Verbal Gender Agreement

Verbal gender marking on the inflected verb was investigated. The presence of this feature is exemplified by Sawi, in (1). The verb in Sawi is marked for gender (and number) in agreement with the intransitive subject or the transitive direct object. In (1a), the verb agrees with the direct object ‘stick’ in feminine singular, in (1b) with the direct object ‘women’ in feminine plural, in (1c) with the direct object ‘(male) child’ in masculine singular, and in (1d) with the direct object ‘books’ in masculine plural.

1. Sawi [sdg] (Indo-Aryan)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| a. | mɑːnuʂ-eː | ɖunɖik | ʑup-ɑːl-**i** |  |
|  | man-obl | stick(f) | make-pfv-fsg |  |
|  | ‘The man made a stick.’ (SDG-Val-FR:085) | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| b. | mɑːnuʂ-u | ɬiɽɛ | loːʈ-ɑːl-**ɛ** |  |  |  |
|  | man-obl.pl | woman.pl | search.for-pfv-fpl |  |  |  |
|  | ‘The men searched for the women.’ (SDG-Val-FR:011) | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| c. | mɑːli | tɑːnu | mɑːɕum-eː | duw-ɑːl-**oː** |
|  | mother | refl | child(m)-obl | wash-pfv-msg |
|  | ‘The mother washed the baby.’ (SDG-Val-FR:012) | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| d. | asi | laːw-u-ʈeː | kitaːb-a | dit-**eː** |  |  |
|  | 1pl.erg | child-obl.pl-dat | book(m)-pl | give.pfv-mpl |  |  |
|  | ‘We gave the books to the children.’ (SDG-Val-FR:036) | | | | | |

Verbal person agreement (in at least one tense-aspect category) is present in a majority of the sample languages, including Burushaski and most of the Indo-Aryan and Nuristani languages, while entirely excluding Sino-Tibetan and Turkic. Geographically most of the languages displaying this feature are found in the southern half of the region.

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| Feature value | # of varieties displaying it | % |
| Present | 40 | 68 |
| Absent | 17 | 29 |
| Indeterminate | 2 | 3 |