



Asian Research Association

Indian Journal of LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS



Pronouns in Lotha

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34256/ijll2016>

Received: 06-09-2020; Revised: 16-09-2020; Accepted: 28-09-2020; Published: 30-09-2020



Abstract: The paper gives an account of pronouns in Lotha, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Nagaland, India. Lotha is a generic name and refers to both the linguistic group and the ethno-cultural entity. Lothas are racially Mongoloid and linguistically, it has been classified under the Central Naga group of the Naga sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages. Pronouns in Lotha are free forms which can function solely to fill the position of a noun phrase in a clause. Personal pronouns are typically deixis to the speech participants for each of the three grammatical person i.e. first person, second person and third person. In annex to person, numbers i.e. singular, dual and plural are also distinguished on pronouns. Personal pronouns in Lotha are independent and free-standing and for that matter it takes case-markers and postposition in similar ways as full noun phrase. The first, second and third personal pronouns take case marking only when it serves as a subject and does not take any case markers when it serves as an object. Demonstrative pronouns function in several ways based on proximity and distance in time. Lotha has three-way distinction of identifying demonstrative pronoun i.e. proximate, distance and remote marked by *ʃi* 'this' (near the speaker), *ci* 'that' (near the hearer) and *o-ci* 'over there' (far away from both the speaker and hearer). The interrogative pronouns *kvə*, *ndo* and *otʃɔ* are attached to the bound nominal suffixes. Indefinite pronouns can be formed from the question words which can change to affirmative by attaching the indefinite suffix *-sana* and its negative particle counterpart *mek*. Reflexive pronoun in Lotha is expressed by the reflexive lexeme *bɔbɔ* 'self' which is a free morpheme.

Keywords: Lotha, Pronouns, Person, Number, Gender, Case



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1. Introduction

Lotha is a generic name and refers to both the linguistic group and the ethno-cultural entity. Linguistically, Lotha has been classified under the Central Naga group of the Naga sub-branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages (Eberhard et.al, 2020). Lotha is one of the major languages spoken in Nagaland. The speakers of Lotha are scattered all over Nagaland but the majority are concentrated mainly at Wokha district of Nagaland. Lotha has no script of its own and has adopted the Roman script introduced by the British and the American Missionaries in the late 19th century. According to the *Census of India (2011)*, the total number of Lotha speakers is 1, 66,343. Similarly, *Lewis et.al (2015)* list a total number of 1, 66,000 Lotha speakers. Lotha has a number of varieties but, the variation is mainly at the phonological level, that is, the accent of the speaker, which varies from village to village. However, for the purpose of literary works, the variety spoken in central villages, particularly in and around



Wokha town is used. This paper is a research done on the standard variety of the Lotha language spoken in and around wokha town.

1.1 Methodology

The linguistic fieldwork methodology was employed for this research study. This includes: Informants: Primary data were collected from the native speakers of the dialect by going to the field. The informants selected include both male and female which are of different age groups. Educated as well as illiterate informants were interviewed for elicitation of data. The data collected were presented in the form of word-lists, sentence list, narratives and oral tradition. In addition, interviews with scholars and writers who have worked on Lotha are included. Number of language consulted consists of eight people, both male and female.

Tools: The tools include interviews, questionnaires and audio recorder. Audio recorders like Zoom H4n and field linguistic softwares like Flex were used for recording and analyzing the data.

Procedure: Data were collected from primary sources and secondary sources which include textbooks, articles, and journals for cross reference.

Presentation of data: Description and standard procedure of presenting field data were presented. Some of the data collected are presented in the forms of charts and tables.

Data was collected from Wokha town, Wokha village, Yikhum village and Doyang which are the villages adjacent to wokha town.

