



Familiarizing Typical Nepali Terms in English

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ABSTRACT

Within the territory of Nepal and its vicinities like India, Myanmar and Bhutan, the Nepali language is used as a means of wider communication. Apart from this, it has become a fertile field of research for linguists, language-based researchers and language teachers. With this assumption, this article aimed to investigate the typical (that are culture-specific) terms of the Nepali language. To achieve this objective, the study employed a case study design that took Nepali culture-specific terms as a case and used document analysis for the interpretation of the information in the selected language based on the framework of words and phrases. For maintaining readability and intelligibility to the global readership, the typical Nepali terms have been glossed in English. The main finding is that the Nepali language is rich in its cultural terms that comprise words and phrases. This study can contribute to the linguists, translators and pedagogues for the frame of reference for further exploration of the rich field of study, reaching to the wider readership.

KEYWORDS: Nepali language, typical terms, words, phrases, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to throw light on the typical (that are culture-specific) terms in the Nepali language. Thus, it is customary to locate the selected language on the linguistic map of the world. Nepali is an offspring of the Indo-European language family, which is one of the largest and most widely scattered language families of the world. Some of the daughter languages (such as Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin) of the Indo-European language have little resemblances to one another; others are different and idiosyncratic in their natures. The Indo-European language is supposed to have been spoken before 3,000 BC and to have split up into different languages during the subsequent millennium (Crystal, 2003, 2007). Nevertheless, the Indo-Europeans are supposed to have been living in Europe for approximately 4600 BC (Cynarski, 2020, p. 33). Yet, there are no written records to claim when it exactly existed and how it was like. It may be because the original Indo-Europeans were not familiar with the system of writing in the ancient days.

Through different evolutionary periods, Nepali got its shape out of the Sanskrit language. For Turner and Turner (2009), “The proof that Nepali is descended from Sanskrit rests upon the fact that many details of its grammatical structure find their explanation only in the corresponding forms of the earlier language, and that much of its vocabulary” (p. xii). Therefore, Sanskrit is the mother of the Nepali language. The first written evidence in Nepali dates back to about 981 AD that is Bhupal Damupal’s stone inscription (Pokhrel, 2016). Today, Nepali has occupied the position of the primary language of administration, literature and day-to-day communication in Nepal.

The Nepali language is an official and a national language of the republican democratic country, Nepal. It is not confined to Nepal only. A large number of Indians of Sikkim, Darjeeling, Assam, Manipur, Dehradun and other parts of India, 40% Bhutanese citizens of Nepali origin, and a significant number of them in Myanmar speak Nepali (Bhattarai, 1997). In this context, *The Constitution of India* (2007) has listed Nepali as one of the 22 state languages of India. Similarly, for different purposes, the Nepali people have gone abroad and are contributing to the prosperity of the Nepali language. Nepali today has also been a language of wider contact for thousands of people in different Nepali Diasporas throughout the world. Not only in Nepal but also in some of the Indian universities, such as North Bengal University, Banaras Hindu University, Sikkim University, Gauhati University, North East Hill University, Dibrugarh University and Jadavpur University (K. Lama & D. Pradhan, personal communication, July 9, 2021), Nepali has been introduced as an academic subject to be taught and learnt. The expansion of Nepali speakers can be witnessed even in the overseas. Different awards and institutions have been established to promote the language. Nepali, now, has a remarkable number of dictionaries, grammar books, literature and a huge storehouse of creative writings as well as their translations. This scenario suffices to claim that the Nepali language has a vital space in the linguistic map of the world.

Typical/cultural terms in the Nepali language are observed based on word classes and the types of phrases. Although there is the abundant use of loan words, they have got local Nepali colour and usage. Because of this, they have been recognized as typical or culture-specific terms. The original as well as borrowed terms in Nepali have made the repertoire an appropriate domain for investigation and analysis. Against this context, the present article classifies terms into words and phrases. Entering the texts for exploration, I have observed functional and/or grammatical words attached with lexical words. For this reason, I have prepared a theoretical framework for observing samples in the results and discussion section. Eight types of words (namely, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, postpositions, conjunctions and particles) and five types of phrases (namely, noun, adjective, adverb, postpositional and verb) are observed along with their glossed English translations for their readability.

The above discussion situates the problem under investigation that helped me undertake the study of the Nepali typical/culture-specific terms, which refer to the individual words and phrases. The investigation focuses on the culture-specificity of the terms. The review mentioned above also justifies that it is the right time to explore the Nepali terms for the proliferation and dissemination to the wider readership.

