% *Ke*

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F PQP

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita?'

There is a homophonous *Ke* that occurs canonically at a preverbal position in constituent questions. To disambiguate the two *Ke*, I henceforth call this question particle polar *Ke* in polar questions and thematic *Ke* in constituent questions.

(3) Ram+ Φ Sita+nə *Ke* [dii]H%

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat Q give.Pfv.F

'What did Ram give to Sita?

2.1 Polar *Ke* in a Matrix Clause

Canonically, polar *Ke* occurs at clause-final position. It can also occur at clause-medial positions. However, unlike *Kyaa* in Hindi, it cannot occur at clause-initial position. In this respect, Bagri *Ke* is similar to *Ki* in Bangla and Odia (Syed and Dash 2017) [4].

(4) (**Ke*) Ram (*Ke*) Sita+nə (*Ke*) chaabi (?*Ke*) [dii]H%

PQP Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita?'

As we can see in (4), *Ke* cannot occur at the clause initial position. It can occur freely at clause non-initial positions except preverbal position. As you might have noticed, we have placed a question mark before *Ke* to indicate that *Ke* is acceptable at this position but not preferred. This is because it is the canonical position for the occurrence of thematic *Ke* as we saw in (3). Thematic *Ke* can occur anywhere in a clause; there is no restriction on its occurrence in a clause; it can even occur at a clause-initial position as well. However, the most preferred position for its occurrence is pre-verbal.

Both polar *Ke* and thematic *Ke* cannot co-occur in a clause. We defer the discussion as to why both *Ke* cannot co-occur in a clause for the time being. We return to this question later in the analysis part.

(5) *Ram+ Φ Sita+nə *Ke* [dii]H% *Ke*

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat Q give.Pfv.F PQP

Intended: 'What did Ram give to Sita?

Apart from its non-occurrence in constituent questions, polar *Ke* also doesn't occur in alternative questions as well.

(6) *tu chai pii si yaa/kə coffee *Ke*

You tea drink.Infv be.Fut.F or coffee PQP

'Will you drink tea or coffee?'

Particle *yaa* is the general disjunction marker in Bagri. However, in interrogative contexts, an alternative disjunction marker *kə* is also used. Interestingly, similar PQPs in closely related languages like *Kyaa* in Hindi and *–aa/-oo* in Malayalam can occur in alternative questions. (7), (5) in there, is taken from Bhatt and Dayal (2018) for exemplification.

(7) (kya:) tum caai piyoge ya: coffee?

PQP you tea drink.Fut.2MPl or coffee

'Will you drink tea or coffee?'

The natural question that arises here is that why *Ke* in Bagri doesn't occur in alternative questions. We will address this question in our analysis section.

2.2 Polar *Ke* in an Embedded Clause

So far, we have discussed where polar *Ke* can occur in a matrix clause. We saw that except clause-initial position, it can occur anywhere in a clause. In an embedded clause also, the same restriction holds on its positioning if it occurs. Polar *Ke* cannot occur in a clause embedded under a plain responsive, i.e. veridical predicates, (8). However, it is marginally acceptable with negated responsive, i.e. under non-veridical predicates, (9). Polar *Ke* is completely acceptable under a rogative predicate, (10) [5].

(8) *Ram-nə ʈʰa hai ki Sita paani piyo *Ke*

R.Dat know be.Pres Comp S-Erg water drank PQP

Intended: 'Ram knows if Sita drank water'

(9) ?Ram-nə koni ʈʰa ki Sita paani piyo *Ke*

R.Dat not know Comp S.Erg water.M drank PQP

Intended: 'Ram doesn't know if Sita drank water'

(10) Ram puchhyo ki Sita paani piyo *Ke*

R.Erg ask.Pfv Comp S.Erg water drink.Pfv PQP

'Ram asked if Sita drank water'

In embedded finite clauses such as (9-10), polar *Ke* is not acceptable unless we interpret the embedded part as a Y/N question. Moreover, polar *Ke* in an embedded infinitival clause must be interpreted with the minimal finite clause as the locus of the polar question.