1.2 Pronouns in Lotha

Pronouns in Lotha are free forms which can function solely to fill the position of a noun phrase in a clause. Personal pronouns are typically deixis to the speech participants for each of the three grammatical person i.e. first person, second person and third person. In annex to person, numbers i.e. singular, dual and plural are also distinguished on pronouns. Personal pronouns in Lotha are independent and free-standing and for that matter it takes case-markers and postposition in similar ways as full noun phrase. The first, second and third personal pronouns take case marking only when it serves as a subject and does not take any case markers when it serves as an object. Demonstrative pronouns function in several ways based on proximity and distance in time. Lotha has three-way distinction of identifying demonstrative pronoun i.e. proximate, distance and remote marked by *ʃi* 'this' (near the speaker), *ci* 'that' (near the hearer) and *o-ci* 'over there' (far away from both the speaker and hearer). The interrogative pronouns *kvə*, *ndo* and *otʃɔ* are attached to the bound nominal suffixes. Indefinite pronouns can be formed from the question words which can change to affirmative by attaching the indefinite suffix *-sana*. Reflexive pronoun in Lotha is expressed by the reflexive lexeme *bɔbɔ* 'self' which is a free morpheme.

1.3 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns are typically deixis to the speech participants for each of the three grammatical person i.e. first person, second person and third person. In annex to person, numbers i.e. singular and plural are distinguished on pronouns. In terms of numbers Lotha has singular, dual and plural pronouns. A paradigm of personal pronouns of Lotha is shown in Table 1 below

Table 1 personal pronouns

Personal Pronouns	Singular	Dual	Plural
First Person	<i>a</i>	<i>eni</i>	<i>ete</i>
Second Person	<i>ni</i>	<i>nini</i>	<i>nte</i>
Third Person	<i>ombɔ (M)</i> <i>ombvə (F)</i>	<i>oni</i>	<i>onte</i>



In Lotha the third person singular, in a free speech the speaker always use the male form of pronoun 'ombɔ' for reference, irrespective of the gender whether it's a male or female; however in orthography the female is referred to as 'ombvə' and the male as 'ombɔ'. Personal pronouns in Lotha are independent and free-standing and for that matter it takes case-markers and postposition in similar ways as full noun phrase. The first, second and third personal pronouns take case marking only when it serves as a subject and does not take any case markers when it serves as an object. The following examples show how case is incorporated in personal pronouns:

1. *opvəi-na ntsəinraŋ pi-tʃɔ osi ombɔ bəŋi-na eŋatʰe*
 Lord-AGT wisdom give-PST CONJ 3P.M mouth-AGT knowledge
osi ntʃəmri tʃəji-tʃɔ
 CONJ understanding come-PST

'The Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding'

2. *boaz-na ruth-ci kʰi-tʃɔ osi ombvə-o ombɔ eŋ kem-*
 boaz-AGT ruth-DET take-PST CONJ 3PF-COMP 3P.F wife become tʃɔ
 PST

'Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife'

3. *ombvə-na ŋarɔ-ci kʰi ombvə opʰi-lo yip-tʰɔk tʃɔ*
 3PF-AGT child-DEm take 3P.F lap-LOCsleep-CAUS PST

'she took the child and made him sleep on her lap'

The nominative case in Lotha occurs in two different shapes conditioned by person and number system of case marking. In Lotha there are two nominative case markers *-no*, and *-yo* which appears on the subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs conditioned by person and number. The following illustrations below shows how the nominatives behaves in Lotha:

4. *a-yo ocəya yi-ala*
 1P-NOM tomorrow go-PRES.PROG

'I am leaving tomorrow'

5. *a-yo olan tsa vo-tʃɔ*
 1P-NOM road walk go-PST

'I went walking'

6. *n-no kvelo yi-ala*
 2P.PL-NOM where go-PRES.PROG

'where are you going?'

7. *n-no kveto ni tsa*
 2P.NOM what 2P call

'what is your name?'

8. *etə-no ŋon ŋon tai pi-a-la*
 1P.PL-NOM good good only give- PRES.PROG

'we gave the good ones only'

9. *onte-no oli yí-a*
 3P.PL-NOM field go-PRES

'they went to field'

In the first person pronoun, the nominative case marker *-no* is marked on the plural but not on the first person singular. In the second person pronoun the nominative *-no* is marked on both the singular and plural. In



the third person pronoun the nominative *-nɔ* is marked only on the third person plural and not on the singular. *-nɔ* is associated with only interrogatives in the second person singular but interrogatives can extend to first, second and third person plural.

