

Portmanteau Honorificity Agreement in Maithili

PREETI KUMARI¹, *Indian Institute of Technology Delhi*

ABSTRACT

The Darbhanga dialect of Maithili shows multiple agreement that results in a portmanteau morpheme. However, multiple agreement is also restricted by two factors –1st person and 3rd person non-honorific objects fail to trigger agreement on the verb. Object agreement is also not allowed in the presence of allocutive agreement. This paper accounts for these facts by proposing that honorificity agreement is a result of the operator-variable binding by the context (c) head in the left periphery. Honorificity licensing also interacts with honorificity-based differential object agreement. Additionally, the c head can encode the honorificity values of only two elements at any given point in time.

Keywords: Maithili, Portmanteau Agreement, Honorificity Agreement, Allocutive Agreement, cP Layer

1 Introduction

Maithili is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language that triggers person and honorificity agreement on the verb. This paper looks at the phenomenon of honorificity agreement in one of the dialects of Maithili, spoken in the Darbhanga district of Bihar, India, henceforth Maithili. In this dialect, honorificity agreement is encoded only in the 2nd and 3rd person paradigm, but not in the 1st person. The language also has ‘multiple agreement’ where the object triggers agreement along with the subject, realized in the form of a portmanteau morpheme. Additionally, the phenomenon of allocutive agreement is also encoded in the language, i.e., the honorificity value of the silent speech addressee is reflected on the verb. Allocutive agreement always co-occurs with the subject agreement, thus resulting in another instance of multiple agreement which involves an argument and a non-argument of the sentence. The subject and allocutive agreement are also encoded in the form of a portmanteau morpheme. However, multiple agreement in Maithili has two important restrictions- first, 1st person and 3rd person non-honorific objects fail to trigger agreement, and second, object agreement fails to take place in the presence of allocutive agreement. Thus, at any given time, only two kinds of agreement can co-occur- either subject and (2nd/3rd person honorific) object or subject and allocutive agreement.

These agreement patterns make two crucial contributions to the existing syntactic literature on portmanteau morphology. First, Maithili adds to the empirical landscape which shows that portmanteau agreement can include non-local arguments, i.e, the 3rd person arguments, contrary to the prominent view in the literature which claims that portmanteau agreement is mostly limited to local or 1st and 2nd person arguments (Georgi 2012, 2013 a.o.). Second, portmanteau morphology may also include non-arguments, as shown by the multiple agreement triggered by the subject and the addressee of the sentence. In order to explain these agreement facts in Maithili, I adopt the account of honorificity licensing proposed in Portner, Pak and Zanuttini (2019). According to their proposal, the left periphery has a ‘c(ontext) Phrase/cP’ which encodes the politeness relationship between the speaker and the addressee, hosted in Spec, c, in the form of the ‘status’ feature. Following Baker (2008) and Kratzer (2009), Portner et al. assume that these operators bind the 1st and 2nd person DPs in the clause, which licenses them. Due to this licensing, the status feature gets transferred to the bound DPs. I also follow Chandra, Kumari and Pak (2021) who extend this licensing mechanism to the 3rd person and include a 3rd person operator in the left periphery, in addition to the speaker and addressee, as shown in (1).



¹ kumaripreeti.2293@gmail.com

I assume that all kinds of verbal agreement in Maithili realizes directly on the *c* head, instead of getting transferred to the lower heads, such as *T*, due to feature transmission. This assumption finds its ground in accounts such as Chomsky (2008) that propose that the *c* head (*C* in Chomsky) is the locus of all features. Under this assumption, the person and honorificity status of the subject is realized on the *c* head in the form of the status feature. For multiple agreement involving the object, I propose, following Georgi (2012, 2013), that the *c* head hosts two status features, such that one of those realizes the person and honorificity value of the object or the utterance addressee while the other one realizes the subject. This explains the resultant portmanteau morphology of multiple agreement in Maithili. As for the restriction on object agreement, I propose that an honorificity based differential object agreement is at play in Maithili. When we come to the restriction posed by allocutivity on object agreement, it is also explainable under the proposal that the *c* head has only two status features. In all sentences, the *c* head realizes the addressee and the subject first, leaving no space for the object. Since allocutive agreement is optional in Maithili, it may not get realized on the verb and only in those instances, does object agreement take place. This explains the complementary distribution between object and allocutive agreement.

The layout of the paper is the following: in section 2 I present the agreement facts of Maithili and the restrictions on object agreement. Section 3 elaborates on the account of honorificity agreement followed in this paper. Section 4 presents my proposal capturing Maithili agreement facts. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 Maithili Agreement Pattern

In this section, I present the facts of Maithili agreement and show three crucial things. First, I make a novel empirical observation about the multiple agreement system in Maithili by showing that only honorific objects trigger simultaneous agreement with (non-)honorific subjects². Second, I show that multiple agreement in Maithili involves not only the arguments of a sentence but also the non-argument, such as the utterance addressee. Finally, I make another novel empirical contribution by showing that object agreement and allocutive agreement exist in complementary distribution in the language.

2.1 Subject Agreement in Maithili

Maithili DPs have inflectional person and honorificity features, and no number or gender³ features. The 1st person subjects only trigger person agreement on the verb as there is no honorificity contrast in the 1st person.

- (2) həm sut-əl-iəi
 I sleep-PRF-1
 ‘I slept’

The 2nd person pronouns trigger person and honorificity agreement on the verb. There are four degrees of honorificity in the 2nd person: high-honorific (HH), honorific (H), mid-honorific (MH), and non-honorific (NH), as shown in (3a-d).

