

Second person verb forms in Tibeto-Burman

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Since the beginning of research on PTB verb agreement, 2nd person marking has posed a persistent problem. Every scholar from Bauman on reconstructs a set of person/number suffixes including 2SG #-*n(a)*. But all have also noted strongly resemblant 2nd person forms in *t-*. The most obvious comparanda are prefixes in rGyalrong and Southern Central Kiranti. But other resemblant forms include postverbal particles (Northern Chin *te?*) and a floating enclitic (Chepang *te?*), which cannot be directly compared to the prefixes. Recent research (DeLancey 2011, 2012, Jacques 2012) has resolved the syntagmatic contradictions and established the reconstruction of a 2nd person #*t-* prefix. Although a number of languages in several branches have innovated other agreement prefixes, there is no evidence for any person agreement prefixes at the PTB level other than #*t-*.

In this talk I will review the primary and secondary evidence for #*t-*, and show that we must reconstruct distinct #*t-* and #-*n* 2nd person forms rather than a single doubly-inflected form. Finally I will suggest a sociolinguistic motivation for the existence of competing 2nd person forms in the proto-language. As possible parallels in innovative 2nd person indexation we will briefly look at the complex formation of 2nd person verb forms in Kuki-Chin, and the anomalous -*o* ~ -*u* 2nd person indices in the Nocte-Tangsa languages, which otherwise preserve the basic PTB person-number paradigm.

- DeLancey, Scott. 2011. Notes on verb agreement prefixes in Tibeto-Burman. *Himalayan Linguistics* 10.1: 1-29.
<http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/HimalayanLinguistics/articles/2011/PDF/HLJ1001A.pdf>
_____. 2013. The history of postverbal agreement in Kuki-Chin. *Journal of the Southeast Asian Linguistics Society* 6: 1-17.
Jacques, Guillaume. 2012. Agreement morphology: the case of Rgyalrong and Kiranti. *Language and Linguistics* 13.1:83-116.