

Language Typology and Universals (CL1.204)

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Assignment 1

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Part 1

The languages that will be considered are Kodava (Dravidian), Telugu (Dravidian), Tulu (Dravidian), Nepali (Indo-Aryan), Marwari (Indo-Aryan), and Manipuri (Sino-Tibetan). The sources are as follows:

- Kodava: native speaker; friend (Ananya Sane)’s mother’s colleague
- Telugu: native speaker; friend (Vamshi Krishna)
- Tulu: bilingual and native speakers; friends (Tejah S S and Sankalp Bhat respectively) for audio and **app** for spellings
- Nepali: native speaker; friend (Pratyaksh Gautam)
- Marwari: native speaker; friend (Jatin Agarwala)’s mother
- Manipuri (Meitei): **paper** for kinship terms; **app** for others

For transliterating Manipuri, I have used **this** transliteration scheme from the Manipuri script (*meitei mayek*). It is nonstandard.

My source for Kodava was only able to provide the script in (unofficial) Roman transliteration, but I was informed that the spelling was similar to Kannada. I have done my best to predict the spellings on this basis.

The vocabulary lists are as follows.

Kinship Terms

As the exact family relations in the various languages differ considerably, I will simply list them out here, rather than making a table.

Kodava

(transcription: WX)

appa – father

avva – mother

wAwa – grandfather

avvayya – grandmother

aNNa – elder brother

akka – elder sister

waMgeV – younger sister
wammaNna – younger brother
woVddappa – father’s elder brother
woVddamma – father’s elder brother’s wife
kuMjappa – father’s younger brother
kuMjavva – father’s younger brother’s wife
mAyi – mother’s sister
mAma – mother’s sister’s husband

Tulu

(transcription: WX)

meVgyeV – younger brother
meVgwi – younger sister
aNNe – elder brother
akka – elder sister
ammeV – father
appeV – mother
ajjeV – grandfather
ajji – grandmother
mageV – son
magal – daughter
xoVddappa – mother’s elder sister / father’s elder brother’s wife
xoVddamma – father’s elder brother / mother’s elder sister’s husband
eVlyappa/cikkappa – father’s older brother / mother’s elder sister’s husband
eVlyamma/cikkamma – father’s younger brother / mother’s younger sister’s husband
mami – father’s younger sister
mama – mother’s elder brother

Telugu

(transcription: WX)

amma – mother
nAna – father
akka – elder sister
ceVlli – younger sister
aNnayya – elder brother / husband’s sister’s husband / wife’s elder sister’s husband
wammudu – younger brother / wife’s younger sister’s husband
awayya – father’s sister / mother’s brother’s wife / partner’s mother
mAmayya – mother’s brother / father’s sister’s husband / partner’s father
pinni/cinamma – mother’s younger sister / father’s younger brother’s wife
peVxxamma/xoddamma – mother’s elder sister / father’s elder brother’s wife
peVxxa nAna – father’s older brother / mother’s elder sister’s husband
bAbayi/cinna nAna – father’s younger brother / mother’s younger sister’s husband
bAva – mAmayya’s son (elder than ego) / husband’s older brother
vAxina – mAmayya’s daughter (elder than ego) / brother’s wife / husband’s sister

marIxi – mAmayya’s son (younger than ego) / husband’s younger brother
maraxalu – mAmayya’s daughter (younger than ego) / wife’s sister / husband’s
younger sister
bAvamarIxi – wife’s brother
wAwayya – grandfather
ammamma – maternal grandmother
nAnamma – paternal grandmother

Nepali

(transcription: WX)

(sAnu) BAI – younger brother
xAju/xAxA – elder brother
bahini – younger sister
xIxI – elder sister
AmA – mother
bAbA – father
boju – grandfather
bAje – grandmother
Tulu bAbA – paternal grandfather
Tulu AmA – paternal grandmother
mAmA – mother’s younger brother
mAiju – mother’s younger brother’s wife
PUPU – father’s sister
PUPA – father’s sister’s husband
CemA – mother’s younger sister
kAkA – mother’s younger sister’s husband / father’s brother

