Copula Construction in Kathariya Tharu
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Abstract
Kathariya Tharu is one of the least studied Indo-Aryan languages spoken by the Kathariya Tharu community living in Kailali district of Nepal and Gorakhpur, Gonda, Lakhimpur, and Khiri districts of India. This is a preliminary study which analyses the morphosyntactic structure of copula construction in this language. The linguistic data for this study were collected from Ghodaghodi municipality, ward no. 9, Sisaiya, ward no. 12, Kota and Kailari rural municipality, ward no. 8, Lausa and were analyzed with the help of the Toolbox software. R. M. W. Dixon’s Basic Linguistic Theory has been employed as analytical tool, though insights have also been taken from other linguists. Kathariya Tharu employs the verbal copula construction strategy with three copula verbs- ho, ba, and rəh. Unlike other NIA languages in which the relation between the copula subject and copula complement is prominent, in Kathariya Tharu, it is the copula subject that determines the selection of the copula verb. However, the person, relation and function distinctions between the copula subject and copula complement disappears in the past tense and so, the same copula rəh is used with all the subjects.

Keywords: Non-verbal predicate, nominal predicate, predicative adjective, predicative locative, predicative possession.

Introduction
Tharu is the largest indigenous community in Nepal. As the Tharu habitat extends from Mechi, the eastern most zone, to Mahakali, the western most zone, of Nepal and cross-border districts like Gonda, Kheri, Nainital, Pilibhit, Baharaich, Gorakhpur and Bijnor (Jeff, 1993, p.5) of India, it is natural for this community to have cultivated distinct variations in its language and culture. Based on the linguistic and cultural variations,

1 We are grateful to the UGC, Nepal for funding the research project A Sketch Grammar of Kathariya Tharu which this article is based on.
the Tharu community has broadly been classified into Rana, Dangaura, Chitoniya and Kochila Tharu (Paudyal, 2014, pp. 7-8), though each of these groups, except Rana, have their sub-groups, with slight variations in their language. However, the 24th edition of Ethnologue (2021, pp. 54-6) has reclassified the languages of this community as Tharu Dangaura, Tharu Kathariya, Tharu Central, Tharu Mid-Eastern, and Tharu Rana. Since Kathariya Tharu is the least studied, Tharu variety and this article is concentrating on the morpho-syntactic structure of the copula constructions in this language, it is desirable to introduce the community as well as the language they speak in brief before we get into the discussion proper.

Kathariya Tharu, the language, is closely related to Dangaura Tharu (Jeff, 1993, p. 4; Paudyal, 2014, p. 7) and the people are found “living approximately the same areas as Dangauras” (Jeff, 1993, p. 2). Krouskoff (1995) finds “Kathariya mostly concentrated in India, south of Dangaura’s habitat, and in Kailali district” of Nepal (p. 186). McDonough (1984) agrees with Krouskoff and adds “and probably, in Bardiya, and Banke, one also finds Kathariya” (p. 27). Quoting Turner (1931, p. 600) McDonough (1984) states that in Gorakhpur region Dangaura and Kathariya Tharus are found but “there the majority were Kathariya” (27). Similarly, even in Kheri, Baharaich and Gonda districts of India “Kathariya and Dangaura are major groupings” (McDonough, 1984, p. 27). In Nepal this community concentrates “in the 46 villages in ten VDCs of Kailali district: Hasuliya, Udasipur, Pahalmanpur, Lalbhoji, Thapapur, Joshipur, Munuwa, Durgauli, Patharaiya, and Chuha” (Echintoff & Michelle, 2012, p. 47). A recent study of Kathariya Tharu shows that this community resides in the Lamki Chuha, Bhajani, Tikapur, Ghodaghodi, and Gauriganga municipalities and Joshipur, Janaki, Bardagoriya, and Kailari rural municipalities of Kailali district and Rajapur municipality, Ward No. 2, Nayagau of Bardiya district (Paudyal, 2077 BS., p. 4). In the same study, Paudyal also reports that the villages like Bela Parsuwa, Mudnochni, Ghuskiya, Maura, Gurghipurawa, Dhakhainipurawa, Chauperi, Jauwapurawa and Gulbhujiya of Lakhimpur district of India are densely populated by this community (Paudyal, 2077 BS., p. 4). Thus, apart from the Kailali and Bardiya districts of Nepal, Kathariya Tharus are found in Gorakhpur, Gonda, Baharaich, Kheri, Pilibhit, Nainital and Bijnor districts of India.

