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**Languages and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region (LPEHR)**

# *An overview of Pangkhua: A South Central Tibeto-Burman (Kuki-Chin) language of Bangladesh*

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of Pangkhua, a South Central Tibeto-Burman (Kuki-Chin) language of Bangladesh. Pangkhua is an underdocumented and a largely endangered language spoken by about 2000 people in Rangamati District, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. In this overview, first, I examine Pangkhua's position in the internal subclassifications of the South Central subgroup and show that its position in the subgroup is not as obvious as has often been regarded. Then, I discuss some of Pangkhua's basic and typologically important characteristics including phonology, morphology, and syntax. As a first account of Pangkhua, this overview will facilitate areal-typological as well as historical and comparative South Central Tibeto-Burman linguistics research.

KEYWORDS

Pangkhua, South Central, Kuki-Chin, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

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## 1 Introduction

Pangkhua (*paŋkʰua*) is a South Central (Kuki-Chin) Tibeto-Burman language spoken by about 2000 people in Rangamati District, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. It is an underdocumented and a largely endangered language. Pangkhua is an autonym used for both the ethnic identity of Pangkhua people and their language. Other names used in the literature include "Paang", "Pang", "Pang Khua", "Pangkhu", "Pangkho", "Pankhu", "Pankho", "Pankhawi", "Panghoi", "Pangkua" and "Paangkhua" (Farid 2006, Simons and Fennig 2018). In the *Linguistic Survey of India* (Konow 1903:160), the language appears as "Pānkhū", with a bar on "ā" and "ū". Within the community, Pangkhua people frequently use the name 'Dinthar' *d̠inʈʰar* for their village; *d̠in* is a Mizo word meaning 'stay', *ʈ̠har* is found in both Pangkhua and Mizo meaning 'new'. The compound 'Dinthar' means 'new stay' not only reflects the relatively recent establishment (1979) of a new Pangkhua village in its current location but is also suggestive of, as I have observed during my fieldwork, an ongoing and extensive Mizo influence on Pangkhua. Of the total Pangkhua population, about 600 people live in Pangkhua Para village while the rest are scattered in small households in Rangmati district in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The present description is based on Pangkhua as it in spoken in Pangkhua Para village[2]. See Akter (2020, 2022) for more information about Pangkhua.

Data of Pangkhua in this paper came from more than a year of my fieldwork in Pangkhua Para, Rangamati, Chittagong Hill Tracts during 2017-2020. My fieldwork data consisted of everyday conversation, folktales, interviews, personal accounts, and procedural texts (e.g., hunting methods, house-building techniques, etc.). A significant amount of data also came from my fieldnotes and elicitations. Out of around twenty hours of audio-visual data that I collected during my fieldwork, I fully transcribed, translated, and annotated around eight hours of data. For data collection and interpretation, I worked with six primary consultants and more than a dozen of Pangkhua native speakers of various age groups and gender. In addition to writing a reference grammar, an important purpose of my data collection was to develop documentary and pedagogical materials to aid in the maintenance and revitalization of Pangkhua language and culture. See Akter (2022) for more information about my data collection and processing methods.

In what follows, I discuss Pangkhua's position in South Central in §2, phonology in §3, basic syllable structure in §4, sesquisyllabicity in §5, word formation and morphology in §6, word classes in §7, noun phrase structure in §8, argument indexation on verbs in §9, clause structure in §10, and clause combination in §11.

## 2 Pangkhua in South Central

Pangkhua's membership in South Central can be evidenced by the fact that the language shares two of the innovations that are usually considered as characteristic of SC languages, namely, verb stem alternation and a phonological change of the Proto-Trans-Himalayan (PTH) initials *s/sy- to Proto-South Central (PSC) *th- (VanBik (2009: 9). While verb stem alternation in Pangkhua is not as robust as in some other SC languages including Mizo, Hakha Lai, and Falam, Pangkhua nonetheless exhibits the feature affecting a handful of its verbs. In Pangkhua, the morphosyntactic conditions that dictate the choices of one stem versus another mainly relate to valence affecting mechanisms. For example, the base form *luʈ̠*$^{B}$ 'enter' occurs in a transitive construction as shown in (1) and the derived form *luʔ*$^{D}$ 'enter' occurs in a causative construction

[2]I have neither noticed nor have found reported that there exist any dialectal differences in Pangkhua.

as shown in (2). See Akter (2022: 244-252) for a detailed discussion of Pangkhua verb stem alternation.

(1) *ʔumʈa ɖai makɒʈ luʈ herinha*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| um=ʈa | ɖai | makɒʈ | **uʈ$^{B}$** | her=in=ha |
| chase=NF | fence | door | **enter** | almost=LOC=DEF |

*sam banluŋ ʈiruah*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sɑm | bɑn | luŋ | ʈi=ruɑh |
| hair | lock | prickle | rep=epis |

'…(they) chased her (Nemrohoi) (and) as she was about to enter the fence-door, her hair rolled around it and got locked.'

