

**Tesyāmpa** is concerned with:

animacy and politeness;  
evidentiality, possibility/potential, uncertainty, and questions;  
direction/location, motion, movement in time, and change;  
effect/result, patterns, and habits.

Tesyāmpa is relatively unconcerned with:

number; gender; the past;  
desires/goals, intention, method/manner, or ease;  
cause, completion, permanence, duration, or definiteness.

### Phonemes

p, pp; t, tt; k, kk; q; s, f, z; m; n, ng, ny; v; y; ts, x, ch; h, r, hh; l, ł, ly  
a, ai, au; e, ei, eu; o, oi, ou; i; u; ʊ

### Pronunciation

pp is p<sup>h</sup>, tt is t<sup>h</sup>, kk is k<sup>h</sup>, hh is x, ł is a very dark l, x is sh, v is ~vw, r is ~rh (as in some portuguese); a is ah/æ, e is e/ɛ, i is i/ɪ, ʊ is ɨ/ʊ, o is o/aw. Conveniently, when digraphs happen to be formed by the Cs that end and begin two consecutive syllables, they're pronounced as that digraph! (Except ng and ch, but there's no ambiguity there.) (This is only distinguishable with suffixes and compounds, neither of which change their visual representation to reflect this.) Syllables are (C)V(C), with most C clusters uncommon. Base words are rarely more than two syllables. Syllable-timed, more or less. It is not usually spoken very quickly.

### Tone

Simple tone system, word tone: two ~register tones, high-low, not counting a neutral mid; one tone per word (exception for some compounds); on non-final syllable if base word has more than one syllable (placement varies for 3-syllable words). Coincides with stress. The rest of the word adapts/contours to this stress/pitch-accent in a culminative way that varies by dialect – in practice they're often the equivalent of Mandarin tones 1 and 4, although Cs can affect it (aspirated more likely to be falling tone (mandarin 4), plain more likely to be level low). Low tone vowels tend to lengthen slightly. Tone/stress not represented in Ps (phonetic symbols); clarified by S (semantic symbol, determinative), sometimes changed by suffix.

### Animacy

Three classes based on motion either physically or in the brain: mobile, stately, inert. Stately includes not only gradual motion over time, but also potential. Body parts can be stately or mobile, not inert. Animacy is not reflected in the base nouns themselves, but in the way they interact with other words. Determinative tends to match animacy, but that's not at all required. As well as nouns, verbs are also classed in a way that's referred to as animacy, although it plays out a bit differently (see Verb Animacy below); some verbs have different 'versions' depending on animacy, and using the wrong one (not agreeing with the animacy of the subject of the core verb) is ungrammatical (although can occasionally be intentionally done for wordplay, poetic effect, kipi).

### Word Order

Pretty flexible in general. Word order can indicate importance, important coming first; often this takes the form of mobile jumping ahead of inert. Most commonly VSO, conjugatedbaseverb-topverb, object-oblique; noun-determiner-stativeadj-adverb, verb-adverb. Adverbs can move around. Noun-stativeadj order is set.

### Compounding

Simple smushing of base words, less likely than suffixes to add an epenthetic y or a; more likely to merge Vs (and reflect this in the 'spelling', if an established compound). No internal conjugation, part of speech usually matches first component; exception in that

determiner-noun results in an adverb (DNA). Tone likely only stays on the first word, but can do other things (if it's an established compound that comes from a one-syl word and a two-syl word, tends to stay on first syl of two-syl word). Established compounds are usually (but not always) written as a single character; unless this would look the same as the uncompounded first component, but the S tends to change for disambiguation purposes. As a general guide (with exceptions for numbers, for example), if the compound is written as two (or more) characters, tone stays on both (or all) components.

### **Copula**

For 1-to-1 identity, the relevant things use the equals (or not-equals) verb like a regular (plural subject) verb. For descriptive or existence, verbify adjective or noun by conjugating it; if there's only one of verb-and-noun, the other one is assumed to be stately for conjugation purposes: 'there is (exists) a dog' is 'dog-3.M.S' (hako); 'it's strange' is 'be.strange-3.S.S' (ingleot). (For comparison, 'a dog is strange' is 'ingleo hak'.) For negative descriptive or existence copula, use the negative verbs: 'there isn't a dog' is 'not-3.M.S dog' (teio hak); 'it's not strange' is 'not-3.S.S be.strange' (teiot ingle).

