# The Chantyal Language[1]
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Chantyal language is spoken by approximately 2000 of the 10,000 ethnic Chantyal. The Chantyal live in the Baglung and Myagdi Districts of Nepal; the villages where the Chantyal language is spoken are all located in the eastern portion of the Myagdi District and include the villages of Mangale Khāni, Dwāri, Ghyās̃ Kharkā, Caura Khāni, Kuine Khāni, Thārā Khāni, Pātle Kharkā, Mālāmpāhār, and Malkābāng. There is relatively little linguistic variation among these villages, though where differences exist, it is the speech of Mangale Khāni that is represented here.

　　The Chantyal language is a member of the Tamangic group [along with Gurung, Thakali, Nar-Phu and Tamang, the last two of which are discussed in this volume]. Within the group, it is lexically and grammatically closest to Thakali. Assessment of the internal relations within the group is complicated by a number of factors, among which is the fact that shared innovations may be the product of geographic contiguity as much as shared genetic background. At the moment, the most likely classification is as follows:
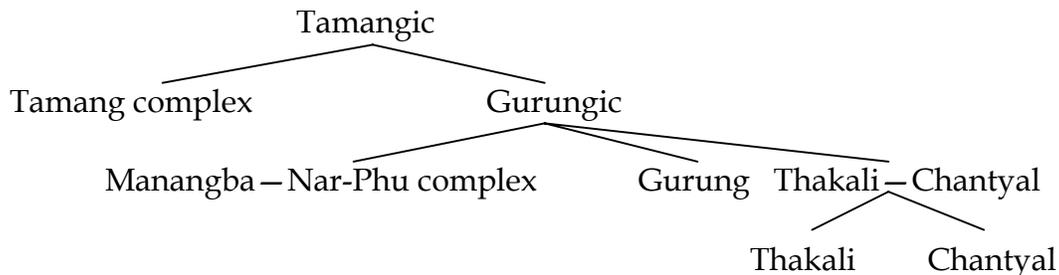
Chantyal, however, is in many respects the most deviant member of the group, lacking a tone system and having borrowed a large portion of its lexicon from Nepali. In addition, there appears to be a layer of Tibeto-Burman vocabulary that is not Tamangic.

2. PHONOLOGY

Vowels: The vowel system of Chantyal consists of a set of six vowel phonemes and their nasalized counterparts. Distinctive vowel length is a marginal part of the system, however, and long nasal vowels are quite rare: in general, vowel length is the product of fairly recent — and still rather unstable — processes of syllabic coalescence.

　/i/: pronounced [i].
　/e/: pronounced ordinarily at a point roughly midway between [ɛ] and [e].
　/ə/: when stressed, is either [ʌ] or [ɐ], sometimes becoming rounded and sounding almost like [ɔ]. When unstressed, it is pronounced [ʌ]. /əə/ (*i.e.* long /ə/) is pronounced [ɜ·].
　/a/: pronounced [ɑ].

/o/: pronounced ordinarily at a point roughly midway between [ɔ] and [o].

/u/: pronounced [u].

All possible combinations of on-glide [/y/ and /w/] and vowel are attested. For off-glides, the following are attested:

/iw/

/ew/   /ey/

/əw/   /əy/

/aw/   /ay/

              /oy/

              /uy/

Consonants: Chantyal contrasts four points of articulation: bilabial, dental, alveolar/alveolo-palatal, and velar. The dental point of articulation is lamino-dental. The alveolar/alveolo-palatal series consists of a set of oral affricates whose stop portions are alveolar and whose fricative portions are alveolo-palatal before front vowels (/ci/ = [tɕi]) and alveolar elsewhere (/ca/ = [tsa]); the fricatives show a similar distribution in being alveolo-palatal before front vowels and alveolar elsewhere. The nasals in this series are postalveolar, whereas the tap approximants are apico-alveolar.

The Chantyal consonant inventory is rich in contrasts involving voice onset time and murmur. Typical of the South Asian speech area, Chantyal contrasts voiceless, voiceless aspirated, voiced, and murmured stops. In addition, Chantyal has stops with voiceless and voiceless aspirated onsets followed by murmur[2]. Nasals, approximants, fricatives, and glides also contrast murmured and non-murmured phonemes. In the transcription used here, <h> indicates aspiration, <ɦ> murmur.

Unaspirated Stop	p	t	c	k
Aspirated Stop	ph	th	ch	kh
Voiced Stop	b	d	j	g
Murmured Stop	bɦ	dɦ	jɦ	gɦ
Murmured Stop with Voiceless Onset	pɦ	tɦ	cɦ	kɦ
Murmured Stop with Voiceless Aspirated Onset		thɦ		khɦ
Voiced Nasal Stop	m	n	ny	ŋ
Murmured Nasal Stop	mɦ	nɦ	nɦy	
Voiced Lateral Approximant		l		
Murmured Lateral Approximant		lɦ		
Voiced Tap Approximant			r	
Murmured Tap Approximant			rɦ	
Voilcess Fricatives			s	
Murmured Fricatives with Voiceless Onsets			sɦ	ɦ
Glides			y	w

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[2] An alternate view of this situation is that there are three sorts of oral stops — voiceless, voiceless aspirated, and voiced — and two sorts of syllabic nuclei: murmured and non-murmured. The view presented in the main body of text reflects the intuitions of Chantyals, though this 'intuition' has doubtless been influenced by Nepali orthographic tradition. The transcriptional system employed here, with {ɦ} representing murmur, is compatible with either view.

As the chart above shows, there are gaps in this system: /phɦ/ and /chɦ/ are unattested, and while /thɦ/ and /khɦ/ are attested, they are rare. The lack of attested /ŋɦ/ likely reflects the absence of /ŋ/ morpheme initially: murmured consonants are generally restricted to morpheme-initial position, except in some borrowings.

