

# TENSE, ASPECT, MODALITY AND EVIDENTIALITY IN LHOWA

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*This paper analyzes tense, aspect, modality and evidentiality in Lhowa from formal and functional perspective. Lhowa does not always present tense as a clear category of verbs. Mostly tense is deduced in the context. An aspect prominent language, Lhowa roughly exhibits the main distinction between perfective and imperfective aspects. It marks egophoricity constrained by clause types, speech act participants and volitionality of verb classes. Tense-aspect interacts with modality and evidentiality. Lhowa also presents some contact induced patterns in encoding tense-aspect. It employs phonology, morphology, auxiliary verbs, combination of morphology and auxiliary verbs as major devices to encode grammatical categories of verb.*

**Keywords:** Perfective, imperfective, modality, evidentiality, egophoric, volitional

## 1. Introduction

This paper analyzes the tense, aspect, modality and evidentiality in Lhowa [ISO loy] from the formal and functional perspective (cf. Givón, 2001a; 2001b & 2010). Lhowa is one of the members of the Central Bodish (viz., Tibetan) of the Bodish section of the Bodic (viz., Western Tibeto-Burman) branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family (Regmi, 2021). Tournadre (2014, p. 18) refers to Lhowa as Loke and designates it as a member of South-Western Section. This language, alternatively known as Loke (viz., *lo* meaning ‘south’ and *ke* meaning ‘language’), is spoken by one set of northern border ethnicity referred to as Lhowa (viz., *lho* meaning ‘south’ and *wa* meaning ‘resident’) residing along the upper Kali Gandaki River in the upper part of Mustang district in Gandaki Province of Nepal. In 2021 Census, this language has been counted with two different designations, viz., Lhopa and Lowa. As Lhopa, it is spoken as mother tongue by 2348 whereas as Lowa, it is spoken as mother tongue

by 624 (NP0, 2023). Lhowa has been categorized as 6a (Vigorous) in Eppele et al.(2012). Lhowa has somewhat diverged into social or geographical dialects. However, there exists mutual intelligibility among the forms of speech spoken in different points to a great extent (Regmi et al., 2017; Regmi, 2021, p., 16). Lhowa is a tonal language. It has thirty-four consonants and twelve vowels (Regmi and Regmi, 2024). However, Regmi et al.(2023, p.10) notes that the number of consonants in Lhowa amounts to fifty.

This paper has used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data were gleaned from dictionary other previous works. As primary data, this paper has employed both elicited and text corpus data. The elicited data were checked with the text corpus. The data on the grammatical categories of verbs in Lhowa were collected by employing the TMA questionnaire in Dahl (1985, pp.199-206) from Jamyang Gelek Lhowa (from Ghiling), Mr. Tamding Gurung (from Lo Manthang) and Mr. Pema Chhiring Gurung (from Ghiling). They are the native speakers of Lhowa.

This paper is organized into seven sections. Section 2 deals with tense-aspect system in Lhowa. In section 3, we examine the modality system in the language. Section 4 discusses evidentiality whereas in section 5, we deal with contact induced change in tense-aspect system. Section 6 makes a review of devices for encoding the categories of verb in Lhowa. In section 7, we present a conclusion of the paper.

## 2. Tense-aspect

Zeisler (2004), rejecting aspect as a universal category, proposes a new concept ‘Framing’ to deal with aspect like phenomenon in Tibetan languages. However, following Givón (2001a, p. 345), we attempt to analyze the basic forms of the verbs in Lhowa in terms of the distinction

between perfective and imperfective aspects. They are briefly discussed as follows:

### 2.1 Perfective

Perfective aspect refers to the termination and boundedness of events or actions. This aspect is strongly associated with the past tense/time. The perfective aspect may be composed of simple past tense and perfect aspect. They are briefly discussed as follows:

#### 2.1.1 Simple past tense

The main function of simple past tense is to code the events (or states) that occurred before the time of speech (i.e., reference time). Morpho-semantically, there are two types of simple past tenses in Lhowa, viz., egophoric and non-egophoric. Egophoricity is a grammatical category of tense which codes one's personal involvement of event (Floyd et al., 2018). There are two types of verbs in Lhowa, viz., volitional and non-volitional. Volitional verbs refer to those verbs which characterize the actions which can be controlled by the subject the clause. Non-volitional verbs are non-intentional verbs which identify actions uncontrollable for the subject of the clause. The verbs meaning 'to be hungry', 'to feel and fall asleep' are non-volitional verbs. Such verbs in Tibetan have been referred to as active and passive verbs (Vernetto, 2007, p.24). In an affirmative construction, the egophoric past tense is marked morphologically by *-wi/-pi* whereas the non-egophoric simple past tense is coded by *-dzuj* in Lhowa (Regmi et al., 2023). Non-egophoric simple past tense is realized with the first person subject with non-volitional verbs. However, it is realized with the second and third person subjects irrespective of the distinction between volitional and non-volitional verb classes as in (1).

- (1) a. *EGOPHORIC SIMPLE PAST TENSE (VOLITIONAL VERBS)*  
*ŋhi tɛfa shiŋwi*  
 1SG.ERG bird catch-PST.VOL.EGO  
 'I caught a bird.'
- b. *EGOPHORIC SIMPLE PAST TENSE (NON-VOLITIONAL VERBS)*  
*ŋhi kaŋba tshakdzuj*

*ŋhi kaŋba tshak-dzuj*  
 1SG.ERG leg break.PST.NVOL  
 'I broke (my) leg.'

- c. *NON-EGOPHORIC SIMPLE PAST TENSE (VOLITIONAL VERBS)*  
*khoi ŋha tzedzuj*  
 kho-i ŋha tse-dzuj  
 3SG-ERG fishes sell-PST  
 'He sold fishes.'

In negative constructions, the past tense is marked by *-dzuj* irrespective of egophoricity whereas in interrogative and negative interrogative constructions, the past tense is coded by the bound morpheme *-dze* as in (2).

- (2) a. *NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS*  
*ŋhi tʃhoma*  
 ŋhi tʃhoma  
 1SG.ERG sweet potatoes  
*mashedzuj*  
 ma-sʃie-dzuj  
 NEG-eat-PST  
 'I did not eat sweet potatoes.'
- b. *INTERROGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS*  
*ŋhi tehu thudze*  
 ŋhi tehu thu-dze  
 1SG.ERG water drink-PST.Q  
 'Did I drink water?'
- c. *NEGATIVE-INTERROGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS*  
*ŋhi somtɛha maɛhedze*  
 ŋhi somtɛha ma-ɛʃie-dze  
 1SG.ERG tea NEG-drink-PST.Q  
 'Did not I drink tea?'

In example (2a), the verb root *ʃie* 'eat' is attached with the past tense *-dzuj* in the negative constructions whereas in the interrogatives and negative interrogatives as in (2b and c) respectively, the root of verb has been affixed by *-dze*.

#### 2.1.2 Perfect

In Lhowa, there are two perfect aspects, viz., present perfect and past perfect. They are indicated by the nominalized verb (affixed by the nominalizer with perfective reference marker *-pa/-wa*) followed by the copulas used as

auxiliary verbs (viz., *lhak* and *duk*). Both are non-egophoric copulas, the former is essential (viz., identity copula) and the latter is existential (viz., location copula). Apart from functioning as auxiliary verbs, the first one marks direct evidentiality whereas the second indicates indirect evidentiality. The perfect is expressed by employing the main verbs in the non-finite form (i.e., nominalized) followed by such copular verbs used as auxiliary verbs as in (3).

(3) a. *PERFECT ASPECT WITH DIRECT EVIDENTIALITY*

*pheki ea*  
 phe-ki ea  
 cat-ERG meat  
*sheiwa duk*  
 shei-wa duk  
 eat-NMLZ COP.DIR  
 'The cat has/had eaten meat.'

b. *PERFECT H INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY*

*pheki ea*  
 phe-ki ea  
 cat-ERG meat  
*sheiwa lhak*  
 shei-wa lhak  
 eat-NMLZ COP.INDIR  
 'The cat has/had eaten meat.'

### 2.1.3 Past durative

The durative aspect is formed of the root of verb suffixed by *-khanj* followed by the existential copula. This durative suffix is further marked by the locative suffix *-la* as in (4a). It also consists of an infinite form of the verb followed by an auxiliary verb affixed by a nominalizer as in (4b).

