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Journal

Himalayan Linguistics, 10(1)

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Publication Date

2011

DOI

10.5070/H910123574

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Himalayan linguistics

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A sociolinguistic study of the Baram language

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a sociolinguistic study of the Baram language undertaken as a part of the Linguistic and Ethnographic Documentation of the Baram Language (LEDBL) project funded by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (HRELDP) and hosted by the Central Department of Linguistics at Tribhuvan University in Nepal. This study, carried out in different Baram-speaking areas in the Gorkha District (Western Nepal), is based on the analysis of data collected by the LEDBL team between May 2007 and April 2010, employing tools such as sociolinguistic questionnaires and Swadesh Wordlist, as well as interpersonal interactions and conversations with members of the Baram community and Baram language consultants.

The main objectives of this sociolinguistic study were to:

- i. Identify the areas of Baram settlement;
- ii. Gather information about Baram speakers;
- iii. Collect details about various sociolinguistic aspects of the language such as the language name, language variation, knowledge and use of the language, language attitudes, vitality and maintenance, and the level of language endangerment.

KEYWORDS

Baram, linguistic survey, language endangerment, language use, lexical similarities and differences, language documentation, language variation

This is a contribution from *Himalayan Linguistics*, Vol. 10(1) [*Special Issue in Memory of Michael Noonan and David Watters*]: 187–225.

ISSN 1544-7502

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A sociolinguistic study of the Baram language

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1 The Baram people: Language names, settlements, and demographics

Beginning with nomenclature, two alternative terms, *Baram* and *Baramu*, are used as both ethnonyms and glossonyms. Variants of these terms have been used to refer to the Baram in the past; Hodgson (1847) and Grierson (1909) used *Bbramu*, while Bista (1980) used both *Bbra:mu* and *Ba:rbmu*. The Baram people, however, prefer to call themselves *Balbang*,¹ which means ‘people’ or ‘human kind’ in their language.

The Baram people are a Tibeto-Burman ethnic group. Physically they resemble the Gurungs and Magars, but linguistically and culturally they are very different from any of the neighboring Tibeto-Burman communities.

The 2001 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) report of Nepal shows that the main area where the Baram people are settled is in the central-southern part of the Gorkha district of western Nepal, along the Daraundi and Budhigandaki rivers and their tributaries. A very small number of these people live in the Dhading, Lalitpur, Lamjung, Tanahun, and Syangja districts.

According to this report, the total population of the Baram community is 7383, which constitutes 0.01% of the total population of Nepal. Most of them (viz. 6709 or 90.9%) live in the Gorkha district while the rest of them live in the other parts of Nepal. Figure 1 presents the distribution of the Baram people in the Gorkha district, their mainland.

1 This word is a compound form in which *bal* means ‘human’ and *bang* means ‘group’ or class; it is used in the villages where people still speak the Baram language. The villages where people have given up speaking the language use the term ‘Baram’.

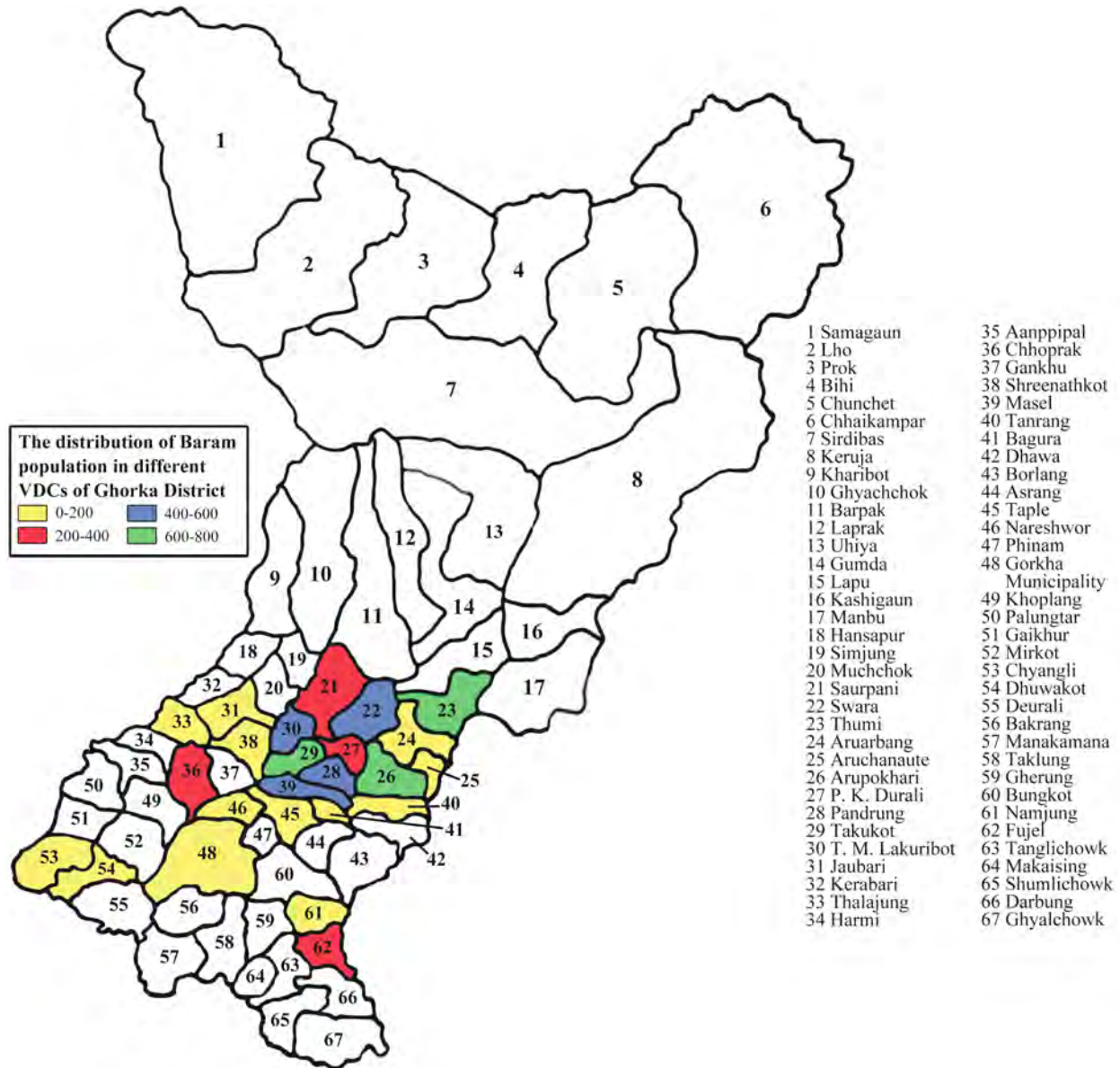


Figure 1. Distribution of Baram speakers in the Gorkha District

There are several discrepancies in historical reports about the precise location of the Baram people. According to Hodgson (1840: 1114-25), the habitat of the Baram was the region called *Gharga*, east of the river *Kali*. He mentioned that they lived in the lower regions—the river valleys that were hot and infested with malaria—and yet seemed immune to the disease. The word *Gharga* phonetically sounds similar to *Gorkha* and, in fact, Gorkha lies east of the Kali Gandaki River. This suggests that Hodgson was correct in his statement but simply misspelled or mispronounced the word *Gorkha* as *Gharga*. His contention that they lived in the lower regions accords with Baram oral history, which holds that previously the Baram people lived in the river valleys, but that later when Brahmins and/or Kshetris migrated there, they deserted their original villages and moved up to the mountains. There are still several Baram settlements in the river valleys.²

2 Baram settlements such as Mailung, Jarang, and some parts of Chhoprak, are still in the river valleys.

Grierson and Konow (1909), however, argue that Baram was one of the tribes from the Nepal Terai.³ According to Bista (1980), the Baram people inhabited the Terai and the inner valleys, living in hot, humid, and malarious areas.⁴ Lewis (2009) assumes the habitat of the Baram to be north of the Gorkha district in the Gandaki Zone, along the Daraundi Khola and its tributaries.

The Baram people consider themselves to be indigenous to their area of settlement. Thapa (1996: 7-8), however, argues that linguistically and culturally they are different from any of the neighboring Tibeto-Burman groups and that this suggests that the Baram migrated to their present location after numerous other migrations, and is thus a group dislocated from its ancestral community. He has hypothesized that the Baram came to their present locations from the eastern part of Nepal where the Sunuwars are now settled, as the clan and sub-clan names used by the Baram are similar to those of the Sunuwars.

A press release by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (January 03, 2005) takes a similar view when it states, “Baramu peoples are known as aboriginal inhabitants of mid-hill regions of Nepal. Today they are found mostly in Gorkha and Tanahun districts. They are also found in Dhading, Makwanpur and Lalitpur districts. Their popular myth of origin connects them with Sunuwars, Surel, Jirel, Rais and Limbus, the other indigenous nationalities of eastern Nepal.”⁵

Moving to the location of actual Baram language speakers, the CBS report claims that only 342 people (about 4.6% of the total Baram ethnic group) speak the Baram language, while the vast majority (viz. 95.4%) have shifted to Nepali completely. Our fieldwork could not, however, confirm these figures. According to the CBS report, there were 147 speakers in Chhoprak Village Development Committee (VDC), 163 speakers in Swara VDC and 18 speakers in the Rautahat district, but our research has not been able to identify any speakers in either Chhoprak or Swara. Furthermore, the claim that there are some Baram speakers in the Rautahat district cannot be true, because there is no Baram community at all in that district.

