

## GRAPHIC AND CLASSIFIER VERB BASES IN THE NEWAR LANGUAGE

Iswaranand Sresthacarya

### Introduction

According to the definition of a classifier language set out by Joseph Greenberg (1972), Newar can be described as a classifier language. It has several types of distinct numeral classifiers.

The classifier and quantifier (or graphic) morphemes in Newar are found in various syntactic situations throughout the language. The role of these morphemes in the formation of verb bases is the subject of this paper.

Verb bases derived from classifier and quantifier (graphic) morphemes are widely used in both colloquial and written Newar. Verb bases formed from both types of morphemes can essentially be viewed as nominal in nature.

In the Newar language true nominal verbs are derived from adjectives. The verb bases derived from classifier and quantifier morphemes can be treated as subgroup to the true nominal verbs derived from adjectives. Both nominal verbs and verb bases are impersonal. The true nominal verbs are always paradigmatically irregular & causative form in whereas the verb bases derived from classifier and quantifier morphemes are always paradigmatically & causative forms.

K forms of true nominal verb are always paradigmatically irregular. Examples are:

#### Non-causative

phākula. (It) became pungent.  
cākula. (It) became sweet.  
pāula. (It) became sour.  
wācula. (It) became blue  
wāula. (It) became green.  
hyāula. (It) became red.  
khiula. (It) became dark.  
mhāsula. (It) became yellow.

#### Causative

phākukala. (One) made (it) pungent  
cākukala. (One) made (it) sweet.  
pāukala. (One) made (it) sour.  
wācukala. (One) made (it) blue.  
wāukala. (One) made (it) green.  
hyāukala. (One) made (it) red.  
khiukala. (One) made (it) dark.  
mhāsukala. (One) made (it) yellow.

K forms of classifier and quantifier (graphic) verb are always paradigmatically regular. Examples for the classifier verb base are given below:

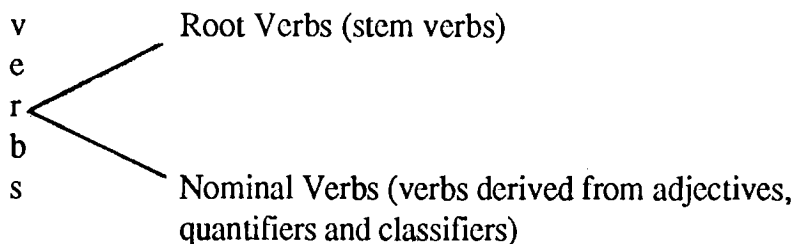
che takhāta. A house became huge.	waa che takhākala. He has a huge house built
wa swāā ciphwala. That flower became small.	gathuy swāā ciphwackala. A gardener made flowers small.
āmāsi tagwla. A guava grew large.	wāā amāsi tagwaekala. He made a guave grow large.
mari tapāta. A bread became large.	wāā mari ta pākala. (He) made a bread large.

Examples for the graphic verb base are as follows:

che tajala. A house became high <sup>4</sup>	waa che tajaekala. He made a house high.
huu la tabyata. That path became broad.	imisaa la ta byakala. They made a path broad.
kapaa cibyata. Cloth became narrow.	waa kapaa ci byakala. He made cloth narrow.
keba tahala. A garden became long.	waa keba tahaekala. He made a garden long.

### Verb types in

Basically there are two types of verbs fundamental to the Newar language, each with importance in its own area. These can be set out as follows:



*Fig. 1 (see figure 4)*

**Root Verbs:** Root verbs or the principal verbs have six possible morphophonemic endings:

*/n/, /y/, /l/, /p/, /t/, /k/*

Each of these endings has its distinct characteristic inflectional conjugational forms and their derivational features as follows:

gloss	Verb	pd.	pc.	imp.	k.
To inform	kan-e	kana	kana	kā	kāḳ-e
To take	kā-ye	kala	kayā	kā	kāek-e
To be pressed	kā-ye	kāta	kānā	x	kāk-e
To scramble	kāl-e	kāla	kalā	kā	kāek-e
To request	kwap-e	kwapala	kwapā	kwapiu	kwapak-e
To rebuke	hakk-e	hakkala	hakkā	hakki	x

