KURMALI NOUN INFLECTION: ASPECTUAL INQUIRY INTO GENDER AND NUMBER

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ABSTRACT

Definitive is a word that the reviewers do not get to use very often. But it is a word that can be used without hesitation to describe a long imminent in this paper on the aspectual inquiry of Inflectional Noun morphology in Kurmali and restricted to nominal morphology, i.e. Gender and Number as grammatical categories. To subsume with a descriptive analysis of Kurmali phonetic data by digging through field study, it outlines the theoretical genesis of inflectional morphology which uses the ideas familiar from the word-and-paradigm model – inflection and stem. Before, it also discusses the linguistic ecology of Kurmali language. Finally, it shows that it is possible to analyse each of these categories in a natural way.

KEYWORDS: Inflectional Morphology, Noun Inflection, Kurmali – Gender and Number, Nominal Grammatical Category

INTRODUCTION

Inflectional Morphology

The concept morphology was first introduced by Professor August Schleicher, German linguist during 1850-1879. He claimed then that language is an organism exhibiting periods of development, maturity, and decline. So he studied the language by the methods of biological science and classified the system of language as per botanical taxonomy and tracing groups of related languages and arranged into genealogical tree (later retold as family-tree theory), which has been very useful for the purpose of historical and comparative linguistic theory (Schleicher, 1874: 4, as cited by Syllaba, 1995 in Booij, 2007; Wikipedia®, as modified till 22 Feb., 2014). While reflecting the various aspects, his romantic theory of language conjured up a springing ape and then species transformation. Such utterances, he mused, might have been the phonetic resources for primitive speech. Unfortunately the conservative considerations of Professor Schleicher's Linguistic Creation groaned any profound link in Nineteenth-Century Evolutionary Theory (Richards, 1987: 200-206) without reference against which he unquestioningly most widespread.

Aside from models of word composition, the formal treatment of morphology is critical to vocabulary development and ricochet the smallest building blocks for comprehension to any language. Usually, the linguistic constituent of morphology distinguishes between – inflectional and derivational (summarised by Spencer & Zwicky, 2001: 2-7). Inflectional morphology occupies an unusual position in language; it teeters the margins between lexicon and syntax in apparent defiance of definition thus draws distinction between the traditional grammatical called 'parts of speech' and word 'form-classes' (Lyons, 1981: 112-113; Anderson, 1985 & 1992). The basic meaning and part-of-speech changes that transformed from inflection (e.g., plural /-s/ or past /-ed/ in English) are largely constrained by the syntax of the root word and the morphed word are the same in language. The addition of affixation changes certain features of the root such as its

number or gender in case of nouns; number, gender, tense and (or) aspect for verbs as a major components of grammatical glue holding relationships in constructions (Palmer, 1971: 77-84; Crystal, 2003; Hamawand, 2011). It is true that affixes generally are the co-product of morphological rules, called word formation rules which are sensitive to features combined with lexical categories. In contrast, Derivational morphology refers to the derivation of new words with different meaning and possibly different part-of-speech from the root word through various morphological operations, which is of least concern here for our purpose.

This article assumes that there are three kinds of morphemes: lexical, derivational, and inflectional. The behaviour of these three morpheme types can be best understood within the context of constructions and focuses on the highly inflected Kurmali languages and to illustrate the discussions here.

Linguistic Ecology of Kurmali as the Native Language of Kurmis

Heritably, Kurmali is associated to Indo-Aryan language family and spoken in the eastern states of India. Having own no script and written literature, Kurmali elsewhere (either written in Devanagari Script or/and *Kurmāli* Chis Script: कुर्माली or कुरमाली, though Kaithi is also known) articulated as *Kurmāli* or *Kudmāli*. As the trade language it is otherwise known as *Panchparganiā* [see, Glottocode: kudm1238 or kyw/tdb, ISO 639-3] (cf. Lewis *et al.* 2014).

Earlier, when we date back to the origin of Kurmali, it is believed to be the native tongue of Kurmi/Kudumi people. Etymologically, though scholars differ as to whether the terms are synonymous with Kunbi. The plethora of intriguing, a richly-documented research made by Dr. George Abraham Grierson (1903/1967: 149) in his pioneer, *Linguistic survey of India* (during 1898-1927) it has affirmed that the speakers of Kurmali were found in all sides by boarder ranges and deeply fringed by various regions of Jharkhand, Bengal, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Alam (1996: 119) too has expressed the possibility that it is mainly used in Tamar, Silli, Baranda, Hazaribag, Chotonagpur and Bundu areas of Jharkhand State. Grierson (ibid.: 146, 147 & 327) maintained that there were nearly 40, 000 Kurmi-inhabitant of Odisha, speaking a form of Western Bengali, though the other Aryan speaking inhabitants of that area are having Odia as their native language.

