A Comparative Study of Khortha and Bangla with a Focus on the Noun Morphology

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By

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Declaration

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This dissertation, titled **A Comparative Study of Khortha and Bangla with a Focus on the Noun Morphology**, submitted by me for the award of the degree of the Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institute.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **A Comparative Study of Khortha and Bangla with a Focus on the Noun Morphology** being submitted by **Rusa Bhowmik** for Master of Philosophy degree in School of Languages and Linguistics, Jadavpur University has been written under my supervision during the session 2018-2019. This work has not been submitted elsewhere for degree.

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To my mother

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PREFACE

"It is only in the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye."

—Antoine de Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince

I conducted my fieldwork on the Malda variety of Khortha. I haven't decided my area of research, as in phonology, morphology or syntax of the language for the dissertation until I started with the literary resources on Khortha. While studying the literature, one of the claims was that Khortha (in Bengal region) has no similarity with Bangla. This struck my mind because I remembered the data that I have collected doesn't seem to be so. I probed further into this matter. I explored and discovered a number of interesting facts which I have discussed in the dissertation. Due to time constraints, I didn't delve much and focused on the noun morphology. The result hereby stands in the form of my M.Phil dissertation.

There were multiple factors which led me to conduct a fieldwork on Khortha. I had a brief experience in fieldwork as a part of the curriculum conducted by Prof. Mina Dan in the 4th Semester of M.A. in Linguistics. Thereafter, reading Prof. Anvita Abbi's works made me inquisitive. Finally, after attending the "Field Survey, Language Archiving and the Study of Endangered Languages" under UGC funded SRIELI-SLL-JU project I was contemplating to take up fieldwork for my dissertation. Fortunately, my supervisor is the Principal Investigator of this project and he used to (and still does) encourage all the students to work on the lesser known languages and their varieties. The Malda variety of Khortha happens to be one of them.

This fieldwork happens to be a life changing experience and an eye opener for me. I have never been to any rural area as a city bred person. When I came across the living conditions of these people during the fieldtrip I realised the meaning of belonging to the privileged class. How little do the value of materialistic tags and luxuries stand in life? Life is way more than that. This experience was the swallow to the Happy Prince in me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1 first person
2 second person
3 third person
A agent-like argument of canonical transitive verb
ABL ablative
ABS absolutive
ACC accusative
ADJ adjective
ADV adverb(ial)
AGR agreement
ART article
AUX auxiliary
CLF classifier
COMP complementizer
COND conditional
DAT dative
DEF definite
DEM demonstrative
DET determiner
ERG ergative
F feminine
FUT future
GEN genitive
IMP imperative
IMPRF/IMPERF imperfect
INDF indefinite
INF infinitive
INS instrumental
LOC locative
M masculine
N neuter
NEG negation, negative
NOM nominative
OBL oblique
P patient - like argument of canonical transitive verb
PL plural
POSS possessive
PRF/PERF perfect
PRS present
PST past
REL relative
S single argument of canonical intransitive verb
SG singular

Chapter 1: Introduction

1   About the Language

Khortha (also known as Khotta) is a language scattered in different regions of Jharkhand and West Bengal. According to Census (2001), it is stated that Hindi has around 49 varieties in India. Khortha (Khotta) is recognized as one of the varieties of Hindi.

1.	Awadhi	2.	Bagheli/ Baghel Khan	3.	Bagri Rajasthani
4.	Banjari	5.	Bhadrawahi	6.	Bharmauri/ Gaddi
7.	Bhojpuri	8.	Brajbhasha	9.	Bundeli/ Bundelkhan
10.	Chambeali	11.	Chattisgarhi	12.	Churahi
13.	Dhundhari	14.	Garhwali	15.	Gojri
16.	Harauti	17.	Haryanvi	18.	Hindi
19.	Jaunsari	20.	Kangri	21.	Khairari
22.	Khari Boli	23.	**Khortha/Khotta**	24.	Kulvi

25.	Kumauni	26.	Kurmali Thar	27.	Labani
28.	Lamani/ Lambadi	29.	Laria	30.	Lodhi
31.	Magadhi/ Magahi	32.	Malvi	33.	Mandeali
34.	Marwari	35.	Mewari	36.	Mewati
37.	Nagpuria	38.	Nimadi	39.	Pahari
40.	Panch Pargania	41.	Pangwali	42.	Pawari/Powari
43.	Rajasthani	44.	Sadan/ Sadri	45.	Sirmauri
46.	Sondwari	47.	Sugali	48.	Surgujia
49.	Surjapuri				

Table 1: 49 Varieties of Hindi

There are two major variations in the spelling and pronunciation of this language. It can be called Khortha or Khotta. Both are used in the Census (2001). Khortha will be used in this dissertation for ease of understanding and to avoid confusion. It has been claimed by Das (2013) that Khortha is a variety of Angika; Angika is a dialect of Maithili. Maithili was considered as one of the many

varieties of Hindi. In 2003, Maithili got the status of a separate language. Therefore, it is debated whether Khortha should be considered a variety of Hindi or a variety of Maithili. The variety that has been worked upon here is found to be spoken among the people residing in Harischandrapur in the Malda district (West Bengal). This is one of the many varieties of Khortha. Khortha does not have any standard variety as of now (Bhowmik, 2018, p. 322).

The variety that has been worked upon here varies from the Jharkhand variety on the basis of a few grammatical aspects and also quite a few lexical items which will be discussed later in the dissertation.

2   Aims and Objectives

The main approach of this dissertation is to explore the Malda variety of Khortha from a comparative aspect to Bangla and the Jharkhand variety of Khortha by positing direct attention to the noun morphology.

The main objectives are:

i.   to collect data on Khortha Noun morphology and analyse the data.

ii.   discuss the field issues to state the degree of endangerment of the Malda variety of Khortha and the need for its preservation by language documentation.

iii.   if, there is any difference between the two varieties, examine the influence of neighbouring languages especially Bangla.

3   Chapter Plans

The dissertation will take over to work on the objectives in the form of chapters.

The first chapter is an introductory chapter to the dissertation. It discusses about the language and the aims and objectives, and the chapter plans. The position of Khortha in terms of language endangerment will also be given special attention in this chapter.

The following chapter will discuss general noun morphology from a typological perspective with a special reference to South Asian languages. It will then continue with the review of the relevant literature worked upon in Khortha.

The next chapter will discuss the field issues and the methodology applied for fieldwork. The focus will be on analysing the data with relevant examples on the basis of noun morphology and discuss the findings chiefly from a comparative perspective to Bangla.

The final chapter will conclude with the summary of findings based on field issues and noun morphology in the Malda variety of Khortha.

I will now discuss about the causes behind the influence of Bangla on Khortha. Matras (2009) notes that the speakers' communicative goals and intentions, their discourse strategies, and their language processing capacities, and structural innovations constitute the seeds of potential language change, i.e. contact-induced change. Contact is "a metaphor: language 'systems' do not genuinely touch or even influence one another. The relevant locus of contact is the language processing apparatus of the individual multilingual speaker and the employment of this apparatus in communicative interaction. It is therefore the

multilingual speaker's interaction and the factors and motivations that shape it that deserve our attention in the study of language contact." (Matras, 2009, p. 3)

4   Contact induced Bilingualism

Bilingualism can be either individual or societal; in case of Khortha, it shows type II societal bilingualism (Appel & Muysken, 2005, pp. 1-3). Almost all the speakers were bilingual[1]; some of them were even multilingual[2]. The number of monolingual speakers in Khortha was limited to a very few. Fortunately, the language still thrives for these elderly speakers. In any geographical area when two languages are in contact, there is a chance of linguistic convergence. Khortha is no different in this case. The Malda variety of Khortha shares many features with its neighbouring languages Bangla and to some extent with Hindi.

4.1   Lexical Borrowing

Lexical borrowing is a contact-induced change and this can occur irrespective of the social and linguistic status of the language. Bangla has socially dominated over Khortha, the socially subordinate language in Harischandrapur. "It is important to note that the socially dominant language may or may not be the linguistically dominant language of the speaker. This means that both borrowing and imposition can take place from a socially dominant to a socially subordinate language, and vice versa." (Winford, 2010, p. 171)

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[1] The bilinguals were proficient in speaking Khortha and Bangla.
[2] The multilinguals were proficient in Khortha, Bangla, and Hindi and in some cases English too.

In this case, the speakers were asked to translate the words from Bangla to Khortha, i.e. the target language. It is natural for any language to go through the loss of certain terms in vocabulary over time. The rate of retention is more than the loss. It was found for a number of basic words where the speakers have forgotten the Khortha words and have replaced it with Bangla and in some cases Hindi. The speakers imported[3] the words and Khortha adopted these words in its' lexical inventory with little to no change.

Here is a list of words[4] which are almost obsolete in the Khortha speech. The variations that are found in use are lexical borrowings from Bangla and Hindi.

Example: Word List

	Bangla	**Khortha**	**Variation 1**[5]	**Variation 2**[6]	**Gloss**
1.	/hãʈu/	/kehuni/	/haʈʈu/	/guʈna/	'knee'
2.	/ɟhirɟhirebriʃʈi/	/phunasi/	/briʃʈi/	-	'drizzle'
3.	/moumachi/	/birni/	-	/bhaura/	'bee'
4.	/mojur/	/manmaɟur/	-	/mor/	'peacock'
5.	/koreaŋgul/	/kaŋgalia/	-	/choʈʈaauri/	'little finger'
6.	/kalo/	/karija/	-	/kala/	'black'
7.	/bacca/	/ceŋgra/	/bacca/	-	'child'

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[3] see (Haugen, 1950)
[4] These words are pretty much lost. Only a few speakers who were in the 61-80 age group could remember those words. There was hardly any young speaker who could remember those words in Khortha. Words like /karija/ 'black', /laddi/ 'river' are not used in regular speech. The speakers rather prefer to use borrowed words.
[5] these words are borrowed from Bangla
[6] these words are borrowed from Hindi

	Bangla	Khortha	Variation 1[5]	Variation 2[6]	Gloss
8.	/ʃɔrɔtkal/	/jhari/	/ʃɔrɔtkal/	-	'autumn'
9.	/ʃɔkal/	/bihan/	/sakal/	-	'morning'
10.	/miʃti/	/mitʈhai/	/miʃti/	-	'sweetmeat'
11.	/jɔkrit/	/libhɔr/[7]	-	-	'liver'

Table 2: Basic Word List (Translational); Bangla to Khortha

Also, my primary focus was to work on the morphology of the language. For this reason, I was looking for someone who is a fluent and native speaker and has not forgotten the language. Unfortunately, I observed that most of them weren't willing to speak Khortha initially. While my search for such speakers was on the process I came across a lot of them who later on voluntarily came to become my informants[8]. I noticed that though they claimed they were speaking Khortha, they weren't[9].

5 Language Attitude and Shift

The people in Bhajjana village were sceptical and reluctant to talk when I first went to the village. They were not hostile, but they weren't amicable either. In the beginning, they were hesitating to articulate that they are the speakers of Khortha language. They informed that Khortha acts a lingua franca, i.e. a link

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[7] the speakers said they had a word for liver and after much struggle they said they cannot remember and they now call it /libhɔr/

[8] The head of the village solved the problem and requested me to talk to all the willing informants once, and later tell him who would be the ideal informant for my work. So, I listened and attended all the speakers who came up to me. They discussed their current living situation, the condition of the language and the community, the job scenario and other socio-economic factors which were the reasons for the decay of the language. But, unfortunately all these discussions were not recorded at that time as I was focusing mainly on morphology and I didn't want to interrupt the flow of speech by rummaging for the recorder and other equipments in my bag.

[9] The investigator is a native Bangla speaker and was able to distinguish Bangla from other languages. Many informants claimed that they were speaking Khortha but it was Bangla.

language that all the local people used earlier. This link language is non-operational in use as everyone speaks Bangla now. There is none in the village who is either a monolingual Hindi speaker or a monolingual Bangla speaker; therefore the use of Khortha has now become non-existent.

I was made aware beforehand that this kind of situation might happen and that I need to be tactful, patient and be kind and sensitive for successful fieldwork. Keeping that in my mind, I was careful and made acquaintance with the local contact. I informed the local contact that the fieldwork was to be conducted on the basis of prior information and that this information was from a trusted source. On hearing the details, the local contact had given me a few names of those who would be willing to work with me and help me with the fieldwork. Upon arrival I enquired what their mother tongue was, they assumed that this 'survey' was for the census. I stated clearly that I am neither working for the government nor was related to any political activity. They had had a bad experience in both the sectors previously. I informed them that my purpose was purely academic and I was interested in knowing their language and work on the language itself. When they were told in details that this is for the purpose of an individual, they seemed to open up a little. This made them curious and I elaborately explained my purpose of visit. I could not help noticing quite a few things as in the unwillingness of the community to speak Khortha primarily because of socio-economic reasons. While working on the elicitation and spending a few days with the Khortha speakers I could understand that the situation is worse than it apparently seemed to be. Most of them are unwilling

to speak the language. This unwillingness had hindered them in remembering the language. The language shift was noticeable through the loss of vocabulary i.e. a lot of Khortha words has been lost and is replaced with Bangla or Hindi (see section Lexical Borrowing).

The Khortha speakers preferred to use Bangla over Khortha. As we are aware that "a language's history, prestige value, and the degree to which it has undergone standardization may be sources of pride or shame for members of a linguistic community, and as such may again facilitate to inhibit the vitality of a given ethnolinguistic group" (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977, p. 312). The factors that determined this shift here are primarily the economic status and social status[10]. The livelihood of the Khortha speakers in the Bhajjana village depends on agriculture (rice, mango). If there is a flood or famine any year, the people starve and die. For instance, I was supposed to conduct my fieldwork in the village named Miyahat in Harischandrapur. On reaching Harischandrapur I came to know that the village has washed away a few months ago during flood and the people who were alive have either migrated to different villages or to Malda town where the dominant language is Bangla. Therefore, the Khortha speakers who mostly belong to the low socio-economic status tend to shift towards Bangla.

The language convergence between the Malda variety of Khortha and Bangla is natural because of language contact. But the shift from one language to another for sake of prestige and better options in life seems a step toward language

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[10] refer (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977, pp. 310-312)

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endangerment when the later generations do not want to speak or forget the language.

 "The general pattern for language shift in immigrant groups is as follows. The first generation (born in the country of origin) is bilingual, but the minority language is clearly dominant, the second generation is bilingual and either of the two languages might be strongest, the third generation is bilingual with the majority language dominating, and the fourth generation only has command of the majority language." (Appel & Muysken, 2005, p. 42) In Khortha, a situation something similar to this pattern was noticed. There were two types of scenarios found among the Khortha speakers in Harischandrapur. I would like to explain the language attitude in the following sections.

