ERGATIVITY IN PAHARI

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Abstract

Ergativity is a term that refers to a certain pattern that some languages show in treating arguments of a verb. Thus ergativity can be explained in terms of marking of verb and its arguments in a clause. This paper aims at analyzing Pahari language as an ergative language by using Keenan's standard mechanisms of case marking, verb agreement and word order. The results show evidence of both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive structures in Pahari. This implies that, like other regional languages, Pahari also exhibits split ergativity. In Pahari language, ergativity appears with perfective aspect.

Introduction

The Pahari language is one of the ancient languages of South Asia. Historically, it remained a very prestigious language, promoted by the Buddhist dynasty of the Harappa civilization. King Ashoka took personal interest in promoting this language. He established the first university of South Asia at Sharda in Neelam Valley near Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and made Pahari the official language of his state. At that time Pahari was written in the Sharda script which was named after the place where the university was established (Karnai, 2007).

Pahari derives its name from Pahar meaning "hills and mountains" and refers to a string of divergent dialects; some of which may be separate languages. It is a language of the Indo-Aryan family of language that is a sub branch of Indo-European languages. It is very important to make clear that every group or community living in the mountains is not Pahari. Moreover, the topography of Jammu and Kashmir State is mostly covered by mountains but the inhabitants of all such areas are not 'Paharis'. In the present case, Pahari is a community living in the mountains and speak Pahari language. Pahari community is identified not with the area of origin but with their language. The Pahari languages are spoken in the lower ranges of the Himalayas from Nepal in the east, through the Indian states of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmiri, to Murree in Pakistan. The present research work was conducted on Batamaji dialect of Pahari spoken in Karnah village of district Kupwara.

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Ergativity

Different languages vary in different ways via word order, case system, arguments, etc. and show different behaviors. Indo-Aryan languages show some specific characteristics regarding case marking and agreement structure. Most of the Indo-Aryan languages show ergativity. Ergativity is a term that refers to a certain pattern that some languages show in treating arguments of a verb. Thus ergativity can be explained in terms of marking of verb and its arguments in a clause. Generally, arguments are classified into three types: the subject of a transitive verb, the object of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb.

Dixon (1979) used the term

S - Subject of intransitive verb

A - Subject of transitive verb

O - Object of transitive verb

In languages where S and O are patterned identically and A differently, an ergative case appears at subject position. An overt ergative case applies in case of perfective aspect and nominative case for imperfective aspect. The verb agrees with the subject or the object.
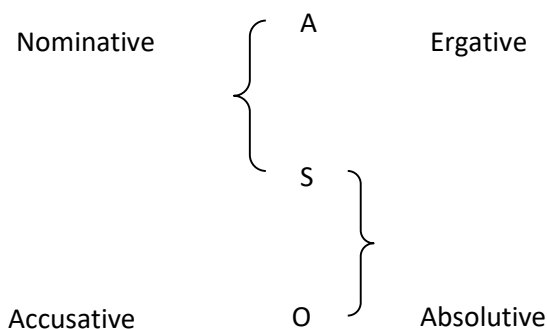

Figure 3.1: Alignment of S, A, O

Accusative Languages

On the basis of the relation between S, A & O, languages are classified into two groups; accusative languages and ergative languages. Languages where S and A are treated identically and O differently are said to have nominative-accusative system and are also called accusative languages.

Examples: Latin (Comrine (1978))

1.   puer   venit

boy-3ms-nom   come-3ms-pres

"The boy comes."

2.   puer   puellam   amat

boy-3ms-nom girl-3fs-acc love-3ms-pres

"The boy loves the girl."

Ergative Languages

There are a number of languages where S and O are treated identically, while A treated differently. Such languages exhibit ergative pattern and are called ergative languages.

The relationship is illustrated in example here:

Basque is a good example: NP *gizona* 'the man' and *nesks* 'the girl' can take either the case ending zero or the case ending –k as follows:

3. (a) gizona   heldu   zen
       the man-nom
       "The man arrived."

   (b) gizonok neska ikusi zuen
       the man-erg the girl-nom
       "The man saw the girl."

   (c) neskak gizona ikusi zuen
       the girl-erg the man-nom
       "The girl saw the man."