(2) *…ʔanhɒi natsun kanpo tsaŋse skul*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ən=hɒi=nɑ | tsun | kɑn=pəu | tsɑŋ=si | skul |
| 3.PL.SUBJ=know=SUBR | then | how=IND.PRON | COP=FOC | school |

*maluʔeiʈih ʔaʈiruah*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mɑ-**luʔ$^{D}$**=ei=ʈi | ə=ʈi | ruɑh |
| CAUS-**enter**=OBJ.PL=REP | 3.SG.SUBJ=say | EPIS |

'…after their learning (how to eat), he (their guardian) said, "however it is possible, (I must) send them to school (lit. make them enter the school).'

Table 1[3] presents an exhaustive list of verb stem alternants attested in my corpus:

| Base form | Derived form | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| *luʈ* | *luʔ* | 'enter' |
| *miʈ* | *miʔ* | 'turn off' |
| *sip* | *siʔ* | 'fill out' |
| *ʈhup* | *ʈhuʔ* | 'hide' |
| *tsap* | *tsaʔ* | 'cry' |

**Table 1 – Verb stem alternation**

Regarding phonological change, Pangkhua consistently shares the PSC initials of *th- in its lexicon as shown in Table 2:

[3]I have adopted the terminology of Bedell et al (2023) in calling one form 'base' (with the superscript B) and another form 'derived' (with the superscript D). In the literature, various names have been used for these two alternante forms including 'independent' and 'dependent' (Chhangte 1993), 'form I' and "form II" (Peterson 1998), "simple" and "infinitive" (Singh 2006), and "stem-1" and "stem-2" (King 2010).

| PTH | PSC | Pangkhua | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| *sak | *thak | *thàk* | 'itch' |
| səy | *thii | *thí* | 'die' |
| sey | *thay | *thèy* | 'fruit' |
| sat | *that | *thàʔ* | 'kill' |
| m-sin | *thin | *məthìn* | 'liver' |
| g-sum | *thum | *thúm* | 'three' |

**Table 2 – PTH initials *s/sy- and PSC/Pangkhua *th (adapted from VanBik 2009:17)**

Where Pangkhua's position within the SC subgroup is concerned, most scholars place it in the Central group alongside Mizo, Bawm, and Hakha Lai. For example, Konow (1904: 2-3) in subdividing the 'Chin' [SC] languages into four different groups such as Northern, Central, Old Kuki, and Southern groups, places Pangkhua under the Central. Similarly, VanBik (2009:23) places Pangkhua under Central, albeit in parenthesis due to the lack of data of the language at the time. Pangkhua does not appear in Peterson's (2017a) internal classification of the SC subgroup into Northwestern, Central, and Peripheral, where his Central is further divided into 'Core Central' and Maraic (and Peripheral is further divided into Northeastern, Southeastern, and Southwestern). While some phonological evidence of sound retention supports Pangkhua's position in Central, the morphological and the grammatical evidence do not always align with its classification as a Central language. Since this issue requires a full-length paper, I'll only briefly discuss it here. The phonological evidence comes primarily from Pangkhua's retention of the putative PSC word-initial rhotic *r- like other Central languages. Table 3 shows this with Pangkhua cognates placed in one of VanBik's (2009: 23) PSC reconstruction schemes:

| | PSC | Peripheral S- (Cho) | N- (Tedim) | Central (H. Lai) | Pangkhua | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *ruʔ | *guh* | *guʔ3* | *ruʔ* | *ruʔ* | 'bone' |
| b. | *rik-I, riʔ-II | *gih* | *gik3-I, giʔ3-II* | *rit-I, riʔ-II* | *rik* | 'be heavy' |
| c. | *ruak | | | *ruak* | *ruak* | 'be empty' |
| d. | *rua | *gaw* | *gua2* | *rûa* | *rua* | 'bamboo' |
| e. | *roʔ | *gawh* | | *roʔ* | *rɒʔ* | 'burn' |
| f. | *ruaʔ | | *guaʔ3* | *ruaʔ* | *(khua)sur* | 'rain' |
| g. | *raŋ-I, ran-II | | *gâng-I gàn-II (T.Kuki)* | *ràŋ-I, răn-II* | *raŋ* | 'be quick' |
| h. | *raal | *ga* | *gaal2* | *râal* | *ral* | 'enemy' |

**Table 3 – Pangkhua's retention of the PSC-initial *r- (adapted from VanBik, 2009:23)**

However, Pangkhua has some of the morphological and grammatical characteristics that most Central languages do not show but can be found in some other groups including (Peterson's) Northwestern and Peripheral (especially, in Northeastern and Southeastern Peripheral) languages. They include:

Morphological:

1. Retention of the unproductive *mə-* and *rə-* prefixes 1, e.g., *məd̠il* 'belly', *məkal* 'kidney', *mərul* 'snake', *məth̠in* 'liver', *rəkhup*, 'knee', *rəmai* 'pumpkin', *rəvan* 'sky', etc. See Akter (2022:105-114) for a detailed discussion. These mə- and rə- prefixes are also found in several Northwestern (a.k.a. Old Kuki) languages (Löffler, 1985: 279).

