

# *The Timah Language*

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# 1 | Introduction

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## 1.1 | External History

The Timah language (*tíməh* [tʰiməh]; lit. *language, speech*) is a constructed language (*conlang*) made by me, Mareck (M.M.N.H.). Its primary goal is simply to be documented entirely in  $\text{\LaTeX}$  (*LaTeX*).

Like most of my constructed languages, it tries to focus balancing between the interesting and the naturalistic, in terms of phonology, grammar, etc. Naturalism, however, is not the primary goal. I have therefore given myself the freedom to take liberties in terms of naturalism.

## 1.2 | Internal History

The Timah language is spoken by the Khokòjòhe people (*kʰɔkʰɔtɕɔʔe* [kʰòkʰòdzɔʔɛ] lit. many-person).

## 2 | Phonology

### 2.1 | Consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Placeless
Nasal	m	n				N
Plosive		t <sup>h</sup> t t <sup>ʔ</sup>	tɕ <sup>h</sup> tɕ tɕ <sup>ʔ</sup>	k <sup>h</sup> k k <sup>ʔ</sup>	ʔ	
Fricative		s <sup>h</sup> s s <sup>ʔ</sup>			h	
Approximant	w	l	j			

Figure 1: Consonant Phonemes

- /n t<sup>h</sup> t t<sup>ʔ</sup>/ are dental; /s<sup>h</sup> s s<sup>ʔ</sup> l/ are alveolar.
- /tɕ<sup>h</sup> tɕ tɕ<sup>ʔ</sup>/ are alveolo-palatal; /j/ is palatal.
- /h/ is articulated with true frication of the glottis, i.e., it is not a voiceless glottal approximant.
- /N/ is a nasal coda archiphoneme, i.e., not an uvular nasal<sup>1</sup>.
- The aspirated obstruents /t<sup>h</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup> s<sup>h</sup>/ may be accompanied by slight breathy-voice on the following vowel.
- The fortis obstruents /t<sup>ʔ</sup> tɕ<sup>ʔ</sup> k<sup>ʔ</sup> s<sup>ʔ</sup>/ are articulated with laryngeal tension, and may be accompanied by slight creaky-voice on the following vowel.

#### 2.1.1 | Consonant Allophony

- /m n/ surface as the implosives [ɓ ɗ] word-initially.
- The coda archiphoneme [N] surfaces as [n ɲ ŋ] before alveolar, (alveolo-)palatal, and velar plosives, respectively. It surfaces as nasalization of the preceding vowel before all other consonants. It surfaces word-finally as [ŋ].
- The aspirated obstruents /t<sup>h</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup> s<sup>h</sup>/ are deäspirated to [t tɕ k s] intervocalically and after /N/.
- The tenuis obstruents /t tɕ k s/ are voiced to [d dɕ g z] intervocalically and after /N/.
- /k<sup>h</sup>/ surfaces as [x] before [a].
- /n/ is palatalized to [ɲ] before [i] word-medially.
- The sibilants /s<sup>h</sup> s s<sup>ʔ</sup>/ are palatalized to [ɕ<sup>h</sup> ɕ ɕ<sup>ʔ</sup>] before [i]. [ɕ] is voiced to [ʒ] and [ɕ<sup>h</sup>] is deäspirated to [ç] intervocalically and after /N/.
- /l/ surfaces as [ɾ] intervocalically and after /N/.
- /w/ surfaces as [ʋ] before [i].

<sup>1</sup>Yes, I say /ən 'uvjələʔ/. Deal with it.

### 2.1.2 | Dialectal Variations of Consonants

- In some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects, the fortis plosives /tʰ tɕʰ kʰ sʰ/ may surface as ejectives [tʰ tɕʰ kʰ (t)sʰ] or geminates [tt ttɕ kk ss-tts].
- In some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects, the alveolo-palatals /tɕʰ tɕ tɕʰ/ may surface as alveolar affricates [tsʰ ts tsʰ].
- In some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects, the lateral [l] has merged with either /j/ or /n/.
- In some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects, the glottal fricative /h/ may surface as pharyngeal [ħ].
- Depending on dialect<sup>[which ones?]</sup> and idiolect, the lateral /l/ may variously surface as any of [ɭ ɮ ʎ ʟ ɻ ʒ].

## 2.2 | Vowels

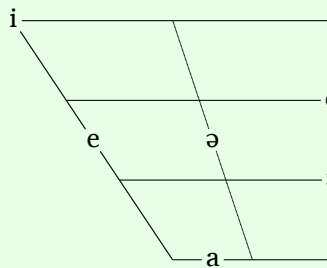


Figure 2: Vowel Phonemes

- /e/ is true mid [ɛ]<sup>2</sup>.
- /a/ is near-front [a] (i.e., not central [ä]).

### 2.2.1 | Vowel Allophony

- All vowels are nasalized before nasal consonants.
- /i/ surfaces as [ĩ] after the velars /kʰ k kʰ/ and before coda [ŋ]
- /o ɔ/ raise to [u ɔ̃]<sup>2</sup> word-finally in open syllables, after the velars /kʰ k kʰ w/, and before coda [ŋ].
- /a/ surfaces as [æ-ɛ] after the palatals /tɕʰ tɕ tɕʰ j/ and before coda /j/.

### 2.2.2 | Dialectal Variations of Vowels

- Some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects have merged the back mid vowels /o ɔ/ into true mid [ɔ̃].
- Some<sup>[which?]</sup> dialects have merged the back the front vowels /i e/ into [i-ɪ]

<sup>2</sup>[ɛ ɔ̃] will be transcribed as [e o] for the sake of brevity.



## 2.3 | Phonological Processes

### 2.3.1 | Stress

Stress placement in Timah is phonologically determined and is not phonemic.

Stress occurs on the left-most live syllable, wherein a syllable ending in a sonorant /*n w j*/ or long vowel are grouped as *live* and those ending in /ʔ h/ are grouped as *dead*.

Open syllables (i.e., syllables with a short vowel and no coda) are superseded by live syllables but take precedence over dead syllables in terms of stress hierarchy.

### 2.3.2 | Vowel Harmony

Timah displays vowel harmony based on tongue root position.

Vowels are divided into two classes: +ATR and –ATR, traditionally grouped as *light* and *heavy* vowels.

+ATR (Light)	i	ə	o
–ATR (Heavy)	e	a	ɔ

Figure 3: Vowel Harmony

Vowel harmony is very pervasive; harmony spreads rightwards from a stressed vowel until it is terminated.

Vowel harmony is terminated after dead syllables (i.e., syllables ending in /ʔ h/) and non-harmonizing morphemes, e.g. clitics and certain affixes.



