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Special Section on Numerals

Morphology and Syntax from Tani to Kuki-Chin

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Preliminary Notes on Dakpa (Tawang Monpa)[1]

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1. Introduction

The languages of the East Bodish branch of Tibeto-Burman remain amongst some of the least documented within the family. Languages of Arunachal Pradesh, in particular those of the western portion of the state, likewise remain almost utterly undescribed. These facts are compounded by the difficulty in travelling to the regions in which East Bodish languages are spoken (Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, Tibet) and the near impossibility of gaining government permission for the research. This article endeavours to contribute to these descriptive deficiencies by outlining some phonological and morphological aspects of Dakpa (Tawang Monpa, a.k.a Northern Monpa), spoken in Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh, India, based on data we collected while there in 2007. As it seems unlikely any further work will be done on Dakpa in the near future, in this article we aim to bring into light what little data and analyses we have.

This article provides a preliminary phonemic inventory and discusses some grammatical morphology in Dakpa of Tawang. Whenever possible, Dakpa data will be presented in the light of other East Bodish languages (Bumthang, van Driem, 1995a), (Kurtöp, Dzala, Chali, our field notes) and/or in comparison to the Dakpa data recently presented in ván Driem (2007). We will conclude by highlighting some aspects of Dakpa that appear unusual in the context of East Bodish. It must be stressed that the analyses in this paper are preliminary. More thorough analyses will have to wait for further research.

This article is organised as follows. In section 2 we provide relevant background information, including a discussion of the term *Monpa* and the source of our data. Section 3 provides a preliminary outline of Dakpa phonology and section 4 is devoted to morphology, including personal pronouns, case markers, and the presence of verbal morphology that appears to mark person. In section 5 we provide a summary of the findings and highlight some aspects of Dakpa that appear unique in the context of other East Bodish languages.

2. Background

2.1. The term *Monpa*

From a scholarly point of view, the term *Monpa* is ambiguous and we advise steering away from using it to identify a given language. As the term is applied to many different speech communities and languages, one can never be sure what is meant by the term.

In Bhutan, for example, *Monpa* is applied to the community of non-Buddhists residing in the Black Mountains and their language. These people practise an indigenous animist religion and speak what has been categorised as a variety of archaic East Bodish (van Driem, 1995b).

In western Arunachal Pradesh, on the other hand, the term *Monpa* denotes a handful of different Tibeto-Burman speaking communities who practise Buddhism. Dirang, of West Kameng, is home to a community of Monpas who speak one of the so-called 'Kho-Bwa' languages referred to

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[2] Sun (1993) also identifies the close relationship of these languages in a group he calls 'Bugunish'. He excludes Puroik from the group of Lishpa, Sherdukpen and Bugun, but suggests it may be closely related to the group. Our field notes on Puroik, Bugun and Sherdukpen support this observation.

as Lishpa. Van Driem (2001) proposes the term 'Kho-Bwa' to identify four (Lishpa, Bugun, Sherdukpen, Puroik)[2] highly divergent Tibeto-Burman languages, where *kho* is the term for 'water' and *bwa* is the term for 'fire'[3]. Rutgers (1999) also identified the relationship between these languages, referring to them as 'isolates' because of the collective deviance from other Tibeto-Burman languages. Thus, the relationship between Lishpa and the other *Monpa* languages is the least clear of all.

Tshangla, a language of eastern Bhutan and western Arunachal Pradesh, is also referred to as 'Monpa' in India, while in Bhutan it is referred to as *Sharchop*, *Sharchokpa* or *Sharchokpa kha* 'language of the easterners'. The placement of Tshangla within Tibeto-Burman is still subject to debate, though the observation that Tshangla fits in the Tibeto-Burman family with other Bodic languages, such as Newar and the Bodish branch, has been observed in Bradley (1997) and many others. Dakpa is yet another language of Arunachal Pradesh that has been termed *Monpa*, but belongs within East-Bodish (c.f. §2.4). At times, 'Central Monpa' has been used to designate Tshangla while 'Northern Monpa' designates Dakpa.

