

**Intense Action Adverbials in Sunwar:  
a verbal intensifier system**

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1. Introduction.<sup>1</sup>

Sunwar is a pronominalized Tibeto-Burman language of the eastern hill region of Nepal, and belongs to the so-called "Kiranti" nucleus classified by Shafer as East Himalayish, and later by Benedict as Bahing-Vayu. Apart from a difference in nomenclature for the higher level nodes, all the major classifications agree fairly consistently on the constituent members of the Kiranti nucleus, and include Sunwar in that nucleus.

I propose in this paper to describe some of the main features of an adverbial system in Sunwar which is similar in some respects to what has become known in the recent literature as "expressives", following Gerard Diffloth's pioneering work in similar systems in some of the Mon-Khmer languages. Greatly hampered by the lack of library facilities in Nepal, my knowledge of expressive systems is limited to a handful of short articles on the subject. Some of the articles (esp. Ratliff 1983) hint at a near universality of related systems, citing such far-flung language families as Bantu (Africa), Japanese, Dravidian, and Austronesian. Samarin (1966, 1969, 1970, 1971a) has done extensive work on Gbeya, and has surveyed the literature on ideophones in other African languages, especially those of the Bantu family (1971b). B. M. Dahal (1974) has done similar service for Nepali.

It is common knowledge that "ideophones", or "onomatopoeic" type expressions occur frequently in the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal, but our knowledge of these phenomena has largely been limited to the more nearly "iconic", nonarbitrary "sound symbols" which resemble in the mind of the speaker the thing he is describing, or at least some aspect of it. The system I am describing for Sunwar includes onomatopoeia, but only as a relatively small subsystem, a semantically and syntactically distinct part of the entire system.

The real heart of the system is composed of two basic subsets, the first of which appears to involve little or no iconism, and the second of which has built into it a "magnitude symbolism" similar to the system described by Gregerson (1984) for Rengao, a Mon-Khmer language. Since in my limited reading on the topic I have gained the impression that "expressives" are supposed to be clearly iconic, I have elected in this paper to refer to the Sunwar adverbials as "intensifiers", for reasons which I hope will soon be clear, and I will leave it to others to decide whether the current etic framework of expressive systems is broad enough to include the full Sunwar system as well.

## 2. Sunwar Intensifiers and Onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeic forms are mentioned here primarily in order to contrast them with intensifiers, which are the main concern of this paper. Intensifiers are both more numerous and more frequent in my data than are onomatopoeic forms and intensifiers play a far greater role in magnitude symbolism than do onomatopoeic forms.

Onomatopoeic forms in Sunwar have certain specific characteristics *which distinguish them from intensive action adverbials. With respect to their syntax, onomatopoeic forms all occur with 'pa, a form of the verb, 'patsa "to do".*<sup>2</sup>

muyktsa	"to put on trousers"
gosh gosh 'pa muyktsa	"to put on trousers with a swishing sound (of one who is hurrying up to be presentable)"

By contrast, intensive action adverbials occur directly before the verb.

'baptsa	"to bow down"
gu' 'baptsa	"to prostrate ones' self to the ground"

With respect to meanings, onomatopoeic forms fall into three sets, all relating to sense perception:

### a. Forms that represent sounds (by far the largest set),

shap shap 'pa 'phiiktsa	"to sweep with a swishing sound"
grek 'pa rooktsa	"(for a door) to open with a creaking sound"

### b. forms that represent the sense of taste,

ka ka 'pa 'katsa	"to be extremely bitter to the taste"
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### c. forms that represent the sense of feeling.

hik hik 'pa 'bwatsa	"to have a throbbing headache"
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By contrast, intensifiers have a much more complex semantics, having little to do with iconic or imitative sound imagery other than by way of their involvement in the magnitude symbolism that they share with the onomatopoeic forms, as will be illustrated in section 5.

As to level of usage, onomatopoeic forms are rarely appropriate in formal speech, whereas intensifiers are not limited in this way. Onomatopoeic forms are more subject to idiolectical variation than are intensifiers. For many onomatopoeic forms there does not seem to be a "correct" form, but any one of a number of forms will do so long as it conveys the appropriate imitative phonological gesture. Variations in the way a speaker imitates a sound such as the following are frequent.

Schulze, M. 1987, "Intense action adverbials in Sunwar: a verbal intensifier system", in *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 63-85.  
([purl.org/sealang/schulze1987intense.pdf](http://purl.org/sealang/schulze1987intense.pdf))

pok pok 'pa 'kyuptsa "To empty a big bottle"  
 dok dok 'pa 'kyuptsa "To empty a big bottle"

Intensive action adverbs, by contrast, are rather strictly defined, and the different forms that occur (such as forms involved in scales of magnitude) are well enough defined to be essential parts of a dictionary entry.

Onomatopoeic forms also differ from intensifiers in that only certain onomatopoeic forms can be reduplicated, and in that the semantic effect of this reduplication tends to be idiosyncratic from verb to verb. The meanings of onomatopoeic reduplicated forms will need to be listed with the relevant verbs in the dictionary.

biikts dzi dzi 'pa broob  
 sugarcane onom. do tasty, 3sg, non-past  
 "The sugarcane is very sweet."

doror 'pa gaakti  
 onom. do went, 1sg, past  
 "I went away in a hurry."

dororor 'pa gaakti  
 onom. do went, 1sg, past  
 "I went in a hurry for a long stretch."

When intensifiers are reduplicated, the semantic effect is to mark plural objects, or repeated, distributed or scattered actions.

