

The syntax of internal possessors in Maithili

Yogendra Yadava¹, Oliver Bond², Irina Nikolaeva³ & Sandy Ritchie³
Tribhuvan University¹, University of Surrey², SOAS University of London³

1. Introduction

Maithili is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in India and Nepal.

It has a complex agreement system in which many terms and non-terms including subjects, objects, obliques, and possessors of any of these can potentially control agreement on the verb.

This complexity of the system is highlighted by the (contrived) example in (1). In (1a) the head of the subject NP controls agreement on the verb. In (1b), the verbal agreement cross-references the subject and the head of the object NP.¹ In (1c) the agreement cross-references the subject and the possessor internal to the oblique. In (1d), it cross-references the head of the subject NP and the possessor of the possessor of the subject head.

- (1) a. h²mar bhai-ek **patni** sicshak-ak nok²r-ke ahak ghar me dek-l-ih
my brother-GEN wife teacher-GEN servant-ACC you.H.GEN house in see-PST-3H.F
- b. h²mar bhai-ek **patni** sicshak-ak nok²r-ke ahak ghar me deka-l-khinh
my brother-GEN wife teacher-GEN servant-ACC you.H.GEN house in see-PST-3H>3NH
- c. h²mar bhai-ek **patni** sicshak-ak nok²r-ke ahak ghar me deka-l-kunh
my brother-GEN wife teacher-GEN servant-ACC you.H.GEN house in see-PST-3H>2H
- d. h²mar bhai-ek **patni** sicshak-ak nok²r-ke ahak ghar me dek-l-einh
my brother-GEN wife teacher-GEN servant-ACC you.H.GEN house in see-PST-3H>1
- ...
- 'My brother's (NH) wife (H) saw the teacher's (H) servant (NH) in your (H) house.'

This paradigm is not exhaustive. The other nominals in this kind of clause could also potentially control secondary agreement (though not all combinations are possible).

¹ In fact (1b) is ambiguous – the non-honorific possessor of the subject *bhai* might be controlling the agreement.

This kind of agreement system requires further investigation because:

1. the syntactic mechanism by which internal possessors can control agreement on the verb is not clear;
2. it is not immediately apparent what enables one potential agreement controller to 'win out' over the others – what is the functional motivation for using one or another of these constructions?

Maithili is one of the four target languages of the Prominent Possessors project, along with Chimane (unclassified, Bolivia), Tundra Nenets (Uralic, Russia) and Turkish (Turkic).

It has a special status for our project as it was the first language in which prominent internal possessors (PIPs) were reported (explicitly).

Seminal papers by Stump and Yadav (1988) and Bickel, Bisang, and Yadava (1999) make several important observations and claims about Maithili PIPs.

These form the basis of our research on Maithili and also other languages which exhibit PIPs.

Today we will discuss prominent possessors in Maithili, and make some proposals based on new data from the language about the syntax of (prominent) internal possessors.

Our two main proposals are:

1. The functional prominence of the internal possessor (i.e. that the possessor is more semantically or information structurally prominent than other elements) may also have a syntactic correlate:

The possessor may be in a more prominent position within the phrase headed by the possessed nominal, and this is what enables it to participate in clause-level syntactic processes.

2. The functional prominence of the possessor is an interaction between honorificity and focus.

2. Maithili

2.1 Background on Maithili

Maithili is spoken by around 35 million people, of which approximately 2.8 million live in Nepal (about 12% of the total population of Nepal), and the rest live in India.

