

# NOUN COMPOUNDING IN GARO

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## Introduction

Anyone who has made a serious effort to learn one of the tribal languages of Southeast Asia must be impressed by the vast, varied and resourceful vocabulary used by its speakers. Gaining control over the lexicon of a language is always a formidable task, no less among rice farming mountaineers of Southeast Asia than among urban sophisticates of Europe. Indeed, since the processes of word formation are quite different in the two areas, it is Southeast Asia that poses the greater challenge for the European. In this paper, I want to describe just one of the means by which Garos, Tibeto-Burman highlanders of northeastern India, build up their rich vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

A distinctive characteristic of the Garo language is the use of numerous noun compounds constructed from a categorizing initial portion, most often a single syllable, to which is added one or more syllables that indicate the specific member of the category. For instance, do'- is used as the first syllable of the great majority of Garo names for birds: do'-qep 'duck,' do'-po 'owl,' do'-ka 'crow,' do'-kru 'dove,' do'-ok 'raven,' do'-ra-ja 'goose,' do'-ma 'wild goose,' do'-mat-chi 'sparrow,' do'-pat-chi 'swallow' and dozens of others, including even do'-bak 'bat.' The

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<sup>1</sup>An earlier version of this paper was distributed at the 12th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics in Paris, October, 1979. My own knowledge of Garo derives from a two year field trip in the mid 1950's to the Garo Hills in what is now Meghalaya, India, a trip made possible by a generous fellowship from the Ford Foundation. To supplement my imperfect memory and imperfect knowledge I have turned to the three available Garo dictionaries, in particular to D. S. Nengminza's The School Dictionary, 1972, and the still unpublished, A Garo Word Collection, n.d. by Lucy M. Holbrook and Garo co-workers of the American Baptist Mission in Tura, Garo Hills. I repeat my offer, made on various occasions, to duplicate this 210 page typescript for anyone willing to pay the modest cost of xeroxing and mailing.

<sup>2</sup>In accordance with usual Garo writing conventions, I use an apostrophe to indicate the glottal stop. This has the substantial advantage of being available on my word processor. I also follow Garo convention in using the digraphs ch and nq, rather than fancier phonetic symbols,

second parts of most of these words are never used by themselves and lack any identifiable separate meaning of their own. They always come attached to the initial categorizing syllable.

In the case of do'- 'bird,' however, the initial part of these clusters can be used alone as an independent word. Do'-o, when used by itself, means 'domestic fowl,' much the most important bird in Garo life.' In many other cases, these initial syllables (which I will call "categorizers") have no independent life of their own. The Garo language has dozens of categorizers that act much like do'-, although only a few of them form as many compounds as it does, and they range in importance down to syllables that occur in a mere two or three closely related compounds.

Garo has a few double compounds in which a segment is attached to an already compounded term to further subdivide

for the voiceless affricate and velar nasal, respectively. I do, however, deviate from conventional Garo spelling in four minor ways: First, I write the sign for the glottal stop before rather than after its co-occurring m, n, ng, or l when they combine to form syllable final clusters. By writing the ' first, I make the morphophonemic alternation that involves echoing the preceding vowel in word final position somewhat more transparent (see footnotes 3 and 5). Second, in order to keep both phonological and morphological segmentation clear, I place a hyphen between all syllables. Third, I revise a few medial consonants or consonant clusters, generally those where the final consonant of one syllable and the initial of the following are homorganic and where Garos write only a single consonant. In some of these cases I feel there is sound linguistic reason for writing two consonants, one in each syllable. Finally, I use the vowel i in a few words to represent very short vowels where Garos write no vowel at all. In other words, some sequences which Garos write as clusters, I write as complete syllables. I have explained these conventions more fully in an earlier article (Burling 1981).

Do'-o is simply an obligatory morphophonemic alternate of do'-. It is required by a rigid Garo refusal to allow a glottal stop in word final position. A glottal stop can be syllable final or it can be a member of a syllable final cluster, but whenever that syllable threatens to turn up in word final position, its vowel must be echoed, adding a syllable and relegating the glottal stop to the penultimate syllable.

I use the awkward term "categorizer" because the rather more graceful term "classifier" has been pre-empted for the numeral classifiers, which play an equally important role in Garo grammar.

the class. For instance, in addition to do'-ka 'crow,' we find do'-ka re-chim 'raven,' and do'-ka-ro-ri 'magpie.' Do'- reng 'kite, hawk' enters into do'-reng at-to-re 'falcon,' and do'-reng qak-a-si 'a red kite' etc. This kind of double compounding is not terribly common, however, and it grades into more productive types of modification, examples of which we will see below.

In this paper I will describe the way in which compounds are formed from these categorizers and give numerous examples, comment more briefly on the second parts of the compounds which they form, and offer some observations about prefixation and about the relationship of prefixation and compounding in the history of Tibeto-Burman languages.

### Animals

Do'- is one of four important categorizers that organize much of the animal kingdom. The other three are na'-, used for fish, mat- for some, but by no means all four-legged animals, and jo'ng- for insects and other small bugs. Collectively, these four seem to divide the animal kingdom rather neatly: animals of the air, water and land, together with a special category for bugs. None of the other three are used as consistently as is do'-, however.

As an independent word, jo'-ong simply means 'bug,' in general, but in combination with other syllables it forms compounds that name particular species: 'jo'ng-bo 'A white worm that lives underground,' jo'ng-dol 'A species of large cricket,' jo'ng-me-ma 'a species of beetle,' jo'ng-su 'a kind of caterpillar', etc. Once I even heard a Garo medical technician refer, quite naturally, to my malarial parasites, which he was observing through a microscope, as jo'-ong. More bugs than birds have names that lack a categorizing first syllable, however. Many bugs, worms, and insects have names that are quite unanalyzable: tam-pi 'fly,' qang-qu 'mosquito,' tik 'louse,' ru'-at leech, and many others. For reasons that I always found quite mysterious, moreover, Garo also has at least two dozen distinct words for different kinds of ants. I discovered no important role that ants play in Garo culture and I am at a loss to explain this terminological efflorescence.

Na'- clearly carries the meaning 'fish' but, unlike do'-o and jo'-ong it is used only in compounds, never alone.

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Jo'-ong, like do'-o, is a morphophonemic alternate of a combining form. In this case, the combining form, jo'ng-, must be modified by the addition of an echo vowel that separates the glottal stop from its following cluster partner, and thereby prevents the glottal stop from belonging to the final syllable of the word.

The general Garo term for 'fish' is na'-tok, and this gives the first example of a pattern that will recur many times: a categorizer that is not used alone, but that occurs as the first syllable of a general term that stands for the whole class. To speak of 'fish' in the general sense, one cannot simply say na'-a, but must instead say na'-tok. In the case of na'-tok, as in many others, the second syllable has no recognizable independent meaning, and it is never used alone. Specific names for fish species include: na'-ek 'a big flat fish,' na'-dang or na'-qraq 'eel like fish,' na'-wa-re 'a small flat fish,' and many others, as well as such species as na'-tik 'prawn,' and na'-nil 'eel,'

The fourth main categorizer of the animal kingdom is mat. Used alone, mat means 'squirrel.' I have no idea why the categorizer that is used for a number of large and important animals should, when used by itself, refer to such an insignificant animal as a squirrel. As far as I ever learned, squirrels are no more important to the Garos than they are to us. Perhaps I missed something.

The general word for 'animal' (primarily 'mammal' or at least 'land animal larger than a bug') is mat-bu-rung. When used without the initial mat-, bu-rung, means 'forest, jungle' so the meaning of mat-bu-rung might be expected to be 'wild animal, jungle animal' but, in fact, the word is used to refer to domestic animals as well. More specific animal names formed with an initial mat- include: mat-chu 'cow, cattle,' mat-cha 'tiger,' mat-cha-peng 'leopard,' mat-ma 'buffalo,' mat-chok 'deer,' mat-a'-ning 'wild pig,' mat-cheng-si 'skunk,' mat-chru 'civet-cat.' The majority of mammals, however, have independent names of their own, without mat- or any other categorizing first syllable.