From the above examples, it is clear that the transitive subject A takes the ending '-k' while as intransitive subject S and transitive object O take zero ending. In Basque, ergative morphology applies in all contexts. Such languages are called ergative languages.

Split Ergative

Many ergative languages show split ergative behaviour in their grammar. By split ergativity we mean that ergative behavior occurs only in some contexts.

Here is an example from Urdu:

(a) Imperfective Aspect

4. (a) mæ   use   ɖekʰʈa   hu
       I-nom   her-acc see-pres.m.sg   be-pres.sg
       "I see her."

   (b) vo   mʊje   ɖekʰʈa   hæ
       he-nom   I-acc   see-pres.m.sg be.pres.sg

"He sees me."

(c) ʈʊm   mʊje   ɖ̪ekʰʈe   ho
    you-nom   I-acc   see-pres.m.pl   be-pres.sg
    "You see me."

(b) Perfective Aspect

(d) mæ –ne   ʊse   ɖ̪ekʰa
    I-erg   her.acc   see.pst.sg
    "I saw her."

(e) ʈʊm –ne   mʊje   kalam   ɖ̪ija
    you-nom I-dat pen-nom.sg   give-pst.m.sg
     "You gave me a pen."

(4 a-c) are in present aspect and subject takes nominative case and verb agrees with it while the object takes the oblique case. (4 d) is in past aspect, the subject takes ergative marker '-ne' and direct object takes accusative case. In (4e), both direct and indirect objects are used. Here, direct object 'pen' is assigned accusative case and indirect object 'me' is assigned dative case.

Case Marking in Pahari

Case in alignment typology is regarded to code grammatical relations of the core arguments. Along with word order and agreement, case is one way of indicating grammatical relations of clause and of distinguishing one relation from other (Kroeger 2005: 102).

Case	Masculine		Feminine		Function
	Singular	**Plural**	**Singular**	**Plural**	
Nominative	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Case of subject of intransitive.
Ergative	sũɖ	sũɖ	sũɖ	sũɖ	Case of subject of transitive
Dative	Ko	Ko	Ko	ko	Case of indirect object of transitive.
Instrumental	naːl	naːl	naːl	naːl	Case to show the instrument by which action is carried.
Accusative	Ko	Ko	Ko	Ko	Case of direct object of transitive verb
Locative	bitʃ	bitʃ	bitʃ	bitʃ	Inflected for inanimate objects for location of object or direction of action.

Table 1.1: Different Case Types

Nominative Case

The nominative case marker can occur in imperfective transitive and intransitive forms. Example

Intransitive Nominative forms

5 (a) / kutta: ponkija:/
     dog-nom bark-pst
     "The dog barked."

(b) /rəhi:m sehgəja:/
    rahim-nom slept-pst
    "Rahim slept."

Transitive Nominative forms

6 (a) /khalid   chota   khana aa/
     khalid-nom.m apple   eat-prs
     "Khalid eats apple."

(b) /khalid   chota   khansi ga/
    khalid-nom.m apple   eat-fut
    "Khalid will eat an apple."

Ergative Case

The ergative case appears in perfective transitive and intransitive forms. Example

7 /aslam-sũɖ mohan-ko: kita:b diti:/
    aslam-erg   mohan-dat   book   give-3p-pst
    "Aslam had given Mohan a book."

Intransitive Ergative Forms

8 /tu: rojijã:/
     you-erg   cry-2p-pst
    "You had cried."

9 /ra:m-sũɖ naha:ta:/
    ram-erg   bathe-pst.m.sg
    "Ram had a bathe."

Transitive Ergative Forms

10 /gədre:-sũɖ kalam dita: a:sim wa:ste:/
     boy-erg   a:sim for   pen   give-pst

"Boys had given a pen for Aasim."

11 /səliːm-sũɖ mukoː pakaɖ kedijaː/
    salim-erg   me   catch-pst
    "Salim had caught me."

12 /raːdzaː-sũɖ mohan waːsteː burʃeːʈ ãːdaː/
    Raja-erg   mohan   shirt buy-pst
  "Raja had brought a shirt for Mohan."

13 /mohan-sũɖ kiskoː tʃiʈʰiː likʰijaː/
    mohan-erg   letter write-pst
   "Who had Mohan written a letter."

