

Athpare has, like all languages of the South Asian sprachbund, verb-final word order, with modifiers preceding the head. It is morphologically ergative with a split between the 1st person pronouns, which do not combine with the ergative case marker, and the rest. There are few ergative traits in syntax. Unlike most verb-final languages, but in accordance with the neighboring languages, Athpare makes little use of converbs and participles. Subordinate verbs are marked for person, number and tense-aspect, but they are minimally reduced in a way that is unique among Kiranti languages: they lack the final tense marker.

The most striking feature of Athpare grammar is the extremely complex verbal system. In principle, both actor and undergoer are marked on the verb in a rather idiosyncratic way. Sometimes there is a simple person marker (*a-* for 2nd person, independent of number and role), sometimes a simple number marker (*-ci* dual). Sometimes person and number are combined (*-i* 1/2p) and sometimes person, number and role (*u-* 3pA/S). The system is further complicated by several types of suffix copying, resulting in the longest suffix chains found in any Kiranti language so far, e.g. *ni-ni-m-get-n-et-ni-m-ci-m-ma-ga* (see-NEG-1/2pA-V2:attain-NEG-AUX:PT-NEG-1/2pA-3nsU-1/2pA-e-NML:ns) 'we (pe) had not seen them'.

² The LSN material is not always reliable. Especially the verbal paradigm questionnaires contain many errors, as it is impossible to ask an informant 120 verbal forms from a paradigm in a row. I found four of the questionnaires (with a word list and translations of 110 sentences) very useful once I could interpret the variants.

A Grammar of Athpare

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