

Evolution of verbal agreement systems in course of typological
development of Western New Indo-Aryan languages
(Hindi-Urdu, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi).

Different paths of evolution from accusative to ergative and from ergative to accusative alignment are usually described predominantly as changes in case marking [Anand & Nevins 2006], [Anderson 1977], [Butt 2001], [Dixon 1994], [Trask 1979] et al.

The interplay of nominal case marking, nominal agreement on main verbs and nominal agreement on auxiliary verbs in modern South Asian languages are analyzed in [Klaiman 1987, 1991]. M. Klaiman has structured the hierarchical set of distinctive syntactic features specific for the South-Asian subcontinent so that a language which lacks A will not display B, a language with A, but without B will lack C and so on.

This paper is aimed at describing the typological evolution of Western Indo-Aryan languages focusing on verbal agreement, especially agreement on auxiliary verb in person.

Verbal agreement in person with Patient NP contradicts L. Trask's statement that the Indo-Aryan languages belong to B-type and thus do not allow verbal agreement in person with the Patient NPs. [Trask 1979]. As for verbal agreement in person with Agent NP in ergative domain, it also contradicts the rules of ergative alignment. However, both these types of agreement are possible in Western Indo-Aryan.

The data analyzed here were obtained from the narrative texts by Jain authors in Old Rajasthani and Old Gujarati starting from the 14-th century, poetical texts included into the Sikh sacred book Adi Granth, prose texts in Old Punjabi (Janam Sakhies) etc.

The perfect ergative system had developed by the time of Middle Indo-Aryan, when for the first time in NIA history the whole perfective domain was structured in accordance with the ergative pattern, implying 'passive syntax without active counterpart'. This definition of ergative system offered by B. Comrie [1978] was advocated by H. Hock [1986] who described the main trends in syntactic development that took place in late Sanskrit and resulted in consistent ergative alignment in Middle and early New Indo-Aryan [Bubenik 1998].

The agreement in person of the auxiliary verb with an always unmarked direct object was one of the important features of consistently ergative morphology at the climatic stage of ergative development – the stage of Apabhramśa and early NIA.

(1) Old Rajasthani, 15-th century

śrīpur-nagar-nāyak-i (A)...	tīham	cor-aham	mārivā nimittu	amhe (O)
Shripur-city-ruler-INST	those-OBL.PL	thief-OBL.PL	kill for	we.NOM
mokaḷ-iyā	ch-āⁿ			
send-PP.M.PL	be-PRES.1.PL			

'The ruler of the city of Shripur has sent us to kill those thieves.' [R.G. 1969: 11]

The process of case merging resulted in splitting of formerly consistently ergative case marking system into the ergative and the neutral ones (with similar marking of A, S and O). At this first stage of ergativity fading agreement with the direct object in person remained intact:

(2) Old Punjabi, 17-th century

hau (O)	paramesar (A)	bhej-iā	h-āⁿ
I. NOM	god. NOM	send-PP.M.SG	be-PRES.1

'I have been sent by God/God has sent me' [P.P.V. 1973: 36]

The introduction of special O-markers which first appeared in non-ergative and later in ergative domains was a decisive step on the way from ergative towards accusative

alignment. The direct object expressed by the first or second person pronouns was to be consistently marked. Direct Object marking blocked agreement on auxiliary verb in person which was replaced by default agreement.

(3) Modern Rajasthani

abai	tā ^{nī}	the	jamī	jīt-ī	h-ai,	log-ā ⁿ	r-ā
now	till	you	land.F	conquer-PP.F	be-PRES.3	people-OBL.PL	GEN-M.PL
hivṛ-ā	nī ⁿ	jīty-ā			h-ai		
heart-M.PL	NEG	conquer-PP.M.PL			be-PRES.3		

‘Until now you have conquered the land, not the hearts of people’ [Ancal 1987:36]

The neutral case marking did not last long. Gujarati, Hindi-Urdu, Marathi and Punjabi nominals developed regular ergative markers. Their nominal case marking systems became either ergative or tripartite. The nominal and pronominal paradigms developed similarly in Gujarati, Hindi-Urdu and Marathi, but differently in Punjabi which acquired the split case marking system: ergative or tripartite for nominals and accusative for pronominals. Rajasthani is characterized by the tendency to lose ergative marking both in nominals and pronominals, though this process is far from being completed. The verbal agreement is also demonstrating different paths of development: in Gujarati and Rajasthani the main verb agrees in number and gender with both the marked and unmarked direct object, in Punjabi, Hindi-Urdu and Marathi - only with the unmarked direct object. In all the described languages the auxiliary verb usually has the default agreement in person.

Some Rajasthani dialects have made a very important step on the way of ergativity fading: they allow agreement of auxiliary verbs in person with the Agent - not Patient! In such cases the main verb agrees with the Patient and the auxiliary – with the Agent:

(4) Rajasthani

the	mhā ⁿ	nai	kā ^{nī}	samajh	rākh-iyā	h-au
you (PL)	we.OBL	DAT	what	understand	keep-PP.M.PL	be-PRES.2.PL

‘Who you consider us to be?’ [Bahal 1989:81]

In Marathi the shortened form of auxiliary verb ‘to be’ is added to the perfective participle which shows agreement with the Patient in number and gender and with the Agent in person:

(5) Marathi

tū ⁿ	pustak-e ⁿ	vac ^a l-ī ⁿ -s
you (SG)	book-F.PL	read-F.PL-2

‘You have read the books’ [Katenina 1963:90]

In some languages (Rajasthani, Gujarati) verbal agreement in number and gender does not necessarily imply the Direct case form of the noun or pronoun, but in all described languages agreement in person is possible only in case the noun or pronoun is in Direct case.

Along with languages that have gone far ahead on the way of ergativity fading, there exist dialects that have preserved intact the ergative model dating back to the beginning of the New Western Indo-Aryan period. They allow the agreement of the auxiliary verb with the unmarked direct object expressed by personal pronouns:

(6) Braj

tai	ne ⁿ	tīn	jaghai	maiⁿ	kāl	pai	te	bacāy-au	ūⁿ
you	ERG	three	place	I	death	in	from	save-PP.M.SG	be.PRES.1.SG

‘You saved me from death in three places’ (Braj ki lok-kahaniyan) from [Lipierovsky 1988: 67]

However, the preservation of consistently ergative verbal agreement in individual dialects does not change the general direction of the historical changes in Western NIA languages which evolve towards the accusative type of verbal agreement.

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