



*Languages and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region (LPEHR) comprises an annual special issue of *Himalayan Linguistics* together with occasional special publications. Peer-reviewed and open-access, it focuses on linguistic and ethnographic documentation and description in the Eastern Himalaya.*

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

*A field report on Kongai language from Manipur, India*

Jessica K. Ivani

University of Zurich

### **ABSTRACT**

This contribution introduces Kongai, a hitherto unreported Trans-Himalayan (Tibeto-Burman) language spoken in Manipur, North-East India. This field report contains preliminary comparative data on Kongai linguistic properties, mainly syllable structure, rhymes, and prefixes. Additional data include the pronominal paradigm, a brief lexical comparison with some of the languages spoken in the area, and a 100-word Swadesh list.

### **KEYWORDS**

Tibeto-Burman, Manipur, phonology, lexicon

This is a contribution from *Himalayan Linguistics* Vol 22(2) – Languages and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region: 1-17.

ISSN 1544-7502

© 2024. All rights reserved.

This Portable Document Format (PDF) file may not be altered in any way.

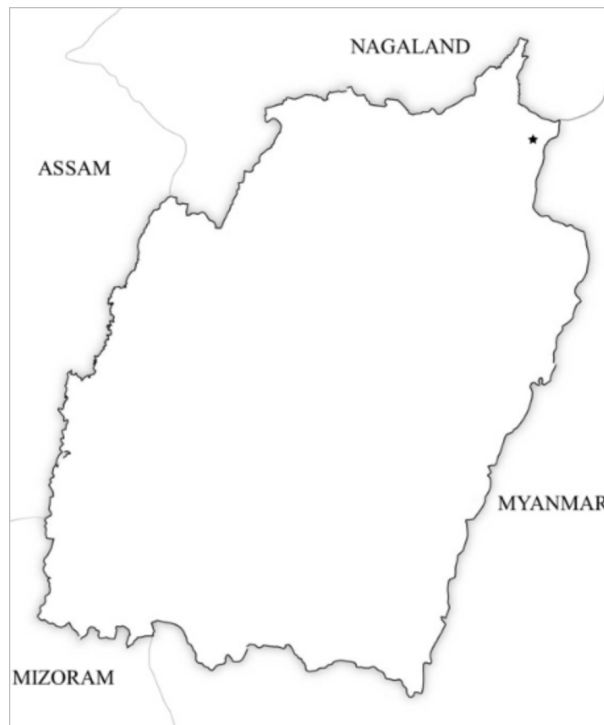
Tables of contents, abstracts, and submission guidelines are available at [escholarship.org/uc/himalayanlinguistics](https://escholarship.org/uc/himalayanlinguistics)

# *A field report on Kongai language from Manipur, India<sup>1</sup>*

**Jessica K. Ivani**  
University of Zurich

## **1 Introduction**

Kongai is a hitherto unreported and endangered Trans-Himalayan (Tibeto-Burman) language spoken in Kongai village, located in the Ukhrul district of Manipur, North-East India. The location of Kongai village within Manipur state is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 – Location of Kongai village (starred) within Manipur**

Kongai language is spoken by approximately 380<sup>1</sup> individuals belonging to the Tangkhul Naga Scheduled Tribe (2011 Indian Census). Kongai and the languages spoken nearby (such

<sup>1</sup>This research was funded by the Department of Comparative Language Science (IVS) at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and the Swiss Society for Endangered Languages (Grant type 1). I gratefully acknowledge their support here. I am grateful to the Kongai, Challow, and Suansu speaking communities for their help and encouragement. I thank Grégoire Hansen, Dagmar Jung, Kellen Parker van Dam, Taras Zakharko, as well as the reviewers, for their valuable feedback during the various stages of this work. I am solely responsible for any imprecision.

<sup>1</sup>Source: 2011 Indian Census (<https://www.census2011.co.in/>/<https://www.census2011.co.in/>).

as Suansu, Ivani 2019a, 2019b, 2022, 2023a and Challow, Ivani, this issue) are not mutually intelligible, including Tangkhul Naga, the lingua franca spoken in the region. Kongai is unattested and unmentioned in the linguistic literature.