Figure 4: Harmony Spread

### 2.3.3 | Obstruent Alterations

Radical	Fortis	Tenuis	Aspirate
* <i>t</i>	tʔ	t	t <sup>h</sup>
* <i>tɕ</i>	tɕʔ	tɕ	tɕ <sup>h</sup>
* <i>k</i>	kʔ	k	k <sup>h</sup>
* <i>s</i>	sʔ	s	s <sup>h</sup>
*ʔ		ʔ	h

Figure 5: Obstruent Alterations

### 2.3.4 | Approximant Nasalization

<i>Approx.</i>	<i>Nasal</i>
w	m
l	n <sup>3</sup>
j	

Figure 6: Approximant Nasalization

## 2.4 | Tone

Timah has two distinct tonemes: *high* and *low*, as well as the option of being unmarked for tone. Tonally unmarked syllables are phonetically realized identically to the low tone, but unlike low tone, it can be affected by various tonological processes such as *tone association* and *tone mobility*.

### 2.4.1 | Tone Association

Tone association is the process in which the tone of a given syllable spreads (or doesn't spread) to the preceding toneless syllable.

Floating tones follow similar rules, but can attach in either direction.

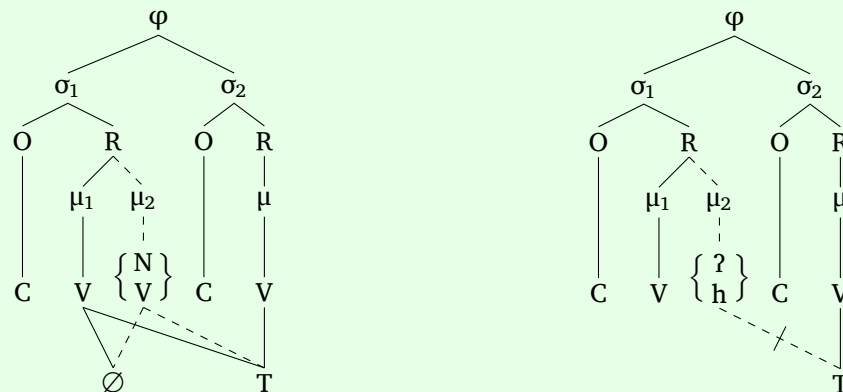


Figure 7: Tone Association

### 2.4.2 | Tone Mobility

**2.4.2.1 | Leftward Tone Shift** At the end of a Prosodic Unit (PU), all tones are shifted one syllable leftward until a toneless syllable, leaving the final syllable toneless.

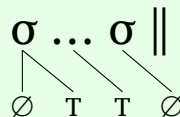


Figure 8: Leftward Tone Shift

<sup>3</sup>/n/ is denasalized to /j/ before /i/, and to /l/ everywhere else.

### 2.4.2.2 | Rightward Tone Shift

## 2.5 | Phonotactics

### 2.5.1 | Syllable Structure

$$CV(T)(V^4(T)|H|S)$$

$$H = \{?,h\}$$

$$S = \{N,w,j\}$$

$$T = \{ó,ò\}$$

*Figure 9: Syllable Structure*

### 2.5.2 | Restraints

These phonotactic restraints govern allomorphy.

- The nasal coda /N/ cannot precede a nasal /m n/.
- The glottal codae /ʔ h/ cannot precede another glottal /ʔ h/.
- The glottal coda /h/ cannot precede a sonorant /m n w l j/.
- The glides /w j/ cannot precede another glide /w j/.

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<sup>4</sup>Long vowel codae must be homorganic in vowel quality but not necessarily in tone quality.

3 | Orthography

The Timah language uses the *Lóma* script (*lóma* [lómà] lit. smooth-word), a defective abugida that was borrowed from a neighboring language *Maryu* (Timah *májlb* [bájɾò]). It was originally written on the large, durable leaves of the *sʼólów* ([sʼóɾɔ́w]) plant, which contributes to the script's curled aesthetic.

3.1 | Other Scripts

3.1.1 | Romanization

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Placeless
Nasal	<m>	<n>				<ŋ> <sup>5</sup>
Plosive		<th d t>	<ch j c>	<kh g k>	<h> <sup>5</sup>	
Fricative		<sh x s>			<h>	
Approximant	<w>	<l>	<y>			

Figure 10: Romanization (Consonants)

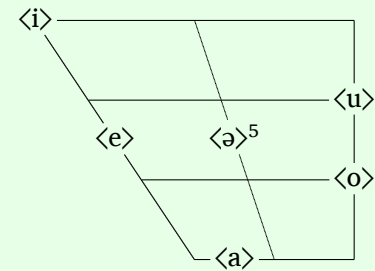


Figure 11: Romanization (Vowels)

3.1.2 | Mkhedruli

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal	Placeless
Nasal	<Მ>	<Ლ>				<Თ> <sup>6</sup>
Plosive		<Რ Ს Ტ>	<Უ Ფ Ქ>	<Ღ Ყ Შ>	<Ჩ>	
Fricative		<Ძ Წ Ჭ>			<Ჰ>	
Approximant	<Უ>	<Ლ>	<Თ>			

Figure 12: Mkhedruli (Consonants)

<sup>5</sup>/N ? ə/ may alternatively be romanized as <n ' v>, respectively.

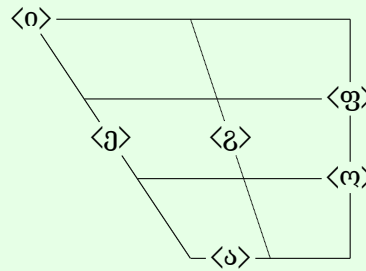


Figure 13: Mkhedruli (Vowels)

## 4 | Syntax

### 4.1 | Sentence Structure

Word order in Timah is primarily *Subject-Object-Peripheral-Verb* in independent clauses, and secondarily *Verb-Subject-Object-Peripheral* in dependent clauses. Only the *verb* must be present. In copular phrases (see § 8), the word order is always *Subject-Copula-Attribute*, wherein the *attribute* is what is being compared to the *subject* of the copular phrase.

The *subject* is the thing that performs the verb; the verb may grammatically agree with the subject's *person*, *probability*, and *integrity*. It consists of one or more noun phrase(s).

The (direct) *object* is the thing that the verb is directly performed upon; the verb may agree with the *salience*, or level of affectedness, of the object. It, like the subject, consists of one or more noun phrase(s).

The *peripheral*, or indirect/oblique object, is the thing that the verb is indirectly performed upon. It is usually marked with a *postposition* (see § 6.4) or *oblique case* (see § 6.3.1) and consists of noun or postpositional phrase(s).

