

# A Comparative Study of Verb Agreement and Person Making Bodo and Nepali Language

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## Abstract

This paper presents a comparative study of verb agreement and person making in Bodo and Nepali language, two genetically unrelated languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burman and Indo-European language families respectively. The study examines the verb agreement with person making tense, aspects, number, and gender and honorifics level in both languages. It highlights similarities and differences in structure of agreement of person in the subject's combination two different family languages. The Bodo verb agree with different level of it person and also Nepali verb agree with different level of person number, gender and honorific level. The analysis demonstrates how the person agrees with verb contact and linguistic typology influence verb agreement of patterns. The study contributes to a better understanding of verb agreement with person in a comparative linguistic perspective.

**Keyword:** Bodo language, Nepali language, verb agreement, person making, tense, number, gender and honorific level.

## Introduction:

Assam, often described as the gateway to North-East India, has been a region of intense linguistic and cultural diversity since time immemorial, with numerous communities coexisting and preserving their distinct linguistic identities and cultural heritages. Among the indigenous communities of Assam, the Bodos constitute the largest tribal group. From a linguistic perspective, the Bodo language belongs to the Bodo–Naga subgroup of the Assam–Burmese branch within the Tibeto-Burman family of the Sino-Tibetan language phylum. In contrast, Nepali is classified under the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family, a language family that historically expanded across Europe and extensive regions of South Asia, including India and Nepal. Nepali speakers are widely dispersed throughout Nepal as well as several states of North-East India. Consequently, Bodo and Nepali do not share a common genetic origin and are not historically derived from the same linguistic source. As a result, considerable lexical differences exist between the two languages. Nevertheless, despite their genetic divergence, certain grammatical similarities and differences can be observed, particularly due to prolonged contact and close social interaction between their speech communities. Subject verb agreement and person making are grammatical concepts that ensure verbs match their subject in number and person. In English, this means that verbs change form to reflect whether the subject is singular as plural, and whether its first, second or their person (For example, I am (First person Singular) they are (third person plural)). The verb agreement and person making in Bodo and Nepali is not similar, the Bodo

verb agreement with person, number, gender and honorific level but in Nepali has lots of agreement with person, number, gender and honorific level. Both the languages verb agreement suffixes inflected with person, number, gender and honorific level and most of

**Objectives:**

The main objectives of this paper are given below-

1. To find out the verb agreement with tense Bodo and Nepali language.
2. To find out the different verb agreement number in both languages.
3. To find out the different similarities and dissimilarities of verb agreement with gender both languages.
4. To find out the different similarities and dissimilarities of verb agreement with honorific level both languages.

**Methodology:**

The present study adopts a descriptive analytical approach to examine and compare the verb agreement and person making in Bodo and Nepali. The data for this research are drawn from both primary and secondary sources, with primary reliance placed on secondary data. The methodological framework and analytical tools employed in this study are based on established secondary resources. Secondary data were collected through an extensive review of relevant literature available in various academic repositories, including the Bodoland University Library and the Department of Bodo Library at Bodoland University. In addition, data were gathered from a wide range of published materials such as books, journals, magazines, research articles, and conference papers. These sources provided a reliable foundation for the systematic description and comparative analysis of verb structures in the two languages.

**Verb Agreement and Person Making in Bodo language:**

Verb agreement is features of grammatical changes of form verb in the agreement of subject and sometimes in the object. Bodo verb has changes with verb agreement with subjects, objects in the person and numbers. Bodo verb has change with agreement person, number, Gender and case endings of the sentence. Like other language Bodo has three person and numbers (Singular and Plural)

Person	Singular	Plural
1st person	/aŋ/ I	/zwaŋ/we
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	/nwaŋ/ you /nwaŋ-thaŋ/	/nwaŋ-swaŋ/ you /nwaŋ-thaŋ-mwaŋ/
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	/bi/ he, she, it (non-hon) /bi-thaŋ/ Sing. Hon.	/bi-swaŋ/ they /bi-thaŋ-mwaŋ/ (Pl. Hon)

In the Bodo, there are three-person 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person and each person has separate words. The 1<sup>st</sup> person /aŋ/ I and /zwaŋ/ we, 2<sup>nd</sup> person /nwaŋ/ you and /-swaŋ/ is non- honorific plural marker suffixes of 2<sup>nd</sup> person and /-thaŋ/ is 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person honorific marker suffix, /-swaŋ/ is non-honorific plural marker and /-mwaŋ/ is plural honorific marker suffix. In Bodo verb agreement with subject honorific level and

these are also agreed with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural number honorific and non-honorific verb. Tense has no effect in verb agreement in the Bodo language.

