

Chapter 3

3 INFLECTIONAL LANGUAGE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEPALI

3.1 Inflectional Language

In grammar, inflection or inflexion is the modification or marking of a word (or more precisely lexeme) to reflect grammatical (that is, relational) information, such as gender, tense, number or person. Synthetic languages are those languages which have some degree of inflection. These languages are highly or weekly inflected such as Latin (highly inflected) and English (weekly inflected). Poly synthetic languages have the highest degree of inflection. This type of languages even contain a single highly inflected word in a sentence (example: American Indian Languages). Nepali is an Inflectional Language.

3.2 Nepali Language

Nepalese or Nepali (नेपाली), is an Indo- Aryan Language. This language is the official language of Nepal and also spoken in some part of Bhutan. In India Nepali is also spoken in the state of Sikkim and in Darjeeling district of West Bengal as well as some part of Assam and Meghalaya. It is also the state official language of Sikkim. Nepali was originated from Indo-Aryan language mostly from Magahi and Pahari, and it has some influence of Sanskrit language too. Geographically Nepal was mostly influenced by Tibeto-Burman language. Nepali language is separated from Pahari language, both in vocabulary and grammar by Tibeto-Burman idioms remaining close contact with respective language group. Nepali is lexically similar to bengali language of about 40%.

Historically, the language was first called the Khas language (Khas kurā), then Gorkhali or Gurkhali (language of the Gorkha Kingdom) before the term Nepali (Nepālī bhāṣā) was taken from Nepal Bhasa. Other names include Parbatiya ("mountain language", identified with the Parbatiya people of Nepal) and Lhotshammikha (the "southern language" of the Lhotshampa people of Bhutan).

According to the 2011 national census, 44.6 per cent of the population

of Nepal speak Nepali as a native language. The Ethnology website counts more than 17 million (2007) and 42 million (2012) speakers worldwide, 17 million within Nepal (from the 2001 census).

Nepali is spoken in Nepal and some parts in India. It is a language which takes its root from Sanskrit, the classical language of India [Arindam Dey, Abhijit Paul, Dr.Bipul Syam Purkayastha 2014]. Nepali is a morphologically rich language [Arindam Dey, Dr.Bipul Syam Purkayastha 2013], also inflected and one has to consider many features to build a stemmer for such language. And in this paper context free words are taken into consideration for stemming. Context free words are those which are not depend on the context of the sentence. Context based technique like Lemmatizer is there which deals with the complex process of first understanding the context, then determining the POS of a word in a sentence and then finally finding the "lemma" (root word) depending on its POS category. This task can be considered as a future work. Following are few words along with their prefix, root and suffix part.

The dialectal variation of Nepali based on social hierarchy is related to some extent to the caste system of Hinduism, which is the major religion in Nepal. There are four castes (varnas) in a Hindu Society, which divide the society into four classes. These classes, from the most prestigious to the least, are: the religious leaders (Brahmanas), the administrators and warriors (Ksatriyas), the trade and craft workers (Vaisyas), and the ordinary worker (sudras). A fifth class, called the achut 'untouchables' is outside the caste system

3.3 Nepali as an Inflectional Language

Noun

Nepali Nouns are inflected for singular or plural numbers and for different (seven) cases like accusative, nominative, dative, instrumental, ablative, and locative [Anup Patel Ganesh Ramakrishnan Pushpak Bhattacharya 2009]. Nepali Nouns doesn't inflect for masculine or feminine (gender) but these genders directly belong to a determined and undetermined gender class [Anup Patel Ganesh Ramakrishnan Pushpak Bhattacharya 2009]. Traditional grammar shows noun has an inflected form for number, gender and seven

different cases eg. Chori 'daughter' vs. choro 'son', but in modern grammar such forms are treated as separate lexical items, independent of each other. Seven different cases of singular and plural forms of noun are listed below.

Nouns in Nepali show inflectional contrasts for singular vs. plural eg. manis/मानिस 'man' , manisharu/मानिसहरू 'men' and for seven different cases. The case-number suffixes are shown in the table below.

Table 2 : The number and case suffixes of nouns[Anup Patel Ganesh Ramakrishnan Pushpak Bhattacharya 2009].

