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List of Talks

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KEYNOTES

Compounding processes as pathways to complexity in Tibeto-Burman

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Tibeto-Burman languages typically present an expansive range of compounding strategies involving combinations of nouns and verbs, a process that has resulted in the emergence of new morphosyntactic categories and considerable complexity in their stems. A widely observed development in the TB languages of Northeast India is that juxtaposed verb roots (V1V2) initially expressing independent meanings gradually become more tightly integrated. The V2 element of the verb compound enters into an asymmetrical relationship with V1, sharing TAM and other suffixes. This asymmetry hastens the grammaticalization of V2 as it undergoes a semantic shift from a purely lexical meaning towards a more abstract grammaticalized meaning as a lexical suffix (Coupe 2007), although the original meaning and function of a lexical verb root may endure alongside its grammaticalized function due to layering, divergence and persistence (Hopper 1991). The lexical suffix slot is arguably the most important conduit for the grammaticalization of new verbal suffixes and has contributed to the agglutinative structure that characterizes the verb stems of many Tibeto-Burman languages of northeast India.

Verb-noun compounding processes are also particularly well attested and have resulted in various types of nominalizations. Nominalization turns out to be an important conduit for the grammaticalization of new morphology encoding TAM marking and converbal constructions, in addition to the widely attested functions of genitivization, relativization and clausal nominalization.

The paper will outline the historical processes through which compounding involving lexical nouns and verbs has provided a conduit for recategorization and the emergence of grammatical complexity. The analysis is mostly based on the languages of the northeastern region of India, but additionally draws on the data of languages from further afield to demonstrate that many of these grammaticalization processes are common to the entire family.

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Inheritance vs. contact: structural parallels in Kiranti languages

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The approximately 30 Kiranti languages of eastern Nepal are a conservative branch of Sino-Tibetan and exhibit complex verbal morphology. The Kiranti phylum shows a binary branching into Western and Eastern Kiranti, both again composed of several subgroup (cf. Michailovsky 1994, Gerber/Grollmann 2018). All Kiranti languages, irrespective of the subgroup, show similarities in their verbal morphology, i.e. indexing either one or both of the arguments (three persons, three numbers and clusivity) and exhibiting a binary tense distinction between past and non-past. However, the historical-comparative investigation of this morphology is hampered by intense contact between individual Kiranti languages, often belonging to different subgroups. While first observations of contact phenomena between Nepali (Indo-Aryan), the lingua franca of the region, and certain Kiranti languages have been presented in some of the Kiranti grammars and in Noonan (2003) and Blaser (2018), contact phenomena among Kiranti languages have remained largely unstudied.

This talk is a first exploration into disentangling contact vs. inheritance in the verbal structures of Kiranti languages. The focus of this talk lies on the geographical interface of the Eastern and Western Kiranti branches. In the region of the Rawa river valley, a cluster of Kiranti languages belonging to three different sub-branches are spoken in close contact to each other, namely Thulung, Koyi (both Western, Thulung-Tilung-Koyi sub-branch), Dumi (Western, Khaling-Dumi sub-branch) and Nachiring (Eastern, Khambu sub-branch). As knowledge about the historical phonology and morphosyntax of Kiranti subgroups is currently progressing (e.g. Jacques 2017, Gerber/Grollmann 2018, Gerber 2023, Grollmann 2023, Gerber in press, Grollmann under review) we are now able to differentiate between inherited and borrowed structures by taking into consideration the established sound laws and internal reconstructions of the verbal systems.

It will be shown that features such as the innovative split of the third person patient index *-u into a scenario marker for 1sg→3 vs. a general third person marker, the semantic shift of the inherited tense marker *-tV to a non-past marker or the reanalysis of the inherited past marker *-a as a third person marker can be attributed to contact influences, while other features, such as many person indexes and verb stem alternations, are common inheritance.

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Vestiges of Verb Stem Alternation in Ranglong

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This study will address the patterns of verb stem alternation found in Ranglong, a South-Central Tibeto-Burman (SCTB) language of Northeast India. Ranglong is a member of the Northwestern (formerly "Old Kuki") subgroup, and is spoken by 8,000-10,000 people in the hilly borderlands of Tripura, Assam and Mizoram states. Compared to other SCTB languages, Ranglong has a dramatically reduced inventory of alternating verb stems, and those few stems that do alternate are sensitive to fewer morphosyntactic conditioning factors than much of the subfamily. Certain derived stem forms survive only in fossilized lexicalizations (not as a form in systematic alternation with the base stem) and so are best described as vestigial.

SCTB languages are well known for their complex and typologically unusual systems of morphosyntactically-conditioned verb stem alternation. The widespread distribution and similar structure of such systems across all subgroups of SCTB suggest that an analogous pattern can be at least partially reconstructed to Proto-SCTB (VanBik 2009:9). While the finer details of these systems differ from language to language, the major distributional patterns of stem variants across the South-Central group can be described in general terms: broadly speaking, the historically bare form (Stem I) is associated with intransitive main clauses, negative polarity clauses, subject relativization, information questions with a focused subject, polar questions, agentive nominalization, imperatives, antipassives and irrealis mood; on the other hand, the historically derived form (Stem II) is associated with transitive and ditransitive main clauses, object/oblique relativization, information questions with a focused object, nonagentive nominalization and deverbal nouns, adverbial subordination, causatives, applicatives/benefactives and non-finite verb forms (King 2009).

In Ranglong, only 12 verbs have been found to have alternating stem forms (contra Haokip 2018, who did not find any alternating stems in the language). As elsewhere in SCTB, "Stem I" forms are generally open syllables, while "Stem II" forms are closed syllables ending in a *-k* (*-? _< PTB *-s) or a *-t* (PTB *-t). Bare stems appear in imperative, negative-polarity and agentive nominalization constructions while derived stems appear elsewhere, though there are curious exceptions in which the observed formal stem class does not map onto the expected functional set: for example, the verb *dit* 'to love, to have sex with' appears as a derived stem in all cases except for the lexicalized non-agentive nominalization *ka-di* 'my love,' which is a bare stem. Another (larger) class of verbs exhibits a fossilized derived stem as the sole grammatical form, which suggests that stem

alternation was once a much more productive process throughout the verbal lexicon. The manner, causes and chronology of this system's decay in Ranglong are as yet unknown, and so possible explanations will be explored in the latter part of the talk.

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Variation in Chiru (NW South Central) verb stem alternation

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South-Central Tibeto-Burman (SCTB) languages are well known for their complex and typologically unusual systems of morphosyntactically-conditioned verb stem alternation. As a contribution for this workshop, we would like to present our study of the forms and functions of verb stem alternation in Chiru, a Northwestern SCTB language of Manipur. Based on preliminary research on the topic in Awan (2018) and by examining apparent reflexes of alternating verbs in VanBik (2009), we have identified a class of 28 verbs that alternate segmentally, including 11 intransitive and 17 transitive verbs. Structurally, we find an alternation between an open syllable form and a stop-final form across all verbs. This is also the prevalent pattern in other Northwestern languages, such as Monsang (Konnerth 2016) and Lamkang (Chelliah and Peterson 2025).

In order to investigate the functional system of stem alternation, we compiled a set of 15 Chiru-specific morphosyntactic contexts. This included both constructions expected (from a SC perspective) to trigger Stem I forms, such as negative indicative forms and imperative; and those expected to trigger Stem II forms, such as valence-increasing constructions and nominalized subordinate clauses.

The surprising finding of our study is the high degree of variation in Chiru. For example, the imperative clause in (1) can both occur with the Stem I form of 'eat' as in (a), or the Stem II form as in (b).

(1) a. sa sa-ro
meat eat.I-IMP
'Eat the meat!'

b. sa sak-ro
meat eat.II-IMP
'id.'

Likewise, the causative in (2) may occur with either stem form: I in (a) and II in (b).

(2) a. thingchek=kha nang mi-thi-zoi
plant=DM 2SG CAUS-die.I-PERF
'You let the plant die (e.g., by forgetting to water it)'

b. thingchek=kha nang mi-thit-zoi
plant=DM 2SG CAUS-die.I-PERF
'id.'

Despite this variability, we were still able to identify patterns. First, in the acirmative indicative, we consistently found that intransitive verbs occurred in Stem I form and transitive verbs occurred in Stem II form. Out of the remaining 14 constructions we investigated, there were 7 that consistently triggered Stem I for intransitive verbs (while transitive verbs were variable). Another 4 constructions showed the converse pattern of consistently triggering Stem II for transitive verbs, while intransitive verbs were variable. Finally, three construction types required the verb to be in Stem II form: applicatives, a type of adverbial subordination, and nonagentive nominalization.

In sum, we believe our study shows that there still are robust and meaningful patterns of stem alternation in Chiru but that the system as a whole is in the process of changing due to the large amount of variation we have encountered. As such, our study shows that our understanding of stem alternation in languages like Chiru will benefit from methodologies beyond simple elicitation/native speaker introspection.

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Aspects of the South-Central verb stem alternation in Lamkang (LMK)

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In this talk, we provide a systematic look at the stem alternation in the Northwestern South Central language, Lamkang (LMK). Based on a large corpus of naturalistic texts supplemented by targeted translational elicitation, we: 1. assess the extent to which the stem alternation in Lamkang is relevant for the verbal lexicon; 2. elaborate on the alternation classes found; 3. review the morphosyntactic distribution of stem variants; 4. discuss ways in which the stem alternation is similar to and different from what has been reported for other South Central languages.

We demonstrate that the stem alternation is a robust phenomenon in Lamkang. Over forty percent of verbs exhibit alternating forms. This finding is significant in the context of Northwestern South Central languages as there appears to be a prevailing impression that the stem alternation is either only modestly represented or completely absent in this part of South Central.

Although we cannot exhaustively enumerate Lamkang's alternation classes or illustrate the distribution of alternants here, the talk will provide detailed information on these issues. A brief example of stem alternation is provided by the distinct stem forms seen in (1a) vs. (1b). In (1a), where the head of the relative clause is a P participant, the form *suk* occurs; in (1b), where the head of the relative clause is an A participant, the form *su* is seen.

(1) a. k-snu do-suk bu ava k-txop
1POS-wife P.REL-pound rice DEM NOM:ATT-rotten
'The rice my wife pounded was rotten'

b. bu k-su nao ava k-canu
rice a.rel-pound child dem 1pos-daughter
'The child who pounded rice is my daughter'

For this verb, the form *su* also is found in negative and imperative contexts, whereas *suk* may occur in affirmative indicatives and in temporal (*when V, …*) subordinate contexts. Based on considerations like these, in traditional terms, *su* would be regarded as a form 1 stem and *suk* would be a form 2 stem. In more recently proposed approaches, *su* would be termed a base stem and *suk* would be a derived stem.

In terms of formal patterning, there are alternation classes in which what appears to be a form 2 (derived) stem occurs in environments where a form 1 (base) stem would be expected, and vice versa. For instance *khok* 'peel' appears in negatives and *khoo* appears in subordinate clause contexts. We provide evidence that these classes of alternation reflect the reconstructed alternation between stem form 1 -V(:)C and stem form 2 -V(:)ʔ rhymes; these classes therefore involve only an apparent exception.

Concerning functional distribution, a noteworthy feature of Lamkang is the occurrence of particular stems in specific tense/aspects. In simplified terms, stem form 2 (derived) is found in present affirmative contexts, as opposed to stem form 1 (base), which is seen in both past and future. In negatives, however, only stem form 1 is found, regardless of tense/aspect. We outline an account of this distribution which posits a source for the present tense formation in a periphrastic deverbal nominalization-copula construction.

The fate of causative *-*s* and applicative *-*t* in Upper Arun (Kiranti)

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In order to better understand functionally and formally disparate verb stem alternation patterns as in South Central, low-level case studies on the stem alternation patterns of other subgroups of Sino-Tibetan, based on a good understanding of the historical phonology of the languages in question, can provide important new insights.
This talk aims to present such a case study and investigates the historical development and reflexes in verb stem alternations of two valency changing suffixes in the Upper Arun branch of the Kiranti subgroup (Koshi Province, Nepal).
Kiranti languages preserve comparatively well several valency changing verbal suffixes assumed to go back to Proto-Sino-Tibetan (Michailovsky 1985, Jacques 2015: 79, 2017: 180–181), e.g. causative *-*s* and applicative *-*t*. An illustrative example of a minimal triplet for base form vs. causative vs. applicative is Limbu *haːp*- "weep" – *haːps*- "cause to weep" – *haːpt*- "mourn for" (Michailovsky 2002: 11). However, in many cases, the suffixes show reduced functionality and formal transparency in all Kiranti languages, cf. Yamphu y*uŋs*- "put down, place" – *yuk*- "mount" (Rutgers 1998: 596) [causative and applicative, but formal relationship blurred, no base form] or Mewahang *pitt*- "give" (Gerber 2023: 553) [applicative *-*t*, no base or causative form]. For this reason, verb stems with these suffixes are often called "augmented stems", and the suffixes themselves "augments" or "post-finals", in Kiranti linguistics (cf. Michailovsky 1985, Ebert 2003, Schackow 2015: 209).
We will trace the development of the two suffixes in Upper Arun in terms of both function and form: The causative suffix completely lost its functionality in all Upper Arun languages, but in diametrically opposed developments in Yamphu on the one side and Mewahang and Lohorung on the other side. Formally, the causative suffix interacted with the verb stem by causing denasalisation of stem-final nasals, a process still visible in synchronic stem alternations, cf. Yamphu *yuŋ-C* ∼ *yuks-V* "put down, place" (Rutgers 1998: 596). The applicative suffix, on the other hand, is retained in all Upper Arun languages, but shows a highly restricted productivity and functional versatility. In Yamphu, it still occurs as a distinct segment, whereas in Lohorung and Mewahang, it is only retained indirectly as gemination of preceding stem-final stops or in stem alternations, cf. Mewahang *min-C͡* mitt-V "think, remember" (Gerber 2023: 550). Both suffixes show a restricted distribution, with the causative only occurring with nasal-final stems, and the applicative almost exclusively occurring with stop-final stems.
Empirically mapping out the history of the suffixes *-*s* and *-*t* in Upper Arun and pointing out their relevance for understanding synchronically opaque verb stem alternations may enable future research to draw inferences on the diachrony of systems of verb stem alternations in other branches, notably in South Central, and forward our understanding of this feature in Sino-Tibetan in general.

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A Historical Analysis of Stem Alternatons in Spiti

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Stem alternations are a defining characteristic of the Tibeto-Burman family and have been traced back to the proto-language (Benedict, 1972: 124). However, their forms and functions vary considerably across the family. This study contributes to our understanding of these systems by examining stem alternations in the Tabo variety of Spiti, a Tibetic language spoken in Himachal Pradesh, India. Taking a historical perspective, the analysis compares Spiti stems with their counterparts in Written Tibetan (WT), which reflects the structure of Old Tibetan, Spiti's ancestor language.

Spiti exhibits multiple types of stem alternations, including one that marks inflectional categories (TAM) and at least two that originate in derivational processes. This presentation will focus on the latter.

The first alternation affects the initial consonant or tone and is linked to transitivity. Similar alternations have been described in other Sino-Tibetan languages as occurring between pairs or triplets of verbs (Uray, 1953). However, Spiti data reveal five distinct forms that can be traced back to Old Tibetan. When combined with a contrast in palatalization, Spiti exhibits a system of ten stem classes, with some verbs in the corpus used having up to seven class members. This type of stem alternation is exemplified by the following series of verb stems: *dàŋ* 'to open wide', *táŋ* 'to let out', *tàŋ* 'to disappear, to be clear(ed)' *tʰáŋ* 'to be clear (of sky and water)' and *ndàŋ* 'to be sufficient' (Bielmeier et al., 2018).

Additionally, some of these alternations can be observed between verbs and nouns, as seen in the verb *nát* 'to be wounded, injured' (WT *snad* 'to hurt, harm, injure') and the noun *nàt* 'disease' (WT *nad* 'illness, disease'), which show the same tonal alternation as above.

The second type of stem alternation, found in a small set of lexemes, resembles those found in South Central, Kiranti, and Gyalrong (King, 2009). It involves verbs with an open syllable and derived nouns with a final alveolar segment. For example, the Spiti noun *nàt* 'disease' (WT *nad* 'illness, disease') can be traced back to the verb *nà* 'to be ill, to get hurt, to ache' (WT *na* 'to be ill, sick') and *kún-má* 'thief-nr' to *kú* 'to steal' (WT *rku, brkus, brku, rkus* 'to steal, rob').

The two types of stem alternation under investigation offer different insights into the historical development of this phenomenon.

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Verb Stem Alternation in nDrapa: A Dialectal Comparative Survey

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Verb stem alternation refers to the morphological variation of verb forms under complex morphosyntactic and pragmatic conditions, a characteristic of Tibeto-Burman languages (TB). This phenomenon is not only observed in the Southern Central TB group (Peterson 2018; Zakaria 2018: 267-278; Bedell et al. 2023; inter alia), but also in certain Qiangic languages spoken in the Eastern Himalayan regions of Southwest Sichuan, China (Sun 2000; Jacques 2010). This paper discusses the morphosyntactic and pragmatic properties of the verb stem alternation in nDrapa (ISO 639-3 zhb), a Qiangic variant spoken in Dkarmdzes, Western Sichuan, China 中国四川省甘孜州 (Shirai & Huang 2024).

A dialectal comparison of specific nDrapa variants reveals at least six sets of inflections of verb stems (Shirai 2024; Huang 2024: 36-39): (i) *Vocalic and tonal modification in the imperative*. For example, the Northern nDrapa (ND) *kʌ́-ntɕʰí* '(Someone) looked at (it)', the verb stem *ntɕʰí* with the directional prefix *kʌ́*, alternates to ***kʌ́-ntɕʰu*** 'Look at (it)!' in the imperative form. A parallel alternation can be found in Southern nDrapa (SD), where front vowels /i/, /y/, /ɪ/, and /e/ alternate with the back vowel **/u/** to express the imperative mood; (ii) *Vocalic modification related to perspective aspect*. This inflectional change is only attested in ND. For instance: *ɳɤ̂* '(I) hear.' has a back rounded vowel, whereas ***ɳɤ̂*** '(Someone) hear.' has a central vowel; (iii) *Consonantal gemination related to aspect and perspective*. This is specifically illustrated in ND, such as *kʌ-tʌ́* '(I) hit (someone).' vs. *kʌ-**tt**ʌ́* '(Someone) hit (me).'; (iv) *Aspirated alternation related to transitivity (causatives)*. This strategy involves the change of the voiced onset into an aspirated voiceless consonant, indicating the transitivity (cf. Shirai 2019; Huang 2024: 187). For example, in ND: *kʌ́-ʱdʌ́* '(The stick) broke.' vs. *kʌ́-**tʰ**ʌ́* '(He) broke (the stick).'; in SD: *ʂʰă tə́-də-a* 'The chopsticks are broken.' vs. *ʂʰă tə́-**tʰ**ə-a* '(He) has broken the chopsticks.'; (v) *Vocalic and consonantal alternation related to transitivity*. For instance, in ND: *ó-ʱɟó* '(It) turned.' vs. *ó-**ʰcó*** '(He) turned (it).'; in SD: *kɛmə́ tə́-tɕetɕe-a* 'The clothes are rotten.' vs. *kɛmə́ tə́-**tɕʰotɕʰo**-a* '(He) has messed up the clothes.'; (vi) *Vocalic alternation related to evidentiality*. This progress undergoes the rising or fronting of vowels of verb stems, whereby to express past witnessed evidential. For example, in SD: *kə́-pɛ* '(He) watches (the girl).' vs. *kə́-p**i*** '(It is witnessed that) he has watched (the girl).' and *a-bdʑô* '(He) throws it away.' vs. *a-bdʑ**î*** '(It is witnessed that he) has thrown it away.'

This study analyses the morphological process and functions of stem alternations in two nDrapa branches. It is posited that, among the aforementioned alternation strategies, (i) is productive and shared by nearly all the nDrapa variants. (ii), (iv), and (v) are not productive but are prevalent in these branches, exhibiting distinctive functions characterized by vocalic alternation across different dialects. (iii) is more dialect-specific, potentially reflecting the intricate inflectional morphology of the Proto-nDrapa. This study will also formulate and discuss the hypotheses with regard to the history of verb stem patterns in ancient nDrapa based on the geo-historical linguistic comparison.

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Stem alternations in Dumi and Khaling: internal reconstruction, analogy and sound changes

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Khaling (Jacques et al. 2012, Jacques 2016, Jacques et al. 2016, Jacques and Lahaussois 2024) and Dumi (van Driem 1993, Rai 2016) stand out among Kiranti languages in having a particularly rich system of stem alternations (Herce 2021). Since these two languages also happen to constitute a subgroup within Kiranti (West Central Kiranti, according to Michailovsky 2017) and share most of their verbal morphology, it is unsurprising that most of these alternations are inherited from their common ancestor. This presentation analyzes a few selected alternations, proposes sound changes in proto-Dumi-Khaling causing them, and attempts at clarifying the distribution of the stems in the proto-languages when they differ between Dumi and Khaling. Three main alternations will be discussed in the presentation.

First, roots with stop codas exhibit synchronically unmotivated alterna tions in both Dumi and Khaling. For instance, the transitive verb 'catch', which has the root |*lop*| in Khaling, present voicing when occurring with some vowel-initial suffixes (1SG→3 *lob-u* and 3SG→3 *lōːb-u*) but remains unvoiced with a few other suffixes, including the *-u* first (dual exclusive 1DE→3 *løp-u*), which is homophonous to the 1SG→3. In Dumi, by contrasts, all of these stems has an aspirated consonant (1SG→3 *luph-u*, 1DE→3/3SG→3 *luph-i*). The absence of alternation in Dumi is explained as due to levelling, and the *b / p* alternation is accounted for by positing the plain intervocalic *p yield a voiced stop, whereas the current intervocalic *p* in Khaling come from geminates, originating from a fusion with the dual suffix *-tsi in pre-Khaling-Dumi). The Dumi aspirated stop reflects the dual form.

Second, a problem specifically concerns the coda *-t*, for instance with the transitive verb |*set*| 'kill'. In both Khaling and Dumi, while the 1SG→3 has a reflex d as expected (K. *sed-u* , D. *sid-u*), in the dual it alternates with *ts* (1DI→3 K. *sets-i* , D. *sits-i*). This opaque alternation is explained as resulting from the rebracketing of an earlier *-tsi suffix for dual (*set-tsi → *setts-i*).

Third, open syllable stems have a very complex system of alternation. |*A*| class stems of transitive verbs have at least six distinct vowel grades in Khaling, as in the paradigm of |*dzA*| 'eat' (1SG→3.N.PST *dzʌ-ŋʌ*, 1DI→3.N.PST *dzɵ-ji* 3SG→3.N.PST *dzɛ*, 1SG→3.PST *dzû-ŋtʌ*, 3SG→3.PST *dzu-tɛ*, 2PL→3.PST *ʔi-dzōː-tnu*), while Dumi has four grades (1SG→3.N.PST *dzaː-ŋu*, 1DI→3.N.PST *dzu-ji* 3SG→3.N.PST *dzi*, PL→3.PST *a-dzō-tini*). These two paradigms are obviously cognate, and we will discuss how to account for these alternations, and evaluate in particular whether some of these could be due to fusion with the third person object suffix *-u as in Limbu (Jacques 2010).

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Traces of Ancient Derivational Morphology in Chepang Verb

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This paper examines ancient derivational morphological traces at the root level in Chepang, a Trans-Himalayan (TH) language spoken in Nepal. Analyzing a dataset of 1,200 verbal roots, we identify approximately 140 verbs forming pairs, triplets, or larger sets that exhibit alternations in their final consonants. These alternations, involving *-h, *-s, *-k, *-ʔ, and *-t, represent historical derivational processes that are at the origin of valency and argument structures of modern Chepang verbs.

Through a synchronic and diachronic approach, we aim at describing how these consonants function as traces of morphological operations. The consonant *-h acts as a valency-decreasing morpheme, deriving intransitive middle causatives from transitive verbs (*gljun-* (tr.) 'take out' > *gljuhŋ-* (intr. mid. caus.) 'go out'). The final consonant *-s serves as a valency-increasing device, transforming stative intransitive verbs into transitive causatives (*nu- (st. intr.) 'be hidden' > *nus-* (tr. caus.) 'hide'), and transitive verbs into applicatives (*ka-* (tr.) 'put' > *kas-* (tr. appl.) 'feed'). The final consonants *-ʔ, *-k, and *-t play roles in causative and anticausative derivations from intransitive and transitive verbs: *-ʔ derives transitive causatives and intransitive anticausatives from intransitive verbs (*al-* (intr.) 'go' > *aʔl-* (tr./intr. anticaus.) 'take away/be taken away'), transitive indirect causatives from transitive verbs (*om-* (tr.) 'cover (cloud) > *oʔm-* (tr. ind. caus.) 'brood (egg)'), and transitive causatives and intransitive anticausatives from transitive verbs (*go-* (tr.) 'look for, collect (wood)' > *goʔ-* (tr. caus./intr. anticaus.) 'call sb's attention/chirp (bird)'); *-k derives intransitive anticausatives from intransitive verbs (*ga-* (intr.) 'open mouth' > *gak-* (intr. anticaus.) 'laugh out loud') and transitive causatives and intransitive anticausatives from transitive verbs (*ja-* (tr.) 'filter liquid, block, settle non-liquid parts' > *jak-* (tr. caus./intr. anticaus.) 'catch, stop, prevent from falling/be stuck (food in throat)'); *t- derives transitive causatives from transitive verbs (*la-* (tr.) 'seize, grab' > *lat-* (tr. caus.) 'carry on arms').

This research clarifies the synchronic argument structures of Chepang verbs, their morphosyntactic behavior, and their historical development, including semantic shifts. It highlights the presence of P labiality and anticausative structures, which historically derive from transitive constructions. Such structures, where an SP argument functions as a P, could be synchronically misinterpreted, for example when observing intransitive argument indexation on a transitive verb. Further, comparative data from related languages, such as Bhujel and Magar, suggest that these morphological traces extend beyond Chepang, shedding light on possible reconstructions at the Proto-Chepang-Bhujel (PCB) level and beyond.

By investigating verb stem alternations in Chepang, this research contributes to the understanding of historical morphological processes in TH languages, providing new insights into verb structure, argument realization, and the evolution of derivational morphology.

Verb-Stem Alternations in South Central Tibeto-Burman

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This study investigates the morphological and functional evolution of three proto suffixes, *-k (nominalizer), *-t (applicativizer), and *-s (causativizer), and their role in the development of derived stems (D-Stems) and invariant causative/transitive stems (INV-Stems) in South Central (SC) Tibeto-Burman. In doing so, this study also provides evidence that the widespread *-k (nominalizing) derived stem was a result of relativization/nominalization, contributing to the syntactic reanalysis of nominalized clause as finite clause in SC.

Much of the literature on verb stem alternations (VSA) in SC focuses on the morphosyntactic manifestation of VSA. The scant literature on the diachrony of VSA identifies two derivational suffixes, *-k (nominalizer) and *-*t* (causativizer/applicativizer). In Sumtu, a SC language, the glottal stop in the nominalized stem ***tɔ́ʔ*** 'weaving', derived from ***tɔ́*** 'weave', reflects the *-k nominalizer. In Mizo, the intransitive verb ***mûû*** 'sleep' derives the causative ***mu-t*** 'put to sleep,' reflecting the *-s causative. Finally, the form ***ké-n*** 'bring for someone' (from ***kêng*** 'bring') reflects the applicative suffix *-t, which may surface as ***-n*** **or** ***-ʔ***. *No existing account adequately explains how the reflexes of these three suffixes* collapsed into the SC verbal system.

Jacques and Lahaussois (2024: 949) notes that in Kiranti the *-t applicative suffix may have been reinterpreted as a causative in motion verbs, e.g., both 'come with something' and 'cause to come' can mean 'bring.' While this might be the case, we investigate this further taking account of attested examples in SC.

We demonstrate how VSA in SC resulted from *-s, *-t, and *-k and collapsed synchronically. We argue that *-s originally served as a causative applied to intransitive verbs, while *-t functioned as an applicative targeting transitive verbs. Comparative evidence from Kiranti supports this hypothesis. For example, in Limbu, ***ha:p*** 'weep' derives ***ha:p-s*** 'cause to weep' via *-s and ***ha:p-t*** 'mourn for someone' via *-t. Michailovsky (1987) provides an extensive list of examples from Limbu. We further argue that the collapse of *-t applicative verbs with *-k nominalized verbs coincided with the emergence of a new benefactive applicative grammaticalized from the lexical verb ***pVC*** 'give' in SC.

