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### “I” VS. “WE”

- I am giving the presentation today; I am the P.I. of the project behind this report
- I did not work alone!

CO-AUTHORS OF 2 PAPERS




PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS (2013) AND CO-AUTHORS OF SEVERAL PAPERS



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### INTRODUCTION

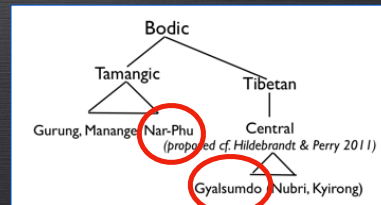
- Can principles of sociolinguistics and dialectology be applied to small language communities located in a region of ethnolinguistic diversity?
- What (if anything) can traditional social variables, alongside newly proposed geo-spatial variables, tell us about how and why residents practice different languages (Stanford 2012; Stanford & Preston, eds. 2009; Hildebrandt et al, eds. 2017)
- And also what the roles of these languages are in this diverse and changing landscape?



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### INTRODUCTION

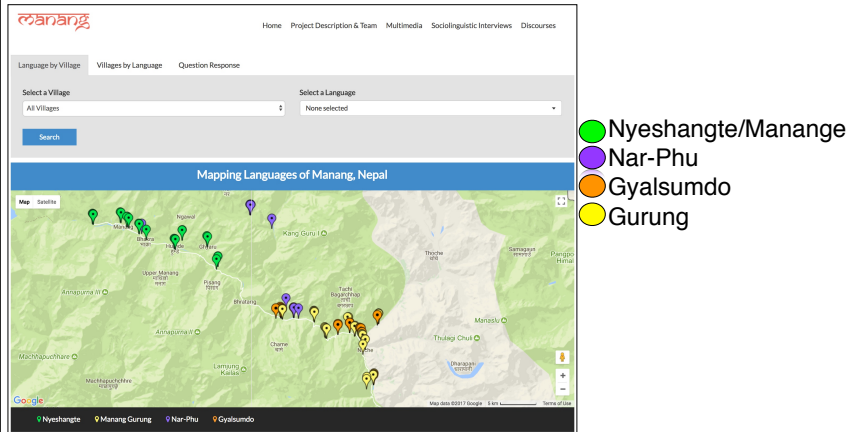
- With ± 100 languages from four major families (and at least one isolate), and close to as many caste-clan groupings, Nepal is a country of great diversity (CBS 2012; Kansakar 2006; Gurung 1998)
- Although it has a low population density in relation to its geographic area, the Manang District is also multi-lingual & multi-ethnic
- Two of four languages are severely endangered (< 500 speakers, few children speakers), while two are viable
- The region is characterized by both individual & societal multilingualism



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Hu, S., Karna, B., Hildebrandt K.A. 2018. Web-based multi-media mapping and visualization in the Digital Humanities: A case study of language documentation in Nepal. *Journal of Geovisualization and Spatial Analysis*. 2.3: 1-14. (<https://tinyurl.com/y7p5sqz2>)

• <https://mananglanguages.isg.siue.edu/>



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## BACKGROUND

- Sociolinguistic survey: An assessment of speaker practices, attitudes & factors behind variation & mutual intelligibility across codes (Mallinson et al, eds 2013)
- Sociolinguistic surveys: investigations of lexico-grammatical variation, but also investigations of speaker attitudes, feelings & ideologies about language
- Adjusted to Nepal: An assessment of language promotion or vulnerability in contexts like home/school/work, in written form and in advertising & official environments



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## BACKGROUND

- In Nepal: many surveys on individual languages
- For example: Balami Newar (Pradhan 2012), Kinnauri (Negi 2012), Tamang (Thokar 2008), Baram (Kansakar et al 2009, 2011), Raji (Sah 2011), Byansi (Nawa 2004), Bantawa (Epele 2011), Gurung outside Manang (Glover & Landon 1980)
- Far fewer surveys on multilingual practices/attitudes in larger regional settings
- However: Japola et al 2003, Webster 1992, Epele 2003 for practices in Mustang, Gorkha, Kiranti diaspora in Kathmandu & Watters 2008 for a typology of sociolinguistic research in Nepal

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## SPATIALITY

- Buchstaller & Alvanides (2013: 96):  
*"The majority of sociolinguistic work [could] be described as spatially naïve, using geographical space merely as a canvas... on to which the results of linguistic analysis [could] be mapped."*
- In the U.S. & Britain, different types of spatial factors increasingly tested (Trudgill 1974; Auer & Schmidt eds. 2009; Lameli et al. eds. 2010; Buchstaller et al. 2011; Cheshire et al. 1989, 1993; Labov et al. 2006; Kretzschmar 1996; Kretzschmar et al. 2014; Britain 2010 and also the rise of "geohumanities" Dear et al. 2011)