METHODOLOGY

The study has employed a case study design as a type of qualitative approach that adopts interpretivism as a philosophical premise (Flick, 2009; Creswell, 2014, 2015a, 2015b). As a case study design requires a case for exploration, this study took Nepali typical terms as its case that incorporates words and phrases with special reference to culture-specificity. The typical terms have been reviewed and interpreted

based on the documents such as Bhattarai (1997), Adhikari (1998, 2010), Bal (n.d.) and Neupane (2017) primarily. Accordingly, document analysis has been used as a tool for analysis and interpretation of the case under study. This study is related to Neupane's (2017) extensive study but different in terms of its focus, scope and purpose. The former focuses on translation strategies of the cultural-specific Nepali concepts whereas the present study focuses on presenting a microscopic view on typical Nepali terms specifically.

For the analysis and interpretation, I delimited word classes such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, postpositions, interjections, particles and conjunctions. Further delimitation was on the types of phrases like noun, adjective, verb, adverb and postpositional. The illustrations were drawn from the Nepali terms that were glossed in English for their intelligibility to the readers of the globe.

Thus, at first, I reviewed the literature related to the Nepali language that helped me construct a frame of reference to delve into the problem under investigation, that is to say, the Nepali terms. Then, I gathered information, reviewed, analyzed and interpreted the related online and offline sources such as dictionaries, books, articles and research reports in general and the selected documents in particular. I have used Nepali terms in transliterated forms based on the symbols used in Turner and Turner (2009) and have glossed each of them in English to make them intelligible for the wider readership. The research process began from brainstorming upon the case under study and concluded with the terms in Nepali, such as words and phrases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The document analysis gave me a huge impetus to derive three themes such as the sources of the Nepali vocabulary, typical Nepali words and phrases. Under the first theme, I delineated that Nepali vocabulary constituted a large number of borrowed and derived words from many languages. Not only words but also phrases are borrowed to enrich the repertoire of the language. Likewise, in the second theme, I expounded typical Nepali words against their glosses in English. The third theme comprised a deliberation on five types of phrases in the Nepali language with their English correspondences.

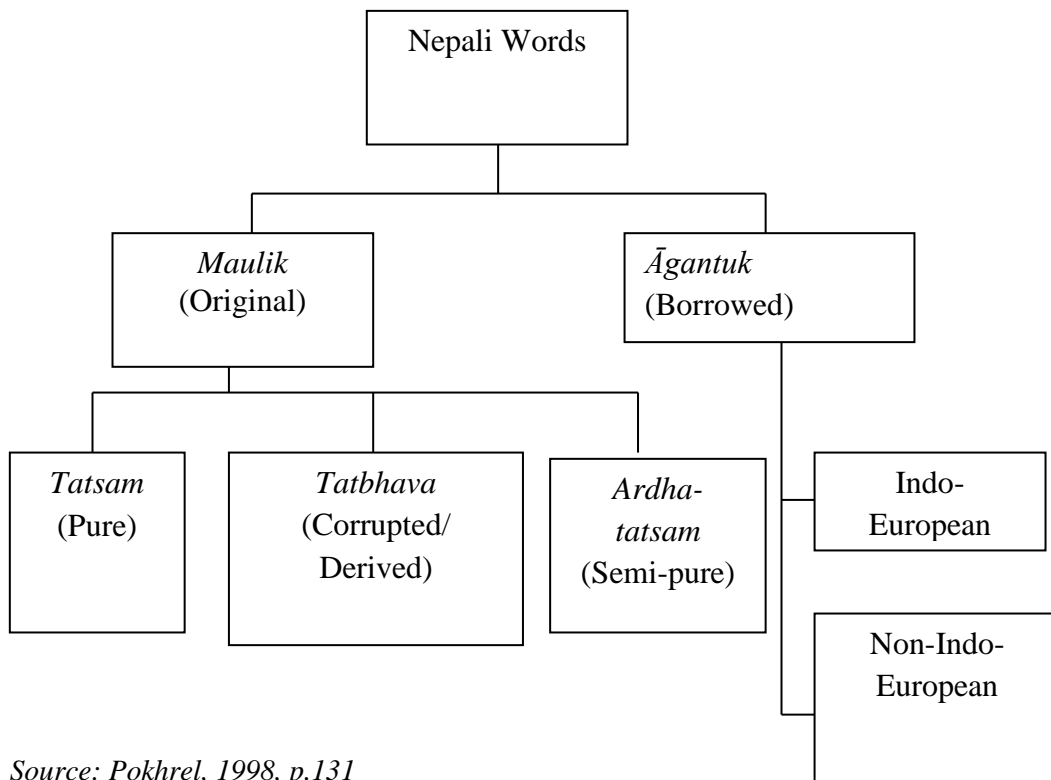
Sources of the Nepali Vocabulary

The word 'vocabulary', which refers to all the words in a particular language (Lea et al., 2020), is a repertoire of all the words of a language. Through vocabulary, a speaker of that language knows or uses in course of speech or writing. Tickoo's (2007) words are worth quoting here, "The vocabulary of a language includes much more than single words. It includes language forms that are not full (un-, il-, -ment) on the one hand and compound words, fixed phrases and idiomatic expressions on the other" (p. 190). This clarifies that the vocabulary of a language refers to a total store of words, including less than a single word (i.e. morpheme) and more than a word (i.e. compound words, phrases and expressions). On the other hand, the term refers to a word or phrase used as a name of something, especially one connected with a particular variety of language (Lea et al., 2020).