**Nominal verbs:** The nominal verbs are the ones derived from adjectives and graphic or classifier morphemes. They are always impersonal. The following examples are derived from adjectives:

gloss	adjective	v. form	meaning	K
sweet	cāku	cākula	(It) became sweet.	cākukala
sweet	māku	mākula	(It) became sweet.	mākukala
sour	pāu	pāula	(It) became sour.	pāukala
green	wāu	wāula	(It) became green.	wāukala
blue	wācu	wācula	(It) became blue.	wācukala
red	hyāu	hyāula	(It) became red.	hyāukala
yellow	mhāsu	mhāusla	(It) became yellow.	mhāsukala
black	hāku	hākula	(It) became black.	hākukala
white	tuyu	tuyula <sup>7</sup>	(It) became white.	tuyukala
light	yāu	yāula	(It) became light.	yāukala
thin	sālu	sālula	(It) became thin.	sālukala
thick	khwātu	khwatula	(It) became thick	khwatukala
rough	kwācu	kwācula	(It) became rough	kwācukala
slippy	culu	culula	(It) became slippery	culukala
clean	yecu	yecula	(It) became clean	yecukala
heavy	jhyātu	jhyatula	(It) became heavy	jhyatukala
smooth	picu	picula	(It) became smooth	piculala
greasy	thyācu	thyācula	(It) became greasy	thyācukala

### Verb Bases

The nominal verb has two semantically similar and characteristically correlative sub-sets, i.e. verb bases, which have a wide range of colloquial and written uses. These are:

**Graphic Verb Base:** It gives a clear, effective, view of size, height, length, breadth, things.

**Classifier Verb Base:** It gives a clear, effective, view of shape, size, figure, things.

Each of these verb bases has two sub-sets. The sub-set for the graphic verb base may be set out as follows:

**Simple Graphic Verb Base:** The quantifier morpheme plus a morpheme representing a graphic feature of height, length or breadth may be formed as a simple graphic verb base. The quantifier morpheme may be treated as a verbal prefix and morpheme for the graphic feature may be treated as a stem verb and it can be conjugated as a root verb ending with /y/. In the similar way K form may also be formed, e.g.:

qni. + gm.	gloss.	V.form <sup>8</sup>	meaning	K
ta + jāā	height	tajāla	(It) became higher	tajaekala
ci + hāā	length	cihāla	(It) became shorter	cihaekala
ta + byā	breadth	tabyāta	(It) became wider	tabyakala
ci + dhikaa	hight	cidhikala	(It) became shorter	cidhikaekala
ta + kuu	size	takula	(It) became bigger	takuikala

**Complex Graphic Verb Base:** The complex graphic verb base may be formed with the help of a morpheme representing the graphic feature of height, length or breadth. The postpositional *pae* is preceded by a pronominal particle *a-*, *āma-*, *ga-*, *tha-*, *hūy-*, and followed by a morpheme representing the graphic feature. This morpheme for graphic is then a verb base which can be conjugated as a morphophonemically /y/ ending verb root. The postpositional *pae*, which denotes 'like', and pronominal morphemes (*a-*, *āma-*, *ga-*, *tha-*, or *hūy-*) are also treated as verb prefixes.

The formation of the complex graphic verb base can be set out as follows:

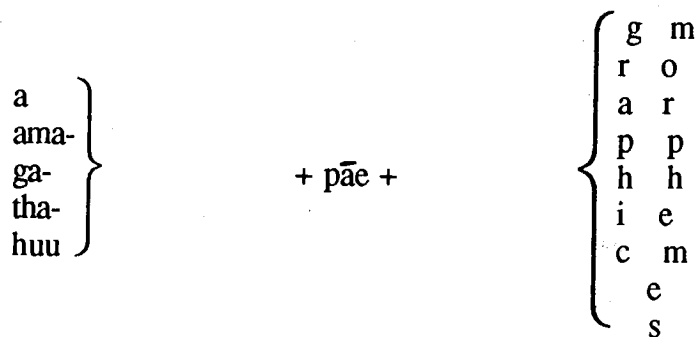


Fig. 2

kāe huṃ-pāe dhikala. The son became that tall (i.e. tall like that).  
 paakhāa a pae jāla. The wall became that high (i.e. high like that).  
 paṃ āmapāe hala. The bamboo became that long (i.e. long like that).  
 che gapāe jala? How high did the house became. (i.e. like what)  
 kāpaa thapāe byāta. The cloth became this wide (i.e. wide like this).

The sub-set for the classifier verb base may be set out as follows:

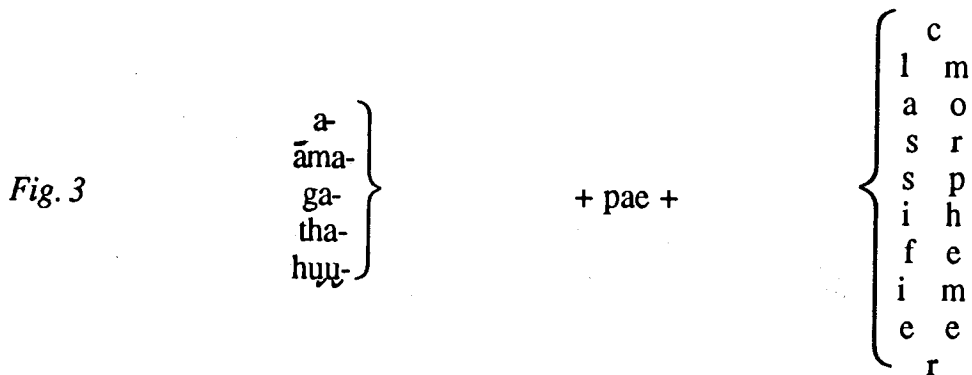
**Simple Classifier Verb Base:** The quantifier morpheme plus a classifier morpheme may be formed as a classifier verb base. The quantifier morpheme may be treated as a verbal prefix, and the morpheme for classifier may be treated as a stem verb that can be conjugated as a root verb ending with /y/. Similarly, the K form can also be formed. A head noun of the class defined by the classifier morpheme must always be the subject, for example:

- che takhāta. A house became large.
- kathi cipula. A stick became thin.
- swāā taphwala. A flower became large.
- laa cipāta. Clothes became small.
- jāsi tagwala. A rice cooking pot became large.

**Complex Classifier Verb Base:**

The complex classifier verb base can be formed in exactly the same way in which the complex graphic verb base has formed, only it needs the replacement of the graphic morpheme by the classifier.

The formation of the complex classifier verb base can be set out as follows:



- che apāe khāta. A house became that big (or small).
- ṃā āmapāe gwala. A mango became that big (or small).
- che gapāe khāta? How big did the house become?
- mari thapāe pāta. A bread became this big (or small).
- tu huṃ pāe pula. A sugarcane became that like big (or small).
- swāā apae phwala. A flower became that large (or small).



swāā baacāpāe phwala. A flower became slightly large (i.e. not so large and not so small).

wayā kāe baacāpāe dhikala. His son became slightly tall (i.e. not so tall and not so short).

āmāsi baacāpāe gwala. A guava became slightly large (i.e. not so large and not so small)

lā baacāpāe byāta. A path became slightly wide (i.e. not so wide and not so narrow).

tu baacāpāe pula. A sugarcane became slightly large (i.e. not so large and not so small)

gulāph swāā baacāpāe phwala. The rose became slightly large (i.e. not so large and not so small).

