



Thulung Rai

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Thulung Rai
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1. Introduction

Thulung Rai is a Kiranti language spoken by about a thousand people in Eastern Nepal. The dialect represented here is that of Mukli. Mukli is near the confluence of the Solu Khola and Dudh Khosi rivers, and the village is spread out over a hillside at an average elevation of 1500 m.

The language is in a situation of what I estimate to be ‘intense’ contact (using Thomason and Kaufman’s standards, 1988: 83) with Nepali. Lexical borrowing is widespread, and there is also a good deal of structural borrowing. This is due to the fact that most speakers are bilingual with Nepali. There do not appear to be any fluent speakers younger than 20.

N. Allen spent several years in the village of Mukli in the early 1970’s and produced a Sketch of Thulung Grammar (1975). This is a particularly valuable document in light of the changes which have come about in the last thirty years. Ebert has also incorporated Thulung data gathered from Allen’s texts into her comparative analyses of Kiranti languages (such as 1994).

2. Phonology

Initial consonants (in native words)

| | unvoiced | unvoiced aspirated | voiced | voiced aspirated | nasal |
|-------------|------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|-------|
| glottal | ʔ | | | | |
| velar | k | kh | g | | ŋ |
| affricate | ts | tsh | dz | dzh | |
| dental | t | th | d | dh | n |
| retroflex | | | ɖ | | |
| labial | p | ph | b | bh | m |
| continuants | h, s, l, r | | | | |
| semi-vowels | j, w | | | | |

Final consonants

k ʈ p ŋ n m l r

Vowels

i y e a ɔ o ʊ u

Vowel length

Allen marks length distinctions in vowels, but I do not consider vowel length to be distinctive in the modern language. While some speakers sometimes produced minimal pairs distinguishing vowel length in some words, these length distinctions were not found to be consistent. This may be the influence of Nepali, which does not have long vowels.

Diphthongs

ai, au, eu, ɔi, ɔu, ɯi, ui

Falling diphthongs are considered to be glide plus vowel combinations, as they can occur word-initially (while rising diphthongs cannot).

In the syllable canon below, diphthongs are represented by the single V, but never occur with a preceding glide.

Tone

Allen reports finding certain pairs of words for which “the most obvious difference was that in... one member was pronounced faster and in a more fortis manner.” (1975: 32) He describes these words “as having tense tone” and the other member of the pair as having “lax tone.” He goes on to point out that “the great majority of Thulung words are not members of such minimal pairs and sounded equally natural... whether pronounced tense or lax.” (ibid.) I found no examples of tonal contrast, even in the pairs listed in Allen. Presumably the traces of tonal contrast disappeared under pressure from Nepali.

Syllable canon

(Ci) (liquid) (glide) V (Cf)

3. Typological summary

Salient typological features of Thulung include the following:

- Basic S O V order.
- Nouns can be inflected for dual or plural number.
- Morphological ergative split, with ergative marking for second plural, third persons and other NPs.
- Verbs are inflected for person and number, with up to two arguments marked.

4. Basic sentences

4.1. Intransitives

A basic intransitive sentence has an unmarked subject and a verb agreeing with it in person and number.

1. a-wotsy pakha lɔ-mri
1POSS-husband outside go-3sP:PST
‘My husband went outside.’

There are several types of predication with the copula, which also agrees with the subject.

Equative predication

2. mɯ mytsy a-pap-ku ŋopsɯ bu
that man 1POSS-father-GEN friend be:3s
‘That man is my father’s friend.’

Locational predication

3. gumi neb-ra bu-mi
3sP house-LOC be-3sP
‘She is at home.’

Existential predication

4. dher protsu sama bu
 many Rai caste be:3s
 'There are many Rai castes.'

Possessive predication

5. go-nun dokpu dzahan bu
 1s-COM big family be:3s
 'I have a big family.'

4.2 Transitives

Thulung has ergative marking in transitive sentences, but with a split conditioned by person and number: agents are nominative, with no overt marking, if they are from the class 1s, 1de, 1di, 1pe, 1pi, 2s, 2sP, 2d, and they are marked with ergative *-ka* if they are 2p, 3s, 3sP, 3d, 3p and any other NP.

There is also primary object marking: *-lai* marks the animate object of monotransitives (always when human, sometimes when non-human) and the recipient of ditransitives.

Monotransitive

6. go mag djo-uto
 1s mug drop-1s/3s:PST
 'I dropped the mug.'

7. go mam-lai tsum dwak-pu
 1s mother-DAT much like-1s/3s
 'I like my mother a lot.'

8. i-lwak-ka i-mam-lai khlui
 2POSS-y.sibling-ERG 2POSS-mother-DAT help:3s/3s
 'Your younger sibling helps your mother.'

Ditransitive

9. mam-ka u-tsuu-tsi-lai po-mu-thok gwak-ty
 mother-ERG 3POSS-children-DU-DAT eat-INF-stuff give-3s/3s:PST
 'The mother gave her two children food.'

10. go a-mam-lai tsu gwak-tomi
 1s 1POSS-mother-DAT child give-1s/3sP:PST
 'I gave the child to my mother.'

4.3 Experiencer constructions

Experiencer constructions are those for which the experiencer is expressed with dative marking and the verb has 3s (agent) agreement.

11. go-lai kwara ly-ra
 1s-DAT thirst feel-3s:PST
 I am thirsty

12. go-lai tsoktsho bok-ta

1s-DAT anger arise-3s:PST
'I am angry.' ('Anger arose in me.')

13. go-lai bira nim ly-ra
1s-DAT leech fear feel-3s:PST
'I am afraid of leeches.'

5. The Noun Phrase

5.1. Word and affix order

Thulung has the following basic word order in the noun phrase:

DEM NUM Classifier Adjective poss-N-case
N-GEN

Nouns can be marked for number (5.4), for case (5.8), and pragmatic status (5.9).

Modifiers can also function as nouns, and can be any of the following categories:

demonstrative

numeral (+ classifier)

adjective

relative clause

possessive pronoun, possessor-GEN

place-LOC-NOM

5.2. Pronouns

Thulung has a fairly complete set of pronouns, with dual forms, an inclusive/exclusive distinction, and polite forms (marked 2sP and 3sP for 2 singular polite and 3 singular polite respectively.)

