# Honorifics and Agreement in Maithili Verbs

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***Abstract*—Maithili verbal morphology exhibits a complex system of person and honorifics marking in which verbal forms may encode information associated with more than one participant. This study examines how person, honorifics, and participant-related agreement interact through an analysis of the dekhal 'to see' verbal paradigm. It pays particular attention to the morphological realization of subject and non-subject participants and to the role of honorifics in selecting verbal forms. The analysis draws on the descriptive tradition represented by Yadav (1996) and on subsequent studies of Maithili agreement, particularly Bickel, Bisang, and Yādava (1999), Yadava et al. (2019), and Kumari (2022). The study adopts Paradigm Function Morphology as its principal morphological framework (Stump, 2001), supplemented by Corbett's (2006) account of agreement and Agha's (1993) treatment of honorifics as a form of social indexicality. The analysis shows that Maithili verbal morphology involves the interaction of person, honorifics, and participant relations rather than a simple one-to-one correspondence between individual grammatical features and suffixes. The complex form dekhalakaik, for example, contains the verbal stem, past-tense morphology, third-person non-honorific subject marking, and third-person non-honorific non-subject beneficiary marking. The study argues that the Maithili verbal paradigm is best understood as an interconnected participant-sensitive inflectional system in which grammatical and socially meaningful properties interact in the morphological realization of the verb.**

***Index Terms*—Maithili; verbal morphology; person; honorifics; agreement; Paradigm Function Morphology; beneficiary; social deixis**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Maithili, an Indo-Aryan language spoken principally in northern Bihar and adjoining regions of Nepal, possesses a highly elaborated verbal system in which grammatical and discourse-related information may be expressed through verbal morphology. The description of Maithili verbal structure has received considerable attention, particularly in relation to person, honorifics, and agreement. Yadav (1996) provides a major descriptive account of the language, while subsequent studies have demonstrated that the Maithili agreement system is considerably more complex than a simple subject–verb relationship.

Bickel, Bisang, and Yādava (1999) describe Maithili as having an unusually complex agreement system in which nominative and non-nominative subjects, objects, other core arguments, and even nonarguments may be cross-referenced on the verb. Their analysis identifies person and honorific degree as important categories reflected in verbal morphology and demonstrates that the paradigm contains cases of neutralization as well as multiple agreement. The complexity of the system is therefore not merely morphological in a narrow sense; it also involves the grammatical and social interpretation of the participants represented by the verbal form.

More recent work has extended this observation by examining the range of participants that may influence agreement in Maithili. Yadava et al. (2019), for example, discuss the prominence of possessors and the relationship between grammatical structure, discourse prominence, and agreement. Their work supports a broader conception of agreement in which participant-related properties may be relevant to the selection of verbal morphology. The Surrey Morphology Group likewise identifies Maithili as a language in which respect is morphologically integrated into a complex verbal paradigm, with several honorific distinctions represented in verbal agreement.

The present study focuses on the interaction of three properties: person, honorifics, and participant-related agreement through an examination of the dekhal 'to see' paradigm. The paradigm is particularly useful

because it demonstrates that the verbal form may encode information associated with the subject as well as another participant. The descriptive source explicitly analyses the complex form dekhalakaik as containing the verbal stem dekh-, past-tense morphology -ala-, third-person non-honorific subject marking -ka-, and third-person non-honorific non-subject beneficiary marking -ik.

The study addresses three related questions. First, how are person and honorifics represented within the Maithili verbal paradigm? Second, how does the morphology associated with a non-subject participant interact with subject-related morphology? Third, how can the interaction of these properties be explained within a paradigm-based theory of inflectional morphology? The central argument is that the Maithili verbal system is more appropriately analyzed as an interconnected participant-sensitive inflectional system than as a strictly subject-centered agreement system.

## II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON MAITHILI VERBAL AGREEMENT

The study of Maithili verbal agreement has a relatively long descriptive and analytical tradition. Yadav (1996) provides a detailed description of the grammatical system, while Yadava has also published specifically on Maithili verb agreement. His publication record includes a separate study entitled “Verb agreement in Maithili” and a later contribution on the complexity of Maithili verb agreement. These descriptive works provide the basis for examining the morphological patterns considered in the present study.