Demographically, although it is arduous to derive the exact users in the most linguistically diverse country like India, still then we have observed some averred efforts have been made to identify the numerous languages spoken as mother tongues (Pereltsvaig, 2012). One of such attempts is obviously the enumeration of languages by the Government of India. Beside the censuses enumeration, Lewis *et al.* (17th ed., 2014: 110 & 251) at *Ethnologue*® noted about 310, 000 Kurmali speakers; whereas the results of Indian Census-2001 conflate some 425, 920 abstract speakers under Hindi as Kurmali Thar and of Bihari (Behari) dialects: Kurmali Thar; Magahi (see also, *LC Linked Data Service* of *Library of Congress*; *Census of India*, 2001). Well, the term "dialect" is not used in the India's census enumeration except the number of languages/mother tongues spoken by people were collected as respondent based at Census 2001. However, Kurmali language is still un-standardised and vigorously used among all generations (see, e.g. Lewis *et al.*, 2014: 110 & 251) and there may be multiple standard dialects associated with a single language and dependent on the user's frame of reference. Thus, quite interestingly for the first time, the neighbouring country Nepal too enumerated of having 99.26 cumulative Kurmali speakers as their Mother Tongue in Nepal Census-2001 (as cited in Yadav, 2007).

Eminent ethnographers and linguists have claimed on the evaluation and interpreted the origin of Kurmali

language in different ways. The term 'tribal' one may mean as primitive, undeveloped, etc. and their language are apparently without grammar speech, which is a misnomer, as Pattanayak (1995) opine. According to Professor V.C Māhane, "Kurmali is a form of that language which is spoken in Sheoneri, the birth place of Shivaji and its neighbouring villages (as cited in Mohānta Burmā, 1986)". Māhāto (1983: pref.) says, "Kurmali is a lingua-franca of Chotonagpur or broadly speaking of Jharkhand. It is most ancient and mother of other dialectical languages known as Nagpuria, Golwary, Sadani (Sadri), Panch Pargania, Sikhria, Mathuary, Chhattisgari Habli, and Bagheli". Basanta K. Mohanta (2011: 23) has a different view about Kurmi tribe. He attributed them as Kudumi (Kudmi/Kurmi) and inhabitant of Jharkhand, part of West Bengal (Purulia, Bankura and Midnapur) and Orissa (Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar). However, Annamalai (1996: 51-52) avowed concern that like [the Kurmali] many other tribal languages/dialects in India are loosing their roots and hence they need to be put in the priority-list for preservation due to the growing influence of English, Hindi and a few other languages.

Descriptive Case Study

Although there are several principles of morphological analysis[1] to deal with the language data but to our objective this paper is primarily a descriptive analysis on the noun inflection formed in Kurmali – the nominal inflectional (grammatical) categories such as Number and Gender and accounts for morphological properties with special emphasis on their semantic significance. This has been – maybe unfairly – neglected earlier in the available body of literature. The secondary goal is that to help, by a study to enrich the grammar building evidence on the same language (Booij *et al*., 2006: 2).

Certainly, an elaborated explanation for the purpose as what hopefully will be benefited is presented alongside. It may not be the first attempt but the clear purpose of the work is not to be unimportant. If it would fail to do, then that would be quite ironic giving the fact that the secondary goal, just as important as the first is an attempt to lay a brick (or at least a pebble) in the bridge between Kurmali Grammar and Lexicography. It will shed some light on the linguistics' scholars – or "amalgamations" – in language and the linguistics world.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A great deal of research by eminent scholars have been consulted to evolve a theoretical framework for this paper on the inflectional morphology especially with various Indian languages/dialects that have been carried out, but much of them are bearing on other aspects in Kurmali literature but not on the language particular. For example, at least few ambitious research studies (as the nomenclature of their titles suggest) have been done on the developmental sequences which are unavailable in print-offset to emphasise (see e.g. Singh, 1962; Māhāto, 1982; Māhto, 1985), and that can not be too predictive unfortunately as what have been done in them. As noted earlier, Kurmali is neither taught as a subject nor used as the medium of instruction in the school. There are no grammar books or any good dictionaries printed. However, we notice a tiny dictionary prepared by Kshudiram Māhāto (1983) and few other publications of him. But to dismay, none of those printed-works (Māhāto, 1973, 1982) are available except the digitized version made by University of California and Stanford University during 2007-2009 for restricted use. Recently, an important theoretical contribution by Alice Louise Davison (2002) investigated the typologically relevance in verb agreement systems on the difference between

