North East Indian Linguistics
Volume 2
Edited by
Stephen Morey • Mark Post
Contents

Foreword
Robbins Burling v

A Note from the Editors
Stephen Morey and Mark Post ix

Field Report

1. Preliminary Notes on Dakpa (Tawang Monpa)
   Gwendolyn Hyslop and Karma Tshering 3
   
   Tonology and Phonology in the Assam Floodplain

2. An Acoustic Study of Dimasa Tones
   Priyankoo Sarmah and Caroline Wiltshire 25

3. Boro Tones
   Robbins Burling and U. V. Joseph 45

4. The Realisation of Tones in Traditional Tai Phake Songs
   Stephen Morey 59

5. Linguistic Features of the Ahom Bar Amra
   Zeenat Tabassum and Stephen Morey 75

6. Some Aspects of the Phonology of the Barpetia Dialect of Assamese
   Mukul Kumar Sarma 95
Special Section on Numerals

7. Number-Building in Tibeto-Burman Languages
   Martine Mazaudon 117

8. The Numeral ‘One’ in Khasi and Karbi
   U.V. Joseph 149

9. A Comparative Study of Kom and Aimol Numerals
   Chongom Damrengthang Aimol 162

Morphology and Syntax from Tani to Kuki-Chin

10. Predicate Derivations in the Tani Languages: Root, Suffix, Both or Neither?
    Mark Post 175

11. The Non-finite Markers –la and –pc in Mising
    Madhumita Barbora 198

12. Universal Quantifiers in Manipuri
    Chandam Betholia 219

13. Negation in Chothe Grammar
    Brojen Hidam Singh 231

14. Benefactives in K’cho
    George Bedell and Kee Shein Mang 241

Foreword

North East India: 1954

I first came to North East India in 1954, but as I write, it is 2008, 54 years later. 54 years in the other direction would take us back to 1900. In my imagination that early period seems much longer than the mere 54 years that have rushed by while I’ve been watching. Can North East India possibly have changed as much in the last 54 years as I imagine it to have changed in the previous 54?

In 1954, it was already possible to fly into Guwahati from Calcutta, and probably from Delhi. Buses already stopped for a rest at Nongpho on the way to Shillong, so that first-time visitors from other parts of India had the chance to be astonished to see Khasi women, rather than men, presiding at the shops and stalls that lined the road. Shillong was the capital of Assam, then. Assam was a large state then than now, but Shillong was a smaller place. I don’t even remember taxis in Shillong, certainly not the long lines that we find today. Arunachal was still NEFA, and I believe Gauhati University was the only one in the North East.

My family and I lived in the Garo Hills for most of the two years we spent in India. Even Shillong was too far away for a visit except on the way in, and again on the way out, when we had to deal with paper work. I never went further up the valley than Jorabat on the road to Shillong. To go by bus from Guwahati to Tura in the Garo Hills required an overnight in Goalpara. It was possible to make the trip by jeep in a single day, but only by leaving from Guwahati early enough to make the last ‘timing’ on the road up from the valley. That road was unpaved and had only one lane, so traffic could move in only one direction at a time. At three or four set times during the day, as many as a dozen trucks, buses, and an occasional jeep, would collect at the upper gate in Tura and at the lower gate, in Phulbari.
1

Preliminary Notes on Dakpa (Tawang Monpa)\(^1\)

Gwendolyn Hyslop
University of Oregon

Karma Tshering
Himalayan Languages Project

1. Introduction

The languages of the East Bodish branch of Tibeto-Burman remain amongst some of the least documented within the family. Languages of Arunachal Pradesh, in particular those of the western portion of the state, likewise remain almost utterly undescribed. These facts are compounded by the difficulty in travelling to the regions in which East Bodish languages are spoken (Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, Tibet) and the near impossibility of gaining government permission for the research. This article endeavours to contribute to these descriptive deficiencies by outlining some phonological and morphological aspects of Dakpa (Tawang Monpa, a.k.a Northern Monpa), spoken in Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh, India, based on data we collected while there in 2007. As it seems unlikely any further work will be done on Dakpa in the near future, in this article we aim to bring into light what little data and analyses we have.

\(^1\) We are grateful first and foremost to Thupten Tshering, Thupten Norbu, Lopon Geden Norbu, Pema Gombu, and the Tawang Language Officer Ngawang Lamsang, for their assistance and for sharing their language with us. Work on Tawang Monpa initially began with Rob Burling, Martine Mazaudon and Boyd Michailovsky in February 2007. Of course, we retain responsibility for any errors in this article.
This article provides a preliminary phonemic inventory and discusses some grammatical morphology in Dakpa of Tawang. Whenever possible, Dakpa data will be presented in the light of other East Bodish languages (Bumthang, van Driem, 1995a), (Kurtöp, Dzala, Chali, our field notes) and/or in comparison to the Dakpa data recently presented in van Driem (2007). We will conclude by highlighting some aspects of Dakpa that appear unusual in the context of East Bodish. It must be stressed that the analyses in this paper are preliminary. More thorough analyses will have to wait for further research.

