

## A micro-typology of contact effects in Tibeto-Burman



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## Goal of this talk

To typologically & quantitatively survey one category of dependent variables in four Tibeto-Burman languages:

Contact effects (within and cross-family origins)

In light of two categories of potential factors or predictors:

Linguistic  
(structural)  
factors

Extralinguistic  
(socio- and spatial)  
factors

Which factor(s) better explain the types of effects seen in these languages?

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## Contact Effects: Borrowing

- (1) Nepali **lexical borrowing** in Nar:

**fōw**-ce cǎ-te.

**apple**-DEF eat-IM PERF

'They are eating apples.'

- (2) Nepali **morphological borrowing** in Gurung:

kro plu tsō-**erə**

wheat seed sow-**SEQ**

'Having sown the wheat seeds...'

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## Contact Effects: Code-switching

- (3) **Gyalsumdo/Nepali Code-switching**

arku-ko **bungur**-la ter-na **gai**  
condensed.water **pig**-LOC give-SUBORD **cow**  
atsu **lanpu**-la **phoko** ter-na  
in.particular **cow**-LOC **pig** give-SUBORD  
'Either giving the condensed water to the pig or the cow...'

- (4) **Gurung/Nepali Code-switching**

əni tsəto kjale ba ama "ŋjo  
and.then here from father mother 1.PL  
**paldinə** **paldinə**" əni **əlikəti**  
care.NEG care.NEG and.then little.bit  
'Then my parents said, "No I will not take care of you, I will not take care of you"...and then a bit (after)...'

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### Contact Effects in Manange

- (5) **English & Nepali Lexical Borrowing into Manange**  
**bides** mi=tse pisaŋ pik=ri kre-pə-ri  
 foreign person=PL Pisang Peak=LOC climb-NMLZR-PURP  
 kati pi-le khə mo  
 many say-SUBORD come COP  
*'Many foreigners come (here) to climb Pisang Peak.'*
- (6) **Manange/Nepali Code-switching**  
 khi=ko=tse lə-tse pairo ju-pə  
 3SG=DEF=ERG do-SUBORD landslide descend-NMLZR  
*'If they do (this: make the god unhappy), a landslide will fall.'*  
 (earlier in text: t<sup>hi</sup> ju-pə 'land descend-NMLZR')

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### Motivations for this study

- There is an abundance of literature on contact scenarios, histories and outcomes Thomason & Kaufman 1991, Gilbers et al [eds] 2000, Thomason 2000, Aikhenvald & Dixon [eds] 2006
- Many studies make generalized predictions and assess their power based on individual case studies cf. Matras 2007, Grenoble & Whaley 1998, Mougeon et al 1985
- Many studies also focus on system simplification, leveling, loss in scenarios of endangerment/death Grenoble & Whaley [eds] 1998, Dorian [ed] 1992

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### Motivations: Code-Switching

- Discourse situations in which words (or structures) originating in more than one system are used side by side/in the same stretch Thomason 2001; Backus 2005
- Can be inter-sentential (At/across sentence boundaries) or intra-sentential (within a sentence boundary)
- Motivations: discourse-interaction (emphasis, affect, dramatic narration, topic shifting), speaker fluency (gap-filling), language community identification or challenges

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### Motivations: Code-Switching

- Code-switching is often assumed to take place in non-shifting contact environments
- But since code-switched units are bigger than lexical or grammatical loans, there have been proposals that it could actually be a type of interference in language shift
- If certain strategies are repeated often in discourse, across large numbers of speakers, this is a possible sign of interference in shift
- If the strategy is adapted structurally to the contact language (Nepali), then it might be interference

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### Motivations for this study

- All of these hypotheses require empirical testing
- And they can only be tested with great amounts of discourse data across a wide range of genres and speaker representatives, and gathered in tandem with speech community accounts of language practices and attitudes

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### Motivations for this study

- We work in an area of cross-family contact with varying effects across languages of two sub-groups (Tamangic & Tibetic in contact with each other, and with Indic/Nepali)
- Our methods give us access to parallel data types to explore a several factors behind these varying effects
- We may also examine whether more 'vulnerable' languages in the same intense contact situation can be appreciated by the same factors as viable languages

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### Preview of findings in this study

- Despite similar contact contexts and histories, contact-effects are unevenly distributed across the four languages
- Gyalsumdo and Nar-Phu show small amounts of lexical borrowing and lexical-level code switching, but are otherwise unaffected
- Manange occupies middle territory with more lexical borrowing and code-switching, which is more incorporated into the grammatical system
- Gurung shows more intense borrowing both lexically and grammatically (with and without nativization), along with frequent lexical and clause-level code-switching

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### Preview of findings in this study