Finally, we argue with examples from Daai and Hyow, two SC languages, that the *-k nominalized stem was the result of a relativized/nominalized clause followed by a copular verb functioning as the head of the clause. This resulted in a syntactic reanalysis of nominalized clause as finite clause in SC, a process commonly found in other Tibeto-Burman languages (DeLancey 2011).

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Verb stem alternations in Rongpa Choyul

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Verb stem alternation is a salient feature in several conservative branches of the Sino-Tibetan language family, including South Central, Kiranti, and Gyalrong. From a broader perspective, Sun (2016: 6) describes six cases of grammatically-driven stem variation across Sino-Tibetan languages, and divided them into five distinct types. In particular, Sun mentions that Choyul, with Horpa and Dulong, belongs to "Type I", in which the productive alternations of vowels and final consonants are employed to denote person indexation.

Choyul is an understudied Sino-Tibetan language spoken primarily in Dkarmdzes (甘孜) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, China. Previous studies regarding the verb stem alternations in Choyul are scanty: Lu (1985) and Wang (1991) only allude to a small number of examples of verb ablaut in the Gara (呷拉) and gYanglagshis (尤拉西) varieties of Choyul.

Based on related data in the Rongpa dialect of Choyul, the present paper aims to provide a detailed description of the vocalic alternation patterns in Choyul. In general, Rongpa Choyul has recourse to vocalic alternations to index 1st and 2nd person arguments. Take the verb *ʧʰí* 'to eat' as an example: when 1SG subject is indexed on the verb, the nuclei of the verb alters to *ʧʰó*; and for 1PL subject, the vowel changes to *ʧʰɛ́*. On the other hand, the verb forms are realized respectively as *ʧʰɜ́* and *ʧʰé* for 2SG and 2PL subjects. When 3rd person subject is indexed on the verb, affixation rather than vocalic alternation is employed. That is, a prefix *P-* is attached to the verb, resulting in *pʧʰí*. Furthermore, it seems that Rongpa verbs resort to tonal polarity to distinguish between grammatical categories such as the imperative mood and the perfective aspect — for example, *kɜ́-ʧʰɜ́* '(you) eat!' vs. *kɜ́-ʧʰə* '(you) have eaten'. In this case, the imperative and perfective verb forms differ solely in tone. Examination of over 200 verbs reveals four primary stem alternation patterns, with specific exceptions.

Compared with neighboring languages like Khroskyabs and Horpa-Stau, it seems that the alternation patterns observed in Rongpa may have evolved from the person suffixes that have already fused with the original vowel of the verb root. In addition, the 3rd person prefix *P-* in Rongpa might correspond to the inverse marker observed in West-Gyalrongic languages (c.f. Lai 2015; Jacques et al. 2017).

Keywords: Choyul, stem alternation, person indexation, tonal polarity

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WORKSHOP: ADVANCES IN SINO-TIBETAN
HISTORICAL-COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

Reconstructing forward an attested language via the comparative method: Tangut and Proto-Horpa

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Recent research (Beaudouin 2023a, 2023b) has established that Tangut, the language of the Western Xia Empire (1038–1227), belongs to the Horpa taxon. This new classification has made it possible to incorporate Tangut phonological distribution alongside other Horpa languages in the first attempts at reconstructing Proto-Horpa, for the initials (Beaudouin 2023a) and the preinitials (Honkasalo et al., 2025)

Following a methodology similar to Jacques (2014), who used Proto-Qiangic to infer a Pre-Tangut stage that predicts Tangut's synchronic phonological distribution (methodologically referring to Goddard 1998), the Proto-Horpa stage enables the reconstruction of another, closer Pre-Tangut stage.

An unusual configuration emerges from this process, one that may have no precedent in historical linguistics: because the Proto-Horpa, Pre-Tangut 2, and Tangut stages are closely related, Proto-Horpa not only aids in reconstructing Pre-Tangut 2 but also provides insights into Tangut itself. Typically, proto-language reconstruction informs the development of unattested languages, but here, Proto-Horpa helps refine our understanding of an attested language.

While similar cases exist—such as Classical Maya or Meroitic (Knorozov 1956, Rilly 2010)—these languages had scripts that provided direct phonological clues. Tangut, however, is unique in this regard. Unlike Classical Maya or Meroitic, whose scripts offer phonetic guidance, Tangut pronunciation—like Chinese—is entirely phonographically opaque. Its reconstruction relies on phonological structures preserved in rime books and phonetic clues from Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese transcriptions. Due to the proximity of Pre-Tangut 2 and overlooked correspondences in Tibetan transcriptions, it is possible to uncover phonological variables that were imperfectly captured by the transcription systems, such as Tangut's Grade II, the number of laterals, and the value of the cycles.

Paradoxically, despite being extinct, Tangut may have an advantage over Chinese in phonological reconstruction. The internal coherence of the Horpa taxon makes recon-

structing Proto-Horpa a straightforward task, whereas no one has attempted to reconstruct a Pre-Middle Chinese stage using exclusively the comparative method.

This presentation will begin with an overview of Tangut's classification. The first section will outline how Tangut phonological variables are identified and how transcriptional data is used as supporting phonetic evidence. The final section will present cases where Proto-Horpa provides crucial insights or resolves inconsistencies in Tangut reconstruction.

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A preliminary reconstruction of case marking in Northwestern South-Central, including a grammatical reconstruction of genitive marking

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About twenty languages spoken in Northeast India, mainly in the states of Manipur, Tripura and parts of Assam, comprise the Northwestern ("Old Kuki") subgroup of the South-Central ("Kuki-Chin") branch of the Trans-Himalayan (Sino-Tibetan) language family (Konnerth 2022: 294, 296). Based on grammatical descriptions available for sixteen Northwestern varieties – namely Aimol, Anal Naga, Biate, Bongcher, Chiru, Chothe, Kharam, Koireng, Kom, Korbong, Lamkang, Monsang, Moyon, Purum, Ranglong and Tarao – I provide a preliminary bottom-up reconstruction of the Proto-Northwestern system of case marking. The case suffixes I suggest to reconstruct to Proto-Northwestern are:

- ergative-instrumental, its form deducible with the help of evidence from other South-Central subgroups (Peterson 2023) as **-iŋ* ∼ *-in* at the Proto-Northwestern stage,
- a comitative **-le*,
- a locative-allative **-na* ∼ *-a*,
- and a genitive-ablative **-ta*.

Of particular interest for the claim that **-ta* served as a genitive due to semantic extension from an earlier ablative are the various innovated ablative suffixes, often analyzable as **-ta* combined with a locative suffix **-a* or **-na*. The locative presumably served to differentiate these new ablatives from the polysemous form **-ta*, the reflexes of which retained only the genitive function. Apart from such morphological reinforcement processes, I identify semantic shifts, which follow cross-linguistically well-established paths, and contact influences, manifesting as borrowed material or borrowed patterns, to account for the attested case markers which are not reflexes of the Proto-Northwestern system.

A peculiarity worth investigating is the unexpected distribution of the genitive in a number of Northwestern languages. In six out of fourteen Northwestern varieties, the genitive *-ta* lacks its prototypical function, which is to mark an adnominal possessor that modifies a nominal head (Lander 2009: 581). Yet all fourteen varieties (for Anal Naga and Biate the relevant data is not available) employ the genitive to mark independent possessors, at least pronominal ones, serving as either nominal predicates in equative constructions or adjuncts in existential constructions.

Drawing on the emerging methodology of grammatical reconstruction (Daniels 2020: §2; Gildea et al. 2020; Bostoen 2022), I propose three syntactic constructions in which the genitive likely occurred at the Proto-Northwestern stage: possessive noun phrases, possessive equative constructions and possessive existential constructions. These correspond to an adnominal, predicative and adverbial function of the Proto-Northwestern genitive, respectively. I further propose a plausible scenario of changes that account for the current distribution and functions of the genitive across Northwestern, especially the absence of the adnominal function in almost half of the surveyed varieties as well as the

sustained use of the genitive on independent possessors with a predicative or adverbial function.

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On the independence of tonogenesis in Northern Naga branches with new evidence from Khiamniungan

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Van Dam (2018) has previously pointed out that a likely tonal correspondence suggesting a "common tonogenetic origin" between Tangsa-Nocte and Wancho may be possible based on the work of Burling & Wangsu (1998), although many exceptions were described. A similar potential correspondence with Lainong and other southern Patkaian varieties has also been suggested (van Dam 2018). This paper investigates this question in light of newly published data on Wancho as well as newly collected data for southern Patkaian (Northern Naga) varieties. Based on these data and recent historical reconstructions, it can be shown that tonogenesis must have occurred independently in the different branches of Patkaian. Data are shown to support the independence of tonogenesis in different branches of the clade, wherein tone categories derive from shared pre-tonal features of phonation and segmental phonology, but in different directions for different branches. These features result in a complex relationship of category correspondence between languages, in particular regarding the Khiamniungan languages for which the system is most disparate.

Tonogenesis for Tangsa-Nocte has previously been described as derived from phonation distinctions in the proto language, wherein aspiration and voicing played no part (van Dam 2018). With newly published Wancho data (Losu & Morey 2023), a direct correspondence can be shown between Tangsa-Nocte and Wancho, with tone 1 in Tangsa-Nocte corresponding to 2 in Wancho, and vice versa. Phom (Burling & Phom 1998) shows a similar direct correspondence. The situation differs with Southeast Patkaian varieties such as Lainong and Khiamniungan; a correspondence pattern can still be found, but only when taking into account features such as aspiration and voicing on the onset as well as glottalisation of the nucleus or coda, both of which can be shown to have played an integral role in Khiamniungan and Lainong tonogenesis. Khiamniungan can be shown to also have incorporated coda consonants in a manner completely distinct from how it has occurred in other groups. In most, checked syllables formed a distinct toneme, as is the case in many Mainland Southeast Asian languages. However, for Khiamniungan specifically, this paper will show how checked syllables cannot be analysed as being a distinct toneme, nor have checked syllables had a role in tonogenesis within the group beyond tone 5 being frequently derived from glottal-stop codas or glottalisation in the proto-language.

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Chinese loanwords as evidence for the divergence of Sichuan Yi

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Research on the lexical borrowing of Chinese words into Sichuan Yi, a Loloish language, as well as other Yi languages, has been extensive. Previous studies primarily identify loanwords based on their close resemblance in both form and meaning to the corresponding words in the donor language (i.e., Chinese). However, this method may only help discover loanwords with shallow historical depth; it is inadequate to detect those with earlier time depth due to sound and meaning changes, hence providing limited insight into the evolution of the languages and diminishing the significance of loanword research within the field of historical linguistics.

To fully leverage the information provided by loanwords, comparative method should be employed, whose primary objective is to differentiate the outcomes of vertical transmission from the ancestral language and those resulting from horizontal transmission through contact with other languages. This is thus the aim of the present study, namely to use comparative method to identify loanwords and investigate the timing of dialectal splits within Sichuan Yi, as well as the divergence of Sichuan Yi from other Yi languages. Methodologically, the dataset supporting the present study comprises approximately 20,000 words from six dialects of Sichuan Yi and four other Yi languages in Yunnan and Guizhou, with around 2,000 words from each dialect or language. Loanwords of earlier historical depth are detected by employing mainly intra-comparison and supplementarily inter-comparison, guided by two criteria: (1) whether a word can be explained through the phonological development of the donor language, and (2) whether the word is cognate with morphemes in other dialects of the same phylogenetic branch. Specifically, if a word in a language cannot be accounted for by regular sound changes from its proto-language but aligns with forms in another language (e.g., Middle Chinese or Old Chinese), it is likely a loanword. This principle is referred to as the Explicability Principle in the present study. Since the present study does not aim to exhaust all Chinese loanwords from Sichuan Yi, the focus is on words resulting from cultural borrowing, which occurs when a language adopts words from another language as a result of cultural contact, particularly when new concepts, items, or practices are introduced.

Regarding the findings, the research indicates that concepts related to farming and crops borrowed from the Tang-Song period to the early Qing Dynasty, e.g., eggplant and fertilize, exhibit strict sound correspondences within the Sichuan Yi dialects. This suggests that the internal split of the Sichuan Yi dialects occurred relatively late, about 500 years before present. With respect to the divergence of Sichuan Yi from other Yi languages, it is found that this split occurred around the Tang-Song period, evidenced by the phonological adaptation of Chinese loanwords such as 伐柯 ‘matchmaker’.

Reconstruction of Proto-Eastern Kiranti: A first look at the vowels

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Eastern Kiranti is a subgroup of Sino-Tibetan spoken in the Koshi province of eastern Nepal. The specification "Eastern" stems from the conventional view that these languages form one of two primary branches of Kiranti besides Western Kiranti. However, the monophyly of both Western Kiranti and Kiranti in general is controversial (Michailovsky 2017: 647, Jacques 2017: 187, 204–205, 2018: 187, Gerber & Grollmann 2018: 119–137). Eastern Kiranti, in contrast, is fairly well established (cf. Michailovsky 1994, Gerber 2023: 62–68) and consists of at least four subgroups, i.e. Khambu, Upper Arun, Tamar and Southern. Whereas shared innovations have been proposed for Khambu, Upper Arun and Tamar (cf. Bickel & Gaenszle 2015: 76, Grollmann in press, Gerber 2023: 73, 81–90), Southern remains a residue group. Since Kiranti is often perceived as a conservative branch of Sino-Tibetan, advances in the understanding of its historical phonology is of paramount importance for the reconstruction of Proto-Sino-Tibetan. Recently, some first steps in Eastern Kiranti historical phonology have been undertaken (cf. Gerber 2023 on Upper Arun, Grollmann 2023, in press on Khambu or Schregenberger 2024 on Tamar), but to date, no reconstruction of Proto-Eastern Kiranti has been elaborated.

This talk presents a first comparison of Eastern Kiranti, taking into account data from all subgroups and based on a rigorous application of the comparative method, i.e. a meticulous treatment of irregularities and overlapping sound correspondences and the inclusion of analogy as an explanatory principle. Since the basic grid of sound correspondences pertaining to the consonants has been captured in previous reconstructions of Proto-Kiranti (i.e. including Western Kiranti), e.g. Michailovsky (1994, 2010), Opgenort (2005), Jacques (2017), we will focus on the vowels, which present a number of interesting issues requiring clarification.

First, unlike the other Eastern Kiranti languages, the Upper Arun subgroup and the Tamar language Limbu show contrastive vowel length. Second, Limbu shows a phonemic distinction between mid-high and mid-low vowels which is reconstructed by Jacques (2017: 199– 200) to Proto-Kiranti and which is not directly retained in most other Eastern Kiranti languages. Third, overlapping sound correspondences within Khambu suggest the reconstruction of an eight vowel system **i, *e, *ɛ, *o, *ə, *ʊ, *u, *a* to Proto-Khambu (Grollmann 2023), contrasting with the simpler vowel inventories attested in other branches.

By identifying and discussing these issues, we expect to forward historical-comparative research on both Kiranti and Sino-Tibetan in general, as the comparison will provide clear, empirically founded indications for the separation of inherited and innovative structures within Eastern Kiranti and thereby facilitate external comparison with other branches. A clearer understanding of the historical phonology of Eastern Kiranti may also help to determine whether Eastern and Western Kiranti form a monophyletic subgroup within Sino-Tibetan.

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The Development of Old Chinese *-s in Late Han Chinese: Insights from the Buddhist Transcription Corpus

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The Middle Chinese *qùshēng* (departing tone) is traditionally understood as a reflex of an earlier *-s, with Baxter (1992) proposing that in syllables where *-s followed a stop (e.g., *-ps, *-ts, *-ks), the cluster simplified over time. However, the precise ordering of these changes and the timing of *-s > *qùshēng* remain debated. This study refines the chronology of these developments by analyzing phonetic transcriptions of Gāndhārī words into Chinese during the Late Han period.

Our dataset consists of Buddhist transliterations from the earliest Chinese translations of Indic texts (2nd–3rd centuries CE), compiled from sources including Ān Shìgāo, Lokakṣema, and Kāng Mèngxiáng. These translations prioritize phonetic accuracy, making them valuable evidence for historical phonology. We systematically examine the Chinese characters used to represent /s/ and related sibilants in the Indic source words and compare them to their Old Chinese reconstructions.

Our analysis confirms that the change *-ts > *-js occurred after *-ks > *-s, and that *-s > qùshēng took place in two distinct waves:

1. After *-ks > *-s, but before *-ts > *-js.
2. After *-ts > *-js, but before the transcription of our Buddhist corpus.

The corpus also provides new evidence for the phonetic status of Old Chinese -s, particularly in syllables with different coda types. While most syllables reconstructed with *-s appear to have lost the final fricative by the Late Han period, those derived from *-ts overwhelmingly retain it. This supports Pulleyblank's (1962, 1973) hypothesis that *the loss of -s was conditioned by preceding consonants, with a more delayed loss after *-ts than after other finals.

Further, our study identifies previously unrecognized retentions and exceptions: Characters reconstructed with *-its behave differently from other *-ts syllables, tempting one to suggest that *-its > *-ijs happened earlier than the rest of -ts > -js. Some characters historically reconstructed with *-s show no evidence of an /s/ sound in transcriptions, implying that the loss of *-s was complete for some syllable types before the Buddhist translation era. A small number of cases show inconsistencies between different texts, suggesting dialectal variation or chronological layering of phonological changes.

The findings contribute to a more refined understanding of Chinese tonal development by demonstrating that *the evolution of -s to *qùshēng* was not a single event, but a stratified process. Our results call for re-evaluations of certain Old Chinese reconstructions.

Keywords: Sino-Tibetan phonology, Old Chinese, Late Han Chinese, Buddhist transcriptions, qùshēng, historical linguistics

Recent Advances in Khmuic Historical Phonology: Proto-Khmuic Suprasegmentals and Their Implications

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This talk will present some of the recent insights gained from the author's ongoing work on the historical phonology of the Khmuic branch of Austroasiatic, with especial focus on the reconstruction of suprasegmentals. It is becoming increasingly clear that two systems of suprasegmental contrasts should be reconstructed for Proto-Khmuic, that have each played a major role in shaping the phonological development of Khmuic languages.

Voice quality contrasts (*tense vs *lax) in the main syllable of phonological words have conditioned binary splits of Proto-Khmuic vowels in all Khmuic languages other than Khmu, and still survive in the severely endangered and virtually undescribed language Iduh (Hiroz 2023). Without this crucial part of the phonology of Proto-Khmuic, vowel correspondences between Khmuic languages cannot be accounted for, nor can the voice quality contrasts found in Iduh.

On the right edge of Proto-Khmuic phonological words, it is necessary to reconstruct a glottalization contrast for sonorant-final (*-N vs *-N^{ʔ}) and vowel-final (*-V: vs *-V:^{ʔ}) syllables (Hiroz 2024). The glottalization contrast in sonorant-final syllables has been transphonologized into tones in Khang varieties, but seems to have been lost elsewhere, with the potential exception of Ksingmul, whose tonogenetic history has not been elucidated yet. The Proto-Khmuic *glottalized and *non-glottalized vowel-final syllables contrasted with syllables ending in glottal stop (where the vowel was predictably short), constituting three distinct series of rhymes: *-V̆ʔ vs *-V:^{ʔ} vs *-V:. These series have been kept apart in Khang dialects in the form of tonal contrasts, and in the Ban Sakad dialect of Mal, as a combination of segmental and tonal contrasts. In the rest of Khmuic, mergers of two or all three of these series have taken place, but because the merging patterns are different across varieties, comparative work brings to light three distinct series of correspondences that align with Khang and Ban Sakad Mal data.

An important implication of this new Proto-Khmuic reconstruction is that Proto-Khmuic did not prohibit open syllables, which in turn challenges the enduring notion that Proto-Austroasiatic itself presented such a constraint on syllable structure. This and other implications of this reconstruction for broader Austroasiatic historical phonology and questions of areality will be touched upon at the end of the talk. As the proto-languages of other language families in the larger Mainland Southeast Asia area are reconstructed with suprasegmental contrasts of some sort (e.g. Proto-Tai, Proto-Hmong-Mien, Proto-Karenic), reconstruction of suprasegmentals deep in the history of Austroasiatic has implications for discussions of potential areal phenomena in the distant past of the region.

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A first look at reconstructing Proto-Northwestern (South Central)

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The Northwestern branch of the South-Central sub-family – formerly known as 'Old Kuki' and 'Kuki-Chin' respectively – of Trans-Himalayan/Sino-Tibetan has been regarded as archaic since its first documentation in the Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson 1904). This claim has largely been reiterated in major classifications since (Bradley 1997, Thurgood 2003). However, due to the lack of sufficient documentation of these languages, both the internal position of Northwestern within South Central, as well as the identification of the languages belonging to the subgroup remain up for debate (Peterson 2017, Konnerth 2022).

This talk presents a first step towards the reconstruction of Northwestern phonology based on regular sound correspondences from the languages Monsang, Moyon, Lamkang, Anal, Hrangkhol, Biate, Kom, and Aimol, among others. A special focus will be given to syllable onsets and to particular difficulties which arise when reconstructing Proto-Northwestern. Since previous work has not been able to focus on Northwestern due to lack of data, this presents the first bottom-up comparative work on this sub-clade. Furthermore, this talk shows the importance of regular sound correspondences as well as how segments should not be considered in isolation when untangling the interaction of similar languages in a historical context.

One difficulty prevalent in the comparison of South-Central languages, like many other language families, is the influence from closely related languages belonging to another clade of the same family, either through areal influence or outright loans. For example, this is the case for the etymon 'eye', reconstructed as *mik on the Proto South-Central level (VanBik 2006: 483). Languages generally considered Northwestern show two types of rhymes in this etymon, e.g. Lamkang *mik* vs. Hrangkhol *mit*. In the Central and Northeastern branches of South Central a regular change of the rhyme *-ik to *-it* has apparently taken place for this particular etymon (VanBik 2006, Button 2009). Additionally, the Northwestern language Monsang has a voiceless onset in *m̥í?* 'eye' (final stops have merged to *?* in Monsang), which normally corresponds to a voiceless onset in Hrangkhol as well. However, Hrangkhol 'eye' *mit* has a voiced onset. Taking these facts into consideration, Hrangkhol *mit* seems quite irregular. One would expect a form akin to 'm̥ik' instead or a regular reflex with rhyme *-it* in all Northwestern languages instead. It is unclear, how this discrepancy came to be. While a loan from one of the languages showing a regular change of *-ik* to *-it* in the etymon for 'eye', such as Meitei *mít*, is possible, there may also be other factors at play.

This talk will not only show regular sound correspondences but also highlight some open questions such as the origin of the form *mit*.

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The correspondences in Old Chinese of Tibetan rS-onsets

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This presentation reports on a comparison between Written Tibetan (WT) words beginning in *rS, where 'S' is a voiced or voiceless obstruent, and their Old Chinese (OC) cognates in the Baxter-Sagart reconstruction. The data support the two generalizations below:
(i) if the WT word begins with rṢ- (where 'Ṣ' is a voiceless stop or affricate), the main syllable initial in OC is an aspirate AND no medial -r- occurs (unless due to <r> infixation):

- rtul 'stupid' : 惷 *t^{h}u[n]ʔ > tsyhwinX > chǔn 'stupid'
- rtsi 'liquids like juice, paint, varnish' : 漆 *[ts^{h}]i[t] > tshit > qī 'varnish tree'
- rku 'to steal, to rob': 寇 *[k]^{hs}(r)o-s > khuwH > kòu 'rob; robber'
- rkang 'marrow', rkang-pa 'foot, leg' : 脛 *m-k^{hs}eŋ-s > hengH > jìng 'leg, shank' and 牼 *k^{hs}<r>eŋ > kheang > kēng 'shank bone'

(ii) if the WT word begins with rṢ- (where 'Ṣ' is a voiced stop or affricate), the main syllable initial in OC is not an aspirate AND medial -r- occurs. Examples with OC voiceless initial:

- rdal 'to spread sth' : 展 *trenʔ > trjenX > zhǎn 'roll over; unfold'
- rdung 'small mound, hillock': 冢 *[t]roŋʔ > trjowngX > zhǒng 'tomb, mound'
- rgyas-pa 'to increase, augment, spread' : 加 *k^{ʕ}raj > kae > jiā 'add'
- rgyo 'have sexual intercourse' : 交 *[k]^{ʕ}raw > kaew > jiāo 'to cross; have relations with; have

Examples with OC voiced initials:

- rdul : 塵 *[d]rə[n] > drin > chén 'dust (n.)' 'to step over; pass over; to ford': 羨 *[ɢ](r)a[n] > yen > yán 'pass, go beyond' (羨 currently *[ɢ]a[n] but MC is compatible with *[ɢ]ra[n]).

Counter-examples will be discussed.
This historical account will be proposed: PST possessed three contrasting series of stops and affricates: voiced, voiceless and aspirated. In the evolution to Chinese, the contrast between three stop series was maintained. PST preinitial r- was lost preceding aspirates. Preceding other stops, r- metathesized to medial position. It is unclear when the metathesis occurred, in OC times or later. In the evolution to WT, after preinitial r- the voiceless unaspirated stops became voiced, merging with the voiced series and the aspirated stops were deaspirated.

The historical phonology of Tamar (Eastern Kiranti)

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The Tamar languages, formerly called «Greater Yakkha-Limbu» and spoken in Nepal's Koshi province and the state of Sikkim by ca. 400'000 people, form a branch of Eastern Kiranti (see Gerber & Grollmann 2018 for details). Tamar historical phonology is severely understudied, as only very few comparative treatments of this specific group exist (e.g. Hansson 1996, which is a comparative lexicon). In recent decades, important descriptive gaps have been closed and thus a fairly refined inquiry into the phonological history of Tamar is possible. Through rigid application of the comparative method to a self-constructed corpus of verbal roots (following Jacques 2017), several shared innovations of Tamar have been identified, which will contribute to a more precise diachronic understanding of Eastern Kiranti (see Gerber 2023). A preliminary reconstruction of both the consonantal and vocalic phonemes of Proto-Tamar is provided, and the findings will be discussed within the broader Eastern Kiranti and Trans-Himalayan context.

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The genetic position of West Himalayish among the Sino-Tibetan languages of the Himalayas

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The West Himalayish (WH) languages constitute a subgroup of fourteen Sino-Tibetan minority languages spoken throughout the North Indian Himalayas. Ever since Konow first recognized this subgroup as a distinct genetic unit in the Linguistic Survey of India (Grierson 1909), scholars have disagreed on how the WH languages relate to other Sino-Tibetan subgroups in the Himalayan region. Some researchers have proposed a close affinity with the so-called "Bodish" languages — encompassing Tibetan, Tamangic, East Bodish, and Tshangla (Benedict 1972; Bradley 1997) — while others have argued for a stronger relationship with Kiranti, Newaric, and Magaric (Grierson 1909; Thurgood & LaPolla 2003).

Drawing on a forthcoming historical-comparative grammar of the WH languages (Widmer, forthcoming), this presentation examines evidence from the reconstructed lexicon, phonology, and grammar of Proto-WH to substantiate its genetic position within the Sino-Tibetan subgroups of the Himalayas. Although identifying shared innovations remains challenging given current limitations in the field, an increasing body of evidence suggests that the WH languages should be considered peripheral members of the Bodish subgroup. This claim rests primarily on potential lexical isoglosses between PWH and other Bodish languages (e.g. PWH **rok* 'black' vs. WT *rog po* 'black-colored', Tamangic PWH *p^h*o* 'deer' vs. PTam *$^A p^h$*o* 'deer', PWH **braŋ* 'resting place' vs. Tshangla *brang* 'place') as well as possible shared morphological innovations (e.g. PWH *-*si* 'perfective converb' vs. Kurtöp -*si* 'converb', PWH *-*si* 'ergative' vs. Tamang -*se* 'ergative').

More broadly, the talk argues that detailed historical-comparative analyses of lower-level subgroups are essential for constructing comprehensive models of the Sino-Tibetan family tree. Without such in-depth studies of individual branches, broader models must rely on educated guesses with weak empirical foundations — often leading to misleading conclusions.

