

**Grammatical change in North East India – the case of Tangsa**  
Stephen Morey

**1 Introduction – the Tangsa**

**2 Theoretical background**

**2.1 General historical principles**

**2.2 Pronominalization / agreement in Tibeto-Burman studies**

Caughley (1982:206) “The wide variation in pronominal affixation between, and even within, the various TB languages points to the relatively recent origins of these systems.”

DeLancey (1989:317) “we will see that there is in fact one paradigm, definable both by morphological form and paradigmatic structure, which is attested in at least one representative in almost every branch of the family, and that this paradigm, at least, must therefore be reconstructed for their common ancestor, PTB [proto Tibeto-Burman].”

**Table 1: Jinghpaw SFW agreement endings (From DeLancey 2010)**

1 <sup>st</sup>	-ing / -eng	-iʔ / -eʔ
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-in / -en	-it / -et

**Table 2: Nocte paradigm (data from DeLancey 2010)**

Intrans.	1SG		1PL		2SG		2PL		3		
	V-Λη <sup>1</sup>		V-ε <sup>1</sup>		V-ɔʔ		V-Λη <sup>1</sup>		V-a <sup>1</sup>		
Trans.	1SG>2	1SG>3	1PL>2	1PL>3	2SG>1	2SG>3	2PL>1	2PL>3	3>1	3>2	3>3
Pres.	V-ε <sup>1</sup>	V-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-ε <sup>1</sup>		V-h-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-ɔʔ	V-h-εʔ	V-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-h-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-h-ɔʔ	V-a <sup>1</sup>
Past	V-t-iʔ	V-t-Λk	V-t-iʔ		V-th-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-t-ɔʔ	V-th-εʔ	V-t-Λt	V-th-Λη <sup>1</sup>	V-th-ɔʔ	V-t-aʔ

**3 The Tangsa language varieties exemplified**

Cholim Tangsa:

- 1) ... ai      gue      lot      mang      gue      lot      mang      ...  
 ... ai<sup>3</sup>      gu<sup>2</sup>      lot<sup>2</sup>      maŋ<sup>3</sup>      gu<sup>2</sup>      lot<sup>2</sup>      maŋ<sup>3</sup>      ...  
 .. VOC      carry      able      NEG.1SG      carry      able      NEG.1SG      ...  
 ‘...“Ah, I cannot carry them, I cannot carry them ...”’

SDM12-20091226-01\_SM\_T\_FloodStory (4)

In this example the agent pronoun *ŋe<sup>1</sup>* was not spelled out. The Lochhang example is in (2)

- 2) ŋgi      le      ghui      dai      mau      ngu      tãngu      va.  
 ŋi<sup>1</sup>      le<sup>2</sup>      yui<sup>2</sup>      dai<sup>2</sup>      mau<sup>3</sup>      ŋu<sup>2</sup>      tə=ŋu<sup>2</sup>      va<sup>2</sup>  
 1SG      SAL      carry      become      NEG.1SG      say      PST=say      RL  
 “‘I cannot carry them,’ she said, it is said.’

SDM15-20081226-03\_SM\_T\_MountainSpiritStory (13)

The Joglei (Joklei) Tangsa example in (3)

- 3) ... nga      ko      hul-chi-mak      shu.  
 ... 1SG      AG?      carry-able-NEG.1SG      fully  
 “‘...I am not able to carry (them).’”

SDM34-20100126-133559\_JS\_E\_Thakna\_FloodStory.wav (15)

Each of these three examples have cognate forms for the word ‘carry’ but employ different words for ‘able’ and different forms for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular negative. Although all three negatives have initial m-, Cholim has a nasal final whereas Joglei employs a stop final in the same place of articulation (-ŋ and -k

respectively). Lochhang has neutralisation of contrast between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular in the negative, hence *mau*.

The Rera example in (4) is completely different in structure. Here negation is shown by an invariant particle / prefix that **precedes** the verbal complex with TAM/person marking following.

- 4)    nga        mih        kãra        mi        gun        nok        lang.  
       1SG        person    that        NEG        carry     able        1SG  
       ‘I am not able to carry the people.’

