

18401 Word Order in Hindi Sentences: A Reference Material

(Quotes are from Michael Shapiro's A Primer of Modern Standard Hindi, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989)

pp 35-6

“5.7 Basic Word Order There are no inviolate principles of word order in Hindi. The language, particularly in its colloquial forms, demonstrates great flexibility in the order in which words and phrases are strung together to form sentences. The statements to follow should therefore be looked upon as indicating tendencies observed in large numbers of sentences, but not as exceptionless rules.

In general, the basic order of a Hindi sentence is subject-object-verb:

राम हिन्दी बोलता है। Ram speaks Hindi.

As mentioned earlier, the negative marker **नहीं** and question words immediately precede the verb:

विद्यार्थी स्कूल में क्यों है? ‘Why is the student in school?’

विद्यार्थी स्कूल में नहीं है। ‘The student is not in school.’

The word **क्या** marking yes/no questions stands at the beginning of its sentence:

क्या विद्यार्थी स्कूल में है? ‘Is the student in school?’

Adverbials of various sorts tend to occur towards the beginning of a sentence, either before the subject, or immediately after it:

क्या अब मोहन आग्रे में है? Or

क्या मोहन अब आग्रे में है? Is Mohan in Agra now??

As in English, modifiers of nouns precede the noun. Numbers, which can be considered nominal modifiers, also precede nouns:

अच्छा आदमी a/the good man

एक अच्छा आदमी one good man (Section 5.7, pages 35-36)

p. 72

“10.3 Adverbs Adverbs can be defined as words that qualify or modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Hindi adverbs can be divided into adverbs of time, place, manner, degree, affirmation or negation. In this chapter the first four of these types are discussed.

Adverbs of time specify the time at which a verbal activity or state of affairs takes place. Some common adverbs of time already encountered are

कल 'tomorrow, yesterday',

आज 'today',

तभी 'just then',

सुबह 'in the morning',

प्रति दिन 'every day', etc.

Some Hindi adverbs of time consist of a postpositional phrase, that is, some word or words followed by a postposition, e.g.,

बुद्धवार को 'on Wednesday',

सोमवार के बाद 'after Monday'.

The postposition को is especially common in adverbs of time, occurring in a wide variety of expressions such as

शाम को 'in the evening',

दिन को 'in the day, by day', and रात को 'in the night, by night'.

Occasionally, Hindi adverbs of time may consist of a noun in its oblique singular form, not followed by a postposition (e.g. सवेरे 'in the morning' [cf., सवेरा n.m. the morning, उस दिन 'on that day']).

Adverbs of place specify the location at which verbal actions or states of affairs take place. They may be either single words

यहां 'here',

इधर 'in this direction'

or longer postpositional phrases

वहां से 'from there',

बाज़ार में 'in the market',

उनके मित्रों के घरों में 'in their friends' houses'.

Adverbs of manner specify the manner in which some activity is carried out. They may consist of a single word

जलदी 'quickly, early'

or a lengthier postpositional phrase

देर से 'late').

The postposition से 'with' is used in conjunction with preceding nouns in a large number of adverbs of manner

देर से 'late' [literally 'with a delay'],

मुश्किल से 'with difficulty' [cf., मुश्किल n.f., 'difficulty']).

Adverbs of degree specify the extent to which some adjectival quality pertains to a qualified noun. Thus in the expression बहुत अच्छा केला 'very good banana' the adverb of extent बहुत describes the extent to which the banana in question can be said to be good.

pp 72-3

“10.4 Word Order It is now possible to make a fuller statement about Hindi word order than was possible in sec. 5.7. The principles describing basic Hindi word order can now be modified as follows:

The preferred word order in the language is Subject-Object-Verb.

(e.g. वह लड़की को देखता है 'He sees the girl'.)

Where both a direct object and an indirect object are present, the latter precede the former.

मैं लड़की को खाना देता हूँ 'I give the food to the girl.)

Attributive adjectives precede the nouns they modify. बहुत छोटी इमारत 'very small building'.

Adverbs of time, place, or manner may occur either before the subject of a sentence or immediately after it.

मैं कल वहाँ गया 'I went there yesterday'.

कल मैं वहाँ गया

Once again, it should be emphasized that all statements about Hindi word order must be considered only rough approximations. Any number of factors can cause Hindi sentences to exhibit patterns of word order considerably different from what has been stated here. Nevertheless, the above principles can be seen to describe the word order of a significant number of sentences of the standard language, particularly in its written form.” (Sections 10.3 and 10.4 pages 72-3)

Word Order When More than One Adverb in a Sentence

from Usha Jain, *Advanced Hindi Grammar* 2007 Regents of the University of California.

p. 63

“If there is more than one adverb in a sentence, the standard word order is adverbs of time, then adverbs of place, then adverbs of manner. Adverbs of degree generally precede the adjective or adverb they modify. Again, this word order is flexible and can be easily changed to give special emphasis.”

Shapiro pp 232-3

“29.3 Stylistic Shifts of Word Order In conversational Hindi, the order of the constituent parts of a sentence often differ markedly from that seen in formal styles of the language. Deviations in word order can be quite substantial, involving all or some of the major components of a sentence.

It is beyond the scope of this primer to discuss all of the types of permutations of word order that can occur in the spoken language. Some shifts, however, are of such general occurrence that even the beginning student should be aware of their existence.

In one important syntactic permutation, a word or phrase is placed after the verb in sentence final position:

बहुत काम किया उसने ‘He did a lot of work’.

मुझे अच्छा शब्दकोश चाहिये हिन्दी का ‘I need a good Hindi dictionary’.

रसीले आम मिलेगा वहां पर ‘You’ll get juicy mangoes there’.

पानी ज़रूर बरेगा शाम तक ‘It will certainly rain by evening’.

In another shift, an attributive adjective, often a possessive phrase, is moved after the noun it modifies;

भाभीजी उसकी अशोक होटल में ठहरेगी ‘His sister-in-law will stay in the Ashoka Hotel’.

वह बैल हमारा कुछ काम का नहीं है ‘That ox of ours is good for nothing’.

Forms of the copula होना frequently are found moved to the beginning of colloquial sentences:

है तो महेंगा लेकिन खरीद लो ‘It’s expensive, but buy it anyway’.

हूं तो अम्रीकन लेकिन हिन्दुस्तानी ‘I am American, but I

गाने मुझे अच्छे लगते हैं like Indian songs’

Words or phrases can also be displaced to the beginning of a sentence or clause:

उसकी बीबी को मैं जानता हूं ‘I know his wife’.

इस तरह का खाना यहां खाया नहीं जाता ‘This kind of food isn’t eaten around here’.

It is quite possible for more than one syntactic permutation to occur within the same sentence:

हूँ तो मैं दिल्ली का, पर पैदा हुआ बंबई में ‘I am from Delhi, but I was born in Bombay’.

बातें बुरी - बुरी कहीं तुम ने ।

‘You have said very bad things’.

In general, the displacement of a word or phrase to the beginning of a sentence serves to bring that word or phrase into greater prominence than is normal. Displacement to the end of a sentence is more complex, and can occur either to emphasize or de-emphasize a form. When the subject of the sentence has been moved to the end of the sentence, however, it is almost always for purposes of de-emphasis:

मामाजी के यहां रहते हो तुम ‘Do you live with your (maternal) uncle?’

In this last example, the word तुम is included as almost an afterthought, and is said at the conclusion of the main portion of the sentence with a minimal amount of stress.”