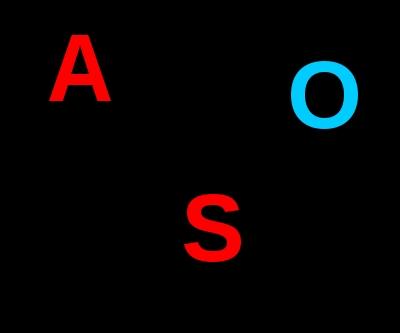
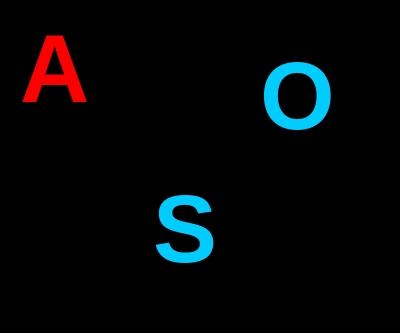
**Split Ergativity in Hindi**

**Ergativity:**

Ergativity is a grammatical property, where the subject/argument of an intransitive verb behaves more like the patient/object of a transitive verb than its agent.

In other words, the doer (or experiencer) of an intransitive verb (a verb that has only a single argument, like *sleep* or *fall*) behaves like the object of a transitive verb (a verb that has two arguments, like *kill*) rather than its subject.

Ergativity Accusativity

The languages in which a verb’s arguments show ergativity are called the Ergative-Absolutive languages, and the rest are called the Nominative-Accusative languages. Both English and Hindi are Nominative-Accusative languages, but Hindi exhibits Ergative behavior in some cases. The following examples show the accusative (non-ergative) behavior in English:

The pen moves.

They move the pen

In the first sentence, the intransitive verb *move* is in the third-person singular form because of the subject *The pen*. In the second sentence, the transitive and causative verb *move* is in the plural form because of the agent *They*. It’s not in the singular form, even though the patient *The pen* is singular. Hence, a subject-agent alignment.

**Split Ergativity:**

Split Ergativity is when a language shows ergative behavior morphologically or syntactically, depending on the situation. Hindi shows ergativity only in certain situations, so it is a split ergative language.

**Split Ergativity in Hindi:**

Hindi exhibits morphological ergativity only in the preterite tense and the perfective aspects and only if the object/patient is directly next to the verb, without any word or particle in between. It doesn’t show ergativity in any other tense or aspect, nor does it exhibit syntactic ergativity. Some examples are:

**मैं पानी पीता हूँ।**  *Mãĩ pānī pītā hū̃*.

Translation: I drink water.

मैं शरबत पीता हूँ।

*Mãĩ šarbat pītā hū̃*.

Translation: I drink syrup.

In the first sentence, the word *Mãĩ* means *I*, *pānī* means *water* and the words *pītā hū̃* mean *(I) drink*. The word *pītā* (drink) is the actual verb, which is the masculine singular and the habitual aspect conjugation of the verb *pīnā* (to drink), and the word *hū̃* which is a sentence-ending copula,indicates the first person and the present tense.

*Pītā* agrees with *Mãĩ* (which is the agent)in gender and number. *Hū̃* agrees with *Mãĩ* in person.

The Second sentence is the same as the first one, except for the patient (object) being *šarbat* (syrup) instead of *pānī* (water).

Now, we can clearly see that the above sentences are in the present tense, habitual aspect. Let’s see the same two sentences in the preterite (simple past) tense.

मैं ने पानी पिया।

*Mãĩ ne pānī piyā*.

Translation: I drank water.

मैं ने शरबत पी।

*Mãĩ ne šarbat pī.*

Translation: I drank the syrup.

First off, we can notice a new word *ne* after *Mãĩ* which is an ergative marker/particle which marks the agent *Mãĩ*.

In the first sentence, the verb *piyā* indicates preterite tense and masculine gender. In the second sentence, the verb *pī* indicates preterite tense and feminine gender.

Because of ergativity, the verb agrees with patient (*pānī*, *šarbat*) in gender, instead of agreeing with agent (*Mãĩ*). (*pānī* is masculine and *šarbat* is feminine.) This is the reason why *piyā* and *pī* come after *pānī* and *šarbat*, respectively.

Let’s look at some other examples.

मैं ने खाना खाया।

*Mãĩ ne khānā khāyā*.

Translation: I ate food.

मैं ने खिचड़ी खाई।

*Mãĩ ne khicṛī khāī*.

Translation: I ate Khichdi.

(Khichdi is an Indian dish.)

*Khānā* is masculine, while *khicṛī* is feminine.

सीता ने कंप्यूटर चलाया।

*Sītā ne kampyūṭar calāyā*.

Translation: Sita ran the computer.

सीता ने मशीन चलाई।

*Sītā ne mašīn calāī*.

Translation: Sita ran the machine.

*kampyūṭar* is masculine and *mašīn* is feminine, which is strange, as both the words are loanwords from English, a language with no grammatical gender.

तू ने गाना सुना।

*Tū ne gānā sunā*.

Translation: You heard the song.

तू ने गाने सुने।

*Tū ne gāne sune*.

Translation: You heard the songs.

In the above sentence, *sune* is in the plural form because the patient *gāne* is plural.

The same behaviour can be observed in the perfective present tense.

उस ने मुझे धोखा दिया है।

*Us ne mujhe dhokhā diyā hai*.

Translation: He has betrayed me.

(Literally: He has given the betrayal to me.)

उस ने तुझे धमकी दी है।

*Us ne tujhe dhamkī dī hai*.

Translation: He has threatened you.

(Literally: He has given a threat to you.)

The noun *dhokhā* is masculine and *dhamkī* is feminine. Hence, the verb is conjugated *diyā* (masc) in the first sentence and *dī* (fem) in the second sentence. The copulae are the same for both genders in the present tense.

मैं ने काम किया है।

*Mãĩ ne kām kiyā hai*.

Translation: I have done the work.

मैं ने महनत की है।

*Mãĩ ne mahnat kī hai.*

Translation: I have done hard work.

तुम ने एक चूहा मारा है।

*Tum ne ek cūhā mārā hai*.

Translation: You have kiled a rat.

तुम ने कई चूहे मारे हैं।

*Tum ne kaī cūhe māre hãĩ*.

Translation: You have killed many rats.

The noun *cūhā* is singular and *cūhe* is it’s plural. Hence, the verb is conjugated *mārā* (sing) in the first sentence and *mare* (plu) in the second sentence. The copulae are *hai* for singular and *hãĩ* for plural.

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