

The Role of Radio Nepal in Constructing Newar Linguistic and Cultural Identity

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa program in building linguistic, cultural, and musical identity. It also explores how the program influences, helps create or maintain identities, and preserves existing forms in Nepal's diverse multilingual media ecosystem. A triangulated mixed-methods design was used, consisting of a survey of 18 regular listeners, 10 key informant interviews, 10 Jeewan Daboo interviews, and content analysis of 70 Nepal Bhasa news bulletins. Survey data shows that 68% of respondents regularly listen to the broadcasts, while 82% state they personally benefit from a better understanding of language, culture, and identity. The qualitative findings suggest a strengthening of linguistic authenticity through the use of native vocabulary and idiomatic expression, along with cultural continuity based on storytelling, music, festivals, and the Nepal Bhasa Movement. This content analysis acknowledges that indigenous vocabulary is commonly used. Listeners wanted more airtime, prime-time scheduling, and expert-led content. Overall, the research highlights how Radio Nepal offers a vital space for maintaining Newar identity and the implications of inclusive media policy for minority languages.

Keywords: Identity construction, Nepal Bhasa preservation, Newar identity, Radio Nepal

Introduction

Traditionally, radio media have served to spread information, produce unity, and shape the consciousness of a people. Its influence is particularly prominent in transitions and politically sensitive times, as well as in spreading information in Nepalese culture and practice, ensuring that what we listen to remains reliable or at least highly meaningful to many people. In this sense, Radio Nepal illustrates language politics in the country.

Founded as Democracy Radio Nepal on January 18, 1951, it aired with Khas-Nepali, Nepal Bhasa, and Hindi—encouraging multilingual participation in the anti-Rana struggle. Radio Nepal was established in April 1951 after the Rana regime was overthrown and became visible in Nepal Bhasa, which expanded through news bulletins and the culture show Jeewan Daboo, highlighting community recognition and identity formation (Maharjan, 2024). These broadcasts were limited after the Panchayat period, which sparked the Nepal Bhasa Movement and calls for democratic reforms. After democracy was restored in 1990, the broadcasting of Nepal Bhasa increased until now,

and recent programs such as *Hyupaya Nuga: Sa* reflect a revival of awareness of linguistic diversity. Today, Radio Nepal broadcasts in 25 languages (Maharjan, 2024).

Jeewan Daboo remains one of the first such programs of historic Nepal Bhasa for the purpose of cultural identity. This coincides with the constitutional tenets of federalism and inclusion and participatory governance enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal (2015). Interviews with community leaders, cultural activists, and professionals help the program foster individual as well as collective identity. Though Nepal Bhasa is one of Nepal's oldest tribal languages, it was only reported to be the first language of the majority (4.5%) of people (Government of Nepal, 2020). Its cultural significance continues, as evidenced by the ballad *Rajamati* and its inclusion as the official language of Bagmati Province in 2024 of Nepal. Broadcasting in Nepal Bhasa therefore symbolizes more than communication—it represents cultural pride and linguistic continuity (Fuller, 2007).

The construction of linguistic identity combines symbolic and practical aspects (Kroskrity, 2000). Language use in broadcasting shapes not only comprehension but also how people feel a sense of belonging and representation in a given society (McLuhan, 2017; Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2019). Though community radio strengthens the voices of the marginalized (Bosch, 2007), Radio Nepal's national coverage has a broader impact, affirming indigenous voices at a broader, institutional level.

This study is conducted with the following objectives: (a) to study the emergence of Nepal Bhasa in Radio Nepal, (b) to assess the process of Nepal Bhasa programming, and (c) to examine the ways in which these programs inform Newar linguistic identity.

Accordingly, the study focuses on examining the main question: What part does Radio Nepal play in helping to develop the linguistic identity of the Newar People of Nepal? The literature review concludes by noting a shortfall in the research on state-run media and linguistic identity construction, justifying this investigation.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive–analytical mixed-methods design to examine how Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa broadcasts contribute to the linguistic and cultural identity of the Newar community. The mixed approach enabled the researcher to integrate quantifiable audience responses with interpretive insights from interviews and broadcast content.

