

# Noun classification in Pnar

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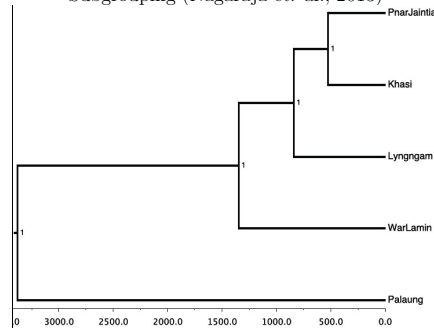
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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Pnar: Overview

Subgrouping (Nagaraja et. al., 2013)



- 400,000+ speakers
- Related to Khasi, but with some differences (Daladier, 2011; Nagaraja, 1993)
- Grammar of Khasi (Rabel, 1961)
- Phonetic/phonemic analysis (Ring, 2012)
- No published grammatical description
- $\approx$  14 hours of recorded speech  
 $\approx$  8 hrs transcribed/translated
  - male and female speakers
  - variety of domains, types
  - time-aligned, annotated via Toolbox
  - 33 texts to date (5min to 1:30min)

### 1.2 Sound System

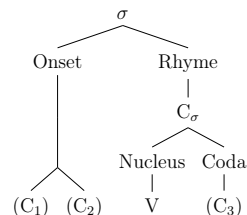
	labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal	
plosive	vl	p	t, t̚		k	
	vl asp.	p <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>		k <sup>h</sup>	*( <u>h</u> ), CyV
	vd	b	d, d̚			? *
nasal		m	n	ɲ *	ŋ *	*( <u>ɲ</u> ) *( <u>ŋ</u> )
affricate	vl			tʃ *		*( <u>ch</u> )
	vd			ʧ *		*( <u>j</u> )
fricative			s		h	
trill			r			
lateral			l			
approximant		w		j *		*( <u>y</u> )

Table 1: Consonant phonemes (\*orthographic)

Table 2: Vowel Phonemes (\*orthographic)

	front	central	back	
close	i	[i]	u	
close-mid	e	[ə]	o *	*(oo)
open-mid	ɛ *	[ɐ, ʌ]	ɔ *	*(æ) *(o)
open		a		

Pnar syllable structure



### 1.3 Basic grammatical structure

NP -> PN or gCl=N (Mod)

S -> V NP

CS -> V S / V A O

- (1) (a) *u*  
3SG.M  
'he'
- (2) (a) *bam u*  
eat 3SG.M  
'he eats'
- (3) (a) *yap u*  
die 3SG.M  
'he dies'
- (b) *u=chiap (hæh)*  
M=basket big  
'the/a big basket'
- (b) *bam u=bru*  
eat M=person  
'the/a man eats'
- (b) *dat u ka*  
hit 3SG.M 3SG.F  
'he hits her'

#### 'Default' Sentences

- (4) (b) *keñ u u=chiap*  
take 3SG.M M=basket  
'he took the basket' [PP05KO\_009]
- (5) (a) *poi ka=blang [ha-jan soh]*  
arrive F=goat LOC-near fruit  
'the goat comes near the fruit'  
[MPSM\_010]

#### Topicalization Sentences

- (6) (a) *ka=yu-spong, toh u=æm ko*  
F=NMZ-wrap right NF=have 3SG.F  
'the turban is necessary' [TACJ\_133]  
(lit. 'the turban, is right to have it')
- (b) *tæ u=doloi hadæm, ong u...*  
NVIS M=doloi hadæm say 3SG.M  
'so the Hadem Daloi,  
he said...' [PP05KO\_025]

### 1.4 Word formation

The word in Pnar is minimally one syllable and can be identified based on phonological and grammatical criteria as per Dixon and Aikhenvald (2003)

#### Phonological criteria:

Segmental – pauses allowed before and after the word.

Prosodic – stress in a word is on the final syllable.

Phonological – vowel sequences within a word often form diphthongs.

#### Grammatical criteria:

Cohesiveness – root or stem (optional prefixes, proclitics and/or enclitics).

Fixed order – must occur together in a fixed order.

Coherence and meaning – conventionalized coherence and meaning.

Isolatability – can be used or discussed on its own and in response to questions.

Immutability – subdivision results in loss of meaning.