The *verb* is the action that is performed within a clause. It consists of one or more *verb phrase(s)*. Some verbs may not take a subject or object (see § 7.1).

#### 4.1.1 | Dependent Clauses

*Dependent* clauses in Timah are introduced by one of three clausal conjunctions (a subset of *verbal conjunctions*, see § 10.1). They take *Verb-Subject-Object* word order except in copular clauses, where the word order remains *Subject-Copula-Attribute*. Relative clauses are placed before their head noun; only subjects and objects may be relativized, and must take the same role in the relative clause as in the main clause.

- *nəj* : introduces basic dependent clause
- *tən* : introduces causal dependent clause
- *motó* : introduces consecutive dependent clause

(1) tǎ=                      lǎj-                      nómǎ -tǎ Ø-                      hòN -Ø  
 3.STBL.ANIM.AGT.CMPLT= PFV.CMPLT- bite -AV ANIM.STBL.CMPLT- dog -AGT.CMPLT  
 =mǎǎ                      nəj                      Ø-                      tǎǎʔi -Ø                      =mǎǎ  
 =REF.VIS.SG CONJ.DEP ANIM.STBL.COMPLT- person -AGT.CMPLT =REF.VIS.SG

tə=                                      kew                                      sìnkà  
 3.STBL.ANIM.AGT.CMPLT= COP.ESSNT.ASSRT weak  
the man that the dog bit is weak

## 4.2 | Alignment

The morphosyntactic alignment in Timah is a type of dually-split-ergative that is dependent of factors of *perfectiveness*, *valency*, and *volition*.

*Perfectiveness* describes the completeness of the verb, *valency* describes the number of arguments of the verb (in this case, a split between one or more than one), and *volition* describes the degree of control or level of intent concerning the verb. In terms of alignment, all these factors are binary, i.e., [*perfective*|*non-perfective*], [*monovalent*|*polyvalent*], [*volitional*|*non-volitional*].

The *ergative-absolutive* alignment is used obligatorily in polyvalent clauses wherein the subject is specified as perfective.

The *active-stative* alignment is used obligatorily in monovalent clauses wherein the subject is specified as perfective and non-volitional as well as in monovalent clauses wherein the subject is specified only as non-perfective.

Either alignment is possible when the subject in polyvalent clauses is specified as non-perfective, as well as in monovalent clauses wherein the subject is specified as both perfective and non-volitional. Which alignment is used is pragmatically determined (see § 14.1).

			<i>Erg.-Abs.</i>	<i>Either</i>	<i>Act.-Stat.</i>
<i>Mono.</i>	<i>Pfv.</i>	<i>Vol.</i>		×	
		<i>Nvol.</i>			×
	<i>Npfv.</i>	<i>Vol.</i>			×
		<i>Nvol.</i>			×
<i>Multi.</i>	<i>Pfv.</i>	<i>Vol.</i>	×		
		<i>Nvol.</i>	×		
	<i>Npfv.</i>	<i>Vol.</i>		×	
		<i>Nvol.</i>		×	

Figure 14: Alignment

Timah is secundative, with the *theme* (object that is directed toward the recipient) of a trivalent verb (i.e., a polyvalent verb that takes three arguments, see § 7.1) being marked by the a postposition (see § 6.4).

## 4.3 | Clitics

What are termed *clitics* in Timah are actually phrasal affixes, i.e., they are affixes that attach to the initial or final component of their phrase. These are glossed and referred to as clitics, but may also be called *gruppenflexion* or the aforementioned phrasal affixes.

## 5 | Integrity & Probability

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### 5.1 | Integrity

Grammatical class, or *integrity* in Timah is divided by compositional integrity, or completeness of the item.

- **Complete**; *the item is sufficient, finished, whole*; CMPLT
- **Incomplete**; *the item is deficient, unfinished, broken or damaged, condensed*; NCMPLT

Generally, these refer to the compositional integrity within the context of the situation.

### 5.2 | Probability

Grammatical number in Timah is divided not by amount, but *probability*, i.e., if the amount is likely or unlikely to change.

- **Stable**; *the amount is not likely to change*; STBL
- **Unstable**; *the amount is likely to change*; NSTBL
- **Panstable**; *it is unknown if the amount is likely or unlikely to change*; PNSTBL

Generally, these refer to the probability to change within the context of the situation.

## 6 | Nouns

### 6.1 | Pronouns

#### 6.1.1 | Personal

*Personal* pronouns decline for probability, person, animacy (in 3<sup>rd</sup> person), case, and integrity.

		<i>Agt.</i>	<i>Pat.</i>	<i>Erg.</i>	<i>Assoc.</i>	<i>Loc.</i>
<i>Stbl.</i>	1	lə	ləhi	jəN	s <sup>h</sup> aj	tɕ <sup>h</sup> ɔ̌
	2	nó	nɔ		nò	nə
	3	təʔ	təhi	tɕàN	kéh	té
			həN			
<i>Nstbl.</i>	1	to	tò		t <sup>ʔ</sup> áw	jé
	2	nɔ́	nɔ̀		néj	tɕɔ
	3	t <sup>ʔ</sup> óʔ	t <sup>ʔ</sup> óhi	tɕ <sup>h</sup> ON	kèè	k <sup>h</sup> əw
			t <sup>h</sup> ɔ̌N			

(a) Complete

	<i>Agt.</i>	<i>Pat.</i>	<i>Erg.</i>	<i>Assoc.</i>	<i>Loc.</i>
1	ká	ke	tàʔ	tɕà	ləj
2	nɔ́	náw		nəw	no
3	səsá	seh		kín	s <sup>ʔ</sup> əw

(b) Incomplete

Figure 15: Personal Pronouns

#### 6.1.2 | Possessive

*Possessive* pronouns decline for person (of the possessor), integrity, and animacy (of the possessed). They indicate ownership and relation. They are placed after their head noun.

	<i>Complete</i>		<i>Incomplete</i>
	<i>Animate</i>	<i>Inanimate</i>	
1	lən	jé	sèn
2	ná	néj	wən
3	tɔ́	tɕɔ́	kaá

Figure 16: Possessive Pronouns



### 6.1.3 | Relative/Interrogative

*Relative/interrogative* pronouns decline for integrity, probability, and domain. They are used to indicate questions and to introduce relative clauses.

		<i>Personal</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Manner</i>	<i>Reason</i>
<i>Complete</i>	<i>Stbl.</i>	ʔəsè	kʰɔ̃naj	silɔ	sáj	sʰèh
	<i>Nstbl.</i>	tansà	kʰiɲhə			
<i>Incomplete</i>		ʔehi	kéhe	saʔíí	səmóɔ	sʰɔjna

Figure 17: Relative/Interrogative Pronouns

### 6.1.4 | Demonstrative

*Demonstrative* pronouns decline for number, proximality, and deictic position. They express spatial and temporal position relative to the speaker (see § 14.3.1). Demonstratives of *proportion* and *manner* express to what extent and in what way, respectively.

