

BASIC GRAMMAR OF KHAMTI SHAN

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Abstract

This paper presents a basic delineation of the Khamti Shan grammar and provides language data to support fundamental aspects of its morphosyntax. This Shan variety of Tai Khamti is a sub-group whose speakers live in Myanmar, distinguishing them from the more widely known and studied Tai Khamti group from Northeast India. I limit the scope of the description to the Khamti variety found in Myanmar. The data used is collected from the Khamti people over the course of 15 years while working closely with them in language development endeavors, and it includes a small interlinearized natural text with audio recording. While certain attention is given to issues of grammaticalization where warranted, the overall goal is to provide a fundamental understanding of the language from which to do further in-depth research. As such, the topics covered are respective of breadth and less so with depth.

Keywords: Tai, Khamti, Shan, grammar, morphosyntax
ISO 639-3 codes: kht

1 Introduction

Khamti Shan is a sub-group of Tai Khamti whose speakers live in Myanmar, distinguishing them from the more widely known and studied Tai Khamti group from Northeast India. Shan is the Burmese rendition of Siam used for all the Tai peoples in Myanmar. The Tai Khamti people in Myanmar do not refer to themselves as Shan, but I use Shan to distinguish them from this greater Tai Khamti of Northeast India.

Within Myanmar there are actually two Tai Khamti regions separated by river valleys, the Chindwin River running along the northwestern border and the Irrawaddy River confluence region with its two main tributaries, the Malikha and North Mai rivers, whose headwaters drain the northern mountain ranges of Myanmar (see Figure 1).

The description of the grammar presented here uses data that I collected from the Khamti of the Irrawaddy confluence region, specifically the central Khamti towns of Putao, Mogaung and Namti, over the course of 15 years, and so I limit the scope of the description to the Khamti variety found in this Irrawaddy confluence region of Myanmar.¹

The Khamti Shan people of Myanmar, though relatively small in number and though squeezed in from every side by other languages—a definitive case of language endangerment—strive not to be irrelevant in today's world, nor to simply be onlookers to the fading away of their language, history, and ways.

¹ The data collected for linguistic documentation, and used in this paper, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Documenting endangered languages: A community-based approach among the Tai Khamti”, ID: Pro00010356_CLS5, January 27, 2014.

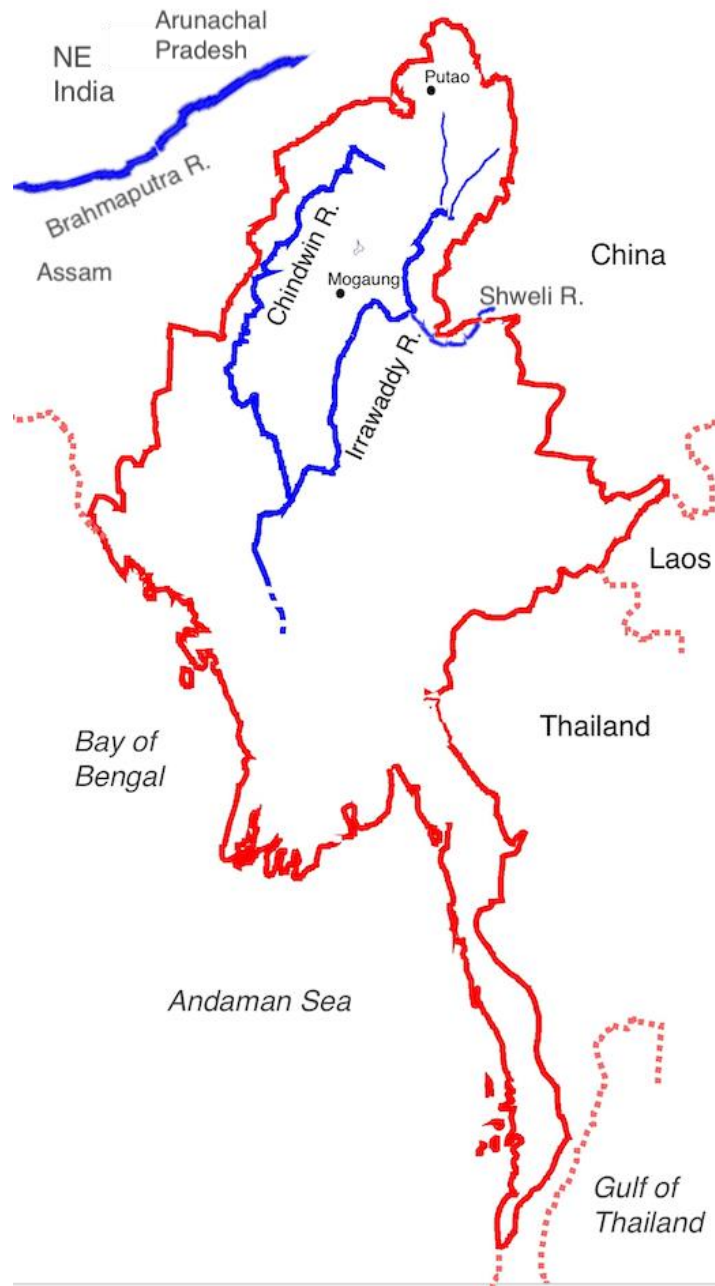


Figure 1. NE India, Chindwin River and the Irrawaddy confluence regions

1.1 People

The Khamti Shan, henceforth Khamti, are a smaller Shan language variety of the much larger general Shan people of Myanmar. The Burmese call them Shan, but the Shan people refer to themselves as Tai Yai (Big Tai) or Tai Long (Great Tai). These Tai peoples migrated from Yunnan, China around the 6th century according to the earliest reports. They gradually extended along the Shweli River arriving from the Dehong region of Southwest China settling into what is today Shan State, Myanmar (Scott & Hardiman 1900). The Tai expanded within Myanmar to the south, west, and north in the 12th and 13th centuries (Edmondson 2008:184). Tai peoples are lowlanders and so all of their migration routes follow major river valleys. The migration passage for the Khamti extends northwest from the Shweli River along the great Irrawaddy River to the Mogaung area, historically the political center of the Khamti. From there they followed the Malikha River, a tributary of the Irrawaddy, and migrated many kilometers north to Putao, which is considered the heartland of the Khamti in the far north of Myanmar with the name “Kham-ti” from *kham* meaning ‘gold’ and *ti* meaning ‘place’. This ‘place of gold’ has legends associating the subgroup to this very northern region

of Putao, Myanmar, and hence the heartland of the people. The Khamti spread out west into Northeast India along the Brahmaputra River in the regions of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. A second group of Khamti traveled southwest inside the Myanmar border and settled in the Chindwin River valley, mostly in two areas, Hkamti and Homalin. The Khamti number approximately 8,000 (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2019) in all of Myanmar.

Khamti follows a stratification system that ascribes rank to people in society stemming from a historical hierarchy starting with royal lineage from which chiefs and princes ruled. Below this aristocracy were Buddhist religious leaders and monks with their own institutional hierarchy and, finally, the laypeople with varying degrees of wealth, poor beggars, and slaves. Slave status was commonly due to indebtedness or other misfortune. Today, there is no recognized royal family or lineage, although the Khamti themselves purport to be able to trace a lineage if they so desire. Each contemporary town or village is run by a headman with all other people ranked in social status according to wealth, education, or family history. While there are the desperately poor who live and forage in the depleting forests, there are no slaves in the political sense today.

The Khamti follow Theravada Buddhism, influenced by that variety found in Myanmar as far back as the initial Tai (Shan) migrations. Monks command much respect in the community and laymen will sometimes take a month to leave family and friends to go meditate at a monastery, obtaining merit. Young boys will go into the monkhood for short periods of time throughout their childhood, bringing merit particularly to their mothers. Many teenage boys live at the monastery while receiving a meager education consisting of rudimentary literacy and arithmetic, but mostly it focuses on religious memorization. Although it is less common, women will become nuns, while some laywomen will go off to the monastery for a month at a time in order to meditate.

The main industry is growing and marketing rice, which follows a tried-and-true planting methodology. The farm has seasonal aspects of work marked by various festivals. However, many Khamti today are without land and so the trading of goods or traveling to outlying jade mines and cities for work is more common. Most people are poor and have a subsistence lifestyle. There are many idle hours in a day and many people are addicted to opium, especially the jobless.

1.2 Language

Tai Khamti, as a whole, is a northern tier language of SW Tai in the Tai-Kadai language family (Chamberlain 1975:75; Diller, Edmondson & Luo 2008; Edmondson 2008:184; Edmondson & Solnit 1997:340). There are approximately 15,000 speakers dispersed across two regions: Northwest Myanmar (Burma) and the Assam region of Northeast India (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig 2019). Khamti aligns with Ahom, Phake, Aiton, and Khamyang (Diller 1992; Morey 2008). As part of the Tai branch, it shares the following general characteristics with Tai: syllabic tone with little tone sandhi, postposed modifiers, verb-medial clause structure (although the more pervasive word order is SOV), and a host of monosyllabic morphemes (Edmondson & Solnit 1997:7; Enfield 2005). Several characteristics of the Khamti variety specific to Myanmar also relate to Tibeto-Burman features rather than Tai. Predominant among these characteristics is the verb-final word order, which also leads to the marking of one or both of the preposed verbal arguments (Inglis 2017a) and the obligatory sentence-final marking of perfectivity (Inglis 2021a). This grammar sketch touches on these general features.

1.3 Previous research

The two dialect areas of the Khamti living in Northeast India and Myanmar are linguistically similar and the broader features of Khamti life are the same for both countries. Ethnographic information about the Khamti focuses almost solely on those residing in India with little to no data about those living in Myanmar (Hattaway 2004:131). For ethnographic material specific to India, one would want to reference (Elias 1876), (Gurden 1895), (Dodd 1923), and (Gogoi 1989). Linguistic documentation of Khamti has been mostly specific to the Northeast India region (Needham 1894; Grierson 1904; Harris 1976; Weidert 1977; Wilaiwan 1986; Morey 2005a; Morey 2005b; Morey 2006; Morey 2008). More recently, Rikker Dockum (2014; 2019:124–140) researches Khamti tone in a historical perspective to proto Tai, eliciting data from the Homalin and Hkamti areas of Myanmar along the Chindwin River valley, while my own research focuses on a variety topics specific to speakers who hail from what I am calling the Irrawaddy confluence area of Myanmar, that primarily of the towns Putao, Mogaung, and Namti. I have researched a variety of linguistic topics in relation to the Khamti spoken in this region (Inglis 2017a; 2017b; 2021a; 2021b; 2022). My

dissertation (Inglis 2014) analyzes constructions that grammaticalize from the proximal deictic ‘this’, the general locative ‘here’, and the general noun/classifier ‘thing’ and shows how these groupings of constructions function as cognitive reference-point phenomena within a Cognitive Grammar framework. The grammar sketch presented here builds on a very brief grammar outline from the dissertation (2014:34–51).

2 Phonology

The phonology described here summarizes Inglis (2017b) correlating with the Khamti orthography. Morey (2008) and Harris (1976) posit phonological descriptions of the Northeast Tai Khamti that closely coincides with the findings of the Khamti in this section. Khamti differs from the variety found in Northeast India in that it includes a rhotic. The semivowels occur syllable initially with *j* transliterated as *y* in the data (Inglis 2017b:li).

Table 1: Khamti consonant phonemes

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Unaspirated stops	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>k</i>	
Aspirated stops	<i>p^h</i>	<i>t^h</i>		<i>k^h</i>	
Nasals	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ɲ</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
Fricatives		<i>s</i>			<i>h</i>
Semivowels	<i>w</i>		<i>y</i> [<i>j</i>]		
Lateral		<i>l</i>			
Rhotic		<i>r</i>			

Khamti vowel phonemes shown in Table 2 do not differ from previous descriptions of Northeast India Tai Khamti. Only the front open vowel *a* has contrastive length, as seen with *an*⁴² ‘thing’ versus *a:n*⁵⁵ ‘to read’.

Table 2: Khamti vowel phonemes

	Front		Back	
		unrounded	rounded	
Close	<i>i</i>	<i>u</i>		<i>u</i>
Close-mid	<i>e</i>	<i>ɤ</i>		<i>o</i>
Open-mid	<i>ɛ</i>			<i>ɔ</i>
Open	<i>a a:</i>			
Diphthong	<i>ia iu</i>	<i>ai a:i au</i>	<i>au a:u</i>	<i>ua ui</i>
Triphthong	<i>iau</i>			<i>uai</i>

There are two sets of vowel sequences represented in the KS orthography. Harris (1976:121) interprets these sequences as diphthongs and triphthongs for Northeast India Tai Khamti.

The basic syllabic structure, (C)V(V)(V)(C), maintains a single vowel as obligatory. Any of the consonants may occur initially and only *p t k m n ŋ* occur as a coda.

In Table 3, Khamti features five tones that, for glossing purposes, I have numbered σ^1 to σ^5 (Low, Rise, Mid, Fall, High). All tones instantiate the contours 21, 34, 42, 53, and 55 respectively.

Table 3: Khamti tonemes

Description	Phonetic contour	Phonemic rewrite
Low (Low falling)	21	σ^1
Rise (Mid rising)	34	σ^2
Mid (Mid falling)	42	σ^3
Fall (High falling)	53	σ^4
High (High level)	55	σ^5
Sentence-final	26] ⁶

The low falling and high level tones exhibit allophonic variation, shorter duration with some glottal restriction and level pitch, for stop-final syllables and some open syllables with short vowels. There is a sixth “tone” which is placed on a sentence-final pragmatic marker (cf. 9.3) that expresses an exaggerated length

starting at 2 and going above 5. This tone duration is not intonational because it starts at the beginning of the pragmatic morpheme.