The goal of this contribution is to introduce Kongai to the linguistic audience by offering initial insights into its phonological and lexical properties. These properties encompass syllable and word structure, including initials, rhymes, and ‘frozen’ prefixes (Section 2); the pronominal paradigm (Section 3); and the lexicon (which includes numerals, Section 4), introduced from a comparative perspective. The study concludes with a short summary (Section 5). The study also includes a Kongai 100-word Swadesh list, reported in the Appendix, along with high-quality audio files available online.<sup>2</sup>

Data for this research was collected from a Kongai male speaker in his thirties, native to Kongai and currently living in Maharashtra. The languages of the Ukhrul district used for the lexical comparison include Suansu (Ivani 2019a, 2019b, 2022, 2023a), Challow (Ivani, this issue), Huishu, East Tusom, Kachai (Mortensen 2003, 2004; Mortensen & Keogh 2011; Mortensen & Miller 2013; Mortensen & Picone 2021; Mortensen et al. 2021), and Tangkhul Naga (Arokianathan 1987, Devi 2011, Leisan 2017, among others). The findings of this study have been shared and discussed with members of the Tangkhul Naga community before finalizing the write-up of the paper, ensuring their involvement and input in the research process.

## 2 Syllable properties

### 2.1. Syllable structure

A preliminary schematic representation of Kongai syllable is presented in Figure 2.<sup>3</sup>

$$\begin{array}{c} [T] \\ (C_2) C_1 V (C_f) \end{array}$$

**Figure 2 – Preliminary representation of Kongai syllable**

In addition, the Kongai syllable includes up to two ‘frozen’ (without synchronic meaning nor grammatical function<sup>4</sup>), mainly consonantal, prefixes, often stacked and attached to the first syllable of the root. The vowel nucleus of these forms (usually a centralized vowel) often undergoes reduction (‘half’ a syllable), leading to ‘syllable and a half’ long structures, or sesquisyllabic syllables. These patterns are extremely common in Trans-Himalayan and beyond (Matisoff 2003). The formal properties and semantic distribution of these prefixes are briefly discussed in Section 2.4.

The root initial consonant ( $C_1$ ) can be either a glide or a consonant. Examples of the former include *mǎrjopi* ‘cloud’, *kǎnja* ‘to see’, *mǎnakjērǎ* ‘to be white’, *nwanle* ‘drink’, among others.

<sup>2</sup>The repository with the audio files can be found on Zenodo: Ivani Jessica K. 2023b. Kongai 100-word Swadesh list. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8338261>.

<sup>3</sup>The schema adopts the symbolic conventions of the Proto-Tibeto Burman (PTB) syllable canon illustrated in Matisoff (2003).

<sup>4</sup>Due to these properties, in the Trans-Himalayan tradition the discussion of the ‘frozen’ prefixes is usually incorporated within the phonological properties of the syllable (cf. Matisoff 2003). The data presented here follows this approach. An updated analysis and parametrization of sesquisyllabicity is proposed in Butler 2015.

Consonant clusters appear to be less common in the sample available, and comprise consonant + liquid, such as in *slanlele* ‘hear’.<sup>5</sup>

The Kongai minimal syllable consists of the vowel nucleus plus tone.<sup>6</sup> *e* ‘first person pronoun’. The vocalic nucleus (V) is followed by a restricted set ( $C_f$ ) of consonants. Kongai rhymes are briefly discussed in Section 2.3. Overall, CV syllables appear to be the most frequent in the sample at hand (accounting for more than 65%, or 109 of the 163 individuated syllables), followed by CVC structures (39 syllables out of 163), and CGV (7 syllables) structures. In what follows, I cover initials, rhymes, and prefixes.

## 2.2. Initials

The initial consonants, extracted from a small sample of Kongai monosyllabic lexical roots, include obstruents, nasals, and liquids. A preliminary comparison of Kongai initials with synchronic data from neighboring languages and established Proto Tangkhulic (hence PTK) forms<sup>7</sup> shows the relative stability of the consonants initials in Kongai when compared to the respective reconstructed PTK forms. Data is illustrated in Table 1, followed by exemplificatory lexemes.