Even more broadly, the term 'Monpa' has been used to identify groups of people who do not even speak Tibeto-Burman languages (van Driem 2001:472). Van Driem further writes that:

> The term ཨོན་ mon or mön has most often been applied to ethnolinguistic groups south of the Tibetan plateau, especially groups which have retained a native shamanist religion or follow an order or Mahāyāna Buddhism other than whichever order happened to be viewed as the most orthodox by the people applying the term. (van Driem 2001 p. 472)

Indeed, the term *Monpa*, when used without further qualification or an elucidating context, is ambiguous at best. Therefore, we advocate using 'Dakpa' (c.f. §2.2/2.3, for information regarding the term 'Dakpa') to identify the language spoken in Tawang and surrounding areas. However, we realise that 'Tawang Monpa' is used in Arunachal Pradesh – by inhabitants and linguists – to precisely identify the language spoken there. Thus, throughout this article we will use the term 'Dakpa' to identify the language but have kept 'Tawang Monpa' in the title.

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[3] Kho shows up elsewhere in Tibeto-Burman. For example, Kurtöp khwe 'water', Dzongkha khau 'snow', Bodo khwa 'snow', Dakpa kho 'snow' etc.

2.2. The language community and source of data

The first Dakpa data were recorded by Brian Houghton Hodgson (Hodgson, 1853), and later used by Shafer (1954) to show that Dakpa[4] was not a direct descendent from Classical Tibetan, though it was clearly a close relative. Dakpa is also spoken in Bhutan by approximately 1,000 people (van Driem 1998) and appears to be spoken in China, where it has been referred to as Dwags and Takpa (Gordon, 2005). Recently, George van Driem (2007) presented data illustrating a very close relationship between Dakpa and Dzala, based on data collected in Bhutan. Throughout this article, we will occasionally compare our data with that presented in van Driem (2007). It will be important to keep in mind that these probably represent two different varieties of Dakpa.

The variety of Dakpa represented in this article is that spoken in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is estimated that approximately 30,000 inhabitants of Tawang speak Dakpa. The data for this article came from Lhou-Dung village, which is located approximately 20 kilometers south of the town of Tawang. We collected data via elicitation and through the collection of one oral text. The primary language of elicitation, communication and translation was Hindi. All data in this article have been cross-checked with at least two native speakers. As mentioned above, this study is necessarily limited in that it is only by chance we were able to collect data and no work on Dakpa is planned for the near future.

2.3. East Bodish

Dakpa is considered an East Bodish language. Shafer (1954) appears to be the first to use the term 'East Bodish'. Bradley (1997) proposes that East Bodish is most closely related to Central Bodish (i.e. the Tibetan dialects). In addition to the languages shown in Figure 1.1, he includes Sherdukpen and the somewhat ambiguous 'Eastern Monpa' in East Bodish. This group joins with its closest genealogical neighbours, the Central Bodish languages. Central and East Bodish together are coordinate with Western Bodish (e.g. Kinnauri, Tamang). The Bodish family then joins with Tshangla and West Himalayan. These three together comprise one side of the Bodic family. However, the exact position of East Bodish within Tibeto-Burman remains subject to debate. For example, the hypothesis