1s go, 1de gutsuku, 1di gutsi, 1pe guku, 1pi gui

2s gana, 2sP gani, 2d gatsi, 2p ganimim

3s gu, 3sP gumi, 3d gutsi, 3p gumimim

Allen noted that polite forms were sometimes used, whereas this now seems to be a fairly well-established pattern. The polite forms are based on what were, in Allen's time, plural forms, and the plurals have been reinforced by the plural morpheme.

5.3. Demonstratives

Thulung has proximal, *o/oram*, and distal, *mw/muram* (also *meram*), demonstratives. The demonstratives can also be used for third person referents, optionally with dual and plural forms formed with the corresponding suffixes (*-tsip* and *-mim* respectively).

5.4. Numerals, number

5.4.1. Numerals and classifiers

Native numerals go up to 'three' for most speakers, and are *ko*, *no*, *su* ('1', '2', '3' respectively). The etymon for 'four' (*blu*) appears in some temporal expressions (*bluhaqda* 'in four years', *blunem* 'four days ago', *blu* 'in four years', *bluna* 'four years ago') but is not used with the remaining classifiers.

The only classifier seen with any frequency is the generic classifier *-le*, and this appears in combination with the three remaining native numbers. The classifier is not used when what is being counted are periods of time, such as year, week, day, in which case numerals occur alone.

The exception to this is *ko-lem*, *nɔ-lem*, *su-lem*, used for ‘one day’, ‘two days’ and ‘three days’ respectively. Another somewhat productive classifier is *-phe* used for counting generally round objects, such as coins, bananas, bread.

5.4.2. Number

The plural marker, *-mim*, is used to pluralize nouns, and its use with pronouns appears to be a new phenomenon, calqued on the Nepali. The distribution of the pluralizer *-mim* is as follows (and presumably the dual patterns paralelly, although I have fewer data on its distribution): it is an optional plural marker, but there is a scale in the frequency of appearance with certain noun classes. It appears most frequently with kin terms, where its use is fairly consistent, although examples are found where it is ommitted. It is optional but generally used with non-kin humans, and considerably less frequent with non-human animates, such as herd animals. It tends not to appear very frequently with inanimate nouns (but this depends on the speaker). The same distribution applies to the dual marker *-tsip*.

5.5. Adjectives

Adjectives in Thulung are defined by requiring no genitive or nominalizing material to appear attributively. There is a small class of lexical adjectives, which are given in the following list, while the biggest class of adjectives are deverbal, seen at the end of this section.

khrekhreja ‘bumpy, rough’

plɔplɔja ‘smooth’

ɖokpu ‘big’

jakke ‘small’

ɲatsɯ ‘old’

malomts ‘young’

happa ‘much’

The color terms are based on a reduplicative pattern, which seems to be uniquely restricted to colors.

lalam ‘red’

gigim ‘green’

kekem ‘black’

ʔoʔom ‘yellow’

bubum ‘white’

nunum ‘blue’

The following adjectives are deverbal, being non-past participial forms, for which not all input verbs are synchronically recognizable.

jepa ‘high’ <jemsimu ‘to stand’

dhypa ‘long’

teɽpa ‘smart’

tsapa ‘strong’ <tsammu ‘be able’

dzuupa ‘good’

tshɔkpa ‘cold’

dzalpa ‘hot’

tsisiŋpa ‘wet’
 saŋpa ‘dry’ <samu, ‘to dry’
 khepa ‘bitter’ <khemu, ‘to be bitter’
 brɔpa ‘tasty’ <brɔmu, ‘to have taste’
 lempa ‘sweet’ <lemmu, ‘to lick’
 dukpa ‘spicy’
 dzyrpa ‘sour’

5.6. Possession

5.6.1. Pronominal possession

Each person has a generic possessive prefix.¹ This prefix is unspecified for number, and can be used for singular, dual and plural referents. There is also a possessive pronoun for each person, which can be used pronominally or as an independent nominal. They appear to be combinations of the prefix and a nominalizing element. Like the prefixes, the forms given in the table below are unspecified for number.

| | | |
|----------|----|-----|
| 1 person | a- | ama |
| 2 person | i- | ima |
| 3 person | u- | uma |

These prefixes and possessive pronouns can also be specified for number with the addition of a suffix: *atsi-/atsima* (1de), *aki-/akima* (1pe), *itsi-/itsima* (1di), *iki-/ikima* (1pi), *itsi-/itsima* (2d), *ini-/inima* (2p or 2sP), *utsi-/utsima* (3d), *uni-/unima* (3p or 3sP).

The prefixes are most often seen with first person prefixes and pronouns, but occasionally with second and third persons as well.

5.6.2. Genitive marking

Dependent-GEN Head is the structure of the possessed noun phrase.

The genitive marker is interchangeably *-ku* or *-kam*.

14. je-ku rɔŋ
 clothes-GEN color
 ‘the colour of the clothes’

15. gai-kam gunu
 cow-GEN inside
 ‘the inside of the cow’

When the head noun is a body part or kin term, the head can optionally be marked with the possessive pronoun in addition to the genitive marker on the dependent.

16. bwa-kam u-bwi
 pig-GEN 3POSS-head
 ‘the pig’s head’

¹ I believe these to be prefixes, but have found one example where it behaved like a clitic:

a- okpu ts ‘my big child’. Quite possibly *okpu ts* is interpreted by this speaker to be a single lexical element, corresponding to English ‘eldest’.

17. po-ku u-suu
 chicken-GEN 3POSS-meat
 ‘chicken meat’

There is also a special subset of possessed NPs: possessed time words are marked differently, and take *-m* or *-mim* (*-mim* postconsonantly).

18. nemtha-m dzam
 evening-NOM rice
 ‘the evening meal’

19. anep-mim din
 today-NOM2 day
 ‘today’s days (these days)’

5.7. Relative clauses

There are two means of relativizing, one construction being based on a finite verb followed by a nominalizer, and the other on a participial form.

5.7.1. *-m/-mim* relativization

This type is based on a finite verb. DeLancey (2002) has noted that “relativization in TB is a subspecies of clausal nominalization” and this applies to Thulung, where the relative markers are in fact nominalizers. The distribution of these nominalizers in relativization is as follows: *-m* is used for general relativization, in all cases (past and non-past) except for with mono-syllabic verbs; *-mim* is only used for the non-past, and always for mono-syllabic verbs.

