

Major Word Classes in the Lohorung Language: A Functional Typological Sketch

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Abstract

This study examines the four major word classes (viz. noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) in Lohorung, a Kirat Rai (Tibeto-Burman) language of northeastern Nepal, based on their semantic, syntactic, and morphological properties, based on Givón's formal and functional approach. Data were collected through elicitation with native speakers and textual analyses and were analyzed with reference to the author's native-speaker intuition. The findings indicate that Lohorung exhibits prototypical nouns with their multiple features and non-prototypical nouns as well. Morphologically, nouns are marked by the specific affixes, <-tsi> encodes dual and <-i> encodes plural. Lohorung employs three types of classifiers, namely <-tsi> <-kɔ>, and <-paŋ/pa>. Verbs are clause-final and serve as main predicates, typical of Tibeto-Burman languages. Lohorung has three numbers and persons systems with clusivity. Manner adverbials may take <ɔ>, and some adverbs modify adjectives. This study concludes that the analysis of the four major word classes enhances the grammatical description of the Lohorung language and contributes to functional-typological research on lexical classification.

Keywords: word class, semantic, syntactic, morphological

Introduction

The study finds how the major word classes in Lohorung are structured morphologically, syntactically, and semantically, drawing on Givón (2001)'s formal and functional approaches. The fundamental component of every language is the lexicon, which comprises the vocabulary and the linguistic information. Thus, major word classes are analyzed on the basis of their semantic, syntactic, and morphological features.

Lohorung belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family, classified under the Tibeto-Burman branch, Western Tibeto-Burman group, Himalayis subgroup, East Himalayis (Kirat), Eastern Kirat, Upper Arun language family subgroup (Bradley, 1997; Eppele et al., 1012). Rutgers (1998) states that Lohorung is closely related to Mewahang, Yamphu, and Yakkha languages. Hanßon (1991, p. 62) states that Biksik spoken in a small region near the upper Sabhakhola (Dhupu) is a dialect of the Lohorung. However, Hanßon himself also notes that there is insufficient data to conclusively establish it as a dialect. In contrast, the “Lohorung Rai society 2065” claims that there are no dialects within the Lohorung language. (Mitchell & Hilty, 2012,) conducted a lexical comparison among Pangma, Dhupu, and Angla. Eventually, the results show that Pangma and Dhupu share 90%, Dhupu and Angla share 88%, and Pangma and Angla share 88% similarity. There are several alternative names for the Lohorung language. They are (viz. lohorung, lohorong, lohrung, lohrung khanawa, lorung, uttari lorung) (Eppele et al. 2012; Rai, 2024, Rai, 2025). Lohorung people themselves like to call their language *Yakkhaba khap* (Rai, 2015) and *enny khap* (Lohorung, 2082). According to the NSO (2023) the total population of the Lohorung people, categorized under cast and ethnicity, is reported to be 2,598, whereas the number 3,884 is the number of Lohorung language speakers, of whom 622 are reported to use it as a second language. NSO (2023) further reports that 4925 people consider Lohorung to be their ancestral language.

Although in the Lohorung language, there have been important studies conducted, limitations remain. Hardman (2001) carried out an ethnography of Lohorung people and transcribed Lohorung ritual texts without supplying any linguistic analysis. Eppele et al (2012) present the language affiliations, status as 6b endangered, postpositional, SOV word ordered, past and non-past tense et. Rai (2015) reviewed Lohorung verb morphology, which shows that various forms of verbs deal with the affixes. Regmi (2072) studied Lohorung phonology and parts of speech in a general manner. Rai and Rai (2076) explored how the Lohorung language is historically connected to its land and environment. Rai (2021) assessed morphosyntax in Lohorung within Givón’s functional-typological framework. Rai (2024) conducted a study on Lohorung myths and the anthropolinguistic aspects of the Lohorung and argued that the Lohorung were the first community to settle in the Arun valley. Rai (2025) conducted a

study examining the verb agreement system in Lohorung (viz. person, number, clusivity, pronominalization). Lohorung (2025) compiled the genealogies of Lohorung's Dekhim pachha and thar clan, in which only minimal morphological analysis was conducted. Such as Mundhumi words were analyzed by breaking them into morphemes, and toponyms (place names) were also examined. Rai (2025) carried out a study on grammatical relations in Lohorung and stated that Lohorung exhibits an ergative-absolutive alignment with a peripheral split-ergative pattern based on its overt coding properties. Rai and Rai (2025) conducted a chronological review of studies on the Lohorung language and presented the historical development of the language. In spite of these systematic studies in Lohorung, nobody has contributed to the study of the Lohorung lexicon. Thus, this study aims to situate its findings within a broader functional typological discussion of the lexicon.

