

Adjectival Personification in Magahi: From Quality to Entity

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Abstract:

Adjectival Personification describes a morphological process observed in Magahi whereby an adjectival quality may acquire increasingly specific and referential functions. The study begins with the contrast between the forms *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa*. While *lamba* functions as a general adjective expressing a quality, *lambka* appears to identify a more specific or individuated manifestation of that quality. The form *lambkawa*, in turn, functions independently as a referential expression for an entity characterised by the quality. The paper argues that this progression represents a movement from **quality to specificity and ultimately to entityhood**. The term *Adjectival Personification* is proposed as an analytical concept for this process, not in the conventional literary sense of attributing human qualities to non-human objects, but in the sense of an adjectival quality becoming embodied in and referentially representative of an entity. The study examines the morphological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions of this phenomenon and proposes that Magahi offers a productive site for investigating the relationship between adjectival categories and nominal reference.

Keywords: Magahi, adjectival personification, adjective, nominalisation, specificity, individuation, morphology, reference

Introduction

Adjectives are conventionally understood as lexical items that express qualities, attributes, or properties associated with entities (Bolinger, 1967; Dixon, 2010). A form such as *lamba* ‘tall/long’ denotes a characteristic attributed to a noun, as illustrated in *lamba aadmi* (‘tall man’). In such constructions, the adjective functions as a modifier and is semantically and referentially dependent upon an overt noun. Its primary role is descriptive, providing additional information about an entity without independently identifying or referring to it. From this perspective, adjectives are generally regarded as property-denoting expressions whose interpretation depends upon the noun they modify (Bolinger, 1967; Cinque, 2010).

However, the relationship between adjectival quality and nominal reference need not remain static. Cross-linguistic research has shown that adjectival expressions may extend beyond their descriptive function under appropriate morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic conditions (Alexiadou & Wilder, 1998; Barker, 2004; Chierchia, 1998). In many languages, an adjectival quality may become sufficiently salient to identify a particular entity within a discourse. Instead of referring to the tall man, speakers may simply use an expression equivalent to the tall one, where the adjectival quality itself provides the basis for identification. Such developments suggest that adjectives may participate not only in property attribution but also in referential processes, depending upon the grammatical resources available in a language (Abney, 1987; Chierchia, 1998).

The present study examines a possible manifestation of this phenomenon in Magahi through the forms *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa*. These forms appear to represent different functional stages in the relationship between an adjectival quality and the entity characterised by that quality. While *lamba* functions as a basic descriptive adjective, *lambka* appears to convey a more specific or individuated interpretation, and *lambkawa* may function as an independent referential expression when the intended entity is recoverable from the discourse context. Rather than treating these forms as isolated lexical variants, this study investigates whether they reflect a systematic relationship between adjectival morphology and increasing referentiality. Previous descriptions of Magahi have identified the productive use of nominal particles and determiner-like elements (Aryani, 1965; Alok, 2014; Kumar, 2022), although the referential development of adjectival forms has not been examined in detail.

The paper explores this proposed development by examining the morphological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic properties of the forms under consideration. Particular attention is given to the ways in which an adjectival quality may gradually acquire the capacity to distinguish a specific entity and, in suitable contexts, function as an independent means of reference. This investigation is informed by theoretical work on noun phrase structure, referentiality, and modification, particularly within the DP framework (Abney, 1987; Borer, 2005; Cinque, 2010), while remaining grounded in the descriptive facts of Magahi.

To describe this proposed phenomenon, the study introduces the term *Adjectival Personification* as a preliminary analytical framework. The term is not intended to replace established concepts such as nominalisation or substantivisation, nor is it used in the conventional literary sense of attributing human qualities to non-human entities. Instead, it is proposed as a descriptive label for the apparent development whereby an adjectival quality becomes increasingly embodied in, and referentially associated with, a particular entity. The suitability and explanatory value of this framework are evaluated in light of the linguistic evidence presented in the study.

By investigating this pattern, the paper aims to contribute to the description of Magahi morphology and semantics while also engaging with broader theoretical discussions concerning adjectival categories, specificity, individuation, and nominal reference (Borer, 2005; Chierchia, 1998; Dixon, 2010). If supported by further empirical investigation, the phenomenon described here may provide new insights into the dynamic interaction between morphology, meaning, and reference in Magahi and potentially in other languages as well.

2. The Concept of Adjectival Personification

2.1 Defining Adjectival Personification

The term **Adjectival Personification** is used in this paper as an analytical label to describe a particular semantic and referential development observed in adjectival forms. It should not be understood in the literary sense of *personification*, where human characteristics are attributed to non-human objects. Rather, the term refers to a linguistic process in which an adjectival quality progressively acquires the capacity to identify and refer to the entity characterised by that quality.

In its conventional function, an adjective expresses a property or attribute of a noun. The adjective is therefore dependent upon the noun for its interpretation and serves a descriptive role. However, when a particular quality becomes sufficiently salient within a speech community or discourse context, it may cease to function merely as a descriptive attribute. Instead, it becomes the primary basis for identifying the entity that possesses the quality.