2. Retention of the *mə-* prefixal causative, e.g., siʔ 'fill' ***məsiʔ*** 'make fill', *sei* 'learn', ***məsei*** 'make learn/teach', *ɒŋ* 'open' ***məɒŋ*** 'make open', *muʔ* 'see', ***məmuʔ*** 'show', etc. See Akter (2022:110-114) for a detailed discussion. Most Central languages use a suffix similar to *-t̠ir* as a causative marker. For example, in Mizo, the causative is *tîîr* (Chhangte, 1993: 100-01); in Bawm, the causative is *tir* (Reichle, 1985: 56-57); in Falam, the causative is *tɜr* (King, 2010: 74); and in Hakha Lai, the causative is *-ter* (Peterson, 2017 b: 418). *-t̠ir* is usually considered as an innovative causative marker in SC languages (Peterson, 2017 b: 418) indicating that Pangkhua has retained the old causative *mə-*, which is quite productive in the language. Note that the old causative *mə-* is also reported in Asho-Chin (as a nasal initial m-), a Peripheral SC language (Jordan (1969: 42).

Grammatical:

4. Grammaticalization of the lexical verb *t̠i* 'say' as marking future. For example, *kal kət̠i* 'kal=kə=**t̠i**' 'go=1.sg.subj=say/**will**' 'I'**ll** go'. See Akter (2022) for a detailed discussion. It may be noted that *t̠i* 'say' has grammaticalized as a future marker in several other non-Central SC languages including Northwestern such as Anal, Lamkang, and Monsang, Peripheral such as Biate, Chorei, and Thadou; and the unclassified Ranglong. The only Central language in which it is reported is Saihrem (Core Central) (Konnerth 2019).

5. Grammaticalization of the cislocative *hɒŋ=* as an object marker. For example, *nəhɒŋmuʔ* 'nə=**hɒŋ**=muʔ' 2.sg.subj=**1.obj**=see' 'You saw **me**'. Grammaticalization of the cislocative *hɒŋ=* as an object marker is also reported in several non-Central languages including Sizang and Tedim (Peripheral) (Stern, 1984: 48, 52). Note though that in Bawm, a Central language, the cislocative *hawng* occurs optionally as a 1st person object marker (Reichle 1981:147-149). See Akter (2022: 341-342, 2024) for a detailed discussion.

These morphological and grammatical evidence make Pangkhua's position in Central or at least in Peterson's "Core Central" group fairly questionable.

## 3 Phonology

### 3.1. Segmental phonology

#### 3.1.1. Consonants

Pangkhua has twenty-one consonants. Pangkhua consonants occur at eight places of articulation: bilabial, labio-dental, dental, alveolar, postalveolar, palatal, velar, and glottal. Most places of articulations have both voiced and voiceless phonemes except for the velar, glottal, and the affricate. All the consonants given in Table 4 can occur in syllable initial as well as word initial position. A more restricted inventory occurs in the coda. The tilde sign

indicates allophonic variation, the parenthesis indicates marginal phoneme[4], the diacritic ( ‿ ) indicates double-articulation, and <angle-brackets> indicate orthographic representations of the respective phoneme.

| | | Bilabial | | Labio-dental | Dental | | Alveolar | Post-alveolar | Palatal | Velar | | Glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stop** | **voiceless** | p | $p^h$ | | t̪ <t> | $t̪^h$ <th> | | | | k | $k^h$ <kh> | (ʔ) |
| | **voiced** | b | | | d̪ <d> | | | | | | | |
| **Fricative** | **voiceless** | | | f | | | s~ʃ | | | | | h~ʔ |
| | **voiced** | | | v | | | z | | | | | |
| **Affricate** | | | | | | | | t͡s <ch> | | | | |
| **Rhotic** | | | | | | | r | | | | | |
| **Nasal** | | m | | | | | n | | | ŋ <ng> | | |
| **Glide** | | w | | | | | | | j <y> | | | |
| **Lateral** | | | | | | | l | | | | | |

**Table 4 – Pangkhua consonant phonemes**

### 3.1.2. Vowels

Pangkhua has seven vowel phonemes. There are two high vowels, three mid and two low vowels. Pangkhua vowel inventory is given in Table 5:

| | Front | Central | Back |
|---|---|---|---|
| **High** | i | | u |
| **Close-mid** | e | | |
| **Mid** | | ə | |
| **Open-mid** | | | |
| **Low** | ɑ | | ɒ |

**Table 5 – Pangkhua vowels**

### 3.1.3. Tone

Tone carries a comparatively low functional load in Pangkhua. This is evidenced from most of the relatively younger Pangkhua speaker's inability to recognize lexical tonal contrast in a consistent manner. Pangkhua has, nonetheless, a lexically contrastive high tone and low tone[5]. Thus, a lexeme with a high tone may have a different denotation from a segmentally identical

[4] A marginal phoneme is contrastive in a phonologically restricted environment. For example, in Pangkhua, the glottal stop ʔ is phonetically present in word initial position but is not contrastive. On the other hand, in word-final position, the glottal stop ʔ is consistently heard as a contrastive sound associated with an abrupt-ending low tone. See Akter (2022: 60-61) for illustrations.