The Population and Housing Census 2011 makes no distinction in the Tharu community and mentions none of the Tharu groups and their languages separately. The exact number of their population, therefore, is not available, though Echintoff and Michelle (2012, p. 47) report one old man in Pabera village, one of the Kathariya Tharu villages in Kailali, estimating that the speakers of Kathariya Tharu are between 12000 and 17000 in Kailali. Eberhad David M. et al. (eds) in the 24th edition of Ethnologue (2021) mention the population of Kathariya Tharu to be 106,000 (2006) in Nepal. However, Paudyal
(2077 B. S., p. 6), reporting the chairperson of Kathariya Society, Nepal’s estimation, claims that the overall population of Kathariya Tharu is not less than 200,000. But since no census has listed the population of this Tharu group, it is difficult to state the exact number of this community.

The genetic classification of this language, according to the 24th edition of Ethnologue, is Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Unclassified.

**Research Methodology**

This article aims at introducing Kathariya Tharu and the morpho-syntactic structures of the copula constructions in this language. The linguistic data for the study were collected in Ghodaghodi municipality, ward no. 9, Sisaiya, Ghodaghodi-12, Kota, and Kailari-8, Lausa. The recorded texts were transcribed and translated with the help of a language consultant. The transcribed texts with morpheme breaks and glosses were input in the Toolbox software, and interlinearized. This article is prepared by analyzing the interlinearized texts. As it is not possible to incorporate all the language structures in natural texts, for some structures, the linguistic data were elicited and interlinearized in the Toolbox. Being a preliminary study of this language, the majority of the examples are from the elicited data. The examples consist of four lines: the first line presents the Kathariya expressions, second the morpheme breaks, third morpheme by morpheme glosses and the fourth line presents the free translation of the expression.

The study has been organized in 5 sections. The first section introduces the Kathariya Tharu people and language. The research methodology used to conduct this study is explained in the second section. The third section introduces the core concept of the paper, the morpho-syntactic structures of the copula construction in this language. This section has been subdivided into four subsections: Identity, Attribution, Location and Benefaction. The fourth section presents the copula construction in the past tense, and the article is concluded with it fifth section- conclusion. For the conceptual discussion and theoretical guidelines, RMW Dixon’s Basic Linguistic Theory (2010, 2012) has been, though insights from various scholars have also been shared.

**Non-verbal predication**

Dryer (2007, p. 224) classifies clauses into two types based on the types of predicates they contain: those with verbal predicates and those with non-verbal ones. By verbal predicates, he means the predicates beginning with lexical verbs encoding distinct meanings, whereas non-verbal predicates refer to the predicative slot of a clause which does not contain such a verb loaded with a specific sense. Non-verbal predication can also be defined on the basis of the number of arguments it requires, and the constituent
that plays a significant role in the clause. According to Hengeveld (1992), in non-verbal predication, the verb element is not significant. It is the non-verbal predicate i.e. nominal, adjectival or locational that is significant in such constructions, as in many of the world languages, the verb element (copula) is not required to connect the subject and predicate in a clause. In such languages, the subject and predicate constituents are merely juxtaposed. As copula verbs are considered to be “auxiliaries accompanying a non-verbal predicate and its arguments” (Hengeveld, 1992, p. 32) and “semantically empty, inflectional supports, light verbs” (Arche et al., 2018, p. 2), copula constructions are categorized as non-verbal predicate constructions.