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## SPATIALITY

- But what about “small” (even endangered) language communities, and those situated within a greater scene of multilingualism & movement?
- Can principles of sociolinguistics research as we have thought of them for “big languages” be applied here? And are spatial factors used in these studies even relevant in Manang?
- Manang is a good candidate for this because of the rapid environmental, economic and infrastructure development changes over time, including the recent road construction & the economic, linguistic demography, and associated population shifts

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## THE MOTOR ROAD



LOWER MANANG, NEAR GYERANG-TAAL

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## BUILDING THE MOTOR ROAD



TAAL VILLAGE DURING BLASTING

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## THE ROAD AS OBSTACLE



A STRETCH DURING THE MONSOON

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## BENEFITS OF THE MOTOR ROAD



RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN  
CHAME VILLAGE  
(DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS)



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## CHALLENGES OF CHANGE



OUTWARD LABOR MIGRATION  
&  
THE BOARDING SCHOOL  
PHENOMENON

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## SOCIO-SPATIAL DISTRIBUTIONS

- Our study: How can we explain observed variation across residents of Manang in their reported linguistic practices & language attitudes?
- Better understand how “space” interacts with practices & attitudes?
- We considered four different & locally constructed categories of “space.”
- We reconsidered different notions of space because traditional linear distance is meaningless to residents
- If you ask a local “How far/many miles is it to Chame Village?” You will get a puzzled look, or else a response that describes effort “It’s not very steep, so that’s an easy walk”, local walking speed (“It takes a local about 4 hours by foot”), or path type (“Walking on the motor road or the old trail?”)

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## SOCIO-SPATIAL DISTRIBUTIONS

- Type #1 is a modified version of Euclidean-type linear distance in recognizing temporal foot travel distances between groups of communities.
- Type #2 considers distance & access to the newly emerging motor road.
- Type #3 considers proximity to the Manang District headquarters, Chame.
- Type #4 applies a popular social-psychological divide that is already articulated by residents of Manang into residents from “upper” vs. “lower” regions.
- Roughly aligns with languages (two language groups in “upper” Manang, two other groups in “lower” Manang), but there is also increased mixture of language groups into both regions, potentially blurring traditional linguistic divisions

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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY: EVIDENCE

### (1) The Impact Of The Road (Gurung)<sup>8</sup>

tsame səmmə sədərmukam səmmə gaɟi  
 Chame until headquarter until jeep

khə-pə pi-rə kjä lə-ipo tsədo-ro mono  
 come-NMLZR say-PART road do-PROG here-LOC Manang

tʃā-pə tə-i ja tə-i  
 good-NMLZR become-PRF go become-PRF

“People have constructed the road to link this area up to Chame, the (district) head-  
 quarters. Manang will be better because of this.” (Dhar\_M1\_69-71)<sup>9</sup>

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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY: EVIDENCE

### (2) Access To Facilities In Chame (Gyalsumdo)

apa-di fjaŋtiraŋ pəru dʒhuŋ fioraŋ fiɟul mənəŋ  
 father-TOP very rich become 3.PL village Manang

dzilla dhakraŋ tʃi fiŋə dhakraŋ fiola sjak  
 district all one EVID all there-LOC only

ɟho gho jo-pa ɟhak du sədərmukam  
 go oblige become-NMLZR like.this EVID headquarters

tsokʈa dʒhuŋparaŋ ghjalsumdo nekeko fiə-ne  
 similar because.become Gyalsumdo saying there-ABL

dʒhuŋ-pa ta du  
 become-NMLZR become EVID

“(Since) father was very rich, our village, all of Manang district, whoever is there, has  
 to go there (to Chame). (This place, Chame) is a headquarters, you know.”  
 (Chame\_GyM6\_108-110)

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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY: EVIDENCE

### (3) A recognition of “upper” vs. “lower” Manang (Nar)

tor kho pfi-pa a-fi-ne mâr njo pfi-pi  
 up come say-NMLZR NEG-stay-ADV down go say-NMLZR

mfi-ce su a-re  
 person-PL who NEG-COP

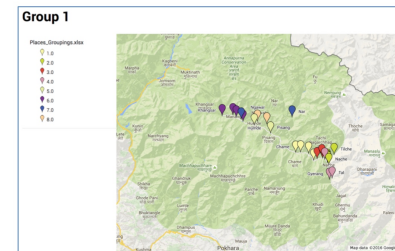
‘Many (people) tell us to come up (to upper Manang), not to settle; nobody says “you  
 settle (lit. go down/to lower Manang).”’ (Koto13\_NF1\_139-140)

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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY

- Social Space 1.** Village clusters: These are clusters of villages that are within an hour’s walking time (point-to-point) from each other, and therefore are clustered together for easy networking and regular contact. Map 3 illustrates these groupings.

