

Why Kulina doesn't have an antipassive

Stefan DIENST

1. Introduction

A transitive verb in Kulina agrees in gender either with its subject or its direct object. Adams Liclan and Marlett (1991) argue that gender agreement with the direct object constitutes the basic pattern and that agreement with the subject occurs in an antipassive construction. But their analysis does not stand up to scrutiny and the phenomenon of alternating gender agreement is in need of a different explanation.

Kulina is a language of south-western Amazonia. It has about 3,000 speakers in the Brazilian states of Acre and Amazonas and a few hundred in Peru. The two main dialects are those of the Purus river, spoken in Acre and Peru, and of the Juruá river, spoken in Amazonas.

Together with Deni and Western Jamamadi, Kulina belongs to the Madihá branch of the Arawan language family. The other known languages of the family are Arawá (extinct), Madi (consisting of the Jarawara, Banawá and Eastern Jamamadi varieties), Paumari, and Suruwahá.

2. Gender system

Kulina nouns are divided into two genders, masculine and feminine. Nouns referring to male humans are masculine, those referring to females are feminine and those which can refer to people of either sex, e.g. **madiha** 'person' and **ehedeni** 'child' can be used with either gender. When referring to groups of people of both sexes, the masculine gender is used.

Nouns referring to animals have a default gender, e.g. **zomahi** 'jaguar' is masculine and **bado** 'deer' is feminine, but the other gender can be used in order to specify the biological sex of an animal. Nouns for inanimates are apparently arbitrarily distributed between the two genders. The form of a noun does not indicate to which gender it belongs.

Certain verbal suffixes, inalienably possessed nouns, some adjectives and some particles have a masculine and a feminine form. In all word classes, the masculine form occurs when the word agrees with a masculine noun and the feminine form when the word agrees with a feminine noun. But agreement with the first or second person differs between the word classes. Verbal suffixes and particles always take the feminine form when they agree with the first or second person, but inalienably possessed nouns take the masculine form, instead. Adjectives take the masculine form when the referent of the first or second person is male and the feminine form when the referent is female.

Examples (1) and (2) show the different gender agreement patterns of adjectives and verbs. As a verb, the copula **ha-** takes the feminine form **-ni** of the declarative suffix in both examples, independently of the sex of the speaker. But the adjective 'old' occurs in the feminine form **hadani** when the speaker is female and in the masculine form **hadai** when the speaker is male.

- (1) **hada-ni o-ha-ni**
 old-F 1SG-COP-DCL.F
 I'm old. (female speaker)
- (2) **hada-i o-ha-ni**
 old-M 1SG-COP-DCL.F
 I'm old. (male speaker)

3. Verb inflection

Kulina has inflecting and non-inflecting verbs. A minority of verbs are of the inflecting type. These verbs take prefixes and suffixes which indicate subject person, subject number, object number, tense, etc. Most verbs are of the non-inflecting type. They are followed by an auxiliary which takes the same kinds of affixes that attach to the inflecting verbs.

Inflecting verb:	Non-inflecting verb:
(3) o-wada-de 1SG-sleep-PAST I slept.	(4) kona o-na-de swim 1SG-AUX-PAST I swam.

4. Verbal agreement

Kulina verbs agree with their arguments in person, number, and gender, but the gender agreement pattern is different from the one for person and number.

4.1. Person and number

Inflecting verbs and the auxiliaries of non-inflecting verbs agree in person with their subject and in number with both their subject and their direct object. The agreement pattern is nominative-accusative, i.e. the same affixes are used to mark person and number of the subject S of an intransitive verb and of the subject A of a transitive verb, whereas the number of the direct object O of a transitive verb is marked differently. The first person singular subject S of the intransitive verb **hapi na-** 'to take a bath' in example (5) is marked by the same prefix **o-** on the auxiliary as the first person singular subject A of the transitive verb **khi na-** 'to see' in example (6). The person of the direct object O in example (6) cannot be marked on the verb, but its plural number is indicated by the object plural suffix **-bakhi**.

