

Unusual allophony in Lhokpu coda plosives

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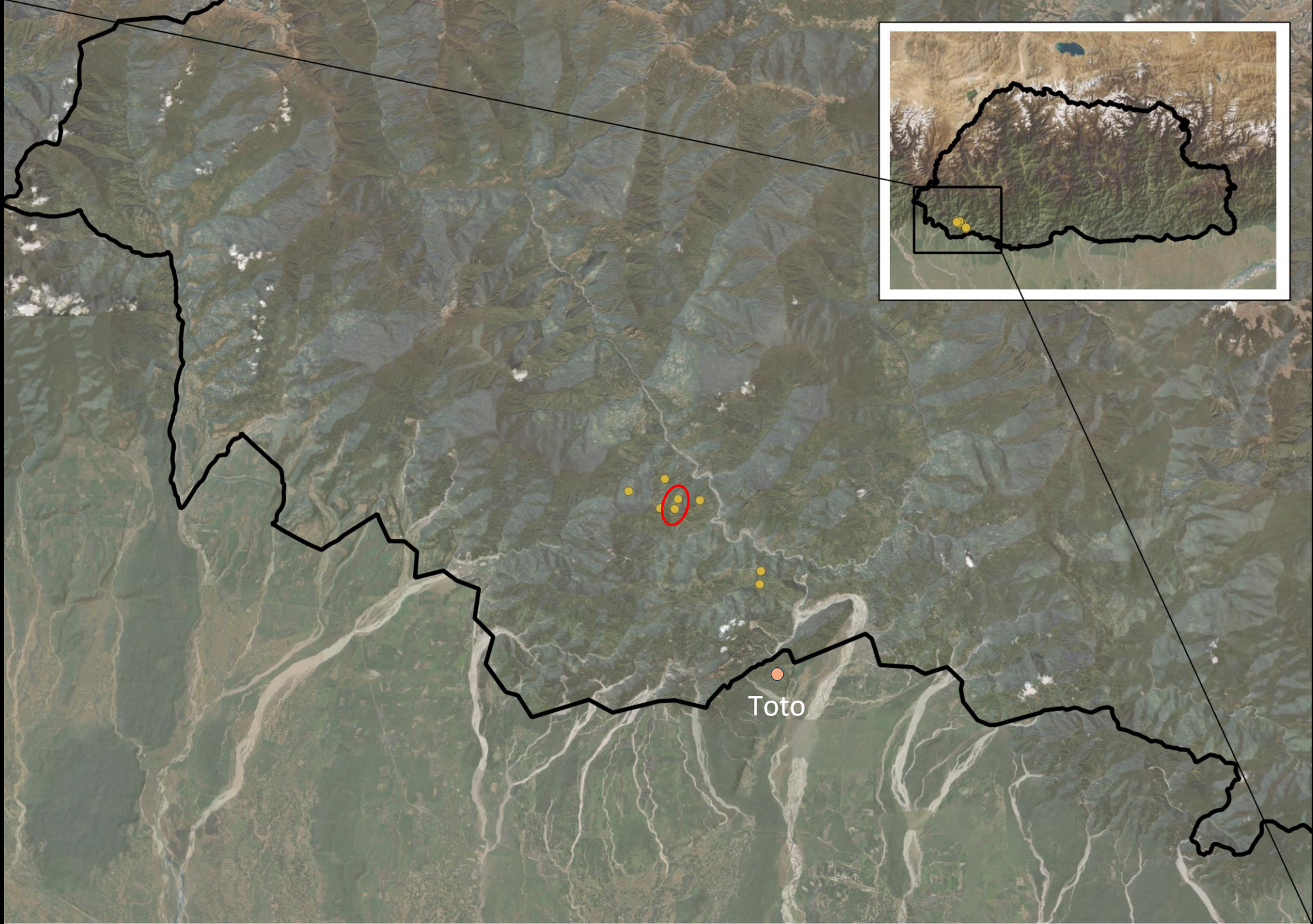
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Overview

- Introduction to Lhokpu
- Brief phonological overview
- Coda position allophony
 - Plosives
 - Nasals

Introduction to Lhokpu

- Trans-Himalayan language, probably most closely related to Dhimal and Toto (Grollmann and Gerber 2018)
- Spoken in two village groups in South-Western Bhutan (Samtse)
 - Estimated 800 speakers across both groups
- Speakers are largely multilingual
 - Nepali very common, then Dzongkha and English
- Exonym Lhop (Dz) ‘Southerner’ or Doya (Ne) etymology unclear
- Endonym *lhóh*
 - Language: *lhóhtam*, people: *lhóhpu*
 - Term used in literature appears to be this demonym with the *–h* transcribed as <k>



