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Himalayan Linguistics

Lamkang verb conjugation

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Abstract

We lay out the conjugation patterns for declarative affirmatives and negatives in Lamkang [lmk], a language of the South Central subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman (a.k.a. Trans-Himalayan) family. As for many languages of this family, conjugation patterns differ according to tense. This includes different patterning with respect to participant prefixes and agreement suffixes as well as stem shape. Lamkang also employs a person hierarchy: with 2nd >1st , 3rd >1st , and 3rd >2nd , an inverse marker *t-* is used if the verb is in the nonfuture affirmative. The verb template includes tense, negative, and copular auxiliaries which are inflected for agent except when agent is otherwise indicated. For example, in negative conjugations with an inclusive prefix, the expected PATIENT-Stem Auxiliary-AGENT pattern for the paradigm flips to AGENT-Stem Auxiliary-PATIENT. Within the clusive forms a great deal of variation exists for which prefixes are used for inclusive and exclusive. We also see variation in the use of plural markers. All this hints at a highly complex system in a state of flux.

Keywords

Stem variation, person hierarchy, inverse, Lamkang, Kuki-Chin, South Central

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1 Introduction

We lay out the conjugation patterns for Lamkang [lmk], a language of the South Central subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman (now often called Trans-Himalayan) family.[1] The data were collected in three workshops in India (Guwahati, Assam, in 2013 and 2016, and Imphal, Manipur in 2018) with the participation of Lamkang speakers (listed in order of seniority): Shekarnong Sankhil, Beshot Khullar, Swamy Tholung Ksen, Donnu Sankhil, Sumshot Khular, the Rev. Daniel Tholung, Kumar Sankhil, and Rex Rengpu Khullar. Linguists David Peterson, Thangi Chhangte, Prafulla Basumatary, Harimohon Thounaojam, and Shobhana Chelliah conducted the workshops based partially on data collected earlier by Willem de Reuse and Daniel Tholung at the University of North Texas, where Rev. the Tholung was a visiting scholar in 2009-2010. Tyler Utt (University of North Texas MA) and MA candidate Sumshot Khular have been the steady guiding hands behind our data checking.[2]

The paper is organized as follows: We cover the conjugation patterns for the intransitive verb and transitive verb in the affirmative and negative declarative constructions. The description ends with a summary and a sample paradigm. Of recurring importance are stem alternation and an empathy hierarchy.

Lamkang shows two major stem shapes which we call Stem-I and Stem-II, following the tradition for related languages as seen in the seminal discussion of the family in Henderson (1965) for Tiddim Chin and since then, for example, for Mizo (Chhangte 1986), K'cho (Mang 2006), Falam Chin (King 2010), and Sizang Chin (Davis 2017). For transitives, in affirmative main clauses in the nonfuture tense, Stem-II is used. For all other conjugations discussed here, Stem-I is used. For intransitives, Stem-I is used. (We do not discuss here interrogative, imperative, or valency-changing constructions, where the patterns for stem alternation may be different. For example, in benefactive constructions, only Stem-II is used.)

Participant marking in transitive clauses also varies according to the tense. It will be seen that participant marking is carried out by prefixes in the nonfuture affirmative tense but split between prefixes and suffixes in all other paradigms, i.e., in the negative nonfuture and in

[1] The term South Central is now in common use to include those languages formerly called Kuki-Chin (DeLancey 2015).

[2] Funding for the project came from two US National Science Foundation grants to the University of North Texas, PI Chelliah, 0755471 and 1160640. Lamkang language materials can be found at the UNT Digital Library and at the Weebly website Lamkang Language Resource.

affirmative and negative past and future tense paradigms. The verb template expands and reorganizes with the addition of auxiliaries, specifically tense, negative, and copular auxiliaries.

Lamkang also employs an empathy hierarchy. When the agent is lower on the hierarchy than the patient, i.e., when 3rd acts on 2nd or 1st, or 2nd acts on 1st, an inverse marker *t-* is used if the verb is in the nonfuture affirmative.

2 Intransitive verb conjugation

For the intransitive verb conjugations, Stem-I is used for the past, future, and nonfuture tenses and there is no participant prefix. For the past conjugation, the stem is inflected as follows: *-nú* '1st past', *-tínú* '2nd past', and *-dá* '3rd past'.[3] For the future conjugation the stem is inflected as follows: *nìk* '1st future', *ná* '2nd future', and *rá* '3rd future'. For the nonfuture, used for gnomic or durative aspect, Stem I is nominalized (*k-* 'nominalizer' +∑[4]) and inflected as follows: *-ng* '1st', *-tíh* '2nd' and -Ø '3rd'. The first person affirmative forms occur in a copular construction with the auxiliary *pi* 'be': *pi-ng* 'I am' [pɪŋ]. The 2nd and 3rd nonfuture affirmative optionally occur in this construction: *p-tíh* 'you are' [pʈ] and *pi-Ø* 's/he is' [piː].

(1) *k-'íip* *-tíh*
NOM-sleepI[5] -2ND
'You (SG) are asleep'

The 3rd person form often occurs with an enclitic particle *=i* resulting in [*pi*ʔ*i*]. For the plurals, we observe *-ín* (allomorph [-án]) for 1st and 2nd person and *-lám* for 3rd person. In the negative forms, a negative auxiliary that takes inflection for tense and person: ∑-(plural) neg-(plural)-person.inflection. The negative paradigm has the same affixes as the affirmative paradigm: *-nú* '1st past', *-tínú* '2nd past', and *-dá* '3rd past'. The nonfuture negative is similarly: *-ng* '1st', *-tíh* '2nd', and *-éh* '3rd'. For the future negative, the compound auxiliary */níma/,* composed of future+negative with allomorphs [ním, nímaa], is used. Table 1 provides a sample conjugation.

