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N-V Compounds and Agreement

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1 The Basic Agreement Algorithm

1.1 Mostly Subject Agreement

In many languages, agreement is more or less limited to subject verb agreement.

- (1) a. **They are** baking a cake.
- b. ***He are** baking **cakes**.

The data from existential constructions suggests that the subject agreement restriction needs to be somewhat nuanced.

- (2) a. There **is a man** in the garden.
- b. There **are several men** in the garden.

Not only is non-subject agreement possible, such agreement can also cross clause boundaries.

- (3) a. There **is** likely [to be **a man** in the garden].
- b. There **are** likely [to be **several men** in the garden].

One way of thinking about this data is that verbal agreement goes with the subject as far as it can but when the subject does not have agreement features (i.e. when it is the expletive *there*), verbal agreement targets the next highest argument.

1.2 Agreeing with the Highest Visible Argument

The agreement facts from Hindi-Urdu provide clear support for an ‘agree with the highest visible argument’ agreement algorithm.

- (4) **visible**_{Hindi-Urdu} = no overt case-marking
- a. Unmarked Subject, subject agreement:
ve lar̥ke yeh kitaab paṛh-te the
those boys this book.f read-Hab.MPl be.Pst.MPl
‘Those boys used to read this book.’
- b. Ergative Subject, Unmarked Object, object agreement:
un lar̥kō-ne yeh kitaab paṛh-ii thii
those.Obl boys-Erg this book.f read-Pfv.F be.Pst.FSg
‘Those boys read this book.’
- c. Ergative Subject, Marked Object, default agreement (=3MSg):
un lar̥kō-ne is kitaab-ko paṛh-aa
those.Obl boys this.Obl book.f-Acc read-Pfv.MSg
thaa
be.Pst.MSg
‘Those boys read this book.’
- (5) The Agreement Algorithm:
- a. Finite Tense agrees with the highest DP with visible agreement features.
- b. Any auxiliaries structurally in between finite T and the DP triggering agreement also agree with the DP.
- extends to cases of Long Distance Agreement

2 Exceptional Non-Agreement with N-V compounds

(6) Normally the N in an N-V compound agrees

a. Ram-ne karīi **mehnat kii**
Ram-Erg hard.f hardwork.f do.Pfv.f
'Ram worked very hard.'

b. class-me Atif-kii khuub **taariif huī**
class-in Atif-Gen.f lot praise.f be.Pfv.f
'Atif was praised a lot in class.'

c. tiicar-ne Atif-kii khuub **taariif kii**
teacher-Erg Atif-Gen.f lot praise.f be.Pfv.f
'The teacher praised Atif a lot.'

but sometimes it doesn't:

(7) a. agreeing N:

Ram-ko [Atif-kii **yaad**] **aa-ii**
Ram-Dat Atif-Gen.f memory.f come-Pfv.f
'Ram thought of Atif.'

b. no agreement with N:

Ram-ne Atif-ko yaad kiyaa/*kii
Ram-Erg Atif-Dat memory do.Pfv.MSg=Default/do.Pfv.F
'Ram thought of Atif.'

c. agreement with N is blocked:

Ram-ko ve laṛke yaad aa-ye
Ram-Dat those boys.MPl memory.f come-Pfv.MPl
'Ram thought of those boys.'

d. no agreement with N:

mujhe Ram-ko yaad aa-naa/*aa-nii caahiye
me.Dat Ram-Dat memory.f come-Inf.MSg/come-Inf.F should
thaa/*thii
be.Pst.MSg/*be.Pst.F
'Ram should have thought of me.'

(8) a. Sita abhinetrii ban gayii
Sita.F actress.F make GO.Pfv.F
'Sita became an actress.'

b. Obligational:

Sita-ko abhinetrii ban-naa/*ban-nii
Sita-Dat actress.F make-Inf.MSg/*make-Inf.F
paṛ-aa/*paṛ-ii
fall-Pfv.MSg/*fall-Pfv.F
'Sita had to become an actress.'

c. Ram-ne Sita-ko abhinetrii banaa-yaa
Ram-Erg Sita-Dat actress.F make-Pfv.MSg
'Ram made Sita an actress.'

