

# Nominal relational morphology of Syangja Gurung

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摘要：古隆（Gurung）語是古隆族的語言，屬於藏緬語族達芒語支（Tamangic：和藏語方言同屬藏－喜馬拉雅語群，主要分佈在尼泊爾北部，主要包括以下語言：達芒（Tamang）語，古隆（Gurung）語，塔卡利（Thakali）語，瑪囊巴（Manang）語，長特雅勒（Chantyal）語等），有43萬人使用，主要分佈在尼泊爾中部，喜馬拉雅山支脈安納普爾納山脈南坡的甘達基專區，即拉姆琼，卡斯基，塔納胡，廓爾喀，桑加和錫安賈等縣，以及道拉吉里專區的帕爾巴特縣，也有少數分布于錫金，不丹以及印度 的西孟加拉邦。作者在2000年至2012年期間向講古隆語的人搜集有關資料。古隆語的主要特徵可和其他達芒語支語言一樣，是按主詞，客詞，述詞的順序排列的。在詞類上，古隆語僅分作三類，分別是名詞，動詞和雜詞或虛字。一個字的重要意義是由它的語根表示，而以接尾詞或格助詞來表示它在語法上的關係。在本文，作者檢查古隆語中格助詞型態。

## 1. Nominal relational morphology

In this paper, we discuss the forms, meaning and uses of relational morphology<sup>1)</sup>, focusing on the word order of postpositions. It is used to express the relationship between the verb and its arguments or among arguments themselves. Primarily the semantic role and pragmatic role of the arguments of a sentence are indicated by the word order and case marking, i.e. postpositions in this language. Postpositions are used to express topics, comparatives, ergatives, absolutes, instrumentals, genitives, vocatives, locatives, comitatives, ablatives and datives. In the following, we will see each type of semantic and pragmatic role of NPs.

### 1.1 Topic

Topicalization refers to the placement of a word or a phrase at the initial position of a sentence or a clause. The English equivalents of this concept are ‘as far as, as for, speaking of.

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1) By relational morphology I mean both markers of grammatical function and location, collectively referred to as ‘relational functions’: the forms that express these relational functions are referred to as ‘relational markers’. In the grammatical descriptions of these languages, these markers have been variously analyzed as adpositions, particles, case clitics, and case affixes. I will consider all these forms together and will not be concerned here with their grammatical status but only with their function as relational markers: etymologically related forms have been analyzed as belonging to all of these grammatical classes. (Noonan: 2009)

The topic marker of Gurung is <-m>.

Topic can be defined as the first NP or post-positional phrase in a sentence. Sometimes a secondary topic appears after the first topic. If there is more than one topic, one is usually a temporal or locative phrase. The topic may be a pronoun, a lexical noun, or a complement clause.

(1) tʃu-m 1            tʃa-mo 1,            tara 4            tʃa-m 1            a-tʃa 1.  
 this-TOP            eat-EXIST            but            that-TOP            NEG-eat  
 'As for this, I eat it. But as for that, I do not eat it.'

(2) tɨjā -m 2            moʃa 2            tʃabeke 1            a-re 1  
 today-TOP            weather            good            NEG-EXIST  
 'Today the weather is not good.'

(3) tʃu-pa-m 1,            ŋa-i 1            tʃu 1            thū-mo 1  
 this-wine-TOP            1sg-ERG            this            drink-EXIST  
 'Speaking of wine, I drink this one.'

(4) tɨjā -m 2            moʃa 2            tʃabe-mo 1            pokuri-uri            ja-le  
 today-TOP            weather            good EXIST,            Pokhara-ALL            go-HORT  
 'It is fine today, let's go to Pokhala.'

<-be >is also used to denote topicality. So far as we know, there is no difference in the usage of these two topic markers.

(5) tɨjā -be 2            moʃa 2            tʃabeke 1            a-re 1  
 today-TOP            weather            good            NEG-EXIST  
 'Today the weather is not good.'