Research Methods

This study deals with an analysis of the Lohorung major word classes based on Givón's formal and functional approach and employs a mixed-methods linguistic fieldwork design to investigate the Lohorung lexicon (major word classes). Data were collected through both primary and secondary sources with elicitation techniques. The primary data were collected from native speakers - Nar Bahadur (age 70), Bhakta Bahadur (age 85), Nara Maya (age 80), Bal Maya (age 56) from the Kathmandu valley. Lohorung—Nepali—English tri-lingual dictionary (2072), the Lohorung literary book Panglum (2074), and other secondary sources were used for the secondary data. All informants have been fluent in the Lohorung language since their childhood and, as native speakers, the researcher's metalinguistic knowledge was used only to confirm and elucidate indistinct cases. Data collected through structured and semi-structured elicitation tasks were translated, produced, and judged by the consultants. The primary data were compared with the data established through secondary sources (viz. Lohorung—Nepali—English dictionary, Panglum [a literature book], etc.).

Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with an analysis of the Lohorung lexicon on four major word classes (viz., nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs). Nouns, adjectives, and verbs are analyzed based on semantic properties, syntactic properties, and morphological

properties, whereas adverbs are analyzed based on manner adverbs, time adverbs, adverbs modifying, and place adverbs.

Major word classes

All languages worldwide exhibit two major lexical classes among the four (viz., nouns and verbs). However, adjectives may or may not be seen in all languages as distinct word classes (Givón, 2001a, p. 49). The Lohorung language also encompasses these four major word classes, which are analyzed based on three properties (viz., semantic, syntactic, and morphological properties), although the number of parts of speech varies cross-linguistically.

Noun and its Properties

A noun is one of the major word classes. According to Givón (2001a), nouns are prototypically time-stable and conceptually perceived as things. Lohorung nouns are analyzed based on properties determined by modern linguists (viz., semantic properties, syntactic properties, and morphological properties).

Semantically, the semantic properties (viz. durability, complexity, concreteness, and individuation) are necessary to be a prototypical noun. Lohorung nouns are analyzed based on semantic properties (viz. durability, complexity, concreteness, compactness, and individuation) as in example (1).

(1)

- a. *liŋkɔʔwa* ‘stone’
- b. *meʔnuŋma* ‘girl’
- c. *waʔ^hŋpa* ‘boy’
- d. *k^him* ‘house’
- e. *nam* ‘sun’
- f. *saŋkemma* ‘star’
- g. *ten* ‘village’

Nouns are reflected as prototypical if they encompass the five properties (viz. durability, complexity, concreteness, compactness, and individuation) (Givón, 2010). Thus, examples (1a-g) encompass these properties and are treated as prototypical nouns. The nouns in Lohorung are examined based on the presence of these five properties (+) and the absence of these five properties (−). If a noun exhibits all five properties (+),

it is classified as a prototypical noun. In contrast, if it doesn't exhibit all five properties, it is classified as a non-prototypical noun, as in Table 1.

Table 1

Lohorung prototypical nouns

Nouns	meaning	Durability	Complexity	concreteness	compactness	individuation
liŋkɔʔwa	'stone'	+	+	+	+	+
meʔnuŋma	'girl'	+	+	+	+	+
waɬʰaŋpa	'boy'	+	+	+	+	+
kʰim	'house'	+	+	+	+	+
nam	'sun'	+	+	+	+	+
saŋkemma	'star'	+	+	+	+	+
ten	'village'	+	+	+	+	+

Lohorung also exhibits non-prototypical nouns that lack these five properties, as in example (2).

