

Languages without nouns and verbs?

A closer look at reference and predication in Kharia (South Munda, India)

- ▶ "free" constituent order, mainly predicate-final
- ▶ strict constituent-internal order
- ▶ grammatical marking mainly through enclitics
- ▶ Singular, Dual, Plural
- ▶ Inclusive / Exclusive
- ▶ Active – generally transitive
- ▶ Middle – generally intransitive

Two syntactically defined clause-level units ("phrases"):

- ▶ TAM/Person-syntagma
- ▶ Case-syntagma

Closely related – but not identical! – to predication and reference, respectively.

Case-Syntagmas can be used attributively:

1. *u goʒa duniya=te lebu=ki=yaʔ kahani*  
 this entire world=OBL person=PL=GEN story  
 'the story of the people on this entire world'

TAM/Person-Syntagmas can be used attributively:

2. *yo=yoʔj lebu col=ki.*  
 see=A.PST.1SG man go=M.PST  
 'The man that I saw left' (= literally: 'I=saw man left'.)

Case-Syntagmas can be used predicatively:

3. "...ro u=ga ho jinis=aʔ komaj." [AK 1:57]  
 and this=FOC that animal=GEN meat  
 "' ...and this [is] that animal's meat.'"

TAM/Person-Syntagmas can be used referentially:

4. *kunqab aw=ki tomliŋ khariya gam qom=na laʔ=ki=may*  
 behind COP=M.PST milk Kharia say PASS=INF IPFV=M.PST=3PL

*ina no u=ki tomliŋ uʔq=ga qel=ki=may.* [MT, 1:180]  
 because this=PL milk drink=FOC come=M.PST=3PL  
 '[Those who] were in the rear (= literally: 'they were behind') were called "Milk Kharia"  
 because they came drinking milk.'

**The Case-syntagma**

(GEN) (DEM)(QUANT (CLASS)) (GEN) (LEXEME*) (=POSS) (=NUM) =CASE
-----------------------------------------------------------------

or simply...

X =CASE
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where X ≡ semantic base ≡ (genitive attribute) (demonstrative) (quantifier (classifier))  
 (genitive attribute) (lexeme\*) (=POSS) (=NUM)

Direct ( $\emptyset$ ) – subjects; indefinite objects

Oblique (=te) – definite objects; "indirect objects",  
 locative adjuncts

Postpositions – *buŋ* 'INST', *tay* 'ABL'

} Relations  
 to the  
 Predicate

**Does not mark a relation to the predicate**

Genitive (=YA?) – Possessive marker

Relation between 2 "NPs" – better: between two semantic bases

**Number:**  $\emptyset$  – Singular; =kiyar – Dual; =ki – Plural

**Inalienable Possession:**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Dual / HON</b>		<b>Plural</b>	
1	(=na)=j, (=na)=jn	<b>Incl.</b>	<b>Excl.</b>	<b>Incl.</b>	<b>Excl.</b>
		(=na)=naŋ	(=na)=jar	(=na)=niŋ	(=na)=le
2	=no=m	(=no)=bar		(=no)=pe	
3	=dom	=dom(=kiyar)		=dom(=ki)	

5. *ho*            *rusuŋ* *o?*(= $\emptyset$ )            'that red house'  
 that            red            house(=DIR)

6. *moŋ*            *kinir*=a?            *jantu*            'an animal of the jungle (= a wild animal)'  
 1            jungle=GEN            animal

7. *konselqu?*=*dom*=*ki*=*te*            'their wives (e.g., as direct object)'  
 woman=3POSS=PL=OBL

**The TAM/Person-syntagma**

STEM\* (V2\*) =TAM/BASIC.VOICE=PERS/NUM/HON

8. *col*=*ki*=*may*            'they went'  
 go=M.PST=3PL

9. *mu?*=*ki*=*may*            'they emerged'  
 emerge=M.PST=3PL

"V2" –Aktionsart and markers of the passive, etc., appears between the stem and TAM-markers. Most common: V2: *go?**q* 'C:TEL', *dom* 'PASS', *kay* 'BEN', etc.

10. *qoko*            *go?**q*=*ki*            '[s/he] sat down'  
 sit.down            C:TEL=M.PST

**TAM / BASIC VOICE**

	<b>Active</b>	<b>Middle</b>
Past (PST)	=oʔ	=ki
Present (PRS)	=te	=ta
Present progressive (PROG)	=teʔjd	=taʔjd
Irrealis (IRR)	=e	=na

**Subject marking**

	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Dual / HON</b>		<b>Plural</b>	
1	=(i)n	<b>Incl.</b> =nan	<b>Excl.</b> =jar	<b>Incl.</b> =niŋ	<b>Excl.</b> =le
2	=(e)m	=bar		=pe	
3	–	=kiyar		=ki / =may	

**"Precategoriality"**

Two lexical classes:

- ▶ **Open** – may appear in referential, predicative or attributive function with no derivational marking, "light verb", copula, etc.
- ▶ **Closed** – two subtypes:
  - **Proforms / deictic elements** – may be used in referential or predicative function with no further marking. In attributive function the genitive is (apparently) obligatory (*I, you, here, there, today, tomorrow, ...*)
  - **Functional morphemes** – TAM, case, *Aktionsart*, etc. May never be used in referential, predicative or attributive function (GEN, OBL, DU, PL, PASS, ...)

**Interrogatives**

*i* 'what?' 'which?' 'of what to happen?' (middle)  
 'do what?' (active)

**Indefinites**

*jahã* 'whatever / whichever' 'do whatever' (active)

**Quantifier**

*moŋ* 'one (ref./attr.)' 'become one, unite (ITR) (middle)'  
 'make one, unite (TR)' (active)

**Properties**

*ranŋa* 'cold' 'coldness' 'become cold' (middle)  
 'make cold' (active)

**Proper names**

*aʔghrom* 'Aghrom' 'be called Aghrom' (middle)  
 'Aghrom' (attr.) 'call [a place] Aghrom' (active)

**Status / Role**

*ayo* 'mother' 'become a mother' (middle)  
 'motherly' 'accept someone as a mother' (active)

### Activities

*silo?* 'plough (v./n.)' 'ploughed; plowing'  
*kayom* 'story; matter' 'tell' 'told; narrative'

### Physical objects and animate entities

*cakhna?* 'curry; become a curry (middle); make s.th. into a curry (active)'  
*kaḍoŋ* 'fish (n.); become a fish (middle); make s.th. a fish (active)'  
*lebu* 'man; person; become man (middle)'  
*lutur* 'ear; become an ear (middle); make s.th. an ear (active)'

### Locatives

*toblur* 'top; on; go up, rise (middle); take up, raise (active)'  
*tuta* 'down; bottom; below; go down (middle); put down, lower (active)'

### Deictics

(in a play about me and you, in which both of us will be taking part):

11. *"naṭak=te in=ga ho=kar=na=in ro am=ga in=na=m."*  
play=OBL 1SG=FOC that=SG.HUM=MID.IRR=1SG and 2SG=FOC 1SG=MID.IRR=2SG

*"umbo?. am=na um=in pal=te. direktar seŋ=ga? in=te"*  
no 2SG=INF NEG=1SG be.able=ACT.PRS director early=FOC 1SG=OBL

*ho=kar=o?. am=ga am=na=m."*  
that=SG.HUM=ACT.PST 2SG=FOC 2SG=MID.IRR=2SG

“In the play I will be him and you will be me.” “No. I can't be you. The director already made me him. You will be you.”“

### **Exceptions?**

- ▶ *maha* 'big'; 'growing (ref./attr.); largeness'; 'grow / enlarge'
- ▶ *borol* 'alive'; 'life'; 'live'  
etc...

*tebul* 'table'  
'table-'  
'become a table' (middle); 'turn into a table' (active)

Unlikely... but possible!

### **Semantic predictability – virtually 100%**

- ▶ Quantifier, physical objects, properties:
  - middle: 'become X'
  - active: 'turn into / make X'
- ▶ Proper names:
  - middle: 'be called X'
  - active: 'call someone / a place X'
- ▶ Status / Role
  - middle: 'become X'
  - active: 'accept someone as X'
- ▶ Locative
  - middle: 'move (ITR) towards X'
  - active: 'move (TR) towards X'

**Genitive-marked "Nominals" can also serve as predicates**

12. *in=aʔ*      *in*    *ho=kaʔ=te*    *in=aʔ=yoʔj*.  
 1SG=GEN      1SG    3=SG.HUM=OBL    1SG=GEN=A.PST.1SG  
 'my'            'I adopted him/her (= "mine-d" him/her).'
13. *am=aʔ*      *am*    *ho=kaʔ=te*    *am=aʔ=yoʔb*.  
 2SG=GEN      2SG    3=SG.HUM=OBL    2SG=GEN=A.PST.2SG  
 'your'            'you adopted him/her (= "your-ed" him/her).'
14. *ayo=yaʔ*      *keciya*    '(a/the) mother's money'  
 mother=GEN      money
15. *keciya*    *ayo=yaʔ=ki*.  
 money      mother=GEN=M.PST  
 'The money became the mother's [property].'
16. *keciya=te*      *ayo=yaʔ=yoʔj*.  
 money=OBL      mother=GEN=A.PST.1SG  
 'I made the money the mother's (= gave the money to the mother).'

**POSS and NUM – like the genitive – can also appear in predicates**

17. *ho=jeʔ*      *u=jeʔ=ki*      *goʔd=ki*  
 that=SG.NHUM    this=SG.NHUM=PL    C:TEL=M.PST  
 'That became these.'
18. *boksel=nom*      *goʔd=ki*  
 sister.in.law=2POSS    C:TEL=M.PST  
 'She became your sister-in-law (e.g., through marriage).'

**entire "NPs" can serve as predicates**

19. *ho*      *rochoʔb=ki=j*.  
 that      side=M.PST=1SG  
 'I went to that side (= I "that-side-d").'
20. *ho=ki*    *oʔ=yaʔ*      *telon=oʔ=ki*.  
 3=PL    house=GEN      roof=A.PST=PL  
 'They roofed the house (= they "the house's roof-ed").'

In other words, in Kharia we are not dealing with *lexical* classes like noun and verb but rather with *syntactic units*.

21. *peʔ*    *cakhnaʔ*      *iʔjthan*      *kinbhar=na=pe!*  
 rice    curry      cow.dung      courtyard=M.IRR=2PL  
 'Cook rice and curry and clean the courtyard with cow dung!'      [Kerkeṭṭā, 1990:7]
22. *timson*      *soṇol*      *gonriṇ=na*  
 fire      firewood      cook.rice=INF  
 '[in order] to [gather] firewood [for the] fire, [so that we can] cook rice'      [RD, 2:55]

**Quotations can also be used predicatively**

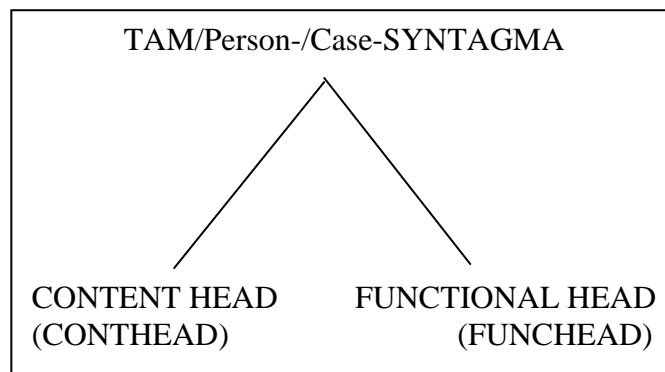
23. *iqib tunbo? "kerson=e la! kersonje la!" lo?=na=kiyar.*  
 day night marry=A.IRR VOC CNT.M.IRR=DU  
 'Day and night they will keep on [saying] "Hey! Get married! Hey! Get married!"  
 [Kerke[[ā, 1990:24]

**Enclitics as "phrasal affixes"**

24. *munu?siŋ rochob=a? lebu=ki*  
 east side=GEN person=PL  
 'the people of the east'
25. *munu?siŋ rochob=a?=ki*  
 east side=GEN=PL  
 'the easterners'
26. *u sembho ro dakay rani=kiyar=a? beta*  
 this Sembho and Dakay queen=DU=GEN son  
 'the son of this Sembho and Queen Dakay'
27. *kayom=ta=m um=em kayom=ta / um kayom=ta=m*  
 speak=M.PRS=2SG NEG=2SG speak=A.PRS NEG speak=M.PRS=2SG  
 'you speak' 'you do not speak'
28. *nog=e=ki ro uq=e=ki*  
 eat=A.IRR=PL and drink=A.IRR=PL  
 'they will eat and they will drink'
29. *nog=e (ro) uq=e=ki / no? (ro) uq=e=ki*  
 eat=A.IRR=PL and drink=A.IRR=PL eat and drink=A.IRR=PL  
 'they will eat and drink'

**My Proposal:**

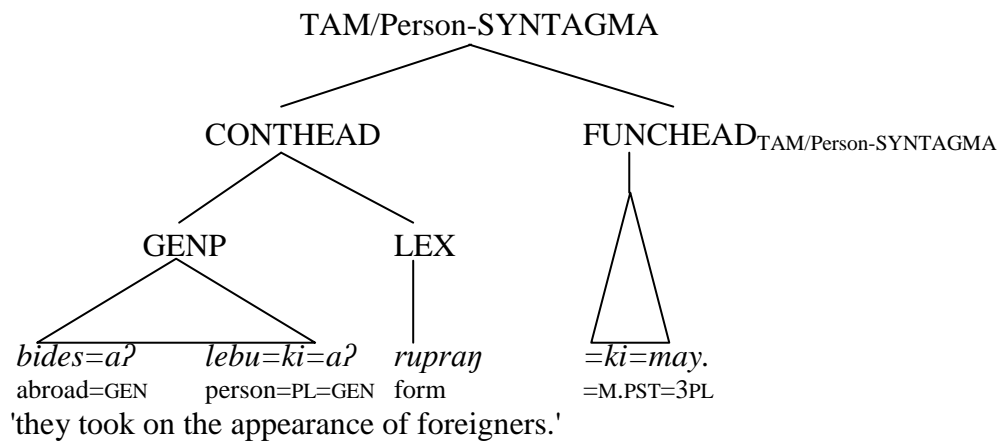
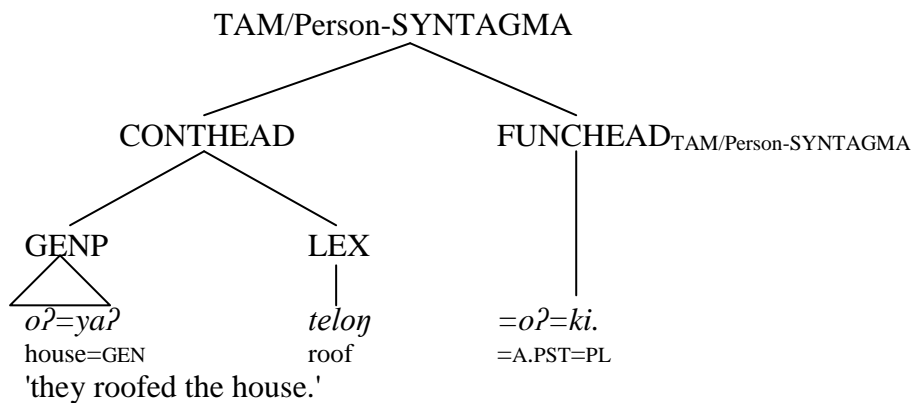
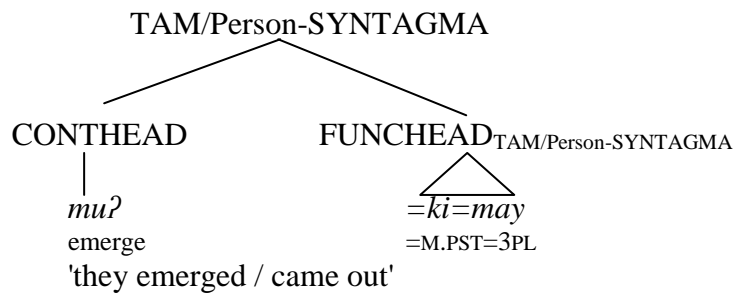
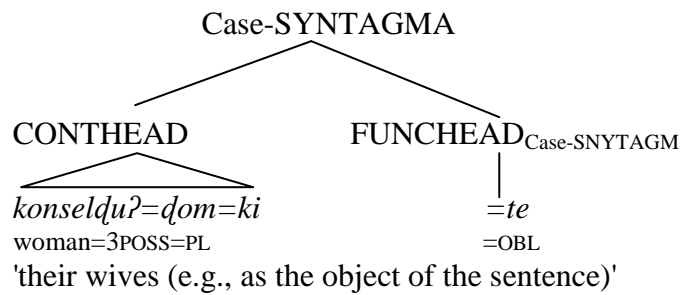
We have two structural categories, TAM/Person-syntagmas and Case-syntagmas, which differ only with respect to their grammatical head



**The content head is neither N nor V**

If X ≡ CONTHEAD, we can then isolate the FUNCHEADs of both TAM/Person- and Case-syntagmas as follows:

Case-Syntagma: X=CASE  
 TAM/Person-Syntagma: X=TAM/BASIC.VOICE=PERS/NUM/HON



(from Sasse, 1993: 200)	Lexical category distinctions	Syntactic category distinctions	Correlation
TYPE A	yes	yes	yes
<b>TYPE B</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>no</b>
TYPE C	yes	no	not applicable
TYPE D	no	yes	not applicable

### Summary:

- ▶ The only lexical classes in Kharia are "open" and "closed". The closed class subdivides into "Proforms / Deictics" and "Functional morphemes".
- ▶ Every constituent in Kharia consists of two parts – a (non-endocentric) "phrasal" content head and a functional head.
- ▶ The content head has the EXACT SAME POTENTIAL STRUCTURE for both TAM/Person- and the Case-Syntagmas.
- ▶ The functional head signals whether the constituent is a TAM/Person- or Case-Syntagma.

### Literature

- Broschart, Jürgen. 1997. "Why Tongan does it differently: Categorical distinctions in a language without nouns and verbs." *Linguistic Typology* 1:123-65.
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- Pinnow, Heinz-Jürgen. 1959. *Versuch einer historischen Lautlehre der Kharia-Sprache*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 1993. "Das Nomen – eine universale Kategorie?". *STUF* 46/3: 187-22.

### Abbreviations

A – active	GEN – genitive
ABL – ablative	HUM – human
ADD - additive focus	INF – infinitive
AFF – affix	INST – instrumental
ANAPH – anaphoric proform	IPFV – imperfective
A:TEL – anticipatory telic	IRR – irrealis
CAUS – causative	M – middle
CMPL – complementizer	NEG – negation
CNTR – contrastive focus	OBL – oblique (case)
CNT – continuative	PL – plural
COP - "copula"	POSS – inalienable possession
C:TEL – culminatory telic	PRS – present
DU – dual	PST – past
DIR – direct (case)	SG – singular
EXCL – exclusive (1/2, non-singular)	SEQ – sequential converb
FOC - restrictive focus	VOC – vocative