

## Tone in PaTani and Central Tibetan: parallel developments?<sup>1</sup>

Anju Saxena  
University of Oregon

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally assumed among Tibeto-Burmanists that languages of the West Himalayish subbranch<sup>2</sup> of the Tibeto-Burman language family are not tonal. The aim of this paper is to show that at least one language of this subbranch (PaTani) is tonal. PaTani (also referred to as Manchati) is spoken in the PaTan valley in Himachal Pradesh, India. There has been very little work done on it, and none of the published works (e.g. S. Sharma 1987, D. Sharma 1989) identify it as a tone language. To quote D. Sharma:

"The glottal fricative /h/ tends to be realized as high falling tone in a prepausal position, as in /meh/ = /mè/, /ah/ = /à/ 'mouth, beak'. In Pattani tone is, however, a non-phonemic feature." (D. Sharma 1989:31)

The phonetic facts concerning PaTani tone are very similar to those of Central Tibetan. Similarities in the tone patterns in these two languages are not because the tones are cognate. Proto-Tibetan did not have tone, suggesting that these are parallel independent developments in each language. Though there has been some work done on tonogenesis in some Bodish languages (e.g. Sedláček (1959), Sprigg (1972), and Chang and Shefts (1964) on Central Tibetan, and Mazaudon (1975) on Tamang), it is hoped that a case-study of PaTani tone will contribute towards getting a better understanding of tonogenesis in this branch of TB.

<sup>1</sup> This work was partially supported by NSF grant II BNS-8711370. I'd like to thank my informants Chemme Angmo (PaTani), Arjun Negi (Kinnauri) for patiently giving me data, and Scott DeLancey for his comments on this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The position of West Himalayish within the TB language family is shown below (following DeLancey 1987):

Tibeto-Burman

Bodhic

Bodish

Tibeto-Kanauri

Tibetan:

West-Himalayish:

Western, Central, Southern, Khams, Amdo, Monpa

Kanauri-Manchati/PaTani, Bunan-Theobar, Chaudangsi-Rangkas

## 2. TONE IN PATANI

PaTani has two distinctive tones: high and low. The following minimal pairs show that tone is phonemic in PaTani. The high tone is represented here by "1" and the low tone is represented by "2".

du <sup>2</sup>	'he/she/it'	du <sup>1</sup>	'a dish made of flour'
ri <sup>2</sup>	'field'	ri <sup>1</sup>	'a measuring pot'
ka <sup>2</sup>	'chest'	ka <sup>1</sup>	'walnut'
la <sup>2</sup>	'month'	la <sup>1</sup>	'goat (female)'
pi <sup>2</sup>	'accusative marker'	pi <sup>1</sup>	'four'
ya(g) <sup>2</sup>	'dinner'	ya(g) <sup>1</sup>	'yak'

In PaTani, as in Central Tibetan, breathiness is associated with the low tone and there is a rising pitch on open and long syllables (e.g. ri<sup>2</sup> 'man'). In PaTani the vowel following a voiced consonant frequently has a low tone and the vowel following a voiceless consonant frequently has a high tone. This is reminiscent of modern Central Tibetan where the vowel following a Written Tibetan voiced consonant has a low tone and the vowel following a voiceless consonant has a high tone. However, unlike Central Tibetan, voicing is phonemic in PaTani. The minimal pair given below is illustrative:

Tu <sup>1</sup>	'smoke'	Du <sup>1</sup>	'cloud'
-----------------	---------	-----------------	---------

In PaTani there is only one consonant cluster (stop/nasal + r/y/w) that is permissible in initial position. In most cases there is a correlation between the voicing of the first consonant of the cluster and the tone on the following vowel.

tre <sup>2</sup> i <sup>#</sup>	'sheep'
kro <sup>1</sup>	'charcoal'

PaTani has a word-tone pattern, where in polysyllabic morphemes only the first vowel has contrastive tone and subsequent syllable(s) have levelled tone, i.e. if the first syllable has a high tone, then subsequent vowels have slightly lower pitch; and if the first syllable has a low tone, then subsequent vowels have slightly mid pitch. The levelled tone is represented by "#". In sequences of vowels too, the second vowel has a levelled tone, which seems like a rising/falling tone depending on the tone of the preceding vowel. For example,

la <sup>2</sup> tsaŋ <sup>#</sup>	'moon'
ro <sup>2</sup> ki <sup>#</sup>	'black'

me <sup>2</sup> tsə <sup>#</sup> mi <sup>#</sup>	'woman'
cho <sup>2</sup> a <sup>#</sup>	'wheat'
so <sup>1</sup> i <sup>#</sup>	'cold'