The nominative marker *-yɔ* is exclusive only for the first person singular. In the first person pronoun, the nominative case marker *-yɔ* is marked on the first person singular but not on the plural. Whereas in the second and third person pronoun the nominative *-yɔ* is unmarked on all the three numbers i.e. singular, dual and plural.

A paradigm of how the nominative cases *-nɔ* and *-yɔ* is incorporated in the personal pronouns and numbers is shown below in table 2.

Table 2 Incorporation of nominative case on personal pronouns

Nominative	Singular	Dual	Plural
<i>-nɔ</i>			
1P	-	-	<i>-nɔ</i>
2P	<i>-nɔ</i>	-	<i>-nɔ</i>
3P	-	-	<i>-nɔ</i>
<i>-yɔ</i>			
1P	<i>-yɔ</i>	-	-
2P	-	-	-
3P	-	-	-

1.4 Possessive Pronouns

Following Picallo (2; 1994) Lotha possessive pronominalization is possible only for arguments that are assigned genitive case, and are referred to as weak pronouns because a strong pronoun agrees with its intended referent in person, gender, and number, while the possessive agrees with the N head. In Lotha the genitive functions both as dependent and independent, where the dependent is not marked for possessive but the independent genitive is marked for possessive. The following examples show how possessive pronouns functions in Lotha on a dependent and independent genitives as seen in the table below:

Table 3 Possessive pronouns			
1Person	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
Dependent	<i>a kagɔ</i> 1P.SG book 'My book'	<i>eni kagɔ</i> 1P.DU book 'Our book'	<i>ete kagɔ</i> 1P.PL book 'Our book'
Independent	<i>cicɔ a-tfə</i> DEM 1P.SG POSS 'That book is mine'	<i>kagɔ-cicɔ eni etfə</i> book-DEM 1P.DU POSS 'That book is ours'	<i>kagɔ-cicɔ ete etfə</i> book-DEM 1P.PL POSS 'That book is ours'
2Person	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
Dependent	<i>ni kagɔ</i> 2P.SG book 'Your book'	<i>nini kagɔ</i> 2P.DU book 'Your book'	<i>nte kagɔ</i> 2P.PL book 'Your book'
Independent	<i>cicɔ ni-tfə</i> DEM 2P.SG POSS 'That book is yours'	<i>kagɔ cicɔ nini etfə</i> book DEM 2P.DU POSS 'That book is yours'	<i>kagɔ cicɔ nte etfə</i> book DEM 2P.PL POSS 'That book is yours'
3Person	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
Dependent	<i>ombvə kagɔ</i> 3P.SG.F book	<i>oni kagɔ</i> 3P.DU book	<i>onte kagɔ</i> 3P.DU book



	'Her book'	'Their book'	'Their book'
Independent	<i>cic ombvə etfə</i> DEM 3P.SG.F POSS 'That book is hers'	<i>kagɔ cic oni etfə</i> book DEM 3P.DU POSS 'that book is their's '	<i>kagɔ cic onte etfə</i> book DEM 3P.PL POSS 'That book is their's'

Dependent genitive pronouns which are often referred to as weak possessives serve more like determiners in front of nouns whereas independent genitive pronouns take the place of a phrase. Most of the possessive markers in Lotha have separate forms for the dependent and independent functions of genitive on personal pronouns. The same genitive is attached to the singular, dual and the plural as seen in table 3 however in the first person singular and the second person singular the particle 'e' is dropped and is replaced with *-tfə*.