Cases	Singular	Plural
Nominative (Nm)	----	-haru / हरू
Accusative (Ac)	-lai / लाई	-haur-lai / हरूलाई
Instrumental (In)	-le / ले	-haur-le / हरूले
Dative (Dt)	-lai / लाई	-haur-lai / हरूलाई
Ablative (Ab)	-bata / बाट	-haru-bata / हरूबाट
Genitive (Gn)	-ko / को	-haru-ko / हरूको
Locative (Lc)	-ma / मा	-haru-ma / हरूमा

The inflection table of noun kitab/किताब 'book' looks like as shown below:

Table 3 : The number and case inflection of noun Book/किताब[Anup Patel Ganesh Ramakrishnan Pushpak Bhattacharya 2009].

Case Marker	Singular	Plural
Nominative (Nm)	किताब	किताबहरू
Accusative (Ac)	किताबलाई	किताबहरूलाई
Instrumental (In)	किताबले	किताबहरूले
Dative (Dt)	किताबलाई	किताबहरूलाई
Ablative (Ab)	किताबबाट	किताबहरूबाट
Genitive (Gn)	किताबको	किताबहरूको
Locative (Lc)	किताबमा	किताबहरूमा

Adjectives

Adjectives is divided into two categories declinable and indeclinable . Declinables are marked, through termination, for the gender and number of the nouns they qualify. The declinable endings are -o for the "masculine" singular, -ī for the feminine singular, and -ā for the plural. e.g. sāno kitāb "small book", sānī keṭī "small girl", sānā kalamharū "small pens".

"Masculine", or "neutral" -o is the citation form and the otherwise overwhelmingly more encountered declension, as previously noted, gender in Nepali is attenuated and accord "typically is restricted to female animates", and "optional or loose even then". However, "In writing, there has been a strong tendency by some to extend the use of feminine markers beyond their use in speech to include the consistent marking of certain adjectives with feminine endings. This tendency is strengthened by some Nepali grammars and may be reinforced by the influence of Hindi upon both speech and writing." [Riccardi, Theodore 2003]

Indeclinable adjectives are completely invariable, and can end in either vowels or consonants (except -o).

a. Examples of declinable adjectives: [Anastasia Rita Widiarti, and Phalita Nari Wastu 2009] ṭhūlo "big", rāmro "good", seto "white", sāno "small".

b. Examples of indeclinable adjectives: [Anup Patel Ganesh Ramakrishnan Pushpak Bhattacharya 2009] garīb "poor", saphā "clean", dhanī "rich", nayā "new".

Postpositions

In Nepali language the locus of grammatical function or "case-marking" stays within a structure of particles or agglutinative suffixes known as postpositions, which is very similar to English's prepositions. In Nepali one-word primary postpositions are available which are described below:

a. ko – genitive marker; declinable adjective are of variable mode. X ko/kī/kā Y has the sense "X's Y", with ko/kī/kā agreeing with Y.

b. *lāi* – marks the indirect object (hence named "dative marker"), or, if definite, the direct object.

c. *le* – both instrumental and ergative marker; in its latter capacity it is applied to the subject obligatorily in the transitive perfective/perfect and optionally in other transitive aspects.

d. *mā* - general locative marker; "in, at, on", etc.

e. *bhandā* - an ablative postpositions used for comparatives and along with adverbs for compound postpositions.

f. Riccardi (2003:557) lists the following other common primary postpositions: *tala* "below", *muni* "under", *dekhi* "from", *bāṭa* "from", *sāga* "with", *sita* "with", *pachi* "after", *samma* "up to", *bittikai* "as soon as".

Pronouns

The first and Second persons in Nepali language has personal pronouns, whereas third person forms are of demonstrative in origin, and can be categorized deictically as distal and proximate. The pronominal system is very elaborate, by reason of its Variation on the lines of sociolinguistic formality. In this respect it has three levels or grades of formality/status: low, middle, and high (see T-V distinction for further clarification). Pronouns do not distinguish gender.

The first person singular pronoun is *ma* म, and the first person plural is *hāmī* हामी. The following table shows the second and third person singular forms.