(6) tʃu 1            Nepala-r-be 4            tʃab 2            kljo 1  
 3sg            Nepal-LOC-TOP            good            place  
 'It is a good place in Nepal.' (emphasizing on 'in Nepal')

(7) tʃu 1 -be4            le 1            taɖʒa 4            a-re 1  
 this-TOP            so            fresh            NEG-EXIST  
 'As far as this is concerned, this is not so fresh.'

## 1.2 Comparative

There is no single comparative form of adjective in Gurung. The NP representing the standard of the comparison consists of the sentence initial topic NP and the comparative marker. The comparative postposition <-bhandā> is used in both comparative and superlative constructions. The sentence initial NP can take the topic marker, or ergative marker to

represent the actor.

### 1.2.1 Forms of the comparative degree

The positive degree and the comparative degree do not change the form of adjective. The forms corresponding to the positive degree and the comparative degree are defined here as forms of the ordinary degree.

- (8) tʃu 1      didi 1      kra-banda 2 larko 2      ane 1      kra 2      ringu-mo 2  
 3sg      sister      hair-than      another      sister      hair      long-exist  
 'His sister's hair is longer than her sister's hair.'

- (9) tʃu 1      ŋa-i 1      tʃa 4      bhanda      nure-mo 1  
 3sg      1sg-GEN      son      than      tall-exist  
 'He is taller than my son.'

As is often the case with Tibeto-Burman languages, it is not allowed to change the word order of the two NPs in a comparative construction.

### 1.2.2 Forms of the superlative degree

Forms of the superlative degree are as follows:

- (10) ŋa-i 1      tʃa 4      tʃume 1      fōlo 2 bhanda      mandu-mo 2  
 1sg-GEN      son      these      three than      short-exist  
 'My son is the shortest among three.'

- (11) Tamūme 2 Nepal-ar-be 2      dʒanmai-banda 3      baljo 2      mi 4  
 Gurung      Nepal-LOC-TOP      any-than      strong      people  
 'Gurung is the strongest people in Nepal. (lit. Gurung is stronger than any other people.)'

### 1.2.3 Forms of the excessive degree

The excessive degree is expressed by using the marker <bele>.

- (12) tʃu 1      bele 2      kekena-mo 4  
 this      too      sweet-exist  
 'This is too sweet.'

## 1.3 Ergative

The ergative case is marked by the postposition <i>, e.g. ŋa vs. ŋa-i 'I (erg)'. <ja> is also used to mark ergativity. The ergative morpheme is used to mark subject of transitive verbs. In this language transitivity is determined by the following criteria: a transitive verb is one which takes an object. Other semantic and discourse factors, such as person of subject, tense or aspect, definiteness, which are used in many languages in order to transitive from

intransitive are not directly involved in Gurung. The Gurung ergative marker is mainly used to highlight the agentive character of a subject which performs an activity.

- (13)  $\eta$ -i 1      pafe<sup>2</sup>       $\eta$ -i 1      pa 3      thū-na 2  
 1sg-GEN    child      1sg-GEN    wine      drink-witness  
 'My child drank my wine.' (I have seen the fact.)

The ergative is generally used whenever an animate subject and an animate object are linked together by a transitive verb to make clear who is doing what to whom.

- (14)  $\eta$ -ja 1      ka:le-lai 2      kho-mo 3  
 1sg-ERG    Kale-DAT      like-exist  
 'I like Kale.'

In a sentence containing an embedded sentence, both the main clause and the embedded sentence may take an actant in ergative case<sup>2)</sup>.

As is well known, Tibeto-Burman has a variety of morphological types of Ergativity and their ways of appearance vary from language to language.

A very limited number of the TB languages are consistently ergative and many languages belong to so-called split-ergative type. This will be further subclassified according to the degree of potentiality and mixture of case markers.

Gurung is said to be a split-ergative type; therefore, our description here will be focused on how split and/or mixed it is in terms of ergativity.

