

Inverse and pseudoinverse prefixes in Kiranti languages: evidence from Belhare, Athpare, and Dungmali

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1. Introductory remarks

Belhare, Athpare and Dungmali are small Rai languages located in the area between Bantawa to the West and Limbu to the East. Athpare is spoken in a few villages to the East and Southeast of Dhankuta. Belhare is the language of one small settlement on the slopes of the Belhara hill South of Dhankuta. Informants gave Athpare-Rai as the name of their language, but it differs considerably from Athpare both in grammar and in the lexicon and is definitely not a dialect of it. Although the number of speakers probably amounts to not more than 600 for Belhare and 2000 for Athpare, both languages are still regularly spoken in the villages. No further information is available about the situation of Dungmali. (*Please see map p. 91.*)

The verbal paradigms, probably the most conservative part of Kiranti languages, show strong affinities with the surrounding bigger languages that I have dealt with earlier in this journal (Ebert 1990). All three languages show traces of an old inverse marker and have pseudo-inverse prefixes, which function as 1st person patient markers.

Verbal prefixes in Tibeto-Burman are usually regarded as secondary innovations; but the discovery of more and more prefixing languages, and especially the establishment of cognates in such distant groups as Southern Rai and Gyarong indicate a considerable age at least for some prefixes. DeLancey (1988) has argued that the 'clitic series', i.e., the prefixes, may be older than the suffixal paradigm.

The Kiranti data and parallels outside Kiranti suggest that there are at least two layers of prefixes, one shared with Gyarong (2nd person *t-, inverse *u-), and one - probably younger - layer of pseudoinverse markers of different origins and grammaticalized to different degrees. For the latter set a parallel exists in Lushai, but it could well be an independent development there.

This article was originally written on the basis of the data from the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LSN)¹. In the meantime I have had the

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Table 1: Belhara verbal paradigms
(sources: Linguistic Survey of Nepal (B1) and B. Bickel (B2))

	B1	B2	B1	B2
1>2			INVERSE	
1s - 2s	-yuk-na/yu?-na	-na	2s-ls	ka- -ga/-ka
- 2d	-yuk-na-chi	-na-chi	2d-ls	ka- -ci-ga
- 2p	-yuk-na-ni	-na-ni	2p-ls	ka- -i-ga
1nse-2	-yuk-na-chi-na	-na-chi-na	2s-lnse	ma?i- -ga
			2d-lnse	ma?i- -chi-ga
			2p-lnse	ma?i- -i-ga
DIRECT				
1s - 3s	-u-ŋ	-u-ŋ	3s-ls	mai-
- 3ns	-u-ŋ-chi-ŋ	-u-ŋ-chi-ŋ	3p(d)-ls	ma-ŋ- (-chi)
1di - 3s	-ch-u	-ch-u	3s-ldi	ka-
- 3ns			3p(d)-ldi	ka-ŋ- (-chi)
1pi - 3s	-u-m	-u-m	3s-lpi	ka-
- 3ns	-u-m-chi-m	-u-m-chi-m	3ns-lpi	ka-ŋ- (-chi)
1de - 3s	-ch-u-wa	-ch-u-ŋa	3s-lde	ma?i-
- 3ns	-u-m-chi-m(-a)	-u-m-chi-m-ma	3p(d)-lde	ma?i- (-chi)
1pe - 3s	-u-m-ma	-u-m-ma	3s-lpe	ma?i-
- 3ns	-u-m-chi-m-a	-u-m-chi-m-ma	3p(d)-lpe	ma?i- (-chi)
2s - 3s	-u-ga	-u-ga	3-2s	N- -ga
- 3ns	-u-chi-ga	-u-chi-ga	3-2d	N- -chi-ga
2d - 3s	-ch-u-ga	-ch-u-ga	3-2p	N- -i-ga
- 3ns	-u-m-chi-m-ga	-u-m-chi-m-ga		
2p - 3s	-u-m-ga	-u-m-ga		
- 3ns	-u-m-chi-m-ga	-u-m-chi-m-ga		
3s - 3s	-	-u	3d-3s	N- -ch-u
3s - 3ns	-chi	-u-chi	3p-3s	N- -u

opportunity to work with some Athpare Informants and to study Belhare data collected by my assistant B.Bickel. Our findings confirmed my analysis and enabled us to eliminate some doubtful data from the LSN². Some of the new data have been included in the paper.

2. Belhare

The LSN provides two verb morphology questionnaires and two sentence questionnaires for Belhare. In Table 1 I give a synopsis of the LSN data (B1) as well as the paradigm elicited by Bickel (B2). The main difference lies in a more systematic distribution of the prefixes in 3>1 configurations in Bickel's paradigm. For the purpose of comparison Bantawa, Chamling and Limbu paradigms are represented in Table 2, leaving out some dual forms that would not add any interesting information.