In addition to compounds that denote particular species of the general class, several of these categorizers also enter into a more limited number of compounds that denote other things having to do with the class: do'-bik 'entrails of a fowl' (cf. bi-bik 'intestines') do'-bi-tip 'nest,' do'-chi 'egg' (cf. chi 'water'), do'-chol 'chicken-coop,' do'-qraq 'wing'; na'-ru 'a kind of creeper from which a poison is made that is used to stupify fish,' na'-mit-im 'fish fat' (cf. mit-im 'fat'), na'-kam 'dried fish' (which is a mixture of many species, cf. kam 'burn'), na'-kol 'fish hole' (see discussion of kol below), na'-qil 'fishing weir'; jo'ng-bi-bik 'cocoon' (cf. bi-bik 'intestines') jo'ng-ki 'insect dung' (see discussion of ki below). Many of these words have second parts with clearly identifiable meanings and even an independent use, and this seems to differentiate them from the species names, the second parts of which cannot typically be used alone. Even qraq can be used alone to mean 'wing' though it is also possible to use the rather redundant compound do'-qraq.



Mat-, unlike the other three categorizers, seems to be limited to species names. This, and the fact that most mammals have distinct names not formed with mat-, makes mat- a much less salient syllable than do'-, na'-, or even jo'ng-. Perhaps the meaning 'squirrel' that is carried by the independent word mat also reduces the clarity of its meaning in compounds. I even had the impression that Garos were only dimly aware of the more general meaning of mat-. Its meaning becomes clear only when we notice that a considerable range of animals do have names that begin with mat-. Thus categorizers vary in salience from those like do'-, whose meanings are manifest, explicit and inescapable, to those like mat- whose meanings emerge clearly only after a review of the words which they form. There may be others that are still more obscure or archaic, and that escape both me and the Garos.

In addition to these four general categorizers for animals, there are a dozen or so more specific categorizers that refer to much narrower taxonomic groups, and form relatively few compounds. These tend to be even less salient in the language than mat, except that their meaning may be quite clear and explicit since they can typically be used alone to carry the meaning of the general group.

It is difficult to draw a clear distinction between the most extensive sets, such as those formed with do'- or na'- and those which are more restricted, but at the least extensive extreme, sets have only two or three members and they grade off to groups of words that hardly differ from English terms such as "sheep dog" and "bull dog." In some cases it is difficult to draw a line between genuine compounds and productive modification. Modifiers frequently follow the noun in Garo, and since suffixes are attached to the end of the entire noun phrase rather than to the noun itself, (and so cannot intervene between a noun and its modifier) compounds have much the same outer form as do productive sequences of noun and modifier. I will return to this matter at the end of the article.

The following list gives the forms which I have culled from the dictionaries of Nengminza and Miss Holbrook, together with some representative examples and a rough indication of the number of compounds formed with them. The numbers, of course, cannot refer to the "whole" language, since we cannot assume that these dictionaries are complete. I can only count those words that happen to be included. The indication of frequency may, however, give some idea of the relative importance of various categorizers. Species identification is uncertain or unknown. I simply rely upon the dictionaries.

anq'-ke 'common crab': Approximately seven compounds including anq'-ke cham-bu 'thorny crab,' anq'-ke-rong 'a

benq-beng 'a small bee,' benq-beng-kil or benq-beng-kri 'a small stingless bee.' No other examples.

benq'-blok 'the common frog,' benq'-blok-ka-kak-pru 'a toad,' benq'-bong 'a greenish, edible frog,' benq'-qa-chok 'a small frog.' No other examples.

chip-u 'snake,' chip-u-chi 'a black water-snake (cf. chi 'water'), chip-u-qam 'cobra,' chip-u-nok-ma 'python' (cf. nok-ma 'village headman'). Six examples.

guk 'grasshopper,' guk-ro-ri 'the common locust,' guk-ma-rang 'a red grasshopper.' Ten examples.

kan-chu-ri 'earthworm,' kan-chu-ri-rip-at 'a small species of earthworm.' No other examples.

mak-re 'monkey,' especially 'macaque,' mak-re bon-da 'a large species of monkey.' No other examples.

map-il 'bear,' map-u 'a species of lizard.' Bears and lizards are so different that this might best be regarded as an example of partial homophony. No other examples.

me-se 'rat,' me-se ma-rak-ka 'a red rat.' No other examples.

ru-at 'land leech,' ru-at-bot-ro 'a bloodsucker, a leech,' ru-at-chi 'water leech.' Only these examples.

tam-pi 'fly,' tam-pi-smit 'gnat.' No other examples.

wak 'pig,' wak-nok 'domesticated pig' (cf. nok 'house'), wak-nol 'pigpen.' About eight examples in all.

It is tempting to speculate why some groups of animals are so much more clearly categorized than others. The class of birds is marked with absolute clarity, but the class of land animals is much more ambiguous. We might suppose that complexities can be expected among the group that is closest and most important to humans (i.e. mammals) while simplicity is possible for the less important birds. This, however, makes the proliferation of words for insects, and, in particular, for different kinds of ants quite mysterious.

## Plants

The classification of plants is more complex than that of animals, but one example is as clear as that of birds. With the exception of fruit trees, which are called by the

same name as the fruit that they bear, the great majority of tree species have names in which the first syllable is bol- and, when used by itself, bol does, indeed, mean 'tree.' This makes bol-, along with do'- 'bird,' one of the most salient categorizers in the language, inescapable to all speakers and learners. Nengminza gives about two dozen names of trees, probably only a fraction of the total used by Garo speakers. Nengminza's examples include: bol-a-sa-ri 'Lagerstomia flos Reginae, a middle-sized deciduous tree,' bol-bok 'Tetrameles nudiflora, a very large and tall deciduous tree,' bol-chu 'simul, Bombax malabaricum, a silk cotton tree,' bol-manq-sam 'Pygeum glaberrimum, a large evergreen tree.' Related words include bol-ma 'extensive forest,' bol-tong 'a piece of wood,' and bol-ja-dil 'tree root.'

Used by itself, wa'-a is a general word for 'bamboo,' and wa'- is a categorizer for bamboo in all its forms. It appears in names for varieties of bamboo such as wa'-dre a species of bamboo that has long sections,' but it is even more ubiquitous in names for parts of bamboo, bamboo in various conditions, or things made from bamboo: wa'-bi-jak 'bamboo leaf,' wa'-qop a cluster of bamboo,' wa'-chap 'a bamboo raft,' wa'-bil-si 'year old bamboo,' wa'-ding 'flexible bamboo tie strip,' wa'-ma 'old bamboo,' and many others. However, a good many objects that are made from bamboo have names that lack wa'-. Even 'bamboo shoots,' which can be eaten, have a special word: me'-a. The extent of the vocabulary for bamboo is a clear reflection of its importance in Garo life.

Most other categorizers for plants are used less extensively and have somewhat less clear meanings than bol- or wa'-. Te'-e, by itself, is the name of a common variety of 'melon,' but as a categorizer, te'- is used for a rather mixed group of fruits and vegetables of less than obvious botanical unity: te'-brong 'jackfruit,' te'-ra-ja 'watermelon,' te'-rik 'banana,' te'-qat-chu 'mango,' te'-bil 'a species of fig,' te'-enq-ki 'a species of plum,' te'-mat-chi 'lime, lemon.' These are all edible and most are relatively juicy, but otherwise they have little in common.

Ta'-a is a kind of edible tuber, and names for most tubers are formed from ta'-: ta'-jong 'a large species of ta'-a,' ta'-bol-chu 'manioc,' ta'-ma-rang 'sweet potato.' The word for tobacco is ta'-ma-ku which begins with the same syllable, but this is clearly a borrowing and must be presumed to be a case of homophony.

Sam, by itself, usually carries the meaning of 'medicine' (including modern medicines such as aspirin) but in compounds it means 'leaves' (from which medicines were traditionally made) and it is used as a categorizer for various kinds of leafy herbs and grasses: sam-si 'grass,'

sam-kni-ding 'a leafy hair-like fern,' sam-pret 'a grass that has a sour, edible leaf,' sam-mik-chip 'sensitive plant' (cf. mik-chip-a 'close the eyes').