- (15)  $\eta$ -i 1      tʃata 2      maja-je 2  
 1sg-GEN    umbrella      lose-PFT  
 'My umbrella is missing.'
- (16)  $\eta$ -ja 1      tʃata 2      ma-la-je 2  
 1sg-ERG    umbrella      lose-CAUS-PFT  
 'I lost an umbrella.'
- (17)  $\eta$ a            kh a-je  
 1sg            come-PFT  
 'I came.'

As (17) shows, a typical intransitive agent does not take any marker, whereas a transitive agent in (16) is marked by a "-ja" and the patient is unmarked, i.e. in absolutive case. In (15), which is the intransitive sentence for (16), "my umbrella" is zero-marked. These examples,

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2) The ergativity of this language will be discussed in detail in another paper.

especially the ergative-absolutive combination in (16), may convince us that Gurung has a prototypical ergative characteristics.

Ergative case marker occurs in sentences including the following types of verbs: Action, Knowledge, Sense, Emotion, Possession and Potentiality.

### 1.3.1 Action

- (18) feta-ja 2            kapa 2        pati-je 4  
       Sheta-ERG        cup            broke-PAT  
       ‘Sheta broke a cup.’

- (19) tʃu mi -ja 1        ʃidū 2 t ho-je 4  
       the man -ERG    tree wood cut-PST  
       ‘The man cut the tree.’

In these examples, the transitive agent is erg-marked while the patient is unmarked. This marking is consistent.

### 1.3.2 Knowledge

- (20) tʃu-ja 1    Gurung-lai 1        ʃja-mo 3  
       3sg-ERG Gurung-DAT    know-exist  
       ‘He knows Mr. Gurung.’

### 1.3.3 Sense

- (21) ŋa-ja 1    name 2        kalidi-ba 4        the-je 1  
       1sg-ERG    bird            cry-PROG-NOM    hear-PST  
       ‘I heard a bird singing.’

### 1.3.4 Emotion

- (22) ŋa-ja 1    ka:le-lai 2        kho-mo 3  
       1sg-ERG    Kale-DAT        like-exist  
       ‘I like Kale.’

### 1.3.5 Possession

Possession is replaced by dative subject.

- (23) tʃu 1        tī 2        ŋa-r 1        a 4  
       this        house    1sg-loc    sentence final particle  
       ‘I possess the house. (lit: This house is mine.)’

### 1.3.6 Potentiality

- (24) tʃu mi -ja 1      tʃa-l 1      kha-mo 4  
 the man -ERG    eat-INF    can-exist  
 'The man can eat.'

From the sentences above the ergative case marking is consistent. Collecting more data on ergativity enables us to see the true picture of this marking system.

### 1.4 Absolutive

The absolutive case is assigned to the subject of an intransitive verb and the direct object of a transitive verb.

- (25) tʃu 1    kju-i 1              dʒa 3    jo-je 4  
 3sg    water-INST    wet      get-PFT  
 'He got wet because of water.'

- (26) tʃu 1    kju-i 1              dʒa 3    jo-je 4  
 3sg    water-INST    wet      get-PFT  
 'He got wet because of water.'

### 1.5 Instrumental

The instrumental case ending is identical to the ergative ending <-i> . Instrumental case indicates the instrument, implement or means with which an action is enacted or takes place. The instrumental marks an instrument distinct from the expressed or unexpressed ergative agent of the sentence used to subordinate causal clauses.

Instrument whereby an activity is performed and indicates the cause of an activity or state.

- (27) tʃu 1    kju-i 1              dʒa 3    jo-je 4  
 3sg    water-INST    wet      get-PFT  
 'He got wet because of water.'

- (28) ŋa-i 1    jo-i 2                  tʃa-mo 1  
 1sg-ERG    hand-INST    eat-NPST  
 'I eat by hand.'

- (29) ŋa-i 1    tʃamtʃa-i 2      tʃa-mo 1  
 1sg-ERG    spoon-INST    eat-NPST  
 'I eat with a spoon.'