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Decomposing Event Structure: Syntax-Prosody Interactions in Taiwanese Southern Min Phrasal Secondary Predicates

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Chinese languages exhibit complex predicate formation through juxtaposition, forming Resultative Verb Compounds (RVCs) (Li & Thompson, 1981: 54-68) or via functional particles, yielding Phrasal Secondary Predicates (PSPs) (Huang, 1992). This study investigates the event structure of Taiwanese Southern Min (TSM) secondary predicates from both syntactic and phonological perspectives, shedding light on their implications for the syntax-phonology interface.

TSM utilizes three distinct particles to introduce a PSP *kah*^{4}, *liau*^{2}, and *tioh*^{8}. These particles differ in selection criteria and tone sandhi behavior. Several impressionistic studies have documented distinctive tone sandhi patterns in Taiwanese secondary predicate particles. Lin (2003, p. 80) reports a prosodic ”pause” following *tioh*^{8}, while Chhoa (2015, pp. 3, §§2.3.1-2.3.2, §3.1) observes similar pausal phenomena after both *tioh*^{8} and *liau*^{2}, though not after *kah*^{4}. Lau (2024) corroborates these findings, noting in a footnote (p. 200, footnote 30) that some speakers produce *liau*^{2} with a following pause. Crucially, all three scholars agree that while *kah*^{4} undergoes regular tone sandhi processes, both tioh^{8} and *liau*^{2} are consistently followed by a tone group (TG) boundary. Cruacially, *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} can also be used as phase markers in an RVC. This mirrors Mandarin use of *dào* ‘to arrive’, which can be used as a PSP marker or as a phase marker in an RVC; however, in some Mandarin dialects, *dào* is read with a neutral tone when used as a phase marker. At the same time, it is never neutralized when used as a PSP marker.

Previous research (Chen 1987; Hsiao 1995) suggests that TSM tone sandhi mirrors syntactic XP boundaries, except in cases of left-adjoined adjuncts or cliticization. However, existing syntactic analyses of TSM PSPs (Lin 2003, 2017; Wang 2010) fail to explain observed tone sandhi patterns. Traditional analyses assume that Pred2 is a complement of Pred1, modeled after Mandarin PSPs. Yet, an Optimality Theory approach would require positing three distinct grammars, each with multiple cophonologies (Inkelas & Zoll 2007), which is an overly complex solution

I propose that just as in the case of Mandarin *dào*, *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} can appear in different structures, giving rise to the confusion in current proposals. When followed by a DP, *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} (like *dào*) are a phase marker part of a complex verb, i.e. an RVC as in

(1a) where V represent the first predicate and Y the secondary predicate. Meanwhile, when *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} select clause (1b), I propose that they should be analyzed as a C0 following Wang's (2010) analysis of Mandarin PSP marker *de*.

(1) a. [$_{VP}$V X] Y

b. V [$_{CP}$X Y]

This can be further proven by the fact that in some cases, root modal *e*^{7} or root modality negation marker *be*^{7} can be inserted between the first predicate and *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8}, but this is ungrammatical in other contexts (Lin, 2002) as shown in (2) and (3) where *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} are phase markers part of an RVC in (2a) and (3a) and complementizers introducing a clause in (2b) and (3b). Furthermore, when *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} appear as a C^{0} the sentence is clearly bi-clausal, as for *kah*^{4} demonstrated by Wang (2010).

(2) a. I^{1} tshiunn^{2} (*e^{7}) liau^{2} tsin^{1} ho^{2}-thiann^{1}
He/she sing (can) LIAU very good.to.hear
'He/She sings well'

b. Gun^{2} khuann^{3} (e^{7}) liau^{2} tsit^{4} pun^{2} tsheh^{4}
We look LIAU that CL book
'We have read that book'

(3) a. Png^{7} tsú (*e^{7}) tioh^{8} tsiok^{4} ho^{2}-tsiah
Food cook (*can) TIOH very good.to.eat
'The food was tasty'

b. Gun^{2} khuann^{3} (e^{7}) tioh^{8} li^{2}–e^{5} bin^{7}
We look (can) TIOH your brother
'We saw your brother.'

To investigate whether there is a connection between the syntactic functions of *kah*^{4}, *liau*^{2}, and *tioh*^{8} and their tone sandhi behavior, we conducted a preliminary experiment. Using carefully controlled, self-paced speech recordings from three male native speakers aged 20, the study examined both RVCs and PSPs. Ten target sentences were constructed for each variant of the marker, each embedded within a six-syllable frame to control for prosodic structure. The target syllables were consistently placed in the second position, enabling clear observation of whether they retained their base tone or underwent tone sandhi. The ratio of target items to fillers was 1 to 3. In total, each participant was presented with sixty-five items, including twenty targets and forty-five fillers. Tonal contours were manually annotated following TW-ToBI conventions (Peng and Beckman, 2003), and syllable duration data were statistically analyzed with a one-way ANOVA using R.

The results revealed distinct tonal behaviors that were sensitive to construction type. *Kah*^{4} consistently underwent tone sandhi in all contexts, in line with prior expectations. In contrast, *tioh*^{8} showed a split pattern: it was typically neutralized in RVC contexts but tended to undergo sandhi in PSP contexts. Interestingly, *liau*^{2} exhibited the opposite of what earlier descriptions predicted. It tended to undergo sandhi in RVCs while often

retaining its base tone in PSPs. Duration analyses showed no statistically significant differences across construction types, suggesting that syllable length is not a reliable cue for prosodic boundaries in these cases. Overall, these findings challenge the assumption of uniform prosodic behavior across these particles and highlight the importance of considering both syntactic and prosodic structure in analyzing tone sandhi in TSM.

One possible explanation is that, similar to the Mandarin particles *de*, and *dào*, which originally functioned as phase markers and were later reanalyzed as PSP markers, *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} in TSM may still be undergoing a comparable process of grammaticalization and reanalysis. Furthermore, the limited productivity of *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8}, in contrast to *kah*^{4} which functions as the default PSP marker in contemporary TSM—particularly among younger speakers (Lau 2024)—may help account for the observed inconsistency in their tone sandhi behavior. These findings suggest an ongoing interaction between prosody, syntax, and language change in TSM.

From a selectional point of view, there is a second problem with TSM phrasal secondary predicates, *kah*^{4} and *liau* seem to be able to select resultative and descriptive complements while *tioh*^{8} only selects descriptive complements. To address these issues, we adopt Ramchand's (2008) first-phase syntax framework, which decomposes verb meaning into a structured hierarchy: InitP (causation/initiation), ProcP (process), and ResP (result). We propose that TSM PSPs exhibit two distinct structural configurations:

1. Structure A (*kah*^{4}*, liau*^{2}): Corresponds to ProcP → ResP, where Pred1 introduces the process, and Pred2 represents the resultative state. This aligns with traditional complement structures and explains why *kah*^{4} and *liau*^{2} predicate *tioh*^{8} the verb.
2. Structure B (*kah*^{4}*, liau2*^{2} and *tioh*^{8}): Follows an InitP → ProcP structure, where Pred1 serves as an adjunct expressing manner or intensity, modifying the main event introduced by Pred2. This accounts for why *liau*^{2} and *tioh*^{8} predicate the subject or object instead of the verb.

By integrating Ramchand's event structure with phonological evidence, our analysis explains both the selectional restrictions and tone sandhi patterns observed in TSM PSPs. This proposal aligns with previous findings on TSM tone group formation (Hsiao 1995) and resolves inconsistencies in prior syntactic analyses. More broadly, it contributes to discussions on event structure, syntactic decomposition, and the syntax-prosody interface in Chinese languages.

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Transitivity-bound voicing alternation in Tibetic and cognate languages

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It has long been recognised that many languages from distinct branches of the Trans-Himalayan language family share one intriguing feature: they possess verb pairs, in which an intransitive verb with a voiced onset alternates with a transitive verb with a voiceless onset (Jacques 2021; Bialek 2021; Gates 2024). By way of example, I provide two verb pairs from Old Literary Tibetan:
INTR √gum 'to die' ∼ TR √kum 'to kill'
INTR √du 'to gather' ∼ TR √tu 'to gather'
The alternation has been documented in Old Chinese, Old Tibetan, Kiranti, Lolo-Burmese, Jingpo, Bodo-Garo, Stau, Geshiza, Khroskyabs, Japhug, Minyag, Tangut, Kurtöp, Bunan, and Darma, to name only those most commonly discussed in literature. Although for none of these languages a productive process could be identified by which one stem could be shown to have derived from the other, there can be no doubt that the two members of a pair are historically related to each other; they were apparently inherited from their last common ancestor, which can only be Proto-Trans-Himalayan.
Except for Zhang et al. (2019), who considered the voicing alternation in rhotic consonants, the bulk of discussion centred hitherto on the phenomenon as displayed on verbs with obstruent root consonants. However, since all the surveyed languages have the voiced voiceless contrast on obstruents or its clear reflexes, their analysis is insufficient to solve the problem. In my presentation, I will, therefore, attempt another approach of examining the intransitive transitive derivation in verbs with nasal root consonants – a set of verbs, overlooked in previous studies, that are reconstructed as voiced sounds to all the relevant proto-languages. The question I will seek to answer is: What was the outcome of the morphological intransitive transitive derivation on verbs with nasal onsets?
Old Literary Tibetan, one of the oldest attested Trans-Himalayan languages, seems to preserve evident traces of this derivation with nasals. Drawing upon its conservative morphology and archaisms found in ritual literature, I will argue in favour of the devoicing hypothesis, $X_1 + \sqrt{G}_{INTR} > \sqrt{K}_{TR}$, as the source of the voicing alternation. To back up my position, I will critically examine arguments that have been raised for the voicing hypothesis, $X_2 + \sqrt{K}_{TR} > \sqrt{G}_{INTR}$, based on data from Rgyalrongic and Old Chinese.

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Topographical Deixis in Lhokpu and its Historical Implications

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There remains a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the origins of pre-Tibetic people and languages in Bhutan, namely the East Bodish group, Tshangla, and the so-called "three gems" (van Driem 2004) of Lhokpu, Gongduk, and Black Mountain Mönpa. In more recent years, some small progress has been made in uncovering the ethnolinguistic prehistory of these groups. It has been suggested (Bialek 2023) that East Bodish groups migrated into Bhutan from the Tibetan Plateau to the north in response to the spread of the Tibetan Empire. Grollmann and Gerber (2018) have also placed Lhokpu within a subgroup containing Dhimal and Toto, spoken respectively in Nepal and India. Despite this, a lack of descriptive research on, in particular, Lhokpu, Black Mountain Mönpa, and Gongduk has limited further comparative research which could help shed light on the development of the languages of the region. It is this gap which this presentation will begin to fill, presenting data from Lhokpu and comparing it to genealogically and areally related languages, considering the possible historical implications of the data.

Lhokpu has a fully developed system of topographic deixis, in which distal demonstrative reference is divided into three topographically anchored bases, UPHILL *ro*, SAME.LEVEL *no*, and DOWNHILL *le*. This is, of course, common across the languages of the Himalayas (Post 2020). Forms are constructed with a root marking the deictic meaning (the three given above, along with proximal *i*) and a demonstrative affix marking locative (static location, *-du*), allative (movement towards, reduplication) or ablative (movement away from, *-na*). Two further roots, *weŋ̊* and *pik*, refer to up and down vertically, although only some constructions using these roots have been attested thus far (*pi∼pik*, *we∼weŋ̊, weŋ̊-du*).

When looking at this system in comparison with those in the neighbouring or related languages, two points become apparent:

1. The system does not appear to be related to other topographic deixis systems, which broadly appear to descend from a common ancestor (Post 2020).

2. Lhokpu is the only language in the Dhimal-Toto-Lhokpu grouping to mark topographical deixis at all.

This presentation will consider these points and discuss the possible pathways through which this situation could have developed. It will find that, given the typology of topographic deixis as described by Post (2019, 2020), two hypotheses appear viable; either that the Dhimal-Toto-Lhokpu subfamily originated in the lowlands and the Lhokpu speakers have more recently moved into the mountains, or that the subfamily originated in the mountains and Lhokpu speakers are the only group who have not left. Each of these possibilities will be discussed in relation to further factors, such as the lack of attested recently innovated topographic deixis systems, or the limitations on population movement created by the Himalayas, which further complicate the two hypotheses.

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Contact between Kusunda and Sino-Tibetan

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Kusunda is a language isolate presently spoken only by a single middle-aged lady of a 160-strong indigenous ethnic community of Nepal. Currently, revitalisation efforts for the language are ongoing. While largely an endogamous, nomadic hunter-gatherer community until the early 20th century, the Kusunda have since then permanently settled down and intermarried with other ethno-linguistic groups of Nepal. Their erstwhile lifestyle and marriage customs, however, did not preclude contact with speakers of languages of other language families spoken in their home range in the Middle Hills and Inner Terai valleys of Western Nepal.

Despite the considerable time depth of contact, based on previously published and new data, in this presentation I will show that there are at least two layers of language contact between Kusunda and the Sino-Tibetan languages of Nepal and the Himalayas. In an older layer of loans from an earlier variety of a Sino-Tibetan language, we find sound correspondences such as the diphthongisation of rhyme *-a to *-ai* in Kusunda, the fronting of the velar nasal *ŋ- to the dental nasal *n-* in onset position, and the preservation of a disyllabic syllable structure in the Kusunda forms. Historically later Sino-Tibetan loans are mainly from varieties of the Chepangic and Magaric subgroups, which aligns with the more recent and known contact history of Kusunda. In such more recent loans, Sino-Tibetan retroflex and aspirated voiced stops are generally reflected in Kusunda as dental stops. The characteristic Kusunda uvular stops often reflect velar stops in the source language.

In some cases, Kusunda and the Sino-Tibetan languages also share possible cognates with the Austro-Asiatic languages of South and Southeast Asia, indicating how the southern Himalayan ranges have been a zone of intense language contact throughout history.

Secure Sino-Tibetan cognates and possible loans account for around 12% of the Kusunda vocabulary, which is considerably higher than the 6% of lexical forms that Kusunda shares with Indo-Aryan languages, despite the recent influence of Khas Kura (Nepali) on the language. The time of contact between Sino-Tibetan and Kusunda also appears to be deeper than that between Indo-Aryan and Kusunda. These observations may have implications for the migration history of the Kusunda and the population history of South Asia.

Autonym, Ruler, Priest, and Writing in Ngwi Society

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Based on archaeology, history and etyma reconstructed for Proto-Ngwi, one of the two subgroups of the Burmic component of the Tibeto-Burman languages, it is likely that from about 2500 years ago, the speakers of these languages lived in what is now east Yunnan Province in southwest China. The early historical kingdoms associated with these languages in Yunnan were 滇 Dian (circa 500 to 109 BC), 爨 Cuan (225-602 AD) and 南诏 Nanzhao (738- 902 AD). These societies had crops, domestic animals, metals and other cultural artefacts derived from earlier Tibeto-Burman origins, with some distinctive forms in Yunnan.

An early autonym of this group was derived from the Proto-ST SILVER etymon in its Proto-Ngwi form ***ŋwi^{1}**, which has modern cognates in autonyms across all subgroups of Ngwi languages. These groups had rulers whose title ***ndzaw^{2}** is reflected in 诏 zhao of Nanzhao; this etymon is derived from the Proto-ST TO RULE etymon. There as an innovative Proto-Ngwi PRIEST etymon ***pi^{1}**. The priests maintained traditional knowledge, initially in oral form. Probably during the Cuan Kingdom, a literary tradition developed; the term for writing is derived from a two-syllable Proto-Ngwi etymon ***t^{h}aŋ^{2} ji^{2}** PAPER. The four orthographies of this tradition, Nosu, Nasu, Nisu and Sani, were all originally logographic and used almost exclusively by the priests. Characters used for the autonym, the ruler the priest and paper/writing, will be illustrated.

Spindle whorls, weaving cultures and the Sino-Tibetan expansion

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The spread of East Asian language families such as Sino-Tibetan, Kra-Dai and Austroasiatic has been associated with demic diffusion related to millet and rice domestication (Fuller and Stevens 2017, Sagart et al. 2019, Tao et al. 2023, Jacques and Stevens 2024, Bradley et al. forthcoming). This was accompanied by the emergence of weaving. Aside from investigations discussing Northeast Asia (Nelson et al. 2020), the history of weaving and its possible correlation with the spread of language families remains insufficiently investigated.

Remains of loom pieces and textile fragments are attested (Buckley 2023), but are extremely rare in the archaeological record, and the clearest archaeological correlate of textile production is the appearance of spindle whorls, used for preparing yarn. In this presentation we will share a new database which maps the types of whorls and the dates of their appearances across a wide region of East Asia, encompassing the present range of Sino-Tibetan speakers and beyond. We discuss the links between this database and the present-day distributions of languages and weaving technologies, and its implications for our understanding of this major process in human history.

We will also explore the etymologies related to spinning in the extant language families of East Asia, showing that while a verbal root 'to spin' (in Sino-Tibetan, represented by Chinese 紡 pʰjaŋX < *pʰaŋʔ, Japhug pɣo <*paʸŋ etc) can be reconstructed in most families, a distinct root for 'spindle' is rarely stable.

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Revisiting the diachronic origin of the *yī-qī-bā-bù* tone sandhi in Beǐjīng Mandarin

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In Beǐjīng Mandarin, the *yī-qī-bā-bù* tone sandhi, namely the phenomenon that the monosyllabic morphemes *yī* 'one', *qī* 'seven', *bā* 'eight' and *bù* 'not' are traditionally realised as the second tone when preceding a syllable with the fourth tone and *yī* is realized as the fourth tone when preceding a syllable with the first, second or third tone, has attracted much academic attention (Chao 1968; Norman 1988; Zhang 1988; Lín et al. 1998). The present study revisits previous accounts on the diachronic origin of this phenomenon and finds the hypothesis that it originated from the tone sandhi rule that once applied to all reflexes of Middle Chinese *qīngrù* 'voiceless entering' syllables plausible (Zhāng 1999; Hirayama 2005). Evidence is drawn from other tone sandhi phenomena in Beǐjīng (Yú 1983; Zhāng 2010) and other Mandarin varieties (Zhāng 2015; Cáo 2010). However, the differences in the said rules cast doubt on the existence of their common origin. Furthermore, other morpheme-specific tone sandhi rules in some varieties suggest that *qīngrù*-specific tone sandhi may have interacted with non-*qīngrù* syllables (Chén & Lǐ 1996; Yǐn 1998; Gāo 2010; Liú 2014). The lack of documentation of tone sandhi rules and tone values in older stages of Mandarin varieties and the limited reconstructability of proto-tone values based on documented tone values make the task of identifying their origins particularly challenging (Endo 2015; 2016; Yang & Xu 2019).

Keywords: *yī-qī-bā-bù* tone sandhi, Beǐjīng Mandarin, *qīngrù*

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The polyfunctional use of the ACQUIRE verb 'de' 得 in Xiang Sinitic

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Typological studies have attested an inventory of possible extended polyfunctional use of the ACQUIRE verb (Matisoff 1991; Sun 1996; among others). This study sets out to provide a typological and areal analysis of multiple functions of 'de' 得 in Xiang Sinitic. We have identified at least 20 different functions of 'de' 得 in different Xiang varieties, including but not limited to 1) lexical verb 'get', 2) lexical verb 'give', 3) recipient marker, 4) beneficiary marker, 5) allative marker, 6) locative marker, 7) causative marker, 8) passive marker, 9) instrument marker, 10) comitative marker, 11) hypothetical marker, 12) phase, 13) completive maker, 14) durative marker, 15) pre-modal verb (possibility), 16) post-modal verb (ability and possibility), 17) complement marker, 18) disposal marker, 19) temporal marker, and 20) emphatic sentence final particle. Siding with Language Atlas of China (2012), we collected language data from 14 subgroups/clusters of Xiang via fieldwork and existing literature. It is found that the Xiang varieties covered in this study display the co-occurrence of use of 'get', post-modal verb (ability and possibility) and complement marker. It appears that 'de' 得 exhibits different degrees of grammaticalization and shows great areal characteristics.

'De' 得 has undergone two main pathways deriving from its lexical 'get' and 'give' meaning. Deriving from 'get', it experiences two split routes. Firstly, it develops into a disposal marker. Secondly, the 'get' meaning contributes to its use as a (non)epistemic modal verb occupying in both preverbal and postverbal position, in which its postverbal modal use has developed into a complete marker and finally an emphatic sentence final particle. The 'give' route undergoes two split pathways. On the one hand, a permissive causative sense originates from 'de' and then contributes to a passive reading. On the other hand, 'de' 得 with lexical 'GIVE' meaning develops into an allative marker, a dative marker (recipient and beneficiary), an allative marker, a locative marker, a comitative marker and also an instrumental marker.

This study specifically reveals multifunctionality and the grammaticalization pathways of the ACQUIRE verb innovative in Xiang Sinitic and thus contributes to the typological studies of ACQUIRE verb as a whole.

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Morphology of the Ralte Language revisited

Lalnunthangi Chhangte

Ralte belongs to the South Central (formerly Mizo-Kuki-Chin) Tibeto-Burman languages. Most of the speakers now live in Mizoram where the language is being replaced by Mizo. There are a few speakers in the border areas of Manipur and Burma (Myanmar). However, as these are currently active conflict zones it is not possible to verify whether or not Ralte speakers still live in these areas. There is no proof that there are villages or communities that speak the language, either in Mizoram or outside. Most speakers are now confined to families. There is also no eveidence that the current generation is actively engaged in using Ralte.

For the reasons mentioned above, Ralte is a highly endangered language as there are just a few speakers scattered in Mizoram. In 2011 a short survey of the language was conducted in northern Mizoram, close to the border of Cachar district, Assam.

This paper follows up on the survey of 2011 by highlighting the morphology and pertinent features of the grammar as it relates to the South Central languages.

Even though Ralte is spoken mainly in Mizoram, there are significant differences between the two languages. The main differences are:

1. Differences in constituent order of person indexation.
2. Exclusive and inclusive second person plurals.

Data used in this paper is from a series of recordings made by native speakers of Ralte. Theses have been entered into ELAN and FLEx . The recordings are as follows: nouns, verbs, short sentences, short conversations.

As Mizo is the language of wider communication, the recordings are in Ralte and Mizo. This paper provides the English translations.

Tone and other relevant linguistic details will be included in the data. Some of the recordings will also be presented.

Contesting the challenges of social integration: A case study on family language policy among Sino Tibetan language family people in Yunnan, China

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This research examines the dynamics of family language policy for maintaining heritage languages among ethnic minority populations in Yunnan province, China. Yunnan province in China is a key area for studying the Sino-Tibetan language family because it has a high concentration of diverse languages within this group. The province is home to a significant diversity of Sino-Tibetan languages, particularly from the Lolo-Burmese branch, namely Yi (also called "Lolo"), Bai, Naxi, Hani, Lahu, and Lisu. This study has been conducted on 30 ethnic groups, including the Jingpo, Lisu, Xishuangbanna Dai, Dehong Dai, Yi, Wa, Lahu, Naxi, Tibetan, Zhuang, Miao, Hani, and Han nationalities. After conducting a survey among 30 community people, 60 ethnic minority students from 30 ethnic groups were involved in the face-to-face interviews. Their family dynamics will be examined via the framework of language policy highlighting their language practices, maintenance strategy, and language ideology. The existing research shows insufficient exploration of the realities and discourses derived from the practical experiences or lived knowledge of family members caused by the dominant language of home country. When looking at different ethnic minority languages side by side, this paper is the first to offer a more politicized view of the home space (and beyond) where each person is constantly balancing their linguistic duties with associated social, political, cultural, and economic pressures. Findings of the research present the linguistic dynamics of 30 Sino Tibetan language families and illustrate how the parents act as policy intermediaries by promoting their children's heritage language acquisition through explicit instruction, fostering a conducive literacy environment at home. They will further demonstrate how the family language stakeholders ensure their language use within the family through constant active strategies and cultivating identity through continuous communication with children regarding home language and culture. This research will provide insight into the family language practices and ideologies of different Sino-Tibetan language family people in China, accentuating the necessity to develop integrated national policies including familial practices to promote the sustainable maintenance of heritage and dominant languages.

The semantics of Hmong indefinites

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This project argues for a choice functional analysis of the indefinite article in White Hmong.* Our discussion includes the indefinite article *ib* and two common classifiers (*tus* and *cov*). The research question is formulated in two parts. The first question is, what are the individual meanings of *ib*, *tus*, and *cov*? The second question is about how the indefinite article combines with *tus* or *cov* classifier phrases.

1. Facts & Data

Fact 1: Classifiers *tus* and *cov* have definite readings (1).
Fact 2: The indefinite article *ib* always occurs with a classifier (2)-(3).
Fact 3: Combining *ib* with the classifier *cov*, results in a 'some' reading (2b).

(1) a. Keng pom **tus** aub
Keng see **CLF.SG** dog
'Keng sees the dog.'

b. Keng pom **cov** aub
Keng see **CLF.PL** dog
'Keng sees the dogs.'

(2) a. kuv pom **ib** **tus** aub
1SG see INDEF **CLF.SG** dog
'I see a dog.' (non-specific)

b. kuv pom **ib** **cov** aub
1SG see INDEF **CLF.PL** dog
'I see some dogs.'

(3) * kuv pom **ib** aub
1SG see INDEF dog
'I see a dog.'

2. Literature Review

There is no discussion in the Hmong literature of the nature of the indefinite article *ib*. More broadly, choice functional analyses of indefinites have been present in the semantic literature for a while. For example, Winter (1997) used a choice functional analysis to account for differences in scopal properties between singular and plural indefinites. More recently, the trend in semantics has been to analyze indefinite articles as existential quantifiers (Elbourne 2005), although both views are still relevant in the literature.

3. Proposal

The current proposal argues that Hmong indefinites behave more like choice functions, rather than existential quantifiers. The lexical denotations for both classifiers are the same (4a)-(4b), except *cov* does not need to refer to an atomic entity. They both turn bare nouns into predicates (Chierchia 1998).

*All of my data and discussion are based on elicitation on Zoom with Mai-Ying Xiong and in person with Keng Xiong, two White Hmong speakers who were raised in Wisconsin. Keng was born in Wisconsin and Ying immigrated to the US at age 4.

(4) (a) $[\![$ *tuv* $]\!]^g = \lambda P.\lambda x.[P(x) \wedge AT(x)]$
(b) $[\![$ *cov* $]\!]^g = \lambda P.\lambda x.[P(x)]$

In a context with three dogs (Apollo, Mars, and Copper), *tus aub* (6a) picks out one of the three dogs, based on discourse reference or gestures. This is a singular definite description. In the same context, *cov aub* only refers to the maximal group of dogs (7a). Now that the meanings of both types of bare classifier phrases are established, we can return to indefinite descriptions. Recall that the indefinite article *ib* is a choice function (5) that applies to a group and arbitrarily selects one of the entities from the group of options generated by the classifier phrase.

(5) $[\![$ *ib* $]\!]^g =_{\langle e,t\rangle} .f_{cf}(\lambda y.P(y) = 1)$

With the same context, when *ib* combines with *tus aub*, *ib tus aub* can arbitrarily select any one of the atomic dog entities in the context (6b).

(6) AUB_C : {Apollo, Mars, Copper}

(a) *tus aub* = A
(b) *ib tus aub* = A or M or C

In the case of *ib cov aub*, the choice function does not select the largest entity; otherwise, some definite ι operator would be the determiner chosen for the utterance instead of *ib*. The choice function also does not select an atomic entity; otherwise, the singular classifier *tus* would have been chosen instead of *cov*. This antipresupposition yields the non-singular and non-maximal entities as the pragmatically sound options when ib cov aub is uttered (7c).

(7) AUB_C : {Apollo, Mars, Copper}

(a) *cov aub* = AMC
(b) *ib cov aub* = AMC or AM or AC or CM or A or M or C
(c) *ib cov aub* = AM or AC or CM **(anti-presupposition)**

Analyzing *ib* as a choice function (along with the notion of antipresupposition) allows us to see how a non-maximal entity is selected from *ib cov aub*, but only the maximal entity can be selected by *cov aub* (7a).

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Copulas, Pronouns, and Information Structure Markers: Investigating Isomorphisms in a Sampling of Tibeto-Burman Languages

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Many geographically divergent Tibeto-Burman languages are found to make use of similar forms as copulas, though the status of of these forms as retentions or parallel innovations is a matter of debate (Lowes 2006). With consideration to copulas as a common source for markers of information structure (DeLancey 2022: 76) and with consideration to verbal agreement suffixes as a source of copulas (DeLancey 2013), the present study explores possible isomorphisms between copulas, markers of information structure, and personal pronouns.

