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## Part 3: **New parameters in epistemic research**



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## 9 Egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā

**Abstract:** This paper examines the relationship between egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā. The analysis is derived from extending the egophoricity paradigm in the language to include a previously undocumented feature, the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking, in addition to the binary pair of the egophoric and non-egophoric markings. I first show that the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking can be established as a significant category that signals the absence of the egophoric feature. I make a case for it by showing the effect of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on the register of interactions in various pragmatic contexts – these interactions utilize verbs from two main semantic verb classes in Kathmandu Newā – volitional and non-volitional. The  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking proves to be instrumental in affecting nuanced informal and formal registers in interactions in the language, and shows that egophoric marking, conversely, can affect formal registers. My findings testify to the relationship between egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā and shed light on the role of egophoricity as a politeness strategy in upholding the mental autonomy of the addressee.

**Keywords:** Egophoricity, Formality, Epistemic Access, Politeness Theory, Kathmandu Newā

### 9.1 Introduction

Egophoricity is a grammatical category that encodes a speech-act participant's epistemic authority over an event (Creissels 2008; San Roque, Floyd and Norcliffe 2018). It has gained increasing attention in Tibeto-Burman linguistics since the pioneering work on Kathmandu Newā (Hale 1980), where the binary morphological contrast on verbs, the egophoric/non-egophoric marking, was initially labeled *conjunct/disjunct* marking (e.g., DeLancey 1992, 1997; Tournadre 2008; Tournadre and LaPolla 2014). These early works have provided canonical examples of egophoricity in Kathmandu Newā, where epistemic authority was described to mainly reside with “the person assumed to have privileged access to the intentions for an action” (Hargreaves 2018:81). This means that an egophoric marker becomes default on a first-person intentional actor who, in interactional settings, typically turns into the

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guage domains (Hargreaves 2018) has expanded the set of conditions needed for marking egophoricity, as compared to older literature, to include:

- (i) *Epistemic authority* which resides in the person with access to the will or intention for an action (Hargreaves 2018).
- (ii) *Involvement* of at least one speech-act participant in the event within the proposition (Hargreaves 1991; Creissels 2008).
- (iii) *Privileged access* to the “ontological subjectivity” (Searle 1995; cited in Hargreaves 2018:101) of the inner state of a speech-act participant.

The egophoricity system in Kathmandu Newā, thus, has been described as exhibiting a binary morphological contrast on verbs – egophoric when these conditions are met and non-egophoric when these conditions are not met – i.e., (i) when epistemic authority does not come from access to the will or intention behind an event; (ii) when neither speech-act participant is involved in the event, and (iii) when there is no privileged access to the subjective inner state of a speech-act participant – in verbs that fall into two main semantic classes in Kathmandu Newā: volitional and non-volitional (Hargreaves 1991).

## 9.2 Prior research on egophoricity: the overlap of evidentiality

Stemming from the mentioned conditions of epistemic authority, involvement, and privileged access to knowledge within an event, the description of egophoricity as a grammatical category has often merged with that of evidentiality – a linguistic category also known to “signal the source of information for an utterance” (Bergqvist and Kittilä, 2020:2). For one, when sourced from the self’s willful involvement in an event, epistemic authority in an egophoric clause in Kathmandu Newā can be attributed to “intimate and immediate knowledge of a situation” (Garrett 2001:5) also borne by the ego-evidential category in Tibetan.

In contrast, when sourced from the self’s unwilling involvement in an event, such as in events out of one’s control, and when sourced from the non-self’s involvement in an event, such as the involvement of a third person or an inanimate object, epistemic authority in a non-egophoric clause in Kathmandu Newā can be attributed to coming from ‘direct evidence’ as described for any “assertion based on perceptual evidence” (Garrett 2001:5) in Tibetan. There is a third category in the evidential system of Tibetan – the ‘indirect evidence’ – which covers clauses based on hearsay, for example, that do not feature in the egophoric paradigm of Kathmandu Newā.

As for the third condition of privileged access, the very term has been articulated within studies on Lhasa Tibetan as such: “. . .there are facts I can know in a certain way which others cannot know in the same way” (Garrett 2001:16). Much like Hargreaves’ description of the term for Kathmandu Newā as the “ontological subjectivity of the inner state of a participant”, the concept of privileged access falls within the description of ego-evidentiality, the sub-category of Tibetan evidentials associated with “self-knowledge or attitudes *de se*” (Garrett 2001:7). Privileged access, as such, encompasses the concepts within ‘epistemic authority’ and ‘involvement’ for it represents the inner-most seat of knowledge a speech-act participant can possess. For convenience, thus, I will distill the discussed conditions for egophoricity and evidentiality into the singular term of ‘privileged access’ as a key reference term hereon.

There are clear parallels between the conditions needed for the use of egophoricity in Kathmandu Newā and the evidential system in Tibetan. The very first discussion that coined the term ‘egophoricity’ (Tournadre 1992; cited in San Roque, Floyd and Norcliffe 2018) also centered around morphemes in Lhasa Tibetan that indicate the same principles of privileged versus non-privileged access to knowledge within a speech act, which subsequently got analyzed as the language’s evidential system (San Roque, Floyd and Norcliffe 2018). The categorical overlap of evidentiality on egophoricity has, therefore, featured in academic discussion since the beginning of the study of the epistemic system of Kathmandu Newā.

Situating this chapter in such a narrative, I propose formality in interactional language as an additional variable, one that interacts with egophoricity independently from the evidence-sourcing operations in speech-acts in Kathmandu Newā. My proposal arises from the description of a third value of egophoricity. Specifically, I argue that in addition to egophoric and non-egophoric marking, as standardly described, there is also the possibility for the absence of egophoric marking, a value I refer to as the  $\emptyset$  egophoric. Crucially, the assumption that the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking differs from non-egophoric marking implies that egophoricity is a bivalent feature where both the positive (egophoric) and the negative (non-egophoric) values are meaningful, rather than monovalent, where non-egophoric marking would be conceptualised as the meaning that arises in the absence of egophoric marking (see for example, Bafle and Manzini (2019) for a discussion on monovalent vs. bivalent features in phonology and syntax). I argue that we have to distinguish non-egophoric marking from the absence of egophoric marking, the  $\emptyset$  egophoric, which has its own morphological, semantic, and pragmatic correlates, and which further sheds light on the role of formality in the egophoric paradigm of Kathmandu Newā.

### 9.3 Methodology

I demonstrate the existence of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking using a dataset prepared by constructing interactions that feature it using my native-speaker competence. As no curated corpora for formal and informal interactions in Kathmandu Newā exist, I follow Newmeyer (2020), who writes that “if a sufficiently large corpus is used, the findings based on data elicited from native-speaker language intuition are the same as the corpus data of conversations” (Newmeyer 2020; cited in Shi and Xie 2022:606). Additionally, I have verified the constructed interactions with three language consultants – two native speakers and a Kathmandu Newā language teacher.