(4) a. *fhula mhi dehi*  
 fhu-la mhi de-hi  
 snake-DAT man this-ERG  
*sekhajla duk*  
 se-khaj-la duk  
 kill-DUR-LOC COP  
 'This man was killing a snake.'

b. *mhai teik tsajbu*  
 mhai teik tsajbu  
 buffalo INDF river

*gala heta lhak*  
 gala he-ta lhak  
 cross-INF remain-NMLZ COP  
 'A buffalo was crossing the river.'

## 2.2 Imperfective

Unlike perfective aspect, imperfective aspect is strongly linked with the non-past tense. In Lhowa, the imperfective aspect may be further elaborated into present tense, future tense and present durative and habitual. They are discussed as follows:

### 2.2.1 Simple present tense

The simple present tense is used to code events (or states) that occur right at the time of speech (i.e. reference time). In a declarative construction with the first person subject, the root of the verb (volitional as well as non-volitional) is affixed by *-gu* in the complex of the main verb whereas with the second person subject, the root of the verb remains unmarked as in (5).

(5) a. *FIRST PERSON SUBJECT (VOLITIONAL)*

*nhi alok shajegu*  
 nhi alok shaje-gu  
 1SG.ERG pot. eat-PRES. VOL  
 'I eat potatoes.'

b. *FIRST PERSON SUBJECT (NON-VOLITIONAL)*

*nha nhugu*  
 nha nhu-gu  
 1SG weep-PRES. NVOL  
 'I weep.'

c. *SECOND PERSON SUBJECT*

*chøi fhoma sha*  
 chøi fhoma sha  
 2SG.ERG s. potatoes eat-PRES  
 'You eat sweet potatoes.'

d. *THIRD PERSON SUBJECT*

*khoi ea shik/shi*  
 kho-i ea shik/shi  
 3SG-ERG meat eat-PRES  
 'He eats meat.'

In examples (5a and b), both volitional and non-volitional verbs are marked by the same suffix *-gu*

with the first person subject. With the second person subject, the root of the verbs remains unmarked as in (5c). In Lhowa, egophoricity does not interact with volitionality in the simple present tense as in (5a-b). However, with the third person subject, the vowel of root of the verb gets changed and at the end of root velar consonant /k/ may be inserted as in (5d).

### 2.2.2 Simple future tense

The simple future tense is used to code events (or states) that occur after the time of speech (i.e. reference time). In a declarative construction with the first person subject, the root of the verb (i.e., volitional) is affixed by the imperfective marker *-e* in the complex of the main verb followed by egophoric essential copula *hin* used as an auxiliary verb whereas with the second and third person subjects, the root of the verb is affixed by another imperfective marker *-gi* followed by non-egophoric existential copula *lhiak*. Following are the examples:

- (6) a. *FIRST PERSON SUBJECT (VOLITIONAL)*  
*nhi fiaba sha-je hin*  
 nhi fiaba sha-je hin  
 1SG.ERG rice eat-FP COP:EGO  
 ‘I will eat rice.’
- b. *NON-EGOPHORIC SIMPLE FUTURE*  
*khoi fiaba shaje lhiak*  
 kho-i fiaba sha-je lhiak  
 3SG-ERG rice eat-FP COP  
 ‘He will eat rice.’

Regmi et al. (2023,p.127)

### 2.2.3 Present durative

Lhowa makes a distinction between self and non-self (+ego and -ego), viz., egophoricity in the complex of the verb in the present durative.<sup>1</sup> The egophoric is coded by *-joth/-jod* as in (7a) and non-egophoric is indicated by *-li/-ti* with its various allomorphs as in (7b) or it is left unmarked if durative is deduced from the discourse context as in (7c).

<sup>1</sup> In Bhote Lama (2021), such phenomenon has been analyzed as conjunct and disjunct. However, Lhowa does not satisfy any basic criteria for conjunct and disjunct.

