

Chapter 5 Reconstruction of nominal morphology

5.1. Introduction

The reconstruction in this chapter moves from linguistic changes which are phonologically general, to changes that specifically concern the form and function of nominal inflections. Three categories of inflections are central to nominal morphology in KRNB: case markers, specificity-classifiers, and pronominals. Case markers (section 5.3) indicate the grammatical function of a noun phrase, while “specificity-classifiers” (section 5.4) indicate its discourse function (hence “specificity”) as well as grammatical class (hence “classifier”).

In KRNB, as in Indo-Aryan generally, there are personal pronominals (eg, ‘she’) and non-personal pronominals (e.g. ‘this much’, ‘here’). These are defined by paradigmatic relations between a proximal form (which begins with *ε), a distal form (which begins with *o), an interrogative form (which begins with *k-), and a relative form (which begins with *ḍ-). An example of non-personal pronominals taken from Mahayespur:

- /εṭela/ ‘this many’—the proximal form;
- /Λṭela/ ‘that many’—the distal form;
- /keṭela/ ‘how many?’—the interrogative form;
- /ḍṭela/ ‘as many’—the relative form (i.e. a subordinating conjunction).

The KRNB systems of non-personal pronominals are described, and the p-Kamta system reconstructed, in section 5.7.

These four morphosyntactic categories also apply to the personal pronominals which in addition are marked for the grammatical function of the NP in the clause (either as a nominative or oblique argument). For example (again from Mahayespur):

- /εε/ ‘s/he here’—proximal—with oblique counterpart /ε-/;
- /Λε/ ‘s/he there’—distal—with oblique counterpart /Λ-/;

- /kaɛ/ ‘who?’—interrogative—with oblique counterpart /kaha-/;
- /ɕaɦɛ/ ‘who’ (subordinating conjunction), with oblique counterpart /ɕaha-/.

The personal pronouns for each of the 8 KRNB lects are described in section 5.5, and the proto-Kamta pronouns are reconstructed in section 5.6.

The inflectional category of number is covered in the section on specificity-classifiers (5.4). In KRNB, as in the other e.Mg. lects (Oriya, Bangla, Asamiya, etc.), gender is not an inflectional category and hence does not figure in this reconstruction.¹

These three categories of morphemes—case, classifiers, pronominals—are termed *inflectional* under the broad definition adopted by Masica (1991: 212ff., after Zograph 1976), which includes both agglutinative and certain analytic elements “entering into *paradigmatic contrasts*”. The reason given by Masica for adopting this approach is the non-discrete line between analytical elements and agglutinative affixes— “the former generally ancestral to the latter, through gradual phonetic reduction and adhesion to the stem” (*ibid.*).

The results of this chapter are a reconstruction of inheritance and change in the inflectional nominal morphology from p-Kamta down to the 8 sample KRNB lects. Reconstructed innovations are scrutinised so as to diagnose propagation events (cf. 3.4.1).

It is not the purpose of this study to pursue exhaustively the MIA (Middle Indo-Aryan) and OIA (Old Indo-Aryan) etymologies of the inherited forms. Etymologies are included only as is necessary for distinguishing inherited and innovative features. Closer reference to the ancient morphological systems is not required because of the general discontinuity between OIA and NIA morphology—with MIA morphology transitional between the two; cf. Chatterji’s comments in the context of Bengali historical morphology:

¹ The presence of gender in inflectional morphology for w.Mg. (Bihari) suggests that the loss of this inflectional category is diagnostic of the *e.Mg. stage. However, establishing this conclusively is beyond the scope of the present reconstruction.

Bengali like most NIA. languages may be said to have started *de novo* in its morphology, having preserved but very little of the declinational system of OIA.; and the little that it has preserved consists of a few inflexions which have been generalised. MIA considerably curtailed the elaborate declension of the noun of OIA. (1926: 715)

The sources of morphological data for non-KRNB lects are:

- Oriya (Dash 1982, Misra 1975, Ramachandran 2001);
- SCA (Goswami & Tamuli 2003, Kakati 1962);
- Rajshahi Bangla (Chaudhuri 1940, S. Islam 1992);
- SCB (Chatterji 1926, Dasgupta 2003);
- Kamrupi Asamiya (Goswami 1970);
- Hajong (Haldar 1986);
- Bhojpuri (Shukla 2001, Tiwari 1960);
- Maithili (Jha 1985 [1958]);
- (Dangaura) Tharu (Boehm 2004, pers. comm.).

In addition, the following sources provide data on several lects:

- Dasgupta (1978) for Kharia Thar, Lodha, Mal-Pahariya and Manbhum Pahariya;
- Masica (1991) for Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Oriya, SCA, SCB and SCH.
- Purkhait (1989) for non-standard Asamiya, Bangla and Oriya geographical ‘dialects’.

5.2. NP structure in KRNB

The Noun Phrase (NP) in KRNB contains a head plus optional modifiers that precede the head, such as demonstratives, possessive phrases, quantifiers, and adjectives. The head noun is followed by specificity-classifiers and then case markers:
Noun—(specificity-classifier)—(case)

Speaking generally for e.Mg., including KRNB, the structure of NP constituents is as follows.

- *NP constituents precede the head*, with the exception that in some lects (such as BH) a numeral may occur in either of two positions. Firstly, the numeral may occur before an adjective, before the head; e.g. /tin-ʈa kala goru/ ‘three-CLF black cows’. Secondly, the numeral may occur after the head; e.g. /kala goru tin-ʈa/ ‘black cows three-CLF’ = ‘the three black cows’. In lects that allow the second position, the numeral’s position with respect to the noun differentiates *specific non-definite* from *definite* pragmatic inferences (e.g. ‘three of the cows’ vs. ‘the three cows’).² These two positions for numerals with these pragmatic functions are also found in Bangla (Dasgupta 2003: 379ff.) and Asamiya (Goswami & Tamuli 2003: 433ff.).
- Possessive Phrases precede all other NP constituents;
- Demonstratives precede other modifiers.

Based on these three general points, the structure of the NP (after some simplification, especially concerning CLF position) is:

NP → PossPhr, DEM, NUM, ADJ, N-CLF-Case or
 PossPhr, DEM, ADJ, N, NUM-CLF-Case

Classifiers occur in one of three positions: suffixed to numerals, nouns, or demonstratives. When a numeral is present in the NP, then the post-numeral position is mandatory for classifiers.

With the exception of classifier marking on numerals and occasionally on demonstratives, NP dependents are not inflected for any grammatical features of the head noun.

² The notion of specificity entails that the speaker intends for the NP to refer to a unique entity in the world. Specificity is thus different from definiteness, in that definiteness requires that the addressee also be able to uniquely identify the NP referent(s).

5.3. Case & case-like postpositions: description and reconstruction

5.3.1. Synchronic overview

Case markers establish the function of the noun phrase within the clause. NPs may be core or adjunctual arguments to the verb; the core arguments being the S of intransitive clauses, and the A and O of transitive clauses (Andrews 1985). In KRNB, the S and A arguments are unmarked. The O argument is marked with the Dative suffix if the head noun is either [human], or [animate and discourse prominent], and otherwise unmarked (see 5.3.6). Adjunctual grammatical functions are marked by:

- Suffixes, which are phonologically bound to the noun (or its classifier);
- Postpositions, which occur after a noun in Genitive case;
- Post-posed morphemes whose syntactic status is somewhere in between the other two categories. They are not phonologically *bound to the noun*, but they occur *directly after it* without an intervening Genitive marker.

In KRNB, the Dative (DAT), Genitive (GEN), and Locative (LOC) case markers fit into the first category—that of suffixes. For example (from Bhatibari):

- /manʃi-ʈa/ ‘man-CLF’ = ‘the man’, unmarked for case;
- /manʃi-ʈa-k/ ‘man-CLF-DAT’ = ‘to the man’, marked for dative case;
- /manʃi-ʈa-r/ ‘man-CLF-GEN’ = ‘of the man’, marked for genitive case.
- /manʃi-ʈa-tʃ/ ‘man-CLF-LOC’ = ‘in the man’, marked for locative case.

The markers for Instrumental (INS) and Ablative (ABL) clausal adjuncts fit into the last category—intermediary between phonologically bound suffixes and NP-external postpositions. Instrumental and Ablative markers, thus remain syntactically distinct from other postpositions by their position with respect to the noun—directly after the specificity-classifier, directly after the head noun. For example (again from Bhatibari):

- /laʈʰi ɖia/ ‘stick INS’ = ‘with a stick’
- /gatʃ-kʰan tʰaki/ ‘tree-CLF ABL’ = ‘from the tree’

The position of general postpositions is after a Genitive marked noun phrase. For example:

- /gaʃ-**er** ʈol-**ot**/ ‘tree-**GEN** **under-LOC**’ = ‘underneath the tree’

In this example the postposition /ʈolot/ ‘underneath’ is external to the NP, as shown by the genitive case marker that intervenes between the head of the NP /gaʃ/ ‘tree’ and the post-posed word /ʈolot/ ‘underneath’.

The morphological elements included in the reconstruction of this chapter exclude the broader category of postpositions (e.g. /ʈolot/ ‘under’), and include only inflectional morphology that is *internal to the noun phrase*, as indicated by the syntactic position: *right of the noun head with no intervening case marker*. For postpositions other than the Instrumental and Ablative markers, the Genitive case marking indicates that they have not been grammaticalised within the noun phrase.³

The case-marking words and suffixes identified here all fit into Masica’s Layer II of Indo-Aryan Case markers, defined as:

- (a) attached to the base indirectly, through the mediation of a Layer I element; and/or (b) invariant for all nouns and the same for both numbers.

(1991: 232)

The difference between Layer I and Layer II in Masica’s scheme is that Layer I elements “attach directly to the base, with morphophonemic adjustments which are occasionally complex” ... “Morphophonemic variation, while not entirely absent at Layer II, tends to be of a simpler order than in Layer I” (*ibid.* 231-2). Layer I morphemes, under Masica’s definition, are entirely absent from KRNB as for Asamiya. Bangla has the general oblique marker /-d/ in the case of plural nouns, and Oriya has /-[ɔ]ŋ/ with the same function. Otherwise NP functions in e.Mg are marked exclusively by elements belonging to Masica’s Layer II and Layer III.

The elements described above as postpositions external to the noun phrase constitute Layer III of case marking under Masica’s scheme. In addition to the syntactic

³ This syntactic distinction could also be tested for adhesion and the insertability of adverbial or intensifier elements before the postposition. Such testing is outside the scope of the present study.

criterion, he also gives a semantic criterion for distinguishing Layer II from Layer III elements:

[A Layer III element] is semantically more specific. E.g., as compared with a more diffuse Locative on Layer II or perhaps Layer I, Layer III typically mediates such concepts as ‘on top of’, ‘under’, ‘behind’, ‘inside of’, ‘near’, etc. (1991: 235)

The Comparative (CMP) marker in KRNB is certainly a Layer III element, rather than Layer II, and on that basis should be excluded from this section. However, it is included in the reconstruction as a special case because of its close functional similarity with the ABL marker. The ABL and CMP markers are addressed jointly in section 5.3.9.

5.3.2. Oblique argument marking in e.Mg.

The term ‘oblique’ is used in Indo-Aryan studies (and the convention will be followed here) to refer to *any case marked NP*. Thus ‘oblique’ in this context refers not only to NPs in adjunctual arguments of a clause, but also to NPs with O function, or even A function, if they are marked with an overt case marker.

In KRNB there is no general marker for oblique arguments. An ‘oblique’ ending, to which case markers attach, exists only in the pronouns, and even there this declension is missing for some KRNB lects (see 5.5 and 5.6.1). This is an important point of difference with the Bangla system of nominal declension. In Bangla, ‘oblique’ (i.e. case marked) nouns are suffixed first by /-ḍ-/ then by the case marker. This oblique declension is limited to semantically animate nouns. For example, in Bangla:

- /manuḥ-t̪i/ ‘man-CLF’ = ‘the man’;
- /manuḥ-era/ ‘man-NOM.PL’ = ‘the men’;
- /manuḥ-t̪i-r baḥa/ ‘man-CLF-GEN home’ = ‘the man’s home’
- /manuḥ-ḍ-er baḥa/ ‘man-OBL.PL.AN-GEN home’ = ‘the men’s home’

In KRNB, on the other hand, there is no distinction between plural marking of direct and oblique arguments (examples from MH):

- /manuḥ-t̪a/ ‘man-CLF’ = ‘the man’;

- /manus-er baʃi/ ‘man-GEN home’ = ‘the man’s home’
- /manus-la/ ‘man-PL’ = ‘the men’;
- /manus-la-r baʃi/ ‘man-PL-GEN home’ = ‘the men’s home’

Chatterji (1926: 731) finds this PL.OBL affix in Bangla to be “well established by the end of the 15th century” on the basis of textual evidence. This feature of Bangla is innovative and unique—with no cognate affix found “in any other NIA. language” (*ibid.*: 730). It is also linguistically complex in its morphological conditioning and thus diagnostic of a propagation event including SCB, but excluding KRNB.

[MI 1.] > /-ḍ-/ ‘PL.OBL.AN’ {SCB} (before 1500 AD). Diagnostic.⁴

The eastern Bangla varieties of Dhaka and Maimensingh use /-go-/ with the same function as SCB /-ḍ-/ (Dasgupta 2003: 365). This formally distinct innovation is also likely to be diagnostic of a PE.

The Oriya morpheme /-[ɔ]ŋ/ which marks oblique plural arguments is a retention of part of the MIA declensional morphology (see Chatterji *ibid.*: 723-4).

5.3.3. Nominative marking in e.Mg.

The nominative case is a core grammatical function encompassing the S of intransitive clauses and the A of transitive clauses. In Bangla, NPs in nominative case are suffixed by /-[e]ra/ ‘PL.NOM.AN’ when the referent of the head noun is both plural and animate. Oriya has a morpheme with nearly the same function: /-mane/ ‘PL.NOM’. Note that the animacy criterion does not apply in Oriya. The function of these markers is independent of the transitivity of the verbal construction. Both Oriya and Bangla nominative plural markers are innovative and unique and thus diagnostic of (distinct) propagation events, based on linguistic complexity.

The Bangla affix /-[e]ra/ is etymologically linked with the genitive case, which is, in its present form, /-[e]r/ in Bangla and KRNB (see 5.3.5), and /-ər/ in w.Mg. lects. Chatterji writes:

⁴ In formalising this morphological change, and those to follow, the following convention has been used: an innovation starting with ‘>’ should be read as ‘the following morpheme was introduced to the morphological system with function as given’. Thus [MI 1.] is to be read as ‘the morpheme /-ḍ-/ was introduced with function PL.OBL.AN into SCB’.

Originally, there was a noun of multitude after the strengthened genitive in « -ā ». This stage is still found in the Maithili « hamarā-sabh ... » we ...; and in Bengali, the noun of multitude can be optionally used (Chatterji *ibid.*: 734).

The “strong” form of the genitive (that is, suffixed with /-a/, cf. 4.4.11), followed by a “noun of multitude” (such as ‘all’) is found as a marker of plurality in early Maithili (Jha 1985 [1958]: 389) and early Asamiya (Kakati 1962: 294). The “weak” form of the genitive (without the suffixed /-a/) is found with the same function in Magahi /-ər-ni/ , and Bhojpuri /-ər-ən/ (Chatterji *ibid.* 734-6).⁵ In sum, the marking of nominal plurality through a construction *noun-GEN(-a)+“noun of multitude”* is well distributed in Mg. lects and seems to be inherited from the proto-Mg. stage of linguistic history.

A morphological innovation occurred *when the noun of multitude was left off* from this plural construction *only in the personal pronouns*, without a change in function.

[MI 2.] *pronoun-GEN(-a) + noun of multitude* ‘plural pronoun’ > *pronoun-GEN(-a)* ‘plural pronoun’ {middle Bangla, early Asamiya, KRNB}. Supportive, not diagnostic.

That is, the inherited construction became *pronoun-GEN-a*, but retained plural function. It is important that this Genitive-related suffix was initially grammaticalised with plural function *only as part of the pronominal system*. The middle Bangla literature provides evidence that [MI 2.] had occurred as early as the 14th century (*ibid.*).

KRNB maintains the morpheme /-ra/ with this function of plural marking in nominative pronouns, and though modern Asamiya constructs its plural pronouns somewhat differently, there is textual evidence that in early Asamiya the situation was the same as pertains in KRNB and Bangla today. The early Asamiya plural pronouns were suffixed with *-rā* followed by a numeral (rather than a noun), e.g. *torā dukānta* ‘you:PL two’ = ‘the two of you’ (Kakati 1962: 294). Recall from section 5.2 that Asamiya, Bangla, and at least some KRNB lects all allow this post-head position for numerals to indicate definite pragmatic function. From the existence of the

⁵ The extension of nominal stems with *-a has been discussed in 4.4.11; it is not unique to e.Mg. and its diagnostic value for propagation events has not been reconstructed in this study.

construction *noun-GEN-a+NUM* it is not difficult to see how the numeral may be left off, leaving only *noun-GEN-a* as a construction with plural function. Goswami makes the case (in his editorial comments to Kakati 1962: 294, footnote 2) that the function of this morpheme /-ra/ had already shifted from GEN to plural *by the time of early Asamiya*. He gives two lines of argument. Firstly, the noun phrase could be suffixed with the standard genitive marker *in addition to /-ra/*, as in the following example: *tārā dui-r ān nāi* ‘they-RA two-GEN other not’ = ‘both of them have none else’. In this clause the genitive case *-r* marks the function of the NP whose head is not *dui* but *tā-* ‘they’. One head noun can only take one case marker, therefore *-rā* can be considered to have ceased to function as a case marker in early Asamiya. Secondly, there are instances in early Asamiya writings where the morpheme *-rā* is suffixed with dative case: e.g. *tārāk* ‘him’. The *-rā* element had clearly lost its erstwhile Genitive function, because the head noun is in Dative case (indicated by *-k*) not Genitive case.

