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Status of English among the Kokborok and Tripura Bangla Learners in Tripura

M.Phil. Dissertation

Swapan Debnath, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
raj_dn29@yahoo.com

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Swapan Debnath,
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D
E-mail: raj_dn29@yahoo.com

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the M. Phil dissertation titled *STATUS OF ENGLISH AMONG THE KOKBOROK AND TRIPURA BANGLA LEARNERS IN TRIPURA* submitted for publication in Language in India www.languageinindia.com is an original work by me based on my research, that I have duly acknowledged in the said paper the work or works of others I used in writing this article, that I have duly cited all such works in the text as well as in the list of references, and that I have presented within quotes all the original sentences and phrases, etc. taken from the sources that I have consulted in writing this article. I further declare that the paper submitted for publication in Language in India www.languageinindia.com has not been previously published, is not currently submitted for review to any other journal, and will not be submitted elsewhere before a decision is made by this journal. I also declare that I will pay the formatting fee for the dissertation (specified in the Guidelines below) as and when my dissertation is accepted for publication in Language in India www.languageinindia.com.

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Swapan Debnath
Ramakrishna Missison Vidyalaya
Viveknagar: Tripura (W)
799130
Cell No. 09862629805

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A = Adjective

ADV = Adverbial

ADVP = Adverbial Phrase

AGR = Agreement

AP = Adjectival Phrase

ART = Article

AUX = Auxiliary

C = Complement

ENG = English

FT/FUT = Future

GEN = Genitive

INTR = Interrogative marker

IPA = International Phonetic Alphabet

KB = Kokborok

LOC = Locative

mV = main verb

N = Noun

NOM = Nominative

NP = Noun Phrase

O = Object

P = Predicative, also Preposition

PL = Plural

PP = Prepositional Phrase

PRF = Perfective

PROG/PRG = Progressive,

PRES. = Present

PT = Past

PTP = Past Participle

S = Subject

SB =standard Bangla

TB = Tripura Bangla

tV = verb with tense

VP = Verb Phrase

V = Verb

YN = Yes-No questions

1PSG = First Person Singular

2SG = Second Person Singular

3PS = Third Person Singular

C = Complementizer

CP = Complementizer Phrase

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No piece of research work can be done in isolation. This humble effort of mine is also no exception. I owe this thesis to the efforts and contributions of so many people. Without their help this would have been impossible for me. I wish I could mention all of them here.

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****

ABSTRACT

Of late many scholars and linguists have got interested in the study of the languages of the North Eastern part of India belonging to the Indo-Aryan family of languages as well as not belonging to the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Most of these scholars have devoted themselves to spelling out the descriptive linguistic phenomenae of these languages. Exceptions are however always there. There is hardly any sustained and systematic effort for explaining the linguistic properties of these languages with the help of the insights available from the researchers in modern linguistics of course excepting few. More over most of these scholars are non-native scholars whose works are always open to suspicion in respect of capturing the subtle nuances of the language concerned.

Unlike the prevalent tendency, I have decided to look into the various syntactic properties of Kokborok and Tripura Bangla, my mother tongue that is used as a first language by the majority of the people in and outside the Indian state of Tripura, whereas Kokborok is used as a first language by nearly 1.5 million. These two languages are used abreast by the tribals and non-tribals respectively of the state. Tribals use Kokborok whereas the non-tribals use Tripura Bangla ,of course, having dialectal variations.

Given the limitations of a thesis like this, I have made a humble effort to bring out the syntactic peculiarities of the Yes-No interrogatives in Kokborok, Tripura Bangla vis-à-vis those of English. This is because without understanding the unique properties of one's first language which often interfere with the learning of a second language, one would not be in a position to successfully learn the grammatical nuances of the second language. This will lead to linguistic aberrations so characteristic of inter-lingual systems.

It is found that English, Tripura Bangla and Kokborok use two different parameters in deciding the word order within their phrases: English is HEAD FIRST

while Tripura Bangla and Kokborok are HEAD LAST. This phenomenon largely decides the word order differences in the three languages. Again, English has a rule of obligatory fronting of the Auxiliary verb having the feature [+Tense]. This is absent in Kokborok and Tripura Bangla. But Koborok and Tripura Bangla use the non-morphemic elements de and ki which do not have any fixed denotative value. these elements enforce the sense of interrogativeness. This can however be dropped. But there is also a use of rising tone which cannot be dropped. This language too like Kokborok is a HEAD LAST language and uses an apparently semantically empty item ki in its Yes-No interrogatives. It is intriguing how these two languages Kokborok and Tripura Bangla, one a Sino-Tibetan language and the other an Indo-Aryan, could have such close similarities. More research is necessary to study the phenomenon of typological universals as opposed to the impact of language contact.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

Genealogy of Kokborok and Tripura Bangla

1. Genealogy of Tripura Bangla:

1.0 Introduction

Bengali belongs to the easternmost branch, called Aryan or Indo-Iranian, of the Indo – European family of languages. Its immediate ancestor is a form of Prakrit or Middle Ind-Aryan which had descended from Sanskrit or Old Indo- Aryan. Sanskrit is said to be has always an important influence in the evolution of Indo-Aryan through all its stages of linguistic and literary history. The very rich vocabulary of Sanskrit has always been an open, inexhaustible fund drawn upon by all Indian literary languages, Aryan and Non-Aryan. (Sen, 1992).

It is guessed that by the fifth century B.C. Indo-Aryan i.e. spoken Sanskrit had developed dialectal characteristics, and by 250B.c. its structure had gone for a great change. The structural change was such that the language now presented a phase that was different from Old Indo-Aryan, although there was yet no question of mutual unintelligibility. This new phase of Indo-Aryan is called Middle Indo-Aryan, in a broad sense Prakrit, which was found in some four regional varieties or dialects, viz. i) north-western, ii) south-western, iii) east-central, and iv) eastern (Sen, 1992). These regional dialects, themselves changing themselves changing in course of time, continued as the spoken languages of Aryan speaking India for more than a thousand years, until they underwent another sea-change of character and developed in to the New Indo- Aryan languages now spoken. Bengali is no exception.

Following Sen (ibid), the following strata of the development of Indo Aryan from its earliest form to the latest can be sown:

a) Old Indo-Aryan: i) Spoken (unrecorded),

ii) Literary (Vedic and classical Sanskrit), and

iii) Mixed Sanskrit

b) Middle Indo-Aryan evolved out of the unrecorded spoken Old Indo-Aryan and showing three stages:

i) Primary Middle Indo-Aryan recorded in the Ashokan and other early inscriptions and Pali;

ii) Secondary Middle Indo-Aryan or the Prakrits, represented by Maharastri, Souraseni, Paisaci, Ardhamagadhi and Magadhi; and

iii) Tertiary Middle-Indo Aryan represented byApabhramsaand its later phase Lauikika or Apabhrasta (Avahatta).

c) New Indo-Aryan evolved out of Apabhramsha and Laukika and represented by the modern Indo-Aryan speeches such as Assamese, Avadhi, Bengali Bhojpuri, Gujrati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Sindhi, Urdu, etc.

Since its origin from the spoken Laukika or Apabhramsha-Avahatta, the Bengali language has passed through two successive stages of development which may be called Old and Middle Bengali. It is now in its New or Modern stage. The Old Bengali stage is thought to cover the period 950-1350A.D. The Middle Bengali stage stretched from 1350-1800.and the Modern Bengali stage has commenced from1800.

There are four main regional dialect groups of Bengali clearly noticebal from the seventh century. These are:

i) the dialects of West Bengal proper,

ii) the dialects of North Bengal

iii) the dialects of North-East Bengal the dialects of East and South-east Bengal.

The dialect TB is believed to come down from the North-East Bengal-dialect. TB dialect is spoken mainly in the capital town, Agartala and its adjacent area. The linguistic pattern of this dialect attracts the attention of linguistics like, Das (2003) and et. al. the location of Bangla from which Tripura Bangla originated, can be seen from the diagram (1b.) given below within the territory of the worlds language. (Shaw. ibid). Bangla has many dialects, which with the passage of time have taken the present form coming in contact with many other corresponding languages. They are categorized as below Fig (1a.) following Shaw (ibid):

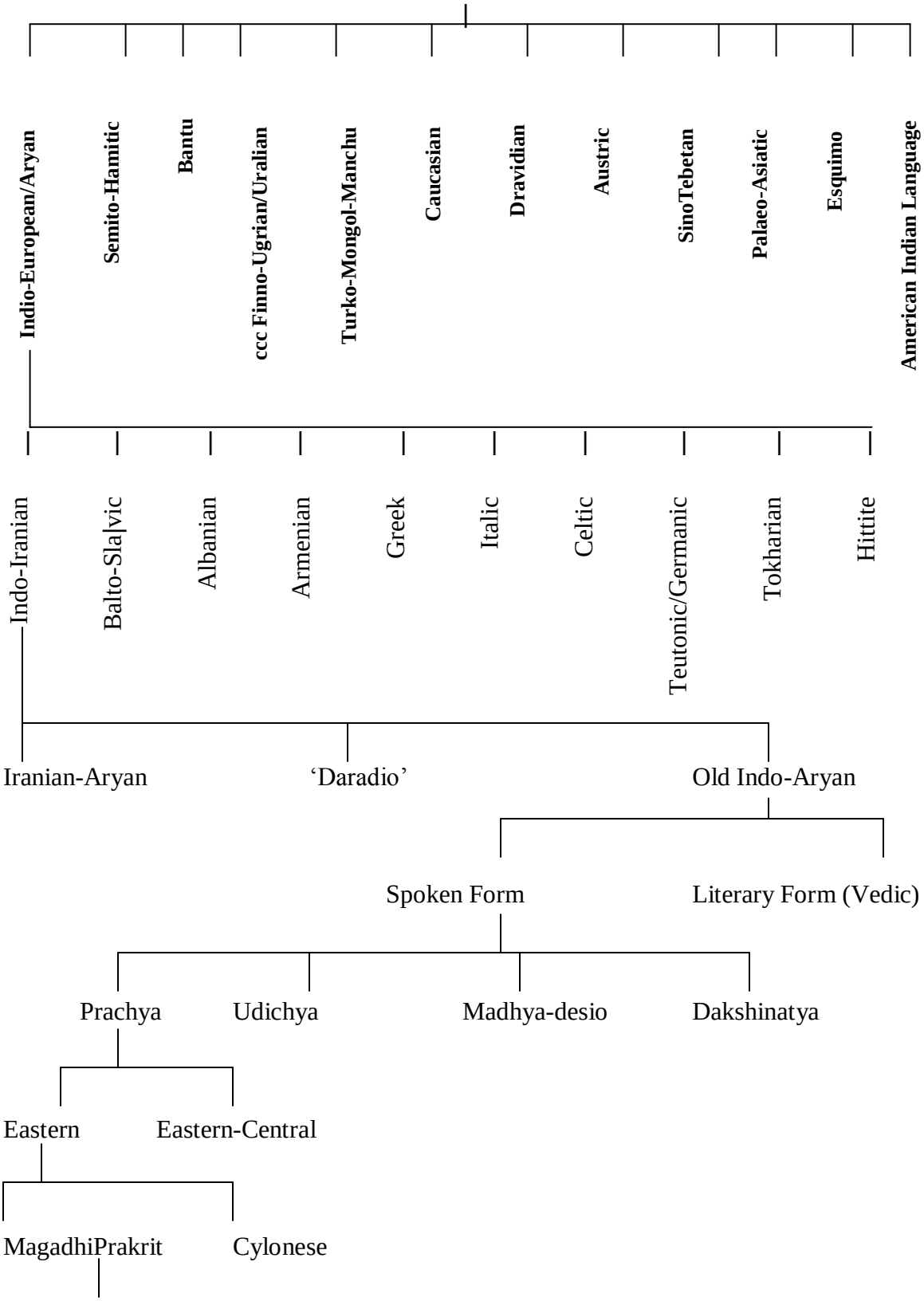
1a.

Dialects of Bangla	Location
a. Rari	Mid-West Bengal(West Rari-Birbhum, Burdwan, East Bakura. East Rari-Kolkata, 24-Pargana, Nadia, Hawrah, Hughli, North-East Midnapur, Mushirdabad.
b.Bangali	East Bengal and South East-Bengal (Dhaka, Moimonsing, Faridpur, Barishal, Khulna, Jashohar, Noakhali, Chatrgram.
c.Barendri	North Bengal (Maldaha, South Dinajpur, Rajsahi, Pabna)
d. Jharkhandi	South West Border area and some areas of Bihar (Manbhum, Singbhum, Dhalbhum,South-West Bakura, South-West Mindnapur)
e.Karupi/Rajbangshi	Nothe_east Bengal (Jalpaiguri, Rungpur, Kuchbihar, North Dinajpur, Kachar, Srihatta, ***Tripura***

Figure-1

1b.

Principal Language Family of the World



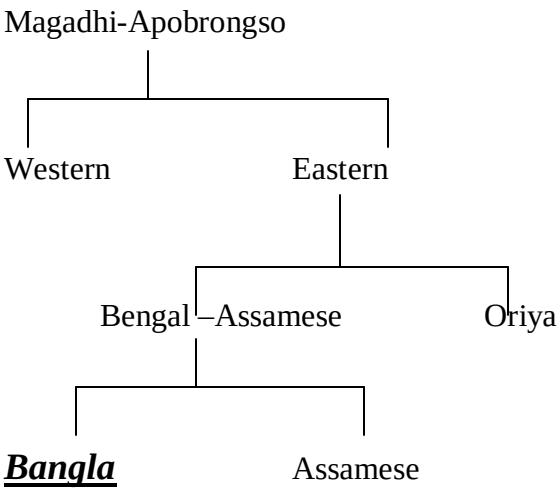
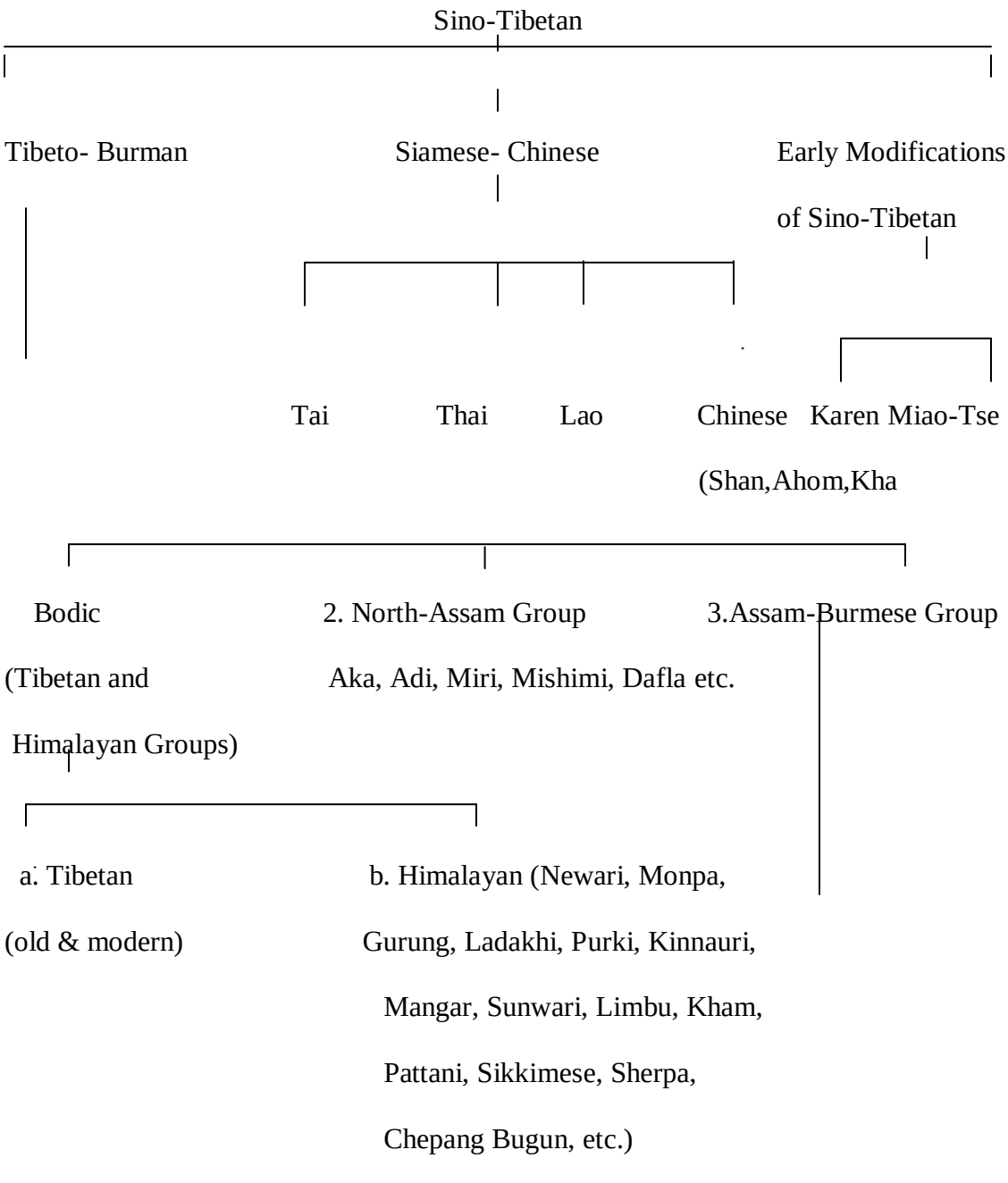


Figure-2

1.2.1 Geneology of Kokborok(KB):

"Kokborok is a language of the Bodo sub-group of the Tibeto–Burman sub-family of the Indo-Chinese Linguistic family. It is the first language of about six tribes of the eighteen specified tribes of Tripura." (Dhar 1987). Tracing the origin of this tribal language Chowdhury (1972) states: "It has nine sister languages in greater Assam of the North-East region in India. The names of the sister languages are Bodo (modern), Garo, Dimasa (Kachari), Coch, Mech, Rabha, Hajong and Moran. All these ten languages including KB descended from Proto-Bodo parent stock and the mutual linguistic relations are very much present in those sister languages of Kokborok. Nearly one million KB speakers reside in Tripura and Bangladesh. It has eight dialects namely Puran, Tripura, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Murasing, Ulsoi (also called Usoi), Kalai and Rupini." These eight dialects constitute Kokbarak (henceforth KB) which was known earlier as Tripuri or Tripura. (cf. Grierson 1967, Vol. III, part II). The genealogical tree below based on Grierson (ibid), Shafer (1955) and Dryer and Buffalo (2000) show the origin and the present location of KB. (cf. Figure 1)

KB is a very interesting language. Its linguistic features attracted a number of linguists over the years. Most of these works are mainly descriptive in character. A brief survey of the same is in order. Chattopadhay (1972) has analyzed phonetic, morphemic and syntactic aspects of KB. Saha (1988) focuses on the origin of KB, its sound system, stylistic and grammatical aspects like parts of speech, affixation, antonyms, proverbs and dialogues etc. etc. His analysis of KB sound system addresses primarily the phonetic issues than the phonological ones. Dhar (1983) concentrates mainly on KB syntax particularly its tense system. It is Dhar (1987) where some aspects of KB phonology have been discussed in addition to its touching upon issues like KB morphology, syntax, verbs, PNG features, case, numerals and classifiers. Chakroborty (1981) presents a short analysis of the formal properties of KB i.e. its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Chowdhury (2006) analyzes, among others, the development of KB from the point of historical and comparative linguistics perspectives. His main thrust is morphological similarities between KB and her cognates. In addition, there are certain pieces of work on KB lexicography. Major among them from the synchronic perspectives are Dhar (1987) and Debbarma (2001). The present study, thanks to its theoretical inclinations, stands apart from all its predecessors. The present work is primarily in the area of syntax more specifically generative syntax. The above genealogical table is based on Debnath (under preparation). At this point of discussion, it would not be out of place to have a look to the dialect area of Kokborok in Tripura given in (§1.2.2).