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[4]   He refers to Dakpa as 'Dwags', and is 'spoken in an area along the Gtsaṅ-po river or south of that river, and southeast of Lhasa (Shafer, 1954:350).
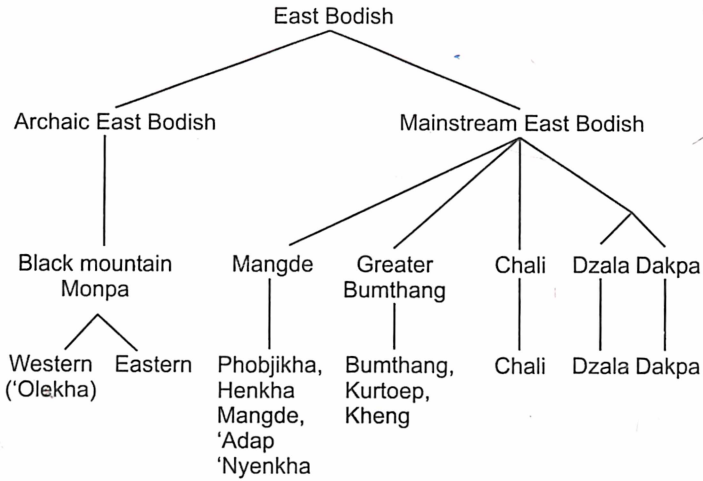
Fig. 1.1   Relationship among East Bodish languages
(adapted from van Driem, 1995b)[5]

that Gongduk may serve as a substrate for the languages of the Bumthang group, as suggested by George van Driem (2001:872), is indeed intriguing and warrants further research.

Within East Bodish there is at least one fairly obvious sub-grouping; a handful of languages show enough similarity to be considered part of one large dialect chain consisting of Bumthang, Kheng, and Kurtöp. Sometimes described as languages of the 'Bumthang' group, these languages also show considerable similarity with Central Bodish, perhaps more so than other East Bodish languages. The proposed relationship amongst the East Bodish languages is illustrated by Figure 1.1. Recently, van Driem (2007) hypothesises that Dakpa and Dzala also form their own subgroup within East Bodish.

3. Phonology

It is premature at this point to put forth a full phonemic analysis of Dakpa, but some observations may nevertheless be noted. In section 3.1 we describe some Dakpa consonants and in 3.2 we discuss the vowels. Suprasegmental properties are discussed in section 3.3.

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[5] Note that van Driem (1995b) does not include Sherdukpen in his diagram of East Bodish (unlike Bradley (1997)). Needless to say, much more research is needed to understand the relationship amongst the East Bodish languages as well as the relationship of East Bodish to other families within Tibeto-Burman.

3.1. Consonants

Our preliminary analyses show that Dakpa contrasts voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated and voiced stops at four places of articulation (labial, dental, palatal, velar) plus at least one word with an aspirated retroflex stop. There are four fricatives (voiced and voiceless dental and palatal) and four nasals (labial, dental, palatal, velar). A voiced and voiceless lateral and rhotic are found. Dakpa also has two glides (w, j) and one aspirate. These consonants are illustrated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1   Dakpa consonants

	labial	dental	alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar
stops	p, pʰ, b	t, tʰ, d		tʰ	c, cʰ, ɟ	k, kʰ, g
affricates		ts, tsʰ				
fricatives		s, z			ç, ʑ	
nasals	m	n			ɲ	ŋ
laterals			l, l̥			
rhotics			r, r̥			
glides	w				j	
aspirates				̊		h

The data in (1-12) illustrate these consonants as syllable onsets.

(1)	*apa*	'father'	*pʰa*	'pig'	*ba*	'face'
(2)	*te*	'horse'	*tʰi*	'one'	*da*	'now'
(3)			*tʰa⁶*	'blood'		
(4)	*(i)cik*	'and then'	*cʰur*	'cheese'	*ɟambor*	'whisk'
(5)	*ko*	'door'	*kʰo*	'snow'	*gor*	'stone'
(6)	*tsa*	'nerves'	*tsʰi*	'water'		
(7)	*sol*	'chile'			*zo*	'eat'

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6 Van Driem (2007) reports <khra> for this word, which must correspond to Written Tibetan ཁྲ. <khrag>. Velar plus rhotic onsets in Kurtöp have led to a retroflex series (Hyslop, 2008), suggesting the same sound change could be at play in Dakpa. However, either the words in this series are borrowed (perhaps from Central Tibetan?) or the sound change has not completed because words such as *kʰret* 'waist' (compare with Kurtöp *tʰat*) are still present in the lexicon.

