

## Tamang

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### 1. Introduction

Tamang is spoken by about a million speakers in central Nepal. The particular dialect described here is spoken in the village of Risiangku, Sindhu Palchok District, Bagmati Zone. It can be considered typical of Eastern Tamang.

Tamang is a close relative of Gurung, Thakali (including the dialects of Marpha, Thini and Syang), Manangpa, the Nar-Phu dialects, Chantyal and the dialect of Tangbe, in Mustang zone. Together they form what Robert Shafer (1955) has identified as the Gurung Branch of the Bodish Section of the Bodic Division of Tibeto-Burman.<sup>1</sup>

Tamang was included under the name of Murmi in Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*. A few studies have appeared on its phonology, but very little on its grammar. On Western Tamang see Taylor 1973 and Everitt 1973. Some texts in Western Tamang have been published in Hale and Pike 1970 and Hoefer 1981-97. On Eastern Tamang see Mazaudon 1978b and 1988, and Yoncan 1997.

On other languages of the TGTM group the reader can consult Glover 1974 for Gurung, Georg 1996 for Marphali, and Noonan in this volume for Chantyal and Nar-Phu. The next closest language on which grammatical information is available is Tibetan.

### *Transcription and abbreviations*

Words in *italics* are loans from Nepali. Abbreviations specific to this section are:

Excl	exclamation	RS	reported speech
INT	intensifier	Ø	zero marker
IRR	irrealis	*	ungrammatical structure
lit.	literally	[ ]	word added in translation
Ner	nominalizer (infinitive or participle)	( )	word deleted from translation
NonPst	non past		

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<sup>1</sup> M. Noonan uses the term "Tamangic" for this group, an improvement over Shafer in as much as the endonym used by most members of the group is "Tamang" rather than "Gurung", but problematic if we want to respect Shafer's sensible proposition to reserve the ending "-ic" for large families (Indic, Sinitic). I refer to this group by the initials of its main ethnic groups, TGTM (Tamang-Gurung-Thakali-Manang).

## 2. Phonology

### *Initial consonants*

	labial	dental	sibilant affricate	trilled retroflex	velar/ glottal
aspirated	p <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	ch	ʈ <sup>h</sup>	k <sup>h</sup>
unaspirated	p	t	c	ʈ	k
nasal	m	n			ŋ
continuant		l	s	r	h
semi-vowel	(j, w)				

### *Initial consonant clusters*

	p <sup>h</sup>	p	m	t <sup>h</sup>	t	n	l	ch	c	s	ʈ <sup>h</sup>	ʈ	r	k <sup>h</sup>	k	ŋ	h
r	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+
l	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+
j	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	(+)
w	(+)	(+)	(+)	-	(+)	-	(+)	+	+	+	+	+	(+)	+	+	-	(+)
rw	-	(+)	(+)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(+)

+ means that the cluster is permitted, - that it is not, (+) that there are restrictions on the following vowel.

### *Final consonants*

p t k m n ŋ l r (s)

### *Vowels*

i i: e e: a a: o o: u u:

Vocalic length is distinctive in open initial syllables. Nasality is very marginally distinctive. It is transcribed by the tilde [~].

### *Vowel clusters or diphthongs*

ui	oi	ai	au	iau
iu	io	ia	ua	uai
iu:	io:	ia:	ua:	ua:
iui	ioi	iai		

An i or u vowel followed by another vowel is pronounced as a semi-vowel. Thus, in the chart of initial consonants and consonant clusters “j” and “w” are not different from i and u as first elements of a vocalic cluster.

### *Tones*

There are four tones, which apply to phonological words. They are transcribed by a raised number preceding the word. A word can contain several morphemes which

are separated by a hyphen in the transcription. The first morpheme determines the tone of the whole word.

Particles which carry their own tone are considered separate words, and are not hyphenated with the preceding word.

The phonetic pitch of the tones is approximately as follows: <sup>1</sup>a, high falling; <sup>2</sup>a, mid-high level; <sup>3</sup>a, mid-low level; <sup>4</sup>a, very low — falling if the word is monosyllabic, falling-rising-falling if the word has two syllables or more.

Words carrying the two higher tones, 1 and 2, have clear voice quality, words in the low tones have a breathy voice quality.

*The main point of interest* in the phonology is the correlation between the tones cum voice quality and the initial consonants. The opposition between aspirated and non-aspirated consonants is not found under the two lower tones, and the archiphonemic series in that position is pronounced unaspirated with a slight optional voicing. This correlation derives from the origin of the tonal system. The devoicing of an old voiced series in Proto-Tamang, which merged with an old voiceless unaspirated series, gave rise to the two low tones through a process of merger and compensatory split of the old two-tone system. (Mazaudon 1977, 1978a).

### ***Canonical forms***

The canonical form of the syllable in Risiangku Tamang is the richest in the TGTM group:

(Tone) (Initial Consonant) (Liquid) (Semi-Vowel) Vowel (Final Consonant)

All verb roots are monosyllabic. About half of the nominal roots are monosyllabic. Morphemes of more than two syllables are exceptional. All bound morphemes are monosyllabic.

### **3. Typological summary**

Basic word order: S O V.

Tamang conforms in most respects to the patterns established by Greenberg (1966) for an SOV language (except for the place of the negation before the verb and of numbers after the noun) although there is great freedom to move the arguments about, for rhetorical purposes.

In complex verb phrases modals follow the verb root. Subordinate clauses precede the main clause.

Case marking: ergative.

Morphology: limited, exclusively suffixing. Bound morphemes include case markers on the NPs and aspects on the verb. There is no agreement pattern.

Clause subordination pattern: mostly through participial and gerundive constructions.

Topic-comment structure is frequent.

Information structure markers play a major role in the expression of logical relations.

## 4. Basic sentences

### 4.1. Intransitives

#### 4.1.1. Verbal predicate

- S-ABS (± PERIPHERAL ARGUMENTS) V

##### Active

- (1)      <sup>2</sup>ai-Ø    <sup>3</sup>naŋkar    <sup>1</sup>ni-pa ?  
           you-ABS   tomorrow   go-IMPFV  
           Are you going tomorrow ?

##### Stative

Stative verbs carry verbal suffixes. They can be used in the perfective with an inchoative meaning.

- (2)      o, <sup>3</sup>ce:-ci            <sup>4</sup>tamo  
           oh beautiful-PFV   now  
           Oh, it's really pretty this time.

But they are mostly used in the participial form in -pa in the same construction as adjectival predicates (with or without a copula).

#### 4.1.2. Non-verbal predicate

- S-ABS PREDICATE (± COPULA)

##### Adjective Predicate

- (3)      <sup>2</sup>cu    <sup>3</sup>mento    <sup>3</sup>caca  
           this   flower   small  
           This flower is small.

The absence of a copula is very frequent. But there exist two main copulas and some others. <sup>1</sup>mu-la is mostly used for existence and attribution, and <sup>3</sup>hin-pa for identification<sup>2</sup>.

Several other verbs can be used as copulas :

- (4)      <sup>1</sup>phjukpa-la    <sup>3</sup>caca    <sup>2</sup>kola-m    <sup>2</sup>os-pa    <sup>3</sup>a    <sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-pa-<sup>1</sup>ka  
           rich-GEN            small    child-TOP    thus-Ner    not   come-IMPFV-FOC  
           The children of the rich are not (lit. do not come) like that.

