

Attitudes, Practices, Co-existence & Endangerment: A Sociolinguistic Survey of Gurung & Gyalsumdo (Manang, Nepal)¹

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1. Research Context

- Manang is multi-lingual & multi-ethnic; the rapid growth of a motor road has also precipitated population movements & introduced new contexts of language contact & viability
- Sociolinguistic Survey: An assessment of speaker practices, attitudes, factors behind social variation & mutual intelligibility across codes (Mallinson et al, eds. 2013); in Nepal: assessing language promotion in public contexts like schools, scripts, advertising & official situations
- Our over-arching goal: In a geographically wide-spread multilingual region like Manang, what are residents' understanding & perspectives on language (variety) categorization & usage?

2. Languages of Manang

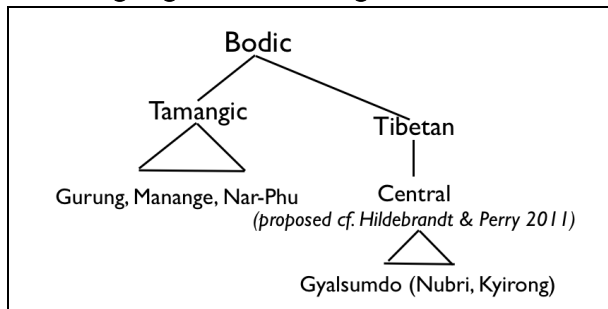
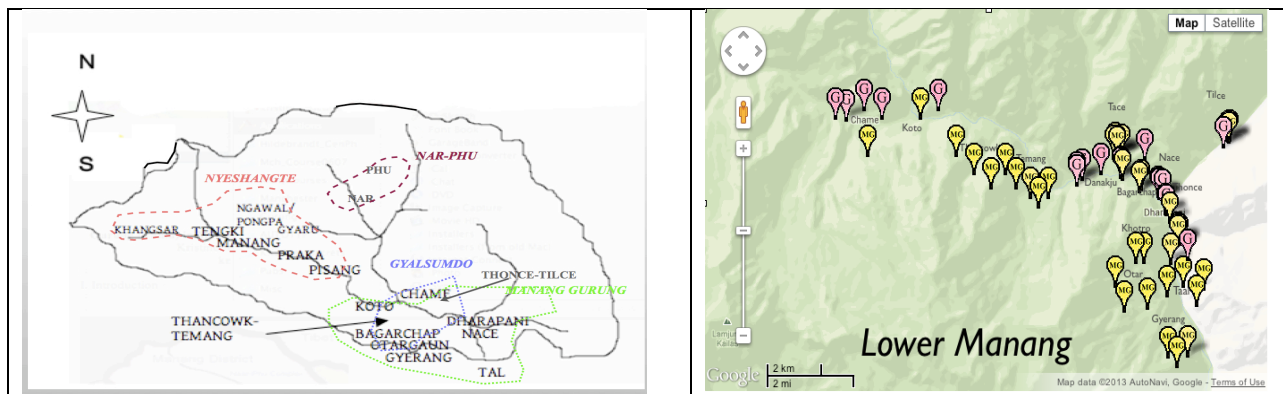


Figure 1. Language Sub-Groupings in Manang (this focus is on Gurung & Gyalsumdo)



Map 1. Languages of Manang & Lower Manang Survey of 2012

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3. Other Sociolinguistic Surveys

- Surveys on individual languages [cf. references on 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)]
- Fewer surveys on multilingual practices/attitudes in larger regional settings (but cf. 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)

4. This Study

- Total sample will include Manang-Gurung, Gyalsumdo, Manange, Nar-Phu
- This Sample: 34 Gurung, 17 Gyalsumdo informants, surveys conducted in June-July 2012
- Original plan was to establish a ratio of informants based on village household count
- Reality: census household counts unreliable, and many houses in certain villages are empty/abandoned, or else sub-let to recent arrivals (e.g. Lhomi & other Tibetn-type, Thakali, etc.)

Village Development Committee	Gurung	Gyalsumdo
Taal	3	2
Gyerang	2	
Khotro	2	
Dharapani	3	1
Thonce	1	3
Tilce	3	1
Nace	2	
Tace	3	
Otar	3	
Bagarchap		2
Danakju		2
Temang	4	
Thancowk	5	
Koto	1	1
Chame (District HQ)	1	5
Totals	34	17

Table 1. Sample by Village Development Committee (VDC)