SDM25-20100106-05\_SM\_T\_FloodStory (9)

The fact that the negative precedes the whole verbal complex (*gun nok*) suggests that these TAM/person morphs should be treated as clitics rather than affixes.

Our final example from the flood story is from Maitai Tangsa, where there is an invariant singular negative shown in (5).

- 5)    ...        nga        mung kang    mih sa    hoi        dai        muh        so.  
       ...        ŋa<sup>2</sup>        muŋ<sup>2</sup>kaŋ<sup>1</sup>    mi<sup>?</sup>sa<sup>1</sup>    hoi<sup>3</sup>        dai<sup>1</sup>        mu<sup>?</sup>        so<sup>3</sup>  
       ...        1SG        world        people     carry     able        NEG.SG    fully  
       ‘... “I cannot carry the people of this world.”’

SDM17-20111112-06\_SM\_JVC\_Tonwang\_FloodStory (18)

Table 3 presents correspondences and differences between the five varieties.

**Table 3: Correspondences demonstrated by examples (1) to (5):**

	Negation marks person agreement not TAM			Negation marks person agreement and TAM	Negation invariant
English	Cholim	Lochhang	Joglei	Rera	Maitai
I	ŋe <sup>1</sup>	ŋi <sup>1</sup>	nga	nga	ŋa <sup>2</sup>
carry	gu <sup>2</sup>	yui <sup>2</sup>	hul	gun <sup>2</sup>	hoi <sup>3</sup>
NEG	V-mAGR	V-mAGR	V-mAGR	mi-V-TAM.AGR	V-muh
able	lot <sup>2</sup>	dai <sup>2</sup>	chi	nok	dai <sup>1</sup>

### 3.1 Song language

The fact that the song language is closer to the proto (and the related language Singpho) is demonstrated in Table 4

**Table 4: Comparison of song language and spoken varieties**

Proto TB	Singpho	(Mungray) Song language	Mungray spoken	Chamchang spoken	Cholim spoken	Gloss
-a	-a	-a	-ai	-i (-e)	-e	
*m-ka	chinghka	kalue	kailung	kilü	kelyo	‘door’
*na	na	na	nai	ni	nekyoe	‘ear’
	-	ka	kai	ki	ke	‘go’
*tsa~*za	kãsa	sa	sai	se	se	‘child’
*m	n-V	n-V	V-m-AGR	V-m-AGR	V-m-AGR	‘negation’

#### 4 Tangsa agreement markers

Table 5: Tangsa agreement markers in various Tangsa varieties, based on data collected (\* - not recorded)