- Group 1 Timang, Thancok, Koto, and Chame villages
- Group 2 Nache, Koto, Dharapani, Thilce, and Thonche villages;
- Group 3 Tache, Danakyu, and Bagarchap villages
- Group 4 Tal, Otargaun, and Gyerang villages
- Group 5 Pisang and Humde villages
- Group 6 Manang, Braga, Tenki, and Khangsar villages
- Group 7 Nar and Phu villages
- Group 8 Ngawal and Ghyaru villages



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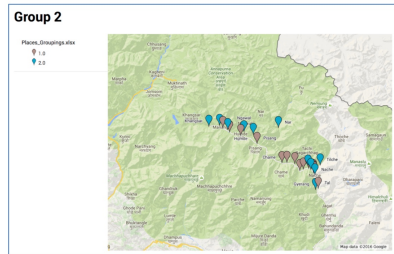
## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY

2. **Social Space 2.** Road proximity: These are villages that sit almost directly on the motor road vs. those that do not; this category is therefore a combination of time/effort of journey as well as type of access. Villages in category 1 are within a one-hour travel time to the motor road, where effort (elevation and risk due to footpath incline) is not so great; this is also a resource access point, as well as a point in which access to non-local languages increases. Villages in category 2 are further away, along footpaths that present more risk and effort. Map 4 illustrates this grouping.

Group 1 (on the road) Tal, Kotro, Dharapani, Bagarchap, Danakyu, Thancok, Timang, Thonche, Koto, Chame, Pisang, Braga, Humde, and

Manang villages

Group 2 (off the road) Thilce, Gyerang, Tache, Nache, Otargaun, Nar, Phu, Ghyaru, Ngawal, Khangsar, and Tenki villages



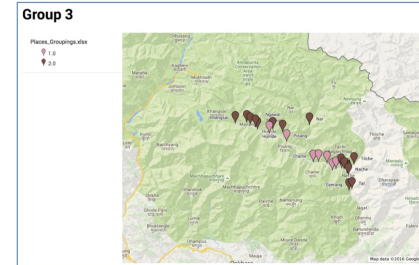
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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY

3. **Social Space 3.** Chame proximity: Chame is the district headquarters, where major governmental, administrative, financial, educational, and medicinal services are available. It is an important point of contact and interaction, and the role of Nepali has grown considerably in Chame in recent years. However, Chame is also the traditional home to both Gyalsumdo and Gurung languages, so the context of contact is complicated. As such, proximity to Chame is likely to correlate with particular types of practice and attitude responses. This factor is measured by villages where a walk to and from Chame does *not* involve a probable overnight stay due to effort and risk considerations. Map 5 illustrates this grouping.

Group 1 (near) Chame, Koto, Thonche, Danakyu, Thancok, Timang, Bagarchap, Pisang, Humde

Group 2 (far) Tal, Kotro, Dharapani, Thilce, Tache, Nache, Otargaun, Gyerang, Braga, Manang, Tenki, Khangsar, Nar, Phu, Ngawal, Ghyaru



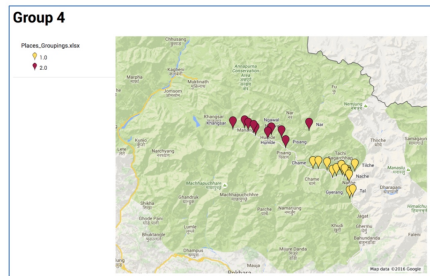
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## ADJUSTED SPATIALITY

4. **Social Space 4.** Upper vs. lower Manang: There is a conceptual distinction between those languages and communities in “upper Manang” vs. “lower Manang.” This has been described as a cultural and linguistic division by Thomas et al. (2006). The evidence is lexicalized in everyday cultural-spatial deictic encoding in Nepali: *maathi Manang* “upper Manang” vs. *tala Manang* “lower Manang.” Pisang village is a boundary line between these two spheres. Map 6 illustrates this grouping.<sup>10</sup>