This article is organised as follows. In section 2 we provide relevant background information, including a discussion of the term Monpa and the source of our data. Section 3 provides a preliminary outline of Dakpa phonology and section 4 is devoted to morphology, including personal pronouns, case markers, and the presence of verbal morphology that appears to mark person. In section 5 we provide a summary of the findings and highlight some aspects of Dakpa that appear unique in the context of other East Bodish languages.

2. Background

2.1. The term Monpa

From a scholarly point of view, the term Monpa is ambiguous and we advise steering away from using it to identify a given language. As the term is applied to many different speech communities and languages, one can never be sure what is meant by the term.

In Bhutan, for example, Monpa is applied to the community of non-Buddhists residing in the Black Mountains and their language. These people practise an indigenous animist religion and speak what has been categorised as a variety of archaic East Bodish (van Driem, 1995b).

In western Arunachal Pradesh, on the other hand, the term Monpa denotes a handful of different Tibeto-Burman speaking communities who practise Buddhism. Dirang, of West Kameng, is home to a community of Monpas who speak one of the so-called ‘Kho-Bwa’ languages referred to as Lishpa. Van Driem (2001) proposes the term ‘Kho-Bwa’ to identify four (Lishpa, Bugun, Sherdukpen, Puroik)2 highly divergent Tibeto-Burman languages, where kha is the term for ‘water’ and bwa is the term for ‘fire’3. Rutgers (1999) also identified the relationship between these languages, referring to them as ‘isolates’ because of the collective deviance from other Tibeto-Burman languages. Thus, the relationship between Lishpa and the other Monpa languages is the least clear of all.

Tshangla, a language of eastern Bhutan and western Arunachal Pradesh, is also referred to as ‘Monpa’ in India, while in Bhutan it is referred to as Sharchop, Sharchokpa or Sharchokpa kha ‘language of the easterners’. The placement of Tshangla within Tibeto-Burman is still subject to debate, though the observation that Tshangla fits in the Tibeto-Burman family with other Bodic languages, such as Newar and the Bodish branch, has been observed in Bradley (1997) and many others. Dakpa is yet another language of Arunachal Pradesh that has been termed Monpa, but belongs within East-Bodish (c.f. §2.4). At times, ‘Central Monpa’ has been used to designate Tshangla while ‘Northern Monpa’ designates Dakpa.

Even more broadly, the term ‘Monpa’ has been used to identify groups of people who do not even speak Tibeto-Burman languages (van Driem 2001:472). Van Driem further writes that:

The term šig mon or mön has most often been applied to ethnonymological groups south of the Tibetan plateau, especially groups which have retained a native shamanist religion or follow an order or Mahāyāna Buddhism other than whichever order happened to be viewed as the most orthodox by the people applying the term. (van Driem 2001 p. 472)

Indeed, the term Monpa, when used without further qualification or in an elucidating context, is ambiguous at best. Therefore, we advocate using ‘Dakpa’ (c.f. §2.2/2.3, for information regarding the term ‘Dakpa’) to identify the language spoken in Tawang and surrounding areas. However, we realise that ‘Tawang Monpa’ is used in Arunachal Pradesh – by inhabitants and linguists – to precisely identify the language spoken there. Thus, throughout this article we will use the term ‘Dakpa’ to identify the language but have kept ‘Tawang Monpa’ in the title.

---

2 Sun (1993) also identifies the close relationship of these languages in a group he calls ‘Bugunish’. He excludes Puroik from the group of Lishpa, Sherdukpen and Bugun, but suggests it may be closely related to the group. Our field notes on Puroik, Bugun and Sherdukpen support this observation.

1 Kho shows up elsewhere in Tibeto-Burman. For example, Kurtöp khwé ‘water’, Dzongkha khaut ‘snow’, Bodo khwa ‘snow’, Dakpa kho ‘snow’ etc.
as Lishpa. Van Driem (2001) proposes the term ‘Kho-Bwa’ to identify four (Lishpa, Bugun, Sherdukpen, Puroik)² highly divergent Tibeto-Burman languages, where kho is the term for ‘water’ and bwa is the term for ‘fire’³. Rutgers (1999) also identified the relationship between these languages, referring to them as ‘isolates’ because of the collective deviance from other Tibeto-Burman languages. Thus, the relationship between Lishpa and the other Monpa languages is the least clear of all.

Tshangla, a language of eastern Bhutan and western Arunachal Pradesh, is also referred to as ‘Monpa’ in India, while in Bhutan it is referred to as Sharchop, Sharchokpa or Sharchokpa kha ‘language of the easterners’. The placement of Tshangla within Tibeto-Burman is still subject to debate, though the observation that Tshangla fits in the Tibeto-Burman family with other Bodic languages, such as Newar and the Bodish branch, has been observed in Bradley (1997) and many others. Dakpa is yet another language of Arunachal Pradesh that has been termed Monpa, but belongs within East-Bodish (c.f. §2.4). At times, ‘Central Monpa’ has been used to designate Tshangla while ‘Northern Monpa’ designates Dakpa.

