4  Nepali expressive morphology

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1  Introduction

Expressives in Nepali constitute a word class with conspicuous and pronounced sound symbolic properties. As parts of speech, expressives exhibit roughly the same syntactic valence as adverbs and predicate adjectives, and they fulfil functions similar to those parts of speech. Nepali expressives are not nonce onomatopoetic formations and are readily comprehensible to other speakers of the language. Expressives are reputed often to be overlooked by lexicographers and neglected by grammarians, though Nepali lexicographers are evidently of a higher calibre in this regard. These parts of speech are an integral part of the grammar and lexicon of the language. Whilst all speakers of Nepali use expressives, some speakers embellish their speech with these parts of speech much more so than others.

All students of linguistics learn that the relationship between form and meaning in language is arbitrary, as taught by Ferdinand de Saussure in Geneva at the beginning of the 20th century, thereby reformulating a strain of thought that had been articulated in various ways since Julius Caesar Scaliger (1540). This view is yet much older and can be traced back to Hermogenes, as he was depicted by Plato in the 5th century bc. However, Plato’s reflections on language were not as one-sided as we find repeated in many a modern linguistic textbook. Whereas Hermogenes espoused the view that the relation between a linguistic form and its meaning was arbitrary, reflecting the result of convention, Plato portrayed the young Cratylos as convinced that a natural and intrinsic relationship obtained between a linguistic form and its meaning.

In this piece, Plato’s teacher Socrates explains that names are forms employed as tools, such as awls and shuttles, to enable our understanding of reality. Using the metaphor of tools, Socrates asserts that by virtue of the speech sounds and syllables of which they are composed, some names are more apt and fitting than others. By adducing etymologies, ranging from false folk etymologies and sound symbolic free associations to morphologically real derivations, Socrates elucidates to the two young men the more complex reality that language exhibits traits of both Cratylos’ semantic naturalism as well as Hermogenes’ conventionalism. Plato’s treatment of the problem of naming culminates in a discussion of the distinction between the name, the named and reality outside of language, concluding with reflections on
the conundrum as to whether constantly changing reality can ever be knowable, and whether language can adequately serve as a lens through which we could ever know reality.

In consonance with these more subtle deliberations, linguists have long made the empirical observation that the relationship between form and meaning is, in fact, not entirely arbitrary, a theme elaborated in 1663 by Johannes Clauberg (1663; cf. Weber 1999; Wunderlin 2017). From 1774, Antoine Court de Gébelin developed the idea that the relationship between specific articulations and certain notions was not arbitrary and that there was a biological basis for the tendency to associate certain sounds with certain notions despite observable linguistic diversity. With regard to the Valeur des Intonations de la Touche Labiale, for example, Court de Gébelin wrote that:

…cette Touche étant la plus aisée à mettre en jeu, est la première dont les enfants fassent usage, & ils s’en servent pour désigner les Étres agréables dont ils sont environnés: ainsi la Nature ne commence à parler en eux que pour faire entendre des sons doux & pour prononcer des choses flatteuses; de-là tous ces mots enfantins, papa, mamma, fanfan, bonbon, bouillie, baiser, poupon, poupée, bobo, bibi, beau, bon, bien, ami, amie, banbin.

(1775: 335)

…La touche labiale, la plus aisée à mettre en jeu, la plus douce, la plus gracieuse, servit à désigner les premiers Étres que l’homme connoit, ceux qui l’environnent & auxquels il doit tout, ceux qu’il aime de préférence; de-là tous ces mots enfantins, papa, maman, fanfan, bonbon, baiser, poupée, beau, bon, bien. On s’est servi également pour désigner la bouche & tous les effets de la bouche, tels que le boire, le manger, le parler, le respirer, & cela dans toutes les Langues, parce que toutes ont été puisées dans la Nature.

(1776: 90–91)

Only two and a half centuries later was Court de Gébelin’s hypothesis that there was a developmental biological basis for the phonaesthetic or sound symbolic values of certain articulations followed up by Morris Michael Lewis (1936) who first made a systematic study of such phenomena.

In the ethnolinguistic handbook of the Himalayas, I noted that:

Onomatopoeic tendencies and idiophones such as ‘cuckoo’ also constitute a deviation from the arbitrary nature of the relationship between meaning and phonological form. Perhaps there are also neurological facts which have not yet been understood which contribute to a probabilistic tendency for proximal deictics in genetically unrelated languages to have high front vowels, for distal deictics to have high back vowels, for words denoting ‘tongue’ to contain a lateral consonant, for words meaning ‘nose’ to contain a nasal segment or feature, for second person pronouns to contain an [n],
for first person pronouns to contain a bilabial nasal [m], or for the names of crustaceans with chitinous exoskeletons to sound ‘crunchy’ by virtue of a voiceless velar /k/.

(van Driem 2001: 153)

Not surprisingly, the computational facilities for data crunching available today have rendered possible quantitative studies, e.g., Blasia et al. (2016), that have now begun to corroborate what has long been a widely appreciated and well-established empirical observation in linguistics. Real breakthroughs will come when the neurological basis comes to be understood for this phenomenon. Recent studies have only just begun to scrape the surface of this inordinately complex domain, e.g., Husain et al. (2006), Theunissen and Elie (2014), Cheung et al. (2016), Manca and Grimaldi (2016).

2 Documenting the Nepali language

According to the 1991 census, just over nine million people, or about half of the population of the kingdom of Nepal, were counted as native speakers of Nepali. Yet, most, although by no means all, of the 18.5 million people tallied in the 1991 census had some command of Nepali as a second language, varying between eloquent fluency to a mere rudimentary working knowledge. In 2017, the population of Nepal was estimated to be about 30 million, including a sizeable number of Nepalis who work and live outside of the country, and proficiency in the language has become more widespread, notwithstanding the language rights that have meanwhile been gained by the country’s many indigenous linguistic minorities. Furthermore, Nepali is the majority language in Darjeeling and Sikkim, and Nepali is spoken in parts of southern Bhutan, by some families in Garhwal and Kumaon and in parts of northeastern India. Outside of Nepal, native speakers of the language have been estimated to number several millions of people. The present study on Nepali expressives is based on traditional spoken usage today amongst native speakers of high caste, i.e., Brahmins or बाहुन bāhun and warrior caste or चेत्री chetṛī, in central Nepal west of the अरुण Arūn.

Literary prose texts written in Nepali first appear in the 17th century. The first extant text written in Nepali according to Pradhān (1984: 25) is a short biography of Rām Śāh, but Kamal Prakāś Malla contested this and reported the earliest authentically datable manuscript in Nepali to be the 1716 translation of an Ayurvedic medical text (1989: 456). In the 18th and 19th centuries, the production of Nepali prose texts reached a crescendo, judging from the manuscripts which have survived. However, Abhi Subedī (1989) reported that only 19 manuscripts in Nepali survive from the period before Pṛthvī Nārāyan Śāh’s conquest of the Kathmandu valley in 1769, comprising medical texts, royal biographies and Hindu religious treatises.

William Kirkpatrick, who visited Nepal in 1793 as a British envoy, collected over 400 “Purbutti” words, on the basis of which he was able to ascertain that:
the Purbutti dialect is evidently a derivative from the Sanscrit, agreeing very closely with the various idioms of Behar, Oude, &c.

(Kirkpatrick 1811: 221)

Hodgson called the language “Khas or Parbattia” (1847). The term खस Khas, sometimes written as खश Khaś, is an ethnonym denoting the Indo-Aryan language community which settled in western Nepal and thence historically spread eastward, whereas the term परवतीय parvatīya denotes “montane, alpine” speech. In 1820, the first to call the language “Népalese” was the British scholar Jason Alexander Ayton in his book *A Grammar of the Népalese Language*, the first ever description of the language, and today a rare and precious collector’s item. Ayton was a lieutenant and an assistant professor of the Arabic and Persian languages at the College of Fort William near Calcutta, where he succumbed to malaria a year before his grammar was published.

It took some time before the British terms “Nepali” and “Nepalese” caught on in Nepal itself, since the term नेपाल भाषा Nepāl bhāsā “Nepal language” applied to Newar. In fact, George Grierson objected vigorously to the use of the term “Nepali” and preferred to call the language only by its original name खस कुरा Khas kurā “language of the Khas”.

The language passes under various names. Europeans call it ‘Nepālī’ or ‘Naipālī’, i.e., the language of Nepal. This is a misnomer, for it is not the language of Nepal, but only that of the Aryan rulers of the country. The inhabitants of Nepal itself give this name (in a slightly corrupted form) to the principal Tibeto-Burman language of the country, Newari, and call the Indo-Aryan language ‘Khas-kura,’ or ‘Khaša-speech.’

(Grierson 1916, ix (iv): 18)

The first printed text in Nepali is the 1821 Serampore Bible, probably attributable to William Carey. Of far greater impact was Bhāṇubhakta Ācārya’s 1853 vernacular translation of the Rāmāyaṇa, published in 1887 by Moti Rām Bhaṭṭa in Benaras. The appearance of the Nepali Rāmāyaṇa is conventionally hailed as a watershed in the development of Nepali as a literary language, and Bhāṇubhakta Ācārya is considered to have been the āḍikāvi or Urdichter of the Nepali language. Jaṅg Bahādur Rāṅā brought back a printing press from Europe in 1851 to print government notices, but the printing of Nepali books and periodicals in Nepal itself did not commence until the 1890s, and Benaras was to remain an important centre of printing in Nepali for many years. Sanskrit was increasingly abandoned in favour of the vernacular as the language of writing, as Nepali bloomed as a language of literature in both prose and verse.

Jaṅg Bahādur Rāṅā officially changed the name खस कुरा Khas kurā “language of the Khas” to गोरखा भाषा Gorkhā bhāsā “the language of Gorkha” or just गोरखाली Gorkhālī, by which name the language had already come to be known informally since the Gorkha conquest. The गोरखापत्र Gorkhāpatra, today still Nepal’s official daily paper, was founded by Deva Šamsr Rāṅā, who was
prime minister for four months in 1901. In 1913, the Gorkhā bhāṣā prakāśinī samiti “Gorkha language publishing committee” was established in order to publish books in Nepali as well as to propagate, monitor and censor literature in Nepali. Only in 1905 did Candra Śamśer Rāṇā officially rename the Gorkhāli language as Nepāli and declare Nepali to be the national language and only valid language for litigation. The Gorkhā government was likewise renamed the government of Nepal by Candra Śamśer Rāṇā in the 1920s.

Just as the name of the Nepali language was first coined by foreigners, the first lexicographical study of the language was completed by Ralph Lilley Turner. After studying Indology in Cambridge and Paris and teaching Sanskrit at Queen’s College in Benaras, he joined a battalion of sappers and miners in the Gurkha Rifles in 1916. For several years, he fought alongside Nepali soldiers against the Ottoman Turks in Palestine. After demobilisation in 1920, Turner compiled the Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language, published in London in 1931. He was knighted in 1950, and only after retiring in 1957 as professor of Sanskrit at the University of London, a chair which he had held for two decades, did he compile the many fascicles of the first volume of the Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages, brought out in instalments between 1962 and 1966 (Wright and Cowan 1984).

The most authoritative Nepali dictionary, Nepāli Brhat Šabdakoś, was compiled by Vasudev Tripāṭhi and Vallaḥa Maṇi Dāhāl, with the assistance of Kṛṣṇa Prasād Parājulī and Gopi Kṛṣṇa Sarma and under the direction of Bālkṛṣṇa Pokhrel. The dictionary was published in Kathmandu in VS 2040 (i.e., AD 1983–84) by the Royal Nepal Academy or नेपाल राजकीय प्रजा-प्रतिष्ठान Nepal Rājakīya Prajnā-Praṭiṣṭhān. More recent editions of the dictionary have since appeared, which in some cases even neglected to mention the original principal main compilers. Amidst a sea of ephemeral lesser attempts, the excellent English-Nepali and Nepali-English dictionaries by Pradhān and Pradhān (1947, VS 2028) and the splendid English-Nepali dictionary by Bābulāl Pradhān (1988) are now classics. The English-Nepali dictionary edited by Dikṣit (VS 2044) is an erudite and valuable work, and a good and practical English-Nepali dictionary was compiled by Adhiṅkāri (1999). The Nepali-English dictionary compiled by Candar Lāl Simha (1971), teacher at Durbar High School, and first published after his death deserves special mention because it contains some interesting and otherwise undocumented or antiquated Nepali lexical material. The Russian-Nepali dictionary by Korolëv and Kudrjavcev (1975) and the Nepali-Russian dictionary by Rabinović et al. (1968) are outstanding works of lexicography.

Although the language has officially been known as Nepali since 1905, the older terms पर्वतीय parvatiya or पर्वत parvate, खस कुरा Khas kurā and गोरखाली Gorkhāli are still used throughout Nepal, especially by non-native speakers of Nepali to designate the national language, as well as by native speakers of the language outside of Nepal. Kamal Dikṣit (1961) collated an anthology of old Nepali poetry entitled Buigail “attic, garret”, starting from the oldest extant
Nepali expressive morphology

Nepali poem composed by the Newar poet Subānanda. Bālkrṣṇa Pokhrel (1963) wrote a patriotic history of Nepali literature entitled Pāñc Śay Vārṣa, i.e., “five hundred years”, containing an anthology of five centuries of early Nepali prose specimens and texts from 1336 to 1866.

Following the pioneering grammar written by Ayton in 1820, early attempts at describing the grammar of Nepali included Turnbull (1904), Morland-Hughes (1947), Meerendonk (1949) and Gordon (1950), based on the language of Darjeeling and of soldiers in the Gurkha regiments. After Nepal opened its borders in 1951, Nepali became more popular as a language for foreigners to learn. Thomas Welbourne Clark (1963) wrote an exemplary coursebook replete with exercises and grammatical notes. In Moscow, Nikolaj Ivanovič Korolëv (1965) brought out a grammatical sketch in Russian, followed three years later by the most sophisticated synoptic reference grammar of the Nepali language to date, in the form of an appendix to the splendid Nepali-Russian dictionary by Rabinovič, Korolëv and Aleksandrovna (1968).

In sequel to the splendid work by Clark and Korolëv, two coursebooks by Matthews (1984) and Hutt and Subedi (1999) suffered from fundamental drawbacks, which have already been detailed elsewhere (van Driem 2001: 1138–1140). Since my earlier critique, a revamped edition of Hutt and Subedi’s coursebook has appeared, thanks to a new third author named Kṛṣṇa Pradhān (2011). The complete rewriting and reorganisation of the book by Pradhān has rendered the coursebook usable and useful, though still quite far from ideal. Another usable Nepali coursebook was produced by Aryāl (2010). Both a comprehensive reference grammar of the Nepali language and a good Nepali course textbook remain sorely needed desiderata. Meanwhile, a noteworthy collection of grammatical studies was published in Nepali by the Royal Nepal Academy (Sīgdyāl and Bandhu, vs 2045), and a syntactic study of Nepali was written by Pokhrel (2004).

The authoritative orthography of Nepali is based on Tripāṭhi and Dāhāl (vs 2040), and the choice in favour of conventional spelling raises a relevant issue. During a private luncheon with the great sitar maestro at Child’s Hill on the 24th of September 2002, a couple of days after a memorable private sitar concert in London, one of several interesting thoughts which the eminent virtuoso Ravi Shankar shared with me was his perennial amazement at the implicit racial assumptions harboured by many people of the Subcontinent. Although Ravi Shankar had trained a few Occidental musicians to play the sitar outstandingly, some listeners amongst Indian audiences would perceive these maestri as just pretending to play the sitar, since they assumed that a person with a fair complexion and Western physiognomy could not possibly be playing the sitar in a genuine, let alone adept fashion.

In a similar fashion, scholars in the Kathmandu Valley scoffed at Turner’s (1931: 579) excellent proposal that the postposition sāga [sāṇa] “with” be written phonologically as sāṇa [sāṇa], in strict observance of the phonemic reality of the living Nepali language as it is spoken.1 In principle, the Devāṇāgārī script is quite well-equipped to represent Nepali phonologically, but a fully phonemic spelling is not followed in practice. In fact, when some of the orthographic proposals contained in Turner’s dictionary were rejected, a dispute was already ongoing in the Kathmandu Valley about which words should be written with the
letter व and which should be written with ब. The controversy about this intricate issue in Nepali phonology had first broken out in the year \( \text{AD} 1965 \) (\( \text{AD} 1908–1909 \)), with Virendra Kesari Arjyal pitted against Cakra Pani Cûlise, Râm Manî Ádi, Jayapûthvî Bahâdur Simha, Hem Râj Pañdit and Viśva Mañi Dîkṣitâcârâya. The not fully phonemic character of Nepali orthography prompted various publishing houses to formulate their own sets of guidelines, whereby those outlined by Asîm and Pradhân \( \text{AD} 1934–1935 \) came to be viewed as the most authoritative.