We did find some elderly Baram speakers in the VDC's of Dandagaun, Takukot-8, and Mailung Takukot-5 in the Gorkha District. Dandagaun is the only place where the language is still in daily use.

2 Culture, religion and education

Although the Baram practice their traditional culture, they are also highly influenced by Hindu culture and practices. Consequently, there exist two patterns of religious ritual practices in the Baram community: the native practices and the adopted Hindu practices. Traditionally, the Baram seem to have been worshippers of nature. The worship of Chandi⁶ (the Goddess, the symbol of

3 Baram settlements are not found in the Terai at present, but in the river valleys and mountains. There is no evidence that shows that they lived in the Terai in the past. As stated in Grierson (1909), the source of information for Grierson and Konow (1903) was Hodgson (1840) in which he states “...they lived in the lower regions infested with malaria...” Grierson and Konow may have assumed that the lower region infested with malaria was the Terai, but it could as easily have been the river valleys in the mountainous regions, which can also be hot and malarious.

4 Bista also seems to rely on the information given by Grierson and Konow (1909).

5 The statement made by NEFIN is based on Gautam and Thapa-Magar (1994).

6 The worship of Chandi is one of the major cultural practices of the Baram. They celebrate Chandi Purnima as their most important festival.

natural power) is central to Baram traditional cultural practice.⁷ Rituals for the worship of Chandi also entail the worship of Kul (the family God), Bhume (the land God), Vayu (the wind God), and Van Jhankri (the jungle God), among others.

Apart from their native practices, the Barams also follow most of the Hindu rites and rituals, and celebrate the Hindu festivals. They have also adopted cultural practices from other non-Hindu neighboring communities. For example, the Barams in Takukot take part in Gai Jatra (the “cow festival”), which is celebrated by the Newar community. It is striking, however, that the Barams have nativized the adopted practices and follow them in their own way.⁸

The basic profession of the Baram people is agriculture; in the past they received loans of arable land under the Kipat system,⁹ indicating that the Barams were traditionally farmers. Farming and animal husbandry are complementary parts of the agricultural subsistence of the Barams. However, their ownership of land has decreased due to expansion of the family and other factors; as a result, their economic situation is gradually degrading as well. Apart from agriculture, the Barams are also found to be involved in other occupations, such as government service (especially membership in the army and police forces), business, and labor.

Regarding education, a survey to identify the educational status of the Baram people was conducted by the Nepal Baram Association in 10 VDCs of Gorkha district in 2065 VS (Baramu et al. 2009). The results are presented in Table 1; these show a remarkably low level of education for the population as a whole.

| Level passed | Number of people | % out of total Baram population |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Illiterate | 10812 | 51.3 |
| Literate | 7110 | 33 |
| Primary | 2116 | 9 |
| Lower secondary | 810 | 3 |
| Secondary | 308 | 0.13 |
| SLC | 189 | 0.08 |
| Intermediate | 38 | 0.01 |
| Bachelor's degree | 9 | 0.003 |
| Master's degree | 1 | 0.00042 |

Table 1. The educational status of the Baram people (Baramu et al. 2009)

3 Genetic affiliation

The Baram language has been variously positioned in the different classifications of Tibeto-Burman languages. The closest linguistic relative of Baram is considered to be Thami (Thangmi),

⁷ This practice is also major among the Kirati people.

⁸ An example of this is Janai Purnima, a Brahmin festival, which the Brahmins observe with fasting but the Barams celebrate with a feast.

⁹ In the Kipat system the government lent land to individuals or groups under certain conditions. This system was popular in Nepal before 1938. In 1938 the system was eliminated and all Kipat land was converted to private ownership.

which is mainly spoken in the Dolakha District to the east of the Kathmandu Valley. Lexical and grammatical comparisons of Baram and Thami justify the assertion that they are close genetic relatives within Tibeto-Burman. A preliminary lexical comparison of Baram with Thami, Chepang, and Newar using the Swadesh 100 Wordlist shows that Baram has 45-50% lexical similarity with Thami, 30-35% with Chepang, and 25-30 % with Newar. The data supporting these results is given in Appendix 3.

Regarding the positioning of these languages with respect to broader classifications of Tibeto-Burman, Grierson and Konow (1909; cited in Hale 1973: 2) classify Baram and Thami into two separate groups: Baram was classified in the catch-all category of “Other Nepal Dialects,” while Thami is put into the “Complex Pronominalized” cluster. By contrast, Voegelin and Voegelin (1964, 1965; cited in Hale 1973: 7) group Baram and Thami together in the “Western Pronominalized Group.” This classification is based on morphological rather than lexical similarity. Pronominalization (the presence of complex systems of pronominal marking on the verb) has long been an important criterion for the classification of Tibeto-Burman languages (e.g., Benedict 1972). But it is important to note that although Voeglin and Voeglin’s classification includes both Thami and Baram in the complex pronominalized group, Thami is still a pronominalized language whereas Baram has ceased to be so. We have so far found no trace of pronominalization in Baram, nor has it been found even in the oldest available data, supplied by Hodgson (as presented in Grierson (1909)). Baram has no agreement system; instead, its system of verbal marking follows a pattern which is more or less similar to the conjunct-disjunct system of Kathmandu Newar (Hale and Shrestha 2006: 55-58). It is therefore untenable to characterize Baram as pronominalized.

Shafer (1966 cited in Hale 1973: 3) also asserts that Baram and Thami belong to the same group. He places them in the “West Himalayish Section” of the Bodic Division. Contrary to Voeglin and Voeglin, this classification relies on lexical similarity rather than morphological similarity (Hale 1973: 2).

Moving to more recent proposals, Bradley (1997: 13) classifies Baram in the Eastern (Nepal) branch of West Himalayish/Kannauri. He also classifies Thami in the same group. The full classification within Tibeto-Burman is shown in Figure 2 (ellipses indicate other branches and languages not specified here).

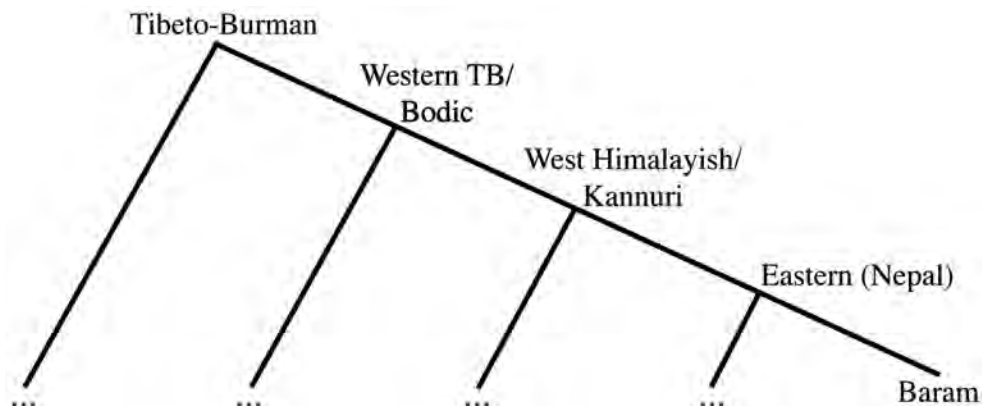


Figure 2. Genetic classification of Baram, according to Bradley (1997)

Van Driem (2003) claims that Baram, Thami, and Newar together make up a group within the Mahakiranti branch of Tibeto-Burman. This conclusion was based on several Baram gram-

Set I questions (for speakers) were divided into eight sections. The main objectives of this questionnaire were to:

- i. Find out the linguistic background and language proficiency of the language speakers;
- ii. Explore the linguistic distribution, language variation, and multilingual situation of the Baram speakers;
- iii. Evaluate language vitality and the pattern of language endangerment; and
- iv. Assess the language attitudes of the speakers.

Set II questions (for non-speakers) were divided into seven sections. These questions aimed to:

- i. Understand the sociolinguistic situation of the Baram language;
- ii. Investigate the locations where the language is spoken;
- iii. Evaluate the pattern of language loss in the Baram communities where the language is not spoken; and
- iv. Assess the language attitudes of the non-speakers.

The results produced by the formal surveys were supplemented by information gathered through informal conversations with a variety of people about different aspects of the language.¹⁰ These provided significant information about the sociolinguistic situation of Baram. Generally, we conversed with the informants in the Baram language.¹¹

In the field, we also made direct observations of language use, language attitudes, and other issues relevant to the sociolinguistic characterization of Baram. These observations were systematically recorded in field notes. This component of the methodology was particularly important because it is possible that people's responses may at times vary from reality.

4.2 Survey location and sampling

In 2006, Krishna Prasad Chalise and Balaram Prasain, in collaboration with the Nepal Baram Association, carried out a short (one week) survey of the Baram areas in the Gorkha District. Their goal was to collect information necessary to prepare a grant proposal. This survey showed that the Takukot VDC in the Gorkha District was the only place where the Baram language is still in regular use. A follow-up pilot survey during the early phases of the LEDBL Project confirmed this finding. We thus selected Takukot VDC as the field site of the LEDBL Project.

Takukot was thus adopted as the study centre and the VDCs around Takukot with the largest populations of Barams were selected as the study locations. A total of 51 respondents were selected from 11 VDCs in the Gorkha District. Of these, 50 were Barams and 1 was a non-Baram

¹⁰ Observation was a very useful method of gathering information. Our stay in the field for more than 8 months greatly contributed to our understanding of the linguistic and cultural situations of the Baram community.