In a similar way, two semantic variations from quantifier morphemes (ta- and ci-) can be formed by lengthening or intoning the final vowel (ta- into taa- and ci- into cii-) to emphasize the meaning semantically, and for giving semantic dimensions to both (ta- and ci) quantifiers by replacing 'bharāe' and 'sasipāe' with the meaning reciprocally gigantic and tiny. Then we have three semantic categories for both quantifier morphemes, which vary and emphasize the meaning to the same extent. These may be listed as follows:

ta-/	taa-/	bharāe/
ci/	cii-/	sasipāe/

All of them can be used for both simple graphic and simple classifier verb bases.

#### Examples for graphic verb base:

chē tajāla. A house became high.<sup>10</sup>

chē taajāla. A house became (a bit more) high.

chē bharaejala. A house became (too) high.

bhāātāālaa cihala. A skirt became short.

bhāātāālaa ciihala. A skirt became (a bit more) short.

bhāātāālaa sasipaehal. A skirt became (too) short.

#### Example for classifier verb base:

chē takhāta. A house became big.

chē taakhāta. A house became (a bit more) big.

chē bharaekhāta. A house became huge.

lā ci pāta. A vesture became small.

lā cii pāta. A vesture became smaller.

lā sasi pāe pāta. A vesture became too small.

āmāsi ci gwala. A guava became small.

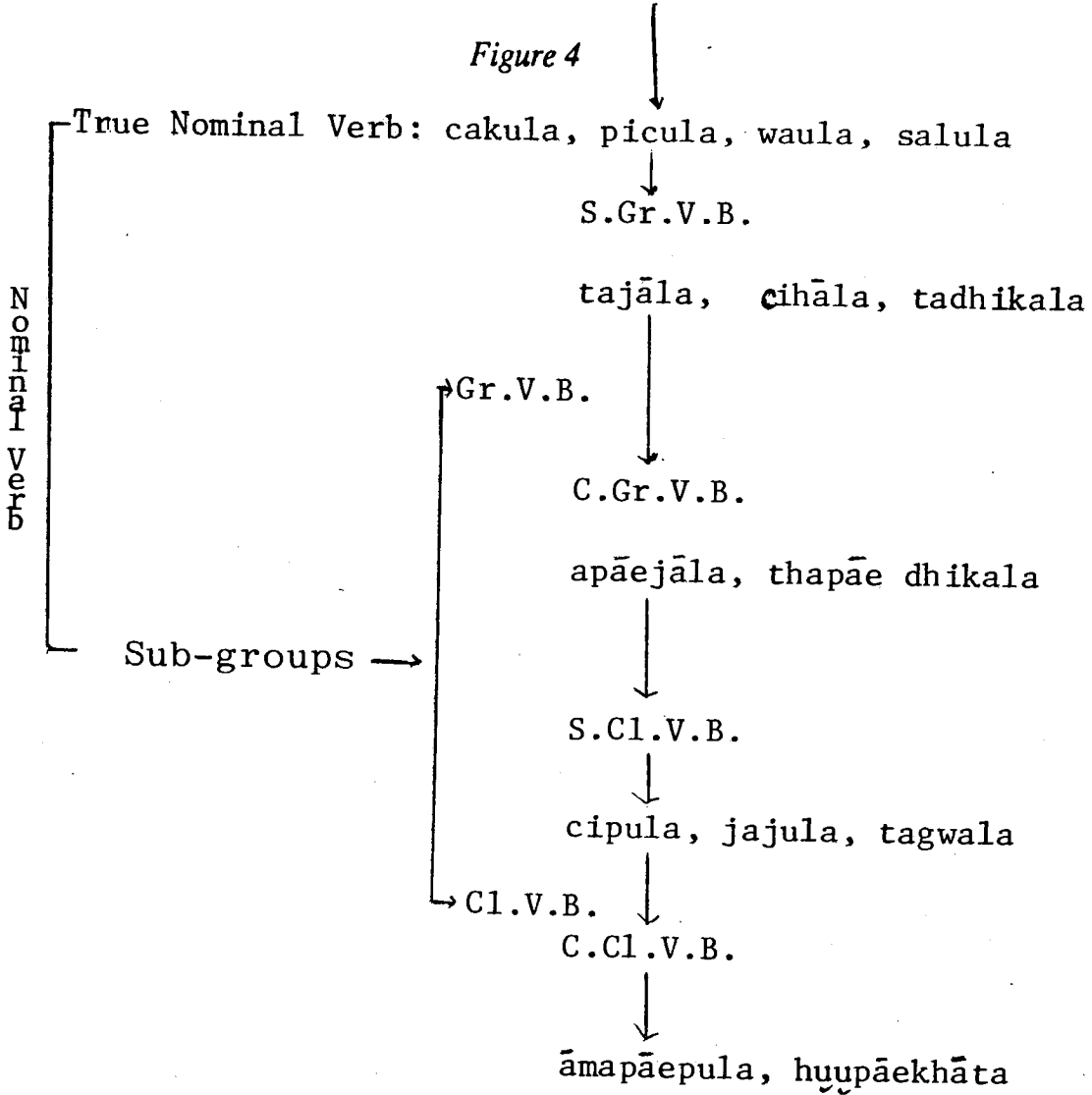
āmāsi cii gwala. A guava became smaller.

