Chapter-5
Summary
&
Conclusion
Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Summary

This thesis aims at examining the argument structures of Urdu and English verbs with a view to finding out whether these languages are somewhat different in this regard. The work has covered a range of issues, approaches and proposals which shed interesting light on the development of θ-theory and its implication on these languages. An attempt has been made to compare θ-roles required by verbs in Urdu and English in order to find out whether the theory applies uniformly to these two languages.

Chapter One provides the theoretical background of the θ-theory. It traces briefly the evolution of the theta theory within the Principles and Parameters Theory (Chomsky 1981) and shows how Chomsky’s concept of thematic structure is different from Jackendoff’s ‘conceptual structure’. The θ-criterion, an important component of the theory which puts constraints on the assignment of θ-roles, has been discussed in detail. In the Minimalist Program, which questions almost every assumption of Principles and Parameters Theory, θ-theory retains its significant role in generating a well-formed sentence. Chomsky observes that θ-roles are the fundamental property of grammar and their proper assignment to the arguments is necessary to satisfy the principle of Full Interpretation (FI), otherwise a derivation gets crashed. The discussion has been followed by the aims and objectives of this work. It argues that a comparative study of the thematic structures in English and Urdu is essential to understand
their language specific requirements, even though the broad structures of semantically similar verbs are logically the same.

Chapter Two deals with the argument structures of Urdu verbs and compares them with their English counterparts. We have followed the hypothesis that the verbs of similar semantic types in different languages have similar argument structures at LF but all of them are not expressed the same way at PF. Some of them may be implicit or θ-absorbed in a specific language. The chapter attempts to find out whether the difference between Urdu and English at the level of PF is due to some semantic factors or it is the structural property which makes them distinct from each other. We have differentiated essential arguments from non-essential arguments.

We have classified Urdu verbs according to the number of arguments they take and divided them in sub-groups according to the nature of their arguments. These groups of verbs have been compared with their English counterparts. Verbs with one argument take an agent, an experiencer, a theme or a patient which is usually realized as a subject at PF. Verbs with one argument show no contrast between Urdu and English except that the weather verbs have no argument at PF in English (e.g., *It snows*). It is found that there are some verbs which are basically transitive in English but may be used intransitively, if only theme is to be focused. In Urdu, whenever we have morphologically related transitive – intransitive pairs, the intransitives will take only one essential argument.

The intransitive verb (e.g. *dauRna*: ‘to run’) which indicates volitional action takes an agent and the verb which indicates physical (e.g. *khã:sna:*
‘to cough’) or mental perception (e.g. bipharna: ‘to be emotionally out of control’) take experiencer as their arguments. If an argument voluntarily does the act to draw the attention of someone, it is an agent rather than an experiencer. Thus, khâ:sna: ‘to cough’ will normally have an experiencer as its argument but when one cough deliberately, it is an agent.

Intransitive verbs (e.g. bhunna: ‘to get roasted’) that are semantically and morphologically related to their transitive counterparts take theme as their essential argument. Intransitive verbs of Urdu (such as bikna: ‘to get sold’ which carries medio-passive sense), take theme as the essential argument in the subject position in Urdu and have their medio-passive counterparts in English. In English such verbs are basically transitive but may be used intransitively, if only the theme is to be focused. Some intransitive verbs (e.g. marna: ‘to die’) take patient as an argument in both Urdu and English.

Verbs with two arguments may take agent and theme, agent and patient, agent and goal or theme and experiencer. Verbs with agent and theme may be inchoative transitive, verbs of creation, accomplishment, motion, performative verbs or verbs of physical and mental perception. Likewise verbs with agent and patient are inchoative transitive (e.g. ma:rna: ‘to kill’), verbs of accomplishment (e.g. dabočna: ‘to grab, to pounce upon’), motion (e.g. ragedna: ‘to chase’), verbs of physical (e.g. dekhna: ‘to see’) or mental perception (e.g. ta:Rna: ‘to perceive’) and some other emotive verbs (jhiRakna: ‘to scold’). When the verbs with two arguments take agent and theme or agent and patient, they are obligatory in the structure of both the languages. Some verbs of motion (e.g. gherna: ‘to surround’) in both Urdu and English take agent and goal. The motion verbs like čaRhna: ‘to climb’ in Urdu take PoP as goal argument but its English
counterpart takes NP as its goal. For instance, \textit{paha}\textperiodcentered\textsubscript{R} \textit{par \v{c}a}\textsubscript{R}hna: ‘to climb the mountain’. There are some emotive verbs (e.g. \textit{na}\textperiodcentered\textsubscript{ummi}\textperiodcentered\textsubscript{d karna: ‘to disappoint’) which take theme and experiencer as their essential arguments.