Although susceptible to improvements that could render spelling more phonemic or morphophonological, on the whole Nepali orthography represents a sophisticated writing system. Yet, beginning in \( \text{VS} 2034 \) (i.e., \( \text{AD} 1977–1978 \)), a number of spelling controversies again broke out between scholars at Tribhuvan University and the Curriculum Development Centre (पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्र, Pâthyakram Vikâs Kendra). These disputes were only put to rest when वल्लभमणि दाहाल Vallabh Mañi Dâhâl spearheaded the movement that culminated in the compilation of the authoritative dictionary Nepâlî Brhat Šabdakosî in \( \text{VS} 2040 \) (\( \text{AD} 1983–1984 \)). The existence of this authoritative dictionary did not prevent a minor quibble erupting in \( \text{VS} 2057 \) (\( \text{AD} 2000–2001 \)) about whether or not the spelling of the word शहीद sahid “martyr” should perhaps be changed to सहिद sahîd.

In recent years, and in shrill contrast to the linguistically sensible orthographic proposal put forward by Turner in 1931, self-appointed spelling aficionados in Nepal have undertaken to tamper with Nepalese orthography in a staggeringly incompetent fashion. This meddling first began with the entirely valid and already long understood observation that Nepali phonology no longer possesses a phonemic distinction corresponding to the spelling difference observed between the हस्त hrasva vowel symbols र and उ as opposed to the दीर्घ dîrgha vowel signs ठ and ठ, nor does modern Nepalese phonology distinguish between the sibilants represented by three distinct symbols, र, ल, श and स, in Devanâgarî script. Spelling conventions had increasingly become a source of vexation to Nepali pupils, particularly since Maoists had for years systematically disrupted an entire generation of schooling by Nepal’s youth.

During a seminar held at the no longer so royal Nepal Academy between the 10th and 13th of January 2011, a number of academicians headed by Hemâng Râj Adhikâri came up with a medley of suggestions about possible spelling reforms. These ideas inspired a group of busybodies inside the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education (शिक्षा मंत्रालय, Shikṣa Mantrâlaya) to tinker with the Nepali spelling in school textbooks, and on the 27th of March 2012 these self-appointed experts decided to implement the changes that they had devised. After several months, during which these bureaucrats busily botched Nepali spelling, the Minister of Education, Dinânâth Sârmâ, signed this new haphazard orthography into law on the 6th of August 2012. Meanwhile, Adhikâri and his gaggle at the Academy had hastily thrown together the seventh edition of the Nepâlî Brhat Šabdakosî, that was thoroughly polluted by this orthography.

The altered spellings in the new schoolbooks were characterised by such linguistic incompetence and such astonishing ignorance of Nepali orthographic
traditions and of the principles governing Indic writing systems in general that a public outcry ensued. In the Nepalese parliament, representatives Gita Rana, Kanta Bhatarai and Anuradha Thapa accused the charlatan Adhikari of ruining the Nepali language. The linguists Bala Krsna Pokharel, Saraccandra Vasti and Cuda Mani Gautam spoke out publicly in an eloquent manner against the orthographic travesty propagated by Adhikari and his accomplices, and their criticisms were seconded by the scholars at the Department of Nepali at Tribhuvan University. A grass-roots protest movement leapt into action, the most vocal group being the नेपाली भाषा बचाउ समिति Nepali bhāṣā bacāu samiti “Save the Nepali language” committee. A formal investigation was launched into abuse of power by the Ministry of Education.

Four years later, on the 9th of September 2016, in the name of the many aggrieved parties, the journalist Tapendra Bahadur Karki and the solicitor Bhadra Prasad Nepali sued the government for the spoliation of Nepali orthography in school textbooks, taking the Ministry of Education and the Curriculum Development Centre to the Supreme Court. The plaintiffs demanded that the court reverse the decision to change spellings with an order of certiorari, and ultimately they won. The damage inflicted upon Nepali orthography was ordered undone by the Supreme Court on the 19th of September 2016 and again on the 17th of October 2016.

Afterwards, the then Minister of Education waffled about never having read the haphazard reforms that he had enacted so that he could disavow any knowledge of the content of the paperwork which he himself had signed. In consequence of the Supreme Court rulings, the Academy was compelled to issue a directive on the 15th of November 2016, withdrawing all copies of the dictionaries with the mutilated spellings and advising a reversion to the authoritative edition of the Nepali Brhat Sahdakos first prepared by Tripathi and Dahal (VS 2040).

There has always been some natural variation in spelling amongst Nepali literati, and this variation is acknowledged and documented in the authoritative vs 2040 edition of the Nepali Brhat Sahdakos. However, in the wake of the जन आन्दोलन jan andaolan “people’s movement” of vs 2046 (AD 1990), the emergence of an unbridled press gave hordes of semi-literate people the chance to rush their ideas into print without the benefit of copy editing. After the palace massacre in 2001, the rampant proliferation of uneducated orthographies worsened, and a small group of philistines even somehow managed to infiltrate into the otherwise venerable echelons of the Nepal Academy. In the wake of the egregious episode recently perpetrated by this group of infiltrators, their well-spoken opponent Saraccandra Vasti published a new orthographic instruction manual in August 2017, prescribing a return to the lovely traditional spelling.

Amongst genuine literati, some natural variation in spelling will no doubt persist, however, and, as time goes by, orthographic ameliorations of a more sophisticated, linguistically informed and less interventionist nature will no doubt be proposed. Perhaps one day, a few of Turner’s proposals, such as his sensibly phonemic spelling of the postposition सङ्ग saña [s añ] “with”, will come to be reconsidered. Maybe the phonemic principle and the native Devanāgari symbol for the representation of a final velar nasal without a following velar
occlusive will one day in future come to be applied more generally in all such cases in a consistent fashion.

3 Expressives vs. onomatopoeia

Despite their phonaesthetic and sometimes onomatopoeic character, Nepali expressives do not have vague senses, but instead convey precise meanings and evoke highly specific images. Diffloth (1972, 1976, 1979, 1994, 2001) and Ngoraja (2003) have pointed out that expressives in many Austroasiatic languages behave similarly. Despite elements of sound symbolism, expressives represent a phenomenon distinct from ideophones and onomatopoeia. At the same time, a spectrum exists that ranges from onomatopoeia to regular adverbs and predicate expressers. Nepali expressives are different from other parts of speech, of the language. Instead, a mastery of the expressives described here and many more besides would serve as a hallmark of a good command of the language.

Although expressives are pregnant with sound symbolism, expressives should be distinguished from onomatopoeic forms. The Nepali language is richly endowed with onomatopoeia, and onomatopoeic parts of speech that convey acoustic imagery might be nouns or verbs. For example, the word गद्याङ्गुदुः gadyāṅguḍuः “thunder” is a noun, which by its phonetic form evokes the rumble or the crackling roar of thunder.

(1) भदौ महिनामा आकाशमा बदो गद्याङ्गुदुः गर्छ। त्यति बेला खोलमा तीते पूलः।
    bhadau mahinā-mā ākāś-mā badhī gadyāṅguḍuः gar-cha. tyati
    Bhadau month-[loc] sky-[loc] more thunder do-[prs/3s]. that.much
    bela kholā-mā tīte phul-cha
    period.of.time river-[loc] baby.minnows come.to.flower-[prs/3s]

    Especially in the month of Bhadau [i.e., roughly the second half of August and the first half of September], it rumbles with thunder in the sky. At that time, tiny [bitter tasting] minnows come out in the streams.

(2) गद्याङ्गुदुः गर्दे छ। बाहिर नजः।
    gadyāṅguḍuः gar-dai cha bāhira na-jā
    thunder do-[prg] be/[prs/3s] outside [neg]-go

    It’s thundering. Don’t go outside.

The sound of a raging alpine brook in spate during the rainy season is captured by the verb गढ़वाङ्गाधूण gadhvāṅgādhāṇu in the following sentence, a lowly drainage canal is roaring onomatopoeically under similar circumstances.
Nepali onomatopoeic forms can fascinate. A deluge of heavy rain makes the sound दरररररररर [dagdarara] whereas the onomatopoeic form सलललललल ललललललल [salaalaala] conveys the sound of smoothly flowing water, and the gradual flow of a wide river is captured by the form झाााााा [swā].

Although expressives are pregnant with sound symbolism, expressives should be distinguished from onomatopoeic nouns and verbs or onomatopoeic forms that serve as interjections. As parts of speech in their own right, expressives behave differently than onomatopoeia.

First of all, many expressives could not realistically be construed as representing cases of onomatopoeia. Secondly, Nepali prosody is renowned for its pronounced and highly expressive intonational melodies, and expressives differ from onomatopoeia in terms of their cadence. Nepali expressives are often pronounced at a higher pitch than the rest of the sentence in which they are embedded, whereas onomatopoeic forms, such as ठ्ठठ� [bwaââââ] “moo” (of a cow) and थुंथुंथुं [bhutubhutu] “ratatatat” (sound of a sub-machine gun) usually tend to receive the same prosodic intonation as a direct quote. Thirdly, expressives appear to serve syntactic functions that are normally fulfilled by adverbs and by predicate adjectives, though constraints apply, particularly in cases where the syntactic function fulfilled by an expressive approaches that of a predicate adjective. Unlike expressives, however, adverbs and predicate adjectives are not pronounced at an elevated pitch with respect to the rest of the sentence either.

4 Expressives ending in a geminate velar plosive sequence

Many Nepali expressives end in a final phonaesthemic sequence containing a geminate, such as [kkā], [ttā], [mmā], [ppā], [ŋŋa], [nnā] and [nnā]. A number of Nepali expressives are reduplicated or rhyming forms. A smaller and perhaps even more fascinating subset of expressives exhibits neither gemination nor evince reduplication or rhyme. An astonishingly large number of Nepali expressives end in a released geminate voiceless velar plosive [kkā]. First, we shall examine this large group of expressives.

The expressive सुतुक्क suṭukka [suṭukka] denotes an action conducted secretly and furtively without others’ knowledge.
As always, much is lost in translation. For example, the inferential past form *puge-cha* has a mirative quality, and the adverb *po* means contrary to expectation and governs the preceding constituent, i.e., the place name *Dolakha*.

English translations strive to capture the meanings present in the Nepali original, since the lexical and grammatical meanings and their ramifications are not quite rendered visible in the interlinear morpheme gloss, which serves mainly to provide some insight into the syntactic and semantic structure of the original Nepali utterances. As explained in the prolegomena to the Bumthang grammar (van Driem 2015), I reject the so-called “Leipzig glossing rules” and their Platonic essentialist underpinnings as part of a semantically stunted approach to language. Labels used in the interlinear morpheme glosses are explained in the list of abbreviations at the end of this chapter. Glosses of lexical items, of course, are not equivalent in meaning, merely expedient in being somewhat indicative of the meaning of the Nepali word. Nepali orthography is not quite phonological, but comes rather close. Nepali is transliterated in keeping with Indological convention, with minor adaptations, as explained in van Driem (2001: xi–xiii). Therefore, the conventional spelling of Nepali is followed, as provided by Tripāṭhi and Dāhal (vs 2040). For the sake of completeness, a phonetic rendering is also provided between square brackets using the symbols of the International Phonetic Association.

The expressive सुतुक्का *suṭukka* [suṭukka] connotes a clandestine activity.

Rājan got angry because I was secretly whispering plans into Subāś’s ear.

In Silīguḍī, a thief furtively took a 500 rupee bill out of the tourist’s pocket.
(7) भारत भाईले लक्ष्मण दाईको पर्स्वाट दुई सय रुपैयाँ निकाले सुटुक्क गएछ। अनि लक्ष्मण दाईले बाहा पाएर भरतलाई समझानु भयो।

bharat bhāi-le laksmaṇ dāi-ko pars-bāṭa
Bharat younger.brother-[erg] Lakṣmaṇ elder.brother-[gen] wallet-from
duī say rupaiyā nikāl-era suṭukka ga-e-cha.
two hundred rupee remove-[cg] suṭukka go-[ifp]-[3s].
laksmaṇ dāi-le thāhā pā-era bharat-lāī
Lakṣmaṇ elder.brother-[erg] knowledge get-[cg] Bharat-[pat] lāī samjhāu-nu bha-yo explain-[inf1] be-[pfp]

Younger brother Bharat secretly took two hundred rupees from the wallet of elder brother Lakṣmaṇ and then went off. Then, when Lakṣmaṇ found out about this, he taught Bharat about right and wrong.

(8) नवीन र जनक सुटुक्क कोठामा गए जोमसोम जाने योजना बनाएछन्।

navīn ra janak suṭukka kothā-mā ga-era jomsom jā-ne
Navīn and Janak suṭukka room-[loc] go-[cg] Jomsom go-[inf,]
yojanā banā-e-chan plan make-[ifp]-[3p]

Navīn and Janak went into the room without anybody knowing about it and made a plan to go off to Jomsom.

(9) तिनीहरूले आफ्नो तरिकाले सुटुक्क काम गर्नु अनि काम विग्रिएपछि मात्र मलाई खबर गर्दैन।

tinī-harū-le āphno tarikā-le suṭukka kām gar-chan ani kām
they-[p]-[erg] own manner-[erg] suṭukka work do-[3p] and work
bigri-e-pachi mātra ma-lāī khabar gar-chan
spoil-[mp]-[prt3]-after only 1-[pat] news do-[3p]

They work sneakily according to their own way of doing things and then only after they mess things up do they inform me belatedly.

Another expressive which likewise denotes an action conducted in a clandestine manner is खुसुक्क khusukka [kʰusukka]. However, the two expressives सुटुक्क suṭukka and खुसुक्क khusukka have a different flavour. The expressive सुटुक्क suṭukka occurs in the speech of every Nepali speaker and is far more frequent in usage than खुसुक्क khusukka. The form सुटुक्क suṭukka is often used with an activity viewed as illicit, e.g., सुटुक्क भान्न suṭukka bhāgnu “run off secretly, abscond”, सुटुक्क भान्न suṭukka bhānu “say secretly”. The expressive खुसुक्क khusukka has a more favourable connotation as if the furtive action were performed discretely or by sleight of hand. Therefore, in the last example, the form खुसुक्क khusukka would be inappropriate because the lads spoil the work.
The expressive

obvious, thereby essentially stealing a glance.

classification is quite correct, but a focal component of the meaning appears

have a look, without being too obvious, to see what he's up to, that guy.

It appears that Tikā and Pramilā secretly made a plan to abscond from home and
elope after mother and father said that they were not going to let them
get married.

It appears that Sudīp deftly took one thousand rupees from my pocket.

The expressive pulukka [pulukka], according to Kanak Maṇḍi Diṅgsit (2017),
suggests ‘a glance that is simultaneously inquisitive and diffident’. Of course, this
classification is quite correct, but a focal component of the meaning appears
also to be feigned insouciance, so that observations are made without being too
obvious, thereby essentially stealing a glance.

Sukadev got angry with me and went next door. Please go over, Sāgītā, and
have a look, without being too obvious, to see what he's up to, that guy.

George van Driem

(10) खाना खायको ठाउँमा ब्रायनले पैसा लिन मानेन तर मैले बिलको पैसा खुसुक्क उसको खलीमा
हालिदिए ।

khānā khā-eko ṭhāū-mā brāyan-le paisā li-na
food eat-[ipp] place-[loc] Brian-[erg] money take-[inf.]
mān-ena tara maile bil-ko paisā khusukka
agree-[3s/neg/pfp] but I-[erg] bill-[gen] money khusukka
us-ko khalū-mā hāl-i di-ē
he-[gen] pocket-[loc] put-[prt.] give-[1s/pfp]

In the place where we ate [on the way], Brian refused to accept any money,
but I secretly slipped the money for the food bill into his pocket.

(11) टिका र प्रमिला को विवाह गर्न नन्दिने भनेर आमा-बुवाले भनेपछि उनीहरु घरबाट खुसुक्क भामे
बोजना बनाएको रहेधन ।

tīkā ra pramīlā-ko vivāha gar-na na-di-ne bhan-era
Tikā and Pramilā-[gen] marriage do-[inf.] [neg]-give-[inf.] say-[cg]¹⁰
āṁa-buvā- le bhan-e-pachi unī-harū ghar-bāṭa khusukka
mother-father-[erg] say-[prt.-after they-[p] house-from khusukka
bhāg-ne yojanā banā-ekā rah-e-chan
run.away-[inf.] plan make-[ipp] remain-[ifp]-[3p]

It appears that Tikā and Pramilā secretly made a plan to abscond from home and
elope after mother and father said that they were not going to let them
get married.

(12) सुदीपले मेरो खलीमा खुसुक्क एक हजार निकालेछ ।

sudīp-le mero khalū-bāṭa khusukka ek hajār nikāl-e-cha
Sudīp-[erg] my pocket-from khusukka one thousand remove-[ifp]-[3s]

It appears that Sudīp deftly took one thousand rupees from my pocket.

The expressive pulukka [pulukka], according to Kanak Maṇṭi Diṅgsit (2017),
suggests ‘a glance that is simultaneously inquisitive and diffident’. Of course, this
classification is quite correct, but a focal component of the meaning appears
also to be feigned insouciance, so that observations are made without being too
obvious, thereby essentially stealing a glance.