       Geminate consonants occur and are distinctive, but they are found only intervocalically within morphemes.

       Retroflex consonants are heard very occasionally in a few Nepali borrowings.

Tone and Stress: Chantyal is the only Tamangic language which is not tonal. Most likely, the massive influx of Nepali vocabulary contributed to the loss of the tonal system.

       In native vocabulary, primary stress is on the first syllable. In borrowed Nepali vocabulary, stress follows Nepali stress rules.

Phonotactics and Phonological Alternations: Murmured consonants occur only word-initially, except in some recent Nepali and English borrowings, wherein borrowed murmured consonants [/bɦ/, /dɦ/, /jɦ/, and /gɦ/] occur word internally in words of Nepali origin and /bɦ/ occurs finally in words of Nepali and English origin: /bɦ/ is used in borrowings from English where it corresponds to English /v/.

       All consonantal segments may occur word initially save /ŋ/. Word-initially, in native vocabulary, Chantyal permits only clusters of consonant+glide. Borrowings from Nepali and English permit also initial clusters of stop+liquid; however, initial clusters of /tl/ and /dl/ do not occur and the alveolar/aveolo-palatal affricates do not form clusters with liquids.

       Word medially, clusters of moderate complexity may occur. The following sorts are attested [where G = glide, N = nasal, K = obstruent [stop, affricate, or fricative], L = liquid]:

KG	əbyala	'late'	GK	bãwso	'hoe'
KL	bakhra	'goat'	LK	arko	'next'
KK	bəkselu	'larva'	KK	tuktuk	'hacking'
KN	thutno	'snout'	NK	əncəl	'province'
NG	kaŋŋyo	'comb [N]'	GN	bɦyawni	'ghost'
NL	aŋla	'joint'	LN	jurni	'joint'

       Prior to the massive influx of Nepali and, recently, English words, allowable word-final segments included vowels, nasals, liquids, and plain stops [*i.e.* not affricated and not aspirated]. However, with the recent borrowings, all segments but murmured stops [with the exception of /bɦ/] occur word-finally.

       All vowels may occur initially, medially, and word-finally.

       There are few phonological or morphophonological processes commonly encountered in moderately careful speech. Of these, the most important are the reduction of /wa/ in suffixes to [o], and /wã/ and /ma/ to [õ], the weakening of morpheme initial /s/ to [h] in suffixes, and the voicing of the alveolo-palatal affricates [/c/, /ch/, /cɦ/] to

/j/ in intervocalic position. There is also the phenomenon of 'emphatic' gemination, whereby the last intervocalic consonant is geminated.

3. MORPHOLOGY

Generalizations: Chantyal is overwhelmingly suffixing and agglutinative. There are only two sorts of native prefixes: the negative prefixes a- and tha- on verbs and adjectives, and the deictic prefixes yi- 'this', ɦə- 'that', and wu- 'yonder'. A small number of prefixes may be found with Nepali borrowings, but these are not productive in Chantyal.

Nouns: Nouns are inflected for number: the plural is marked with the suffix {-ma}; the singular is unmarked. Number is not obligatorily marked on notionally plural count nouns, but it is commonly so marked and can be found even with nouns quantified by numeral or non-numeral quantifiers: even the presence of a classifier does not rule out overt number marking, though not many such cases have been recorded:

> tin-ta jəmməy naku-ma
> three all   dog-PLURAL
> 'all 3 dogs'

The plural suffix is often found with the first person plural pronoun, *e.g.* nɦi-ma, a form which is already fully specified for plurality; other expressions fully specified for plurality may also contain the plural morpheme:

> nə-ye ama   bəw-ma
> I-GEN mother father-PL
> 'my parents'

The plural suffix is also used collectively: Ram-ma means 'Ram and his family/companions'.

Case is marked on nouns by means of a large number of case enclitics. At this stage in the history of the language, these forms are clearly clitics since, for example, only the last NP in a set of conjoined NPs need be specified for case. The clitics, however, form a tight phonological bond with the nouns to which they are affixed and in a very few cases condition idiosyncratic changes on the nouns:

> na 'I'   nə-ye 'my' [I-GENITIVE]
> tɦim 'house'   tɦem-əŋ 'homeward' [house-LOCATIVE]

The case clitics are listed below:

Absolute	-Ø
Ergative/Instrumental	-sə
Ablative	-gəm-sə
Elative	-nɦa-ri-gəm-sə
Abessive-proximal	-nasa-w
Dative	-ra
Allative	-nas
Locative	-ri
	-əŋ [with a few common nouns, deictics, case clitics]
	-chə [with the noun mɦun 'night']
	-ra [in a few special expressions]
Inclusive	-muwa

Adessive	-muwa-ri
Inessive	-nɦa-ri
Genitive	-ye, -i
Allative/Commitative	-siŋ, -səŋ, -səŋə, -səŋgə (N, except? -siŋ)
Comitative	-ru
Circumlative	-mar
Subessive	-pɦiri
Sublative	-pɦiri-ŋ-sə
Superessive	-phyara-ŋ-sə
Temporal	-ma (N)
Comparative/Temporal	-bɦənda (N)
Comparative/Temporal	-dɦin, -dɦikhin (N)
Comparative/Temporal	-rasə
Essive/Comparative	-tɦõy

[The forms followed by '(N)' are borrowings from Nepali.] As shown in the chart, the absolute case is indicated by the absence of any case clitic. The case clitics can be combined within a single NP, and frequently are:

tɦim-nɦari-gəmsə
house-INESSIVE-ABLATIVE
'out from inside the house'

Indeed, many of the case clitics presented in the chart above originated as combinations of case clitics which have become grammaticalized. I've inserted hyphens in these forms to show the historical components.