(8)	*ça*	'meat'				*ɟu*	'mouse'
(9)	*meloŋ*	'eye'	*ná*	'ear'		*ɲep*	'neck'
	ŋar	1ST.PL					
(10)	*láŋ*	'forehead'	*l̥am*	'shoes'			
(11)	*rui*	'small bamboo'	*r̥u*	'vegetable'			
(12)	*wam*	'bear'	*jeng*	'sheep'		*hɔpto*	'week'[7]

These consonants combine to form a number of complex onsets, as illustrated in Figure 1.2 and by the data in (13–18).

pr-, pʰr-, br-,
dr-, kʰr-, gr-
pl-, bl-, pʰj-
kl-, gl-
kj-, gj-
mr-, ml-, ŋl-

Fig. 1.2 Some Dakpa complex onsets

(13)	*pregam*	'closet'	*pʰreŋa*	'bead'	*bra*	'cliff'
(14)	*dra*	'enemy'	*kʰrɛt*	'waist'	*grɛp*	'soy bean'
(15)	*plang*	'sun'	*bli*	'four'	*pʰjaku̠*	'bead, necklace'
(16)	*klo*	'lose'			*glau*	'lungs'
(17)	*kja*	'Indian'			*gjap*	'back'
(18)	*mrop*	'scratch'	*mla*	'arrow'	*ŋla*	'lick'

There are likely other complex onsets that have not been recorded.

We also have some data illustrating that at least eight of the consonants can occur as syllable codas, shown in Figure 1.3 and illustrated with the data in (19–21).

-p, -t, -k
-r, -ç
-m, -n, -ŋ

Fig. 1.3 Some Dakpa syllable codas

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[7] Note this word is most likely a borrowing from Hindi हफ्ता *hapthā* 'week'. Ideally, a native word would be found with the phoneme.

(19)	*láp*	'finger'	*gɛt*	' eight'	*ák*	'grandson'
(20)	*ker*	'radish'	*dɛç*	'day'		
(21)	*sum*	'three'	*cʰin*	'urine'	*nîŋ*	'heart'

Dakpa also evidences some complex codas, a feature unusual for Tibeto-Burman languages. Examples of complex codas are shown in (22–25). We suspect that the loss of word-final vowels has recently resulted in these complex codas, as suggested by the comparative data in (22) and (25).

	Dakpa		Comparative Data[8]
(22)	*mákp*	'husband'	རྐྱབ་ <rmakpa> (Dzongkha)
(23)	*ŋentʰ*	'day'	
(24)	*nuptʰ*	'evening'	
(25)	*riŋk*	'long/tall'	རིང་ཀུ་ <ringku> (Kurtöp)

There is some evidence that aspiration can occur on coda consonants, though no contrast has been seen between aspirated and unaspirated coda consonants. Note also that when an aspirated coda is present it may also be realised and understood with the unaspirated counterpart. An example of an aspirated coda in Dakpa is shown by the data in (26).

(26)   *bekʰ* ~ *bek* 3RD.GEN

Comparative data suggest the aspiration shown in (26) above has come from a lost vowel. The Dakpa genitive -*k* is cognate with the Dzala form -*ku* 'GEN' and likely the Chali form -*u* 'GEN', suggesting a high vowel was also once present in the Dakpa genitive. We hypothesise that the loss of this high vowel has led to aspiration in some instances but more data is needed to support this.

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[8] Note the modern pronunciation of the Dzongkha form is quite different than what the spelling would indicate. The initial cluster has simplified to a single nasal with high tone, the syllable coda /k/ has been lost (without compensatory lengthening), and the final vowel has been lost, yielding the pronunciation *máp*. The Kurtöp data are represented in the Kurtöp Joyig and Roman orthographies. In comparison to the Dzongkha, the pronunciation of the Kurtöp form much more closely resembles the spelling – *riŋku*.

