

Verb Agreement in Purbiya Raji

Dubi Nanda Dhakal 

Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University

Abstract

The agreement in the Purbiya Raji verbs reveal a number of features common across Tibeto-Burman languages in general and among Raji varieties and Raute. There are TB features in the pronoun forms. The verbs in intransitive verbs agree with the subject. Additionally, a number of features in verb agreement show that Raji is a truly a Tibeto-Burman (TB) language as it has a number of agreement suffixes that can be reconstructed to TB roots. Purbiya Raji has a simplified verb morphology compared to Naukule and Barabandale varieties. Purbiya Raji verbal affixes are largely similar to other Raji varieties, and Raute spoken in Nepal but differs greatly from the variety of Raji spoken in India.

Keywords: verb agreement, inverse marker, areal-typology, Tibeto-Burman agreement

Article Info.

Article History

Received: March 18, 2026

Revised: April 28, 2026

Accepted: July 28, 2026

Email

dndhakal@gmail.com

Cite

Dhakal, D. N. (2026). Verb agreement in Purbiya Raji. *Gipan*, 8(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gipan.v8i1.98717>

Introduction

Raji is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in western districts in Nepal, viz. Surkhet, Kailali, Banke and Bardiya. The census 2021 reports a total number of 5125 Raji ethnic group whereas only 4,247 Raji people reported this as their mother tongue showing that the language retention rate is 82.9% (NSO, 2024; 2025). Some earlier references have noted that the genetic classification of Raji is not certain thanks to the lack of adequate description of Raji. Thurgood (2017, p. 30) notes “It is unclear what to do with Raute, Raji” referring to the uncertainties of the genetic classification of Raji. Thurgood (2017, p. 26) mentions “[Raji, Raute] is sometimes added into west Himamalysh, but it does not fit well”. However, Bradley (1997) classifies Raji as a Tibeto-Burman language belonging to the central group of Himalayan language within Western Tibeto-Burman (or Bodic).

The descriptions available as of now show that there are at least three varieties of Raji spoken in Nepal, viz. Naukule, Barabandale, and Purbiya. In addition, the variety spoken in India has distinct morphosyntactic features (Rastogi, 2012). Some reference materials exist in Purbiya Raji (PR), such as lexicon, and analyzed texts (Dhakal, 2018; 2019), grammar (Dhakal, 2025), and descriptions of some aspects of grammar, such as case marking (Dhakal, 2023), and tense categories (2022b). In addition, the contact-induced change in PR is dealt in (Dhakal, 2022a), and its link with Raute is mentioned in Dhakal

(2020b). The historical context of the tense marker *-a* in PR is dealt with in Dhakal (2021). For the sake of comparison of verb agreement of PR with other varieties, there are materials, such as Khatri (2008) for Barabandale Raji, Rastogi (2012) for Kumaun Raji, Dhakal (2024) for Rastogi (2012) for Raute. This paper aims to describe the verb morphology in PR comparing this with other Raji varieties.

This article is organized in 6 sections. An introduction to the methodology and sources of data are given in section 2. A brief list of affixes and the pronouns in PR is given in section 3. Section 4 is devoted to the verb agreement in PR detailing the verb agreement in intransitive, transitive and ditransitive agreement patterns. Some affixes in PR are compared among Raji varieties including the variety of Raji spoken in India, and also in Raute in section 5. The article is summarized and concluded in section 6.

Methodology

This analysis is based on both elicited examples, and text corpus. The examples have been obtained by eliciting from the speakers during the field work. In addition, the examples have also been taken from the corpus the author himself collected in 2017-18 (Dhakal 2018). The texts and the lexical items obtained already were from Bhim Bahadur Raji, Moti Raji, Sukmati Raji, Gopisa Raji and Khadga Raji. Some texts have already been gathered (about 2500 naturally occurred sentences) from different genres. The texts, and examples were obtained from the speakers living in Raji Tole, located in Madhuvan Municipality in Bardiya district.

Findings and Discussion

Raji shows distinct verb agreement pattern which has different implications in this endangered language of western Himalaya.

