

AGREEMENT IN KINNAURI

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Abstract

Kinnauri is said to belong to Sino-Tibetan (or Tibeto-Burman) family of language. It is interesting to examine the structure of Kinnauri language at any level of its function; however, 'agreement' needs some special attention. Language has great bearing to the environment, and especially to the languages that act as the 'contact language' in the area. Languages in Himachal Pradesh such as Kumauni, Garhwali, Dogri, Kangri and many others are from Indo-Aryan stock. Another important trait of the languages spoken in Himachal Pradesh is that they show a great deal of 'influence' of Punjabi language. This influence is mapped in the languages of the area beyond borrowing of the vocabulary or pronunciation. The influence is reported even at the structure-level in the languages. It is for this reason also that the 'agreement system' of Kinnauri becomes very important to examine. Kinnauri has 'ergativity' but it functions very differently in the language. Kinnauri does not mark the 'gender' as a phi feature on the verb-morphology. Thus, the implicational statement about the characteristics of the structure of the language with regard to 'grammatical gender', 'ergativity' and 'agreement' and their interplay would forecast that Kinnauri might not have the so called 'object-verb-agreement' as a system of agreement. If this is so, the agreement system proposed in Das (2006) becomes very relevant to analyze the agreement-system in Kinnauri. The present paper on 'agreement in Kinnauri' is an attempt to explore some of these interrelated issues of language structure and agreement phenomenon'.

Introduction

Agreement is interpreted as the outcome of some sort of grammatical relations between two or more elements in the sentence. In other words, agreement is viewed purely as a reference of the participant(s) that is marked on the verb which subsequently turns the verb into finite form with the help of the tense and aspect in which the sentence is constructed.

Thus, supporting one of famous view in modern times, we can say that 'agreement' in most cases helps the hearer to keep track of the different referents in a discourse. This is probably why Lehmann (1988:55) prefers to call 'agreement' to be referential in nature. It is referential because it helps to retrieve the referent(s). A formal definition for agreement is mentioned in Das (2006) which is a modified version of Lehmann's definition of agreement (1988):

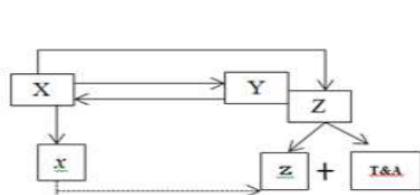
Definition of 'Grammatical Agreement'

Constituent $Y_{(verb)}$ agrees with constituent $X_{(NP)}$ in a category Z iff the following conditions hold true:

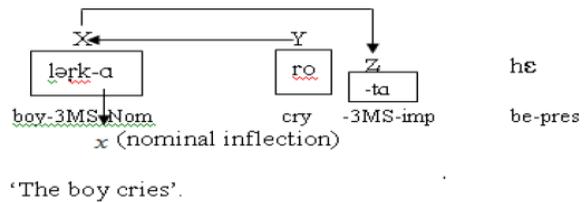
- a. There is a syntactic relationship between X and Y .
- b. X is related to a subcategory z (the nominal inflections) of a grammatical category Z (the verbal inflection) and X 's relationship to z is independent of the nature or value of Y .
- c. There is a mutual sharing of the grammatical features/values between the nominal and verbal inflections in the clause.
- d. Z is expressed on Y and forms a constituent with it (i.e. VP).

This definition is simple and useful for mapping the agreement system of most of inflectional languages. It is very easy to explain the schema that has been outlined in the definition. We can interpret it in the following way, the verb (i.e. **Y**) agrees with an NP (i.e. **X**) in a category **Z** (i.e. the bound morpheme(s)ⁱ). The first condition that is demanded by the definition is very clear and that is ‘...there is a syntactic relationship between the verb and the NPs in the sentence’. The next important point in the definition is that every ‘**X** (i.e. an NP)’ necessarily belongs to its own sub-class i.e. ‘**x**’ which is encoded with its PNGⁱⁱ and this ‘**x**’ is inherently subsumed in the making of a sub-class i.e. ‘**z**’ which becomes an integral part of ‘**Z**’ i.e. verbal inflection. The verbal inflection is an output of ‘PNG’ of subject NP and the tense and aspect of the sentence. It is for this reason that the tail of the condition states that ‘...‘**X**’s relationship to ‘**z**’ is independent of the nature or value of **Y**’ and this should be understood as the verb inflection which is made out of the PNG and T&Aⁱⁱⁱ is not concerned with what is the type (i.e. intransitive, transitive or di-transitive) of verb. The last condition suggests that the formation of VP as a constituent takes place when the ‘**Z**’ the inflectional marker is expressed on ‘**Y**’ in the sentence.