### **Pronouns**

Optional number marking, with plural form regular; exceptions for both for 1p, and 3p-inert can't take plural. 2p used only for informal/familiar. In Tesyāmpa, polite speech generally uses circumlocution and avoidance – for pronouns, it uses respectful title/descriptor, can combine with vocative, uses 3p conjugations. 3p is split 3 ways for proximity distinction and 3 ways for animacy – demonstratives are used as pronouns for inert. The basic 3p pronouns are acceptably polite/respectful in almost all circumstances, except when referring to, say, royals; the 'royal' 3p compound can also be used on an individual and variable basis as a status-raiser, conveying admiration, respect, appreciation of effectiveness/competence/power. Pronouns can be dropped when the verb conjugation clarifies person, but they might still be used for emphasis, brief answers to questions, kipi. The mobile pronouns (1P, 2P, 3P) typically form the possessive on a stately or inert noun by compounding after it; for example, 'my shell' is 'shell-I', 'ix-nu'. Phrasing it as 'ix nūyu' means closer to 'shell of mine'.

### **Demonstratives**

Optional number marking – plural form regular with stately nouns, unused with inert. When plural is specified, demonstrative is marked, not noun. 3-way proximity distinction. Used as 3p inert pronouns and also sometimes essentially a definite article, for clarity (no indefinite article). When used as determiners, the only animacy difference is having a specific determiner for 'this M!'; when used with/as pronouns, replace inert pronouns and add to stately pronouns (they aren't used with mobile pronouns). When used with/as pronouns, they signify prox/obv/far rather than near/medial/distal – a bit more metaphorical.

### **Quantification**

Optional number marking, plural (with m/s) or one or other numbers to specify. Inert nouns don't pluralize (they instead can take numbers, or adjectival verbs like 'be many' or 'be few'), and a plural is never used when a number is given. Count/noncount noun distinction unmarked – all nouns are treated as noncount as much as possible. All/every, none, and specific numbers are inert qualities; other amounts are generally stately. Numbers are base 12 and classified under drum, with a few specific exceptions. Long numbers are written as compound words, with a determinative in each.

### **Negation**

There are a couple negative verbs (tei and ulet), and all other verbs follow them infinitively. Double negation with ~pronouns like nothing or none or nobody. 'I don't walk every day' means I walk but not every day (as in English); to distinguish, just move the adverbial phrase around: 'every day I don't walk' (although it would more likely be phrased 'I never walk').

### **Questions**

Polar yes/no, whether; goes first if modifying whole sentence or serving as

complementizer, attaches to word otherwise. 'What' attaches to some words (irregularly) to form who, where, kipi. Any form of question tends to be bumped up in word order. Intonation alone is insufficient for forming a question. No specific interrogative punctuation, just the ~comma or sentence ender.

### **Imperative**

The use of -eļ as an imperative is limited; it wouldn't even be used in a boss-employee situation. Some of its uses are: from parents/adults to (usually their own) kids, if they're impatient or being stern (highly variable); between friends – the effect in this case is to (often in a teasing/joking manner) express a great desire for them to do the thing; to someone who you feel has wronged you / done you a dishonor and now must act to ameliorate that; when complaining at a malfunctioning computer; as commands to a trained animal; to command slaves; when yelling at someone to stop so they don't fall off a cliff; for emphasis in a ~royal decree, as a supplement to the future indicative. Future indicative can be used generally when compliance is expected, as in parent-child or boss-employee, but future possible (plus maybe some circumlocution) is the politest form.

### **Evidentials**

There are four evidential markers: one for direct perception, one for deduced from evidence, one for reported/secondhand/thirdhand, and one for assumed as prior/given. (For example, if you heard something from an untrustworthy source, you could say something like 'this might be true (reported), but it might not (deduced)'). Strictly speaking they're always optional, but they're generally used in most transmission of information, and fairly often in the title of stories or anecdotes (whether fictionally or not; a novel written in a tight single-person perspective might title its chapters with the 'perceived directly' evidential).

### **Suffixes**

There are a total of 96 'official' suffixes: 72 regular, 24 flipped. (This number, and the lack of prefixes, is somewhat arbitrary: there are ~words that can attach to the front or end of a word, often slightly shifting pronunciation and meaning, but these are written as compounds (changing the phonetic symbols to match but keeping their determinative).) Some agglutination, a bit of fusion. The most inherent (first in attachment order) suffix fills the fourth slot of the base word; others add on. Add epenthetic y or a (in pronunciation, not in representation) when needed to differentiate syllables (the a tends to get inserted into a CC combo... unless it makes a valid digraph, or is any nasal before any stop (pronunciation changes allophonically), or is an s/x/z and a stop (the z becomes unvoiced), kipi...); but when suffixes start with i or u (not counting conjugation -ū and -ūn endings), they diphthong with the base word when possible instead of taking a y. Some vowel-starting suffixes drop their initial vowel when following that same vowel, some don't (oski and ohh also drop the o when following a u). Cs change to match aspiration of closest C of immediately preceding syllable, if relevant. Five combined suffixes that include the dative have their own symbols. Suffixes labeled 'a' can function as adverbs without changing their form; to be adjectives, they conjugate like normal.

