NEPALI VERBS: SOME PROPERTIES

Balaram Prasaain

Nepali verb stems end with i, a, o and ʌ vowels, and voiced and voiceless consonants. From transitivity perspective, they are intransitive and transitive/ditransitive. The verbs are monosyllabic and polysyllabic from syllabicity point of view. Another feature that Nepali verbs have is sound [a] whose presence and absence has direct impact on causative stem formation. The causative stem formation is regular with some phonological restrictions; however, the passive stem formation is very productive. Negativization occurs from both prefixation and suffixation processes. On the basis of features and morphological processes, four types of stems, namely, base stem, passive stem, causative stem and causative passive stem are found.

1. Introduction

Nepali verbs exhibit various types of features namely, significant verb stem finals, transitivity, syllabicity and sound *a*. First of all, the verbs are illustrated in terms of these features and in the second the morphological processes like causativization, passivization and negativization are discussed.

The basic verb stems end with different sound segments. Some of the final segments are noteworthy from the morphophological point of view. The morphological processes that are under consideration such as passivization, causativization, negativization and other affixation processes need the information of the final segment of the verb to produce the acceptable surface forms. The stem of the basic verb is identified by removing the past tense third person singular marker *-jo* from the verb forms and then the remaining segment is analyzed with reference to various phenomena. Those final segments which are significant from our point of view are discussed as follows:[1]

2. Significant verb stem finals

2.1 Vowel final stems

2.1.1 *i*-ending verb stems: A set of verb stems which end in vowel *i* are listed in Table 1. The majority of the verb stems in this class are intransitive verbs but some of them are transitive also. Some examples of this group are listed in Table 2. The verbs *upʰri-* 'jump' and *pʌkri-* 'arrest' in (1a) and (1b), respectively end with vowel *i*.

---

[1] Pokharel (2010) has mentioned the various strategies to derive the verb stems. Among them imperative singular form as the basic stem has been adopted here for the simplicity, although it leaves some exceptions.

(1) a. keṯo   upʰri-jo
         boy   jump-PST.3SG.MASC
         'The boy jumped.'
     b. prʌɦʌri-le   tsor-lai   pʌkri-jo
         police-ERG   thief-DAT   arrest-PST.3SG.MASC
         'The police arrested the thief.'

Table 1: *i*-ending intransitive verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
upʰri-	'jump'
kʰumtsi-	'shrink'
tsoiṯi-	'be pieces'
bʰʌtki-	'be broken'

The *i*-ending intransitive verb stems listed in Table 1 and *i*-ending transitive stems listed in Table 2 look similar in their form. But they differ in their further morphology.

Table 2: *i*-ending transitive verb stems

I Verb stem	Gloss of stem
pʌkri-	'arrest'
pʌrkʰi-	'wait'
birsi-	'forget'
mʌnsi-	'throw away'
sʌmdzʰi-	'remember'
kultsi-	'tread'
uĩṯi-	'spindle'
di-	'give'
li-	'take'

i-ending verb stems listed in Table 2 behave differently. The vowel *u* is obligatorily inserted between the stems and suffix if the suffix that follows the stems begins with *n* and *ũ* if the suffix begins with *tsʰ* and *tʰ*.

Table 2: *i*-ending transitive verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
pi	'drink'
si	'sew'
dzi	'live'

The vowel *i* at the end of the verb stem optionally drops without change in meaning. The verb stem *pʌgli-* 'melt' in (2a) has retained vowel *i* and verb stem *pʌgl-* 'melt' in (2b) vowel *i* is dropped.

(2) a. hiũ   pʌgli-jo
        ice   melt-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The ice melted.'
    b. hiũ   pʌgl-jo
        ice   melt-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The ice melted.'

This vowel *i* at the end of the verb stems also is optionally changed to ʌ especially when the suffix begining with *n*, *d*, and *e*. For example, when *-nu* '-INF' gets attached to verb stem, *i* optionally changes to ʌ. Table 3 lists these alternative forms due to change of *i* to ʌ in *i*-ending verb stems.