- Some structural predictions are upheld (e.g. open class >> closed class and semantic classes; using is a pathway to borrowing)
- But not all are predictions are upheld or even relevant (e.g. typological proximity; "matter/pattern" differences)
- Rather, modified extra-linguistic (sociolinguistic and spatial) factors have more explanatory power for the observed cross-linguistic differences

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## The languages in this study

This study is part of a multi-year project incorporating parallel data collection methods to document four Tibeto-Burman languages of the Manang District of Nepal

1. Tone Analysis
2. Comparative Lexical Analyses
2. Text Collection
3. Sociolinguistic Interviews



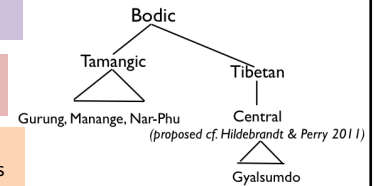
## The languages in this study

**Gurung:**  
> 1000 across 11 VDC's

**Gyalsumdo:**  
< 400 in 3 VDC's

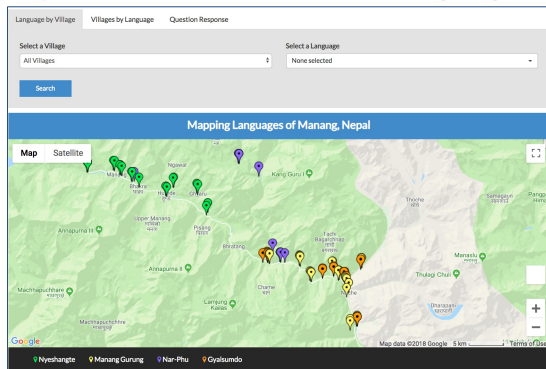
**Nar-Phu:**  
< 600 combined in 2 VDC's

**Manange/Nyeshangte:**  
ca. 5000 across 8 VDC's



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## Spatial distribution of the languages



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

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## The data in this study

### Project data:

- Sociolinguistic interviews (in-person)
- Discourse samples (variety of genres)
- Lexical and sentence elicitation (in Manang/Kathmandu)

Any external impact coded according to several structural and extra-linguistic factors

### Data used for this study:

- Transcribed, interlinearized discourses from the languages;
- Both genders represented, ages range from 20's to 60's;
- Genres include stimuli (Pear Story, Frog Story), procedurals, demonstrations, autobiographical monologues and multi-participant conversations.

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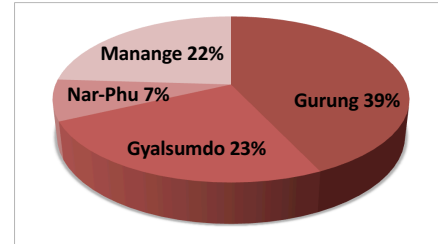
### The data in this study

Sociolinguistic Interview  
(Phu village, 2014)



All discourses available at University of Virginia SHANTI archive (<http://audio-video.shanti.virginia.edu/video/gyalsumdo-male-describes-mineral-water-factory-koto>)

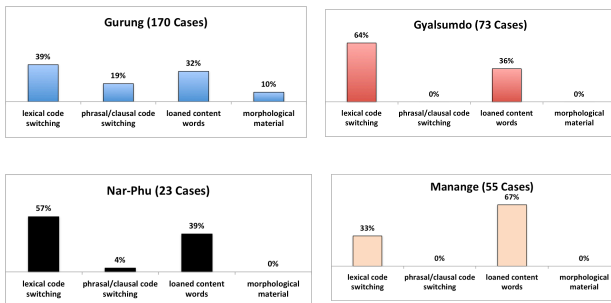
### Observations: Cases



Total Corpus = 1372 clauses, but unevenly split across languages  
 Gurung N = 415, Gyalsumdo N = 319  
 Nar-Phu N = 343, Manange N = 255

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### Observations: Type



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### A preliminary hypothesis

High, long-established 'lingualism' correlates with more extensive contact effects (cf. Field 2002; Aikhenvald 2008; Thomason 2001)

**BUT**

All languages have had roughly the same degree and timeline of contact with Nepali

Almost every person with whom we have worked is (minimally) bilingual in their mother-tongue and Nepali

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### A modified hypothesis

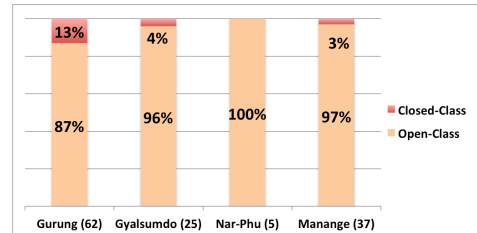
Proximity of language communities to Nepali-centric business and educational infrastructures ('public') correlates with more extensive contact effects

In interviews with speakers who also provided texts, 50% of speakers across languages report reliance upon Nepali in public contexts, 50% report mother tongue use in public

Since language practices in public contexts do not correlate neatly with the divergent contact consequences across the languages, **which factors do?**

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### Linguistic structural factor (#1 of 3): PoS



**Part of speech:** Open class items (nouns, verbs, property concepts) are borrowable more so, or are borrowed before closed class items (discourse markers, particles, etc.)