The process may be represented as follows:

Quality → Specific Identification → Entity Reference

For example:

tallness

↓

thetallone

↓

a particular entity identified through tallness

At the initial stage, the adjective denotes only a quality. As the quality becomes more distinctive, it acquires the capacity to identify a particular individual among others. Ultimately, the adjectival form itself functions referentially, enabling the quality to stand for the entity without the need for an overt noun.

The use of the term *personification* is therefore intended in the broader sense of **embodiment** rather than anthropomorphism. The adjectival quality is no longer viewed simply as an abstract property possessed by an entity; instead, it becomes embodied in a particular referent and serves as the principal linguistic means through which that referent is recognised and identified. In this sense, the movement is from **description** to **identification**, and finally to **reference**.

2.2 Adjectival Personification and Related Linguistic Concepts

The phenomenon proposed in this study bears certain similarities to several well-established linguistic concepts, including nominalisation, substantivisation, conversion, ellipsis, lexicalisation, semantic shift, morphological derivation, and pragmatic reference. However, although each of these concepts explains a particular aspect of the relationship between adjectives and nouns, none appears to account fully for the gradual increase in referential force proposed for the Magahi forms *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa*. The present section therefore compares the proposed framework of **Adjectival Personification** with these related concepts in order to clarify its scope and theoretical contribution.

2.2.1 Nominalisation

Nominalisation is the process by which a word belonging to another grammatical category is transformed into a noun. In the case of adjectives, this typically occurs through the addition of a nominalising suffix that creates an abstract noun denoting a quality or state. For example:

- *happy* → *happiness*
- *kind* → *kindness*
- *dark* → *darkness*

In each case, the adjective no longer describes an entity but becomes an abstract noun referring to the quality itself. Thus, *happiness* denotes the state of being happy rather than a happy person.

The Magahi pattern proposed in this study differs fundamentally from nominalisation. The form *lambkawa* does not denote the abstract quality of tallness. Instead, it refers to the entity characterised by that quality. Consequently, the semantic development involves increasing referentiality rather than the creation of an abstract noun.

2.2.2 Substantivisation

Substantivisation refers to the use of an adjective as a noun without necessarily changing its morphological form. In English, adjectives frequently function substantivally when preceded by the definite article.

Examples include:

- *the rich*
- *the poor*
- *the blind*
- *the elderly*

Here, the adjective functions as a noun referring collectively to a class of people possessing a particular characteristic.

At first sight, substantivisation appears similar to the Magahi forms discussed in this study. However, substantivisation primarily describes the end result—that an adjective is functioning as a noun. It does not explain the intermediate stages through which a descriptive adjective gradually develops identificatory and referential functions. The present study

proposes that *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa* represent successive stages in such a development rather than a simple adjectival-to-noun conversion.

2.2.3 Conversion (Zero Derivation)

Conversion, also known as zero derivation, is a process whereby a lexical item changes its grammatical category without any overt morphological marking.

Examples include:

- *native* (adjective) → *a native* (noun)
- *criminal* (adjective) → *a criminal* (noun)
- *professional* (adjective) → *a professional* (noun)

No additional suffix is required; only the grammatical function changes.

The Magahi pattern differs because the proposed progression involves overt morphological modification (*lamba*, *lambka*, *lambkawa*) together with corresponding semantic and referential changes. The focus is therefore not merely on category change but on the gradual development of referential force.

2.2.4 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a syntactic process in which an element recoverable from the context is omitted.

For example:

- *the red car* → *the red*
- *the tall boy* → *the tall one*
- *the broken chair* → *the broken one*

In such constructions, the omitted noun remains understood from the discourse context.

The present proposal differs because the Magahi forms are not analysed simply as shortened expressions resulting from noun omission. Rather, the adjectival form itself is argued to acquire sufficient referential force to identify the entity independently. The adjective functions as more than a substitute for an omitted noun; it becomes the principal linguistic expression through which the entity is accessed.

2.2.5 Lexicalisation

Lexicalisation refers to the historical process through which a derived or frequently used expression becomes established as an independent lexical item.

Examples include:

- *relative*
- *private*
- *conservative*
- *liberal*

These words may function as nouns in contemporary English despite their adjectival origins.

Lexicalisation primarily concerns the historical development of vocabulary. By contrast, the present study investigates the synchronic behaviour of adjectival forms within present-day Magahi discourse. Whether the forms eventually become permanent lexical items lies beyond the scope of the current investigation.

2.2.6 Semantic Shift

Semantic shift refers to a change in the meaning or function of a lexical item over time or across contexts.

Examples include:

- *the accused*
- *the deceased*
- *the employed*

These expressions denote individuals through qualities originally expressed adjectivally. The present analysis also involves semantic development, but it proposes that the change occurs gradually through increasing referentiality. Rather than assuming an immediate semantic reclassification, the study suggests a continuum in which descriptive meaning, identificatory function, and independent reference emerge successively.

2.2.7 Morphological Derivation

Morphological derivation involves the formation of new lexical items through the addition of derivational affixes.

English examples include:

- *happy* → *happiness*
- *active* → *activity*
- *modern* → *modernism*

The principal concern of derivational morphology is word formation.