The shift in function of **-ra* from Genitive to Plural *in the personal pronouns* (formalised by [MI 2.]), involves a reduction in the complexity of the construction—which counts against its diagnostic value for a propagation event (cf. 3.4.1.1). Nonetheless, the conditioning of the change involves a change in function restricted to pronouns, which is thus relatively complex. The diagnostic value is registered as presently unclear, based on the criterion of linguistic complexity. It may be supportive of a propagation event diagnosed on other grounds.

Middle Bangla documents of the 15th century show that the scope of this innovative affix /-ra/ ‘NOM.PL’ had by that time expanded beyond personal pronouns to nouns in general. This change is peculiar to Bangla and does not characterise either early Asamiya or present day KRNB:

[MI 3.] /-[e]ra/ ‘PL.NOM’ in pronouns > /-[e]ra/ ‘PL.NOM.AN’ in general nominal morphology {Bangla} (by the 15th century). Diagnostic.

The reinterpretation of this morpheme /-[e]ra/ as a marker of plural subjects (i.e. no longer restricted to the pronouns) is unique to Bangla in the Mg. lects and diagnostic of a PE. This Bangla change is the nominative counterpart of [MI 1.] which introduced marking of oblique plural nouns. Together these two changes constitute a

partial restructuring of nominal declensions in Bangla which is not shared with KRNB or Asamiya.

5.3.4. Ergative marking in e.Mg.

Ergativity is a complex matter in NIA. In KRNB, as in Oriya and Bangla, overt marking of the Agent in transitive clauses has been completely lost, though it is attested in earlier stages of Oriya and Bangla. The Agent of transitive clauses is marked by a suffix in Asamiya, but it is usually termed the ‘agentive’ or ‘nominative’ case because the suffix does not affect Agreement marking on the verb (which always agrees with the subject regardless of transitivity). The ergative-absolutive construction was replaced with a nominative-accusative construction concurrently with the addition of subject agreement endings on past and future tense formations (cf. 6.4). The loss of ergativity is a common feature of many NIA lects and its value for diagnosing unified propagation events is uncertain given its far reaching range over NIA. The exception to this loss is the maintenance of ergative/agentive marking in Asamiya—which is plausibly connected to contact with speakers of ergative marking Tibeto-Burman languages (cf. Masica 1991: 339ff.). In both cases—the loss of ergativity, and its maintenance—the changes are non-distinctive in their respective linguistic ecologies, and non-diagnostic of PEs.

5.3.5. The genitive case marker

The Genitive case is cognate in all 8 KRNB lects but with some phonological differences between the sites, see Table 5-1. This charted representation of Mg. lects will be used throughout the chapter. In the chart the 8 KRNB lects are separated from other lects by a double line, and are themselves separated by dotted lines. Superscript ‘V_^’ should be read as ‘after a vowel’, and ‘C_^’ as ‘after a consonant’.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Tharu -ək | RL V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | MH V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | SH V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er |
| °SCH ⁶ -ka, -ki, -ke | KS V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | TH V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | BH V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er |
| °Awadhi -ker, -ki, -kae | Kharia Thar V ₋ -r, C ₋ -or | RP V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | BN V ₋ -r C ₋ -er, or |
| Maithili -ker (-k) | Mal Paharia V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | Rajshahi V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | Kamrupi V ₋ -r, C ₋ -or |
| Bhojpuri -kæ | Lodha V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | SCB V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | SCA V ₋ -r, C ₋ -or |
| °Marathi-Konkani -ca, ce, lo, le etc. | Manbhumi Paharia V ₋ -r, C ₋ -er | Oriya -rɔ | |

Table 5-1. Genitive forms in KRNB and some other NIA lects

The only morphological divergence within KRNB is the grammatically unconditioned variation in BN between two forms: /-er/ and /-or/. The [-ε]r variant is shared with other KRNB lects, the [-ɔ]r variant is shared with SCA and Kamrupi Asamiya, as well as Kharia Thar to the south-west of KRNB. Both variants, /-er/ and /-or/, have their origins in, and are inherited from, the common Magadhan stage of linguistic history.

During late MIA, the inherited OIA genitive affixes were lost through phonological reduction. However, before their complete loss, certain postpositions came into use as “help words” for establishing the genitive function of NPs. These postpositions are the source of genitive case marking in most of NIA today, and KRNB is no exception. The two postpositions attested in MIA which pertain to this discussion are *kēra* and *kara*. The former is reconstructed by Chatterji as a semi-tatsama form of OIA *kārya*, with transposition and reduction during MIA > **kāira* > *kēra*. Derivatives of this etymon are found throughout Magadhan, as well as further afield, notably “in the speech of European Gipsies who went with their language from North-Western India during the Second MIA. period” (Chatterji *ibid.*: 753). Later, he writes:

⁶ The symbol ° indicates, following Masica, a preceding Oblique linkage—that is an oblique marker which links the case marker and the noun.

Side by side with «kārya > kēra, kēla», the words «kara, kāra» ... were used in Māgadhī Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa to indicate the genitive. It would seem that in Māgadhī Ap. «kara» was used with the pronoun originally, and then was extended to the noun ... [In Mg. lects] «kēra, kara» have become practically doublets of an identical genitive affix. (*ibid.*: 755)

These two forms have been in variation for the same grammatical function since late MIA. The selection of either one of these two historical variants is a case of *inheritance of variation with subsequent regularisation* (cf. 3.4.1.4). This type of change is not diagnostic of a propagation event because of the possibility of independent regularisation of the variation. The presence of /-ɔr/ in Asamiya, but /-ɛr/ in Bangla and KRNB, suggests that this variation was still present during the common Asamiya-Kamta stage (proto-Kamrupa). This hypothesis is confirmed by early Asamiya writings which for genitive case use: *-kera, -era, -kara, -ka* (Kakati 1962: 306). (Note that this single medial -k- was being lost during late MIA and early NIA).

There are two different explanations for the general presence of the -[ɛ]r Genitive across KRNB but variation between -[ɛ]r and -[ɔ]r in BN. Firstly, p-Kamta may have inherited the -[ɛ]r/-[ɔ]r variation from p-Mg. and p-Kamrupa. BN then, alone of the 8 KRNB lects, may have retained the variation through to the present day. Secondly, the -[ɛ]r variant may have been regularised as the unique Genitive marker during the p-Kamta stage. The presence of -[ɛ]r/-[ɔ]r variation in present day BN could be the result of a mixed inheritance of both p-Asamiya *- [ɔ]rɔ and p-Kamta *- [ɛ]rɔ. This contact, and mixing of linguistic ancestries, may be recent or may have existed for centuries. We cannot exclude the possibility that this variation has continued unbroken in BN's linguistic ancestry since the p-Mg. stage. Nonetheless the absolute absence of the -[ɔ]r variant in KRNB outside of BN suggests it is more likely that this variant was re-introduced into BN through its phylogenetic re-integration with Asamiya (cf. 7.5.4.2). The proto-Kamta form is therefore reconstructed as *- [ɛ]rɔ.

[MI 4.] > /-[ɔ]r / 'GEN' {BN, from Asamiya}. Supportive of contact relations with Asamiya.

Determining whether the reintroduction of the [ɔ]r variant occurred recently or centuries ago in BN linguistic history is more difficult. The best policy it would seem is to delay judgement until all innovations have been reconstructed, then use the less ambiguous aspects of BN’s linguistic history to interpret the more ambiguous areas.

Regardless of whether the re-introduction occurred at an early or recent stage of BN’s linguistic history, the fact remains that BN incorporates several features—both morphological and phonological—that have been introduced from Asamiya. Alongside what might be called BN’s p-eKamrupa (Asamiya)-ancestry, there are some morphological features—notably in pronominals—which distinguish BN from Asamiya and instead associate its linguistic history with p-Kamta. For this reason, BN is reconstructed to be a transitional lect—intermediary between Asamiya and the other KRNB varieties. Even in a dialect continuum, not all lects are transitional. There are centres of innovation and stability, which contrast with more variable areas that mix and match the features of adjacent lects. BN is a transitional lect; its linguistic ancestry is mixed, with some innovative features traceable to the p-Kamta proto-stage, and others traceable to the p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) stage.

For the reasons given above, p-Kamta is reconstructed as having regularised the *-εrɔ variant at the expense of the *-ɔrɔ variant. Note that this regularisation of variation, while reconstructed as part of the p-Kamta stage, is not *diagnostic* of that stage. It is a principle of this reconstruction that the regularisation of inherited variation is not diagnostic of a propagation event because of the possibility that regularisation could have taken place independently and given the same outcome.

[MI 5.] Regularisation of *-[ε]rɔ in genitive function. {KRNB, ...}. Non-diagnostic.

| | Reconstructed forms |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| p-e.Mg. | <i>-kara, -kēra</i> |
| p-Kamta | *-εrɔ ⁷ |
| p-wKamrupa (Asamiya) | *-ɔrɔ |

Table 5-2. Genitive case forms reconstructed for various stages of NIA history

⁷ becomes /εr/ by loss of final *ɔ; cf. 4.4.11.

Likewise, there is no diagnostic value to the cognacy between the p-Kamta form and the Bangla form /-er/, or for that matter any Genitive markers which are reflexes of the *kera* variant instead of the *kara* variant. The variation was inherited, and regularisation was plausibly independent (cf. 3.4.1.4).

5.3.6. Dative marking

The Dative case has three major uses in KRNB, as in NIA more generally: firstly, to mark the recipient of a ditransitive verb, e.g. ‘I gave the book *to the boy*’; secondly to mark the object of a transitive verb (‘P’ in Comrie 1978) whose referent is either [human] or [animate and discourse prominent], e.g. ‘I saw *the boy*’; thirdly to mark logical subjects which have the semantic role of experiencer as in the example below (from MH).

/mo-k duk^h lag-i-c-e/
1SG-DAT fear attach-PFV-PRS-3
‘I feel scared’ or ‘Fear has struck me!’

A proper syntactic description of the grammatical relations involved in this construction is beyond the scope of this study.⁸ Note that in Bangla the experiencer in this construction is marked with *Genitive* not Dative case.

Using the same case to mark both objects of transitive verbs and indirect objects of ditransitive verbs is a common feature of NIA. The only lect in Table 5-3 which has distinct forms for Accusative and Dative functions is Manbhum Paharia (according to Dasgupta 1978: 248). In all other lects the Dative case also marks NPs with Accusative function.

The Dative case marker is cognate at all 8 KRNB sites and the regular reflex of *-ɔko.

⁸ For a general description of the dative subject construction from a pan-NIA perspective see Masica (1991: 346ff.), for papers giving details for individual NIA lects see Verma & Mohanan (1990).

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tharu -hənə | RL V- ɳk, C- ɳk | MH V- ɳk, C- ɳk | SH V- ɳk, C- ɳk |
| SCH -ko | KS V- ɳk, C- ɳk | TH V- ɳk, C- ok | BH V- ɳk, C- ok |
| Aw. [-kə, -ka] ⁹ | Kharia Thar V- ɳk, C- ɳk | RP V- ɳk, C- ok | BN V- ɳk, C- ɳk |
| Maithili -ke~ | Mal Paharia V- ɳk, C- ek | Rajshahi V- ɳk, C- ok | Kamrupi V- ɳk, C- ɳk |
| Bhojpuri -ke | Lodha -ke | SCB -ke, -[e]re | SCA V- ɳk, C- ɳk |
| Konkani -k(ə), ^{PRO-} -ka | Manbhumi Paharia ACC: -ke DAT: V- ɳk, C- ek | Oriya -ku | |

Table 5-3. Dative forms in KRNB and some other NIA lects

The prosodic raising of *ɳ > /o/ affects the case marker in TH, BH and RP (cf. 4.4.4). The chronology of this change is argued in section 7.5.3.2 to be post-1800 AD on the basis of sociohistorical sequencing. This chronology places the raising innovation subsequent to the p-Kamta stage, and thus the p-Kamta form in Table 5-4 is reconstructed with the lower vowel: *-ɳkɳ.

Dative forms along the lines of -(V)k(V) may be found in most NIA languages. Several of these are very likely to be cognate with KRNB *-ɳkɳ, though Masica writes “It is not ... clear whether [all NIA Datives in -k-] are to be ascribed a common origin” (1991: 245). The etymology is ambiguous, with Chatterji citing three or four different possibilities.

SCA and Kamrupi forms are clearly cognate with KRNB *-ɳkɳ. Chatterji (1926) reconstructs the SCB /-ke/ as the result of agglutination of *-k ‘DAT’ + *-ε ‘INS-LOC’. Given that the closely related lects SCA and KRNB have regular reflexes of *-ɳkɳ, the SCB etymology should be slightly amplified as follows: -ke ‘DAT’ < *-[ɳ]ke < *-ɳkɳ ‘DAT’ + *-ε ‘INS-LOC’.¹⁰ The extension of the Dative with the Instrumental-Locative suffix /-e/ mirrors the extension of the Bangla

⁹ These variants are phonologically conditioned (Masica 1991: 244).

¹⁰ This fuller etymology is implied but inexplicit in Chatterji’s analysis because his description gives Romanised transliterations of the written form, rather than phonological forms, and /-ke/ and /-[ɳ]ke/ are homographs in Bangla script.

Locative to a Double Locative (see 5.3.7). It is found beyond Bangla in other e.Mg. lects, for example Lodha. Before this innovation can be considered diagnostic of a propagation event, its broad dialectology in e.Mg. needs to be studied and showed to be conducive to sociohistorical explanation.

[MI 6.] *-ɔkɔ ‘DAT’ + *-ε ‘INS-LOC’ > /-ke/ ‘DAT’ {Bangla, ...}. Supportive, not diagnostic.

The chronology of [MI 6.] in Bangla is not clearly stated by Chatterji. He writes that the older form /-ɔk/ is “exceedingly common in M.B., as in the ŚKK. and other works” (*ibid.*: 759), but then that “«-kē» occurs regularly in MB., NB.,” (*ibid.* 762).

This discussion suggests the reconstruction of the following forms for some post-Magadhan stages of linguistic history pertinent to KRNB’s history.

| | Reconstructed forms |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| p-e.Mg. | ? |
| p-Kamta | *-ɔkɔ ¹¹ |
| p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) | *-ɔkɔ |
| p-Gauḍa-Banḡa (Bangla) | *-ɔkɔ + *-ε > /-ke/ |

Table 5-4. Dative case forms reconstructed for various stages of NIA history

As the prior ancestry of *-ɔk(ɔ) is ambiguous, it is unclear whether Asamiya-Bangla-KRNB *-ɔkɔ constitutes an innovation diagnostic of a pre-Gauḍa-Kamrupa propagation event or not. The Oriya form is /-ku/ which is probably but not conclusively cognate. The KRNB and Asamiya forms—while identical—are inherited morphemes, partially cognate with the -k element of (at least) Bangla /-ke/ ‘DAT’. As the Asamiya-Kamta similarity in this feature is not innovative, it cannot be used as diagnostic for the common p-Kamrupa (Asamiya-Kamta) stage.

Before moving onto Locative marking, we may briefly visit the evidence for earlier dative marking as found in the Buddhist mystical songs, the *Caryāpadas*. Chatterji writes that the *-ɔk form is “used for the dative in [Old Bangla]” i.e. in the *Caryās* (*ibid.*: 759), but then later adds that “The Caryās, in addition to «-ka» and «-ku», give instances of «-kē».” (*ibid.*: 762) This may suggest a history of inherited variation with

¹¹ becomes /ɔk/ by loss of final *ɔ; cf. 4.4.11.

subsequent regularisation, which would entail that SCB /-ke/ ([MI 6.]) is also not diagnostic of a propagation event. However, it must be kept in mind that the sentence structure of the Caryā songs is intentionally poetic and that extended morphology in the songs may reflect considerations of rhyme or meter rather than a vernacular of the time. Anyhow, the status of the evidence in the Caryās is so complex and controversial—“deliberately enigmatic”, as Masica (1991) puts it—that Dasgupta’s (2003) policy of agnosticism towards the classification of this ‘language’ (if, indeed, the songs reflect anything like a synchronically unitary lect at all) seems the most advisable course of action at the present time.

5.3.7. Locative marking

The Locative marker, used to indicate locational adjuncts, is cognate across the 8 KRNB sites. The forms differ only due to prosodic vowel raising.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tharu -mə | RL $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ | MH $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ | SH $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ |
| SCH mẽ, pər | KS $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ | TH $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ | BH $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ |
| | Kharia Thar -e $v_{-}k, c_{-}o\ddot{k}$ | RP $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ | BN $v_{-}t, c_{-}o\ddot{t}$ |
| Maithili -e, me, -hi, -tə | Mal Paharia $v_{-}t, c_{-}e\ddot{t}$ | | Kamrupi -o\ddot{t} |
| | Lodha -e, -ke, -te | SCB $c_{-}e, v_{-}te^{12}$ | SCA -o\ddot{t} |
| Marathi-Konkani -i:, -t | Manbhum Paharia $v_{-}e, c_{-}o\ddot{e}$ $v_{-}k, c_{-}e\ddot{k}$ | Oriya -re | |

Table 5-5. Locative case markers in KRNB and some other NIA lects

Similarly to the Dative above, the KRNB Locative is cognate with the SCA form /-o\ddot{t}/. SCB has two allomorphs with Locative function: the allomorph /-te/ is partially cognate with SCA and KRNB, while the allomorph /-e/ is non-cognate. Early Oriya

¹² In SCB the allomorph /-e/ is used after consonants, and optionally after non-high vowels. The historically ‘double locative’ allomorph /-te/ is mandatory after a high-vowel and optional after non-high vowels (Dasgupta 2003: 364).

-e is cognate with this latter Bangla allomorph (Chatterji 1926: 746). The modern Oriya locative marker is /-rɛ/, which is not cognate with KRNB /-ɔt̪/.