Marwari

(transcription: WX)

mĀ – mother
bApa – father
BAi – brother
bahana – sister
nAnA – maternal grandfather
nAnI – maternal grandmother
xAxA – paternal grandfather
xAxI – paternal grandmother
tAu – father’s elder brother
tAI – father’s elder brother’s wife
cAcA – father’s younger brother
cAcI – father’s younger brother’s wife
buA – father’s sister
PUPA – father’s sister’s husband
mAmA – mother’s brother
mAmI – mother’s brother’s wife
mOsI – mother’s sister
mOsA – mother’s sister’s husband

xevara – husband’s brother
 xevarAnI – husband’s brother’s wife
 nanaxa – husband’s sister
 sAlA – wife’s brother
 sAlI – wife’s sister
 BABI – elder brother’s wife
 jIjA – elder sister’s husband

Manipuri

(transcription: see above)

Note: the following terms must be prefixed with *i-* for “my”, *nə-* for “your”, and *mə-* for “his/her”.

–ma – mother
 –pa – father
 –mabok – mother’s elder sister / father’s elder brother’s wife
 –ndomca – mother’s younger sister / father’s younger brother’s wife
 –pən – father’s elder brother / mother’s elder sister’s husband
 –ton – father’s brother / mother’s younger sister’s husband
 –ne – father’s sister / mother’s brother’s wife
 –bok – grandmother
 –pubok – grandfather

Colour Terms

English	Kodava	Telugu	Tulu	Nepali	Marwari	Manipuri
red	c0vMxax	eVrupu	keVMpu	rAwo	lAla	afAfba
black	karwax	nalupu	kappu	kAlo	kAlo	amuba
white	boVlxax	weVlupu	boVlxu	sewo	saPZexa	af0ba
yellow	maMjeV	pasupu pacca	maMjal	pahilo	pIlo	hãgAm mapAl
blue	nIli	nIlaM	nIli	nIlo	nIlo	higok macugi
green	pacceV	Aku pacca	pacceV	haryo	haro	asãba macu

Body Parts

English	Kodava	Telugu	Tulu	Nepali	Marwari	Manipuri
eyes	kaNN	kaNNu	kaNN	ÃKÃ	ÃKyA	mit
nose	mUkk	mUkku	muMku	nAka	nAka	nAton
ears	keVmi	ceVvi	kibi	kAna	kAna	nAkof
mouth	bAyi	nOru	bAyi	mUka	muha	cin
face	mUd	muKaM	moneV	mUka	muNdo	mAi
neck	woMxeV	mexa	kuwwigeV	GAti	garxana	faksam
arms	kE	ceVyyi	kE	hAWa	hAWa	pAmbom
elbows	mUleV kE	mUceVyyi	moVraMgE	kuina	koNi	Kutnif
stomach	poVtteV	kadupu	baMji	Budi	peta	cakAu

English	Kodava	Telugu	Tulu	Nepali	Marwari	Manipuri
legs	kAl	kAlu	kAr	KuttA	pEra	Kof
knees	maMdi	mUkAlu	moVraMgAl	GodA	Gutano	Kuu

Numbers

English	Kodava	Telugu	Tulu	Nepali	Marwari	Manipuri
one	oVMx	oVkkati	oVMji	eka	eka	ama
two	xaMd	reVMdu	eVrad	xui	xo	ani
three	mUNd	mUdu	mUji	wIna	xIna	ahum
four	nAl	nAlugu	nAl	cAra	cAra	mari
five	aMji	Exu	En	pÃca	pÃca	mafA
six	Ar	Aru	Aji	CO	Caha	taruk
seven	elY	edu	el	sAwa	sAwa	taret
eight	eVtt	eVnimixi	eVNma	ATa	ATa	nipAl
nine	oVyIMbax	wommixi	oVrMba	nO	nO	mApal
ten	paww	paxi	paww	xasa	xasa	tarA

