

Tense, Aspect and Mood in Bantawa

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to analyze the tense, aspect and mood (TAM) system in Bantawa, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the eastern hilly region. The study aims to present the form-function relation of the TAM in Bantawa from the typological-functional perspectives. The researcher has used his own knowledge of language to extract the data for the study through paradigm construction. Apart from this, a data set was prepared through manual method to draw relevant data to enrich the description and interpretation. The TAM was identified, described and interpreted from the transcriptions of the data set. The study reveals that TAM in Bantawa is primarily morphologically marked but it presents a syntactic and semantic contrasts. The morphemes can be changed based on syntactic behaviours. Moreover, TAM is similarly marked with other neighbouring Kirati languages.

Keywords: Bantawa, Tense, Aspect, Mood, Funtional-Typology

INTRODUCTION

Tense, aspect and mood (TAM) are grammatical categories embedded in the verb to convey time, temporal structure and modality. TAM is inflected usually in the forms of morphemes in the verbs. Tense refers to the expression of the time whether it is past or non-past, whereas aspect refers to the dynamics of action whether it is completed or ongoing. Likewise, mood reflects the attitude of speakers towards the action, such as command, certainty, prohibition, wish or will etc. Crystal (2008) defines tense as a category used in the grammatical description of verbs (along with aspect and mood), referring primarily to the way the grammatical category marks the time. On the other hand, Comrie (1985) mentions that tense is concerned with time or the grammaticalization of time location in time and aspect as the grammaticalization of expression of internal temporal constituency which concerns with the nature of the event either it is ongoing or completed. Palmer (2001) mentions that modality is concerned with the status of the proposition that describes the event. Likewise, Bybee et. al (1994) mention that mood and modality are not easily defined as tense and aspect so it can be defined that modality as the grammaticalization of speakers' (subjective) attitudes and opinions. Aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Holt, 1943 as cited by Comrie 1976). The aforementioned foundational studies on the subject reveals that tense relates the time of an action, aspect relates the internal temporal structure of the action and mood relates the intention towards the proposition.

Studying TAM in languages has three major implications. Firstly, it provides linguistic description and interpretation of a language. Secondly, it reveals cross-linguistic variations. Thirdly, it informs us about the cultural nuances of the mother tongue speaking community from the linguistic categories. Givón (2001, p. 285) states that:

TAM systems illustrate the paradoxical status of much of grammar: While morphology itself is part of clausal structure, its functional scope is not the propositional semantics of the atomic event or state, but rather the pragmatics, or connectivity, of the clause vis-a-vis its discourse context.

High degree of shifting of minority languages (other than Nepali, a dominant language in Nepal) towards Nepali, English and Hindi indicate a phenomenon of the reduced use of mother tongues in Nepal (Gautam, 2021, pp. 147). Bantawa itself fall under a *definitely endangered* language in the proportion of speakers within the total population in the Major Evaluative Factors of Language Vitality by UNESCO (2003), which indicates that Bantawa language is on a path toward extinction. In this context, exploring Bantawa TAM contributes not only to uncovering its grammatical systems but also to understanding the cultural concepts of Bantawa-speaking people. Moreover, it contributes to document and describe the grammatical system, especially TAM of Bantawa language from the viewpoint of Himmelmann (2006), who argues that producing a descriptive grammar is a necessary part of a language documentation otherwise, essential aspects of the language system would be left undocumented. This study significantly assists policy maker curriculum developer, textbook writers, teaching material developers, lexicographers, translators, language teachers and learners of this language.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Bantawa is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken by a group of Rai-Bantawa ethnic people in the eastern hilly region of Nepal. Bantawa refers to the mother tongue itself and the ethnic people who speak this language. However, Bantawa belongs to a broader *Rai*, an umbrella term used to refer to a large group of indigenous nationalities of the country, which includes twenty-five mother-tongue speaking groups including Chamling, Khaling, Thulung Mewahang etc. Furthermore, all Rai linguistic communities belong to the Kirati-ethnic group, the greater ethnonym of Limbu, Yakkha, Rai and Sunuwar. According to Bradely (1997), Bantawa is categorized as east Himalayish under the Himalayish group of Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Nepal. Bantawa has its neighbouring languages Puma, Dungmali, Chhiling and Chhintang. Chhintang and Puma speakers equally speak Bantawa as well and Dungmali speaking area is surrounded by Bantawa speaking homeland.

National Statistics Office (2021) reports the total Bantawa mother-tongue speaking population is 138003 spreading across Bhojpur, Khotang, Udaypur, Dhankuta, Ilam, Pachthar, Ilam and Sunsari districts. However, three cultural regions Amchok, Dilpa and Hatuwa regions of Bhojpur and Khotang districts are the main homeland of Bantawa people. Based on these cultural regions, the Bantawa language has three dialects Amchoke, Dilpali and Hatuwali. All the Bantawa people connect their cultural and linguistic identity with these cultural regions because it is believed that all Bantawa-speaking people were migrated from these regions. Cho (2020) has devised three Bantawa speaking regions; homeland, near diaspora and middle diaspora, where Bhojpur, Khotang and Udaypur come under the homeland, Dhankuta as near diaspora and Ilam, Pachthar come under the middle diaspora. The cultural region is significant to represent Kirati languages rather than administrative areas (Rai, 2024, p. 23), because cultural identity always plays a vital identity marker even if they get to migrate to other areas. Rai et al. (2016) report that vitality of Bantawa language is significant as Bantawa children also speak their mother tongue. However, it is heavily shifting to the Nepali language as in most of the homeland areas, children no longer speak Bantawa. While comparing theclusivity among the Kirati languages, Rai (2024) has enlisted the Bantawa language and thus classified it under the

language closely related to the Dungmali, Puma and Chamling (Rai, 2024 p.94).

Bantawa is a least documented language. Rai (1985) has carried out a descriptive study of the language for the first time. Later, Doornenbal (2009) published a comprehensive descriptive grammar. Cho (2018) has carried out doctoral research on the linguistic history of Bantawa. Rai, et. al. (2023) has compiled and edited the Bantawa-Nepali-English dictionary, which came out as a remarkable documentation of the Bantawa lexicon. *Bungwakha*, a monthly magazine edited by Padam Walahang, has contributed to documenting the Bantawa language from literary writings. It has created a big repertoire of the Bantawa literature through its more than 200 issues. Descriptive studies of the Bantawa language have uncovered the structural pattern of the language. This study aims to add insights from the functional-typological perspectives. The research questions of this study are presented as follows:

- (i) How TAM system is inflected in the Bantawa language?
- (ii) How Bantawa TAM relates its communicative function?
- (iii) How does the TAM system of Bantawa is similar or different from other Kirati languages?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted the functional-typological approach to analyze the TAM system of the Bantawa language. Thus, this study is designed to explain and illustrate the Bantawa TAM system focusing on its structural elements with their communicative functions. For this, functional-typological perspectives by Comrie (1976), Comrie (1985) and Bybee et al. (1994) have been adapted as the theoretical framework of this study. Also, the model by Rai (2014) and Rai (2015) are also employed while analyzing the data.