As Nepali is a member of the Indo-European language family, it is indebted to both the Eastern and Western traditions as it has enriched its repertoire from terms and expressions of both traditions. Specifically, it has borrowed vocabulary from Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages. Regarding the sources of Nepali vocabulary, different scholars have offered their views. Bhattarai (1997) has asserted that there are three main sources of Nepali vocabulary such as classical, indigenous and foreign words. The classical source refers to the Sanskrit language, from which the

largest portion has been received. Therefore, Sanskrit is a primary donor to Nepali vocabulary. Secondly, indigenous sources refer to neighbouring Indo-Aryan sister languages, such as Hindi, Bengali, Panjabi, Gujarati, Oriya, among others. Thirdly, foreign sources refer to the English language, which has contributed several terms to enrich the Nepali vocabulary. Extending this view, Pokhrel (1998) has presented a tree diagram (Figure 1), which shows that there are mainly two types of words in Nepali: original and borrowed. The original words (pure, semi-pure or derived) are those words that have been the words of Nepali itself even though they are borrowed from its grandmother, that is Sanskrit (being Prakrit its mother) directly or indirectly. On the other hand, borrowed words refer to those which Nepali directly borrowed from (a) other Indo-European languages than Sanskrit, such as Bengali, Maithili, English, Portuguese, French and Russian to mention a few, and (b) non-Indo-European languages, such as Newari, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Kirāṭi, among others. Now, Turner and Turner (2009) is worth mentioning here. They have claimed that the sources of Nepali vocabulary are: (a) Sanskrit, (b) Sanskrit via Pali and Prakrit, (c) Muṇḍā (Austro-Asiatic) and Dravidian, (d) neighbouring Indo-Aryan languages, such as Hindustani, (e) Tibeto-Burman languages, such as Newari, and (f) English. Out of these sources, Sanskrit has been mentioned to be the primary one. In line with this claim, Adhikari (2010) has also conceded that the primary source of Nepali vocabulary is Sanskrit itself. The original Nepali terms refer to either pure forms or derived forms. The next types of words are borrowed words, which have come from English, Persian, Arabic, Hindi, Newari, Maithili, Magar, Gurung and so on.

Figure 1
Classification of Nepali Vocabulary



Source: Pokhrel, 1998, p.131

The aforementioned literature shows that the main sources of Nepali vocabulary are (a) Sanskrit, (b) non-Sanskrit and (c) foreign languages. Sanskrit is the primary contributor to enriching the Nepali vocabulary store. To put in Turner and Turner's (2009) words, Sanskrit has contributed to Nepali the pronouns, numerals, many adjectives and substantives, especially those expressing concrete ideas, and a large proportion of verbs. Original Nepali words, which are descendants of Sanskrit, are of three types: pure, semi-pure and derived (Table 1). Pure words are those, which are in Nepali use as they are in Sanskrit. Some examples include *kumār* [bachelor], *dhām* [religious spot], *mahimā* [grandeur], *prajā* [subject] and so on.

Table 1

Some Nepali Words that are Borrowed from Sanskrit

Types	Examples
Pure Words	<i>kumār</i> [bachelor], <i>dhām</i> [religious spot], <i>mahimā</i> [grandeur], <i>prajā</i> [subject]
Semi-pure Words	<i>Kishna</i> , <i>Bishnu</i> , <i>parsād</i> , <i>parjā</i> , <i>hirdaya</i>
Derived Words	<i>bhāt</i> [rice], <i>kām</i> [work], <i>eghāra</i> [eleven], <i>dudh</i> [milk], <i>dām</i> [money]

Source: Pokhrel, 1998

Semi-pure words are those, which have been slightly changed from their Sanskrit correspondence. Some examples like *Kishna*, *Bishnu*, *parsād*, *parjā* and *hirdaya* are Sanskrit correspondences like *KrishNa*, *BishNu*, *Prasād*, *prajā* and *hridaya* respectively. The third category is derived form, which refers to the words in Nepali taken from Prakrit and Pāli (already derived form of Sanskrit). Some examples are *bhāt* [rice], *kām* [work], *eghāra* [eleven], *dudh* [milk] and *dām* [money], to mention a few. Whether they are in pure, semi-pure or derived forms, their origin is Sanskrit or Sanskrit-derived dialects. Since language changes in the course of time and linguistic evolution is a slow process, Sanskrit-based terms and concepts are continuously entering into Nepali (Pokhrel, 1998).