Upon verification, I compare interactions that feature the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking to those that feature egophoric and non-egophoric markings from previous literature and the new dataset, framing the comparison around the pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties of each interaction. This, in particular, is a method I choose to follow as I intuited that the factors that differentiate interactions with the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking from those with egophoric and non-egophoric markings are indeed the pragmatic and morpho-syntactic aspects of the language. The pragmatic properties compared in these exercises include the register of interaction as a main property, and social equality and distance between the speech act participants as associated properties. The morpho-syntactic properties under comparison include the pattern of agreement among different parts of speech, which tie closely with the register of interaction (see Section 9.5 and 9.6 for an elaboration).

Another important method included in this study is supplementing each constructed interaction with an interactional context. My life years as a person from the Kathmandu Newā community helped me easily think of interactions between different members of Newā society, and the interpersonal dynamics they would be embedded in. I also observed that conversational context was missing in the canonical examples documented since the 1980s. It therefore became important to assign a conversational context to the canonical and constructed examples, outline their pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties, and conduct the mentioned comparative exercises to cull out differences that shed light on the nature of egophoricity.

In Section 9.4, therefore, I use widely cited examples from previous literature, provide a context for their possible occurrence, and supplement them with pragmatic properties as outlined above. I use the volitional verb *wan-* (go) and the non-volitional verb *thyan-* (arrive) that feature prominently in previous literature (Hale 1980; Hargreaves 2005).

Section 9.5 introduces the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking and its pragmatic properties through constructed examples of informal interaction in the language. I initially use the volitional *wan-* (go) and the non-volitional *thyan-* (arrive), and situate the interactions in different contexts of nuanced informality among three different pairs of speech act participants. I then survey the occurrence of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on volitional and non-volitional verbs across the language to attest to its prevalence beyond the verbs *wan-* and *thyan-*. As the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on *wan-* and *thyan-* produces a distinct (nasal) phonological sound, I sub-classify the remaining volitional and non-volitional verbs by their morpho-phonemic stem-final consonants (Sresthacharya 1981; Malla 1986) to attest to a similar phonological distinction in their respective  $\emptyset$  egophoric inflections.

Section 9.6 examines the occurrence of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking in interactions with nuanced formality in Kathmandu Newā. I also construct interactions that elucidate the role of egophoricity in augmenting formality in the language to provide further empirical evidence to support the hypothesis of the relationship between egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā.

Section 9.7 discusses observations from the comparative exercises between minimal pairs of interactions within the dataset.

## 9.4 Pragmatic properties of EGO and NON-EGO (volitional verbs) in Kathmandu Newā

We know by now that in the domain of volitional verbs, egophoric marking is expected in declaratives (2b) where the speaker (S) holds privileged access, while in interrogatives (2a) the addressee (A) does. This fundamental epistemic property is indicated on the top line of every example, which also includes information on the clause type and speech-act participant. Non-egophoric marking, on the other hand, is expected in declaratives and interrogatives where neither speaker nor addressee is involved in the propositional event, and thus do not possess privileged access as in (3). This epistemic property is differentiated from that of egophoric examples like (2) with an unequal sign between the speech-act participant and privileged access.

- (2) Context: *Person X misses a party and asks his colleague, Person Y, if she went.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access
- |           |       |                 |     |
|-----------|-------|-----------------|-----|
| Cha       | ana   | wan-ā           | lā? |
| 2.SG.INFM | there | go.INFM-PST.EGO | Q   |
- ‘Did you go there?’



- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access

Ji ana wan-ā

1.SG there go.INFM-PST.EGO

‘I went there.’

(Hale 1980:85)

- (3) Context: *Person X asks Person Y if their colleague Person Z attended a party*

- a. Interrog: A ≠ Privileged Access

Wa ana wan-a lā?

3.SG.INFM there go.INFM-PST.NONEGO Q

‘Did he go there?’

- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access

Wa ana wan-a

3.SG there go.INFM-PST.NONEGO

‘He went there.’

(Hale and Shrestha 2006:57)

To supplement these interactions with relevant pragmatic properties, I begin by noting down their register, followed by respective details of social status, equality, and distance between the speech act participants. In this section and the ones to follow, I distinguish registers according to the categories ‘plain informality’, ‘nuanced informality’, ‘plain formality’, and ‘nuanced formality’. The categories of ‘nuanced informality’ and ‘nuanced formality’ are further diversified according to specific dynamics between different pairs of speech act participants, discussed in Sections 9.3 and 9.4.

Each register is then attributed with information on the social equality or inequality of the speech act participants and the social distance between them. Social equality is divided into three categories, including where the speaker and addressee, and the third-person referent ‘R’ in third-person clauses, are equal ( $S=A$  and  $S=A=R$ ); where the speaker is superior to the addressee, and both superior to the third-person referent in third-person clauses ( $S>A$  and  $S \text{ and } A>R$ ); and where the speaker is inferior to the addressee, and both inferior to the third-person referent in third-person clauses ( $S<A$  and  $S \text{ and } A<R$ ).

Social distance, on the other hand, is divided into the categories of ‘neutral’, ‘distant’, and ‘proximate’. The ‘neutral’ category indicates relations that are neither intimate nor distant, such as that between contemporaries; the ‘distant’ category would have the relation between distant relatives as a fit example; and the ‘proximate’ category would have childhood friends as a fit example. These examples bear the pragmatic property of social equality, which means that social non-equals, too,

will have their respective examples for each category of social distance. Following this system, the pragmatic properties of (2) and (3) can therefore be summarized as follows:

**Table 2:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (2) and (3).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(2)	S=A	EGO			
	S>A	EGO			
(3)	S=A=R	NON-EGO			
	S and A>R	NON-EGO			

In (2), an informal interaction with S=A, such as colleagues or friends, or S>A, such as between a senior and junior colleague, employs the informal second-person pronoun *cha*, which agrees with an informal root verb *wan-* (go). The verb inflects egophorically with the suffix *-ā* as the speaker seeks privileged access. This sequence, namely of an informal pronoun, an informal root verb, and an egophoric inflection, produces a plain informal register as marked in Table 2, which I consider as the baseline for the pragmatic property of the register.

Similarly, in (3), an informal interaction between colleagues or friends about a third-person referent who is an equal or inferior, employs the informal third-person pronoun *wa*, which agrees with an informal root verb *wan-* (go). The verb inflects non-egophorically with the suffix *-a* as the speaker seeks access to the addressee’s knowledge sourced from perceptual evidence (Garrett 2001). This sequence produces a plain informal register, too.

Further, as the egophoric and non-egophoric inflections in Kathmandu Newā were documented in both past and non-past tenses to form the prevailing paradigm for egophoricity in the language (see Table 3), I will continue this section to include examples from the non-past tense for the verb *wan-* (go).

