

Agreement in Hindi Conjunct Verbs

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Abstract

¹ The conjunct verbs in Hindi pose a problem with respect to the agreement. Shapiro has observed that when the nominal element of a conjunct verb functions as a direct object of the conjunct verb, then the verb shows an agreement with its nominal element. In this paper we give the syntactico-semantic criterion to decide whether the nominal element of a verb is an argument of a conjunct verb or not and give rules for agreement decisions in such cases.

1 Introduction

A conjunct verb is a sequence of either a noun or an adjective followed by a verb that constitutes a tight coupling as a semantic unit. *sādī karanā* (to marry), *pasanda karanā* (to select), *gālī denā* (to scold) are some of the Hindi examples of conjunct verbs. Typically when they are translated into other languages such as English or Sanskrit, they are expressed as a unitary verb. The most common verb elements in conjunct verbs are *karanā* and *honā* although evidences of other elements such as *laganā*, *denā*, *lenā*, etc. are also found in Hindi, as in *bhūkha laganā* (to be hungry), *acchā laganā* (to feel good), *būrā laganā* (to feel bad), *paricaya denā* (to introduce), *yāda dilānā* (to remind), *tasvīra khīmcanā* (to take a photograph), *sāmsa lenā* (to breathe), etc.

Conjunct verbs with nouns are more common than adjectives. Shapiro(1989) classifies the conjunct verbs into two classes. Some conjunct verbs such as *anusaraṇa karanā*, *pratīkṣā karanā*, *sevā karanā* are conceptual wholes whose logical objects are other nominals. But the nominal elements *anusaraṇa*, *pratīkṣā* and *sevā* themselves function as a direct object of the verb *karanā*, and thus verb *kara* shows

an agreement with these elements in the past tense. Other class of conjunct verbs are those where the nominals such as *majabūra*, *māpha* as in *majabūra karanā*, *māpha karanā* are not linked to other words in a sentence.

The conjunct verbs pose an important problem when it comes to the feature agreement between a noun and a verb. Consider the following sentences.

Hnd: *sītā ne rāma kā anusaraṇa kiyā.* (1)
gloss: Sita{erg} Ram follow did.
Eng: Sita followed Ram.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohana para gussā kiyā.* (2)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan on anger did.
Eng: Ram got angry with Mohan.

Hnd: *rāma ne sītā ko pasanda kiyā.* (3)
gloss: Ram{erg} Sita{acc} select did.
Eng: Ram selected Sita.

The noun *pasanda* is feminine while *anusaraṇa* and *gussā* are masculine. In (1) and (2), the verb is in agreement with the nominal part of the conjunct verb, but not in (3). So the question is, how does one account for the agreement?

2 Verb agreement in Hindi

Before we discuss the verb agreement in conjunct verbs, let us first see the general verb agreement phenomenon in Hindi. The case marker of a noun is determined by the verb, the tense-aspect-modality (TAM) marker and the *kāraka* role the noun has with respect to the verb. For example, if the TAM marker is *nā-ṣaḍā*, then the *kartā*(roughly agent) takes ‘ko’ *vibhakti*(case marker).

Hnd: *rāma ko phala khānā ṣaḍā.* (4)
gloss: Rama fruit had.to.eat.
Eng: Ram had to eat a fruit.

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Once the nouns get appropriate vibhaktis, the rules for noun-verb gender-number-person agreement are as follows.

- If the verb is intransitive, and the kartā is in nominative case, then the verb agrees with the kartā.
E.g. *rāma so gayā. / sītā so gayī.*
- If the verb is intransitive and the kartā has a case marker other than nominative, then the verb is in third person masculine singular form.
E.g. *rāma ko sonā paḍā.*
- If the verb is transitive and the kartā is in nominative, then the verb agrees with the kartā.
E.g. *rāma cāvala khātā hai.*
- If the verb is transitive, the kartā is not in nominative, but the karma (roughly direct object) is in nominative, the verb agrees with the karma.
E.g. *rāma ko roṭī khānī paḍī.*
- If the verb is transitive and if both the kartā and karma are not in nominative, then the verb assumes third case masculine singular form.
E.g. *rāma ne mohana ko dekhā.*

Now let us look at the sentences (1) to (3) again. The conjunct verbs *anusaraṇa karanā* and *pasanda karanā* are transitive and both the kartā and karma have case markers other than nominative. The conjunct verb *gussā karanā* is intransitive and its kartā is not in nominative. Therefore in all the three cases either the verb should have been in third case masculine singular or should have been in agreement with the noun in the conjunct verb uniformly. But as we notice in the first two sentences, the conjunct verb agrees with the noun part and in the third example it is in third person masculine singular form. So how do we account for this variation?