āmāsi sasi pae gwala. A guava became too small.

**Verb Diagram**

Root Verb (It has morphophonemically /n/, /y/, /l/, /p/, /t/, /k/ endings).

Figure 4



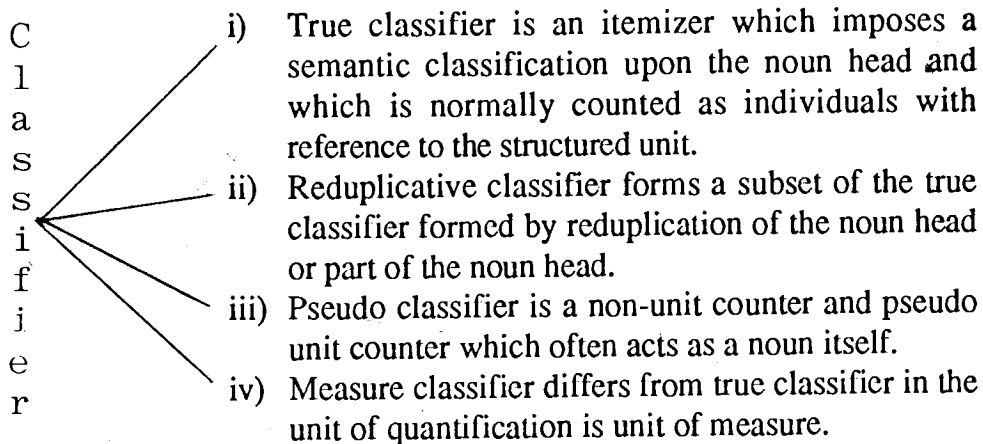


## APPENDIXES

## Relating to the verb bases

**Appendix A. The role of classifiers in forming the verb base.**

There are four kinds of principal classifiers in Newar. These can be set out according to the following criteria:



*Figure 5*

Apart from true classifier each of these has many sub-classes. Only those classifiers from which verb bases can be formed will be discussed and listed in their verb forms with K form:

**(a) From the true classifier.**

gwaa. cl. for round object, container and house parts.

phasi ta gwala. A pumpkin became big. K. gwaekala

pā. cl. for flat object, and paired object.

mari tapāta. A bread became large. K. pakala.

pu, cl. for long thin object.

wayā lhāā tapula. His hand became fat. K pukala. (Irr.)

phwaa. cl. for flower. floral object.

gulāph swāā ciphwala. The rose became small. K. phwaekala.

cāā. cl. for circular object.

ghaacāā tacāla. A wheel became large. K. cackala.

khā. cl. for house (unique).

chaagu che cikhata. Your house became small. K. khakala.

pāā. cl. for shirt, skirt, and coat. (unique).

macāyāta laa tapata. A vesture became large for a child. K. pakala.

pwāā. cl. for lamp, light (unique).  
mata tapwāta. A lamp became bright. K. pwakala.