**Table 3:** Egophoric paradigm in Kathmandu Newā (Hargreaves 2005:11).

	PAST		NON-PAST
EGO	<i>ā</i>	IMPERFECTIVE	<i>-e</i>
	PERFECTIVE		NON-PAST
NON-EGO	<i>-a</i>	<i>-V:</i>	<i>-i</i>

The non-past forms of volitional verbs in Kathmandu Newā have been documented to have the *-e* suffix for egophoric and the *-i* suffix for the non-egophoric. These are demonstrated in (4) and (5) below:

- (4) Context: *Person X is curious if her colleague, Person Y, will attend an event.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access  
 Cha kanhe wan-e lā?  
 2.SG.INFM tomorrow go.INFM-NPST.EGO Q  
 ‘Will you go tomorrow?’
- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access  
 Ji wan-e  
 1.SG go.INFM-NPST.EGO  
 ‘I will go.’
- (5) Context: *Person X asks Person Y if their colleague, Person Z, will attend a party.*
- a. Interrog: A ≠ Privileged Access  
 Wa kanhe wan-i lā?  
 3.SG.INFM tomorrow go.INFM-NPST.EGO Q  
 ‘Will she go tomorrow?’
- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access  
 Wa wan-i  
 3.SG.INFM go.INFM-NPST.EGO  
 ‘She will go.’

(Hargreaves 2005:9)

The pragmatic properties of (4) and (5) turn out to be the same as those of (2) and (3) (see Table 4). An informal second-person pronoun in (4) and an informal third-person pronoun in (5) both agree with an informal verb, which inflects egophorically for the first and second-person subjects in (4) and non-egophorically for third-person subjects in (5), both of which give plain informal registers.

**Table 4:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (4) and (5).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(4)	S=A		EGO		
	S>A		EGO		
(5)	S and A=R		NON-EGO		
	S and A>R		NON-EGO		



‘Has he arrived?’

- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access

Wa            thyan-a

3.SG.INFM arrive.INFM-PST.NONEGO

‘He has arrived.’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

Further, non-egophoricity in *thyan-* in the non-past context manifests with the *-i* suffix, as seen for non-past third-person clauses featuring *wan-* in (5). A non-past interaction comprising first-person and second-person clauses with *thyan-* features in (8) and another interaction with third-person clauses features in (9):

- (8) Context: *Person X wants to ensure that Person Y will arrive on time.*

- a. Interrog: A ≠ Privileged Access

Cha            ilay            thyan-i            lā?

2.SG.INFM on.time arrive.INFM-NPST.NONEGO Q

‘Will you arrive on time?’

- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access

Ji            ilay            thyan-i

1.SG on.time arrive.INFM-NPST.NONEGO

‘I will arrive on time.’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

- (9) Context: *Person X wants to know if Person Y will arrive on time. He asks Person Z.*

- a. Interrog: A ≠ Privileged Access

Wa            ilay            thyan-i            lā?

3.SG.INFM on.time arrive.INFM-NPST.NONEGO Q

‘Will he arrive on time?’

- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access

Wa            ilay            thyan-i

3.SG on.time arrive.INFM-NPST.NONEGO

‘He will arrive on time.’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

The pragmatic properties of both past and non-past interactions featuring *thyan-* (arrive) are summarized in Table 5. These interactions can be used between social equals with neutral social distance, such as colleagues or contemporaries, or between non-equals with neutral social distance where the speaker is superior to the addressee, such as between a senior and a junior colleague. The morpho-syntactic properties include the following sequence: informal second and third-per-

son pronouns *cha* and *wa* agree with the informal root verb *thyan-*, which inflects non-egophorically, given the non-volitionality of the verb. This sequence features in past and non-past interactions, as does the plain informal register.

**Table 5:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (6) – (9).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(6)	S=A	Neutral	NON-EGO		
	S>A		NON-EGO		
(7)	S=A=R	Neutral	NON-EGO		
	S and A>R		NON-EGO		
(8)	S=A	Neutral	NON-EGO		
	S>A		NON-EGO		
(9)	S=A=R	Neutral	NON-EGO		
	S and A>R		NON-EGO		

Thus, we see that pragmatic properties such as register, social equality, and social distance between speech act participants are reflected in the parts of speech and morpho-syntax of the clause. These properties were previously not acknowledged in discussions on egophoricity, which mainly observed verb inflections as indicative of semantic properties such as (non) volition, and evidential properties such as the presence or absence of privileged access.

There is yet another verb inflection included in the egophoricity paradigm of Kathmandu Newā, documented as the ‘imperfective disjunct’ which will be discussed in a forthcoming paper due to the complexity of its analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper.

## 9.5 The Ø EGO marking & nuanced informality in Kathmandu Newā

In this section, I examine the pragmatics and morpho-syntactic aspects of informal interactions in Kathmandu Newā, a central point of interest of this chapter as their pragmatic properties shed light on the role of an additional factor in egophoricity, namely formality.

### 9.5.1 The Ø EGO marking and nuanced informality in volitional verbs

The distinction in verb inflections, represented as a paradigm in Table 3, has characterized egophoricity as a binary feature, with a positive value (egophoric marking) and a negative value (non-egophoric marking). Also, interactions featuring the canonical pattern of egophoricity listed thus far follow the ‘rule of anticipation’, where the verb marking in a question anticipates the same marking to be used in the response (Garrett and Bateman 2007:88). As a native speaker immersed in the speaker community for much of my life, though, several interactions come to mind where this is not necessarily the case. Certain interactions in Kathmandu Newā can have an addressee respond with an egophoric inflection, for example, to a question that does not contain the expected egophoric marking. The speaker in such cases can use a verb marking unlike either the egophoric *-ā* or the non-egophoric *-a*:

(10) Context: *A landlord thinks it is unlikely that his servant would attend a certain event. He asks his servant anyway:*

a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access

Cha mhigaḥ ana wā: lā?

2.SG.INFM yesterday there go. INFM-ØEGO Q

‘Did you go there yesterday?’ (Informal, condescending)

b. Decl: S = Privileged Access

Ji wan-ā

1.SG go. INFM-PST.EGO

‘I did.’

(Source: personal knowledge, verified)

**Table 6:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (10).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(10) S>A	Distant	Ø EGO Condescending			

Here, the landlord does not use the expected egophoric marking *-ā* on the volitional verb *wan-* (go), even if using an interrogative clause type that seeks privileged access to knowledge held by the addressee. The verb marking is not conventionally non-egophoric (*-a*) either, as this interaction meets condition (ii) from Section 9.1, i.e., the willed involvement of at least one speech-act participant in the event, unchar-

acteristic in non-egophoric clauses. The verb marking is thus neither egophoric nor non-egophoric – it does not satisfy the conditions for either case, nor does it exhibit their morphology.