When a verb of Urdu and its English counterpart needs three essential arguments, they are (a) agent, theme and goal (b) agent, theme and location (c) agent, theme and source, (d) agent, theme and experiencer, (e) agent, patient and instrument or (f) agent, patient and source. There is something common in these verbs with three arguments; they have agent and theme or patient as their first two arguments. They are different in regard to the third argument they take. Some verbs of exchange or transaction (e.g. \textit{bhejna: ‘to send’) need 0-role of goal, some of source (\textit{Khari}\textperiodcentered\textsubscript{dna: ‘to buy’) both in Urdu and English. Some other verbs (e.g. \textit{bharna: ‘to fill’) take the 0-role of location. In Urdu, the sentence may be well-formed without the location argument as opposed to English where location is essential with agent and theme to generate a grammatical sentence with verbs such as \textit{rakhna: ‘to put’. Agent can be deleted when the sentence is passivised in both the languages. In Urdu, a sentence may be complete with theme only but in English both theme and location arguments are needed with verbs such as \textit{to fill up}. Some verbs of exchange (e.g. \textit{ha}\textperiodcentered\textsubscript{s}il karna ‘to obtain’) require the 0-role of source as their third argument. With such verbs a sentence may be correct without source and even without the agent and source both in Urdu and English. \textit{m\ddot{a}Dhna: ‘to impose’ type of verbs in Urdu and English need agent, theme and experiencer in all cases. The verb such as \textit{\v{c}ubho}\textsubscript{na: ‘to pierce’ takes agent, patient and instrument. In Urdu, it takes an NP as patient argument but in its English equivalent, there is a PP. All the three
arguments are essential here for the completion of a sentence. Some motion verbs (e.g. haTa:na: ‘to remove’) take agent, patient and source.

We have discussed the verbs which need an embedded sentential argument separately. In sentences with such verbs, the embedded sentential arguments are theme. Such verbs need agent or experiencer as well in the main clause. Some performative verbs (e.g. tardi:d karna: ‘to deny’) need two arguments i.e. agent and an embedded clause as its theme. The agent can be dropped from Urdu sentences as it is a pro-drop language. The verb lagna: / ma:lu:m paRna: ‘to seem / appear’ of this group take an NP argument aisa: which is like the pleonastic it in English and has no θ-role. The only difference between these languages is that aisa: can be dropped in Urdu but it cannot be dropped in English because English is not a pro-drop language.

Verbs with three essential arguments may also take a clause as its theme and other two arguments are agent and experiencer. The experiencer can be dropped in Urdu but in English it should be overt for the sentence to be well-formed. Some performative verbs (e.g. wa:da karna: ‘to promise’) can generate a well-formed sentence with two arguments in both Urdu and English, i.e. agent and theme. The infinitival complements which are taken as theme in Urdu are formed with verbs by the process of genitive formation (e.g. a:ne ka: wa:da: karna: ‘to promise to come’). The frequently used verb to say, the counterpart of Urdu verb kahna:, cannot take an NP as an experiencer without a preposition (e.g. say to me rather than *say me).