Group 1 Upper Manang (Pisang village upward/northwestern-ward)

Group 2 Lower Manang (Chame village downward/southeastern-ward)



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## THE REST OF THIS TALK

- Methods (data collection, questionnaires, including the sub-set of 9 questions used in this particular study)
- Demographics (including visual portraits of communities)
- Adjusted spatiality and the 4 spatial categories considered alongside social factors
- Findings
- General discussion and concluding comments

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## METHODS OF SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

- Original plan: establish a ratio of interviewees across the languages based on village household counts (Quota sample)
- However: census household counts are unreliable, and many houses in certain villages are empty/abandoned, or else sub-let to recent arrivals (e.g. Lhomi, Gorkha, Thakali, etc.)
- Therefore our approach is a mixture of “Snowball” (interviewees help point us to additional interviewees) and “Sample of Convenience” (anyone who is available)

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## DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVIEWS (N = 87)

| VDC                | Gurung | Gyalsumdo | Manange | Nar-Phu |
|--------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Taal               | 3      | 2         |         |         |
| Gyerang            | 2      |           |         |         |
| Kotro~Karte        | 2      |           |         | 1       |
| Dharapani          | 3      | 1         |         |         |
| Thonce             | 1      | 3         |         |         |
| Tilce              | 3      | 1         |         |         |
| Nace               | 2      |           |         |         |
| Tace               | 3      |           |         |         |
| Otar               | 3      |           |         |         |
| Bagarchhap~Danakju |        | 4         |         |         |
| Temang~Thancowk    | 9      |           |         |         |
| Chame~Koto         | 2      | 6         |         | 2       |
| Pisang             |        |           | 3       |         |
| Humde              |        |           | 3       |         |
| Braagaa            |        |           | 3       | 1       |
| Manang~Tengki      |        |           | 6       |         |
| Khangsar           |        |           | 4       |         |
| Ngawal             |        |           | 2       |         |
| Ghyaaru            |        |           | 2       |         |
| Nar                |        |           |         | 7       |
| Phu                |        |           |         | 3       |

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### GURUNG & GYALSUMDO-SPEAKING VILLAGES



THANCOWK  
(CHONGUE  
'PINE BRIDGE-WATER')



OTAR  
(U-NASA 'CAVE VILLAGE')



CHAME (DISTRICT HQ)  
(CE-ME 'BRIDGE-LOCATION')

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### MIXED GURUNG/GYALSUMDO VILLAGES



DHARAPANI  
(‘CATCH/TAP-WATER’)



TILCE  
(‘MUSTARD TREE-PLACE’)

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### NYESHANGTE/MANANGE VILLAGES



MANANG VILLAGE



TENGI MANANG

KHANGSAR

### NAR AND PHU-SPEAKING VILLAGES



NAR (TSHYPRUNG)



PHU (NARTWE)

### INTERVIEWS



MANANGE

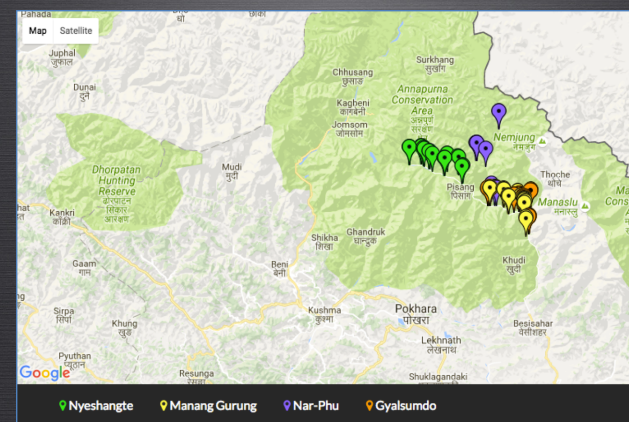


NAR



PHU

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGES





### SAMPLE BY GENDER & AVERAGE AGE

| GENDER | Gurung | Gyalsumdo | Manange | Nar-Phu |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Male   | 19     | 12        | 13      | 9       |
| Female | 15     | 5         | 10      | 5       |

- More males than females

| AGE     | Gurung | Gyalsumdo | Manange | Nar-Phu |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Males   | 59     | 59        | 50      | 58      |
| Females | 37     | 40        | 38      | 28      |
| All     | 45     | 54        | 42      | 44      |