This study has adopted a qualitative research design. The researcher has used his own knowledge for the data as he is a fluent speaker of the Amchoke dialect of Bantawa language. Paradigm construction is used as the data collection tool. Identification of TAM markers and their description and interpretation followed by functional-typological analysis is done during the data analysis procedure.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tense in Bantawa

Tense refers to the function of time in grammar. It is a grammatical category that expresses time about the action, often called grammaticalized expression of time. Givón (2001) mentions that tense involves the systematic coding of the relation between two points along the ordered linear dimensions of time; reference time and event time. In most languages, tense is indicated on the verb, either by the verb morphology, or by grammatical words adjacent to the verb (Comrie, 1985, p. 12). The time is differently reflected in different languages. The common types of tense system in languages are past and non-past.

Past and other being non-past, two types of tenses are reflected in Bantawa. The time that is gone or passed from the reference point is termed as past and the time reference that is currently going on and yet to come is termed as non-past tense. Some of

the examples are presented in the following sentences:

- (1) *uŋka kirtipura k^haraŋ*
 uŋka kirtipura k^har-a-ŋ
 1SG Kirtipur go-PST-1SG
 'I went to Kirtipur.'
- (2) *kho bəl^hu bana*
 k^ho bəl^hu-ju ban-a
 3SG balk^hu-LOC come-3SG.PST
 'She came to Balkhu.'
- (3) *k^hotsi lam lam lor-a-tsi*
 k^ho-tsi lam lam lor-a-tsi
 3DU road~road run-PST-3DU
 'They (two) ran along the road.'
- (4) *uŋka kirtipura khatŋa*
 uŋka kirtipura k^hat-ŋa
 I Kirtipur go-NPST.1SG
 'I go to Kirtipur.'
- (5) *k^ho bəl^hu-ju ban*
 k^ho bəl^hu-ju ban.
 3SG balk^hu-LOC come.3sgNPST
 'She will come to Balkhu.'
- (6) *k^hotsi lam lam lottsi*
 k^ho-tsi lam lam lot-tsi
 3DU road road run-DU.NPST
 'They (two) run along the road.'

In the examples above, (1)-(3) reflect the reference time that has already passed or it talks about the event that has already happened and completed. On the other hand, (4)-(6) inform the time reference that does not happen yet or the action is anticipated to happen in the future.

These examples show that, the marker <-a> reflects past tense or the time reference of completed action, while there is null marking in non-past tense. The time reference is unmarked in non-past tense or verb root itself functions for it. Thus, verb root understood itself a non-past action, while past tense is marked. The tense system in the Bantawa language is observed in intransitive and transitive cases in the example (7) and (8).

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| (7) Non-past/verb root | Past | | |
| im 'sleep' | ims-a | sleep [vs]-PST | 'slept' |
| i 'laugh' | ij-a | sleep [vs]-PST | 'laughed' |
| tsep 'speak' | ts ^ə w-a | speak [vs]-PST | 'spoke' |
| lot 'run' | lor-a | run [vs]-PST | 'ran' |
| k ^h ap 'cry' | k ^h aw-a | cry [vs]-PST | 'cried' |
| (8) Non-past/verb root | Past | | |
| puŋ 'start' | puŋs-u | start [vs]-PST | 'started' |
| ts ^h ap 'write' | ts ^h apt-u | write [vs]-PST | 'ate' |
| k ^h ip 'count' | k ^h ipt-u | count [vs]-PST | 'counted' |
| d ^h et 'cut' | d ^h er-u | cut [vs]-PST | 'cut' |

k^hun 'carry' k^huj-u carry [vs]-PST 'carried'

From the examples above, we can generalize the varied tense marker in Bantawa; reflected differently in transitive and intransitive verbs. The past tense in the intransitive verbs (7) is generally inflected with the <-a> marker after added the verb stem, while it is marked with '<-u>' in transitive verb stems (8).

These general observations are tested and further explored with the verb paradigms furthermore. The first part is tested through non-transitive verb paradigm and second part is tested through transitive verb paradigm. After comparing two verbs paradigm, the similarities and distinctions will be illustrated in (9).

(9) 1SG

(a) *juŋŋa*
juŋ-ŋ-a
sit-1SG-NPST
'I sit.'

(b) *juŋaŋ*
juŋ-a-ŋ
sit-PST-1SG
'I sat.'

(c) *əjuŋnəŋ*
ə-juŋ-nə-ŋ
me-sit-NEG-1SG
'I do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋŋa*
man-juŋ-ŋ-a
NEG-SIT-1SG-PST
'I did not sit.'

The marker <-a (-)> of (b) and (d) above reflect the past tense in this paradigm, however, the same marker in the (a) does not represent past, instead it indicates non-past tense.

(10) 1DU INCL

(a) *juŋtsi*
juŋ-tsi
sit-2DU
'We (you and I) sit.'

(b) *juŋatsi*
juŋ-a-tsi
sit-PST-DU
'We (you and I) sat.'

(c) *əjuŋtsin*
ə-juŋ-tsi-n
we-sit-DU-NEG
'We (two) do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋdatsi*
man-juŋ-da-tsi
NEG-sit-PST.DME-DU
'We (incl.) did not sit.'

The marker <-a-> of (b), and <-da> of (d) reflects the past tense marker in this paradigm. However, the <-ŋ> morpheme that is attached to the past tense marker in the former in the pronominal element and <-d->, which is added preceding to the past tense marker in the second example indicates the demonstrative 'there'.

(11) 1DU EXCL

(a) *juŋtsia*
juŋ-tsi-a
sit-2DU-EXCL
'We (two) sit.'

(b) *juŋatsia*
juŋ-a-tsi-a
Sit-PST-DU-EXCL
'We (two) sat.'

(c) *əjuŋtsinka*
ə-juŋ-tsi-n-ka
we-sit-DU-NEG-EXCL
'We (two) do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋdatsia*
man-juŋ-da-tsi-a
NEG-sit-PST.DEM-DU-EXCL
'We (two) did not sit.'

The <-a> that appeared at the end reflects the exclusive marker in this paradigm, while the marker <-a> is apparent in the past tense only. This is unmarked in non-past

tense.