Within the nominal word, the order is:
NOUN - PLURAL - CASE

Chantyal is consistently ergative in case marking [transitive subjects are ergative, intransitive subjects and direct objects are absolutive], but does not demonstrate syntactic ergativity; that is, grammatical processes that refer to subjects refer to ergative and absolutive marked subjects equally and no grammatical processes refer to absolutives regardless of grammatical role. Ergative subjects may be agents, but they may also represent other semantic roles, for example experiencers, as in the following:

khi-sə   uttər   thãya-m
s/he-ERGATIVE answer know-NON.PAST
'He knows the answer'

Animate direct objects are typically marked as datives, *i.e.* Chantyal evidences 'anti-dative' marking. The use of the genitive [as opposed to simple juxtaposition of an absolutive NP] to mark genitival relations is used in the majority of cases but is not obligatory. Partitives are formed by juxtaposition of the measure word with the substance measured:

yek gilas cɦa
one glass tea
'one glass of tea'

The locative case is is used with both static [locational] and dynamic [allative] senses: ɦyunda-ri 'in the winter', Bini-ri 'to Beni'. The names of the other cases are intended to provide a general indication of their meaning and use.

Comparative constructions are formed using one of the comparative case forms:

nə-ye   naku khi-ye   naku-bɦənda   thyo mu

I-GENITIVE dog   s/he-GENITIVE dog-COMPARATIVE big   be+NON.PAST
'My dog is bigger than his dog'

There is also a topic/focus particle nə, which occurs always in NP-final position following case and number morphology. The interpretation as topic or [contrastive] focus is entirely contextual. It can be used more than once per clause and is commonly found with orienting information, whether locative or temporal:

cəŋ nə   ram-sə   nə   bənnu chij-ji
then TOPIC Ram-ERGATIVE FOCUS gun   hold-PERF
'Then, it was Ram who held the gun'

However, it's use with episode initial temporal clauses ['When he returned to the village...'] is virtually obligatory.

There are no concord classes [genders] in Chantyal. In rare instances, speakers may use the feminine form of an adjective borrowed from Nepali to modify a feminine noun borrowed from Nepali, but such usage, rare enough in the local dialect of Nepali, is used only when speakers are trying to sound sophisticated and never happens in spontaneous speech.

Chantyal does not have special sets of honorific nouns and verbs.

Locational Expressions: In addition to the case clitics, Chantyal has an extensive vocabulary for describing location. Some of these are nouns and bear an obvious relation to the case clitics. Others are built off of independent elements, often in combination with case clitics. Still others contain traces of an earlier set of demonstratives. Only some of these forms can be discussed here.

Direction on a vertical scale is expressed by means of the following set of forms:

	Location	Direction
down	məŋ	mar
up	tuŋ	tor

The forms indicating location contain locative -əŋ; those indicating direction contain locative -ri.

A number of locative expressions attest an earlier set of demonstratives; in these forms ca- denotes the proximal relation and te- the distal. Some examples follow:

ca-ŋ	'this place, over here'	te-ŋ	'that place, over there'
ca-r	'in this way/direction'	te-r	'in that way/direction'
ca-jam	'this side [of river or gorge]'	te-jam	'that side [of river or gorge]'

Note that, with these forms too, locative -əŋ indicates location and locative -ri direction.

A number of locative nouns have assumed the function of postpositions and take genitive complements. A few instances of this construction are illustrated below:

Ram-ye lele	'after Ram'	Ram-ye lesəŋ	'behind Ram'
tin məyna-ye liga	'for 3 months'	Dasẽ-ye ligəm	'after Dasain'
Ram-ye wən	'before Ram'	Ram-ye wənwən	'in front of Ram'

Classifiers: There is no native system of nominal classifiers. There is, however, a system of classifiers borrowed imperfectly from Nepali. This consists of a two-way classification into humans and non-humans. This system is realized as a pair of suffixes attached

to the numerals 'one', 'two', and 'three': the suffixes are obligatory for 'one' and 'two', but not for 'three':

	Non-human	Human
One	yew-ta	yeg-jana
Two	duy-ta, dwi-ta	dwi-jana
Three	tin-ta	tin-jana

In practice, however, the human classifier is seldom used: it is found mostly in very self-conscious speech where the speaker imitating the forms s/he would use in formal Nepali. In less guarded speech, the human classifier is rarely encountered. The non-human suffix -ta, however, is habitually used whenever the numerals 'one' and 'two' are used to directly quantify nouns.

Numerals: The entire system of numerals, both cardinal and ordinal, has been borrowed from Nepali.

Pronouns and Demonstratives: The personal pronouns, with their major variants, are listed below:

1s	na
1d	nagi [< na kɦi 'I you'; inclusive sense only]
1p	nɦi, nɦi-ma [we-PLURAL]
2s	kɦi [INFORMAL], nũwə [FORMAL]
2p	nũwə
3s	khi [humans only], cə ['that': humans and non-humans]
3p	thə̃wə, thə̃wə-ma [they-PLURAL], cə-ma [that-PLURAL]

The 2p and 3p forms derive from forms with overt plural marking, though as thũwə-ma 'they' shows, these forms have ceased being analyzed as such.

The 'informal' 2s pronoun is the one used in almost all speech situations; the use of the 2p pronoun as a 'formal' 2s pronoun is in imitation of Nepali usage and is not done consistently. As for the 3s pronouns, reference to humans may be affected either by use of khi or cə, though cə seems to be restricted to cases where a true deictic reference is intended: otherwise the khi form is used. A few instances have been recorded where khi has a non-human referent.