The quantitative component consisted of a structured questionnaire administered to 18 listeners of Nepal Bhasa programs, including M.A. Nepal Bhasa students at Tribhuvan University, Patandhoka, Lalitpur. Participants were selected purposively and through convenience sampling based on their regular exposure to Nepal Bhasa broadcasts. The questionnaire measured perceptions of linguistic clarity, cultural relevance, credibility, and personal benefits of the programs. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and

percentages were used to summarize the responses, which were later organized into six thematic dimensions representing listener evaluations.

The qualitative component was based on two sources: key informant interviews and an examination of interviews featured in Radio Nepal's Jeewan Daboo (Forum of Life) program. Ten key informants—including journalists, language activists, musicians, cultural experts, and policymakers—were purposively selected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed, and manually coded to identify themes related to linguistic practice, cultural representation, political identity, and the broader meaning of Nepal Bhasa broadcasting. Ten Jeewan Daboo interviews were also reviewed to understand lived experiences, ritual knowledge, cultural continuity, and community perspectives that complemented the quantitative findings.

Additionally, a 70-day content analysis of Nepal Bhasa news bulletins was carried out, covering broadcasts from 1 November 2024 to 8 January 2025. Seventy bulletins were examined to identify lexical patterns, including indigenous vocabulary, borrowed terms, and specialized terminology. Word-level coding helped determine the extent to which native linguistic forms were used in the news.

Triangulation of the survey data, key informant interviews, and lexical analysis strengthened the reliability and interpretive depth of the study by ensuring that conclusions were supported by converging evidence from multiple sources.

Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent before data collection. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing survey responses and using interviewee names only when they were public figures or provided consent. Participation was voluntary, and the information gathered was used solely for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

The results of the research, derived from both quantitative and qualitative investigations presented below, are explained in more detail.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative part of the analysis obtained six significant thematic dimensions which are interpreted in an overarching context of such language practice of Nepal Bhasa broadcasting in terms of audience response, in terms of identity construction.

Effectiveness of Nepal Bhasa Usage

This theme examines the performance of Nepal Bhasa, which is employed in news bulletins from Radio Nepal with reference to clarity of language and the appropriateness of indigenous cultural representations. These properties are particularly relevant to minority language media, as language use directly defines listener ability, cultural

identity, and perceived credibility of news content, making them key for minority language media.

Table 1: Audience Evaluation of Nepal Bhasa Usage in News Bulletins

Characteristics	Category	Percentage
Understandable	Excellent	58.82
	Satisfactory	29.42
	Hardly	11.76
Indigenous Content	Sufficient	23.52
	Satisfactory	64.72
	Hardly	11.76

Broadly, the findings suggest that listeners see the Nepal Bhasa utilized in news bulletins from Radio Nepal as linguistically clear and culturally sensitive. Most of the respondents indicated that the language spoken in these broadcasts is well understood, meaning that the accessibility and vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are well used.

Meanwhile, the positive response to indigenous material shows that traditional vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, honorifics, and culturally specific expressions fit neatly into the bulletins. Thus, it can be said that these broadcasts maintain a harmonious mix of clarity for wide reading and what is necessary to keep culture alive. This compromise is consistent with Fairclough (1992) who claims that linguistic choices are products of cultural identity and social dominance. Thompson (1995) further claims that mass-mediated language becomes symbolically interesting when it carries shared cultural references perceived by those consuming it. Such an interpretation in cultural contexts is especially apparent in this study where the respondents' appreciation of idiomatic expressions, seasonal references and cultural narratives reflects the strong symbolic resonance of Nepal Bhasa when meaningfully used in news contexts.

The positive reception reinforces the broader academic literature on minority-language media, which emphasizes their role in maintaining continuity of culture and the collective memory. According to Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011), embedding indigenous linguistic resources in public communication reinforces community ties and strengthens linguistic identity. These findings are similar to those presented by Maskey (2017) and Pradhan (2012), highlighting the role of consistent and authentic indigenous language use in the media in maintaining language vitality.

In total, we can state quite clearly that the stories about Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa news bulletins are both linguistically accurate as well as culturally meaningful. The audiences can largely appreciate the broadcasts, also maintaining the richness of the traditional idioms. It stands to reason that the two-fold success of the Nepal Bhasa news portal makes it not only an effective medium for disseminating information but also an important construct for forming cultural identities.

Credibility of Nepal Bhasa News

This theme is used to evaluate the credibility, balance, subject-matter coverage, and time coverage of the News from Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa. Public broadcaster credibility in broadcasting underlies identity building that allows journalists the confidence of other people, helping to build a cultural identity, strengthen identities and reinforce a sense of collective belonging. The assessments of the respondents are shown in the following table.

