

A Micro-Typology of Contact Effects in Four Tibeto-Burman Languages

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Abstract

When minority languages with similar typological profiles are in long-term contact with a genealogically unrelated socio-economically dominant language, the perfect context is provided for investigating which observed contact effects are demonstrably allied to sociolinguistic dynamics rather than purely structural ones. This paper investigates the factors determining the different extent of contact effects in four Tibeto-Burman languages (Gurung, Gyalsumdo, Nar-Phu, and Manange) spoken in a geo-politically defined and multilingual region of Nepal. Using corpus data and sociolinguistic interviews collected in the field, we demonstrate that a range of social, economic and geo-spatial factors contribute to asymmetries where contact effects are observed in the four speech communities. These notably include factors specifically relevant in mountain-based communities, including proximity to transport and trekking routes, outward migration effects on small settlements, and the primary economies of the different parts of the Manang District.

Keywords: language contact; geo-spatial factors; language endangerment, lexical borrowing; language maintenance, Tibeto-Burman

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1 Introduction¹

This paper analyzes the influence of structural, social, economic, and geo-spatial factors behind a range of contact-induced language effects in a set of languages for which the mechanisms and outcomes of contact (other than endangerment) have been less well documented.² We investigate these factors in the case of contact between Nepali and English and four Tibeto-Burman languages, Gurung, Gyalsumdo, Nar-Phu, and Manange, which are all spoken in the Manang District of Nepal.³ Our main research question asks which factor(s) better account for the different types of, and also different extents of, structural contact effects in these different languages. All are Tibeto-Burman varieties that are located in the same region. All four languages have experienced long-term contact between themselves and with Nepali (which is Indo-European), and these languages now demonstrate different degrees and different types of contact effects or outcomes. One kind of predictor is linguistic, namely structural factors, while another kind of predictor is extralinguistic, namely sociolinguistic (speaker-reported attitude and practices) and language community spatial or locational factors. Here we examine these outcomes as manifested in a set of variably related languages. In addition to examining structural contact effects, we also consider the role that these factors play in the varying degrees of viability of these speech communities.⁴

As a preview to the main findings, we show that Gurung, while demonstrating the most pervasive contact effects across multiple linguistic sub-systems, also evidences the greatest likelihood for long-term transmission and viability as a language. On the other end of the spectrum are Nar-Phu and Gyalsumdo, which demonstrate more severe degrees of speech community erosion and speaker population loss (see also Campbell and Muntzel's 1989 concepts of 'sudden' vs. 'radical' vs. 'gradual' death), but without the degree or types of structural contact effects seen in Gurung. Manange, on the other hand, is in the middle of this continuum, showing some degree of speech community erosion, but also indications of community interest in preservation and promotion across generations. It shows a limited number of contact effects, primarily impacting the lexicon and manifesting itself in Manange-Nepali or Manange-English code switching in discourse.

Our investigation also considers the role of socio-spatial factors beyond those usually considered in studies of variation, particularly locational stability and access/proximity to contact language contexts in the trajectories of preservation and change to these languages. We demonstrate that those language communities with greater locational stability (communities less

¹ The abbreviations used in this paper are: 1 = first person, 3 = third person, ABL = ablative, AUX = auxiliary, COND = conditional, COP = copula, DEF = definite DM = discourse marker, Eng. = English, ERG = ergative, INSTR = instrumental, LOAN = loan marking suffix, LOC = locative, Nep. = Nepali, NMLZ = nominalizer, NPST = non-past, PFV = perfective, PL = plural, PROX = proximate, PST = past, PTCPL = participle, SEQ = sequential, SIM = simultaneous, SUBORD = subordinator, T-B = Tibeto-Burman, VDC = Village Development Committee.

² See also Munshi (2010) for a sociolinguistic study of trilingual contact in Janmu and Kashmir, and Thurgood (2010) for a comparison of three languages of China and Vietnam.

³ We acknowledge a current debate regarding the nomenclature and structure of the family, with an alternative label proposed for Tibeto-Burman: Trans-Himalayan (van Driem 2014).

⁴ While we draw on quantitative data as an indicator of the differences observed across the speech communities in question, we do so with caution. We do not have a sufficient sample size to measure which linguistic and extra-linguistic factors might underlie long-term changes in this multilingual context. Rather, this report represents a qualitative first step at uncovering the variation in types and degrees of language contact mechanisms observed in four genealogically and geographically proximate languages in the face of differing viability fates and an early consideration of what factors may play a role in explaining these differences.

likely to fracture due to social and economic pressures) and also access and proximity to Nepali-centric resources (e.g. Manang District headquarters and marketplaces) show a higher likelihood of viability with more profound contact consequences across lexical and grammatical sub-systems.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 further introduces the languages that form the basis of this study, while Section 3 describes the methods by which we have gathered and operationalized linguistic structural, sociolinguistic, and geospatial data. Sections 4 and 5 provide observations on contact patterns and present more refined hypotheses about the factors underlying these patterns. Section 6 provides a conclusion of our main observations about the relationship between contact and endangerment within our case study languages.

2 Case study languages

With over one hundred languages from four major families (and at least one isolate), and a similarly high number of caste-clan and ethnic groupings, Nepal is a country of great ethno-linguistic diversity (Central Bureau of Statistics 2012; Kansakar 2006; Gurung 1998). It is also a country with a deep history of language community movement, migrations, and contact (van Driem 2001; Noonan 2003; 2006; Sonntag and Turin (eds.) 2019). The Manang District is home to several Tibeto-Burman languages that belong to the Tibetic and Bodic sub-branches. This study focuses on one Tibetic language and three Bodic languages belonging to the Tamangic group, elaborated on in Table 1.

Name used in this study	Other autonyms	ISO-639	Glottocode	Sub-grouping within Tibeto-Burman	Estimated speaker populations	References
Gurung	tamu, tamu khoe	<i>gvr</i>	guru1261	Bodish > Tamangic > Gurungic	2,000 in Manang, approx. 200,000 elsewhere in Nepal, Sikkhim, and diaspora	Glover 1974
Gyalsumdo		<i>gyo</i>	gyal1235	South-western Tibetic > Gyalsumdo-Nubri	< 250	Hildebrandt and Perry 2011
Manange	nyeshangte	<i>nmn</i>	mana1288	Bodish > Tamangic > Nuclear Tamang	5,000 - 8,000 in Manang, Kathmandu, approx. 1,000 diaspora	Hildebrandt 2003; 2004; Hildebrandt and Bond 2017
Nar-Phu	tshyprung, nartwe	<i>npa</i>	narp1239	Bodish > Tamangic > Nuclear Tamang	< 400 for Nar, < 200 for Phu approx. 1,000 diaspora	Noonan and Hildebrandt 2017

Table 1. The Tibeto-Burman languages in this study

The speaker population and viability estimates of the 120-plus languages of Nepal are uneven. Nepali (Indo-European) is the national language and is the language most commonly encountered in official business, government, and media environments, and is spoken by 44.6% of the population (Yadava 2014). Another nineteen languages are identified by Yadava as ‘major’ languages of Nepal in that they each have over 100,000 speakers. Of the four languages considered in this study, only Gurung is located in this category, with over three hundred thousand speakers. The other 104 languages included in the 2011 Nepal census survey are referred to as ‘minor’ languages by Yadava (2014). Only Manange is included in this list of 104, and it is claimed to have under 400 speakers (Yadava 2014: 60). This number is at odds with what we report based on speech community self-estimates (which suggest there are 4,000-8,000 speakers in Manang). The number of Tibetan speakers in Nepal is counted at over 4,000 in the census. It is likely that, as a south-western Tibetic language, Gyalsumdo speakers are included in this figure. Nar-Phu does not feature in the census.

The history of language policies and indigenous minority language discrimination in Nepal is discussed in Awasthi (2004). Until recently, hundreds of years of official policies of what Hough et al (2009: 160) quote as ‘one king, one country, one language, one culture’ resulted in a banning of indigenous linguistic and cultural practices and a virtual snuffing out of these practices anywhere but in the most private of domains and environments. This began to change in the 1990s with a popular democratic movement in Nepal, with calls for recognition

and protection of cultural and linguistic human rights. Nepal began a slow journey towards linguistic pluralism, described in Sonntag (1980) and Eagle (1999).

Progress in language rights stalled in the early 2000s during a decade-long Maoist militia uprising, followed almost immediately by controversies from the (now defunct) monarchy, and then from a long stalemate on ratification of a national constitution. Recent language protection developments in Nepal have included a process of official registration of minority languages, recognition in interim constitutions of indigenous languages on some levels (including education), and the establishment of a federation to promote indigenous-inclusive language rights (the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities/NFDIN), all of which have played a role in constructing multilingual education programs.

Turning to developments in the region of this study, in recent generations, it has become commonplace for many individuals or even families of Manang to migrate to the Kathmandu valley, or to lower elevations within Manang or neighboring Lamjung District during winter, to benefit from longer growing seasons. In winters, women and children especially, stay in low elevation villages where Nepali (Indo-European) is spoken, and men may travel to other regions in Nepal or to India (or beyond) for work (Rogers 2004).

