Outline of Harigaya Koch Grammar

Alexander Kondakov
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Abstract

Harigaya Koch is one of the several speech varieties of the Koch language (ISO 639-3: kdq). It belongs to the Koch subgrouping of the Bodo-Garo group of the Tibeto-Burman family and is spoken by a relatively small number of people in the western part of Meghalaya state in Northeast India (the total number of Koch in Meghalaya is about 25,000 people). Harigaya Koch is well understood by many Koch people of other groups and is used as a lingua franca at Koch social gatherings and in informal settings. Until now the Koch language, including Harigaya and several other varieties, has remained less documented.

This paper will present an outline of the main features of the Harigaya Koch grammar. The linguistic data for this study was collected during the years of 2008–2010 in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Study texts consist of about 30 oral and written stories, examples from the *Koch into English and Assamese Phrasebook*, the Koch–English dictionary, and other material elicited informally from native speakers. The paper will also include some data from other Koch varieties to compare with Harigaya. The works on closely related languages such as Rabha, Garo and Atong, will also be taken into account.

Typologically, Harigaya Koch exhibits the following peculiar features: absence of tone, extensive suffixation, prefixes on verbal adjectives and causative verbs only, case markers and postpositions, animate vs. inanimate distinction in some cases, definiteness markers (with human male vs. female distinction), adjectives before nouns (except in fixed expressions and idioms), compound nouns, verbal nouns, extensive reduplication and onomatopoeia, pronouns in both full and contracted forms, existential vs. equational copulas, aspect-oriented verbs, and clause chaining. Due to prolonged contact with Indic languages, Harigaya Koch has acquired many of their features, which are evident in its lexicon, phonology, and syntax.
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<th>Definition</th>
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<td>&lt;</td>
<td>comes from</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>leads to</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>zero (null), covert form</td>
</tr>
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<td>first person</td>
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<td>second person</td>
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<td>third person</td>
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<td>accusative case</td>
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<td>ADV</td>
<td>adverb(ial)</td>
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<td>allative case</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAUS2</td>
<td>second level causation</td>
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<td>CLF</td>
<td>classifier</td>
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<td>continuous aspect</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>copula2 – existential</td>
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<td>GEN</td>
<td>genitive case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>highlighting marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>IMM</td>
<td>immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSY</td>
<td>hearsay, reported evidential</td>
</tr>
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<td>incompletive aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>imperative mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPFV</td>
<td>imperfective aspect</td>
</tr>
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<td>kinship marker</td>
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<tr>
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<td>purposive</td>
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<td>relative</td>
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<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>singular</td>
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<td>smb</td>
<td>somebody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smth</td>
<td>something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAM</td>
<td>tense, aspect, mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMP</td>
<td>temporal case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

Koch is a people group\(^1\) mainly found in the Indian states of Meghalaya and Assam and in northern Bangladesh.\(^2\) The Koch people call themselves Kocho (in Meghalaya) or Kocha (in Lower Assam). The number of Koch in Meghalaya is about 25,000 people (Census 2011). The Koch language (ISO 639-3: kdq) belongs to the Koch subgrouping of the Bodo-Garo, or Bodo-Koch group of the Tibeto-Burman family (Benedict 1972; Burling 2003a:175–178; Joseph and Burling 2006:1–4).

The Koch divide themselves into nine ethnolinguistic groups: Harigaya, Wanang, Tintekiya, Margan, Chapra, Kocha (Koch-Rabha), Satpari, Sankar and Banai. The groups are endogamous, and there used to be very few intermarriages in the past. Each group includes small clans called nikini. The clans are matrilineal and strictly exogamous (Koch 1984:180), i.e. marriages are not permitted within the same clan. The first six groups have preserved their original Tibeto-Burman forms of speech while the remaining three have long switched to local Indo-Aryan varieties.

Koch are agriculturists: they grow paddy, jute, pulses and mustard. Most of them live in villages and lead a traditional way of live, which includes weaving clothing and making houses of hardened mud. Fishing and trade are subsidiary occupations. Some are engaged in government and private services, undertake teaching assignments or work as wage labourers (Singh 1994:541–543).

Originally the Koch were animists, but over the time they have been Hinduized to a certain extent. Nowadays the majority of them associate themselves with the Hindus. In the middle of the 20th century a portion of the Kocha group from Lower Assam converted to Christianity.

The Koch people live in a highly multilingual environment and in their day-to-day lives they use a number of other languages, such as Hajong, Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Hindi and English. The mother tongue is used in many social situations, especially at home and in village (less outside the community). The Harigaya variety is well understood by many Koch people of other groups and is used as a lingua franca at Koch social gatherings and in informal settings.

Until now, Harigaya and other varieties of the Koch language have remained less documented. There is a brief specimen of the Koch varieties in Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson 1903b). For the past several decades a few individuals from India have done their doctoral studies on Koch, but mainly in the field of anthropology. The most recent PhD dissertation that deals with linguistics aspects of Koch is written in Assamese by A. B. Mandal, University of Gauhati (2010). At the same time scholars such as R. Burling, U. V. Joseph, S. van Breugel and others have enriched our knowledge of other languages of the Bodo-Garo group.

This paper will present an outline of the main features of the Harigaya Koch grammar. The linguistic data for this study was collected during the years of 2008–2010 in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Study texts consist of about 30 oral and written stories, examples from the Koch into English and Assamese Phrasebook, the Koch–English dictionary, and other material elicited informally from native speakers. The paper will also include some data from other Koch varieties to compare with Harigaya. The works on closely related languages such as Rabha, Garo and Atong, will also be taken into account.

Typologically, Harigaya Koch exhibits the following peculiar features: absence of tone, extensive suffixation, prefixes on verbal adjectives and causative verbs only, case markers and postpositions, animate vs. inanimate distinction in some cases, definiteness markers (with human male vs. female distinction), adjectives before nouns (except in fixed expressions and idioms), compound nouns, verbal nouns, extensive reduplication and onomatopoeia, pronouns in both full and contracted forms, existential vs. equational copulas, aspect-oriented verbs, and clause chaining. Due to prolonged contact

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\(^1\) For disambiguation with Rajbangsi and Rabha and for more information on the origin and history of Koch see Majumdar 1984, Koch 1984 and Kondakov 2013.

\(^2\) I would like to express my gratitude to many Koch people who helped me in data collection and showed hospitality during my field trips. I would like to give special thanks to several individuals who assisted me in making this work possible: president of the Koch literature society “Koch Kröorang Mathop” Mr. Nirmal Koch for giving me his valuable inputs; Mr. Chundi Ram Koch who helped me in transcription and translation of the texts; and wonderful story tellers: Mr. Bhajendra Hari Koch from Harigaon village, Mr. Baidyanath Koch from Ampati, and Mr. Astin Koch from Dunnigaon village.
with Indic languages, Harigaya Koch has acquired many of their features, which are evident in its lexicon, phonology, and syntax.

2 Phonology

2.1 Consonant phonemes

Koch has 25 consonant phonemes. The special status of the four voiced aspirated phonemes and the glottal stop (all shown in parentheses in table 1) is discussed following the table.

Table 1. Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>p</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>(?)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ph</td>
<td>(bʰ)</td>
<td>(dʰ)</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td>(gʰ)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td>(dʰ)</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
<td>(gʰ)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>s</td>
<td>(d̆)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>w</td>
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<td>j</td>
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<td></td>
<td>l</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Koch stops are generally characterized by contrasts between voiced vs. voiceless and unaspirated vs. aspirated. Voiced aspirated stops are originally not characteristic of Koch. However due to the Indo-Aryan influence some of the Koch dialects have adopted the whole row of voiced aspirated stop phonemes such as /bʰ/, /dʰ/, /gʰ/ and /jʰ/. These have initially entered the Koch sound system through loanwords, then gradually acquired the status of native phonemes and began to spread to the native words and even to some loanwords where there was previously no aspiration at all. Thus a phenomenon of hypercorrection took place. A very similar phenomenon has occurred in Rabha (Joseph 2007:19). The process of aspiration – deaspiration is not uniform across different Koch speech varieties, so one can find words with voiced aspirated stops in one variety and corresponding words with no aspiration in another variety.

