

Verb Agreement in Tibeto-Burman Languages

Verb agreement = argument indexation = verbal
person marking = 人称范畴

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Common in languages of the world

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person marking = 人称范畴

Common in languages of the world

Not found in Chinese or Tibetan languages

A trace of verb agreement in English:

I sing.

She sing**s**.

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I sing.

She sing-**s**.

A verb in English has the -s suffix only when the subject is 3rd person.

We say that the -s in *sings* marks 3rd person agreement.

English does not have 1st or 2nd person
agreement.

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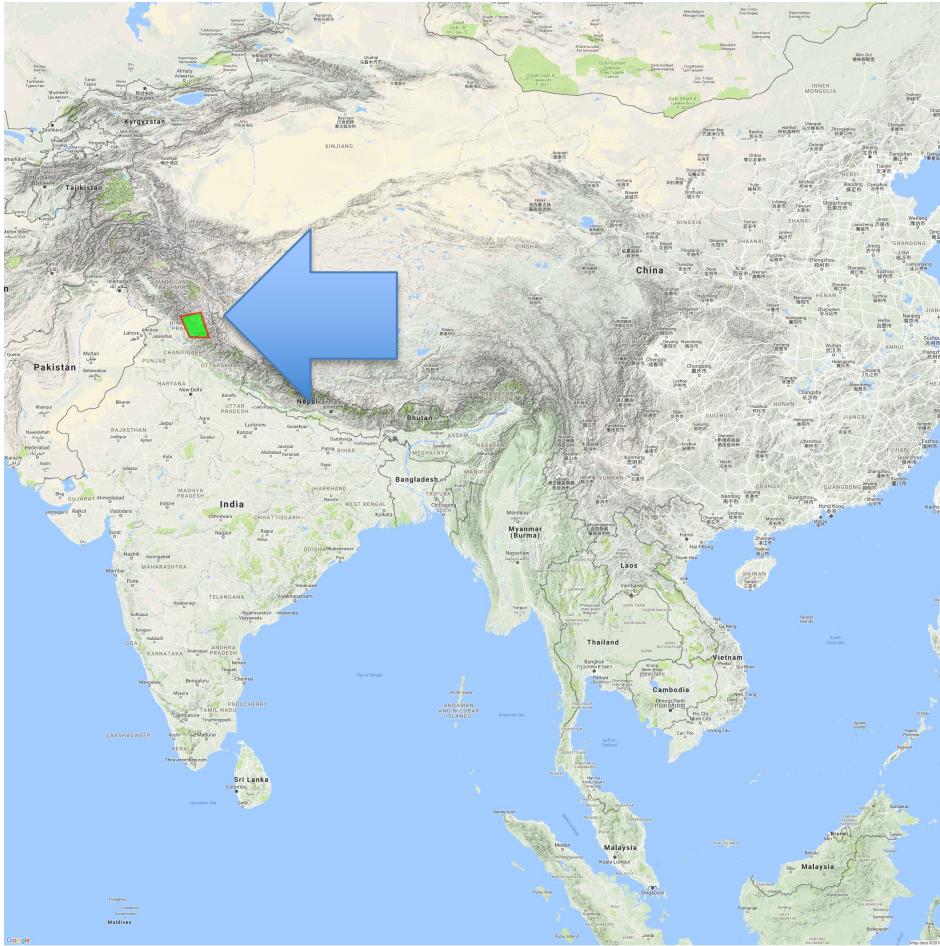
Many Sino-Tibetan languages do.

English does not have 1st or 2nd person agreement.

Many Sino-Tibetan languages do.

For example:

Kinnaur (West Himalayan branch)



Verb agreement in Kinnaur

gə piyarəs ni-ta-**k** ‘I will be a priest.’
I priest be-FUT-**1SG**

ki piyarəs ni-ta-**n** ‘You will be a priest.’
you priest be-FUT-**2SG**

nishi piyarəs ni-ti-**c** ‘We two will be priests.’
we2 priest be-FUT-**1DUAL**

kisha piyarəs ni-t-**e** ‘We (more than 2)will be priests.’
we priest be-FUT-**1PL**

Verb agreement in Kinnaur

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
1 st	VERB-k	VERB-c	VERB-me
2 nd	VERB-n	VERB-c	VERB-no
3 rd	not marked in Kinnaur		

Suffixes and prefixes

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But some languages use prefixes.