- (7) a. *PRESENT EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*  
*nha nuijoth*  
 nha nui-joth  
 1SG weep-PRES.DUR.EGO  
 ‘I am weeping.’
- b. *PRESENT NON-EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*  
*phidza khawa tseli*  
 phidza khawa tse-li  
 boy dance do-DUR  
 ‘The boy is dancing.’
- c. *PRESENT NON-EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*  
*weca fiaba shi*  
 weca fiaba shi  
 3PL rice eat.PRES.DUR  
 ‘They are eating rice.’

There is a long and constant contact of the speakers of Lhowa with Nepali. Due to such contact, borrowing from Nepali, Lhowa has innovated present durative form consisting of the main verb marked by infinitive marker *-de* and followed by auxiliary verb *the* meaning ‘remain’ plus existential copula as in (8).

- (8) a. *nhiima sharde the duk*  
 nhiima shar-de the duk  
 sun rise-DUR remain COP  
 ‘The sun is rising.’
- b. *tehuwa japde the duk*  
 tehuwa jap-de the duk  
 water rain-DUR remain COP  
 ‘It is raining.’

### 2.2.4 Future durative

Like in the present durative, Lhowa distinguishes between self and non-self (+ ego and -ego), viz., egophoricity in the complex of the verb in the future durative. The egophoric future durative makes use of the copula *hin*. Such copula is preceded by a non-finite verb (viz., nominalized verb) as in (9a). The non-egophoric is indicated by the suffixes *-li/-ti* as in (9b) or it is left unmarked if durative is deduced from the discourse context as in (9c).

- (9) a. *FUTURE EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*  
*nha nuiraje thewi*  
 nha nui-ra-je the-wi

1SG weep-INF remain-NMLZ  
*hin*  
 hin  
 COP.EGO  
 ‘I will be weeping.’

b. *FUTURE NON-EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*

*weca kfiawa tse-li*  
 weca kfiawa tse-li  
 3PL dance do-DUR  
 ‘They will be dancing.’

c. *FUTURE NON-EGOPHORIC DURATIVE*

*nimagi fiaba sfi*  
 Nima-gi fiaba sfi  
 Nima-ERG rice eat-FUT.DUR  
 ‘Nima will be eating rice.’

### 2.2.5 Habitual

There are two types of habitual in Lhowa, viz, non-past and past. The non-past habitual is lexically marked by the adverb of frequency along with the main verb in non-finite form followed by a copula as in (10a). It is also found lexically marked by the adverb of frequency along with the main verb in finite form as in (10b). Similarly, the past habitual is lexically marked by the adverb denoting the past time along with the main verb in finite form as in (10c).

- (10) a. *ŋha ŋhima tenjan*  
 ŋha ŋhima tenjan  
 1SG day every  
*gopma doe lfiak*  
 gopma do-e lfiak  
 monastery go-INF COP  
 ‘I go to monastery every day.’
- b. *ŋhi ŋhima tenjan*  
 nfi ŋhima tenjan  
 1SG.ERG day every  
*fiaba ŋhaje-gu*  
 fiaba ŋhaje-gu  
 rice eat-PRES. VOL  
 ‘I eat rice every day.’
- c. *ŋhi ŋenla*  
 ŋhi ŋen-la  
 1SG.ERG then-LOC

*arak thunje*  
 arak thun-je  
 alcohol drink-PST.EGO  
 ‘I used to drink alcohol.’  
 Regmi et al. (2023, p.29)

### 3. Modality

There are broadly two types of modality: epistemic and evaluative (Givón, 2001a:300). Such modalities are used to code the speaker’s judgment about a propositional information indicated by specific marking in the complex of the verb. We briefly discuss them as follows:

#### 3.1 Epistemic modality

This modality indicates the degree of commitment of the speaker to the truth of the proposition. It can be further classified into probability, certainty and negation in Lhowa. They are discussed as follows:

##### 3.1.1 Probability

The probability is marked by a bound morpheme *-jun* as in (11a). It can also be coded by another bound morpheme *-da* as in (11b).

- (11) a. *norbu arak thunjun*  
 Norbu arak thun-jun  
 Norbu alcohol drink-PROB  
 ‘Norbu may drink alcohol.’
- b. *aki taj ama*  
 aki taj ama  
 father and mother  
*fiinda neri jham*  
 fiin-da ne-ri jham  
 be-PROB say-SEQ happy  
*kfielalfiak*  
 kfi-la lfiak  
 feel-NMLZ COP  
 ‘Thinking, probably, they were my parents I became very happy.’