A major theoretical and descriptive contribution is Bickel, Bisang, and Yādava's (1999) study Face vs. empathy: The social foundation of Maithili verb agreement. The authors explicitly characterize Maithili as having one of the more complex agreement systems among Indo-Aryan languages. Their analysis demonstrates that verbal desinences can cross-reference several participants and that the categories represented include person and honorific degree, together with additional distinctions in third-person forms. They further argue that the organization of the paradigm is related to principles of social hierarchy and empathy.

The relevance of this earlier work to the present study is twofold. First, it establishes that Maithili agreement cannot be adequately described solely in terms of subject–verb concord. Second, it demonstrates that honorifics is not simply an external pragmatic interpretation but is integrated into the morphological system. These observations provide the empirical foundation for the present examination of the dekhal paradigm.

Kumari (2022) provides a more recent account of honorifics agreement in Darbhanga Maithili. The study demonstrates that multiple agreement may result in a portmanteau morpheme and identifies restrictions on which participants trigger object agreement. It further examines the interaction between object agreement and allocative agreement. This research is particularly relevant to the present analysis because it demonstrates that the relationship between grammatical features and verbal morphology cannot always be reduced to a simple segmentation in which every grammatical feature corresponds to an independent morpheme.

The present study therefore builds on this literature but approaches the data from a primarily morphological perspective. Rather than proposing a new syntactic account of Maithili agreement, it examines how person, honorifics, and participant relations are organized within the verbal paradigm and how these relations can be represented through a paradigm-based morphological framework.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Paradigm Function Morphology

The principal theoretical framework adopted in this study is Paradigm Function Morphology (PFM), developed by Stump (2001). PFM treats the paradigm as central to the organization of inflectional morphology and distinguishes between morphosyntactic content and its morphological realization. The framework is particularly appropriate for systems in which a single form may realize several grammatical properties and in which identical morphological forms may correspond to more than one morphosyntactic specification.

This perspective is useful for Maithili because the verbal forms do not always exhibit a transparent one-to-one relationship between grammatical meaning and individual suffixes. The source-based analysis of dekhalakaik provides a clear example. The form contains several components, but the complete verbal

expression represents an integrated configuration involving tense, subject properties, and a beneficiary.
For analytical purposes, the morphological realization of a Maithili verb may therefore be represented schematically as:
PFORM = f {PERSON, HONORIFICS, SUBJECT, BENEFICIARY, TENSE, ASPECT, MOOD}
This formula is not intended to suggest that every verbal form overtly expresses all these categories. Rather, it represents the assumption that the morphological form of a verb may be selected in relation to a particular bundle of morphosyntactic properties. Such an approach is preferable to an analysis in which every suffix is assumed to have one and only one grammatical function.

3.2 Agreement
The analysis also draws on Corbett's (2006) terminology of controller and target. Agreement involves the expression of grammatical information on a target that is associated with the grammatical properties of a controller. In the present study, the verb constitutes the morphological target, while the relevant participant or participants may function as agreement controllers.
In a simple configuration, this relation can be represented as:
Participant features → Verbal target
The situation becomes more complex when more than one participant is represented. In the case of dekhalakaik, for example, the relevant relation can be represented schematically as:
[SUBJ: 3NH] + [BEN: 3NH] → VERB
This representation does not imply that every participant is obligatorily represented on the verb. Instead, it captures the fact that verbal morphology may reflect the properties of more than one participant.

3.3 Honorifics and Social Indexicality
Honorifics provide a further dimension to the analysis. Agha (1993) treats honorific expressions as grammaticalized forms that index social relations and deference in interaction. Although Agha's analysis is not specifically concerned with Maithili, the concept is useful for interpreting a system in which socially meaningful distinctions are incorporated into grammatical morphology.
Maithili provides a particularly relevant case because distinctions of respect are embedded within the verbal agreement system. The Surrey Morphology Group identifies a multi-valued respect system in Maithili and notes that its realization is fully integrated into the verbal paradigm. Bickel et al. (1999) similarly demonstrate the significance of honorific degree in the organization of Maithili verb agreement.
Honorifics can therefore be understood as occupying an interface between grammatical morphology and social meaning. The morphological form of the verb does not merely identify a participant in terms of person; in relevant contexts, it also encodes information concerning the social relation associated with that participant.