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### Linguistic structural factors: Loan type

Open-class loans for Gyalsumdo & Nar-Phu reflect technological/cultural gaps more so than for Gurung

**Gyalsumdo:**

turis < Eng. 'tourist';  
tha ~ thaliŋ < Nep. thaali 'plate';  
bjaŋ < Eng. 'bank';  
riphudzi < Eng. 'refugee';  
hotel < Eng.

**Nar-Phu:**

fow < Nep. syau 'apple';  
rumal < Nep. rumal 'handkerchief';  
saikul < Eng. 'cycle'

**Gurung:**

gəna < Nep. ghan 'hammer';  
gədi < Nep. 'jeep';  
tsəppəl < Nep. cəppəl 'sandal';  
besi < Nep. 'valley';  
khola < Nep. 'river';  
dziro < Eng. 'zero';  
iskul < Nep./Eng. 'school';  
məstər < Nep./Eng. 'teacher'

**Manange:**

armi < Eng. 'army';  
gabisa < Nep. 'ward';  
bides < Nep. bidesi 'foreigner';  
phis < Eng. 'fees';  
deuta < Nep. 'god'

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### Linguistic structural factors: Loan type

- Gurung and Manange evidence frequent use of loaned verbs that are morphologically incorporated
- This is rarely observed in Nar-Phu or Gyalsumdo

**Gurung:**

dzər-ti 'descend-LOAN'  
bəs-ti 'stay-LOAN'  
tsə-ti 'operate-LOAN'

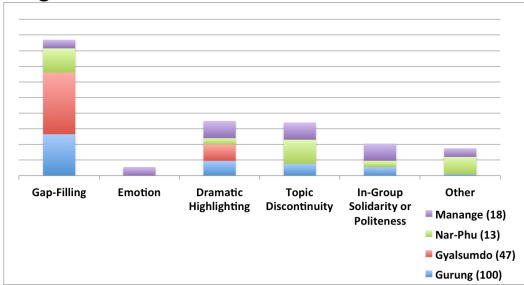
**Manange:**

tsə-ti 'operate-LOAN'  
bal-ti 'burn-LOAN'  
mil-ti 'mix-LOAN'  
uqə-ti 'fly-LOAN'

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### Linguistic structural factors

- Using as a path to borrowing (#2 of 3)?
- While all languages show code-switching, only Gurung evidences inter- and intra-sentential switching and has the greatest amount of ‘switched’ material



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### Linguistic structural factors

- ‘Pattern’ Borrowing is a gateway to ‘matter’ borrowing Matras & Sakel eds. 2007
- This is difficult to survey in this sample
- Gyalsumdo and Manange show a slightly greater propensity to alter Nepali loaned open-class items to fit its segment & phonotactic profile, but not significantly so

bjaŋ < ‘bank’; thaliŋ ~ tha < thaali ‘plate’  
 kamani < ‘company’; t̥uris < ‘tourist’; waṭ < ‘ward’

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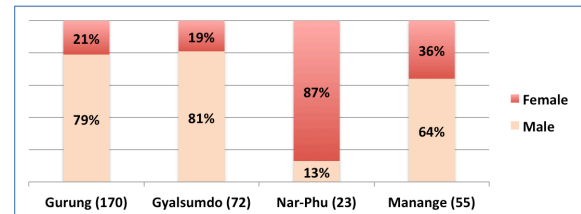
### Linguistic structural factors: Pattern (#3 of 3)

- Hildebrandt (2012): In Gurung, the acoustics of tone are decidedly Tamangic in their specific correlates (vs. Indic)—this appears to be a pattern effect from Manange
- This also makes Manang Gurung different from other varieties of Gurung in this dimension
- But this happens without any other clear contact effects in Gurung from other Tamangic languages in the region

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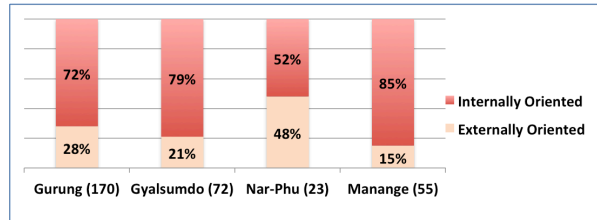
### Extra-linguistic factors (#1 of 6): Gender

**Gender:** Men operate and interact more in the public sphere in Manang, so their discourse may reflect more contact effects



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### Extra-linguistic factors (#2 of 6): Genre