Another relevant factor for language contact with Nepali in Manang is education (Hildebrandt 2003; Turin 2014; Hildebrandt and Krim 2018). There is at least one government-funded school in each larger Manang village, and instruction is in Nepali and English. In addition, a number of adults who live in Manang (traditionally men, but increasingly women too) have had some education either in Kathmandu or abroad.

Starting in the late 20th century, the Manang District became a tourist hot-spot because the popular ‘Annapurna Long Circuit’ backpacking trail bisects the District. As a result, a tourist-driven economy emerged where wealthy residents could build elaborate lodges to host foreign trekkers. Some aspects of this new economy are grounded in Nepali language use (e.g. interaction with tour guides and porters), and so the economic benefit of speaking Nepali has grown there. This type of contact has been intensified with the construction of a motorable road through the District.

Another observation is the recent immigration of Tibetans, Lhomis and other residents from neighboring districts to various Manang District Village Development Committees (VDCs). They have come to Manang in search of better economic opportunity; they rent houses and farm the land in a share-cropping situation. Residents report that in public domains, these new migrants adopt the language of the village in which they live, or else use Nepali with them.

The four languages are distributed unevenly across the Manang District, and Gurung is also spoken in many locations outside of Manang, and in India, as well. Fig. 1. shows that while Nar-Phu is largely spoken in VDCs to the north and east, and Manange speakers have traditionally been settled in several VDCs to the north and west of the District, Gurung and Gyalsumdo-speaking communities are found primarily in the south and eastern parts of the District. Gyalsumdo and Gurung are the two languages with most geographic overlap in terms of community, and more will be said about this in Sections 4 and 5.

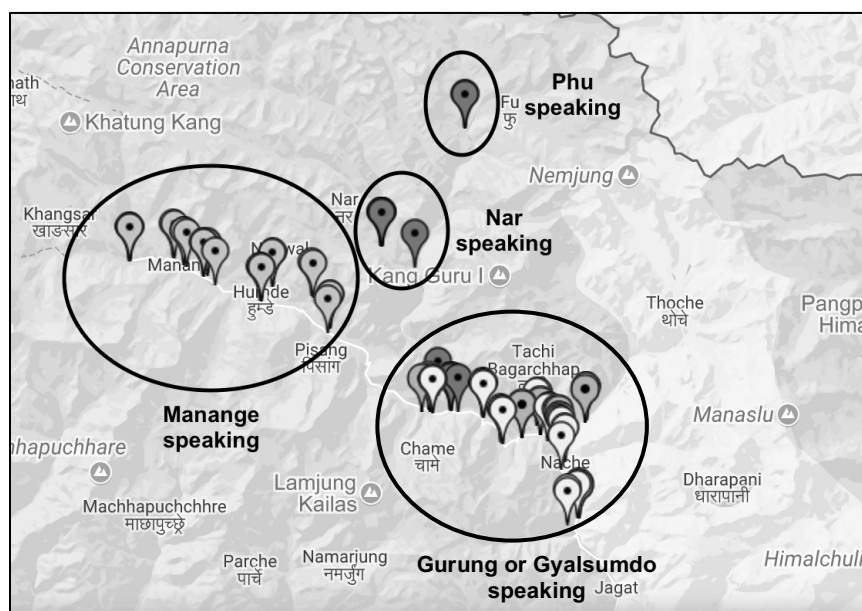


Figure 1. The location of speaker settlements in Manang District grouped by predominant language/variety (in the Gurung/Gyalsumdo area, dark grey = Nar and Phu households; medium grey = Gyalsumdo households; light grey = Gurung households)

All languages in this study (except for Nepali) are Tibeto-Burman, and while Nar-Phu and Manange have a strong degree of structural similarity and speaker-reported mutual intelligibility, Gurung, whilst also Tamangic, belongs to a different sub-group (identified as ‘Gurungic’ by Noonan 2003), together with sister languages Chantyal and Thakali). This is reflected in different grammatical organization and to some extent in lexical and phonological innovations. Gyalsumdo is Tibetic (Gyalsumdo/Nubri/Kyirong, according to Hildebrandt and Perry 2011: 170), with a lower degree of mutual intelligibility between Gyalsumdo speakers and speakers of the regional Tamangic languages (Hildebrandt et al 2015).

The interaction of this set of factors has led to a contact scenario in which each of the languages of Manang District exhibits different degrees of contact effects. This is reflected in the practices of language reported by members of each language community.

3 Methods

3.1 Methodological overview

In order to better understand the effects these factors may have on contact-induced change and the overall viability of the languages, we investigated the distribution of contact effects within parallel corpora of these four Tibeto-Burman languages. The materials were collected as part of larger documentary project that captured (i) lexical data for comparative studies of the tonal phonology and lexicons of these languages, (ii) a corpus of texts crossing different genres and registers, and (iii) sociolinguistic language attitude and usage interviews designed to facilitate

understanding the motivations behind varying viability prospects of these languages.⁵ Consequently, our study of contact language effects pairs quantitative analysis of spontaneous speech data with detailed insights into speakers' reported language usage patterns and attitudes across all the settlements within Manang District.

3.2 Data and data collection

The primary linguistic data used for our quantitative analysis of types/degree of structural language contact come from spontaneous texts collected in Manang District. These discourses were collected from representative speakers of the different language communities, and the topics are primarily those that the speakers felt comfortable discussing in front of audio-video recording equipment, rather than following a predetermined schedule. These include topics such as autobiographies, the settlement and history of particular VDCs, demonstrations of particular tasks, and descriptions of locations within a VDC of particular cultural significance. Some speakers felt more comfortable participating in more controlled stimulus-recording activities, including elaborated summaries of the *Pear Stories* film (Chafe 1980). All of these recordings were transcribed, interlinearized, and translated into Nepali and English. Complementing these texts, we have a number of elicited structures and vocabulary lists, particularly ones aimed at uncovering the differing and variable argument structure and case-marking strategies in these languages.

The structural analysis of text data is complemented by sociolinguistic interview data, collected to reveal extralinguistic factors behind degree and types of contact, as well as factors affecting language viability. The questionnaire was modeled on a similar survey reported on in Kansakar et al. (2011). A total of 87 interviews were conducted between 2012 and 2014 across the four language groups. The basic distribution of the interviewees by language and gender are given in Table 2. Full details of make-up of the speaker pool are available in Hildebrandt et al. (2015).

	Gurung	Gyalsumdo	Manange	Nar-Phu
Male	19	12	13	9
Female	15	5	10	4

Table 2. Speaker pool for sociolinguistic interviews, by dominant language and gender of interviewee.

All sociolinguistic interviews were conducted in person, in the Nepali language, in the presence of the co-authors and always with a local and well-known and trusted community liaison, and all interviews were audio-recorded. The interview questions and an analysis of responses may be found in Hildebrandt et al. (2015) and in Hildebrandt and Hu (2017).

There are some obvious limitations to our study which in part reflect the difficulty associated with collecting the data. For example, not every person who offered a text offered a sociolinguistic interview so there is not a one-to-one match between the texts and the

⁵Archived materials for this project may be found at the University of Virginia's Tibetan and Himalayan Library (<https://audio-video.shanti.virginia.edu/home>), or at a locally hosted archive at the home institution (<https://iris.siue.edu/manang-languages-archive/>). Copies of Institutional Review Board (IRB) oral informed consent templates may be found at <https://iris.siue.edu/manang-languages-archive/exhibits/show/project-derivatives>.

interviewees. We also did not strictly control for types of texts we collected, instead prioritizing the opportunity to document a range of materials. Table 3 details key social variables for each text used in the textual analysis.

Text Title	Language	Speaker gender	Speaker age
DharGM1	Gurung	Male	51 or older
GyeGM1	Gurung	Male	51 or older
GyeGM2	Gurung	Male	51 or older
KhotroGF1	Gurung	Female	31-50
OtarGM1 through GM3	Gurung	Male	31-50
TemangGF1	Gurung	Female	31-50
BgchpGyM1	Gyalsumdo	Male	31-50
ChameGyF2	Gyalsumdo	Female	51 or older
ChameGyF3	Gyalsumdo	Female	31-50
DanakyuGyM2	Gyalsumdo	Male	31-50
ThonceGyM2	Gyalsumdo	Male	51 or older
Pear Story	Nar-Phu	Female	30 or younger
Sheep Organs	Nar-Phu	Male	mixed
Yaks	Nar-Phu	Male	51 or older
Phu Life Story	Nar-Phu	Female	51 or older
Pisang13_MM2	Manange	Male	51 or older
Tengki13_MM1	Manange	Male	51 or older
Manang13_MF1	Manange	Female	31-50
Pisang13_MF1	Manange	Female	51 or older
Manang13_MF2	Manange	Female	31-50
Khangsar13_MM1	Manange	Male	51 or older
Braga13_MM2	Manange	Male	51 or older

Table 3. Speaker pool for text analysis.