[3] It is apparent that *-tínú* is built on *-nú*, perhaps related to the visual sensory evidential clitic *=nu* described for the related language Hyow (Zakaria 2017:489). Additionally, *-tih* is probably related to the dental second person prefix (Delancey 2014). In the synchronic grammar, however, *-nú* by itself always indicates 1st past and, furthermore, *-dá* is a portmanteau morph. So, for a simplified description, we treat all three as portmanteau morphs.
[4] The sigma symbol is used for STEM.
[5] This is unexpected as in Lamkang and related languages like Mizo (Chhangte 1986), nominalized and subordinate forms usually take Stem-II.

	PAST Affirm.	PAST Neg.	FUTURE Affirm.	FUTURE Neg.	NONFUTURE Affirm.	NONFUTURE Neg.
1	íip-nú	íip m-nú	íip nì[6]	íip nímaa-ng	k-íip pi-ng	íip maa-ng
1 pl	íip-ín-nú	íip má-án-nú[7]	íip nìk-áán	íip nímá-án-ri-ng	k-íip-ín pi-ng	íip má-án-ri-ng
2	íip-tínú	íip m-tínú	íip ná	íip ním-tíh	k-íip-tíh	íip m-tíh
2pl	íip-ín-tínú	íip má-án-tínú	íip ná-án	íip nímá-án-tíh	k-íip-ín-tíh	íip má-án-tíh
3	íip-dá	íip m-dá	k-íip ráh	íip ním-éh	k-íip-'i	íip m-éh
3pl	íip-lám-dá	íip-lám m-dá	k-íip-lám ráh	íip-lám ním-éh	k-íip-lám	íip-lám m-éh

Table 1. Intransitive verb conjugation of the verb *iip*I 'sleep'

3 Nonfuture tense

In this section we will illustrate the conjugation of the nonfuture affirmative for the verb 'see' *dèì*, which is the Stem-I form, and *déé,* which is the Stem-II form.[8] For the nonfuture tense, in affirmative main clauses, Stem-II is used and participant marking prefixes are ordered PAT-AGT-stem. In the nonfuture negative main clause, agent is indicated through suffixes and patient through prefixes. Table 2 lists the participant makers for this tense.

	Patient					Agent			
	1&1pl. excl.	1pl. incl.	2	3		1&1pl. excl	1pl. incl.	2	3
Affirm. & Neg.	m-	mi-	a-	Ø-	Affirm.	k-/t-/n-	n-/t-	a-	m-
					Neg.	-ng		-tíh	-éh

Table 2. Affirmative and negative nonfuture tense participant marking

Recall that marking on the transitive verb in the nonfuture tense also involves an inverse marker *t-* that suppresses marking of one of the referents, most often the agent. Lamkang inverse marking can be characterized as a non-canonical direct/inverse system (Jacque and Anton 2014). To use their terminology, the inverse is seen in 2>1 (local domain), and 3>2 and 3>1 (mixed domain), but not 3>3 (non-local domain). The inverse is useful in disambiguating which role is taken on by 2nd person as the *a-* '2' can indicate either P or A. See examples (8) and (10).

The majority of following examples were elicited during our workshops and then checked by speakers in a final workshop in 2018. In natural discourse, independent pronouns are rarely used. Even so, we elicited the clauses with independent pronouns because this helped speakers keep the intended meanings of the conjugations in mind when filling paradigm charts. There is also affix homophony and, in some cases, more than one way of saying the same thing. The pronouns helped with possible mistranslation due to these factors. We also note that Thounaojam and Chelliah (2007) miss the complexity of Lamkang verb conjugation primarily because the data

[6] Note alternate forms with *-dìh*: *íip nì* or *íip nìkdìh; íip nìkáán* or *íip nìkáándìh*; *íip ná* or *íip nádìh; íip nààn* or *íip nààndìh.*

[7] The suffix *–min* is used for inclusive but here instead of **m-min-nú* for 1st inclusive negative, *má-án-nú* is observed.

[8] We have observed a few instances of a 'Stem-III', e.g., *dét* 'see' in example (37).

for that description were based on translations of a set of sentences not designed for paradigm investigation, which requires a specific strategy (Chelliah and de Reuse 2011: 383).

(2) *nei=yí*[9] *nàng* *a-k-déé*
I=AGT you(SG) 2-1A-seeII
'I see you.'

(3) *nei=yí* *mà* *Ø-k-déé*
I =AGT s/he 3P-1A-seeII
'I see him/her.'

(4) *nei=yí* *nààn* *a-k-dèè-ín*[10]
I =AGT you(NS) 2-1A-seeII-NS
'I see you (NS).'

(5) *nei= yí* *máán* *Ø-k-dèè-lám*
I =AGT they 3P-1A-seeII-3.PL
'I see them.'

With 2nd-person agents, the preferred form is for 2nd person agent to be expressed, i.e. for 2>1, we get a-t-∑ , that is, 2nd agent-inverse-∑. Another form exits where the patient is expressed, i.e., m-t-∑, that is 1st patient-inverse-∑. Here it is ambiguous if the agent is 2nd or 3rd person. The functional difference between m-t-∑ and a-t-∑ is not yet clear. Speakers do find it odd to report on the current activity of 2nd person. They will sometimes, but not always, characterize a-t-∑ as a question or request for clarification, e.g., *atdèèmó* or with rising intonation, *atdéé* 'Do you see me?' It may simply be that a-t-∑ avoids the ambiguity of m-t-∑ because when a directional is added, the m-t-∑ form becomes more acceptable: *nàng=ngí m-hei-t-duul* 'you are pushing me on a flat plane.'