'shooktsa "to sow seed"  
 shaw 'shooktsa "to sow seed quickly"  
 shaw shuw 'shooktsa "to sow seed quickly with repeated motions of  
 the arm"

thitsa "to give birth"  
 bre' thitsa "to give birth quickly to a big child"  
 bre' bru' thitsa "to give birth quickly to big twins"

Finally, onomatopoeic forms frequently violate the phonological constraints on reduplication that apply to intensifiers. Intensifiers are phonologically restricted in that unreduplicated intensifiers consist only of a single closed syllable, whereas unreduplicated onomatopoeic forms may be bi- or trisyllabic.

ditish 'pa khroyktsa "to spoil by cutting"  
 ditish ditish 'pa khroyktsa "to spoil by cutting all up in little  
 pieces"

korong 'pa dimtsa "(for a tree) to fall of its own accord"  
 korong korong 'pa dimtsa "(for two trees) to fall of their own  
 accord"

brodod 'pa deptsɑ                    "to throw mud"  
 brododododod 'pa deptsɑ            "to throw mud continuously"

Onomatopoeic forms have been observed to undergo types of reduplication such as the following which are not permitted types of reduplication for intensifiers:

a. Partial reduplication.

goror 'pa 'hiltsa                    "to grind"  
 gororor 'pa 'hiltsa                "to grind round and round"

b. Exact reduplication.

hur hur 'pa hartsa<sup>3</sup>                "to winnow grain against the wind"  
 tsek tsek 'pa heektsɑ              "to sift"  
 pitil pitil 'pa 'himsɑ              "to wag one's (small) tail"  
 phitil phitil 'pa himsɑ            "to wag one's (bushy) tail."

Since intensifiers are all monosyllabic there can be no question of partial reduplication, and exact reduplication of intensifiers occurs only where pluralization is used to denote deliberate intense action. In all other cases the reduplicated second syllable of an intensifier undergoes a vowel shift, following the patterns shown in Figure 1 in the following section.

### 3. Pluralization of Intensifiers.

Intensifiers of both single-member and multiple-member sets can be pluralized by reduplicating the monosyllabic intensifier so that it becomes bisyllabic, while at the same time changing the vowel of the second syllable according to the rules in Figure 1.

		Examples:	
Sg	Pl	Singular	Plural
i	i ... a	ship	ship shap
u	u ... a	bul	bul bal
a	a ... u	pa'	pa' pu'
e	e ... u	the'	the' thu'
o	o ... u	to'	to' tu'

Figure 1. Rules for pluralization of intensifiers.

When an intensifier is pluralized it can have one of two meanings: 1) it can indicate repetition or distribution of the action or 2) it can indicate plurality of participants in the action, each of which is pictured as participating in the intense action. The interpretation depends upon whether the verb is inflected for singular or plural actor. (A singular verb can occur with either a singular (unreduplicated) or a plural (reduplicated) intensifier. Plural verbs can occur only with plural intensifiers.)

The morpheme, *shaw*, is a single-member intensifier which collocates with the verb 'shooktsa "to sow grain". When the verb is singular, the verb-intensifier sequence can be glossed, "to sow grain rapidly/intently". When the verb is inflected for plural actors, and the reduplicated form of the intensifier, *shaw shuw* is used, the sequence indicates that several men are intently or rapidly sowing seed in their fields.

woynsh muru-mi tserbi shaw shuw 'shookteekm.  
 male man-Ag wheat int,pl sow,3pl  
 "Several men sowed wheat intently."

When the same pluralized intensifier occurs with a singular verb form, however, the plurality shifts to the intense action itself and indicates a single actor intently sowing seed with a repeated, rhythmic motion of the arm.

woynsh mur-mi tserbi shaw shuw 'shooktu  
 male man-Ag wheat int,pl sow,3sg  
 "A man sowed wheat intently (swinging his arm back and forth)."

A second type of pluralization is also possible with intensifiers: a slowed down, delayed action which is also done with intensity, albeit with great deliberation. Instead of a vowel shift in the reduplicated form (as in Figure 1), the second type of pluralization involves the simple repetition of the intensifier with a slow drawn-out intonation.

woynsh mur-mi tserbi shaaw shaaw 'shooktu.  
 male man-Ag wheat int,pl sow,3sg  
 "A man sowed wheat intensely with a deliberate, rhythmic action."

Multiple-member intensifiers are also pluralized following the same rules as those given for single-member intensifier sets. The effects of pluralization are also much the same as for the single-member sets. Take as an example the verb, *thitsa* "to give birth", with its intensifier set, consisting of *pre'* and *bre'*.

<i>thitsa</i>	"to give birth"
<i>pre' thitsa</i>	"to give birth immediately to a small baby"
<i>bre' thitsa</i>	"to give birth immediately to a large baby"



With reduplication of bre' to bre' bru', together with a plural verb we get the following:

miish mur-puki-mi bre' bru' thimteekm.  
 female man-pl-Ag int,pl gave birth,3pl,Ag  
 "The women gave birth immediately to large babies."

By using a singular verb with the plural intensifier we get the following:

miish muru-mi bre' bru' thiptu.  
 female man-Ag int,pl gave birth,3sg,Ag  
 "The woman gave birth immediately to large twins."

Finally, by applying the second rule of pluralization, reduplicating bre' with length but without vowel shift to bree' bree', we get an example of intense, deliberate action:

miish muru-mi bree' bree' thiptu.  
 female man-Ag int,sl,pl gave birth,3sg,Ag  
 "The woman gave slow difficult birth to large twins."

#### 4. Single-Member vs. Multiple-Member Intensifier Sets.

In this section we look briefly at the two sets referred to in section 2 as constituting the real heart of the system. The difference between the two sets has to do with number of related intensifiers that are allowed to collocate with a given verb.

A multiple-member intensifier set consists of at least two intensifiers that 1) collocate alternatively with a given verb, 2) are phonologically related to one another according to rules that define a possible intensifier magnitude scale, and 3) influence the interpretation of the intensifier-verb collocation in a way that is semantically consistent with the phonological magnitude symbolism.

Take as an example, the verb 'yaptsa which means "to drip or leak". There are two phonologically and semantically related intensifiers that can occur with this verb:

bril 'yaptsa "to drip or leak a great deal"  
 brel 'yaptsa "to drip or leak a very great deal"

These two intensifiers, bril and brel are phonologically related. They satisfy the norm that intensifiers within a set can differ pair-wise from other members of the set only in one segment. They also satisfy the magnitude symbolism constraint that if a "larger" member differs from a "smaller" member of a set with respect to a vowel, the larger member must have a vowel which is either lower or further back than the vowel of the "smaller" member.