After a review of the literature available on the development of copulas and verbal person agreement suffixes in the family, data is presented from languages representing four branches of the family on both sides of the Himalayas: Written Tibetan (Bodic), Tawrã (Kera'a-Tawrã, also known as the *Mishmi cluster* (van Driem 2001: 496)), Milang (Macro-Tani, (Modi 2017)), and Eastern and Western Minyag (Qiangic). As an example, Tawrã, and Milang both demonstrate isomorphism between a marker of information structure and a second person singular pronoun corresponding to the proposed proto-copula *ni* (DeLancey 2022), while Western Minyag and to a lesser degree Eastern Minyag, demonstrate a possible isomorphism between a second person pronoun and a copular verb corresponding to the same morpheme.

In studying the relationship between these forms and their diachronic paths of development in geographically and genetically diverse languages, this research builds on the methodologies of recent work, casting a broad net in determining diachronic sources and relationships between copulas, information structure markers, and pronouns (DeLancey 2023). It also examines the implications of connections between pronouns and information status markers more broadly, considering evidence for a diachronic pathway from pronoun to information status marker in the absence of a copula stage.

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One -*œ* to rule them all: On the diverse grammaticalization pathways of a diachronic demonstrative

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This study presents a functional analysis of the multi-functional particle *œ* in Eastern Minyag (emq), a Qiangic language of southwest Sichuan spoken by a population of no more than 1,000 individuals living in Shimian County and far eastern Jiulong County, Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. In Eastern Minyag, an *œ* particle is found (with various intonational contours), serving as a genitive in noun phrase internal modifying constructions, as a clausal subordinator in multi-clausal constructions, a non-final particle, a clause final culminative particle, a clause final interrogative particle, and a component of proximal demonstratives. At first glance, these various contexts may appear too disparate to be attributable to a single source morpheme, but as will be shown, the Eastern Minyag *œ* particles may be amenable to a unified analysis.

On a synchronic level *œ* particles are *boundary markers*, partitioning both phrases and clauses as units within the grammar. On a diachronic level, this study proposes that the *œ* particles can be traced to a demonstrative. Examples are presented from a large corpus of natural speech data illustrating the various contexts in which *œ* particles appear. Grammaticalization pathways which account for the development of *œ* particles from a single demonstrative source are then proposed and substantiated using comparative data from the language's closest genetic relative, Western Minyag (wmg). The study concludes with a discussion of typological implications. Not only is the development of Eastern Minyag *œ* predictable with respect to other Tibeto-Burman languages — exhibiting genitive-nominalizer syncretism (Genetti et al. 2008; LaPolla 2004; Noonan 2009) and the reinterpretation of clause final morphemes as markers of modality (DeLancey 2022) — it is of relevance to the reconstruction of demonstratives in nearby languages, indicating that the phonological erosion of a demonstrative can obscure its diachronic source.

Keywords: demonstratives; information structure

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The contemporary sociolinguistic status of the Dara-ang community in the Chiang Mai province

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Northern Thailand hosts a diverse range of language minorities, some indigenous to the region and others descended from migrant groups whose histories in the area span decades and centuries. Among these communities are the speakers of Dara-ang (Ruching), a minority language belonging to the Palaungic branch of the Austroasiatic family. According to the *Language Map of Ethnic Groups in Thailand* produced by the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia at Mahidol University, there are approximately 2,567 Dara-ang speakers in Thailand, with the vast majority—2,484 individuals—residing in Chiang Mai Province. Despite their longstanding presence and significant local population, members of the Dara-ang community often face considerable challenges in obtaining Thai citizenship, as observed by the author during fieldwork conducted between 2023 and 2025.

Within Chiang Mai, the Dara-ang community practices a range of belief systems, including Animism, Christianity, and Buddhism. Religious differences, particularly between Christian adherents and those following Animism, have historically led to social divisions and occasional conflicts, as documented in the author's field research in 2023 and 2025. Nevertheless, members of both groups exhibit a strong commitment to maintaining their linguistic heritage. For example, the Christian community has translated the Bible into Dara-ang and developed a mobile application featuring audio recordings of the Old Testament and portions of the New Testament in the language. Importantly, the preservation of Dara-ang is not confined to religious contexts; interviews indicate that both followers of Christianity and Animism hold an optimistic view of the language's future and intentionally use it as the primary language in their community and in social media such as Meta or TikTok to ensure its continuity.

This paper examines the position of the Dara-ang community within the linguistic landscape of Northern Thailand and presents the community-driven measures to preserve and promote this language. The findings derive from interviews conducted as part of a broader project investigating the interconnection between biodiversity and multilingualism in contemporary Thailand led by the author at the University of Warsaw. The research employs sociolinguistic analysis of semi-structured interviews with nine Dara-ang speakers (five women and four men from the age group between 30 and 80) conducted in April 2023, December 2023, April 2024, and March 2025) critical discourse analysis of state discourse in Thailand concerning Dara-ang community from the 2nd half of the 20th century, and participant observation, carried out in collaboration with the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA) at Mahidol University.

Keywords: Dara-ang, Austroasiatic, multilingualism, sociolinguistics, minorities.

Grammaticalization of the Agent Marker in Khatso

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Many Tibeto-Burman languages feature an agent marker, but these markers seem to be of recent development. In fact, it is not possible to reconstruct a single marker for even lower-level family groups, let alone one for Proto-Tibeto-Burman (LaPolla 1995). The agent marker *kɛi*^{33} in Khatso, of the Ngwi (or Yi) sub-group, is unlike those of its closest relatives. And while it shares a few uses attested elsewhere in the family, it has also evolved new uses unique to Khatso.

Disambiguation rather than agency seems to be its most salient function, which has allowed for non-agentive functions to evolve over time. These data expand our knowledge of the possible grammaticalization paths of this type of marker.

Khatso (*kha*^{55}*tso*^{31} 喀卓语; also Katso, Kazhuo, Gazhuo) is an endangered language spoken in a single farming village in Yunnan, China. It is a tonal, morphologically-isolating language of APV word order (Donlay 2019). As a result, all core arguments precede the verb and the agent marker *kɛi*^{33} is used pragmatically to disambiguate core arguments when necessary. The agent marker is isomorphic with both the ablative and instrumental markers, which is unusual in the family, and clearly evolved from one of these more basic morphemes. It has also developed a number of other uses (Donlay 2017, 2019). In the pseudo-passive construction, P occurs before A and so *kɛi*^{33} must differentiate the latter due to non-canonical word order; both remain core arguments, however. When *kɛi*^{33} appears in clauses that do not need disambiguation, it provides contrastive focus. Unexpectedly, here it may mark S and P as well as A, showing that agency is not its most salient feature. When used with a gradable stative verb, the construction is interpreted as a superlative—the only way to convey this notion in the language. Finally, the marker is also used as a nominal conjunction, appearing after each coordinand. Here too *kɛi*^{33} may group S and P as well as A arguments.

Thus, we see a grammaticalization path in Khatso from the ablative and instrumental to the agent marker to the nominal conjunction. These four functions have evolved to the extent that they may co-occur in a single clause, though this is rare in discourse. The pseudo-passive, contrastive and superlative functions cannot, however, and must therefore be seen as expanded uses of the agent marker. Some of these uses have analogs elsewhere in the family, but the superlative and nominal functions are not reported in any other Tibeto-Burman language. These patterns thus expand our knowledge about how such functions may grammaticalize over time.

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A reexamination of tone in Northern Tujia

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This project concerns the representation of tone in Northern Tujia (henceforth Tujia), a Tibeto-Burman isolate. Drawing on fieldwork data collected in 2018-2024 in Dianfang Township, Hunan Province, China, I argue that tone in Tujia should be considered at the word level, not the syllables. That is, I propose a revision of tonal representation in Tujia such that monomorphemic polysyllabic words may be notated with one tone, as in (1); I use superscripts rather than IPA to avoid confusion with pinyin. Secondarily, I infer that grammatical particles—bolded in (2)—are underlyingly toneless, as their tone is predictable from the preceding morpheme and general prosody.

(1) k^{h}atɕ^{h}iema^{HL}
frog
'frog'

(2) kɤtsi^{HL} ãm^{MH}**-po^{HL}** wu^{MH}**-nou^{H}** si^{L}**tiu$^{H\%}$**
3PL 1PL.OBL**-GOAL** cow**-CLF** send**-DIR:PRF**
'They sent us a cow,'

Data & discussion. Tone inventory in Tujia has long been a matter of debate, beginning with Tian's (1986) observation that high-level and high-falling tones appear to freely vary. More recently, Xiong (2016) has made the case that up to 6 tones may be distinguished. I believe that these authors' focus on the monosyllabic word narrowed their analytic vision.

For instance, consider the collection of monomorphemic disyllabic words in Chen (2006). Of these 82, five preliminary contours can be identified that account for the majority of the data: H-H (30.5%), H-L (17.1%), M-H (15.9%), L-H (12.2%), and L-L (9.8%). Following analysis by Tian et al. (2019) that low tones alternate with rising tones at the end of utterance, L-H may be considered an allophone of L when followed by boundary tone H%. This distribution is unexpected in a system where each syllable has a theoretically equal chance of being high (or high-falling), low, and rising. In (3), I show a sample of words with their entries in Chen (2006) and Zhang (2006) followed by their representation under my proposed system; my final inventory consists of H, HL, MH, and L.

(3) a. pu^{55}ts^{h}i^{55} (Chen 2006) / pu^{53}ts^{h}i^{53} (Zhang 2006) > puts^{h}i^{H} 'spider'
b. xa^{53}lie^{21} (Chen 2006) / xa^{53}lie^{21} (Zhang 2006) > xalie^{HL} 'dog'

Under this analysis, processes previously labeled as tone sandhi can be understood as rightward tone spreading. H and HL in monosyllabic words freely vary, but they are distinguishable in polysyllabic words, as in (3), and in sequences of monosyllabic words followed by grammatical particles, as in (4). Thus, true rightward replacive tone sandhi must be teased apart from rightward tone spreading; in fact, my fieldwork shows that many compound words do not productively undergo tone sandhi.

(4) a. tɕ^{h}u^{H}-po^{H}
home-GOAL
'toward home'

b. zũm^{H}-po^{L}
little.sister-GOAL
'to/for (my) little sister'

Conclusion. This analysis aligns with the data and is theoretically motivated, as tone is expected to be assigned to a morphological unit rather than a syllable. Moreover, it is typologically unsurprising, given that nearby Qiangic languages have been analyzed as having word-level tone characterized by culminativity (Chirkova and Michaud 2009; Evans 2008). Such reexamination of tone is much-needed for accurate transcription of the Northern Tujia language.

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The typology of applicative constructions in Lolo-Burmese languages

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The Lolo-Burmese languages spoken in Burma and Southwest China form a coherent branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. Shafer (1966-1974) used the term *Burmic*, Benedict (1972) preferred *Burmese-Lolo*, while Burling (1967) and many subsequent scholars use the term *Lolo-Burmese*. The Chinese term for this group is *Mian-Yi* (Bradley, 2012).
Applicative constructions (ACs) have been extensively studied from typological perspectives (e.g., Peterson 2007; Zúñiga & Kittilä 2010; Polinsky 2013; Zúñiga & Creissels 2024). However, research on ACs in Lolo-Burmese languages remain limited, with the exception of some work on Burmese (e.g., Jenny & Hnin Tun 2017). Consequently, comparative studies of ACs across Lolo-Burmese languages are still underdeveloped.
In Lolo-Burmese languages, ACs are primarily of the benefactive type, and the applicative markers are typically derived from the verb GIVE, a pattern widely attested in other Asian languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. The applicative marker GIVE in the Lolo-Burmese branch commonly appears in the lexical form *pi*, exhibiting minor consonantal or tonal variation across languages. This marker has undergone grammaticalization from the main verb *pi*, and now also functions as an auxiliary verb. As a main verb, *pi* forms double-object constructions in two patterns: S + IO + DO + *pi*, found in several Lolo-Burmese languages spoken in China (e.g., Hani, Nusu), illustrated in example (1); and S + DO + IO + *pi*, as exemplified by Burmese in (2).

Hani (Jing Dian, 2015 :154)

(1) ji^{31} khɔ^{31} ŋɔ^{35} tsu^{55} sɔ^{31} kɔ^{31} thɯ^{31} pe^{31} pi̱^{31}
3SG 1SG OBJ book one CLF give
S/he gave me a book.

Burmese (Jenny & Hnin Tun, 2017: 164)

(2) ʔəme-ði ʔi sa.ʔouʔ-ko θà-ʔà pè-ði.
mother-SBJ this book-OBJ son-OBJ give-NFUT
'The mother gave this book to the son.'

When used as an auxiliary verb, *pi* immediately follows the main verb, forming an applicative construction by introducing a benefactive argument into the clause as the direct object. In Burmese, the main verb can be either intransitive or monotransitive, resulting in either a transitive or a double-object construction, as illustrated in (3). In contrast, in many other Lolo-Burmese languages spoken in China, the auxiliary verb *pi* typically follows a bivalent verb, yielding the pattern S + IO + DO + V + *pi*, as exemplified by Hani in (4).

Burmese (Jenny & Hnin Tun, 2017: 207)

(3) mìn mə-ʔà-yin ŋa θwà-pè-mɛ.
2FAM NEG-free-if 1FAM go-give-FUT
'If you are not free, I will go for you.'

Hani (Jing Dian, 2015: 107)

(4) ji^{31} khɔ^{31} ŋɔ^{35} tsu^{55} thɯ^{31} tshui^{31} tɯ^{31} pi̱^{31}
3SG 1SG OBJ one fist hit give
'S/he gave me a punch.'

ACs in Lolo-Burmese languages exhibit a high degree of structural consistency, reflecting shared typological characteristics within this language group. Furthermore, they display notable parallels with ACs in Sinitic languages—particularly Mandarin and Northwestern Chinese dialects—suggesting the presence of an areal linguistic feature. This article offers a systematic description and analysis of ACs in Lolo-Burmese languages, and compares them with their counterparts in Sinitic languages, with the aim of identifying both genealogical typology and areal universals.

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Relator Nouns, Adpositions, and Spatial Adverbs in Sino-Tibetan

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Sino-Tibetan languages have a wide range of lexical and grammatical means for expressing spatial and directional meanings. Among these are three-word classes that are frequently described in grammars but infrequently compared. One is the "relator noun," a subclass of lexical nouns that can function like adpositions in constructions with other nouns (Starosta 1985). Relator noun constructions typically require genitive marking, although sometimes this is dropped, paving the way for grammaticalization into adpositions or affixal casemarkers (ibid; DeLancey 1997). For example, in Kham, relator nouns take possessive prefixes and locative suffixes, as in (1) below, although the prefix can be dropped when a relator noun directly follows a modified noun, as in (2). Semantically, relator nouns profile a plane or part of a ground (e.g., top, front, foot).

Like relator nouns, adpositions occur in constructions with nouns, however they form a distinct class. For example, in Tshangla, postpositions are phonologically distinct from relator nouns and directly follow an NP or nominalized clause, as in (3). When we compare inventories of adpositions with those of relator nouns across multiple Sino-Tibetan languages we find semantic overlap but also interesting differences: inventories of relator nouns tend to be larger and more semantically varied. Adposition inventories may include forms that express locational cases not marked by relator nouns, such as locative and ablative. Additionally, adpositions can have directional meanings and can be deictic, which is untrue of relator nouns. These differences can be attributed to the different pragmatic functions of the classes: relator nouns are referential, while adpositional phrases are modificational.

Intriguingly, some Sino-Tibetan languages are described as having spatial adverbs that can express some of the same meanings. Like adpositions, spatial adverbs can be used with both static and dynamic predicates, as shown in (4) and (5) from Dolakha Newar. As with adpositions, spatial adverbs can be deictic and/or directional, a fact that can be attributed to their shared function as modifiers. The similarities between adpositions and adverbs in Sino-Tibetan can be constructively compared to adverb/adposition interactions in languages beyond the Himalayas, such as particle verbs, pre-verbs, etc.

In sum, we find that while all three classes express some similar meanings, adpositions share properties with both relator nouns and spatial adverbs, but spatial adverbs and relator nouns are fully distinct.

Examples

(1) Kham (Magaric, Nepal)

o-**lap**-kə
its-side-LOC
'beside it' (Watters 2002:137)

(2) Kham (Magaric, Nepal)

zihm **lap**-kə
house beside-LOC
'beside the house' (Watters 2002:138)

(3) Tshangla (Tshangla, Bhutan)

nyi zala thola shing **thungka** di-n-than
PRT monkey up.there tree upon go-SE-NF
'And the monkey went up there into the tree.' (Andvik 2010:45)

(4) Dolakha Newar (Newaric, Nepal)

ji=uri **hākhena** jur-gi
1s=INDV front be-1sPST
'I was in front.' (Genetti 2007:231)

(5) Dolakha Newar (Newaric, Nepal)

āle **hākhen** liŋā-en
then front walk-PART
'Then walking forward…' (Genetti 2007:231)

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First steps in using Automatic Speech Recognition to document Thulung: the importance of text types

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In this presentation, we describe the development of an automatic transcription system for Thulung, a Kiranti language spoken in Eastern Nepal, on the basis of a corpus of ca. 6.5 hours of annotated data collected in the field. Our work builds on previous research aimed at applying recent advances in natural language processing and speech recognition to lesser-documented languages with limited annotated data [1, 2, 3]. Specifically, we use XLSR-53 [4], a multilingual pre-trained speech model capable of representing audio recordings in any language as vector embeddings. By *fine-tuning* this model using a now-standard approach in NLP, we have reduced the amount of annotated data required to train the system, as has been done for several languages which are being documented [5, 6].

The system we developed achieves a character error rate (CER) of 16.9 % when trained on the corpus. This is not a particularly impressive score: it means that a linguist would need to correct (insert, delete or modify) an average of 17 characters per 100 characters predicted by the model as the transcription of the audio data. We realized however that the results are dramatically improved when we sort the material in the corpus into different categories on the basis of metadata: distinguishing narrative events based on whether they involve a single speaker or multiple speakers; whether the event involves spontaneously produced speech, or is produced using a stimulus (such as a picture-book stimulus) or is read (cf. [7]). Furthermore, when looking at the CER results across the corpus, it has become apparent that by sorting the individual sentence transcription results from worst to best, a small percentage of sentences (fewer than 10 percent) are responsible for bringing down CER scores. By identifying the properties of the texts (number of speakers, presence of those speakers within the corpus, recording conditions, type of communicative event) which are associated with low scores, we are able to significantly increase annotation accuracy.

Our goal in this presentation is thus to begin sharing, on the basis of our current experience, best practices for assembling a corpus on which to train ASR models, in order to increase their predictive efficiency in assisting fieldworkers in annotating data in the field.

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Presyllable effects on preceding morphemes in Daai Yindu

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Compared to presyllables in many other Southeast Asian languages, Daai presyllables are quite eroded. They do not surface in CV form but only as a consonants. Each variety has only three presyllables: two nasal presyllables m, ŋ and one voiceless plosive presyllable (k or ʔ). However, this seeming simplicity results in a rich set of phonological processes. Presyllables in Daai varieties exert a profound influence on the preceding syllable in derived compounds and inflected verbs. So-Hartmann (1989) first reported evidence from Daai Chin (Yang Daai). She described rules that involve vowel shortening, tone loss, resyllabification, and final consonant assimilation. Kheng (2017) followed with evidence from Mkuui Daai. He characterized these phenomena as nasal coda manner assimilation, nasal coda place assimilation, oral coda co-articulation, glide-strengthening, and open syllable closure rules. Both authors account for very similar phenomena where features of the presyllable spread regressively to the preceding morpheme, often restructuring the preceding syllable. Crucially, these accounts differ in their representation of the phonological word and tone-bearing unit. So-Hartmann (2009) viewed words with presyllables as iambic disyllables with the weak-strong pattern found frequently in Southeast Asian languages. Kheng argued that the Mkuui presyllable is an extrametrical appendix. With respect to tone, So-Hartmann analyzed the syllable as the tone-bearing unit; however, it seems she did not ascribe tone to presyllables. Kheng described the tone-bearing unit as the mora with syllables bearing up to two mora. The second mora consists of additional vowel length or a sonorant coda.

This study presents evidence from Daai Yindu, a previously undescribed variety. We recorded 700 wordlist items wherein the speaker pronounced three forms of each item: citation, the wordlist item in a frame, and then each morpheme in isolation. For example, noun compounds were pronounced in citation form, in a possessive phrase, followed by each constituent morpheme in isolation. For verbs, the speaker pronounced each verb inflected for non-future tense, the inflected verb in a carrier phrase, and the verb root and tense marker in isolation. With this data, we compare Daai Yindu morphophonological processes with those described for Yang Daai and Mkuui Daai. Furthermore, we use duration and pitch measures of 124 words to provide acoustic evidence for tone and vowel length alternations. This is a significant contribution since quantitative acoustic analysis was not a part of previous accounts of Daai morphophonology. In our account of Daai Yindu morphonological processes, we weigh the merits of each analysis of the tone-bearing unit and phonological word structure. Thus, we aim to provide a more comprehensive account of morphophonological processes involving presyllables in Daai varieties. In this way, we contribute to the growing understanding of the typology of sesquisyllables in Southeast Asia (Butler, 2014; Herr, 2011; Pittayaporn, 2015; Tan, 2022; West, 2015).

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Markers of Agents and Patients in Yi Language

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The relationship of giving and receiving in Yi language is mainly expressed by word order and semantic case markers. We compared different case markers used for distinguishing agent-patient roles in six Yi dialects, and divided them into two types accordingly: the agent-marker type and the patient-marker type. The distribution, frequency and function of the markers are different in the six dialects. There are similarities in their grammaticalization path, but the sources are different, which come from independent innovation after dialect differentiation.

The use of agent-patient markers in Yi dialects is constrained by semantic factors and information structure: agent-patient markers are used to avoid ambiguity and to meet the pragmatic needs. The priority of agent markers and patient markers are different in the six dialects, which can be divided into two types: 1) dialects (e.g. Nuosu Yi, Nasu Yi, Sani Yi and Gepo Yi) in which agent markers are prioritized; 2) dialects (e.g. Laluo Yi , Shansu Yi and Luoluo Yi) in which patient markers are prioritized.

In the dialects where agent markers are prioritized, agent markers are mainly used to distinguish agent-patient relationship. In these languages, there is no patient marker altogether, or the patient marker will only appear together with the agent marker to emphasize the semantic role of the patient. Whereas in the dialects where patient markers are prioritized, patient markers are mainly used to distinguish agent-patient relationship. In these languages, there is no agent marker altogether, or the agent marker will only appear together with the patient marker to emphasize the semantic role of the agent. For now, it is found that only in Gepo Yi, the southeastern dialect, agent markers are prioritized, but with patient markers being allowed to appear alone. However, its scope of application is very narrow, and it can only appear syntactically after the patient component that is not at the beginning of the sentence.

The sources of agent markers in dialects where agent markers are prioritized are as follows: ablative marker $\rightarrow$ agent marker (e.g. lɪ^{33}/li^{33} in Sani Yi language); verb $\rightarrow$ instrument marker/agent marker (e.g. si^{21} in Nuosu Yi, tiɛ^{33} in Gepo Yi). The sources of patient markers in dialects where patient markers are prioritized are as follows: locative marker $\rightarrow$ dative marker $\rightarrow$ patient marker (e.g. di^{33} in La Luo Yi). No grammaticalization path has been found in other dialects, and further investigation should be needed.

Through the development of the above-mentioned agent-patient markers, it can be seen that there are some similarities in their grammatical paths in different dialects, but their sources are different, which are not the common form in proto-Yi language, and thus should be the result of independent innovation.

Personal names and the kin numerative system in Maring

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A particular characteristic of traditional names in Maring (an unclassified Tibeto-Burman language; Manipur, Northeast India, (Chelliah, 2015:89; Kanshouwa, 2016) is the use of a so-called 'kin numerative' (KN) system (cf. (Benedict, 1945). These are lexemes that are used for indicating the name-bearer's position in birth order. In the Maring system, female and male birth orders are mostly tracked separately with different terms. Specifically, *momo, koko, meme* or *anga* (depending upon specific clan) and *lei/kham* are the male KN terms in descending order. Likewise, *tete, toto, atung/pepe, shangkhu*, and *lei/kham* are the female KN terms. This study documents variation in the 'kin numerative' system of Maring and contextualizes this both internally within Maring naming customs and the grammatical properties of proper names, as well as comparatively with the 'kin numerative' systems of other languages of the region.

The two lists above provide Maring KN terms in 'nickname form', i.e. these particular forms are used as such for address/reference although other variants are also commonly used. The underlying formatives of Maring KN terms are mostly monosyllabic and may occur in up to four different morphological shapes: i) bare (e.g. *lei* above); ii) reduplicated (e.g. *momo*); iii) with an *a-* prefix (e.g. atung); iv) with a *-wa* ∼ *-a* suffix (possibly *anga* above). Based on native speaker observations, discussions with community members, and explorations of a corpus, we will discuss the sociolinguistic and (socio-)pragmatic distribution of these different KN forms. Among the particular factors we are exploring are a) address vs. reference; b) the difference in age (and social standing) between the speaker and the person being referred to/addressed; c) (type of) kin relation; d) clan affiliation of the speaker. In addition, our aim is a preliminary investigation of the differences in morphosyntactic behavior, e.g. the use of the *-wa* ∼*-a* suffix in combination with a demonstrative.

In order to contextualize the KN system, we will discuss the larger naming system and procedure in Maring society. The KN formatives typically combine with words with desirable meaning in the derivation of full names. For instance, *dar* 'gong' signifying wealth and riches can be attached to any KN to derive a name meaning 'one who brings wealth and prosperity'. So, the names *Modar/Kodar/Medar* would mean 'the first/second/third son who brings wealth and prosperity'.

Similarly, *Tedar/Todar/Tungdar* are the names of first/second/third born daughter. Besides such terms with cultural and/or historical significance, other lexemes that recur in names denote personal traits or events – something also found in many Papuan languages (Aikhenvald, 2021).

Within Northeast India, KN systems with many (near-)identical formatives are found in other languages of Manipur, such as Moyon, Monsang (Wanglar, 2014), Anal (Devi, 2015), Lamkang (Thounaojam & Chelliah, 2007), and even among some of the southern and eastern Tangkhul languages (Kanshouwa, 2018). This distribution makes the KN system of particular interest, since it cross-cuts phylogenetic boundaries due to its occurrence in Maringic/Tangkhulic and South Central. We will compare the forms of the Maring KN terms with those documented for the other languages of the region, while keeping this phylogenetic divide in mind.

Keywords: Names, Naming practices, Kin numeratives, Maring, Manipur

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Place names in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

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The sociolinguistic study of place names allows us to explain the immediate and subsequent "changes in population and settlement dynamics" which is often yet to be discovered but has consequences in the politico-cultural life of the people who experience such changes.

From a synchronic standpoint, these studies would help us to comprehend "the everyday relations between human beings and their places and place names" (Cacciafoco & Cavallaro, 2023, p. xiii). As the study unfolds in the administrative region of *bandarban* (*bandar* 'monkey' + *ban* 'dam'), locally known as *rwa-do-mro* (*rwa* 'village' + *do* 'big, great, largest among others' + *mro* 'main town') 'the great town', particularly around the Sadar Upazila many villages and natural sites like streams and hills have a Bangla (official language of Bangladesh) in addition to a Marma (a dialect of Burmese) name.[1] The names in Bangla are often calque of the Marma names. While Marma names contain the stories behind a placename, they are entirely lost in Bangla. During discussions with Marma speakers as we travelled through the villages, they fondly remembered the stories behind the names. It was obvious from the stories why indigenous people inhabited certain places more densely while in other places the Bengalis. According to a native Bawm speaker, the Bawm (South-Central Tibeto-Burman) village named *laimi para* is a place where the Lai People live. Even though the Bawms are not Lais, they speak the languages belonging to the Core Central Tibeto-Burman branch. The name *laimi* is originally a compound of the words *lai* 'plainland paddy field' and *mi* 'person' (van Bik, 2009, p. 230, 250), indicating the Bawms of the plainlands. The Bangalee-dominated village *kowingchu wa*, called by the Marmas, is administratively known as *reisatholi para*. There is a police check post in *reisatholi para*. The word *reisa* probably comes from the Marma word *reisa* 'police' and the other member of this compound *tholi* 'a bag' is a Bangla word. The name *kowingchu* 'plainland' can also be a metonymic reference for a place where Bengali settlers live. In Sadar Upazila, the village name *doluchori para* (administrative) contains the Bangla word for a type of bamboo, *dolu* and stream, *chori* (< *chora*). The Marma name, *mrongkhyong* (*mrong* 'a type of bamboo' + *khyong* 'stream'), suggests that the Bangla name is a calque.