##### 3.1.2 Certainty

This modality is marked morphologically by *-gi* in the complex of the verb followed by the copula

*lhiak* as in (12a) and it is also marked by *-gu* and followed by the copula *lhiak* as in (12b).<sup>2</sup>

- (12) a. *ramgi fiaba sfiugi lhiak*  
 ram-gi fiaba sfiu-gi lhiak  
 Ram-ERG rice eat-FP COP  
 ‘Ram will eat rice.’
- b. *tehuwa thiranj japgu lhiak*  
 tehuwa thiranj jap-gu lhiak  
 water today rain-FP COP  
 ‘Today, it will certainly rain.’

### 3.1.3 Negation

In Lhowa, the negation is indicated in the verb by the prefix *ma-* and its allomorphs as in (13).

- (13) a. *de ηfi polli mada*  
 de ηfi polli mada  
 this 1SG.GEN shoe NEG-COP  
 ‘This are not my shoes.’
- b. *hoduru thonbo midu*  
 hoduru thonbo mi-du  
 there tree NEG-COP  
 ‘There were no trees.’
- c. *ηha dan*  
 ηha dan  
 1SG yesterday  
*tshemo mənə*  
 tshemo mənə  
 night NEG-sleep  
 ‘I did not sleep last night.’

In examples (13a-c), the verbs (viz., auxiliary/copular and main verbs) have been prefixed by the negation marker *ma-*.

### 3.2 Evaluative modality

Unlike epistemic modality, evaluative modality indicates ability of the agent with respect to the completion of the predicate situation. In Lhowa, only two evaluative modalities have been attested, viz., ability and obligation. They are briefly discussed as follow.

#### 3.2.1 Ability

This modality is marked lexically by *diku* ‘be able’ followed by the auxiliary verb *lhiak* as in (14a). It is also lexically marked by *tehu* ‘can be’ suffixed by a tense marker as in (14b).

- (14) a. *ram fiaba sfi-na*  
 ram fiaba sfi-na  
 Ram rice eat-INF  
*diku lhiak*  
 diku lhiak  
 can COP  
 ‘Ram can eat rice.’

- b. *ti ηfi khomaka*  
 ti ηfi khomaka  
 then 1SG in the start  
*miteiki mikita*  
 miteiki mi-kita  
 much NEG-happy  
*tehudzun*  
 tehu-dzun  
 can be-PST.NVOL  
 ‘Then, I could not feel happy in the beginning.’

Regmi et al. (2023,p.131)

#### 3.2.2 Obligation

In Lhowa, in order to indicate obligation, the root of the verb is suffixed by *-so* as in (15).

- (15) a. *fiaba tsuj sfi-so*  
 fiaba tsuj sfi-so  
 rice little eat-OBLG  
 ‘A little rice has to be eaten.’

- b. *tehu manbo thunaso*  
 tehu manbo thunaso  
 water a lot drink-OBLG  
 ‘A lot of water has to be drunk.’

Regmi et al. (2023, p.131)

### 4. Evidentiality

Gawne (2017) notes that egophoric which marks the own knowledge of the speakers is the source of evidential in the Tibetic languages. It is marked variously in different languages. There are two types of evidential, viz., indirect and direct. In Lhowa, tense, aspect and evidentiality are intermingled as well as fused with tense. Such phenomenon prevails in Lhomi (Vesalainen,

<sup>2</sup> In Regmi et al. (2023, p.130) *-gulhak* has been taken as certainty marker in Lhowa.

2016, p. 159). Lhowa registers evidentiality in two types of clauses, viz., verbal predicate clauses and existential copular clauses.

#### 4.1 Direct evidentiality

The direct evidence codes the information as assertively true. In Lhowa, the direct evidentiality is realized in verbal predicate clauses having the main verb in the nominalized form followed by the existential copula (viz., *duk*) functioning as an auxiliary verb as in (16a-b).

