

Ttesyāmpa 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.

Ttesyāmpa 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, ll, ly
 a, ai, au; e, ei, eu; o, oi, ou; i; u; w

Pronunciation

pp is [p^h], tt is [t^h], kk is [k^h], hh is [χ], ll is [l̥], x is [ʃ], v is [v], r is... ~[ʁh] (as in some portuguese); a is [a/æ], e is [e/ɛ], o is [ɔ/ɒ], w is... probably [ʁ]; eu is closer to [iu].
 Conveniently, when digraphs happen to be formed by the Cs that end and begin two consecutive syllables, they're pronounced as that digraph. (This only applies with suffixes and compounds, neither of which change their orthography 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 especially 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. A bit like Swedish, to my very limited understanding. 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, 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, essentially 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. As well as affecting interactions with other words, animacy is partially and imprecisely reflected in the base nouns themselves (with a few rare, irregular exceptions, such as loanwords).

Inert base nouns: start with any C except kk, tt, or pp; or ù or ò (including òu and òi).

Stately base nouns: start with any C except kk, tt, or pp; or any V other than ù or ā.

Mobile base nouns: start with any C except k, t, or p; or ā (including āu and āi).

Or, the other way around:

Base nouns starting with ù: inert.

Base nouns starting with any V other than ù, ò, or ā: stately.

Base nouns starting with kk, tt, pp, or ā: mobile.

Base nouns starting with k, t, p, or ò: inert or stately.

Base nouns starting with any other C (including y): inert, stately, or mobile.

Determinative is not required to match animacy.

Some nouns are derived from straightforward combinations of verbs and/or other nouns, and these can be a different animacy without modifying the start. Some have a slightly shifted meaning (have been lexicalized) and do change their start to fit their animacy. Which-is-which can't always be straightforwardly discerned and is somewhat a matter of memorization.

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) is ungrammatical (although can occasionally be intentionally done for wordplay, poetic effect, *kipi*). If a plural subject contains more than one animacy, it's treated as the higher animacy.

Word Order

Slightly flexible. Word order can indicate importance, important coming first; often, although not reliably or encoded-in-grammar-ly, this takes the form of mobile jumping ahead of inert. Most commonly VSO, (leadverb)-mainverb-(tailverb), 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 orthography, 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; not if this would look the same as the uncompounded first component, but the S does tend to change for disambiguation purposes. As a general guide (with exceptions for some numbers, for example), if the compound is written as two (or more) characters, tone stays on both (or all) components.

Copula and Generic Statements

For 1-to-1 identity, the relevant things use the equals (or not-equals) verb like any other verb (with a plural subject). For descriptive or existence, verbify adjective or noun by conjugating it. A noun conjugates as for a stately verb: 'there is (exists) a dog' is 'dog-3.M.S' (*hàko*). A verb with no explicit subject conjugates as for a 3P subject matching its animacy: 'it's strange' is 'be.strange-(3.S.S)' (*īngle*). (For comparison, 'a dog is strange' is 'īngleo *hàk*'.) For negative descriptive or existence copula, conjugate the negative verbs as above, followed by the noun or adjective as an infinitive verb: 'there isn't a dog' is 'not-(3.I) dog' (*ùtei hàk*); 'it's not strange' is 'not-(3.I) be.strange' (*ùtei īngle*). ('*ùteio hàk*' (with '*hàk*' as the subject) would mean more like 'the dog does not exist'.)

Pronouns

Optional number marking, with plural form regular; exceptions for both for 1p (tiny exception for 2p), and 3p-inert can't take plural. 2p used only for informal/familiar. In Ttesyāmpa, polite speech generally uses circumlocution and avoidance – instead of 2p, it uses a respectful title/descriptor the first time (can combine with vocative) and then 3p pronouns, with 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, unless 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', 'īx-nu'. Phrasing it as 'īx nūyu' has a meaning closer to 'shell of mine'.

Demonstratives

Optional number marking – plural form regular with stately (and mobile) 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 as a sort of 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 (same for mobile and stately) or numbers or other quantifiers to specify. Inert nouns can't pluralize (they instead can take numbers, or adjectival verbs like 'be many' or 'be few'). A plural is ungrammatical when a number or other quantifier 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; there's a pattern to where the tone(s) fall(s) in long numbers, dependent on the magnitude, most easily seen in the charts.

Negation

There are a couple negative verbs (mostly ùtei and ùlet), and all other verbs follow them infinitively. Double negation with ~pronouns like nothing or none or nobody. 'I don't walk every day' implies that 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: conjugates like any other leadverb. '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, but in the past or present it's not uncommon to simply use an uncertain phrasing instead of xōng, to elicit confirmation or denial. No specific interrogative punctuation, just the ~comma or sentence ender.

Imperative

The use of -èl 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 and the default for strangers.

