

Editorial

Since time immemorial, Nepal, undoubtedly, has been a multilingual country. However, until the restoration of democracy, the language policy of the government, especially during 1846-1990 AD, was fundamentally guided by the monolingual ideology. As a result, many minority speech communities were gradually and unknowingly forced to be assimilated into the dominant speech communities. It further resulted in designating more than 56% of the mother tongues enumerated by the Census, 2011 as unsafe/endangered.

This situation is further aggravated by the infatuation of all the speech communities including Nepali with the growing communicative authority of English. Besides, the minority speech communities in Nepal are powerfully magnetized for the use of Nepali, the language of wider communication, in the major domains of language use like education, mass media and office. Thanks to this, despite the fact that language is equated with the ethnic identity and power, the attempts made by the speech communities, government and non-governmental organizations till the date have not been practically result-oriented.

The academic advice that cultural values and life-crucial indigenous knowledge can only be conserved by preserving the languages embodying them has not yet been seriously approved and followed. It is evidently exemplified by the pitiable implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education in Nepal. Unless effective interventions are timely and collectively made such speech communities are likely to be assimilated globally into English and nationally into Nepali.

In order to prevent such languages being lost, by far the most important intervention comprises motivating to use such languages in speaking and broadening the domains of language use such as education, mass media and local government offices. Besides, some effective interventions such as detailed language census and survey, orthography development for unwritten languages, grammar writing for hitherto undescribed languages, dictionary compilation of indigenous and endangered languages, mother tongue textbooks, mother tongue-based adult literacy, language development planning and language documentation have to be effectively implemented.

Since its inception, Central Department of Linguistics, as a teaching cum research department, has been involved in documenting languages, conducting sociolinguistic survey, writing grammars, compiling dictionaries, preparing mother tongue-based textbooks and publishing research journals singly or collaboratively. *Gipan* is a research journal of Central Department of Linguistics. It has been exclusively dedicated to the preservation and promotion of endangered languages of Nepal; however, it has been solely published in English. This volume, in compatible to the spirit of multilingualism, for the first time, has included the papers in Nepali as well. This was further necessitated by the motive to uphold the dignity and historicity of the title of the journal, viz., *Gipan*. Such journal naturally demands to be fully inclusive and linguistically multilingual. *Gipan* itself is a word for 'language' in Kusunda, a seriously endangered language of

Nepal. It is, indeed, a righteous step for judicious implementation of the language policy of Nepal.

This volume has been uniquely contributed by the senior as well as the young and promising linguists of Nepal. It has incorporated 16 papers from diverse sub-disciplines of linguistics; namely, acoustic phonetics, descriptive linguistics, morphosyntax, ethnolinguistics, semantics, contact linguistics, translation, applied linguistics, orthography, language policy and linguistic survey. These contributions are hoped to be useful for teaching Nepalese linguistics in particular and doing further research in the languages of Nepal in general.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the editors, paper contributors and to those who directly or indirectly helped to publish this volume.

Chief Editor