¹¹ For the first two years of the project, we (Krishna Chalise, Balaram Prasain, Dubi Nanda Dhakal, and Krishna Poudel) learned the language so that we could communicate in it by the time of these surveys. Because of our fluency in Baram, during our last field trip some speakers in Mailung could not guess that we were not authentic Baram people. They said that we were Baram but with quite a different appearance. Our linguistic abilities helped us in our personal communications with the speakers, allowing us to elicit more information. These abilities also contributed to our good relationship with the community; they were very helpful and cooperative.

(who speaks the Baram Language).¹² The largest number of survey respondents were from Takukot and its adjacent VDCs: Pandrung, Masel, and Panckhuwa Deurali. Table 2 shows the number of respondents selected from each of the VDCs. Figure 4 shows the locations of the VDCs in the Gorkha district.

| VDCs | Number of respondents | VDCs | Number of respondents |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Masel | 8 | Aru Arbang | 1 |
| Baguwa | 1 | Thumi | 1 |
| Pandrung | 16 | Aruchanaute | 1 |
| Panchkhuwa Deurali | 5 | Arupokhari | 1 |
| Takukot | 15 | Takumajh Lakuribot | 1 |
| Tandrang | 1 | | |

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 51

Table 2. Number of respondents from VDCs in the Gorkha district



Figure 4. The VDCs of the survey area

12 We have met some non-Baram people who can speak Baram. Man Bahadur Bishwakarma of Dandagaun, Takukot-8, can speak Baram, although not fluently. People reported that in the past, non-Baram people around Dandagaun used the language to communicate with the Barams. People in Mailung, Dandagaun-5, specifically reported that Newars living in nearby Baram communities used to speak Baram. We were able to meet two elderly Newars who are Baram speakers.

In order to make the sample as fair and balanced as possible, survey respondents were selected on the basis of four independent parameters: age, sex, education level, and ability to speak Baram.

- i. Age and sex: The respondents were selected to represent different age and sex groups. Respondent age ranged from 16-80 and there were 27 females and 24 males. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the respondents by age and sex.

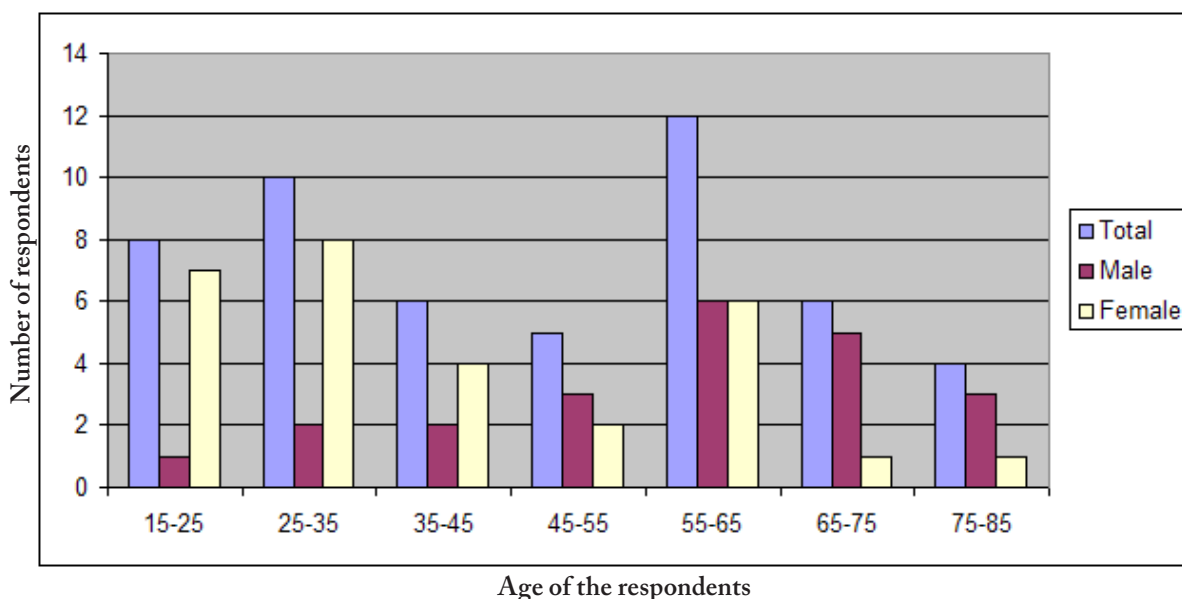


Figure 5. The sampling of the respondents by age and sex

- ii. Education: Of the respondents selected, 24 were preliterate, 19 literate, and 8 educated.
- iii. Speaker vs. non-speaker: Of the selected respondents, 17 were speakers and 34 non-speakers of the Baram language.

5 Findings

5.1 The name

The terms *Baram* and *Baramu* are popular among the Baram communities and are also used as their surnames; about 10% use *Baramu* while about 90% use *Baram*. Native speakers of the language use the terms *Balbang* and *Baram* alternately, but the non-speakers only call themselves *Baram*. The people from other communities also call them *Baram*. The etymology of the terms *Baram* and *Baramu* is not known.¹³

¹³ During our research we tried to extract information about the origin of these words but we could not find them in the Baram language. They do not appear to be native Baram words. The words are also not found in Nepali or in other languages of Nepal. The oldest known use of the word Baram is in an inscription in Gorkha from the period of Aditya Malla (1378 VS). The language used in the inscription seems to be some form of old Nepali but the meaning of the word is still unknown.

Moving to terms for the language itself, the heteroglotonym is *Baram* and the autoglotonym is *Balkura*. *Bal* is a Baram word meaning ‘people’ and *kura*, borrowed from Nepali, means ‘language’. The meaning of the term *Balkura* is thus ‘human language’. The survey showed that the Baram people overwhelmingly prefer the autoglotonym to the heteroglotonym. Of the 50 total Baram respondents, 47 (92%) preferred the autoglotonym (*Balkura*) and only three (6%) liked the heteroglotonym (*Baram*).

From our personal communications, we discovered that people from other language groups living in the Baram speaking areas (Takukot-8 and Takukot-5) also use the autoglotonym, whereas those in communities living farther from the Baram-speaking areas use the heteroglotonym.

5.2 *Baram-speaking areas*

Baram is spoken in Takukot-5, Mailung (Figure 6), and in Takukot-8, Dandagaun (Figure 7), in the Gorkha district. These two villages are about four kilometers apart and are situated on two opposite slopes of the same mountain, the first facing the south and the second facing the north. The way to the district headquarters runs along the top of the mountain; people therefore come up from their villages in order to go to their destinations. As a result, the people in each of these two villages report having little contact with those from the other village.



Figure 6. Mailung, Takukot-5



Figure 7. Dandagaun, Takukot-8

In Mailung, we could find only nine speakers, all of whom were older than 60 years.¹⁴ Of these, only two speakers, an elderly couple, use Baram at home in daily communication. The remainder do not use it because they are the only speakers in their households.

Dandagaun is the only place where the language is still spoken. 129 people identified themselves as native speakers of Baram. It was reported that in some of the villages there are handfuls of speakers who either married from the two villages or who learned the language from the villages in various ways.¹⁵

The research team carried out a detailed sociolinguistic study of Dandagaun village. For this purpose, we visited and collected data from every household. There are four major toles in the village: Gaira Tole, Mukhiya Tole, Danda Tole, and Pallogaun Tole. In total, 684 people live in 114 households; 357 are male and 327 are female. Of the total population only 18% (129 out of 684) identified themselves as speakers of the language. Of these, 39.53% (51 out of 129) are fluent speakers (defined as those who use it in daily life, even if only in a limited number of domains), 34.10% (44 out of 129) are semi-speakers, and 26.35% (34 out of 129) are not really speakers but have tacit knowledge of the language to a certain extent. All of the speakers are bilingual and elderly. Most of the fluent speakers are above 60 years of age. The youngest fluent speaker we found is

14 As of the time of publication there are only 8 speakers; one has recently passed away.

15 We noted that if a person knew only a few words and sentences of Baram, people called him or her a Baram speaker.

48 years old as of time of publication. Every year the number of the speakers is decreasing. During the last three years of the project, six fluent speakers passed away.

Some enthusiastic children have been using the Baram-Nepali-English dictionary compiled by Yadava et al. (2005) as reference material to learn Baram words. It was reported that three people from the Nepali speaking community in Dandagaun can speak Baram as their second language. As noted above, they reported that Baram was widely used in the past, both in the Baram and non-Baram communities.

5.3 *Language variation*

As Baram is spoken only in two small villages within a distance of four km, viz. Dandagaun and Mailung, there are no distinct regional dialects. There are, however, a few variations in pronunciation and vocabulary between the forms of the language used in the two villages. Out of 1251 basic Baram native words extracted from the LEDBL Corpus, there are slight variations in pronunciation in 49 words. In addition, 15 words that were found in the Mailung variety are not present in the Dandagaun variety (Appendix 4). As Baram is spoken by a single ethnic group with no social stratification, it has no obvious social variations.

5.4 *Multilingualism*

5.4.1 *The setting*

The Baram live within a larger local community that is ethnically complex. Brahmins, Kshetries, and the so-called Hindu lower castes inhabit the vicinity of Dandagaun, whereas Brahmins, Kshetries, and Newars inhabit the vicinity of Mailung. Both the Baram and the non-Baram people have been living there for a long time in social and cultural harmony. The relationship among them is very friendly and they live in daily contact with one another.¹⁶ Nepali and Baram are both spoken in these areas. Nepali is used widely while Baram is used in limited domains and particular situations. The Gurung and Newar languages were also spoken in adjacent villages in the past, but now their use has been drastically reduced due to the increasing prevalence of Nepali.