**Verb Agreement and Person Making in Nepali language:**

Verb agreement is features of grammatical changes of form verb in the agreement of subject and object structure. Nepali verb has changes with verb agreement with subjects, objects in the person, number, gender and honorific level. Nepali verb has change with agreement person, number, Gender and case endings of the sentence. Like other language Bodo has three person and numbers (Singular and Plural)

Person	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> person	/m/ I	/hami/ we -
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	/ta/ you /timi/ you (Mid- Hon.) /tapai/ you (high-Hon.)	/timi-haru/ you (low-Hon.) /tapai-haru/ you (high-Hon)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	/u/ He/ She (low-Hon) /Uha/ He/she (high-Hon.)	/uni-haru/ They (low-Hon) /uha-haru/ they (high-Hon)

Verb agreements play an important role in person making in the Nepali language. Verb agreement and person making is the key feature in inflectional morphology in Nepali. Verb agreement plays an important role for person making in the grammatical process in the Nepali language where a verb changes its form to correspond with the subject of grammatical categories. There are three person as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person and each person has plural form and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> has also honorifics form. The 1<sup>st</sup> person /m/ I and /hami/ we, 2<sup>nd</sup> person /ta/, /timi/ (Mid Honorific), /tapai/ (High Honorific) you are pronoun form and /heru/ is plural marker honorific and non-honorific marker suffix in Nepali language. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person /u/, /uni/ he/she, /uni-heru/ and /uha-heru/ they low/high honorific plural pronoun in the Nepali language.

**Conclusion:**

On the basis of analysis undertaken the following conclusion on Bodo and Nepali verb agreement and person making can be drawn –

1. There are three types of three person and each person singular and plural form between the language like Bodo (Singular- ang/I, nwng/ you, bi/he/she and plural-zwng/we, nwngswr/you, biswr/they) and Nepali (Singular-ma/I, ta/, timi/, tapai/ you, u/uni/ he/she and uni/ uha/ they and uniheru/uhaeru) 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural form.
2. There are two honorific suffixes marker in Bodo (-thag, -mwn) and in Nepali three or more honorific pronoun (timi/tapai/ hajur,) and /-heru/ is plural honorific/non-honorific marker suffix.
3. There are two types of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person honorific marker suffixes in Bodo-/thag/, /-mwn/ but in Nepali there are three or more 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person honorific pronoun and also honorific level low/mid/high these are timi/tapai/hajur .

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30. Nepali verb agreement is complex, marking **person, number, gender, and honorifics** through suffixes on the verb stem, which must match the subject's properties (e.g., 'I eat' vs. 'you (respectful) eat'). Verbs agree with subjects, but also show agreement with objects or dative subjects in certain constructions, and use different endings for politeness (e.g., *ma khanchu* - I eat (neutral) vs. *tapai khanu huncha* - you (formal) eat).

### Key Aspects of Agreement

- Person & Number:** The verb changes endings for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person, and singular/plural.
  - khanchu* (I eat), *khanchau* (You (mid) eat), *khancha* (He/She eats).
- Honorifics:** A crucial part of agreement, distinguishing between neutral (*-chu*), medium (*-chau*), and high respect (*-huncha*).
  - Ma* (I) uses *khanchu* (neutral).
  - Timī* (You, informal) uses *khānchau* (medium respect).
  - Tapāī* (You, formal) uses *khānu huncha* (high respect).
- Gender:** Gender agreement (masculine/feminine) appears in some verb forms, especially third-person past tense or certain auxiliary verbs like *hunu* (to be).
  - Hun* (they, masc/plural) vs. *Chin* (she, fem).
- Ergativity (Split-Ergativity):** Nepali uses an ergative case marker (*-le*) with transitive verbs in the past tense, making agreement more complex (agreeing with the object or subject depending on tense/aspect).

### Example: Verb 'Hunu' (To Be/To Become)

The verb *hunu* clearly shows these distinctions:

- Present:** *hunchu* (I am), *hunchau* (You are), *huncha* (He/She/It is), *hunchan/hunchin* (They are).
- Past (Masculine):** *bhaeko* (was), *bhaekau* (you were), *bhaecho* (he was).

### Summary

Nepali verbs are highly inflected, encoding subject's person, number, gender, and level of respect, making the verb's ending a rich source of grammatical information.