

## Reconstructing the history of the Kaike-Ghale-Tamangic languages

Scholars generally agree that the Tamangic languages, which are spoken in the Himalayas of Nepal, are closely related with the Tibetic languages. However, no one has attempted to properly assess what the two families have in common, let alone to determine which shared features they may have inherited from a common ancestor, and which ones are more likely to have been borrowed from one into the other family. In the last two years, I investigated two languages that are closely affiliated with the Tamangic languages (and included into the ‘Kaike-Ghale-Tamangic’ clade on glottolog, henceforth ‘KGT’), namely Kaike and Kutang Ghale, as they have been reported to exhibit a grammatical phenomenon that is found throughout the Tibetic varieties as well as a number of languages in contact with these (contrastive evidentiality). And indeed, our work on both these languages [9, 10, 11] reveals that most of their verbal morphemes reflect either matter or patterns borrowed from the Tibetic varieties spoken in the same regions (likewise, distinctive tone in Kaike and Northern Ghale may have arisen under Tibetic influence, [12]) and at the same time supports the idea that both Kaike and Ghale belong to the Tamangic family. Given that all KGT languages show some degree of bilingualism with neighbouring Tibetic varieties, I am currently trying (together with Florian Matter) to get funding for a project compiling data on all KGT languages in order to build an Interactive Comparative Dictionary of KGT which allows us to identify features that are shared by different KGT languages and thus need to be reconstructed for their common ancestor and features that were borrowed from (or modelled after) a Tibetic or another contact language. Our project aims to thereby provide linguistic evidence for population splits, migrations, and episodes of contact between different peoples in a time and region for which historical sources are extremely rare, and to achieve the best-possible basis on which to address also the question of how the KGT languages are genetically related with Tibetic as well as other languages and peoples of the region.

[9] Zemp, Marius and Sara Schindler. 2023. *A new look at the conjunct/disjunct opposition of the Kaike (Dolpa District, Nepal) past tense*. 56th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea in Athens, August 29–September 1.

<https://societaslinguistica.eu/sle2023/programme>

[10] Zemp, Marius. 2023. *Tichurong-Tibetic influence in the grammar of Kaike (Nepal)*. 26th Himalayan Languages Symposium in Paris, September 4–6.

<https://sites.google.com/view/hls26/program>

→ HLS2023\_Abstract\_Tichurong-Tibetic influence in the grammar of Kaike

[11] Copulas in Kutang (Northern Gorkha, Nepal): caught between descriptive systems – and evidence for the unity of these systems. 57th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea in Helsinki, August 21–24.

→ SLE2024\_Abstract\_Copulas in Kutang\_110123\_accepted.pdf

[12] Stylized intonation in a tone language – evidence from Northern Ghale (Gorkha district, Nepal). 27th Himalayan Languages Symposium in Guwahati, June 12–14.

→ HLS2024\_Abstract\_Stylized intonation in a tone language\_accepted.pdf