Table 3: Alternative forms of *i*-ending verb stems

-i forms	*-ʌ* froms
upʰri-	upʰrʌ-
kʰumtsi-	kʰumtsʌ-
tsoiṭi-	tsoiṭʌ-
bʰʌtki-	bʰʌtkʌ-
siuri-	siurʌ-
bigri-	bigrʌ-
sʌpri-	sʌprʌ-
ugʰri-	ugʰrʌ-
pʌgli-	pʌglʌ-
ugli-	uglʌ-
ukli-	uklʌ-
pʌkri-	pʌkrʌ-
pʌrkʰi-	pʌrkʰʌ-
birsi-	birsʌ-

2.1.2 *a*-ending verb stems: Some of the verb stems ending with the vowel *a* are listed in Table 4 and Table 5. Verb stems in this group are of both intransitive and transitive types. The verb stem *kʌma-* 'earn' in (3a) and *a-* 'come' in (3b) end with vowel *a*.

(3) a. us-le   pʌisa   kʌma-eko   tsʰʌ
        3SG.OBL-ERG   money   earn-PERF   be-PST.3SG.MASC
        'He has earned money.'
    b. ram   skul-baṭʌ   gʰʌr   a-jo
        Ram   school-ABL   house   come-PST.3SG.MASC
        'Ram came home from school.'

Table 4: *a*-ending verb stems (group 1)

Verb stem	Gloss
ʌgʰa-	'satisfy'
kʌma-	'earn'
tʌkʌra-	'be broken'
muskura-	'insert'
pa-	'get'
a-	'come'
tsʰa-	'cover the roof'
ba-	'open (mouth)'
pa-	'get'
bʰja-	'manage'
bja-	'give birth'

Table 5: *a*-ending verb stems (group 2)

Verb stem	Gloss
kʰa-	'eat'
dza-	'go'

The *a*-ending verb stems are also of two kinds, a set of verbs in which vowel *u* is inserted between stem and suffix if the following suffix begins with *n*, and *ũ* with *tsʰ*, and *tʰ* as in Table 4. Those verb stems as listed in Table 5 do not take *u* in the condition as stated above. In this group *n* is inserted in the non-past tense and past habitual aspect.

2.1.3 *o*-ending verbs stems: There are a few verb stems which end with *o*. The stem final *o* obligatorily changes to *u* if the following suffix begins with *tsʰ*, *d*, *tʰ* and *n* sound segments; and *n* is obligatorily inserted in non-past tense. Table 6 lists some of the *o*-ending verb stems and Table 7 shows the change of *o* to *u* in the condition mentioned above.

Table 6: *o* -ending verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
ro-	'weep'
dʰo-	'wash'
tsʰo-	'touch'

Table 7: Change of *o* to *u* in o-ending verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
ru-nu	'to weep'
dʰu-nu	'to wash'
tsʰu-nu	'to touch'

2.1.4 ʌ-ending verbs stems: There is a small set of verbs which end with the vowel ʌ. The vowel ʌ in the end of the vowel stem drops if the following suffixes begining with *e*, *i*, *u* and *o* are attached. Table 8 lists some ʌ-ending verb stems and Table 9 shows some dropping of vowel ʌ.

Table 8: ʌ-ending verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
sʌɦʌ-	'tolerate'
rʌɦʌ-	'remain'

Table 9: ʌ-ending verb stems (ʌ-dropped)

Verb stem	Gloss
sʌɦ-erʌ	'tolerate-CONJUNT'
rʌɦ-erʌ	'remain-CONJUNCT'

In the vowel ending verb stems, except verbs in Table 2 and Table 4, semantically null element *n* is inserted between stem and suffix if the suffix begins with *tsʰ* or *tʰ* sounds. But, in the case of the verb stems in Table 2 and Table 4, only $\tilde{d}$ʌ is inserted after *u* is inserted for some other purpose.

2.2 Consonant final stems

2.1 Voiceless consonant ending stems: The verb stems that end with voiceless consonants are both intransitive and transitive types. Some examples of the verb stems ending with voiceless consonants are listed in Table 10.

Table 10: Verb stems ending with a voiceless consonant

Verb stem	Gloss
kʌs-	'tighten'
kãp-	'tremble'
gʰʌseṯ-	'drag'
dzak-	'insert'
pʰjãk-	'throw'
nats-	'dance'

In this group of verb stems, semantically null elements *t*ʌ or *d*ʌ are inserted optionally between the stem and suffix if the suffix begins with *tsʰ* and *tʰ*. These forms are used only in non-past tense and past habitual aspect. These alternative forms of the stems are listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Alternative forms from stems ending with voiceless consonant

Verb stem	form1	form2
kʌs-	kʌstʌ-	kʌsdʌ-
kãp-	kãptʌ-	kãpdʌ-
gʰʌset̪-	gʰʌset̪tʌ-	gʰʌset̪dʌ-
dzak-	dzaktʌ-	dzakdʌ-
pʰjãk-	pʰjãktʌ-	pʰjãkdʌ-
nats-	natstʌ-	natsdʌ-

2.2.2 Voiced consonant ending stems

The verb stems that end with voiced consonants are of both types intransitive and transitive. Some examples of the verb stems ending with voiced consonants are listed in Table 12.

