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**PERSON AGREEMENT IN KHORTHAS: A LANGUAGE
OF JHARKHAND**

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Abstract

Khortha is the most widely spoken language in Jharkhand and it is also referred as the eastern variety of Magahi. Khortha belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. As per 2011 census Khortha has 8.04 million speakers. Since very few attempts have been made to study the language from linguistic point of view, the present research paper tries to identify and analyze the pattern of person agreement in Khortha. According to Crystal (1995), an agreement is "the formal relationship between elements whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another". The data for the current study includes both primary and secondary. For collecting the primary data, a field survey was done in the Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand where native speakers of the language were consulted and requested to respond to the questionnaires prepared by the researchers. The sample size for collecting data consisted of 50 people from the different age groups. The secondary sources of data included story books, newspapers, and books of folktales. The findings of the study reveal that agreement markers are very much prominent in the language and they are used in the language depending upon the variations in persons. Agreement markers in the Khortha language are observable as the verbal endings or also at the level of auxiliaries. The research paper contributes to the field of syntax as well as to the field of language documentation by analyzing the structure of the language.

Keywords: Khortha Language, Agreement, Person agreement, Indo-Aryan Language, Documentation.

Introduction

The present research paper attempts to identify and analyze the person agreement in Khortha, an endangered language of India. Khortha belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family under the Indo-European group of languages. As it belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family and is very similar to Hindi, the grammatical structure of Khortha is SOV and it is V-final

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language. According to the 2011 census, Khortha speakers are it is estimated to be around 8.04 million. So far its identity is concerned; there has been a debate. Various scholars have given different opinions regarding its identity. Prasad and Shastri (1958) consider Khortha to be a variety of Magahi whereas Das (2013) views it to be a variety of Angika mainly spoken in Western Jharkhand and Bihar. Similarly, researchers have pretty different perspectives regarding the linguistic family of Khortha. Some believe that it originated from the Indus Valley culture while others think it to have originated from the Prakrit language. Some others view it to be originated from the sounds of nature. However, Khortha is the second most spoken language in Jharkhand after Hindi. It is not just the mother tongue of several tribal groups of the region but also the language of the Sedans of Jharkhand. Moreover, Khortha has very rich folk literature and the folk tales of Khortha are known as Maharai.

The agreement results from grammatical relationships between two or more sentence constituents. In linguistics, various scholars have defined the term “agreement” in several ways over the years. Crystal (1995) sees it differently and asserts that “an agreement is a formal relationship between elements whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another. Moreover, in the opinion of Steel (1978), “Agreement commonly refers to some systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another; for example, adjectives may take some formal indication of the number and gender of the noun they modify” (as cited in Choudhary: 2014). However, it has been a matter of research and discussion that languages around the world have varieties of agreement marking patterns. Similarly, like many other languages, Khortha, too, may have agreement markers in the language. It may be possible that the person, number and gender of the language may overtly agree with verbs and show agreement remarkably. Thus, agreement is a relation that connects the noun and the verb in a sentence. Along with the agreement-related information, verbs also carry much other information. The information about agreement is represented by the suffixes that follow verbs.

The topic of agreement has been an interesting area of research to the scholars of linguistics. Some of the scholars who have prominently conducted research over the topic of agreement include Moravesik (1978), Lapointe (1985), Nagaraja (1993), Bhatt (1993), Donohue (2003), Corbett (1979; 2006), Comrie (2009), Wunderlich (2009), Nishiyama (2011), Baker (2008;

2011), Subbarao (2012), Henderson (2013), Rakesh & Kumar (2013), Das (2006; 2018), Alahmadi (2019), Alwahibee (2020) and Michael & Bateman (2020). So far as research on Khortha language is concerned, scholars have also attempted to analyze it from different perspectives. Priya & Singh (2018) has conducted research on the topic “*Khortha or Khotta: An Endangered Language of India and the Urgency to Retain its Pure Variety*” whereas the research work of Aman et al. (2020) prominently deals with the phonological aspects of Khortha language and they also try to provide the linguistic profile of the same. The latest work on Khortha language includes the research work of Kumari (2021) which deals with analyzing Ergativity and agreement in it.

The review of the research work on the topic exhibits that there has been minimal research work on the language Khortha and since very few attempts have been made to analyze language from the syntactic perspective, the current research work attempts to identify, analyze and highlight the current agreement patterns that are identifiable in Khortha. The research work would be helpful in documenting the data of the Khortha, an endangered language for future reference and study.

