

# PEXPLOING THE PARAMETERS OF VERB AGREEMENT IN MAJHI

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*This paper discusses a number of parameters which trigger verb agreement in Majhi, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Nepal. Like some Indo-Aryan neighbours, Majhi takes account of ranges of facts in the verb agreement. The verb is not only marked for agreement with one nominal phrase in a clause, but also encodes inflectional features of both subject and object simultaneously in transitive and ditransitive verbs by employing portmanteau suffixes. The features that control the agreement include person, number, honorificity, gender, and case roles of nouns.*

**Key words:** *Verb agreement, inflectional features, ditransitive verbs, honorificity*

## 1. Introduction

Majhis are one of the nationalities of Nepal with their distinct language, rituals and traditions (National Committee of the Nationalities 1996)<sup>1</sup>. The language spoken by Majhis is called the Majhi language (ISO mjz). This language is distinct from Majhi, a dialect of Punjabi, spoken in India. Some ethnic Majhi people also inhabit in Sikkim, India (see Gangopadhyay 1993). While a total of 83227 Majhi people live in Nepal, only a total of 24422 speakers speak their language as recorded in Census 2011 (CBS 2012), showing 29.34% language retention. Majhi is reported as “extinct” language in Sikkim, India<sup>2</sup>.

Majhis are “dark-skinned, of medium height, with thin wiry bodies and extremely shy in nature’. In their physical appearance, they are like Tharus in Terai (Gautam and Magar 1994:42). Bista (1967:117) notes that the Majhis, Darais and Danuwars have striking physical similarities. He further mentions that these people are also referred to as “Kushwar”<sup>3</sup>. My informant notes that Majhis have five inner groups, viz. Danuwar, Kushwar, Kumhale, Bantar, and Thalthalu. He claims that “Kuswar” must be Majhi because it is related to one of the groups within Majhi ethnic group. The Majhi people belonging to this group within Majhis outnumber the other groups within the Majhi community. Although some scholars regard ‘Bote’ and ‘Majhi’ as the same, the

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<sup>1</sup>I acknowledge to Mr. Dhan Bahadur Majhi for his help during the elicitation of the Majhi data. The data used in this analysis is based on the variety spoken in Tamakoshi area. In addition to elicited data, we have also used examples obtained from various kinds of texts.

<sup>2</sup>(<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/the-silence-of-the-last-surviving-majhi-speakers-8782758.html>, accessed to May 13, 2015). van Driem notes that Majhi is at the throes of death (2007:317). Similarly, Eppel et al. (2012) notes that Majhi is ‘threatened’.

<sup>3</sup>In many a places, the Majhis and Botes are considered to be a single language. For example, van Driem (2001:1172) mentions, “Majhis and Botes are two names for the same population group”. In some parts of western Nepal, Botes prefer to call themselves ‘Majhis’. However, Majhi is a distinct language, not a variety (or dialect) of any other languages. Majhi (2072 VS) has prepared a glossary of lexical items which includes different varieties of Majhi.

languages spoken by these two ethnic groups are distinct in grammatical features despite the similarity in their traditional profession.

A very few materials are available on Majhi in general and verb agreement patterns related to Majhi in particular. Hodgson (1857) lists some lexical items of ‘Kushwar’ which resembles much with Majhi these days. Dhakal (2013) has noted that the verbs in Majhi encode both the subject and object. Dhakal (2014) deals with the grammatical description of Majhi, and this also discusses the Majhi verb agreement. Currently, Majhi (2015) has prepared a bilingual lexicon of Majhi incorporating three varieties of the Majhi language, viz. Bhatauli, Sunkoshi and Dudhkoshi.

Van Driem (2001:1172) guesses that Majhi might be identical to ‘Kushwar’ or ‘Kushwàr’. The name ‘Kushwar’ is also mentioned in Grierson (1903a) and Hodgson (1992). Epple et al. (2012) also mention the term ‘Kushar’ while discussing the Majhi language. Thus, the earliest linguistic references to it can be found in Hodgson (1857) and Hunter (1978 [1868]).

## 2. Pronouns and pronominal suffixes

Majhi is mainly a suffixing language, both in nominal morphology and verb morphology. Majhi exhibits both of the features of head-marking and dependent-marking in genitive construction. When Majhi nouns appear in genitive phrases, agreement in person and number is obligatory between possessors and possessed if the pronominal possessive suffixes are present<sup>4</sup>. The phenomenon is also treated as ‘locus’ of information (Nichols and Bickel 2007). These pronominal suffixes are attached only to kinship terms. Table (3) contains the pronominal possessive suffixes attaching to the nouns in Majhi.

**Table 1 : Pronominal possessive suffixes**

	Pronominal possessive suffixes	
	Singular	Plural
<b>1 SG</b>	-m	-
<b>1 PL</b>	-	-
<b>2 SG</b>	-r	-
<b>2 PL</b>	-	-
<b>3 SG</b>	-k	-khjan
<b>3 PL</b>	-	-

Table (1) shows that the pronominal possessive suffixes appear only if the possessor is a singular pronoun. In addition, the pronominal possessive suffix is also coded if the possessed kin term is the plural and the possessor is the third person singular (or noun phrases). The gaps show that the pronominal possessive suffixes are absent. Examples follow.

<sup>4</sup> Nichols (1986) discusses the head-marking and dependent marking languages.

- (1) *hokrə bhaek*  
 hjə-rə      bhai-k  
 brother-POSS.3SG>3PL  
 ‘His brother’
- (2) *hokrə bhaekhjan*  
 hjə-rə      bhai-khjan  
 he-GEN      brother-POSS.3SG  
 ‘His brothers’

As we see in (1-2), the pronominal possessive suffixes appear with kinship terms, but these suffixes are not used with other kinds of possession. There is a very clear case that the suffix *-khjan* is attached to the plural nouns if the possessor is the third person singular. The same phrase may contain the suffix *-m* with the possessor modifier, such as *morə bhaim* ‘my brother’.