Scenario 1

Khortha is extensively spoken by the grandparent generation in all domains. The parent generation switch between Khortha and Bangla. Most of them do not teach their children Khortha. They have stopped using Khortha in their home domain unless they are talking to the grandparent generation. The children try to speak Khortha only to communicate with the grandparent generation and the parent generation need to serve as a mediator to help the cause. A very few children use Khortha as their mother tongue but without any prolonged use. They shift to Bangla as soon as they get admitted in school.[11]

Scenario 2

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[11] There were no schools found near Bhajjana, Harischandrapur where primary education was imparted in Khortha. The medium of instruction was strictly Bangla.

The grandparent generation uses Khortha in a restricted domain. They speak Khortha with those who do not know any other language and cannot communicate in anything except Khortha, i.e. the Scenario 1 grandparent generation. They speak in Bangla with their children and also grandchildren. As a result, unlike Scenario 1 situation the parent generation does not need to serve as a mediator here. In this scenario, it is seen the loss of language starts from the parent generation. This parent generation claims they are not comfortable in using Khortha as they have almost forgotten the language. The only reason they can still speak a little and can understand Khortha because of the older generation who cannot communicate in any language except Khortha. They declare Bangla as their mother tongue. The children do not know an iota of Khortha in this Scenario; i.e. Scenario 2. The children speak fluent Bangla and communicate with their parents and grandparents in Bangla.

It can be substantiated from the observation made in the fieldwork that the second language learning, i.e. Bangla, in this case, plays a crucial role. It has been seen that the kids start learning Bangla (Scenario 1) as soon as they start going to school[12], approximately at the age of 4 or 5. All the subjects are taught in Bangla and compared to their Bangla speaking classmates the Khortha speakers don't fare well when they try to adhere to their mother tongue in their home domain. This naturally becomes harder when the parents and grandparents speak in a mix of Khortha and Bangla (Scenario 1). At times it is only the grandparents who still speak Khortha and the parent generation has shifted in using Bangla (Scenario 2). Their parents did not encourage in speaking Khortha

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[12] The medium of instruction in primary education is Bangla in Bhajjana and the nearby villages.

and the conservations are held mostly in Bangla (Scenario 2). And in case, if the grandparents have died earlier, the use of Khortha almost becomes obsolete even in the home domain (Scenario 2).

"Language shift is, in fact, the redistribution of varieties of language over certain domains. If the shift is towards the majority language, this language seems to conquer domain after domain via the intermediate stage of bilingual language use. When the minority language is spoken in fewer domains, its value decreases. This, in turn, will lessen the motivation of younger people to learn and use it." (Appel & Muysken, 2005, p. 41)

Therefore, it can be seen that Khortha is not spoken among all the generations in all domains. The intergenerational communication is interrupted because of language loss. They discourage their children from learning the language. A very few children can understand the language but they have forgotten it since they started primary education[13]. It is becoming rare where people from parent generation use Khortha for communication among themselves. As I observed the usage of Khortha among adults along with children is almost negligible.

6 Language Endangerment

"Of the 6000 languages spoken today, 276 of them comprise more than 5 billion speakers. All the rest of the languages, 95% of them, are spoken by 300 million

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[13] Scenario 1 situation only

people. Just 5% of the people in the world speak 95% of the world's languages."[14] (Bernard, 1996) In the light of this, I will now turn to Khortha.

6.1 GIDS

The Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) of Fishman is a seminal work on language endangerment. This scale has eight levels. The table below is given for ready reference.

Stage of endangerment	Level of endangerment (with explanation)
Stage 1	"some use of Xish[15] in higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence)" (Fishman, 1991, p. 107)
Stage 2	"Xish in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either" (Fishman, 1991, p. 105)
Stage 3	"use of Xish in the lower work sphere (outside of the Xish neighborhood/community) involving interaction between Xmen and Y[16]men." (Fishman, 1991, p. 103)
Stage 4	"Xish in lower education (types a and b) that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws" (Fishman, 1991, p. 98)
Stage 5	"Xish literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy" (Fishman, 1991, p. 95)
Stage 6	"the attainment of intergenerational informal oralcy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement" (Fishman, 1991, p. 92)
Stage 7	"most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age" (Fishman, 1991, p. 88)

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[14] Though the dynamics seem to have improved a little throughout the years, the situation for "the smallest half of the world's languages—consisting of more than 3,500 languages—are spoken by a mere 0.2 percent of the global population" (Harrison, 2007, pp. 13-14) Thus, this huge number of languages still remains in potential danger of language endangerment and loss.

[15] X = any language
[16] Y = any language apart from X

Stage 8	"most vestigial users of Xish are socially isolated old folks and Xish needs to be re-assembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults" (Fishman, 1991, p. 88)

Table 3: GIDS (Fishman, 1991)

Level 8 denotes extremely poor thriving condition of the language; i.e. the language is dying. Level 1 denotes that the language has prominence and is in the safe zone in terms of endangerment; i.e. the language is not endangered. In the case of Khortha, two scenarios were found in Harischandrapur. In case of Scenario 1, the situation lies in between Stage 6 and 7 of GIDS, and in case of Scenario 2, the situation of the Malda variety of Khortha stands at Stage 7 in the GIDS. Stage 7 on the GIDS: most users of Xish are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child-bearing age (Fishman, 1991, p. 89). The users of Khortha has the knowledge of the language but the language is not transmitted to the children, i.e. the parents do not teach the children or refrain from teaching the language as their mother tongue. Therefore, based on the overall perspective the stage of language endangerment of Khortha in the framework of GIDS can be concluded as a stage 7.

6.2   UNESCO

UNESCO measures languages in its six-level scales of language endangerment. It was noted that the usage of Khortha in case of intergenerational transmission is restricted between the parent and grandparent generation. The intergenerational transmission of Khortha between the parent generation and the children are almost marginal in the current scenario. As per UNESCO's

degree of endangerment, it helps to understand that Khortha in Malda is definitely endangered and if this is not checked and any sort of measure is not taken, there is a high chance that within two to three generations it might be that this variety will become extinct.

Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> *not included in the Atlas*
vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
extinct	there are no speakers left >> *included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s*

Table 4: UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger[17]

Khortha is deemed as a dialect of Angika. Angika's position is termed as vulnerable in UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. But, the Malda variety, i.e. Khortha in Malda is definitely endangered and is slowly progressing towards severely endangered, irrespective of Angika's position in the degree of endangerment.

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[17] (Moseley, 2010)

6.3 EGIDS

The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons, 2010) is an aligned, amplified, elaborate and evaluative framework for endangered languages constructed on the basis of GIDS and other language endangerment scales, including UNESCO's. The table has 13 levels. The 13 levels are discussed in the table below:

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.
2	Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.
3	Wider Communication	The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.
5	Developing	The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.

6b	Threatened	The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no one has more than symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Table 5: EGIDS[18] (Ethnologue, 2018)

The position of the Malda variety of Khortha based on an overall evaluation can be stated as Shifting (Level 7). This level according to the EGIDS is the level where language shift is in progress. Though the parents are capable of using the language, the usage of Khortha currently has been restricted to certain domains. As Khortha has been the first language of the parents thus, Khortha can be revitalized by increased exposure.

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[18] (Language Status, 2018) retrieved on 30th December 2018
https://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-status.

6.4   Revitalization

The first step towards reversing language shift is planning for language revitalization. Language revitalization can be achieved through various means. For the start, primary education in Khortha can be imparted in schools. It is recommended by the National Curriculum Framework of NCERT[19] how mother tongue education is important in the primary stage. In India, the general consensus is that a person's recognition as educated is based on the medium of instruction in school. It is a widespread notion that if a speaker of a minority language is not fluent in one of the majority languages then that person is either uneducated or stupid. As a result of this perception, the stigma of knowing an indigenous language as a mother tongue accelerates language loss for the minority speakers.

Factors such as economic condition, social status, official status, and prestige can play an important role in language maintenance. "Official status can lead to more resources for the language, both monetary and otherwise. It allows for (or buoys) the use of the language in official contexts, making knowledge of the language more valuable in the public sphere. Governmental recognition also increases the prestige associated with the language by placing it on the same level (at least theoretically) as the majority language." (Hoffmann, 2009, p. 19) Prestige plays an important factor in language revitalization. A person will have a chance to sustain a respectable position in society based on the language he or she speaks. In urban scenarios, English is seen with prestige; in case of rural areas, the situation remains similar with English covering the highest level of the

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[19] NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training). National Curriculum Framework. New Delhi: NCERT.

hierarchy, next to it stands the socially dominant language (generally one of the 22 scheduled languages) of that state. Such beliefs of the general mass triggers language shift among the minority language speakers. The Khortha speakers in Malda were no different. The value of the language has to be understood by the speakers themselves; else outside sources cannot help in revival if the people themselves do not respond in such efforts.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1   Introduction

This chapter discusses various aspects of noun morphology from a typological perspective. At the onset, it discusses a few typical features of South Asian languages with respect to the noun morphology. The focus is given on the Indo European languages along with other language families of South Asia as Khortha belongs to the Indo Aryan language family spread across the South Asian region. Besides, the objective is to discuss and review the variety of works done on the Khortha language which is under the scope of this dissertation.

2   Noun morphology

The different aspects on the basis of which noun morphology can be studied are the *number, gender, definiteness,* and *declensions*. The emphasis will be given specifically on the different categories under the rubrics of morphology such as case, agreement, reduplication, dative subject construction and definiteness. Noun morphology is described as the 'nominal base is followed by the plural suffix when plurality has to be expressed and then by a case suffix; a postposition is normally attached to the genitive form of a noun.' (Brown, 2006) "Nominal morphology—inflection for definiteness, number, gender, case, and possessor agreement—is maximally elaborated on expressions for person/thing in term function" (Vogel & Comrie, 2000, p. 22).

2.1   Agreement

The agreement is grammatically a significant phenomenon as it shows the syntactic facts of a language. Agreement relations can be based on the syntactic,

semantic and morphological component. It depends on the arguments related to the clause. Here, the agreement will be discussed in terms of the morphosyntactic properties i.e. agreement based on grammatical relations will be discussed and this type of agreement is also known as grammatical agreement. Grammatical agreement occurs mainly on the basis of noun-verb relation and noun adjective relation. Nouns (and pronouns) are the basic component in grammatical agreement as this helps in determining the position of other syntactic categories. Therefore, the relevance of relational hierarchy[20] seemed necessary to understand the grammatical agreement. A typological claim was made by Moravcsik (1978)that if there is an agreement in the language then there will be an agreement with the direct object and it was implied that indirect object can have an agreement only when the direct object will showcase of agreement. Also, the intransitive subject may show agreement if the direct object followed by an indirect object showed agreement.

Adjectives generally depend on nouns as these work as modifiers. So, the gender of the noun influences adjectives and in quite a number of languages adjective does show agreement to the noun. This dependency is mainly showcased through an agreement in gender. Greenberg (1963) stated that adjectives show agreement with the noun in gender if the verb of the given language agrees with the noun in gender.

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[20]subject > direct object > indirect object >other object

Universal 31: "If either the subject or object noun agrees with a verb in gender, then the adjective always agrees with the noun in gender." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

"Agreement is an important feature of South Asian language family, although not all IA languages show it in a uniform pattern. The languages that show agreement prominently are Western Indo-Aryan languages." (Abbi, 2001, p. 27) Languages that have the agreement of the adjective with the noun exhibit the modification in the form of all three categories of gender, number, and person or at least one of them. For example, Punjabi and Konkani have nominal modifiers for gender and number which are inflected; whereas Hindi inflects for gender and also the masculine number. The eastern Indo Aryan Languages do not have any inflections for adjectives and remains invariant like Bangla, Assamese and Oriya (Abbi, 2001, p. 132). But, few languages like Nepali and the Bihari languages lie in the transitional belt and inflection is truncated and often optional, and in any event only for gender and/or number, not for case (Masica, 1991, p. 251). South Asian languages exhibit mainly three levels of comparison, i.e. equative, comparative and superlative. The pattern for equative words is similar to other modifiers that follow the pattern of inflection. The comparative and superlative inflections of adjectives are not found in Indo Aryan languages in general. The comparison is expressed through the use of the comparative marker which is generally a postposition. Superlatives are formed by periphrastic constructions, i.e. through a syntactic construction instead of simple morphological inflection or derivation (Abbi, 2001, p. 136).

2.1.1　Person

In noun morphology, case marking, agreement and constituent order can all
function to indicate the relationship that a noun phrase bears to a verb as noted
by (Whaley, 1997, p. 152). The three inflectional categories that show noun-verb
agreement are *person, number* and *gender*. Languages use different marking
and order to distinguish the agreement in subject and object. For example,
English uses case but only when the pronouns are involved, i.e. *she* for subjects
and *her* for objects (Whaley, 1997, p. 153). An example from Shoshone is given
below to discuss the person paradigm.

Pronoun			Nominative	Objective
1S			nü	nia
	D	INCL	tangku	tahi
		EXCL	nungku	nuhi
	P	INCL	tammü	tammi
		EXCL	nümmü	nümmi
2S			ü	ümmi
	D		mungku	muhi
	P		mümmü	mümmi
3S				ma

Table 6: Personal pronouns paradigm in Shoshone[21]

Some languages like the Burmese is said to have a unique third person singular
and plural pronouns.

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[21] (Whaley, 1997, p. 177)

Universal 42: "All languages have pronominal categories involving at least three persons and two numbers." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 75)

Moravcsik (2013) shows, for example, Russian and French exhibit gender in the third person only, and Syrian Arabic has gender distinction in both the second and third person. It is not the other way round. "We have no example of a language with gendered second-person pronouns and ungendered third-person ones." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 43)

Also, in another case, it is shown that "if a plural pronoun has a gender differentiation, so does a singular pronoun. Russian (like English) has gender only in the singular, while French has it both in the singular and in the plural. There is no language in this sample with gender in the plural but not in the singular." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 43)

2.1.2 Number

The category of number is usually demonstrated through an article, suffix or prefix. It has been discussed by Greenberg (1963).

