

Literacy Survey on Ghale language



NNLPI
2009

Preface

This literacy survey of the Ghale language was sponsored by the Nepali National Languages Preservation Institute (NNLPI). The goal of NNLPI is to promote mother tongue language development among the minority people groups of Nepal. In order to accomplish this goal more effectively, NNLPI seeks to understand the sociolinguistic situation of the minority language groups of the country.

The background research, planning and preparation for this survey were begun in mid 2007. The field trip was done in January 2008 in Gorkha district.

The survey team included Jeewan Khaling Rai, Kishor Rai, Rajman Ghale and Navaraj Ghale. This trip was a challenge to them because it was snowing throughout the trip. Their efforts and hard work are deeply appreciated.

Finally we would like express our sincere appreciation to Barpak VCD and Shree Himalaya Ma. Vi. School for providing all the data that we needed. We also would like to thank all the Ghale speakers whom our team met. They are very friendly and spent much time with us to answer all our questions. Their assistance and cooperation enabled us to obtain reliable data for this survey. We hope that this research will contribute to the development of their language.

We have tried our best to provide accurate findings and recommendations in this report. Any suggestions and corrections are welcome.

Survey team
NNLPI
2009

Introduction

The Ethnologue (2009) classifies the Ghale language as: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Himalayish, Tibeto-Kanauri, Tibetic, Tamangic. According to the census of Nepal (2001), the population of Ghale speakers is around 1,649. However, based on the UNESCO Language Survey Report Nepal (2002), the total number of Ghale speakers is approximately 10,000. Most of them live in the Gorkha district.



There has not been much study done on the Ghale language. One SIL linguist started to study this language in early 1970 but not much was done. In 1981, a Japanese scholar studied the linguistic position of Ghale and the survey paper was presented in 1982.

A sociolinguistic survey of Tibeto-Burman dialects of North Gorkha was done in 1992. The goals of this survey were (1) the study of the dialect area, (2) determining the degree of bilingualism, (3) determining language use and attitudes and language vitality. The result showed the mother tongue was used exclusively in almost every domain in all surveyed locations. Attitudes towards the mother tongue were very strong and positive throughout the surveyed area.

The overall purpose of this survey was to assess the latest situation of language use, language attitudes and determine if there was need of a literacy program among Ghale speakers.

Location and Methodology

Location

Five villages, Uiya, Khorla, Laprak, Gumda and Barpak from four VDCs in Gorkha district were selected. These five villages speak the same dialect and have less influence from other languages. This survey was done in January 2008.

Methodology

Basic social information of five villages were collected from VDC office schools. A questionnaire (Appendix I) covered with different areas was used. The surveyors checked with the local people on accuracy as necessary.

For language use and language attitudes, a questionnaire (Appendix II) was prepared and used in the interviews. Samples chosen were based on (1) ratio of Ghale and Gurung origin in that village, (2) age, (3) gender, and (4) educational level.

A total of 357 sample people were interviewed. All interviewees were Ghale speakers, aged from 10 to 84. Only one interviewee was 10 years old. He was a grade 6 student and could fully understand all the questions well. Most interviewees over 40 years old could not fully understand Nepali. The interviews were conducted in the Ghale language. The number of samples from each village was based on the population. The average percentage of the sampling was 2.64% of the population. 33% of the total of the samples were of Ghale origin and 67% were of Gurung origin.

Age	Men (203)			Women (154)			Total
	uneducated	primary level	secondary level	uneducated	primary level	secondary level	
20 yrs. and younger	6	32	44	7	21	15	125
between 21-40 yrs	22	13	28	35	9	23	130
40 yrs. and older	49	8	5	37	3	0	102
Total	77	53	77	79	33	38	357

Figure 1 Sample arranged by age, sex and education

Summary of Findings

Social information

All five of these villages are located in Gorkha district. It takes about 2 days to walk from the main road to Barpak village. The road is uphill. It would take longer time during snowy season.

The population of each village varies from 800 to 6,000. Most of the villagers work in agriculture, carpentry, herbal production, trekking and small business. Recently there has been a trend among the youth to work overseas/in other countries. Therefore, the number of youth staying in the village is decreasing.

Only three villages have electricity. Phone is available in only two villages. Barpak is one of the largest villages in that area. It has radio, television and newspaper available. Except the village of Uhiya, all others have radio.