	Negative					Past					Future				
	1		2		3	1		2		3	1		2		3
	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg
Cholim	V-maŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-mi <sup>3</sup>	V-mu <sup>3</sup>	V-miŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-mu <sup>?</sup> 1	V-kyo <sup>3</sup>	V-ki <sup>3</sup>	V-ku <sup>3</sup>	V-kiŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-tu <sup>?</sup> 1	me <sup>1</sup> -V-aŋ <sup>3</sup>	me <sup>1</sup> -V-i <sup>3</sup>	me <sup>1</sup> -V-u <sup>3</sup>	me <sup>1</sup> -V-iŋ <sup>3</sup>	me <sup>1</sup> -V
Longri	V-maŋ	V-mi	V-mu	V-min	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-ko	V-ki	V-ku	V-kin	V-tə-va	ma-V-aŋ	ma-V-i	ma-V-u	ma-V-in	ma-V
Lochhang	V-mau <sup>3</sup>	V-mai <sup>3</sup>	V-mau <sup>3</sup>	V-man <sup>3</sup>	V-mok	V-keŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-kai <sup>3</sup>	V-lau <sup>3</sup>	V-lan <sup>3</sup>	V-tə-wa	mə-V-a <sup>3</sup>	mə-V-ai <sup>3</sup>	mə-V-au <sup>3</sup>	mə-V-an <sup>3</sup>	mə-V
Chamchang	V maŋ <sup>3</sup>	V mai <sup>3</sup>	V mau <sup>3</sup>	V man <sup>3</sup>	V mak	V-kaŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-kai <sup>3</sup>	V-lau <sup>3</sup>	V-lan <sup>3</sup>	V-to <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>2</sup> -V-ha <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>2</sup> -V-i <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>2</sup> -V-hau <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>2</sup> -V-han <sup>3</sup>	mi <sup>2</sup> -V
Rera	mi-V-laŋ	mi-V-i	mi-V-u	mi-V-lan	mi-V	V-taŋ	V-ti	V-tu	V-tan	V-to	ma-V-laŋ	ma-V-i	ma-V-u	ma-V-lan	ma-V
Khalak	n-V	n-V	n_V	n-V	n-V	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mungray	V-i-mok	V-i-mik	V-i-mok	V-i-mat	V-i-mok	V-taq	V-tik	V-taq	V-tit	V-taq	me-V-ŋəŋ	me-V-ŋəi	me-V-ŋoŋ	me-V-ŋəŋ	me-V
Ngaimong	V-muk	V-mi <sup>?</sup>	V-mo <sup>?</sup>	V-mit	V-mo <sup>?</sup>	V-tək	V-ti <sup>?</sup>	V-to <sup>?</sup>	V-tit	V-ta <sup>?</sup>	ɸ <sup>1</sup> -V-əŋ <sup>3</sup>	ɸ <sup>1</sup> -V-əi <sup>3</sup>	ɸ <sup>1</sup> -V-əu <sup>3</sup>	ɸ <sup>1</sup> -V-in <sup>3</sup>	a <sup>1</sup> -V
Joklei	V-mak	V-məi <sup>?</sup>	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-mit	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-tak	V-təi <sup>?</sup>	V-tu <sup>?</sup>	V-tit	V-ta <sup>?</sup>	a-V-aŋ	a-V-i	a-V-u	a-V-in	a-V
Mueshaungx (1)	V-mauk	V-mi <sup>?</sup>	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-mɔt	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-tauk	V-ti <sup>?</sup>	V-to <sup>?</sup>	V-tɔt	V-tu <sup>?</sup>	V-ɸaŋ <sup>2</sup>	V-ɸi <sup>2</sup>	V-ɸɔu <sup>2</sup>	V-ɸɔn <sup>2</sup>	V-ɸu <sup>2</sup>
(2)	as (1)					as (1)					V-tauŋ <sup>2</sup>	V-ti <sup>2</sup>	V-tɔu <sup>2</sup>	V-tɔn <sup>2</sup>	V-tu <sup>2</sup>
Yongkuk	V-maŋ	V-mai	V-mau	V-man	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-taŋ	V-tai	V-tau	V-tan	V-ta	V-caŋ	V-cai	V-cau	V-can	V-ca
Tikhak <sup>1</sup>	V-màŋ	V-mè	V-mṣ̃	V-mən	V-mṣ̃ <sup>?</sup>	V-tàŋ	V-tè	V-tṣ̃	V-tən	V-tə <sup>?</sup>	V-tçàŋ	V-tçè	V-tçṣ̃	V-tçən	V-tçi <sup>?</sup> , V-tçə
Muklom	V-moŋ	V-mi	V-mu	V-min	V-mo <sup>?</sup>	V-taŋ	V-ti	V-tu	V-tin	V-ta	V-naŋ	V-ni	V-nu	V-nin	V-na
Phong	V-muŋ	V-m <sup>w</sup> i	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-mun	V-mu <sup>?</sup>	V-taŋ	V-te	V-tu(?)	V-tan	V-ta(?)	V-aŋ	V-e	V-u(?)	V-an	V-a
Hakhun	V-mɔ <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>	V-mo <sup>1</sup>	V-mat <sup>1</sup>	V-ma <sup>1</sup>	V-tɔ <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>	V-to <sup>1</sup>	V-tat <sup>1</sup>	V-ta <sup>1</sup>	V-ɔ <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>	V-o <sup>3</sup>	V-an <sup>3</sup>	V-a <sup>3</sup>