The sentences with causative verbs in Urdu have been discussed separately. To tackle the complexities of causative verbs, we have
adopted the framework of Hale and Keyser (1993) and shown that they can be discussed the same way in which other verbs with embedded sentences have been discussed. Superficially, causative verbs in Urdu seem to have (a) causer, agent and theme, (b) causer, agent and patient (c) causer, agent, theme and location (d) causer, agent, theme and source or (e) causer, agent, theme and goal. Configurationally they have biclausal structure in English, (e.g. make...do or cause...to do). The Urdu causative verbs are usually formed by adding the suffix (w)a: to the intransitive or transitive verb. Almost all intransitive verbs have transitive and causative counterparts (e.g. khulna: ‘to get open’, kholna: ‘to open’ and kholwa:na: ‘to cause to open’) but all transitive verbs do not have intransitive counterparts (e.g. likhna: ‘to write’). The sentences with a causative verb have a complex thematic structure. One argument is an NP which is the agent and another is an embedded clause as its theme. This theme argument which is a clause has its own thematic structure which may have (a) agent and theme (b) agent and patient (c) agent, theme and location (d) agent, theme and source or (e) agent, theme and goal, depending upon the verbs in embedded clause. The agent argument can be optionally deleted in Urdu but it is not possible to do so in English. Besides, the Urdu sentence with a causative verb can be well-formed, if it has a covert or overt causer of the action. We have initially adopted Grimshaw’s (1990) suggestion to call the agent of the causative sentence as ‘causer’ and that of the embedded sentence as ‘agent’ and shown the drawback of this approach. As we are not satisfied with Grimsahaw’s approach for some theoretical reason (specially, violation of UTAH), we have adopted Hale and Keyser’s framework (1993), which satisfies UTAH and proves the Causer Hierarchy of Grimshaw superfluous. We have shown how this approach has enabled us to represent identical
In Chapter Third, we have discussed different cases of absence of an argument in PF of various sentences. If the absence of an argument is not due to its movement or because it is a pro-drop language or it is represented by PRO, it may be due to incorporation or θ-absorption. The concept of incorporation as proposed by Gruber (1976) and Baker (1988) have been discussed and differentiated from Jackendoff’s concept of argument fusion (1990) and Chomsky’s concept of θ-absorption (1981, 1986). Although both these processes seem to account for arguments which are not overtly expressed in sentences, the former (e.g. Baker’s) has a problem. We have adopted the notion of θ-absorption given by Chomsky (1981, 1986). Chomsky uses the concept of θ-absorption to cover only those cases in which θ-role is absorbed in the verb and can be inferred from it, as opposed to Gruber and Baker who use the term incorporation in such a way that it covers not only cases involving noun incorporation but also those of verb and preposition incorporation. According to Baker’s approach, the incorporated elements are visible (e.g. to babysit) but θ-absorption does not cover such cases; it covers the cases in which the absent argument can be inferred from the semantics of the verb (e.g. He ate meaning ate something edible)

We have discussed the pattern of absorption of arguments in Urdu verbs and compared them with their English counterparts. We have looked at different groups of Urdu verbs to find out the types of θ-roles absorbed in them. We have found that the most common argument absorbed in both Urdu and English is the theme. We have also found that it is absorbed in
situations when it has an unspecified reference or when it can be inferred from the predicate that absorbs it. There are some verbs (e.g. *na:čna:* ‘to dance’) which can be used both transitively and intransitively. They absorb unspecified theme. They indicate a profession when used in an indefinite present tense. Some verbs (*da:Rh: i: bana:*na:* ‘to shave’) may take reflexive of an agent as either theme or patient. Some verbs (e.g. *pi:na:* ‘to drink’), absorb specified theme and are used in an indefinite present tense. Verbs of transaction (e.g. *Khari:dn:*a:* ‘to buy’) in Urdu can omit the theme but it is not possible to do so in English. Similarly, sentences with verbs of perception in Urdu are well formed without theme if it can be recovered contextually. When these verbs are used in the abilitative sentence, they may absorb the theme in both languages. Some other arguments, which are absorbed in both the languages, are experiencer, goal, source, location and instrument. Some verbs of Urdu absorb experiencer in contrast to English, where it is necessary to have experiencer in PF to have a well-formed sentence. Performative verbs (*wa:da: karna:* ‘to promise’) may absorb experiencer in both the languages i.e. Urdu and English. Both the languages appear alike in the absorption of goal and source. When the location lacks specification, it can be absorbed in the verbs in Urdu but not necessarily in English. Some verbs (e.g. *phaila:*na:* ‘to spread’) may absorb location argument in English as well. The instrument argument may be absorbed in the verbs (e.g. *ka:*Tna:* ‘to cut’) in both Urdu and English. Verbs of transaction may absorb goal or source but not theme. Theme is absorbed in such verbs only in Urdu when it can be recovered contextually. As far as the agent is concerned, in passive sentences, it is absorbed by the morphological marking on the verbs in both the languages. But in active sentences, it is not the case. Being a pro-drop language Urdu can drop the agent but for
English it is not possible to drop it. It is also observed that the argument which is lowest in hierarchy i.e. theme, as Grimshaw (1990) mentioned, is absorbed more easily than the other argument in both the languages.