Of interest to historical linguistics and those familiar with the Gedney tone box methodology of comparing tonal genesis across Tai languages, Figure 2 lays out the historical tone categories specific to the Khamti speakers of the Irrawaddy confluence area. These are preliminary findings that warrant an acoustic analysis.

	A	B	C	D-short	D-long
1	High		Rising	High	
2	Mid				
3			Low	Low	
4	Falling				

Figure 2. Historical tone categories of Irrawaddy confluence Khamti

In Appendix B, I provide a brief background to the Gedney tone box as well as the Khamti data informing the results here in Figure 2.

3 Nouns

Basic nouns are commonly single morphemes correlating to monosyllables, such as *po*⁵ ‘father’, *nam*¹ ‘water’, and *nuk*¹ ‘bird’. Polysyllabic nouns tend to be more semantically complex due to the combining of several morphemes to express a single concept. Compounding in this way is found in abundance as a word formation pattern. A compound noun is formed with an initial head noun followed by a series of nouns and verbs (and prepositions). Table 4 shows some examples observed in the corpus. The left column shows compounding, and the right column shows the nominalized word structures.

Table 4: Representative Khamti compounded and nominalized nouns

Compound	Nominalized
<i>kun</i> ⁴ - <i>muŋ</i> ⁴ person-country citizen	<i>p^hu</i> ² - <i>lak</i> ¹ NMZ.person-steal a thief
<i>ka</i> ⁴ - <i>uan</i> ⁵ vehicle-be.small motorcycle	<i>an</i> ³ - <i>ka</i> ² thing-to.dance a dance
<i>ta</i> ⁴ - <i>lam</i> ¹ - <i>nin</i> ³ - <i>pai</i> ³ - <i>nau</i> ⁴ - <i>nin</i> ³ road-dive-ground-move-into-ground underpass	<i>ta</i> ⁴ - <i>yum</i> ⁵ <i>yam</i> ³ - <i>puŋ</i> ³ <i>ij</i> ³ way-believe-rely faith

Two nouns, *kun*⁴ ‘person’ and *muŋ*⁴ ‘country’, combine to form the holistic concept *citizen*. The noun *ka*⁴ ‘vehicle’ and (stative) verb *uan*⁵ ‘be small’ comprise the single notion of *motorcycle*. The idea of an *underpass* is expressed multimorphemically using a combination of nouns, verbs and prepositions. This example (from written correspondence) takes the nominal plural marker *nai*¹*k^hau*⁵, strongly suggesting it to be a noun rather than a phrase.

Derived nouns arise from three nominalizers, *p^hu²* ‘person who does something’ (*a thief*), *a:n³* ‘thing’ turns actions into things (*a dance*), and *ta:ŋ⁴* ‘way’ forms a nominal concept that is often philosophically or religiously abstract (*faith*).

Proper nouns include the names of people, places, and special prefixes to names. Some people have morphemes as prefixes to their names, especially if they are of high rank in society. The proper prefix is gender-specific and can later be used as a pronoun (a free-standing morpheme) in subsequent discourse. Table 5 is representative.

Table 5: Representative Khamti proper names and prefixes

Prefix	Male	Female
Older and married	<i>cau²</i>	<i>na:ŋ⁴</i>
Younger and unmarried	<i>ca:i³</i>	<i>cuai¹</i>
First born	<i>ai:²</i>	<i>ye²</i>
Second born	<i>ŋi³</i>	<i>i⁵</i>
Third born	<i>sa:m⁵</i>	<i>a:m⁵</i>
Fourth born	<i>sai⁵</i>	<i>ai⁵</i>
Fifth born	<i>ŋo¹</i>	<i>wo²</i>
Sixth born	<i>nuk¹</i>	<i>uk⁵</i>
Seventh born	<i>tsit⁵</i>	<i>it⁵</i>
Eighth born	<i>piat⁵</i>	<i>iat⁵</i>
Ninth born	<i>kau²</i>	<i>ut⁵</i>
Tenth born	<i>sip⁵</i>	<i>at⁵</i>

Sons and daughters are each assigned a unique prefix that positions them in the birth order (for up to twenty children). These prefixes are commonly used by family and friends in the village as informal names with context determining who is referenced.

4 Pronouns

The personal pronoun system exploits a complicated social network of relationships and kinship. The basic system is shown in Table 6. Categorization features dual number and an inclusive exclusive division for first person dual and plural.

Table 6: Khamti pronouns

	Singular		Dual		Plural	
		inclusive	exclusive		inclusive	exclusive
1	<i>kau³</i> I	<i>ha:⁴</i> you and I	<i>ha:ŋ⁴k^hŋ⁵</i> we two (not you)		<i>hau⁴</i> we all	<i>tu³</i> we (not you)
2	<i>mau⁴</i> you		<i>suaŋ⁵k^hŋ⁵</i> you two			<i>su⁵</i> you all
3	<i>man⁴</i> s/he it		<i>suaŋ⁵k^ha:⁵</i> they two			<i>k^hau⁵</i> they

There are no pronominal forms differentiating the grammatical functions of subject, object, and possessive, even though the English free translation only expresses subject function in Table 6. These grammatical functions of pronouns are distinguished by other factors such as syntactic position and context. A reflexive morpheme, *p^hu²cau²* (often reduced to *pəcau²*) immediately following a personal pronoun expresses a grammatical reflexive function.

5 Noun modification

5.1 Noun phrase

The basic noun phrase is shown in (1). A minimal noun phrase comprises a bare noun (or compound noun) as head. Subsequent elements in the noun phrase are optional and include modifiers (genitive, noun, stative verb (or adjective), numeral-classifier), demonstratives (proximal, medial, distal), definitives (indefinite, definite, plural), and quantifiers.

- (1) H (GEN) (N) (STV) (NUM-CLF) (DEM) (INDEF/DEF/PL) (QUANT)

A representative example of a noun phrase from my corpus is shown in (2), featuring the head noun *ma:n²* ‘village’, directly modified with the proper noun *p^ha:ŋ⁵k^hai⁵* ‘Phangkhai’ and followed by three classifier phrases: classifier + noun, (repeater) classifier + stative verb, and a (repeater) classifier + indefinite (see Table 9 for repeater classifier).

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | Head | N | PRT | CLF | N | CLF | ST.V | CLF | INDEF |
| (2) | <i>ma:n²</i> | <i>p^ha:ŋ⁵k^hai⁵</i> | <i>nəsi⁵</i> | <i>ma:n²</i> | <i>tai⁴</i> | <i>ma:n²</i> | <i>luŋ⁵</i> | <i>ma:n²</i> | <i>luŋ³</i> |
| | village | Phangkhai | QUOT | CLF | Tai | CLF | be.big | CLF | INDEF |
| | Lit. ‘Phangkhai village a big one, a Tai one’ | | | | | | | | |
| | ‘a big Tai village Phangkhai’ | | | | | | | | |

The following sections describe respective parts of the noun phrase in turn starting with the right edge and working back to the head noun.

5.2 Quantifier

The quantifiers *all*, *some*, *most*, *any*, *many*, and *few* form the right edge of the noun phrase. The example ‘all his bones’ in (3) shows the quantifier *taŋ⁴muŋ⁴* ‘all’, following the noun phrase structure H GEN PL QUANT. The *mai²* marker glossed FGD.O signals grammatical objects that are foregrounded in the information structure. Here it marks the noun phrase as a whole but isn’t part of it.²

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (3) | <i>nuk¹</i> | <i>man⁴</i> | <i>nai¹k^hau⁵</i> | <i>taŋ⁴muŋ⁴</i> | <i>mai²</i> | <i>hum³k^huan²</i> | <i>yau⁴ki⁴</i> | <i>nin³</i> | <i>mai²</i> | <i>p^ha:ŋ⁵</i> | <i>ŋai⁴si⁵</i> |
| | bone | 3SG | PL | all | FGD.O | gather.up | after | ground | LOC | bury | and.then |
| | ‘After gathering up all his bones, (they) bury (them) in the ground, and then...’ | | | | | | | | | | |

The example ‘some of my men’ in (4) uses *kam³p^huaŋ⁴* ‘some’ with the noun phrase H GEN QUANT.

- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| (4) | <i>kun⁴</i> | <i>kau¹</i> | <i>kam³p^huaŋ⁴</i> | <i>ca:¹</i> | <i>cuai⁴</i> | <i>mau⁴</i> | <i>mai²</i> | <i>au³krt⁵</i> | <i>wai¹</i> | <i>kuat⁵</i> |
| | person | 1SG | some | for | help | 2SG | LOC | leave | DUR | INTENT |
| | ‘(I) left some of my men here for helping you.’ | | | | | | | | | |

In (5), ‘most of the people’ with the head noun *kun⁴* ‘person’ simply takes the quantifier *kan²nam⁵* ‘most’ with definiteness and plurality inferred.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| (5) | <i>kun⁴</i> | <i>kan²nam⁵</i> | <i>ya:¹</i> | <i>k^hau⁵</i> | <i>p^həcau²</i> | <i>na:³</i> | <i>kaw¹</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>tuŋ⁴</i> |
| | person | most | TOP | 3PL | REFL | even | also | NEG | know |
| | ‘As for most of the people, they themselves didn’t even know.’ | | | | | | | | |

² The *mai²* FGD.O postposition has been analyzed as a marker for the anti-ergative construction, which grammaticalizes from the deictic morpheme *mai²* ‘here’ (Inglis 2017a).

Likewise, the noun phrase ‘any shrubs’ in (6) takes *kəsaŋ*⁵ ‘any’ as quantifier with plurality inferred.

- (6) *laŋ*⁵*nin*³ *amau*⁴ *mai*² *tun*² *kəsaŋ*⁵ *kaw*¹ *ŋ* *yaŋ*⁴
 land that LOC shrub any also NEG exist
 Lit. ‘Any shrubs didn’t exist on that land.’
 ‘That land didn’t have any shrubs.’

The quantifiers *many* and *few* are shown in (7) ‘many people’ with no plural marker and (8) ‘a few messengers’, using an overt plural marker.³

- (7) *ta:ŋ*⁴ *amau*⁴ *mai*² *kun*⁴ *a:n*⁵*ta:n*⁵ *ka*⁵ *kan*³ *u*⁵
 path that LOC person many go COL IPFV.i
 ‘Many people go on that path.’
- (8) *man*⁴ *ya*¹ *p^hu²ke⁵cau*² *man*⁴ *mai*² *p^hu²cau*¹ *nai¹k^hau*⁵ *e*⁵ *puai⁴cau*¹ *u*⁵
 3SG TOP elder.brother 3SG LOC messenger PL few send IPFV.i
 ‘He sent a few messengers to his elder brother.’

Unlike the previous quantifiers, *each* always precedes its head noun, as in *ku*⁵ *mɔ*³ ‘each day (lit. time)’ in (9).

- (9) *amu*⁴ *kau*¹ *ya*¹ *ku*⁵ *mɔ*³ *pan*⁵ *si*⁵ *yuan⁴kin*³ *na:i*³ *nam*⁵
 work 1SG TOP each time wander CONJ beg just IPFV.ii
 ‘My work each day is to just wander and beg.’

The quantifier *taŋ*⁴ ‘whole’, as in *the whole day*, also precedes its head noun. In my corpus, these two quantifiers are the only ones observed as pre-heads. This may pertain to the referent head being conceptualized as a single whole, rather than a plural mass as in examples (3) - (8).

5.3 Definitive

I take a definitive as an element that delimits the scope of the head noun in regards to definiteness (indefinite and definite) and to plurality.

5.3.1 Indefinite

An indefinite construction N (CLF) (INDEF) is primarily used to introduce participants in a text, such as the first sentence in a narrative text in (10) with the main character, *kun⁴ma:u*⁵ ‘bachelor’, the classifier for humans, *ko*¹, and the indefinite *luŋ*³, which is also the numeral one. Many languages use the numeral one as an indefinite article (Dryer 2020).

- (10) *mɔ*³*nan*¹ *a:i*² *mak⁵k^hum*⁵ *nənai*¹ *kun⁴ma:u*⁵ *ko*¹ *luŋ*³ *yaŋ*⁴ *u*⁵
 long.ago first.son Makkhum DEF bachelor CLF.human INDEF exist IPFV.i
 ‘A long time ago, there was a bachelor, the Aai Makkhum.’

Only the noun is obligatory for an indefinite construction, as shown with a bare noun *ma:n*² ‘a village’ in (11). Also in (11) is an indefinite structure omitting the classifier with *hun⁴ luŋ*³ ‘a house’ and finally a full structure, *pəsau⁵ ko¹ luŋ³ to⁴huk*⁵ ‘a girl weaving’, with overt classifier and indefinite.

³ In (8), the *mai*² LOC obligatory marker for all semantic goals in ditransitive clauses identifies the recipient *p^hu²ke⁵cau*² ‘elder brother’. As an extension of marking physical location, as in (7) *ta:ŋ*⁴ ‘path’, the goal marking function grammaticalizes from the deictic source glossed ‘here’. This phenomenon follows the Tibeto-Burman anti-ergative marking hierarchy established for Khamti in Inglis (2017a).

- (11) *ma:n² mai² t^huŋ⁵ ka:⁵ ki:⁴ hu:n⁴ luŋ³ mai² pəsa:u⁵ ko¹ luŋ³ to⁴huk⁵*
 village LOC reach ANDT when house INDEF LOC girl CLF INDEF weave

mai² han⁵ u⁵
 FGD.O see IPFV.i
 ‘When he reached a village, he saw a girl weaving at a house.’