Table 12: Verb stems ending with voiced consonant

Verb stem	Gloss
bol-	'speak'
pĩd-	'grind'
tʰun-	'close'
pʌtsʰar-	'throw down'
d̪ub-	'sink'
tsʰam-	'feel'
kʰodz-	'search'

In this group of stems also, a semantically null element *dʌ* is inserted optionally between the stem and suffix if the suffix begins with *tsʰ* or *tʰ*. These forms are used only in non-past tense and past habitual aspect. These alternative forms of the stems are listed in Table 13.

Table 13: Alternative forms from stems ending with voiced consonant

Verb stem	Alternative form
bol-	boldʌ-
pĩd-	pĩddʌ-
tʰun-	tʰundʌ-
pʌtsʰar-	pʌtsʰardʌ-
d̪ub-	d̪ubdʌ-
tsʰam-	tsʰamdʌ-
kʰodz-	kʰodzdʌ-

3. Transitivity

Transitivity is the number of argument that a verb takes (Katamba 1993: 256-62; Payne 1997:171). The transitivity is significant in verbs. Morphology of the verbs can be further analyzed in term of this feature.

3.1 Intransitive verbs

Those verbs which take only one argument as subject noun phrase are intransitive verbs. In example (4) the verb *uṭʰ* 'get up' has taken only one argument *u* 'he' as a subject and in example (5) the verb *bʌs* 'sit' has taken only one argument *u* 'he' as subject, therefore, they are intransitive verbs.

(4)   u   bihan-ʌi   uṭʰ-jo
           he   morning-EMP   rise-PST.3SG.MASC
           'He got up early in the morning.'

(5)   u   sʌ̃dhʌi   gʰʌr-ma   bʌs-tsʰʌ
           3SG   always   home-LOC   sit-NPST.3SG.MASC
           'He always stays at home.'

Some verbs are listed in Table 14 are intransitive verbs and they also take only one argument as the subject.

Table 14: Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verb	Gloss
uṭʰ-	'wake up'
kud-	'run'
bʌs-	'sit'
lʌḍ-	'fall down'
sut-	'sleep'
ʌgʰa-	'satisfied'

3.2 Transitive/ditransitive verbs

Those verbs which take two arguments are said to be transitive and those verbs which take three arguments are said to be ditransitive verbs. Both types of verbs are kept here under the same group as they behave in the same way at the morphological level. The Table 15 and 16 list the transitive verbs and ditransitive verbs, respectively. The verb *kaṭ* 'cut' in (6) has taken two arguments *sjam* 'Shyam' and *rukʰ* 'tree' as subject and object of the sentence, respectively. And the verb *di* 'give' in (7) has taken three arguments *mʌi* '1SG', *us* 'he.OBL' and *kitab* 'book' as subject, indirect and direct object of the sentence, respectively.

(6)   sjam-le   rukʰ   kaṭ-jo
           Shyam-ERG   tree   cut-PST.3SG.MASC
           'Shyam cut the tree.'

(7)   mʌi-le   us-lai   kitab   di-ẽ
             1SG.OBL-ERG   3SG.OBL-DAT   book   give-PST.1SG.MASC
             'I gave him a book.'

Some transitive verbs are listed in Table 15 which take only two arguments as subject and object and some ditransitive verbs as listed in Table 16 take three arguments as subject, indirect and direct objects.

Table 15: Some transitive verbs

Transitive verb	Gloss
kaṯ-	'cut'
kʰa-	'eat'
tsu-	'suck'
pʌdʰ-	'read'
ṯok-	'bite'

Table 16: Some ditransitive verbs

Ditransitive verb	Gloss
tir-	'pay'
bets-	'sell'
di-	'give'
lekʰ-	'write'
sodʰ-	'ask'

4. Syllabicity

Nepali verb stems can be grouped into two classes based on the number of syllables in a stem. This feature is significant especially in the causative stem formation.