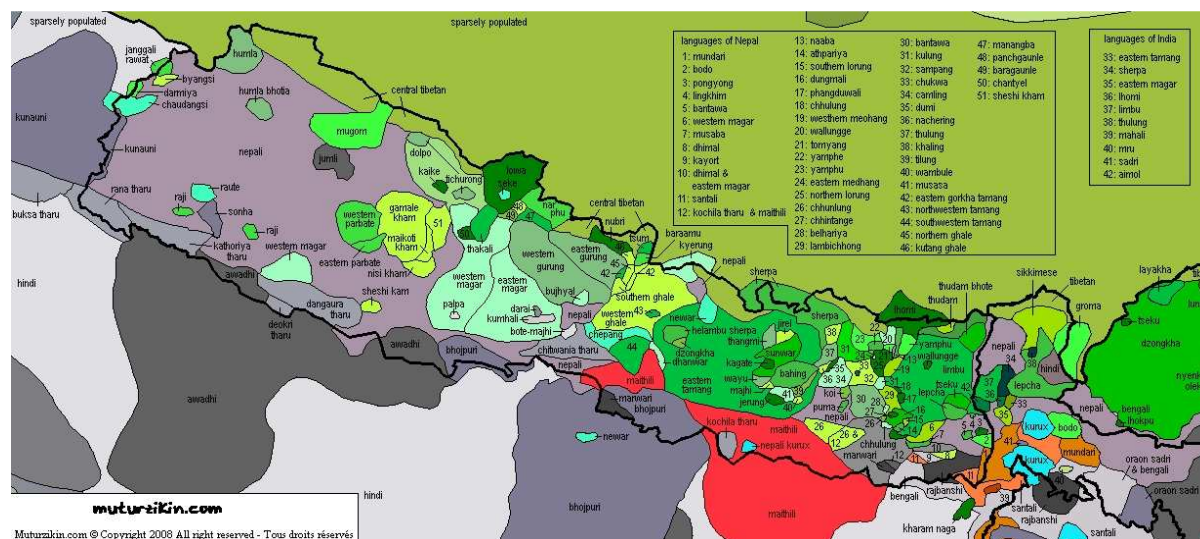


Figure 1. Languages of Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and northern India. Maithili-speaking area highlighted in red.

It has official status in both countries and is the second most widely spoken language in Nepal.

There are several dialects. The one we will be discussing today is the 'literary' variety used in formal social contexts and in writing.

Some of our examples also come from a different variety spoken in the village of Ramgopalpur near Jannapur in southeast Nepal.

Maithili morphosyntax is typical of Indo-Aryan languages; it exhibits SOV word order and both case marking on nominals and agreement on verbs.

It has a system of honorificity involving four levels in the second person and two in the third person.

2.2 Case marking

Nominals and pronominals are distinguished for nominative, accusative/dative and genitive case. The pronominal system is shown in Table 1.

	Nominative	Accusative/Dative	Genitive
1	həm	həmra	həmar
2NH	tu tũ	tora	tohər
2MH	tõ		
2H	hã	hãk	hãk
2HH	pne	pnek	pnek
3NH.DISTAL	u	okra	okar
3NH.PROXIMAL	i		
3H	o	hunka	hunkar

Table 1. Pronominal case forms.

There is some collapse of the distinction between the accusative/dative forms and the genitive forms.

For example, it is possible to find accusative/dative pronouns functioning as possessors, as in (2a) and both accusative/dative and genitive pronouns are found as objects of postpositions, as in (2b):

- (2) a. həm tohər / tora nokər-ke pita-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN you.NH.ACC servant-ACC hit-PST-1.2NH
 'I hit your servant.'
- b. həm tohər / tora sange kana pakui-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN you.NH.ACC with food cook-PST-1.2NH
 'I cooked with you.'

Apart from this overlap, case marking is generally a useful indicator of the grammatical functions which nominals bear in the clause.

2.3 Verbal agreement

There are three major paradigms of verbal agreement: the nominative intransitive paradigm, the non-nominative intransitive paradigm and the cross-reference paradigm.

Major features of nominals referenced by the paradigm are person and honorific grade (with one case of gender in the nominative intransitive paradigm). Number is not indicated.

Nominative intransitive agreement is typically controlled by the sole argument of an intransitive verb. The paradigm is shown in Table 2:

Subject	
1	-ãunh
2NH	-æ
2MH	-ᵛh
2H	-ãunh
2HH	-∅ ge-l-ei -∅ ge-l-ãunh -ãunh
3NH	-∅ -ᵛi -ᵛkh -kᵛi
3H.M	-eth -ᵛith -ah -khinh
3H.F	-ih -ah -khinh

Table 2. Nominative intransitive paradigm.

