

みんなくりポジトリ

国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

The Decay and Reconstruction of Nominal Classes in Srinagar Burushaski

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2019-10-31 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: 吉岡, 乾 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00009446

The Decay and Reconstruction of Nominal Classes in Srinagar Burushaski

Noboru Yoshioka*

ブルシャスキー語スリナガル方言での名詞クラスの崩壊と再構成

吉岡 乾

There are four major nominal classes in the Burushaski language and all nouns are classified into the following groups according to their referents: human males, human females, concrete entities, and abstract entities. This paper demonstrates that the inherent noun classification system of the Burushaski variety spoken by the younger generation of immigrants in the Bota Raj colony in Srinagar is decaying and being reconstructed in an altered form.

Noun classification systems are generally dynamic and may decline in number or even become lost altogether. Some languages have (partially) lost their classification systems through contact with other languages that have simpler noun classification systems or no classification systems at all. Some languages have neutralised previously distinct classes into a new class, decreasing the overall number of classes as a result.

However, the Srinagar Burushaski of young people does not merely demonstrate the decay of nominal classes. Having initially lost the basis of categorisation for noun classification, they have since re-categorised all nouns, thereby avoiding incoherency in the nominal class system. As a result, the number of reconstructed nominal classes has increased to five: human males, human females, animals, concrete entities, and abstract entities. It is worth noting that no adjacent languages have a noun classification system that specifically distinguishes animals from others.

ブルシャスキー語には4つの主要な名詞クラスがある。全ての名詞類は、その指示対象の特性に合わせて、以下のグループのいずれかに属す：ヒト男性・

* 国立民族学博物館

Key Words : Burushaski, language change, nominal classes, categorisation
キーワード : ブルシャスキー語, 言語変化, 名詞クラス, 範疇化

ヒト女性・具象物・抽象物。本稿では、インド側カシミールのスリナガル市ボタ・ラージ地区で若者が話すブルシャスキー語において、その本来の名詞クラス体系が崩壊し、再建されていることを論じる。

名詞クラス体系は一般的に動的であり、既存のそれが変容する際には、クラス数が減少したり失われたりする方向に向かうとされる。言語によっては、より単純な体系の言語や、名詞クラス体系自体を持たないような言語との接触によって、その体系を（部分的に）失って行ったと報告されている。

スリナガルの若者のブルシャスキー語は、名詞クラスの崩壊のみを示しているわけではなく、一旦クラス範疇化の基準を見失った後、名詞クラス体系内の整合性の解れを避ける形で、再範疇化が起こっている。その結果、再建された体系ではクラスの数が増えた：ヒト男性・ヒト女性・動物・具象物・抽象物。周辺にそういった、動物を他の範疇から区別するような名詞クラス体系を持った言語が存在しないことも、注目に値する。

1 Introduction	5.1 Agreement on copulae and verbs
2 Decay of nominal classification systems	5.2 Suppletive verbal roots
3 Dialects and history of Burushaski	5.3 Plural forms of nouns
4 Inherent nominal classification system in Burushaski	6 Nascent reconstruction of nominal classes and classification in Srinagar Burushaski
5 Agreement and concord systems with nominal classes in Srinagar Burushaski	7 Conclusion

1 Introduction

In this study, I demonstrate that there is a gap between older and younger speakers in the nominal classification system of Srinagar Burushaski spoken in the Bota Raj colony in the city of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, India. I then discuss the characteristics of the nominal classification system, comparing it with other dialects on which I have been conducting field surveys for the past 15 years.

The findings are useful for considering the genesis or development of nominal classification systems. As far as I am aware, no previous study has reported a case in which the number of nominal classes in a language has increased subsequent to or through the decay of a nominal classification system. This paper may be the first report of such a case.

2 Decay of nominal classification systems

Sands (1995) has described several phenomena concerning the decay of noun classification systems, including classifiers and grammatical gender, and summarises them well:

As with other aspects of grammar, noun classification systems are dynamic and subject to change that includes erosion and may ultimately lead to loss of the system. This evolution is not necessarily the result of language death but may occur in a thriving language. (Sands 1995: 255)

A concrete example is provided by Schmidt (1985) in relation to the endangered Australian language of Dyirbal (Pama-Nyungan). She reports that in Dyirbal spoken by the younger generation more than two nominal classes have lost their grammatical distinction, merging into a single class and thereby decreasing the total number of classes. Demuth, Faraclas, and Marchese (1986) show that certain languages belonging to the Kru and Cross River groups of Niger-Congo have (partially) lost their own nominal classification systems through contact with languages with simpler classification systems. From such examples, Sands generalised the phenomenon as above and termed it the decay of noun classification systems. It seems as though she considered the merger of classes to be mono-directional, that is, decay would lead only to a decrease in the number of classes, or their ultimate disappearance. Sands concludes that contact with languages with simpler nominal classification systems, or without any kind of nominal classification at all, must be the primary reason for such change.