The ancestry of this -t- based locative is an open question. Chatterji writes:

The «-ta» postposition characterises the Bengali-Assamese group only among Magadhan speeches. This postposition would nevertheless seem to have been a Magadhan (MIA.) inheritance in Bengali. At the present day, it occurs as «-t » in Assamese and in dialectal Bengali (North, East, South-east). (*ibid.*: 750)

The absence of a locative in /-t̪-/ in modern Oriya or earlier Oriya documents casts some doubt over the presence of *-ɔt̪ 'LOC' during the common p-e.Mg. stage (ancestral to Oriya, Bangla, Asamiya and KRNB). However, when we look further afield, a potentially cognate -t- based locative is found in more distantly related lects Maithili and Marathi. According to Masica, the -t- based locative is “derived from the older locative postposition -*ta* (cognate with M. [Marathi] -*ā*(*˜*)*t* < OIA *antar* ‘the inside’)” (1991: 213¹³). According to Jha a cognate morpheme is found in Maithili linguistic history:

The presence of the loc. forms in -*ta* in the *Caryās* suggests, at first, a connection with Bengali. But -*ta* in extended forms is met with in early literary Maithilī as well as in the modern eastern Maithilī dialect: of course, even there, it is no longer commonly used. ... As a matter of fact, it may be considered to be a loc. affix current in the whole of northern, central, and eastern Māgadhan area inasmuch as it occurs in Assamese, Maithilī and Bengali (Jha 1985 [1958]: 34-5).

Given that cognates of this locative morpheme are distributed beyond Bangla-Asamiya-KRNB and found with the same function in Maithili and possibly also in Marathi, the heritage of the -t- based locative seems to stretch back in time beyond the hypothetical proto-Gauḍa-Kamrupa stage, to the hypothetical proto-Magadhan stage. The absence of a cognate morpheme in Oriya must then be explained by proposing the *replacement* of this inherited locative at quite an early stage of Oriya’s linguistic history. This hypothesis should be considered tentative until subjected to testing based on a broader sampling of data from the Magadhan lects.

¹³ Italicised forms are transliterated orthographic representations. Kakati (1962: 305) disputes the OIA etymology proposed by Masica.

| | Reconstructed case forms |
|--------------------------|--|
| p-Mg. | ?*-ɔ̃t̃ɔ |
| p-e.Mg. | ?*-ɔ̃t̃ɔ, written *-ᳵ, Romanised as *-ata |
| p-Kamta | *-ɔ̃t̃ɔ |
| p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) | *-ɔ̃t̃ɔ |
| p-Gauḍa-Baṅga (Baṅla) | *-ɔ̃t̃ɔ-ɛ *-ɛ |

Table 5-6. Locative case forms reconstructed for various stages of NIA history

At any rate, the double locative found in Baṅla, is certainly innovative. There is no clear evidence that both *-ɔ̃t̃ɔ and *-ɔ̃t̃ɔ-ɛ occurred during the p-e.Mg. stage or earlier for that matter (unlike for the variation in genitive case *-kera*, *-kara*).¹⁴ The testimony of the Sri Krishna Kirtana manuscript is that this locative doubling innovation occurred early in Baṅla linguistic history—either during or prior to the 14th Century. [MI 7.] is likely to be diagnostic of a propagation event:

[MI 7.] *-[ɔ̃]t̃ ‘LOC’ + *-ɛ ‘LOC-INS’ > /-t̃ɔ̃/ ‘LOC’ {SCB, Man. P} (before 1400 AD.). Probably diagnostic.

To summarise the key points: Locative markers in KRNB and SCA are cognate, and partially cognate with SCB /-t̃ɔ̃/. The doubling of the SCB Locative is probably diagnostic of an PE, but the Asamiya-KRNB markers are inherited forms and not diagnostic of a change event.

5.3.8. Instrumental marking

At this point the analysis shifts from case suffixes to morphemes which are noun phrase internal, but whose status as suffixes or postpositions is not categorically determined as part of this study. The two categories of postposition and suffix are natural points along the pathway of grammaticalisation, and it is not surprising that older suffixes are supplanted by newer postpositions, which in turn are

¹⁴ Analogously to the history of the dative outlined above, Chatterji mentions “one or two instances” in the *Caryās* of ‘double locative’ forms, but “numerous instances” of the locative *-ta* [-ɔ̃t̃ɔ] (ibid.: 750). For the reasons sketched under 5.3.6, this reconstruction maintains an agnostic position on how to interpret the data found in the *Caryās*, especially concerning whether or not the data constitute a unitary historical lect. Data from the *Caryās* alone are not sufficiently reliable to establish inherited variation with subsequent generalisation. Therefore the extension of the locative *ɔ̃t̃ɔ with *ɛ stands as a PE-diagnostic change.

phonologically reduced as they move towards suffix status themselves. Instrumental forms for KRNB were collected using the sentence frame ‘I am writing with a pen’ and are compared with other lects in Table 5-7.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Tharu le, leka | RL sɛ | MH ɖɛ | SH ɖi |
| SCH se | KS sɛ | TH ɖehene | BH ɖiæ |
| | Kharia Thar -e, -ɖie | RP ɖiæ | BN ^{v-} -re, ^{c-} -ere |
| Maithili -e, ẽ, s̃, ɖea | Mal Paharia -e, -herɔĩ, -hilẽ | | Kamrupi -e- ɖi |
| | Lodha -e, -ɖi | SCB -tɛ ¹⁵ , -ke ɖie | SCA -e, -er-e ¹⁶ , ɖi, -e-ɖi¹⁷ |
| Marathi -ẽ, -ĩ, -nẽ, nĩ | Manbhum Paharia -ẽ, -ɖia | Oriya -e, -re, ɖei | |

Table 5-7. Instrumental forms in KRNB and some other NIA lects

The KRNB data in Table 5-7 include variants of 3 etyma, which are referred to here as s-, d- and r- based instrumentals. The s-based instrumental is found in RL and KS, as well as in Hindi. The s-based instrumental is not found in Asamiya-Bangla-KRNB-Oriya (the eastern Magadhan lects) outside of RL and KS. This distribution of the s-based instrumental suggests it is a Hindi loan.

[MI 8.] > /sɛ/ ‘INS’ {RL, KS from Hindi/Bihari}. Diagnostic of contact relations of diglossia with Hindi.

This lexical replacement is diagnostic of a change event, but because contact through diglossia with Hindi is a likely conditioning factor the range (joining RL and KS) is not diagnostic of a propagation event.

Turning to the d-based instrumental, this etymon is found repeatedly in e.Mg., see Table 5-7 where d-based instrumental markers are in bold face. This etymon is the perfect participle form of the verb *ɖɛ-‘give’. Modifications to the suffix *-ia >

¹⁵ The Instrumental-Locative is used for Inanimate Instruments (Masica 1991).

¹⁶ Masica (1991: 246)

¹⁷ Kakati (1962: 304)

/-ε,-i,-hene/ are due not to nominal morphological changes but to phonological changes and *verbal* morphological changes.

The range of this etymon—throughout e.Mg. and also in the c.Mg. lect Maithili—suggests it is an inherited feature from pre-e.Mg., and is accordingly listed in Table 5-8. This accords with Chatterji’s judgement that this form is “Found from early times: *e.g.*, ŚKK” (*ibid.*: 770). The presence of this etymon in post-Mg. lects is an inheritance, and not the result of a change event.

The *r*-based instrumental is found in e.Mg. lects Oriya and SCA among others (see the italicised forms in Table 5-7). This discontinuous range suggests that the *r*-based instrumental is inherited from at least the p-e.Mg. stage. Misra connects this marker etymologically to the inherited genitive marker /-εr, -or/ extended by the locative-instrumental ending /-e/ (1975: 61).

With respect to the presence of the *r*-based instrumental in BN of KRNB, two explanations are possible (as in 5.3.5 above). The *r*-based instrumental may have been inherited into the p-Kamta stage and independently lost at all KRNB sites excepting BN. Alternatively, it may have been replaced by the *d*-based instrumental at the p-Kamta stage, and the presence of the *r*-based instrumental in BN resulted from its dual or mixed ancestry. The latter explanation is the more plausible and economical reconstruction. As argued in section 5.3.5, some morphological features of BN are clearly inherited from p-Kamta, with others clearly from p-eKamrupa (Asamiya); others yet are ambiguous between the two. The *r*-based instrumental is one of those features inherited into BN not from p-Kamta, but from p-eKamrupa (Asamiya).

The p-Kamta stage is reconstructed without the *-[ε,ɔ]r-ε instrumental marker. While this loss is held to have occurred during the p-Kamta stage, it is not a diagnostic feature of this stage. As for other changes involving the loss of inherited variants, the loss of *-[ε,ɔ]r-ε ‘INS’ is not a good diagnostic for a propagation event (cf. 3.4.1.1).

The instrumental case forms reconstructed for various stages of e.Mg. linguistic history are summarised in Table 5-8.

| | Reconstructed case forms |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| p-e.Mg. | *ḍia *-[ε,ɔ]r-ε |
| p-Kamta | *ḍia |
| p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) | *ḍi *-[ε]re |
| p-Gauḍa-Baṅga (Bangla) | *ḍie |

Table 5-8. Instrumental case forms reconstructed for different stages of NIA linguistic history

Both *d*-based and *r*-based instrumental markers are inherited from p-e.Mg., while the *s*-based instrumental occurs in KS and RL due to borrowing from Hindi. The presence or absence of *d*-based and *r*-based instrumental markers are not diagnostic of propagation events because they constitute inheritance of variation with subsequent regularisation. The *r*-based instrumental is not reconstructed for p-Kamta as its presence in BN is more simply explained by reference to BN's p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) ancestry.

5.3.9. Ablative and Comparative marking

The functions of Ablative and Comparative are grammatically interrelated in eastern NIA in general, including KRNB. For this reason forms which serve either or both of the two functions are analysed concurrently in this section. Markers of both these functions are postpositions of sorts, occurring either after the noun head, or after the head suffixed by genitive case. However, there is a general asymmetry in the relation between markers for ablative and comparative. The ablative form may be used for comparative function, but in most KRNB lects (not RL, KS, MH) there is a uniquely comparative postposition, which may not in turn be used for general ablative function.

Ablative forms for the KRNB sites are shown in Table 5-9. These were collected using the sentence frame 'Ram/Mohammed fell from the tree'. KRNB comparative forms were collected using a frame such as 'I am taller than you, he is taller than me, etc.'.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tharu se | RL ABL se CMP -GEN se | MH ABL se CMP -GEN se | SH ABL haṭe, tʰaki CMP -GEN tsaja |
| SCH se, -GEN karən --GEN ṭarəf se | KS ABL se CMP -GEN se | TH ABL tʰeke CMP -GEN tʰeje | BH ABL haṭe, tʰaki CMP -GEN tsaja |
| | Kharia Thar ABL he~te ABL CMP -hu~ CMP -GEN lou,le CMP -GEN tʰaki | RP ABL tʰaki, tʰæki CMP -GEN sæja | BN ABL -GEN pəra CMP -LOC koi |
| Maithili sə~, -k karəne | Mal Paharia ABL -GEN ṭʰalai~ ABL -GEN ni~ | | Kamrupi ABL -GEN pere, pai ABL -GEN perai CMP -LOC ke,kori CMP -LOC tʰaki |
| | Lodha ABL -nu CMP -GEN ṭʰai | SCB ABL -tʰeke CMP -GEN tʰeje | SCA ABL -GEN pəra CMP -GEN koi |
| Marathi-Konkani -un, -hun, -aṭun, -mule~, -pekṣa | Manbhum Paharia CMP -GEN le~ | Oriya -u, -ru, tʰaru, tʰiru | |

Table 5-9. Ablative and Comparative forms in KRNB and some other NIA lects

Ablative marking is highly fragmented in e.Mg.. Historical texts record an Apabhramśa (late MIA) ablative suffix (*hu~*, *-hu*), which Chatterji reconstructs as also inherited into eastern (Magadhi) Apabhramsha. The only evidence of inheritance into e.Mg. lects is Oriya /-u/, and possibly Lodha /-nu/. In other e.Mg. descendants this suffix has been replaced by a range of new forms.

The geographically central KRNB sites are alike to Bangla lects in employing the verb root /tʰak-/ ‘stay, remain’ in its perfect participial form. Chatterji finds this form as early as the ŚKK (before 1400 AD), but no earlier. The restricted distribution of this form in Mg. lects—not found beyond KRNB and Bangla— points to an innovation rather than an older inherited form.

[MI 9.] > *t^hakia ‘ABL’ {Bangla, TH, SH, RP, BH}. Tentatively diagnostic of contact relations with SCB through diglossia.

This narrow distribution casts doubt over whether (i) the ablative marker *t^hakia should be reconstructed as part of the p-Kamta inheritance (with loss in KS, RL, MH and BN), or whether instead (ii) it was introduced into the other four lects (TH, SH, RP and BH) after the p-Kamta stage through borrowing from Bangla, or indeed whether (iii) it was borrowed into Bangla from these lects. This is a problem of sequencing which cannot be disambiguated on purely linguistic grounds. The range within KRNB of the ablative marker /t^hakia/ is limited to the Bengal socio-political zone, and for this reason [MI 9.] is labelled as ‘tentatively’ diagnostic of contact relations with Bangla. Some further discussion on this change comes in Chapter 7, but on the whole the history of this morpheme in KRNB remains unclear.

The absence of a stable ablative marker at the proto-Kamrupa (Asamiya-Kamta) stage is supported by the early Asamiya texts which record the ablative largely marked by the genitive with “verbs implying removing, going away, descending” (Kakati 1962: 309). Grammaticalisation of any of these verbs within the noun phrase had thus not occurred during proto-Asamiya nor during the still earlier proto-Kamrupa stage.

The more western KRNB lects employ the same form for the ablative and comparative functions as for instrumental function: /sɛ/. This instrumental marker was diagnosed above as a borrowing from Hindi, and a similar explanation accounts for the ablative and comparative uses of this morpheme. In the case of [MI 10.], MH lect is also included in the range of the change event. For the same reasons as outlined in 5.3.8 for instrumental marking, this change is not diagnostic of a propagation event, but of diglossia with Hindi.

[MI 10.] > /sɛ/ ‘ABL, CMP’ {RL, KS, MH}. Diagnostic of contact relations through diglossia with Hindi.

The BN ablative and comparative forms are innovated replacements by borrowing from SCA. They are part of the p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) linguistic ancestry of BN.

[MI 11.] > /pɔra/ ‘ABL’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

[MI 12.] > /kɔi/ ‘CMP’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

The form /haṭe/ also occurs with ablative function in some KRNB lects, as well as in early Asamiya texts (cf. Kakati *ibid.*). It is a reflex of the OIA present participle of the verb ‘to be’: *santa*. Cognates are also found in Kharia Thar /-hōṭe/, Magahi /səṭi/, Bhojpuri /səṅṭe/, and Middle Bangla -*hante*, *honte*, *haṭe*, *hane*. This form is not the inherited p-Mg. ablative suffix (which is /-u/, cf. Oriya), but is nonetheless an inherited means of marking ablative function. Its presence as an ablative marker in these lects outlined above (and others beside) is an inherited feature and not diagnostic of a morphological change event.

A uniquely comparative marker, distinct from the ablative, is a feature of SCB and some of the KRNB lects. In these lects the marker is based on the perfect participial form of the verb *ṭah- ‘look at’. Unlike the ablative marker *ṭak-ia, this comparative marker is an inherited form for this function. Chatterji reconstructs the etymology as follows:

“চাহিয়া, চেয়ে «cāhiyā > cēyē» *having looked at*, indeclinable conjunctive ... used in comparison, with the genitive. This use seems to be old. Cf. Early Eastern Hindi as in Tulasī-dāsa” (1926: 769).

Tulsidas’ writings record that this form was used for comparative function in a w.Mg. lect of the 16th century. This distribution in both w.Mg. and e.Mg suggests it was inherited with this function from the common p-Mg. stage, though the possibility of a more recent propagation cannot be completely ruled out. If cognate postpositions are found in more Mg. lects, then this would strengthen the hypothesis that it is a postposition inherited with a function related to comparison. Further reconstruction relating to this morpheme should investigate the syntactic processes that created this construction with comparative function, including the syntactic motivation for putting verbal participles after a genitive case marked noun.

The reconstruction of ablative and comparative postpositions is summarised in Table 5-10.

| | Reconstructed forms | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | ABL | CMP |
| p-e.Mg. | *(hũ, hu), <i>hante</i> | *tʃa-ja |
| p-Kamta | *haɬɛ ? | *tʃa-ja |
| p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) | *haɬɛ *pɔra | *koi |
| p-Gauḍa- Baṅga (Bangla) | *haɬɛ *tʰak-ia | *tʃa-ja |

Table 5-10. Ablative and comparative postpositions reconstructed for different stages of NIA linguistic history

The sequencing of the propagation of *tʰak-ia ‘ABL’—whether before, during or after the p-Kamta stage—has been tentatively reconstructed to be *post-Kamta*, resulting from more recent Bangla influence in extended central KRNb (cf. 7.5.3.2). The other ambiguity registered in the table concerns whether or not *(hũ, hu) still pertained as ablative marker during the proto-Kamrupa and then proto-Kamta stages, or had already been lost.