	Gurung	Gyalsumdo
Male	19	12
Female	15	5

Table 2. Sample By Gender

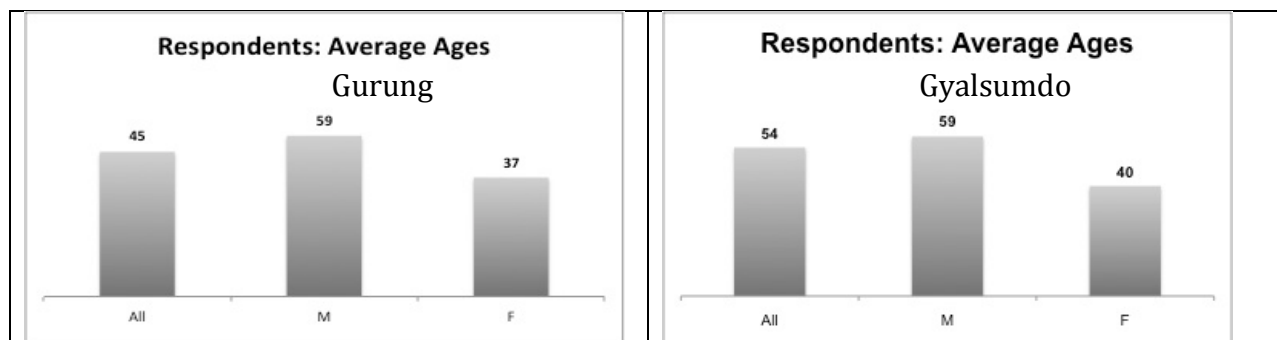


Chart 1. Sample By Average Age

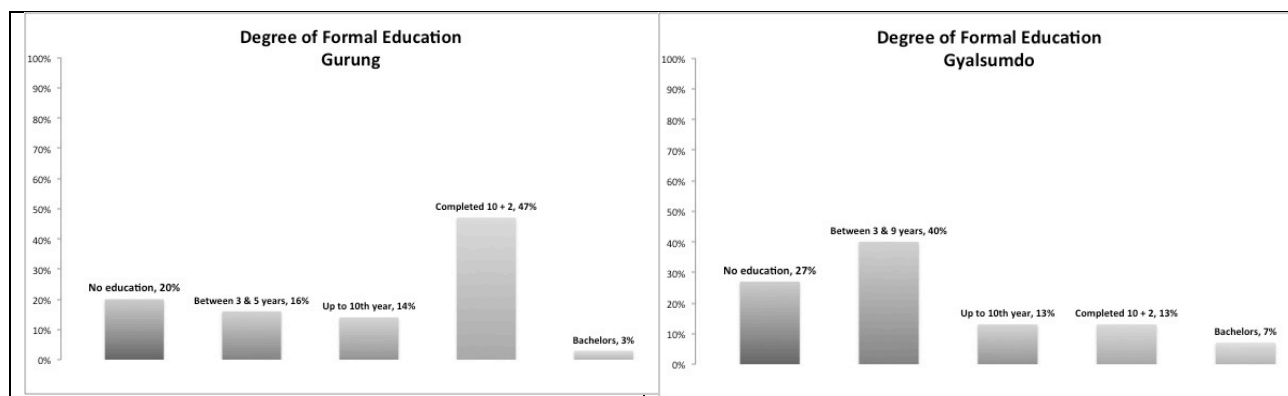


Chart 2. Sample By Degree of Formal Education

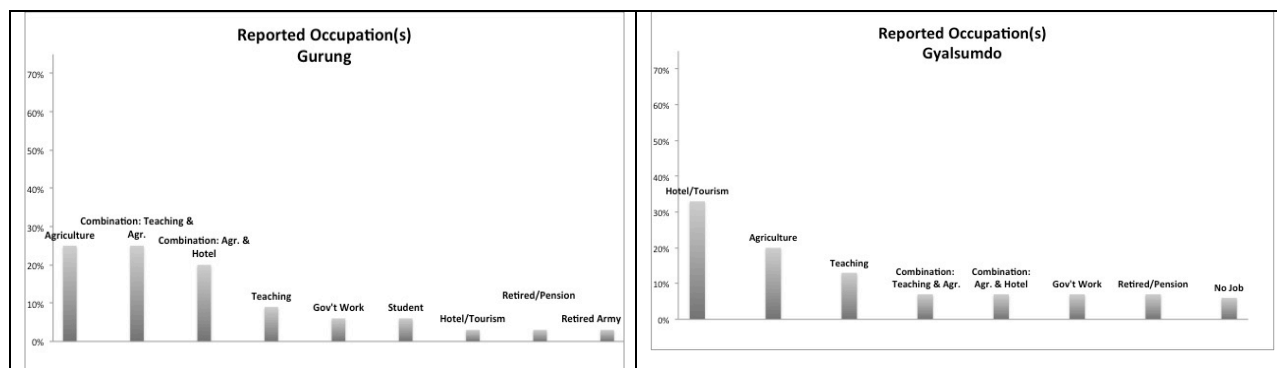


Chart 3. Sample By Reported Occupation

5. Questionnaire design

- Questions based on Kansakar et al 2011, Milroy & Gordon 2003, Newman & Ratliff (eds.) 2001
- Five sections: General & personal information; Family background & practices; Current family situation & practices; Work & education practices; Subjective contemporary [e.g. opinions on language/variety locations and mutual intelligibility, language prospects in different public domains] & a question devised part-way into 2012 data collection: “In your opinion, is there only one language spoken throughout Manang, or several languages?” (see appendix for questionnaire)
- Interviews were recorded in person, in Nepali, in each lower Manang village in 2012

6. Selected Findings

i. Language Name(s)

- Ethnologue entry for Gurung: ISO GVR, “Western Gurung,” “Tamu Kyi”; Glover (1974): Kaski Gurung endonyms “Tamu khyui,” “Gurung,” and Gurung Bhaasaa; Burton-Page (1955) “Gurungkura” (noted as a Nepali exonym)
- Information on Gyalsumdo: Khadgi (2006: 6): “Gyasumdar...Gurungs (living) in Lamjung”; identified as Tamangic in van Driem (2001).

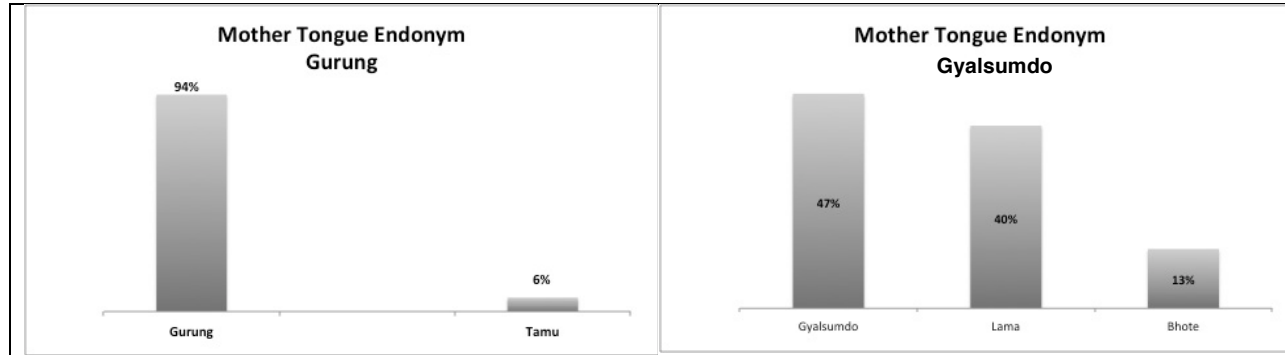


Chart 4. Endonyms for Gurung and Gyalsumdo

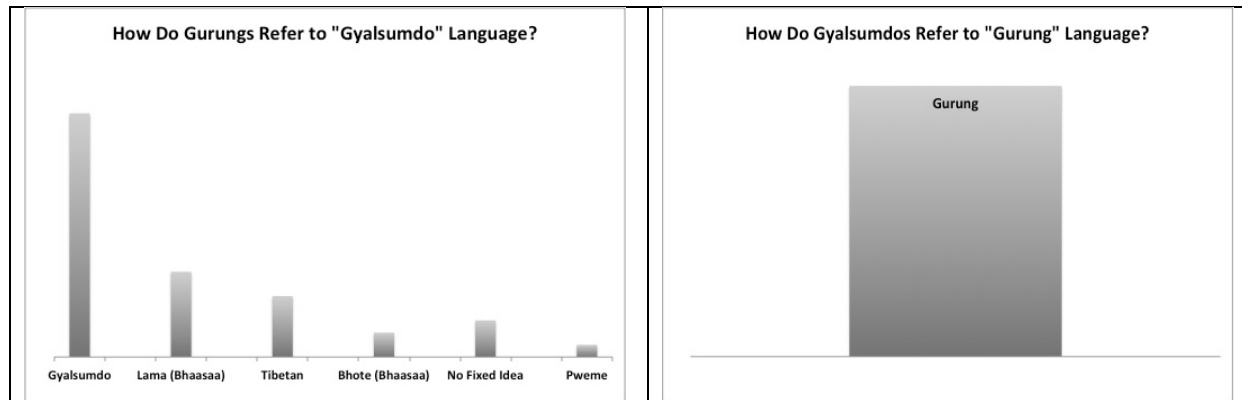


Chart 5. Language Names Gurung → Gyalsumdo; Gyalsumdo → Gurung

- Those Gurungs who think that Gyalsumdo = “Tibetan” are largely from Gurung-dominant villages (Dharapani, Temang, Tilce, Nace); One respondent thinks that Gyalsumdo = “Gurung;” One Gyalsumdo respondent refers to Gurungs as *fertē* ‘those originating from the East.’, and Gurungs from Tace village are *tapce* ‘those who have returned’

ii. Daily Language Use (General)

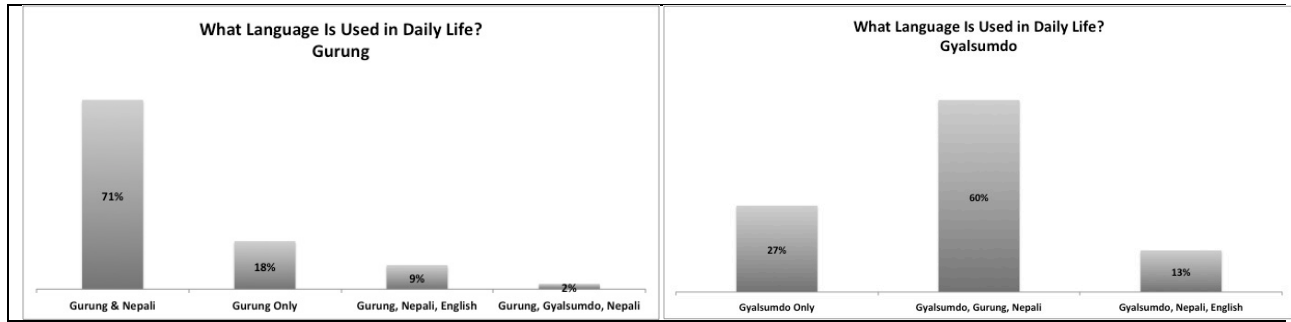


Chart 6. Reported Language Use in Daily Life

- Neither community can claim strictly monolingual language practices, but Gyalsumdo speakers are more likely to use their mother-tongue daily; Gyalsumdo also more likely to switch between their M-T & Gurung on a daily basis, while Gurung speakers are less likely to use Gyalsumdo

iii. Language Use in Private/Family/Local Contexts

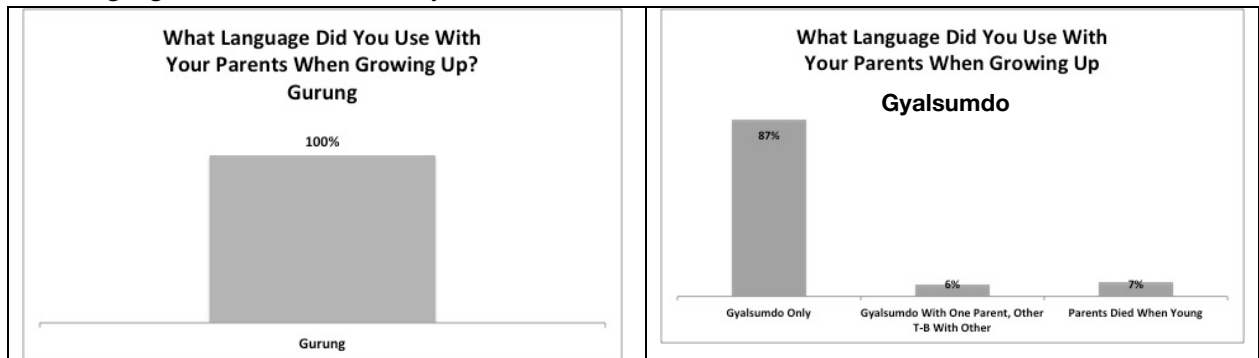


Chart 7. Language Use with Parents in Childhood (when relevant)

