CHAPTER-II

VERB AGREEMENT
2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the verbal agreement paradigm of Hawa Nokte with different tenses. The section 2.1 presents a brief account of general conceptual definition of the agreement. The section 2.2 highlights the grammatical relation of the core arguments or in other words, the marking of the core arguments. Then, the section 2.3 and its subsequent sections provide the descriptive analysis of the morphosemantic properties of person-number agreement (PNAgr) markers in Hawa Nokte. As part of the agreement paradigm, it looks into the semantic of inverse marking system. In short, the present chapter addresses the various issues relating to verb agreement patterns in Hawa Nokte.

2.1 Concept of Agreement

Haselmath & Sims (2010) define agreement as “...a kind of syntactic relation in which the inflectional value of a word or phrase (the target) must be the same as the inflectional value of another word or phrase in the sentence (the controller) to which it is closely related” (p. 91). By verb agreement generally it means showing subject agreement with the verb in terms of person-number marking. Mostly, verbal agreement is expressed inflectionally. The most common verbal agreement categories are usually manifested in terms of person, number and gender (PNG). The category of person seems universally to distinguish speaker (first person), addressee (second person), and non-participant (third person). Thus, the agreement systems are based on dimensions that can be analyzed in terms of grammatical functions such as subject and object. Though not many languages show verbal agreement in terms of person, number and gender, but language such as Hindi uses these devices to identify the participants in the event specified by the verb as shown in (1).

(1) a. *ram- jata -he*

   *ram- go3m sg-impf aux prs-sg.*

   ‘Ram goes’
b. *sita- jati -he
   sita -go3f sg impf-aux prs-sg.
   ‘Sita goes’

In English, the grammatical form /s/ not only functions as 3rd person agreement marker but also denotes singular number marking as shown in (2a). However, such construction is possible only in present tense, and not in the case of future or past tense in English.

   (2)  a.  He likes her.

b.  *He like her.

2.2 Marking of Core Arguments in Hawa Nokte

Verb is an integral part of a sentence. It relates to other parts of the sentence, assigning them different semantic roles, depending upon the verb’s meaning. McMichael (1975) stated that “verb is an inherently relational entity in that its existence or presence requires the existence or presence of at least one or the other entity” (p. 2). For instance, verb ‘laugh’ is inherently relational because the existence of the situation denoted requires the existence of one participant, namely ‘the one who laughs’ or ‘laugher’ as in the case of ‘Mary laughs’. Syntactically, verb plays a role of predicate or predicator. It contains obligatory reference to grammatical roles and number of its arguments such as subject, object and indirect object. So likewise, different verbs will have different number of participants; some participants would be obligatorily required and others may not. In (3a), the subject John is obligatory if the sentence is to mean anything. However, the object ‘knife’ in (3b), may be removed yet the sentence John cut the cake is still grammatically correct without it also.

   (3)  a. John loves Mary.

b. John cut the cake with knife.
Dixon (2010) has given the three types of case marking systems to posit the grammatical relations. The first one is, in which, $A$ (agent of the transitive verbs), $S$ (subject of the intransitive verbs) and $O$ (object of the transitive verbs) are marked differently which is called as ‘tripartite’ system. However, tripartite system is of course not commonly found across languages. The second type is the nominative-accusative language. In such languages, $A$ and $S$ are marked in same way whereas $O$ is marked differently. This second system is the most common among the three. English is one such example of nominative-accusative language. Examples from English are shown in (4);

(4)  
   a.  *John is laughing.*
   b.  *John loves Mary.*

The third type is in which $A$ is marked differently from $S$ and $O$ which are marked in the same way. This type of case system is called ergative-absolutive case system. Though, this type is also less common, still some of the world’s languages have the type-III marking system. In addition to that, many languages either combine types I and II or I, II and III depending on the various semantic and semantic parameters. Split system is one such combination of the three different types of case marking system. The split system is semantically conditioned. According to Dixon (2010), the semantic parameters on which the split systems of marking depend include (i) the referents of core arguments (ii) tense and/or aspect of the clause, and (iii) the syntactic status of the clause. Hindi is one such language which exhibits the split-ergative pattern. In Hindi, the split system is usually conditioned by the tense feature. In (5a) $S$ (Ram) is unmarked whereas in (5b) it is marked by ergative marker /ne/. Thus, in Hindi, the ergative marker /ne/ can only occur in past tense.