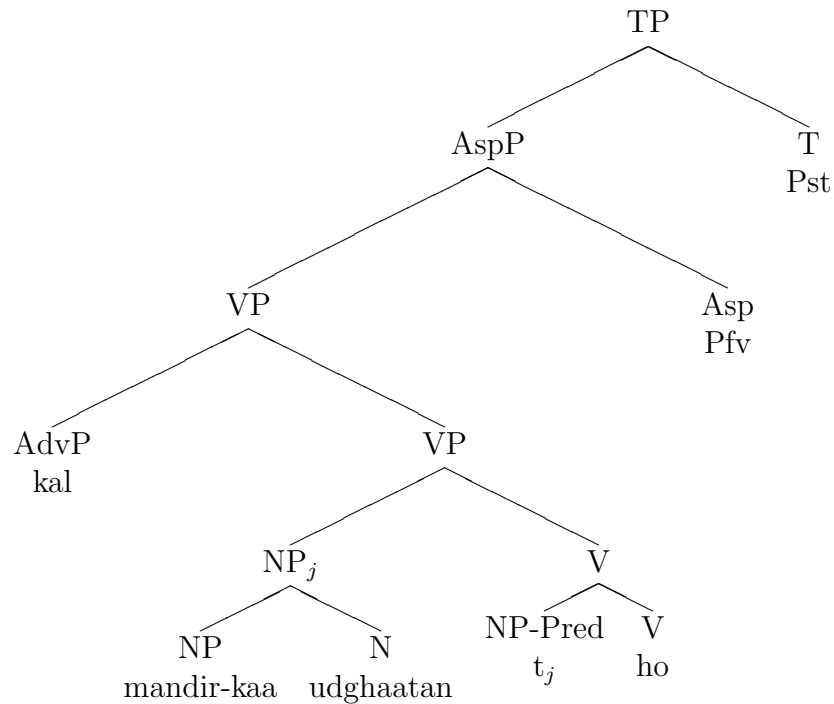
3 Three Kinds of NP + V Predicates

3.1 Genitive Always Licensed

(9) a. NP + be:

kal mandir-kaa udghaatan huua
 yesterday temple-Gen inauguration be.Pfv.MSg

‘The temple was inaugurated yesterday.’