Given that the data is largely from unplanned, spontaneous monologues rather than conversation, it is likely that the incidence of code-switching in our data sets is less than in more naturalistic interactions. This means that the conclusions we draw from the quantitative data are tentative rather than conclusive (particularly when examining differences across gender), but nevertheless provide insight into differences in the extent that contact effects pervade the four languages. We also recognize the effect our presence as foreign researchers can have on language repertoire choices made by community members in these texts. However, balancing this out, our own ethnographic observations confirm that code-switching is common and appears to be distributed across members of these language communities in ways similar to the data that we have in our corpus.

We now turn to our observations of the degree and types of contact-induced language change in the four languages. Our study in this case focuses on code switching at the lexical

(single word) level, code switching at larger phrasal or clausal levels, loaned content words, and loaned morphological material.⁶

3.3 *Distinguishing contact effects*

Before moving into the types of contact effects, it is important to provide a summary typological profile of these languages. Manange, Nar-Phu and Gurung are Tamangic languages which are verb-final, exhibit differential case marking, demonstrate low referential density, and make productive use of a suffix -pa, which is used for nominalization, relativization, and complementation. Gyalsumdo also demonstrates these properties, but it differs slightly in having a more elaborated system of tense, aspect, and evidentiality. Consequently, their structural profiles identify these languages as a cohesive set within Tibeto-Burman.

Contact effects are observed when changes or re-structuring impacts a language's lexicon or grammatical systems as a result of the speech community's use of more than one language in the same place at the same time, often in a context of both individual and societal bilingualism or multilingualism (Thomason 2001: 1). The past fifty years have provided an abundance of literature on language contact scenarios and their outcomes (e.g. Weinreich 1968; Moravcsik 1978; Thomason and Kaufman 1991; Gilbers et al (eds.) 2000; Thomason 2001; Aikhenvald and Dixon (eds.) 2006) leading to a range of hypotheses about the principles governing language convergence, the role of interference during transmission, and the mechanisms of contact. Here we operationalize the scenarios and results that are relevant to the quantitative portions of the study.

3.3.1 *Lexical borrowing vs morphological borrowing*

Lexical borrowing occurs when a lexeme (or lexical stem) originating in one lect is adopted as a word or word stem (rather than an affix, for example) in the recipient language (cf. Haspelmath and Tadmor 2009: 13).⁷ At some point in the history of a language, this loanword enters the lexicon of the borrowing language as a result of processes like transfer or copying (Haspelmath 2009: 35) typically exhibiting signs of integration into the phonological and morphological systems of the recipient language.

All of the languages in our corpus show at least some loaned words from Nepali, Tibetan, and also from English (although probably by way of Nepali). Example (1) shows a Nepali loan, the noun *syau* (सेउ) 'apple', inflected with the Nar definite marker.

⁶ We acknowledge that there are other ways in which language contact can be observed in the grammars of languages, including system restructuring, and this has been observed in some of these languages in other studies (e.g. tone system simplification in Manange and in Manang Gurung (Hildebrandt 2003; 2009b), but this was more difficult to track systematically with the types of data gathered in this survey, and so we focus on these four types here.

⁷ Related to loanwords is semantic calquing, which is a transfer of meaning without transfer of word or form. We do not consider this in our study.

(1) Lexical borrowing in Nar from Nepali

ʃôw-ce cæ-te.⁸

apple-DEF eat-IPFV

‘They are eating apples.’ (Pear Story: 064)

While the form *ufu* (a word of Tibeto-Burman origin) is used to refer to apples in Nar and in Manange, *syau* is more commonly used in both of these languages, and may be slowly replacing *ufu*. This borrowing is particularly interesting given the economic importance of apple growing in the region.

Verbs loaned from Nepali are usually easy to identify in the languages of Manang, because they may not be completely phonologized to a Tamangic pattern, and they also carry a suffix *-ti~ti*, alongside native T-B inflectional morphology. This suffix is semantically vacuous, and appears to only ever indicate that its host stem is a loan. An example of this is given in (2), where the verb *ts3le* ‘operate, run’ is from Nepali *tsalaau* (चलाउनु), ‘to move, drive, influence, administer, develop’.

(2) Lexical borrowing in Gurung from Nepali

ŋi-e na tshjn3jũ ts3le-ti-pu

1.PL-ERG also establishment operate-LOAN-COP.NPST

‘We have been running the hotel well.’ (Temang, GF1: 009)

While much less common than lexical borrowing, morphological borrowing has been observed, primarily in Gurung, and again from Nepali, as shown in (3) and (4).

(3) Grammatical borrowing in Gurung from Nepali.

b3rsa-ri makai plu tsõ-**era** kro plu tsõ-**era**

year-LOC corn seed sow-SEQ wheat seed sow-SEQ

su nas3 tsu dz3ĩ ni teno nas3-ri tu kh3-pa

PROX village PROX DM then then village-LOC stay come-NMLZ

‘Having sown corn seeds, having sown wheat seeds, over the year, (people) come to settle in this village (of Otar).’ (Otar, GM1: 018-019)

(4) Grammatical borrowing in Gurung from Nepali

ŋjo toso dzilla bikas mæi-**era** tinake

1.PL now district development COP-SEQ nowadays

dzilla bikas t3-i

district development become-PFV

‘Then (the) District Development Committee was formed.’ (lit. ‘The District Development Committee having been formed, has become the District Development Committee (that we are familiar with).’) (Dharapani, GM1: 061)

⁸ In Nar-Phu and Manange, a falling (contour) tone is indicated via a diacritic over the vowel.

In Nepali, the suffix *-era* (एर) attaches to a verbal stem to form a participle indicating that one action or event is completed prior to the next action or event (Acharya 1991: 147). In Gurung, it gives a similar sequential temporal reading to two or more verbs in a larger sentence structure (see Section 5.3 for discussion). Morphological borrowing is less common than lexical borrowing but is attested in a wide range of languages (see Seifart 2013, 2017 for a large cross-linguistic sample, and Gardani et al. 2014 and Bond et al. 2020 for useful overviews).

In Sections 4 and 5 we examine the extent to which lexical borrowing within each of the varieties investigated reflects a difference in the degree of contact they have with Nepali and each other especially with respect to the extent that morphological borrowing and code switching are observed.

3.3.2 *Codeswitching vs. lexical borrowing*

While intersentential codeswitching, and clause-level intrasentential codeswitching is easy to identify in our corpus, entering and coding code-switches involving smaller phrasal or lexical units in our database is more challenging, essentially because the distinction between a loaned element vs. code-switched element is seldom clear cut. Aikhenvald (2012: 82) avoids forcing a distinction between the two in studies of obsolescence, where contact and usage indices are unstable, by using the term ‘import’ to acknowledge the presence of a non-native lexical-sized element. However, we make a distinction between the two here as a potential indicator of differences in the extent of code-switching across varieties.

Following Haspelmath (2009: 40), we assume that there are several indicators that a word has been borrowed into a given particular variety, with its use by monolinguals being the best evidence. Full or partial phonological integration into the recipient language, as illustrated in Sections 2.2 and 5.3, is also a good indicator (see Haspelmath 2009 for discussion). Morphological integration of a stem also provides evidence for integration. The presence of case and definiteness marking is a less robust indicator in the languages of Manang, since these categories are expressed by phrasal clitics showing varying degree of morphological integration.

The primary distributional criteria we use to identify lexical code-switching vs. loanwords in this account include the following:

- First, we consider within-discourse variability. If, in a stretch of discourse, an Indic form alternates with a synonymous T-B form, we consider that to be an example of code-switching. Loans on the other hand typically occur without alternation with a T-B form (although a T-B form may still be available) and function frequently as lexico-semantic gap fillers.
- Secondly, we may identify loanwords by virtue of certain phonological and morphological adjustments. Loanwords are more fully integrated into the receiving language lexicons, and usually undergo some phonotactic and segmental changes that are typical of Tibeto-Burman and less-so of Indic, or else, in the case of verbs, host a borrower suffix in order to participate in inflectional operations. We provide specific examples of this in Section 5.2.

Example (5) shows lexical-level (intrasentential) code-switching between Gyalsumdo and Nepali, with both native and non-native words being used across a larger sentence. The non-italic bold-face forms are the Nepali lexemes, and the italic bold-face forms are Gyalsumdo lexemes.

(5) 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...’ (Chame GYF2: 01:39)

Example (6) shows code-switching between Nepali and Manange. We observe in the larger corpus that several clauses earlier, the speaker used the Manange phrase *tʰi ju-pə* ‘land descend-NMLZ’ to describe a landslide.