Sino-Tibetan
Tibeto- Burman
Siamese- Chinese
Early Modifications of Sino-Tibetan
Tai
Thai
Lao
Chinese (Shan,Ahom,Kha
Karen
Miao-Tse
Bodic (Tibetan and Himalayan Groups)
2. North-Assam Group
Aka, Adi, Miri, Mishimi, Dafla etc.
3.Assam-Burmese Group
a. Tibetan (old & modern)
b. Himalayan (Newari, Monpa, Gurung, Ladakhi, Purki, Kinnauri, Mangar, Sunwari, Limbu, Kham, Pattani, Sikkimese, Sherpa, Chepang Bugun, etc.)
a)Baric (Kachari, Mech, Rabha, Garo, Dimasa,
b) Kuki-Chin-Naga
Meithei (Manipuri), Kuki-Chin (Mizo, Bawm, Tiddim, Siyin, Lai Lakher etc.
c) Burmese-Kachin Jingphaw)-Lolo

Tipra, Sonowal,	etc), Naga (Angamai, Tangkhul,
Hajang, Chang, Nocte,	Kachcha, Sema, Ao, etc.)
Lungchang, etc.	

Figure 2.

1.2.2. Dialect areas of KB in Tripura

KB has eight dialects namely Puran/Kwcham Tripuri, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Murasing, Uchoi, Koloi and Rupini. They are spread all over the state of Tripura. In this section we give a brief account of their ethnic distribution in various geographical locations of Tripura.

1. Kwcham Tripuri:

The speakers of this dialect live both in hills and plain lands. During the early reign of Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya Bahadur Tripura, all people of Tripuri community used to use the surname Tripuri. But later on some of them started to use Debbarma, during the reign of Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Bahadur Debbarma. This dominant dialect, which in fact represents the language Kokborok itself, is spoken by the members of the Tripura Royal Family and their close relatives living in Agartala, the capital of Tripura. Some people of this community, living in rural areas still continue to use the surname Tripura. According to the census report of 2001, the total number of population belonging to this community is 5, 43,848, This dialect covers areas of Sadar Sub-Divisions (both North and South) of the West Tripura District. Some of this community also live in Khowai, Kamalpur, Kailasahar, Dharmanagar and Longtarai valley Sub-divisions.

2. Reang:

This dialect area covers areas of both South and North Tripura Districts. In the South the remarkable areas inhabited by the Reangs include Kasima, Kurma, Chelagang, Durgarampara, Satyarampara and Karbook etc. In the North the Reang speaking people live in the Sub-divisions of Kailasahar, Dharmanagar, Kanchanpur and the Jumpui Hills. This is the second major dialect of Kokbarak spoken by about 165103 (qua Census 2001).

3. Jamatia:

This dialect speaking people live in various areas of the Sub-Divisions of Udaipur, Amarpur and Gandachera. They number about 74949 (qua ibid).

4. Noatia:

This dialect is spoken in the areas spread over the Sub-divisions of Sonamura, Belonia, Santirbazar and Sabroom. Noatias number about 6655 (qua ibid).

5. Murasing:

People of this dialect numbering about 2,500 (as per ibid), live in the areas of Belonia, Santirbazar and Udaipur sub-divisions.

6. Koloi:

Their total population is approximately 3500 and they originally belong to the Halam community, the other being the Rupini, who speak KB. Kolois live in areas belonging to the Sub-divisions of Teliamura, Amarpur, and Longtarai Valley.

7. Uchoi:

This is for some scholars the smallest dialect of KB with the total population being about 2103 and the people speaking this dialect live in areas of the Sub-divisions of Amarpur and Kanchanpur.

8. Rupini:

This dialect is spoken in areas of Jirania Block of the Sadar Sub-division, and in areas of Telaimura, Dharmanagar, Kumarghat and Longtarai Valley Sub-divisions. The speakers of this dialect number about 2000.

1.3 Syntax

Syntax refers to the study of sentential properties of language, including its phrase structures, clause structures and various sentence forms. The study of syntax is traditionally known as 'grammar'. Right from the time of ancient Greek scholars through Bhratrihari's *Vakyapodiya* to Noam Chomsky and other generativists, sentence structure and the mechanism of meaning conveyance has occupied the centre stage in the study of language, the most miraculous gift endowed on human beings as a species.

India is vast country with innumerable language varieties (dialects included). Not much work exists today which paid focused attention to the study of this huge linguistic paradise. People interested in society-related linguistic studies get gravitated towards issues like communication in multilingual situation, bilingualism, language change, dialectology, communicative strategies, pragmatics etc. etc. In the process what remains most neglected are the formal properties and grammatical rules which only the native speakers of a language or dialect know best. There are many languages and dialects for which there is no script, for which there is no educated speaker cum scholar who can write up the formal properties of his/her language. Even if there are some, they are so minuscule in number that they feel insecure as far as their linguistic identity is concerned. More often than not, the social stigma associated with their language, caste or culture is so high that they prefer to merge into the dominant language group and consciously make efforts to forget their own language. The result is language death, so regular and so

agonizing. With the loss of language we not only lose a language, the human civilization itself gets deprived for ever from the immense treasure of folk culture, knowledge, literature and lore contained in that language. Every conscious people therefore should come forward to save a language especially if it is endangered. It is with this aim in view that the present scholar got interested to write up systematically the formal properties of KB syntax, especially with the help of the insights of modern research in grammar and syntax.

As far as KB and TB are concerned, these languages which originally belong to some subfamily of Sino-Tibetan family of language and New Indo-Aryan respectively. The KB language shares many properties – syntactic, semantic, phonological and morphological — with languages like Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Korean etc. Interestingly, KB is located in an area which is also inhabited by various ethnic groups who speak one or the other version of the descendant languages of Indo-Aryan group of languages. For instance, in Tripura, one of the federal states of India, this language is primarily spoken. KB speakers are also available in many other Indian states and in Bangladesh. This is the one of the two official languages of Tripura, the other being Bangla. Unfortunately, despite having such a huge number of speakers (approximately 15 lacs) the KB speakers could not yet come out with a standard grammar of their own language. Most of the works on KB available today are done by non-KB scholars, most among whom again do not have the formal training to do systematic research. Only Pai (1972, 1976), Dhar (1983) could be taken as instances of systematic study of the syntax of the language. But they have their own limitations as they did not get the benefits of scientific research in language in their own time. Still, these are the two most remarkable works on KB which are however written by non-native scholars. Among the other non-

native scholars are Chatterjee (1972), Chakraborty (1981), Saha (1988a, 1988b), Acharya (1983/2001), Acharya (2000), Chakraborty (2000), Chaudhury (2007) etc.

The works of the native scholars, though not very many, certainly are worth-mentioning for their honest and sincere efforts to formally understand their language. These are mainly descriptive studies of the language based on the writers' knowledge of traditional grammar and, as regards phonology, on their personal impressions and perceptions. Debbarma (1967), Debbarma (1977), Debbarma (2001), Debbarma (2002), Debbarma (2006).

Study of all the areas of KB and TB syntax require a Herculean task and a few dozens of highly devoted and trained scholars, even for a descriptive account of the language. The present scholar's effort in this respect is a very humble one. It seeks to explore the syntactic features of the Yes/No interrogative questions in KBand TB along side other sentence pattern. And in course of doing so, the issue of tense realization, realization of AGR or AGREEMENT features, importance and rigidity vs. flexibility of word order in the language will come up. The methodological approach will be primarily descriptive and comparative. This is because, in addition to being a time tested method for cross-linguistic investigation, we have resorted to this method for examining the role of language contact in bringing about language change.

KB is spoken in areas in Tripura where Bangla is also spoken. In fact the KB and Bangla speakers frequently interact as they live together. For business, commerce, for day-to-day interactions the KB and Bangla speakers go hand in hand. Additionally, Bangla being the principal medium of instruction in the schools, which are mostly vernacular, the KB students have to learn Bangla. However, they also have to learn English, if not for using the latter as a medium of instructions, but at least as a subject. Faced with such a double challenge of coping two alien systems, they can hardly find

their way out. As a result we notice large scale drop-outs among tribal students, at every level of learning. This leads to their large scale unemployment, and over all economic and intellectual backwardness despite all official and non-official supports to the contrary.

The need of the hour therefore is to find out the reasons which primarily play roles of hindrances in the over all cognitive development of the KB students. This can best be done by first ascertaining the linguistic properties of KB at various levels like phonological, morphological and syntactic etc. which are at variance with the rules of the two target languages Bangla and English. If this can be done successfully and study materials are produced accordingly followed by requisite training pertained to the language teachers in schools, both vernacular and otherwise, it would be possible to improve the performance of the KB and TB speaking students in the academic and other fields of cognitive development.

The present thesis, though confined only to the syntax of Yes-No questions and other sentence pattern in KB and TB in comparison to English makes a humble effort in the aforesaid direction.

****

CHAPTER II

Chapter II

Yes-No (YN) questions in Kokborok, Tripura Bangla and English:

Their YN Structural Asymmetry

2.0 Introduction

KB belongs to Sino-Tibetan family of languages which are famous for lexical tone along with strong inflectional morphology.So is Bengali. However, one cannot but take into account the factor of language contact which goes a long way in (re)defining the linguistic properties of a system at various levels such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics etc. etc. In the absence of any systematic study of KB from the point of view of modern theoretical perspectives, the language remains a great source of mystery. In the present chapter which is one of the core chapters of this thesis, an attempt has been made to explore the syntactic properties of Yes-No (henceforth YN) questions of KB. Comparison with Bangla and English will help us to ascertain the KB features from the point of the impact of language contact and pedagogy. This is because the KB speaking students regularly interact in Bangla language as spoken in Tripura, while they also study English as a subject. Of late, thanks to some English medium schools, they also use English as a medium of instruction. For a better understanding of the problems of KB students in learning English and also Bangla the similarities and differences in the syntactic properties of the two languages definitely promises to be revealing. Additionally, of particular interest is the conceptualization and distribution of tense in KB and TB. The lay-out of the discussion therefore follows the traditionally accepted tense sub-groupings of English.

2.1 Present Tense

The traditional distribution of tense of the verb involves three major concepts of time PRESENT, PAST and FUTURE. Each of these major categories is chunked further into four sub-categories: INDEFINITE, PROGRESSIVE, PERFECT and PERFECT PROGRESSIVE. In KB the fourth sub-category is not attested. Hence KB has a total of nine subcategories into which the continuum of TIME has been chopped up and the concept of time has been represented accordingly in the language. Whereas in TB and SB there are twelve sub-categories representing TIME continuuam. We begin our survey with the subcategories of the PRESENT.

2.1.1 Present Indefinite: Tense marker 'V+ 0'

1.	KB:	[1]nwng	pora	de	swrwng?[2]
		2SG	lesson	INTR	learn
		NP	NP	INTR	VP
		S	O		mVt[3]
		'Do you learn (the) lesson?'			
	TB:	tumi	ki	pora	sikha
		2SG	lesson	INTR	learn
		NP	INTR	NP	VP
		S		O	mVt

[1] KB data is collected from Ajita Tripura, Krishna nagar: Agartala, Tripura.
[2] In certain variations an existential verb 'tong' is used both for the Progressive and Indefinite forms. For better clarity we refrain from using the additional verb in the Indefinite forms.
[3] mVt stands for main verb which also carries finite tense. The need for such representation of tax will be clearer from the subsequent sections.

	ENG:	Do	you	learn	the lesson?
		AUX	NP [2SG]	VP	NP [ART N]
		AUX	S	V	O
2.	KB:	[4]boh	pora	de	swrwng?
		3SG	lesson	INTR	learn
		NP	NP	INTR	VP
		S	O		mVt
		‘Does (s)he learn (the) lesson?’			
	TB:	se	ki	pora	sekhe
		3SG	INTR	lesson	learn
		NP	INTR	NP	VP
		S		O	mVt
	ENG:	Does	(s)he	learn	the lesson?
		AXU	NP[3SG]	VP	NP[ART N]
		AUX	S	V	O
3.	KB:	boh-rok	pora	de	swrwng-lai?
		3PL	lesson	INTR	learn -PL
		NP	NP	INTR	VP

[4] Following the orthographic conventions of English, of late KB-speakers using roman script for writing their language, use capital letter for the initial sound of the sentence-initial word. This we have not used here lest the capital letter is misinterpreted for some other sound in the absence of IPA, which should have been used ideally.

		S	O		mVt
		'(Do) they learn (the) lesson?'			
	TB:	tara	ki	pora	sikhe
		3PL	INTR	lesson	learn -PL
		NP	NP	INTR	VP
		S		O	mVt
	ENG:	Do	they	learn	the lesson?
		AUX	NP [3PL]	VP	NP [ART N]
		AUX	S	V	O
4.	KB:	nwng	kaham	de	tong?
		2SG	well	INTR	exist
		NP	AP	INTR	VP
		S	P		V
		'Are you well?'			
	TB:	tumi	ki	bhalo	acho
		2SG	INTR	well	exist
		NP	INTR	AP	VP
		S		P	V
	ENG:	Are	you	well?	
		VP	NP [2SG]	AP	
		V	S	P	

5.	KB:	noh-rok	hug-o	de	thang-lai?
		3PL	jum-LOC	INTR	go-PL
		NP	PP	INTR	VP
		S	C		mVt
		'(Do) you go to (the) jum?'			
	TB:	tumra	ki	jum-e	jao
		3PL	INTR	jum-LOC	go-PL
		NP	INTR	PP	VP
		S		C	mVt
		'(Do) you go to (the) jum?'			
	ENG:	Do	you	go	to the Jum?
		AXU	NP[2SG]	VP	PP [NP[ART N]]
		AUX	S	V	C

2.2 Issues at stake

Certain interesting things come up from the comparative data sentences of KB and TB and English (1-5) such as role of 'de', 'ki' word order, use of auxiliary, and the mechanism for representing Tense in the three languages. Let us discuss them one by one.

2.2.1 de and its role in YN questions

'de' is an interrogative marker which the native speakers perceive as an independent word though without any fixed meaning and which enjoys mobility within

the sentence within certain restrictions. This we designate as INTR i.e. INTEROGATIVE MARKER. Another interesting feature is that it is used only in YN interrogative questions. It is very often accompanied by a rising tone which invariably characterizes an interrogative sentence in KB. But de can also be dropped optionally. Irrespective of the presence or absence of de in KB sentences, the sense of interrogativeness is carried by the presence of the rising tone. The role of de therefore can be compared to TB (cf.1-5) and Standard Bangla (henceforth SB) 'ki' (6) which is optionally used for example in

6. SB apni ki ekhon jaben?
   OR apni ekhon jaben ki?
   OR apni ekhon ki jaben?'
   '(Will) you go now?'

Both de in KB and ki in TB and SB do not have any fixed meaning in YN questions; hence they are optionally droppable.

7. SB: apni ekhon jaben?
   TB: apni akhan jaiben?
   '(Will) you go now?'

In any case, the presence of a rising tone is a must. We refrain from investigating the issue of the interrelationship between de, ki and rising tone further in this thesis.

2.2.2 *de* (KB), *ki* (TB), AUX and Word order

If *de* and *ki* are absent in English, the latter has a syntactic unit called AUX i.e. Auxiliary which has no role in KB and TB. As a result, the basic constituents of YN

interrogative sentences having transitive, non-transitive and copular structures stand as in (8) respectively.

8a. **Transitive:**	**KB:**	S O INTR V
	TB:	S INTR O V ~ S O INTR V ~ S O V INTR
	English:	AUX S V O (cf. 1-3)
8b**. Intransitive:**	**KB:**	S C INTR V
	TB:	S C INTR V ~ S INTR C V ~ S C V INTR
	English:	AUX S V C (cf.5)
8c. **Copular:**	**KB:**	SP INTRV
	TB:	SP INTRV ~S INTR P V~ SP V INTR
	English:	VSP (cf. 4)

Such a distribution of the two items, AUX in English and INTR in KB and TB, has interesting implications for the word order sequence in the three languages. The basic word order pattern for KB, like TB, SB, is SOV while for English it is SVO. From the typological point of view KB ,TB and SB is a HEAD LAST language while English is a HEAD FIRST language. So the structure of VP in English is VP → [V[NP]] and in KB and TB is VP → [[NP]V]. To illustrate this distinction based on typological parameter further, one could look into the constituent structures of various phrases in the three languages English, KB and TB as shown in (9) below. The head of the phrase is underlined.

9a. **English:**	PP → [P[NP]]	till night	
	NP → [N[PP]]	the book of stories	
	VP → [V[NP]]	ate rice	
	AP → [A[VP]]	nice to see	
9b. **KB:**	PP → [[NP] P]	hor jora	'till night'
	NP → [[PP]N]	kothoma-ni bijap	'book of stories'
	VP → [[NP]V]	mai chakha	'ate rice'
	AP → [[NP]A]	naina-ni[5] naithok	'nice to see'
9c. **TB**	PP → [[NP] P]	raat porjonto	'till night'
	NP → [[PP]N]	golper boi	'book of stories'
	VP → [[NP]V]	bhat khelo	'ate rice'
	AP → [[NP]A]	dekhte sundor	'nice to see'

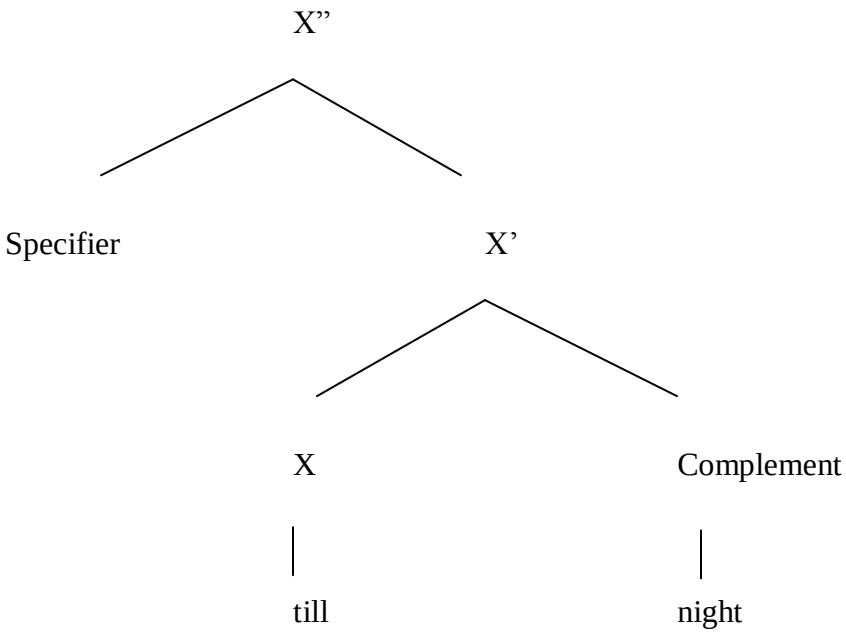
It is obvious from (9) that in English the head of the phrase comes at the beginning i.e. the left most position of the phrase. But in KB and TB the head of the respective phrases come at the last or the right most position of the phrase. This parametric distinction between English on the one hand and KB & TB on the other plays a crucial role in determining the word order variation noted in these languages.