[5] Weidert (1987: 14) also found two tonal categories in Pangkhua, a high and a low. A few other South Central languages are also reported to have similar tonal categories. For example, So Hartmann (2009: 47-48) reports two lexically contrasting tones in Daai Chin-a mid-level and a falling. Watkins (2013) reports two lexical tones for Sumtu-a high and a low. However, Zakaria (2017: 73) reports three lexical tones for Hyow, a high-level tone (H), a low-level tone (L) and a falling tone (F).

lexeme with a low tone. For example, *vá* ‘fountain’ vs *và* ‘bird’, *ín* ‘sleep’ vs *ìn* ‘house’, and *páŋ* ‘big container’ vs *pàŋ* ‘body’, etc. A high tone is phonetically realized as a mid-level pitch and a low tone is phonetically realized as a low-falling pitch. Table 6 presents a list of a few monosyllabic tonal pairs. See Akter (2022:76-82) for an acoustic analysis of the distinctive minimal pairs given in Table 6.

| Word (H tone) | Gloss | Word (L tone) | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| *bṏm* | ‘container’ | *bṏ̀m* | ‘a tribe’ |
| *béŋ* | ‘compress’ | *bèŋ* | ‘slap’ |
| *d̪ár* | ‘bell’ | *d̪àr* | ‘shoulder’ |
| *kái* | ‘climb’ | *kài* | ‘pull’ |
| *káŋ* | ‘dry’ | *kàŋ* | ‘burn’ |
| *lák* | ‘take’ | *làk* | ‘rub’ |
| *láŋ* | ‘be visible’ | *làŋ* | ‘pass on’ |
| *léŋ* | ‘cut’ | *lèŋ* | ‘throw’ |
| *lóu* | ‘medicine’ | *lòu* | ‘farm’ |
| *sáj* | ‘elephant’ | *sàj* | ‘uncooked rice’ |

**Table 6 – Monosyllabic tonal minimal pairs**

## 4 Basic Syllable Structure

Pangkhua is a quantity sensitive language. Basic syllables can be light or heavy, depending on whether or not there is a final X, which indicates a vowel or a consonant. The maximum basic syllable in Pangkhua is (C)(L)V(X), where ‘C’ is a consonant and ‘L’ is a lateral. The vowel is obligatory. Other segments are optional. Pangkhua has twelve possible syllable shapes as shown in Table 7:

| Weight | Shape | Example | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|
| Light | V | *ə* | ‘3.sg’ |
| | CV | *la* | ‘song’ |
| | CCV | *t̪hli* | ‘air’ |
| Heavy | VV | *i:* | ‘cq’ |
| | VC | *in* | ‘house’ |
| | CVV | *lou* | ‘medicine’ |
| | CVC | *mit̪* | ‘eye’ |
| | CVVV | *buai* | ‘wear’ |
| | CCVV | *thlai* | ‘run’ |
| | CVVC | *puan* | ‘cloth’ |
| | CCVC | *t̪hlaŋ* | ‘hill’ |
| | CCVVC | *t̪hluaŋ* | ‘straight’ |

**Table 7 – Basic syllables in Pangkhua**

Figure 1 presents the basic Pangkhua syllable shape.

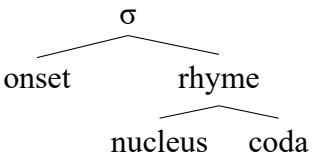


**Figure 1 – Pangkhua syllable shape**

While all twenty-one phonemes as shown in Table 4 can occur in syllable onset position, only twelve phonemes can occur in coda position. The consonants that cannot occur in coda position include the stops *b, ph, t̪h, kh* the fricatives *f, v, s, z*, and the affricate *ts*.

## 5 Sesquisyllabicity

Pangkhua has a set of words with sesquisyllabic structure. This word-type consists of a final heavy syllable preceded by a light and phonologically reduced first syllable. The major syllable that carries the tonal properties and prosodic prominence is always word final. The reduction of the non-final vowel in the first syllable and the prosodic prominence of the word-final syllable makes this type of words a disyllabic iamb. Most sesquisyllabic words are nouns and quite a few relate to body parts though their semantics widely vary. A good number sequisyllabic words can also function as adjectival verbs (see §7.2). In my collection of more than 3000 words, at least 127 words were found to have sesquisyllabic structure. See APPENDIX B in Akter (2022) for a full list of Pangkhua sesquisyllabic words. Table 8 presents a list of a few sesquisyllabic words:

| Syllable-structure | Word | Gloss |
|---|---|---|
| VC.CV: | ənhu: | ‘hot’ |
| VC.CVV | ənd̪əu | ‘war’ |
| VC.CVC | ənd̪ak | ‘eggplant’ |
| VC.CVVC | ənriaŋ | ‘poor’ |
| CV.CV: | rənu: | ‘breast’ |
| | səkhi: | ‘deer’ |
| CV.CVC | mət͡sal | ‘forehead’ |
| | rəsɑm | ‘wash’ |
| CV.CVVC | mət͡suap | ‘lung’ |
| | rəhuan | ‘gardening-place’ |
| CV.CVVV | məliau | ‘harm’ |