(5)  
   a.  *ram gana ga rəha he*
   
   ram song sing PROG.MASC.SG AUX
   
   ‘Ram is singing a song’
b. *ram-ne gana gaja*

ram-ERG song sing.PST

‘Ram sang the song’

With regards to case marking in Hawa Nokte, it exhibits split-ergative case marking type. The split-ergative can be observed in both intransitive and transitive. The *S* arguments of intransitive verb such ‘to speak/talk’ are expressed in two morphologically distinct ways. For instance, in (6a), *S* argument is unmarked for case whereas in (6b) it is marked by ergative case marker /ma/. It is expressed in the same way as transitive *A* argument as shown in (6c). To such split system, Payne (1997) calls it as ‘split intransitivity’. In such split case marking system, the “… agentive intransitive subjects are functionally more like prototypical *A* arguments, in that both act with volition and control. Similarly, non-agentive intransitive subjects are functionally more like prototypical *P* arguments in that both receive or undergo the action expressed by the verb” (Payne, 1997:47).

(6)  

a. *ǝte dʃap-a*

he FUT-speak-3SG

‘He will speak’

b. *ǝte-ma dʃap-a*

he-ERG speak-3SG

‘He will speak’

Also, the subject of intransitive (mostly the non-agentive or motion related verbs) do not take ergative case in Hawa Nokte. For instance, the *S* (subject) of intransitive verbs such as ‘sleep’, ‘die’, ‘go’, etc., are unmarked for case as shown in (7).

(7)  

a. *meri dʃup-a*

mary sleep-3SG

‘Mary sleep’
b. *mahatma gandi rí-t-á?*

mahatma gandhi die-PST-3SG

‘Mahatma Gandhi died’

c. *ŋa hum-nφ n̂a-ŋ*

I house-LOC go[down]-1SG

‘I go to the house’

In case of transitive, the S argument of agentive verbs (mostly action verbs) which involved volition and control generally received ergative case marking as shown in (8).

(8)  

a. ᠠ᠋᠋ᠡ᠋᠋ᡎ-*-ᠮᠠ-*ᡥᡠ-*ᡴᠣ-᠋ᡎ-*ᠪᠠ᠋᠋ᡎ-*ᡴᠠ-᠋ᡎ

he-ERG dog-OBJ beat-PRES-3SG

‘He beats the dog’

b. ᠠ᠋᠋.assertEquals(855, 1196, 2137) ᠠ᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋CursorPositionEvent---*≧-ᡞ---*ᠨᠠ-᠋ᡎ-*ᠨ᠋ᠦ᠋᠋᠋᠋CursorPositionEvent---*≧-ᡥ-᠋ᡎ

he-ERG I-OBJ kick-INVS-1SG

‘He kicks me’ or ‘He kicks to me’

Also, in case of transitive, the marking of core argument is based on the following contrast between the ergative and non-ergative coding pattern under focus or non-focus conditions. For instance, in (9a), the agent (Ram) receives ergative case *ma* as focus is on the actor, whereas in (9b) the agent is unmarked for case as focus shifts from agent to the event, that is, *the breaking of the glass*. Thus, in Hawa Nokte, agentive scale is an important feature for exhibiting split-ergative case marking type.

(9)  

a. ᠠ᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋CursorPositionEvent---*≧-ᠷᠠᠮ-*-IdentifierEvent---*≧-*ᠰᡤᡎ-᠋ᡎ-*青海省---*≧-ᡎ-*᠋ᡠᠰᡨ-᠋ᡎ-*ᡎ

ram-ERG glass break-PRES-3SG

‘Ram is breaking the glass’
b. *ram sisa \( k^h \)asiet-\( k-a \)

ram glass break-PRES-3SG

‘Ram is breaking the glass’

Tense is another factor for split-ergative case marking in Hawa Nokte. For instance, ergative case marking obligatory in past tense as shown in (10a) or else it is not acceptable as shown in (10b).

(10) a. ram-\( m \)a sisa \( k^h \)asiet-\( t-a \)?

ram-ERG glass break-PST-3SG

‘Ram broke the glass’

b. *ram sisa \( k^h \)asiet-\( t-a \)?