14 /səliːm-sũɖ mohan-koː hambeː naːl maːrijaː/
    salim-erg   mohan   stick   with beat-pst
    "Salim had beaten Mohan with a stick."

15 /mohan-sũɖ akʰbaːr pədijaː/
    mohan-erg newspaper   read-pst
    "Mohan had read newspaper."

16 /naːdija-sũɖ kahnɖi jaːd karkeː di/
    nadiya-erg   story   memorise-pst
    "Nadiya had memorised the story."

17 /raːm-sũɖ dʒiraːpʰ dikʰijaː/
    ram-erg giraffe see.pst
    "Ram had seen a giraffe."

Marking on Pronouns

In pronouns, for ist person and 2ⁿᵈ person hidden ergative case markers are seen in Pahari.

18 /mẽː bazaːr dzuldãː/
   I-erg market go-pst
   "I had to go to market."

However all pronouns do not have hidden ergative case marker. For ist person plural and third person we have ergative marker 'sũɖ'.

19 /əsiː-sũɖ paːt kʰaːdaː/
  we-erg rice eat-pst
  "We had eaten rice."

20 /us-sũɖ muɡoː itʰa ãːdaː/
   she-erg me   here bring-pst
   "She had brought me here."

21   /us-sũɖ apne: gədre: ko ik kita:b diti:/
      he-erg   child   a book   give-pst
   "He had given a book to his child."

22   /us-sũɖ kita:b ʈe:bla: ta pʰanki:/

      she-erg book   table   throw-pst
   "She had thrown the book on the table."

23   /us-sũɖ haba:ni: kʰã:di:/
      he-erg apricot   eat-pst
   "He had eaten an apricot."

Methodology

The paper is based on qualitative analysis. The fieldwork for the study was conducted in Karnah village of district Kupwara. The data was collected from the native speakers of Pahari in Karnah by a series of structured questionnaires comprising of a well prepared sentence list focusing on the case marking of Pahari. Highly sophisticated recorders were used to record the responses of the speakers. The data collected was also crosschecked for its authenticity. It was then transcribed and analyzed. The paper is based on Keenan's test methodology for coding properties of noun phrases. According to Keenan (1976:324-5), following three coding properties of noun phrase should be taken into consideration while examining for evidence of ergative morphology.

☐ Case Marking

☐ Verb Agreement

☐ Constituent Order

	S	A	O
Case Marking			
Verb Agreement			
Constituent order			

Results and Discussion

From the above analysis, it can be implied that Pahari demonstrates split ergativity. To elaborate further let us examine the coding properties discussed in methodology.

Case Markers

Pahari shows ergative morphology in the perfective aspect while, in other cases, nominative accusative construction is used.

Nominative –Accusative Behavior of Pahari:

24 (a) /khalid seh gəja: aa/

    khalid-nom   sleep-pres

    "Khalid sleeps."

  (b) /khalid   pʰʊl-ko   chasi/
      khalid-nom   flowers-acc   pick-up-fut
      "Khalid will pick up the flowers."

The above mentioned examples clearly show that in nominative-accusative pattern, the subject of intransitive clause and transitive clause show similar pattern.

Criteria	S	A	O
Case Marking	Ø	Ø	ko

Table 1.2: Nom-Acc Case Marking

Ergative-Absolutive Behavior of Pahari:

25 (a)   /khalid   dʰodija/
      Khalid-nom   run-pst
      "Khalid ran."

  (b)   /raːm-sũɖ tʃiɖiː   dikʰiː/
      ram-erg   sparrow   see-pst
      "Ram had seen sparrow."

From (25 a), we can see that in case of perfective intransitive verbs, nominative case is assigned to subject. (25 b) shows that perfective transitive verbs assign ergative case with ergative marker '-sũɖ'.

From the above it is clear that O 'tʃiɖiː' and S 'Khalid' are patterned identically but A 'raːm' is patterned differently.

Criteria	S	A	O
Case Marking	Ø	sũɖ	ø

Table 1.3: Erg-Abs Case Marking

The above table clearly shows that S and O show similar pattern.

Verb Agreement

Verb agreement is another morphological feature for determining the degree of ergativity in a language. If the verb shows agreement with the subject of an intransitive verb and indirect object in one way and with agent in another way,

this may be the evidence of ergative verb agreement (Trask 1979:388); Dixon 1979:66).