For a greater clarification in terms of distribution of the phrases and their internal make up it would not be out of place here to utilize the mechanism of X-bar syntax

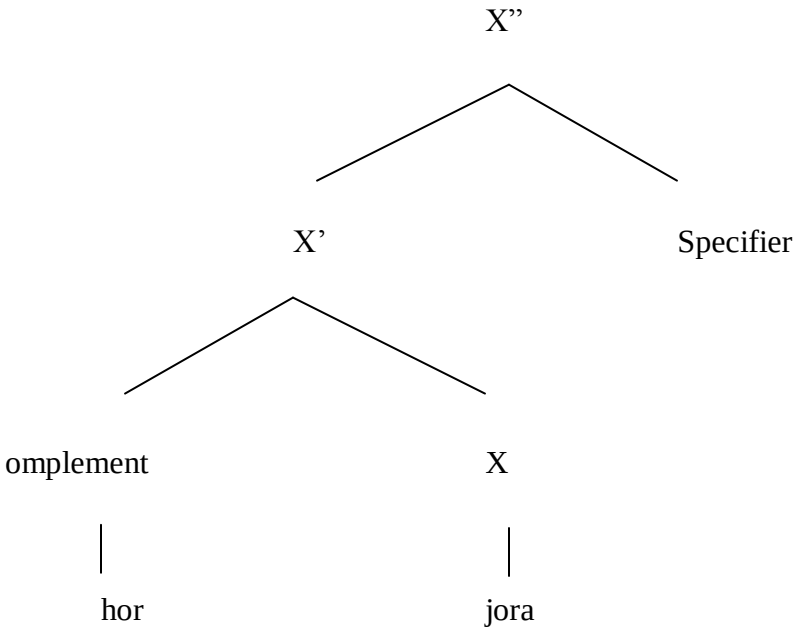
[5] In KB the head of the Adjectival Phrase (AP) governs the complement in the GENETIVE which forces the verbal base to convert to N. So literally, English 'to see' the non-finite form of the verb gets converted to 'of seeing' i.e naina-ni (seeing of). Bangla however differs from KB in this respect and resembles English: dekhte 'to see'.

expounded in Chomsky (1981a, 1981b, 1986a, 1986b), Stowel (1981), Huang (1982), and Hawkins (1982) etc.

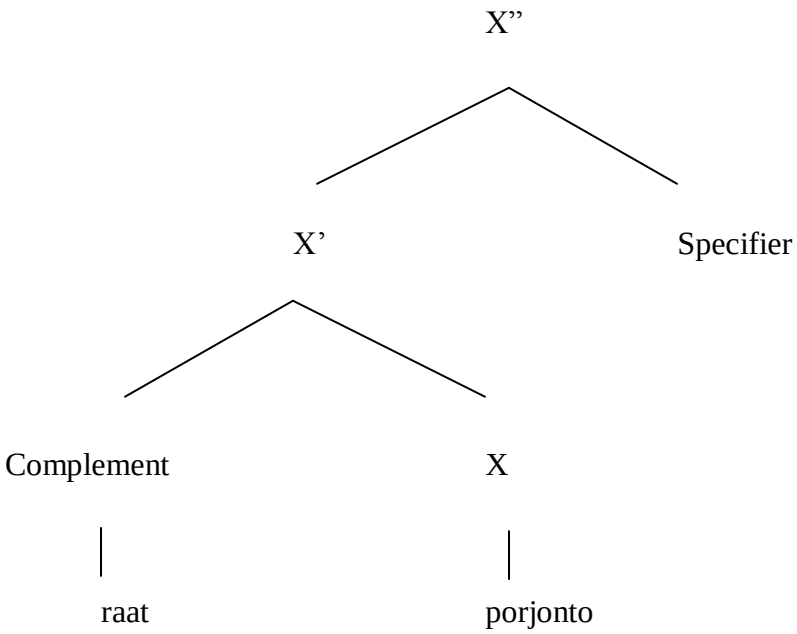
10a. **English:** PP where P = X



10b. **Kokbork** and **Tripura Bangla:** PP where P = X



10c. **TB:** PP where P = X



2.2.3 Tense and Word-order

Coming back to the issue of distribution of AUX in English, this language imposes a mandatory subject-verb inversion in question sentences and the verb in this case is the one which carries the Tense. So we have interrogative structures like VSP ← SVP, the latter being the unmarked word order for basic declarative sentences: ‘You are well.’ → ‘Are you well?’ This means that finiteness of the Tense also has a significant role to play in deciding the word order in interrogative sentences in English. This inference is amply substantiated in English structures with complex VPs. A complex VP in this language generally includes one or more than one Auxiliaries. Of these multiple Auxiliaries the one with the feature [+Tense] is moved to the initial position of the sentence in YN questions.

11. **Declarative**	**Interrogative**
a. He will come tomorrow.	Will he come tomorrow?
b. They will be coming tomorrow.	Will they be coming tomorrow?

c. John will have been playing chess tomorrow. Will John have been playing chess omorrow?

In English non-copular structures where the main verb cannot be moved (for reasons not to be discussed here), a dummy verb popularly known as Auxiliary verb or AUX with the feature [+Tense] is moved to the initial position of sentence to form the interrogative. No such obligatory movement is required for KB, TB or SB: for example in the English sentences in (1-3) and (4) the AUX from the verb 'Do' is moved to the sentence initial position. Random movement of items resulting in radical scrambling is restricted in English. Movement driven by various transformational rules is a highly regular and rule-governed process in the language. Otherwise, being primarily an analytical language, English normally requires a rigid word order to derive meaning.

By contrast movement in KB and TB is not so restricted and the language displays Case and AGR features both through overt morphology and post-positions and in this respects KB shows greater affinity, once again, to Bangla., than to English.

12. **KB**	nwng	ang	bai	rwng-nog-o	thang-nai.
	you	I	with	education-house-to	go-will
	NP	PP[[NP]P]		PP [[NP]P]	VP
	S	ADVP		ADVP	V
	'You will go to school with me.'				
13. **SB/TB:**	tumi	amar	Songe	skul-e	jabe
	you	my	with	school-to/at	go-will
	NP	PP[[NP]P]		PP[[NP]P]	VP
	S	ADVP		ADVP	V
	'You will go to school with me.'				

The two sentences in (12) and (13) agree in all respects: in word order as well as in using both morphological and structural 'case assigners'[6] in the form of P or Post-positions within the PP. As the English translation shows for both the cases English uses PPs with internal structures of [P[NP]]: 'to school' and 'with me'.

An interesting difference however emerges in the three languages in respect of the case type of the NP governed by the P. Let us look at the following three instances of PPs without overt morphology (let us call them structural PPs) one each from the three languages under survey. Semantic values of these PPs are same.

14. **English:**

with me

P I, DAT

[P [NP]]

KB:

ang	bai	'with me'
I, NOM	P	
[[NP]	P]	

Bangla (TB and SB):

amar	Songe	'with me'
I, GEN	P	
[[NP]	P]	

For the PP-internal NP the three languages use different cases: English uses the DATIVE Case; KB uses NOMINATIVE Case; while Bangla uses GENETIVE Case. The reason

[6] The idea of 'case assigner' is based on Chomsky (1981).

for this difference is open to further investigation and is kept out of the purview of the present thesis.

In (12-14) both ‘ang bai’ & ‘amar Songe’, ‘amar loge’ and ‘rwng-nog-o’ & ‘skul-e’ are prepositional phrases if translated into English. But in case of ‘ang bai’ & ‘amar Songe’ the structure of the PP is clearly spelt out as in an analytical language like English: ‘with me’/‘I with’ PP [[NP] P]. But in ‘rwng-nog-o’ of which the base is a compound NP ‘rwng-nog’, the LOCATIVE morpheme –o is suffixed to show its relationship with other words. Same is the fact with the Bangla PP ‘skul-e’ where the LOCATIVE marker is -e.

Again, the inflectional morphemes –nai in KB ‘thang-nai’ and –be in Bangla ‘jabe’and in TB ‘jaib-e’ also substantiate the agglutinative nature of KB morphology. This dual status of KB, TB and SB in between structural and morphological representation of Case and AGR features promises to be another interesting area of study.

As for Auxiliaries once again, neither KB nor Bangla seems to use any such elements in forming their interrogatives. These helping verbs however acquire crucial syntactic value in a language like English as they both carry and determine the Tense property of the action. Their movement is accordingly very restricted and predictable, since their [+Tense] feature assigns case to the adjacent NPs which normally occupy the subject position. The main verb lacking both Tense and AGR features, remain in its place or *in situ* as far as the Subject NP is concerned. In a transitive construction these main verbs inherently possess an objective case which they must assign to the Object NP. Hence is the reason for the non-movement of the main verbs in English. So, Auxiliary movement is also a significant determiner for the ‘free’ or ‘restricted’ movement of words within a sentence. We shall hear more about these properties of ‘split VPs’ in the subsequent sections.

2.2.4 Verb Morphology and Agreement (AGR)

The next important issue in this comparative discussion is the nature of Tense representation mechanism in KB and English. KB has three major Tenses: Present, Past and Future, unlike English where there is no Future Tense i.e. the sense of futurity in English is represented with the help of auxiliaries, modal, and future-specific words like tomorrow, next year, afterwards etc. etc. For illustrations, look at the sentences 'He will come tomorrow', or 'He is coming next month'. In these two sentences there is no FUTURE suffix added on the verb as in come+PAST = came, or come+PRESENT 'come/s' etc.

KB usually marks the tense features on the main verb provided the latter alone constitute the whole of verbal items in the VP: swrwng 'learn+PRESENT = swrwng' (no overt phonetic marker of the tense suffix, which we hence call zero morpheme or 0); swrwng-kha 'learn+PAST' where the PAST tense is overtly marked by the suffix –kha; and swrwng-nai 'learn+FUTURE' where the FUTURE tense is distinctly marked on the verb in the form of -nai. In this respect of using overt morphology for marking tense on the body of the verb KB resembles Bangla, a language with which the KB speakers have greater proximity and social interactions, than with English. Bangla unlike KB and English marks the PERSON features also on the verb along with Tense. This is illustrated in the following examples from Bangla.

15. **Prsent Tense**

a. ami Sikhi → Sikh+i+ SG: V + PRES. (0) +1P (i) + SG (0) 'I learn'

b. tumi Sekho → Sikh+o+SG: V + PRES. (0) + 2P (o) + SG (0) 'You learn'

c. Se Sekhe → Sikh+e+SG: V + PRES. (0) + 3P (e) + SG (0) 'He learns'

16. **Past Tense**

a. amra Sikhlam → Sikh+l+am+ PL: V+PAST+1P+ PL[7] (0) 'We learnt'

b. tomra Sikhle → Sikh+l+e+PL: V+PAST+2P+PL (0) 'You learnt'

c. tara Sikhlo → Sikh+l+o+PL: V+PAST+3P+PL (0) 'They learnt'

17. **Future Tense**

a. ami/amra → Sikh+b+o+SG/PL: V+FUTURE+1P+SG/PL 'I/we shall learn'

b. tumi/tomra → Sikh+b+e+SG/PL: V+FUTURE+2P+SG/PL 'You/you shall learn'

c. Se/tahara → Sikh+b+e+SG/PL: V+FUTURE+3P+SG/PL 'He/they shall learn'

In TB and SB verbal morphology no GENDER or NUMBER marker is used. Only TENSE and PERSON markers are used. KB verbal forms also use no GENDER marker, but it differs from Bangla in encoding NUMBER features in the verb forms. Both KB and Bangla use TENSE markers on the verb. So the comparative picture that emerges between the three languages can be stated as below.

18.

English: V+TENSE + (PERSON only for 3PSG):

KB: V+ TENSE + NUMBER

TB: V+ TENSE + PERSON

Examples:

18a. **English:** I/You/He (SG/PL) learnt

18b. **KB:** ang/nwng/boh (1,2,3 SG) swrwng-kha (V+SG NUM(0)+TENSE)

'I/You/(S)he learnt'

[7] It is not yet clear why in Bangla verbal morphology the PERSON marker changes along with TENSE.

chwng/nohrog/bohrog swrwng-lai-kha (V+PL-NUM+TENSE) ‘we/you/they learnt’

18c. **TB/SCB:**

ami Sikhlam (V+TENSE+ FIRST PERSON) ‘I learnt’;

tumi Sikhile (V+TENSE+SECOND PERSON) ‘you learnt’;

Se Sikhlo (V+TENSE+ THIRD PERSON) ‘he/she learnt’

amra Sikhlam (V+TENSE+FIRST PERSON) ‘we learnt’

tomra Sikhle (V+TENSE+SECOND PERSON) ‘you learnt’;

Se Sikhlo (V+TENSE+ THIRD PERSON) ‘they learnt’

So the summary is that of the AGR or Agreement features between the verb and the subject NP, English uses only one on the verb i.e. TENSE; KB uses two TENSE and NUMBER; and TB and SB also use two TENSE and PERSON. The process of simplifying the complex AGR morphology has reached various stages of degree in the three languages.

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CHAPTER III

Chapter III

Constructions of Progressive Tense in Kokborok and Tripura Bangla

3.0 Introduction

The picture of word order and verb morphology in KB and TB YN questions as discussed in the previous chapter, starts getting complicated when we move on to examine the representation of complex time concepts in the language. In this respect we shall discuss the various progressive forms in the language vis-à-vis English and Bangla-Standard and Tripura Bangla.

3.1 Present Progressive: Tense marker 'mV-wi tV-0' (KB) and 'mV-aas-e tV-0' (TB)

In the progressive tense KB splits up the VP between the main verb and an additional verb 'tong' which independently means 'to exist'? This verb which we call 'tensed verb' or 'tV', as opposed to the main verb or 'mV', functions like an AUX and also carries the finite tense. However, the progressive suffixal morpheme –wi is attached to the main verb. In addition to tense, the tV also carries the distinctive markers of NUMBER: 0 for SINGULAR and –lai for PLURAL. de continues to play its role as INTR and the word order of the sentence remains the same as it is in case of indefinite tense. More or less the same phenomena can be found in case of TB where ki plays the role of INTER as de in KB. In TB also the progressive tense splits up between the main verb and an additional verb-suffix 'tesi' (aas-i), 'teso' (aas-o) and 'tese' (aas-e), (according to PERSON) which independently mean 'to exist'. The following examples illustrate this.

19. KB: nwng pora de swrwng-wi tong?

2SG lesson INTR learn-PRG exist

NP NP INTR VP

S O mV tV

TB: tumi ki pora sikh-taso (aas-o)[8]

2SG INTR lesson learn-PRG exist

NP INTR NP VP

S O mV tV

'Are you learning the lesson?'

ENG: Are you learning the lesson?

AUX NP[2SG] VP[V-PRG] NP[ART N]

AUX S V O

20. KB: bo pora swrwng-wi de tong?

3SG lesson learn-PRG INTR exist-SG

NP NP VP INTR V

S O mV tV

TB: se ki pora sikh-tase (aas-e)

3SG INTR lesson learn-PRG exist-SG

NP INTR NP VP V

S O mV tV

'(Is) s/he learning (the) lesson'?

ENG: Is s/he learning the lesson

AUX NP[3SG] VP[V-PRG] NP[ART N]

AUX S V O

[8] The short and modern simplified form is 'sikso/sikhcho'.

21.	**KB:**	boh-rok	pora	swrwng-wi	de	tong-lai?
		3PL	lesson	learn-PRG	INTR	exist-PL
		NP	NP	VP	INTR	V
		S	O	mV		tV
	TB:	tara ki	pora	sikhi- tese (aas-e)		
		3PL INTR	lesson	learn-PRG exist		
		NP INTR	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	mV	tV	
		'(Are) they learning (the) lesson?'				
	ENG:	Are they		learning	the lesson ?	
		AUX NP[3-PL]		VP[V-PRG]	NP [ART N]	
		AUX S		V	O	

3.2 Past Continuous: Tense Marker 'mV-wi tV-mani'

The picture remains the same even for past progressive forms with the exception that the sense of pastness is encoded on the body of the tV in the form of the suffixal form –mani and 'ass-i', aas-o', 'aas-e' in KB and TB respectively. The order of suffixation between the PERSON and NUMBER morphemes, follows the pattern: tV+0+mani for SINGULAR, and tV+lai+main for PLURAL. But in TB, SINGULAR AND PLURAL markers are unified into theV1 and V2. These KB and TB facts are exemplified in the following interrogative sentences.

22.	**KB:**	nwng	pora	swrwng-wi	tong-mani	de?
		2SG	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	

	TB:	tara	ki	pora	sikh-	chilo
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV
		‘Were you	learning	(the) lesson?’		
	ENG:	Were	you	learning	the lesson?	
		AUX-PT	NP[2SG]	VP[V-PRG]	NP[ART N]	
		AUX	S	mV	O	
23.	**KB:**	boh	pora	swrwng-wi	tong-mani	de?
		3SG	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	
	TB:	Se	ki	pora	sikh-	chilo
		3SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV
		‘Was s/he learning the lesson?’				
	ENG:	Was	s/he	learning	the lesson?	
		AUX-PT	NP[3SG]	VP[V-PRG]	NP [ART N]	
		AUX	S	mV	O	
24.	**KB:**	boh-rok	pora	swrwng-wi	tong-lai-mani	de?
		3-PL	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PL-PT	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	

TB:	tara	ki	pora	sikh	chilo
	3-PL	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT
	NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
	S		O	mV	tV

'Were they learning the lesson?

ENG:	Were	they	learning	the lesson?
	AUX-PT	NP[3PL]	VP [V-PRG]	NP [ART N]
	AUX	S	mV	O

25.

KB:	noh-rok	ri	sw-wi	tong-lai-mani	de?
	2-PL	cloth	wash-PRG	exist-PL-PT	INTR
	NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
	S	O	mV	tV	

TB:	apni	ki	kapor	dhuite	-chilen(aas-len)
	2-PL	INTR	cloth	wash-PRG	exist-PT
	NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
	S		O	mV	tV

'Were you washing cloth?'

ENG:	Were	you	washing	cloths?
	AUX-PT	NP[2PL]	VP[V-PRG]	NP[N]
	AUX	S	mV	O

3.3 Future Progressive: Tense Marker: 'V-wi tong-nai'

In future progressive tense, as usual, the sense of progressiveness is doubly realized by the progressive suffix attached to the mV and the presence of the existential verb i.e. tV tong. But the sense of FUTURE is encoded by the morpheme attached to the tV that also implies the finiteness of the TENSE. The following set of KB and TB data juxtaposed with their English counterparts bears this out.

26. **KB:** nwng pora swrwng-wi tong-nai de?
2SG lesson learn-PRG exist-FT INTR
NP NP VP V
S O mV tV

TB: tumi ki pora sikhte thakbe
2SG INTR lesson learn-PRG exist-FT
NP NP VP V
S O mV tV
'(Will) you be learning the lesson?'

ENG: Will you be learning the lesson?
AUX NP VP [AUX V-PRG] NP[ART N]
AUX S V O

27. **KB:** boh pora swrwng-wi tong-nai de?
3SG lesson learn-PRG exist-FT INTR
NP NP VP V
S O mV tV

TB:	se	ki	pora	sikhte	thakbe
	3SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-FT
	NP	INTE	NP	VP	V
	S		O	mV	tV

'(Will) he be learning the lesson?'

ENG:	Will	s/he	be	learning	the lesson?
	AUX	NP	VP[AUX V-PRG]		NP [ART N}
	AUX	S	V		O

28.

KB:	boh-rog		pora	swrwng-wi	tong-lai-nai	de?
	3-PL		lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PL-FT	INTR
	NP		NP	VP	V	
	S		O	mV	tV	

TB:	tara	ki	pora	sikhte	thakbe
	3-PL	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-FT
	NP		NP	VP	V
	S		O	mV	tV

'(Will) they be learning (the) lesson?'

ENG:	Will	they	be	learning	the	lesson?
	AUX	NP	VP[AUX V-PRG]		NP [ART N}	
	AUX	S	V		O	

29.	**KB:**	noh-rog	sa	pung	samung	tang-wi		tong-lai-nai	de?
		3-PL	day	whole	work	do-PRG		exist-PL-FT	INTR
		NP	[NP	A]	NP	VP		V	
		S	ADVP		O	mV		tV	
	TB:	apnara	ki	sardine		puro	kajta	karte-	thakben
		3-PL	INTR	day		whole	work	do-PRG	exist-PL-FT
		NP		NP		[NP	A]	VP	V
		S		ADVP		O		mV	tV

'(Will) you be doing the work the whole day?'

ENG:	Will	you	be	doing	the work	whole day?	
	AUX	NP	VP	[AUX V-PRG]	NP	ADVP	
	AUX	S	V		O		

3.4 Issues of interest

While examining the various types of complex VPs of KB and TB in relation to their TENSE (PRESENT, PAST and FUTURE) and ASPECT (in this case PROGRESSIVE) the following observations are in order.

