Hayu Typology and Verbal Morphology
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0. Introduction

The following notes on Hayu are based on field work by Martine Mazaudon and myself in the village of Murajor, Ramechhap District, Nepal. Hayu is a Tibeto-Burman language with probably less than 500 speakers, all of whom speak Nepali, an Indo-Aryan language.

Hayu was studied in the last century by Brian H. Hodgson. His excellent work was published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 26 (1857) pp. 382-398, with errata in JASB 27 (1858) (at the end of the volume). This work was reprinted in Hodgson, B. H., Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects, London, 1880, vol. 1, pp. 161-319. The article in the Linguistic Survey of India (III:1: 382-398) by Sten Konow is entirely based on Hodgson's articles.

For the phonology of Hayu, see the appendix to this paper and also Mikhailovsky and M. Mazaudon, "Notes on the Hayu Language", Kailash 1.2 (Kathmandu, 1973), pp. 135-152.

The present paper is the first version of a grammatical sketch that I intend to eventually publish with a collection of texts. Criticism is welcome.

1. Hayu as an SOV Language

1.1 The basic word order of Hayu is subject-object-verb.

1. ga mi dzemga totop+ha ton+me+m
   I-erg. he all(N) having beaten I'll-chase+them+M
   'I'll beat them and chase them off.'

2. gon+ha gu ima ... xwan-xwan dza ping+suq ...
   you-erg. I thus ... (adv) eat CAUSE+me ...
   'You let me stuff myself like this [so bless you.]'

SOV order is not strictly adhered to, however. CSV is also permitted; in 3, the object is clearly focused on:

3. e kikki, inoq jungka lat+ji siytoq nakpu
   hey grandpa, here down go+er man two
   gon+ha jep+ko ki ma?
   you+erg saw or(N) not
   'Hey grandpa, did you see two people going down this way?'
Note that the ergative marker on the subject of a transitive verb eliminates any ambiguity whether arguments are rear-
 ranged or deleted.

Even the final position of the verb is by no means
obligatory. But when elements are placed after the verb
and sentence particles, there is a marked drop in intonation.
(This does not apply to vocatives, which often follow the
verb.) In 4 and 5, I mark this fall in intonation by **:

4. mỳ+khen+ko mỳ+nog dog  lâk+tse+m**mii  (mìi = mì)
that+from that+at arrive go+3d-refl+M he
'Then he arrived there.'

5. "ma jen+kUg" pa  "tha:tso ** ga+ko"
not I-saw unquote grandson  I-erg+emph
'I didn't see them, grandson.' (response to 3)

In 4, I suspect that the postposed 'he' calls attention to
a shift in topic. For the previous several sentences the
narration had left the main character and was describing the
situation at the place he was approaching. But I can't
say exactly how this works.

In spite of this freedom of order, I would consider
Hayu closer in typology to Japanese than, say, to Hindi,
because there are no elements that are regularly post-
posed. In Hindi, quoted discourse regularly follows the
verb, and the complementizer is placed before the quotation
(like English 'that'). Hayu has no such construction,
as we will see. (But see 22-23.) Occasionally a relative
clause may be postposed, as in 6, where the postposed clause
seems to be a relative with head noun 'sU:li thamji' :

6. kolu sU:li tham+jì no+m  it+tse ithara xUnta
one bran sell+er be they-say this-much big
le got+jì
foot have+er
'Once there was a bran-seller who had feet this big.'

Some other features that have been associated with SOV order
in the literature are treated briefly below. In each case,
Hayu seems to follow the pattern associated with regular
SOV languages.

1.2 Postposition rather than preposition

All particles except negatives -- ma 'not'; tha 'don't!';
makhi 'not yet' -- and the vocative e (3) follow whatever
is in their scope. This applies to postpositions marking
case (1.21) as well as to sentence particles (1.22). A few
of each will be illustrated.