Mi- and me- are categorizers with somewhat overlapping designations. Mi, by itself, means either 'growing rice' or 'cooked rice' but the intermediate stage of 'rice grain' is me-rong. Thus both mi- and me- seem most specifically associated with rice but, in addition to forming compounds that designate the many forms and varieties of rice, they also appear in a few words for other grains. Me- is found in me-a'-chik 'hill rice,' me-chu 'cold cooked rice,' me-qap 'rice straw,' me-gra 'a coarse rice' etc. as well as such terms as me-pring 'morning meal,' me-at-am 'evening meal,' (rice being the most important component of a proper meal) but also me-ra-ku, 'maize,' and me-qa-ru 'a kind of grain or pop corn.' Mi- turns up in mi-qil 'unhulled rice,' mi-pal 'a portion of rice,' mi-chil 'rice seed, paddy,' mi-cho'ng-dik 'rice stubble,' mi-qap 'rice straw,' mi-ka-ri 'harvest season,' (cf. di'ng-ka-ri 'hot season') and also in mi-si 'millet.'

These relatively generalized categorizers tend to refer to life-form categories, although they do not cover every single plant that belongs to their particular life-form. In addition, there are, for plants just as there are for animals, a number of much more specialized classifiers that are used to form relatively few words for a relatively narrow range of species.

ak-ka-ru 'pumpkin,' ak-ka-ru qip-bok 'the white pumpkin,' (cf. qip-bok 'white'), ak-ka-ru qit-chak 'red pumpkin' (cf. qit-chak 'red'), ak-ka-ru meng-qo 'small white pumpkin'. No other examples.

kanq-ka-wek or kanq-krol 'a bitter, bright yellow fruit that is used as a vegetable,' kanq-kri or kanq-ka-ni 'plum.' These examples suggest that kanq may have some sort of fruit like meaning, but I know of no other examples.

kil 'cotton,' kil-ap 'ginned cotton,' kil-bol 'a wild cotton,' kil-ding 'thread, string,' kil-qong 'stem of the cotton plant,' kil-kok 'basket for carrying cotton,' kil-tom 'mass of cotton, a ball of thread.' About 20 examples, but mostly for stages or uses of cotton rather than for varieties or species.

pang 'wild opium shrub,' pang-qit-tal 'a new fruit bearing tree' (cf. qit-tal 'new'), pang-smit 'a small species of thatching grass.' The range of meanings of pang is very diverse and this "set" might be best chalked up to homophony. Pang turns up as a second syllable in a number of words having to do with trees or poles, including

bi-pang 'trunk.' It is not the common word for tree and seems to refer most specifically to the stem or trunk. Its use as a categorizer is, at best, marginal.

pat-chal 'gourd,' pat-chal-ma 'a large gourd used for water vessels.' No other examples.

prap and prap-sil-ang both translated as 'a species of banyan tree.' No other examples.

ra-sin 'onion,' ra-sin-chi-sik 'leek,' ra-sin qip-bok 'garlic' (cf. qip-bok 'white'). No other examples.

re 'rattan, cane,' re-bet 'a small spiral rattan,' re-chil 'a species of rattan,' re-ding 'a strip of rattan, a clothes line,' re-jak 'a rattan leaf, a rattan leaf umbrella,' re-jap 'a bundle of rattan leaves,' re-ma 'a large species of rattan.' No other examples

re'-gat-chi 'a wild plantain,' re'-qip-eng 'one-half of a plantain leaf, cut lengthwise,' re'-min-de or re'-qong 'a plantain leaf,' re'-pang 'plantain tree' (See pang, just above). About eight other examples. The ordinary word for 'banana' is the unrelated te'-rik.

sa-qu 'sago, tapioca,' sa-we 'sago palm,' sa-da 'tobacco,' (a less common word than ta'-ma-ku), sa-qil-si 'a plant of the pineapple family,' sa-on-at 'a common fern,' sa-rang 'early ripened grain,' sa-wil 'an edible fruit.' This is an exceedingly diverse group and the common syllable sa- may simply be a coincidence. No other examples.

til-u 'reed, bullrush,' til-u-grim 'a mass of reeds' til-u-si 'a species of reed.' No other examples.

Several of these examples have to be considered as marginal. Not only is homophony a possible factor in a few cases, but a few others include names that hardly seem to be compounds. Ak-ka-ru qip-bok, for instance, means literally 'white pumpkin,' and it is difficult to pin down criteria for deciding whether such expressions should be considered compounds or simply phrases.

There is one additional plant categorizer of a rather different sort. Bi- is never used by itself but only in compounds, so its meaning can only be inferred from the range of meanings of its compounds. Most of these label parts of plants rather than species or varieties, and several of the resulting words are very common. The general word for 'fruit,' for instance, is bi-te. Other words

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'The old Tibeto-Burman root for 'fruit' turns up as the second syllable of this word but Garos do not use it as a

beginning with bi- include: bi-bal 'flower,' bi-jak 'leaf' (of which more below), bi-du-al 'joint, as of bamboo,' bi-qil 'bark, husk' (again, more below), bit-chi 'juice' (cf. chi 'water'), bi-bak 'the stem of a fruit,' bi-dil 'a stem or stalk of a vine or root,' bi-me 'sapwood,' bi-mit-u 'shoot, sprout,' bi-tong 'trunk,' and many others. As I will point out below, there is also a categorizer bi- that is used for certain human and animal body parts and one may speculate as to whether or not the two bi-'s should be counted as the same.

The categorizers for plants divide their world less neatly than do those for animals, but they do reflect the cultural importance that various groups of plants have for Garos. Trees are an obvious life-form category and, within the Garo universe, bamboo is hardly less so. Other plants tend to be categorized according to the part of the plant that is of most importance to the Garos--the tuber, the fruit, the leaves or the grain. It should be recalled, however, that there are a many plants that have unanalyzable names with no categorizer at all.

### The Natural World

A number of categorizers are used in sets of words that refer to the natural world in which Garos live. Most of these can be used alone to designate the general category, but they can also enter into compounds which point to more specific examples. Many of these categorizers are common words in their own right and the meanings are, therefore, transparent to Garo speakers.

Possibly the most common of these, and the categorizer that refers to the most diverse range of phenomena is a'-. Used alone, a'-a means 'ground, land, earth, soil.' A sample of the more than 150 compounds formed with a'- that are given in Miss Holbrook's dictionary includes: a'-bri 'hill, mountain,' a'-be-a 'landslide,' a'-dal 'a new jhum cultivation' (cf. git-dal 'new'), a'-chi 'clay,' A'-chik 'a hill slope, a hill man, a Garo' (this is the usual term that

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separate word. It is conceivable that this syllable is related to te'-, given above as a categorizer for melons and a number of other juicy food plants. The second syllable of bi-te lacks the glottal stop that is found in the word for 'melon,' however, and alternation between the presence and absence of glottal stops is not a usual feature of Garo. The syllables may, therefore, be quite unrelated.

Bit- is probably related historically to bi- in the same way that git- and qip- are related to qi-. See footnote 9.

Garos use for themselves), a'-qit-dok 'a low point on a ridge, a pass,' a'-king 'the territory under a single village headman,' a'-kol 'a hole, a pit, a cave,' a'-sil 'a boundary between neighboring cultivated plots,' a'-tot 'an individual's garden plot,' a'-wil 'land tax.' There are also a few double compounds formed from a'-kong 'valley': a'-kong-dep 'gully,' a'-kong-qrip 'a ravine covered with growth,' and a'-kong-kep 'a dale, glen.'