5.3.10. The reconstructed case system of p-Kamta, and its modern reflexes

The foregoing reconstruction of the p-Kamta system of case inflections is summarised in Table 5-11. Contemporary forms for the 8 sample KRNb lects are given as reflexes in accordance with the discussion above. Putative borrowings (post-Kamta replacements) are shown by shaded cells.

| | DAT | GEN | | LOC | ABL | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|----|--------------|
| pre-KRNb | *-[ɔ]kɔ | *-[ɛ]rɔ | | *-[ɔ]tɔ | *haɬɛ | ? | | |
| RL | -[ɔ]k | -[ɛ]r | | -[ɔ]t | | | se | |
| KS | -[ɔ]k | -[ɛ]r | | -[ɔ]t | | | se | |
| MH | -[ɔ]k | -[ɛ]r | | -[ɔ]t | | | se | |
| TH | -[o]k | -[e]r | | -[o]t | | tʰeke | | |
| SH | -[ɔ]k | -[ɛ]r | | -[ɔ]t | haɬɛ | tʰaki | | |
| RP | -[o]k | -[e]r | | -[o]t | haɬɛ | tʰæki | | |
| BH | -[o]k | -[ɛ]r | | -[o]t | | tʰaki | | |
| BN | -[o]k | -[ɛ]r, | -[ɔ]r | -[o]t | | | | -GEN pɔra |

Table 5-11. Reconstructed proto-Kamta case system and its reflexes

Six morphologically-conditioned innovations have been reconstructed in this section, which together derive the contemporary systems from the reconstructed forms.

[MI 4.] > /-[ɔ]r / ‘GEN’ {BN, from Asamiya}. Supportive of contact relations with Asamiya.

[MI 8.] > /sɛ/ ‘INS’ {RL, KS from Hindi/Bihari}. Diagnostic of contact relations of diglossia with Hindi.

[MI 9.] > *tʰakia ‘ABL’ {Bangla, TH, SH, RP, BH}. Tentatively diagnostic of contact relations with SCB through diglossia.

[MI 10.] > /sɛ/ ‘ABL, CMP’ {RL, KS, MH}. Diagnostic of contact relations through diglossia with Hindi.

[MI 11.] > /pɔra/ ‘ABL’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

[MI 12.] > /kɔi/ ‘CMP’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

All of the innovations that affect KRNB case systems are replacements through (a) the influence of Hindi in the western KRNB lects {RL, KS, and to a lesser extent MH}, (b) the influence of SCA in the eastern KRNB lect {BN}, and possibly (c) the influence of SCB in the central lects {TH, SH, RP, BH} (though this last hypothesis is less robust than the others).

5.4. Specificity-classification markers: description and reconstruction

5.4.1. Synchronic overview

Within the e.Mg. lects, there are a set of suffixes which attach directly to nouns, and specify the discourse status of the noun as either specific-indefinite or specific-definite depending on the relative position of the noun, numeral and classifier (cf. overview in section 5.2). The inflectional categories marked by these suffixes are number and noun class, but noun class is only marked when the noun referent is singular and thus the plural marker is the same across all noun classes. KRNB differs in this regard from Bangla, which has distinct plural markers depending on whether the referent is animate or not (this divergence established by [MI 3.]). The suffixes employed in Mahayespur are given in Table 5-12 as an illustration of how all this works as a synchronic system.

| Number | Noun class | | |
|----------|------------|--------------------|--------|
| | Class I | Class II | Humans |
| Singular | -tʃa | -k ^h an | -ɕʌn |
| Plural | -la | | |

Table 5-12. System of classifiers in Mahayespur (MH) of KRNB

Recall from section 5.2 that classifiers may differ in their syntactic position within the NP. Classifiers /-tʃa/ and /-k^han/ may occur in one of three positions in the noun phrase in MH: post-numeral, post-determiner or post-nominal (in that order of priority). The human classifier /-ɕʌn/ is only permitted in the post-numeral position in MH. The plural marker may occur post-determiner or post-nominal but not post-numeral, and plural marking is not permitted when the noun phrase includes a numeral. For example: /lok-la/ ‘man-PL’ = ‘the men’, or /tin-tʃa lok/ ‘three-CLF man’ = ‘the three men’. The pragmatic implications of the position given to the classifier are considerably more complex than this, but this overview suffices for the purpose here.¹⁸

Some noun classes are mutually exclusive, while others may be sub-classes of more general classes. In MH, all human referents are also Class I nouns, thus three men can be either /tin-tʃa lok/ or /tin-ɕʌn lok/ ‘three-CLF man’ = ‘the three men’, though the latter is usually preferred. Because the position of /-ɕʌn/ is restricted to post-numeral, /-tʃa/ is always used for human referents in the absence of a numeral, e.g. /lok-tʃa/ ‘the man’.

The definition of some noun classes involves a semantic criterion, but not for others. In the MH system, the /-k^han/ class is partially defined by the semantic criterion of spatial extension—either flatness or length. For example /kitap-k^han/ ‘the book’, /duar-k^han/ ‘the door’, etc. The /-tʃa/ class is rather more of a ‘default’ noun class, into which all left over nouns are thrown. In western Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal, the default classifier /-tʃʌ/ (with allomorph /-ɕʌ/) even attaches to *proper nouns*. Such suffixing does not occur elsewhere in KRNB.

¹⁸ For further synchronic details, see Dasgupta’s (2003) analysis of the pragmatic effects of the syntactic position of classifiers in Bangla.

Bangla has variants of the /-tʰa/ and /-kʰan/ suffixes which are conditioned by semantic and pragmatic factors: /-tʰa/ vs. /-tʰi/ and /-kʰana/ vs. /-kʰani/, the latter being basically a diminutive form (see further Dasgupta 2003: 379ff.).

Table 5-13 lists the specificity-classifiers collected for this study at each of the 8 KRNB sites, as well as cognate forms in other e.Mg. lects. These suffixes were collected using the nominal concepts glossed in Table 5-14. Cells are shaded if they contain forms that are not cognate with other forms in the same column.

| | Specific-classification forms for singular noun referents | | | | | | | | | Plural forms | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------|------|----------|------|---|------|
| | | | | | | | | | | NOM | OBL |
| RL | -[tʰ, dʰ] | -kʰan | -dʰʌn | | | | | | | -la | |
| KS | -[tʰ, dʰ] | -kʰan | -dʰʌn | | | | | | | | |
| MH | -[tʰ, dʰ] | -kʰan | -dʰʌn | | | | | | | -la | |
| TH | -[tʰ, dʰ] | -kʰan | -dʰon | | | | | | | -la | |
| SH | -[tʰ, tʰʌ] | -kʰan | -zɔn | | | | | | | -la, giʰa | |
| RP ¹⁹ | -[tʰ, tʰʌ] | -kʰan | -zɔn | -pʰaʈa, -pʰala | | | | -tʰukuʈæ | -seo | -(gulʰæ, giʰæ) | |
| BH ²⁰ | -[tʰ, tʰʌ] | -kʰan | -zɔn | -pʰala | | | | -kuʈuʈa | -seo | -(gulʰæ, giʰæ, giʰʌ, la) | |
| BN ²¹ | -ta | -xan | -zɔn | -pʰala | -xini | -dal | -gɔ | -tukura | -heo | -gila | |
| SCB | A n. | -tʰa, | -kʰana, | -dʰon | | | | | | -gulo, -guli | |
| | | -tʰi | -kʰani | | | | | | | -[e]ra | -dɛr |
| Kamrupi ²² | | -ta | -kʰan | -zɔn | -pʰala, -pʰat | -kʰeni | -dal | | | -gila | |
| SCA ²³ | | -to, -ta | -kʰɔn, -kʰɔni | -zɔn | | | -dal | | | -bilak, -hɔ̃t, -bor | |
| SCO | | -tʰa, -tʰi | | | | | | | | -man(e), -manɔ, -kuʈa, -guʈa, -sɔbu | |

Table 5-13. Specificity-classifiers in KRNB and some other e.Mg. lects

¹⁹ Also for RP: /-dʰumi, -kɔna, -kʰɔna/. The latter two are probably allomorphic variants.

²⁰ Also for BH: /-dʰumi, -tʰuma, -aʃi, -gʰɔr/

²¹ Also for BN: /-silpa/.

²² For a fuller list of the classifiers used in the Kamrupi dialect, see Goswami (1970:105ff).

²³ For a fuller list of the classifiers in SCA, see Kakati (1962: 279ff.).

There is a sharp difference in complexity of classification between {RL, KS, MH, TH, SH} and the central and eastern lects {RP, BH, BN}. The former lects mark two nominal classes, *ʈa and *kʰan, with the sub-class *ɕʌn. The latter group of lects distinguish several more classes besides. The correlation between geographical direction and increased classificatory complexity is not accidental. From Oriya in the south-west (/ʈa/ and /ʈi/, but not /kʰan/), north-east through SCB and the western KRNB lects, and further north-east into the central and eastern KRNB lects as well as Kamrupi Asamiya and SCA, the complexity of classification gradually increases. The reconstruction below will make reference to this geographically conditioned complexity of declension. Note that the additional classifiers found in RP, BH and BN also exist as independent words in these same lects, and in the other KRNB lects. The morphological difference is that in RP, BH and BN these words, e.g. /pʰala/ ‘strip, length’ can occur directly after the noun as a suffix, whereas in the other lects the Genitive case intervenes. Thus in RP, BH and BN: /bas-pʰala/ ‘bamboo-strip’ = ‘a/the strip of bamboo’ vs. in the other lects /bas-er pʰala/ ‘bamboo-GEN strip’ =

a/the strip of bamboo’. The difference between these two examples is morphosyntactic—whether the classifying noun has been included within the set of grammaticalised words that are permitted within the NP, without an intervening Genitive marker.

As in the illustrated system from Mahayespur, not all the classes are mutually exclusive. This can be seen in Table 5-14, where the grammatical functions of some classifiers overlap, enabling more than one classifier to be used with the one noun, e.g. ‘bamboo’. Deeper synchronic study is required before we can say to what extent the use of each of these classifier is grammatically as against semantically conditioned. It is quite likely that, as in the case of MH /ʈa/ and /ɕʌn/, there is some grammatical hierarchy to these classifiers in the more complex systems such as BH and BN.

Fifteen nominal concepts were elicited for specificity-classification at all 8 sites. The spread of these 15 nouns across noun classes is given in Table 5-14.

| Classification of nouns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| | -tʌ,-tə,-tʌ,-ta, -dʌ,-dʌ,-dʌ | -kʰan, -xan | -gɔ | -dal | -sɛo, -heo | -silpa | -afi | -gʰɔr | -dumi | -pʰata, -pʰala | - tʰuma | -kuʈura, -tukura | -kʰini | -kʰona |
| RL | nose, bamboo, mango, betel leaf, pen, tree, cow, child, mother, person | hand, book, rope, hair | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KS | ¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MH | nose, bamboo, mango, betel leaf, pen, tree, cow, child, mother, person | hand, book, rope, hair | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TH | nose, bamboo, mango, betel leaf, pen, tree, cow, child, person, hair | hand, book, rope, betel leaf | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SH | nose, bamboo, mango, betel leaf, pen, tree, cow, child, mother, person, hand, hair | book, rope | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RP | nose, bamboo, mango, book, pen, tree, cow, child, person | book, rope, hand | | | bam- boo | | | | bam- boo | | | bam- boo, mango | | betelleaf, child, person |
| BH | nose, mango, hand, book, pen, tree, cow, child, person | book, rope, hair, betel leaf, tree, children, person | | | rope | | man- go | moth- er | bam- boo | bam-boo, mango, betel leaf | bam- boo | bam- boo, mango | | |
| BN | pen, cow, person, child, mother, hair | hand, book, betel leaf | nose, mango, pen, cow, mother, child, person | hair, bamboo, rope, tree | rope | man- go | | | | mango | | bambo o, rope | hair | |

Table 5-14. Membership of classes exemplified by 15 nouns

¹ Comparable data for Kishanganj was not collected.

5.4.2. Historical reconstruction of increased classification complexity

As noted in the synchronic overview, classification complexity builds towards the east of KRNB and then in Asamiya. The complexity is not ‘original’—i.e. not inherited from p-Kamta—but has developed incrementally through incorporating more nouns within the grammatical set of post-nominal markers of specificity. Taking what is basic across KRNB, I reconstruct the specifiers *-ʈa, *-k^han and *-ɕɔŋ as inherited from the p-Kamta historical stage and probably further back still. The introduction of the classifier *-k^han is possibly diagnostic of a common Bangla-Asamiya-KRNB propagation event, though this must be confirmed by a broader reconstruction of the common eastern Magadhan changes. Further developments in the system are reconstructed as having occurred after the division of proto-Kamta (1550 AD, cf. 7.3.1).

[MI 13.] Introduce as classifiers: *-p^hala, *-ʈukura, *-seo and assign nouns to them {RP, BH, BN}. Non-diagnostic.

[MI 14.] Introduce as classifier: /-ɕumi/ and assign nouns to it {RP, BH}. Non-diagnostic.

[MI 15.] Introduce as classifier: /kona;k^hona/ and assign nouns to it {RP}. Non-diagnostic.

[MI 16.] Introduce as classifiers: /-ɕumi, -ʈ^huma, -aʃi, -g^hɔr/ and assign nouns to them {BH}. Non-diagnostic.

[MI 17.] Introduce as classifiers: /-xini, -gɔ, -silpa, -dal/ and assign nouns to them {BN}. Non-diagnostic.

The nouns that become classifiers are already used in phrasal specification in other lects (e.g. /am-er p^hala/ ‘the strips of mango’ in SH). The grammaticalisation of these nouns as classifiers seems to be conditioned by contact relations with Tibeto-Burman lects, and is thus not diagnostic of propagation events because of the possibility of independent grammaticalisation in different areas.

5.4.3. History of the plural markers

The OIA plural markers were eroded during MIA, and from the start of the NIA period nouns of multitude were used as suffixes to denote plurality:

In Assamese as in Bengali ... the plural affix of O.I.A. *-ā̃*, *-ā̄* nouns, *-ā̃h* > *M.I.A.* *-ā̄*, was reduced to *-ā̃* in [Apabhramsa] and lost its Pl. force ... New Pl. forms had to be built up by adding nouns of multitude (Kakati 1962: 93).

The forms across KRNB are reflexes of proto-Kamta **-guḷa*. This in turn is a reflex of the semi-Tatsama form *kula* ‘herd, troop’ (see Turner 1966-71; headword id. 3330). Subsequent to the grammaticalisation of this noun as a plural suffix, its form has been reduced in some KRNB lects: **-guḷa* > *-gla* > *-la*. Cognates of *kula* are also found in Bangla /*gulo*/, Kamrupi Asamiya /*gila*/, and Oriya nouns of multitude /*kuḷa*, *guḷa*/ (cf. Misra 1975: 54 for Oriya). The change in vowel in Kamrupi /*gila*/ < *kula* also occurs in some KRNB lects. This change seems to reflect a stage intermediary between **-guḷa* (> *gVla*) > **gla*. During this intermediary stage the vowel—written V—became very short. The phonetic qualities of this reduced vowel were reinterpreted phonemically as /i/, rather than /u/.

Masica notes that “Bengali *gulo/guli* ... may be related not only to Western Assamese (Kamrupi) *gila*, but possibly also to Gawarbatī *gila*, Khowar *gini*, etc. in the far northwest.” (1991: 229). Probably all that can be said is that the semi-Tatsama form *kula* formed part of the p-Magadhan (and earlier) inheritance as one of a number of nouns that had some plural function. This form was then regularised with plural function in the lects mentioned above. This scenario of grammaticalisation is unlikely to be diagnostic of a common propagation event between Gawarbatī, Khowar, Kamrupi, Oriya, Bangla, KRNB, etc.

Reduction in the form of the plural marker occurs in several KRNB lects. The reduction of **-gula* ‘PL’ > **-gla*/ ‘PL’ seems to be connected to the phonological processes described in 4.4.6. Further reduction of **-gla* > /-la/ in {KS, RL, MH, TH, SH, variably in RP} must be accounted for by a change specific to this morpheme:

[MI 18.] **-gla* ‘PL’ > /-la/ ‘PL’. {KS, RL, MH, TH, SH, variably in RP}. Non-diagnostic.

This change involves loss of linguistic material and without much complexity in the morphological conditioning of the loss. All instances of the plural marker are affected, rather than a functional subset. (This change thus differs in its

morphological complexity from the reduction in temporal pronominals in 5.7.3 which is more tightly constrained). Despite the geographical contiguity, the possibility of some degree of independent replication of [MI 18.] having occurred is too high to use this change as diagnostic of a propagation event over the whole range. It is likely that propagation networks (e.g. RL-MH-TH) established on the basis of other diagnostic changes (e.g. [PI 25.]) conditioned the propagation of [MI 18.] to some extent—though to what extent is not reconstructed here.

The history of the SCB plural for animate nouns /-[e]ra/ has already been given above under 5.3.3.

5.5. Personal pronoun systems: description

The personal pronoun systems are presented in this section with only minimal comments on peculiar contrasts and forms. Detailed reconstruction of the p-Kamta pronominal system comes in 5.6, after all the systems have been individually sketched.

5.5.1. Rangeli (RL)

The pronoun system reported for Rangeli and other areas of Morang district of Nepal, is given in Table 5-15. Empty cells in this and later pronominal tables indicate categories identified as ungrammatical by the informant(s). ‘Oblique’ pronouns take case suffixes to indicate their function within the clause. The ‘Nominative’, or Direct pronouns take no suffix, and function as subject in a clause. Underscore marks indicate the position of the case marker in an oblique form which is also suffixed by - Λ . For example: kaha- = Λ \rightarrow /kahak Λ / ‘whomever’ = ‘INT –DAT=INDF’.

| | SG.L.NOM | SG.L.OBL | SG.H | PL |
|----------|----------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | muĩi | mo- | hama | hama-la |
| 2 | tuĩi | to- | t̥(a,ʌ)m ^h a | t̥(a,ʌ)m ^h a-la |
| 3.PROX | jeĩ | jeha- | (je,ε)m ^h a | jem ^h a-la |
| 3.DIST | wʌheĩ | wəha- | (a,ʌ)m ^h a | (a,ʌ)m ^h a-la |
| INT.DEF | kəhaj | kəha- | | kahaj-la |
| INT.INDF | kah = ʌ | kaha-__ = ʌ | | |
| REL.DEF | ɕəhaj | ɕəha- | | ɕahaj-la |
| REL.INDF | ɕah = ʌ | ɕaha-__ = ʌ | | |

Table 5-15. Rangeli system of personal pronouns

The Rangeli system distinguishes three persons across the number categories of Low Singular, High Singular and Plural. This is peculiar among the 8 KRNB lects examined here, and is reconstructed as an historical innovation in section 5.6. Speakers report that SG.L forms are used in casual conversation, but that in formal situations, such as with one’s father-in-law, “we don’t speak **mui tui**, we speak **hama tama**”. That is, SG.H forms are used in formal conversation styles, and SG.L in casual conversation styles. A thorough sociolinguistic study of the use of these different Low and High pronoun sets remains to be done. Historically, the use of inherited plural pronouns as high singular was accompanied by the innovation of new plural forms—extended by the plural suffix /-la/, e.g. /mui/ ‘I:Low’, /hama/ ‘I:High’, /hama-la/ ‘we’.