Non-nominative intransitive agreement is controlled by non-nominative elements on intransitive verbs.

For example, dative subjects and possessors internal to possessive phrases which function as the subject of intransitives (we will return to this second type later).

The paradigm is given in Table 3:

Subject	
1	-∅
2NH	-au
2MH	-ᵛh
2H	-∅
2HH	-∅ -ᵛi
3NH	-∅ -ᵛi
3H	-ᵛin(h)

Table 3. Non-nominative intransitive paradigm.

Examples of nominative and dative subjects with intransitive verbs are shown in (3):

- (3) a. tu æ-l-æ
 you.NH come-PST-2NH
 'You (NH) came.'
- b. tora bukh lagh-l-au
 you.NH.ACC hungry feel-PST-2NH
 'you (NH) were hungry.'

The cross-reference paradigm consists of verbal agreement suffixes which cross-reference two referents in the clause: the 'primary' and 'secondary' referents.

The primary referent is nearly always (but does not necessarily have to be) the subject.

The secondary referent is the second most prominent referent in the clause. The cross-reference paradigm is shown in Table 4:

Primary	Secondary						
	1	2NH	2MH	2H	2HH	3NH	3H
1		-iau	-iɔ̃h	-õ	-ienh	-ie(kh)	-ienh
2NH	-e(hi) -ahi					-e(hi) -ahi	-ahinh -ahunh
2MH	-ah					-ah	
2H	-õ					-ie(kh)	
2HH	-ie(kh)					-ienh	
3NH	-ɔ̃kh -(a)khɔ̃i					-ɔ̃kh -(a)khɔ̃i -kho	-ka
3H	-eth -ein -kinh	-kahunh		-eth -kahunh	-eth -kinh		

Table 4. Cross-reference paradigm.

There are some examples of syncretism in the paradigm, for example -õ indicates both 1>2H and 2H>1 combinations. There is further overlap across the three paradigms. Identical suffixes in different paradigms are indicated in Table 5:

	Intr. nom. subj.	Intr. non-nom. subj.	Primary
1	-õ		-õ (1>2H)
2NH	-e		-e (2NH>1,3NH)
2MH	-h	-h	
2H	-õ		-õ (2H>1)
2HH	-õ		
3NH	-∅ -i	-∅ -i	
3H	-eth -kinh		-eth -kinh

Table 5. Identical suffixes in different paradigms.

3. Primary and secondary agreement

Primary agreement is nearly always with the subject, while secondary agreement can be with a number of potential controllers, including objects but also obliques and, crucially for our purposes, possessors internal to a number of terms and non-terms.

Secondary agreement is possible with single objects of monotransitive verbs, patient-like and non-patient-like of ditransitives, and possessors internal to all of these:

- (4) a. h̄m tora pita-l-iau
I you.NH.ACC hit-PST-1>2NH
'I hit you.' (single object of monotransitive verb)
- b. h̄m toh̄r nok̄r-ke pita-l-iau
I you.NH.GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-1>2NH
'I hit your servant.' (possessor internal to object)
- c. h̄m tora b̄cha de-l-ie / de-l-iau
I you.NH.ACC baby give-PST-1>3NH give-PST-1>2NH
'I gave you the baby.' (direct or indirect object of ditransitive verb)
- d. h̄m toh̄r guruji-ke b̄cha de-l-iau
I you.NH.GEN teacher-ACC baby give-PST-1>2NH
'I gave the baby to your teacher.' (possessor internal to indirect object)
- e. h̄m toh̄r b̄cha guruji-ke de-l-iau
I you.NH.GEN baby teacher-ACC give-PST-1>2NH
'I gave your baby to the teacher.' (possessor internal to direct object)

Secondary agreement is also possible with oblique arguments, and with possessors internal to obliques:

- (5) a. hɨm tohɨr sange khana pakau-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN with food cook-PST-1>2NH
 'I cooked with you.' (oblique)
- b. hɨm tohɨr guruji-ke sange khana pakau-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN teacher-ACC with food cook-PST-1>2NH
 'I cooked with your teacher.' (possessor internal to oblique)
- (6) a. hɨm tora sã kɨlɨm chhin-l-iau
 I you.NH.ACC from pen take-PST-1>2NH
 'I took the pen from you.' (oblique)
- b. hɨm tohɨr guruji sã kɨlɨm chhin-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN teacher from pen take-PST-1>2NH
 'I took the pen from your teacher.' (possessor internal to oblique)

Agreement is also possible with possessors internal to subjects of intransitives. In such cases, the possessor triggers non-nominative agreement on the verb (Table 3), rather than nominative agreement (Table 2):

- (7) a. tohɨr nokɨr ɨel-ɨi
 you.NH.GEN servant come-PST-3NH
 'Your (NH) servant came.' (nominative agreement with 3NH possessum)
- b. tohɨr nokɨr ɨel-au
 you.NH.GEN servant come-PST-2NH
 'Your (NH) servant came.' (non-nominative agreement with 2NH possessor)

Possessors internal to subjects of transitive verbs can also control secondary agreement. In such cases, primary agreement is typically controlled by the possessed noun.

This means both elements of the possessive subject are referenced by cross-reference agreement, as in (8b).

It does not appear to be possible for possessors internal to subjects of transitives to control primary agreement and have the object control secondary agreement as shown in (8c):

- (8) a. tohṛ bhai hṁra pita-l-khṁi
 you.NH.GEN brother me hit-PST-3NH>1
 ‘Your brother hit me.’ (possessed noun and object cross-referenced)
- b. tohṛ bhai hṁra pita-l-kho
 you.NH.GEN brother me hit-PST-3NH>2NH
 ‘Your brother hit me.’ (possessed noun and possessor cross-referenced)
- c. *tohṛ bhai hṁra pit-l-ahi
 you.NH.GEN brother me hit-PST-2NH>1
 (‘Your brother hit me.’) (possessor and object cross-referenced)

In constructions with ‘stacked’ possessors (i.e. possessors of possessed nouns and possessors of possessors of possessed nouns), either of the two possessors can control secondary agreement:

- (9) ham tohṛ sikshak-ak nokṛ-ke pita-l-ie / pita-l-ienh / pita-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN teacher-GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-1>3NH hit-PST-1>3H hit-PST-1>2NH
 ‘I hit your teacher’s servant.’

4. Are controllers of secondary agreement arguments?

Typically, control of verbal agreement is a characteristic which distinguishes terms from non-terms.

The data from Maithili therefore beg the question: do controllers of secondary agreement, including internal possessors, actually function as arguments, or do they retain their non-argument status?

There are several kinds of evidence which can be used to show that controllers of secondary agreement retain their non-argument status. These include topicalization, focusing, fronting, clefting, coordination, and right dislocation. We have tested this with the other variety.

One clear test is passivization. Despite being able to control secondary agreement, indirect objects, obliques and internal possessors cannot function as subjects of passive verbs.

Passivization of the patient-like object possible, but passivisation of non-patient-like object is not possible:

Passivization of a single object:

- (10) hamra dwara tu pital ge-l-æ
I.ACC by you.NH hit-PST.PTCP AUX-PST-2NH
'You were hit by me.'