What stands out in (10) is that, unlike canonical settings where an addressee is assumed to have privileged access to provide an answer, the addressee here is denied the same. I indicate this denial of privileged access to the addressee in the top line of the example as ‘Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access’, and intuit it to arise from pragmatic properties stemming from an asymmetric power relation between the speaker, a landlord, and the addressee, a servant. The landlord does not deign the servant as an addressee with privileged access – such interpersonal dynamics manifest pragmatically with a condescending register, and associated properties of social inequality ( $S > A$ ) and social distance. Such pragmatic force nullifies the phenomenon of egophoricity in the interaction. The verb marking – neither egophoric nor non-egophoric – represents the absence of egophoricity and is thus encoded with an Ø egophoric marking.

It is worth noting that it is also felicitous for the landlord to employ the egophoric marking when asking the servant a question, similar to the morphological properties of the canonical examples in Table 1:

- (11) Context: *A landlord thinks it is unlikely that his servant would attend a certain event. He asks his servant anyway:*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access  
 Cha        mhigaḥ    ana    wan-ā                      lā?  
 2.SG.INFM   yesterday   there   go. INFM- PST.EGO   Q  
 ‘Did you go there yesterday?’ (Informal, plain)
  - b. Decl: S = Privileged Access  
 Ji        wan-ā  
 1.SG   go. INFM-PST.EGO  
 ‘I did.’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

The difference between (10) and (11) includes a difference in register: where (10) with a Ø egophoric marking has a nuanced informal (condescending register), (11) with the egophoric marking bears a plain informal register. The pragmatic properties of social equality and distance between (10) and (11) would be the same, as the speech act participants and their social relationship are the same. Examples (10) and (11) as a minimal pair thus shows us that in informal interactions between a pair of speech act participants where the speaker is superior to the addressee ( $S > A$ ), a change in verb marking – from the Ø egophoric or the absence of egophoricity, to the egophoric or the presence of egophoricity – indicates a change in register, i.e., a change in the degree of informality.



The Ø egophoric marking is also observed in contexts where the speaker and addressee are equals, and in close relation. In the case of childhood friends, for example, the inflection is used but with a slightly different register:

(12) Context: *Person X knows his childhood friend Person Y would typically not attend a certain event. He asks him casually:*

a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access

Cha mhigaḥ ana wā: lā?

2.SG.INFM yesterday there go. INFM-ØEGO Q

‘Did you go there yesterday?’ (Informal, condescending)

b. Decl: S = Privileged Access

Ji wan-ā

1.SG go. INFM-PST.EGO

‘I did.’

(Source: personal knowledge, verified)

Here again, the speaker does not use the expected egophoric marking *-ā* when asking a question to a childhood friend. The marking is not conventionally non-egophoric (*-a*) either, as the addressee is intentionally involved in the event. The speaker instead employs what is also observed in (10a) – the Ø egophoric marking that signals the nullification of privileged access held by the addressee. Example (12), however, does not feature (10)’s register of condescension related to the use of Ø egophoric marking. Instead, the interaction bears a casual, informal register associated with the proximity between childhood friends, who are social equals. I intuit that due to the interpersonal dynamics between two childhood friends, the speaker here takes the liberty to assert upon the ‘territory of information’ (Kamio 1997) held by his friend, the addressee, with whom he is close enough to know the latter’s expected choice of action. This manifests as a nullification of the addressee’s privileged access, implying the speaker does not need to seek it, the speaker does not seek it, but asserts upon it. With this, we have another example of an interaction, in a different pragmatic context, featuring the Ø egophoric marking. The pragmatic properties of (12) are thus summarized in Table 7 below:

**Table 7:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (12).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(12) S=A	Proximate	Casual Ø EGO			

Finally, a third context where the Ø egophoric marker can be demonstrated is one where the speaker is superior to the addressee but shares a close relationship, such as that between a mother and child (13).

(13) Context: *X knows that her son Y attends school daily. She cuddles him and asks:*

- a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access  
Cha mhigaḥ school wā: lā, putā?  
2.SG.INFM yesterday school go.INFM-ØEGO Q dear?  
'Did you go to school yesterday, dear?' (Informal, endearing)
- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access  
Ji wanā  
1.SG go.INFM-PST.EGO  
'I did.' (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

Much like in (12), the speaker has proximate knowledge of the addressee's habits and routine and therefore uses the Ø egophoric marking to signal they do not need to seek privileged access for a question they already know the answer to. This produces an endearing register, with associated pragmatic properties such as proximity and social superiority of the speaker (Table 8).

**Table 8:** Verb inflections based on pragmatic properties for (13).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(13) S>A	Proximate	Endearment Ø EGO			

The Ø egophoric marking is thus observed in three different pragmatic contexts within informal interactions in Kathmandu Newā. In all of these contexts, we observe the register of interaction to be that of nuanced informality – a condescending nuance in (10), a casual nuance in (12), and an endearing sense of informality in (13). These deviate from the plain informal registers and other properties observed in the canonical example (2) that forms the baseline in terms of pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties.

Note that interactions with the Ø egophoric marking do not follow the “rule of anticipation” (Garrett and Bateman 2007:88) whereby the use of a verb inflection in a second-person question anticipates the same inflection to be used by the addressee in their answer. We observe that the speaker in (10), (12), and (13) uses

the Ø egophoric marking while the addressee in all three examples uses the egophoric one, as they speak based on the authority they hold over their declarative utterance. The departure of these interactions from the rule of anticipation is consistent with observations of interactions in Tibetan (Garrett and Bateman 2007) and Cha'palaa (Floyd 2018) that also use the egophoric or 'ego-evidential' (Garrett 2001) marking.

### 9.5.2 The Ø EGO marking and nuanced informality in non-volitional verbs

The Ø egophoric marking also occurs in interactions that use non-volitional verbs. As seen in (14), the non-volitional *thyan-* (arrive) is felicitous with the Ø egophoric marking, and is used in a similar context as that of (10):

- (14) Context: *A landlord thinks it is unlikely that his servant would have reached his mansion on time. He asks anyway:*
- a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access
- |           |           |         |                   |     |
|-----------|-----------|---------|-------------------|-----|
| Cha       | mhigaḥ    | ilay    | thyā:             | lā? |
| 2.SG.INFM | yesterday | on time | arrive. INFM-ØEGO | Q   |
- 'Did you arrive on time yesterday?' (Informal, condescending)
- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access
- |      |           |         |                     |
|------|-----------|---------|---------------------|
| Ji   | mhigaḥ    | ilay    | thyan-a             |
| 1.SG | yesterday | on time | arrive.INFM- NONEGO |
- 'I arrived on time.' (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

As discussed in Section 9.4.1, non-volitional verbs represent events that are not initiated by speech act participants. They are marked non-egophorically, as the lack of initiation in the propositional event leaves the speech act participants devoid of privileged access, for knowledge within the proposition is not 'self-borne' (Roque, Floyd and Norcliffe 2018). In non-volitional verbs such as *thyan-* (arrive), speech-act participants do not initiate the event of arriving at a place, but bear perceptual knowledge through their physical involvement. As such, the canonical examples (6)–(9) that use *thyan-* have speakers confer upon addressees the authority to answer their question through evidence sourced from such non-self-borne means, also described as 'direct evidence' in the literature on Lhasa Tibetan (Garrett 2001).