For example:

Verb agreement in Mizo (Kuki-Chin)

kabia ‘I am talking’

nabia ‘you are talking’

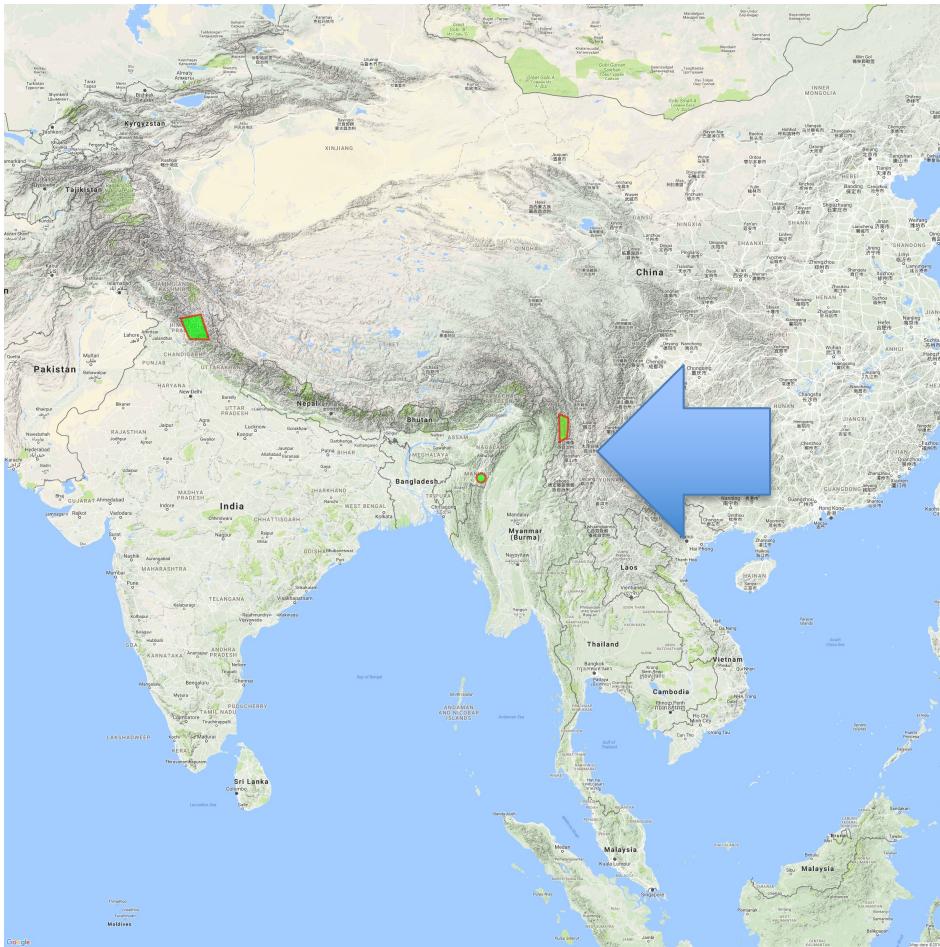
abia ‘he or she is talking’

Suffixes and prefixes

Some languages have both prefixes and suffixes.

For example:

Trung 独龙



Agreement in Trung 独龙

àŋ-lɛ́ *rū*-ŋ

he-OBJ carry-**1SG**

‘I carried him.’

àŋ-lɛ́ *nw*-rū

he-OBJ **2SG**-carry

‘**You** carried him.’