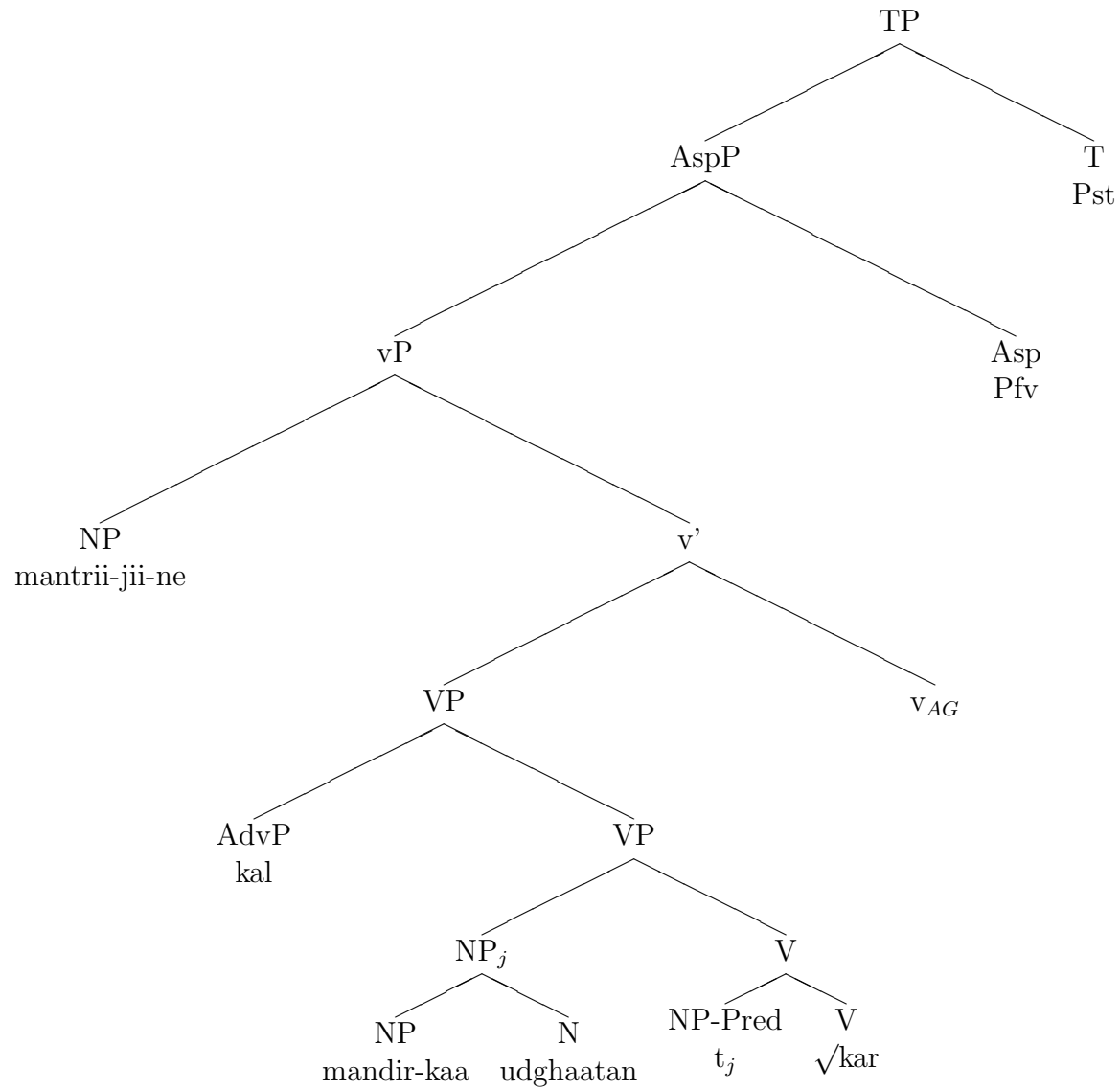


→ NP ends up as argument of *be*.

b. NP + do:

mantrii-jii-ne mandir-kaa kal udghaatan
 minister-Hon-Erg temple-Gen yesterday inauguration
 kiyaa
 do.Pfv.MSg

‘The minister inaugurated the temple yesterday.’



→ Lower NP ends up as argument of *kar*.

To save space, I will omit the AdvP, v_{ag} , Asp, and T nodes from subsequent trees.

3.2 Genitive Sometimes Licensed

- (10) a. NP+*be*: genitive, no external argument:
kal [gehenõ-kii chorii] huii
yesterday jewels-Gen.f theft.f be.Pfv.f
'Yesterday the jewels got stolen.' (Literally: Yesterday, there was a theft of jewels.)
- b. NP + *be*: no genitive, no external argument:
kal gehenẽ chorii ho gaye
yesterday jewels-MPl theft.f be GO.Pfv.MPl
'Yesterday the jewels got stolen.'
- c. NP + *kar*: genitive, external argument:
Atif-ne kal [gehenõ-kii chorii] kii
Atif-Erg yesterday jewels-Gen.f theft.f do.Pfv.f
'Atif stole the jewels yesterday.'
- d. NP + *kar*: no genitive, external argument:
Atif-ne kal gehenẽ chorii kiye
Atif-Erg yesterday jewels-Gen.f theft.f do.Pfv.f
'Atif stole the jewels yesterday.'
- (11) a. NP+*aa*: licenses genitive as well as dative:
Ram-ko Atif-kii yaad aa-ii
Ram-Dat Atif-Gen.f memory.f come-Pfv.f
'Ram thought of Atif.'

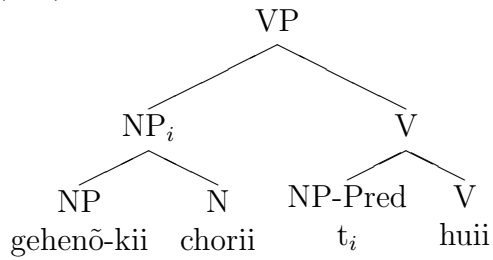
b. NP+*aa*: licenses dative but does not license genitive:

Ram-ko Atif yaad aa-yaa
 Ram-Dat Atif.M memory.f come-Pfv.MSG
 ‘Ram thought of Atif.’

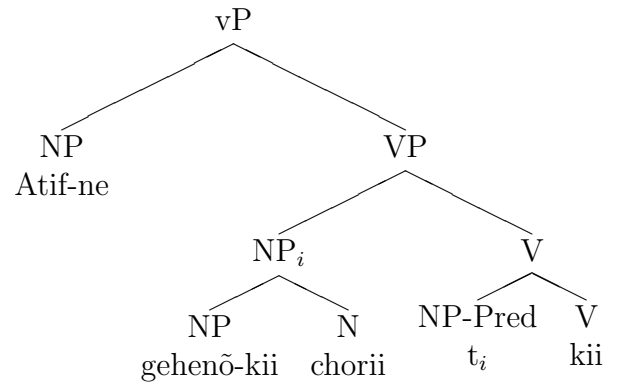
c. NP+*kar*: does not license dative or genitive:

Ram-ne Atif-ko yaad kiya
 Ram-Erg Atif-Acc memory.f do.Pfv
 ‘Ram thought of Atif.’