Table 2: Nepal Bhasa News Audience Assessment of the Credibility

Characteristics	Category	Percentage
Accuracy, Balance & Credibility	More Credible	17.64
	Credible	70.58
	Satisfactory	11.78
Subject Matter Presentation	Excellent	29.42
	Best	23.52
	Good	47.06
Time Allocation	Sufficient	11.76
	Need More	88.24

Responses show the audience believe Nepal Bhasa news bulletin is credible and trustworthy. But the trust in the accuracy and balance is so high that it suggests the audience views the broadcasts of the information as reliable, professionally crafted and in accordance to ethical news values. Such trust is fundamental to identity in that (credible) media act as authoritative sources on which communities assert their cultural and linguistic identity (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The quality of presentation of subjects, which ranged from good to excellent means that listeners believe that the subject matter is meaningful, relevant and represents Newar social, cultural and civic issues. This aligns with Thompson's (1995) concept of mediated communication as a site of cultural knowledge production, circulation, and legitimization. The quality of presentation suggests the program maintains the overarching themes, narrative framework, and clarity of context as was expected in professional broadcasting. However, there is a disturbing lack of time available, with 88.24 percent turning to us for additional airtime. This reflects an upward surge of demand for deeper connections to Nepal Bhasa content, and broader engagement as it indicates the community yearns for more spaces to express its cultures. These expectations support arguments that indigenous language programming has symbolic and functional significance in minority media contexts (Cormack, 2007). The call for additional time also implies that current broadcasts, though credible, are not sufficient to meet the expanding needs of the community in terms of information, identity, and cultural discourse.

The respondents' recognition of the program as a source for understanding Newar identity, learning language-related practices, and appreciating Nepal Bhasa culture further

emphasizes the role of Radio Nepal as a critical site for identity reinforcement. As argued by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), identity construction in multilingual societies often occurs through trusted media spaces where linguistic representation intersects with cultural recognition.

The results validate the good reputation of Nepal Bhasa news on the Radio Nepal in relation to its credibility, content relevance and significance. Despite that, the fact that the public continues to wish for extended broadcast time speaks the community's desire to have deeper engagement with their language and identity. As a result, Theme 2 makes it clear that trust and credibility in Nepal Bhasa media provide vital elements for cultural continuity and language empowerment.

Personal Benefits of Listening to Nepal Bhasa

This theme explores the personal gains that listeners attribute to Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa broadcasts. Personal benefit is an important indicator of how minority-language media contribute to the strengthening of linguistic pride, cultural connection, and self-recognition within a speech community. We detail in the results the degree to which the broadcast acts not only as an informational source, but as driver of identity-building.

Table 3: Perception by the Audience of the Individual Benefits of Nepal Bhasa Broadcasts

Characteristics	Category	Percentage
Benefits	Yes	82.35
Non-Benefits	No	5.88
No Idea	—	11.76

The responses show that, no matter what the topic, an overwhelming number of the listeners have identifiable personal benefits from Nepal Bhasa programming. These benefits, as described in qualitative comments, are deepened comprehension of Nepal Bhasa vocabulary, knowledge of culture and cultural tradition of Nepal and feeling the belongingness of the Newar community. These responses indicate that the broadcasts of Nepal Bhasa are a major medium of linguistic maintenance and of self-identification.

One benefit that has been reported is not a mere material gain. Hearing their mother tongue on a national broadcast has reinforced an emotional link to their own heritage and renewed their pride in linguistic identity, listeners said. This also provides support to Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011), that minority-language broadcasting practices in the public domain are symbolic strengthening and can help to affirm the language in the public domain, therefore making it symbolic of empowerment. For Moring (2007), minority-language broadcasting offers representational spaces in which communities receive reflection, further enhancing empowerment both psychologically and culturally.



Social Representation & Cultural Inclusion in Nepal Bhasa Broadcasting

A closer look at how often audiences listen to Nepal Bhasa broadcasting, and in what situations they do so, helps us understand its cultural importance and level of social inclusion. Listening patterns—whether audiences listen only to Nepal Bhasa programs or combine them with Nepali broadcasts—show how Nepal Bhasa is positioned within Nepal’s wider media landscape. These patterns suggest that Nepal Bhasa is not only an identity-based language for its speakers but also functions as a cultural support language for bilingual listeners. Table 4 below shows how these preferences were distributed.