	PTk	Kongai	Challow	Huishu	Tusom	Suansu	Kachai	Tangkhul
(1)	*k	k	k		k	k	k	k
(2)	*p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>	p <sup>h</sup>
(3)	*t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>	θ	t <sup>h</sup>	t <sup>h</sup>
(4)	*w	v	v	w	w	x	w	v
(5)	*ʃ	ʃ	ʃ	s	s	s	s	ʃ
(6)	*h	f	h	h		ɯ	h	f
(7)	*ts	ts	ts	ts	ts	t	ð	tʃ
(8)	*m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
(9)	*n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
(10)	*l	l	l	l		ɭ	l	l
(11)	*r	r	r	r	r	r	r	r

**Table 1 – Some consonant initials in Kongai and the languages of the Ukhrul district**

- (1) ‘head’, PTK \*kow; Kongai *a-ka*, Challow *pǎ-kao*, Tusom *ʔǎ-kfu*, Suansu *kə*, Kachai *ʔa-ke*, Tangkhul *ā-kui*
- (2) ‘mountain’, PTK \*p<sup>h</sup>uŋ; Kongai, Challow, Huishu, Tusom, Suansu, Kachai, Tangkhul: *kə-p<sup>h</sup>uŋ*
- (3) ‘three’ PTK \*t<sup>h</sup>um; Kongai, Challow, Huishu *kǎ-t<sup>h</sup>am*, Suansu *kə-θam*, Kachai *kə-t<sup>h</sup>um*, Tusom *ka-t<sup>h</sup>ǎ*, Tangkhul *thum*

<sup>5</sup>The Kongai speaker did not consistently produce verbs in the reportative form, as these are sometimes realized in the declarative form (as shown by the suffix *le*). In the text, I distinguish these realizations by glossing with the English infinitive the reportative forms (‘to hear’) and using a less specified gloss (‘hear’) for non-reportative realizations.

<sup>6</sup>This study does not deal with tone. An impressionistic account of the data, supported by comparative material, suggests that Kongai has distinctive lexical tone at the syllable level. To account for this uncertainty, I have enclosed the tone symbol T in Figure 1 in square brackets.

<sup>7</sup>The forms are extracted and reported verbatim from the STEDT database (<https://stedt.berkeley.edu/>), except for Suansu (Ivani 2023a) and Challow (Ivani this issue)

- (4) ‘bird’ PTK \*wa; Kongai *vǎ-tǎ*, Challow *pǎ-va*, Huishu *ʔa-p<sup>h</sup>-we*, Kachai *wu-ðu*, Tangkhul *va-naw*, Suansu *xe*
- (5) ‘blood’ PTK \*fi; Kongai *a-fi*, Challow *pǎ-fi*, Huishu *ʔa-sik*, Suansu *asu*, Kachai *ʔa-sv*, Tangkhul *ʔa-fi*, Tusom *ǎn-suu*
- (6) ‘dog’ PTK \*hwi; Kongai *fu*, Challow *t<sup>h</sup>o-huk<sup>h</sup>*, Suansu *mi*, Huishu *ʔa-huk*, Kachai *ʔa-hwi*, Tangkhul *hu*, Tusom *y*
- (7) ‘black’ PTK \*tsik; Kongai *kǎ-tsǎk*, Challow *kǎ-tsa-pǎ*, Huishu *kǎ-tsoʔ*, Suansu *a-tǎ-ke*, Kachai *k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-tsvǎk*, Tusom *kǎ-zuu*, Tangkhul *kachik*
- (8) ‘eye’ PTK \*mit; Kongai *a-mǎk*, Challow *pǎ-mak*, Huishu *ʔa-moʔ*, Kachai *ʔa-mǎk*, Tangkhul *mik*, Tusom *ʔu-muu*, Suansu *mok*
- (9) ‘ear’ PTK \*na; Kongai *a-kniǎ*, Challow *pǎ-kǎ-ni*, Huishu *ʔa-k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-ni*, Suansu *ni-kǎ*, Kachai *k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-nv*, Tangkhul *khǎ-na*, Tusom *ʔi-k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-ni*
- (10) ‘earth’ PTK \*lej; Kongai *nǎ-le*, Challow *nǎ-laj*, Huishu *ʔa-nǎ-lu*, Suansu *la*, Kachai *ŋǎ-li*, Tangkhul *ŋǎ-rǎy*
- (11) ‘bone’ PTK \*ru; Kongai *a-ru*, Challow *pǎ-ruk*, Huishu *ʔa-ruk*, Kachai *ʔa-rv*, Tangkhul *ǎ-ra*, Tusom *ʔu-ru-kuǎ*

### 2.3. Rhymes

Table 2 summarizes the consonant rhyme patterns found so far in Kongai.