In (11), the first instance of the *mai²* marker indeed indicates *hu:n⁴* ‘house’ as a location, whereas the second instance, which emerges from the postposition locative marker *mai²*, encodes the full relativized nominal *pəsa:u⁵ ko¹ luŋ³ to⁴huk⁵* ‘a girl weaving’ as the anti-ergative argument, glossed FGD.O, foregrounded object, an “optional” marking of grammatical objects, based on a pragmatic speaker focus of interest (see (Inglis 2017a) for complete analysis of this foregrounded anti-ergative argument).

5.3.2 Definite

The definite construction identifies a referent already known in the context. In (12), the referent *cau²ma:n²* ‘headman’ is known as part of a shared knowledge pertaining to each village having a headman and the definite article *nai¹* marks it so.

- (12) *man⁴ cau² ya:¹ cau²ma:n² nai¹ nam⁵*
 3SG POL TOP headman DEF IPFV.II
 ‘He [polite] is the headman [lit. lord].’

In a discourse, the definite construction points to a previously established referent. The sentence in (13) is from a text describing a picture of a bus introduced in a previous sentence. Here the definite construction back-references that bus.

- (13) *kan²nau⁴ ka:⁵luŋ⁵ nai¹ mai² kun⁴ nam⁵ k^hi⁵ kan³ u⁵*
 inside bus DEF LOC person be.numerous ride COL IPFV.i
 ‘Numerous people ride inside the bus.’

5.3.3 Specific indefinite

A specific indefinite construction employs both the definite and the indefinite to introduce a specialized referent in a discourse. The sentence in (14) introduces the main protagonist of the story by taking an embedded portion of the noun phrase and specifying it using the definite marker, *kun⁴ p^ha:n⁵ an³ si⁵ yuan⁴kin³ u⁵ nai¹* ‘**this** poor person who wanders and begs for a living’.

- (14) *mɔ³nan¹ ma:n² luŋ³ mai² kun⁴ p^ha:n⁵ an³ pan⁵ si⁵ yaun⁴kin³ u⁵*
 long.ago village INDEF LOC person poor REL wander CONJ beg live

nai¹ ko¹ luŋ³ yaŋ⁴ u⁵
 DEF CLF INDEF exist IPFV.i
 ‘A long time ago in a village, there was this one poor person who wanders a begs for a living.’

This “specified” embedded phrase then takes the indefinite construction CLF INDEF, *ko¹ luŋ³* ‘**this one** poor person who wanders and begs for a living’. English has a comparable use: *This man came into a bar*. The nouns of the specific indefinite construction are indefinite because there is no objective means of identification.

Outside of introducing a specialized participant, the specific indefinite construction can identify a particular object for emphatic purposes. In (15), a man has been looking for a boy who is hid rolled up in a mat. The specific indefinite highlights a particular mat among others that is shaking and so the boy must be inside that one. In this use, the definite follows the CLF INDEF to make the one instance more explicit, *this one mat shaking*.

- (15) *ŋai⁴si⁵ pa:³ha:ŋ⁵mai² sat⁵ to³ luŋ³ nai¹ niŋ⁵ ...*
 and.then finally mat CLF INDEF DEF shake ...
 ‘And then finally, (he sees) this one mat shaking ...’

In (15), the order is CLF INDEF DEF, whereas in (14) it was the other way around, DEF CLF INDEF. This change of order may reflect that while (14) is more formulaic as an introduction to a main participant, (15) is part of the building drama leading to the climax of the story, which functions as emphasis. This would be in keeping with *nai¹* DEF as an emphatic, rather than a specific, marker (see 8.2.5 with *nai¹* DEF in an emphatic function).

5.3.4 Plural

There are three types of plurals observed, a definite plural, plural, and associative plural. A definite plural is shown in (16) with the plural *nai¹k^hau⁵* to mark the nouns *mak⁵* ‘fruit’ and *p^hak⁵su²* ‘vegetable’.

- (16) *mak⁵ nai¹k^hau⁵ p^hak⁵su² nai¹k^hau⁵ kaw¹ kəsəŋ⁵ k^hau³ kin³ məlau³ k^hau³*
 fruit PL vegetable PL also whatever want eat whenever want

kin³ nəkaw¹ nai² u⁵
 eat then ABIL IPFV.i
 ‘Then, whatever the fruits and vegetables (you) want to eat, whenever (you) want to eat, can (eat).’

The definite *nai¹* component indicates that both fruit and vegetable are already established in the context, that of describing a particular market. Market places commonly include fruits and vegetables and so *nai¹* is referencing that shared knowledge.

Nouns are also pluralized without the definite simply using *k^hau⁵*, as seen with *cau²ma.n² k^hau⁵* ‘headman’ in (17). *Khau⁵* is the third person plural pronoun, which seems to “weaken” to indicate a generalized plurality.

- (17) *cau²ma.n² amau⁴ khau⁵ kaw¹ hap¹tuan³ kan³ si⁵ ...*
 headman that PL also 1SG COL CONJ ...
 ‘Those headmen welcomed (them) and ...’

Third person plural pronouns are a common source for a plural marker, bleaching the main semantic content of person and leaving just the number feature (Heine & Kuteva 2002:237–238).

An associative plural identifies the referent of the noun, along with other entities known to be associated with that referent (Daniel & Moravcsik 2020; Moravcsik 2003). An associative plural using the full *nai¹k^hau⁵* is shown in (18). It is not pluralizing coffin but rather associating all of the cultural details that go into constructing that coffin.

- (18) *yau⁴ki⁴ ca:¹ man⁴ cuŋ⁴ nai¹k^hau⁵ kaw¹ hit⁵ si⁵ ...*
 after for 3SG coffin PL also make CONJ ...
 ‘Then (they) also make a coffin, and all the related stuff, and ...’

In (19), a reduced associative plural *k^hau⁵* is referring to the twelve disciples of Jesus that have come to be equated with his entourage in the story (Khamti NT 2023).

- (19) *wan⁴ luŋ³ cau² ye⁵su⁵ k^hau⁵ taŋ⁴ p^huŋ⁵ kun⁴ ka:⁵ wiŋ⁴ u⁵*
 day one lord Jesus PL along.with crowd person go city IPFV.i
 ‘One day Jesus and his disciples, along with a crowd of people, go to the city.’

The more common associative plural in Khamti relates to people such as family members, tribesmen, or cohorts of some sort.

5.4 Demonstrative

Demonstratives are deictic elements that require the speech context, specifically the speech act participants, for identification. In (20), the demonstrative *an³nai¹* ‘this’ (lit. ‘thing this’) is grammatical subject of an equative sentence.⁴

- (20) *an³nai¹ ti³ an³ wai¹ ha:ŋ³ man⁴ nam⁵*
 this place REL keep corpse 3SG IPFV.ii
 ‘This is the place where they keep his corpse.’

In (21) the demonstrative *amau⁴* ‘that’ (lit. ‘thing near you’) is the grammatical object, which gets pluralized and quantified.⁵

- (21) *amau⁴ k^hau⁵ taŋ⁴muŋ⁴ mau⁴ mai² hau² kuat⁵*
 that PL all 2SG LOC give INTENT
 ‘I will give all of those to you.’

Table 7 shows demonstrative pronouns forming a three-way division (proximal, medial, distal). However, the “medial” is actually based on proximity to the hearer, rather than to the speaker. The 2SG *mau⁴* component of the hearer proximal establishes explicit reference to the hearer. The *nai¹* component expresses general deixis and is often omitted with the hearer proximal and distal pronouns.

Table 7: Khamti demonstrative pronouns

	Singular	Plural
Speaker proximal	<i>an³-nai¹</i> thing-this Lit. ‘the thing/one near me’ ‘this’	<i>an³-nai¹ k^hau⁵</i> thing-this PL Lit. ‘the things/ones near me’ ‘these’
Hearer proximal	<i>a-mau⁴-(nai¹)</i> thing-2SG-this Lit. ‘the thing/one near you’ ‘that’	<i>a-mau⁴-(nai¹) k^hau⁵</i> thing-2S-this PL Lit. ‘the things/ones near you’ ‘those’
Speaker/hearer distal	<i>an³-pun²-(nai¹)</i> thing-afar-this Lit. ‘the thing/one afar’ ‘that over there’	<i>an³-pun²-(nai¹) k^hau⁵</i> thing-afar-this PL Lit. ‘the things/ones afar’ ‘those over there’

Each of the demonstratives are grammaticalizations with the general noun *an³* ‘thing’, the hearer proximal showing phonetic reduction *a-*. The plural *khau⁵* is discussed in 5.3.4.

5.5 Modifier

A nominal modifier here is any noun, verb, or classifier that supplies additional semantic content to its head noun, as well as an element functioning as a possessor (genitival).

⁴ The literal readings of the demonstrative pronouns are explained in Table 7.

⁵ Note that the non-reduced form *an³-mau⁴*, ‘lit. thing-you’, equates to the possessive pronoun ‘yours’.

5.5.1 Stative verbs (adjectives)

Adjectival modification pattern as verbs as evidenced with the comparison in (22). Sentence (22a) shows an intransitive clause with the verb *ma:*⁴ ‘come’ and (22b) with the stative verb *uan*⁵ ‘be small’. Both link the clausal subject directly with the verb and take imperfective marker *u*⁵.

- (22) a. *nam*¹ *mai*² *caŋ*¹ *nai*¹ *ma:* *u*⁵
 water LOC elephant DEF come IPFV.i
 ‘The elephant comes to the water.’
- b. *caŋ*¹ *nai*¹ *uan*⁵ *u*⁵
 elephant DEF be.small IPFV.i
 ‘The elephant is small.’

Representative stative verbs are shown in Table 8 following categories set out by (Dixon 1982).

Table 8: Representative Khamti stative verbs

Quality	Stative verbs		
Properties	<i>k^hiaŋ</i> ⁴ ‘be.hard’	<i>wa:n</i> ⁵ ‘be.sweet’	<i>na:u</i> ⁵ ‘be.cold’
Dimensions	<i>yau</i> ⁵ ‘be.big’	<i>na:</i> ² ‘be.thick’	<i>miap</i> ⁵ ‘be.flat’
Ages	<i>mau</i> ⁵ ‘be.new’	<i>num</i> ⁵ ‘be.young’	<i>kau</i> ⁵ ‘be.old’ (objects)
Values	<i>ni</i> ³ ‘be.good’	<i>kin³ni</i> ³ ‘be.delicious’	<i>sian</i> ² ‘be.pretty’
Colors	<i>niaŋ</i> ³ ‘be.red’	<i>nam</i> ³ ‘be.black’	<i>k^hiau</i> ⁵ ‘be.green’
Human propensities	<i>k^ha:n</i> ¹ ‘be.lazy’	<i>a:i</i> ³ ‘be.shy’	<i>am</i> ⁵ ‘be.intelligent’
Speed	<i>kian</i> ⁵ ‘be.fast’	<i>k^ha:n</i> ⁴ ‘be.slow’	

5.5.2 Noun and stative verb modifiers

Bare nouns and stative verbs (adjectives) modify a head noun. In (23), *pa:ŋ*³ ‘hole’ is the head noun modified by the noun *ŋu*⁴ ‘snake’ and by the stative verb *kau*⁵ ‘be old’.

- (23) *tun*² *mənaŋ*⁵ *mai*² *pa:ŋ*³ *ŋu*⁴ *kau*⁵ *pa:ŋ*³ *luŋ*³ *kaw*¹ *yaŋ*⁴ *u*⁵
 tree Manang LOC hole snake be.old CLF INDEF also exist IPFV.i
 ‘There is an old snake hole at the Manang tree.’

The sentence in (24) take two stative verbs, *uan*⁵ ‘be small’ and *təki*⁵ ‘be tiny’, to modify *hun*⁴ ‘house’.

- (24) *mɔ³nan*¹ *nuai*⁴ *mai*² *hun*⁴ *uan*⁵ *təki*⁵ *an*³ *luŋ*³ *yaŋ*⁴ *u*⁵
 long.ago mountain LOC house be.little be.tiny CLF INDEF exist IPFV.i
 ‘A long time ago there was a small tiny house on the mountain.’

Stative verbs are also found taking the relativizer *an*³, which grammaticalizes from *an*³ ‘thing’ (Inglis 2014:74ff).

- (25) *luk*¹ *ko*¹ *an*³ *yau*⁵ *nai*¹ *k^hau*⁵
 child person REL be.big DEF PL
 ‘the man’s children that are grown’

5.5.3 Genitive

The previous sentence (25) has the noun *ko*¹ ‘person’ functioning as a genitive possessor of *luk*¹ ‘child’. Another genitive example is in (26) with the noun *me*⁵ ‘mom’ and the first-person pronoun *kau*³ functioning as successive possessors, ‘my mom’s friends’.

- (26) *yau*¹*ki*⁴ *man*⁴ *mai*² *tai*⁴*ko*¹ *me*⁵ *kau*³ *khau*⁵ *pəsa:u*⁵ *nai*¹*k^hau*⁵ *au*³ *nam*⁵
 then 3SG FGD.O friend mom 1SG PL single.lady PL take IPFV.ii
 ‘Then my mom’s friends, the single ladies would take (look after) her (my sister).’

5.5.4 Classifier constructions

Classifier constructions include a numeral-classifier unit that follows any genitive and noun or stative verb modifier, as observed in (27) with the numeral classifier *suaŋ*⁵ *ko*¹ ‘two CLF’ following the third singular possessive *man*⁴ and the stative verb *kat*⁵ ‘be smart’.

