A Descriptive Analysis of Tense and Aspect in Sadri

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Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing verbal suffixes in Sadri with special focus on tense and aspect inflections. The Sadri past tense and the future tense are marked by morphemes **/**-l-/ and /-b-/ respectively. But, there are some exceptions found in imperfective and perfective aspects in the past tense which are marked with or without the past tense marker /-l-/. The future tense marker /-b-/ is absent in the third person singular in all aspects. Likewise, the perfective aspect morpheme in Sadri is /-y ~ -i-/. The perfective aspect morpheme **/**–y/ gets attached to the vowel ending verbs and /–i-/ get inserted in the consonant ending verbs. The Sadri imperfective is marked by morpheme /-at ~ -t **/**. The morpheme / -t / is attached to the vowel ending and /-at / to the consonant ending verbs.

Keywords: Sadri, Indo-Aryan, Chota Nagpur, agglutinative, tense, aspect

1.0. Introduction
1.1 Tribal Groups in Chota Nagpur

The Chota Nagpur region is filled with many indigenous tribal groups viz. Mundari, Ho, Santhal, Kharia, Oraon, Kisan. They speak different aboriginal languages within their own community. They use Sadri as the lingua franca among the other tribal groups. This language has become the link between these groups. Sadri is used in all most all the village functions like, village meetings, worship at church and for other occasions. It is because the villages comprise of all these above mentioned tribal groups in this region. Sadri has become more dominant over a period of time within these communities. As a result, Sadri language is taking over the aboriginal languages. Many Munda, Oraon and other tribal children and the parents have acquired Sadri as the first language in todays' generation.

1.2 Brief history on Sadri

The Sadri language has very lively history in Chota Nagpur plateau. In the words of Bukaut (1906: 4 quoted in Keshari 2012: 17) "if the archaic character of Nagpur is considered, it throws the advent into Chota Nagpur of Aryan colonists (Sadans) far back in history". The history is backed with the first king of Nagvanshi dynasty Phani Mukut Rai who had built the Sun temple in Sutiyambe near Pithoria in first century. Pithoria was the capital of Chota Nagpur founded by Phani Mukut Rai from the Nagvanshi dynasty. This was the capital for the tribal king Maharaja Madra Munda, the Munda king earlier in 500 B.C. Also the Mahamaya temple in the village of Hapamuni at Ghaghra station and the Tanginath temple at Gumla were built in the beginning of tenth century (Keshari 2012: 18). During their ruling period, Nagvanshi dynasty used Sadri as the state language (Rajbhasa). Every other political speech to the gathering was made in Sadri which was more convenient and communicating. It was even promised by the political parties that Sadri would be made the state language, when the new state Jharkhand is established. But, it was Hindi,

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which got the status of state language in Jharkhand. The above history along with the evidences shows that the Aryans are here since long period and have harmonized with the other tribal groups in this region.

1.3 Sadri Language

Sadri language comes under the Indo-Aryan language family which is spoken in the Chota Nagpur plateau. It has moved out from this region to some parts of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha and to Assam. According to the Census of India Report 2001, there are 2,044,776 Sadri speakers in India.

Navarangi (1965: 5) states that "Sadani/Sadri originated as the mother tongue of the Sadan, an Aryan group amongst the Non-Aryans in Chota Nagpur Plateau". The Sadans, an Aryan group, consists of communities like; Teli, Ghansi, Jhora, Lohra, Bhokta, Keuta, Kumhar, Ahir, etc.

Sadri is called by many different names according to the regions, as it is listed by Simons et al. (2017) Chota Nagpuri, Dikku Kaji, Ganwari, Gauuari, Gawari, Goari, Jharkhandhi, Nagpuri, Nagpuria, Sadan, Sadana, Sadani, Sadari, Sadati, Sadhan, Sadhari, Sadna, Sadrik, Santri, Siddri, Sradri.

Grierson (1903: 42) mentioned that the "Bhojpuri has three main varieties – the standard, the western and Nagpuri". In the western studies Sadri is considered as the dialect of Bhojpuri (Peterson (n.d.)). Rev. Bukaut (1906) has different view in this regard; by saying that Sadri must be considered as a fourth form of Bihari (Keshari 2012: 218). It was Grierson who discussed about the Nagpuri as the eastern Magahi. Due to which the census report of 1961 classified Nagpuri together with the eastern Magahi (Grierson 1903). Finally, the census of India report 2001 has put Sadri under the dialect of Hindi.

2.0 Tense in Sadri

The tense is indicated by the forms of a verb which carries the information about the time of an action. The verbs carry the information of tense, aspect, mood, person, number, gender and honorificity of the subject. Payne (1997: 234) states tense as "it is associated with the sequence of events in real time, aspect with the internal temporal "structure" of situation while mode relates the speaker's attitude toward the situation or the speaker's commitment to the probability that the situation is true".