V	Cf
a	
o	-k
ε	
ǎ	
o	-t
a	
o	-m
a	
o	
e	
ǎ	-n
ǎ	
i	
o	
u	
ǎ	
a	-ŋ
ǎ	
a	-r

**Table 2 – Coda consonants in Kongai**

The Kongai data available exhibits plosives, nasals, and liquids in coda position. Plosive [k] occurs after [a], e.g., *tsǎmak* ‘sun’, [o], *avok* ‘belly’, [ə], *kǎtsək* ‘black’ and [ɛ], e.g., *kəməkjek* ‘green’. Plosive [t] occurs after [ɔ], *aməkɔt* ‘smoke’. Nasal [m] occurs after [a] and [o], e.g., *kǎtʰam* ‘three’, *nevomlalak* ‘round’. Nasal velar [ŋ] is found after [ɔ̃], see *aŋiðŋ* ‘root’, [a], *nwanɽe* ‘drink’, [u], *tʰanruŋ* ‘tree’, and [ã] *akfãŋ* ‘neck’. Finally, liquid [r] is found after [a], *harfu* ‘feather’.

Kongai does not seem to add epenthetic consonants after open syllables, a typologically rare phonological process that has been observed in Huishu (on syllables ending in high vowels, Mortensen 2004), Chakpa (Huziwaru 2020), and notably Challow (Ivani, this issue), spoken in close geographical proximity to Kongai. In Challow, this process applies to open syllables ending with either high or low vowels (Ivani, this issue). Examples are illustrated in Table 3.

	PTB	PTk	Kongai	Challow	Huishu
‘blood’	*shywəy	*a.ʃi	afɪ	pəʃi	ʔa-sik
‘die’	*səy	*kəthi	tʰidze	kəthak <sup>h</sup>	kə-tik
‘one’		*kəsi	kǎʃika	kǎsǎka	kə-sik-a
‘two’	*g-nis	*kəni	kǎni	kǎnak	kʰə-nik
‘salt’	*tsyi	*məci	maci	matsak	ʔa-mə-tsik
‘bone’	*g-rus	*ʔru	aru	pəruk	a-ruk
‘breast’	*nəw	*ʔnu	an <sup>w</sup> i	pənunu	ʔa-nənuk
‘dog’	*kwəy	*hwi	fu	tʰohuk <sup>h</sup>	ʔa-huk
‘water’	*rəy	*ri	ti	ʃəruk	ʔa-ruk

**Table 3 – Open syllables in Kongai and addition of epenthetic consonants in Challow and Huishu**

## 2.4. Prefixes

Several ‘frozen’ prefixes are added to Kongai lexical roots (cf. Section 2.1), the latter showing in some cases reprefixation, where up to two stacked prefixes are attached to Kongai lexical roots. Three prefixes can be currently identified in the sample: *k<sup>(ʰ)</sup>(ə)-*, *m(ə)-* and *a-*.<sup>8</sup> The vowel nucleus of these forms is often reduced, leading to sesquisyllabic forms (cf. Section 2.1).

Kongai verbs and adjectives (the latter do not form a separate class) add the formative *k<sup>(ʰ)</sup>(ə)-* to the respective reportative forms. This formative has been included among the defining properties of the Tangkhulic linguistic group (Mortensen 2004). It is still unclear how regular and systematic this process is in Kongai, due to the quality<sup>9</sup> and the limited size of the sample. Examples include *kǎran* ‘be alive’, *kǎde* ‘be big’, and *kǎtʰar* ‘be new’.

The prefix *a-* is found quite regularly on Kongai lexical roots indicating body parts: *avok<sup>h</sup>* ‘belly’, *afi* ‘blood’, *aru* ‘bone’, *amək* ‘eye’, *aka* ‘head’, *afə* ‘tooth’, with some exceptions, such as *kadzək̚sa* ‘foot’ and *voklōn* ‘liver’. This prefix is found in other languages of the Ukhrul

<sup>8</sup>It is worth noting that often each of these prefixes does not trace back to a single form but is rather the result of distinct formatives that got merged during their diachronic path. For convenience, I discuss these forms as they surface synchronically, leaving the discussion of their histories to future research, as more data becomes available.

<sup>9</sup>Often the Kongai speaker has produced the declarative forms of verbs (characterized by the presence of the suffixed formative *le*), which lack the prefix *k<sup>(ʰ)</sup>(ə)-* used in the reportative forms.

district, such as Huishu. Exceptions include Challow, where *p(ə)-* is rather used (Ivani in press), and Suansu (Ivani 2023a), where prefixation is much less systematic and often it does not occur at all. Examples are illustrated in Table 4.