(5) hapi o-na-de take.bath 1SG-AUX-PAST I took a bath.
(6) shabira khi o-na-bakhi-de giant.otter see 1SG-AUX-PL.O-PAST I saw giant otters.

4.2. Gender

While person and number are marked on verbs by special affixes that have no other function, gender is marked by verbal affixes which have a different primary function and which come with a masculine and a feminine form. The use of one form or the other indicates the gender of the verbal argument that the verb agrees with. The verbal suffixes that have masculine and feminine forms are the negation suffix and about half of the TAM suffixes.

Agreement of intransitive verbs is straightforward. They agree in gender with their subject S. In example (7) the negation suffix and the declarative suffix occur in the masculine form, agreeing with the subject **makhidehe** 'man', whereas in example (8) both suffixes are feminine, agreeing with the subject **amonehe** 'woman'.

- (7) **makhidehe Ø-zokhe-hara-i**
 man(M) 3-die-NEG.M-DCL.M
 The man didn't die.
- (8) **amonehe Ø-zokhe-hera-ni**
 woman(F) 3-die-NEG.F-DCL.F
 The woman didn't die.

Transitive verbs agree in gender either with their subject A or with their object O. Dixon (2000) calls these two agreement patterns, which are also found in other Arawan languages, A-construction and O-construction. In example (9) the verb agrees in gender with the feminine subject head **amonehe** 'woman'. In example (10) the auxiliary agrees in gender with the masculine object **tapa** 'maize'.

- (9) **o-kha amonehe bani Ø-hipa-ni**
 1SG-ASS woman(F) meat(M) 3-eat-DCL.F
 My wife ate meat.
- (10) **amonehe tapa apa i-na-i**
 woman(F) maize(M) eat 3-AUX-DCL.M
 The woman ate maize.

Intransitive verbs take the third person subject prefix **Ø-** or **to-**. A transitive verb with a third person subject takes the prefix **Ø-** or **to-** when it agrees in gender with its subject and the prefix **i-** when it agrees in gender

with its object. It can thus be said that there are two transitive clause types in Kulina, which differ in their third person subject prefixes and their verbal gender agreement.

	3 rd person subject prefix	gender agreement
intransitive clause	Ø- or to-	S
transitive clause type I	Ø- or to-	A
transitive clause type II	i-	O

Table 1. Gender agreement of different clause types

5. The antipassive hypothesis

Transitive verbs agree more often with their object than with their subject. Adams Liclan and Marlett (1991) suggest that O-agreement is basic and that clauses in which a transitive verb agrees with its underlying subject are antipassives. The verbal agreement in such clauses would thus be with a derived intransitive subject S, not the underlying transitive subject A. The gender agreement pattern of Kulina would thus be ergative (agreement either with S or with O).

The most important argument against the idea that Kulina has an antipassive is given by Dixon (2004: 422): In certain cases a transitive verb must agree in gender with its subject and cannot agree with its object. This makes the claim that clauses with subject agreement are derived highly doubtful. Conversely, where object agreement is found, this is usually also obligatory and it is impossible to transform a clause with object agreement into one with subject agreement while retaining the same verb and the same arguments. The antipassive hypothesis is therefore untenable.

6. Distribution of A- and O-agreement

Whether a transitive verb in a given clause agrees with its subject or its direct object depends on various factors. The elements that have been identified so far allow to predict in most cases whether a verb will agree with A or O. But there are still clauses whose agreement pattern cannot be accounted for and which require further research. To the extent that the

distribution of A- and O-agreement can currently be explained, it can best be described by listing the cases in which A-agreement is found, as in the following sections. In clauses which do not fall into any of the categories in sections 6.1 and 6.2, the verb agrees with A.

6.1. Obligatory A-agreement

In the following six cases, gender agreement with the subject is obligatory for transitive verbs. The headings of the subsections indicate the factors that trigger the A-agreement.

