

The Emergence of Politeness: Evidence from Dialects

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1. Introduction²

- Ever since the seminal work of Speas and Tenny (2003) that incorporates discourse-level information into the left periphery of the tree, there has been a huge upsurge in research to understand the morpho-syntax of honorificity (HON).³ Some questions that are recently being asked are:

(i) Is HON a primitive feature or a derivative?

- A typologically robust fact is that HON(orific) nominal and verbal morphology often lack an independent morphological realization and is, instead, a reflex of a pre-existing grammatical form (INDEF(inites), 3(person), PL(urality)); see Wang (2023) for details, but also for some exceptions. Examples showing the morphological dependence of HON on other grammatical elements are given in (1)-(3).⁴

(1) An nu no.oka Ainu (Refsing 1986: 94)
INDEF ask IMPF
'As you (HON) are asking ...'
(Lit: 'As someone is asking')

(2) Signor Alessandro è/*sei content Italian (Wang 2023: 1288)
Sir A 3SG/*2SG.COP happy.MASC
'Sir Alessandro, are you (HON) happy?'
(Lit: 'Sir Alessandro, is s/he happy?')

(3) Avez/*As vous le livre? French (Wang 2023: 1288)
Have.PRES.2PL/*SG You.PL the book
'Do you (HON) have the book?'
(Lit: 'Do you all have the book?')

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² Glosses for Honorificity: Non-Honorific (NH), Mid-Honorific (MH), High Honorific (H).

³ To mention some recent works on honorificity: Boeckx and Niinuma (2004), Pak (2008, 2017), Hill (2007, 2014), Pak et al (2008), Haegeman and Hill (2013), Portner et al (2019), Kaur (2020, 2023), Bhatt and Davis (2021), Alok (2020, 2021), Baker and Alok (2022), Alok and Haddican (2022), Miyagawa (2022), Kumari (2023), Kaur and Sinha (2024), among others.

⁴ Boeckx and Niinuma (2004) possibly were the first to propose a syntactic analysis for honorificity agreement. The Japanese data they present show that honorificity agreement is sensitive to defective intervention effects, just like other phi-features. This pattern is illustrated below: of the two Japanese examples, only (i) is grammatical because the IO 'Prof. Tanaka' can agree with the verb in honorificity without intervention from the structurally lower DO 'Mary'. Sentence (ii), on the other hand, blocks honorificity agreement due to defective intervention from the IO 'to Mary'.

- | | | | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| (i) | Hanako-ga | Tanaka sensei-ni | Mary-o | go-syookai-si-ta | |
| | Hanako-NOM | Prof.Tanaka-DAT | Mary-ACC | introduce-OH-PST | |
| | 'Hanako introduced Mary to Prof. Tanako' | | | | Japanese (BN 2004: 7) |
| (ii) | *Hanako-ga | Mary-ni | Tanaka sensei-o | go-syookai-si-ta | |
| | Hanako-NOM | Mary-DAft | Prof. Tanako | introduce-OH-PST | |
| | 'Hanako introduced Prof. Tanako to Mary' | | | | Japanese (BN 2004: 8) |

(ii) A second question concerns the formal representation for HON.

- Specifically, if HON finds realization through PL(ural) in a language, what is the underlying representation of PL? Ackema and Neeleman (2018) and Wang (2023) support a single PL projection, whereas Despić (2017), Puskar-Gallien (2019), Bhatt and Davis (2021), Sinha (2023), Kaur (2024), Kaur and Sinha (2023) opt for multiple positions for PL.^{5,6} The two schemes are given below.

(4) [DP D [**NumP** [GenP [nP]]]]

(5) [DP D [**NumP (SG)** [GenP [nP (**PL**)]]]]

(iii) On a related note, is PL a formal feature or a semantic feature?

- Formal Features are defined by Cowper and Hall (2014) as in (i). Semantic features on the other hand, are not represented in form, but they denote meaning (also see Despić (2017)).