Table 4: Audience Preference and Language Choice in Broadcast Listening

Category	Percentage
Nepal Bhasa Listener Only	35.30
Both Nepal Bhasa and Nepali	64.70

The distribution of listening patterns reveals important insights into how Nepal Bhasa broadcasts function within Nepal’s multilingual media ecology. The fact that 64.70% of respondents listen to both Nepal Bhasa and Nepali news, while 35.30% rely exclusively on Nepal Bhasa, suggests that Radio Nepal’s Nepal Bhasa program serves as both an identity-specific platform and a supplementary cultural resource within broader media consumption.

Although a minority listens exclusively in Nepal Bhasa, their proportion is significant. It underscores that for more than one-third of the audience, the program is not just informative but a primary linguistic space through which they maintain cultural belonging. This is consistent with Fishman’s (1999) argument about the use of minority-language media as “strongholds” in maintaining ethnolinguistic vibrancy. For most people who consume content in both Nepal Bhasa and Nepali, the broadcasts seem to serve an augmentative role instead of a replacement for majority language-based media. It reflects Riggins’ (1992) observation that minority language audiences are in a cycle of pursuing competing mainstream needs to access certain forms of information while also navigating a culture-based identity. Hence, Nepal Bhasa broadcasts serve an independent cultural and emotional purpose which contributes for a greater informational function to that, while the respondent’s willingness has shown preference for bilingual listening.

Qualitative comments also indicate that listeners seek more broadcast duration, prime-time broadcast, and linguistic expert input to improve accuracy and depth. And these expectations are in line with Anderson’s (2006) idea of imagined communities, where communities use language spaces to strengthen communal identities and must rely on institutional resources.

Finally, the results reveal that Nepal Bhasa and its programming are not only prized because of cultural conservation, but also as a positive medium for social representation.

The role it plays in our day-to-day listening may show that Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa shows are functioning as a cultural reference point for Nepal Bhasa and facilitate integration between linguistic worlds, thereby serving to illustrate the symbolic and functional aspects of Newar identity in the media spectrum.

Justification of Radio Nepal in Identity Construction

This theme investigates the perception of listeners on Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa programming as supporting the further preservation, recognition, and construction of Newar linguistic and cultural identity. For minority, who exist for the purpose of representation into the mainstream national media, representation in local popular voice-making media, in particular, is an icon in the country for the purpose of maintaining cultural legitimacy and identification.

Table 5: Audience Perception of Radio Nepal's Contribution to Identity Construction

Category	Percentage
National and International Agenda	23.52
Preservation and Construction of Identity	76.48

The findings show that most of the respondents (76.48%) believe Radio Nepal to play a major role in preserving and constructing Newar identity. This, in turn, means that listeners view the Nepal Bhasa broadcasts not as news broadcasts but as spaces in which linguistic pride, cultural memory, and communal belonging are affirmed. Such perceptions closely align with the broader understanding that minority-language media embody cultural institutions that sustain the symbolic and functional activity of heritage languages (Cormack 2007).

The respondents' concern about identity preservation illustrates how radio is the medium by which language, culture and collective history is routinely affirmed. A nation broadcast that includes the audiences' mother tongue serves their linguistic rights and builds cultural confidence; both arguments that Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) also express, who argued that minority media provide spaces for negotiating and asserting ethnolinguistic identity in multilingual environments.

A less common yet significant number of respondents (23.52%) mentioned the role of Radio Nepal in framing national and international agendas. As I argue in this study, state-run broadcasting must provide both a civic function — as a means for public issues to be framed — but also be a vehicle of cultural articulation for marginalized groups. This is consistent with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory, where the media drive public priorities and influence collective consciousness. With this, Radio Nepal comes the role of both national stage and a tool for ethnolinguistic empowerment.

Qualitative feedback also indicates that the Nepal Bhasa program has contributed to re-engagement with Newar traditions, a deeper comprehension of their culture and the

linguistic heritage of their people. This is consistent with Thompson's (1995) assertion that media create "narratives of self-identity" through the infrastructure embedding of cultural signifiers, values and worldviews in everyday communication. Through everyday listening practices, audiences internalize these narratives, thereby strengthening their sense of collective belonging.