**(b) From the reduplicative classifier.**

pwaa. cl for package. swelling (of a body part).  
wasaa pwaa ta pwala. A package of clothes became large. K. pwaekala.  
kii, cl. for a nail. peg.  
pyākii takina. A staple became big. K. kiikala.  
hwaa. cl for hole.  
sāsaa hwaa cihwala, The larynx (wind pipe) became small. K. hwaekala.  
pwāā. cl for hole.  
bhau pwāā tapwāta. A cat-hole became large. K. pwakala.  
duwāā. cl for gate,  
cheyāta lukhā-duwāā ciduwāta. A gate became small for (that) building. K. duwāekala (irr).  
patij, cl for a finger.  
aaguupatij cipatina. The ring-finger became small. K. patiikala.  
haa. cl. for leaf.  
palehaa cihala. A petel of lotus became small. K. haekala.  
kawaa. cl. for column spacing between two pillars.  
pasaa kawaa ci kawala. A column spacing of a shop K. kawaekala became smaller.

**(c) From the pseudo classifier.**

ju. cl. for paired object.  
lakāā tajula. A pair of shoes became large. K. jukala. (irr.)  
jwāā. cl. for a set of 108 standing lamps.  
dewa tajwala. A set of 108 butter lamps became large. K. jwekala.  
jwaa. cl. for paired or grouped object.  
pujyābhaa cijwala. A set of plate for worship became small. K. jwaekala.

**The following are the sub-groups of pseudo classifier:**

**i. Approximate arrangement.**

ku. cl for a load.  
jāki takula. A load of rice became large. K. kukala. (irr)  
thu. cl for bundle.  
tukāā cithuta. A bundle of mustard plant became small. K. thunkala.  
jhwaa. cl for a line, a row, queue.  
bhwae tajhwala. The line for a feast became longer. K. jhwaekala  
dhwaa. cl for a line, stripe.

kāpatae hyāy tadhwala. The red stripe in the cloth became wider. K. dhaekala.  
mhuu. cl for a bundle.

pasalae tarkāricimhula. A bundle of vegetable in the shop became small. K. mhuikala.

## ii) Approximate volume.

bhwāā. cl for flat palmful morsel.

macāyāta baji tabhwāta. For the child, a heaped handful beaten rice became more than enough. K. bhwākala.

pee. cl for fingerful morsel.

jitaa jā tapela. For me the morsel of fingerful of cooked rice became large. K. peekala.

bekyy. cl for armful load or package.

wasaa tabekuna. The armful of clothes became big. K. bekyukala.

## iii) Approximate size

kawaa. cl. for column spacing (between two poles, pillars)

pasaa ta kawala. The column spacing of a shop became large. K. kawekala

phwaa. cl for flower. floral object

swāā taphwala. The size of a flower became large. K. phwaekala.

## iv) Shape (a discribed entity)

gwāā. cl for a log.

si tagwaja. A log became large. K. gwaekala.

tā. cl. for a piece of bread.

mari tatāta. The bread became large. K. takala.

thuu. cl for rolled item.

sukuu tathula. A roll of mat became large. K. thukala. (irr)

## v) Shape (simple proximity)

dwa. cl for heap

cā tadwala. The heap of earth became large. K. dwaekala

pucaa, cl for a group.

pujyābhalae jāki tapucal. An amount of rice in the Puja plate became K. pucaekala.

## vi) Integral part

gājaa. cl for cluster, bouquet.

swāāmā tagajala. A flower plant became tufty. K. gājaekala.

thwāā. cl for head of Cauli flower.

kaule ta thwata. The head of cauliflower became large. K. thwākala.

**vii) Bounded Item**

kuu. cl for wound, dried wound; piece, cut piece.  
ghāā takula. A wound became large. K. kukala.