The glottal stop has the status of a marginal phoneme in the present analysis. It does not occur frequently in Harigaya Koch. It usually serves as a barrier between two echoing vowels as in [beʔe] ‘where?’ or separates identical vowels belonging to different morphemes as in [naʔa] ‘(he) hears- HAB’³. There are very few native words where the glottal stop occurs in the coda of a non-final syllable as in [maʔ.wa] ‘boy’. The Koch Spelling Guide recommends that this phoneme be represented by the apostrophe (’) (Harigya et al. 2009). Whether this is a residue of a formerly present phoneme (perhaps tone), influence of Garo, or another phenomenon needs to be ascertained by further inquiry.

2.2 Vowel phonemes

There are six vowel phonemes in Koch.

³ Cf. contiguous occurrence of /a/ being divided by a glottal stop in Rabha (Joseph 2007: 105).
Table 2. Vowels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>u</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to locate /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ precisely in the phonetic chart: they are somewhere halfway between close-mid and open-mid position, apparently as in Rabha (Joseph 2007:50–51).

The phoneme /ɔ/ has two allophonic counterparts [o] and [ɔ] – which one is realized is dependent on the phenomenon of vowel harmony and/or on stress. Some Koch writers prefer to express each allophone using its own distinct grapheme.

/a/ is the Koch variant of what has been called in the Bodo-Garo linguistics a “sixth” vowel with somewhat special status (Burling 2009). It has its counterparts in Rabha, Garo and Boro variously represented as /u/, /i/ or /a/. It is a mid central unrounded vowel, and local Koch writers represent it as à and ɔ̇ in the Roman and Assamese orthographies respectively. This phoneme appears to be closer in articulation (towards /i/) in the Kocha, Wanang, and Chapra varieties and is often conditioned by vowel harmony (see § 2.6).

Koch vowels do not show a contrast in length. Normally a stressed vowel is slightly longer than an unstressed one.

All vowels can occur in open as well as closed syllables. Whenever there is a tendency of a two-vowel sequence, the glottal stop, /j/ or /w/ is inserted.

2.3 Koch syllable

Koch, just as the related language Garo, lacks contrastive tones which is a rather uncommon phenomenon in Tibeto-Burman. However, as in many tone languages, the syllable is an important phonological unit (Burling 1981:61; Joseph and Burling 2006:3) and, for the purpose of phonological analysis, is often more relevant than the word. Therefore in describing the Koch phonological system it is essential to discuss the syllable, its structure and distribution patterns. It is also appropriate to have further discussion on consonants, as to whether they occur syllable-initially (in syllable onsets) or syllable-finally (in syllable codas).

There are six syllable types in Koch: V, CV, VC, CVC, .CCV and .CCVC. The last two syllable types occur relatively rarely and only at the end of di- or trisyllabic words.

2.4 Syllable-initial consonants

Practically all consonants except /ŋ/ and the glottal stop can occur in syllable onsets. /s/ is frequently pronounced with aspiration as in [sʰɔŋ] ‘village’. When followed by the close back rounded [u] it gets somewhat retracted and raised and sounds more like /ʃ/ as in [musrət] ‘wipe’.

Syllable-initial consonant clusters are not found in the majority of the Koch varieties. Kocha, however, shows the presence of some types of initial clusters, namely, consisting of a stop followed by a liquid such as /kr/ in kraw ‘language’.

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4 A similar phenomenon is found in the related languages. The Tiwa initial /s/ is strongly aspirated (Joseph and Burling 2006:5). In Rabha the initial /s/ is pronounced with greater friction when followed by a high-toned vowel (Joseph 2007:47). It would be interesting to compare such Rabha words with their Koch cognates.
2.5 Syllable-final consonants

Voiced stops, aspirated stops, affricates and [h] do not occur in syllable codas. Only the following 11 consonant phonemes can be found in that position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Syllable-final consonants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-p</td>
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<tr>
<td>-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-k</td>
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<tr>
<td>(-ʔ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
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<tr>
<td>m</td>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔ</td>
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<tr>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voiceless stops are unreleased. /l/ is very rare syllable-finally: it is found predominantly in loanwords and only in few native Koch words. Final /s/ is restricted to loanwords just as in Garo (Burling 2003b:389; Joseph and Burling 2006:20). The glottal stop is rare and never occurs in syllable codas word-finally as in Garo (Joseph and Burling 2006:21). /ŋ/ affects the preceding vowels /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ by increasing their closeness.

In many multisyllabic words the final consonant of the first syllable immediately precedes the initial consonant of the second syllable as in sɔk.maj ‘fly’. Here /k/ and /m/ consonants are adjacent, though they do not form a cluster. CC cluster may occur in the onset of the non-initial syllable of some words such as man.трɛн ‘pestle’ or kak.trɛ ‘(it) bit’. In the second example /-tɛɾa/ stands for a verbal suffix which is perceived by some Koch speakers as [-tɛɾa], thus, making it a CV.CV type, not a CCV5. There are no word-final consonant clusters.

2.6 Phonological processes

There is a number of phonological processes occurring in Koch that are described in Kondakov (2015). The most notable feature to be mentioned here is vowel harmony.


The process of vowel harmony also affects demonstratives i ‘this’ (proximal) and u ‘that’ (distal): they lower to ɛ- and o- respectively when conjoined by the plural suffix -ɾɔŋ as in ēɾɔŋ ‘these/they’ and ϖɾɔŋ ‘those/they’.

2.7 Stress

In Koch the phonetic correlate of stress is a combination of length and loudness. Koch stress is phonologically predictable: in simple words it invariably falls on the last syllable from the end as in: bʰɛˈda ‘water lily’, raˈdəɡə ‘king’, kʰɔjɪˈbɛnə ‘bulbul (kind of bird)’.

5 The Harigaya suffix /-t(a)ra/ has its cognate /-tana/ in Wanang Koch.
6 This adjectival pV- prefix is found in a few Rabha words and has cognates in other Boro-Garo languages: gu- in Boro, gi-/git-/gi- in Garo and ko- in Tiwa (Joseph and Burling 2006: 34-35; Burling 2009).
Words with inflectional suffixes carry stress in two places – one on the last syllable of the root and the other on the last syllable of the suffix as in: *huʧˈuŋ-aˈ-na* ‘turtle-DEF-ACC’ > ‘the turtle’.

In compound nouns there is also stress in two places as in: *maˈma-bhagiˈnə* ‘uncle and nephew’.

The nature of double stress in the latter two cases needs further investigation as there are polysyllabic words with longer roots as well as the roots followed by more than two suffixes.

### 2.8 Loanword phonology

Koch has for a long time been in close contact with the surrounding Indo-Aryan languages Bengali, Assamese and Hajong. The result of this contact is evident both in phonological and grammatical systems of modern Koch. However the major impact is seen in the lexicon: Koch has been drawing heavily on Bengali, Assamese and Hajong for loan words with the effect that a bulk of Indo-Aryan loanwords now makes up the Koch vocabulary.

Having entered the Koch lexical system the loanwords did not remain totally unchanged. Many of them fell under the influence of the Koch phonological system and underwent certain adaptations (see examples in Kondakov 2015:37).

### 3 Orthography and script

Koch has been mainly an oral language. Scanty writings usually consisting of poems and short stories appear from time to time in local Koch magazines where the main material is usually presented in Assamese and sometimes in English. The script used for writing Koch has been predominantly Assamese. These days one can find some Koch writings both in Assamese and Roman. Yet the official position of the All Meghalaya Koch Association is to encourage the use of the Assamese script for all literary and educational purposes.

Whether Assamese or Roman, the Koch writing had been very much unsystematic: each writer would use his own spelling conventions, often influenced by the Assamese language. An important step for systematizing the Koch orthography was undertaken at a workshop in 2009 at Tezpur, Assam, organized by a local NGO PAJHRA in collaboration with the SIL International. As a result a small book entitled *Kocho Koroni Bornobinyas* (Koch Spelling Guide) saw the light. It was recommended for the use of Koch writers. In that book it was decided to present both Assamese and Roman spelling systems for writing Koch.

Nonetheless some minor orthographic issues continue to be unresolved. This is especially the case when it comes to vowel harmony, consonant lengthening and the glottal stop.

### 4 Inflectional and derivational morphology

#### 4.1 Nouns

Nouns and verbs are two major word classes in Koch. Nouns can be divided into two groups: simple and compound. Simple nouns can be mono- or bimorphemic: *nok* ‘house’, *sum* ‘salt’, *pha* ‘tooth’, *morot* ‘human being’, *soka* ‘cloth’. Many bimorphemic nouns are made of two independent roots at least one part of which has a discernible meaning: *hacheng* ‘sand’ (*ha* ‘land’, *cheng* ‘lightweight’), *pamti* ‘dew’ (*pan* ‘plant, tree’, *ti* ‘water’), *rambu* ‘cloud’ (*rang* ‘rain’). Many bird names begin with *tәw-*, parts of bamboo begin with *wa-*, and parts of the house begin with *nok-*. Many parts of fish begin with *na-*, while many names for varieties of fish end with *-na*. Polysyllabic nouns, except for their declined forms, are usually loanwords.