Collectively, these findings show that Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa programming supports the significance of the Newar personas as well as legitimizes the use of indigenous languages in national media, thereby establishing the relevance of the Newar people's Newar identity in itself — the cultural anchoring role of the Newar people in the national media. It contributes strategically to culture — providing linguistic pride, bonding communities, and facilitating a public platform for Newar voices, where they would be listened to and represented.

The fact that Radio Nepal is perceived as a notable influence on the linguistic and cultural representation of the Newar people is evident from the data. Its broadcasts also offer a platform where information and symbolic space come together between language and culture, identity. Most of its listeners see the show as pivotal not just in protecting and promoting their heritage but as a potent means of state media efforts in building up minority-language communities in a multilingual nation.

A Closer Look at Nepal Bhasa News Bulletin

This thematic dimension investigates 70 news bulletins in Nepal Bhasa (Nepal Bhasa news bulletins) on Radio Nepal for 70 days. Each bulletin consisted of an average of 1,300 words, and the texts were manually classified for the occurrence of native words, scientific or technical vocabulary, and borrowed vocabulary by using word-labeling.

Table 6: Lexical Structure and Analysis of news bulletins in Nepal Bhasa bulletins

Lexical Category	Approx. Frequency per Bulletin	Approx. Percentage
Scientific & Technical Terms		< 3%
Native Vocabulary & Grammar	Remainder	> 97%

The analysis shows, among other things, that more than 97% of the vocabulary taken as input from Nepal Bhasa news bulletins are native, indigenous lexical items while less than 3% are scientific, technical borrowing. This linguistic evolution reflects a purposeful editorial preference to promote and respect Nepal Bhasa as a usable modern form of public communication.

The significant usage of native vocabulary reflects the linguistically proficient state and cultural ability of Nepal Bhasa, even in modern spheres like governance, international relations, technology. Such a response directly correlates to previous academic research highlighting the capacity of minority languages to keep robust and colourful over the long term as long as the press deliberately privileges native vocabulary (Maskey, 2017;

Pradhan, 2012). Simultaneously, we can see that the small scope but necessity for scientific and technical lexicons appears due to the context in which Nepal Bhasa intersects, its interaction with the discourse that emerges globally. According to Toba (1992), though indigenous languages must use contemporary terminology to communicate well, the main problem is balancing it without undermining the indigenous linguistic structure. Radio Nepal does seem to be able to accomplish it, however.

The results are also in accordance with the agenda-setting role of media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and imply that the sustained use of Nepal Bhasa, on a wider spectrum, in stories related to local culture and news and international affairs, situates the language as a legitimate agent of national and global knowledge. In the process the bulletin serves as a symbolic point of contact, emphasizing the affirmation of linguistic identity as a site for resisting linguistic assimilation.

In addition, such conscious emphasis on native vocabulary mirrors the ideological attitude of linguistic pride and authenticity. As Fairclough (1992) explains, the language choices made in public discourse shape identity, power dynamics, and cultural continuity. The Nepal Bhasa news bulletin does precisely this, establishing an expressional sufficiency of the language into a national media institution.

In overall, the vocabulary of the bulletins tells you that Radio Nepal is maintaining the cultural and linguistic identity of its people, ensuring that the communication needs of modern times do not erode what once needed language and culture. In that sense, the news bulletin is not just a technical instrument, but a culturally meaningful construct of identity in the context of Nepal's multilingual media environment.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative part of this study expands on the quantitative findings in exploring how Nepal Bhasa broadcasting is experienced, understood, and appreciated by practitioners engaging with the network. Through interviews with cultural leaders as well as language activists, journalists, musicians, policymakers, and community members, along with analysis of interviews aired in *Jeewan Daboo*, this section investigates the lived meanings, cultural narratives, and identity-related reflections not readily measurable through numerical data alone.

To achieve this depth, qualitative analysis was organized into two analytically distinct but complementary strands. The first strand examines broadcast-level identity narratives as articulated within the *Jeewan Daboo* programme itself, focusing on how Newar identity is publicly narrated, performed, and negotiated on air. The second strand draws on Key Informant Interviews (KII) to explore expert and insider reflections on how language, culture, and music function as identity constructors within Nepal Bhasa broadcasting. Together, these two strands capture both mediated identity expression and interpretive

evaluation, enabling a holistic understanding of identity construction through Nepal Bhasa radio.