Modifications of the adjective occur only when the adjective is used as predicate. A change of copula can be used for this purpose, for instance <sup>1</sup>ta-ci expresses excess.

- (5)      <sup>3</sup>caca    <sup>1</sup>ta-ci  
           small    reach completion-PFV  
           It is too small.

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<sup>2</sup> In Risiangku Tamang the copulas <sup>1</sup>mu-la and <sup>3</sup>hin-pa are only found with non-perfective suffixes. In this context the suffix -la does not have its usual future/irrealis value, but is a plain non-past or imperfective. <sup>1</sup>mu-la cannot be negated; a substitutive root <sup>3</sup>are is used instead.

Intensification is usually expressed by repetition of the adjective (29). Another frequent form of intensification is an intonation pattern. One of the syllables of the emphasized word is pronounced on a very high pitch with a falsetto voice. This procedure is an areal feature in Nepal.

Adjectives are rarely modified by adverbs.

#### *Noun Predicate*

The meaning difference of the basic copulas with an adjectival predicate is clear, but it does not seem to hold when the predicate is a noun.

- (6) <sup>1</sup>ŋa-la    <sup>1</sup>apa    <sup>1</sup>chɔŋpa    {Ø}    /<sup>3</sup>hin-na    /<sup>1</sup>mu-la}  
 I-GEN    father    merchant    {Ø}    /be-NonPst    /exist-NonPst}  
 My father is a merchant.

#### *Locative Predicate*

- (7) <sup>4</sup>kle    <sup>1</sup>it    <sup>3</sup>naŋ-ri    <sup>1</sup>mu-la  
 king    this    inside-LOC    be-NonPst  
 The king is inside this [bag].

#### *Predicate of possession*

The predicate of possession, either of existence ('I have X') or of identification ('X is mine') is generally expressed by an NP in the genitive case.

- (8) <sup>1</sup>ŋa-la    <sup>4</sup>came    <sup>4</sup>ni: <sup>1</sup>mu-la  
 I-GEN    daughter    two    be-NonPst  
 I have two daughters
- (9) <sup>1</sup>ŋa-la    <sup>1</sup>ka  
 I-GEN    FOC  
 It is mine.

The genitive is the most commonly used case for possession, but the dative is also used:

- (10) <sup>4</sup>tap    <sup>1</sup>mu-la    <sup>2</sup>ani-ta ?  
 needle    be-NonPst    aunt-DAT  
 Do you have a needle, Auntie ? (lit.: Does Auntie have a needle ?)

The dative is the usual case when there is a transfer or attribution of possession (11) although even in that situation, the genitive can be used (12).

- (11) <sup>1</sup>ŋa-ta    <sup>3</sup>pa-u  
 I-DAT    give-IMP  
 Give it to me!
- (12) <sup>4</sup>came    <sup>4</sup>ca    <sup>1</sup>the-la    <sup>1</sup>am-la-n    <sup>1</sup>pin-ci  
 daughter    TOP    she-GEN    mother-GEN-INT    give-PFV  
 The daughter, they gave to her mother. (lit. of her mother)

#### *4.1.3. Weather expressions*

Natural events are usually expressed by a noun + a weak verb:

- (13)    <sup>2</sup>nam    <sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-ci  
          rain    come-PFV  
          It's raining.

Similar constructions are used to express the way in which we experience external events. (see § 6.5)

#### 4.2. Transitives

Transitive verbs construct their subject in the ergative and their object either in the absolutive or the dative. Some verbs allow only one or the other construction and can thus be sub-categorized as direct (14, 15) or indirect transitives (16).

• S-ERG O-ABS V

- (14)    <sup>2</sup>naka-se    <sup>3</sup>tap-Ø    <sup>1</sup>ca-ci  
          chicken-ERG    vegetable-ABS    eat-PFV  
          The chicken is eating the vegetable.

Perception predicates follow the direct transitive pattern.

- (15)    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i    <sup>4</sup>jo:-Ø    <sup>1</sup>mraŋ-ci  
          I-ERG    thief-ABS    see-PFV  
          I saw the thief.

• S-ERG O-DAT V

- (16)    <sup>1</sup>mam-se    <sup>2</sup>kol'-kat'-ta    <sup>3</sup>paŋ-pa  
          Grandma-ERG    children-DAT    scold-IMPFV  
          Grandma is scolding the children.

Many verbs allow variation in the case marking of the patient for semantic or rhetorical purposes. With those verbs, it is statistically more frequent that animate objects be put in the dative, and inanimate objects in the absolutive. Definite/indefinite, the degree to which the object is affected, and the information structure of the sentence also play a part.

#### *Ditransitives*

• S-ERG IO-DAT O-ABS V

- (17)    <sup>1</sup>am'-se    <sup>2</sup>kol'-ta    <sup>1</sup>kan-Ø    <sup>2</sup>khwa:-ci  
          mother-ERG    child-DAT    rice-ABS    feed-PFV  
          The mother fed the child rice.

#### 4.3 Experiencer constructions

• N-DAT N-ABS V

A number of verbs, especially of feeling or experience, put the experiencer in the dative:

- (18)    <sup>2</sup>aŋa-ta    <sup>1</sup>pet-pa?  
          sister-DAT    shy-IMPFV  
          Do you feel shy ? [said to a young girl addressed as 'sister']

With some other verbs, the experiencer is in the absolutive and the source, or object of the feeling, is in the dative, yielding a construction similar to the indirect transitive construction except for the reversed word order.

- (19) <sup>1</sup>ŋa-ta    <sup>1</sup>the    <sup>1</sup>nai-pa  
 I-DAT    he    disgust-IMPFV  
 I disgust him.

Inanimate objects of feelings require a subordinate clause:

- (20) <sup>1</sup>kli    <sup>1</sup>mraŋ-si    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>1</sup>nai-ci  
 feces    see-having    I    disgust-PFV  
 Excrements disgust me (lit. Seeing feces I feel disgust).

a construction which can also be used with animate objects as in:

- (21) <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>1</sup>mraŋ-si    <sup>2</sup>ai    <sup>1</sup>pet-pa ?  
 I    see-having    you    shy-IMPFV  
 Are you shy with me ?

Note the case variation on the experiencer subject of 'shy' as compared to (18).

#### 4.4. Peripheral arguments

##### *Beneficiary*

Aside from IO, some DO, and experiencer subjects, the dative is used for many arguments loosely bound to the verb:

- (22) <sup>1</sup>the-ta    <sup>3</sup>ro    <sup>1</sup>kik    <sup>1</sup>por-pa    <sup>1</sup>ce-n  
 he-DAT    friend    one    take-IMPFV    only-INT  
 He took only one travelling companion for himself.

##### *Instrument*

Ergative, instrumental and ablative, three cases which share the general semantic notion of source, are homophonous.

#### 4.5. Variation in subject case marking

There is ample variation in the case marking of the subject as well as the object (see 4.2). This sometimes reflects the fact that the same verb can be used as a transitive or an intransitive or that an expression is in the process of lexicalization.

Information structure is also an important factor. In (24) topicalization of 'you' is accompanied by a shift to the dative case<sup>3</sup>, as opposed to the expected ergative (23), although topicalization does not necessarily imply such a shift in case marking: compare (89).

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<sup>3</sup> These variations are the closest Tamang gets to voice: (24) could be analyzed as a sort of 'impersonal passive': 'There is no reward finding, as far as you are concerned', whence the dative.