Even more broadly, the term ‘Monpa’ has been used to identify groups of people who do not even speak Tibeto-Burman languages (van Driem 2001:472). Van Driem further writes that:

The term mon or môn has most often been applied to ethnolinguistic groups south of the Tibetan plateau, especially groups which have retained a native shamanist religion or follow an order or Mahāyāna Buddhism other than whichever order happened to be viewed as the most orthodox by the people applying the term. (van Driem 2001 p. 472)

Indeed, the term Monpa, when used without further qualification or an elucidating context, is ambiguous at best. Therefore, we advocate using ‘Dakpa’ (c.f. §2.2/2.3, for information regarding the term ‘Dakpa’) to identify the language spoken in Tawang and surrounding areas. However, we realise that ‘Tawang Monpa’ is used in Arunachal Pradesh – by inhabitants and linguists – to precisely identify the language spoken there. Thus, throughout this article we will use the term ‘Dakpa’ to identify the language but have kept ‘Tawang Monpa’ in the title.

² Kho shows up elsewhere in Tibeto-Burman. For example, Kurtöp khow ‘water’, Dzongkha khaü ‘snow’, Bodo khwa ‘snow’, Dakpa kho ‘snow’ etc.
2.2. The language community and source of data

The first Dakpa data were recorded by Brian Houghton Hodgson (Hodgson, 1853), and later used by Shafer (1954) to show that Dakpa⁴ was not a direct descendent from Classical Tibetan, though it was clearly a close relative. Dakpa is also spoken in Bhutan by approximately 1,000 people (van Driem 1998) and appears to be spoken in China, where it has been referred to as Dwags and Takpa (Gordon, 2005). Recently, George van Driem (2007) presented data illustrating a very close relationship between Dakpa and Dzala, based on data collected in Bhutan. Throughout this article, we will occasionally compare our data with that presented in van Driem (2007). It will be important to keep in mind that these probably represent two different varieties of Dakpa. The variety of Dakpa represented in this article is that spoken in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is estimated that approximately 30,000 inhabitants of Tawang speak Dakpa. The data for this article came from Lhou-Dung village, which is located approximately 20 kilometers south of the town of Tawang. We collected data via elicitation and through the collection of one oral text. The primary language of elicitation, communication and translation was Hindi. All data in this article have been cross-checked with at least two native speakers. As mentioned above, this study is necessarily limited in that it is only by chance we were able to collect data and no work on Dakpa is planned for the near future.

2.3. East Bodish

Dakpa is considered an East Bodish language. Shafer (1954) appears to be the first to use the term ‘East Bodish’. Bradley (1997) proposes that East Bodish is most closely related to Central Bodish (i.e. the Tibetan dialects). In addition to the languages shown in Figure 1.1, he includes Sherdukpen and the somewhat ambiguous ‘Eastern Monpa’ in East Bodish. This group joins with its closest genealogical neighbours, the Central Bodish languages. Central and East Bodish together are coordinate with Western Bodish (e.g. Kinnauri, Tamang). The Bodish family then joins with Tshangla and West Himalayan. These three together comprise one side of the Bodic family. However, the exact position of East Bodish within Tibeto-Burman remains subject to debate. For example, the hypothesis that Gongduk may serve as a substrate for the languages of the Bumthang group, as suggested by George van Driem (2001:872), is indeed intriguing and warrants further research.

Within East Bodish there is at least one fairly obvious sub-grouping; a handful of languages show enough similarity to be considered part of one large dialect chain consisting of Bumthang, Kheng, and Kurtöp. Sometimes described as languages of the ‘Bumthang’ group, these languages also show considerable similarity with Central Bodish, perhaps more so than other East Bodish languages. The proposed relationship amongst the East Bodish languages is illustrated by Figure 1.1. Recently, van Driem (2007) hypothesises that Dakpa and Dzala also form their own subgroup within East Bodish.

4 He refers to Dakpa as ‘Dwags’, and is ‘spoken in an area along the Gtsa-h-po river or south of that river, and southeast of Lhasa (Shafer, 1954:350).
that Gongduk may serve as a substrate for the languages of the Bumthang group, as suggested by George van Driem (2001:872), is indeed intriguing and warrants further research.

Within East Bodish there is at least one fairly obvious sub-grouping; a handful of languages show enough similarity to be considered part of one large dialect chain consisting of Bumthang, Kheng, and Kurtoep. Sometimes described as languages of the ‘Bumthang’ group, these languages also show considerable similarity with Central Bodish, perhaps more so than other East Bodish languages. The proposed relationship amongst the East Bodish languages is illustrated by Figure 1.1. Recently, van Driem (2007) hypothesises that Dakpa and Dzala also form their own subgroup within East Bodish.

3. Phonology

It is premature at this point to put forth a full phonemic analysis of Dakpa, but some observations may nevertheless be noted. In section 3.1 we describe some Dakpa consonants and in 3.2 we discuss the vowels. Suprasegmental properties are discussed in section 3.3.

Note that van Driem (1995b) does not include Sherdukpen in his diagram of East Bodish (unlike Bradley (1997)). Needless to say, much more research is needed to understand the relationship amongst the East Bodish languages as well as the relationship of East Bodish to other families within Tibeto-Burman.
3.1. Consonants

Our preliminary analyses show that Dakpa contrasts voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated and voiced stops at four places of articulation (labial, dental, palatal, velar) plus at least one word with an aspirated retroflex stop. There are four fricatives (voiced and voiceless dental and palatal) and four nasals (labial, dental, palatal, velar). A voiced and voiceless lateral and rhotic are found. Dakpa also has two glides (w, j) and one aspirate. These consonants are illustrated in Table 1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>labial</th>
<th>dental</th>
<th>alveolar</th>
<th>retroflex</th>
<th>palatal</th>
<th>velar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>stops</td>
<td>p, pʰ, b</td>
<td>t, tʰ, d</td>
<td>tʰ</td>
<td>c, cʰ, j</td>
<td>k, kʰ, g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affricates</td>
<td>ts, tsʰ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fricatives</td>
<td>s, z</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c, ç</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasals</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td>l, l̃</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laterals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>r, r̃</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhotics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ǰ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glides</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in (1-12) illustrate these consonants as syllable onsets.

(1) apa ‘father’
(2) te ‘horse’
(3) tʰa ‘blood’
(4) (t)cik ‘and then’
(5) ko ‘door’
(6) tsa ‘nerves’
(7) sol ‘chile’

6 Van Driem (2007) reports <khra> for this word, which must correspond to Written Tibetan ཕར, <khrag>. Velar plus rhotic onsets in Kurtöp have led to a retroflex series (Hyslop, 2008), suggesting the same sound change could be at play in Dakpa. However, either the words in this series are borrowed (perhaps from Central Tibetan?) or the sound change has not completed because words such as kʰret ‘waist’ (compare with Kurtöp tʰat) are still present in the lexicon.
These consonants combine to form a number of complex onsets, as illustrated in Figure 1.2 and by the data in (13–18).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(8) ča</th>
<th>‘meat’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(9) melöŋ</td>
<td>‘eye’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṇar</td>
<td>1ST_PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) láŋ</td>
<td>‘forehead’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11) rui</td>
<td>‘small bamboo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) wam</td>
<td>‘bear’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8) qa | ‘meat’ |
(9) melöŋ | ‘eye’ |
(10) láŋ | ‘forehead’ |
(11) rui | ‘small bamboo’ |
(12) wam | ‘bear’ |

These consonants combine to form a number of complex onsets, as illustrated in Figure 1.2 and by the data in (13–18).

| pr-, pʰr-, br-, |
| dr-, kʰr-, gr- |
| pl-, bl-, pʰj- |
| kl-, gl- |
| kj-, gj- |
| mr-, ml-, nj- |

Fig. 1.2 Some Dakpa complex onsets

| (13) pregam | ‘closet’ |
| (14) dra | ‘enemy’ |
| (15) plang | ‘sun’ |
| (16) klo | ‘lose’ |
| (17) kja | ‘Indian’ |
| (18) mrop | ‘scratch’ |

| pregam | ‘closet’ |
| dra | ‘enemy’ |
| plang | ‘sun’ |
| klo | ‘lose’ |
| kja | ‘Indian’ |
| mrop | ‘scratch’ |

There are likely other complex onsets that have not been recorded.

We also have some data illustrating that at least eight of the consonants can occur as syllable codas, shown in Figure 1.3 and illustrated with the data in (19–21).

| -p, -t, -k |
| -r, -c |
| -m, -n, -ŋ |

Fig. 1.3 Some Dakpa syllable codas

Note this word is most likely a borrowing from Hindi हप्ठा hapthā ‘week’. Ideally, a native word would be found with the phoneme.
Dakpa also evidences some complex codas, a feature unusual for Tibeto-Burman languages. Examples of complex codas are shown in (22–25). We suspect that the loss of word-final vowels has recently resulted in these complex codas, as suggested by the comparative data in (22) and (25).

| Dakpa | Comparative Data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mdkp</td>
<td>‘husband’&lt;rmakpa&gt; (Dzongkha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ēntʰ</td>
<td>‘day’&lt;ringku&gt; (Kurtdp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nuptʰ</td>
<td>‘evening’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riŋk</td>
<td>‘long/tall’&lt;ringku&gt; (Kurtdp)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is some evidence that aspiration can occur on coda consonants, though no contrast has been seen between aspirated and unaspirated coda consonants. Note also that when an aspirated coda is present it may also be realised and understood with the unaspirated counterpart. An example of an aspirated coda in Dakpa is shown by the data in (26).