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7 All Koch examples henceforth are given in the form approximated to the orthographic rather than the phonological system.
Koch is rich in onomatopoeia, and there are many nouns such as par-par ‘the cracking sound of fire’, tang-tang ‘the sound of a bell’, tumblung ‘plop’.

There are also many compounds such as әiyә-awa ‘parents’ (әiyә ‘mother’, әwa ‘father’), miyә-michik ‘a couple’ (miyә ‘husband’, michik ‘wife’), mama-bhaginә ‘uncle and nephew’. Some compounds may denote transitional state: phar-monop ‘dawn’ (phar ‘night’, monop ‘morning’).

A separate category of nouns is derived from verbs by means of the genitive case marker -ni. These types of nouns will be referred to as verbal nouns in the present paper. They typically denote abstract ideas, processes or acts of doing something, e.g. monsәni ‘love’, chikni ‘cold’, gelni ‘playing, game’, phuini ‘coming’, lini ‘going’ etc. Verbal nouns can also form collective units such as kanni-chunni ‘clothing, wear’ (both kan and chun are synonyms and mean ‘to wear (smth.)’). This is a very common process in Koch and other related Bodo-Garo languages (see Burling 2003b:396) and is virtually similar to the English -ing form. Verbal nouns are often part of longer word combinations as in koro bakni ‘conversation’, rasan dotni ‘sunrise’.

As is typical among Tibeto-Burman languages Harigaya Koch nouns have no grammatical gender. Animate objects that are inherently male or female have an additional suffix or word to make their gender explicit: tәw-boyar ‘rooster’ (tәw ‘bird’, boyar ‘alpha male’), tәw-mәtju (mәtju ‘female’) or tәwju ‘hen’ (ju ‘feminine definiteness marker’). Borrowed words or those modelled after Indo-Aryan tend to receive the suffix -i to denote human females: buri ‘an old woman’ as compared with bura ‘an old man’; kәni ‘a blind woman’ as compared with kәnә ‘a blind man’.

Historically all Koch nouns fall under several categories depending on their shape, quality or function. This feature of nouns becomes explicit when they are used with numerals. However the modern Harigaya Koch has lost its native numerals together with the classifiers except for the word geset/gesek/gosek ‘one’, where gV- is a classifier (inanimate and non-human). Harigaya speakers in their everyday speech use Indo-Aryan numerals and only two Indo-Aryan classifiers: -fjon ‘adult humans; gods’ and -ta ‘things; children; lower supernatural beings’.

Nouns can be singular or plural. The plural suffix -rong attaches directly to the noun root preceding any other suffixes that may follow. The presence of a numeral (above one) or an adverb of quantity makes the plurality explicit; in that case the noun root preserves singular form. Singularity is normally unmarked; when it is necessary to specify the given noun, the classifier phrase is used: gesek morot ‘one man’.

Definiteness is expressed by means of two suffixes: -a (and its allomorphs -wa and -ya) and -ju. The suffix -a is used with most nouns and specifically with male-inherent ones: masa-wa ‘the tiger’, hati-ya ‘the elephant’, tәkә-wo ‘the water’. The suffix -ju is reserved exclusively for feminine-inherent objects: amә-ju ‘the mother’. Definiteness markers also attach to human names: komol-a ‘Kamal (the one I’m talking about)’; anu-ju ‘Anu (the one I’m talking about)’.

Harigaya nouns take several case markers, often coupled with postpositions. Pure case markers are shown in table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>morot ‘a person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morota9 ‘the person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>-ni</td>
<td>morot-ni ‘of a person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>morota-ni ‘of the person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>-na</td>
<td>morota-na ‘to the person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>-na, -o</td>
<td>morota-na ‘the person’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nok-o ‘the house’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 Cf. the Garo -rang (Burling 2003b:396).
9 Here the suffix -a is not a case marker, but the suffix expressing definiteness.
### Case Marker Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locative; temporal</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>nok-e ‘in the house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pharok-e ‘at night’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allative</td>
<td>-ang</td>
<td>nok-ang ‘to the house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comitative</td>
<td>-mung</td>
<td>morota-mung ‘with the person’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nominative case indicates the subject and receives zero case marker. The suffixes -a (-wa, -ya) and -ju that may attach to the noun root indicate the definiteness markers described above but not case markers.

The genitive case marker -ni indicates possession and can be used with various nouns, pronouns and proper names. The possessor with the suffix -ni always precedes what is possessed, e.g. ani mung ‘my name’. It can also be used alone, without mentioning the thing possessed: iyәn ani ‘this is mine’. Here the genitive itself acts as a noun and may further receive an additional case marker. Thus in sona-ni-yo nahajok (he) brought the golden one the accusative marker -yo follows the genitive -ni.

In a peculiar instance the genitive is augmented with the locative marker which results in -e-ni meaning ‘belonging to’ or ‘coming from’: nok-e-ni ‘of the house’, ui song-e-ni morotrong ‘people of that village’, ang rasiya-ye-ni ‘I am of/from Russia’. This case commonly occurs with definite inanimate nouns or place names.

The dative -na marks the indirect object – a beneficiary or a recipient of some action: orong rajawa-na bakjok ‘they said to the king’, uwa’s mohana-na taka haotra ‘he gave money to Mohan’. The modal verbs and verbs of perception usually also require the dative case: a-na porayna pelem lagiyә ‘I like reading’, na-na ata lagiya ‘What do you want?’

The accusative indicates the direct object, the recipient of an action. The definite inanimate objects usually take the suffix -o, while the definite animate objects take the suffix -na. In this way the accusative for animate singular objects merges with the dative by form. When the direct object is represented by an indefinite or generic noun, the accusative case marker is omitted: ang may lumto ‘I’m cooking rice’, ang but porayto ‘I’m reading a book’.

The suffix -e is used for both locative and temporal, answering questions ‘where?’ (sometimes ‘where to?’) and ‘when?’: nok-e ‘in the house’, pharok-e ‘at night’.

The allative suffix -ang indicates the movement to a place: nok-ang ‘to the house’, i-yang ‘to here, hither’. This suffix may be omitted when the place is well-known or regularly visited, e.g.: ang bajar lito ‘I’m going to the market’ (cf. inherently locational nouns in Atong, Van Breugel 2014:105).

Comitative -mung means ‘(along) with’, ‘accompanying’: cho a-mung ‘come with me, come along’, uju-mung li ‘go with her’.

The dative and the comitative cases are apparently used with animate objects only, whereas locative and allative with inanimate. The locative may sometimes be used in place of the allative and vice-versa:

1. **kanda-ye phui.**
   near-LOC come
   ‘Come closer!’

---

10 The same form genitive case marker is also found in Rabha (Joseph 2007: 156) and Garo (Burling 2003b:396); in Atong its counterpart is -mi (Breugel 2014).

11 In plural, however, both inanimate and animate objects take the suffix -na.

12 The dative-accusative -na is found in Atong. In Van Breugel’s analysis it is referred to as the goal enclitic (2014:170 and elsewhere). The dative -na is also found in Garo, and accusative inanimate -o corresponds to the Garo -ko (Breugel 2003b:396).

13 Cf. the Garo -ming (Burling 2003b:396). The Kocha and Wanang -man also indicates the instrumental case.
(2) ang i-yang to-wa.
   1.SG DEM1-ALL COP2-HAB
   ‘I am here.’

In sentence 2 above, the speaker is answering the question “Where are you?” while being at some distance from the person asking. If both persons are closer, locative would be used:

(3) ang i-ye’e-n
   1.SG DEM1-LOC-EMP
   ‘I am here.’

Postpositions follow the noun and often require it to take the genitive case marker -ni: nudiyә-ni jone ‘about the river’. However this is not always the rule as there are instances when the postposition follows directly the noun. This is common in casual speech: nok thaki ‘from the house’.

A somewhat peculiar instance is shown by the instrumental diyo which in the present analysis is understood as a postposition. It does not require the preceding noun to take a case marker: chak diyo ‘by hand’, teksi diyo ‘by taxi’, Kocho koro diyo ‘in the Koch language’ (lit. ‘by means of the Koch language’). However it is disyllabic and appears more as an independent word. It is interesting that Harigaya does have the instrumental case marker -da which undoubtedly corresponds to (or may even derive from) diyo, but its occurrences are rather rare: kondam-da ‘with a stick’. In Chapra Koch the instrumental case is unambiguously shown by the suffix -ti: kolom-ti ‘by pen’.