(i) A feature is formal if it is involved “[...] in inflectional paradigms, or triggers syntactic movement or agreement, or plays some other demonstrably formal role”

(Cowper & Hall 2014: 146)

- The current paper approaches these questions with data from 5 Bangla varieties (1 standard and 4 non-standard). The non-standard varieties, historically, do not have honorific pronouns and agreement. But they are currently developing honorific pronouns and honorificity agreement with influence from the standard variant of Bangla (through education and mass media). There is 1 dialect that is also influenced by standard Odia, a neighboring language.
- What is interesting about standard Bangla is that it does not have plural inflection on both nouns and verbs. Instead, it has an Associative Plural (APL) that does not trigger plural agreement. Odia also has an APL, but additionally, has plural verbal inflection.
- The primary research questions of this study are:
 - (i) Do Bangla dialects use the APL to develop honorific pronouns and honorificity agreement, and how?
 - (ii) What is the formal representation of the APL – is it a formal PL feature or is it a semantic PL feature? In the development of Hon, does the PL undergo a change in its formal/semantic nature?

⁵ Unique or dual specifications are able to capture mixed agreement (HON) patterns as elicited with the following French and Czech examples.

(i) vous **êtes loyal** French (Despić 2017: 257)

you.PL be.2.PL loyal.M.SG

‘You (singular, formal, male) are loyal’

(ii) vy **jste byl-a dobr-á** Czech (Comrie 1975)

you aux.2PL been-FSG good-FSG

‘You (a formal female addressee) were good’

⁶ Alok (2020) and Kumari (2023) claim that HON is a separate head in DP for Eastern Indo-Aryan languages Magahi and Maithili.

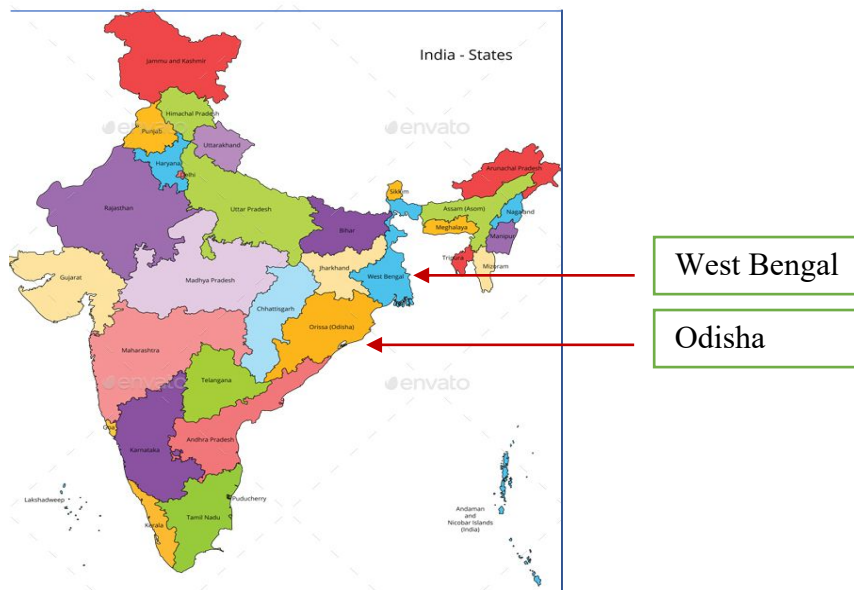
(i) [**HONP** [DP [NP N] D] **HON**]

- The data we survey here show the following patterns -
 - (i) 2 non-standard varieties use the 2pMH (+APL) to denote honorificity with the correct corresponding agreement in Person and Hon (i.e., in 2pMH). The 2pH (+APL) is very rare. The 3pH (+APL), when used, triggers 3pNH agreement.
 - (ii) 1 non-standard variety uses the 2pMH + APL form to denote 2pHON (SG) with PL agreement. In this variety, the 2pH is never used, and the 3pH is sometimes used but with corresponding 3pNH agreement.
 - (iii) 1 dialect borrows the honorific forms from standard Odia but suppresses the expected PL agreement with 2pMH and 3pH. For 2pH, however, it borrows the pronominal form from standard Odia but uses the standard Bangla plural agreement.
- From here on, there are three forms to look out for in the non-standard variants: **2pMH**, **2pH**, **3pH** (and their corresponding agreement patterns).

2. Introducing Bangla

- Bangla is an Eastern Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in West Bengal; Odia is spoken in the neighboring state of Odisha, located in the South of West Bengal; see Map 1.