Brief phonological overview



- Early stages of analysis
 - Some distinctions are proving very difficult
- Two way voicing distinction
 - Also present across most sonorants
 - *ɲar* 'elephant' *mɛ* 'odour' *ɾa* 'goat'
- Probably 5 vowels, three way length distinction
 - Extra short has glottal coda in open syllables, but still appears to be contrastive in closed syllables
 - *dzaʔ* 'rainbow' >Dzʔ *dza* 'old' *dza:* 'bamboo water channel'
 - *dzikʔ* 'leopard' *tik* 'start' *dzi:k* 'kernel/crumb'
 - Also final –h could be further distinction/phonation type but appears to only occur with no other coda, so better analysed as a potential coda
 - *dzah* 'waterfall/precipice'

[dzaʔ dza dza: dzah]

dzaʔ dza dza: dzah

Rainbow >Dzʔ, old, water trough, drop/waterfall

Brief phonological overview cont.

- Tone

- Probably two (high vs unmarked), maybe 3? (high, falling, low)
- *lum* keep embers going, *lúm* round
- *rus* rub, *rús* pocket
- White vs winter millet
- Many vs plain



[ruç rúç ɾûç]

rus rus rhús

Rub, pocket, bone

Coda position allophony - plosives

- Voiceless plosives are often nasalised in coda position
 - Checked with glottal stop
 - Contrastive with true nasal codas
- Widespread, but with some limitations on distribution




[tɿŋ.jaŋʔ]
*tin**h-yak*
see-PST





[tɿŋ.jaŋ]
*tin**h-yang*
see-INT



Coda position allophony – plosive cont.


- Mostly present in checked syllables
 - eg *bi:k* ‘cow’ attested once nasalised
 - Present word finally and word medially
 - *nak-ka* black-ADJ
 - *pak truk-dra* pig six-ANIM
- Not always present in careful/clear speech
 - e.g elicitation
- Not present following voiced plosives
 - Only attested in *ob-* ‘hot’

 [na: tɕa tuŋ.mi.o ob.ti tuŋ.mi.o]
na ca tung-mi-yo ob-ti tung-mi-yo
2SG water(<Dz) drink-PRES-INT hot-water drink-PRES-INT
‘Are you drinking tea or hot water?’ (Elicited)

 [naŋʔ.ka naŋ na]
nak-ka nang na
black-ADJ LOC.IN ABL
‘Out from inside the darkness’

 [paŋʔ tuŋʔ.da]
pak truk-dra
pig six-ANIM
‘Six pigs’

 [paŋʔ inʔ.da]  Maybe inʔda?
pak it-dra
pig one-ANIM
‘One pig’

 [pak paŋʔ]

Coda position allophony – plosive cont.

- Present in all speakers (younger, old, male, female)
 - “younger” bein 20-40
 - Not sure about children
- Mostly seen with velar, then alveolar, then bilabial
 - Partly reflects how common each coda is
 - Also attested unreleased
- To investigate:
 - Distribution across villages
 - Presumably similar across the northern speech area, maybe different in Taba-Dramtoe?

Allophone or phoneme

- Variation in careful speech
- Use in clear borrowings
 - Tibetic *cik* ‘one’ > Lhokpu *cik* ‘only, one’
- Form also reconstruct to PTB *k
 - e.g. Pig *p^wak, Six *t-ruk (STEDT)



[pak paŋʔ]



[ko.na loh.du pun.ti tɕiŋʔ mi.hã]

kona loh-du punti cik mi-hã
then near-LOC flower only COP.EXIST-DIR
‘Then, there is one flower nearby.’



[ko.na siŋ inʔ.pu tɕiŋʔ]

kona sing it-pu cik
then tree one-INAN only
‘And only one tree.’

Related Languages

- Toto and Dhimal
 - Nothing that I can see (King 2009, Basumatary 2016)
- Garo (Burling 2003)
 - Similar sounds phonetically
 - Separate phoneme, do not appear to be related
 - e.g. *wak* 'pig'
 - No reason really to expect shared innovation, though not too geographically distant
- Nepali
 - Also not present to the best of my knowledge

Why is this happening?

- Rhinoglottophilia
 - Relationship between glottal and nasal sounds
 - Understandable then that checked/glottalised syllables become nasalised
 - /kʔ/ -> [ŋʔ]
 - Does not explain why it still occurs in other syllables
- Active phonological process
 - Not present in careful speech, not recognised by speakers
- Otherwise, every time I have an idea I found a counter example

Coda position allophony - nasals

- Nasal codas can be voiced and voiceless
- Voiced codas attested in long and mid syllables
 - Length of the vowel is maybe realised in the length of the nasal coda
 - *ta:m* 'language' [tam:] (though the more work I do the less sure I am)
- Voiceless codas not attested in long syllables
- Working theory: nasal codas are devoiced in checked syllables
 - Vowel length is reflected in overall voicing time, meaning long vowels show long coda nasals, checked vowels show devoiced nasals
- Alternatively, voiceless nasal codas could just be phonemic