(13) सुकदेव म साँग पैसाएर फल्टी घरमा गएको छ । जानु त संगीते एक चोटी पुलुक्क हेरे आउनु
t त्यसने के गद्दे छ ... त्यो ।

sukadev ma-sāṅg risā-era pallo ghar-tirā ga-eko. jā-nu
Sukadev I-with get.angry-[cg] next door house-to go-[ipp]. go-[inf.]
ta sāṅgitē ek coṭī pulukka her-era āu-nu ta tyas-le
[top] Sāṅgītā one time pulukka look-[cg] come-[inf.] [top] he-[erg]
ke gar-dai cha ... tyo
what do-[prg] be/3s ... he

Sukadev got angry with me and went next door. Please go over, Sāṅgītā, and
have a look, without being too obvious, to see what he's up to, that guy.
The expressive खुटुकक khutrukka [kʰuṭuṛkkɔ], which conveys the meaning of an action or movement carried out in a light-footed, furtive and stealthy manner.

The expressive sounding but semantically quite distinct form खुटुककै khutrukkaī [kʰuṭuṛkkɔ] which expresses the meaning of an action or movement carried out all at once and all of a sudden. Formally, the form खुटुकक khutrukka must not be confused with the similar sounding but semantically quite distinct form खुटुककै khutrukkaī which expresses the meaning of an action or movement carried out all at once and all of a sudden. Formally, the form खुटुकक khutrukka would appear to be a regular emphatic form of the expressive खुटुकक khutrukka. However, the difference in meaning between the two expressives is now so great that they represent distinct lexical items.

As I was walking down the road, I tripped and fell all at once.

The expressive भुटुकक bhutukka [bʰuṭuṛkkɔ] is used to convey two different feelings, both of which appear somehow to be notionally related in Nepali, namely being stricken with anger and envy and being overwhelmed with a sudden unbearable pain.

Seeing my progress, Hari was green with envy.
72 George van Driem

(17) हिङ्ग्रा हिङ्ग्रे झुठा दुःखमा ठेस लागेग भुतुक्क भए।
hide-roots hide-garden foot-leaf stone-[loc] trip/stumble
be.affected-[cg] bhutukka become-[pfp/1s]

Whilst walking, I stubbed my toe/bumped my foot and it hurt like hell.

Unlike the pair of distinct expressives झुठूक्क khatrukkā and झुठूक्क khatrukka, the form भुतुक्क bhutukkā [bʰuṭukkā] is just the regular emphatic form of the expressive झुठूक्क bhutukka [bʰuṭukka]. However, when a speaker says भुतुक्क bhutukkā “I am overwhelmed with an unbearable pain”, the expression remains ambiguous as to whether the suffering is caused by envy or physical pain.

The expressive झुठूक्क jurukka [dʒurukka] conveys the sense of suddenness. Since this expressive most often collocates with the verb उठनु uṭhnu “rise”, the verb often evokes the image of an abrupt rising.

(18) हालो कुरा मन नबेरे शिव झुठूक्क उठे हिङ्ग्रो।
hāmro kura man na-par-era śiva jurukka uth-era
our discussion mind [neg]-fall-[cg] Śiva jurukka get.up-[cg]
hide-yo
walk-[pfp/3s]

Because he didn’t like what we were saying, Śiva abruptly got up and left.

(19) म बिहान झुठूक्क उठने बिलके काममा गए।
ma bijān jurukka uth-ne bittikai kām-mā ga-ē
I morning jurukka get.up-[inf.] whilst work-[loc] go-[pfp/1s]

In the morning, as soon as I got up all of a sudden, I dashed off to work.

(20) अनि साथीले पोन गरेपछि झुठूक्क उठे हतार हतारमा साथीलाई भेटनु गइयो।
anī sāthī-le phon gar-e-pachi jurukka uth-era hatār
and.then friend-[erg] phone do-[prt₂]-after jurukka get.up-[cg] haste
hatār-mā sāthī-lāi bhet-na ga-i-yo
haste-[loc] friend-[pat] meet-[inf₁] go-[mp]-[pfp/1s]

Then, after [his] friend called, he got up all at once and went off to meet the friend in a big hurry.

A similar expressive, ठनक्क thanakka [tʰənakkā], likewise conveys suddenness, but not of rising or getting up, but of standing upright or becoming erect. The expressive typically collocates with the verbs ठनिनु thākīnu “become erect, stand upright” and ठाकुनु thākūnū “make erect”, from which this expressive derives.
In a similar fashion, the expressive ranakka used to refer to a sudden erection. However, in such contexts, the expressive a vertical position as the object weighs more than a droop if the object weighs weighs less than a one is calibrated to assume a horizontal position if the object weighed is equivalent to

In order to understand the utterance, it is helpful to know that the weight indicator named a डाँडी danṭi is a stick attached to a traditional Nepalese scale or tulo, which is calibrated to assume a horizontal position if the object weighed is equivalent to one dhārnī [i.e., twelve पाउ pāu or roughly 2.33 kg], whereas the डाँडी danṭi will droop if the object weighed weighs less than a dhārnī and gradually rises towards a vertical position as the object weighs more than a dhārnī.

Because of its meaning, the expression ठनकका ठाकियो thanakka thankīyo may be used to refer to a sudden erection. However, in such contexts, the expressive रनकका ranakka [ranakka] is more aptly employed with regard to the virile member, as in the following crude utterance.

It turns out that they had slaughtered a goat in the lower house. So, I went to buy some meat. As we were weighing the meat, the weight indicator stood suddenly upright because the portion of meat was heavier than one dhārnī.

In a similar fashion, the expressive तनकका tanakka [tanakka] derives from the verbs तनिनु tankinu “become taut” and तनकानु tankānu “make taut, stretch taut”. The expressive तनकका tanakka conveys the meaning of taut and stretched.

Stretch the sheets taut across the bed and make the bed nicely.

The obvious etymological relationship which obtains between the expressives ठनकका thanakka and तनकका tanakka and the verbs from which they derive is exceptional
amongst Nepali expressives. In the case of तनक्क tanakka, an entire word family shares in the etymological relationship, including items such as तन्ना tannā “sheet”, तनुं tān bunnu “weave” and so forth.

Similarly, the expressive तनक्क tanakka [tanakka] derives from the verb तन्न tankanu “be infected, fester painfully”. The expressive तनक्क tanakka conveys the image of a festering wound throbbing with pain.

(24) खुट्टको घाँउ मूठ भरिए पाकेछ। घाँउ तनक्क टकिए हिंदूने गाईहो भयो मलाई त
khūṭṭāko ghāū-mā pīp bhar-i-era pāk-e-cha. ghāū
leg-[gen] wound-[loc] pus full.up-[mp]-[cg] ripen-[ifp]-[pfp/3s]. wound
tanakka tank-i-era hīd-nai gāhro bha-yo
tanakka fester-[mp]-[cg] walk-[inf2/emph] difficult become-[pfp/3s]
ma-lāī ta
I-[pat] [top]

The wound on my leg appears to be festering and has filled up with pus. Because the festering wound is throbbing so painfully, it has even become hard for me just to walk.

(25) सुकाडेको हाँमा पिलो पाकेछो देखौ टीकाले सुकाडेवलाई पिलो करिको तनक्क टनक्क गाँठ
sukadev-[gen] hāṭ-mā pilo pāk-eko dekh-era ḍīkā-le
sukadev-lāi pilo kati-ko tanakka tanakka gar-cha
Sukadev-[pat] furuncle how.much-[gen] tanakka tanakka do-[prs/3s]
bhan-era sodh-dai thi-yo
say-[cg] ask-[prg/emph] be-[pfp/3s]

Seeing that the furuncle on Sukadev’s hand had come to a head, ḍīkā was asking Sukadev just how much the boil was painfully throbbing.

As in the case of the expressives टनक्क thana, टनक्क tanakka and टनक्क tanakka, an etymological relationship obtains between the expressive फनक्क phanakka [p̪h̪anakka] and the verb फन्कन phankanu and its mediopassive counterpart फन्कन phankinu “be in disagreement with, be dissatisfied and trying to get out of a tight spot”. An example of the use of this verb is in the following utterance.

(26) बैठकमा सबैको सहमति भए गेको निर्णयमा लोक मान मात्र किन फनकि राखिएको छ।
baithak-mā sabai-janā sahamati bha-era gar-eko nirnay-mā lok
meeting-[loc] all-[hum] agreement be-[cg] do-[ipp] decision-[loc] Lok
mān mātra kina phank-i rākh-eko cha
Mān only why be.disgruntled-[prt1] keep-[ipp] be/[prs/3s]

Why is just Lok Mān disgruntled about the decision that was taken at the meeting after everybody had come to be in agreement?
(27) त्यसलाई के भयो । हाम्रो कुग चित बुझेन जस्तो छ । फनकक फनकेक गयो ।

WDSHUVRQZKRGRHVQRWVHHWKHVSHDNHUDQGLVWKHUHIRUHXQDEO

image of making an about-face. The following sentence was uttered on the phone

SKDUNƗXQX

Similar in form but distinct in meaning is the expressive फनकक phanakka [phānākka] is etymologically related to the verbs फन्कनु phankanu and transitive फन्काँनु phankānū “to make a round about something, to go or turn around in a sweeping circular motion”.

(28) यहाँ अगाडिको ट्राफिककले बहापो ट्याक्सीलाई मोडून दिएन । अल्त अगाडिबाट फनकक घूम्नाँ है।

DQGWKHQௐZRUN>ORF@ௐJR>SISV@

The traffic policeman just up ahead did not let our taxi turn [to the right] here. [Turning left...] Let’s just go up ahead a bit and then make a U-turn.

(29) मैले मंदिरलाई फनकक एक फनको लाई बिहानै अति काममा गए।

SDW@ZKDWௐEHFRPH>SISV@

Early in the morning, I circumambulated the temple once and then went to work.

Similar in form but distinct in meaning is the expressive फनकक pharakka [phārākka], etymologically related to the intransitive फरकिनु pharkinu and transitive फरकाँनु pharkānū “turn back, turn around, return”. The form फनकक pharakka evokes the image of making an about-face. The following sentence was uttered on the phone to a person who does not see the speaker and is therefore unable to find him.

(30) तौ जहाँ हिंदो रहेको घर्स त्यहाँबाट फनकक फनकेक आइस भने म भएको ठाउँमा आइ पुग्छ।

PHDVVKH>SDW@ZKDWௐEHFRPH>SISV@

If you make an about-face from the direction in which you are presently walking and then walk back from where you are now, then you will end up at the spot where I am [standing].
Similarly, the expressive सनक्क sanakka [sanakka] is related to both the verb सन्किनु sankinu “be displeased, refuse angrily to do something” and the noun सनक sanak “angry resistance”.

What’s wrong with you, little brother? Can’t you speak softly/slowly? Why have you suddenly become so irate and obstinate? If you are displeased, say what’s on your mind. Rather, let us sit together and talk it through.

Although the expressive सनक्क sanakka collocates readily with the verb to which it is etymologically related, the expressive also leads a life of its own. Unless we are dealing with homophones, the meaning of the expressive सनक्क sanakka is no longer semantically restricted to irate obstinacy. In the context of cleaning, the expressive सनक्क sanakka conveys the sense of removing all dirt from every nook and cranny.

Sweep the courtyard, removing the dirt and dust from every nook and cranny.

The preemptive expressive खुरुक्क khurukka [kʰurukka] “without giving any flak, without putting up a fuss, without protest or excuses” is routinely used by those who wield authority and deal with unruly staff or obstreperous individuals.
The expressive *khurukka* is used not just to preempt protest, but also to preclude the person being addressed trying to get out of doing something by other means. When used in this way, the expressive *khurukka* also conveys the sense of “at once” and “without further delay”. For example, if a servant is asked to fetch a computer from the next house, and he attempts to delegate the task to another orderly or delay doing the task because he wishes to complete another chore first, he might be told:

When I tell you to go to Lakeside, just go without putting up a fuss.

Go at once and just bring the computer yourself without further delay

Another expressive with a highly specific meaning is *capakka* [capakka], which conveys the sense of snuggly or in an all-round embrace.

As soon as elder brother Sureš meets me, he grabs me snuggly in an all-round embrace.
Similar in sound but quite different in meaning is the expressive casakka, which conveys the feeling of being pierced or, for example, receiving an injection for the first time.

When you stick yourself [inadvertantly] with a needle, it hurts with a piercing sensation.

This expressive casakka can be used both for a physical feeling of pain as well as a mentally piercing sensation of anguish, similar to being stuck by a thorn or splinter in an emotional sense.

When I heard the news of the earthquake in Nepal, my mind was chillingly pierced by the idea that perhaps one of my relatives could have been hurt.

The matter seared my mind in a piercing fashion.

What you are telling gives me a piercing feeling of unpleasantness.
The expressive तुप्लुक्का tāplukkā [tāplukkā] gives voice to the same sense as evoked by the English expression “speaking of the devil”. In other words, this form is used when someone makes an appearance at the moment that this person is the topic of discussion. This specific meaning is illustrated by the following Nepali utterances.

(44) सुनिलको कुरा गद्दी गद्दी उ तुप्लुक्का त्याही आइयो।

sunil-ko kurā gar-dā gar-dai u ṭāplukkā tyahī
Sunil-[gen] discussion do-[prg] do-[prg/emph] he ṭāplukkā there/[emph] 
ā-i pug-yo
come-[prt] arrive-[pfp/3s]

Just when we were speaking about Sunil, he showed up by sheer coincidence.

(45) रामलाई हामीसँग चितवन नलोजाने भनेको तर हामी हिङ्दै बेलामा उ तुप्लुक्का आइयो। त्यसैले एकले छोडेक हिङ्दृ मिलेन।

rām-lāi hāmī-śaṅga citvan na-la-i-jā-ne bhaṇ-e ko
Rām-[pat] we-with Citvan [neg]-take.along-[prt]-go-[inf,] say-[ipp]
tara hāmī hīd-ne belā-mā u ṭāplukkā ā-i
but we set.off-[inf,] period.of.time-[loc] he ṭāplukkā come-[prt,]
pug-yo. tyas-āi-le ekła chोd-era hīd-na
arrive-[pfp/3s]. that-[emph]-[erg] alone abandon-[cg] set.off-[inf,]
mil-ena
be.all.right-[neg/pfp/3s]

We had decided that we were not going to take Rām along with us to Citvan, but at the moment that we were about to leave, he showed up by sheer coincidence, and so we could not just leave him by himself.

(46) मेरो विशयमा साथीहरू कुरा काट्दै रेख्नै। त्यति बेले म तुप्लुक्का त्याही पुरुङ्ग। मलाई देखि सबैका ज्याप्रक जुरुक्का उठेसै हिङ्दै।

mero viśya-mā sāthī-harā kurā kāṭ-dai raḥ-e-chan,
my subject-[loc] friend-[p] discussion cut-[prg] remain-[ifp]-[3p].
tyatī belai ma ṭāplukkā tyahā pug-ē.
that.much period.of.time/[emph] I ṭāplukkā there arrive-[pfp/1s].
ma-lāḥ dekh-era sabāi-jānā jaryāk jyrukka uṭh-era
I-[pat] see-[cg] all-[hum] jaryāk jyrukka get.up-[cg]
hīd-e.
walk.off-[pfp/3p]

It turns out that the friends were badmouthing me, and by sheer coincidence I showed up at that very moment. Upon seeing me, they all got up abruptly and walked off.

The last example contains not just an instance of the expressive तुप्लुक्का tāplukkā but also a case of an intensified expressive, whereby जुरुक्का jyrukka is intensified as जयाक jaryāk jyrukka [dārvāk dārakkā], evoking a very visual sense of the awkward image of everybody getting up all at once in great haste.
The expressive पुटुरक्र पुटुक्कা [puṭukκa] evokes the image of emerging or coming up in the fashion of a boil or pimple, as in the following sentences. The second sentence was heard uttered by a native speaker of Nepali in response to televised images.

47) पुटुक्का फोको उठेको।

puṭukka phoko uṭh-ekō
puṭukka blister come.up-[ipp]

A blister came up and formed just like that.

48) मुस्लिमहरूले प्रार्थना गर्दा खेती तिनि रहनुको चाक पुटुक्का उठेको हुन।

muslim-harū-le prārthanā gar-dā kheri tini-harū-ko
Muslim-[p]-[erg] prayer do-[prg] at.the.time.of they-[p]-[gen]
cāk puṭukka uṭh-ekō huncha
back.side puṭukka come.up-[ipp] be/[3s]

When Muslims pray, their rear quarters all pop up.

49) बुढै माथेको पेट पुटुक्का आगडी आएको।

būḍ-e mānche peṭ puṭukka agādi āeko
belly-[adj] person stomach puṭukka forward come-[ipp]

A fat man’s stomach pops out forward like this.

The expressive फुटुक्कै phutukkai [pʰutukkai] evokes the image of ripening fully to the point of bursting.