Third person pronouns are deictics which distinguish distal (far) and proximal (near) positions against the categories Low Singular, High Singular, and Plural.

In all KRNB lects, indefinite pronouns are formed by attaching the associative clitic /-ʌ,ɔ,o/ ‘even, also’ to the interrogative pronoun. For example, in RL the interrogative pronoun is /kəhaj/ ‘who?’, and the indefinite pronoun is /kah = ʌ/ ‘someone, anyone, whoever’. (In some lects including RL the attachment of the clitic alters the rhythm of the word with minor effects on the preceding vowels.)

We may note in RL the phonetic variation between on-glided and pure vowels in the opening syllables of the third person pronouns, e.g. (je,ε)m^ha ‘3:SG.H’ = ‘this respected one here’. There is variation also in the constituent phonemes of the second

and third person High Singular and Plural pronouns, e.g.: /t̪(a,ʌ)m^ha/ ‘you:H’, /ʌ(a,ʌ)m^ha/ ‘s/he:H’.

The Rangeli (RL) system, like the Mahayespur (MH) system (5.5.3), distinguishes Nominative and Oblique forms only in the Singular pronouns, with the distinction neutralised in the Plural pronouns (see further section 5.6).

5.5.2. Kishanganj (KS)

The pronoun system collected in a village area outside Kishanganj town, and reported for other southern areas of Kishanganj district of Bihar, is given in Table 5-16.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|----------|--|------------|-------------|
| 1 | mũi | mo- | hamra | həm(s,t̪)a- |
| 2 | t̪ũi | t̪o- | t̪umra | t̪umsa- |
| 3.PROX | jə̃haj | jəha- | era; ɛmra | is(m)a- |
| 3.DIST | wəhə̃j | wəha- | wora; ʌmra | us(m)a- |
| INT.DEF | kɛ | kəha- | | |
| INT.INDF | kah = o | kəha- _o = o(b ^h i) | | |
| REL.DEF | d̪aj | d̪əha- | | |
| REL.INDF | d̪ah = o | | | |

Table 5-16. Kishanganj system of personal pronouns

The KS system differs from RL, but is similar to the other KRNB sites in only distinguishing Singular and Plural pronouns. The PL forms may also be used for High Singular functions. In KS the on-glide to the third person singular pronouns (variable in RL above) is more categorically established. e.g. /jə̃haj/ ‘PROX’ and /wəhə̃j/ ‘DIST’. Obliqueness in the plural pronouns is signalled by a morpheme (ts, s), which appears in a different position in the 1st and 2nd person pronouns than in the 3rd person pronouns. Reconstruction of the historical morphology of this morpheme is attempted in section 5.6.1. Nominative Plurality is signalled by the element /ra/, also historically reconstructed in 5.6.1.

5.5.3. Mahayespur (MH)

The pronoun system collected in Mahayespur, and reported for other areas of eastern Jhapa district of Nepal and southern Darjeeling district of West Bengal, is given in Table 5-17.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|----------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | mūi | mo- | | hama |
| 2 | tūi | to- | | tΛm ^h a |
| 3.PROX | ε | ε- | | εm ^h a |
| 3.DIST | Λj | Λ- | | Λm ^h a |
| INT.DEF | kaj | kəha- | kaε kaε | kəha-__ kəha- |
| INT.INDF | kah = Λ | kəha-__ = Λ | kahΛ kahΛ | kəha-__ = Λ kəha-__ = Λ |
| REL.DEF | dzahe | dzəha- | dzahe dzahe | dzəha-__ dzəh-a- |
| REL.INDF | dzah = Λ | dzəha-__ = Λ | dzahΛ dzahΛ | dzəha-__ = Λ dzəha-__ = Λ |

Table 5-17. Mahayespur system of personal pronouns

In the interrogative and relative pronouns of this set plural number is indicated by doubling of the singular forms. Analysis of oral texts is needed to find out how prominent this plural marking strategy is in actual use. This strategy may also be present in KS and RL, but failed to show up in the data elicited for this study.

In MH there is no difference in form between the Nominative and Oblique-base plural pronouns, except in the Interrogative and Relative functions.

5.5.4. Thakurgaon (TH)

The pronoun system collected in a village near Thakurgaon town of Bangladesh, is given in Table 5-18. For some categories there are different forms reported for the local Muslims as against the local Polia/Rajbanshi Hindus of Thakurgaon district. Forms reported for Muslims are indicated by {M}, and for Hindus by {H}. The data were collected with a Muslim speaker and his Hindu and Muslim friends, and the variation is confirmed by the dialectological data collected as part of this study, see Appendix D.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | mui | mo- | hamra | hama- |
| 2 | ṭui | ṭo- | ṭumr ^h a | ṭum ^h a- |
| 3.PROX | ia [~] | ia [~] - | imr ^h a | im ^h a- |
| 3.DIST | ua [~] | ua [~] - | umr ^h a | um ^h a |
| INT.DEF | ke {M}, kaj{H} | ka- | kela {M}, kara {H} | ka-__ ka- |
| INT.INDF | keh = o | ka-__ = o | | ka-__ = o ka-__ = o |
| REL.DEF | dzaj | dza- | dzejla | dza-__ dza- |
| REL.INDF | dze keh = o | | | |

Table 5-18. Thakurgaon system of personal pronouns

This system is like the MH system in utilising reduplication for Interrogative and Relative Plural pronouns. The combination of aspirated nasals in the Plural Oblique forms (e.g. /ṭum^ha/ ‘2.PL.OBL’) and aspirated rhotics in the Plural Nominative forms (e.g. /ṭumr^ha/ ‘2.PL.NOM’) is unique among the 8 KRNB sites and significant for the reconstruction in section 5.6.

The Interrogative PL.NOM form /kela/ reported for Muslims is a newer plural than the Hindu equivalent /kara/. It results from agglutination of the INT.SG.NOM pronoun /ke/ with the productive Plural morpheme /-la/ (cf. section 5.4).

5.5.5. Shalkumar (SH)

The pronoun system collected with speakers of Shalkumar, in central Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal, is given in Table 5-19.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | mui, moj | mo- | ham(e)ra | hama- |
| 2 | ṭui | ṭo- | ṭomora, ṭomra | ṭoma(-__-la)- |
| 3.PROX | ijai | ija- | imir ^h a | ima- |
| 3.DIST | uwai | uwa- | umur ^w a, umra | uma- |
| INT.DEF | kaj | ka- | kajgula | kunla-, ka-__ ka- |
| INT.INDF | kah = o | kaho-__ = o | kah = o kah = o | |
| REL.DEF | dzaj | dza- | dzaj dzaj, dzeila | |
| REL.INDF | dze kah = o | | | |

Table 5-19. Shalkumar system of personal pronouns

Peculiar to the Shalkumar data is the insertion of a vowel between sonorant consonant clusters. The particular vowel that is inserted is determined by the preceding vowel, thus /ham(e)ra/, /ṭomora/, /imirⁱa/, and /umur^wa/ (cf. section 4.4.8). The pattern of pronominals is otherwise highly similar to RP and BH below (minus the innovative relative plural form of Rangpur).

5.5.6. Rangpur (RP)

The pronoun system collected with speakers in and around Rangpur town, Bangladesh, is given in Table 5-20.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1 | mūi, mōi | mo- | hamra | hama- |
| 2 | ṭūi, ṭōi | ṭo- | ṭomra | ṭoma- |
| 3.PROX | āi | iæ- | emra | ema-, imæ- |
| 3.DIST | ṣi, ṭāi | uæ- | omra, ṭamra | oma- |
| INT.DEF | kāi | ka- | | - |
| INT.INDF | kājo | ka- _o = o | | - |
| REL.DEF | zāi | za- | zamra (DIST), zemra (PROX) | zama- |
| REL.INDF | zājo | za- _o = o | | - |

Table 5-20. Rangpur system of personal pronouns

Three features of this system warrant some comment for their variance from the broader KRNB patterns. Firstly, this is the only system to have extended the Plural Nominative and Oblique elements /-mra/ and /-ma-/ to the Relative or subordinating conjunctions: /zamra, zemra, zama-/. Interestingly, these new Relative pronouns further distinguish the categories Distal vs. Proximal. Secondly, along with standard third person Distal pronouns in /o;o-/, the data also include an Anaphoric form (listed under 3.DIST) in /ṭa-/. Functionally equivalent forms exist in the other central and eastern KRNB lects, but not in RL, MH, or KS to my knowledge. Thirdly, the variation [mūi, mōi] and [ṭūi, ṭōi] is part of a confusing historical picture of the development of these pronominal forms, to be addressed in depth in section 5.6.1.

5.5.7. Bhatibari (BH)

The pronoun system collected with speakers from villages around Bhatibari—on the border between south-eastern Jalpaiguri district and north-eastern Cooch Behar district, West Bengal—is given in Table 5-21.

| | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | mui | mo- | (h)amra | (h)ama- |
| 2 | tui | to- | tomra | toma- |
| 3.PROX | iŋ ¹ ej, ijej | iŋ ¹ ε-, ije- | emra, imr ¹ ε | im ¹ ε- |
| 3.DIST | uŋ ¹ ej, uwej | uŋ ¹ ε-, uje- | umr ¹ ε | um ¹ ε- |
| INT.DEF | kaj | ka- | kaj kaj | ka-__ ka-__ |
| INT.INDF | kaŋ = o, kaj = o | kaŋ-__ = o | kaŋ = o kaŋ = o | kaŋ-__ = o kaŋ-__ = o |
| REL.DEF | dzaj | dza- | dzaj dzaj | dza-__ dza- |
| REL.INDF | dzaŋo | | | |

Table 5-21. Bhatibari system of personal pronouns

This pronominal system is substantially the same as for Rangpur above, though with reduplication as a strategy for marking plurality in the place of Rangpur's innovative relative plural forms.

5.5.8. Bongaigaon (BN)

The pronoun system collected with speakers of Bongaigaon lect, in western Assam is given in Table 5-22.

| | SG. NOM | SG. OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL | H. NOM | H. OBL |
|----------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | mɔj | mɔ- | ami(ra) | ama- | | |
| 2 | tɔj | tɔ- | tumi(ra) | t[o, u]ma- | apuni | apona- |
| 3.PROX | ε | e- | imira | ima- | | |
| 3.DIST | oj, hi | ta- | umira, tamira | uma-, tama- | | |
| INT.DEF | kaj | ka- | kaj kaj | ka-__ ka- | | |
| INT.INDF | kabaj | kaba- | kabaj kabaj | kaba-__ kaba- | | |
| REL.DEF | (d)zaj | (d)za- | (d)zigila | (d)za-__ (d)za- | | |
| REL.INDF | zabaj | zaba- | | | | |

Table 5-22. Bongaigaon system of personal pronouns

Several aspects of this pronominal system diverge from the other KRNB systems. The first and second person Singular pronouns /mɔj, tɔj/ are almost identical with

SCA.²⁵ The second person pronouns include a high honorific form, foreign to the other KRNB lects, but common with SCA as well as SCB (see 5.6.3). Thirdly, the third person singular distal ‘s/he there’ is /oj/ or /hi/. The latter may have an anaphoric function. Lastly, the Indefinite pronouns based on /kaba-/ are markedly different to the equivalent forms in other KRNB lects, though similar to SCA.

5.5.9. Standard Colloquial Bangla (SCB)

For the sake of comparison, and given the influence of the regional Standard languages on certain KRNB lects, the pronominal systems of SCB and SCA are also outlined and discussed briefly. The SCB system given in Table 5-23 is based on Dasgupta (2003: 367) and Bhattacharya (2001: 68). The levels of honour are given in the leftmost column: L (low), NT (neutral), H (high honour). Anaphoric function /ʃe/ is distinguished from distal /o/ in the third person.

| Person | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1 | ami | ama- | amra | amaḍer |
| 2.L | ṭui | ṭo- | ṭora | ṭoḍer |
| 2.NT | ṭumi | ṭoma- | ṭomra | ṭomaḍer |
| 2.H | apni | apna- | apnara | apnaḍer |
| 3.NT.PROX | e | e- | era | eḍer |
| 3.H.PRX | ini | ẽ- | ẽra | ẽder |
| 3.NT.DIST | o | o- | ora | oḍer |
| 3.H.DIST | uni | õra | õra | õder |
| 3.NT.ANP | ʃe | | ṭara | |
| 3.HON.ANP | ṭini | | ṭãra | |
| INT.DEF | ke | ka- | | |
| INDF | ke = o | kau- | | |
| REL.DEF | ḍe | ḍa- | | |
| REL.INDF | ḍe ke = o | ḍe kau- | | |

Table 5-23. SCB system of personal pronouns

The SCB pronoun system is considerably more complicated than the KRNB systems, due to the categorisation for honour in second and third person. While in KRNB there are generally no special forms to distinguish high and low honour, SCB distinguishes

²⁵ SCA forms are /mbe, tpe/ ‘I, you:SG’. SCA has four distinct phonemes in the back vowels /ɒ, ɔ, o, u/, to BN’s three /ɔ, o, u/.

three levels of honour in the second person forms /tui, tumi, apni/, and two levels in the third person forms /o, uni/, /e, ini/, etc.. In the second person, KRNB generally only has /tui/ for singular number, and the further option of using the plural pronoun /tom^ha, tomra/ in cases of high honour. As a result, KRNB /tui/ is not functionally equivalent to SCB /tui/. Rather, the function of KRNB /tui/ is equivalent to the functions covered by both SCB /tui/ and /tumi/. The functional equivalent of SCB /apni/ is KRNB /tom^ha, tomra/, but this KRNB pronoun also grammaticalises the category of Plurality, so the functional equivalence is not one-to-one. Similar differences in the categorisation of Honour exist between the 3rd person pronouns of SCB and KRNB. These structural differences lead to misunderstandings, largely on the part of SCB speakers, who mistakenly assume that KRNB /tui/ exists in the same structural relations of Honour as SCB /tui/ when in fact the structure of the systems is quite different.²⁶

Note also that the function of the SCB pronominal element /-ra/ differs from the function of KRNB /-ra/. In KRNB and other e.Mg. lects the morpheme is restricted to the pronominal system, while in SCB it is a general marker of plurality for animate nouns (see 5.3.3).

5.5.10. Standard Colloquial Asamiya (SCA)

The structure of the SCA pronominal system is similar to SCB in its categorisation of Honour in second and third persons. However, there are several other differences with SCB and with KRNB, as can be seen in the data in Table 5-24. The data are from Goswami & Tamuli (2003) and Kakati (1962).

²⁶ I have had Bengali mother tongue speakers say to me “Rajbanshis are rude, they use *tui* when they speak to me.” This is a misunderstanding of the functional relations of /tui/ ‘2.SG’ within the pronominal systems of KRNB lects.

| Person | SG.NOM | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | mɔj | mo- | ami | ama- |
| 2.L | tɔj | to- | tɔhɔ̃t | |
| 2.NT | tumi | toma- | tomalok | |
| 2.H | apuni | apona- | aponalok | |
| 3.NT.PROX: M | i | ia- | ihɔ̃t | |
| 3.NT.PROX: F | ei | | xihɔ̃t | |
| 3.H.PROX | eõ, ek ^h et | | eõlok, ek ^h etxɔ̃kɔ̃l | |
| 3.NT.DIST: M | xi | ta- | xihɔ̃t | |
| 3.NT.DIST: F | tai | | | |
| 3.H.DIST | teõ, tek ^h et | | teõlok, tek ^h etxɔ̃kɔ̃l | |
| INT.DEF | kon | ka- | | |
| INT.INDF | konoba | karoba | | |
| REL.DEF | zi | za- | | |
| REL.INDF | | | | |

Table 5-24. SCA system of personal pronouns

SCA stands out in e.Mg. for its categorisation of gender in the third person. The distinction is maintained only in the Nominative pronouns (/i/ ‘he’, /ei/ ‘she’) and not in the Oblique ones (e.g. /ia-r/ ‘his, her’). The gender distinction is neutralised for the third person pronouns with high honour, e.g. /eõ, ek^het/.

The plural element /-ra/ mentioned above for SCB and KRNB is noticeably absent from SCA (though it was present during early Asamiya, cf. 5.3.3). Plurality is marked either through use of different lexemes /mɔj/ ‘I’ vs. /ami/ ‘we’, or by the suffixes /-hɔ̃t/ or /-lok/. The suffix /-hɔ̃t/ is always applied to low honour pronouns, and sometimes to neutral honour pronouns, but never to high honour pronouns. The use of the suffix /-lok/ is the exact reverse.