#### Observations

- 1) Mueshaungx has two verb classes, with different endings in the future, depending on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive
- 2) NEG: All varieties have a postpositional particle / postclitic / suffix to indicate negative, except for Rera and Khalak. The postposition is marked for person and number, except for the following mergers in the NEG singular – 1-3 in Mungray, 2 & 3 in Mueshaungx, Ngaimong, Joklei, and Phong 1 & 2 in Lochhang (but not in Chamchang)
- 3) Rera (and Rinkhu) express negation with a prepositional particle / prefix mi- followed by agreement markers. Khalak, which we have not been able to collect a full paradigm for, marks negation by a preverbal syllable n- which is the same as Singpho, song language and perhaps proto Sino-Tibetan<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Paul Hastie for providing data about the Tikhak variety.

- 4) The Negative forms in Phong all have back vowels /u/, except for the 1<sup>st</sup> plural, which still has the /i/ vowel but the consonant is expressed with a labio-velarisation, which we have notated as /m<sup>w</sup>i/.
- 5) FUT: This is shown by a prepositional particle / prefix commencing in m- in Cholim, Longri, Lochhang, Chamchang, Mungray, Rera; by a prefix a- in Ngaimong and Joklei; in each case these are invariant forms and the person/number is marked by an element following the verb. The initial consonant of this form in Mungray is ŋ- which may be related to the Muklom n-.
- 6) There is no form prefixing or preceding the verb in the other varieties, but postclitics with initial n- in Muklom, ʃ- in Mueshaungx, c- in Yongkuk, tɕ- in Tikhak and person/number agreement. Muklom has a complex form *-che*-AGR for the ‘continuous / progressive’, which may be related to the c- ~ tɕ- initial in Yongkuk and Tikhak. There is no preceding consonant in Hakhun or Phong.
- 7) PAST: All past constructions employ postpositional particle / postclitic / suffix. This commences with t- in Rera, Mueshaungx, Ngaimong, Joklei, Muklom, Yongkuk, Tikhak, Hakhun; in k- (except for 3<sup>rd</sup> person t-) in Cholim and Longri, and k- and l- mixed with t- in Lochhang and Chamchang. As with the negative, Mungray has merged the forms for all three singular persons to -ta?
- 8) FINAL STOPS vs NASALS.
  - a. Final nasals / open throughout found as follows
    - (i) all future forms, (ii) all forms in Rera and (iii) Chamchang, Lochhang, Muklom and Yongkuk past
  - b. Final stops throughout are found in:
    - (i) Mungray negative and (ii) Mueshaungx, Ngaimong and Joklei negative and past
  - c. Mixed systems (3 is stop, others open)
    - (i) Longri and Cholim, Tikhak negative and past
    - (ii) Lochhang and Chamchang and Muklom, Yongkuk – negative only
    - (iii) Hakhun has final stop only in the past and negative 2PL
- 9) 1<sup>st</sup> SINGULAR FINALS. All the varieties have a velar stop (either oral or nasal) for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, except for
  - a. Lochhang 1Sg negative, which has merged with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person in the form *mau*,
  - b. Lochhang and Chamchang 1Sg future, both of which have -a finals
  - c. Cholim and Longri 1Sg past, both of which have final -o. This does appear to be a regular sound change between a putative proto *-\*aŋ* and /-o/ in these two varieties for grammatical words, for example the negative existential /agjo/ in Cholim is /ayjaŋ/ in Lochhang.
  - d. Hakhun 1Sg forms are all /-x/, note that this is not the form in Nocte as DeLancey points out above.
- 10) VOWELS The vowels of the second plural are /a/ vowels in Lochhang, Chamchang, Rera, Mungray, Yongkuk, Tikhak, Hakhun and Phong (except in the dual, see below Table 13); -i vowels in Cholim, Longri, Ngaimong, Joklei, Muklom, mixed in Mueshaungx. We know that for everyday content lexical items. /a/ in Lochhang and Chamchang corresponds to a likely proto *\*i*, so it tempting to suggest that this is an example of *\*i* > /a/ changes. However, Yongkuk and Tikhak do not exhibit the same vowel changes for content items.
- 11) Some irregularities
  - a. Chamchang FUT 1PL.EXCL mi<sup>2</sup>-V-hai<sup>3</sup> (this is the only evidence of an exclusive ending in Tangsa so far)
  - b. Tikhak FUT.3 form with -i? is not found in other varieties.
  - c. Irregular -ŋ in the 2PL in Cholim