### 2.3 Verb Agreement in Hawa Nokte

It was Hodgson (reference in Bauman, 1975), who, first introduced Nocte (Namsangia) as pronominalized language of Tibeto-Burman group, based on the short grammatical sketch of Robinson (1849). In *Linguistic Survey of India*, data used by Grierson (1903) also mentioned about Namsangia (Nocte) paradigms which show the existence of parts of the old agreement paradigms - different from those complex pronominalized Himalayas groups. In *An Introduction to the Nocte Language*, Das Gupta (1971) also demonstrated the existence of verbal agreement features in Hawa Nokte. Thus, it is evident that Hawa Nokte shows a cross-referencing system where the subject is indexed on the verb. Generally, the finite verbs take agreement markers indicating the person and number of the subject. They function as to index the participants in the state or event described by the verb. Haw Nokte agreement suffixes are attached to grammatical particles marking tense/aspect, mood, and other verbal categories. In most cases, the agreement suffixes are obligatory.

In terms of person, Hawa Nokte usually distinguishes three persons; that is, first, second and third. Besides singular, both first and second person also have dual,
whereas third person doesn’t have dual. Under third person, not only human, but non-human (such as animals, birds and reptiles), and natural objects (such as rain, wind, sun, etc..) are also included. Table 2.1 shows the different persons (pronouns) in Hawa Nokte.

Table 2.1: Personal pronouns in Hawa Nokte

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Person</td>
<td>ŋa ‘I’</td>
<td>ʧhəni ‘we (two)’</td>
<td>ni/nikʰu ‘we’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Person</td>
<td>nəŋ ‘you’</td>
<td>neʧʰe ‘you (two)’</td>
<td>ne/nekʰu ‘you’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Person</td>
<td>ətə ‘(s)he/it’</td>
<td>ʧhənin/ɪʰənin ‘they’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1 Paradigm of person-number with different tenses

The pattern of verbal agreement may be analyzed under two paradigms namely - (i) intransitive and (ii) transitive.

2.3.1.1 Intransitive paradigm

(i) First person

The 1st person singular has two PNAgr forms such as /ɔŋ/ and /ɔk/; the first one occurs in present and future as shown in (11a & b), whereas the second one occurs exclusively in past as shown in (11c). The 1st person dual and plural uses the same PNAgr form /i/ in both present and future tense as shown in (12a & b) and (13a & b) whereas in past tense, PNAgr form /iʔ/ is used as shown in (12c) and (13c). Verb agrees with the subject.

Singular:

(11) a. ŋa ʤup-əŋ

I sleep-1SG

‘I sleep’
b. ŋa e-ʤup-oŋ
    I FUT-sleep-1SG
    ‘I will sleep’

c. ŋa ʤup-t-ək
    I sleep-PST-1SG
    ‘I slept’

Dual:

(12) a. ti’eni ʤup-i
    we sleep-1PL
    ‘We (two) sleep’

b. ti’eni e-ʤup-i
    we FUT-sleep-1PL
    ‘We (two) will sleep’

c. ti’eni ʤup-t-ɨʔ
    we sleep-PST-1PL
    ‘We (two) slept’

Plural:

(13) a. ni ʤup-i
    we sleep-1PL
    ‘We (two) sleep’

b. ni e-ʤup-i
    we FUT-sleep-1PL
    ‘We (two) will sleep’
(ii) Second person

The 2nd person singular use PNAgr form /o/ in present and future as shown in (14a & b) whereas in past, PNAgr form /oʔ/ is used as shown in (14c). The 2nd person dual and plural has two PNAgr forms such as /en/ and /et/; the first one occurs in present and future as shown in (15a & b) and (16a & b), whereas the second one occurs only in past as shown in (15c) and (16c). Verb agrees with the subject.