4.1. Monosyllabic verb stems

Those verb stems which have only one syllable are said to be monosyllabic verb stems. Some examples are listed in Table 17.

Table 17: Monosyllabic verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
bol-	'speak'
kʰa-	'eat'
pĩd-	'grind'
tʰun-	'close'
kʌs-	'tighten'
ḏub-	'sink'
tsʰam-	'feel'
kʰodz-	'search'
kʰol-	'open'

suk-	'be dried'
kʰa-	'eat'
dza-	'go'
di-	'give'
dʰo-	'wash'
ro-	'weep'
si-	'sew'
pi-	'drink'

4.2. Polysyllabic verb stems

Those verb stems which are formed from two or more syllables are said to be polysyllabic verb stems. Some examples are illustrated in Table 18.

Table 18: Polysyllabic verb stems

Verb stem	Gloss
upʰri-	'jump'
kʰumtsi-	'shrink'
bʰʌtki-	'be broken'
pʌtsʰar-	'throw down'
gʰʌseṭ-	'drag'
muskura-	'insert'
nitsor-	'squeeze'
nimoṭʰ-	'twist'
tsitʰor-	'scratch'
tsʰimʌl-	'prune'

5. Sound *a*

The sound *a* appears in Nepali verb stems in two manifestations, one as a normal vowel phoneme /a/; and another as a causative marker -*a* while forming the causative verb stems. The presence and absence of *a* sound in the base verb stem is very significant for forming the causative stems. Therefore, the basic verb stems can be grouped into two classes, i.e., stems with *a* sound and stems without *a* sound. Some examples of former group are listed in Table 19 and of latter group are listed in Table 20.

Table 19: Verb stems with *a* sound

Verb stem	Gloss
kʰãd-	'press down'
gal-	'melt'
tsʰan-	'choose'
pʌtsʰar-	'throw down'
kotsar-	'insert into'

dʌkar-	'bulch'

Table 20: Verb stems without *a* sound

Verb stem	Gloss
tir-	'pay'
bʌl-	'burn'
kʰop-	'cut deep'
gʰʌt̪-	'be less'
tsimʌt̪-	'pinch'
tsʰimʌl-	'prune'

6 Morphological processes

6.1 Causativization/transitivization

In transitivization, an argument is added irrespective of the role of the argument but in causativization, the added argument is definitely the causer. The morphological change in the verb stem and syntactic make up are the same in both the processes, however, the interpretation may differ semantically (Katamba 1993:274-5; Pokharel 2054VS:6-16). But, in this study, both are treated as a single process. In sentence (8a), the verb 'slept-PST.3SG' is non-causative which has taken *bʌtstso* 'child' as subject of the sentence. When it is causativized as *sut-a-in* 'sleep-CAUS-PST.3SG.FEM.HON' in (8b), it has taken a new subject *ama* 'mother' as a causer and the subject of the non-causative construction is demoted to the object of causativized verb. So, in the process of causativization, a morphological causative marker is suffixed to the verb stem and is followed by the agreement markers. Table 21 lists some examples of such causative verb stems.

(8) a. bʌtstso   sut-jo
         child.SG.MASC   sleep-PST.3SG.MASC
         'The child slept.'
     b. ama-le   bʌtstsa-lai   sut-a-in
         mother-ERG   child-DAT   sleep-CAUS-PST.3SG.FEM.HON
         'The mother made the child sleep.'

Table 21: Causative verb stems

Casuative verb	Gloss
ut̪ʰ-a	'cause to wake up'
sut-a	'cause to sleep'
tir-a	'cause to pay'
lekʰ-a	'cause to write'
bʰʌn-a	'cause to say'

6.1.1 Strategies of causative formation

a. by -*a* suffix

The causativization by a causative marker -*a* is the most regular and the bulk of the non-causative stems become causative stem by this process. The verb stems listed in Table 4.18 are formed by this method.[2]

b. by both -*a* and -*al* suffixes

A small set of verb stems which, instead of taking marker -*a*, also take marker -*al* to form the causative stems. For example, verb stem *kʰʌs* 'drop' in (9a), gets causativized by maker -*a* in (9b) and by -*al* in (9c). Table 22 lists some examples of this type of causative stem formation.