Passivization of direct objects:

- (11) a. h̄m Mohan-ke b̄cha de-l-ie
I Mohan-ACC baby give-PST-1>3NH
'I gave the baby to Mohan.' (active)
- b. h̄mra dwara b̄cha Mohan-ke del ge-l
me by baby Mohan-ACC give.PTCP AUX-PST.3NH
'The baby was given to Mohan by me.' (direct object is promoted to subject)
- c. *H̄mra dwara Mohan b̄cha del ge-l
me by Mohan baby give.PTCP AUX-PST.3NH
- *H̄mra dwara b̄cha-ke Mohan del gel
*H̄mra dwara Mohan b̄chake del gel
*H̄mra dwara b̄cha Mohan del gel
(('Mohan was given the baby by me') (indirect object cannot be subject))

In a similar way, it is not possible to passivize obliques:

- (12) a. h̄m tora sange raha-l-ãunh
I you.NH.ACC with live-PST-1
'I lived with you.'
- b. h̄m tora sange raha-l-iau
I you.NH.ACC with live-PST-1>2NH
'I lived with you.'
- c. *h̄mra dwara tu rahal ge-l-ehi sange
me by you.NH live.PTCP AUX-PST-2H>1 with
- *h̄mra dwara tu sange rahal gelehi
*h̄mra dwara tora sange rahal gelehi
(('You were lived with by me.'))

It is possible for a possessive phrase to function as the subject of a passive verb as in (13a), and for the possessor internal to the passive subject to control non-nominative intransitive agreement on the verb, as in (13b):

- (13) a. tohṛ nokṛ dwara hṁmra pital ge-l
 you.NH.GEN servant by me hit.PTCP AUX-PST.3NH
 ‘Your servant was hit by me.’ (intransitive agreement with possessed noun)
- b. tohṛ nokṛ dwara hṁmra pital ge-l-au
 you.NH.GEN servant by me hit.PTCP AUX-PST-2NH
 ‘Your servant was hit by me.’ (non-nominative agreement with possessor)

However, it is not possible for the possessor to stand in the nominative case, as in (14a) and (14b), or to stand in the genitive but be separated from the possessed noun, as in (14c):

- (14) a. *tu nokṛ dwara hṁmra pital ge-l-au
 you.NH servant by me hit.PTCP AUX-PST-2NH
- b. *tu dwara hṁmra nokṛ pital ge-l-au
 you.NH by me servant hit.PTCP AUX-PST-2NH
- c. *tohṛ dwara hṁmra nokṛ pital ge-l-au
 you.NH.GEN by me servant hit.PTCP AUX-PST-2NH
 (‘Your servant was hit by me.’)

These examples show that patient-like objects of ditransitive verbs, obliques and possessors in Maithili retain their non-argument status despite being able to control secondary agreement on the verb.

5. Interim proposal

Internal possessors do not gain argument status when they control secondary agreement.

Therefore, it must be stated that in Maithili, agreement controllers do not correspond one-to-one with grammatical functions, as they do in many other languages.

Instead, predicate-‘argument’ agreement is conditioned by something else.

The argument we will put forward is that it is conditioned by the relative prominence of the potential controllers, such that the most prominent one will control secondary agreement.

The key question: what kind of prominence do internal possessors exhibit?

5.1 Types of prominence

There are actually two major types of prominence:

Formal/structural prominence is an asymmetry between elements such that the most prominent one has some morphosyntactic property that the others lack (Vogel 2015).

Functional prominence is understood here partly as a function of the semantic features of referents, e.g. affectedness, animacy and definiteness, and partly as a function of their information structure roles, in particular topic and focus (Aissen 1999; 2003).

So far, analyses of Maithili have claimed that it is the **functional** prominence of internal possessors which enables them to control secondary agreement:

- Stump and Yadav (1988): topicality (information structure)
- Bickel, Bisang and Yadava (1999): face versus empathy (pragmatics)
- Comrie (2003); Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2005): secondary topic (information structure)
- Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011): contrast (information structure)

The first part of our proposal is that, alongside functional prominence, formal prominence of the internal possessor may in fact play a role in enabling internal possessors to control secondary agreement.

The second part is that the functional motivation for possessor agreement is to index a combination of honorificity and focus. We think topicality is probably not correct. Bickel, Bisang & Yadava (1999) are right about honorificity but we also need to take into account focus which is probably the primary determinant of secondary agreement.

Taking the two parts of the analysis together, it can be stated that formal prominence reflects (or is the syntactic reflex of) functional prominence.