Let us see this in a pictorial notation and then transposing these pictorial notations in an example in Hindi and then move on the next section:



pictorial diagram-1



exemplified diagram-2

Systems of agreement in different languages

The above definition and its illustration can be realized in different languages resulting in different kinds of ‘Systems of Agreement’. I will try to limit myself to the analysis of the possible systems of agreement in Indian languages, because it will not be possible for me to examine and discuss every type of system of agreement in languages of the world due to the limitation of time and space of the present paper.

Mostly, the languages that show ‘grammatical gender’ as an essential semantic and structural feature of the lexical items tend to have ‘subject-verb’ and ‘object-verb’ agreement. These two systems of agreement exist in complementary distribution. Meaning, the ‘subject-verb’ and ‘object-verb’ agreement demand two different syntactic environments and they can’t co-exist in a sentence. They are mutually exclusive. Researchers working on languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Nepali etc. have reported this fact in their works^{iv}. I would like to reiterate it again here that most of the typological claims that I am making regarding the structural dependencies for agreement phenomenon are mainly for the languages in India. This is important here because one can easily raise an objection to the implicational claim that *if a language has ‘grammatical gender’ as a feature for every lexical item, the language will have ‘object-verb agreement’*. There are languages like French, Spanish, Italian and many other languages in the world which may have ‘grammatical gender’ as a distinguishing feature of every lexical item, but do not have ‘object-verb agreement’. However, the objection is invalid for present paper because this prediction is valid only for some languages spoken in India from Indo-Aryan stock.

But if we combine another linguistic feature such as ‘ergative case’ with the subject nominal along with the ‘grammatical gender’, it will make the situation better for the typological implicational claim. The ‘ergative case’ in these Indo-Aryan languages and its relationship with the ‘grammatical gender’ helps the languages to facilitate the ‘object-verb agreement’. Having combined these two linguistics features together, the abovementioned implicational typological claim and its application become wider and it can now take care of even the European languages that are mentioned above.

Another important point that must be mentioned here is that if any of these two features is unavailable in a language, the language won’t show ‘object-verb agreement’. Thus, the European languages that I have named here do have ‘grammatical gender’, but none of them has ‘object-verb agreement’ because they all lack ‘ergativity’. On the contrary, there are languages in India like Hmar, Mizo, Khortha, Kinnauri and all of them have ‘ergativity’, but ‘object-verb agreement’ is not present in any of them simply because none of them has ‘grammatical gender’.

There is yet another type of languages where the system of agreement shows that the subject-verb agreement is fundamental and the primary requirement of the verb to agree with. However, there are other NPs in the sentence that are important from discourse point of view. It is for this reason that some referential marking of these NPs must find some reference on the verb phrase besides the subject of the sentence. This marking of the other NPs on the verb looks similar to the marking of the subject NP but they are quite different in their linguistics features. They do not create a new syntactic domain^v where the system of agreement has to change for the purpose of their references to the other NPs than subject NP. The speakers simply need these special discourse markers on the verb to keep track of the references in the sentence along with the subject but certainly not barring the subject NP. Languages like Maithili, Angika and some other languages come under this type. Das^{vi} (2006) has classified these systems of agreement into two different types e.g. ‘Single-system of agreement’ and ‘Dual-system of agreement’.

Kinnauri is a language which has a ‘single-system of agreement’ despite the fact that the language has ‘ergativity’ marking on the subject NPs, ‘i.e. a ‘split-system of ergativity’. The present paper keeps the above mentioned implicational typological claim at the center as a theoretical model and wishes to examine the agreement facts in Kinnauri. The paper is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the basic and descriptive details of agreement in Kinnauri. The second section deals with ergativity in Kinnauri and explains how the phenomena of ‘ergativity’ and ‘agreement’ are unnecessarily grouped together. There are mere correlations between the two but they are not dependent linguistically one on each other as they have been reported by many researchers from Indian subcontinents. The third section explains as to why the agreement system in Kinnauri should be classified as ‘Single-system of agreement’.