As a result of this extensive contact and language shift, the Baram language shows significant evidence of convergence with Nepali both lexically and grammatically. The number of Nepali loan words included in the dictionary of Baram,¹⁷ 2478 out of the 3729 (66.45%), supports this fact. Similarly, several grammatical structures have been borrowed from Nepali. They will be discussed in Kansakar et al. (forthcoming) in detail.

5.4.2 *Knowledge of the language*

Of the 51 people surveyed, 17 identified themselves as Baram speakers: 16 were ethnically Baram and one was non-Baram. Table 3 shows the responses of these self-identified speakers about their knowledge of the Baram language and their reported abilities in both Baram and Nepali.

16 This statement is based on personal communication with both the Baram and non-Baram people in Dandagaun and Mailung.

17 Kansakar et. al (2011).

| | Which language(s) do you speak? | Which language(s) do you speak better? |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Baram | 0 (0%) | 4 (23.5%) |
| Baram and Nepali | 17 (100%) | 7 (41.17%) |
| Nepali | 0 (0%) | 6 (35.29%) |
| TOTAL | 17 (100%) | 17 (100%) |

Table 3. Responses about the knowledge of the language

There is not a single monolingual speaker of Baram; all are bilingual in Nepali and Baram and no one we met throughout the study could identify any person who was thought to be monolingual in Baram. With respect to speaker perceptions of their relative proficiency in the two languages, only four (23.5%) of the 17 respondents considered themselves to be better in Baram; 41.17% reported equal proficiency in both the languages, and 35.29% considered themselves to be better speakers of Nepali.

Table 4 reports results for several questions designed to elicit more detailed speaker assessments about proficiency in Baram and Nepali.

| | Are you always able to understand jokes and proverbs? | Are you always able to understand heated arguments? | Can you always find the right words to express your thoughts? |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Baram | 1 (5.88%) | 1 (5.88%) | 1 (5.88%) |
| Baram and Nepali | 11 (64.70%) | 11 (64.70%) | 11 (64.70%) |
| Nepali | 5 (29.42%) | 5 (29.42%) | 5 (29.41%) |
| TOTAL | 17 (100.00%) | 17 (100.00%) | 17 (100.00%) |

Table 4. Responses to questions to elicit information on proficiency

Regarding levels of comprehension in challenging verbal exchanges, 64.70% reported having equal levels of comprehension in both the languages, 5.88% reported better comprehension in Baram, and 29.41% reported better comprehension in Nepali. The same distribution was found for speaker responses regarding expressive abilities in the two languages. Taken in aggregate, these statistics demonstrate that the level of proficiency in Baram among people who still speak the language is decreasing.

In response to a further question, 100% of the respondents said that they had learned both Nepali and Baram through exposure to the language in their homes and local communities. This indicates that both of the languages have long been in use in Baram society. Further support for this is found in the lexical data collected by Hodgson more than a century ago (Hodgson 1880); of the 165 basic words collected, some are Nepali loan words.

5.4.3 Use of the language

In daily life the Baram people use their mother tongue only in limited domains. The following anecdote, taken from our field notes, is highly revealing regarding the true circumstances of the level of Baram usage in the community:

On the 16th January, 2008 we recorded the first session with Mina Baram. We were very pleased to meet her because she was the most fluent speaker we had ever met. After the session Mina expressed her excitement saying, “I am speaking Baram after a gap of complete 6 years.

The statement made by Mina¹⁸ gives us a vivid and significant picture of daily language choice in the Baram community.

To explore this issue further, we constructed a number of survey questions designed to elicit reports on the relative usage of the two languages based on the following parameters:

- i. The speaker’s relationship with the interlocutors;
- ii. The type of verbal or cognitive activity.

For the purpose of this sub-study we selected 15 speakers.¹⁹ To derive a quantifiable result for each speaker reflective of their degree of Baram usage, we assigned a value to each response: if the speaker reported using only Baram in a given interactional context or domain of use, we assigned a value of 2; if a speaker reported using Baram or Nepali, we assigned a value of 1; if a speaker reported using only Nepali, or if the question was not answered or did not apply to a particular speaker, we assigned a value of 0.

Table 5 presents the results. In each cell, the number of respondents answering affirmatively is given first; the calculated value is given in parentheses.

| Which language do you use with the following people? | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Grandparents | Parents | Elder brother | Elder sister | Younger brother | Younger sister | Spouse | Children | Relatives | Pets | Servants |
| Generally Baram | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 3 (6) | 6 (12) | 1 (2) | 1 (2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 3 (6) | 5 (10) | 2 (4) |
| Both languages | 1 (1) | 3 (3) | 3 (3) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 2 (2) | 7 (7) | 2 (2) | 1 (2) |
| Generally Nepali | 4 (0) | 4 (0) | 5 (0) | 4 (0) | 10 (0) | 10 (0) | 8 (0) | 13 (0) | 5 (0) | 8 (0) | 4 (0) |
| No response; absence of addressee | 10 (0) | 8 (0) | 4 (0) | 2 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (0) | 2 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 8 (0) |
| TOTAL VALUES | 15 (1) | 15 (3) | 15 (9) | 15 (15) | 15 (6) | (15) 6 | 15 (5) | 15 (2) | 15 (13) | 15 (12) | 15 (5) |

Table 5. Use of Baram in interpersonal communication

The values calculated for each interpersonal context allow us to rank these in terms of the likelihood that the language of interaction will be Baram. The resulting hierarchy is presented in Figure 8:

18 Mina Baram is a 70 year old woman who is a fluent speaker of Baram, which was her first language. She was married out of Dandagaun village but after the death of her husband she has been living in the village with her family.

19 Two respondents did not answer these questions.

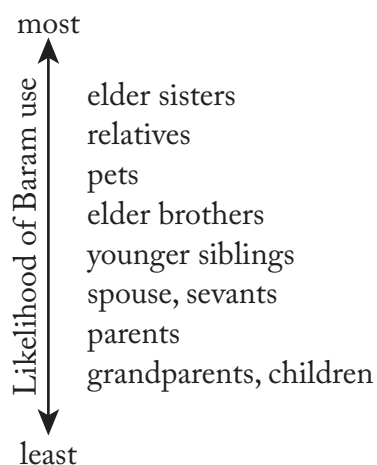


Figure 8. Likelihood of Baram use by interpersonal context

As most of the speakers are elderly, they themselves do not have grandparents or parents. Only five of the speakers have grandparents and seven have parents. These speakers were comparatively junior in age, so their use of Baram with the older generations was obviously very low.

It is interesting to note that speakers report greater use of Baram with elder sisters than with elder brothers. Some respondents stated the opinion that the use of the native tongue indicates a higher degree of intimacy between the speaker and the listener. Together these facts suggest that the brother-sister relation is closer than the brother-brother relation.²⁰ In Baram society, sisters go to live in their husbands' houses after marriage. Women report that when they come to their maternal houses they use Baram instead of Nepali because it gives them the feeling of greater intimacy. On the other hand, the relationship between brothers is rather formal and less intimate, because they must live at the same place, share parental properties, and also share common borders of their lands. It is also interesting to note that speakers report lower rates of Baram use with younger siblings than with elder siblings. This indicates that the use of Baram has been not only been decreasing from generation to generation, but also from elder to younger within the same generation.

The use of Baram between spouses is low due to the fact that seven (out of 15) of the respondents are married to non-Baram speakers and, of the others, some of the spouses have very low proficiency in Baram. Nepali is the daily language of such households.

The use of the language with other relatives is comparatively high. This is because most Baram speakers have a large number of Baram relatives, at least some of whom are also speakers. Within Dandagaun, the majority of speakers are married and the spouse's elder and younger sisters are treated as close relatives in Baram culture.

Pet keepers have close relationships with their pets, and therefore use Baram with them. During our fieldwork we observed that speakers mostly addressed their pets and cattle in Baram.

The interpersonal context that is least likely to elicit use of Baram is that of adults to children. This indicates the complete discontinuation of intergenerational language transmission to the younger generation. Two very old speakers said they use Baram and Nepali with their grownup sons and daughters, but not with their younger children.

²⁰ This conclusion was drawn on the basis of views expressed by Baram people when we administered the sociolinguistic questionnaires. The explanation is also the opinion of the respondents that we recorded in our field notes.

None of the Baram people served as permanent household employees. Those who have given responses in the column are the people who work on daily wages as household employees.

A second set of survey questions was developed to discover the types of verbal activities that speakers undertake in the Baram language. Again, we selected 15 speakers (the same set as the previous 15). Values were assigned as follows: 2 for activities reported to be undertaken in Baram, 1 for activities that could be undertaken in either Baram or Nepali, and 0 for activities undertaken only in Nepali. Table 5 shows the number of respondents who claim to use the particular language for the specified activity. Values are indicated in parentheses.

| Which language(s) do you use for the following activities? | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|---------|
| | To think | To play | To curse | To joke | To scold | To sing | To count | To dream | To abuse | To perform rituals | To pray |
| Generally Baram | 5 (10) | 1 (2) | 1 (2) | 1 (2) | 3 (6) | 0 (0) | 6 (12) | 1 (2) | 1 (2) | 1 (2) | 4 (8) |
| Both languages | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 9 (9) | 7 (7) | 6 (6) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 7 (7) | 6 (6) | 6 (6) | 3 (6) |
| Generally Nepali | 6 (0) | 5 (0) | 5 (0) | 7 (0) | 6 (0) | 11 (0) | 5 (0) | 7 (0) | 8 (0) | 8 (0) | 8 (0) |
| TOTAL | 15 (14) | 11 (7)* | 15 (11) | 15 (9) | 15 (12) | 15 (4) | 15 (16) | 15 (9) | 15 (8) | 15 (8) | 15 (14) |

Table 5. Use of Baram for different types of verbal and cognitive activities

Again the values calculated for each activity allow us to rank them along a hierarchy from most likely to be conducted in Baram to least likely to be conducted in Baram. The hierarchy is given in Figure 9.