3.2. Vowels and suprasegmentals

Our preliminary analysis has found at least six vowels, *a, e, i, u, o, ø,* and four diphthongs *au, ui, ei* and *ai.* We also transcribed *ɛ, ɔ, ü,* and *əɔ,* however, these four were not consistently transcribed and their presence in the language remains the most nebulous of all. We are unable to say whether each of these vowels or diphthongs represent a phonemic contrast or not. Long versus short vowels were also transcribed in open syllables, but it remains unknown whether or not they represent a contrast in the language. The data in (27–35) illustrates the monophthongs we transcribed.

(27) *láŋ*   'forehead'
(28) *né*   'coriander'
(29) *lɛmin*   'foot', leg'
(30) *mi*   'person'
(31) *bu*   'breath'
(32) *ko*   'door'
(33) *ɔnu*   'child'
(34) *cʰøçam*   'alter room'
(35) *dy*   Dü (name of a demoness)

It is important to note that the mid lax vowels, as illustrated in (29) and (33), were not consistently transcribed, as we sometimes heard their tense counterparts. That being said, van Driem (2007) also presents these lax vowels, often in the same words in which we recorded them. For example, van Driem presents *lɛmin* for 'foot, leg', *lɛŋa* 'five' and *gɛt* 'eight', where we also have the same transcription.

A major difference between the current study and that reported in van Driem (2007) is the lack in our data of a low front vowel *æ* transcribed in van Driem, as in *mlæŋpu* 'black' (van Driem, 2007:7), which was *mrám* for us. Note that (34) is a likely borrowing from Tibetan and van Driem (2007) does not show any words with the front rounded vowel, nor with the high front rounded vowel exemplified in (35).

Vowel sequences or diphthongs are illustrated by the data in (36–40).

(36) *raudir*   'hurting.3RD'
(37) *luip*   'body'
(38) *dei*   'these'
(39) *gaidir*   'going.3RD'
(40) *priu*   'small'

Of particular interest in Dakpa is the presence of voiceless vowels, which are found word-finally and appear to be restricted to the high vowels. Data evidencing these vowels are shown in (41–44).

(41) *akpu̥*   'crow'
(42) *cipket^{h}i̥ ~ cipket^h*   'eighteen'
(43) *thoŋgi̥u*   'will drink.1st
(44) *phuipu̥*   'male'

Similar to other East Bodish languages, such as Bumthang (van Driem, 1995a), Kurtöp (Hyslop, 2008, 2009), amongst others, tone (high/low) appears to be contrastive in Dakpa following sonorants with predictable tone/tonogenesis following obstruents[9]. Data illustrating tone following the sonorants are shown in (45–47).

(45) *nîŋ*   'heart'   *ɲin*   'excrement'
(46) *ŋái*   'pillow'   *ŋok*   1st.GEN
(47) *wá*   'tooth'   *wam*   'bear'

Tone is predictably high following voiceless obstruents and low following voiced obstruents. Voicing appears to not necessarily be the primary cue. That is, voiced segments may be devoiced. For example, both *gro* and *krò* 'six', have been recorded. Further research into the tonogenetic details of Dakpa could indeed be interesting, particularly in light of the findings for Kurtöp, that tone first phonologised following the sonorants and palatal fricative and is now phonologising following the remaining obstruents (Hyslop, 2009).

The preliminary report on Dakpa phonology suggests that Dakpa deviates from other East Bodish languages in some interesting ways. Compared to data available on Bumthang and Kurtöp, Dakpa exhibits more complex onsets and a larger array of vowels. Based on the data available on Bumthang and Kurtöp, and the authors'field notes on Dzala, Kheng and Chali, it appears that Dakpa is the only East Bodish language to have voiceless vowels. While van Driem (2007) presents data illustrating much of the phonology illustrated here, he does not transcribe voiceless vowels, nor are they mentioned in Shafer (1954). It is worth recalling that

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[9] There is a vast literature on tonogenesis showing that, diachronically, a high tone will follow from voiceless initials and a low tone will follow from voiced initials. For more details, see Haudricourt (1954), Matisoff (1970, 1973, 1999), Mazaudon (1977), Thurgood (2002), Kingston (2004) and Hyslop (2009) amongst others.

van Driem's (2007) account is based on data collected in Bhutan, while our data is collected from India, and that Shafer was working with data collected in the 1800s.