Data and Methodology

The data for the current study is based on both primary and secondary sources. For collecting the primary data, a field survey was done in the Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand where native speakers of the language were consulted and requested to respond to the questionnaires prepared by the researchers. The questionnaire included some basic questions seeking details of the informants like name, age, maximum education level, etc. It also included some questions based on agreement. The questions were given in Hindi and they were asked to translate them into Khortha. The purpose of giving questionnaire was to collect data on agreement from the Khortha language. The sample size for collecting data consisted of 50 people from the different age groups. The secondary sources of data included story books, newspapers, and books of folktales. The primary and secondary data collected were transcribed and analyzed linguistically so as to identify agreement patterns as observable in the language, Khortha.

Data Analysis

This section deals with the analysis of agreement patterns in the language Khortha. In order to identify an agreement in Khortha,

I, II, and III person pronouns have been analyzed and discussed under the heads of different types of tenses and aspects.

Agreement in Tense

Tense and aspect are major grammatical categories of the verbal system in the language. There are three grammatical aspects: habitual, progressive, and perfective. Each of them is expressed by marking the verbal stems.

Present Tense

The present tense describes a fact or activity happening right now. It can also represent an action that is habitual, repeated, or characteristic action. Let's consider some examples from the present tense of the Khortha language to see how agreement occurs at the level of the present tense.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|------------|
| (1) | <i>ha:m̃e</i> | <i>g^har</i> | <i>dza:</i> | <i>hi:</i> |
| | i | home | go | be |
| | I.SG.NOM | LOC | V | PRS |
| | 'I go home'. | | | |
| (2) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>g^har</i> | <i>dza:</i> | <i>hẽ</i> |
| | you | home | go | be |
| | 2. SG.NOM | LOC | V | PRS |
| | 'You go home'. | | | |
| (3) | <i>o</i> | <i>g^har</i> | <i>dza:</i> | <i>he</i> |
| | he | home | go | be |
| | 3. SG.NOM | LOC | V | PRS |
| | 'He goes home'. | | | |

All of the above-mentioned examples are in the present tense. Here, in example (1), the first person singular pronoun '*ha: m̃e*' in Khortha agrees with the auxiliary verb '*hi:*' whereas, in example (2), the second person singular pronoun '*toŋ*' in Khortha agrees with the auxiliary verb '*hẽ*'. Further, in example (3), the third person singular pronoun '*o*' agrees with the auxiliary verb '*he*' in Khortha. Thus, we can see here that depending upon the persons of the pronoun; the auxiliary verb changes accordingly. Therefore, it can be said that the auxiliary verb in the present tense agrees/changes according to the persons of the pronouns.

Past Tense

An action that has already been finished is represented in the past tense. Here, some of the examples of past tense from the Khortha language have been taken to analyze person agreement.

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|--------------------------|
| (4) | <i>ha:m̃e</i> | <i>k^həile</i> |
|-----|---------------|--------------------------|

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|--|
| | I | eat |
| | 1. SG.NOM | V.PST |
| | ‘I ate’ | |
| (5) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>lik^həl^hi:</i> |
| | you | write |
| | 2. SG.NOM | V.PST |
| | ‘You wrote’ | |
| (6) | <i>ʊ</i> | <i>geləi</i> |
| | he | go |
| | 3. SG.NOM | V.PST |
| | ‘He went’ | |

The examples mentioned above (4-6) are simple past tense. We can see here that in the Khortha language the first-person singular pronoun ‘*ha :mē*’ takes ‘*-le*’ as an inflectional suffix to denote past tense whereas in the second example, the second-person singular pronoun ‘*toŋ*’ takes ‘*-^hi:*’ as an inflectional marker to denote past tense. Similarly, in example (6), we can observe that the third person singular ‘*ʊ*’ takes ‘*-əi*’ as an inflectional suffix to denote simple past tense. Therefore, it can be said that depending upon the types of pronouns, the verbs in the past tense also take different types of inflectional suffixes.

Future Tense

The future tense refers to an event or a state that has not yet occurred.