To date, the number of studies of place names in Tibeto-Burman languages has been very few, Sawada (2023) among them. This paper explores 'naming' as a complex phenomenon requiring a diachronic and sociolinguistic framework that can deal with history and geography in general and linguistic landscape in particular. Taking examples of place names in Bandarban, located in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, this paper aims at explaining how place names in Marma, Bawm and Mru (unclassified) are used as a reference in their daily conversation within the speech communities. On the one hand, for a speech community, places, as 'sites of contestation' are means of safeguarding their memory in opposition to others' attempts to delete the memory to install new historical claims. On the other, diachronically, "the morphology of a toponym can be configured as a 'toponymic stratigraphy' that can lead us far back in time to its proto-form and root" (Cacciafoco & Cavallaro, 2023, p. xiii). They might provide evidence to lexical diffusions due to language contact within and outside of the language groups.

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Vocatives in Kiranti languages

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This paper explores questions surrounding the form, function, and description of vocatives in languages of the Kiranti subgroup (Eastern Nepal). Vocatives, forms "used for calling out and attracting or maintaining the addressee's attention" (Daniel & Spencer 2009: 626) and by some accounts a sub-type of interactive (Heine 2023), are rarely fully described in Kiranti, or indeed in other Tibeto-Burman, grammars.
I will argue that there are several reasons for this:

a) vocatives have traditionally been considered part of the case system of languages, and yet the way they are formed in Kiranti does not comfortably fit this paradigm;

b) the type of corpus needed to document vocatives is primarily interactive, containing more spontaneous and dialogical communicative events (Himmelmann 1998) or reported versions thereof, with sufficiently rich language corpora being rare.

I will begin the presentation with data I have collected on the vocative system found in Thulung. The system is partly suffixal and partly interjective (of the conative subtype (Ameka 1992; Dingemanse 2023)), and encodes formality and spatial distance. It serves as a good illustration of the complexity of the data underlying the description of vocatives in the languages of the subgroup (and beyond).
The larger goal of the presentation is to encourage the description of interjections in general and research into the relationship between vocatives and interjections in particular.

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Topic markers in Jinman Bai

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The research of this paper based on the investigation on an endangered Bai variety, which is Jinman Bai. It is spoken by villagers in Jinman village (金满村), Luobenzhuo Bai Autonomous Township (洛本卓白族乡), Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture (怒江傈僳族自治州), Yunnan Province, China. Jinman Bai belongs to the northern Bai dialect according to Xu & Zhao(1984), or the western Bai according to Wang (2006, 2013). The study of Jinman Bai remains limited due to geographical inaccessibility and challenging environmental conditions. Existing research has widely documented the rich inventory of topic markers in Bai, and Jinman Bai is no exception to this pattern. It is found that topic expressions in this variety can be followed by various markers, such as bɑ21, zɯ55, nɔ33 and e33. To examine this phenomenon, our study first compiled all topic-comment constructions from extended natural discourse, quantifying the proportions of unmarked topics versus those marked by the aforementioned particles. Based on the grammatical features of Jinman Bai, we then analyze the nature of these markers, demonstrating that not all co-occurring elements with topic expressions function as genuine topic markers. Furthermore, by examining the formal characteristics of topicalized NPs, we trace the historical origins of specific markers: bɑ21 derives from a classifier, while nɔ33 originates from an accusative marker. Finally, the paper discusses the identifiability and activation status of all topic expressions, offering preliminary insights into the governing principles behind the optionality of topic markers in Jinman Bai.

Keywords: The Bai language; topic markers; identifiability; activation

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Mozi Demonstratives

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Mozi, also known as Southern Tujia, is a subvariety of Tujia spoken in Central South China. It is underdocumented and under-studied compared to its northern counterpart, Bizi (Northern Tujia), largely due to its severely limited speaker population, which was recorded at around 500 during my fieldwork in the summer of 2024. As with Bizi in the Tujia language group, Mozi demonstratives have received little scholarly attention. Li (2000) and Xiang (2017) briefly discuss Mozi demonstratives, whereas Tian et al. (1986), Chen (2006), Zhang (2006), and Xu (2010) only list basic demonstratives in appended wordlists.

This paper aims to systematically analyze Mozi demonstratives by drawing on a historical archive (Xu, 2010) and my recent fieldwork data. The study focuses on their morphological forms, syntactic functions, and semantic roles. Like many Sino-Tibetan languages, Mozi distinguishes between a proximal form, *dʑia*^{55}, and a distal form, *ta*^{55}. Both can take additional forms via affixation. For example, by appending the plural markers *wo*^{21} and *tɕie*^{21}, one obtains contrasts such as *dʑia*^{55} 'this' vs. *dʑia*^{55}*wo*^{21}/*tɕie*^{21} 'these', and *ta*^{55} 'that' vs. *ta*^{55}*wo*^{21}/*tɕie*^{21} 'those'.

Contrary to previous accounts (Li 2000; Chen 2006; Zhang 2006) that report only these two demonstratives, new evidence suggests two additional stems with demonstrative functions: *ka*^{21} and *tɕie*^{21}. The form *ka*^{21} acts as a neutral demonstrative, whose exact meaning depends on the context and on whether it follows the proximal *dʑia*^{55} or the distal *ta*^{55}. Notably, *ka*^{21} never appears alone; it is always followed by *tɕie*^{21}, forming *ka*^{21}*tɕie*^{21}. This combined form can modify an NP, as in [*ta*^{55}/*dʑia*^{55} + *ka*^{21}*tɕie*^{21}], or stand alone, functioning adjectivally or adverbially. In some cases, *ka*^{21} remains entirely neutral; in others, it may reinforce or contrast the deictic meaning of the demonstrative it follows. Specifically, *ka*^{21} appears to exclude first-person or second-person referents in speech and include only third-person referents, which may stem from the grammaticalization of the third-person pronoun *ka*^{21} (referring to both animate and inanimate entities). Meanwhile, *tɕie*^{21} alone occurs in enumerations of multiple items (e.g., NP + *ka*^{21}*tɕie*^{21} + NP + *tɕie*^{21}), where from the second NP onward only *tɕie*^{21} is used. Thus, *tɕie*^{21} independently assumes the demonstrative function otherwise carried by ka^{21}.

Overall, Mozi demonstratives function pronominally, adnominally, and adverbially, referring to time, place, and manner, and they may combine with various suffixes. In addition to *dʑia*^{55} and *ta*^{55}, and the two extra forms *ka*^{21} and *tɕie*^{21}, Xiang (2017) notes that *dʑia*^{55} can be replaced by *tɕi*^{35} and *ta*^{55} by *di*^{35} in contexts of close space, although no detailed examples are provided. These points will be explored further in this paper.

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De-toning Tibetan Dialects: A Computational Perspective on Tibetan Tonogenesis

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Tone languages like various Tibetan languages use pitch to distinguish word meanings, but the contribution of tone to overall intelligibility can vary by dialect. This study investigates the phonetic and computational aspects of de-toning Tibetan languages, i.e. removing tonal cues, to test how well words can be understood without tone. We first review the tone systems of several Tibetan languages: Lhasa (Central), Yushu (Khams), Dege (Khams), Chamdo (Khams), and Amdo (Amdo). Lhasa and Khams dialects have developed binary high/low tone registers, realized not only by f_0 differences but also by co-occurring phonetic features such as voice onset time (VOT) and phonation type (Sun 2003). For example, Lhasa high-tone syllables often have longer VOT in aspirated stops, whereas low-tone syllables show pre-voicing in unaspirated stops (Watters 2002). Amdo Tibetan, in contrast, is non-tonal, retaining the consonant distinctions (e.g. voicing, clusters) from Classical Tibetan that in other dialects gave rise to tones (ibid). Notably, many cues to tone in Lhasa and Khams varieties (such as slightly breathy vs. modal voice, or intensity differences) remain as redundant phonetic information. This suggests that if pitch contrasts are neutralized, listeners may still distinguish words using these residual cues (Chen 2014).

We then explore computational methods to remove tonal cues while preserving segmental content. Using Praat's Pitch-Synchronous OverLap and Add (PSOLA) algorithm, we flatten the f_0 contour of recorded utterances, creating monotone "de-toned" speech while preserving the spectral envelope. We next fine-tune an XLS-R 300m model on both original and de-toned data, measuring word error rate (WER) and character error rate (CER) to assess intelligibility. Grapheme-to-phoneme conversions are applied where appropriate to encode tone markers in transcripts. By comparing ASR performance across original versus pitch-flattened audio, we quantify how crucial pitch is for each dialect's lexical contrasts. We find that de-toning Tibetan dialects significantly affects intelligibility in tone-bearing Lhasa and Khams dialects but less so in non-tonal Amdo. Our pitch-flattening approach preserves segmental cues, yet ASR results with the fine-tuned model show a notably higher CER rise for Lhasa and Khams, reflecting their reliance on pitch-based distinctions. By contrast, Amdo sees only a modest CER increase, consistent with its lack of pitch-based contrasts. Overall, these results highlight the critical role of pitch in later-stage tonogenesis and the resilience of consonantal contrasts in Amdo, consistent with the historical retention of pre-tonal phonological features (Mazaudon 1977; Hildebrandt 2007). The findings also bear on related work on low-resource speech technology applications, where phonological information such as tone could be modeled to improve system performance (Coto-Solano 2021; Yan et al. 2018).

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Checked Tone Neutralization in Taiwanese Southern Min

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This study investigates the neutralization of checked tones in Taiwanese Southern Min (TSM) under the framework of Comparative Markedness (McCarthy, 2003), which separates markedness violations into 'old' (shared with the fully faithful candidate) and 'new' (not shared with the FFC). Research has found that, in the non sandhi position, the high checked tone ($H^{[Lr, h]}$), T8, increasingly converges with the low checked tone ($M^{[Lr, h]}$), T4. Data collected through fieldwork with elderly speakers (age 60+) in Central Taiwan show that while 15.87% maintain a distinction between T4 and T8, a noticeable proportion (84.13%) exhibit a complete neutralization, producing both tones as low checked tone ($M^{[Lr, h]}$).

(1) T8→T8	[go33]	**[tsap5]**	T4→T4	[hue33]	**[tap3]**
	five	**ten**		return	**answer**
Surface	$M^{[Lr, h]}$	**$H^{[Hr, h]}$**	Surface	$M^{[Lr, h]}$	**$M^{[Lr, h]}$**
(2) T8→T4	[go33]	**[tsap5]**	T4→T4	[hue33]	**[tap3]**
	five	**ten**		return	**answer**
Surface	$M^{[Lr, h]}$	**$M^{[Lr, h]}$**	Surface	$M^{[Lr, h]}$	**$M^{[Lr, h]}$**

The data indicates that the neutralization is in progress, and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of constraint ranking in phonological variation.
The main constraints proposed in the study to account for the checked tone neutralization are shown below. $*_{O}$CHECKED-HIREG and $_{O}$CHECKED-LOREG, which respectively block underived high and low registers in close syllables, are ranked higher than $*_{N}$CHECKED-HIREG and $*_{N}$CHECKED-LOREG, which respectively forbid newly derived high and low registers in closed syllables. ID-REG-R prohibits any change of register feature on the right edge of a tonal domain. The interaction between these constraints accounts for the checked tone neutralization, where both T8 and T4 surface as a low checked tone.

(3) Input: $H^{[Hr, h]}$ Output: $M^{[Hr, h]}$

	$*_{O}$CHECKED -HIREG	ID-REG-R	$*_{O}$CHECKED -LOREG	$*_{N}$CHECKED -HIREG	$*_{N}$CHECKED -LOREG
a. $H^{[Hr, h]}$	*!				
☞ b. $M^{[Lr, h]}$		*			

(4) Input: $H^{[Lr, h]}$ Output: $M^{[Lr, h]}$

	$*_{O}$CHECKED -HIREG	ID-REG-R	$*_{O}$CHECKED -LOREG	$*_{N}$CHECKED -HIREG	$*_{N}$CHECKED -LOREG
a. $H^{[Hr, h]}$		*!			*
☞ b. $M^{[Lr, h]}$			*		

The proposed ranking — $*_{O}$CHECKED-HIREG ≫ ID-REG-R ≫ $*_{O}$CHECKED-LOREG ≫ $*_{N}$CHECKED-HIREG, $*_{N}$CHECKED-LOREG — blocks underived high register tones in close syllables, forcing them to surface as low tone. At the same time, underlying low tones are faithfully preserved in their surface form. Consequently, both T4 and T8 surface as $M^{[Lr,\ h]}$, consistent with the neutralization observed in the fieldwork data.

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Relativization in Rgyalrong Elicited and Spontaneous Data

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This study examines relative clauses (RCs) in the Cogtse dialect of Situ Rgyalrong (henceforth Cogtse), a Sino-Tibetan language, using both elicited data and spontaneous narratives. RCs in Cogtse are classified into partially finite and non-finite types, both involving nominalization. Partially finite RCs exhibit aspectual reduction, while non-finite RCs show noun-like features, such as possessive prefixing and the loss of aspect marking.
The analysis shows there are three types of RCs in Cogtse: external, internal, and free, which can alll be found in both elicited and spontaneous data. Spontaneous data, however, highlight discourse-driven preferences, such as the dominance of internal RCs in relativizing S for introducing new referents, as well as the use of external RCs for obliques. The morphosyntax behaviors of non-finite RCs, common in narratives, suggest an evolutionary shift toward deverbal nominal structures.
By integrating elicited and naturalistic data, this study underscores the dynamic interplay between grammar and discourse. It offers insights into the structural diversity and functional evolution of RCs in Cogtse and broader Sino-Tibetan typology.

Internal Variation in Minimal Tonal Systems: A Case Study of Wuwei Mandarin in Gansu

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The tonal systems of Northwestern Mandarin exhibit significant variability, with recent surveys revealing a widespread distribution of three-tone and two-tone dialects. The two-tone system — exemplified by the well-documented Wuwei dialect in Gansu — represents the minimal tonal configuration found among Chinese dialects. According to previous studies, the level tone (*píng* 平声) and rising tone (*shǎng* 上声) in Wuwei Mandarin have merged into a single rising or contour tone, while the departing tone (*qù* 去声) is realized as a falling tone.

This study adopts a sociophonetic perspective to examine internal variation within the Wuwei two-tone system. The analysis is based on monosyllabic tone production experiments conducted with 22 native speakers across three age groups (elderly, middle-aged, and younger; 11 males). Using weighted Dynamic Time Warping (DTW) to calculate distances between pitch contours and the Partitioning Around Medoids (PAM) clustering algorithm, the optimal tonal pattern for each speaker was identified.

Results indicate that Wuwei Mandarin maintains a stable two-tone system, consisting of a merged level-rising tone (平上声) and a departing tone. However, differences in pitch patterns and tonal merging rules are observed across gender and age groups. Among male speakers, the elderly group predominantly produces a robust rising tone for the level-rising category, while middle-aged and younger speakers exhibit flatter slopes and contour-like features. Their pitch contours include "falling–rising–falling" and "rising–falling" patterns. In contrast, among female speakers, the level-rising tone typically appears as a very flat rising tone or approximates a mid-level tone. The departing tone remains consistently realized as falling across all age groups.

Within the framework of Middle Chinese tonal categories, the assignment of entering tones (*rù* 入声) varies by age. In the elderly group and some middle-aged speakers, both clear (*qīng* 清) and clear-murky (*cìzhuó* 次浊) entering tones merge with the departing tone. In younger and some middle-aged speakers, however, these tones merge with the level-rising tone, leading to a reduction in departing tone instances.

In sociolinguistic studies, women are often regarded as leaders of linguistic change. Based on this observation, we propose that the Wuwei two-tone system is undergoing synchronic variation along the trajectory: rising–falling > contour–falling > level–falling tones. This trajectory aligns with the natural "leveling" principle frequently observed in tonal simplification. Wuwei Mandarin not only exhibits an extremely minimal tonal inventory but also shows further simplification in pitch pattern realization.

Since Gansu Honggu Mandarin was first reported as a two-tone dialect in 1999, the tonal systems of Northwestern Mandarin have garnered increasing scholarly attention. While two-tone dialects have gradually gained acceptance as a distinct tonal type in Chinese, their complex internal variation clearly calls for more detailed micro-level investigations. Such studies must incorporate statistical approaches, as only large-scale, multi-speaker surveys can reveal the underlying phonological patterns governing these systems.

Keywords: two-tone Chinese dialects, sociophonetics, synchronic variation, pitch clustering

A Comparative Analysis of Categorical and Gradient Grammar Models of Mandarin Phonotactics

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I carried out a nonword acceptability judgement experiment using Mandarin data to compare 3 different models of grammars (a-c) with 2 approaches to defining constraints (manual & data-driven) to find the one which can best reflect speakers' phonotactic intuitions. Thus 6 grammars (3 models * 2 approaches) are discussed in this study:
(a) categorical grammars: forms are assessed on whether they have a constraint violation or not; (b) cumulative categorical grammar: forms are assessed based on the number of violated constraints; (c) gradient grammar: forms are assessed based on the weight of violated constraints as determined by Hayes & Wilson's Maxent Grammar Tool (2008) and on penalty scores generated by a Phonotactic Learner (Hayes & Wilson 2008).
My research questions are:

(i) Is a gradient grammar more or less predictive of speakers' grammaticality judgements than a categorical grammar?

(ii) Is a gradient grammar derived from the Phonotactic Learner ("data driven") more or less predictive of speakers' grammaticality judgements than one derived manually ("phonologically driven")? Gong & Zhang (2019) carried out a Mandarin nonword judgment experiment and found that systematic gaps received lower acceptability ratings than accidental gaps, allophonic gaps and tonal gaps (see also Myers & Tsay 2005; Myers 2002). The present experiment builds on Gong & Zhang (2019) and further divides the systematic gaps based on the number of constraints each token violates, the weight of those violations as determined by Hayes & Wilson's Maxent Grammar Tool (2008), and the penalty score generated by the Phonotactic Learner.

Methods: ***Participants:*** 50 Mandarin native speakers participated in this experiment online via Qualtrics. ***Stimuli:*** The stimuli include 1255 (C)(G)V(X) syllables in Mandarin, among which 400 are attested (Tsai 2000). ***Procedures:*** Each participant was presented with 81 randomized audio tokens with 0-5 constraint violations. After listening to each recorded token, the participants rated the acceptability of each syllable on a scale of 1 (完全不可能 "No, impossible) to 7 (完全可能 "Yes, definitely possible).

Data Analysis: Five factors for acceptability ratings (z scores) are included in the analyses: (1) syllable type: attested, accidental gap, systematic gap; (2) number of constraint violations based on phonological generalizations ("no"); (3) weight of violated constraints based on phonological generalizations ("weight"); (4) number of constraint violations generated in the Phonotactic Learner ("plno"); (5) penalty score generated by the Phonotactic Learner ("penalty"). **(1) Syllable type:** ANOVA analyses suggest that the syllable type significantly influence syllables' acceptability ratings ($p < 0.001$), except attested syllable with 0 violations and attested syllables with one violation ($p = 0.0263 > 0.01$). Accidental gaps with 0 violations tend to receive higher acceptability than systematic gaps ($p < 0.001$), but much lower than attested words with 0 or 1 violation. This shows that Mandarin speakers are more sensitive to syllable types than constraint violations. **(2) Number of violations of constraints based on phonological generalizations:** ANOVA analyses suggest that the acceptability ratings of syllables with 0, 1, 2 violations are significantly different from any other syllables (all $p < 0.001$).

In comparison, the ratings of syllables with 3, 4, 5 violations are not significantly different from each other (all $p > 0.01$). **(3) Weight of violated constraints that were manually determined:** The acceptability ratings of syllables whose constraint violation weight is less than 10 are significantly different from any other groups of syllables (all $p < 0.001$). The ratings of syllables with a constraint violation weight of 10-15 are slightly different from syllables with a weight of 15-25 ($0.01 < p < 0.06$). For syllables with a violation weight over 15, their ratings are not significantly distinguishable from each other ($p > 0.1$). Mandarin speakers are less sensitive to the differences among syllables with higher constraint violation weight (weight > 15). **(4) Number of violations of constraints generated by the Phonotactic Learner:** Ratings of syllables with fewer than 10 violations are significantly different from any other groups of syllables (all $p <$ 2e-16). Furthermore, the ratings of syllables with 11-20 violations are slightly different from any other groups (all $p < 0.05$). Syllables with 21+ violations are only slightly different ($p < 0.05$) or are indistinguishable from each other ($p > 0.1$). In other words, native speakers are not sensitive to the differences among syllables with more violations of constraints generated by the Phonotactic Learner (plno > 20). **(5) Penalty score determined by the Phonotactic Learner:** ANOVA analyses suggest that the acceptability ratings of syllables with a penalty score lower than 10 are significantly different from any other groups of syllables (all $p <$ 2e-16). Likewise, the acceptability ratings of syllables with a penalty score lower than 20 are significantly different from any other groups (all $p < 0.001$). In comparison, the ratings of syllables with a penalty score higher than 20 are not significantly different from each other (all $p > 0.1$).

Summary: Compared to other factors, the effect of syllable types (1) (attested, accidental gap, systematic gap) on acceptability ratings stands out ($p < 0.001$). Both machine-driven and generalizations-based categorical grammar can predict the significant difference between the speakers' judgments on grammatical and ungrammatical syllables ($p < 0.001$). Yet neither of them can explain the gradient decreasing tendency among the ratings of the "more grammatical" syllables (threshold: no$<$3, weight$<$15, plno$<$20, penalty$<$20), as the number of violations, violation weight, and penalty increase. In contrast, both the cumulative categorical grammars ((2) "no" and (4) "plno") and the gradient grammars ((3) "weight" and (5) "penalty") predict the negative correlation between the ratings and the factors for all syllables. The predictions from both the manually-constructed grammars ((2) and (3)) and machine-driven grammars ((4) and (5)) are only partially accurate, because the ratings of the highly ungrammatical nonwords (no$>$3, weight$>$15, plno$>$20, penalty$>$20) are indistinguishable from each other. In summary, cumulative categorical grammars and gradient grammars are better at predicting "more grammatical" syllables, but categorical grammars can account for highly ungrammatical nonwords.

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Northwestern Himalayan Dialects of the Sino-Tibetan Language Family

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There are 7000 different languages spoken around the world. The 3000 languages have a writing system. Around 150 to 250 languages use a script and only 12 Languages have their script.
All the 7000 languages can be included in 12 major languages family. The Tibetan language family is one of the world's language families. It's also called a Tibeto-Burmese Language. In the 7th and 8th centuries, the Tibetan Empire spread the culture and language of its neighboring countries and places. Due to that reason the Himalayan region, Baltistan, and some parts of China still speak Dialects that are part of the Tibetan Burmese Language Family. Tibetic use for the old Tibetan Language which language gepgraphy is larger to present Tibetan Geography. Many dialects emerged from the old Tibetic Language family that is spoken and used around the Himalayan region called Dialect of Continua.
According to Nicolas Tournade and Suzuki, there are eight geographical sections of the Tibetic Dialects of the Tibetic Language family such as South-eastern section, Eastern, North Eastern, Central, Southern, South Western, Western, and North Western.
The North Western Dialects are spoken around the Ladakh region and it divided into 7 seven different dialects according to different geography and culture, the seven different dialects are Nubra Skad, Changthang Skad, Leh Skad, Sham Skad, Zangskar Skad, Balti Skad, and Purik Skad.
The Balti Skad is authentic and the phonetic system is the same as the standard Tibetan Literary language rest of the Tibetan Dialects are not as closely pronounced as Tibetan Literary classical.
The Nubra Skad and Changthang Skad have some sort of similar use or terminology and the short way such as combining two words and pronouncing in one word. The Tibetan plateau Changthang region speaks a nomadic dialect which is similar to some parts of western Tibet.
The Leh city area and Sham Skad share similarities of pronunciation and words.
The Zangskar dialects don't pronounce the sub Script (Sa Mgo Ra Mgo) etc. all the dialects speak around Ladakh but these dialects have different pronunciations, usage of words style peaking, etc.
The current situation of these northwestern dialects is considered as endangered dialect or language. The villages and remote areas of Ladakh still preserve and use the traditional language and culture the area like the Leh city's local language is near extinction, influenced by outsiders' people's language of Hindi and English. Currently, in Leh City, all the younger and older generations use English words for counting numbers and money, and the local counting in Ladakh and Tibet become extinct and nearly totally lost.

Keywords: Tibetic language, Tibetan's Archaic words, Nubra dialect, Changthang dialect, Leh dialect, Sham dialect, Zangskar dialect, Balti dialect and Purik dialect

Gender Markers in Po-ai: A Typological Perspective

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This paper investigates gender marking in Po-ai, a Northern Tai language within the Kam-Tai group of the Tai-Kadai family of languages. Po-ai does not have the gender-marking of the type found in many Indo-European languages. Expressions of gender in Po-ai are done through a set of gender markers. These are categorized into human and animal markers, where significant differences can be detected in their usage. For humans, gender markers differentiate not only gender but also age and marital status. For animals, gender markers distinguish between livestock and poultry, with some markers cutting across the boundaries between these categories and others specific to only one. In addition, the distinctions extend to whether the animals have reproduced, further elaborating on the semantic meanings of these markers.

This study analyses the functional status of these gender markers. It has demonstrated that about half of these gender markers can function as free morphemes, while others behave like bound morphemes, combining with the head nouns to form word compounds marking gender. Several gender markers are found to exhibit multifaceted function load: as gender markers and classifiers. This study situates gender marking in cross-linguistic contexts, drawing insights from related isolating languages as well as inflectional, agglutinative languages. The paper highlights Po-ai's typological divergence, demonstrating how it contributes to the broader typological discussion of gender expression in analytic languages.

A Glimpse on the Numeral Systems of the Himalayan Languages

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This paper is an attempt to give an insight of the morphosyntactic and typological structure of numeral systems of few Himalayan Languages belonging to Tibeto-Burman language family, and two Language Isolates. Delving into the intricacies of the numeral system, preserving and documenting it for the future generations. These numeral systems are getting lost in translation as time passes often with entire linguistic tribes getting extinct. Mentioned below are the select languages:

> Tibeto-Burman (TB): Angami, Mao, Ao, Sema, Ladakhi, Bodo, Tinkar lo, Meiteilon, Tangkhul, Spiti, Dzongkha.
>
> Language Isolate (LI): Nahali and Burushaski.

The numeral system is an integral part of a language and should be described like all other parts of lexicon from the point of view of its syntactic construction and its internal morphology. Therefore, for this study, I followed the "Questionnaire and Interview method" to see the various aspects (cardinals, ordinals, fractions, distributives, word order, number marking, and other quantifying expressions) of numerals. A schedule questionnaire I mainly used was developed upon a questionnaire developed by Sjef Barbier's (2014, Utrecht) with several extensions and modifications. Data for all the TB languages were collected by fieldwork. For LI and Dzongkha secondary sources have been used.
The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the different patterns followed by the numeral systems from different language groups present in Himalayan ranges as well as the different structure found intra language family. And, in doing so it finds if there is a relation between languages belonging to a single language group and more broadly whether there is a relation between different language families when it comes to numeral systems in languages. It also looks for the extent of similarities among these languages. This research explores additional traits, such as "overcounting" (expresses a value as part of a group with an upper limit in Tibeto-Burman), which is already lost in many languages, including Ao, Dzongkha, and Sema, and talks about 'non-decimal base system' for example, Meiteilon (vigesimal base system).
The another perspective of this paper is to investigate the scenario of borrowing of numerals. A high range of variation has been attested in numeral systems across languages. It occurs due to many reasons; culture presents a majority of it. Lexical variations and the base system of numerals is characteristic of its culture and biodiversity. The need for borrowing influences the indigenous numeral system to a larger extent. And due to such influences, the processes involved in the formation of complex numerals and higher numerals undergo different variations. It tries to look for the role of a dominant language that plays in particular linguistic area in defining the numeral system. Diversity of mathematical conception is severely under threat, particularly because they are encouraged by education systems, language contact and dominance, as well as standardisation to consider rare and traditional systems as a deterrent to their socio–economic development.