Other categorizers that refer to objects and phenomena of nature include the following:

bal 'air,' bal-wa 'air, wind,' bal-bil-si 'northeast wind of spring' (cf. bil-si 'year'), bal-jaŋq-qil 'the sheltered side' (cf. jaŋq-qil 'back'), bal-mik-ka 'storm' (cf. mik-ka 'rain'), bal-sri 'breeze,' and some others.

chi 'water,' chi-kol 'channel, water course,' chi-ba-sing 'water-jar,' chi-dip-ek 'swamp,' chi-dik 'latrine,' chi-ring 'brook, stream,' chi-bi-ma 'big river, mother of rivers,' and many others.

go'l-dik 'stick,' go'l-a-reŋq 'long bamboo pole,' go'l-chong 'pointed stick, stake,' go'l-chit 'splinter,' sliver,' go'l-enq-si 'a very small stick,' and a few others.

ja 'moon, month,' ja-jaŋq 'moon,' ja-bit-chim 'a dark night,' ja-te'ŋq-a 'moonlight,' and some others.

ro'-onq 'stone,' ro'ŋq-brak 'a large stone,' ro'ŋq-da-re 'cliff, precipice,' ro'ŋq-chun 'limestone,' ro'ŋq-srek 'gravel,' ro'ŋq-te 'pebble,' and an additional dozen examples.

sal 'sun, day,' sal-ak-a 'sunshine,' sal-ak-kim 'shade,' sal-qi 'sky,' sal-qro 'north' (and other directions), and others.

to 'oil,' to-chri 'lamp,' to-ki 'sediment left after pressing out oil' (cf. ki 'excrement, dirt').

### Objects of Human Manufacture

Just as a number of natural objects receive categorizers that group together several related phenomena, so do many objects of human manufacture. Most of these do not embrace a large number of words, but the pattern is common enough to reinforce a pervasive "set" of the language.

am 'mat,' am-bik 'fine woven mat,' am-dil-na 'a large mat,' am-pak 'a bark mat,' am-tol 'a rolled up mat' and a half dozen others.

at-te 'large Garo machete like knife,' at-te-pong 'knife blade,' at-te jo-jal 'a long, large knife,' at-te gong-qa 'a small knife,' and a half dozen others.

chek 'net,' chek-pong 'handle of a net,' chek-ke 'bamboo scoop-like fish-basket,' and about four others.

chu 'rice beer,' chu-ak 'fermented rice' (from which beer is made), chu-bi-sre 'rice beer that has been brewed a second time,' chu-bit-chi 'undiluted rice beer,' chu-bok 'rice beer foam,' and about three other examples.

dang-qa 'club,' dang-qrip 'a trap for birds,' dang-king 'a helmet,' dang-kong 'pincers,' dang-krok 'a bamboo tube for holding things.' No other examples. Dang has no identifiable meaning alone, and the unity of this set of compounds is not obvious, but the density of words that begin with dang and name small manufactured objects goes well beyond what would be expected by chance.

dik-ka 'large earthen pot, beer jar,' dik-kleng 'pot shard,' dik-te 'drinking vessel,' dik-rong-bol 'a very large cooking pot,' and a half dozen other examples. Like dang, dik does not occur as a word by itself, but, unlike dang, its meaning as 'pot' is unmistakable. It also occurs as the second syllable of a few compounds: me'-dik 'cooking pot.'

gan-do 'man's loin cloth,' gan-a 'traditional woman's skirt.' One or two other marginal examples. This is a marginal case since these two words are surely related to the verb gan-a 'to wear, to dress.' Other related words are clearly derivational forms of the verb. Virtually all other categorizers, if they occur by themselves at all, are clearly nouns. If they are related to verbs at all, it is the verbs that are the derived forms (see examples given below under mik-, 'eye'). If gan- is to be considered a categorizer, it seems to be a unique one, since its root is a verb.

jeng-ge 'cotton basket,' jeng-ja 'a hand-made musical instrument,' jeng-jri 'a metal cage,' jeng-pong 'a money bag.' No other examples. This is a miscellaneous category and it is not at all clear that jeng has an identifiable common meaning in all the examples, although many of them refer to containers.

kok 'basket,' kok-chek 'large vegetable basket,' kok-si 'fish basket,' kok-krenq 'a closely woven lunch basket,' kok-il 'a small measuring basket.' An additional dozen examples. This is a clear and salient set. Kok by itself has the unambiguous meaning of 'basket' in the general sense, and specific varieties of baskets are designated by compounds, just as particular varieties of



trees are designated by compounds based upon bol-.

mil-si 'fish-hook,' mil-si-chi-du or mil-si-bu-du 'fish-line,' mil-si-ponq 'fishing rod.' No other examples.

nok 'house, home, family,' nok-ap 'building site,' nok-de 'outbuilding' (cf. de 'child'), nok-qil 'veranda,' nok-ma 'village headman,' nok-krom 'son-in-law who will inherit the property,' nok-sul 'neighbor.' Several dozen other examples. This is a widely used categorizer that extends both to various physical aspects of houses and other buildings, and to the social characteristics of the family.

rik 'bead,' rik-bil-jet 'a light brown bead,' rik-git-ok 'a bead necklace' (cf. git-ok 'neck'), rik-ka-kam 'a yellow necklace,' rik-su-rong 'stone bead.' Another half dozen examples.

ring 'boat, dugout,' ring-banq-qi 'bow of a small boat,' ring-na-chil 'helm' (cf. na-chil 'ear'). No other examples.

ru-a 'axe,' ru-a-pat 'a large axe,' ru-a bi'-sa 'a small axe' (cf. bi'-sa 'child'). No other examples.

san-rim-it 'a wide, brass bracelet' (cf. rim-it 'yellow'), san-tok 'arm-ring.' No other examples.

se'l-u 'long handled spear,' se'l-u-ponq 'spear handle,' se'l-u wa-qam 'sharp edge of a spear' (cf. wa-qam 'tooth'). No other examples.

sil 'iron, metal,' sil-brak 'ladle, spoon,' sil-bu-du 'wire,' sil-bu'-su 'pointed iron' (cf. bu'-su 'thorn'), sil-chok 'awl,' sil-ai 'gun.' At least two dozen other examples, mostly referring to small iron objects and tools.

### Body Parts

I will now turn to a rather different type of categorizer, those for body parts. Several of these are cognate to widespread Tibeto-Burman roots but many of them never occur in Garo except in compounds. A striking example is the syllable mik- 'eye,' obviously derived from the ubiquitous Tibeto-Burman root, but never occurring by itself in Garo. It occurs only in compounds, almost always as the first syllable. Thus, when wishing to refer simply to 'eye,' Garos use the word mik-ron. Other words formed with the same first syllable include: mik-chi 'tear' (cf. chi 'water'), mik-qil 'eyelid,' mik-kanq 'face,' mik-ki 'eye dirt,' mik-king 'forehead,' mik-kol 'hole of the eye, or-

bit,' mik-skim 'eyebrow,' mik-sim-anq 'eyelash,' mik-bil-bang 'the space between the eyes.'

Since mik-ron is always given as the translation for the English word 'eye,' and since it is the most likely response if one points to the eye and asks its name, it is easy to attribute a central significance to this word. It is not easy to justify its centrality, as compared to all the other words built from mik-, however, and the sense of its priority may be an imposition from English. Since the word for 'face' is formed from the same categorizer, the syllable, mik-, might be more properly seen as referring generally to the face but especially to that part of the fact that lies in and around the eyes. Perhaps its range of use suggests that Garos regard the eyes as forming the center of the face.

As an aside, it is worth pointing out, that mik- also forms the first syllable of a good many verbs that express a wide range of feelings and emotions. Unlike nouns, Garo verbs cannot occur without at least one suffix, a tense marker, and the following examples are shown with -a which is the neutral tense suffix: mik-bok-a 'to covet,' mik-brap-a 'to dazzle,' mik-bu-a 'to dislike,' mik-krat-a 'to be shy, timid' mik-mak-a 'to be stupid, drunk,' mik-rak-a 'to be careful, awake, cautious,' mik-neng-a 'to be envious, jealous.' Also, mik-kem-a 'to blink.' Verbs are rarely formed from roots that are used as categorizers for plants, animals, or natural or manufactured objects, but mik- is not the only body part categorizer to be used in this way. This seems to set off the body parts as forming a special type of categorizer. A number of other examples are given below.

Another body part term that is used in a very large number of compounds is jak 'hand, arm.' Unlike mik-, jak can be used by itself, but it forms many compounds as well: jak-chok 'fist,' jak-pa 'palm,' jak-mik-ron 'round bone on the wrist' (cf. mik-ron 'eye'), jak-si 'finger,' jak-sku 'elbow,' jak-skil 'finger nail,' jak-weng 'forearm' jak-ra 'right, right hand,' jak-a-si 'left, left hand.' Jak-ra and jak-a-si are sometimes used in the sense of 'first' and 'second' as well as 'right' and 'left.' Double compounds are formed from jak-si 'finger: jak-si-ma 'thumb,' jak-si-no-de 'little finger' etc.