1.5 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns occupy the pre-head modifying position in a noun phrase. Demonstrative in Lotha functions in several ways based on proximity and distance in time. Lotha has three-way distinction of identifying demonstrative pronoun i.e. proximate, distance and remote marked by *fi* 'this' (near the speaker), *ci* 'that' (near the hearer) and *o-ci* 'over there' (far away from both the speaker and hearer). There is no particular affix to mark proximity and distance but remoteness is marked by the prefix *o-* in the language. There are no separate plural demonstrative pronouns, the plural marker suffix *-aŋ* is attached to a singular pronoun to form a plural demonstrative pronouns as in *fi-aŋ* 'these', *ci-aŋ* 'those', *o-ci-aŋ* 'those over there'. The locative is marked by the suffix *-lo* as in *fi-lo* 'here', *ci-lo* 'there' and *o-ci-lo* 'over there'. The following illustrations show how demonstrative pronouns in Lotha functions.

10. *ŋarɔ fi-co ombo tsolov*
child DEM-TOP 2P.M daughter
'This child is his daughter'
11. *ŋarɔ ci-co ombo tsolov*
child DEM-TOP 2P.M daughter
'That child is his daughter'
12. *ŋarɔ o-ci-co ombo tsolov*
child DEM-TOP 2P.M daughter
'That child over there is his daughter'
13. *ŋarɔ fi-aŋ-co ombo tsolov ci-aŋ mek*
child DEM-PL-TOP 2P.M daughter DEM-PL NEG
'These children are not his daughters'
14. *ŋarɔ ci-aŋ-co ombo tsolov ci-aŋ mek*
child DEM-PL-TOP 2P.M daughter DEM-PL NEG
'Those children are not his daughters'
15. *ŋarɔ o-ci-aŋ-co ombo tsolov ci-aŋ mek*
child DIS-DEM-PL-TOP 2P.M daughter DEM-PL NEG
'Those children over there are not his daughters'

The locative demonstrative pronoun *fi-lo* 'here', *ci-lo* 'there' and *o-ci-lo* 'over there' are formed by the demonstratives this and that by adding the locative suffix *-lo*. The following examples illustrated below show how locative demonstratives occur in Lotha.

16. *fi-lo li-a*
DEM-LOC have-PRES
'It is here'
17. *ci-lo li-a*



DEM-LOC	have-PRES
<i>'It is there'</i>	
18. o-ci-lo	li-a
DIS-DEM-LOC	have-PRES
<i>'It is over there'</i>	
19. o-ci-aŋ-lo	li-a
DIS-DEM-PL-LOC	have-PRES
<i>'they are over there'</i>	

1.6 Interrogative Pronouns

Interrogative pronouns are question words which ask questions about people, object or things. The interrogatives are attached to the bound nominal suffixes as seen in the following data.

<i>kvə -lo</i>	<i>'where'</i>
<i>kvə -do</i>	<i>'how'</i>
<i>kvə -tʰəŋ</i>	<i>'when'</i>
<i>kvə -ta</i>	<i>'how much'</i>
<i>kvə -la</i>	<i>'which'</i>
<i>ndo</i>	<i>'what'</i>
<i>ndo -li</i>	<i>'why'</i>
<i>otʃɔ</i>	<i>'who'</i>
<i>otʃɔ -etʃə</i>	
<i>who-GEN</i>	<i>'whose'</i>

The interrogative *kvə* can have the question-answer morphological settings as seen in the following table 4.

Table 4 Interrogative settings

Question	Answer
<i>kvə -lo</i> Q-LOC <i>'where'</i>	<i>fɪ-lo</i> PROX-LOC <i>'here'</i> <i>ci-lo</i> DIST-LOC <i>'there'</i>
<i>kvə -to</i> Q-like <i>'how'</i>	<i>he-to</i> PROX-like <i>'like this'</i> <i>ci-to</i> DIST-like <i>'like that'</i>
<i>kvə -tʰəŋ</i> Q-time <i>'when'</i>	<i>to-tʰəŋ</i> DIST-time <i>'that time'</i>
<i>kvə -ta</i> Q-much <i>'how much'</i>	<i>he-tata</i> PROX-much <i>'this much'</i> <i>ci-tata</i> DIST-much <i>'that much'</i>
<i>kvə -la</i> Q-one <i>'which one'</i>	<i>fɪ-la</i> PROX-one <i>'this one'</i> <i>ci-la</i> DIST-one <i>'that one'</i>



1.7 Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns in Lotha refer to a person, an object or a thing which are not specified. They can be formed from the question words which can change to affirmative by attaching the indefinite suffix *-sana*. Indefinite pronouns generally occur in a series like the English some-series, any-series and no-series (Haspelmath. 11: 1997). Following Haspelmath Lotha have *sana* series and *mek* series, where the former is a suffix and the latter is a particle and stands next to the pronoun stem in both the cases. The following table show how indefinite pronouns behave in Lotha.

