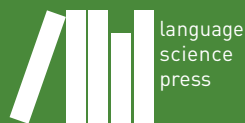


# A grammar of Yakkha

Diana Schackow

DRAFT  
of Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015, 14:31

■ Studies in Diversity Linguistics 7



# A grammar of Yakkha

This grammar provides the first comprehensive grammatical description of Yakkha, a Sino-Tibetan language of the Kiranti branch. Yakkha is spoken by about 14,000 speakers in eastern Nepal, in the Sankhuwa Sabha and Dhankuta districts. The grammar is based on original fieldwork in the Yakkha community. Its primary source of data is a corpus of 13,000 clauses from narratives and naturally-occurring social interaction which the author recorded and transcribed between 2009 and 2012. Corpus analyses were complemented by targeted elicitation. The grammar is written in a functional-typological framework. It focusses on morphosyntactic and semantic issues, as these present highly complex and comparatively under-researched fields in Kiranti languages. The sequence of the chapters follows the well-established order of phonological, morphological, syntactic and discourse-structural descriptions. These are supplemented by a historical and sociolinguistic introduction as well as an analysis of the complex kinship terminology. Topics such as verbal person marking, argument structure, transitivity, complex predication, grammatical relations, clause linkage, nominalization, and the topography-based orientation system have received in-depth treatment. Wherever possible, the structures found were explained in a historical-comparative perspective in order to shed more light on how their particular properties have emerged.

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Diana Schackow

A grammar of Yakkha



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Finally, I thank Lennart (again): for making those Nepal journeys "our" journeys.



# List of abbreviations

## Linguistic abbreviations

1,2,3 person (1>3: first acting on third person, etc.)	argument verb
SG/DU/PL/NSG numerus: singular, dual, plural, nonsingular	GEN genitive
A most agent-like argument of a transitive verb	GSR generalized semantic role
ABL ablative	HON honorific
ADD additive focus	HORT hortative
AFF affirmative	REP reportative marker
ALT alternative	IGN interjection expressing ignorance
AUX auxiliary verb	IMP imperative
BEN benefactive	INCL inclusive
B.S. Bikram Sambat calendar, as used in Nepal	INF infinitive
CAUS causative	INIT initiative
CL clause linkage marker	INS instrumental
COM comitative	INSIST insistent
COMP complementizer	INT interjection
COMPAR comparative	IRR irrealis
COMPL completive	ITP interruptive clause linkage
COND conditional	LOC locative
CONT continuative	MDDL middle
COP copula	MIR mirative
CTMP cotemporal (clause linkage)	NATIV nativizer
CTR contrastive focus	NC non-countable
CVB converb	n.a. not applicable
EMPH emphatic	n.d. no data
ERG ergative	NEG negation
EXCL exclusive	Nep. Nepali
EXCLA exclamative	NMLZ nominalizer
G most goal-like argument of a three-	NPST non-past
	OPT optative
	P most patient-like argument of a transitive verb
	POL politeness

## *List of abbreviations*

PLU.PST plupast	RESTR restrictive focus
PRF perfect tense	S sole argument of an intransitive verb
POSS possessive (prefix or pronoun)	SBJV subjunctive
PROG progressive	SEQ sequential (clause linkage)
PST past tense	SIM simultaneous
PST.PRFPast perfect	SUP supine
PTB Proto-Tibeto-Burman	T most theme-like argument of a three-argument verb
PURP purposive	TAG tag question
Q question particle	TEMP temporal
QUANT quantifier	TOP topic particle
QUOT quotative	TRIPL triplication
RC relative clause	V2 function verb (in complex predication)
RECIP reciprocal	VOC vocative
REDUP reduplication	
REFL reflexive	
REP reportative	

## **Abbreviations of kinship terms**

B brother	MB mother's brother
BS brother's son	MF mother's father
BD brother's daughter	MM mother's mother
BW brother's wife	MZ mother's sister
e elder	S son
D daughter	W wife
F father	y younger
FB father's brother	Z sister
FF father's father	ZS sister's son
FM father's mother	ZD sister's daughter
FZ father's sister	ZH sister's husband
H husband	
M mother	

# Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
List of abbreviations	vii
Index of Yakkha formatives	1
List of references	5
Bibliography	5
Index	25
Name index . . . . .	25
Language index . . . . .	25
Subject index . . . . .	25



# Index of Yakkha formatives

MARKER	FUNCTION	SECTION
<i>a-</i>	possessive prefix, 1SG	??
<i>-a</i>	past	??
<i>-a</i>	imperative, subjunctive	??
<i>-a</i>	nativizer on loans	??
<i>-a ~ -na</i>	function verb, 'leave'	??
<i>-ap</i>	function verb, 'come'	??
<i>-apt</i>	function verb, 'bring'	??
<i>anciŋ-</i>	possessive prefix, 1DU.EXCL	??
<i>aniŋ-</i>	possessive prefix, 1PL.EXCL	??
<i>au</i>	initiative particle	??
<i>baŋna</i>	complementizer	??
<i>baŋha</i>	complementizer	??
<i>baŋniŋ</i>	textual topic, quotative	??
<i>-bhes</i>	function verb, 'deliver'	??
<i>-bhoks ~ -bhon</i>	function verb, 'split'	??
<i>bhon</i>	conditional, complementizer, quotative	??, ??, ??
<i>-ca</i>	function verb, middle, reflexive	??, ??
<i>ca</i>	auxiliary, reciprocal	??
<i>=ca</i>	additive focus	??, ??
<i>=chen</i>	topic	??
<i>-ci ~ -cin</i>	dual (verbal)	??
<i>-ci</i>	3 nonsingular P (verbal)	??
<i>=ci</i>	nonsingular (nominal)	??
<i>-eba</i>	polite imperative	??
<i>=em</i>	alternation particle	??
<i>eN-</i>	possessive prefix, 1PL.INCL	??
<i>-end</i>	function verb, 'insert'	??