Readers with total recall may remember that the same (or a homonymous) syllable, -jak, also occurs as the second member of certain compounds where it has the meaning 'leaf': bol-jak 'tree leaf,' sam-jak 'leaves of bushes and small plants,' bi-jak 'leaf, curry' (curry is often made from leaves of some sort), wa-jak 'bamboo leaves;' Relatively abstract or general ideas are sometimes expressed in Garo by juxtaposing two more specific terms, and bol-jak-sam-jak literally 'tree leaves and bush leaves.' is used in the

sense of 'leaves, in general.' One might suppose that jak, by itself, might carry that sense, but when used alone, jak is usually understood to mean 'hand' rather than 'leaf.'

In Garo as in many other closely related Tibeto-Burman languages, the word for 'leg, foot' is very much like that for 'hand, arm', though the two words remain clearly distinct. The Garo word for the lower extremity is ja'-a which, like jak, enters many compounds, in some cases compounds that are parallel to those formed with jak-: ja'-pa 'sole,' ja'-sku 'knee,' ja'-skil 'toe-nail,' ja'-si 'toe,' ja'-si-ma 'big toe,' ja'-bi-rang 'the sound of footsteps,' ja'-dik 'a cripple,' ja'-bo 'elephantiasis,' ja'-bik 'a sore on the sole.'

Having been greatly inspired by Matisoff's Variational Semantic in Tibeto-Burman (1978), I must also comment on certain categorizers that form terms for internal organs. Ka'- is never used as an independent word for a body part, but it enters into compounds for a number of them, most of which are situated in the upper part of the trunk. Intuitively, its most central meaning seems to emerge in ka'-tong 'heart,' though I find it difficult to support this feeling by objective criteria. The same syllable occurs in ka'-kit 'bile, gall' and this leads one to wonder if it is related to the verb ka'-a 'to be bitter.' In addition to these, ka'- occurs as part of several other terms for body parts, both internal and external: ka'-sop 'lungs,' ka'-bak 'belly of a snake,' 'breast' (not in the specific sense of a woman's breast, but rather in the more general meaning of the upper front part of the body), ka'-til-ik 'the hollow part of the breast,' ka'-kil-ok 'tip of the sternum.'

Like mik-, ka'- also occurs as the first syllable of a number verbs that express various kinds of emotion: ka'-ding-a 'laugh,' ka'-dong-a 'hope,' ka'-sa-a 'love,' ka'-o-nang-a 'be angry,' ka'-sok-a 'to dare, be brave,' and many others. Possibly it is this association with emotions that leads me to feel that 'heart' is the central meaning of the syllable. I am not at all sure that Garos would feel the same way. Perhaps they associate these emotions with 'bile' though I somehow doubt it.

Bi- is another categorizer that is used primarily, though not exclusively, for internal organs, most of them lying somewhat lower down in the abdomen than those formed from ka'-. Bi- is like ka'- in never being used alone. Bi-bik 'intestines,' bi-ol 'uterus,' bi-ka 'liver,' bi-wek-wek 'small intestine.' In bi-mang 'body,' bi- escapes its association with the lower internal organs. In addition, it should be recalled the bi- is also used as a categorizer for a considerable range of plant parts, and one may reasonably wonder if the two bi-'s are related, even though the focus on the lower internal organs that bi- displays when used for

human or animal anatomy has no parallel when it is used for plants. There is, however, at least one term which can refer either to a plant part or an animal part, and this suggests that both bi-'s should be considered one: bi-qil, which I translated earlier as 'bark, husk' can also mean 'hide' or 'skin,' including 'human skin.'

A third term that is used for some internal organs is ok 'stomach, belly.' Unlike ka-' and bi-, ok can occur as a separate word, so its central meaning is less obscure. In its compounds, however, its range of meanings extends well beyond that of 'stomach' in any narrow sense, and even in its central meaning, it can refer to the external 'belly' as well as to the internal 'stomach: ok-kru 'front part of the body,' ok-ste 'navel,' ok-pil 'spleen.' Also ok-kri-a 'to be hungry,' ok-re'a 'diarrhea,' and ok-qin-ang 'pregnant.' -Gin-ang is usually a postposition, meaning 'with, along with.'

A large number of other terms for body parts are also constructed with categorizing first syllables. So pervasive is this pattern that single syllables, used by themselves, are not the most common body part terms in Garo. Most Tibeto-Burman roots for body parts are single syllables. Many of these, like mik-, are found in Garo, but most have been so well fused to other syllables that they can no longer be used alone. Examples follow.

a'-an, 'body,' turns up as the first syllable of a'n-chi 'blood,' (cf. chi 'water'), and also in a number of verbs: a'n-cha'-a 'to have sexual intercourse (cf. cha'-a 'to eat'), a'n-ni-a 'attend childbirth' (cf. ni-a 'look, watch').

bik-ma 'stomach,' bik-sring or bik-ju-ri 'small intestine.' Note that bik also turns up as a second syllable in bi-bik, another word for intestine.

chel 'chest,' chel-bret 'side of the chest,' chel-chik 'portion of meat taken from the chest.'

qing 'mucus from the nose' (relatively rare), qing-ting 'nose' (considerably more common), qing-chi 'discharge from the nose,' qing-ki 'snot,' qing-kol 'nostril,' qing-sep 'septum.' Ging- also enters into verbs for smelling.

ki 'excrement, dung,' ki-sang 'buttocks,' This syllable is not common as a categorizer. It is much more often used alone or as a second part of a compound.

ko-bok 'white hair,' ko-chong 'short hair,' ko-chu-ru 'crest, tuft,' ko-dam 'pillow,' ko-ka 'turban,' ko-king 'forehead,' and a few others. Ko is not used by itself,

the usual word for head hear being kin-i. The word for 'head' is sko, which is enough like ko to invite speculation, but alternations in the pattern ko/sko are not a usual feature of the Garo language and this is most likely to be coincidence.

ku'-sik 'mouth, language,' ku'-chil 'lip,' ku'-chi 'saliva,' ku'-dip-e 'chin.' The syllable ku'- also occurs in a wide range of verbs, mostly, though not exclusively having something to do with language: ku'-chak-a 'to answer, consent,' ku'-chim-it-a 'to smile,' ku'-dim-a 'to kiss,' ku'-kanq-a 'forbid.'

manq 'body, corpse,' manq-qi-si 'corpse,' manq-qi-sim 'dark complexion' (c.f. qi-sim 'black, dark'), manq-qlong-qlong 'naked,' manq-kam-be 'height, stature,' manq-pong 'pole used for carrying the dead.' -Manq is also the numeral classifier used in counting animals.

na-chil 'ear,' na-de 'brass ear ornament,' na-de-rong 'an earring worn in the upper part of the ear,' na-qok or na-dik 'a deaf person,' na-ki 'ear wax.'

pak-kre 'shoulder,' pak-kol 'armpit,' pak-sim-ang 'under arm hair,' pak-pil 'clavicle.'

pe, pe-top, or pe-teng 'cheek, side of the face,' pe-bo 'swelling in the neck, mumps,' pe-chu 'crop of a fowl, maw of a fish.'

ri, ri-qong 'penis,' ri-chi 'testicle,' ri-sim-ang 'male pubic hair,' ri-spil 'scrotum.'

si'-i 'vagina,' si'-sim-ang 'female pubic hair,'

sko 'head,' sko-pat-al 'crown of the head,'

su-bu 'urine,' su-bu-tip 'bladder

wa 'tooth,' wa-ching 'tusk, fang,' wa-chu 'incisor,' wa-ma 'molar,' wa-ki 'tartar,'

### Miscellaneous

Finally, we come to a number of rather scattered terms that exhibit a similar pattern to the one exemplified in earlier sections but that fail to fall into such pervasive sets as the other terms. None of the categorizers listed here are nearly as widespread as bol 'tree,' do- 'bird,' etc., but they conform to a similar pattern. In an effort to be as complete as possible, I list the plausible candidates.