Majhi distinguishes the first, second and third person pronouns. There is no formal distinction of gender in the forms of the third person pronouns. Majhi exhibits a split ergativity based on nominal hierarchy (cf. De Lancey 1979). The first and second person pronouns do not code ergativity (also see Table 2). The third person pronouns and other noun phrases code ergativity if the clauses are transitive. The inflection of pronouns for accusative-dative, genitive, ablative and ergative is given in Table (2). The third person pronouns are based on remote demonstratives.

**Table 2 : Personal pronouns and inflections**

		ACC-DAT	ABL	GEN	ERG
<b>1SG</b>	muĩ	mi-lai	mui-baṭe	mo-rə	-
<b>1SG.EMPH</b>	muĩ-ne	mi-lai-ne	mui-baṭe-ne	morəi-ne	-
<b>1PL</b>	haĩ	haĩ-lai	haĩ-baṭe	ham-ro	-
<b>1PL.EMPH</b>	haĩ-ne	haĩ-lai-ne	haĩ-baṭe-ne	ham-re	-
<b>2SG</b>	tui	tui-lai	tui-baṭe	to-rə	-
<b>2SG.H</b>	tora	toral-kəi	toralə-baṭe	toralə-ko	-
<b>2PL</b>	tora:	toral-kəi	toralə-baṭe	toralə-ko	-
<b>3SG</b>	hoi	hoi-lai	hoi-baṭe	hok-rə	hoi-nin
<b>3PL</b>	holə	hoi-lai	hoi-baṭe	holə-ko	hol-kin

We see oblique forms of pronouns when they inflect for some cases. For example, when the first person singular pronoun inflects for accusative-dative, and genitive, the pronouns have oblique forms. Demonstratives and the third person pronouns are identical in Majhi.

### 3. Verb morphology: A bird's eye view

Majhi is mainly a suffixing language, but allows negative prefixes. Majhi makes a distinction between past and non-past tense. While the past tense in Majhi is expressed by the tense marker *-lə* or *-nə*, the non-past tense marker is *-tsh* in Majhi. Some morphologically coded aspects are habitual *-te*, progressive *-tin*, and perfect *-lə*, which is also homophonous with the past tense. Similarly, some moods are morphologically coded in Majhi, such as imperative is generally zero-marked, prohibitive prefix is *dzun-*, conditional is *-la*, and hortative is *-ũ/-əũ*.

The tense markers follow the verb stems, and in turn the agreement markers immediately follow the tense markers in Majhi. Typologically Majhi shares some features of verb morphology with eastern Indo-Aryan languages. Grierson (1903b:3) states, "Distinction of gender is slightly observed in 'Bihari' languages." Grammatical gender is evident in adjectives and certain verb forms (see section 5.6.2). 'Eastern' languages are characterized by the past tense suffix *-lə* with Marathi (Grierson 1903a:8; Masica 1991:270). Majhi partially shows this feature as it contains *-l /-n* to code the past tense (see Table 4-9). Eastern languages are characterized by 'inflectional synthesis' compared to western languages. Several agreement features are suffixed to the verbs (Grierson 1903a:7). As we will discuss later, Majhi indexes the information, such as subject and object in verb simultaneously.

### 4. Verb Agreement

Majhi only encodes a single, or double arguments in the verbs although some languages, such as Maithili (Yadava 1999), and Kashmiri (Raina 1994) also code triple agreement. First of all, I discuss agreement patterns related to single agreement and then I move to double agreement. By verb agreement we mean "the systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another (Steele 1987, as cited in Corbett 2006:4).

#### 4.1 Single agreement

A single NP is coded in the verbs in Majhi in a number of cases. The features which are responsible for the agreement are the person, number, gender, honorificity, and case roles. This is common in Indo-Aryan languages (cf. Acharya 1991; Yadava 1999; Kachru 2006; Das 2006; Dhakal 2012, 2014 among others). They are outlined in this section.

##### 4.1.1 Person, number and honorificity

There are distinct person and agreement markers in Majhi. The agreement markers in the non-past and past tense are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 : Person markers in past and non-past tense**

	NPST	PST
<b>1SG</b>	-ũ	-aĩ/-ai
<b>1PL</b>	-e	-e
<b>2SG</b>	-əs	-əi
<b>2SG.HON</b>	-ə	-ə
<b>2PL</b>	-ə:	-ə:
<b>3SG</b>	-əi	-e
<b>3PL</b>	-ət	-a

We see that although there are some agreement markers which are identical in the past tense and non-past tense, such as *-e* (1PL), *-ə* (2SG.H), *ə:* (2PL), the other agreement markers are different in the past tense and non-past tense. In order to illustrate the inflectional behavior of consonant-ending and vowel-ending verb stems, inflections of two verbs *beg-* ‘run’ and *dza-* ‘go’ are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 : Inflection of intransitive verbs *beg-* ‘run’, *dza-* ‘go’**

	<i>beg-</i> ‘run’		<i>dza-</i> ‘go’	
	NPST	PST	NPST	PST
<b>1SG</b>	<i>beg-tsh-ũ</i>	<i>beg-n-aĩ (ai)</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-ũ</i>	<i>dzai-na-ĩ (-i)</i>
<b>1PL</b>	<i>beg-tsh-e</i>	<i>beg-l-e</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-e</i>	<i>dzai-l-e</i>
<b>2SG</b>	<i>beg-tsh-əs</i>	<i>beg-l-əi</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-əs</i>	<i>dzai-l-əi</i>
<b>2SG.HON</b>	<i>beg-tsh-ə</i>	<i>beg-l-ə</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-ə</i>	<i>dzai-l-ə</i>
<b>2PL</b>	<i>beg-tsh-ə:</i>	<i>beg-l-ə:</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-ə:</i>	<i>dzai-l-ə:</i>
<b>3SG</b>	<i>beg-tsh-əi</i>	<i>beg-l-e</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-əi</i>	<i>dzai-l-e</i>
<b>3PL</b>	<i>beg-tsh-ət</i>	<i>beg-l-a</i>	<i>dzai-tsh-ət</i>	<i>dzai-l-a</i>

The vowel-ending stems also take the epenthetic vowel *i* before it takes the tense markers. The vowel stem *dza-* is followed by the epenthetic vowel preceding the non-past tense marker *-tsh*. And the past tense marker is *-l~n*. In contrast to this, the epenthetic vowel is not found with the consonant ending stems.