Table 4: The second and third person singular forms

	2nd pn.	3rd pn.		
		Prox.	Dist.	
Low	<i>tā</i> तै	<i>yo</i> यो (<i>yas</i> यस)	<i>tyo</i> त्यो (<i>tyas</i> त्यस)	<i>ū</i> उ (<i>us</i> उस)
Middle	<i>timī</i> तिमि	<i>yinī</i> यिनी (<i>yin</i> यिन)	<i>tinī</i> तिनी (<i>tin</i> तिन)	<i>unī</i> उनी (<i>un</i> उन)
High	<i>tapā</i> तपाईं	<i>yahā</i> यहाँ		<i>vahā</i> वहाँ

yo and tyo have yī and tī as plurals, while other pronouns pluralize (including hāmī, for emphasis, but excluding ū) with the common suffix -harū. Also, bracketed beside of a number of forms in the above chart are their oblique counterparts, used when they (as demonstrative pronouns) or that which they qualify (as demonstrative determiners) is followed by postpositions. However, the need to oblique weaken the longer distance between demonstrative and postpositions gets. Also, one exception which does not require obliquing is -sāga "with".

Verbs

In Nepali language verbs are highly inflected, mainly with different forms like number, status, gender and person. Verbs are also inflected for aspects, mood and tense. Irrespective of these inflected forms, there are large numbers of participles forms also.

In Nepali language the most important as well as the most irregular verb is हुनु hunu 'to become, to be'. There are atleast three conjugations of हुनु hunu in simple present tense and only one of these conjugation is regular. The first is the the 'ho' conjugation which is used to define things, and its complement is usually a noun. The second is the 'cha' conjugation which is used to describe things, and the complement is either a prepositional phrase or an adjectival phrase. The third is the 'huncha' conjugation which is used to express future events or regular occurrences, and also expresses 'to happen' or 'to become'.

They are conjugated as follows:

Table 5: Simple Present conjugation of the verb हुनु hunu

	हो ho	छ cha	हुन्छ huncha
First person singular	हुँ hū	छु chu	हुन्छु hunchu
First person plural	हौं haū	छौं chaū	हुन्छौं hunchaū
Second person singular low-grade	होस् hos	छस् chas	हुन्छस् hunchas
Second person middle-grade/plural	हौ hau	छौ chau	हुन्छौ hunchau
High grade	हुनुहन्छ hunuhuncha	हुनुहन्छ hunuhuncha	हुनुहन्छ hunuhuncha
Third person singular low-grade	हो ho	छ cha	हुन्छ huncha
Third person middle-grade/plural masculine	हुन् hun	छन् chan	हुन्छन् hunchan
Third person middle-grade/plural feminine	हुन् hun	छिन् chin	हुन्छिन् hunchin

हुनु hunu also has two different supplemental stems in the simple past tense, like भ- bha- (which is used in 'huncha' conjugation) and थि- thi- (which is used both in 'cha' conjugations and 'ho' conjugations) otherwise both of them are regularly conjugated. भ bha stem are used in the formation of different participles.

Infinitives

Nepali language has two infinitives. The first infinitive is formed by the addition of नु nu to the verb stem. This is mentioned in the verb form, and is used in different forms of sentence construction, and the most important is the sentence construction expressing obligation. This type of sentence construction can be formed by the combination of 'nu' infinitive with the verb पर्नु parnu 'to fall'. This type of sentence construction is called impersonal construction, which means that the object constructor -लाई lāi is frequently added to the agent, unless the verb is transitive, in which case the ergative/instrumental case marker -ले le is added. So, for example, I have to do work would be translated as मैले काम गर्नुपर्छ maile kām garnuparcha. It is also used with the postposition -अघि aghi 'before'. गर्नुअघि garnuaghi, then, means 'before doing'.

The second nepali infinitive is constructive by the addition of न na to the verb stem. This infinitive is used in a various situations, and can normally be used where the infinitive is used in English. For example, म काम गर्न रामकहाँ गएको थिएँ ma kām garna rāmkahā gaeko thie 'I had gone to Ram's place to do work'.