(6) *nàng=ngí* *nei* *a-t-déé/* *m-t-déé*
you(SG)=AGT me 2A-INV-seeII 1P-INV-seeII
'You (SG) see me.'

(7) *nàng=ngí* *nèèn* *a-t-déé-ín /* *m-t-dèè-ín*
you(SG)=AGT us 2A-INV-seeII-NS 1P-INV-seeII-NS
'You (SG) see us.'

[9] Note the following allomorphy for the agent /=ŋ́i/: When the preceding syllable is open and when the preceding syllable ends in a velar nasal, the enclitic is [=ŋ́i]. When the preceding syllable ends in a consonant, the initial /ŋ/ assimilates totally to that consonant. After [au] or [ao], /=ŋ́i/ is [ví] and after [ai] or [ei], it is [yí].

[10] The allomorphy is explained as follows: when the segment preceding this suffix (whether a root or another suffix) ends in [a], we get [-án] resulting in a long vowel [-áán]. Elsewhere this suffix is realized as /-ín/ or /-én/; the former is more common, but the two are in free variation.

(8) *nàng=ngí* *mà* *Ø-a-déé*
you(SG)=AGT s/he 3P-2-seeII
'You (SG) see him/her.'

(9) *nàng=ngí* *máán* *Ø-a-dèè-lám*
you(SG)=AGT they 3P-2-seeII-3.PL
'You (SG) see them.'

With 3rd-person agent the order of participant marking is the same. Again, when the inverse marker occurs, either the P or A is expressed, not both.

(10) *mà=ngí* *nàng* *a-t-déé*
s/he=AGT you(SG) 2-INV-seeII
'S/he sees you (SG).'

(11) *mà=ngí* *nei* *m-t-déé*
s/he=AGT me 1P-INV-seeII
S/he sees me.'

(12) *mà=ngí* *nààn* *a-t-dèè-ín*
s/he=AGT you(PL) 2-INV-seeII-NS
'S/he sees you (PL).'

(13) *mà=ngí* *máán* *Ø-m-dèè-lám*
s/he=AGT them 3P-3A-seeII-3.PL
'S/he sees them.'

Next, we turn to plural agents and patients. The following is true for all tenses. Plural 1st and 2nd participants are indicated with *-ín* (with allomorph [-án]) and 3rd participants with *-lám*. Usually, either the plurality of the agent or patient is expressed: *m-t-dúúl-ín* 'You(SG) are pushing us' and *a-dúúl-ín* 'You(PL) are pushing her.' Also, note that *-lám* may only attach to the stem, not the auxiliary, and may indicate either 3rd plural patient or agent. In general, it appears that when there is a choice between 3rd and non-3rd participant, the plurality of the non-3rd participant will be indicated. Additionally, although there does not appear to be a different paradigm for dual, some speakers report that with 3rd person, *-lam* is preferred for two participants and *-in* for more than two.

(14) *máán*$_i$ *=ní* *máán*$_j$ *Ø-m-dèè-ín*
they=AGT them 3P-3A-seeII-NS
'They$_i$ see them$_j$.'

As shown in (15), the 1st agent plural inclusive is indicated by the *n-* prefix, which occurs with Stem-II in the conjugation for nonfuture affirmative tense.[11]

(15) *Ø-n-pìik-ín*
3P-1A.PL-giveII-NS
'We (incl.) gave (it) to them'

A variant *t-* is also seen in nonfuture affirmative clauses, so it is possible to get either the *n-* or *t-* prefix and, in paradigm elicitation, to have these glossed the same way: *ndéé* or *tdéé* 'we (incl.) see him/her/it'. It is also possible to get the same forms with exclusive reference, e.g., 1excl>3pl as *n-dèè-ín* or *t-dèè-ín.* For inclusive and exclusive patient prefixes there is also some variation. In most elicitations, these are kept distinct, but for some speakers the inclusive patient prefix *mi-* can be freely used for both inclusive and exclusive. This variation between inclusive and exclusive marking leads us to conclude that clusivity is on its way out in Lamkang.

Table 3 provides a summary of the affix patterns for singular and plural participants for the nonfuture affirmative. In this and later tables, the shaded boxes indicate forms that are expressed through morphology, such as reflexives, not discussed in this paper. The capital sigma (∑) represents the placement of the stem. Right of the greater-than sign (>) gives person of the patient. Observed variants are given in square brackets.

<table>
<tr><td>A / P</td><td>>1</td><td>>1pl.excl.</td><td>>1pl.incl.</td><td>>2</td><td>>2pl</td><td>>3</td><td>>3pl</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>a-k-∑</td><td rowspan="2">a-k-∑-ín</td><td>k-∑</td><td>k-∑-lám</td></tr>
<tr><td>1pl.excl.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>a-k-∑-ín</td><td>k-∑-ín]</td><td>k-∑-ín
[t-∑-ín]</td></tr>
<tr><td>1pl.incl.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>n-∑
[t-∑]</td><td>n-∑-ín
[t-∑-ín]</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>a-t-∑
m-t-∑</td><td rowspan="2">a-t-∑-ín
m-t-∑-ín</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>a-∑</td><td>a-∑-lám</td></tr>
<tr><td>2pl</td><td>a-t-∑-ín
m-t-∑-ín</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>a-∑-ín</td><td>[a-∑-ín]</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>m-t-∑</td><td rowspan="2">m-t-∑-ín
[mi-t-∑-ín]</td><td rowspan="2">mi-t-∑-ín</td><td>a-t-∑</td><td rowspan="2">a-t-∑-ín</td><td>m-∑</td><td rowspan="2">m-∑-lám</td></tr>
<tr><td>3pl</td><td>m-t-∑-lám</td><td>a-t-∑-lám</td><td>m-∑-ín</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3. Participant-marking patterns for the affirmative nonfuture tense