2.1. Identification of the suffixes

Most of the suffixes found in Belhare direct configurations are familiar from other Kiranti languages:

(1)	-ŋ	1st person singular
	-na	2nd person (in 1>2)
	-m	1p (ns)/2p (A: after -u)
	-i	" elsewhere (S,P)
	-ni	2p (in 1>2)
	-chi	dual A/S
		3ns patient (after -u, + copy of person suffix)
	-a/-ŋa	exclusive
	-u	3rd patient

-yuk in B1 is a future marker. Different from the surrounding Kiranti languages, 2nd person is not marked by a prefix, but by the suffix -ga. Otherwise the parallels with Southern Rai and Limbu in the formation of verb forms are obvious:

² The LSN material was collected by Nepali investigators with only a few weeks of linguistic training. Configurations with a 1st or 2nd person agent were elicited in the nonpast, with 3rd person agent in the past, but tenses are not always distinguished in the answers. A main source of errors is the distinction between inclusive and exclusive, which informants have the greatest difficulties to grasp in isolated forms.

Table 2: Limbu, Bantawa, Chamling verbal paradigms (past forms)

	LIMBU/Panthare (Weidert & Subba)	BANTAWA/Ilam (N.K.Rai)	CHAMLING
1>2			
1s -2s	-nc	-na	-na
-2d	-nc-cchi-ŋ	-na-ci	-na-ci
-2p	-nc-nin	-na-nin	-na-i
1de-2s	-nc-gya	-na-c-a	-na-ci / na-c-ka
-2p	-nc-ci-gya	-a-nin	-na-ni / "
1pe-2s	-nc-gya	um-	-na / -n-um-ka
-2p	-nc-ci-gya	um-	-na-ni/ "
		um-	
DIRECT			
1s -3s	-u-ŋ	-u-ŋ	-uŋa
-3ns	-u-ŋ-si-ŋ	-u-ŋ-cw-ŋ	-uŋ-c-uŋa
1di-3s	a- -c-ch-u	-a-c-u	-aci
-3ns	a- -c-ch-u-si	-a-c-u	-u-m-c-u-m
1pl-3s	a- -u-m	-u-m	-u-m
-3ns	a- -u-m-si-m	-u-m-cw-m	-u-m-c-u-m
1de-3s	-c-chi-gya	-a-c-a	-ac-ka
-3ns	-c-ch-u-si-gya	-a-c-a	-u-m-c-u-m-ka
1pe-3s	-u-m-ba	[-u-m-ka]	-u-m-ka
-3ns	-u-m-si-m-ba	-u-m-cw-m-ka	-u-m-c-u-m-ka
2s-3s	kc- -u	tw- -u	-u
-3ns	kc- -u-si	tw- -u-ci	-u-c-yu
2p-3s	kc- -u-m	tw- -num	-u-m
-3ns	kc- -u-m-si-m	tw- -num-c-wm	-u-m-c-u-m
3s-3s	-u	-u	-u
3p-3p	mc- -u-si	um- -u-ci	-u-c-yu)
			(mi-

(2)	BELHARE	BANTAWA	CHAMLING	LIMBU (Panth.)
1s>2p	-na-ni	-na-nin	-na-ni	-ne-nin
1pl>3s	-u-m	-u-m	-u-m	a- -u-m
1s>3ns	-u-ŋ-chi-ŋ	-u-ŋ-cw-ŋ	-uŋ-c-uŋa	-u-ŋ-si-ŋ
1pe>3ns	-u-m-chi-m-ma	-u-m-cw-m-(k)a	-u-m-c-u-m-ka	-u-m-si-m-ba

The standard distribution of *-chi/-ci* in Southeastern Kiranti languages, i.e. dual agent marker before *-u*, 3rd nonsingular patient marker after *-u*, is manifest in the following Belhare (B2) forms:

(3)	2d>3s	teĩ-ch-u-ga -dA-3P-2	you ^d beat him
	1de>3s	teĩ-ch-u-ŋa -dA-3P-c	we ^{de} beat him
	1nsi>3ns	teĩ-t-u-m-chi-m -NPT-3P-1ns-3nsP-1ns	we ^{nsi} beat them

2.2. The prefixes

2.2.1. The inverse marker (w)N-

Belhare inverse configurations (with patient higher on the scale 1 > 2 > 3s > 3p than agent) are characterized by prefixes. Note that in contrast to the other South-Eastern Kiranti languages Belhare, due to the fact that 2nd person is marked by a suffix, has no prefixes in direct configurations.