There is no problem of water supply. All villages get water either from the forest or up the hill. There are toilets in every village. Except Khorla village, each of the other four villages have a health post. According to locals, there is no major sickness in the village. The most common problems are diarrhea, gastritis, fever, skin problems, cough and pneumonia.

All villages have a school. Schools in Barpak and Laprak offer education up to grade 10. Uhiya has one lower secondary school. Gumda and Khorla have only a primary school. According to the teachers, there is a decline in the number of students each year for various reasons. The dropout rate of girls is higher than boys after grade 7 due to early marriage (around age 16 or 17).

There are groups of Ghale and Gurung people living in each village. The number of Gurung people is higher than the number of Ghale people. The ratio among Ghale people, Gurung people and other people group is 39:54:7. They all speak the same language. Ghale people call it the Ghale language, and some Gurung people call it Gurung. In fact, the cultural and life patterns of the two groups are very different.

In regard to literature, there is no literature, grammar or lexicon in the Ghale language. Music in the Ghale language is available. The villagers still sing in their mother tongue on various occasions.

There was a Nepali literacy class conducted by Save the Children before 1996; the classes were suspended after that. One Nepali literacy class was conducted in Gumda village in 2007, but it was closed down due to a political problem.

The need of a literacy program

The literacy rate in these villages is around 50%. The illiteracy rate for women is higher than for men. Those over 40 years old have a higher illiteracy rate. During the interview, people expressed the need for a literacy program. Those aged between 20 and 40 felt that it will be helpful if they could read and write.

There are female or male literacy class teachers available in each village. The challenge for running a class in the Ghale speaking area is the season. There is snow during the winter (January to February) and landslides in the rainy season (beginning in July) so there are only 4 months available for literacy class. The course design has to be fitted within this time frame; otherwise the dropout rate of class will be high.

Language Use and Attitudes and Language Vitality

Observation and formal interviews were used to assess language use, language attitudes and language vitality in these five villages. "Language use" refers to the domains in which a language is used - the choices people make about which language to use in different situations. "Language attitudes" refers to the attitude people have towards their own language and towards other languages around them. "Language vitality" refers to the prospect that a language will continue to be spoken by mother-tongue speakers in the foreseeable future.

The issue of language use was very straightforward throughout this survey. In every location the Ghale language is used in almost every domain. Over 97% of the interviewees speak Ghale language at home and within the community. 82% used the Ghale language in religious, cultural and social functions or activities. Even at the market, more than 60% used the Ghale language only. It is a very strong indicator that the Ghale language is still widely used in this area.

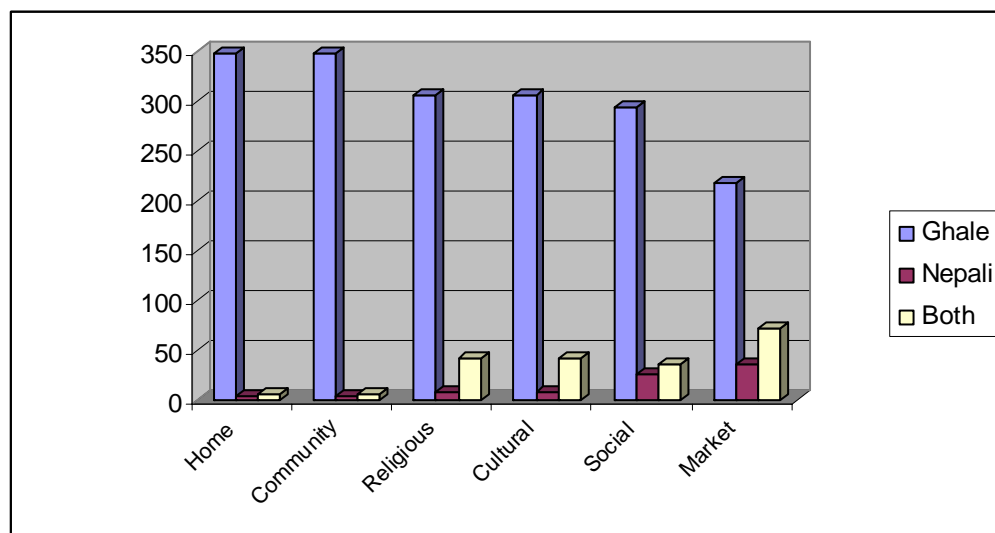


Figure 2 Languages used in different domains

Attitudes towards the mother-tongue are very strong and positive throughout the surveyed area. Over 82% of interviewees prefer speaking in their mother-tongue. Some expressed that this is their language and they want to preserve it. Some said it is our common language. It is easy to communicate in their mother tongue because they started speaking since childhood. Most important reason of all was, 'This is our identity'. 16% of interviewees prefer speaking in Nepali, over 50% of whom are below 20 years old and most of them are male. Most of them expressed the fact that Nepali is the national language. If their Nepali is good, their future will be better. Another reason is that no mother-tongue book or reading material is available in the market so it is hard for them to learn

their mother tongue. It might be an indicator that the younger generation shifts to the national language in order to get an education or have more job opportunities.