The present study recognises the importance of morphological suffixation in forms such as *lambka* and *lambkawa*. Nevertheless, the primary focus is not the derivational process itself but the semantic and referential consequences of that morphological development. Morphology is therefore viewed as one component of a broader interaction involving semantics, syntax, and pragmatics.

2.2.8 Pragmatic Reference through Salience

Pragmatics recognises that speakers may identify an entity through a salient property when the context makes the intended referent sufficiently clear.

For example:

- "Call the tall one."
- "Bring me the red one."
- "The old one has arrived."

The hearer successfully identifies the intended referent because the discourse context provides sufficient information.

The proposed framework shares this dependence upon contextual salience but extends beyond it. The study argues that in Magahi, contextual interpretation interacts with morphological marking to produce increasingly referential adjectival forms. The referential capacity therefore arises not from context alone but from the combined effects of morphology, semantics, syntax, and discourse.

2.2.9 Distinctiveness of Adjectival Personification

The foregoing discussion demonstrates that each of the above concepts captures one aspect of the relationship between adjectives and nouns. Nominalisation explains the

formation of nouns from adjectives; substantivisation describes the nominal use of adjectives; conversion accounts for category change without overt morphology; ellipsis explains noun omission; lexicalisation concerns historical vocabulary development; semantic shift addresses changes in meaning; morphological derivation focuses on word formation; and pragmatic reference explains context-dependent interpretation.

The concept of **Adjectival Personification** proposed in this study differs from these existing frameworks by attempting to account for the **entire developmental continuum** through which an adjectival quality progressively acquires referential force. Rather than viewing the phenomenon solely as a change of grammatical category or as a consequence of contextual omission, the framework integrates morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics into a single explanatory model. It proposes that an adjectival form may move from expressing a descriptive property, to identifying a particular bearer of that property, and finally to functioning as an independent referential expression for the entity itself. In this sense, Adjectival Personification is intended not as a replacement for existing linguistic concepts but as a complementary analytical framework for describing a specific pattern of adjectival referential development observed in Magahi.

Concept	Primary Focus	Typical Outcome	Example	Difference from Adjectival Personification
Nominalisation	Formation of nouns from other word classes	Abstract noun denoting a quality or state	<i>happy</i> → <i>happiness</i> ; <i>kind</i> → <i>kindness</i> ; <i>dark</i> → <i>darkness</i>	<i>lambkawa</i> does not denote the abstract quality ('tallness') but refers to the entity possessing that quality. The development is referential rather than abstract.
Substantivisation	Use of an adjective as a noun	Adjective functions nominally	<i>the rich</i> ; <i>the poor</i> ; <i>the blind</i> ; <i>the elderly</i>	Describes the final nominal use of an adjective but does not explain the intermediate stages from description to identification and reference.
Conversion (Zero Derivation)	Change in grammatical category without morphological marking	Adjective becomes a noun	<i>native</i> → <i>a native</i> ; <i>criminal</i> → <i>a criminal</i> ; <i>professional</i> → <i>a professional</i>	The Magahi forms involve overt morphological changes (<i>lamba</i> → <i>lambka</i> → <i>lambkawa</i>) together with gradual semantic and referential development.
Ellipsis	Omission of a recoverable noun	Adjective substitutes for an omitted noun	<i>the red</i> (<i>car</i>); <i>the tall one</i> ; <i>the broken</i> (<i>chair</i>)	The adjective is not merely replacing an omitted noun but is argued to acquire independent referential capacity.
Lexicalisation	Historical establishment of new lexical items	Permanent vocabulary item	<i>relative</i> ; <i>private</i> ; <i>conservative</i> ; <i>liberal</i>	Focuses on diachronic lexical change, whereas the present study examines synchronic referential behaviour in Magahi.
Semantic Shift	Change in lexical meaning or function	New semantic interpretation	<i>the accused</i> ; <i>the deceased</i> ; <i>the employed</i>	The proposed framework emphasises a gradual continuum from descriptive meaning to independent reference rather than an isolated semantic change.
Morphological Derivation	Formation of new words through affixation	Derived lexical item	<i>happy</i> → <i>happiness</i> ; <i>active</i> → <i>activity</i> ; <i>modern</i> → <i>modernism</i>	Morphology is only one component of the proposed analysis, which also incorporates semantics, syntax, and pragmatics.
Pragmatic Reference through Salience	Context-based identification of referents	Reference established through discourse	<i>Call the tall one.</i> ; <i>Bring the red one.</i> ; <i>The old one has arrived.</i>	Context alone is insufficient. In Magahi, referentiality arises through the interaction of morphology, semantics, syntax, and discourse.
Adjectival Personification	Progressive development of referentiality in adjectival forms	Descriptive adjective → Identifier → Independent referential expression	<i>lamba</i> → <i>lambka</i> → <i>lambkawa</i>	Integrates morphology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics into a unified model explaining how an adjectival quality progressively comes to refer to its bearer.