Person agreement is also shown in Table 4. In the verb *beg-tsh-ũ* ‘run-NPST.1SG’, the verb *-ũ* is the first person singular agreement marker whereas the agreement marker *-e* is the form agreeing with the first person plural subject. Examples follow.

- (3) *tui begtshəs*  
 tui beg-tsh-əs  
 you run-NPST-2SG  
 ‘You run.’
- (4) *tora begtshə*  
 tui beg-tsh-ə  
 you run-NPST-2SG.HON  
 ‘You (HON) run.’

- (5) *hoi begtshəi*  
 tui beg-tsh-əi  
 you run-NPST-3SG  
 ‘He runs.’

Now, let’s look at the verb agreement as seen in both the past and non-past tenses. Examples (3-5) illustrate the person agreement in the non-past tense. We see that the suffix *-əs* shows that the verb agrees with the second person singular whereas the *-əi* shows that the verbs agree with the third person singular in the non-past tense.

Moving to the agreement in the past tense, we see examples (6-7). We may contrast example (6) in which the agreement suffix *-a* agrees with the third person plural subject while *-ə* agrees with the third person singular subject in the past tense (7).

- (6) *madzahilkin mun khaila*  
 madzhi-l-kin mun kha-l-a  
 Mahi-PL-ERG liquor begin-PST-3PL  
 ‘Majhis drank liquor.’
- (7) *dzwārekin puni mən bitsar gərlə*  
 dzwā-re-k-in puni mən bitsar gər-l-ə  
 son-in-law-POSS.3SG-ERG also soul thought do-PST-3SG  
 ‘Son-in-law also thought for a while.’ [Prince.170]

When we look at Table 4 we see that the agreement is triggered by the person, number, and honorificity. Moreover, the honorificity triggers the verb agreement in the past and non-past tense in the second and third person subjects. While the second person singular subject takes the suffix *-ə*, the second person honorific subject takes the suffix *-ə:* both in the past and non-past tense.

#### 4.1.2 Gender

Only two genders, masculine and feminine, are differentiated in Majhi. The gender distinction is seen in Majhi in adjectives, classifiers and certain verb forms, viz. in perfect aspect, past tense and prospective form. Examples (8-9) show that the classifiers agree with the feminine nouns.

- (8) *duiṭa ghər*  
 dui-ṭa ghər  
 two-CLF house  
 ‘two houses,’
- (9) *tinṭi gailə*  
 tin-ṭi gai-lə  
 three-CLF.F cow-PL  
 ‘three cows,’

The gender distinction is also seen in numeral classifiers (8-9). For example, the classifier used with the masculine noun *-ṭa* inflects as *-ṭi* when it occurs with the feminine subject.

Similarly, some adjectives which end in *-a*, *-ə*, or *-o* inflect taking the inflectional suffix *-i* agreeing with the feminine nouns. Some examples follow (10).

(10)	ADJECTIVE		FEM (SG/PL)
	<i>bāṭha</i>	'clever'	<i>bāṭhi</i>
	<i>bəḍkhə</i>	'big'	<i>bəḍkhi</i>
	<i>burra</i>	'old'	<i>burri</i>
	<i>kupro</i>	'stoop'	<i>kupri</i>
	<i>goro</i>	'white'	<i>gorai</i>
	<i>laṭa</i>	'dumb'	<i>laṭai</i>

We see that the verb agrees with the masculine subject in the perfect aspect with *-lə* whereas we see the verb form *-li* agreeing with the feminine subject.

- (11) *tshōḍari ailə atshə*  
 tshōḍari ai-lə atsh-ə  
 son come-PRF be.NPST-3SG  
 '(My) son has come.'

- (12) *tshuneni aili atshi*  
 tshuneni a-li atsh-i  
 daughter come-PRF.F be.NPST-3SG.F  
 '(My) daughter has come.'

Verb agreement with the feminine subject is also seen in the prospective form of verbs as well. Compare examples (13-14) in which the prospective form appears as noun modifying clauses. We see that the modifying clause ending in *-nari* agrees with the feminine head noun in (13). By contrast, the prospective form ends in *-nar* to agree with the masculine subject (14).

- (13) *ghərə dzainari buhari*  
 ghərə dzai-nari buhari  
 house go-PROS.F daughter-in-law  
 'The daughter-in-law who will go home'

- (14) *ghərə dzainar tshōḍari*  
 ghərə dzai-nar tshōḍari  
 house go-PROS.M son  
 'The son who will go home'

Majhi also exhibits the verb agreement owing to gender only in certain verb forms. The gender agreement is not coded in non-past tense. We see the same agreement marker (viz. *-əi*) appearing in the non-past tense although the subject of (15) is the third person singular masculine whereas the subject of (16) is the third person singular feminine.

- (15) *tshuneni dzaitshəi*  
 tshuneni dza-tsh-əi  
 daughter go-NPST-3SG

- ‘(My) daughter goes.’  
 (16) *tshōḍari dzaitshəi*  
 tshōḍari            dza-tsh-əi  
 son                    go-NPST-3SG  
 ‘(My) son goes.’

#### 4.1.3 Case roles

Verbs in Majhi agree with the nominative, ergative, or dative subjects. While ergative and nominative subjects take the agreement suffixes shown in Table (3), the dative subject, and the genitive modifier of a NP takes different agreement suffixes. The subjects may be in the nominative case (17-18), in ergative case (19), or in dative case (20).