4. Morphology

At this point we can offer some preliminary notes on Dakpa grammar. We will briefly discuss some personal pronouns in §4.1, illustrate some case markers in §4.2, discuss verbal morphology in §4.3 and sentence final particles in §4.4.

4.1. Personal pronouns

Dakpa personal pronouns are shown in Table 1.2. Our data presents one form in addition to the genitive and plural. If Dakpa is like its sister languages Kurtöp and Bumthang we would expect there to be separate pronominal forms for ergative and absolutive case. It is not clear, at present, whether the first column of pronouns shown in Table 1.2 represent the forms for ergative, absolutive or something else, or whether indeed such terms will be useful to describe grammatical relations in Dakpa in the future. Van Driem (2007) reports similar forms, the only differences being the absence of *ŋai, ŋe* instead of *ɲe*, and *ŋɔk* instead of *ŋok*[10].

Table 1.2 Personal pronouns in Dakpa

	Unmarked	**Plural**	**Genitive**
First person	*ŋai, ɲe*	*ŋar*	*ŋok*
Second person	*i*	*ir*	*ik*
Third person	*be*	*ber*	*bek*

4.2. Case markers

As illustrated by the data in Table 1.2, the Dakpa genitive is -*k*. The data in (48) and (49) illustrate the genitive in recorded discourse, with (49) further illustrating the use of the genitive beyond the domain of pronouns.

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[10] Note also that van Driem (2007) has only first and second singular forms within the genitive pronouns.

(48) ŋok   miŋ
      1ST.GEN   name
      'my name'

(49) tawaŋ   monpa gompa-k   lugju
      Tawang   Monpa Monastery-GEN   history
      'the history of the Tawang Monastery'

In addition to the genitive we also have evidence of an ergative and locative/accusative case marker. The data in (50) and (51) show *-si* marking what could be ergative case. A Hindi (the language of translation and elicitation) gloss in (51) further supports the analysis of this morpheme as ergative. The Hindi ergative -ने *-ne* (c.f. Mountaut, 2004) was offered as the translation for Dakpa *-si*. It is also worth pointing out that Classical Tibetan 'agents' or 'instruments' were coded with a combination of the genitive and *-s*[11] (Jäschke, 1883), and *-si, -s* are among the ergative forms found in a handful of modern Tibetan dialects (c.f. LaPolla, 1995). Note that in (52) the single argument of a monovalent verb does not evidence the *-si* morpheme. Based on these limited data an alternate hypothesis might be that *-si* occurs with human referents only; however, other data suggest that *-si* may also occur on non-human referents. While our preliminary analysis suggests *-si* marks ergativity in Dakpa, a final analysis will be dependent upon the collection of more data and future research.

(50) jaŋki-si   ɲe-le   bokçin   bi   ço
      Yangki-ERG   1ST.-LOC   fist   give   SFP
      'Yangki punched me.'

(51) mera lama-si ...
      mera Lama-ERG
      मेरा लामा-ने...
      'mera Lama...'

(52) ɲa   tsʰ-ga   bɔ-ter   ço
      fish   water-LOC   swim   SFP
      'The fish is swimming in the water.'

Another morpheme *-le* marks what could be glossed as locative or accusative. In (53) and (54) it marks the O argument in the clause. However,

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[11] After vowels the genitive was not present and 'agent' or 'instrument' was marked with only *-s* or sometimes *yis*.

-*le* does not appear following all Os, as in (55), suggesting its presence in bivalent clauses is not obligatory.