The clue is in Shapiro's observation that in some cases the nominal element of a conjunct verb functions as a direct object of the verb and thus verb shows an agreement with its nominal element. So the question is under what circumstances the nominal element of a conjunct verb functions as a direct object? Is it possible to give any syntactic or semantic criterion to decide the agreement?

We look at the Pāṇinian grammar for clues.

3 Noun in a conjunct verb is a verbal noun

Since Pāṇini's grammar is written for Sanskrit, let us consider the Sanskrit translation of (1).

Skt: *sītā rāmam anusarati.* (5)
gloss: Sita Rama{acc} follows.
Eng: Sita to Ram follows.

Here the verb *anu+sṛ* is transitive. It has an expectancy of kartā and karma and thus *sītā* and *rāma* take nominative and accusative case markers respectively. The verb *anu+sṛ* is not a conjunct verb. However, Sanskrit also allows a construction parallel to the Hindi construction viz.

Skt: *sītā rāmasya anusaraṇam karoti.* (6)
gloss: Sita Rama{gen} following does.
Eng: Sita follows Ram.

In this sentence, *karoti* is the main verb, *sītā* is the kartā and *anusaraṇam* is a verbal noun, which has its own expectancies. The kartā of *anusaraṇam* is here shared with the kartā of *karoti*. Karma of *anusaraṇam* is *rāma*. According to the Pāṇini's rule *karṭṛkarmaṇoḥ kṛti* (P-2.3.65), the karma takes genitive case marker justifying the genitive case of *rāma*.

Pictorially this is represented as in Fig.1.

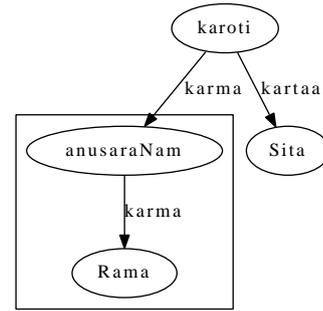


Figure 1: verbal noun

Hindi sentence (1) is of this type. The genitive case of *rāma* is due to its association with the verbal noun *anusaraṇa*. *Rāma* is the karma of the verbal noun and the verbal noun itself is the karma of the conjunct verb. The kartā is not in nominative. The verbal noun is in nominative case and as such, the verb shows an agreement with its noun. Thus when the noun element of a conjunct verb is a verbal noun, and it functions as a karma of the conjunct verb, the verbal noun being in nominative case, the conjunct verb shows an agreement with it when kartā is not in nominative.

Here are a few more examples of this type:

Hnd: *dāḱṭara ne sītā kā upacāra kiyā.* (7)
gloss: Doctor{arg} Sita{gen} treatment did.
Eng: Doctor treated Sita.

Hnd: *rāma ne sītā kī sevā kī.* (8)

gloss: Rama{erg} Sita{gen} service did.
Eng: Ram served Sita.

Hnd: *rāma ne sītā kī pratīkshā kī.* (9)
gloss: Rama{erg} Sita{gen} waiting did.
Eng: Rama waited for Sita.

4 Noun in a conjunct verb is not a verbal noun

In sentences (2) and (3), the noun in a conjunct verb is not a verbal noun. We notice that in one case the verb agrees with its nominal part and in the other case it does not.

4.1 Conjunct verb agrees with its noun element

Let us first analyse (2). Here the verb *gussā karanā* has an expectancy of a kartā and a sampradāna(beneficiary)². In Hindi the default sampradāna case marking is *ko*. But *gussā karanā* is an exceptional verb that assigns locative case marker to the sampradāna (Shukl, 2009).

