

Research Question

This is a preliminary study investigating the question: How do prosodic units match up with morphological units in the verbs of Lamkang?

About Lamkang



- Tibeto-Burman
- South-Central TB
- Under 10,000 speakers
- SOV
- agglutinative

The Verbal Template

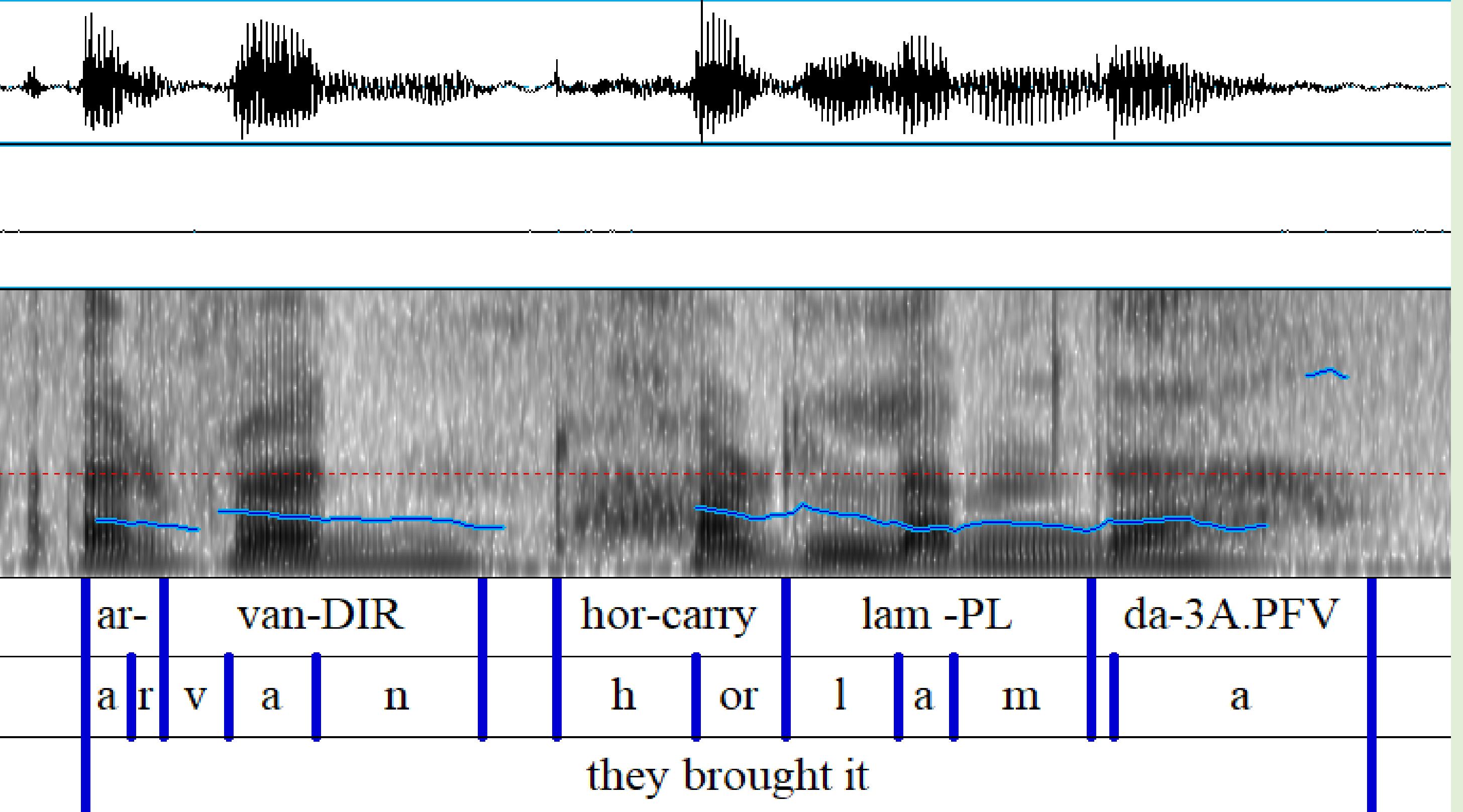
1 Patient	2 Venitive	3 Preverbal	4 Agent	5 Inverse	VERB	6 Derivational Suffixes	7 Inflectional suffixes	Enclitics
-----------	------------	-------------	---------	-----------	------	-------------------------	-------------------------	-----------

Table 2. Lamkang verb template for the affirmative current non-subordinate paradigm⁵

Lamkang has a complex verbal array made up of many constituents. In this chart (Chelliah and Utt 2017), the many constituents are illustrated.

- Auditorily, this appears to be broken up into three prosodic segments: the root, and all other elements on either side of the root.
- The present study investigates the reality of this analysis.
- If the prosodic and morphological boundaries align, it provides a clear place to put the spaces between words in the orthography.

Data Samples



In this data, a pause occurs directly after a directional morpheme, in this case, the morpheme –van ‘same level’. This pause is .073 seconds.

- Tapping syllable research was done- it illustrates the syllabification of many preverbal constituents, into different syllables. This is the preverbal patient, agent and inverse markers. These show that many affixes are ambisyllabic without being geminate. A few examples are presented below.

Orthographic representation	Gloss	Prefixes	Verb Root	Resulting Syllable Structure
mptxooi lam	'They are obeying me.'	m.t.	ptxooi	mvt.təp.ptxooi.lam
mtpk'on	'S/he is causing me to sit.'	m.t.p.	k'ong	mvt.təp.kon
mkpchor ra	'S/he will soak me.'	m.k	pchor	mvk.kəp.pchor.ra
mktpmen lam ra	'They will trap me.'	m.k.t.	pmen	mvk.təp.pmen.lam.ra

Table 1: Verbs illustrating prefix sequence syllabification in Lamkang

This chart was elicited by my colleagues, Melissa Robinson, Sumshot Khular and Shobhana Chelliah, and presented 5-7th July 2017, Tezpur University, Assam, India

Further Research

- Many words have syllable structures consisting of and nasals in the coda and unvoiced stops in the onset. In order to disambiguate between a pause that is the natural consequence of an unvoiced stop and an actual prosodic break, we could investigate the length of a voiceless stop occurring within a morpheme and compare the pause there the pauses which are expected to be prosodic.
- More information is needed: What information could benefit us to ask? Regarding changes in pitch, does the intonation reset after each prosodic unit? We are curious to see that after such breaks, if there is any indication from the tone, such as descending at the end of each p-word. Furthermore, are there any tonal indicators representing such things as prosodic foot? If so, these can be compared to morphological boundaries.

Selected Resources

Hildebrandt, Kristine A. "Prosodic Word - Oxford Handbooks." Oxford Handbooks – Scholarly Research Reviews, Nov 2014.

www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199641604.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199641604-e-035.

Chelliah, Shobhana and Tyler Utt. "The syntax and semantics of spatial reference in Lamkang verbs." Journal of Himalayan Linguistics, 2017.

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4481w2xc>

Robinson, Melissa, Khular, Sumshot, Chelliah, Shobhana "Lamkang phonology: Prefix syllable Phonology" Paper presented at Himalayan Languages Symposium 2017.
Assam, India