Like English KB and TB also split up the verbal elements and assigns them distinct duties. For example, English uses what is called a helping verb or Auxiliary verb or AUX as in the element on the left of the mV+ing in 'is/are mV+ing' for the present progressive, 'was/were mV+ing' for the past progressive and 'will/shall be mV+ing' for the future progressive. Among these in 'will/shall be mV+ing' we notice the involvement of an additional element i.e. a modal (will/shall) before the 'be' verb to convey in

particular the sense of the FUTURE. KB and TB resemble in splitting up the VP into two verbs as shown below:

30. **KB: SINGULAR**

	A-V1	B-V2	
a)	mV-wi	tV-0	(PRESENT PROG.)
b)	mV-wi	tV-mani	(PAST PROG.)
c)	mV-wi	tV-nai	(FUTURE PROG.)

31. **PLURAL**

	A-V1	B-V2	
a)	mV-wi	tV-lai	(PRESENT PROG.)
b)	mV-wi	tV-lai-mani	(PAST PROG.)
c)	mV-wi	tV-lai-nai	(FUTURE PROG.)

where tV= tong.

TB: A-V1 B-V2

a) mV-te tV-aas-e (PRES. PROG.) e.g. zaite aase zaitase ‘is/are going’

b) mV-te tV-aas-l-o (PAST PROG.) e.g. zaite aaslo zaitaslo ‘was/were going’

c) mV-te tV-thak-b-o (FUT. PROG.) e.g. zaite thakbo zaite thakbo ‘will be going

A clear pattern emerges from the study of the verbal forms. All the verb forms both for singular and plural in column A contain the main verb (semantically) suffixed by a fixed morpheme –wi signifying the PROGRESSIVE-ness of the action. The second column contains the existential verb -tong which is also fixed. For signifying the SINGULAR-ness there is no verbal suffix attached to this second element of the VP. A fixed PLURAL

morpheme –lai is used however to indicate the distinction from singular forms. As for ASPECT markers KB uses no overt morpheme to indicate the PRESENT PROGRESSIVE. For PAST PROGRESSIVE however there is a fixed suffix namely –mani while the same for FUTURE PROGRESSIVE is –nai.

The next theoretical issue that crops up is 'Can this second verbal form bearing the AGR features (TENSE and NUMBER) be considered as at par with the putative AUX in English?' Before jumping into a conclusion let us make a survey of the state of affairs in the verbal morphology of TB, the next door neighbour of KB.

32. **3P.SINGULAR/PLURAL**

A-V1 B-V2

a) mV-te tV-aas-e (PRES. PROG.) e.g. zaite aase zaitase 'is/are going'

b) mV-te tV-aas-l-o (PAST PROG.) e.g. zaite aaslo zaitaslo 'was/were going'

c) mV-te tV-thak-b-o (FUT. PROG.) e.g. zaite thakbo zaite thakbo 'will be going

As we have noticed already, TB marks TENSE and PERSON on the verb through overt morphology while KB marks TENSE and NUMBER. Since the distinction between the PERSON- and NUMBER-signifying morphemes are of no theoretical consequence at this point of discussion, we avoid giving a detailed account of the TB PERSON morphemes glued to the verbal base. It suffices us to look at only one PERSON marker i.e. the unmarked 3P, whose singular and plural forms are identical as the language ignores number distinctions.

In the examples in (32) the main verb mV is zai 'go'; with this verbal root the infinitive morpheme –te is added lending the meaning to the mV 'to go'. The second verbal root, surprisingly enough, is an existential verb (as it is in KB) 'aas'. This second form takes the TENSE and PERSON markers in the same order i.e.

V+TENSE+PERSON. So for present tense third person we have aase, for past tense aaslo, and for the future thakbo. This verbal root ‘thak’ is semantically equivalent of aas, though historically comes from a different root. Subsequently sandhi collates the two verbal elements into one rendering zaitase ‘is/are going’, zaite aaslo zaitaslo ‘was/were going’. No sandhi is possible in ‘zaite thakbo’.

Let us now look into the semantics of these verbal formations. Answering this question will bring us back to the mystery behind the existential verb being used in KB, TB and also English. The semantic value of the TB VP ‘zaitase’ ‘zaite aase’ can be delved into like the following: aase means something exists; and zaite means ‘something is in the condition of going’. So the phrase ‘zaite aase’ refers to ‘something exists in the state of going’. Now let us consider the semantics of KB VP ‘thang-wi tong’. The KB phrase is an exact transliteration of the TB phrase. The verb root thang means ‘to go’; the morpheme –wi stands for the sense of progressiveness i.e. something in the condition of going; the existential verb tong means ‘exists’. So the total signification of the KB phrase is ‘something exists in the condition of going’. The English counterpart of the KB and TB phrases ‘is going’ also refers to the same semantic implication i.e. something exists (is < be; cf. SKT bhu ‘to be’) in the condition of ‘going’.

Going by the above discussion, it seems alluring to conclude that the second verbal element is KB VPs i.e. tV is doing the function of an auxiliary or AUX. But the matter requires further investigation since in TB and in SB in general there is a class of verbs which are called ‘compound verbs’ such as

33. Compound verb	literal translation	meaning in use
theke za	‘staying go’	stay back
eshe za	coming go	come back
eshe poR	coming fall	come

more za	dying go	die
phele de	throwing give	throw away
jete de	to go give	allow to go
haste za	to laugh go	to laugh
dekhe phel	seeing throw	to see
jete thak	to go keep	keep going
jete aache	to go has/is	keep going

Formally these compound verbs of TB and SB resemble the KB VPs, semantically there are lots of differences between the two. There is a fixed existential verb ‘tong’ that carries the TENSE as well. Again the suffix –wi attached to the mV gives a fixed sense of PROGRESSIVE-ness. It would not be sensible and factual to call these verbs ‘compound verbs’. The notion of an existential verb referring to the condition of the Subject NP sounds much more logical and viable.

To sum up, the split VPs found in KB are not like the compound verbs attested in Bangla; nor can the tV be justifiably called an AUX. This is a phenomenon unique to KB. Undoubtedly it will bring up a new interesting field of linguistic discourse

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CHAPTER IV

Chapter IV

Kokborok and Tripura Bangla Syntax of the Perfectives

4.0 Introduction

Before probing into the main stream of analysis it can be said that The Perfectives in KB and TB like Progressives have some have some unique properties. This uniqueness is primarily confined with in the VP. Hence the general word order that we have noticed for the Indefinite and Progressive structures in KB remains unaffected. The INTR de in KB continue to behave with its mobile property around the VP.

4.1 Perfect Tense

As a point of departure let us look at the following set of KB and TB sentences along with their English counterparts.

4.1.1 Present Perfect: Tense Marker 'mV tV(paih)-kha' and 'mV tV (aas)-chi/o/e

34.	KB:	nwng	pora	swrwng-wi	paih-kha	de?
		2SG	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	

'(Have) you learnt (the) lesson?'

	TB:	tumi	ki	pora	sikh-echo	
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV

'(Have) you learnt (the) lesson?'

ENG:	Have	you	learnt	the lesson?		
	AUX	NP[2SG]	VP[V-PRF]	NP[ART N]		
	AUX	S	V	O		
35.	KB:	boh	pora	swrwng-wi	paih-kha	de?
	3SG	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF	INTR	
	NP	NP	VP	V	INTR	
	S	O	mV	tV		
TB:	se	ki	pora	sikhe-che		
	3SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF	
	NP	INTR	NP	VP	V	
	S	O		mV	tV	

'(Has) s/he learnt (the) lesson?'

ENG:	Has	he	learnt	the lesson?	
	AUX	NP[3SG]	VP [V-PRF]	NP [ART N]	
	AUX	S	V	O	
36.	KB:	boh-rok	pora	swrwng-wi	paih-lai-kha	de?
	3-PL	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PL-PRF	INTR	
	NP	NP	VP	V	INTR	
	S	O	mV	tV		

'(Have) they learnt (the) lesson?'

TB:	ora	ki	pora	sikhe-che	
	3-PL	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF
	NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
	S		O	mV	tV

‘(Have) they learnt (the) lesson?’

	ENG:	Have	they	learnt	the lesson?	
		AUX	NP[3PL]	VP [V-PRF]	NP [ART N]	
		AUX	S	V	O	
37.	KB:	noh-rok	mai	chah-wi	paih-lai-kha	de?
		2-PL	rice	eat-PRG	finish-PL-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	
	TB:	tumra	ki	bhat	khaye-cho	
		2-PL	INTR	rice	eat-PRG-finish-PRF	
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV

‘(Have) you eaten rice?’

ENG:	Have	you	eaten	rice?	
	AUX	NP[2PL]	VP[V-PRF]	NP[ART N]	
	AUX	S	V	O	

As we notice above the VP for the Present Perfect tense in KB and TB is constituted of an mV i.e. the main verb followed by the tensed-verb or tV which is a fixed one. This verb is suffixed by –kha the putative past marker. In case of TB, it is noticed that like KB, TB also follows the same phenomena. In case of plural form the plural marker –lai is suffixed between tV and the ‘past’ tense marker –kha. In Tb there is no plural marker. It is only restricted by PERSON only.

The matter to be noted is that the mV is used with a suffix –wi which denotes PROGRESSIVENESS (cf. Chapter III). The fixed tV paih which has an allomorphic variant in –bai, meaning ‘finish’ with the feature [+Tense] in –kha denotes the

completion of a work. But this sense of completion is contradicted by the PROGRESSIVE suffix –wi attached to the mV. The question then arises 'How do the KB speakers conceptualize the Present Perfect-ness of the verb?' Semantically the complex VP for the Present Perfect tense in KB is: 'MAIN VERB+PROG. TENSED VERB +PAST'!

Employing the insights of gerundives in English having the form 'V+ing = NP' one can easily interpret the mV+PROG part in KB as an OBJECT NP for the tV paih meaning 'finish' which is also an transitive verb. Since we have already established that KB is a HEAD LAST language, the KB Present Perfect VP can be reinterpreted as [[NP]V]. Translated into English, a KB declarative sentence say, 'boh-rog pora swrwng-wi paih-lai-kha' reads like 'they have finished learning the lesson'. However alluring this interpretation might sound this is also erroneous. This is obviated if we remove the NP pora or the lesson from the sentence.

38. a. KB: *boh-rok swrwng-wi paih-lai-kha

b. TB: * ora pora che-sikhe.

c. ENG: *They have finished learning.

If 'learning' is interpreted as an NP then the sentence would have been grammatically acceptable since the LF requirement of the transitive verb 'finish' would have been fulfilled by 'learning' the gerundive NP. But this is not the case. The sentence (38b) can be easily redeemed if an NP is supplied after 'learning'. That means the verbal root of 'learning' i.e. 'learn' by the principle of C-selection must have an NP at the LF as well as PF as its Object complement. In other words the word 'learning' continues to function as a verb only, not as a noun. In terms of Case theory of GB, there will be fatal error to treat

learning as a noun because in that case the NP 'lesson' will not get any Case and an NP minus Case is never parsed. The same argument holds for KB.

Summary of the discussion therefore is that the semantic interpretation of the KB in comparison with TB and ENG, VP in the Present Perfect form needs to be interpreted semantically as 'an action which has been continuing for some in the recent past, has come to an end'. This interpretation however is far from definitive.

4.1.2 Past Perfect: Tense Marker: 'V paih-jak'

In the Past Perfect form the PROG. suffix –wi is dropped and the mV appears in bare form i.e. without any overt inflectional morpheme. Additionally with the tV a suffix –jak is added. The PLURAL marker –lai continues to hold its position immediately after the tV paih and before –jak. These facts of KB are illustrated by the following set of data.

39.	KB:	nwng	pora	swrwng	paih-jak	de
		2SG	lesson	learn	finish-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	V		
		'Had you learnt the lesson?'				
	TB:	tumi	ki	pora	sikhe-chile	
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn-finish-PRF	
		NP		NP	VP	V
		S		O	V	
	ENG:	Had		you	learnt	the lesson
		AUX-PT-PRF		NP[2SG]	VP[V-PTP]	NP [ART N]
		AUX		S	mV	O

40.	KB:	boh	pora	swrwng	paih-jak	de?
		3SG	lesson	learn	finish-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	V		
	TB:	se	ki	pora	sikhe-chilo	
		3SG	INTR	lesson	learn	finish-PRF
		NP		NP	VP	V
		S		O	V	
		‘Had s/he learnt the lesson?’				
	ENG:	Had	he/she	learnt	the lesson?	
		AUX-PT-PRF	NP[3SG]	VP[V-PTP]	NP [ART N]	
		AUX	S	mV	O	
41.	KB:	boh-rok	pora	swrwng	paih-lai-jak	de?
		3-PL	lesson	learn	finish-PL-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	V		
	TB:	tara	ki	porata	sikhe-chilo	
		3-PL	INTR	lesson	learn	finish-PL-PRF
		NP		NP	VP	V
		S		O	V	
		‘Had they learnt the lesson?’				
	ENG:	Had	they	learnt	the lesson?	
		AUX-PT-PRF	NP[3PL]	VP[V-PTP]	NP [ART N]	
		AUX	S	mV	O	

42.	KB:	nwng	mai	chah	paih-jak	de?
		2SG	rice	eat	finish-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	V		
	TB:	tumi	ki	bhat	kheye-chile	
		2SG	INTR	rice	eat	finish-PRF
		NP	NP		VP	V
		S		O	V	
		‘Had you eaten rice?’				
	ENG:	Had	you	eaten	rice?	
		AUX-PT-PRF	NP[2SG]	VP[V-PTP]	NP [N]	
		AUX	S	mV	O	

43.

KB:	nwma	phai-ma-ni	swkang	nwng	thui	paih-jak	de?
	your mother	come-N-Gen	before	you	sleep	finish-PRF	INTR
	NP	PP[[NP-GEN] P]		NP	VP	V	
	S	ADV		S	mV	tV	
	‘Had you slept before your mother came?’						
	ENG: Had	you	slept	before	your mother	came?	
	AUX-PT-PRF	NP[2SG]	VP[V-PTP]	ADVP	NP [GEN N]		
	AUX	S	V		S	V	

4.1.3 Future Perfect: Tense Marker: 'V-bia/paih tong-nai'

In this form of the YN interrogatives, once again the moot point turns out to be the internal make of the VP. An interesting development takes place here? The mV is affixed (or compounded?) by the verb paih (/bai) and thus brings in a shade of meaning of 'finish' or having finished a work etc. More surprises awaits us however. The existential verb 'tong' is introduced again as the tV and it is suffixed with the putative FUTURE marker -nai. They can appear on either of the sides of the VP. As for PLURAL marker –lai for all persons continues to hold its position in between the tV root and the suffixal morpheme –nai. The following sentences attest these facts of KB.

41. KB: nwng pora swrwng-bai tong-nai de?
2SG lesson learn-end-PRF exist-FT INTR
NP NP VP V
S O mV tV
'(Will) you have learnt the lesson?'

ENG: Will you have learnt the lesson?
AUX NP[2SG] VP[AUX V-PTP] NP[ART N]
AUX S V O

42. KB: boh pora swrwng-bai tong-nai de?
3SG lesson learn-end-PRF exist-FT INTR
NP NP VP V INTR
S O mV tV
'(Will) s/he have learnt (the) lesson?'

ENG: Will s/he have learnt the lesson?
AUX NP[3SG] VP[AUX V-PTP] NP[ART N]
AUX S V O

43. KB: boh-rog pora swrwng-bai tong-nai de?

3-PL lesson learn-end-PRF exist-FT INTR

NP NP VP V INTR

S O mV tV

'(Will) they have learnt (the) lesson?'

ENG: Will they have learnt the lesson?

AUX NP[3PL] VP[AUX V-PTP] NP[ART N]

AUX S V O

44.

KB: nwng jora-ni bising nog-o thang-bai tong-nai de?

2SG time-GEN in home-LOC go-end-PRF exist-FT INTR

NP [NP P]PP [NP P]PP VP V

S ADV C mV tV

'(Will) you have reached (at) home in time?'

ENG: Will you have reached home in time?

AUX NP[2SG] VP[AUX V PTP] NP PP[P N]

AUX S V C ADV

45.

KB: noh-rog sanja-ni swkang samung tang-bai tong-lai-nai de?

2-PL sunset-(GEN) before work do-end-PRF exist-FT INTR

NP [NP P]PP NP VP V INTR

S ADV O mV tV

'(Will) you have finished the work before sunset?'

ENG: Will you have finished the work before sunset?

AUX NP[2PL] VP[AUX V-PTP] NP PP[P NP]

AUX S V O ADV

Point to be noted is that there are as many as three verbs in the VP for the Future Perfect Tense presented as the following.

46. KB: [[[swrwng]-[pai]] [[tong]-nai]]

ENG: [[[learn]-[finish]] [[exist]-FT]]

Paraphrased into English the VP will read as "'Somebody 'learn-finished will exist'" i.e. the subject will exist having finished his/her/their learning. For more discussion from the comparative perspective let us move on to the next section.

4.2 Differences in realization of Tense between KB and TB and other languages

Cross linguistically use of multiple verbal items within the VP for giving expression to complex concepts of temporal entity is nothing new. But while it is possible for a native speaker to acquire and apprehend the subtle nuances or shades of meaning carried by each of the morphemes, whether agglutinative or structural, it becomes immensely difficult for the non-native users of the language. The non-native learner of the language will have to reorient himself or herself to get at the underlying conceptualization process of the native speakers. And quite understandably this is easier said. But does it mean that there is nothing common in the interpretation and understanding of the reality among the people speaking various languages? This is certainly not true as it goes against the principle of linguistic, or more appropriately, cognitive universals. As members of the

same species human beings certainly share some common features in their conceptualization and interpretation of the reality. Let us have a closer look at the VPs of KB for various forms of Perfectives and compare them with those of English and TB and SB.

47. Present Perfect

Language	Form of VP	Illustration	Gloss
1. KB	mV-wi tV(paih)-kha	swrwng-wi paih-kha	Leanr-ing finish-Past
2. English	AUX-T mV-PTP	has learnt	has learn+PTP
3. TB/SB	mV-NONF exist-3P	Sikhia-ache >Sikheche	After learning exists

48. Past Perfect

Language	Form of VP	Illustration	Gloss
1. KB	V paih-jak	swrwng paih-jak	learn finished
2. English	AUX-PT-PRF VP[V-PTP]	Had learnt	
3. TB/SB	Same as Past Indefinite		

49. Future Perfect

Language	Form of VP	Illustration	Gloss
1. KB	V-bia/paih tong-nai	swrwng-bai tong-nai	Learn-finish exist will
2. English	AUX VP[AUX V-PTP]	will have learnt	
3. TB/SB	mV-NONF exist FT 3P	Sikhia thakbe > Sikhe thakbe	After learning will exist

Though semantic analysis is out of the purview of the present study, it is obvious from the study of the VPs of the three languages for the three forms of the Perfect Tense and their corresponding gloss, that all the three languages use multiple verbal items to express the complexity of the concept of time. In English the use of modals like shall/will followed by the AUX followed by the mV in Past Participle or PTP form is the standard

for the future perfect. KB also uses three verbs ‘swrwing’, ‘bai’ and ‘tong’ followed by the Future marking suffix –nai. Thus although it is not yet certain whether the tV in KB should be given the status of an AUX, we notice definite similarity in the concept formation and linguistic representation of this chunk of temporal entity in the two languages. TB/SB in this respect uses only two verbs Sikh-ia thak-b-e. The suffix –ia means ‘having done/finished’ and can be considered as semantic equivalent of paih in KB. The TB/SB verb thak means ‘to stay’ or ‘to exist’; and thus is the semantic equivalent of ‘tong’ in KB. So with two suffixes one each for the mV and the tV, Bangla captures the idea of Future Perfectness. Both English and KB uses three verbs (considering ‘paih’ as a verb here) and one suffix -- with the mV in English and with tV in KB.