The mirror principle of direction marking I postulated for Kiranti-Gyarong, *-u marking direct, *u- marking inverse, is manifest in Belhare:

(4)	2s>3s	-u-ga	3s>2s	(w)N-	-ga
	2p>3s	-u-m-ga	3s>2p	(w)N-	-i-ga

These forms fill the gap that has so far existed in the inventory of inverse markers. Chamling has no inverse marker before 2nd *ta-* in 3>2 due to a prefix restriction, and the synchronic function of Bantawa *tw-* (probably < *t-w-*) is ambiguous. The Belhare forms add a further piece to the shattered inverse elements found in other languages.

Both LSN verb-questionnaires lack *wŋ-* in some 3>2 forms. One investigator gives the following comment: "For verb 'beat' when it starts from [t] then my informant always pronounced something [wŋ], also [wŋte ne chim], [wŋte ne -i gak] etc."; i.e. he does not regard the prefix as part of the verb form and hence does not write it in the second part of the

questionnaire. But in the other verb questionnaire the prefix is also missing in different parts. The sample sentences exhibit the same unsystematic use; sometimes one questionnaire has *wŋ-* where the other has zero, or vice versa, so that the LSN data invite the conclusion that the prefix is optional.³

According to Bickel the inverse and 3pAS prefix is a homorganic syllabic nasal and is obligatory. Of course a syllabic *ŋ-* can easily be misheard as *wŋ-*, but we cannot exclude the possibility of variants.

2.2.2. Other Belhare prefixes

All configurations with a 1st person patient are characterized by prefixes. 2>1s configurations have *ka-*; the verb agrees in person and number with agent. Those forms correspond to Eastern Chamling *kha-* forms.

(5)	BELHARE	E-CHAMLING
2s>1s	<i>ka-tɛĩ-ka</i> you beat me	<i>kha-ta-caidh-e</i> you beat me/us
2d>1s	<i>ka-tɛĩ-chi-ga</i>	<i>kha-ta-caidh-ac-e</i>
2p>1s	<i>ka-tɛĩ-t-i-ga</i>	<i>kha-ta-caidh-i-e</i>
	1sP-beat-NPT-2p-2	1P-2-beat-p-2p-NPT

Whereas Eastern Chamling uses *kha-* in all 1s patient configurations, Belhare 2>1ns forms are characterized by the prefix *maʔi-*.

Both prefixes are also found in 3>1. *maʔi-* in Bickel's paradigm stands only for nonsingular exclusive patients, which fits with its use in 2>1ns and with the restriction of corresponding Limbu and Athpare prefixes (cf. below). I therefore assume that the arbitrary distribution of *ka-* and *maʔi-* in 3>1 configurations of the LSN data is due to the difficulty of distinguishing Inclusive and exclusive in the elicitation situation, a problem which of course does not arise for 2>1.

All sources show the contracted form *mai-* in 3s>1s, *ma-* in 3ns>1s. 3nsA is marked by *ŋ-*; *ka-ŋ-* corresponds to Eastern Chamling *kha-m(i)-*:

(6)	BELHARE	E-CHAMLING
3p>1pl	<i>ka-ŋ-tɛnh-e</i> they beat us	<i>kha-m-caidh-a</i> they beat me/us
3ns>1s	<i>ma-ŋ-tɛnh-e</i> they beat me	

³ According to N.K.Rai's paradigms Bantawa *w-* is optional, too. But in the Bantawa texts I have not found a single case without *w-* where it would be expected.

I have no explanation for the use of *ka-* as a 1st singular patient marker in 2>1, but as nonsingular inclusive in 3>1.

In the prefixed 1st person patient forms the mirror principle of direction marking is carried over to person markers. With the more natural perspective of direct configurations, 1st person agent and 3rd person patient or direct markers are suffixed. In inverse configurations it is the other way round: 1st person patient, 3rd person agent and inverse markers are prefixed.

3. Athpare and Dungmali prefixes

For Dungmali I could consult two LSN verb morphology questionnaires from different villages, Sanodungma (S) and Bastim (B). A third paradigm exists from Khesang (Kh), which is usually regarded as a Dungmali dialect, but the people themselves claim to speak a different language. The Khesang verbal paradigm and sample sentences show so many parallels with the data from Bastim and Sanodungma that I have included it in Dungmali.

Athpare and Dungmali (S and B) use the prefix *a-* to mark 2nd person, where Chamling has *ta-* and Bantawa *tw-*. The suffixes are the same as in Belhare (but Dungmali *-ga* marks exclusive):