Copula constructions
The languages of the world vary in expressing the internal relationship between the copula subject and copula complement. According to Curnow (1999, p. 1-2), copula construction is considered “the most basic construction or constructions” used “to encode the notions of identity and group membership”. He further claims that “existence, location, possession are often encoded with this construction”. Based on the study of the “grammatical description of approximately seventy languages”, Curnow (1999, pp. 2-4) formulates four strategies of copula construction that different languages use to express copula relations: (i) verbal copula construction, using a copula verb to encode the relationship between the copula subject and copula complement, (ii) particle copula construction, using a particle other than a verb, to encode such a relationship, (iii) inflectional copula construction that “treats the copula complement as though it were a verb”, and (iv) zero copula construction in which the copula subject and the copula complement are simply juxtaposed. Although languages use different constructions to link the subject to its complement predicate, “mostly copular verbs are used to connect the subject and predicate” (Turker, 2014, p. 194). Similar to many of the IA languages like Hindi, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Chitoniya Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, Darai and Bote, Kathariya Tharu employs copula verbs to encode the relationship between the copula subject and copula complement, and so, in Curnow’s (1999, pp. 2-4) classification, it follows the verbal copula construction strategy.

Copula construction in Kathariya Tharu
A copula verb is mostly defined on the functional basis. It has a relational meaning, indicating a relation between CS (Copula Subject) and CC (Copula Complement) (Dixon 2010:100-01). It is “a term used in grammatical description to refer to linking verb … whose main function is to relate other elements of clause structure, especially subject and complement” (Crystal, 1980, p. 93 qtd.in Pustet, 2003, p.3). Arche et al. (2008) discuss four properties that are prototypically associated with copula. According
to them, (i) copulas carry verbal inflections, (ii) copulas appear in the context where the predicate is not verbal, (iii) copulas are elements used to link the predicate and the subject, and (iv) copulas are semantically light, possibly empty. Kathariya Tharu exhibits some verbs like ho, ba, rəh which possess all these properties, and so, are copula verbs. Since copula verbs are used “to encode the meaning of identity... existence, location and possession” (Curnow, 1999, pp. 2-3) in non-verbal predicate constructions, this section discusses the morphosyntactic structures of the copula constructions in Kathariya Tharu.

Identity relation / Nominal predicate
There are many languages in which “the constituents are merely juxtaposed, and no copula verb is used” (Attia, 2008, p. 6). In a cross-linguistic study regarding copula construction, Stassen (2013) found that out of 386 languages he studied “zero copula is possible in 175 languages”. These references prove that languages use different strategies to express the predicative relationship. Even in the languages where copula verbs exist, there is variation in the number of copula used in such constructions. Curnow (1999) reports that out of 70 languages he studied “approximately half of the languages have only one copula construction, while the others have two or sometimes three different constructions” (2). Stassen (2013) claims that there are some languages like Egyptian, Arabic, Hungarian, Babungo, Jamaican creole, Lango, Ngalakan and Imbabura Quechua, and Turkish (Hegenveld, 1992, pp. 206, 29), and Russian (Attia, 2008) which do not require a copula verb in the present tense. We find a single copula ‘to be’ in English, and hona ‘to be’ in Hindi (Kachru, 2006) which are used with all the copula constructions whether it is nominal predicate, adjectival predicate or locative predicate. Dangaura Tharu exhibits two copulas- huina and ba ‘to be’ in the present and a single copula rəhəna in the past tense. Similarly, Chitoniya Tharu attests two copulas- həkʰ and bəɖ ‘to be’ in the present and rəhə in the past. Kathariya Tharu shares the copulas with Dangaura Tharu.

Kathariya Tharu has two copula verbs in the present tense- ho and ba ‘to be’, and ‘rəh’ in the past and future tenses. The present form ho is very close to the only copula in Hindi but the inflectional suffixes are quite different. Languages have different strategies in the use of copula verbs. Unlike English and Hindi, there are languages which use different copula forms for different types of copulas predicates. There are languages like Mauka, a Mande language, in which the copula used with a predicate adjective is not used with a predicate nominal or a predicate locative (Dryer, 2007, p. 231). In some languages, the nominal and adjectival predicates share the same copula but the locative predicate requires a different copula. Similarly, there are some languages, in which a predicate adjective does not require a copula verb but a predicate nominal does (Dryer,
In the languages like Nepali, Chitoniya Tharu, and Dangaura Tharu, the locative and adjectival predicate share the same copula but a nominal predicate requires a different one. In Dryer’s study, it was found very common for a language using different copula in locative predicates (Dryer, 2007, p. 239) but the nominal and adjectival predicates sharing the same copula.