Pronouns and Verbal Affixes in Raji

The singular, dual, and plural pronouns is maintained in PR. The inclusive/exclusive distinction is not maintained in the second and third person pronouns. The first-person pronoun *ŋa* in

Raji can be reconstructed to PTB *#ŋa* (DeLancey, 2019). Similarly, the first-person plural pronoun in Raji can be reconstructed to PTB *#ni* (DeLancey, 2019). Similarly, the second person *naŋ* can be reconstructed to TB languages (DeLancey, 2014). The first-person dual pronoun *ŋadzi* contains the dual marker *-tsi/-dzi*.

Raji is often described as a ‘pronominalized’ language. Raji maximally agrees both with the subject, and object. The verb agreement in PR is more simplified (Dhakal, 2025) compared with Barabandale and Naukule varieties (cf. Khatri 2008; Dhakal, 2024). If the verbs are borrowed from Indic language (source), the verbs are marked with the adaptive suffix *-e*, or *-i* before other suffixes are attached to them. In the lexical verbs, there is a three way distinction of tenses, viz. past, present and future. The future tense is marked with *-h*, and the present tense is marked with *-k*. The past tense is marked with *-ka*, and also with *-a*. (Dhakal, 2025). The aspects, and moods are morphologically encoded. Compared to other varieties of Raji spoken in Nepal, the verb agreement in transitive verb is less elaborate as some features that appear regularly in other varieties are absent in this variety.

Verb Agreement

Raji maximally agrees both with the subject, and object. This section first discusses the single agreement, and then it discusses the double agreement in Raji.

The verbs agree with the number and person in Raji. Despite the fact that some studies, viz. Khatri (2008) mention that the verbs also agree with the dual subjects, this is not found regularly in PR. The plural marker *-si* appears to agree with the plural subjects in Raji. There are some portmanteau suffixes triggering the agreement both by the subject and object.

Intransitive Verbs

The verb agrees with the person, and number of the subject in the intransitive verbs. In addition, the verb also agrees with the honorificity. It is

not certain how the honorificity in verb agreement evolves in Raji.

Future Tense

The verb root is followed by the tense marker -h, and that is followed by the agreement markers in future tense in Raji (1-2).

1) *ŋa səihəi*

ŋa səihəi
ŋa səi-h-əi

1SG get.up-FUT-1SG

‘I will get up.’

2) *ŋai sloka dz^həi hon boŋa swahəi*

ŋa-i slok-a dz^həi hon boŋa swa-h-əi
1SG-ERG call-COND if 3SG forest go-FUT-3SG

‘If I call, he will go to forest.’

The verb inflection in the future tense is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Verb Agreement in the Future Tense

	<i>swa</i> ‘go’	<i>bəu</i> ‘grow’	<i>səi</i> ‘get up’	<i>niŋ</i> ‘sleep’
<i>ŋa</i> ‘I’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>ŋədzi</i> ‘we’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>ŋəi</i> ‘we’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>ŋəirəu</i> ‘we’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>naŋ</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>naŋni</i> ‘you.TWO’	swa-h-i	bəu-h-i	səi-h-i	niŋ-h-i
<i>naŋdzi</i> ‘you.HON’	swa-h-i	bəu-h-i	səi-h-i	niŋ-h-i
<i>naŋrəu</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-h-i	bəu-h-i	səi-h-i	niŋ-h-i
<i>hon</i> ‘s/he’	swa-h-əi	bəu-h-əi	səi-h-əi	niŋ-h-əi
<i>honrəu</i> ‘they’	swa-h-i	bəu-h-i	səi-h-i	niŋ-h-i

As shown in Table 1 the agreement marker -əi appears to agree with the singular subjects whereas the agreement marker -i appear with the plural subjects. In addition, the first person singular subject contains the agreement suffix -əi. The nasal element in the first person singular agreement suffix can be interpreted as the residue of the first person agreement marker -ŋa (DeLancey, 1989). This can be interpreted as a TB feature.

Present Tense

The present tense marker -k immediately follows the verb roots, and the agreement markers follow the tense markers. The tense markers are not always overtly present (3–4) in present tense.