(7)	DUNGMALI (S)	ATHPARE	cf.	CHAMLING
2s>3s	<i>a-</i>	<i>a- -u</i>		<i>ta- -u</i>
2p>3s	<i>a- -u-m(-go)</i>	<i>a- -u-m</i>		<i>ta- -u-m</i>
2s>1s	<i>a- -oŋ</i>	<i>a- -aŋ</i>		<i>ta- -uŋa</i>
2s>1d	<i>a- -c-ga</i>	<i>a- -aci-ŋ</i>		<i>ta- -ac-ka</i>
2s>1p	<i>a- -in-ga</i>	<i>a- -i-ŋ</i>		<i>ta- -i(m)-ka</i>
3>2s	<i>min-a-</i>	<i>m-a-</i>		<i>ta-</i>
3>2p	<i>min-a- -in</i>	<i>m-a- -i</i>		<i>ta- -i</i>

a- for 2nd person is also attested for Chulung, Chintang and Mugali. Dumi (cf. v.Driem 1988) has *a-* both for 2nd person and in all inverse configurations. Dungmali-Khesang uses *a-* in 3>2, in other configurations 2nd person is marked only by the number suffixes *-c* (d), *-nu* (2p). In this dialect *a-* must be interpreted as an inverse marker. Note that Chhattare Limbu, where 2nd person is marked by *ka-*, has also an inverse marker *a-* in 3>1 (cf. Table 3).

Except in 3>2 the prefix *min-* occurs in all three Dungmali dialects in 3>1, in the Bastim dialect also in 1ns>2, and in Bastim and Khesang irregularly in 2ns>1ns. The unclear status of *min-* will be discussed under

Table 3: Distribution of Kĩranti prefixes

	LIMBU (Panth.) (Phed.) (Chhat.)		ATHP.	BELH. (B2)	DUNGMAI (Bast.) (Kh.)	BANT.	CHAMLING (West) (East)
3pitr	<u>me-</u>	?	<u>u-</u>	<u>N</u>	?	<u>um-</u>	<u>mi-</u>
3p-3s	<u>me-</u>	<u>mu-</u>	<u>u-</u>	<u>N-</u>	m-	<u>u-</u>	<u>pa-</u>
3s-2s	ke-	ka-	m-a-	N-	min-a-	tu	ta-
-2p	kc-	ka-	m-a-	N-	min-a-	tu	ta-
3p-2s	kc-mi-	ka-n-	m-a-	N-	min-a-	<u>u-m-</u>	ta-
-2p	kc-mi-	ka-n-	m-a-	N-	min-a-	<u>u-m-</u>	ta-
3s-1s	-	a-	yaŋ	maŋ-	min-	u-	pa- kha-
-1pl	a-	a-	a-	ka-	min-	u-	pa- kha-
-1pe	yapmi-	a-	yaŋ	maŋ-	min-	u-	pa- kha-
3p-1s	<u>me-</u>	a-n-	yaŋ <u>u-</u>	maŋ	min-	<u>u-m-</u>	pa- kha-mi-
-1pl	a-mi-	a-n-	a-	ka-ŋ	min-	<u>u-m-</u>	pa- kha-mi-
-1pe	yapmi-mi-	a-n-	yaŋ <u>u-</u>	maŋ-	min-	<u>u-m-</u>	pa- kha-mi-
2s-1s	ke-	ka- /na'pmi	a-	ka-	a-	tu-	ta- kha-ta-
-1p	yapmi-ke-	a-ge- /na'pmi	a-	maŋ-	a-	tu-	ta- kha-ta-
2p-1s	(yapmi)-ke-	a-ge- /na'pmi	a-	ka-	a-	tu-	ta- kha-ta-
-1p	yapmi-ke-	a-ge- /na'pmi	a-	maŋ-	min-(a)-	tu-	ta- kha-ta-
1p-2s	-	-	-	-	min-a-	<u>um-</u>	-
-2p	-	-	-	-	min-a-	<u>um-</u>	-

bold: inverse marker

italics: pseudo-inverse (IPAT or impersonal)

underlined: 3pA/S

unmarked: 2nd person

underlined italics: reinterpretation as 1nsA marker

4.2. Dungmali further has a prefix *m-* which functions as an inverse marker in 3ns>3. It is the same prefix as in Athpare 3>2 (see (7)).

- (8) DUNGMALI
3p>3 *m-nor-a* they beat him

In 3>1 all my Athpare informants use *yaŋ-* if the patient does not include the hearer, *a-* with inclusive patients. Whereas the *a-* forms follow the regular TB pattern of agreement with speech act participants, the *yaŋ-* forms agree with 3rd person agent. Some forms in the Athpare LSN questionnaires have the prefix *yapmi-*. Although I never heard it, my informants confirm that *yapmi-* may be used instead of *yaŋ-* in a more formal style. *yaŋ-* is optionally used in 2>1 negated forms:

- (9) ATHPARE
3s>1e *yaŋ-nis-e* 3>1dl *a-nisa-c-e*
3d>1e *yaŋ-nisa-c-e* 3>1pl *a-nis-e*
he/they saw me/us
- (10)
2s-1e *yaŋ-a-ni-ni-na*⁴ or: 2s-1s *a-ni-ni-ŋ-na*
1eP-2-see-NEG-sNOML 2s-1de *a-ni-ni-ci-n-na-ga*
you do not see me/us 2-see-NEG-d-NEG-e-nsNOML

4. Status and origin of the prefixes

4.1. Inverse markers

We found two sets of prefixes that characterize inverse configurations in the three languages examined here. The first set, printed in bold characters in Table 3, includes Belhare (**w**)ŋ-, Athpare and Dungmali *m-*. They pattern like Bantawa *w-* and Chamling *pa-*. Although their function in the individual languages can not always be stated unambiguously, they are identifiable as reflexes of an inverse marking system that was either never carried through systematically in Kiranti or substituted for to a large degree by prefixes from the second set. Inverse forms conform to the Tibeto-Burman principle of agreement with speech act participants.