- (3) a. əpne⁴ sut-n-əũh
 You (2HH) sleep-PRF-2(H)
 ‘You slept’

² It is well known in the literature that most (if not all) dialects of Maithili have multiple agreement which involves both subject and object agreement (see Yadav 1996, Stump and Yadav 1998, Bickel et al. 1999). Apart from the fact that I present data from the dialect spoken in Darbhanga, while these works are concerned with the dialects of Maithili spoken in Nepal, the novel empirical observation here is the inability of the 1p and 3p non-honorific objects to trigger agreement (see Yadav et al. 2019 for multiple agreement restrictions for the Siraha dialect spoken in Nepal).

³ Some varieties of Maithili, such as those spoken in the Madhubani district, parts of Darbhanga district, and some varieties of Maithili spoken in Nepal have a restricted presence of the inflectional (natural) gender feature only in the 3rd person context (see Yadav 1996).

⁴ The 2nd person HH pronoun *əpne* is used in extremely formal contexts, such as with in-laws or people of high social status. In declaratives, this pronominal form triggers the same agreement as the 2nd person H pronoun *əhã*. Therefore, in the gloss, there is a mismatch between the honorificity value on the noun (HH) and honorificity value on the verb

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|----|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| b. | əhã You (2H) 'You slept' | sut-n-əũh sleep-PRF-2(H) |
| c. | tõ You (MH) 'You slept' | sut-əl-əh sleep-PRF-2(MH) |
| d. | tõ You (NH) 'You slept' | sut-əl-æ sleep-PRF-2(NH) |

The 3rd person pronouns also trigger person and honorificity agreement (4). The 3rd person paradigm has two levels of honorificity- honorific (H) and non-honorific (NH).

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|-----|----|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (4) | a. | o (S)he (H) '(S)he slept.' | sut-əl-khinh sleep-PRF-3(H) |
| | b. | o (S)he (NH) '(S)he slept' | sut-əl-əi sleep-PRF-3(NH) |

2.2 Multiple Argument Agreement

This section shows that Maithili has multiple agreement, which allows the object, in addition to the subject, to trigger person and honorificity agreement on the verb. However, object agreement is not allowed in the 1st person, and it is restricted in the 3rd person as only honorific 3rd person objects trigger agreement. There is no such restriction on 2nd person objects. I illustrate these patterns in the following sub-sections: Section 2.2.1. shows agreement pattern when the subject is 1st person and object is 2nd and 3rd person. Section 2.2.2 shows agreement triggered by 2nd person subjects and 1st and 3rd person objects. Finally, section 2.2.3 shows agreement triggered by 3rd person subjects and 1st and 2nd person objects.

2.2.1 1st Person Subjects and 2nd/3rd Person Objects

Let's first take a look at the agreement pattern when the subject is 1st person, and the object is 2nd person. Sentences (5a-c) show 1st person subject and 2nd person H, MH, and NH objects, respectively.

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|-----|----|--|--------------------------------|
| (5) | a. | həm ahã-ke I you (H)-ACC 'I saw you (H).' | dekh-n-əũh see-PRF-1+2(H) |
| | b. | həm to-ra I you (MH)-ACC 'I saw you (MH).' | dekh-əl-iəh see-PRF-1+2(MH) |

(H). Since *əpne* triggers the agreement otherwise used for 2nd person H pronouns, I do not discuss it further. However, in imperatives, *əpne* triggers a passive-like construction, with an agreement morphology not found in other paradigms (i). Such passive-like use of *əpne* follows the general trend in most Indo-Aryan languages where passives are considered more formal than active sentences (Subbarao et al. 1991). I leave this special use of *əpne* for future research.

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (i) | əpne sut-əl ja-e You (2HH) sleep-PRF go-IMP.2(HH) 'Please sleep' |
|-----|--|

- c. həm to-ra dekh-əl-**iəu**
 I you (NH)-ACC see-PRF-1+2(NH)
 ‘I saw you (NH).’

The agreement morphemes **-əũh**, **-iəh**, **-iəu** are different from the 1st person subject agreement **-iəi**, shown in (2). This shows that in addition to the subject, the 2nd person H, MH and NH objects also trigger clausal agreement which is encoded in the form of a portmanteau morpheme.

Moving on to the agreement triggered by the 1st person subjects and 3rd person objects, we notice a similar portmanteau agreement pattern. Examples (6a-b) show the agreement triggered by the 1st person subject and 3rd person H and NH objects, respectively.

- (6) a. həm hun-ka dekh-əl-**iəinh**
 I (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-1+3(H)
 ‘I saw him/her (H).’
- b. həm ok-ra dekh-əl-**iəi**
 I (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-1
 ‘I saw him/her (NH).’

(6a) shows that the agreement marker **-iəinh** is different from the agreement triggered by the 1st person subject, **-iəi**, shown in (2). However, (6b) shows no difference as the agreement triggered by the combination of the 1st person subject and the 3rd person NH object is the same as the agreement triggered by the 1st person subject. Based on this, I conclude that the 3rd person NH object does not trigger any agreement on the verb, as opposed to the 2nd person NH object, which does.

2.2.2 2nd Person Subject and 1st/3rd Person Object

Let’s now look at agreement triggered by the 2nd person subject and the 1st person object. Sentences (7a-c) show the agreement pattern when the subject is 2nd person H, MH and NH, respectively, and the object is 1st person.