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[1] See for greater comprehension to Aronoff & Fudeman. (2010: 12-21) and a basic detail summarisation available at http://linguistics.ucla.edu/people/schuh/LX105/105_00lectures/003_priciples_basic.pdf

standard Hindi/Urdu and Kurmali. She brings up a contrastive distinction that the Kurmali verb may have multiple morpheme agreement markers, each referring to different single agreement antecedents in Hindi/Urdu/Nepali (Indo-Aryan languages) which occurs only with tense, not on the aspect forms in Kurmali with few other Indo-Aryan languages, as Davison (2002: 27–57) observed. Although, this evidence is today generally accepted as the in most used reference, but it has not settled all aspectual inquiries in details, particularly to Kurmali language.

Since we do not see any morpheme agreement markers on the noun inflection in their works so more study is highly required by digging data through field study as to find the exact inflection such as Gender and Number in Kurmali.

MODUS OPERANDI

As a default purpose, this study primarily presents an analysis, based upon unexplored data gleaned from a small number of informants through field work after reviewing the secondary sources as available in published references and websites, synthesizing the information then bringing it to the conclusions in the theoretical prospectives. Note that the phenomena in question also are by no means isolated or marginal data. Selectively on a simple random sampling, data have been initially collected from (1) Mr. Nurbasha Ranjan Mohānta (aged about 48 years) in 1987, but verified recently in 2011 to avoid inferences with (2) Ms. Jaya Mahanta, (3) Mr. Mathur Mahto (both aged about 21 years) and (4) Mr. Ganesh Mahato (aged about 19 years). They belong to Kurmi families. Whereas, the first informant is a native of village Tangabilan in the district of Mayurabhanj, Odisha; the second/third belong to Chotanagpur region in Jharkhand and the fourth, an inhabitant from Singhbhum district in West Bengal. Apart from native speaking Kurmali, all informants are highly educated and proficient in Hindi and English.

The whole approach here is a descriptive analysis of the nominal grammatical category adopted the position broached in Nida (1976 [1946]), Hockett (1947/1966, 1958/1970) to inflectional morphology, such as word-paradigm model references (e.g. Block & Trager, 1972; Matthews 1974; Anderson, 1985, 1992: 51-56; Stump, 2001; Davison, 2002; Sutton, 2010: 57-58).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Differentially, languages may coffer meaning in their own ways, but ultimately all languages are able to convey all possible meanings. In Roman Jakobson's words, 'All cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language' and 'languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey' (1959: 234, 236; emphasis in original). Choices in language can be expressed grammatically or lexically, depending on the type and range of linguistic resources available in a given language. Grammar is organized along two main dimensions: morphology and syntax. Morphology covers the structure of words, the way in which the form of a word changes to indicate specific contrasts in the grammatical system (Palmer, 1971: 14, 53). The morphological structure of a language determines the basic information which must be expressed in that language. It is also considered that the result of a number of different forces crucially may have opposing effects (Booij & Marle, 1986: 490; Stump, 2001). Similarly, the grammatical pattern of a language (as opposed to its lexical stock) determines those aspects of each experience that have to be expressed in the given language (Jakobson, 1959: 235-6; Mathews, 1974; Aronoff, 1994). The constituent words of a paradigm are differentiated from one another which are known as morphological processes (Block & Trager, 1972: 56; Stump, 2001). Importantly, there are five kinds may be distinguished in the process of Affixation; Internal change; Compounding; Suppletion; Zero-modification. Inflectional Categories such as noun which refers to the grammatical

categories that generally consider: 1. Number, 2. Gender, 3. Case, and 4. Person (cf. Aronoff, 1994; Anderson, 1984, 1992; Stump, 2001; Sutton, 2010).

Gender

In the foregoing paragraphs we have made a general summation about the theoretical prospective on the morphological resources as to how those are useful in a sense to attest noun inflection, grammatical structure and categories that determined to the language specific construction as frame of reference (Nida, 1976 [1946]; Block & Trager, 1972: 56; Booij & Marle, 1986; Stump, 2001). Now, let's turn our discussion on to how those impulses affect Kurmali language in proper.