**Appendix B. Reduplicative uses.**

**i) Reduplication of quantifier morphemes.**

For both verb bases, quantifier morphemes ta- and bharae-, ci- and sasipāe may be reduplicated. This reduplication may denote semantically the individuality of the items. e.g.:

saatrāsi cicigwaa. The oranges have grown small (Each orange is small; they are small individually).

saatrāsi tatagwala. The oranges have grown large (individually).

ukij ukii bharae bharae gwagu lya: So, choose the biggest (huge) ones among them

tj tatahāā. The reeds are long (each reed is long; they are long individually).

jhiita cicihāāgu māā. We need short ones.

ukij ukii sasipāe sasipaehaagu leya kae nu. So, let us choose the shortest ones among them.

**ii) Reduplication of pronominal morphemes.**

There may be reduplicated pronominal morphemes 'a-' 'āma-', 'ga-', 'tha-' 'huy-' or postpositional -pae- in exactly the same manner. Each of them occur separately or together, e.g.:

kathi { āma āma pāe  
āma pāe pāe  
āma pāe āma pāe } hāla. The stick became that long. K. hāekala.

che { tha tha pāe  
tha pāe pāe  
tha pāe tha pāe } khata. A house was built this big K. khakala.

pāsi { ga ga pāe  
ga pāe pāe  
ga pāe ga pāe } gwala? How big did become pears? K. gwaekala.

khicā { huy huy pāe  
huy pāe pāe  
huy pāe huy pāe } dhikal. The dogs had become that big. K. dhikaekala.

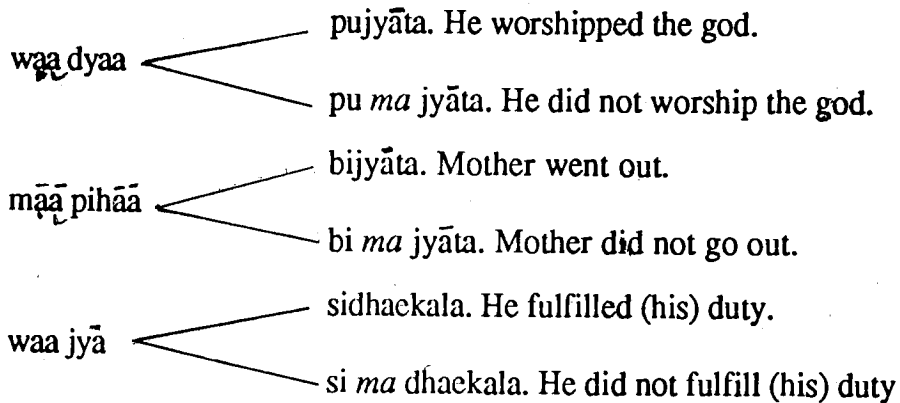
paakhāā { a a pāe  
a pāe pāe  
a pāe a pāe } jala. The wall became that high. K. jāekala.