- (7) a. əhã həm -ra dekh-n-**əũh**
 You (H) I-ACC see-PRF-2(H)
 ‘You (H) saw me.’
- b. tō həm -ra dekh-əl-**əh**
 You (MH) I-ACC see-PRF-2(MH)
 ‘You (MH) saw me.’
- c. tō həm -ra dekh-əl-**ə**
 You (NH) I-ACC see-PRF-2(NH)
 ‘You (NH) saw me.’

The interesting thing to note in (7) is that the agreement morphemes **-əũh**, **-əh**, **-ə**, triggered in the presence of the 1st person object, are the same agreement morphemes that 2nd person subjects trigger on intransitive verbs, as shown in (3) in section 2.1. Therefore, we can say that the 1st person objects also don’t trigger any agreement on the verb.

The next combination that we look at is the agreement triggered by the 2nd person subject and the 3rd person object. Sentences (8a-b) show the agreement pattern when the subject is 2nd person H and the object is 3rd person H and NH, respectively.

- (8) a. əhã hun-ka dekh-əl-**iəinh**
 You (H) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-2(H)+3(H)
 ‘You (H) saw him/her (H).’
- b. əhã ok-ra dekh-n-**əũh**
 You (H) (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-2(H)
 ‘You (H) saw him/her (H).’

In (8a), both the 2nd person H subject and the 3rd person H object trigger agreement on the verb. This is evident in the morpheme *-iəinh*, which is different from *-əüh*, triggered by the 2nd person H subject on intransitive verbs, shown in (3b). However, (8b) shows no difference from single agreement triggered by the 2nd person H subject, thus it further shows that 3rd person NH object does not trigger agreement.

We now turn to agreement triggered by 2nd person MH subject and 3rd person H and NH object, shown in (9a-b), respectively.

- (9) a. tō hun-ka dekh-əl-ə**h**unh
 You (MH) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-2(MH)+3(H)
 ‘You (MH) saw him/her (H).’
- b. tō ok-ra dekh-əl-ə**h**
 You (MH) (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-2(MH)
 ‘You (MH) saw him/her (NH).’

In (9a), the agreement morpheme *-əh*unh captures the MH status of the subject as well as the H status of the object, as the morpheme *-əh*unh is distinct from the 2nd person MH subject agreement *-əh*, shown in (3c). (9b) on the other hand shows that the agreement triggered by the 2nd person MH subject and the 3rd person NH object is captured by the morpheme *-əh*, which is the same as (3c). Thus, we find further evidence that 3rd person NH objects trigger no agreement.

Next, let's look at the agreement triggered by the 2nd person NH subject and the 3rd person H and NH objects, shown in (10a-b), respectively.

- (10) a. tō hun-ka dekh-əl-ə**h**unh
 You (NH) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-2(NH)+3 (H)
 ‘You (NH) saw him/her (H).’
- b. tō ok-ra dekh-əl-ə
 You (NH) (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-2(NH)
 ‘You (NH) saw him/her (NH).’

The agreement morpheme *-əh*unh in (10a) is similar to the agreement triggered by the 2nd person MH subject and the 3rd person H object in (9a). The 3rd person H object is common in both these sentences; however, the subject is 2nd person MH in (9a) and 2nd person NH in (10a). Yet, the agreement morpheme is similar. I take this to be a case of syncretism between 2nd person MH and 2nd person NH subjects, which is further supported by the fact that the pronominal forms are also syncretic. However, one may also notice that the 2nd person MH and NH subjects do not trigger syncretic agreement on intransitive verbs, shown in (3). I leave this issue of syncretism between 2nd person MH and NH in multiple agreement constructions outside of this paper and do not pursue it further. What is indeed confirmed from both (9a) and (10a) is that a 3rd person H object does take part in the verbal agreement. On the other hand, the 3rd person NH object fails to trigger any agreement on the verb, as the agreement triggered by (10b) is similar to the agreement triggered by the 2nd person NH object on an intransitive verb, as shown in (3c).

2.2.3 3rd Person Subject and 1st/2nd Person Object

We now come to the agreement paradigm when the subject is 3rd person, and the object is 1st and 2nd person. Examples (11a-b) show the agreement triggered by the 3rd person H and NH subjects, respectively, and the object is 1st person in both cases.

- (11) a. o həm-ra dekh-əl-**kh**inh
 (s)he (H) I (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)
 ‘(S)he (H) saw me (NH).’
- b. o həm-ra dekh-əl-**k**əi
 (s)he (NH) I (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)
 ‘(S)he (NH) saw me (NH).’

The agreement morphemes *-khinh* and *-kai* in (11a-b) are the same as the agreement triggered by the 3rd person H and NH subjects on an intransitive verb, shown in (4a-b) in section 2.1. This further shows that the 1st person objects fail to trigger agreement here as well.

Let's now look at the combination of 3rd person H subject and 2nd person H, MH and NH objects (12a-c).

- (12) a. o ahā-ke dekh-əl-**əinh**
 (s)he (H) you (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+2(H)
 '(S)he (H) saw you (H).'
- b. o to-ra dekh-əl-**əkhunh**
 (s)he (H) you (MH)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+2(MH)
 '(S)he (H) saw you (MH).'
- c. o to-ra dekh-əl-**əkhunh**
 (s)he (H) you (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+2(NH)
 '(S)he (H) saw you (NH).'

What we notice here is that the 2nd person objects trigger agreement on the verb, as the morphemes *-əinh* (12a), and *-əkhunh* (12b-c) are different from the agreement morpheme *-khinh*, triggered by the 3rd person H subjects on intransitive verbs, shown in (4a). This shows that the agreement in (12) is not solely subject agreement but also involves object agreement.