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| (7) | <i>ha:mē</i> | <i>badza:r</i> | <i>dza:ib</i> |
| | i | market | go |
| | 1. SG.NOM | OBL | V.FUR |
| | ‘I will go to market’ | | |
| (8) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>badza:r</i> | <i>dza:ibe</i> |
| | you | market | go |
| | 2. SG.NOM | OBL | V.FUR |
| | ‘You will go to market’ | | |
| (9) | <i>ʊ</i> | <i>badza:r</i> | <i>dzitej</i> |
| | he | market | go |
| | 3. SG.NOM | OBL | V.FUR |
| | ‘He will go to the market’ | | |

The examples mentioned above (7-9) are of future tense and the subjects are 1P, 2P and 3P, respectively. In example (7), we can see that the subject, i.e., the first

person singular pronoun ‘*ha: mē*’ takes ‘*-ib*’ to denote future tense with the main verb whereas in example (8), the subject second person singular pronoun i.e., ‘*toŋ*’ takes ‘*-ibe*’ as an inflectional suffix with the main verb to denote future tense. Similarly, in example (9), the third person singular pronoun ‘*ʊ*’ takes ‘*-ej*’ as the inflection suffix to denote future tense. Thus, from the above discussion it is clear that all the three different types of pronouns take or agree with different inflectional markers attached with the main verbs to denote or reflect future tense.

Agreement in Aspects

The past, presumptive, and subjective tenses each have specific verb forms that indicate one of these qualities. The present, past, presumptive, and subjunctive tenses are combined with one of the three aspects to generate a variety of aspect-tenses, including present-habitual, past-habitual, future-habitual, presumptive-habitual, subjunctive-habitual, present progressive, past progressive, presumptive progressive and subjunctive progressive (Koul, 2008). All are discussed independently in Kortha.

Habitual Aspect

The habitual aspect refers to the actions that occur frequently or on the daily basis. Here, sentences from Khortha language have been taken and analyzed at the level of aspects to see person agreement in Khortha.

Present – habitual

- (10) *ha:mē* *roj* *gʰəre* *ja:*
 hi:
 I daily home go be
 1. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V PRS
 ‘I go home daily.’
- (11) *toŋ* *roj* *gʰəre* *ja:* *hē*
 you daily home go be
 2. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V
 PRS
 ‘You go home daily.’
- (12) *ʊ* *roj* *gʰəre* *ja:* *he*
 he daily home go be
-

3. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V PRS

‘He goes home daily.’

The examples mentioned above (10-12) are in present-habitual aspects. These three examples of habitual aspects from Khortha language reflect that 1P, 2P and 3P pronouns take three different types of present habitual aspect markers or auxiliary verbs such as ‘*hi:*’, ‘*hē*’ and ‘*he*’ respectively. These three auxiliary verbs confirm that the category of the pronouns governs even present habitual aspects.

Past–Habitual

(13) *ha:mē roj bəja:r ja: həle*
 i daily market go was
 1. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V PST

‘I used to go to market daily.’

(14) *toŋ roj bəja:r ja: həlhi:*
 you daily market go was
 2. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V PST

‘You used to go to market daily.’

(15) *ʊ roj bəja:r ja: hələi*
 he daily market go was
 3. SG.NOM ADJ LOC V PST

‘He used to go market daily.’

The examples mentioned above (13-15) are of the past habitual. In example (13), we can see that the subject in the first person singular pronoun, i.e., ‘*ha:mē*’ agrees with the auxiliary verb ‘*həle*’ as a past-habitual marker whereas in example (14), the subject in the second person singular pronoun ‘*toŋ*’ agrees with the auxiliary verb ‘*həlhi:*’ as a past habitual marker. Similarly, in example (15), the third person pronoun ‘*ʊ*’ agrees with the auxiliary verb ‘*hələi*’ as a past-habitual marker in Khortha. Thus, we can see that the past habitual aspect markers or auxiliary verbs change according to the types of pronouns in the Khortha language.

Presumptive–Habitual

(16) *ʊ a:itej hotej*
 he come be
 3. SG.NOM V FUR

‘He would be coming.’

In example (16), the third person singular pronoun ‘*ʊ*’ agrees with the auxiliary verb ‘*hotej*’ as a presumptive-habitual marker and the third person singular pronoun ‘*ʊ*’ also takes ‘*-ej*’ as an inflectional suffix attached with the main verb to denote future tense.

Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect refers to the ongoing acts or states of affairs. The two primary categories of progressive aspect include present-progressive and past-progressive.