## IV. DATA AND METHOD

The analysis is based primarily on the dekhal ‘to see’ paradigm presented in the descriptive source. Particular attention is given to person, honorifics, subject and non-subject participant marking. The terminology of the source is retained, including P for person, H for honorific, NH for non-honorific, Sub. for subject, and Ben. for beneficiary.
The analysis proceeds from the paradigm to individual examples and finally to a theoretical interpretation. First, the distribution of person and honorifics is examined across the paradigm. Second, selected complex forms are segmented morphologically. Third, the resulting patterns are interpreted through PFM, Corbett's theory of agreement, and the concept of honorifics as social indexicality.
The study deliberately distinguishes descriptive facts from theoretical interpretation. The forms and morphological analyses attributed to the descriptive source are treated as empirical data, whereas the term participant-sensitive inflectional system is used as an analytical characterization developed in the present study.

## V. THE DEKHAL VERBAL PARADIGM

The verb dekhal ‘to see’ provides an appropriate basis for examining the interaction of person, honorifics and participant-related morphology. The paradigm contains configurations in which the subject occurs alone as well as configurations in which an additional participant is represented. The source explicitly organizes the paradigm in terms of person, honorifics,

subject and beneficiary/non-subject participant distinctions.

Table 1. Person, Honorifics and Participant Marking in the Dekhal Paradigm

| No. | Subject | Non-subject participant | Marker |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1P | – | – |
| 1A | 1P | – | -ahũ |
| 2 | 1P | 2PH | -iahu |
| 3 | 1P | 2PNH | -iauk |
| 4 | 1P | 3PH | -ianhi |
| 5 | 1P | 3PNH | -iaik |
| 6 | 2PH | 1P | -ah |
| 7 | 2PH | 3PH | -ahunh |
| 8 | 2PH | 3PNH | -ahak |
| 9 | 2PNH | 1P | -ẽ |
| 10 | 2PNH | 3PH | -ahunh |
| 11 | 2PNH | 3PNH | -ahik |
| 12 | 2PNH | – | – |
| 12A | 3PH | 1P | -anhi |
| 13 | 3PH | 2PH | -athunh |
| 14 | 3PH | 2PNH | -athunh |
| 15 | 3PH | 3PH | -athinh |
| 16 | 3PH | 3PNH | -athinh |
| 17 | 3PNH | 1P | -ak |
| 18 | 3PNH | 2PH | -akahu |
| 19 | 3PNH | 2PNH | -akauk |
| 20 | 3PNH | 3PH | -akanhi |
| 21 | 3PNH | 3PNH | -akaik |

Abbreviations: P = person; H = honorific; NH = non-honorific; Sub. = subject; Ben. = beneficiary/non-subject participant.

The paradigm demonstrates that person and honorifics do not operate as completely independent morphological dimensions. Instead, the form selected for the verb depends upon the particular combination of participant properties. This is visible, for example, in the first-person subject forms in which different non-subject participants are associated with different markers. The first-person subject with a second-person honorific participant is represented by -iahu, whereas the corresponding non-honorific configuration is represented by -iauk.

A similar pattern occurs with third-person non-honorific subjects. The forms -akahu, -akauk, -akanhi and -akaik occur with different participant configurations. The recurrence of the initial element -aka- in these forms suggests that the morphology is sensitive to the subject specification, while the following material differentiates the associated participant.

The paradigm therefore provides direct morphological evidence for an analysis in which the verbal form is related to a configuration of features rather than to the subject alone.

## VI. PERSON IN THE MAITHILI VERBAL SYSTEM

Person is one of the principal dimensions of the Maithili verbal paradigm. First-, second-, and third-person participants are distinguished, and these distinctions interact with honorifics and participant relations. This observation is consistent with the broader description of Maithili agreement provided by Bickel et al. (1999), who identify person as one of the categories encoded in verbal morphology.

The first-person configurations illustrate this interaction particularly clearly. Consider the following two paradigm cells:

1P + 2PH → -iahu

1P + 2PNH → -iauk

The subject remains first person in both cases, yet the verbal morphology changes when the associated second-person participant changes from honorific to non-honorific. The difference therefore cannot be attributed to the subject alone.

The same general pattern occurs in third-person configurations. A third-person non-honorific subject combined with a second-person honorific participant receives -akahu, whereas the corresponding second-person non-honorific configuration receives -akauk. The morphology consequently reflects the interaction between the properties of the subject and those of another participant.