Any verb which does not have at least two intensifiers that are phonologically and semantically related within this kind of a magnitude scale is said to have a single-member intensifier set. Thus the verb, 'beektsa "to die" has a two-member set consisting of sol and yol,

'beektsa "to die (of people and plants)"  
 sol 'beektsa "to be in serious condition (with some chance of recovery)"  
 yol 'beektsa "to be in very serious condition (with no chance of recovery)"

but it also has a single-member set consisting of po'.

po' 'beektsa "to die suddenly"

Where a verb occurs with a single-member intensifier set, the primary function of the intensifier appears to be that of isolating and intensifying the basic semantic component of the verb with which it is collocated, making the action more specific than it would have been without the intensifier. In addition, intensifiers carry with them an inherent sense of intensity, and (with the exception of the pluralized deliberate action intensifiers mentioned in section 3) of speed or immediacy. Consider the following examples:

'preentsa "to forget"  
 yu' 'preentsa "to forget immediately (with no attempt to retain the forgotten item in one's thoughts)"

'dayktsa "to receive with outstretched hands"  
 le' 'dayktsa "to receive graciously with outstretched hands (bent forward)"

mimtsa "to think"  
 ti' mimtsa "to think deeply"

'guuktsa "to bend (by itself)"  
 ngol 'guuktsa "to bend down (by itself, as a tree in the wind)"

liitsa "to stop raining"  
 ko' liitsa "to stop raining suddenly"

breettsa "to lie together"  
 shol breettsa "to lie closely together"

Some verbs can occur with more than one set of intensifiers. For example, the verb ettsa "to fall, turn over" occurs with two sets of intensifiers, one of which combines with the verb to refer to a tree which falls, lifting earth with its roots in the process; the other of which combines to refer to a free falling object which lands on a flat surface.

<b>ettsa</b>	"to fall, to turn over"
<b>pul ettsa</b>	"for a small tree to fall over, lifting the soil with its roots"
<b>bul ettsa</b>	"for a big tree to fall over, lifting the soil with its roots"
<b>til ettsa</b>	"for a very small object to fall onto a flat surface"
<b>thil ettsa</b>	"for a small object to fall onto a flat surface"
<b>dil ettsa</b>	"for a wide object to fall onto a flat surface"
<b>bwoltsa</b>	"to stir, turn over"
<b>griw bwoltsa</b>	"to stir a small pot of porridge"
<b>graw bwoltsa</b>	"to stir a large pot of porridge"
<b>kyu' bwoltsa</b>	"to turn a small flat object over (e.g. a mat)"
<b>gyu' bwoltsa</b>	"to turn a large heavy flat object over"

Intensifiers having the same phonological form can occur with several different verbs.

<b>bruyktsa</b>	"to get loose"
<b>su' bruyktsa</b>	"to get loose quickly"
<b>pruyktsa</b>	"to undress, unfasten"
<b>su' pruyktsa</b>	"to undress quickly"
<b>tiltsa</b>	"to remove, separate (people)"
<b>su' tiltsa</b>	"to remove to a near-by location"
<b>diltsa</b>	"to leave a society"
<b>su' diltsa</b>	"to leave a society for a near destination"
<b>'preentsa</b>	"to forget"
<b>yu' 'preentsa</b>	"to forget immediately"
<b>'buyktsa</b>	"to fall out (of a tooth)"
<b>yu' 'buyktsa</b>	"to fall out suddenly, unexpectedly (of a tooth)"
<b>'puyktsa</b>	"to pull out, pull off"
<b>yu' 'puyktsa</b>	"to pull out suddenly"
<b>'yatsa</b>	"to melt"
<b>brel 'yatsa</b>	"to melt a great deal"
<b>'yaptsa</b>	"to drip, leak"
<b>brel 'yaptsa</b>	"to drip, leak profusely"
<b>hentsa</b>	"to fall as ripe fruit"
<b>brel hentsa</b>	"to fall as ripe nuts"



but it is risky to assume that we are dealing with the same lexical item in each case. The first two verbs listed above, 'yatsa and 'yaptsa, do share one phonological set of intensifiers (the other member of the set being bril, a slightly smaller member on the magnitude scale), and the semantic effect of these is parallel for the two verbs (both deal with degree of verbal action). The third verb, hentsa, however, has brel as a member of a rather different set: brel --- "fall as ripe nuts"; brol --- "fall as ripe plums"; and bral --- "fall as ripe apples". From these examples and a large number of others like them I would conclude that the cooccurrence constraints between verbs and their intensifiers are sufficiently restrictive to merit the listing of intensifiers in the dictionary entries for their respective verbs.

### 5. The Form of Magnitude Gradations in Intensifiers.

In addition to their intensifying and pluralizing functions, intensifiers that participate in multiple-member sets also indicate relative magnitude of an action or a participant in the action.

Relative magnitude within a given intensifier set is indicated through a graded series of consonants at a given point of articulation or through a graded series of vowels, or through a combined series in which vowel gradations alternate with consonant gradations. Where consonants are involved, voiced consonants indicate greater magnitude than voiceless consonants. Aspirated or breathy consonants represent greater magnitude than their unaspirated or nonbreathy counterparts. Figure 2 presents the magnitude scale for labial stops and fricative obstruants. Stops at other points of articulation are scaled analogously.

