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-ValQuestSK:074) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. | dasiːn-eːj | kitaːb-eː | | | tap | | | | ʈ͡ʂaʈ | | **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-ValQuestSK:032) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. | guʃ-inant͡s-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-ValQuestSK:072) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 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-ValQuestSK: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 |