(9) a.   ḍʰuŋga   kʰʌs-jo
        stone   drop-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The stone dropped.'
    b.   keta-le   ḍʰuŋga   kʰʌs-a-jo
        boy-ERG   stone   drop-CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The boy dropped a stone.'
    c.   keta-le   ḍʰuŋga   kʰʌs-al-jo
        boy-ERG   stone   drop-CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The boy dropped a stone.'

Table 22: Verb stems forming causatives with -*a* and -*al*

Base stem	Gloss	Causative stem	Gloss
bʌs-	sit	bʌsa-/bʌsal-	cause to sit
kʰʌs-	drop	kʰʌsa-/kʰʌsal-	cause to drop
tsũḍ-	snatch	tsũḍa-/tsũḍal-	cause to snatch
tsʰin-	chop off	tsʰina-/tsʰinal-	cause to chop off

c. by ʌ → *a*

A small set of monosyllabic verb stems having the vowel ʌ in between consonants (i.e. CʌC structure) form the causative stem by changing the vowel ʌ to *a*. The verb stem *mʌr* 'die' in (10a) is causativized as *mar* 'kill' in (10b). Some of the verb stems in which causative stems are formed by this way are listed in Table 23.

(10) a.   mrigʌ   mʌr-jo
        deer   die-PST.3SG.MASC
        'The deer died.'

---

[2] Most of the Nepali grammarians believe that the basic causative marker is -*au*. But in this study, -*a* is assumed to be the basic causative marker since it appears in most of the perfective forms..

    b.   bagʰ-le   mrigʌ   mar-jo
          tiger-ERG   deer   die-CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
          'The tiger killed the deer.'

Table 23: Verb stems forming causatives by changing ʌ to *a*

Base verb	Gloss	Causative	Gloss
mʌr-	die	mar-	kill
sʌr-	shift	sar-	cause to shift
tsʌl-	move	tsal-	cause to move
ṭʌr-	pass over	ṭar-	cause to pass over
pʌr-	fall	par-	cause to fall
gʌl-	melt	gal-	cause to melt
bʌl-	burn	bal-	cause to burn

d. by *u → o*

Another set of monosyllabic verb stems having vowel *u* in between the consonants (i.e. C*u*C structure) forms the causative stem by changing the vowel *u* to *o*. The verb stem *kʰul* 'open' in (11a) is causativized as *kʰol* 'open.CAUSE' in (11b). Some of the verb stems in which causative stems are formed by this way are listed in Table 24.

(11)   a.   ḍʰoka   kʰul-jo
              door   open-PST.3SG.MASC
              'The door opened.'
       b.   pale-le   ḍʰoka   kʰol-jo
              gate-keeper-ERG   door   open.CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
              'The gate keeper opened the door.'

Table 24: Verb stems forming causatives by chaning *u* to *o*

Base stem	Gloss	Causative stem	Gloss
tsʰuṭ-	be left behind	tsʰoḍ-	cause to be left behind
kʰul-	open	kʰol-	cause to open
pʰuṭ-	break	pʰoḍ-	cause to break
gʰul-	dissolve	gʰol-	cause to dissolve

Interestingly, both the verb stems listed in Table 24 can also be causativized with causative marker *-a* as listed in Table 25. The causative verb stems of this set are listed in Table 25.[3]

---

[3] In Table 25, the change of ṭ to ḍ has not been discussed here (see Pokharel 2054VS). The causativizations shown in Table 24 and Table 25 have slightly different semantics.

Table 25: Verb stems forming causatives by suffixing -*a*

Base stem	Gloss	Causative	Gloss
tsʰuṭ-	be left behind	tsʰuṭ-a	cause to be left behind
kʰul-	open	kʰul-a	cause to open
pʰuṭ-	break	pʰuṭ-a	cause to break
gʰul-	dissolve	gʰul-a	cause to dissolve
tsʰoḍ-	be left behind	tsʰoḍ-a	cause to be left behind
kʰol-	open	kʰol-a	cause to open
pʰuḍ-	break	pʰoḍ-a	cause to break
gʰul-	dissolve	gʰol-a	cause to dissolve

e. by *a* insertion

A subset of polysyllabic *i*-ending verb stems containing consonant cluster form the causative stem by inserting the vowel *a* in between the consonants in the cluster. The verb stem *pʌgli* 'melt' in (12a) is causativized as *pʌgal* 'melt.CAUSE' in (12b). Some examples of verb stems in this process are listed in Table 26.