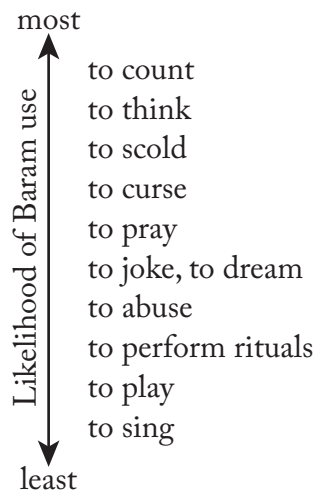


Figure 9. Likelihood of Baram use for different types of verbal and cognitive activities

Speakers reported being more likely to use Baram for counting than for any of the other verbal or cognitive activities included in the survey. An interesting point is that the numeral system

at present only retains the native numerals from 1 to 3 (*de, nis, som*);²¹ the remaining numerals are Nepali loans. Nevertheless, speakers consider themselves to be counting in Baram as long as they include the three native numerals.

The survey suggested that Baram is more likely to be used for activities such as thinking, scolding, cursing, and praying than for joking, dreaming, abusing, performing rituals, or playing.

Speakers do not sing in Baram and there is not a single traditional native Baram song. It is equally interesting that Baram is not used in any Baram rituals; they use Nepali instead. This is likely due to the linguistic and cultural convergence that resulted from prolonged contact with Nepali-speaking people.

5.5 Language attitude

In various discussions that we held with Baram people over the course of our fieldwork in the Gorkha villages, individuals reported that they used to hesitate to speak their own language in front of speakers of other languages and to identify themselves as Barams. Several Baram people are known to have identified themselves as Gurungs or Magars for higher prestige and upward mobility, and to avail themselves of opportunities to join the army.²² But at present, because of the democratic movements and growing awareness among the minority ethnic groups, Barams are happy to use their language and to identify themselves as Baram. Some organizations have been established to promote their language and culture. The Nepal Baram Association, a national-level organization, and the Gorkha Baram Association, at the district level, have been actively promoting the language, culture, and identity of the Baram people.

We surveyed language attitudes among all 50 respondents, both speakers and non-speakers, from 11 VDCs in different parts of the Gorkha District. There were 22 speakers and 28 non-speakers. Table 6 presents the results for two questions that query the overall attitudes of speakers towards Baram and Nepali.

| | Which language do you prefer to speak? | Among the languages you speak, which do you like most? |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Baram | 37 (74%) | 15 (71%) |
| Both Baram and Nepali | 1 (2%) | 3 (14%) |
| Nepali | 12 (24%) | 2 (10%) |
| No response | 0 (0%) | 2 (10%) |
| TOTAL | 50 (100%) | 21 (100%) |

Table 6. Overall attitudes of respondents towards Baram and Nepali

The results show that 74% of the respondents preferred Baram, 24% preferred Nepali, and 2% were neutral.²³ Among the speakers, 15 stated that they liked Baram more, while only three

21 Hodgson (1880) has listed the native numerals up to five as *de* (one), *nis* (two), *som* (three), *bi* (four), and *baya* (five).

22 In the past only the Kshetries, Gurungs, Magars, Rais, Limbus, and some other limited groups were permitted to join the Nepal Army, the Indian Army, and the British Army. So it was a common trend among the people who were not permitted to join to change their identities for this purpose.

23 The results of language preference and the reality of language use seem contradictory. They raise the question

(14%) preferred Nepali. It is noteworthy that 15 non-speakers stated that they would prefer to use Baram. This reflects a clear interest in the language, presumably as a cultural resource and marker of ethnic identity. It is striking to note that all the respondents from the Baram-speaking areas preferred Baram, while some of the respondents from outside of the Baram-speaking area (six from Pandrung, four from Masel, one from Baguwa, and one from Deurali) preferred Nepali. When we asked the respondents why they preferred Nepali, they stated that Nepali was the language that they knew well. So non-speakers are more likely to want to learn Baram if they have had exposure to the language in their home community. Overall we see that language loyalty is stronger among speakers than among the non-speakers and that the decline of language loyalty begins with the reduction of language transmission.

Another interesting result is presented in Table 7, which queried how people felt about speaking Baram in the presence of speakers of the dominant language.

| How do you feel speaking Baram in the presence of Nepali speakers? | |
|--|-----------|
| Prestigious | 23 (46%) |
| Neutral | 27 (54%) |
| Embarrassed | 0 (0%) |
| TOTAL | 50 (100%) |

Table 7. Attitudes about Baram in the presence of Nepali speakers

Of the respondents, 46% considered speaking Baram to be prestigious while 54% were neutral about it. None of the respondents reported feeling embarrassment about Baram, a clear shift from reports of earlier experiences. Among the speakers surveyed, all except one replied that they consider it would be prestigious to speak Baram. Nine of the non-speakers replied that they considered it prestigious to speak Baram, while the rest were neutral about the issue.²⁴

Several of the survey questions on language attitudes were designed to gauge the degree of interest in language revitalization efforts and education in Baram. Table 8 presents these results.

| | Would you like to be taught to read and write in Baram? | Would you like your children to read and write in Baram as well as Nepali? | Would you like Baram to be taught in early primary school? |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| Yes | 40 | 46 | 48 |
| No | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Neutral | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| No response | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 50 | 50 | 50 |

Table 8. Attitudes about Baram education

of why the language is dying if three quarters of the population prefer it. Here we have a classic example of how perception can be at odds with reality.

²⁴ The question was addressed to both speakers and non-speakers, so the answers of the non-speakers were hypothetical.

Regarding their own potential to develop literacy skills in Baram, 80% of the respondents liked the idea of being taught to read and write in Baram if given the opportunity to do so, 18% were neutral, and 2% stated they would not like to read and write in Baram.²⁵ Regarding their children, 92% liked, 6% didn't mind, and 2% did not like the idea of their children learning to read and write in Baram apart from Nepali. Similarly favorable attitudes were found for incorporating Baram into the primary school curriculum: 96% liked the idea of introducing Baram into primary education and the other 4% did not object to it. In aggregate, these results indicate that almost all of the Baram people desire the survival of their language into the future and want to revive and revitalize their language through systematic education.

The respondents reported that they used to be hesitant about speaking Baram in front of other speakers in the past. However, quite recently there has been a change in their attitude. The ethnic communities have become more conscious about their ethnic identity and are encouraged to promote their languages. 19 of these respondents reported that they had no problem in speaking Baram, whereas 3 did not respond to these questions.

Similarly, 4 respondents replied that it would be good for the Baram to speak other languages apart from Baram, 11 reported that it was bad and 7 were neutral in this regard. 19 respondents preferred to encourage the use of Baram but 3 objected to it. Two respondents said they would like their children to marry non-speakers of Baram, 14 objected to it, and 6 were neutral.

All the responses show that the vast majority of the Baram people, both speakers and non-speakers, have a high level of affection and respect towards their language and are committed to work for its promotion and revitalization.²⁶

5.6 Vitality and endangerment

The results from subsections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 suggest that Baram is a seriously endangered language. Further confirmation came from James A. Matisoff, who, on the basis of the analysis of 210 basic words of Baram, asserted that Baram is an extremely endangered language as it has very high percentage of loan words (personal communication with T.R. Kansakar, 2010).

To explore this further, the research team carried out an assessment of the vitality of Baram in 2007. For this purpose, we adopted the criteria set in UNESCO (2003), incorporating several relevant sociolinguistic elements. To elicit information about the intergenerational transmission of the language, the questionnaire was administered to 16 speakers of Baram. The questionnaire asked people about language use during their childhood, and about which languages they currently use when speaking to their friends and family members. They also asked speakers for their current observations on language choice among the younger generations. Table 9 presents the results of the reports on language use in childhood.

25 Yadava et al. (2005) have proposed a Baram orthography based on the Devanagari script. The orthography is in use nowadays.

26 This high level of language loyalty, in fact, is the result of political awareness in the ethnic communities after the restoration of the democratic system of politics in the country. In the past, during the Panchayat System politics, the ethnic communities seemed to be rather reluctant about their language and ethnic identity.

| | Which language(s) did you learn first? | Which language(s) did you speak at home as a child? | In which language(s) did your parents speak to each other? |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Baram | 9 (56.25%) | 4 (25%) | 3 (18.5%) |
| Baram and Nepali | 1 (6.25%) | 8 (50%) | 8 (50%) |
| Nepali | 6 (37.5%) | 4 (25%) | 5 (31.25%) |

Table 9. Language use among Baram speakers when they were children

Baram was the first language of 56.25% of the speakers, Nepali was the first language of 37.5% of the speakers, and 6.25% were bilingual.²⁷ During their childhood the number of monolingual speakers of Baram was reduced to 25% and the number of bilingual speakers increased to 50%. This indicates that the rate of language shift was very high during their childhood. The trend suggests that there was a high level of orientation towards bilingualism in the Baram community. This case applies not only to Baram but also to Nepali. The number of children monolingual in Nepali also decreased during their childhood, however, the ratio is low in comparison with the number of Baram children becoming bilingual. By the time they were grown up, all the speakers were bilingual.