⁴ Athpare negated forms have a nominalizing suffix, which agrees with P or S in number. *yaŋ-* forms are treated as intransitive.

(11)	direct		Inverse	
BELH	<i>tɛĩ-t-u-ga</i>	you ^s beat him NPT	<i>n-tɛĩ-ka</i>	he beat you ^s
ATHP	<i>a-lɛmɜ-u-e</i>	" " PT	<i>m-a-lɛmɜ-e</i>	" "
DUNG	<i>nor-o</i>	he beat him	<i>m-nor-a</i>	they beat him
BANT	<i>qhatt-u</i>	" "	<i>w-qhatt-a</i>	" "
	<i>qhatt-u-ŋ</i>	I beat him	<i>w-qhatt-a-ŋ</i>	he beat me
CHAM	<i>caidh-uŋa</i>	" "	<i>pa-caidh-uŋa</i>	" "
	<i>caidh-yu</i>	he beat him	<i>pa-caidh-a</i>	they beat him

The person markers are the same in the two columns. 2nd person Belhare *-ga* (*-ka* < NPT *t* + *-ga*), Athpare *a-*, 1st singular *-ŋ/-uŋa*, and 3rd \emptyset in all languages (*-a* and *-e* are past markers). The prefixes in the second column thus mark only direction, based on the person hierarchy $1 > 2 > 3s > 3p$.⁵

There are also traces of an inverse marker in Chintang, in Chhattare Limbu and in a variety of Bantawa recorded near Dhankuta. The following forms can be cited from the LSN questionnaires:

(12)	CHINTANG	BANTAWA (Dhankuta)	CHATTARE-LIMBU (Dhankuta)	
3>1s	<i>u-pir-e-hẽ</i>	<i>w-pw-aŋ</i>	<i>a-bir-aŋ</i>	he gave to me
3>2s	<i>n-a-pir-e</i>	<i>n-w-pw-ʔa</i>	<i>ka-bir-a</i>	he gave to you
cf. 2s>3	<i>a-pir-e</i>	<i>w-pw</i>	<i>ka-bir-u</i>	you gave to him

In the Bantawa dialect the distinction between inverse and 2nd prefix is blurred; *w-* sometimes corresponds to inverse *u-* and sometimes to 2nd *a-* in some neighboring languages. This may be a first step toward a generalization of one prefix to all inverse and 2nd configurations (except $1 > 2$), as found in Dumi and Khaling. The convergence may be induced by the unclear function of *a-* in the neighboring languages: 2nd person and inclusive in Athpare and Panthare Limbu, 1st person nonsingular in Phedappe Limbu, 2nd person in Chintang and Mugall, inverse in Chhattare Limbu $3 > 1$ and in Khesang $3 > 2$. On the other hand the inverse marker is *n-* in Chintang and Bantawa-Dhankuta in combination with 2nd *a-* or *w-* (cf. Athpare $3 > 2$ *m-a-*).

Although we are far from being able to reconstruct the development of inverse markers in Southern Rai languages, something along the following lines seems to have happened:

⁵ As this paper is concerned mainly with prefixes, I shall not go into the problem of whether *-u* functions as direct or as 3rd person patient marker in the single languages. For the sake of simplicity and comparability I have always glossed it as 3P in this paper.

1. At an early stage of language history there probably was an inverse marker *u- and a 3pAS marker *mi-. In 3pA configurations, which are inverse, we would have *u-mi- or *mi-u-.

2. Later the INV+3pA marker was in some languages identified with the inverse marker, in others with 3pA/S.

3. The reflexes of this identification come out in the various languages as follows:

(13)		INVERSE	INV-3pA (>1)	3pS
BANTAWA	Ilam	w-	w-m-	wm-
	Bhojpur	w-	3pA/S	
	Dhankuta	w-/n-	mw-	
CHINTANG		u-/n-		
DUNGMALI		m-		
ATHPARE		m-	u-	
BELHARE		(w)N-	(w)N-	

After various morphophonemic changes the result may be the reverse of the earlier situation, as in Athpare inverse m- (after vowel reduction before 2nd a-) and 3pAS u-. That there were originally two prefixes and not just one (e.g. a 3pAS prefix mi- that was reinterpreted as inverse marker) is born out by the Bantawa variants. Both Ilam and Bhojpur Bantawa do not use wm-/mw- in 3ns>3. Here we find the inverse marker with dual and plural agents, whereas 3d intransitive has no prefix. The same holds for the corresponding Dungmall and Chamling forms, but Belhare has N- also in 3d intransitive.