50) हलुवाबेद रुखमा फुटुक्के पाकेछ।

haluvābed rukh-mā phutukkai pāk-e-cha
persimmon tree-[loc] phutukkai ripen-[ifp]-[3s]

The persimmons ripened on the tree until they were about to burst open.

51) हाम्रो घरको अभावको बोटमा दुई-चार वटा अभावहरू पुटुक्के भए पाको सक्दा पनि कसैले याद गरेकौं। कसैले पनि दोपर खाएन।

hāmro ghar-ko ambā-ko boṭ-mā duːcār-vaṭā ambā-harū
our house-[gen] guava-[gen] tree-[loc] two-four-[nnc] guava-[p]
phutukkai bha-era pāk-i sak-dā pani kas-ai-le
phutukkai become-[cg] ripen-[prt.] finish-[prg] also who-[emph]-[erg]
yād gar-e-na-chan. kas-ai-le pani tip-era
remembrance do-[ifp]-[neg]-[3p]. who-[emph]-[erg] also pluck-[cg]
khā-enan
eat-[neg/pfp/3p]

Even though two to four of the guavas on our guava tree had completed ripening until they were about to burst open, nobody paid them any heed. Nobody picked and ate them.
The expressive टक्क takka [takka] conveys the sense of everything being brought into an orderly and tidy state.

(52) सबै कुरा टक्क मिलाएर राख त बाबु।
sabai kura takka mila-era rakh-a ta bābu
all thing takka arrange-[cg] put-[imp] [top] Bābu

Get everything neatly ordered and tidily arranged now, Bābu11

Both the expressives चटकक caṭakka [caṭakka] and चितिक caṭiṭkā [caṭiṭkā] convey the sense of pretty, groomed or beautified, but they each have a different flavour.

(53) चटकक परे सोलिटनी कता हिंदिको हो।
caṭakka par-era, solīnī, katā hiḍ-eko ho
whither be/[3s] sister-in-law12 caṭakka become-[cg] walk-[ipp]

Where is it that you are off to, sis, all done up and pretty like that?

(54) सुदीप भाई सिक्किम जाने भनेर चटकक परे गयो।
sudīp bhāi sikkim jā-ne bhan-era caṭakka par-era
Sudīp younger.brother Sikkim go-[inf,] say-[cg] caṭakka become-[cg] ga-yo
go-[pf/3s]

Younger brother Sudīp got all spruced up because he was going off to Sikkim.

(55) सुकादेव को जन्ती जाने भनेर अर्जुन चटकक भएर घरबाट हिंदिङ।
sukadev-ko jantī jā-ne bhan-era arjun caṭakka
Sukadev-[gen] marital.procession go-[inf,] say-[cg] Arjun caṭakka bha-era ghar-bāṭa hiḍ-yo
become[cg] house-from set.off-[pf/3s]

In order to take part in Sukadev’s marital procession, Arjun left the house after getting himself all nicely groomed.

(56) दशाको बेलामा नेपालको घरहरू चितिक परेर शृङ्गारित्यन्।
daśāko belā-mā nepāl-ko ghar-harū caṭiṭkā
render-[cg] spruce.up-[mp]-[prs/3s]

During the festival of Daśā, the houses in Nepal get all spruced up.
The expressive बुरुक्क burukka [burukka] or बुरुल्क्क burulukka [burlukka] conveys the image of jumping or bolting in an agitated or overly excited fashion.

Upon seeing the car, the buffalo bolted suddenly in an excited fashion.

Why do you want to bolt off suddenly and go abroad?

By contrast, the expressive पाटक्क पाटक्क [patakk] or, more emphatically, पाटक्क पाटक्क [patakk] “utterly, absolutely, at all” collocates with a negative verb. Though similar in meaning, the two expressives are used quite differently. Moreover, the form पाटक्क [patakk] is transparently an emphatic form of the word पाटक [patak] “time, occasion, turn”. In the case of पाटक्क पाटक्क, the etymological transparency is so clear that treating the form as an expressive is justified only on account of the gemination of the voiceless velar plosive precisely mimicking the most commonly observed final phonological pattern in Nepali expressives.
(62) मलाई चुरोट खाने माछे पटक्के मन पट्र्न।

ma-lāi curoṭ khā-ne māche pāṭakkai man par-dainan
I-[pat] tobacco eat-[inf.] person pāṭakkai mind fall-[neg/prs/3p]

I can’t stand cigarette smokers.

(63) किरनले हामीलाई भनेको कुरा पटक्के मिलेन।

kiran-le hāmī-ḷāi bhan-eko kurā pāṭakkai mil-ena
Kiran-[erg] we-[pat] say-[ipp] matter pāṭakkai be.in.accord-[neg/pfp/3s]

What Kiran told us isn’t true at all.

(64) हिदो आज अशोक पर्नले लगाएको काम पटक्के गर्दैन र।

hījo āja aśoṅk bharat-le lagā-eko kām pāṭakkai
yesterday today Aṣok-[erg] Bharat-[erg] cause.to.do-[ipp] work pāṭakkai

do-[neg/prs/3s] [rsp]

I heard that nowadays Aṣok never does what Bharat tells him to do.

(65) सुकदेवले घर सफा गरेको पटक्के भएन।

sukadev-le ghar saphā gar-eko pāṭakkai bha-ena
Sukadev-[erg] house clean do-[ipp] pāṭakkai become-[neg/pfp/3s]

The way that Sukadev cleaned the house won’t do at all.

The expressive छक्क chakka [cākkha]\(^{13}\) conveys the image of astonishment and is used in collocation with the verb पन्ना parnu “fall” to express amazement. As in the case of the form पटक्के pāṭakkai, the choice to treat this form as an expressive is based on the word exhibiting the most frequent final phonological pattern of expressives, with the gemination of the voiceless velar plosive.

(66) त्यो कुइरेले नेपाली बोलेको सुन्ने त्यस्तो बोलेको कृषि चाक लिए सुनेका।

tyō kuira-le nepālī bol-eko sun-era tyahā bas-ekā
that gora-[erg] Nepali speak-[ipp] hear-[cg] there sit-[ipp/p]
nepālī-ḥari chakka par-era tivas-ko bol-eko kurā cākh
Nepali-[p] chakka fall-[cg] he/she-[erg] speak-[ipp] matter interest
li-era sun-ekā,
take-[cg] sit-[ipp/p]

Those Nepalis were amazed when they heard that gora speaking Nepali and then took an interest in what he was saying and [sat there and] listened to him.

The expressive ढुक्क dhukka [dūkkha] denotes the sense of being free of worry and anxiety and without cares. The first of the two example sentences is a headline, whereas the second, like all the other example sentences, is a spoken utterance.
The days are now gone that criminals can be free of worry thinking that they are outside of Nepal, legislation has been decided that crimes committed abroad will be treated before the law as if they had been committed in Nepal.

Now that Jinán University has sent all the paperwork from Canton (Guángzhōu), my mind is now at peace that Sudip will now get his Chinese [student] visa.

The expressive सर्लक्का [sarlakka] means completely, all at once or all in one go.

As I looked on, the snake swallowed the frog whole in just one gulp

That tradesman completed all my work in one go within a single day
The expressive तसुक्का tusukka [tusukka] conveys the image of sitting jauntily on one’s haunches in the Nepali style, i.e., with both feet flat on the ground.

(71) चरिकोट आउनको लागि गाडी खुराउन बसेको । कुर्दा कुर्दा गाडी नआए म त्यहाँ बाटोको हिलमा दुसुक्का बसेको मात्रे थिएँ गाडी आई हाल्यो । अनि गाडीमा चढने म चरिकोटितिर लागेँ।
carikoṭ āu-na-ko lāgi gāḍī kur-erā bas-eko Carīkoṭ come-[inf.]-[gen] for vehicle wait.for-[cg] sit-[ipp].
kur-dā kur-dā gāḍī na-ā-era ma wait.for-[prg] wait.for-[prg]. vehicle [neg]-come-[cg] I
tyahī bāṭo-ko dīl-mā āsu isukka bas-eko matrai there/[emph] road-[gen] roadside-[loc] tusukka sit-[ipp] only
thī-ē gāḍī ā-i hāl-yo. ani be-[fp/1s]. vehicle come-[prt.] complete-[fp/3s] and then
gāḍī-mā caṭh-era ma carīkoṭ-tīra lāg-ē.
vehicle-[loc] chimb-[cg] I Carīkoṭ toward set.off-[fp/1s]

I was waiting for the bus in order to come to Carīkoṭ. As the bus hadn’t come even though I had been waiting for so long, I just sat down on my haunches at the roadsides, and just as I had sat down, the vehicle showed up, and then I got in and began to head towards Carīkoṭ.

The expressive सुलुक्का sulukka conjures up the image of swallowing whole without chewing.

(72) सर्पले भ्यागुटोलाई हेडाहेडको सुलुक्का निल्यो।
swallow-[fp/3s]

As I looked on, the snake swallowed the frog whole.

The expressive पिलिक्का pilikka [pilikka] evokes the image of flashing lightning. An iterative form पलाक पिलिक्का palāk pilikka [palakpilikka]. This expressive form can collocate with the verb गर्नु garnu “do”. Whether this expressive in such collocations serves as a nominal complement or an adverbial modifier is moot. In any event, पिलिक्का pilikka and पलाक पिलिक्का palāk pilikka [palakpilikka] are not the only expressions that can occur as complements of the verb गर्नु garnu “do”.

(73) पिलिक्का गरेको चढाड पन्नो।
pilikka gar-era catyāṅg par-yo pilikka do-[cg] thunderbolt fall-[fp/3s]

It flashed and lightning struck.
86 George van Driem

(74) आकाशमा बिजुली चम्को छ पलाक पिलिकक मर्चो बेलामा छट्याड हाम्छ।
ākāś-mā bijulī chamki-nadai cha. palāk pilikka gar-eko
sky-[loc] lightningflash-[prg] be-[prs/3s] palāk pilikka do-[ipp]
belā-mā catyāng hān-cha
period.of.time-[loc] thunderbolt strike-[prs/3s]

Lightning is flashing in the sky. When it is flashing and flickering like that, a bolt of lightning will strike.

The above list of Nepali expressives ending in the sequence [kkə] is probably not complete. However, this subset of Nepali expressives accounts for about half of the forms in the present study. The preponderance of these forms and the etymological transparency of forms such as टनकक thanakka, टनकक tanakka, टनकक tanakka and फनकक phanakka suggest that the formation of expressives in [kkə] may be akin to a productive morphological process. However, the form मक्कha makkha [makkʰə], which conveys the image of being smugly satisfied, differs from all of the hitherto adduced expressive forms in ending in the sequence [kkʰə].

(75) के हो महेश । खुब मक्क परे बसेका छौ । के भ्यो ट्यास्टो ।
ke ho mahēs. khub makkha par-era bas-ekā chau.
what be-[prs/3s] Mahesh pretty makkha fall-[cg] sit-[ipp/p] be-[prs/2p]
ke bha-yo tyasto
what be-[pf/p/3s] like.that

What gives, Mahesh? You’re sitting there looking quite smugly satisfied about something. What happened to make you feel like that.

5 Expressives ending in a geminate retroflex plosive sequence

The following sets of expressives is a smaller set ending in the geminate sequence [ttə]. The expressive फाटपुट्ट pāṭaphutta [pʰattʰə pʰuttʰə] means “à l’improvisi, in a makeshift fashion”.

(76) फाटपुट्ट सबैले ऑंग्रेजी बोल्छन् ।
pāṭaphutta sabai-le āŋgreji bol-chann
pāṭaphutta all-[erg] English speak-[3p/prs]

In a makeshift fashion, everybody can make do in English

(77) मलाई त्यो काम गर् त्यति राशि आउँदेन तर फाटपुट्ट काम चलाउन सक्छ।
ma-lāi tyo kām gar-na tyāti āū-daina tara
1-[pat] that work do-[inf₂] that.much come-[neg/prs/3s] but
pāṭaphutta kām calāu-na sak-chu
pāṭaphutta work cause.to.move-[inf₂] can-[prs/1s]

I don’t know that well how to go about doing that work, but I can try to improvise.
The expressive स्वाभि [svāṭṭa] means “unexpectedly, all of a sudden”, whereas the expressive च्वाभि [tvāṭṭa] means “in one fell swoop, in twain, asunder”.

(78) रामले बाटोमा गाडी आउँदा व्हाडो बाटो काठ्यो।
राखौ बाटो-मा गाडी आउँदा व्हाडो बाटो काठ्यो।

As cars just kept on coming, Rām suddenly crossed the road.

(79) सन्तोष भाट नसोधीकन व्हाडो कोटाधिपत्त आए किताब लिए गयो।
सन्तोष भाट् नसोधीकन व्हाडो कोटाधिपत्त आए किताब लिए गयो।

Without asking, younger brother Santoso suddenly went into the room, took the book and went off.

(80) अज बिहान चारानी काठ्य तले मेहो व्हाडो काठ्यो।
अज बिहान चारानी काठ्य तले मेहो व्हाडो काठ्यो।

This morning, whilst cutting the vegetables, I suddenly cut my hand.

(81) दशाइ मार हानव बोकाको ग्रहण एके पक्कमा च्वाभि खिनाउनु पर्छ नभए दृष्टान्त हुनेछ।
दशाइ मार हानव बोकाको ग्रहण एके पक्कमा च्वाभि खिनाउनु पर्छ नभए दृष्टान्त हुनेछ।

Whilst celebrating the slaughtering festival of DaśaI, one must sever the neck of the goat with one fell swoop [so that the goat suffers no pain], otherwise it will bring misfortune.

(82) राम पिंड खेळ्दै खेळ्दै पिंडको दोरी च्वाभि छिन्ने उसको दूर्घटना भयो।
राम पिंड खेळ्दै खेळ्दै पिंडको दोरी च्वाभि छिन्ने उसको दूर्घटना भयो।

Whilst playing on the large festival swing, the rope snapped in two and he suffered an accident.
George van Driem

The expressive झवाट् jhvāṭa [dhwat[s] is similar in meaning to the expressive चवाट्च cvāṭa [twat[ts], but the image of the action depicted is more violent or as unfolding with a jolt, evoking the impression of greater force.

In order to straighten a tree, [we] had tied a rope to the tree and were pulling it straight. The rope had become rotten, however. Just at the moment that the tree was about to be straight, the rope snapped in two. The tree fell back down, and the guys all landed in the other direction.

The buffalo snapped the tether in two and ran off.

When chopping down a tree, at precisely the moment that the tree begins to fall, exert force with a sudden burst of strength and pull the tree towards yourself.

rukh sūdhā banāu-na bhan-era rukh-mā ḍorī bādh-era tān-eko.

robe straight make-[inf.] say-[cg] tree-[loc] rope tie-[cg] pull-[ipp].

rukh ṭalā kheri ḍorī cvāṭa cuḍi-yo. rukh ṭalā be.on.the.verge.of-[prg] whilst rope cvāṭa snap-[pfps] tree down gayo. mānche para pug-yo. go-[pfps]. person over.there arrive-[pfps]

rukh kāṭ-dā kheri jati belā rukh ḍhal-cha
tree cut-[prg] whilst just.as.much period.of.time tree fall.over-[prs] tree cut-[inf.]

when chopping down a tree, at precisely the moment that the tree begins to fall, exert force with a sudden burst of strength and pull the tree towards yourself.

rukh kāṭ-dā kheri jati belā rukh ḍhal-cha
tree cut-[inf.]

when chopping down a tree, at precisely the moment that the tree begins to fall, exert force with a sudden burst of strength and pull the tree towards yourself.

rukh kāṭ-dā kheri jati belā rukh ḍhal-cha
tree cut-[inf.]

when chopping down a tree, at precisely the moment that the tree begins to fall, exert force with a sudden burst of strength and pull the tree towards yourself.

rukh kāṭ-dā kheri jati belā rukh ḍhal-cha
tree cut-[inf.]

when chopping down a tree, at precisely the moment that the tree begins to fall, exert force with a sudden burst of strength and pull the tree towards yourself.
(87) आफे झ्याट छिन्नो।

āphai jhvāṭṭa chin-yo
self/emph jhvāṭṭa snap[pfp/3s]

It snapped in two by itself with great force.

The expressive प्रयात्त phyaṭṭa [pwhyattaa] evokes the image of finishing up an activity briskly and without assiduity. In the context of striking something with a projectile, the expressive प्रयात्त phyaṭṭa represents the action was done with effect but in a casual manner without the person being confident that he would actually strike the target.

(88) मलाई अलि हतार छ। मेरो कामचाहि पहिला प्रयात्त सकाए आउँछ। अनि बसरे कुना गरीला है।

ma-lāē ali hatār cha. ma mero kām-cāhi pahlā phyaṭṭa
I-[pat] a.bit hurry be[prs/3s]. I my work-[ind] first phyaṭṭa
sakā-era āu-chu. ani bas-era kurā gar-āulā
finish.up-[cg] come-[prs/1s]. and.then sit-[cg] discussion do-[pos/1p]
hai hey

I am in a bit of a hurry. I shall finish up my work first and then come. Then we’ll sit down together and talk the matter through, all right.