- (17) *muĩ masu khainai*  
 muĩ masu kha-n-ai  
 I meat eat-PST-1SG  
 ‘I ate meat.’
- (18) *tui masu khailəi*  
 tui masu kha-l-əi  
 you meat eat-PST-3SG  
 ‘You ate meat.’
- (19) *hoinin bərdei kinle*  
 hoi-nin bərdei kin-le  
 he-ERG ox buy-PST.3SG  
 ‘He bought the ox.’
- (20) *milai bhok lagtshəi*  
 muĩ-lai bhok lag-tsh-əi  
 I-DAT hunger feel-NPST-1SG.DAT  
 ‘I am hungry.’

We should also remember that Majhi shows the split ergative pattern. The split begins between the second person plural and the third person singular pronouns. So, we don’t see the ergativity encoded in (17-18) even if they are transitive clauses, but we see that it is encoded with the third person pronoun (19)<sup>5</sup>. Since we have discussed the verb agreement with nominative, and ergative subjects, let’s move to dative subjects and the genitive modifiers which trigger verb agreement.

The dative subjects are the ‘experiencer’ subjects (Masica 1991:346). Masica also explains that they often include physical sensations, psychological states, need, and obligation among others. One of the properties of the dative subjects in Majhi is that it also controls the verb agreement although this varies in other languages (cf. Bickel and Yadava 2000). Dative agreement is evidenced only in a few cases with the verbs, viz. *lag* ‘feel’ viz. verbs *ris uṭh-* ‘be angry’, *pər* ‘happen’ *ḍaha hək-* ‘envy’, *tsahi-* ‘be needed’ etc

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<sup>5</sup>See Dhakal (2014) for the detailed discussion of split ergativity in Majhi.



in the data we have collected. In order to explain the dative subject agreement, the inflection of the verb *lag-* ‘feel’, and copular verbs are shown in Table (5).

**Table 5 Inflection of verbs for dative subjects**

	<i>lag-</i> ‘feel’ (NPST)	<i>lag-</i> ‘become’ (PST)	<i>atsh-</i> ‘be.NPST’	PST ‘be.PST’
<b>1SG</b>	lag-tsh-əi	lag-l-e	atsh-ət	rəi-l-ə
<b>1PL</b>	lag-tsh-əi	lag-l-e	atsh-ət	rəi-l-ə
<b>2SG</b>	lag-tsh-jas	lag-l-jas	atsh-jas	rəi-l-jas
<b>2SG.H</b>	lag-tsh-ja	lag-l-ja	atsh-ja	rəi-l-ja
<b>2PL</b>	lag-tsh-ja	lag-l-ja	atsh-ja	rəi-l-ja
<b>3SG</b>	lag-tsh-i	lag-əl-te	atsh-i	rə-l-ti
<b>3SG.H</b>	lag-tsh-i	lag-əl-te	atsh-i	rə-l-ti
<b>3PL</b>	lag-tsh-jak	lag-l-jak	atsh-jak	rə-l-jak
<b>3PL.H</b>	lag-tsh-jak	lag-l-jak	atsh-jak	rə-l-jak

As can be seen in Table (5), agreement suffixes differ in the past and non-past tenses. First of all, let’s consider the examples in the past tense which agree with dative subjects.

- (19) *milai bhok lagle*  
 muĩ-lai bhok lag-l-e  
 I-DAT hunger feel-PST-1SG.DAT  
 ‘I was hungry.’
- (20) *tuilai bhok lagljas*  
 tui-lai bhok lag-l-jas  
 you-DAT hunger feel-PST-2SG.DAT  
 ‘You are hungry.’
- (21) *hja tshagrilai pāts sœ pərälte*  
 hjə tshagri-lai pāts sœ pər-əl-te  
 this goat-DAT five hundred cost-PST-3SG.DAT  
 ‘This goat cost five hundred rupees.’

We see that the finite verb contains *-e* to agree with the first person singular in (19) but the verb hosts the suffix *-jas* to agree with the second person singular dative subject in (20). The dative agreement is attested mainly with the ‘experiencer verbs’.

We also see that the dative subject agreement is also attested in the perfect construction in which the dative subject agrees with the auxiliaries rather than with the main verbs. Examples follow.

- (22) *milai bhok laglə atshət*  
 muĩ-lai bhok lag-l-ə atsh-ət  
 I-DAT hunger feel-PRF be.NPST-1SG.DAT  
 ‘I have become hungry.’

- (23) *tuilai bhok laglə atshjas*  
 tuī-lai bhok lag-lə atsh-jas  
 I-DAT hunger feel-PRF be.NPST-2SG.DAT  
 ‘You have become hungry.’

It is not strange to find examples which agree with the dative subjects because some IA languages reported to have this feature (Hook 1990). An example obtained from the corpus follows.

- (24) *hoilai huījā kaṭhkərə lau mantsinte kaṭhkərə bəhana tsahilatshjak*  
 hoi-lai huījā kaṭh-kərə lau  
 they-DAT Huinya wood-GEN boat  
 mantsinte kaṭh-kərə bəhana tsah-latsh-jak  
 Manchinte wood-GEN oar be needed-NPST-3PL.DAT  
 ‘They need Huinja wood for making a boat and Manchinte wood for making an oar.’  
 [Wood for boat 25]

We showed that the verb agree with dative subjects in Majhi. Now let's move to the genitive modifiers which trigger verb agreement. In addition to the dative case discussed earlier, the genitive case also controls the verb agreement when the genitive modifiers precede the nouns. This is seen with ‘possessives’ in which verb agrees with ‘a part of complex noun phrases which is not the lexical head’ (Corbett 2006:61). Consider examples (25-27).

