

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

40TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF NEPAL*

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This presidential address raises issues in language policy of Nepal regarding multiple official languages in the government business. Implementation of this policy requires language of record and a group of government staff to work on different languages. By creating jobs for hundreds of linguists, this solution addresses the university officials' concern about decreasing number of students in linguistics.

Keywords: language policy, official language, linguistics job market

Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Bhim Prasad Subedi, Chair, University Grants Commission, Nepal

Special Guest, Professor Dr. Jagat Prasad Upadhyaya, Member-Secretary, Nepal Academy

Guest, Shree Usha Hamal, Member, Language Commission

Guest, Professor Shiva Lal Bhusal, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University,

Keynote speaker, Professor Ramawatar Yadav, Former Vice Chancellor, Purvanchal University, Nepal

Professor Abhi Subedi, former President Linguistic Society of Nepal

Professor Dubi Nanda Dhakal, Head, Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University

Dr. Dambar Chemjong, Head, Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University

Mr. Kamal Poudel, Chief Editor, Nepalese Linguistics,

My Gurus,

* This Presidential Address was delivered at the Inaugural Ceremony of 40th Annual Conference of the Linguistic Society of Nepal at CEDA Hall, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu on 26 November 2019.

Former Presidents of Linguistic Society of Nepal, Executive Director, Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA), this venue, where we are at this moment,

Heads and Professors at central and other departments of Tribhuvan and other universities,

Distinguished Guests from other institutions,

Life Members of Linguistic Society of Nepal Presenters and participants from home and abroad,

Invited presenters Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya, actually we have two talks on 28th, one by Dr. Bhattacharya and another by Kumon Tokumaru,

Executive Members of the Society and Members of the Editorial Board of Nepalese Linguistics, Members of the organizing and supporting institutions and the volunteers.

Warm welcome at this morning at the Fortieth Annual Conference of Linguistic Society of Nepal's Inaugural program.

I beg for apologies from the foreign participants as I would like to talk on only the national issues as this is the right forum to present issues on Nepalese linguistics among the representatives of concerned government agencies as well as the university officials. I will put forward two three issues with special focus eventhough these issues have been already raised by myself as well as others in similar occasions. The issues are policy issues and issues on implementation.

A crucial policy issue which I would like to repeat here from the already raised issues is that the unit of additional official language should be local level not the province as mentioned in the constitution. To address the issue, constitution should be ammended. The agency to recommend for this ammendment is Language Commission. I

invite you to join my paper in the poster session where we can discuss in detail.

The second point which I would like to raise here belongs to implementation of the constitutional provision of additional official language. Huge number of government personnels, at least about 8,000, are required to implement this policy. As more than one languages in official use results into the need of new provision on language of record in the constitution, which was there in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 but missing in the present constitution. Language of record is the language in which the original documents need to be translated into the language of record which will be produced to the higher courts or other government agencies where the language of the original document is not used officially in case of any dispute or other situations in future in which the document is needed. This dual process of documenting in one language and translating it into another language requires highly specialized and well trained staff in the public service. To be specific, to be native to the language of additional official use and trained in linguistics will be the basic requirements of this group of staff.

I would like to relate this point to the question on number of students in Central Department of Linguistics at Tribhuvan University raised by respected Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in his speech earlier. Number of student depends mostly on the job market which, I think as a linguist, is shrunk because of the clumsy process of introducing new subjects in Bachelor's level and recruitment of required teachers on the one hand and government's unwillingness to recruit linguists in the public service.

I am ashamed to note in front of the Member of Language Commission, whom we have invited as Guest, that we have Language Commission in this country with no single linguist, neither as member nor as staff.

The provision of linguists or language group staff in public service commission of Nepal will address both the concern of our respected Dean as well as the issue of social inclusion because this provision will not only create the job market it will be only for native speakers of other than

Nepali languages. I would like to request to respected Member of the Language Commission Shree Usha Hamal to make recommendation for creating language group (with trained in linguistics) in public service. It may not be easy for you and all other people in the Commission right now who have background of being public servant of education group, I would like to humbly remind that a national interest is always greater than an interest of any other smaller group.

Finally, I would like to repeat my request to the community members, please keep using your mother tongue continue so that it can survive till the government will begin substantial language revival and development efforts and let fortune teller linguists' forecast fail.

Let me conclude my address with this, perhaps the shortest Presidential speech in the Society's history.

I would like to thank all the guests, presenters, participants, volunteers, co-organizer, supporters and Members of the LSN Executive Committee, and other people. Without your participation and active involvement, this program would not have happened.

Thank you for your patience.

Thank you all.