Figure 1 : Tabular Comparison of Adjectival Personification with Related Linguistic Concepts

The Table demonstrates that existing linguistic concepts each explain only one dimension of the adjective–noun relationship. The proposed framework of Adjectival Personification differs in accounting for the complete developmental continuum, whereby an adjectival quality progresses from simple description to identification and finally to independent reference. Rather than replacing existing concepts, it complements them by integrating morphological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic factors into a single explanatory model.

3. The Morphological Progression

The central example may be represented as follows:

Form	Function	Semantic value
lamba	Basic adjective	tall/long
lambka	Specific/individuated adjectival form	the particular tall/long one
lambkawa	Adjectivally personified form	an entity represented through the quality

The present study examines the forms *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa* as representing successive stages in a proposed morphological and referential development in Magahi. The basic form, *lamba*, functions as an adjective expressing the quality of being 'tall' or 'long'. In constructions such as *lamba aadmi* ('tall man'), the adjective performs a purely descriptive function by attributing a property to a noun. At this stage, the adjective remains dependent upon the noun for its interpretation and does not independently identify or refer to any particular entity. Its primary semantic function is therefore to denote a quality.

The second form, *lambka*, appears to represent a stage of adjectival specification or individuation. Although it continues to express the same basic quality, it no longer functions merely as a general descriptive adjective. Instead, the quality becomes associated with a particular referent within a given discourse context. Rather than simply indicating that an entity is tall, the form serves to distinguish one specific tall entity from other possible referents. In this way, the adjectival quality acquires an identificatory function while still retaining its descriptive meaning.

The third form, *lambkawa*, represents the stage referred to in this study as Adjectival Personification. At this point, the adjectival quality acquires sufficient referential force to function independently as an expression referring to the entity characterised by that quality. For example, in the sentence *Lambkawa aael* ('The tall one came'), the adjective no longer

requires an overt noun because the intended referent is recoverable through the quality itself. The adjectival expression thus serves as the principal means of identifying the entity within the discourse. This development suggests a gradual increase in referentiality, whereby the adjective progresses from expressing a property, to identifying a particular bearer of that property, and finally to functioning as an independent referential expression. The proposed progression therefore illustrates how morphological modification, together with semantic interpretation and discourse context, may enable an adjectival quality to move beyond simple description and participate directly in the identification and reference of an entity.

The progression is:

Stage I: Adjectival Quality

lamba

The adjective expresses a property.

lamba

tall man

The quality remains descriptive.

Stage II: Adjectival Specification

lambka

The quality becomes more closely associated with a particular referent.

The form no longer functions merely as a general description. It helps distinguish one entity from other entities.

The semantic movement is:

tall → the particular tall one

This stage may therefore be described as **adjectival individuation** or **adjectival specification**.

Stage III: Adjectival Personification

lambkawa

The quality becomes sufficiently referential to represent the entity possessing it.

For example:

Lambkawa aael.

The form can be interpreted as:

The tall one came.

The entity need not be separately named. The adjectival quality itself becomes the identifying expression.

The movement can therefore be represented as:

QUALITY → PROPERTY-BEARER → REFERENTIAL ENTITY

aadmi

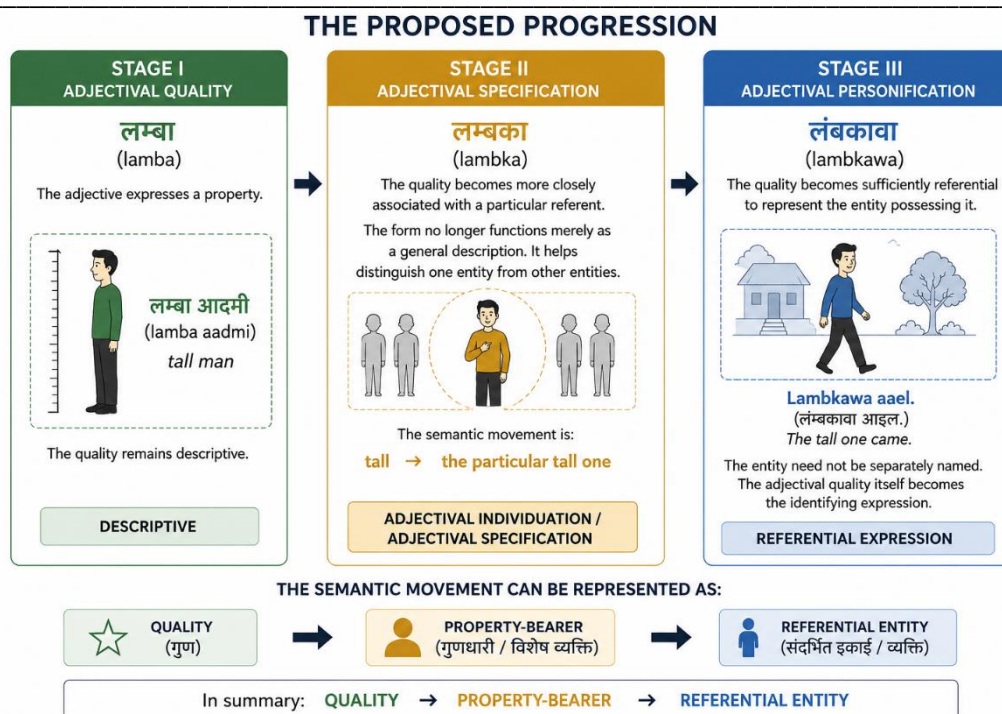


Figure 2 : The Proposed Morphological Progression

4. Research Questions

The paper will investigate the following questions:

1. How does the basic adjectival form function in Magahi?
2. What semantic or pragmatic distinction exists between *lamba* and *lambka*?
3. Does *lambkawa* function as an independently referential form?
4. What morphological processes contribute to this transformation?
5. Can the proposed pattern be observed across other Magahi adjectives?
6. Does Magahi exhibit a systematic relationship between adjectival morphology and entity reference?
7. Can **Adjectival Personification** serve as a useful framework for describing this phenomenon?

5. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

- examine the morphological structure of adjectival forms in Magahi;
- distinguish general adjectival description from specific adjectival reference;
- analyse the transformation of adjectival qualities into referential expressions;
- investigate the role of suffixation in this process;

- determine whether adjectival personification is productive across different semantic categories;
- propose a theoretical model for the relationship between adjective and entity in Magahi.

6. Hypothesis

The study proposes the following hypothesis:

Magahi permits a morphological progression in which an adjectival quality can acquire increasing degrees of specificity and ultimately become a referential form representing an entity characterised by that quality.

This progression may be represented as:



Figure 3 : Adjective Progression

The paper further hypothesises that this process is not restricted to human beings.

Depending on context, the adjectivally personified form may refer to:

- a person;
- an animal;
- an object;
- a place;
- or another identifiable entity.

This is precisely why **Adjectival Personification** should be understood as the embodiment of a quality in an entity, rather than simply as the conversion of an adjective into a word referring to a person.

7. Theoretical Framework

The paper can be situated at the intersection of four linguistic areas.

7.1 Morphology

The study examines how suffixation and morphological modification alter the grammatical and semantic function of an adjective.

7.2 Semantics

The study investigates the movement from:

quality → entity possessing the quality

The meaning of the form changes from a property to a referential expression.

7.3 Syntax

The study examines whether the adjectival form can function:

1. attributively: **lamba aadmi** (tall man)
2. independently: **lambkawa aael** (the tall one came)

This shift in syntactic distribution is crucial to the argument.

7.4 Pragmatics

Context plays an important role in determining which entity is being referred to.

For example, if several people are present and only one is tall, the quality **tall** becomes sufficient for identifying that person.

Thus, adjectival personification may depend partly on:

salience + contrast + contextual identifiability

8. The Central Analytical Model

The paper's core model can be presented as:

Stage 1: Description

lamba - A quality is expressed.

Question answered:

What quality?

Stage 2: Individuation

lambka - The quality becomes associated with a specific manifestation.

Question answered:

Which one?

Stage 3: Adjectival Personification

lambkawa - The quality becomes a referential representation of the entity.

Question answered:

Who/what is being referred to?

Thus:

WHAT QUALITY? → WHICH ONE? → WHO/WHAT?

This progression is further visualised in Figure 1:

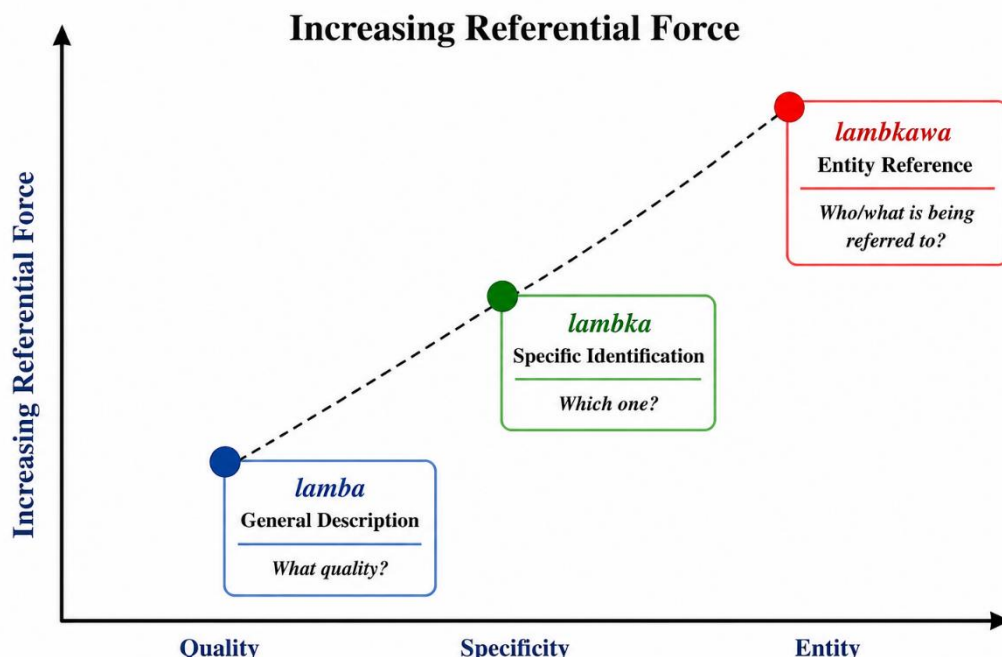


Figure 4: The Proposed Continuum of Adjectival Referentiality

The graph represents the central argument of the study: as the adjectival form moves from *lamba* towards *lambkawa*, its function shifts from merely expressing a quality to identifying and ultimately providing referential access to an entity. The progression may therefore be formulated as:

DESCRIPTION → INDIVIDUATION → ENTITY REFERENCE

This model does not necessarily imply that every adjectival form passes through these stages in an obligatory linear sequence. Rather, it provides an analytical framework for examining the increasing referential force that an adjectival form may acquire through morphological and contextual development.

