

Stuti Bhagat, University of York

In the traditional variety of Kurukh, in the 2nd and 3rd plural forms, the masculine plural marker is used among the male interlocutors and in male-female speech and vice versa. Whereas the feminine plural marker is used by a group of all-female interlocutors. However, the data below shows that the female interlocutors are shifting to the masculine forms. In example (1) the verb ‘sell’ has the feminine 3Pl agreement /nəje/, which is appropriate as per traditional norms. In example (2), the verb ‘mop’ has the masculine agreement /nər/ in the same social context. Lastly, in example (3) as well, the younger speaker uses the verb ‘see’ with the masculine agreement /nər/. Therefore, the speakers, from different age groups, are using two different gender agreements for the same social setup.

Example 1.

d ^h ergo	məhila	dʒ ^h ara	bisəlnəje
many.CLF	women	rice beer	sell.Pres.Cont.3PL.F

Many women are selling rice beer.

Speaker 2 (F, 60), interlocutors - females

iṭra	məhilər	aur	pellər	erpen	guramaṭi	kuru	eganər
here	women.Pl.M	and	young	house	soil		mop.Pres.3Pl.M
			women.Pl.M				
Here, women mop the house with soil.							

Example 3.

Speaker 3 (F, 26), interlocutors – females

dui dʒ^hən nalur peller et^hranər
two CLF dancer.F.Pl women.Pl.M see.V.Pres.Cont.**3Pl.M**
Two dancers (women) are seeing (others dancing)

My hypotheses are that firstly, Kurukh is a less likely to be a dominant language among the female speakers because of various social factors. Secondly, the alterations in gender as a grammatical marker and social motif in the language are a result of contact with the dominant languages of the region. An apparent time analysis with correct method of data collection and elicitation will help to test my hypotheses. Further, language attitude study will signify the language preferences and linguistic environment. The above examples also raise questions about the density of women's social network. Thus, a social network analysis will procure information about the cohesiveness in the community. Hence, a mixed-method approach will be adopted to investigate my hypotheses. A snowball sampling and judgement sampling method will help to study the occurrences. The field interview is an impeccable method to track changes, aided by a questionnaire and stimulus-oriented experiment to initiate conversations. These methods are best suited to the socially diverse setting and to understand better the apparent decline in Kurukh's typologically unusual sociolinguistic function of gender agreement.