- (27) *pi*⁵ *man*⁴ *kat*⁵ *suaŋ*² *ko*¹ *nai*¹ *k^hau*⁵
 older.sibling 3SG be.smart two CLF DEF PL
 ‘her two smart older siblings’

The noun classifier groups a set of nouns based on some semantic or functional feature, such as small-long-thing, globular-thing, royal-person, a-kind-of-thing, and so forth. Some examples of classifiers and their semantic-functional characteristics are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Representative Khamti classifiers

Noun	Classifier	Noun	Classifier	Noun	Classifier
<i>ho</i> ⁵ <i>k^ha:m</i> ⁴ king	<i>pa</i> ⁴ royalty	<i>p^hak</i> ⁵ curry	<i>p^han</i> ⁴ kind/type	<i>na</i> ⁴ field	<i>pa</i> ² expanse
<i>kun</i> ⁴ people	<i>ko</i> ¹ human	<i>ka</i> ⁴ bus	<i>lam</i> ⁴ vehicle	<i>tu:n²mai</i> ¹ tree	<i>tu:n²</i> tree-like
<i>caŋ</i> ¹ elephant	<i>to</i> ³ animal	<i>mak⁵muar</i> ⁵ mango	<i>luk</i> ¹ globular	<i>k^ha:m</i> ⁴ language	<i>k^ha:m</i> ⁴ language (repeater)
<i>p^hun</i> ⁴ log	<i>lun</i> ² small long	<i>k^hau²p^ha</i> ¹ corn	<i>k^huan</i> ¹ cylindrical	<i>ma:n²</i> village	<i>ma:n²</i> village (repeater)

Sectioned off at the bottom right of Table 9 are nouns with repeater classifiers, the noun functioning as its classifier (cf. (2) for the word *ma:n*² ‘village’ as noun and a classifier). A repeater classifier construction represents a limiting case in which the classifier is specific only to the one noun.

6 Verbs

Along with stative verbs described in Section 5.5, there is an open class of active verbs. Like nouns, basic verbs are commonly single morphemes correlating to monosyllables.

Polysyllabic verbs express semantically complex notions due to the compounding of several morphemes to express a single action. A few examples include *iau*⁵ ‘to cry out’ combined with *tiau*⁵ ‘to announce’ for the summary meaning ‘to declare’. Or, *put*⁵ ‘to open something’ together with *k^hai*⁵ ‘to tell something’ arises at the more complex concept ‘to confess something’.

Another type of compounded verb, or serial verb, relies on contiguous verbs to express a sequential, rather than summary, action. This sequential or serial verb action has been described well by Enfield (2007:377) for Lao (related to Tai Khamti) in what he calls multi-verb constructions. For Khamti examples, the verb *ka:*⁵ ‘to go’ contiguous with *sɿ*¹ ‘to buy’ conveys the actions of a single participant first going to a destination in order to then buy rice or whatever. Then by adding *k^hau*³ ‘to want’ before this set of verbs, it sequences a desire to do something, moving to a location in order to do that something, and then buying something.

7 Verb modification

7.1 Verb phrase

The basic verb phrase is shown in (28), minimally comprising a bare or complex verb as head. All other phrasal elements are optional and surround the verb head. These include demonstrative adverbs (*here, there*), a potential marker, adverbs, intensifiers, and postverbs, which are mostly main verbs that have grammaticalized to express grammatical function (Jenny 2015:145ff).

(28) (DEM ADV) (POT) (ADV) **H** (ADV) (INTENS) (POST-V)

A representative verb phrase is shown in (29) that includes the preverbal potential marker *ti*⁵. Following the main verb, then, is an adverb *cam*³ ‘almost ready (to do something)’ and an intensifier *te¹te¹* ‘really’.

(29) *tu*³ *ti*⁵ *ka:*⁵ *cam*³ *te¹te¹* *yau*¹
 IPL.DU POT go almost.ready really PFV
 ‘We are really almost (ready) to go now.’

7.2 Potentiality (*irrealis*)

The preverbal potential marker *ti*⁵, functions as an irrealis marker indicating that the specified event has not yet happened.⁶ The first context calling for potential marking is with future tense:

(30) *ma:n*² *an*³ *kau*³ *u*⁵ *mai*² *man*⁴ *ti*⁵ *nai*² *u*⁵ *nam*⁵
 village REL 1SG live LOC 3SG POT get live IPFV.ii
 ‘He will get to live in the village where I live.’

Two speculative situations call for the use of *ti*⁵. In (31) the action of waking someone is imminent, while in (32), the event of extinguishing something is a mere possibility.

(31) *kau*³ *ti*⁵ *ka:*⁵ *luk*¹ *nam*⁵
 1SG POT go wake.up IPFV.ii
 ‘I am about to go wake (him) up.’

(32) *wa:n⁵p^hai⁴* *tu*³ *ti*⁵ *muat*⁵ *yau*¹
 torch 1PL.DU POT extinguish PFV
 ‘Our torch might extinguish now.’

When potential constructions are imperfective, they always take the second of two sentence-final imperfective particles, *nam*⁵ ‘IPFV.ii’ (see 8.2.1 for imperfective *u*⁵ ‘IPFV.i’ and *nam*⁵ ‘IPFV.ii’).

⁶ I am calling this potential, rather than irrealis, because *ti*⁵ is not obligatory and non-real situations can also be inferred from context. As well, irrealis marking suggests a counterpart realis marker, which Khamti does not feature.

7.3 Adverbs

7.3.1 Basic

Table 10 shows a variety of adverbs along the parameters of frequency, manner, and degree correlating to syntactic position pre- post-verb. Many, but not all, adverbs are found as single morphemes and reduplicated forms.

Table 10: Representative Khamti adverbs

Parameters	Adverbs		
Frequency (PRE-V)	<i>mɔː³lau⁵mɔː³lau⁵ kaw¹</i> always	<i>mɔː³lau⁵ kaw¹ ɲ</i> never	<i>mau⁵ya:n⁵mau⁵ya:n⁵</i> often
Manner (POST-V)	<i>ni³ni³</i> well	<i>ɲai⁴ɲai⁴</i> easily	<i>luai⁴luai⁴</i> slowly
Degree (POST-V)	<i>p^hiau⁵</i> too	<i>cam³</i> almost	<i>po⁴</i> enough

The adverb for ‘always’ is a reduplicated bi-morpheme *mɔː³lau⁵mɔː³lau⁵* while ‘never’ is a negated phrasal form of ‘always’, although without the reduplication, as shown in (33) and (34). These two examples occur before the verb.

- (33) *me⁵ ya:¹ mɔː³lau⁵mɔː³lau⁵ kaw¹ man⁴ mai² na:i⁵ saŋ⁵ liaŋ¹ yau¹*
mother TOP always CONN 3SG FGD.O only EMPH care.for PFV
‘Mother always cared for only HER.’

- (34) *mau⁴ mai² mɔː³lau⁵ kaw¹ ɲ lum⁴*
2SG FGD.O always CONN NEG forget
‘(We) will never forget you.’

Many adverbs are found following the verb they modify. The monomorphemic *na:i⁵* ‘just/only’ is seen in (35) modifying the sequential main verb *k^hau³ mɔː⁴* ‘want to return’.⁷

- (35) *k^hau³ mɔː⁴ na:i⁵ sa:⁴*
want return just EMPH
‘(I) just want to go home, for sure.’

Reduplicated forms of adverbs are commonplace and reference mostly manner of action, such as *luai⁴luai⁴* ‘slowly’ in the everyday leave taking in (36).

- (36) *ka:⁵ luai⁴luai⁴ kəta:¹*
go slowly OPT
Lit. ‘May (you) go slowly.’
‘May it be well with you as you go.’

7.3.2 Intensifier

There is a rather large set of reduplicated forms that function as intensifiers of the action of the (stative) verb. This set does not contribute semantic information but merely express a heightened sense of the action, approximating the English *very* or *extremely*. Furthermore, these intensifiers do not freely modify all verbs

⁷ The adverb *na:i⁵* ‘just/only’ is also found preceding the main verb (cf. (46) below), but its ambi-position seems unique to this adverb.

but are rather verb specific, as shown in (37), with the intensifier *p^hiaŋ⁴p^hiaŋ⁴* ‘very’ pertinent only to the stative verb *nun⁴* ‘be weary’. Representative examples of intensifiers are shown in Table 11.

- (37) *kau³ k^hi⁵khum⁵ nai¹si⁵ nun⁴ p^hiaŋ⁴p^hiaŋ⁴ nam⁵*
 1SG grieve because be.weary very IPFV.ii
 ‘I am very weary because I grieve.’

Table 11: Representative Khamti intensifiers ‘very/extremely’ and the verbs they modify

Intensifiers	
<i>t^hau² ŋu¹ŋu¹</i> ‘be very old’	<i>nun⁴ p^hiaŋ⁴p^hiaŋ⁴</i> ‘be very weary’
<i>piau⁵ sa⁵sa⁵</i> ‘be very happy’	<i>p^ha.i⁵ ciap⁵ciap⁵</i> ‘be very sharp’
<i>a.m⁴ tai⁵tai⁵</i> ‘be very terrified’	<i>tit⁵ cip¹cip¹</i> ‘be very quiet’
<i>k^hau⁵ pa.n⁴pa.n⁴</i> ‘be very white’	<i>tuaŋ⁵ him¹him¹</i> ‘be very bright’
<i>hua² tuai¹tuai¹</i> ‘be very disappointed’	<i>nam³siŋ⁵ tik¹tik¹</i> ‘be very dark’
<i>ŋam⁴ pak¹pak¹</i> ‘to scowel greatly’	<i>tuaŋ⁵ him¹him¹</i> ‘to agitate greatly’
<i>k^hi⁵k^hi⁵ k^hum⁵k^hum⁵</i> ‘be extremely ill’	<i>piau⁵piau⁵ mun⁴mun⁴</i> ‘be extremely happy’

7.3.3 Demonstrative adverb

Demonstrative adverbs form a three-way division based on proximity to the speaker and/or hearer, as in Table 12. The morpheme *mai²* ‘here’ is used to reference the speaker proximal demonstrative adverb. This word is likewise a component of the compound for both the hearer and distal forms, making *mai²* a general locative deictic with its default value being immediacy to the speaker.

Table 12: Khamti demonstrative adverbs

Distance	Locationals
Speaker proximal	<i>mai²</i> LOC.DEIC ‘here (near me)’
Hearer proximal	<i>a-mau⁴-mai²</i> thing-2SG-LOC.DEIC ‘there near you’
Speaker/hearer distal	<i>a-pun²-mai²</i> thing-afar-LOC.DEIC ‘over there’

Furthermore, *mai²* ‘here’ grammaticalizes as a postposition marking a wide variety of functions such as location, possessor, allative, recipient/addressee, beneficiary, causee, standard of comparison (Inglis

2014:Chapter 5), as well as marking an anti-ergative grammatical argument that is foregrounded vis-à-vis the information structure (Inglis 2017a).

7.4 Postverbs

Postverbs are grammaticalized verbs contributing a grammatical function to the main verb. Among the basic ones described here are the postverbs arising from the main verbs *come*, *go*, *finish*, *keep*, *live*, and *give*.

When the motion verbs *ma:*⁴ ‘come’ and *ka:*⁵ ‘go’ occur as postverbs, they can signal direction to or away from the speaker, as in the venitive usage in (38) and the andative in (39).

(38) *məlaw*⁵ *nai*⁵ *mau*⁴ *mɔ:*⁴ *ma:*⁴ *nai*¹
 when Q 2SG return VENT Q
 ‘When will you return (here).’

(39) *məlaw*⁵ *nai*⁵ *mau*⁴ *mɔ:*⁴ *ka:*⁵ *nai*¹
 when Q 2SG return ANDT Q
 ‘When will you return (there).’

Past tense is most often implied from context but an overt grammaticalized postverb *ma:*⁴ ‘come’ can also be used to make past tense explicit. The postverb *ma:*⁴ in (40) encodes past time on both verbs, *huanj*¹ ‘call’ and *nuan*³ *huam*⁵ *nuai*⁵ ‘rest’.⁸

(40) *məlaw*⁵ *man*⁴ *huanj*¹ *nai*¹ *məlaw*⁵ *kaw*¹ *kau*³ *nuan*³ *huam*⁵ *nuai*⁵ *kan*³ *su*⁵
 when 3SG call DEF when CONN 1SG sleep rest COL PROG

*ma:*⁴ *nam*⁵
 PST IPFV.ii
 ‘Whenever he called, I was resting.’

When *ma:*⁴ co-occurs with the sentence-final perfective marker *yau*¹ (expressed *now* in the free translation), it signals perfect tense, the action occurring prior to the temporal reference point in (41).

(41) *luk*¹ *mau*⁴ *to*³ *k^hun*⁴ *ma:*⁴ *yau*¹
 son 2SG grow.up PERF PFV
 ‘Your son has now grown up.’

Likewise, when *ka:*⁵ co-occurs with the perfective marker *yau*¹ resultative aspect obtains, the state of the action being maintained as the culmination of an action in the past, as in (42).

(42) *pi*³ *ka:*⁵ *po*⁵ *man*⁴ *ta:*⁵ *ka:*⁵ *yau*¹
 year far father 3SG die RES PFV
 ‘Her father died last year.’

The resultative in (42) expresses the final stage of death as a permanent state. An idiomatic equivalent translation might be *pass away*, with the English *away* approximating a resultative state (Inglis 2021a:900).

A completive construction has the action performed thoroughly or to completion, employing the verb *yau*¹ ‘finish’ as both a grammaticalized completive marker and a perfective marker *yau*¹ *yau*¹ (Inglis 2021a:899). I translate the completive with *already*.

⁸ The *kan*³ collective seems to be used here to relate the two complementary actions *nuan*⁴ ‘sleep’ and *huam*⁵ *nuai*⁵ ‘rest’. Although *kan*³ is also used in a postverbal position to represent action initiated by a plural agent. The progressive marker *su*⁵ is a concatenation of *si*⁵ *u*⁵ in the progressive construction (cf. 47 for a fully articulated expression).