(6) Manange-Nepali code-switching

khi-ko-tse l3-tse **p3iro** jû-p3
3SG-DEF-ERG do-SUBORD landslide descend-NMLZ

‘If they do (this: make the god unhappy), a landslide will fall.’ (Pisang MM2: 04:15)

The means we use to distinguish loans from code switching is largely pragmatic, rather than idealized, since determining the structure of any bilingual speakers’ mental lexicon is not a straightforward task. Rather, it reflects the fact that switches of the type illustrated in (5) and (6) indicate access to more than one system and reflect high levels of competency (cf. Poplack 1980).

3.3.3 System remodelling

System or sub-system remodelling is often observed in contact situations of slow obsolescence, where younger generations are considered passive or else semi-proficient users (Dorian 1977; 1981; Campbell and Muntzel 1989; Grenoble and Whaley (eds.) 1998). System simplification or leveling may also be observed in cases where active speakers are found across generations, but where the contexts of language use are becoming more limited or restricted. Hildebrandt (2003) provides evidence for this view through a study of tone system leveling in Manange, observed primarily in younger, more urban-located speakers, who have had greater exposure to non-tonal Nepali in formal and informal environments.

Other examples of possible system remodeling due to contact with Nepali in these languages are described in detail for Manange by Hildebrandt (2007). These include a reorganization of split ergativity modelled on Nepali, and also a change in the relative noun-modifier word orders⁹. Likewise, some Manange speakers calque certain clause-combining and valency adjustment strategies based on Nepali. Again, this is primarily seen in younger, more urban-located Manange speakers, who have had more pervasive lifelong access to Nepali and English in relation to Manange. Beyond Manang, similar phenomena have also been observed in Japhug-Tibetan contact scenarios (Jacques 2019). We do not consider these phenomena

⁹ We also acknowledge that the situation with case marking in our language sample is in fact more complex than remodeling through speech community contact with Nepali. In fact, many Tibeto-Burman languages show variation in the realization of case marking, and this variation may also be due to discourse-pragmatic factors in addition to, or instead of, contact (Chelliah and Hyslop (eds.) 2011; Bond et al. 2013).

specifically in this study, but they are clearly of importance in a more holistic investigation of language contact.

4 Quantitative observations

The total number of instances of contact phenomena in the languages of our study, whether a loaned item or an instance of code-switching, is summarized in Table 4. The total corpus from which we drew these observations is 1,332 clauses, but the texts in the corpus are unevenly distributed across languages, at 415 transcribed, interlinearized, and translated clauses for Gurung, 319 clauses for Gyalsumdo, 255 clauses for Manange, and 343 clauses for Nar-Phu.

Language	Clause count	Contact effects	Mean contact effects per clause	Mean clause number per contact effect
Gurung	415	170	0.41	2.44
Gyalsumdo	319	72	0.23	4.43
Manange	255	55	0.22	4.63
Nar-Phu	343	23	0.07	14.91

Table 4. Summary of instances of contact effects as a proportion of clause numbers

Given the uneven number of clauses included in the corpus for each language, the figures we report on here for the purposes of cross-linguistic comparison are means rather than raw figures. This allows us to infer that Gyalsumdo and Manange have similar profiles in terms of the mean frequency of contact effects in texts, which are different from Gurung (with a higher frequency of contact effects) and Nar, with a lower frequency.

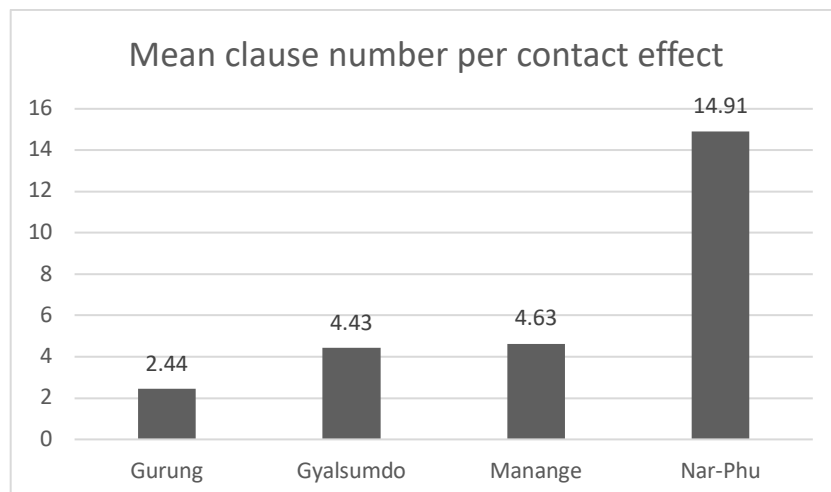


Figure 2. Mean clause numbers per contact effects by language

For Gurung, for example, of 415 clauses, 170 show either some form of loaned material (lexical or grammatical) or else code-switching (primarily between Gurung and Nepali). This equates to encountering some form of contact phenomena every 2.44 clauses, or put another way, a contact effect is observed in roughly 41% of all clauses.¹⁰ As Fig. 2 suggests, language contact has had an uneven impact on the lexicons and grammars of these languages, an asymmetry that we further explore in the following sections.¹¹

A closer look at the distribution of the types of contact effects (loans vs. code-switching) further reveals the uneven nature of impact across each of the languages. Figs. 3 through 6 show contact effects, by language, broken down by two types of code-switching (phrasal/clausal vs. lexical), and also two types of loans (loaned lexemes vs. loaned morphological material/affixes).

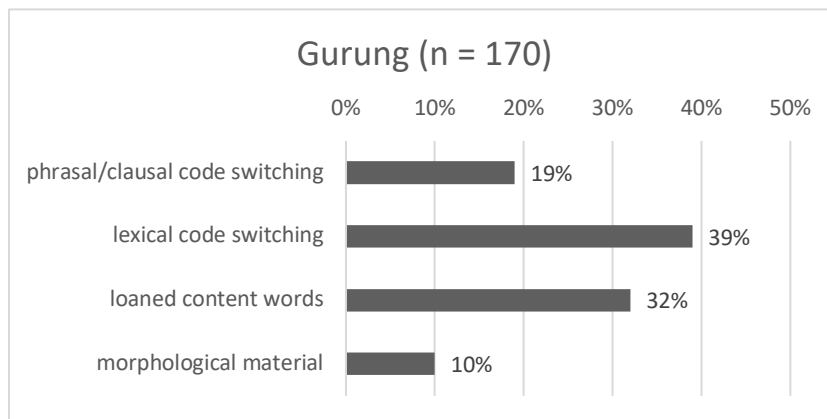


Figure 3. Relative frequency of contact effects in Gurung (observed once every 2.44 clauses)

¹⁰ It is entirely possible that multiple contact effects could be observed within a single clause. As a ratio of contact effect to clause number, our figures do not take this into account and consequently the actual number of clauses containing contact effects will be the same or slightly lower than the mean presented here.

¹¹ This is not to say that within-family contact has not happened; however, it is harder to assess because three of the four languages are closely related within Tibeto-Burman and share many structural and lexical properties. Hildebrandt (2009b) provides a preliminary hypothesis that the tone system in the Manang varieties of Gurung demonstrate some degree of phonetic restructuring (loss of phonation contrasts), possibly due to contact with Manange (which is a regional lingua franca in upper Manang, and which does not have these phonation contrasts). Also, within Nar-Phu, which is a single language comprised of two geographically discontinuous communities, Phu has retained more conservative Tibetan forms in portions of its lexicon, while Nar has innovated some new forms, alongside and in closer geographic proximity to Manange (Hildebrandt et al 2018).

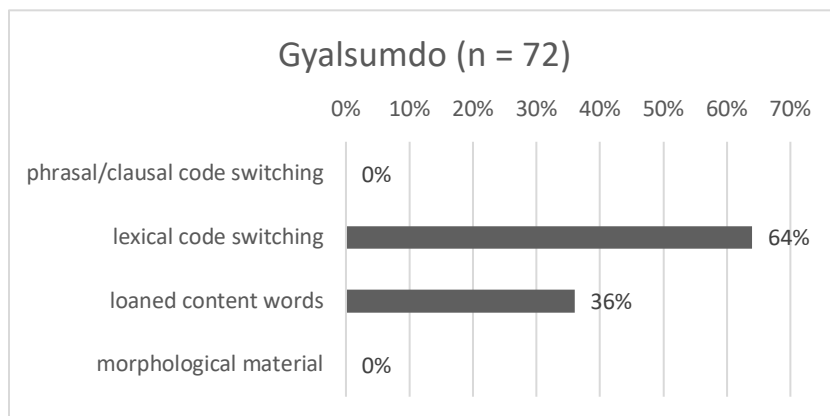


Figure 4. Relative frequency of contact effects in Gyalsumdo (observed once every 4.37 clauses)