(26) bekʰ ~ bek 3RD.GEN

Comparative data suggest the aspiration shown in (26) above has come from a lost vowel. The Dakpa genitive -k is cognate with the Dzala form -ku ‘GEN’ and likely the Chali form -u ‘GEN’, suggesting a high vowel was also once present in the Dakpa genitive. We hypothesise that the loss of this high vowel has led to aspiration in some instances but more data is needed to support this.

---

Note the modern pronunciation of the Dzongkha form is quite different than what the spelling would indicate. The initial cluster has simplified to a single nasal with high tone, the syllable coda /k/ has been lost (without compensatory lengthening), and the final vowel has been lost, yielding the pronunciation mdp. The Kurtdp data are represented in the Kurtdp Joyig and Roman orthographies. In comparison to the Dzongkha, the pronunciation of the Kurtdp form much more closely resembles the spelling – riŋkū.

---

3.2. Vowels and suprasegmentals

Our preliminary analysis has found at least six vowels, a, e, i, u, ə, and four diphthongs au, ui, ei and ai. We also transcribed e, ə, i, and ai, however, these four were not consistently transcribed and their presence in the language remains the most nebulous of all. We are unable to say whether each of these vowels or diphthongs represent a phonemic contrast or not. Long versus short vowels were also transcribed in open syllables, but it remains unknown whether or not they represent a contrast in the language.

The data in (27–35) illustrates the monophthongs we transcribed.

| (27) láj  | ‘forehead’ |
| (28) né   | ‘coriander’ |
| (29) lēmin | ‘foot’, ‘leg’ |
| (30) mi   | ‘person’ |
| (31) bu   | ‘breath’ |
| (32) ko   | ‘door’ |
| (33) onu  | ‘child’ |
| (34) chǎcam | ‘alter room’ |
| (35) dy   | Đū (name of a demoness) |

It is important to note that the mid lax vowels, as illustrated in (29) and (33), were not consistently transcribed, as we sometimes heard their tense counterparts. That being said, van Driem (2007) also presents these lax counterparts. For example, vowels, often in the same words in which we recorded them. For example, van Driem presents lēmin for ‘foot, leg’, lena ‘five’ and get ‘eight’, where we also have the same transcription.

A major difference between the current study and that reported in van Driem (2007) is the lack in our data of a low front vowel æ transcribed in Driem (2007) as in mlampu ‘black’ (van Driem, 2007:7), which was mlām in van Driem, as in mlampu ‘black’ (van Driem, 2007:7) for us. Note that (34) is a likely borrowing from Tibetan and van Driem for us. Note that (34) is a likely borrowing from Tibetan and van Driem (2007) does not show any words with the front rounded vowel, nor with the high front rounded vowel exemplified in (35).

Vowel sequences or diphthongs are illustrated by the data in (36–40).

| (36) raudir | ‘hurting.3RD’ |
| (37) luíp   | ‘body’ |
| (38) dei    | ‘these’ |
| (39) gaidir | ‘going.3RD’ |
| (40) priu   | ‘small’ |
3.2. Vowels and suprasegmentals

Our preliminary analysis has found at least six vowels, a, e, i, u, o, ø, and four diphthongs au, ui, ei and ai. We also transcribed ɛ, ɔ, û, and ø0, however, these four were not consistently transcribed and their presence in the language remains the most nebulous of all. We are unable to say whether each of these vowels or diphthongs represent a phonemic contrast or not. Long versus short vowels were also transcribed in open syllables, but it remains unknown whether or not they represent a contrast in the language. The data in (27–35) illustrates the monophthongs we transcribed.

(27) láŋ ‘forehead’
(28) né ‘coriander’
(29) lemin ‘foot’, leg’
(30) mi ‘person’
(31) bu ‘breath’
(32) ko ‘door’
(33) onu ‘child’
(34) chɔcam ‘alter room’
(35) dy Dū (name of a demoness)

It is important to note that the mid lax vowels, as illustrated in (29) and (33), were not consistently transcribed, as we sometimes heard their tense counterparts. That being said, van Driem (2007) also presents these lax vowels, often in the same words in which we recorded them. For example, van Driem presents lemin for ‘foot, leg’, lenja ‘five’ and get ‘eight’, where we also have the same transcription.

A major difference between the current study and that reported in van Driem (2007) is the lack in our data of a low front vowel æ transcribed in van Driem, as in mlæŋpu ‘black’ (van Driem, 2007:7), which was mrdám for us. Note that (34) is a likely borrowing from Tibetan and van Driem (2007) does not show any words with the front rounded vowel, nor with the high front rounded vowel exemplified in (35).

Vowel sequences or diphthongs are illustrated by the data in (36–40).

(36) raudir ‘hurting.3RD’
(37) luip ‘body’
(38) dei ‘these’
(39) gaidir ‘going.3RD’
(40) priu ‘small’
Of particular interest in Dakpa is the presence of voiceless vowels, which are found word-finally and appear to be restricted to the high vowels. Data evidencing these vowels are shown in (41–44).