(11) a. restructuring infinitival:

Ram Sita-nə *Ke* gift deno chavo

R.Erg S.Dat PQP gift give.Inf want.Pfv

'Had Ram wanted to give a present to Sita?'

b. infinitival subject:

garibaan-nə kutno *Ke* aachhi baat hai ?

poor.Dat beat.Inf PQP goof.F thing.F be.Pres

'Is it a good thing to beat the poor?'

In (11), polar *Ke* is not interpreted with embedded infinitival clause; instead, it is interpreted with the matrix finite clause. It is because there is no such thing in Bagri as an infinitival question. This is also true for Hindi as well. Interested readers are referred to Bhatt and Dayal (2018: 5) and Han and Romero (2004b) [6] for a detailed discussion on this topic.

2.3 Information Structural Effects

We know that canonical position of polar *Ke* in a clause is clause final. It can also occur in clause medial positions as well. However, it can never occur in a clause initial position. The first two instances of its occurrence parallel with Hindi *Kyaa*. The major difference between these two PQPs is that *Kyaa* in Hindi canonically occurs at clause initial position. Bhatt and Dayal (2018) assume that *Kyaa* in Hindi is located above CP projection and non-initial occurrences of it are derived by moving TP internal expressions to the left of *Kyaa*. If we assume that polar *Ke* in Bagri is enclitic in nature but *Kyaa* in Hindi is not, then we can give a natural account of their distribution. Since *Kyaa* in Hindi is not enclitic in nature, it wouldn't require any expression in TP to move to its left; therefore, clause initial position will become its canonical position. However, since *Ke* in Bagri is enclitic in nature, it would require expressions in TP to move to its left. If whole TP moves to its left, then we get a clause-final *Ke*. On the other hand, if some constituent from TP moves to its left, then we get a clause medial *Ke*. This enclitic nature of *Ke* is not limited to just Bagri. Syed and Dash (2017) also make a similar assumption about PQP *Ki* in Bangla and Odia. PQP *Ki* in Bagla and Odia also cannot occur clause-initially.

As we have said earlier that polar questions in Bagri are marked prosodically with an optional lexical item *Ke*. Then, the natural question that flows from this observation is that what role *Ke* plays in these structures. For Hindi *Kyaa*, Biezma, Butt & Jabeen (2017) [7] observe that clause-medial *Kyaa* in a Yes/No question puts limits on the information state of the speaker using the question. In other words, *Kyaa* in Hindi divides a clause into two parts-constituents to its left and constituents to its right. The part to its left is interpreted as being not-at-issue; therefore, it is not open to be challenged. However, the part to its right is unspecified with respect to this division; therefore, it can be challenged. Based on this observation, Biezma, Butt & Jabeen (2017) propose that *Kyaa* in Hindi is a focus-sensitive operator. In this respect, Bagri *Ke* also behaves similarly. Based on the positioning of *Ke* in the structure, we can understand what information a speaker already possesses off. Since *Kyaa* in Hindi canonically occurs at clause initial position, all constituents in the clause are open to be challenged. However, in Bagri, *Ke* canonically occurs at clause final position; therefore, with the nature order, no information in a clause can be challenged using a disjunction marker in a gapping structure, (12). But, when *Ke* occurs in a clause medial position, the information to its right can be challenged using a disjunction marker in a gapping structure, (13).

(12) Clause-final *Ke*

Ram+Φ Sita+nə chaabi [dii]H% *Ke*

Ram.Erg Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F PQP

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita…

a. * ya Shyam+Φ

or Shyam.Erg

or did Shyam? (subject being challenged)

b. * ya Mina+nə

or Mina.Dat

or to Mina? (IO being challenged)

c. *ya kitaab

or book.Acc.F

or book? (DO being challenged)

d. *ya lii

or take.Pfv.F

or take? (verb being challenged)