3) *hon dinkəl tūni niŋəŋ*

hon dinkəl tūni niŋ-əŋ
3SG everyday afternoon sleep-3SG

‘He sleeps in the afternoon.’

4) *naŋna swaŋ*

naŋ-na swa-ŋ
2SG-with go-1SG

‘(I) go with you.’

The suffix -ŋ appears as an agreement marker in many Tibeto-Burman languages of this area (DeLancey, 2014). The inflections of the verbs in the present tense are given in Table 2. Both consonant-ending and vowel ending verb roots are included in this table.

Table 2*Verb Inflections in the Present Tense*

	<i>swa</i> ‘go’	<i>bəu</i> ‘grow’	<i>niŋ</i> ‘sleep’	<i>brok</i> ‘run away’
<i>ŋa</i> ‘I’	swa-k-əŋ	bəu-k-əŋ	niŋ-k-əŋ	brok-k-əŋ
<i>ŋədzi</i> ‘we’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>ŋəi</i> ‘we’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>ŋəirəu</i> ‘we’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>naŋ</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-k-əŋ	bəu-k-əŋ	niŋ-k-əŋ	brok-k-əŋ
<i>naŋni</i> ‘you.TWO’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>naŋdzi</i> ‘you.HON’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>naŋrəu</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i
<i>hon</i> ‘s/he’	swa-k-əŋ	bəu-k-əŋ	niŋ-k-əŋ	brok-k-əŋ
<i>honrəu</i> ‘they’	swa-k-i	bəu-k-i	niŋ-k-i	brok-k-i

The language informants I worked with did not confirm whether the verb agrees with the dual number. However, dual agreement suffix *-tsi* occurs in the text as *hapex legomena*. Since this form also exists in copular verbs, it seems that this was there in the past, but now seems to be less common (5).

5) *ŋai p^heri swatsi*

ŋai p^heri swa-tsi
 1PL again go-DU
 ‘We (two) again go.’ [FiveBrothers]

The dual marker *-tsi* is regularly present in the Barabandale variety but rarely occurs in PR. Khatri (2008, pp. 50–52) has shown that the dual marker occurs with the first, second and third person pronouns in Barabandale Raji. The distinction among singular, dual and plural is attested in the copular verbs in Raji.

6) *naŋ gurəu hō*

naŋ gurəu hō
 2SG priest COP.PRES
 ‘You are a priest.’

7) *naŋdzi gurəu hōtsi*

naŋdzi gurəu hōtsi

2DU priest COP.PRES.2DU
 ‘You (two) are priests.’

8) *naŋrəu gurəu hūi*

naŋrəu gurəu hūi
 2PL priest COP.PRES.2PL
 ‘You are priests.’

The singular form of the identificational copula is shown in (6), second person honorific form in (7) and plural form are seen in these examples.

Past Tense

The past tense marker in Raji is *-ka*, and the agreement marker appears after it if it is ever present in the verbal complex. The past tense is also indicated without the past tense is overtly present in the past tense. Raji makes a distinction between singular and plural in the past tense. No overt agreement suffix is present to refer to the singular subject whereas the plural is indicated by the suffix *-si*.

9) *hon keṭa dāi kui niŋsi*

hon keṭa dāi kui niŋ-si
 that boy and dog sleep-(PST)PL
 ‘That boy and dog slept.’

- 10) *hon oŋka*
 hon oŋ-ka
 3SG come-PST.SG
 ‘He came.’
- 11) *bag^harəu swasi*
 bag^ha-rəu swa-si
 tiger-PL go-PST.PL
 ‘The tigers went.’
 The verb agrees with number, and perhaps with honorificity in the past tense.
- 12) *hon oŋka*
 hon oŋ-ka
 3SG come-PST
 ‘He came.’
- 13) *ŋakə deuraŋ hoŋheksi*
 ŋa-kə deuraŋ hoŋ-heksi
 1SG-GEN brother-in-law come-PST.HON
 ‘My brother in law came.’
- 14) *ŋakə bərdzihū hoŋheksi*
 ŋa-kə bərdzihū hoŋ-heksi
 1SG-GEN mother-in-law
 come-PST.HON
 ‘My mother in law came.’
 The verb inflections in the past tense are shown in Table 3.