**Table 8 – Structures of Pangkhua sesquisyllables**

## 6 Word formation and morphology

In Pangkhua, words can be categorized as monosyllabic roots, multisyllabic roots, unproductive prefixed roots, and root-root compounds. Thus, stem formation (pre-inflectional word formation) involves four main types of structure: [MONOSYLLABIC ROOT], [MULTISYLLABIC ROOTS], [PREFIXED ROOTS], and [ROOT-ROOT COMPOUNDS]. Table 9 summarizes them.

| Monosyllabic root | Multisyllabic root | Prefixed-root | Compound |
|---|---|---|---|
| *u* ‘husband’s elder brother’ | *hɒireŋ* ‘remember’ | *ən-ru* ‘thief’ | *ʈuibur* ‘water bottle’ (*ʈui* ‘water’, *bur* ‘bottle’) |
| *lu* ‘head’ | *kʰuanim* ‘cloud’ | *mə-kal* ‘kidney’ | *lukʰu* ‘hat’ (*lu* ‘head’, *kʰu* ‘cover’) |
| *kʰal* ‘ride’ | *inrinni* ‘Saturday’ | *rə-van* ‘sky’ | *mero* ‘dried meat’ (*me* ‘meat’, *ro* ‘dried’ |

**Table 9 – Basic word-formation processes in Pangkhua**

Pangkhua has both free morphemes and bound morphemes. Bound morphemes include affixes, clitics, and roots. Affixes are mostly suffixes and clitics can be proclitics or enclitics. In (3) and (4), *kəi* ‘1.SG.SUBJ, *muʔ* ‘see’, *nɒl* ‘again’, *ʈhiam* ‘story’, *ril* ‘tell’ are free morphemes as they can stand alone and can be uttered as meaningful words:

(3) *ʔinan kəi ənruha*
in=in kəi ənru=ha
house=LOC 1.SG.SUBJ thief=DEF.TOP

*kəmunɒlləu reŋ ruah*
kə=muʔ-nɒl=ləu reŋ ruah
1.SG.SUBJ=see-again=NEG yet EPIS
‘I didn’t see the thief yet again in the house.’

(4) *…ʈhiam kərilpeaʈei mitsaŋ*
ʈhiam kə=ril-pe-aʈ=ei=mi tsaŋ
story 1.SG.SUBJ=say-BEN-FUT=OBJ.PL=NZR COP
‘…I’ll tell you all this story.’

However, in (3), the word *ənru* ‘thief’, has a noun root *-ru*, which is a bound morpheme as it cannot stand by itself as a meaningful utterance. *ən-* is also a bound morpheme; unlike *-ru*, it is not a root but a grammatical morpheme, which is synchronically ‘unproductive’. The fact that it is a grammatical morpheme and not part of a disyllabic root is clear from its ability to attach to various other roots, e.g. *ənrɒl* ‘be big’, *ənriaŋ* ‘be poor’, etc. On the other hand, in *kəmunɒlləu* ‘kə=muʔ-nɒl=ləu’ ‘1.SG.SUBJ=see-again=NEG’, kə= ‘1.SG.SUBJ’, and *=ləu* ‘NEG’ are bound morphemes since they cannot stand alone and attach to a root to create a meaningful utterance. On a clitic-affix continuum, *kə=* ‘1.SG.SUBJ’ in (3) and *=ei* ‘OBJ.PL’ in (4) are more like clitics, since, among others, they have a syntactic as opposed to word-level scope and they can occur on various kinds of word class.

On the other hand, in (4), *-pe* ‘BEN’ and *-aʈ* ‘FUT’, are also bound morphemes morphemes as they cannot stand alone and must attach to a root to create a meaningful utterance. On a clitic-affix continuum, they are more like affixes since, among others, they have a word-level scope, and they occur on only one kind of word class (e.g., verb).

Based on the examples above, we can draw a clear division between words on the one hand and morphemes on the other, and between free morphemes and bound morphemes. Further, we can also subdivide the bound morphemes into clitics and affixes. Table 10 summarizes these morphological units in Pangkhua:

| Freedom | Type | Category | Example | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Free | word | lexical | *ʈhiam* | ‘story’ |
| | | grammatical | *kəi* | ‘1.SG.SUBJ’ |
| Bound | root | lexical | *ru* | ‘thief’ |
| | clitic | proclitic | *kə=* | ‘1.SG.SUBJ’ |
| | | enclitic | *=ei* | ‘OBJ.PL’ |
| | affix | suffix | *-pe* | ‘BEN’ |
| | | suffix | *-aʈ* | ‘FUT’ |

**Table 10 – Morphological units in Pangkhua**

## 7 Word classes

The basic Pangkhua words are noun and verb. Adverb is also an open word class and include both derived adverbials and lexical adverbs. Adjectives are not a ‘fully developed’ word-class and are best considered as a subclass of verb.

### 7.1. Noun and verb

Nouns and verbs can be diagnostically distinguished based on the respective behavior in predicative functions. Nouns may occur as clause complement (CC) but cannot head a predicate. In (5), the noun *luŋ* ‘stone’ can occur as a clause-complement but cannot occur as a predicate head (6):

(5) *ɒhihihi luŋ*
ɒ=hi=hi=hi luŋ
DEM=PROX=PROX=PROX stone
‘This is a **stone**.’