Moving to the final column of Table 10, 50% of the parents used both Baram and Nepali at home, only 18.75% used only Baram, and 31.25% used only Nepali. Given that the respondents were between 48 and 76 years of age at the time of publication, these figures indicate that there was a high degree of language shift towards bilingualism in the Baram community more than 70 years ago. It also means that loss of the Baram language in Dandagaun began in generations prior to that of our speakers, at least among their parents, and perhaps farther back.

The results of the questions on what language speakers typically used when conversing with immediate family members and friends (of the same age) are presented in Table 10.

| What do you usually speak with... | Your spouse | Your children | Baram-speaking friends |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Baram | 4 (56.25%) | 0 (18.5%) | 1(25%) |
| Baram and Nepali | 1 (6.25%) | 2 (50%) | 9 (50%) |
| Nepali | 11 (37.5%) | 14 (31.25%) | 6 (25%) |

Table 10. Current language use among Baram speakers with immediate family and friends

Beginning with language choice among spouses, Nepali is the language of communication between husband and wife of 68.75% of the speakers. For most of the respondents, they are either married to non-speakers or one of the spouses has low proficiency in Baram. Those couples who use Baram or who use both Baram and Nepali are from Dandagaun and have spoken Baram since their childhood. The low percentage of Baram-speaking couples has set the stage for a vast decrease in language transfer to the future generations.

In speaking with friends of the same language background, only 6.25% of the respondents report using Baram, while 56.25% report using Baram and Nepali, and 37.5% report using Nepali. These results constitute further evidence of the decrease in the use of the Baram language. We can see that in casual settings both inside and outside the home, Baram is rarely used.

27 A child can be bilingual from the beginning if the family members, especially parents, are bilingual

The statistics on the respondents' use of Baram with their children further emphasizes the dismal situation of the Baram language. 87.5% of the speakers use Nepali with their own children; 12.5% use both Baram and Nepali, while none report using exclusively Baram. As pointed out earlier, the 'children' of the current speakers are their sons and daughters who are adults, not small children. The use of Baram with small children is thus null. The language of communication between Baram children and the children of other language communities is Nepali. The situation presented suggests that inter-generational transmission of the Baram language has been discontinued. This view is further confirmed by the respondents' replies to questions on Baram proficiency among the younger generation, the relative use of Baram and Nepali, and the ongoing language shift; these results are presented in Table 11.

| Questions | Yes | No |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Do young people speak Baram well? | 0 | 16 |
| Is Nepali used more than Baram? | 16 | 0 |
| Is the use of Baram decreasing | 16 | 0 |

Table 11: Views of Baram speakers on comparative use of Baram and Nepali

All of the respondents asserted that younger people do not speak Baram well, that Nepali is used more than Baram, and that the use of Baram is decreasing. Taken together, the results of this language vitality study provide further evidence that the language is seriously endangered and nearly driven to extinction.

6 Conclusion

This study has established four facts regarding the accelerating decline in the use of the Baram language. Firstly, of the two villages in the Gorkha District where Baram is still spoken, Mailung in Takukot-5 has 9 speakers; however, these speakers do not use the language in day-to-day conversation. Dandagaun in Takukot-8 is the only village where Baram is used for everyday communication, but it occurs only in limited domains of language use. Secondly, the study identified 51 fluent speakers, 44 semi-fluent speakers, and 34 people with tacit knowledge of the language. Among them, most of the fluent speakers are senior in age and their number is decreasing rapidly. During the three-year duration of this project, six of the fluent speakers passed away. Thirdly, all the speakers are bilingual in Nepali, which is widely used as a preferred language of social communication. Our findings show that only 18% of the 129 speakers have retained their language. Fourthly, the inter-generational transmission of Baram is not taking place. All of these facts indicate that Nepali is rapidly replacing the native language, and as a result Baram has been reduced to a seriously endangered language.

However, the present trend among the younger generation of speakers shows a growing awareness of their ethnic and linguistic identity, and the need to preserve and promote their language and culture through education in the mother-tongue and through revival of their traditional social and cultural practices. This trend of language revitalization is an encouraging sign that the Baram language and the Baram way of life will survive.

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APPENDIX I: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE SET-I (FOR THE SPEAKERS)

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| THE PILOT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE | |
| Set-I (for the speakers) | |
| (Linguistic and Ethnographic Documentation of the Baram Language) | |
| Date:/...../2007 | Researcher: |
| Place: | Language used: |
| Researcher's note: | |
| | |
| | |

1. General Background

- 1.1 Name and surname:
- 1.2 Baram subgroup
- 1.3 Sex: male female
- 1.4 Age:
- 1.5 Profession: agriculture business service
- 1.6 Address:
Municipality/VDC: Ward No.:
- Village: ToleS:
- 1.7 Education:
 Pre-literate Literate non-formal formal: (level)

2. Linguistic Background

- 2.1 Where were you born? VDC.....Ward No.....Tole.....
- 2.2 Where did you grown up? VDC.....Ward No.....Tole.....
- 2.3 Language used at home in childhood days?
- 2.4 Language you learnt first?
- 2.5. Father's first language?
- 2.6. Mother's first language?
- 2.7 Spouse's first language?

3. Baram Language proficiency

- 3.1 How well do you speak Baram?
 - can take part in social discussions and controversies
 - have simple types of two-way communication on few topics
 - can communicate using few words and phrases
- 3.2 How many Baram words do you know?
 - up to 20 up to 50 up to 100 more

3.3 How well do you understand people speaking Baram?

- completely adequately satisfactorily slightly

3.4 How much can you judge whether a sentence is grammatical, ungrammatical, or ambiguous?

- completely adequately satisfactorily slightly

3.5 How well can you explain the meaning of a word?

- completely adequately satisfactorily slightly

3.6 What language do you use with the following people?

| People | Baram | Nepali | Other | People | Baram | Nepali | Other |
|-----------------|-------|--------|-------|--------------|-------|--------|-------|
| parents | | | | grandparents | | | |
| elder brother | | | | spouse | | | |
| elder sister | | | | servants | | | |
| children | | | | pets | | | |
| younger brother | | | | relatives | | | |
| younger sister | | | | | | | |

3.7 What language do you use for the following activities?

| Activities | Baram | Nepali | Other | Activities | Baram | Nepali | Other |
|------------|-------|--------|-------|---------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| to think? | | | | to count? | | | |
| to play? | | | | to dream? | | | |
| to curse? | | | | to abuse? | | | |
| to joke? | | | | to perform rituals? | | | |
| to scold? | | | | to pray? | | | |
| to sing? | | | | | | | |

4. Name of the Language

4.1 Autoglotonym (name(s) given to the language by the native speakers):

- a. c.
b. d.

4.2 Heteroglotonym (name(s)) given by the non-native community:

- a. c.
b. d.

4.3 Which name do you prefer?

- Heteroglotonym Autoglotonym

4.4 Is there any language similar to your language?

- Yes No

If yes, Name of the language:

Place where spoken:

5. Language Variation

5.1 Where is Baram spoken?

| S.N. | VDC | Ward No. | Name of the Locality | Remarks |
|------|-----|----------|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |

5.2 Among those villages, where is your language spoken in different ways?

- a. b. c. d.

5.3 What kinds of differences (pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.?) are there between them?

| Name of the place | Pronunciation | Vocabulary | Intonation | Structure |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

(Note: If there are several differences, the surveyor has to note them in the note copy.)

5.4 Which dialect is exactly the same as your dialect?

5.5 Which dialect is the easiest for you to understand?

5.6 Which dialect is the most difficult for you to understand?

5.7 Is there any variety that you can't understand?

5.8 Arrange the dialects in the order of less difficult to more difficult:

- a..... b..... c..... d.....

5.9 Which variety is regarded to be the purest form of the Baram language?

..... Why?

5.10 If one would like to write your language, which dialect should be chosen?

..... Why?

5.11 Are there any differences in the language used by,

- male and female? Yes No
- old and young? Yes No
- different Baram subgroups? Yes No

If yes,

5.12 What are the differences?

| | Pronunciation | Vocabulary | Intonation | Structure |
|--------|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| male | | | | |
| female | | | | |
| old | | | | |
| young | | | | |
| | | | | |

6. Knowledge and use of the languages

6.1 What languages are spoken in your territory?

Baram Nepali

6.2 Which is the most adjacent to the Baram language?

Nepali

6.3 Which language(s) do you speak?

Baram Nepali

(If more than one language)

6.4 Which do you speak better?

Baram Nepali

6.5 Where and how did you learn the languages?

| language | Place of learning | Way of learning |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Baram | | |
| Nepali | | |
| | | |

6.6 Are you always able to understand heated arguments (palavers) between two people who are speaking in....,

Baram? Nepali?

6.7 Are you always able to understand jokes and proverbs in,

Baram? Nepali?

6.8 Can you always find the words to express your thoughts in,

Baram? Nepali?

6.9 Are there any Baram people who speak only Baram Language?

Yes No

If yes, where are they?

6.10 Which language do you use in the following situations?

| At home with | | Baram | Nepali | Other |
|--------------|-------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Grand Parents | | | |
| | Your own siblings | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Your children | | | |
| | Your relatives | | | |
| In society with the Baram community | People senior in age | | | |
| | People of the same age | | | |
| | Young people and children | | | |
| In society with other communities | People senior in age | | | |
| | People of the same age | | | |
| | Young people and children | | | |
| | Village leaders | | | |

6.11 Which language do you use to do the following activities?

- a. In the local market
- b. In agricultural works.....
- c. Religious functions
- d. Local offices
- e. Festivals

6.12 What language do your children use when they talk to

| | Baram | Nepali | Other |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| you | | | |
| mother/father | | | |
| grand parents | | | |
| themselves while playing | | | |
| their teacher | | | |
| the neighbors | | | |
| the relatives | | | |
| a stranger | | | |

6.13 Do non-Baram people speak your language?

- Yes No

If yes, which language community people?