	PTk	Kongai	Challow	Huishu	Tangkhul	Suansu
‘breast’	*nu	an <sup>wi</sup>	pənunu	ʔa-nə-nuk	nu	nwi
‘nose’	*na	asə̃pə	pə̃nesu	ʔa-ni-su	ʔna <sup>1</sup> taŋ	niswa
‘skin’	*hol	ahən	pə̃fə	ʔa-hən	ə <sup>3</sup> hui	awi
‘mouth’	*mor	amasu	pə̃mansu	ʔa-mu-su	khəmor	kəmun

**Table 4 – Distribution of a- prefix in Kongai**

The prefix *m(ə)-* is found on a few verbs and adjectives, such as *kə̃məke* ‘bite’, *kə̃məka* ‘cold’, and *kə̃məkjek<sup>h</sup>* ‘green’. This prefix is most likely the oldest, given its similar distribution in the other languages of the Ukhrul district, its position closer to the lexical root, and as suggested by Trans-Himalayan protoforms: \*m-k(r)a-y ‘chew’.

### 3 Pronominal paradigm

The Kongai independent personal pronouns paradigm is illustrated in Table 5.

	SG	PL
1	e	wu (inclusive) wutsōna (exclusive)
2	nə	netsōna
3f	nələha	kojə / kojətsōna
3m	səvəha	

**Table 5 – Kongai independent personal pronouns**

Kongai independent personal pronouns distinguish singular and plural number. No information about dual marking is currently available. The third person form, used for human referents, has two separate forms for female and male human. Lexical forms are used for non-human and inanimate referents. The morpheme *ha* found in the third person singular forms *nələha* ‘he’ and *səvəha* ‘she’ might have the meaning of ‘human being, person’, as it is also found on *kwuiha* ‘child’ and *iəvanha* ‘young person’. The gender distinction found in the third person gets neutralized in the plural. The first-person plural pronoun has distinct forms that include or exclude the addressee. The plural forms include the plural marker *tsōna*, meaning ‘all’. The form *tsōna* is found across the three persons in the paradigm; its presence in the second and plural forms appears to be emphatic and optional, whereas its use in the first person overtly specifies the inclusion of the addressee.

## 4 Lexicon

### 4.1 Numerals

Kongai basic numerals are illustrated in Table 6, together with Tangkhulic reconstructed forms and synchronic data from Huishu, Suansu, and Tangkhul.

	<b>Kongai</b>	<b>PTk</b>	<b>Huishu</b>	<b>Suansu</b>	<b>Tangkhal</b>
1	kəʃika	*si	kə-sik-a	sək <sup>h</sup> a	khə
2	kəni	*ni	k <sup>h</sup> ə-nik	kəniga	<sup>3</sup> khə <sup>3</sup> n
3	kə <sup>h</sup> am	*t <sup>h</sup> um	kə-t <sup>h</sup> əm	kəθam	thum
4	maki	*ti'	mə-kik	matei	mati
5	peŋə	*ŋa	p <sup>h</sup> ə-ni'	pəŋe	pha <sup>o</sup> nga
6	ʃok	*ruk	sə-ruʔ	tʃok	thə <sup>1</sup> ruk
7	teni	*ni	t <sup>h</sup> i-nik	tsoni	shini
8	taʃsat	*ʃet	tə-tsejʔ	kəθa	tʃi <sup>1</sup> ʃət'
9	tuku	*ko	tə-ku	təku	tʃi <sup>2</sup> ko
10	serek	*ra	sə-re	tʃej	ra

**Table 6 – 1-10 numerals in Kongai and the languages of the Ukhrul district**

Kongai basic numerals are clear cognates with the respective forms found in the languages of the Ukhrul district. Numerals 1-3 exhibit the prefix *k(ə)-* added to the root, similarly to Huishu, and a prefix *m(ə)-* is added to the numeral four. Notably, the Kongai numeral for ten, *serek<sup>h</sup>*, displays a consonantal coda *-k<sup>h</sup>*: this either suggests a revision of the reconstructed PTK form or the presence of the epenthetic consonant is a later addition, similar to the process observed systematically in Huishu and Challow. This process, however, would be at the early stages in Kongai, as it has not surfaced after many attested reconstructed open syllables (as shown in Table 3 above). Further data and research are required to clarify either scenario.