(6) * *ɒhihihi luŋaʈ*
ɒ=hi=hi=hi luŋ-aʈ
DEM=PROX=PROX=PROX stone-FUT
‘This is a **stone**.’

Only a verb can occur as a predicate head and can be inflected for tense (7):

(7) *ɒhihihi əkalaʈ*
ɒ=hi=hi=hi ə=kɑl-aʈ
DEM=PROX=PROX=PROX 3.SG.SUBJ=walk-FUT
‘This will **walk**.’

Further, unlike verbs, only a noun as clause subject can be modified by the existential negator *bei* ‘NEG.EXIST’ (8) but a verb cannot (9). On the other hand, only a verb can be negated by the declarative clause negator *=ləu* ‘NEG’(10) but a noun cannot (11).

(8) *ʔanbei*
ɑn **bei**
curry **NEG.EXIST**
'There's **no** curry.'

(9) * *ɒhihihi əkalbei*
ɒ=hi=hi=hi ə=kɑl bei
DEM=PROX=PROX=PROX 3.SG.SUBJ=go NEG.EXIST
'This does**n't** run.'

(10) *ʔɒhihihi əkalləu*
ɒ=hi=hi=hi ə=kɑl=**ləu**
DEM=PROX=PROX=PROX 3.SG.SUBJ=go=NEG
'This does**n't** run.'

(11) * *ʔanləu*
ɑn **ləu**
curry **NEG**
'There's **no** curry.'

Other distributional properties that distinguish nouns from verbs are as follows: nouns can be modified by demonstratives, gender, augmentative/diminutive, multiplicative, and another noun. Nouns can also function as arguments. Verbs, on the other hand, can be modified by tense, aspect, and modal markers, comitative applicative, and adverb. Verbs can also be marked for participants (see §9).

### 7.2. Adjectival verbs

Pangkhua does not have a dedicated word class of adjectives. The adjectival functions are accomplished by stative verbs. However, stative verbs functioning as adjectives show at least two distinct structural and distributional properties that separate them from prototypical verbs. First, unlike prototypical verbs (e.g., *zel* 'hit', *ʈha* 'kill', *ʈhɒn* 'move', etc.), stative verbs in their citation forms have always (the unproductive) *ə/ən-* nominalizer in word-initial position. Thus, *ənrɒl* 'be.big', *ənhuai* 'be.beautiful', *əlum* 'be.hot' (object), *əɖai* 'be.cold' (weather), etc. Second, unlike prototypical verbs, which normally take person marking and can be inflected for TAM, stative verbs in their modifying (as opposed to predicative) functions usually does not take person marking and and can never be inflected for TAM. (12) shows that stative verbs in their predicative functions are normally argument marked like other prototypical verbs. However, (13) shows that in modifying functions, a stative verb can occur without person marking. Finally, (14) shows that a stative verb in its modifying functions cannot be inflected for TAM.

(12) *luŋ ətsaŋ*
luŋ ə=**tsɑŋ**
stone 3.SG.SUBJ=**be.hard**
'The stone **is hard**.'

(13) *luŋ tsaŋmi hɒŋpekrɒh*
luŋ **tsɑŋ**-mi hɒŋ=pek-rɒh
stone **be.hard**-NZR 1.OBJ=give-IMP.SG
'Give me the hard stone.'

(14) * *luŋtsaŋaʈmi hɒŋpekrɒh*
luŋ **tsɑŋ**-ɑʈ=mi hɒŋ=pek-rɒh
stone **be.hard**-FUT-NZR 1.OBJ=give-IMP.SG
'Give me the stone that will be hard.' / 'Give me the hardening stone.'

### 7.3. Adverb

Pangkhua adverbs include derived adverbials and lexical adverbs. In derived adverbials, the morphological adverbializer *-kən* occurs on a verb to derive an adverbial phrase (advp), which can modify a verb. The functions of morphological adverbials are restricted to describing manner of an action. Lexical adverbs are roots that can express manner (*yaŋ* 'in this way'), time (*ʈua* 'now'), frequency (*nɒl* 'again'), and addition (*seŋ* 'too'). Considering all these various functions, adverbs are the most diverse among all word classes conforming to a cross-linguistic tendency (Givón 2001: 87, Hetterle 2015: 23). (15) illustrates a morphologically derived adverbial:

(15) *...əʔen [ziarkən] əkal khalviŋ*
ə=en [ziɑr-kən]$_{ADVP}$ ə=kɑl-khɑl-viŋ
3.SG.SUBJ=look be.innocent-**MAN** 3.SG.SUBJ=go-CMPL-PRF
'...looking **innocently**, he went away.'