(12) 1PL INCLU

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(a) <i>juŋin</i> juŋ-in sit-PL.INCLU.NPST 'We (pl. incl.) sit.'</p> <p>(b) <i>əjuŋimin</i> ə-juŋ-i-min we-sit-3PL.INCLU-NEG.NPST 'We (pl. incl.) do not sit.'</p> | <p>(c) <i>juŋin</i> juŋ-in sit-PL.INCLU.PST 'We (pl. incl.) sat.'</p> <p>(d) <i>manjuŋdan</i> man-juŋ-da-n NEG-sit-PST.DEM-3PL 'We (pl. incl.) did not sit.'</p> |
|--|--|

The tense is differently marked in (12). Both past and non-past are identical and unmarked in (a) and (c), however, the tense is embedded as non-overt element. These non-overt elements are understood through the contexts only. However, the <-da-> marker in (d) reflects the past tense, where demonstrative is also embedded as <-d->, being <-a-> is the default past marker in the language.

(13) 1PL EXCL

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(a) <i>juŋinka</i> juŋ-in-ka sit-1PL.NPST-EXCL 'We (PL. EXCL.) sit.'</p> <p>(b) <i>juŋinka</i> juŋ-in-ka sit-1PL.PST-EXCL 'We (PL. EXCL.) sat.'</p> | <p>(c) <i>əjuŋiminka</i> ə-juŋ-i-min-ka we-sit-3PL-NEG-EXCL 'We (PL. EXCL.) do not sit.'</p> <p>(d) <i>manjuŋdanka</i> man-juŋ-da-n-ka NEG-sit-PST.DEM-1PL-EXCL 'We (PL. EXCL.) did not sit.'</p> |
|--|---|

The past is contextually marked in this paradigm. The marker <-ka> carries the meaning of exclusion; exclusive marker.

(14) 2SG

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>(a) <i>təjuŋ</i> tə-juŋ you-sit 'You sit.'</p> <p>(b) <i>təjuŋa</i> tə-juŋ-a you-sit-PST 'You sat.'</p> | <p>(c) <i>təjuŋnin</i> tə-juŋ-nin you-sit-NEG.NPST 'You do not sit.'</p> <p>(d) <i>manjuŋtəda</i> man-juŋ-tə-da NEG-SIT-2SG-DEM 'You did not sit (there)'</p> |
|--|---|

The <-a> of < tə-ju-ŋa> and < man-juŋ-tə-da> reflect the past tense. The <-juŋ> of < tə-juŋ> and < tə-juŋ-nin> are the non-past markers.

(15) 2DU

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(a) <i>tə-juŋ-tsi</i> tə-juŋ-tsi you-sit-DU.NPST 'You (two) sit.'</p> | <p>(b) <i>təjuŋatsi</i> tə-juŋ-a-tsi you-sit-PST-DU 'You (two) sat.'</p> |
|--|--|

(c) *təjuŋtsin*
 tə-juŋ-tsi-n
 you-sit-DU-NEG
 'You (two) do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋtədat̪si*
 man-juŋ-tə-da-tsi
 NEG-sit-you-PST-2DU
 'You (two) did not sit.'

The <-a> and <-da> are past tense markers. Non-past is unmarked here.

(16) 2^{PL}

(a) *təjuŋin*
 tə-juŋ-in
 you-sit-2^{PL}.NPST
 'You (many) sit.'

(c) *təjuŋimin*
 tə-juŋ-i-min
 you-sit-2^{PL}.NPST-NEG
 'You (many) do not sit.'

(b) *təjuŋin*
 tə-juŋ-in
 you-sit-2^{PL}.PST
 'You (many) sat.'

(d) *manjuŋtədan*
 man-juŋ-tə-da-n
 NEG-sit-you-PST-NEG
 'You (many) did not sit.'

The past and non-past forms are identical in the first two verbs. The context complements the communication in this context. The <-da> appears as a past tense marker in the last verb.

(17) 3^{SG}

(a) *juŋ*
 juŋ
 sit.3^{SG}.NPST
 'He/she sits'

(c) *əjuŋnin*
 ə-juŋ-nin
 he/she-sit-NEG.NPST
 'He/She does not sit.'

(b) *juŋa*
 juŋ-a
 sit-1^{sg}.PST
 'He/she sat'

(d) *manjuŋ*
 man-juŋ
 NEG-sit.3^{SG}.PST
 'He/she did not sit.'

The non-past is also unmarked here, because <juŋ> is the verb root, which itself reflects the non-past tense. The <ʌ> and <-nin> represent the third person and plural respectively.

(18) 3^{DU}

(a) *juŋtsi*
 juŋ-tsi
 sit-3^{DU}.NPST
 'They (two) sit.'

(b) *juŋatsi*
 juŋ-a-tsi
 sit-PST-3^{DU}
 'They (two) sat.'

(c) *əjuŋtsin*
 ə-juŋ-tsi-n
 they-sit-3^{DU}-NEG
 'They (two) do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋtsi*
 man-juŋ-tsi
 NEG-sit-3^{DU}.PST
 'They (two) did not sit.'

(19) 3_{PL}

(a) *məjun*
mə-juŋ
they-sit.3_{PL}.NPST
'They (many) sit.'

(b) *məjuŋa*
mə-ju-ŋa
they-sit-3_{PL}.PST
'They (many) sat.'

(c) *nijunin*
ni-juŋ-ni-n
they-sit-3_{PL}.NEG
'They (many) do not sit.'

(d) *manjuŋməda*
man-juŋ-mə-da
NEG-sit-they-PST.DEM
'They (many) did not sit.'

'They (many) did not sit.' In the examples (18) and (19), <-a-> and <-da> appear as past tense markers. Non-past is unmarked as it is reflected with the verb root itself.

Now, the next section deals with the paradigm of the transitive verb; 'eat'. The explanation will be made to each paradigm as in (20)-(30).

(20) 1_{SG}

(a) *tsaŋ*
tsa-ŋ
eat-1_{SG}.NPST
'I eat'

(b) *tsorŋ*
tso-ŋ
eat.PST-1_{SG}
'I ate'

(c) *ətsanəŋ*
ə-tsa-nə-ŋ
I-eat-NEG-1_{SG}
'I do not eat.'

(d) *mantsaŋa*
man-tsa-ŋ-a
NEG-eat-1_{SG}-PST
'I did not eat.'

Unlike, the non-past tense markers, <-o-> appears as the past tense marker in the transitive verb paradigm. Its occurrence will be examined through other paradigms.

(21) 1_{DU} INCL

(a) *tsatsi*
tsa-tsi
eat-1_{DU}.NPST
'We eat.'