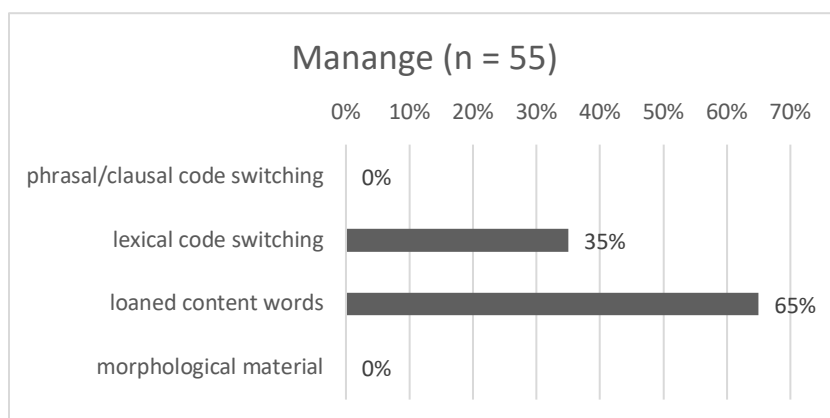


Figure 5. Relative frequency of contact effects in Manange (observed once every 4.64 clauses)

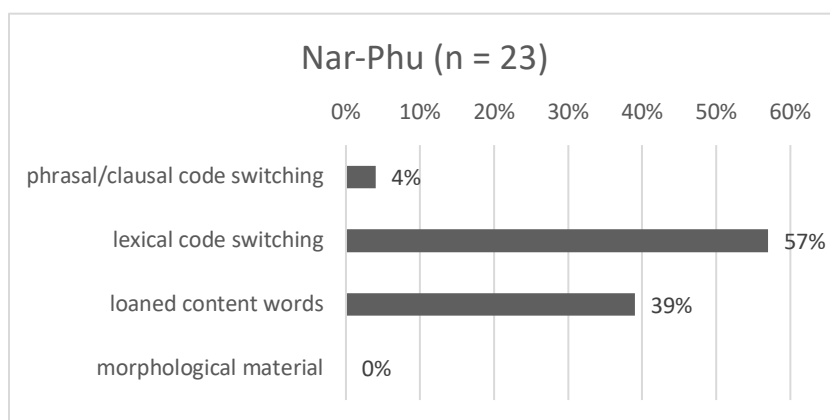


Figure 6. Relative frequency of contact effects in Nar-Phu (observed once every 14.91 clauses)

While all languages in our sample show at least some instances of code-switching, most contact effects are observed at the lexical level, with evidence of borrowing of morphological material restricted to Gurung. Similarly, Gurung is the only language in which code-switching above the level of the word is characteristic, amounting to around a fifth of all examples of contact effects encountered. This marks Gurung out as being somewhat different from the other languages in our sample.

These figures show that all languages display loanwords and code-switching phenomena, but this is largely restricted to lexical effects in three of the languages (with Nar-Phu showing a tiny amount of phrasal/clausal code-switching). In contrast, Gurung shows code switching across-the-board, more intensely permeating the grammar and the lexicon.

This gives rise to a question: Given the contact-effect variation observed across these closely affiliated languages, which have been spoken in a relatively compact geographic region in which the speech communities share many cultural, environmental, and political similarities, why this variation? Section 5 explores some possible reasons behind this variation, and assesses their explanatory power.

5 Assessing hypotheses

In this section, we explore some popular explanations behind differing contact effects in order to assess the extent to which they jointly or individually correlate with the tendencies observed in the discourse data and the interviews conducted in every village of Manang District.

5.1 The role of intensity of contact

One predictor has to do with time-depth and intensity of contact between languages. The idea is that higher degrees of intense ‘lingualism’ correlate with more extensive contact effects that through time come to permeate the lexicons and grammars of those languages in contact (Thomason 2001; Field 2002; Aikhenvald 2008). This has been most famously presented in Gumperz and Wilson’s (1971) account of grammatical convergence in languages (representing different families) in Kupwar, India. In this scenario, extreme code-switching amongst all of the languages in a more or less egalitarian multilingual setting feeds into a bilingual preference for languages with shared grammatical structures and/or patterns.

In the case of these languages, all have had roughly the same degree and timeline of contact with Nepali. Of the three main types of contact scenarios described by Noonan (2006), the oldest situation is between Himalayish languages, whose speakers have been long-time residents of Nepal. A more recent type of contact is between speakers of the Tibetan-type languages of the Bodish sub-group, including the languages of this study. These peoples are more recent immigrants to Nepal, having migrated within the last two millennia, and occupying territories that are in close proximity. More recent is contact between speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages and Indo-European languages like Nepali.

In our own fieldwork, almost every person whom we have interviewed is (minimally) bilingual in both their mother-tongue and in Nepali. In sociolinguistic interviews with those participants who also offered us discourse samples to record, 50% of speakers report a reliance on Nepali in most public contexts (the marketplace, government). In addition, as will be elaborated on in Section 5.4.2 speaker attitudes towards the presence of Nepali are neither overwhelmingly positive nor negative. Whether the participant in our fieldwork was born and raised in lower Manang (where Gurung and Gyalsumdo are concentrated) or upper Manang

(where Manange and Nar-Phu are spoken), Nepali is viewed practically, as a language of education and other formal domains across all speech communities. Conversely, local languages are viewed as important to activities that happen largely in private or community-centric activities, including holidays, localized family communication, and local employment (Section 5.4.3). Lacking direct evidence of ‘lingualism’ as a factor to explain the difference between Gurung vs. the other three languages, we now consider structural and non-structural (‘extra-linguistic’) predictors of the variation in contact effects in these languages.

5.2 Linguistic-structural factor: Part of speech

A widespread observation is that categories that are open-class are more amenable to addition via borrowing than closed class items. This includes classes such as nouns, verbs, and property concepts (to the extent that the language has viable diagnostics to justify these categories). These are classes that readily expand (and contract) via various processes of language change, including contact-induced change. Closed-class categories, including discourse markers, particles, adpositions, numerals, and the like, which generally have fewer item members and do not readily expand or contract through time, are less amenable to addition via borrowing.¹² One reason the distinction is interesting with respect to our sample comes from a parallel study of these languages, demonstrating that even kinship terms (a closed sub-set of culturally entrenched nouns) can be borrowed or can change via cross-language contact (Hildebrandt et al 2018).

Even verbs, which are often included as open-class, have been argued to be less borrowable, or in other words, the category of verb is claimed as less impacted by lexical loans than other categories, because it is a subsystem in which a great deal of inflectional and derivational morphology occurs and it is often the case that verbs are borrowed into a language as part of another part of speech (Moravcsik 1975, Muysken 2000). However, in many languages, verbs are in fact borrowable, and cross-linguistically, the category of ‘verb’ is often amenable to addition via loans, but often with some degree of modification (e.g. through a light verb strategy or alongside a so-called ‘loanword affix’). Wichman and Wohlgemuth (2008) also point out many cases where loans may be borrowed via no modification at all (‘direct insertion’) or else the verb enters into the borrowing language with a great deal of inflectional material also included from the lending language.¹³ So, our goal here is to take a closer look at what is happening with respect to these languages.

But first, what makes an open-class category in these languages? There are many diagnostics to justify categories like ‘noun’ and ‘verb’ in these languages, but property concepts are more complicated because they behave largely like stative verbs and host some (but not all) of the inflectional and derivational morphology that other verbs do, and for at least Manange, there is morpho-syntactic evidence for a second, smaller class of true adjectives (Genetti and Hildebrandt 2004). They behave differently in the language’s morphology and syntactic sub-systems than do verb-like adjectives. The true adjectives also have more Nepali loans than do the verb-like adjectives (e.g. *suntala* ‘orange’ and *katti* ‘many’, *tsok* ‘straight’). For this study, we

¹² For example, instances of closed-class or grammatical borrowing are described for Iroquoian languages (Mithun 2013).

¹³ See Jacques (2019) for a study of Amdo Tibetan loan verbs in Japhug, a Gyalrong Sino-Tibetan language spoken in Western Sichuan. Japhug (with an elaborated system of person indexation marked via affixes) has borrowed many verbs from Amdo (which lacks such a system), and that verbs of Tibetic origin have fully integrated morphosyntactically into Japhug, and that the alignment of argument structure of the loaned verb is almost always maintained with that of Japhug.

include adverbials (which have hybrid part-of-speech properties), spatial and locational encodings (formally post-positions), discourse markers, and conjunctions, comparative and superlative expressions, and quantifiers all as closed-class items or concepts.

Fig. 7 shows the distribution of loaned lexemes by class type across the four languages.