### **Verb Animacy**

Base verbs are morphologically divided by animacy.

Base verbs starting with ȳ: i-only.

Base verbs starting with kk, tt, pp, or ā (including āu and āi): m-only.

Base verbs starting with k, t, p, or any V other than ȳ or ā: s-only.

Base verbs starting with any other C: either m or s.

Most verbs have only a single version with a fixed animacy, and any noun can use it when called for (inert baseverbs are rare). Some verbs have fixed 'versions', and a noun subject must use the verb version that agrees with its animacy (barring wordplay, metaphor, kipi). The grouping of the versions is either m/s (with i nouns also using the s version) or m/s/i. The m/s distinction need not be distinguishable; that is, m and s can share the same base if it starts with most Cs, and only differ in which conjugations they take. Determinatives may or may not differ between versions.

Eight particular verbs are distinguished in animacy by a completely different form – these are still classed as versions of the 'same' verb, which means that agent-verb animacies must agree. These verbs are: have(m/s/i), stop(m/s/i); go(m/s), come/arrive(m/s), continue(m/s); say (hold meaning/ information)(m/s), need(m/(s-i)), help(m/(s-i)).

Some verbs are just direct conjugations of a noun (stative – to be this noun). These have the noun's animacy, even though the starting segment may not match (such as 'zūn'). Some verbs share a root with a noun but are considered to be their own words, and these modify the start (if applicable) to agree with their category (such as 'ttīhom'). Some verbs are derived from straightforward combinations of other verbs and/or nouns, and these can be a different animacy without modifying the start.

## Conjugation

The floating tones of verb endings affect the final syllable of the base word; if it was a one-syllable word that already carried that tone, it reduplicates the initial (C)V of that word so that, for example, qōu (swim) would become qoqōu (swimming, as in the phrase 'if the moon is swimming'). Compound tenses are kind of conjugated directly, see oldtale for an example. Pluralizing a verb means it's done more than once (in quick succession or at the same time); when there's an (implied) object of any animacy, it generally means the object is plural (connoting multiple acts, as opposed to pluralizing the object itself, which implies a single action affecting them all). Using 'pei' nounifies a verb, but can also be conjugated as a means of verbification. Free, fully conjugated verbs can act as objects, but not as subjects. Verbs are an important base unit of the language; to, for example, express a concept without a sentence, just as a label or something, it would be more natural to use the root (infinitive) verb than the noun (-pei) form. Verbs can also stand alone, with no particular subject, taking the 3.S conjugations; these often occur when English would use a sentence-modifying adverb.

Conjugation is slightly complicated in that it depends not only on the subject, but also on the animacy of the verb itself; 'I run' (mobile verb) takes a different ending than 'I float' (stately verb), and categories combine in various tenses and aspects. But hey, at least conjugation isn't affected by the object of the verb, and the total number of unique verb endings is only 48.

The present indicative forms of inert verbs drop their conjugation ending when they take ~meaning-changing suffixes (ekko, ive (habit), uqu, mo, xo, long, uli) or any compound verb. 'It's small' is 'ūtisūt'; 'it tends to be small' is 'ūtisuqu' (instead of 'ūtisuquyūt').

Stately and inert verbs can be conjugated as though they were mobile, to denote particular respect and honor for a mobile or stately subject (this is default for 'tētem', 'kōnye', and 'lūsa'). Any verb can be conjugated as possible/uncertain, when the framing otherwise matches the indicative, to be especially polite/formal/distant (minimizing presumption) toward its subject or object.

## Transitivity

The transitive is rarer than in English; no verbs are obligatorily transitive; transitivity plays out differently depending on animacy. Stately verbs are considered to be intransitive (or, sometimes, 'locative-transitive'); if they act 'directly' on an object, the object takes the locative. With mobile verbs, if the subject is more animate than the object, the relation is directly transitive and uses the accusative; if the subject is less animate than the object, the relation is intransitive, and must use the locative. Inert-inert and stately-stately (with a mobile verb) use the locative. Mobile-mobile (with a mobile verb) generally uses the locative, but can use the accusative in roughly the same sort of conditions as the imperative, or also when the action itself is harsh and direct (such as 'bites dog me-ACC'). When a mobile subject acts through any verb on an inert object, or when it does a mobile verb to a stately object, the accusative or locative is optional and most commonly

dropped.