Postpositions usually occur in their bare form (not counting the often mandatory genitive -ni of the preceding noun), but some of them take a case marker, usually locative -e: kanda-ye ‘near’, rumbǝ-ye ‘inside’. Harigaya postpositions often have synonymic counterparts and many of them derive from Indo-Aryan.

A number of other affixes, clitics and particles may adjoin to nouns: the proclitic of kinship a-; personal-possessive enclitic of kinship -bara; additive enclitic -bo ‘also’, ‘even’; emphatic enclitics -(a)n, -en, -se; exclusivity enclitic -san/sәn; particle to highlighting the preceding word (see more in § 6.5 Discourse markers, fillers and interjections).

4.2 Pronouns

Harigaya personal pronouns show distinction for person and number and can be proximal (i-, e-) and distal (u-, o-)\(^{14}\). The third person pronouns referring to female human beings are additionally marked for gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ang</td>
<td>ning(^{15})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>nang</td>
<td>narong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (m)</td>
<td>iyә, uwә/iju, uju</td>
<td>erong, orong/ tjurong, utjurong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (f)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demonstrative pronouns are similar to the third person pronouns by form and function. There are proximal /ei, distal u and remote ui/oi demonstratives. Remoteness can also be marked just by raising the voice pitch:

---

\(^{14}\) In oral discourse the remote form for the third person masculine pronoun uәwә is sometimes used.

\(^{15}\) Wanang and Kocha varieties have both inclusive (na’ang) and exclusive (ning) forms.
Like nouns, personal pronouns take case markers and postpositions. When combined with case markers or postpositions, some of them assume contracted forms:

Table 6. Contracted forms of Harigaya personal pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sg</th>
<th>Pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>a-</td>
<td>ni-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>na-</td>
<td>narong- or naw-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (m)</td>
<td>iyә, uwә- / iju-, uju-</td>
<td>erong- or in-, orong- or on-/ ijurong-, ujurong-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possessive pronouns are thus formed by the contracted form of a personal pronoun and the genitive suffix -ni: a-ni ‘my’, na-ni ‘your’.

Reflexive pronoun is apan ‘oneself’ as in: uwa apan ‘he himself’, apan thini ‘suicide’. Reciprocal pronoun is nana-na ‘each other’ (lit. ‘you-ACC-me-ACC’). Honourific pronouns apa ‘you-HON.SG’ and aparong ‘you-HON.PL’ ultimately come from the word meaning ‘self’. Honourific forms are not a prominent feature in Harigaya Koch.

Interrogative pronouns include the following: ata ‘what?’, atana ‘why?’, chang ‘who?’, chani ‘whose?’, and chana ‘(to) whom?’. Many of them begin with the prefix bV-: bi ‘which?’, be’e ‘where?’, beyang ‘where to?’, besoman ‘how much?’, bingko ‘how?’. Relative pronouns are of the jV- type and appear to have been borrowed from Indo-Aryan. The basic relative pronoun is ji ‘who, which’; it can assume plural form by adding the plural suffix as in je-rong ‘those who’ (the vowel change is due to vowel harmony). Relative pronouns can also be reduplicated: jay-jay ‘whoever, all those who’. The jV- form can assume various suffixes resulting in the relative pronouns of various types: je’e ‘where’, jeyang ‘to where’, jesoman ‘as much’, jingko ‘(just) as’ and some others. The jV- can also take the definiteness marker and case markers: jiya ‘which-DEF’, jiju ‘which-DEF.FEM’, jiyo ‘which-ACC’.

Relative pronouns are often used in pair with correlative pronouns, which often play the role of demonstratives, as in examples 75 and 76.

Indefinite pronouns are represented by words such as kay ‘some (person)’, kisu ‘some (thing)’ and kunu ‘any, some’; others are formed by interrogative or relative pronouns and the suffix -ba: chang-ba ‘somebody’, ata-ba ‘something’, bibila-ba ‘sometime’, jibil-ba ‘whenever’, beyang-ba ‘somewhere’, jeyang-ba ‘wherever’. The last example may be constructed in the Indo-Aryan manner: jeyang-kunu ‘wherever’.

There is no specific form for the negative pronouns; instead indefinite pronouns such as kay ‘some (person)’, kisu ‘some (thing)’ and kunu ‘any, some’ are used together with emphatic suffixes and the negative form of a verb: kay-bo-n ma’ka ‘(there is) no one’, kisu-n ma’ka ‘nothing’, kunu-din dongcha ‘never’.

4.3 Verbs

Verb is another major word class in Koch. Most of the typical Harigaya verb roots are monosyllabic: bak ‘to speak’, haw ‘to give’ etc. Bi- and polysyllabic verbs are mainly causatives or loans from Indo-Aryan.

Harigaya verbs are strikingly regular. Exceptions are the two copulas: dong ‘to be, to become (equational)’ and tong ‘to be, to exist (existential)’: in the habitual aspect their roots are reduced to do- and to- resulting in the forms such as do’a and to’a respectively.

The conjugation of verbs is very straightforward. There is no agreement in regard to person, number or gender (in the case of the third person pronouns). Harigaya verbs are primarily aspect-oriented rather than tense-oriented.
Table 7. Primary Tense-Aspect-Mood (TAM) markers of the Harigaya verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAM</th>
<th>Marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prohibitive</td>
<td>ta-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>-cha/chә</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future/infinitive</td>
<td>-na/naә</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purposive</td>
<td>-nana/nәnә</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>habitual/gnomic</td>
<td>-a/a/ә/wә/yә</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuous</td>
<td>-to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immediate past</td>
<td>-jok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distal past</td>
<td>-tra/trә</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past imperfective</td>
<td>-mung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absolutive</td>
<td>-mung</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imperatives are made of bare verb roots, with zero suffixes: *Rek!* ‘Do!’, *Li!* ‘Go!’17 These bare forms are used to cite verbs in isolation and have been chosen to represent headwords for verbs in the Koch–English dictionary. Prohibitives require the addition of the proclitic *ta*: *Ta-rek!* ‘Don’t do!’, *Ta-li!* ‘Don’t go!’18 There is no honourific marker for verbs. Negative forms are yielded by the suffix *-cha/chә*: *lagi-chә* ‘do not need’.

The suffix *-a* (and its allomorphs *-ә, -wa, -ya*) denotes a state, generic condition or habitual action. It carries a sense of present reality:

(5) *hatiya-ni sur to-wa*  
    elephant-gen trunk cop2-gno  
    ‘Elephants have trunks.’

(6) *nang ata kam rek-a*  
    2.sg what work do-hab  
    ‘What work do you do?’

(7) *ang dinni may sa’a*  
    1.sg daily rice eat-hab  
    ‘I eat rice daily.’

In some discourses the suffix *-a* may carry the main story line. It is omitted in negative present statements after *-cha*:

(8) *uwә kan sa-cha*  
    3.sg meat eat-NEG  
    ‘He doesn’t eat meat (i.e. he is vegetarian).’

The identical marker is found in Rabha (Joseph 2007:250–252) and Garo (Burling 2003b:390; 2004:121) where it is referred to as present or neutral.

The continuous aspect is marked by *-to* and is similar to the English present continuous marker *-ing*:

16 Slashed are allomorphs.
17 Cf. the Rabha zero morpheme acting as the imperative in Joseph 2007:248-249.
18 Cf. the negative imperative prefixes *ta-* in Rabha (Joseph 2007:249-250), *da-* in the Gara-Gan-ching variety of Garo (Marak 2014) and *da-* in the Modhupur Mandi speech of Garo (Burling 2004:126-127). (Note that the small dot · approximates the orthographical solution for the glottal stop in the Garo language.)
In negative statements it indicates the condition of not having done something yet, but expecting to do it at some point in the future:

(10) sa-chә-to
    eat-NEG-CONT
    ‘(I) haven’t had my food yet.’

Its counterpart in Kocha is -ta, in Rabha -eta/-ita (Joseph 2007:252–253) and in Garo -enga (Burling 2004:141).

The suffix -jok indicates the immediate past or the recent change of state which continues at the time of speaking. It carries a sense of completeness and is similar to English present perfect:

(11) ang phui-jok
    1.SG come-IMM.PST
    ‘I have come/I (just) came.’