The next combination that we look at is 3rd person NH subject and 2nd person H, MH and NH objects, respectively in (13a-c).

- (13) a. o ahā-ke dekh-əl-**ək**
 (s)he (NH) you (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)+2(H)
 '(S)he (NH) saw you (H).'
- b. o to-ra dekh-əl-**əkəh**
 (s)he (NH) you (MH)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)+2(MH)
 '(S)he (NH) saw you (MH).'
- c. o to-ra dekh-əl-**əkəu**
 (s)he (NH) you (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)+2(NH)
 ''(S)he (NH) saw you (NH).'

Just like what we noticed in (12), both the subjects and the objects trigger agreement in (13) as well. The agreement morphemes *-ək*, *-əkəh*, and *-əkəu* are different from the agreement morpheme *-kai*, triggered by the 3rd person NH subjects on intransitive verbs, shown in (4b). Thus, (13) also confirms that 2nd person objects trigger agreement.

Finally, the last combination that we need to see is 3rd person in both the subject and the object position. I first present the agreement paradigm when the subject is 3rd person H and the object is 3rd person H and NH, respectively in (14a-b).

- (14) a. o hun-ka dekh-əl-**khinh**
 (s)he (H) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+3(H)
 '(S)he (H) saw him/her (H).'
- b. o ok-ra dekh-əl-**khinh**
 (s)he (H) (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+3(NH)
 ''(S)he (H) saw him/her (NH).'

The agreement morpheme in (14a & b) is *-khinh*. This pattern is easily explainable as in (14a), both the subject and the object have the same person and honorificity values, which results in an identical morpheme. (14b) on the other hand, falls from what we have observed so far, i.e., it only involves agreement triggered by the 3rd person H subject while the 3rd person NH object doesn't trigger any agreement.

The last case of multiple agreement that we look at is the 3rd person NH subject and 3rd person H and NH objects, as given in (15).

- (15) a. o hun-ka dekh-əl-**kəinh**
 (s)he (NH) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)+3(H)
 ‘(S)he (NH) saw him/her (H).’
- b. o ok-ra dekh-əl-**kəi**
 (s)he (NH) (s)he (NH)-ACC see-PRF-3(NH)+3(NH)
 ‘(S)he (NH) saw him/her (NH).’

The agreement morpheme *-kəinh* in (15a) is different from the agreement morpheme *-kəi*, triggered by the 3rd person NH subject on intransitive verbs, shown in (4b). Thus, it is evident that 3rd person H objects trigger agreement, but 3rd person NH objects do not.

To summarize, we have seen that Maithili has multiple agreement which encodes all subjects while object agreement is restricted to 2nd person and only 3rd person honorific objects. Therefore, object agreement doesn’t include 1st person or 3rd person NH objects. A crucial empirical generalization that falls out of this agreement pattern is that portmanteau morphology involves non-local, or 3rd person objects. This is an important addition to the typology of portmanteau agreement languages, which mostly includes local, i.e., 1st and 2nd person agreement (Heath 1998, Cysouw 2003, Wunderlich 2006, a.o). We now look at restrictions on object agreement posed by allocutivity.

2.3 Multiple Agreement Constituting Allocutivity

So far, we have seen instances of Maithili multiple agreement that involve the arguments of a sentence, i.e., all subjects and all 2nd person and 3rd person honorific objects. The phenomenon of multiple agreement in the language goes beyond the arguments and involves non-argument such as the utterance addressee. Agreement triggered by the null utterance/speech addressee of a sentence is called allocutive agreement (Oyharçabal 1993 and Miyagawa 2012 a.o). In Maithili, the allocutive agreement encodes the H and NH status of the addressee. Most importantly, allocutive agreement can co-occur with the subject agreement in the language and just like object agreement, it is also encoded in the form of a portmanteau morpheme. However, allocutive agreement is not allowed with object agreement. Let’s take a detailed look at it.

2.3.1 Subject and Allocutive Agreement

The example in (16a), repeated from (2), shows 1st person subject agreement, i.e., when the sentence is not addressed to anyone. Contrast this with (16b & c), which shows the co-occurrence of subject and allocutive agreement, when the sentence is uttered to an H and an NH addressee, respectively. These sentences show that allocutive and subject agreement is encoded in the form of a portmanteau morpheme.

- (16) a. həm sut-əl-**iəi** **(No addressee)**
 I sleep-PRF-1
 ‘I slept’
- b. həm sut-əl-**əūh** **(H addressee)**
 I sleep-PRF-1+ALLOC(H)
 ‘I slept’
- c. həm sut-əl-**iəu** **(NH addressee)**
 I sleep-PRF-1+ALLOC(NH)
 ‘I slept’

Allocutive agreement, however, fails to occur with 2nd person subjects. This complementary distribution between allocutive and 2nd person agreement is natural as both encode the addressee and their co-occurrence is redundant (McFadden 2017 and Baker and Alok 2018). Allocutivity is allowed to co-occur with the 3rd person subjects, as shown for the 3rd person H subjects in (17b-c).

- (17) a. o sut-əl-ə**khinh** (No Addressee)
 (s)he (H) sleep-PRF-3(H)
 ‘(S)he (H) slept’
- b. o sut-əl-ə**inh** (H Addressee)
 (s)he (H) sleep-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(H)
 ‘(S)he (H) slept’
- c. o sut-əl-ə**khun** (NH addressee)
 (s)he (H) sleep-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(NH)
 ‘(S)he (H) slept’

(17a) shows 3rd person H subject agreement when the sentence is not uttered to any addressee. (17b) shows the co-occurrence of the 3rd person subject and the H addressee agreement, encoded by the morpheme *-əinh*. In (17c), the morpheme *-əkhun* encodes the combination of the 3rd person H subject and the NH addressee.

