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**SHINA ASTORI DIALECT (ASTORIJA) VERB INFLECTIONS AND
THEIR FUNCTIONS IN PRESENT INDEFINITE TENSE: A
MORPHOSYNTACTIC ANALYSIS**



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Abstract

The study has carried out a morphological analysis so as to investigate the verb inflections and their functions in Astori dialect (locally known as Astorija) of Shina language specifically focusing on the inflections and their functions in the present indefinite tense. It is a descriptive research which involves describing the morphological structure of verb inflections in Shina (Astorija) in the present indefinite tense. The study examines the verb inflection systems in Astorija so as to identify their functions in sentences. Ten Shina verbs, targeting all the possible situations of verb inflections with different subjects, were sent through WhatsApp to fifteen educated native speakers of Astorija, and they were asked to use the verbs in sentences. The sentences sent by the participants, targeting the focused verb inflections, were selected for the analysis. The sentences have been analyzed in the framework "Inflectional Morphology" which deals with the study of inflectional morphemes. The study reveals that Astorija verbs are inflected with all the subjects, whether the subject is first person singular male or female, second person singular male or female, third person singular male or female, first person plural, or second person plural, the verb has to be inflected accordingly. The analysis also indicates that Astorija verb inflections (a single inflection) most of the time show several functions at a time. From the analysis of the study, it is concluded that morphology plays significantly a vital role in Astorija. Thus, Astorija can be considered polysynthetic as Haspelmath and Sims opine that when a language has an extraordinary amount of morphology and perhaps many compound words, it is called polysynthetic (Haspelmath & Sims 2010: 4, 5).
KEYWORDS: *Inflections, present indefinite tense, functions, Shina/Astorija*

Introduction

This study basically deals with verb inflections and their functions in Astori dialect of Shina language (locally known as Astorija) specifically in the present indefinite tense. 'Inflection' is an important aspect of a language which means variation in the form of a word with the help of an affix that is used to indicate a grammatical function, sometimes inflection is very necessary for a stem word to function differently. Inflection is the name for the addition of letter/letters to nouns, verbs and adjectives in their different grammatical forms. Language experts tend to use the term inflection to indicate the endings which have been added to words to express grammatical function and relationship in different contexts like; in phrases or sentences. Present day English has only a countable number of grammatical inflections. Musavir, (2019), Rajapurohit, (2012), Zia-ul-Haq et al. (2022) have identified several inflections in Shina. Yule, (2006) is of the view that there are only eight inflections in present day English.

A Breif Introduction of Shina Language

Shina (Tshina also) is considered to be Dardic language and it is being used by a large number of people in Gilgit Baltistan (formerly known as Northern Areas of Pakistan). The valleys, where different Shina dialects are spoken are: Astore, Chilas, Dareil, Tangeer, Gilgit, Ghizer and a few parts of Baltistan and Kohistan. It is also spoken in Gurez Drass (Kargil) and Laddakh valleys of Jammu and Kashmir. Bailey, (1924) identifies the three main dialects of Shina as Gilgiti, generally considered standard dialect, Astori, and Kohistani. Astori dialect is further divided into Guresei and Drasi, and Chilasi and Kohistani are said to be the dialects of Kohistani.