(53) ŋai   kʰi-le   tjo-do   ço
     1ST   dog -LOC look   SFP
     'I am looking at the dog.'

(54) jaŋki-si   ɲe-le   bokçin   bi   ço
     Yangki-ERG   1ST.-LOC   fist   give   SFP
     'Yangki punched me.'

(55) ŋok   ama   topcʰe   cø-ter
     1ST.GEN   mother   food   make
     'My mother is cooking food.'

The morpheme -*le* also marks the possessor, as in (56). As a preliminary hypothesis we have labelled this morpheme as marking locative case, similar to Tibetan -*la* (DeLancey, 2006).

(56) ɲe-le   ŋái   tʰi   nau
     1ST-LOC   pillow   one   COP
     'I have one pillow.'

4.3. Verbal morphology

Unlike Kurtöp and Bumthang, Dakpa evidences some interesting verbal morphology, including a vowel alternation in verbal stems and tentative indexing of the A or S verbal argument, or evidential marking, in the tense/aspect morphology.

The data in (57) shows that in present time the verb *zo* 'eat' retains a round vowel, while in the future time the vowel becomes a front, unrounded *e*, shown in (58).

(57) ɲe   topce   zo-du
     1ST   food   eat
     'I eat food.'

(58) ɲe   nogor   topce   ze-ku
     1ST   tomorrow   food   eat
     'I will eat food tomorrow.'

This alternation has also been observed in the verb *gjo* 'laugh', as shown in (59) and (60).

(59)   *be*   *gjo-der*
     3RD   laugh
     'S/he is laughing.'

(60)   *daŋ*   *be*   *gjɛ-sɔm*
     yesterday   3RD   laugh
     'Yesterday   s/he   laughed.'

Verbal suffixes also appeared to minimally index subjects, as illustrated by the data in (61) and (62). The data in (61) shows first person future marked with *-ku* while in (62) the third person future is marked with *-m.*

(61)   *ɲe*   *topce*   *zo-ku*
     1ST   food   eat
     'I will eat food.'

(62)   *be*   *topce*   *ze-m*
     3RD   food   eat
     'S/he will eat food.'

During our elicitation, we found that *-u* was often used with first person while *-ir/-m/ø* was often associated with the third person. Compare (63, 65, 67) with (64, 66, 68).

(63)   *ɲe*   *gai-du*
     1ST   go
     'I am going.'

(64)   *be*   *gai-dir*
     3RD   go
     'S/he is going.'

(65)   *ɲe*   *tsʰi*   *tʰoŋ-gju*
     1ST   water   drink
     'I will drink water.'

(66)   *be*   *tsʰi*   *tʰoŋ-gjum*
     3RD   water   drink
     'S/he will drink water.'

(67)   *ɲe*   *tsʰi*   *tʰoŋ-u*
     1ST   water   drink
     'I drank water.'

(68)   *be*   *tsʰi*   *tʰoŋ*
     3RD   water   drink
     'S/he drank water.'

However, whether the alternations are best described as person-marking on a verb, or something else – perhaps a type of evidentiality – remains unknown. Kurtöp, for example, uses two morphemes to mark perfective aspect, which differ in their evidential values. Thus, one perfective tends to be used with first person statements and second person questions while the other tends to be used with third person statements. From the surface, then, it may look as though Kurtöp marks person but it is epiphenomenal. Indeed, this could also be the case in Dakpa. The data in (69), showing -*du* with a third person argument, would support the hypothesis that the verbal alternations described in this section are conditioned by evidentiality.

(69) *ŋok   miŋ   geden   norbu   ɲe-du*
    1ST.GEN   name   Geden   Norbu   called
    'My name is Geden Norbu.'

Of course, data such as that in (69) does not in itself disprove the notion that verbal morphology in Dakpa indexes person. It could also be possible that first person genitive conditions first personal verbal agreement. Whatever the nature of these morphemes, further research will be required, preferably drawn from natural conversation and oral texts with additional native speakers.