I. Interview Record Examination of Jeewan Daboo Programme in Nepal Bhasa

Here is an analysis of the sub-theme of ten interviews on Jeewan Daboo (Forum of Life) and a Nepal Bhasa program aired by Radio Nepal. The cultural organizations, groups in diaspora, political movements, academic and community organizations, the interviewees represent, provide firsthand accounts of how the program contributes to linguistic and cultural identity construction by Newar individuals.

Analytically, this sub-theme focuses on how *Jeewan Daboo* functions as a cultural forum where linguistic pride, ritual knowledge, political memory, diaspora belonging, and emerging identity domains are narrated and legitimized. The emphasis here is on what kinds of identity meanings are voiced on air, how they are framed linguistically and culturally, and how the programme itself operates as a living archive of Newar collective memory.

Table 7: Interviewee Profile and Focus Areas of Jeewan Daboo

Name	Organization	Designation	Interview Focus
Season Shrestha	World Newa Organization, USA	President	Nepal Era and diaspora
Rajendra Shrestha	Janata Samajbadi Party	President	Nepal Era, Identity politics
Binod Maharjan	Halin Newa Guthi	President	Economy and Newar identity
Padam Shrestha	Sya:sya: Samaj	Acting President	Cultural identity
Mangal Krishna Singh	Jyapoo Culture Development Trust	President	National Jyapoo Day
Bir Prasad Bhansari	Indreni Cultural Society	President	Socialist culture, and music
Dr. Bijay Prakash Sainju	Nepa: Rastriya Party	President	Nepal Bhasa and Identity
Siham Ashok Shrestha	World Kyekosin Karate Federation	Vice-President	Martial Arts, Sports identity
Krishna Ram Kisi	Khopa College	Lecturer	Journalism and Media
Ashok Soki	Independent scholar	Philosopher	Newar literature and Philosophy

The interview transcripts of Jeewan Daboo show that the program is a multi-dimensional space in which Newar identity – linguistic, cultural, political, diasporic, professional – is also negotiated and reasserted. And while it is a state-run broadcast, it serves as a culturally intimate, empowering space for a wide range of community voices.

Cultural Continuity, Ritual Knowledge, and Institutional Identity

Many interviewees said the program is absolutely essential in defending ritual practices and shared values. *Padam Shrestha elaborated that community organizations are key in protecting cultural institutions from loss, and Mangal Krishna Singh pointed out National Jyapoo Day as a symbol of caste-based heritage and inclusiveness.* These observations align with Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes (2011) who argue that minority language media assist in the preservation of cultural memory and enrich identity. In these reflections, Jeewan Daboo fosters cultural belonging and carries traditional information to an audience beyond his own community.

Language Rights, Political Identity and Historical Memory

Linguistic justice and political recognition came forward as issues. *The long-standing Nepal Bhasa Movement and the quest for recognition of Nepal Era were particularly emphasized by Rajendra Shrestha and Dr. Bijay Prakash Sainju.* Their statements highlight how political identity is grounded in historical struggle and collective fortitude. This is consistent with Thompson's (1995) conception of mediated identity formation, where public discourse becomes a site for negotiating recognition, along with Onta (1996), who argues that minorities use the media to contest hegemonic discourses. It is thus that the program helps define cultural rights and maintain a shared political memory.

Diaspora Connectivity and Transnational Identity

Season Shrestha presented the findings that Nepal Era celebrations and Newar cultural events abroad enhance affective connections between diaspora and home communities. Through these reflections Hall's (1996) notion of symbolic continuity and cultural memory, diasporic identity changes, and is transformed into a larger one, can be illustrated. Through the dissemination of Nepal Bhasa stories across the world, Jeewan Daboo acts as a transnational cultural connector, nurturing global Newar belonging.

Emerging Cultural Capital and Expanding Identity Domains

Many interviewees also helped illustrate the way identity is extended into professional spaces today; beyond traditional heritage. *Sihan Ashok Shrestha spoke of martial arts as the field of the Newar youth, Krishna Ram Kisi stressed the role of the media, and Ashok Soki focused on philosophical works, literature and more. Binod Maharjan emphasized also the influence of guthi economy in the formation of socio-cultural identity.* These findings align with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, as identity forms through various types of achievement, knowledge, and skills.