Evidentials

There are four evidential markers: one for direct perception, one for deduced/inferred from evidence, one for reported/secondhand/thirdhand, and one for assumed as prior/given; all these meanings are used fluidly, though, more to impart connotations/attitude than they are as a literal report. They're suffixed to verbs in statements and sometimes questions; they can also sometimes suffix to nouns, in which case meaning is contextual but would usually refer to evidence for its existence/presence, or, for nouns like 'story', the evidence for all the events therein. In the future tense, evidentials are usually unused entirely (a sort of 'future evidential' is assumed, close to the 'deduced'). In the past and present tenses, 'perceived directly' is assumed default and unmarked, but there is an explicit marker for it that's used in a few specific cases: for one, it can be used in the future tense, typically by oracles. The 'reported' evidential has a slight distancing effect by default, marking it as unverified and more uncertain, although it's not redundant with the 'possible' conjugation. 'Deduced' is for anything inferred or logicked out, broadly speaking; it's much more common than 'assumed', which implies that no explanation is needed. Evidentials generally work the same independent of verb animacy, except that non-negative inert verbs can't take the 'perceived directly' evidential; by default, they use 'deduced/inferred' (but do still need to use it, no zero-marking).

Suffixes

There are a total of 96 'official' suffixes: 72 regular, 24 flipped. This number, and possibly the lack of prefixes, is somewhat arbitrary: there are ~words that can attach to other words, often slightly shifting pronunciation and meaning, but these are written as compounds (keeping their orthography). In writing, the most inherent (first in attachment order) suffix fills the fourth slot of the base word; others add on. Suffixes labeled 'a' can function as adverbs without changing their form; to be adjectives, they conjugate like normal. Most suffixes can apply to words of any animacy. Exceptions are 'taia' and 'uma', which are used according to the subject (not the word they suffix to); and 'tu', 'u', and 'ku', which generally can't attach to inert nouns or verbs and must be circumlocuted. Verbs formed by 'taia' are mobile, and those formed by 'uma', 'te', and 'u' are stately. Five combined suffixes that include the dative have their own symbols.

Add epenthetic y, v, or a (in pronunciation, not in Ttesyāmpān orthography) when needed to differentiate syllables. (The v only comes before an i; the a tends to get inserted into a CC combo... unless it makes a valid digraph, or is any nasal before any stop/affricate or voiced fricative or l-class (pronunciation changes allophonically), or is an s/f/z and a stop (the z becomes unvoiced), or is an l-class before a stop/affricate or nasal, kipi....) Suffixes starting with a letter in parentheses drop that sound when y/v/a would otherwise be inserted; vowels in double parentheses only include that vowel when necessary for pronunciation, in place of 'a'; but when suffixes start with i or u (parenthesized or not, not counting conjugation -ū and -ūn endings), they diphthong with the base word when possible instead of dropping or taking y/v.

Verb Animacy

Base verbs are morphologically divided into classes. Ttesyāmpā speakers conceptualize these as animacy, like nouns have, but applied to verbs.

Base verbs starting with ù: i-only.

Base verbs starting with kk, tt, pp, or ā (including āu and āi (but not yā)): m-only.

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

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

Or, the other way around:

Inert base verbs (not formed by a compound) always start with ù.

Stately base verbs start with any C except kk, tt, or pp; or any V other than ù or ā.

Mobile base verbs start with any C except k, t, or p; or ā (including āu and āi).

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). If a plural subject contains different animacies, it takes the higher animacy. 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. Verb animacy controls transitivity marking, which verbs can compound to them, and which evidentials they take.

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: stop(m/s/i); need(m/(s-i)); have(m/s), go(m/s), come/arrive(m/s), continue(m/s), say (hold meaning/ information)(m/s), help(m/s).

Some verbs are just direct conjugations of a noun. These have the noun's animacy, even though the starting segment may not match (such as 'zùn'). Some verbs share a root with a noun but have a slightly shifted meaning, and these modify the start (if applicable) to agree with their category (such as 'ttihom'). Which-is-which can't always be straightforwardly discerned. Some verbs are derived from straightforward combinations of other verbs and/or nouns, and these can be a different animacy without modifying the starting segment.

Conjugation

Compound tenses are kind of stacked on. Pluralizing a verb (same marking as nouns, mobile/stately) 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 to form a generic statement, with no particular subject, taking the animacy-matching 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 moods. But hey, at least conjugation isn't affected by the object of the verb, and the total number of unique verb endings (for standard verbs (almost all of them)) (not counting the imperative) is only 48.

If a verb ending with a tone attaches directly to a one-syllable verb, it replaces the existing tone; if one or more syllables (from the verb itself or from suffixes) come in between, the word now has two tones. Verb endings with floating tones affect the previous syllable, replacing the existing tone unless, again, the word would end up with at least one syllable in between the two tones; if it was a one-syllable verb that already carried that tone, the initial (C)V of the verb is reduplicated so that, for example, qōu (swim) would become qoqōu (swims, as in the phrase 'if the moon swims'). Ttesyāmpa orthography does not reflect this reduplication in the phonetics.

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 'tèxa' and 'kōnye'; there is disagreement on whether to class them as mobile or stately verbs).