- (25) *morə dzjan bātstshəi*  
 muī-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-əi  
 I-GEN life live-PST-1SG.GEN  
 ‘My life was safe (lit. my life lives).’
- (26) *torə dzjan bātstshjas*  
 tui-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-jas  
 you-GEN life live-PST-2SG.GEN  
 ‘Your life was safe (lit. your life lives).’
- (27) *hokrə dzjan bātstshi*  
 hoi-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-i  
 he-GEN life live-NPST-3SG.GEN  
 ‘His life was safe (lit. your life lives).’

We see that the the head of the noun phrases is *dzjan* 'life' in exmaples (25-27). However, we see that the verb agreement pattern is different in these examples. It is so because the genitive modifiers which precede the head nouns are different. For example, the genitive modifier is *morə* 'my' in (25), *torə* 'my' in (26), and *hokrə*'my' in (27). We see that the agreement suffix *-əi* agrees with *morə* 'my' in (25), *-jas* with *torə* 'my' in (26), and *-i* with *hokrə* 'my' in (27). So, the part of the noun phrases controls the verb agreement in this case.

Now, let's consider an example obtained from the corpus (28). Although the sentence lacks an overt subject, the verb agreement is controlled by genitive modifier. In this example, the verb is controlled by the phrase *holako kuro* 'their decision /consultation /matter'.

- (28) *helai kaṭai pərtshəi bhənnə kuro həkljak ni*  
 hjə-lai kaṭ-əi pərtshəi bhənnə kuro  
 this-DAT stab-INF should said matter  
 hək-l-jak ni  
 become-PST-3PL.GEN HS  
 'He should be stabbed, (they) decided (it) (it was their decision).'  
 [Prince.53]

We also need to note that if the overt subject was *torə kuro* 'your decision/ consultation/ matter' the verb form would be *həkljas* 'become-PST.2SG.GEN'. The inflections of genitive modifiers of some verbs, viz. *bāts-* 'live', and *hurk-* 'grow up' are shown in Table 6. The copular verbs *atsh-* 'be.NPST' and *rəi-* 'be.PST' inflect to agree with the genitive modifier as they are given in Table (5).

**Table 6 : Inflection of verbs for genitive modifiers**

	<i>bāts-</i> 'live'	<i>bāts-</i> 'live'	<i>hurk-</i> 'grow up'	<i>hurk-</i> 'grow up'
	(NPST)	(PST)	(NPST)	(PST)
<b>1SG</b>	bāts-tsh-əi	bāts-l-e	hurki-tsh-əi	hurki-l-e
<b>1PL</b>	bāts-tsh-əi	bāts-l-e	hurki-tsh-əi	hurki-l-e
<b>2SG</b>	bāts-tshj- as	bāts-le-s/ (l-e)	hurki-tsh-jas	hurki-l-es (l-e)
<b>2SG.H</b>	bāts-tsh-ja	bāts-l-ja	hurki-tsh-ja	hurki-l-ja
<b>2PL</b>	bāts-tsh-ja	bāts-lə-r	hurki-tsh-ja	hurki-l-ər
<b>3SG</b>	bāts-tsh- i(ik)	bāts-əl-te	hurki-tsh-i (ik)	hurki-l-te
<b>3SG.H</b>	bāts-tsh-i	bāts-əl-te	hurki-tsh- i(ik)	hurki-l-te
<b>3PL</b>	bāts-tsh- jak	bāts-l-jak	hurki-tsh- jak	hurki-l-jak
<b>3PL.H</b>	bāts-tsh- jak	bāts-l-jak	hurki-tsh- jak	hurki-l-jak

Table 6 presents the inflections of some verbs (viz. *bāts-* 'live', and *hurk-* 'grow up') when they are controlled by the genitive modifiers. Like in the past tense, the genitive modifiers also trigger verb agreement in the non-past tense. Examples follow.

- (29) *morə dzjan bātsstshə*  
 muĩ-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-ə  
 I-GEN life live-NPST-1SG.GEN

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- ‘My life is safe (lit. my life lives).’  
 (30) *torə dzjan bātstshjas*  
 tui-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-jas  
 you-GEN life live-NPST-2SG.GEN  
 ‘Your life is safe (lit. your life lives).’  
 (31) *hokrə dzjan bātstshi*  
 hoi-rə dzjan bāts-tsh-i  
 he-GEN life live-PST-3SG.GEN  
 ‘His life is safe (lit. your life lives).’

We see that although the head noun is the same in (29-31), the genitive modifiers differ. While the genitive modifier of (29) is *morə* ‘my’, the genitive modifier of (30) is *torə* ‘your’, and *hokrə* ‘his’ in (31). Like in the main verbs, the genitive modifiers also trigger changes in auxiliaries. Examples follow.

- (32) *morə ekdzən bhaem atshət*  
 muī-rə ek-dzən bhae-m atsh-ət  
 I-GEN one-CLF brother-POSS.1SG be.NPST-1SG.GEN  
 ‘I have a brother.’  
 (33) *torə ekdzən bhaer atshət*  
 tuī-rə ek-dzən bhae-r atsh-jas  
 I-GEN one-CLF brother-POSS.2SG be.NPST-2SG.GEN  
 ‘You have a brother.’  
 (34) *hokrə ekdzən bhaek atshik*  
 hoi-rə ek-dzən bhae-k atsh-ik  
 I-GEN one-CLF brother-POSS.3SG be.NPST.3SG.GEN  
 ‘He has a brother.’

We note that the copula agreement is triggered by the genitive subject in (32-34). If we replace the modifier *hokrə* ‘his’ by *torə* ‘your’ the agreement pattern differs. An example obtained from the corpus follows.

- (35) *torə kunu ištə atshjas ki*  
 tui-rə kunu ištə atsh-jas ki  
 you-GEN who friend be.NPST-2SG.GEN PRT  
 ‘Do you have any of your friends?’

We also see that the verb agreement in (38) is controlled by the genitive modifier again. Although the head of the NP is *ištə* ‘friend’, the ‘be’ verb agrees with the second person singular. The second person singular is the modifier of the NP rather than the head NP in (38).