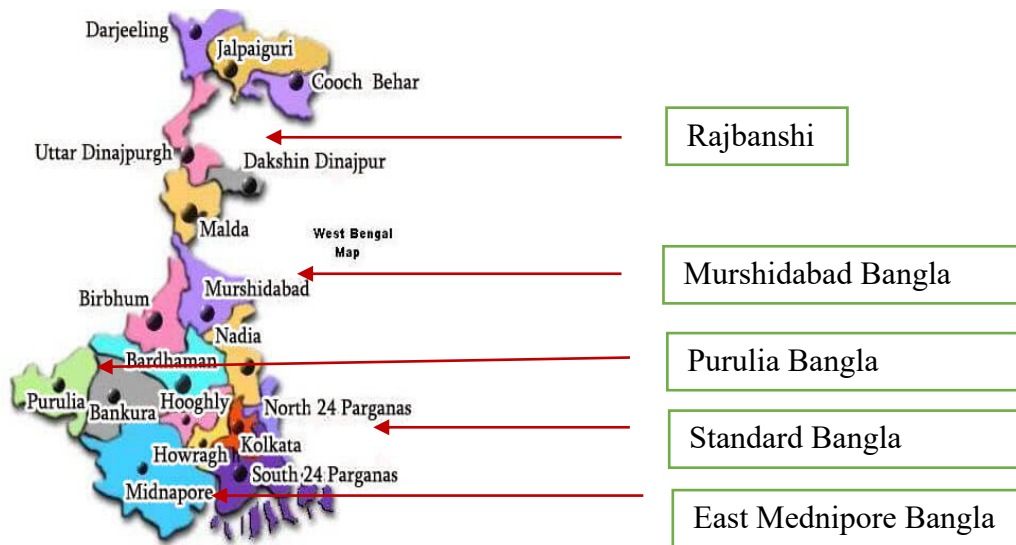
Map 1.



Link: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/602286150140729725/>

- The 5 Bangla varieties are geographically located as below.

Map 2.



- The common typological features defining all 5 Bangla dialects are given below -

- (i) SOV order
- (ii) Nom-Acc case alignment
- (iii) Person agreement
- (iv) No gender and number inflections
- (v) Numeral Classifier system

2.1. Standard Bangla Honorificity & Plurals

- Standard Bangla lacks plural morphology on both nouns and verbs. Instead, it has an APL **-raa** that denotes a 'group' interpretation.

(6) **Biden-raa** chole **gelo/gaelen**

Biden-APL walk go.PST.3pNH/go.PST.3pH

'Biden (NH/H) and his group/family went away'

- The APL also appears on plural pronouns as shown in the table below. Bangla 2p pronouns have 3 honorific values (NH, MH and H/+formal). 3p pronouns on the other hand, have 2 values (NH and H/+Formal). The APL appears on all plural pronouns, irrespective of their HON values.

Table 1: Singular and Plural Pronouns in Standard Bangla

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	Aamii	aam- raa
2p	tuii/tumii/aapnii (NH/MH/H-Formal)	to- raa /tom- raa / aapnaa- raa (NH/MH/H-formal)
3p	o/se/unii (NH/H-Formal)	o- raa /onaa- raa (NH/H-Formal)

- The APL also marks plurality on nouns, but only when they are +animate. There is a separate **-gulo** marker for plural -animate nouns (Table 2).

Table 2: Singular and Plural Nouns in Standard Bangla

Nouns	Singular	Plural
Boy	chhele	chhele- raa
Girl	meye	meye- raa
Sister	bon	bon-e- raa
Teacher	Shikkhak	shikkhak-e- raa
Carpenter	kaathmishtri	kaathmishtri-e- raa
Goat	Chaagol	chaagol-e-? raa/gulo
House	Baarii	baarii-gulo/ *raa

- Another point to note is that the APL does not trigger plural agreement on the verb. This is illustrated in the examples below where the singular and plural forms of the 2pNH and the 2pMH pronouns have the same verbal morphology in person and honorificity.