First, a few kinship terms, though by no means most, can be interpreted as being constructed with categorizers

de 'child' (as a kinship term), ' de-pan-te 'son' (cf. pan-te 'young man', de-me-chik 'daughter' (cf. me'-chik 'woman')). Also de-bra 'cloth for carrying a small child,' de-bu-rung 'illegitimate child' (cf. bu-rung 'jungle').

ma'-a, ma'-qip-a 'mother,' ma'-de 'mother's younger sister,' ma'-jong 'mother's older sister,' ma'-chong 'clan, lineage,'

ni-o-tang 'mother-in-law,' ni-o-chek-sa-ri 'wife's elder sister,' ni-o-sa-ri 'husband's female relatives.'

pa-a, pa-qip-a 'father,' pa-jong 'father's older brother,'

A small group of words that express time relationships also have some similarities to words constructed by means of categorizers. Since these words specify location (in time) they most often terminate with the locative suffix, -o. This same locative suffix can be readily attached to other nouns to indicate either location in space or some more abstract relationship such as possession. This makes it reasonable to consider the time words to be nouns, but since they almost always take the suffix -o, I will list them in that way in the following examples.

at-am-o 'in the evening,' at-am-qro 'late afternoon,' at-am-panq 'evening star,' at-am-sim-sim 'dusk.'

da'-o 'now,' da'-o-ro-ro 'nowadays,' da'-si 'recently,' da'-si-ka-ri-o 'last year,' da'-si-pring-o 'this morning,' da'-si-wal-o 'last night.'

kin-al-o (< kin-a sal (?), sal 'sun, day') 'tomorrow,' kin-al-pring-o 'tomorrow morning,' kin-al-at-am-o 'tomorrow evening.'

me-jal-o (< me-ja sal (?)) 'yesterday,' me-ja-at-am-o 'last evening.'

Finally, there are two terms that defy classification.

chol 'way, opportunity, chance,' chol-bi-bra 'a forked road,' chol-qu-qa 'gateway,' chol-ra-ma 'main road' (cf. ra-ma 'road').

kol 'hole,' kol-kep 'narrow hole,' kol-ki 'bowl at the top of a water pipe.' Kol is more characteristically used as a second syllable than as a categorizer. A number of examples have already been given.

Beyond the categorizers that I have listed, there are surely other more marginal examples that might be added, but it would be quite impossible to give a complete and definitive list. Compounds constructed with categorizers grade imperceptibly into productive constructions of a noun followed by a modifier and I see no way to decide, in individual cases, whether or not they should be counted as compounds. Miss Holbrook's dictionary, for instance, lists u-ri 'chicken pox' and u-ri da'l-qip-a 'small pox.' Da'l-qip-a simply means 'big,' so u-ri da'l-qip-a means 'big pox.' Whether this should be counted as a compound made with a categorizer would presumably depend upon its degree of conventionalization, and possibly upon subtle features of intonation. There seems to be no clear way to draw a line.

If categorizing compounds can be regarded as conventionalizations of productive constructions, I can, at the risk of being a bit fanciful, point to an example of how categorizers might come into existence. Ba-ring means 'eggplant' and, so far as I know, it is a unitary lexeme, with neither of its syllables having any independent life of its own. Bel-a-ti means 'foreign, coming from the outside' and ba-ring bel-a-ti means 'tomato.' In other words, tomatoes are 'foreign eggplants' to the Garos--a designation that hardly fits our ideas about botanical classification, but which is an understandable name for a newly introduced plant that grows in a vaguely eggplant-like manner.' So far as I am aware, there are no other kinds of ba-ring except for plain ordinary ba-ring and ba-ring bel-a-ti, but one can imagine other plants acquiring names that would imply that there are other kinds of ba-ring, and we might then be willing to describe ba-ring as a categorizer for whole group of plants, among them eggplant and tomatoes. I think this is unlikely to happen, but one can still see how this categorizing system could arise from such modification.

From do'- and bol- at one extreme to ba-ring at the other, the categorizers that I have listed show wide variation in their freedom of occurrence and in the explicitness of their meaning. Perhaps it makes sense to sort them into a number of groups. First are the widely used categorizers that can also be used by themselves to carry the general meaning of the class. The best example may be bol 'tree.' Next come those that can be used alone but that then have a specialized meaning as one member of the general category. Examples include mat 'animal/squirrel,' te'-/te'-e 'fruit/melon,' and do'-/do'-o 'bird/domestic fowl.' Third, are those categorizers that are never used independ-

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'I am indebted to William Gedney for pointing out to me that many Southeast Asian languages have parallel ways of labeling tomatoes. Garos, it seems, are not the only people to look upon tomatoes as foreign eggplants.

ently but that have, nevertheless, entirely clear meanings. These include mik- 'eye,' na- 'ear,' and several other body parts. Finally, we are left with those categorizers that are never used independently and that have somewhat more obscure meanings such as me- for certain grains and grain parts or bi- for some plant and body parts. One must suspect that Garo has other even more obscure or fossilized categorizing prefixes whose independent meanings and independent phonological content have been so weathered away by usage as to be difficult to recognize. Obviously it is not easy to find examples, though I will speculate further on the matter below. First, however, I want to say something about the second parts of the compounds.

### Second Parts

The second parts of the compounds are more variable than the categorizers. A full treatment of them would carry us far beyond the reasonable limits of a single paper, but a few relatively obvious points can be made. In many cases the meanings of the second parts seem obscure, though a more extensive study might reveal clearer etymologies for a good many of them. Certainly some do have clear and unambiguous meanings, at least when a number of examples are brought together for comparison. Kol, for instance, means 'hole,' as in qing-kol 'nostril,' na-kol 'hole of the ear,' wa-kol 'space left by a lost tooth,' ja'-kol 'footprint,' a'-kol 'cave,' and chi-kol 'channel, water course.' Since kol can also occur as an independent word meaning 'hole,' there can be no doubt about its meaning in compounds, but this is not the case with all forms.

Another common second syllable is -ma and, to judge by the meaning of the compounds it helps to form, it carries the meaning of 'big' or 'important member of the category.' Ma never occurs by itself, however, and I found it difficult to get Garos to agree explicitly that it had the meaning 'big.' (An unrelated intransitive verb, da'l-a, is the usual word for 'to be big.'). Nevertheless, the compounds into which -ma enters, make its general meaning inescapable: do'-ma 'wild goose' (a large bird), ta'-ma 'a large edible root,' mat-ma 'buffalo,' jak-si-ma 'thumb' (the largest finger), wa-ma 'molar tooth,' bol-ma 'an extensive forest,' nok-ma 'headman' literally 'big house,' etc.

I have already mentioned the compound bi-qil 'skin, bark, husk,' and I can now add the fact that -qil can also enter into a few other compounds with related meanings, although -qil is never used alone: mik-qil 'eye lid,' mi-qil 'unhulled rice' (rice with the skin still on), etc.

Ki is the Garo representative of a widespread Tibeto-Burman word meaning, most literally, 'feces, dung.' It can



readily be used by itself and, as shown above, it occasionally acts as a categorizer. It is more characteristically used as a second syllable, however, and the compounds it forms show that its more general meaning is 'body dirt': mik-ki 'eye dirt,' wa-ki 'tartar of the teeth,' na-ki 'ear wax,' qing-ki 'snot,' etc.

Another second part of which I was always fond is -sim-ang which usually refers to the various kinds of hair that sprout at puberty: ku'-sim-ang 'mouth hair, beard,' pak-sim-ang 'arm pit hair,' ri-sim-ang 'male pubic hair,' si'-sim-ang 'female pubic hair.' Mik-sim-ang 'eyelash,' names a kind of hair that precedes puberty, however.

I have already pointed out that jak- occurs both as a categorizer with the meaning 'hand,' and as a second syllable with the meaning 'leaf.' Another syllable that turns up in both positions is chi 'water.' As a categorizer, chi enters into compounds for water in various forms--lakes, rivers, puddles. In the second position it tends to specify various other sorts of liquids: mik-chi 'tear,' an'-chi 'blood' bit-chi 'juice, semen, egg.' As can be seen from some of the examples given earlier, other forms occasionally turn up in both positions, but this is not the typical pattern. More often, different items fill the two slots.