A negative statement with -jok means that something has not happened and it is not going to happen in the future:

(12) uwәә phui-cha-jok
    3.SG come-NEG-IMM.PST
    ‘He never came.’

-jok does not receive any further suffixes. It is often used in narratives to bring about liveliness. Functionally it is similar to its cognates in other related languages: cf. Garo -jok (Burling 2003b:390), Rabha -jo(k) (Joseph 2007:256) and Wanang Koch -jәw.

The suffix -tra indicates an event that happened further in the past; it also carries a notion of completeness and is used in narratives:

(13) wa-ni wasi-yә tikә-ye kәi-tra
    he-GEN axe-DEF water-LOC fall-DIST.PST
    ‘His axe fell into the water.’

The suffix -tra is akin to English simple past. It is found in Wanang in the form of -tana, in Rabha as -(n)(a)ta (Joseph 2007:254–255) and in Garo as -aha (Burling 2003b:390; 2004:124–125). In many historical narratives it carries the main story line. In stories where -jok is used to carry the story line, -tra can be used to refer back to something that already happened earlier.

In oral discourse the ‘folksy’ suffix -ka/kә is often added to verbs ending with -jok and -tra, e.g. phuijok-ka, litә-ka. It is not used in literary writings.

The suffix -na/nә indicates the future tense:

(14) chang li-nә
    who go-FUT
    ‘Who shall go?’

In the compound verbal predicate the -na/nә plays the role of infinitive:

(15) uwәә phui-na-bo man-a
    3.SG come-INF-also may-HAB
    ‘He may come.’
(16) ang poray-na lam-a  
1.SG read-INF like-HAB  
'I like reading.'

(17) na-na i kam-o rek-na lagi-na  
2.SG-DAT DEM1 work-ACC do-INF need-FUT  
'You will have to do this work.'

The suffix -na/na may reduplicate resulting in -nana/nana. In the compound verbal predicate it also functions as infinitive but indicates intention or purpose:

(18) hati-yә tikә lu-nәnә hur-tra  
elephant-DEF water bathe-PURP descend-DIST.PST  
'The elephant went down to bathe.'

The past imperfective suffix -mung/-mun together with the gnomic/habitual suffix -a indicates a kind of imperfective aspect with the inherent notion of remote past. It is typically used to describe the setting of a story. Many folk tales begin with a statement such as:

(19) gesek kawra to-wa-mung  
CLF-one crow COP2-HAB-PST.IPFR  
'(Once upon a time) there was a crow.'


This suffix can adjoin other TAM markers: with the continuous -to it results in the past continuous: li-to-mung ‘was going’; with the distal past -tra it makes past perfect/pluperfect: peray-tra-mung ‘had purchased’; with the habitual -a it yields the intentional: lam-a-mung ‘would like’, besides the case described in example 19; with -na it makes the subjunctive: rek-na-mung ‘would have done’.

In some cases mung can be used independently, without any verb root, even without a copula:

(20) ang mama-wa-ni nok-e-se mung  
1.SG uncle-DEF-GEN house-LOC-EMP PST.IPFR  
'I was in my uncle’s house.'

The suffix -mung/-mun is also used to form absolute constructions, or verb chains; in this case the participial suffix -i/yi adjoins the verb root20:

(21) u-wo’o na-yi-mung miyә-barә-wa how dot-a  
DEM2-ACC hear-PTCP-ABS husband-PERS.POSS-DEF angry arise-HAB  
'Having heard this, her husband got angry.'

Three more verbal suffixes belong to the category of mood. The suffix -nang is used to form the conditional:

---

19 Taken the hypothesis by both Grierson (1903a:214) and Masica (1991:429) who suggest that Hajong is a Tibeto-Burman based creole.

20 A similar suffix (-e) exists in Rabha where it is termed incomplete (Joseph 2007:222 et al.).
(22) rang phui-nang  
          rain come-COND  
          ‘if it rains’\textsuperscript{21}  

The suffix -kon denotes probability\textsuperscript{22}:  

(23) dong-na-kon  
          COP1-FUT-PROB  
          ‘Maybe that’s it.’  

The suffix -hun expresses optative or the 3rd person imperative:  

(24) pidan bosor pelem dong-hun  
          new year good COP1-OPT  
          ‘May the New Year be good!’  

(25) uwә-nә bayrang ta-dot-hun  
          3.SG-DAT out PROH-come.out-3.SG.IMP  
          ‘Do not let him come out.’  

Some dynamic verbs join with the verb tong ‘to be’ to yield yet another aspect – continuative. Here the participial suffix -i/y is also employed:  

(26) li-yi-n   tong-0  
          go-PTCP-EMP COP2-IMP  
          ‘Keep going!’  

The completive aspect is formed by joining two verbs: the main and the auxiliary (in other grammar descriptions sometimes called the ‘vector verb’). The main verb often takes the participial suffix -i/y and precedes the auxiliary: naha-y phui ‘to have brought’, bui li ‘to break down’, alay tan ‘to hang (smth.) up’, bak-i haw ‘to have told’, sa-i bakhay ‘to eat up’. In Harigaya there is a whole set of auxiliaries that play an explicatory role (see table 8):  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicator</th>
<th>Basic meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>li-</td>
<td>complete &amp; go</td>
<td>bui li, hecha dui li, tilup li, thi li, nangi/ham li</td>
<td>to break down, to worsen, to be drowned, to die, to pass away, to burn down, to burn out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phui-</td>
<td>complete &amp; come</td>
<td>nahay phui</td>
<td>to bring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haә-</td>
<td>complete &amp; give</td>
<td>biya reki haә, thalang haә</td>
<td>to marry (smb.) off, to set fire to, to light, to kindle, to ignite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tan-</td>
<td>complete &amp; keep</td>
<td>alay tan, dhakai tan</td>
<td>to hang up, to cover up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bakhay-</td>
<td>complete &amp; throw</td>
<td>say bakhay, that bakhay, gin bakhay</td>
<td>to eat up, to kill off, to wash up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{21} This construction is often replaced by the one of the Indo-Aryan type: judi rang phui-ya.  

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. the identical suffix in the Modhupur Mandi (Burling 2004: 158).
The incompletive aspect is formed by adding a non-finite suffix -te to the verb root. The resulting verb form is normally duplicated (in oral discourse even quadruplicated):

(27) tikә lu-te lu-te
water bathe-NF bathe-NF
‘As they were bathing…’

Certain verbs, such as dong ‘to become’, rek ‘to do’, haw ‘to give’, man ‘to get’, lagi ‘to have a disposition toward (smth.)’ often join with adjectives or nouns to form larger verbal expressions. At this the first element (adjective or noun) loses its syntactic role and becomes associated only with the verb, e.g.: mata dong ‘to grow big’, pelem man ‘to love’, hurǝn lagi ‘to get tired’. These types of verbs, also found in Garo, are called ‘empty verbs’ in Burling 2004:118–120. They help create numerous verbal expressions derived from nouns and adjectives and provide a way of incorporating loan words from other languages into Koch: kam rek ‘to work’, sesta rek ‘to try’, dheka haw ‘to push’ (from Indo-Aryan); miting rek ‘to hold a meeting’, redi dong ‘to get ready’ (from English).

There are verbs that cannot stand by themselves but are used exclusively with the second component, e.g. the verb lu always goes with the noun tikә ‘water’ in the expression tikә lu ‘to take a bath’; the verb dap usually goes with the noun war ‘fire’ in the expression war dap ‘to warm oneself by the fire’.

Passive voice is a very marginal feature in Harigaya Koch and it may seem that it does not exist there at all. Passive constructions such as in the example below are very rare:

(28) 3SG,Dist father-PERS,POS,DEF,GEN hand-DAT beat get-DIST,PST
‘He was beaten up by his father (lit. ‘by his father’s hand’).’

The passive-like constructions such as the one shown below are modelled after Indo-Aryan:

(29) 2009 year-TEMP DEM1 book-ACC making COP1,IMM,PST
‘This book was written in 2009.’

The sentence literally means: ‘The making of this book was done in the year 2009.’

There is no formal distinction between active and passive participles. Participles are formed by the verb root and the genitive suffix -ni, e.g. phui-ni ‘coming’ in the expression phui-ni ganek ‘coming day, tomorrow’; li-ni ‘gone, past’ in the expression li-ni bosor ‘last year’. Thus, active and passive participles in Harigaya Koch assume the same form, and their meaning may be understood only from context.