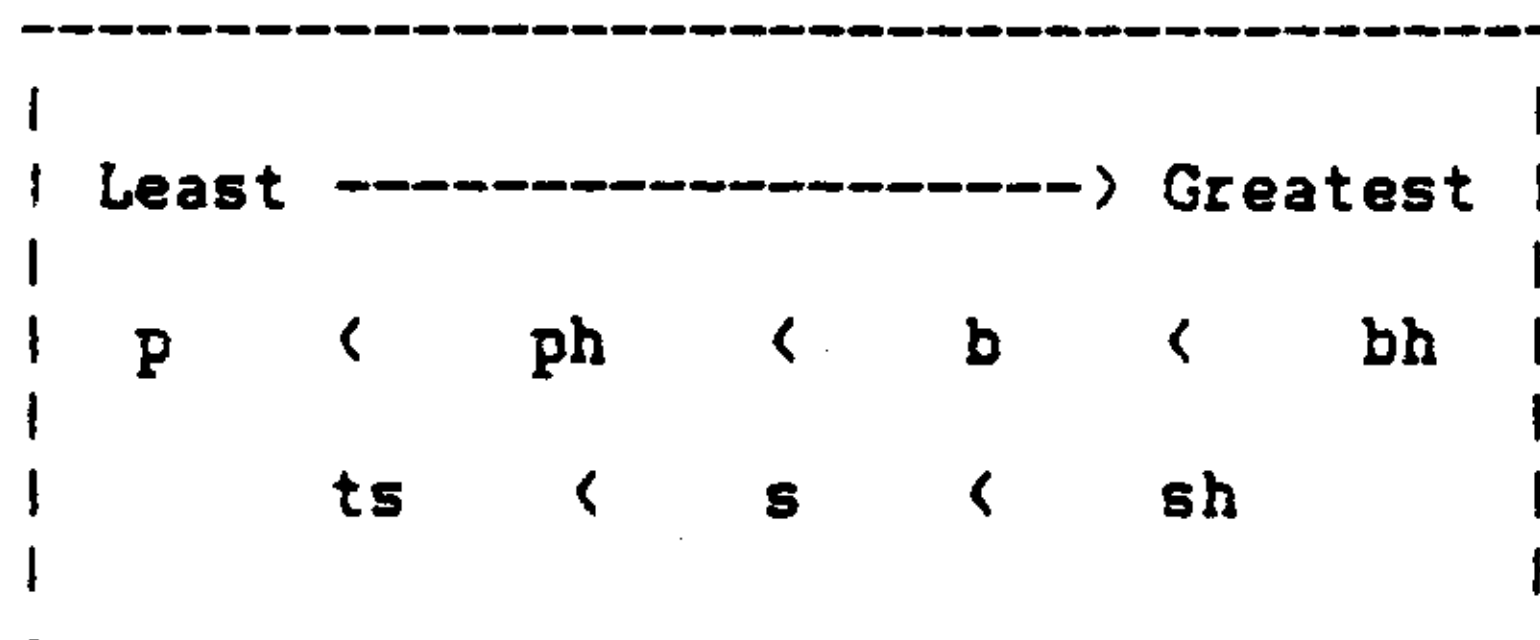


Figure 2. Magnitude symbolism in stops and fricative obstruants.

#### a. Magnitude symbolism in stops

looktsa	"to turn s.t., to turn s.t. over"
pil looktsa	"to turn s.t. over quickly (as a page in a book)"
phil looktsa	"to turn s.t. over quickly (as a cake of unleavened bread)"

<b>bil looktsa</b>	<b>"to turn s.t. over quickly (a heavy object such as a stone)"</b>
<b>'dzuuktsa</b>	<b>"to alight (of a bird)"</b>
<b>te' 'dzuuktsa</b>	<b>"to alight suddenly (of a small bird)"</b>
<b>de' 'dzuuktsa</b>	<b>"to alight suddenly (of a large bird)"</b>
<b>'hiltsa</b>	<b>"to grind grain"</b>
<b>kor 'hiltsa</b>	<b>"to grind quickly (a small quantity)"</b>
<b>gor 'hiltsa</b>	<b>"to grind quickly (a large quantity)"</b>

#### **b. Magnitude symbolism in fricatives**

<b>'phiiktsa</b>	<b>"to sweep clean"</b>
<b>saw 'phiiktsa</b>	<b>"to sweep clean (a small area near the sweeper)"</b>
<b>shaw 'phiiktsa</b>	<b>"to sweep clean (a large area)"</b>
<b>'khaltsa</b>	<b>"to mix"</b>
<b>sow 'khaltsa</b>	<b>"to mix quickly (a small quantity)"</b>
<b>show 'khaltsa</b>	<b>"to mix quickly (a large quantity)"</b>
<b>'wartsa</b>	<b>"to throw something"</b>
<b>tsut 'wartsa</b>	<b>"to throw, smashing (a very small object) to pieces"</b>
<b>shut 'wartsa</b>	<b>"to throw, smashing (a small object) to pieces"</b>
<b>shot 'wartsa</b>	<b>"to throw, smashing (a large object) to pieces"</b>

#### **c. Magnitude symbolism in vowels:**

Where vowels are involved in the scale of magnitude represented by an intensifier, the direction of increasing magnitude is from high (small) to low (large) and from front (small) to back (large). Figure 3 lists the Sunwar vowels. The arrows link pairs of vowels that occur in multiple-member intensifier sets, with the head of the arrow pointing to the "larger" member. The numbers on the arrows indicate the number of pairs found within the present corpus.

(mid —> low vowels)

<b>'thitsa</b>	<b>"to find"</b>
<b>bre' 'thitsa</b>	<b>"to find (a small object) unexpectedly"</b>
<b>bra' 'thitsa</b>	<b>"to find (a large object) unexpectedly"</b>

(front —> back vowels)

<b>'tsettsa</b>	<b>"to split wood"</b>
<b>pre' 'tsettsa</b>	<b>"to split (a very small piece of wood) with a sudden crack"</b>
<b>pro' 'tsettsa</b>	<b>"to split (a small piece of wood) with a sudden crack"</b>