(b) *tsatsu*
tsa-tsu
eat-1_{DU}.PST
'We ate.'

(c) *ətsatsun*
ə-tsa-tsu-n
we-eat-1_{DU}.NPST-NEG
'We do not eat.'

(d) *mantadatsu*
man-tsa-da-tsu
NEG-eat-PST.DEM-1_{DU}
'We did not eat.'

(22) 1_{DU} EXCL

(a) *tsatsu*
tsa-tsu
eat-2_{DU}.EXCL
'We eat.'

(b) *tsatsuwa*
tsa-tsu-wa
eat-1_{DU}.PST-EXCL
'We ate.'

(c) *ətsatsunka*
ə-tsa-tsu-n-ka
we-eat-1_{DU}.NPST-NEG-EXCL
'We do not eat.'

(d) *mantadatsuwa*
man-tsa-da-tsu-wa
NEG-eat-PST.DEM-1_{DU}-NEG
'We did not eat.'

The <-u> appears as a past tense marker in (21) and (22). The other attachments with this marker relate to the pronominal or demonstrative(s).

(23) 1PL INCL

- (a) *tsam*
tsa-m
eat-1PL.NPST
'We (many) eat.'
- (b) *tsom*
tso-m
eat.PST-1PL
'We (many) ate.'

(24) 1PL EXCL

- (a) *tsamka*
tsa-m-ka
eat-1PL.NPST-EXCL
'We (many) eat.'
- (b) *tsomka*
tso-m-ka
eat.PST-1PL-EXCL
'We (many) ate.'

- (c) *ətsanmin*
ə-tsa-n-min
we-eat-NEG-1PL.NPST
'We (many) do not eat.'
- (d) *mantsadom*
man-tsa-do-m
NEG-eat-PST.DEM-1PL
'We (many) did not eat.'

- (c) *ətsanminka*
ə-tsa-n-min-ka
we-eat-NEG-1PL-EXCL
'We (many) do not eat.'
- (d) *mantsadomka*
man-tsa-do-m-ka
NEG-eat-PST-1PL-EXCL
'We (many) did not eat.'

The morpheme <-o> appears as paste tense marker in the paradigm (23) and (24).

(25) 2SG

- (a) *tətsa*
tə-tsa
you-eat.2SG.NPST
'You eat.'
- (b) *tətsə*
tə-tso
you-eat.2SG.PST
'You ate.'

- (c) *tətsan*
tə-tsa-n
you-eat-NEG
'You do not eat.'
- (d) *mantsatədo*
man-tsa-tə-do
NEG-eat-you-2SG.PST
'You did not eat.'

(26) 2DU

- (a) *tətsatsi*
tə-tsa-tsi
you-eat-2DU.NPST
'You (two) eat.'
- (b) *tətsatsu*
tə-tsa-tsu
you-eat-2DU.PST
'You (two) ate.'

- (c) *tətsatsin*
tə-tsa-tsi-n
you-eat-2DU-NEG
'You (two) do not eat.'
- (d) *mantsatədatsu*
man-tsa-tə-da-tsu
NEG-eat-you-PST.DEM-2DU
'You (two) did not eat.'

(27) 2PL

- (a) *tətsan*
tə-tsa-n
you-eat-2PL.NPST
'You (many) eat.'

- (b) *tətsom*
tə-tso-m
you-eat.PST.2PL
'You (many) ate.'

(c) *tətsanmin*
 tə-tsa-n-min
 you-eat-2PL-NEG
 'You (many) do not eat.'

(d) *mantsatədom*
 man-tsa-tə-do-m
 NEG-eat-you-PST.DEM-2PL
 'You (many)' did not eat.'

The morpheme <-o> in (25) and (27) and <-u> in (26) are past tense markers. As per the previous evidence, the non-past is unmarked here. The non-past is reflected in the verb root itself.

(28) 3SG

(a) *tʃa*
 tʃa
 eat.3SG.NPST
 'He/she eats.'

(b) *tʃo*
 tʃo
 eat.3SG.PST
 'He/she ate.'

(c) *ətsan*
 ə-tsa-n
 3SG-eat-NEG
 'He/she does not eat.'

(d) *mantsado*
 man-tsa-do
 NEG-eat-3SG.PST
 'He/she did not eat.'

(29) 3DU

(a) *tʃatsi*
 tʃa-tʃi
 eat-3DU.NPST
 'They (two) eat.'

(b) *ətsatsu*
 ə-tsa-tsu
 they-eat-3DU.PST
 'They (two) ate.'

(c) *ətsatsin*
 ə-tsa-tʃi-n
 they-eat-3DU.NPST-NEG
 'They (two) do not eat.'

(d) *mantsaəɖatsu*
 man-tsa-ə-da-tsu
 NEG-eat-they-PST.DEM-3DU.PST
 'They (two) did not eat.'

As previous evidences, the morpheme <-o> comes in (26) and <-u> comes in (29) to mark the past tense.

(30) 3PL

(a) *mətsa*
 mə-tsa
 they-eat.3PL.NPST
 'They (many) eat.'

(b) *ətsa*
 ə-tsa
 they-eat.3PL.PST
 'They (many) ate.'

(c) *nitsan*
 ni-tsa-n
 3PL-eat-NEG
 'They (many) do not eat.'

(d) *mantsaəda*
 man-tsa-ə-da
 NEG-eat-3PL.PST
 'They (many) did not eat.'

The tense is not apparently reflected in (30). The <-da> of the fourth verb is only one past tense appearance. Others do not have tense markers; they must have context to denote tense.

Aspect in Bantawa

Aspect refers to a grammatical category that interacts with the tense in the sentences to show the aspectual dimension of the tense. Aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation (Comrie, 1976 pp. 3). Givón (2001) presents three aspectual contrasts: perfectivity, sequentiality and immediacy. However, aspects are generally discussed as per the dimension of perfectivity; perfective vs. progressive. The inflection of aspects in the Bantawa language will be examined through the verb paradigm in this study. However, we begin with a general observation of aspect in the following sentences:

(31) Progressive transitive

(a) *tsapɲaɲa*
ts^hap-ɲa-ɲa
write-1SG.NPS-PROG
'I am writing'

(b) *ts^haptanɲəɲ*
ts^hap-tan-ɲəɲ
write-PST.1SG-PROG
'I was writing'

(c) *ts^hanɲaɲa*
tsa-ɲa-ɲa
eat-1SG.PST-PROG
'I am eating'

(d) *tsoɲɲəɲ*
tso-ɲ-ɲəɲ
eat.PST-1SG-PROG
'I was eating'

(e) *təts^hapɲaɲ*
tə-ts^hap-ɲaɲ
2SG-write-PROG
'You are writing.'