(41) akpy ‘crow’
(42) cipket$^2$ ~ cipket$^3$ ‘eighteen’
(43) thongyu ‘will drink.1st’
(44) phuipy ‘male’

Similar to other East Bodish languages, such as Bumthang (van Driem, 1995a), Kurtöp (Hyslop, 2008, 2009), amongst others, tone (high/low) appears to be contrastive in Dakpa following sonorants with predictable tone/tonogenesis following obstruents$^9$. Data illustrating tone following the sonorants are shown in (45–47).

(45) nj$h$ ‘heart’ jin ‘excrement’
(46) $n$di ‘pillow’ $n$ok 1st.GEN
(47) wd ‘tooth’ warn ‘bear’

Tone is predictably high following voiceless obstruents and low following voiced obstruents. Voicing appears to not necessarily be the primary cue. That is, voiced segments may be devoiced. For example, both gro and kro ‘six’, have been recorded. Further research into the tonogenetic details of Dakpa could indeed be interesting, particularly in light of the findings for Kurtöp, that tone first phonologised following the sonorants and palatal fricative and is now phonologising following the remaining obstruents (Hyslop, 2009).

The preliminary report on Dakpa phonology suggests that Dakpa deviates from other East Bodish languages in some interesting ways. Compared to data available on Bumthang and Kurtöp, Dakpa exhibits more complex onsets and a larger array of vowels. Based on the data available on Bumthang and Kurtöp, and the authors’ field notes on Dzala, Kheng and Chali, it appears that Dakpa is the only East Bodish language to have voiceless vowels. While van Driem (2007) presents data illustrating much of the phonology illustrated here, he does not transcribe voiceless vowels, nor are they mentioned in Shafer (1954). It is worth recalling that

---

$^9$ There is a vast literature on tonogenesis showing that, diachronically, a high tone will follow from voiceless initials and a low tone will follow from voiced initials. For more details, see Haudricourt (1954), Mati$^3$soff (1970, 1973, 1999), Mazaudon (1977), Thurgood (2002), Kingston (2004) and Hyslop (2009) amongst others.

---

van Driem’s (2007) account is based on data collected in Bhutan, while our data is collected from India, and that Shafer was working with data collected in the 1800s.

4. Morphology

At this point we can offer some preliminary notes on Dakpa grammar. We will briefly discuss some personal pronouns in §4.1, illustrate some case markers in §4.2, discuss verbal morphology in §4.3 and sentence final particles in §4.4.

4.1. Personal pronouns

Dakpa personal pronouns are shown in Table 1.2. Our data presents one form in addition to the genitive and plural. If Dakpa is like its sister languages Kurtöp and Bumthang we would expect there to be separate pronominal forms for ergative and absolutive case. It is not clear, at present, whether the first column of pronouns shown in Table 1.2 represent the forms for the ergative, absolutive or something else, or whether indeed such terms will be useful to describe grammatical relations in Dakpa in the future. Van Driem (2007) reports similar forms, the only differences being the absence of $n$ai, $n$e instead of $n$e, and $n$ok instead of $n$ok$^{10}$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>$n$ai, $n$e</td>
<td>$n$ar</td>
<td>$n$ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>$ir$</td>
<td>$ik$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>$b$e</td>
<td>$ber$</td>
<td>$bek$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Case markers

As illustrated by the data in Table 1.2, the Dakpa genitive is -k. The data in (48) and (49) illustrate the genitive in recorded discourse, with (49) further illustrating the use of the genitive beyond the domain of pronouns.

---

$^{10}$ Note also that van Driem (2007) has only first and second singular forms within the genitive pronouns.
van Driem’s (2007) account is based on data collected in Bhutan, while our data is collected from India, and that Shafer was working with data collected in the 1800s.

4. Morphology

At this point we can offer some preliminary notes on Dakpa grammar. We will briefly discuss some personal pronouns in §4.1, illustrate some case markers in §4.2, discuss verbal morphology in §4.3 and sentence final particles in §4.4.

4.1. Personal pronouns

Dakpa personal pronouns are shown in Table 1.2. Our data presents one form in addition to the genitive and plural. If Dakpa is like its sister languages Kurtop and Bumthang we would expect there to be separate pronominal forms for ergative and absolutive case. It is not clear, at present, whether the first column of pronouns shown in Table 1.2 represent the forms for ergative, absolutive or something else, or whether indeed such terms will be useful to describe grammatical relations in Dakpa in the future. Van Driem (2007) reports similar forms, the only differences being the absence of nai, ne instead of je, and nok instead of yok.\(^\text{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Genitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First person</td>
<td>nai, ne</td>
<td>njar</td>
<td>nkok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second person</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ir</td>
<td>ik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>ber</td>
<td>bek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Case markers

As illustrated by the data in Table 1.2, the Dakpa genitive is -k. The data in (48) and (49) illustrate the genitive in recorded discourse, with (49) further illustrating the use of the genitive beyond the domain of pronouns.