3 Dialects and history of Burushaski

Burushaski is a language isolate in South Asia. It has about 100,000 speakers consisting mainly of Burusho people. Typologically it is highly agglutinative and prefers the SV/AOV constituent order.¹⁾ Broadly speaking, Burushaski is spoken in three main areas; two in Pakistan, and one in India (see Maps 1–4).

Map 3 shows two areas in Pakistan. The third area - the only Burushaski area in India - is about 200 km to the south (Map 4).

In Pakistan, Burushaski is spoken in four major valleys; the westernmost enclave is the Yasin Valley, and in the east are the Hunza, Nager, and Gojal (a.k.a. Upper Hunza) Valleys (Map 3). The local population in Yasin speak Burushaski or Khowar, or both. Burushaski coexists with Wakhi in Gojal.

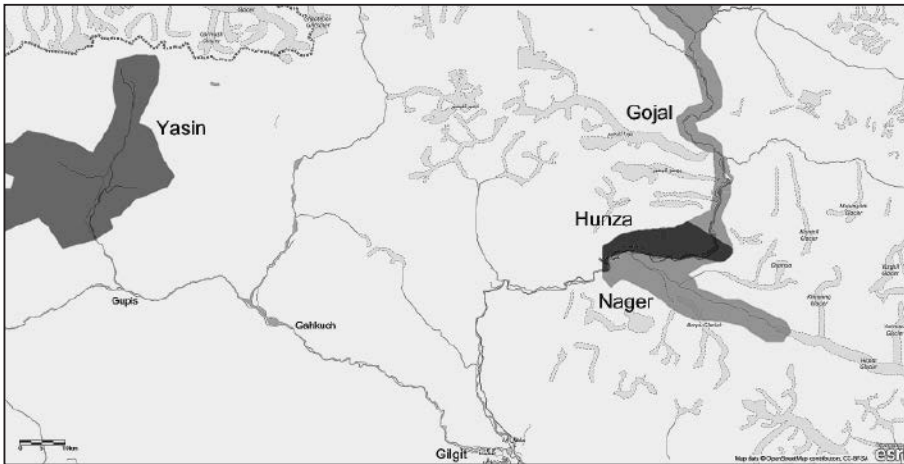
Map 4 shows the location of a Burushaski community in India. This small colony is named Bota Raj and is located at the eastern foot of the hill of Hari Parbat Fort in the centre of Srinagar. Srinagar is the summer capital of the Jammu



Map 1 Region within South Asia



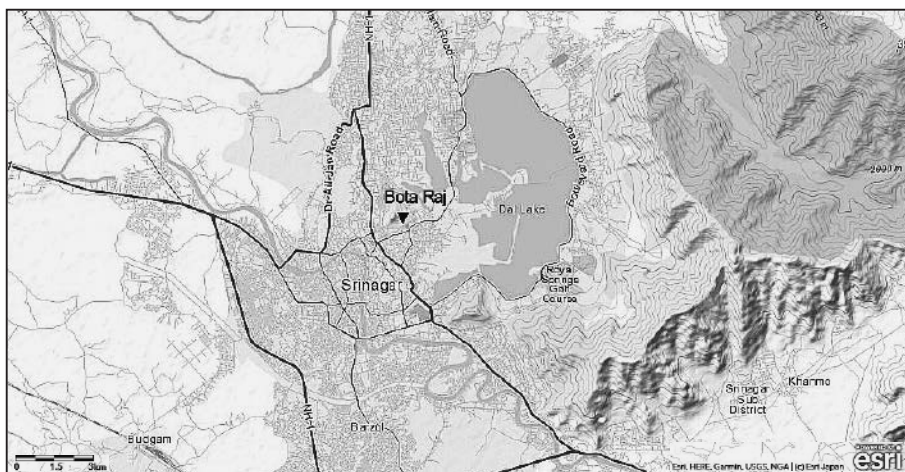
Map 2 Whole distribution of Burushaski within the region shown in Map 1



Map 3 Burushaski in northern Pakistan (see wider region in Map 2)

and Kashmir district (a.k.a. India-occupied Kashmir).

The Burushaski-speaking community in Srinagar consists of descendants of Burusho immigrants from the Nager Valley and elsewhere, including some from the royal family of Nager. The immigrants arrived about 150 years ago, and around four or five hundred descendants remain today. Those on the Indian side seem to have maintained some intercourse with communities on the Pakistan side until the Partition of India in August 1947. The youngest generation in Bota Raj does not speak much Burushaski, while the other generations speak it well. In the Bota Raj community, there are Hunza-origin Burusho families and Balti-speaking families



Map 4 Bota Raj in Srinagar (see wider region in Map 2)

from Skardu, a city to the southeast of Gilgit-Baltistan in Pakistan, as well as Nager-origin Burushos. Bota Raj is, therefore, an enclave of both the Burushaski and Balti languages. Kashmiri and Urdu are spoken in the surrounding area.