(14)	BANT. Ilam	DUNGMALI	BELHARE (B2)	CHAMLING
3d>3	w-qhatt-a-c-u	m-nor-c-e	n-ʃenh-e-chi ⁶	pa-caidh-aci
3p>3	w-qhatt-a	m-nor-a	n-ʃenh-e	pa-caidh-a
	they beat him/them			
cf.				
3s>3s	qhatt-u	nor-o		caidh-yu
3dltr	khaɽ-a-ci		ŋ-khaɽh-e-chi	khat-aci
	they went			

The origin of the Chamling inverse marker pa- is unknown. It cannot be an accidental homonymy that pa- is also a negation marker, as ŋ- and

⁶ The 3P marker -u is elided with past -e/-he in Belhare. Although the past forms look superficially like clear inverse cases, the directional ambiguity is the same as in Bantawa 3d>3 (but not 3p>3).

ʷ- are also found in some negated Belhare and Bantawa direct forms. In the sample sentences of the Belhare LSN questionnaires most negated forms have the prefix ʷŋ-.

- (15) BELH *ina cece ʷŋ-co-n.*
 this meat NEG-eat:3P-NEG
 Don't eat this meat.
 ina-ŋa ŋasa ʷŋ-choŋ-t-u-na
 he-ERG fish NEG-sell-NPT-3-NOML
 He does not sell fish

The Bantawa negation markers are, according to Rai, *man-* (past) and *-nin /-n* (nonpast).

- (16) past *qhatt-u-ŋ* I beat him NEG: *man-qhatt-q-o-ŋ?*
 nonpast " *qhatt-n-w-ŋ*

But in the Bantawa texts published in the appendix to Rai's dissertation (n.d.) we find ʷ- as part of the negation, with the negative marker *-n-* in both tenses. The following sentences are from the story of the mythical birds "Tanwama and Khiyama" (p.209; glosses mine):

- (17) *ʷŋka-a ʷ-net-n-w-ŋ* *yŋŋ-ma ...*
 [I-ERG NEG-tease-NEG-3P-1s say-INF]
 "I shall not tease him," [he] said ...
- (18) *mosa-a ʷ-sin-n-w-ŋ* *yŋŋ-a-yakt-a ...*
 [he-ERG NEG-know-NEG-3P-1s say-PT-V2-PT]
 "I didn't know it," he kept saying ...

Cf. the latter utterance in the Chamling version of the story:

- (19) *kana pa-chai-n-uŋa* *ruŋ-a...*
 I NEG-know-NEG-1s say-PT
 "I didn't know it," he said.

Even if the conditions for the use of Belhare ʷŋ- and Bantawa ʷ- in negation have to be further explored, the parallel between those prefixes and Chamling *pa-* is obvious. The common semantic denominator of inverse

⁷ *man-* negates the verb stem; person and tense markers are carried by the auxiliary *qa-*. This type of negation, with a negative prefix *mi-*, is also used in the Chamling Imperative, e.g. *mi-im-da* "don't sleep", *mi-ca-do* "don't eat it".

and negation seems to be that both are in some sense a reversal of the direct affirmed state of affairs.

(20)	CHAMLING	BANTAWA	
	<i>cit-una</i>	<i>nett-u-ŋ-a</i>	I teased him
INV	<i>pa-cit-una</i>	<i>w-nett-a-ŋ</i>	he teased me
NEG	<i>pa-ci-n-una</i>	<i>w-net-n-w-ŋ</i>	I didn't tease him

4.2. Impersonal 1st person patient markers

The second set of prefixes, printed in italics in Table 3, includes Athpare *yaŋ-*, Limbu *yapmi-* (Phedappe *na·pmi*, Chhattare *mapmi*), Dungmali *min-*, Belhare *ka-*, *maʔi-/mai-*, and Eastern Chamling *kha-*. The areal distribution of those prefixes forms a belt stretching from Limbu across the Southern Rai languages, leaving out Bantawa and not reaching West-Chamling. Verbforms with those prefixes imitate the principle of marking inverse by prefixes, but they are structured in a way quite different from the familiar TB pattern (which is why I call them pseudo-inverse).