Universal 35: i.e. "There is no language in which the plural does not have some non-zero allomorphs, whereas there are languages in which the singular is expressed only by zero. The dual and the trial are almost never expressed only by zero" (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

It is stated by Greenberg (1963) that there are languages where singular and sometimes even plural is expressed by zero morphs. This is true in a variety of languages and thus helps in grouping and classifying them on the basis of such criteria. This will be shown by the following examples. Moravcsik (2013) has discussed how English shows overt and covert allomorph for plural affix;

whereas, Latin shows this overt and covert allomorph situation in case of singular affix.

Example:

i.   English   Latin

     lamb-s   colon-us 'colonist'

     cow-s   equ-us 'horse'

     sheep_   uxor_ 'wife'

     deer_   consul_ 'consul'   (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 132)

"In English, the nominal plural is generally marked by a suffix but for some nouns – such as sheep or deer – the base form is used both for the singular and for the plural. In this case, Example:

a. English   (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 132)

    SINGULAR   PLURAL

    lamb-ø   lamb-s
    cow-ø   cow-s
    school-ø   school-s
    pen-ø   pen-s

zero is invoked as an allomorph of the plural affix.

The same argument applies to the description of the singular nominative of Latin nouns, which is overtly marked for *colon- us* and *equ- us* but unmarked for *uxor* and *consul.* In these instances, the positing of a zero allomorph is supported by the existence of a synonymous overt analogue." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 132) But, this is just a variant between the covert and overt forms for singular and plural affixes with respect to Latin and English.

It is also seen in case of different languages that there is a type on which it can be seen that the singular has no affix and the plural have affixes, in that case, it is not a situation of allomorphy, it is regular and thus presents zero morphemes. The distribution of allomorphs might be considered as language specific, but when there are zero morphemes in case of various languages this distribution indicates an overall type and thus, concluding into a pattern; i.e. this marked feature and this occurrence can be taken as a widespread pattern and thus, can be basis in terms of typology. For example in the case of French or Breton along with English (as shown in a. above) will help one to understand the pattern.

b. French

SINGULAR   PLURAL

fille-ø   fille-s
'daughter'   'daughters'

maison-ø   maison-s
'house'   'houses'

ligne-ø   ligne-s
'line'   'lines'

chambre-ø   chambre-s
'room'   'rooms'

c. Breton   (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 133)

SINGULAR   PLURAL

lenn-ø   lenn-où
'lake'   'lakes'

merc'h   mer'c-ed
'girl'   'girls'

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In case of South Asian languages, it is found that the number category, in general, is overtly marked in western Indo Aryan languages; but when the overt markings of number get restricted it ultimately loses all its distinctions in some South Asian languages.

The South Asian Languages particularly the Indo Aryan group is "capable of gender agreement, and whether it is required or optional, and resulting differences in the domain of the category are also important." (Masica, 1991, p. 219)

It is an established fact that when a language has the category of gender, it must have a category of number as well.

Universal 36: "If a language has the category of gender, it always has the category of number." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

In the case of Dravidian languages, the inter-relativity between the number and gender makes it difficult to separate. Gender and number in the Dravidian languages are relevant only in the third person. Plurals vary on the first person pronoun; including person addressed (inclusive) and excluding the person addressed (exclusive). (Krishnamurti, 2003, pp. 28-29).

	Singular	**Plural**	
Person	Familiar	Inclusive	Exclusive
First (speaker)	nēnu 'I'	manam(u) 'we and you'	mēm(u) 'we but not you'
Second	nīwu/nuwwu	mīru 'you/you guys/you all'	

	Singular	Plural
(addressee)	'you'	
Third (topic)	adi 'she'	wāṇḍlu/wāḷḷu 'they' (human)
	wāḍu 'he'	
	adi 'it'	awi 'they' (non-human)

Table 7: Personal pronouns in Telugu[22]

2.1.3 Gender

Gender is one of the categories of the noun class which can be analysed on the basis of syntactic structure and semantic information; i.e. *grammatical gender* and *natural gender*. Some languages have an overlap of grammatical gender and natural gender. For example, Russian assigns masculine gender to male humans (nouns) and those denote the female humans are assigned feminine gender. (Corbett G. G., 1982, pp. 202-11)

Though Corbett (1991) opines that the difference in the concept of gender and noun classes is an output of different linguistic tradition, in reality, there is no substantive difference.

The concept of grammatical gender is not prevalent in all language families. For example, the concept of grammatical gender is absent in language families like Uralic, Altaic, and Sino-Tibetan (Corbett G. G., 1991, p. 1). Languages can be defined on the basis of typology with the presence or absence of grammatical gender. The gender of a given noun also depends on the basis of which nouns are divided (controller gender) from the ones that are formed on the basis of

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[22] (Telugu language)

different genders marked on agreement targets (target gender) (Corbett G. G., 1991, pp. 159-160).

The Tibeto-Burman language family does not possess grammatical gender[23]. But recent studies on Tibeto-Burman family has shown that some of the languages have developed a system of gender by suffixing in case of animate nouns to differentiate male and female genders. Apart from that, it is also seen borrowed words are taken in the language with their respective gender markers[24]. Dravidian languages show gender and number in such form it is difficult to differentiate the categories. Gender is primarily based on animacy. Krishnamurti (2003) states "Gender and number are interrelated categories. Singular (unmarked) and plural (marked) are the numbers denoting 'one' and 'more than one'. The plural is differentiated originally between human and non-human categories. The categories ±Animate, ±Human, ±Male human underlie gender classification, which is mainly based on meaning and not on form. There are two plurals of the first-person pronoun, one including the person addressed (inclusive) and the other excluding the person addressed (exclusive). Adverbial nouns have no gender or number; personal pronouns (first and second) are distinguished for the number and not gender. Gender and number are relevant only in the third person. The gender-number-person agreement is expressed by finite verbs. An inflected noun has the structure Stem + number + oblique + case." (pp. 28-29).

Whereas, in case of the Indo Aryan languages it is found that gender is a classificatory property of one class of words (nouns) and for other classes such

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[23] Refer (Chatterji, 1985, pp. 721-722)
[24] collected notes of Suhnu Ram Sharma from Deccan College.

as adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, even verbs and also post positions it works as a variable or inflectional property of those. The agreement varies in case of gender and those differences constitute the domain of the category (Masica, 1991, p. 219). Grammatical gender is preserved in most of the Indo Aryan languages with a few exceptions; those exceptions being the eastern Indo Aryan languages like Bangla, Assamese, and Oriya. It can be said that these languages have lost their grammatical gender as a result of influence from the Tibeto-Burman family. The languages that retain it grammatical gender are of two types, one where masculine, feminine and neuter are still present and can be recognised because of their different function. Another type of languages that show grammatical gender is where the masculine and neuter has merged into masculine, and the feminine gender retains. Most of the Indo Aryan languages fall into the second category. Languages like Marathi, Gujarati, and Sinhalese have three forms in grammatical gender whereas languages like Hindi retain two forms.

Moreover, the gender marking in case of Marathi and Gujarati is similar to Dravidian where the differentiation of masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns are marked by affixes. (Chatterji, 1985, pp. 720-722)

Gender may or may not be present in adjectives, but it is one of the universals that there will be a gender category in pronoun.

Universal 43: "If a language has gender categories in the noun, it has gender categories in the pronoun." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

Therefore, it is possible for a language to have gender in pronouns and that might not get reflected in nouns. In some languages, a single marker or inflection can determine the gender and other grammatical categories in the language. Moravcsik (2013) gives examples from Swahili to explain such phenomenon where nouns have different inflections for gender and number but both are blended into single morphemes.

Example: Swahili

ki–jiko ki-dogo

vi-jiko vi -dogo

m -toto   m -dogo

wa-toto   wa-dogo

(Class 1 and 7 indicate gender classes):   (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 67)

ki- 'singular, Class 7'

vi- 'plural, Class 7'

m - 'singular, Class 1'

wa- 'plural, Class 1'

 Another Universal of Greenberg, i.e. Universal 44 states that in the case of gender distinction in pronoun if a person has distinguished then the second or third person and at times both will be distinguished in terms of gender. Also, it has been stated that if it is implied that gender distinction is present in the plural of the pronoun, then gender distinction will be present in the singular of the pronoun.

Universal 44: "If a language has gender distinction in the first person, it always has gender distinctions in the second or third or in both." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

Universal 45 states- "If there are any gender distinctions in the plural of the pronoun, there are gender distinctions in the singular also." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90)

Moravcsik (2013) shows, for example, Russian and French exhibit gender in the third person only and Syrian Arabic has gender distinction in both the second and third person. It is not the other way round. "We have no example of a language with gendered second-person pronouns and ungendered third-person ones." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 43)

2.2 Definiteness

Dryer (2013) has done a study for definite articles on 620 languages, out of which 377 languages have words or affixes that serve the purpose of definiteness by the presence of definite articles. In another study, Dryer (2013) has studied 534 languages for the indefinite article and 236 languages show indefinite article either as words or affixes. There are cases where some languages yield both definite articles and indefinite articles. Some languages show the presence of any one of the article. Another set of languages show that there is no presence of either the definite or the indefinite marker.

Blake (2004) suggests a number of factors for describing case systems (especially with reference to Indo-European languages) based on meaning and function.

(a) There are numerous paradigms (when a number is taken into account) with different patterns of syncretism (i.e. the paradigms are not isomorphic).

(b) For each case, there are a number of functions.

(c) There is concord between the head of a noun phrase and its dependents.

(Blake, 2004, pp. 28-29)

Moravcsik (2013) gives an elaborate explanation of how German uses articles in its nominative, accusative, genitive, and dative cases. German also uses articles to exhibit the number and gender of these four cases.

Example:

	SINGULAR			PLURAL		
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Nominative	der	die	das	die	die	die
Accusative	den	die	das	die	die	die
Genitive	des	der	des	der	der	der
Dative	dem	der	dem	den	den	den

Table 8: The article paradigm in the German language[25]

All of the above shows multiple meanings in terms of the case, gender, number; i.e. syncretism. "Syncretism in particular paradigms is the most readily observable and the most widespread example of shared properties between cases." (Blake, 2004, p. 41)

"There are 24 slots defined by the two numbers, three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter) and four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative); yet, there is only one-fourth as many distinct forms: *der, die, das ,den ,des ,* and *dem*. With the exception of des, all of these forms are multiply employed: they have alternative meanings." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 123) As observed here, the

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[25] (Moravcsik, Introducing Language Typology, 2013, p. 123)

syncretism is found in between two or more cases. This overlap recurs in a number of paradigms. "For example, masculine and neuter are differentiated in the singular nominative and accusative but not in the genitive and dative; and genitive and dative are distinct in the singular for masculine and neuter but not for the feminine." (Moravcsik, 2013, p. 123)

In South Asia, it is seen that the definiteness particle is differentially employed through the use of cases like Accusative, Nominative, even prepositions and postpositions. It is found that definiteness is derived in some South Asian languages generally by the use of demonstratives. Some of the South Asian languages like Bangla or Malayalam derive its' definiteness particles from classifiers. "they appear to be used (redundantly but by no means consistently) mainly with nouns whose definiteness is already implied by their position, or even overtly, marked by a demonstrative." (Masica, 1991, p. 371)

Examples from Bangla

a) ʃisu-ʈi-**r** pita　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Masica, 1991, p. 371)
   'The baby's father'
b) ʃisu-ʈi-**ke** ɟabe rpatre ʃoyano dekhte pelo
   'They found the babe lying in a manger.'

It is also seen that definiteness gets marked with a common suffix where both the accusative and dative has merged in Indo Aryan languages like in Sindhi. Generally, it is found in South Asia throughout all the language families in different degrees, i.e. primarily in Indo Aryan and Dravidian, and a very few of the Tibeto Burman and Munda languages (Masica, 1986, pp. 124-136). It affects only a minority of the Indo Aryan languages directly. And, this specific feature is marked syntactically instead of morphologically, unlike other Indo Aryan

languages which follow agreement primarily based on morphology (Masica, 1991, p. 248). Though definiteness is present in Dravidian languages to some extent mainly based on case marking, the denial of speakers makes it tricky to assess the situation (Krishnamurti, 2003).

Definiteness marking can range from Yoruba which has a highly lexical definite marking to the maximal high redundant marking of Modern Greek (Masica, 1986, p. 138).I will now turn to discuss the declensions.

2.3   Classifiers

Classifiers are used to categorize the different word classes. Classifiers can be used for a different function in different word classes. There are six types of classifiers listed by Aikhenvald (2000).

i.   Noun classifiers

ii.   Numeral classifiers

iii.   Relational classifiers

iv.   Verbal classifiers

v.   Locative classifiers

vi.   Deictic classifiers

The most common two classifiers that are distributed typologically among the world's languages are the noun classifiers and the numeral classifiers. Classifiers can be of two morphological realisations; the free morpheme type and the bound morpheme type.

Free morpheme classifiers	Bound morpheme classifiers
Numeral classifiers (Animate, Shape)	Concordial classifiers (Animate, Shape)
Non-numeral classifiers (Animate only)	Predicate classifiers (Animate, Shape)
	Intralocative classifiers (Shape only)

Table 9: Classifiers, their morphological realization, and semantics[26]

In South Asian languages classifiers are those that are used to classify morphemes of quantity and numeric values. In South Asia, this typical feature is available throughout all the languages. The influence of the massive use of classifiers in the Tibeto-Burman language family reflects in the Indo Aryan languages, especially the eastern Indo Aryan languages.

2.4   Declensions

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics defines declension as "type of inflection of nouns, articles, adjectives, numerals, and pronouns that varies according to the *case, gender, and number*." The corresponding inflectional forms of a word constitute the declensional paradigms that are subsumed in declensional classes according to regularities and predictability or practicability." Traditional grammar had discussed declensions and had used case markers to exhibit the feature. Morphologically, this is highly relevant as this explains the meaning and function in a language either semantically or grammatically.