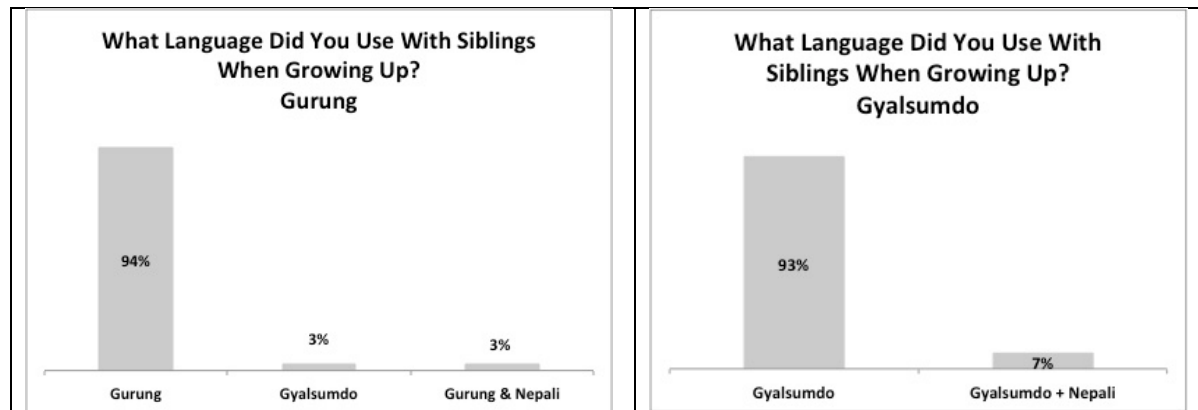


Chart 8. Language Use with Siblings in Childhood (when relevant)

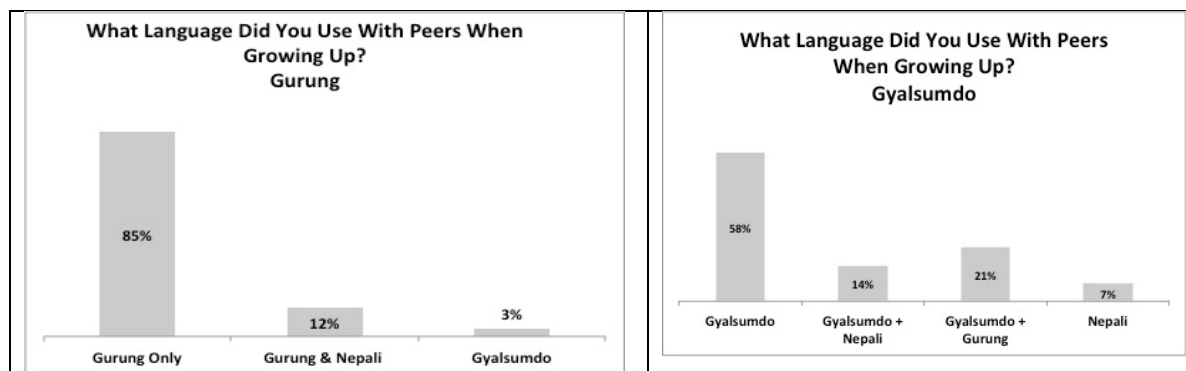


Chart 9. Language Use with Peers/Friends in Childhood

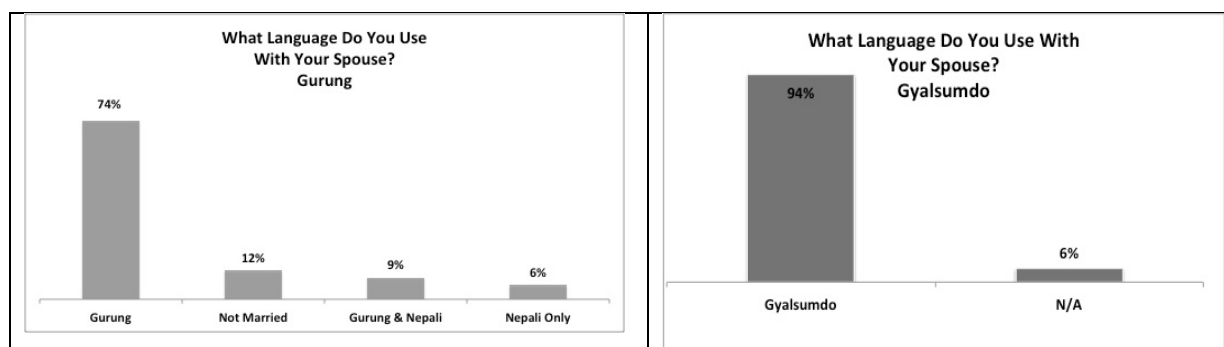


Chart 10. Language Use with Spouse (when relevant)

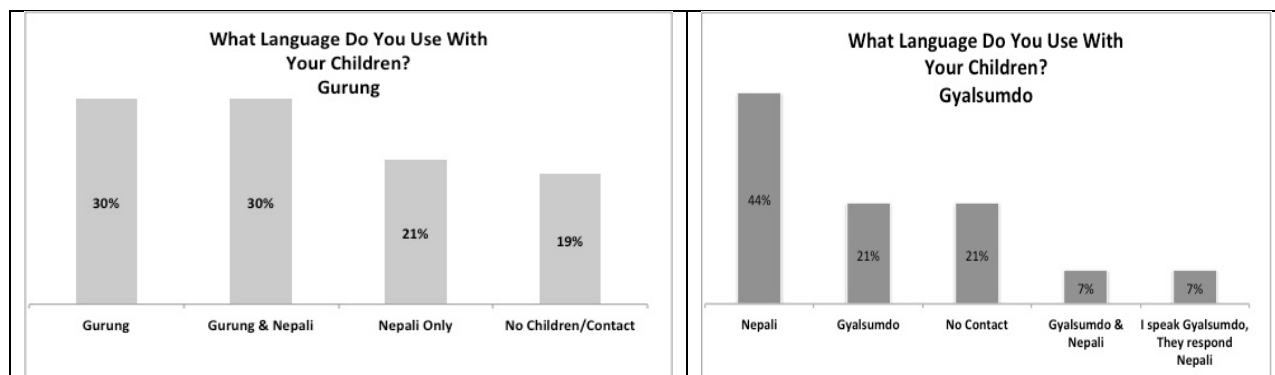


Chart 11. Language Use with Own Children (when relevant)

- Within the family, language use in the respondents' childhood almost exclusively mother-tongue, but we see the emergence of Nepali in outside (play, socialization) contexts during same time period; For Gyalsumdo respondents, the entrance of Nepali is combined with Gurung
- Currently, most respondents speak their mother-tongue with spouses, but with children a tendency towards a mixture of M-T/Nepali, or else Nepali (cf. Chart X for further comparison & commentary on future M-T use predictions)

iv. Language Use in Public Contexts

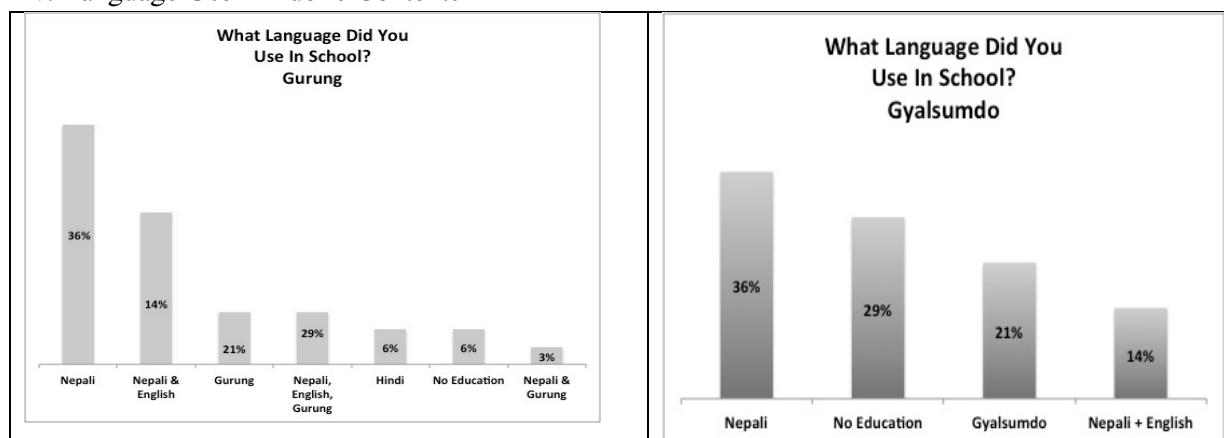


Chart 12. Language Use in School (in Childhood)