5.2 Formal prominence of PIPs

Internal possessors in Maithili can also combine with determiners. For example, the demonstrative *i* ‘this’ is compatible with possessors:

- (15) a. *i tohṛ nokṛ ʔe-l-ʔi*
this you.NH.GEN servant come-PST-3NH
‘This servant of yours came.’
- b. *tohṛ i nokṛ ʔe-l-au*
you.NH.GEN this servant come-PST-2NH
‘This servant of yours came.’

The determiner can either precede the possessor, as (15a), or follow it, as in (15b). Note however, the difference in agreement on the verbs in (15).

When the determiner precedes the possessor, the possessed noun controls agreement. When the possessor precedes the determiner, it controls agreement.

In fact, the reverse of (15) in which the determiner precedes the possessor but the possessor controls agreement and vice versa, is pragmatically infelicitous.

- (16) a. *#i tohṛ nokṛ ʔe-l-au*
this you.NH.GEN servant come-PST-2NH
‘This servant of yours came.’
- b. *#tohṛ i nokṛ ʔe-l-ʔi*
you.NH.GEN this servant come-PST-3NH
‘This servant of yours came.’

This is because the sentences in (15) have different readings: when the possessor precedes the determiner and controls agreement, it is in focus, while when the determiner precedes the possessor and the possessed noun controls agreement, the determiner is in focus:

- (15') a. *i tohṛ nokṛ ʔe-l-ʔi*
this you.NH.GEN servant come-PST-3NH
‘This servant of yours came.’ [implied: not another servant]
- b. *tohṛ i nokṛ ʔe-l-au*
you.NH.GEN this servant come-PST-2NH
‘This servant of yours came.’ [implied: not someone else’s servant]

The same readings can be found with possessive phrases featuring determiners which bear other grammatical functions:

Subjects of transitive verbs:

(17) a. i tohṛ bṛcha hṛmra pit-l-ṛkh
 this you.NH.GEN baby me hit-PST-3NH>1

b. #tohṛ i bṛcha hṛmra pit-l-ṛkh
 you.NH.GEN this baby me hit-PST-3NH>1
 ‘This child of yours hit me.’

(18) a. tohṛ i bṛcha hṛmra pita-l-kho
 you.NH.GEN this baby me hit-PST-3NH>2NH

b. #i tohṛ bṛcha hṛmra pita-l-kho
 this you.NH.GEN baby me hit-PST-3NH>2NH
 ‘This child of yours hit me.’

Objects of transitive verbs:

(19) a. hṛm e tohṛ nokṛr-ke pita-l-iekh
 I this you.NH.GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-1>3NH

b. #hṛm tohṛ e nokṛr-ke pita-l-iekh
 I you.NH.GEN this servant-ACC hit-PST-1>3NH
 ‘I hit this servant of yours.’

(20) a. hṛm tohṛ e nokṛr-ke pita-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN this servant-ACC hit-PST-1>2NH

b. #hṛm e tohṛ nokṛr-ke pita-l-iau
 I this you.NH.GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-1>2NH
 ‘I hit this servant of yours.’

What these examples show is that functional prominence (in this case focus) seems to have a structural correlate.

When the possessor is focussed, there is a preference for it to precede the determiner.

This indicates that PIPs in Maithili may be associated with a more structurally prominent position in the NP, possibly some kind of functional phrase like a ‘focus phrase’ (FocP) or the specifier position of the DP headed by the possessed noun (Spec DP).

5.3 Functional prominence of PIPs: honorificity and focus

Previous studies have mostly argued that secondary agreement in Maithili is used to mark topical possessors.

In these analyses, the most topical potential agreement controller (after the subject) will control the secondary agreement

We have some preliminary evidence to suggest that in fact secondary agreement is used to index two different features of possessors, one semantic and one information structural.

The semantic feature referenced by secondary agreement is the honorific grade of the possessor, or more specifically ‘face versus empathy’, as noted by Bickel, Bisang and Yadava (1999).