20. [go khok-to-m/*-mim] dzam brɔpa bai-ra
 1s cook-1s/3s:PST-NOM/NOM2 rice good be-3s:PST
 ‘The food I cooked was good.’

21. [go dwak-pu-m/-mim] kitab gani-lai gwa-gwa
 1s like-1s/3s-NOM/NOM2 book 2sP-DAT give-give
dwa.
 like:3s/3s
 ‘I want to give you a book I like.’

22. [gui si-i-mim /*-m] din
 1pi die-1pi-NOM2/NOM day
 ‘the day we die’

The original distribution (according to Allen) appears to be based on tense, with *-mim* for non-past and *-m* for past, but the distribution is now partly phonologically conditioned.

5.7.2. *-pa/-ma* relativization

This type is based on a participle, either non-past (*-pa*) or past (*-ma*). The main semantic difference is that in a participial relative, the participants need not be specified. (In *-m/-mim* relativization, the verb agreement shows who the participants are.)

23. [nem bane-pa] a-lwak
 house make-Npst.PRT 1POSS-y.sibling

‘my brother who builds houses’

24. khok-ma dzam
cook-Pst.PRT rice
‘cooked rice (by anyone)’

5.8. Case markers

Ergative *-ka* (exs 8, 9)

Instrumental *-ka* (see also causal, 7.4.)

25. ganimim-ka muu mi-honpa betho-ka mi-dzhak-ni
2p-ERG that NEG-sharp knife-INSTR NEG-cut-2p/3s
‘You should not cut wood with that blunt knife.’

Dative *-lai* (exs 7, 9, 11)

Genitive *-ku*, *-kam* (see 5.6.2.)

Locative *-ra*, but also *-nu* (same level), *-la* (high), *-jy* (low)

Locative *-ra* (see also purposive, 7.3.)

26. go iskul-ra angredzi si-pu
1s school-LOC English teach-1s/3s
‘I teach English at the school.’

Level locative *-nu*

27. Deusa-nu-m Darim Popnar ra-ma dadzju
Deusa-levLOC-NOM Darim Popnar call-Pst.PRT o.brother
bhai noktsho get-tsi.
y.brother shaman come.up-3d:PST
‘A pair of brother magicians from across at Deusa, called Darim and Popnar, came up.’

High locative *-la*

28. Lukla ra-ma fau-la
Lukla call-Pst.PRT place-hiLOC
‘In the place up from here called Lukla’

Low locative *-jy*

29. gumi-ka bloku-jy-m ku khe-saka pem-thal-miri
3p-ERG river-loLOC-NOM water bring-AC drink-3p-HAB-3p/3s:PST
‘They brought the water from down in the river and were drinking it.’

Comitative *-num*

30. go pap-num bu-nu
1s father-COM be-1s
‘I live with my father.’

Ablative *-lam*, *-lanpa*

31. ba-lam/lan̩ka rok-na-m
 where-ABL come-2s:PST-NOM
 ‘Where have you come from?’

5.9. Discourse markers

5.9.1. Topic *ne*, Focus *re*

The topic marker signals given information, in contrast to the focus marker which marks new information. They appear after whatever case marker may be required by the grammatical context.

The contrast between the two is best seen in examples where they both appear.

32. ɔsind̩a ne mytsy re bu-mi tsha
 here TOP man FOC be-3p be
 ‘There’s a man here!’ (indicating surprise, as noone was present before)
33. go ne bia re be-uto
 1s TOP marriage FOC do-1s/3s:PST
 ‘I got married.’ (said to someone who hasn’t seen me since)

The topic and focus markers need not appear in the same sentence, and there are numerous examples of their occurring independently of one another.

5.9.2. Contrast *tsahi*

The contrast marker is borrowed from Nepali. It is used to set up a contrast between several entities, in which case all are marked with *tsahi*, or between a marked entity and a reference point obvious from context, as in the following.

34. khlea-ka tsahi mu boʃol-gunu u-bwi phik-y.
 dog-ERG CONTR that bottle-inside 3POSS-head stick.in-3s/3s:PST
 ‘The dog stuck his head inside the bottle.’

The entity with which *khlea* is contrasted is the other participants in the story, who are carrying on other activities.

5.9.3. Emphasis marker *-ŋa*

The emphasis marker can be affixed to adverbs and adjectives as well as noun phrases, and generally emphasizes the marked element. For NPs the result is similar to the focus marker, highlighting the new information.

35. oram je-ku rɔŋ go-ŋa tshen-to-m
 this clothes-GEN colour 1s-EMPH choose-1s/3s:PST-NOM
 ‘I am the one who chose the colour of these clothes.’

6. The Verb Phrase

6.1. Word and affix order

Adverb negation-verb-directional-aspectivizer-agreement/non-finite-hearsay

6.2. Adverbs

Adverbs are very limited in number, and express manner (*wakha* ‘slowly’, *dala* ‘fast’) and extent (*tsuum* ‘much’, *kitsuu* ‘little’).

There is another means of expressing manner on a verb: a limited number of verbs can take a particular prefix on the root, to express that the action is carried out suddenly. These adverbial prefixes are not productive, and are limited to the particular verb they occur with. They may have their origins in some kind of onomatopoeic expression.

Examples:

buŋ-swa-mu ‘to flee rapidly, suddenly’, cf *swa-mu* ‘to flee (vi)’

la-than-mu ‘to pull out quickly’, cf *than-mu* ‘to pull out (vt)’

puli-tshar-mu ‘to make something fall quickly’, cf *tshar-mu* ‘to make fall (vt)’

tsha-gro-mu ‘to throw immediately’, cf *gro-mu* ‘to throw (vt)’

tsuu-krwa-mu ‘to push in violently, suddenly’, cf *krwa-mu* ‘to push into (vt)’

leb-bo-mu ‘to throw someone down violently during a fight’

thoŋ-kon-mu ‘to drench all of a sudden’, cf *kon-mu* ‘to make wet (vt)’

6.3. Negation

Negation is a prefix to the verb. It has the form *mi-*.

In order to negate past forms of verbs, extra material is needed: the irrealis marker is suffixed to the finite non-past verb form.

36. mi-lwa-ku-wa vs. lwat-toko
NEG-see-1pe/3s-IRR see-1pe/3s:PST
We did not see it. We saw it.

37. mi-lɔ-ŋ-wa vs. lɔ-ŋro
NEG-go-1s-IRR go-1s:PST
I did not go. I went.