Agreement words

In some Sino-Tibetan languages the agreement morpheme is separate from the verb

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For example:

Agreement words in Jinghpaw 景颇

ngai MaNang-hpe
I MaNang-OBJ
'I beat MaNang.'

kayat ya **ngng**-ai
beat give 1SG-FINAL

nang MaNang-hpe
you MaNang-OBJ
'You beat MaNang.'

kayat ya **nd**-ai
beat give 2SG-FINAL

Shi MaNang-hpe
he MaNang-OBJ
'S/he beat MaNang.'

kayat ya ai
beat give FINAL

- Some Kuki-Chin languages of NE India and Myanmar have two complete sets of agreement markers

Old suffixes and new prefixes s in Kuki-Chin

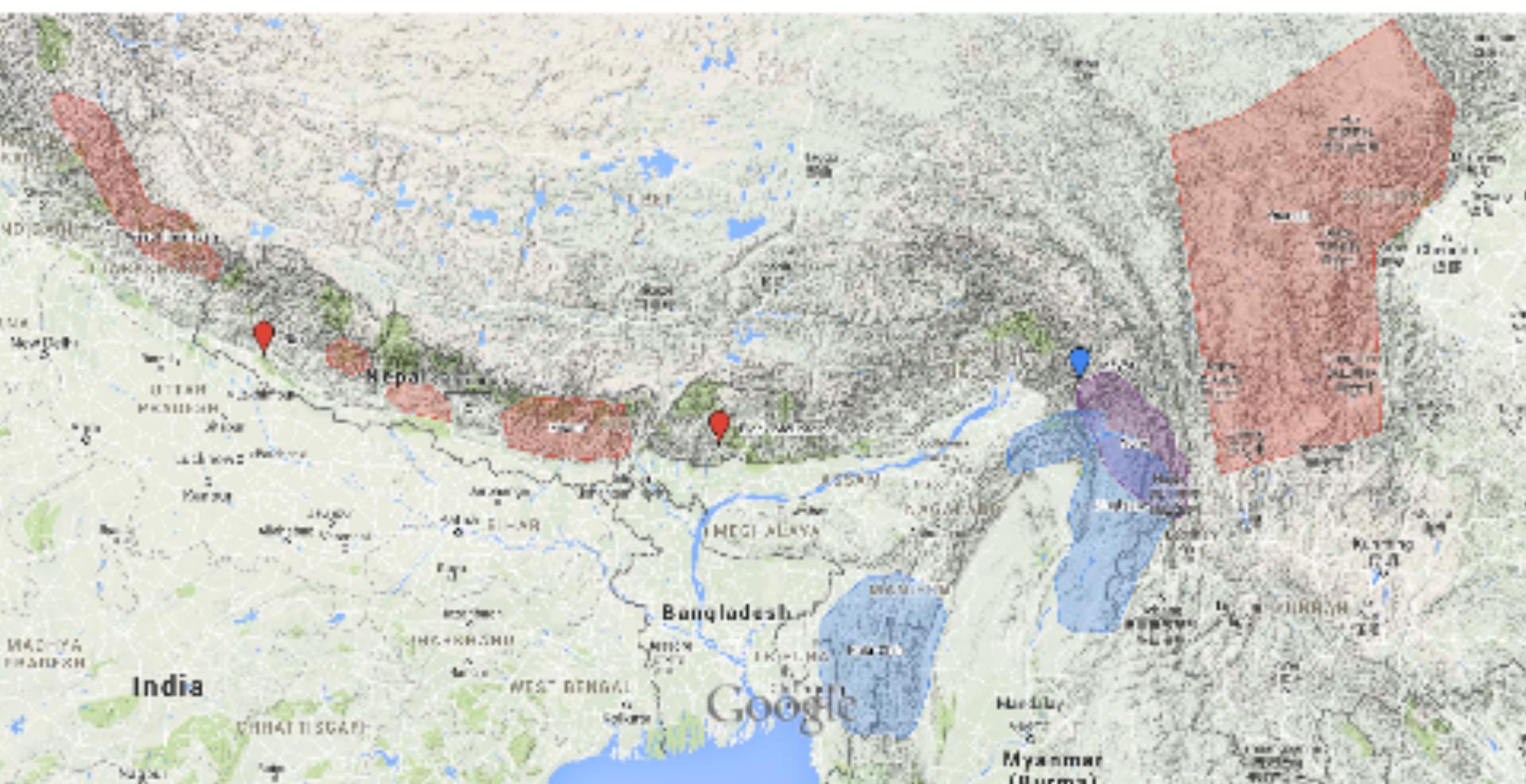
	old	new
1SG	$\Sigma \ i\eta$	$ka-\Sigma$
2SG	$\Sigma \ t\varepsilon\rho$	$na-\Sigma$
3SG	--	$a-\Sigma$
1PE	$\Sigma \ \grave{u}-\eta$	$ka-\Sigma \acute{u}\rho$
1PI	$\Sigma \ \grave{h}\grave{a}-\eta$	$i-\Sigma$
2PL	$\Sigma \ \acute{u}\rho \ t\varepsilon\rho$	$na-\Sigma \ \acute{u}\rho$
3PL	$\Sigma \ \acute{u}\rho$	$a-\Sigma \ \acute{u}\rho$