For the nonfuture negative conjugation in main clauses, Stem-I is used. In this conjugation pattern, only the P is indicated by prefixal morphology. The stem is followed by the negative

[11] We find that in some elicitations this *n-* prefix used for 1st plural exclusive as well. More conversational data is needed to see if this represents an accepted variation.

auxiliary *ma,* which is inflected by one of the following person morphemes: *-ng* '1ST', *-tíh* '2ND', and *-éh* '3RD' for agent. An example of the negative nonfuture is illustrated in (16) for the verb 'push'.

(16) *nèèn=ní* *nààn* *a-dúúl-ín* *máá-ng*[12]
we=AGT you(PL) 2-pushI-NS neg-1ST
'We did not push you (PL).'

Note that with first person agents, *-ri* is needed for atelic predicates: so, *a-dèì má-án-ri-ng* 'We did not see you.' This morpheme *-ri* is seen only with first person agents and at least one of the participants in the clause must be plural.

In example (17), as expected, the 3rd-person patient is not expressed. The negative auxiliary *ma* is inflected for the second person agent *-tíh*. Because this is a plural agent, the form includes [án], allomorph of /-ín/ 'plural'. For plural patient and singular agent, the clause would be *dèì-ín m-tíh* 'you (SG) do not see them' showing another allomorph of the negative, *m-*.

(17) *nààn=ní* *mà* *Ø-dèì* *má-án-tíh*
you(PL)=AGT s/he 3P-seeI neg-NS-2ND
'You (PL) do not see him/her.'

In example (18), *-lám* indicates a third-person plural participant.

(18) *máán=ní* *máán* *Ø-dèì-lám* *m-éh*
they=AGT they 3P-seeI-3.PL neg-3RD
'They do not see them.'

We also note a possible variant with inclusive forms in the negative which may historically be part of another now defunct paradigm. In this variant form, the first inclusive prefix *t-* is used. When this happens, the patient prefix/agent suffix patterning flips so that the prefix indicates the agent and the patient is indicated by the suffix. This means that, *-éh* indicates either 3rd agent or patient depending on which prefix is used. A similar example is seen where the form *-min* '1st plural' is used. Here again, since agentivity is already indicated by *-min*, the suffix will indicate the patient. Thus, these three forms are possible for negative nonfuture 1pl>3: ∑ *máá-ng*; *t-*∑ *m-éh*; and ∑*-min m-éh*.

[12] The allomorphs of the negative are as follows: (a) the allomorph [ma]: With a following plural marker, the result is a long vowel (ma+án>máán); (b) the allomorph [maa]: with a following *-ng* '1st agent' the resulting vowel is long (ma+-ng>maang); (c) the allomorph [m]: the vowel is deleted when followed by an oral or nasal stop (ma+-nú>mnú). There is some variation per speaker where rather than delete the vowel, it is lengthened (ma+-nú>maanú) where *-nú* is the first person agent past. The [m] allomorph also occurs with the third person marker *-éh* (ma+-éh>méh).

Table 4 shows the patterns for the negative nonfuture. Again, the observed variants are provided in square brackets, showing clearly the blurring between exclusive and inclusive.

A / P	>1	>1pl. excl.	>1pl. incl.	>2	>2pl	>3	>3pl
1				a-∑ maa-ng	a-∑-ín maa-ng [a-∑ má-án-ri-ng]	∑ maa-ng	∑-lám maa-ng
1pl. excl.				a-∑ maa-ng [a-∑ má-án-ri-ng]		∑ máá-ng [∑ má-án-ri-ng]	∑-lam maa-ng [∑ má-án-ri-ng] [∑ má-án-min]
1pl. incl.						∑ máá-ng [t-∑ m-éh] [∑-min m-éh]	∑-ín máá-ng [t-∑-in m-éh] [∑-lám-min m-éh]
2	m-∑ m-tíh	m-∑ má-án-tíh				∑ m-tíh	∑-lám m-tíh
2pl	m-∑ má-án-tíh					∑ má-án-tíh	∑-lám m-tíh [∑-ín m-tíh; ∑ ma-án-tíh]
3	m-∑ m-éh	m-∑-ín m-éh	mi-∑-ín m-éh	a-∑ m-éh	a-∑-ín m-éh	∑ m-éh	∑-lám m-éh
3pl	m-∑-lám m-éh			a-∑-lám m-éh		∑-lám m-éh	

Table 4. Participant-marking patterns for the negative nonfuture tense

4 Past tense

The participant markers in this conjugation pattern occur in the following order: PATIENT-∑-AGENT. Stem-I is used in both the affirmative and negative paradigms. The same patient participant markers are used as in the previous paradigm: *m-* '1P'; *a-* '2P'; *Ø-* '3P'. In addition, the verb requires portmanteau agreement markers for tense and agent. The markers are: *-nú* '1A.PST'; *-tínú* '2A.PST'; *-dá* '3A.PST'. Examples are in (19) to (22).

(19) *nei=yí* *nàng* *a-dèì-nú*
I=AGT you(SG) 2-seeI-1A.PST
'I saw you (SG).'

(20) *nei=yí mà* *Ø-dèì-nú*
I=AGT s/he 3P-seeI-1A.PST
'I saw him/her.'

(21) *nàng=ngí* *nei* *m-dèì-tínú*
you(SG)=AGT me 1P-seeI-2A.PST
'You (SG) saw me.'