Potential controllers which are higher in honorific grade will control secondary agreement, even if they are more ‘lowly’ in their syntactic status.

For example, in a social context in which you are referring to an honoured person’s non-honorific possessions, and that person is present in the situation, it is infelicitous for the verb to show agreement with their non-honorific possession over them.

This is despite the fact that the honorific referent is an internal possessor and the non-honorific possessed noun is the head of the object NP:

- (21) tu hunak nok²r-ke pit-l-ahunh / #pit-l-ahi
 you he.H.GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-2NH>3H hit-PST-2NH>3NH
 ‘You (NH) hit his (H) servant.’ (Honorific possessor is present in the situation)

It is only felicitous to use the variant in which the possessed noun controls secondary agreement if the honorific possessor is absent from the situation:

- (22) tu hunak nok᳚r-ke pit-l-ahunh / pit-l-ahi
 you he.H.GEN servant-ACC hit-PST-2NH>3H hit-PST-2NH>3NH
 ‘You (NH) hit his (H) servant.’ (Honorific possessor is absent in the situation)

This kind of judgement indicates that the need to respect honoured people is one of the factors motivating the choice between potential agreement controllers.

Agreement with honorific referents can also be ‘overridden’, however, if another potential referent is focussed.

If a non-honorific possessor is focussed, it is possible (although not obligatory) it to ‘take over’ control of secondary agreement, even if the possessed noun is higher in honorific grade:

- (23) a. tu k᳚k᳚r sikshak-ke pit-l-ahunh
 you who.GEN teacher hit-PST-2NH>3H
 ‘Whose teacher (H) did you hit?’
- b. h᳚m toh᳚r sikshak-ke pit-l-iau
 I you.NH.GEN teacher hit-PST-1>2NH
 ‘I hit your (NH) teacher (H).’ (teacher is absent, and the possessor is in focus)

What these data indicate is that while honorificity can still outrank a focussed element, it is possible for focus to override honorificity, enabling non-honorific possessors to control secondary agreement over honorific possessed nouns.

6. Summary

We have shown that Maithili verbal agreement is conditioned by two major semantic/IS factors: honorificity and focus.

We have also provided some initial evidence to show that functionally prominent possessors may also be associated with a prominent structural position with the possessive NP.

7. Further questions

If we propose a prominent position in the possessive NP for PIPs, how do we model this situation in an explicit syntactic framework like LFG?

How do you formalise the argument that possessors in lower structural positions cannot control agreement on the verb, while these higher possessors can?

References

- Aissen, Judith L. 1999. "External Possessor and Logical Subject in Tz'utujil." In *External Possession*, edited by Doris L. Payne and Immanuel Barshi, 167–93. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Aissen, Judith L. 2003. "Differential Object Marking: Iconicity vs. Economy." *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 21 (3): 435–83.
- Bickel, Balthasar, Walter Bisang, and Yogendra P. Yadava. 1999. "Face vs. Empathy: The Social Foundation of Maithili Verb Agreement." *Linguistics* 37 (3): 481–518.
- Comrie, Bernard. 2003. "When Agreement Gets Trigger Happy." *Transactions of the Philological Society* 101 (2): 313–37.
- Dalrymple, Mary, and Irina Nikolaeva. 2005. "Nonsubject Agreement and Discourse Roles." In *Oxford Working Papers in Linguistics, Philology, and Phonetics*, 73–94. University of Oxford: Centre for Linguistics and Philology.
- Dalrymple, Mary, and Irina Nikolaeva. 2011. *Objects and Information Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stump, Gregory T., and Ramawatar Yadav. 1988. "Maithili Verb Agreement and the Control Agreement Principle." In *Papers from the 24th Annual Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Part Two: Parasession on Agreement in Grammatical Theory*, edited by Diane Brentari, Gary Larson, and Lynn MacLeod, 304–21. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Vogel, Ralf. 2015. "Is prominence a useful concept for the theory of syntax?" *Lingue e Linguaggio* 14 (1): 97–112.