(f) *təts^haptanɲa*
tə-ts^hap-ta-ɲa
you-write-PST.DEMO-PROG
'You were writing'

(32) Progressive intransitive

(a) *k^hapɲaɲ*
k^hap-ɲaɲ
cry-3SG.PROG
'He/She is crying'

(b) *k^hawaɲa*
k^ha-wa-ɲa
cry-PST.DEM-3SG.PROG
'He/She was crying'

(c) *imɲaɲ*
im-ɲaɲ
sleep-3SG.PROG
'He/She is sleeping'

(d) *imsaɲa*
im-sa-ɲa
sleep-PST.DEM-3SG.PROG
'She/He was sleeping'

(33) Perfective

(a) *ts^haptuɲ juɲsuɲ*
ts^hap-tuɲ juɲ-suɲ
write-1SG.PST keep-PER
'I have written'

(b) *ts^haptuɲ o juɲaɲa*
ts^hap-tuɲ o juɲaɲa
write-1SG.PST DEM keep.PER
'I had written.'

(c) *tsoɲ juɲsuɲ*
tso-ɲ juɲ-suɲ
eat.PST-1SG keep-PER
'I have eaten'

(d) *tsoɲ o juɲaɲa*
tso-ɲ o juɲaɲa
eat.PST-1SG DEM keep.PER
'I had eaten'

From this observation, different suffixes; <-η>, <-ηa>, <-jλη> represent the progressive aspect in Bantawa language, while the words <jun̩sun̩> and <jun̩ηa> appeared as the perfective meaning-making. Two types of aspects in Bantawa will be dealt in the following section.

Progressive aspect

(34) 1SG

- (a) *tsaηaηa*
tsa-ηa-ηa
eat-1SG.NPST-PROG
'I am eating'
- (b) *tsoηjəη*
tso-η-jəη
eat.PST-1SG-PROG
'I was eating'

- (c) *ətsanəηnəη*
ə-tsa-nəη-nəη
me-eat-1SG.NPST-PROG
'I am not eating'
- (d) *mantsaηaηa*
man-eat-ηa-ηa
NEG-eat-1SG.PST-PROG
'I was not eating'

In this paradigm <-ηa>, <-jλη> and <-nλη> suffixes are progressive markers. These markers carry the meaning of the the progression of eating.

(35) 1DU inclusive

- (a) *tsatsiηtsi*
tsa-tsiη-tsi
eat-1DU.NPST-PROG
'We are eating.'
- (b) *tsaηatsu*
tsa-ηa-tsu
eat-1DU.PST-PROG
'We were eating.'

- (c) *ətsatsintsin*
ə-tsa-tsin-tsin
we-eat-1DU.NPST-PROG
'We are not eating.'
- (d) *mantsadaηatsu*
man-tsa-da-ηa-tsu
NEG-eat-PST.DEM-1DU-PROG
'We were not eating'

(36) 1DU exclusive

- (a) *tsatsiηtsja*
tsa-tsiη-tsja
eat-1DU.NPST.PROG-EXCL
'We are (she and me) eating'
- (b) *tsaηaηa*
tsa-ηa-tsja
eat-1DU.NPST.PROG-EXCL
'We (she & me) were eating.'

- (c) *ətsatsintsinka*
ə-tsa-tsin-tsin-ka
we-eat-1DU.NPST-PROG-EXCL.
'We are not eating'
- (d) *mantsadaηatsja*
man-tsa-da-ηa-tsja
NEG-eat-PAST.DEM-PROG-EXCL
'We were not eating.'

(37) 1PL inclusive

- (a) *tsanjən*
tsa-n-jən
eat-1PL.NPST-PROG.INCL
'We are eating'
- (b) *tsomjəm*
tso-m-jəm
eat.PST-1PL-PROG.INCL
'We were eating'

- (c) *ətsanminjən*
ə-tsa-n-min-jən
we-eat-NEG-1PL-PROG.INCL
'We are not eating'
- (d) *mantsadomjəm*
man-tsa-dom-jəm
NEG-EAT-PST.PROG-INCL
'We were not eating'

In the paradigm of first-person dual inclusive and first-person dual exclusive, the central morphemes appear as progressive markers. The morpheme <-tsi>, <-tsu>, <-tsin> <-jən->, <-jəm-> are progressive markers.

(38) 2_{SG}

- (a) *tətsajan*
tə-tsa-jan
you-eat.2_{SG}.NPST-PROG
'You are eating'
- (b) *tətsəŋu*
tə-tso-ŋu
you-eat.2_{SG}.PST-PROG
'You were eating'

- (c) *tətsanjən*
tə-tsa-n-jən
you-eat.2_{SG}-NEG-PROG
'You are not eating'
- (d) *mantsatədoŋu*
man-tsa-tə-do-ŋu
NEG-eat-1_{SG}-PST.DEM-PROG
'You were not eating'

(39) 2_{DU}

- (a) *tətsatsin̄tsi*
tə-tsa-tsin̄-tsi
you-eat-2_{DU}.NPST-PROG
'You (two) are eating'
- (b) *tətsan̄qatsu*
tə-tsa-ŋa-tsu
you-eat-2_{DU}.PST-PROG
'You (two) were eating'

- (c) *tətsatsintsin*
tə-tsa-tsin-tsin
you-eat-2_{DU}.NPST-PROG
'You (two) are not eating'
- (d) *mantsatədaŋatsu*
man-tsa-tə-da-ŋa-tsu
NEG-eat-2_{DU}-PST.DEM-PRO
You (two) were not eating'

(40) 2_{PL}

- (a) *tətsamjəm*
tə-tsa-m-jəm
you-eat-2_{PL}-PROG
'You (many) are eating.'
- (b) *tətsomjəm*
tə-tso-m-jəm
you-eat.2_{PL}-PROG
'You (many) were eating.'

- (c) *tətsanminjən*
tə-tsa-n-min-jən
you-eat-2_{PL}.NPST-NEG-PROG
'You (many) are not eating'
- (d) *mantsatədomjəm*
man-tsa-tə-dom-jəm
NEG-eat-2_{PL}-PST.DEM-PROG
'You (many) were not eating'

The marking of the progressive aspect in the second person appears differently. In the paradigm of dual, the morphemes are embodied centrally within the verb structures. On the other hand, the singular and plural progressives are appended as suffixes. The suffixes <-jan>, <-ŋu>, <-jən> and <-ŋu> are the markers of progressive aspects, while <-tsin̄->, <-ŋa->, <-tsin->, <-ŋa-> are the progressive markers of second person dual verb structures. The plural progressives share a common suffix <-jəm> except the third verb structure, which inflects <-jən>.