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*Index of Yakkha formatives*

MARKER	FUNCTION	SECTION
<i>enciŋ-</i>	possessive prefix, 1DU.INCL	??
<i>=ge ~ =ghe</i>	locative	??
<i>-get</i>	function verb, 'bring up'	??
<i>=gaŋ ~ =ghaŋ</i>	ablative	??
<i>-ghet ~ -het</i>	function verb, 'carry off'	??
<i>-ghond</i>	function verb, 'roam'	??
<i>=ha ~ =ya</i>	nominalizer, NSG/NC	??
<i>-haks ~ -nhaŋ</i>	function verb, 'send'	??
<i>haksəŋ</i>	comparative	??
<i>haʔniŋ</i>	comparative	??
<i>-heks</i>	function verb, 'cut'	??
<i>=hoŋ</i>	sequential clause linkage	??, ??
<i>=hoŋca</i>	concessive clause linkage	??
<i>hau</i>	exclamative	??
<i>=i</i>	sentential focus	??
<i>i</i>	question marker	??
<i>-i ~ -ni</i>	completive	??, ??
<i>-i ~ -in</i>	1PL, 2PL (verbal)	??
<i>-ka</i>	2nd person (verbal)	??
<i>=ka</i>	genitive	??, ??
<i>=khaʔla</i>	directional, manner	??
<i>-kheʔ</i>	function verb, 'go'	??
<i>-khuba</i>	nominalizer	??
<i>-khusa</i>	reciprocal marker	??
<i>=ko</i>	topic	??
<i>=lai</i>	exclamative	??
<i>=le</i>	contrastive focus	??
<i>-les</i>	suffix of knowledge or ability	??
<i>-lo</i>	interruptive clause linkage	??
<i>loppi</i>	probability	??
<i>-loʔa</i>	equative	??
<i>-m</i>	1PL.A>3, 2PL.A>3	??
<i>-ma</i>	infinitive	??, ??, ??, ??
<i>-ma</i>	event numeral, 'times'	??
<i>-ma</i>	nominalizer	??
<i>-ma ~ -mi</i>	perfect	??
<i>=maŋ</i>	emphatic particle	??



MARKER	FUNCTION	SECTION
<i>-masa ~ -misi</i>	past perfect	??
<i>maʔnin</i>	privative	??
<i>meN-</i>	negation	??
<i>meN-...-le</i>	negative converb	??
<i>-met</i>	causative	??
<i>-meʔ</i>	nonpast	??
<i>N-</i>	negation (verbal)	??
<i>N-</i>	3PL	??
<i>N-</i>	possessive prefix, 2SG	??
<i>-n</i>	negation	??
<i>=na</i>	nominalizer, SG	??
<i>-nen</i>	1>2 (verbal)	??
<i>-nes</i>	function verb, 'lay'	??
<i>-nhanʔo</i>	temporal ablative	??
<i>-ni</i>	optative	??
<i>-nin</i>	plural and negation (verbal)	??, ??
<i>njin-</i>	possessive prefix, 2DU	??
<i>=nin ~ =ninja</i>	cotemporal clause linkage	??
<i>=ningobi</i>	counterfactual clause linkage	??
<i>nnin-</i>	possessive prefix, 2PL	??
<i>=nun</i>	comitative case and clause linkage	??, ??
<i>-ŋ ~ -ŋa</i>	1SG, EXCL	??
<i>=ŋa</i>	ergative case and clause linkage	??, ??
<i>-pa</i>	nominalizer	??
<i>=pa</i>	sentential focus	??
<i>-paŋ</i>	numeral classifier	??
<i>=pe</i>	locative	??
<i>=phaŋ</i>	ablative	??
<i>=pi</i>	irrealis	??
<i>-piʔ</i>	function verb, 'give'	??, ??
<i>=pu</i>	reportative marker	??
<i>rahecha</i>	mirative	??
<i>-raʔ</i>	function verb, 'come'	??
<i>-raʔ</i>	function verb, 'bring'	??
<i>-ris</i>	function verb, 'place'	??
<i>-sa</i>	infinitive	??, ??
<i>-saŋ</i>	simultaneous converb	??

*Index of Yakkha formatives*

MARKER	FUNCTION	SECTION
-se	supine converb	??
=se	restrictive focus	??
-si?	progressive	??
-si?	middle	??, ??
-si?	function verb, 'avoid'	??
-so?	function verb, 'look'	??
-t	benefactive	??
u-	possessive prefix, 3sg	??
-u	3.P (verbal)	??
=u	vocative	??
-uks	function verb, 'come down'	??
-uks ~ -nuŋ	perfect	??
-uks ~ -nuŋ	function verb, continuative	??
-uks ~ -uksa	past perfect	??
-ukt	function verb, 'bring down'	??
uŋci-	possessive prefix, 3NSG	??
-wa	nonpast	??
=?lo	exclamative	??

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