4.4. Sentence final particles

The final aspect of Dakpa we present in this article is what we have tentatively analysed as sentence final particles. Consider the data in (70) and (71).

(70) *be   su   lo*
    3RD   who   SFP
    'Who is s/he?'

(71) *i   go   so   lo*
    2ND   want   what   SFP
    'What do you want?'

In our data we have the sentence final particle *lo* occurring only at the end in wh-questions. While we have analysed this form simply as a sentence final particle in this article, a comparison with Kurtöp suggests this form may be better analysed as copula restricted to wh-questions. *lo* appears also in van Driem (2007) as the final element in the following

sentences: 'What is this?', 'What is your name?', and 'Who are you?'. In Kurtöp, *jo* is a copula used exclusively in 'wh' questions. Further, Kurtöp /j/ often corresponds to /l/ in other Bodic languages (c.f. Hyslop forthcoming 2009a, forthcoming 2009b).

Another particle we recorded is illustrated by the data in (72–73).

(72) *ɲe*   *gai-du*   *ço*
      1ST   go   SFP
      'I am going.'

(73) *jop*   *namnum-na*   *hur-dir*   *ço*
      bird   sky-in   fly   'SFP'
      'Birds are flying in the sky.'

The particle *ço* occurred in our data only sometimes and has been considered optional in all occurrences. Thus, the data in (72) and (73) would also be considered correct if *ço* SFP were omitted. We recorded this optional *ço* SFP is affirmative statements in present and past time but more work is needed to discern its distribution and function. An identical form *ço* SFP appears also in Kurtöp marking emphasis to affirmative statements.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In this article we have outlined some aspects of Dakpa as spoken in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Our analysis in all areas – phonology and morphology – remains preliminary and subject to further analysis. However, given that no future research on Dakpa is known to be forthcoming, we hope our study offers some reliable data and analysis on this otherwise understudied language.

In terms of phonology, Dakpa appeared to be quite similar to other East Bodish languages. A three-way contrast (voiceless, aspirated, voiced) in stops was found at four places of articulation (labial, dental, palatal, velar) with at least one additional stop at the retroflex place of articulation. It appears that Dakpa has preserved more complex onsets than some of the other East Bodish languages and has some complex codas – most likely the recent historical result of loss of word-final vowels – that have not been found in other East Bodish languages, and indeed appear to be rare within Tibeto-Burman.

The vowels and suprasegmental system of Dakpa are also quite similar to other East Bodish languages. Tone is contrastive following the sonorant

consonants and appears to be predictable following the obstruents, so that a high tone follows the voiceless obstruents and a low tone follows the voiced obstruents. Voiced obstruents are sometimes devoiced. Further research into the tonogenetic properties of Dakpa promises to yield interesting results (c.f. Hyslop, 2009).

What is unusual about Dakpa compared to other East Bodish languages is the presence of voiceless vowels. Like the complex codas, we suspect these to be the result of recent diachronic processes. Recall that complex codas and voiceless vowels were not present in the transcription published in van Driem (2007).

We found a genitive *-k* in Dakpa that is likely cognate with Dzala *-ku,* but seems to be a different morpheme than the Kurtöp and Bumthang *-gi/-i.* The ergative *-si* is not present in Kurtöp or Bumthang, either, but may be cognate with Classical Tibetan *-s.* The locative *-le* is also a likely cognate with Tibetan *-la.* Compared to Bumthang and Kurtöp, Dakpa has a richer system of verbal morphology. The Archaic East Bodish language, Black Mountain, also has a complex system of conjugational morphology (van Driem (1995b) and a further comparison of these systems would likely be valuable toward a contribution of the reconstruction of conjugational morphology and the indexing of verbal arguments in Proto-East-Bodish and Tibeto-Burman in general.

Abbreviations

1ST	1st person
2ND	2nd person
3RD	3rd person
ERG	Ergative
GEN	Genitive
LOC	Locative
PL	Plural
SFP	Sentence final particle

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