We now come to the co-occurrence of the 3rd person NH subject and allocutive agreement. (18a) shows simple 3rd person NH subject agreement in the absence of the addressee. (18b-c) show the co-occurrence of the 3rd person NH subject and H and NH addressee, respectively.

- (18) a. o sut-əl-ə**i** (No addressee)
 (s)he (NH) sleep-PRF-3(NH)
 ‘(S)he (NH) slept’
- b. o sut-əl-ə**k** (H addressee)
 (s)he (NH) sleep-PRF-3(NH)+ALLOC(H)
 ‘(S)he (NH) slept’
- c. o sut-əl-ə**kəu** (NH addressee)
 (s)he (NH) sleep-PRF-3(NH)+ALLOC(NH)
 ‘(S)he (NH) slept’

2.3.2 Allocutive Agreement as a Restriction on Object Agreement

So far, we have seen single agreement and multiple agreement involving both arguments as well as a non-argument. Both argument and non-argument multiple agreement trigger portmanteau agreement. The question now arises, what happens when the multiple argument agreement meets allocutive agreement? Does the language allow all three, i.e., the subject, the object, and the speech addressee to co-occur? The answer is no, as allocutive agreement blocks object agreement on the verb. To illustrate this restriction, we need to take only those cases of multiple agreement where the 2nd person is not an argument as allocutive and 2nd person cannot coexist. We also cannot take any cases where the 1st or 3rd person NH is an object because neither trigger multiple agreement, as I show in section 2.2. Therefore, the only instance where we can see an interaction of multiple argument agreement with allocutive agreement is when the subject is 1st or 3rd person (H/NH) and the object is 3rd person H. The example in (19) shows the 1st person subject and 3rd person honorific object combination. (19a) shows the sentence without any allocutive agreement and captures the subject and object agreement. (19b-c) show that when the same sentence is spoken to an H and NH addressee, respectively, the agreement morpheme changes.

- (19) a. həm hun-ka dekh-əl-ə**inh** (subj+ obj agreement)
 I (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-1+3(H)
 ‘I saw him/her (H).’
- b. həm hun-ka dekh-əl-ə**ūh** (subj+ H addressee)
 I (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-1+ALLOC(H)
 ‘I saw him/her (H).’

- c. həm hun-ka dekh-əl-iəu **(subj+ NH addressee)**
 I (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-1+ALLOC(NH)
 'I saw him/her (H).'

Contrast (19b-c) with (20a-b), repeated from (16b-c), which shows allocutive agreement with 1st person subjects on intransitive verbs. What we notice is that the agreement morpheme on a transitive verb with 1st person subject and 3rd person H object along with allocutive agreement (19b-c) is the same as the agreement triggered by 1st person subject and allocutive agreement (20a-b). This means that object agreement, shown in (19a), is overruled by allocutive agreement in (19b-c).

- (20) a. həm sut-l-əũh **(H addressee)**
 I sleep-PRF-1S+ALLOC(H)
 'I slept'
- b. həm sut-l-iəu **(NH addressee)**
 I sleep-PRF-1S+ALLOC(NH)
 'I slept'

Similarly, in other cases of interaction between multiple argument agreement and allocutive agreement, such as the one shown in (21a), with the 3rd person H subject and 3rd person H object. We see object agreement getting blocked in (21b-c), when the same sentence encodes H and NH allocutive agreement as the agreement morpheme in (21b-c) is the same as the agreement morpheme on an intransitive verb with 3rd person H subject and H and NH allocutive, as shown in (17b-c), repeated in (22).

- (21) a. o hun-ka dekh-əl-khinh **(No addressee)**
 (s)he (H) (s)he (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+3(H)
 '(S)he (H) saw him/her (H).'
- b. o hun-ka dekh-əl-əinh **(H Addressee)**
 (s)he (H) (s)he(H)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(H)
 '(S)he saw him/her (H)'
- c. o hun-ka dekh-əl-khunh **(NH addressee)**
 (s)he (H) he (H)-ACC see-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(NH)
 '(S)he (H) saw him/her (H).'
- (22) a. o sut-əl-əinh **(H Addressee)**
 (s)he (H) sleep-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(H)
 '(S)he slept'
- b. o sut-əl-əkhun **(NH addressee)**
 (s)he (H) sleep-PRF-3(H)+ALLOC(NH)
 '(S)he slept'

To summarize section 2, we notice the following agreement patterns for Darbhanga Maithili:

- I. Maithili encodes person and honorificity subject agreement.
- II. It also encodes object agreement along with subject, however, only 2nd person and 3rd person H objects trigger agreement. 1st person and 3rd person NH objects do not trigger agreement.
- III. It has allocutive agreement which co-occurs with the subject agreement, but not with object agreement.
- IV. All instances of multiple agreement are encoded in the form of portmanteau morpheme.

I now proceed towards capturing these facts in the syntax.