(12)   a.   ɦiũ   pʌgli-jo
            ice   melt-PST.3SG.MASC
            'The ice melted.'
       b.   gʰam-le   ɦiũ   pʌgal-jo
            sun-ERG   ice   melt.CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
            'The sun melted the ice.'

Table 26: Verb stems form causatives by inserting *a*

Base verb	Gloss	Causative	Gloss
upʰri-	jump	upʰar-	cause to jump
bigri-	spoil	bigar-	cause to spoil
sʌpri-	flourish	sʌpar-	cause to flourish
ugʰri-	open	ugʰar-	cause to open
pʌgli-	melt	pʌgal-	cause to melt
ukli-	climb up	ukal-	cause to climb up

Now, it has been clear that the causative stem formation from base verb stems depends on various features available in the verb stems such as syllabicity, presence and absence of *a* sound in the stem, transitivity and stem final segments.[4]

7.   Passivization

Passivization is an opposite phenomenon to causativization in terms of syntax. When passivization takes place, the subject noun phrase is either demoted to postpositional

---

[4] See Adhikari (2062VS) and Pokharel (2054VS) for detail information.

phrase or dropped (Katamba 1993:268-9; Pokharel 2054VS:1-5) In Nepali, passivization from intransitive verbs is also possible, but it is restricted only to default agreement (i.e, third person singular), and to some other morphology and interpretation as well (Pokharel 2054VS; Adhikari 2062VS). But the passivization from transitive/causative verbs undergoes for full morphological paradigm and in its interpretations. However, in both cases, the passive marker is the same, i.e., *-i* that follows the non-passive stem. The verb as *sut* 'sleep' in (13a) is intransitive and *sut-i* 'sleep-PASS' is the passive form in (13b). The verb *lekʰ* 'write' in (13c) is a transitive verb and *lekʰ-i* 'write-PASS' in (13d) is the passive form, *lekʰ-a* 'write-CAUS' in (13e) is causative stem and *lekʰ-a-i* 'write-CAUS-PASS' in (13f) is the causative-passive stem. Therefore, the passive stem of a verb is at least theoretically possible to be derived from intransitive, transitive and causative verb stems. Table 27 lists some passive forms of the verbs.

(13)   a.   mʌ   adzʌ   ramrʌri   sut-ẽ
            1SG   today   nice   sleep-PST.1SG
            'I slept nicely today.'

        b.   adzʌ   ramri   sut-i-jo
            today   nice   sleep-PASS-PST.3SG.MASC
            '(Myself) slept nicely today.'

        c.   us-le   euṯa   tsitʰtʰi: lekʰ-jo
            3SG-ERG   one.CLF   letter   write-PST.3SG.MASC
            'He wrote a letter.'

        d.   us-baṯʌ   euṯa   tsitʰtʰi: lekʰ-i-jo
            3SG-ABL   one.CLF   letter   write-PASS-PST.3SG.MASC
            'A letter was written by him.'

        e.   us-le   euṯa   tsitʰtʰi: lekʰ-a-jo
            3SG-ERG   one.CLF   letter   write-CAUS-PST.3SG.MASC
            'He caused to write a letter.'

        f.   us-baṯʌ   euṯa   tsitʰtʰi: lekʰ-a-i-jo
            3SG-ABL   one.CLF   letter   write-CAUS-PASS-PST.3SG.MASC
            'He was made to write a letter.'

Table 27: Some passive verb stems

Passive verb	Gloss
uṯʰ-i-	'be waken up'
sut-i-	'be slept'
tir-a-i-	'cause to be paid'
lekʰ-a-i-	'cause to be written'
ʌgʰa-i-	'be satisfied'

8. Negativization

Negativization in Nepali is primarily an affixation process which includes both prefixation and suffixation. Basically the negative marker is *nʌ* 'NEG' is used in both cases; it is consistent in its form in prefixation process whereas it gets slightly modified in suffixation due to morphophonemic changes (Pokharel 2054 VS:40-6).

8.1 Prefixation

The negativization by prefixation takes place in moods: potential, optative and imperative, aspects: perfect and imperfect and participial forms: absolute, conjunctive, infinitive, purposive, perfective, prospective and conditional as shown in Table 28, the negative by prefixation in a verb *kʰa-* 'eat'.