Besides Sanskrit, other languages (here, non-Sanskrit) have contributed many words to the Nepali language. They are neighbouring Indo-Aryan as well as languages of other families. Some of such languages are Mundā, Hindustāni, Newāri, Bengāli, Panjābi, Gujrāti, and Oriyā, to mention a few. Out of them, Hindustāni (Hindi) has the major influence. To put in Turner and Turner's (2009) words, "The majority of Nepali printed books are either translation from, or imitations of, Hindi works" (p. xiv). Likewise, many words from Perso-Arabic have entered Nepali languages via Indian languages as administrative, military and legal registers. Even other indigenous languages spoken by the scattered population of Nepal itself and some parts of SAARC countries (such as Rāi, Limbu, Bhote, Magar and Tāmang) have contributed many words to Nepali (Table 2).

Table 2

Some Nepali Words that are Borrowed from Other Languages

Languages	Examples
Newari	<i>cāku</i> [a ball of molasses], <i>gyāpu</i> [Newar caste in Nepal], <i>kwātī</i> [a mixture of lentils, peas, soybeans, etc.], <i>jhyāl</i> [window],
Arabic	<i>adālat</i> [court], <i>muluk</i> [country], <i>kitab</i> [book], <i>inām</i> [reward]
Maithili	<i>painī</i> [canal], <i>khaini</i> [tobacco], <i>gamchā</i> [towel], <i>patuwā</i> [tossa]

	jute], <i>thāt</i> [ancestral land]
Tibetan	<i>yatī</i> [<i>yeti</i>], <i>jhumā</i> [unmarried middle daughter], <i>thukpā</i> [a variety of Chinese noodles], <i>docā</i> [thick woolen stockings]

Source: Turner & Turner, 2009; Lohani & Adhikari, 2010

After Sanskrit and non-Sanskrit, the foreign source here refers to English, one of the popular and widely used global lingua franca, which has contributed many words to the Nepali language. Since the recruitments of Gorkha Regiments in British India, English began to enter into the Nepali vocabulary. Because of the proliferation of Western education, information and communication technology (ICT), and the expansion of geopolitical and social relationships across the nations, English has been the main source of knowledge. As a result, Nepali has been borrowing terms from English and other languages. Some of the examples subsume coat, cup, basket, photo, camera, shirt, pant, radio, studio, television, telephone, cassette, film, campus, school, ticket, rail, kismis and plate, among others. In this way, many languages have entered into Nepali through the channels of religion, literature, administration, law, modern advancement of ICT, contact, proximity, exchange and others. This justifies that one language has to adopt the terms and expressions for its development (cf. Bhattarai, 2009).

The discussions above justify that the sources of Nepali vocabulary constitute Sanskrit, non-Sanskrit and English. Because of the extensive borrowing from foreign languages, the Nepali language has become rich in its terms like words and phrases.

Typical Nepali Words

In this study, I faced problems of recognizing what a word is as Gleason (1979) is right when he observes, “The word is one of the most difficult concepts in English to define” (p. 10). This is true in the case of Nepali, too. For example, one cannot exactly say whether the following units have only one word or two: *bhuiko* [of the floor], *gadhalāi* [to the donkey], *gyāsalbāṭa* [from the tools at the iron workshop] and the like. Nevertheless, I have observed various types of words as minimal meaningful distinctive semantic units. Again, I faced another difficulty when I tried to assign the words into their particular word class. The same word can be a verb in one context whereas an adjective in another. For example, *dekhnu* [to see] is a verb and *dekhieko* [seen] is an adjective as in *kitāb dekhnu* [see the book] and *dekhieko himāl* [seen Himalaya]. Such “multiple memberships” (Aarts & Aarts, 1986, p. 22) is an obstacle to distinguishing one-word class from the other. Therefore, I have made general observations of the types of words, which can function as a point of reference for analysis.

Patanjali's *Mahābhāṣya* classifies words into four types such as nouns, verbs, prefixes and particles (Bandhu, 2009). This classification has missed other word types, such as adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions and others. Lately, Adhikari (2010) has classified Nepali words based on source, structure, meaning and function. Based on the source, words can be classified as pure, derived and borrowed. Likewise, based on meaning, words can be lexical and functional/grammatical. Finally, based on function, words are classified into three broad groups such as noun group, verb group and *avyaya* [indeclinable word] group.

Based on the delineations above, I have presented a glimpse of word classes partly from Adhikari (1998 & 2010), Bal (n.d.), Bhattarai (1997), Neupane (2017) and partly from my intuition as I have been using Nepali for years as a native user.

Nouns refer to the word, which denotes the name of a person, thing or concept. This notional or conceptual definition is traditional and does not incorporate all types of nouns. Therefore, morphological and syntactic properties should be considered for its basis. Morphologically, Nepali nouns allow inflectional suffixes (that do not change the

word class) for numbers and cases but do not allow inflections for gender. Likewise, they allow derivational suffixes (that change the word class) such as 'yāi' and 'āi'. For example, *murkhyāi* [foolishness] and *hasāi* [laughter] are some of them.