- (23) *inam bakas k<sup>h</sup>up <sup>1</sup>jaŋ-ci <sup>4</sup>jaŋ-la p<sup>h</sup>alana sipai-se*  
 reward a lot find-PFV us-GEN so-and-so soldier-ERG  
 He got a big reward, our soldier so-and-so.
- (24) <sup>2</sup>os <sup>1</sup>ta-m' <sup>2</sup>ai-ta *inam bakas* <sup>3</sup>a <sup>1</sup>jaŋ  
 thus happen-when you-DAT reward NEG find  
 In that case you don't get a reward.

## 5. The Noun Phrase

### 5.1. Word Order

The general word order is Modifier-Modified. Genitive phrases and relative clauses precede their heads, and the structure of the simple NP is as follows:

Demonstrative, Adjective<sub>1</sub>, Adjective<sub>2</sub>, Noun, Numeral, {Case + Particle / Particle + Case}<sup>4</sup>

### 5.2. Form classes

Noun modifiers: demonstrative, adjective (4), numeral (27), genitive NP (25) or headless relative clause (32), can function as nouns.

Noun modifiers are not morphologically distinguishable from nouns. The main difference between them and nouns is that they modify a noun without an intervening genitive marker.

### 5.3. Pronouns and pronominalization

The most common form of pronominalization is by deletion. Any definite argument of the verb, the head of a relative clause (32), or the head of a complex NP (25) can be pronominalized by deletion. On the other hand, an indefinite element cannot. Deleted elements are referential.

The set of personal pronouns consists of: <sup>1</sup>ŋa 'I', <sup>2</sup>ai 'you', <sup>1</sup>the 'he', <sup>4</sup>jaŋ 'us (inclusive)', <sup>1</sup>in 'us (exclusive)', <sup>2</sup>ai-ni 'you (plural)', <sup>1</sup>the-n 'they'. The two plural pronouns of the first person are often used instead of the singular. 'You' is often replaced, for politeness, by a kinship term (10, 18), or by the intensifier <sup>3</sup>raŋ 'oneself'.

The demonstratives <sup>2</sup>cu 'this' and <sup>1</sup>oca 'that', and the nouns <sup>3</sup>mi 'man', and <sup>3</sup>ro 'companion' are also often used as pronouns.

- (25) <sup>3</sup>mi-la Ø <sup>4</sup>tamom <sup>3</sup>rap-si <sup>3</sup>cin-ci  
 person-GEN [thing] now play-having finish-PFV  
 Her [tape-recorder] has now stopped playing.

Personal or demonstrative pronouns take the same case markers as nouns, except for <sup>1</sup>ŋa 'I' with which a variant of the ergative is found <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i 'by me'.

<sup>4</sup> The order of these elements depends on the tonal or non-tonal status of the particle.



#### 5.4. Reflexives , reciprocals and intensifiers

There are no special reflexive pronouns. Usually one of the pronouns, or both, are deleted. See (22).

The pronoun <sup>3</sup>raŋ ‘in person’, ‘one's own’ can be used for the reflexive.

- (26)    <sup>3</sup>ponpo-se        <sup>3</sup>raŋ-ta-n        <sup>3</sup>kjaŋ-si        <sup>1</sup>cja:-pa  
          shaman-ERG        self-DAT-INT        hit-PART        see-IMPV  
          The shaman checks by hitting himself [with the hot broom that it is not too hot for the patient].

Reciprocity is expressed either by a verb with a conjoined subject:

- (27)    <sup>2</sup>o-te-ma        <sup>4</sup>ni:-nun        <sup>2</sup>chaŋ-cim,        <sup>3</sup>rempa-then        <sup>1</sup>mriŋ  
          that-much-when    both            fight-PFV        husband-and        wife  
          And thereupon they (both) fought, husband and wife.

or by repetition of the arguments with reversed case marking:

- (28)    <sup>3</sup>rempa-ta        <sup>1</sup>mriŋ        <sup>1</sup>mriŋ-ta        <sup>3</sup>rempa        <sup>1</sup>nai-sam...  
          husband-DAT    wife        wife-DAT        husband        disgust-if  
          If husband and wife are disgusted with each other...

#### 5.5 Adjectives

Adjectives are few and rarely used as nominal modifiers. They comprise 'big', 'small', 'elder', the colors and a few others. Most notions commonly expressed by adjectives in other languages are expressed by participial forms of stative verbs. Adjectives differ from stative verbs in that they do not carry verbal suffixes (<sup>1</sup>tar 'white', <sup>3</sup>caca 'small') although some of them end in a non alternating final syllable -pa (<sup>1</sup>kheppa 'big') which is probably etymologically related to the nominalizer -pa.

Adjectives used as modifiers usually precede the noun. They follow it in kinship expressions, and sometimes for emphasis.

#### 5.6 Definite / indefinite

The numeral ‘one’ and the demonstratives can be used as definite/indefinite markers:

- (29)    <sup>4</sup>kle    <sup>4</sup>kik    ra:ni    <sup>4</sup>kik    <sup>1</sup>mu-pa    <sup>2</sup>cim  
          king    one    queen    one    be-Past    EVID  
          <sup>1</sup>oca    <sup>4</sup>kle-then    ra:ni-mi    <sup>1</sup>phjukpo-<sup>1</sup>phjukpo    <sup>1</sup>mu-pa    <sup>2</sup>cim  
          that    king-and    queen-TOP    rich-rich    be-Past    EVID  
          [Once upon a time] there was a king and a queen. That king and queen were extremely rich.

Their use is optional:

- (30)    <sup>3</sup>mi    <sup>1</sup>kha-ci  
          man    come-PFV  
          Someone came. / There is someone at the door. / The man [whom we expected] came. / People (plural) came.

### 5.7. Plural, numbers and quantifiers

Plural, or collective, and numbers occupy the same slot, after the head noun. Quantifiers have a different status.

There is no compulsory marking of plurality on nouns. An indefinite plurality marker, *-kate*, or a numeral can follow the noun. They are mutually exclusive. *-kate* is adjoined to the plural form of pronouns: <sup>2</sup>*ai-ni-kate* 'you all'. *-kate* is a collective rather than a plural; it extends the meaning of the NP to related, not necessarily identical objects, like English 'etc.'

The number system is vigesimal. Numbers are built according to the general syntax of the NP: name of the base followed by multiplier: <sup>4</sup>*pokal* <sup>4</sup>*ni*: |twenty.two| 'forty'. Addition is indicated by the ablative *-se*: <sup>4</sup>*pokal* <sup>4</sup>*ni*:*-se* <sup>4</sup>*ni*: |twenty.two-from two| 'forty-two'.

The suffix *-te*, added to a number or measure (91) gives it an imprecise meaning.

Quantifiers like 'all', 'many', etc. are either used as full nouns (31) or as adverbs (see § 6.3). They are not adjectives.

- (31)      <sup>3</sup>*mokko-se-n*          <sup>2</sup>*se:-pa*  
              all-ERG-INT          know-IMPFV  
              Everybody knows.

### 5.8. Case markers and particles

Case markers are all toneless suffixes. They include: *-se* 'ergative, instrumental, ablative', *-la* 'genitive', *-ta* 'accusative, dative', *-ri* 'locative' (used for time, space, purpose), *-then* 'sociative'. Temporal *-ma* is bound to some words (33).