		<i>Anterior</i>		<i>Posterior</i>				
		<i>Sinister</i>	<i>Dexter</i>					
<i>Stbl.</i>	<i>Prox.</i>	tàá	kò	mɔN	<i>Prox.</i>	sʰà	kɔʔ	nəj
	<i>Med.</i>	sáwhe	kàmeʔ	jéhə		tòhe	ʔankí	móle
	<i>Dist.</i>	kʔitò				sawa		
<i>Nstbl.</i>	<i>Prox.</i>	tɕaà	ʔakə	wón	(b) <i>Incomplete</i>			
	<i>Med.</i>	ʔitɕʔa	kèho	míí				
	<i>Dist.</i>	tekí						

(a) *Complete*

		<i>Complete</i>	<i>Incomplete</i>
<i>Prop.</i>	<i>Prox.</i>	jé	likɔN
	<i>Dist.</i>	jín	
<i>Man.</i>	<i>Prox.</i>	wój	misɔN
	<i>Dist.</i>	kəN	

(c) *Proportion & Manner*

Figure 18: Demonstrative Pronouns

- **Proximal**; able to be heard by speaker
- **Medial**; able to be seen by speaker and/or heard by listener
- **Distal**; able to be seen by speaker; may be indistinct or non-visible
- **Anterior**; in front of the speaker; associated with the past
  - **Sinister**; to the left of the speaker; associated with volitional events
  - **Dexter**; to the right of the speaker; associated with non-volitional events
- **Posterior**; behind the speaker; associated with the future

## 6.2 | Article Enclitics

Articles in Timah decline for referentiality, visibility, and probability. They attach as enclitics to the final element of their head noun phrase.

	Referential		Non-referential	
	Visible	Non-visible	Visible	Non-visible
<i>Stbl.</i>	=mʊɔ	=han	=sʔi	=tʔéʔ
<i>Nstbl.</i>	=kʔə	=mé	=kʰəN	=tɕáá
<i>Pnstbl.</i>		=já		=kʰɔɔ

Figure 19: Article Enclitics

## 6.3 | Declensions

### 6.3.1 | Cases

- **Agentive** (*Agt.*) : In *multivalent* verbs (i.e., *ambivalent* or *polyvalent* verbs that take two or three arguments, see § 7.1), the *agentive* case marks a Complete subject or an Incomplete object. In *monovalent* verbs, it marks a volitional Complete subject (see § 7.2) or Incomplete subject.
- **Patientive** (*Pat.*) : In polyvalent verbs, the *patient* case marks a Complete object. In monovalent verbs, it marks a non-volitional Complete subject.
- **Ergative** (*Erg.*) : In polyvalent verbs, the *ergative* case marks an Incomplete *subject*.
- **Associative** (*Assoc.*) : The *associative* case marks genitive and genitive-like relations that can be further clarified using postpositions.
- **Locative** (*Loc.*) : The *locative* case marks physical and/or temporal location and movement that can be expanded upon using postpositions.

	Complete	Incomplete		Complete	Incomplete
<i>Agt.</i>	-Ø	-N-(ó)	<i>Agt.</i>	-Ø	-té
<i>Pat.</i>	-h	-h-(ó)	<i>Pat.</i>	-si	-séN
<i>Erg.</i>	-ʔ	-ho	<i>Erg.</i>	-kʔi	-kʰo
<i>Assoc.</i>	-wɔ		<i>Assoc.</i>	-kɔ	
<i>Loc.</i>	-tɕó	-je	<i>Loc.</i>	-tɕó	-se
(a) Open			(b) Closed		

Figure 20: Cases

The *Associative* and *Locative* cases, collectively called *peripheral cases*, may be accompanied by a postposition (see § 6.4). In isolation the *associative* takes the meaning of an alienable genitive (in contrast to the *ergative*, which may have an inalienable genitive meaning) and the *locative* takes on the meaning of a general locative or temporal (i.e., marking place or time).

## 6.4 | Postpositions

There are two types of postpositions in Timah: those of *association* and those of *location*. These types are directly related to the *associative* and *locative* noun cases, as the Postpositional Object must take the respective case of its postposition.

### • Associative Postpositions

- lí : *accompaniment/use; basic theme of trivalent verb*
- k<sup>ʔ</sup>e : *lack of accompaniment/use; negatory theme of trivalent verb*
- k<sup>h</sup>ɔno : *intent of benefit/purpose; beneficial/purposive theme of trivalent verb*
- sɪ : *intent of reference/relation*
- tɕé : *state of being*
- k<sup>h</sup>ò : *change of state*
- kéh : *similarity/comparison*
- t<sup>ʔ</sup>ɔka : *causation*

### • Locative Postpositions

- tí : *movement toward*
- s<sup>h</sup>ì : *movement away from*
- mí : *movement onto*
- tɕɔɔ : *movement under*
- t<sup>h</sup>ɪsé : *movement into*
- siiʔi : *movement out of*
- tɕoli : *beginning of movement/time*
- ʔan : *end of movement/time*
- kanʔɔ : *movement through, by way of, adjacent to*
- soʔa : *in front of/below/before*
- sàkə : *behind/above/after*
- seeʔá : *between, amidst, within*
- sɔt<sup>h</sup>e : *surrounding, around, encompassing*

## 6.5 | Noun Classes

Noun classes in Timah are separated into the groups *complete* and *incomplete*, which are associated with semantic wholeness or entirety of the noun (see § 5.1).

The *complete* group is further divided into the classes *animate* and *inanimate*. The *panstable* number is generally associated with mass nouns.

	Complete		Incomplete
	Animate	Inanimate	
Stbl.	Ø-	kaw-, kɔ-	wí-
Nstbl.	tɔ-	jé-	
Pnstbl.	na(N)-	Ø-	kó-

Figure 21: Noun Classes

## 6.6 | Noun Reduplication

Many nouns (including pronouns) may optionally be fully reduplicated and attached to their root to indicate plurality or intensity. Reduplication to mark plurality is never used when a numeral is used to quantify the root noun.

- (2) tɕəŋi  
 person  
a person
- (3) tɕəŋi ~tɕəŋi  
 person ~person  
people

In some nouns, full reduplication may also be used to derive mass nouns.