- (43) *k^hau⁵ an³ ha:ŋ¹ nai¹ tuŋ⁴ yau¹ yau¹*
 3PL thing need COMPL know CMPL PFV
 ‘They already know what (they) need.’

A durative uses the verb *wai¹* ‘keep’, which grammaticalizes in a postverb position to express duration of action, as observed in sentence (44).

- (44) *su⁴ luŋ⁵ ca:¹ su⁵ hiam⁴ wai¹ yau¹ yau¹*
 reward INDEF for 2PL prepare DUR CMPL PFV
 ‘A reward has already been prepared for you all.’

The completive postverb *yau¹* in (44) signals something already intact while the durative shows it waiting to be received (Inglis 2021a:898).

The main verb *u⁵* ‘live’ evolves three grammatical functions as postverbs, the continuative and habitual constructions, which work in conjunction with the sentence-final *u⁵* imperfective marker and the progressive construction which works with the sentence-final *nam⁵* imperfective marker (see 8.2.1 for the two obligatory sentence-final markers of imperfective).

In (45), the predicate *se⁴k^ha:m⁵ si⁵ u⁵* ‘continue to tolerate’ shows *u⁵* as a postverb continuative marker. It also presents a second instance of *u⁵* as the grammaticalized sentence-final imperfective marker *u⁵ u⁵*.

- (45) *pu⁵ nək^ha:⁵ ya:⁵ nai¹ kaw¹ man⁴ mai² hak¹ luŋ⁵ nai¹si⁵ se⁴k^ha:m⁵*
 grandpa and grandma DEF then 3SG FGD.O love big because Tolerate
si⁵ u⁵ u⁵
 CONJ CONT IPFV.i
 ‘Because Grandpa and Grandma love him very much, (they) continue to tolerate (him).’

In (45), the grammatical object is the anti-ergative argument, taking the foregrounded object *mai²* marker.⁹

The habitual postverb *u⁵* is shown in (46) with the predicate *na:i⁵ p^hiat¹ puak¹ p^hiat¹ pai³ si⁵ u⁵* ‘would just lie back and forth’. The sentence is describing the grandson as a habitual (continuous) liar.

- (46) *na:i⁴si⁵ pu⁵ nək^ha:⁵ ya:⁵ man⁴ mai² na:i³ p^hiat¹ puak¹ p^hiat¹ pai³*
 and.so grandpa and grandma 3SG LOC just lie back lie forward
si⁵ u⁵ u⁵
 CONJ HAB IPFV.i
 ‘And so, (he) would just lie back and forth to his grandpa and grandma.’

The continuative in (45) and the habitual in (46) have the same structure [V *si⁵ u⁵ u⁵*] and derive their interpretation based on context.¹⁰

The progressive employs the postverb *u⁵* as a progressive marker, which co-occurs with the second imperfective marker *nam⁵*.

- (47) *au³ mɹ⁴ tu³ p^hu²cau² k^huk¹k^huk¹yak¹yak¹ hit⁵ kin³ si⁵ u⁵ nam⁵*
 INS hand 1PL.EXCL own hard.pressed make food CONJ PROG IPFV.ii
 ‘We are being hard-pressed making a living (lit. make food) with our own hands.’

⁹ The foregrounded (anti-ergative) is one serving to bring its referent into psychological prominence, and therefore, from the speaker's viewpoint, carries special importance for the communication (Inglis 2017a:142).

¹⁰ The *mai²* marker in (46), also (48), is the grammaticalized locative marker for grammatical goals, here the addressee. All addressees, recipients, beneficiaries require the *mai²* postposition (cf. *mai²* ‘LOC’ as beneficiary marker in 49). All of these *mai²*-marked semantic roles express non-agentive function, hence the term anti-ergative.

The main verb *nai*² ‘get’ emerges as a postverb abilitative marker approximating the English *can do something* (Heine & Kuteva 2002:143; Jenny 2009; Jenny 2015:145ff).

- (48) *maw*⁴ *man*⁴ *mai*² *kaw*¹ *t^ha:m*⁵ *nai*² *u*⁵
 2SG 3SG LOC CONN ask ABIL IPFV.i
 ‘You can then ask her.’

The lexical verb *haw*² ‘give’ with its recipient argument clearly capitalizes on this conceptualization to sanction a generalized movement of an event towards its endpoint (Inglis 2014:156–7), which I gloss as GOAL. An example is (49) showing *haw*² cross-referencing a beneficiary vis-à-vis the *mai*² locative postposition.¹¹

- (49) *man*⁴ *pi⁵nuan¹* *mai*² *ta:η*² *p^hak*⁵ *haw*² *u*⁵
 3SG sibling LOC cook curry GOAL IPFV.i
 ‘She cooks curry for her siblings.’

8 Sentences

Sentences express propositions and are comprised of one or more clauses. In this fashion, basic clause structure is described and presented as the foundation for building sentences. Simple sentences contain a single clause and complex sentences contain multiple clauses. Multi-clausal complex sentences are divided into subordination (dependent and independent clauses) and coordination (two independent but interrelated clauses).

8.1 Basic clause structure

Khamti exhibits a basic AOV word order as generally demonstrated with the data in this description. Because nominal ellipsis is common in connected discourse, the full word order is not always evident.¹² An OV example is provided in (50).¹³

- (50) *ha:η*⁵ *ηo*⁴ *to*³ *luη*³ *tiap*⁵ *si*⁵ *ci*⁵ *kin*³ *yau*¹
 tail cow CLF INDEF lop.off CONJ roast eat PFV
 ‘(He) lopped off a cow’s tail to roast and eat.’

There are also examples, although much less frequent in the corpus, showing a VO word order. An example is shown in (51).

- (51) *ku*⁵ *mɿ*³ *ku*⁵ *mɿ*³ *ka:*⁵ *k* *k^ha:*⁵ *pa:*³ *nam*⁵
 each day each day go HAB look.for fish IPFV.ii
 ‘Each and every day (he) would go fishing (lit. look for fish—VO).’

When the object occurs after the verb it can signal a backgrounded object construction (Inglis 2017a:147ff), such as *k^ha:*⁵ *pa:*³ ‘look for fish’ in (51), which often expresses a non-referential object, indefinite and non-specific. These VO phrases are not about the effect of an action on any particular referent, but about a type of action in general, *fishing* for example. When the event is one of a generalized activity, it is more likely to be

¹¹ Jenny (2015:148) has nicely characterized this *give* generalization as A[gent] passes control over T[heme] to G[oyal], the starting point for its grammaticalization as a benefactive postverb and general applicative.

¹² A sentence with a fronted O argument most likely signals a discourse-level phenomenon. I can easily elicit the same sentence with either OAV or AOV word order. In such cases, language consultants say both sentences are grammatical and generally mean the same thing.

¹³ For a thorough discussion of Tai Khamti (Shan) word order in relation to other research on Tai Khamti, including (Needham 1894; Wilaiwan 1986; Diller 1992; Morey 2006), see Inglis (2017a).

encoded as VO, whereas when the event includes a specific entity as grammatical object, it is more likely to be OV. Some examples of non-referential objects are found in Table 13 taken from Inglis (2017a:148).

Table 13: Khamti non-referential VO constructions

English	Khamti	Gloss
eat	<i>kin³-k^hau²</i>	eat-rice
read	<i>a:n⁵-pap¹</i>	read-book
sing	<i>ue²-k^ha:m⁴</i>	sing-word
speak	<i>ta:n²-k^ha:m⁴</i>	speak-word
write	<i>k^hian²-k^ha:m⁴</i>	write-word
drive	<i>t^hin⁴-ka:⁴</i>	drive-vehicle
walk	<i>p^ha:i²-ta:ŋ⁴</i>	walk-road

Following the basic word order AOV, an intransitive clause is shown in (52) and a transitive in (53).

(52) *mai² kaw¹ mau⁴ kin³k^hau² nai² u⁵*
 here also 2SG eat ABIL IPFV.i
 ‘You can also eat (lit. eat-rice) here.’

(53) *mau⁴ ŋo⁴ liŋ¹ si⁵ kau³ mai² t^ha:² u⁵ la¹*
 2SG cow look.after CONJ 1SG FGD.O wait.for PROG IMP
 ‘You look after the cows and be waiting for me.’

In (53) there are two transitive clauses with *mau:⁴* ‘2SG’ as the A argument. The first clause has an unmarked O argument *ŋo⁴* ‘cow’ while the O in the second clause *kau³* ‘1SG’ takes *mai²* indicating the anti-ergative function, here a foregrounded object (Inglis 2017a).

A ditransitive clause is shown in (54) with the tag question interrogative construction.

(54) *mau⁴ man⁴ mai² pap¹ hau² aw⁴*
 2SG 3SG LOC book give Q
 ‘Did you give her the book?’

In a ditransitive clause, clausal goals, such as a recipient in (54), take the obligatory *mai²* ‘LOC’ marker.

8.2 Simple (mono-clausal) sentences

8.2.1 Perfective and imperfective obligatory aspectual categories

Khamti follows a rather unique obligatory perfectivity system (Inglis 2021a), contrasting the situation expressed in a proposition as either bounded or unbounded in its internal temporal delineation (Langacker 2000:224). Khamti marks perfectivity using three sentence-final particles: *yau¹* for perfective, *u⁵* for an imperfective, and *nam⁵* for a second imperfective.¹⁴

The simple perfective sentence in (55) contains a main verb *tuay⁴* ‘know’ immediately followed by the perfective particle *yau¹* and elaborates the situation expressed by the verb as a bounded whole. I try to capture this with the English, ‘now knows’. The knowing event is conceptualized with definitive beginning and ending points.

¹⁴ This perfectivity system is only found in the Khamti variety spoken in Myanmar. The Tai Khamti speakers in Northeast India do not seem to use these sentence-final markers, as evidenced by one of my Tai Khamti (Shan) language informants on a visit to Northeast India. While this person was able to fully understand the Northeast India speakers, he found it quite strange and incomplete to not include these particles.

- (55) *kau*³ *pin*³ *pəs*⁵ *nai*¹ *man*⁴ *tuŋ*⁴ *yau*¹
 1SG be ghost DEF 3SG know PFV
 ‘He now knows that I am a ghost.’

Next are two varieties of simple imperfective sentences that contrast with the perfective in (55). In (56) is observed the first imperfective with a main verb *yaj*⁵ ‘exist’ immediately followed by the first imperfective particle *u*⁵.¹⁵

- (56) *pun*⁴ *pa:ŋ*⁵ *kan*²*uak*⁵ *ma:n*² *mai*² *ya:*² *yaj*⁴ *u*⁵
 over.there area outside village LOC grass exist IPFV.i
 ‘There is grass over there in an area outside the village.’

Using this imperfective, the situation of the grass existing is perceived as unbounded, with neither the beginning or endpoints of a grassy extent in the conceptual purview.

Likewise, in (57), the second imperfective particle occurs with the main verb to conceptualize an unbounded situation. That is, the stative event of *a book belonging to me* carries no beginning or endpoint within its internal temporal profile.

- (57) *pap*¹ *an*³*nai*¹ *an*³ *kau*³ *nam*⁵
 book this thing 1SG IPFV.ii
 ‘This book is mine (lit. my thing).’

There are two important observations regarding these simple final particles. First, each of these perfectivity markers arise from basic verbs: *yau*¹ ‘to finish’, *u*⁵ ‘to live’, and *nam*⁵ ‘to be numerous’. Secondly, each of these three basic sentences form the foundation from which more complex constructions arise (cf. Section 7.4 Postverbs).

8.2.2 Equatives

Equative constructions correlate two entities, primarily nominals, asserting the two expressions as having the same referent. Equative sentences in Khamti always employ the second imperfective final particle *nam*⁵.

- (58) *me*⁵ *kau*³ *ya:*¹ *tai*⁴ *k^ham⁴ti*³ *nam*⁵
 mother 1SG TOP Tai Khamti IPFV.ii
 ‘My mother is Tai Khamti.’

- (59) *kau*³ *an*³ *k^hian*⁴ *yau*⁵ *nam*⁵
 1SG CLF most be.big IPFV.ii
 ‘I am the oldest one (of three siblings).’

In (59), the generic classifier *an*³ (grammaticalized from *an*³ ‘thing’) takes the comparative stative verb phrase, *k^hian⁴ yau⁵* ‘be most big’, and reifies it as an individual ‘the oldest one (lit. the most big one)’ and in that way an entity coreferential to the first person singular grammatical subject *kau*³.

8.2.3 Existentials, locationals, and possessives

Existential, locational, and (predicative) possessive sentences are closely related constructions. A simple existential sentence is shown in (60) with the main verb *yaj*⁴ ‘exist’ and the first imperfective particle *u*⁵.

¹⁵ In discourse, it is this first imperfective construction that carries the basic storyline compared to English which would use a historical past tense to do so.

- (60) *tu³ pi⁵nuəŋ¹ sa:m⁵ ko¹ yaŋ⁴ u⁵*
 1PL.EXCL sibling three CLF.person exist IPFV.i
 ‘There are three of us siblings.’

A simple locative sentence takes an existential situation and supplies a location for its actuality. The location must take the locative marker *mai²*.

- (61) *hun⁴ mai² ŋu⁴ yaŋ⁴ u⁵*
 house LOC snake exist IPFV.i
 ‘There is a snake at the house.’

A simple locative sentence using the second imperfective particle *nam⁵* “equates” the grammatical subject referent *pap¹ nai¹* ‘the book’ with its (coreferential) marked location *kan²nɔ⁵ p^hun⁵ mai²* ‘on the table’, as in (62). With the *nam⁵*-based locative construction in (62), there is no verb, simply the referent equivalent to its location.