3 Honorificity Licensing

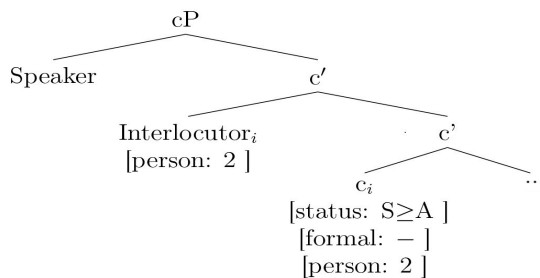
Some of the existing accounts of honorificity agreement such as Boeckx and Niinuma (2004), Bhattacharya (2016), McFadden (2017), Alok and Baker (2019), Alok (2021) a.o. treat it as equivalent to phi-feature agreement. In these accounts, honorificity agreement is a result of ‘Agree’ between an interpretable valued (Hon)orificity feature carrying DP and an uninterpretable unvalued Hon carrying functional head. However, I contend that honorificity cannot be a valued feature on the noun because it is a relational feature, which shows context sensitivity. This means that the values of Hon on a DP are always decided in relation to some other noun and when that relation changes, the values also change. This is quite different from features such as number or gender. Alok (2021), following Portner et al. (2019a), addresses the issue of Hon being a relational feature and suggests that the iHon feature on the noun has a relational semantics. The relational semantics on iHon comes from two arguments- the speaker and the DP that carries the iHon feature. Thus, for instance, when a 3rd person DP enters the derivation with an iHon feature, its values come from the relation between that 3rd person DP and the speaker. While this approach takes care of the relational semantics of the honorificity feature, it can only account for those relations that are formed between a DP and the speaker of the sentence.

Contrary to the predictions of the above predicted account, languages sometimes also allow a relation between the 3rd person DP and the addressee (Helmbrecht, 2004). Maithili happens to be one such language where the Hon value of a 3rd person DP is based on the relation between the 3rd person DP and the addressee, not the speaker (Chandra et al. 2021). For instance, in a context where the mother is talking to her kids (who are non-honorific to her) about their father (who is also non-honorific to her), she uses the honorific 3rd person form instead of the non-honorific form (23). Since the father is honorific to the kids, the mother choses an honorific pronoun based on the relation of the addressee and the 3rd person (the kids and the father) and not the speaker and the 3rd person (the mother and the father).

- (23) papa ac-l-khinh/*əi
 father come-PRF-3(H)/*3(NH)
 ‘(your) father came.’

Therefore, we need an account which can take care of the fact that honorificity is a context-sensitive feature, and its values can be dependent on either the speaker or the addressee. The context-sensitivity of the Hon feature has been dealt with in Portner et al. (2019) who propose a functional layer, context Phrase/cP, in the discourse domain that captures social relations such as politeness. The c head hosts the speaker and the addressee operators in its specifier position and the politeness relation between the two operators is encoded in the form of the ‘status’ feature on the c head. The values of the ‘status’ feature are relational, of the form S(peaker)>A(ddressee) or, S=A or, S<A, depending on the context. The schematic representation of the cP layer in Portner et al. is given in (24)

- (24)



Portner et al. follow Baker (2008) and Kratzer (2009) in opting for long-distance binding of the 1st and 2nd person DPs in the clause by the speaker and addressee operators, respectively. Since the operators are hosted in Spec, c, the features of the c head get transferred to the variable DPs as well as the functional head associated with the DPs. Therefore, honorificity agreement triggered by the 1st/2nd person DPs of a clause is a result of Hon licensing of the DP. As for allocutive agreement, they claim that the features of the speech addressee (interlocutor in their account), are spelled out directly on the c head in the form of the status feature.

While the account presented in Portner et al. takes care of the context-sensitivity in the 1st and 2nd person, it doesn't say anything about honorificity in the 3rd person. This approach follows from the trend in the literature which separates discourse participants, or the speaker and addressee from the non-participant, the 3rd person (Speas and Tenny 2004, Haegeman and Hill 2013, Miyagawa 2012 a.o.). However, in a recent proposal, Chandra et al. (2021) claim that 3rd person honorification is not different from 1st or 2nd person honorification and therefore, it must also be represented in the left-periphery along with the 1st and 2nd person operators.⁵

The first argument that Chandra et al. present in favour of treating 3rd person honorification as equivalent to 1st and 2nd person honorification is based on the methodological minimalist desideratum. Since both 1st/2nd and 3rd person honorification capture the politeness relationship with respect to the speaker and/or addressee, they should be encoded via the same syntactic mechanism. The second argument that advocates the inclusion of the 3rd person honorification in the account of honorificity licensing presented in Portner et al., comes from the fact that person differences between 1st and 2nd on one hand and 3rd on the other, although widely attested, is debatable. For instance, works such as Adger and Harbour (2003), Anagnostopoulou (2005), Nevins (2007) and Ackema and Neeleman (2018) have claimed syntactic similarities between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person DPs in certain contexts. Based on the similarity between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person honorificity, Chandra et al. propose that the 3rd person can also be represented in Spec, cP as an operator, on par with the speaker and the addressee operators. They argue that since the honorification relation of all person values encodes the same kind of social relationship, they should be encoded via the same mechanism in the syntax. The mechanism of licensing of the 3rd person remains the same as the 1st and 2nd person honorification. The 3rd person operator binds the 3rd person DP in the clause and thus assigns values. The revised cP structure, along with the licensing of the 3rd person is given in (25).

(25) $[cP \text{ Speaker Addressee } 3rdP_i \text{ c } [TP \text{ T } [\text{vP } 3pDP_i \text{ v } [\dots]]]]$

Another modification proposed by Chandra et al. is the possibility of having multiple 3rd person operators in Spec, cP. The reason for proposing this stems from the fact that although there can be only one speaker and one addressee in a sentence, there can be multiple 3rd person DPs. Therefore, they claim that there can be multiple operators as well, that bind the various 3rd person DPs in the clause.