The presence of a Ø egophoric marking, however, signals the absence of even a perceptual source of evidence. If the interaction between landlord and servant in (10), which uses the volitional verb *wan-*, features the Ø egophoric marking to signal denial of privileged access, the interaction between the same speech-act par-

ticipants in (14), which uses the non-volitional verb *thyan-* (arrive), features the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking to signal denial of epistemic authority gained from perceptual evidence. In (10), the speaker substitutes the expected egophoric inflection  $\bar{a}$  with a zero-marked  $\emptyset$  egophoric in an interrogative clause type that uses a volitional verb. Similarly, here in (14), the speaker substitutes the expected non-egophoric inflection *-a* with a zero-marked  $\emptyset$  egophoric in an interrogative clause type that uses a non-volitional verb.

The pragmatic property affected here is, again, a nuanced informal register – the asymmetric power relation between the speaker, a landlord, and the addressee, a servant, combined with a  $\emptyset$  egophoric in their interaction, produces a condescending register as indicated in Table 9 below:

**Table 9:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (14).

SOCIAL EQUALITY		SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
			Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(14)	S>A	Distant	Ø EGO Condescending			

Notably, the pragmatic properties of (10) and (14), two interactions where the Ø egophoric marking is used, are the same, despite one featuring a volitional verb (privileged access) and the other a non-volitional verb (non-privileged access). This leads me to predict that the pragmatic properties for the remaining two contexts used in interactions featuring the volitional *wan-* – one between childhood friends in (12) and between a mother and her child in (13) – will be the same for interactions featuring the non-volitional *thyan-* in similar contexts, seen in (15) and (16). The prediction holds as we can see when comparing these examples demonstrated in Tables 7 and 8, and Tables 10 and 11, respectively.

- (15) Context: Person X knows his childhood friend Person Y typically arrives late to class. He asks anyway:
- a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access  
Cha m̥hiɡaḥ ilay thyã: lā?  
2.SG.INFM yesterday on time arrive. INFM-ØEGO Q
- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access  
Ji ilay thyan-a  
1.SG on time arrive. INFM-NONEGO  
'I arrived on time.' (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

**Table 10:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (15).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(15) S=A	Proximate	Causal Ø EGO			

(16) Context: *X knows her son Y reached home on time yesterday. She cuddles him and asks anyway:*

- a. Interrog: A Ø Privileged Access

Cha mhigaḥ ilay thyā: lā puta?  
 2.SG.INFM yesterday on time arrive. INFM-ØEGO Q dear?  
 ‘Did you arrive on time yesterday, dear?’ (Informal, endearing)

- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access

Ji ilay thyan-a  
 1.SG on time arrive. INFM-NONEGO  
 ‘I arrived on time.’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

**Table 11:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (16).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(16) S=A	Proximate	Causal Ø EGO			

In both (12) and (15), the speaker and addressee are social equals – childhood friends with proximate relations. Here, the use of Ø egophoric marking correlates with a casual informal register. In (13) and (16), the speaker and addressee have proximate relations, but the speaker is superior to the addressee. Here, the use of Ø egophoric marking correlates with an endearing register. The only difference between the interactions in these two pairs is that (12) and (13) employ the volitional *wan-* whereas (15) and (16) employ the non-volitional *thyan-*. This observation, along with the one made between (10) and (14) confirms that similar properties in the pragmatics may prevail despite differences in the semantic class of verbs in Kathmandu Newā, and that the Ø egophoric marking is consistent across different semantic classes of verbs.

We can now expect the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking to hold across volitional and non-volitional verb classes of Kathmandu Newā, and not just the verbs of *wan-* and *thyan-* discussed above. As seen in Tables 12 and 13, the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking is prevalent across the language in numerous verbs from both verb classes. As the pair of verbs *wan-* and *thyan-*, which end with an *-n* stem-final consonant, adopt a nasal phonological quality with the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking, I have sub-categorized the list of additional verbs here according to their respective stem-final consonants to attest to the phonological form of their  $\emptyset$  egophoric inflection.

**Table 12:** EGO, NON-EGO, and  $\emptyset$  EGO inflections of volitional verbs with different stem-final consonants.

STEM-FINAL MORPHEME	VERB	EGO	NON-EGO	$\emptyset$ EGO
<i>-n</i>	<i>Wan-</i> (go)	Wanā	Wana	Wā:
<i>-ay</i>	<i>Nay-</i> (eat)	Nayā	Nala	Na:
<i>-iy</i>	<i>Biy-</i> (give)	Biyā	Bila	Bī:
<i>-l</i>	<i>Tal-</i> (keep)	Tayā	Tala	Ta:
<i>-t</i>	<i>Sa:t-</i> (call)	Sa:tā	Sa:tala	Sa:tu:
<i>-k</i>	<i>Lāk-</i> (snatch)	Lākā	Lākala	Lāku:
<i>-p</i>	<i>Kop-</i> (assist)	Kopā	Kopala	Kopyu:

(verb list from Malla 1986:36–37)

**Table 13:** NON-EGO, and  $\emptyset$  EGO inflections of non-volitional verbs with different stem-final consonants.

STEM-FINAL MORPHEME	VERB	EGO	NON-EGO	$\emptyset$ EGO
<i>-n</i>	<i>Thyan-</i> (arrive)	-	Thyana	Thyā:
	<i>Luman-</i> (remember)	-	Lumana	Lumā:
<i>-y</i>	<i>Siy-</i> (know)	-	Sila	Syū:
	<i>Thuy-</i> (understand)	-	Thula	Thū:
<i>-l</i>	<i>Cāl-</i> (feel external stimuli)	-	Cāla	Cā:

(source: personal knowledge, verified)

In this section, I have demonstrated the pragmatic correlates of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking in informal interactions in Kathmandu Newā. I observe that the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking has similar pragmatic effects in interactions that use volitional as well as non-volitional verbs. I also observe a correspondence of egophoric and non-egophoric markings with a plain informal register and the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking with nuanced informal registers, which allows the prediction of a similar pattern within formal interactions in the language. In the next section, I will examine if this prediction holds, using constructed interactions in formal contexts in Kathmandu Newā.

