<u>Nominalized predicates and the Tibeto-Burmanization of Nepali</u>   (Oral presentation)

Tibeto-Burman languages in the Central Himalaya exhibit a typological profile for nominalized verbs that Bickel (1999) has called "the Standard Sino-Tibetan Nominalization (SSTN) pattern", where nominalized forms are used for verbal complements, attributive adnominals, relativization, and frequently as main verbs (Watters, 2008; Noonan, 2011 *inter alia*). The pattern has been much discussed in TB literature, however the existence of very analogous forms has attracted less attention in another major language of the area: Nepali.

The intense contact between Nepali and Tibeto-Burman languages is documented over many centuries (Driem, 2001 *inter alia*), and the striking parallels of Nepali's use of nominalized verbs with the "SSTN pattern" indicate that it could well be considered an areal as well as a Tibeto-Burman genetic feature. In conforming to the prevailing linguistic profile of the Central Himalaya, Nepali has essentially abandoned the distinction between "finite" verbal morphology for main clauses and "non-finite" morphology for dependent clauses which generally holds in other New Indo-Aryan languages (Masica, 1993) and throughout Indo-European.

This paper will focus on one of the most aberrant phenomena in Nepali from an Indo-Aryan/Indo-European perspective: use of nominalized predicates as independent verbs to achieve certain pragmatic effects. For example, to say "I came yesterday" a Nepali-speaker can choose between *hijo ā-ẽ* (yesterday come-PFV.1P) or *hijo ā-eko* (yesterday come-PST.PTCPL), the first being a "finite" verb with person agreement and the second a nominalized form. Whereas the first would give the proposition full narrative force as a foregrounded action, the second would indicate an action which is either backgrounded or somehow topical in the discourse context.

Using discourse-based data from the Nepali spoken corpus, I will show that Nepali's usage of nominalized verbs as a discourse strategy more closely resembles typical Tibeto-Burman rather than typical Indo-Aryan syntactic/pragmatic patterns. This case stands as yet more evidence that areal factors such as substrata and contact can play at least as large a role as genetic affiliation in determining the typological profile of a language, and on occasion can draw it far from the "standard" typology of its family (see Noonan, 2010; Donohue, 2012).

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