Information structure particles end the NP. They can also apply to VPs or whole clauses. (see § 10).

### 5.9 Possessor NP

The possessive construction marks the dependent NP, or possessor, with the genitive; the head noun is unmarked (4, 6, 38).

This construction is often used to link postpositions to the noun they govern (54, 95).

The genitive is also used to indicate price but expressions of amounts using a measure word do not use an overt genitive marker.

### 5.10. Relative clauses

The verb of the relative clause (RC) is in the participial form in *-pa*, and the RC precedes its head without any intervening connecting marker. This is a difference with Western Tamang and Tibetan, which use a genitive marker on the RC. There is no relative pronoun, and the relativized argument is simply deleted inside the relative clause: <sup>4</sup>*tot* <sup>2</sup>*pwi-pa* <sup>3</sup>*mi* |load carry man| 'a porter'.

Like any other NP, the head of a RC can be pronominalized by zero. Case markers are suffixed directly to the nominalized verb of a headless RC (32).

- (32) <sup>1</sup>kha-pa-ta <sup>1</sup>pin <sup>1</sup>to:-pa, <sup>3</sup>a <sup>1</sup>kha-pa-ta <sup>1</sup>pin <sup>3</sup>a <sup>1</sup>to:  
 come-Ner-DAT give must-IMPV not come-Ner-DAT give not need  
 We must give [food] to the [people who] come, to [those who] don't come,  
 we don't have to give.

Tamang can relativize on very peripheral elements : locative, genitive expressing the material, and even, especially when the head of the relative clause is accompanied by a demonstrative, on elements which have no clear function in the RC (33).

- (33) <sup>1</sup>tu-kjuŋ-ma <sup>2</sup>maca-ri <sup>2</sup>ai-ni-kate <sup>3</sup>to:-pa  
 last year down-LOC you-PL-COLL reach-Ner  
<sup>1</sup>oca <sup>1</sup>mam-<sup>1</sup>khwī  
 that old-woman  
 That old woman [whose house] you guys went to, last year, down [*i.e.* in the city].

### *Corelatives and free relatives*

Corelatives, where the relativized element is represented both in the RC and in the main clause, are not usual. A structure of this type is found only when relativizing on an adverbial, represented inside the RC by an interrogative adverb, and taken up again in the main clause by a deictic adverb. It conveys an indefinite meaning 'wherever, however much'. Compare (81).

- (34) <sup>1</sup>sun <sup>4</sup>ka:te <sup>1</sup>to:-pa-cim <sup>2</sup>ote <sup>1</sup>tat-si <sup>2</sup>to:-ko  
 rice how much need-IMPV-EVID that much take-ing pound-IMP  
 Polish as much rice as will be required!

This can also be expressed without a resumptive word in the main clause, and such structures might better be analysed as free relatives:

- (35) <sup>1</sup>sun <sup>4</sup>ka:te <sup>1</sup>ni-pa-cim <sup>2</sup>to <sup>1</sup>to:-ci  
 rice how much go-IMPV-EVID pound must-PFV  
 We must pound the amount of rice that will get used up.

## **6. The Verb Phrase**

### **6.1 Agreement pattern**

Whether the verb be main or subordinated there is no agreement with any argument of the verb, except marginally in the optative/hortative -ke 'first person' - kai 'third person'. The conditional-sai also functions as a sort of 'first person plural inclusive' or 'indefinite third' of the optative: <sup>1</sup>ni-ke 'let's go!' <sup>1</sup>pin-sai 'let us give (alms)' <sup>4</sup>tik <sup>1</sup>la-sai 'what can we do?'

### **6.2. Word order**

The verb phrase comprises the following elements, in order:  
 adverb, negation, verb, directional, modal, {tense-aspect or subordinating suffix}.

### 6.3 Adverbs

Like adjectives, adverbs are rare. Time and place adverbs or prepositional phrases are not part of the VP and are placed freely in the sentence, with a preference for time to precede place (33).

Manner and quantity adverbs are the only ones which modify the verb (as opposed to the sentence) and which are potentially part of the VP or the predicate phrase.

#### *Manner adverbs*

Simple words are restricted to 'fast' and 'slow'. They precede the verb or predicate phrase as closely as possible, allowing only the negation or a suffixless subordinated verb to come between them and the main verb. In closely knit expressions like 'get wood', 'eat rice', 'speak words' the object can sometimes come between the adverb and the verb.

Manner is most often expressed by a subordinate clause in -si (69) or in -na (64).

#### *Quantity adverbs*

Quantity words, if they are not NPs (see 5.7), always modify the predicate and occur in the same position as adverbs: between NP arguments and the verb (23, 36) or before a complex predicate (37).

- (36) <sup>1</sup>sun    <sup>4</sup>ca    <sup>4</sup>la:mo    <sup>3</sup>a    <sup>1</sup>kha    <sup>1</sup>mu-la  
 rice    TOP    much    not    come    be-NonPst  
 Rice does not grow well (lit. much) [here].

- (37)    apai,    <sup>4</sup>la:man    <sup>1</sup>suŋ    <sup>1</sup>kheppa  
 Excl    much    mouth    big  
 Oh! He is very much a big-mouther (= he is very greedy)

### 6.4 Negation

Negation precedes the verb. It has two forms, <sup>4</sup>ta for imperatives and optatives, and <sup>3</sup>a for all other verb forms.

### 6.5 Verb

The verb is usually a simple monosyllabic root.

A limited number of verbs can be followed by the directional suffix -ka which derives from the verb 'to come' (<sup>1</sup>kha-pa): <sup>2</sup>pit-ka-pa 'to send hither'.

Compounds are exceptional (<sup>2</sup>pit-hur-pa 'to throw to someone' from <sup>2</sup>pit-pa 'to send' and <sup>1</sup>hur-pa 'to throw').

A verbal expression consisting of a noun and weak verb sequence (<sup>1</sup>sem <sup>1</sup>ta-pa |feelings happen| 'to like', <sup>3</sup>prot <sup>1</sup>kha-pa |taste come| 'to be tasty') can replace the verb and be constructed like a simple verb (38, 41).

- (38)    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-ta    <sup>3</sup>twa-la    <sup>1</sup>sja    <sup>3</sup>prot    <sup>1</sup>kha    <sup>1</sup>mu-la  
 I-DAT    pork-GEN    meat    taste    come    be-NonPst  
 I like pork meat.

## 6.6 Modals

Modals are fully toned words, which also exist as full verbs with nominal complements.

Whether a succession of two fully toned verb roots is to be interpreted as a serial construction, as a sequence main verb + modal, or as a sequence subordinated verb + main verb is open to debate. In such constructions, the first verb appears as a bare root and the second, which carries the tense-aspect markers, expresses some kind of modality. The details of modal construction are treated below under "complex sentences" (see 7.3).

## 6.7 Tense-aspect and sentence final particles

Basic tense-aspects are expressed by a small set of suffixes which follow the last verb, directional, or modal of the clause: -pa, present/imperfective, -ci, past/perfective, -la (-na after dentals), future/irrealis, -u/-ko imperative, -ke/-kai optative, -sai conditional. Only main clause or completive clause verbs (complements of verbs of thinking and saying) carry tense-aspect markers.