Normally, Gender is a grammatical distinction in which a noun or pronoun is classified as masculine or feminine in several languages (Palmer, 1971: 79; Corbett, 1991). As stated earlier, it is logically independent of any particular semantic association that might be established between the gender of a noun and physical or other properties of the persons or objects denoted by the noun (see Robins 1964: 263-265). Its distinctions in the case of human referents are not arbitrary, and that for instance, suggests what is important in communication is the pronominal function of gender rather than the category of gender in 'natural'. The pronominal function of gender reflects a genuine, non-arbitrary distinction between male and female, as John Lyons (1968: 284) emphasised.

Gender Inflection

Kurmali makes two gender distinctions that are the connection between biological category 'sex' and the grammatical category 'gender'. The natural sex distinctions determine the Kurmali gender distinctions. Besides this, it has natural gender also which exhibits the sex of the noun, like 'masculine and feminine'.

It is found that Kurmali has grammatical gender that is agrees with the noun and verb. The following are the examples of Kurmali grammatical gender:

Table 1

(1)	/*betā ʧɔtā jāesāhe*/	The boy is going
(2)	/*beti ʧʰəti jāesāhi*/	The girl is going
(3)	/*gā ʧʰtā bələ heigelik*/	The tree has grown up
(4)	/*ləʈāti bələ heigeli*/	The creeper has grown up
(5)	/*ehe pĩmptā/ ɖerəmtā mərhekek*/	This is my drum
(6)	/*ehe tiɳti mər heki*/	This is my tin

From the above examples, we see that /*betā*/ is male and /*beti*/ is female gender in sex. But /*gāʧʰtā*/, /*pĩmptā*/ and /*ləʈāti*/, /*tiɳti*/ have no sex. In this case, the former two are masculine and the later two are feminine in gender. Therefore, we find that both grammatical gender and natural genders are available in Kurmali language where the gender is determined by the form of noun except in very few cases we find noun with grammatical gender.

Considering the above, it can be said that Kurmali had grammatical gender earlier which has lost its existence sporadically, due to the contact and convergence with other languages. There are also some signs of forming the feminine and masculine nouns in Kurmali. The feminine words used in Kurmali are completely different from the corresponding

masculine words in the case of animal, parent, etc. See below some of the illustrated examples:

Table 2

Masculine Word(s)	Gloss	Feminine Word(s)	Gloss
/hāliā/ and /bərəd/	Bullock	/gāy/	Cow
/kukur/	Male dog	/kuṭi/	Female dog
/bāp/	Father	/mãy˜/	Mother
/purus/	Husband	/bəhu/	Wife

After analysing the whole data, we find that there are five feminine gender suffix markers which are added to the masculine stems in order to derive feminine forms. These markers are generally referred as the by-product of morphological rules which are sensitive to features associated with the lexical categories. The suffix markers are as follows:

(1) /–ān/, (2) /–in/, (3) /–āin/, (4) /–i/, (5) /–ni/

Feminine markers are derived forms of masculine in Kurmali. Such derived forms of feminine nouns are as follows:

Table 3

Masculine Word(s)	Gloss	Feminine Word(s)	Gloss
/nāṭi/	Grandson	/nāṭin/	Grand daughter
/śəsur/	Father-in-law	/śās/	Mother-in-law
/sālā/	Brother-in-law	/śāli/	Sister-in-law

It is clearly shown that only in case of adjective the gender marker /–i/ is added to the masculine form to derive feminine form. For example:

Table 4

Masculine Word(s)	Gloss	Feminine Word(s)
/kālā/	Deaf	/kāli/
/ʧətā/	Lame	/ʧəti/
/bulhā/	Old man/woman	/bulhi/

From the above such paradigms, /–ā/ is the marker of masculine gender and /–i/ is the marker of feminine gender for adjectives. It is also a morphological condition which determines suffix marker when added to the adjective noun stems. The other suffixes like. /–āin/, /–in/ and /–ni/ are added with the masculine stem when /– Φ/ occurs finally in masculine. For example:

Table 5

Masculine Word(s)	Gloss	Feminine Word(s)
/kumʰər + Φ/	Potter	/kumʰər + in/
/dāktər + Φ/	Doctor	/dāktər + āin/
/ʧər + Φ/	Thief	/ʧər + ni/

After analysing the given data, it has become difficult to bring forth any farm of inflectional rules on the adding of suffixes to the masculine gender. Likewise, it is very difficult to predict or classify their distribution either semantically or phonologically. As a result of which, it can not be listed since suffix markers do not depend on the stem. What we usually find the suffixes are not added on the basis of phonemic/syllabic structure to the stem or drifting unusually.