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A Malay Loanword in Old Manipuri

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Full abstract available from the author on request.

Bodo-Boro Causatives vis-a-vis Bodo-Garo Counterparts: A Comparative Study

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Causative is one of the valency changing operations found in languages. Numerous linguists have provided different definitions on causative constructions. According to Agnihotri (2007), causative verbs indicate a situation in which certain actor makes somebody else do something or causes him to be in a certain state. Baker (1988) defines causative as one of the grammatical function changing rules employed by different languages to express different meanings. Greaves (1988) says that a causative verb is one that tells causing another to do something, instead of doing it itself. In the words of Hasan (2010, 118), a causative construction is a grammatical device that encodes causation.
This paper is a humble attempt to provide a descriptive study of Boro and Garo causative constructions and the degree of variations in them. Both Boro (B) and Garo (G) belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. According to Burling (2008:174-175), the languages in this family are divided into 14 (fourteen) subgroups. Both B and G fall under the Bodo-Koch branch of Bodo-Konyak-Jingpaw subgroup identified as the major subgroup of Tibeto-Burman language family. The relationship among various languages belonging to Bodo-Koch subgroup is represented in figure 1 below:

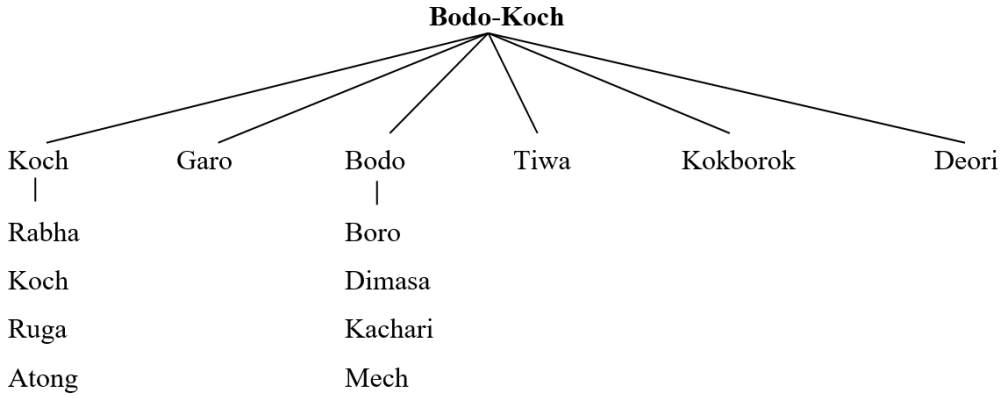

Figure 1: Bodo-Koch group of languages (Burling 2008)

From the given figure (Fig1), we observe that Garo and Boro branch out into separate subgroup under Bodo-Koch group of languages. This entails that both Boro and Garo have respective language specific features apart from sharing common Tibeto-Burman typological characteristics. For instance, Boro and Dimasa have double causative constructions which are not found in Garo. Extensive study on Boro causative constructions is not done so far by any linguist and none so on the comparative studies of causatives of the two languages in question.
When a causative morphology is applied to an underlying B intransitive, mono-transitive and ditransitive verbs, we get the following results as in 1, 2, 3 respectively:

1. A new argument, the causer in A (transitive subject) function is introduced with no overt case marking while the original S (intransitive subject) goes to DO (theme argument) function which takes accusative case *-khuo*.

2. Causes the original A (transitive subject) to receive IO (Indirect Object) marking and the original DO retains its functions while a new argument (a causer) is introduced in A function.

3. Causes all the arguments, that is, the original A, the original dative (recipient argument) and the original DO (theme argument) retain their respective functions while an obligatory argument (an intermediary) which may be a noun phrase (NP) or a Post Position (PP) is introduced indicating an indirect causation.

This paper includes study of whether or not the application of causative morphology to Garo intransitive, mono-transitive and di-transitive verbs yield the same syntactic and semantic results as are found in Boro. Primarily, this paper focuses on two issues: (i) to study various syntactic possibilities in B and G intransitive, mono-transitive and di-transitive causative verbs resulting in differences in semantic readings, and (ii) to analyse valency in B and G causative constructions.

B exhibits morphological and lexical causatives. B has two morphological mechanisms, viz., (i) prefixes *ph-, b-, s-* and (ii) suffix *-hu*; these are found to be productive causatives. The former, i.e., the causative prefixes are applicable only to a few intransitive verbs, e.g., *pheder* 'to make big/grow', *bekheu* 'untie', *sigi* 'frighten'. The causative prefixes copy the vowel of the root verbs to which they affix forming a syllable and thereby forming disyllabic causative verbs, e.g., *ph-* + *der* 'to become big' = *pheder* 'cause to become big'. The B causative suffix *-hu*, unlike its causative prefixes applies to all the types of verbs, namely, intransitive, mono-transitives and di-transitives [Examples, gi 'to fear'+ *-hu* = *gihu* 'frighten', der (become big) +*-hu* = *derhu* 'to make big/grow', *hu* (give) + *-hu* = *huhu* (cause to give through somebody)]. B intransitive verbs that are compatible with causative prefixes can also take the causative suffix *-hu* forming double causative constructions, e.g., *phɔ*-zɔ-*hu* 'cause to sit by somebody'.

Talking of B lexical causatives, we can say that these causatives are morphologically irregular and unproductive and found to express direct manipulative causation; they are limited in number, for instance, *sao* 'burn' is the causative correspondent of *kham* 'to burn'.

In B, causative is a derivation that changes the valency of a given verb. Causative verb increases the valency by one.

Keywords: Boro, Garo, Causative Construction, Valency

Subject form and referent introduction in Burmese: multimodality, interaction, restructuring

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Burmese is a typical East Asian Tibeto-Burman language, with an optional argument expression, no verbal person-indexation, and differential argument marking driven by elusive factors. This pilot study explores the expression of subject and its differential case marking in a 20-minute sample of a corpus of spontaneous Burmese conversation.
Zero-subjects are the most common strategy (44%) found in the sample. It is commonly associated with 1SG in sequence-starting assertions and 2SG in sequence-starting questions. It could be expected that otherwise a zero would refer to the most accessible continuing referent, yet this is not the case. Around 25% of zero-expressed subjects are cases of referent shifts, mostly shifting between the speaker and another active referent, or between two different 3rd person referents. Studies of written language suggested that the reference resolution is derived purely from semantic-pragmatic considerations: who is the likeliest referent to perform this action (Ozerov 2015). However, spoken language relies on additional strategies for this purpose, the most notable of which is material recycling, illustrated in (1): the first two clauses with zero-subjects ('said'; 'has heart disease') recycle previous material. For example, the second clause with the precise wording of "have heart disease" unmistakably echoes a previous utterance and thus links it to the relevant accessible referent. The last clause 'startled' shows no explicit cues for self-reference, although the speaker is not the most salient referent at this point. However, contextually he is the most likely referent of the expressed event. Such zero-arguments also demonstrate that precise reference can be unnecessary as interlocutors orient themselves at a "good enough" (Ferreira and Patson 2007) interpretation, with a primary split between "ingroup vs. outgroup" readings. For instance, it remains vague in (1) whether it is only the speaker who startled or also his colleagues. In (2), it remains vague whether the discussion with the "others" involved a single neighbour or the whole family, whether the measuring procedure by the "ingroup" was carried out by the speaker (professional builder) alone, or how much the contractor was involved in it. Such underspecification is found in around a half of the cases.
Introduction of new or inferable referents is expectedly carried out by full NPs and is found in around a quarter of the examined cases. However, spontaneous speech demonstrates that the NP has numerous additional prosodic and multimodal characteristics making referent activation into a separate, negotiated discourse move. Such NPs are commonly marked by a range of "pragmatic" particles: differential case marking and a few other utterance-structuring markers. The usage of differential case markers and other particles strongly coincides with prosodic partition, as 90% of the cases form a separate Intonation Unit. Moreover, there are multimodal cues accompanying the referent introduction process, such as pointing, head shake, gaze-shift, co-gesture or shifting body posture. The combination of these markers is shown in (3). This has the differential subject marker and an additional discourse marker in both lengthy NPs; the speaker pauses after each NP; and throughout the production of the two NPs he shifts gaze and uses head pointing, returning to the base posture and aligning gaze with the recipient again immediately afterwards. However, new referents can also be introduced with no such markers or cues, if they are transient, as 'time' in (4). This suggests that case-marking and multimodal cues coincide with discourse moves since they are associated with an interactional process of joint attention alignment (O'Madagain and Tomasello 2021), rather than the

referent's pragmatic status or a syntactic form.
Hence, the study situates subject expression and differential case marking in the interactional multimodal perspective, demonstrating how the syntactic form and marking are interrelated with multimodal and prosodic cues linked in turn to attention distribution.

Examples

(1) One minute earlier the speaker – a leader of a construction team – said that the neighbours of their current construction site had talked to them and requested to keep the construction process quiet because of the heart disease of the neighbour's grandmother. This evolved into a discussion initiated by another interlocutor about how this request is impossible. The original speaker resumes the abandoned topic with the following utterance.

ʔɛ̀da-Ko	pjɔ̀-Ta=Pɔ̰ .	n̥əlò̰u-jɔ̀ga	ɕḭ-Tɛ=sʰo	houʔ-kɛ̰	lã̰-θwà-Tɛ=Pɔ
this-OBJ	say-R.NMLZ=OBV	heart-disease	be-R=say	right	startled-COS-R=OBV

'**[They]** said that, sure. Since **[this grandma]** has a heart disease, right, **[I/we]** obviously got startled.'

(2) The speaker (same as in (1)) tells how a neighbour from a different house came to complain that their house gets lower because of the construction work. He and the contractor of the constructed house went over to check the issue and discuss it.

ʔɛ̰lo-mjò	pjɔ̀=Tɔ̰	ʔəkʰṵ=Tɔ̰	pe-tɕò-nɛ̰	ba-nɛ̰	θetɕʰa-tà̰i-Kʰɛ̰-pì=Tɔ̰
like.that-kind	say=SEQ	now=SEQ	foot-rope-with	what-with	sure-measure-DIST-after=SEQ

'After **[he/they]** said so, now, **[I/we]** measured **[the house/the house height/etc.]** with a rope.'

(3) The speaker describes the kind of odd jobs he works in. Usually, he says, his friend finds a job and invites him over to work together. He continues:

lɛʔ.ɕḭ	ʔəpjĩ.ʔəlouʔ-te-Ka̰-tɕa̰.Tɔ̰,…	tɕənɔ	ko.Tãi	louʔ-ta=tɕa̰.Tɔ̰, …
current	job-PL-SBJ-DM	1SG	self	work-R.NMLZ=DM

palata=Pɔ̰
paratha=OBV
'The current job, a job I work myself in, is [preparing] parathas.'

(4) ʔɛ̀da-nɛ̰=Pɛ̀ **ʔətɕʰẽi** kõu-ne-Ta=Pɔ̰
this-with=ATTN **time** be.over-CONT-R.NMLZ=OBV
'That way, the time has been passing by.'

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Hear say: Quotation in Kera'a

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Languages in the Himalayas are well-known for the plurifunctionality associated with the encoding acts of speech. The multifunctionality of the verb 'say' is recognised as a property of the wider South Asian sprachbund (Saxena 1988), reported evidentiality systems are commonly found in Himalayan languages (Gawne 2021), and researchers have highlighted the prevalence of quoted speech in narratives which occur without attribution of a quotation to a speaker or even an explicit verb of saying (e.g. Gawne and Hildebrandt 2020). In this talk, we will sketch out what strategies are used to encode quotation in Kera'a, from quotative constructions proper to embodied performance of direct speech.

Kera'a is a Trans-Himalayan (Kera'a-Tawrã) language spoken by pproximately 10,000 people in Arunachal Pradesh, India. Quotation in Kera'a can either be explicitly encoded throughthe use of a quotative construction involving an embedded clause (1) or the performance of direct speech (2). These two strategies have led to the further development of additional constructions, such as the state of affairs construction and the non-finite quotative construction, both found in (3).

Here is a language example:

(1) *paku kaʤi uʤi | ejaja | layedo . //*

paku kaji u-ji e-ya-ya la-ge-do
field how dig-IPFV do-PFV-Q say-SEQ-WHEN
'when (they) said, how did you dig the field…'

(2) *ilime ejagum , |||| ume |||| ejada . // |||| aji lao . //*

ili=me e-ya-gumi u=me e-ya=da ayi la-ho
pig=NOM do-PFV-RL.NEG LOG=NOM do-PFV=DECL like_this say-WHEN
'"The pig didn't do it, I did it," so (the dog) said…'

(3) *ajahone |||| ĩtʰu ʧĩm wa la gana gene . //*

ayahone ĩthu chĩ-mi=wa la-ga-na-ge-ne
therefore corpse rot-NEG=TOP say-PL-IRR-SEQ-CV
'Therefore, it is said the dead body won't decay…' (lit. 'they say the body won't decay')

These constructions interface with larger systems within the language like reference tracking by using strategies like logophoric pronouns (2) or subject agreement (3). Furthermore, each construction shows distinct distributions within discourse, suggesting that they are used for different interactive purposes (cf. Noonan 2006; Genetti 2011). For example, while quotative constructions can be associated with progression of a narrative, direct quotation is used to dramatise events within a story. We will end the talk by providing an initial semantic map of the functional area of quotation and showing how the uses of these four constructions are distributed within this space.

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Non-standard evidential categories in Thewo Tibetan

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In order to analyze evidential systems, many scholars divide evidential markers into different semantic categories: direct and indirect (Willet 1988); visual, sensory, inference, assumption, hearsay, and quotative (Aikhenvald 2004: 929 Kindle); and specifically for Tibetan, sensory, inferential, authoritative, hearsay and reported speech, and epistemic (Tournadre & Suzuki 2023: 389). Yet not all languages' evidential markers fit into these categories. Thewo Tibetan, an under-described and endangered language spoken on the border of China's Gansu and Sichuan Provinces, exhibits several evidential markers which do not fit the categories mentioned above. This paper analyzes the use of four evidential markers, /ɹa^{33}/, /ta^{33}/, /nə^{33}/, and /jõ^{55}ts^{h}ɯ̥^{33}/, and compares their usage with Aikhenvald's (2004) and Tournadre and Suzuki's (2023) categories.
The author finds that:
1. In relation to Aikhenvald's (2004) categories, these four evidential markers match the following categories:

1. /ra^{33}/ is visual and sensory
2. /ta^{33}/ is visual, sensory, and inference
3. /nə^{33}/ is visual, sensory, and inference
4. /jõ^{55}ts^{h}ɯ̥^{33}/ is inferential

2. In relation to Tournadre Suzuki (2023) categories, these four evidential markers match the following categories:

1. /ra^{33}/ is sensory
2. /ta^{33}/ is sensory and inferential
3. /nə^{33}/ is sensory and inferential
4. /jõ^{55}ts^{h}ɯ̥^{33}/ is inferential

As can be seen, both Aikhenvald's (2004) system and Tournadre Susuki's (2023) system obscure the diversity found within Thewo Tibetan evidentials and thus are not suitable for use. Thewo Tibetan evidential markers do not fit into established evidential categories because of their unique interaction with time and verbal semantics. The implication is that although typological systems for categorizing evidentials are helpful and important, there is still a need for more research to better elucidate categories.

Keywords: evidentiality, Thewo Tibetan, inner-processes, observability, telicity, verbal semantics

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A comparison of Indic loanwords in Thai inscriptions of the north and northeast regions of Thailand from 17th - 18th centuries: an implication of orthographical norms in pre-modern state

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Most studies on language standards are researches on modern languages tied to modern nation-states. The modern language standards have been established and inherited from earlier writing styles and traditions. Although pre-modern written languages did not have such standardized spellings as modern time and often have more variation in spelling than modern languages, certain ancient Thai texts found in inscriptions appears to have patterns or standards of spelling, especially loanwords from the Indic languages such as Pali and Sanskrit which have a longer history of being recorded as written languages than Thai. In addition, Pali-Sanskrit words are found in significant proportions in both ancient and modern Thai texts. Therefore, the research questions arise as to what norms of spelling Pali-Sanskrit words exist in the Thai language before the printing era (focused on Lanna and Lan Xang inscriptions of the north and northeast regions of Thailand), and what is the similarities and differences. The purposes of this research article is to find the factors related to the variations of Pali-Sanskrit spelling in Thai texts of Lanna and Lan Xang inscriptions found in Thailand and dated from 17th - 18th centuries, and to compare the variations of Pali-Sanskrit word spellings in Lanna and Lan Xang inscriptions, as Lanna and Lan Xang writing systems are related in epigraphy. The analysis results show that type of script, locality, and genre of the texts are main factors related to the variations. The similarities of both Lanna and Lan Xang inscriptions are that texts recorded in Dhamma script tend to have less variation of Pali-Sanskrit word spellings than texts recorded in other scripts, inscriptions of some localities have less variation than other localities, and bilingual inscriptions (Thai-Pali) tend to have less variation than monolingual Thai inscriptions. The differences are that Lanna inscriptions tend to spell words according to etymology more than spelling according to pronunciation. It is also found that Lan Xang inscriptions with less variation of spelling are mostly found in texts that refer to kings, which is not found in Lanna inscriptions from the same period, as a result of the different political, socio-cultural conditions between Lanna and Lan Xang during the 17th - 18th centuries.

Case-marking Clitics of Tripura (Usoi) Language

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The Tripura language — also known as Tripuri or Kokborok — is a Bodo-Garo language of the Tibeto-Burman branch, spoken in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati) and the Indian state of Tripura. This study focuses on the Usoi dialect, documenting and analyzing its case-marking clitics — morphemes that attach to the end of noun phrases (NPs) to indicate grammatical relations. Drawing on naturalistic corpus data, it explores their syntactic roles, morphological properties, and typological parallels with other Bodo-Garo languages. Unlike many Tibeto-Burman languages, which predominantly mark case through postpositions, Usoi relies on cliticized case markers. For example, the accusative clitic *-no* marks both direct objects (*opu topu-no hãlai-oi* "Opu loves Topu") and indirect objects (*aŋ-no nuŋ-ni soikoŋ rói-di* "Give me your pen"). The genitive/ablative clitic *-ni* signals possession (*topu-ni nok* "Topu's house") and source (*bo nok-ni lak^{h}a p^{h}ái-oi* "He comes out of the house"). The locative clitic *-o* encodes spatial or temporal location (*bo kãmí-o tóŋ-oi* "They live in this village"; *cani sà-o t^{h}àŋ-je* "He will go on Saturday"). The comitative/instrumental clitic *-bai* expresses accompaniment (*aŋ à-bai mai cà-oi* "I eat rice with fish") and means (*bo dasa-bai int^{h}ài-ma ra-oi* "He cuts the fruit with a knife"). Topic clitics (=le, =se, =ba) highlight discourse prominence, especially in equational clauses (*leluŋ=le sip^{h}ai Ø* "Lelung is a policeman"). The data reveal that nominative arguments are generally unmarked, while accusative, genitive, locative, and instrumental roles are overtly marked — a pattern consistent with other Bodo-Garo languages such as Garo and Rabha, but with distinct morphosyntactic nuances in Usoi. The analysis also identifies functional flexibility in certain clitics, reflecting contact-induced changes and historical layering. By combining detailed morphosyntactic description with cross-linguistic comparison, this study deepens our understanding of case-marking strategies in the Bodo-Garo group and the wider Tibeto-Burman family. It highlights the need for urgent documentation of endangered varieties like Usoi, both to preserve linguistic heritage and to contribute to broader debates in typology, historical linguistics, and language contact in South and Southeast Asia.

Starting a documentation of Vaiphei (South Central, Assam)

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Vaiphei is classified as a Northeastern (cf. Sæbø & Konnerth 2024: 7; Prichard 2018) South Central (SC) Trans-Himalayan language and is spoken by several 10.000 people. Most speakers reside in the state of Manipur with smaller communities existing also in the states of Assam and Meghalaya, among others (cf. Singha 2024: 1). While a number of descriptive studies exist (Suantak 2013; Prichard 2018; Murakami 2018), so far no extensive language documentation has been undertaken. Furthermore, the existing studies focus on the variety/ies spoken in Manipur to the exclusion of the varieties spoken in other Northeast Indian states. The author intends to address this gap by initiating a language documentation (Himmelmann 1998; Woodbury 2003) as part of his PhD project, focusing on the variety of Vaiphei spoken in a number of villages in the Dima Hasao district of Assam. According to speakers, their variety of Vaiphei is somewhat different from the variety spoken in Manipur. This talk will provide an overview of several linguistic phenomena which, based on the available literature, may well occur in this under-documented variety. It will then outline how their documentation and description could contribute to our understanding of SC languages.

Suantak (2013) describes Vaiphei as having three tones, namely two contours (rising and falling) as well as a low tone. Many minimal pairs are provided, such as:

(1) *gam*^{21} 'land' *gam*^{23} 'dry' *gam*^{52} 'fine' (Suantak 2013: 120)

Featuring three tones, the system appears superficially similar to the one described for closely related Thadou (cf. Hyman 2007). However, these examples are given in isolation and the tones are reportedly "phonetic surface tones" (Suantak 2013: 117). Tone sandhi is briefly described for compounds but overall, it is unclear how the tone system as a whole works since natural discourse data are lacking. A thorough description of the Vaiphei tone system could therefore contribute to our understanding of tone in SC (cf. Lotven 2023) and in Southeast Asia more generally (cf. Brunelle & Kirby 2016).

Another domain of interest seems to be the system of person marking found in the language (cf. DeLancey 2023). Examples such as the following suggest that argument indexation in the verb isn't always obligatory:

(2) naŋ kikhɔp-na aʔ va-paŋ-lɔu-mɔ
you serve-NOM LOC DEIC-attend-NEG-Q
'Did you not attend the service?' (Suantak 2013: 213)

Here, no second person argument indexation is found but only an initial personal pronoun. Furthermore, Bedell et al. (2023) state that third person subject indexing can be omitted in certain constructions.

Another intriguing phenomenon is the demonstratives of the language which frequently co-occur with a so-called "deictic particle" *zi* (Suantak 2013: 177):

(3) **zi** tsem **tsu** ei pi in
DEM knife **DEM** 1OBJ give IMP
'Did you not attend the service?' (Suantak 2013: 178)

Here, the demonstratives/deictics "enclose" the noun they modify. Constructions of this kind are reportedly frequent in SC languages and potentially extend to the clause-level (cf. Baclawski Jr. 2023) but are understudied.

Abbreviations

1OBJ	first person object
DEIC	deictic
DEM	demonstrative
IMP	imperative
LOC	locative
NOM	nominalizer
NEG	negation
Q	question

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From topic-prominence to subject-prominence in Kera'a-Tawrã? – Disentangling change from genre

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Trans-Himalayan languages are known for their use of topic-comment structures, instead of or in addition to, a clause division into subject and predicate (Li & Thompson 1976, Xu 2006). This talk addresses topic-prominence and subject-prominence in the Kera'a-Tawrã branch, focusing on Igu, the shamanic language of the Kera'a and on Kera'a (*idum1241*; *clk*, also "Idu (Mishmi)"), the Kera'a's language of everyday communication (Reinöhl 2022, Reinöhl 2024). Current research suggests that Igu partially preserves older historical strata in lexicon and structure, and can be regarded a predecessor variety to Kera'a (Reinöhl et al., to appear). It is also clear that Igu, as the language of oral-tradition ritual, sits on another communicative plane relative to Kera'a, and so any comparison between Igu and Kera'a is faced with the dual challenge of disentangling change from genre.
Igu ritual is conspicuous for its tri-partite style of line organization. An example is (1):

(1) aloju atogi dji-mi-ma
holy_turmeric tong sit-NEG-HON
'(Here is) turmeric! (Here are) tongs! Stay away!'

The line in (1) consists of, first, two nouns (or noun phrases) and then a verb (or noun phrase). It represents an imagined enactment of the shaman displaying objects of protection (turmeric, tongs) and addressing a threatening spirit. One could translate the above in one sentence, such as '(I am holding) the turmeric (and) the tongs, stay away!'. However, in these types of tripartite line structures, there is rarely any explicit marking of the noun phrases with regard to their role in a larger, assumed sentence structure, or relative to the predicate. The verb *dji* 'to sit', unsurprisingly, lacks argument slots for objects displayed by the speaker. Another option is to analyze (1) as involving two (with asyndetically coordinated NP & NP) or three separate miniature clauses, consisting of (a) noun phrase(s) and a verb phrase respectively. The third possibility, which I pursue in this talk, is to analyze such structures as inspired by work on topic-prominence. Following Li & Thompson (1976), conceptual relations between topic and comment are more flexible and looser than those between subject and predicate. The topic in such combinations is always definite, proper and or generic. While I am a sceptic of one-to-one mappings at the form-information structure interface (Matić & Wedgwood 2013), the notion of topic prominence does capture the conceptual and syntactic looseness that is characteristic of a majority of Igu line structures.
Kera'a also shows topic-comment structures (2). However, while Igu almost never uses subject-predicate structures, Kera'a does so regularly (3).

(2) aya mese=wa (...) ena-ga-i-gum
DEM kill=TOP ena-HAB-COP-NEG
'(As for) the ones we kill (i.e. domesticated animals), we don't do the Ena ritual.'

(3) echa=ma abratõ=me atikõ=chi abratõ gum
DEM=LOC bamboo.sp=NOM village=GEN bamboo.sp NEG
'The bamboo in this (epwe) is not the bamboo from the village.'

This talk addresses the question of whether the observed structural differences between Igu and Kera'a are due to change and/or to differences in genre. Associative, rather than tight and specific, semantic relations generally feature prominently in the intensely poetic and metonymic language of Igu ritual. This contrasts with the more explicit and close conceptual groupings that are more typical of casual Kera'a discourse. I will frame this comparison of Igu and Kera'a line and clause structure by more general considerations of how to disentangle genre differences from historical changes in oral data. Based on a variety of morpho-syntactic and pragmatic-performative arguments, I will argue that both change and genre account for the observed differences in Igu and Kera'a utterance organization.

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A Study of Boundary-Crossing Motion Expression in Lhasa Tibetan

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Among different varieties of the Tibetan language, there is a term called 'Standard Tibetan', corresponding to the language spoken in Central Tibet in the area of Lhasa, i.e., the Lhasa dialect. This study aims to investigate the linguistic representation of spatial relationships in Lhasa Tibetan, with a concentration on motion events. Talmy's (1991) linguistic typology of motion events can be approached from two perspectives: how the Manner of motion is expressed and how the Path of motion is expressed. Expression of spatial motion varies significantly across languages (Talmy, 2000) and events involving the traversal of a spatial boundary impose the tightest typological constraints in the lexicalization of motion, providing a reliable test to detect the typological class of a language (Özçaliskan, 2015; Tuuri & Belliard, 2024). As speakers of V-languages typically express the Path of a motion event in the main verb, they especially need to do so when expressing boundary-crossing motion events, i.e., they never use Manner verbs to mark the change of location across boundaries (Aske, 1989) and use them only when describing non-boundary-crossing situations (Slobin & Hoiting, 1994).

Based on this, the current study included an experiment of boundary-crossing motion events referring to the methodology and data elicitation tool developed by Özçaliskan (2015) to explore how Lhasa Tibetan speakers behave. The participants were explicitly asked to describe motion events first in a free description and second by using particular Manner verbs (e.g., run, fly, jump) in Lhasa Tibetan. Data were collected from 12 stimulus pictures depicting boundary-crossing motion events with a salient Manner and a salient Path component (see Özçaliskan (2015)). Participants' description of each picture was coded for 1) the type of verb used to describe boundary-crossing motion events (Manner vs. Path) and 2) the number of clausal segments used to describe the event depicted in the picture (one vs. multiple). The results indicate that Tibetan speakers used Path verbs as main verbs more frequently in free description conditions than in plus-verb description. However, compared with typical V-languages such as Turkish, Lhasa Tibetan typically encode Manner in verbs and directionality in Path satellites (such as Allative and Ablative postpositions). On the other hand, in plus-verb descriptions, Lhasa Tibetan speakers also used multiple linguistic strategies (such as Path verbs with subordinate Manner and segmented descriptions of several sub-events) and Turkish showed a similar tendency. Another important strategy of expressing Manner is the serial verb construction, which may contain a Path verb plus a Manner verb.