(2)

- a. jouwa 'water'
- b. kʰi:pʰuma 'cloud'
- c. məkʰũma 'smoke'
- d. hari 'blood'
- e. hiʔjapa 'wind'
- f. bakʰa 'soil'

Examples (2a-f) illustrate the non-prototypical nouns in Lohorung for which at least one of the five properties is absent (-), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Lohorung non-prototypical nouns*

nouns	meaning	durability	complexity	concreteness	compactness	individuation
<i>jouwa</i>	‘water’	+	-	+	-	-
<i>k^{hi}:p^huma</i>	‘cloud’	-	-	+	-	-
<i>mek^hũma</i>	‘smoke’	-	-	+	-	-
<i>hari</i>	‘blood’	+	-	+	-	-
<i>hiʔjapa</i>	‘wind’	-	-	-	-	-
<i>bak^ha</i>	‘soil’	+	-	+	-	-

Syntactically, the distribution of nouns in different syntactic slots inside the clause constitutes their syntactic properties (Givón, 2011, p. 38). Lohorung nouns occupy six major syntactic slots (viz. subject slot, direct object slot, nominal predicate slot, slot of possession, slot of adjective complement, and slot of the locative)

(3)

a. *araʔwae wapasa sikp^het^u*

araʔwa-ε wapasa sik-p^hε-t-u
 crow-ERG chick carry away in mouth-take-INS-PST.3SG.3SG
 ‘Crow took away the chick.’

b. *anaε nusa tse pittuna*

ana-ε nusa tse pi-tt-u-na
 2SG-ERG brother/sister clothes give-INS-3SG-PST.2G
 ‘You gave brother/sister the clothes.’

c. *igo mi:mi umma seʔma lε:k*

igo mi:mi u-m-ma seʔ-ma lε:k
 this fire-GEN 3SF-GEN-mother kill-INF must
 ‘The source of fire must be coaxed and colmed down.’

d. *kaniε k^ho: waɖa aɖ^hjakts^hja he:tsamiɖa*

kani-ε k^ho: waɖa aɖ^hjakts^hja he:tsa-mi-ta
 ‘1pl-erg 3sg-Ø ward chairperson win.-caus-ins-pst.1pl.3sg
 ‘We made him win the ward chairperson.’

e. *tsomteha:ŋ manɖewabi pena*

tsomteha:ŋ manɖewa-bi pe-na

chomtehang mangtewa-loc live-3sg.pst
 ‘Chomteha:ng lived in Mangtewa.’

In the example (3a), the noun *araʔwa* ‘crow’ occupies the subject slot inside the clause. In the example (3b), the noun *tse* ‘clothes’ occupies a direct object slot. The noun *umma* ‘his mother’, in example (3c), occupies the nominal predicate and the noun *mi* ‘fire’ occupies the slot of possession. In the example (3d), *waɖa ad^hjakts^hja* ‘ward chairperson’ occupies the slot of the object complement, and the noun *manɖewa* ‘Mangtewa’ occupies the slot of the locative in the example (3e).

Morphologically, morphological properties refer to the processes of word formation in a lexical category through morphological mechanisms such as derivation, inflection (Givón, (2001a). Lohorung nouns are discussed morphologically under number, classifiers, case role, and clusivity.

Lohorung encompasses three number system (viz. singular, dual, and plural). This number system applies to animate entities, whereas it is not applicable to inanimate nouns (Rai, 2021, p. 15).

(4)

- a. *jaʔmi* ‘person’
- b. *jaʔmi-tsi* ‘two person’
- c. *jaʔmi-tsi* ‘many person’
- d. *liŋkɔwa* ‘stone’
- e. *liŋkɔwa* ‘two stone’
- f. *liŋkɔwa* ‘many stones’

Examples (4a-c) illustrate the three-number system of nouns in Lohorung. The morphologically marked marker <-*tsi*> functions as both dual and plural numbers in Lohorung. In contrast, the inanimate noun *liŋkɔwa* ‘stone’ in examples (4d-f) doesn’t imply the three-number system.

In linguistics, classifiers are markers that classify nouns, especially when counting. Lohorung encompasses two types of classifiers on the basis of human and non-human (Rai, 2021, p. 17). However, the singular noun doesn’t follow this system as in (5).