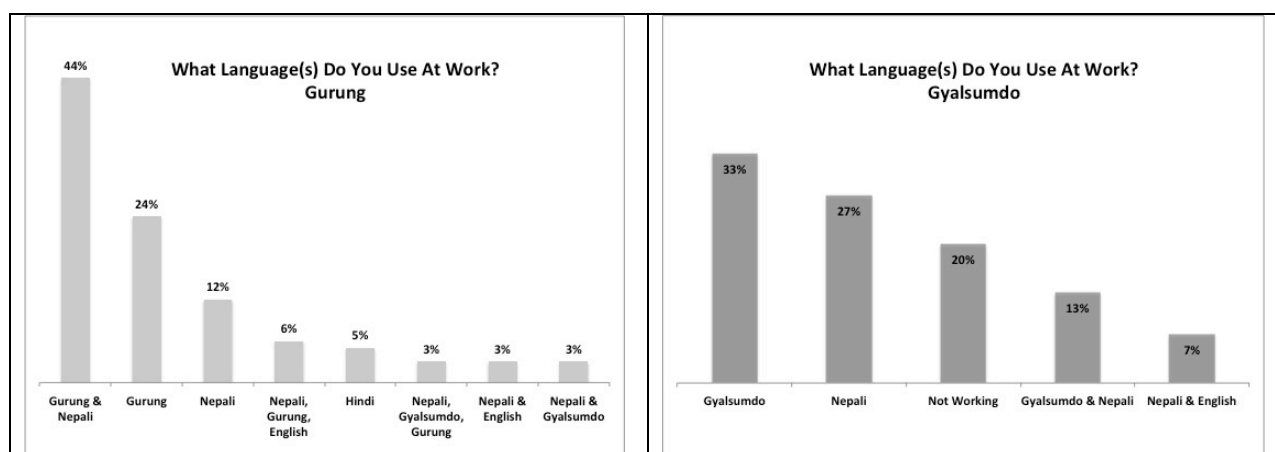


Chart 13. Language Use at Work

- Schools in Lower Manang are Nepali-Medium, with some English curriculum; Respondents frequently report locally originating teachers used M-T to help them transition to Nepali in first & second years
- Work language depends on context: respondents who are agriculture-oriented report more M-T use while those in official or hotel work, or who transition across different work types, use a mixture of Nepali & English; migrant workers use Hindi

v. Opinions of Intelligibility in greater Manang

- We asked the question like this: “How well do you understand someone from X village if s/he speaks his/her own language to you?”

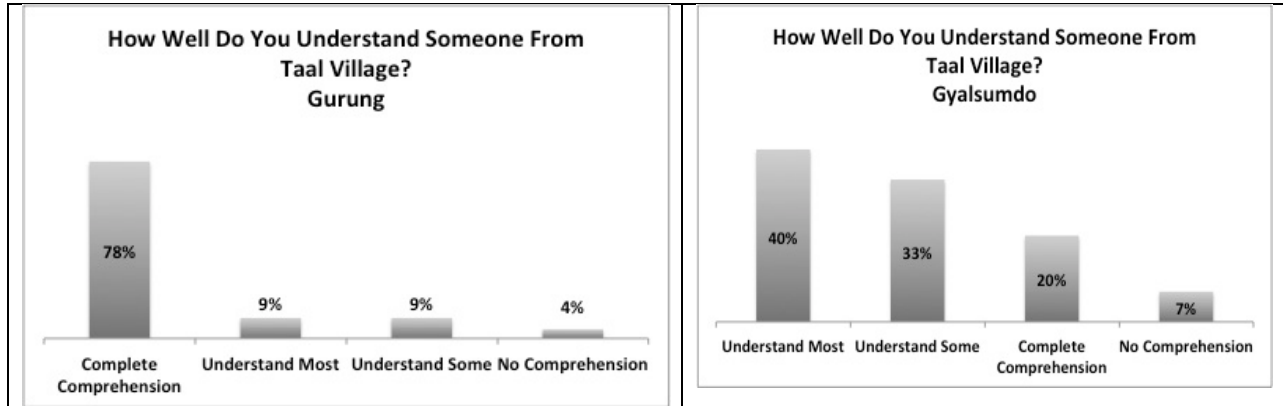


Chart 14. Degree of Comprehension of Taal Resident (southernmost Manang village, mixed Lamjung Gurung)

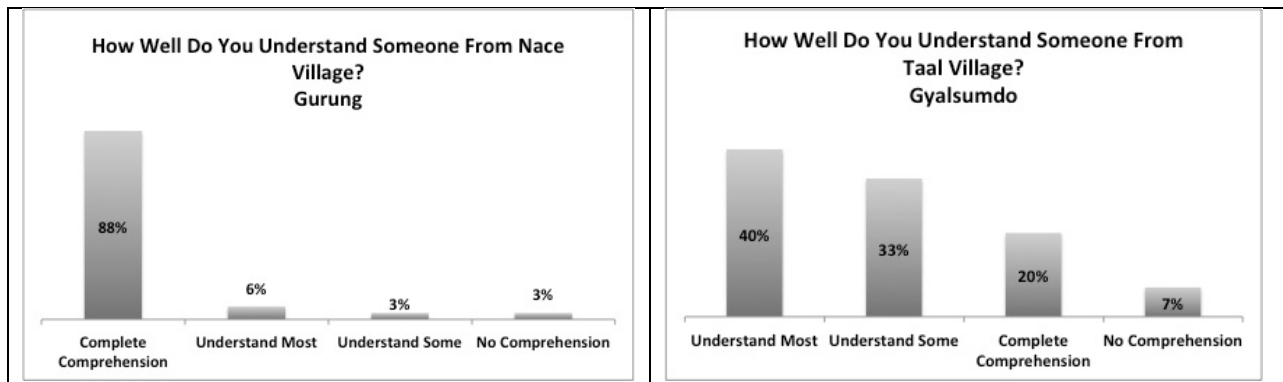


Chart 15. Degree of Comprehension of Nace Resident (a “pure/traditional” Gurung village)

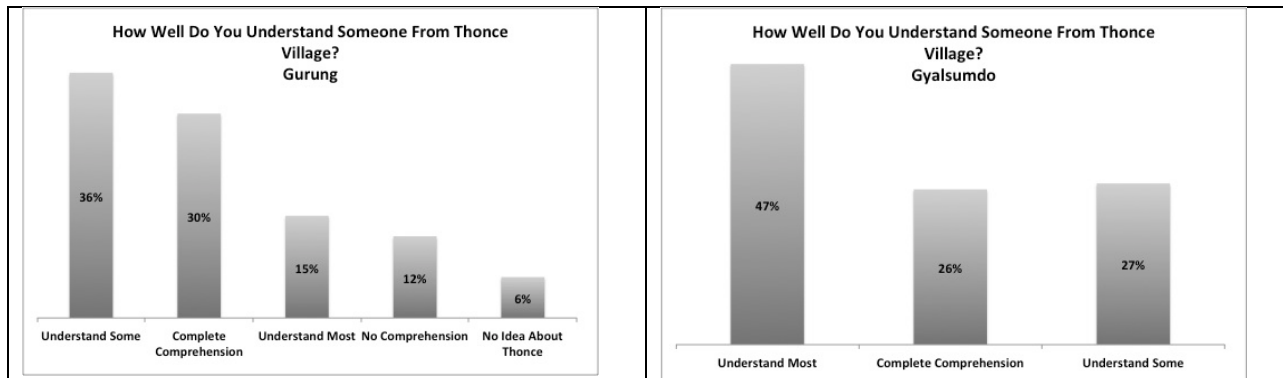


Chart 16. Degree of Comprehension of Thonce Resident (a “pure/traditional” Gyalsumdo village)