Kathariya Tharu employs quite different strategies from other Tharu languages like Chitoniya Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, Rana Tharu and Saptariya Tharu in the copula constructions. Rana Tharu and Saptariya Tharu have a single copula in the present tense (Dhakal, 2013, pp. 154-5; Thakur, 2012, pp. 57-79), whereas Dangaura and Chitoniya Tharu have two copula verbs, but in these languages, locative and adjectival predicates share the same copula and nominal predicate requires a different one. Kathariya Tharu is different in the sense that the type of predicate does not play a significant role here.

The unique feature of this language is that it is the person of the subject argument that triggers the selection of copula. It exhibits a copula \(-ho\) in the first and third persons but \(-ba\) in the second person, as illustrated in the examples (1a-c) and (2a-c).

(1) a. \textit{m̄ĩ kisənma h̄oī} \\
\textit{m̄ĩ kisənma ho -ũ} \\
\textit{1SG farmer be.PRS -1SG} \\
‘I am a farmer.’    \hline(ELCTD.0010)

b. \textit{h̄omre əbbe kʰetme h̄oī} \\
\textit{h̄omre əbbe kʰet -me ho -i} \\
\textit{1PL now field -LOC be.PRE -1PL} \\
‘We are in the fields now.’ \hline(ELCTD.0014)

c. \textit{u  h̄ommr̄ bʰəlmənsa h̄oī} \\
\textit{u h̄ommr̄ bʰəlmənsa ho-ī} \\
\textit{3SG 1PL.GEN village head be.PRS -3PL} \\
‘He is our village chief.’ \hline(ELCTD.0030)

(2) a. \textit{tɔĩ mor bʰ̄oiya baṭe} \\
\textit{tɔĩ mor bʰ̄oiya baṭ -e} \\
\textit{2SG.NH 1SG.GEN younger brother be.PRS -2SG.NH} \\
‘You are my brother.’ \hline(ELCTD.0016)

b. \textit{toine kƏ̄hã baṭo?} \\
\textit{toine kə̄hã baṭ -o} \\
\textit{2PL where be.PRS -2PL} \\
‘Where are you?’ \hline(ELCTD.0019)

c. \textit{tum dubbəɾ baṭo} \\
\textit{tum dubbəɾ baṭ -o} \\
\textit{2SG.HON thin be.PRS -2PL}
‘You are thin.’

The examples in (1a-c) and (2a-c) clearly illustrate how the person of the subject argument determines the selection of the copula. The examples in (1) have the first- and third-person subject arguments: \( məĩ \) ‘1SG’, \( həmre \) ‘1PL’ (1a-b) and \( u \) ‘3SG’ (1c) and the copula forms are \( həũ \) ‘be -1SG’, \( hoi \) ‘be -1PL’ and \( həĩ \) ‘be.3PL’ respectively. Similarly, as the subject arguments in (2) belong to the second person, the copula forms they concord with are different from the one the first- and third-person subject arguments take. In this case \( bate \) ‘be -2SG.NH’, \( baṭo \) ‘be -2PL’, and \( baṭo \) ‘be -2PL’ respectively.

Kathariya Tharu seems to have a close relation with Maithili in which the copula shows person distinction. It attests two copula verbs -\( ch \)- and -\( əich \)-. With all the types of predicates, third person non-honorific, demonstratives, pronominal subjects, and in the dative construction with the first- and second-person subject argument, the copula -\( əich \) is used, whereas with other arguments, the copula -\( ch \)-, is used (Yadav, 1997, pp. 218-9).

**Attributive relation / Adjectival predicate**

The attributive relation between the subject argument and the predicate is presented through copula construction in Kathariya Tharu too. As Kathariya Tharu copula constructions show person distinction, it is the person of the subject argument that triggers the selection of the copula. As in identity relation, the same copula -\( ho \) and -\( ba \) are used in the present tense even to express the attributive relation. In attributive relation, the predicate constituent is an adjective which in many languages shares the same copula with nominal predicates (Dryer, 2007, p. 213). The examples in (3) have first and third person subject arguments and the copula verb is \( ho \) ‘be.PRS’ and in (4), the subject arguments are in second person and the copula verb is \( ba \) ‘be.PRS’.