Transitivity

The transitive is rarer than in English; no verbs are obligatorily transitive; transitivity plays out differently depending on animacy. Stately verbs are often considered to be intransitive or 'dative-transitive'; many of them can act directly on an object, the object simply takes the dative. With mobile verbs, it's more complex: 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 dative. Inert-inert and stately-stately (with a mobile verb) use the dative. Mobile-mobile (with a mobile verb) generally uses the dative, 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 dative is optional and most commonly dropped. The accusative is thus rare and used mainly for emphasis. The object can also be a fully conjugated verb, in which case it takes no accusative or dative ending.

Mobile verbs:

Subject and object both mobile: ACC for occasional emphasis, else DAT

Subject mobile, object stately or inert: ACC - commonly dropped

Subject stately, object mobile or stately: DAT

Subject stately, object inert: ACC

Subject inert: DAT

Stately verbs:

Subject mobile, object inert: DAT - commonly dropped

Other: DAT

Inert verbs: always intransitive, and do not even use the dative. Usually this is straightforward, but there are a few phrasings worth noting. For example:

'It needs something (unspecified)' would just be 'ùloq (tō)' (it needs).

'It needs mortar' might be phrased as 'ùloq, tēia tēm tōu' (it needs, its lack is mortar), or just 'tēia tēm tōu'.

Passive

'Verb-act-have' serves as a (rarely 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)'. Commonly, what would be in the passive in English is instead expressed through a generic statement; that is, simply a verb, conjugated as for a 3P subject matching its animacy. 'The dog is caught', instead of being phrased 'ttōppeitaiaye hāk', might more likely be phrased 'ttōpe hāk'.

Lead, Main, Tail, and Compound Verbs

(I'm using 'main verb' to refer to the verb that... holds the basic content. If there's only one verb, it's the main verb. A 'lead verb' is one that comes in front, before a space, and carries the conjugation, leaving the main verb in the infinitive; in the English phrase 'I want to swim', 'want' is the lead verb and 'swim' is the main verb.)

In Ttesyāmpa, quite a few verbs ('tail verbs') can follow another verb (compounding to it in a string, the final verb losing its stress/tone), modifying it. This often fulfills the function of what, in English, might be a preposition or adverb. If a tail verb varies for animacy, it must agree with the animacy of the main verb (this is not always equivalent to agreeing with the subject). Verbs that are used as tail verbs can also generally be used on their own, especially those for path of motion, often with a shift in meaning. A compound verb (mainverb-tailverb(s) set) only takes a single conjugation ending, which always comes

after the final tail verb; the ending agrees with the main verb unless a tail verb is a verb of motion (preposition equivalent), in which case it raises the whole thing to mobile. If the compound verb has multiple objects, word order becomes strictly tailverb-object mainverb-object (LIFO), as in 'hāti-xettaye hək ləp tès' (the dog follows the rope through the house). This word order restriction applies no matter whether the objects take the accusative or dative suffix, or drop it. (Generally if one drops it both do, if they both have the option; dropping exactly one would be getting pretty weird or poetic.)

Prepositional Verbs

Some verbs fulfill the function of prepositions. They conjugate like any other verb in a simple phrase such as 'xəttaye 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 tail verbs in compounds in a phrase such as 'kkàm-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, although the form of numbers does not reflect it at all. My impression is that adverb animacy is irrelevant and functionally nonexistent. Some adverbs can function as ~conjunctions (between two clauses/nps), and are often written as a particular ligature in this case, with no determinative (it's not incorrect to spell it out, though). They're typically set off by ~commas on either side when they precede a clause (applies mostly to tāu and kki). When used as a typical adverb (more ~substantially, as opposed to a quick reference), they're written out as usual (no ligature). 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 probably functions as an adjective. There's no relativizer – subject and object relative clauses are formed by juxtaposition and word order – so the simplest way to think of it is that 'red house' is phrased as 'house (that) is-being-red'. Verbal adjectives that follow a noun like this (when not forming a longer or more distinct phrase) only conjugate in the simple present.

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 lead verbs, or tailverb compounds, or nouns plus the instrumental suffix, or verbs plus the adverb 'while' (yāits). Adverb-equivalents are generally not as common as in English.

Stories and narrative

Stories are generally in present tense, often with a phrase like 'long ago' at the beginning to place it in time. Evidentials are most often put in the title and/or very beginning (whether fictionally or not) (if missing, 'perceived directly' assumed default); they're then mostly left off throughout, except in dialogue and when otherwise relevant, and this doesn't strongly imply the default 'perceived directly'. To emphasize the 'perceived directly', the explicit marking for it is used.

Miscellaneous

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

Conjunction ligatures and logographs are special glyphs that fill the width of a line, rather than half the width.

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, kipi.

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

The set form of 'or' (sā) implies that these are the only options available; the speculative form (nyā) implies that there might be other, possibly unknown options.

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

Names take whatever symbol matches the namee: place, city, type of animal; selfspecies names take the king symbol. Unusual names, on first appearance, may be spelled out in a string for clarity.

Phonetic spelling is the only case that uses half-width writing. It's imprecise as to the pronunciation, and if a very specific pronunciation is desired it has to be described.

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

Zero complementizer.