2.4.1   Case Marking

"Case is a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads. Traditionally the term refers to inflectional marking, and, typically, the case marks the relationship of a noun to a verb at the clause level

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[26] (Aikhenvald, 2000, p. 7)

or of a noun to a preposition, postposition or another noun at the phrase level."
(Blake, 2004, p. 1) "It is a universal feature of human languages to establish the
relations of nominal arguments in a clause. Cases exhibit the relation between
verbs and nouns (or pronouns) in a sentence. It may also indicate the
relationship between two nouns. Sometimes it is demonstrated by adpositions
known as pre- or postpositions occurring with or without any morphological
change in the nouns they are attached to." (Abbi, 2001, p. 127) In different
languages, as stated by Comrie (1989) the occurrence of case marking depends
on either semantic criteria or a syntactic function, in some cases, it is also used
as a pragmatic marker like Japanese or Tagalog. In South Asian languages, case
markers are inflectional in nature. The type of inflection varies across the
different language family. With time it is found that the Indo Aryan languages
have undergone the loss of inherited inflections and as a result of which new
forms has set off. Indirect case marking suffixes and postpositions are used for
most cases (e.g. instrumental, ablative, some genitive and locative) i.e. with the
exception of Nominative and Accusative (Masica, 1991, p. 230). A common
pattern in South Asian languages is a "two-storey" system of nominal inflection,
with a distinction between Nominative/Absolute and an Oblique, which serves
as the basis for further case affixes or clitics. The Oblique often is identical to the
Genitive, as in Telugu and other Dravidian languages (Krishnamurti 2003: 217–
240), and some of the Munda languages, including Korku (Zide 2008: 264), (Hock
& Bashir, 2016, p. 445). Dravidian languages like the Indo-Aryan do not show
inflection in nominative and have oblique stems which undergo through a
variety of suffixes which is discussed here. "Nominals (including nouns,

pronouns, numerals and adverbs of time and place) are all inflected for case. In several classes of nominals, the nominative stem is the basic form. An oblique stem, which occurs before case suffixes, is different from the nominative; a series of oblique suffixes are added to form it. In most languages, the genitive and the oblique stems are identical." (Krishnamurti, 2003, p. 28). Usually, it is seen that different Dravidian languages have employed a myriad of independent postpositions such as 'by means of, from (being in a place/time), before, after, above, below, up to, until, through' etc. Case markers and postpositions are added to the oblique stems of nouns, in the singular and in the plural. As Dravidian languages are highly agglutinative languages the case relations are employed by bound morphs for the functioning of the accusative, dative, and genitive instead of using case markers like Indo Aryan. The marker for instrumental and locative is similar and shows syncretism which will be discussed in the following chapter [27] . Dravidian languages also use grammaticalized inflected words (Krishnamurti, 2003, pp. 205-227).

2.4.2   Ergativity

Languages can be typologically divided into two categories based on the morphosyntactic alignment. Languages show two types of morphosyntactic alignment.

    a) Ergative-absolutive

    b) Nominative-accusative

Ergative-absolutive languages are those where the subject i.e. the single argument of intransitive verb behaves like the object of a transitive verb. The

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[27] discussion of Khortha declensions

difference between nominative-accusative languages to ergative-absolutive

languages is that the case assigned to the subject. In nominative-accusative

languages, both transitive and intransitive subjects get assigned by the same

case and a different case is assigned for the object. Whereas, in ergative-

absolutive languages, the subjects of transitive and intransitive are marked by

different cases; and the object of the transitive sentence in the ergative-

absolutive language is marked by the same case of the subject of the intransitive

sentence.

	Marked	Unmarked	Examples
Nominative-Accusative	O	A,S	Mary-ɵ saw Jane-na Jane-ɵ ran
Ergative-Absolutive	A	O,S	Mary-na saw Jane-ɵ Jane-ɵ ran
			[-na is the marked case ending]

Table 10: Two-Way Case System in Human Languages[28]

In South Asian languages both the nominative-accusative and the ergative-

absolutive alignments are found. Some languages can exhibit features from both

the morphosyntactic alignments. It is even more interesting that a very few

South Asian languages exhibit the case of split ergativity. Ergative constructions

are found in the Tibeto Burman languages and the Dravidian languages do not

exhibit ergativity of any kind. Split ergativity is found in the Indo Aryan languages

where some of the languages show neither of the alignments singularly and

uniformly. Hindi is one such language that shows split ergativity. This type of

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[28] (Abbi, 2001, p. 129)

languages usually shows ergativity in the past tense or perspective aspect whereas the nominative pattern is followed in the present or imperfective domains (Hock & Bashir, 2016).

2.4.3   Syncretism

When a language loses its markers or merge and this lack of distinction in any category makes it difficult to understand its function. This loss or merge can happen through various grammatical or syntactic categories, and as a result, when it is not prominent to understand the function it is called syncretism. In highly inflectional languages, it is found that different cases have different markers, this leads in understanding that certain morphemes are used for a different purpose. For example, German shows case syncretism, especially where the article paradigm shows the usage of the same morphemes to denote various forms and meanings. Another form of syncretism like gender syncretism is also prominent in languages like German[29]. South Asian languages show syncretism mainly in the case system. The Indo-Aryan languages had inflections which were similar for the case markers in the duals of different stems. There were also some similarities in case inflections for singulars (Macdonell). Later, with time this phonological changes triggered the case inflections to lose their distinctiveness and as a result of which case inflections were remodelled and accelerated case syncretism in the majority of the Indo Aryan languages. Similarly, the Dravidian languages showcase syncretism in instrumental, ablative and locative (Krishnamurti, 2003, p. 238). Thus, case syncretism is regularly found in most South Asian languages.

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[29] check Definiteness of this chapter

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2.5   Pronominals

Greenberg (1963) states that in the category of pronominals usually have a minimum of three persons and also evidently seen that pronominals have two numbers.

Universal 42: "All languages have pronominal categories involving atleast three persons and two numbers." (Greenberg, 1963, p. 90).

"In many languages, in the majority, in fact, there is some kind of pronominal representation of certain core grammatical relations quite apart from their representation via noun phrases." (Blake, 2004, p. 13) Pronominals carry different information like gender, number, and animacy to name a few of the several categories. This is evident in most of the world's languages. In the South Asian languages pronouns occur in a different range of forms. According to Abbi (2001), there seems to have an overlap between the inflectional and derivational categories in pronominals; morphological and syntactic categories are also overlapped in some cases. South Asian languages, especially in some of the Indo Aryan languages pronominals (relative, interrogative, indefinite) show a distinction between oblique and direct bases which is a very common pronominal feature in Dravidian languages. "A few languages have special forms for the 1st and 2nd person Agentives (in Gujarati arguably for the 3rd person, interrogatives, and relative as well). In other languages (Hindi, Punjabi) these Agentives have ousted old Nominatives. As mentioned earlier, Hindi has special forms for the Dative. A number of NIA languages lack 3rd person personal pronouns, using deictics (demonstratives) instead. These are differentiated for a

minimum of two categories (distant/proximate) and in some languages for as many as four: e.g., Sinhalese meka/oka/araka/eka 'this one, that one (by you), that one (yonder), that one (not in sight, only spoken about)'" (Masica, 1991, p. 251) Most of the South Asian languages do not show gender distinction in third person pronominals. But, the Bhadarwahi-Khashali dialect differentiates gender in first and second person pronominals which are not found in other South Asian languages till now. There is also an interesting feature which is found in the Dravidian group and also some of the other South Asian languages like Marathi, Gujarati, and Santhali are clusitivity. It is the "distinction between inclusive (i.e. addressee included) and exclusive (addressee excluded) first-person dual and plural pronouns." (Abbi, 2001, p. 125). South Asian languages also exhibit pronominals with honorifics; "honorifics have been reinterpreted as indicators of humility and politeness rather than of flattery" (Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 274). The range of honorifics is found primarily in the second person of all languages. Some languages exhibit no honorificity which is rare in South Asian languages. Most of the South Asian languages exhibit two layers of honorific forms and some languages show three layers, it is rare though not impossible to have four layers of honorific forms which are found in a few Dravidian languages like Kannada. "In Kannada, according to S. N. Sridhar (1990: 203), there are two-second-person pronouns, singular niinu and plural niivu. In addition, the reflexive plural pronoun taavu is used as an ultra honorific second person plural pronoun in markedly formal contexts (124). The plural forms of the second and third person pronouns are used as honorifics. In imperatives, the suffixes –i and –ri indicate politeness." (Kachru, 2008, p. 350). Honorific particles are also found

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in South Asian languages. "Hindi has a distinct second person pronoun marked [+honorific]–ap–which is used for elders, new acquaintances, and anyone considered worthy of respect. It takes plural agreement even when it refers to one individual. The plural first and third person pronouns are used in the honorific sense, and as usual, control the plural agreement. There is an honorific particle, jī, which is used with names to denote respect, for example, gandhī jī ''Gandhi [+honorific],'' indirajī ''Indira [+honorific].'' " (Kachru, 2008, p. 349)

2.6   Reduplication

Reduplication is one of the most important processes in morphology that is employed by various languages in the world. Reduplication also serves its function semantically in different languages. Reduplication can also be of two types:

i)   full: the exact repetition of the word or syllable that is reduplicated

ii)   partial: the reduplication occurs in partial repetition (usually phonological and at times semantic)

South Asian languages exhibit reduplication in both full and partial forms. The partial reduplication based on phonology is called echo formation. Echo formation is also a type of reduplication in the morphological pattern. Reduplication helps in determining the different semantic function of the word depending on the language and context. This partial reduplication, i.e. the echo formation is typically found in South Asia where different sound replacement helps in deriving the function and meaning. Generally, echo formations are used

for the meaning of 'etc'. Three types of echo formations are found in South Asia and are listed below.

(1)   "Initial sound replacement by a fixed sound, e.g. IA such as Hindi v-, Punjabi sh-, Bangla ʈ- etc.

(2)   Initial sound replacement by a fixed phonological syllable, e.g. Dravidian languages usegi-.

(3)   Vowel alternation by a qualitatively fixed vowel, e.g. in Tibeto-Burman languages and some of the IA languages such as Punjabi and Bangani (spoken in the Himalayan regions), for instance,shakunshukun 'meat etc. in Bangani. In this type, the canonical shape of the base word is copied with a change of vowel in the first syllable, e.g. mar 'beat'> mar mur 'beating etc.' but tuʹl 'dust' >tuʹl tal 'dust etc.' in Punjabi. The vowel alternation strategy is gradually penetrating in languages that never used it before such as Hindi and its dialects." (Abbi, 2001, p. 169)

2.7   Dative Subject Construction

Non-nominative subject constructions are a typical feature of South Asian languages (Emeneau, 1956). Typologically speaking dative subject constructions, i.e. where the subject is marked by the dative case instead of the nominative case is frequently observed in South Asia especially in the Dravidian languages. "The Dative Subject construction gets its name from the fact that one of the NPs which is a prime candidate for the syntactic role of Subject is marked by the Dative case in many NIA (and non-NIA) languages." (Masica, 1991, p. 346) The dative subject is distinguished by its syntactic characteristics; the dative subject

is recognised because it behaves like an 'Experiencer' instead of 'Agent' marking. Masica (1991) states that there are six types of 'experienced' that a dative subject can receive. The six are:

a. physical sensations and conditions.

b. psychological or mental states including liking, perceiving,

c. wanting or needing

d. obligation or compulsion

e. kinship relations

f. external circumstances or events affecting but not controlled by the Dative (or Genitive)

Thus, it can be said that the South Asian languages make a distinction between performative and non-performative actions; and the subjects of non-performative activities receive a dative subject in general with a few exceptions like Bangla where it takes genitive. These constructions are non-agentive (dative and in rare cases genitive or instrumental) and along with the 'experiencer' subject, they also receive 'involuntary', 'benefactor' or 'recipient' subject (Abbi, 2001, pp. 192-193).

3   Resources on Khortha

Out of the works available most of the studies focus on the varieties of Khortha found on the Jharkhand variety. The work of prime importance in reference to this chapter is the doctoral thesis of Jha (1985) that had focused on Khortha in West Bengal.

In the doctoral thesis (paścim baṅgāl mẽ maithilī kī vibhāṣā khuṭṭā kā bhāsāśāstrīya adhyayan) Jha (1985) discusses discusses the historical origin and the geographical location and the origin of the community who spoke the language Khortha. Chapter two discusses the nomenclature of Khortha and the author thinks the name of the language should be regarded as khuṭṭā (Jha, 1985, p. 54). Khortha is also referred as referred to as the dialect of Maithili in this thesis. It is argued throughout in a section of chapter two (Jha, 1985, pp. 56-61). It is shown by comparing the pronominals (pp. 59-60) in the initial section. It is argued that Khortha has three persons and that of Maithili has four i.e. along with the three persons it has a honorific second person. Then Jha (1985) follows up by comparing the different varieties of Maithili (mānaka, dakshinī mānaka, pūrvī) with Khortha on the basis of pronominals and the honorificity that is reflected in the pronominals (pp. 60-61). Jha (1985) then discusses the lexical similarities and differences of Khortha based on sound change by doing a comparative analysis with Maithili (pp. 64-69). The following chapter, i.e. chapter three of this thesis Jha (1985) deals with the phonology of Khortha from the perspective of Maithili. In this chapter in the preliminary, it shows the comparison of Khortha and Maithili[30] based on the sounds present in each of the language; it is represented in terms of the orthography and not by a phonetic transcription (pp. 75-81). The comparative analysis of sounds is followed up between Khortha and Maithili with a few references from Bangla (p. 83). This comparative analysis is done by the initial, final, interconsonantal and

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[30] The author usually uses the mānaka variety of Maithili. If other variety is used it will referred with the variety name, otherwise Maithili and mānaka Maithili both will be referred as Maithili in this chapter.

intervocalic positions of the vowels among the three languages, i.e. Maithili, Khortha, and Bangla (Jha, pp. 84-103). It is stated that Khortha have more similarities in the (vowel) phonological system with Maithili than that of Bangla and as a result, it is hard to accept it as a dialect of Bangla (Jha, p. 104). The primary focus of this chapter is on finding the similarities between Maithili and Khortha. The only difference that is found is in the use of liquids[31] where the use of such in Khortha is more akin to Bangla than Maithili when compared among Maithili, Khortha and Bangla. More such commentaries and analysis has been discussed in this chapter (pp. 141-142).

The subsequent chapter in the doctoral thesis deals with morphology. A comparative analysis of Maithili, Khortha and Bangla is made on the treatment of the grammatical gender endings[32] (pp. 157-159). A comparative study of person showed that Maithili has three layers in the second person, Khortha has one, and Bangla has two[33]. A vivid discussion on the pronominals was followed and all of the data was thoroughly compared and shown in tables for ease of understanding (pp. 166-173). When the comparative study among Maithili, Khortha and Bangla was done it was seen that only in case of *tatsama* words Bangla[34] retained a few adjectives which were distinct to show gender, but apart from that Bangla did not have any agreement of adjective with gender; whereas Maithili retains the agreement pattern and Khortha seems to have the

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[31] /l/ and /r/

[32] i, ī, ini, inī, āini, ni, ñi (only the feminine markers)

[33] Whereas, Bangla has two forms in the third person and the other two have one each. All of them have only one form in case of first person (Jha, pp. 162-163). Declensions among the three languages were also compared; case endings and post positions were shown in tabular formats (Jha, pp. 163-166).