\(^{10}\) Note also that van Driem (2007) has only first and second singular forms within the genitive pronouns.
In addition to the genitive we also have evidence of an ergative and locative/accusative case marker. The data in (50) and (51) show -si marking what could be ergative case. A Hindi (the language of translation and elicitation) gloss in (51) further supports the analysis of this morpheme as ergative. The Hindi ergative -ने -ने (c.f. Mountaut, 2004) was offered as the translation for Dakpa -si. It is also worth pointing out that Classical Tibetan ‘agents’ or ‘instruments’ were coded with a combination of the genitive and -स्१ (Jäschke, 1883), and -si, -s are among the ergative forms found in a handful of modern Tibetan dialects (c.f. LaPolla, 1995). Note that in (52) the single argument of a monovalent verb does not evidence the -si morpheme. Based on these limited data an alternate hypothesis might be that -si occurs with human referents only; however, other data suggest that -si may also occur on non-human referents. While our preliminary analysis suggests -si marks ergativity in Dakpa, a final analysis will be dependent upon the collection of more data and future research.

(50) यांग्की-सी ने-ले बोक्चिन बी चो

Yangki-ERG 1ST.-LOC fist give SFP

‘Yangki punched me.’

(51) मेरा लामा-सी ...

mera Lama-ERG

‘mera Lama...’

(52) ना त्स्ह-गा बातेर चो

fish water-LOC swim SFP

‘The fish is swimming in the water.’

Another morpheme -ले marks what could be glossed as locative or accusative. In (53) and (54) it marks the O argument in the clause. However,

---

11 After vowels the genitive was not present and ‘agent’ or ‘instrument’ was marked with only -s or sometimes yis.
-le does not appear following all Os, as in (55), suggesting its presence in bivalent clauses is not obligatory.

(53) \( \eta \ddot{a}i \) k\( \ddot{a} \)-le tjo-do \( \ddot{c} \)o
1st dog -LOC look SFP
‘I am looking at the dog.’

(54) \( j\ddot{a}g\ddot{k}i\ddot{-}si \) ne-le bok\( \ddot{c} \)in \( \ddot{b} \)i \( \ddot{c} \)o
Yangki-ERG 1ST.-LOC fist give SFP
‘Yangki punched me.’

(55) \( \ddot{y}o\mathcal{k} \) ama tope\( \ddot{e} \) e c\( \ddot{e} \)-\( \ddot{t} \)er
1ST.GEN mother food make
‘My mother is cooking food.’

The morpheme -le also marks the possessor, as in (56). As a preliminary hypothesis we have labelled this morpheme as marking locative case, similar to Tibetan -la (DeLancey, 2006).

(56) ne-le \( \eta \ddot{a}i \) \( \ddot{b} \)i nau
1ST-LOC pillow one \( \ddot{c} \)op
‘I have one pillow.’

4.3. Verbal morphology

Unlike Ku\text{"u}t\text{"o}p and Bumthang, Dakpa evidences some interesting verbal morphology, including a vowel alternation in verbal stems and tentative indexing of the A or S verbal argument, or evidential marking, in the tense/aspect morphology.

The data in (57) shows that in present time the verb zo ‘eat’ retains a round vowel, while in the future time the vowel becomes a front, unrounded \( \ddot{e} \), shown in (58).

(57) ne topce zo-du
1ST food eat
‘I eat food.’

(58) ne nogor topce ze-\( \ddot{e} \)u
1ST tomorrow food eat
‘I will eat food tomorrow.’

This alternation has also been observed in the verb g\( \ddot{o} \) ‘laugh’, as shown in (59) and (60).
Verbal suffixes also appeared to minimally index subjects, as illustrated by the data in (61) and (62). The data in (61) shows first person future marked with -ku while in (62) the third person future is marked with -m.

During our elicitation, we found that -u was often used with first person while -ir/-m/∅ was often associated with the third person. Compare (63, 65, 67) with (64, 66, 68).

However, whether the alternations are best described as person-marking on a verb, or something else – perhaps a type of evidentiality – remains unknown. Kurtöp, for example, uses two morphemes to mark periphrastic aspect, which differ in their evidential values. Thus, one perfective tends to be used with first person statements and second person questions while the other tends to be used with third person statements. From the surface, then, it may look as though Kurtöp marks person but it is epiphenomenal. Indeed, this could also be the case in Dakpa. The data in (69), showing -du with a third person argument, would support the hypothesis that the verbal alternations described in this section are conditioned by evidentiality.

Of course, data such as that in (69) does not in itself disprove the notion that verbal morphology in Dakpa indexes person. It could also be possible that first person genitive conditions first personal verbal agreement. Whatever the nature of these morphemes, further research will be required, preferably drawn from natural conversation and oral texts with additional native speakers.

4.4. Sentence final particles

The final aspect of Dakpa we present in this article is what we have tentatively analysed as sentence final particles. Consider the data in (70) and (71).

