

**REVIEW OF *NEWĀR (NEPĀL BHĀṢĀ)*,
BY AUSTIN HALE & KEDĀR P. SHREĪTHA
(MUENCHEN: LINCOM EUROPA, 2006)**

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Not only did the year 2006 mark seventy years since Hans Jørgensen's landmark achievement, *A Dictionary of the Classical Newāri*, was published, but it also saw an outstanding grammatical description of Kathmandu Newar published by the renowned linguist Austin Hale and his co-author K.P. Shrestha, which I have the opportunity to review in this article.

Newar is one of the most well-studied Tibeto-Burman languages in the Himalayan region. Although it has been recognized under the name of “Newari”, the currently accepted designation of the language is, as the title of the book suggests, “Newar”, or “Nepāl Bhāṣā”. Since the Kathmandu Valley had been referred to by the name “Nepal” for a long period of time, the ethnic name, Newar, whose self-denomination is *Newāh*, has obviously a link to this name. The language has a literal tradition in varieties of a unique descendent of the Brāhmī script, and quite a few old manuscripts on palm leaves and inscriptions are well preserved for scrutiny.

The language has been studied by both Newar and foreign scholars, and some grammars and dictionaries have been available both in English and the native language. The two most important works on grammar by Newar scholars is a concise overview written in English by K. P. Malla, *The Newāri language: A working outline*. Another grammar is written in Newar, by S. K. Joshi: *Nepāla Bhāṣāyā Bhāṣāvaijñānika Vyākaraṇ* [A linguistic grammar of Nepāl Bhāṣā]. As for works done by foreign scholars, A. Hale also wrote a short description of Newar grammar for Mānandhar's *Newarī-English Dictionary*, and C. Genetti wrote an excellent comparative description of Kathmandu Newar and Dolakhā Newar, and a much larger volume on the grammar of the latter variety.

H is one of the pioneering scholars in the study of Newar, and has presented a number of significant analyses, which qualifies him as an ideal person to write a long-expected grammar book of this kind. The current volume is a cooperative work between H and his consultant S, resulting from their nearly two decades of data collection and analysis of Newar written texts. This book serves as a concise handbook of the language that extensively incorporates and summarizes previously published and unpublished works on the language by other scholars. At the same time, it offers a large number of new findings by H&S. Their analyses of Newar texts are data-driven: most of the examples cited in the book are taken from Newar written texts stored in *Toolbox*, a linguistic database application software

developed and distributed by SIL for free use. This tool is especially designed for linguistic fieldwork, so that the linguist who uses it can construct a text database with interlinearized glossed text, as well as a virtually automatically-created lexicon generated from the interlinearized text.

The size of the volume may be rather small for a comprehensive reference grammar of Newar. Considering the fact that there has been much discussion of Newar grammar in the literature, however, this reviewer considers it unavoidable due to the limitation of the number of pages for the Lincom Europa descriptive grammar. Still, this does not undermine the value of H&S's book, and the resulting volume turns out to be well organized and abundant in examples and grammatical description, such that it will definitely benefit students of Newar to a great extent.

The organization of the book is structured in terms of phonology (Ch. 1), morphology (Ch. 2), syntax (Chs. 3-7) and discourse (Ch. 8). Most of the volume is devoted to a description and analysis of syntax, which accounts for more than half. The analysis and discussion are basically theory-neutral, without any reference to a particular linguistic theory. In this respect, the book is a traditional type of descriptive grammar.

The classification of Nepāl Bhāṣā has been vehemently discussed in studies of the Tibeto-Burman languages (Shafer 1955, Benedict 1972, Bradley 1997, van Driem 2001). H&S do not consider its classification in depth, but rather only provide a short summary of the discussions in the literature in the two-page introduction at the beginning of the book.

H&S's first chapter summarizes the segmental phonology of Newar. This chapter illustrates the phonetic characteristics of Newar as well as intonation and prosody, reviewing three previous works. The transliteration of the language in other works makes use of most of the Sanskrit transliteration and the roman phonetic representation. For example, 'a' and 'ā' represent the vowels /ə/ and /a/, and the combinations of the vowels with the locative /e/ result in /ɛ:/ and /æ:/ respectively, often transliterated as 'ae(:)' and 'āe(:)'. The phonetic representation in H&S's book seems more user-friendly in that the IPA-based phoneme-by-phoneme transliteration makes the examples closer to the actual pronunciation, although the reader might possibly be confused with the morphological boundaries in some words. This is the case with some vowel-ending nouns in the locative. For example, 'gate' is transliterated as *dhwaka*, pronounced as [dhwaka]. When it is followed by the locative marker *-e*, its morpheme representation would be *dhwaka-e*. This is pronounced as [dhwakæ:], which is the transliterated form employed in the book (as in the third example on p. 72).

Ch. 2 deals with the morphology of nouns, pronouns, quantifiers, verbs, adjectives and verbs. H&S discuss the morphology and function of the grammatical categories in detail, with ample examples from their database, sometimes based on previous research. H&S define noun and verb classes in terms of morphological and syntactic behavior (23). Their description of the parts of speech also includes discussion of the case marking on nouns and pronouns, and numeral classifiers; five verb classes based on inflection; tense/aspect; causative forms; and various forms of adverbs. Newar ergative case morphology is not as simple as it may look. They illustrate all the possible patterns with examples and word origins from Classical Newar. Another interesting topic discussed in this

chapter is the well-known verb conjugation system, called the ‘conjunct/disjunct’ dichotomy. Although the original paper on this was written by Hale, H&S follow the analysis by Hargreaves to illustrate the distributions of the conjunct and disjunct forms in terms of two classes of verbs: control verbs and non-control verbs. Hargreaves 2005 discusses this issue in detail in terms of intentionality and agency, which govern the occurrence of the conjunct form.