(5)

- a. *ekkə maŋpa*
 ek-kə maŋpa
 one-CLF shaman
 ‘One Shaman.’
- b. *hippa/hippaŋ maŋpaʈsi*
 hip-pa / hip-paŋ maŋpa-ʈsi
 two-CLF/ two-CLF shaman-DUL
 ‘Two Shamans.’
- c. *sumpa maŋpaʈsi*
 sum-pa maŋpa-ʈsi
 three-CLF shaman-PL
 ‘Three shamans.’
- d. *ekkə pik*
 ek-kə pik
 One-CLF ox
 ‘One ox.’
- e. *hiʈʈsi pik*
 hiʈʈ-si pik
 ‘two-clf oxen
 ‘Two oxen.’
- f. *sumʈsi pik*
 sum-ʈsi pik
 three-clf oxen
 ‘Three oxen.’
- g. *ekkə siŋ*
 ek-kə siŋ
 one-CLF fire wood
 ‘One fire wood.’
- h. *hiʈʈsi siŋ*
 hiʈʈ-si siŋ
 two-CLF fire wood

‘Two fire woods.’

i. *sumtʃsi siŋ*

sum-ʃsi siŋ

three-clf fire wood

‘Three fire woods.’

Examples (5a-c) demonstrate the use of the classifiers <-kɔ> and <-pa> as human classifiers, whereas examples (5d-f) illustrate the classifiers <-kɔ> and <-ʃsi> as non-human classifiers. Examples (5a) and (5d) deal with the classifier used with the singular number, whereas examples (5b) and (5e) deal with the classifier used with the dual number. Similarly, examples (5c) and (5f) deal with the classifier used with the plural number. The classifier <-kɔ> used with the singular number does not distinguish between human and non-human classifiers. In contrast, the classifier used with dual and plural numbers distinguishes between human and non-human classifiers. The classifier <-ʃsi> used with dual and plural numbers is identified as a non-human, and the classifier <-pa/pan> used with dual and plural numbers is identified as a human classifier. Examples (5g-i) deal with the use of classifiers with inanimate nouns. As a result, the inanimate nouns and animate non-human nouns imply the same classifier for singular, dual, and plural numbers as in Table 3.

Table 3

The human and non-human classifiers in Lohorung

Number	Classifiers		
	Inanimate	Animate non-human	Animate human
Singular	<-kɔ>	<-kɔ>	<-kɔ>
Dual	<-ʃsi>	<-ʃsi>	<-pa/pan>
Plural	<-ʃsi>	<-ʃsi>	<-pa/pan>

Fillmore (1968) introduced the concept of case role based on its semantic/thematic role (viz. agent, experiencer, instrument, object/patient/theme, source, and goal) that represents the meaning or function of a noun phrase in relation to the verb. However, later linguists expanded this list to include other roles like

beneficiary, recipient, location, etc. Thus, the Lohorung case role is discussed based on this case role as in (6)

(6)

- a. *huʔwaε tsam tsaʔu*
 huʔwa-ε tsam tsa-ʔ-u
 dog-ERG rice eat-INS-PST.3SG.3SG
 ‘Dog ate rice.’ (Agent)
- b. *kaŋa haŋhaŋ miŋkŋa*
 kaŋa haŋhaŋ miŋ-k-ŋa
 1SG happy feel-NPST-1SG
 ‘I am very happy.’ (Experiencer)
- c. *kʰosε qabεε siŋ qaŋu*
 kʰos-ε qabε-ε siŋ qaŋu
 3SG-ERG khukuri-INS firewood cut-PST.3SG.3SG
 ‘He cut the firewood with Khukuri.’ (Instrumental)
- d. *kaŋaε pik rɔg-u-ŋ*
 kaŋa-ε pik rɔg-u-ŋ
 1SG-ERG ox beat-PST.3SG-1SG
 ‘I beat ox.’ (Patient)
- e. *anaε qεtsapa ro:pa:baŋ tsam kʰinɔapuna*
 ana-ε qεtsapa ro:pa-baŋ tsam kʰin-ɔap-u-na
 2SG-ERG Dechapa paddy field-ABL rice carry-come-
 PAST.3SG-2SG
 ‘You brought rice from the paddy field.’ (Source)
- f. *apa haŋdεʔwa kʰara*
 apa haŋdεʔwa kʰa-r-a
 father haŋdεʔwa go-INS-PST.3SG
 ‘Father went Hangdeʔwa.’ (Goal)
- g. *kaŋaε babbaŋ bentʰi pittuŋ*
 kaŋa-ε babbaŋ bentʰi piʈ-t-u-ŋ
 1SG-ERG uncle axe give-INS-PST.3SG-1SG
 ‘I gave an axe to uncle.’ (Recipient)

- h. *amaε apam lagi tsam peru*
 ama-ε apa'm lagi tsam peru
 mother-ERG father-GEN for rice cook-INS-PST.3SG.3SG
 'Mother cook food for you.' ♀Beneficiary)