Basic structures of agreement in Kinnauri

Simple clauses:

1. gi kim-o bi-č du-k
 I-1S-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pres-1S
 ‘I go home’.

2. ki/ka kim-o bi-č du-ĩn /-n
 You-2S-H/NH-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pres-2S-H/NH
 ‘You go home’.

3. do kim-o bi-č du-ø
 S/he-3S-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pres-3S
 'S/he goes home'.

In the above examples (1-3), the verb phrase has two linguistic elements, the first one is the main verb and other one is a 'be' verb. The main verb in the verb phrase bears a bound morpheme '-č' that marks the present tense and the 'be' verb takes care of the person markings e.g. '-k' for first person singular and '-n' for second person non-honorific and '-ĩn' for second person honorific. The third person remains unmarked, meaning the 'be' verb does not show any overt marking for the third person singular or plural subject in Kinnauri. Let us examine the plural counterparts of the present simple tense in different persons in Kinnauri:

4. kəʒəŋɑ kim-o bi-č du-č
 We-1Pl-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pre-1Pl
 'We go home'.
5. kina kim-o bi-č du-č
 You-2Pl-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pres-2Pl
 'You(all) go home'.
6. do-gɑ kim-o bi-č du-ø
 They-3Pl-Nom house-Loc go-pres be-pres-3Pl
 'They go home'.

These examples (4-6) show the plural counterpart of the earlier examples in present simple tense. There are some interesting morpho-syntactic markers shown up in these Kinnauri sentences. The plurality of the subject NPs is marked on the 'be' verb with an inflectional marker '-č' which is homophonous with the present tense marker that appears with the main verb in Kinnauri. Since, both person and number features from the PNG are used in Kinnauri; we can wonder what happened to the person distinction in present tense. Well, the person distinction is lost in case of plural subject NPs in first and second person. If the subject NP is in third person, it remains unmarked even in the plural form.

Past simple tense

7. gɪ kim-o bi -yo-k
 I-1S-Nom house-Loc go pst-1S
 'I went home'.
8. ki/ka kim-o bi -yo-ĩn /-n
 You-2S-H/NH-Nom house-Loc go pst-2S-H/NH
 'You went home'.
9. do/doga kim-o bi- -yo-ø
 S/he/they/-Nom house-Loc go pst-3S
 'S/he went'.

10. kəʃəŋa kim-o bi- -yo-č
 We-1-Pl-Nom house-Loc go pst-1Pl
 ‘We went home’. <The verb ending is same for 2nd person plural>

The morpho-syntactic markings of these examples (7-10) again conform to the earlier findings about the person and number markings on the verb phrase for the agreement-system in Kinnauri in past simple tense.

However, unlike the present simple tense, where the main verb was accompanied by a be verb to take care of the marking for person and number, in case of past simple tense, the tense marker as well as the markers for person and number are borne by the main verb^{vii} only. The morpheme ‘-yo’ marks the past tense and person and number markers are reiterated as the ‘-k’ for first person singular and ‘-n’ for second person non-honorific and ‘-in’ for second person honorific and the third person remains unmarked in both singular and plural forms.

Future simple tense

11. gi kim-o bi- -to-k
 I-1S-Nom house-Loc go fut-1S
 ‘I will go home’.
12. ki/ka kim-o bi- -to-in /-n
 You-2S-H/NH-Nom house-Loc go fut-2S-H/NH
 ‘You will go home’.
13. do/ doga kim-o bi -to-ø
 S/he/ they-Nom house-Loc go fut-3S
 ‘S/he /they will go home’.
14. kəʃəŋga kim-o bi -to-č
 We-1Pl-Nom house-Loc go -fut-1Pl
 ‘We will go home’.
15. kɪna kim-o bi -to-č
 You-2Pl-Nom house-Loc go -fut-2Pl
 ‘You(all) will go home’.