1) Verbal lexeme

The following (semantically atypical) verbs always agree in gender with their subject.

awa- experience, suffer

kahi- have

kaphira- not have

In example (11) the human subject is masculine while the third person object, a nominalisation, is feminine. Whereas other verbs would always agree with O in such a constellation, **awa-** agrees with A.

- (11) **makhidehe koma-ni Ø-awa-i**
 man(M) drunk-NMLZ.F 3-experience-DCL.M

The man is drunk. (lit. The man is experiencing drunkenness.)

2) Person and number

When the subject of a verb is third person and its object is first or second person, gender agreement of the verb depends on person and number of both arguments. (A verb agreeing with the first or second person is always feminine, see section 2 above.)

subject	direct object	agreement
3 rd singular	1 st or 2 nd	A-agreement
3 rd plural	1 st or 2 nd singular	with subject plural affix: O-agreement without subject plural affix: A-agreement
3 rd plural	1 st or 2 nd plural	with subject plural affix: A- or O- agreement without subject plural affix: A-agreement

Table 2. Gender agreement according to person and number

When the subject is third person singular, the verb always agrees with it in gender (example 12).

A 3rd singular, O 1st plural, A-agreement:

- (12) **ethe ia Ø-ta-kha-i**
 dog 1PL 3-PL.O-bite-DCL.M
 The dog bit us.

When the subject is third person plural, the agreement of the verb also depends on whether the plurality of the subject is marked by a verbal affix or not. Verbal plural affixes are often omitted when the plurality of the subject is evident from other grammatical or semantic cues or the context. In these cases, the verb agrees in gender with the subject (example 13). But if a plural affix cross-referencing the third person subject is present on the verb, the verb always agrees in gender with a first or second person singular object (example 14).

A 3rd pl, O 1st sg, no verbal subject number affix, A-agreement:

- (13) **karia owa Ø-ka-moko-waha-ni-i**
 white.person 1SG 3-APP-be.surrounded-in.circle-back-DCL.M
 The white people surrounded me.

A 3rd pl, O 1st sg, verbal plural suffix **-mana**, O-agreement:

- (14) **karia-deni owa hore i-na-khi-mana-haro**
 white.person-PL 1SG wrap 3-AUX-DIR-PL.A-NAR.F
 The white people wrapped me (in a blanket).

In the case of a third person plural subject and a first or second person plural object, both A-agreement (example 15) and O-agreement (example 16) are found if the verb has a subject plural affix. If the verb has no such affix, it always agrees with A (example 17).

A 3rd pl, O 1st pl, plural suffix **-mana**, A-agreement:

- (15) **ehedeni bazima ia bishi ta-bakhi-mana-i**
 child many 1PL pinch 3.AUX-PL.O-PL.A-DCL.M
 A lot of children pinched us.

A 3rd pl, O 1st pl, plural suffix **-mana**, O-agreement:

- (16) **awani ia kha i-na-bakhi-mana-ni**
 wasp(M) 1PL sting 3-AUX-PL.O-PL.A-DCL.F
 The wasps stung us.

A 3rd pl, O 1st pl, no verbal subject number affix, A-agreement:

- (17) **ethe bazima ia Ø-ta-kha-i**
 dog many 1PL 3-PL.O-bite-DCL.M
 Many dogs have bitten us.

3) Verbal lexeme, person and number

The verbs **hipa-** 'eat' and **ze na-** 'drink' take A-agreement when A is third person.

- (18) **o-kha amonehe bani Ø-hipa-ni**
 1SG-ASS woman(F) meat(M) 3-eat-DCL.F
 My wife ate meat.

When A is first or second person, agreement is with O.

- (19) **owa nako bani o-hipa-i**
 1SG too.M meat(M) 1SG-eat-DCL.M
 I, too, ate meat.

4) Third person subject and non-patient object

In certain cases, the verb agrees with a third person subject when the object isn't a patient, as in example (21). In example (20), the verb **hia ma-** means 'reheat' and has 'food' as its patient-object, with which it agrees in gender.