Harigaya is rich in causative verbs which are typically formed by means of four different prefixes of CV.CV type: dV-, gV-, thV-, and gVthV-. The first three prefixes produce the first-level causatives: kir ‘to fear’ > di-kir ‘CAUS1-fear’, ‘to threaten’; jar ‘to flee’ > ga-jar ‘CAUS1-flee’, ‘to drive (away)’; muk ‘to see’ >
thu-muk ‘CAUS1-see’, ‘to show’. Here the quality of the prefix vowel conforms to the one of the verb root following the principle of vowel harmony. The onset consonant of the prefix (d, g, th) depends on the onset consonant type of the verb root. Thus d goes with p, b, k, g, and h; g goes with t, d, j and s; th goes with l, m, n and r; which can be summarized in table 9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causative prefix onset</th>
<th>Verb root onset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d-</td>
<td>p, b, k, g, h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g-</td>
<td>t, d, j, s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>th-</td>
<td>l, m, n, r</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a kind of mutual exclusion in regard to the place and manner of articulation of onsets: the alveolar cannot co-occur with another alveolar, velar cannot co-occur with another velar, sonorants go with the aspirated alveolar only. There are certain exceptions to these rules across different Koch varieties, e.g. in Chapra Koch j and s of the verb root go with d- prefix (instead of g- in Harigaya). A similar, but somewhat more complicated system of causative formation is discussed in U.V. Joseph’s “Causatives in Rabha” (2005). Prefixed causative forms of the CV type also exist in Tiwa (Joseph 2005:105) and Boro (Bhattacharya 1977:177).

The complex prefix gVthV- is attested in only a few Koch verbs. Apparently it signifies the second-level causative as in the following expression from an oral story:

(30) **pore** **ang** **u** **matju-ju-na** **cha** **githi-ling-trә**

then 1.SG DEM2 girl-DEF-ACC tea CAUS2-drink-DIST.PST

‘Then I offered tea to the girl.’

In this story the narrator does not himself give the girl tea but rather has a waiter at a teashop serve her tea. There are, however, instances where the verbs with the prefix gVthV- do not necessarily point to the second-level causation: guthulup ‘to bathe (smb.)’ < guthu-lup ‘CAUS1-bathe’ (when somebody himself gives a bath to a child, instead of having somebody else do that); gathalang ‘to kindle (e.g. a lamp)’ < gatha-lang ‘CAUS1-kindle’ (when somebody himself kindles a lamp, instead of having somebody else do that).

### 4.4 Verbs and adjectives

Verbs and adjectives are less distinct in Koch than in the Indo-Aryan languages or English. What in those languages is conveyed by adjectives, in Koch is often conveyed by words that act syntactically as stative verbs. This is especially true in the predicative function:

(31) **u-wәә** **bok-a**

DEM2-DEF to_be_white-HAB

‘It is white.’

In the attributive function some of the verbal roots receive the prefix pV- as in **pe-lem** ‘good’ (< **pe-nem** where the verb nem means ‘to be good’), or **pi-buk** ‘white’ (where the verb bok means ‘to be white’) etc. However, just like the Garo prefix gV- (Burling 2009) this prefix is unproductive in the modern Koch.24

Adjectives precede nouns in the clauses such as:

---

24 The pV- appears to be more common but not the only prefix found among the adjectives of this class. A few adjectives with different consonants in the prefix were found: hV- as in **ha-jan** ‘far’ and tV- as in **ti-sum** ‘wet’. One can hypothesize that these prefixes derive from real words that have lost their lexical meaning. From the two examples above it is possible to assume that **ha-** in **ha-jan** comes from ‘earth’ and **ti-** in **ti-sum** comes from ‘water’.
The negative form of stative verbs can be used attributively (at least in some varieties of Koch, as here in Tintekiya Koch):

\[(33)\] nem-cha kalumni
to_be_good-NEG disease
‘incurable disease’

At the same time a large class of Harigaya adjectives neither have verbal basis nor can they assume two different forms when used attributively or predicatively. Those are similar to the ‘proper’ adjectives in English or Hindi: datik ‘hard’, mata ‘big, strong’, maycham ‘old’, taw ‘hot’.

Many Harigaya adjectives are formed as echoes: ama-sama ‘dim’, chikri-chakra ‘dirty’, hecha-pecha ‘ugly’ and many of them are onomatopoeic by nature: ding-dang ‘unsteady’, jhilik-jhalak ‘gaudy’, phung-phas ‘wasted’.

To express the tints of colour, adjectives receive an additional reduplicated syllable word-medially: hinjirik ‘yellow-greenish’ (from hinjirik ‘yellow-green’), penek ‘blackish’ (from penek ‘black’).

As is mentioned above, adjectives in the attributive function normally precede nouns. However in many fixed expressions and idioms it is vice versa:

\[(34)\] hem mata
drum big
‘a special kind of big drum’ (not just any); big drum

\[(35)\] chak pelem
hand good
‘an artistic hand’

Comparison is expressed by using the postposition *chǝiyǝ* ‘than’, usually requiring genitive:

\[(36)\] a-ni bukchula na-ni chǝiyǝ pelem
1.SG-GEN shirt 2.SG-GEN than good
‘My shirt is better than yours.’

The superlative degree of adjectives is formed by the same postposition *chǝiyǝ* (or its shorter form *chai*) coupled with the adjective *sop* ‘all’ (Indo-Aryan loan):

\[(37)\] i-yǝ sop chai mata bui
DEM1-DEF all than big book
‘This is the largest book.’

A number of adjectives have entered the modern Harigaya Koch from Indo-Aryan languages.

## 4.5 Adverbs

Although adverb is considered by modern linguists a kind of “catch-all” category we shall resort to it for the ease of classification of many different words that do not readily fit into other available categories.

There are various types of adverbs in Harigaya Koch. Adverbs of manner receive the suffix -*ka*/*kirǝ*: ing-*ka* ‘this-ADV’, ‘like this’; pelem-*ka* ‘good-ADV’, ‘well’. For some adverbs -*ka* is optional, especially in fast speech: *taratari*(-*ka*) ‘quickly’. Adverbs of place are marked by the locative -*e*: i-ye’ee ‘DEM1-LOC’, ‘here’.

Adverbs of motion are marked with the allative -*ang*/-ǝng: *i-yǝng* ‘DEM1-ALL’, ‘hither’. Adverbs of time take
the temporal -e: ag-e ‘front-temp’, ‘before’, ‘earlier’. Some adverbs are unmarked: eghenek ‘like this’; ubila ‘(at) that time’, tamte ‘very’. This is often the case with loan words such as sopsomoy ‘always’. Some adverbs are formed by means of reduplication: ghumut-ghamat ‘suddenly’.

There are no negative adverbs per se. To express negation of adverbs such as ingkǝ ‘like this’, taibon ‘still, yet’ or indefinite kunu, kisu ‘some’ etc. the negative verb form is used. At this the adverbs often take the emphatic suffix -n:

(38)  
\[
\text{taibon} \quad \text{li-cha-to} \\
\text{still} \quad \text{go-NEG-CONT} \\
\text{‘have never been to’ or ‘have not yet been to’}
\]

(39)  
\[
\text{kisu-n} \quad \text{dong-cha} \\
\text{some-EMP} \quad \text{COP1-NEG} \\
\text{‘Never mind.’}
\]

(40)  
\[
\text{kay-bo-n} \quad \text{ma’ka} \\
\text{some-ADD-EMP} \quad \text{COP1-NEG} \\
\text{‘There is nobody.’}
\]

The adverbs of quantity are often marked by the suffix -sa/sǝ and may be further enhanced by the emphatic -n: akuisǝ ‘a little’, pangan/pangasan ‘many, much’.

5  Syntax

5.1  The structure of a simple sentence

A minimal Harigaya sentence consists of nothing but verb. This is often the case when the intended meaning is suggested by larger context, e.g. in short answers such as:

(41)  
\[
\text{dong-jok} \\
\text{COP1-IMM.PST} \\
\text{‘(It is) done.’}
\]

(42)  
\[
\text{lagi-cha-jok} \\
\text{need-NEG-IMM.PST} \\
\text{‘Enough!’ (Lit.: (I) need no more)}
\]

Verbs are often modified by various adverbs. The position of verb within the verb phrase is invariably at the end:

(43)  
\[
\text{pore} \quad \text{bong-na} \\
\text{later} \quad \text{meet-FUT} \\
\text{‘(We) will meet later.’}
\]

A regular Harigaya Koch sentence, however, consists of at least two mandatory elements – a noun (pronoun) and a verb:

(44)  
\[
\text{ang ring-ǝ} \\
\text{1.SG know-HAB} \\
\text{‘I know.’}
\]

There is an exception to this: in positive statements or questions, where the present tense is used, the equational copula is normally omitted:
In such contexts the copula verb is usually implied. Existential copula is nevertheless indicated when there is an implication of staying, living or being there:

(48)  i hadam-e gesek mata morot to-wa-mung
      DEM1 place-LOC one big man COP2-HAB-PST.IPFFV
      ‘There lived a great man in this area.’