Singular:

(14) a. \(nǝŋ \ dʒup-o\)
   you sleep-2SG
   ‘You sleep’

b. \(nǝŋ e-\ dʒup-o\)
   you FUT-sleep-2SG
   ‘You will sleep’

c. \(nǝŋ \ dʒup-t-oʔ\)
   you sleep-PST-2SG
   ‘You slept’

Dual:

(15) a. \(nef'e \ dʒup-en\)
   you sleep-2PL
   ‘You (two) sleep’

d. \(ni \ dʒup-t-iʔ\)
   we sleep-PST-1PL
   ‘We (two) slept’
b. *netf'e e-ʤup-en*
   you FUT-sleep-2PL
   ‘You (two) will sleep’

c. *netf'e ʤup-t-et*
   you sleep-PST-2PL
   ‘You (two) slept’

Plural:

(16) a. *nek'b u ʤup-en*
   you sleep-2PL
   ‘You (all) sleep’

b. *nek'b u e-ʤup-en*
   you FUT-sleep-2PL
   ‘You (all) will sleep’

c. *nek'b u ʤup-t-et*
   you sleep-PST-2PL
   ‘You (all) slept’

(iii) Third person

In case of 3rd person, both singular and plural use PNAgr form /a/ in present and future as shown in (17a & b) and (18a & b), whereas in past tense, PNAgr form /aʔ/ is used as shown in (17c) and (18c). However, in case of third person plural, if required, the plurality may be indicated by employing an additional morpheme /vǝk/ which immediately follows the verb root as shown in (18). It is optional. Verb agrees with the subject.
Singular:

(17) a. əte ɓoŋ-ə
    he dance-3SG
    ‘(S)he dances’

b. əte e-ɓoŋ-ə
    he FUT-dance-3SG
    ‘(S)he will dance’

c. əte ɓoŋ-t-ə?
    he dance-PST-3SG
    ‘(S)he danced’

Plural:

(18) a. əʧ in ɓoŋ-(vək)-ə
    they dance-(3PL)-3PL
    ‘They dance’

b. əʧ in e-ɓoŋ-(vək)-ə
    they FUT-dance-(3PL)-3PL
    ‘They will dance’

c. əʧ in ɓoŋ-(vək)-t-ə?
    they dance-(3PL)-PST-3PL
    ‘They slept’

2.3.1.2 Transitive paradigm

In transitive, the agreement patterns behave differently. The same agreement marker can occur either with the subject or the patient. It depends on the person hierarchy. In other words, the agreement is not clearly directed to the subject but
shows split agreement pattern. To understand the nature of this split agreement pattern, the agreement may be analysed based on semantic relationship of the core arguments such as *Agent* and *Patient/Receiver/Benefactor* relationship.

(i) **Agent [1st person] and Patient [2nd and 3rd person]**

When the *Agent* is 1st person singular or plural and the *Patient* is 2nd person singular then the *Agent* is marked by morpheme /i/ in present and future as shown in (19a & b), whereas in past, it is marked by morpheme /iʔ/ as shown in (19c). The verb agrees with the subject.

(19) a. $\eta/ni-ma\;noŋ-noŋ\;vat-k-i$

   I/we-ERG you-OBJ beat-PRES-1SG/PL
   ‘I/we beat you’

   b. $\eta/ni-ma\;noŋ-noŋ\;e-vat-i$

   I/we-ERG you-OBJ FUT-beat-1SG/PL
   ‘I will beat you’

   c. $\eta/ni-ma\;noŋ-noŋ\;vat-t-iʔ$

   I/we-ERG you-OBJ beat-PST-1SG/PL
   ‘I/we beat you’

When the *Agent* is 1st person singular or plural and the *Patient* is 2nd person plural, then the *Agent* is marked by morpheme /a/ in present and future as shown in (20a & b), whereas in past, it is marked by morpheme /aʔ/ as given in (20c). The verb agrees with the subject (the agent).

(20) a. $\eta/ni-ma\;ne-noŋ\;vat-k-a$

   I/we-ERG you-OBJ beat-1SG/PL
   ‘I/we beat you’
b. \( \eta/n\-ma\ ne\-nəŋ\ e\-vat-a \)
   I/we-ERG you-OBJ FUT-beat-1SG/PL
   ‘I/we will beat you’

c. \( \eta/n\-ma\ ne\-nəŋ\ vat\-a? \)
   I/we-ERG you-OBJ beat-PST-1SG/PL
   ‘I/we beat you’

When the Agent is 1st person singular and the Patient is 3rd person singular or plural, then the Agent is marked by morpheme /\(n\)/ in present and future as shown in (21a & b), whereas in past, it is marked by morpheme /\(n\)/ as shown in (21c). The verb agrees with the subject (the agent).