[34] a selected few adjectives of Sanskrit origin like 'buddhimoti' and 'buddhiman' follows agreement but the rest has undergone change and have no gender agreement with adjective.

agreement but in some cases it does not agree[35]. It was shown through a detailed study of the verbs and roots that there is not much difference among the three languages and that it is quite similar to one another (pp. 180-190). A prescriptive method is shown in the study of tense and aspect and a lot of data from the three languages had been compiled and compared. Khortha has almost no similarity with Bangla. (pp. 214-215).

Khortha has been discussed on the basis of morphosyntactic alignment by Das (2013) in the paper (Ergativity in Khorṭha: an enigmatic phenomenon). This paper focuses on the ergativity of Khortha which is similar to Basque and languages from Tibeto-Burman family. It is also stated that Khortha does not show the syntactic environment where the object-verb agreement can be mediated as a separate system of the agreement as found in Hindi (Das, 2013, p. 1).

Example: (Hindi)   (Das, 2013, p. 8)

1. ram-ɘ doṛt-a hɛ
   Ram-3MS-NOM run-IMPRF-3MS be-PRST-3MS
   'Ram runs.'
2. sita-ne bʰat-ɘ kʰa-ya hɛ
   Sita-3FS-ERG rice-3M-ABS Eat-PERF-3M be-PRST-3MS
   'Sita has eaten rice.'

The data from intransitive and transitive sentences are analysed to show that the ergative case marker in Khortha in its subject NP does not serve as a barrier between the verb and subject agreement (Das, 2013, pp. 4-5). It is followed up with examples.

Example: Khortha

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[35] (Jha, 1985, p. 175)

Intransitive sentences   (Das,   2013,   p.   3)

3. cʰõɽa ghɔr gel-o
   boy-3MS-NOM house-LOC go-PERF-3M
   'The boy went home.'
4. cʰõɽi kohẽ gel cʰe
   girl-3FS-NOM somewhere go be-IMPRF-PRS-3FS
   'The girl has gone somewhere.'
5. həmsəb ãgənwɑ-mə beʈʰəl cʰelɪye
   we-1PL-NOM courtyard-LOC sit be-IMPRF-PST-1PL
   'We were sitting in the courtyard.'
6. ʊkəhã jɛ rəhəlcʰe
   S/he-3S-NOM where go CONT. be-IMPRF-PRST-3S
   'Where is s/he going?'

Example: Khortha

Transitive sentences   (Das, 2013, p. 4)

7. cʰõɽã uʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰə-l-ke
   boy-3MS-ERG that book read-PERF-PRST-3S
   'The boy has read that book.'
8. həmẽ ɪʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰə-l-ɪ-ye
   I-1S-ERG this book read-PERF-PRST-1S
   'I have read this book.'
9. tohẽ ʊʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰ-l-ɪ-hi
   you-2SH-ERG that book read-PERF-PRST-2S
   'You have read that book.'
10. cʰõɽĩ ɪʈa cɪʈhɪya lɪkhə-lə hot-e
    girl-3FS-ERG this letter write-perf be-FUT-3S
    'The girl must have written this letter.'

Examples show that the phonological markers '-ẽ' and ' -˜ ' are being used as

ergative markers in transitive sentences; '-ẽ' for consonant ending words like

'toh', 'you' and 'həm' 'I', and ' -˜ ' for vowel ending words like 'cʰõɽã', boy and

'cʰõɽĩ', girl in transitive sentences and also how this pattern of ergativity is

distinctly different from Hindi as this ergative pattern does not serve as a blocker

between the verb and the subject.

Examples had been given below to show the fully developed ergative system in Khortha[36].

Example:

Full ergative system in Khortha   (Das, 2013, p. 14)

11. kəbitəwã gʊdəriya khɪčɪ rəhəl cʰe-l-e
    Kavita-FS-ERG clothes-ABS wash-PRST stay-CONT be-PST-3S
    'Kavita was washing clothes.'
12. həm-ẽ kɑl okər ḍʰeʊwa gʰʊmɛ dɛ-b-e
    I-1S-ERG tomorrow his money-ABS return-IMPF give-FUT-1S
    'I will return his money tomorrow.'

The difference in ergativity and agreement between languages like that of Khortha and Hindi is discussed, i.e. there are two types of languages which show agreement in two different patterns in spite of being ergative languages[37]. It has been demonstrated with examples that there are two types of agreement features found. In the first type of languages, the agreement of the verb with the subject and the object alternates because of syntactic constraints resulting in the NP to behave as a blocker. Whereas, in the second type of language it shows no alternation in verb agreement and that the presence of a case marker does not function as a blocker. Therefore, it is argued that ergativity is an independent feature and so agreement and ergativity is not dependent on each other. The paper also tries to shed a focus to treat the instances of 'ergativity'

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[36] The attempt to show Khortha as a fully developed ergative language by comparing with other evolved full ergative languages like Basque, Dyirbal, and Hmar has been argued (Das, 2013, pp. 9-15).

[37] The grammatical pattern of ergativity in general typology has been discussed i.e. the difference between ergative-absolutive and nominative-accusative languages and also a basic discussion between full and split ergativity (Das, 2013, pp. 6-9).

and 'agreement' as separate and not as implicated as it has been going on. (Das, 2013, pp. 16-18)

The languages that are in contact with Khortha do not have any reference to ergativity. It is speculated by Das (2013) that Khortha has been influenced by the Kaithi script. "This is not known or recorded in any document whether this script was just a script or was also used in the form of a language. However, this much can be definitely speculated that 'Kaithi' writing had the reference to 'ergativity', it could be the case that Khorṭha still retains this 'ergativity' and it retains the marker in its full-scale i.e. a full-fledged ergative system as it was articulated by Dixon (1994)."

Khortha is also studied from the sociolinguistic perspective[38]; it is worked mostly in Dhanbad and regions nearby. It was found that there is a difference in verb usage among males and females (Priya & Singh, 2016, pp. 195-197). It was noticed that gender played a crucial role in society where the study was conducted. The data collected from twenty five females and males showed that there was a marked difference in the usage of verbs and also some phrases and words.

The data collected from the informants are given below to show the difference in speech based on gender:(Priya & Singh, 2016)

Sentences	Males	Females

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[38] (Priya & Singh, 2016)

Jisladke ne kaanchtodauskobulao (Call that boy who has broken the glass)	/je/ /gɪd3rta:/ /ka:nch/ /pho:d^lkau/ /se/ /gɪd3ta:/ /ke/ /bula:/	/ je/ /gɪd3rta:/ /ka:nch/ /pho:rh3u/ /sei/ /gɪd3ta:/ /ke/ /daik/
Kaanch toot gayi (The glass has been broken)	/ka:nch/ /tu:t/ /gel3i/	/ka:nchta:/ /tu:it/ /gel3i/
Bachha ye khananahikahyega (The boy will not eat this food)	/i:/ /kha:na:/ /gid3rta:/ /n3hi:/ /khaeto/	/i:/ /kha:yek/ /gid3rta:/ /n3ye/ /khaeto:/
Kal main chor se bahut maar khaya (Yesterday I was beaten brutally by the thief)	/ka:l/ /hum/ /chor/ /se/ /b3hUt/ /ma:r/ /kha:ye/	/ka:ilh/ /h3me//chor/ /se/ /b3di://ma:r/ /khaelho:/
Ye topisafed rang kihai (This cap is white in colour)	/i:/ /topi:/ /s3fed/ /hel3i	/i:/ /topi:/ /sa:da:/ /h3l3i

Table 11: Response Sheet of Males and Females marking Gender Differences

Words	Males	Females
Masoom(Innocent)	/ma:su:m/	/ch3ua:/
Dulha (groom)	/dUlha:/	/bo:r/
Jaladiya (have got burnt)	/j3laI/ /del3i/	/j3ra:I / /del3i/
Sabji "(cooked vegetables)	/s3bji/	/ti:m3n/

Table 12: Response Sheet of Males and Females marking Gender Differences

From the above data, it can be observed that the responses obtained from the female respondents were close to Khortha. This is because women being less exposed to the outer world make use of the words and expressions which are pure in form. Thus, their responses were closer to the original form of Khortha (Priya & Singh, 2016, p. 196). Whereas, the influence of Hindi can be seen in case of the male respondents; they used words that are influenced from Hindi: /səbji:/ for cooked vegetables as compared to /ti:mən/ used by female respondents. The reasons that are stated are related to education, migration, convergence and contact (p. 195); the most probable reason is stated that it is the distinction in the language of female respondents. This could have been because of the lack of exposure and very little or no interaction with the people of other speech communities (Priya & Singh, 2016, p. 196).

In the following chapter, the noun morphology of Khortha (the Malda variety) will be taken up (my own fieldwork). Also, a comparative study between the Malda variety of Khortha and the Jharkhand variety of Khortha will be explored

to check on the differences. In addition to that, special attention will be given to examining the influence of Bangla on the Malda variety of Khortha.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data

1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the methodology for the fieldwork that I conducted in the village named *Bhajjana* and to study the noun morphology of Khortha (Malda variety). The data is compared with reference to Bangla which is the dominant language in the region. The variety of Khortha, i.e. the Malda variety that is worked upon here varies from the Jharkhand variety. The variation is noted mainly on the basis of grammatical aspects which will be explored in this chapter. The difference between the two varieties can be derived as an effect of language contact between the neighbouring languages especially Bangla in case of Malda variety.

The data was collected through questionnaire elicitation method in a village named Bhajjana in Harischandrapur, Malda. This variety will be referred to as the Malda variety when discussed in comparison to the Jharkhand variety of Khortha.

At the onset, I have discussed the issues related to the field and the methodology used for the fieldwork of the Malda variety of Khortha.

2 Field Issues

While I started working on Khortha I observed that there is no honorific marker in Khortha. As a native speaker of Bangla which has three tiers of honorificity, it seemed unusual for me and I enquired repetitively at the beginning of the fieldwork. We know that it is essential to take an objective view and analyze the language according to its own occurrence coherently instead of imposing on it.

3   Methodology

Data collection can be done in two methods[39].

    i.   direct

    ii.   indirect

Primary data was collected through fieldwork followed up with library work. Before the collection of data, the most important work is to know the goals of linguistic field research. Here, the purpose of the research was to work on the noun morphology in Khortha with a special focus on the Malda variety.

Fieldwork was conducted in a village named Bhajjana in Harischandrapur, Malda.
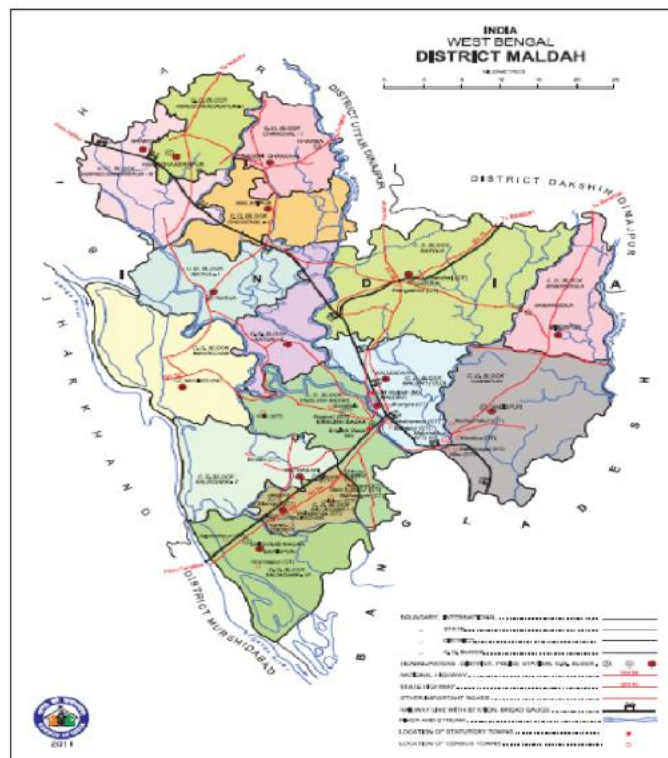
Image 1: Malda District Map[40]

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[39] (Dan, 2016)

3.1 Questionnaire

The structure of a questionnaire is considered as very important. Along with the basic details of the informant, different types of data need to be collected. The Swadesh list (1971) is considered as an important list in field linguistics. It is the crux of a basic questionnaire. Words of different semantic groups help in deriving the translations of the target language. Also, certain Indian words are necessary for the Indian context. Then, it is object words in possible basic morphological constructions. But again, simple sentences and later complex sentences were asked for elicitation. The questionnaire was based on scheduled elicitation, i.e. translational. Non-translational elicitation could not be done because of time constraints. In the case of scheduled elicitation, it is important to note that the questionnaire was prepared to analyse the data as a list of questions as prescribed.

There are two types of fieldwork; blind and easy. "Blind fieldwork involves working with an informant who does not share a common language. Easy fieldwork involves the less challenging task of dealing with an informant who understands a language spoken by the members of the class." (Vaux & Cooper, 2005, p. 10). The factor which was important here is that the community on which the linguistic fieldwork was to be done was a bilingual[41] community, i.e. easy fieldwork. So, a biscriptal format is useful for both the linguist and the informant.

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[40] retrieved from http://malda.gov.in/maps.htm on 24th March 2018
[41]Bilingualism as a common human condition makes it possible for an individual to function, at some level, in more than one language. The key to this very broad and inclusive definition of bilingualism is 'more than one'. Retrieved from https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/multilingualism on 30th December 2018.

1. The linguistic composition of the speech community: Khortha

2. The language of the investigator: Bangla

The observation was made by eliciting data with the help of word list[42] and basic sentences list[43] among 17 families.

3.2 Choosing Informants

Though it is a general practice to choose informants from both younger and older generations, this could not be followed in case of Khortha.

The main reasons were:

i.   The younger generation has moved to urban areas and cities for a better scope of life as in terms of education, earning and so on.

ii.   Khortha speakers believe there is no use in speaking Khortha as they feel they are in a disadvantageous position.

iii. The younger generation who are still in the village prefer to speak Bangla over Khortha and has almost forgotten the language without much use.

iv.   The use of Khortha is not even used in the home domain, which leads to the younger generation of not knowing it or even if they can understand it they can hardly converse.

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[42] (Swadesh, 1971)
[43] The questionnaire was based on Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 5, and Appendix 10 of A Manual of Linguistic Field Work and Structures of Indian Languages (Abbi, 2001).