- i. *kaŋa ha:ŋtenbi penukŋa*
 kaŋa ha:ŋten-bi pen-u-k-ŋa
 1SG Kathmandu-LOC live-INNS-NPST-1SG
 'I live in Kathmandu.' (Locative)

- j. *lukdimmaε jaksa ho:raŋsu*
 lukdimma-ε jaksa ho:-raŋ-s-u
 Earthquake-ERG shed destroy-finish-INS-PST.3SG.3SG
 'Earthquake destroyed shed.' (Force)

Examples (6a-j) illustrate the case role in Lohorung. The noun *huʔwa* 'dog' in example (6a), *kaŋa* 'I' in example (6b), *qabe* 'Khukuri' in example (6c), *pik* 'ox' in example (6d), *deʔsapa ro:pa* 'Dechapa paddy field' in example (6e), *haŋdeʔwa* 'Hangdeʔwa' in example (6f), *babbaj* 'uncle' in example (6g), *apa* 'father' in example (6h), *haŋten* 'Kathmandu' in example (6i), and *lukdimma* 'earthquake' in example (6j) illustrate agent, experiencer, instrumental, patient, source, goal, recipient, beneficiary, locative and force respectively.

Lohorung exhibits two types of clusivity (viz., exclusive and inclusive) (Rai, 2015, p. 95; Regmi, 2072, p. 6). Clusivity appears in the first person dual number and plural numbers.

(7)

- a. *kaʔsi kʰim kʰeʔtsi*
 kaʔsi kʰim kʰε:-k-ʔsi
 2DL.INCL house go-NPST-2DL
 'We two (inclusive) go to home.'
- b. *kaʔsiga kʰim kʰε:kʔsiga*
 kaʔsi-ga kʰim kʰε:-k-ʔsi-ga
 2dl-excl house go-npst-2dl-excl
 'We two (exclusive) go to home.'

- c. *kani k^him k^hε:ki*
 kani k^him k^hε:-k-i
 1pl.incl house go-npst-1pl
 ‘We (inclusive) go to home.’
- d. *kaŋka k^him k^hε:kiŋka*
 kaŋ-ka k^him k^hε:-k-iŋ-ka
 1pl-excl house go-npst-1pl-exl
 ‘We (exclusive) go to home.’

Table 4*Lohorung Clusivity Marker*

Number	Person	Clusivity	
		Inclusive	exclusive
Dual	Second	-	<-ga>
Plural	First	-	<-ka>

Adjective and its Properties

The adjectives in Lohorung are analyzed based on their properties (viz., semantic properties, morphological properties, and syntactic properties).

Lohorung adjectives are primarily categorized on the basis of semantic features such as color, size, shape, hardness, roughness, smell, and taste. Accordingly, they are classified in terms of their semantic properties, as illustrated in (8)

(8)

a. color

harrapa/harraε ‘red’
p^hirie ‘green’
bi:ε ‘white’

maiε/maiʔma ‘black’
p^hi:ε ‘yellow’

b. size

d^hjapa ‘big’
tɔksue ‘short’
mi:kmɔ ‘tittle’

mi:ts^hupa/mi:ts^huʔwa/mi:ts^huʔma ‘small’
tɔkb^hε:ε ‘long/tall’
dirik ‘more’

c. shape

lo:loma ‘oval’

wɛŋwɛŋma ‘round’

ʈsʰomʈsʰomma ‘sharp’ f

ɛkʃɛkma ‘flat’

d. hardness

ʈsʰakke ‘hard’

nɛkke ‘soft’

e. roughness

lɛŋke ‘slippery’

f. smell

namnuɛ ‘sweet smelling’

naʈsʰuɛ ‘bad smelling’

g. taste

ʈsanuɛ ‘delicious’

ʈsaisɛ ‘not delicious’

limpɛ ‘sweet’

kʰikke ‘bitter’

ʈhukpɛ ‘astringent’

aŋke ‘harsh taste’

sinʈɛ ‘sour’

Examples (8a-g) illustrate the semantic properties of Lohorung adjectives based on its features (viz., semantic properties, morphological properties, and syntactic properties).

According to Givón (2001a), the syntactic properties of adjectives are explained in terms of their distribution and grammatical roles in a clause (viz., NP modifier vs predicate, role as stative predicates, functional similarity to verb, and cross-linguistic variability). However, cross-linguistic variability is not discussed in Lohorung.