(51)  i-yə’ə a-ni dong-cha
      DEM1-DEF 1.SG-GEN COP1-NEG
      ‘This is not mine.’

Similar phenomena are documented for Rabha (Joseph 2007:480–482).

Within a noun phrase, adjectives precede nouns except for idiomatic phrases and certain established collocations:

(52)  mata nok
      big house
      ‘a big house’

but:

(53)  kam mata
      work big
      ‘a name of a funeral ritual’ (lit.: big work)

(54)  kan pelem
      body good
      ‘healthy’ (lit.: good body)
Classifier phrases precede noun phrases:

(55)  
ge-set mata duphut to-wa-mung  
CLF-one big snake COP2-HAB-PST.IPFV  
‘There was a big snake.’

In the Kocha variety it is more common for the classifier phrase to follow the noun phrase:

(56)  
sabǝntǝi mǝng-ning  
son CLF-two  
‘two sons’

Demonstratives, genitivals and verbal nouns precede noun phrases:

(57)  
ei chay  
DEM1 song  
‘this song’

(58)  
na-ni chak-e  
2.SG-GEN hand-LOC  
‘in your hand’

(59)  
tong-ni jaga  
COP2-GEN place  
‘dwelling’

Harigaya is a verb-final language, typically following the SOV order:

(60)  
ang na-na muk-trǝ  
1.SG 2.SG-ACC see-DIST.PST  
‘I saw you.’

Indirect object, especially the adverb of time, may take the initial position in a sentence:

(61)  
 ganek-e orong i-ye’e phui-trǝ  
yesterday-TEMP 3PL.DIST DEM1-LOC come-DIST.PST  
‘Yesterday they came here.’

In a sentence with marked word order the object may change its usual place and move beyond the verb, to the end of the sentence:

(62)  
u duphut-a-ni mung do’-a-mung phepo raja  
DEM2 snake-DEF-GEN name COP1-HAB-PST.IPFV Phepo Raja  
‘The name of that snake was Phepo Raja.’

Thus a simple sentence in Harigaya may have two or three objects, and the order of the constituents is relatively free due to the presence of case markers.
5.2 Complex sentences

5.2.1 Coordination

It appears that originally Koch employed minimum or no conjunctions to express coordinating relations between different components within a clause or a sentence. Coordination between two nouns is often done by means of compounding: *awa-sasa* ‘father and son’ (*awa* ‘father’, *sasa* ‘child’). In case of personal pronouns this relation can be expressed by adding a numeral with a classifier:

(63) "ning mang-ning"

2PL CLF-TWO

‘you and I’ (lit.: ‘we two’)

Coordination between verbs is done by the absolutive suffix *-mung* (see also § 4.3 Verbs: table 7 and example 21). In this way verb chains showing the sequence of events are constructed. This process is very common in Koch:

(64) "ning bajar-ang li-yi-mung thai naha-tra"

2PL market-ALL go-PTCP-ABS fruit bring-DIST.PST

‘We went to the market and brought (some) fruits.’

In modern Harigaya Koch the processes described above are often replaced by using the Indo-Aryan loan conjunction *aro* ‘and’. A contrasting conjunction also borrowed from Indo-Aryan is *kintu* ‘but’.

Another type of coordinating unit is the expression *uwǝni jone* ‘therefore, so’, or its shorter forms *ui jone* and *ojone*:

(65) "uwǝ-ǝ tamten may uhui-trǝ,"

3.SG-DAT very rice hungry-DIST.PST

*ojone uwǝǝ pangasan may sa-jok*

so 3.SG much rice eat-IMM.PST

‘He was very hungry, so he ate a lot of rice.’

There are two conjunctions of the ‘or’ type – the conjunctive *ba* and the disjunctive *na*:

(66) "dher ba dihar"

back or rear

‘back, or rear’ (both are synonymic)

(67) "cha na kophi"

tea or coffee

‘tea or coffee’ (to choose)

5.2.2 Subordination

Subordination in Harigaya Koch is expressed by various subordinating conjunctions or particles. In a typical Koch compound sentence the subordinate clause precedes the main clause with the subordinating conjunction postposed:

(68) "diri dong-ni jone/bade ang nok-ang li-jok"

late COP1-GEN because 1.SG house-ALL go-IMM.PST

‘As it was late, I went home.’
In modern Koch, however, subordinating constructions are often patterned after Indo-Aryan:

(70) **mastar-a how dot-tra karon ang diri dong-tra**
    teacher-DEF angry arise-DIST.PST because 1.SG late COP1-DIST.PST
    ‘The teacher got angry because I came late.’

(71) **judi rang phui-ya ning bayrang li-chǝ-na**
    if rain come-HAB 2PL out go-NEG-FUT
    ‘If it rains, we will not go out.’

Here **karon** ‘because’ and **judi** ‘if’ are Indo-Aryan loan conjunctives. The “proper” Koch subjunctive clause structure in the above sentences would be as such:

(72) **ani diri dong-ni jone/bade**
    my late COP1-GEN because
    ‘As I was late…’

(73) **rang phui-nang**
    rain come-COND
    ‘If it rains…’

Temporal subordinate clause is introduced by the postposition **bilǝ** ‘while, as’:

(74) **hangay hau-ni bilǝ**
    field burn-GEN while
    ‘While they were preparing the land for slash-and-burn cultivation…’

Correlation between two clauses is usually expressed by the combination of a relative conjunction in one clause and a correlative conjunction in another clause:

(75) **ang jingkǝ rek-tra ungkan rek-0**
    1.SG just-as do-DIST.PST like-that do-IMP
    ‘Do it just as I did!’

(76) **ji-yo nang ela rek-na man-a u-o’o**
    which-ACC 2SG now do-INF can-HAB DEM-ACC
    ganek-na ta-tan
tomorrow-DAT PROH-put
    ‘Don’t postpone until tomorrow what you can do today.’

Relative clauses appear to be a feature taken from Indo-Aryan. They take the initial position within the sentence and begin with a relative pronoun:

(77) **je-rong kam rek-cha orong-na sa-na-n lagi-chǝ**
    REL-PL work do-NEG 3PL.DIST-DAT eat-INF-EMP should-NEG
    ‘Those who do not work should not eat.’
In some instances the original Koch form is used, where it is the attributive that plays the role of the relative clause:

(78) \text{nang-en } \text{uwaˈ} \text{ masa } \text{thatni-ya} \\
2.SG-EMP 3.SG tiger killing-DEF \\
‘Are you the one who killed a tiger?’

(79) \text{uwaˈ} \text{ kawra-wa-na } \text{ruti } \text{sa-yi } \text{tongni-yo } \text{muk-jok} \\
3.SG crow-DEF-ACC bread eat-PTCP staying-ACC see-IMM.PST \\
‘He saw the crow that was eating bread.’

6 Elements of discourse

6.1 Constituent order variations

Harigaya Koch is a verb-final language, and the default word order (as in examples 60 and 79 above) is typically SOV. However, to give prominence to the focal constituent, the natural word order may be violated, with the focal constituent postposed (resulting in SVO):

(80) \text{u } \text{birgum-a-ni } \text{mung } \text{doˈ-a-mung } \text{Bogaram khutriyo} \\
DEM2 hero-DEF-GEN name COP1-HAB-PST.IPFV Bogaram Khutriyo \\
‘The name of that hero was Bogaram Khutriyo.’

(81) \text{sopp-an } \text{to } \text{thi-jok } \text{kawi-rong} \\
all-EMP HIGH die-IMM.PST monkey-PL \\
‘As for them, they all died—the monkeys.’