Some second parts are quite abstract. In one set of words, -dik means 'pot,' as in ronq-dik 'an earthen vessel for uncooked rice,' me'-dik 'cooking pot,' sam-dik 'curry pot,' but an apparently unrelated -dik is also used in several compounds that seem to mean something undesirable or bad, often, though not always, having to do with bodily infirmities: ja'-dik 'a cripple,' na-dik 'a deaf person,' ba'n-dik 'dwarf,' bi-chongq-dik 'stubble (in a field),' chi-dik 'a latrine,' cho'ngq-dik 'a small, insufficient portion,' jo'ngq-bi-dik 'a burying ground for lepers.' It is worth noting that -dik- can also be joined to a number of verbs and adverbs where it also, at least part of the time, seems to lend a meaning of undesirability or insufficiency: ni-dik-a 'to be ugly' (cf. ni-a 'to look,' ni-to-a 'to be beautiful'), sa'-dik-a 'to be painful,' ol-dik-a 'uncomfortable to carry' (cf. ol-a 'to carry from a tump line'), kin-a-dik-a 'overhear, hear unexpectedly,' a-dik-skel 'abruptly,' bil-dik-bil-dak 'in disorder.' Garo is no more uniformly orderly than any other language, however, and ku'-ban-dik-dik means a beautiful mouth,' and jot-dik-a means 'to touch, to probe.'

One group of second syllables with a special interest indicates shape. There are several of these (including, perhaps, -ma 'big,' and -kol 'hole' which have already been mentioned) though their use is irregular and many of them occur in only a few items. A few of these second syllables of shape can also be used as numeral classifiers. -Dil ap-

pears as a second syllable in bi-dil 'stem, stalk, literally 'long slender plant part,' and in ja'-dil 'nerve, tendon, root,' literally 'long slender part of the leg or bottom.' Dil- is also a numeral classifier for long slender things such as roads, rivers, roots of plants and creepers. Similarly, kil-ding 'thread' (cotton-long thing) and wa'-ding 'bamboo tie strip' (bamboo-long thing) are related to the classifier, ding- which is used to classify long narrow things such as rope, thread, hair, blood vessels etc. Me-rong means uncooked rice and rong- is used as a classifier for round or roundish objects such as small stones, coins, eyes, most kinds of fruit, and also rice grains. -Jak is used in compounds for various kinds of leaves, and jak- is used as a classifier for thin flat objects such as leaves and pages of a book.

The order of items in a classifier phrase is usually noun--classifier--number. This means that when the noun is a compound it directly precedes the classifier, and this means, in turn, that the same syllable is occasionally duplicated, once as part of a compound noun and once as part of a classifier phrase: kil-ding ding-sa 'one thread,' me-rong rong-sa 'one grain of rice,' ja'-dil dil-sa 'one root.' Such expressions are a bit reminiscent of the situation in Burmese where there are a great many echo classifiers that repeat all or a part of the noun: ein ta ein 'one house,' ywa taywa 'one village,' etc. All Garo classifiers, however, can readily occur with nouns that lack a homophonous syllable: ra-ma ding-bri 'four roads,' chi-bi-ma dil-bri 'four rivers,' ko-mil-a rong-bri 'four oranges.' This means that these are not really echo classifiers like those in Burmese, for the latter never occur except with a homophonous or partly homophonous noun. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that classification by shape, which is a nearly universal principle of numeral classification, not only in Garo, but in all languages with well developed systems of numeral classifiers, also shows up as one of the classificatory principles of Garo noun compounds. Some of the terms used are the same in both systems.

### Marginal Prefixes

The examples of categorizers that I have already given are, with a few minor exceptions, exceedingly stable. They consist, at a minimum, of one full syllable, and the form of this syllable does not change from word to word. Garo has a small number of prefixes, or prefix like elements, that are not quite so stable or so readily isolable. I review these in this section.

First, there are a handful of intransitive verbs that

begin with the syllable qi-, git-, or qip-.' Garo does not have a large separate class of adjectives, and most meanings that would be conveyed by adjectives in English are conveyed by intransitive verbs in Garo. The verbs beginning with the syllable qi-/git-/qip-, however, are all strongly "adjective like" in meaning and, unlike most intransitive verbs, the qi-/git-/qip- verbs do not always require an explicit adjective forming suffix when they are used to modify a noun. Here is, essentially, the total list: qi-sim 'black,' qip-bok 'white,' git-chak 'red,' git-cham 'old,' git-dal 'new,' qip-pin 'another,' git-tang 'fresh, raw,' git-ting 'unripe.'

This prefix is undoubtedly cognate to a much more widespread prefix that occurs in the closely related Boro language and that Bhattacharya (1977) summarizes as qV- because the vowel varies from word to word. This Boro prefix converts intransitive verbs into adjectival form, and it seems to be productive, or at least very nearly so. In Garo, however, it is frozen quite solidly onto the remaining part of the word. I have to say "quite solidly" because there are a number of expressions in which the remainder of the word is used without the qi-/git-/qip- prefix even in Garo, and indeed, several of them have turned up as second parts of compounds that have been given in earlier sections of this paper. For the most part, however, the qi-/git-/qip- has simply become a part of the word in Garo and there is little reason even to recognize a special qi- class of intransitive verbs except for the rather dubious observation that all the words with qi- are "adjective like." (In fact, they have meanings that are found in a special and restricted "adjective class" in a number of languages. See R. B. W. Dixon, "Where have all the Adjectives Gone?") This is the only clear case of a frozen prefix in Garo.

There are a few unclear cases. Earlier I mentioned the parallelism of sko, the usual Garo word for 'head,' and a fairly rare categorizer ko- that forms a few compounds that refer to things having to do with head hair. A similar parallelism occurs between kin-a-a 'to hear,' (as I prefer to write it--Garos usually write it kna-a) and na-, the categorizer for 'ear.' It is tempting to see some sort of

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'These are morphophonemic variants of one another. They can be easily explained as having arisen from an ancestral q\_. The -t or -p was interpolated before following homorganic consonants, thereby preserving the older shwa pronunciation of the vowel. In modern Garo this pronunciation survives only in closed syllables. In qi-sim the syllable lacks a final consonant because Garo has no available final consonant that is homorganic with the initial s\_ of the following syllable. In conformity with modern Garo phonology, the i in qi- is pronounced as a high front vowel, while the vowel of git- and qip- preserves what must be the older pronunciation, a shwa.

etymological relationship between these words, and interpret k- as some sort of frozen prefix, but parallelisms of this sort are rare in Garo, and those that occur may be no more than we should expected to pop up in language by mere chance.

There is also the curious case of greng 'bone,' grang 'wing, feather' and grong 'horn.' These three words all refer to animal body parts and, particularly when grang means 'feather,' to rather hard parts of animals. Grenq, to be sure, can refer to human bones as well as to animal bones, but Garos, like most enthusiastic meat eaters, deal more often with animal bones, and that is when they most often use the word greng. The three words are so much alike that it is tempting to find some sort of relationship among them, but there is nothing else in the language that would support such an analysis.

Finally, there are some curious parallelisms among the numbers that hint at frozen prefixes. I list here the Garo, Boro, Ruga, and Atong words for the numbers one through ten. Boro is spoken by a people counted as belonging to a "plains tribe" and who live in the Assam valley. Ruga and Atong are spoken by groups living in the Garo Hills and generally reckoned, ethnically, to be Garos, although their languages are quite different. Indeed, Ruga and Atong seem to be linguistically more distant from regular Garo than is Boro, although there has been far more intimate opportunity for mutual borrowing among Garo, Ruga, and Atong than between these languages and Boro. (The Boro examples are from Bhat-tacharya, 1977. The Ruga and Atong examples are from Grier-son, 1967, first published in 1903, pg. 135).