### 1.6 Genitive

The genitive case is marked by <-i>, which is also identical to the ergative and instrumental case markers. It is primarily used to denote a possessive relationship between nouns. It follows the possessor and precedes the possessed noun. A NP marked by the genitive marker can be marked by other cases such as the locative or associative.

The most common role associated with genitive marked NPs is possessor. However, there are other possibilities including agent, location, time, theme etc. See the following examples:

- (30) a. possessor                      b. agent  
 Gurung-i 2    ti 2                      ṅa-i 1    tʃamtʃa-i 2 tʃa-ba 1  
 Gurung-GEN house                      1sg-GEN spoon eat-GRD  
 ‘Gurung’s house’                      ‘my eating with a spoon’
- c. theme                                  d. time                                  e. location  
 ṅa-i 1    ji 1                                  tija-i 2    moʃa 2                                  tī-r-i 2 tʃa-ba 1  
 1sg-GEN    death                                  today-GEN    weather                                  house-LOC-GEN eat-GRD  
 ‘my death’                                  ‘today’s weather’                                  ‘eating at home’

### 1.7 The Vocative

There is no independent vocative case, except in the singular of a few kinship terms. When addressing someone in the imperative, the second person pronoun may be left unexpressed. In the imperative constructions, a second person pronoun takes the ergative case when the verb is transitive and takes the absolutive case when the verb is intransitive. The absolutive argument of a transitive verb in the imperative is the patient, not the agent addressee.

Some examples of vocatives of kinship terms are below:

- (31) agi 4    ‘oh my elder brother!’  
 tʃō 2    ‘oh my younger brother!’  
 age 4    ‘oh my elder sister!’  
 kadʒi 2    ‘oh my younger sister!’  
 aba 2    ‘oh my father!’  
 ama 2    ‘oh my mother!’

### 1.8 Locative

The locative case ending is <-ra>. Its main function is to mark inanimate spatial location, direction, quantity, duration and goals. The locative ending may be added to other endings when it is a semantically plausible combination. The locative marking may be <-r> instead of <-ra> in allegro speech. There are some allomorphs of locative marker: <-ar> e.g. Nepal-ar ‘in Nepal’, <-ara> e.g. Betnam-ara ‘in Vietnam’, <-nana> e.g. Thai-nara ‘in Thailand’, and <-ṅara> e.g. Hoŋkoŋ-ṅara ‘in Hong Kong’.

- (32) lo 4 kri-r 2  
year one-LOC  
'for a year'
- (33) tʃume 1 pandhra-r 2 ja-mo 3  
3pl fifteen-LOC-EXIST  
'They will go on 15th.'
- (34) tʃa-i 1 tī-ra lo-di-mo  
3sg-ERG home-LOC study-PROG-EXIST  
'I study at home.'
- (35) paila 2 tʃu-kljo-r 1 bele-thebe 2 dū 2 mo-lo 4  
before this place-LOC very big tree EXIST PST  
'There used to be a very big tree in this place.'

#### Locative phrases

- (36) ŋa 1 jattra 2 lo-u 1 fanma 2 tʃa 1 ŋa-i 1 tī-r 2 ti-mo 2  
1sg trip do-NOM until 3sg 1sg-GEN house-LOC stay-EXIST  
'While we are on a trip, we will stay in our house.'

In the following example, <-ra> could be analyzed as marking an animate goal, however the presence of the genitive postposition <-i> indicates that there is a possessed noun which is not phonologically realized in the structure, such as place, which will be case marked by <-ra>:

- (37) nakju-i-ra 2  
dog-GEN-LOC  
'to the dog's place'

The locative marker is also used to mark temporal locations:

- (38) tʃa-ti-r 1  
that-day-LOC  
'on the day'

Locative marker is also used in expressions denoting change of a certain thing into another, as with into in English:

- (39) urkja-r 2 ta-je3  
yellow-LOC happen-PFT  
'(It) has changed into yellow.'