(89) संदीपले गुलेलीले प्रयात्त हानेर रुखमा भएको झुकालाई पुहुँँमा झारिदियो।

sandīp-le guleō-le phyaṭṭa hān-era rukh-mā bha-e ko
ḍhukur-lāē bhuṅ-mā jhār-i di-yo
pigeon-[pat] ground-[loc] cause.to.fall-[prt1] give[pfp/3s]

Sandīp fired his catapult in an offhand manner and caused the pigeon in the tree to drop down to the ground.

(90) रोहितले मलाई फोन गरेर तिमीहरु एके छिन पहिछिद गर। मेरो बाटोमा अलिकति काम छ।

rohit-le ma-lāē phon gar-era timi-harū ekai chin
Rohit-[erg] I-[pat] phone do-[cg] you-[p] one/emph moment
parkhi-ndai gar-a. mero bāto-mā alikati kām
wait-[prg/emph] do-[imp]. my way-[loc] a.little.bit work
cha. tyas-lāē phyaṭṭa sakā-era āi hāl-chu
be[prs/3s]. that-[pat] phyaṭṭa finish,up-[cg] come-[prt1] insert-[prs/1s]
bhan-e ko cha
say-[ipp] be[prs/3s]

Rohit rang me up and said that we should just keep waiting for one more second. He said, “I have some work to get done on the way. I shall just finish that up in a jiffy and then I’ll be right there”.

Nepali expressive morphology 89
6 Expressives ending in a geminate dental plosive sequence

In sequel to the expressives ending in the sequences [kkə] and [ttə], we shall now examine expressives ending in the voiceless dental geminate sequence [tt̪ə]. The first expressive to be discussed in this set is the form लूटा (lutta [luttə]), which renders vivid the image of entering an orifice or passage. Speakers report that this expressive also conveys the notion of concealment or concealed activity.

(91) पर बाट बिरालोले गुसालाई लखट्दै आएको धिङ्गो मुसा लूट ज्याल्ला छियो। बिरालो हेको हेय भयो।
para-bāta birālo-le musā-lāī lakḥat-dai ā-eko
be-[pfp/3s]. mouse lutta hole-[loc] slip.into-[pfp/3s]. cat her-eko her-ai bha-yo. look-[ipp] look-[emp] become-[pfp/3s]

From over there the cat came chasing after the mouse, and the mouse slipped into the hole. The cat could do nothing but keep looking on in powerless bewilderment.

As the astute reader may have surmised from the semantic description, just provided, the expressive लूटा (lutta [luttə]) is particularly employed in sexual contexts, although this realm of discourse presumably does not constitute a routine topic of conversation for all speakers of the language. The expressive लूटा (lutta [luttə]) has a counterpart फुटा (phutta [phutta]), which serves to render vivid the image of popping out of an orifice or slipping out of a passage.

(92) लूटा छियो... हालयो फुट चाहि निकिङ्गौ बाहिर।
lutta chiryo... hāl-yo, phutta cāhī niski-yo
lutta slip.into-[pfp/3s]... insert-[pfp/3s], phutta [ind] emerge-[pfp/3s]
bāhira outside

It went in just like that... [he] put it in, but it slipped back out just like that.

The expressive फुटा (phutta) is also used vividly to depict the image of hopping, popping or jumping.

(93) क्षरायो फुटा फुटा उफ्रिन्दै बाँचा पुगयो।
kharāyō phutta phutta uphri-ndai bagācā pug-yo.
rabbit phutta phutta jump.up-[prg] garden arrive-[pfp/3s]

The rabbit hopped all the way over to the garden.
All at once he took a big stride forward.\(^{14}\)

All at once the mobile phone slipped from his hand and fell to the ground.

The expressive फुट फड्को मान्यो । phutta phadko mār-yo.
phutta stride kill-[pf/p3s]

Come on and hop in.

Come on and take a jump.

The closely related form सूलुट सुलुटा [sulutta] has a sense quite similar to that of the expressive फुट लट्टा [lutta], but the expressive सूलुट सुलुटा also conveys the sense of slippery.

This morning, when I was eating, the rice got stuck in my throat and then I ate some wet vegetable curry, and the rice went down just like that.

As [I] was trying to catch hold of the fish, it slipped [out of my hands] just like that.
As [I] was eating millet stodge, it slipped down the hatch without my throat even coming to know.

The stodge referred to in the last example is traditionally a cooked black paste made of finely ground finger millet, although sometimes maize flour is used, which results in a stodge reminiscent of polenta. A bit of the black stodge is removed from the mass on the plate with one’s fingers, then moistened in the lentil stew or other wet curry and consumed. The phonetic similarity but semantic distinctness is noteworthy that can be observed between सुलूका sulutta [sulta] and the expressive सुलुकक़ sulukka, discussed previously.

The expressive ख्वाता khvāta [kʰwaṭa] conveys the sense of recklessness and of doing something that should not be done due to a careless or inconsiderate attitude. If there is no explicit agent, as in the case of a sentence with a mediopassive verb, then the image conveyed is of an activity that is out of control.

After the food had been prepared, she just came straight along and stuck her hand recklessly into the food that was meant to be served to the guests.

In the place where [we were] working with the iron stake, whilst [we were] working, the iron stake bounced back up from a stone that it had struck and then dashed into the ground in another spot.16

The expressive ख्वाता khvāta [kʰwaṭa] is typically used in anger when a person has done something wrong or has not done what he or she had promised to do.
You just stuck it in the bag without asking anyone. So, you just stick things in your bag like that, do you?

The following example with the expressive ख्वाता khvāṭta also contains a lot of Kathmandu urban slang.

You really let [us] down. You blew it. You messed things up. You really can't manage to get anything done right.

The expressive फ्याता phyāṭa conveys the action of releasing something unthinkingly.

The other morning, I just dropped the bag that I was carrying and ran off to see the vehicle that had flipped over.

So, where do you think you’re off to, just leaving the wet clothes on the ground like that? Aren’t you supposed to be hanging them out to dry?
7 Expressives ending in a geminate palatal affricate sequence

A couple of expressives ends in the voiceless palatal geminate sequence [ṭṭa]. The expressive प्याच्च pyācca [piṭṭeta] evokes the image of prattling or speaking without thinking, whereas the expressive थ्याच्च thvācca [ṭṭeta] conveys the image of sitting down without looking or thinking. Both expressives occur in a Nepali proverb quoted below.

(107) बोलन पाए भनेर ध्याच्च नबोलनु।
बसन पाए भनेर ध्याच्च नबसनु।
bol-na pā-ē bhan-era pvācca na-bol-nu
sit.down-[inf.] get[pfp/1s] say-[cg] pvācca [neg-speak-[inf.]]

Just because you got the chance to speak, don’t speak without thinking.
Just because you got the chance to take a seat, don’t just sit down unwittingly.

(108) काहिला भाई जुककोर ध्याच्च पीरामा बसौँ कियो।
वास्तवमा पीरामा चाहिए बच्चाले आका गर्नेको कियो।
kāhīla bhāi jukkoer dhyaćcha piērame bāsā ko kīyō.

Fourth-born younger brother just sat on the flat stool without thinking or looking. In fact, a child had done a poo on that flat stool.

(109) अरु मात्रे कुना गर्दै रहेको ठाउँमा कुनाल भाई त्यहाँ पुराए के कुना भएको कियो भने ताइ नभएकन प्याच्च बोलेको।
aru maṭre kuṇā gar-de rāheko thāumā kuṇāl bhāi tyehān pūrae ke kuṇā bhāiko kīyō

When younger brother Kuṇāl arrived at the place where the others had been talking, without having an inkling about what they had been talking about, he just began blurting out his own ideas entirely out of context.

8 Expressives ending in a geminate bilabial plosive sequence

The expressive झयाप्प jharyāppa [ḍ³aɾreppa], ending in the voiceless bilabial geminate sequence [ppa], suggests being squashed or slammed down to the ground. Although the emphatic form झयाप्प jharyāppat [ḍ³aɾreppat] was used in the second of the following two sentences, the fate of the victim in the second case was bright.
During the time of the earthquake, one elderly man was crushed [to death in an instant] by a house that caved in on top of him.

At the time that the earthquake struck, one young nephew was suddenly captured underneath a house, and then we got together and managed to rescue and extricate him alive.

The expressive झ्याप्ता jhyāpta [झे्चप्पा] suggests sudden or abrupt action.17

As we were returning home, our car was careening along, and then a dog shot out in front of our vehicle, and elder brother Lok Bahadur then suddenly slammed on the brakes.

[He] suddenly snatched the chicken that was on the run.
The expressive क्वाप्प क्वाप्प kvāppa kvāppa [kwappa kwappa] conjures up the image of eating in small round mouthfuls by munching one mouthful after the other. The similarity in meaning and form to the Dutch hapje “mouthful” is striking. Possible implications of the meaning can either entail that one is eating by oneself in a sequestered fashion, one mouthful after the other, as in the last two examples.

(114) सबैजना भोकाएका मानेको छेउमा बसेर एकले क्वाप्प क्वाप्प खान तरलाई अन्नवारो लागेन।

Don’t you even feel a little uneasy munching blithely away sitting in front of all these hungry people?

(115) लोखर्केले त्यहाँ बसेर क्वाप्प क्वाप्प खाइदे छ।

The squirrel is sitting over there, munching away one mouthful after the other.

(116) उसिने राखेको आलु नु प्यासाँगी सांग क्वाप्प क्वाप्प खाइनौ।

Boiled potatoes with salt and chillies go right in by the mouthful.

(117) म खाना खाइदे गरिको बेलामा बजार गइहालु पने काम परेर मैले भात क्वाप्प क्वाप्प खाएर गइ हाल्न।

Whilst I was busy eating, the need arose to go run an errand in the market, and so I ate my rice one mouthful after the other and then headed off promptly [to the market].
The expressive ख्रव्प्पा khvāppa [khwappā] conveys the image of a piercing or jabbing action.

(118) त्यो गल्लीमा कुनै मान्छेल ख्रव्प्पा छुरिले हानेर भाग्यो।

tyo gallī-mā kunai mānche-le khvāppa churī-le hān-era

that alleyway-[loc] some person-[erg] khvāppa knife-[erg] strike-[cg]

bhāg-yo run.away-[pfp/3s]

Down in that alleyway, some guy stabbed someone with a knife and then ran off.

Up to this point, we have discussed the large set of expressives ending in the geminate sequence [kk], and the four sets of forms ending in the retroflex geminate sequence [ṭṭ], the dental geminate sequence [ṭṭ], including a single form ending in [ṭṭ], the palatal geminate sequence [ṭṭa] and the bilabial geminate sequence [pp]. Some of the following expressives evince geminate nasal sequences at the end of the word, but the remaining expressives demonstrate that this part of speech is characterised by phonetic diversity.

9 Expressives ending in a geminate liquid or rhotic sequence

The expressive ख्रलुल्ला khululla [kʰululla] evokes the image of running liquid.

(119) बर्खामा कुलो भरि पानी ख्रलुल्ला बगेर आउँछ।

barkhā-mā kulo bhar-i pānī khululla bag-era

rainy.season-[loc] drainage.canal fill-[prt.] water khululla flow-[cg]

āū-cha come-[prs/3s]

During the rainy season, water just comes guzzling down the drainage canals.

The expressive छतालुल्ला chatāchulla [kʰatāchulla] evokes the image of spilt liquid.

(120) धरमा केटाकेटैले कोहि कोहि बेला ख्रममा पानी छतालुल्ला पोखेका हुन्छ।

ghar-mā kētāketi-le kohi kohi belā khrām-mā pānī chatāchulla pokh-ekā hun-chan

house-[loc] children-[erg] some some period.of.time play-[inf.]

kram-mā pānī chatāchulla pokh-ekā hun-chan
case-[loc] water chatāchulla spill-[ipp/p] be-[prs/3p]

Sometimes when children are playing at home, they will be spilling water left and right all over the place.
The expressive छताड़ुल्ल chatāchulla, which conveys the image of spilt liquids, the expressive हवार्रा hvārra [ʰwarra] conveys the notion of spilt particulate matter.

(122) गाउँ छेत्रबाट धानको भारी बोकेर घर आउँदै बिएँ। बाटोमा मेसो धानको भारी कुटेर धान जति सबै बाटोमा हवार्रा धमाको।

ma khet-bāta dhān-ko bhārī bok-era ghara āŭ-dai
I rice.field-from paddy-[gen] burden carry-[cg] home come-[prg] thi-ē. bāto-mā mero dhān-ko bhārī phut-era
be-[pfp/1s]. road-[loc] paddy-[gen] burden burst-[cg] dhān jāti sabai bāto-mā hvārra pokh-i-yo
paddy as.much.as all road-[loc] hvārra spill-[mp]-[pfp/3s]

I was coming home carrying a burden of paddy from the rice field. My burden of paddy burst on the way, and just about all of the paddy was spilt onto the ground.

The corresponding emphatic form हवार्रई hvārrai [ʰwarrai] is attested as an expressive used to convey the notion of great speed, as if kicking up and scattering dust on the way whilst whirring past.

(123) बिहान बाटोमा गाडी नै हुडैन र त्यति खेर मेसो गाडी हवार्रई जान।

bihān bāto-mā gādī nai hun-daina ra tyati
morning road-[loc] vehicle themselves be-[neg/prs/3s] and that.much
kēra mero gādī hvārrai jā-ncha
span.of.time my vehicle hvārrai go-[prs/3s]

In the morning there are no vehicles on the road, and my car just goes whizzing along.

10 Expressives ending in a geminate sibilant sequence

The expressive ख्वास्स kvāssa [kʰwassa] evokes the image of putting something into something else in a nonchalant fashion. In the case of donning footwear, the use of this expressive additionally, in most contexts, implies without putting on socks.
(124) ख्वास्स खुट्रा हालने अनि हिडने ।
khvāssa khuṭṭā hāl-ne ani hīd-ne
khvāssa feet insert-[inf₁] and then walk-off-[inf₃]

Just stick your feet into those shoes and get a move on.

(125) जस्को पायो त्यस्को चप्पल दा जुतामा ख्वास्स खुट्रा हालने नगरू ।
jas-ko pā-yo tyas-ko cappal vā juttā-mā khvāssa
whoever-[gen] get-[ppf/3s] he/she-[gen] flip-flop or shoe-[loc] khvāssa
kuṭṭā hāl-ne na-gar-nu
foot insert-[inf₁] [neg]-do-[inf₃]

Don’t just put your feet into whoever’s flip-flops or shoes you happen to find lying about.

(126) तेरो हातमा भएको पानीको बोटल ख्वास्स झोलामा हाले हिड न ।
terō hāt-mā bha-eko pānī-ko botal khvāssa jholā-mā
your hand-[loc] be-[ipp] water-[gen] bottle khvāssa bag-[loc]
hāl-era hīd na. ke dekha-era hīd-chas
insert-[cg] walk [fū]. what show-[cg] walk-[prs/2s]

Just put that water bottle away in your bag and move. What are you doing walking about showing that thing?

(127) के बोकी राख्स्स । त्यो भाँडामा ख्वास्स हाले आइन न ।
ke bok-i rākh-chas. tyo bhāḍā-mā khvāssa hāl-era
what carry-[prt₁] keep-[prs/2s]. that bin-[loc] khvāssa insert-[cg]
aīja na
come [fū]

Why do you keep on carrying that thing? Just throw it in that bin over there and then come on back.

The expressive ठ्वास्स thvāssa [¹wassə] conjures up the image of painfully stubbing one’s toe or bruising oneself.

(128) हिड्रा हिड्दै मेरो अन्तलामा ठ्वास्स ठेस लायो ।
hīd-dā hīd-dai mero amlā-mā thvāssa thēs
walk-[prg] walk-[prg/emph] my digit-[loc] thvāssa stub
lāg-yo
apply-[ppf/3s]

While I was walking, I badly stubbed my toe.

11 Expressives ending in a geminate dental nasal sequence

In addition to the final geminate sequence [ŋ nga], Nepali expressives can end in the geminate nasal sequences [mmına] and [nnña]. The expressive टन्ना tanna [tānnā] conveys the sensation of having eaten so that one is bursting at the seams.
12 Expressives ending in a geminate velar nasal sequence

There are several expressive ending in a geminate velar nasal, some of which appear to evoke semantically similar images. The expressive सिरिन्ना siriṇña [sirinña] is described as depicting the sensation of having cold water poured down one’s back. Not surprisingly, सिरिन्ना siriṇña is used in precisely this context, but this expressive is also used in other contexts where an experience elicits a similar type of shuddering sensation.

(130) mero ḍhāmā chisō pānī par-dā jiu nai siriṇña
mero ḍhāmā ciso pānī par-dā jiu nai siriṇña
my spine-[loc] cold water fall-[prg] body the.very siriṇña
bha-yo
become-[pfp/3s]

When cold water ran down my back, my whole body shuddered.

(131) āja bijān uth-éra bāhira jā-dā sarpa dekh-éra mero
āja bijān uth-éra bāhira jā-dā sarpa dekh-éra mero
today morning get.up-[cg] outside go-[prg] snake see-[cg] my
jiu siriṇña bha-yo
body siriṇña become-[pfp/3s]

When I woke up this morning and, as I went outside, I saw a snake and it gave me the shudders.

(132) pāraqlāidīṅ gār-dā ek-ai coṭi tala ga-éra pherī māthī
pāraqlāidīṅ gar-dā ek-ai coṭi tala ga-éra pherī māthī
paragliding do-[prg] one-[emph] time down go-[cg] again up
jā-dā mero man siriṇña bha-yo
go-[prg] my mind siriṇña become-[pfp/3s]

During paragliding, when swooping down and then coming back up all at once, my mind was all a-shudder.
The expressive तरूण्या turunuña [turunyā] and तराईना taraṇīna [taraṇīṇa] both evoke the image of a sudden fright, but each has its own flavour.

(133) म मनमा कुरा सोचेके बसि राखेको थिए पछाडि बाट प्रशान्त दाइ आए बाघ जस्तो कराउँ भयो अनि म तरूण्या तसिएँ।

\[ ma \text{ } man-mā \text{ } kurā \text{ } soc-erā \text{ } bas-i \text{ } rāk-h-eko \text{ } thi-ē. \]

I mind-[loc] matter think-[cg] sit-[prt.] keep-[ipp] be-[pfp/1s].

Praśānt dāī aera bāgh jasto karāu-nu
Praśānt elder.brother come-[cg] tiger like cry/shout-[inf.]

bha-yo anī ma turunuña tarsi-ē
be-[pfp/3s] and.then I turunuña be.startled-[pfp/1s]

I was quietly sitting there thinking to myself when elder brother Praśānt came along from behind and began growling like a tiger and I was frightfully startled.

(134) सडकमा हिंडि रहेको बेलामा अगाडिबाट चालकको बसमा नभएको बाइक आए मेरो छेँटै बाट जाँदा म तरूण्या तसिएँ।

\[ saḍak-mā \text{ } hīd-i \text{ } rah-eko \text{ } belā-mā \text{ } agāḍi-bāṭa \text{ } street-[loc] \text{ } walk-[prt.] \text{ } remain-[ipp] \text{ } period.of.time-[loc] \text{ } in.front-from \text{ } cālak-ko \text{ } bas-mā \text{ } na-bha-eko \text{ } bāık \text{ } ā-era \text{ } mero \text{ } driver-[gen] \text{ } control-[loc] \text{ } [neg]-be-[ipp] \text{ } motorcycle come-[cg] \text{ } my \text{ } cheu-ai-bāṭa \text{ } jā-dā \text{ } ma \text{ } taraṇīna \text{ } tarsi-ē \text{ } side-[emph]-from \text{ } go-[prg] \text{ } I \text{ } taraṇīna \text{ } be.startled-[pfp/1s] \]

When I was walking on the street, a motorcycle that was manifestly not under the driver’s control came from up ahead and then skirted right past me and I got a terrible fright.

The expressive झसान्या jhasāṇaṇa [dēkṣeṇāṇa] evokes the image of being jolted.

(135) नारायो सप्ना देखेको गहिरो निन्द्राबाट झस्किए झसान्या भए बियङ्घिएँ।

\[ narāmo \text{ } sapnā \text{ } dekh-era \text{ } gahiro \text{ } nindrā-bāṭa \text{ } bad \text{ } dream \text{ } see-[cg] \text{ } deep \text{ } sleep-from \text{ } jhaski-era \text{ } jhasāṇaṇa \text{ } bha-era \text{ } be.startled.out.of.one’s.sleep-[cg] \text{ } jhasāṇaṇa \text{ } be-[cg] \text{ } biyāj-i-ē \text{ } awaken-[mp]-[pfp/1s] \]

I awoke when I was startled awake from my deep sleep upon seeing a bad dream.
102 George van Driem

(136) Sudīp[ko] rohīt bhan-ne sāthī sūnkhāṇī gāū jā-daī friend:second Sūnkhāṇī village go-[prg]
thi-yo anī bāṭo-mā gāḍī palṭi-eko be-[pfp/3s] and.then road-[loc] vehicle flip.over-[ipp]
khābar sun-era tyo sāthī par-yo ki bhan-era news hear-[cg] that friend fall-[pfp/3s] whether say-[cg]
sudīp jhāsānīna bha-yo Sudīp’s friend named Rohit was on his way to the village of Sūnkhāṇī and then Sudīp heard the news that a vehicle had flipped over on the [precipitous] road and then Sudīp got a sudden fright, wondering whether his friend might have been a casualty of the accident.

The expressive ठीना thīnā [ṭīṇa] evokes the image of standing in the wrong place and obstinately failing to budge.

(137) kāḍāgāhāri-dekhi āu-da hāmro ṭyāksī-łaī dekh-i dekh-i pani Kāḍāgāhāri-from come-[prg] our taxi-[pat] see-[prt.] see-[prt.] also ṭyāksī jā-ne bāṭo-mā thīnā ubhi-era bas-i rah-eko taxi go-[inf.] way-[loc] thīnā stand-[cg] stay-[prt.], remain-[ipp]
thi-yo. kāl khoj-era ā-eko mānche rah-e-cha. be-[pfp/3s]. epoch seek-[cg] come-[ipp] person remain-[ifp]-[3s]

As we were coming from Kāḍāgāhāri, even though he plainly saw our taxi, he just kept on standing there right in the way of where the taxi was coming. He was obviously in a big hurry to meet the Grim Reaper.

The Nepali expressive चप्लान caplān [caplāṇa], which also sometimes occurs in the form चप्लानी caplānīna [caplāṇaṇa], conveys the image of a splash of water and fits into the syntax of a sentence very much as would any regular adverb. Despite its suggestively onomatopoeic character, this form, like other expressives, is pronounced with a raised prosodic intonation.

(138) mero mobāil caplān pānī-mā parera bīgrī-yo my mobile.phone caplān water-[loc] fall-[cg] be.spoilt-[pfp/3s]

My mobile fell into the water with a splash and was ruined.

The Nepali expressive त्वान्ना tvānna [tvānṇa] evokes the image of a resounding thud or smack.
The flower pot had been put on the roof fell and with a terrible thud struck the head of somebody who was walking on the road below.

As the car was rolling along, a stone skipped on the tyre and struck the glass of the window with a big smack, and the window shattered.

Tripāṭhi and Dāhāl (vs 2040: 629) derive the Nepali form दाँन from Persian دانگ “astonished, confounded”. Although this etymology may be entirely correct, part of the nativisation of this loanword is manifest in the fact that Nepali speakers treat the word as if it were a native expressive, pronouncing the word with a geminate velar nasal final sequence as दाँना [dāṇṇa]. This form collocates with the verb प्राण parnu “fall” in the expression दाँना प्राण daṇṇa parnu “be amazed”, and, despite its alien provenance, can now on phonetic grounds be categorised as amongst the set of Nepali expressives ending in [ṇṇa].

Sukadev got a visa for Kuwait. He is absolutely amazed that he got a visa. Now [it remains to be seen whether] he will actually be able to work in Kuwait or not.

The same proviso with regard to the form दाँना [dāṇṇa] might be indulged in the case of the form मक्खा makkha “smugly satisfied”, adduced above. In our opening paragraph, we pointed out that expressives exhibit approximately the
same syntactic valence as adverbs and predicate adjectives. By this formulation, expressives would actually exhibit a more versatile syntactic valence than either adverbs or adjectives. Yet as parts of speech, the syntactic behaviour of expressives is unlike that of adjectives. Expressives cannot be used adnominally, and even their occurrence in syntactic positions that can be occupied by predicate adjectives is restricted.

Whilst expressives often act as the predicate complement of inchoative forms of the verb हुं hunu “to be”, such as a भयो bhayo or भेक bhaē, a collocation such as चसकक्का lāgyo yields unacceptable Nepali, although the verb लाग्नु lāgnu “appear, feel like, seem, appear, make itself felt as” pre-eminently takes predicate adjectives. Whether this is a general grammatical constraint or simply a question of lexical collocation is an issue which remains to be properly investigated. Similarly, the forms दानिना daṇṇa “amazed, astonished” and मक्खा makkha “smugly satisfied”, likewise cannot combine with the verb लाग्नु lāgnu, but collocate uniquely with the verb पर्नु parnu “fall”.

Perhaps the collocation and syntactic behaviour of an expressive has nothing to do with the part of speech that expressives collectively represent, or perhaps there is more than one category of expressive. It may just be that Nepali distinguishes two sets of adjectives, as does Japanese, for example, and that these two sets of Nepali adjectives exhibit different syntactic behaviour. On the other hand, collocation may have more to do with the lexical semantics of the particular form in question. For example, whilst both the expressives छक्का chakka and दानिना daṇṇa combine with the verb पर्नु parnu “fall” to yield collocations expressing amazement, the form अचम्मा acamma “astonishing, unusual” likewise expresses astonishment, but this form does preferentially collocate with the verb लाग्नु lāgnu “appear, feel like, seem, appear, make itself felt as”.

(142) त्यो खबर सुन्दर अचम्मा लाग्नु।
yo khabar sun-dā acamma lāg-cha
that news hear-[prg] astonishing appear-[prs/3s]

Listening to that news, it really strikes you as odd.

(143) त्यो फोटो हेर अचम्मा लाग्नु।
photo her-era acamma lāg-yo
photo look.at-[cg] astonishing appear-[pfp/3s]

Looking at the photo, it really struck me as unusual.

In the case of the forms छक्का chakka and दानिना daṇṇa, the expressive modifies the syntactic constituent denoting the experiencer, i.e., the person who feels the sense of amazement, whereas the form अचम्मा acamma qualifies the matter that is experienced. The difference in collocation would therefore appear to be a natural consequence of a difference in meaning. The precise constraints governing the valence of expressives have therefore yet to be analytically better understood and documented, for multiple factors may be at play. However, with the expressive अचम्मा acamma,
we have already lunged prematurely into the next section, which deals with expressive characterised by a final phonaesthetic bilabial geminate sequence.

13 Expressives ending in a geminate bilabial nasal sequence

The expressive ख्वाम्मा khvāmma [khwamma], ending in a geminate bilabial nasal sequence, conveys the image of burying a sharp implement into a substrate as far as possible.

(144) हामी जंगलाम बन तरुल खजले गएको बेलामा हामी सङ्गी गएको साथी नरेशलाई साँपले टोक्को
भरे म हातमा भएको इलामक मुडमा ख्वाम्मा गाड्दो नरेशलाई हैन गएँ।

hāmī jāgal-mā ban tarul khan-dai gar-eko
we jungle forest tuber dig-[prg/emph] do-[ipp]
belā-mā hāmī sāgai ga-eko sāthī nareś-lāī
period.of.time-[loc] we together go-[ipp] friend nareś-[pat]
sāp-le tok-yo bhan-era ma hāt-mā bha-eko jhyāmpal
snake-[erg] bite-[pfp/3s] say-[cg] I hand-[loc] be-[ipp] iron.rod
bhū-mā khvāmma gād-era nareś-lāī her-na ga-e
ground-[loc] khvāmma bury-[cg] nareś-[pat] look.at-[inf,] go-[pfp/1s]

Whilst we were digging up forest tubers in the jungle, as the friend Nareś who had come along with us had been bitten by a snake, I thrust the iron rod that I was holding in my hands into the ground and went over to tend to Nareś.

(145) गाउँको खेतमा दाई गर्नको लागि खेतको गाउँमा गोरु घुमन मिलने गरी कीलो ख्वाम्मा
गाडिको र गोरुलाई यो कीलोमा बाँधेर गोरु घुमाउँदे दाई गरिएँ।

gāu-gār-ko khet-mā dāīi gara-ko lāgi
village-house-[gen] rice.field-[loc] threshing do-[inf,]-[gen] for
khet-ko gahro-mā goru ghām-na
rice.field-[gen] rice.field.terrace-[loc] bull go.around-[inf,]
mīl-ne gar-i kīlo khvāmma gād-i-ncha ra
be.suitable-[inf,] do-[prt,] stake khvāmma bury-[mp]-[prs/3s] and
goru-lāī tyo kīlo-mā bādh-era goru
bull-[pat] that stake-[loc] tie.up-[cg] bull
ghūmaū-dai dāīi gar-i-ncha
make.go.around-[prg/emph] threshing do-[mp]-[prs/3s]

In the rice fields of our home village, in order to prepare the threshing floor, a stake that is suitable for having the bull walk around in circles is thrust with all our might into the ground of one of the rice field terraces and then the bull is tethered up to that stake and the threshing can commence.

Note the phonetic similarity but semantic distinctness between the expressive ख्वाम्मा khvāmma and the expressive ख्वाप्पा khvāppa, illustrated above.

The expressive इलामक jhāryāmma [jhaɾəməma] evokes the acoustic image of noisily shattering upon impact.
There are various ways of slapping people, and for a native speaker of Nepali there is no mistaking the expressive चड्याम्मा cadyāmma [cədˈjɛmːma], conveying the image of a single forceful slap on the cheek, with the expressive प्ल्याफ phyl phyl [plaɪ phyl], conveying a slap on each cheek delivered in quick succession.
The form प्यान phyāt brings us to another subset of Nepali expressives, reduplicated and rhyming forms. Some, but not all, of the reduplicated expressives come close to onomatopoeia in character.

The expressive प्यान प्यान phyaṭ phyaṭ [pʰyaːt pʰyaːt] conveys the image of activities taking place one after the other in quick succession.

In Locan’s hotel, Rām quickly completed the chores that Locan had given him to do, one after the other, so that Rām quickly returned home.

The expressive भ्यान bhyāt bhyāt [bʰyaːt bʰyaːt] evokes the acoustic image of the rustle of flapping wings.

As the eagle was flying overhead, the swooshing noise of the eagle’s wings flapping could be heard.
Somewhat similar in meaning and form to the expressive कवाप्प कवाप्प kvāppa kvāppa, but lacking the final geminate plosive sequences, the expressive कुपु कुपु kupa kupa [kupa kupa] specifically conjures up the image of eating in tiny mouthfuls and without pause, in the manner of child.

(153) त्यो बच्चाले सबे भात कुपु कुपु खायो।

*tyo baccā-le sabai bhāt kupa kupa khā-yo*

That child ate up all the rice, eating in the manner of a child.

Despite the difference in vocalism, the expressive भत्तभती bhatbhatī [bhatbhati] is related to the noun मुल्कृ भत्तभुट्ट bhutbhute ‘hot glowing embers’, which may occur both as a noun in its own right and as an adjective to modify खारानी kharānī ‘ashes’. In the following example, in which a ritual healer addresses a malevolent spirit which he is driving out of the body of an ailing person.

(154) भुकुमुते खरानीमाह ग्वलिदित्तु तेलाई।

*bhutbhute kharānī-mā āhā di-chu tā-lāi. yo*

glowing embers ashes-[loc] insert-[prt₁] give-[prs/1s]. this

*mañche-ko šarīr chod-era bhāg*

person-[gen] body leave-[eg] run.away

I shall put you into the glowing embers. Leave the body of this person and begone!

The form धमाधाम dhamādhām [dhamadham] evokes the image of activity or work executed quickly, energetically and without unnecessary delay.

(155) मैले भनेको बेलामा आफ्नो काम धमाधाम शुरु गरेको भए पानी पर्न भन्दा अगाडि सिद्धिज्यो।

*maile bhan-eko bela-mā āpno kām dhamādhām l/[erg] say-[ipp] period.of.time-[loc] one’s own work dhamādhām šuru gareko bha-e pāni par-na bhandā agādi*

begin do-[ipp] be-[prt₂] water fall-[inf₃] than before

*sidh-i-nthyo*

finish-[mp]-[con/3s]

If you had started your work diligently and without delay when I told you to do so, then your work would now have been finished before it started to rain.
(156) तल्लो खेतमा धामधाम धान रोने काम चल्दै 

tallo khet-mā dhamādham dhān rop-ne kām 
lower rice field-[loc] dhamādham paddy plant-[inf.3s] work 
cal-dai cha move-[prg/emph] be/[prs/3s]

The planting of rice seedlings is diligently in progress in the lower rice field.

The form पहाट्धा [pʰaṭapʰa] evokes the image of movement conducted quickly, energetically and without unnecessary delay.

(157) हामी दिउसो फटाफट हिंडको भए हामी साँझ नयंदै घर पुण्याँ 

haṃī diisō pahāṭdā ko bha-e haṃī sājhi 
we daytime pahāṭdā walk-[ipp] be-[prt.] we evening twilight 
na-par-dai ghar pug-thyāū [neg]-fall-[prg/emph] home arrive-[con/1p]

If we set off walking energetically and without delay to reach the summit of that mountain across the valley, then it will only take three hours.

The expressive भत्नती bhatbhati evokes the image of intense internal burning.