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Reorganizing Lhaovo Kinship Terms

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This presentation aims to reorganize the kinship terms of Lhaovo, a Northern Burmish language spoken in the Kachin and Shan states of Myanmar and Yunnan Province, China, as presented by Burling (1971).
Burling (1971) compared the kinship terminology of Jinghpaw and Maru (=Lhaovo) and demonstrated that, though their terms are different, the systems into which they are organized are very similar (p.27). Each kinship is located in a cell of tables composed of rows representing descent lines related by marriage and columns representing generations.
Most Lhaovo kinship terms are names assigned to one or more cells. Note that the same kinship may be located in different cells depending on whether the speaker is male or female. For example, B(rother's)S(on) falls in the same cell named *tso*^{L} as S if the speaker is a male, but if the speaker is a female, BS falls in the cell named *tau*^{F} different from S's cell (named *tso*^{L}).
Burling (1971: 36) provides the four kinship name tables for four possible combinations of male and female speakers and male and female relatives. They can be decomposed into the following four components:

(1) two name templates consisting of the cell for the parent and the five 'ascendent' cells surrounding it (Parent templates),

(2) a name template consisting of the cell for the child(ren) and the five 'descendent' cells surrounding it (Child template),

(3) a name template consisting of the cell for the speaker and the two cells of the speaker's generation adjacent to it (Sibling template), and

(4) the positioning of (1) and (2) relative to (3).

Some kinship terms are not the names of specific cells but are assigned directly to a particular kinship relationship. H(usband) and W(ife), the two parties to the marriage, as well as D(aughter's)H, WF(ather) and WM(other) are assigned special terms, not those of the cells where they are located. On the other hand, SW, HF, and HM do not have special terms and are referred to by the names of the cells where they are located.
It is often necessary to distinguish between multiple individuals who belong to the same kinship category and reside (or once resided) in the same household. In Lhaovo, this requirement is met by compounding a kinship term with an element derived from an abstract noun such as *(ʔă)mo*^{H} 'the eldest' < n. 'a large one', *(ʔă)leʔ*^{F} 'the second eldest' < n. 'a middle one', *(ʔă)t*^{h}*oŋ*^{H} 'the youngest' < n. 'end, limit': e.g., *paj*^{L}***-mo***^{H} '**the eldest** Z(=sister)/D', *paj*^{L}***-leʔ***^{F} '**the second eldest** Z/D', *paj*^{L}***-t***^{h}***oŋ***^{H} '**the youngest** Z/D'.
Instead of these elements, the compounding with an element indicating their sex and birth-order values, such as *nuk*^{H} 'first-born male', *ŋ'an*^{H} 'third-born female', is also used: e.g., *moŋ*^{L}***-nuk***^{H} '**the eldest** B/S', *paj*^{L}***-ŋ'an***^{H} '**the third eldest** Z/D'

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Adnominal markers in Uipo: structuring information through discourse and syntax

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Differential Case Marking and adnominal pragmatic markers in Tibeto-Burman languages typically exhibit highly lusive distribution and functions (Chelliah 2017; Teo 2018; Boro 2021 among many others). These are often linked to diverse factors related to syntax, information structure, semantics and pragmatics. However, natural data often offers counterexamples for each analysis.

This paper examines two markers of this kind in Uipo, an unclassified Tibeto-Burman language of Manipur: ergative *-nə*, and contrastive *-tə*. Examining 40 minutes of multimodal natural spontaneous interaction, we show how interactional analysis combined with construction-based views helps to account for their distribution and role. The marker *-nə* is commonly used for agentive arguments in transitive clauses, but natural data show it also occurs with intransitive predicates and serves discourse functions – such as signaling referent prominence or foreshadowing agentivity – beyond strict grammatical ergativity. Its distribution is differential, and elicitation does not suggest a clear pattern. We find that it occurs in two constructions: (a) at the beginning of an Intonation Unit, opening a side-sequence where an accessible referent is agentive with respect to the discussed topic as in (1); or pre-verbally where the agentive role is the main contribution ("agent-focus", cf. Archer 2021) as in (2).

(1) Discussing whether the person keeps taking drugs. 'When he was here, …somehow, …'

ŋi-**nə** tɕa-jer-mək
1PL-**ERG** eat-distribute-NEG
'We-ERG did not let him take it.'

(2) ŋei-tə kei-nu hoŋ-pʰaː-roːi ŋei-**nə** kʰaːŋ-kə-tʰoːt-ne
1SG-CNTR 1SG.POSS-wife go.up-receive-also 1SG-**ERG** pick.up-KV-bring.forth-DECL
'I, at the time of my marriage also I arranged everything by myself'

NPs marked by *-nə* can also occupy a separate intonation unit and then are used merely for shifting/maintaining attention on a referent while vaguely foreshadowing its agentive role. As the upcoming structure is not planned yet, it can evolve elsewhere. This is illustrated in (3), where the speaker introduces a referent foreshadowing its agentivity, but continues with an intransitive verb. In contrast, unmarked nouns very rarely appear as independent intonation units; they typically occur with a verb or other accompanying material.

(3) əŋi-kʰei nei-teima: Victory-**nə** kou-joŋ-kaːl-lə
ereyesterday-one 2SG.POSS-sister.in.law PN-**ERG** KV-go.down-time-LOC
'once when your sister-in-law Victory went there'

The marker *-tə* fulfils the function of foreshadowing a shift against the current contextual expectations, including shifts in perspective or structure. Similarly to *-nə*, NPs marked by

-tə can occupy a separate intonation unit. It often co-occurs with accessible referents in contexts like right dislocation and is common in contrastive or corrective sequences. Its function is best understood as marking a re-alignment of attention. As such, in addition to contrastive topic shifts, it also occurs in discourse shifts while maintaining the same topic. This is shown in (2) above where the speaker describes his independence: he has finished telling how he funded himself in school years, and starts a new discussion on covering his wedding expenses. In this function, the marked NP often occupies a separate intonation unit. Finally, *-tə* is also often found with subjects of negated verbs. As sentence negation is commonly a discourse level instruction that contextual expectations are not fulfilled (Verhagen 2008), this use forms part of the overall function.
Thus, we argue that the ergative marking has an agentive role in identifiable constructions, while both markers also convey expectation managing, local interactional instructions.

Abbreviations

1PL	1st person plural
1SG.POSS	1st person singular possessive
2SG.POSS	2nd person singular possessive
SNTR	Contrastive
DECL	Declarative
ERG	Ergative
KV	Velar prefix
NEG	Negation
LOC	Locative

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An articulatory description of the Zangskari coronal obstruents

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Phonological descriptions in the vast majority of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages (except for a few South Dravidian varieties) traditionally identify a coronal three-way contrast: denti-alveolar, laminal post-alveolar, and apico-postalveolar or "retroflex" (see Arsenault 2012; 2017). Static palatography and articulatory studies have provided empirical support for these phonological classifications and, in some cases, challenged and refined them (Ladefoged & Bhaskararao 1983; Khatiwada 2007; Bakst 2012; Bohnert et al. 2018; Kochetov et al. 2024). For example, while both Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages are described as having retroflex consonants, comparative studies indicate that their place of articulation differs: Indo-Aryan retroflexes are apico-postalveolar, while Dravidian retroflexes involve subapical-palatal contact (Ladefoged & Bhaskararao 1983; Bakst 2012; Bohnert et al. 2018; Kochetov et al. 2024).

In contrast, descriptions of Tibetic languages—and more broadly, the Tibeto-Burman family—have been primarily based on perceptual analysis, with little articulatory or acoustic evidence. This study provides the first articulatory investigation of the coronal obstruents in Zangskari, a phonologically innovative, non-tonal, and endangered Western Tibetic language spoken in Ladakh, India.

Zangskari exhibits a rich inventory of coronal obstruents, with three-way voicing and aspiration contrasts in stops and affricates (voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated, and voiced) and a voiceless vs. voiced contrast in fricatives. The coronal obstruent system includes a four-way typologically uncommon contrast in terms of place of articulation:

- **Interdental**: fricatives /θ, ð/
- **Laminal denti-alveolar**: stops /t, tʰ, d/, affricates /ts, tsʰ, dz/, and sibilants /s, z/
- **Laminal postalveolar**: affricates /tʃ, tʃʰ, dʒ/ and fricatives /ʃ, ʒ/
- **Apico-postalveolar**: stops /ʈ, ʈʰ, ɖ/ and fricatives /ʂ/ and [ʐ̺] (the latter is an allophone of /r/ occurring before high vowels /i, u/)

We employed static palatography with eight younger Zangskari speakers (aged 19–25), using chocolate paste (see Anderson 2008) to obtain linguographic and palatographic impressions of coronal and palatal consonants. These data were supplemented with acoustic recordings to verify articulatory findings and document temporal characteristics.

Our analysis reveals two significant findings. First, we show that Zangskari "retroflexes" are actually apico-postalveolar consonants. Thus, they resemble Indo-Aryan retroflexes more closely than Dravidian ones, which have been shown to have subapical-palatal contact (see above). This challenges traditional descriptions of retroflection in Tibetic languages. Second, we show that Zangskari maintains a typologically uncommon four-way coronal contrast between obstruents: apico-postalveolar (/ʈ, ʈʰ, ɖ, ʂ/ and [ʐ̺]), laminal postalveolar (/tʃ, tʃʰ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/), laminal denti-alveolar (/t, tʰ, d, ts, tsʰ, dz, s, z/), and interdental (/θ, ð/) This distinguishes Zangskari from both its Tibetic relatives and the Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the region.

This articulatory study on Zangskari's coronal obstruents allows for a more precise phonological classification. The findings call into question prior assumptions about retroflection in Tibetic languages and highlight the phonetic distinctiveness of Zangskari within

the Tibetic subgroup. More broadly, this research contributes to comparative Tibetic phonology, deepening our understanding of coronal typology in South Asia, and establishing a foundation for future instrumental phonetic studies on these languages.

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On Proto-Hmongic rime system

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This study explores a new reconstruction of the rime system of Proto-Hmongic (PH) based on observations on some rime correspondences between modern Hmongic languages. Hmong-Mien historical linguists have maintained that Hmongic languages tend to indicate more archaic features in initials, and Mienic languages do in rimes, as summarized by Solnit (1996) as: "It is a truism of comparative Hmong-Mien that Hmongic preserves initial contrasts and simplifies rhymes, while Mienic preserves rhyme contrasts but simplifies initials" (3). As an example of this axiom, we can mention the rime system of PH reconstructed by Wang (1994), which only has open-syllable rimes and rimes with nasal codas, contrasted with that of Proto-Mienic reconstructed by Purnell (1970), which not only has the syllable types of the PH rime system, but also closed-syllable rimes ended with stop codas. The PH rime system of Wang (1994) was basically succeeded to Ratliff (2010)'s reconstruction of PH.

Although Ratliff (2010) succeeded Wang's PH almost intact, she made a new discovery on rime correspondences between Hmongic languages (24-25). Her discovery is that in the PH rime categories 4, 5, and 13, two Hmongic languages, Pa Hng and/or Xong, preserve distinctions between open syllables and sonorant-ending syllables on one hand, and stop-ending syllables on the other, as rime distinctions (see Table below).

PH	PHM		Hmongic	Pa Hng	Xong
4	*at	>	*a	e,i	ei, i
	*a	>	*a	a	ɑ
7	*əp, *ət, *u̯ət	>	*o	a	o
	*o, *u̯o, *əw, *i̯ou		*o	o	o
13	tone7 (< -p, -t, -k)	>	*ow		u
	tones1,3,4,5,6	>	*ow		ə

Although she noted that the newly discovered patterns "will help us do a better job of sub-grouping than has been done to date," this significant discovery did not affect her reconstruction of the PH rime system. The author of the present study considers that these new patterns must be reflected in the reconstruction of PH. The author further found that there are similar rime distinctions in the PH rime categories 5 and 9, which led him to conclude that PH has a rime system comprising not only open-syllables and sonorant-ending syllables, but also stop-ending syllables. The author also mentions the issue of the PH rime category 6, a rime having only words having Tone 5 or 6, which has not been provided with any explanation. In this study, the author presents the whole picture of the reconstructed PH rime system, reflecting the above-mentioned issues, which will be a significant revision of the view that PH is a language of a "head-heavy" syllable structure with simplified rimes.

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Evidentiality in Queyu

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This paper describes evidentiality in Queyu (Qiangic, spoken in western Sichuan), and shows that it has a five-way evidential system. The use of evidential markers is, to some extent, pragmatically driven, and it interacts with factors such as person, volitionality, and consciousness, resulting in more flexible usage. Several markers also display incipient grammaticalization toward TAM.

Tibeto-Burman languages are known for their complex evidential systems (DeLancey 1986; Aikhenvald and LaPolla 2007). Nonetheless, many of them are understudied. For example, there are only a few studies on the evidentiality of Qiangic languages (LaPolla 2003; Shirai 2007; Song 2018; Jacques 2022; Huang 2023). This study aims to fill this gap. Our data are based on in-person fieldwork, combining elicitation with narratives and conversations, and are annotated with Leipzig glosses. We identify five distinct evidential markers: factual /tʂɨ/, egophoric /tsɨ/, sensory /zɻ̩/, inferential /sɨ/, and hearsay /ni/. The factual /tʂɨ/ expresses general knowledge for which the speaker has absolute subjective certainty without resort to external evidence. The egophoric /tsɨ/ is related to the speaker's privileged knowledge. The sensory /zɻ̩/ is used when the speaker is at the scene of the event; for past events, a zero marker is used as the sensory evidential instead. The inferential /sɨ/ denotes that the information is inferred from evidence. The hearsay /ni/ indicates that the information source is others rather than the speaker.

Aikhenvald (2004, 2018) defined evidentiality as a grammatical category expressing information source, a view that is widely accepted. However, as research on evidentiality has progressed, phenomena have emerged that challenge this view, with the evidential system of Tibeto-Burman languages being especially controversial (Tournadre and LaPolla 2014; Drolma and Suzuki 2024). Queyu is one such case. We argue that factual and egophoric categories in Queyu and other Tibeto-Burman languages should also be considered evidentials, and thus we propose a broader definition and framework for evidentiality. Additionally, the existence of egophoric and factual categories in Queyu might be due to contact with Tibetic, which is also attested in other Qiangic and Himalayan languages (Song 2018; Zemp 2020; Huang 2023).

As pragmatic factors matter, evidentials in use show some fluidity. The factual /tʂɨ/ can be used with first person to express general facts. The egophoric /tsɨ/ can be used with non-first-person with intention. The sensory /zɻ̩/ and inferential /sɨ/ are primarily used with non-first-person. For first person, /zɻ̩/ is used with non-volitional predicates, while /sɨ/ is used with non-conscious predicates.

Mélac and Bialek (2024) argue that evidentiality is more often a "grammaticalization passenger" than a "grammaticalization target," tending to develop from partially or fully grammaticalized forms like tense/aspect. However, Queyu exhibits distinct characteristics. Its evidential markers show a tendency to evolve into tense-aspect markers, rather than the other way around. The egophoric /tsɨ/ connotes intention and future reference. The factual /tʂɨ/ is used to express general knowledge and tends to develop into the habitual aspect. The sensory /zɻ̩/ conveys a progressive-like meaning when used with active predicates. Such evolution is also relatively rare in Tibeto-Burman languages.

Keywords: Qiangic, Queyu, eivdential, egophoric, factual

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Tracing the Origin of the ū + VP Construction in Early Southern Min: Historical Evidence and Semantic Evolution

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ū (also pronounced *iú*) is the Southern Min counterpart of Mandarin *yǒu*. In Modern Mandarin, *yǒu* functions as a verb indicating possession or existence and typically takes noun phrases (NP) complements (Chao 1987; Zhu 1982). The use of *yǒu* preceding a verb phrase (VP) was once viewed as a regional deviation, limited to southern Chinese varieties such as Cantonese and Southern Min (Li and Thompson 1981; Lu 1980; Tan 2012). In recent decades, however, this construction has become increasingly widespread in Mandarin (Fu 2007; Sun 2003; Tan 2012), where *yǒu* has been argued to signal the speaker's confirmation of or emphasis on the referenced event (Cheng 1985; Fu 2007; Tan 2012, among others). Tsai (2024) further defines it as a realis marker, indicating the speaker's subjective certainty and their intention to strongly assert to the interlocutor that the proposition is true.

Scholars generally agree that this usage entered Taiwan Mandarin through contact with Taiwanese, a branch of Southern Min, and later spread to Mainland China through the influence of Taiwanese popular culture (Fu 2007; Yang and Dong 2003). Still, the historical origins of the construction remain unclear. Tsao and Cheng (1995) suggest that a similar structure existed in Old Chinese around 2600 years ago and was preserved in Southern Min but lost in Mandarin. Although Southern Min's geographic isolation and archaic features (Fu 2007) make this plausible, current evidence is insufficient to confirm a direct line of descent. Since Taiwan Mandarin is thought to have adopted this construction from Taiwanese, identifying its origin requires close examination of historical Southern Min data.

Through an analysis of six Early Southern Min literary works (1566–1782 CE), this study finds that the *ū* + VP construction is attested as early as this period. However, *ū* may not yet have fully developed its modern function of marking speaker certainty. Nevertheless, the gradual expansion of *ū*'s complements from NP to VP over time points to an ongoing grammaticalization process (Himmelmann 2004). Notably, the *ū* + stative VP construction occurs significantly more frequently than the *ū* + dynamic intransitive VP construction, suggesting that this expansion may have been motivated by a semantic parallel between nouns and stative verbs in terms of temporal stability: nouns typically refer to permanent characteristics of entities (Wierzbicka 1986), while stative verbs denote states of affairs with an indeterminate temporal extent (Langacker 1987).

Moreover, zero conversion, the process by which a word changes syntactic category without morphological inflection (Evans and Osada 2005), may have further supported this development. While the absence of morphological cues may leave speakers unaware of the syntactic category of the complement in the *ū* + X construction, this structural ambiguity, combined with the semantic similarity, appears to have encouraged the emergence of *ū* + stative VP constructions. Through analogical extension, this pattern was eventually generalized to include dynamic intransitive and transitive verbs in the *ū* + VP construction (cf. Traugott 2008).

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Syllabic Expansion in Cantonese QIE*and Residual Consonantal Clusters in Chinese

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QIE*s are pervasive among Sino-Tibetan languages (Tsou, 2012, 粵語研究, 2017) and constitute an areal feature among languages with the logographic writing system. One kind of productive process is the generation of onomatopoetic QIEs with uniform or regular tone patterns from disyllabic words. For example, in Mandarin and Cantonese:

Mandarin	“噼啪”		“劈劈啪啪”
			1. pi^1 pi^1 pa^1 pa^1
	pi^1 pa^1	⇨	“劈哩啪啦”
			2. pi^1 li^1 pa^1 la^1
Cantonese	“霹拍”		“霹霹拍拍”
			3. pik^7 pik^7 $paak^7$ $paak^7$
	pik^7 $paak^7$	⇨	“霹靂拍勒”
			4. pik^7 lik^7 $paak^7$ $laak^7$
			5. pik^9 lik^9 $paak^9$ $laak^9$

Cantonese also has a related and pervasive high-low-tone parallel series (e.g. 4&5, 6&7 etc.):

$bing^4$ $bang^4$	⇨	6. $bing^1$ $ling^1$ $bang^1$ $lang^1$
	⇨	7. $bing^4$ $ling^4$ $bang^4$ $lang^4$
$ping^4$ $pang^4$	⇨	8. $ping^4$-$ping^4$-$paang^4$-$paang^4$
	⇨	9. $ping^1$-$ling^1$-$paang^1$-$laang^1$
kik^1 $kaak^1$	⇨	10. kik^1 lik^1 $kaak^1$ $laak^1$
	⇨	11. kik^4 lik^4 $kaak^4$ $laak^4$

The examples from the Mandarin dialects are much less common than Cantonese (Tsou; 2017), where the following additional variations are found:

$ping^4$ $pang^4$	⇨	12. $ping^4$-$ling^1$-$paang^4$-$laang^4$
fi^4 fe^4	⇨	13. fi^4 li^1 fe^4 le^4

However, it may be noted that Cantonese does not allow other variant tone patterns, so that only one additional series of non-uniform but new restricted tones may be found in Cantonese (e.g. 13):

	⇨	14. *$ping^1$-$ling^4$-$paang^1$-$laang^1$
$ping^4$ $pang^4$	⇨	15. *$ping^1$-$ling^4$-$paang^4$-$laang^4$
	⇨	16. *$ping^4$-$ling^4$-$paang^1$-$laang^4$

These expressions offer a range of denotative and connotative meanings associated with semantic augmentation of magnitude involving *extent*, *duration* & *intensity* etc. They are

*QIE: Quadrisyllabic Idiomatic Expression

readily shared among native speakers but are often elusive to even the best near-native speakers, and they offer hints of past morphological derivations (Tsou, 1979). This paper explores the structure and development of the complex expressions in Cantonese and Mandarin dialects, and among some Sino-Tibetan languages such as Bai from Yunnan province, as well as their relevance to Chinese versification (Jacobson, 1981).

The hypothesis is also advanced that these expressions reflect the residual forms of some consonantal clusters in Archaic Chinese.

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First insights in the morphosyntax of Wancho (Arunachal Pradesh)

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Wancho (nnp, Brahmaputran > Patkaian > South Patkaian > Southwestern Patkaian) is spoken in Arunachal Pradesh, in Longding district, Pongchau Circle, Khãkam Block. Wancho has received attention by both linguists and local language activists, but to date there are no publications about its morphophonology. Studying Wancho morphophonology might help to explain the discontinuity between languages north and south of Central Nagaland, which have (complex) verb indexing and stem alternation with tone, while the Central Nagaland languages lack these.

The phonology of Wancho is presented in Losu & Morey (2023), along with an extensive word list and a presentation of the Wancho script, designed by the first author. Losu & Morey (2023) builds on the pioneering work by Burling & Wangsu (1998) and compares the words collected by the older source, concluding that they represent a different dialect than the one studied by Losu & Morey. Morey also has a collection of Wancho recordings with extensive metadata (Morey 2019 and some shared privately to us), but almost none of it is glossed. Losu also has several gigabytes of untranscribed and partly unsorted recordings.

The current talk is based on a field trip of 8 days in February 2025, combined with the analysis of some of the material previously gathered by Morey. All data is from the Kamhua Noknu variety, the one studied by Losu & Morey and the native variety of Banwang Losu.

We will present an analysis of the data, focusing on the verbal system. First, we will show that Kamhua Noknu Wancho has no person indexing, illustrating this with a combination of elicited and naturalistic data. Second, we will present a very preliminary analysis of TAM categories present in Kamhua Noknu Wancho, all postverbal morphemes (as is common in Patkaian, Parker van Dam ms.). So far, we have identified future *əi*^{3}, as well as a past reportative marker *na*^{3}. Aspect markers include a possible past or realis *pu*^{2}, perfect or completive *p*^{h}*əi*, and continuous *tʃoŋ*. Mood markers so far identified are imperative *an/ən*, polite imperative *kəi*, prohibitive *t*^{h}*e?*, and hortative *k*^{h}*aː?*. There are another eight morphemes that seem to indicate TAM categories, but which await more data.

Losu & Morey (2023) show with data that there are at least two varieties of Wancho, and report names for three. Morey (p.c.) thinks there are likely more, and this is confirmed by my fieldwork. At least lexically, there seems to be a rough distinction between Upper and Lower Wancho, which comprise several villages each. These varieties are not easily mutually understandable, which is why speakers of these often communicate in Hindi. In addition, there are differences between villages as well as clan differences. For example, seven different forms for the word 'mother' are recorded, some of which only differ by one phoneme, while others are completely different words. Moreover, the lect spoken at Mintong village in the same Circle as Wancho, which does not appear in literature at all to date, is possibly a separate language altogether (Morey, p.c.). These are topics to investigate during a next longer field trip planned for the winter of 2025/2026, along with further investigations into morphosyntactic topics.

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A New Classification of Tibetic languages in Thebo County, China

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Thebo County, also known as Thewo or Diebu, is situated in the southern part of Gansu Province, within the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, PRC. As classified by Tournadre (2014), it falls under the Eastern Section of Tibetic languages. This section is distinguished by its remarkable linguistic diversity and low mutual intelligibility, with numerous Tibetan dialects that remain under-researched and inadequately documented, such as those found in Drugchu and Tanchang.

The Tibetan dialects spoken in Thebo County can be broadly categorized into two main groups: Upper and Lower Thebo (Tournadre & Suzuki 2023), which are mutually unintelligible. The Gazetteers Committee (1998); Rénzēng Wàngmǔ (2013) and Powell (2022) further classified the Thebo language into six groups. The first two sources offer the same grouping, dividing Thebo into six groups, while the latter proposes ten groups, providing a more fine-grained grouping of Lower Thebo. All three classifications highlight the distinction between Upper and Lower Thebo. Rénzēng Wàngmǔ (2013) also offers a description of the Dbangbzang dialect and identifies it as the Middle Thebo dialect, which is a variety intelligible with both Upper and Lower Thebo, despite the mutual unintelligibility between the latter two. This study employs the historical comparative method to illuminate two core questions: Why is Middle Thebo intelligible with both Upper and Lower dialects, which otherwise cannot understand each other? And genealogically, is Middle Thebo more closely related to Upper or to Lower Thebo?

Building on shared innovations as well as lexical and grammatical evidence, Yeung (2024) further delineates the scope of Middle Thebo and proposes a revised classification. The resulting classification, which recognizes six distinct subgroups arranged from west to east (i.e., from Upper to Lower), is as follows: the westernmost group, Gyiba and Stengka, form the first group; Khapa and Nyinngo make up the second; Stagra is considered an independent third group; Dbangbzang and Gyersgang constitute the fourth group; Azha and Rdora form the fifth; and Byavbab, Lazar, and Ridang comprise the sixth. The Middle Thebo area is thus centered around Dbangbzang and Gyersgang.

Du & Yeung (2025) compares the rhyme evolution of Gyersgang step by step with Gyiba (Yang et al. 2024), representing Upper Thebo, and Ridang (Yeung 2024), representing Lower Thebo, drawing on linguistic and anthropological evidence and shedding light on both the puzzle of mutual intelligibility in Middle Thebo and the question of its genealogical affiliation.

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The Alternation between MC ʔ- and other MC initials from Old Chinese *L-type

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There is currently no reconstruction as ***ʔ-l-*** or ***ʔ.l-*** for Old Chinese words in Baxter and Sagart's system (Baxter & Sagart 2014; 2015). Proposing a so far unreconstructed phoneme like ***ʔ-l-*** carries significant ramifications for the phonotactics of Old Chinese. The form ***ʔ-l-*** that I introduce here should be regarded as a provisional, notational device, rather than a claim that Old Chinese had a preinitial or prefix ***ʔ-*** with morphological function. Its purpose is to indicate that the segment developed into MC ***ʔ-***, and that it contacts with those MC initials from Old Chinese *L-type, i.e., MC ***y-*** (< OC ***l-***), MC ***d-*** (< OC ***lˤ-***), MC ***drj-*** (< OC ***lr-***), and MC ***s-*** (< OC ***s.l-***).
The cases are as follows:

1. {兆 MC ***drjewX*** < OC ***lrewʔ*** (*pace* Baxter and Sagart's Old Chinese ***lr [a] wʔ***) 'one billion'} is written 要 (MC ***ʔjiew*** < OC ***ʔ-lew***, *pace* OCBS ***ʔew*** 'waist' (腰)) in the Xiàjiātái 夏家臺 Chu manuscript, *Shangshu* 尚書, *Lü Xing* 呂刑 (Punishments of Lü) excavated from Jīngzhōu 荆州, Húběi 湖北 (Jiǎng & Xiāo, 2023, 41).

2. {窈窕 MC ***ʔewX-dewX*** < OCBS ***ʔˤ [e] wʔ-lˤ [e] wʔ*** 'be elegant, beautiful'} (progressive reduplication Sūn 2008, 210–1) appears as 要嫽 (lit. MC ***ʔjiew-ʔ*** < OCBS ***ʔew-ʔ***) in the *Odes* of Wángjiāzuǐ 王家嘴 Chu manuscript (Jiǎng & Xiāo, 2023, 40–1), where the second syllable is written with the phonetic 要 (MC ***ʔjiew***) and the abbreviated phonetic 兆 (MC ***drjewX*** < OC ***lrewʔ***).