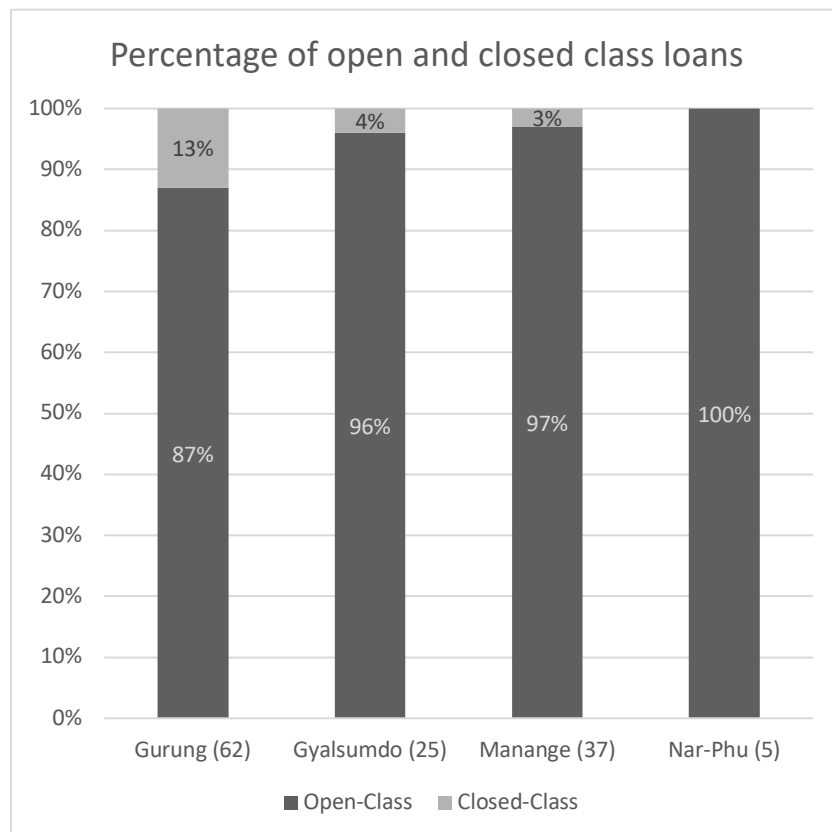


Figure 7. Loaned material by class across languages

As Fig. 7 shows, these languages all evidence open-class loans, primarily nouns, and they vary across languages according to their semantics and presumed communicative functions. In Gurung, loans from Nepali cross-cut many different semantic domains and functions, including geographic locations (*besi* < Nep. ‘valley’), counting terms (*dziro* < Eng. ‘zero’) formal or public domains (*iskul* < Nep./Eng. ‘school’), items of the contemporary world (*gadi* < Nep. ‘jeep’), and natural phenomena (*khola* < Nep. ‘river’). In the other languages, Nepali and English loans primarily fill technological or cultural gaps (concepts that were not frequently articulated historically), for example *turis* < Eng. ‘tourist’ in Gyalsumdo, *phis* < Eng. ‘fees’ in Nar-Phu, and *gabisa* < Nep. ‘political ward’. These loans may or may not undergo segmental or phonotactic adjustments to blend in more with the borrowing language’s phonological system (see Hildebrandt 2009a for a study of loanwords in Manange).

While nouns are the most frequently borrowed class across languages, loaned verbs from Nepali are also found in Gurung and in Manange, and these verbs include a semantically empty affix *-ti*, as shown in Table 5.

Gurung	Manange
<i>dzər-ti</i> ‘descend-LOAN’	<i>tsə-ti</i> ‘operate-LOAN’
<i>bəs-ti</i> ‘stay-LOAN’	<i>bal-ti</i> ‘burn-LOAN’
<i>tsə-ti</i> ‘operate-LOAN’	<i>mil-ti</i> ‘mix-LOAN’
	<i>uɖə-ti</i> ‘fly-LOAN’

Table 5. Loaned verbs in Gurung and Manange

Loaned verbs are never evidenced in either the Nar-Phu or Gyalsumdo materials to which we have access. Gyalsumdo is not a Tamangic language, and exhibits different verbal morphology from the rest of the sample and this may play a role in the difference, for instance, the presence of the loan suffix *-ti* is not attested in any of our Gyalsumdo data (including in discourse data not included in this sample). Gurung is a language that borrows a large and varied number of closed class items from Nepali, illustrated in Table 6.

Form	Meaning	Part of Speech
<i>3b3</i>	‘from here, now’	<i>Temporal adverbial</i>
<i>ki</i>	‘if’	<i>Conditional</i>
<i>ts3ĩ ~ dz3ĩ</i>	‘um, uh’	<i>Discourse marker</i>
<i>p3kka</i>	‘certainly’	<i>Epistemic adverbial</i>

Table 6. Borrowed closed class items in Gurung from Nepali

This table also shows a broad range of items being borrowed into Gurung. We note that by virtue of being elements at the clause edge (adverbials, discourse markers, fossilized expressions), this may help their borrowability.

5.3 Linguistic-structural factor: Pattern borrowing

Matras (2007) and Matras and Sakel (2007) and Sakel (2007) propose a distinction between types of borrowing. Pattern borrowing is the borrowing of strategies (e.g. argument structure, reorganization of TAM distinctions, word order, prosodic restructuring), while matter borrowing involves forms and shapes (segments, lexemes, affixes, particles, clitics). Their cross-linguistic study suggests that languages that have undergone larger-scale pattern borrowing effects are also likely to show an increase in matter borrowing.

This relationship is difficult to survey in our sample of languages, due to both their close genealogical affiliations and also their typological sameness in multiple dimensions of the grammar and lexicon. However, different descriptions of the languages suggest that at least two of the languages (Manange and Gyalsumdo) show more evidence of adjusting loaned open-class items from Nepali to fit into the borrowing languages’ phonotactic profiles. Both languages have relatively simple syllable canons (C(C)V(C)) with most words being monosyllabic, and both languages have lexical tone. Also, Manange has no contrastive voicing in obstruent consonants,

while in Gyalsumdo, any voicing is a secondary artefact of low tone registers. Therefore, words like these in English or Nepali are adjusted accordingly in their pronunciation by Manange and Gyalsumdo speakers, illustrated in Table 7.

Manange	Gyalsumdo
<i>bjaŋ</i> < ‘bank’	<i>tʊris</i> < ‘tourist’
<i>thaliŋ</i> ~ tha < thaali ‘plate’	<i>waʈ</i> < ‘ward’
<i>kamani</i> < ‘company’	

Table 7. Phonotactic adjustments in Manange and Gyalsumdo

In Gurung, on the other hand, many Nepali and English loans enter and preserve most or all of their Indo-European phonological characteristics. But one thing that does seem to be happening in (Manang) Gurung is that its lexical tone system is undergoing some degree of restructuring to resemble that of Manange more so than that of other dialects of Gurung spoken elsewhere in Nepal (described in Hildebrandt 2009b). In Manang-external communities, Gurung has been described as having a tone system in which the low tones correlate with a breathy or murmured phonation on either the onset consonant or the initial syllable vowel (or both) (Glover 1970; Ronkos 2020), while in the Manang variety, that murmured phonation is almost entirely absent across speakers, and where initial obstruent consonants are categorically unvoiced. This makes Manang Gurung tone acoustically more like Manange than like other dialects of Gurung. As such, three of the languages show both matter and pattern effects, but the impacts are not evenly observed across languages, and it’s not clear that one effect is uniformly a gateway or catalyst for another. In addition, pattern impacts are to the best of our knowledge absent in Nar-Phu, which shows only a minor degree of loaned material (and only open-class items in our dataset).

We have observed one case of what might be considered ‘pattern borrowing’ namely the occurrence of Nepali *-era*, first illustrated in Section 3.3. The *-era* suffix in Nepali is used in contexts in which one action (in first clause) takes place prior to another action (in second clause), as illustrated in (7).

(7) Example of *-era* in Nepali.

kasai-le dek-cha ki **bhan-era** odhhne-le chopeki thiin
 someone-ERG see-3.NPST COND say-PTCPL shawl-INTR cover AUX.3.PST

Thinking that someone may see it, she covered it (the bundle) with her shawl.’ (Acharya 1991: 185)

The use of *-era* in Gurung is facilitated by the fact that Gurung (and other Bodish) languages already have converbal (both simultaneous and sequential) structures (also more agnostically described a clause chaining), shown with the simultaneous coverbal suffix *-le* in (8).

(8) Example of *-le* in Gurung

chamtse-to tole bas **a-jon-le** m3tr3

Chjamche-ABL up stay NEG-get-SIM only

tsu kjoran-ri b3s-ti ti-pa

PROX Gyerang-LOC stay-LOAN stay-NMLZ

‘Since (they, the travellers) did not find any place to live up than Chamche, the settlements remained here in Gyerang.’ (Gyerang_GM1: 008)

Examples of a sequential converb marked with *-si*, is illustrated in (9).

(9) Example of *-si* in Gurung

chamtse-to tole **kh3-si** ts3tsotole mjadgi khola-to

Chjamche-ABL up come-SEQ up.from Myagdi river-ABL

tole **kh3-si** kjoran-ri **ti-si** tole tole

up come-SEQ Gyerang-LOC stay-SEQ up up

‘Having come up from Chamche, having come up from Myagdi river, and having stayed in Gyerang village...’

tole ja-i runkhu **ti-si** runkhu-to ts3ts3 no-p3-ri

up go-PFV Runkhu stay-SEQ Runkhu-ABL salt carry-NMLZ-LOC

larke ja-pa

Larke go-NMLZ

‘Having gone up and stayed in Runkhu village, (they) used to go to Larke to fetch salt.’ (Gyerang_M1: 009-010)

The use of *-era* follows along with a strategy that is already quite active in the language. It appears as though the presence of a pre-existing morphological pattern in Gurung may have made the borrowing of morphology easier. This is not pattern borrowing, since the pattern already existed, rather it is an instance of matter borrowing.