#### 4.2. Kongai and the Tangkhulic language group

The existence of the Tangkhulic language group is based on several phonological processes and lexical innovations (Mortensen 2004) shared by some (but not all, notably Suansu, Ivani 2023a, and Sorbung, Mortensen & Keogh 2011) languages of the Ukhrul district. The data at hand does not allow systematic exploration of these sound processes. Lexical similarities, on the other hand, are based on a handful of shared lexemes, most of them found in the Kongai vocabulary (exceptions that require further investigation are *ladzu* ‘give’ and *kadzaksa* ‘foot’). The Tangkhulic lexical innovations<sup>10</sup> are illustrated in Table 7, with the respective forms in Kongai and other languages of the Ukhrul district. The Kongai 100-word Swadesh list is available in the Appendix.<sup>11</sup>

	<b>PTk</b>	<b>Kongai</b>	<b>Huishu</b>	<b>Tangkhal</b>	<b>Kachai</b>	<b>Suansu</b>
‘mountain’	*phuŋ	kəp <sup>h</sup> uŋ	?a.kə.phuŋ	ka.phuŋ	kə.phuŋ	kə.phuŋ
‘fish’	*khaj	kisw	?a.khejʃe	khai	khaj	kiθe
‘give’	*kə.mi	ladzu	khə.me	kə.mi	khə.mə	?a.mie
‘hand’	*pan	avan	?a.vej	pang	?a.pon	ke
‘foot’	*pej	kadzaksa	?a.phu	phai	?a.phi	pedzə

**Table 7 – Tangkhulic lexical innovations**

<sup>10</sup>The lexical innovations deemed as Tangkhulic also include the word for mushroom, PTK \*waar. This datapoint is not currently available in Kongai.

<sup>11</sup>Empty fields indicate unavailable data points. The audio files are available online (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8338261>).

## 5 Summary

This contribution introduced Kongai, a hitherto unreported and endangered Trans-Himalayan language from Manipur, North-East India. Kongai phonological and lexical properties offer an additional data point in the variation found in the languages of Indo-Myanmar border. Further research and richer data will contribute to advancing our knowledge of this complex region.

## References

- Arokianathan, S. 1987. *Tangkhul Naga Grammar*. Vol. 16 (CIIL Grammar series). Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.
- Butler, Becky. 2015. Approaching a phonological understanding of the sesquisyllable with phonetic evidence from Khmer and Bunong. In N. J. Enfield & Bernard Comrie (eds.), *Languages of Mainland Southeast Asia: The state of the art*, 443–499. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Devi, Thokchom Lakhipriya. 2011. *The Tangkhul grammar of Shangshak village*. Can- chipur: Manipur University dissertation.
- Haokip, Pauthang. 2011. The languages of Manipur: a case study of the Kuki-Chin languages. *Linguistics of the Tibeto- Burman Area* 34(1).
- Huziwara Keisuke. 2020. On the genetic position of Chakpa within Luish languages. *Himalayan Linguistics*, 19(2).
- Ivani, Jessica K. 2019a. A first overview on Suansu, a Tibeto-Burman language from Northeastern India. Paper presented at *the 29th Meeting of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (SEALS 29)*, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan 27–29 May 2019. 34.
- Ivani, Jessica K. 2019b. Suansu 250 concepts wordlist. Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3383006
- Ivani, Jessica K. 2022. Comparative constructions in Suansu and the languages of northeastern India. *Linguistic Typology at the Crossroads* 2(1). 65–93.
- Ivani, Jessica K. 2023a. Suansu language from northeastern India: A field report. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 46(1).
- Ivani Jessica K. 2023b. Kongai 100-word Swadesh list. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8338261>
- Ivani, Jessica K. 2024. Some preliminary notes on Challow, a Trans-Himalayan language from Manipur, India. *LPEHR*.
- Leisan, Apinao Reisangmi. 2017. *Grammar and Texts of Hunphun variety of Tangkhul Naga language*. University of Poona dissertation.
- Marrison, Geoffrey E. 1967. *The classification of the Naga languages of north-east India*. School of Oriental & African Studies dissertation.
- Matisoff, James A. 2003. *Handbook of Proto-Trans-Himalayan: System and Philosophy of Sino-Tibetan reconstruction*. Vol. 135. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. xlii+750.
- Mortensen, David. 2003. *Comparative Tangkhul*. University of California, Berkeley, Un-

published Manuscript.