(9)

a. *ekkɔ ɖʰja kʰim*

ek-kɔ	ɖʰja	kʰim
One-CLF	big	house

‘A big house.’ (NP modifier)

b. *akkɔ kʰim ɖʰja lɛ:k*

akkɔ	kʰim	ɖʰja	lɛ:k
that	house	big	COP

‘The house is big.’ (Predicate)

c. *jowa jempe lɛ:k*

jowa	jempe	lɛ:k
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water cold cop
 'Water is cold.' (Stative)

- d. akkə buŋ kamnuk
 akkə buŋ kamnu-k
 that flower beautiful-npst.cop.3sg
 'That flower is beautiful.' (Functional similarity to verb)

Example (9a-b) illustrates the distinction between NP modifier and predicative use. In the example (9a), the adjective *q^hja* 'big' just modifies the noun *k^him* 'house', whereas the same adjective in (9b) functions as a predicate of the clause. The adjective *jempε* 'cold' in (9c) denotes the state of water and thus, exhibits stative meaning. Likewise, example (9d) demonstrates functional similarity to verb.

Lohorung adjectives function both as nominal and verbal elements, and they exhibit corresponding morphological marking as in (10).

(10)

- a. *masiŋma tsaik^hεtu*
 masiŋma tsaik^hε-t-u
 elderly female distress-INS-PST.3SG
 'The elderly woman distressed.'
- b. *masiŋmaŋtsi tsaik^hεtuŋtsi*
 masiŋma-tsi tsaik^hε-t-u-tsi
 elderly female-PL distress-INS-PST-3PL
 'The elderly women distressed.'
- c. *bi:ε jaʔmi kamnuk*
 bi:ε jaʔmi kamnu-k
 white people beautiful-npst.3sg
 'The fair-skinned people is good.'
- d. *bi:q jaʔmiŋtsi kamnukmi*
 bi:q jaʔmi-tsi kamnu-k-mi
 white.PL peoples-PL beautiful-NPST.3PL
 'The fair-skinned peoples are good.'

In the example (10a), the adjective *masiŋma* 'old woman' functions as a noun as evidenced by its morphological plural marking in example (10b). The adjective *bi:ε*

‘white’ in (10c) agrees with the plural noun in (10d), while the adjective *kamnuk* ‘is good’ displays functional similarity to the verb.

According to Givón (2011, p. 51), it is not surprising that numbers above 10 are not all that significant in the Ute language, and the same applies to the Kirati language in Nepal. However, at present, a numeral system ranging from 1 to 100 has been developed in most Kirati languages. Similarly, Lohorung Rai Society (2069, p. 31) presents Lohorung numerals from 1 to 100 as in Table 5.

Table 5

Number System Developed in the Lohorung Language

<i>lohorrung</i>	English	<i>Lohorung</i>	English
<i>Ip</i>	‘one’	<i>wan</i>	‘seven’
<i>hiʈs</i>	‘two’	<i>ban</i>	‘eight’
<i>Sum</i>	‘three’	<i>nan</i>	‘nine’
<i>riʈs</i>	‘four’	<i>ipɔŋ</i>	‘ten’
<i>ŋaʈs</i>	‘five’	<i>ipon ip</i>	‘eleven’
<i>tʰuk</i>	‘six’	<i>pipon hiʈs</i>	‘twelve’

Originally, in the Lohorung language, only the numerals *ip* ‘one’, *hiʈs* ‘two’, and *sum* ‘three’ were commonly utilized. With the subsequent extension of the numeral system to 10, it became feasible to enumerate up to 100.

Verb and its Properties

Verbs constitute the central element of clauses (Givón, 2011, p. 54). Most of the Kirati languages encompass directional verbs. Such as Bantawa (Marius, 2009), Rai (2025), Limbu (van Driem, 1993), Koyee (Rai, 2015). Similarly, Lohorung displays the directional verbs as in (11)

(11)

- a. *karɛ* ‘come up’
- b. *uŋɛ* ‘come down’
- c. *qabɛ* ‘come’
- d. *u:sɛ* ‘go down’
- e. *tʰaŋɛ* ‘go up’

f. *k^hare* ‘go’

Lohorung verbs are analyzed based on three properties (viz. semantic, syntactic, and morphological properties).

According to Givón (2011, p. 52), Verbs differ from nouns and adjectives semantically because they usually represent change or actions rather than a state of being.