(7) **tuii** chole **gelii**

You walk go.PST.2pNH

'You (SG.NH) went away'

(8) **to-raa** chole **gelii**

You-APL walk go.PST.2pNH

'You (PL.NH) went away'

(9) **tumi** chole **gele**

You walk go.PST.2pMH

'You (SG.MH) went away'

(10) **tom-raa** chole **gele**

You-APL walk go.PST.2pMH

'You (PL.MH) went away'

- The APL contributes to the plural meaning on the noun/pronoun but does not trigger plural agreement on the verb. This indicates that it has a semantic PL feature, not a formal feature that participates in syntactic agreement/relations.
- Based on that, I propose that the 2pMH (**tumii/tom-raa**) is listed with +P(erson) and +Hon(orificity) features, with HON specified as MH.⁷ The APL with its semantic PL feature is appended to the N.

(11) $2pMH + (raa) = [NP N_{+P, +HON} + (APL_{SEMF})]$

⁷ The HON in Standard Bangla 2pMH could be a grammaticalized form of a pre-existing feature from a prior stage. I leave this as a possible topic to explore in future work.

- The schema in (11) cannot be extended to the 2pH forms (**aapnii/aapnaa-raa**) since they do not trigger person agreement. Rather, the verbal agreement for 2pH is the same as that for 3pH; consider the **-en** morpheme on the verb in the following sentences.⁸

(12) **aapnii/aapnaa-raa** chole **gaelen**
 You/You-APL walk go.PST.H
 'You(SG.H)/You (PL.H) went away'

(13) **uni/onaaraa** chole **gaelen**
 S(he)/S(he)-APL walk go.PST.H
 'S(he)-(H)/They(H) went away'

- Person 'neutrality' on 2pH also enables many speakers to interchange the 2pH form with the 3pH form in extremely formal contexts. In other words, since the 2pH and 3pH forms are not differently specified for person, they can substitute each other in the right contexts. Following is one such context where an anchor introduces the Chief Guest Mr. X to the audience: here, the anchor may switch easily between 2pH and 3pH form while introducing Mr. X.⁹

(14) aaj aamaader moddhe. Mr. X achhen. **Unii** ekjon mohaana chitrokaar. **Unii** saaraa priithiibiite te bhikhyaato. **Aapni** khuub bichitro kaaj koren.
 'We have the honour of having **Mr. X** here today. **He (HON)** is a great artist. **He (HON)** is known internationally for his work. **You (HON)** have contributed immensely to art'

- What does the 2pH/3pH verbal morpheme **-en** stand for? If it does not encode Person, then is it just Hon [+Formal] feature that is common to both 2pH and 3pH forms? Or does it denote something else?
- When we consider data from related languages, we come across another interesting feature associated with the overlap. To illustrate with Hindi-Urdu (a Western Indo-Aryan and an inflectionally richer language), we find a similar overlap between the 2pH **aap** and the 3pH **veh** and their corresponding verbal agreement **-e**. I gloss this marker as H for the moment.

(15) **aap/aap-log** chale **gaye**
 you/you-people walk.PL go.PST.H
 'You (SG.H/PL.H) went away'

(16) **veh** chale **gaye**
 he/they walk.PL go.PST.H
 'He (SG.H)/They went away'

- Differently from Bangla, however, Hindi-Urdu has number agreement on the verb, and thus presents a better test ground to find out the exact nature of the syncretic verbal inflection. In this language, the **-e** morpheme clearly is not simply a Hon feature. It is also a plural marker. This is shown in (17), where the verb is marked with **-e**, even when the

⁸ One possible analysis is that this pattern is the result of an Impoverishment Rule (Ackema and Neeleman 2018) with the Person value suppressed at PF. But this kind of syncretism is an outlier in Bangla and not a norm (for instance, it is absent with 2pNH/2pMH and 3pNH pronouns). It will be a technically expensive move to posit a special rule for an outlier case.

⁹ Not all my informants had the same intuition. Some rejected the interchange completely.

subject is a non-honorific plural noun 'boys' (compare the verbal agreement of (17) with that of (18)). The **e** reflects the plural of the pronoun/noun, which, in some other contexts, multi-functions as HON (see Sinha (2023) for similar observations on 2p pronouns in Hindi).

(17) **bacce** chale **gaye**
 children walk.3p.PL go.PST.3p.PL
 'The children (NH) went away'

(18) **bacca** chala **gayaa**
 child walk.3p.Sg go.PST.3p.Sg.
 'The child (NH) went away'

- Extending the same reasoning to Standard Bangla **-en**, which has been glossed as H so far, we conclude that the HON **-en** is plural verbal morphology.

