

Gurung (Tamu) in the Manang District, Nepal: Observations & Outstanding Questions

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Gurung (endonym *Tamu*) is a Bodish, Tibeto-Burman language spoken in several different political districts and geo-cultural zones in Nepal. Of the approximately 250,000 speakers of Gurung, a very small percentage of these have their traditional village settlements in the more northern Manang District, where a number of other Bodish languages with strikingly different prosodic and morpho-syntactic profiles are also spoken, including Nyeshang, Gyalsumdo, Ghale, Nar, and Phu. The majority of other Gurungs come from outside of Manang (in more southern parts of Nepal). Despite a fair amount of descriptive work published on Gurung varieties spoken in other districts (e.g. Warren Glover, Kenneth Pike, and Austin Hale on Gurung in Kaski and Lamjung), and despite early speculations that Gurung in Manang District might represent a distinct dialect area, to date, there exists no published work on the ways that Manang Gurung (structurally) resembles other dialects of the same language, or conversely the other Bodish languages of Manang. This talk presents initial findings from fieldwork on Manang Gurung (2004-2006) in a comparative frame with other Gurung dialects and with other Manang languages (specifically, Nyeshang, and Nar-Phu). A portion of the talk focuses on observations of structural similarities and differences between these languages & dialects (with emphasis on phonetics, phonology and nominal morpho-syntax), and a portion focuses on initial attempts to discover *additional* regional dialects of Gurung within Manang District itself. These observations are also grounded in issues of language contact and endangerment in the larger Nepalese arena.