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Newār (Nepāl Bhāsā)
By Austin Hale and Kedār P. Shreṣṭha
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Reviewed by David Hargreaves

There is more than a little irony in the fact that although Newar has one of the oldest written traditions in the Tibeto-Burman family, there as never been, until now, a comprehensive reference grammar of the modern language available to western scholarship. The historical reference dictionary and grammar of Hans Jørgenson (1931; 1941) has stood for some time as the primary source for historical material. The most important recent historical contribution is the newly completed and monumentally valuable *Dictionary of Classical Newari*: *Complied by Dictionary Sources,* produced by the Nepal Bhasa Dictionary Committee under the guidance of chief editor K.P. Malla.

The Newar language tradition has itself produced several fine reference works, but they remain mostly unread, except by Newar speaking students and scholars. Since 1985, the excellent work by K.P. Malla, *The Newari Language: A Working Outline* has been the standard English language reference, but even the author's introduction concedes it is but "a preliminary step." Thus, despite many fine individual works on a wide range of individual topics, a full reference grammar of Newar remained unavailable, until now.

The new reference grammar *Newār (Nepāl Bhāsā)* by senior scholar Austin Hale and native speaker scholar Kedār P. Shreṣṭha (hereafter H&S) is a welcome and valuable addition to Newar scholarship and Tibeto-Burman linguistics. Of special interest is the fact the grammar provides us with a corpus-based account of Newar grammar. As H&S note in the introduction, the corpus is drawn from a range of written texts, the citations of source texts suggesting a preponderance of narratives and essays. The corpus is supplemented by "intuitive and analytic observations;" sentence level citations and some discourse examples from other published works are also included as sources of examples. Thus, the grammar combines the best of typologically informed analysis and adherence to a corpus based methodology.

Chapter One begins, as expected, with phonology. The presentation of the data is clear with abundant examples of minimal pairs and tables of contrastive sets. The analysis follows the analytical tradition developed by Austin Hale and others over the years so there are no surprises here. The only point of debate noted in the text is in the analysis of the syllable initial glide /w/ and the mid back vowel /o/. As described, Hale follows one tradition in preferring to recognize a distinctive vowel phoneme /o/, while Shreṣṭha's intuitions, following another tradition, lean towards the sequence /wə/. The differing approaches are outlined by H&S in the grammar itself. They ultimately choose the representation /wə/, citing deference to native speaker intuitions and the dictionary tradition. Syllable templates are also outlined where H&S note that authoritative statements about the Newar syllable canon are complicated by the rich continuum of

assimilated and unassimilated loans from Indic sources. The final section in Chapter One concerns itself with prosody and intonation at the phrase, clause and discourse levels, an underdeveloped part of Newar scholarship.

Chapter Two is an extensive account of the morphological properties of the various word classes. The first section outlines the morphological properties of nouns, and in particular case marking. In their absolute forms, Newar noun stems do not typically retain final consonants. Vestiges of older finals appear only in oblique case forms, and H&S's outlining of the unruly patterning of these finals is particularly useful. The sections on pronouns, compounding, classifiers and forms of quantification are also extensive, gathering examples and analyses that have circulated in the specialist literature but never compiled until now.

When Chapter Two turns to the verbal morphology, H&S's exhaustively detailed work is superbly presented, summarizing the most recent work on the semantic and discourse pragmatic distribution of the conjunct/disjunct system. This is followed by an extensive account of how the verbal morphology interacts with various classes of stem vowels and stem final consonants. The classes of stem final consonants seems to be shared across the Newar family, and although Newar verbal morphology does not approach the intricacies of its Kiranti neighbors, H&S's work here lays out important data for internal reconstructions within the Newar family, and the foundations of Tibeto-Burman comparative work.

Turning to Chapter Three, and the syntax of the Noun Phrase, H&S bring together a comprehensive account of the noun phrase constituents and their relationships. The description is clear and free of terminological opacity. Of interest to typologists and grammaticalization specialists is H&S's discussion of the "antideictic" suffix /-mhə/, undoubtedly related to the noun /-mhə/ 'body, self.' Where Newar kinship terms automatically index the speaker, the addition of the antideictic cancels such a pragmatic entailment.

H&S's corpus examples are used advantageously in the section on attributive and relative clauses, where the examples are chosen judiciously to illustrate the relevant syntactic properties of animacy and number agreement between the pre-nominal attributive or relative clause constituents and the head. Similarly, the complexities of quantifiers and classifiers are outlined with a useful balance of structural information and textual examples. One particularly bountiful section revolves around the continuum between "true" case marking suffixes and a heterogeneous collection of post-positional elements that run the gamut from high frequency collocations with phonological reflexes, indicative of advanced grammaticalization processes, to productive grammatical constructions with idiomatic semantic and pragmatic features.