3. Western Zhou bronze script 旚 'a particular important banner' is deciphered and interpreted as an orthographic variant of the logograph for {旐 MC ***drjewX*** < OC ***lrewʔ*** 'banner adorned with serpents and tortoises'} (Tián 2015, 193–5; Wū 2024, 379).

4. {伊 MC ***ʔjij*** < OC ***ʔ-lij*** (*pace* OCBS ***ʔij***) 'personal name'} as in the Shāng politician 伊尹 MC ***ʔjij-ywinX*** is written 泗 in the *Rongchengshi* 容成氏 'Rongcheng clan' (Shanghai Chu manuscript, vol. 2, slip 37), whose phonetic is 四 (MC ***sijH*** < OCBS ***s.li [j] -s***).

5. The river name 伊 MC ***ʔjij*** < OC ***ʔ-lij*** (*pace* OCBS ***ʔij***), conventionally written as 伊, appears as 泗 in the **Xi'nian* 繫年 'Annalistic History' (Tsinghua Chu manuscript, vol.2, slip 102) and as 洍 in the *Rongchengshi* 容成氏 (slip 26), with the latter containing the phonetic 死 (MC ***sijX*** < OCBS ***s.lijʔ***). Additionally, the character 伊 has an orthographic variant 𠂤 recorded in the *Shuōwén*, the stone classics, and the *Gǔwén Sìshēngyùn* 古文四聲韻, which is composed of the semantic 人 ('person') and the phonetic 死. These graphic variants all indicate a liquid component in the Old Chinese onset of the character 伊 (*pace* OCBS ***ʔij***).

6. The phonetic translation of a Kra-Dai word "good" as 伊 (MC ***ʔjij***) in an archaic Wu-Yue 吳越 toponym in the *Chūnqiū Gǔliáng Zhuàn* 春秋穀梁傳 (Spring and Autumn Annals - Commentary of Guliang), which corresponds to 眙 in 盱眙 (MC ***xju-yi*** < OC ***hwa-lə***) in present-day Jiāngsū province (SJZZW 2000, 66; Yáng 2016, 1032; Zhèngzhāng 1990, 16–7). cf. Kadai **ʔi**[1] 'good', Zhuang (Wúmíng 武鳴) dei[1] (ZMXSMYYDY 1985, 279; Zhèngzhāng 1990, 16; 2024, 166), Zhuang (Cóngjiāng 從江) **li**[1].

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Grammatical Number in Tuha Haoni

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This presentation investigates from a typological perspective the grammatical number in Haoni, a dialect of the Honi language classified within the Southern Loloish group of Tibeto-Burman. The study is based on primary data collected during fieldwork on a variety spoken in Tuha village, Yuanjiang County, Yuxi City, Yunnan Province, China.
Firstly, the presentation aims to provide an initial synchronic description of the morphosyntax of the two number markers: *tʰɒ³¹* "singular" and *lu³³* "plural,". While overt plural marking is relatively widespread across other Honi dialects, the presence of a dedicated singular marker is typologically rare. However, synchronic analysis suggests it is plausible in Haoni. The referential hierarchy (Croft 2003; Haspelmath 2013) plays a crucial role in determining the distribution of grammatical number: the singular morpheme can only modify kinship and human terms, whereas the plural primarily modifies personal pronouns, kinship, and other human nouns, and can extend to all noun types when co-occurring with demonstratives.
In addressing the semantics and discourse functions of number, the presentation first discusses the interpretation of bare nouns, then turns to definiteness and quantification in both singular and plural contexts, briefly comparing these with numeral classifier constructions. The study also establishes the number system of Tuha Haoni following the typological criteria proposed by Corbett (2004).
By comparing grammatical number in other Honi dialects (Yang 2021 for Woni; Zhang 2024 for Mojiang Haoni), this presentation also puts forward a preliminary hypothesis for the emergence of the singular marker. Adopting a source-oriented typology (Cristofaro 2019), it argues that the marker arose through reanalysis of a numeral classifier construction meaning "one human".

Keywords: grammatical number, Tuha Haoni, referential hierarchy, linguistic typology, Southern Loloish

Examples:

(1) ŋɒ^{5} a^{55}pi^{3} **tʰɒ^{3}** jo^{5} jɒ^{31}mu^{5}
5 3 **1** 5 5
1SG child **SG** OBL see
'I see (a) child.'

(2) ŋɒ^{5} a^{55}pi^{3} **lu^{3}** jo^{5} jɒ^{31}mu^{5}
5 3 **3** 5 5
1SG child **PL** OBL see
'I see children.'

(3) a^{55}ko^{33} **tʰɒ^{3}** ɒ^{31}ni^{55} **tʰɒ^{3}** tʰa^{3} jɒ^{55} kɒ^{3}
1 **1** 3 3
elder.brother **SG** younger.brother **SG** than more tall
'The elder brother (is) taller than the younger brother.'

(4) ja^{31}ju^{33}jɒ^{3} t^{h}i^{33} **lu^{3}** ɒ^{55}xo^{5} ts^{h}u^{33}tsɒ^{3}
1 **3** 5 1
man DIST **PL** house build
'These men build (a) house/houses.'

(5) *ji^{3} jɒ^{31}mi^{31}jɒ^{3} **t^{h}ɒ^{3}** **t^{h}i^{31}-kɒ^{31}** ɕi^{31}tʂ^{h}ɻ^{55}ɒ^{31}ɕi ɬɤ^{31}
3 1 1 31
prox woman **SG** **one-CL$_{human}$** pear peel
Agrammatical

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Evidence for dialectal diversity in Imperial Times, and linguistic parameters for determining the provenance of Old Tibetan texts

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This presentation investigates linguistic characteristics of modern Tibetan dialects from two different regions, and discusses evidence for the same traits in Old Tibetan (OT). Classical Tibetan (ClT) has a number of verbs with a present stem in *ʾG-* ([*ŋG-*], e.g. *ʾgugs* 'bend' and *ʾdon* 'take out', modern Amdo *ŋgəç* and *ndon*) and a past stem in *bK-* ([*pK-*], *bkug* and *bton*, Amdo *pkəç* and *pton*), but the past stems are different for labial initials: their initial *ph-* lacks the *b-* [*p-*] prefix which all other initials have, and is aspirated instead (*ph-*, as in *phog* 'put down' and *phul* 'give'). In a vast area of modern dialects from Tsang to Ladakh, however, the same stems are shown in the Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects (CDTD) to have an unaspirated initial *p-* (e.g. Trangtse *pōk* and Leh *pul*). What is more, this *p-* occurs already in the Chronicle (as in *pog(s)* and *pul*, see `https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/archives?p=Pt_1287`) from the first half of the ninth century (cf. Zeisler 2016) and a few other OT texts, and I will argue that it may be interpreted as suggesting that these texts originate from Ü-Tsang.

In Amdo, by contrast, the same verb initials appear to have been pronounced as *ph-* already in Imperial Times. This aspirated pronunciation predominated in the OT contracts from Dunhuang (most of which are from the first half of the ninth century), and it became the only possible spelling in ClT. And while present > imperfective and past > perfective stems for non-labial initials continued to be marked by *ŋG-* and *pK-* in Amdo, imperfective stems with labial initials are regularly found there to have initial *m-ph-* instead of the expected *m-b-*. That is, a nasal prefix came to distinguish imperfective (*m-ph-*) from perfective (*ph-*) stems for verbs with labial initials, and in fact many other voiceless aspirated initials likewise (i.e. dozens of verbs have imperfective *N-Kh-* and perfective *Kh-*), as well as *ʾchi* [*ntɕʰi*] 'die' and *ʾchar* [*ntɕʰar*] 'rise', which were derived from *ɕi* and *ɕar* (for the epenthetic *-t-*, see Sprigg 1970). The fact that nasal prefixed present stems such as *ʾchi* and *ʾchar* are among modern dialects found only in Amdo (and northern Kham) makes it appear likely that OT texts in which such present stems occur also originate from that region, and that ClT was also strongly influenced by the variety spoken there in Imperial Times.

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Grammaticalization of demonstratives and the nominal structure in nDrapa

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Background: nDrapa is a subgroup of the Qiangic languages spoken in Western China, which exhibits an AOV/SV order. Similar to Chinese, nDrapa employs a classifier system and lacks overt (in)definite articles like English 'a'/'the', which aligns with the typological observation that languages with obligatory classifier systems generally do not develop (in)definite markers (Chierchia 1998, Bošković 2012). However, nDrapa diverges from this expectation by possessing a demonstrative like definite marker *-mbəʐə*, which is semantically equivalent to the distal demonstrative *tʊʐə4* according to Huang (2018, 2022).

(1) nu^{2} **tʊʐə^{4}** s^{h}uɪ^{1} t^{h}umt^{h}um^{3} **tɛ-ji^{3}-mbəʐə-wu** və^{1} dzu^{2}.
2SG DIS person tall **one-CL-DEF-DAT** come call
'You call that tall person to come.'

Proposal: Firstly, building on Huang (2022), we provide additional evidence to show that *-mb* has evolved into a pure definite marker, which behaves like a strong definite article in the sense of Schwarz (2009). We observe that *-mbəʐə* can freely co-occur with proximal and medial demonstratives, as illustrated in (2). Moreover, its ability to appear in bridging contexts strongly suggests that *-mbəʐə* has lost the deictic function.

(2) **kəʐə^{4}/kutɕozə^{4}** tɕuɪ^{1}**-mbəʐə** tɔtɔ^{3} jiji-zɨ^{3} tɜ-ʐɛ^{2}.
PROX/MED fish**-DEF** very small-DIM COP-GNO
'This fish is very small.'

(3) tɛɳə^{1}, pədʑə^{3} tɛ-ji^{1} ŋə^{1}-ʂtɕi^{2}-a-ʐɛ^{3}-dɛdʐɛ^{1}. mɪ^{3}-mbəʐə təʐə^{3} me^{1} tɛ-ji^{1}
one.day child one-CL DIR-born-N.EGO-GNO-HS mother-DEF 3SG name one-CL
kə-t^{h}ɛ^{2}-ʂtia tʊʐə^{3} Tʂesɛ^{4} bdze-a^{3}-ʐɛ.
DIR-get-PFV:N.EGO 3SG Tʂesɛ say-N.EGO-GNO
'One day, a child was born. The mother named him Tʂesɛ.' (Modified from Huang 2022)

Secondly, we argue for the following nominal structure for nDrapa that can capture the co-occurrence of classifiers and definite markers, as illustrated in (4).

(4) [$_{DP}$ DEM-*tʊʐə* [$_{D}$ [$_{NumP}$ [$_{NumP}$ [$_{NP}$ N-*s^{h}ur* Modifier-*t^{h}umt^{h}um*] Num-*tɛ*] CL-*ji*] D-*mbəʐə*]]

The demonstrative occupies the Spec of DP and as a definite marker, *-mbəʐə* serves as the D head. The distinct division of labor between the definite marker and classifier in the current case suggests that classifiers may not have a direct relation with (in)definiteness, different from Cantonese language (see Cheng & Sybesma 1999). If definiteness is encoded on classifiers, it is unlikely for *-mbəʐə* to be grammaticalized to exercise the same function in the same language.

Finally, while the use of *-mbəʐə* as a definite marker is widely attested in the southern region of nDrapa (see Huang 2018), it is not observed in the northern region (cf. Gong 2007; Shirai 2019, 2022). We propose that this regional variation may stem from differences in the degree of language contact. As highlighted in Huang (2024), northern nDrapa has primarily been in contact with Khams Tibetan. In contrast, southern nDrapa

has experienced intensive contact with southwestern Mandarin in recent decades. Under extreme language contact, where individuals acquire two languages in childhood and one is a minority language, the minority language often accelerates incipient changes that would typically unfold over a much longer period (Kupisch & Polinsky 2022). For southern nDrapa, the intense contact with Mandarin may have amplified the grammaticalization of *-mbəʐə* into a definite marker, which usually takes centuries diachronically (Greenberg 1978), leading to the regional divergence.

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Semi-Lexicalization and Semi-Grammaticalization in Intensifier Adjective Constructions

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Intensifier adjective constructions represent a distinctive form of expressive adjective formation in Sinitic languages, typically comprising a monosyllabic core adjective combined with an expressive morpheme. Their primary function is to amplify the descriptive or modifying effect of the core adjective. Constructions such as "飞快" (fēi-kuài, 'fly-fast,' very fast) and "冰寒" (bīng-hán, 'ice-cold,' very cold) explicitly convey intensification through vivid imagery, while adjectives like "天蓝" (tiān-lán, 'sky blue') carry descriptive but non-intensified meanings. Many Sinitic languages exhibit analogous yet regionally distinct forms, reflecting both common underlying patterns and functional variation.
Primarily observedin East Asian languages, these constructions are typologically significant yet highly language-specific. Existing studies have focused predominantly on stative adjectives in modern Sinitic languages; however, research on intensified adjective constructions has remained fragmented and overly homogenized, often limited to isolated dialectal data. These constructions, traditionally categorized as XA or BA (A = core adjective, X/B = non-core element), have typically been analyzed with a focus on identifying the word class of the non-core element and exploring the syntactic functions of the construction lacking detailed investigation. Yet intensifier constructions display substantial internal variation, which has been overlooked. In particular, studies addressing lexicalization and grammaticalization processes in these constructions remain scarce.
Adopting an integrated framework that incorporates both dynamic and static perspectives, as well as macro-level and regional analyses,this study investigates intensifier–adjective constructions across the Sinitic languages, focusing on their morphosyntactic features, semantic properties, and intensifying functions. It systematically classifies intensifier–adjective constructions into three types and explores their internal variation.
Type A: These constructions maintain lexical independence, exhibit strong analogical productivity, are semantically transparent, and have identifiable lexical sources. e.g.

雪白 xuě-bái, 'snow-white,' very white

Type B: These are fixed or with some conventionalized forms (e.g.idioms). They show reduced semantic transparency but still involve identifiable lexical sources or homophonous elements.e.g.

瘟苦 wēn-kǔ, 'negative meaning-bitter,' very bitter

瘟臭 wēn-chòu, ''negative meaning-stinky,' very stinky

Type C: In these constructions, a non-core element evolves into an intensifier. It combines freely with adjectives (though within a limited inventory), is semantically opaque, and often involves homophones or phonological approximations, .e.g.

kuat5新 kuat5- xīn„' very-new

kuat5甜 kuat5-tián,'very-sweet

kuat5热 kuat5-rè,' very-hot

……

The progression from Type A to Type B reflects a process of semilexicalization, in which originally independent free roots gradually cohere into compounds. At this stage, constructions are analyzed holistically, and some become conventionalized into fixed lexical items—albeit with constrained distribution in particular domains—while others undergo the semigrammaticalization trajectory into Type C. The noncore element then detaches from the construction to function as a highly productive grammatical marker, remaining strictly bound to core-adjectives.

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Motion Event Expressions of the Luzhou dialect of Chinese

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This study focuses on the motion event expressions of the Luzhou dialect of Chinese, which is spoken in Sichuan, China.
Regarding the classification of motion events, Talmy (1991) claimed that the languages can be divided into two types: verb-framed languages and satellite-framed languages. Slobin (2004) advocates that there should be a third type: equipollently-framed languages. (Hereinafter, these three types will refer to as V-type, S-type, and E-type). As for the motion events in Chinese, previous studies said that the self-agentive motion events in Mandarin can be a mixed type of V-type and S-type, and the cause motion events as S-type (Lamarre 2017), which is totally acceptable. However, we recognize that there are great differences in the strategies for the motion event expression among the Southwestern Mandarin subdialects. For example, in the Wuhan dialect, they often use "去了回" to express "go and come back soon". Similarly, the Luzhou dialect employs expressions like "来了去" to denote "Someone came but has already left". These usages clearly do not fit S-type or V-type, but rather exhibit E-type features. Nevertheless, we did not find any previous research on these phenomena. Based on the natural conversations cited from fieldwork, this paper aims to describe the motion event expressions of the Luzhou dialect.
The motion events in the Luzhou dialect share the following four common features:

1. Multiple verb clauses are used to describe a complete motion event. And in terms of word order, it strictly follows the principle of temporal sequence.

(1) na^{23} tsou^{53} nu^{31}tsou^{35} tɕi^{23} sua^{53} no^{0} nai^{31}
3SG PREP Luzhou go-V1 visit-V2 PERF come-V3
'She/He went to Luzhou for a visit and has come back.'

2. They generally utilize the prepositions grammaticalized from the verbs, such as /tai^{21}/ (在, at) and /tsou^{53}/ (走, walk). Among these, /tsou^{53}/ is most frequently employed and can indicate source, path and goal. When /tai^{21}/functions as a preposition, it can co-occur with /nai^{31}/(来, come) and /tɕi^{23}/(去, go).

(2) **tai**^{21} zi^{23}pɔ̃^{53} **tɕi**^{23} ny^{53}iu^{31}
PREP JAPAN **go-V1** travel
'travel to Japan'

3. In the motion expressions, the nouns other than place names should be followed by the localizer.

(3) tsou^{53} pau^{35}pau^{55} **thou**^{31} na^{31} tɕi^{53} tshu^{23} nai^{31}
from-PREP bag **LCLZ** take start-point out come
'Take it out from the bag'

4. The actions occurring along the path are also overtly encoded.

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Possessive Constructions in the Baoji Dialect

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Possessive constructions involve not only the interaction of morphosyntactic and semantic relation, but also reflect broader patterns of language evolution, cross-linguistic universals, and sociolinguistic influences (Heine 1997; Dixon 2010). This study explores the various strategies for expressing possession—including alienable/inalienable distinctions and part-whole relations—in the Baoji dialect, a representative variety of Central Plains Mandarin within the Guanzhong subgroup, spoken in central Shaanxi province.
Adopting a typological perspective, the data analysed are based on first-hand fieldwork conducted by the author in a rural area of Baoji. One notable feature is that possessive forms of personal pronouns are identical to their plural forms and are distinguished from the singular only by tone: a falling tone marks singular, while a dipping tone indicates plural and possessive. This pattern may reflect a historical merger caused by the loss of a plural suffix, which could have originally served as a possessive marker.

(1) wa^{33} t^{h}a^{312} pa^{33}
child 3GEN father
'child's father' lit. child, his/her father

The study further examines several possessive markers in the Baoji dialect, including ***ti***, which is functionally similar to Mandarin 的 *de*, the frequently used clitic ***ke***, and ***u***^{51}, a marker derived from the locative noun meaning 'house'. The clitic ***ke*** is particularly multifunctional, also serving as a third-person pronoun, a demonstrative, and a nominalization marker.
Two additional phenomena are highlighted. First, recursive possessive constructions are frequently attested. Second, possessive phrases show a strong correlation with definiteness, often co-occurring with demonstratives at the syntactic level.

(2) ŋɤ^{312} u^{51} kɛ^{51} tɕ^{h}jɛ^{31} ɕjɛn^{31}
1GEN GEN/house DEM shovel
'my shovel'

Finally, the study investigates the phenomenon of ellipsis in possessive constructions. In these constructions, the overt possessive marker is absent, yet demonstratives remain strongly prominent.

Keywords: Baoji dialect, possessive constructions, grammaticalization, ellipsis, typology

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An Empirical Study on Grammatical Tone Change in Jino Language

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This paper presents an empirical study of grammatical tone change and prosodic salience in Jino (ISO 639-3: jiu), a Lolo-Burmese language of the Sino-Tibetan family spoken in Baka Village, Yunnan, China. Building on the recent typological interest in non-arbitrary form–meaning mappings, we explore how pitch alternations in Jino go beyond lexical distinctions to signal morphosyntactic and discourse-level meanings — thus contributing to ongoing discussions of grammatical tone at the phonology–syntax interface (Rolle 2018; Michaud 2006; Ozerov 2021).
The study draws on first-hand field data, including 510 elicited utterances and 10 semi-natural conversational excerpts, recorded with four native speakers (2 male, 2 female, avg. age 62) using high-fidelity equipment (Zoom H6 + Audio- Technica AT9904). Recordings were conducted indoors with informed consent and village-level ethical approval. Transcription and glossing were carried out collaboratively with community members.

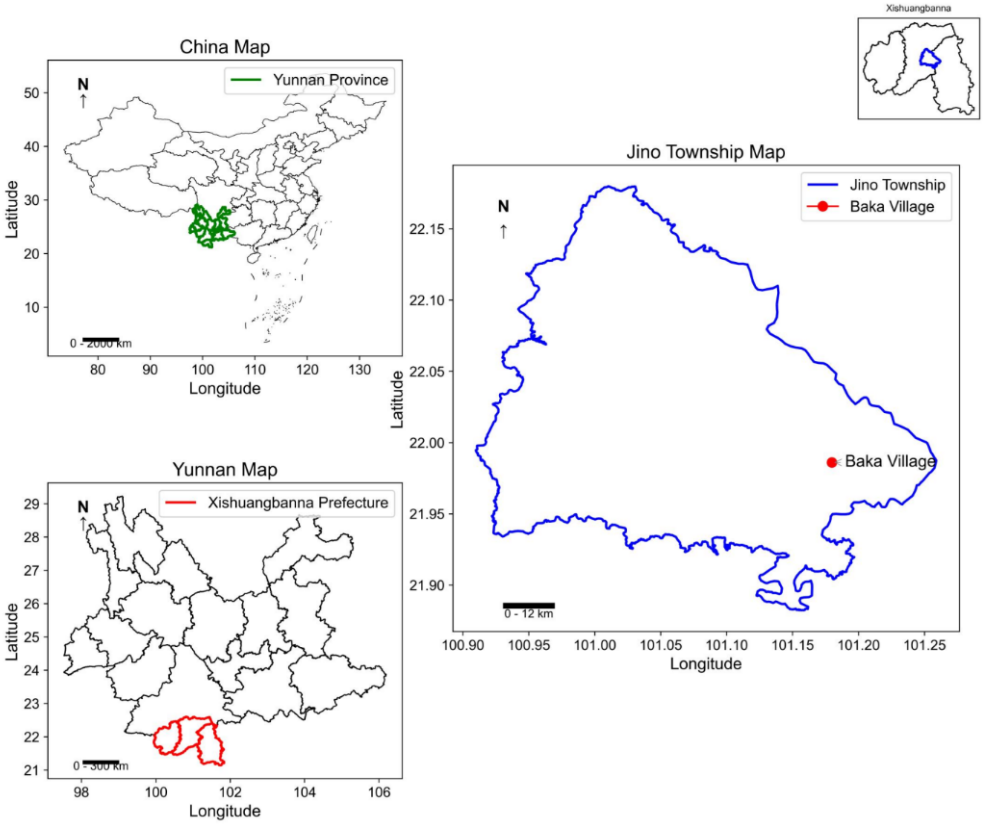

Figure 1: The geographical location of Baka Village

Jino phonology and grammar provide a rich typological context. The language has 40 initial consonants, 19 vowels, and five surface tones (/55/, /44/, /33/, /31/, /35/). Tone sandhi in bisyllabic constructions typically reduces high tones to mid. Jino is analytically

structured with SOV word order, minimal inflection, and heavy reliance on particles and compounding. The tone /35/, although rare lexically, frequently emerges through morphosyntactic alternation (Zhou 2024).
Our analysis reveals that **rising pitch contours (e.g., /35/, /351/)** occur across key grammatical environments:

- **Demonstratives** mark definiteness and distance through rising tone and vowel lengthening*:

(1) $k^hɤ:^{351}(k^hɤ^{31})$ $k^hɤ^{31}$-a^{33} $man^{35}vu^{31}$-a^{33} le^{33}-$jɔ^{31}$ $n̥œ^{31}ɔ^{44}$ k^ha^{33}-$jɔ^{55}$.
DEM + DEF + DIST DEM-LOC Manwu-LOC go-SUBJV Xiaohei river cross-SUBJV
'If (someone) wants to go to Manwu (that remote place), they have to cross Xiaohei River.'

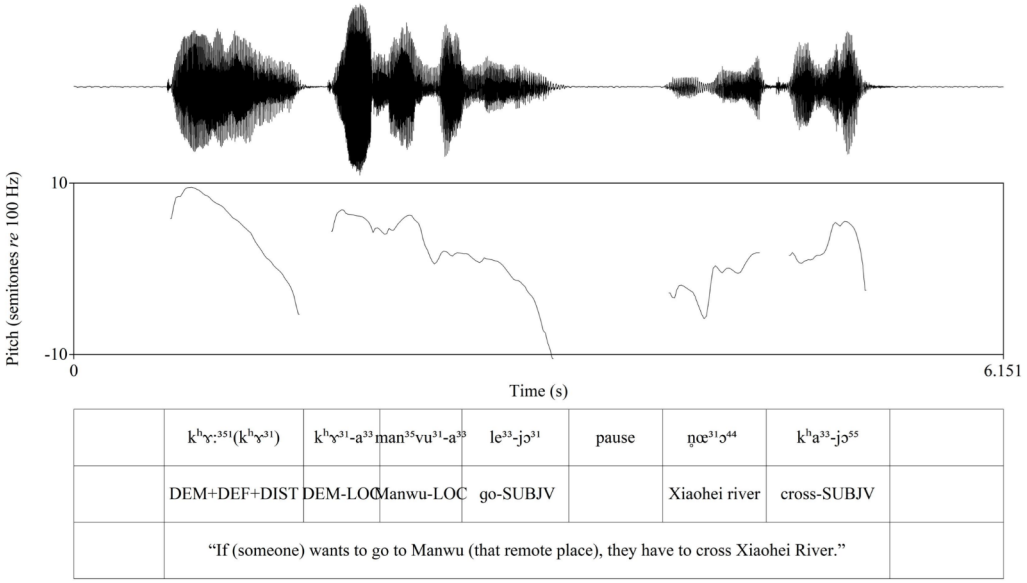

Figure 2: Tonal alternation in Jino demonstratives: rising pitch marking definiteness and distal deixis

- **Adjectives** used as resultative complements obligatorily rise in pitch:

(2) xji^{33} $ŋɔ^{31}=ɛ^{55}$ $tʃ^hɻ^{31}k^hɤ^{44}$ $a^{44}p^ha^{31}$ p^ha^{31}-k^hjo^{35} (k^hjo^{31})-$lɯ^{33}$ $nœ^{33}$.
DEM 1SG=POSS Chike cracked to crack-complete-become SFP
'My Chike instrument has completely cracked.'

* The form inside the parentheses represents the word's citation form.

- **Expressive adjectives** exhibit non-obligatory pitch rise and vowel lengthening:

(3) xji^{33} a^{44}sɯ^{44} a^{44}ʧʰɻ:^{353} (ʧʰɻ^{44}).
DEM fruit sweet-SUP
'This fruit is super sweet.'

- **Nouns** under identificational focus show pitch enhancement:

(4) mja^{31}**sɯ**^{41}(**sɯ**^{44}) kh**ɤ**^{31} khjo^{44}lo^{44}-a^{33} a^{44}**tsŋ**^{33}-a^{33} mja^{31} **sɯ**^{44}-**ɛ**^{33} khu^{44} nœ^{33}.
eyeball-DEF DEM inner space-LOC eye-LOC eyeball-AUX to call SFP
'The eyeball is the thing we call the bead inside the eye.'

- **Verbs** expressing habitual actions rise tonally:

(5) pu^{44} ʧhe^{44}-m̥a^{55} ɯ^{33} te^{33} m^{31}-tsɔ^{35} (tsɔ^{44}) nœ^{33}.
Tai Lue people-PL DECL paddy field to make-eat SFP
'The Tai Lue people rely on the paddy field for their livelihood.'

A key phenomenon is the tonal behavior of the genitive clitic /**ɛ**^{55}/, which fuses with the preceding host and triggers pitch rise:

(6) n**ɤ**^{31} ɛ^{55} ɔ^{31} thu^{31} → nɛ^{35} ɔ^{31} thu^{31}
2SG GEN ASSERT DIST
'That is yours.'

- **Fusion is gradient** if the host is already high-toned, pitch remains flat (/55/), suggesting segmental and tonal interaction (Zhou & Lin 2024). This behavior resembles floating tone patterns in Naxi (Michaud 2006), possibly representing an intermediate stage in tonal grammaticalization.

In sum, the study shows that grammatical tone in Jino is both structurally systematic and pragmatically flexible, used not only to encode definiteness, aspect, and habituality, but also to manage speaker intent and information structure. These findings demonstrate the role of prosodic salience — pitch, duration, intensity — in the organization of tonal grammar in spontaneous discourse.

Keywords: grammatical tone, prosodic salience, tone–syntax interface, non-arbitrariness, Jino language, tonal fusion, field linguistics

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