In PaTani some nouns are formed by reduplicating the first syllable. In such cases too, the second syllable has a levelled tone. For example,

kir <sup>1</sup> kir <sup>#</sup>	'circle'
-----------------------------------	----------

An important characteristic of PaTani phonology is that in word final position nasals and liquids are pronounced, but stops are unreleased. In the latter case the preceding vowel is not long. Since stops are unreleased and lenis, it is hard to characterize them as voiced or voiceless. Final stops are, however, pronounced when a suffix is added to them, or when they are part of a compound. For example,<sup>3</sup>

gu(d) <sup>1</sup>	'hand'	
ra(g) <sup>2</sup>	'stone'	
mo(d) <sup>2</sup>	'face'	
ya(g) <sup>1</sup>	'yak'	yak <sup>1</sup> -ku <sup>2</sup> 'two yaks'
mig <sup>2</sup> ti <sup>#</sup>	'tear [eye water]'	(cf. mig <sup>2</sup> 'eye', ti <sup>1</sup> 'water')

It was pointed out earlier that PaTani has a word-tone system, where non-initial vowels have a levelled tone. However, in polysyllabic words the vowel preceding the unreleased stop seems to have a high/rising tone.

Ti <sup>1</sup> li <sup>1</sup> i(g) <sup>1</sup>	'egg'
nyu <sup>1</sup> ra(g) <sup>1</sup>	'a day after tomorrow'
ka <sup>1</sup> Te(g) <sup>1</sup>	'bitter'
bən <sup>2</sup> Də <sup>#</sup> yo(d) <sup>1</sup>	'vulture'

#### *Tone of suffixes and postpositions*

Suffixes get the levelled tone. The possessive marker -o/-ku/-tu is one such suffix.

puk <sup>2</sup> -o <sup>#</sup>	tsam <sup>1</sup>	'body hair'
body-POSS	wool	

<sup>3</sup> The final stops are represented here by voiced stops. This is consistent with the intuitions of my informant.

siŋ<sup>1</sup>-o#    miŋ<sup>2</sup>tə#ri# 'carpenter'  
 wood-POSS   carpenter

tsha<sup>1</sup>-ku# ca<sup>1</sup>                    'salted tea'  
 salt-POSS   tea

Postpositions (such as case markers and number markers), on the other hand, always have a low tone. Irrespective of the voicing of the postposition. For example,

a<sup>1</sup>                -ku<sup>2</sup>                'two mouths'  
 mouth        - DUAL

ka<sup>1</sup>Tu# -re<sup>2</sup>                'children'  
 child        - PLURAL

### *Tone in compounds*

In PaTani the second morpheme of a compound does not have an independent tone; instead it has a levelled tone, as seen below.

miŋ<sup>2</sup>ti#    'tears'                (cf. ti<sup>1</sup> 'water')  
 sa<sup>1</sup>-pi#    'fourteen' (cf. pi<sup>1</sup> 'four')  
 sa<sup>1</sup>-ŋa#    'fifteen'                (cf. ŋa<sup>1</sup> 'five')

PaTani has borrowed a lot of vocabulary items from Indic languages. Some of the borrowed items have been nativized and they have acquired tone, for example *cor<sup>1</sup>* 'thief', *ca<sup>1</sup>* 'tea'. But there are some borrowed items that do not have distinctive tone, for example *bə#gə#tə#* 'food'. However, all borrowed items undergo the same morphological processes as native words, for example *cor<sup>1</sup>-ku<sup>2</sup>* 'thieves (DUAL)'.

### 3. TONOGENESIS IN CENTRAL TIBETAN AND PATANI

The studies done on tonogenesis in TB and elsewhere (e.g. Haudricourt 1954, Matlisoff 1973, Maran 1973, Mazaudon 1975) show that in many TB languages the development of tone seems to have been triggered by the reduction of initial clusters (e.g. Central Tibetan)<sup>4</sup> or the loss of

<sup>4</sup> The development of tones in Tamang is similar to the development of the high and low tones in a series of Tibetan (Mazaudon 1975).