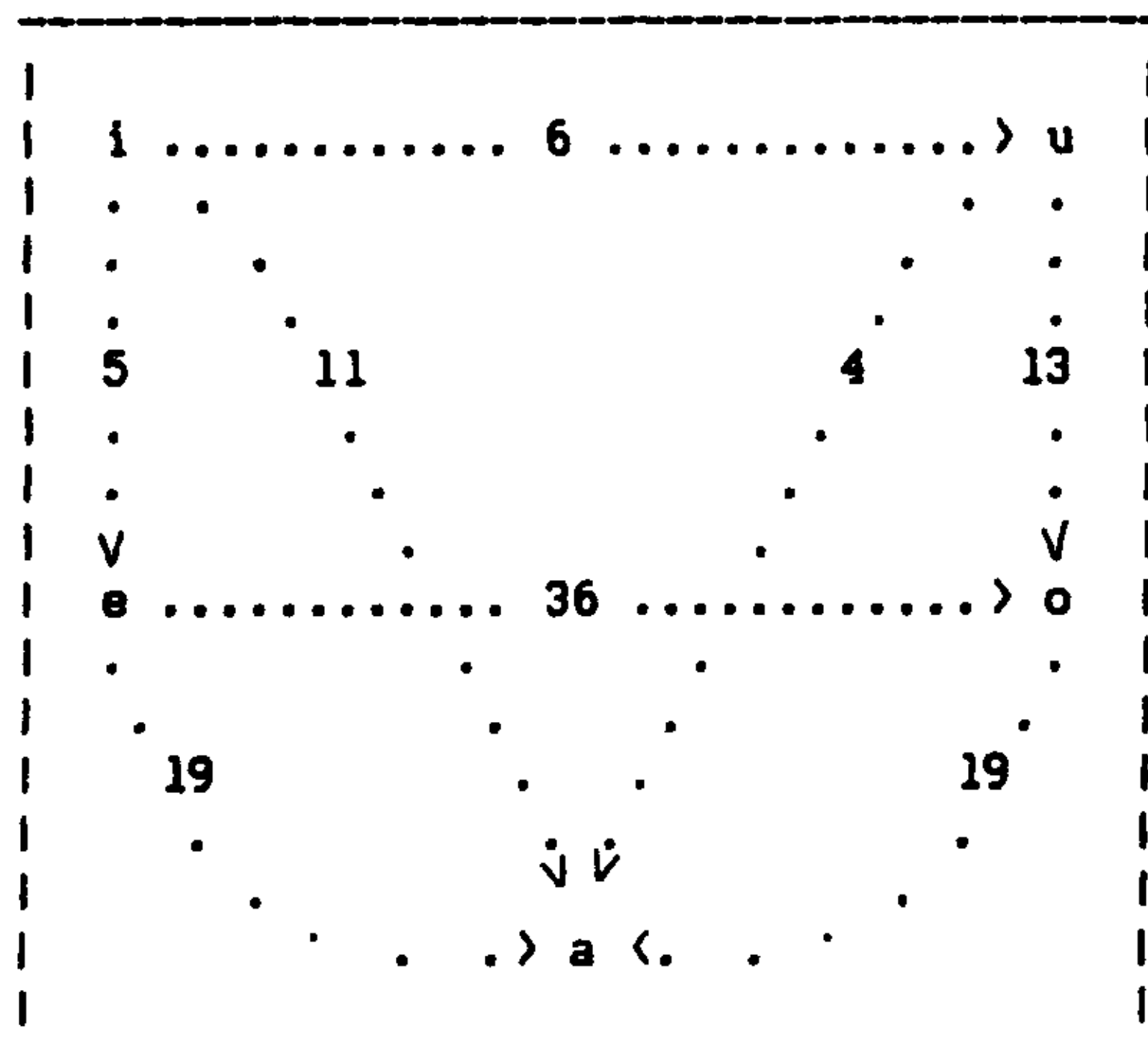


Figure 3. Magnitude symbolism in Sunwar vowels.

(high —> mid vowels)

'yaptsa	"to drip, leak"
bril 'yaptsa	"to leak (much) with a constant dripping"
brel 'yaptsa	"to leak (very much) with a constant dripping"
tsirtsa	"to drain something"
tur tsirtsa	"to drain liquid to the very last drop (very little liquid)"
tor tsirtsa	"to drain liquid to the last drop (little liquid)"

(high front —> low central vowels)

shuptsa	"to keep for oneself"
ship shuptsa	"to keep (a small object) greedily for oneself"
shap shuptsa	"to keep (big object) greedily for oneself"

(mid front —> low central vowels)

hentsa	"to fall off as fruit"
brel hentsa	"to fall off with a bump (of very small fruit, ripe nuts)"
brol hentsa	"to fall off with a bump (of ripe plums)"
bral hentsa	"to fall off with a bump (of large fruit such as apples)"

Though one might expect some interplay between magnitude symbolism in consonants and vowels, I have not yet discovered a set large enough to encompass all the possibilities with a single verb. Within a single set the gradation between members can involve only one phonological segment at a time but this does not rule out the possibility of a compound set in which there is a step-wise gradation holding consonants constant joined to a set in which the vowel is held constant, such as the following.

khir	'khraaktsa	"to churn (very little) buttermilk"
khar	'khraaktsa	"to churn (little) buttermilk"
ghar	'khraaktsa	"to churn (much) buttermilk"
pre'	'durtsa	"(for very small pieces) to drop"
pro'	'durtsa	"(for small pieces) to drop"
bro'	'durtsa	"(for big pieces) to drop"
bra'	'durtsa	"(for very big pieces) to drop"

## 6. Semantics of Magnitude Gradations in Intensifiers.

It should be clearly noted that the term "magnitude" refers not only to the size of participants (such as agents and patients) but can also apply metaphorically to categories such as time, location, and manner, depending upon the verb which is intensified. Consider the following examples.

### a. Magnitude of referent (agent)

When intensified, the verb, *bertsa* "to fly", means "to fly off in a flurry" as when flushed from its hiding place. Associated with *bertsa* is a two-member intensifier set consisting of *phur* and *bhur*, with the following meanings:

<i>phur</i>	<i>bertsa</i>	"to fly off in a flurry (of a small bird)"
<i>bhur</i>	<i>bertsa</i>	"to fly off in a flurry (of a large bird)"

### b. Magnitude of referent (patient)

When intensified, the verb, *riptsa* "to bundle", means "to bundle tightly." Associated with *riptsa* is a two-member intensifier set consisting of *kya'* and *gya'*, with the following meanings:

<i>kya'</i>	<i>riptsa</i>	"to bundle a small bundle tightly"
<i>gya'</i>	<i>riptsa</i>	"to bundle a large bundle tightly"

### c. Magnitude of spatial orientation (location).

When intensified, the verb, *tiltsa* "to remove or separate someone (as for misconduct)" means "to remove sternly". Associated with *tiltsa* is a two-member intensifier set consisting of *su'* and *shu'* with the following meanings:

*su'* *tiltsa* "to remove someone sternly (to a nearby location)"  
*shu'* *tiltsa* "to remove someone sternly (to a remote location)"

