P-A Agreement Order

The occurrence of verb agreement reflecting the order P (the more patient-like argument) followed by A (the more agent-like argument) was investigated. The presence of this features presupposes simultaneous agreement with the A argument and the P argument in at least one tense-aspect category. Hunza Burushaski is an example of this agreement pattern, as seen in (1). The verb agrees in person, number and gender, with the P argument by means of a prefix, and with the A argument by means of a suffix. Burushaski has a four-gender system, in which the genders traditionally are labelled as HF (human female), HM (human male), X (a non-human gender), and Y (another non-human gender).

1. Hunza Burushaski [bsk(h)] (isolate)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | hileːs-eːj | dasin | tʰan | **muː**-ti-m-**i** |
|  | boy-erg | girl | tip | 3sg.hf-do-pst-3sg.hm |
|  | A | P |  | p-V-a |
|  | ‘The boy pushed the girl.’ (BSKh-Val-SK:074) | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| b. | dasiːn-eːj | kitaːb-eː | tap | ʈʂaʈ | **eː**-tu-m-**u** |  |
|  | girl-erg | book-gen | leaf(y) | rip | 3sg.y-do-pst-3sg.hf |  |
|  | A |  | P |  | p-V-a |  |
|  | ‘The girl tore the page from the book.’ (BSKh-Val-SK:032) | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| c. | guɕ-inants-eːj | ʈeːbəl | saːf | **eː**-tu-m-**an** |
|  | woman-pl-erg | table(x) | clean | 3sg.x-do-pst-3pl.h |
|  | A | P |  | p-V-a |
|  | ‘The women wiped the table.’ (BSKh-Val-SK:072) | | | |

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| d. | gus-eːj | ʁunoː | zan | **oː**-tu-m-**u** |  |  |
|  | woman-erg | seeds(x) | grind | 3pl.x-do-pst-3sg.hf |  |  |
|  | A | P |  | p-V-a |  |  |
|  | ‘The woman ground the seeds.’ (BSKh-Val-SK:071) | | | | | |

This feature was evidenced in only a small minority of the languages, curiously spread out geographically. Apart from the isolate Burushaski, in the northwest, this is also a feature of some of the Indo-Aryan Pashai varieties in the southwest as well as in Indo-Aryan Kashmiri in the southeast.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 7 | 12 |
| Absent | 51 | 86 |
| Indeterminate | 1 | 2 |