In the syntax of the verb complex, Chapter Four, the first formal division distinguishes a lexical head, the only obligatory element, from a range of non-obligatory "auxiliaries." The auxiliaries are then divided into three classes based on their control properties, namely those that control participle (/-a/) complements, those that control infinitive /-e/ complements, and those that control a non-finite "long stem" form of the complement verb. Within each formal class, H&S identify a set of functional/semantic domains: directional, aspectual, applicative, honorific for the participle (/-a/) class;

purposive for the long stem class; modal, aspectual and purposive for the infinitive /-e/) class. H&S's corpus based approach shines in its ability to present this complex array of form-function constructions in authentic textual environments.

The syntax of the Newar verb complex, beginning with the lexical head, is thus characterized by an array of complementation requirements teamed with a host of grammaticalized and semi-grammaticalized auxiliaries, the so-called versatile verbs, all piling up one after another, like the traffic in Tripureshwor, ending with inflectional morphology on the final verb. There is simply nothing available to date that approaches the accuracy and thoroughness of the H&S account.

In Chapter 5, the description turns to argument structure, grammatical roles and case marking in simple clauses. The approach in this chapter is overtly taxonomic beginning with a list of clause types categorized relative to case marking (Erg, Gen, Abs, Dat, Soc, Loc) and semantic roles (Agent, Experiencer, Patient, Location). Hale and Manandhar's (1980) original work on "case and role" did not appeal to grammatical relations such as subject, direct object, indirect object, oblique, and the same basic orientation is followed here. References to grammatical relations in Newar come via a citation of Givón (2001), but no detailed syntactic argumentation is included. This may be considered a weakness, but is more likely a reflection of H&S's reluctance to burden the grammar with the theoretical machinery necessary to enter the arena of syntactic argumentation, an arena inevitably bound up with partisan syntactic models. It is sufficient here to note that the question of "subjecthood" in Newar syntax remains to be excavated thoroughly.

Chapter 6 discusses two important grammatical constructions that do much of the heavy lifting in Newar discourse: relativization and nominalization, including the ubiquitous "unembedded" nominalization. Newar relative clauses precede the head noun, and are distinguished from nominalizations by the presence of a "gapped" constituent, coreferential with the head. Since the relativized clause is verb final, the verb will carry attributive morphology that marks agreement (animacy and number) with the head noun, which follows the relative clause. Relative clauses may also appear "beheaded," in which case the final verb will carry both the attributive morphology and the morphology marking the case role of the absent head. Importantly, H&S take pains to clarify the point that "beheaded" relative clauses and nominalizations, although similar in appearance in some cases, are syntactically distinguishable by the presence of the gapped constituent in relative clauses.

Turning to nominalizations, H&S's corpus-based approach is particularly valuable in that many of the colloquial uses of nominalization are stubbornly resistant to elicitations and decontextualized examples. H&S's descriptions are thus drawn from a wide range of attested constructions: finite nominalizations functioning as various types of arguments, unembedded nominalizations with a variety of discourse functions falling under the general notion of "backgrounding," and infinitive nominalizations functioning as modifiers to specific noun heads as well as core arguments to verbs. Nominalization, and finiteness in general, remains an understudied area of Newar syntax, and H&S have made a great contribution in uncovering the core constructions.

With the grammar moving into more complex clause types, Chapter Seven takes up a categorization of clause combining constructions. The functional term, clause combining,

covers for a heterogeneous grouping of formal constructions both finite and non-finite, ranging from converb or "participial" chaining sequences to formally marked subordination and coordination. In discourse terms, the constructions cover a wide range of multi-clausal semantic domains including temporal relations, manner, reason, cause, and conditional, as well as comparative and quotative constructions. The discussion of coordination usefully points out a wider range of correlative constructions than is usually discussed in the literature on Newar clause combining. Following Chapter Seven is a brief discussion of topicalization constructions, most of which were discussed in previous sections of the grammar.

Overall, H&S have contributed an invaluable body of material to the study of the Newar language, which is not to say that there isn't work that remains, as the authors themselves readily admit. If there were an additional grammar of Newar yet to be written, it would be one based on a complementary corpus drawn from the registers of spoken Newar. Nevertheless, H&S's work will without a doubt serve us well as the standard reference on Newar grammar.

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David Hargreaves
hargred@wou.edu