We find verb agreement in:

- rGyalrongic and Qiang (Sichuan)
- Nungic (northern Myanmar, Yunnan)
- Northern Naga (NE India / NW Myanmar)
- Kuki-Chin (NE India / NW Myanmar)
- Kiranti (eastern Nepal)
- Central Himalayan (central Nepal)
- West Himalayan (NW India)



Google ICSTLL SB



Hierarchical agreement

Hayu (Western Kiranti, Nepal)

buk-sʊ-ŋ

get.upINTR-PAST-1SG

‘I got up.’

pʊk-sʊ-ŋ

get.upTR-PAST-1SG

‘I got him up.’

OR

‘He got me up.’

Hierarchical agreement

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OR

‘He got **me** up.’

Hierarchical agreement

Rawang (Nungic, northern Myanmar)

ngà dī-ŋ *bØ-n̥g-à*
I go-**1SG** PFV-**1SG-PAST**
'I went'

rí-ŋ *dvr-à*
carry-**1SG** PAST
'I carried him.'

è-rí-ŋ *dvr-à*
INV-carry-**1SG** PAST
'He carried **me**.'

Hierarchical agreement

Hakhun Tangsa (Northern Naga, NE India)

ati kymy ηa lan r-γ. (inverse)

he SUB I beat PRES.INV-**1SG**

‘He beats **me**.’

ηa-bγ ati lapk^{hi} t-γ. (direct)

I-SUB he see PAST-**1SG**

‘**I** saw him.’

ati kymy ηa lapk^{hi} th-γ. (inverse)

he SUB I see PAST.INV-**1SG**

‘He saw **me**.’

Possessor agreement

Jinghpaw 景颇

na-a manang wa grai pyaw I-it d-ai
Your-GEN friend go very happy EP-**2SG** 2-FINAL

'Your friend is very happy'

shi nye-a baw-hpe adup ya I-iP-ai
He my-GEN head-OBJ hit give EP-**1SG**-FINAL
'He hit **my** head'

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

Khroskyabs ສ්‍රූෂ්‍ය or Lavrung 拉坞戎 (rGyalrongic, 四川)

ŋó æ-vÙ-ŋ 'I go up.'
I UP-go-1SG

ŋó ætà næ-vdá-ŋ 'I saw him.'
I he AOR-see₂-1SG

ætà-γə ŋó næ-u-vdá-ŋ 'He saw me.'
he-ERG I AOR-INV-see₂-1SG

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he-ERG I AOR-INV-see₂-**1SG**

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I UP-go-**1SG**

ŋó ætà næ-vdá-ŋ 'I saw him.'