Like nouns, adjectives share three properties, namely, semantic, morphological and syntactic. Semantically, they qualify nouns, for example (italicized words are adjectives), *ramrī* keṭī [beautiful girl], *ciso* din [cold day], and *rāto* kapāl [red hair]. They occur before nouns (attributives) and after nouns (predicatives). For example, attributes like *hariyo* rukh [green tree], *pācoṭā* kitab [five books], *tyo* ghar [that house] and predicatives like *kāth* *sukeko* cha [wood is dry] and *rukh* *aglo* *cha* [tree is high]. Further, adjectives allow derivational suffixes such as *ilo*, *ālu*, *eko*, *ita*, *ālī*, *wāl*, *iya*, and *ika*. The examples include *rasilo* [delicious], *māyālu* [lovely], *paḍheko* [read book/man], *lāvānvita* [beneficiary girl], Nepālī, *sampatiwāl* [wealthy], *kendriya* [central], *dhārmik* [religious] and so on. Further, Nepali adjectives are recognizable by the postpositions *bhandā* [than] in comparatives and *sabaibhandā* [than all] in superlatives. The examples include *Bāgh* *biralobhandā* *thulo* *cha* [Tiger is bigger than cat.]; and *Sagarmāthā* *sabaibhandā* *aglo* *śikhar* *ho* [Mt. Everest the highest peak is.].

Unlike in English, Nepali adjectives are inflected differently based on gender (Table 3), for example, *-o* for masculine, *-ī* for feminine and *ā* for plural.

Table 3
Inflections for Adjectives

S.N.	Singular Masculine	Singular Feminine	Plural Masculine/ Feminine
1	<i>rāmro</i> [good]	<i>rāmri</i> [good]	<i>rāmra</i> [good]
2	<i>bāṭho</i> [clever]	<i>bāṭhi</i> [clever]	<i>bāṭhā</i> [clever]
3	<i>kālo</i> [black]	<i>kālī</i> [black]	<i>kālā</i> [black]

Similarly, verbs in Nepali are considered as words that denote to process, event, state, action and activities. Morphologically, they allow the following derivational and inflectional suffixes: *nu*, *dai*, *ī*, *in*, *ina*, *inan*, *ē*, *is*, *yo*, *yaū*, *e*, *din*, *dainas*, *daina*, *dainai*, *dainan*, *dīn*, *incha*, *inchan*, *ena*, *iyo*, *inna*, *īkana* and others. Here are some examples: *garnu* [do], *gardai* [doing], *gardī* [doing], *garin* [did], *gardina* [do not do], etc. Likewise, Nepali verbs inflect for: (a) persons (e.g. *garchu* 'I do', *garchau* [you do], *garcha* [he does]), (b) number (e.g. *garcha* [he does], *garchan* [they do]), (c) gender (e.g. *garcha* [he does], *garchin* [she does]), (d) tense (e.g. *garyo* [he did], *garcha* [he does], *garnecha* [he will do]), (e) infinitive (e.g. *garnu* [to do], *bhannu* [to say]), (f) perfective participle (e.g. *gareko* [done], *garera* [having done]), and (g) grades of honorifics (e.g. 'garchas' for lower grade honorifics, 'garchu' for middle grade honorifics and 'garnuhuncha' for high-grade honorifics) (Bal, n.d.). Moreover, Acharya (1991) has asserted that there are 180 regular inflectional suffixes of Nepali finite verbs. This shows that the form of Nepali verbs is very rich and therefore it can be a good area of exploration.

Like nouns, adjectives and verbs, adverbs also belong to the open/major word class in Nepali. As adjectives qualify nouns, adverbs qualify verbs and therefore placed generally before and after the verbs. Nepali adverbs are characterized by their optionality as they are optional constituents in a sentence. For example, Hari *tyahā* *basyo* [Hari sat there] and Hari *basyo* [Hari sat] are meaningful. Adverbs qualify verbs (e.g. Ram *jurukka* *uṭhyo* [Ram stood jerkily]), adjectives (e.g. *yo* *koṭhā* *gyādai* *thulo* *cha* [this room is very big]), and adverbs (e.g. U *asādhyā* *bistārai* *bolcha* [he speaks very slowly]). Morphologically, they allow derivational suffixes such as *-ari*, *-sāth*, *-bittikai*, *-pūrvak*, to mention a few but do not allow inflectional suffixes. For example, *ramrari*

[beautifully], *khuśīsāth* [happily], *jānebittikai* [as soon as he/she goes], *shāntipūrvak* [peacefully] and the like. They show contrasts of comparatives and superlatives employing quantifiers. For example, they include *bistārai*, *ali bistārai*, and *vyādai bistārai* [slowly, more slowly and most slowly respectively]. Moreover, some adverbs do not allow the use of suffixes, for example, *hijo* [yesterday], *tyahā* [there] and so on.