### d. Magnitude of time orientation

When intensified the verb '*raptsa* "to stand" means "to stand upright". Associated with '*raptsa* is a two-member intensifier set consisting of *to'* and *do'* which carry the following meanings:

*to'* '*raptsa* "to stand upright (for a short time)"  
*do'* '*raptsa* "to stand upright (for a long time)"

### e. Magnitude of manner.

When intensified the verb '*thayktsa* "to slap" means "to slap with a smack". Associated with '*thayktsa* is a two-member intensifier set consisting of *pre'* and *bre'* with the following meanings:

*pre'* '*thayktsa* "to slap with a light smack"  
*bre'* '*thayktsa* "to slap with a heavy smack"

## 7. A Possible Source for Intensifiers.

Nothing conclusive can be demonstrated regarding the sources for verbal intensifiers at this stage of our knowledge. It is possible, however, to make a few observations that indicate that the search for evidence as to sources may be fruitful. Though there are many striking parallels between intensifiers in Sunwar and verbs in related languages, I will confine my observations at this point to Sunwar evidence.

Sunwar verb stems provide lexical source material both for onomatopoeic expressions and for intensifiers.

There are some cases where a verb stem will sometimes be used to construct an onomatopoeic expression, sometimes as an intensifier, and sometimes both, as in the following examples:

*'ngortsa* "to snore"  
*ngor ngor 'pa 'ngortsa* "to snore with a snoring sound"  
  
*shiptsa* "to whittle on a stick"



ship ship 'pa shiptsa	"to whittle on a stick (with a whittling sound)"
khraptsa	"to clean grain on a winnowing tray"
ship ship 'pa khraptsa	"to clean grain on a winnowing tray"
'kyooktsa	"to flatten wood"
ship ship 'pa 'kyooktsa	"to flatten (a small piece of) wood (with a certain sound)"
ship shuptsa	"to be greedy (for a small object)"
Note in this case that ship shuptsa also participates in a magnitude scale:	
shap shuptsa	"to be greedy (for a large object)"
'hurtsa	"to blow (of wind)"
hur hur 'pa 'hurtsa	"to blow with gale force"
khuyktsa	"to clean the surface of pots"
shoptsa	"to strain beer (rubbing the strainer)"
shop khuyktsa	"to clean s.t. with a rubbing motion"
murtsa	"to wash something"
shop murtsa	"to wash something (a little)"
bratsa	"to burn"
'hurtsa	"to blow (as wind)"
hur bratsa	"to burn high"
bwetsa	"to bend, bow down"
'gurtsa	"to be bent over with infirmity"
gur bwetsa	"to bend low"
shaptsa	"to clean up a room"
khuptsa	"to scrape together"
shap shup 'pa khuptsa	"to scrape together (with a sweeping sound)"
dzotsa	"to graze (of cattle), to eat up (of a moth)"
shap dzotsa	"to graze, eat (with a munching sound)"

#### 8. Partial List of Intensifiers in Sunwar.

Following is a partial, alphabetical listing of Sunwar intensifiers. Each entry for each intensifier is organized as follows. The intensifier is listed first as the head word of the entry. Following the intensifier is a number in parentheses which indicates the number of different Sunwar verbs with which the intensifier collocates in the current corpus). Next comes a portion of the entry

labeled 'S:' which lists a verb which is a possible source for the intensifier. The portion of the entry which begins with three hyphens (---) lists a verb with which the intensifier collocates. The part of the gloss for each verb which is enclosed in square brackets in this portion of the entry indicates how the meaning of the verb is made more specific when it occurs with the intensifier, though the semantic component of intensity has usually not been specified in these entries. The unbracketed portion of the gloss (including parenthesized stage directions) gives the meaning of the verb as it occurs without the intensifier. Some entries also have a part labelled 'O:' in which the onomatopoeic utilizations of the source verb are illustrated.

Intensifiers for which no plausible Sunwar sources have yet been found have not been listed.

- bal (5) S: baltsa "to be extremely hungry"  
 ---romsitsa "to turn one's self in pain or exercise" [with bal, specific to human beings]  
 ---'nortsa "to spoil s.t. by bending" [with bal, specific to large objects]  
 ---peektsa "to finish, to complete" [with bal, specific to rope making]  
 ---\*roptsa "to twist a rope" [with bal, specific to twisting with the fingers]  
 ---roptsa "to pluck vegetables" [with bal, specific to plucking vegetables with a twisting motion]
- bel (4) S: 'beltsa "to break off by itself" (also used in idioms referring to backache)  
 ---gyuuktsa "to climb a rope (hanging above the ground)" [with bel, specific to climbing down a rope]
- ber (2) S: bertsa "to fly"  
 ---pitsa "to break wind backwards" [with ber, specific to adults]
- bir (4) S: bwirtsa "to sprain or twist (a hand or leg)"  
 ---\*hirtsa "to go around" [with bir, quickly]  
 ---lettisa "to turn around" [with bir, to turn the whole body around]  
 ---khrittsa "to bore holes, pierce" [with bir, big holes]
- bra' (24) S: 'bratsa 1. "to receive s.o. into society, to adopt" 2. "to be spread out for drying"  
 ---\*'thiintsa "to meet s.o." [with bra', unexpectedly]  
 ---'saptsa "to cover a roof" [with bra', with very big pieces of slate]
- dor (3) S: dortsa "to run"  
 ---dor greektsa "to slip, stumble, trip" [with dor, for a big person to slip but not fall]

0: doror 'pa gaaktsa "to walk in a hurry"  
 doror 'pa kyaltsa "to mix liquid by pouring"  
 doror 'pa latsa "to go running"

dur (2) S: 'durtsa "to crack and peel off (as pieces from a mud-plastered wall during the rainy season)"  
 ---shuyktsa "for a knife to slide into a sheath" [with dur, a big knife]

dzet (6) S: 'dzeltsa "to arrange weaving of thread or bamboo"  
 ---'tsettsa "to rearrange bamboo stripes for weaving" [with dzet, indicates a large weaving project]

gu (4) S: guuktsa "to bend down as a tree full of fruit"  
 ---'baptsa "to bow down" [with gu, to bow down to the ground]

gul (1) S: giltsa "to wrap"  
 ---'looktsa "to turn s.th. over" [with gul, to turn big animals or very large objects over]