(21) a. \( \eta-ma\ \dot{e}t\-\dot{e}f\-\dot{e}n\-nəŋ\ vat\-k\-əŋ \)
   I-ERG he/they-OBJ beat-PRES-1SG
   ‘I beat him/them’

b. \( \eta-ma\ \dot{e}t\-\dot{e}f\-\dot{e}n\-nəŋ\ e\-vat\-əŋ \)
   I-ERG he/they-OBJ FUT-beat-1SG
   ‘I will beat him/them’

c. \( \eta-ma\ \dot{e}t\-\dot{e}f\-\dot{e}n\-nəŋ\ vat\-t\-ək \)
   I-ERG you/they-OBJ beat-PST-1SG
   ‘I beat him/them’

When the Agent is 1st person plural and the Patient is 3rd person singular/plural then the Agent is marked by /\(i/\) in present and future as shown in (22a & b) and in past, it is marked by morpheme /\(i/\) as given in (22c). The verb agrees with the subject (the agent).
(22) a.  \textit{ni-ma øte/øtfʰin-nəŋ vat-k-\text{-}i}\newline
we-ERG he/they-OBJ beat-PRES-1PL
‘we beat him/them’

b.  \textit{ni-ma øte/øtfʰin-nəŋ e-vat-\text{-}i}\newline
we-ERG he/they-OBJ FUT-beat-1PL
‘we will beat him/them’

c.  \textit{ni-ma øte/øtfʰin-nəŋ vat-t-iʔ}\newline
we-ERG he/them-OBJ beat-PST-1PL
‘we beat him/them’

(ii) **Agent [2\textsuperscript{nd} person] and Patient [3\textsuperscript{rd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} person]**

When the Agent is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person singular and the Patient is 1\textsuperscript{st} person singular, then the Patient is marked by morpheme /əŋ/ irrespective of tense/aspect as shown in (23). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(23) a.  \textit{ŋəŋ-ma ŋə-na-ŋə vat-h-əŋ}\newline
you-ERG I-OBJ beat-INVS-1SG
‘You beat me’

b.  \textit{ŋəŋ-ma ŋə-na-ŋə e-vat-h-əŋ}\newline
you-ERG I-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-1SG
‘You will beat me’

c.  \textit{ŋəŋ-ma ŋə-na-ŋə vat-t-h-əŋ}\newline
you-ERG I-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1SG
‘You beat me’
When the *Agent* is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person singular or plural and the *Patient* is 1\textsuperscript{st} person plural, then the *Patient* is marked by morpheme /i/ irrespective of tense/aspect as shown in (24). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(24) a. \textit{nǝŋ/ne-\textit{ma} ni-\textit{nǝŋ} vat-\textit{h-i}}

\begin{center}
you (pl)-ERG I-OBJ beat-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You (pl) beat me’

b. \textit{nǝŋ/ne-\textit{ma} ni-\textit{nǝŋ} e-vat-\textit{h-i}}

\begin{center}
you(pl)-ERG I-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You (pl) will beat me’

c. \textit{nǝŋ/ne-\textit{ma} ni-\textit{nǝŋ} vat-t-\textit{h-i}}

\begin{center}
you(pl)-ERG I-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You(pl) beat me’

When the *Agent* is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person plural and the *Patient* is 1\textsuperscript{st} person singular, then the *Patient* is marked by morpheme /a/ irrespective of tense/aspect as shown in (25). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(25) a. \textit{ne-\textit{ma} ya-\textit{nǝŋ} vat-\textit{h-a}}

\begin{center}
you-ERG I-OBJ beat-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You (pl) beat me’

b. \textit{ne-\textit{ma} ya-\textit{nǝŋ} e-vat-\textit{h-a}}

\begin{center}
you-ERG I-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You (pl) will beat me’

c. \textit{ne-\textit{ma} ya-\textit{nǝŋ} vat-t-\textit{h-a}}

\begin{center}
you-ERG I-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1SG
\end{center}
‘You (pl) beat me’
When the Agent is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person singular and the Patient is 3\textsuperscript{rd} person singular or plural, then the Agent is marked by morpheme /o/ in present and future as shown in (26a & b), whereas in past, it is marked by morpheme /oʔ/ as given in (26c). The verb agrees with subject (the agent).