	Garo	Boro	Ruga	Atong
one	sa	<sup>1</sup> se	gaisō	gōesa
two	gin-i	<sup>1</sup> noy	gainī	gōenī
three	git-tam	<sup>1</sup> tham	gaitam	goetam
four	bri	<sup>1</sup> broy	gaibri	birī
five	bong-a	<sup>1</sup> ba	gaibongā	bāngā
six	dok	<sup>1</sup> do	gaidok	korok
seven	sin-i	<sup>1</sup> sni	gaisni	senē
eight	chet	<sup>1</sup> zad	gaichet	chätgik
nine	sku	<sup>1</sup> si <sup>1</sup> kho	gaisku	chiku
ten	chi-kung	<sup>1</sup> zi	gaichi	chäigik

Most of these numbers are obviously related, as one would expect for four such closely related languages, but there is a curious discrepancy: the Garo numbers for two and three begin with gi-<sup>1</sup>. Atong has a corresponding

<sup>1</sup>As in the case of the "adjective" prefix described in the previous footnote, the git- which appears in the numeral for 'three' can be considered to be a simple mor-

"prefix" not only in the numerals for 'two' and 'three,' but in 'one,' as well, and Grierson gives all the Ruga numbers with a similar "prefix." The Ruga prefix is probably a numeral classifier of the sort found in all four of these languages, and it even looks as though it could be related to the Garo classifier qe-, which is the residual category classifier, used when nothing more specific seems appropriate. It would not be particularly odd to list all Garo numbers with a prefixed qe-, and, indeed, the numbers as given in the table are practically never used alone in Garo. Considering the four languages together, we can imagine a process by which this classifier has become so characteristic of Ruga that it seems reasonable to list it with all numbers, and by which it became fused with the numbers 'two' and 'three,' in Garo, and 'one,' 'two,' and 'three' in Atong, although it is difficult to imagine why this should have happened. Today, the qi- is thoroughly fused to the Garo numerals and there is no problem whatsoever about it co-occurring with the classifier qe-: bo-stu qe-qin-i, bo-stu qe-git-tam 'two things, three things.'

In addition, in all four of these languages, the numbers for both 'four' and 'five' all begin with b-, although it is the remaining portions of the words (the portions that follow the b-) that look as though they are related to more distant Tibeto-Burman languages. e.g. Burmese lei 'four,' and nqa 'five.' By exercising a vigorous enough imagination, one can guess that, at some time before these languages split, a b- was somehow prefixed to the numerals 'four' and 'five.' Then at some later time, after the languages had gone their separate ways, the prefix qv- somehow attached itself to a varying selection of the numbers in the different languages. I find no obvious explanation for such a series of changes, however.

### Conclusions

Compounds formed with the help of initial categorizers form a distinctive component of the Garo lexicon. In fact, they are so common that they help to give a pervasive "feel" to the language, that simple monosyllables are not its most characteristic lexical form. Garo, to be sure, has a good many monosyllables, but cognates of monosyllables found in other Tibeto-Burman languages have often been securely joined to other syllables in Garo, and bi-syllabic or longer

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phophonemic variant of qi- which developed because of the following t. The word for 'two' has undergone a more extensive rearrangement, but the usual Tibeto-Burman cognates tend to be something like ni, as in Boro and so, by comparison with Boro and other languages, it seems that Garo has, somehow, prefixed a qi- in this word as well.

words seem more characteristic of the language than monosyllables.

Garo is unusual among Tibeto-Burman languages in lacking contrastive tone. Its syllable structure, with a wider range of initial than final consonants and a significant juncture between adjacent syllables, is similar to that of Southeast Asian tonal languages, and it is natural to guess that Garo is descended from an older tonal language. One can even speculate that it could have been encouraged to lose tone under the impact of the surrounding Indic languages. In the process of losing tone a good many homophones would have been created, and the obvious solution to that problem would be to construct compounds by joining two formerly independent syllables more firmly together. It is possible that the categorizing construction was one means by which Garo escaped the homophony of a newly toneless language.

Hundreds of Garo words are constructed by means of categorizers, and no learner of the language can fail to notice the pattern by which they are built. In some degree, this pattern resembles the prefixation that is characteristic of many other Tibeto-Burman languages and, since Wolfenden's remarkable work of a half century ago (1929), prefixation has received a good deal of attention from Tibeto-Burman comparativists (e.g. Benedict, 1972, pp. 103-123). In Jinghpaw, for instance, a large number of words begin with a "weak" syllable that has a shwa as vowel, no final consonant, a restricted choice of tones, and probably reduced stress (e.g. g lu 'long', g pha 'shoulder', m ra 'sky', m tsuuy 'seed', m 'phan 'garden, fence' etc.) It is difficult to assign any clear meaning to these unstressed introductory syllables in Jinghpaw, but it has been widely supposed that they are historically derived from more independent prefixes that once carried clearer semantic or syntactic information.

There are many more different "prefixes" in Garo than in Jinghpaw, though Jinghpaw may have as many individual words that are formed from them. Those in Garo also have far clearer semantic roles. They are, furthermore, "full" syllables, with no hint at the kind of phonological "weakness" characteristic of Jinghpaw "prefixes." The Garo categorizers show little evidence of becoming frozen. Most have readily identifiable meanings and many can occur as independent words.

Like virtually all Tibeto-Burman languages except those of the Karen group, Garo is a verb final language and it has most of the typological features characteristic of such languages: post-positions; a rich system of suffixation for both nouns and verbs; demonstratives and possessives that precede the noun. Verb final languages are quite variable

in their favorite order of adjective and noun, and adjective position is less fixed in Garo than it is in most languages. It is probably the case that the more fixed and stereotyped a Garo expression is, the more likely it is that the modifier will follow the noun. In more productive constructions there is greater freedom. Perhaps a bit of extra emphasis or foregrounding of the adjective is supplied by placing it before the noun, though it is by no means a highly marked position, and in many cases either order is possible. In any event, compounds are among the most fixed of expressions, and to the extent that compounds made with the help of categorizers can be looked upon as consisting of a head (the categorizer) and a modifier (the second part) the order of the constituents is absolutely obligatory.

Compounding, of the sort described here, hovers somewhere between productive modification of nouns by adjectives and a more frozen system of prefixation such as is found in Jinghpaw. This makes it easy to imagine an historical process by which a relatively free and productive modifying construction could first be solidified into the kinds of categorizing compounds that I have described for Garo. The next step might be a fusion of the two parts of the word until the categorizers are reduced to a system of frozen prefixes, and by further reduction they might turn into a phonological marker that loses all independence--the sort of "prefixation" that has been noted in some other Tibeto-Burman languages. The Garo compounding construction remains much more like ordinary noun modification than like a prefixing construction, however.

The most productive modifiers in Garo are derived from verbs. When used as modifiers, verbs are readily given an adjective forming suffix that shows that they are, indeed, being used to modify something: Man-de da'l-a 'the man is big'; da'l-qip-a man-de or man-de da'l-qip-a 'the big man.' Here the verb da'l-a 'to be big' becomes an adjective by the addition of the suffix -qip-a, which is the most common adjective forming suffix. There are, however, a great many idioms that complicate the picture considerably. Modifiers of various sorts fuse in various degrees with nouns, and the modifiers do not always require an explicit affix that demonstrates their adjectival role. This means that productive modification grades rather smoothly into compounding and, among compounds, those formed with categorizers are relatively tightly fused. They have not, however, become nearly as tightly fused as the "prefixes" of Jinghpaw.

Compounds formed from categorizers are different from phrases produced by productive modification in one other important way. The second or "modifying" parts of the categorizing compounds are not, typically, derived from verbs. When they occur as independent words at all, these second, or "modifying" parts are almost always nouns or, oc-

casionally, numeral classifiers (which are surely more "noun like" than "verb like"). I have speculated that categorizing compounds might be a relatively recent adaptation to the loss of contrastive tone, but one can also make a quite different and possibly even more risky speculation: that the categorizing compounds represent a fossilized relic of a somewhat older pattern of modification, one in which the order of elements was more fixed than is productive noun modification today.

The categorizing construction itself remains alive and well in Garo, however. While there are certainly marginal and uncertain examples, the most common categorizers are readily understood by all speakers and I have no doubt that new compounds are coined from time to time and that they can become part of the general language. Surely if new birds and new trees are introduced into the Garo Hills, it will be natural for new species names to be coined that include do'- or bol'-. Conceivably, the Garo construction represents a typological stage of the kind that could have been antecedent to the stage of frozen prefixation that we find in some other Tibeto-Burman languages. An understanding of the Garo pattern may then help us to understand an earlier stage of these other languages. Such, at least, is my hope.

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