Srinagar Burushaski was formed and has remained as an enclave community under these conditions, hence its dialect is closest to that of Nager, although its grammar has been influenced to some extent by the Hunza dialect. The overall dialectal classification of Burushaski can be understood as shown in Figure 1. Among the different varieties of Burushaski, dialectal distance does not correspond to geographical distance.

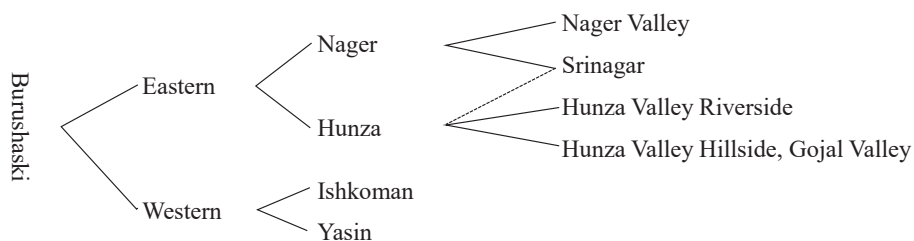


Figure 1 Dialects of Burushaski

Srinagar Burushaski is an under-described language, and the only recent, published work is by Munshi (2019).

In the following section I compare the Srinagar variety of Burushaski spoken in Bota Raj with Eastern Burushaski (mainly the Nager Valley dialect). In this study, unless accompanying annotation states otherwise, '(Burushaski) inherent'

means ‘common to all varieties of Burushaski except that of in Srinagar’.

4 Inherent nominal classification system in Burushaski

The nominal classes in Burushaski function for agreement on verbals, choice of certain suppletive verbal roots, agreement on adjectivals and demonstratives, choice of nominal plural suffixes, and so on. Morphosyntactically, the classification system behaves to some extent like the grammatical gender systems in, for example, surrounding Indo-European languages. Unlike grammatical gender systems, however, it is categorised according to the physical character of the referents.

Loosely speaking, Burushaski inherently has four major nominal classes: human males (HM-class), human females (HF-class), concrete entities (X-class), and abstract entities (Y-class)². The distinction between concrete and abstract is based on criteria such as whether, roughly and subjectively speaking, the referent is something that is easy or difficult to count, or whether or not one would be willing to count it. See Table 1 for sample referents of each class.

Table 1 Burushaski inherent nominal classes and examples of noun class membership

Male	HM	man, boy, father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, nephew, God
Female	HF	woman, girl, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, witch, fairy
Concrete	X	animal, fruit, astronomical object, braid, vehicle, ogre
Abstract	Y	tree, plant, grapefruit, weather, building, hair, liquid, material, space-time, idea

In (1) below, I show how nominal classes work in actual clauses of the Nager Valley dialect. There are differences in both choices of proximal demonstrative adjectives and plural suffixes, as well as in copular forms.

- (1) a. HM *khiné hir báí.* vs. *khué hiríkanc báan.*
 khiné hir bá-i-Ø khué hir-íkanc bá-an-Ø
 this:H man COP:H-3SG.HM-PRS these:H man-PL COP:H-3PL.H-PRS
 ‘It is this man.’ ‘It is these men.’
- b. HF *khiné gus bo.* vs. *khué gušíanc báan.*
 khiné gus bá-o-Ø khué gus-íanc bá-an-Ø
 this:H woman COP:H-3SG.HF-PRS these:H woman-PL COP:H-3PL.H-PRS
 ‘It is this woman.’ ‘It is these women.’
- c. X *khosé huk bí.* vs. *khocé hukái bíó.*
 khosé huk b-i-Ø khocé huk-ái b-ió-Ø
 this:X dog COP-3SG.X-PRS these:X dog-PL COP-3PL.X-PRS
 ‘It is this dog.’ ‘It is these dogs.’

d. Y *khoté tom dilá.* vs. *khoké tomíčan bicán.*
 khoté tom d-il-Ø khoké tom-íčan b-icán-Ø
 this:Y tree COP:SG.Y-3SG.Y-PRS these:Y tree-PL COP-3PL.Y-PRS
 ‘It is this tree.’ ‘It is these trees.’

I have only shown some of the suffixes with (1) here, because there are several dozen allomorphs of the nominal plural suffix in Burushaski, and which nominals take which allomorph(s) is almost always (i.e., a bit loosely) determined lexically. Most of the allomorphs can be grouped by morphological character, and the morphological groups correlate with nominal classes as shown in Table 2, so we can distinguish the class of every noun to a considerable degree.