- (4) hɔŋ  
 dog  
a dog
- (5) hɔŋ ~hɔŋ  
 dog ~dog  
a pack of dogs

## 7 | Verbs

---

### 7.1 | Valency Classes

There are four main valency classes in Timah: *avalent*, *monovalent*, *ambivalent*, and *polyvalent*.

- *Avalent* verbs take zero arguments.
- *Monovalent* verbs take one argument.
- *Ambivalent* verbs take one or two arguments.
- *Polyvalent* verbs take two or more arguments.

Ambivalent and polyvalent verbs that take exactly two arguments are grouped as *divalent*, polyvalent verbs that take exactly three arguments are grouped as *trivalent*, and polyvalent verbs that take two or more arguments are grouped as *multivalent*. These terms (*divalent*, *trivalent*, *multivalent*) are used only in analysis and meta-grouping.

### 7.2 | Volitional Classes

Verbs are inherently classed as either *volitional* or *non-volitional*. These classes determine the case of the subject in monovalent verbs, as well as semantic intention regardless of valency.

*Volitional* verbs usually denote an action that is intentionally performed by the subject.

*Non-volitional* verbs usually denote an action that is accidentally performed by the subject.

### 7.3 | Verbal Reduplication

Reduplication is more prominent in verbs than in nouns. Full reduplication of the root can optionally be used to indicate greater intensity, but partial reduplication is used in verbal paradigms.

$|R_i\sim|$  indicates full reduplication of the initial syllable, and  $|\sim R_f|$  indicates full reduplication of the final syllable.

### 7.4 | Conjugations

<i>subj.</i>	<i>obj.</i>	<i>(classifier)</i>	<i>mode</i>	<i>(noun)</i>	<b>root</b>	<i>voice</i>	<i>(DoI)</i>	<i>(directional)</i>	<i>(applicative)</i>
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Figure 22: Conjugation Slots

#### 7.4.1 | Pronominal Proclitics

*Pronominal proclitics* are obligatorily appended to verb phrases and must agree with their respective argument. Pronouns are dropped when pronominal proclitics are present.

		Agt.	Pat.	Erg.			Agt.	Pat.	Erg.
	1	lə=	le(h)=	jə́(N)=					
Stbl.	2	nó=	nɔ=	nò=					
	3	Anim.	tə́=	té(h)=		1	ká=	tà(?)=	tà(?)=
		Inan.	ha(N)=	tɕà(N)=		2	nó=(ó)	nəw=, no=	no=
	1		to=	tò=		3	sá=	se(h)=	kí(N)=
Nstbl.	2		nɔ=(ó)	nó=(ò)					
	3	Anim.	tʔó=	tʔó(h)=					
		Inan.	tʰɔ(N)=	tɕʰo(N)=					

(a) Complete

(b) Incomplete

Figure 23: Pronominal Proclitics

### 7.4.2 | Noun Incorporation & Salience

In certain verbs, object and peripheral nouns may be *incorporated*, or attached to, the verb. The incorporated noun may be phonologically reduced or even undergo suppletion. They are always placed directly before the verb root.

When a noun is incorporated, the meaning of the phrase becomes more general, e.g., he chops the tree (a specific tree) vs. he chops trees (as a profession, in general). Additionally, the incorporated noun may optionally be marked with a noun class prefix (see § 6.5). If it is a peripheral object, it may take an associative or locative case marker.

### 7.4.3 | Voice & Investment

The verbal voices in Timah are symmetric, i.e., they do not alter the valency of the verb, only the arguments' roles.

Voice indicators also inflect for the *investment* of the subject. This indicates that the subject has some sort of interest or stake pertaining to the action, e.g., give (uninvested) vs. loan (invested).

	Uninvested	Invested
Actor	-tá	-tɕà
Undergoer	-sʔó	-jə́
Correlative	-mótè	

Figure 24: Voice

(6)

The *correlative* voice indicates that both the agent and patient are in some way related; it is often used for reflexive constructs, but can also be used for reciprocal constructs.

- (7) lə=                      laj-                      mólá -mótè  
 1.STBL.AGT.CMPLT= PFV.CMPLT- wash -CV  
I wash myself

- (8) to=                      laj-                      mólá -mótè  
 1.STBL.AGT.CMPLT= PFV.CMPLT- wash -CV  
we wash ourselves
- (9) to=                      tò=                      laj-                      mólá -mótè  
 1.STBL.AGT.CMPLT= 1.STBL.PAT.CMPLT= PFV.CMPLT- wash -CV  
we wash each other

#### 7.4.4 | Domain of Influence

The *domain of influence* describes the area in which the object is able to be affected by the subject. With certain verbs this is fairly straightforward, e.g., sensory verbs—the domain of influence describes the area in which the subject can sense the object.

Verbs conjugate via suffixes for the presence of the object inside or outside the domain of influence of the subject.

- ó-N, -ná? : *inside the domain of influence*
- -lǒǒ : *outside the domain of influence*

Only multivalent verbs in either the actor or undergoer voices may be marked for domain of influence, i.e., avalent and monovalent verbs, and verbs in the correlative voice may not take domain of influence marking. Furthermore, verbs in which the object is understood to be inherently inside or outside the domain of influence may not take domain of influence marking, e.g., *niwi* eat, *kʰòo* touch, interact (with).

When pertaining to abstract concepts, the domain of influence instead describes the perceived attainability of the object (i.e., the subjective probability of it being able to enter the domain of influence).

- (10) Ø-                      hòN -si                      =sʔi                      lǎ=                      té=  
 CMPLT.ANIM.STBL- dog -CMPLT.PAT =NREF.VIS.STBL 1.STBL.AGT= 3.STBL.ANIM.PAT=  
 hòNó -tǎà                      -N  
 want -AV.INVST -∈DOI  
I want a dog (and believe this to be attainable)
- (11) Ø-                      hòN -si                      =sʔi                      lǎ=                      té=  
 CMPLT.ANIM.STBL- dog -CMPLT.PAT =NREF.VIS.STBL 1.STBL.AGT= 3.STBL.ANIM.PAT=  
 hòNó -tǎà                      -lǒǒ  
 want -AV.INVST -∉DOI  
I want a dog (and believe this to be unattainable)

#### 7.4.5 | Expressive Moods

There are three moods in Timah that are independent from normal moods. These are called *expressive moods*, and are placed at the beginning of a clause. They are excluded from the Complete/Incomplete distinction.

- tǎǎ : **Imperative**; *commands, wishes, desires*
- sʰa : **Interrogative**; *questions, requests*
- tǎj : **Polar Interrogative**; *yes/no questions; tag questions*
- kǐ : **Precative**; *polite requests and commands*

### 7.4.6 | Mood & Aspect

*Mood* and *aspect* (collectively called *mode*) are optionally marked using fused mood-aspect prefixes.