---

<sup>2</sup> Proto *\*ma* prefix is reconstructed. La Polla (pers. comm.) says that “In Sino-Tibetan generally preverbal negation is older”

## 4.1 The Continuous / Present

In some Pangwa Tangsa varieties, there are forms whose function is to show continuous, progressive and habitual aspects. Some of these have initial l-. They may be cognate with the Tikhak/Yongkuk present that shows initial r-, but whose function is different from that of the continuous.

**Table 6: Comparison of Continuous and Past forms**

	Continuous					Past				
	1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3	1SG	1PL	2SG	2PL	3
Ngaimong	V-lak	V-liʔ	V-loq	V-lit	V-laʔ	V-tək	V-tiʔ	V-toʔ	V-tit	V-taʔ
Joklei	V-lak	V-ləiʔ	V-luʔ	V-lit	V	V-tak	V--təiʔ	V-tuʔ	V-tit	V-taʔ
Cholim	V-laŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-li <sup>3</sup>	V-lu <sup>3</sup>	V-liŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-lu <sup>3</sup>	V-kyo <sup>3</sup>	V-ki <sup>3</sup>	V-ku <sup>3</sup>	V-kiŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-tuʔ <sup>1</sup>
Rera	V-sa-laŋ	V-sa-li	V-sa-lu	V-sa-lan	V-sa-lo	V-taŋ	V-ti	V-tu	V-tan	V-to
Lochhang	V-təkəŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-təkai <sup>3</sup>	V-tə-lau <sup>3</sup>	V-tə-lan <sup>3</sup>	V-tə-lə-(wa)	V-kəŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-kai <sup>3</sup>	V-lau <sup>3</sup>	V-lan <sup>3</sup>	V-tə-(wa)
Chamchang	V-təkəŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-təkai <sup>3</sup>	V-təlau <sup>3</sup>	V-təlan <sup>3</sup>	V-təlo <sup>3</sup>	V-kəŋ <sup>3</sup>	V-kai <sup>3</sup>	V-lau <sup>3</sup>	V-lan <sup>3</sup>	V-to <sup>3</sup>
Phong	V-raŋ	V-re	V-ru	V-ran	*	V-taŋ	V-te	V-tu(?)	V-tan	V-ta(?)
Muklom	V-təe-aŋ	V-təe-i	V-təe-u	V-təe-in	V-təe-a	V-tang	V-ti	V-tu	V-tin	V-ta
	Present					Past				
Tikhak	V-rəŋ	V-rè	V-rɿ	V-rən	V-rəʔ	V-təŋ	V-tè	V-tɿ	V-tən	V-təʔ
Yongkuk	V-raŋ	V-rai	V-rau	V-ran	V-ra	V-taŋ	V-tai	V-tau	V-tan	V-ta

Observations:

- 1) Most of the continuous / habitual forms have l- initial, corresponding to t- or k- initial in the past
- 2) Lochhang and Chamchang are unusual in that they have a complex structure, essentially the past form prefixed by tə-
- 3) It seems that Ngaimong represents the most ‘typical’ stop-final form, and Joklei almost copies it, except for a bare final verb in 3<sup>rd</sup> continuous.
- 4) The present forms in Tikhak and Yongkuk, which have no corresponding form in the other varieties listed here, have initial r-. Could this be related to the l- of the continuous in the Pangwa varieties?