Present Progressive

- | | | | | |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------|
| (17) | <i>ha:mẽ</i> | <i>pəiɖ^{h̃}</i> | <i>rəhəl</i> | <i>hi:</i> |
| | i | read | prog | be |
| | 1. SG.NOM | V | PROG | PRS |
| | ‘I am reading.’ | | | |
| (18) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>pəiɖ^{h̃}</i> | <i>rəhəl</i> | <i>hẽ</i> |
| | you | read | prog | be |
| | 2. SG.NOM | V | PROG | PRS |
| | ‘You are reading.’ | | | |
| (19) | <i>ʊ</i> | <i>pəiɖ^{h̃}</i> | <i>rəhəl</i> | <i>he</i> |
| | he | read | prog | be |
| | 3. SG.NOM | V | PROG | PRS |
| | ‘He is reading.’ | | | |

The examples mentioned above (17-19) are in the present progressive. These three examples of the Khortha language show that 1P, 2P and 3P pronouns use the same progressive markers ‘*rəhəl*’ to denote the progressive aspect.

Past Progressive

- | | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| (20) | <i>ha:mẽ</i> | <i>pəiɖ^h</i> | <i>rəhəl</i> | <i>həli:</i> |
| | i | read | prog | be |
| | 1. SG.NOM | V | PROG | PST |
| | ‘I was reading’ | | | |
| (21) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>pəiɖ^h</i> | <i>rəhəl</i> | <i>həle</i> |
| | You | study | prog | be |
| | 2. SG.NOM | V | PROG | PST |

‘You were reading.’

(22)	<i>ʊ</i>	<i>pəiɖʰ</i>	<i>rəhəl</i>	<i>həl</i>
	he	read	prog	be
	3. SG.NOM	V	PROG	PST

‘He was reading.’

These above-mentioned examples (20-22) are of past progressive these three examples from the Khortha language show that 1P, 2P and 3P pronouns take the same types of progressive aspects marker i.e., ‘*rəhəl*’.

Presumptive-progressive

(23)	<i>ha:mẽ</i>	<i>kʰəite</i>	<i>rəhəb</i>
	i	eat	prog
	1.SG.NOM	V.FUR	PROG

‘I will keep on eating.’

(24)	<i>toɲ</i>	<i>likʰəte</i>	<i>rəhəbe</i>
	you	write	prog
	2. SG.NOM	V.FUR	PROG

‘You will keep on writing.’

(25)	<i>ʊ</i>	<i>likʰəte</i>	<i>rəhət</i>
	he	write	prog
	3. SG.NOM	V.FUR	PROG

‘He will keep on writing.’

In the examples mentioned above (23-25), we can observe that the subjects in different persons take ‘-te’ as an inflectional suffix attached to the main verb to denote future tense. Contrary to this, it can be observed that the first-person pronoun ‘*ha:mẽ*’ takes ‘*rəhəb*’ as a presumptive- progressive marker where as in example (24) the second-person pronoun ‘*toɲ*’ takes ‘*rəhəbe*’ as a presumptive-progressive marker. And, in the same way, in example (25), the third person singular pronoun ‘*ʊ*’ takes ‘*rəhət*’ as a presumptive- progressive marker in the Khortha language. Thus, it can be summarized that, in the Khortha language, the pronouns of different categories take different presumptive-progressive markers in the sentences.

Perfective Aspect

The perfective aspect indicates an action or state of affairs completed.

Present Perfective

- | | | | | |
|------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| (26) | <i>ha:mẽ</i> | <i>kita:b</i> | <i>pəidʰəl</i> | <i>hi:</i> |
| | i | book | read | be |
| | 1. SG.ERG | N | V.PERF | PST |
| | ‘I have read the book.’ | | | |
| (27) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>kita:b</i> | <i>pəidʰəl</i> | <i>hẽ</i> |
| | you | book | read | be |
| | 2. SG.ERG | N | V.PERF | PST |
| | ‘You have read the book.’ | | | |
| (28) | <i>o</i> | <i>kita:b</i> | <i>pəidʰəl</i> | <i>he</i> |
| | he | book | read | be |
| | 3. SG.ERG | N | V.PERF | PST |
| | ‘He has read the book.’ | | | |

The examples, as mentioned above from 26 to 27, indicate present perfective aspects. All the pronouns take ‘-əl’ as an inflectional suffix attached to the main verb to indicate the perfective aspect. Thus, it is very clear that, in Khortha, there is only one present perfective aspect marker for all the categories of pronouns.