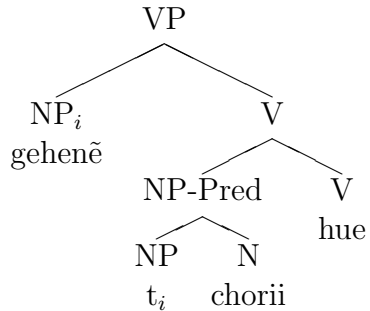
(10a):



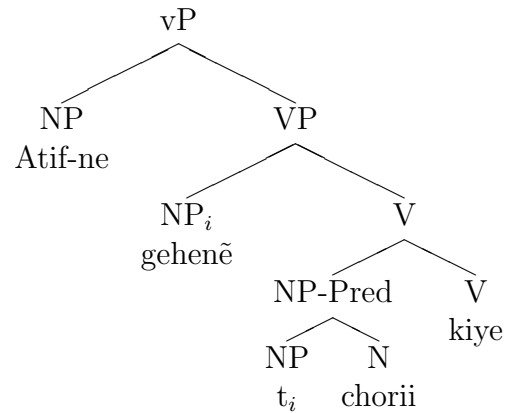
(10c):



(10b):



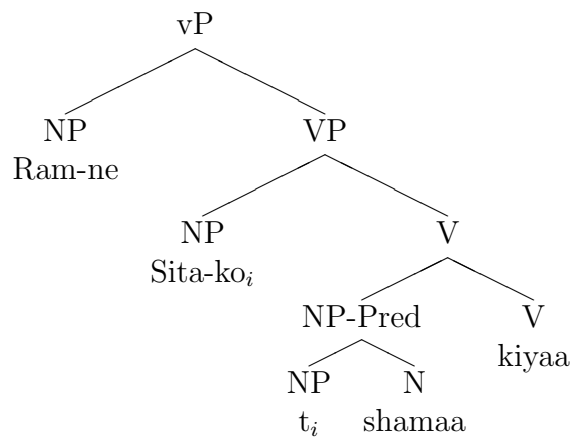
(10d):



3.3 Genitive is not Licensed

- (12) Ram-ne Sita-ko shamaa kiyaa
Ram-Erg Sita-Acc forgiveness do.Pfv
'Ram forgave Sita.'

In these cases, the NP obligatorily moves out of the N. Negation can precede the N.



4 Assumptions and Consequences

4.1 Assumptions about Case and Agreement

- (13) Why do some NPs in N-V compounds agree while others do not?

→ the distinction between argument positions ([Spec,vP], [Comp,VP]) and predicative positions (NP-Pred).

→ only NPs in argument positions agree.

→ only NPs in argument positions can get structural case.

(14) Point of Variation: some Ns always license genitive, others do so optionally, and yet others do not do so at all.

(15) Two cases where the NP in the NP+V stays in NP-Pred

a. NP + *be*: no genitive, no external argument:

kal gehenē chorii ho gaye
yesterday jewels-MPl theft.f be GO.Pfv.MPl

‘Yesterday the jewels got stolen.’

b. NP + *kar*: no genitive, external argument:

Atif-ne kal gehenē chorii kiye
Atif-Erg yesterday jewels-Gen.f theft.f do.Pfv.f

‘Atif stole the jewels yesterday.’

(16) NPs in these environments does not trigger agreement:

a. obligational construction:

gehenē-ko kal chorii ho jaa-naa/*-nii chaahiye
jewels-Dat yesterday theft.F be GO-Inf.M/*F should
thaa/*thii
be.Pst.M/*F

‘Yesterday the jewels got stolen.’

b. *ko*-marked object:

Atif-ne kal gehenē-ko chorii kiyaa/*kii
Atif-Erg yesterday jewels-Dat theft.F do.Pfv.M/*F

‘Atif stole the jewels yesterday.’

4.2 Participle Formation

Assuming that only arguments can be relativized, we predict that in cases where the NP in the NP-V compound is an argument, it will be possible to relativize it. Moreover in cases where the NP is not an argument, it should not be possible to do so. This conclusion is borne out.