	<i>Imperfective</i>	<i>Perfective</i>	<i>Habitual</i>	<i>Continuous</i>	<i>Experiential</i>	<i>Iterative</i>
<i>Realis</i>	Ø-	laj-, le-	kʔa(?)	tɕee-	j íhi-	R <sub>i</sub> -kʔa(?)
<i>Affirmative</i>	~R <sub>f</sub>	laj-√-R <sub>f</sub> , le-√-R <sub>f</sub>		tɕee-√-R <sub>f</sub>	jíhi-√-R <sub>f</sub>	R <sub>i</sub> -tɕee-√-R <sub>f</sub>
<i>Irrealis</i>	tɔ(?)	haj-, he-	tew-, tə-	sʰe(?)	já-	R <sub>i</sub> -tew-, R <sub>i</sub> -tə-
<i>Conditional</i>	ʔo-	né(h)-	ne(N)-	ʔaa-		
<i>Hypothetical</i>	tàj-, tè-	kʰà-	nəw-, nò-		taʔe-	R <sub>i</sub> -nəw-, R <sub>i</sub> -nò-

Figure 25: Aspect & Mood

- **Moods**

- **Realis** : event is known to be real
- **Affirmative** : event is emphasized as being real
- **Irrealis** : event is unknown or known to be unreal
- **Conditional** : event is dependent upon other events
- **Hypothetical** : event is unknown or counterfactual, but possible

- **Aspects**

- **Perfective** : event is complete
- **Habitual** : event is repeated across multiple timeframes
- **Continuous** : event is incomplete or ongoing
- **Experiential** : event is experienced
- **Iterative** : event is repeated within the same timeframe

### 7.4.7 | Evidentials

Timah optionally marks four levels of evidentiality (as well as a *quotative*), which express how the information was gathered. Evidentiality markers are placed before their head verb.

- kʰekʰì : **Witness**; knows of event directly
- sʰsɔN : **Evidential Inferential**; knows of event via evidence
- tɔNke : **Anecdotal Inferential**; knows of event via prior experience(s)
- mʰhɔ : **Reportative**; knows of event indirectly
- ʔaj : **Quotative**; marks quoted speech, dialogue; can be used in conjunction with other evidentials



### 7.4.8 | Directional Specifiers & Applicatives

The *ventitive* and *andative* suffixes, collectively called *directional specifiers*, are commonly used with verbs of movement, such as *wə* move, walk, *s<sup>h</sup>ɔj* carry, give/take, and others. These are placed directly after the verb root.

- -tí : **Venitive**; *motion toward*
- -s<sup>h</sup>ì : **Andative**; *motion away from*

*Applicatives* are valency-increasing operations that switch the syntactic position of the peripheral (indirect object) with that of the (direct) object. They are formed by appending an applicative suffix to the verb, which can be used in tandem with the venitive and andative markers in order to specify direction or efficiency. These are placed directly after the verb root and, if present, the directional specifier.

- -lí : **Relational**; *accompaniment*
- -k<sup>h</sup>òN : **Beneficial**; *intent of benefit/purpose or reference/relation*
- -tʔɔʔ : **Causal**; *causation, final causation*
- -kéh : **Complemental**; *similarity/comparison, state of being*
- -tɕò : **Locational**; *absolute physical or temporal location and movement*
- -sòʔ : **Positional**; *relative physical or temporal location and movement*

The applicatives -lí and -k<sup>h</sup>òN may be used to invert the secundative construction (see § 4.1), making it indirective. This inversion does not change the clause semantically, only syntactically.

Further specifications can be made by supplementing the applicative suffix with a postposition (see § 6.4) placed after the object.

## 7.5 | Verbal Classifiers

*Verbal classifiers* are used with certain verbs to describe characteristics of the object. It is most often used with verbs of handling.

	<i>Innate</i>	<i>Discrete</i>	<i>Coherent</i>	<i>Aggregate</i>	<i>Diverse</i>
<i>Living</i>	ʔi-		tàj-		sahi-
<i>Solid</i>	kaw-	maa-	maa-√~R <sub>f</sub>	ʔitii-	itii-√~R <sub>f</sub>
<i>Fluid</i>		tɕè-	tɕè-√~R <sub>f</sub>	tín-	tín-√~R <sub>f</sub>
<i>Generic</i>	kʔáj-		məájón-		ʔɔj-

Figure 26: Verbal Classifiers

- **Innate**; *unspecified composition*
- **Discrete**; *group of similar entities*
- **Coherent**; *organized group of similar entities*
- **Aggregate**; *group of dissimilar entities*
- **Diverse**; *organized group of dissimilar entities*

## 7.6 | Serial Verb Constructions

A *serial verb construction* (SVC) in Timah is a verb phrase that contains two or more verbs that, within the context of their clause, share the same inflections and one or more arguments. They may be *continuous* (the constituent verbs are placed adjacent to each other) or *discontinuous* (the constituent verbs are separated by an argument.)

*Continuous* SVCs obligatorily share the same subject and object, while *discontinuous* SVCs only obligatorily share the same subject (i.e they may take different objects).

### 7.6.1 | Perceptive

*Perceptive* SVCs are always discontinuous, and express sensory interaction.

### 7.6.2 | Directive

*Directive* SVCs may be either continuous or discontinuous, and express movement or position.

### 7.6.3 | Capacitive

*Capacitive* SVCs are always continuous, and express ability, attitude, or causality.

## 8 | Copulae

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There are two classes of *copulae* in Timah: *essential* and *existential*. These classes are further divided into *assertive*, *negative*, and *revelatory* forms.

Copulae only inflect for person and mood/aspect (see §§ 7.4.1 and 7.4.6), and the constituent arguments within a copular phrase (i.e., the subject and attribute) both take the (unmarked) agentive case. As noted in § 4.1, all copular phrases have *Subject-Copula-Attribute* word order.

### 8.1 | Essential Copulae

The *essential* copulae express nominal and descriptive predication.

#### 8.1.1 | Essential-Assertive

The *essential-assertive* copula *kew* is the basic copula used for predicating nouns and descriptives.

#### 8.1.2 | Essential-Negative

The *essential-negative* copula *kələ* expresses negative predication of nouns and descriptives.

#### 8.1.3 | Essential-Revelatory

The *essential-revelatory* copula *?owó* expresses surprise or doubt from the speaker toward the clause. It suppletes the essential-assertive copula in Incomplete moods (see §§ 7.4.6 and 7.4.7).

### 8.2 | Existential Copulae

The *existential* copulae express locational predication as well as possession and existence.

#### 8.2.1 | Existential-Assertive

The *existential-assertive* copula *nén* is the basic locative copula used for predicating location as well as indicating possession and existence.