I he AOR-see₂-**1SG**

ætà-γə ŋó næ-u-vdá-ŋ 'He saw me.'

he-ERG I AOR-INV-see₂-**1SG**

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

Nocte (Northern Naga, NE India)

$^1\etaaa$ kha $^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I go.’
I go 1SG

$^1\etaaa-^1m\varepsilon$ $^1? \Lambda^1te-^2n\Lambda\eta$ $vaat$ $^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I beat him.’
I-ERG he-OBJ beat 1SG

$^1? \Lambda^1te-^1m\varepsilon$ $^1\etaaa-^2n\Lambda\eta$ $vaat$ $^1h-\Lambda\eta$ ‘He beat me’
he-OBJ I-OBJ beat INV-1SG

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

Nocte (Northern Naga, NE India)

$^1\etaaa \ kha \ ^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I go.’
I go 1SG

$^1\etaaa-^1me \ ^1?A^1te-^2n\Lambda\eta \ vaat \ ^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I beat him.’
I-ERG he-OBJ beat 1SG

$?A^1te-^1me \ ^1\etaaa-^2n\Lambda\eta \ vaat \ ^1h-\Lambda\eta$ ‘He beat me’
he-OBJ I-OBJ beat INV-1SG

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

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$^1\etaaa \ kha \ ^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I go.’
I go 1SG

$^1\etaaa-^1me \ ^1\gamma\Lambda^1te-^2n\Lambda\eta \ vaat \ ^1\Lambda\eta$ ‘I beat him.’
I-ERG he-OBJ beat 1SG

$^1\gamma\Lambda^1te-^1me \ ^1\etaaa-^2n\Lambda\eta \ vaat \ ^1h-\Lambda\eta$ ‘He beat me’
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he-OBJ I-OBJ beat INV-1SG

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

Nocte (Northern Naga, NE India)

¹ηaa-¹mε ¹?Λ¹te-²nΛη vaat ¹Λη ‘I beat him.’
I-ERG he-OBJ beat 1SG

¹?Λ¹te⁻¹mε ¹ηaa-²nΛη vaat ¹**h-Λη** ‘He beat me’
he-OBJ I-OBJ beat INV-1SG

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

A verb is inverse if the subject is 3rd person, and the object is 1st or 2nd person

Hierarchical agreement with Inverse

A verb is inverse if the subject is 3rd person, and the object is 1st or 2nd person

Direct: I see him

You see him

Inverse: He sees me

He sees you

Local: I see you

You see me

Khroskyabs agreement and inverse

Obj Subj	1sg	1pl	2	3
1sg			$\Sigma\text{-}n$	$\Sigma\text{-}\eta$
1pl				$\Sigma\text{-}j$
2	$\text{u-}\Sigma\text{-}\eta$	$\text{u-}\Sigma\text{-}j$		$\Sigma\text{-}n$
3			$\text{u-}\Sigma\text{-}n$	$\text{u-}\Sigma$

The most complex verb agreement is found in
rGyalrong languages of Sichuan and Kiranti
languages of Nepal

Camling (Kiranti branch, Nepal)

A O		1			INC		2			3			
S	D	P	D	P	S	D	P	S	NS				
1	S						-na	-na-ci	-na-ni	-uŋa	-uŋ-c-uŋa		
	D								-c-ka				
	P								-um-ka	-um-c-um-ka			
I	D									-ci			
	P								-um	-um-c-um			
2	S	ta- -uŋa	ta- -c-ka	ta- -i-ka						ta- -u	ta- -u-cy-u		
	D	ta- -ci								ta- -ci			
	P	ta- -i								ta- -um	ta- -um-c-u-m		
3	S	pa- -uŋa	pa- -c-ka	pa- -i-ka	pa- -ci	pa- -i	ta- -a	ta- -ci	ta- -i	-u	-u-cy-u		
	D									pa- -ci			
	P									pa-	-u-cy-u		

Features of the Camling paradigm

- Hierarchical, dual/plural and inclusive/exclusive, includes prefixes & suffixes
- Ten morphemes, expressing person (*ta-* 2nd), number (-*ci* dual), person + number (-*uŋa* 1SG; -*i* 1PL.INC; -*ka* 1PL.EXC; -*ni* 2PL) person + role (-*u-* 3O), hierarchical relations (*pa-* 3→1/Inc and 3ns→3; -*na* 1→2), person + number + role (-*m-* 3PL.OBJ direct)