These examples (11-15) are given here to show the pattern of agreement in Kinnauri in simple future tense. The marking of the agreement features on the verb is remarkable as they attest to great structural uniformity in the language. The main verb stem ‘bi’ is attached with a bound morpheme to mark the future simple e.g. ‘-to’. This is often called the ‘stem forming’ process in inflectional languages. After this the person and number marking are attached to the stem to refer to different kinds of subject NPs in the sentences. The inflectional marker ‘-k’ has been used for first person singular and ‘-n’ for second person non-honorific and ‘-in’ for second person honorific. The third person in both singular and plural form remains unmarked. The bound morpheme ‘-č’ is used to mark the plural first person and second person subject NPs in example (14-15).

Aspectual marking in Kinnauri

Present simple or indefinite aspect in Kinnauri

16. gi roṭe ja-č du-k
I-1S-Nom chapatti eat-pres be-pres-1S
'I eat chapatti'.
17. ki/ka roṭe ja-č du-iñ /-n
You-2S-H-Nom/NH chapatti eat-pres be-pres-2S-Hon non-Hon
'You eat chapatti'.
18. do/doga roṭe ja-č du-ø
S/he-3S/Pl-Nom chapatti eat-pres be-pres-3S/Pl
'S/he/They eat chapatti'.
19. kəšəŋa roṭe ja-č du-č
we-1Pl-Nom chapatti eat-pres be-pres-1Pl
'We eat chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

The examples (16-19) are reiteration of earlier explained fact about the agreement pattern in present simple or indefinite aspect in Kinnauri. The verb in these examples have been intentionally chosen to be from the transitive stock, which can clearly illustrate that there is no effect on the agreement pattern due to the change of the verb type in Kinnauri.

The example (18) shows that a marker '-ga' is used with the subject NPs or with other nominal items to make it plural in Kinnauri.

Progressive/Continuous aspect in Kinnauri

20. gi roṭe ja-o du-k
I-1S-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pres-1S
'I am eating chapatti'.
21. ki/ka roṭe ja-o du-iñ /-n
You-2S-H-Nom/NH chapatti eat-prog be-pres-2S-Hon non-Hon
'You are eating chapatti'.
22. do/doga roṭe ja-o du-ø
S/he-3S/Pl-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pres-3S/Pl
'S/he/They eating chapatti'.
23. kəšəŋa roṭe ja-o du-č
we-1Pl-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pres-1Pl
'We are eating chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

The examples (20-23) have been given here to highlight the continuous aspect marking in Kinnauri in present tense. The inflectional marker '-o' is used here with the main verb to show the progression or the continuity of the action denoted by the main verb in the sentences. The agreement maker for person and number remains uniform in the above sentences such as '-k' for first person singular, '-n and -iñ' for second person non-honorific and honorific and '-č' for plural

forms of first and second person subject NPs. The third person remains unmarked with singular and plural subject NPs.

Past progressive aspect in Kinnauri

- 24. gi roṭe ja-o dwe-k
I-1S-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pst-1S
'I was eating chapatti'.
- 25. ki/ka roṭe ja-o dwe-iñ /-n
You-2S-H-Nom/NH chapatti eat-prog be-pst-2S-Hon non-Hon
'You were eating chapatti'.
- 26. do/doga roṭe ja-o dwe-ø
S/he-3S/Pl-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pst-3S/Pl
'S/he/They was/were chapatti'.
- 27. kəšəŋa roṭe ja-o dwe-č
we-1Pl-Nom chapatti eat-prog be-pst-1Pl
'We were eating chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

These examples (24-27) are used here for the purpose of showing the agreement system in past progressive aspect in Kinnauri. The main verb is marked with an affix '-o' for showing the progressive aspect. The be-verb shows a change from 'du' to 'dwe' in these examples. After that there is a regular affixing of person and number inflection to the be-verb and we have already explained these markers.

