A TYPOLOGY OF VERB AGREEMENT IN BURUSHASKI

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Burushaski is a language isolate spoken in the Northern Areas, Pakistan, by approximately 60-80,000 people. Nouns belong to one of four inflectional classes in Burushaski, human male, human female, general animate and inanimate, with a few semantically inanimate nouns belonging to the ‘animate’ class (1).

(1) 4 noun classes $\rightarrow$ human male [I], human female [II], animate [III], inanimate [IV]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I: male human</th>
<th>II: female human</th>
<th>III: animate non-human</th>
<th>IV: inanimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>hir</em> ‘man’ (I)</td>
<td><em>dasîn</em> ‘girl’ (II)</td>
<td><em>hayûr</em> ‘horse’ (III)</td>
<td><em>yatênç</em> ‘sword’ (IV)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hunza/Nagar Burushaski [HB/NB]

The Burushaski verb is relatively complex. The maximal verb template consists of four prefix positions, a root in position-Ø, and up to six suffix positions. Positions +3 and +5 are mutually exclusive, so all slots cannot be filled in a single verb form. See (2) for a schematic representation of the Burushaski verb template.

(2) Verb Template $\rightarrow$

-4 -3 -2 -1 Ø +1 +2 +3 +4 +5 +6

NEG D PERSON CAUS √ PL.SBJ DUR 1SG.SBJ AP/NON.FIN/MODAL SUBJ.SFX Q

Finite verbs in Burushaski fall into two basic inflectional sets, roughly speaking a durative/non-past set of inflections marked with the durative affix in position +2 and a past/perfective set of inflections which lack a formal marker per se. Within each set, at least three tense forms are found (3).
(3) | **Durative/Non-Past** | **Past/Perfective** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DUR affix</strong></td>
<td>**unmarked (Aorist)**¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Pluperfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous discussions of aspects of Burushaski verb agreement may be found in both the several grammars and text collections (Lorimer 1935-38, Klimov 1970, Berger 1974, 1998) as well as in several shorter works (e.g. Børgstrom 1942).

2. TYPES OF VERB AGREEMENT IN BURUSHASKI

Several different types of verb agreement are found in Burushaski. In the first section below we briefly present the basic sub-types, and then turn to a discussion of agreement with NPs in conjunctive and disjunctive coordinative structures.

2.1 Subject Suffixes

Following Tiffou and Morin (1982), we assume that the subject of the Burushaski verb is the noun phrase which triggers suffixal person/number/class agreement in position +5, except for first singular subjects which are marked in position +3 (4). Examples of subject agreement in Burushaski may be found in (5) (i)-(iv).

(4) | **SG** | **PL** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-a₃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-a₅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>-w/o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[2sg can also be -áa]

(5) i. **dansen-e hir park-ule del-u**
girl-ERG man park-LOC hit-II
'The girl hit the man in the park'
[Anderson et al. 1998]

ii. **un in mu-cú-č-um-a**
you s/he II-marry-DUR-AP-2
'You will marry her'
[Tiffou and Morin1982: 88]

iii. **hilés-e dasin mu-yeéc-im-i**
boy-ERG girl II-see-AP-I
'The boy saw the girl'
[Willson 1990: 4]

¹ Called the Konativ by Berger. Note that Yasin Burushaski prefers the unmarked Aorist over the Past; Hunza and Nagar Burushaski show just the opposite. The Past historically comes from a univerbated auxiliary verb construction.
iv. *jaa u dáfa ó-t-a-m*  
I.ERG they drive.out PL-AUX.TR-1-AP  
‘I drove them out’  
[Willson 1990: 46]

The particular suffix that is selected to index the referent properties of the subject is determined by the interaction of a small number of constraints belonging to the levels of (linear and hierarchical) syntax and semantics. These are presented in 2.6.2 below.