## 8 Noun phrase

Noun phrase can be headed by a proper noun head, a pronominal head, or a nominal head. Proper name headed noun phrases can take definiteness markers for discourse-pragmatic functions even though proper names are referentially unique. (16) illustrates this with the proper noun 'Manbo' marked for topic and definiteness apparently for the purpose of reactivating and emphasizing an old topic:

(16) *...hanan saŋ ʔaɖeŋsinʈih*
hɑ=in=in sɑŋ ə=ɖeŋ=sin=ʈi
DEM=LOC=LOC.EMP paddy 3.SG.SUBJ=grind=HAB=REP

*manbəutsu haha kham tseklo viŋ...*
**mɑnbəu**=tsu=hɑ=hɑ khɑm tsek=ləu=viŋ
**PN**=TOP=DEF=DEF too notice=NEG=PRF
'…then she (Thancher) used to grind the paddy without
Manbo too already having noticed it…'

Nominal headed noun phrases are headed by common nouns and can have both pre-head and post-head modifiers, though post-head modifiers outnumber pre-head modifiers. Pre-head modifiers include demonstratives, possessives, modifying nominals, and numerals. Post-head

modifiers include verbal adjectives, numerals, relator nouns, qualifying noun, and demonstrative, focus and topic markers. Here, only one example of a nominal headed noun phrase with a relator noun functioning as a post-head modifier is given in (17):

(17) *...ha hɒlt̪a inkum nuaiʔei burʔei*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ha | hɒl=t̪ɑ | [inkum | **nuɑi=ei**]$_{NP}$ | bur=ei |
| DEM | search=PFV | bed | **under=pl** | bottle=PL |

phəikɒkʔei ʔanmalet ver…

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| phəikɒk=ei | ən=mɑ-let | ver |
| shoe=PL | 3.PL.SUBJ=CAUS-ransack | EXHST |

‘...(he) searched all over the places under the bed, the bottles and shoes, they ransacked everything to look for (the frog)…’

## 9 Argument indexation on verbs

Pangkhua exhibits an elaborate argument indexation on verbs. Argument indexes are reduced forms of full independent personal pronouns. Pangkhua marks all subject arguments (‘**I** hit you’, ‘**You** hit me’, ‘**He** hit you’) in preverbal position. As for object arguments, Pangkhua marks 1st person object (‘**You** hit me’) and 2nd person object (‘I hit **you**’) on the verb but does not code 3rd person object (‘I hit **him**’). Thus, Pangkhua marks only SAP objects on the verb. Further, Pangkhua makes a distinction between marking 1st person object and 2nd person object. While 1st person object is marked preverbally, 2nd person object is marked postverbally. 3rd person object argument is zero-marked. Further, all animate plural object arguments are marked postverbally. Table 11 summarizes subject argument indexation on the verb and Table 12 summarizes object argument indexation on the verb:

| S/A | SG | PL |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | kə=Σ | kən=Σ |
| 2 | nə=Σ | nən=Σ |
| 3 | ə=Σ | ən=Σ |

**Table 11 – Subject argument indexation**

| O | SG | PL |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *hɒŋ=Σ* | *hɒŋ=Σ=ei* |
| 2 | *Σ=ne* | *Σ=ne=ei* |
| 3 | *Σ=∅* | *Σ=ei* |

**Table 12 – Object argument indexation**

(18)-(29) illustrate these features. (18)-(23) show the indexation of subject arguments for all three persons and singular and plural number in pre-verbal position. (24)-(26) show the indexation of object arguments with (24) illustrating the pre-verbal marking of 1st person object and (25) post-verbal marking of 2nd person object arguments, while (26) shows that the 3rd person object is zero-marked. Finally, (27)-(29) illustrate the marking of plural objects for

all three persons in post-verbal position. See Akter (to appear) for a detailed discussion of argument indexation on verbs in Pangkhua and South Central languages.

(18) *kəmune*
**kə**=muʔ=ne
**1.SG.SUBJ**=see=2.OBJ
'**I** saw you.'

(19) *kənmune*
**kən**=muʔ=ne
**1.PL.SUBJ**=see=2.OBJ
'**We** saw you.'

(20) *nəhɒŋmuʔ*
**nə**=hɒŋ=muʔ
**2.SG.SUBJ** =1.OBJ=see
'**You** saw me.'

(21) *nənhɒŋmuʔ*
**nən**=hɒŋ=muʔ
**2.PL.SUBJ** =1.OBJ=see
'**You all** saw me.'

(22) *əmune*
**ə**=muʔ=ne
**3.SG.SUBJ** =see=2.OBJ
'**He/She** saw you.'

(23) *ənmune*
**ən**=muʔ=ne
**3.PL.SUBJ** =see=2.OBJ
'**They** saw you.'

(24) *nəhɒŋmuʔ*
nə=**hɒŋ**=muʔ
2.SG.SUBJ=**1.OBJ**=see
'You saw **me**.'

(25) *kəmune*
kə=mu=**ne**
1.SG.SUBJ =see=**2.OBJ**
'I saw **you**.'

(26) *kəmuʔ*
kə=muʔ=[∅]
1.SG.SUBJ=see=[**3.OBJ**]
'I saw **him/her**.'

(27) *nəhɒŋmuʔei*
nə=**hɒŋ**=muʔ=ei
2.SG.SUBJ=**1.OBJ**=see=OBJ.PL
'You saw **us**.'

(28) *kəmuneʔei*
kə=mu=**ne**=ei
1.SG.SUBJ =see=**2.OBJ**=OBJ.PL
'I saw **you all**.'