Future Indefinite aspect in Kinnauri

- 28. gi roṭe ja -tə-k
I-1S chapatti eat fut-1S
'I will eat chapatti'.
- 29. ki/ka roṭe ja -tə-iñ/-n
You-2S-H/NH-Erg chapatti eat fut-2S-H/-NH
'You will eat chapatti'.
- 30. do/doga roṭe ja -tə
S/he-3S/Pl-Erg Chapatti eat fut
'S/he/They will chapatti'.
- 31. kəšəŋa roṭe ja -tə-č
we-1Pl-Erg chapatti eat fut-1Pl
'We will eat chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

We have already seen the future indefinite aspect in Kinnauri in the examples (11-15), and these examples (28-31) conform to the similar or same findings about the agreement system in future indefinite aspect. However, I have used the transitive verb in these sentences to ensure that

there is no change in the marking for the future indefinite aspect with regard to the +/- transitivity of the verb.

Future progressive aspect in Kinnauri

32. gi roṭe ja-o ni-tə-k
I-1S chapatti eat-prog be-fut-1S
'I will be eating chapatti'.
33. ki/ka roṭe ja-o ni-tə-ĩn/-n
You-2S-H/NH chapatti eat-prog be-fut-2S-H/-NH
'You will be eating chapatti'.
34. do/doga roṭe ja-o ni-tə-ø
S/he-3S/Pl chapatti eat-prog be-fut-3S
'S/he/They will be eating chapatti'.
35. kəʃəŋa roṭe ja-o ni-tə-č
we-1Pl chapatti eat-prog fut-1Pl
'We will be eating chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

The above examples (32-35) are the last set of examples to show the progressive aspect in future tense which also exemplify the imperfect aspect^{viii} in Kinnauri. The progressive aspect in future tense that is shown in examples (32-35) is very simple. The main verb is marked with a progressive suffix '-o' and there is a different helping verb 'ni' which takes an inflectional marker '-tə' that we have seen earlier to be used for future tense in Kinnauri. The markers that mark the person and number of the subject NPs on the verb in the sentence are similar to what we have already explained in earlier cases.

Split-ergative system in Kinnauri

Kinnauri, like many other languages spoken in India, depicts a 'split-ergative system'. Dixon (1994; Pp1) defines ergativity as '*...the subject of an intransitive sentence and the direct object of a transitive sentence is treated in the same way and these two are treated differently from the subject of a transitive sentence*'. Indian languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Kangri, and even Kinnauri follow the abovementioned definition of ergativity by Dixon. The marking of the ergative case with the subject of a transitive clause takes place only in 'past simple tense, and in all perfective aspects' in most of the languages from India^{ix} which are known or called ergative languages.

In other words, the subject of a transitive clause is case marked with an ergative case only when the main verb shows the perfective reading. The perfective reading includes the past simple tense and all perfect aspects in different tenses. Kinnauri follows this system, and thus it is classified as a 'split-ergative' language. Let us examine the agreement in ergative constructions in Kinnauri.

Present Perfect Aspect in Kinnauri

36. gi-s roṭe ja ja-ø
I-1S-Erg chapatti eat perf-3S(default)
'I have eaten chapatti'.

37. ki-s/ka-s roṭe ja ja-ø
 You-2S-H/NH-Erg chapatti eat perf-3S(default)
 ‘You have eaten chapatti’.

38. do-s/doga-s roṭe ja ja-ø
 S/he-3S/Pl-Erg Chapatti eat perf-3S(default)
 ‘S/he/They have eaten chapatti’.

39. kəṣəŋa-s roṭe ja ja-ø
 we-1Pl-Erg Chapatti eat perf-3S-default
 ‘We have eaten chapatti’ <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

These examples (36-39) show many important features of agreement system in Kinnauri. One, Kinnauri seems to reduplicate the stem of the main verb to show the perfective aspect in present tense. Second, the subject NP is marked with ergative case suffix in all the examples. Third, it is interesting to see that in case of reduplicated verb-form, which is used for marking the present perfect aspect, the verb does not take any agreement marker for subject NPs. This is somewhat odd. Punjabi and Hindi which are the contact-languages in the area have ergative case in such context, but they also have a change of the system of agreement. In other words, Hindi and Punjabi will have ‘object-verb agreement’ in such context. However, Kinnauri does not have ‘object-verb agreement’ and in order to show the ‘default agreement’, which is the last option if there is no NP in the sentence to agree with, the language develops this unique strategy to repeat the verbal stem and add nothing afterwards to make it work as ‘default agreement’.

Past simple aspect

40. gi-s roṭe ja-ø -k
 I-1S-Erg chapatti eat-pst -1S
 ‘I ate chapatti’.