(22) *mà=ngí nàán a-dèì-ín-dá*
s/he=AGT you(PL) 2-seeI-NS-3A.PST
'He saw you (PL)'

We turn next to plural participants where *-min* indicates plural first person agent, usually for inclusive, but in some elicitations it has shown up for exclusive as well, showing again the uncertain status of clusivity in Lamkang. The *-nú* here is deemed optional as the meaning of 1st is carried by *-min*. Thus we may also get *dúúl máánmin* 'we didn't push.' (p.c. August 2018, Daniel Tholung).

(23) *Ø-píí-lám-mín-nú*
3P-giveI-3.PL-1A.PL-1A.PST
'we gave it to them'

<table>
<tr><td>A / P</td><td>>1</td><td>>1pl. excl.</td><td>>1pl. incl.</td><td>>2</td><td>>2pl</td><td>>3</td><td>>3pl</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2"></td><td>a-∑-nú</td><td rowspan="2">a-∑-ín-nú</td><td>∑-nú</td><td>∑-lám-nú</td></tr>
<tr><td>1pl. excl.</td><td>a-∑-ín-nú</td><td colspan="2">∑-ín-nú</td></tr>
<tr><td>1pl. incl.</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>∑-min-nú
[∑-ín-min-nú]</td><td>∑-lám-min-nú</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>m-∑-tínú</td><td rowspan="2">m-∑-ín-tínú</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2"></td><td>∑-tínú</td><td>∑-lám-tínú
[∑-ín-tínú]</td></tr>
<tr><td>2pl</td><td>m-∑-ín-tínú</td><td colspan="2">∑-ín-tínú</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>m-∑-dá</td><td rowspan="2">mi-∑-ín-dá</td><td rowspan="2">mi-∑-ín-dá</td><td>a-∑-dá</td><td rowspan="2">a-∑-ín-dá</td><td>∑-dá</td><td>∑-lám-dá</td></tr>
<tr><td>3pl</td><td>m-∑-lám-dá</td><td>a-∑-lám-dá</td><td colspan="2">∑-lám-dá</td></tr>
</table>

Table 5. Participant marking patterns for the past affirmative tense

In the past negative paradigm as well the patient is indicated by a prefix and the negative auxiliary *ma* is inflected for tense and agrees with the agent.

(24) *nei=yí nàng a-dèì m-nú*
I=AGT you(SG) 2-seeI neg-1A.PST
'I did not see you(SG).'

(25) *nàng=ngí máán Ø-dèì-lám m-tínú*
you(SG)=AGT they 3P-seeI-3.PL neg-2A.PST
'You (SG) did not see them.'

(26) *máán=ní nàng a-dèì-lám m-dá*
they=AGT you(SG) 2-seeI-3.PL neg-3A.PST
'They did not see you (SG).

The conjugation patterns for the past negative tense are in given in Table 6.

A / P	>1	>1pl excl.	>1pl. incl.	>2	>2pl	>3	>3pl
1				a-∑ m-nú	a-∑ má-án-nú	∑ m-nú	∑-lám m-nú
1pl. excl.				a-∑ má-án-nú		∑ má-án-nú	
1pl. incl.						∑ m-min-nú [∑ m-min] [∑ má-án-min-nú][13] [t-∑ m-dá][14]	∑-lám m-min-nú
2	m-∑ m-tínú	m-∑ má-án-tín				∑ m-tínú	∑-lám m-tínú
2pl	m-∑ má-án-tínú					∑ má-án-tínú	
3	m-∑ m-dá	m-∑ má-án-dá [m-∑-ín m-dá]	mi-∑ má-án-dá	a-∑ m-dá	a-∑ má-án-dá [a-∑-ín má-dá]	∑ m-dá	∑-lám m-dá
3pl	m-∑-lám m-dá	m-∑ má-án-dá		a-∑-lám m-dá	a-∑-lám m-dá	∑-lám m-dá	

Table 6. Participant-marking pattern for the negative past tense

The semantic distinction between nonfuture and past can be seen contrasting (27) for nonfuture which indicates that an activity has not occurred and (28) with past tense which indicates that is has not occurred but was expected to occur.

(27) *a-dúúl-lám* *m-éh*
2-push-3.PL neg-3RD
'They didn't push you'

(28) *a-dúúl-lám* *m-dá*
2-push-3.PL neg-3A.PST
'They didn't push you (but it was expected that they would)'.

5 Future tense

For the conjugation of the affirmative future, Stem-I is used. The P is indicated by a participant marker, as in the paradigm above. The stem is followed by future inflection with these auxiliaries (in other descriptions of related languages called agreement words): *nìk* '1a.fut';[15] *ná* '2a.fut'; *ráh* '3a.fut'. *Nìk* (and the allomorph [nì]) and *ná* behave like auxiliaries in that they take plural marking similar to the negative *ma*. So, when the A or P is plural, we get *nìk-áán* or *ná-án*. An example is given in (29). Perhaps because *nìk* is used with 1st person, speakers report a sense of certainty in the event occurring.

[13] There are some fast speech variants that elide *-min*: e.g., *dúúl má-án-min-nú~ dúúl má-án-nú*. 'We (incl.) did not push him.'

[14] Note here as well, just as in the case of the nonfuture negative paradigm, that when the inclusive *t-* prefix is used, the suffix indicates 3rd patient.

[15] The *ní* is most likely derived historically from a copula (see DeLancey 2015:134 and compare Meitei *ni* described in Chelliah 1997).

(29) *nei=yí nààn* *a-dèì* *nìk-áán*
I=AGT you(PL) 2-seeI 1a.fut-NS
'I will see you (PL).'