(29) *kəmuʔei*
kə=muʔ=ei
1.SG.SUBJ=see=OBJ.PL
'I saw **them**.'

## 10 Clause

The basic order of clause constituents is SOV. (30) illustrates these features in a transitive affirmative clause:

(30) *ramŋai lalpek əzel*
**[ramŋai]**$_A$ **[lalpek]**$_O$ [ə]$_A$=zel
**PN.SUBJ** **PN.OBJ** 3.SG.SUBJ=hit
'Ramngai hit Lalpek.'

A Pangkhua clause can be either independent (main) or dependent (subordinate). Structurally, an independent clause does not depend on any other clause and can stand by itself as a meaningful

utterance. On the other hand, a dependent clause structurally depends on a main clause to be fully meaningful. Example (31) illustrates an independent clause and example (32) illustrates a dependent clause followed by an independent clause:

(31) *...t̪ua kei hakah t̪hiam kərilat̪*
t̪ua [kei hɑkɑh t̪ʰiɑm kə=ril-ɑt̪]MAIN/INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
now 1.SG.SUBJ one story 1.SG.SUBJ =tell-FUT
'Now, I'll narrate a story.'

(32) *vɒk nət̪ha intsun meː nət̪pŋ*
[vɒk nə=t̪ʰɑ intsun]DEPENDENT CLAUSE [me nə=t̪pŋ]MAIN/INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
pig 2.SG.SUBJ=kill if meat 2.SG.SUBJ=get
'If you kill pigs, you get meat.'

## 11 Clause combining

Pangkhua clause combining strategies include coordinated clauses as well as a combination of independent and adverbial clauses. Various types of adverbial clauses are time clauses, manner clauses, purpose clauses, conditional clauses, reason clauses, and concessive clauses. Multiclause also includes complement clauses.

A coordinated clause can consist of two independent main clauses coordinated by a syntactically free from as shown in (33).

(33) *vat̪eʔin əmasei sint̪ih kʰamla əhɒilət̪i*
[vɑ-t̪e=in ə=mɑ-sei=sin=t̪i]MAIN CLAUSE **kʰamla** [ə=hɒi=ləu=t̪i]MAIN CLAUSE
bird-DIM=AGT 3.SG.SUBJ=CAUS-LEARN=HAB=REP **but** 3.SG.SUBJ=know=NEG=REP
'The little bird used to teach Manbo **but** she didn't learn.'

Unlike a coordinated clause that involves two or more independent clauses, adverbial clauses are subordinate clauses that modify an entire independent clause. A prototypical adverbial clause in Pangkhua precedes the main clause and is marked by a subordinator as shown in (34).

(34) *...ŋun kut̪bi ənd̪u ʔintsun*
**[ŋun kut̪bi ən=d̪u intsun]**ADV:CL
**gold ring DETR=like if**

*ŋun kut̪bi d̪eŋ kalkət̪i*
ŋun kut̪bi d̪eŋ kɑl kə=t̪i
gold ring make do 1.SG.SUBJ=say/will
'**If/as/since (you) like a gold ring**, then I'll go make you a gold ring.'

Complement clause is a type of clause which fills an argument slot of a complement taking predicate. (35) illustrates this with a complement clause functioning as an O argument:

(35) *buh buh hɒŋpekt̪u hɒi ŋai ət̪i ruah*
**[buh buh hɒŋ=pek=t̪u]**ADV:CL hɒi ŋɑi ə=t̪i ruɑh
**rice rice 1.OBJ=give=COMP** know need 3.SG.SUBJ=say EPIS
'She (Manbo's mother) said, "(I) need to know **who gave us the rice**".'

**Symbols and abbreviations**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ˊ | high tone | EMP | emphatic |
| ˋ | low tone | EPIS | discourse episode marker |
| ˆ | rising-falling tone | EXHST | exhaustive |
| | | EXIST | existential |
| ∗ | unacceptable | FUT | future tense |
| ∗ | proto-form | HAB | habitual aspect |
| – | suffix boundary | IMP | imperative mood |
| = | clitic boundary | LOC | locative case |
| ~ | alternates with | MAN | manner adverbial |
| Ø | zero-marked | NEG | negative |
| 1 | first person | NZR | nominalizer |
| 2 | second person | O | object argument |
| 3 | third person | OBJ | object |
| ADVP | adverbial phrase | PFV | perfective aspect |
| ADVR | adverbializer | PL | plural |
| BEN | benefactive applicative | PN | proper noun |
| C | consonant | PRF | perfect aspect |
| CAUS | causative | PROX | proximal demonstrative |
| CC | complement clause | PSC | Proto-South-Central |
| CL | clause | PTH | Proto-Trans-Himalayan |
| CMPL | completive aspect | REP | reportative |
| COM | complement | SC | South-Central |
| COMP | complementizer | SG | singular |
| COP | copular verb | SUBJ | subject |
| CQ | constituent question | TAM | tense, aspect, and mood |
| DEF | definitive | TH | Trans-Himalayan |
| DEM | demonstrative | TOP | topic |
| DIM | diminutive | V | vowel |

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