5.6. Personal pronoun systems: reconstruction

Having sketched the contemporary pronominal systems of KRNB and its influential neighbours SCB and SCA, the present section reconstructs the historical change events that derived the contemporary systems from earlier ones. Structurally general innovations that applied across Person categories are reconstructed first in 5.6.1,

followed by a blow-by-blow reconstruction of forms in each category of Person (5.6.2 - 5.6.4), as well as in the Interrogative (5.6.5) and Relative (5.6.6) pronominal categories. The p-Kamta pronoun system that results from all the reconstruction is presented here in advance, in order to aid the reader in following the discussion below.

| Person | SG.NOM/INS | SG.OBL | PL.NOM | PL.OBL |
|--------|---------------|---------|---|--|
| 1 | *mui | *mo- | *hamra | *[hama-, hamʃa-] |
| 2 | *t̥ui | *t̥o- | *tom ^h ra | *[tom ^h a-, tom ^h ʃa-] |
| 3.PROX | *[ẽj, ĩhaj] | *ĩha- | *[em ^h ra, im ^h ra] | *[em ^h a-, im ^h a-, eʃma-, iʃma-] |
| 3.DIST | *[õj, ũhaj] | *ũha- | *[om ^h ra, um ^h ra] | *[om ^h a-, um ^h a-, oʃma-, uʃma-] |
| INT | *kahe | *kaha- | | |
| REL | *dzahē | *dzaha- | | |

Table 5-25. Reconstructed personal pronouns for p-Kamta

5.6.1. General structural changes in personal pronouns

The KRNB lects are treated in the same order as above, with departures from this ordering when necessary to describe common innovations between lects.

The structure of the RL system differs from the other KRNB sites by formally distinguishing low singular from high singular and general plural. Important points to note are: High and Low are only distinguished in the Singular number, but are distinguished across all three persons. This system of Honour marking is completely different from the SCB and SCA systems which distinguish three levels of Honour across both numbers, but only in the second and third Persons. The RL system of Honour marking is not an inherited feature of p-Kamta, but a recent innovation through the shift in meaning of the inherited plural > high singular. New plural pronouns have been formed by suffixing the inherited plural pronouns with the ending /-la/ 'PL' (cf. 5.4.3). Notably, given RL's Hindi and Bihari language contact, a similar shift also occurs in varieties of those languages whereby the old plural /həm/ 'we' functions as a singular pronoun 'I' in the place of inherited /m̥i/ 'I'. The new

plural is formed by a help word or suffix, such as /log/ ‘people’ in some varieties of Hindi, e.g. /həm log/ ‘we’.

The inherited p-Kamta pronoun system is reconstructed as distinguishing 3 persons, with Singular and Plural number, in Nominative and Oblique functions, but no grammaticalised honour marking. The RL system diverges from this reconstruction by the following changes:

[MI 19.] p-Kamta pronouns with PL function > SG.H function {RL}. Non-diagnostic.

[MI 20.] p-Kamta pronouns with PL function are suffixed by /-la/ ‘PL’, and retain PL function {RL}. Non-diagnostic.

The second structural divergence in pronouns occurs in the plural pronouns of RL and MH: /hama, t̪am^ha/ etc.. These pronouns diverge from the general KRNB pattern by not employing distinct pronominal forms for nominative and oblique arguments. The simplest historical solution is to reconstruct the merger of nominative and oblique categories in the MH and RL plural pronouns, with retention elsewhere in KRNB:

[MI 21.] Pronouns with function PL.OBL are extended to general plural function (thus including PL.NOM) {RL, MH}. Diagnostic.

This change is diagnostic of a PE, because the merger of these morphological categories is ecologically distinctive. The two lects are also adjacent to one another, and hence the range of propagation is sociohistorically plausible.

The element /-ra/ ‘PL.NOM’ has already been reconstructed as an inherited feature of Mg. lects in 5.3.3.

In Kishanganj, where the nominative and oblique distinction is maintained, plural oblique is marked in a peculiar manner. The typical KRNB marking of Oblique pronouns is with the suffix /-a/, e.g. /ham-**ra**/ ‘1.PL-PL.NOM’, /ham-**a**/ ‘1.PL-OBL’. However, in Kishanganj obliqueness is marked in plural pronouns by an *-s-* element (with a variant allomorph /tʃ/), in addition to /-a/. This element comes between the pronominal base and the typical oblique suffix /-a/ in both first person and second person pronouns: /ham(**s,tʃ**)a-, t̪umsa-/. The same element occurs in the third person plural oblique pronoun ‘them’: /is(m)a-, us(m)a-/. However, in these forms the *-s-* element precedes a variable *-m-* element.

Two questions must be answered in order to reconstruct the history of these forms: Is the element /s/ a proto-Kamta retention or a post-*proto-Kamta* innovation? And why does it occur *before* the variable *-m-* in the third person, rather than after it, as in the first and second person pronouns? Both questions must be answered perspicuously by any proposed etymology of the *-s-* element. Kakati presents some pertinent data from early Asamiya:

-s- . Used in E.As. [Early Asamiya] only after oblique forms of the pronouns of the first and second persons (*āmāsā-k*, to us; *āmāsā-r*, of us; *tomāsā-t*, in you). It is found also in Bengali (Siripuria, Purneā), *hams-ār*, our; *tums-ār*, your (L.S.I., Vol I, p.354). In this connection cf. Bihārī (Bhoj-puri) *-sa* (*ghoṛā-sa*; horses) (L.S.I., V. II, p.224).

The origin of this *-sa-* seems obscure. Dr. Chatterji taking the Assamese dative form in *-sāk* (*āmāsā-k*; *tomāsā-k*) alone, affiliates *-sāk* to inscriptional *-sat-ka-* (O.D.B.L. §. 504).

(Kakati 1962: 295 [The term “Siripuria” and its classification as “Bengali” are from the LSI. Today’s speakers in KS use the term ‘Surjapuri’ and do not class it as Bengali—MT]).

Unfortunately Kakati does not state the early Asamiya document in which he finds the relevant forms with /*-s-*/ . The written documents categorised as early Asamiya are at points closely connected with early KRNB stages of development. Kakati sets the time frame for early Asamiya as “from the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century” (*ibid.*: 13). During this period Asamiya literature was written under the patronage of the Koch Kings of Kamatapur and in the Kamrupi or western Asamiya dialect. This was also the period when *proto-Kamta* features were innovated (cf. 7.3.1). It is not out of the question that mixing of some *proto-Kamta* features may have occurred in the early Asamiya document he mentions, though this hypothesis remains to be checked, and the rest of the argument below does not depend on it.

The evidence from early Asamiya suggests that the *-s-* element has been part of the linguistic history of the area for some time, and should be considered an inheritance from the *proto-Kamta* stage rather than a KS innovation. However, other etymologies for this element are possible besides that put forward by Chatterji (which Kakati termed “obscure”). The two crucial pieces of data are the following:

- 1) in KS the *-s-* element occurs not only in the first and second Plural pronouns, but also in the third person Plural pronouns before a variable *-m-* element,
- 2) in early Asamiya Kakati records an alternative plural marking strategy in the pronouns:

-saba, samba: (OIA *sarva* > MIA *sabba, *samba*). Used in [early Asamiya] as Plural suffixes after oblique forms of the second and third person pronouns; e.g. *tomā-sab*, you all; *tā-sambār*, of them all (Kakati 1962: 295-296).

Taking all this evidence together, it seems quite likely that the *-s-* element in KS (and early Asamiya) is from MIA *sabba, *samba* ‘all’, rather than from *-satka*. Chatterji after all had made this reconstruction based on the mistaken identification of the whole element *-sāk* as a plural oblique ending, when the /k/ element does not code general oblique, but is specifically dative, and it is *-sā* alone which codes plural oblique function. Kakati shows this by citing forms with other (non-dative) case endings, e.g. *āmāsā-r*, ‘our’.

If we take the origin of the *-s-* element to be MIA *sabba, *samba* ‘all’ this accounts for the two pieces of data presented above:

- 1) The first and second person plural oblique pronouns /hamsa-, ṭomsa-/ are reflexes of the inherited bases **ham-*, **ṭom-*, and the oblique suffix **-a*. These morphemes were supplemented at an early stage by a plural word **ṣom* ‘all’ < **ṣombə*, as follows: **hama ṣoma-* > **ham-ṣm-a-* > **hamṣa-* ‘1PL.OBL’. The reduction of **mṣm* > **ṣm* is probably phonologically rather than morphologically conditioned as the consonant cluster **mṣm* is phonotactically impermissible in KRNB. The variable element /-m-/ in the KS third person plural oblique /is(m)a-/ is a variable retention from **ṣom* ‘all’.
- 2) This hypothesis also accords with the use of derivatives of MIA *sabba, *samba* ‘all’ in early Asamiya for plural oblique function: e.g. *tā-sambār*, ‘of them all’.

This proposed etymology is perspicuous in explaining the position of the *-s-* element in KS and early Asamiya. Following this reconstruction, key stages leading to the proto-Kamta plural oblique pronouns are given as follows:

| | 1PL:OBL | | 2PL:OBL | | 3:OBL | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|
| p-Mg. | *am ^h a- | | *tom ^h a- | | *o- | |
| p-Kamrupa | *am ^h a- | *hama ʃɔmba- | *tom ^h a- | *tom ^h a ʃɔmba- | *o ʃɔmba- | |
| p-Kamta | *hama- | > *ham-ʃma > *hamʃa- | *tom ^h a- | > *tom ^h -ʃma- > *tomʃa- | > *o ʃma- > *oʃma- | *om ^h a- |

Table 5-26. Reconstructed changes in plural oblique pronouns

In accordance with the hypothetical sequencing shown in Table 5-26, [MI 22.] is tentatively reconstructed as part of the proto-Kamrupa stage—ancestral to both p-Kamta (KRNB) and p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) (cf. 7.3.4). A similar extension of pronouns with a cognate morpheme is found in Maithili, so [MI 22.] is not unique to Asamiya and KRNB linguistic history. Therefore this change will not be considered diagnostic of a propagation event until the relations with Maithili are better understood. Also let it be noted that the proto-Kamrupa stage is not yet well established by diagnostic changes (cf. 7.3.4), and thus further reconstruction may need to revisit the hypothesis that [MI 22.] occurred during a hypothetical p-Kamrupa stage.

[MI 22.] > *ʃɔmba- ‘PL.OBL’ in pronoun declension {KRNB, early Asamiya}.
(tentatively p-Kamrupa stage). Supportive, not diagnostic.

[MI 23.] *[hama ʃɔmba-, hama-] ‘PL.OBL’ > *[ham-ʃɔma-, hama-] > *[hamʃa-, hama-] ‘1.PL.OBL’, and the equivalent changes across the second and third person pronouns. {KRNB, ?early Asamiya}. Diagnostic value unknown.

Before moving on from the Kishanganj pronouns, there is one further feature which requires some discussion. The third person nominative plural pronouns in this lect incorporate some variation: /era, emra/ ‘they PROX’; /wora, ʌmra/ ‘they DIST’. The variable loss of the *-m-* element is unique within the KRNB area to the Kishanganj and adjacent Dinajpur areas. The finer grained dialectological data collected during the second stage of the project, and given in Appendix D, show that some KRNB lects around Dinajpur have carried this phonological reduction of pronouns further still: *hamra > /hara/ ‘we’, *tom^hra > /tora/ ‘you PL’, and *om^hra > /ora/ ‘they’ (see

sites 56 and 57 in Appendix D). The phonological change in KS is restricted to /wora, ʌmra/ < *om^hra and does not affect the other pronouns.

The BN system is the most divergent of the KRNB pronoun systems, including several divergences that are general across the person categories. Firstly, the pronouns /mɔj/ ‘I’=‘1SG:NOM’, /tɔj/ ‘you’=‘2SG:NOM’ are distinct from the forms which are otherwise general across KRNB: /mui, tui/ ‘I, you:SG’. The KRNB forms are also found across Bangla dialects, as well as in earlier Oriya:

The direct form *mu[~]i~/mu[~]* < OIA instrumental singular ... > *mae[~]* > *mai[~]* and on the analogy of *tu/tui mai* > *mui[~]*, and *mui[~]* > *mu[~]* by shortening or due to the influence of *tu*. ... Old & Middle Oriya: *mui[~]*, *mu[~]* (Misra 1975: 84, and see *ibid.*: 87 for second person forms in Old Oriya).

The variation between *tui and *toi, *mui and *moi is a complex matter in e.Mg. history. As Misra notes, old Oriya variants (*mui[~]*, *mu[~]*, *tui[~]*, *tu[~]*) all had the high vowel /u/, and in modern Oriya the regularised forms are /mu[~], tu[~]/. In Asamiya the forms are /mɔj, tɔj/—with a low back vowel—and Kakati makes no statement about the corresponding forms in early Asamiya literature. Chatterji describes two variants for the first person singular instrumental pronoun in the *Caryās* (which he labels Old Bengali): *mai*, *moe*. The former he considers a retention from MIA, and the latter an innovative instrumental built from the oblique base *mo-* and the instrumental case marker *-(e,e[~])*. For middle Bangla, Chatterji describes a high degree of variation (which may largely be orthographic, rather than phonological): “«mōē, mōē[~], mōñā[~], mōñē, mōñā, mōñi, muñi, mu[~]hi, mui[~], mōi »,” (1926: 811).

While it is clear that the raised vowel in /mui/ constitutes an innovation, it is not at all clear what kind of innovation should be reconstructed. Misra accounts for the raising in Oriya /mōi > mui/ by analogy with an inherited second person singular pronoun /tui/ (see quote above). Kakati explains the same raising /ɔ/ > /u/ in Bangla as regressive vowel harmony triggered by the following /i/ (1962: 312). Chatterji gives a third account of the change by proposing Bangla /tui/ < /toi/ through “the influence of the oblique «tō-»” (1926: 817). For both Misra and Chatterji, the explanation involves analogical change—either across persons (Misra), or across functions within the one

person (Chatterji). Kakati's explanation is phonological rather than morphological. All three processes are plausible, and thus the exact characteristics of the change remain an open question, with no unambiguous solution possible at the present time.

[MI 24.] MIA pronouns *mai* '1.SG:INS', *tai* '2.SG:INS' > NIA pronouns /mui/ '1.SG:NOM', /t̪ui/ '2.SG:NOM' {old Oriya, middle Bangla, KRNB}. Non-diagnostic.

This vowel raising, being consistent with both analogical and phonological pressures, is an unlikely contender for a propagation event. The possibility of independent replication is considerable. In some (or all) areas it is possible that the raising is due to regressive vowel harmony, in some areas the raising may be due to analogy and pressure to regularise across pronominal paradigms. Given the similar pronominal and phonological starting conditions across e.Mg. lects, it is easily conceivable that [MI 24.] should have occurred through independent replications, thus reflecting more than one propagation event.

Further support for the proposal of independent replication comes when we consider the range of the change. It is highly implausible that a propagation occurred between Oriya, Bangla and KRNB (and before old Oriya at that), but *excluded* Asamiya. The existence of historical stages common to Asamiya and Bangla, as well as Asamiya and KRNB is hypothesised in Chapter 7. There is insufficient evidence, however, to warrant the reconstruction of a common stage proto-Bangla-Oriya-KRNB. Either the change [MI 24.] was independently replicated in the various areas of e.Mg., or it was inherited as variation from the p-e.Mg. stage with independent regularisation in some e.Mg. descendants.

The pronouns /mɔj, tɔj/ 'I, you' in BN are similar to Asamiya and distinct from the rest of KRNB. Recall that BN has mixed linguistic ancestry, inheriting features from both proto-Asamiya and proto-Kamta. These pronominal forms are part of BN's Asamiya linguistic inheritance.

[MI 25.] /mɔj, tɔj/ 'I, you' {BN}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

Similarities between the BN and Asamiya pronoun systems also include the plural first person form (cf. 5.6.2), the High second person forms (cf. 5.6.3), the third person form /hi/ (cf. 5.6.4) and the indefinite forms in /kaba-/ (cf. 5.6.5).

The next sections reconstruct divergent changes with respect to p-Kamta which are person-specific rather than general across the pronoun system.

5.6.2. First person pronouns

The first person nominative singular pronoun is reconstructed for p-Kamta in Table 5-25 as *mui. This pronoun has been retained in all 8 of the KRNB lects with the exception of BN. The corresponding BN form is /mɔj/ ‘1.SG:NOM’, which reflects not its p-Kamta (KRNB) ancestry, but its p-eKamrupa (Asamiya) ancestry. The singular oblique pronoun is reconstructed for p-Kamta as *mo-, and retained across KRNB.

The first person plural pronoun is reconstructed as *hamra ‘we’=‘1.NOM.PL’, with oblique counterpart: *[hama-, hamʃa-] ‘1.OBL.PL’. The inherited nominative has been substituted by the oblique in MH and RL (see [MI 21.]). The initial *h is retained in most KRNB lects, though variably lost in BH. The corresponding BN pronoun /ami(ra)/ is ambiguous between a p-Kamta and p-eKamrupa inheritance. The initial *h in KRNB is innovative and distinct from Bangla and Asamiya, though common with Bihari and Hindi.

[MI 26.] *am^hε ‘we’, *am^ha- ‘us’ {pre-*proto-Kamta*} > *ham-ra ‘we’, *hama- ‘us’ {KRNB}. Non-diagnostic

The p-Kamta system is reconstructed to include variation between oblique forms *[hama-, hamʃa-] ‘1.PL.OBL’. The first variant is found in the majority of contemporary KRNB lects, but cognates of the second variant are found both in early Asamiya and the contemporary Kishanganj (KS) lect as has been discussed under 5.6.1. I hypothesise that the variation between these two forms goes back to the *proto-Kamta* stage and that the variation was regularised after the division of *proto-Kamta*, possibly independently in different areas. Thus, the regularisation of *hama- ‘us’ in all lects but KS is innovative, but not diagnostic of a PE.

[MI 27.] *hama- ‘us’ regularised as 1st person plural oblique pronoun {KRNB except KS}. Non-diagnostic.

Finally, note that the pronoun /ami/—found in Bangla meaning ‘I’ and in Asamiya meaning ‘we’—is absent in all of KRNB excepting BN. The pronoun system in BN is highly similar to that of Asamiya, and it is most plausible that /ami/ ‘we’ in BN reflects its Asamiya linguistic ancestry and not a proto-Kamta inheritance.

[MI 28.] > /ami/ ‘we’ {BN} Supportive, not diagnostic, of contact relations with Asamiya.

The presence of this form in BN supports the hypothesis of significant contact relations between BN and Asamiya (though the formal similarity with Bangla /ami/ ‘I’ means it is not *diagnostic* of those relations).