(19) **en (H) --- > PL**

- As for the 2pH forms **aapnii/aapnaa-raa** that trigger **-en** (PL) agreement, we attribute them with a formal plural feature. The APL, when merged to the N, gives it its plural semantics (20).

(20) **2pH = [[NP N_{+PL}] + (APL_{SEMF})]**

- The 3pH forms **uni/onaa-raa** similarly have a formal PL feature, which results in plural agreement on the verb. Following is the representation for 3pH forms.

(21) **3pH = [[NP N_{+PL}] + (APL_{SEMF})]**

- The 3pNH form **o** triggers person and non-honorific agreement, so we assume that NP has +P, +H features, with a non-honorific value.
- With this information in the backdrop, I first enquire about the 2pMH+APL form and the corresponding verbal agreement, as they happen in non-standard varieties. More precisely, when a 2pMH+APL is borrowed from standard Bangla, what is the ensuing agreement – is it the canonical 2pMH agreement or PL agreement? What processes underlie the dialectal differences?

(22) **2pMH + APL = [[NP N_{+P, +HON}] + (APL_{SEMF})] --- > 2pMH Φ or PL-en?**

- My second question is: why are 2pH and 3pH forms less common in borrowed varieties, and even when borrowed, why is it difficult to get the correct PL verbal morphology with these forms?

3. Borrowed Honorifics: Murshidabad Bangla and Purulia Bangla

- Two non-standard varieties, Murshidabad Bangla and Purulia Bangla do not exhibit honorific distinctions (see Tables 3 and 4 where the pronouns are glossed as -H(onorific)). The plural pronouns are marked with **-raa**.

Table 3: Murshidabad Bangla Singular and Plural Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	aamii	aam-raa
2p	tuii (-H)	to-raa (-H)
3p	o/se (-H)	o-raa (-H)

Table 4: Purulia Bangla Singular and Plural Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	haamii	haam-raa
2p	tuii (-H)	to-raaaii (-H)
3p	o/se (-H)	o-raa (-H)

- The marker **-raa** also exhibits APL properties for Murshidabad Bangla, but not for Purulia Bangla; in the former, it attaches to proper nouns to denote group-readings. Both varieties use **-gulo/gule/gilaan** to mark plurality on (\pm animate) nouns. These patterns are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Murshidabad Bangla Nouns

Nouns	APL	Plural (preferred form)
John	John-raa	John-gule
Biden	Biden-raa	Biden-gule
Cow	-	goru-gule
Table	-	table-gule

Table 6: Purulia Bangla Nouns

Nouns	APL	Plural
John	-	John-gule/gilaan
Biden	-	Biden-gule/gilaan
Cow	-	goru-gule/gilaan
Table	-	table-gule/gilaan

- Though infrequently, speakers of these two varieties have started using honorific pronouns, influenced by Standard Bangla. The following table lists out the honorific forms

that are emerging in the two varieties. Note: I do not include the 1st person pronouns as they are not distinguished in terms of honorific values.

Table 7: Murshidabad and Purulia Bangla - NEW Honorific Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
2p	tumii (HON)	tom-raa sobaaii (you all) (HON)
3p	unii (HON)	onaa-raa (HON)

- Speakers of these two varieties have adopted 2pMH **tumi/tom-raa** (and not 2pH **aapnii**) as the honorific pronoun. The corresponding agreement for 2pMH (with and without the APL **-raa**) is 2pMH, just like Standard Bangla.
- Given that the 2pMH forms and agreement are borrowed directly from Standard Bangla, I claim that in these two varieties, the 2pMH form has the following representation. The APL also hosts a semantic PL feature since it contributes to the plural semantics of the noun.

$$(23) \quad \boxed{2pMH = [[NP N_{+P, +HON}] + (APL_{SEMF})] \text{ --- } > 2pMH \Phi}$$

- As for 3pH, both varieties (infrequently) use the standard Bangla 3pH **uni** form, but this form is yet to trigger 3pH verbal agreement. Instead, as shown in the following contrast, the verbal agreement with 3pH is 3pNH **-e**, not the Standard Bangla plural agreement **-en**. This means that this lexical item too has been borrowed from Standard Bangla, but without the right feature specifications.