6.4. Verb

The verb has a monosyllabic root.

A multisyllabic stem can occur when the root is augmented by an aspectivizer (this is a category of suffixes which appear to be derived from full verbs and which cover, in addition to aspectual shadings, valence increasing and decreasing morphology—see 6.7.). The root can also be augmented into a bisyllabic stem by suffixing a directional. This is a set of suffixes which combine with the verb *romu* ‘to come’, specifying the vertical dimension involved. In some cases these are compounds, and the suffix identifiably comes from a motion verb, in other cases, the origin of the suffix is lost.

The compounds formed are limited to the following list:

rojomu ‘to arrive here from up above’ (*jomu* ‘to come down’)

rogemu ‘to arrive here from down below’ (*gemu* ‘to come up’)

rothimu ‘to arrive there (from any direction)’

rophamu ‘to arrive here (from any direction)’

robimu ‘to arrive here (from any direction)’ (*bimu* ‘to come’)

6.5. Agreement

6.5.1. Agreement paradigms

Verbs have a suffixal agreement slot, and the agreement suffixes can encode up to two participants. The suffixes are portmanteau morphemes that also encode tense. For intransitives, the only participant is encoded, for monotransitives, the agent and patient, and for ditransitives, the agent and the recipient.

There are however cases in which it looks like it is the primary object is unmarked on the verb, but this appears to be an omission of the distinctive number marker rather than the marking of a single argument. The following example shows that even within the same sentence, verbs with the same arguments can show a shift in marking. (The relevant suffixes are marked in bold: the action clearly refers to a 3s agent and 3d patient, yet some verbs have 3s patient suffixes.)

38. mesimma pet-tsi-m patshi **thok-tytsi**, lo-ry-ma
 then eat-3d/3s:PST-NOM after hide-3s/3d:PST take-3s/3s:PST-AS
- thok-ty-ma** phoka-ka njak-tytsi-ʔe
 hide-3s/3s:PST-AS ash-INSTR cover-3s/3d:PST-HS

‘Then after they ate, she hid them, she took [them] and hid [them] and covered them in ashes.’

Similarly, the verbal marking in the following example makes it seem like it is the patient, and not the recipient, which is used for verb agreement, but it appears to be the same type of phenomenon as in 39.

39. mam-ka u-tsuu-tsi-lai po-mu-ʔhok gwak-ty
 mother-ERG 3POSS-children-DU-DAT eat-INF-stuff give-3s/3s:PST
 ‘The mother gave her two children food.’

The language has different agreement paradigms for past and non-past.

Table 1: Intransitive personal endings, non-past and past

| | Non-past | Past |
|---------|----------|--------|
| 1s | -ŋu | -ŋoro |
| 1de | -tsuku | -tsoko |
| 1di | -tsi | -tsi |
| 1pe | -ku | -toko |
| 1pi | -ɖi | -ɖi |
| 2s | -na | -na |
| 2d | -tsi | -tsi |
| 2sP, 2p | -ni | -ni |
| 3s | | -ɖa |
| 3d | -tsi | -tsi |
| 3sP, 3p | -mi | -miri |

Table 2: Non-past intransitive personal endings

| Pat▶ Ag▼ | 1s | 1de | 1di | 1pe | 1pi | 2s | 2d | 2sP, 2p | 3s | 3d | 3sP, 3p |
|-------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|------------|----|-------|------------|
| 1s | | | | | | -ni | -nitsi | -nini | -u | -utsi | -umi |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|--------------------|--------|-----------------|-------|--------|---------------------|------------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1de | | | | | | -tsuku | | | | | |
| 1di | | | | | | | | | -tsi | | |
| 1pe | | | | | | -ku | | | | | |
| 1pi | | | | | | | | | -i | -itsi | -i |
| 2s | -ḡi | -ḡitsi / -tsiki | | -ki | | | | | -na | | |
| 2d | -ḡitsi | -tsiki | | -tsiki | | | | | -tsi | | |
| 2sP, 2p | -ḡini | -kini | | -kini | | | | | -ni | | |
| 3s | -ḡi | -ḡitsi/ -tsiki | -tsiki | -ki | -sa | -na | -na | -nimi | -y | -ytsi | -ymi |
| 3d | -ḡitsi | -ḡitsi/ -tsiki | -sa | -sa/ -kini | -sami | -natsi | -natsi | -nimi/ -nitsi | -ytsi | -ytsi | -ytsi |
| 3sP, 3p | -ḡimi | -tsiki | -sami | -sami/ -kimi | -sami | -nami | -nitsi/ -natsimi | -nimi | -mi | -ytsi/ -mi | -mi |

Table 3: Past transitive personal endings

| Pat▶ Ag▼ | 1s | 1de | 1di | 1pe | 1pi | 2s | 2d | 2sP, 2p | 3s | 3d | 3sP, 3p |
|-------------|----------|------------------|--------------------------|---------|----------|--------|----------|------------|--------|--------|------------|
| 1s | | | | | | -ni | -nitsi | -nini | -to | -totsi | -tomi |
| 1de | | | | | | -tsoko | | | | | |
| 1di | | | | | | | | | -tsi | | |
| 1pe | | | | | | -toko | | | | | |
| 1pi | | | | | | | | | -li | | |
| 2s | -ḡiri | -tsiki | | -tiki | | | | | -na | -natsi | -nami |
| 2d | -ḡiritsi | -tsiki | | | | | | | -tsi | | |
| 2sP, 2p | -ḡirini | -tiki/ -tsiki | | | | | | | -ni | -nitsi | -nimi |
| 3s | -ḡiri | -tsiki | -tsiki/ - saḡḡatsi | -tiki | -saḡḡa | -na | -natsi | -nimi | -ly | -lytsi | -lymi |
| 3d | -ḡiritsi | -tsiki | - saḡḡatsi | -tiki | -saḡḡa | -natsi | -natsi | | -lytsi | -lytsi | -lymi |
| 3sP, 3p | -ḡirimi | -tsikimi | - saḡḡami | -tikimi | -saḡḡami | -nami | -natsimi | | -miri | -miri | -miri |

Thus the verb *jal-mu* ‘to hit’ has a verb stem *jal-*. For a 1s agent and 2s patient, the form is *jal-ni* (the past and non-past are identical for this combination.)