## Appendix C

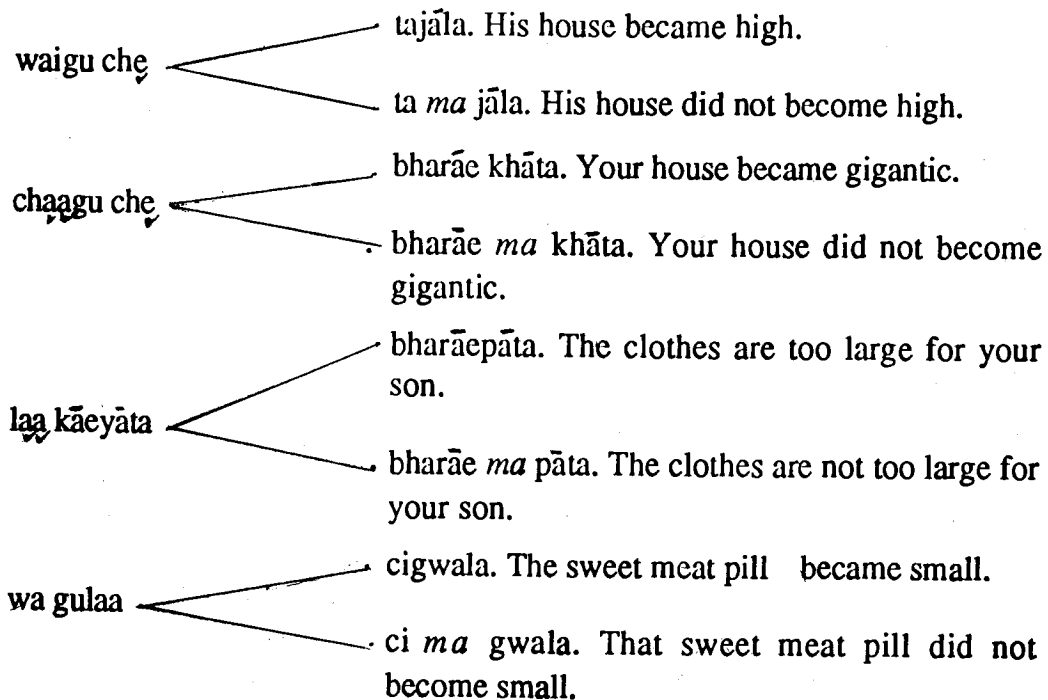
### Generic Negation



The generic negation *ma* morpheme is always inserted in between the prefix and the root verb in Newar. So the negation *ma* discriminates the verbal prefix and the root verb.

The following are examples of insertion



Similarly the morphemes which are treated as verbal prefixes can also be distinguished from the graphic and classifier verb base by insertion of the generic negation *ma* morpheme, e.g.:



nhāe p̄wālaacā		pāepula. (His) nose became as big as gourd.
		pāe ma pula. (His) nose did not become as big as gourd.
gulāph lakhaeswāā		pāephwala. That rose was as large as daisy.
		pāe ma phwala. That rose did not become as large as daisy.

### Appendix D.

#### Causative K

For almost all verbs, *K* is the causative marker in Newari. (i.e. excluding the non-causative *K* ending root verbs). This occurs with both the graphic and classifier verb bases. e.g.:

Non-causative	Causative
wayā che tajāla, His house became high.	wāā che tajāekala, He made (his) house high.
takuswāā taphwala. The rhododendron became large.	wāā takuswāā taphwaekala. He made the rhododendron large.
la cibyāta. A path became narrow.	imisāā la cibyakala. They made a path narrower.
waita laa tapāta. A shirt became larger for him.	wāā jitta laa tapāekala. He made a shirt larger for me.
khicā cidhikala. A dog became small.	wāā khicā cidhikaekala. He made a dog smaller.
caa cidhana, A swivel became small.	barejuu caa ci dhaakala. Bare made a swivel smaller.

### Appendix E. Pronominal morphemes.

The pronominal morpheme *a* is the syncopated form of the demonstrative pronoun *wa*, 'that'. The morpheme *tha* is the syncopated form of demonstrative *thwa*, 'this'. In Newar there are four demonstrative pronouns, while in other languages such as Japanese, there are often fewer (with Japanese equivalents):-

- 1) **thwa** this (if the object is close to speaker), the Japanese equivalent is *kore*.
- 2) **āma** that (if the object is very close to the hearer), (the Japanese equivalent is *sore*.)

- 3) **hyu** that (if the object as far away from both the speaker and hearer),
- 4) **wa** that

### References

- Weidert, Alfons K. 1984, "The Classifier Construction of Newari and its Historical Southeast Asian Background" *Kailash, Volume XI*.
- Hale Austin and Iswaranand Shresthacharya, 1973, "Is Newar a Classifier Language?" *Contribution to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 1. No 1, pp. 1-21.
- Greenberg, Joseph H., 1972, *Numeral Classifiers substantival numeral: Problems in the genesis of a linguistic Type*.
- Shresthacharya, Iswaranand, 1981 *Newar Root Verbs*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Shresthacharya, Iswaranand, and Nirmal Man Tuladhar, 1976 *Jyapu Vocabulary* (Preliminary Report). Kathmandu: INAS/TU.
- Shresthacharya, Iswaranand, Jagan Nath Maskey and Hale Austin, 1971, *Conversational Newari*. Kathmandu: SIL/TU.