(26) a. \textit{ŋəŋ-ma əʧ/əʧʰ in-ŋəŋ vat-o}
   
   you-ERG he/they-OBJ beat-1SG
   ‘You beat him/them’

b. \textit{ŋəŋ-ma əʧ/əʧʰ in-ŋəŋ e-vat-o}
   
   you-ERG he/they-OBJ FUT-beat-3SG
   ‘You will beat him/them’

c. \textit{ŋəŋ-ma əʧ/əʧʰ in-ŋəŋ vat-t-oʔ}
   
   you-ERG he/they-OBJ beat-PST-3SG
   ‘You beat him/them’

When the Agent is 2\textsuperscript{nd} person plural and the Patient is 3\textsuperscript{rd} person singular or plural, then the Agent is marked by morpheme /en/ in present and future as shown in (27a & b), whereas in past, it is marked by morpheme /et/ as shown in (27c). The verb agrees with the subject (the agent).

(27) a. \textit{ne-ma əʧ/əʧʰ in-ŋəŋ vat-en}
   
   you-ERG he/they-OBJ beat-INVS-2PL
   ‘You (pl) beat him/them’

b. \textit{ne-ma əʧ/əʧʰ in-ŋəŋ e-vat-en}
   
   you-ERG he/they-OBJ FUT-beat-2PL
   ‘You (pl) will beat him/them’
c.  ne-ma ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ŋŋ vat-t-ǝt
   you-ERG hr/they-OBJ beat-PST-2PL
   ‘You (pl) beat him/them’

(iii) Agent [3rd person] and Patient [1st and 2nd person]

When the Agent is 3rd person singular or plural and the Patient is 1st person singular, then the Agent is marked by morpheme /ŋŋ/ irrespective of tense/aspect as given in (28). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(28) a. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ɣa-ŋŋ vat-h-ŋŋ
   he/they-ERG I-OBJ beat-INVS-1SG
   ‘He/they beats me’

b. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ɣa-ŋŋ e-vat-h-ŋŋ
   he/they-ERG I-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-1SG
   ‘He/they will beat me’

c. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ɣa-ŋŋ vat-t-h-ŋŋ
   he/they-ERG I-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1SG
   ‘He/they beat me’

When the Agent is 3rd person singular/plural and the Patient is 1st person plural, then the Patient is marked by morpheme /i/ irrespective of tense/aspect as shown in (29). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(29) a. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ni-ŋŋ vat-h-i
   he/they-ERG we-OBJ beat-INVS-1PL
   ‘He/they beats us’

b. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ni-ŋŋ e-vat-h-i
   he/they-ERG we-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-1PL
   ‘He/they will beat us’
c. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ni-ŋŋ vat-t-h-i
   he/they-ERG we-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1PL
   ‘He/they beat us’

When the Agent is 3rd person singular/plural and the Patient is 2nd person singular then the Patient is marked by morpheme /o/ irrespective tense/aspect as shown in (30). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(30) a. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ŋŋ-ŋŋ vat-h-o
   he/they-ERG you-OBJ beat-INVS-2SG
   ‘He/they beats you’

b. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ŋŋ-ŋŋ e-vat-h-o
   he/they-ERG you-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-2SG
   ‘He/they will beat you’

c. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ŋŋ-ŋŋ vat-t-h-o
   he/they-ERG you-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-2SG
   ‘He/they beat you’

When the Agent is 3rd person singular or plural and the Patient is 2nd person plural then Patient is marked by morpheme /en/ irrespective of tense/aspect as given in (31). The verb agrees with the object (the patient).

(31) a. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ne-ŋŋ vat-h-en
   he/they-ERG we-OBJ beat-INVS-2PL
   ‘He/they beats you’

b. ǝte/ǝʧʰ in-ma ne-ŋŋ e-vat-h-en
   he/they-ERG we-OBJ FUT-beat-INVS-2PL
   ‘He/they will beat you’
c. ǝte/ǝʧ in-ma ne-ǝŋ vat-t-h -en

he/they-ERG we-OBJ beat-PST-INVS-1 PL

‘He/they beat you’

The change in the PNAgr form is the result of phonological alternation. It may be observed that the final phonological segment (ŋ) of first person singular PNAgr form /əŋ/ changes to velar voiceless stop /k/ and the final phonological segment (n) of second person plural PNAgr form /en/ changes to alveolar voiceless stop /t/ in past tense. Also, whenever the past tense marker /t/ comes in between the verb stem and the PNAgr markers (such as /l/, /a/ and /o/) then the glottal stop /ʔ/ is added to the PNAgr form. However, if the PNAgr marker is immediately preceded by inverse marker /h/, then no glottal sound is added.