One thing that becomes apparent upon looking at the transitive suffixes is that the third person is virtually unmarked: a paradigm with a 3s patient is practically the same as an intransitive paradigm.

6.5.2. Verb stem alternations

Thulung has a system of alternating verb stems, with three main verb classes.

| Class I | Class II | Class III |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Non-alternating verbs</i> | <i>Alternating stems</i> | <i>Alternating stems</i> |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|----|---|--------------|----|---|--------------|----|---|--------------|----|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---------------|----|---|----|---------------|----|---|----|---------------|----|---|----|
| <p>These are verbs with roots ending in -l,-r, and also some of the verbs whose roots end in -m and in -n (although these are divided, with some of the -m final roots being subclass IIb, and some of the -n final being subclass IIc.)</p> <p>Examples of some of the verbs in Class I are <i>mal-mu</i> ‘to search’, <i>kur-mu</i> ‘to carry’, <i>plym-mu</i> ‘to soak’, <i>mun-mu</i> ‘to establish’.</p> | <p>Verbs in class II divide into three subclasses depending on the alternation they show. The table below lists the two stem endings for each subclass, with stem 1 appearing in imperative forms and stem 2 in infinitive forms.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="613 478 946 636"> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIa</td> <td>-k</td> <td>Ø</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIb</td> <td>-p</td> <td>m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIc</td> <td>-d</td> <td>Ø/-n</td> </tr> </table> <p>Alternations between stem 1 and stem 2 occur according to a well-defined pattern, depending on the person and number of the agent. The distribution is set out in table 4.</p> | | 1 | 2 | Subclass IIa | -k | Ø | Subclass IIb | -p | m | Subclass IIc | -d | Ø/-n | <p>Verbs in class III divide up until three subclasses as well, but in this case there are three alternative stems per verb type. Stem 1 appears for certain person combinations as well as in the imperative, stem 2 appears for other person combinations and for the infinitive, and stem 3 appears for most past forms (Stem 3 is stem 2 with an additional past-tense morpheme -t, which assimilates to -n before -n)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1036 737 1393 894"> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIIa</td> <td>-s</td> <td>Ø</td> <td>-t</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIIb</td> <td>-i</td> <td>Ø</td> <td>-t</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subclass IIIc</td> <td>-ŋ</td> <td>Ø</td> <td>-t</td> </tr> </table> <p>Alternations occur but in much more reduced circumstances than for Class II verbs, and the distribution of the three stems is laid out in table 5 below.</p> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | Subclass IIIa | -s | Ø | -t | Subclass IIIb | -i | Ø | -t | Subclass IIIc | -ŋ | Ø | -t |
| | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIa | -k | Ø | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIb | -p | m | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIc | -d | Ø/-n | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIIa | -s | Ø | -t | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIIb | -i | Ø | -t | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subclass IIIc | -ŋ | Ø | -t | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

For verb classes with alternating stems, it seems clear from comparative evidence that these alternations were originally phonologically based, with significantly different verbal suffixes for non-past and past forms. The phonological conditioning is no longer relevant in determining the alternations, and is now set out according to person/number combinations.

Table 4: Class II alternation pattern

| | transitive | | intransitive | |
|-----|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Non-past | Past | Non-past | Past |
| 1s | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 1de | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 1di | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 1pe | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 1pi | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2s | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 2d | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 2p | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 3s | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 3d | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 3p | 2 | 2~1 | 2 | 2 |

Table 5: Class III alternation pattern

| | transitive | | intransitive | |
|-----|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | Non-past | Past | Non-past | Past |
| 1s | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1de | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 1di | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 1pe | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 1pi | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2s | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 2d | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 2p | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 3s | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3d | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 3p | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Table 6: Examples of verb paradigms illustrating Class II verbs (shading represents stem 1)

| | Subclass IIa | | Subclass IIb | | Subclass IIc | |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | rja-mu ‘to write’ | | rem-mu ‘to look’ | | sen-mu ‘to kill’ | |
| | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> |
| 1s/3s | rjak-pu | rjak-to | rep-u | rep-to | set-pu | set-to |
| 1de/3s | rja-tsuku | rjak-tsoko | rem-tsuku | rep-tsoko | sen-tsuku | set-tsoko |
| 1di/3s | rja-tsi | rjak-tsi | rem-tsi | rep-tsi | sen-tsi | set-tsi |
| 1pe/3s | rja-ku | rjak-toko | rem-ku | rep-ku | sen-ku | set-toko |
| 1pi/3s | rjak-i | rjak-ti | rep-i | rep-ɖi | ser-i | seɖ-ɖi |
| 2s/3s | rja-na | rjak-na | rem-na | rep-na | sen-na | seɖ-na |
| 2d/3s | rja-tsi | rjak-tsi | rem-tsi | rep-tsi | sen-tsi | set-tsi |
| 2p/3s | rja-ni | rjak-ni | rem-ni | rep-ni | sen-ni | seɖ-ni |
| 3s/3s | rjak-y | rjak-ty | rep-y | rep-ɖy | ser-y | seɖ-ɖy |
| 3d/3s | rja-tsi | rjak-tsi | rem-tsi | rep-tsi | sen-tsi | set-tsi |
| 3p/3s | rja-mi | rja-mri | rem-mi | rep-miri | sen-mi | set-miri |

Table 7: Examples of verb paradigms illustrating Class III verbs (light shading is Stem 3, dark shading is stem 1, and no shading is stem 2)

| | Subclass IIIa | | Subclass IIIb | | Subclass IIIc | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | lwa-mu ‘to see’ | | tsa-mu ‘to burn’ | | Du-mu ‘to drink’ | |
| | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> | <i>Non-past</i> | <i>Past</i> |
| <i>lwamu</i> , ‘to see’ | | | | | | |
| 1s/3s | la-u | la-uto | tsa-u | tsa-uto | ɖu-u | ɖu-uto |
| 1de/3s | lwa-tsuku | lwat-tsoko | tsa-tsuku | tsat-tsoko | ɖu-tsuku | ɖut-tsoko |
| 1di/3s | lwa-tsi | lwat-tsi | tsa-tsi | tsat-tsi | ɖu-tsi | ɖut-tsi |
| 1pe/3s | lwa-ku | lwat-toko | tsa-ku | tsat-toko | ɖu-ku | ɖut-toko |
| 1pi/3s | lwas-i | lwas-ti | tsa-i | tsai-ri | ɖuŋ-i | ɖuŋ-ri |
| 2s/3s | lwa-na | lwan-na | tsa-na | tsan-na | ɖu-na | ɖun-na |
| 2d/3s | lwa-tsi | lwat-tsi | tsa-tsi | tsat-tsi | ɖu-tsi | ɖut-tsi |
| 2p/3s | lwa-ni | lwan-ni | tsa-ni | tsan-ni | ɖu-ni | ɖun-ni |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 3s/3s | lwas-y | lwas-ty | tša-y | tsai-ry | uŋ-y | uŋ-ry |
| 3d/3s | lwa-tsi | lwat-tsi | tša-tsi | tsat-tsi | ɖu-tsi | ɖut-tsi |
| 3p/3s | lwa-mi | lwa-mri | tša-mi | tša-mri | ɖu-mi | ɖu-mri |