Table 28: Negation by the prefixation of negative marker *nʌ-*

Grammatical categories	Positive	Negative
Potential	kʰala	nʌ-kʰala
Optative	kʰaes	nʌ-kʰaes
Imperative	kʰa	nʌ-kʰa
Perfect Aspect	kʰa-eko	nʌ-kʰa-eko
Imperfect Aspect	kʰã-dʌi	nʌ-kʰã-dʌi
Absolutive	kʰa-iː	nʌ-kʰa-iː
Conjunctive Participle	kʰa-erʌ	nʌ-kʰa-erʌ
Infinitive	kʰa-nu	nʌ-kʰa-nu
Purposive	kʰa-nʌ	nʌ-kʰa-nʌ
Conditional	kʰa-e	nʌ-kʰa-e
Perfective	kʰa-e	nʌ-kʰa-e
Prospective	kʰa-ne	nʌ-kʰa-ne

8.2 Suffixation

The negativization by suffixation takes place in tense: past and non-past and aspects: past habitual and inferential as shown in Table 29 in a verb *kʰa-* 'eat'. The negative marker *nʌ-* 'NEG' always follows the tense marker and precedes the agreement markers.[5]

---

[5] In non-past tense and past habitual aspect, negative marker is preceded by *dʌi,* it's status is yet to be discovered.

Table 29: Negation by the suffixation of negative marker -nʌ

Grammatical categories	Positive	Negative
Non-Past Tense	kʰa-ntsʰʌ	kʰã-dʌinʌ
Past Tense	kʰa-jo	kʰa-enʌ
Past Habitual Aspect	kʰa-ntʰjo	kʰã-dʌinʌ-tʰjo
Inferential Aspect	kʰa-etsʰʌ	kʰa-e-nʌ-tsʰʌ

9. Stem formation

As discussed in (6.1) the causativization is very productive in Nepali verbs at morphological level. The causative stems are formed from both intransitive and transitive verb stems. Thus, from a causativization process, the stems can be divided into two types of stems: base verb stems and causative stems. However, there are some verb stems from which the causative verb stems can not be formed due to either phonological or semantic constraints.

The passivization as discussed in (7) is even more productive phenomenon in Nepali morphology than causative. That means, almost all the verb stems either intransitive or transitive verb stems can be passivized. Above all, the causative stems formed from the non-causative stems can still be passivized. This means, causative-passive stems have also been possible (Prasain 2012). Therefore, it can be generalized that a verb can have at least four different forms as shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Pattern of the stem formation

Category	Form	Example 'write'
Basic verb stem	V	lekʰ
Passive verb stem	V-*i*	lekʰ-i
Causative verb stem	V-*a*	lekʰ-a
Causative Passive verb stem	V-*a-i*	lekʰ-a-i

10. Summary

Nepali verb stems end with vowels segments: *i, a, o and ʌ* and consonant segments: voiceless and voiced. From transitivity perspective, they are intransitive and transitive/ditransitive. The verbs can be grouped into monosyllabic and polysyllabic from syllabicity point of view. Another feature that Nepali verbs have is sound *a* whose presence and absence has direct impact on causative stem formation. The causative stem formation is regular; however, there are some phonological restrictions. The passive stem formation is very productive, ie, most of the verbs can be passivized. Negativization occurs from both prefixation and suffixation processes. On the basis of features and morphological processes, four types of stems, namely, base stem, passive stem, causative stem and causative passive stem are found.

Abbreviations

1 = First person	HON = Honorific
2 =Second person	LOC = Locative
3 =Third person	MASC= Masculine gender
ABL =Ablative	OBL = Oblique
CAUS = Causative	PASS = Passive
DAT = Dative	PERF=Perfect
EMPH =Emphatic	PST = Past tense
ERG =Ergative	SG = Singular
FEM = Feminine gender	V = Verb form

References

Adhikari, Hemanga. 2062VS. *Samasaamayik Nepali vyakaran* (Contemporary Nepali grammar). 3rd edn. Kathmandu: Vidhyarthi Pustak Bhandar.

Katamba, Francis. 1993. *Morphology*. St. Martin's press: New York

Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pokharel, Madhav Prasad. 2054VS. *Nepali vaakarana* (Nepali Syntax). Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy.

Pokharel, Madhav Prasad. 2054VS. *Nepali vaakarana* (Nepali Syntax). Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy.

Pokharel, Madhav Prasad. 2010. 'Noun class agreement in Napali'. In *Kobe papers in linguistics*. 40-59.

Prasain, Balaram. 2012. *A computational analysis of Nepali morphology: A model for natural language processing*. PhD dissertation. Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal.