Gender marking in Shumcho
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Shumcho is a small, endangered, and hitherto undescribed, language spoken in a handful of villages in the district Kinnaur in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the Indian Himalayas. Shumcho belongs to the West Himalayish group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. Sandwiched between the Indo-Aryan varieties of North India and the Bodish varieties of West Tibet, Shumcho (as have other neighbouring local West Himalayish languages in Kinnaur) has been heavily influenced by either side. As a result, gender marking on Shumcho nouns and adjectives displays a rather heterogeneous picture, making use of marking devices from two genetically distinct groups of languages.

Beside indicating gender by means of a contrast in the initial consonant, e.g. ***ph***obəlaŋkh 'male (person)' vs. ***j***obəlaŋkh 'female (person)', a variety of suffixes are used, e.g. *khorəs/khore* 'lame (m./f.)', *orəs/orni* 'carpenter (m./f.)', *kjupo/kjumo* 'dog (m./f.)', *nakʈo/nakʈe* 'shameless (m./f.)', *laʈa/laʈe* 'deaf (m./f.)', *šara/ šare* 'beautiful (m./f.)', etc.While some suffixes can be attributed to the Tibeto-Burman or Indo-Aryan language groups, the case is less clear with other marking instances (or the marked lexical items as well). Thus, in the pattern *-o* (m.)/*-e* (f.), which occurs in Indo-Aryan loans only, the origin of the feminine ending *-e* is unclear. Similar questions arise with respect to the marking pattern *-a* (m.)/*-e* (f.), which is found with a few Indo-Aryan loans and a greater number of lexical items of hitherto uncertain etymological origin. As of now it is not clear whether the *-a/-e* pattern is derived from the Indo-Aryan patterns *-a/-i* and *-o/-i* or based on some Tibetic model, or whether it represents some sort of crossover.

Being a Tibeto-Burman language, Shumcho has no grammatical gender. However, the integration of gendered adjectives in the language allows an interesting glimpse on the representation of gender in its speakers. Thus, it turns out that speakers consider inanimate entities as having female gender (e.g. *šare ra:* 'beautiful stone').

Based on data from my fieldwork in Kinnaur I will present a descriptive account of various gender marking strategies and the emerging patterns in Shumcho and some neighbouring languages and discuss some consequences and problems.

Classifiers, Gender, Plural Nouns, and Diachrony in Khasian
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The Khasian language family is striking in exhibiting both gender and classifier systems, as well as the additional feature of plural marking within classifier phrases (Rabel 1961; Nagaraja 1985; Ring 2015). Located in the Northeast Indian state of Meghalaya in an area frequently observed to be a contact zone for cultures and language groups (Chelliah and Lester 2014), this group of languages belongs to the Austroasiatic (AA) phylum, but are separated from their closest relatives by Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman languages. As gender in particular is unusual for AA languages, it is currently an open question how this system has arisen. The literature on grammaticalization and gender suggests that gender markers can easily grammaticalize from pronouns (Corbett 1991; Kilarski 2013; Heine and Kuteva 2002), yet case studies illustrating this are few.

This talk first describes the Khasian system, with reference to an annotated database of

transcribed Pnar speech, and then suggests a pathway by which languages which do not have gender can develop gender systems. Contrary to Greenberg (1978)'s claim regarding Khasi, I claim that in these languages gender markers are more likely to have developed from pronouns than from demonstratives. The discussion posits a language contact situation in which 'pivot-matching' processes (Matras and Sakel 2007; Matras 2009) and nominalization strategies (Ring 2014) interact to enable contact-induced grammatical change (Heine and Kuteva 2003).

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