The case clitics used with nouns are also found with the personal pronouns. A few irregularities occur: the 1s has an irregular genitive nə-ye, and the 2s and 3s have commonly encountered irregular datives, kɦya-ra and khya-ra: the regular forms kɦi-ra and khi-ra are also possible.

There are two sorts of demonstratives in Chantyal: the 'root' demonstratives and the 'prefixal' demonstratives.

The root demonstratives are used both adnominally and pronominally. When they are used pronominally, they occur with the same case clitics as nouns and personal pronouns; they also occur with the plural suffix. In their adnominal use, they are not inflected; that is, they do not agree with the head noun in case or number.

The root demonstratives form a two member deictic system consisting of proximal cu 'this' and distal cə 'that'. The distal form is used as a 3s personal pronoun and, with plural marking, a 3p personal pronoun.

The prefixal demonstratives form a three member deictic system: proximal yi-
'this', distal ɦə- 'that', and remote wu- 'yonder'. These forms may be prefixed onto only
a limited number of roots. These include the root demonstratives, measure terms, some
locational nouns, and the adjective thyawa 'big'. Examples of the last two sorts follow:

yi-sər	'this way'	yi-jəgər	'this much'
ɦə-sər	'that way'	ɦə-jəgər	'that much'
ɦə-tuŋ	'up there'	yi-ddyo	'this big'
wu-tuŋ	'up there yonder'	ɦə-ddyo	'that big'

The prefixal and root demonstratives together form a system of deictic reference which
can be used adnominally or pronominally. The following combinations are attested:

yi-cu	'this' [near speaker, closer of two alternatives]
ɦə-cu	'this' [near speaker, further from speaker of two alternatives]
yi-cə	'that' [distant from speaker, nearer of two alternatives]
ɦə-cə	'that' [distant from speaker, more distant of two alternatives]
wu-cə	'yonder' [distant from speaker and hearer]

In these forms, the root establishes the primary deictic focus and the prefix a secondary
focus.

Interrogative pronouns may also occur with case clitics and the plural mor-
pheme. The main forms are listed below:

su	'who'	ta	'what'
khənə	'which', 'whose'	khəni	'where'
khawa	'how', 'what kind'	kɦəre	'how many, how much'
tala	'why'		

The indefinite pronouns su-i 'someone, anyone' and tə-y 'something, anything' consist
of the corresponding interrogative pronouns and a suffix -i which is likely the same as a
suffix meaning 'too, also; even'.

Verbs: Verbs are inflected for tense, aspect, and mood. They may also be nominalized
[becoming nominalizations, which may occur with case clitics and which may be used
in adnominal functions] and adverbialized [becoming converbs, that is non-finite
verbals having adverbial functions]. Verbs are not inflected for agreement with argu-
ments, for direction, or for voice; they do not demonstrate a conjunct/disjunct distinc-
tion. In the native vocabulary, verbs are not marked for transitivity, but in the bor-
rowed Nepali vocabulary, distinctions in valence may be marked morphologically.
The various verbal suffixes are listed below:

Tense-aspect:

Non-past	-m, -mu
Non-past Interrogative	-m-ẽ, -ẽ
Perfective	-ji, -i
Perfective Interrogative	-la
Imperfective	-ma, -wã, -õ
Negative Anterior Imperfective	-s-are, -s-ere
Past Anterior	-sẽẽ
Emphatic, mirative	-wa

Mood:

Hypothetical	-Ø
Suppositional	-ndə, -nnə, -n

Suppositional	-t
Hypothetical	-rə, -r
Desiderative	-to
Imperative	-o
Polite Imperative	-ne
Hortative	-ye
Optative	-kəy, -gəy, -ge
Subordinate:	
Anterior	-si-
Nominalizer	-wa
Infinitive	-nu (N?)[3]
Cotemporal	-khiri, -khir, -khi (N)
Progressive converb	-kəy, -gəy, -ge
Sequential converb	-si-rə, -si-r, -si
Resultative	-nə
Conditional	-la
Negative conditional	-kɦəre, -gɦəre
Remote Conditional	-la-i

The anterior suffix -si- combines with the non-past, imperfective, emphatic [really a form of the nominalizer suffix], suppositional, hypothetical, and nominalizer suffixes, adding an anterior [secondary past] sense.

Only one verb, ɦya- 'go', has an honorific counterpart: this honorific verb ba- is defective in having only imperative forms.

A large number of periphrastic verbal constructions exist and are used to express a wide variety of tense, aspect, and mood senses. The principal auxiliary verbs are:

ɦin	'be'		mu	'be'
ta-	'become'		la-	'do'
pin-	'give'		yã-	'find'

Of these, the two *be*-copulas are the two most commonly used auxiliaries. In these periphrastic constructions, the semantic main verb can occur in a number of non-finite forms, the most common of which are illustrated below:

-wa	NOMINALIZER
-si-wa	ANTERIOR-NOMINALIZER
-si	ANTERIOR
-gəy	PROGRESSIVE
-la	CONDITIONAL
-nə	RESULTATIVE

The basic tense-aspect system contrasts a perfective with an imperfective in the past, but does not oppose these aspects in the future. The perfective has past perfective and immediate future senses; the non-past is used to express present and future senses: the future sense is neutral with regard to aspect.

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[3] The status of this form as a Nepali borrowing would appear to be self-evident were it not for the fact that the use of this form does not correspond to the use of the Nepali infinitive in -**nu**, even in dialectal usage. The Chantyal suffix is used in a construction whose sense is 'about to V':

thũ-nu	**thũ-nu**	**la-gəy**	**a-thũ**
drink-INFINITIVE	drink-INFINITIVE	do-PROGRESSIVE	NEGATIVE-drink
'She was about to drink, but didn't'			

	PAST	PRESENT	IMMEDIATE FUTURE	FUTURE
PERFECTIVE	-ji		-ji	
IMPPERFECTIVE	-ma	-m		

Progressive aspect can be expressed by means of various periphrastic constructions in both the past and non-past. Secondary tense distinctions, perfect and prospective, are also formed periphrastically.