Table 3*Verb Inflections in the Past Tense*

	<i>swa</i> ‘go’	<i>səi</i> ‘get up’	<i>niŋ</i> ‘sleep’
<i>ŋa</i> ‘I’	swa-ka	səi-ka	niŋ-ka
<i>ŋədzi</i> ‘we’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>ŋəi</i> ‘we’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>ŋəirəu</i> ‘we’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>naŋ</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-ka	səi-ka	niŋ-ka
<i>naŋni</i> ‘you.TWO’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>naŋdzi</i> ‘you.HON’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>naŋrəu</i> ‘you.SG’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>hon</i> ‘s/he’	swa-ka	səi-ka	niŋ-ka
<i>honrəu</i> ‘they’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>ui</i> ‘s/he’	swa-ka	səi-ka	niŋ-ka
<i>usi</i> ‘he.h’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si
<i>usirəu</i> ‘they’	swa-k-si	səi-ka-si	niŋ-ka-si

As shown in Table 3, the verbs in singular nouns terminate in *-ka* whereas the verbs with the plural nouns terminate in *-ka-si*. The verbal suffix for the second person as reconstructed in DeLancey (2014) is *tV-*. This is not present in PR, however.

Agreement in Transitive Verbs

The transitive verbs in the languages of the Himalayan group can code both the subject and

object. The verbs agree both with the subject, and object in some Rai-Kiranti languages spoken in the eastern Nepal (DeLancey, 1989; LaPolla, 1992; van Driem, 1993). Kham, one of the closest Tibeto-Burman neighbours of Raji, also has characterizes this feature (Watters, 2002). The verb agreement is similar in both the transitive and ditransitive verbs in Raji. In addition to the subject, the objects also control the verb agreement in Raji. For example,

if the subject is singular, but the verb is plural the verbal suffix *-si* is used to control it. The verb agreement in the future, present, and past tense is discussed in this section.

Past Tense

The verbs are followed by the tense marker, and that in turn, is followed by the agreement suffixes. It is, however, to be noted that Raji does not contain the verbal suffixes to mark the subject, and object separately in transitive verbs. Instead, portmanteau affixes are used to encode together.

15) *ηai uikəna mōkkā*

ηa-i ui-kəna mok-kā
1SG-ERG 3SG-DAT hit-PST.1SG.3SG
'I hit him.'

16) *guatjaŋi ηakəna sud^heksi*

guatjaŋ-i ηa-kəna sud^he-ksi.

younger.brother 1SG-ACC ask-
PST.3SG.1SG

'My younger brother asked me.'

17) *honi ηakəna mōkkasi*

hon-i ηa-kəna mok-kasi.
3SG-ERG 3SG -ACC beat-PST.3SG.1SG
'He beat me (PST).'

The verbal inflection in (15) is *-kā*. In a number of Tibeto-Burman suffixes, the first person suffix is **-ηa/*-η*. We don't see the full form of *-ηa* in this example, but there is the presence of nasality in it. Moreover, when the subject is the first person singular, and the object is either the second person, or the third person plural, there is the presence of the suffix *-si*, or *-so*. These agreement suffixes follow the tense marker if tense markers are overtly present. The verb inflection in the past tense is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Verb Inflections mok 'Hit' in the Past Tense

	<i>ηa</i> 'I'	<i>ηadzi</i> 'we'	<i>ηai</i> 'we'/ <i>ηairəu</i> 'we'	<i>naŋ</i> 'you. SG'	<i>naŋrəu</i> 'you.PL'	<i>hon</i> 'he/ she'	<i>honrəu</i> 'you. SG'
<i>ηa</i> 'I'				mok-kā	mok-kasi	mok-kā	mok-kasi
<i>ηadzi</i> 'we/' Incl'				mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso
<i>ηai</i> 'we'/'ηairəu 'we'				mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso
<i>naŋ</i> 'you.SG'	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	-	-	mok-ka	mok-kaso
<i>naŋdzi</i> 'you.HON'	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kasi			mok-kaso	mok-kaso
<i>naŋrəu</i> 'you.SG'	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	-	-	mok-kaso	mok-kaso
<i>hon</i> 's/he'	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-ka	mok-kasi	mok-ka	mok-kasi
<i>honrəu</i> 'they'	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kasi	mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso	mok-kaso