This pattern provides empirical support for the following generalization:

Subject properties + non-subject participant properties → verbal realization

The formulation captures the structure of the paradigm without assuming that every participant-related property must be represented by an independently segmental morpheme.

## VII. HONORIFICS IN THE VERBAL PARADIGM

Honorifics are morphologically relevant in Maithili because changing the honorific status of a participant can result in a different verbal form. The paradigm explicitly distinguishes honorific and non-honorific participants.

For example, the paradigm distinguishes:

2PH + 3PH → -ahunh

from:

2PH + 3PNH → -ahak

Similarly, third-person non-honorific subjects occur with different markers depending on whether the associated second-person participant is honorific or non-honorific:

3PNH + 2PH → -akahu

3PNH + 2PNH → -akauk

These examples demonstrate that honorifics are integrated into the morphology of the verb. It is therefore inappropriate to regard honorifics merely as an interpretation added at the discourse level. Instead, it constitutes a morphologically relevant property that participates in the selection of verbal forms.

The wider literature supports this interpretation. Bickel et al. (1999) identify honorific degree as one of the categories reflected in Maithili verb agreement, while the Surrey Morphology Group describes respect as a morphosyntactic feature whose realization is embedded in the Maithili verbal paradigm.

At the same time, honorifics cannot be reduced to purely grammatical information. Their function is connected with social relations between participants. Agha's (1993) concept of honorifics is useful here because it allows the grammatical encoding of respect to be understood as a form of social indexicality. The Maithili system therefore illustrates an interface between grammatical morphology and socially meaningful participant distinctions.

## VIII. NON-SUBJECT PARTICIPANT AND BENEFICIARY MARKING

One of the most significant characteristics of the paradigm is the representation of a participant other than the subject. The clearest evidence is provided by the complex form dekhalakaik.

The source analyses the form as follows:

dekh-ala-ka-ik

see-PST-3NH.SUBJ-3NH.BEN

Here dekh- is the verbal stem meaning ‘see’, -ala- marks the past, -ka- represents a third-person non-honorific subject, and -ik represents a third-person non-honorific non-subject beneficiary.

The significance of the form is that the verbal morphology does not simply identify the subject. It simultaneously contains information concerning another participant. The structure can therefore be represented as:

[PST] + [SUBJ: 3NH] + [BEN: 3NH]

The presence of the beneficiary marker provides direct evidence for participant-sensitive verbal morphology. This finding is consistent with the wider description of Maithili agreement. Bickel et al. (1999) report that objects, other core arguments and even nonarguments may be cross-referenced on the verb, while Yadava et al. (2019) demonstrate that the range of potentially relevant participants extends beyond canonical subjects.

The present study therefore uses the term participant-sensitive agreement as an analytical description. The term does not imply that every non-subject participant obligatorily controls agreement. Rather, it captures the observation that the morphological form of the verb may be conditioned by information associated with more than one participant.

## IX. THE FORM DEKHALAKAIK

The form dekhalakaik is particularly important because it provides a concrete example of the interaction of verbal stem, tense and participant-related morphology.

Example 1

dekh-ala-ka-ik

see-PST-3NH.SUBJ-3NH.BEN

The morphological structure can be represented as:

STEM + PST + 3NH.SUBJ + 3NH.BEN

The source explicitly provides this segmentation and identifies -ik as a third-person non-honorific non-subject beneficiary marker.

A related example in the descriptive discussion is delakaik, glossed as ‘The child gave a biscuit to his cat’. The example demonstrates that the verbal form can encode information associated with a recipient or beneficiary in addition to the subject.

The analytical importance of this example lies in the fact that it cannot be satisfactorily described through a rule such as:

SUBJECT = 3NH → -ka
Such a rule would account only for part of the verbal form. It would not explain the occurrence of -ik. A fuller representation is therefore required:
[PST] + [SUBJ: 3NH] + [BEN: 3NH] → dekhalakaik
This is precisely the type of morphological relationship for which a paradigm-based theory is useful.