## 4.2 Imperative – Future merger

Some of the varieties employ the future system to convey imperative; some have singular-plural distinctions in imperatives and some have hierarchical marking of imperatives: (\* – not recorded; n/f – function not specifically marked in this variety)

**Table 7: Imperatives and Future**

Variety	2SG	2PL	2>1SG	2>1PL	2SGPROH	2PLPROH
l- systems						
Joglei	V-luʔ	V-lit	V-p <sup>h</sup> əu	*	nak-V	nak-V-in
Mueshaung	V-lo-ʔ	*	see below	see below	nak-V-ka <sup>1</sup>	
Cholim	V-laʔ <sup>2</sup>	V-laʔ <sup>2</sup>	n/f	n/f	nak <sup>2</sup> -V-ke <sup>1</sup>	nak <sup>2</sup> -V-ke <sup>1</sup>
Longri	V-laʔ	V-laʔ	n/f	n/f	nak-V-ka	nak-V-ka
Lochhang	V-laʔ	V-ren-laʔ	n/f	n/f	nak-V-ki	
Chamchang	V-laʔ	V-roŋ <sup>2</sup> -laʔ	n/f	n/f	nak <sup>2</sup> -V-ki <sup>1</sup>	nak <sup>2</sup> -V-ki <sup>1</sup>
Rera	V-laʔ	V-pan	n/f	n/f	nak-V-ka	nak-V-pan-ka
Mungray	V-luʔ	V-lat	n/f	n/f	noq-V-keq	
Song Language	V-lo	*	*	*	nak-V	
Merged-systems						
Phong	V-u	V-an	*	*	nak-V-u	nak-V-an
Muklom	V-u	V-shin	V-phau	V-phin	nak-V-uh	*
Mueshaung (1)	V-ʃru <sup>1</sup>	V-ʃɿn <sup>1</sup>	*	*	(see above)	(see above)
Mueshuang (2)	V-kru <sup>1</sup>	V-kɿn <sup>1</sup>	V-k <sup>h</sup> auŋ	*	(see above)	(see above)

The simplest systems are those in Cholim and Longri which have a single imperative with no marking of plural and a single form for the prohibitive (shown by shading). The most complex is Mueshaungx, which

has both an I- form and also a future-imperative merger (use of the future marking for imperative function), as well as marking of non 3<sup>rd</sup> person objects (hierarchical marking). Note that Moklum marks the person of the actor in the form, and the inversion of the hierarchy is shown by p<sup>h</sup>-, whereas Mueshaung marks the person of the undergoer (which we also see in Table 12).

#### 4.3 The system in Champang – no person marking

Champang is one the Tangsa varieties that has a completely different system.

**Table 8: Verbal markers – main clauses**

PRESENT	a-V
FUTURE	a-V-kaʔ
PAST	V-wa
DID	V-kəwa
NEG	V-la
IMP.SG	V-laʔ
IMP.PL	V-paʔ
PROH	V-kaʔ
PROH	V-kəŋo

- 6) *Piʔ-ŋeʔ jo juk-kəwa.* ‘He drank water.’  
*Jo juk-kaʔ-saa* ‘will you drink water?’  
*Jo juk-laʔ* ‘drink water!’  
*Piʔ-ŋeʔ jo juk-la.* ‘He did not drink water.’

#### 4.4 The hierarchical system in Hakhun

**Table 9: Hakhun Hierarchical agreement markers – 3<sup>rd</sup> singular agents**

	3SG>3	3SG>1SG	3SG>1PL	3SG>2SG	3SG>2PL
Future	V-a <sup>3</sup>	V-a <sup>3</sup>	V-a <sup>3</sup>	V-a <sup>3</sup>	V-a <sup>3</sup>
Continuous	V-ka <sup>1</sup>	V-rɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-ri <sup>1</sup>	V-ru <sup>1</sup>	V-ran <sup>1</sup>
Negative	V-ma <sup>1</sup>	V-rəmx <sup>1</sup>	V-rəmi <sup>1</sup>	V-rəmo	V-rəmat <sup>1</sup>
Past	V-ta <sup>1</sup>	V-thɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-thi <sup>1</sup>	V-thu <sup>1</sup>	V-than <sup>1</sup>