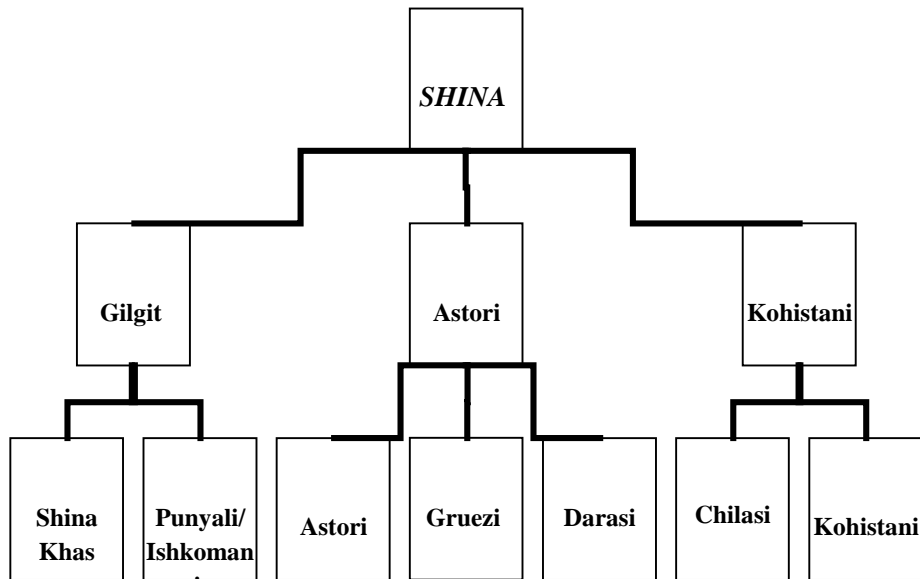


Figure 1 Main Dialects of Shina Language

The Origin of Shina Language

As Shina has no properly written system and it does not have recognized alphabets in published form, it is very difficult to find the mystery that from where Shina language has been originated in its correct historical aspects. Many researchers Fussman (1972), Strand (1973), Masica (1991), Radloff (1992), Bashir (2003), Zoller (2005), Schmidt and Kohistani (2008) and Liljegren (2016) have been doing their best in working on different dialects of Shin language. Some of the researchers Radloff (1992), Bailey, (1924) are of a view that Shina language is an Indo – Aryan language of the Dardic group which is spoken in several dialect groups in Gilgit Baltistan. The variety spoken in the main valley “Gilgit” is known as Gilgiti Shina. Gilgiti Shina is considered as the standard dialect of Shina because of the greatest number of speakers live in and around Gilgit town besides being socio economic hub of the region. Some modern linguists (Bashir 2003; Morgenstierne 1961; Grierson 1919; Masica 1991; Strand 2012) use the term Dardic for a group of Indo Aryan languages. These languages are said to be spoken in the Hindu Kush and Western Himalayas. These linguists put the Dardic group in six groups as:

- **Pashai languages** – these are spoken in northeastern Afghanistan.
- **Kunar**: in this group Dameli, Gawar-Bati, Shumashti, Nangalami/Grangali are included.
- **Chitrali**: in Chitrali languages Khowar and Kalasha are said to be included.
- **Kohistani**: Indus Kohistani (Maiya), Bateri, Chilisso, Gawri (Kalami), Gowro, Torwali, Wotapuri-Katarqalai, Tirahi, Mankiyali are considered to be included in Kohistani.
- **Shina**: Shina, Brokskad, Kundal Shahi, Ushojo (Ushoji), Palula, Savi (Sawi), and Domaaki are included in Shina group.
- **Kashmiri group**: This group consists of Kashmiri, Poguli, Kishtwari, and Rambani.

Astori Dialect (Astoriya)

Astoriya, Astori dialect, is one of the main dialects of Shina language, and it has around more than seventy thousand speakers. Astorians (in this study people of Astore) are considered to be Dardo Tibetans. They have migrated from Chilas to Astore because there was a war between two groups. It was an internal war between Bote and Matshuke which are said to be two Chilasi groups (Dardistan, 1986:61). Influence of Chilasi dialect can be perceived in Astori dialect, however, this dialect has not only been influenced by the standard dialect but also by Urdu, national language, and English as well. In Astore, code switching and code mixing is a very common phenomenon that’s why Astorians possess a tremendous amount of adoptive

capability to speak and understand the other dialect of the same language or other languages like Urdu, Balti and English etc. nonetheless it is noteworthy that if the code mixing and code switching phenomenon is not interrupted, Astori dialect can very soon be among the list of distinct dialects. Shina is considered to be more complex than many Indo-European languages like, English in terms of inflectional morphology. Different endings are attached to a stem in order to indicate different functions in different grammatical environments (Zia-ul-Haq et al, 2022). So is the Astori dialect as it is also more complex in terms of inflections and their functions. Astori dialect is one of the Shina dialects that can be easily understood by the speakers of standard dialect and the speakers of other dialects. When simple words are put through morphological processes, complex words are formed (Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005). Affixation is also a morphological process through which inflections are added to form complex words. Shina also forms complex words by adding inflections to stem words.

Inflections are not equally prominent in all the languages of the world. Languages of the world are quite different from each other in the amount of inflections in their words which show different grammatical functions. What one language expresses with the help inflection may be expressed by a separate word in another language. For example, English expresses the plural of noun by means of inflections (i.e. boy, boys, cat, cats and so on), but Shina sometimes uses separate word to show plural of some nouns (i.e. “manoozo” man, “jak” men). It does not happen with all the languages but it happens with only the languages that are **isolating** (the language that has almost no morphology are called isolating e.g. Yoruba and Vietnamese), English is not included in isolating languages, it is considered **analytic language** (languages in which morphology plays a relatively modest role, are called analytic). Shina Astori dialect has a large amount of morphology, so it can be considered as **Polysynthetic** (a language that has an extraordinary amount of morphology is called polysynthetic).