In Nepali, minor word classes comprise pronouns, postpositions, conjunctions, vocatives, interjections and particles. Like nouns, pronouns inflect for case and number, and the gender of a pronoun is shown syntactically in the third person. They are marked by simple/underived word forms. Pronouns show references to nouns and the reference is of two types, such as anaphora (backward reference) and cataphora (forward reference) (cf. Cutting, 2010). Nepali pronouns are classified as personal, reflexive, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, indefinite, definite and reciprocal (Adhikari, 1998 & 2010). Personal pronouns are of three sub-types like in English such as first, second and third. However, Nepali has multi-layers of their uses based on different social factors, such as age, sex, education, status, roles and others. They also show contrast in number and gender. The second and third personal pronouns show the degree of honorifics based on gender, social role/status, age and others (Table 4). Likewise, they are proximal (such as *yahā* [here]) and distal (such as *wahā* [there]). Like personal pronouns, reflexive pronouns can be used by adding [-self] in singular and [-selves] in plural pronouns in English.

Table 4
Number, Gender and Grades in Nepali Pronouns

Person	Singular	Plural
First	<i>ma</i> 'I'	<i>hāmī</i> , <i>hāmīharū</i> 'we'
Second	<i>tā</i> MGH you/thou <i>timī</i> MGH you <i>tapāī</i> HGH you <i>yahā</i> HGH 'you' <i>hajur</i> EHG 'you' <i>sarkār</i> EHG 'you' <i>mausuph</i> EHG 'you'	- <i>timī</i> , <i>timīharū</i> LGH/MGH 'you' <i>tapāīharū</i> HGH 'you' <i>yahāharū</i> HGH 'you' <i>hajurharū</i> EHG 'you' <i>sarkārharū</i> EHG 'you' <i>mausupharū</i> EHG 'you'
Third	<i>ū</i> , <i>yo</i> , <i>tyo</i> , LGH 'he/she/it' <i>unī</i> , <i>tinī</i> , <i>yinī</i> MGH 'he/she' <i>wahā</i> HGH 'he/she' <i>hajur</i> , <i>sarkār</i> , <i>mausuph</i> EHG 'he/she'	<i>yī</i> , <i>tī</i> , 'they' <i>unīharū</i> , <i>tinīharū</i> , <i>yinīharū</i> LGH/MGH 'they' <i>wahāharū</i> HGH 'they' <i>hajurharū</i> , <i>sarkārharū</i> , <i>mausupharū</i> EHG 'they'

Note: LGH - Low grade honorifics, MGH - Middle grade honorifics, HGH - High grade honorifics, EHG - Extra high-grade honorifics

Source: Adapted from Bhattarai, 1997, pp. 134-136, & Adhikari, 1998, pp. 91-99

However, in Nepali, there is only one form '*āphu/āphai*' for it, which is added with all types of personal pronouns. The primary function of its use is to emphasize the agents in pronominal forms. Demonstrative pronouns are used to point out any person, thing or concept. They show contrast in number (singular and plural) and distance (proximal and distal/remote). The examples are *yo* [he/she/it/this], *yī* [these], *tyo* [he/she/it/that], *tī* [those], *yī/yinī/yin* [he/she/it/this], *tinīharū* [these], *yahā* [he/she], *yahāharū* [these], *uhā* [he/she], *uhāharū* [they], to mention a few. Relative pronouns are: *jo* [who], *je* [which], *jun* [who] and interrogatives are: *ko* [who, whom], *ke* [what] and *kun* [which] in Nepali. They are limited in Nepali but are used for both animate and

inanimate things/objects based on contexts. Finally, the remaining three types are also limited in number.

Table 5
Three Types of Pronouns in Nepali

Indefinite		Definite
<i>kohī</i> [somebody/anybody]		<i>pratyek/harek</i> [each/every]
<i>kehī</i> [something/anything]		<i>sabai</i> [these all]
<i>kunāī</i> [someone/anyone]		<i>duwāī</i> [both]
<i>je/jo/jun+sukai</i> [anybody/anything]		<i>ek, euṭā</i> [one]
Reciprocal		
<i>ek-arko</i> [each other]	<i>ā-āphu</i> [self-selves]	<i>ek-āpas</i> [one-another]

Source: Adhikari, 2010

Unlike English prepositions, Nepali postpositions (and case markers) are always preceded by a noun, a pronoun or a noun phrase. They constitute a closed word class and are formally invariable. They are uninflected and underived but are simple (having a single word, like *mā* [in/at/on], *bāhira* [outside], *bhitra* [inside], *bāṭa/dekhi* [from]) and complex (having more than one word, like *ko lāgi* [for the sake of], *ko biṣayamā* [on the subject of] and *ko baremā* [about/concerning]). These instances show that some postpositions can be reduplicated whereas some others cannot. Anyway, they show meaning relations with nouns, noun phrases or pronouns in terms of place, time, purposes, possession, subject, comparison, choice and others (Adhikari, 2010).