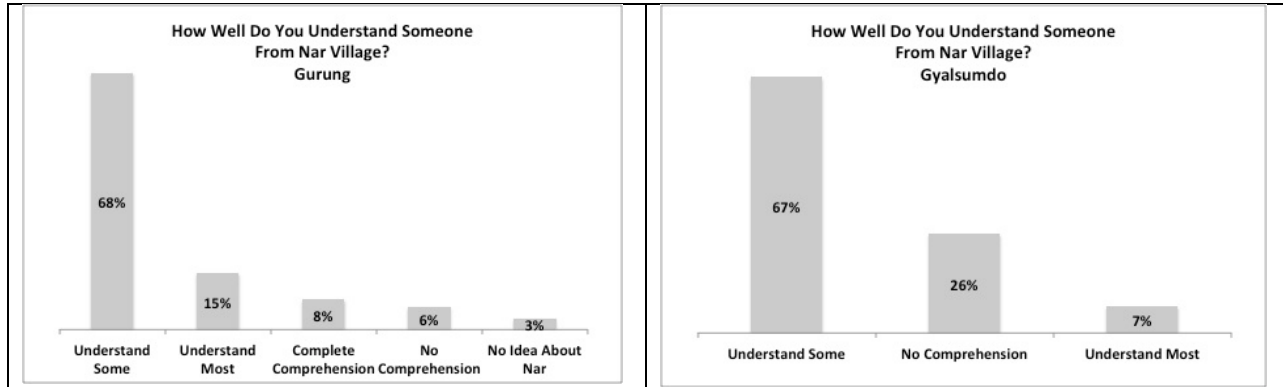


Chart 17. Degree of Comprehension of Nar Village Resident

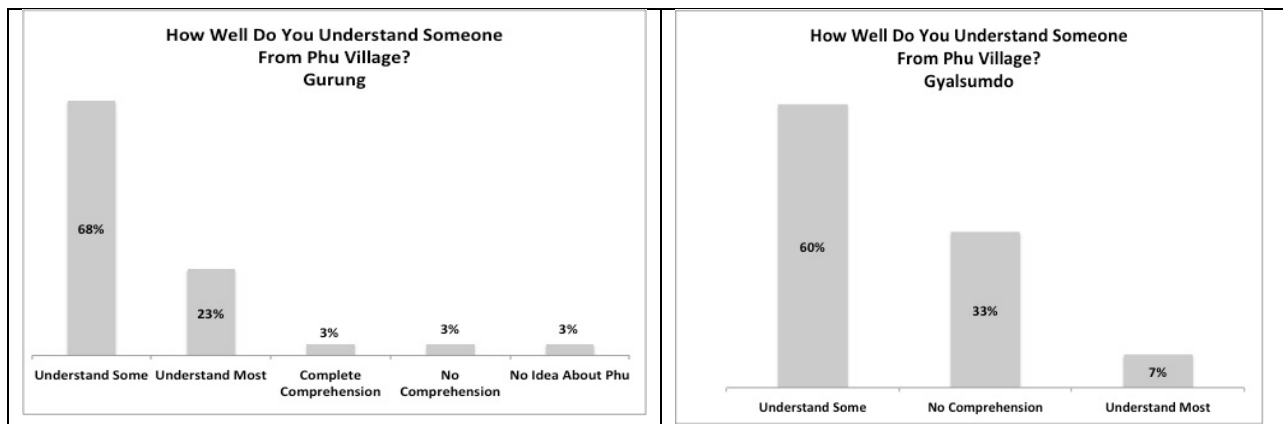


Chart 18. Degree of Comprehension of Phu Village Resident

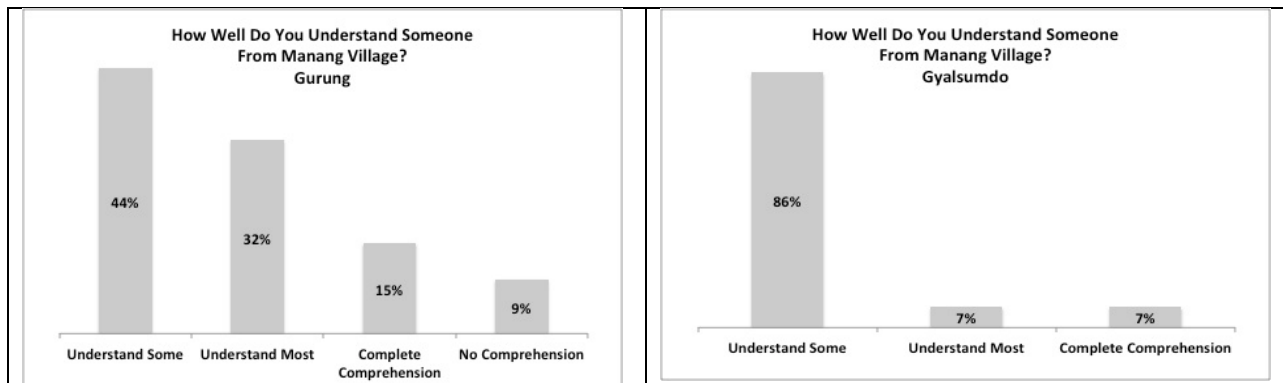


Chart 19. Degree of Comprehension of Manang Village Resident (a.k.a. “^hulo manar”)

- Some non-structural evidence of regional dialect variation within Gyalsumdo
- About equal comprehension of Nar & Phu, although some Gurungs not aware of these villages
- Gyalsumdo speakers report greater comprehension of Manange

vi. One or Multiple Languages in Manang?

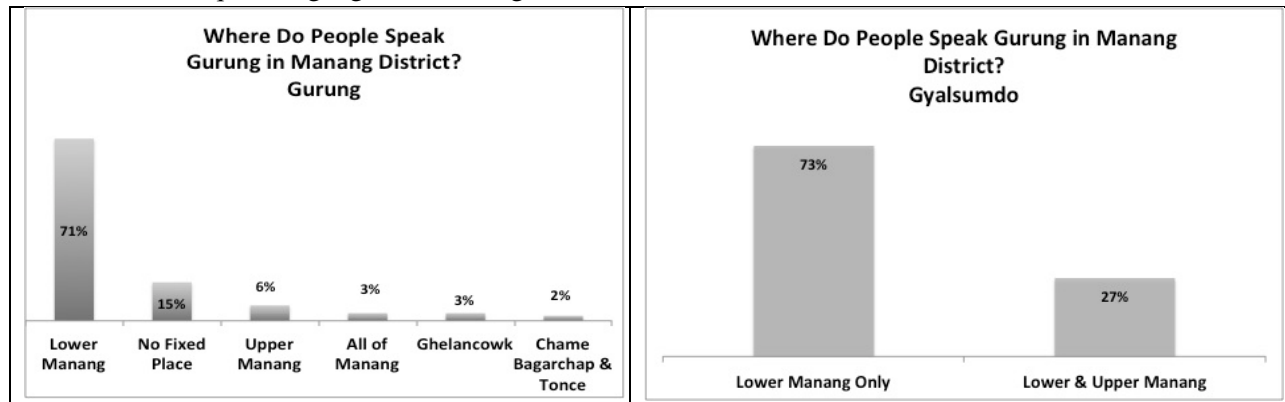


Chart 20. Where is Gurung Spoken?

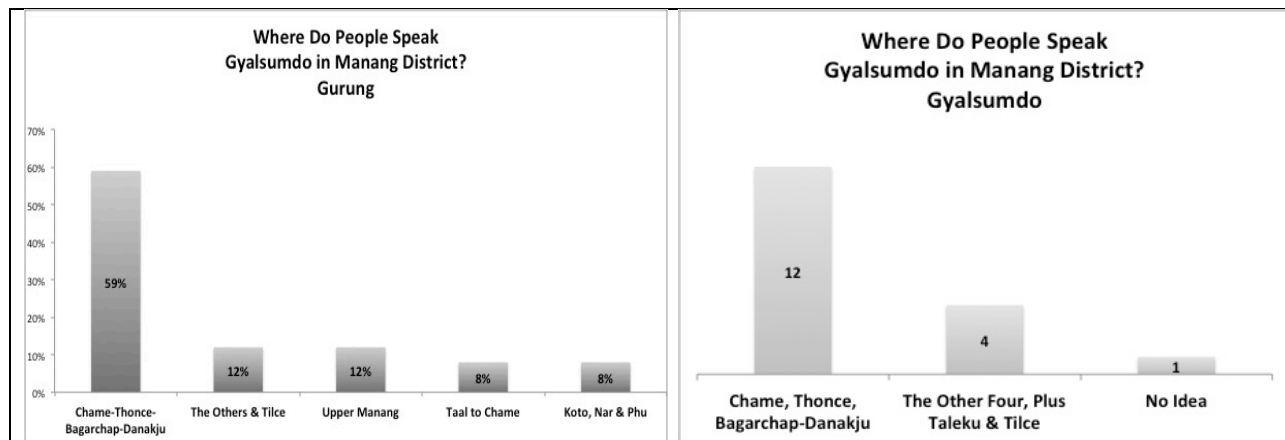


Chart 21. Where is Gyalsumdo Spoken?