9. The Importance of the Term “Personification”

The term *Adjectival Personification* is used in this study in a sense distinct from the literary device of personification. It does not refer to the attribution of human qualities to non-human entities. Rather, it refers to the process through which an adjectival quality acquires an embodied and referential manifestation in an entity. The term therefore highlights the movement of a quality from abstraction to embodiment and reference.

10. Methodology

This study employed a **qualitative and descriptive methodology** based primarily on **context-based elicitation**. The elicitation method was designed to examine the relationship between adjectival forms and their referential functions in Magahi.

10.1 Context-Based Elicitation

Native speakers of Magahi were presented with carefully designed linguistic contexts to examine whether different morphological forms were used according to differences in **description, specificity, and independent reference**.

Context 1: General Description

Participants were presented with a situation in which the quality was used merely to describe an entity.

Example:

He is tall.

The form used by the speakers was recorded to determine the basic adjectival form expressing the quality.

Context 2: Specific Identification

Participants were then presented with a context involving multiple possible referents, in which a particular entity had to be identified through a distinguishing quality.

Example:

Give the book to the tall one.

The elicited form was examined to determine whether the language employed a morphologically or semantically distinct form to express **specificity or individuation**.

Context 3: Independent Referential Use

Finally, participants were presented with a context in which the entity had already been established or was identifiable from the discourse.

Example:

The tall one has arrived.

The elicited forms were analysed to determine whether the adjectival expression could function independently as a referential expression without an overt accompanying noun.

The responses obtained across these three contexts were compared to determine whether the distinction between the forms was:

morphological, semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, or a combination of these dimensions.

The elicitation procedure therefore enabled the study to examine the proposed movement from:

General Description → Specific Identification → Independent Reference

and to assess whether the forms represented distinct stages in the relationship between an adjectival quality and the entity associated with it.

11. Analysis and Findings

The elicited data were analysed by comparing the forms produced in contexts requiring **general description, specific identification, and independent reference**. The comparison revealed that the relationship between an adjectival quality and its referent was not constant

across the three contexts. Rather, the adjectival form appeared to acquire increasing referential force as the discourse moved from description towards identification.

12.1 General Description: The Adjective as Property

In contexts requiring only the description of a quality, speakers used the basic adjectival form:

lamba

The form functioned attributively and expressed the property of being tall or long. Its interpretation was not restricted to any particular entity. The same quality could potentially be attributed to multiple referents.

At this stage, the adjective functioned primarily as a **property-denoting expression**:

lamba → PROPERTY

The referent was independently supplied by the noun or by the surrounding syntactic context. The adjective itself did not function as the primary means of identifying a particular entity.

12.2 Specific Identification: The Quality as Identifier

When the context required the identification of one particular entity among several possible referents, the form:

lambka

was observed as a distinct stage in the proposed pattern.

The significance of this form lies not merely in its formal difference from *lamba*, but in the change in the function performed by the quality. The adjectival meaning remained present, but the quality acquired an additional **identificatory dimension**.

Thus, the form could be represented as:

lambka → PROPERTY + IDENTIFICATION

At this stage, the quality no longer operated solely as a description applicable to an entity. It began to distinguish one particular manifestation of the quality from other possible manifestations.

The referential relationship may therefore be represented as:

QUALITY → identifies → PARTICULAR BEARER

This stage marks the emergence of **adjectival individuation**: the quality begins to narrow the field of possible referents.

12.3 Independent Reference: The Quality as Entity-Access

The third context tested whether the adjectival expression could function independently when the intended referent was already identifiable.

In this environment, the form:

lambkawa

was used as an independent referential expression, as in:

Lambkawa

The tall one has arrived.

aael.

Here, the expression does not merely describe an entity. It provides the hearer with a means of accessing the entity itself. The entity is recoverable through the quality that characterises it.

The semantic configuration may therefore be represented as:

lambkawa → **PROPERTY + ENTITY REFERENCE**

The crucial change at this stage is the reversal of the direction of dependence:

Earlier: Entity → possesses → Quality

Now: Quality → accesses → Entity

The adjectival quality has thus acquired sufficient referential force to function as an independent expression for the entity associated with it.