- (16) a. *lhakpa tchawa duk*  
 lhakpa tcha-wa duk  
 hand break-NMLZ COP  
 ‘The hand is broken.’
- b. *ηfi pηidza nama*  
 ηfi pηidza nama  
 1SG.GEN son marriage  
*lhienwa duk*  
 lhien-wa duk  
 do-NMLZ COP  
 ‘My son is married.’

In examples (16a-b) the main verbs are nominalized with the suffix *-wa*. Such verbs are followed by the existential copula *duk*. The constructions with such verbal complex are interpreted as showing direct evidentiality in Lhowa.

Direct evidentiality is also realized in existential copular clauses. In such clauses, the non-egophoric existential copula *duk* may be used to encode direct evidentiality as in (17).

- (17) a. *pηola jak duk*  
 pηo-la jak duk  
 Tibet-LOC Yak COP.DIR  
 ‘There are yaks in Tibet.’
- b. *khanba tshuwā duk*  
 khanba tshuwā duk  
 room small COP.DIR  
 ‘The room is small.’

#### 4.2 Indirect evidentiality

Indirect evidence suggests that the event described in the clause is not directly witnessed by the speaker. In Lhowa, the indirect

evidentiality is realized in verbal predicate clauses in which the main verb in the nominalized form followed by essential copula (viz., *lhak*) functioning as an auxiliary verb as in (18a-b).

- (18) a. *de tfiogon dze*  
 de tfiogon dze  
 these stone heavy  
*metawa lhak*  
 me-ta-wa lhak  
 NEG-become-NMLZ COP  
 ‘These stones are not heavy.’
- b. *ηfia hode jfula*  
 ηfia hode jful-la  
 1SG that village-LOC  
*kewa lhak*  
 ke-wa lhak  
 be born-NMLZ COP  
 ‘I was born in that village.’

In examples (18a-b) the main verbs are nominalized with the suffix *-wa*. Such verbs are followed by the existential copula *lhak*. The constructions with such verbal complex are interpreted as containing indirect evidentiality.

In Lhowa, as in Tibetan (Vernetto, 2007) the copula *yore* is used to indicate indirect evidentiality as in (19).

- (19) a. *pηola jak yore*  
 pηo-la jak yore  
 Tibet-LOC Yak COP.INDIR  
 ‘There are yaks in Tibet.’
- b. *hode khanba midziki*  
 hode khanba midziki  
 that house very  
*tana yore*  
 tana yore  
 cold COP.INDIR  
 ‘That house is very cold.’

#### 5. Contact induced changes in tense-aspect

Hickey (2010, pp. 166-167) notes that due to the language contact even syntactic features can be borrowed from the dominant language. In due course of time language typology may change. Due to the intense and long contact with Nepali, the root of the verb suffixed by an

durative/imperfective marker *-de* followed by a lexical verb meaning ‘stay’ and a copula has been innovated functioning as durative aspect in as in (20) in Lhowa.<sup>3</sup>

- (20) *phēki tēfia shiṅde*  
 phē-ki        tēfia        shiṅ-de  
 cat-ERG      bird        catch-DUR  
*thē duk*  
 thē        duk  
 stay        COP  
 ‘The cat is/was catching a bird.’

Similarly, due to the contact with Nepali, the future participle *-ḡe/ḡi* has been developed as in (21).

- (21) a. *tiriṅ ḡimo tshadi*  
 tiriṅ        ḡimo        tshadi  
 today        day        hot  
*huṅe du*  
 hu-ḡe        du  
 become-FP    COP: EXT  
 ‘It will be hot today.’
- b. *kho nḡaba horoṅla*  
 kho        nḡaba        horoṅ-la  
 3SG        next year    1PL-DAT  
*thuktu huṅi lḡiak*  
 thuk-tu    hu-ḡi        lḡiak  
 meet-INF    come-FP    COP  
 ‘He will visit us next year.’

Similarly, due to the contact with Nepali, non-egophoric simple future copula *huṅ* has also been developed in Lhowa as in (22).

- (22) *khoi fiaba*  
 kho-i        fiaba  
 3SG-ERG    rice  
*shāje huṅ*  
 shā-je        huṅ  
 eat-FP        COP.FUT  
 ‘He will eat rice.’

