Morphological evidence for “Raji-Raute” and Genetic Position within Trans-Himalayan

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide morphological evidence for the existence of a third sub-branch of the Himalayan branch, along with East (Kiranti) and Central (Kham-Magar-Chepang), that I propose to call Kali-Karnali (KK). It consists of languages spoken in Mid-Western and Far-Western Nepal in the Karnali river basin, as well as in the eastern parts of the Kali river in Kumaon, Uttarakhand, India. These languages are Khamci, Raji (Rawat), Bho and Raji. They have long been left unclassified (Matisoff 1996, Krishan 2001), or classified within different sub-branches of the family under the name of “Raji-Raute”: within East-Himalayan (Breton 1997) or Central-Himalayan (Glover 1974, Hale 1982, Kasankar 1993, Bradley 1997, 2002, van Driem 2001, Matisoff 2003, Rastogi 2012, Schorer 2017). Grierson & Konow (1909), followed by Shafer (1997), classified these languages within the Western-Subgroup of the “Complex Pronominalized Languages”, along with Kinnauri, Rangkas, Darma, Chaudangsi, Byangsi, and Bunan. Recent research (Saxena 1992, Bradley 1997, Widmer 2014) has shown that these latter are part of the Bodish sub-branch of Western TH languages, and do not fall within the Himalayan clade. I show, through internal and comparative reconstruction of independent pronouns and verbal argument indexation, that Khamci, Raji (Rawat), Bho and Raji constitute a clade, i.e. descend from a common ancestor, and that this clade shares the higher-level node of Himalayan languages along with Central-Himalayan and East-Himalayan.
References


Rastogi, Kavita. 2012. A Descriptive Grammar of Raji (Rawat).