As shown in (30), future inflection tends to be followed by a particle *-dìh* which indicates that the speaker is identifying one candidate from a possible set to perform the action. Also, we see that *-dìh* cannot co-occur with *ráh* '3a.fut' which is used for contrastive selection from a list of possible actors.

(30) *nàng=ngí* *máán* *Ø-dèì-lám* *ná-dìh*
you(SG)=AGT they 3P-seeI-3.PL 2a.fut-DECL
'You will see them'

Third future agent requires prefixal marking *k-*, most likely derived from the *k-* nominalizer, along with the auxiliary *ráh* 'future'. Monsang too appears to have a nominalizer in the affirmative transitive construction, but in Monsang this is not limited to future reference (Konnerth and Wanglar 2019). In (31), we again see nonsingular allomorph *-án* following the auxiliary, this time *ráh*, forming [ráán].

(31) *mà=ngí* *nèèn* *m-k-dèì* *rá-án*
s/he=AGT us 1P-A.FUT-seeI 3a.fut-NS
'S/he will see us.'

A / P	>1	>1Excl.	>1Incl.	>2	>2pl	>3	>3pl
1				a-∑ nì [a-∑ nìk-dìh]	a-∑ nìk-áán [a-∑ nìk-áán-dìh]	∑ nì [∑ nìk-dìh]	∑-lám nì [∑-lám nìk-dìh]
1pl excl.				a-∑ nìk-áán [a-∑ nìk-áán-dìh]	a-∑ nìk-áán [a-∑ nìk-áán-dìh]	∑ nìk-áán [∑ nìk-án-dìh] [t-∑ rá-án]	
1pl incl.						t-∑ rá-án [t-∑ ráh]	t-∑ rá-án
2	m-∑ ná [m-∑ ná-dìh]	m-∑ ná-án [m-∑ ná-án-dìh]				∑ ná [∑ ná-dìh]	∑-lám ná [∑-lám ná-dìh]
2pl	m-∑ ná-án [m-∑ ná-án-dìh]					∑ ná-án [∑ ná-án-dìh]	
3	m-k-∑ ráh	m-k-∑ rá-án	mi-k-∑ rá-án	a-k-∑ ráh	a-k-∑ rá-án	k-∑ ráh	k-∑-lám ráh
3pl	m-k-∑-lám ráh	m-k-∑ rá-án		a-k-∑-lám ráh		k-∑-lám ráh	

Table 7. Participant-marking patterns for the future affirmative tense

Note that the inclusive *n-* prefix is not observed in the future paradigm; instead, for future inclusive we see only *t-*. A third prefix *t-* exists which can be used with 1st plural exclusive or inclusive. This *t-* prefix is clearly not the inverse marker, as it occurs with 1st agents, but it is also not the inclusive or exclusive. This prefix is used to express control as can be seen by comparing (32) and (33).

(32) *Ø-t-p-k'ong* *nìk-áán-dìh*
3P-CNT-CAUS-sitI 1a.fut-PL-DECL
'We will make them sit' (a plan to force it).

(33) *Ø-p-k'ong* *nìk-áán-dìh*
3P-CAUS-sitI 1a.fut-PL-DECL
'We will seat them' (as in offering as seat).

With an inanimate patient, (32) could be used for setting something down, as in setting a mug on a table. This *t-* prefix can co-occur with *k-* or *n-*, as seen in (34)-(36), but there are restrictions that seem to be based on verb semantics which are still to be worked out.

(34) *nèèn=ní* *ui* *Ø-k-t-p-chee-ín*
we=AGT dog 3P-1A-CNT-CAUS-walkII-PL
'We (excl.) made the dog walk.'

(35) *nèèn=ní* *ui* *Ø-n-t-p-chee-ín*
we=AGT dog 3P -1A.INC-CNT-CAUS-walkII-PL
'We (incl.) made the dog walk.'

(36) *nèèn=ní* *máán* *Momo* *Ø-n-t-p-det-ín*
we=AGT they Momo 3P -1A.INC-CNT-CAUS-seeIII-PL
'We (incl.) caused Momo to see them.'

This *t-* prefix can occur in the negative as well, as seen in (37).

(37) *mi-t-p-piik* *nímá-án-tíh*
1P.PL-CNT-CAUS-giveII fut.neg-PL-2ND
'You (PL) will not make us give it to him/her.'

For the negative future, the stem shape (Stem-I) and prefixal P markers are the same as for the affirmative future. For the future negative auxiliary we see */níma/* with allomorphs [ním, nímaa]. The agreement forms with the nonfuture negative tense are the familiar: *-ng* '1ST'; *-tíh* '2ND'; *-éh* '3RD'

(38) *nei=yí* *nàng* *a-dèì* *nímáá-ng*
I=AGT you(SG) 2-seeI fut.neg -1ST
'I will not see you (SG).'

(39) *nàng=ngí* *mà* *Ø-dèì* *ním-tíh*
you(SG)=AGT s/he 3P-seeI fut.neg -2ND
'You (SG) will not see him/her.

(40) *mà=ngí mà Ø-dèi ním-éh*
s/he=AGT s/he 3P-seeI fut.neg -3RD
'S/he will not see him/her.'

The plural indication occurs as follows. The nonsingular marker for agent follows the future negative, thus *níma+-án* gives *nímáán* and we get *dúúl nímáántíh* 'You(pl) did not push him'. Notice how the plural may refer to plural patient as in (42) or to plural agent as in (43).

(41) *nàng=ngí nei m-dèi ním-tíh*
you(SG)-AGT me 1P-seeI fut.neg-2ND
'You (SG) will not see me.'

