

# Parallels between Karbi and Kuki-Chin

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# Today

- Introduction of languages and branches
  - Karbi
  - Kuki-Chin
  - “Naga”
  - Bodo-Garo
- Parallels
  - Phonological
  - Morphological
  - Syntactic
- Summary, What it means, & What’s next

# TB languages at Indo-Myanmar border



# Karbi

- Verb-final, 3 tones, agglutinating: mostly suffixes
- Half million speakers
- Brahmaputra Valley, India; wide geographic spread
- Phylogenetic affiliation inside TB unclear
  - Proposals have linked Karbi with K-C and “Naga”
- In traceable history, extensive contact with Khasian
- Gone through creolization
- No verb stem alternation; no subject indexation



# Kuki-Chin

- ~50 languages in 5 subbranches
    - Northern
    - Northwestern (“Old Kuki”)
    - Central
    - Southern
    - Maraic
  - Spoken in Burma, NEI, Bangladesh
- Innovated prefixal subject indexation
- Verb stem alternations
- Status in Northwestern languages (and others!) unclear

# Proto-Kuki-Chin (VanBik 2009)

2 characteristics unifying K-C

1) Verb stem alternations

2) Sound change  $*s > t^h$

# “Naga”

- Languages spoken in NEI and Burma, mostly to the north of K-C area
- Ethnic label
- Linguistically not one branch
- Lower-level, inspectionally obvious branches
  - Angami-Pochuri
  - Ao
  - Zeme
  - Tangkhul\*

# Bodo-Garo

- Branch of ~ a dozen languages
- Little internal diversity
- Transparent morphology
- Very wide geographic spread in Brahmaputra Valley
  - Proto-BG as lingua franca of the region → creolized (DeLancey 2012)



# Parallels

- Phonology
  - \*s > t<sup>h</sup>
  - \*g > k
- Morphology
  - Reflexive/reciprocal prefix
  - Copulas and focus marker
  - Causative prefix
- Syntax
  - 2 → 1/2 object (SAP)
  - Cislocative and SAP object marking

# Phonology

\*s > t<sup>h</sup>

	PTB (Matisoff 2003)	Proto-KC (VanBik 2009)	Karbi	Sumi (Teo fieldnotes)	PTk (Mortensen 2003)
'die'	*səy	*thii	thì	t <sup>h</sup> i	*thi
'wood, tree'	*sik/siŋ	*thiŋ	thēng	[à-ʃɪ]	*ʔa-thiŋ
'three'	*sum	*thum	kethòm	kət <sup>h</sup> ɪ	*kəthum
'kill'	*sat	*that	thàt		*thət
'fruit'	*sey	*thay	thē	àxàt <sup>h</sup> i	*thej
'know'	*syey	*thay	thèk(?)	ìt <sup>h</sup> i	*thej

→ KC, Karbi, Angami-Pochuri, Tangkhul, BG

\*g > k

	PTB (Matisoff 2003)	Proto-KC (VanBik 2009)	Karbi	PTk (Mortensen 2003)
'call'	*gaw	*kaw	ku 'call dogs' (?)	
'mouth'	*gam	*kam		
'ten'	*gip		kēp	
'bamboo'	*g-p <sup>w</sup> a		kephō	*kə.hwa
'nine'	*s/d-g <sup>w</sup> a	*kua		*cə.ko

→ KC, Karbi, Tangkhul, (not in BG)



# Morphology

# Reflexive/Reciprocal Prefix

- Karbi *che-*
    - With *thàp* ‘insert, put into’:  
*che-thāp* ‘put oneself into (an opening)’
    - Also in possessor raising construction:  
*a-metháng a-lám*                      *che-thēk-vàng-vē*  
POSS-RR              POSS-language      RR-know-PL-NEG  
‘they don’t know each other’s languages’
    - Prefix; light syllable
    - Morphophonology: Tone change and vowel deletion  
[*che-* + *inghōn* ‘love’ → *chinghōn*]
- Old!

# Reflexive/Reciprocal Prefix

- Kuki-Chin

Northwestern			Northern		Central	
Tarao	Monsang	Lamkang	Tedim	Sorbung	Lai	Mizo
<i>ki-</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>ki-</i>	<i>ki-</i>	<i>ʔən-</i>	<i>ʔii-</i>	<i>in-</i>
Southern					Maraic	
Lemi	Mrokhimi	Daai	K'cho	Khumi	Mara	
<i>ae-</i>	<i>ka-</i>	<i>ŋ-</i>	<i>ŋ-</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>mə-</i>	

So-Hartmann 2013; Peterson 2003; King 2010; Thounaojam & Chelliah 2007; Peterson 2004; Chhangte 1993; Kee Shein Mang 2006; Mortensen & Keogh 2011; Ch. Yashawanta Singh 2002

# Reflexive/Reciprocal Prefix

- K-C
    - Velar-initial (*ki-*)
    - Nasal (*n-*, *ʔən-*, *in-*, *ɨ-*, *mə-*)
  - Karbi
    - Productive RR prefix *che-*
    - Historically detransitivizing *ing-*
- Nasal prefixes as reflexes of PTB \*m- (Matisoff 2003:117ff.)
- Velar/palatal prefixes as K-C/Karbi innovation