6.6. Mood

6.6.1. irrealis

The irrealis is either *-wa* or *-ja*, with the following conditioning: *-wa* after back vowels, *-ja* after front vowels. It is also seen assimilating to a preceding bilabial nasal resulting in *-ba*. The irrealis appears in the following contexts:

1) in some conditional clauses: either in both clauses (eg. 40), or in the protasis marked with *-mala* (eg 41).

40. mu nem ɖi-sɔŋ-pu-wa-mala
that day leave-DEF-1s/3s-IRR-COND
ɖzhjal-laŋka bɔtse-ŋa mi-dyp-sa-wa
window-ABL survive-EMPH NEG-become-2IMP-IRR
‘If I had left her alone that day, she would not have survived the window (ie when she climbed out and fell)’

41. mi-tsap-sy-ja-mala kitsu phul kam-mu basi
NEG-able-3s-IRR-COND little flour add-INF OBL
‘If one is not able [to guess the right amount], one must add a little flour.’

2) in the past tense forms of negative verbs (as mentioned in 6.3.)

6.6.2. imperative

The imperative is formed with the suffixes *-a* for 2s, *-tsi* for 2d, *-ni* for 2p.
jal-mu ‘to hit’ 2s jal-a 2d jal-tsi 2p jal-ni

Verbs which have alternating stems use stem 1 with the imperative suffixes.
ro-mu ‘to come’ (Subclass IIa) 2s rok-a 2d rok-tsi 2p rok-ni
bre-mu ‘to buy’ (Subclass IIc) 2s brer-a 2d bret-tsi 2p bred-ŋi

The exception to this is for verbs from subclass IIb which use a suffix *-ra* for the 2s imperative form.

rem-mu ‘to see’ (Subclass IIb) 2s rep-ra 2p rep-ni

For verbs from class III, stem 1 is only used for the 2s imperative form, and stem 2 for the dual and plural forms.

ɖu-mu ‘to drink’ (Subclass IIIc) 2s ɖuŋ-a 2d ɖu-tsi 2p ɖu-ni

The imperative conjugation can also encode a second participant.

The verb in the following example is *rem-ben-mu* (look-CAU-INF)

i-kɔl rem-beŋ-ŋi / rem-beŋ-ŋitsi / rem-beŋ-ŋini

‘Show me your face.’

The participants encoded are, respectively, 2s, 2d, 2p as agent and 1s as recipient.

6.7. Aspect

6.7.1. “aspectivizers”

These are suffixed onto the verb root to convey aspectual shadings. (There is a piece of agreement morphology which appears between the aspectivizer and the verb stem for certain persons; this point needs further study.)

Habitual -thal

42. go athal iskul lon-thal-ŋu
I nowadays school go-1s-HAB-1s
'I go to school regularly these days.'

Stative -ta ('to keep on doing X')

43. gon-ta-si-mu
sit-STA-DET-INF (the detransitivizer is also in this example)
'to keep sitting'

Definitive -so (perfective + permanence of action)

44. gu-ka surti du-mu di-sod-dy
3s-ERG tobacco drink-INF stop-DEF-3s/3s:PST
'He gave up smoking for good.'

Ponent -dzul (perfective + actions carried out ahead of time)

45. go beno-lai ghas phol-dzul-to-m bu
1s ox-DAT grass cut-PON-1s/3s:PST-NOM be:3s
'I have cut grass for the ox.'

Resultative -le (perfective + focus on end-point of action)

46. go mi-gok-thi-ŋa a-bep si-m-le-mri
1s NEG-be.born-NEXP-EMPH 1POSS-grandfather die-3p-RES-3p:PST
'My grandfather was dead before I was born.'

6.7.2. perfect construction : nominalized finite verb followed by an inflected copula

47. bante lo-mri-m bu-mi
where go-3p:PST-NOM be-3p
'Where have they gone?'

6.7.3. progressive construction: verb root + -sa a followed by an inflected copula

48. anebdika pare-pa-ka fau-ŋa mi-lwa-saŋa bu-mi
nowadays study-Npst.PRT-ERG place-EMPH NEG-find-PROG be-3p
'Nowadays people who study are not finding jobs.'

6.8. Non-finite forms

6.8.1. “Infinitive”

The infinitive suffix is *-mu*.

The very notion of infinitive is challenged by the fact that these forms can sometimes show agreement with the patient/recipient, in the context of an expression of obligation or negative obligation.

For patients/recipients which have number marking (ie duals, plurals, and polite referents), the infinitive suffix can be augmented to make reference to number. In other words, patients/recipients corresponding to the following person.number combinations can bring about alternative infinitive marking as follows:

1p, 2sP, 2p, 3sP, 3p: infinitive form in *-m̄mi* (as an alternative to the form in *-mu*)

1de, 1di, 2d, 3d : infinitive form in *-m̄tsi* (as an alternative to the form in *-mu*)

The context on these infinitives forms if somewhat limited though. While they can be used in obligation constructions, they cannot be used in complement constructions that normally take infinitives.

49. go a-pap-lai lwa-mu la-u
 1s 1POSS-father-DAT see-INF see-1s
 ‘I get to see my father.’

50. *go a-pap-lai lwa-m̄mi la-u
 1s 1POSS-father-DAT see-PL.INF see-1s

51. gumi-lai dzam de-m̄mi basi
 3p-DAT rice feed-PL.INF OBL
 ‘(I) must feed them rice.’

52. *go mu-mim-lai dzam de-m̄mi khap-u
 1s that-PLU-DAT rice feed-PL.INF be.about-1s
 ‘I am about to feed them rice.’