5.4 Extralinguistic factors

We have seen so far that all languages evidence some degree of contact effects from within-family and from Indic, but those contact effects are manifested in various ways and to different degrees across the languages. In some ways, the languages fulfil popular predictions about the results of language contact, but they do so in uninteresting ways that do not explain the variation observed across these related languages that have historically co-existed in the same contexts and under the same multilingualism and language usage opportunities and pressures as each other. Gurung shows more profound effects of contact in both the lexicon and in various dimensions of the grammar. Nar-Phu and Gyalsumdo, on the other hand, show limited effects. Manange shows more impact to lexicon, but also a degree of contact effects in some parts of the grammar (phonology in particular). If linguistic factors cannot adequately explain the differences observed across languages, perhaps extralinguistic factors can shine a clearer light on these differences. In the following subsections, we consider the potential role of four different extralinguistic factors

that might influence the observed variation, namely gender, interlocutors, language attitudes and locational stability.

5.4.1 The role of gender

Our approach regarding the role of gender and contact effects largely derives from a vast body of sociolinguistic, dialect variation and diffusion of change studies (for example, Ochs 1992; Tannen 1996; Schilling-Estes 2002) and has been modified for this study as the following prediction: Males operate and interact more (in Manang communities) in the public sphere than do women, and men's usage may reflect evidence of contact than women's usage (but cf. Stanford 2009 and Romero 2009 for alternative approaches to gender as a factor in sociolinguistic studies). In order to examine this in our sample, we attempted to work with texts that came from both male and female speakers, roughly equally.¹⁴ Fig. 8 summarizes these values.

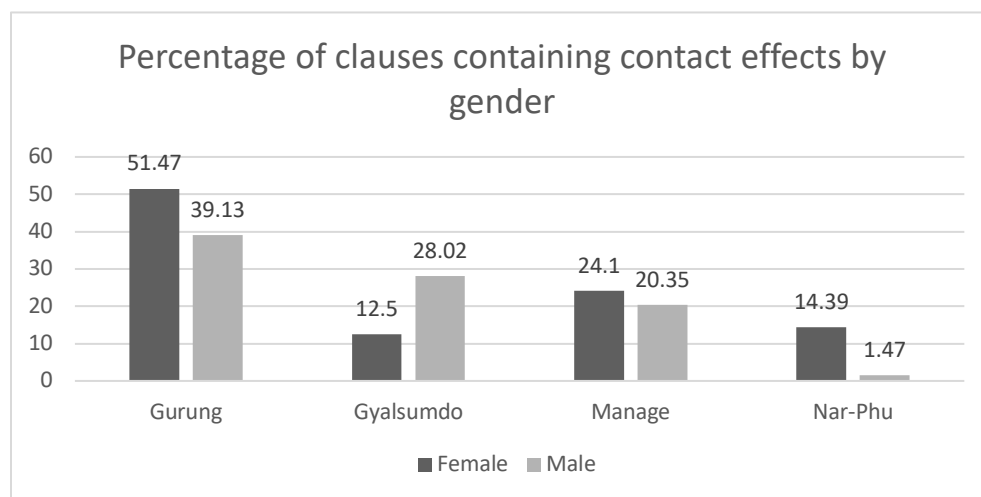


Figure 8. Effects of contact by gender, across languages

This chart shows percentages of contact effect instances within the corpus. It is an admittedly rough way of considering this relationship, but based on participant self-reporting of occupations and their daily language networks, it is a useful position from which to begin an examination of gender as a factor (Hildebrandt and Hu 2017). What we see here is that for one of the languages—Gyalsumdo - males in fact do show a greater preponderance of contact effects in their speech, but this is simply not true of the others, suggesting that in the Tamangic speaking communities, women are the innovators. In Nar-Phu, women drive contact-induced change, manifested primarily by lexical loanwords and some small amount of code-switching. With Nar-Phu males, contact effects were almost completely absent. This again makes Nar-Phu stand out from the other languages. Hildebrandt et al (2015: 115) observed that 92% of the Nar-Phu speakers interviewed for the sociolinguistic survey reported that they use only their mother tongue for their work, compared to 33% for Gyalsumdo speakers, and 24% for Gurung speakers. No Manange speaker claimed to only use one language for their job. This is indicative of the general

¹⁴ Specifically: The texts represent contributions from four Gurung males and two females, three Gyalsumdo males and two females, four Manange males and three females, and two Nar-Phu males and two females.

dominance of the use of Nar-Phu within the community, resulting from geographic isolation (see Section 5.4.4.). We acknowledge that other studies of sociolectal variation observe that in changes “from above”, where speakers have a conscious awareness of different patterns, females are often observed at the forefront (Labov 2001), arguably in situations where they have the most linguistic capital to gain through the use of prestige forms (Bourdieu 1977). These differences suggest gender is an important factor to control for in an expanded study.

5.4.2 The role of language attitudes

A not-infrequent undercurrent in discussions about contact-induced change, particularly in studies of vulnerable, or linguistically marginalized communities in Nepal, is that of a level of stigmatization or shame held by speakers in the public practice of the traditional language (often described for younger generations, who may or may not be fully fluent), perhaps also combined with a sense of resignation that shift to a regionally dominant language is inevitable or a sign of progress (the concept of ‘language attitudes’ is discussed broadly in Baker 1992; McCarty 2011; Sallabank 2013, and is explored in the Nepal scenario in Tumbahang 2012 and Angdembe 2013). Therefore, in slow shift scenarios, traditional language may be expected to show more influence and impact from the target language. Conversely, in situations in which there is a more conscious attempt to preserve the traditional language or to preserve a place for the traditional language in public, official contexts, contact effects will be less pervasive.

In sociolinguistic interviews carried out by the project team and reported on in Hildebrandt et al (2015) and Hildebrandt and Hu (2017), no interviewee expressed hostility or fatalism at the increasing presence of Nepali in public environments such as schools, banks, and government offices, or the media. Most respondents were either neutral or else agreed with the idea that Nepal should have only one official language in such domains (Hildebrandt and Hu 2017: 165), with a smaller number of respondents expressing the opposite opinion (that Nepal should have multiple official languages).

Likewise, another question in the interviews suggests that the cultural value of these languages (opinions about the role of the language in conveying historical, ceremonial, and socially significant information about the community) is held in high regard, across all languages, also with minor variation. Respondents born and raised in village clusters where mother tongues have been established for a long period of time, where cultural facilities (gompas, monasteries, etc.) exist, and where celebrations regularly take place, identify a (slightly) stronger link between their languages and cultural practices (Hildebrandt and Hu 2017: 166).

Therefore, for example, with a language like Nar-Phu, with a small and dwindling speaker population and with comparatively little in the way of contact effects, we observe a high valuation of languages for cultural contexts and activities overlaid with a recognition of the importance of the presence of Nepali. On the other hand, Gurung, with a large and relatively stable speaker population, exhibits more pervasive contact effects, and there is also a high valuation of languages for cultural contexts, also overlaid with a recognition of the importance of Nepali. What differentiates these two extremes?

5.4.3 The role of locational stability

We suggest that what may better reflect the differences in observed contact effects is that two of these languages are losing speaker populations, and are therefore undergoing more rapid shift. This is shift that is happening so quickly that it is occurring without the usual structural change

during a slow-pace, multi-generational adoption of a target language (in this case, Nepali) or else in a situation of maintenance with extreme intermingling of languages in individual and societal bilingualism. This more rapid loss of speaker populations appears to be impacting language communities like Nar-Phu and Gyalsumdo more so than Gurung or Manange communities. This loss of speakers, however, is not due to the usual causes like language shame or ethnic and political strife (although see Hough, et. al. 2009 for a discussion of the impact that the decade-long Maoist insurgency in Nepal had on rural populations), but is more the result of a more low-level and insidious phenomenon of speaker outward migration.

Nepal has long been a country where its citizens regularly participate in work-abroad opportunities. This is often referred to ‘labor exporting’ or ‘professional manpower migration,’ and has been discussed in the Nepal context (Ministry of Labour and Employment 2017; Malit and Naufal 2017). It is often the younger (historically male, but now increasingly also female) generations who are financially sponsored by other community members, and who may contract with labor exporting companies to receive two, three, or even multi-year work visas in countries in the Gulf countries (Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates), Southeast Asia (Singapore, Hong Kong), and beyond.