(24) **o chole aaisbe** (Original Sentence)
S(he) walk.3p come.FUT.3p(-H)
'She (-H) will come'

(25) **uni chole aaisbe** (Standard Bangla Influenced Sentence)
S(he) walk.3p. come.FUT.3p(-H)
'She(H) will come'

- It is however worth noting that with formal address terms such as 'sir', the verbal agreement is the standard Bangla agreement marker **-en**. This is more evidence that the newly emerging honorific pronouns are differently specified for features than the honorific nouns.

(26) **Sir chole geichilen** (Standard Bangla Influenced Sentence)
Sir walk.3p. go.PST.3pH
'Sir(H) went away'

4. Innovative Honorifics in Rajbanshi

- Honorific forms are absent in Rajbanshi. We present the pronominal data with Table 8, where **-raa** is attached to the plural forms.¹⁰

Table 8: Rajbanshi Singular and Plural Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	muii	haam-raa
2p	tuii (-H)	to-raa (-H)
3p	uae (-H)	um-raa (-H)

- Rajbanshi does not have **-raa** on names and uses **-gulaa/gilaan** to denote plurality on all nouns.

Table 9: Rajbanshi Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns	APL	Plural
John	-	John-gulaa/gilaan
Biden	-	Biden-gulaa/gilaan
Cow	-	goru-gulaa/gilaan
Table	-	table-gulaa/gilaan

- Rajbanshi is currently developing some honorific forms influenced by standard Bangla. What sets Rajbanshi apart from the other dialects considered so far is that the [2pMH + APL] is taken as a 2pHSg.

Table 10: Borrowed from Standard Bangla

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
2p	tom-aa/tom-raa (HON)	tom-aa/tom-raa (sobaii) (you all) (HON)
3p	uen/une (HON)	una-raa/om-raa (HON)

- Even more puzzling is that, instead of the expected 2pMH verbal morphology that we find in Standard Bangla, the Rajbanshi verb now carries the **-en** (PL) morpheme.

(27) **tom-aa/tom-raa** kheleis **dorchen**
 You(MH)/You(MH-APL) play hold.PST.PL
 'You (SG.MH) played'

- Clearly, the APL on the Rajbanshi 2pMH is behaving differently: (i) it is not adding plural semantics to the N and (ii) it is triggering plural agreement on the verb. It therefore

¹⁰ The Rajbanshi data were collected as part of a joint project between IIT Delhi and UCL (PIs: Pritha Chandra and Andrew Nevins), funded by the two institutes. Some of the data presented here are also reported in Chandra, Nevins and Sudo (2023).

follows that the underlying representation for **tom-raa** in Rajbanshi involves the grammaticalization of a semantic PL feature into a formal PL feature, which simultaneously works as a HON feature.

$$(28) \quad \boxed{[\text{NP N}_{[+P, +\text{HON}]} + \text{APL}_{\text{SEMF}}] \text{ ---- } > [\text{NP N} + \text{APL}_{[+PL]}]}$$

- For the 3pH, Rajbanshi uses the **uni** form but the verb is marked with either the original Rajbanshi 3p(-H) morphology (**koichhil**) or the standard Bangla 3pNH morphology (**koichhilo**). This is very similar to the patterns found in Murshidabad and Purulia varieties, where the 3pH forms fail to exhibit the PL inflection.

(29) **uen/une koichhil/?koichhilo ...**

S(he) say.3p(-H)/3p.NH. ...

'She (3pH) said ...'

- In summary, the patterns observed so far for borrowed honorifics are the following –
 - (i) The 2pMH+raa form is used with an +H value, which in Murshidabad Bangla and Purulia Bangla triggers 2pMH verbal agreement, and in Rajbanshi, triggers PL agreement. This indicates that the semantic feature on the APL has grammaticalized into a formal PL feature only in the latter.
 - (ii) For all three varieties, the 3pH form is used with an HON semantics, but the verbal agreement is 3p(-H). This, together with the absence of the 2pH form, attests that forms that are formal PL to start with, are not easily borrowed into non-standard varieties to denote HON values.

5. East Mednipore Bangla

- The East Mednipore variety, spoken at the border between West Bengal and Odisha, presents a different challenge as it borrows an APL **-maane/mene** from standard Odia. The standard Odia APL, unlike the standard Bangla APL **-raa**, triggers obligatory plural agreement, thus presenting a case where a formal PL feature is present in the dominant language. I enquire into what happens to this formal PL feature when the East Mednipore variety develops its honorific system.
- Odia uses **-maane/mene** as an APL, as attested in the following sentence. There is obligatory plural agreement on the verb with **-maane**-attached proper nouns.