**Table 10: Hakhun Hierarchical agreement markers – 2<sup>nd</sup> person agents (showing mergers)**

	2SG>3	2SG>1SG	2SG>1PL	2PL>3	2PL>1SG	2PL>1PL
Future	V-o <sup>3</sup>	V-o <sup>3</sup>	V-o <sup>3</sup>	V-an <sup>3</sup>	V-an <sup>3</sup>	V-an <sup>3</sup>
Continuous	V-ko <sup>1</sup>	V-rɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-ri <sup>1</sup>	V-kan <sup>1</sup>	V-ra <sup>1</sup>	V-ri <sup>1</sup>
Negative PAST		V-thɣ <sup>1</sup> rəmx <sup>1</sup>	V-thɣ <sup>1</sup> rəmi <sup>1</sup>		V-thɣ <sup>1</sup> rəma <sup>1</sup>	V-thɣ <sup>1</sup> rəmi <sup>1</sup>
Negative FUTURE	V-mo <sup>1</sup>	V rəmx <sup>1</sup>	V rəmi <sup>1</sup>	V-mat <sup>1</sup>	V rəma <sup>1</sup>	V rəmi <sup>1</sup>
Past	V-to <sup>1</sup>	V-thɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-thi <sup>1</sup>	V-tat <sup>1</sup>	V-ta <sup>1</sup>	V-thi <sup>1</sup>
Imperative	V-lo <sup>1</sup>	V-rɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-ri <sup>1</sup>	V-lat <sup>1</sup>	V-ra <sup>1</sup>	V-ri <sup>1</sup>

**Table 11: Hakhun Hierarchical agreement markers – 1<sup>st</sup> person agents**

	1SG>3	1PL>3	1SG>2SG	1SG>2PL	1PL>2SG	1PL>2PL
Future	V-ɣ <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>	V-e <sup>3</sup>
Continuous	V-kɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-ki <sup>1</sup>	V-ki <sup>1</sup>	V-ki <sup>1</sup>	V-ki <sup>1</sup>	V-ki <sup>1</sup>
Negative PAST			V-təmi <sup>1</sup>	V-təmi <sup>1</sup>	V-təmi <sup>1</sup>	V-təmi <sup>1</sup>
Negative	V-mɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>	V-mi <sup>1</sup>
Past	V-tɣ <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>	V-ti <sup>1</sup>

Observations on the Hakhun system

- 1) Like in other Tangsa varieties, the future has no stop endings; note that the tones of the future markers differ from those of the other categories, and this perhaps is parallel to the open-syllable endings. The Tone 1 in Hakhun does carry some glottal constriction unlike the Tone 3.

- 2) In the hierarchical systems, there is a 1<sup>st</sup> person actor it always takes precedence over 2<sup>nd</sup> person undergoers and thus, in Table 11, we see invariant forms for person, all of which are identical to the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural forms
- 3) Where there are 3<sup>rd</sup> singular actors and non-third singular undergoers, the marking is of the person of the undergoer, except for the future which is invariant.
- 4) Where there are 2<sup>nd</sup> singular actors, the patterns are less easy to categorise; in most cases where the undergoer is 1<sup>st</sup> plural, the marking agrees with the undergoer, but this is not so for the future.
- 5) The past in t- and negative in m- matches the other Tangsa varieties, as seen in Table 5, but in this variety k- marks continuous (rather than past as we see in the Pangwa varieties Cholim and Longri).

#### 4.5 Other hierarchical systems

In Table 7 we have seen that hierarchical marking in the imperative is found in Joglei, Mueshaungx (both Pangwa varieties) and Muklom, though absent in Cholim, Longri, Lochhang, Chamchang, Mungray and Rera.

**Table 12: Hierarchical agreement in past time**

	1SG	1SG>2		2SG	2SG>1
Muklom	V-taŋ	V-ta-p <sup>h</sup> aŋ		V-tu	V-ta-p <sup>h</sup> u
	3SG	3SG>1SG	3SG>1PL	2SG	2SG>1SG
Mueshaung	V-tuʔ	V-p <sup>h</sup> auŋ			
Phong	V-taʔ	V-taʔ-haʔ	V-taʔ-he	V-tuʔ	V-haŋ

#### 4.6 Duals

**Table 13: Duals**

		Moklum imperatives (Das Gupta 1980:11)	
2SG	-u	ka-u	Go!
2DL	-shin	ka-shin	Go (you two)!
2PL	-in	ka-in	Go (you all)!
		Phong question forms (past) (our research)	
2SG	-taʔ-ho	ka-taʔ-ho	Where did you go?
2DL	-taʔ-hin	ka-taʔ-hin	Where did you (dl) go?
2PL	-taʔ-han	ka-taʔ-han	Where did you (pl) go?