- (62) *kan²nɔ⁵ p^hun⁵ mai² pap¹ nai¹ nam⁵*
 on table LOC book DEF IPFV.ii
 ‘The book is on the table.’

Otherwise, an event expressed by any verb can supply a marked location, usually as the first constituent, as seen in (63) with the verbs *cuat¹* ‘wrap (cloth on his hand)’ and *sau⁵* ‘put (it) in (eel hole)’.

- (63) *mɔ⁴ man⁴ mai² p^ha:2 cuat¹ ŋai⁴si⁵ kan²nau⁴ hu⁴ pa:3sən¹e¹ mai² sau⁵ u⁵*
 hand 3SG LOC cloth wrap and.then inside hole eel LOC put.in IPFV.i
 ‘(He) wrapped a cloth on his hand and then put (it) inside the eel hole.’

A simple possessive sentence follows both existential and locative constructions, common across languages (Heine & Kuteva 2002:204–5; Dryer 2007; Rice & Kabata 2007; Langacker 2009). Khamti uses the existential verb *yaŋ⁴* while making a locative *mai²* the marker for a possessee, as in (64) with an inanimate possessor *ma:n² amau⁴ mai²* ‘that village’ and (65) with an animate one *man⁴ mai²* ‘he’.¹⁶

- (64) *ma:n² amau⁴nai¹ mai² an³yap⁵ a:n⁵ta:n⁵ yaŋ⁴ u⁵*
 village that LOC problem many exist IPFV.i
 Lit. ‘Many problems exist at the village.’
 ‘That village has many problems.’

- (65) *man⁴ mai² k^hiau⁵ kau³ yaŋ⁴ u⁵*
 3SG LOC book 1SG exist IPFV.i
 Lit. ‘My sickle is at him.’
 ‘He has my sickle.’

8.2.4 Comparative

A comparative sentence is shown in (66) using the comparative postverb *sa:⁴*. The standard of comparison takes the ever prolific grammaticalized obligatory locative marker *mai²*, here ‘boys’ being the *mai²*-marked standard to which the subject nominal, *pəyij⁴* ‘girls’, are compared in regards to smartness.

- (66) *pəyij⁴ nai¹k^hau⁵ pəcai⁴ nai¹k^hau⁵ mai² am⁴ sa:⁴ u⁵*
 girl PL boy PL LOC be.smart COMP IPFV.i
 ‘Girls are smarter than boys.’

¹⁶ The locative *mai²* grammaticalized from *mai²* ‘here’ also serves to indicate possessor.

8.2.5 *Emphatic sentence*

An emphatic sentence is constructed with two elements of emphasis, a post-phrasal marker *nam*⁵ serving to point out which portion of the proposition is receiving the emphasis and the sentence final definite marker *nai*¹. Two examples are shown in (67) and (68).

(67) *taŋ*⁴ *me*⁵ *na:i*³ *nam*⁵ *u*⁵ *ma:*⁴ *nai*¹
 with mother only EMPH live PERF DEF
 ‘It is only with mother that (she) had lived.’

(68) *lan*⁵*su*⁵ *an*³ *kʰian*⁴ *yau*⁵ *ya:*¹ *luk*¹ *kun*⁴*hun*⁴ *pʰəcau*² *mai*² *nam*⁵ *ti*⁵ *uak*⁵*ma:*⁴ *nai*¹
 enemy REL most big TOP from family own LOC EMPH POT come.out DEF
 ‘It is from one’s own family that the biggest enemy will arise.’

While the English free translation suggests a dummy “it” construction, this is not the literal case for Khamti, but rather approximates the emphatic effect produced by the *nam*⁵ ... *nai*¹ construction. Of note, the *nam*⁵ ‘EMPH’ in (67) and (68) arises from the verb *nam*⁵ ‘be numerous’ and is included in the grammaticalization pathway with the final imperfective marker *nam*⁵ ‘IPFV.ii’ (discussed at length in (Inglis 2021a)).

8.2.6 *Interrogatives*

Basic interrogative sentences appear in two forms, a full form and an abbreviated form. The full form includes the interrogative word, which takes an interrogative marker *nai*⁵, followed by the the main verb and a sentence-final interrogative particle *nai*¹. The sentence in (69) represents a full form question with the *nai*⁵-marked interrogative *kʰəlau*⁵ ‘how much’.

(69) *pʰa:*² *nai*¹ *mai*² *kʰəlau*⁵ *nai*⁵ *man*⁴ *sɿ*¹ *nai*¹
 blanket DEF FGD.O how.much Q 3SG buy Q
 ‘How much did she buy this blanket for?’

Both the interrogative marker and sentence-final particle are grammaticalized from the *nai*¹ ‘DEF’. The interrogative marker changes from a low to a high tone (tone 5) while the final particle retains the same low tone (tone 1) form, albeit a different syntactic position and function. This tonal change is of interest and warrants further research.

The abbreviated interrogative form is shown in (70) which starts with the main verb, followed by the single (high tone) interrogative marker *nai*⁵ as the sentence-final particle. The shortened version is more commonly found in conversation.

(70) *pʰa:*² *nai*¹ *mai*² *man*⁴ *sɿ*¹ *kʰəlu*⁵ *nai*⁵
 blanket DEF FGD.O 3SG buy how.much Q
 ‘How much did she buy this blanket for?’

These two construction forms are the same for all interrogatives shown in Table 14.

Table 14: *Khamti interrogatives*

Interrogative	Khamti + marker
who	<i>pʰau</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
where	<i>amai</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
how	<i>həlu</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
what	<i>kəsəŋ</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
why (lit. what reason)	<i>la:i</i> ⁴ <i>pɿ</i> ⁵ <i>kəsəŋ</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
which (lit. which one)	<i>an</i> ³ <i>lau</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
when (lit. which time)	<i>məlau</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵
how many (lit. which amount)	<i>kʰəlau</i> ⁵ <i>nai</i> ⁵

8.3 Sentence negation

In Khamti, negation marking takes three forms. Firstly, to negate a simple imperfective sentence that employs the first imperfective *u*⁵ sentence-final particle, the negator *mau*⁵ is used in front of the main verb and the final particle *u*⁵ is omitted.

- (71) *nai*¹*nəkaw*¹ *puun*⁵ *mau*⁵ *cu*⁴
 but others NEG agree
 ‘But others do not agree.’

The first imperfective *u*⁵ construction also takes the syllabic nasal negator *mau*⁵ in front of the main verb. It is not clear when *mau*⁵ or *ŋ* is used but seems more a matter of convention with a given verb, a matter for further research.

- (72) *həlu*⁵ *liam*⁴ *nəkaw*¹ *ŋ* *han*⁵
 how look.on even.though NEG see
 ‘No matter how (they) look on, (they) don’t see.’

The second imperfective construction with sentence-final *nam*⁵ employs a different negation strategy that is in keeping with equative clauses (cf. 8.2.2 for equatives). In (73), this sentence-final marker is replaced by the sentence-final negator *ŋcau*³.

- (73) *pap*¹ *an*³*nai*¹ *an*³ *kau*³ *ŋcau*³
 book this CLF 1SG NEG
 ‘This book is not mine (lit. not my one).’

This negator is a compound word *ŋ* + *cau*³, which carries a stative verbal meaning ‘be not true’, in correlation with positive equative constructions (compare 73 with 57).

The progressive construction retains the progressive postverb *u*⁵ and the imperfective particle *nam*⁵ while negating the main verb, with the example in (74).

- (74) *ŋai*¹ *k^hau*⁵ *k^ha:m*⁴ *man*⁴ *cau*² *mau*⁵ *t^huam*⁴ *si*⁵ *u*⁵ *nam*⁵
 now 3PL message 1SG POL NEG listen CONN PROG IPFV.ii
 ‘Right now, they are not listening to his [polite] message.’

The final two examples of sentence negation pertain to the sentence-final perfective marker *yau*¹. In both instances this perfective marker is retained. Sentence (75) employs the preverbal syllabic negator *ŋ* with the perfective *yau*¹.

- (75) *man*⁴ *cau*² *mai*² *ti*⁵ *həlu*⁵ *suak¹puak¹* *kaw*¹ *ŋ* *tuaŋ*⁴ *yau*¹
 1SG POL LOC POT how reply then NEG see PFV
 ‘(They) then did not now know how they would reply to him [polite].’

For negated perfectives, the conceptual bounding of the event is retained via the presence of the final perfective particle, which views the (*not*) *knowing* situation holistically, roughly translated ‘did not **now** know’.

The sentence in (76) uses the negator *ŋcau*³ as a negated stative verb, while retaining the perfective reading, ‘not **now** my duty’, by including the *yau*¹ perfective marker.

- (76) *na:²ti³* *kau*³ *ŋcau*³ *yau*¹
 duty 1SG NEG PFV
 ‘(This) is not now my duty.’

Standard negation in Khamti is rather involved because it depends on the perfectivity system employed by Khamti (Inglis 2021b; Inglis 2021a).

8.4 Complex (multi-clausal) sentences

8.4.1 Relative clause

The relative clause bears its own verb and serves to modify a head noun. In (77), the relative clause *an³ kau³ u⁵* ‘where I live’ headed by the relativizer *an³* modifies the noun *ma:n²* ‘village’, which is a locative argument of the main verb *u⁵* ‘live’.

- (77) *ma:n² an³ kau³ u⁵ mai² man⁴ ti⁵ nai² u⁵ nam⁵*
 village REL 1SG live LOC 3SG POT get live IPFV.ii
 ‘He will get to live in the village where I live.’

Three interesting relative clauses in my corpus include the ditransitive in (78), the benefactive in (79) and the rather extensive one with several subordinate verbs in (80).

- (78) *kun⁴ an³ lək^ha:⁵ nai¹ mai² k^hau³ au³ta:i³ nai¹khau⁵*
 person REL child DEF FGD.O want kill PL
 ‘the people who want to kill the child’

- (79) *ko¹ an³ man⁴ k^ha:i⁵ ma:¹ ca:¹*
 person REL 3SG sell horse BEN
 ‘the man for whom he sold the horse’

- (80) *lək^ha:⁵ an³ kat⁵ mai² naŋ⁵ kan³ iau⁵ kan³ u⁵*
 child REL market LOC sit COL shout COL PROG
 ‘children who are sitting together, shouting at each other in the market’

8.4.2 Complement clause

The complement clause includes its own verb and functions as a clausal participant to the main verb of the sentence. The demonstrative *nai¹* grammaticalizes as a marker of a clause that encodes a complement proposition (Inglis 2014:119). This is demonstrated in (81) in which the initial clause, *kau³ pin³ pəsui⁵* ‘I am a ghost’ encodes a proposition that takes the postposition complement marker *nai¹* and functions as the grammatical object of the main clause *man⁴ tuaŋ⁴ u⁵* ‘he now knows’.

- (81) *kau³ pin³ pəsui⁵ nai¹ man⁴ tuaŋ⁴ yau¹*
 1SG be ghost COMPL 3SG know PFV
 ‘He now knows that I am a ghost.’

In (82) the complement clause uses a variant form of the demonstrative complement marker, *nənai¹*, while in (83), the complement forms an oblique argument that serves as the reason for happiness.

- (82) *kau³ su³to⁵ u⁵ nənai¹ mau⁴ han⁵ u⁵*
 1SG be.honest CONT COMPL 2SG see IPFV.i
 ‘You see that I am honest.’

- (83) *taŋ⁴ man⁴ u⁵ nai¹ kau³ piu⁵ u⁵*
 with 3SG live COMPL 1SG happy IPFV.i
 ‘I am happy that I live with her.’

8.4.3 Adverbial clause

The adverbial clause is analogous to other adverbs in that both modify an event. But as a clause, it retains its own verb making the sentence multi-clausal. Described here are a variety of adverbial clauses making up complex sentences.

8.4.2.1 Temporal

Khamti uses the definite *nai¹* as postposition marker for the adverbial dependent clause. The sentence in (84) shows the initial adverbial clause with its own verb *p^hun⁵ tuk¹* ‘rain falls’ using the literal *mɿ³* ‘time’ as the temporal adverbial ‘when’. This adverbial clause modifies the main clause *p^hun⁵* ‘plow (the field)’ indicating the time to do so.

- (84) *mɿ³ nun³ sa:m⁵ p^hun⁵ tuk¹ nai¹ pa:n³ luŋ³ p^hun⁵ wai¹ u⁵*
 time month three rain fall DEF interval one plow DUR IPFV.i
 ‘When the third month rain falls, plow (the field) for the first time.’

In (85), the adverbial clause employs the usual temporal and adverbial markers *mɿ³* and *nai¹* followed by the distal demonstrative used to mark the time up to a certain point to promote the notion ‘ever since (an event occurred)’. This distal marker is optional.

- (85) *man⁴ luk¹ mɿ³ tuk¹ ma:¹ ka:⁵ nai¹ pun² ha:n²kəlu¹ u⁵*
 3SG from time fall horse ANDT DEF DIST limp IPFV.i
 Lit. ‘From the time she fell off the horse going forward, she limps.’
 ‘Ever since she fell off the horse, she limps.’

8.4.3.2 Simultaneous

The temporal adverbial clause featuring an initial temporal marker *mɿ³* ‘time’ with a final definite marker *nai¹* is now shown in (86) expressing temporal simultaneous actions arising from the adverbial clausal and main clausal verbs, when the postposition adverb *məlau³kaw¹* ‘whenever’ is included.