(12)

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | <i>a. ɔŋma</i> ‘to melt’ | <i>heŋk^heɽma</i> ‘to dry up’ | <i>pəkma</i> ‘to break’ | <i>hia:pma</i> ‘to cry’ |
| b. | <i>pemma</i> ‘to sit’ | <i>imʈsama</i> ‘to sleep’ | <i>ʈsa:ma</i> ‘to eat’ | |
| c. | <i>waima</i> ‘to wander’ | <i>ʈseɽma</i> ‘to plough’ | <i>k^himma</i> ‘to carry’ | |
| d. | <i>sapma</i> ‘to write’ | <i>peɽma</i> ‘to cook’ | <i>paq^hli:ma</i> ‘to read’ | |

Examples (12a-d) illustrate semantic features of Lohorung verbs. Example (12a) illustrates verbs that code rapid changes in the state, condition or spatial location of some noun-coded entity. Example (12b) illustrates the verbs that encode enduring states. Example (12c) illustrates the verbs that encode long-duration events (gradual or extended processes), and Example (12d) illustrates the verbs that encode deliberate action and complex temporally sequenced subcomponents.

Most languages spoken in Nepal follow SOV word order. Lohorung also follows the same pattern and is therefore a verb final language (Rai, 2021, p. 23). Lohorung is basically SOV word order, but it is flexible as well (Rai, 2025). Thus, Lohorung verbs occupy any position in a clause.

(13)

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| a. | <i>huɽwa k^haiɽa</i> | | |
| | huɽwa | k ^h aiɽa | |
| | dog | go-INS-PST.3SG | |
| | ‘The dog went.’ | | |
| b. | <i>pikε nusa lugu</i> | | |
| | pik-ε | nusa | lug-u |
| | ox-ERG | brother | gore-PST.3SG |
| | ‘The ox gored brother.’ | | |
| c. | <i>amaε apa ʈsam piɽtu</i> | | |
| | ama-ε | apa | ʈsam piɽtu |

mother-ERG father rice give-INS-PST.3SG
 ‘Mother gave father rice.’

In example (13a), the finite verb *kʰiʈa* ‘went’ is preceded by a single subject *huʔwa* ‘dog’. In example (13b), the verb is preceded by the direct object *nusa* ‘brother’ and the subject *pik* ‘ox’. In example (13c), the verb is preceded by direct object *ʈsam* ‘rice’, indirect object *apa* ‘father’ and subject *ama* ‘mother’.

In Lohorung, morphological processes are observed in the agreement system (viz., number, person, clusivity, and pronominalization) and TAM. For a detailed discussion of morphological properties in Lohorung, see Rai (2025).

Adverbs

Adverbs are classified according to their semantic features (viz., manner adverbs, time adverbs, adverbs modifying adjectives, and place adverbs). Accordingly, Lohorung adverbs are analyzed with respect to these features.

Manner adverbs modify verbs by adding information about how the action is performed (Givón, 2001a, p. 88). Lohorung manner adverbs are discussed as in Table (6).

Table 6

Manner adverbs in Lohorung

S.N.	Manner adverbs	‘Meaning’
1	<i>kamnurɔ</i>	‘properly, well’
2	<i>kairɔ</i>	‘badly, not properly’
3	<i>ʈammɔ</i>	‘slowly’
4	<i>gɔʈɔʈɔ</i>	‘sound of heavy rain’
5	<i>bʰɔŋliktɔ</i>	‘manner of uprooting tree’
6	<i>ʈʰuriktɔ</i>	‘manner of overturned’
7	<i>pʰurtseptɔ</i>	‘the method of completely dropping anobject’
8	<i>ʈsanʈsan</i>	‘cleverly’
9	<i>ʈsʰɛntʈsʰɛn</i>	‘in a high manner’
1	<i>hanʈhan</i>	‘happy’

The table (6) exemplifies Lohorung manner adverbs. Lohorung typically exhibits recurring phonological and morphological pattern, which are also evident in manner adverbs where the morphemes <ɔ> and <ŋ> is similarly realized. Thus, Lohorung exhibits musical quality.

According to Givón (2001a.), adverbs help to identify a specific point of time when an action occurs and describes the deferent ways an event unfolds over time. Time adverbs in Lohorung are as in table (7).