1.21. Case-marking postpositions, etc.

(Pronouns have an oblique form used before most post-
positions except -ha (instrumental), e.g. 1ps. an; 2ps. un;
3ps. a; (all singular) etc.)
-ha: instrumental (for ergative use, see 1-3; ga-
*gu+ha)

7. gon buti+ha ben?
you food+inst had-enough (intr)
'Did you get enough food?'

8. top+caq+ha top+to! (cf. 22)
beat+tool+inst beat-it
'Pound it with the pestle!'

-mu: genitive (possessive, material, etc.) (often
omitted)

9. aŋŋ+mu kikki pippi+mu pig
my grandfather grandmother+’s swing(N)
'my grandparents’ swing'

10. rampi+mU lo
yam+of leaf
'a yam leaf'

-he: locative

11. kem+he 'at home'

12. lom+he 'on the road'

-khen: 'from' etc.

13. mĩ+noq+khen 'from there' (see 15)

14. ũ+khen gu ram+sUŋ+mi
his+from I I-am-afraid
'I am afraid of him.'

-non: sociative, locative

15. mĩ+noq 'there' (mi 'that')

16. ba:lu+noq sjal
bear(N)+and jackal(N)
'a bear and a jackal'

17. 1 gaũ+noq 'in this village(N)'

-khata: plural (human); 'etc.' Precedes all case
suffixes; often omitted.

18. mĩ+khata+ha 'they-erg'

1.22. Sentence particles

There are a number of particles which are placed after
the main verb of the sentence.

-M (→ mĩ / C or (usually) ūCV_; → m elsewhere)
marks the main verb of a declarative sentence. For use,
see 1, 4, 6, 14. In 2, note that the whole sentence is
conjoined to a following one—I have used 'so' in the gloss,
but no conjunction appears in Hayu. But the -ī is not
present. I don't know why -ki does not appear on jenkuq in
5. 3 and 7 are questions and 8 is an imperative, so -ki
is not used.

-ki (< Nep. ki 'or'); -ki ma: Yes-no question markers;
optional. See 3.

-ro (-Nep. ra 'id.'): Rhetorical question marker

19. gon+ha+ko mItsI se ro?
   you+erg+emph what know RhetQ
   'What do you know?'

-phen: Contrary to fact (both for protasis and apodosis)

20. totop+ha dulo pa+kUg+phen
    having-beaten dust(N) I-made+contrary-to-fact
    'I'd have beaten him to dust.' or 'If I'd beaten
    him to dust...'

In addition, a number of particles (including many of the
case-markers seen earlier) serve to subordinate sentences.

-pa/-paha: Quoted speech

21. ma dzo+no+m pa it+tom a:re
    not I'll-eat-you+M unquote he-said they-say(N)
    'He said, 'I won't eat you.'''

There seems to be some tendency to postpone -pa complements
which report reasoning rather than actual speech.

22. arko ta+ko+m re aba ha:na+mu dog paha
    other(N) he-put+M they-say(N) now(N) how+of come unquote
    'He assigned another man, to see what would happen.'

23. mI+ha+ko ... dza:mai se+ko ine ine no+m paha
    he+erg+emph all(N) knew here here is+M unquote
    'He knew where everything was.'

R-ha: (repeats initial (c)V- of verbal root and
adds -ha) 'having V-ed, he ...' or 'by V-ing he ...'--
normally with the same subject (sole argument) as the main
verb. See 1 and 20.

-non: 'when' or conjunction

24. hana dzo+ke pa it+non
    how eat+us unquote say+when
    'If you want to know how they take advantage of us...'

25. khot+non khot+non khot+non M+non+na dog
    walk+and walk+and walk+and there+emph arrive
    'He walked and walked and finally got there.'

-he: 'when' tc.

26. mI+ha dza+he gont+le dza:me de no
    he+erg eat+on you+emph eat+refl (encouragement)
    'Go ahead and eat when he eats.'