There are no reflexive pronouns nor is there any special verbal form used to express reflexive senses. When ambiguity would otherwise arise, ordinary personal pronouns [marked as datives if direct objects] are used to translate English reflexive pronouns.

> na-sə   na-ra   jɦi-i
> I-ERGATIVE I-DATIVE bite-PERFECTIVE
> 'I bit myself'

There is, however, a special reciprocal form:

> Ram rə Pirəm-sə   lɦi-si   khum   la-i
> Ram and Piram-ERGATIVE hit-ANTERIOR RECIPROCAL do-PERFECTIVE
> 'Ram and Piram hit each other'

In the vocabulary borrowed from Nepali — but not in the native vocabulary — a pair of derivational affixes is used to indicate differences in transitivity *vis-à-vis* the basic, inherent valency of the verb. The lower degree of transitivity is indicated by the derivational affix -i-; the higher degree of transitivity is indicated by -ə-. The lower degree of transitivity may either be intransitive or transitive; the higher degree is transitive or causative [three implicit arguments]. While this system is based on morphological distinctions made in Nepali, it is not entirely congruent with the Nepali system, which is richer, both morphologically and semantically.

As noted, the -i- suffix indicates relatively low transitivity, -ə- relatively high. A couple of examples are given below:

ROOT	INTRANSITIVE	TRANSITIVE	CAUSATIVE
pətk-	pətk-i-	pətk-ə-	
'explode, burst'	*'explode, burst [intr]'*	*'explode, burst [tr]; fire a gun'*	
dɦəl-	dɦəl-i-	dɦəl-ə-	
'fall'	*'fall over'*	*'knock over'*	
phutk-	phutk-i-	phutk-ə-	
'loose'	*'escape, untangle, untie [intr]'*	*'let loose, untie [tr]'*	
tər-		tər-i-	tər-ə-
'cross'		*'cross'*	*'take across'*
buj-		buj-i-	buj-ə-
understand'		*'understand'*	*'explain'*
səmjɦ-		səmjɦ-i-	səmjɦ-ə-
'remember'		*'remember'*	*'remind'*

In a few cases, the i-form is associated with a root vowel /a/ and the ə-form with a root vowel /ə/; in almost all such cases, the alternation was borrowed directly from Nepali: pak-i- 'cook [intr]', pək-ə- 'cook [tr]'; nacc-i- 'dance', nəcc-ə- 'make [smn] dance'. In a

very few cases, the two forms may signal different kinds of objects rather than differences in transitivity: for example, bɦər-i- 'fill' takes substances as objects, whereas bɦər-ə- 'fill' takes containers as objects. [Note that bɦər-i- also has an intransitive sense: 'be full'.]

The case marking associated with verbs having these derivational affixes is entirely predicable and expected: transitive subjects are marked with the ergative, intransitive subjects are absolutive. There is also a periphrastic causative, illustrated below:

ram-sə   pirəm-ra   nɦaka   rɦe-nə   la-i
Ram-ERGATIVE piram-DATIVE chicken steal-RESULTATIVE do-PERF
'Ram made Piram steal the chicken'

This is the only native valence-changing process, morphological or syntactic.

Copular Verbs: There are two stative copular verbs in Chantyal, and one active. The active copula is ta- 'become'; the stative copulas are ɦin and mu, both of which are morphologically irregular:

NON-PAST	INTERROGA- TIVE NON-PAST	NEGATIVE NON-PAST	PAST	NEGATIVE PAST
ɦin	nɦe	ɦayn		
mu	mu-ẽ	ɦare	mu-ma	ɦare-ma

mu is regular except for the suppletive root [rɦe] found in the negative and in the non-past, which lacks the suffix -m. [The latter is understandable given that the copula mu is the origin of the non-past suffix.] ɦin is defective in not having past forms: the past forms of mu are used instead. ɦayn is analyzable simply as the negative suffix a- plus ɦin; nɦe is simply a contraction of ɦin and the non-past interrogative suffix -ẽ.

In general, ɦin is used to indicate identity; mu is used for location and attribution: it is also used in presentative constructions. mu, however, is clearly the unmarked form, and is occasionally found in contexts normally associated with ɦin. Both copular verbs are commonly used as auxiliaries.

The presence of a copula in clauses with a predicate adjective or a predicate nominal is virtually obligatory: in a corpus of over five thousand analyzed clauses, only two clear instances of such clauses without a copular verb have been recorded.

Adjectives: The category of adjective is defined syntactically, not morphologically, in Chantyal. Prior to the massive influx of vocabulary from Nepali, adjectives all contained the nominalizer suffix -wa. [As will be discussed below, the nominalizer has adnominal, attributive functions.] In modern Chantyal, all but one native adjective contains -wa [or a fossilized version of it]; however, the great majority of adjectives in contemporary Chantyal are Nepali borrowings and such words follow Nepali rules in not being marked as nominalizations. The following NP contains a native and a borrowed adjective:

thya-wa   kalce naku
big-NOMINALIZER black dog
'big, black dog'

Expressive Vocabulary: The Chantyal lexicon contains a large number of items which I refer to collectively as 'expressive' vocabulary. These words describe sounds [often onomatopoetically], the appearance of things, modes of action, physical sensations, or some combination of these factors. The words are often full reduplications and sometimes partial reduplications; those forms that are not reduplicated typically employ 'emphatic' gemination of the last consonant.