Number

Universally, the way we count is probably the same everywhere as it can rightly be accessible to all human beings and articulated as a lexical structure in any language. Number is indicated, although normally, by means of adding a word such as 'several' or a numeral such as 'one' or 'three' to the noun, rather than by changing the form of the noun itself. On the whole, the grammatical structure of a language remains fairly constant throughout the lifetime of an individual, where one encounters new words, expressions, and collocations on a daily basis deviant of grammatical rules by speakers (Palmer, 1971: 78 & 81; Corbett, 2000; Stump, 2001).

However, all languages do not have a grammatical category of number, and even not necessarily may pose in same forms for their counting system (Palmer, 1971: 82). This distinction has to be expressed morphologically, by adding a suffix to a noun or by changing its form in order to indicate whether it refers to one or more than one (Block & Tagger, 1942/1972). Generally, the number system by which the grammatical categories get affected is as follows:

- Substantive (nouns)

- Finite verbs

- Adjectives when used as nouns.

In Kurmali, the singularity is indicated by using a word with the stem. This may be exemplified as follows:

Table 6

(1)	*//ektā ʧʰəā/* a boy	(2)	*/ ektā beti ʧʰəā/* a girl
(3)	*/ʧʰətā/* a boy	(4)	*/beti ʧʰəāti/* a girl

Number Inflection

The singular number in Kurmali is unmarked and there is no suffix to denote it. For example:

Table 7

Singular	Gloss
/siŋ/	Lion
/gāʧʰ/	Tree
/mānus/	Human

Whereas, plural number is marked by adding the plural suffixes, like: */–gilā/*, */–gā/* and */–rā/*. Out of these, most often used plural suffix */–gilā/* is added in the stem [+ animate] nouns. */–gā/* is added where the stem is [– animate] noun. And

suffix /–rə/ is added with the stem pronoun. Therefore, in fact, there are crucial differences, which render the functional account inadequate to deal with the system of number inflections of gender system in Kurmali. Considering the above fact, the following are some of the examples can be examined more closely.

- There are [+ animate] noun stems to which /–gilā/ is normally added and [– animate] noun stems to which /–gā/ is added. The following examples show-how suffix /–gilā/ is only added in order to derive the plural number.

1.	/gāy/ '	cow'	pl.>	/gāy–gilā/	> /gāygilā/
2.	/bərəd/	'bullock'	pl.>	/bərəd–gilā/	> /bərədgilā/
3.	/jəñtu/	'animal'	pl.>	/jəñtu–gilā/	> /jəñtugilā/
4.	/ gāʧʰ/	'tree'	pl.>	/gāʧʰ–gilā/	> /gāʧʰgilā/
5.	/sãp/ '	snake'	pl.>	/sãp–gilā/	> /sãpgilā/
6.	/kʰirā/	'cucumber'	pl.>	/kʰirā–gilā/	> /kʰirāgilā/
7.	/ləā/	'gourd'	pl.>	/ləā–gilā/	> /ləāgilā/

The /–gā/ is only added in this table in order to denote the plural number.

8.	/bow/	'female cat'	pl.>	/bow–gā/	> /bowgā/
9.	/bilāe/	'male cat'	pl.>	/bilāe–gā/	> /bilāegā/
10.	/ kāḷā/	'male buffalo'	pl.>	/kāḷā–gā/	> /kāḷāgā/
11.	/kukurʧʰəā/	'puppy'	pl.>	/kukurʧʰəā–gā/	> /kukurʧʰəāgā/
12.	/siyārā/	'jackal'	pl.>	/siyārā–gā/	> /siyārāgā/
13.	/beŋ/	'frog'	pl.>	/beŋ–gā/	> /beŋgā/
14.	/məkā/	'maize'	pl.>	/məkā–gā/	> /məkāgā/
15.	/budā/	'bush'	pl.>	/budā–gā/	> /budāgā/

In the below mentioned table either suffix /–gilā/ or /–gā/ is added to derive full form of plural number.