2.3.2 Hierarchical agreement

According to DeLancy (2010) one of the striking features of the Nokte verbal agreement paradigm, is explicit marking of the grammatical category called inverse. Mathews (2007) defines inverse as “…that of two elements in a clause that differ on some scale of empathy, it is the one lower on the scale that is the agent” (p.65). In inverse construction, the argument to be indexed on the verb is determined by person, rather than by grammatical or semantic role. Hypothetically, for instance, if the 3rd person is lower than the 1st person, then a sentence meaning ‘I love her’ will be marked as direct, while on the other hand, a sentence meaning ‘She loves me’ will instead be marked as inverse.

In Hawa Nokte, an inverse suffix usually indicates that action is performed by someone lower on the person hierarchy on someone higher on the person hierarchy. The inverse marker can only occur with transitive verbs and not with intransitive verbs. Inverse to occur, there must be subject (agent) and object (patient, recipient) which can be either human or non-human. In case of past tense, the inverse marker /h/
is fused with the past tense marker /t/ and the resultant form is the aspirated /th/ as in (32).

(32) ならないな tī̃ap kōʔ-t-h-ŋ

you-ERG I-DAT book give-PST-INVS-1SG

(i) ‘You gave me a book’

(ii) ‘You gave a book to me’

The direct-inverse distinction in Hawa Nokte may be observed in (33) and (34), where the direct is unmarked and inverse is marked by /h/. Myhill (1992) noted that the choice of whether to use direct or inverse in a given context is determined automatically by a person hierarchy. He termed it as ‘grammatically automatic inverse construction’ where inverse construction is person hierarchy dependent. Thompson (1989b) as reported by Myhill (1992) rightly pointed out that “if the A is higher than the P on the hierarchy, then the direct construction is used, while if the P is higher than the A, the inverse construction is used” (p. 156). This is true with Nokte.

Direct:

(33) な-タ ma ṭe-ŋ kōʔ-ŋ

I-ERG he-DAT give-1SG

‘I give to him’

Inverse:

(34) ṭe-タ ma な-ŋ kōʔ-h-ŋ

he-ERG I-DAT give-INVS-1SG

‘He gives me’

It may be noted from the above two examples (33) and (34), that in person hierarchy, ‘I’ (A) is higher than ‘He’ (P), thus it is marked as direct and on the other hand, ‘I’ (P) is higher than ‘He’ (A), it is marked with inverse. Hawa Nokte direct
versus inverse marking comply with Thompson’s hypothesis. The above two examples (33) and (34) have proved that inverse /h/ is possible only when the P is higher than the A on the person hierarchy 1>2>3. Direct is covertly marked. In inverse construction, the inverse suffix /h/ follows the verb and then PN Agr marker as shown in (34). In such construction, it is the object ‘me’ which is encoded in the verb. However, in both direct and inverse constructions, the case marking remains the same, i.e., the Agent receives ergative case and Patient receives objective case.

According to Dalency (1989), the argument to be indexed on the verb is determined by person, rather than by grammatical or semantic role. In other words, the ‘inverse’ morpheme indicates that the indexed argument is not the A or subject argument. An inverse is usually marked in 2-1, 3-1, & 3-2 patterns. In 2-1, the first person (P) is higher than the second person (A); in 3-1, the first person (P) is higher than the third person; and in 3-2, the second person (P) is higher than the third person (A) in person hierarchy. The direct is marked in 1-2, 1-3, & 2-3 patterns.

2.4 Summary

Verbs, in Hawa Nokte, agree with the subject in terms of person-number. Verbs are generally inflected for PN Agr. There are ten PN Agr forms such as /əŋ/, /ək/, /i/, /iʔ/, /o/, /oʔ/, /en/, /et/, /a/ and /aʔ/ for both singular and plural for all three persons. Dual has no separate PN Agr forms. They can occur with all tense/aspects. The PN Agr forms can occur with both intransitive and transitive verbs. In intransitive verbs, agreement is directly with the subject, whereas in case of transitive, it is not the same. It shows split agreement pattern based on person hierarchy.