Negation is incompatible, in Risiangku Tamang, with the perfective suffix. A negated past is expressed with the irrealis marker -la, followed by the intensifier -i: <sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-ci |come-PFV| 'he came'; <sup>3</sup>a-<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-la-i |NEG-come-IRR-INT| 'he did not come'

The perfective suffix -ci is used with an inchoative sense, as in Nepali (2, 13, 14).

Other aspects of the verb are expressed through complex constructions consisting of a subordinate clause followed by a copula or by a small set of verbs like 'finish', 'stay' used as auxiliaries: V-pa-n <sup>1</sup>mula, progressive; V-si <sup>2</sup>cipa, durative; etc.

The reported speech particle -ro is added to the tensed form of the verb (55, 91).

## 6.8 Subordination suffixes

The logical relationship of the subordinate clause to the main clause is indicated by a set of suffixes added to the last verb root of the subordinate verb phrase: -sam / -sai / -saka, conditional; -si, temporal succession; -ma, temporal simultaneity; -na, manner; -pa-ri, purpose; -si / -pa-se / -pa-se <sup>1</sup>la-ma, cause.

## 7. Complex sentences

### 7.1 Formal types of subordination

Subordinated verbs or clauses precede the main verb or clause. There are four ways a verb can be subordinated to another:

#### *The bare root*

The bare root of the subordinated verb immediately precedes the main verb (except for the negation which comes in between). This construction is used with the

modals 'need to', 'want to', 'know how to', 'can', half the 'be about to' sentences, and half of the causatives.

- (39) <sup>1</sup>ni <sup>4</sup>ta <sup>2</sup>puŋ-o  
go don't let-IMP  
Don't let him go.

### *Participial form*

The subordinated verb can be in a participial form, or it can be in a finite form followed by a weak verb ('do', 'say'), itself in the required participial form.

- (40) <sup>2</sup>nam {<sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-sam / <sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a-ci <sup>3</sup>pi-sam} <sup>1</sup>ŋa <sup>3</sup>a <sup>1</sup>k<sup>h</sup>a  
rain {come-if / come-PFV say-if} I not come  
If it rains, I won't come.

### *Nominalized form*

The subordinated verb can be in the nominalized form followed by a suffix. Most of these suffixes are homophonous with nominal case markers.

- (41) <sup>2</sup>ai-ni-kate <sup>4</sup>pu <sup>2</sup>mra <sup>2</sup>sjot-pa-ri <sup>1</sup>ni-ci  
you-PI-COLL field weeds pull out-Ner-LOC go-PFV  
You guys had gone to weed the fields.

### *Juxtaposition*

Two clauses can be simply juxtaposed, and be clearly subordinated in meaning.

- (42) <sup>1</sup>ni-la <sup>1</sup>ta-la  
go-FUT happen-FUT  
He might go.

## **7.2 Sentential subjects and completives**

### *7.2.1 Sentential subjects*

The sentential 'subject' appears as a topic (or an anti-topic) for the main clause and can carry the topic marker.

- (43) <sup>1</sup>ti:la <sup>4</sup>ni:-ra <sup>2</sup>som-ra <sup>1</sup>ta-ci <sup>1</sup>ŋa <sup>1</sup>chjai-pa-m  
yesterday two-days three-days happen-PFV I ready-IMP-FV-TOP  
Yesterday [already], I had been ready for two or three days.

Formally, a modal notion like epistemic possibility is expressed in the same way as a sentential subject. Example (42) can be paraphrased 'It may happen [that] he will go'

### *7.2.2 Completives: Verbs of thinking, saying, feeling, and wanting*

The most usual way of introducing the complement of a verb of opinion is as a quotation, using a dummy verb 'to say' in the participial form before the main verb 'to say' 'to think' etc. The construction 'having said, he said' is not specific to

Tamang but is an areal feature, found also in Nepali among other languages of the area.

- (44) *paisa*      <sup>3</sup>*nan*kar      <sup>3</sup>*pa-u*      <sup>3</sup>*pi-si*      <sup>3</sup>*pi-m*  
 money      tomorrow      bring-IMP      say-ing      say-EMPH  
 He said that you should bring the money tomorrow. (lit.: 'Bring the money tomorrow' having said he said.)

Verbs of saying, intention or desire are often constructed without any overt mark of subordination by two juxtaposed finite clauses.

- (45) <sup>1</sup>*ni-la*      <sup>4</sup>*man-pa*  
 go-FUT      like-IMPV  
 I want to go.

### 7.3. Modality

The most frequent expression of modality is a V-V construction, which could be analysed as a complex verb phrase belonging to a single clause. Since this construction alternates with clearly subordinated structures we treat it as a complex sentence.

Case marking on the participant shared by the two clauses is normally the same as in the corresponding simplex sentence (47, 79). With the modal of necessity, if the embedded verb is transitive, the case can shift from ergative to dative (46).

- (46) <sup>1</sup>*ŋa-ta-m*      <sup>1</sup>*tamo*      <sup>2</sup>*aru-la*      <sup>2</sup>*p<sup>h</sup>a:*      <sup>1</sup>*to:-ci*  
 I-DAT-TOP      now      aunt-GEN      repay      need-PFV  
 Now I have to repay my aunt's [loan].

The three main modals of ability are: <sup>2</sup>*k<sup>h</sup>am-pa* 'be (physically) able to' <sup>2</sup>*se:-pa*, 'know how to', <sup>2</sup>*mjaŋ-pa* 'have time to'.

With these modals the more analytic 'purpose' clause construction can be used with the same meaning as the V-V construction:

- (47) <sup>2</sup>*ai-se*      {<sup>4</sup>*pwi* / <sup>4</sup>*pwi-pa-ri*}      <sup>4</sup>*k<sup>h</sup>am-la ?*  
 you-ERG      {carry / carry-Ner-LOC}      can-FUT  
 Will you be able to carry it?

Immediate future is expressed either by a V-V construction with the modal <sup>4</sup>*tam-pa* or, more commonly, by a purpose clause with the verb <sup>1</sup>*chjai-pa* 'be ready to' (61).

- (48) <sup>1</sup>*ŋa-ta*      *sarpa-se*      <sup>1</sup>*sat*      <sup>4</sup>*tam-pa*  
 I-DAT      snake-ERG      kill      be about to-IMPV  
 A snake was about to kill me.

In a modal construction, it is not possible to negate the first (or embedded) verb independently. A subordinated construction has to be used instead.

- (49) \*<sup>3</sup>*a*      <sup>1</sup>*ca*      <sup>2</sup>*k<sup>h</sup>am-la?*  
 not      eat      can-FUT  
 \*Can you refrain from eating?

- (50) <sup>3</sup>*a*      <sup>1</sup>*ca-na*      <sup>2</sup>*ci*      <sup>2</sup>*k<sup>h</sup>am-la?*  
 not      eat-ing      stay      able-FUT  
 Will you be able to stay without eating?

## 7.4 Causatives

### 7.4.1. V <sup>2</sup>puŋ-pa

One of two ways of expressing causation is a V-V construction with the verb <sup>2</sup>puŋ-pa ‘to let, allow, order, cause’ as the second verb. The causee appears in the dative if the embedded verb is transitive (51), in the absolutive if it is intransitive (52). In this particular construction the embedded verb has to be voluntary or at least active.

- (51) <sup>1</sup>then-kat'-ta-n                      <sup>4</sup>klu    <sup>2</sup>puŋ    <sup>1</sup>to:-nam  
 they-PL-DAT-INT                      buy    make    must-INFR  
 We have to get them to buy [it] [for us].