rɦaŋ rɦaŋ	'sound of something dry and crunchy'
cwakta cwakta	'sound of cutting up meat'
jɦəm jɦəm	'burning, tingling sensation [as produced by alcohol, nettle, Szechuan pepper]'
kɦwak kɦwak	'sound of choking, gagging'
burruk burruk	'action of jumping'
phwak phwak	'coming off in chunks'
phwakkə	'coming off in chunks'
cakal cikil	'eating sloppily, noisily'
phappə phuppə	'scattered carelessly, easily picked up and/or stolen'
khəllə bəllə	'action of quarreling'
lətə pətə	'appearance of scattered things'
khwassə	'inserting quickly and neatly'
lwarrə	'pulling something, which offers some resistance, smoothly'

The expressive vocabulary can form verbal expressions with the verb la- 'do':

burruk burruk la-wa	'jump'
gɦadi gudi la-wa	'be silent'

These verbal expressions can then be used adverbially:

cakre makre   la-i   ci-wa
sit-cross-legged do-ANT sit-NOM
'to sit cross legged'

Verb Particles: There are about a dozen commonly occurring verbal particles, so called because they attach as enclitics to the verb. These particles express a variety of senses, ranging from evidentiality to emotional reaction to the state of affairs described in the sentence. They are found only with finite clauses. The most common particles and their meanings are listed below:

tə	speaker asserts the statement is true
ro	speaker asserts that s/he cannot guarantee the truth of the statement [for example, because the event described was not directly witnessed]
nu	the sentence should serve as a reminder of information the hearer should already be in possesion of
sə̃	expresses a sense of disappointment or frustration with regard to the state of affairs associated with the statement
nɦĩ	used to elicit a response indicating agreement with the truth of the statement or an indication that the statement was understood

The semantics and pragmatics of these forms are complex and so the senses given above should only be taken as approximations. The use of the evidential particles tə and ro is not obligatory; they are used primarily for emphasis.

4. WORD FORMATION

Derivation: Chantyal has relatively little in the way of native derivational morphology. With the exception of verbs, Nepali vocabulary is borrowed into Chantyal with its derivational morphology intact, but there is little evidence that the morphological patterns instantiated in this vocabulary are used productively. [As discussed above, verbs, too, are borrowed so as to reflect Nepali derivational categories, though the inventory of categories in Chantyal represents a subset of those found in Nepali.]

An important piece of derivational morphology in Chantyal is the nominalizer suffix -wa. This suffix is available for verbs, adverbs, and other word classes. Its functions are described in some detail below. An important set of derivational morphemes are the converbal suffixes, which adverbialize verbs.

Compounding: Noun-noun compounding is an active process in Chantyal, but it does not have the prominence in Chantyal that it does in some other Tamangic languages, such as Nar-Phu. One likely reason for this is the frequency and ease with which Chantyals borrow vocabulary from Nepali and, more recently, English. Many Chantyal compounds, however, are composed of Nepali elements and have their origins in the local Nepali dialect.

Noun-noun compounds involve simple juxtaposition of the two nouns with the last noun constituting the semantic head. A few examples follow:

COMPOUND	MEANING OF PARTS	MEANING OF COMPOUND
buri əŋŋula	'old woman digit'	'thumb'
dɦopini mimi	'washerwoman bird'	'brown dipper'
ɦar khor	'bone shelter'	'skeleton'
bɦũy puləm	'ground berry'	'mock strawberry'

In a few cases, however, the relation between the component nouns is coordinative, in which case the last noun is not the semantic head.

COMPOUND	MEANING OF PARTS	MEANING OF COMPOUND
nɦe tɦara	'milk buttermilk'	'dairy products'
ama bəw	'mother father'	'parents'

A few fossilized noun-noun compounds exist, forms which derive historically from noun-noun compounds but which are no longer analyzed as such as their origins have ceased to be transparent. A few examples are given below:

COMPOUND	ORIGIN	MEANING
pɦəkən	pɦara 'flour' + kan 'food'	'porridge'
khele	khə 'mouth' + le 'tongue'	'tongue'
nagi	na 'I' + kɦi 'you'	'we two'

Noun-verb compounds, however, are also common. With noun-verb compounds, the noun-verb unit is independently lexicalized and, as a result, may take on senses not directly inferrable from the component parts: this is true also for non-noun compounds. Further, the noun component in noun-verb compounds does not count as an object for purposes of case assignment since it is part of the predicate expression. These nouns are always in the absolute case — that is, they are unmarked. A few noun-verb compounds are given below:

COMPOUND	MEANING OF PARTS	MEANING OF COMPOUND
bənnu lɦi-	'gun hit'	'shoot'

chutti ta-	'release become'	'dismiss'
sə̃ncə la-	'health do'	'treat, cure'
sunne la-	'emptiness do'	'be silent, desert'

Many noun-verb compounds have la- 'do' as their verb.

5. SYNTAX

Structure of the Noun Phrase: Word order within the NP is fairly rigid. The canonical order is as follows:

DETERMINER/GENITIVE + RELATIVE CLAUSE + NUMERAL + ADJECTIVE + HEAD NOUN

Very few deviations from this arrangement have been recorded in a corpus of over five thousand analyzed clauses.