41. ki-s/ka-s roṭe ja-ø -ĩn/-n
 You-2S-H/NH-Erg chapatti eat-pst -2S-H/NH
 ‘You ate chapatti’.

42. do-s/doga-s roṭe ja-ø -ø
 S/he-3S/Pl-Erg Chapatti eat-pst -3S/Pl
 ‘S/he/They ate chapatti’.

43. kəṣəŋa-s roṭe ja-ø -č
 we-1Pl-Erg chapatti eat-pst -1Pl
 ‘We ate chapatti’ <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

We had seen examples of past simple aspect earlier (7-10), but those examples were with intransitive verb. These examples (40-43) are in the same aspect, but have transitive verb, and it is because of the transitive verb that we have ergative case with the subject NPs. However, what is linguistically interesting about these sentences is that they show the regular agreement marking of the subject NP on the verb in each of the sentence. What remains puzzling though is the absence of past-tense marker^x in these examples. However, if we compare this with present perfect aspect,

we do have some explanation. The verb stem is not repeated in past simple tense and the agreement is put on the stem to mark the past simple aspect which brings a distinct verbal-form to show that the action has been done in past and in perfective way.

The agreement of the ergative case marked subject NPs with the verb in Kinnauri is a new thing if compared with the languages of Indo-Aryan family (of course with some exceptions). Meaning, most of the Indo-Aryan languages will have the 'object-verb agreement' in such context because the ergative or any case suffix with the subject NPs blocks their eligibility to show the agreement with the verb. Let us see some more examples in Kinnauri with such pattern before we conclude the section.

Past perfect aspect in Kinnauri

44. gi-s roṭe ja-ja dwe-k
I-1S-Erg chapatti eat-perf be-pst-1S
'I had eaten chapatti'.
45. ki-s/ka-s roṭe ja-ja dwe-ĩn/-n
You-2S-H/NH-Erg chapatti eat-prog be-pst-2S-H/-NH
'You had eaten chapatti'.
46. do-s/doga-s roṭe ja-ja dwe-ø
S/he-3S/Pl Chapatti eat-perf be-pst-3S
'S/he/They had eaten chapatti'.
47. kəṣəŋa-s roṭe ja-ja dwe-č
we-1Pl chapatti eat-perf fut-1Pl
'We will have eaten chapatti' <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

The examples (44-47) in Kinnauri present another important and discrete pattern of verb morphology of a Tibeto-Burman language that is spoken in an area where the contact-languages are mostly from Indo-Aryan language family. In these examples, the verb stem, as it was in present perfect, is repeated to show the perfectivity of the action described by the verb and a 'be-verb' is used with its past form 'dwe' and the agreement suffixes are put on the past tense marked 'be-verb'. This is a good example of morphosyntactic concatenation of agreement suffixes and tense and aspect marking on the verb of a sentence. Kinnauri seems to have developed this pattern as a blend of different patterns that are available in the contact-languages in the area such as Hindi and Punjabi.

Future perfect aspect in Kinnauri

48. gi-s roṭe ja-ja ni-tə-k
I-1S-Erg chapatti eat-perf be-fut-1S
'I will have eaten chapatti'.
49. ki-s/ka-s roṭe ja-ja ni-tə-ĩn/-n
You-2S-H/NH-Erg chapatti eat-prog be-fut-2S-H/-NH
'You will have eaten chapatti'.

50. do-s/doga-s roṭe ja-ja ni-tə-ø
 S/he-3S/Pl Chapatti eat-perf be-fut-3S
 ‘S/he/They will have eaten chapatti’.
51. kəʃəŋa-s roṭe ja-ja ni-tə-č
 we-1Pl Chapatti eat-perf fut-1Pl
 ‘We will have eaten chapatti’ <the verb marker remains same for 2nd Plural>

These examples (48-51) are the last set of examples showing the perfective marking on the verb in future tense. The pattern of the verb morphology is very simple. The main verb stem is repeated to mark the perfectivity and this brings the ergative case with the subject NPs in the sentences. There is a ‘be-verb’ and a future tense marker i.e. ‘ni-tə’ and once this helping verb is conjugated with tense, it is ready to accept the agreement suffixes for different persons and numbers that are available with subject NPs to show the syntactic relationship with the verb in the sentence. The inflectional marker for agreement in case of first and second person plural subjects remains the same, a homophonous marker ‘-č’ is used, and we have seen this earlier examples too. The third person either singular or plural remains unmarked for its person and number agreement on the verb. This brings Kinnauri quite close to a more ‘agglutinative-type’ of language than Hindi at the level of verb morphology^{xi}.