The verb agrees with number, in the past tense. The pronouns given in the vertical column are the subjects, and those given in the horizontal row are the objects. As explained in some Tibeto-Burman languages (DeLancey, 1989), the suffix *-η* is well-established first person agreement marker in Tibeto-Burman languages. We also find its trace in Raji as it retains its ramnant being attached to the

preceding vowel, *a* and is thus realized as *-ā*.¹ A couple of examples follow.

18) *ηai honkəna mōkkā*

ηai hon-kəna mok-kā
1SG 3SG -DAT beat-PST
'I beat him (PST).'

19) *honi ηakəna mokkasi*

honi ηa-kəna mok-kasi
3SG-ERG 1SG-ACC beat-PST

‘He beat me (PST).’

The suffix *-si* appears in a number of constructions in Raji in transitive paradigms.

20) *gutjaŋi ηakəna suɖʰeksi*

gutjaŋ-i ηa-kəna suɖʰe-ksi
elder.brother-ERG 1SG-ACC

ask-PST.3SG.1SG

‘My brother asked me.’

21) *boka ti dzakkaso*

boka ti dzak-kaso

he.goat water pour-NPST.3PL.3SG

‘(They) pour (lit. keep) water on the head of he-goat.’[AncestorWorship]

The agreement suffixes that occur with the past tense marker are summarized in Table 5. The suffix *-si* is used in various contexts. First of all, this suffix is used to agree with the plural object in some cases, such as in the following two combinations, viz. 1SGSUB.2PLOBJ, 1SGSUB.3PLOBJ. In these combinations, the controller of the verb agreement is the object, rather than the subject. Secondly, this is used when the objects are higher in nominal hierarchy in relation to the subjects, viz. second and third person subjects, and the first and the second person subject.

Table 5

Summary of the Inflectional Suffixes in the Past Tense

		ηa ‘I’	ηədzi ‘we’	ηəi ‘we’/ ηəirəu ‘we’	naŋ ‘you. SG’	naŋrəu ‘you.HON’	hon ‘he/ she’	honrəu ‘you.SG’
		1SG	1PL	1PL	2SG	2PL	3SG	3PL
ηa ‘I’	1SG				-kã	-kasi	-kã	-kasi
ηədzi ‘we/ Incl’	1PL				-kaso	-kaso	-kaso	-kaso
ηəi ‘we’/ηəirəu ‘we’					-kaso	-kaso	-kaso	-kaso
naŋ ‘you.SG’	2SG	-kasi	-kasi	-kasi	-	-	-ka	-kaso
naŋrəu ‘you.HON’	2SG	-kasi	-kasi	-kasi			-kaso	-kaso
naŋrəu ‘you.SG’	2PL	-kasi	-kasi	-kasi	-	-	-kaso	-kaso
hon ‘s/he’	3SG	-kasi	-kasi	-kasi	-ka	-kasi	-ka	-kasi
honrəu ‘they’	2PL	-kasi	-kasi	-kasi	-kaso	-kaso	-kaso	-kaso

We mention earlier that the tense marker is sometimes not overtly added to the verb stems. In this case, the agreement marker is directly added to the verb stems. For example, when the subject is the first person singular and the object is the second person the form *-kso* is present. The tense marker in this verb form is absent. There are also other contexts when the tense marker is not present and is not added to the verbal complex. As shown in

Table 5, Raji makes use of portmanteau affixes in transitive verb agreement.