Although Majhi have suffixes which agree with dative subjects, most of them either resemble to the suffixes in intransitive verbs, or in transitive verbs. Note that the suffixes with *-tsh* appears with the dative subject in the non-past tense whereas the suffixes with *-lə/-nə* appear with the past tense suffixes. The suffixes appearing with the dative subjects are summarized in Table (7).

**Table 7: Morphemes appearing with dative and genitive subjects**

TENSE	PERSON, NUMBER	SUFFIXES OCCURRING WITH DATIVE SUBJECTS	SUFFIXES RESEMBLING TO
NON-PAST	1SG/PL	-tsh-əi	3SG
	2SG	-tsh-jas	3SG/PL.SUB. 2SG.OBJ
	2SG.H, 2PL	-tsh-ja	3SG/PL .SUB. 2PL.OBJ
	3SG	-tsh-i	3SG.SUB .3SG.OBJ
	3PL/3PL.HON	-tsh-jak	3SG/PL.SUB.3PL.OBJ
	3SG	-tsh-ik	-
PAST	1SG/PL	-l-e	3SG
	2SG.HON, 2PL	-l-ja	3SG/PL.SUB. 2SG.OBJ
	3SG/3SG.HON	-əl-te	3SG.SUB. 3SG.OBJ
	2SG/PL	-l-jak	3PL.SUB. 3PL.OBJ
	2PL	-l-ər	-
	2SG	-l-es	-

Table (7) includes the possible sources of the suffixes because most of the suffixes occurring with the dative subjects resemble either to intransitive or transitive verbs. Only a few forms which occur with dative subject occur neither in intransitive nor in transitive verb paradigms. They are *-tsh-ik* in the non-past and *-l-er* and *-le-s* in the past. Examples obtained from the corpus are given in (36-37).

- (36) *aneləkai dāha həkəi thalljak*  
ane-l-kai dāha hək-əi thal-l-jak  
other-PL-DAT envy become-INF begin-PST-3PL.DAT  
‘Other people began to envy him.’ [Manthali and river bank.9]
- (37) *madzhilai dhere pir pərəl-te*  
madzhi-lai dhere pir pər-əl-te  
Majhi-DAT much sorrow happen-PST-3SG.DAT  
‘Majhi felt sad.’ [Manthali and river bank.14]

In perfect aspect the agreement suffixes are attached to *be* verbs which immediately follow the main verbs. As expected, the genitive modifier triggers the verb agreement (38-40).

- (38) *morə bhahem kam gərlə atshə*  
muī-rə bhai-m kam gər-lə atsh-ə  
I-GEN one-POSS.1SG work do-PRF be.NPST-1SG.GEN  
‘My brother has done work.’

- (39) *terəbhaer terə kam gərlə atshjas*  
 tui-rə bhae-r tui-rə kam gər-lə  
 you-GEN brother- POSS.2SG you-rə work do-PRF  
 atsh-jas  
 be.NPST-2SG.GEN  
 ‘Your brother has done work.’
- (40) *hokrəbhaikin kam gərlə atshjas*  
 hoi-rə bhae-k-in kam gər-lə  
 he-GEN brother- POSS.3SG-ERG work do-PRF  
 atsh-i  
 be.NPST-3SG.GEN  
 ‘His brother has done work.’

As shown before, the case roles affect the agreement suffixes in some Indo-Aryan languages (see Yadava 1999 for Maithili; Wilde 2008 for Rajbanshi and Dhakal 2012 for Darai).

#### 4.1.4 Agreement in transitive and ditransitive verbs

A more interesting feature characterized in Majhi is the double agreement where verb agreement is triggered both by subject and object simultaneously. Table (8) summarizes the affixes which are attached to the verbs in the past and non-past tenses in transitive, and ditransitive verbs.

**Table 8 : Agreement suffixes in transitive and ditransitive verbs**

Objects		1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3SG	3PL
Subjects							
1SG	PST	-	-	-n-ai	-l-ai	-n-in	-l-ai
	NPST	-	-	-tsh-ũ/ -s-ũ	-tsh-jā	-tsh-in	-tsh-ai
1PL	PST	-	-	-le			
	NPST	-	-	-tsh-e	-tsh-jā	-tsh-e	-s-ai/-tsh-ai
2SG	PST	-l-əi		-	-	-əl-si	-l-khən
	NPST	-tsh-əs		-	-	-tsh-is	-tsh-əs
2PL	PST	-l-ə		-	-	-l-ək	-l-khən
	NPST	-tsh-ə					
3SG	PST	-l-e		-l-jas	-l-ja	-l-te	-l-jak
	NPST	-tsh-əi		-tsh-jas	-tsh-ja	-tsh-i	-tsh-jak
3PL	PST	-n-i/-l-a	-l-a	-l-jas	-l-ja	-n-i	-l-jak
	NPST	-tsh-ət		-tsh-jas	-tsh-ja	-tsh-in	-tsh-jak

First of all, let’s discuss the inflectional behavior of verbs in ditransitive verbs as given in Table (8). The subjects are mentioned in the horizontal column and the objects in the vertical column. There are some cases where the agreement suffixes combined with tense markers in transitive verbs are identical to the ones which also occur in intransitive

paradigms. So, the transitive verbs in which the inflectional forms are decided only by the subject are referred to as ‘Only S (Subject) marked’ in Table (8). In other words, only subjects are marked to them.

In order to make the presentation more convenient, let’s summarize the agreement pattern described in Table (8). There are two patterns of verb agreement. Firstly, both the subjects and objects are coded in the transitive and ditransitive verb patterns. It is to be noted that Majhi employs the portmanteau suffixes to code the subject and object simultaneously. In fact, we can’t tease apart the subject and object agreement markers in the verbs. Secondly, only the objects are coded in the verbs.

Firstly, let’s present the situation in which both the subjects and objects are coded in transitive and ditransitive verbs. Since Majhi employs the portmanteau suffix of verb agreement, the portmanteau suffixes which appear in the past tense with different subjects and objects are given in (41).