The nouns in Pahari language have intrinsic gender: masculine and feminine. A verb agrees to gender of a noun. For example

26   (a) /gədra   hənsda/

            boy-nom.m.   laugh-pst

              "The boy laughed."

            (b) /gədri: hənsdi/

               girl-nom.sg.f.   laugh-pst.sg.f.

              "The girl laughed."

(26a, b) shows that intransitive verb in imperfective aspect agrees with the gender of nominative case. Masculine form takes '–a' sound and feminine form takes '–i' sound.

The verb in perfective aspect does not agree with the agent of the transitive clause rather it agrees with the object.

27 /mohan-sũɖ gəɖi: ʈi:kʰ nəhi: kidi:/
     mohan-erg   car   fix   not
     "Mohan had not fixed the car."

Nominative –Accusative Verb Marking

28(a) /khalid   seh gaya   aa/
      khalid-nom.sg.m. sleep-pres.sg.m   be-pres.sg.m
      "Khalid sleeps."

   (b)   /maryam   seh gaye   aa/
        maryam-nom.sg.f. sleep-pres.sg.f. be-pres.sg.f
      "Maryam sleeps."

    (c)   /Khalid   hamidinu   jagana   aa/
         khalid-nom.sg.m. hamid-acc.sg.m   wake-pres.sg.m. be-pres.
        "Khalid wakes Hamid."

   (d)   /maryam   hamidinu   jagani   aa/
        maryam-nom.f hamid-acc.m.   wake-pres   be-pres
        "Maryam wakes Hamid."

The above examples (28 a, b) show that, in intransitive imperfective clauses, verb requires nominative case, and both verb and auxiliary agree with subject in gender and number. Examples (28 c, d) show that, in transitive clauses, in imperfective aspect, the verb requires object in accusative case, both the verb and auxiliary agree with the nominative subject.

Gender Agreement	S	A	O
	Khalid-M	Khalid-M	Hamid-M
	Maryam-F	Maryam-F	Hamid-M

Table 1.4: Nom-Acc Gender marking on Verbs

Ergative -Absolute Gender Marking on Verbs

In imperfective intransitive construction, verb takes nominative subject and verb and auxiliary both agree with nominative subject in number and gender. Consider the following example

29(a)   /Khalid   hənsa/

          khalid-nom.m   laugh-pst.sg.m.

     "Khalid laughed."

(b)   /Maryam   hənsi/
           maryam-nom.f   laugh-pst.sg.f
           "Maryam laughed."

In perfective transitive clauses, where A is marked with ergative case, the verb agrees with O (patient-like argument). Consider the following example.

30(a)   /khalid-sũɖ   roti: kʰa:di:/
          khalid-erg   bread-abs eat-pst
          "Khalid had eaten bread."

(b)   /maryam-sũɖ ka:r   ke:da:/
          maryam-erg house-abs buy-pst
          "Maryam had bought house."

The predicate 'kʰa:di:'-F (eat) and 'ke:da:'-M (buy) in (30 a, b) agree in gender with the O argument and not with 'khalid'-M (boy) and 'maryam'-F (girl) that are in ergative case. So, in this case, O of transitive case and S of intransitive clause follow identical pattern and hence exhibit ergativity.

Gender Agreement	S	A	O
	Khalid-M	Larka-M	kʰa:di:-F
	Maryam-F	Larki-F	ke:da:-M

Table 1.5: Erg-Abs Gender Marking on Verbs

Constituent Order

Constituent order proves valid for verb medial languages. Since Pahari is a verb final language, word order does not provide any evidence for presence of ergativity in Pahari languages.

Constituent Order	S	A	O
	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table 1.6: Constituent Order

Conclusion

The present study showed Pahari as an ergative language. The analysis is based on a standard checklist of three fundamental tests--- case marking, verb agreement and constituent order. Case marking and verb agreement provide evidence for ergative alignment of Pahari while as constituent order does not provide any such evidence. Results showed that Pahari is a split ergative language. The ergative case appears only in perfective aspects. Perfective aspect does not allow nominative case at subject position. The subject of transitive verb 'A' is overtly marked ergative with the affix - sũḍ.

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