(41) 3_{SG}

- (a) *tsaŋu*
tsa-ŋu
eat-3_{SG}.NPST.PROG
'He/She is eating'

- (b) *tsoŋu*
tso-ŋu
eat.PST-3_{SG}.PROG
'He/She was eating'

- (c) *ətsanjən*
 ə-tsa-n-jən
 3SG-eat-NEG-PROG
 'He/She is not eating'
- (42) 3DU
 (a) *ətsatsunʔtsu*
 ə-tsa-tsunʔ-tsu
 3DU-eat-3DU.NPST-PROG
 'They (two) are eating'
- (b) *ətsanʔtsu*
 ə-tsa-ŋa-tsu
 3DU-eat-3DU.PST-PROG
 'They (two) were eating'
- (43) 3PL
 (a) *tətsamjəm*
 tə-tsa-m-jəm
 3PL-eat-3PL.NPST-PROG
 'You (many) are eating'
- (b) *tətsomjəm*
 tə-tso-m-jəm
 3PL-eat-3PL.PST-PROG
 'You (many) were eating'

- (d) *mantsadoŋu*
 man-tsa-do-ŋu
 NEG-eat-3SG.PST-PROG
 'He/She was not eating'
- (c) *ətsatsuntsun*
 ə-tsa-tsu-n-tsun
 3DU-eat-3DU.NPST-NEG-PROG
 'They (two) are not eating.'
- (d) *mantsa-əda-ŋa-tsu*
 man-tsa-ə-da-ŋa-tsu
 NEG-eat-3DU-PST-3DU-PROG
 'They (two) were not eating'
- (c) *tətsanminjən*
 tə-tsa-n-min-jən
 3PL-eat-3PL.NPST-NEG-PROG
 'You (many) are not eating'
- (d) *mantsatədomjəm*
 man-tsa-tə-do-m-jəm
 NEG-eat-3PL-PST-DEM-3PL-PROG
 'You (many) were not eating.'

The appended suffixes are the progressive aspect markers in (41) and (42), while <-unʔ>, <-ŋa> and <-tsun> which are structured within are the dual progressive aspect markers. It shows a unique aspect marking system of Bantawa.

Perfective aspect

Marking of the perfective aspect in Bantawa also shares a unique structure of markings. They are discussed below in the paradigm (44)-(52).

- (44) 1SG
 (a) *tsaŋ juŋsaŋ*
 tsa-ŋ juŋ-saŋ
 eat-1SG keep-1SG.NPST.PER
 'I have eaten'
- (b) *tsoŋ juŋsun*
 tso-ŋ juŋ-sun
 eat.PST-1SG keep-1SG.PST.PER
 'I had eaten'
- (c) *mantsa jukŋa*
 man-tsajuk-ŋa
 NEG-eat keep-1SG.NPST.PER
 'I have not eaten'
- (d) *mantsa juktun*
 man-tsajuk-tun
 NEG-eat keep-1SG.PST.PER
 'I had not eaten'

The perfective aspect is not marked by morpheme here, instead different independent words appear to complement the meaning perfective aspect. The words; juŋsaŋ, juŋsun, jukŋa and juktun express the perfective aspect of the paradigm (44).

(45) 1_{DU} INCL

- (a) *tsajuṃsatsi*
tsa-juṃ-sa-tsi
eat-keep-PER-1_{DU}.NPST.PER.INCL
'We (you and me) have eaten'
(b) *tsajuṃsatsu*
tsa-juṃ-sa-tsu
eat-keep-PER-1_{DU}.PST.INCL
'We (you and me) had eaten'
(c) *mantsajuktsi*

man-tsa-juk-tsi
NEG-eat-keep-1_{DU}.NPST.PER.INCL
'We (you and me) have not eaten'

- (d) *mantsajuktatsu*
man-tsa-juk-ta-tsu
NEG-eat-keep-PST-1_{DU}.PST.PER.INCL
'We (you and me) had not eaten'

(46) 1_{DU} EXCL

- (a) *tsajuṃsatsja*
tsa-juṃ-sa-tsja
eat-keep-PER-1_{DU}.NPST.EXCL
'We (I and he) have eaten'
(b) *tsajuṃsatsuwa*
tsa-juṃ-sa-tsu-wa
eat-keep-PER-1_{DU}.PST.EXCL
'We (I and he) had eaten'

- (c) *mantsajuktsja*
man-tsa-juk-tsja
NEG-eat-keep-1_{DU}.NPST.PER.EXCL
'We (I and he) have not eaten'
(d) *mantsajuktatsja*
man-tsa-juk-ta-tsja
NEG-eat-keep-PST-1_{DU}.PST.PER.EXCL
'We (I and he) had not eaten'

The perfective aspects of first-person dual inclusive and first-person dual exclusive are structured within the verb as distinct morphemes. In (45) and (46), <-juṃsa->, and <-juk-> are perfective aspect markers.

(47) 2_{SG}

- (a) *tətsajuṃsa*
tə-tsa-juṃ-sa
2_{SG}-eat-keep-2_{SG}.NPST.PER
'You have eaten'
(b) *tətsajuṃsu*
tə-tso-juṃ-su
2_{SG}-eat-PST-keep-2_{SG}.PST.PER
'You had eaten'

- (c) *mantsatəjuktu*
man-tsa-tə-juk-tu
NEG-eat-2_{SG}-keep-2_{SG}.NPST.PER
'You have not eaten'
(d) *mantsatədojuktu*
man-tsa-tə-do-juk-tu
NEG-eat-2_{SG}-PST-keep-PST.PER
'You had not eaten'

(48) 2_{DU}

- (a) *tətsajuṃsatsu*
tə-tsa-juṃ-sa-tsu
2_{DU}-eat-keep-PER-2_{DU}.NPST
'You (two) have eaten'
(b) *tətsajuktatsu*
tə-tsa-juṃ-sa-tsu
2_{DU}-eat-keep-PER-2_{DU}.PST
'You (two) had eaten'

- (c) *mantsatəjuktsu*
man-tsa-tə-juk-tsu
NEG-eat-2_{DU}-keep-2_{DU}.NPST.PER
'You (two) have not eaten'
(d) *mantsatəjuktatsu*
man-tsa-tə-juk-ta-tsu
NEG-eat-2_{DU}-keep-PER-2_{DU}.PST.PER
'You (two) had not eaten'

(49) 2_{PL}

- (a) *tətsam juṃsum*
tə-tsa-m juṃ-sum
2_{PL}-eat-2_{PL}.NPST keep-2_{PL}.PER
'You (many) have eaten'