In Chapter Four, we have talked about the relation of \( \theta \)-theory with case theory. We have discussed the role of case theory in the generation of a grammatical sentence and tried to relate it to various \( \theta \)-roles. Though \( \theta \)-role assignment is a basic property of grammar, it cannot alone generate a well-formed sentence. All the functional elements are important to arrange them structurally. Case theory accounts for the distribution of overt NPs in such a manner that they are assigned proper case. The Case Filter, a basic component of case theory, says that every lexically realized NP must be assigned a case, for which features of case and case assigners must be in proper configuration. In other words, every NP that needs a case should have a case-assigner (V, P or AGRs/AGRo). The case theory interacts with movement. The \( \theta \)-role assigned is not concerned with movement because they are assigned to the arguments before they move.

We have also examined the types of case taken by a particular \( \theta \)-role and tried to find out whether an NP with a specific \( \theta \)-role (e.g., agent) is assigned a specific case (e.g., nominative) uniformly or it is assigned a specific case in one situation and another case in a different situation. We have noted that there is no one to one correspondence between the \( \theta \)-roles and cases. For instance, it is not only the instrument case that is assigned to instrument argument. The agent may be in the instrumental case (marked by \( se \) in Urdu and \( by \) in English) in passive constructions. The absolutive case in Urdu and accusative case in English are also assigned to locative argument. One case (e.g., nominative) may correspond to more
than one θ-role (e.g., agent, theme, patient and experiencer). Source and goal arguments seem to have ablative and dative case uniformly in both Urdu and English languages. The difference between a nominative-accusative structure and ergative-absolutive structure accounts for some crucial differences in the realization of agent and theme / patient in Urdu. As Urdu is a split ergative-absolutive language, it follows both these patterns which make it different from English which has only the nominative-accusative pattern.

5.1 Conclusion
This comparative study of Urdu and English languages is confined to the process of the application of θ-theory in these two languages. We begin with the hypothesis that these two languages differ at PF in this regard but are alike at LF. We have examined the θ-grid of several types of Urdu verbs and their English counterparts and gone into the discussion of the overt realization of arguments in sentences.

Our analysis leads us to conclude that the number of arguments needed by a specific type of verb is the same in both Urdu and English, though their overt realization varies. It happens mainly because of the process of θ-absorption. Urdu and English exhibit a lot of difference in the absorption of some arguments such as, theme and experiencer. We have found that the theme argument is absorbed in the verbs in Urdu if it is unspecified or it can be recovered from the context but it is not always possible to do so in English. However, it is not always the case that English verbs cannot absorb unspecified NPs. For instance, when the verbs of perception are used in the abilitative sentence, the theme may be absorbed in the verbs in both the languages. Experiencer is absorbed in
more cases in Urdu than in English. In so far as the experiencer of the performative verbs is concerned, Urdu and English behave in a similar fashion i.e. they both θ-absorb it. For an Urdu speaker learning English it is necessary to know when a verb in Urdu absorbs an argument but that in English does not. The opposite is also true; English verb may θ-absorb but its Urdu counterpart may not. If these facts are kept in mind while teaching English to Urdu speakers, they may help them in using well formed and complete sentences in English. Our study of the relation of θ-theory with case theory in Urdu and English may also provide useful hints about the use of specific prepositions in English at least in some situations.

Finally, we have shown with the help of θ-theory that Urdu and English are somewhat different from each other in the overt realization of their arguments in sentences with specific type of verbs. This knowledge may be useful for Urdu-speaking English learners. The knowledge as to what semantic class of verbs will θ-absorb which type of argument may also be useful. To some extent this work may also be helpful to those working in the area of natural language processing.