Table 5 Indefinite forms

Affirmative	Negative
<i>otʃɔ-sana</i> who-INDF 'someone/somebody'	<i>otʃi-a mek</i> who-PRES NEG 'no one/ nobody/none'
<i>ndo-sana</i> what-INDF 'something/anything'	<i>ndi-a mek</i> what-PRES NEG 'nothing'
<i>ndo-lo-sana</i> where-LOC-INDF 'somewhere'	<i>ndi-ala mek</i> what-PROG NEG 'nowhere'
<i>kvəlo-sana</i> where-INDF 'somewhere'	<i>kvəlo ha mek</i> where POL NEG 'nowhere'

In an affirmative and negative structure of an indefinite pronoun, there is a phonological change in the vowel. The mid tone (ɔ) changes to high tone (i) when a present and present progressive is added to the negative structure.

1.8 Reflexive Pronouns

Bhat (79; 2004) defines reflexive as a term generally used to denote co reference between two different noun phrases however, the notion that underlies the use of this device is primarily a distinction between actions that affect the performer himself on the one hand and the ones that affect some other person or object on the other. Reflexive pronoun in Lotha is expressed by the reflexive lexeme *bɔbɔ* 'self' which is a free morpheme. The list of reflexive pronouns in Lotha is shown in table 6 below.

Table 6 List of reflexive pronouns

	Singular	Dual	Plural
1P	<i>a bɔbɔ</i> 1P REFL 'myself'	<i>eni bɔbɔ</i> 1P REFL 'ourselves'(two of us)	<i>ete bɔbɔ</i> 1P REFL 'ourselves' (more than two of us)
2P	<i>ni bɔbɔ</i> 2P REFL 'yourself'	<i>nini bɔbɔ</i> 2P REFL 'yourselves'(two of them)	<i>nte bɔbɔ</i> 2P REFL 'yourselves'(more than two of them)
3P	<i>ombɔbɔ</i>	<i>oni bɔbɔ</i>	<i>onte bɔbɔ</i>



	3P REFL 'himself/herself'	3P REFL 'themselves' (two of them)	3P REFL 'themselves' (more than two of them)
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Reflexive pronouns function as the antecedent of anaphoric nouns and pronouns. It can be seen in the illustration given below:

20. *a* -ɔ *a bɔbɔ* *vo-* *tʃɔ*
 1P.SG -NOM 1P.REFL go- PST
'i went by myself'
21. *eni -na eni bɔbɔ vo-ta tʃɔ*
 1P.DU AGT 1P.DU REFL go-HAB PST
'we went by ourselves' (two of us)
22. *ete -no ete bɔbɔ vo- ta tʃɔ*
 1P.PL NOM 1P.PL REFL go- HAB PST
'we went by ourselves' (more than two of us)
23. *ni -na ni bɔbɔ kʰi tso- a*
 2PSG AGT 2P.SG REFL take eat PRES
'you take yourself and eat'
24. *nini -na nini bɔbɔ kʰi tso- ta*
 2P.DU AGT 2P.DU REFL take eat- HAB
'you (two) take yourselves and eat'
25. *n-te -ɔ n-te bɔbɔ kʰi tso- ta*
 2P.PL NOM 2P.PL REFL take eat- HAB
'you (more than two) take yourselves and eat'
26. *ombo ombɔbɔ ro- tʃɔ*
 3P.SG 3P.REFL come PST
'he came by himself'
27. *oni -na oni bɔbɔ rɔ- tʃɔ*
 3PDU AGT 3PDU REFL come- PST
'they (two of them) came by themselves'

The reflexive pronouns can carry case markers as seen in (20), (22) and (25), where the first person singular, first person plural and second person singular are marked with nominative case markers.