### 2.2 Person/Class Prefixes

In addition to the suffixal subject agreement, Burushaski allows for the indexing of the person/number/class of a verbal actant or discourse referent in prefix position –2. There are four different classes of these prefixes, determined by the inflectional stem-class of the verb (6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>[Berger 1998: 91]</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A’</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>á-</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td></td>
<td>á-</td>
<td>áa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>gú-/kú-</td>
<td>gu-</td>
<td></td>
<td>gó-/kó-</td>
<td>góo-/kóo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td></td>
<td>é-</td>
<td>éé-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>mú-</td>
<td>mu-</td>
<td></td>
<td>mó-</td>
<td>móo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>l-</td>
<td>l-</td>
<td></td>
<td>é-</td>
<td>éé-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.SG/PL</td>
<td>l-</td>
<td>i-</td>
<td></td>
<td>é-</td>
<td>éé-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>mí-</td>
<td>mi-</td>
<td></td>
<td>mé-</td>
<td>mée-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>má-</td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td></td>
<td>má-</td>
<td>máa-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I/II/III.PL</td>
<td>ú-</td>
<td>u-</td>
<td></td>
<td>ó-</td>
<td>óo-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the suffixal agreement positions +3 and +5, which unambiguously mark the referent properties of the subject, the noun that the prefixal position –2 indexes varies considerably. With 2 or 3 argument verbs, this is canonically, though not exclusively, the patient or recipient, etc. (7i-v).²

(7) i. *hala* gič-um yaréya nu-mú-del mó-sqan-u  
homeward enter.DUR-AP as.soon.as NF-II-SG.hit II-kill-II  
‘As soon as (she) came into the house, she struck her dead (lit. hit her, killed her)’  
[Berger 1974: 116]

ii. *hilés-e dasin mu-yeeč-im-i*  
boy-ERG girl II-see-AP-I  
The boy saw the girl  
[Willson 1990: 4]

iii. *jaa u dáfa ó-t-a-m*  
I.ERG they drive.out PL-AUX.TR-1-AP  
‘I drove them out’  
[Willson 1990: 46]

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² This varies lexically. Certain verb stems prefer or require one or another element to be indexed in the prefixal agreement position. Other verbs allow more context-sensitive agreement. See below for more on this.
iv. hiles-e dasin taswiir mőo-ltir-im-i v. mo ja a-p’ůs-u
     boy-ERG girl picture II-show-AP-I
     ‘The boy showed the girl the picture’
     [Willson 1990: 5]
     she I 1-tie.up-II
     ‘She tied me up’
     [Berger 1974: 49]

Note that the class-IV objects are not marked in general by the prefixal agreement position. Compare in this regard (8i) and (8ii).

(8) i. baldá pus-ím-i               ii. hir i-p’ůs-im-i
     load tie.up-AP-I
     ‘He tied up the load’
     [Berger 1998: 118]

In addition, the prefixal agreement position may mark an argument roughly analogous to ‘experiencer’ subjects familiar from various S. Asian languages (9).

(9) i. q’us go-čila                ii. til áa-l bá-ya-m
     cough 2-AUX.TR-IV
     ‘You have a cough, are coughing’
     [Bashir 1985: 17]
     forget.. 1--forget AUX-1-AP
     ‘I forgot’
     [Berger 1998: 121]

With some verbs, an argument indexed by the subject suffixes can also be marked by the person/class prefixes. In general, these are 1-argument verbs, which we will turn to below briefly, but 2-argument verbs are possible in this construction as well. Compare the forms in (10). In (10i) the argument indexed by the subject suffix is also marked by the prefix, whereas the form in (10ii) looks more like a standard transitive construction, like the forms in (7), above. This is called subject-affective agreement by Bashir (1985).

(10) i. áa-lji du-kóo-šqalč-um-a     ii. d-ée-šqal-car asír man-um-o
     1-behind D-2-overtake.DUR-AP-2
     ‘You will overtake me’
     [Bashir 1985: 15]
     D-1-overtake.ALL.B near AUX.INTR-AP-II
     ‘She came near to overtaking him’
     [Bashir 1985: 15]

Some verbs appear to lack prefixal agreement but actually mark this internally (at least with class-I/III/IV and plural objects). Many of these verbs have the important D-prefix as in (11i-iii), but others do not; see the examples in (11) and (12).

3 Thus, we find mu-del (II-hit), gu-del (2-hit) not **du-mu-l or **du-ku-l, etc. as might be expected based on such forms as du-ku-man-um-a ‘you were born’ or du-mu-man-um-o ‘she was born’. Therefore, these types of verbs form a separate subset of partly internally and partly externally marked stems.