4   Data Description and Analysis

4.1   Verbal Repertoire

The Khortha speakers in Malda had no difference in their verbal repertoire in terms of the usage of phonemes, morphemes, or lexical items, unlike the Jharkhand variety. It was noted that there was a distinct difference in the usage of speech among the male and female speakers of Khortha in the Jharkhand variety (Priya & Singh, 2016). There was no such difference seen for the male and female speakers in Harischandrapur region i.e. the Malda variety in the usage of verbs. There was hardly any difference in the case of lexical entries that were found in variants of male and female speech. The speakers of Malda variety were multilingual and were quite fluent in Bangla unlike the female speakers of Khortha in Jharkhand who were not exposed to different societies as compared to their male counterparts. This might have been the reason for such non-distinctive speech.

4.2   Noun Morphology

4.2.1   Agreement

4.2.1.1   Gender
"Gender in Indo Aryan languages is both a syntactic and a morphological category." (Abbi, 2001, p. 26). Khortha does not exhibit any grammatical gender, be it the Jharkhand variety or the Malda variety. "Gender in eastern Indo-Aryan languages has almost disappeared." (Abbi, 2001, p. 26)

Example: Khortha data

(1) ram-ɔ ek-ʈa am-ɔ kha-reh-l-e
    ram-NOM one-CLF mango-ACC eat-stay-PRS-3P

'Ram is eating a mango.'
(2) sita-ɔ ek-ʈa pakka am-ɔ kha-reh-l-e
    sita-NOM one-CLF ripe.ADJ mango-ACC eat-stay-PRS-3P
    'Sita is eating a ripe mango.'

It can be seen from the above examples (1) and (2) that despite the subjects being of different genders, it has no reflection in the gender agreement. In the Khortha form, 'kha-reh-l-e' 'e' is the person marker. The inflection in the verb for both 'ram' and 'sita', i.e. proper nouns denoting male and female names respectively show no such difference. Both of the subjects have the same markers and exhibit the same despite the gender difference, therefore showing the absence of noun-verb gender agreement.

Example: Bangla data

(3) ram-ɔ æk-ʈa am-ɔ kha-cch-e
    ram-NOM one-CLF mango-ACC eat-PRS-3P
'Ram is eating a mango.'
(4) ʃita-ɔ æk-ʈapaka am-ɔ kha-cch-e
    sita-NOM one-CLF ripe mango-ACC eat-PRS-3P
'Sita is eating a ripe mango.'

It can be seen that both the sentences (3) and (4) use the form 'kha-cch-e'. There is no marker to distinguish the difference. This is similar to Khortha where there is no reflection of gender as Bangla too does not have grammatical gender.

4.2.1.2 Number
The agreement in number is implicational with respect to gender; therefore languages having no gender agreement may or may not have number

agreement[44]. Khortha does not show number agreement. Consider the examples below.

Example: Khortha data

(5) ram-ɔ am-ɔ kaṭ-ṭa
    ram-NOM mango-ACC cut-PST
    'Ram cut the mango.'
(6) bacca-sab cakku deke am-ɔ kaṭ-ṭa
    child-NOM.PL knife with mango-ACC cut-PST
    'The children cut the mango with a knife.'

In the above examples, (5) has a subject 'ram' which is in the singular number and (6) has a subject 'bacca-sab' which denotes the plural form. It can be seen in both the examples that the verb used is 'kaṭ-ṭa'; therefore denoting the absence of number agreement. Similarly, like Khortha the number agreement is also missing in Bangla. It can be seen in the following examples.

Example: Bangla data

(7) ram-ɔ am-ṭa kaṭ-lo
    ram-NOM mango-CLF cut-PST
    'Ram cut the mango.'
(8) bacca-gulo churi dije am-ṭa kaṭ-lo
    child-NOM.PL knife with mango-CLF cut-PST
    'The children cut the mango with a knife.'

The grammatical pattern is the same in case of Bangla, there is only one form for 'kaṭ-lo' , which is available for both the singular subject 'ram' and the plural subject 'bacca-gulo', i.e. the examples (7) and (8) respectively. Therefore, this marked similarity shows that Khortha like another Eastern Indo-Aryan language has neither gender nor number agreement in nominal inflections.

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[44] Universal 32: 'Whenever the verb agrees with a nominal subject or nominal object in gender, it also agrees in number.' (Greenberg, 1963)

4.2.2   Classifiers

The system of classifiers can be found around the subcontinent among quite a number of languages from different families like Boro, Burmese, Kokborok, Malto, Assamese, Bangla, Andamanese and a few Munda languages (Abbi, 2001, p. 122). It is interesting to state that Khortha uses two different types of classifier construction. The Jharkhand variety of Khortha uses classifiers like '-ţho', '-go' which is close to the Hindi classifier '-ţho'; whereas, the Malda variety of Khortha uses classifiers that seems to have adopted its' classifiers and their usage like Bangla[45]. The following examples from Khortha and Bangla will help us in understanding the similarity.

Khortha	Bangla
(9) du-ţa boi cori h-o ge-lo two-CLF book steal AUX-PST go-PST 'Two books were stolen.'	(10) du-ţo boi curi ho-e ge-lo two-CLF book steal AUX-PST go-PST 'Two books were stolen.'
(11) ek-ţa chauri one-CLF girl One girl	(12) ek-ţa meje one-CLF girl One girl
(13) ek-ţa chaura one-CLF boy 'One boy'	(14) ek-ţa chele one-CLF boy 'One boy'
(15) bacca-sab cakku deke am-ǝkaţ-ţa child-NOM.PL knife with mango-ACC cut-PST 'The children cut the mango with a	(16) bacca-gulo churi dije am-ţa kaţ-lo child-NOM.PL knife with mango-CLF cut-PST 'The children cut the mango with a

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[45]Number + Classifier + Noun e.g. Bangla tin ţaboi 'three + cl + books' 'three books'. (Abbi, 2001, p. 122)

Khortha	Bangla
knife.'	knife.'

Table 13: Comparison between Khortha and Bangla classifiers

It can be said that Khortha has probably undergone a similar change and has developed the classifier as both have shared a historical origin[46]. I argue that the plural classifiers seem to have been borrowed from Bangla and they have undergone morphophonological change as a result of language contact[47]. Therefore, it can be stated that:

Bangla >   Khortha (Malda)

gulo   >   gala

sɔb   >   sab

4.2.3   Numerals

Around the world, languages retain numerals which are found to be following different types of number systems, i.e. the base of tens, fives, and others like fours and sixes. Numerals in the South Asian languages follow the traditional decimal system. The numerals (Cardinals) in Khortha stated by Jha (1985) are listed below.

I.   Cardinal Numbers

Numerals	transliteration[48]	Gloss

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[46] see (Chatterji, 1985)

[47]Phonologically 'ɔ' is not present in Khortha and it has undergone a sound change because of the phonological constraints.

[48] there has been no use of IPA by Jha (paścim baṅgāl mẽ maithilī kī vibhāṣā khuṭṭā kā bhāsāśāstrīya adhyayan, 1985)

Numerals	transliteration[48]	Gloss
1	eka	One
2	dū	Two
3	tīna	Three
4	cāra	Four
5	pāňca	Five
6	cho	Six
7	sāta	Seven
8	āṭha	Eight
9	ňā	Nine
10	dasa	Ten
11	egārha	Eleven
12	bārha	Twelve
13	terha	Thirteen
14	caudha	Fourteen
15	Ppandraha	Fifteen
16	solaha	Sixteen

Numerals	transliteration[48]	Gloss
17	satraha	Seventeen
18	aṭhṭhāraha	Eighteen
19	unais	Nineteen
20	kuri/ bīs	Twenty

Table 14: Cardinal Numbers in Khortha (Jha, 1985)

But the data collected in the fieldwork didn't represent exactly these numerals.

The numerals especially the tens i.e. numerals from ten (10) to nineteen (19) did

not match. The data from the fieldwork is given below.

II.   Cardinal numbers of Khortha collected in fieldwork

Numerals	IPA	Gloss
1	ek	One
2	du	Two
3	tin	Three
4	car	Four
5	pãc	Five
6	chau	Six
7	sat	Seven

Numerals	IPA	Gloss
8	aʈ	Eight
9	nau	Nine
10	das	Ten
11	eggaro	Eleven
12	barau	Twelve
13	tero	Thirteen
14	caudho	Fourteen
15	panrau	Fifteen
16	solau	Sixteen
17	sottero	Seventeen
18	aʈʈharo	Eighteen
19	unnis	Nineteen
20	bis	Twenty

Table 15: Cardinal numbers of Khortha collected in fieldwork

The main differences that can be seen in the case of cardinals in the Khortha

data[49] (Jha, 1985) collected then and now have differences in terms of the

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[49] Khortha data in Bengal region collected by Jha in 1985

number six, nine and the few of the numerals from the tens, i.e. ten to nineteen.

It can be seen that the present endings of *chau* 'six', *nau* 'nine', *barau* 'twelve',

panrau 'fifteen', *solau* 'sixteen' contain diphthongs and does not retain the 'ha'

endings anymore like it used to be. Sound change, in general, denotes that

diphthongs like 'au' changes to monophthongs 'o'. This lenition can be seen

already present in numerals like *eggaro* 'eleven', *tero* 'thirteen', *caudho*

'fourteen', *sottero* 'seventeen', and *aṭṭharo* 'eighteen'. Another feature that is

noted in Khortha is the use of gemination in certain numerals like that of eleven,

and seventeen. The ordinals could not be collected as the informants[50] have

forgotten and had shifted in using Bangla ordinal terms.

4.2.4   Pronominals

Khortha distinguishes pronominals across the first person, second person and

third person. The table for Khortha pronominals is given below:

PRONOMINALS		1ST PERSON	2ND PERSON	3RD PERSON
SINGULAR		hamma	tãi	u
PLURAL		hamma-sab	tãi-sab	u-sab

Table 16: Pronominals in Khortha

Khortha has an interesting feature in its pronominal system. However, unlike the

other eastern Indo Aryan languages Khortha does not mark honorificity in the

second and third persons. The following examples show formal and informal

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[50] the informants are multilingual and educated and the reason they stated was that Bengali ordinals are used in schools and in workplaces for decades and that is how they have been using such Bengali ordinals since childhood.

situations and with that, it can be understandable that Khortha does not any

have honorific markers or pronouns.

Example: Khortha

(17) tãi kesan hak-e?
     2.SG how AUX-PRS?
    'How are you?'
(18) tãi kakhni ghar ɟabi?
     2.SG whenhomego.PRS?
    'When are you going home?'
(19) (daja karike) ca ʈa pi
     (please do-PRS) tea etc drink
    'Please have some tea, etc.'

The phrase 'daja karike' was a literal translation from Bangla which was the

source language of the elicitation [51].The reason behind the absence of

honorificity may be speculated as a non-Indo-Aryan influence. Areal contact with

Santhali, a North Munda language spoken in different districts of West Bengal

may have been the reason which paved the way for Khortha to lose its

honorifics.

4.2.5   Agreement

4.2.5.1   Adjectives
South Asian languages show agreement with adjectives like Punjabi. Modifiers

like 'good' are represented as 'cəŋgiyã kuɽiyã' 'good girls' and 'cəŋge muɳɖe'

'good boys' (Abbi, 2001, p. 27) in Punjabi, thus exhibiting adjective agreement.

But such feature is absent in Khortha; i.e. 'sundar ceŋra-ʈa' 'beautiful boy'

'sundar ceŋri-ʈa' 'beautiful girl'.

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[51] The informant delivered this unnatural sentence when the investigator (native Bengali speaker) repeated the question. This was an output of misunderstanding as the informant told that it is a forceful expression and the informant felt pressurised to use such words because people who are non-Khortha speakers, especially the Bengali speakers think it is rude to not use honorifics.

4.2.5.2   Possessives

Typologically, it is found that South Asian languages yield possessives, what makes it intriguing is that in many of these inflecting languages the case markers for the genitive morpheme is used as possessives (Abbi, 2001, p. 130). Khortha uses two types of markers for possessives; a genitive inflection '–*r*' is used only in case of personal pronouns and the other one is a bound morpheme '–*ke*' that is used as possessives for all except singular personal pronouns in Khortha. The data below for the personal pronouns will show this peculiar feature exhibited in Khortha.

POSSESSIVES		1ST PERSON	2ND PERSON	3RD PERSON
SINGULAR		hammar	tor	okar
PLURAL		hammar sab ke	tor sab ke	o sab ke

Table 17: Possessives in Khortha

Khortha exhibits this interesting mix of two genitive markers in case of plural possessives. The possessive marker '-*r*' is restricted in the personal pronoun domain in Khortha. This '-*r*' marker is not used anywhere as possessives in Khortha except personal pronouns. The '-*ke*' marker also exhibits possessives in Khortha and 'sab' is a plural morpheme. This '-*ke*' marker is used as a genitive case marker and also as few other markers (accusative and dative in most cases) in Khortha. In the case of plural pronouns and their possessives, Khortha uses both '-r' and '-ke' markers except in case of third person plural. This feature in Khortha marks a different path in possessives.

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4.2.5.3 Comparison

In case of Indo-Aryan languages, earlier the adjectives had comparative and superlative inflections which are no longer found (except as isolated lexicalized forms) (Masica, The Indo-Aryan Languages, 1991, p. 251). The comparative and superlative degrees are denoted by a morpheme with the adjectives. The comparatives are demonstrated with examples below.

Example: Khortha data

(20) naddi ke pani pokhar ke pani se sappha hɛ

river GEN water pond GEN water than clean AUX-PRS

'River water is cleaner than lake water.'

(21) ganga pani sab se sappha hɛ

Ganges water all than clean AUX-PRS

'The Ganges water is the cleanest.'

Thus it can be seen that the examples (20) and (21) use the comparative and superlative forms respectively. It can be derived from example (20) that the noun is followed by the postposition '-se' which is used as a marker for comparative degree and then it is followed by the modifier i.e. the adjective. In example (21) the comparative marker '-se' is preceded by a classifier 'sab' to denote a higher degree of comparison, i.e. the superlative. So, the sentence in example (21) shows the pattern where the noun is followed by the classifier and the comparative marker and finally the adjective which is the modifier.