Overall, on the show for all the Jeewan Daboo interviews, it has been demonstrated that the program is a living repository of Newar identity as it nurtures traditional ways, amplifies ideological narratives, perpetuates diaspora connection, and pays tribute to emergent cultural competence. It can give linguistic pride and collective identity a boost, complementing the quantitative data by demonstrating that identity construction happens not only in broadcast language, but also reflectively in public discourse.

II. Key Informant Interviews (KII): Language, Culture and Music as Identity Constructors.

The Key Informant Interviews (KII) provide perspectives from language specialists, journalists, cultural activists, musicians and policy makers who have worked closely with Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa programming. Their reflective experiences demonstrate how language, culture, and music combine to form the cultural and linguistic identity of the Newar people.

Analytically, this sub-theme shifts focus from broadcast narratives to interpretive evaluation. The introduction of Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa news speaks to this identity work:

“Tho Radio Nepal kha:, Nepal Bhasa ya Samachar jee Upesh Maharjan pakhen nyanadishan, thaun Nepal Sambat 1145, Thinlaga Panchami.”

(This is Radio Nepal. The Nepal Bhasa news is read by Upesh Maharjan. Today is Nepal Era 1145, Thinlaga Panchami.)

This reflects the pride in our language and the structure of contemporary channels. As officials observe, the single non-Nepal Bhasa word “news” is used to maintain clarity for all Newars, including those outside Nepal's Kathmandu Valley. Interviews conducted through 2024 contributes to Nepal Bhasa broadcasting as something valuable and significant for understanding, identity, cultural continuity, and political consciousness.

The KIIs collectively demonstrate that radio stations in Nepal Bhasa help build a multilayered Newar identity. These interviews reflect upon a network of identities: The four identity domains in this chapter highlight the significance of broadcasting language and culture.

Table 8: Language, Culture, and Music as Identity Constructors

Component	Function	Evidence / Interview Insight	Identity Dimension
Language	Enhances comprehension; preserves vocabulary; translates national & global news	<i>Pyakurel (2024): "It strengthens belonging and advocates for indigenous rights."</i>	Linguistic identity
Culture	Promotes traditions, rituals, festivals, communal values	<i>Nakarmi (2024): "Cultural music and seasonal cues preserve heritage."</i>	Cultural identity
Music	Broadcasts Newar devotional, seasonal and ritual music	<i>Paudhel (2024): "Seasonal music highlights musical heritage."</i>	Musical identity
Political Awareness	Reinforces Nepal Bhasa Movement & ethnic rights	<i>Dangol (2024): "Representation exists, but political rights still lag."</i>	Ethnic/political identity
National Pride	Showcases Newar contributions to Nepal's heritage	<i>Jakami (2024): "Nepal Bhasa is a symbol of national identity."</i>	National identity

Linguistic Identity: Language as Pride, Continuity, Comprehension

Key informants consistently highlighted how the news format itself reinforces linguistic pride.

According to Pawan Pyakurel, *"broadcasting Nepal Bhasa daily helps listeners understand their language better and strengthens their sense of belonging."*

Likewise, Rachana Shrestha emphasized that they *"use idioms, verbs, proverbs, and native expressions meaningfully, translating national and international news according to the Nepal Bhasa Style Book."*

Such statements echo Thompson's (1995) theory of media as the constructor of "self-narratives," underscoring how standardized broadcast language becomes a tool of cultural self-recognition.

Cultural & Musical Identity: Ritual, Festivals & Collective Memory

The interviews reveal a lot about culture.

Surendra Paudhel added, *"Newar music is played according to the seasons and adds significantly to cultural identity."*

Likewise, Manaraja Nakarmi emphasized that *"Newar music has influenced Nepal's national music heritage for 72 years."*

Such reflections echo Pratt (2005) and Phinney (1996) who argue that cultural behaviors—music, festivals, rituals—constitute the root of ethnic identity.

Whether through Nepal Sambat, Gai Jatra, Gulan Dharma, or devotional songs, the memory of cultural transmission is disseminated throughout the Nepalese nation, to both young and old.