Table 2 Distribution of the major types of plural suffixes (Yoshioka 2012: 41)

Class	Plural suffix type	
H	CARO, TID	ÓDO
X	MUC, NC, O	
Y	D	
representative examples of each type: CARO : /-aro, -caro, -taro, -daro/ TID : /-tíŋ/ MUC : /-c, -uc, -muc, -umuc/ NC : /-inc, -nc, -anc, -ónc, -ianc .../ O : /-čo, -išo, -ko, -iko, -čuko, -ú, -úu .../ D : /-iŋ, -éŋ, -miŋ, -číŋ/-čaŋ, -mičíŋ, -ŋ, -aŋ, -óŋ .../ ÓDO : /-óŋo, -ómo, -óno/		

The correlations between each noun and allomorph(s) of plural suffix are to some extent phonologically driven, but there are too many exceptions to find a unique rule for each pairing of noun and allomorph(s).

5 Agreement and concord systems with nominal classes in Srinagar Burushaski

I conducted a grammatical survey with two distant generations (grandparent and grandchild) of informants. The four inherent classes of Burushaski I have given in §4 were illustrated by an older speaker of Srinagar Burushaski³⁾, while the two younger speakers consistently used a different classification system. In this section, I will give examples and describe the new system in detail.

There have been no previous studies of Srinagar Burushaski apart from those by Munshi (2006; 2019), who composed the nominal classes of Srinagar

Burushaski with reference to some other studies of the Pakistani dialects of Burushaski. She noted some inter-speaker variations in nominal class distinctions (2019: 141), and ‘some exceptions which either fall under the class of [+concrete] or under [-concrete] nouns’ (Munshi 2006: 166). She listed ‘tree, book, clothes, house, field’ and advocated that these referents should be classified as concrete (x) entities but they do not actually behave as such in Srinagar Burushaski. These all belong to the abstract (y) class in the inherent classification of Burushaski (in Pakistan) from the very first, and do not present a particular problem in Srinagar Burushaski. This author might not have understood the criteria for distinguishing concrete (x) and abstract (y) classes of the inherent classification system.

5.1 Agreement on copulae and verbs

As I have shown with the sentences in (1), copulae take seven different forms for the third person according to nominal classes and numbers in the Nager Valley variant of Burushaski. Although these forms are commonly used by all speakers in Srinagar Burushaski, the young informants used different copulae for the preposition in (1d). The following examples shown in (2) are copula sentences of young people’s Srinagar Burushaski. I have tentatively labelled each line with the inherent nominal class, determined according to the copula forms and demonstratives.

- | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|-----|--|
| (2) a. | HM | <i>khiné hir báí.</i>
khiné hir bá-i-Ø
this:H man COP:H-3SG.HM-PRS
‘It is this man.’ | vs. | <i>khué hiríkanc báan.</i>
khué hir-íkanc bá-an-Ø
these:H man-PL COP:H-3PL.H-PRS
‘It is these men.’ |
| b. | HF | <i>khiné gus bo.</i>
khiné gus bá-o-Ø
this:H woman COP:H-3SG.HF-PRS
‘It is this woman.’ | vs. | <i>khué gušíanc báan.</i>
khué gus-íanc bá-an-Ø
these:H woman-PL COP:H-3PL.H-PRS
‘It is these women.’ |
| c. | X | <i>khosé huk bí.</i>
khosé huk b-i-Ø
this:X dog COP-3SG.X-PRS
‘It is this dog.’ | vs. | <i>khocé hukái bíó.</i>
khocé huk-ái b-ió-Ø
these:X dog-PL COP-3PL.X-PRS
‘It is these dogs.’ |
| d. | N/A | <i>khoté tom bí.</i>
khoté tom b-i-Ø
this:Y tree COP-3SG.X-PRS
‘It is this tree.’ | vs. | <i>khoké tomíčañ bicán.</i>
khoké tom-íčañ b-icán-Ø
these:Y tree-PL COP-3PL.Y-PRS
‘It is these trees.’ |
| e. | Y | <i>khoté sambá dilá.</i>
khoté sambá d-il-Ø
this:Y thought COP:SG.Y-3SG.Y-PRS
‘It is this idea.’ | vs. | <i>khoké sambámiñ bicán.</i>
khoké sambá-miñ b-icán-Ø
these:Y thought-PL COP-3PL.Y-PRS
‘It is these ideas.’ |

The group (2d) $\boxed{N/A}$ is problematic. This pair includes both the copula form and demonstrative adjective of the concrete (x) class for the singular and those of the abstract (y) class for the plural.⁴⁾