Thus,

   a. Noun + postposition + modifier = Comparative

        pani + se + sappha

   b. Noun + Classifier + postposition + modifier = Superlative

pani + sab + se + sappha

4.2.6 Case

4.2.6.1 Nominative

"The term **nominative** is generally used for the S (single argument of intransitive clause) and A (most agent-like argument of the transitive clause), and in most languages, this is also the (zero-coded) citation form of the noun" (Haspelmath, 2006, p. 6). In South Asian languages, the subject behaves in two patterns, either by direct form, i.e. nominative or by oblique form, i.e. non-nominative subjects. Some South Asian languages like Hindi nouns may inflect for both number and form (Spencer, 2005).

HINDI	Singular	Plural
Direct	ləɽka	ləɽke
Oblique	ləɽke	ləɽkõ

Table 18: Hindi inflections in subject position

Example: Hindi data   (Abbi, 2001, p. 127)

(22) ləɽka gəya
     'the boy went'
(23) ləɽke-ko accha ləga
     'the boy-Dat. felt good'

In Hindi, *ləɽka-ko is ungrammatical. In case of non-nominative subjects, Hindi nouns are assigned dative case in the oblique form as shown in example (23), ləɽka changes to ləɽke before taking up –ko affix. But some Indo-Aryan languages like Bangla do not change into oblique form before taking a case marker in general as explained in the example (25) below.

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Example: Bangla data

(24) chele-ʈage-l-o
    boy-CLF go-PST-3SG
   'The boy went.'
(25) chele-ʈa-r bhalo lag-l-o
    boy-CLF-DAT good feel-PST-3SG
   'The boy felt good.'
Khortha like Bangla does not take up any marker to change into oblique form to

exhibit case. It has no marker in Nominative case.

Example: Khortha data

(26) choura-ʈa ekʈa kela kha-le-l-ko
    boy-CLF one banana eat-take-PST-3P
   'The boy ate a banana.'
(27) ram-ke laɟ lagi ge-l-e
    ram-DAT shy feel go-PST-3P
   'Ram felt shy.'

Therefore, nouns and pronouns in Khortha remain in its direct form and takes

case marking. Though, Abbi (2001) states that this feature where nouns and

pronouns change into the oblique form before taking a case marker is what

distinguishes Indo-Aryan family from others. It can be seen both Bangla and

Khortha doesn't follow this pattern. S.K. Chatterji (1985) stated that the usage of

oblique has become rare with time compared to earlier forms. He attested that

such use has become gradually restrictive in nature for Bangla and other eastern

languages (and maybe in some cases dialects). This oblique form in Bangla has

become identical with the locative but seems to be recognised in case of usage

of other markers. Thus, the oblique form in Khortha is now obsolete as it has

become identical with all its' case markers.

4.2.6.2 Accusative

South Asian languages though have accusative case relations; in general, they carry no inflection in the accusative case. But, in some sentences, it is seen that Hindi uses –ko affix to show accusative case relations. Similarly Bangla uses –ke affix for accusative case relations. The presence of such an accusative case marker is based on the information provided by the subject and this case marking is function based i.e. it is based on the semanticity of the sentence rather than the morphological concept of structural case system[52]. (Butt & King, 2003, p. 77) Thus, the accusative case is represented through the –ko/-ke affix to put emphasis on the object; i.e. if it is not specific ('any') there is no –ko/-ke marked noun phrase, but if it is about a 'particular' object then this is ensured by the –ko/-ke marked noun phrase.

ko (↑CASE) = ACC   (Butt & King, 2003, p. 77)

  (OBJ ↑)

  (↑sem – str SPECIFICITY) = +

The following examples are given from Hindi followed up with data from Bangla.

Example: Hindi data

(28) bacce-ne apne behən-ko nei mar-a
       child.OBL-ERG his sister-ACC.SG NEG hit-PST
     'The child did not hit his sister.'
(29) ghore-ko cara de-do
       horse.OBL-DAT food-ACC.SG give-PRS
     'Give the horse the feed.'

---

[52] Ram-ne ɟirafdekʰ-i
Ram-ERG giraffe.F.NOM see-PERF.F.SG
'Ram saw a/some giraffe.'

Ram-ne ɟiraf-kodekʰa-a
Ram-ERG giraffe.F-ACC see-PERF.M.SG
'Ram saw the (particular) giraffe.'

Hindi shows split ergativity (-ne) and take up '-ko' suffix as seen in example (28) and there is the presence of no marker in example (29). Bangla shows a similar pattern like Hindi by taking up '-ke' suffix in example (30) and having no accusative marker in the following sentence i.e. example (31).

Example: Bangla data

(30) bacca-ţa niɟer bon-ke mar-e-ni
       child-CLF his sister-ACC hit-PST-NEG
       'The child did not hit his sister.'
(31) ghora-ke khabar-ţa da-o
       horse-DAT food.ACC-CLF give-PRS-2P
       'Give the horse the feed.'

Khortha is different from both the languages as Khortha is one of those exceptions and retains its accusative markers and exhibits them with the accusative marker '–ke' irrespective of specificity. Examples from Khortha are given below i.e. examples (32) and (33).

Example: Khortha data

(32) bacca-ţa appan bahin-ke nai mar-k-o
       child-CLF his sister-ACC NEG hit-PST-3P
       'The child did not hit his sister.'
(33) ghora-ke khabe-ke de
       horse-DAT food-ACC give-PRS
       'Give the horse the feed.'

With the exception of the nominative and accusative case, it is usually seen that the other cases mark indirectly in the sentences. This indirect case marking has been functional and is found in quite a few South Asian languages.

4.2.6.3   Instrumental

The presence of Instrumental case does exist in South Asian languages, but its markers are many in number and like other categories of case, instrumental too

show syncretism. The problem is that the combination of the merge of the instrumental case with other cases is different and varies from language to language[53]. "It is generally in the Ag/Instr/Soc/Abl area that categories may be variously collapsed: e.g., Hindi combines Instrumental, Sociative, and Ablative (One) while differentiating Agentive (One)." (Masica, The Indo-Aryan Languages, 1991, p. 238). In some languages, postpositions may or may not be used along with the instrumental suffix. For example, Hindi uses '-se' suffix, Bangla uses '-e' affix in rare cases but mostly uses postpositions. Khortha behaves like Hindi instrumental suffix and uses '-se' marker. Examples from Hindi, Bangla and Khortha are given below.

Example: Hindi data

(34) hanuman-ne apne pucch-se lənka-ko ɟəl-aj-a
     Hanuman-ERG his tail-INS Lanka-ACC burn-PST-3P
     'Hanuman burnt Lanka with his tail.'

Example: Bangla data
(35) hɔnuman niɟer læɟ dije lɔnka ɟala-l-o
     hanuman his tail with lanka-ACC burn-PST-3P
     'Hanuman burnt Lanka with his tail.'

Example: Khortha data
(36) hanuman pucchi-se lanka ɟaral-k-e
     hanuman tail-INS lanka burn-PST-3P
     'Hanuman burnt Lanka with his tail.'

4.2.6.4 Ablative
It is natural for inflecting languages to have case syncretism. South Asian languages have a myriad range of inflections and syncretism in cases happens to be one of them. Khortha like other South Asian languages also displays case syncretism. Case syncretism, thus another typological feature is present in

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[53] Refer (Masica, The Indo-Aryan Languages, 1991, pp. 231-248)

Khortha and quite a number of South Asian languages. Hindi too shows instrumental-ablative syncretism quite prominently like Khortha. But, in this scenario, Khortha does not seem to have many similarities with reference to Bangla. Bangla, on the other hand, expresses ablative by using postpositions like 'theke' 'from'. Examples from all these three languages are stated here.

Example: Hindi data

(37) dudh-se dahi ban-ta hɛ
    milk-ABL curd make-COND AUX-PRS
    'Curd is made from milk.'
(38) pero-se patte pat ɟhar mɛ gir-te hɛ
    tree-ABL leaves.OBL autumn at fall-COND AUX-PRS
    'The leaves fall from trees in autumn.'

Example: Bangla data

(39) dudh theke doi hɔi
    milk from curd AUX-COND
    'The curd is made from milk.'
(40) ʃɔrot-er ʃomɔy gach theke pata ɟhare
    autumn-LOC time tree from leaves fall-COND
    'The leaves fall from trees in autumn.'

Example: Khortha data

(41) dudh-se dahi hu-a
    milk-ABL curd AUX-COND
    'The curd is made from milk.'
(42) ʃit-ke samaj mɛ gach-se patta ɟhari ɟaha
    cold-LOC time at tree-ABL leaves fall go-COND
    'The leaves fall from trees in autumn.'

4.2.6.5 Locative

South Asian languages though are typologically similar, but the concept of location varies in different Indian communities[54]. Khortha shows case syncretism in a wider range, the locative case is no different. The examples for (38), (40),

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[54] Refer (Abbi, 2001, p. 130) for the multiple concepts of location

and (42) have been used in Ablative. Hindi does not use any locative marker as can be seen in example (38). Bangla and Khortha use locative marker –er and –ke respectively.

4.2.6.6 Dative

In some of the South Asian languages, it is found that the marker used for dative is similar in nature. Especially the Eastern Indo Aryan languages and also in Sindhi[55] it is found that the dative suffix is almost the same, i.e. it can be said as a variation of '-ke', Sindhi uses '-khe', Oriya '-ku' and so on.

Example: Hindi data

(43) ram-ne apne ma-ko kal khat lik-kha tha
     ram-ERG his mother-DAT yesterday letter write-PST AUX.PST
     'Ram wrote a letter to his mother yesterday.'
(44) raban-ne ram-ke sang larai ki-ja tha
     Ravan-ERG Ram.DAT with fight do-PST AUX.PST
     'Ravan fought with Ram.'

Examples (43) and (44) are from Hindi which shows that dative suffix can be present with or without postpositions. The '-ko' marker in (43) has been used without any other postposition; whereas example (44) shows the use of postposition along with the dative suffix. The following data is of Bangla and it has '-ke' as its dative suffix in example (45) but in the following example i.e. (46) it can be seen that a genitive marker '-er' is attached to the post position 'ʃɔnge' and it behaves as a dative and serves the purpose. Whereas, Khortha does not use any other affix except '-ke' for its dative marker.

Examples from Bangla and Khortha are stated below.

Example: Bangla data

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[55]Refer (Chatterji, 1985, pp. 760-762)

(45) ram gotokal niɟer ma-ke ciʈhi likhe-ch-e
   ram yesterday his mother-DAT letter write-PST-3P
   'Ram wrote a letter to his mother yesterday.'
(46) raban ram-er ʃɔnge larai kɔr-l-o
     ravan.NOM ram-DAT with fight do-PST-3P
     'Ravan fought with Ram.'

Example: Khortha data

(47) ram kalkhin appan ma-ke ciʈʈhi likk-o
     ram yesterday his mother-DAT letter write-PST.3P
     'Ram wrote a letter to his mother yesterday.'
(48) raban ram –ke sange larai kar-k-o
     ravan.NOM ram-DAT with fight do-PST-3P
     'Ravan fought with Ram.'

4.2.6.7   Genitive

The function of genitive is used to determine the relationship between two

nouns (or pronouns) in general. South Asian languages exhibit interesting fact

regarding genitives is that in many of the genitive morphemes exhibit agreement

for other features like gender and number of the head (Abbi, 2001, p. 130).

Examples from such a language are given below to demonstrate the use of

agreement features with the head, i.e. in most cases noun based on the function

of the genitive morpheme.

Example: Hindi data

(49) ram-ki behən-ki ʃaadi kal hɛ
     Ram-GEN.AGR sister-GEN.AGR wedding AUX-PRS tomorrow
     'Ram's sister wedding is tomorrow.'
(50) ram-ki ʈopi nil-i he
     Ram-GEN.AGR cap blue-AGR AUX-PRS
     'Ram's cap is blue.'
(51) paccis rupaje-ki cini kharid-o
     twenty five rupee-GEN.AGR sugar buy-FUT.IMP
     'Buy twenty five rupees sugar.'

All of the above examples exhibit this agreement. But if the noun was of masculine gender, for example, 'ram ka gʰər' (Abbi, 2001, p. 130), here instead of '-*ki*' the genitive morpheme '-*ka*' is used. But, especially in eastern Indo Aryan languages, the genitive morpheme is only used as possessive markers like Bangla. The situation in Khortha shows that it is similar in case of the use of genitive marker, i.e. it is used for possessives, but the genitive case marker is '-*ke*' in general which is another example of case syncretism. Khortha does have another genitive marker, the '-*r*' morpheme. The only use of the '-*r*' morpheme is found in case of personal pronouns. This has already been discussed earlier in Pronominals. Examples from both Bangla and Khortha are given here to show the usage of a genitive morpheme.

Example: Bangla data

(52) kal ram-er bon-er bije
        tomorrow ram-GEN sister-GEN wedding
      'Ram's sister wedding is tomorrow.'
(53) ram-er ʈupi-ʈa nil rɔŋ-er
        ram-GEN cap-CLF blue color-GEN
      'Ram's cap is blue.'
(54) põciʃ ʈaka-r cini kin-o
        twenty five rupee-GEN sugar buy-FUT.IMP
      'Buy twenty five rupees' sugar.'

Example: Khortha data
(55) kalkhin ram-ke bahin-ke biha hau
        tomorrow ram-GEN sister-GEN wedding AUX-PRS
      'Ram's sister wedding is tomorrow.'
(56) ram-ke ʈopi nil hau
        ram-GEN cap blue AUX-PRS
      'Ram's cap is blue.'
(57) paccis ʈaka-ke cini kini-an
        twenty five rupee-GEN sugar buy-FUT.IMP
      'Buy twenty five rupees' sugar.'

Khortha has used either the single marker '-*ke*' for most cases or '-*se*' case marker in two types of case marking system. Khortha has also used a few post positions to serve the purpose which has been discussed in details throughout this section.

CASE	SUFFIX	POSTPOSITION
NOMINATIVE	∅	∅
ACCUSATIVE	ke	∅
INSTRUMENTAL	se	∅
DATIVE	ke	sange
ABLATIVE	se	∅
GENITIVE	ke; r	∅
LOCATIVE	ke	∅

Table 19: Khortha Declension

4.2.7   Case structure

Khortha uses '-*ke*' marker in general as a result of case syncretism; this happened as because of undergoing through several morphological changes like other South Asian languages. It can be seen that personal pronouns allow both '-*r*' and '-*ke*' markers in the case structure with an exception in case of third person plural. The '-*r*' marker denotes the personal pronoun possessive for both first person and second person irrespective of the number as seen in 'hammar', and 'tor', i.e. the '-*r*' marker functions as a genitive morpheme. The differentiation process in the first person and second person possessives is done by adding the classifier 'sab' to denote plurality. But, after adding the 'sab' to

denote plurality the genitive morpheme '-*r*' triggers vocabulary insertion and adds '-*ke*' marker to denote it as a genitive. Here, in this case, it seems that it acts like a genitive though the function which is really appropriate is of the functioning of dative; whereas, in the case of the third person the accusative instead of the genitive acts like a dative. This might be explained by discussing the layers of case structures in morphology.