- (b) *tətsom juṃsum*
tə-tso-m juṃ-sum
2_{PL}-eat-PST-2_{PL} keep-2_{PL}.PER
'You (many) had eaten'

- (c) *man-tsa-tə juk-tum*
 NEG-eat-2PL.NPST keep-2PL.PER
 'You (many) have not eaten'
mantsa təjuktum junsum

- (d) *mantsatəjuktum [junsum]*
man-tsa-tə-juk-tum [occur.PST.PER]
 NEG-eat-2PL-keep-2PL.PST [keep-2PL.PER]
 'You (many) had not eaten' (same)

The perfective aspect markings in (47)-(49) resembles the previous progressive marking aspect. Second-person singular and plural got suffixed to show the perfective aspect, where *-junsa*, *-junsu*, *-juktə*, *-junsum* and *-juktum* refer the perfective aspect. On the other hand, second person dual inherits the morphemes structured within the verb structure, where *-junsa*, *-jukta* and *-juk* are the perfective aspect markers.

(50) 3SG

- (a) *tsojunsu*
tso-jun-su
 eat.3SG-keep-PER
 'She/He has eaten'
- (b) *tsojunsunsu*
tso-jun-sun-su
 eat-keep-3SG.PST-PER
 'She/He had eaten'

- (c) *mantsajuk*
man-tsa-juk
 NEG-eat-3SG.NPST.PER
 'She/He has not eaten'
- (d) *mantsajuktujujusu*
man-tsa-juk-tu-jun-su
 NEG-eat-keep-3SG.PST-keep-PER
 'She/He had not eaten'

(51) 3DU

- (a) *ətsajunsatsu*
ə-tsa-jun-sa-tsu
 3DU-eat-keep-PER-3DU.NPST
 'They (two) have eaten'
- (b) *ətsajunsatsiatsu*
ə-tsa-jun-sa-tsia-tsu
 3DU-eat-keep-3DU.PST-PER-3DU.PST
 'They (two) had eaten'

- (c) *mantsaəjuktsu*
man-tsa-ə-juk-tsu
 NEG-eat-3DU-keep-3DU.NPST.PER
 'They (two) have not eaten'
- (d) *mantsaəjuktasu*
man-tsa-ə-juk-ta-tsu
 NEG-eat-3DU-keep-3DU.PST-3DU.PST
 'They (two) had not eaten'

(52) 3PL

- (a) *ətsajunsa*
ə-tsa-jun-sa
 3PL-eat-keep-3PL.NPST.PER
 'They (many) have eaten'
- (b) *ətsajunsa o junəŋa*
ə-tsa-jun-sa [o junəŋa]
 3PL-eat-keep-3PL.PST [occur.PST.PER]
 'They (many) had eaten' (same)

- (c) *mantsaəjuk*
man-tsa-ə-juk
 NEG-eat-3PL-keep-3PL.NPST.PER
 'They (many) have not eaten'
- (d) *mantsaəjukta*
man-tsa-ə-juk-ta
 NEG-eat-3PL-keep-3PL.PST.PER
 'They (many) had not eaten'

In paradigm (50)-(52), the previously mentioned feature of verb-structures appears. The third person dual verbs show different markings of perfective aspect then in first person and second person. In the first-person, *<-su>* and *<-juk>* are suffixed to show the feature. Likewise, *<-jun>* and *<-junsa>* morphemes are appended to show the perfective aspect in the third person. On the contrary, perfective aspect is embodied in third person dual where *<-junsa>*, *<-juk>* and *<-jukta>* are the perfective aspect markers.

Mood in Bantawa

Mood expresses the attitude of the speaker toward the action implied by the verb. Mood is grammatically marked in the verb structure and semantically it covers speaker's attitude such as uncertainty, necessity, probability, possibility etc. Crystal (2008) defines mood as a set of syntactic and semantic contrast signaled by alternative paradigms of the verbs, e.g., indicative (the unmarked form), subjunctive, imperative. Bantawa modality as presented by Rai & Rai (2067BS) and Dornenbal (2009) present semantic divisions based on the grammatical marking. However, this study presents mood in Bantawa under broad categories; epistemic and imperative moods mentioned by Bybee et. al. (1994).

Epistemic mood

Epistemic mood expresses a speaker's judgement about the certainty, inferred certainty, uncertainty and probability. The epistemic markers have the whole proposition in their scope and indicate the degree of commitment of the speaker to the truth or future truth of the proposition (Bybee et. al., 1994, p. 320). Under this, possibility, probability, inferred certainty, certainty and uncertainty are explored followingly.

Possibility: When the speaker expresses a chance of occurring something, a particle or grammatical word <he> is added after the verb to refer possibility in Bantawa.

- (53) *uŋka khatŋa he*
uŋka k^hat-ŋa he
I go-1SG.NPST POSS
'I may go.'
- (54) *k^hotsi k^hattsi he*
k^ho-tsi k^hat-tsi he
they-DU go-2SG POSS
'They (two) may go.'
- (55) *k^hana tək^hat he*
k^hana tək^hat he
you 2SG-go POSS
'You may go.'

Probability: When the speaker expresses a some activity, that is likely to happen, a particle or grammatical word <onde> added after the verb in a sentence to express probability in Bantawa.

- (56) *uŋka k^hatŋa onde*
uŋka k^hat-ŋa onde
I go-1SG.NPST PROB
'I probably go.'
- (57) *k^hotsi bantsi onde*
k^ho-tsi ban-tsi onde
she/he come-2DU POSS
'They probably come.'
- (58) *k^hana tək^hat onde*
k^hana tək^hat onde
you 2SG-go POSS
'You probably go.'

Certainty: When the speaker infers some evidence of a activity that has been occurred, a particle or grammatical word <ɲe> is added after the verb to express inferred certainty or certainty.

- (59) *kʰotsi khara ɲe tsiatsi*
 kʰo-tsi khar-a ɲe tsia-tsi
 he/she -DU go-PST CERT complete-DU
 'They have certainly gone.' (because here are their footprint)
- (60) *jawa o lam ɲe khara*
 jawa o lam ɲe kʰar-a
 friend this road CERT go-PST
 "Friend went to this road." (because brother said it to me).
- (61) *saɲwa jənpa ɲe lorao*
 saɲwa jənpa ɲe lor-a o
 buffalo downward CERT run-PST Q
 "Did buffalo ran downward?" (Did you see it?)

Imperative mood

Imperative mood expresses commands, wish, warning, prohibitions or instructions. While expressing imperative mood, the subject is often implied and base form of the verb or bare infinitive is used. Range of intentions are expressed through imperative mood. Under this, imperative, optative, hortative and prohibitive are expolored followingly.