- Mortensen, David. 2004. The emergence of dorsal stops after high vowels in Huishu. In *Annual meeting of the Berkeley linguistics society*, vol. 30, 292–303.
- Mortensen, David & Jennifer Keogh. 2011. Sorbung, an undocumented language of Manipur: its phonology and place in *Tibeto- Burman*. *JSEALS* 4. 64–114.
- Mortensen, David & Jordan Picone. 2021. East Tusom. a phonetic and phonological sketch of a largely undocumented Tangkhulic language. *Linguistics of the Tibeto- Burman Area* 44(2). 168–196.
- Mortensen, David R. & James A. Miller. 2013. A reconstruction of Proto-Tangkhulic rhymes. *Linguistics of the Tibeto- Burman Area* 36(1). 1–32.
- Mortensen, David R., Jordan Picone, Xinjian Li & Kathleen Siminyu. 2021. Tusom2021: A phonetically transcribed speech dataset from an endangered language for universal phone recognition experiments. *CoRR* abs/2104.00824.
- Pettigrew, William. 1918. *Tangkhul [Naga] grammar and dictionary*. Shillong: Assam Secretariat Printing Office. 490.
- Post, Mark W. & Robbins Burling. 2017. The Tibeto- Burman languages of northeast India. *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*. 213–242.

### Appendix: Kongai 100-word Swadesh list

ALL	tsõna
ASHES	
BARK	
BELLY	avok <sup>h</sup>
BIG	kǎde
BIRD	vǎtə
BITE	kǎmǎke
BLACK	kǎtsək
BLOOD	aʃi
BONE	aru
BREAST	an <sup>wi</sup>
BURNING	medzale
CLOUD	mǎriopi
COLD	kǎmǎka
COME	oro
DIE	t <sup>h</sup> idze
DOG	fu
DRINK	nwaŋle
DRY	t <sup>h</sup> jondze
EAR	aknio
EARTH (SOIL)	nǎle
EAT	pǎzǎnle
EGG	harti
EYE	amak
FEATHER	harfu

FIRE	me
FISH	kisui
FLY (V)	pihan'e
FOOT	kadzək̚sa
FULL	p <sup>w</sup> edze
GIVE	ladzu
GOOD	jəle
GREASE	
GREEN	kəməkjek
HAIR	akasam
HAND	avan
HEAD	aka
HEAR	sləŋlele
HEART	amat <sup>h</sup> ən
HORN (ANATOMY)	swendzi
HOT	k <sup>h</sup> əs <sup>h</sup> u
I	e
KILL	jət <sup>h</sup> ətəze
KNEE	apekə
KNOW (SOMETHING)	kət <sup>h</sup> e
LEAF	tapə
LIE DOWN	mətsamətsə
LIVER	voklön
LONG	ajəŋgəfu
LOUSE	akarak
MALE PERSON	səvəha
MANY	kətuŋga
MEAT	sə
MOON	
MOUNTAIN	kəp <sup>h</sup> uŋ
MOUTH	amasu
CLAW OR NAIL	avanpətan
NAME	amuŋ
NECK	akfũŋ
NEW	kət <sup>h</sup> ar
NIGHT	
NOSE	asijə
ONE	kəʃika
PERSON	
RAIN (PRECIPITATION)	kədzan
RED	akəfaŋ
ROAD	sote
ROOT	aŋiöŋ
ROUND	nevomlalak
SAND	ʃit <sup>h</sup> ə
SAY	
SEE	kəŋja
SEED	at <sup>h</sup> e
SIT	
SKIN	ahən

SLEEP	jeptase
SMALL	kǎtin
SMOKE (EXHAUST)	aməkɔt
STAND	kǎnedzaŋ
STAR	ʃira
STONE	luŋ
SUN	tsǎmak
SWIM	
TAIL	akǎme
THAT	andza
THIS	atsa
THOU	nɔ
THREE	kǎt <sup>h</sup> am
TONGUE	amǎle
TOOTH	afə
TREE	t <sup>h</sup> anruŋ
TWO	kǎni
WATER	tɪ
WE (INCLUSIVE)	wu
WHAT	keku
WHITE	mənakjerə
WHO	t <sup>h</sup> u
WOMAN	ʃuniha
YELLOW	