A number of Shina words have inflections. According to structure, some similarities with English can be found in Shina language as some of Shina (Astori dialect) verbs are inflected in the same way as the English to show the person and tense. Consider the following examples:

Shina (Astori)	English
➤Likhyono	➤to write
➤Likhay (...ay)	➤write (imperative) for singular 3 rd person
➤Likhya (...ya)	➤write (imperative) for plural 3 rd person
➤Likhas (...as)	➤I have written (1 st person singular Present Perfect)
➤Likhem (...em)	➤I will write (1 st person singular Future)
➤Likhao (...ao)	➤he wrote
➤Likhieen (...ieen)	➤She wrote

Theoretical Framework

Inflectional morphology has been used as theoretical framework in this study. Inflectional

morphology was proposed by Gregory T. Stump, (2001). The theory deals with the inflectional morphemes which are used to indicate different functions in a grammatical environment i.e. tense, aspect, mood, person, and number. In the languages which exhibit inflections, each inflected word in a grammatical environment carries Morphosyntactic properties. In English for example, in the sentence, '*He eats.*' the inflected word 'eats' carries the properties like third person, singular and present tense agreement. For the purpose of this study, verb inflections of Shina (Astori) are taken as stand points focusing on the grammatical features i.e. tense, person, number, and gender.

Objectives

- To describe verb inflections and their grammatical functions in Astori dialect of Shina language

Research Question

- How are verbs inflected in Astori dialect of Shina, and what grammatical functions these inflections show?

Literature Review

The aim of this research work to identify verb inflections and describe their grammatical functions in Astori dialect of Shina language. Inflections are studied in morphology (Morphology is the study of the structure of words). Morphology and syntax are closely related because the words are usually inflected according to the syntactic structure of the sentence. Morphology can be considered as a sub discipline of grammar as inflections are the major concern of morphology and they (inflections) show grammatical functions by means of affixes (Haspelmath & Sims, 2010).

Morphology studies the combination of morphemes (a minimal unit of speech which has a meaning or grammatical function that cannot be divided into further such units) to construct words, and inflections are morphemes which show different grammatical functions. Nouns may be inflected to express number (singular, plural i.e. bat bats) and noun case (i.e. Boy, boy's, boys'), verbs may be inflected to show the tense (i.e. write, wrote), number of the subject in a sentence (I, we, they, you go; he/she goes), and verbs may also be inflected to show tense, person, number, gender or aspects (i.e. I am writing. I have written.), and adjectives are inflected to indicate the degree i.e. comparative or superlative (tall, taller, tallest) in English.

Inflections in Astori Dialect of Shina Language

Shina (Astori dialect) has many inflections that show different functions. For example; nouns take inflections whether they are used as subject or object e.g. In "*Aslam^{mo} gosh aelay hoon*" the inflection "*-mo*" shows the possession and it is used as a subject in this sentence it also tells us that the entity being discussed, is masculine. In contrast, modern English does not have as much inflections as Shina (Astori dialect) has. In English, nouns can be inflected to show only plural or possession e.g. "*Boys are playing cricket*" the inflection "*-s*" shows only plural but when the noun is used as object it does not take inflection as; "*Seema likes Ahmed*". In Shina (Astori) nouns are inflected either they are used as subject or they are used as object of the sentence as; "*Seemasey Ahmedadey khosh thein*". Here Ahmed is used as object of the sentence and it has been inflected as; "*-adey*".

Derivational and Inflectional of Shina (ASTORI) and Other Languages.

Inflections are the additional letter(s) in a base lexeme to show the different grammatical functions in sentences, it is valuable to discuss inflectional and derivational in a particular and systematic way to make the discussion more vivid. The suffixes or prefixes, added to a base lexeme, can be either inflectional or derivational. These inflectional and derivational suffixes and prefixes are termed as derivational meaning and inflectional values by the Morphologists.

Derivational Suffixes or Prefixes

Derivational suffixes or prefixes are the additional letters which cause to convert the class of the word like they sometimes change verb into noun and they are usually placed close to the base e.g. “read, reader”. Here the suffix “-er” changed the class of the verb “read” into a noun “reader”. Bybee (1985: 87) admits, “the distinction between derivational and inflectional morphology is not discrete, but rather a gradient phenomenon”.

Verb Inflections and Their Functions

Shina inflections mostly perform more than one function. Verbs in English are inflected to show tense and number of the subject in the sentences, but sometimes, in English, a separate word (helping verb) is used to show number as; “he is writing”. In Shina the verb is inflected not only to show a tense, but the same inflection may show tense, the number of the subject, person of the subject, and gender of the subject at the same time in a sentence.