- (86) *mɿ³ man⁴ huaŋ¹ nai¹ məlau³kaw¹ kau³ nuan³ huam⁵nue⁵ si⁵ u⁵ nam⁵*
 time 3SG call DEF whenever 1SG sleep rest CONJ PROG IPFV.ii
 Lit. ‘Whenever is the time he calls, I am napping.’
 ‘Whenever he calls I am napping.’

A second simultaneous clause applies the preverbal adverb *ka:⁵ca¹* ‘while’ in conjunction with the erstwhile adverbial marker *nai¹* ‘DEF’.

- (87) *man⁴ ka:⁵ca¹ liam⁴ pap¹ nai¹ kin³ k^hau² u⁵*
 3SG while look.at book DEF eat rice IPFV.i
 ‘While she looks at a book, (she) eats.’

As well, simultaneous actions can be inferred from context simply using the all-purpose conjunction *si⁵*.

- (88) *man⁴ liam⁴ pap¹ si⁵ kin³ k^hau² u⁵*
 3SG look.at book CONJ eat rice IPFV.i
 Lit. ‘She looks at a book and eats.’
 ‘She eats looking at a book.’

The simultaneous action reading in (88) could also be interpreted as separate or sequential action, first looking at the book and then eating rice, due to the *si⁵* conjunction being vague, serving to merely piece together two conjuncts (cf. 8.4.4.3 Successive coordination).

8.4.3.3 Limitative

Limitative adverbial modification approximates the meaning *up to a certain point* and the example I posit is (89) using the adverb *au³t^huŋ⁵* ‘until’, along with the definite marker *nai¹* as adverbial marker.

- (89) *man⁴ au³t^huŋ⁵ nue² nai¹ p^ha:i² u⁵*
 3SG until be.tired DEF walk IPFV.i
 ‘He walked until (he) was tired.’

8.4.3.4 Conditional

A full conditional adverbial is found in (90), with an initial *saŋ⁵wa:³* ‘if’ introducing the conditional clause and the generic adverbial marker *ki:⁴* ‘if’ closing said clause.¹⁷

- (90) *saŋ⁵wa:³ mau⁵ hau² huaŋ²ka:⁵ ki:⁴ tu³ ŋ ka:⁵ u⁵*
 if NEG PERM bring if 1PL.EXCL NEG go IPFV.i
 ‘If (you) do not let (us) bring (him) there, we will not go.’

The same conditional meaning can be achieved without the initial *saŋ⁵wa:³* ‘if’ by using the generic post-adverbial marker *ki:⁴*, as in (91). However, without an explicit *saŋ⁵wa:³* ‘if’, the sentence in (91) can also mean ‘When he comes, he will bring food’. Because of the ambiguous meaning of *ki:⁴*, the interpretation is drawn from context.

- (91) *man⁴ ma:⁴ ki:⁴ an³kin³ au³ma:⁴ u⁵*
 3SG come if food bring IPFV.i
 ‘If he comes, (he) will bring food.’

8.4.3.5 Sequential

In (92), a sentence found in my textual corpus, *ki:⁴* carries the ‘when’ interpretation (cf. 91) and so is not a conditional reading but expresses a preceding (temporal) action.

- (92) *t^huŋ⁵ ki:⁴ ya:⁵ cau² ya:¹ kau³ mai² k^hau²sua:i⁴ hau² kin³ u⁵*
 arrive when grandma POL TOP 3SG FGD.O noodles JUSS eat IPFV.i
 ‘When (I) arrived, Grandma made me eat noodles.’

On the other hand, *yau⁴ki:⁴* ‘after’ represents definitive sequential action. In (93), first Dad drinks and only then does he not know anything, supporting a cause-effect sequence.

- (93) *ŋai⁴si⁵ ua:⁴ mau⁴ lau² yau⁴ki:⁴ kəsəŋ⁵kaw¹ ŋ tuaŋ⁴ yau¹*
 and.so dad alcohol drink after nothing NEG know PFV
 ‘And so after Dad drinks, he doesn’t know anything.’

Other sequential actions include the notion arising from the clause initial adverb *co³ka:⁴* ‘before’, as in (94). Being an adverbial clause, it uses the definite post clausal *nai¹*.

- (94) *co³ka:⁵ kau³ mau⁵ pai⁵ ta:³ nai¹ kau³ man⁴ mai² ka:⁵ han⁵ nam⁵*
 before 1SG NEG yet die DEF 1SG 3SG FGD.O go see IPFV.ii
 ‘I will go see him before I die.’

¹⁷ The permissive (also jussive in 92) preverb *hau²* grammaticalizes from *give*, a common phenomenon, especially of Southeast Asian languages (Jenny 2015:152).

The example in (95) presents a variant, but prolific, construction of sequential action, which uses a negated phrase *mɔ̃³ kau³ mau⁵ pai⁵ tʰuŋ⁵ma:⁴* ‘lit. the time I did not yet arrive’, to assert a similar interpretation of prior action, ‘before I arrived’.

- (95) *mɔ̃³ kau³ mau⁵ pai⁵ tʰuŋ⁵ma:⁴ mau⁴ nɔ̃¹mɔ̃² cuan⁵ luŋ³ na:i³ yaŋ⁴ yau¹*
 time 1SG NEG yet arrive 2SG animals few INDEF see exist PFV
 ‘Before I arrived you had only a few animals.’

8.4.3.6 Concessional

A concessional sentence features an adverbial clause that provides a counter expectation that may impact the action of the main verbal event of the sentence, as shown in (96) with the concessional *nəkaw¹* ‘even though’.

- (96) *man⁴ ma:⁴ nəkaw¹ kau³ ŋ hau² kʰau²*
 3SG come even.though 1SG NEG PERM enter
 ‘Even though she came, I didn’t let her enter.’

8.4.4 Coordination

The difference between subordination and coordination probably best forms a continuum of dependency of the one clause to the main clause (Langacker 1991:417–418). An obvious modifying relationship would include the adverbial examples in 8.4.3, whereas those less obvious and more is keeping with the linking of two independent clauses would pertain to the examples in this section. Nevertheless, both the sub- and co-ordination examples provide a good basic description of the complex sentences found in Khamti.

8.4.4.1 Conjunctive

A coordinating construction uses an all-purpose conjunction *si⁵* approximating, but more vague than, the English *and* to link events expressed by two independent clauses. Being interpreted by context, this conjunction is shown in (97) with a successive reading, in (98) with a contrastive reading, and in (99) with a reasoning reading.

- (97) *pa:³sən¹e¹ yau⁵ amau⁴ uak⁵ma:⁴ si⁵ mu⁴ man⁴ kap¹ yau¹*
 eel big that come.out CONJ hand 3SG bite PFV
 ‘That eel came out and bit his hand.’

- (98) *kuak⁵ kʰau² kan²nuak⁵ mai² na:i³ saŋ⁵ si⁵ pa:² kan²nau⁴ mai² haŋ² u⁵*
 bowl rice outside LOC only EMPH CONJ side inside LOC be.dirty IPFV.i
 ‘The rice bowl is only clean on the outside, but on the inside it is dirty.’

- (99) *pʰuŋ⁵ tuk¹ si⁵ tu³ u⁵ huŋ⁴ u⁵*
 rain fall CONJ 1PL.EXCL stay house IPFV.i
 ‘It rained so we stayed in the house.’

8.4.4.2 Disjunctive

A disjunctive sentence includes two statements using the disjunctive coordinator *nai¹mau⁵cau³ki⁴* ‘or’. In (100), the disjunctive phrases express synonymous characterizations that warrant abandoning him.

- (100) *man⁴ mai² naŋ⁵ kun⁴kan²nuak¹ nəkən⁵ nai¹mau⁵cau³ki⁴ naŋ⁵ pʰu²map¹lup¹ nəkən⁵*
 3SG FGD.O as outsider just or as traitor just

mat¹ kʰuat⁵ ta¹
 consider abandon IMP
 ‘Abandon him, considering him as an outsider or as a traitor.’

Using *nai'nəkaw¹* 'but' in (101), the disjunction presents a contrast of characterizations, being rich or being poor.

- (101) *man⁴ mi⁴ u⁵ nai'nəkaw¹ pi⁵cai⁴ man⁴ ya:¹ p^ha:n⁵ u⁵*
 3SG be.rich CONT but brother 3SG TOP be.poor IPFV.i
 'He is rich but, as for his elder brother, (he) is poor.'

Here the *ya:¹* topic marker is functioning as switch (agent) topic marker (cf. 9.2).

8.4.4.3 Reason-result

A reason-result reading of a sentence has been posited above in (99) employing the all-purpose conjunction *si⁵*. In that example, staying in the house is read as a result of the rain falling but could also simply mean two otherwise unconnected events, *staying in the house* + *rain falling*. In (103), however, the *nai'si⁵* 'and.so' conjunction takes two independent sentences to produce a definitive reason-result meaning, being patient the sure result of love.

- (102) *ya:⁵ nai¹ kaw¹ nai¹ man⁴ mai² hak¹ luŋ⁵ nai'si⁵ se⁴k^ha:m⁵ u⁵*
 grandma DEF also DEF 3SG FGD.O love large REAS be.patient IPFV.i
 'The grandma really loves him and so (she) is patient.'

8.4.4.4 Purposive

In similar fashion, the two independent sentences in (103) with the verbs *puaŋ⁴caw³* 'understand' and *k^ha:i³* 'explain' yield a sure purposive conjunctive sentence vis-à-vis the initial *hau²po⁴* 'so that'.

- (103) *hau²po⁴ man⁴ mai² kau³ puaŋ⁴caw³ nai¹ k^hai³ hau² ta¹*
 so.that 3SG LOC 1SG understand DEF explain GOAL IMP
 'Explain (to me) so that I understand him.'

Note that the purposive in (103) follows the adverbial structure with the initial purposive conjunction and the definite marker *nai¹* followed by the second clause. In (104), the purposive conjunction *ha:ŋ⁴hau²* 'in order that' is sentence medial, conjoining the two independent clauses.

- (104) *man⁴ wa:³ ŋai⁴nai¹ ha:ŋ⁴hau² mau⁴ pin³ p^hu² ma² nam⁵*
 3SG say like.this in.order.that 2SG is NMZ.person be.confused IPFV.ii
 'She said it like that in order that you would be the confused one (lit. the confusee).'

9 Discourse and pragmatics

9.1 Discourse markers

Discourse markers are those that connect more than one sentence to create a text level coherence. The most prevalent of these markers is the all-purpose *kaw¹* which functions as a signal of story continuation with the interpretations *then*, *also*, and *too*. Sentence (105) from a text simply carries on with the narrative using *kaw¹* 'also', which always occurs sentence-medially and in this way is iconic for sentence flow.

- (105) *mɿ³ nai¹ kaw¹ cau²hun⁴ nai¹ khau² ŋ ka:⁵ suŋ⁵*
 day this also landlord DEF rice NEG go send
 'This day also, the landlord did not go and send rice (to the poor man).'

Most of the other discourse markers occur as the first element of a sentence, linking said sentence to the previous sentence(s) in the discourse. Table 15 highlights some of these sentence-initial linkers.

Table 15: Representative Khamti discourse markers

Discourse connector	Khamti
then	<i>nai¹mai²</i>
and when	<i>ηai⁴ki⁴</i>
and	<i>ηai⁴</i>
at that time	<i>mɔ³amau⁴</i>
for/because	<i>kuap¹pɔ³kəsəŋ⁵nai⁵nəki⁴</i>
now	<i>ηai⁵</i>
and because of this [therefore]	<i>ηai⁴nai¹si⁵</i>
but	<i>nai¹nəkaw¹</i>
nor	<i>nai¹mau⁵cau³ki⁴</i>
after this	<i>yau¹ki⁴</i>

9.2 Topic and agentive

A single marker *ya:¹* is used for a variety of closely related functions, a topic marker, a switch topic marker, and an agentive (or perhaps subject) marker. The sentence in (106) comes from the text in Appendix B. The previous sentence introduces the clothes that a postman wears. In (106), the discourse topic is clearly *k^huŋ³ amau⁴* ‘those clothes’ and the context goes on to elaborate details concerning the clothes.

- (106) *k^huŋ³ amau⁴ ya¹ sɔ²kuk¹ mɔ⁴ k^huŋ³ yau⁴ mɔ⁴ muk⁵ mɔ⁴*
 clothes those TOP shirt.coat be.blue pants be.long be.blue hat be.blue

ηai⁴ nam⁵
 altogether IPFV.ii

‘As for those clothes, they are altogether a blue shirt coat, long blue pants, and blue hat.’

The example in (107) shows a clear function of switching topics from one man who is rich to second who is poor.

- (107) *man⁴ mi⁴ u⁵ nai¹nəkaw¹ pi⁵cai⁴ man⁴ ya:¹ p^ha:n⁵ u⁵*
 3SG be.rich CONT but brother 3SG TOP be.poor IPFV.i
 ‘He is rich but as for his elder brother, (he) is poor.’

Finally, the agentive function is shown in (108) with a third-singular *man⁴* marked as the topic. The mother is not a focal part of the text and here is only cast as a matchmaker.

- (108) *man⁴ ya:¹ man⁴ mai² taŋ⁴ p^hu²yiŋ⁴ ko¹ luŋ³ kup⁵ hau² u⁵*
 3SG TOP 3SG LOC with woman CLF.person INDEF connect GOAL IPFV.I
 ‘She (his mother) matched him with a woman (lit. connected to him with a woman).’

9.3 Sentence-final particles

Described in this section are a variety of sentence-final particles that expound an enhanced speaker perspective (see also Inglis 2022). The use of these various final particles often replaces the basic perfective categories, as observed with the imperative *ta¹* in (109).

- (109) *amau⁴ mai² p^hau⁵kɔ¹ pi⁵ hau² u⁵ ka:⁵ ta¹*
 there LOC anyone PROH JUSS live ANDT IMP
 ‘Don’t have anyone live over there [simple command].’

