Why a verb dictionary?

While it might seem unusual to have a dictionary made up entirely of verbs, we feel that this is the most impactful contribution we can make to Khaling lexical studies.

Traditionally, dictionaries list verbs according to their infinitive form--in Khaling, the infinitive is the form that ends in -nɛ. The complexity of Khaling verbs is such that the infinitive of a verb does not provide sufficient information to be able to accurately conjugate the verb.

Take for example the verb *kʌrnɛ*: it has two meanings, 'carry' and 'bring for someone'. Their infinitives are the same, yet when conjugated, for example with a 1st person singular subject in the non-past, the forms are different:

uŋʌ kuru, I carry

uŋʌ kʌrdu, I bring for someone

The reason for this is that the verb roots are different--one is kur, the other is kurt--even though their infinitives are pronounced exactly the same way.  
This verb dictionary's mission is to provide complete information about all verbs, allowing them to be conjugated correctly.

Each verb is thus listed by its root form, alongside the more familiar infinitive, and we also provide verb conjugation tables for each type of verb, so that any verb can be conjugated in any of its forms.

How to use this dictionary and its conjugation tables

Online version

Verbs are listed by their root form, followed by the infinitive, and then the translation in English and/or Nepali (depending on which language options are selected when launching the dictionary).

It is the verb root which contains the information allowing us to conjugate the verb properly.

Starting from the end of the verb root (the right side), you will find that it has one of three possible shapes:

1) it can end in a vowel, such as thi (infinitive *thinɛ*, 'stumble')

or

2) it can end in a vowel followed by a consonant, such as ter (infinitive *ternɛ*, 'flee')

or

3) it can end in a vowel and two consonants, with the second consonant being a t, such as tɛnt (infinitive *tɛinɛ*, 'drop')

Some other verbs are made up of several parts, separated by hyphens (such as ther-si, infinitive *thersinɛ*, 'to lean against'). These verbs have distinct conjugations, and you must use different tables for them.

Once you have determined the shape of the verb you wish to conjugate, according to the criteria described above, you will be able to look up the conjugation table the verb belongs to. Again ignoring the beginning of the verb root, this will consist of the vowel (which we can be labeled V, for vowel), and of the following consonant, if present (which can be labeled C, for consonant) and t (if present).

For any verb, then, there are two pieces of information necessary for determining which verb conjugation table to use:

1) is the verb intransitive or transitive?

An intransitive verb describes a state or an action where only the subject is affected.

A transitive verb describes an action which prototypically has two main participants: the subject performing the action (the agent) and the object being affected by the action (the patient).

2) what is the shape of the end of the verb root, in terms of its V and possible C and t?

Does the verb root end in just -V, in -VC, or in -VCt?

The different possibilities of these two criteria are the following, each followed by the number of the relevant conjugation table.

a) just -V:

b) -VC

c) -VCt

vi

-ɛ (Table 1)

-ɛp (Table 2)

-ɛt (Table 3)

-ɛm (Table 4)

-ɛn (Table 5)

-aŋ (Table 6)

-ɛr (Table 7)

-ɛl (Table 8)

vt

-a (Table 9)

-ɛp (Table 10)

-ɛt (Table 11)

-ak (Table 12)

-ɛm (Table 13)

-aŋ (Table 14)

-ɛr (Table 15)

-al (Table 16)

-ɛl (Table 17)

-ɛpt (Table 18)

-ɛtt (Table 19)

-akt (Table 20)

-ɛmt (Table 21)

-ɛnt (Table 22)

-aŋt (Table 23)

vi

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Once you have determined the relevant conjugation table, you need to know what the person and number of the agent and patient are.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1S | ʔuŋ or ʔuŋʌ |  |
| 1DI | ʔitsi or ʔitsiʔɛ |  |
| 1DE | ʔotsu or ʔotsuʔɛ |  |
| 1PI | ʔik or ʔikʔɛ |  |
| 1PE | ʔok or ʔokʔɛ |  |
| 2S | ʔin or ʔinɛ |  |
| 2D | ʔetsi or ʔetsiʔɛ |  |
| 2P | ʔɛn or ʔɛnʔɛ |  |
| 3S | ʔʌm or ʔʌmʔɛ |  |
| 3D | ʔʌmsu or ʔʌmsuʔɛ |  |
| 3P | ʔʌmhɛm or ʔʌmhɛmʔɛ |  |
| X>Y | X is the agent, Y is the patient |  |

Once you determine the correct combination of agent and patient, as well as whether the verb you wish to conjugate should be non-past (=present or future), past, or imperative (=command), you will be able to find the example verb which is in the corresponding slot of the verb conjugation table.

The example verb will have the same ending but probably not the same beginning as the verb you wish to conjugate. You will need to substitute the correct beginning consonant(s) so they match the verb you are conjugating.

Eg.

You want to conjugate kʌrnɛ, 'carry', with a 1S agent (ʔuŋʌ) and a 3S patient (ʔʌm, or any singular noun), in the non-past.

The verb dictionary will give you the verb root kur as corresponding to 'carry'

This is a transitive verb, and its root ends in the VC combination -ur, which is Table XYZ.

The 1S>3S non-past cell of the conjugation table gives you: suru (because the example verb is sʌrnɛ, 'wash'.

You must change the first letter from s to k (sʌrnɛ > kʌrnɛ) to obtain the correct form: suru > **kuru**.

PDF version

Verbs are listed by infinitive form followed by a form in parentheses, which is the verb root.

The link at the bottom of the entry refers to the correct conjugation table.

You will need to determine what the nature of the subject (also called agent, if it carries out the action) and of the object (also called patient), if present. You will also need to determine whether you want a non-past (=present or future), past, or imperative (=command) form of the verb.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1S | ʔuŋ or ʔuŋʌ |  |
| 1DI | ʔitsi or ʔitsiʔɛ |  |
| 1DE | ʔotsu or ʔotsuʔɛ |  |
| 1PI | ʔik or ʔikʔɛ |  |
| 1PE | ʔok or ʔokʔɛ |  |
| 2S | ʔin or ʔinɛ |  |
| 2D | ʔetsi or ʔetsiʔɛ |  |
| 2N | ʔɛn or ʔɛnʔɛ |  |
| 3S | ʔʌm or ʔʌmʔɛ |  |
| 3D | ʔʌmsu or ʔʌmsuʔɛ |  |
| 3N | ʔʌmhɛm or ʔʌmhɛmʔɛ |  |
| X>Y | X is the subject/ agent, Y is the object/patient |  |

Once you determine the correct combination of subject and object, and whether you need a non-past, past or imperative form, you will need to look at the example verb which is in the corresponding slot of the verb conjugation table.

The example verb will have the same ending but probably not the same beginning as the verb you wish to conjugate. You will need to substitute the correct beginning consonant(s) so they match the verb you are conjugating.

Eg.

You want to conjugate kʌrnɛ, 'carry', with a 1S agent (ʔuŋʌ) and a 3S patient (ʔʌm, or any singular noun), in the non-past.

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The 1S>3S non-past cell of the conjugation table gives you: suru (because the example verb is sʌrnɛ, 'wash'.

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