12.4 The Emergent Continuum

The comparison of the three contexts revealed the following progression:

Stage	Form	Primary function	Relationship to referent
I	<i>lamba</i>	Description	Describes a property of an entity
II	<i>lambka</i>	Identification	Distinguishes a particular bearer of the property
III	<i>lambkawa</i>	Reference	Provides access to the entity through the property

The progression can therefore be formulated as:

PROPERTY → IDENTIFIER → REFERENTIAL EXPRESSION

The analysis suggests that the development is not adequately described as a simple movement from **adjective to noun**. The more significant change concerns the **referential status of the quality**.

At the first stage, the quality is **possessed by** an entity.

At the second stage, the quality **distinguishes** an entity.

At the third stage, the quality **represents or accesses** the entity.

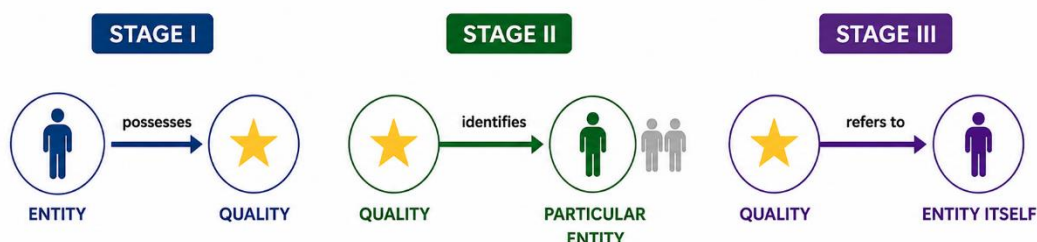


Figure 5 : The Emergent Continuum

This may be represented as:

lamba → lambka → lambkawa
 property identifier referential expression

describes distinguishes represents/accesses

12.5 Findings across Additional Examples

The same general tendency was examined through additional adjectival forms representing physical, material, gendered, and plural distinctions.

The examples suggested that the pattern was not restricted to a single lexical item. Forms associated with qualities such as colour, size, physical appearance, age, material condition, and other properties appeared capable of acquiring increasingly specific and referential functions.

However, the data also indicated that the forms did not necessarily constitute a single uniform morphological process. Some forms appeared to involve distinctions related to **gender or number**, while others appeared to involve **specificity, individuation, or independent reference**.

This finding is important because it suggests that the broader phenomenon may be better understood as a **continuum of adjectival referentiality**, rather than as one uniform suffixation rule applicable to all adjectives.

To establish whether the pattern is productive, the study examines adjectives from different semantic fields.

Physical qualities

Adjective	Adjectival Specification	Adjectival Personification	Example
Laal	Lalka	Lalkava	Lalkava hamara de de
Chhot	Chhotaka	Chhotakava	Chhotakava aa Gelai
Mot	Motaka	Motakava	Motkava ke bolava
Patar	Patarka	Patarkava	Patarkava khaet hae
Kariya	Karikka	Kariyakava	Kariyakawā ā gelo
Ujjar	Ujaraka	Ujarakava	Ujarkava le la
Bhari	Bharikka	Bharikava	Duno me Bharikva aage chala hae

Age

Puran	Puranka	Purankava	Purankava le aahu
Naya	Nayaki	Nayakiya	Nayakiya muh dhakle hae

Material or object-related qualities

Tuttal Broken	Tuttalka	Tuttalkava	Tuttalkava fek dehi
Maila	Mailaha	Mailahava	Mailahava saaf kar dehi
Geela	Geelaka	Geelakava	Geelkava ke dhoop me daal da
Fattal	Fattalka	Fattalkava	fatalkava na pahinbai

Gender (feminine)

Gor	Gorki	Gorkiya	Gorkiya aa gelo
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Chhoti	Chhotki	Chhotkiya	Chhotkiya aa gelo
Mot	Motki	motkiya	Motkiya aa gelo
Lambi	Lambaki	Lambkiya	Lambkiya aa gelo

Number (Plural)

Lamba	Lambakan	Lambkanvan	Lambkanvan aa gelo
Chhota	Chhotkan	Chhotkanvan	Chhotkanvan aa gelo
Mota	Motakan	Motakavan	Motakavan aa gelo
Patar	Patarkan	Patarkavan	Patarkavan aa gelo

This, these adjectives similarly move from description to specific reference and then to adjectival personification.

The important point is that the final form need not refer to a person.

For example, depending on context, a form meaning ‘lalkava’ (the red one) could refer to:

- a person wearing red;
- a red cloth;
- a red flower;
- a red object.

The **entity is determined by context**, while the adjectival form provides the identifying quality.

12.6 Principal Finding: A Shift in Referential Direction

The principal finding of the study is that the relationship between adjectival quality and entity may be understood as dynamic rather than fixed.

The progression may be represented as:

ENTITY → **QUALITY**
An entity possesses a quality.

QUALITY → **ENTITY** **IDENTIFICATION**
The quality distinguishes one entity from others.

QUALITY → **ENTITY** **REFERENCE**
The quality itself provides access to the entity.

The analysis therefore identifies a shift in **referential direction**:

from entity-centred description to quality-centred reference

This shift constitutes the central basis for the proposed concept of **Adjectival Personification**.

The term describes the point at which a quality moves beyond its descriptive function and acquires an embodied referential presence through the entity characterised by it.