(21)	ATHPARE	<i>yaŋ-ŋ-nis-e</i>	they ^p saw	me/us ^c
	LIMBU-Panth.	<i>yapmi-mɛ-ni-s-a</i>	" "	.
	CHAMLING	<i>kha-mi-khaŋ-a</i>	" "	me/us
	BELHARE	<i>ka-ŋ-nis-e</i>	" "	me/us ^l
		1P - 3pA - see - PT		
	BELHARE	<i>ka-piŋh-e-<u>chi</u>-ga</i>	you ^d gave	me
		<i>maʔi-piŋh-e-<u>chi</u>-ga</i>	" "	us ^c
		1P - give - PT - d - 2		
	CHAMLING	<i>kha-ta-ida-<u>ci</u></i>	" "	me/us
	LIMBU-Panth.	<i>yapmi-kɛ-pir-e-<u>cchi</u></i>	" "	me/us ^c
		1P - 2 - give - (PT) - d		
	ATHPARE	<i>yaŋ-a-pi-<u>ci</u>-n-ga</i>	" don't give	"
		1P - 2-give-d-NEG-nsNOML		

There is no *-ŋa* to mark 1st person singular nor *-i(m)* to mark 1st person plural; the underlined affixes show that the verb agrees with A. The prefixes seem to function as 1st person role markers. But they are strange person markers that sometimes do not distinguish between 1st singular and plural, and sometimes not between inclusive and exclusive.

This peculiarity finds a simple explanation in the origin of most prefixes in an impersonal noun/pronoun. Athpare *yapmi*, Belhare *maʔi*,

Dungmali *min* and Phedappe Limbu *na·pmi* mean "person, someone".⁸ The replacement of 1st person plural by Impersonal forms is known from a number of languages. In French Informal speech the impersonal pronoun *on* (< *homo*) has to a large degree replaced the 1st person plural pronoun *nous* in subject function: e.g. *on va manger* "we will eat".⁹

The status of Dungmali *min-* is ambiguous and varies in the different dialects. Whereas it looks like the well-known 1st person patient marker in 2ns>1ns, it would have to be a 3rd agent or inverse marker in 3>1s and could be both in the variants given for 3>1p. In the Bastim dialect moreover it stands for 1ns agent in 1ns>2 and the 3>2 forms look like inverse constructions.

(22) DUNGMALI

2p>1p	<i>min-nor-nin</i>	(B, Kh)	<i>you^P</i> eat someone (<i>us</i>)
3>1s	<i>min-nor-an</i>	(B, S)	someone (<i>he/they</i>) beat <i>me</i>
3>1p	<i>min-nor-in</i>		someone (<i>he/they</i>) beat <i>us</i>
or:	<i>min-nor-a</i>		<i>he/they</i> beat someone (<i>us</i>)
1ns>2	<i>min-a-nor</i>	(B)	someone (<i>we</i>) beat <i>you</i>
3>2p	<i>min-a-nor-in</i>		someone (<i>he/they</i>) beat <i>you^P</i>
3>2p	<i>a-nor-in</i>	(Kh)	

Although *min-* has taken the place of an inverse marker in 3>1 and 3>2, I think it should not be understood as such. I take all *min-* forms to be impersonal. The constructions is spreading from 1st patient configurations to others that are not clearly marked. In the Khesang dialect, which does not have a 2nd person prefix, *a-* functions as an inverse marker (as in Chhattare Limbu). The use of *min-* in 1nse>2 has a close parallel in Ilam Bantawa, where the Inverse/3pA marker indicates simply a plural agent in this configuration (e.g. *um-qhatt-a* "we beat you").

The origin of Belhare *ka-*, Chamling *kha-* is uncertain. The data from Puma, Chamling's Southeastern neighbor, suggest that *kha-* has an impersonal origin, too. Cf. (23), where the prefix has replaced a 2nd person marker:

⁸ Weidert & Subba do not list *yapmi* in their glossary, but give *yambiccha*, *namyapmi·sa* ... for "man". One would expect the native speaker Subba to have noticed the origin of *yapmi*, if it were transparent. *yapmi* seems to be grammaticalized further than Phedappe *na·pmi*, although it is not used consistently in the individual paradigms given in the grammar.

⁹ Cf. also Chukchi (Bogoras 1912:736), Salish (Newman 1985), and German *man* (< Mann). Phedappe Limbu has an impersonal form also for 1pcA: *hu?·m?na* "we (pc) taught him" is a passive participle.

- (23) PUMA 1pe>2 kha-dedh-im-ka we beat someone (you)
beat - 1p - e

The synchronic status of the second group of prefixes is not identical in the different languages. Belhare *kə-* and Eastern Chamling *kha-* are obligatory in 1st person patient configurations and seem to have no other function in the language. They are therefore best described as 1st patient markers (with the necessary specifications for Belhare). Panthare Limbu *yapmi-* and Athpare *yaŋ-* (<*yapmi*) has developed into a 1st person exclusive patient marker, whereas Phedappe Limbu *na.pmi*, written as a separate word by van Driem, is an optional variant in 2>1 only. Dungmali *min* can stand for different participants and is partly optional; it is probably still understood as an impersonal pronominal element. *min* has entered to a different degree into the dialects of Dungmali. According to the LSN paradigms it is used most frequently in the Bastim dialect.