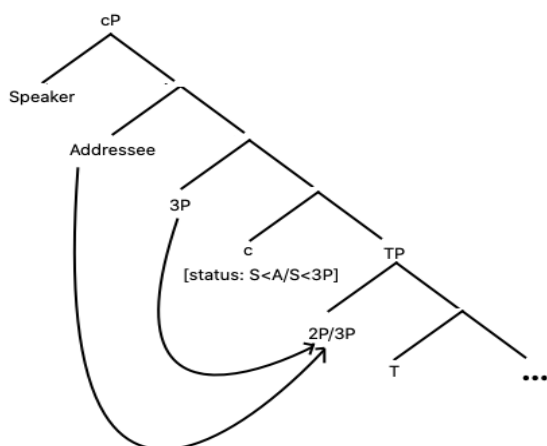
To summarize the proposal made in Chandra et al., referent honorification triggered by the 3rd person can be explained by the same mechanism that captures 1st and 2nd person honorification. The licensing head in their account is the c head, which they extend to host a 3rd person operator in Spec, cP. They follow Portner et al. and propose that honorificity agreement is a result of the operator-variable binding relationship between the speaker, the addressee and the 3P operator and the respective DPs in the clause.

4 Deriving Maithili Agreement

We now derive the person and honorific portmanteau agreement in Maithili on the basis of the honorificity agreement mechanism presented in the previous section. Let us first look at the subject agreement. Once the subject DPs enter the derivation, they need to be licensed for their Hon feature. For this licensing, they get bound by the operators in the Spec, cP. As a result of this binding, the status feature of the c head gets transmitted to the DPs, giving it honorificity values. I also assume, following Chomsky (2008) a.o. that it is the c head (C in Chomsky's account) that has all the features, and not the T head. Thus, while the 2nd and 3rd person DPs need licensing for Hon, they directly agree with the c head for person feature. The 1st person DPs do not need Hon licensing and only trigger person agreement on c. The c head, therefore, realises the person values as a result of agreement and honorificity values (in the form of the status feature) as a result of 2nd and 3rd person Hon licensing. The subject agreement mechanism is shown schematically in (26).

⁵ Equating 3rd person with 1st and 2nd person has been done previously in the literature, however, in different ways. For instance, Nevins (2007) claims that those 3rd person DPs that observe the PCC effects, have a featural content on par with the 1st and 2nd person which gets licensed in the syntax. Similarly, Kaur and Rayanaud (2019) propose that certain 3rd person clitics are context-sensitive on par with the 1st and 2nd person clitics. Chandra et al.'s work also follows this line of work as they equate the 3rd person with the 1st and 2nd person. However, the novelty of their idea lies in the fact that they introduce the 3rd person operator in the left periphery.

(26)



We now come to multiple argument agreement triggered by subjects and honorific objects. In this agreement, we need to account for two things- first, 1st and 3rd person NH objects do not trigger agreement and second, multiple agreement is realised in the form of portmanteau agreement. Let's address the first question first- why do only 2nd person and 3rd person honorific objects trigger agreement? For the 3rd person, I suggest that the honorificity restriction on object agreement is an instance of 'differential object marking'. This idea comes from works such as Woolford (1999) and Wiltschko and Ritter (2015) who claim that objects in languages that have differential object case and agreement, on lines of animacy/+human or specificity features, must move to the edge of the vP phase to check these features. I propose that honorificity is another such criteria for differential object agreement.⁶ While this explains the 3rd person, it doesn't explain why all 2nd person objects, including the 2nd person NH objects, are allowed to trigger agreement. While a definite answer for this question awaits further research, I speculate that there is a fundamental difference between 2nd and 3rd person honorificity. While the former is scalar in nature, consisting of a high-honorific, honorific, mid-honorific and non-honorific value, the latter is bivalent, consisting of an honorific and a non-honorific value. Therefore, all forms of 2nd person need to be licensed, even in the object position, thus, disallowing any differential agreement, which is based on bivalent features.⁷ Since 3rd person honorificity is bivalent, it allows differential agreement which results in only honorific 3rd person objects triggering agreement.

The second puzzle regarding object agreement concerns portmanteau morphology. In the syntactic literature, portmanteau morphology has been claimed to be a result of multiple agreement on the same functional head (Bobaljik and Branigan 2006, Georgi 2012, 2013, Oxford 2015). Various motivations have been proposed as an explanation for the same. Bobaljik and Branigan (2006) associate multiple agreement in Chukchi with multiple case checking by the T head. Since the subjects receive the nominative case in Maithili and the objects receive the accusative case, we can't suggest that case checking motivates multiple agreement in Maithili. In a different account, Oxford (2018) associates multiple agreement with agreement triggered by two equidistant arguments. While this approach can explain multiple agreement triggered by the subject and the object, it cannot explain multiple agreement triggered by the subject and the speech addressee, which are at an unequal distance.