- (52) *sikar-se*            <sup>1</sup>nak<sup>hi</sup>            <sup>4</sup>jar            <sup>2</sup>puŋ-pa  
 hunter-ERG            dog-ABS            run            let-IMPFV  
 The hunter lets his dog run / makes his dog run.

With negation, the meaning is ‘prevent, not let’ and not simple negation of the causation. The lower verb cannot be negated independently of the higher verb.

### 7.4.2 V-na <sup>1</sup>la-pa

Causation is often expressed by a ‘result’ alias ‘manner’ clause followed by the verb ‘to do’. Hence ‘to act in such a way that V’. The case marking in the subordinate clause remains what it would be in an independent clause:

- (53) <sup>2</sup>ani-kat'-se-nun                      <sup>1</sup>thai-na            <sup>1</sup>la-u  
 nun-PL-ERG-INT                      hear-that            do-IMP  
 Tell the nuns themselves. (lit. do so that they hear).

This construction can always replace the V- <sup>2</sup>puŋ construction, except for the meaning ‘let, allow’.

Denial of causation (as opposed to denial of permission) uses the V-na <sup>1</sup>la-pa construction:

- (54) <sup>3</sup>ca-ta-mi            <sup>3</sup>mi-la            <sup>1</sup>ŋon-ti            *icat*            <sup>1</sup>ni-na            <sup>4</sup>ta            <sup>1</sup>la-u  
 son-DAT-TOP            man-GEN            front-LOC            face            go-so that            don't            do-IMP  
 Don't make your son lose face in front of people.

## 7.5 Purpose Clauses

The most usual way to express purpose is by adding the suffix -ri to the nominal form of the subordinated verb (41). The subject of the embedded clause has to be subject (41) or object (55) of the main clause verb.

- (55) <sup>3</sup>ca:            <sup>1</sup>cjanpa            <sup>4</sup>ca-Ø            <sup>3</sup>kruŋ-Ø            <sup>2</sup>khru-pa-ri            <sup>2</sup>pit-cim-ro  
 son            youngest            TOP-ABS            guts-ABS            wash-Ner-LOC            send-PFV-RS

The story says that they sent the youngest son to wash the guts.

‘The youngest son’ is the object (ABS) of ‘sent’ and the (deleted) subject (which would be ERG) of ‘wash’.

The embedded verb must be active. Failing this condition an optative construction connected by <sup>3</sup>pi-si ‘having said’ used as a conjunction is employed.



- (56) <sup>3</sup>keŋ      <sup>1</sup>me-ri      <sup>4</sup>po-kai      <sup>3</sup>pi-si      <sup>4</sup>caŋ-pa  
 bread      fire-LOC      rise-OPT      say-ing      insert-IMPV  
 I put the bread in the fire so that it may rise.

- (57) \*<sup>1</sup>me-ri <sup>4</sup>po-pa-ri <sup>4</sup>caŋ-pa

A negative aim has to be expressed by something like ‘for fear of’ or a negative optative followed by the quotation formula ‘saying’.

- (58) <sup>1</sup>cjan-se      <sup>1</sup>ŋa-ta      {<sup>1</sup>ca-la/<sup>3</sup>a-<sup>1</sup>ca-kai}      <sup>3</sup>pi-si      <sup>4</sup>jar-pa  
 tiger-ERG      I-DAT      {eat-FUT/not-eat-OPT}      say-ing      escape-PFV  
 I ran away for fear the tiger would eat me / so the tiger would not eat me.

The participle <sup>3</sup>pi-si used as a conjunction can also be added to the usual V-pa-ri construction. It indicates that the aim is not going to be reached:

- (59) <sup>4</sup>pu      <sup>3</sup>su-pa-ri      <sup>3</sup>pi-si      <sup>1</sup>apa      <sup>1</sup>kha-ma...  
 field      plant-Ner-LOC      say-ing      father      come-when  
 When the father came thinking that he would plant the field...

Using a conditional form <sup>4</sup>pu <sup>3</sup>su-sai <sup>3</sup>pi-si [field plant-COND say-ing] makes the outcome even more doubtful.

The purpose construction is also used for ‘try to V’ and ‘start to V’, and optionally with the modals of ability (47).

- (60) <sup>2</sup>nam      <sup>1</sup>ka      <sup>1</sup>kha-pa-ri      <sup>4</sup>mai-ci  
 rain      FOC      come-Ner-LOC      search-PFV  
 It's going to rain ( lit. it's rain that is trying to come).
- (61) <sup>1</sup>ni-pa-ri      <sup>1</sup>chjai-ci  
 go-Ner-LOC      be ready-PFV  
 He is about to go / he has started.

### 7.6 Synchronic relationship: time and manner

Temporal simultaneity is expressed by the suffix -ma ‘while’

- (62) <sup>1</sup>sjoŋ      <sup>3</sup>kuŋ-ri      <sup>3</sup>to:-ka-ma      <sup>1</sup>sjoŋ-se      <sup>4</sup>lap      <sup>4</sup>por-ci  
 river      middle-LOC      reach-DIR-when      river-ERG      ADV      carry-PFV  
 As he was reaching the middle of the river, the river carried him off.

The addition of a topic marker facilitates a causal reading:

- (63) <sup>3</sup>a-<sup>1</sup>kha-ma-m,      <sup>4</sup>mai      <sup>1</sup>ni-ci  
 neg-come-when-TOP      search      go-PFV  
 As he did not arrive, they went to look for him.

Manner or result clauses are formed with the suffix -na ‘in such a way that, with the result that’. This construction is rare in the affirmative, except as a way to express causation with the head verb ‘to do’ (see 7.4.2)

- (64) <sup>3</sup>rit-si      <sup>4</sup>pra-pa      <sup>1</sup>pa:ci      <sup>2</sup>mren-na      <sup>1</sup>ca-ci  
 beg-ing      walk-Ner      beggar      satiated-so that      eat-PFV  
 He, a beggar, ate to his full.

*Terminus ad quem*

The notion of 'until' or 'before' is expressed via a grammaticalized use of the verb 'to reach', in the manner-participial form <sup>4</sup>to:-na, or the Nepali loan equivalent *samma*, following a negative form of the verb bearing the suffix -te, which indicates extent.

- (65) <sup>1</sup>jaŋ      <sup>3</sup>maima-m      <sup>3</sup>a      <sup>1</sup>si-te      *samma*-m  
 us      women-TOP      NEG      die-as long as      until-TOP  
<sup>3</sup>rit-sai      <sup>1</sup>ca-sai  
 beg-COND      eat-COND  
 As for us, women, until we die, let us beg for our food.

*Logical implicature*

A logical implicature (without causal or temporal connection) is expressed by the simultaneity participial form of the verb V-ma followed by the postposition <sup>4</sup>ŋjanchem 'from'.

- (66) <sup>1</sup>oca      <sup>1</sup>kan      <sup>3</sup>a      <sup>2</sup>min-ma      <sup>4</sup>ŋjanchem ...  
 that      rice      NEG      cook-during      since ...  
 Since that rice did not cook... (reporting on an experiment where the fire was 3 yards away from the pot)

**7.7 Logical or temporal succession**

Temporal anteriority is expressed by a participial clause in V-si.