Imperative: When the speaker asks to do or make direct commands over somebody, then a <-a> suffix is added to the verb stem.

- (62) *kʰana kʰipta*
 khana khip-ta
 you read-IMP
 "you read."
- (63) *kʰanatsi kʰiptatsi*
 khana-tsi kʰip-ta-tsi
 you-DU read-IMP-DU
 "you (two) read."
- (64) *kʰananin kʰiptanin*
 kʰana-nin kʰip-ta-nin
 you-PL read-IMP-PL
 "You (many) study."

Optative: When the speaker expressess his/her wish or will to cause somebody to do something or himself/herself, a suffix <-ne> is added at the verb stem in first and third person and <-a> morpheme is added to the second person.

- (65) *kʰana kʰipta*
 kʰana khip-ta
 you study-OPT
 "(I wish) you study."
- (66) *kʰo kʰipne*
 kʰo khip-ne
 he/she study-OPT
 '(I wish) he/she studies.'

- (67) *uŋka k^hipŋane*
 uŋka k^hip-ŋa-ne
 I study-1SG-OPT
 "(I wish), I study."

Hortative: When the speaker encourages or incites to somebody to take action, a morpheme <-k^ha-> is added after the verb stem preceded by imperative markers.

- (68) *k^hana k^hiptakha*
 k^hana k^hip-ta-k^ha
 you study-IMP-HOR
 "(I encourage) You study please!"
- (69) *k^hananin k^hiptakhanin*
 k^hana-nin tsa-k^ha-nin
 you-PL study-HOR-PL
 "(I encourage) You (many) eat please!"
- (70) *k^hanatsi k^hiptak^htsi*
 k^hana-tsi khip-ta-k^ha-tsi
 you-DL study-OPT-HOR-DU
 "(I encourage) You two study."

Prohibitive: When the speakers expresses negative commands or prohibition for any action to somebody, then, a prefix <man-> is added to the verb stem and <-do> is added as a suffix to show prohibition. However, the suffix gets inflected based upon the person indicating to.

- (71) *k^hana mank^hipdo*
 k^hana man-k^hip-do
 you NEG-study-PROH
 "You don't read!"
- (72) *k^hana man-k^hip-da*
 k^hana man-k^hip-da
 you NEG-study-PROH
 "You don't read!"
- (73) *k^hanatsi mank^hipdatsu*
 k^hana-tsi man-k^hip-da-tsu
 you-DL NEG-study-PROH-DU
 "You (two) don't study."

Mood in Bantawa is expressed in various ways, however they can be grouped under two broad categories; epistemic and imperative moods. Epistemic moods are expressed through particular grammatical words after the verb and imperative moods are marked morphologically within the verb structure, primarily as suffixes.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Bantawa language, as other eastern Kirati languages, inherits a complex verb morphology. Person, tense, demonstratives, negation, inclusivity and exclusivity are expressed with various morphemes in the verb structure. The person number and even tense may appear twice or more than this in a verb structure overtly and non-overtly. This system makes the verb structure of the Bantawa language colorful beads tied with a string. Hence, the study of TAM in Bantawa is interesting as well as challenging. The morpheme <-a-> is the common past tense marker in Bantawa. However, it can be inflected variously

depending upon the person. It changed to become <-o> in singular, while it may be attached with /d/ and /t/ to become <-da-> and <-ta-> respectively. Sometimes, it changed to <-u-> to show the action that is completed or finished from the reference point. On the other hand, non-past is unmarked in the Bantawa language. The verb root itself generally gives information about the non-past action. Consequently, the verb root gets the inflections to show past marking.

The aspect is also variedly appearing in Bantawa. The common morphemes are <-η>, <-ηa>, <-jη> <-juk>, <-jun>, <-juns> and <-junsu>. However, the structural placement of these morphemes are varied. The morphemes are suffixed in singular and plural verb structure, however, in dual verb structure, the morphemes are infixes; they come as an internal part of the verb structure. Due to the multiple beads of morphemes, the infixes aspect markers need to be scrutinized among morphemes. Unlike, TAM is inflected in morphemes in most of the languages, expressions of mood in Bantawa presents a distinct structure as it also expressed in grammatical words or particles. However, only epistemic moods are expressed in grammatical words, such as *he*, *ηe* and *onde*. Imperative moods appear within the verb structures, especially as suffixes, such as <-k^ha>, <-do>, <-ta> etc. These suffixes/syllables get prominence during pronunciation while expressing moods in real-life communication. The TAM system of Bantawa language shares the commonality among Kirati languages, especially nearby languages; Puma, Dungmali, Chhiling and Chhintange. The mother-tongue speakers of these Bantawa-neighbouring languages can communicate in Bantawa and also situated geographically contiguous. According to a study by Rai (2009), Dumi language also aligns the TAM system with Bantawa having identical categorizations of TAM regardless of semantic interpretations of mood. On the other hand, a study by Rai (2014) shows a distinct tendency has been observed in Koyee, which shows that expression of an aspect can be lexical, which merely align with other Kirati languages. Typologically, Kirati languages inherit complex verb morphology and embed TAM within it. Lexical expressions may arise due to loss of grammatical convention in the language. Inquiry by Rai (2070BS) and Neupane & Rai (2080) to Dungmali TAM and an inquiry by Kainla et. al. (2070) to Limbu TAM present do not appear fundamentally dissimilar with Bantawa TAM system.

The TAM system of Bantawa language can be generalized to other Kirati languages, however, in-depth study of different grammatical aspects have not been carried out to assess their functional-typological features. Independent researches mostly focus only to the description of linguistic aspects of Kirati languages, such as phonology, morphology and TAM, which delimits the broader exploration and assessment. This small-scale study may ignite a small way-forward towards the in-depth-study of TAM system of Bantawa language and beyond.

Abbreviations

| | | | | | |
|------|---|---------------|------|---|------------|
| 1 | = | first person | IMP | = | Imperative |
| 2 | = | Second person | INCL | = | Inclusive |
| 3 | = | Third person | LOC | = | Locative |
| CERT | = | Certainty | NEG | = | Negative |
| DU | = | Dual | NPST | = | non-past |
| EXCL | = | Exclusive | OPT | = | Optative |
| HOR | = | Hortative | PER | = | Perfective |

| | | | | | |
|------|---|-------------|-----|---|-------------------|
| PL | = | Plural | PST | = | Past |
| POSS | = | Possibility | Q | = | Question particle |
| PROB | = | Probability | SG | = | Singular |
| PROG | = | Progressive | VS | = | verb stem |
| PROH | = | Prohibitive | | | |

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