53. go mul-lai dzam de-mu khap-u
 I that-DAT rice feed-INF be.about-1s
 ‘I am about to feed him rice.’

6.8.2. Participles

There are two participles in Thulung, the past and the non-past. The past participle is formed by suffixing *-ma* to the verb root, whereas the non-past is with suffix *-pa*. These participles are used in relativization (see 5.7.2.)

6.8.3. Converbs

Thulung has two converbs: one is for expressing simultaneous events, and the other for a sequential relationship between clauses. In both cases, the converb is built by suffixing the relevant converbal affix to the verb root: *-to* for the simultaneous converb, suffixed to stem 1 (for verbs from classes II and III); *-saka* for the anterior converb, suffixed to stem 2 (for verbs from classes II and III). The converbs are seen in 7.5. and 7.6.

6.9. Evidentiality

Thulung has a hearsay evidential marker, used with great frequency in narratives to relate an event not personally witnessed. This particle is *-ʔe*.

54. meram khram-lo mɔni lo-mi-ʔe
 he cry:3s-SS good.man go-3p-HS
 ‘Apparently, when he cries, good people die.’

Sentence nominalization can occur before or after this marker.

55. “dape-dola re ɔŋ-ŋu” rak-ta-ʔe-ma ɔms-ta-ʔe-m
 rack-above FOC sleep-1s say-3s:PST-HS-AS sleep-3s:PST-HS-NOM
 ‘“I’ll sleep up on the rack” he said and slept.’

56. meram tsahi kitsu u-kantshi.aula-ra
 that CONTR little 3POSS-baby.finger-LOC
ɖar-ry-m-ka dhɔmilo luk-ta-m-ʔe
 meet-3s/3s:PST-NOM-INSTR cloudy.liquid exit-3s:PST-NOM-HS
 ‘Because he had been injured in the baby finger, cloudy liquid came out.’

7. Complex sentences

Complex sentences are those in which multiple clauses are combined. These clauses can be based on either a finite or a non-finite verb, the input depending on the construction. In the category of non-finite verbs, the possibilities are bare stems, infinitives, converbs, whereas for finite verbs, the possibilities are finite verbs or nominalized finite verbs. It is interesting that regardless of the type of complex sentence, the subordinate clause is frequently nominal in form: either finite and nominalized, or non-finite and infinitival (which results in a nominal element).

7.1. Complement clauses

Complement clauses are of two types: those which are finite, and those which are non-finite. These divide along semantic lines, with complements to verbs of cognition and sensation, such as to hear, to see belonging to the finite types; complements to modals, on the other hand, and non-finite, and based on an infinitive verb form, the bare stem (or the reduplicated bare stem), or a verbal noun (-si suffixed to the verb stem).

7.1.1. Verbs of utterance and cognition:

‘to tell’

57. a-lwak-ka misy-su py-ry-m a-mam-ka
 1POSS-y.sibling-ERG buffalo-meat eat-3s:PST-NOM 1POSS-mother-ERG
bastaka su-mri
 yesterday tell-3sP:PST
 ‘My mother said that yesterday my brother ate buffalo meat.’

‘to hear’

58. sokmu-ra gupsy nur-mim ɔsinda thu-si
 forest-LOC tiger roar:3s-NOM here hear-1pi
 ‘Here we hear the tiger roar in the forest.’

59. ɔni sintha solla by-ry-m u-ɖokpu tsu-ka

and night counsel do-3s/3s:PST-NOM 3POSS-big child-ERG
thus-ty-m
 hear-3s/3s:PST-NOM
 ‘And the big child heard as they made a plan at night.’

‘to say’

60. man-ka ne hopmam mi-dzuupa lamdi
 mother-ERG TOP like.this NEG-good road
khrekhreja be-pa lamdi lok-tsi rak-ta-m bu-mi.
 bumpy make-Npst.PRT road go-2D say-3s-NOM be-3sP
 ‘Mother said “take the bad, bumpy road like this.”’

7.1.2. Modals:

‘to want to, to like to’

V-V dwamu, V-mu dwamu

(the case of the subject can be either nominative or dative--when it is dative, the verb agrees with a neutral 3 person)

61. go-lai phaplu lo-lo dwa²
 1s-DAT Phaplu go-go want:3s
 ‘I want to go to Phaplu.’

62. go/go-lai phaplu lo-mu dwak-pu/dwa
 1s-DAT Phaplu go-INF want:1s/want:3s

‘to need to, have to’

V-mu tsahe mu/ tsahe bomu, V-mu basi

63. go homlo ljasi po-mu tsahe-u
 1s now banana eat-INF need-1s/3s
 ‘I have to eat bananas now.’

64. go dika mukli lo-mu basi
 1s tomorrow Mukli go-INF OBL
 ‘I need to go to Mukli tomorrow.’

‘to be able to’

V-mu tsammu, V-si then-mu

65. koŋmi tsokpu-mim hun-mu tsam-mi, koŋmi mi-tsam-mi
 some bird-PLU fly-INF can-3p some NEG-can-3p
 ‘Some birds can fly, others cannot.’

66. lamdi-si then-mu
 walk-VN know-INF
 ‘to know how to walk’

² Reduplication of the verb root before the modal *dwa-mu* ‘to want, to like’ is seen quite frequently, but by no means necessary. If the verb complement is not reduplicated, then it must be in infinitive form, as in examples 7 and 8.

7.2. Causative

There are several ways to express the causative in Thulung. The most common is to use the suffix *-be*, which attaches to the verb root and is followed by agreement morphology.

An alternative means of expressing causativity is seen below. The verb *b nemu* ‘to make, to prepare’ (which is a borrowing from Nepali *banaaunu*) is used in combination with a non-past participial form.

67. go a-lwak-lai ri-pa bɔne-u
1s 1POSS-y.sibling-DAT laugh-Npst.PRT make-1s/3s
‘I make my brother laugh.’

68. go a-lwak-lai mysy-suu pe-pa bɔne-u
1s 1POSS-y.sibling-DAT buffalo-meat eat-Npst.PRT make-1s/3s
‘I make my brother eat buffalo meat.’

7.3. Purpose clauses

A purpose clause is built from the bare stem of the verb, with locative marker *-ra* suffixed. The cognitive connection seems to conceptualize the purpose as being a goal, which has a locative connotation.