Kinnauri and Hmar

I want to conclude the paper by comparing Kinnauri with a language from Tibeto-Burman family called ‘Hmar’. This comparison is needed to make a better sense of the ‘agreement-pattern’ that we have found or seen in Kinnauri. Consider the following examples from Hmar^{xii}

Ergativity in Hmar

Subject in Intransitive clauses in Hmar

52. kei ka- tlan
 I-1S-Nom 1S run-pres
 ‘I run’.
53. kei-ni kan- tlan
 I-1Pl-Nom 1Pl run-pres
 ‘We run’.
54. kei skol-a ka- fe
 I-1S-Nom school-Loc 1S go
 ‘I go to school’.
55. naute c^hu a- trap
 baby-3S-Nom det. 3S cry
 ‘The baby cries’.

The above examples from Hmar show that the subject NP is marked with nominative case because the verb in these examples is intransitive. Now, let us examine some examples with transitive from Hmar.

Subjects in transitive clauses in Hmar

56. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- zi:k
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S write
 'I write a letter'.
57. kei-ni-in lek^hat^hɔn ei- zi:k-tah
 I-1S-Erg letter 1Pl write-pst
 'We wrote a letter'.
58. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- zi:k-diŋ
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S write-fut
 'I will write a letter'.
59. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- zi:k-jiŋ-diŋ
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S write-fut-prog
 'I will be writing a letter'.
60. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- lo-zi:k-anih
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S pst-write-be
 'I was writing a letter'.
61. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- zi:k-laime:k-anih
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S write-Prog-be
 'I am writing a letter'.
62. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- lo-zi:k-tah
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S pst-write-prest-perf
 'I have written a letter'.
63. kei-in lek^hat^hɔn ka- zi:k-ta-diŋ-ana
 I-1S-Erg letter 1S write-Perf-Fut-be
 'I will have written a letter'.

The above examples (56-63) from Hmar are with transitive verbs and these verbs have been used in different tenses and aspects. These examples also depict the fact that the subject of these examples are case marked with the ergative case if we compare these to the earlier examples of intransitive verbs. However, the most important thing that these examples have to show here and help us establish the fact of agreement in Kinnauri is that the subject NPs in all these examples show agreement with the verb in all the sentences. Therefore, we can't do justice to the agreement facts in languages from different family if we are guided too much by the parameters of ergativity and its coincidental implicational values with the agreement in Indo-Aryan languages. The comparison of Hmar with Kinnauri here is with the purpose to show that agreement and ergativity are two different phenomenon and they are accidentally together in some languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi and some other languages from Indo-Aryan languages. And this should lead us to theorize that they are not part and parcel of each other and they have to exist in mutual exclusiveness in all the languages.

The last set of examples that I want to put here to prove the point is from Gujarati. Gujarati is Indo-Aryan language. In Gujarati, when the subject NP gets an ergative case, of course the verb does not show agreement with it. However, the verb invariably agrees with the direct object in the sentence irrespective of whether the direct object is case marked or not. Gujarati shows nothing but just another functions of case marker and agreement. Let us see the examples from Gujarati:

Gujarati: (adopted from Mistry 2003)

64. šilaa-e kaagaL lakh-y-o
 S.(F)-ERG letter (M) write-PF-M
 ‘Sheela wrote a letter’.
65. šilaa-e raaj-ne jagaaD-y-o
 S.(F)-ERG R.(M)-Acc awake-PF-M
 ‘Sheela woke up Raj’.