- Gyalsumdo speakers are older on average (it's difficult to locate adults between 18-35 years)

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### SAMPLE BY DEGREE OF FORMAL EDUCATION

| Education         | Gurung | Gyalsumdo | Manange | Nar-Phu |
|-------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| None              | 27%    | 20%       | 35%     | 61%     |
| Between 1-9 years | 16%    | 40%       | 39%     | 31%     |
| Up to SLC         | 14%    | 13%       | 0%      | 0%      |
| 10+2              | 47%    | 13%       | 26%     | 8%      |
| Bachelors         | 3%     | 7%        | 0%      | 0%      |

- Most interviewees between “none and some” for formal education
- We also found Gurungs who had completed 10+2 level

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### SAMPLE BY REPORTED OCCUPATION

| Occupation           | Gurung | Gyalsumdo | Manange | Nar-Phu |
|----------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Hotel/Tourism        | 3%     | 35%       | 0%      | 0%      |
| Agriculture          | 25%    | 20%       | 22%     | 61%     |
| Teaching/Student     | 10%    | 12%       | 9%      | 0%      |
| Combination of Above | 67%    | 28%       | 61%     | 31%     |
| Gov't                | 5%     | 5%        | 4%      | 8%      |
| Retired/None         | 0%     | 5%        | 4%      | 0%      |

- Occupations largely mixed: agriculture & local business (hotels)
- We did locate some teachers & government workers

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### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

- Questionnaire modeled on Kansakar et al 2011, LinSuN, Milroy & Gordon 2003, Newman & Ratliff (eds.) 2001
- 61 questions overall (9 questions today)
- Five sections: General & personal information; Family background & practices; Current family situation & practices; Work & education practices; Subjective contemporary [e.g. opinions on language/variety locations & mutual intelligibility, language prospects in different domains] and a question devised part-way in 2012: “In your opinion, is there only one language spoken throughout Manang, or several languages?”
- Interviews conducted in person, in Nepali, and audio-recorded
- Interviews lasted between 35-50 minutes

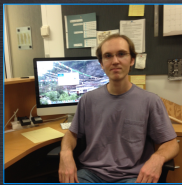
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| Questions  | Response Groups  |
|--|--|
| 1. How important is your language for your cultural and religious practices?   | Agree/important, Neutral, Disagree/not important   |
| 2. Should Nepal have one language (Nepali) for formal use?   | Agree/yes, Neutral, Disagree/no  |
| 3. What language(s) do you use in your daily life?   | Primarily mother tongue, Mixture of mother tongue and Nepali, Primarily Nepali                 |
| 4. What language(s) do you use with your spouse?   | Mother tongue only, Mixture of mother tongue and Nepali, Nepali                                |
| 5. What language(s) do you use with your children?   | Mother tongue only, Mixture of mother tongue and Nepali, Nepali                                |
| 6. What language(s) do you use at work?  | Mother tongue only, Mixture of mother tongue and Nepali, Nepali only, Other non-local language |
| 7. How many languages do you think are spoken in Manang?   | A single language (with dialects), Two languages, Many languages, No                           |
| 8. Will your mother tongue continue to be used by children in future generations?  | Yes, Yes—if children remain local, Yes—but only to a limited extent, No, No opinion            |
| 9. Do you think the inclusion/addition of your mother tongue to local school curriculum would be helpful or hurtful to children? | Help, Help—but only under certain conditions, Hurt, No opinion                                 |


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## NINE QUESTIONS


- For regression analysis (R-brul) response types grouped continuously (i.e. “agree” to “disagree”, “primarily mother tongue” to “not mother tongue”, “helpful” to “not helpful” etc.).
- Responses analyzed according to social variables: Mother tongue; gender; age (18-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years, 61 years and older); degree of formal education (none, up to 9<sup>th</sup> class, School Leaving Certificate or Higher); occupation (unemployed, inward/outward-centered, mixture)