Similarly, for the Past Perfect KB uses ‘mV tV-jak’ where the main verb is used in the bare form while the tV is suffixed with –jak. The picture in English is slightly different: English uses AUX+Tense and mV+PTP i.e. two verbs and two suffixes. TB/SB makes no representational distinction between Past Indefinite and Past Perfect, although conceptually, difference is clearly discernible to any native speaker.

The most democratic distribution in terms of the number of verbal items and their suffixal items across the three languages under study is noticed in the case of Present Perfect. Here KB uses mV-wi tV-kha. That is, two verbs and two suffixes. So does English: have+tense and mV + PTP. In case of TB/SB the mV carries the NON-FINITE suffix –ia and the existential verb aach+3P.

In the following chapter (Chapter VI) we jump in to the analysis of the syntactical structural differences amongst KB, TB and ENG with respect to wh- questions,. It will

help to find out the way to formulate in parsing the wh –structure of KB and TB in to ENG.

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CHAPTER --V

Chapter V

Pedagogical Implications

5.0 Introduction

In this concluding section we shall see how the findings of our research can help us in teaching English as a second language better. But before that let us have a brief look at the scenario of language learning practices and methods which dominated the area for the last one hundred years at least.

5.1 Issues of interest

The issue of an effective method of teaching a second or foreign language is still a burning one. People have been doing research in this area for more than one hundred years now. As a result we have seen the emergence of many theories of language teaching and learning. These include the age old Grammar Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Situational Language Teaching, Communicative Language Teaching, Total Physical Response, the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, the Natural Approach, Suggestopedia etc. All theories leak, goes the saying. So no theory is foolproof. Every theory while implemented comes up with certain limitations. These limitations are subsequently sought to be remedied. And this gives birth to a new theory. Of course behind every such theory there is an approach at work and that approach in its turn is born of certain central premises about the nature and operational mode of human language. So the people admiring the Grammar Translation method looked upon language primarily as a matter of reading and writing. Being the oldest, its primary objective was to equip the learners with the essential information about the grammatical rules of the target language and give them sufficient training in translating from the first language to the second language and vice versa. They addressed only two of the four skills of language learning i.e. Reading and Writing. This is because their primary goal

was to enable the learners to read and understand the classical literatures of ancient Greece and Rome. The other two methods namely Listening and Speaking were never regarded as relevant for language learning. With the arrival of the Audio-Lingual method based on the Structuralist premises, all the four skills came into focus. But this method failed as it neglected the role of mind in language learning. For this school of applied linguists language learning is primarily a process of habit formation based of stimulus-response theory. As a reaction to this method of second language teaching came the mentalist approach called the Communicative Language Teaching. This method gives primacy to communicational proficiency, grammar rules are treated as secondary and error-correction was hardly ever resorted to, if at all. This is because according to this school, hugely influenced by the generativist school of linguists, believe that all human babies are inherently equipped with a Language Acquisition Device or LAD. This device is activated when linguistic inputs start coming in resulting in the child's learning of the language/s to which it is exposed in its early and formative years. Grammar rules follow automatically, as the learner goes on forming its own 'growing grammar' and gets it corrected and refined through checking and cross-checking with the elders who are the model of native speakers for the child.

But even this method failed to prove itself successful across the board in all situations and all places. As of now no method could prove itself cent percent effective in all times and places. Hence a combinatorial approach according to necessity is the in thing in language pedagogy across the world today. Along with fluency of communication learning the rules of grammar and regular practice (drills) are also emphasized on.

In India, in fact this combinatorial approach is found to be most effective because of the immensely diverse nature of the learners in a highly populated multi linguistic

situation. From my own experience as a practicing teacher of English, I also believe that along with communication, learning grammar rules of the target language is of equal importance. Without this no language learning can achieve its desired goal. For doing so, a crucial step would be to make the learners aware of the differences in grammatical forms and devices in the two languages. The rules of the native language automatically intervene with the rules of the second language. This is because whenever necessary the learners tend to subconsciously supply the linguistic forms and rules of their first language to the second language. This is particularly true of second language learners. This cross-linguistic application of rules is what we popularly term as 'errors' and penalize the learners for such aberrations. A serious study would reveal that these errors are not idiosyncratic or random. On the contrary they are highly systematic reflecting the interlingual grammar of the learners.

5.2 Similarities and Dissimilarities between KB and TB and English

The KB and TB speaking students in Tripura are today confronted with multiple challenges. They have to learn both SB and English, both as second languages. While for the former they get many 'teachers' around them in the form of the Bangla speakers around them, for the latter there is hardly any atmosphere conducive to language learning outside the classroom. But what does a poor teacher do alone in the class where the number of learners far out number the ideal ratio of 1:20 i.e. one teacher for twenty learners at a time. More over both the KB and TB learners come from varied linguistic backgrounds each having its own first language grammar in their mind.

Still, taking up the issue of teaching English only to the KB and TB students, the teacher would do well to equip herself/himself with the rules of both KB and TB and English. Unfortunately, no such standard grammar book exists for KB and TB written

with a pedagogical intention. The ones available deal mainly with grammar structures to be memorized. They do not reveal the under lying rules behind such systems which can be compared and contrasted with the rules of the target language i.e. English.

As we have seen in chapters II and III, in forming the YN interrogative sentences KB and TB and English adopt different strategies and this results in varied word orders in the three languages. Let us enumerate some of them here.

In English Imperatives need obligatory fronting of the Tensed verb i.e. to the left of the subject NP and at the beginning of the sentence. In case of copular verbs which also bear the Tense, the main verb itself is fronted. In non-copular constructions a dummy verb called AUX in the form of be/do/have is created and is endowed with Tense and AGR features. This verb is then fronted to the initial position of the sentence. This renders the English YN constructions as AUX S (V) O/P illustrated below.

51. Are you well?

Do you know me?

Have you done the work?

When there are multiple auxiliaries the one with the Tense and AGR features is fronted.

52. Will you be writing the letter?

Will he have reached home by this time?

In KB and TB there is no need for any such fronting. No helping verb is needed for the indefinite form (cf 53 below). The helping verb tV which also carries the Tense and AGR features can remain in situ i.e. within the VP. Significantly, the tV never can come even before the mV – a phenomenon we interpreted as because of the strong parametric choice made by KB and TB for being a HEAD LAST language. The putative question item de in KB which is equivalent to TB ki appears either before or after the VP.

53.:	KB:	nwng	pora	de	swrwng?
		you	lesson		learn
	TB:	tumi	ki	pora	sikho?
		you		lesson	learn
		'Do you learn the lesson?'			
54.	KB:	nwng	kaham	de	tong?
		You	fine		are
	TB:	tumi	ki	bhalo	acho?
		You		fine	are
		'Are you fine'			
55.	KB:	boh	pora	swrwng-kha	de?
		He	lesson	learnt	
	TB:	se	ki	pora	sikhe-chilo
		He		lesson	learnt
		'Did he learn the lesson?'			
56.	KB:	nwng	pora	swrwng-nai	de?
		You	lesson	learn will	
	TB:	tumi	ki	pora	sikh-be?
		You		lesson	learn will
		'Will you learn the lesson?'			

As we see in (53-56) no additional verb is used for the indefinite forms. This is true even for copular constructions like (54). So the points of difference between KBand TB and English infinitive structures for YN interrogatives can be summed up as in (57) below, re-presented from (8) above.

57a. Transitive:	Kokborok:	S O INTR V	
	Tripura Bangla:	S INTR O V	
	English:	AUX S V O	(cf. 1-3)

57b. Intransitive:	Kokborok:	S C INTR V	
	Tripura Bangla:	S INTR C V	
	English:	AUX S V C	(cf.5)

57c. Copular:	Kokborok:	SP INTRV	
	Tripura Bangla:	SINTRP V	
	English:	VSP	(cf. 4)

KB and TB however also use a helping verb in the form of what we termed tV. But that of necessity remains within the VP and occurs immediately after the mV which is [--Tense] and [–AGR]. Verbs like paih-kha (KB), sikhe-cho (TB) (58), paih-jak, sikhe-chile (TB) (59), tong-nai, sikhe-thakbe (TB) (60), tong-mani. sikhe-thakbe(TB) (61), tong (62) and tong-nai (63) are all examples of tV in KB and TB.

58.	KB	nwng	pora	swrwng-wi	paih-kha	de?
		2SG	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	
	TB:	tumi	ki	porata	sikhe-cho	
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	finish-PRF

		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV

‘(Have) you learnt (the) lesson?’

59.	KB:	nwng	pora	swrwng	paih-jak	de	
		2SG	lesson	learn	finish-PRF	INTR	
		NP	NP	VP	V		
		S	O	V			
	TB:	tumi	ki	porata	sikhe-chile		
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn	finish-PRF	
		NP		NP	VP	V	
		S		O	V		

‘Had you learnt the lesson?’

60.	KB:	boh	pora	swrwng-bai	tong-nai	de?	
		3SG	lesson	learn-end-PRF	exist-FT	INTR	
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR	
		S	O	mV	tV		
	TB:	tumi	ki	porata	sikhe-thakbe		
		3SG	INTR	lesson	learn-end-PRF	exist-FT	
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V	
		S		O	mV	tV	

‘(Will) s/he have learnt (the) lesson?’

61.	KB:	Nwng	pora	swrwng-wi	tong-mani	de?
		2SG	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	INTR
		S	O	mV	tV	
	TB:	tumi	ki	porata	sikh- chile	
		2SG	INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-PT
		NP	INTR	NP	VP	V
		S		O	mV	tV
		‘Were you	learning	(the) lesson?’		

62.	KB:	nwng	pora	de	swrwng-wi	tong?	
		2SG	lesson	INTR	learn-PRG	exist	
		NP	NP	INTR	VP		
		S	O		mV	tV	
	TB:	tumi		ki	porata	sikh-	teso
		2SG		INTR	lesson	learn-PRG	exist
		NP		INTR	NP	VP	
		S			O	mV	tV

‘Are you learning the lesson?’

63	KB:	nwng	pora	swrwng-wi	tong-nai	de?
		2SG	lesson	learn-PRG	exist-FT	INTR
		NP	NP	VP	V	
		S	O	mV	tV	
	TB:	tumi		ki	porata	sikhte- thakbe
		2SG		INTR	lesson	learn-PRG exist-FT

NP	NP	VP	V
S	O	mV	tV

‘(Will) you be learning the lesson?’

The dissimilarity between KB and TB and English in respect of the formation of the VP for YN interrogatives can be summarized as below.

64.	a	Kokborok:	S	O	mV	tV
	b.	Tripura Bangla:	S	O	mV	tV
	c.	English:	tV	S	mV	O

For the sake of uniformity of representation and greater clarity we involve the other functional categories like S O and represent AUX in English as tV. This word order distinction between English and KB and TB is the crucial piece of information that everybody involved in the business of teaching of English to the KB students must be familiar with. The dissimilarities between the three languages are galore especially at the phonological and morphological levels. But at the syntactic level these do not concern us here directly.

One phonological similarity however is too obvious to ignore. In all the languages we have considered in this thesis use of a rising tone in the YN interrogatives is common. While for English no extra item is used other than the AUX and word order reshuffling, in KB and TB/SB, word order is not affected much. But instead we see an additional element being used de in KB and ki in TB/SB these do not have any direct denotative semantic value. But these apparently meaningless words lend an extra force to the interrogative sense of the sentences. That it can be dropped also, is perhaps because of this property of morphological emptiness of it. In no case the rising tone can be dropped or substituted. This aspect of sentential tone remains a mystery and awaits future

research. This is particularly because languages belonging to Sino-Tibetan family are notorious for having lexical tone. Though Tb doesnot belong to the same is thought be having the same.

5.3 Implications for teaching English

Influence of mother tongue on the acquisition process of second language has for long been a major topic of research in applied linguistics. It has been established by researchers that in spite of all possible efforts made by the second language learners at the most only 5% of them can acquire native like competence in the target language. For the rest, learning of the language remains incomplete with varying degrees of approximation towards the target language. Linguists give various names to this incomplete state of second language learning such as 'transitional competence' (Pit Corder 1967) 'approximative system' (Nemser 1971), 'interlanguage' (Salinker 1972) etc. Although mother tongue influence is not the sole ingredient in constituting the so called 'affective filter' that hinders the acquisition of native like perfection in the target language, it is certainly a major factor to reckon with. Mother tongue pull manifests itself in many forms and can affect any module of linguistic system: phonological, morphological, syntactic and even discoursal.

In the present dissertation we have confined ourselves to finding the similarities and dissimilarities between KB and TB and English (and occasionally SB) in respect of a) word order differences, b) realization of tense and c) the mechanism for capturing interrogativeness in YN questions. While English uses AUX verb or modals fronted to the sentence initial position, KB and TB avoid both. On the contrary KB and TB use a non-morphemic unit de and ki respectively to capture the sense of interrogativeness. In

addition, in non-indefinite structures the internal make up of the VP is augmented by incorporating either an existential verb (for present tense), a 'completion' verb meaning 'end or finish' along with appropriate morphological items. Though a humble piece of effort as such this work can go a long way in throwing some light on how the KB and TB students can be helped better in acquiring this aspect of the English language and will hopefully cease to commit any so called 'error'. This can be a useful piece of information also for the teachers, researchers and above all the material producers.

5.4 Conclusion

To wind up, let us briefly recapitulate the major findings so far.

a. KB and TB and English belong to three totally different families of languages: no-Tibetan, Indo Aryan and Indo-European respectively. The KB and TB students learning English find various problems in coping up with the latter.

b. It is a truism in second language research that the first language grammar plays a significant role, mostly as a hindrance, in cases where the two systems i.e. the first language and second language, are radically at variance with each other.

c. Through this comparative study it has been established that KB and TB are HEAD LAST languages while English is a HEAD FIRST language.

d. This parametric variation is largely responsible for the word order differences noted in the three languages.

e. The morphological property of VP determines the phenomena of Tense and AGR representation in KB, TB and ENG respectively..

f. In English AUX is mandatory in non-copular structure of such interrogatives. KB and TB fulfil this demand of the interrogative formation by introducing a non-morphemic element de and ki respectively, in addition to rising tone.

g. The formation of the VPs gets complicated in accordance with the need to represent the complex concepts of the time continuum of the languages under discussion.

h. Use of an additional verbal item renders the KB and TB VP look like [(O) mV tV], where mV stands for main verb, and tV for the Tense Verb.

g. No verbal movement is necessary in KB and TB, unlike English. Only de and ki move around the VP without affecting the semantic value of the sentence concerned.

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CHAPTER-VI

Chapter VI

Wh-questions in Kokborok and Tripura Bangla

6.0 Introduction

At the end of the previous chapter i.e. in section (5.5) we have summarized the major characteristics of the YN questions in KB and compared them with the word order phenomenon in English. But for a comprehensive picture of the interrogative structures in KB one must also look at the other type question formation. In the present chapter therefore we look at the other major type of interrogative sentences namely Wh-questions in KB and compare them with those of English. In the process, we expect to get some insights into the word order phenomenon in the two languages which promises to be extremely useful for the purpose of teaching English as a second language to the KB-speaking students of Tripura. To begin with we discuss the major characteristics of wh-word formation in English.

6.1 Wh-Questions in English

Wh- is the short form for what the traditional grammarians call interrogative pronouns i.e. who, when, whom, whose,why, which, where, what, and how. But even *Wh*-questions in English share certain properties with the YN ones. Let us therefore briefly remind ourselves some of the canonical properties of YN questions. YN questions are generally intended to elicit the reply *yes* or *no*. The word order in YN questions differs from that in declaratives. In declaratives the subject comes before the verb, but in YN question the auxiliary verb, (which normally functions as an operator) when the main verb is not carrying the AGR features like Person, Tense, Number and Gender etc., is placed before the subject.

65a. Robin will marry Jill.

65b. Will Robin marry Jill?

In (65a) the declarative sentence contains an auxiliary in the form of *will* which is placed after the subject NP *Robin* while in (65b) this order is reversed. This change is traditionally known as **subject-operator inversion**. Operator is generally the first or the only auxiliary. If the question does not have an auxiliary, nor is it a copular construction with a be-type verb, *do* is inserted as a dummy auxiliary. For instance, the YN question in (66a) corresponds to the declarative in (66b).

66a. Catherine likes Robin.

66b. Does Catherine like Robin?

Does in (66b) has the appropriate inflection i.e. 3rd PERSON SINGULAR PRESENT TENSE which corresponds to the inflection of the verb *likes* in (66a). *Does* in (66b) ensures that the question begins with the sequence verb followed by subject.

[9]*Wh*-questions expect a reply that supplies the information that the *wh*-word indicates. They are called *wh*-questions since such interrogative sentences begin with a *wh*-word. '*how*' does not phonetically begin with *wh*- yet it is also included among the *wh*-questions. The *wh*-word may be a pronoun (67a-c), an adverb (68a-g), or a determiner (69a-b) that introduces noun phrase.

67a. *Who* is this man?

67b. *What* do you mean by this?

67c. *Whom* do you want to meet?

68a. *Why* is he here?

68b. *Where* did you stay last night?

[9] For the discussion in this respect I have followed mainly Greenbaum (1996).

68c. *When* will your brother arrive at the station?

68d. *How* did it all begin?

68e. *How* deep is the water here?

68f. *How* many people where there in the meeting?

68g. *How* much money do you need?

69a. *Which* song will you sing first?

69b. *Whose* house do you stay in?

In English, the *wh*-word is generally begins the question. However, if the *wh*-word or the phrase it is part of, is the complement of a preposition, in formal style the preposition moves the front together with the complement (cf. 70).

70a. I can go to any extent to help you.

70b. *To what extent* can I go to help you?

70c. *What extent can I go to to help you?

The two sentences in (70a) and (70b) correspond – the former being the declarative sentence and the latter being its comparable *wh*-interrogative. In the latter the *wh*-word *what* belongs to the prepositional phrase *to what extent* and hence when the interrogative form is being formed the *wh*-item needs to fronted; but being the complement of a preposition the entire prepositional phrase or PP is fronted. The grammaticality of such a movement operation is justified by the ungrammaticality of (70c) where the head of the PP *to* remains *in situ* i.e. in the position where it originates. All said, one must remember a caveat: in less formal style, the preposition can remain *in situ* with a pause in between the two prepositions *to* and *to* (cf. 71)

71. What extent can I go to, to help you?

We have noticed that subject-operator inversion takes place in YN questions. The same rule of inversion also applies to *wh*-questions. For example let us note the flowing sentence.

72a. What do you think?

72b. ?You think what?

72c You think something.

The declarative sentence in (72c) contains an object *something* to the transitive verb *think*. In (72b) we see the object which is being questioned by the speaker is replaced by the *wh*-word *what*. The grammaticality of (72b) though debatable does not concern us here as we are trying only to trace the route of transformation lying behind (72a). In (72a) grammaticality is ensured by two operations: a) the *wh*-word moves from its place deep inside the sentence to the beginning; b) a dummy operator *do* moves to the left of the subject *you* through subject-operator inversion.

An interesting thing happens when the *wh*-expression is the subject of the sentence. In that case there is apparently no movement of the *wh*-item. But this view of the traditional grammarians has been challenged by the generativists who argue that movement definitely takes place: the *wh*-item moves further to the left but since the latter crosses no other item, the left-to-left movement remains invisible in the linear order of the constituents i.e. the normal declarative subject-verb order is retained (cf. 73).

73a. A: Who is coming by the next flight?

73b. B: The president [is coming by the next flight].

Speaker A asks the question with the intention to know the agent (subject) of the act of coming (73a). Speaker B answers (73b) by replacing the *wh*-word *who* with *the president* which is the subject of the declarative sentence corresponding to the interrogative form in

(73a). However, in the informal style which is usually spoken, the normal subject-verb order is sometimes retained even when the *wh*-expression is not the subject as in (74-75).

74. You saw which movie?

75. You did what this morning?

This type of non-application of the rule of *wh*-movement to the beginning of the interrogative sentence is very intriguing for us especially when we notice that in KB and TB avoiding such movement i.e. retaining the *wh*-word *in situ* is the norm. We shall have more discussion about this *invisible movement* before long.