Now, *gussā karanā* is one semantic unit, and it is an intransitive verb. But the verbal element *karanā* being a transitive verb, *gussā* functions as a karma of the verbal element *karanā*. Since *gussā* does not have any case marker, the verbal element shows an agreement with its nominal part.

So the analysis of (2) may be represented as in Fig. 2. Note the difference between Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. In Fig. 2 the arguments are of the complex whole whereas in Fig. 1, the arguments are of individual elements of the conjunct verb.

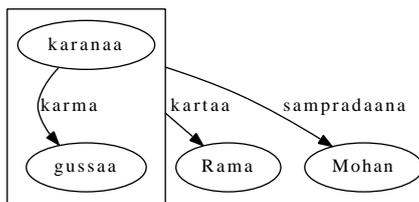


Figure 2: nominal element:karma

Few other examples of this type are:

Hnd: *rāma ne ghara meṃ praveśa kiyā.* (10)
gloss: Rama{erg} home{loc} entry did.
Eng: Rama entered home.

²In Sanskrit, Pāṇini has formulated a special rule to account for the sampradāna role of the verbs *krudh*, *druh*, etc. (*krudhdruheryśāsūyārthānaṃ yaṃ prati kopāḥ* 1.4.37)

Hnd: *rāma ne pratiyogitā meṃ hissā liyā.* (11)
gloss: Rama{erg} competition{loc} participation did.
Eng: Ram participated in a competition.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohana ko gālī dī.* (12)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan{dat} epithet gave.
Eng: Ram abused Mohan.

The conjunct verbs which represent associative actions such as *vivāha karanā*, *śādī karanā*, *jhagaḍā karanā*, also behave similarly. Thus in a sentence,

Hnd: *rāma ne sītā se vivāha kiyā.* (13)
gloss: Rama{erg} Sita{inst.} married.
Eng: Rama married Sita.

vivāha is an object of the verb *karanā*, and *rāma* and *sītā* are the kartā and karma of the conjunct verb *vivāha karanā*.

4.2 Conjunct verb does not agree with its noun/adjective part

Let us now look at sentence (3). In this sentence, the conjunct verb *pasanda karanā* takes two arguments, *rāma* as a kartā and *sītā* as a karma. We also see that the karma takes an accusative marker. Hence, according to the agreement rule, the verb should be in third person masculine singular form. Thus in such cases there is no agreement of verb with its noun part.

With *pasanda karanā* another construction is also possible.

Hnd: *sītā ne sādī pasanda kī.* (14)
gloss: Sita{erg} sari selected.
Eng: Sita selected a sari.

Here since the karma (*sādī*) of *pasanda karanā* does not have an overt accusative marker, the verb shows agreement with *sādī*.

If the nominal part of the conjunct verb is an adjective and the conjunct verb is transitive, then also the behaviour is similar as in (15) and (16).

Hnd: *rāma ne mohan ko prasanna kiyā.* (15)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan{dat} pleased.
Eng: Rama pleased Mohan.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohan ko dukhī kiyā.* (16)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan{dat} hurt.
Eng: Rama hurt Mohan.

If the karma however does not take an accusative marker then the agreement is with the karma as in (17).

³Here Mohana is the sampradāna and not a karma.

Hnd: *rāma ko mohana acchā lagā.* (17)
gloss: Ram to Mohan good felt.
Eng: Ram liked Mohan.

Finally conjunct verbs whose noun part is a Perso-Arabic word also fall under this category. Here are some examples.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohan ko pareśāna kiyā.* (18)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan{dat} trouble did.
Eng: Rama troubled Mohan.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohan ko hājira kiyā.* (19)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan{dat} presented.
Eng: Rama presented Mohan.

In these cases also, since the karma takes an accusative marker, the verb takes default value of the gender-number-person.

4.3 Conjuncts with verbs other than *karanā*

There are many conjunct verbs with verbal elements different from *karanā*. For example, *paricaya denā*, *sāmsa lenā*, *ādata ḍālanā*, etc. The above rules get extended to these conjunct verbs as well, as is clear from the following examples.

Paricaya denā does not have an expectancy of karma⁴. Hence the verb *denā* agrees with *paricaya*.