Conjunctions constitute a closed word class like pronouns and postpositions. They are uninflected and formally invariable. They are connectors, which join two or more words, phrases and clauses. Structurally, they are simple (one word) or complex (multi-word). Functionally, they are either co-ordinators or sub-ordinators (Table 6). Co-ordinators connect equal level constituents at all levels, i.e. words, phrases and clauses. For example, *ani* [then], *ki* [either], *kintu* [but], *naki* [neither], *ra* [and] and *tara* [but] are some of them. Some co-ordinators occur in pairs, which are termed correlative pairs (cf. Aarts & Aarts, 1986). The examples include *ki...ki* [either...or], *na...na* [neither...nor], to mention a few. Unlike coordinators, subordinators introduce sub-clauses. They join the main clause with subordinate clause/s. Some of the most frequently used subordinators are *jabaki* [whereas], *jasle gardā* [because of which], *ki* [that], *pachi* [after], *taba* [then], *tyasaile* [therefore], among many others.

Table 6
Some Examples of Nepali Conjunctions

Types of Nepali Conjunctions	Examples
Coordinators	<i>ani</i> [then], <i>ki</i> [either], <i>kintu</i> [but], <i>naki</i> [neither], <i>ra</i> [and], <i>tara</i> [but], <i>ki...ki</i> [either...or], <i>na...na</i> [neither...nor], <i>yā...yā</i> [either...or]
Subordinators	<i>jabaki</i> [whereas], <i>jasle gardā</i> [because of which], <i>ki</i> [that], <i>pachi</i> [after], <i>taba</i> [then], <i>tyasaile</i> [therefore]

Particles also belong to a closed word class. They are underived, uninflected and formally invariable. They are used for emphasizing, intensifying and modifying the tone of the individual words or whole sentence in which they are used. They are mostly monosyllabic. They do not have their meaning but are contextually understood. Some such particles (mainly nuance particles) are like *nai* [proposition, emphasis], *la/na* [request] and *ra* [doubt]. Besides, some particles are compounded employing reduplication. For example: *la la* [acceptance], *khai khai* [curiosity], *lau lau* [acceptance]

and others are some of them. Further, there are some vocatives and interjections which are like particles themselves. The interjections are uninflected and underived and function like minor sentence types. Syntactically, they are complete and independent of other constituents in phrasal or clausal structures. The most frequent interjections are the words expressing emotion, feeling and attitude of the speakers (Table 7).

Table 7
Some Interjections in Nepali

Context	Interjections
happiness	<i>ahā, wāh, syābās</i>
fear	<i>abūi</i>
surprise	<i>aho, oho, la, āmmai, lā</i>
pain	<i>aiya, uhu, uph, ātthu, ācchu</i>
hatred	<i>chih, dhat, thukka, bahāda</i>
sympathy	<i>hāya, kaṭhai, hare shiva, ccah ccah</i>
acceptance	<i>la, hawas, ā, jyū, hajur</i>

These common interjections call for the distinction between them and vocatives. The latter ones may stand in construction with the nouns. For example, *Oi Gopal* [Hey Gopal!] *He ishwar* [Oh my God!] and *E kanchā* [Oh kancha!] are some of them. Vocatives are also used to call non-human animals, such as *su...ri* (for cat), *cei...cei* (for dog) and the like.

As a final note, it is worth mentioning that articles are not found in Nepali as they are used in English. Further, numerals have a separate entry in English minor word classes but in Nepali, they fall under a type of adjectives, namely quantitative adjectives.

Typical Nepali Phrases

In the Nepali language, a number of phrases varies according to the scholars. Acharya (1991) has listed seven types of phrases, such as common noun, proper noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, adverbial postpositional and verb. Likewise, Adhikari (1998) has classified phrases into five types, such as noun, verb, adverb, prepositional and adjective. Based on these, the present study embraces the following five-fold classification based on Todd's (1991) framework of phrases, which has also been illustrated from the texts as well as other sources such as Adhikari (1998), Bal (n.d.) and my intuition.

Generally, a noun phrase (NP) is a group of words with a nominal as its headword. Here, a nominal includes a common noun, proper noun or a pronoun and is preceded by determiners and/or modifiers such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, pronouns or clauses. In any case, the obligatory constituent, i.e. nominal can substitute the whole noun phrase and therefore it functions as a noun that can do in a sentence. In this sense, noun phrases are extendable or contractible. Here, *Bhoṭ sarkār* [Tibetan Government], *karmāṭh kāmḍārharu* [diligent labourers], *lālī lāgeko kopile oṭh* [delicate lips using lipstick], *māṭāko gāro* [earthen walls], *kāmuk keṭī* [passionate girl], *budhi aūlāko chāp* [mark with a thumb], *ek hul pariḥaru* [a group of hill beauties] and *umliraheko ghurṇa bāyu* [blowing whirlwind] are some examples. These instances justify that like in English, heads of Nepali NPs are nouns that can replace the phrase.