0: gulul 'pa latsa "to go rolling"

gar (2) S: 'gartsa "to fit, to work together in agreement"  
 ---tsittsa "to cut lengthwise" [with gar, to cut a large field lengthwise]  
 ---'yooktsa "to divide" [with gar, to divide fields for an inheritance]

gur (2) S: 'gurtsa "to be infirm, sick for a long time"  
 ---bwetsa "to bend down" [with gur, to bend down a little]

gre' (4) S: gretsa "to move aside (as in making place for s.o. to sit)"  
 ---timtsa "to fell a tree" [with gre', a small tree]

ho' (5) S: 'hotsa "for s.th. to heat up of its own accord"  
 ---\*gramtsa "to be ready to beat s.o." [with ho', in the heat of anger]  
 ---dzitsa "to be ready to reap" [with ho', ready to harvest fruit, such as apples]

hup (1) S: 'huptsa "to put fruit into straw for ripening"  
 ---'domtsa "to get fat" [with hup, very fat]

hur (2) S: 'hurtsa "to get a fire burning by blowing through a pipe"  
 ---bratsa "to burn" [with hur, to flare up, burn high]

0: hururur 'pa bratsa

ke' (4) S: keektsa "to kill lice by crushing between two fingernails"  
 ---'potsa "to be squeezed by accident" [with ke', for a very small object or person to be crushed]

- kal (1) S: 'kaltsa "to keep with one's self"  
 ---tsuutsa "to wrap with cloth" [with kal, to wrap a small object with cloth]
- khe' (1) S: 'khetsa "to peal"  
 ---maptsa "to cling to" [with khe', to cling to a small person or object]
- khu' (2) S: 'khutsa "to be fully ripe (of grains such as rice, millet, corn and wheat)"  
 ---briiktsa "to remove from the fire (after cooking)" [with khu', to remove light pots from the fire after cooking]
- khra' (5) S: khratsa "to hit a target"  
 ---'tsooktsa "to close a door" [with khra', to close a small door with a slam]
- kya' (4) S: 'kyatsa "for threads on a loom to get tangled"  
 ---riptsa "to make a bundle" [with kya', to make a small tight bundle]
- kyol (4) S: 'kyoltsa "to disturb s.o., to interrupt s.o. working"  
 ---mettsa "to vomit on s.o. [with kyol, a little]  
 ---metsa "to vomit" [with kyol, a little]  
 ---luuktsa "to pour water [with kyol, a little]  
 ---thooktsa "to pour from one vessel into another" [with kyol, a little]
- O: [kyol 'pa] kyuptsa "to spill over of its own accord" [with kyol 'pa, a little]
- pe' (3) 'petsa "to spoil s.th. with a knife (as children, for no reason)"  
 --- raaktsa "to rot" [with pe', for small fruit to rot]
- pu' (7) S: 'putsa "to hang s.th. over the fire place for drying"  
 ---tsotsa "to burn, to roast" [with pu', to burn or roast a small quantity]
- pre' (31) S: preektsa "to jump"  
 ---'dintsa "to step on" [with pre', slightly]  
 ---theektsa "to step on, walk on s.th." [with pre', of a small man on mud]
- pro' (14) S: proyktsa "to tear a piece off"  
 ---'taltsa "to cut a piece off" [with pro', a small piece]
- pet (1) S: 'pettsa "to cut ears of grain (taking the ear in the hand and cutting the stalk just below the ear)"  
 ---retttsa "to catch with the hand" [with pet, to catch fish instantly by hand]

- pher (1) S: phertsa "to sow clothing"  
 ---'dzeektsa "to wear out (as garments or household goods)" [with pher, to wear out of torn clothing]
- phir (1) S: 'phirtsa "to fold one's hands behind one's back"  
 ---lettisa "to turn back" [with phir, to turn only the head back]
- phro' (1) S: 'phrooktsa "to clap hands, to slap s.o.'s face"  
 ---'raptisa "to slap s.o.'s face" [with phro', hurts only a little]
- O: phrok phrok 'pa phrooktsa "to slap the face with a noise"
- ro' (2) S: rooktsa "to weed"  
 ---phettisa "to take a small object out of s.th. big (as a coal out of the fire, a thorn out of the flesh)" [with ro', specific to thorns]
- so' (46) S: sotsa "to multiply, become many (used in blessings)"  
 ---\*bwayktsa "to pair animals" [with so', to pair animals at just the proper time]
- so' (46) S: sootsa "to dry"  
 ---raptisa "to sear, to hold meat over the fire in preparation for drying" [with so', quickly]
- sur (1) S: surtsa "to be big (e.g. of potatoes)"  
 ---bartisa "to increase, to grow" [with sur, specific to plants and animals]
- suyn (2) S: 'suyntsa "to refuse (e.g. a gift or food)"  
 ---'yoltisa "to carry away" [with suyn, is far away, out of sight]  
 ---'aptisa "to shoot, to throw" [with suyn, to shoot or throw a great distance]
- shil (3) S: 'shiltisa "to clean intestines of slaughtered animals"  
 ---'shamtisa "to cause an abortion" [with shil, a small fetus]
- O: shil shil 'pa 'shiltisa "to clean the intestines of a slaughtered animal with a certain sound"
- shol (5) S: 'sholtisa "to take s.th. out of s.th."  
 ---'moyktsa "to pour out, to empty a vessel" [with shol, specific to grain]
- shap (3) S: 'shaptisa "to clean up a room"  
 ---'bruyktsa "to splash" [with shap, the splashing is specified as near]  
 ---\*dzotsa "to graze (as cattle), to eat (like a moth)" [with shap, to graze or eat clean]
- O: shap shap 'pa liptisa "to clean the small twigs off a branch"