- (67) <sup>1</sup>nana      <sup>1</sup>kha-si      <sup>1</sup>capasai      <sup>3</sup>ŋjo-si      <sup>1</sup>ca-ci  
 sister      come-having      food      cook-having      eat-PFV  
 Nana came, we cooked food, and we ate.

This is also the most common way of expressing a cause.

- (68) <sup>2</sup>nam      <sup>1</sup>kha-si      <sup>4</sup>pu-ri      <sup>1</sup>ni      <sup>3</sup>a      <sup>2</sup>mjaŋ-lai  
 rain      come-ing      field-LOC      go      not      can-IRR  
 Because it rained, we could not go to the field.

If the action of the verb of the main clause can be construed as expressing a terminal point for the whole process, the action of the subordinate clause in -si need not be anterior, it can express a manner.

- (69) <sup>1</sup>sja-si      <sup>1</sup>sja-si      <sup>1</sup>kha-ci  
 dance-ing      dance-ing      come-PFV  
 She came dancing all the way.

Like the finite suffix -ci 'perfective aspect', -si indicates that the action has or will definitely happen. It cannot be negated. A negated manner clause is used instead (50).

- (70) <sup>2</sup>nam      <sup>3</sup>a      <sup>1</sup>kha-na      <sup>4</sup>pu      <sup>3</sup>su      <sup>3</sup>a      <sup>2</sup>mjaŋ-lai  
 rain      not      come-ing      field      plant      not      can-IRR  
 Because it did not rain, we are not able to plant the fields.

*Auxiliary constructions*

With the head verbs 'give', 'finish' and 'stay' used as auxiliaries, the V-si construction expresses the notions of 'doing something for someone' (71), completion (72) and duration or protracted action (73). Comparable constructions are found in Nepali.

- (71) <sup>1</sup>am'-se    <sup>1</sup>kwan-si    <sup>1</sup>pin-pa  
 mother-ERG    dress-having    give-IMPFV  
 His mother dresses [him].
- (72) <sup>1</sup>the-jen    <sup>1</sup>thai-si    <sup>3</sup>cin-ci  
 they-too    hear-having    finish-PFV  
 They too have already heard [the news].
- (73) <sup>3</sup>mi    <sup>4</sup>pra-si-n    <sup>2</sup>ci-pa  
 people    walk-ing-INT    stay-IMPFV  
 There are always passers-by. / People keep walking by.

**7.8. Conditionals**

Hypothetical verb forms are built on the verb root augmented with the suffix -sa, always followed by a second suffix which differentiates several kinds of conditionals.

*Simple conditionals*

Simple conditionals are formed with the addition of the topic marker -m(i).

- (74) <sup>2</sup>nam    <sup>1</sup>kha-sa-m    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>3</sup>a    <sup>1</sup>kha  
 rain    come-if-TOP    I    NEG    come  
 If it rains, I won't come.

The verb of the main clause can be in the indicative mood as in (74). It can also be in the conditional, expressing greater doubt as to the certainty of the event.

- (75) <sup>1</sup>iampu-ri    <sup>1</sup>mar    <sup>1</sup>ni-pa    <sup>3</sup>mi    <sup>1</sup>mu-sam,  
 Kathm.-LOC    down    go-Ner    man    be-if  
  
<sup>1</sup>ŋa-m    <sup>3</sup>cakir    <sup>1</sup>ca-pa-r'    <sup>1</sup>ni-sai  
 I-TOP    salary    eat-Ner-LOC    go-COND  
 If there was someone going down to Kathmandu, I would go [with him] to earn a salary.

A necessary condition 'only if' is expressed by a disjunction of the opposite conditions.

- (76) <sup>th</sup>unta    <sup>2</sup>pit-ka-sam    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>2</sup>so-la,  
 food    send-DIR-if    I    live-FUT  
  
<sup>th</sup>unta    <sup>3</sup>a-<sup>2</sup>pit-ka-sam    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>1</sup>si-la  
 food    NEG-send-DIR-if    I    die-FUT  
 If you send me supplies I will survive, otherwise I will die.

*Counterfactuals*

If the verb of the main clause is in the conditional past tense, the meaning becomes counterfactual.

- (77) <sup>4</sup>kjarca    <sup>2</sup>som    <sup>1</sup>la-sai    <sup>1</sup>mu-pa,    <sup>2</sup>arku-se    <sup>3</sup>hin-sam  
 hundred    three    make-COND    be-Past    other-ERG    be-if  
 They would have made it 300 Rs, had it been someone else (= if someone else had fixed the fine)

With counterfactuals, the subordinate clause usually replaces the topic marker -m by the focus marker -ka, which corresponds well to the pragmatic use of counterfactuals: the new, important, information is usually in the subordinate clause.

- (78) <sup>1</sup>sar    <sup>1</sup>ju:-sa-ka    <sup>4</sup>mrai-sai  
 manure    pour-if-FOC    swell-COND  
 If you'd put MANURE, it might have grown!

Even in the absence of any main clause, the reading of -sa-ka is counterfactual: <sup>2</sup>se:-sa-ka 'if only I had known!'

### *Emphatic conditionals and concessive conditionals*

If we add to the verb carrying the hypothetical suffix -sa an intensifying suffix -i 'also', yielding a conditional form similar to that used in main clauses, the meaning is more hypothetical, whence 'if ever' (79).

- (79) <sup>2</sup>chjai    <sup>1</sup>ta-sa-i,    <sup>2</sup>ai-se    <sup>2</sup>pha:    <sup>1</sup>to:-pa    <sup>3</sup>ahin  
 debt    occur-if-INT    you-ERG    pay    must-IMPV    isn't it?  
 And if ever he incurred a debt, you would have to repay it, right?

The emphatic conditional -sa-i is used to express a concessive condition 'even if'. In this meaning it is often strengthened by a second intensifier -nun.

- (80) <sup>1</sup>the    <sup>3</sup>a-<sup>1</sup>kha-sai(-nun)    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>1</sup>ni-la  
 he    not-come-if+INT(-INT)    I    go-FUT  
 Even if he won't come, I will go.

A 'universal concessive conditional' (see Haspelmath and König, in press) is expressed by an interrogative/exclamative word with the emphatic conditional -sai.

- (81) <sup>4</sup>kjat    <sup>4</sup>kate-n    <sup>1</sup>la-sai    <sup>3</sup>a    <sup>3</sup>cin-pa  
 work    how much-even    do-COND    not    finish-IMPV  
 However much work I may do, it is n[ever] finished.

## **8. Comparison**

Word order: standard + marker + predicate.

- (82) <sup>1</sup>ŋa    *banda*    <sup>2</sup>ti:-tiŋ-la    <sup>3</sup>purin  
 I    than    one-year-GEN    younger sister  
 She is one year younger than me. (she is not necessarily my sister).

The morpheme *bhanda* is a Nepali loan meaning 'saying'. A Tamang calque <sup>3</sup>pi-ma is also used.

Whole clauses can appear as the compared terms.

## 9. Questions

### 9.1. Yes-no questions

Yes-no questions are most usually marked by intonation only (1). A particle *wa*, or the loan word *ki* can occur in sentence final position:

- (83) <sup>4</sup>me <sup>1</sup>mama-i <sup>1</sup>ni-ci wa ?  
 cow female-also go-PFV Q  
 Did the mother-cows also go ?

The particle *wa* can follow a focalized word, phrase, or clause in a yes-no question.