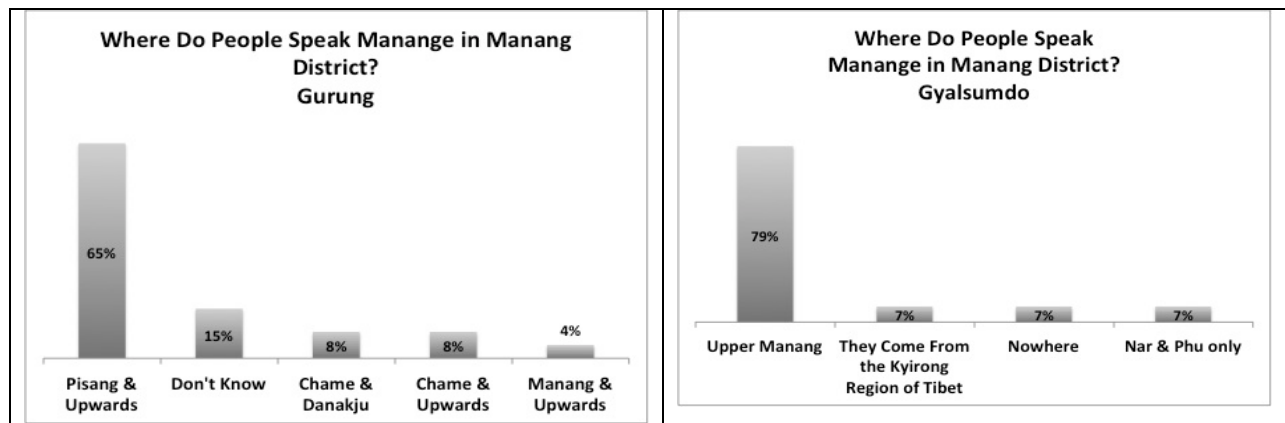


Chart 22. Where is Manange Spoken?

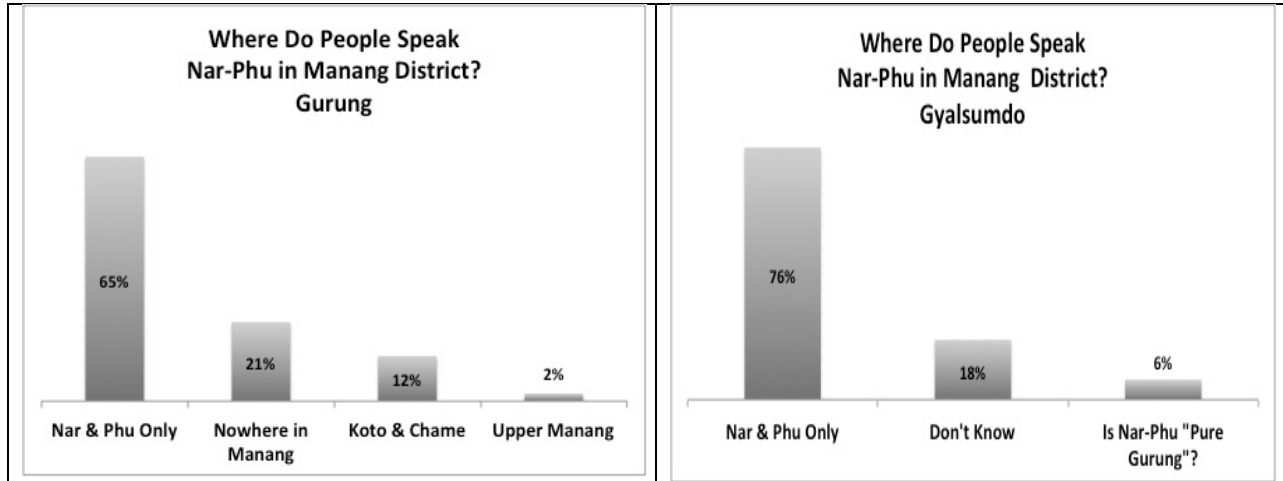


Chart 23. Where is Nar-Phu Spoken?

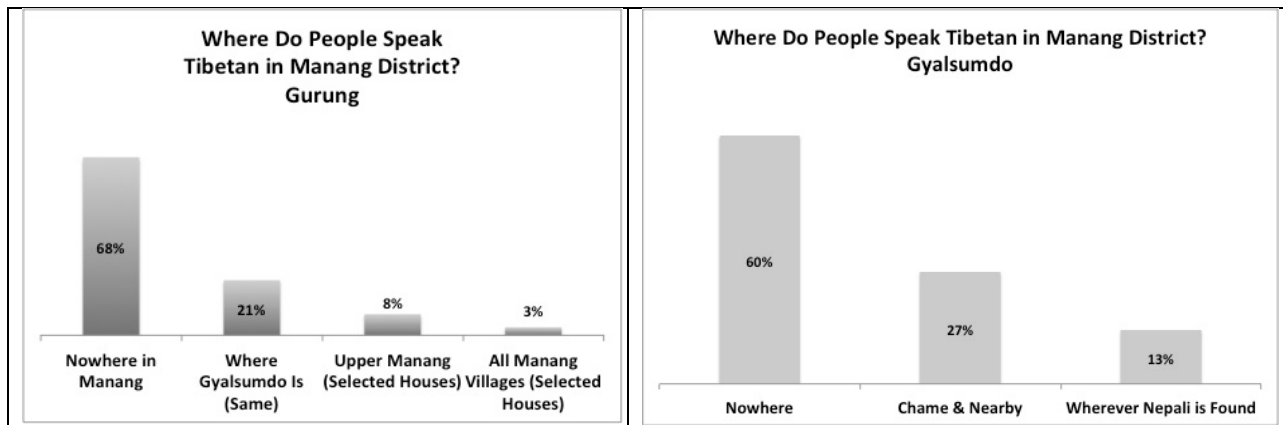


Chart 24. Where is Tibetan Spoken?

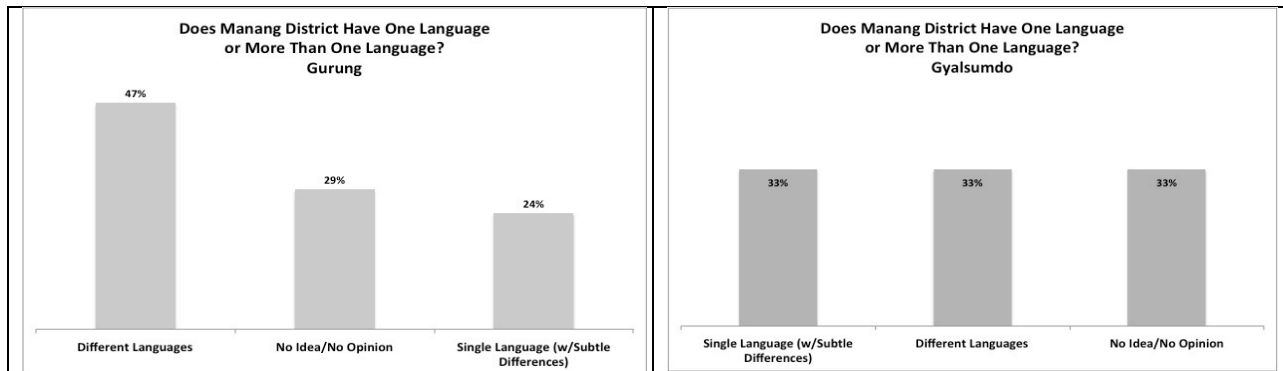


Chart 25. One Language or Many Languages in Manang?