Table 7

Time adverbs in Lohorung

S.N.	Time adverbs	Meaning
1	<i>aju</i>	‘today’
2	<i>kʰɔndɑ</i>	‘two days later’
3	<i>akrɔklɔ</i>	‘at that time’
4	<i>irɔklɔ</i>	‘at this time’
5	<i>hanam</i>	‘when’
6	<i>iʈsʰɔk</i>	‘a moment’
7	<i>nammak</i>	‘next year’
8	<i>simmak</i>	‘the year after next’
9	<i>aniŋ</i>	‘this year’
10	<i>aʈsela</i>	‘nowadays’

According to Givón (2001a), a distinct class of adverbs is used to enumerate the degree of adjectives. Adverbs modifying adjectives in Lohorung are as in (14).

(14)

a. *qirik kamnuɛ*

qirik kamnuɛ
more good
'very beautiful/handsome/nice.'

b. *miʔmi kamnuɛ*

miʔmi kamnuɛ
a little good

'A little bit good.'

c. *mik jempe*

mik	jempe
little	cold

'Slightly cold'

d. *εʔwa djapa*

εʔwa	djapa
how.much	big

'How big.'

e. *akrɔ wɛ:ɛ*

akrɔ	wɛ:ɛ
that.much	big

'So big.'

f. *gɔrɔ wɛ:ɛ*

gɔrɔ	wɛ:ɛ
this.much	big

'So big.'

g. *ettano kamnuɛ*

ettano	kamnuɛ
extremely	good

'Extremely good'

Examples (14a-g) illustrate the adverbs modifying adjectives in Lohorung. The adverbs that describe the intensity, degree, or quality of adjectives.

Adverbs that specify the location of an action or state in a clause are place adverbs (Givón, 2001a, p. 50). Place adverbs in Lohorung are as in (15).

(15)

jaʔlɔ 'in front'

dɛŋpi 'behind'

sɔkpi 'on'

kʰukmabi 'under'

sɔŋpi 'above'

kɛkpi 'beside/near'

hɔŋsi 'inside'

Miu 'far'

jumpʰe 'downward'

tʰaŋpe 'upward'

mimmu ‘down/below’

mittu ‘up/above’

akkubi ‘there’

igubi/gɔbi ‘here’

mɔbi ‘there’

giu ‘near/here’

Example (15) illustrates the place adverbs in Lohorung.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the properties of the four major four-word classes in Lohorung, a Kirati Rai Tibeto-Burman language, based on three properties (viz., semantic, morphological, and syntactic). From the perspective of semantic properties, Lohorung nouns encompass prototypical nouns with certain features (viz., durability, complexity, concreteness, compactness, and individuation) and non-prototypical nouns that lack those properties. Syntactically, Lohorung nouns occupy the subject slot, indirect object slot, nominal predicate slot, slot of possession, object complement slot, and locative expression slot. Morphologically, Lohorung nouns are analyzed based on their number system (singular, dual, and plural), classifier (human and non-human), clusivity (inclusive and exclusive), and case role. The markers <-*tsi*> and <-*i*> indicate dual and plural, respectively, whereas singular is unmarked. The markers <-*kɔ*> and <-*tsi*> are non-human singular and plural, and <-*kɔ*> and <-*pa/-paŋ*> are human singular and plural classifiers. Lohorung nouns occupy the agent, experiencer, instrumental, patient, source, goal, recipient, beneficiary, locative, and force case roles. Lohorung adjectives are analyzed in terms of color, size, shape, hardness, roughness, smell, and taste. Syntactically, Lohorung adjectives function as a modifier, predicate of the clause, stative meaning, and verb, and morphologically as nominal and verbal, and it has been developed into a one-to-ten number system. Lohorung verbs exhibit directive verbs. Semantically, verbs encode rapid change in state, condition, or spatial location; nduring states, long-duration and deliberate action; and complex temporally sequenced. Syntactically, Lohorung is a verb-final language, and, morphologically, verbs agree with number, person, clusivity, and pronominalization. But Lohorung is not a rigid language. Thus, Lohorung verbs can occupy any position in a clause. Manner adverbs can be marked by the markers <-*ɔ*> and <-*ŋ*>. Adverbs specify the location of an action and identify a specific point of time, and function as modifying adjectives. This study contributed to the description of the lexicon in Lohorung, based on Givón’s formal and functional approaches.

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Conflict of Interest

It is declared that there are no financial supports, business interests, or personal relationships that can harm the work presented in this paper.

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