- (17) a. NP in NP+V is in an argument position: relativization is possible

[Atif-dwaaraa t_i kii gayii] [gehenō-kii chorii]_i
Atif-by do.Pfv.F GO.Pfv.F jewels-Gen.F theft.F
‘The theft of jewels done by Atif’

- b. NP in NP+V stays in the NP-Pred position: relativization of this NP is impossible

*[Atif-dwaaraa gehenō t_i kii gayii] [chorii]_i
Atif-by jewels.M do.Pfv.F GO.Pfv.F theft.F
intended: ‘The theft of jewels done by Atif’

- (18) *kshamaa* is always in NP-Pred: no relativization

*[Atif-dwaaraa Mona-ko t_i kiyaa gayaa] kshamaa_i
Atif-by Mona-Acc do.Pfv GO.Pfv forgiveness
intended: ‘the forgiving of Mona by Atif’

4.3 Negation

Generally, sentential negation in Hindi-Urdu is always adjacent to a verb.

- (19) Atif-ne (*nahĩ:) kitaab nahĩ: paṛh-i:
Atif-Erg Neg book.F Neg read-Pfv.F

‘Atif didn’t read the book.’

However as Rajesh Kumar noted, this adjacency restriction is lifted in some but not all NP+V compounds:

- (20) a. Neg N V is ok with *kshamaa*:
 (?)Atif-ne Mona-ko nahĩ: kshamaa kiyaa
 Atif-Erg Mona-Acc Neg forgiveness do.Pfv.M
 ‘Atif did not forgive Mona.’
- b. Neg N V is not ok with *mehnat*:
 *Atif-ne nahĩ: mehnat kii
 Atif-Erg Neg hardwork.F do.Pfv.F
 ‘Atif didn’t work hard.’

Following Rajesh Kumar, if we assume that *nahĩ:* must adjoin to a V-head, then the negation asymmetry follows:

- (21) a. (20a): *kshamaa* stays in NP-Pred, [*kshamaa kar*] is a V, negation can adjoin to it.
- b. (20b): *mehnat* moves to [Comp,V] and [*mehnat kar*] is not a V. Hence negation cannot adjoin.

4.4 Unaccusativity and Restructuring

- (22) sentential subject: non-restructuring environment
- a. *gehenẽ* is nominative:
 [gehenẽ chorii ho-naa] nindaniya hai
 jewels theft.F be-Inf condemnable be.Prs
 ‘The jewels being stolen is worthy of condemnation.’
- b. *gehenẽ* is non-agreeing Genitive:
 [gehenõ-kaa chorii ho-naa] nindaniya hai
 jewels-Gen theft.F be-Inf condemnable be.Prs
 ‘The jewels being stolen is worthy of condemnation.’

c. *gehenẽ* is agreeing Genitive:

[gehenõ-kii chorii ho-naa] nindaniya hai
jewels-Gen.F theft.F be-Inf condemnable be.Prs

‘The jewels being stolen is worthy of condemnation.’

(23) complement of *chaahiye*: obligatory restructuring environment

a. *gehenẽ* is nominative:

[gehenẽ chorii ho-ne] chaahiye the
jewels theft.F be-Inf.MPl should be.Pst.MPl

‘The jewels should have been stolen.’

b. *gehenẽ* is non-agreeing Genitive:

*[gehenõ-kaa chorii ho-naa] chaahiye thaa
jewels-Gen theft.F be-Inf should be.Pst.MSg

‘The jewels should have been stolen.’

c. *gehenẽ* is agreeing Genitive:

[gehenõ-kii chorii ho-nii] chaahiye thii
jewels-Gen.F theft.F be-Inf.F should be.Pst.F

‘The jewels should have been stolen.’

- genitive subjects block restructuring.

5 General Consequences

5.1 NPs and Case

NPs do not need case intrinsically. They only need case if they are arguments.

→ when an NP remains in the NP-Pred position (as in 10b, d and 12), it does not receive case. But this does not lead to ungrammaticality.

→ the NP inside the NP in an NP-V compound is always an argument and needs case. It can get genitive inside the NP but if that is not an option, it must move to [Comp,VP].

5.2 Motivations for Movement

Movement is not driven only by Case Concerns. Instead other formal concerns on par with EPP seem relevant: V must have a sister.

→ If the movement of NP-Pred to [Comp,VP] was driven by Case, then it would always move to [Comp,VP]. The structure where it stays behind would not be possible.

→ But something must force movement of NP-Pred to [Comp,VP] in the cases where nothing else moves to [Comp,VP]. If this was not the case, we would not get obligatory agreement with the NP in the NP-V compound in (10a, c).