## X. MORPHOLOGICAL OPTIONALITY AND CONTEXT

The Maithili verbal system also demonstrates that the presence of participant-related morphology is not necessarily automatic in every context. The descriptive source notes that the relevant suffixes need not occur together and gives forms such as dekhal, dekhalak and dekhalakaik as examples of forms that may be selected according to speaker intention.
This observation is important because it indicates that the verbal system should not be treated as a fixed sequence in which every possible participant must always receive overt morphological marking. Instead, the verbal form may reflect which participant-related information is selected for expression in a particular discourse context.
The progression can therefore be represented descriptively as:
dekhal → dekhalak → dekhalakaik
The increasing morphological complexity does not necessarily represent three obligatory stages. Rather, the forms illustrate the availability of different degrees or configurations of participant-related marking.
This observation is also important for the theoretical analysis. A purely concatenative approach would tend to predict that every available suffix should be attached whenever its corresponding participant is present. The descriptive evidence does not support such a simple interpretation. Instead, morphological selection interacts with discourse and participant interpretation.

## XI. CONTEXTUAL APPROPRIATENESS: ETAE PA:NI NAHI CHAIK

A particularly revealing example is provided by the sentence:
Example 2
etae pa:ni nahi chaik
‘There is no water here.’
The descriptive source observes that the use of -ik is redundant in this context because the speaker is himself the beneficiary and describes achi as the more appropriate form.
This example demonstrates that the availability of a participant-related marker does not necessarily entail its obligatory use. The speaker's interpretation of the participant structure contributes to the choice of verbal form.
The example therefore establishes an important distinction between morphological availability and contextually appropriate morphological realizations. The grammar provides a range of possible morphological resources, but their actual selection is sensitive to the discourse situation.
This property is compatible with the broader literature on Maithili agreement, in which participant relations and social prominence are shown to play an important role in agreement selection. Bickel et al. (1999), for example, explicitly relate the organization of the agreement paradigm to social and interactional principles.

## XII. SYNCRETISM IN THE PARADIGM

The dekhal paradigm also contains instances in which the same morphological material occurs with more than one feature configuration. A clear example is the marker -ahunh, which occurs with both 2PH + 3PH and 2PNH + 3PH configurations.
This recurrence should not automatically be interpreted as evidence that the relevant grammatical distinctions are absent. Rather, it can be treated as a case of syncretism, in which distinct morphosyntactic specifications receive the same morphological realization.
This type of pattern is particularly relevant to PFM. A paradigm-based theory allows identical forms to be associated with different feature bundles without requiring the grammatical distinctions themselves to disappear. The analysis can therefore distinguish between the morphosyntactic specification of a paradigm cell and its morphological realization.
The Maithili data consequently demonstrate why a strict one-feature-one-morpheme analysis is insufficient. A form may realize a combination of properties, and different combinations may sometimes receive the same form.

## XIII. TENSE AND ASPECT IN THE VERBAL SYSTEM

Person and honorifics form part of a broader verbal system that also expresses tense and aspect. The descriptive account identifies present, past and future tense and distinguishes perfective, imperfective and progressive aspectual categories. Past morphology includes -al/-a, while future morphology includes -ab/-b for first- and second-person forms and -at/-t for third-person forms.

The following examples illustrate the interaction of the verbal stem with aspectual morphology and auxiliary forms.

Example 3
ham dekhne chi:
1SG see.PFV AUX
'I have seen.'

Example 4
ham a: el chi:
1SG come.PFV AUX
'I have come.'

Example 5
ham dekhait chi:
1SG see.PROG AUX
'I am seeing.'

Example 6
ham dekhi rahal chi:
1SG see PROG.PTCP AUX
'I am seeing.'

These examples demonstrate that the morphological organization of the Maithili verb cannot be separated completely into independent categories. Person, tense and aspect interact within the broader verbal system, while honorifics and participant-related morphology further contribute to the form of the verb.

From the perspective of PFM, the verbal form can therefore be treated as the morphological realization of a larger morphosyntactic specification. This approach provides a unified way of analyzing forms containing tense, aspect, person and participant-related information.

## XIV. DISCUSSION

The analysis demonstrates that person is structurally integrated into the Maithili verbal paradigm. The forms associated with first-, second- and third-person participants are systematically differentiated, but these differences cannot be understood independently of honorifics and the presence of additional participants. The contrast between -iahu and -iauk, for example, shows that the verbal form changes when the honorific status of the associated second-person participant changes, even though the subject remains first person. Honorifics are therefore morphologically relevant. It is not simply an optional pragmatic interpretation imposed on a grammatically identical verbal form. Instead, it participates in the organization of the verbal paradigm. This observation is consistent with the established description of Maithili agreement and with more recent research on honorifics agreement.