The question marker *ki* at the end of the sentence can co-occur with *wa* after the term questioned. The question is made even more emphatic by adding <sup>1</sup>tik ‘what’ after *ki*.

- (84) <sup>3</sup>plo:-si-wa <sup>1</sup>thān-pa ki <sup>1</sup>tik ?  
 boil-having-Q put-IMPV or what  
 Is [that egg] boiled or what [that you handle it so roughly] ?

The verb can be the term emphatically questioned. In that case it is repeated:

- (85) <sup>2</sup>chat-wa <sup>2</sup>chat-pa-ki, <sup>2</sup>to-ca-kate-m ?  
 fight-Q fight-IMPV-Q up-those-COLL-TOP  
 Are they fighting for good, the people upstairs ?

Alternative questions are frequently used.

- (86) <sup>2</sup>na <sup>4</sup>ŋacha <sup>3</sup>to:-ci <sup>2</sup>na <sup>1</sup>licha <sup>2</sup>ci-ci  
 Q ahead reach-PFV Q behind stay-PFV  
 Were they in front or had they stayed behind?

### 9.2. Interrogative word questions

The interrogative word remains in the position of the questioned NP.

- (87) <sup>2</sup>osem <sup>2</sup>khačjupa guru <sup>2</sup>sjap-ci ?  
 thus which guru meet-PFV  
 Then, which guru did you get to see ?

### 9.3. Interrogatives as exclamatives and indefinites

Exclamations are made with ‘wh-’ question words, indefinites with reduplicated ‘wh-’ words.

- (88) <sup>2</sup>khaima <sup>2</sup>khaima <sup>1</sup>klaŋ-pa  
 when when play-IMPV  
 He gambles occasionally.

#### *Negative polarity indefinites*

In all the languages of the area, including Nepali, the most common way to say ‘no one’, ‘nothing’, ‘never’, etc., is to use an interrogative word suffixed with the intensifier ‘also / even’ and a negated verb (96).

Negative polarity indefinites can also be used in questions.

## 10. Information structure

Tamang possesses two topic markers, -mi/-m for simple topic and <sup>4</sup>ca for contrastive topic, one focus marker -ka/<sup>1</sup>ka; and a set of intensifiers -i/-e/-ja 'even, also' and -n/-nun 'own, self (intensifier, not reflexive)'. These markers code the information structure of a sentence without interfering with its grammatical structure; case marking and word order can remain unchanged when information structure markers are added.

### 10.1 Topic and topicalization

If we define 'topic' (following Lambrecht 1994) as 'the matter of current concern' about which new information is being added in an utterance, the most common surface expression of topic in Tamang, whether in conversation or in running text, is zero. Previously known elements are absent from the sentence.

The next most common form a topic can take is as an anti-topic — several of them if need be — placed at the end of the sentence, after the verb, accompanied by lowered intonation (23).

If an active topic has to be mentioned in its proper grammatical place in the sentence, it is marked with the topic marker -m(i). This structure occurs in story telling where the cohesion of discourse is ensured by the formal repetition of the topic from one sentence to the next (29).

A topic which is accessible but not active (present in the slightly more distant context) is reactivated by being mentioned with the topic marker -m(i). This is the case for a demonstrative summing up a situation, or for a pronoun referring to the speaker (89).

- (89) <sup>1</sup>oca-m    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i-mi    *tha:*    <sup>3</sup>are,    *mai*  
           that-TOP    I-ERG-TOP    knowledge    is not    Mai  
           That, as far as I am concerned, I don't know, Mai.

A contrastive topic is marked by the tonal particle <sup>4</sup>ca, possibly a loan word from Nep. *cahĩ*. (12, 55).

Clauses also can be topicalized with either topic marker. See (43).

- (90) <sup>1</sup>si-pa    <sup>4</sup>ca    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i    *patta*    <sup>3</sup>are  
           die-Ner    TOP    I-ERG    knowledge    not be  
           That she had died, I did not know.

#### *Topic marker on subordinate clauses*

On subordinate clauses, -m(i) explicitly sets the clause as background (63, 65). In (91) it prepares thus a dramatic effect expressed in the main clause. Compare with the unemotional reporting in (62).

- (91) <sup>3</sup>kuŋ-te-ri    <sup>3</sup>to:-ka-ma-m    <sup>1</sup>apa    <sup>1</sup>sjon-se    <sup>4</sup>lap    <sup>4</sup>por-ci-ro  
           middle-about-LOC    reach-DIR-when-TOP    father    river-ERG    ADV    carry-PFV-RS  
           But as he was reaching the middle of the river, the father was carried off by the river.

On plain conditionals, it has become grammaticalized, corresponding to the now well accepted idea that 'conditionals are topics' (Haiman 1978) (see § 7.8).

## 10.2 Focus

Plain predicate focus and sentence focus structures contain no focus marking morpheme. Strong narrow focus (or contrastive focus) is marked with the suffix *-ka*. It can occur on all elements of the sentence including the predicate, nominal or verbal.

### *Argument focus*

- (92)    <sup>2</sup>ai-la    <sup>4</sup>mar-ka    <sup>4</sup>ni:-nun    <sup>2</sup>cun-o    <sup>3</sup>pi-pa    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i-mi  
           you-GEN    gold-FOC    two-INT    sell-IMP    say-IMPFV    I-ERG-TOP  
           It is your gold [earrings] that I said to sell both of (I did).

### *Predicate and sentence focus*

- (93)    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-ka  
           I-FOC  
           It's me! (typical answer at the door)

The marker *-ka* on a verbal predicate does not necessarily indicate a contrastive narrow focus on the verb. It can simply make the assertion strongly affirmative (or negative as the case may be), indicating that the assertion is contrary to expectation (contrary to the presupposition the hearer is thought to hold, or contrary to his wish). Its domain in that case is the sentence or the predicate.

- (94)    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-i-ia    <sup>1</sup>nipa-ka,    <sup>1</sup>apa  
           I-ERG-also    go-FOC    father  
           I want to go too, Daddy

The focus marker which semantically applies to the whole predicate can be affixed to the object of the verb (95) or to its subject in case of sentence focus (60).

- (95)    <sup>2</sup>ai-se-mi    <sup>1</sup>ŋa-la    <sup>1</sup>tho-ri    <sup>1</sup>cha:mo-ka    <sup>3</sup>pa-ci  
           you-ERG-TOP    I-GEN    top-LOC    cowife-FOC    bring-PFV  
           You brought a CO-WIFE on me.

### *Focus marker on subordinate clauses*

When used on a subordinate clause, the narrow focus marker *-ka* has a contrastive value comparable to clefting in English

- (96)    <sup>1</sup>ti:la    <sup>1</sup>ŋa    <sup>1</sup>oraŋ    <sup>3</sup>ŋjot-la    <sup>3</sup>pi-si-ka  
           yesterday    I    that way    drunk-FUT    say-ing-FOC  
           <sup>4</sup>paŋ    <sup>3</sup>are-pa-ri    <sup>2</sup>k<sup>h</sup>ana-i    <sup>3</sup>a-<sup>2</sup>waŋ-pa  
           strength    not be-Ner-LOC    where-also    NEG-enter-IMPFV  
           Yesterday it was for fear of getting drunk, like that, in my weak condition, that I did not enter anywhere.

As we have seen, it is almost systematically used on counterfactual conditionals (78).

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