The third important thing to note about *wh*-expressions in English is that a single interrogative sentence sometimes can contain more than one *wh*-item, if the question seeks to elicit more than one piece of information. For example, consider the following:

76. Who copies whom?

6.1.1 Wh-movement in English in generative syntax: a brief sketch

In generative syntax particularly Chomsky (1981) onwards all English declarative sentences are assumed to be at the most a complementizer or Comp or C phrase or CP. This is because any declarative sentence in English can be made a subordinate clause by introducing a C like that, if, as, since, whether etc. etc. (cf. 77a-d)

77a. He is honest.

77b. I know that he is honest.

77c. John knows that I know that he is honest.

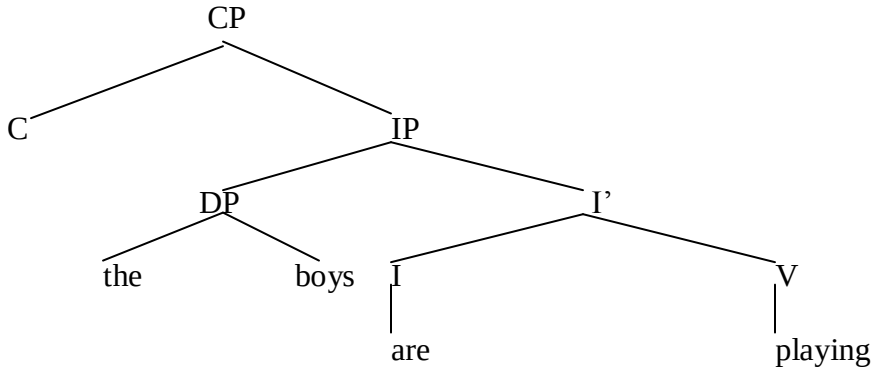
77d. Mary believes that John knows that I know that he is honest.

Another major premise of the Transformational Generative grammar or TG is that for all transformations the simple declarative form is the basic: transformation is effected by only one single rule Move α. Understandably, YN and *Wh*-questions also being derived in nature emerges through some item being moved from their place of origination in the

underlying i.e. declarative form. The job of the grammar therefore is to explain where does the moved items go and land. We use the tool of phrase marker or tree diagram to show the origination, movement and landing site of the relevant items. We begin with subject-operator inversion involved in a YN question[10].

78. The boys are playing.

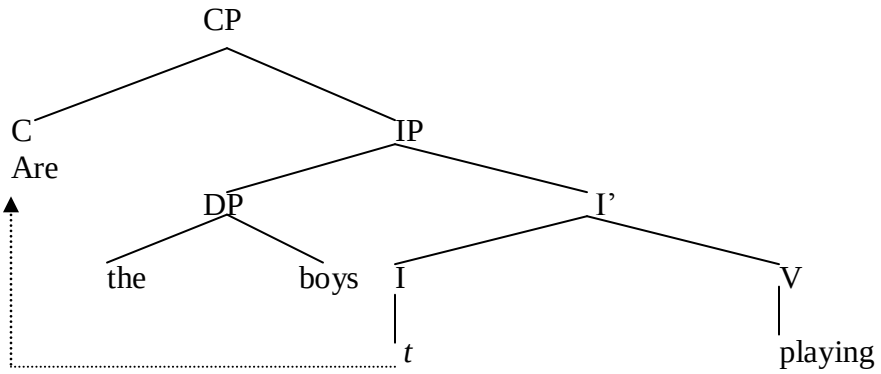
79.



The origination of the constituents of the sentence (78) are shown in the phrase marker in (79) where CP= COMP Phrase, C= COMP, IP = INFLEXION or INFL Phrase, I= INFL, I'= I single bar (i.e. the intermediate category between the zero category I and the maximal phrasal category IP, DP= Determiner Phrase, and V= Verb. To transform this simple declarative sentence into its corresponding YN question what is needed is to move the AUX or operator to the left of the Subject NP 'the boys' and the empty docking site to accommodate the moving item i.e. α is the head position of C. The arrow marked dotted line shows the movement route.

[10] The analysis and discussion in this section is based on Radford et al (1999).

80.



This type of inversion operation involves movement of a word from the head position in one phrase into the head position in another phrase (in this case, from the head INFL position of IP into the head C position of CP). Hence such type of inversion movements is called head movement. What is interesting to note is that the moved item leaves behind a trace *t* of itself so that no other item can occupy this vacated place without violating the grammaticality of the construction. Hence the underlying picture of the sequence of words after movement looks like (81).

81. Are the boys *t* playing?

Let us now turn to *wh*-question type of transformations. So far it has been implicitly assumed the CP comprises a head C constituent and an IP complement. The C position is filled by a complementizer in some structures and by a preposed auxiliary in others. A vital question crops up at this point: where are the pre-auxiliaries like *wh*-items positioned in a structure like (80). One such structure is given in (82).

82. What games *can* you play?

In (82) the verb *play* is a transitive one hence must have an object. This intermediate form is as in (82a).

82a. *Can you play what games?

Reversing the process of auxiliary movement we get the form that approximates the original declarative form.

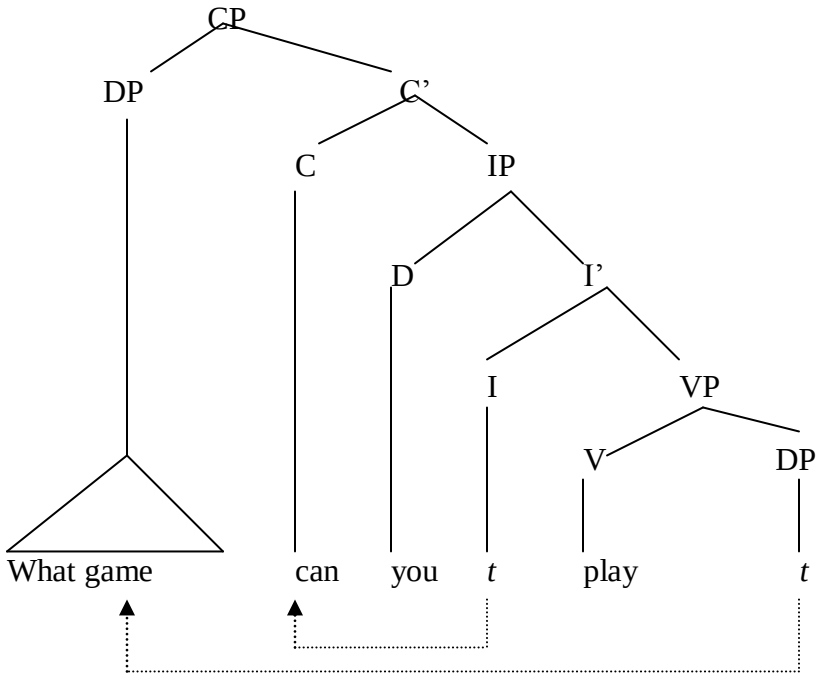
82b. ?You can play what games?

(82b) is unacceptable because in a declarative sentence there can be no *wh*-item functioning as an interrogative marker. Replacing *what* with a non-*wh*-word like *some* gives us a completely grammatical structure of declarative type.

(82c) You can play some games.

Now tracing back the process we notice that the mapping from the declarative form in (82c) to the interrogative form in (82) involves two movements: a) the auxiliary movement and b) *wh*-movement, the latter being also known as operator movement. That the former is known operator movement has already taken note of earlier. We demonstrate the two movements in the following diagram in (83).

83.



What being a determiner of some kind *what games* is a DP. This DP which originates as a complement of the V in the VP deep inside the sentence, is obligatorily moved in the interrogative form of the sentence and the landing site of the DP in the Specifier or Spec position within the CP. This movement is called Operator Movement *wh*-word being an

operator. In the other movement where the AUX *can* moves the Head position of IP i.e. I to the Head position of CP i.e. C is known as Head Movement.

A theory internal question arises at this point: how do we know that the *t* position of the moved item actually remains intact even after movement takes place. Two pieces of evidence are very common in the literature for justifying this theoretical stand. Let us look at the two following sentences:

84a. What game can you play *t*?

84b. *What game can you play cricket?

The first sentence is correct because the *t* position vacated by the DP 'what game' is not filled in subsequently by any item. In other words, the native speakers of English know that the t-position is there and should be kept intact. The second piece of evidence in support of *traces* is provided by the practice of *have* contraction in English. This is also known as have-cliticization. The form *have* of the perfect auxiliary has the clitic variant *'ve* and can cliticize to an immediately preceding word which ends in a vowel or diphthong. Significantly however cliticization is not possible in sentences such as (85).

85a. Which students would you *say have* won the match?

85b. *Which students would you say've won the match?

(85a) is acceptable as no cliticization takes place as opposed to (85b) where *have* cliticizes to *say*. This is because the DP *which students* actually originates as the subject of the embedded clause in informal use as shown in (86).

86.? You would say which students have won the match.

The DP phrase containing the *wh-item* cannot remain in-situ in an interrogative sentence and hence has to move out to the initial position leaving behind the trace t to look after its vacated position. The native speakers' knowledge of this underlying presence of *t* prevents the cliticization of have in (85b).

To sum up, we can say that in English there two types of interrogative constructions: YN and *Wh*- questions. In both the cases some items are moved to the sentence initial position. In the YN question it is the AUX or be verb with tense. In this case the movement employed is called Head Movement (cf. 79-80). In *Wh*-questions the AUX and *wh*-itme both are moved. While the AUX is moved to the Head position C of CP, the *wh*-item is moved to the Spec position of CP. Speaking differently, we can define a *wh*-question formally as that a clause is interpreted as a question in English if it has an interrogative specifier i.e a *wh*-item in the Spec position of CP.

6.1.2 Movement in double *wh*-constructions

As already noted earlier, in English a single interrogative sentence sometimes can contain more than one *wh*-item, if the question seeks to elicit more than one piece of information. For example, consider the following:

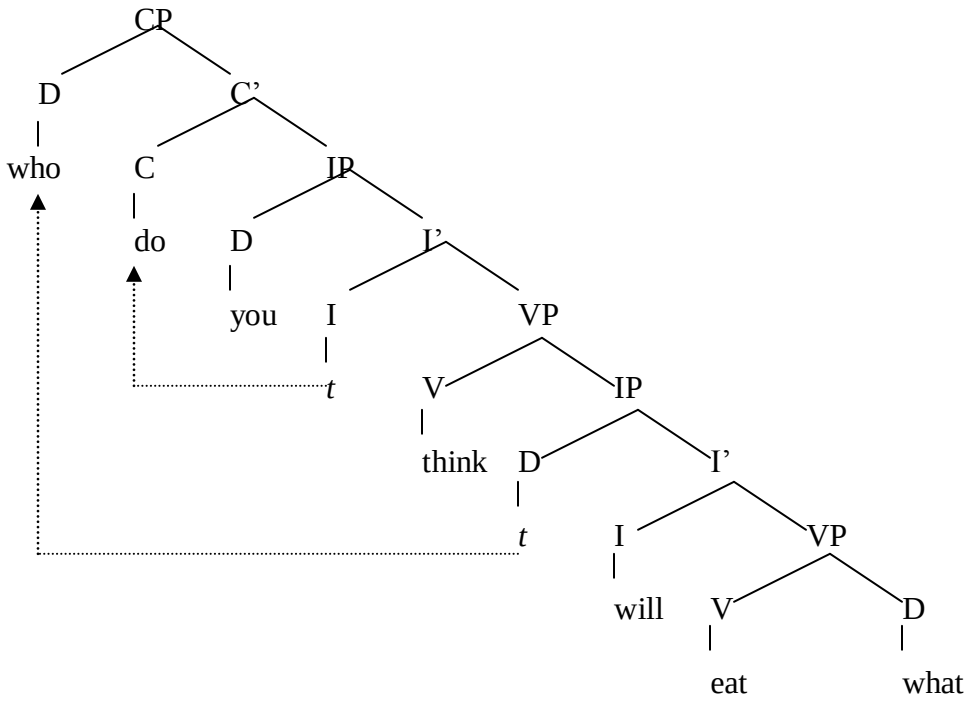
87. **Who** do you think will eat *what*?

A construction like this will render itself ungrammatical if both the *wh*-items are moved to the initial position of the sentence (cf. 88).

88. **What* **who** do you think eat?

To find an answer to this let us begin with a phrase marker for (87) containing the relevant movements.

(89)



In (89) it is obvious that there is only one place D (i.e. Spec) position of CP into which a wh-item can be moved. The question remains why *who* has been selected over *what*? To answer this, the generativists have incorporated into their premise an economy principle stated in (90).

90. Economy Principle (EP)

> Minimize grammatical structure and movement operations.
>
> (i.e. posit as little structures as possible, and move as few constituents as possible the shortest distance possible.) (Radford et al 1999: 330)

Understandably, (89) agrees with the EP which is ideal in any scientific research as it requires us to always seek the simplest and most elegant theory which is consistent with the data we need to explain. An English wh-question requires only one wh-item in the Spec position of CP. Preposing two would be superfluous and contrary to EP. Again moving *what* to the said Spec position will involve a longer journey for *what* compared to

the one needed for *who*. Thus we can account for why it is *who* and not *what* that moves to the Spec-CP position in (89).

6.2 Wh-questions in KB and TB

The picture of *wh*-question formation in KB and TB is certainly not so complicated. But it has its own characteristic features. Let us have a look at the relevant KB and TB data. There are at least ten wh-interrogatives in KB where as in TB there are nine. They are divided into three groups: a) interrogative pronouns, b) interrogative adverbs and c) interrogative determiners. Although it sometimes becomes impossible to find an exact replica of this classification for English wh-words in KB and TB, because of certain cases of overlapping, we have tried to follow the classification as much as possible. In course of ours survey certain interesting differences emerge not only in word order but also in the complement structures of certain categories. We shall point out these at appropriate junctures.

6.2.1 Wh-questions with interrogative pronouns: sabo, tamo, sabono

6.2.1.1 Sabo (KB) and ke (TB) 'who'

91. **KB: S P [WH] (V)**

Nwng	sabo?
2SG-NOM	WH-NOM
NP	NP
S	P[11]
You	who

TB: S P [WH] (V)

Tumi	ke?

[11] P is the abbreviated form for PREDICATIVE which is found in copular constructions, unless otherwise specified. The latter situation may arise when P stands ro Preposition/Post position in a PP.

2SG-NOM	WH-NOM
NP	NP
S	P[12]
You	who

'Who are you?'

ENG: S[WH] V P

Who	are	you?
WH-NOM	mVt (be)	2SG-NOM
NP	VP	NP
S[WH]	V	P

92. **KB: S[WH] O V**

sabo	a-no	chuba-nai
WH-NOM	1SG-DAT	help-FT
NP	NP-DAT	mVt[13]
who	me	help-will
S	O	V

TB: S[WH] O V

ke	amake	sahajya-karbe
WH-NOM	1SG-DAT	help-FT
NP	NP-DAT	mVt[14]
who	me	help-will
S	O	V

[12] P is the abbreviated form for PREDICATIVE which is found in copular constructions, unless otherwise specified. The latter situation may arise when P stands ro Preposition/Post position in a PP.
[13] mVt stands for the main verb which also carries tense.
[14] mVt stands for the main verb which also carries tense.

'Who will help me?'

ENG: S[WH] V O

Who	will	help	me?
WH-NOM	VP [AUX-FT	mV]	1SG-DAT
[WH] S	V		O

93. **KB: S [WH] O O V**

sabo	No-no	o	bijap	rw-kha?
WH-NOM	2SG-DAT	[DET	book-AC]	give-PT
NP	NP		NP	mVt
S	IO[15]	DO		V
who	You	this	book	gave

KB: S [WH] O O V

ke	tumake	ei	baita	di-e-chilo?
WH-NOM	2SG-DAT	[DET	book-AC]	give-PT
NP	NP		NP	mVt
S	IO[16]	DO		V
who	You	this	book	gave

'Who gave you this book?'

ENG: S[WH] V O O

Who	gave	you	this book?
WH-NOM	V-PT	2SG-DAT	DET book
NP	VP	NP	NP
S[WH]	V	IO	DO

[15] IO = Indirect Object, DO = Direct Object.
[16] IO = Indirect Object, DO = Direct Object.

94. **KB: (ADV) S[WH]V**

A-ni	logi	sabo	thang-nai?
1SG-GEN	P	WH-NOM	go-FT
[[NP]	PP]	NP	mVt
ADV		S	V
me	with	who	go-will

TB: (ADV) S[WH]V

amar	sange	ke	ja-be?
1SG-GEN	P	WH-NOM	go-FT
[[NP]	PP]	NP	mVt
ADV		S	V
me	with	who	go-will

'Who will go with me?'

ENG: S[WH] V (ADV)

Who	will	go	with	me?
WH-NOM NP	[AUX-FT VP	mV]	P PP	1SG-OBLQ[17]
S	V			ADV

95. **KB: O S[WH] V**

'Rajmala'	bijap	sabo	swi-kha?
[Rajmala	3SG-AC]	WH-NOM	write-PT
NP		NP	mVt
O		S	V
Rajmala	book	who	wrote

[17] OBLQ = Oblique Case, which is the default case for the PP-internal Object NP in English.

TB: O S[WH] V

'Rajmala'	baiti	ke	li-khe-chilen?
[Rajmala	3SG-AC]	WH-NOM	write-PT
NP		NP	mVt
O		S	V
Rajmala	book	who	wrote

'Who wrote the book 'Rajmala'?'

ENG: S[WH] V O

Who wrote the		book 'Rajmala'?		
WH-NOM	mVt	[DET	book	Rajmala-AC]
NP	V		NP	
S	V		O	

A four fold comparison helps us understand the distinctions better. The comparison on the one hand is between the KB-I or KB interrogative sentences with KB-D or KB declarative type of sentences; and on the other hand between their English counter parts. We present the summary of the sabo 'who' type *wh*-interrogatives in the two languages in (96-97) below.

96a. KB-I

S P [WH] (V)
S [WH] O V
S [WH] O O V
(ADV) S [WH] V
O S [WH] V

96b. KB-D

S P (V)
S O V
S O O V
(ADV) S V
S O V

97a. TB-I

S P [WH] (V)
S [WH] O V
S [WH] O O V
(ADV) S [WH] V

97b. TB-D

S P (V)
S O V
S O O V
(ADV) S V

O S [WH] V S O V

98a	**ENG-I**	**98b. ENG-D**
	S [WH] V P	S V P
	S [WH] V O	S V O
	S [WH] V O O	S V O O
	S [WH] V (ADV)	S V (ADV)
	S [WH] V O	S V O

In KB and TB the *wh*-word can remain in situ or its place of origination. This is unlike English where the *wh*-word obligatorily moves to the initial position of the sentence. Another interesting feature of KB and TB syntax of both wh-words and declarative sentences is that in the third person singular/plural in present tense the be-verb can be dropped. This phenomenon of phonetically unrealized be-verb in KB and TB is also shared by SCB. For example, consider the following:

99a. KB Interrogative

nini para boro

your village where

'Where is your village?'

99b. Declarative

ani para oro

my village here

'My village is here.'

100a. TB Interrogative

tomar gram koi

your village where

'Where is your village?'

100b. TB Declarative

amar gram eikhane
my village here

'My house is here.'

101a. SCB Interrogative

tomar gram kothay

your village where

'Where is your village?'

101b. Declarative

amar gram ekhane

my house here

'My house is here.'

When it is mandatory for the English version of these sentences to have an overt be-verb 'is' in the three others i.e. KB, TB and SCB, the be-verb can remain covert. That the verb form is underlyingly there in such copular constructions can be proved by the surfacing of the be-verb form in other tense forms. (cf. 101).

102a. **KB**: Ani para oro *tongmani*

102b. **TB**: amar bari eikhane *asilo*

102c. **SCB**: amar baDi ekhane *chilo*

For all these sentences in (101) the English version is 'My village was here.'