## 6. Devices for coding verbal categories

In Lhowa, there are four basic devices for encoding the grammatical categories of verbs. They include phonology (viz., root modification), morphology, minor lexical words (viz., auxiliary verbs), and combination of morphology and minor lexical words (viz., auxiliary verbs). They are briefly discussed as follows:

### 6.1 Phonology

In Lhowa, the root is modified to mark the grammatical categories of verbs. The non-past verbs are formed just by changing the vowel of the root of infinitive or citation form. In such case, the low central unrounded short vowel /a/ in the root of the verb in infinitive or citation form gets changed into the high front unrounded /i/ as in (23).

- (23) a. *shagin*        ‘to eat’        sfik  
 b. *tshagin*        ‘to burn’        tshik  
 c. *nḡagin*        ‘to sick’        nik

The high back short vowel /u/ in the root of the verb in infinitive or citation form changes into the high front rounded vowel /y/ as in (24).

- (24) a. *sfu ṡugin*        ‘to bathe’        sfu ṡyik  
 b. *kugin*        ‘to steal’        kyk

### 6.2 Morphology

In Lhowa, the roots/stems of verbs are affixed by bound morphemes to form either finite or non-finite forms. Finite verbs (in the past tense), infinitive, sequential, nominalizer with perfective reference and present participle/imperfective participle/simultaneous are formed by adding various monosyllabic affixes to the roots/stems of verbs in Lhowa (Regmi et al., 2023).

### 6.3 Minor lexical words (Auxiliary verbs)

The essential and existential copulas are realized in terms of egophoricity in different forms in affirmative and negative constructions (Regmi et al., 2023, p.122). Table 1 presents the forms of essential and existential auxiliary verbs in Lhowa.

<sup>3</sup> Due to the long contact with non-Tibeto-Burman languages, Thakali has also drastically diverged from its original tense and aspectual patterns (Regmi et al., 2020, p. 110)



Table 1: *Forms of essential and existential auxiliary verbs in Lhowa*

AUXILIARY VERBS	EGOPHORICITY	CONSTRUCTIONS	
		AFFIR	NEG
ESSENTIAL	+ EGO	hin	min/ men
	-EGO	lfiak	malfiak
EXISTENTIAL	+ EGO	jfiok	majfiok
	-EGO	duk	maduk

Following are some examples in affirmative constructions:

- (25) a. *ESSENTIAL AUXILIARY VERB (EGOPHORIC)*  
*ŋha tshoŋwa hin*  
 ŋha tshoŋwa hin  
 1SG b. man COP:ESS.EGO  
 ‘I am a businessman.’
- b. *ESSENTIAL AUXILIARY VERB (NON-EGOPHORIC)*  
*ram ŋfi adzu*  
 ram ŋfi adzu  
 Ram 1SG.GEN brother  
*tehe lfiak*  
 tehe lfiak  
 elder COP:ESS  
 ‘Ram is my eldest brother.’
- c. *EXISTENTIAL AUXILIARY VERB (EGOPHORIC)*  
*ŋhala adzo sum*  
 ŋha-la adzo sum  
 1SG-DAT e.brother three  
*jfiok*  
 jfiok  
 COP:EXT.EGO  
 ‘I have three elder brothers.’
- d. *EXISTENTIAL AUXILIARY VERB (NON-EGOPHORIC)*  
*chy jful tshē*  
 chy jful tshē  
 2SG.GEN village big  
*duk*  
 duk  
 COP: EXT  
 ‘Your village is big.’

In Lhowa, due to contact with Nepali, in the Kimling variety, *lfiak* has been found being used in place of egophoric essential copula *hin* as in (26).

- (26) *ŋfi minla*  
 ŋfi minla  
 1SG.GEN name  
*tchimi lhowa lfiak*  
 tchimi lhowa lfiak  
 Chhimi Lhowa COP  
 ‘My name is Chhimi Lhowa.’

#### 6.4 Combination of morphology and auxiliary verbs

Lhowa expresses the grammatical category of verbs, specifically, the perfect and durative aspects by means of a combination of non-finite verb morphology and auxiliary verbs. The auxiliary verb coding identity, viz., *lfiak* is primarily used in combination with morphology as in (27).