16.	/heliā/	'bullock'	pl.>	/heliā–gā/	> /heliāgā/
				/heliā–gilā/	> /heliāgilā/
17.	/šérʰə/	'ox'	pl.>	/šérʰə–gā/	> /šérʰəgā/
				/šérʰə–gilā/	> /šérʰəgilā/
18.	/nāk/	'nose'	pl.>	/nāk–gā/	> /nākgā/
				/nāk–gilā/	> /nākgilā/

19. /bəhi/   'book'   pl.>   /bəhi–gā/   > /bəhigā/

                                    /bəhi–gilā/   > /bəhigilā/

20. /ehe/   'these'   pl.>   /ehe–gā/   > /ehegā/

                                    /ehe–gilā/   > /ehegilā/

21. /əhe/   'those'   pl.>   /əhe–gā/   > /əhegā/

                                    /əhe–gilā/   > /əhegilā/

- In the case of personal pronoun /–rā/ suffix is added to the base to form the pluralised words, for example:

Table 8

Singular	Gloss	Plural	Gloss
/mə̃ỹ/	I/me	/həm–rā/	Our
/ţə̃ỹ/	You/your	/ţəh–rā/	You/your
/ə̃ỹ/	S/he	/əkʰ–rā/	They

Number Verb Concord

The Kurmali number is categorised into two classes, i.e. singular and plural. That is to say that the number concord between subject (noun) and finite verbs is significant with some difference while the sentences are concord. The instances of such cases are as follows:

Table 9

(1)	/ektā ʧʰəā āuesāhe/ "A boy is coming"	(4)	/beti ʧʰərā āoʰəţ/ "Girls are coming"
(2)	/ʧʰərā āoʰəţ/ "Boys are coming"	(5)	/ektā gāɖi āue [or] āhuek/ "A bus is coming"
(3)	/ektā betiʧʰəā āuesāhi/ "A girl is coming"	(6)	/gāɖigilā āoʰəţ/ "Buses are coming"

As per the above entity, we can confine to construct some rules, which are mentioned below:

- The number concord between subject (noun) and finite verbs is significant where it is marked by /āuesāhi/ and /āoʰəţ/ as in the sentence (1) and (2), above.

- In case of plural, the form of finite verb the number /āoʰəţ/ is same in human beings and inanimate objects, as mentioned in (2), (4) and (6) sentences.

- It is also noticed that the form of finite verb differs in case of inanimate singular to plural, as in sentences (5) and (6).

Another point about the relation arise, the number inflections in Kurmali can be seen that the distribution of the suffix /–gā/ and /–gilā/ is very difficult to determine and to trace out the environment in which both are attached. Further, it is hard to predict the forms wherein the rules concentrate for the concordance of number-verb agreement in Kurmali.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary concern of this discussion has been a descriptive analysis of the transcribed spoken data on the noun inflection of nominal function: gender and number in which morphological structure may be manifested. Plausibly, the analysis of the overall findings can be summarised below.

It can be said that Kurmali has natural gender and grammatical gender, where natural gender is determined by the sex of the noun and grammatical gender agrees with the noun and verb, as far as gender is concerned. We observed that the Kurmali had the grammatical gender earlier but progressively lost its use, due to the contact and convergence of other languages.

The morphological composition of Kurmali is found to have two kinds of genders, which refers to masculine and feminine. Feminine words are completely different from the corresponding masculine forms which subsume with the words, animals and parents referents. There are few feminine suffix markers which make the feminine forms when added to masculine stems. It becomes very difficult to construct any definite rule for suffix fixation to masculine gender or to classify the distinction either semantically or phonologically. Because the gender suffixes are not added on the basis of phonemic or even syllabic structure to the stems. Since in morphology the gaps and irregularities are ubiquitous, so we take the impossibility of the forms to be a morphological fact (see § 4.1.1).

Similarly, Kurmali has two numbers, denoted as singular and plural. Singularity is indicated by using a word which means one word stem. Generally, the singular number is unmarked and no suffix is attached with the stem. Whereas, plural number is denoted by adding plural suffixes with the singular stems. In the case of [+ animate] noun stems /–gilā/ is added and /–gā/ is added with [+ animate] noun stems. Exceptionally /–rā/ is added only with pronoun stem (see § 4.2.1).

Like other associated languages in the language family, Kurmali has pronominal function of nominal grammatical categories. However, it has become difficult to formulate the distribution of suffixation rules for concordance making with number and verb agreement though the number inflections in gender system are independent in Kurmali. The same is also in the case of concordance between subject (noun) and finite verbs in the sentences where the speakers use different suffixes for different words to convey complete meaning as per their wish in different situations. For the time being, we are left with one clear aspectual inquiry in which a structure involving the claim is significant to the morphology/phonology interface and this is a first step towards answering the broader across - linguistic questions that have been raised.

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