Past Perfective

- | | | | | |
|------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|-----|
| (29) | <i>ha:mẽ</i> | <i>likʰələ</i> | <i>həli</i> | |
| | I | write | be | |
| | 1. SG.NOM | V.PERF | | PST |
| | ‘I had written.’ | | | |
| (30) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>likʰəlhi:</i> | <i>həlẽ</i> | |
| | you | write | be | |
| | 2. SG.NOM | V.PER | | PST |
| | ‘You had written.’ | | | |
| (31) | <i>o</i> | <i>likʰəlai</i> | <i>həl</i> | |
| | he | write | be | |
| | 3. SG.NOM | V.PERF | | PST |
| | ‘He had written.’ | | | |

Here in the examples (35-37) it is very clear that pronouns of different categories take ‘*həli*’, ‘*həlē*’, and ‘*həl*’ as the past perfective aspect markers. Thus, it is obvious from the examples mentioned above that there are different past perfective aspect markers for different types of personal pronouns in the Khortha language.

Presumptive Perfective

- | | | | | |
|------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----|
| (32) | <i>ha:m̃e</i> | <i>kʰa:il</i> | <i>hevəb</i> | |
| | I | eat | be | |
| | 1. SG.ERG | V.PERF | | FUR |
| | ‘I must have eaten’ | | | |
| (33) | <i>toŋ</i> | <i>kʰa:il</i> | <i>hebe</i> | |
| | you | eat | be | |
| | 2. SG.ERG | V.PERF | | FUR |
| | ‘You must have eaten.’ | | | |
| (34) | <i>ʋ</i> | <i>kʰa:il</i> | <i>hevət</i> | |
| | he | eat | be | |
| | 3.SG.ERG | V.PERF | | FUR |
| | ‘He must has eaten.’ | | | |

The above mentioned examples of presumptive perfective from the Khortha language reflect that all three different types of pronouns take three perfective aspect markers such as ‘*hevəb*’, ‘*hebe*’ and ‘*hevət*’.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study revealed some interesting facts about a person’s agreement in the Khortha language. The most striking and prominent features identified and analyzed at the levels of Tense and Aspects are discussed below:

Tense

In the present tense, auxiliary verbs - ‘*hi:*’, ‘*hē*’ and ‘*he*’ agree distinctively according to the persons of the pronouns.

Likewise present tense and the past tense marker inflectional suffixes such as ‘*-le*’, ‘*-h̃i:*’ and ‘*-əi*’, which are attached with the main verbs, agree with to the persons of the pronouns.

In future tense, the inflectional suffixes like ‘*ib*’, ‘*ibe*’, and ‘*ej*’ which are the future tense markers, also agree according to the persons of the pronouns.

Aspect

At the level of aspects, too, it can be observed that habitual aspect markers such as ‘*hi:*’, ‘*hē*’ and ‘*he*’ distinctively agrees with each pronoun.

Similarly, past habitual aspect markers such as ‘*həle*’, ‘*həl̥hi:*’, and ‘*həl̥ai*’ are also used in the language according to the persons of the pronouns.

Even in presumptive habitual, aspect marker like ‘*hotej*’ is in consonance with the persons of the pronouns.

It has been identified in the language that only one progressive aspect marker - ‘*rəhəl*’ is used in both the past and present tense equally and it doesn’t change its form according to the persons of the pronouns used in the sentence.

But in presumptive progressive, different progressive markers such as ‘*rəhəb*’, ‘*rəhəbe*’ and ‘*rəhət*’ are used for different persons of the pronouns.

In the present perfective aspect, only one perfective aspect marker ‘*əl*’ is used and doesn’t change as per the persons of the pronouns.

But in past perfective aspect, three different types of perfective aspect markers such as ‘*həli*’, ‘*həl̥ē*’ and ‘*həl*’ are used as per the persons of the pronouns.

Even in the presumptive perfective aspect, three different types of perfective aspect markers like ‘*hevəb*’, ‘*hebe*’ and ‘*hevət*’ are used in consonance with the persons of the pronouns.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be summarized that like many other languages, the Khortha language, too, has agreement markers that are quite identifiable at the level of tense and aspects in the language. The findings of the research prove that, in Khortha language, auxiliary verbs and inflectional suffixes attached to the main verbs distinctively agree with the persons of the pronouns used in the language. Similarly, some aspects markers that appear to be free as well as bound in nature also agree as per the persons of the pronouns in the Khortha language. Thus, it can be concluded that the Khortha language has person agreement.

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