In case of singular,

hamma + GEN = hammar

i.e., hamma + SG >hamma+ ∅   (no overt SG marker)

hamma + SG + GEN>hammar + ∅   (genitive do not attach to ∅)

In case of plural,

hamma + PL+ GEN

i.e., hamma + PL >hamma sab   (PL marker 'sab' is a free morpheme)

hamma + PL+ GEN = hamma + r + sab

Now, this word 'hammar sab' though have both morphemes of plural and genitive, it is ungrammatical. Therefore,

hamma + PL + GEN + ACCU = hamma + r + sab + ke

i.e. *hammar sab + ke

Thus, it can be seen that the case follows through two layers, one where the structure assigns the '-r' marker for genitive and adds 'sab' as a plural

morpheme and the inner layer case is formed, then the other one i.e. outer layer case adds the '-ke' marker to give this a form and meaning. As, '-r' is limited to the use of personal pronouns it cannot attach to 'sab' to form the outer layer case structure. This same thing happens with the second person pronoun.

tãi + r = tor   tor + sab = *tor sab   *tor sab + ke = tor sab ke

But, in the case of third person pronoun, this does not happen. The third person pronoun behaves in a little different way.

Therefore, u + SG + GEN = okar and, u + PL + GEN = u sab ke i.e. u + GEN = okar

Hypothetically speaking, the reason for this might have happened as a result of the addition of both '-ke' and '-r' marker.

okar + sab = *okar sab   *okar sab + ke = u sab ke

i.e., u + GEN > okar + PL > *okar sab > [*okar sab] + -ke> [*okar sab + deletion] + ke> [u sab] + ke> u sab ke

Here, it can be seen that unlike the other two personal pronouns, the form does not become *okar sab ke to denote the form and meaning. Therefore, this finding shows that Khortha undergoes two layers of case structure in case of personal pronouns.

4.2.8   Dative Subject Construction

Non-nominative subject constructions, i.e. dative subject constructions are typically found in South Asian languages. Though, as the name suggests the languages take up the dative case in general, other case markings like

instrumental and genitive are also found. The constructions are non-agentive in nature and the subjects are received as 'involuntary', 'experiencer', 'benefactor', or 'recipient' (Abbi, 2001, p. 193).

Khortha actually takes up genitive marking which is similar to Bangla non-nominative subject constructions. Examples from both languages are given below.

Example: Khortha data

(58) ahmed-ke sãhas hɛ
      Ahmed-GEN courage AUX-PRS
    'Ahmed has courage.'
(59) ghar-ke du-ʈa darwaɟɟa hɛ
      house-GEN two-CLF door AUX-PRS
    'The house has two doors.'
(60) hammar laɟ laga
      1SG shy feel-PRS
    'I feel shy.'

Example: Bangla data
(61) ahmed-er ʃahos ache
      Ahmed-GEN courage AUX-PRS
    'Ahmed has courage.'
(62) ghar-er du-ʈo dɔrɟa ache
      house-GEN two-CLF door AUX-PRS
    'The house has two doors.'
(63) amar lɔɟɟa lagche
      1SG shy feel-PRS
    'I feel shy.'

Thus, it can be seen that Khortha takes up the genitive markers '-r' and '-ke' for non-nominative subjects. This feature is similar to Bangla as Bangla also takes up the genitive marker '-er' in case of non-nominative subject constructions.

4.2.9   Ergativity

Languages are usually divided typologically based on the morphosyntactic alignment. Some South Asian languages show nominative-accusative alignment

and some of the other South Asian languages show ergative-accusative alignment. But some South Asian languages exhibit both alignment forms which are called split ergativity and one of the primary examples of this is Hindi. Bangla doesn't show ergativity and Khortha doesn't exhibit ergative features in any form. But, it is claimed by Das (2013) that Khortha[56]does show ergativity. Examples are given below:

Example: Khortha (Jharkhand variety)

Intransitive sentences   (Das, 2013, p. 3)

(64) cʰõɽa ghɔr gel-o
      boy-3MS-NOM house-LOC go-PERF-3M
      'The boy went home.'
(65) cʰõɽi kohẽ gel cʰe
      girl-3FS-Nom somewhere go be-IMPRF-PRST-3FS
      'The girl has gone somewhere.'
(66) həmsəb ẽgənwɑ-mə beʈʰəl cʰelɪye
      we-1Pl-NOM courtyard-LOC sit be-IMPRF-PST-1Pl
      'We were sitting in the courtyard.'
(67) ʊ kəhɑ̃ jɛ rəhəlcʰe
      S/he-3S-NOM where go CONT. be-IMPRF-PRST-3S
      'Where is s/he going?'

Example: Khortha (Jharkhand variety)

Transitive sentences   (Das, 2013, p. 4)

(68) cʰõɽã uʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰə-l-ke
      boy-3MS-ERG that book read-PERF-PRST-3S
      'The boy has read that book.'
(69) həmẽ ɪʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰə-l-ɪ-ye
      I-1S-ERG this book read-PERF-PRST-1S
      'I have read this book.'
(70) tohẽ ʊʈa kɪtəba pəɽʰ-l-ɪ-hi
      you-2SH-ERG that book read-PERF-PRST-2S
      'You have read that book.'
(71) cʰõɽĩ ɪʈa cɪʈhɪya lɪkhə-ləhot-e
      girl-3FS-ERG this letter write-PERF be-FUT-3S

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[56] Das (2013) speaks of Khortha in general, but the data was collected from Deogarh, Jharkhand.

'The girl must have written this letter.'

The difference in intransitive and transitive sentences in Khortha as explained by Das (2013) can be seen from the above examples. "Khorṭha displays 'ergative case' with the subject NPs either by a phonological material i.e. nasalization of the vowel of the word or by the placement of '-ē' if the subject NP ends in a consonant sound. This ergative case in Khorṭha appears in the sentence only when the verb in the sentence is transitive and not when the verb is intransitive, meaning as per Dixon's definition of 'ergativity'." (Das, 2013, p. 1) Whereas, the following examples show that it is not the case in the Malda variety of Khortha.

Example: Malda variety

(72) **tãi** kakhni ghar ɟabi?
2.SG when home go.PRS?
'When are you going home?'
(73) **hamma** udas ha-kie
1SG sad be-PRS.1SG
'I am sad.'
(74) **ram** udas hɛ
Ram sad be-PRS.3SG
'Ram is sad.'
(75) **choura-ṭa** accha khe-lel ko
boy-CLF good play-PST
'The boy played well.'
(76) **hamma** iʃkul nai ɟaio
1SG school NEG go
'I don't go to school.'
(77) **hamma-sab** kalkhin ɟajpur nai ɟa-ibo
1-PL tomorrow Jaipur NEG go-FUT
'We will not go to Jaipur tomorrow.'

The above examples show that the subject NP has neither any phonological marker such as nasalization nor a morphological marker such as the use of suffixes to show ergativity neither as fully developed nor in any developing stage

in the Malda variety that has been worked on here. There is neither any presence of the ergative marker in person nor in any number forms[57]. "Moreover, there is also no sign of split ergativity like Hindi which shows different morphosyntactic alignment in a different tense. Therefore, it can be said that ergativity of any form i.e. tense or number, is completely absent in the Malda variety of Khortha." (Bhowmik, 2018, p. 327) Otherwise, it can be assumed that this variety has features like Bangla as a result of language contact and in some cases direct borrowing. This claim has a basis as because it can be seen that the Malda variety of Khortha shows a few grammatical features which are like Bangla and these features are different from the Jharkhand variety. "The Malda variety of Khortha has also a few more grammatical features like Bangla. For example, in the case of classifiers, it can be seen that Khortha uses two different types of classifier construction. The Jharkhand variety of Khortha uses classifiers like '-ṭho', '-go' which is seemingly close to the Hindi classifier '-ṭho'; whereas, the Malda variety of Khortha uses classifiers that seems to have developed its classifiers and their usage is like that of Bangla[58]. Also in case of dative subject constructions Khortha unlike other South Asian languages does not take up the common route, i.e. dative marking in case of non-nominative subject constructions. The Malda variety of Khortha rather takes up genitive marking which is similar to Bangla non-nominative subject constructions." (Bhowmik, 2018, pp. 327-328).

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[57]There is no presence of ergative marker in first person, second person or even in third person. There is also no trace of ergativity in singular or plural forms. (Bhowmik, 2018, p. 327)

[58]Number + Classifier + Noun e.g. Bangla tin ṭaboi 'three + cl + books' 'three books'. (Abbi, 2001, p. 122)

Chapter 4: Conclusion

1   Summary of findings

1.1   Field Issues

Khortha is not spoken by all the generations in all domains. The intergenerational communication is interrupted because of language loss. A few children can understand the language but they have forgotten it since they started primary education[59]. It is becoming rare where people from parent generation use Khortha for communication among themselves. The usage of Khortha among children is almost negligible.

Therefore, based on the overall perspective the stage of language endangerment of Khortha in the framework of GIDS can be concluded as a stage 7. Khortha in Malda is definitely endangered and is slowly progressing towards severely endangered based on UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger[60]. According to EGIDS, the position of the Malda variety of Khortha based on an overall evaluation can be stated as Shifting (Level 7). As Khortha has been the first language of the parents thus, Khortha can be revitalized by increased exposure.

They themselves are shifting from Khortha to Bangla for the sake of better livelihood, job prospects and employment, education and prestige. They

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[59]Scenario 1 situation only
[60] (Moseley, 2010)*UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.* Retrieved September 21, 2018, from unesco.org: http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/

admitted if Khortha was taught in school or given recognition in official work[61]

they would consider to continue to speak the language and teach the younger

generations to retain the language. This shows the level of language

endangerment when the later generations do not want to speak or forget the

language.

1.2   Data

Khortha does not exhibit any grammatical gender, be it the Jharkhand variety or

the Malda variety. Khortha like any other Eastern Indo-Aryan language has no

agreement in nominal inflections. The Jharkhand variety of Khortha uses

classifiers like '-ṭho', '-go' which is seemingly close to the Hindi classifier '-ṭho';

whereas, the Malda variety of Khortha uses classifiers that seems to have

adopted its' classifiers and their usage like Bangla[62]. Another feature that is

noted in Khortha is the use of gemination in certain numerals like that of eleven,

and seventeen. The ordinals could not be collected as the informants[63] have

forgotten and had shifted in using Bangla ordinal terms. Khortha unlike the other

Eastern Indo Aryan languages does not mark honorificty in the second and third

persons. In case of plural pronouns and their possessives, Khortha uses both *'-r'*

and '*-ke'* markers except in case of third person plural. This feature in Khortha

marks a different path in possessives. Khortha uses '*-ke'* marker in general as a

result of case syncretism; this happened as because of undergoing through

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[61]   (Meghalaya   Times)   retrieved   on   21st   September   2018 http://meghalayatimes.info/index.php/front-page/10142-jharkhand-assembly-accords-second-language-status-to-11-languages.

[62]Number + Classifier + Noun e.g. Bangla tin ṭaboi 'three + cl + books' 'three books'. (Abbi, 2001, p. 122)

[63]the informants are multilingual and educated and the reason they stated was that Bengali ordinals are used in schools and in workplaces for decades and that is how they have been using such Bengali ordinals since childhood.

several morphological changes like other South Asian languages. It can be seen that this is where it can be seen that personal pronouns allow both *'-r'* and *'-ke'* markers in the case structure with an exception in case of third person plural. Khortha, unlike other South Asian languages, does not take up the common route, i.e. dative marking in case of non-nominative subject constructions. Khortha rather takes up genitive marking which is similar to Bangla non-nominative subject constructions. "There is no presence of ergative marker in first person, second person or even in third person. There is also no trace of ergativity in singular or plural forms. Moreover, there is also no sign of split ergativity like Hindi which shows different morphosyntactic alignment in different tense." (Bhowmik, 2018, p. 327) Therefore I argue that Khortha doesn't yield ergativity.

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APPENDIX

1   Sample Questionnaire

1.1   BASIC SENTENCES

1. Ram is eating a mango .রাম একটা আম খাচ্ছে।

2. Sita is eating a ripe mango. সীতা একটা আম খাচ্ছে।

3. Ram cut the mango. রাম আমটা কাটলো।

4. The children cut the mango with a knife. বাচ্চাগুলো ছুরি দিয়ে আমটা কাটলো।

5. We will not go to Jaipur tomorrow. আমরা কাল জয়পুর যাবো না।

6. The child did not hit his/her sister. বাচ্চাটা নিজের বোনকে মারেনি।

7. How are you? কেমন আছো ?

8. When are you going home? তুমি কখন বাড়ি যাবে ?

1.2   NOUN MORPHOLOGY

9. The boy ate a banana.ছেলেটা একটা কলা খেয়েছিল।

10. The boy played well.ছেলেটা ভালো খেলেছিল।

11. Give the horse the feed.ঘোড়াকে খাবার দাও।

12. Ram wrote a letter to his mother yesterday.রাম গতকাল তার মাকে একটা চিঠি লিখেছিল।

13. Curd is made from milk.দুধ থেকে দই হয়।

14. One girl/boy. একটা মেয়ে/ছেলে।

15. I feel shy. আমার লজ্জা লাগছে।

16. Ahmed has courage. আহমেদর সাহস আছে।

COLOPHON

As I have stated earlier in the dissertation that finding informants was not an easy feat. It was proved that being a woman in the fieldwork was indeed a blessing. It was easy access to gain their approval and trust. Once, the equipment was out for fieldwork they understood it was serious business and they spend no time wasting and helping enthusiastically. Automatically, this trust helped in gathering data was fast and it also helped working under someone's roof and other informants were called there in a house as being a woman one tends to offer protection and honour and they were hospitable and polite to serve food and drinks. Therefore, instead of harrowing oneself through the whole village to find informants, data elicitation took a few hours and fieldwork was wrapped within a course of less than a week. The problem was with remuneration. They were not willing to take money or any sort of remuneration; be it in cash or kind. The preparation was taken accordingly as one had expected that this could happen. Therefore, they were happy to receive delicacies in form of sweets from Kolkata and there were also books and pens for them and they didn't mind receiving this as this seemed gifts and not any sort of payback.