

Contrastive analysis of Tamang Phonology: Eastern and Western

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This paper presents the contrastive phonological system of Eastern and Western Tamang, Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Nepal. It employs the data collected from Rasuwa, Dhading and Nuwakot (Western), and Ramechhap and Dolakha (Eastern) districts. Eastern and Western Tamang are mutually unintelligible languages (Varenkamp, 1996); however they share largely similar phonological system. Five contrastive vowels /i, e, a, o, u/ with their length counterpart are found in Eastern Tamang (Mazaudon, 1973b), whereas Western Tamang entertain six contrastive vowel system /e, i, ʌ, a, o, u/ with their length counterpart expect /ʌ, a/. Similarly, thirty consonants are found in Eastern Tamang, but thirty-three consonants exist in Western Tamang. Five different syllable structures are found in both languages. These languages have very similar four tone system such as high, mid, low, high-mid (Mazaudon, 2005). Similar intonation pattern (falling and rising) is existing in both languages. All subsisting consonants can occur in the syllable initial position, ten consonants in the syllable final position, and twenty-three consonants entertain the intervocalic position in Eastern Tamang (Yonjan, 2073), whereas in Western Tamang, the syllable initial position can be occupied by all thirty-three consonants, the medial position by twenty-two consonants, and the final position by ten consonants (WTN Dictionary, 2073).