- (20) **o-kha amonehe hihipa hia i-Ø-^oma-i**
 1SG-ASS woman Food make.warm 3-AUX-UP-DCL.M
 My wife is reheating the food.

In example (19) **hia na-**, with the same verb stem as the previous example, means 'to warm'. It has 'sun' as a direct object, which is not a patient. The verb agrees in gender with the subject.

- (21) **o-kha amonehe mahi hia Ø-na-ni**
 1SG-ASS woman(F) sun(M) make.warm 3-AUX-DCL.F
 My wife is warming herself in the sun.

With the same verb and object, gender agreement is with the non-patient direct object if the subject is first or second person.

- (22) **mahi hia o-na-i hini**
 sun(M) make.warm 1SG-AUX-DCL.M FUT
 I'm going to warm myself in the sun.

5) Reflexive

Since the subject and the object of a reflexive are coreferential, gender agreement itself cannot be recognized as A- or O-agreement. But if the subject is third person, the person prefix is **Ø-**, not **i-**, indicating subject gender agreement.

- (23) **hizama** **powa** **Ø-nahima-hari**
 white.lipped.peccary(M) 3M 3-hide-NAR.M
 The white-lipped peccary hid (itself).

6) No object

When a transitive verb is used without an overt or inferred object, it agrees in gender with its subject. (This could be described as the intransitive use of an S/A-ambitransitive verb.)

- (24) **tomaithani** **o-hipa-ni** **hini**
 in.the.afternoon 1-eat-DCL.F FUT
 I'm going to eat in the afternoon.

6.2. Optional A-agreement

For some speakers, A-agreement is also possible when the object is generic or indefinite. Example (25) comes from a speaker of the Purus dialect. All other speakers of this dialect who were asked rejected the sentence, saying that it required O-agreement, but all the speakers of the Juruá dialect who were asked considered it correct. This indicates that A-agreement in clauses of this type is obsolescent in the Purus dialect. When asked a second time after several years, the original consultant produced exactly the same sentence again. (In this example, the fact that the verb agrees with the subject can only be gleaned from the prefix **to-**. In the case of object agreement, the prefix **i-** would occur instead.)

- (25) **makhidehe** **poroko** **ethe** **to-ha-i**
 man(M) pig(M) raise 3-AUX-DCL.M
 The man raises pigs.

7. Conclusion

Kulina has one intransitive clause type and two transitive clause types. In transitive clause type I, the verb agrees in gender with A, in type II, it agrees with O. Since the choice of clause type is largely determined by the verb and its arguments, both types must be considered basic, neither

being derived from the other. There is hence no place for the concept of "antipassive" in Kulina.

Languages with one transitive and two intransitive clause types, in which S patterns either with A or with O, have been called "split-S languages" (Dixon 1994: 71-78). In this terminology, a language like Kulina, with two transitive clause types and one intransitive clause type, would be a "split-A/O language" (since either A or O patterns with S), but "split transitive language" appears to be a more appropriate name. "Split-S languages" can correspondingly be referred to as "split intransitive languages".

Abbreviations and symbols

A	subject of transitive verb	NEG	negative
APP	applicative	NMLZ	nominalizer
ASS	associative	O	direct object
AUX	auxiliary	PAST	past tense
COP	copula	PL	plural
DCL	declarative	S	subject of intransitive verb
DIR	directional	SG	singular
F	feminine	Ø	zero
FUT	near future	°	suffix deletes preceding auxiliary na-
M	masculine		
NAR	narrative		

References

- ADAMS LICLAN, Patsy & MARLETT, Stephen
 1991 Antipasivo en madija (culina). *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Etnolingüísticos* 6: 37-48.
- DIXON, Robert M. W.
 1994 *Ergativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 2000 A-constructions and O-constructions in Jarawara. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 66: 22-56.
 2004 *The Jarawara language of Southern Amazonia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.