(158) त्यो पारिको पहाडीको तुप्पो मात्र बैनी तिबी तीन घण्टा मात्र लाग्छ 

tyo pāri-tu pahādi-tu tupp-o mātr bhan-e tīn 
that across the valley-[gen] mountain-[gen] summit-[loc] 
pug-nā-lāī pahāṭdā hūd-ne ho bhan-e tīn 
arrive-[inf.3s]-[pat] pahāṭdā walk-[inf.3s] be/[prs/3s] say-[prt.] two 
ghanā mātrai lāg-cha 
hour only/[emph] take-[prs/3s]

If we set off walking energetically and without delay to reach the summit of that mountain across the valley, then it will only take three hours.

When Krishna’s rivals saw how he was able to distribute relief aid in the village [after the earthquake], they burnt inside with seething envy.

The form ख्याँ ख्याँ gū gū [gwā gwā] conveys the image of uncontrolled sobbing.
उत्सव आपने ट्याक्सी से रत्नपार्क के बाएं सुर्य-बिनायक बांदा खेत्र बांधकर जेब्रा क्रासिडमा बाटटे गोंगो एउटा बालकलाई कोटेशवरो रत्नपार्क के बाद गोंगो सार्वजनिक यातायातको बसले ठककर दिए उसलाई जेब्रा क्रासिडमा गाइते बनाएको देखेर उत्सव आफ्नो मन बान्न नसकेका घटाको भिडाउ स्थापना गए रोगी।

utsav अपनो त्याको लिए रत्नपार्क बाट सूर्य-बिनायक बांदा खेत्र बांधकर जेब्रा क्रासिडमा बाटटे गोंगो एउटा बालकलाई कोटेशवरो रत्नपार्क जाई गोंगो सार्वजनिक यातायातको बसले ठककर दिए उसलाई जेब्रा क्रासिडमा गाइते बनाएको देखेर उत्सव आफ्नो मन बान्न नसकेका घटाको भिडाउ स्थापना गए रोगी।


Utsav took his taxi and whilst he was on his way from Ratna Pārk to Sūrya Bināyak, when he saw that the public transport bus that was on its way from Koteśvara to Ratna Pārk had hit a child that was crossing the road on the Bāneśvara zebra crossing and had rendered the child a casualty on that very zebra crossing, Utsav could not bear the sight of it and broke down sobbing right there inside of his taxi.

(161) पैमा कमाऊँ परदेश गएको छोटोको दूर्घटनाको खबर सुनेर घरमा म्याको बुढी आफ्नो घरमा घरमा दाङो छोटो रोएर बर्षकी छन्।


When the old mother sitting at home heard the news about the accident of her son who had gone abroad to earn money, she let out a wail and then broke down and just sat there sobbing.

The expressive क्षिप्र कि क्षिप्र dyān ki dyān [ʤæŋ ki ʤæŋ] conveys the image of beating or striking.
(162) नील बराही तिर घनश्यामले हरिलाई ड्राइड कि ड्राइड पिटेको मैले पनि देखेँ।

निल बराही-तिरा घनश्याम-ले हरि-लाई ड्राइड कि ड्राइड

I too saw that Ghanaśyām gave Hari a horrible beating near Nīl Barāhī.

(163) ग्याल्पीले ड्राइड कि ड्राइड कोटो कुटिदिएर जाउ न बाघु।

ग्याल्पी-ले ड्राइड कि ड्राइड कोटो कुटिदिएर जाउ न बाघु।

In the case of reduplicated forms, the transition from expressives to onomatopoeia appears to be a gradual one, separated perhaps by no more than a highly fuzzy and fluid border.

However, unlike expressive forms, Nepali onomatopoeic forms tend not necessarily to trigger a pronunciation in a high pitch, and instead exhibit a pattern of intonation characteristic of a direct quote. Moreover, unlike genuine expressives, onomatopoeic forms do not fulful a function that could be described as adverbial. The following examples illustrate the onomatopoeic forms ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
dv_g_ya, dv_r_g_ya, dv_t_ya, dv_gha, dv_ha, dv_r_a, dv_m_ya, dv_danda.

(164) टामाङहरूले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड ड्राइड
tāmāṅ-harū-ले ड्राइड

The Tamangs beat the drum “[ḍaṇḍ ḍaṇḍ]”.

(165) दमाई ट्यान कुटूट्यान कुटूट्यान पासै दमाई बजाउन आएको।
damāi tyān kuṭu tyān kuṭu tyān kuṭu dhyān pār-era
tailor/minstrel.caste tyān kuṭu tyān kuṭu dhyān render-[cg]
damāi bajāu-na ā-eko
tailor.caste.drum play-[inf.] come-[ipp]

The tailor came to play the drum “[ṭen kuṭu ṭen kuṭu ṭaṇṭaṇ]”.

In the case of reduplicated forms, the transition from expressives to onomatopoeia appears to be a gradual one, separated perhaps by no more than a highly fuzzy and fluid border.

However, unlike expressive forms, Nepali onomatopoeic forms tend not necessarily to trigger a pronunciation in a high pitch, and instead exhibit a pattern of intonation characteristic of a direct quote. Moreover, unlike genuine expressives, onomatopoeic forms do not fulful a function that could be described as adverbial. The following examples illustrate the onomatopoeic forms ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड ड्राइड
dv_g_ya, dv_r_g_ya, dv_t_ya, dv_gha, dv_ha, dv_r_a, dv_m_ya, dv_danda.

The Tamangs beat the drum “[ḍaṇḍ ḍaṇḍ]”.

The tailor came to play the drum “[ṭen kuṭu ṭen kuṭu ṭaṇṭaṇ]”.
When making the roof of the balcony next door, as they were hammering the corrugated metal sheet, that “[dʰəŋ dʰəŋ]” noise kept on coming.

Two reduplicated forms निचिष्ठिष sīmsim [simsim] and भूसमुस bhusbhus [bʰusbʰus] convey the image of drizzling rain, each with its own flavour. Some say that भूसमुस bhusbhus evokes more the image of fine drizzle in the air, whereas निचिष्ठिष sīmsim evokes more the image of getting moist, since a perennially moist piece of land also happens to be called a sīmsim sim. Both expressives can be augmented with an adjectival ending to yield the regular adjectives निचिष्ठिषम sīmsime and भूसमुसे पानी bhusbhuse pānī, which are used in the expressions निचिष्ठिषम पानी sīmsime pānī and भूसमुसे पानी bhusbhuse pānī, each of which translates into English as “drizzling rain”. These adjectival forms are perhaps even more frequent in usage, but the following examples show that the plain expressives can be used as such.

It has begun to drizzle.

It is drizzling.

The expressive ग्रूम ग्रूम grūm grūm [grum grum] conveys the notion of munching on something crunchy.

[For today’s midday tiffin] there is nothing but flattened dry rice. Let’s munch on it crunchily. Just chew crunchily. [Your] teeth will be strong.
The expressive गुल्तुङ्ग गुल्तुङ्ग gultun gultun [gultun gultun] suggests the rolling action of a boulder. An etymological relationship obtains with the verb गुल्तान्न gultānu “tumble downhill”, which is used with reference to boulders. Both the expressive and the verb occur in the following sentence.

(170) हाम्रो घर बनाउँदा झुका फुटाउँने ठाँउमा एउटा झुका माथिबाट गुल्तुङ्ग गुल्तुङ्ग गुल्तुङ्ग आए एउटा काकालाई लागाय। अस्पताल लाई गरी प्राथमिक उपचार गरे ठाँउमा मर्नु भयो।


When they were building our house, at the place where they were splitting boulders, one boulder came barrelling down the slope from above and struck one paternal uncle. As they were taking him to hospital, he died at the place where they administer first aid.

Distinct from the reduplicated forms are the expressives that rhyme or show partial reduplication, the latter commonly termed a jingle in some linguistic treatises. The expressive कच्चाकुचक kacyākkuk [kacykkutek] evokes the image of something crumpled up and dented.

(171) महत्त्वपूर्ण कागजपत्र कच्चाकुचक नयापरिक जतन गरे गरेसु परेछ।
mahattvapūrna kāgaj-patra kacyākkuk na-par-ikana jatan important paper-letter kacyākkuk [neg]-render-[pfg] care gar-era rākh-nu par-cha do-[cg] keep-[inf.] must-[prs/3s]

You have to keep important documents with care without wrinkling them.

(172) आज बिहान सधकमा बस र ट्रक दोकिदा बस त पौर कच्चाकुचक भयो।
aija bihān sadak-mā bas ra trak thok-i-nda bas ta today morning street-[loc] bus and lorry collide-[mp]-[prg] bus [top] piṟai kacyākkuk bha-yo completely/[emph] kacyākkuk become-[pfp/3s]

This morning on the highway, when a bus and lorry crashed, the bus got all smashed and crumpled up.
Bring the paper she crumpled up ball of paper.

Similarly, the expressive 

George van Driem

(173) ḡāt-le kāgaj eutaí pokō pār-era mero cithê
hand-[erg] paper one/[nhe/emph] ball render-[cg] my letter
kacyākkucuk pār-in
kacyākkucuk render-[pfp/3s/fem]

Crumping up the paper with her hand, she reduced my letter to a crumpled up ball of paper.

The expressive मयःकुमुःक maryākmuruk [mavēkmuruk] conveys the image of massage conducted by pinching and kneading movements.

(174) hījō suṇḍra daikō jīu ḏukh-erā maṭe suṇṇḍra daikō jīu मयःकुमुःक पारिजय घनिच दियको 

Yesterday Surendra elder-brother-[gen] body ache-[cg] Surendra
daī-ko jīu maryākmuruk pār-di-era thic-i
elder.brother-[gen] body maryākmuruk render-give-[cg] pinch-[pṛt.]
di-eko surendra dāi-lāi alikātī ārām bha-eko
give-[ipp]. Surendra elder.brother-[pat] little.bit relief become-[ipp]
 mahāsas bha-e-cha
awareness become-[ipp]-[3s]

Yesterday, elder brother Surendra’s body was aching, and so I gave him a massage, kneading and pinching gently. Afterwards, he began to experience a sense of relief.

The expressive गुतुः guṭuṭu [guṭuṭu] suggests speed, but also exhibits a somewhat more pronounced onomatopoeic character than is usual in expressives, evoking the sound of the thud thud thud of running feet hitting the ground.

(175) sīgaṭī jā-dai pārēko bās paṭṭiṇḍyō bānēkō suṇṇā tinnēhuk guṭuṭu dāiḍērā bās paṭṭēko ṭāūṃma pūnēko

When they heard that the bus that was on its way to Sīgaṭī had flipped, they ran briskly and reached the spot where the bus had flipped [and gone down below the road].

The expressive फलात phalāṭ phulūṭ [phēḷāṭ phulūṭ] evokes the image of something that has been soaked or cooked to such an extent that it is soft or falling apart.
(176) दासाई मामा घरमा मापु पकाउँदा हाम्रो नै फलातफुलुङ्गा हुने गरी पकाउनु भएको।

dàsāi-mā màma ghar-mà màsu pakhài-dà haddi nai Dasāi-[loc] maternal.uncle house-[loc] meat-cook-[prg] bone the.very
phalāt phulut hu-ne gah-i pakhài-nu bha-e-chha.
phalāt phulut be-[inf₃] do-[prt₃] cook-[inf₃] become-[ifp]-[3s]

At Dasāi, when they were cooking the meat in the household of maternal
uncle, it turns out that they had cooked it [for so long] that even the very
bones had got mushy.

(177) बिहानको पत्रिकाको धेरै गेटमा बिसेर पत्रिकाको पानीले बिद्दौ फलातफुलुङ्गा भएको। आजको

bihān-ko pātrikā bāhira get-mai bīr-eria
morning-[gen] newspaper outside gate-[loc/emph] forget-[cg]
pātrikā pāni-le bījh-eria phalāt phulut
newspaper water-[erg] get.wet-[cg] phalāt phulut
bha-e-chha. āja-ko samācār ke thi-yo
become-[ifp]-[3s]. today-[gen] news what be-[pfp/3s]
bhan-eria padh-nai pā-i-ena
say-[cg] read-[inf₂/emph] get-[mp]-[neg/pfp/3s]

Having forgotten the newspaper this morning outside at the gate, the newspap-
er got totally soaked in the rain till it was reduced to mush. [We]
didn’t even get to read what today’s news was about.

The rhyming expressive ओल्टे कोल्टे olte kolte [olte kolte] conveys the image of
secret whispers at close quarters, with one’s mouth hidden behind the shielding
palm of a hand, or of concealed exchanges behind closed doors.

(178) गणेशलाई आकाशको कुरा गन्ना आकाशको घर परिवारबाट ओल्टे कोल्टे भएको कुरा गन्ना खोजछ

gaṇeṣ-le ākāṣ-ko kūra ghar-dā ākāṣ-ko
Ganēṣ-[erg] Ākāṣ-[gen] discussion do-[prg] Ākāṣ-[gen]
ghar-parivār-bāta olte kolta bhaera kūra ghar-na
house-family-from olte kolte become-[cg] discussion do-[inf₂]
khoj-cha kinabhane gaṃeṣ-le ākāṣ-ko bāre-mā narāmro
seek-[prs/3s] because Gaṇeṣ-[erg] Ākāṣ-[gen] about-[loc] bad
kūra ghar-chha
discussion do-[prs/3s]

When Ganesh talks about Ākāṣ, he tries to talk in a secretive way so as to
keep this from Ākāṣ’s household and family because Ganēṣ badmouths
Ākāṣ.

Tripāthi and Dāhāl (vs 2040: 178) included an entry for ओल्टे कोल्टे olte koltē, which they defined as denoting looking around or turning to and fro, whilst the
meaning described and illustrated here for the actually observed expressive ओल्टे
George van Driem

Kôlê olte kolê might by implication entail looking around to see whether one is being observed.

The rhyming expressive ukus mukus ukus mukus [ukus mukus] conveys the image of being in a stuffy place, not being able to get enough air or experiencing a suffocating sensation.

(179) राती सुरंदा कोठाको इथाल नखिलि सुतेढ़। राती उकसमुकस भए पैरी उठेई इथाल खोलने सुतेढ़ बल्ल ठीक भयो।

raṭī sur-dā kothā-ko jhyāl na-khol-i sut-e-chu.

night sleep-[prg] room-[gen] window [neg]-open-[prt.] sleep-[ifp]-[1s].

raṭī ukus mukus bha-era pheri uth-era jhyāl

night ukus mukus become-[cg] again get.up-[cg] window

khol-era sut-e-pachi balla thīk bha-yo

open-[cg] sleep-[prt.-]after finally all.right become-[pfp/3s]

It turns out that I had gone to sleep at night without opening the window.

When I got a stuffy feeling at night, I got back up and opened the window, and then, when I went back to sleep, it finally felt all right again.

(180) घर जाडो भयो भने पनि म राती सुरंदा सिकले मुख छोपेर कहिल्ये सुन्दरिन्दाकिनभने मलाई सिकले मुख छोपेभने उकसमुकस हुन।

dherai jāḍo bha-yo bhan-e pani ma rāṭī sut-dā

very cold become-[pfp/3s] say-[prt.] also I night sleep-[prg]
sirak-le mukh chop-era kahilyai sut-dinā

quilt-[erg] mouth cover-[cg] when/emph] sleep-[neg/prs/1s]
kina bhane ma-lāi sirak-le mukh chop-yo bha-ukus

because I-[pat] quilt-[erg] mouth cover-[pfp/3s] if ukus mukus hun-cha

mukus be-[prs/3s]

Even if it gets very cold, I never cover my head with the quilt when I sleep because, when I cover my face with the quilt, I get a suffocating feeling.

The following example shows that, for some speakers at least, a feeling of stuffiness and the sensation of being smothered and unable to get enough fresh air can be occasioned by an overly copious meal.

(181) हिन्दी बेलुकी खाना घरे खाए एक छिन त उकस मुकस भयो नि मलाई।

hijo belukī khānā dherai khā-era ek chin ta ukus

yesterday evening food much eat-[cg] one moment [top] ukus mukus bha-yo ni ma-lāi mukus become-[pfp/3s] [iu] I-[pat]

When I ate so much yesterday evening, just for a moment I really got a stuffy feeling.
The expressive sarsarī [sərsarī] conveys the image of skimming a document or going through a piece of writing cursorily.

(182) मैले तपाईंको किताब सरसरी पढौँ। मलाई राखो लागेन।
maile tapāi-ko kitāb sarsarī paḍh-ē. ma-lāī rāmro
lāg-ena
seem-[neg/pfp/3s]

I skimmed through your book, but it didn’t appeal to me.

(183) मैले तिन्द्रा हिसाब सरसरी ह्यौं तर मलाई चिन बुझ्नौं।
maile tindra hisāb sarsarī her-ē tara ma-lāī citta
I-[erg] your accounting sarsarī look-[pfpl]s but I-[pat] sentiment
bujh-ena
arouse-[neg/pfp/3s]

I went over your calculations but I am not satisfied.