(13) Clause-medial *Ke*

Ram+Φ *Ke* Sita+nə chaabi [dii]H%

Ram.Erg PQP Sita.Dat key.Acc.F give.Pfv.F

'Did Ram give a/the key to Sita…

a. *ya Shyam+Φ

or Shyam.Erg

or did Shyam? (subject being challenged)

b. ya Mina+nə

or Mina.Dat

or to Mina? (IO being challenged)

c. ya kitaab

or book.Acc.F

or book? (DO being challenged)

d. ya lii

or take.Pfv.F

or take? (verb being challenged)

Based on structures in (12-13), we can convincingly say that an element to the left of *Ke* in a clause is not open to be challenged using a disjunction marker in a gapping structure, while the material to its right is open to be challenged using a disjunction marker in a gapping structure. The partition contrasts in (12-13) is also observed in gapping structures involving a disjunction marker *ya* with negation marker *nhi*. So, we can say that the role of *Ke* in Bagri is similar to that of *Kyaa* in Hindi when it comes to information structural effects. For a detailed discussion, see Bhatt and Dayal (2018: 36-41)

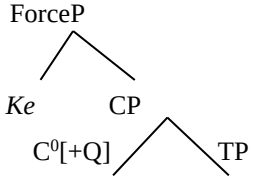
III. ANALYSIS OF POLAR PARTICLE KE

A quick recap of the distributional properties of polar *Ke* tells us that this question particle occurs optionally only in polar Y/N questions. It cannot occur in constituent questions as well as in alternative questions. In embedded structures, it shows selectivity; it cannot occur in a clause embedded under a plain responsive, i.e. veridical predicates. However, it is marginally acceptable with negated responsive, i.e. under non-veridical predicates and completely acceptable under a rogative predicate. Moreover, based on its position in a structure, it imposes restrictions on the information state of the speaker. When we compare its distributional properties with that of polar *Kyaa* in Hindi, we find that except its non-occurrence in alternative questions, both these particles in these languages are similar in nature. Therefore, this portends an analysis of the syntax and semantics of *Ke* along the lines of Bhatt & Dayal (2018), that can account for the aforementioned distributional properties.

3.1 *Ke* in Polar Questions

Polar *Ke* in Bagri shows the hallmark properties of a root phenomenon as far as its distributional contrast in matrix vs. embedded structures is concerned. Therefore, it should be located above the normal embedded height on a clausal spine. Since it doesn't show up in declarative clauses, it should also be located above a position where the declarative vs. interrogative split is determined. Following Bhatt & Dayal (2018) we take this location to be minimally the ForceP above C[+Q], as shown in (14).

(14)



Next, as we know that polar *Ke* shows selectivity in embedding; it can only appear in quasi-subordinated embedded polar Y/N questions. How do we account for this behaviour? We know that *Kyaa* in Hindi also behaves the same way. Moreover, it is also observed in embedded inversion structures in English (McCloskey 2006) [8]. So, this pattern is not specific to Hindi or Bagri, rather a larger pattern found cross-linguistically. In line with the aforesaid authors we analyse that these quasi-subordinated embedded polar questions involve an extra CP layer [9], the ForceP layer, as shown in (14). Thus, matrix predicates that take a ForceP like non-veridical responsive predicates and rogative predicates permit *Ke* to be embedded under them, but those predicates that only take CPs as their complements like veridical-responsive predicates do not permit polar *Ke* to be embedded under them.

(15) a. veridical responsive predicates: $[_{CP}\ C^0{+}Q\ [_{TP}\ ]]$

b. non-veridical and rogative predicates: $[_{ForceP}\ [_{CP}\ C^0{+}Q\ [_{TP}\ ]]]$

Finally, how do we restrict occurrence of *Ke* to only polar questions? Bhatt and Dayal (2018) observe that this is trademark distribution of polar question particles and propose that all such particles have a presuppositional requirement that their complement is a singleton set. Following them, we also propose that polar *Ke* in Bagri also has a similar presuppostional requirement as shown in (16).

(16) $[[\ Ke\ ]] = \lambda Q_{<st,\,t>} : \exists P \in Q[\forall_q \in Q \rightarrow q = p].\ Q$

The denotation of *Ke* in (16) states that it takes a set of propositions; therefore, it cannot combine with declaratives. It also can't combine with a constituent question as a constituent question involves a plural set of propositions *in contra* with its requirement of a singleton set. Apart from this, *Ke* also can't occur in an alternative question. We already know that polar *Kyaa* in Hindi can occur in alternative questions. Then, how do we explain non-occurrence of *Ke* in alternative structures in Bagri. This is the question we address in the next subsection.