5.6.3. Second person pronouns

The second person pronouns described in 5.5.1-5.5.8 are reconstructed in Table 5-25 as reflexes of the forms *ṭui ‘2.SG:NOM’, *ṭo- ‘2.SG:OBL’, *ṭom^hra ‘2.PL:NOM’, *[ṭom^ha-, ṭom^hja-] ‘2.PL:OBL’. The only divergence in the singular pronouns is in BN, reflecting at this point its Asamiya linguistic ancestry (see [MI 25.] under 5.6.1). Among the plural pronouns, the RP form is slightly divergent from *ṭom^hra > /ṭumra/. The raising is due to analogy with the singular form *ṭui. Given the confused picture across e.Mg. of /u/ vs. /ɔ/ and /o/ in second person pronouns (cf. 5.6.1), [MI 29.] is not diagnostic of a propagation event.

[MI 29.] *ṭom^hra ‘you:PL’ > /ṭumra/ {RP}. Non-diagnostic.

Of the 8 KRNB lects sampled, only BN has introduced a specifically honorific second person pronoun.

[MI 30.] > /apuni/ ‘2.H:NOM’, /apona-/ ‘2.H:OBL’ {BN} Supportive, not diagnostic, of contact relations with Asamiya.

Cognate forms have also been introduced into Bangla and Asamiya, as well as further afield in NIA. This honorific pronoun is traced etymologically to an erstwhile reflexive pronoun /ap-/ , whose use in this sense “is quite recent, unknown to Middle or older New Indo-Aryan ... It ... appears to radiate from Delhi and to be associated with urban/Muslim/“Hindustani” influence ... probably in imitation in turn of

“elegant” Persian usage (*perhaps independently in Bengal*)” (Masica 1992: 41, emphasis added—MT). Put in the terms of this study, Masica does not find the introduction of this honorific pronoun to be diagnostic of a propagation event linking the central Delhi region and Bengal because of the possibility of independent replication in Bengal. The change [MI 30.] in Bongaigaon is probably due to Asamiya influence (in accordance with BN’s mixed Asamiya-Kamta ancestry). However, the similarity with other NIA lects means that the change is supportive, not diagnostic of a PE. The honorific pronoun /apun-/ is clearly not to be reconstructed as part of the p-Kamta ancestry because (a) it is a recent introduction, and (b) it is not used in KRNB beyond BN, where its presence is explicable by contact relations with SCA.

5.6.4. Third person pronouns

Among the third person pronouns there are two complex matters for reconstruction. Firstly, across KRNB it is common to find variation between third person singular pronouns starting with /u(h)a-/ and /o-/. Furthermore, in areas where there are sizeable populations of Muslims and Hindus, it is common to find one variant preferred by Hindus and the other variant preferred by Muslims. However, the distribution of variants is not consistent from area to area: in the north-west of Jalpaiguri district (around Oodlabari), Muslims use /ɔj, oj/ ‘s/he’=‘3.SG:NOM’, and Hindus use /uaj/; further south near Shibganj of Bangladesh (site #35, see Appendix D) the situation is exactly reversed with Muslims using /uaj/ and Hindus /ɔj/. The best explanation for this distribution of variants is that variation was inherited from the p-Kamta stage and regularised independently in different areas along social lines. Croft’s “first law of propagation” (2000: 176) is relevant to this differential regularisation of variation: “When variants are created ... one variant either (i) shifts its meaning, (ii) shifts its community, or (iii) disappears.” In the case of the inherited variation of third person singular pronouns, we have examples of options (ii) in the Muslim/Hindu differentiation, and (iii) in the regularisation of one variety in one area, for example MH has /ɔj/, but RL has /wɔhaj/ < *uhaj.

The second matter for reconstruction in third person pronouns concerns the *-m-* (or *-m^h-*) element found in the plural pronouns *[om^hra, um^hra, em^hra, im^hra]. Chatterji writes regarding KRNB lects:

North Bengali uses the base তাঁ (beside a fuller তিনি «tāni») for the nominative; and the form [sic] তামার «tāmāra», plural তাম(া)রা «tām(ā)rā» are honorific, with «-m-» for «-n-» or «-h-» of other forms of Bengali—a phonetic peculiarity which characterises this dialect : as early as c. 1555 A.C., in a letter from the Kōc king Nara-Nārāyaṇa of North Bengal to the Ahom king Su-khām-phā, we find ইমারাক পাঠাইতেছি «imārā-ka (= ihā-digā-kē) paṭhāitē-chi» *I am sending them*, (Chatterji 1926: 828; [the subject of this example is either plural *we are sending them* or high singular—MT])

The origin of this *-m-* element, and its uniformity across KRNB is perplexing. Chatterji attempts to explain it etymologically as cognate with Bangla /n/ in third person plural pronouns. This is a possible explanation: *[o,u]w̃ra > *[o,u]mra, but as there are no other instances in the data where we reconstruct the cluster *w̃r the phonological regularity of this hypothetical change cannot be tested at present.

As argued under 5.6.1, there is reason to reconstruct oblique plural pronouns *[o]ma-, u[ma-] with the postposed *ʃm < ʃomə < *sambha* ‘all’. It is possible that the *-m-* element in the corresponding nominative form *[o,u]mra was introduced by analogy with the *-m-* of the oblique *-ʃm-. However, there is no evidence in KRNB (outside of BN, by Asamiya influence cf. 4.3.13) for *ʃ > h. Lacking corroboration in the reconstructed KRNB phonological changes, a different explanation should be sought.

A third, and more plausible explanation is found in analogy across persons. First and second person plural forms are reconstructed as *hamra and *tom^hra, flanked by the elements *mra and *m^hra. It is quite conceivable that the similarity in these forms was reinterpreted as ‘plural nominative’ and extended to the third person to give *[om^hra, um^hra]. Similarly, in the oblique pronouns the first and second persons are *hama-, *tom^ha- and it is conceivable that the nasal stop element *m^ha was analogically extended to the third person to give: *[om^ha-, um^ha-]. These reconstructed changes of morphological reinterpretation and analogical extension are further supported by the *relative pronouns in RP which have also incorporated the*

morphological elements /-mra, -ma-/ to give /zamra/ ‘REL.NOM.PL’ and /zama-/ ‘REL.OBL.PL’ (see 5.6.6 below).

[MI 31.] *m^hra reinterpreted as ‘PL.NOM’ in pronoun system, and extended as such to third person *[o,u]mra {KRNB, also some Hajong lects}. Diagnostic.

[MI 32.] *m^ha- reinterpreted as ‘PL.OBL’ in pronoun system, and extended to third person *[o,u]m^ha- {KRNB, also some Hajong lects}. Diagnostic.

Reflexes of the *-m-* element are found in all KRNB lects and are unique to this area, as stated by Chatterji in the quote above. Having searched NIA data, I have found no such *-m-* element in third person plural pronouns anywhere else in NIA, with the exception of the most closely neighbouring Hajong lects (other Hajong lects further south are considerably different). These changes are unique and morphologically complex. For these reasons, [MI 31.] and [MI 32.] are diagnostic of a propagation event. They subgroup all of KRNB along with lects spoken by Hajong people in the neighbouring Garo hills. (cf. section 7.3.1).

5.6.5. Interrogative personal pronouns

Changes specific to the interrogative pronouns are localised to particular areas, and thus not of great significance for broader KRNB history. For TH the following two divergences from the p-Kamta system have been reconstructed:

[MI 33.] /ke/ ‘INT.SG.NOM’ +/-la/ ‘PL’ > /kela/ ‘INT PL.NOM’ {TH: Muslims}.
Non-diagnostic.

[MI 34.] /ka-/ ‘INT.SG.OBL’ +/-ra/ ‘PL.NOM’ > /kara/ ‘INT PL.NOM’ {TH: Hindus}. Non-diagnostic.

In BN, the suffix /-ba/ for indefinite pronouns is etymologically distinct from the broader KRNB suffix which is /ʌ, ɔ, o/. This divergence of BN away from the KRNB pattern once again brings it into closer conformity with Asamiya norms. The change is morphologically specific, and thus diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya. The indefinite affix /-ba/ used in BN and Asamiya is discussed by Kakati:

The affix *-ba*, *-bā* is often added to pronominal derivatives expressing manner or quality to suggest an indefinite sense ; e.g. *keneba*, *kenebā*, *konoba*, *kono-bā*, *zeneba*, *jene-bā*, *kiba*, *ki-bā*, etc. With *-ba*, the forms *kono-*, *ka~jo-*, give an affirmative sense “some body”. (Kakati 1962: 318)

[MI 35.] > /-ba-/ ‘INDF’ in pronouns {BN, from Asamiya}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.

Other divergences from the p-Kamta system are explained by phonological or morphologically general changes treated above in Chapter 4 and 5.6.1 respectively.

5.6.6. Relative personal pronouns

Among the relative pronouns, all that remains to be mentioned is a couple of localised analogical changes in RP:

[MI 36.] Analogical extension of /-mra, -ma-/ to Relative plural pronouns /zamra, zama-/ {RP}. Diagnostic.

The fact that the elements /-mra/ and /-ma-/ have been innovatively extended in RP to relative plural function adds support to the analogical explanation given in 5.6.4 for the presence of the *-m-* element in third person plural pronouns across KRNB. This change (as for [MI 37.] below) is diagnostic of a PE based on ecological distinctiveness and linguistic complexity of the morphological conditioning.

A further analogical change again concerns the relative pronouns in RP:

[MI 37.] Extension of DIST/PROX distinction to the Relative Plural pronouns: /zamra/ ‘REL.DIST.PL.NOM’ vs. /zemra/ ‘REL.PROX.PL.NOM’ {RP}. Diagnostic.

Together, [MI 36.] and [MI 37.] constitute a restructuring of the relative plural pronouns based on the model of the third person plural pronouns—distinguishing nominative vs. oblique functions, singular vs. plural number, and distal vs. proximal location.

5.7. Adjectival and adverbial pronominal derivatives

In addition to the personal pronominals, KRNB has pronominal derivatives in both adjectival and adverbial categories. These forms also enter into paradigmatic relations, distinguishing Proximal, Distal, Interrogative, Relative, and sometimes Anaphoric categories for each pronominal base. There are two systems of adjectival pronominals—quality and quantity—and multiple systems of adverbial pronominals including temporal, locational and directional pronominals.

The pronominals involve two morphemes: a deictic compounded with a nominal base. The deictics thereby recur across all pronominal systems, and some introductory comments on them are in order. The deictic forms for KRNB and some other Magadhan languages are displayed in Table 5-27.

| | ‘this’ | ‘that’ | ‘which?’ | ‘(that) which’ | ‘the aforesaid’ | |
|-------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----|
| | PROX | DIST | INT | REL | ANP | |
| KS | i-, wε- | u-, wo-, ʌ-, | kε-, kə- | ɖε- | ²⁷ | |
| RL | hi-, ε(i)- | hu-, ʌ(i)-, sɛi- | ki-, kun- | ɖε(i)- | | |
| MH | i-, ε(i)- | u-, ʌ(i)- | kε-, kun- | ɖε(i)- | | |
| TH | ε-, ei- | ɔ-, oi-, ʃε- | kε-, kun- | ɖʒε-, ɖʒɔ- | | |
| SH | ε-, ei- | ɔ-, oi-, ʃε- | kε-, kɔ-, ko- | zε-, zɔ- | | |
| RP | ε-, ei- | ɔ-, oi-, ʃæ-, ʈɔ- | kæ-, kɔ-, ko(n)- | ɖæ- | | |
| BH | ε-, ei- | ɔ-, oi-, ʃε- | kε-, ki-, kɔ-, ko-, kun- | ɖε-, ɖzi-, ɖɔ- | | |
| BN | ε | o-, hε-, he- | kε-, ke-, ko(n)- | zε-, ze- | | |
| Oriya | ε- | o- | kε- | ɖʒε- | | ʃε- |
| SCB | æ- | o-, ʈæ-, ʈɔ- | kɔ-, kæ- | ɖʒɔ-, ɖʒæ- | | ʃæ- |
| SCA | ε-, ɔ- | tɔ-, tε- | kɔ-, kε- | zɔ-, zε- | xε-, xɔ- | |
| Mth. | e-, ə- | o- | kə-, ke- | ɖʒə-, ɖʒe- | ʈə-, ʈe- | |
| Bhoj. | (h)e-, (h)ə- | (h)o- | kə-, ke- | ɖʒə-, ɖʒe- | ʈə-, ʈe- | |

Table 5-27. Magadhan deictic forms

Proximal forms are marked by a front vowel, distal forms by a back vowel, interrogatives by an initial *k-, and relatives with an initial *ɖ-. All these features have been inherited into these lects as well as other NIA lects (cf. Chatterji 1926: 829). The exact vowel quality in proximal and distal forms varies across KRNB, as well as in Mg. languages more generally. The tendency for prothesis of a glide in western KRNB (KS, RL, MH)—e.g. /wə̃haj/ < *ɔ̃haj < *õhaj ‘s/he’—is akin to the ‘Bihari’ lects, Maithili and Bhojpuri.

²⁷ Anaphoric pronominals were not systematically collected as part of the KRNB data. Some KRNB lects always employ the DIST for ANP function, other KRNB lects have distinct DIST and ANP forms. Further data are required before these differences can be understood and historically explicated.

There is recurring variation in the vowel element of interrogative and relative deictics: cf. e.g. SCB /kɔ-, kæ-/ and the cognate Maithili forms /kə-, ke-/. The wide distribution of this variation suggests a Magadhan inheritance. The back vowel variant *kɔ- is absent in Oriya as well as several KRNB lects. Given their non-contiguous locations, this is more likely the result of independent regularisation of inherited variation, rather than a propagation event.

The outcome of this short discussion is that the deictic forms inherited into Mg. lects are not reconstructible to unique proto-forms. Rather the inheritance includes variation within certain parameters: front vowels for proximal, back for distal, *k[ɔ,ɛ]- for interrogative and *ɕ[ɔ,ɛ]- for relative forms.

The reconstruction of pronominal systems below focuses on differences in the *compounded noun* portion of the pronominals (e.g. /ei-**mon**/ ‘this kind’), rather than on variation in the deictic element.

5.7.1. Adjectival pronominals of quality

The first set of adjectival pronominals are concerned with qualities of the referent, e.g. /**enɔŋ** nok/ ‘this kind of man’, /**kɛmun** asen/ ‘what kind are you?’ = ‘how are you’. The nouns which are compounded with the deictics to create this pronominal system are as follows:

| | | | | |
|---------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| KS | -rʌŋ | | | |
| RL | -rʌŋ, -nʌŋ | | | |
| MH | -nʌŋ | | | |
| TH | -noŋ (H), rəkɔm (M) | | -mon (M) | |
| SH | | | -mɔʈɔn, -mɔn | |
| RP | | -ŋka | -mon | |
| BH | | -naxan | -mɔʈɔn, -mun | |
| BN | | -ŋka | | |
| p-Kamta | *-rəkɔm | *-lak ^h a | *-mɔʈɔn | |
| Oriya | | | -mɔntɔ, mɔʈi | |
| SCB | | | -mon, -moʈ | -no |
| SCA | | | | -ne |
| p-eMg | | | <i>-manʈa</i> | <i>-sana</i> |
| Mth. | | | | -hən |
| Bhoj. | | | | -sən |
| p-Mg. | | | | <i>-sana</i> |

Table 5-28. Noun bases for pronominals of quality in KRNB, e.Mg, and Mg.

Within KRNB there are three etymologically distinct bases used in pronominals of quality. These are reconstructed in Table 5-28 as *-rəkɔm, *-lak^ha, and *-mɔʈɔn in accordance with the phonological correspondences in Chapter 4. Reflexes of the first etymon are found in the four westernmost lects. The reduction in form is not explained by regular phonological processes, and is a morphologically conditioned change:

[MI 38.] *-rəkɔm > *-rɔŋ ‘like, similar to’ {KS, RL, MH, TH (Hindus, not Muslims)}. Diagnostic.

The morphological specificity of this change, geographical contiguity of range, and distinctiveness from surrounding lects all suggest this change to be diagnostic of a propagation event. The change of *r > n in TH, MH and variably in RL is not a regular phonological change (e.g. /rʌŋ/ ‘colour’). However, there is a similarity between the nasalisation of this pronominal base (*rəkɔm > *rɔŋ > *nɔŋ) and the nasalisation of the past tense marker *-il- > /-in-/ before a nasalised vowel (cf. 6.4.1.3). The nasalisation of *l > n ([MI 68.]) before certain nasal features is much

more geographically widespread than this change of *r > n. The nasalisation of *-r- in this pronominal extends the conditioning environment for medial nasalisation to cover the rhotic as well as the lateral. This extension is probably not diagnostic of a propagation event as the possibility of independent replication (given the pre-existing nasalisation process for *-l-) is quite high.

The second etymon, *-lak^ha, is likewise phonologically reduced by a morphologically-conditioned change:

[MI 39.] *-lak^ha > *-ŋka ‘like, similar to’ {RP, borrowed into BN}. Diagnostic of contact relations between RP and BN.

The nasalisation of *l is expected in RP by [PI 14.] because of the initial position of *l in *lak^ha as an independent noun. The presence of a nasal for *l in BN is phonologically irregular (see 4.3.11), and indicates that the lexeme is a loanword from RP into BN.

The third etymon *-mɔ̃ɔ̃n is not unique to KRNB, but shared with modern Oriya and Bangla. This etymon was also present in early Asamiya as *-mata, mana* (Chatterji 1926: 852, Kakati 1962: 322) but it has been all but lost from the modern Asamiya language. The KRNB, early Asamiya and Bangla mix of inherited forms *-mɔ̃nɔ̃, *-mɔ̃ɔ̃ and *mɔ̃ɔ̃n are alternative reflexes of a still earlier *mɔ̃ɔ̃. The Oriya reflex /mɔ̃ɔ̃/ is thus archaic.