These two examples (64-65) from Gujarati exemplify that the verb can agree with a case marked nominal in Gujarati. This strengthens the above-mentioned facts of ‘agreement pattern’. In example (64) the direct object is unmarked and it is a third person singular nominal entity and that is what the inflection on the verb shows. So, one can mistake this as a similar pattern that is found in Hindi, Punjabi and Marathi where verb agrees with the left most nominal element only if that nominal is not case marked. However, when we compare (65) with (64), we have to change this view. The verb in (65) still agrees with the direct object in spite of the fact that the direct object bears an overt case. Let us see one more example in Gujarati to arrive at a better conclusion because one can argue that the example (65) might be a case of ‘default agreement’ in Gujarati. Consider the following example:

65. raaj-e šeela-ne jagaaD-y-i
 R.(M)-ERG S.(F)-Acc awake-PF-F
 ‘Raj woke up Sheela’.

The above example (65) leaves no space for any doubt regarding the agreement of the verb in Gujarati with a case marked direct object in case the subject NP is ergative case marked. One can ask a naïve question though as to why does not the verb then agree with ergative case marked subject itself. I guess there is no answer to such a question and anyway linguistics has never been out there to answer a question that starts with ‘why’, it has been able to answer ‘how’ at the best. Let us also examine the case of Nepali and its agreement pattern in ergative construction. This will really enrich the future research work in the area and widen up the horizon of the research topic on ‘ergativity and agreement’ with myriad diversification.

Nepali: (adopted from Poudel 2006)

66. čitrakar-le d^herai čitrə bəna-yo
 painter-3MS-Erg Many picture make-pst-3MS
 ‘The painter made many pictures’.
67. mai-le sod^hpətrə lek^h-y-e
 I-1MS-Erg research paper write-pst-1MS
 ‘I wrote a research paper’.

These examples (66-67) help us to wind up the discussion on the issue of ergativity case marked nominal and its agreement with the verb in the sentence. Nepali is an Indo-Aryan language and it shows the pattern of agreement where 'the ergative case' does not have to block the agreement between the subject and the verb in the sentence. The same fact has been ascertained from the discussion and examination of Kinnauri in the paper. So, we could close the discussion with the finding that Kinnauri belong to a 'single-system of agreement' despite the fact that the subject NP is ergative case marked, however, the ergative case functionally does not behave similar to some Indo-Aryan languages (i.e. Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi etc.), in the sense that the ergative case does not function as a blocker for the agreement between subject and verb in Kinnauri.

NOTES

- i. Bound morpheme is true in case of languages other than Isolating type of languages. Morpheme could be more than one in case of languages where the 'agreement markers' are more than one and they show agreement with SUB and OBJ both. Maithili is an example of such language discussed in Das (2006) that requires more than one bound morphemes to encode the agreement with SUB and OBJ.
- ii. This PNG i.e. Person, Number and Gender of the Subject/Object NP is not marked uniformly in all languages. There is a degree of selection of these three grammatical properties. A language may have one, two, all three or even none of these properties and this depends on how much 'inflectional' a language is.
- iii. T&A= I have mentioned Tense, aspect, but in some cases it may have mood as well in a sentence.
- iv. Saksena(1981), Comrie (1984), Butt (1995), Das (2006) and many others have reported this.
- v. This is what happened in subject-verb and object-verb agreements and the change of their references to different NPs than the subject NP in Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi and other languages.
- vi. See Das (2006) for more details about these two types of agreement in different languages.
- vii. As a language topologist, I am quite surprised to the form of verb in past simple tense in Kinnauri. Most of the languages that I have worked on would show a suppletive form (i.e. go- went or jana, 'to go' – 'gəya' etc.) but in Kinnauri there is no such change of main verb from present to past simple.
- viii. The past simple aspect in the examples (7-10) could have given us different structural information in Kinnauri because this aspect functions as the perfect aspect compared to other imperfect aspects that we used so far. However, this did not happen as the verb in the examples (7-10) was intransitive one.
- ix. I have said most of the Indian languages, because there are languages like Mizo, Hmar, and Khortha (angika) and may be some more which show a full-fledged ergative system.
- x. I have checked these examples for past perfect aspect and their pattern with the native speaker of the language twice, but he kept insisting that this is how we speak.
- xi. Typologically speaking, Hindi is more close to 'Inflectional type of languages' at the level of verb and its morphological patterns.
- xii. Darhmingthang John (2011) Ergativity in Hmar, an MPhil proposal submitted at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Linguistics, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007

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