Hnd: *rāma ne mohana ko apanā paricaya dīyā.* (20)
gloss: Rama{erg} Mohan to self introduction gave.
Eng: Rama introduced himself to Mohan.

Sāmsa lenā is intransitive. Hence *sāmsa* functions as a karma of the verbal element *lenā* and it shows an agreement with its noun element.

Hnd: *rāma ne sāmsa lī.* (21)
gloss: Rama{erg} breath took.
Eng: Rama breathed.

Ādata ḍālanā is intransitive with *ādata* having its own expectancies marked by the genitive case. Thus *ḍālanā* agrees with *ādata*.

Hnd: *rāma ne roja subaha jaldī uṭhane kī ādata ḍālī.* (22)
gloss: Rama{erg} every morning early wake{gen} habit put.
Eng: Rama got into the habit of waking up early.

Conjunct verbs with *honā* are intransitive. However unlike other verbs such as *lenā*, *ḍālanā* etc. which are transitive, *honā* is intransitive.

Hence in case of conjunct verbs with *honā*,

⁴Mohana is a sampradāna(beneficiary) and not a karma.

If the *kartā* does not take a case marker then the verbal element of the conjunct verb agrees with the *kartā*. For example,

Hnd: *rāma prasanna huā.* (23)
gloss: rāma please happened.
Eng: Ram was pleased.

Hnd: *gahane corī hue.* (24)
gloss: jewels theft happened.
Eng: jewels got stolen.

But if the nominal element behaves as a verbal noun demanding its own arguments, the *kartā* and/or karma of the nominal element take genitive case. And now since no other overt *kartā* is present, the nominal element functions as a *kartā* and the verbal element agrees with it. For example,

Hnd: *gahanom kī corī huī.* (25)
gloss: jewels of theft happened.
Eng: jewels got stolen.

Finally if the nominal element of the conjunct verb with *honā* functions as a *kartā* of the conjunct verb as in (26) then the verb agrees with its nominal element.

Hnd: *hamāre ghara mem kala corī huī.* (26)
gloss: our house yesterday theft happened.
Eng: Yesterday there was a theft in our house.

5 Border Cases

There are certain border cases where the nominal part of the conjunct verb optionally functions as a verbal noun. For example consider the following sentences.

Hnd: *mohana ne gahane corī kiye.* (27)
gloss: Mohan{erg} jewels stole.
Eng: Mohan stole the jewels.

Here the verb agrees with *gahane*, since *gahane*, which is the karma of the conjunct verb *corī karanā* is in nominative.

Now consider another sentence, where the behaviour of the noun *corī* is like a verbal noun.

Hnd: *mohana ne gahanom kī corī kī.* (28)
gloss: Mohan{erg} jewels{gen} stole.
Eng: Mohan stole the jewels.

Gahane here functions as an argument of *corī* and takes a genitive case and the conjunct verb shows agreement with its noun element viz. *corī*.

6 Conclusion

The nominal element functions as an argument of the verbal element under the following circumstances.

- If the nominal element is a verbal noun or has its own expectancies.
- If the verbal element of the conjunct verb is transitive but the conjunct verb as a whole does not have an expectancy of karma.
- If the verbal element of the conjunct verb is intransitive and nominal element has its own expectancy.
- If the verbal element of the conjunct verb is intransitive and the conjunct verb as a whole does not have any expectancy of kartā.

In all these cases the verbal element shows agreement with the nominal element. We summarize the rules as below.

- If the nominal element of the conjunct verb is a verbal noun, and thereby has its own expectancies, the nominal elements satisfying the expectancy of kartā and karma of this verbal noun take genitive case markers and the conjunct verb shows agreement with the verbal noun.
- If the noun part of the conjunct verb is not a verbal noun, and if the transitive(intransitive) conjunct verb does not have an expectancy of karma(kartā), then the verb shows agreement with its nominal part.
- If the noun or the adjective element of a transitive(intransitive) conjunct verb is not a verbal noun, and it has an expectancy of a karma(kartā), and if karma(kartā) takes a nominative case, then the conjunct verb agrees with it. However if the karma(kartā) takes an accusative marker, then the conjunct verb is in third person singular masculine form.

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