# Copulas and Focus Markers

## Karbi Copulas

- Existential: *dō* (positive), *avē* (negative)
- Negative equational: *kalī*

## Karbi Focus Clitics (→ cleft construction)

- Realis: =*si*
- Irrealis: =*le*

# Copulas and Focus Markers

- Karbi *avē* ‘not exist’
  - Cp. Daai Chin *ve* ‘exist’, *am ve* ‘not exist’
- Karbi *kalī* ‘NEG.EQU’
  - Cp. Daai Chin velar-initial prohibitive; B-G velar negative

## Karbi Focus Marker =*si* (and =*le*?)

- Developed from copula via cleft construction
  - Cp. Hakha Lai *sii* ‘copula’, Falam Lai *si* ‘copula’ (Peterson 2003; King 2010)
  - [?Cp. =*le* and *kalī*]

# Bilabial Causative Prefix

- Karbi *pe-*
- K-C
  - Maraic: Maraa *pa-*
  - Southern: Khumi *p-*
- B-G: Dimasa *phV-*
- Angami-Pochuri: Angami *pə-*
- Grammaticalized from 'give'? (Matisoff 2003:132)  
→ What about benefactive *-pV* in those languages?

Matisoff 2003:132-3; Peterson 2001; Hartmann 2001

# Syntax



# Speech Act Participant (SAP) Constructions

- 1) Extension of 2<sup>nd</sup> person → SAP object
- 2) SAP object and Cislocative

## 2 → SAP in K-C

- Purum (Northern K-C)

	O 1.SG:O	2.SG:O	3.SG:O
<b>A</b>			
<b>1.SG:A</b>	----- -----	<i>kə-nə-V</i> 1SG.A-2SG.O-V	<i>kə-∅-V</i> 1SG.A-3SG.O-V
<b>2.SG:A</b>	<i>nə-nə-V</i> 2SG.A-1SG.O-V	----- -----	<i>nə-∅-V</i> 2SG.A-3SG.O-V
<b>3.SG:A</b>	<i>ə-nə-V</i> 3SG.A-1SG.O-V	<i>ə-nə-V</i> 3SG.A-2SG.O-V	<i>ə-∅-V</i> 3SG.A-3SG.O-V

## 2 → SAP in Karbi

- Karbi *nang*= ‘SAP.NONSUBJECT’

	NSUBJ	1.SG:NSUBJ	2.SG:NSUBJ	3.SG:NSUBJ
<b>A</b>				
1.SG:A		-----	<i>nang</i> =V	V
		-----	2SG.NSUBJ=V	V
2.SG:A		<i>nang</i> =V	-----	V
		1SG.NSUBJ=V	-----	V
3.SG:A		<i>nang</i> =V	<i>nang</i> =V	V
		1SG.NSUBJ=V	2SG.NSUBJ=V	V

# Speech Act Participant (SAP) Constructions

- 1) Extension of 2<sup>nd</sup> person → SAP object
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# SAP and Cislocative in Karbi

- Same underlying basis:  
SAP at deictic center  
→ action/motion directed towards deictic center

*laso ahut amat inut akaprek*

lasō	a-hūt	amāt	[e-nūt	a-kV-prék
this	POSS-during	and.then	one-CLF:HUM.SG	POSS-NMLZ-be.different

*amonit abangke saikel nangardonsi vanglo... [...]*

a-monít	abàng=ke]	saikél	nang=ardòn-si	vàng-lò...
POSS-man	NPDL=TOP	bicycle(<Eng)	CIS=ride-NF:RL	come-RL

‘in this moment, another person riding on a bicycle came, [...]

# SAP and Cislocative in K-C

- Sizang (Northern K-C)

<i>na-lá:</i>	<i>hong</i>	<i>thák</i>	<i>ka-ngá:</i>	<i>a:</i>		
2-letter	CIS	send	1-receive	NONFINAL		
'I having received your letter which [you] sent to me...'						

<i>k-ong</i>	<i>thûk</i>	<i>kí:k</i>	<i>lâ-lê:u</i>	<i>hî:</i>	
1-CIS	reply	again	once.more	FINAL	
'I in turn reply to you.'					

# Summary

# Summary: Phonology

- \*s > t<sup>h</sup> → Karbi, K-C, B-G, Angami-Pochuri (Naga), Tangkhul (Naga)
- \*g > k → Karbi, K-C, Tangkhul (Naga)



# Summary: Morphology

- Reflexive/reciprocal prefix  
*ki-* /*che-* → Karbi, K-C  
[nasal prefix → PTB]
- Copulas and focus marker  
/si/ copula → Karbi, K-C  
/ve/ copula → PTB; overlap Daai Chin & Karbi  
  
/a-/, /k-/ negatives → fossilized in Karbi copulas;  
/a-/ also elsewhere, /k-/ also in Daai Chin, **B-G**
- Causative prefix  
/pV-/ → Karbi, K-C, **B-G**, Angami-Pochuri (Naga)

# Summary: Syntax

1) Extension of 2<sup>nd</sup> person → SAP

2) SAP and Cislocative

→ (so far) not found outside Karbi and K-C

# So...

- Evidence is too weak for any firm conclusions and too strong to dismiss as general TB similarities
  - *ki-* /*che-* reflexive/reciprocal
  - /*si*/ copula and focus marker
  - SAP constructions
- If considered borrowed rather than co-innovated, has to go back a long time

# What's next

- Systematic lexical comparison between Karbi and K-C
- As always, more description needed
  - Within K-C
  - Within Khasi
- Look into relationships between Karbi and particular K-C subbranches



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