- (with a certain sound)"  
 shap shap 'pa kiptsa "to gird one's self with a waistband of cloth  
 some five meters long"
- shap (1) S: 'sheptsa "to sharpen"  
 ---tsuptsa "to shrink, make s.th. smaller" [with shap, specific to  
 cloth soaked in water]
- O: shap shap 'pa 'yuuktsa "to whip (sideways, with a rope or thin  
 stick)"
- shop (3) S: 'shoptsa "to strain beer (with a rubbing motion of the hand  
 across the strainer)"  
 ---khuyktsa "to clean s.th." [with shop, to clean with a rubbing  
 motion]  
 ---nurtsa "to wash" [with shop, to wash with a rubbing motion]
- O: shop shop 'pa shoptsa
- shayn (1) S: 'shayntsa "to deceive one's self (pursuing a girl not  
 interested in the match)"  
 ---khertsa "to chase away" [with shayn, to chase far away]
- tep (1) S: tsptsa "to dip rice or bread into meat or vegetable sauce"  
 ---yaptsa "to drip, to leak" [with tep, to drip or leak a great  
 deal]
- tho' (5) S: 'thooktsa "to beat upon from above with a hammer"  
 ---'thooktsa "to hammer" [with tho', specific to medium sized  
 nails]
- thur (1) S: 'thurtsa "to peel off"  
 ---\*'payktsa "to shake off dust" [with thur, to shake dust off  
 vigorously]
- tsu' (1) S: tsutsa "to push, to thresh"  
 ---neektsa "to push into a hole" [with tsu', to push into a small  
 hole filled with a soft substance]
- tseI (1) S: 'tseltsa "to arrange bamboo for basked weaving"  
 ---'nuktsa "to split bamboo" [with tsel, specific to a small kind  
 of bamboo]
- tsor (1) S: tsortsa "to ferment (under control)"  
 ---naptsa "to be consumed by heat" [with tsor, only to a small  
 degree]
- yal (2) S: 'yaltsa "to withhold a deserved punishment from a child  
 because the child is still very small"  
 ---\*'datsa "to be tired" [with yal, quickly]  
 ---yaltsa "to withhold deserved punishment..." [with yal,  
 punishment; withheld due to shame]

yol (1) S: 'yoltsa "to carry away (as by a river)"  
 ---'beektsa "to die" [with yol, suddenly]

### Notes

- 1) This paper is a revised and enlarged version of a paper presented at the 19th Annual Meeting of the International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics which was held September 11-14, 1986 at The Ohio State University in Columbus. I am grateful to Tika Ram Mulicha from Kiitsi, who was the first person to check through a large set of verbs with me for their respective intensifiers. Dev Bahadur Sunwar from Sabra deserves special thanks for his endless patience in answering questions about meaning and in rechecking the intensifiers. I would like to thank Werner Winter for his encouragement during the course of this research. I would also like to thank my partner in Sunwar study, Dora Bieri, for many helpful and thought-provoking suggestions. For corrections and suggestions on the write-up I would like to express my appreciation to Anna Holzhausen and David Nichols. I am indebted to David Watters for many fruitful discussions. Without his help this paper would not have reached its present form. Along with Kent Gordon and Austin Hale he was helpful in obtaining articles on expressives. An error in the magnitude symbolism for vowels in an earlier version of the paper was picked up both by Lon Diehl and Werner Winter. I was also greatly stimulated through discussion of the paper by James A. Matisoff, Paul Benedict, Martine Mazaudon, Boyd Michailovski, Alfons Weidert, and W. South Coblin, after its presentation at the conference. For assistance in bringing the paper to final form I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Austin Hale. Whatever shortcomings remain are my own responsibility.

The following abbreviations have been used in this paper:

Ag	agent marker
int	intensifier
obj.	object
O/onom.	onomatopoeic expression
pl	plural
S	possible source verb
sl	slow
sm.	small
s.o.	someone
s.t.	something
v.	very
1sg	first person singular
3pl	third person plural
3sg	third person singular

\* single member intensifier set  
' glottal stop (word final); high tone (word initial)

- 2) A few comments on Sunwar phonology and the system used in this paper for the transcription of Sunwar examples may be helpful at this point.

Vowels contrast for length (long 'a' is written 'aa'). Long vowels and diphthongs contrast for nasalization. Syllable-final 'n' is a consonant following short vowels, but represents the nasalization of the preceding vowel following long vowels and diphthongs ('iin' = long nasalized 'i'; 'ayn' = nasalized 'ay'). Syllable-final 'k' is a consonant following short vowels but represents laryngealization followed by glottal closure following long vowels ('aak' = [a:ʔ]), and represents a velar fricative following diphthongs ('ayk' = [a'ɣ]). Light glottal closure following short vowels is represented in this paper as an apostrophe (').

Sunwar has been analyzed as having the following phonemic inventory (retroflexed consonants are upper case and occur almost exclusively in loan words):

Stops:	p, t, T, k, '[ʔ]
	ph, th, kh
	b, d, D, g
	bh, dh, Dh, gh
Affricate	ts
Fricatives:	s[ʃ], sh[ʃ]
	dz[z]
Nasals:	m, n, ng[ŋ]
Liquid:	l
Flap:	r
Glides:	w, y, h
Vowels:	i, ii u, uu
	e, ee o, oo
	a, aa
Diphthongs:	uy, oy, ay,
High tone:	' at the beginning of a word.

- 3) One who knows Sunwar may question the claim implicit here to the effect that hur hur 'pa hartsa involves reduplication, since hur 'pa hartsa is not an acceptable form. The basic point being made here is that onomatopoeic forms contrast with intensifiers, and

that point can just as well be argued from the fact that reduplication of onomatopoeic forms is not at all regular and straightforward, and probably should not be viewed as a productive general syntactic process. One could, however, argue that many onomatopoeic forms are derived from verbs in Sunwar, and *hur* would be an example of this since it is the root for the verb *hurtsa* "to blow". In addition to being a possible source for the onomatopoeic form, *hur hur 'pa hartsa*, it is also a source for an intensifier that goes with the verb, *bratsa* "to burn". Thus, *hur har bratsa* means "to burn high". Though section 7 represents a beginning in the exploration of possible sources for intensifiers in Sunwar, the whole subject of the sources of onomatopoeic forms and of intensifiers deserves more attention than will be possible to devote to it in this brief treatment.

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