(41)	SUFFIXES	SUBJECTS	OBJECTS
	-ai	1SG →	2PL, 3PL
	-in	1SG →	3SG
	-si	2SG →	3SG, 3PL
	-khən	2SG →	3PL
	-ək	2PL →	3SG
	-khən	2PL →	3PL
	-jas	3SG →	2SG
	-ja	3SG →	2PL
	-te	3SG →	3SG
	-jak	3SG →	3PL
	-jas	3PL →	2SG
	-jas	3PL →	2PL
	-i	3PL →	3SG
	-jak	3PL →	3PL

In the same way, the portmanteau suffixes which appear in the non-past tense with different subjects and objects are given in (42). Note that some common suffixes appearing in the past and non-past tenses which will be discussed later.

(42)	SUFFIXES	SUBJECTS	OBJECTS
	-ũ	1SG →	2SG
	-jã	1SG →	2PL
	-in	1SG →	3SG
	-ai	1SG →	3PL
	-sis	2SG →	3SG
	-khən	2PL →	3PL
	-jas	3SG →	2SG
	-ja	3SG →	2PL
	-i	3SG →	3SG

-jak	3SG	→	3PL
-jas	3PL	→	2SG
-ja	3PL	→	2PL
-in	3SG	→	3SG
-jak	3PL	→	3PL

Although some portmanteau suffixes appear both with the past and non-past tenses, others do not. The suffixes which appear both in the past and non-past tenses are given in (43). It is also to be noted that other portmanteau suffixes occur either in the past and non-past tenses, however.

(43)	<b>SUFFIXES</b>	<b>SUBJECTS</b>	<b>OBJECTS</b>
	-in	1SG	→ 3SG
	-ai	1SG	→ 3PL
	-jas	3SG	→ 2SG
	-ja	3SG	→ 2PL
	-jak	3SG	→ 3PL
	-jas	3PL	→ 2SG
	-ja	3PL	→ 2PL
	-jak	3PL	→ 3PL

The inflection of the verb *de-* 'give' is given in Table (9).

**Table 9 : Inflection of the verb *de-* 'give' in past and non-past tenses**

Objects		1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3SG	3PL
Subjects							
1SG	PST	-	-	Only S marked	di-l-ai	di-n-in	di-l-ai
	NPST	-	-		di-tsh-jǎ	di-tsh-in	di-tsh-ai
1PL	PST	-	-	Only S marked			
	NPST	-	-	Only S marked	di-tsh-jǎ	di-tsh-e	di-s-ai/ di-tsh-ai
2SG	PST	Only S marked		-	-	di-l-si	di-l-khən
	NPST			-	-	di-s-is	Only S marked
2PL	PST	Only S marked		-	-	di-l-ək	di-l-khən
	NPST			-	-	Only S marked	
3SG	PST	Only S marked		di-l-jas	di-l-ja	di-l-te	di-l-jak
	NPST			di-tsh- jas	di-tsh-ja	di-tsh-i	di-tsh-jak
3PL	PST	Only S marked		di-l-jas	di-l-ja	di-n-i	di-l-jak
	NPST			di-tsh- jas	di-tsh-ja	di-tsh-in	di-tsh-jak

Although some verbs are marked only with the subject, there are inflectional slots in the paradigm where both subject and object are indexed. We are going to deal with this in



this section. Let's recall that the suffix *-ai* codes the first person singular subject in the past tense in intransitive clauses. When we compare this form with the inflectional suffixes appearing to index the verbs in transitive verbs, we find some differences. We see that the form *-ai* also appears when the first person singular subject acts on the second person singular in the past tense. By contrast, when the first person singular subject acts on the rest of the pronouns, the forms differ, viz. *-ai*, *-in*. The form *-ai* indexes the first person subject acting on the second person plural (PST.1SG.SUB.2PL.OBJ) and third person plural (PST.1SG.SUB.3PL.OBJ) in the past tense. Similarly, the suffix *-in* indexes the first person singular subject acting on the third person singular object (PST.1SG.SUB.3SG.OBJ). Examples follow.

- (44) *muĩ tshoḍarilai dzal dinin*  
 muĩ tshoḍari-lai dzal di-n-in  
 I son-DAT net give-PST-1SG.SUB.3SG.OBJ  
 'I gave a net to my son.'
- (45) *muĩ tshoḍarillai dzal dilai*  
 muĩ tshoḍari-l-lai dzal di-l-ai  
 I son-PL-DAT net give-PST-1SG.SUB.3PL.OBJ  
 'I gave a net to my sons.'
- (46) *hoinin beṭaklai balalte*  
 hoi-nin beṭa-k-lai bal-l-te  
 he-ERG son-POSS.3SG-DAT call-PST.3SG.SUB.3SG.OBJ  
 'He called his son.'
- (47) *hoinin beṭakhjankai balalte*  
 hoi-nin beṭa-khjan-lai bal-l-te  
 he-ERG son-POSS.3SG>3PL-DAT call-PST-3SG.SUB.3PL.OBJ  
 'He called his sons.'

Examples (44-45) illustrate the verb agreement when the first person singular subject acts on the third person singular and plural noun phrases. Despite the fact that the subject is the same in these two examples the differences result from the objects they incorporate in verb forms. For example, in example (44), the object is the third person singular *tshoḍari* 'son' whereas in (45) the object is the third person plural *tshoḍari-l* 'son-PL'. Similarly, we see that the third person acts on the third person singular subject in (46) in the past tense, but the third person singular subject acts on the third person plural objects in (47). Now, let's turn into the agreement in the non-past tense.

Now, let's turn to the inflections of the ditransitive verbs in the non-past tense. Consider examples (48-49).

- (48) *muĩ hoilai dzal ditshin*  
 muĩ hoi-lai dzal di-tsh-in  
 I he-DAT dzal give-NPST-1SG.SUB.3SG.OBJ  
 'I give him the net.'