(42) *nàng=ngí nèèn m-dèi nímá-án-tíh*
you(SG)=AGT us 1P-seeI f ut.neg-NS-2ND
'You (SG) will not see us.'

(43) *nààn=ní nei m-dèi nímá-án-tíh*
you(PL)=AGT me 1P-seeI fut.neg-NS-2ND
'You (PL) will not see me.'

(44) *nààn=ní nèèn m-dèi nímá-án-tíh*
you(PL)=AGT us 1P-seeI fut.neg-NS-2ND
'You (PL) will not see us.'

(45) *nèèn=ní nàng a-dèi nímaa-ng*[16]
we=AGT you(SG) 2-seeI fut.neg-1ST
'We will not see you (SG).'

Example (46) illustrates the sequence *-ri+-ng* which is frequently observed with first person plural. Based on the contrast provided by speakers, we have an initial hypothesis that *-ri* indicates inceptive aspect: compare (46) and (47).

(46) *a-dúúl nímá-án-rí-ng*
2-pushI fut.neg-NS-INCEP-1ST
'I will not push you' (won't start pushing)

(47) *a-dúúl nímaa-ng*
2P-pushI fut.neg-1ST
'I will not push you' (will quit pushing)

Table 8 shows the participant marking for the negative future tense.

[16] The sequence *–an+-ng> aŋ*.

A / P	>1	>1pl. excl.	>1pl. incl.	>2	>2pl	>3	>3pl
1				a-∑ nímaa-ng	a-∑ nímá-án-ri-ng [a-∑ nímaa-ng]	∑ nímaa-ng	∑-lám nímaa-ng
1pl. excl.				a-∑-ín nímá-án-ri-ng [a-∑ nímá-án-ri-ng]		∑ nímá-án-ri-ng	∑ nímá-án-ri-ng [t-∑-ín ním-éh]
1pl. incl.						t-∑-ín ním-éh [t-∑ ním-éh]	t-∑-ín ním-éh [t-∑-lám ním-éh]
2	m-∑ ním-tíh	m-∑ nímá-án-tíh				∑ ním-tíh	∑-lám ním-tíh
2pl	m-∑ nímá-án-tíh					∑ nímá-án-tíh	
3	m-∑ ním-éh	m-∑-ín ním-éh [mi-∑-ín ním-éh]	mi-∑-ín ním-éh	a-∑ ním-éh	a-∑-ín ním-éh	∑ ním-éh	∑-lám ním-éh
3pl3	m-∑-lám ním-éh			a-∑-lám ním-éh		∑-lám ním-éh	

Table 8. Participant marking for the negative future tense

6 Summary and conclusion

In this description, we have provided core structure of the Lamkang verb. A summary of the morphology is given in Table 9. A full paradigm for the transitive verb *duul* 'push' is given in Table 10.

	Patient					**Agent**			
	1	***1pl***	***2***	***3***		***1/1pl. excl.***	***1pl. incl.***	***2***	***3***
Nonfuture (+)	m-	m-	a-	Ø-		k-/t-/n-	n-/t-	a-	m-
Nonfuture (−)						-ng		-tíh	-éh
Past (+)						-nú	-minnú	-tínú	-dá
Past (−)									
Future (+)						nìk	t-∑ ráh	ná	k- ráh
Future (-)						-ng		-tíh	-éh

Table 9. Affixes and Auxiliaries for the nonfuture, future, and past tenses

For the negative paradigm, we note the use of the negative auxiliaries: *ma* for negative nonfuture/past and *nima* for negative future. The major tenses for declaratives have been discussed here, but investigation of aspect and tense combinations with additional illocutionary types may reveal additional verb conjugation patterns. Within the clusive forms we see a great deal of variation both in patterning and morphology. The role of disambiguation is also observed. For disambiguation we see the non-ambiguous a-t-∑ (2-INVERSE-STEM) used in preference to m-t-∑ (1P-INVERSE-∑) since, due to an awkward homophony between the 1P and 3A, the *m-* can

be interpreted as 3A. The role of avoidance of redundancy is dramatic in that when the person of agent is clear through clusive marking (*t-* or *–min* for example), the suffixes which are usually used to indicate agent, indicate patient. Specifically, with inclusive negative the expected PAT-Stem Auxiliary-AGT pattern for the paradigm flips to AGT-Stem Auxiliary-PAT. Also, a great deal of variation in the forms for the inclusive/exclusive and plural/3rd plural exists. All this hints at what we assume is a grammar in a state of flux.