(30) **Biden-maane** chali **gale**

Biden-APL walk go.PST.3p.PL

'Biden and his associates/family went away'

- The APL is also used for plural pronouns in Odia. As shown in Table 11: for 2p pronouns, there are 3 values for singular and for two of them (2pMH, 2pH), the APL is used to denote plural 2p pronouns. 3p plurals are also marked with **-maane**.

Table 11: Odia Singular and Plural Pronouns

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	mũ	ame
2p	tu/tume/aapna (NH/MH/H)	tume/tume- maane/aapna-maane (MH/H)
3p	se (NH)	se-mane (NH/H)

- The **-maane** also pluralizes +animate nouns; the marker **-gudikaa** pluralizes -animate nouns (and +animate, -human nouns). See Table 12 for a list.

Table 12: Odia Plural Nouns¹¹

Nouns	Plural
Boy	puaa-maane
Girl	jhia-maane
Tailor	telar-maane
Sir	sir-maane
Goat	chhelii-maane/gudikaa
Dog	kukura-maane/gudikaa
Table	table-gudikaa
Book	bahii-gudikaa

- The **-maane** when attached to 2pMH and 2pH pronouns does not bring any change in the agreement, as illustrated below. This indicates that **-maane** on 2p pronouns has a semantic PL feature.

(31) **tume** chali **golo**

You walk go.PST.2pMH

'You (MH.SG) went away'

(32) **tume-maane** chali **golo**

You-PL walk go.PST.2pMH

'You (MH.PL) went away'

- For 3p pronouns, however, **-maane** triggers PL/HON agreement. Therefore, differently from 2pMH+maane cases, **3p+maane** behaves like a formal PL feature.

¹¹ Plural nouns trigger plural agreement, as shown in the contrast below.

- (i) buddhimaan **jhia-maane** pratidina bahi **padhantii**
Intelligent girl-PL everyday book read.PRS.3PL
'The intelligent girls read books every day'
- (ii) buddhimaan **jhia-Ti** pratidina bahi **padhe**
Intelligent girl-CL everyday book read.PRS.3SG.
'The intelligent girl reads books every day'

(33) **se chalii galaa**

He walk go.PST.3p
'He went away'

(34) **se-maane chalii gale**

He-PL walk go.PST.3p.H/PL
'He (HON)/They went away'

- Note that the 3pH/PL and 2pH/PL verbal inflectional morphology is the same (see examples (34) and (35)-(36)). This is the same pattern we observed for standard Bangla, where the +H value (tied to formality) has the same morphological realization for 2pH and 3pH.

(35) **aapnaa chali gale**

You walk go.PST.2p.H/PL
'You (SG.HON) went away'

(36) **aapnaa-maane chali gale**

You-PL walk go.PST.2p.H/PL
'You (PL.HON) went away'

- In summary, Odia **-maane** has a semantic PL for 2pMH, and a formal PL feature for 2pH and 3pH. I now test how East Mednipore variety develops its honorific pronominal system under influence from Standard Odia (and Standard Bangla).
- East Mednipore Bangla's pronominal system has the Odia APL **-maane/mene**. Consider Table 13.

Table 13: East Mednipore Bangla: Singular and Plural Pronouns with HON values

Pronouns	Singular	Plural
1p	mũ	amne/amor-mene
2p	tu/tume/aapna (NH/MH/H)	tume/tume-mene/aapna- mene (NH/MH/H)
3p	se/siye (NH)	tomo-mene, taar-mene (NH/H)

- When it comes to marking plurals on nouns, the East Mednipore variety uses **-maane/mene** for +animate/+human nouns (with an APL-induced group-reading), and the Standard Bangla **-gulo** for -animate nouns. See Table 14.

Table 14: East Mednipore Bangla Nouns

Nouns	APL	Plural
John	John-mene	-
Biden	Biden-mene	
Cow	-	goru-gulaa
Table	-	table-gulaa

- Turning now to verbal agreement with 2pMH, we find that, Mednipore Bangla has no plural agreement. The agreement is always in person and honorificity. When the 2pMH pronouns are appended with **-mene**, there is no change in agreement. Illustrations are given below. This agreement is the same as that of 2pMH pronouns in standard Odia, where the agreement is always in person and honorificity, never in plurality. The APL -**mene** retains its semantic plural feature when borrowed in Mednipore Bangla.