**Genre:** Discourses involving community-external reference, or acknowledgement of an external audience will index this (more so) with elements from external sources

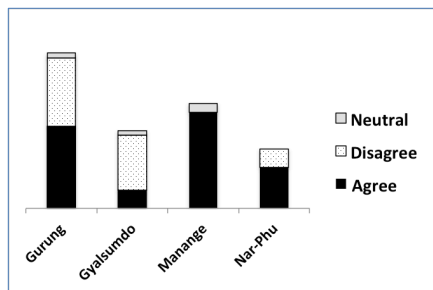
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### Extra-linguistic factors (#3 of 6): Attitudes

- Language attitudes correlate with degree of contact effects ('acceptance' facilitates lexical & grammatical effects)
- No interviewee is hostile towards the rising presence of Nepali
- We have survey questions regarding respondent feelings about Nepali monolingualism in official environments and regarding the perceived value of M-T for cultural affiliation

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### "Should Nepali Be The Only Language Used in Official Contexts?"



$p < .001$

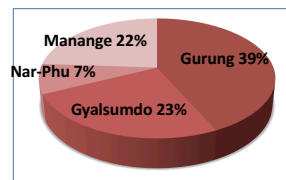
Manange & Nar-Phu speakers are most inclined to answer affirmatively to this question, Gurung & Gyalsumdo speakers disagree more proportionally to their sample size

Hildebrandt & Hu (2017)

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### Extra-linguistic factor (#4 of 6): Emigration

- Gyalsumdo and Nar-Phu: heavy emigration to lower Manang/Kathmandu (and abroad) for employment, boarding schools, acquisition of Tibetan refugee I.D.'s for international relocation, etc.



- This affects younger generations, leaving (primarily) older populations in traditional communities
- This may account for the overall lack of Indic contact effects & counter examples to particular hypotheses

Mougeon et al (1985), Munshi (2010), Stanford (2012)

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### Interview excerpt from Gyalsumdo male

**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...”



Baggarchhap Village, 2012

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### Interview excerpt from Manange female

**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).”

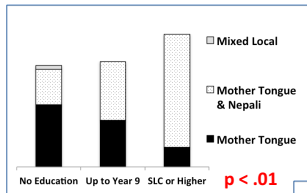


Khangsar Village, 2013



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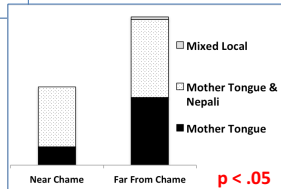
### Language Use in Daily Life (#5 of 6)



Less formal education correlates with more regular M-T use in daily life

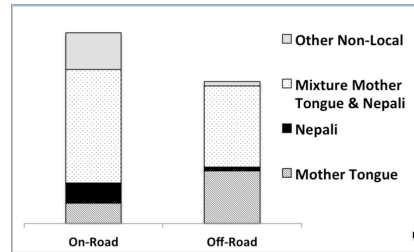
$p < .01$

But also, those located further from the District head-town also report more daily M-T use



$p < .05$

### Language Use at Work (#6 of 6)



$p < .001$

Employment further away from the developing motor road correlates with more regular use of M-T languages (or else a mix)

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### Discussion

- Gurung shows the most intense contact effects and the most conformity to structural predictions.
- Gurung is also slightly more likely to tolerate Nepali phonological patterns in loaned and switched material.
- But **extra-linguistic** predictions are also important given the observed variation.
- One **socio-spatial** factor that does account for the Gurung vs. Gyalsumdo/Nar-Phu difference is **locational stability**.
- On the other hand, **access/proximity to Nepali-valued contexts** also correlates with Mother Tongue use, and these are the same languages evidencing comparatively fewer/less intense contact effects

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### Discussion

- Does endangerment correlate with system simplification, pattern loss or structural contraction? Dorian [ed] 1992, Grenoble & Whaley [eds] 1998, Aikhenvald 2012
- Campbell & Muntzell (1992) distinguish between 'sudden death' vs. 'radical death' vs. 'gradual death'.
- 'Radical death': rapid loss of speaker population, typically in an environment of political and cultural oppression; it occurs without obvious compromise to lexico-grammatical system.
  - Pipil & Lenca in El Salvador (Elmendorf 1981)
  - E. Sutherland Gaelic (Dorian 1982)
  - This has also been considered in the Nepal context by Angdembe (2012)

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### Discussion

- Gyalsumdo and Nar-Phu are at a stage somewhere between the 'radical' and 'gradual' death continuum.
- They do not face extreme political/cultural pressures as in other cases, and they may not 'die' within the next generation, but the dearth of younger speakers combined with shrinking local populations makes for a unique scenario of shift.
- The lack of interference from Nepali, combined with the restricted structural/semantic domains impacted in these systems is symbolic of their special status.

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### Thank you!

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