Inert verbs are always intransitive and do not even use the locative. Usually this is straightforward, but there are a few phrasings that an English-speaker might not predict. For example:

'It has something (unspecified)' would just be 'u<sub>1</sub>mayo<sub>1</sub>t (tō)' (it has).  
'It has salt' would be 'hōlauma (tō)' (it is salt-ful).

'It needs something (unspecified)' would just be 'u<sub>1</sub>loqo<sub>1</sub>t (tō)' (it needs).  
'It needs glue' might be phrased as 'u<sub>1</sub>loqo<sub>1</sub>t, tēiayo<sub>1</sub>t tte<sub>1</sub>m tōu' (it needs, its lack is glue), or just 'tēiayo<sub>1</sub>t tte<sub>1</sub>m tōu'

### **Passive**

'Verb-act-have' serves as a (not very commonly used) passive construction. 'I was bitten (by the dog)': 'bite-act-had I (dog-via)'. 'The door is (being) pounded (by me)': 'pound-act-has door (I-via)'.

### **Compound Verbs**

Some verbs can follow another verb (compounding to it, the final verb losing its stress), modifying the main verb and fulfilling the function of a preposition or adverb. Most of these verbs, including all those for path of motion, can also be used on their own. A compound verb only takes a single conjugation ending: always comes after the final component, agrees with the first component unless the compounding verb is a verb of motion (preposition equivalent), in which case it conjugates as mobile. If the compounded verb has multiple objects, word order becomes strictly tailverb-object leadverb-object (LIFO), as in 'hāti-xettaye hək ləp tte<sub>1</sub>s' (the dog follows the rope through the house). This word order restriction applies no matter whether the objects take the accusative or locative suffix, or drop it. (Generally if one drops it both do, if they both have the option (in the cases of \_-m-i or m-m-s); dropping exactly one would be getting pretty poetic.)

### **Prepositional Verbs**

Some verbs fulfill the function of prepositions. They conjugate like any other verb in a simple phrase such as 'xēttaye hək ləp' (the dog goes through the house), with 'ləp' (house) acting as a direct object. Prepositional verbs of motion (as opposed to position) can also be post-verb compounds in a phrase such as 'kkəm-xettaye hək ləp' (the dog runs through the house). Predicative expressions / object complements are formed by compounding 'nēus', which can be considered a prepositional verb.

### **Parts of Speech**

Divides pretty neatly into verbs (v), nouns (n), determiners (d), and adverbs (a). Determiners can generally also serve as nouns; this is the sense in which they have an animacy. Base adverbs show their animacy with their starting segments in the same way as verbs, even though their animacy is otherwise pretty irrelevant. Some adverbs can function as conjunctions (preceding a clause/np), and are typically set off by ~commas on either side when they precede a clause (applies mostly to tau and kki); these conjunctions are the only words written with no determinative, and are also unstressed. They do take an S (and stress/tone) when used as a typical adverb. Interjections can fill any of the four parts.

### **Adjectives**

There are no adjectives as base words, if not counting determiners. Adjectives are formed by stative verbs, and conjugate as such (or close to it): if a verb follows a noun, it functions as an adjective. There's no relativizer – relative clauses are formed by juxtaposition and word order – so the simplest way to think of it is that 'blue house' is phrased as 'house (that) is-being-blue'. Adjectival verbs that follow a noun like this (unless forming a longer phrase) only conjugate in the simple present, and the ending drops completely for an inert subject.

## **Adverbs**

There are a few base adverbs, and quite a few more that are formed from determiner-noun compounds. Adverbs can be formed with suffixes meaning at, in, out, over, under, on, off, before, beyond, toward, away from; these serve the function of adverbs of place and time, some of which can then indicate frequency by adding the determiner 'pām' (cycle). The function of other adverbs can be served by stand-alone or leading verbs, or postverb compounds, or nouns plus the instrumental suffix, or verbs plus the conjunction 'while' (yāits). Adverb-equivalents are generally not as common as in English.

## **Miscellaneous**

Grammar terms tend to be position-related, towards at kipi

Only conjunctions and suffixes have no S (and are unstressed).

Future... durations kipi... conjugate... not sure how to phrase it, but what I mean is that 'always' means 'forever' when it's applied to a future tense verb.

'and' only links nouns; a pause/comma usually serves to link verbs or clauses.

In derivation notes, '~' marks a suffix/compound that has merged with the base and lost its original form.

Names take whatever symbol matches, place, city, type of animal; but self-species names take the king symbol.

The reflexive isn't used especially often.

'yes' and 'no' are verbs and conjugate like any other.

Zero complementizer (xōng can serve as 'whether' complementizer).