2.1 Present Tense

Koul (2008: 105) opines that, "the present tense represents an ongoing action, a habitual, repeated or characteristic action, or simply expresses a fact". There is no specific present tense marker in Sadri. For example:

(a) *mɔ̃y   khaɔn/ khaɔna*
       1SG.   eat.1SG. HAB.
     "I eat".

(b) *hame /hamreman   khail/ khaila*
       1PL.   eat.1PL.HAB.

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"We eat".

(c)   *mɔ̃y*   *jat*   *hɔ̃*
       1SG.   go.IPFV be.1SG.
       "I am going".

(d)   *u*   *cay*   *bana*   *he*
       3SG.(DIST.) tea   make.PFV. be.3SG.
       "S/he has made tea".

The morphemes after the verbs are the information about person, number and honorificity in the present tense. As it is seen in the examples above, /kha-/ 'eat', in /kha-ɔn / "I eat", / kha-il / "we eat", /jat hɔ̃/ "I am going" and/ bana he / "S/he has made".

2.2 Past Tense

The past tense grammatically marks the action that has been completed in the past. According to Comrie (1985: 39) "…the past tense only locates the situation in the past, without saying anything about whether that situation continues to the present or into the future, although there is often a conversational implicature that it does not continue to or beyond the present." The morpheme /-l-/ is the past tense marker in Sadri. For example:

(a)   *ʈiʈɔ*   *ghar*   *chɔṛlak*
       Tito   home   leave.PST.3SG.
       "Tito left home".

(b)   *mɔ̃y*   *khalɔ̃*
       1SG.   eat.PST.1SG.
       "I ate".

(c)   *ʈiʈɔ*   *randhat*   *rahe* /*rahlak*
       Tito   cook.IPFV.   be.PST.3SG. /be.PST.3SG
       "Tito was cooking".

(d)   *uman*   *suit*   *rahãy/ rahlãy*
       3PL.   sleep.PFV.   be.PST.3PL. /be.PST. 3PL.
       "They had slept".

The past tense marker /-l-/ is less frequently observed in the progressive and past perfect tense. There is an exception that the **be**+ verb /rah- / carries the past tense information along with the person number and honorific information without the availability of /–l- / the past tense morpheme. The **be**+verb /rah-/ may or may not take the past tense morpheme /–l- /. The verbs in the example above (c) and (d) can be taken into consideration. Both the forms are used; one without the past tense marker /-l-/ is more frequent than the other with the past tense marker /-l-/.

2.3 Future Tense

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The future tense represents a situation where an action is yet to occur. The morpheme **/-b-/** in Sadri to mark the future tense. For Example:

(a) *mɔ̃y   nahabɔ̃*
    1SG.   bathe.FUT.1SG.
    "I will take bath".

(b) *tɔhreman   baiʈh   rahba*
    2PL.   sit.PFV.   be.FUT.2PL.
    "You will have sat".

(c) *u   rindhi*
    3SG.   cook.FUT.3SG.
    "S/he will cook".

(d) *u   rindhat   rahi*
    3SG.   cook.IPFV.   be-FUT.3SG.
    "S/he will be cooking".

It is interesting to note that the future tense morpheme **/-b-/** in Sadri is absent in the third person singular number in all the aspects in the future tense. The examples above (a) and (b) have the future tense morpheme /-b-/ whereas the examples (c) and (d) do not carry the future tense morpheme /-b-/. This happens only in the third person singular number.

3.0 Aspect
An aspect can be described as the types of action or the state of an event perfect or imperfect or habitual denoted by the inflection of verb. In the words of Comrie (1976: 3) "aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation."
There are three aspects in Sadri, viz. habitual, perfective and imperfective. Peterson (n.d.) mentions two aspects viz. /–at ~ -t / for imperfective aspect and /-e ~ -i/ are the linker marked for the perfective aspect depending on the form of the stem. Dey (2011: 20) discusses three aspects for the Assam Sadri viz. perfective, imperfective (habitual) and progressive.

3.1 Habitual Aspect
The habitual aspect specially refers to the situations of an action which occur in regular basis. This is a habitual action. There is no specific habitual aspect marker in Sadri. For example:

(a) *mɔ̃y   khaɔn/khaɔna*
    1SG.   eat.1SG. HAB.
    "I eat".

(b) *hame /hamreman   khail /khaila*
    1PL.   eat.1PL.HAB.
    "We eat".

(c) *tɔ̃y   khaisla/ khais*

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2SG.(NON.HON.)   eat.2SG.NON.HON. HAB.
"You eat".

The verb /*kha-*/ 'eat' has inflected for person, number and honorificity in this aspect. The morphemes like; /*-ɔn/-ɔna* / in example (a), /*-il/-ila/* in (b), /*-isla /-is/* in (c) are all different all together carrying the same aspectual meaning respectively along with the information on present tense. Therefore, there is no specific morpheme to mark the habitual aspect in Sadri.

