Agreement with verbs in Chukchansi Yokuts

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Introduction

Agreement on verbs is common across languages; agreement with verbs or verbal features is almost unknown.

(Notable exception: Tiqą (Austronesian, Papuan New Guinea)—prepositions agree with verb in Tense/Mood (Collord and Gilbert 2005).)

Chukchansi Yokuts (Penutian, Central California) has intricate agreement with verbal features, but it has been entirely overlooked in the literature.

Only a handful of documented cases exist in texts.

(1) ša'ama? ša'um-ša'um makačiš? wi-liten-ša'tašn it-tan it that b-basket-roots'it woman keep-acc go-inf 'Burden-basket woman kept going' (Bowern and Gül 2013a:188)

(2) mejš-ša'tašn Call-it really-acc burn-acc 'He really burned' (Collord and Gilbert 2005:10)

Our goal is to provide the first complete description of this.

Morphosyntax of the Chukchansi verb

Chukchansi is an agglutinating language with a number of polysynthetic features:

- Basic VSO order with scrambling
- Monochordal Case marking
- Redundant argument assignment with a nihom (personal) prefix
- Broad to head movement of nihom in all open clauses

Agreement Data

We've found four words that agree with verbs

mejš-ša ‘really’ wi-liten-ša ‘keep—ing’

We must agree with the verb and cannot be conjointed with it:

(4) *[lihm-ša] mejš-ša’tašn pəy-a-e-ti run-inf really-acc child-acc.nom

(5) *[lihm-ša] ša’ama? mejš-ša’tašn pəy-a-e-ti run-inf and also really-acc child-acc.nom

Mejš-ša ‘really’

(6) xat-it mejš-ša eat-acc really-acc ‘He really ate. He ate a lot.

(7) mejš-ša’tašn č̓a-viš-tašn hoxti-tašn really-acc dog-acc bark-acc ‘The dog really barked’

(8) mejš-ša’tašn č̓a-viš-tašn č̓a-viš-tašn really-acc dog-acc really-acc ‘The ice is really melting’

Agreement with Passive, Causative, Desiderative

(9) mejš-ša’tašn xat-it-tašn guyača-tašn really-acc-xa-eit-acc-nom cookie-nom ‘The cookies were really eaten’

(10) mejš-ša’tašn xat-it-tašn yun-xa-eit-acc-nom pəy-a-n’iš-tašn really-acc-xa-eit-acc-nom really-acc-xa-eit-acc-nom ‘She really wanted to eat the child’

Narrow scope of ‘really’ shows up with Causative agreement


Broad scope of ‘really’ shows up without Causative agreement

(12) mejš-ša’tašn xat-it-tašn naš? pəy-a-hu-ya-tašn really-acc-xa-eit-acc-1 child-acc hu-ya-tašn ‘I really made the baby eat hu-ya.’

Functionally, the agreement serves to track the scope of modification

The agreeing item takes on the features of the heads that command it. (Modification via the Probe-Goal relation)

wi-liten- ‘keep—ing’

(13) ča-sa-viš-tašn wi-liten-tašn bii-tašn dog-acc keep-acc hide-acc ‘The dog kept hiding’

(14) pəy-a-e-ti wi-liten-tašn təl-əw-tašn kid-acc keep-acc burn-acc ‘The kids keep burning each other’

(15) mejš-ša’tašn pəy-a-e-ti wi-liten-tašn təl-əw-tašn really-acc dog-acc keep-acc burn-acc ‘The kids really kept burning each other’

haw- ‘why’

(16) haw-tašn daš? maš-widin-tašn why-xa-eit-acc-nom you-acc fall-acc ‘Why did you fall?’

(17) haw-tašn daš? maš-gon-xa-eit-acc-nom xat-aš-tašn why-xa-eit-acc-nom you-acc cook-acc food-acc ‘Why are you cooking the food?’

(18) haw-tašn daš? wi-liten-tašn bii-tašn why-xa-eit-acc-nom dog-acc hide-acc ‘Why did the dog keep hiding?’

Agreement in non-matrix environments

(19) mejš-ša lihm-šač̓-č̓ a-xo-n’tašn really-acc run-inf really-acc ‘While really running, the dog barked.’

What features agree

- Nonfinal verbal affixes:
  - CAUSATIVE
  - PASSIVE
  - DESIDERATIVE
  - CONTINUOUS ASP.

- Final affixes:
  - TENSE: -že (Recent past), -taš (Past)
  - Narrative past: -mə (Narrative past)
  - SUPP: -mag (Impérative), -taš (Hortitive)

- Processive: -ni

Directions for future research

We know of only four items that agree in verbal features: mejš- ‘really’, haw- ‘why’, wi-liten- ‘keep—ing’, bii-taš ‘start—ing’.

Why? Agreement on ‘really’ suggests a type of concord, though other adverbial elements do not agree with the verb. ‘Keep—ing’ and ‘start—ing’ may function as part of a serial verb construction with another predicate with which it agrees. Agreement on ‘why’ may be required by its status as a proposition level who-word; note that the verbal complex itself has propositional syntax. Further research may reveal other items in Chukchansi that exhibit agreement with verbs.

References


Acknowledgments

Niken Adisasmito-Smith is supported by a grant from the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians.

Poster template design by Colin Purrington.