- (27) a. *EGOPHORIC SIMPLE FUTURE*  
*ŋfi de tfiŋbo*  
 ŋfi de tfiŋbo  
 1SG.ERG that tree  
*tŋae hin*  
 tŋa-e hin  
 climb-FP COP  
 ‘I shall climb that tree.’
- b. *NON-EGOPHORIC SIMPLE FUTURE*  
*ramgi de totsi*  
 ram-gi de totsi  
 Ram-ERG this shirt  
*tsogi lfiak*  
 tso-gi lfiak  
 sell-FP COP  
 ‘Ram will sell this shirt.’
- c. *PERFECT ASPECT WITH DIRECT EVIDENTIALITY*  
*kho tŋi tsoŋi*  
 kho tŋi  
 3SG knife  
*tsowa duk*  
 tso-wa duk  
 sell-NMLZ COP.DIR  
 ‘He has sold knives.’

- d. PERFECT ASPECT WITH INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY  
*nimagi haba*  
 nima-gi                      *haba*  
 Nima-ERG                    rice  
*sheiwa lhak*  
 shei-wa                      *lhak*  
 eat-NMLZ                    COP.INDIR  
 ‘Nima has/had eaten rice.’
- e. DURATIVE ASPECT WITH DIRECT EVIDENTIALITY  
*khojhu thujma t̥hihi*  
 kho-j̥hu      thujma      t̥hi-hi  
 3SG-ERG    wood            knife-INSTR  
*made the duk*  
 ma-de                      t̥he                      duk  
 cute-DUR                  stay                    COP.DIR  
 ‘He is/was cutting the wood with a knife.’
- f. DURATIVE ASPECT WITH INDIRECT EVIDENTIALITY  
*kho golok*  
 kho                      golok  
 3SG                      clothes  
*thiwa lhak*  
 thi-wa                      *lhak*  
 wash-NMLZ                COP.INDIR  
 ‘He was washing clothes the river.’

In example (27a and b), the egophoric and non-egophoric simple future are lexically marked by copulas *hin* and *lhak*, respectively. Similarly, in examples (27c and e) perfect and durative aspects with direct evidentiality are marked by the copula *duk* whereas in examples (27d and f) perfect durative aspects with indirect evidentiality are indicated by the copula *lhak*.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper analyzed the tense, aspect, modality and evidentiality in Lhowa. Lhowa is an aspect prominent language. Lhowa does not always present tense as a clear category of verbs. It roughly exhibits the main distinction between the two basic forms of the verbs: perfective and imperfective. It marks egophoricity constrained by clause types, speech act participants and volitionality. There are two types of past tense: egophoric and non-egophoric. In an affirmative

construction, the egophoric past tense is marked morphologically by *-wi/-pi* whereas the non-egophoric simple past tense is coded by *-dzuj*. In an interrogative construction, the verbs with the first and third person subjects are marked by *-dze* whereas the verbs with the second person subject are marked by *-we*. In Lhowa, tenses and aspects interact with modality and evidentiality. There are two types of modalities, viz., epistemic and evaluative. The epistemic modality includes probability, certainty and negation and the evaluative modality contains ability and obligation. Lhowa exhibits two types of evidence, viz., indirect and direct. Evidentiality is realized in both copular and verbal predicate clauses. Due to the intense and long contact with Nepali, Lhowa has drastically diverged from its original tense and aspectual patterns. It makes use of four basic devices for encoding the grammatical categories of verbs: phonology, morphology, minor word class (viz., auxiliary verbs) and combination of morphology and auxiliary verbs.

## Abbreviations

1SG	First person singular
2SG	Second person singular
3SG	Third person singular
ABL	Ablative
CERT	Certainty
COP	Copula
DAT	Dative
DIR	Direct
DUR	Durative
EGO	Egophoricity
ERG	Ergative
ESS	Essential
EXT	Existential copula
FP	Future participle
FUT	Future tense
GEN	Genitive
INDIR	Indirect
INF	Infinitive
LOC	Locative
NEG	Negative
NMLZ	Nominalizer
NVOL	Non-volitional
OBLG	Obligative
PL	Plural
PRES	Present tense

PROB	Probability
PST	Past tense
Q	Question marker
SEQ	Sequential
SG	Singular
TOP	Topic
VOL	Volitional

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