Research Method

This study is a descriptive research which involves describing the morphological structure of verb inflections in Shina (Astori) in the present indefinite tense. The study describes the verb inflection systems in Shina (Astori) so as to identify and describe verb inflections and their functions in sentences.

Data Collection

Ten Shina (Astori) verbs, targeting all the possible situations of verb inflections, were sent through Whatsapp to fifteen educated native speakers of Shina (Astori), and they were asked to use the verbs in sentences. Ten sentences targeting the focused verb inflections were selected for the analysis. The sentences have been analyzed in the framework “Inflectional Morphology” which deals with the study of inflectional morphemes. These morphemes are used to indicate different grammatical functions i.e. tense, aspect, mood, person, number and gender. The analysis specifically focuses on tense, number, person, and gender. The study examined the Shina (Astori) verb inflections, and how they express grammatical functions in the present indefinite tense.

Data Analysis

Table 1 Shina Verbal Inflections and Their Functions in Present Indefinite Tense

Shina Sentences	Inflectional morpheme	Pronunciation	Functions	English Translation
1. Baal se woi pion.	"-ioon"	[i:jú:]	Tense, number, person	The boy drinks water.
2. Mulayi se woi pieen.	"-een"	[yĩ:]	Tense, person, number, gender	The girl drinks water.
3. Babali se tiki khena.	"-naa"	[ná:]	Tense, person, number, gender	Boys eat meal.
4. Mulaaye se tiki khenaaye.	"-naaye"	[ná:ye]	Tense, person, number, gender	Girls eat meal.

5.	Tu se moji down.	"-own"	[ʌʊn]	Tense, person, number, gender	You talk. (singular)
6.	Tho/Xho moji diyaant.	"-yaant"	[yá:nt]	Tense, person, number, gender	You talk. (plural)
7.	Mu razemos.	"-emos"	[emɔs]	Tense, person, number, gender	I tell. (1 st person singular male)
8.	Bey razones.	"-oness"	[ɔnes]	Tense, person, number	We tell. (1 st person plural female/male)
9.	Beyi razones.	"-oness"	[ɔnes]	Tense, person, number	We tell. (1 st person plural female/male)
10.	Mu razemess.	"-emess"	[mes]	Tense, person, number, gender	I tell. (1 st person singular female)
11.	Tu se razein.	"-ein"	[eĩ]	Tense, person, number, gender	You tell. (2 nd person singular female)

Analysis

1. Baal se woi pieoon. (Shina)

In Shina verbs are inflected to show tense, person and number. As in above Shina sentence 1, verb inflection “-eoon” shows present indefinite tense, and the number of the subject. That is, it shows that the subject "baal" is singular and third person.

2. Mulayi se woi pieen. (Shina)

Shina inflections usually perform more than one function; this can be observed in Shina sentence 2 where the verb inflection “-een” shows the present simple tense and at the same time it also shows that the subject of the sentence “Mulayi” is singular and third person. The verb inflections show additional grammatical function that is they also show whether the subject is feminine or masculine. It can be noticed in the Shina sentences 1 and 2. The verb inflection “-eoon” in Shina sentence 1 shows that the subject "baal" is masculine and the inflection “-een” in Shina sentence 2 shows that the subject "mulayi" is feminine gender.

3. Bali se tiki khenaa. (Shina)

Inflections in Shina language usually perform more than one function which can be seen by analyzing the Shina sentence 3 where the inflection “naa” does four functions as it shows that the tense is present indefinite, the subject "bali" third person and it is plural in number. Moreover, it also shows that the subject of the sentence “bali” is masculine as well.

4. Mulaayese tiki thenaaye. (Shina)

Shina verbs in both the tenses, the present and the past, the verb is inflected. In Shina sentence 4 above, the inflection “aaye” shows that the tense is present simple, the subject "mulaaye" is third person plural, and it shows that gender of the subject "mulaaye" is feminine. It can be noticed that the verb inflection “-aaye” shows tense, person, number, and gender at a time.

5. Tu se moji down. (Shina)

In Shina (Astori), there are different pronouns for singular and plural. When the person spoken to is singular, the second person pronoun "tu" is used. It may refer to either masculine or feminine gender. The verb is inflected so as to show whether the entity referred by the second person pronoun "tu" is feminine or masculine. In the sentence 5 above, the verb inflections "-own" shows present indefinite tense, and it also shows that the entity referred by the second person pronoun "tu" is masculine gender and it is singular in number.