Manange-speaking communities are not excepted from outward migration patterns, but due to historical access to wealth Mananges do not travel abroad for the same reasons as do members of other communities (see Rogers 2004 for a study of the economic history of upper Manang, and Hildebrandt 2003 for a study of cross-speaker variation in contact-induced phonetic and phonological change in Manange). Gurung-speaking communities are likewise not excepted from these trends, but populations in many of these communities have remained more stable, or else Gurungs return home to reinvest in community development. Gurung have had benefits bestowed primarily on Gurkha regiments, who have served in the military for Nepal, India, Britain, and former British colonies. Referred to as *lahure* (लाहुरे) in standard Nepali, and as *laure* in fast and colloquial speech, Gurkha veterans are given handsome pensions and often use this to return home and build elaborate houses and businesses, often trekking lodges in popular tourist regions such as Manang (Aryal 2008).

This puts both Gurung and Manange-speaking communities at slightly greater advantages in terms of locational stability. The relative access to wealth and social status keeps communities more intact and favors cohesion, but at the same time, it also comes with increased access to Nepali in official and in private domains. Hildebrandt and Hu (2017: 166) observed in responses to sociolinguistic interview question ‘What language(s) do you use in your daily life?’ that three factors (degree of education, $p < .01$), age ($p < .05$), and social space 3 (proximity to Chame, the Manang District administrative seat $p < .05$) emerge as significant indicators. Younger respondents with more formal education report more mixed usage than mother tongue only, while older respondents with less formal education report more mother tongue use only. In terms of social space, those who are located closer to Chame report more Nepali language use vis-à-vis their mother tongues than do those located further away from Chame, suggesting that the Nepali-centric District headquarters has an impact on day-to-day language choices for those who live within its range of influence. Again, this primarily would include Gurung speakers. And even though there are also Gyalsumdo speakers in this same area, they are primarily older and do not report access to formal education in the way that Gurung speakers do.

A more recent phenomenon that fosters the presence of Nepali, but in uneven ways across communities, is that of a partially paved motorable road, which has crept upslope through Manang and adjacent districts over the past twenty years, introducing both opportunities and

challenges for local residents. Historically, access to upper Manang District was via footpath. A municipal airport was built in the late twentieth century, but it operates intermittently and is primarily for tourists. Otherwise, goods have continued to travel in and out of Manang via mule or yak trains. As Fig. 9 shows, the newer motor road directly intersects with Gurung and Gyalsumdo communities. It has been more recently introduced in Manang-speaking communities, but due to annual inclement weather, it periodically closes. The road remains distant from Nar-Phu-speaking communities, but as of 2020, construction was begun to connect a motorable road from Chame to Nar village. The impact of the COVID pandemic, including District border closures and resulting employment losses, on the progress of this road remains to be seen.

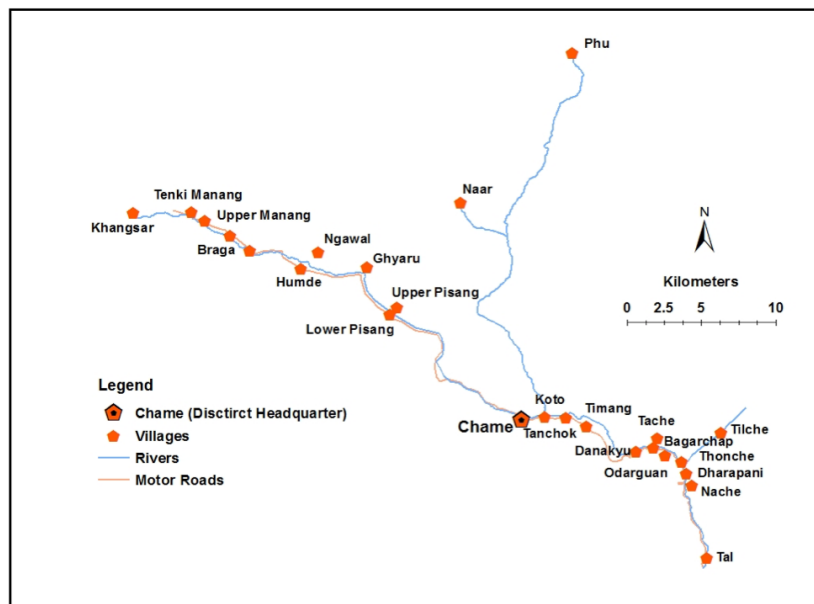


Figure 9. Manang VDCs and the motor road.

Hildebrandt and Hu (2017: 168) includes responses to the sociolinguistic interview question ‘Which language do you use at work?’ They found that those workers who live near the motor road report more Nepali-only, mixed language, or other non-local (e.g. Hindi, English) use at work, while those who live further away report more mother tongue-only, or more mixed language use at work in comparison to Nepali or non-local languages.

6 Conclusion

The lack of clear symmetry in contact effects across the four language groups surveyed in our research, when considered in tandem with extralinguistic factors, especially locational stability and changes in dynamics of access to Nepali and local mother tongues, demonstrates that language contact in Manang comes with different consequences for the different languages involved. Specifically, Gurung and Manange have social factors that favor longer-term transmission, but this comes with a greater influence of Nepali into the lexicon and grammars. Conversely, Gyalsumdo and Nar-Phu have social factors that present greater challenges to

longer-term transmission, and the language being used by dwindling community member populations does not show the degree or types of contact from Nepali.

We have shown that the structural consequences of contact vary across the four languages investigated in ways which correlate with the differing sociolinguistic dynamics of these specific communities. Rather than structural profiles dictating this variation in contact effects, it is the extralinguistic profiles. Specifically, we have shown that Gurung demonstrates the most influence from contact with Nepali, supported by a higher proportion of contact effects than any other variety, pervading multiple linguistic sub-systems. Gurung is almost a textbook case for the results of long-term, individual and societal bilingual maintenance, where Nepali influence profoundly influences lexicon and discourse patterns (increased evidence of code-switching, across multiple discourse-functional domains), and where impacts are beginning to be observed in the grammar (perhaps through mechanisms like morphological copying or pattern/strategy borrowing). Codeswitching and lexical and grammatical borrowing are evident in around a third of all clauses, indicating that this is a normal property of Gurung linguistic practice.

On the other end of the spectrum is Nar-Phu, which lacks the degree or types of structural contact effects seen in Gurung. It represents another kind of textbook case for shift without this structural impact. Speakers are geographically isolated (from the motor road and other villages - especially those living in Phu village) and the population is small. This appears to facilitate closer networks in which the language remains an important identifier of community membership. Contact effects were barely present in the speech of Nar-Phu males, with female speakers exhibiting more Nepali influence. The biggest threat to Nar-Phu's future is not a gradual shift towards using Nepali in more domains, but an acute erosion of the speaker population, as people of child-bearing age raise their offspring outside of the Nar-speaking community.

Manange, on the other hand, is somewhere in the middle of this continuum, showing some degree of speech community erosion, but also more stability and indications of community interest in preservation and promotion across generations. It shows a limited degree of contact effects, primarily impacting the lexicon and manifesting itself in Manange-Nepali or Manange-English code switching in discourse.

Our investigation also considers the role of socio-spatial factors beyond those usually considered in studies of variation, particularly locational stability and access/proximity to contact language contexts in the trajectories of preservation and change to these languages. We demonstrate that those language communities with greater locational stability (communities less likely to fracture due to social and economic pressures) and also access and proximity to Nepali-centric resources (e.g. Manang District headquarters) show a higher likelihood of viability with more profound contact consequences across lexical and grammatical sub-systems. Therefore, while Gyalsumdo, like Nar-Phu, has a relatively small tight-knit speaker population, the contact effects observed in the language are substantially higher. This is likely in part to reflect the fact that Gyalsumdo is spoken close to the district headquarters, with Gyalsumdo speaking villages interspersed with Gurung speaking communities. Asymmetries in the linguistic repertoires of Gurung and Gyalsumdo speakers suggest that day to day interaction between Gurung and Gyalsumdo speakers is conducted in Nepali or Gurung, giving rise to a more prominent role of Nepali in Gyalsumdo community than in Nar-Phu. Since males are more outward-facing than females with the communities of Manang District, this major difference might account for the observation that contact effects are more prevalent in the male Gyalsumdo speech than in the

speech of female Gyalsumdo participants. Thus, although all languages in our study have had roughly the same chronological opportunities of contact with Nepali, the situations of contact for different languages are different, with different consequences. In particular, the geographic remoteness of Nar and Phu communities has cut them off from opportunities and access, which might otherwise foster their linguistic survival, albeit at the cost of more possible contact effects.

As such, our study provides compelling evidence that contact-induced language change, and also language shift, do not align neatly along lines of language pride/shame, as suggested in other studies (Angdembe 2013). Rather, our study contributes to Buchstaller and Albanides' (2013: 109) call for “a socio-demographically informed snapshot of socio-geographical patterns of language variation.” Our observations highlight the constantly evolving landscape in which these languages are practiced and vary, along with the mechanisms behind their shifting and uncertain fates.

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