How do they feel to speak your language?

6.14 Arrange the languages according to the wider use in the society?

-

7. Language Attitude

7.1 Which language do you prefer to speak?

- Why?

7.2 What would you say if someone offered to teach you to read and write in Baram?

I like it. I do not like it. I don't mind it.

7.3 Would you like your children to learn to read and write Baram in addition to Nepali?

Yes No

7.4 What would you say if the government offered to teach in Baram in the first years of primary school?

I like it. I do not like it. I don't mind it.

7.5 How would you feel speaking in your mother tongue/first language in the presence of a speaker of the dominant language?

Prestigious Embarrassed Neutral

7.6 Among the languages you speak, which one do you like most?

Baram Nepali

Why?

7.7 Have you ever had any problems because of speaking the Baram language?

Yes No

7.8 How do you feel when you hear young people of your own community speaking other languages instead of their first language?

Good Bad Neutral

7.9 Do you encourage the younger generation to speak your native language?

Yes No

7.10 If yes, why?

a..... b..... c.....

7.11 If no, why?

7.12 How would you feel if your son or daughter were to marry a non-Baram speaker?

8. Language Vitality, Maintenance and Endangerment

8.1 What language(s) did you speak at home when you were a child?

.....

8.2 Which one did you speak first?

.....

8.3 What language(s) do/did your father and mother speak with each other?

Baram Nepali

8.4 What language(s) do you speak most often with your husband / wife? What do they speak with you?

I speak: Baram Nepali

S/he speaks: Baram Nepali

8.5 What language(s) do you speak with friends the same age? (From your language)

Baram Nepali

8.6 What language(s) do you speak most often with your children? What do they speak with you?

Baram Nepali

8.7 What language(s) do your children speak most often when they play with other children?

8.8 Do young people in your village/town speak your language well, the way it ought to be spoken?

Yes No

8.9 Do you think that young people in your village speak Nepali more than they speak Baram?

Yes No

8.10. Do you have any friends who do not speak your language?

Yes No

8.11 If yes, what language do you speak most often with them? What language(s) do they speak to you?

I speak: Baram Nepali

They speak: Baram Nepali

8.12 Is the use of the Baram language decreasing?

Yes No

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE SET-II (FOR THE NON-SPEAKER)

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| THE PILOT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE | |
| Set-II (for the non-speakers) | |
| (Linguistic and Ethnographic Documentation of the Baram Language) | |
| Date:/...../2007 | Researcher: |
| Place: | Language used: |
| Researcher's note: | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

1. General Background

- 1.1 Name and surname:
- 1.2 Baram subgroup
- 1.3 Sex: male female
- 1.4 Age:
- 1.5 Profession: agriculture business service
- 1.6 Address:
Municipality/VDC: Ward No.:
- Village: Tole:
- 1.7 Education:
 Pre-literate Literate non-formal formal: (level)

2. Linguistic Background

- 2.1 Where were you born? VDC.....Ward No.....Tole.....
- 2.2 Where did you grown up? VDC.....Ward No.....Tole.....
- 2.3 Language used at home in childhood days?
- 2.4 Language you learnt first?
- 2.5. Father's first language?
- 2.6. Mother's first language?
- 2.7 Spouse's first language?

3. Name of the Language

- 3.1 Autoglotonym (name(s) given to the language by the native speakers):
a. b.
- 3.2 Heteroglotonym (name(s)) given by the non-native communities:
a. c.
b. d.

3.3 Which one do you prefer?

- Heteroglotonym Autoglotonym

4. Language Variation

4.1 Where is Baram spoken?

| S.N. | VDC | Ward No. | Name of the Locality | Remarks |
|------|-----|----------|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |

4.2. Among those villages, where is your language spoken in different ways?

- a. b. c. d.

4.3. Which variety is regarded to be the purest form of the Baram language?

.....

4.4. If one would like to learn and write your language, which dialect should be chosen?

..... Why?

4.5 Are there any differences in the language used by,

- male and female? Yes No
- old and young? Yes No
- different Baram subgroups? Yes No

5. Knowledge and use of the languages

5.1 What languages are spoken in your territory?

- Baram Nepali

5.2 Which is the most adjacent to the Baram language?

- Nepali

5.3 Which language(s) do you speak?

- Baram Nepali

(If more than one language)

5.4 Are there any Baram people who speak only the Baram Language?

- Yes No

If yes, where do they live? VDC.....Ward No.....Tole.....

5.5 Do non-Baram people speak the Baram language?

- Yes No

If yes, which language community people?

5.6 Arrange the languages according to their wider use in the society:

-

6. Language Attitude

- 6.1 Which language do you prefer to speak?
 Why?
- 6.2 What would you say if someone offered to teach you to read and write in Baram?
 I like it. I do not like it. I don't mind it.
- 6.3 Would you like your children to learn to read and write Baram in addition to Nepali?
 Yes No
- 6.4 What would you say if the government offered to teach in Baram in the first years of primary school?
 I like it. I do not like it. I don't mind it.
- 6.5 How would you feel speaking in Baram in the presence of a speaker of the dominant language?
 Prestigious Embarrassed Neutral
- 6.6 Do you encourage the younger generation to speak Baram language?
 Yes No
- 6.7 If yes, why?
a.....
b.....
c.....
- 6.8 If no, why?

7. Language Vitality, Maintenance and Endangerment

- 7.1 What language(s) do/did your father and mother speak with each other?
 Baram Nepali
- 7.2 Do young people in your village/town speak your language well, the way it ought to be spoken?
 Yes No
- 7.3 Do you think that young people in your village speak Nepali more than they speak Baram?
 Yes No
- 7.4 Is the use of the Baram language decreasing?
 Yes No

APPENDIX 3: LEXICAL COMPARISON OF BARAM WITH THAMI, CHEPANG AND NEWAR

| S.N. | English | Baram | Thami (45-50%) | Chepang (30-35%) | Newar (25-30) |
|------|---------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | I | ŋa | gai | ŋa | ji |
| 2 | you | naŋ | naŋ | naŋ | c ^h ə, c ^h i |
| 3 | we | ni | ni | ni, ŋi | j ^h i:, jipī |
| 4 | this | yo | ka | ʔiʔ | t ^h wə |
| 5 | that | u, to | to | ʔowʔ, ʔuwʔ | wə |
| 6 | who | su | su | su | su |
| 7 | what | hai | hara | doh | c ^h u |
| 8 | not | ma- | ma- | -la, -ma | mə-, -mə- |
| 9 | all | səpəi (N) | sakale | juda, ʔanə | p ^h ukkə, dakkwə |
| 10 | many | d ^h erəi (N) | ahe | ʔa.nə | ye-kwə |
| 11 | one | de | di | yat | c ^h ə-gu |
| 12 | two | nis | nis | nis | nyi-gu |
| 13 | large | alam | jek ^h a | taŋh-ʔo | tə:d ^h ə: |
| 14 | long | alam | ələmga | gyaŋ-ʔo | tahakə: |
| 15 | small | ikine | ucya | mi-ʔo | cid ^h i:, cid ^h ə: |
| 16 | woman | mama | camaica | nom-coʔ | misa |
| 17 | man | papa | mi | goy-coʔ | mij ə |
| 18 | person | bal | mi | manta, coʔ | mənu |
| 19 | fish | nəŋa | naŋa | ŋaʔ | nya |
| 20 | bird | jyali, wa (hen) | ɖaŋaŋeŋ, wa (hen) | waʔ | j ^h əgə: |
| 21 | dog | akya | kucu | kuyʔ | k ^h yica |
| 22 | louse | k ^h at | sirik | kras, srəyk | syi |
| 23 | tree | seŋma | seŋ | siŋʔ | syi-ma |
| 24 | seed | ayu | puya | sayʔ | pusa |
| 25 | leaf | su / hola | aja | lo, mat | ləpte, hə: |
| 26 | root | jəra (N) | nara | rut, goyʔ | ha |
| 27 | bark | bokra (N) | sebu (skin) | pun | k ^h wəla |