Structure of the Clause: In the overwhelming majority of cases, the verb complex, by which I mean the verbal predicate together with any auxiliaries and verb particles, comes last in the clause. When it does not — afterthoughts aside — the effect is usually to focus attention on the verb, often signaling surprise or astonishment that the particular action took place:

bɦuluŋ-sə   ca-i   bura-ra
leopard-ERGATIVE eat-PERFECTIVE old.man-DATIVE
'the leopard actually *ate* the old man'

As for the other clausal constituents, the order usually follows the empathy hierarchy:

SPEECH ACT PRONOUNS [FIRST AND SECOND PERSON]
THIRD PERSON PRONOUNS
PERSONAL NAMES
OTHER HUMAN REFERENTS
ANIMATE NON-HUMANS
INANIMATES

In general, the higher a referent is on the hierarchy, the more likely it is to occur early in the clause.

na-ra   bɦuluŋ-sə   ca
I-DATIVE leopard-ERGATIVE eat-HYPOTHETICAL
'the leopard might eat me'

Where there are two participants of equal rank on the empathy hierarchy, the subject will precede the object, and the object will precede any obliques. Orienting information, temporal or locative, usually occurs first:

cə-ŋ   gã̃w-ri   na-sə   bənnu bɦar-ri   kar-ji
that-LOCATIVE village-LOCATIVE I-ERGATIVE gun   rack-LOCATIVE put-PERFECTIVE
'Then, in the village, I put the gun on the rack'

There is a special sentence topic slot which, when it is filled, comes first in the sentence, preceded only by orienting information. Such sentence topics, always marked with the topic/focus particle nə, are typically accompanied by a special intonation and may lack expected subject [ergative] or direct object [dative] case marking:

cəŋ nə,   pirəm nə,   lata   mənchi, dula kho-i
then TOPIC Piram TOPIC stupid person   hole dig-perf
'then Piram, that stupid person, dug a hole'

The notional subject, Piram, lacks the expected ergative case marking because it is occupying the sentence topic slot.

Chantyal is remarkably consistent in employing the ergative case with transitive subjects, regardless of tense, aspect, or mood; regardless of whether the subject was acting volitionally; or, indeed, regardless of whether the subject was acting at all. As long as the situation is expressed transitively, the subject will be coded in the ergative case:

khi-sə na-ra cini-m
s/he-ERGATIVE I-DATIVE know-NON-PAST
'She knows me'

Conversely, the ergative is never used with intransitive subjects, for example as an emphatic marker.

Direct objects may be expressed in the absolutive case or in the dative. While there are a number of factors involved in the choice of case marking in such cases, the primary factor is, again, the empathy hierarchy: the higher a referent expressed as a direct object is on the empathy hierarchy, the more likely it is to be coded as a dative. Human referents are generally coded as datives; non-human referents generally are not. Other factors include the degree to which the entity is perceived as registering sensation as a result of the action expressed in the clause and the degree of empathy felt toward the entity. Compare

khi-sə nɦaka tha-i
s/he-ERGATIVE chicken cut-PERFECTIVE
'he sacrificed/killed the chicken'

with:

khi-sə nɦaka-ra tha-i
s/he-ERGATIVE chicken-DATIVE cut-PERFECTIVE
'she cut the chicken [so that it bled]'

The dative case is also used with indirect objects [recipients in transactions] and with experiencers in constructions where the verb is basically not transitive, *e.g.* a copula or an intransitive verb of motion:

na-ra joro kha-si-m
I-DATIVE fever come-ANTERIOR-NON.PAST
'I have a fever'

As noted above, experiencers are coded as ergatives when the verb is transitive.

Copular Clauses: As noted above, Chantyal has two stative copular verbs and one active copula. It was further noted that a copular verb is obligatory in clauses with a non-verbal predicate [*i.e.* a predicate nominal, predicate adjective, or an oblique case-marked NP functioning as the predicate].

In clauses with a predicate nominal or predicate adjective, the verb complex containing the copular verb occurs in clause final position in the same manner as other verb complexes. The verb complex is preceded immediately by the non-verbal predicate:

PREDICATE NOMINAL
nɦi bidyarthi ɦin
we student be+NON.PAST
'We're students'
PREDICATE ADJECTIVE

na khusi mu
I happy be+NON.PAST
'I'm happy'
OBLIQUE CASE-MARKED NP FUNCTIONING AS PREDICATE
cə kitab tebəl-phyaraŋ mu
that book table-SUPERESSIVE be+NON.PAST
'That book is on the table'

Negative Clauses: The negative morpheme is the prefix a-, attached to the verb.[4] There is a special imperative negative tha-. Apart from these forms, there are no morphemes that can be used to negate a clause and only one other specifically negative form, kɦəmməy 'never', though this form requires the negative prefix on the verb:
khi-sə kan kɦəmməy a-ca-m
s/he-ERGATIVE rice never NEGATIVE-eat-NON-PAST
'he never eats rice'
Chantyal thus has no specifically negative indefinite pronouns, such as English 'no one' or 'nothing', which can independently negate a verb, and further does not require, like Russian, negative agreement of indefinite pronouns with a negative verb, as
nɦi-sə su-i-ra pəni a-pin
we-ERGATIVE who-even-DATIVE also NEGATIVE-give-PERFECTIVE
'we didn't give it to anyone'
and
na-sə təy a-yã
I-ERGATIVE anything NEGATIVE-find-PERFECTIVE
'I didn't find anything/I found nothing'
show. [If the negative morpheme were not present on the verb, the first sentence would mean 'we gave it to whomever' and the second would mean 'I found something'.]

Interrogative Clauses: YES/NO questions can be formed 1) with an appropriate interrogative suffix on the finite verb within the verb complex, 2) with an interrogative tag, or 3) by means of an appropriate interrogative intonation on a sentence whose grammatical form is the same as the corresponding statement.

Interrogative suffixes are available only for the PERFECTIVE and NON-PAST and for the periphrastic forms built off them. For other tense/aspect/mood forms, intonation or interrogative tags are used to forms questions. The perfective suffix is -la, which replaces the declarative perfective suffix. The non-past suffix is -ẽ, which is added to the non-past suffix -m.
kɦi-sə bɦalu sar-la
you-ERGATIVE bear kill-PERFECTIVE.INTERROGATIVE
'Did you kill a bear?'

kɦi-sə bɦalu sar-m-ẽ
you-ERGATIVE bear kill-NON.PAST-INTERROGATIVE
'Will you kill a bear?'