#### 8.2.2 | Existential-Negative

The *existential-negative* copula *néjé* expresses negative predication of location and indicates lack of possession/existence.

#### 8.2.3 | Existential-Revelatory

The *existential-revelatory* copula *təjə* expresses surprise or doubt from the speaker toward the predicated location or possessive/existential phrase. It suppletes the existential-assertive copula in Incomplete moods (see §§ 7.4.6 and 7.4.7).

## 9 | Descriptives & Derivation

There are twelve descriptives (which function as adjectives or adverbs) in Timah. They are placed before their head noun or verb. All descriptives may optionally be fully reduplicated to indicate greater intensity.

- tɕʰàné : *good, positive; full*
- sìnkà : *bad, negative; empty*
- kʰɔkʰɔ : *big, strong; many*
- tɕʰi : *small, weak; few*
- semɔʔ : *fast; loud; hard, rough*
- lɔ : *slow; quiet; soft, smooth*
- sɔN : *short, wide; feminine*
- ʔin : *long, narrow; masculine*
- tɕósʰa : *white, light; fresh, new*
- káj : *warm (color); hot, dry*
- sɔtɕe : *cool (color); cold, wet*
- tʰawsá : *black, dark; stale, old*

### 9.1 | Comparison

Comparative constructions are made by appending a postposition after the descriptive in a copular clause. The recipient of comparison is placed after the subject, i.e., *Subject-Recipient-Copula-Attribute*.

- sʰi : *positive comparison*
- míh : *equative comparison*
- tí : *negative comparison*

- (12) Ø- keteh -Ø =mɔɔ Ø- tɕòʔi -tɕó  
 ANIM.STBL.CMPLT- child -AGT.CMPLT =REF.VIS.SG ANIM.STBL.CMPLT- person -LOC.CMPLT  
 sʰi =mɔɔ tɕ= kew tɕósʰa  
 ABL =REF.VIS.SG 3STBL.ANIM.AGT.CMPLT= COP.ESSNT.ASSRT new  
the child is younger than the man

## 9.2 | Derivation

Noun and verbs can be zero-derived from each other, i.e., no overt marking is used to change a noun to a verb and vice versa. Other derivations are possible by appending a descriptive onto a noun or verb as a prefix.

Additionally, there exists a small closed class of various derivational affixes.

### Prefixes

- t̀̀j-, t̀̀- : *opposite, reverse*
- ṭ̣ḥà(?) : *person, profession*
- lə(h)-(ó) : *place; time*
- kósó : *homorganic group/mass*
- k<sup>h</sup>e- : *heterorganic group/mass*
- ṭ̣á(N)-(ò) : *prevent, stop, interrupt*
- sáj-, sé- : *pretend, mimic, falsify*
- sóo- : *cause, source*
- ʔikə- : *expected accompaniment*

### Suffixes

- -ṭ̣ʔ́ : *attempt, try*
- -t̀̀j : *product, result*
- (ó)-litó : *within a period of time*
- -kʔ́ʔ́e : *tool, instrument*
- (ò)-s'oo : *abstraction, mass*
- -ṭ̣ì : *animals, inedible plants*
- -mitàN : *edible plants, food*
- -kosée : *pejorative, derogatory*
- -ṭ̣ì : *previous, former*
- (ó)-nə : *eventual, later*

## 10 | Particles & Other Words

### 10.1 | Conjunctions

There are two groups of conjunctions in Timah: *nominal* and *verbal*. *Nominal* conjunctions connect nouns, noun phrases, and descriptives; *verbal* conjunctions connect verbs and verb phrases.

- **Nominal**

- ní : *presents non-contrast*
- ʔika : *presents contrast*
- teh : *presents alternative*

- **Verbal**

- nəj : *presents non-contrast; introduces basic dependent clause*
- ten : *presents rationale, causality; introduces causal dependent clause*
- motó : *presents consequence; introduces consecutive dependent clause*
- ʔihi : *presents contrast*
- kàh : *presents alternative*

#### 10.1.1 | Ellipsis

- (13) kaw-                      melə -si                      lə=                      ha=                      niwi -tá nəj  
 INAN.STBL.CMPLT- bread -PAT.CMPLT 1.STBL.AGT= 3.STBL.INAN.PAT= eat -AV and.VRBL  
 tóʔ                      kaw-                      kʰətàj -si  
 3.STBL.ANIM.AGT INAN.STBL.CMPLT- milk -PAT.CMPLT  
I eat bread and he (eats) milk

### 10.2 | Affirmatory & Negatory

- **Affirmatory**

- séN : **Affirmatory-Basic**; *affirms with no regard to evidence*
- sʰè : **Affirmatory-Witness**; *affirms via visual evidence*
- sʰò : **Affirmatory-Sensory**; *affirms via non-visual evidence*
- sʰó : **Affirmatory-Evidential**; *affirms via direct evidence*
- tɕʰén : **Affirmatory-Anecdotal**; *affirms via prior experience(s)*
- jón : **Affirmatory-Reportative**; *affirms via indirect evidence*

- **Negatory**

- káj : **Negatory-Basic**; *negates with no regard to evidence*
- kʰáj : **Negatory-Sensory**; *negates via sensory/direct evidence*
- sáj : **Negatory-Inferential**; *negates via direct evidence/prior experience(s)*
- wáj : **Negatory-Reportative**; *negates via indirect evidence*

# 11 | Numerals

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Timah uses a base-60 numeral system. This is not a pure base-60 system, as it uses base-12 as a sub-base to construct the constituent numeric symbols.

0	12	24	36	48
1	13	25	37	49
2	14	26	38	50
3	15	27	39	51
4	16	28	40	52
5	17	29	41	53
6	18	30	42	54
7	19	31	43	55
8	20	32	44	56
9	21	33	45	57
10	22	34	46	58
11	23	35	47	59

Figure 27: Numerals

# 12 | Register Terms

Timah has a complex system of social register terms that are used to describe the social relations between the speaker and listener.

	Inferior			Equivalent			Superior		
	Younger	Equal	Elder	Younger	Equal	Elder	Younger	Equal	Elder
Formal	tèhah		waj	kátç <sup>h</sup> è	s <sup>h</sup> ò	s <sup>h</sup> əw	létça?	jó?oh	sako
Polite	ləj	tç <sup>h</sup> aw	tçoo	sáhkəh		wo?ɔ	k <sup>h</sup> emé	mii?í	
Familiar		tç <sup>h</sup> ɔs <sup>h</sup> ə	to?a	k <sup>h</sup> a		t <sup>h</sup> ii?ɔj	t <sup>h</sup> itçín		t <sup>h</sup> è
Pejorative		kəj		ketç <sup>h</sup> ɔ			k <sup>h</sup> èle		

Figure 28: Register Terms



13 | Ideophones

13.1 | Ideophonemes

There exists a set of phonemes in Timah that can appear only in ideophones. These are called *ideophonemes*, and they cannot cluster (i.e., codae /ʔ h ɳ w j/ may not precede them). Basic consonants can appear in ideophones, but ideophones are restricted to a reduced vowel inventory.