In our data we have the sentence final particle lo occurring only at the end in wh-questions. While we have analysed this form simply as a sentence final particle in this article, a comparison with Kurtöp suggests this form may be better analysed as copula restricted to wh-questions. Lo appears also in van Driem (2007) as the final element in the following
However, whether the alternations are best described as person-marking on a verb, or something else – perhaps a type of evidentiality – remains unknown. Kurtdp, for example, uses two morphemes to mark perfective aspect, which differ in their evidential values. Thus, one perfective tends to be used with first person statements and second person questions while the other tends to be used with third person statements. From the surface, then, it may look as though Kurtöp marks person but it is epiphenomenal. Indeed, this could also be the case in Dakpa. The data in (69), showing -du with a third person argument, would support the hypothesis that the verbal alternations described in this section are conditioned by evidentiality.

(69) pok min geden norbu ne-du

1ST GEN name Geden Norbu called

‘My name is Geden Norbu.’

Of course, data such as that in (69) does not in itself disprove the notion that verbal morphology in Dakpa indexes person. It could also be possible that first person genitive conditions first personal verbal agreement. Whatever the nature of these morphemes, further research will be required, preferably drawn from natural conversation and oral texts with additional native speakers.

4.4. Sentence final particles

The final aspect of Dakpa we present in this article is what we have tentatively analysed as sentence final particles. Consider the data in (70) and (71).

(70) be su lo

3RD who SFP

‘Who is s/he?’

(71) i go so lo

2ND want what SFP

‘What do you want?’

In our data we have the sentence final particle lo occurring only at the end in wh-questions. While we have analysed this form simply as a sentence final particle in this article, a comparison with Kurtöp suggests this form may be better analysed as copula restricted to wh-questions. lo appears also in van Driem (2007) as the final element in the following
sentences: ‘What is this?’, ‘What is your name?’, and ‘Who are you?’.

In Kurtop, jo is a copula used exclusively in ‘wh’ questions. Further, Kurtop /j/ often corresponds to /l/ in other Bodic languages (c.f. Hyslop forthcoming 2009a, forthcoming 2009b).

Another particle we recorded is illustrated by the data in (72–73).

(72)  jie  gai-du  ço
     1st  go     SFP
     ‘I am going.’

(73)  jop  namnum-na  hur-dir  ço
     bird  sky-in  fly  ‘SFP’
     ‘Birds are flying in the sky.’

The particle ço occurred in our data only sometimes and has been considered optional in all occurrences. Thus, the data in (72) and (73) would also be considered correct if ço SFP were omitted. We recorded this optional ço SFP is affirmative statements in present and past time but more work is needed to discern its distribution and function. An identical form ço SFP appears also in Kurtop marking emphasis to affirmative statements.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In this article we have outlined some aspects of Dakpa as spoken in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Our analysis in all areas – phonology and morphology – remains preliminary and subject to further analysis. However, given that no future research on Dakpa is known to be forthcoming, we hope our study offers some reliable data and analysis on this otherwise understudied language.

In terms of phonology, Dakpa appeared to be quite similar to other East Bodish languages. A three-way contrast (voiceless, aspirated, voiced) in stops was found at four places of articulation (labial, dental, palatal, velar) with at least one additional stop at the retroflex place of articulation. It appears that Dakpa has preserved more complex onsets than some of the other East Bodish languages and has some complex codas – most likely the recent historical result of loss of word-final vowels – that have not been found in other East Bodish languages, and indeed appear to be rare within Tibeto-Burman.

The vowels and suprasegmental system of Dakpa are also quite similar to other East Bodish languages. Tone is contrastive following the sonorant

-
consonants and appears to be predictable following the obstruents, so that a high tone follows the voiceless obstruents and a low tone follows the voiced obstruents. Voiced obstruents are sometimes devoiced. Further research into the tonogenetic properties of Dakpa promises to yield interesting results (c.f. Hyslop, 2009).

What is unusual about Dakpa compared to other East Bodish languages is the presence of voiceless vowels. Like the complex codas, we suspect these to be the result of recent diachronic processes. Recall that complex codas and voiceless vowels were not present in the transcription published in van Driem (2007).

We found a genitive -k in Dakpa that is likely cognate with Dzala -ku, but seems to be a different morpheme than the Kurtöp and Bumthang -gi/-i. The ergative -si is not present in Kurtöp or Bumthang, either, but may be cognate with Classical Tibetan -s. The locative -le is also a likely cognate with Tibetan -la. Compared to Bumthang and Kurtöp, Dakpa has a richer system of verbal morphology. The Archaic East Bodish language, Black Mountain, also has a complex system of conjugational morphology (van Driem 1995b) and a further comparison of these systems would likely be valuable toward a contribution of the reconstruction of conjugational morphology and the indexing of verbal arguments in Proto-East-Bodish and Tibeto-Burman in general.

Abbreviations

1ST  1st person
2ND  2nd person
3RD  3rd person
ERG  Ergative
GEN  Genitive
LOC  Locative
PL   Plural
SFP  Sentence final particle

References


(forthcoming). “Kurtöp morphophonemics”. *Proceedings from the 13th Himalayan Languages Symposium (HLS)*.