Ch. 3 deals with syntactic aspects of noun phrases. H&S start their discussion with a diagram that illustrates the syntagmatic relation of the head and its dependents. In each subsection, they discuss the lexical properties of nouns (e.g. animacy and honorifics); and agreement between the head noun and dependents such as relative clauses, complement clauses, determiners, genitive NPs and adjectives. They also discuss quantifiers, inflection for number, postpositions, emphatic expressions, and appositions. Of all the subsections, §3.2.4, *Kin Terms and the Antideictic -mhə*, is the most interesting, with a summary of H&S 1996, which deals with the distinction between one’s own kin and those of other’s by means of the dissociative suffix *-mhə*. For instance, ‘father’ in Newar can be distinguished by the bare form and the kin term followed by the dissociative *-mhə*; *bau*, without a genitive NP or pronoun, is always understood as ‘my father’ whereas *bau-mhə* is understood as someone else’s father. This is similar to the English bare form usage of *Father* and *Mother*.

In Ch. 4, H&S deal with the verb complex, providing a tree diagram that indicates constituent order in a verb phrase. Here they explicate the way verbs are stacked upon other verbs—that is, verb serialization. They divide the verb complex into four possible slots: main verb, purposive auxiliary, tense-aspect-modality auxiliary and inflection. This chapter is especially significant, in that H&S illustrate the usage of various auxiliaries. Newar has a variety of auxiliary verbs that express different connotations, all of which are necessary for understanding Newar texts. They classify auxiliary verbs into three types depending on the form of the verb that each one follows: AAux (directional, applicative, aspectual and honorific), LAux (purposive in the context of motion), and EAux (modality, aspect and purposive). Each auxiliary verb appears with a description of usage and illustrative examples.

In Ch. 5, H&S provide the reader with a clear exposition of Newar case patterns and grammatical relations within the clause. Their organization of the latter is based on a topicality hierarchy for roles presented in Givón 2001. According to the hierarchy, an NP which is agent or experiencer will be the subject of a clause. Their table for Newar clause types neatly summarizes possible clause patterns in terms of case marking on arguments, with corresponding example numbers that serve as a quick reference for examples. In passing, I found a possible typo on page 180, where H&S illustrate the BR4 possessor clause pattern, which takes a possessor in either the sociative or genitive case, but they write “the existential experiencer also has two forms, Dative and Genitive”: here the Dative must mean Sociative, a case that marks animate possessor, and information source.

In this chapter, they also deal with causatives and negation, which I think could have been more informative from a functional point of view. The discussion of negation is especially insufficient. Taking up negation in §2.4.8 and §5.9.2, they do not discuss the semantics of prefixal negation with *mə-* or the periphrastic negation

with *məkhu*, which follows a verb. They fail to consider the periphrastic negative pattern ‘verb.FUT + *məkhu*’ as a simple negation of future tense, which is listed as such in Malla 1985:88. For example, the past negative forms of a verb *wəne* ‘to go’ are *mə-wəna* (past conjunct) or *mə-wənə* (past disjunct), but the simple future negative forms will not be *mə-wəne* (future conjunct) and *mə-wəni:* (future disjunct). These forms are actually possible yet limited in use, mainly to subordinate clauses; the usual forms are *wəne məkhu* and *wəni: məkhu*, respectively. H&S cite an example with the periphrastic negative *məkhu* in this chapter, but they mention nothing about its usage, even though the free translation of the example suggests that it is a case of future negation.

Ch. 6 discusses relativization and nominalization. Relative clauses are given a short overview with actual written examples. The types of clauses treated here are both regular and “beheaded”, or headless, relative clauses. In the following sections, nominalized clauses are discussed. H&S divide nominalized clauses in Newar into two types, finite and infinitival nominalized clauses, the latter taking a regular noun as nominalizer that follows the infinitival form of the verb. The former type takes the nominalizing agreement marker *-gu*, preceded by a finite form of the verb. The authors illustrate finite nominalized clauses that appear in both subject and object positions. They also provide an excellent functional explanation of the use of sentence final *-gu* in detail.

Ch. 7 addresses aspects of clause combining, such as clause subordination, conjunction, and correlatives. The first section of this chapter—based on Hale and Shrestha 1999—explicates converb constructions in Newar. Their clear explanation of the functions of converbal forms, which H&S name “conjunct participles”, are indispensable for scholars engaged in Newar text analysis.

Although it consists of only two pages, Ch. 8 is devoted to topic marking, exemplifying the choice of topic in each clause, based on the beginning part of a story. Since Newar has a variety of topic markers—as illustrated in Kiryu 2002—a more extensive analysis regarding topic markers could have been accommodated.

H&S’s book ends with a very short Newar text (Ch. 9) adapted from Kansakar 1977, and an exhaustive bibliography which I found very helpful. At the back of the book, H&S provide some enjoyable photographs of the Newars.

In summary, I found H&S’s book worth reading for any scholar working on TB languages. Since it is extensive and detailed, it will be helpful for a comparative study of phonology, morphology and syntax with other TB languages. As a researcher of Nepāl Bhāṣā, I also find this handy grammar of Newar to be a good companion in field research. One unfortunate feature of the book, however, is the absence of an index.

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