The findings may consequently be summarised as:

lamba — a quality is described

lambka — a particular bearer of the quality is identified

lambkawa — the entity is accessed through the quality

Thus, the proposed progression is:

QUALITY → SPECIFICITY /IDENTIFIER → ENTITY

or, in grammatical terms:

ADJECTIVAL DESCRIPTION → ADJECTIVAL INDIVIDUATION → QUALITY-BASED ENTITY REFERENCE (ADJECTIVAL PERSONIFICATION)

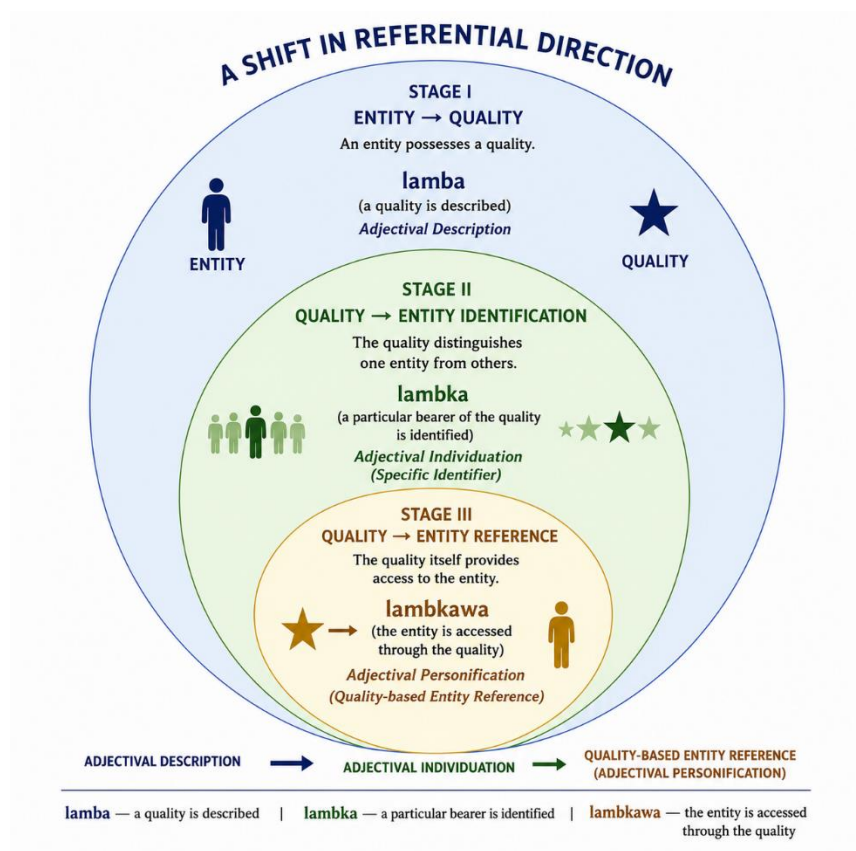


Figure 6 : A Shift in Referential Direction

14. Conclusion

14. Conclusion

This study has proposed **Adjectival Personification** as a preliminary analytical framework for understanding how adjectival forms in Magahi may develop increasing referential force. Through the examination of the forms *lamba*, *lambka*, and *lambkawa*, the analysis suggests that an adjectival quality may undergo a functional progression from expressing a general descriptive property to identifying a particular referent and, under appropriate linguistic and discourse conditions, to functioning as an independent referential expression.

The findings indicate that the relationship between adjectives and the entities they describe is more dynamic than is traditionally assumed. Rather than remaining confined to an attributive role, adjectival forms in Magahi appear capable of acquiring additional semantic and pragmatic functions. As the descriptive quality becomes increasingly salient within a given context, it may serve not only to distinguish a particular entity from others but also to provide direct referential access to that entity. In this sense, the adjectival quality becomes the principal basis for identification and reference.

The analysis further suggests that this development cannot be explained solely as a simple transition from adjective to noun. Instead, it reflects a gradual increase in the referential potential of the adjectival form through the interaction of morphological marking, semantic interpretation, syntactic distribution, and pragmatic context. The proposed framework therefore highlights the importance of examining adjectival forms not only in terms of their lexical category but also in terms of their changing communicative functions within discourse.

Although the present study is exploratory and based primarily on context-based elicitation, the data provide preliminary evidence for a systematic relationship between adjectival morphology and referentiality in Magahi. At the same time, the proposed framework should be regarded as a working hypothesis rather than a definitive account of the phenomenon. Its validity requires further investigation through larger datasets, broader dialectal coverage, corpus-based analyses, and comparison with related Indo-Aryan languages.

The study therefore contributes to the description of Magahi by drawing attention to a potentially significant but previously underexplored aspect of its adjectival system. More broadly, it raises questions concerning the relationship between lexical categories, specificity, individuation, and reference, suggesting that adjectival forms may participate more actively in referential processes than has generally been recognised. It is hoped that the concept of *Adjectival Personification* will stimulate further discussion and empirical research into the ways in which adjectival qualities interact with morphology, discourse, and reference in Magahi and other languages.

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