3.2 Perfective Aspect

The perfective aspect morpheme in Sadri is /*-y ~ -i-*/. The perfective aspect morpheme /*-y*/ gets attached with the verbs that end with vowel and /*–i-* / gets inserted in the verbs which end with consonant. For example:

(a)   *ʈiʈɔ*   *ghar*   *chɔiɽ*   *he*
       Tito   home   leave.PFV.   be.3SG.
       "Tito has left home".

(b)   *raju*   *suit*   *rahe* / *rahlak*
       Raju   sleep.PFV.   be.PST.3SG. /be.PST.3SG
       "Tito had slept".

(c)   *mɔ̃y*   *kɔiɽ*   *rahbɔ*
       1SG.   dig.PFV.   be.FUT.3SG.
       "I will have dug".

(d)   *uman*   *khay*   *rahãy / rahlãy*
       3PL.   eat.PFV.   be.PST.3PL. /be.PST.3PL.
       "They had eaten".

(e)   *tɔ̃y*   *ninday*   *Rahbe*
       2SG.   sleep.PFV.   be.FUT.2SG.
       "You will have slept".

The insertion of /*–i-*/ as the perfective aspect morpheme is exceptionally in the perfective aspect of the present, past and future tense. The verbs like; /*chɔɽ-*/ 'leave', /*sut-*/ 'sleep', /*tɔr-*/ 'pluck', /*kɔɽ-*/ 'dig', /*paɽh-*/ 'read' etc. insert /*–i* / to mark perfective aspect as it is marked in the examples (a) to (c) and verbs /*kha-*/ 'eat', /*ninda-*/ 'sleep' , / *ja-*/ 'go' attach /*–y*/ at the end of the verb root as it is marked in the example (d) and (e).

Exceptions: There are two exceptions found with regard to the use of perfective aspect marker.

   (1) The /*-y* / perfective aspect morpheme is not attached with the verbs that end with vowel in the present perfect tense. For example:
(a)   *chɔŋa*   *ninda*   *he*
       boy   sleep.PFV.   be.3SG.
       "The boy has slept".

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(b) *uman   bajar   ja   hãy*
 3PL.   market   go.PFV.   be.3PL.
 "They have gone to market".

The perfective aspect morpheme is null only in the present tense for the vowel ending verbs like; /*ninda-*/ 'sleep', /*ja-*/ 'go' /*kha-*/ 'eat', /*ga-*/ 'sing' etc.

(2) The verbs do not take the perfective aspect marker /–*y* ∼ –*i-* / in the simple past tense. For example:

(a) *ʈiʈɔ   sutlak*
 Tito   sleep.PFV.PST.3SG.
 "Tito slept".

(b) *mɔy   khalɔ*
 1SG.   eat.PFV.PST.3SG.
 "I ate".

3.3 Imperfective Aspect

The imperfective is about the action which is in progress. The Sadri imperfective is marked by morpheme /**-***at* ∼ *-t* /. For example:

(a) *u   cay   banat   he*
 3SG.   tea   make.IPFV.   be.3SG.
 "S/he is making tea".

(b) *hamre   likhat   rahi/rahli*
 1PL.NOM.   write.IPFV.   be.PST. 1PL./be.PST.1PL.
 "We were writing".

(c) *tɔhreman   jat   rahba*
 2PL.   go.IPFV.   be.FUT.2PL.

 "You will be going".

The imperfective morpheme /-*t* / is used for vowel ending verbs like; /*bana-*/ 'make', /*ja-*/ 'go', /*kha-*/ 'eat', /*ga-*/ 'sing' etc. and the morpheme /-*at* / is used for consonant ending verbs like; /*khel-*/ 'play', /*kud-*/ 'run', /*jal-*/ 'burn', /*mar-*/ 'hit', /*likh-*/ 'write', etc.

4.0 Conclusion

The Sadri has the agglutinating features like any other Indian languages. There are some exceptions observed in both tense and aspect. The present tense do not have specific marker. The past tense marker /-*l*-/ is observed with or without in the past progressive and perfect tense. And, the future tense marker /-*b*-/ is absent for the third person singular. There is no specific habitual aspect marker. The imperfective aspect marker /-*t*/ is occurring with the vowel ending verbs and

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/-*at*/ with consonant ending. The perfective aspect marker /–*i*-/ as the perfective aspect morpheme is exceptionally used in the perfective aspect of the present, past and future tense and /–*y*/ at the end of the vowel ending verb root. But, the morpheme /-*y* / does not get attached with the verbs that end with vowel in the present perfect tense. The verbs do not take perfective aspect marker /–*y* ~ –*i*- / in the simple past tense. Further research is necessary on this subject.

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