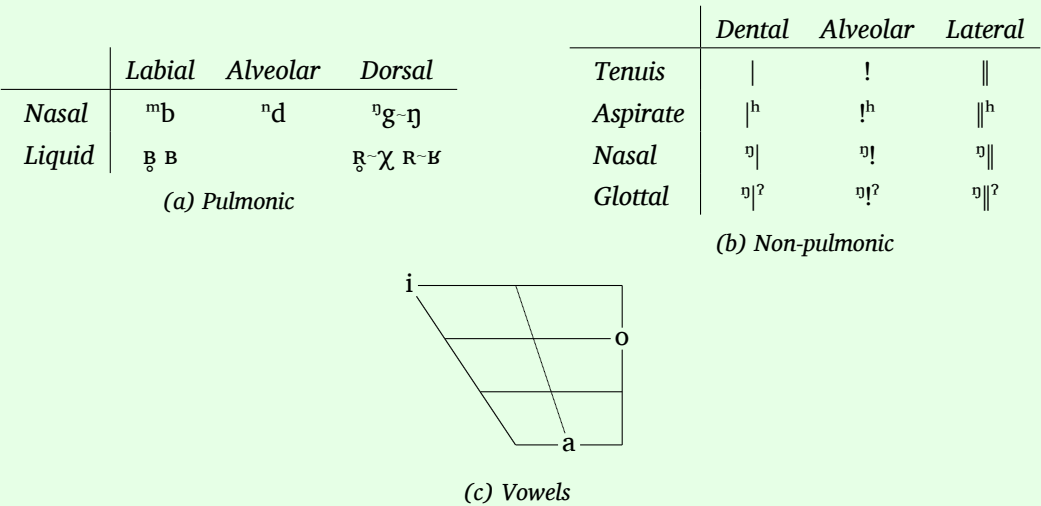


Figure 29: Ideophonemes

Additionally, the syllabic nasals /ᵐᵑ ᵑ ᵑ̥/ also appear, but only in isolation.

13.2 | Ideophones

There are three types of ideophones in Timah: *phonomimes*, *phenomimes*, and *psychomimes*.

13.2.1 | Phonomimes

*Phonomimes* imitate sounds directly.

13.2.2 | Phenomimes

*Phenomimes* imitate sounds associated with tangible states and conditions.

13.2.3 | Psychomimes

*Psychomimes* imitate sounds associated with intangible states and conditions.

## 14 | Semantics & Pragmatics

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### 14.1 | Topic & Focus

*Topic* and *focus* are important elements of discourse in Timah. Under certain circumstances (see § 4.2), the presence of explicit topic-fronting and/or focus-marking can change which alignment is used.

In general, the topic marks known or old information, while the focus marks unknown or new information.

#### 14.1.1 | Topic & Focus Marking

The *topic* of a clause can be explicitly marked by fronting it and obligatorily appending a referential article enclitic (see § 6.2) onto the phrase. The topic strongly correlates to the subject of the clause, but this is not always the case.

The *focus* of a clause can be explicitly marked by appending one of three *focus markers* before the phrase containing the focus.

- kʔitò : *focuses the entire phrase*
- tàá : *focuses the head of the phrase*
- kò : *focuses the dependents of the phrase*

### 14.2 | Avoidance

### 14.3 | Deixis

#### 14.3.1 | Spatial/Temporal Deixis & Domains

The deictic space of Timah is divided into three main domains: *anterior-sinister*, *anterior-dexter*, and *posterior*.

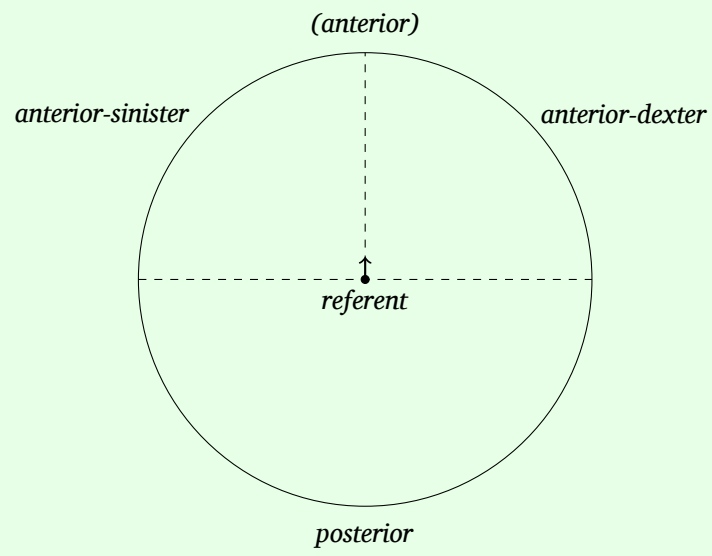


Figure 30: Deictic Space

## Appendices

- (14) kaw-                      lómelə    -Ø                      jón=                      kaw-  
 COMNSTBL.INAN.SG- dumpling -AGT.COMPL 1STBL.ERG.COMPL= SOLID.INTGRL-  
 laj-                      hɔ́nɔ́- niwi -tɕà                      ʔihi                      =se  
 PFV.REAL- want- eat -AV.NSAL CONJ.CONTRAST.VRBL =NEG  
I wanted to eat a dumpling but no
- (15) Ø-                      keteh -kʔi                      =móɔ                      laj-                      Ø-                      hòN-  
 COMPLT.ANIM.SG- child -ERG.COMPLT =REF.VIS.SG PFV.REAL- COMPLT.ANIM.SG- dog-  
 ʔi-                      tɕán kʰòò -tɕà  
 INTGRL.LIV- stop touch -AV.NSAL  
the boy stopped and pet the dog

## A | *The King and the God*

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(16) wí- ʔi(N)- nètɕa -né =móɔ ká= nén  
 IRR- long- royalty -AGT.NCOMPLT =REF.VIS.SG 3.AGT.NCOMPLT= COP.EXIST.ASSERT  
a king existed

(17) ká= néjé keteh -té =móɔ  
 3.AGT.NCOMPLT= COP.EXIST.NEG child -AGT.NCOMPLT =REF.VIS.SG  
he did not have a child

(18)

(19)

(20)