(3) a. \( məĩ \) ḍʰeŋ əur \( tʰulʰa \) həũ
\( məĩ \) ḍʰeŋ əur \( tʰulʰa \) ho -ũ
\( 1SG \) tall and fat be.PRS -1SG
‘I am tall and fat.’

b. \( həmre \) sudʰ əur bəľgər hoi
\( həmre \) sudʰ əur bəľgər ho -i
\( 1PL \) simple and strong be.PRS -1PL
‘We are simple and strong.’

c. \( u \) ləũɖiyabʰər bəhut məja həĩ
\( u \) ləũɖiya -bʰər bəhut məja həĩ
\( 3SG \) girl -PL many good be.PRS.3PL
‘Those girls are very beautiful.’

(4) a. təĩ birami bate

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tōĩ</th>
<th>birami</th>
<th>baṭ -e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SG.NH</td>
<td>sick</td>
<td>be.PRS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘You are sick.’ (ELCTD.0020)

b. *tum dubbər baṭo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tum</th>
<th>dubbər</th>
<th>baṭ -o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SG.HON</td>
<td>thin</td>
<td>be 2PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘You are thin.’ (ELCTD.0024)

c. *toine bəlgər baṭo*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>toine</th>
<th>bəlgər</th>
<th>baṭ -o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>be 2PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘You are strong.’ (ELCTD.0025)

**Locative relation / Predicate locative**

In this language, we do not find a separate copula for expressing the locative relation as Dyer (2007, p. 213) claims for many languages cross-linguistically. As in the constructions with predicative nominals and predicative adjectives, in locative predicate constructions the same copula -ho and -ba are used in the present tense and the selection is controlled by the person of the subject argument. The number, gender, and honorificity do not play any role in the selection as we find in Maithili where honorificity controls the selection of copula in the third person. The examples in (5) and (6) illustrate the situation.

(5) a. *oine əbbe gʰərme nahĩ həĩ*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>oine</th>
<th>əbbe</th>
<th>gʰər -me</th>
<th>nahĩ</th>
<th>həĩ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>house -LOC</td>
<td>neg</td>
<td>be.PRS.3pl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘They are not at home now.’ (ELCTD.0032)

b. *maĩ gʰərme həu*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>maĩ</th>
<th>gʰər -me</th>
<th>ho -ũ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>house -LOC</td>
<td>be.PRS -1sg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘I am at home.’ (ELCTD.0011)

c. *həmre əbbe kʰetme hoi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>həmre</th>
<th>əbbe</th>
<th>kʰet -me</th>
<th>ho -i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>field -LOC</td>
<td>be.PRS -1pl</td>
</tr>
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</table>

‘We are in the fields now.’ (ELCTD.0014)

(6) a. *tum ajʰ həmmər gʰəre baṭo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tum</th>
<th>ajʰ</th>
<th>həmmər</th>
<th>gʰər -e</th>
<th>baṭ -o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2SG.HON</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>house -3SG</td>
<td>be.PRS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘You are at our home today.’ (ELCTD.0006)

b. *ətne jun tōĩ kəhã baṭe?*
Copula Construction in Kathariya Tharu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Nominal / Adjectival / Locative</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td><em>ho</em></td>
<td><em>ro</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td><em>ba</em></td>
<td><em>ro</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td><em>ho</em></td>
<td><em>ro</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benefactive relation / Predicate possessions**

Languages use different strategies to express predicate possessions. In some languages this meaning is expressed with a transitive verb like English ‘have’ as in ‘John has a car’ in which the possessor occurs as subject and the possessed item occurs as an object (Dryer, 2007, p. 244). Many languages employ predicate locative or existential clauses to express such meanings with the possessor expressed as some sort of location (Dryer, 2007, p. 244). Many other languages use copula clause to express possession…. However, many languages lack a verb ‘have’, using a copula or verbless clause construction or possession in its stead (Dixon, 2010b, p. 174). Languages usually employ existential and/or locational structures to express the notion of possession (Payne, 1997, p. 126). As Dixon (2010b, p. 174) and Payne (1997, p. 126) state regarding many of the world languages, Kathariya Tharu lacks a verb expressing possession. Instead, it employs the same copula verb *ho* ‘be’ as it is used to show identity or attributive relations. Another form of the same copula *ahe* or *ahi* is also attested to express the predicate possession or benefactive relation. The examples in (7a-c) clarify the situation.