The expressive अलपत्र alapatra [alapatra] conveys the image of being in a state of not knowing what to do.

(184) सुकदेव आज काठमाडौँबाट चितवन जाँदैगर्दा बाटोमा उसको पर्स पैसा र मोबाइल सबै हसाए।
अहिले मुलिङ्गमा अलपत्र परेको छ।
sukadev āja kāthmāḍāl-bāṭa citvan jā-daig-ḍā
Sukdev today Kāthmāṇḍū-from Citvan go-[prg/emph]-do-[prg]
bāṭo-mā us-ko pars paisā ra mobāil sabai
road-[loc] he/she-[gen] wallet money and mobile phone all
harā-era ahile mugliṅ-mā alapatra par-eko cha
lose-[cg] now Mugliṅ-[loc] alapatra fall-[ipp] be/[prs/3s]

Today on the way from Kāthmāṇḍū to Citvan, Sukdev lost his wallet, money and mobile phone and is now stuck in Mugliṅ with no idea what to do next.

(185) दलालले दसजना नेपाली विदेश लगेर अलपत्र पारे छाड्नौ।
dalāl-le das-janā nepāli videś lag-era alapatra pār-era
broker-[erg] ten-[hum] Nepāli abroad take-[cg] alapatra render-[cg]
chod-yo.
abandon-[pfpl]

The broker [i.e., human trafficker] took ten Nepalis abroad and rendered them in a state of not knowing what to do next and then abandoned them.
Sunil started our work, then after only having finished half the job he abandoned the work leaving it in a state so that it would be hard to pick up and complete the task.

15 Monosyllabic expressives

Finally, Nepali has expressives that show no final sequence containing a geminate and exhibit neither reduplication nor rhyme. One of this small set of expressives even has a known etymology, as do the expressives  Tanakk, Tanakk, Tanakk,  Phonakka and  Sanakka. Yet the transparency of their etymology somehow does not diminish the sound symbolic qualities and expressive force of the form in question. In origin, the expressive  Tāp is clearly the noun  Tāp “hoof”, which specifically denotes a horse’s hoof as opposed to a bull or cow hoof, which denotes the hoof of a cow, goat or buffalo. The expressive  Tāp evidently derives from the expression  Kasnū Tāp kasnu, whereby the verb  Kasnū kasnu means “to tie up [a knot]” or “to tighten [a belt, rope or cable]”. The expression  Kasnū Tāp kasyo can be translated as “he bolted off”, “he dashed off” or “he absconded”, literally “he tightened up the hoof”.

Let’s strap on our bags and get the hell out of here.

That boy stole our younger brother’s toy and then beat it.

The colloquial expression has, however, given birth to the use of the form  Tāp as an expressive, evoking the image of having vanished without a trace.
The expressive \textit{tāp} can even be used by itself. An alternative shorter answer in the exchange recorded in the last example could also be just the word \textit{tāp}, used on its own.

The expressive \textit{dvā} \textit{[tvā]} evokes the image of staring or gaping at something in sheer puzzlement.
When somebody who had never seen computers before showed up in Carikoṭ and saw people working on computers, he just stared at them gaping. At that point, I explained to the guy, “younger brother, the world has already moved on ahead”.

16 Concluding observations

As parts of speech, Nepali expressives are distinguished from simple adverbs, which in Nepali may have meanings which are not necessarily so simply expressed in English. For example, the adverbial particle पो po in example sentence (4) indicates that the meaning expressed by the preceding syntactic constituent, which the particle पो po governs, is contrary to the expectation of the speaker. Similarly, the adverbial pair क्यारे kyāre and ब्यारे byāre also express subtle meanings. The adverb क्यारे kyāre expresses uncertainty on the part of the speaker, as if the speaker is hedging or expressing a hunch.

I already feel quite bored, staying in Sikkim for so long. I wonder whether I should not just go back to Nepal now.
This uncertainty on the part of the speaker expressed by क्यारे kyāre can even be used in the imperative or in questions. When leaving, it is common to wish the person well who is staying behind, saying राम्रो-सिता बस्नुहोस्‍ rāmro-sita basnuhos “remain well”, but a speaker who is going away for a long time or who has other reasons to harbour some sense of uncertainty might wish the person staying behind well, saying राम्रो-सिता बस्नुहोस्‍ क्यारे rāmro-sita basnuhos kyāre “remain well, I guess”. It is possible to modify a simply question such as क्यारे हि दियो kata hīdyo “where did he go off to?” with this adverb, but the difference between this question and क्यारे हि दियो kata hīdyo kyāre is a subtle one. The speaker is still essentially posing the same question, but the addition of the adverb क्यारे kyāre is a hedge, which shows some reservation on the part of the speaker with regard to any presuppositions which might be implied or could be construed from the very question.

The adverb क्यारे byāre marks a proposition that is contrary to what has already just been maintained or has previously been contended in some other context.

(196) टीकेलाई मेरो नम्बर याद रेहन्छ। मैले सुरुचि दाइलाई मेरो नम्बर दिता खेरि टीकेले होइन भयो। अनि फेरि मैले सुरुचि दाइलाई एही हो ग्यारे मेरो नम्बर भेट दिन्छाँ।
      टिका-पतिले मेरो मार्ग रहेका थाँ। मैले मेरो नम्बर दिता खेरि माले होइन भयो। अनि फेरि मैले मेरो नम्बर दिता खेरि मार्ग रहेका थाँ।
      हिना भान-यो। अनि फेरि मैले मेरो नम्बर दिता खेरि माले होइन भयो। अनि फेरि मैले मेरो नम्बर दिता खेरि मार्ग रहेका थाँ।

Whilst remaining silent on the possible etymology of क्यारे kyāre, Tripāthī and Dāhāl (vs 2040: 989) propose that an etymological relationship obtains between the adverbs क्यारे byāre and the reported speech marker रे re. This hearsay evidential is tagged onto the end of an utterance, including questions and imperatives, indicating that the speaker is relating or repeating a contention or statement made by an unspecified person or persons other than the speaker.19

Expressives are evidently parts of speech distinct from adverbs. Tripāthī and Dāhāl categorise expresses as क्रियाविशेषण kriyāvišeṣan “adverbs” in their dictionary Nepālī Brhat Šabdakoś, noting, however, that these forms have an अनुकरण mūl “mimetic basis” in the Aristotelian sense.20 Nonetheless, some expressives do not have a fixed orthography. The Nepālī Brhat Šabdakoś includes entries for the following 74 forms illustrated in the present study, listed here in the order in which they have been presented in the present study: सुटुक्क suṭukka, खुसुक्क khusukka, पुलुक्क pulukka, खुरुक्क khutrukka, भुटुक्क bhutukka, जुटुक्क
in the present study that are not covered by a lexical entry of their own.

Assembling the expressives in this way reveals that many expressives appear to be a part of speech and a prelude to an analytical semiotic treatment of these parts of speech. In conclusion, after this review of well over seven dozen Nepali expressives, which no doubt represent a mere subset comprising some of the more frequent expressives in the language, it can be observed that expressives constitute a part of speech representing a grammatical category in its own right, distinct from both adverbs and predicate adjectives. Moreover, despite being suffused with sound symbolism, expressives in Nepali constitute a category that is distinct from onomatopoeia. By the same token, expressives can have etymologies, and derivational relationships may obtain between expressives and other parts of speech.

The present study is a first attempt to classify the expressives on the basis of their phonetic traits, and the classificatory approach adopted here is a prerequisite and a prelude to an analytical semiotic treatment of these parts of speech. Assembling the expressives in this way reveals that many expressives appear to be composed of identifiable phonaesthemes. The relationship between the pairs of expressives झया झयाप्पा vs. झयाम झयायम्मा and खम्म प्हवम्मा vs. खम्म प्हवम्मा suggest the psychological reality of particular semiotic values in the minds of Nepali speakers that distinguish the final sequence [pa] from final [ma]. Similarly, the formal and semantic resemblance and distinctness between...
the expressives सुलुटा sulutta and सुलुकक sulukka suggest the existence of definable semiotic values for the final phonaesthetic sequences [ttɑ] and [kkɑ], or more probably perhaps between the final phonaethemes [uʈʈ] and [ukkɑ].

Often a good deal of reflection is required on the part of native speakers before they can capture what elements of meaning are added to an utterance through the presence of a particular expressive and precisely what meaning comes to be lacking when the same utterance is pronounced without that particular expressive, e.g., (88). It is laudable that Vasudev Tripāṭhi and Vallabh Maṇi Dāhāl undertook to incorporate so many expressives in their monumental lexicographical work. Yet dictionary entries seldom contain examples of actual usage. Moreover, the perennial challenge to lexicographers to provide instructive and insightful definitions that are not ultimately circular looms even larger in the case of expressives. It is yet another tribute to these great lexicographers that they provided so many semantically sensitive definitions for a fair number of the expressive entries which they managed to document.

Expressives are observed to be more frequent in colloquial registers of speech than in elevated literary styles, and certain speakers can be observed to make incessant use of them, whereas others use them sparingly. Expressives represent just one facet of the beauty and expressive power of the Nepali language, and they are but one of the multifarious factors which add to the already robust linguistic topography of the Nepali language.21 It is my hope that this study will inspire a more comprehensive semiotic studies of these parts of speech, both in order to document these intriguing and lovely elements in the Nepali language, but also for the light that these parts of speech and their semiotic traits and phonaesthetic characteristics may shed on the relationship between form and meaning and on the nature of language itself.

List of abbreviations

The abbreviations used in the interlinear morpheme glosses are explained in the list below. In the context of the Indian subcontinent, serial verb constructions used to be termed *conjunct verbs* or *compound verbs* (Burton-Page 1957; Hacker 1961), a term for which Bisang (1995) used the contraction *converb*. For semantically similar grammatical categories in Limbu and Dumi (van Driem 1987, 1993), I introduced the term “perfect gerund”, abbreviated [pfG], in view of the phenomenon that serial verb constructions in Limbu, Dumi and, for that matter, Nepali distinguish between a “present gerund” category, abbreviated [prG], denoting a situation coextensive with the situation denoted by the main verb, and a “perfect gerund” category, denoting a situation that is either temporally anterior to the situation denoted by the main verb or depicting a situation that adverbially modifies the situation denoted by the main verb.

Although each grammatical category no doubt has its own precise language-specific meaning and language-specific morphosyntactic ramifications, the latter type of category is principally used in serial verb constructions. In view of its meaning...
and syntactic function, the term “perfect gerund” is therefore arguably more apt than the descriptively less adequate terms “conjunct verb”, “compound verb” and “converb”. In order to emphasise the fundamentally adverbial character of the category and its syntactic role in clause chaining, however, I here introduce the term “concatenative gerund”, abbreviated [cg], for the Nepali category expressed by the suffix < -era >. In spoken language, I have used this term for many years now.

Both in terms of its meaning and its syntactic behaviour, the Nepali progressive participle in < -(n)dā > is the grammatical category most closely analogous to what I termed a “present gerund” [prG] in the context of the Limbu and Dumi grammars in that the category depicts a situation coetaneous with the situation denoted by the main verb. However, this Nepali grammatical form is morphosyntactically more participial in character than what I am here calling the concatenative gerund, and the progressive participle in < -(n)dā > figures in one of the Nepali progressive or continuous tenses. For this reason, I have chosen to use the abbreviation [prg] for the Nepali progressive participle in < -(n)dā > in the interlinear morpheme glosses.

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adj   adjectival ending < -e >
cg    concatenative gerund < -era >
con   conditional conjugation
emph emphatic suffix < -ai ~ -hī >
erg   ergative ending in < -le >, marking agent or instrument
fem   feminine
fu    particle of friendly urging < na >
gen   genitive ending in < -ko >, in literary speech also < -kā > (plural masculine), < -kī > (feminine)
hum   human numeral classifier < -janā >
ifp   stem participial suffix < -e > as ending of the inferential past
imp   imperative in < -a ~ -u >
ind   individuative postposition < -cāhī > “in particular, as for”
inf₁   infinitive in < -nu > (cf. Turner 1921)
inf₂   infinitive in < -na > (cf. Turner 1921)
inf₃   infinitive in < -ne > (cf. Turner 1921)
ipp   imperfective past participle in < -eko >
iu    particle of insistent urging < -ni >
loc   locative morpheme < -mā > “in, on, at”
mp    mediopassive suffix or infix < -i >
neg   negative morpheme
nhc   non-human numeral classifier < -autā ~ -vatā >
opt   optative mood, routinely termed ‘adhortative” in the first person forms
p     plural
pat   patientive form in < -lān >, marking the benefacted, malefacted or affected actant or recipient or the goal of the activity or situation denoted by the verb
pfg   perfective gerund < -ikanā >
pfp   perfective past
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Appendix — Journalism on the Nepali spelling controversy

Key pieces of Nepali journalism covering the orthographic controversy are listed below in chronological order of appearance online. The name or nom de plume of the journalist is cited when available. All online postings are dated except for two, and the undated postings are listed between the entries for 2016 and 2017. My cordial thanks goes to दीपक अर्याल Dipak Aryal of Madan Puruskār Pustakālaya in Lalitpur for making this list of journalistic sources far more complete.

Nepali expressive morphology 125

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प्रकाश लिखित Prákash Silvāl. 2017. हल भयो भाषा विवाद, पात्त्वपुस्तकम भने अको वर्ष माच सुधार गरिएहाले Hal bhayo bhāṣā vivād, pāthyapustak-kā bhane arko varṣa mātra...
sudhār garine (2074 ब्राह्मण १, i.e., 14 April 2017), नेपाल खबर Nepāl Khabar

Notes

1. Turner’s spelling रह saña was adopted by Clark (1963).
2. २०६७ पृष्ठ २६ – २७, i.e. 2067 Pus 26–29.
3. २०६८ घट १४, i.e. 2068 Cait 14.
4. २०६९ सार २२, i.e. 2069 Sāun 22.
5. २०७३ शार २४, i.e. 2073 Bhādra 24.
6. २०७३ असोज ३, i.e. 2073 Asoj 3, and २०७३ कार्तिक १, i.e. 2073 Kārtik 1.
7. २०७३ कार्तिक ३०, i.e. 2073 Kārtik 30.
8. Pieces of journalism documenting these events are listed in the Appendix.
9. For example, the past stem ध्वान bhannu “to be” is glossed as “be”, whereas the inchoative past stem ध्वान bhane, the stem participate in < -e > of the verb ध्वान bhannu “say”, meaning “if”, marks a contingency. Both the postpositions ध्वान bhane, the infinitival form in < -ne > of the verb ध्वान bhannu “say”, and the postposition ध्वान bhani (sometimes written as ध्वान bhani), the stem participate in < -i > of the verb ध्वान bhannu “say”, terminate a subordinate clause or a proposition in the sense of “that” or “namely”. In the latter function, the use of this verb is reminiscent of the antique Dutch usage of the subjunctive form zegge “say” formerly used on bank cheques and negotiable instruments on paper, introducing the precise value denominated in guilders. The postposition ध्वान bhaneko “say”, the imperfective past participle in < -eko >, is used in the sense of “signifying” or “means”, although the form is also used straightforwardly as the imperfective past participle in < -eko > of the verb ध्वान bhannu “say”. Similarly, the form कनाब्हान bhane in “because”, incorporating the stem participate in < -e > of the verb ध्वान bhannu “say”, remains etymologically transparent in meaning literally “if it be asked why”.
10. बाबू Bābu is an affectionate term of address.
11. The terms सोली solī, roughly “brother-in-law”, and सोलिंग solिङ, roughly “sister-in-law”, are borrowed kinship terms, sometimes heard in western Nepal, and do not properly constitute part of Nepali kinship nomenclature, but represent a rival subsystem in Nepali kinship terminology (cf. van Driem 2019).
12. Non-native speakers might like to exercise care in distinguishing this form from the phonemically distinct words छक्का chakkā “poofier” and छक्का cakka [< छक्र cakra] “tyre”.
13. Some speakers can be heard to use the more colloquial expression ठाक मन्न tān mārnu. The iterative or vibrational sense of बजारिन bajārinu is lost in the English translation.
14. Used as a metaphor, the Nepali expression ज्यापल jhyāpal “operate the threshing device” means to work in a speedy and relentless manner.

Nepali expressive morphology 127

The first element in क्याँ Kang. क्याँ “what”, an older form of के ke “what”, but Tripathi and Dähäl identify the first element in यां खाँ as Persian "बाह" bāh. It is not quite clear, however, to which Farsi form they are making reference, e.g. the form ش bāh of the word عاد bādā, “let it be” or "so be it" or the exclamation ش wāh, which, depending on the situation, may translate variously as “fie”, “pshaw” or “bravo”, presumably not the noun ش bāh “sperm, virility”.

Aristotle is known in Indic languages such as Nepali as आरस्तु Arastu (cf. Tripathi and Dähäl vs 2040: 38).

cf. van Driem (2016) for an elucidation of the concept of linguistic topography.

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Nepali expressive morphology


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