Political & Historical Identity: Rights, Movements, and Recognition

Several major informants linked the news of the Nepal Bhasa to political identity. According to Rajbhai Jakami, *“Nepal Bhasa broadcasts symbolize national pride and helped revive awareness during and after the Movement.”*

Cultural journalist Padam Shrestha affirmed that the station *“played a significant role in raising political awareness during Nepal Bhasa and Nepal Sambat movements.”*

These insights correspond with Onta (1996), who shows that radio has historically enabled marginalized groups to contest dominance and reframe political identity.

Expanding Identity Domains: Diaspora, Modern Professions, and Inclusion

Interviews also clearly show how identity broadens into new social domains. Season Shrestha explained that Nepal Era celebrations abroad help *“connect the diaspora emotionally and culturally to Nepal.”*

According to Tirthaman Dangol, *“government programs highlight cultural identity more than political rights, though both are necessary.”*

Finally, Amardhoj Lama emphasized that Radio Nepal *“preserves 26 languages and promotes inclusion through linguistic and musical programming.”*

Collectively, these views echo Kellner’s (1995) contention that media culture provides people with cultural and ideological resources from which to construct their sense of identity, even into more modern professions such as journalism, martial arts, education, and networks of diaspora global actors.

The KII findings reveal how Radio Nepal’s Nepal Bhasa programming constructs Newar identity across four interlinked areas: linguistic pride and cultural comprehension, culture and music heritage, political and historical identity, and diaspora and modern cultural participation.

Taken together, these interviews show that not only is Radio Nepal the nation’s state body broadcasting information, but it is also a thriving cultural site, nurturing and shaping Newar identity to be passed on from generation to generation as it does across geographies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Radio Nepal plays a significant and multifaceted role in constructing and sustaining the linguistic identity of the Newar community. Quantitative results show high levels of comprehension, trust, and personal

benefit among listeners, while qualitative results reveal that the broadcasts serve as a platform for cultural continuity, linguistic pride, political recognition, and diaspora connection.

The Nepal Bhasa news bulletins maintain linguistic clarity while incorporating rich indigenous vocabulary, idioms, seasonal references, and cultural expressions. This aligns with the audience's expectations for authenticity and cultural resonance. The strong preference for increased airtime reflects the community's desire for deeper engagement with their language and heritage.

Lexical analysis of 70 bulletins confirms that Radio Nepal carefully preserves Nepal Bhasa, using more than 97% indigenous vocabulary and relying minimally on technical borrowings. This editorial choice strengthens the expressive capacity of the language and asserts its legitimacy within national media.

Interview findings—both from Jeewan Daboo and KII—indicate that the Nepal Bhasa program contributes not only to linguistic identity but also to cultural pride, political awareness, ritual continuity, musical heritage, and transnational belonging. The program functions as a living archive of Newar identity, enabling generational transmission of cultural memory while accommodating evolving identity domains such as diaspora, media, music, sports, journalism, and community activism.

Overall, the study concludes that Radio Nepal's Nepal Bhasa programming is a vital cultural institution that reinforces Newar identity across linguistic, cultural, musical, political, and global dimensions.

Implications

The findings show that minority-language broadcasting needs to be continued and strengthened in Nepal's national media. Nepal Bhasa programs on Radio Nepal have an important role in giving visibility to the language and in supporting Newar identity. Increasing the time and frequency of such programs can respond to listeners' demand and help represent Newar culture more clearly. Content should also be guided by language experts so that the language remains correct, culturally meaningful, and suitable for modern communication.

The study also shows that regular use of Nepal Bhasa in formal broadcasting helps preserve the language. It proves that Nepal Bhasa can be used effectively in news, discussion, and other modern contexts. To continue this progress, attention should be given to developing new terms, updating vocabulary, and keeping some level of standardization so the language can be used in academic, administrative, and media fields.

Programs like *Jeewan Daboo* help protect Newar culture by recording rituals, festivals, stories, and traditional music. This is important at a time when urbanization and

globalization are changing traditional ways of life. Such programs work like a cultural record that helps pass cultural knowledge to younger generations.

Broadcasting in Nepal Bhasa also gives confidence to the Newar community. It increases cultural pride and strengthens a sense of belonging among local listeners and people living abroad. By giving space to scholars, artists, activists, and young voices, Radio Nepal helps the community express its identity and rights more strongly. Moreover, the study opens opportunities for comparative research examining how other indigenous-language programs in Nepal—such as Maithili, Tharu, Tamang, Gurung, or Bhojपुरi broadcasts—contribute to the linguistic and cultural identity of their respective communities.

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