### 1.9 Allative

Allative is a kind of locative case, which is used to marked goals in the sense of terminate:

- (40) tʃa-i 1    tela 2    iʃkla-r 2    ja-je 3  
 3sg-ERG yesterday school-ALL go-PFT  
 'He went to school yesterday.'
- (41) ŋa-i 1    kalama 2    tebla-phi-r 2    the-mo  
 1sg-ERG pen            table-on-ALL    put-EXIST  
 'I put the pen on the table.'
- (42) philima 2    njo-u-ri    ja-u a  
 film            see-GER-ALL go-GER be  
 'I am going to see a movie.'

In (42), the allative marker is used to show the purpose of the action. Locative marker is also used to indicate the temporal meaning as in (43).

- (43) ʃadai 2    nakha-r 4    riʃa-kha-mo 2  
 everyday morning-LOC angry-come-EXIST  
 '(I) get angry every morning.'

### 1.9 Comitative

The comitative postposition is <-ni> 'with, and', which indicates accompaniment and coordinates nominal arguments. This might be a cognate and similar in function to Burmese -*ne*. The comitative postposition is used to coordinate nominal groups as a conjunction. It is affixed to all but the last noun in a series, e.g. ki-ni 1tʃu 1 'you and he'. It is also used in a meditative sense, e.g. tamu-kwi-ni 2 'in the Gurung language.' Of course, it is also used as comitative 'with'e.g. ŋa-ni 1 'with me'.

- (44) tʃu 1    kalama 2    ŋa-ni 1    tikim    ʃera 2    mo  
 this    pen    1sg-COM last    year    EXIST  
 'I have had this pen since last year.'
- (45) toko 2    tʃu-ni 1    mui 2    a-re 1  
 now    3sg-COM    money    NEG-EXIST  
 'He does not have money with him now.'
- (46) [ŋa-ni mobe]                            ʃamana 4    dʒanmai 4    bi-mo 2  
 1sg-COM have-NOM-GEN    item            all            give-EXIST  
 'I will give you all what I have.'

The comitative marker is also used in the expressions of feeling

(47) paila2 tʃa1 nga-ni 1 rifa-kha-lo 2  
 before 3sg 1dg-COM angry come-PST  
 'He got angry with me before.'

(48) tʃu-i1 Gurung-ni 2 lo-ye 1  
 3sg-ERG Gurung-COM study-EXIST  
 'He studied with Mr. Gurung.'

### 1.10 Ablative

Ablative marker expresses the meaning of 'from (the exterior of)'.

In space

(49) hoŋkoŋ 1 -le  
 Hong Kong-ABL  
 'from Hong Kong'

In time

(50) tʃa-ti-sero  
 that-day-ABL  
 'since that day'

### 1.11 Dative

The Gurung postposition <-lai> has many functions, among them the prototypical usage is dative. When it is used as the dative postposition, it is used to mark recipients in ditransitive verbs and animate patients, usually human. In the following sentence, both the recipient and the patient are marked with <-lai>:

(51) baba-lai 2 pre-no 2  
 father wait-HORT  
 'Let's wait for Father.'

(52) ŋa-i 1 gurung-i 2 tʃa-lai 4 a-mro-bele 1 barʃa-kri 2 ta-je 4  
 1sg-ERG Gurung-GEN child-ACC NEG-see-since year-one happen-PFT  
 'It is one year since I saw Mr. Gurung's child last.'

(53) ŋa-i 1 paʃe-lai 2 nja 2 thū-mi-mo  
 1sg baby-ACC milk drink-BEN-EXIST  
 'I am giving milk to my baby.'

- (54)  $\eta$ a-i 1 ki-lai 1 t amukwi 2 lo-di-mo 2  
 1sg-ERG 2sg-ACC Gurung language teach-PROG-EXIST  
 'I am teaching you the Gurung language.'