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[4] It may also be prefixed onto adjectives, though generally not when they are used predicatively.

Interrogative tags have a pragmatic sense similar to tag questions and tag particles in English: they are typically used in situations where the speaker is not sincerely trying to acquire information, but rather is trying to get the hearer to confirm an opinion the speaker already has.

khĩ-sə   bɦalu sar-m   nɦĩ
you-ERGATIVE bear   kill-NON-PAST OK
'You'll kill a bear, OK?'

Information questions are formed with an interrogative pronoun which is placed in the usual position within the clause that a corresponding non-interrogative form would take, *i.e.* the pronoun is not obligatorily fronted. In the perfective and non-past, the interrogative forms of the finite verb are used.

khĩ-sə   su-ra   mara-la
you-ERGATIVE who-DATIVE see-PERFECTIVE.INTERROGATIVE
'Whom did you see?'

Complement [Nominal] Clauses: Complement clauses — clauses occupying nominal slots — are typically expressed as nominalizations in -wa.

na-ra   syaw ca-wa   mən   kha-m
I-DATIVE   apple eat-NOMINALIZER desire come-NON-PAST
'I want to eat an apple'

There are no finite subordinate clauses in Chantyal, except as direct quote complements of bɦi- 'say'. There are numerous instances of clauses which are presented as though they were direct quotes, but are in fact not literally quotes: these clauses function as complement clauses. The verb bɦi- is thus taking on many of the characteristics of a complementizer, though it is not yet fully grammaticalized in this role.

khi   tisuŋ   kadmandu-ri   ɦya-i   bɦi-wa   na-sə
s/he last.year Kathmandu-LOCATIVE go-PERFECTIVE say-NOMINALIZATION I-ERGATIVE
səmjɦi-i
remember-PERFECTIVE
'I remembered that she went to Kathmandu last year'

Adjectival [Relative] Clauses: Adjectival clauses, clauses that modify nouns, are grammatically nominalizations in -wa. These clauses do not employ a relative pronoun, nor do they employ a resumptive pronoun within the clause: the role of the referent within the clause that is coreferential to the head must be inferred from context.

khyo-ma-ru   duli-si-wa   kyata tɦem-əŋ
friend-PLURAL-COMITATIVE   wander-ANTERIOR-NOMINALIZER boy house-LOCATIVE
ɦya-i
go-PERFECTIVE
'the boy who was wandering around with his friends went home'

Adverbial Clauses: Adverbial clauses in Chantyal are grammatically of two types: they are either nominalizations with an appropriate case marker which provides their semantic interpretation, or they are CONVERBS, specialized adverbial clause types.

Case marked nominalizations are used for a number of adverbial functions, including the expression of purpose and cotemporality.

səŋlal-ma	məə	tara-wa-ri	ɦya-i

səŋlal-ma   məə   tara-wa-ri   ɦya-i
Sanglal-PLURAL honey gather-NOMINALIZER-LOCATIVE go-PERFECTIVE
'Sanglal and some others went in order to gather honey'

There are a number of converbs in Chantyal and they are used to express a wide variety of senses, including condition, temporal sequence, and so on.

pirəm kha-lanə   a-kha-m
Piram come-CONDITIONAL NEGATIVE-come-NON-PAST
'If Piram comes, I won't come'

Overt conjunction of clauses is little used in Chantyal; instead, other devices, most particularly the sequential converb, are used:

Ram-sə   gãw-ri   ɦya-si-rə   tɦim-nɦari
Ram-ERGATIVE village-LOCATIVE go-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL house-INESSIVE
wõ-si-rə   nɦaka-ye   sya   ca-i
enter-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL chicken-GENITIVE meat eat-PERFECTIVE
'Ram went to the village, entered the house, and ate the chicken'

The anterior converb, which is found mostly in a set of grammaticalized constructions, is used to form an (anti-)benefactive construction:

na-ra   pir-si   pin-o
I-DATIVE let.loose-ANTERIOR give-IMPERATIVE
'Let me loose!'

'Zero' Anaphora: Chantyal does not normally express referents overtly if their identity is inferrable from context. The result, relative to languages like English, is that discourses appear highly abbreviated, assuming an almost telegraphic style, and require for their interpretation a greater degree of familiarity with the physical setting and the social and historical circumstances of the participants than a similar discourse would in a language whose grammar and discourse conventions required a greater degree of 'copiousness' with regard to information. Consider, for example, the following mini-discourse:

mənchi-sə   thar-ra   bənnu lɦi-si-rə   sar-ji.
person-ERGATIVE mountain.goat-DATIVE gun   hit-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL kill-PERFECTIVE
chala tar-si-rə,   ənnarabɦũri thuti-si-rə,
skin   extract-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL viscera   pull.out-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL
tɦem-əŋ   kɦa-si-rə,   dewri-ri   pəkə-ysi-rə,
house-LOCATIVE bring-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL pot-LOCATIVE cook-ANTERIOR-SEQUENTIAL
ca-i
eat-PERFECTIVE
'The man shot a mountain goat and killed it. He skinned it, cleaned it, took it home, put it in a pot, cooked it and ate it'

In this discourse, the referents 'man' and 'mountain goat' are introduced in the first clause and are not repeated in any of the clauses that follow since the referents in these clauses are clear; by contrast, the English translation contains one instance of 'he' and seven instances of 'it'.

6. REFERENCES
Very little has yet been published on Chantyal. Articles that focus exclusively or primarily on Chantyal include the following, all of which are written by the author, Michael Noonan:

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An extensive grammar is in preparation.