2. Conclusion

Pronouns in Lotha are free forms which can function solely to fill the position of a noun phrase in a clause. Personal pronouns are typically deixis to the speech participants for each of the three grammatical person i.e. first person, second person and third person. In annex to person, numbers i.e. singular, dual and plural are also distinguished on pronouns. In Lotha the third person singular, in a free speech the speaker always use the male form of pronoun '*ombɔ*' for reference, irrespective of the gender whether it's a male or female; however in orthography the female is referred to as '*ombvə*' and the male as '*ombɔ*'. Personal pronouns in Lotha are



independent and free-standing and for that matter it takes case-markers and postposition in similar ways as full noun phrase. The first, second and third personal pronouns take case marking only when it serves as a subject and does not take any case markers when it serves as an object. The nominative case in Lotha occurs in two different shapes conditioned by person and number system of case marking. In Lotha there are two nominative case markers *-no*, and *-yo* which appears on the subject of both transitive and intransitive verbs conditioned by person and number.

In Lotha possessive pronominalization is possible only for arguments that are assigned genitive case. In Lotha the genitive functions both as dependent and independent, where the dependent is not marked for possessive but the independent genitive is marked for possessive. Dependent genitive pronouns which are often referred to as weak possessives serve more like determiners in front of nouns whereas independent genitive pronouns take the place of a phrase. Most of the possessive markers in Lotha have separate forms for the dependent and independent functions of genitive on personal pronouns. The same genitive is attached to the singular, dual and the plural as seen in table 3 however in the first person singular and the second person singular the particle 'e' is dropped and is replaced with *-tʃə*.

Demonstrative in Lotha functions in several ways based on proximity and distance in time. Lotha has three-way distinction of identifying demonstrative pronoun i.e. proximate, distance and remote marked by *ʃi* 'this' (near the speaker), *ci* 'that' (near the hearer) and *o-ci* 'over there' (far away from both the speaker and hearer). There is no particular affix to mark proximity and distance but remoteness is marked by the prefix *o-* in the language. There are no separate plural demonstrative pronouns, the plural marker suffix *-aŋ* is attached to a singular pronoun to form a plural demonstrative pronouns as in *ʃi-aŋ* 'these', *ci-aŋ* 'those', *o-ci-aŋ* 'those over there'. The locative is marked by the suffix *-lo* as in *ʃi-lo* 'here', *ci-lo* 'there' and *o-ci-lo* 'over there'.

Interrogative pronouns are question words which ask questions about people, object or things. The interrogative pronouns *kvə*, *ndo* and *otʃ* are attached to the bound nominal suffixes.

Indefinite pronouns in Lotha refer to a person, an object or a thing which is not specified. They can be formed from the question words which can change to affirmative by attaching the indefinite suffix *-sana* and its negative particle counterpart *mek*. In an affirmative and negative structure of an indefinite pronoun, there is a phonological change in the vowel. The mid tone (ɔ) changes to high tone (i) when a present and present progressive is added to the negative structure.

Reflexive pronoun in Lotha is expressed by the reflexive lexeme *bɔbɔ* 'self' which is a free morpheme.

Abbreviations

1P	First Person
2P	Second Person
3P	Third Person
AGT	Agentive
CAUS	Causative
CONJ	Conjunction
DEM	Demonstratives
DIST	Distance
DU	Dual
F	Female
HAB	Habitual Aspect
INDF	Indefinite
LOC	Locative
M	Male
NEG	Negative
PL	Plural
POL	Negative polarity item
POSS	Possessive
PRES	Present Tense
PROG	Progressive
PROX	Proximant



PST	Past tense
Q	Interrogative
REFL	Reflexive
SG	Singular
TOP	Topic particle

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Funding

No funding was received for conducting this study.

Conflict of interest

The Author has no conflicts of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.

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