6.2.1.2 Tamo (KB) and ki (TB) 'what'

103. KB: **S P[WH] (V)**

Nini mung tamo?

2SG-GEN NP-NOM WH-NOM

[DET N] NP

NP	NP
S	P
Your name	what

TB: **S P[WH] (V)**

tumar	nam	ki?
2SG-GEN	NP-NOM	WH-NOM
[DET	N]	NP
NP		NP
S		P
Your	name	what

'What is your name?'

ENG: S[WH] V P

What	is	your	name?
WH-NOM	be-3SG-PRES	[DET-GEN	N]
NP	V	NP	
S[WH]	V	P	

104. **KB: S O [WH] V AUX**

Nwng	tamo	khlai-wi	tong?
2SG	WH-AC	do-PROG	exist V
NP	NP	[mV	tV]
S	O	V	AUX
You	what	do-ing	exist

TB: S O [WH] V AUX

tumi	ki	kar-ta-	cho

2SG	WH-AC	do-PROG	exist V
NP	NP	[mV	tV]
S	O	V	AUX
You	what	do-ing	exist

'What are you doing?'

ENG: O[WH] AUX S V

What	are	you	doing?
WH-AC	be-3SG-PRES	2SG-NOM	do-PROG
NP	tV	NP	mV
O	AUX	S	V

In English the presence of an AUX+T is obligatory in most of the wh-constructions except when information is sought about the subject of the sentence. The AUX in English when present bears the Agreement or AGR features while the main verb either appears in bare form or participial form: *will go, have gone* or *is going* etc. In KB and TB a similar phenomenon is observed not only in interrogative but also in declarative sentences. This is noted in particular in progressive tense constructions. To be specific, the verbal form is split up between mV+PROG and an existential verb which bears AGR feature which we designate as tV or verb with tense. The existential verb lends a sense of continuousness to the expression. In (103) above we notice an illustration of this in *khlai-wi tong* translated as *do-PROG exist V* meaning 'are/is doing'. One feels tempted to invite a comparison with Bangla compound verbs live *kaj korche* → 'work doing' = doing. But the latter is obviously not a case of split up VP. The KB and TB phenomenon resembles the English type AUX+T mV construction. Notice in KB also the main verb takes the participial

suffix –*wi* equivalent to English –*ing*. In TB the similar for is taso. More research is needed in the morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects of such constructions.

105. **KB: S O WH[O] V AUX**

Nwng	a-no	tamo	sa-wi	tong?
2SG	1SG-AC	WH-AC	tell-PROG	exist
NP	NP-AC	NP-AC	[mV	tV]
S	O	O	V	AUX

TB: S O WH [O] V AUX

tumi	amare	ki	koi-t-	acho?
2SG	1SG-AC	WH-AC	tell-PROG	exist
NP	NP-AC	NP-AC	[mV	tV]
S	O	O	V	AUX

'What are you telling me?'

ENG: [WH] O AUX S V O

What	are	you	telling	me?
WH-AC	be-3SG-PRES	2SG-NOM	tell-PROG	1SG-AC
NP	tV	NP	mV	NP
DO	AUX	S	V	IO

Once again we summarize the contrastive picture prevailing in KB,TB and English through a six fold comparison.

106a. KB-I

S WH[P] (V)
S WH[O] (V)
S O WH[O] V

106b. KB-D

S P (V)
S O (V)
S O O V

107a. TB-I

S WH[P] (V)
S WH[O] (V)

107b.TB-D

S P (V)
S O (V)

S O WH[O] V S O O V

108a. ENG-I
S[WH] V P
O[WH] AUX S V
O[WH] AUX S V O

108b. ENG-D
S V P
S AUX V O
S AUX V O O

6.2.1.3 Sabono (KB) and kare (TB)'Whom'

109. **KB: S WH[O] V**

Nwng	sabo-no	suri?
2SG	WH-AC	worship
NP	NP-AC	mVt
S	O	V
You	whom	worship

TB: S WH[O] V

tumi	kare	puja-karo?
2SG	WH-AC	worship
NP	NP-AC	mVt
S	O	V
You	whom	worship

'Whom do you worship?'

ENG: O[WH] AUX S V

Whom	do	you	worship?
WH-AC	AUX PRES-INDF	2SG	mV
NP-AC	AUX	NP	mV
O	V	S	V

110. **KB: S WH[O] V INF (V)**

Nwng	sabo-no	nai-na-ni	muchung[18]?
2SG[NOM]	WH-AC	see-INF	desirous
NP	NP-AC	V-INF-GEN	AP
S	O	V-INF-GEN	A
You	whom	of seeing	desirous

TB: S WH [O] V INF (V)

tumi	kare	dekh-te-	ichhuk[19]?
2SG[NOM]	WH-AC	see-INF	desirous
NP	NP-AC	V-INF-GEN	AP
S	O	V-INF-GEN	A
You	whom	of seeing	desirous

Who are you desirous of seeing?

ENG: O[WH] V S A PP

Who	are	you	desirous	of seeing?
WH-AC	AUX PRES-INDF	2SG/PL	A	P N
NP	VP	NP	AP	PP
O	V	S	A	PP

The SOV structure of KB and TB simple declaratives sentences obtains even in wh-constructions. The only difference is that the wh-word can take appropriate morphemes to signify is case feature. So sabo-no = who to = 'whom' i.e. who-AC[cusative]. But in TB this rather marked in comparison with KB. That movement of wh-items is redundant in KB, is perhaps because KB is still predominantly a synthetic language where post positions are yet to take over en mass the role of syntactic relations between words. Case

[18] The semantics of muchung is a problematic one. This word can be used also as a verb as in muchung-kha. This is however not our concern in the present thesis.

[19] The semantics of dekh-te-ichhuk is a problematic one. This word can be used also as a verb as in muchung-kha. This is however not our concern in the present thesis.

markers (read suffixes) signify the inflections. The following summary in abstract forms of functional categories substantiates our observations.

111a. KB-I
S WH[O] V
S WH[O] V-INF (V)

111b. KB-D
S O V
S O V-INF A (V)

112a. TB-I
S WH[O] V
S WH[O] V-INF (V)

112b. TB-D
S O V
S O V-INF A (V)

113. ENG-I
O[WH] AUX S V
O[WH] V S A PP

113b. ENG-D
S V O
S V A PP O

6.2.2 Wh-questions with Interrogative Adverbs: tangwi/tamoni bagwi, boro, buphuru, bahai, bwswk (KB)and kere, konano,

6.2.2.1 Tangwi/ Tamoni Bagwi 'Why'

114. **KB: S WH[ADV] ADV V**

Nwng	tangwi	oro	phai?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	LOC-ADV	come
NP	WH[ADV]	ADV	VP
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
You	why	here	come

'Why do you come here?'

TB: S WH[ADV] ADV V

tumi	kere	eikhano	aiso?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	LOC-ADV	come
NP	WH[ADV]	ADV	VP
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
You	why	here	come

'Why do you come here?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV

Why	do	you	come	here?
WH[ADV]	AUX	2SG	V	LOC-ADV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	mV	ADV
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V	ADV

Though not directly related to our purpose of the comparative study of the syntax of wh-interrogatives in KB, TB and English, it would not be out of place here a note morphological practice in KB and TB. In these language a very productive process of morphemic reduction takes place by subtracting the latter part of the first NP and the first part of the second NP in an other wise genitive phrase of type NP's NP. So *nini bwsa* → *nwsa* 'your children', *ani pha* → *aph* 'my father'. Similarly *tangwi* originates from *tamo-ni bagwi* [what-GEN for] → *tangwi*. Similar phenomena can be observed in TB also: *konkhane* → *konano* .Synchronically sometimes both the contracted and non-contracted forms are used as free variations.

115. **KB: WH[ADV] S ADV V-NEG**

Tangwi	nwng	tini	phaili-ya?
WH[ADV]	2SG-NOM	TEMP-ADV	V-PT-NEG
WH[ADV]	NP	ADV	VP-NEG
WH[ADV]	S	ADV	V-NEG
Why	you	today	came-not

'Why did not you come today?'

TB: WH[ADV] S ADV V-NEG

kere	tumi	ajga	aiso-na?
WH[ADV]	2SG-NOM	TEMP-ADV	V-PT-NEG
WH[ADV]	NP	ADV	VP-NEG

WH[ADV]	S	ADV	V-NEG
Why	you	today	came-not

'Why did not you come today?'

ENG: **WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V ADV**

Why	did	not	you	come	today?
WH[ADV]	AUX	NEG	2SG-NOM	V	ADV
WH[ADV]	AUX	NEG	NP	mV	ADV
WH[ADV	Vt		S	V	ADV
WH[ADV	AUX	NEG	S	V	ADV

Why did not you come today?'

116. **KB: WH[ADV] S A[PRED]-NEG(V)**

Tangwi	nini	kha	ham-ya?
WH[ADV]	2SG-GEN	3SG-NOM	A-NEG
WH[ADV]	[DET	N]	A-NEG
WH[ADV]	NP		A-NEG
WH[ADV]	S		A-NEG
Why	your mind		well not

TB: WH[ADV] S A[PRED]-NEG(V)

kere	tumar	mon	bhalo-na?
WH[ADV]	2SG-GEN	3SG-NOM	A-NEG
WH[ADV]	[DET	N]	A-NEG
WH[ADV]	NP		A-NEG
WH[ADV]	S		A-NEG

'Why your mind is not well?' = Why are you upset?

ENG: WH[ADV] NP V NEG A

Why	your	mind	is	not	well
WH[ADV]	2SG-GEN	3SG-NOM	be-3SG-PRES	NEG	A
WH[ADV]	[DET	N]	mVt	NEG	A
WH[ADV]	NP		V	NEG	A

117. **KB: S WH[ADV] V-NEG**

Nwng	tangwi	kok-sa-ya?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	word-speak-NEG
NP	WH[ADV]	V-NEG
S	WH[ADV]	V-NEG
You	why	speak-not

‘Why do not you speak?’

TB: S WH[ADV] V-NEG

tumi	kere	katha-kao-na?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	word-speak-NEG
NP	WH[ADV]	V-NEG
S	WH[ADV]	V-NEG
You	why	speak-not

‘Why do not you speak?’

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V

Why	do	not	you	speak?
WH[ADV]	AUX	NEG	2SG	V
WH[ADV]	tV	NEG	S	V
WH[ADV]	AUX	NEG	S	V

Ya and *na* are a negative markers in KB and TB that can be treated at par with a clitic because of its ability to get attached to more than one category of word. In (115) and (117) it is cliticizes to a verb while in (113) it does so to an adjective.

118. **KB: S WH[ADV] O V AUX**

Nwng	tangwi	ano	kebeng-wi	tong?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	1SG-AC	mV-PROG	AUX
NP	WH[ADV]	AN-AC	mV	tV
S	WH[ADV]	O	V	AUX
You	why	me	disturb-ing	exist

'Why are you disturbing me?'

TB: S WH[ADV] O V AUX

tumi	kere	amare	birokto-kart	aso?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	1SG-AC	mV-PROG	AUX
NP	WH[ADV]	AN-AC	mV	tV
S	WH[ADV]	O	V	AUX
You	why	me	disturb-ing	exist

'Why are you disturbing me?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V O

Why	are	you	disturbing	me?
WH[ADV]	be-2SG-PRES	2SG-NOM	mV-PROG	1SG-AC
WH[ADV]	AUX	NP-NOM	mV	NP-AC
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	mV	NP
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V	O

119a. KB-I
S WH[ADV] ADV V
WH[ADV] S ADV V-NEG
WH[ADV] S A[PRED]-NEG(V)
S WH[ADV] V
S WH[ADV] O V AUX

119b. KB-D
S ADV V
S ADV V-NEG
S P[A]-NEG(V)
S V-NEG
S O V AUX

120a. TB-I
S WH[ADV] ADV V
WH[ADV] S ADV V-NEG
WH[ADV] S A[PRED]-NEG(V)
S WH[ADV] V
S WH[ADV] O V AUX

120b. TB-D
S ADV V
S ADV V-NEG
S P[A]-NEG(V)
S V-NEG
S O V AUX

121a. ENG-I
WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV
WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V ADV
WH[ADV] NP V NEG A
WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V
WH[ADV] AUX S V O

121b. ENG-D
S V ADV
S AUX NEG V ADV
NP V NEG A
AUX NEG S V
S AUX V O

6.2.2.2 Boro (KB) and konano/konkhano 'where'

122. **KB: S P[WH] (V)**

Nini	kami	boro?	
2SG-GEN	NP-NOM	WH[ADV]	
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]	
NP		WH[ADV]	
S		P	(V)
Your	village	where	

'Where is your village?'

TB: **KB: S P[WH] (V)**

tumar	gram	konano/konkhano?
2SG-GEN	NP-NOM	WH[ADV]
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]
NP		WH[ADV]

S		P	(V)
Your	village	where	

'Where is your village?'

ENG: WH[ADV] V S

Where	is	your	village?
WH[ADV]	be-3SG-PRES	2SG-GEN	NP
WH[ADV]	mV	[DET	N]
WH[ADV]	V	NP	
WH[ADV]	V	S	

123. **KB: S WH[ADV] V**

Nwng	boro	thang-nai?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	mV-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	V
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	where	go-FT

'Where will you go?'

TB: S WH[ADV] V

tumi	konano/konkhano	jai-ba?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	mV-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	V
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	where	go-FT

'Where will you go?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

Where	will	you	go?
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	2SG	mV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	V
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V

124. **KB: S WH[ADV] (V)**

Ani	swikong	boro?	
1SG-GEN	N	WH[ADV]	
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]	
NP		WH[ADV]	
S		WH[ADV]	(V)
My pen		where?	

‘Where is my pen?’

TB: S WH[ADV] (V)

amar	kolom	konano/konkhano?	
1SG-GEN	N	WH[ADV]	
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]	
NP		WH[ADV]	
S		WH[ADV]	(V)
My pen		where?	

‘Where is my pen?’

ENG: WH[ADV] V S

Where	is	my	pen?
WH[ADV]	be-3SG-PRES	1SG-GEN	N
WH[ADV]	mV	[DET	N]

WH[ADV]	V	NP
WH[ADV]	V	S

To sum up, the following are the contrastive facts characterizing the three languages.

125a. KB-I
S P[WH] (V)
S WH[ADV] V
S WH[ADV] (V)

125b. KB-D
S P (V)
S ADV V
S P (V)

126a. TB-I
S P[WH] (V)
S WH[ADV] V
S WH[ADV] (V)

126b. KB-D
S P (V)
S ADV V
S P (V)

127a. ENG-I
WH[ADV] V S
WH[ADV] AUX S V
WH[ADV] V S

127b. ENG-D
S V ADV
S AUX V ADV
S V ADV

6.2.2.3 Buphuru (KB) and konsomo/kobe (TB) 'when'

128. KB: S WH[ADV] V

Nwng	buphuru	phai-nai?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	V-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	mV
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	when	come-FT

'When will you come?'

TB: tumi	konsomo	ai-ba?
2SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	V-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	mV
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	when	come-FT

'When will you come?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

When	will	you	come?
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	2SG-NOM	mV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	V
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V

129. **KB: S WH[ADV] ADV V**

Bo	buphuru	tangnok-ni	kiphil-nai?
3SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	NP-P	V-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	PP	V
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
S/he	when	office-from	return

‘When will s/he return from office?’

TB: S WH[ADV] ADV V

he	konsomo	office-te	ai-bo?
3SG-NOM	WH[ADV]	NP-P	V-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	PP	V
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
S/he	when	office-from	return

‘When will s/he return from office?’

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV

When	will	s/he	return	from office?	
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	NP-NOM	mV	P	NP
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	mV	PP	

WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V	ADV

130. **KB: WH[ADV] S V**

Buphuru	ani	jora	kaham	sokphai-nai?
WH[ADV]	1SG-GEN	3SG-NOM	A	V-FT
WH[ADV]	[DET	N	A]	V
WH[ADV]	NP			VP
WH[ADV]	S			V
When	my	time	good	become-FT

'When will my good time (be)come?'

TB: WH[ADV] S V

Kobe	amar	bhala	somoy	ai-bo?
WH[ADV]	1SG-GEN	A3SG-NOM		V-FT
WH[ADV]	[DET	A]	N	V
WH[ADV]	NP			VP
WH[ADV]	S			V
When	my	good	time	become-FT

'When will my good time (be)come?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

When	will	my	good	time	come?
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	1SG-GEN	A	3SG-NOM	mV
WH[ADV]	tV	[DET	A	N]	V
WH[ADV]	AUX	NP			V
WH[ADV]	AUX	S			V

131. **KB: S WH[ADV] ADV V**

Chwng	buphuru	taisa	malai-lai-nai?

1PL-NOM	WH[ADV]	ADV	V-PL-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	ADV	mVt
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
We	when	again	meet shall

'When shall we meet again?'

TB: S WH[ADV] ADV V

amra	kobe	abar	deha-korum?
1PL-NOM	WH[ADV]	ADV	V-PL-FT
NP	WH[ADV]	ADV	mVt
S	WH[ADV]	ADV	V
We	when	again	meet shall

'When shall we meet again?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV

When	shall	we	meet	again?
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	1PL-NOM	mV	ADV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	mV	ADV
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V	ADV

We summarize the facts in relation to the distribution of buphuru 'when' in KB, TB and English in (128-131).

132a.	KB-I	132b.	KB-D
	S WH[ADV] V		S V
	S WH[ADV] ADV V		S ADV ADV V
	WH[ADV] S V		S (ADV) V
	S WH[ADV] ADV V		S (ADV) ADV V

133a.	KB-I	133b.	KB-D
	S WH[ADV] V		S V
	S WH[ADV] ADV V		S ADV ADV V
	WH[ADV] S V		S (ADV) V

S WH[ADV] ADV V S (ADV) ADV V

134a. ENG-I
WH[ADV] AUX S V
WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV
WH[ADV] AUX S V
WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV

134b. ENG-D
S AUX V ADV
S AUX V ADV[PP] ADV
S AUX V ADV
S AUX V ADV ADV

6.2.2.4 Bahai (KB) and kemne (TB) 'how'

135. **KB: S WH[ADV] V(V)**

Nwng	bahai	tong?
2SG	WH[ADV]	exist (V)
NP	WH[ADV]	mVt
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	how	exist

'How are you?'

TB: tumi	kemon	aso?
2SG	WH[ADV]	exist (V)
NP	WH[ADV]	mVt
S	WH[ADV]	V
You	how	exist

'How are you?'

ENG: WH[ADV] V S

How	are	you?
WH[ADV]	be-2SG-PRES	2SG
WH[ADV]	tV	NP
WH[ADV]	V	S

130. **KB: S WH[ADV] V**

Bo	bahai	khai	thang-nai?

3SG-NOM	WH	do	go-FT
NP	WH[ADVP	V]	V
S	WH[ADV	V]	
He	[how	do]	go-will

'How will he go?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

How	will	he	go?
WH[ADV]	AUX-FT	3SG-NOM	mV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	V
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V

136. **KB: S ADV WH[ADV] V**

Ang	saichung	bahai	khai	tong-nai?
1SG	ADV	[WH-ADV	V]	exist-FT
NP	ADVP	[ADVP	do]	mVt
S	ADV	[ADV	V]	
I	alone	[how	do]	stay will

'How will I stay alone?'

B: S ADV WH[ADV] V

ami	ekla	kem-ne	thakum?
1SG	ADV	[WH-ADV-V]	exist-FT
NP	ADVP	[ADVP-do]	mVt
S	ADV	[ADV- V]	
I	alone	[how-do]	stay will

'How will I stay alone?'

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV

How	will	I	stay	alone?
WH[ADV]	AUX	1SG	mV	ADV
WH[ADV]	tV	NP	V	ADV
WH[ADV]	AUX	S	V	ADV

137. **KB: S WH[ADV] V**

Nini	amjokmung	bahai	wng-wi	tong?
2SG-GEN	examination	WH[ADV]	be-PROG	exist (V)
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]	mV-PROG	tV
NP		WH[ADV]	[V	V]
S		WH[ADV]	V	
Your	examination	how	be-PROG	exist(V)

‘How is your exam going on?’