In addition to the younger generation employing this kind of classification, the older generation in Srinagar also demonstrates an agreement system that deviates from the inherent system. It can be observed in the way the auxiliary copula in a complex temporal form of a verb agrees with the third-person abstract (Y) class singular subject, as in (3f). Examples (3a, c, e) illustrate free copula forms, and (3b, d, f) show auxiliary copula forms. Here, I analyse and gloss Srinagar Burushaski according to inherent Burushaski.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(3) a. Hz <i>faarsí bilá</i>.
 faarsí b-il-Ø
 Persian COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is Persian.’</p> | <p>b. <i>jáar faarsí açúçilá</i>.
 jé-ar faarsí a-jú-č+b-il-Ø
 I-DAT Persian NEG-COME-IMPF+COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘I cannot speak Persian.’ (lit. Persian is not come to me)</p> |
| <p>c. NG <i>faarsí dilá</i>.
 faarsí d-il-Ø
 Persian COP:SG.Y-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is Persian.’</p> | <p>d. <i>jáare faarsí aújúçibilá</i>.
 jé-are faarsí aú-jú-č+b-il-Ø
 I-DAT Persian NEG-COME-IMPF+COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘I cannot speak Persian.’</p> |
| <p>e. SN <i>faarsí dilá</i>.
 faarsí d-il-Ø
 Persian COP:SG.Y-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is Persian.’</p> | <p>f. <i>jáare faarsí aújúçibi</i>.
 jé-are faarsí aú-jú-č+b-i-Ø
 I-DAT Persian NEG-COME-IMPF+COP-3SG.X-PRS
 ‘I cannot speak Persian.’</p> |

The free copula forms agreeing with the third-person abstract class singular are *bilá* in Hunza and *dilá* in Nager and Srinagar, while the auxiliary forms that are compounded with a main verb to provide certain temporalities become *bilá* in Nager and Hunza (due to a morphophonological convention, the initial *b* is omitted in Hunza, as in (3b)). Although the inherent forms are so, none of the generations in Srinagar employs either *dilá* or *bilá*, but *bi*, which is the same form as for the concrete class in both free and auxiliary use.

In Table 3 I list the free copulae for the third-person concrete and abstract classes and the auxiliary copulae in verbal complex forms for the third-person singular abstract class of the Hunza, Nager, and older and younger generations’ Srinagar varieties. The grey cells of the Srinagar variants indicate points that differ from the Nager Valley variant.

We can see that neither the older nor the younger generations’ Srinagar Burushaski is the same as the Pakistani variants.

It remains unclear why such changes have occurred over the last 150 years. I believe that it is worth learning more about the neutralisation of the negative form

Table 3 Free COPS for the third-person non-human classes and auxiliary COPS for 3SG.Y in Eastern Burushaski

Subject	Hunza Valley	Nager Valley	OG's Srinagar	YG's Srinagar
dog	<i>bi</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>bi</i>
dogs	<i>bién</i>	<i>bió</i>	<i>bió</i>	<i>bió</i>
tree	<i>bilá</i>	<i>dilá</i>	<i>dilá</i>	<i>bi</i>
trees	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>
idea	<i>bilá</i>	<i>dilá</i>	<i>dilá</i>	<i>dilá</i>
ideas	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>	<i>bicán</i>
Persian lg. (as AUX)	<i>bilá</i>	<i>bilá</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>bi</i>

of free copulae for the third-person abstract class singular to the one for the concrete class in all variants, regardless of the difference between Eastern and Western dialects. Compare the example (4) with (3a, c, e).

- (4) a. Hz *faarsí apí*.
 faarsí a-b-il-Ø
 Persian NEG-COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is not Persian.’
- b. NG *faarsí apí*.
 faarsí a-b-il-Ø
 Persian NEG-COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is not Persian.’
- c. SN *faarsí apí*.
 faarsí a-b-il-Ø
 Persian NEG-COP-3SG.Y-PRS
 ‘It is not Persian.’

For each variant, I give the gloss with the third-person abstract singular suffix *//-il//*, i.e., *//a-b-il-Ø//* [NEG-COP-3SG.Y-PRS], but the surface form *apí* is the same as the third-person concrete singular form *apí* which is analysed as *//a-b-i-Ø//* [NEG-COP-3SG.X-PRS].

5.2 Suppletive verbal roots

Some Burushaski verbs alter their roots suppletively according to the nominal class and number of object arguments. A prime example of this is the verb ‘to give’, which consists of the following three roots: Eastern Burushaski / \sqrt{u} / for HM/HF/X objects, / \sqrt{chi} / for Y.SG objects, and / \sqrt{yun} / (or Srinagar / \sqrt{yon} /) for Y.PL objects.

Older speakers in Srinagar distinguish these roots clearly, whereas younger speakers use them somewhat indistinctly. Relatively young speakers choose roots

consistently and correctly according to the inherent distinction in simple imperative clauses, such as (5) ‘give me st.’, while they inconsistently judge which roots are appropriate for each kind of object in, for example, declarative clauses, such as (6) ‘I will give you st.’, stating that ‘both choices are possible’. We cannot find such confusing use in any dialects in Pakistan. This phenomenon can also be considered as part of the decay of the nominal classification system. Below are some examples with singular objects alone.