The verb inflection is presented in Table 5, which is based on Table 4. We see that the verbal inflectional form *-ka* is present in the past tense even in intransitive clauses with the singular subject. In addition to *-ka*, the other verb forms that appear are *-so*, and *-si* combined with tense marker if they are

in the texts the speakers narrate. This seems to be disappearing from PR.²

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| ts ^h oʈasiŋ-i | ts ^h a-tsi |
| Chhotasingh-ERG | take.away-DU |
| 'Chhotasingh took (two of them) away.' [FiveBrothers] | |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------|------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| hon | ni- ^h ð | pəhəra | kur-njaŋ | n ^h i-g ^h i | gum-tsi |
| 3SG | two-CLF | cliff | carry-NMLZ | TWO-CLF | fight-DU |
- ‘Those two, two who were carrying the cliff began to fight.

Further investigation is needed why the dual marker -tsi is not consistent in the elicited examples and text corpus.

Like in the past tense, the agreement marker follows the tense marker in the present tense in Raji.

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|--------|---------------|
| ŋa-i | naŋ-kəna | dɪnkəl | trijaŋ | bəi-k-ũ |
| 1SG-ERG | 2SG-DAT | everyday | money | give-PRES-1SG |
| 'I give you money everyday.' | | | | |

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------|
| naŋ-kə | dzənti | dzaʔ-ku-si |
| 2SG-GEN | people.in.marriage.ceremony | eat-PRES-PL |
| 'I will eat the people in your marriage ceremony.' [FiveBrothers] | | |

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| səb | mjak-ku-si |
| all | swallow-PRES-PL |
| '(I) swallow all of you.' [FiveBrothers] | |

the object is plural. The verb inflection of *bai* 'give' is given in Table 6.

Verb *bəi* 'Give' in The Present Tense

	<i>ŋa</i> 'I'	<i>ŋədzi</i> 'we'	<i>ŋəi</i> 'we'	<i>naŋ</i> 'you. SG'	<i>naŋdzi</i> 'you.SG'	<i>naŋni</i> 'you.SG'	<i>naŋrəu</i> 'you.HON'	<i>hon</i> 'he/she'	<i>honrəu</i> 'you.SG'
<i>ŋa</i> 'I'	-	-	-	bəi-ku	bəi-kina	bəi-kina	bəi-kina	bəi-ku	bəi-ku
<i>ŋədzi</i> 'we'	-	-	-	bəi-ku	bəi-kina	bəi-ke	bəi-ke	bəi-ke	bəi-ke

	ḡa ‘I’	ḡadzi ‘we’	ḡai ‘we’	naḡ ‘you.SG’	naḡdzi ‘you.SG’	naḡni ‘you.SG’	naḡrḡu ‘you.HON’	hon ‘he/she’	honrḡu ‘you.SG’
ḡai ‘we’/ḡairḡu ‘we’	-	-	-	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke
naḡ ‘you.SG’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	-	-	-	-	bai-ke	bai-ke
naḡdzi ‘you.SG’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	-	-	-	-	bai-ke	bai-ke
naḡni ‘you.SG’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	-	-	-	-	bai-ke	bai-ke
naḡrḡu ‘you.HON’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	-	-	-	-	bai-ke	bai-ke
hon ‘he/she’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke
honrḡu ‘you.SG’	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ki	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke	bai-ke

Despite the fact that the dual marker *-tsi* is not found in direct elicitation, there are a few examples in which the dual marker *-tso* is found.

27) *pura ḡadzi bānetso*

pura ḡadzi bān-c-tso
all 1DU make-NTVZ-DU
‘(We two) will make all of them.’
[SunkesriQueen]

28) *ts^hala wala dzakaṡtso*

ts^hala wala dzaka-ḡ-tso
skin echo keep-1SG-DU
‘(We two) will fix the skin and so on.’
[SunkesriQueen]

Table 7. A few examples were found in examples in the texts.

29) *naḡnirḡukāna slokhina*

naḡnirḡu-kāna slok-h-ina
2PL-DAT call-FUT-1.SG.SUB.2PL.OBJ
‘I will call both of you.’ [FiveBrothers]

30) *honi ḡakāna slokhi*

hon-i ḡa-kāna slok-h-i
3SG-ERG 1SG-DAT call-FUT-1.SG.SUB.2PL.OBJ
‘He will call me.’