The final imperatives *ta¹* and *la:⁴* express similar simple commands and are observed in free variation in (109) and (110). In (110), however, there also appears a series of sentence-final particles expressing the

imperative with an added speaker perspective of sudden exigency, as seen with $k^h\text{ɔ}^5$, glossed ‘URGENT’, followed by the imperative la^4 .¹⁸

- (110) $man^4 \quad mai^2 \quad hin^5 \quad sij^4 \quad k^h\text{ɔ}^5 \quad la^4$
 3SG LOC stone throw URGENT IMP
 ‘Throw a stone at it [Don't be afraid, just do it].’

Table 16 shows a variety of sentence-final markers, providing a context in which they may be used.

Table 16: *Khamti non-basic sentence-final particles*

Khamti particle	Context
$t\text{ɔ}^6$	An imperative particle when the speaker places coercive emphasis to ensure the addressee fully understands the command stated.
na^4	An imperative particle that softens the harshness of a command. Also, in an alarming situation, it serves to mollify a potential overreaction of an addressee to the expressed command.
kai^6	A declarative particle building an excited state for the speaker, either as positive anticipation or negative exasperation or worry.
$nt^h a:\eta^1$	A declarative particle stating the possibility of a state of affairs being the case. Even if the situation is almost certainly true the speaker is not willing to fully commit.
$n\text{ɔ}^6$	An interrogative particle used to petition the addressee for complete acquiescence on the affirmation of a particular proposition.
na^6	An interrogative particle expressing negative expectation on the part of the speaker asking their question. The speaker is incredulous, having no idea whether their question is accurate.

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¹⁸ The $k^h\text{ɔ}^5$ ‘URGENT’ particle can also stand alone as the sentence-final marker (Inglis 2022:726).

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Abbreviations

1	=	first person	JUSS	=	jussive
2	=	second person	LOC	=	locative
3	=	third person	N	=	noun
ABIL	=	(cap)ability	NEG	=	negation
ANDT	=	andative	NMZ	=	nominalizer
ADV	=	adverb	NUM	=	numeral
CLF	=	classifier	O	=	grammatical object
CMPL	=	completive	OPT	=	optative particle
COL	=	collective	PERF	=	perfect tense
COMPL	=	complementizer	PERM	=	permissive
COMP	=	comparative	PFV	=	perfective aspect
CONJ	=	conjunction	PL	=	plural
CONN	=	connective	POL	=	polite register
CONT	=	continuative	POST	=	postposition
DEF	=	definite	POT	=	potential particle
DEIC	=	deictic	PRE	=	preposition

DEM	=	demonstrative	PROG	=	progressive
DIST	=	distal	PROH	=	prohibitive
DU	=	dual	PST	=	past tense
DUR	=	durative	Q	=	interrogative particle
EMPH	=	emphasis	QUANT	=	quantifier
EXCL	=	exclusive	QUOT	=	quotative particle
FGD	=	foregrounded	RCPR	=	reciprocal
GEN	=	genitive	REAS	=	reason-result
GOAL	=	dative-like argument	REFL	=	reflexive
H	=	head	REL	=	relativizer
HAB	=	habitual	RES	=	resultative
IMP	=	imperative	RPRT	=	reported speech
INDEF	=	indefinite	SG	=	singular
INS	=	instrument	STV	=	stative verb (or adjective)
INTENS	=	intensifier	TOP	=	topic in information structure
INTENT	=	pragmatic speaker intent	URGENT	=	pragmatic force of urgency
IPFV.i	=	first imperfective	V	=	verb
IPFV.ii	=	second imperfective	VENT	=	venitive

Abbreviations with multifunctional glosses (grammaticalization)

Source	Gloss	Abbreviation	Source	Gloss	Abbreviation
<i>an</i> ³ ‘thing’	CLF	= classifier		LOC	= goal arguments
	REL	= relativizer		LOC	= beneficiary
<i>au</i> ³ ‘take’	INS	= instrument		LOC	= causee
				LOC	= standard of comparison
<i>hau</i> ² ‘give’	GOAL	= dative argument		FGD.O	= anti-ergative
	PERM	= permissive	<i>nai</i> ¹ ‘this’	DEF	= definite
	JUSS	= jussive		DEF	= adverbializer
<i>ka</i> ⁵ ‘go’	ANDT	= andative	Q	= interrogative	
	RES	= resultative	COMPL	= complementizer	
<i>kan</i> ³ ‘share’	COL	= collective	<i>nam</i> ⁵ ‘numerous’	EMPH	= emphasis
				IPFV.ii	= 2nd imperfective
<i>luŋ</i> ³ ‘one’	INDEF	= indefinite	<i>u</i> ⁵ ‘live/stay’	CONT	= continuative
				HAB	= habitual
<i>ma</i> ⁴ ‘come’	VENT	= venitive		PROG	= progressive
	PST	= past tense		IPFV.i	= 1st imperfective
	PERF	= perfect tense	<i>wai</i> ¹ ‘keep’	DUR	= durative
<i>mai</i> ² ‘here’	LOC	= physical location			

LOC	=	temporal location	<i>yau</i> ¹ ‘finish’	CMPL	=	completive
LOC	=	possessor		PFV	=	perfective aspect

Appendix A. Glossed Text¹⁹

k^{hiap}tin³ *p^{hu}su⁵lik¹*
 slipper postman

The postman’s slippers

1

ma.n² *tu³* *mai²* *ua:⁴* *p^{hu}su⁵lik¹* *ko¹* *lu^u³* *ya^u⁴* *u⁵*
 village 1PL.EXCL LOC dad postman CLF.person INDEF exist IPFV.i

‘There is a postman Dad in our village.’

2

man⁴ *mai²* *k^{hu}u³* *an³* *nu^u³* *ka⁵* *tiak¹lik¹* *ya^u⁴* *u⁵*
 3SG LOC clothes REL wear go mail exist IPFV.i

‘He has clothes that he wears to go mailing.’

3

k^{hu}u³ *amau⁴* *ya¹* *s^rku²kuk¹* *m^r⁴* *k^hun³* *yau⁴* *m^r⁴* *ŋai⁴* *muk⁵* *m^r⁴*
 clothes those TOP shirt.coat be.blue pants be.long be.blue and hat be.blue

nai¹ *nam⁵*

DEF IPFV.ii

‘Those clothes are the blue shirt coat, long blue pants, and blue hat.’

4

man⁴ *mai²* *cuau²* *m^r³nan¹* *an³* *kan⁴* *yau⁴* *ŋai⁴* *ŋau²* *mai²* *ŋuak⁵* *ŋai⁴si⁵*
 3SG LOC umbrella long.ago REL handle be.long and base LOC hook and.then

an³ *nam³* *to³* *lu^u³* *kaw¹* *ya^u⁴* *u⁵*
 thing black CLF INDEF CONN exist IPFV.i

‘He has an old-fashioned umbrella whose handle is long and a hook at the base, then that is also black.’

5.1

ku³ *m^r³* *man⁴* *ka⁵* *tiak¹lik¹* *ki⁴* *cuau²* *amau⁴* *miak⁵* *ŋai⁴*
 each time 3SG go mail when umbrella that shoulder.carry and

‘Each time when he goes mailing, he carries that umbrella over his shoulder and...’

¹⁹ This is a third person oral narrative of a true account of a Khamti Shan postal deliverer located in Putao, Myanmar. The speaker is a 28 year old single Khamti Shan female who grew up in Putao and, as her first language, is a fluent speaker. I recorded this story in February 2008 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The speaker and I worked together on the glossing and free translation, along with cultural notes at this time. It is published here with informed consent.

5.2

kan²lan⁵ kan³ ηuak¹ amau⁴ mai² t^huŋ⁵ an³ sau⁵ tiak¹lik¹ t^huŋ⁵ p^ha:²yuaŋ³
back handle hook that LOC bag REL put.in mail bag plastic

ha:i¹ nai¹ huai² nai² yau¹
used DEF hang ABIL PFV

‘...on that hook handle in the back, (he) now can hang a bag to put mail in, this used plastic bag.’

6.1

ki⁴ kan²na:² pa:i³ cuaŋ² mai² ya:¹ k^hiap⁵tin³ law⁵pa:⁵ an³ ma:η³ ηai⁴
and front tip umbrella LOC TOP slipper rubber REL thin and

‘And, as for on the umbrella tip at the front, (he) hangs thin rubber slippers and...’

6.2

sa:i⁵ kaw¹ sa:i⁵ law⁵pa:⁵ ma:η³ puaŋ⁵puaŋ⁵ mai² huai² ηai⁴si⁵ ku³ mɿ³
strap CONN strap rubber thin very LOC hang and.like.this each time

ku³ mɿ³ ka:⁵ amu⁴ man⁴ u⁵
each time go work 3SG IPFV.i

‘...a strap also, a very thin rubber strap, and so each and every time (he) goes to his work like this.’

7.1

man⁴ ηai⁵ ka⁵ nai¹ mai² pun³ han⁵ ki⁴ ua:⁴ oi⁴ hit⁵kənai⁵ mau⁴ k^hiap⁵tin³
3SG now go DEF LOC others see when dad o why 2SG slipper

mau⁴ mau⁵ sup⁵ nai¹ nəsi⁵ t^ha:m⁵ ki⁴
2SG NEG wear DEF QUOT ask if

‘When others see him now going, if (they) ask, “O Dad, why don't you put your slippers on?”’

7.2

ua:⁴ amau⁴ wa:³ kau³ k^hiap⁵tin³ kau³ ko³ ma:η³ ka:⁵ si⁵ nam⁵ nəwan¹
dad that say 1SG slipper 1SG be.afraid thin RES PROG IPFV.ii RPRT

‘...that dad says, “I'm afraid my slippers will be getting thin.”’

8.1

ηai⁴ki⁴ ya:¹ hit⁵kənai⁵ mau⁴ k^hiap⁵tin³ amau⁴ ku³ mɿ³ pak¹ ka:⁵ nai¹
like.this TOP why 2SG slipper those each time carry ANDT Q

nəsi⁵ t^ha:m⁵ ik⁵ ki⁴
QUOT ask again when

‘Like this, when they ask again, “Why do you carry your slippers each day?”’

8.2

a:³ an³nai¹ ya:¹ kau³ mai² kun⁴ nai¹k^hau⁵ k^han⁵tau⁴ k^hiap⁵tin³ mau⁵ yaŋ⁴ si⁵
ah this TOP 1SG LOC person PL think slipper NEG exist and

mau⁵ sup⁵ nai¹ ko³ wa:³ si⁵ nam⁵ nəsi⁵ k^ha:i³ piau⁵ u⁵
NEG put.on DEF afraid say CONJ IPFV.ii QUOT explain so.much IPFV.i

‘... (he) so much explains, “Ah! As for this, (I’m) afraid people would think (I) don’t have slippers and say that is why (I) don’t wear them.” ’

9

ua: amau⁴ ηai⁵ kaw¹ yaη⁴ u⁵
 dad that now CONN exist IPFV.i

‘That Dad is (alive) also now.’

Appendix B. Gedney tone box data for Irrawaddy confluence Khamti

The Gedney tone box (Gedney 1972) is a tool developed to map modern Tai language tonal categories to historical Proto-Tai segmental categories. The 20-box table arises from a subset of the words that establish a surface pattern sharing a historical conditioning environment for tonogenesis (Dockum 2019:38) and used for historical reconstruction. Table 17 represents the underlying data for the Irrawaddy confluence Khamti described in this paper resulting in the tonal merger and split categories found in Figure 2 of the paper. Given this paper as descriptive in nature, any comparative analysis is for future research.

Table 17: Irrawaddy confluence Khamti tone box data

Proto-Tai initials		Proto-Tai tonal categories				
		A	B	C	D-short	D-long
1	Voiceless friction *p ^h , *t ^h , *k ^h , *s, *η, etc.	hu ⁵ ear k ^h a: ⁵ leg ho ⁵ head	k ^h ai ⁵ egg p ^h a: ⁵ to split k ^h au ⁵ knee	k ^h au ² rice sɿ ² shirt k ^h a: ² to kill ha: ² five	mat ⁵ flea suk ⁵ ripe p ^h ak ⁵ vegetable	k ^h at ⁵ broken huuk ⁵ gums hap ⁵ carry on shoulder pole
2	Voiceless unaspirated *p, *t, *k, etc.	pi ³ year ta: ³ eye kin ³ eat	pa: ⁵ forest kai ⁵ chicken ke ⁵ elderly	kau ² nine ka: ² seedling tum ² to boil	k ^h it ⁵ frog tap ⁵ liver tsip ⁵ to hurt	puat ⁵ lungs pik ⁵ wings tup ⁵ to pound
3	Glottalized *ʔ, *ʔb, *ʔj, etc.	min ³ to fly nian ³ red na:u ³ star	pa: ⁵ shoulder ma:u ⁵ bachelor pa:u ⁵ to scold	ma: ² crazy ma:n ² village sa: ² string	mit ⁵ fish-hook nip ⁵ raw ok ⁵ breast	niat ⁵ sunshine ap ⁵ to bathe muak ⁵ flower
4	Voiced *b, *m, *l, *z, etc.	mɿ ⁴ hand k ^h a:i ⁴ buffalo na: ⁴ rice field	pi ⁵ old sibling po ⁵ father pa:η ⁵ dry field	nam ¹ water tuaη ¹ belly mai ¹ wood	nuk ¹ bird mat ¹ to bind lak ¹ to steal	mit ¹ knife luk ¹ child nuak ¹ outside
			<i>Smooth Syllables</i>		<i>Checked Syllables</i>	

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