69. grenem theb-ɖa los-ta-m bu
nettle pick-LOC go-3s:PST-NOM be:3s
‘She went to pick nettles.’

7.4. Causal clauses

A nominalized finite verb is the base for a causal clause, with the ergative/instrumental marker as a suffix.

70. go basi dzam pe-uto-m-ka homlo nuupa bu-ŋu
1s leftover rice eat-1s/3s:PST-NOM-INSTR now sick be-1s
‘Because I ate leftover rice, I am sick now.’

7.5. Temporal clauses

7.5.1. Simultaneous relationship

A simultaneous relationship between two clauses can be expressed with three different constructions: an infinitive verb followed by the loan word *bela* ‘time’ and a temporal marker *-ka*; with a converbal form in *-to*; with a sequencer *-lo* suffixed onto a finite verb. The converbal clause is subordinate to the main clause, as a converb is by nature a non-finite verb form. The sequencer on the other hand is suffixed to a finite verb, and it serves to coordinate the clauses in a certain temporal relationship. Equivalent examples are given of both, as well as of another means of expressing another simultaneous temporal relationship, with the expression *bela-ka* following an infinitive verb form.

71. mɯ lo bɔne-mu bela-ka mɯ deuta rok-ta
that frog prepare-INF time-TEMP that god come-3s:PST

72. mɯ lo bɔnet-to mɯ deuta rok-ta
that frog prepare-SC that god come-3s:PST

73. mu lo bone by-ry-lo mu deuta rok-ta
 that frog preparedo-3s/3s:PST-SS that god come-3s:PST

‘While he was preparing the frog, the god arrived.’

7.5.2. Sequential relationship

Like a simultaneous relationship, a sequential relationship can be expressed in three ways: a finite nominalized verb followed by the loan word *patshi* ‘after’; a converbal form *-saka*, on the root; a sequencer construction, with *-ma* suffixing to the finite verb. The relevant suffixes are the anterior converb *-saka* and the anterior sequencer *-ma* (the label anterior serving to express the notion that the marked clause contains the material coming first temporally).

74. mari mu hot-miri-m patshi happa mwasy tshabet-miri
 much fire light-3p/3s:PST-NOM after much soot spread-
 3p/3s:PST

75. mari mu ho-saka happa mwasy tshabet-miri
 much fire light-AC much soot spread-3p/3s:PST

76. mari mu hot-miri-ma mepmam happa mwasy tshabet-miri
 much fire light-3p/3s:PST-AS like.that much soot spread-3p/3s:PST

‘After lighting a huge fire, they spread the soot all over.’

7.6. Conditionals

Conditional clauses are marked with *-mala* (sometimes just *-la*), and either one of the clauses can be non-past or past, or irrealis.

The following sentence has non-past verbs in both clauses.

77. go mukli mi-bi-ηu-mala ama-mam-ka dykha bo-mi
 1s Mukli NEG-come-1s-COND 1POSS-mother-ERG difficulty do-3sP
 ‘If I don’t come to Mukli, my mother will struggle.’

The same sentence, referring to an unrealized past situation, is in the irrealis mode³.

78. go mukli mi-bi-η-wa-m-mala
 1s Mukli NEG-come-1s-IRR-NOM-COND
ama-mam-ka dykha be-m-ba
 1POSS-mother-ERG difficulty do-3p-IRR
 ‘‘If I hadn’t come to Mukli, my mother would have struggled.’’

The past can also be used in both clauses to refer to a hypothetical situation.

79. ama-wa-ka ɔokpu mytsy-num bia be-mri-mala
 1POSS-o.sibling-ERG big man-COM marriage do-3sP/3s:PST-COND
ɔokpu neb-ra dym-mi
 big house-LOC become-3sP
 ‘If my big sister marries an important person, she will live in a big house.’

³ A prototypical irrealis mode makes no assertion that a specific event or state of affairs has actually happened. (Payne 1998: 244) This clarifies why the irrealis would occur with an unrealized event.

8. Comparison

Comparative constructions: *-ram*, probably a locative (*-ra*) followed by a relativizer (*-m*), is suffixed to the object of comparison. (The Nepali *bhanda* is also used)

80. ama-lwak go-ram jepa bu
1POSS-brother 1s-than tall be:3s
'My brother is taller than I am.'

Superlatives also show this alternation between native and borrowed material, in addition to which the very form of the superlative construction is the same across the two languages.

81. ama-del khotle-ram/-bhanda dzupa bu
1POSS-village all-than/-than beautiful be:3s
'My village is the most beautiful.'

Most clear as far as comparatives and superlatives go is that Nepali is the source of an alternative comparative, with *bhanda*. Also possible, but potentially an areal pattern instead, is the fact that Nepali is the source of the superlative construction using 'all' followed by the comparative.

Abbreviations

| | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|----------|--------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| ABL | ablative | HS | hearsay | PLU | plural |
| AC | anterior converb | INF | infinitive | PON | ponent |
| AS | anterior sequencer | INSTR | instrumental | POSS | possessive pronoun |
| CAU | causativizer | IRR | irrealis | PROG | progressive |
| COND | conditional | levLOC | level locative | Pst.PRT | past participle |
| CONTR | contrastive | LOC | locative | RES | resultative |
| DAT | dative | loLOC | low locative | SC | simultaneous converb |
| DEF | definitive | NEG | negative | COM | comitative |
| DET | detransitivizer | NEXP | negative experiential | SS | simultaneous sequencer |
| DU | dual | NOM | nominalizer -m | STA | stative |
| EMPH | emphasis | NOM2 | nominalizer -mim | TEMP | temporal |
| ERG | ergative | Npst.PRT | non-past participle | TOP | topic |
| FOC | focus | OBL | obligation | VN | verbal-noun |
| GEN | genitive | PL.INF | plural infinitive | | |
| HAB | habitual | | | | |
| hiLOC | high locative | | | | |

Personal agreement markers show the person and number of the two arguments separated by a / in the order A/O.

Reference to person/number combinations is as follows: 1, 2, 3 are for first, second and third persons respectively; s is singular, d is dual, p is plural, sP is singular polite, and e and i stand for exclusive and inclusive respectively.

All lexical items (not grammatical) borrowed from Nepali (and in a few cases, English) appear in italics in the examples. Within the text of my discussion, italics serve to distinguish Thulung words from the English.

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