(5) a. *chil* {*dačhí* / ?**joó*}!
 chil da-čhi-i ja-u-i⁵⁾
 water 1SG:I-give:SG.Y.OBJ-IMP.SG 1SG:I-give:HX.OBJ-IMP.SG

‘Give me water (Y)!’

b. *mobáil* {*joó* / ?**dačhí*}!
 mobáil ja-u-i da-čhi-i
 mobile.phone 1SG:I-give:HX.OBJ-IMP.SG 1SG:I-give:SG.Y.OBJ-IMP.SG

‘Give me a mobile (X)!’

(6) a. *chil* {*gučhíčam* / *guíčam*}.
 chil gu-čhi-č-a-m gu-u-č-a-m
 water 2SG:I-give:SG.Y.OBJ-IMPF-1SG-NPRS 2SG:I-give:HX.OBJ-IMPF-1SG-NPRS

‘I will give you water (Y).’

b. *mobáil* {*gučhíčam* / *guíčam*}.
 mobáil gu-čhi-č-a-m gu-u-č-a-m
 mobile.phone 2SG:I-give:SG.Y.OBJ-IMPF-1SG-NPRS 2SG:I-give:HX.OBJ-IMPF-1SG-NPRS

‘I will give you a mobile (X).’

5.3 Plural forms of nouns

As noted above, it seems that, to some extent, the younger and older speakers in Srinagar have different rules from each other. For the plural forms of nouns - namely the choice of plural suffixes - there is no appreciable difference in the forms used by speakers of different generations, nor from those of the inherent dialects, except in cases where Srinagar speakers have forgotten the original plural suffixes appropriate to certain words. In other words, Srinagar Burushaski speakers have kept the characteristics of the concrete (X) class for nouns which originally belonged to the inherent concrete (X) class, and that of the abstract (Y) class which originally belonged to the inherent abstract (Y) class, despite the fact that the younger generation has rearranged the nominal classes. Hence, they have not changed the plural form of *tom* ‘tree’ in (2d) into anything like **tomíanc*, which appears anew in the X-class.

6 Nascent reconstruction of nominal classes and classification in Srinagar Burushaski

In light of the above, I would like to assert that in the Srinagar variant of Burushaski, the older generation also shows some diachronic changes, such as the agreement form of auxiliary copulae on complex predicates seen in (3f), while younger speakers have made further changes, which have contributed to the large disparity between the generations. The changes made by the younger generation, including the removal of restrictions on the radical choice of the verbal concepts like ‘to give’ shown in (6), seem to be based on the decay of the inherent nominal classification system (particularly among the non-human classes).

On the one hand, Srinagar speakers have neatly kept the distinction between animals and concepts as in (2c, e), while on the other hand, they have generated a new, ambiguous class in the midst of both extreme referential characters as in (2d), and this class now has the greatest amount of content. The new classification, whose existence we can ascertain by observing the demonstrative and copular use for each word, is described in Table 4.

Table 4 The Srinagar Burushaski of younger speakers: nominal classes and examples of noun class membership (compared with the inherent classes)

Male	HM	man, boy, father, grandfather, son, brother, uncle, nephew, God	HM
Female	HF	woman, girl, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, witch, fairy	HF
Animal	A	animal, ogre	X
Concrete	x'	fruit, astronomical object, vehicle; tree, plant, grapefruit, building, hair	X; Y
Abstract	y'	weather, liquid, material, space-time, idea	Y

The column on the far right indicates the inherent classes. In young people’s Srinagar Burushaski, the human classes have not changed at all, but in the other classes, the non-human, inherent dichotomic x- and y-classes have become trichotomic. I have tentatively named the new class ‘A-class’ for ‘animal’. There are also two new classes for concrete (x’) and abstract entities (y’) in Table 4. These classes resemble the inherent x- and y-classes, but you can see that their contents differ when you compare Table 4 with Table 1. I have listed sample referents for the new concrete (x’) class with a semicolon dividing previously-x-class entities on the left from previously-y-class entities on the right.