CHRIS WITRUK

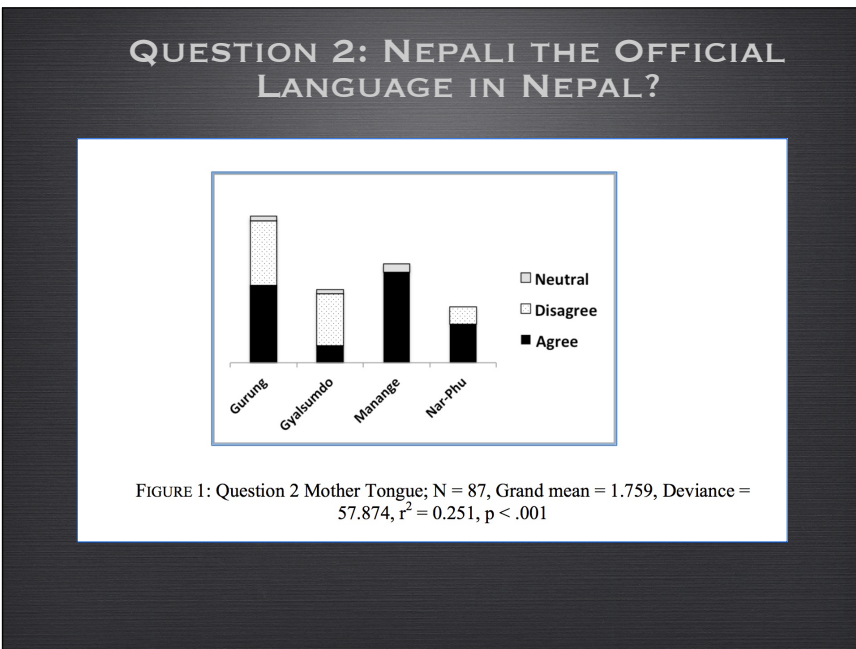


CASSIDY MARTIN

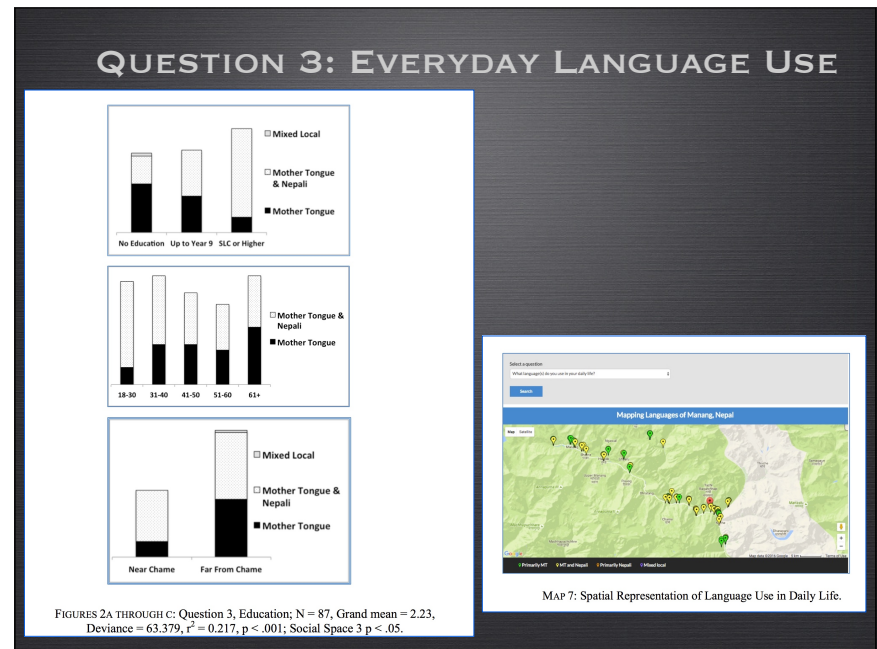


MATT VALLEJO

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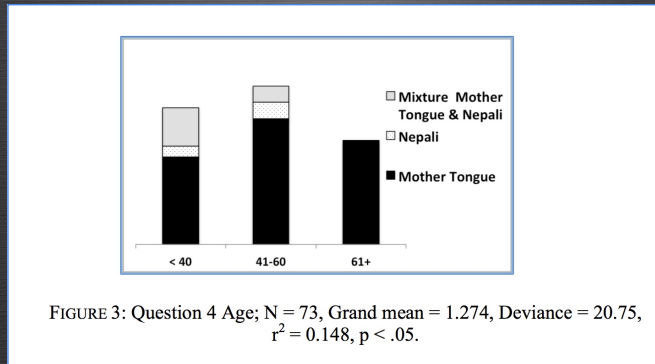