- (49) *muĩ holəkai dzal ditshai*  
 muĩ holə-lai dzal di-tsh-ai  
 I they-DAT net give-NPST-1SG.SUB.3PL.OBJ  
 ‘I give them the net.’

Let’s remember that the first person singular subject takes the verb form that ends marker is *-ĩ* in non-past tense. When we compare this with the inflections of verbs in (48-49), we notice that the addressee component is also indexed in the verbs. The suffix *-in* shows that the first person singular subject is acting on the third person singular object whereas *-ai* codes the first person singular subject acting on the third person plural object.

As seen in tables before, a number of markers in Majhiare portmanteau suffixes incorporating both the agent and patient components in the verbs. In other words, in addition to the subject, the verb also incorporates the addressee components to them. Let’s take the suffix *-te*, which is the suffix appearing with the past tense marker. It is obvious that the *-l* is the past tense marker. It is not, however, easy to tease apart the rest of its component into agent and patient markers. Following are some examples (50-52) in which both the subject and object control the verb agreement simultaneously as it is evidenced in Majhi texts.

- (50) *bərman risaitin dutkai bəlljak*  
 bərma-n risa-tin dut-kai bəl-l-jak  
 Brahma be angry-SIM messenger-DAT speak-PST3SG.3PL.OBJ  
 ‘As Brahma was angry, he called the messenger.’  
 [Majhi and water.21]
- (51) *madzhilkin tsərilk lagi mähālə khōda bənai dini*  
 madzhi-l-kin tsəri-l-kərə lagi mähālə  
 messenger-PL-ERG bird-PL-DAT for good  
 khōda bən-a-i di-n-i  
 nestmake-CAUS-ABS give-PST-3PL.SUB.3PL.OBJ  
 ‘Majhis make a nice nest for the birds.’ [Wood for boat.33]
- (52) *bihanə səbere uṭh-ikəi rati tsərilkin gərlə sebbe kuro sathilkai sunailjak*  
 bihanə səbere uṭh-ikəi rati tsəri-l-kin gər-lə  
 morning early get up-SEQ night bird-PL-ERG do-PRF  
 sebbe kuro sathi-l-kai sun-a-l-jak  
 all matter friend-PL-ERG listen-CAUS-PST-3SG.SUB.3PL.OBJ  
 ‘Having got up early in the morning, he told all the things heard in the night said by the birds to (his friend).’ [Wood for boat.31]

As we see in (50-52), for example, Majhi employs a number of portmanteau suffixes in ditransitive and transitive paradigm. For example, the suffix *-ljak* is the portmanteau suffix which is the third person singular agent acting on the third person patient in the past tense (52).

Now, let’s move to the cases in which only the subjects are coded in the verbs. Reflexives are not included in this case either. We have not included the first person subject acting

on the first person objects. Similarly, the combinatory cases in which the second person subjects acting on the second person objects are not included in this case either. The other cases in which only the subjects are coded in the past tense are given in (53).

(53)	SUFFIXES	SUBJECTS	OBJECTS
	-ai	1SG →	2SG, 2PL
	-le	1PL →	ALL OBJECTS
	-əi	2SG →	1SG, 1PL
	-ə	2PL →	1SG, 1PL, 3SG, 3PL
	-e	3SG →	1SG, 1PL
	-a	3PL →	1SG, 1PL

The cases in which only the subjects are coded in the non-past tense are given in (53). We see that the objects do not control verb agreement when the subjects act on objects mentioned in (54).

(54)	SUFFIXES	SUBJECTS	OBJECTS
	-ũ	1SG →	2SG
	-e	1PL →	2SG
	-əs	2SG →	1SG, 1PL
	-ə:	2PL →	1SG, 1PL, 3SG, 3PL
	-əi	3SG →	1SG, 1PL
	-ət	3PL →	1SG, 1PL

Although it is difficult to set the criteria why the objects do not trigger the verb agreement in this case, we find some kind of pattern in it. When the second and third person subjects act on the first person objects, the object component is not included in it. So, we have a hierarchy relation like (3>1, 2>1) in this case. Secondly, there are cases in which the plural pronouns while acting as subjects do not incorporate the object component in the verbs, such as first person plural acting on the second person singular, and second person plural acting on all pronouns.

Indo-Aryan languages present double and even triple agreement. Double agreement is reported in Rajbanshi (Wilde 2008), Maithili (Yadava 1999), Darai (Dhakal 2012), Magahi (Verma 1991), and Bajjika (Kashyap 2011). In addition, Maithili and Kashmiri show triple agreement (see Yadava 1996, 1999 for Maithili and Raina 1994 for Kashmiri) which is not characterized in Majhi.

## 5. Summary

The discussion shows that we need ranges of facts to discuss the verb agreement in Majhi where the verb is not only marked for agreement with one nominal phrase in a clause. The verbs may agree with the nominative, ergative, or with the dative subject, or the modifier of a genitive phrase. The agreement triggered by gender, person, and number are like in other Indo-Aryan languages of the region, such as Hindi (cf. Kachru 2006, Saksena 1981, Das 2006), or Nepali (Acharya 1991). In addition to the features such as number, person, gender, honorificity, and case, verb agreement is also controlled by both subject and object in ditransitive verbs (and some transitive verbs). Genitive modifier also

controls the verb agreement. Majhi mainly employs portmanteau suffixes to encode the inflectional values of subject and object simultaneously in transitive and ditransitive verbs.

### Abbreviations

1	first person	2	second person
3	third person	CLF	classifier
DAT	dative	ERG	ergative
F	feminine	GEN	genitive
H	honorific	HH	high honorific
INF	infinitive	LOC	locative
NEG	negative	NPST	non-past
OBJ	object	PART	particle
PL	plural	PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive	PROS	prospective
PRT	particle	PST	past
POSS	pronominal possessive suffix	PURP	purpose
REM	remote	SG	singular
SEQ	sequential converb	SIM	simultaneous converb
SUB	subject		

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