The verb agreement in the future tense is shown in Table 7.

Future tense

The future tense is marked with *-h*. The verb inflection of *mok* ‘hit’ in the future tense is given in

Table 7

Inflections of the Verb mok ‘hit’ in the Future Tense

	ḡa ‘I’	ḡadzi ‘we’	ḡai ‘we’	naḡ ‘you.SG’	naḡdzi ‘you.SG’	naḡni ‘you.SG’	naḡrḡu ‘you.HON’	hon ‘he/she’	honrḡu ‘you.SG’
ḡa ‘I’	-	-	-	mok-haina	mok-hina	mok-hina	mok-haina	mok-hḡu	mok-haina
ḡadzi ‘we’	-	-	-	mok-he	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē
ḡai ‘we’/	-	-	-	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē	mok-hē
naḡ ‘you.SG’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	-	-	-	-	mok-hḡu	mok-hḡu
naḡdzi ‘you.SG’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	-	-	-	-	mok-he	mok-he
naḡni ‘you.SG’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	-	-	-	-	mok-he	mok-he
naḡrḡu ‘you.HON’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	-	-	-	-	mok-he	mok-he
hon ‘he/she’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hai	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hḡu	mok-he
honrḡu ‘you.SG’	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-hi	mok-he	mok-he

PR in Areal-Typological Context Among TB Languages

The languages of Raji and Raute group have moderately elaborate inflectional verb morphologies similar to Himalayish languages, such as Kham and Chepang. It seems that there is a set of categories distinguished in many ways. The verbal affixing pattern is mainly suffixing. A less common features in the verbal slot among the varieties of Raji and Raute mentioned in the directional marking attested only in Naukule Raji but lacking in other varieties is the directional marking found in Naukule Raji.

Table 8

Comparison of Verbal Affixes in Raji Varieties and Raute

	Purbiya Raji	Naukule Raji	Barabandale Raji	Kumaun Raji	Raute
Directional marking	No	Yes	No	No	No
First person singular <i>-ŋ</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dual marker <i>-tsi</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?
Plural <i>-s</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Future <i>-h</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Past <i>-a</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?
Plural suffix <i>-si</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	-ŋi	Yes

Kumaun Raji seems to be distinct in this regard as it does not contain a number of verbal affixes mentioned in Table 8. On the basis of the features in Table 8, Naukule Raji seems to have elaborate the features. Purbiya Raji does not exhibit the directional marking. Additionally, the dual marker is nearly absent in Pubiya Raji. The first person singular form *-ŋ* appears as residual form in nazalized form. Comparing the features, it seems that Raute shares some verbal suffixes to Raji varieties compared to Raji spoken in Kumaun areas in India. The plural suffix *-si* is present in all varieties of Raji, and also in Raute.

Conclusion

The verb agreement offers some typologically interesting results in Raji. The verb maximally

- 31) *naji ŋa mədɪpka*
naŋ-i ŋa mə-ɖip-ka
2SG-ERG 1SG INV-beat-PST
'You beat me.'
- 32) *ɖʰāɽilai ŋakʰəlai mədɪpkə*
ɖʰāɽila-i ŋa-kʰəlai mə-ɖip-ka
boy-ERG 1SG-DAT INV-beat-PST
'The boy beat me.'

The directional marking mentioned in (31-32) is absent in many Raji varieties mentioned above. Let's compare some features of verb agreement in Raji and Raute.

encodes both the subject, and object. The first-person agreement suffix *-ŋa* is reported in a number of TB languages of this region (DeLancey, 1989). Although the suffix *-ŋ* is present in a few cases as verb agreement, its fossilized form appears with the nasal element present in *-ā* in Raji. There are cases in which the verb agrees with the object, rather than with the subject in Raji. The agreement suffix *-so*, and *-si* appears in various subject/object combinations. The verb agreement suffix *-tsi* is suffixed to the verb to mark the dual number. DeLancey (2009, p. 698) mentions that the suffix *-tsi* can be reconstructed to PTB. This is present in Raji as well. The non-past form of copulas in Raji actually begin with *-h* however. Some pronouns, and the verbal affixes show that PR retains some proto-forms of TB

languages. The verb agreement compared on the basis of the available data so far show that Naukule Raji seems to have more elaborate agreement system. Moreover, the agreement system of Raji spoken in India does not resemble the agreement system as found in other Raji varieties in Nepal. The variations in verb agreement among Raji varieties is interesting feature from synchronic and diachronic perspectives as well.

