

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE 45TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF NEPAL, 2024

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Honorable Chairperson of Indigenous Nationalities Commission, Honorable Chancellor of Nepal Academy, Honorable member of Language Commission, Vice-president of Linguistic Society of Nepal, former presidents of Linguistic Society of Nepal, keynote speaker, Prof. Krzysztof Stronski, Distinguished linguists from home and abroad, media personnels, ladies and gentlemen. Namaskar and very good morning.

In fact, it is indeed a matter of great pleasure for me to address this august gathering of both linguists and language lovers from home and abroad. This date, November 26-27, is an auspicious moment for those who dedicate their life for language and linguistics from all around the world. It is a great opportunity for sharing the knowledge obtained from our researches on languages and linguistics and feeling the part of the knowledge generation mission of the scientific community.

In this conference, 67 papers are going to be presented in which 25 papers are from Nepal, 38 papers from India and rest from other countries. The papers cover a wide range of diverse fields linguistics such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, language policy, power and discourse, multilingual and mother tongue education, anthropology and indigenous ethnolinguistics, child language acquisition, translanguaging and language teaching, language shift, language documentation and orthography, toponyms, autism, etc.

Keynote speech to be delivered right after this opening ceremony is on 'Diachronic of linguistic features in South Asia. Lessons from early New Indo-Aryan' is very much relevant in our context because majority of Nepal's population speak Indo-Aryan languages, thus, it definitely will encourage the linguists towards this field.

Contribution of LSN

From its inception in 1979 to till date, LSN has contributed a lot in the field of language and linguistics, particularly in Nepal and around. LSN has published 38 volumes of Journal 'Nepalese Linguistics', and has conducted 45 Annual International conferences in a row without any break in the same date. Therefore, LSN is serving the nation and the humanity in a broad sense with its fullest capacity for the preservation, promotion and development of the languages and dialects.

Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032)

UN has declared the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032) with the aim of revitalizing the Indigenous languages. The main objective of UN is to draw global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion. In this regard, the national action plan is already submitted to the Ministry of culture, tourism and civil aviation and I believe that the necessary arrangements are being made soon to achieve the aims of UN.

As per the constitutional provision, languages are getting their official status, as we know that Language Commission has recommended about 13 languages to be used as official language in the seven provinces, and Bagmati Province has completed the legal procedurals to set NepalBhasha and Tamang languages as official language of the province. Other provinces are on the way to achieve the same in near future.

There will be a special session about the international decade of indigenous languages (2022-2032) Status of the action plan in Nepal and presentation by language commission about its activities.

Mother Tongue Education is very important for the preservation, promotion and development of a

language; however, no serious effort has been made from the concerned sectors. Now, many municipalities (local governments) have started teaching local languages at the basic level, however, effectiveness is within the question mark. It has to be realized that this is one the best ways to transfer the language to new generation, which ultimately saves the language from dying. In this regard, the proper language management in multilingual setting is essential to achieve the goal.

Language Museum

Even though Nepal is a small country, it hosts 124+ languages, 3 heritage languages, namely, Sanskrit, Pali and Bote Bhasha. There is an urgent need of a language museum which can reflect the great treasure of Nepal. In this regard, the ministry of culture, tourism and civil aviation formed a committee to study and present a report regarding the possibility of establishing a language museum. The committee has already submitted the report. Let us hope that the government will initiate to establish a language museum in terms of both virtual and physical.

Language Database

In this age of computer, any kind of research is not possible without storage of information, this is equally applicable to language and linguistics. Particularly, in case of Nepal, we are urgent need of searchable language database. At this age of digital world, data is the power, so is the case with language and linguistics.

Central Department of Linguistics, TU, spending its total capacity to produce human resources and linguistic researches; and it will continue to do so for the betterment of language and linguistics in Nepal. New syllabus for master's level is being designed which are more practical and market oriented.

We like to thank from our bottom of the hearts to Central Department of Linguistics, TU, Nepal Academy, Indigenous Nationalities Commission, University Grants Commission, National Foundation For Development of Indigenous Nationalities, Madan Bhandari Memorial college, JS Murarka Multiple Campus, Far-western

University, Gorkhas Finance, Dharan, Prof. Dr. Tankaprasad Neupane research center, Dharan and many other organizations for their support to make this event happen. Last but not least, I would like to thank Editor in-chief, Prof. Dr. Dan Raj Regmi and editors Dr. Karnakhar Khatiwada and Indresh Thakur of Nepalese Linguistics, Vol.38, the journal of Linguistic society of Nepal for their hard work to make it published in time.

At the end, we would like to thank everybody here for joining us, enjoy the conference and have a nice stay in Kathmandu and invite all of you to participate next LSN conference at the same date next year

Thanks.