At the same time, the analysis demonstrates that agreement is not exclusively subject-oriented. The form dekhalakaik provides direct evidence that a beneficiary may be represented in the verbal morphology in addition to the subject. This observation corresponds with the broader literature in which Maithili is described as allowing the verbal cross-reference of several types of participants.

The recurrence of similar forms across different configurations further demonstrates that the relationship between grammatical features and morphological form is not always transparent. The repeated occurrence of -ahunh, for instance, illustrates a situation in which different participant configurations receive the same morphological realization. Such patterns are naturally accommodated within a paradigm-based approach.

The evidence consequently supports the following generalization:

Person + Honorifics + Grammatical Function + Participant Relation → Verbal Morphological Realization

This formulation captures the principal empirical observation of the study without assuming that each grammatical property must receive an independent overt exponent.

## XV. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The analysis has implications for the understanding of inflectional morphology in Maithili. First, it demonstrates the value of treating the paradigm as a structured system rather than as a collection of unrelated word forms. The dekhal forms are systematically related through recurring

morphological material and recurring combinations of person, honorifics, and participant properties.

Second, the analysis demonstrates the usefulness of distinguishing between morphosyntactic specification and morphological realization. The form dekhalakaik does not merely contain four mechanically concatenated pieces; it represents a particular configuration involving tense, subject properties and beneficiary properties.

Third, the data demonstrate that honorifics occupy an intermediate position between grammar and social meaning. It is sufficiently grammaticalized to affect verbal morphology, but its interpretation is connected with socially meaningful distinctions among participants. This observation makes Maithili particularly relevant to the study of the relationship between agreement and social deixis.

Fourth, the evidence suggests that the term participant-sensitive inflectional system provides a useful description of the Maithili pattern examined here. The term is preferable to an unrestricted claim that Maithili has obligatory agreement with all participants because the descriptive evidence clearly indicates contextual variation and optionality in the expression of participant-related morphology.

## XVI. CONCLUSION

The present study has examined the interaction of person, honorifics and participant-related agreement in Maithili verbal morphology through an analysis of the dekhal paradigm. The evidence demonstrates that the verbal system cannot be adequately described as a simple subject–verb agreement system. Instead, the verbal morphology may incorporate information associated with several participants, while the selection of the morphological form is also sensitive to person and honorifics.

The analysis of dekhalakaik is particularly significant because it provides a clear example of a verbal form containing information associated with both the subject and a non-subject beneficiary. The form can be segmented as dekh-ala-ka-ik, in which dekh- represents the verbal stem, -ala- the past-tense component, -ka- the third-person non-honorific subject and -ik the third-person non-honorific non-subject beneficiary. The related example delakaik, glossed as ‘The child gave a biscuit to his cat’, further demonstrates the participant-sensitive character of the system.

The examples dekhal, dekhalak and dekhalakaik additionally demonstrate that participant-related morphology is not necessarily realized in a fixed or obligatory sequence. The source explicitly notes that the relevant suffixes may be selected according to speaker intention. The example etae pa:ni nahi chaik ‘There is no water here’ further shows that a morphologically available participant marker may be regarded as redundant in a particular discourse context.

The findings are consistent with the established literature describing Maithili as a language with complex multiple agreement and socially conditioned verbal morphology. Bickel et al. (1999) demonstrate the importance of person, honorifics, and participant relations in the agreement system, while Kumari (2022) provides more recent evidence concerning portmanteau honorifics agreement in Darbhanga Maithili.

The study therefore argues that the Maithili verbal paradigm is best understood as an interconnected participant-sensitive inflectional system. Paradigm Function Morphology provides a useful framework for capturing this organization because it allows verbal forms to be analyzed as morphological realizations of bundles of morphosyntactic properties rather than as simple sequences in which each grammatical feature corresponds to an independent suffix.

More broadly, the Maithili data demonstrate how inflectional morphology can provide a point of interaction between grammatical structure, participant relations and social meaning. Person and honorifics are integrated into the morphology of the verb, while non-subject participant information may also be represented in the same verbal form. The Maithili verbal paradigm thus provides significant evidence for the study of the relationship between inflectional morphology, agreement, participant structure and social deixis.

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