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 28 | skin | c ^h ala (N) | sebi | pun | c ^h ēgu |
| 29 | meat | kusya | cici | may? | la |
| 30 | blood | cihwui | cwoi, cəi | wəy? | hi |
| 31 | bone | hoʔ | k ^h osa | hrus | kwəē |
| 32 | fat | uc ^h o | c ^h yəu, cyou | c ^h aw | da: |
| 33 | egg | wohom, wom | ahum, wom | ?um | k ^h ē: |
| 34 | horn | uyuŋ | naru | roŋ? | nyeku |
| 35 | tail | pitik | limek | me? | n ^h ipyō: |
| 36 | feather | pwāk ^h (N) | - | me?, p ^h eh | pəpu |
| 37 | hair | syam | sam | myaŋ | sā: |
| 38 | head | kəpu | kapu | ta.laŋ | c ^h yō: |
| 39 | ear | kuna | kunla | no | n ^h aepō |
| 40 | eye | mik | mesek | mik | mik ^h a |
| 41 | nose | cina | ciŋa | neh | n ^h ae |
| 42 | mouth | anam | ugo | hmo.toŋ | m ^h utu |
| 43 | teeth | swa | suwa | syək, səyk | wa |
| 44 | tongue | cele | cile | le | mye |
| 45 | nail | luŋjiŋ, ləgjuŋ | pin | sən | lusyi |
| 46 | leg | unjik | konʔe, ulaŋ | dom | tuti |
| 47 | knee | g ^h ūda (N) | pokolek | kryoŋ/ | puli |
| 48 | hand | hit | lak | krut | l ^h a: |
| 49 | abdomen | uyaŋ | baŋkal, guŋguŋ | tuk | pwa: |
| 50 | throat | g ^h āti (N) | kaŋtu | kəyk | gəpə: |
| 51 | breast | nənu | nunu | ?oh | duru-pwə |
| 52 | heart | muʔu | loŋsek | hluŋ | nugə |
| 53 | lever | kəlejo (N) | - | sinh | syē |
| 54 | drink | syəŋ-go | tun-sa | tunʔ-na | twəne, twənə |
| 55 | eat | ca-go | cya-sa | jeʔ-na | nələ, nəye |

| | | | | | |
|----|--------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 56 | bite | aŋak-ko | cek-sa | ŋawh-na | nyatə, wā nyaye |
| 57 | look | ayo-go, ni-go | yo-sa | yo-na, cewʔ-na | kʰənə, kʰəne |
| 58 | hear | səi-go | na-sai-sa | sayʔ-na | talə, taye |
| 59 | know | ra-go, ci- go | sai-sa | ci-na | silə, syiye |
| 60 | sleep | nu-go | ammi-sa | ʔenʔ-sa | denə, dene |
| 61 | die | si-go | si-sa | si-sa | sitə, syie |
| 62 | kill | sat-ko | sat-sa | sat-sa | syatə, syae |
| 63 | swim | pəuri bəne-go (N) | lampasa | laʔ-na, kwelh-na | lal- kalə/kaye |
| 64 | fly | uble-go | per-sa | syuŋ-na | bwələ, bwəye |
| 65 | walk | jyo-go, ya-go(go) | cawa-sa, ajsa- ca | wah-na | nya:se, wənə, wəye |
| 66 | arrive | hyuŋcel- go | kelet-sa | waŋ-na | wələ, jʰalə |
| 67 | lie | na-go | ami-sa | ʔenʔ-na | mu:pulə, |
| 68 | sit | huk-ko | hok-sa | cuyʔ-na | dilə, pʰetuye |
| 69 | stand | tʰiŋ-go | tʰeŋ-sa | ciŋ-na | dənə, dane |
| 70 | give | pi-go | pi-sa | bəyʔ-na, hla-na | bila, biye |
| 71 | say | da-go | ŋa-sa, isdu | dayh-na | dʰalə, dʰaye |
| 72 | sun | uni | uni | nyam | surdyə: |
| 73 | moon | cəlauni | cəlauni | lah | timla |
| 74 | star | tara (N) | ucʰi | kar | nəu, nəgu |
| 75 | water | awa | paŋku | tiʔ | lə: |
| 76 | rain | aŋmət | yudu | tiʔ, waʔ-ʔo | wa |
| 77 | stone | kumba | lyuŋ, liŋ | baŋ | lwəhā |
| 78 | sand | - | - | - | pʰi |
| 79 | earth | nəsa | nasa | saʔ | ca |
| 80 | cloud | amu | kʰasu | mus | supäe |
| 81 | smoke | isku | asku | hmeʔ-ku | kū |

| | | | | | |
|-----|----------|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 82 | fire | mui | me | hmeʔ | mi |
| 83 | ash | mau | tarba | hmeʔ-mut | nəu |
| 84 | burn | jo-go | jyou-sa | ʃʰəm-na | cyatə, cyaye |
| 85 | way/path | uŋma | ulam | lyam | lā |
| 86 | mountain | pahaɟ | cyuri (top) | pa.har | pahar |
| 87 | red | pʰəya | keret | du-ʔo | hyāũ |
| 88 | green | həriyo (N) | - | pli-ʔo | wāũ |
| 89 | yellow | keuwo | melu | yar-ʔo | mʰasu |
| 90 | white | gyabo | ubo | bʰam-ʔo | tuyu: |
| 91 | black | ciliŋ | kiji | gal-ʔo | haku |
| 92 | night | rat (N) | ʈa | ya. ʔdiŋ | canʰəe, ca |
| 93 | hot | gyodum | adum | dʰah-ʔo | kwa: |
| 94 | cool | ciso (N) | ajik | nik-ʔo | kʰwaũ |
| 95 | full | kipoŋ | ir-ir | bliŋ-ʔo | ja: |
| 96 | new | kau | naka | rəw-ʔo | nʰu: |
| 97 | good | kisen | apraca | pe-ʔo | bʰi: |
| 98 | round | golo (N) | kurluŋ | luŋ-o, gore | gwəlla: |
| 99 | dried | kyoksi | areŋ, gaŋdu | sot-ʔo | gə̃gu |
| 100 | name | umin | name | məyŋ | nā |

Source: Thami data from Turin (2004); Chepang data from Hale (1973); and Newar data from Tej Ratna Kansakar

Abbreviation: N=Nepali

APPENDIX 4: VARIATIONS IN THE DANDAGAUN AND MAILUNG VARIETIES

| S.N. | Dandagaun | Mailung Gaun | | Gloss |
|------|-----------|--------------|------|---|
| 1. | əŋgago | aŋgago | v. | to fall from the cliff, to be dropped |
| 2. | əŋla | aŋla | n. | embrace, full of arm |
| 3. | aīkok | aŋkok | n. | kind of plant |
| 4. | akphorgo | akphərgo | v. | to jump, to leap |
| 5. | - | agaŋ | n. | kind of tree |
| 6. | aŋŋaŋgo | anjaŋgo | v. | to taste |
| 7. | apu | aphu | n. | husband's elder brother |
| 8. | asitu | asidu | n. | housefly |
| 9. | - | ase | n. | centipede |
| 10. | - | in | n. | kind of large tree bearing sweet fruits |
| 11. | ukmaŋ | ukhmaŋ | n. | pepper, kind of hot spices |
| 12. | ukhme | okhne | n. | Nepali knife, Khukuri, Nepalese sword |
| 13. | ugba | uga | n. | state of landslide after a heavy rainfall |
| 14. | ucaucuməi | ucwausməi | n. | children |
| 15. | ucuməi | ucməi | n. | daughter, maid |
| 16. | ucuwa | ucwa | n. | son, boy-child, youth |
| 17. | ucho | ocho | n. | fat |
| 18. | uthaŋgo | uʈaŋgo | v. | to insult. |
| 19. | kəŋlo | kaŋlo | adj. | soft |
| 20. | - | kəʈ | n. | food-grains fermented for making liquor |
| 21. | kausō | kause | n. | plant that cause irritation |
| 22. | kaŋkaŋ | kəŋkaŋ | n. | crow |
| 23. | - | kik | n. | back part of the neck |
| 24. | kunəŋ | kunaŋ | adj. | from where |
| 25. | kusja | kuse | n. | meat |
| 26. | kephlen | keplen | adj. | slippery |
| 27. | - | kjalam | adj. | proud |
| 28. | khəskulum | kəskulum | n. | egg of louse |
| 29. | kha | khələŋ | adv. | how |
| 30. | - | gəbba | n. | big bucket for milking |
| 31. | - | gidzik | adj. | dark |
| 32. | cinʈuŋ | cjunʈuŋ | n. | upper lip of animals |
| 33. | cunʈkja | cunʈke | adv. | day before yesterday |
| 34. | cjaŋŋaŋgo | cjanjaŋgo | v. | to taste |
| 35. | cjo | hincjo | pvt. | possibly |
| 36. | chulja | chule | adj. | back-biting, deceitful |

| | | | | |
|-----|------------|----------|------|--|
| 37. | dzəwaĩ | dzuŋəi | n. | son-in-law |
| 38. | - | dziləi | n. | creeper of the yam |
| 39. | dzhuŋ | dzuŋ | n. | bamboo |
| 40. | taŋkhuholə | təŋkhol | n. | green leaf-tobacco |
| 41. | təksjak | ʈəksjak | n. | maize stalk or stem |
| 42. | ʈuŋse | ʈuŋse | n. | big bamboo basket |
| 43. | nəmpue | nəmpui | adv. | next, next year |
| 44. | njaŋla | neŋla | n. | millet |
| 45. | - | pəɡusik | adj. | green, unripe |
| 46. | paje | pənam | n. | bed bug |
| 47. | pitik | pitik | n. | tail |
| 48. | pəini | pəgəri | n. | cloth used to block air from the vessel while making alcohol |
| 49. | phəja | phəija | adj. | red |
| 50. | bəldiŋ | bərlŋ | n. | kind of tree used as fodder for the cattle |
| 51. | - | bai | n. | father |
| 52. | bindzjuŋ | bəndzjuŋ | n. | flea |
| 53. | - | bjaŋe | n. | kind of red ant |
| 54. | - | bhəkə | n. | place to provide fodder for goats |
| 55. | - | bhəsə | n. | sheep |
| 56. | - | marci | n. | match box |
| 57. | miktəŋ | mektu | n. | secretion of the eye |
| 58. | mjak | umjak | n. | flour |
| 59. | lədzuŋ | ləgdziŋ | n. | nail, claw |
| 60. | səibə | səiba | n. | hailstones |
| 61. | hətku | herku | n. | bird's excreta |
| 62. | haro | həro | adj. | irritated, unwanted |
| 63. | həkjələ | həkjələ | n. | third day to come |
| 64. | hjaŋ | jaŋkha | adv. | steep down below |