(7) a. *tumʰər babak 8 bigaha jəgga he*  
*tumʰər baba -k 8 bigaha jəgga həe*  
‘Your father has 8 bigahas of land.’  
(ELCTD.0196)

b. *oinke kʰet bag nai he*  
*oinke kʰet bag nai həe*  
‘They do not have any land.’  
(ELCTD.0197)
The agreement pattern in these examples show that the possessor NP in Kathariya Tharu is marked with Genetive case and the possessed NP is used as the subject of the copula verb. In the examples (7a & 7b), the copula verbs ho‘e ‘be.PRS.3PS’ agree with the NPs 8 bigaha jəgga ‘8 measure of land land’ and kʰet bag ‘field unirrigated land’, whereas the verb ho‘ĩ ‘be.PRS.3PL’ in (7c) agrees with the possessor NP mor tin ləɖka ‘1SG.GEN three son’, a third person plural NP.

Kathariya Tharu also employs another copular verb ahe in singular and hĩ or ahĩ in plural to indicate predicate possession, as illustrated in (8a-c).

Apart from expressing identity relation, attributive relation, locative relation and benefactive relation between the copula subject and copula complement in a sentence, a copula verb can also perform a descriptive function. Kathariya Tharu employs a distinct copula rəh ‘remain’ for this function, as illustrated in (9a-c).
These examples describe how the flowers look (9a), how juicy the fruits are (9b) and how shy the Tharu girls are (9c).

**Copula construction in the past**

The person distinction attested in the selection of copula verb in the present tense is not employed in the past tense. Analogous to many of the IA languages like Chitoniya Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, Darai, and Nepali, the person or relation distinction disappears, and the same copula *rəh* ‘be.pst’ is used to express identity relation, attributive relation, locative relation or benefactive relation irrespective to the person of the copula subject. The examples in (10a-c) will clarify the situation.

(10) a. *həmmər baba kisan rəhe*

1PL.gen father farmer be.pst -3sg

‘My father was a farmer.’ (ELCTD.0003)

b. *pərəũka tum dubbər rəho*

last year 2sg.hon thin be.pst -2pl

‘You were thin three years ago.’ (ELCTD.0200)

c. *kalʰ məĩ citwənme rəhũ*

yesterday 1sg Chitwan -loc be.pst -1sg

‘I was in Chitwan yesterday.’ (ELCTD.0005)

All these examples show different relations between the copula subject and copula complement. The example in (10a) shows the identity relation, the example in (10b) shows the attributive relation, and the example in (10c) shows the locative relation. Even then the copula verb is the same *rəh* ‘be.pst’ which indicates that the person or relation distinction present in the present tense disappears in the past tense in Kathariya Tharu.

**Conclusion**

Kathariya Tharu is one of the least studied Indo-Aryan languages in our country. It is spoken by the Kathariya Tharu community living in Kailali district of Nepal and Gorakhpur, Gonda, Lakhimpur, and Khiri districts of India. Based on the preliminary study of this language, this article may not have gone to the depth of copula constructions. Kathariya Tharu employs the verbal copula construction strategy to indicate the relation between the copula subject and copula complement. The copula construction in this
language is comparatively simple. It attests three copula verbs *ba* and *ho* in the present and *rəh* in the past tense. Unlike in Dangaura and Chitoniya Tharu, Kathariya Tharu distinguishes the copula verbs on the basis of the person of the copula subject. It is the copula subject that determines the selection of the copula verb. For the first- and third-person subjects, the copula verb is *ho* which has different forms to concord with the subject. But for the second person subject, it is *ba* with different inflectional suffixes. For the descriptive function of the copula verb, a separate verb *rəh* is used. However, the person, relation and function distinction between the copula subject and copula complement disappears in the past and so, the same copula *rəh* is used with all the subjects.

### Abbreviations and symbols

<table>
<thead>
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### References


Copula Construction in Kathariya Tharu