- Among speakers with fixed ideas, there is agreement that Gurung is generally “lower Manang,” Manange is “upper Manang,” Nar-Phu is spoken in Nar & Phu, and that Gyalsumdo is located in the transition zone between lower & upper Manang
- We asked about Tibetan because some speakers claim that Gyalsumdo is Tibetan-only Gurungs equate Gyalsumdo with Tibetan

- Gyalsumdo is evenly split on the “one language/multiple languages” issue; Gurungs see Manange & Gurung same, or Manange & Nar-Phu as same (& Gyalsumdo as different)

vii. Attitudes in the Context of Nepali

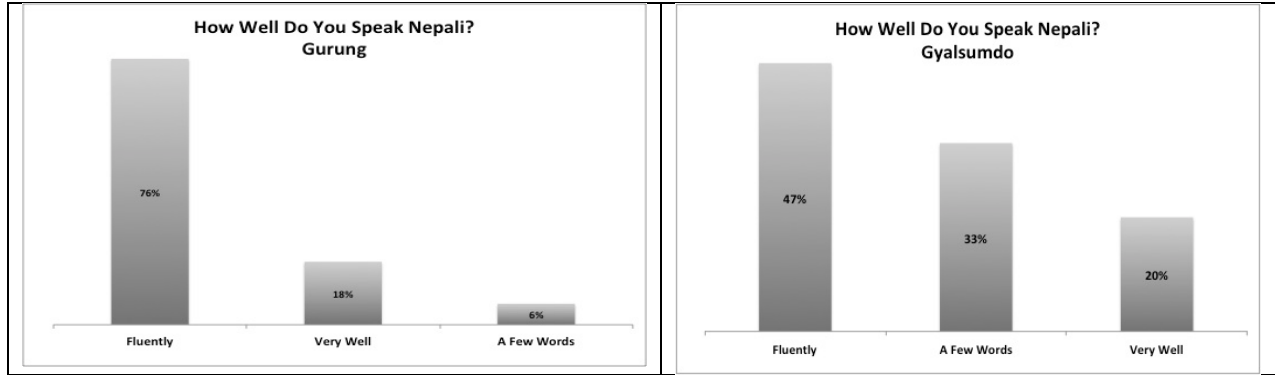


Chart 26. How Well Do You Speak Nepali?

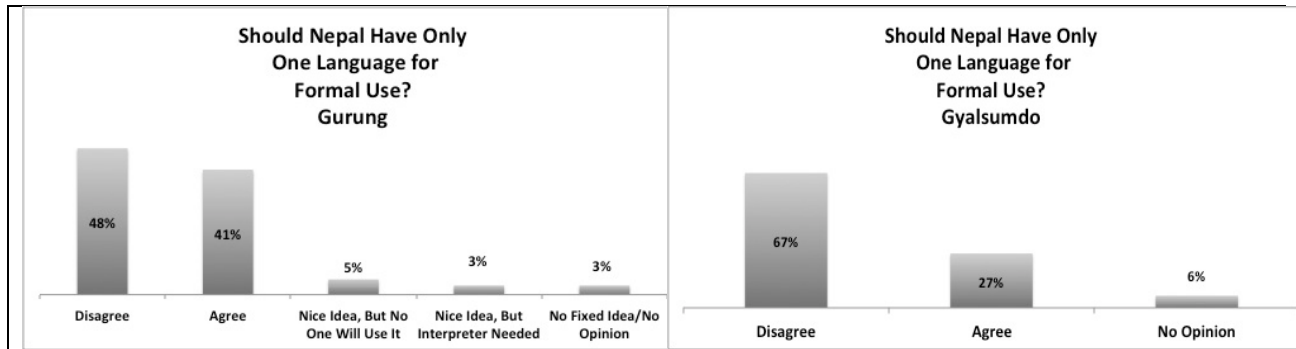


Chart 27. Should There Be One (Formal) Language For All Public Use?

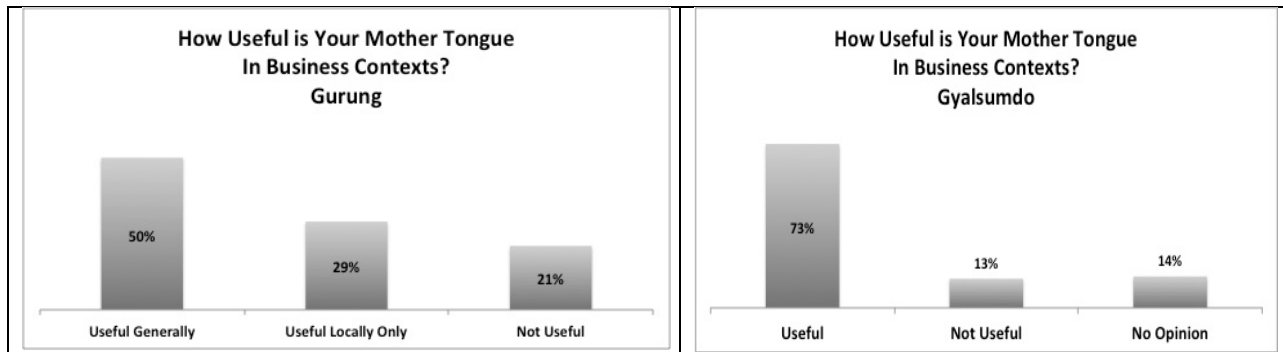


Chart 28. How Useful Is Your Mother Tongue in Business Contexts?

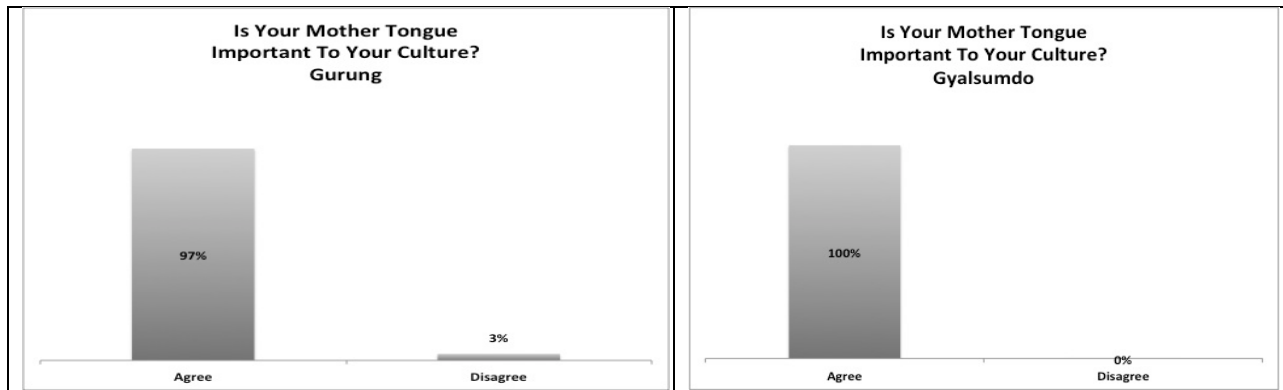


Chart 29. How Useful Is Your Mother Tongue in Cultural/Religious Contexts?

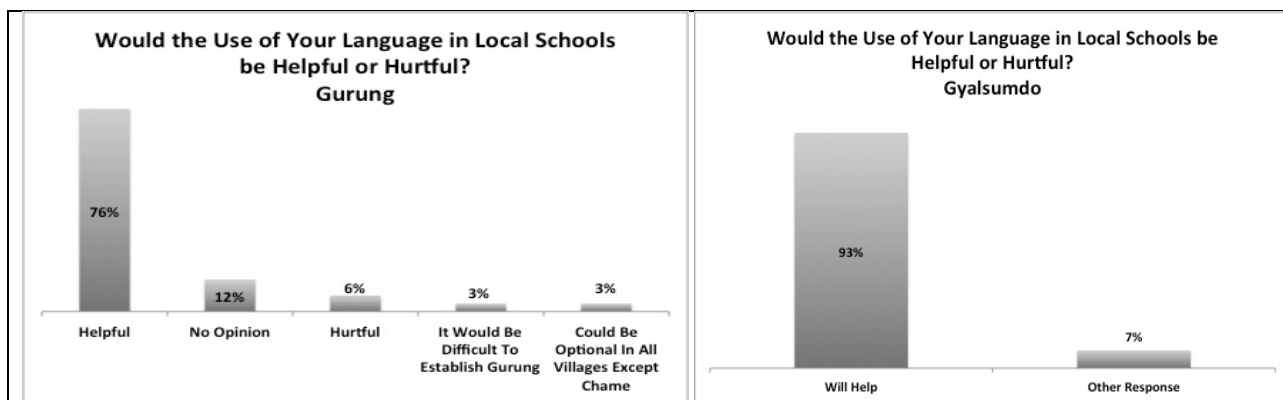


Chart 30. Would the Introduction of Your Mother Tongue in Local Schools be Helpful or Hurtful?