Domestic Animals

English	Kodava	Telugu	Tulu	Nepali	Marwari	Manipuri
cow	pEyu	Avu	peVwwa	gAya	gAya	sanbi
dog	nAyi	kukka	nAyi	kukkura	kuwwa	hui
cat	pUFFeV	pilli	pucCeV	bIrAlu	billI	hOdof
horse	kuxre	gurraM	kuxureV	GodA	GodA	sagol
chicken	kolYi	kOdi	kori	kuKrA	murgA	yenAu
fish	mIn	cepa	mIn	mACA	maCalI	fA
goat	Ad	meka	ed	bAKrA	bakarA	hAmeF
sheep	koVri	goVrreV	kuri	KAsi	Beda	yAu
pig	panxi	panxi	paMji	suMgura	suara	ok
rabbit	mola	kunxelu	mugeVr	KArAyo	KaragoSa	Teba

Part 2

It is immediately clear that languages in the same family have extremely similar words for most of the terms considered. An exception to this is the terms for younger siblings and grandparents in Dravidian languages.

Along Language Families

Dravidian

A common pattern across the terms for uncles and aunts across Dravidian languages is that they are often the words “big” or “small” compounded with the word “father” or “mother”. The exact meanings sometimes vary.

It also appears that Telugu is the odd one out among the three Dravidian languages (it has unrelated words for “black”, “white”, “yellow”, “mouth”, “nine”, “cow”, “dog”, “fish”, “goat” and “rabbit”). This might mean that Telugu diverged from the common-origin ancestor of these three languages *before* the other two. Such differences can also be noted when Telugu is compared to other Dravidian languages, like Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam; for example, “want” (cAhie in Hindi) is formed with the root *ve-* in Malayalam and Tamil, *be-* in Kannada (the *v/b* correlation is observed between Malayalam/Tamil and Kannada in several words), but is *kAvAli* in Telugu.

However, it is also possible that the difference arose only due to geographical separation, when in reality Tulu or Kodava might have diverged before Telugu. Both of these languages are spoken relatively near each other (the districts of Coorg/Kodagu and Mangalore are roughly 150 km apart, and 400-500 km from the Andhra state border).

Indo-Aryan

In general, Nepali and Marwari appear to have roughly the same degree of similarity as Kodava and Tulu. Some terms have unrelated words in both languages – for example, the word for “white” is a loanword in Marwari but a Sanskrit-origin word (presumably) in Nepali. Nearly every category has at least one or two differences.

It could be that Nepali and Marwari belong to different subfamilies under Indo-Aryan, *i.e.*, their immediate parent languages are distinct.

As with the Dravidian family, however, it is possible that the differences arose only due to geographical separation (Siliguri, Pratyaksh’s hometown, is 1600 km away from Badopal, Jatin’s hometown).

Along Categories

The following table shows the number of terms for which the languages in a certain family have unrelated words:

Family	Colours	Body Parts	Numbers	Animals
Dravidian (all different)	0	2	0	0
Dravidian (not all same)	4	3	1	5
Indo-Aryan	2	3	0	3

Note: I estimated the above numbers based on the superficial similarity of the

words.

One immediate fact that this reveals is that numbers very rarely change across related languages. All other categories have an average of at least 3 differing terms in each category, while numbers have only one difference in Dravidian languages and none in Indo-Aryan languages.

Interestingly, the word for “nine” in Telugu and Kodava is derived from the words “one” and “ten”, while Telugu it has a different root (which also forms the root for the word for “ninety” in Malayalam and Kannada)¹.

Possibly, numbers show less variance across languages because they are frequently used, and so the words to express them rarely change even across long periods of time.

¹Krishnamurti, Bhadriraju. *The dravidian languages*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pages 264-5.