[MI 40.] *mɔ̃ɔ̃ > *-mɔ̃nɔ̃, *-mɔ̃ɔ̃ ‘like, similar to’ {Bangla, Asamiya, KRNB}.
Probably diagnostic.

This change is old, attested in Bangla documents of the 14th Century (SKK), as well as in the Asamiya writings of the late 15th century (authored by Sankara-Deva). Whether these forms have been lost in western KRNB and thus were part of a common Bangla-Asamiya-Kamta inheritance, or are instead to be accounted for by a more recent and limited propagation, must be decided on sociohistorical grounds in Chapter 7. Loss in western KRNB of the variation created by [MI 40.] would not be diagnostic of a propagation event.

5.7.2. Adjectival pronominals of quantity

The second set of adjectival pronominals concerns the quantity of the referent, e.g. /**ε̣ṭla** nok/ ‘this many people’, /**ḳọṭo**/ ‘how many’. These pronominals are more consistent across Mg. lects than for the quality pronominals examined above.

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|------|
| KS | -ṭo-la, -ṭε-xan | |
| RL | -ṭ(ε)-la, -ṭ-kina | |
| MH | -ṭ(ε)-la | |
| TH | -ṭo | |
| SH | -ṭo(-la) | |
| RP | -ṭo-ṭa, -ṭo-ḷʲæ, -kṇʲæ | |
| BH | -ṭo-la | |
| BN | -to-yila | |
| p-Kamta | *-ṭε, *-ṭo | |
| Oriya | -ṭε | |
| SCB | -ṭo | |
| SCA | -te(-k), -ṭo-bor | -man |
| p-eMg | *-ṭε, -ṭo | |
| Mth. | -ṭε-k | |
| Bhoj. | -ṭε-k | |
| p-Mg. | -ṭe, -ṭa | |

Table 5-29. Comparison of pronominals of quantity in KRNB, eMg., and Mg.

With the exception of the Asamiya pronominals in /-man/, all these forms are cognate and constitute retentions. For discussion of the MIA and OIA etymology of affix *-ṭ- see Chatterji (1926: 855). Note that possible cognates of the KRNB proto-variants *-(ṭε, ṭo) are found in early Maithili as -(ṭẽ, ṭa).

It is not clear whether the /k/ element—pleonastic in Maithili, Asamiya and some of KRNB—forms part of the inherited pronominal material or is rather the result of independent replications of the same extension. The extension of quantity pronominals with the various plural morphemes (e.g. /-la/, /-gila/) is non-complex, and not diagnostic of a propagation event.

5.7.3. Temporal pronominals

The next few pronominal sets are adverbial rather than adjectival, and address temporal, locational or directional features of an event. For the KRNB temporal adverbials all four forms—proximal, distal, interrogative and relative—are shown because of a change which affects some but not all of these forms. Cognates are listed in columns, with any non-cognate forms (due to the limited number of columns) indicated by shaded cells.

| | ‘now’ | ‘that time, then’ | | ‘which time, when?’ | | ‘that time which, when’ | | |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| | PROX | DIST | | INT | | REL | | |
| KS | al ^h a | | u-xuna | | kəɬ- k ^h una | | ɬɛ- xuna | |
| RL | al ^h a | sei-βela | | kun-bela | kun- k ^h una | ɬɛi-βela | ɬɛi- k ^h una | ɬɬab, ɬɬap |
| MH | al ^h a | li-βela, u-βela | | kun-bela | | ɬɛi-βela | | ɬɬab |
| TH | ɛla, ɛlan ^h e, ɛl ^h aj | ʃɛla, ʃɛlan ^h e | | kun-bela | | ɬɛbela, ɬɛβela, ɬɛla | | |
| SH | ɛla | ʃɛla | | | kɔɬɔ- kkon | zela | | |
| RP | æla | ʃæla | ɬɔ-kun | kon-bæla, kon-b ^h æla, kumbæla | | ɬɬæla, ɬɬebæla | ɬɬɔɬ- k ^h on | |
| BH | ɛla | ʃɛla | | kun-bela | | ɬɬela | | |
| BN | ɛla | hela | | kon-bela, kun-bela | | zela, sela | | |
| p-Kamta | *ɛw a | *ʃɛ-bɛ a | | *kɔun-bɛ a | | *ɬɛ(i)-bɛ a | | |
| Oriya | -ɬɛ-bɛ ɛ | -ɬɛ-bɛ ɛ | | -ɬɛ-bɛ ɛ | | -ɬɛ-bɛ ɛ | | -bɛ |
| SCB | | | -k ^h on | | -k ^h on | | -k ^h on | -bɛ |
| SCA | | | | | -t ^h ɔni, -hani | | | -bɛ, -wɛ |
| p-e.Mg | | | *-k ^h ɔn | | | | | *-bɛ |
| Mth. | | | -k ^h ən | | | | | -bɛ |
| Bhoj. | -bera~ | -bera~ | | -bera~ | -ɬɬun | -bera~ | | |

Table 5-30. Comparison of temporal pronominals in KRNB, e.Mg, and Mg.

The temporal pronominals in KRNB are consistently derived from the noun *bɛla which occurs in KRNB as an independent word meaning ‘sun’ as well as ‘time’. A reduced derivative of *bɛla is found in all KRNB lects for the proximal form ‘now, this time’: *ɛbɛla > *ɛb|a > *ɛw|a > *ɛh|a. In MH, RL and KS the contemporary form is /al^ha/ ‘now’. The vowel *ɛ seems to have been reinterpreted in KS, RL and MH as [ə]—a derivative of *a by [PI 34.] in the environment *_hla (< *_wla). Probably this resulted in variation of (ɛ,ə,ʌ): *(ɛ,ə,ʌ)hla, which > /al^ha/. If this reconstructed series of changes is correct, then the altered form /al^ha/ is the result of a series of changes sufficiently complex to be diagnostic of a propagation event:

[MI 41.] *ɛwla > /al^ha/ ‘now’ {KS, RL, MH}. Diagnostic.

In other KRNB lects, there is a reduction of *bɛla in the anaphoric and relative functions:

[MI 42.] *-bɛ- > -Ø- in ANP and REL temporal pronominals {TH, SH, RP, BH, BN}. Diagnostic.

This change accounts for forms such as /ʃɛla/ < *ʃɛbɛla ‘then’. This change does not require a complex series of changes as in the case of [MI 41.], nevertheless the conditioning has a degree of complexity (ANP and REL, but not INT) which is uniform across a contiguous area, justifying the reconstruction of a propagation event. Variation in the relative forms in TH and RP need not affect the formalisation of this change. The presence of the fuller form /ɖʒɛbɛla/ alongside the reduced form /ɖʒɛla/ is probably due to the re-creation of the fuller form by analogy with the interrogative form /kun-bɛla/ ‘when?’.

Cognate pronominals are found in Bhojpuri /-bera~/ and Oriya /-bɛ|ɛ/ *bɛ|ɛ*. The Bhojpuri substitution of /r/ for *l, is consistent with its Magadhan inheritance (cf. Masica 1992: 186).

The pronominal element *-bɛla < OIA *velā* is not cognate with the pronominal element /-bɛ/ < OIA *-va* found in pronominals across the Magadhan languages, e.g. the early Asamiya forms given in Table 5-30 as *ebe* etc. (after Chatterji) and *ewe* etc. (after Kakati).

Temporal pronominals derived from the reflex of OIA *kṣana* > /-(k)k^hən/ are found in all Magadhan languages according to Chatterji (1926: 857). The use of nominal base /-k^huna/ in KS and RL may be Maithili influence, but could also constitute retentions. The RP form /təkun/ is likely to be a Bangla loanword, and SH /kəṭək^hon/ possibly a Sanskritism. However, in both cases the possibility of retention from MIA must first be ruled out—a task which awaits further study.

5.7.4. Locational pronominals

The second set of adverbial pronominals refer to the location of an event. This set is also reasonably uniform across KRNB.

| | | | | | |
|---------|--|---|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| KS | | -t ^h in, -t ^h ina | | | |
| RL | | -t ^h a, -t ^h ina | | | |
| MH | -t ^h ε | -t ^h ina | | | |
| TH | -t ^h e | -t ^h e-kona | | | |
| SH | -t ^h e | | | | |
| RP | -tε | -tε-kona | | | |
| BH | -tε | -tj-xun ^j æ | | | |
| BN | -tε | | | | |
| p-Kamta | *-t ^h ε | *-t ^h ε-kuna | | | |
| Oriya | -t ^h i | | | | |
| SCB | | | -k ^h ane | | |
| SCA | | | | -t | |
| p-eMg | *-thā [~] i | | < CLF | < Locative | |
| Mth. | | | | -tə(ε) | |
| Bhoj. | -t ^h ən, -t ^h in | | | | -ha [~] |
| p-Mg. | *-thā [~] i | | | < Locative | |

Table 5-31. Comparison of locational pronominals in KRNB, eMg. and Mg.

The Asamiya locational pronominals are based on the locative case ending /-t/ < *-ṭṭ, and are not cognate with the KRNB pronominals. The same goes for Maithili /-tə/, which Jha derives from OIA *-tra*.

The locational pronominals in KRNB are reconstructed as derivatives of *-t^hε, in turn cognate with Oriya /-t^hi/, as well as Northern and Western Bhojpuri /-t^hən, t^hen, t^hin/. Middle Bangla of the Sri Krishna Kirttana (14th Century) has *ঠাই* *-thāi*. The most

probable form for the p-e.Mg. stage is reconstructed as **-ṭhā̃i* (following Chatterji 1926: 769) < *sthā́man* (cf. Turner 1966-71: id. 13760) from which we derive Oriya and KRNB forms by changes whose regularity has not been tested:

[MI 43.] **-ṭhā̃i* > /-ṭ^hi/ ‘place’ {Oriya}. Diagnostic value unknown.

[MI 44.] **-ṭhā̃i* > **-ṭ^hε* ‘place’ {KRNB}. Diagnostic value unknown.

Alongside KRNB cognates of **-ṭ^hε* (< **-ṭhā̃i*) there are extended forms, with /-ina/ suffixed in the west and /-kuna, kona/ in the centre and east, which require some discussion.

There are two distinct etymologies possible for the /-ina/ suffix found in MH, RL and KS. Firstly, it may be cognate with Bhojpuri /-ṭ^hən, -ṭ^hin/, and constitute an inheritance alongside **-ṭhā̃i* from the common Mg. period. Alternatively, it may be cognate with the suffix /-kuna, kona/ found in central and Eastern KRNB lects TH, RP and BH.

Tiwari reconstructs the etymology of the Bhojpuri forms as follows:

The origin of **-ṭhan**, **-ṭhen**, **-ṭhin** and **-ṭhẽ** forms ... is possibly the pronominal base $\sqrt{sthā}$ + the locative affix **hĩ** or **ahĩ**. These forms can be compared with the dialectical Bengālī forms *sēṭhi*, *ēṭhi*, *jēṭhi*, and with *ṭhi-* forms in Oṛiyā. (Tiwari 1960: 150)

Based on Tiwari’s reconstruction, the /n/ element in Northern and Western Bhojpuri is cognate with the nasal element of **-ṭhā̃i*. This would constitute a highly irregular and clumsy etymology for the /ina/ ending in MH, RL and KS.

A simpler and neater etymological explanation for the /-ina/ is through considering possible cognacy with /-kuna, kona/ < **-kuna* in TH, RP and BH. The simplicity of this explanation is that /-ina/ and /-kuna, kona/ are given for contrasting KRNB lects. The process would be as follows:

> **-ṭ^hε-kuna* ‘place’

> **-ṭ^hikuna* (by regressive vowel raising, [PI 20.]),

> **-ṭ^hikna* (by changes to medial high vowels, see 4.4.6),

> /-ṭ^hina/ ‘place’.

The only parts of this process that are not accounted for by phonological changes are the first and last steps:

[MI 45.] $*-t^h\varepsilon + kuna > *-t^hekuna$ ‘place’ as a base of locational pronominals. {KRNB}. Diagnostic.

[MI 46.] $*-t^hikna > /-t^hina/$ ‘place’ {MH, RL, KS}. (after [PI 20.]). Diagnostic.

The first change is, to my knowledge, unique to KRNB. Based on this uniqueness, coupled with the morphological specificity of the change, it is diagnostic of a propagation event.

The reduction of $*-kn-$ to $/-n-/$ is not a phonologically regular change in these lects (cf. MH /*nukni*/ ‘louse’), but specific to this morpheme in this pronominal set. The specificity increases the complexity of the change, which is uniform across a contiguous area, and diagnostic of a propagation event.

This concludes the reconstruction of changes in the KRNB pronominal sets, and changes in nominal morphology more generally.

5.8. Summary of diagnostic innovations in nominal morphology

The following changes in linguistic history have been reconstructed in this chapter to be either (i) diagnostic of propagation events; (ii) supportive of other diagnostic changes; or (iii) of unclear diagnostic value to be further examined on sociohistorical grounds in Chapter 7:

[MI 1.] $> /-d̪-/$ ‘PL.OBL.AN’ {SCB} (before 1500 AD). Diagnostic.

[MI 2.] pronoun-GEN(-a) + noun of multitude ‘plural pronoun’ $>$ pronoun-GEN(-a) ‘plural pronoun’ {middle Bangla, early Asamiya, KRNB}. Supportive, not diagnostic.

[MI 3.] $/-[e]ra/$ ‘PL.NOM’ in pronouns $>$ $/-[e]ra/$ ‘PL.NOM.AN’ in general nominal morphology {Bangla} (by the 15th century). Diagnostic.

[MI 4.] $> /-[ɔ]r/$ ‘GEN’ {BN, from Asamiya}. Supportive of contact relations with Asamiya.

[MI 6.] $*-əkɔ$ ‘DAT’ + $*-ε$ ‘INS-LOC’ $>$ $/-ke/$ ‘DAT’ {Bangla, ...}. Supportive, not diagnostic.

- [MI 7.] *-[ɔ]t̪ ‘LOC’ + *-ε ‘LOC-INS’ > /-t̪e/ ‘LOC’ {SCB, Man. P} (before 1400 AD). Probably diagnostic.
- [MI 8.] > /sɛ/ ‘INS’ {RL, KS from Hindi/Bihari}. Diagnostic of contact relations of diglossia with Hindi.
- [MI 9.] > *t̪ʰakia ‘ABL’ {Bangla, TH, SH, RP, BH}. Tentatively diagnostic of contact relations with SCB through diglossia.
- [MI 10.] > /sɛ/ ‘ABL, CMP’ {RL, KS, MH}. Diagnostic of contact relations through diglossia with Hindi.
- [MI 11.] > /pɔra/ ‘ABL’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 12.] > /kɔi/ ‘CMP’ {BN, SCA}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 19.] p-Kamta pronouns with PL function > SG.H function {RL}
- [MI 21.] Pronouns with function PL.OBL are extended to general plural function (thus including PL.NOM) {RL, MH}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 22.] > *ʃɔmbɔ ‘PL.OBL’ in pronoun declension {KRNB, early Asamiya}. (tentatively p-Kamrupa stage). Supportive, not diagnostic.
- [MI 23.] *[hamʃɔmba-, hama-] ‘PL.OBL’ > *ham[ʃɔm]a- > *ham[ʃ]a- ‘1.PL.OBL’, and the equivalent changes in other pronoun declension, e.g. *tom^h[ʃ]a- ‘2.PL.OBL’, etc. {KRNB, ?early Asamiya}. Diagnostic value unknown.
- [MI 25.] /mɔj, tɔj/ ‘I, you’ {BN}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 28.] > /ami/ ‘we’ {BN} Supportive, not diagnostic, of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 30.] > /apuni/ ‘2.H:NOM’, /apona-/ ‘2.H:OBL’ {BN} Supportive, not diagnostic, of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 31.] *m^hra reinterpreted as ‘PL.NOM’ in pronoun system, and extended as such to third person *[o,u]mra {KRNB; also some Hajong lects}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 32.] *m^ha- reinterpreted as ‘PL.OBL’ in pronoun system, and extended to third person *[o,u]m^ha- {KRNB; also some Hajong lects}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 35.] > /ba-/ ‘INDF’ in pronouns {BN, from Asamiya}. Diagnostic of contact relations with Asamiya.
- [MI 36.] Analogical extension of /-mra, -ma-/ to Relative plural pronouns /zamra, zama-/ {RP}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 37.] Extension of DIST/PROX distinction to the Relative Plural pronouns: /zamra/ ‘REL.DIST.PL.NOM’ vs. /zemra/ ‘REL.PROX.PL.NOM’ {RP}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 38.] *-rɔkɔm > *-rɔŋ ‘like, similar to’ {KS, RL, MH, TH (Hindus, not Muslims)}. Diagnostic.
- [MI 39.] *-lak^ha > *-ŋka ‘like, similar to’ {RP, borrowed into BN}. Diagnostic of contact relations between RP and BN.

[MI 40.] *mōntō > * mōnō, * mōtō ‘like, similar to’ {Bangla, Asamiya, KRNB}.

Probably diagnostic.

[MI 41.] *εwla > /a^ha/ ‘now’ {KS, RL, MH}. Diagnostic.

[MI 42.] *-bε- > -Ø- in ANP and REL temporal pronominals {TH, SH, RP, BH, BN}. Diagnostic.

[MI 43.] *-tḥā̃i > /-t^hi/ ‘place’ {Oriya}. Diagnostic value unknown.

[MI 44.] *-tḥā̃i > *-t^hε ‘place’ {KRNB}. Diagnostic value unknown.

[MI 45.] *-t^hε + kuna > *-t^hεkuna ‘place’ as a base of locational pronominals. {KRNB}. Diagnostic.

[MI 46.] *-t^hikna > /-t^hina/ ‘place’ {MH, RL, KS}. (after [PI 20.] and [PI 30.]-[PI 33.]). Diagnostic.

The sociohistorical conditioning of propagation of these changes is examined in Chapter 7.