References

- Bradley, D. (1997). Tibeto-Burman languages and classification. In D. Bradley (Ed.), *Tibeto-Burman languages of the Himalayas* (Papers in Southeast Asian Linguistics No. 14, Pacific Linguistics Series A-86, pp. 1–72). Pacific Linguistics. <https://doi.org/10.15144/PL-A86.1>
- DeLancey, S. (1989). Verb agreement in Proto-Tibeto-Burman. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 52(2), 315–333. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00035485>
- DeLancey, S. (2009). Sino-Tibetan languages. In B. Comrie (Ed.), *The world's major languages* (2nd ed., pp. 693–702). Routledge.
- DeLancey, S. (2014). Second person verb forms in Tibeto-Burman. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 37(1), 3–33. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lbta.37.1.01lan>
- DeLancey, S. (2019). Non-singular pronouns in Tibeto-Burman (Trans-Himalayan). *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 42(1), 110–136. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lbta.18006.del>
- Dhakal, D. N. (2018). *Documentation of oral genres and wordlist of Raji* [Research report]. Endangered Language Fund.
- Dhakal, D. N. (2019). *A Raji-English lexicon* (Languages of the World/Dictionaries 72). LINCOM Europa.
- Dhakal, D. N. (2021). Raji-Raute link explained. *Journal of Nepalese Studies*, 14(1), 66–91.
- Dhakal, D. N. (2022a). Lexical and grammatical borrowings in Raji. *Gipan*, 5(1), 27–51. <https://doi.org/10.3126/gipan.v5i1.49541>
- Dhakal, D. N. (2022b). Tense categories and the polysemous-a in Raji. *Nepalese Linguistics*, 36(1), 46–52. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nl.v36i1.49457>
- Dhakal, D. N. (2023). Case markers in Purbiya Raji in comparative perspective. *Nepalese Linguistics*, 37(1), 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nl.v37i1.60010>
- Dhakal, D. N. (2024). *A grammar and lexicon of Naukule Raji (in Nepali)* [Research report]. National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities.
- Dhakal, D. N. (2025). *Purbiya Raji grammar*. Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University.
- Khatri, R. (2008). *The structure of verbs and sentences of Raji* [Master's thesis, Tribhuvan University]. TUCL.
- LaPolla, R. J. (1992). On the dating and nature of verb agreement in Tibeto-Burman. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55(2), 298–315. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00004638>
- National Statistics Office. (2024). *Population composition of Nepal* (National Population and Housing Census 2021, Thematic Report I).
- National Statistics Office. (2025). *Languages in Nepal* (National Population and Housing Census 2021, Thematic Report XI).
- Rastogi, K. (2012). *A descriptive grammar of Raji*. Aviram Prakashan.
- Thurgood, G. (2017). Sino-Tibetan: Genetic and areal subgroups. In G. Thurgood & R. J. LaPolla (Eds.), *The Sino-Tibetan languages* (2nd ed., pp. 3–39). Routledge.
- van Driem, G. (1993). The Proto-Tibeto-Burman verbal agreement system. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 56(2), 292–334. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00005528>

Watters, D. E. (2002). *A grammar of Kham*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486883>

Note.

1. The plural suffix -tsi as a plural suffix is reported in Bantawa, a Rai language spoken in eastern Nepal. This suffix is perhaps present in some other languages belonging to Rai and Kirati groups.



2. The verbs given in Table (5) reveal that the suffix -si is mainly used to encode the transitivity and plurality. In addition, this is also used for other purposes. For example, when there are the second and the third person subject, and the first-person object, this suffix is used.