## 9.6 Egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā

Formality in Kathmandu Newā is typically marked by parts of speech with formal semantics and morpho-syntactic correlates. Thus far in this chapter, we have encountered pronouns and a selective pair of verbs used in informal contexts, with informal semantics denoted by the gloss ‘INFM’ in Sections 9.4 and 9.5. When used in formal contexts, these very parts of speech acquire formal semantics specific to the speech act participants engaged in interaction. The informal second-person pronoun *cha* then changes into the formal *chi*; the informal third-person pronoun *wa* changes into the formal *waykah*; and the informal root verbs *wan-* (go) and *thyan-* (arrive) change into their common formal counterpart *jha-*(go/arrive).

### 9.6.1 EGO marking and formality in volitional verbs

Using this new set of formal pronouns and verbs in this section, I will examine interactions with formal registers, including the plain formal register, and various nuanced formal registers in Kathmandu Newā for corresponding properties of social equality, distance among speech act participants, and how these pragmatic properties interact with egophoricity. Similar to observations in Section 9.5, I will check for patterns of agreement among parts of speech within the clause, and how the volitional *wan-* (go) and the non-volitional *thyan-* (arrive) manifest morpho-syntactically, in the respective pragmatic contexts. This dataset of interactions will further test the hypothesis on the relationship between egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā.

The first set of examples for the formal domain comprises an exchange between socially equal acquaintances in (17) and another between social equals referring to a third-person, a common acquaintance in (18).

- (17) Context: *Person X asks acquaintance Person Y if he went to an event.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access
- |                              |           |       |                 |     |                |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------------|-----|----------------|
| Chi                          | mhigaḥ    | ana   | jhāy-ā          | lā? |                |
| 2.SG.INFM                    | yesterday | there | go.FRML-PST.EGO | Q   |                |
| 'Did you go there yesterday? |           |       |                 |     | (plain formal) |
- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access
- |          |                    |  |
|----------|--------------------|--|
| Ji       | wan-ā              |  |
| 1.SG     | go.INFM-PST.NONEGO |  |
| 'I did.' |                    |  |
- (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

- (18) Context: *Person X asks Person Y if Person Z went to an event.*
- a. Interrog: A ≠ Privileged Access  
Waykaḥ      ana      jhāl-a                      lā?  
3.SG.FRML   there   go.FRML-PST.NONEGO   Q  
'Did he go there?' (Formal, plain)
- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access  
Waykaḥ      ana      jhāl-a  
3.SG.FRML   there   go.INFM-PST.EGO  
'He went there' (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

In (17), the speaker who addresses an acquaintance employs a formal second-person pronoun *chi*, which agrees with a formal root verb *jha-* (go), marked with an egophoric marker. This sequence correlates with a plain formal register and is associated with properties shown in Table 14 below. In (18), we observe a similar sequence for sentences referring to a third person. Here, the formal third-person pronoun *waykaḥ* agrees with the formal verb *jha-* (go), which is marked with the non-egophoric marker. This again correlates with a plain formal register and its associated pragmatic properties shown in Table 14:

**Table 14:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (17) and (18).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(17) S=A	Distant			EGO	
(18) S=A=R	Distant			NON-EGO	

Compared to example (2), repeated below for convenience, (17) has formal semantics in its pronoun and root verb, and greater social distance between socially equal speech act participants, as would be expected in a formal interaction. The same differences hold between the informal third-person interaction in (3) and the formal third-person interaction in (18).

- (2') Context: *Person X misses a party and asks his colleague, Person Y, if she went.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access  
Cha              ana      wan-ā                      lā?  
2.SG.INFM   there   go.INFM-PST.EGO   Q  
'Did you go there?' (plain informal)





The pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties associated with the augmented formal register in these interactions are presented in Table 15 below:

**Table 15:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for (19) and (20).

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(19) S<A	Distant				EGO + EGO (Aux)
(20) S and A<R	Distant				EGO + NON-EGO (Aux)

This sub-section has briefly demonstrated the pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties of interactions with plain formal and augmented formal registers in Kathmandu Newā, focusing on the semantics of formal parts of speech, the egophoric marking in plain formal second-person interrogatives, non-egophoric marking in plain formal third-person interrogatives, and the deferential auxiliary used to augment formality. The next sub-section will examine further types of nuanced formal registers that employ the Ø egophoric marking.

### 9.6.2 The Ø EGO marking and nuanced formality in volitional verbs

In what follows, I show how the Ø egophoric marking can affect further types of nuanced formal registers, which, as compared to the baseline example of the plain formal register in (17), note a reduction of formality to produce semi-formal registers. Consider first the example (21) where the Ø egophoric marking used on a formal root verb *jha-*, combines with the formal pronoun *chi* in an interaction between acquaintances:

- (21) Context: *Person X wants to know if acquaintance Person Y attended an event.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access
- |                              |           |       |                   |               |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------------------|---------------|
| Chi                          | mhigaḥ    | ana   | jhā:              | lā?           |
| 2.SG.INFM                    | yesterday | there | go.FRML-PST. ØEGO | Q             |
| 'Did you go there yesterday? |           |       |                   | (semi-formal) |

- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access

Ji wan-ā

1.SG go.INFM-PST.NONEGO

'I did.'

(Source: personal knowledge, verified)

When minimally paired with (17) from Section 9.6.1, the only difference noted in example (21) is a change from the egophoric verb marking to an Ø egophoric verb marking. This morphological change denotes a reduction of formality from a plain formal register in (17) to a semi-formal one in (21). As formality and social distance positively correlate (see comparison between baseline (17) and augmented formal (19)), a reduction of formality here would imply a reduction of social distance between speech act participants.

There are further ways of being semi-formal when speaking in Kathmandu Newā; the next two examples will exhibit these. Example (22) features a different pair of speech act participants – childhood friends who have grown old and are now their respective individuals:

(22) Context: *X and Y are elderly gentlemen who have known each other since childhood.*

- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access

Chi mhigaḥ ana wā: lā?

2.SG.FRML yesterday there go. INFM-ØEGO Q

'Did you go there yesterday?

(semi-formal)

- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access

Ji ana wan-ā

1.SG there go.INFM-PST.EGO

'I went there'

(Source: personal knowledge, verified)

When minimally paired with (21), we see just one morphological difference: (22) uses the informal root verb *wan-*, compared to the formal root verb *jha-* in (21). The informal semantics of the verb in (22), combined with its Ø egophoric marking and a formal pronoun *chi* together serve a unique interpersonal dynamic: the speaker here respects the addressee's personhood formed during their adult life, yet acknowledges their closeness and familiarity as childhood friends. This element of closeness and familiarity is expectedly absent between the acquaintances in (21). Example (22) thus features a semi-formal register that is a shade different from the one in (21).

When minimally paired with (12) from Section 9.5.1, which also features childhood friends as speech act participants, we see that in both cases, the Ø egophoric marking reduces the degree of formality from their respective baseline examples:

Example (12) takes on a casual informal register as compared to the plain informal register in baseline example (2). Example (22), which features a  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on an informal root verb *wan-*, takes on a semi-formal register as compared to the egophoric marking on a formal root verb *jha-* in baseline example (17). In both cases, the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking signals the speaker's familiarity with his childhood friend, the addressee, well enough to access their 'territory of information' (Kamio 1997).