An adjective phrase (Adj.P), which has an adjective as its head, functions as an adjective. Unlike NP, determiners are not used in Adj. P but modifiers are used. Generally, Adj. P occurs as a part of an NP. Some examples are *butṭedār hariyo galaicā* [green carpet-like lawn], *kālonilo hunu* [to turn blue], *rasilo poshilo bhojan* [delicious and nutritious food], *jakhar jakhar khasī* [stout goats], *gorī gorī swāsni* [fair wife], *ṭhulā*

thulā ghar [huge buildings], *aswābhāwik rāto* raṅg [loud red colour] and *euṭi moṭi agli hissi parekī āimāi* [a plumpish tall and beautiful woman].

A verb phrase (VP) is also termed as a verbal structure because it consists of a main verb accompanying other auxiliaries. Its quaint feature is that its head usually occurs as a first verb if there are two or more verbs in Nepali. Then, other verbs are dependent on the head. A VP may consist of one to seven verbs in Nepali. The examples include *paḍhyo* 'read', *paḍhisakyo* 'had read (non-honorifics)', *paḍhisaknubhayo* 'had read (honorifics)', *bhanthānidinubhayo* 'thought to be', *garidiiraheko hunasakcha* 'may be doing (passive)', *garidirahanubhaeko huna sakcha* 'may be doing' and *lekipaṭhāisaknu hune chaina holā* 'may not be sending by writing' (Adhikari, 1998). However, some dependent/ auxiliary verbs can take nouns, adjectives or adverbs as headwords, for example, *ujur garnu* 'to complain', *anurodh garnu* 'to request', *phelā parnu* 'to find out', *dar lāgnu* 'to feel fear', *moṭo hunu* 'to be fat' and others. These examples show that such verbs follow nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

A postpositional phrase (PP) is a group of words, which consists of a postposition preceded by a noun phrase. Unlike other phrases, PP does not have a postposition as a head of the phrase because it is not a lexical word but a functional one. Therefore, PP is structurally different from other phrases. It functions as adverbials or adverb phrases. Some examples of PP are *hirāko* tap [diamond earring], *motikā* mālā [pearl garlands], *risko āvegmā* [in a fit of anger], *bhayabhit ākhāle* [through frightened eyes], *dhunḡaidhunḡāko* paharā [rocky precipice], *nityajhaī* [as usual], *bāskā* dhugrāharu [bamboo hollows], *jamindāribhitra* [among their possessions] and *hariṅko cālmā* [in the pace of a deer].

An adverb phrase (Adv. P) is realized by an adverb as an obligatory head. It is preceded by a complement and/or modifier, for example, *gharbāṭa dherai ṭāḍha* 'very far from home'. In this example, *gharbāṭa* [from home] is a modifier and *dherai ṭāḍha* is an adverb phrase. Therefore, a minimal constituent of an Adv. P is an adverb itself, which has distinct features and types. Apart from individual adverbs, I have found only a few adverb phrases in the texts, which are as follows: *sarlāṅ...sarlāṅ* [sound of grass], *charlyāṅ...charlyāṅ* [clinking of chains] and so on.

In Nepali sentences, NPs and VPs are obligatory constituents whereas the other three, namely Adj. P, Adv. P and PP, are optional. In each phrase, the headword is obligatory (except in PP) based on which their types are determined. Therefore, NPs have noun head, VPs have verb head and Adj. Ps have the adjective head, Adv. Ps have adverb heads and PPs do not have postposition as their head but ends in a postposition. These heads (except in PPs and VPs) can be extended by the use of other non-obligatory constituents.

Conclusion

The Nepali language, as is the case of other languages, has open and closed word classes and five types of phrases. As in English, the open word class subsumes nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs whereas the closed word class includes pronouns, postpositions (unlike English prepositions), conjunctions, vocatives, interjections and particles. However, articles are not observed in Nepali as they are in English. Further, in English, numerals are considered a member of the minor word-class family whereas in Nepali they are categorized as quantitative adjectives. Similarly, Nepali constitutes five types of phrases such as noun, verb, adverb, adjective and postposition. The observation of numerous typical terms in Nepali reveals that Nepali is rich in its repertoire of such typical expressions that make it a researchable domain for linguists, applied linguists, translators and language-based researchers.

The contributions of this study can be at policy, practice and research levels. At the policy level, the Nepali language can be incorporated in the academics and linguistics or applied linguistics or translation studies departments at the university level curriculum because the language in question has rich sources of knowledge and information, which has yet been unexplored. At the practice level, this study can be replicated to analyze the languages used in the world. Since this study is limited to its scope and size, further studies which deal with in-depth analysis of the separate entities like nouns, verbs, adjective phrases, prepositional phrases, idioms proverbs and metaphorical expressions, can be conducted. Thus, this small-scale study opens up the avenues for further and deeper studies on language, linguistics, applied linguistics, literature and translation studies.

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