Table 5 shows the paradigm for present-tense conjugation for both free and auxiliary copulae according to number and class in young people’s Srinagar Burushaski. We can see that the forms for x’-class are always the same as either A- or y’-classes. The neutralisation of the x’-class singular form for auxiliary use with y’-class has made the conjugation pattern identical to the one for free-negative. This is how it was possible to create a new class without making any new conjuga-

Table 5 Copular forms in young people's Srinagar Burushaski

	Free-positive		Free-negative		Auxiliary	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
1	<i>báa</i>	<i>báan</i>	<i>apáa</i>	<i>apáan</i>	<i>báa</i>	<i>báan</i>
2	<i>báa</i>	<i>báan</i>	<i>apáa</i>	<i>apáan</i>	<i>báa</i>	<i>báan</i>
3	HM <i>bái</i>	<i>báan</i>	<i>apái</i>	<i>apáan</i>	<i>bái</i>	<i>báan</i>
	HF <i>bo</i>		<i>apó</i>		<i>bo</i>	
A	<i>bi</i>	<i>bió</i>	<i>apí</i>	<i>apíó</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>bió</i>
x'		<i>bicán</i>		<i>apícan</i>		<i>bicán</i>
γ'				<i>dilá</i>		

tional forms.

The conjugation pattern for free-negative may have been a gateway through which all Srinagar Burushaski speakers have been led to invoke the decay. That is seen in the pattern for auxiliary copulae, as well as with certain former γ-class nouns that have come to behave as x'-class nouns, resembling the behaviour of former x-class nouns. The next step might possibly be the γ-class singular free-positive form *dilá* becoming neutralised with the x-class form *bi*, but the fact that the former includes the suppletive copular root /√d/ specifically used for γ(′)-class singular will likely prevent it from doing so. Conversely the inherent γ-class singular auxiliary form *bilá* (see 3b, d) is made of the root /√b/ which is used similarly to the x-class.

Inherent classification in Burushaski divides referents into four groups according to, at first, whether or not they have humanity. It does not, however, make a distinction between non-human referents as to whether they are animate or inanimate. As noted above, the distinction between concrete and abstract is based on subjective criteria, such as whether a thing is easy or difficult to count, or whether one would be willing to count them. Meanwhile, in the younger generation's Srinagar Burushaski there are five distinct nominal classes, including a new class related to the animacy of the referent, and the differentiation between concrete and abstract has become determined by whether it is morphous⁶ or amorphous. It is possible that this change has led the inherent classification, which is a lexical system, to a new system of classification, which is based on a more physically (i.e., objectively) determined categorising principle. That is to say, it is easier to reach consensus by distinguishing a fixed shape from an unfixed shape according to its physical characteristics, than by identifying the degree of ease or willingness with which someone might count it.

However, there remains no effective way to determine the inherent nominal class to which a noun belongs depending on the choice of plural suffix, because the suffixation patterns remain unchanged, as mentioned in §5.3. While it seems that the younger generation has made the classification system more objective than

before, a new problem has arisen in the relationship between the five nominal classes and a variety of the morphological series of plural suffixes; specifically, within the x'-class there are both sets of series for the former x- and y-classes. Compare Table 6 below, which shows the younger generation's Srinagar Burushaski, with the inherent classification shown in Table 2 (in §4).

Table 6 Distribution of the major types of plural suffixes in YG's Srinagar Burushaski

Class	Plural suffix type	
H	CARO, TID	MUC, NC, O
A	óDO	
x'		
y'	D	

If one knows the nominal class of a noun, the choice of plural suffix is somewhat predictable in the inherent classification system, because the morphologically defined border between the x- and y-classes is quite clear-cut, except for the óDO type being used beyond classes (see Table 2). In the younger generation's contemporary Srinagar Burushaski, however, the conventions surrounding the x'-classhood of a noun and the choice of the series of plural suffix type of the noun have become more ambiguous and the relation has, on the contrary, become more lexical. I wonder if either of the sets of plural suffix series we can currently detect within the x'-class will one day be expelled by another.

7 Conclusion

I have reported on and discussed the phenomenon of diachronic changes in Srinagar Burushaski. Its nominal classification system has started to decay, and it seems that the younger in age the speakers are, the further that decay has progressed. However, the younger generation of speakers has begun to reconstruct a system that may halt this change and prevent incoherency in the system. As a result, the number of classes has increased and classification has become relatively objective. The system of categorisation underpinning the nominal classification has been made more transparent, but in exchange the relationship between nominal classes and the choice of plural suffix has become more complex.

In this example, the decay of a nominal classification system does not necessarily lead to a unidirectional decline in the nominal classification itself, but opens up the possibility of reviving or even improving it. It is worth noting that no adjacent languages have such a nominal classification system specifically distinguishing animals from others. Both Kashmiri and Urdu, the largest adjacent languages of Srinagar Burushaski, have two-way (masculine vs feminine) grammatical gender

systems, and broadly speaking, Balti has no nominal classification system functioning at a morphosyntactic level. The decay and reconstruction of the nominal classification system in Srinagar Burushaski should therefore be considered to have occurred spontaneously. Under these conditions the classification seems to have a tendency to become more physical, external, and objective, rather than lexical, internal, and subjective. This is another typologically simple but significant example of the mechanism of cognitive categorisation as a basis for nominal classification.