The difference between (12) and (22), on the other hand, is that in (12) the speaker uses the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking to signal a lack of need to seek privileged access. The speaker, in effect, does not grant the addressee their mental autonomy. In (22), though, the formal pronoun *chi* gives the addressee respect and therefore, the interaction retains the speaker's mental autonomy despite the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on the verb. This minimal pair thus reveals the sole effect of formality – here in the form of the formal semantics of the pronoun *chi* – in preserving the mental autonomy of the addressee.

A third example of a semi-formal register in Kathmandu Newā features a married couple, with husband and wife born in the 1950s, as speech act participants. In Newā society, couples wedded in an arranged marriage, and from this generation, tend to share gendered dynamics where wives address their husbands respectfully. In (23), a wife addresses her husband using the formal pronoun *chi* and combines it with the informal root verb for 'go', *wan-*, to signal a respectful but proximate social relationship. Additionally, the verb in (23) inflects egophorically as the wife regards her husband as a bearer of privileged access.

- (23) Context: *Person X wants to ask her husband if he attended an event*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access  
 Chi mhigaḥ ana wan-ā lā?  
 2.SG.FRML yesterday there go.-PST.EGO Q  
 'Did you go there yesterday? (semi-formal)
- b. Decl: S = Privileged Access  
 Ji ana wan-ā  
 1.SG there go.INFM-PST.EGO  
 'I went there' (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

The semi-formality in (23) is distinguished from the semi-formal interactions in (21) and (22) by the informal root verb that inflects egophorically. When minimally paired with (22), the only difference is seen in the verb marking – the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking in (22) gives a more casual tone of semi-formality, whereas the egophoric marker in (23) changes the register, giving it a more respectful tone. The semi-formal register in (23) is therefore a shade more formal than the one in (22), making

this yet another minimal pair that culls out the trait of the egophoric marking as being associated with formality. The pragmatic and morpho-syntactic properties associated with the semi-formal registers in (21), (22), and (23) are laid out in Table 16 below:

**Table 16:** Verb inflection based on pragmatic properties for semi-formal registers.

SOCIAL EQUALITY	SOCIAL DISTANCE	REGISTER			
		Nuanced Informal	Plain informal	Plain formal	Nuanced Formal
(21)	S=A	Distant			ØEGO (formal verb)
(22)	S=A	Neutral			ØEGO (informal verb)
(23)	S<A	Proximate			EGO (informal verb)

This sub-section has covered a set of examples that demonstrate the role of the Ø egophoric marking in affecting different nuances of semi-formality in Kathmandu Newā. How the Ø egophoric marking affects nuanced formal interactions, however, is different from its effect on nuanced informal interactions discussed in Section 9.5. In the informal domain, the Ø egophoric results in a nullification of privileged access, denying the addressee their mental autonomy. In the formal domain, though, the effect is mainly that of reduced formality and not a denial of the addressee's mental autonomy.<sup>2</sup> The consistent use of the formal pronoun *chi*, alongside the Ø egophoric marking in the verb, ascribes respect and mental autonomy. This alludes to Brown and Levinson's classic theory on politeness, where speakers employ politeness strategies to mitigate a face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson 1987). In Kathmandu Newā, the Ø egophoric marking, as demonstrated in Section 9.5, affects the face-threatening act of denying the addressee their mental autonomy. Conversely, using a formal pronoun, as seen in Section 9.6.2, mitigates the threat by attributing to the addressee a state of mental autonomy, despite the presence of a morphological category that in informal contexts threatens face.

This section has also documented the effect of the egophoric marking on augmenting formality in the language. This observation, along with observations on the role of the Ø egophoric in manipulating formality, crucially highlights a strong correlation between egophoricity and formality.

The next sub-section looks at nuanced formality in non-volitional verbs. As I have observed in Section 9.5.2 that similar pragmatic properties prevail despite

<sup>2</sup> A detailed examination of the role of formality in ascribing mental autonomy is beyond the scope of this paper and will be conducted in forthcoming work.

differences in the semantic class of verbs in Kathmandu Newā, I will do away with listing out all examples of nuanced formality for the non-volitional verb *thyan-* (arrive), except for one that overtly highlights the role of formality in triggering the egophoric inflection, and strengthens my stance on formality being affected by a strategy of ascribing mental autonomy to the addressee.

### 9.6.3 EGO marking and nuanced formality in non-volitional verbs

As discussed in Section 9.4.1, a lack of initiation in a non-volitional propositional event leaves speech act participants devoid of privileged access, therefore resulting in non-volitional verbs being marked with the non-egophoric marker. When used in the context of augmented formality, however, we see an additional element of a causative morpheme *-k*. The verb *thyan-* (arrive), combined with a causative *-k*, gains a causer subject argument, i.e. a subject who causes the event of arriving. When the action is intentionally caused, the subject associated with the non-volitional action acquires agency, which subsequently warrants the appearance of the egophoric marking.

- (24) Context: *Person X asks her father-in-law if he arrived on time yesterday.*
- a. Interrog: A = Privileged Access
- |                |           |         |                     |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------------|
| Chi            | mhigaḥ    | ilay    | thyan- <b>kā</b>    |
| 2.SG.FRML      | yesterday | on time | arrive-CAUS.PST.EGO |
| diy- <b>ā</b>  | lā?       |         |                     |
| be.AUX-PST.EGO | Q         |         |                     |
- ‘Did you (cause to) arrive on time yesterday? (augmented formal)
- b. Decl: S ≠ Privileged Access
- |      |         |                        |
|------|---------|------------------------|
| Ji   | ilay    | thyan- <b>a</b>        |
| 1.SG | on time | arrive.INFM-PST.NONEGO |
- ‘I arrived on time’ (Source: personal knowledge, verified)

Contrary to conventional behaviour of signalling perceptual evidence with a non-egophoric marking, the intention to augment formality in (25) triggers a causative egophoric marking on the non-volitional verb *thyan-*. This example demonstrates the relationship between egophoricity and formality very well – for a non-egophoric marking on the main verb, in contrast, would not be felicitous and neither would the informal pronoun *cha* when combined with the causative egophoric and auxiliary, as seen in the following minimal pairs:

- (25) Context: *Person X asks her father-in-law if he arrived on time yesterday.*

Interrog: A = Privileged Access

\*Chi mhigaḥ ilay thyan-a diy-ā lā?  
 2.SG.FRML yesterday on time arrive-PST.NONEGO be.AUX-PST.EGO Q  
 ‘Did you arrive on time yesterday? (augmented formal)’

- (26) Context: *Person X asks her father-in-law if he arrived on time yesterday.*