This postposition can be used to mark some experiencer subjects. Most of the examples of this are found in structure borrowed from Nepali or Indic origin, where dative subject construction are common. See the following sentences:

Experiencer subject

- (55)  $\eta$ a-lai 1 Himala-i 2 barer 4 pribe 4 kitaba2 tʃai-di-je 1  
 1sg-EXP Himalaya-GEN about write-GER book need-PFT  
 'I needed a book on Himalaya.'
- (56)  $\eta$ a-lai 1 tha-mo 3  
 1sg-EXP know-EXIST  
 'I know (it) .'
- (57) tʃa-m 1  $\eta$ a-lai je-mo 3  
 3sg-TOP 1sg-EXP recognize-EXIST  
 'I recognizes him.'

Nepali and other Indic languages also have the usage as accusative. The followings are some examples of Gurung:

- (58)  $\eta$ a-i 1tʃu 1 maʃtara-lai 2 a-kho-la 1  
 1sg-ERG this teacher-ACC NNG-like-PST  
 'I didn't like the teacher.'
- (59) tʃu mi -lai 1  $\eta$ a-i 1 paila 2 mro-la 4  
 that man-ACC 1sg-ERG before see-PST  
 'I have seen the man before.'
- (60) khi khi-lai na thoe-la ʃi-je  
 self self-ACC EMP cut PST die-PFT  
 'He killed himself and died.'
- (61) tela nga-lai dzoro mo la  
 yesterday 1sg-LAI fever EXIST-PST  
 'I had fever yesterday.'

The prototypical function of the dative case is to mark the indirect object, which frequently correspond to the recipients with verbs meaning transfer. Generally <-lai> is used to mark datives, but it can be used to mark accusative marker. However, as seen above, the case used for this purpose is invariably used to mark other types of elements as well. Sometimes, the postposition <-lai> is also used in the causative sentences:

- (62)  $\eta$ a-1 1      tʃa-lai 1      ja-l 3      bi-je 2  
 1sg-ERG      3sg-LAI      go-INF      give-PFT.  
 'I let him go.'

However, we can say that the usage in the following sentence shows the prototypical function of this postposition:

- (63)  $\eta$ a-i 1      ki-lai 1      tamu-kwi 2      lo-je1  
 1sg-ERG      2sg-DAT      Gurung-language      teach-PFT  
 'I taught him Gurung.'

In this sentence, in order to disambiguate the actor and the other referent, the postposition -lai is used. In so-called pronominalized languages, any postposition is used in this sentence since the actor is clearly marked on the verb, so no ambiguity exists even when the postposition marking of the goal is omitted. This case marking is called anti-ergative (LaPolla 1992) .

## 2. Summary of postpositional marking

In the previous sections, we looked at how various functions are coded in Gurung. In this section we will illustrate the functions that the different types of postpositions have. Following are the postpositions and the types of roles they mark, followed by the member of the example of each use.

-m/-be	Topic marker
-i	Agent, Instrumental, Genitive
-i/-ja	Ergative
-r	Locative, Allative, Temporal
-ni	Comitative
-bhandā	Comparative
-le	Ablative
-lai	Dative, Accusative, Experiencer, Benefactive

The most striking features of this language from historical linguistic perspective are as follows:

(64) Dative has separate shape from Locative.

(65) Ergative has separate shape from Ablative.

In general, Gurung is a dependent marking language, and grammatical relations are expressed by case markers or postpositions. The case marking pattern is the nominative-accusative type (S/A vs. P). S and A occur without any overt marker. The case marking of P, on the other hand, is determined by its animacy. That is, P is marked by the accusative marker when it is as high as or higher than A in the animacy hierarchy<sup>3)</sup>.

The relational morphology of Tibeto-Burman languages varies from language to language, and relational morphemes are so different that most of them cannot be reconstructed to PTB, therefore they are probably secondary innovations. Most relational morphemes in Tibeto-Burman languages do not appear to be cognate, but some cognates are reconstructable, e.g. PTB. Genitive marker <-i> corresponds to Written Tibetan i. The reconstruction of relational morphemes deserves further study.

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3) The animacy hierarchy of this language will be discussed in detail in another paper.

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