Jiaomuzu rGyalrong 脚木足 = རྩྭବླྷྱྭ

O	1SG	1DU	1PL	2SG	2DU	2PL	3SG	3DU	3PL
A									
1SG				ta-V-n	ta-V-	ta-V-	V-ŋ		
1DU				n-dʒ		j-n		V- dʒ	
1PL								V-j	
2SG							tə-V-w		
2DU	ko-V-	ko-V-	ko-V-j				tə- V- n-dʒ		
2PL	ŋ	dʒ					tə- V- j-n		
3SG	wu-V-ŋ	wu-V-dʒ	wu-V-j	to-V-n	to-V- n-d	to-V-j-n	V-w	V- n-d	V-j-n
3DU					3		V- n-dʒ		
3PL					3				V-j-n

Features of the Jiaomuzu paradigm

- Hierarchical, dual/plural but not inclusive/exclusive, includes prefixes & suffixes
- Nine morphemes, expressing person (*t*- 2nd), number (-*dʒ* dual, -*j* plural), person + number (-*ŋ* 1SG), person + role (-*n* 2O, -*w* 3O), hierarchical relations (*wu-* ~ -*o-* inverse; -*a-* 1→2; *k-* 2→1)

Verb agreement in Monsang

si ‘go’: Imperfective		Negative
1sg	si n-ì-ŋ	si-mà:ŋ
1pl:excl	si n-ù-ŋ	si-mà uŋ
1pl:incl	si me-né	si-mà mə
2sg	si ne-ts-ə	si-ma tsə
2pl	si né-ts ^w - ù	si-mà tswu
3sg	si nè	si-ma?
3pl	si he-né si ne-he	si-mà he

Bictantial agreement

Some languages mark both the subject and the object on the verb.

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For example:

Agreement in Mizo (Kuki-Chin)

S	O	1SG	2SG	3SG
A	1SG		ka- Σ <i>ce</i>	ka- Σ
i- Σ	2SG	mi- Σ (<i>ce</i>)		i- Σ
a- Σ	3SG	mi- Σ	a- Σ <i>ce</i>	a- Σ

Transitive agreement with singular arguments in Bawm

O	1SG	2SG	3SG/INT
A			R
1SG		<i>ka-nan</i>	<i>ka</i>
2SG	<i>na-ka</i>		<i>na</i>
3SG	<i>a-ka</i>	<i>a-nan</i>	<i>a</i>

Transitive agreement with singular arguments in Sizang

O	1SG	2SG	3SG/INT
A			R
1SG		<i>k-oŋ</i>	<i>ka</i>
2SG	<i>n-oŋ</i>		<i>na</i>
3SG	<i>hɔŋ</i>		<i>a</i>

Agreement indices with singular arguments in Hyow

O	1SG	2SG	3SG/INTR
A			
1SG		<i>ki-ni</i>	<i>kV-</i>
2SG	<i>(khrɔŋ-)nV-</i>		<i>nV-</i>
3SG	? <i>V-</i> / <i>khrɔŋ-</i>	<i>ni-</i>	--

Mara person-number agreement

O	1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3SG	3PL
A						
1SG			<i>ei cha</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>ei cha</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>ei</i> Σ	<i>ei</i> Σ <i>ei</i>
1PL				<i>ei-ma cha</i> Σ	<i>ei-ma</i> Σ	
2SG	<i>ei na</i> Σ <i>chi</i>	<i>ma-nia</i> <i>na</i> Σ			<i>na</i> Σ	<i>na</i> Σ <i>ei</i>
2PL	<i>ei na</i> Σ <i>ei chi</i>	<i>ma-nia</i> <i>na-ma</i> Σ			<i>na-ma</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>na-ma</i> Σ
3SG	<i>ei na</i> Σ	<i>ma-nia</i> <i>a</i> Σ	<i>a cha</i> Σ	<i>a cha</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>a</i> Σ	<i>a</i> Σ <i>ei</i>
3PL	<i>ei na</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>ma-nia</i> <i>a-ma</i> Σ	<i>a-ma</i> <i>cha</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>a-ma</i> <i>cha</i> Σ	<i>a-ma</i> Σ <i>ei</i>	<i>a-ma</i> Σ