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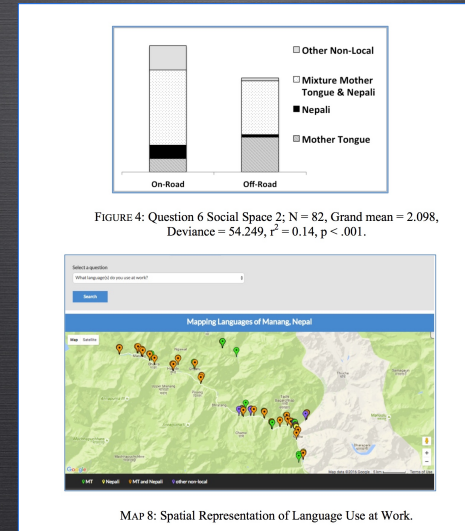
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## QUESTION 4: LANGUAGE USE WITH SPOUSE



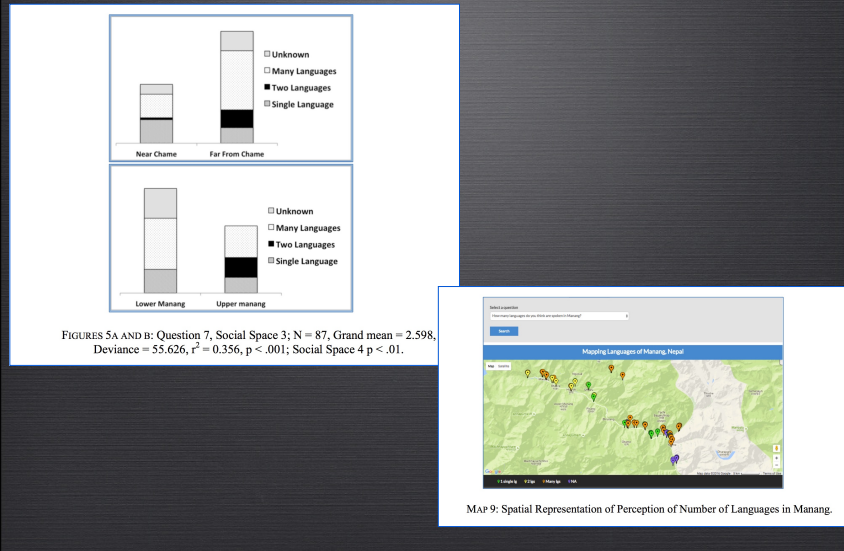
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## QUESTION 6: LANGUAGE(S) AT WORK



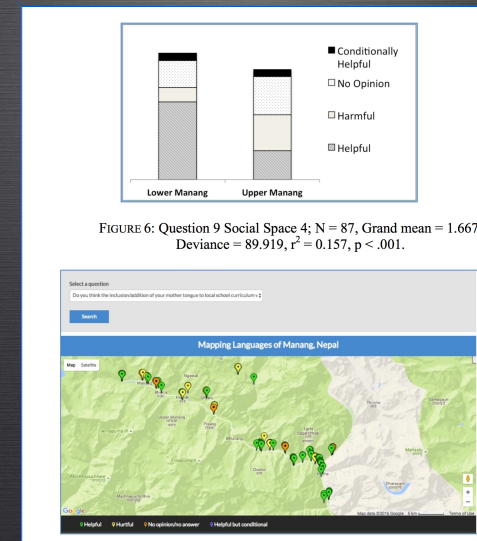
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## QUESTION 7: HOW MANY LANGUAGES IN MANANG?



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## QUESTION 9: LOCAL LANGUAGES INTRODUCED TO LOCAL SCHOOLS?



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## THE OTHER QUESTIONS (1, 5, 8)

- Question 1: “How important is your language for your cultural practices?” Social Space 1 (village clusters) correlates weakly with response types. Respondents where cultural traditions are strongly in place identify a stronger link between MT and cultural practices. However, dissenting responses came from villages for which we had fewer interviews (skewed distribution)
- Question 5: “What language(s) do you use with your children?” Social Space 2 (proximity to road) and Social Space 3 (proximity to Chame village) significantly predicted the response type ( $p < .05$ ); parents who are off-road report more MT use with children. But, cross-tabulation showed a skewed sample distribution (no parents from near Chame village who were also off-road). When these factors were removed from the data-set, no others emerged as significant.
- Question 8: “Will your MT continue to be used by children in future generations?” Great variation across respondents, ranging from certainty of the survival, to conditional certainty, to great skepticism

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## GENERAL DISCUSSION

- Some attitude/usage responses accounted for by social factors and that’s not surprising: age, formal education reported as significant predictors of other types of variation (Cheshire et al. eds. 1989, Henry 1995, Hinskens 1996, Stölten & Engstrand 2002). This study shows that particular attitudes and practices may also be appreciated along these factors even in smaller, multilingual communities.
- Other responses accounted for equally or better by adjusted spatiality. Although the road (Social Space 2) does not align with all reported practices, it does align with use at work. Over time, as the road becomes a more reliable presence, other reported practices and attitudes may show similar correlations. Non-local languages clustered along the road, where new businesses have sprung up, will become seen as increasingly important (and practiced) in more Manang communities.