A\P	>1exc		>1inc		>2sg		>2pl		>3sg		>3pl	
	nonneg	neg	nonneg	neg	nonneg	neg	nonneg	neg	nonneg	neg	nonneg	neg
1SG	---		---		a-dèi-nú	a-dèi m-nú	a-dèi-ín-nú	a-dèi má-án-nú	dèi-nú	dèi m-nú	dèi-lám-nú	dèi-lám m-nú
					a-k-dèè-ín	a-dèi maa-ng	a-k-dèè-ín	a-dèi má-án-ri-ng	k-déé	dèi maa-ng	k-dèè-lám	dèi-lám maa-ng
					a-dèi ník-díh	a-dèi nímaa-ng	a-dèi ník-áán-díh	a-dèi nímá-án-ri-ng	dèi ník-díh	dèi nímaa-ng	dèi-lám ník-díh	dèi-lám nímaa-ng
1EXC	---		---		a-dèi-ín-nú	a-dèi má-án-nú	a-dèi-ín-nú	a-dèi má-án-nú / a-dèi-ín má-án-nú	dèi-ín-nú	dèi má-án-nú	dèi-ín-nú	dèi ma-án-nú
					a-k-dèè-ín	a-dèi má-án-ri-ng	a-k-dèè-ín	a-dèi-ín maa-ng	k-dèè-ín	dèi má-án-ri-ng/ dèi máá-ng	k-dèè-ín / t-dèè-ín	dèi-lám maa-ng / dèi má-án-ri-ng / dèi má-án-min
					a-dèi ník-áán-díh	a-dèi nímá-án-ri-ng	a-dèi ník-áán-díh	a-dèi nímá-án-ri-ng	dèi ník-áán-díh	dèi nímá-án-ri-ng	t-dèi rá-án	t-dèi-in ním-éh
1INC	---		---		---		---		dèi-minnú	t-dèi m-dá / dèi m-minnú	dèi-lám-minnú	dèi-lám m-minnú
									n-déé / t-déé	t-dèi m-éh	n-dèè-lám / t-dèè-lám	dèi-lám maa-ng / dèi-má-án-ri-ng / dèi-lám-min m-éh
									t-dèi ráh	t-dèi ním-éh	t-dèi-lám rá	t-dèi-lám ním-éh
2SG	m-dèi-ín-tinú	m-dèi má-án-tinú	---		---		---		dèi-tinú	dèi m-tinú	dèi-lám-tinú	dèi-lám m-tinú
	m-t-dèè-ín	m-dèi má-án-tih							a-déé	dèi m-tih	a-dèè-lám	dèi-lám m-tih
	m-dèi ná-án-díh	m-dèi nímá-án-tih							dèi ná-díh	dèi ním-tih	dèi-lám ná-díh	dèi-lám ním-tih
2PL	m-dèi-ín-tinú	m-dèi má-án-tinú	---		---		---		dèi-ín-tinú	dèi má-án-tinú	dèi-in-tinú	dèi má-án-tinú
	m-t-dèè-ín	m-dèi má-án-tih							a-dèè-ín	dèi má-án-tih	a-dèè-ín	dèi má-án-tih
	m-dèi ná-án-díh	m-dèi nímá-án-tih							dèi ná-án-díh	dèi nímá-án-tih	dèi ná-án-díh	dèi nímá-án-tih
3SG	m-dèi-ín-dá	m-dèi má-án-dá	mi-dèi-ín-dá	mi-dèi má-án-dá	a-dèi-dá	a-dèi m-dá	a-dèi-ín-dá	a-dèi-ín m-dá / a-dèi má-án-dá	dèi-dá	dèi m-dá	dèi-lám-dá	dèi-lám m-dá
	m-t-dèè-ín	m-dèi-ín m-éh	mi-t-dèè-ín	mi-dèi-ín m-éh	a-t-déé	a-dèi m-éh	a-t-dèè-ín	a-dèi-ín m-éh	m-déé	dèi m-éh	m-dèè-lám	dèi-lám m-éh
	m-k-dèi rá-án	m-dèi-ín ním-éh	mi-k-dèi rá-án	mi-dèi-ín ním-éh	a-k-dèi ráh	a-dèi ním-éh	a-k-dèi rá-án	a-dèi-ín ním-éh	k-dèi ráh	dèi ním-éh	k-dèi-lám ráh	dèi-lám ním-éh
3PL	m-dèi-ín-dá	m-dèi-ín m-dá	mi-dèi-dá	mi-dèi-ín m-dá	a-dèi-lám-dá	a-dèi-lám m-dá	a-dèi-ín-dá	a-dèi-ín m-dá	dèi-lám-dá	dèi-lám m-dá	dèi-lám-dá	dèi-lám m-dá
	m-t-dèè-ín	m-dèi-ín m-éh	mi-t-déé	mi-dèi-ín m-éh	a-t-dèè-lám	a-dèi-lám m-éh	a-t-dèè-ín	a-dèi-ín m-éh	m-dèè-ín	dèi-lám m-éh	m-dèè-lám	dèi-lám m-éh
	m-k-dèi rá-án	m-dèi-ín ním-éh	mi-k-dèi rá-án	mi-dèi-ín ním-éh	a-k-dèi-lám ráh	a-dèi-lám ním-éh	a-k-dèi rá-án	a-dèi-ín ním-éh	k-dèi-lám ráh	dèi-lám ním-éh	k-dèi-lám ráh	dèi-lám ním-éh

Table 10. Conjugation of the Lamkang verb 'to know' *dei*I and *dee*I

ABBREVIATIONS

=dìh	DECL	declarative	*-mó*	INT	interrogative
=ngí	AGT	agent	*n-*	1A.INCL	1st person plural inclusive agent
Ø-	3P	3rd person patient	*ná*	2a.fut	2nd person agent future
a-	2	2nd person	*-ng*	1ST	1st person
-ch	M	middle	*nìk*	1a.fut	1st person agent future
-dá	3A.PST	3rd person agent past	*-nú*	1A.PST	1st person agent past
-éh	3RD	3rd person	*p-*	CAUS	Causative
-ín	NS	Non-singular (includes dual)	*ráh*	3a.fut	3rd person agent future
k-	1A	1st person agent	*-rek*	PL	plural
k-	A.FUT	future agent with third inflection	*-ri*	INCEP	inceptive aspect
-lám	3.PL	3rd person plural	*t-*	CLUS	Inclusive/exclusive agent
m-	1P	1st person patient	*t-*	CNT	Control
m-	3A	3rd person agent	*t-*	INV	inverse
m-	3.POS	3rd possessive	*-tih*	2ND	2nd person
ma	neg	negative	*-tinú*	2A.PST	2nd person agent past
-min	1A.PL	1st agent plural			

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