### 5 The historical development of the markers

Whether this type of TAM marking, or pronominalisation, is a feature of proto-TB or not, the ubiquitous nature of it in a wide range of Tangsa varieties suggests that we can reconstruct it for some form of proto-Tangsa/Nocte.

That said, we will still need to explain the following features

- 1) Why do some varieties have hierarchical marking and others not?
- 2) Why is there no person marking at all in Champang?
- 3) What is the historical explanation of the stop-final ~ nasal/open-final alternation
- 4) How did the prefixal / prepositional future develop?
- 5) How did a prefixal / prepositional negative develop in Rera?
- 6) Why are k- forms found in the past in some varieties?
- 7) What might the hierarchical system have looked like?

#### 5.1 Comparative features

Matching: Using the methodology proposed by Koch, we have already matched the TAM/AGR morphemes in Table 5.

Archaic versus innovative

- 7) \*postposition / postclitic marking
- \*past in t-
- \*-ŋ 2PL
- \*-open FUT
- \*-closed PST and NEG

For Pangwa varieties, at least, we can perhaps mention

- 8) \*continuous in l-

These can perhaps be regarded as the reconstructible forms for the persons:

1		2		3
Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg
-Cvelar	-Vhigh front	-Vhigh back	C-velar	?

Of all the varieties Chamchang and Lochhang appear then to be the most innovative. They have the changed all of the archaic forms listed in both (7) and (8), and have a particularly complex past system. The past in these two varieties can be explained as

- 9) adoption of k- initials in the non3 past (in common with Cholim and Longri)
- adoption of l- initials (perhaps taken from the continuous) in 2<sup>nd</sup> person forms
- creation of a new continuous by prefixing a t-, incidentally the historical past form.
- 3past retains t-, as the most conservative of the person endings (cf English thinks)

Rera is perhaps equally startling, in its development of a prefixal / prepositional negator, and the mixture of l- (with C finals) and V- (with V finals) forms for the agreement markers in the negative and future. The story of the negative may well be that it developed from a preverbal nasal \*n- with no agreement, to a postverbal nasal combined with person endings, where Rera is perhaps a medium stage between the proto form represented by Khalak and the others. Rera and Chamchang/Lochhang are both divergent and will have some difficulty understanding each other. Remember ‘I am not able to carry’ (negation shown in bold):

- 10) Rera: *mi gun nok lang*
- Lochhang: *ghui dai mau*
- (**mi** is the future prefixal particle in Chamchang and Lochhang)

Perhaps the substantial variation in agreement between the various Tangsa/Nocte varieties is a good model for the whole of Sino-Tibetan. It seems likely this is a system that would have been part of the proto language and is eroding.

## 6 References

Burling, Robbins. 2003. The Tibeto-Burman Languages of Northeastern India. In G. Thurgood and R. LaPolla (eds). *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*. London: Routledge. 169–191.

Caughley, Ross. 1982. *The syntax and morphology of the verb in Chepang*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

Dài Qìngxia. 1992. *Jīngpōyǔ Yǔfǎ* (Jinghpo Grammar) Beijing: Zhong yang min zu xue yuan chu ban she.

DeLancey, Scott. 1989(b). “Verb agreement in Proto-Tibeto-Burman”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 52.2: 315-33.

Koch, Harold. 1996. “Reconstruction in Morphology” in Mark Durie and Malcolm Ross (eds.) *The comparative method reviewed. Regularity and irregularity in language change*. New York: Oxford University Press. 218-263.

Koch, Harold. in preparation “The reconstruction of inflectional classes in morphology, history, method and Pama-Nyungan (Australian) verbs”

LaPolla, Randy J. 1992. “On the Dating and Nature of Verb Agreement in Tibeto-Burman”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. 55,2: 298-315