## 2 Types of nominal categorization

### 2.1 Gender

Table 3: Pnar personal pronouns

Person	topic/oblique			default, post-verbal		
	Masc	Fem	Neut.	Masc	Fem	Neut.
1sg	<i>nga</i>			<i>o</i>		
2sg	<i>me</i>	<i>pha</i>		<i>mi</i>	<i>pho</i>	
3sg	<i>oo</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>i</i>
1pl	<i>i</i>			<i>i</i>		
2pl/formal	<i>phi</i>			<i>phi</i>		
3pl	<i>ki</i>			<i>ki</i>		

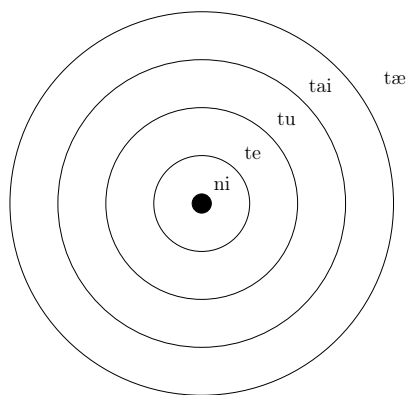
Table 4: Pnar gender markers

Noun Class	Marker	Noun	Gloss
masculine	<i>u</i>	= <i>masi</i>	‘male cow’
feminine	<i>ka</i>	= <i>masi</i>	‘female cow’
neutral/diminutive	<i>i</i>	= <i>masi</i>	‘small/neuter cow’
plural	<i>ki</i>	= <i>masi</i>	‘plural cow’

### 2.2 Deixis

#### Deictic demonstratives

Figure 5: Pnar spatial deixis



- (7) (a) *ka=ni ka=kynthai*  
F=PROX F=female  
‘this woman (proximal)’ [MPSRJ\_044]
- (b) *u=te u=bru*  
M=MPROX M=person  
‘that man (m-proximal)’ [KNI\_004]
- (c) *ka=tu ka=blang*  
F=MEDL F=goat  
‘that goat (medial)’ [MPSM\_013]
- (d) *u=tai u=loom*  
M=DIST M=hill  
‘that hill (distal)’ [PP4SKO\_036]
- (e) *u=tæ u=bru*  
M=NVIS M=person  
‘that man (non-visible)’ [MPSRJ\_052]

### 2.3 Number

Table 5: Pnar numeral classifiers

	Number	Classifier	Plural Noun	Gloss
Human	<i>ar</i>	<i>ngut</i>	<i>ki=bru</i>	‘two CLF.HUM PL=person’
Non-human	<i>san</i>	<i>tylli</i>	<i>ki=soh</i>	‘five CLF.NH PL=fruit’
Week	<i>le</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>yaw</i>	‘three CLF.WK week’
Measure	<i>ynniaw</i>	<i>kyntein</i>	<i>ki=kwai</i>	‘seven SET PL=areca’

Table 6: Local measure terms

Local term	Explanation
<i>chi hali</i>	‘eight pieces of fruit’
<i>chi biah</i>	‘packet of about 50 <i>pathi</i> ( <i>paan</i> ) leaves’
<i>chi song</i>	‘four <i>biah</i> ’
<i>chi kani</i>	‘four hundred <i>kwai</i> ( <i>areca</i> ) nuts’
<i>chi sær</i>	‘a weight, slightly less than one kilo’
<i>chi mon</i>	‘100 kilograms’
<i>u mon</i>	‘40 <i>sær</i> ’
<i>chi kati, trop</i>	‘basket weighing ~2.5 <i>sær</i> ’
<i>chi kti</i>	‘handful, i.e. 10’ ( <i>kti</i> means hand)
<i>chi kyntein</i>	‘a set of betel nut, leaf, and lime’
<i>chi</i>	‘a/an, one, set’

### 2.4 Movement, direction, location

Table 7: Pnar case markers

Verb	S-arg.	Case	Obl.	Gloss	Function
(Intransitive)					
<i>lai</i>	<i>u=bru</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>bei</i>	‘the man goes for/due.to (his) mother’	[BEN]
<i>lai</i>	<i>u=bru</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>kari</i>	‘the man goes by car’	[INST]
<i>sah</i>	<i>u=bru</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>yung</i>	‘the man sits at home’	[LOC]
<i>lai</i>	<i>u=bru</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>yung</i>	‘the man goes to (his) house’	[ALL]
<i>lai</i>	<i>u=bru</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>yung</i>	‘the man goes from (his) house’	[ABL]