(37) **tume** chali **golo**
 You walk go.PST.2pMH
 'You (MH.SG) went away'

(38) **tume-mene** chali **golo**
 You-APL walk go.PST.2pMH
 'You (MH.PL) went away'

- Surprisingly, however, East Mednipore variety suppresses plural agreement even with 3pH pronouns (compare (39) with (40)). This is very different from Odia, where 3p+**maane** pronouns obligatorily triggered plural agreement.

(39) **taar-mene** chali **gola**
 He.GEN.NOM-PL walk go.PST.3p
 'He (H)/They went away'

(40) **se/siye** chali **gola**
 He walk go.PST.3p
 'He (NH) went away'

- One possible factor in suppressing number-agreement is the genitive marking on the **3p+mene (ta/taar)** subjects. Compare (39) with (41), where the **ta** is case-valued genitive.

(41) **ta/taar** bahi
 He.GEN. book
 'His book'

- As discussed by Dash (2022), case-stacking (GEN-NOM, GEN-ACC) DPs are very common in Odia, and these oblique DPs do not trigger agreement. Consider (42)-(43).

(42) **ta-ku** seo bhala laage
 He.GEN-ACC apples like feel
 'He likes apples'

(43) **se-manan-ku** seo bhala laage
 He-PL-ACC apples like feel
 'They like apples'

- If that is the case, then **3p+maane** pronouns in East Mednipore are obliquely case-marked and though they have a formal PL feature, there is no plural verbal inflection because of a more general constraint in the grammar that prevents oblique subjects from controlling agreement.

- This possibility finds support when we look at agreement triggered by the 2pH form **aapna**, for which East Mednipore variety has adopted the PL **-en** marker from Standard Bangla.

(44) **aapna chali golen**

You walk go.PST.2pH(PL)

'You (SG.HON) went away'

(45) **aapna somosto chali golen**

You all walk go.PST.2pH(PL)

'You all (HON) went away'

- These sentences serve as further confirmation that 2pH and 3pH forms are borrowed from standard Odia with their formal PL feature. However, only unmarked subjects trigger agreement.

6. Concluding Remarks

- In the research for honorificity, questions are being posed about (i) the HON/PL overlap, and (ii) the underlying representation for PL.
- From this study, we see is that in languages such as standard Bangla that lack canonical plural nominal/verbal markings, an APL with a semantic PL feature is used to denote plurality on nouns (but fails to trigger verbal/syntactic agreement). The APL is used differently by different dialects while developing honorificity in their respective grammars.
- While one tendency is to use the APL with its semantic PL feature as it is, and avoid a direct borrowing of a formal PL feature, another possibility is to grammaticalize the APL into a formal PL feature and use it to denote honorificity. Thus, even non-standard varieties may use an pre-existing APL/semantic PL feature to develop HON.
- Regarding the structural representation of APL, existing works (cf. Cinque (2018), but also see Chacon (2011) Biswas (2013), Dutta (2023) among others), posit a different structural position for APL and additive (ADD) plurals. This is captured in (46), and accounts for phrases (47) and (48).

(46) [CaseP [NumP [DP [NumeralP_{cardinal} [CL(assifier) [NumP **ADD** [...]]]]] **APL**]]

(47) **abi-m-ler**

(associative plural)

brother-1SG.Poss-**PL**

'My brother and his family/associates/friends'

(48) **abi-ler-im**

(additive plural)

brother-**PL**-1SG.Poss

'my brothers'

(Turkish: Görgülü 2011,72-73)

- If we adopt (46) as the underlying representation for Bangla too, we can position the semantic PL feature at a higher position and the formal PL feature closer to the N. Schematically –

(49) [CaseP [NumP [DP [NumP [N **FOR-PL**] D] **SEM-PL**]]

- Non-standard Bangla varieties that grammaticalize the APL are using the lower position closer to N (which translates into corresponding PL agreement), while non-standard varieties that don't grammaticalize the APL, keep using it at the higher position for its semantic function.

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