- Both groups find their M-T to play an important role in cultural practices (e.g. births, weddings, funerals, holidays, etc.), but Nepali plays a bigger role in lives of Gurungs; Gyalsumdo speakers find more place for their M-T because their business dealings are also largely local
- “Other responses” from Gyalsumdo (and Gurung) speakers: No Gyalsumdo orthography, so introduction difficult; there are no current teaching materials published in either language

viii. Attitudes Regarding Future Prospects

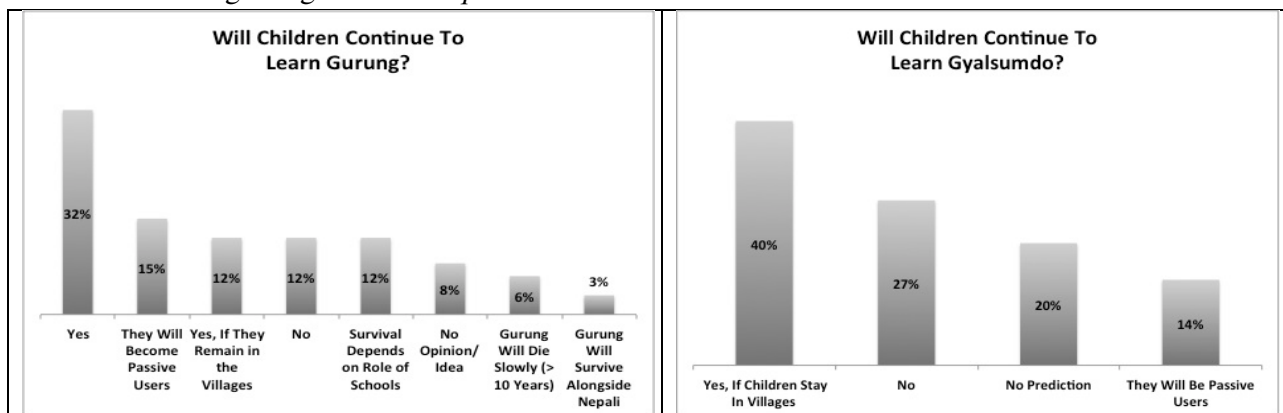


Chart 31. Will Your Mother Tongue Continue to be Spoken in Future Generations?

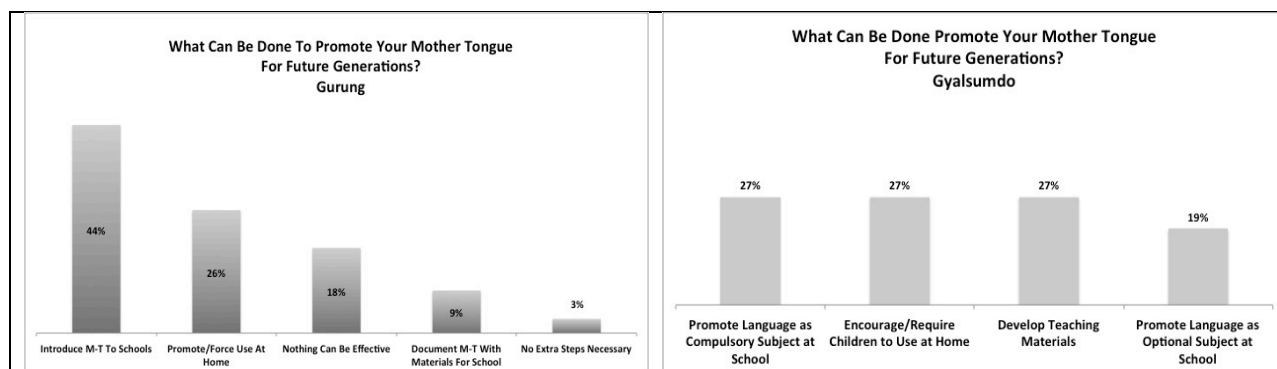


Chart 32. What Can Be Done to Keep Your Mother Tongue Spoken by Future Generations?

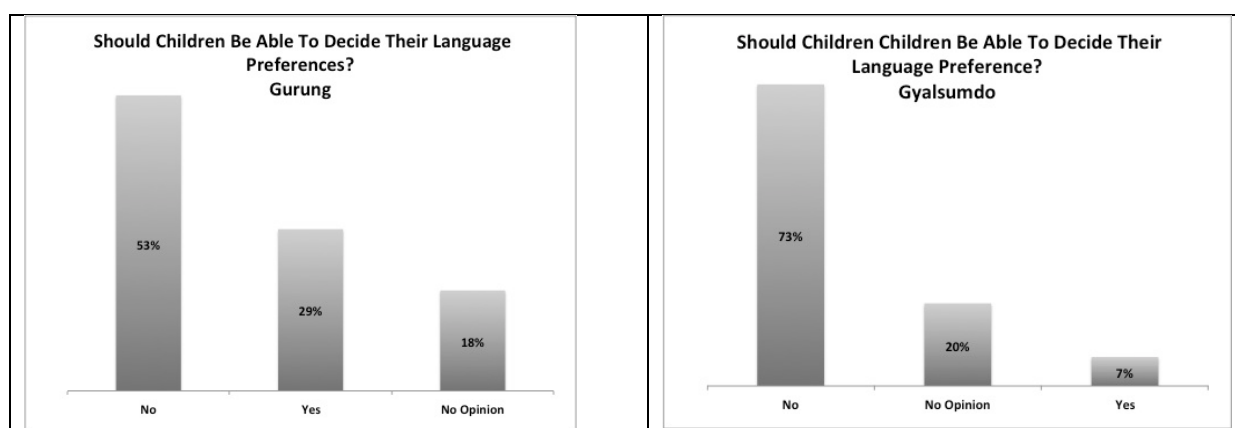


Chart 33. Should Today's Children be Able to Decide Their Own Language Use Preferences?

- Gurungs are largely positive about the viability of their M-T, but they recognize the (rising) influence of Nepali; Gyalsumdos are less optimistic, more qualified in survival scenarios
- Both communities recommend keeping the M-T active (required) in domestic & village settings; Gyalsumdos have a stronger (positive) opinion about the potential role of local schools in promoting their language

7. Observations

- Nepal CBS (2012) speaker counts: Gurung with 226,000 speakers distributed across the Western Development Region (where Manang is located, and also Lamjung, a Gurung-rich region); Manange has 392 speakers (but in the Central Development Region, where Manang is *not* located), “Tibetan” has 151 speakers in WDR, and Nar-Phu not counted; but Nar-Phu is noted by Tumbahang (2012) as “seriously endangered (83)”
- Our own survey reports perhaps 350 Gurung & 200 Gyalsumdo households in lower Manang, but the counts are complicated by the influx of other groups into Chame, the exodus of local

children to boarding schools outside of Manang & of adults to other parts of Nepal or overseas jobs; the houses are either abandoned or sub-let to families from western Nepal²

- At this point, most indicators point to Gyalsumdo as more vulnerable/threatened; Gurung has undergone significant contact-induced language change
- Landweer (2000): A language spoken within urban confines is more affected by urban confines & thus is weaker than a language whose speakers are in more remote areas
- But what counts as “urban” vs. “rural” in the Manang District context? If Landweer is speaking of émigré speech communities in large metropolitan areas who are cut off from their larger/heritage speech network, then this is not the case for either community
- Lower Manang is characterized by a continuous chain of semi-to-fully populated small to medium-sized villages, many of which are a patchwork of traditional languages
- Also Landweer (2000): Home is the foundational social domain, followed by cultural events, then social events, so a vernacular vitality level is high if it is used in all domains; likewise, a strong ethnic identity facilitates survival
- Again, difficult to test in the Gyalsumdo-Gurung environment; both languages show high degrees of ethnic pride & identity; in both communities, the M-T is also favored in private/domestic environments
- What appears to be happening here (particularly for Gyalsumdo): “boarding school/work emigration phenomenon”: children & adults leave Manang (& Nepal) to seek educational & employment opportunities. This is particularly significant for children, as it disrupts the acquisition-transmission cycle

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² Some other data from CBS 2012: Population growth in Manang is the smallest in Nepal, with a 31.8% *decrease* since the 2001 census; 12% of the district reported abandoned households; 28% of population 0-19 years of age; 48% 20-50 years of age; 24% 51 years+

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