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## GENERAL DISCUSSION

- “The road” in Manang is about one generation old. Respondents who are now raising their own children were themselves young when construction began. Over time, they have witnessed great change in socio-economic activities, community settlement/movement, and changes to local landscapes. We predict that these changes will continue, and proximity to the road will correlate with shifting practices and opinions about language.
- The location/status of Chame (Social Space 3), is a frequently correlating location with responses. The “upper” and “lower” spheric division within Manang also factors in, aligning with both perceptions about language diversity in Manang, and with attitudes about the place of local languages in local schools.

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## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

- Value of this study:
- Principles of dialect geography can be modified to fit smaller and multilingual language communities in landscapes of different spatial scales
- This offers an illuminating account of particular types of variation, and opens avenues for future research in an area undergoing significant and rapid change.
- Also: language attitudes and practices can be successfully surveyed in small but diverse language communities. In the case of Manang, the relevance of spatial alongside social factors reveals a great deal about how the viewpoints of individual language communities and overlap and intertwine (and at times, remain distinct) within a larger multilingual region.

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## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

- Could observed shifts in attitudes & practices correspond with shift in language vitality in this area?
- Gyalsumdo & Nar-Phu are most endangered due largely to outward migration of younger speakers (older average age of respondents in these two groups)
- Manange occupies a somewhat precarious middle ground scenario with more speakers, but with similar issues of outward migration and fewer younger speakers. Gurung is the most viable (but most profoundly affected structurally by lg. contact)
- Landweer (2000): home is the foundational domain in which language socialization takes place, followed by cultural events, then external social events. A vernacular's vitality level is higher if it is used in all domains. Likewise, a strong ethnic identity facilitates survival.

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## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

- Not obvious in Manang: high levels of ethnic pride and strong identities. Mother tongue is also favored in public domains if the context is local and appropriate.
- So what factors most accurately predict the vitality levels for the Manang languages?
- Although ethnic identity is strong, and two languages have wider domains, the social spaces in which they are accessed and used are starting to shift.
- Access to home language practices are increasingly compromised by new developments in Manang: the increasing influence of Nepali and English, the expanding motor road and its wider links; a blurring of traditional conceptual divisions between "upper" and "lower" linguistic-cultural spheres

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## STRONGLY POSITIVE ATTITUDES

### Question V.B.5

"In your opinion, will there still be children speaking Gyalsumdo in 10-15 years from now?"

"At this time, if Gyalsumdo children remain here, they must speak Gyalsumdo, even if they are not perfectly fluent. If they leave, they will speak whatever language they like, English or Nepali..."



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## STRONGLY POSITIVE ATTITUDES

### Question V.B.6

"What can (or should) people do to keep their mother tongue spoken (in future generations)?"

"At this time, children should remain locally so they can be taught/use the language as much as possible. When my life has finished (without our community), the language could be finished (too)."



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## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

- This study will hopefully inform companion research on Manang languages and multilingual regions elsewhere, serving as a comparative basis for investigations of structural variation.
- The prospect is already there, as Hildebrandt (2003, 2012) has demonstrated that phonetic correlates to tone systems in these Tibeto-Burman languages vary across different communities, using broader sociolinguistic demarcations as “urban vs. rural”.
- Such combined investigations would provide, as Buchstaller & Alvanides (2013: 109) term it, “a socio-demographically informed snapshot of socio-geographical patterns of language variation.”
- Furthermore, they would throw into sharper relief the constantly evolving landscape in which these languages are practiced, along with the mechanisms behind their shifting and uncertain fates

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## OUR PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS (2012-2014)



SIUE

Thank You: Ritar Lhakpa Lama, Sangdo Lama, EkMaya Gurung, Sassi Gurung, Pushpa Gurung, Chimi Lama, Prita Malla, Prabal Malla, Kanchan Karki, Yesha Malla, Alex Kalika, Tiffany Downing, Cassidy Jacobsen, Alex Taitt, Brajesh Karna, Mehali Patel, Kristin Kaskeski, Ishu Jha, Pratik Lamsal, Cassidy Martin, Allison Rue, Alex Jackson, Ada Lewis

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