6. Tho/ Tso se moji diyaant. (Shina)

In Shina, the pronoun 'tho/' 'tso' is used when the persons spoken to (2nd persons) are more than one and the verb is inflected accordingly as in the sentence 6 above, the verb inflection "-yaant" shows that the entity referred by the second person pronoun "tho/tso" is plural, and the tense is present indefinite. The same inflection of the verb is used to refer to both the genders, male and female.

7. Mu se razemos. (Shina)

The Shina (Astori) first person pronoun "mu" is used to refer to both, masculine and feminine, genders. That is, the said pronoun does not show gender, but to show whether the entity referred by the pronoun "mu" is masculine or feminine, the verb in the sentence is inflected as in the sentence 7 above, the verb inflection "-emos" shows present indefinite tense, singularity of the subject "mu" and it also shows that the entity referred by the pronoun "mu" is masculine.

8. Bey se razeness. (Shina)

In Shina, verb inflections have to be in agreement with the person, number, and gender of the subject. Additionally, they also show other grammatical functions like tense or aspect. As in the Shina sentence 8, the verb inflection "-ness" not only shows present indefinite tense, but it also shows that the subject is plural in number, and this inflection may specifically be added to first person plural subject whether the subject is inclusive first person plural or exclusive. The pronoun "bey" is said to be exclusive first person pronoun as the first person pronoun, "bey" is used to refer to the speakers only, but it does not refer to the person spoken to.

9. Beyi se razeness. (Shina)

In Shina, there are separate pronouns for first person to refer to the people inclusively, and to refer to the people exclusively. First person pronoun "bey" (pronounced [be]) only refers to the people from/ on behalf of whom the sentence is used/uttered, it does not refer to the listener. However, the first person pronoun "bayi" (pronounced [bei]) refers to the people on behalf of whom the sentence is said/uttered, and at the same time it refers to the listener as well. That is, the pronoun "beyi" includes speaker(s) as well as the listener(s). Either the first person plural pronoun is inclusive or is it exclusive, the verb takes the same inflection "-ness" in present indefinite tense as in the Shina sentences 8 and 9 above.

10. Mu se razemess. (Shina)

In Shina sentence 10, the verb inflection "-mess" shows present indefinite tense. It also shows that the subject "mu" is first person singular and the person referred to by the pronoun "mu" is a female.

11. Tu se razein. (Shina)

Second person pronoun "tu", in Shina, refers to both the genders, feminine and masculine, but femininity and masculinity is realized in the verb inflection. In the sentence 11, the verb inflection "-ein" shows three grammatical functions. It shows present indefinite tense, and it shows that the person referred to by the pronoun "tu" is second person singular and female.

Findings

The analysis reveals that the Shina (Astoir) verb inflections “-eoon” and “-een” show the present indefinite tense, and they also indicate that the subject is third person singular. In Shina, when the subject is third person singular male, the verb takes the inflection “-eoon”, and when the subject is third person singular female, the verb takes the inflection “-een”.

Shina (Astori) verbs are inflected to indicate first person male or female, second person male or female, and plural male or female accordingly. For example, the inflection “-naa” in Shina sentence 3 indicates that the subject of verb is third person plural, and “-naaye” in sentence 4 indicates that the subject is third person plural female. Similarly, the inflection “-own” in the sentence 5 indicates that the subject is second person singular male, whereas the inflection “-ein” in sentence 11 shows that the subject is second person singular female, and the inflection “-yaant” in sentence 7 shows that the subject of the verb is second person plural. It is pertinent to mention here that, in Shina, when the subject is second person plural, the same inflection i.e “-yaant” in sentence 6 is used either the subject is feminine or masculine. For first person singular male most of the Shina verbs take inflection “-emos” as in the Shina sentence 7, but when the subject is first person singular female, most of the Shina verbs take the inflection “-emess” as in the Shina sentence 10. Like the second person plural subjects, the first person plural subjects also take the same inflection “-oness” for both, male and female, genders as in the Shina sentences 8 and 9.

Conclusion

The study concludes from the analysis that Shina (Astori) verbs are inflected with all the subjects, whether the subject is first person singular male or female, second person singular male or female, third person singular male or female, and first person plural, or second person plural, the verb has to be inflected accordingly. Shina (Astori) verb inflections most of the time show tense, person of the subject, number of the subject, and gender of the subject at the same time. From the analysis of the study, it can be concluded that morphology plays significantly a vital role in Shina (Astori). Thus, Shina can be considered polysynthetic as Haspelmath and Sims opine that when a language has an extraordinary amount of morphology and perhaps many compound words, it is called polysynthetic. The languages in which morphology plays a modest role are known as analytcs, and the languages in which morphology has a very little or almost no role are considered isolating (Haspelmath & Sims 2010: 4, 5).

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