Interrog: A = Privileged Access

\*Cha mhigaḥ ilay thyan-kā diy-a lā?  
 2.SG.INFM yesterday on time arrive-CAUS.PST.EGO be.AUX-PST.EGO Q  
 ‘Did you arrive on time yesterday? (augmented formal)’

The unexpected egophoricity in (25), therefore, arises from conferring volition upon a superior addressee, even in a non-volitional context. This, again, would not be the case if the addressee were socially equal or inferior to the speaker. Therefore, addressees can be considered as holders of privileged access due to the superiority of their social status even in a non-volitional context. This testifies to the importance of agency and volition in the system of formality encoded in Kathmandu Newā. The pattern is seen in numerous non-volitional verbs across the language, with different stem-final consonants as documented in Table 17:

**Table 17:** Non-volitional verbs in NON-EGO, Ø EGO, and EGO inflection patterns.

STEM-FINAL MORPHEME	VERB	NON-EGO (PLAIN FORMALITY)	Ø EGO (REDUCED FORMALITY)	EGO + AUX (AUGMENTED FORMALITY)
-n	<i>Thyan-</i> (arrive)	Thyana	Thyā:	Thyankā diyā
	<i>Tan-</i> (misplace)	Tana	Ta:	Tankā diyā
	<i>Mhan-</i> (dream)	Mhana	Mha:	Mhankā diyā
	<i>Luman-</i> (remember)	Lumana	Luman:	Lumankā diyā
-y	<i>Thuy-</i> (understand)	Thula	Thu:	Thuykā diyā
	<i>Siy-</i> (know)	Sila	Syu:	Siykā diyā
-l	<i>Cāl-</i> (feel emotion)	Cāla	Cā:	Cāyekā diyā

(source: personal knowledge, verified)

We thus get a stronger testament to a relation between egophoricity and formality through example (25) that ascribes privileged access to the addressee even in a conventionally unexpected context.

## 9.7 Discussion

The literature on egophoricity in Kathmandu Newā has long established a binary system that features the egophoric marker as a signifier of privileged access and the non-egophoric marker as a signifier of non-privileged access. These markers have been typically examined in first-person declaratives, second-person interrogatives, and third-person clauses of both types. A list of three conditions – epistemic authority, involvement and access to the speech-act participant's ontological subjectivity (referred to as 'privileged access') – has explained the appearance of this grammatical category in Kathmandu Newā. As these conditions and the concepts within have overlapped strongly with the definition of the grammatical category of evidentiality, the literature always struggled to describe egophoricity as a separate entity.

In this chapter I propose formality in interactional language to be a key differentiator – a variable that interacts independently with egophoricity, from the grammatical category's evidence-sourcing traits. I argue for this position by first validating the existence of a third member within the egophoricity paradigm of Kathmandu Newā – one that morphologically signals the absence of egophoricity and indicates a complete nullification of privileged access. The  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking, as I call it, semantically correlates with an imperfective interpretation in the context of a certain class of stative verbs and in contexts where otherwise (non) egophoric marking would be expected, it correlates with a manipulation in privileged access, formality and social distance.

This chapter makes several observations on the behaviour of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking, and conversely the egophoric marking, which shed light on the relationship between egophoricity and formality. A first minimal pair between interactions in (11) and (10) shows us that controlling for all other properties of an interaction, a change from the egophoric marking to the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on the verb accounts for a change in register – from a plain informal register in the former to a nuanced informal register in the latter.

Further, minimal pairing of example (10), that employs the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking on a volitional verb in an informal context, with (14), that does the same but on a non-volitional verb, shows that the effect of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking is the same across volitional and non-volitional contexts. This is an important observation as it suggests that the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking affects register, thus (in)formality, independently of the volitionality of the propositional event. There is evidence, thus, that formality interacts with egophoricity independently of the volitionality and non-volitionality of verbs.



This further indicates the distinction of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking from the egophoric and non-egophoric markings as the latter two signal privileged versus non-privileged access, which the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking interacts independently with refer to Sections 9.5.1 and 9.5.2. Observations in Section 9.5.2 that distinguish the non-egophoric marking from the  $\emptyset$  egophoric, further supports this view. We thus come to understand egophoricity as a bivalent feature where both the positive (egophoric) and the negative (non-egophoric) values are meaningful in contrast to the zero value of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking.

Further observations made in this chapter include the difference in the effect of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking in examples with informal registers versus those with formal registers. In the former category, the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking signals the lack of need for the speaker to gain privileged access to the addressee's mind, or in other contexts, the marking signals the speaker to disregard the addressee as a holder of privileged access. When controlled for formality, on the other hand, the same marking is only effective in reducing the degree of formality in interactions, and not as effective in nullifying privileged access. As such, this observation reinforces the idea that properties of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking are independent of the evidential aspects of the grammar of Kathmandu Newā, and that social status and formality towards the addressee are critical variables that play a role in retaining their mental autonomy.

Finally, several observations in this chapter attest to the importance of formality and the social status of the addressee, in conversely, triggering egophoricity. A stand-out example is seen in (24) where a non-volitional verb *thyan-* (arrive) is observed to carry a causative egophoric marking, accompanied by an egophoric auxiliary verb when addressing a person of superior social status. This unexpected use of egophoricity in a non-volitional context testifies to the role of egophoricity in ascribing privileged access to a socially superior addressee, even in a non-volitional context. When considered alongside observations of the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking in nullifying mental autonomy, one is bound to infer egophoricity as a politeness strategy to mitigate the face-threatening act in Kathmandu Newā of having one's mental autonomy nullified.

## 9.8 Conclusion and future research

Re-examining the egophoricity paradigm of Kathmandu Newā, by including the  $\emptyset$  egophoric marking as discussed, expands the discourse on epistemicity to include the role of formality. This chapter shows that understanding the role of formality, observed to exist independently of epistemic aspects such as privileged access, can

enable a clearer distinction between the description of egophoricity and evidentiality as grammatical categories. As various registers of nuanced (in)formality have been observed to be caused by agreements between the (in)formal parts of speech and egophoricity or Ø egophoricity in verbs, without heeding the expected patterns for presence, absence or nullification of privileged access, formality is seen to interact with egophoricity independently. This observation is also attested for when the role of egophoricity as a politeness strategy to uphold the mental autonomy of the addressee is made clear.

With the above points as key takeaways from this chapter, future research that examines the syntax of egophoricity and formality in Kathmandu Newā would be desirable to obtain a structural understanding of the interaction between the two variables. Research on patterns of evidentials and the interaction between evidentials and other parts of speech would shed further light on the topics as well.

## List of abbreviations

1.SG	First-person singular
2.SG	Second-person singular
3.SG	Third-person singular
PST	Past
NPST	Non-past
EGO	Egophoric
NONEGO	Non-egophoric
Ø EGO	Null-egophoric
Q	Questioner
ERG	Ergative
COMP	Complementiser
INFM	Informal
FRML	Formal
AUX	Auxiliary
CAUS	Causative

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