### 3 Number revisited

#### 3.1 Number at the word level

singular vs. plural vs. unspecified

- (8) (a) *u=deĩĩ*  
M=tree  
'tree' [TACJ\_344] [+singular, +specific, +masculine]
- (b) *daiĩ i ki=deĩĩ*  
cut 1PL PL=tree  
'we cut trees' [PP11NC\_006] [-singular, +specific]
- (c) *daiĩ deĩĩ i*  
cut tree 1PL  
'we tree-cut' [BMPJ\_032] [±singular, -specific]

#### 3.2 Number at the phrase level

singular vs. plural agreement vs. classifiers

- (9) (a) *iĩ ka=tu ka=yung*  
burn F=MEDL F=home  
'that home burned' [FPAHM\_036] [+unique]
- (b) *æm ki=ni ki=yung ki wa he-i=tæ*  
have PL=PROX PL=home 3PL NMZ LOC-N=NVIS  
'there are these homes which are there' [PP14MF\_098]
- (c) *u=chæm phi ar tylli ki=deĩĩ*  
NFIN=meet 2PL two CL.NONH PL=tree  
'you will find two pieces of wood' [BPVM\_012]

#### 3.3 Number at the clause level

*chi* - an operator that allows for clausal modification

- (10) (a) *ymru sein ha ka chi ta yaw*  
six time LOC 3SG.F set CL.WK week  
'six times in one week' [AIJ\_046]
- (b) *rah u chi krah*  
carry 3SG.M set basket  
'he carried a basket' [FPPSM\_018]
- (c) *ksoh u chi ksoh*  
hold 3SG.M set hold  
'he held her tightly' [PP05KO\_010]

*classifier phrases* - variable members within a clause

### 3.4 Syntactic constraints on Pnar classifier phrases

Elicited examples:

#### 'Default' pre-head vs post-head modification

- (11) (a) *e [ar tylli] ki=kwai*  
give two CL.NONH PL=areca  
'give two kwai (to me/him/her)' [Imperative]
- (b) *e u ki=kwai [ar tylli]*  
give 3SG.M PL=areca two CL.NONH  
'he gives/gave two kwai (to me/him/her)'

#### Noun-incorporation with CP

- (12) (a) *e kwai ar tylli*  
give areca two CL.NONH  
'kwai-give two (to me/him/her)' [Imperative]
- (b) *e kwai u ar tylli*  
give areca 3SG.M two CL.NONH  
'he kwai-gives/gave two (to me/him/her)'

#### Topicalization with CP (pre- and post-head)

- (13) (a) *ar tylli ki=kwai e u ya nga*  
two CL.NONH PL=areca give 3SG.M BEN 1SG  
'two kwai he gives/gave me'
- (b) *ki=kwai ar tylli e u ya nga*  
PL=areca two CL.NONH give 3SG.M BEN 1SG  
'two kwai he gives/gave me'

#### Topicalization of CP (default vs. incorporation)

- (14) (a) *ar tylli e u ki=kwai*  
two CL.NONH give 3SG.M PL=areca  
'two kwai he gave'
- (b) *ar tylli e kwai u*  
two CL.NONH give areca 3SG.M  
'two he kwai-gives/gave'

#### Incorporation with afterthought CP

- (15) *e kwai u (ya nga), ar tylli*  
give areca he BEN 1SG two CL.NONH  
'he kwai-gives (to me), two'

### Disallowed constructions

- (16) (a) ??*e u ki ar tylli ki=kwai*  
 give 3SG.M 3PL two CL.NONH PL=areca  
 ‘he gives the two pieces of kwai’
- (b) \**e u ki ar tylli kwai*  
 give 3SG.M 3PL two CL.NONH areca  
 ‘he gives two kwai’
- (c) \**ki=kwai e u ar tylli*  
 PL=areca give 3SG.M two CL.NONH  
 ‘two kwai he gives/gave (to me/him/her)’

### Conclusions:

- tendency for CP to occur with the NP-head
- classifier allows for disambiguation
- pre- or post-head modification is allowed
- marking the CP with gender is dispreferred

## 4 Nominal classification/categorization in Pnar: Summary

Three syntactic levels of nominal organization:

- Word
- Phrase
- Clause

Four (or five) functional/semantic domains/categories:

- Gender
- Deixis
- Number (gender-based number [ $\pm$ singular] vs. CP [ $+$ numeral])
- Movement/Direction/Location

Table 8: Pnar noun classification  
 (function in terms of syntactic realization)

	Gender	gNum	Deixis	eNum	MDL
Word:	X	X			
Phrase:	X	X	X	X	X
Clause:				X	X

## References

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