Originally Harigaya appears to have no connectives to express coordinating relations between different constituents of an utterance or to link sentences. In addition to instances described in 5.2.1. Harigaya also employs juxtaposition as in:

(82) \text{ingkǝ} \text{ bhabay-mung } \text{Bogaram-a } \text{awa-bara-ni } \text{tanthani} \\
like this think-ABS Bogaram-DEF father-KIN-GEN left \\
\text{torowal-o } \text{sat } \text{din } \text{sat } \text{phar } \text{dharai-jok} — \\
sword-ACC seven day seven night sharpen-IMM.PST [PAUSE] \\
\text{li-jok } \text{Phepo } \text{Raja } \text{gata-ye} \\
go-IMM.PST Snake King hole-LOC \\
‘Having thought like this, Bogaram for seven days and seven nights sharpened the sword left by his father—and finally went to the hole of the Snake King.’

In this oral narrative there is no connective between the last clause and the previous one. Instead the narrator makes a short pause to bring about intensity. Note that the last clause has a marked word order (VO): after seven days and seven nights Bogaram finally went to the Phepo Raja’s hole.

In oral material the tail-head linkage device is sometimes used as a slowing-down device, e.g.:

(83) \text{wapan } \text{handokni } \text{bila-n } \text{uwa-ni } \text{wasi-ya } \text{tika-ye} \\
wood cutting while-EMP 3.SG-GEN axe-DEF water-LOC \\
\text{kɔi-tro. } \text{kɔi-yi-mung } \text{uwa } \text{ichamote-n } \text{hep-to} \\
fall-DIST.PST fall-PTCP-ABS 3.SG very-EMP cry-CONT \\
‘While he was cutting wood, his axe fell into water. When (it) fell, he started crying out loud.’
6.2 Participant reference

In a narrative, a new participant is usually introduced with a noun phrase preceded by a classifier phrase in a stative sentence with a verb in past imperfective, e.g.:

(84) ge-sek kawra to-wa-mung
    CLF-one crow COP2-HAB-PST.IPFW
    ‘There was a crow’.

If the new participant is introduced by a proper name, it is followed by a special word bakimung meaning ‘called’, ‘by name’:

(85) i hadam-e noksa bhuiya bakimung ge-sek
    DEM1 place-LOC Noksa chieftain called CLF-one
    mata morot to-wa-mung
    big man COP2-HAB-PST.IPFW
    ‘In this place (once) there lived a great man called Noksa the chieftain.’

In the following sentence of the story the newly introduced participant is usually referred to with the use of a demonstrative, followed by the noun phrase with the definiteness marker:

(86) i noksa bhuiya-wa tini longthay kaya du-i tong-to
    DEM1 Noksa chieftain-DEF today stone evidence COP1-PTCP COP2-CONT
    ‘This Noksa the chieftain’s evidence (in the form of a) stone is there to this day.’

Other ways of tracking the participant in a narrative include the following: 1) the use of the noun phrase followed by the definiteness marker; 2) pronoun (more rarely) and 3) the null reference, when much is left up to context. The latter is perhaps the most common method of tracking participants in the Koch narrative.

6.3 Speech and event reporting

Harigaya Koch does not use indirect speech. Direct speech may follow or precede the cited speaker. In the first instance the quotation frame typically contains the word bakjok ‘said’ with the optional conjunction je ‘that’ (of Indo-Aryan origin):

(87) hirai-ju bak-jok (je) nang-en to may sa-jok
    Hirai-DEF said-IMM.PST (that) 2.SG-EMP HIGH rice eat-IMM.PST
    ‘Hirai said: “It is you who ate the rice!”’.

In the second instance the same word bakjok (or bakto ‘saying’) of the quotation frame is usually accompanied by a function word bakimung (lit. ‘having said’) that separates the speech itself from the reporting verb:

(88) nang atana hep-to bakimung bakto
    2.SG why cry-CONT — say-CONT
    “‘Why are you crying?’ (he) is saying.”

The first pattern appears to be modelled after Indo-Aryan, while the second one is likely to be “proper” Koch.

In informal speech another function word may follow the reporting verb, thus, concluding the quotation frame:
Here the word areki appears to be a hearsay marker, when the thing said in the story was unwitnessed by the narrator.

The word areki is extensively used in informal discourse and oral stories to report an unwitnessed event. It is conspicuously absent from written texts. Below are a few more examples from audio-recorded stories:

(90) mama-bhayin do-sek song-e-ni do’-a-mung areki

‘In one village there were an uncle and his nephew, it is said.’

(91) te orong ek-jhon morot-a-mung jit rek-tra areki

‘Now they contested with one man, it is said.’

(92) kintu elo dululul tong-to areki jaga-wa

‘But till now the place has been a marsh, they say.’

6.4 Backgrounding and highlighting

Along the story line certain details (often, additional information serving as a commentary on the theme) may be backgrounded. The same tense and aspect are repeated on theme-line verbs; backgrounded verbs change tense and aspect. For instance, in the story about the uncle and his nephew (example 91 above) an additional background information is given, and the verb form changes from distal past to past imperfective:

(93) tikǝ mata do’-a-mung

‘It was (the time of) flooding/high water.’

Harigaya Koch also uses a device to background the event that immediately precedes the significant development. In this case a duplicated verb in incomplete aspect is employed:

(94) hep-te hep-te tikǝ rumbo thakiyo ek-jhon

‘While (he) was crying, a god rose from the water and said to him: …’

To highlight a change in the flow of the narrative, adverbials such as ekdina ‘one day’, (uwon) jikamay ‘after that’ etc. are used.

---

25 A similar case can be found in other languages, e.g. in spoken Russian there are a few evidentiality markers in the form of lexical items, such as mol, de, deskat’. However they are not used in formal and literary writings.
6.5 Discourse markers, fillers and interjections

Harigaya Koch is rich in particles that have various discourse functions. The most common of them will be considered here.

Emphatic, or intensifier, enclitics include -n, and its allomorphs -en and -an/әn: ang noke-n ‘I am at home-EMP’, ang-en lina ‘I-EMP will go!’, utә thekә-yәn ‘from that time on-EMP’. Another emphatic enclitic is -se, whose meaning can be approximately rendered as ‘only’: tai-se ‘then only’, rutimung-se ‘by boiling only’.

Additive enclitic -bo with the basic meaning ‘too, also’ can join nouns, proper names, pronouns and verbs with a variety of functions: ang-bo ‘me too’, ji somoye-bo ‘anytime’, tini phuichәnә ganeke-bo ‘(he) is coming neither today nor tomorrow’, kalum phuimung-bo ‘although ill’, rang phuinang-bo ‘in spite of rain’.

The enclitic -san/sәn carries the sense of exclusivity: gesek-san ‘only one’, Bogarama-san ‘only Bogaram’.

To re-introduce or highlight a subject which had been mentioned before a particle, to is used: nang to sopsomoy amung towә ‘as for you, you are always with me’. It appears to be a borrowing from Indo-Aryan, where it is widely used, e.g. in Hindi.

A polite particle ne is used when someone asks permission to do something: Ang duwәro golokna ne? ‘Should I open the door?’ The same polite -ne exists in the Modhupur Mandi variety of Garo (Burling 2004:129).

The particle te frequently used at the beginning of many utterances in the oral setting can be described as a filler: it signals a pause without giving the impression the speaker has finished speaking, as in example 91.

There are also various interjections in Harigaya. To get somebody’s attention the Koch people use he!, oi! and o! To draw attention to something they say chatә (lit. ‘look!’). To show surprise – are! To express a feeling of surprise and delight baa! is used; for pity – baphra!; for vexation and annoyance – iss! Incentive interjections are cho and de. The latter also means OK, just as atsa, which originally comes from the Indo-Aryan word meaning ‘good’.

7 Conclusion

The present work outlined the main features of the Harigaya Koch grammar. Many areas could not be dealt with thoroughly therefore they require a further in-depth study. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. In respect to phonology: vowel harmony, consonant lengthening and the glottal stop (they will ultimately affect some of the pending orthography issues); the nature of stress in polysyllabic words.
2. In the area of morphology: noun case system and its relation with definiteness and animation; original Koch numerals and classifiers; verb aspects; second-level causatives; the function of various emphatic suffixes.
3. In the area of syntax: the structure of various complex sentences; reconstruction of the original Koch forms.
4. Discourse is the least studied area in Koch and requires more careful study.

Harigaya, being the central variety, is well understood by speakers of other Koch groups. At the same time it is the most affected by Indo-Aryan and has lost some of its original vocabulary and grammatical features. Therefore, a careful study of other Koch varieties, such as Wanang, Kocha (Koch-Rabha), Chapra, Margan and Tintekiya would be of great benefit: it would allow the reconstruction of some of the original features lost by Harigaya and enable a unique comparative analysis of all the varieties.
References