TB: S WH[ADV] V

tumar	parikha	kemon	sol-ta-	(a)se ?
2SG-GEN	examination	WH[ADV]	be-PROG	exist (V)
[DET	N]	WH[ADV]	mV-PROG	tV
NP		WH[ADV]	[V	V]
S		WH[ADV]	V	
Your	examination	how	be-PROG	exist(V)

‘How is your exam going on?’

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

How	is	your	exam	going on?
WH[ADV]	tV	2SG-GEN	N	mV

WH[ADV]	AUX	[DET	N]	mV
WH[ADV]	AUX	NP		V
WH[ADV]	AUX	S		V

138a.	KB-I	138b.	KB-D
	S WH[ADV] V(V)		S ADV V(V)
	S WH[ADV] V		S ADV V
	S ADV WH[ADV] V		S ADV (ADV) V
	S WH[ADV] V		S ADV V

139a.	KB-I	139b.	KB-D
	S WH[ADV] V(V)		S ADV V(V)
	S WH[ADV] V		S ADV V
	S ADV WH[ADV] V		S ADV (ADV) V
	S WH[ADV] V		S ADV V

140a.	ENG-I	140b.	ENG-D
	WH[ADV] V S		S V ADV [P]
	WH[ADV] AUX S V		S AUX V ADV[PP]
	WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV		S AUX V ADV (ADV)
	WH[ADV] AUX S V		S AUX V ADV

6.2.2.5 Bwswk (KB) and koto (TB) 'how much/ how many[20]

141. **KB: S WH[ADV] (V)**

Nini	bwsa	khorok	bwswk?
2SG-GEN	child	[+HUM]	WH[ADV]
NP			WH[ADV]
S			WH[ADV]
Your	child-PL		how many

'How-many are your children?'

TB: S WH[ADV] (V)

[20] It is very difficult to ascertain the exact grammatical category of *bwswk* in KB. The word is translated by many scholars as 'how many' or 'how much'. Going by the English form the word how many is a combination of an ADV+ADJ forming an ADVP (English being a head –first language). KB word bwswk is constituted of one word and behaves more like an Adjective than an Adverb. More over the literal translation of the sentence like Nini bwsa khorok bwswk? 'Your children (are) how many' indicates the structure being a copular one where the post/preverbal adjectival phrase is interpreted as Predicative. For this reasons while in interrogative sentence we interpret as a WH[ADV] and in declarative structure its corresponding non-interrogative items are treated as P[redicative].

tumar	sontan	koto	-jon?
2SG-GEN	child	WH[ADV]	[+HUM]
NP		WH[ADV]	
S		WH[ADV]	
Your	child-PL	how	many

'How-many are your children?'

ENG: WH[ADV] V S

How many	are	your	children?
WH[ADV]	be-3PL-PRES	2SG-GEN	child-PL
WH[ADV]	mVt	[DET	N-NOM]
WH[ADV]	V	NP	
WH[ADV]	V	S	

In KB and TB lexicon for various referents there are designated morphemes –either a word or a clitic – which are mandatorily used. In (135) *khorok* in *bwsa khorok* is one such example which indicates an item with the feature [+HUMAN]. The TB item *jon* which is always used in constructions referring to human beings like *koto jon* 'how many people', *onek jon* 'many people', *ek jon* 'one person' etc. presents an analogous morpho-syntactic formation.

142. **KB: ADV S WH[ADV] (V)**

Nini	rwng-nog	o	swrwng-nai	bwswk?
2SG-GEN	education-house	LOC-SUF	learners	how many
[DET	N	P]	NP	WH[ADV]
	PP		NP	WH[ADV]
	ADV		S	WH[ADV]
Your	education-house	at	learner	how many

'How many children are (there) in your school?'

TB: ADV S WH[ADV] (V)

Nini	iskul	o	koy-jon	satro?
2SG-GEN	education-house	LOC-SUF	how many	learners
[DET	N	P]	WH[ADV]	NP
	PP		WH[ADV]	NP
	ADV		WH[ADV]	S

Your education-house at how many learner
'How many children are (there) in your school?'

ENG: WH[ADV] S V ADV ADV

How many children	are	there	in	your	school?
[WH[ADV] ADJ N]	be-3PL	ADV-LOC	P-LOC	[DET	N]
NP	V	ADV	PP		
WH[ADV]	S	V	ADV	ADV	

143. **KB: S ADV WH[ADV]**

Nini	kami	Aguli-ni	simi	bwswk	hachal?
[2SG-GEN	N]	[Agartala-GEN	P]	WH[ADV]	A
NP		PP		WH[ADV]	A
S		ADV		WH[ADV]	A

Your village Agartala from how distant

'How far is your village from Agartala?'

KB: S ADV WH[ADV]

tumar	gram	agartala	teikka	kot	dur?
[2SG-GEN	N]	[Agartala-GEN	P]	WH[ADV]	A
NP		PP		WH[ADV]	A
S		ADV		WH[ADV]	A

Your village Agartala from how distant

'How far is your village from Agartala?'

ENG: WH[ADV] V S ADV

How	far	is	your	village	from Agartala
WH[ADV]	A	be-3SG-PRES	[2SG-GEN	N]	[P N]
[WH[ADV]	A]	tVm	DET	N	PP
WH[ADV]		V	NP-NOM		PP
WH[ADV]		V	S		ADV

144. **KB: ADV WH[S] V**

Kuthumlaimung-o	khorok	bwswk	manjak-kha?
N-LOC	[+HUM]	WH[A/ADV]	tVm-PT
PP	men-PL	WH[A/ADV]	V-PT
ADV	NP	WH[A/ADV]	V
ADV	S	WH[ADV]	V
Meeting-at	[+HUM]	how many	attended

'How many people attended (at) the meeting?'

TB: ADV WH[S] V

meeting-o	koy-jon	ai-chilo?
N-LOC	WH[A/ADV] [+HUM]	tVm-PT
PP	WH[A/ADV]men-PL	V-PT
ADV	WH[A/ADV]NP	V
ADV	WH[ADV]S	V
Meeting-at	[+HUM]how many	attended

'How many people attended (at) the meeting?'

ENG: WH[ADV] S V O

How	many	people	attend-ed	the	meeting?
WH[ADV]	[A	N]	V-PT	[DET	N]
WH[ADV]	NP-NOM		V	NP-LOC/AC	
WH[ADV]	NP		V	NP	
WH[ADV]	S		V	O	

The comparative picture of the use of bwswk 'how much/how many are shown in (141-145)

146a. KB-I
S WH[ADV] (V)
ADV S WH[ADV] (V)
S ADV WH[ADV]
ADV WH[S] V

146b. KB-D
S ADV (V)
ADV S ADV (V)
S ADV ADV
ADV S V

. 147a. TB-I
S WH[ADV] (V)
ADV S WH[ADV] (V)
S ADV WH[ADV]
ADVWH[ADV]SV

147b. TB-D
S ADV (V)
ADV S ADV (V)
S ADV ADV
SAD V ADV] V

148a. ENG-I
WH[ADV] V S
WH[ADV] S V ADV ADV
WH[ADV] V S ADV
WH[ADV] S V O

148 b. ENG-D
S V ADV
ADV V S ADV
S V ADV ADV
S V O

6.2.3 Wh-questions with determiners in KB

6.2.3.1 bobo (KB) and konda (TB) 'which'

149. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

Nini	bijap	bobo?	
2SG-GEN	book-NOM	DEM-PRO	(V)
[NP	NP]	NP	
S		P	
Your	book	which	

‘Which is your book?’

TB: S WH[P] (V)

tumar	boi	konda?	
2SG-GEN	book-NOM	DEM-PRO	(V)
[NP	NP]	NP	
S		P	
Your	book	which	

‘Which is your book?’

ENG: WH[S] V P

Which	is	your	book?
WH-NOM	be-3SG-PRES	[DET-GEN	N]
WH[NP]	tV	NP	
WH[S]	V	P	

150. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

Risha-ni	nok	bobo?	
2SG-GEN	house-NOM	DEM-PRO	
[NP	NP]	NP	
NP	NP		
SP		(V)	

Risha’s house which

‘Which is Risha’s house?’

TB: S WH[P] (V)

Risha-r	bari	konda?
2SG-GEN	house-NOM	DEM-PRO

[NP	NP]	NP	
NP	NP		
SP		(V)	
Risha's	house	which	

'Which is Risha's house?'

ENG: WH[S] V P

Which	is	Risha's	house?
WH-NOM	be-3SG-PRES	[NP-GEN	N]
NP	tV	NP	
WH[S]	V	P	

151. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

Nwsa[21]		bobo?
2SG-GEN child-NOM		DEM-PRO
[NP	NP]	NP
NP		NP
S		P
Your	child	which

'Which is your child?'

TB: S WH[P] (V)

Tumar	baicha	konda?
2SG-GEN child-NOM		DEM-PRO
[NP	NP]	NP
NP		NP
S		P

[21] In KB morphophoneics a peculiar blending is noted where parts of the underlying monomorphemic words are combined together followed by application of the permissible phonological rules including syllabification. So Nini Ama → nwma 'your mother', Nini bwsa → nwsa 'your child', Nini kiching → nikching 'your friend'

Your child which

'Which is your child?'

ENG: WH[S] V P

Which is your child?

WH-NOM be-3SG-PRES [DET-GEN N]

NP tV NP

S V P

152. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

Nikiching bobo?

2SG-GEN friend-NOM DEM-PRO

[NP NP] NP

S P

Your friend which

'Which is your friend?'

TB: S WH[P] (V)

Tumar badu konda?

2SG-GEN friend-NOM DEM-PRO

[NP NP] NP

S P

Your friend which

'Which is your friend?'

ENG: WH[S] V P

Which is your friend?

WH[NP] be-3SG-PRES [DET-GEN N]

NP tV NP

WH[S] V P

153a. KB-I
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)

153b. KB-D
S P (V)
S P (V)
S P (V)
S P (V)

154a. TB-I
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)

154b. TB-D
S P (V)
S P (V)
S P (V)
S P (V)

155a. ENG-I
WH[S] V P
WH[S] V P
WH[S] V P
WH[S] V P

155b. ENG-D
S V P
S V P
S V P
S V P

6.2.3.2 saboni (KB) and kar (TB) 'whose'

156. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

O malkhung sabo-ni?

[DET N] WH[PRON]-GEN

NP DET

S WH[P] (V)

This vehicle whose

'Whose vehicle is this?'

KB: S WH[P] (V)

ei gari-da kar?

[DET N] WH[PRON]-GEN

NP DET

S WH[P] (V)

This vehicle whose

‘Whose vehicle is this?’

ENG: WH[S] V P

Whose	vehicle	is	this?
WH[PRON]-GEN	N	be-3SG-PRES	PRON
[DET	N]	tVm	NP
NP		V	NP
WH[S]		V	P

157. **KB: S WH[P] (V)**

O	nok	saboni?	
[DET	N]	WH[PRON]-GEN	
NP		DET	
S		WH[P]	(V)
This house		whose	

‘Whose is this house?’

TB: S WH[P] (V)

ei	bari-da	kar?	
[DET	N]	WH[PRON]-GEN	
NP		DET	
S		WH[P]	(V)
This house		whose	

‘Whose is this house?’

ENG: WH[S] V P

Whose	house	is	this
WH[PRON]-GEN	N-NOM	be-3SG-PRES	PRON

[DET	N]	tVm	NP
NP		V	NP
WH[S]		V	P

158. **KB: S WH[ADV] V**

Nwng	sabo-ni	nog-o	thang-nai
2SG-NOM	WH[PRON]-GEN	house-LOC	go-FT
NP	[DET	N] P	mVt
S	PP[ADV]		V
S	WH[ADV]		V
You	whose	house	go will

‘Whose house will you go?’

KB: S WH[ADV] V

tumi	kar	barit	jai-ba
2SG-NOM	WH[PRON]-GEN	house-LOC	go-FT
NP	[DET	N] P	mVt
S	PP[ADV]		V
S	WH[ADV]		V
You	whose	house	go will

‘Whose house will you go?’

ENG: WH[ADV] AUX S V

Whose	house	will	you	go?
WH[PRON]-GEN	N	AUX	2SG-NOM	V
[DET	N]	tV	NP	go
NP		AUX	NP	V

[WH[DET] NP-LOC] AUX S V

WH[ADV] AUX S V

159a. KB-I
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[ADV] V

159b. KB-D
S POSS-PPON (V)
S POSS-PPON (V)
S ADV V

160a. TB-I
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[P] (V)
S WH[ADV] V

160b. TB-D
S POSS-PPON (V)
S POSS-PPON (V)
S ADV V

161b. ENG-I
WH[S] V P
WH[S] V P
WH[ADV] AUX S V

161b. ENG-D
S V P
S V P
S AUX V ADV

6.3 Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined the syntax of interrogatives of wh-questions in KB,TB and English. This has given us in the main a comprehensive picture of the word order differences in these three languages. In the following chapter we will note the major differences in respect of YN questions and their implications for English language pedagogy in Tripura particularly concerning a more effective teaching of English to the KB and TB speaking students at various levels. To recap the main points we reproduce the major points here.

162.

a. Kokborok,Tripura Bangla and English belong to three totally different families of languages: Sino-Tibetan, Indo-Aryan and Indo-European respectively. The KB and TB students learning English find various problems in coping with the latter.

b. It is a truism in second language research that the first language grammar plays a significant role, mostly as a hindrance, in cases where the two systems i.e. the first language and second language, are radically at variance with each other.

c. Through this comparative study it has been established that KB and TB are HEAD LAST languages while English is a HEAD FIRST language.

d. This parametric variation is largely responsible for the word order differences noted in the two languages making the KB and TB learners find it very difficult in learning English.

e. The morphological property of VP determines the phenomena of Tense and AGR representation in the languages under discussion.

f. In English AUX is mandatory in non-copular structure of such interrogatives. KB and TB fulfill→ this demand of the interrogative formation by introducing a non-morphemic element *de* and *ki*, in addition to rising tone in YN type questions.

g. The formation of the VPs gets complicated in accordance with the need to represent the complex concepts of the time continuum of the three languages.

h. Use of an additional verbal item renders the KB and TB VP look like [(O) mV tV], where mV stands for main verb, and tV for the Tensed Verb.

g. No verbal movement is necessary in KB and TB, unlike English. Only *de* and *ki* moves around the VP without affecting the semantic value of the sentence concerned.

There is no use of de and ki in wh-questions in KB and TB respectively. The rising tone however continues to play its role as an accompaniment of interrogative constructions. The major aspect of interest in wh-questions is the involvement of no movement of any item in KBand TB compared to English. The wh-item remains in situ and the over all word order sequence is the same as in declarative sentences. Mandatory absence of be-verb in the present tense in copular constructions is another significant aspect of distinctions between KB, TB and English interrogatives and declaratives. We have given sufficient number example sentences and pointed out the relevant issues for theory and

language teaching. The entire picture of differences between KB, TB and English in respect of their respective interrogative formations and also in respect of formation of declaratives in given in the table in (163). The picture in almost a complete one with the facts ranging over ten wh-items of KB and TB. Keeping the points of differences mentioned in the table will definitely help everybody concerned to approach the issue English language teaching to the KB and TB speaking students (tribals and non-tribals) of Tripura in a more systematic, scientific and fruitful manner. This is because the teacher can now trace the systematicity of the errors committed by the learners and will be able to explain the mistakes in terms of the word order disparity between the three systems.

163.

Wh-item	KB-I	KB-D	TB-I	TB-D	ENG-I	ENG-D
1.Sabo 'who'	SP[WH](V)	S P (V)	SP[WH](V)	S P (V)	S[WH] V P	S V P
	S[WH]OV	S O V	S[WH]OV	S O V	S[WH] V O	S V O
	S[WH] O O V	S O O V	S[WH] O O V	S O O V	S[WH] V O O	S V O O
	(ADV)S[WH] V	(ADV) S V	(ADV) S[WH] V	(ADV) S V	S[WH] V (ADV)	S V (ADV)
	O S[WH] V	S O V	O S[WH] V	S O V	S[WH] V O	S V O
2.Tamo 'what'	S WH[PRD] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[PRD] (V)	S P (V)	S[WH] V P	S V P
	SWH[O]V)	S O (V)	SWH[O]V)	S O (V)	O[WH] AUX S V	S AUX V O
	SOWH[O]V	S O O V	SOWH[O]V	S O O V	O[WH] AUX S V O	S AUX V O O
3.Sabono 'whom'	S WH[O] V	S O V	S WH[O] V	S O V	O[WH] AUX S V	S V O
	SWH[O]V-F(V)	SOVINFA(V)	SWH[O]V-INF(V)	S O VINF A (V)	O[WH] V S A PP	S V A PP O
4. Tangwi 'why'	SWH[ADV] ADVV	S WH[ADV] ADV V	SWH[ADV] ADVV	S WH[ADV] ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV	S V ADV
	WH[ADV]S ADV V-NEG	SADVV-EG	WH[ADV]S ADV V-NEG	SADVV-EG	WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V ADV	S AUX NEG V ADV
	[PRED]-NEG(V)	SP[A]-EG(V)	WH[ADV] NP V NEG A	NP V NEG A	WH[ADV] NP V NEG A	
	S WH[ADV] V	S V-NEG	WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V	AUX NEG S V	WH[ADV] AUX NEG S V	
	SWH[ADV]OV AUX	S O V AUX	SWH[ADV]OV AUX	S O V AUX	WH[ADV] AUX S V O	S AUX V O
5. Boro 'where'	S P[WH] (V)	S P (V)	S P[WH] (V)	S P (V)	WH[ADV] V S	S V ADV
	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V	S AUX V ADV
	SWH[ADV] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[ADV] (V)	S P (V)	WH[ADV] V S	S V ADV

6.Buphuru ‘when’	S WH[ADV] V	S V	S WH[ADV] V	S V	WH[ADV]AUXS V	S AUX V ADV
	S WH[ADV] ADV V	S (ADV) V	S WH[ADV] ADV V	S (ADV) V	WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV	S AUX V ADV[PP] ADV
	WH[ADV] S V	S (ADV) V	WH[ADV] S V	S (ADV) V	WH[ADV] AUX S V	S AUX V ADV
	S WH[ADV] ADV V	S (ADV) ADV V	S WH[ADV] ADV V	S (ADV) ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV	S AUX V ADV ADV
7. Bahai ‘how’	S WH[ADV] V(V)	S ADV V(V)	S WH[ADV] V(V)	S ADV V(V)	WH[ADV] V S	S V ADV [P]
	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V	S AUX V ADV[PP]
	S ADV WH[ADV] V	S ADV (ADV) V	S ADV WH[ADV] V	S ADV (ADV) V	WH[ADV] AUX S V ADV	S AUX V ADV (ADV)
	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V	S AUX V ADV
8. Bwswk’ how many/ how much	S WH[ADV] (V)	S ADV (V)	S WH[ADV] (V)	S ADV (V)	WH[ADV] V S	S V ADV
	ADV S WH[ADV] (V)	ADV S ADV (V)	ADV S WH[ADV] (V)	ADV S ADV (V)	WH[ADV] S V ADV ADV	ADV V S ADV
	S ADV WH[ADV]	S ADV ADV	S ADV WH[ADV]	S ADV ADV	WH[ADV] V S ADV	S V ADV ADV
	ADV WH[S] V	ADV S V	ADV WH[S] V	ADV S V	WH[ADV] S V O	S V O
9. Bobo ‘which’	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S P (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
10.Saboni ‘whose’	S WH[P] (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S WH[P] (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
	S WH[P] (V)	S POSS-PPON (V)	S WH[P] (V)	S POSS-PPON (V)	WH[S] V P	S V P
	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	S WH[ADV] V	S ADV V	WH[ADV] AUX S V	S AUX V ADV

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