(24) prefixes meaning "person":

LIMBU Phedappe	<i>na·pmi,</i>	1nseP (opt. 1n 2>1)
Panthare	<i>yapmi-</i>	1nseP, (1sP opt. with nsA)
ATHPARE	<i>yaŋ-</i>	1eP
BELHARE	<i>maʔi-</i>	1nseP
	<i>mai-/ma-</i>	1sP (with 3A)
DUNGMALI Bastim	<i>min-</i>	1P, 1nsA, 3A
k-prefixes:		
BELHARE	<i>ka-</i>	1sP (with 2A), 1ns1P (with 3A)
CHAMLING East	<i>kha-</i>	1P
PUMA	<i>kha-</i>	1nsP, 2P (with 1pA)

If we compare the distribution in the different languages it appears that the prefix meaning "person" has entered the paradigm starting from the problematic 2>1ns (i.e. you > me + him/them) configurations, where it is not possible to mark the number of both participants in the conservative paradigm (cf. West Chamling in Table 2). It then spread to 3>1nse and to 1s patient configurations in some languages. The k-prefix on the other hand has no association with exclusive.

5. The question of relative age

I think it is too early to say anything definite about the relative age of the rivaling prefix paradigms. From Kiranti internal evidence some facts speak against the primacy of pseudo-inverse prefixes:

- The impersonal prefixes are grammaticalized to a different degree in different dialects. The innovation is semantically motivated.
- The Eastern Chamling 1st person marker *kha-* takes the position before other prefixes such as 2nd *ta-*, 3pAS *mi-*. Western Chamling and Bantawa allow only one prefix. We can therefore assume that *kha-* is a relatively late clitic.
- With the exception of Limbu, all languages that have pseudo-inverse prefixes also show traces of an inverse marker which looks like a relic.
- The great variation in the form of pseudo-inverse markers also speaks in favor of innovation.

Parallels outside Kiranti can be found for both sets of prefixes. The identity of Southern Rai inverse **u-* with Gyarong *u-* indicates a relatively high age for this prefix (cf. Ebert 1990). Also the unsystematic distribution, that does not always make sense in the individual languages, seems to indicate antiquity. The 1st person prefixes have certain parallels in Kuki-Chin languages, which usually have subject agreement, with 1st person *ka-*, 2nd *na-*, 3rd *a-*. Several languages of this group, however, use double indexation, and a kind of mirror principle can be found in some scattered forms, e.g. (cf. Reichle 1981, Weidert 1985):

(24) BAWM	1>2	<i>ka-nan-</i>	2>1	<i>na- -ka</i> (also <i>ka-</i>)
	1>3	<i>ka-</i>	3>1	<i>a- -ka</i>
LAKHER	1>2	<i>ei-tsə-</i>	2>1	<i>ei-nə- -tsɿ</i>
	3>2	<i>ə-tsə-</i>	2>3	<i>nə-</i>

Most interesting is the 1st person patient marker *min/mi* in Lushai (Mizo), which has the same origin as Dungmali *min*¹⁰. Cf. the following sentences from the Linguistic Survey of India (135-6):

(25) *ka-CHANAI min pe-ráh*

ny-share me give

ka-thien-te nhen-a lhim-na-tur kel-te min pe-ngai-shi-lo

my-friends with feasting-for kid me give-consider[-2]-not

This parallel in a distantly related language seems to indicate an old pattern, which may have been refilled with new, semantically appropriate

¹⁰ *min, mi* 'person, ... someone, ... me, us ...' (Lorrain 1940). In the Ngente version of the LSI *in*, though glossed as 'you', is obviously a variant of *min*, cf. the passages corresponding to (25):

ka chanai in pe-roh-u

ka rual-cham-nhai riem-zong kel-te pa-kat páh in pe-lo

material several times. But in view of the spread of impersonal 1st person markers, independent development cannot be excluded.

Probably none of the prefix systems should be attributed to Proto-Tibeto-Burman. Both seem to be innovations of certain subgroups of TB that lived in close contact at some time. The Kiranti languages constitute a rather heterogeneous cluster that so far resists further subgrouping. The distribution of lexical isoglosses and phonological innovations suggests that different waves of immigration have been assimilated in the area (Hansson, ms.). This picture fits well with the data presented in this paper. It seems likely that one of the immigrant groups once lived in close contact with the ancestors of the Gyarong, while another, probably later, immigrant group could have brought subject agreement and impersonal 1st person patient marking from a Kuki-Chin neighborhood. The verbal systems of Bantawa and West-Chamling show traces of the first group, those of Limbu of the second group, whereas Belhare, Athpare, Dungmali and East Chamling show a mixture of both.

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