3.2 *Ke* in Alternative Questions

We have already noted that polar *Ke* in Bagri cannot occur at a clause initial position. It is due to the fact that it is enclitic nature and therefore, it requires some element to its left. In (17), we propose a structure as to how we derive non-initial occurrences of polar *Ke*.

(17) $[_{ForceP}\ TPi\ [_{ForceP}\ Ke\ [_{CP}\ C^0{+}Q\ [\ t_i]]]]$

To derive a clause medial *Ke*, some XP from TP moves to the left of *Ke*. In case of *Ke* occurring at a clause final position, the whole TP moves to its left. Nothing substantial hinges on the fact whether TP moves or CP.

Now, we turn to questions as why *Ke* doesn't appear in alternative questions. For Hindi, Bhatt and Dayal (2018) observe that *Kyaa* in alternative questions can appear clause-initially. In these structures, the interrogative disjunction operator OR_{ALT} takes scope over *Kyaa*; it disjoins two ForcePs. Occurrence of non-initial *Kyaa* is restricted to cases where disjunction is not of two finite clauses, for instance, disjunction of two nominals or of two non-finite clauses. In these instances, we get only polar Y/N reading. Whenever there is a disjunction of two finite clauses, non-initial *Kyaa* simply cannot occur. If a disjunction of two ForcePs allows *Kyaa* to occur at a clause-initial position, then why it can't occur at non-initial position in a clause. Bhatt and Dayal (2018) claim that these structures are simply not available in Hindi. Coming back to Bagri, we have seen that *Ke* cannot occur clause-initially due to its unique enclitic nature. It also doesn't appear in non-initial position in an alternative question simply because these structures are not available in the language.

3.3 Demarcation of Domain Boundary

In subsection 2.3, we noted that elements left to polar *Ke* are not open to be challenged, while elements to its right are open to be corrected. Since *Ke* in Bagri does appear at a clause-initial position, it means that there is always an XP which cannot be corrected, especially the subject.

(18) kaal *Ke* Ram khano khayo
Yesterday PQP R.Erg food.Acc.M eat.Pfv.M
'Did Ram eat food yesterday?'

As we can see in (18), *Ke* doesn't necessarily occur only after the subject. Due to its enclitic nature, it just requires an XP to its left. However, whenever it occurs, it demarcates the domain into two parts: material to its left cannot be corrected and the material to its right can be corrected. Since it creates a window for correction, Bhatt and Dayal (2018) assume that polar questions have two semantic values. Apart from polar questions having an ordinary semantic value, which is a singleton propositional set, they also have an additional focus semantic value. The focus semantic value of a polar question will therefore include all the possible continuations of this question. In case, where a PQP occurs clause-finally, its ordinary and focus semantic values remain same. It is because whole TP/CP moves to its left in a domain which cannot be challenged. Since non-initial occurrence of *Kyaa* and its role in demarcating the domain boundary parallel with that of *Ke* in Bagri, we will also assume that polar questions in Bagri also have two semantic values namely, ordinary semantic value and focus semantic value.

IV. CONCLUSION

Bhatt and Dayal (2018) draw a distinction between two types of question particles, namely Q-morpheme and polar question particles (PQP). They claim that for any element to be classified as a PQP, it should have some signature properties such as restriction to polar/alternative questions, selectivity in embedding, optionality, flexible syntactic positioning, etc. Since Bagri *Ke* has all these signature properties, it is well-suited to be classified as another polar question particle (PQP) cross-linguistically, that is situated in ForceP and has a presuppositional requirement that its complement must be a singleton set. As we know from our discussion that PQP *Ke* doesn't occur at a clause-initial position, we claim that it has an additional requirement that there must be some phonological element to its left. Moreover, *Ke* cannot occur in alternative questions as these structures are simply not available in the language.

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