Therefore, I turn to Georgi (2012, 2013) who proposes that languages may have two probes on one functional head, which agrees with two goals. Since probes are (uninterpretable and unvalued) features, Georgi's proposal is essentially an account of the number of features encoded by a functional head. Following this argument, I propose that the status feature on the c head is limited to two in Maithili. Thus, these two assumptions – that Maithili has honorificity based differential object agreement in the 3rd person domain, and that the c head can host only two status features captures both instances of portmanteau agreement in- i) subject and object portmanteau, ii) subject and

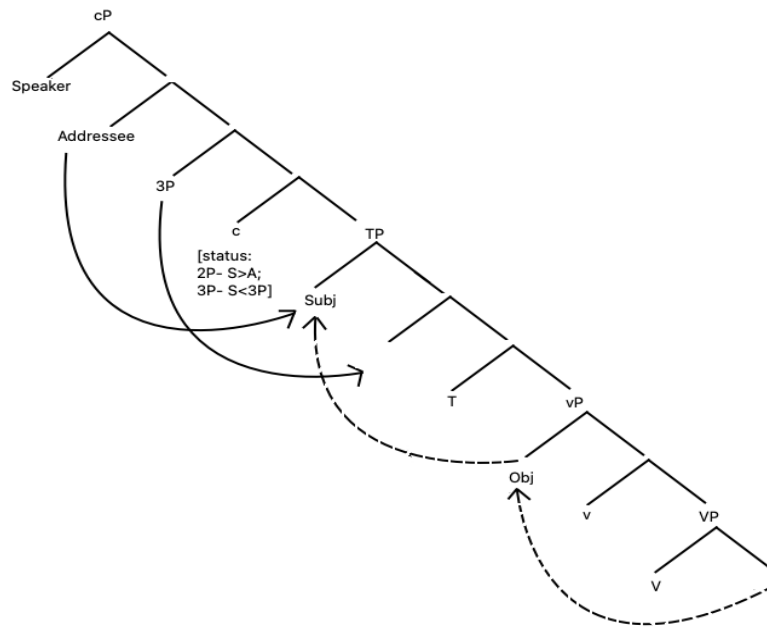
⁶ The proposal that honorificity is also a feature on the hierarchy scale gains further support from the fact that the high-honorific 2nd person requires an obligatory passive construction in Maithili (see footnote 2). See Nichols (2001) and Anagnostopoulou (2005) for an account of passives and the person/animacy scale.

⁷ See Alok (2021) for a different account where he breaks the scalar property of the honorificity feature into [\pm Hon] and [\pm High]. A simple reason for not adopting such an account is that the 2nd person high-honorific pronouns cannot be accounted by the feature combination suggested in Alok. The feature combination suggested by him can account only till the high honorific pronoun.

allocutive portmanteau. This account also explains the allocutive agreement restriction on object agreement. Let us understand them one by one.

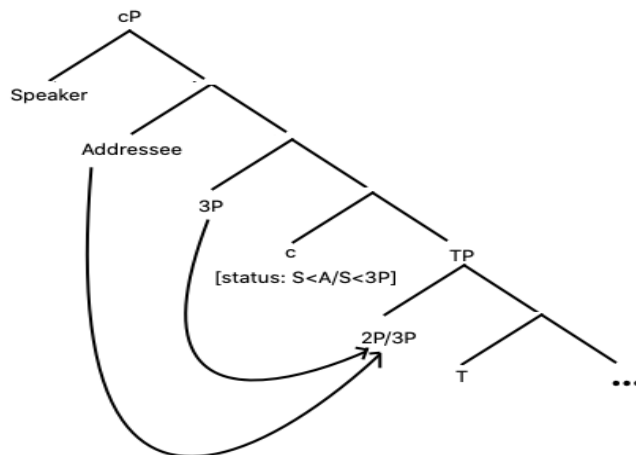
To begin with, as I have already mentioned, all the 2nd person and 3rd person honorific objects move out of their vP internal position to get licensed by the operators in Spec, c. The c head encodes the status feature that gets transmitted because of the op-var binding. Since the c head can encode two status features, it can easily license two DPs. This explains the multiple agreement facts, as well as the resultant portmanteau morphology. This is shown schematically in (27), for a 2nd person NH subject and a 3rd person H object triggered multiple agreement. In the structure in (27), the 1st person objects and the 3rd person non-honorific objects do not move out to the vP edge because of lack of honorificity.

(27)



We now come to portmanteau morphology that encodes subject and allocutive agreement on an intransitive verb. Under the theoretical assumptions made so far, the person and honorificity values of the subject are encoded on the c head and the allocutive agreement is also realised on the c head. Since c has two status features, we get a portmanteau morpheme encoding the subject and the addressee. This is shown schematically for a 3rd person honorific subject agreement and non-honorific allocutive agreement (28).

(28)



Finally, we come to the question of object agreement getting blocked by allocutive agreement. A simple explanation for this follows from the order in which the subject, object and the speech addressee get merged in the structure. Following a top-bottom merging approach, we realize that the object and the subject merge, in that order, followed by the addressee in the end, as can be seen in the image given in (27 or 28). However, the moment the specifiers of the c head generate, they become the closest arguments to c. Thus, the allocutive agreement is technically the first agreement that takes place which would leave only one more status feature value to host the subject agreement. Why then do we get object agreement at all? The answer lies in the optionality of allocutive agreement. As mentioned earlier, allocutive agreement is optional in Maithili, which means that every time allocutivity is not encoded, there is a spot for one status feature, which can be taken by the object. Thus, object agreement becomes contingent on the absence of allocutive agreement and it fails to show in its presence.

5 Conclusion

This paper presents an account of Darbhanga Maithili agreement which constitutes person and honorificity agreement. Through the data presented here, I add to the literature on portmanteau agreement which goes beyond 1st and 2nd person in Maithili. I also show that multiple agreement in Maithili includes both the argument as well as non-argument. Additionally, multiple agreement is contingent on factors such as differential object agreement and the maximum number of features allowed on a functional head.

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