Abbreviations

A	A-class	NEG	negative
AUX	auxiliary copula	NG	Nager valley variant
COP	copula	NPRS	non-present mood
DAT	dative	OBJ	object
H	H-class	PL	plural
HF	HF-class	PRS	present mood
HM	HM-class	SG	singular
HZ	Hunza variant	SN	Srinagar variant
I	type-I of personal prefix	X	x-class
IMP	imperative	Y	y-class
IMPF	imperfect		

Acknowledgement

I am deeply grateful to the field informants. I have only myself to blame for any flaws in the research. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15H05380.

Notes

- 1) Burushaski has no orthography, so I have used my own writing system for the language. The phonemic inventory of Burushaski in the writing method is as follows (with IPA representations for which phonemes I do not employ IPA symbols): /i, e, a, o, u; p, ph [p^h], b, t [t^h], th [t^h], d [d^h], t [t], th [t^h], d [d], k, kh [k^h], g [g], q, qh [q^h], c [ts], ch [ts^h], č [tɕ], čh [tɕ^h], j [dʒ], ç [tʃ], çh [tʃ^h], j [dʒ], s, z, š [ɕ], š [ʃ], γ [ɣ], h, m, n, ŋ, r [r], l, y [j], w, y [ɥ]/. In addition to these, there are peripheral phonemes /f, x/ and nasal vowels, which are seen in onomatopoeias and loan words. Burushaski has a distinctive pitch accent system. The acute accent mark (´) indicates vowels with a high-pitched accent for multisyllabic words, while it is omitted for monosyllabic words because the words always take an accent on the single vowels.
- 2) Speaking strictly, we should identify at least one more nominal class for space-time (z-class) as a subclass of the y-class. But this (sub)class is not important for this study, so for now, I have omitted it from this paper and counted the number of Burushaski nominal classes as four.
- 3) This study is wholly based on my own field data. Surveys of Srinagar Burushaski were carried out twice in Bota Raj in September 2016 and July 2017. The representative informant for older speakers was a man, R.M.A.K. (born in 1936), and the informants for the younger generation were two men, R.W.A. (born in 1988) and R.R. (born in 1978). They are close relatives. I cannot prove that these

informants are truly representative of each generation. However, there is no reason to believe that the informants chosen at random used idiolects that differed significantly from other speakers, so I have regarded them here as representative without going through sociolinguistic criteria. Of course, all the informants speak sufficiently fluent Srinagar Burushaski. My surveys of Pakistani Burushaski have been conducted since 2004.

- 4) Inherently, Burushaski has a few peculiar nouns which behave concretely for singular and abstractly for plural: e.g., @-úŕtis ‘foot (SG.X)’ vs. @-úŕŕij ‘feet (PL.Y)’; janphálo ‘comb-plate for carpet (SG.X)’ vs. janphálij ‘comb-plates (PL.Y)’, and so on. However, these words are quite rare (appearing in under 0.1% of my collected vocabulary) and do not seem to constitute a semantic category, so it is fair to say that these nouns differ from those related to (2d), for which younger speakers of Srinagar Burushaski alter the nominal class according to number in terms of quality. The use of the noun @-úŕtis ‘foot’ has been ascertained in Srinagar Burushaski too, and behaves in the same way as in Pakistan. ‘@-’ indicates the personal prefix slot for the possessor.
- 5) There are three primary allomorphs of the first-person singular prefix: *a-*, *ja-*, and *da-* in Srinagar Burushaski. Normally, the Nager variant (i.e., Nager Valley and Srinagar Burushaski) does not show the morphophonological change of /aú/ into [oó] which is regularly observed with the Hunza variant, besides the case of the 1SG prefix *ja-* with the verb stem @-ú- ‘to give’ where /jaú/ (written according to my system, not IPA) is realised as [joó] as in (5).
- 6) The Burushaski term *thóos* is used to denote the idea of being morphous. It was explained to me that ‘Concrete entities are *thóos*, while abstract entities are not *thóos*’. This word has not been detected in any variants in Pakistan, nor in the languages surrounding Srinagar Burushaski.

References

- Demuth, K., N. Faraclas, and L. Marchese
 1986 Niger-Congo Noun Class and Agreement Systems in Language Acquisition and Historical Change. In C. Craig (ed.) *Noun Classes and Categorization*, pp.453–471. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Munshi, S.
 2006 Jammu and Kashmir Burushaski: Language, Language Contact, and Change. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.
 2019 *Srinagar Burushaski: A Descriptive and Comparative Account with Analyzed Texts*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Sands, K.
 1995 Nominal Classification in Australia. *Anthropological Linguistics* 37(3): 247–346.
- Schmidt, A.
 1985 *Young People’s Dyirbal: An Example of Language Death from Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yoshioka, N.
 2012 A Reference Grammar of Eastern Burushaski. Ph.D. dissertation, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.