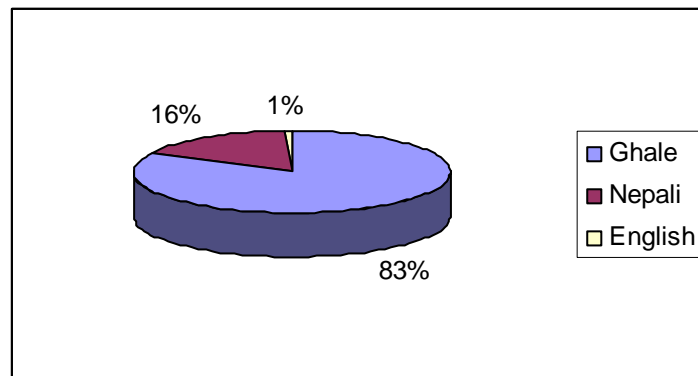


Figure 3 Language preference in speaking

When asked about which language the interviewees prefer to read and write, 49% prefer to read and write in the Ghale language, even though no reading material is available. The reason is that they want to promote their language. They also express the hope to have reading material in their language in the near future.

Among the interviewees, only 204 answered the question, "Do the parents want their children to speak in Ghale?" 94% indicated yes because they want their children to learn the language and culture. The ultimate goal is to preserve their language and culture from generation to generation. They also mentioned that the Ghale language should be the first language for the child to learn.

Based on the discussion of language use and attitudes, language vitality is still very strong in these villages. There is every indication that the mother tongues will continue to be passed down to successive generations. There is an indication, however, that the younger generation shifts to the national language. The way to preserve the language is for the language community to work on mother tongue reading materials. Without written material, it is hard to preserve the language and encourage the younger generation to value their mother tongue.

Recommendation

Literacy program

There is definitely a need of conducting a literacy program in this area. Since there is no mother tongue (MT) reading material available, it is recommended to produce some simple MT material, such as posters and booklets to arouse people interest in learning their MT. Different stages of MT books can be further produced in cooperation with the local community.

It is recommended that the course design should be worked out together with the local community. The crucial thing is the time frame of the course. Unless it fits into the local routine, it cannot be sustained.

A further short village visit is recommended. The main focus is to find out which kind of literacy program they want, MT literacy program or Nepali literacy program or MT-based bilingual literacy program. It would also be a good time to explain the differences between these programs so the community can make a better decision.

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ASSESSMENT FORM**Name of village:****DEMOGRAPHIC**

Estimated population:

Total estimated number	Adult		Children under 15
	Male	Female	

School

No

Yes

How many:

Up to which grade:

Dropout rate

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Above
BOY						
GIRL						

Education level (up to which class)

	Below 20	21-30	31-40	40-50	Above 50
MEN					
WOMEN					

Literacy rate (# of people)

	Below 20	21-30	31-40	40-50	Above 50
MEN					
Literacy rate in MT					
Literacy rate in NL					
WOMEN					
Literacy rate in MT					
Literacy rate in NL					

SOCIAL /ECONOMIC

Major means of income generation:

What kinds of products:

Work done by

- Men
- Women
- Youth

Would any seasonal work affect the literacy class? Which months? (e.g., farming season)

Electricity: No Yes

Media:

	Radio	TV	Video/ VCD	Newspaper
No				
Yes				
Channels				
Languages				

HEALTH & SANITATION

Major health problems in the village:

Any health post/ clinic in the village No YesAny water supply No Yes From where:Toilet available No Yes**RESOURCES, ETC.**

- Teachers available

- Are any organisations running a literacy programme in the village? In what language?

- Are there any cultural issues one needs to be aware of?

LITERACY USED

	religious	economic	re health	personal	for entertainment
MT					
Nepali					

Appendix II

LANGUAGE USE

Ask each interviewee which language he/she is using in each domain. If he/she uses both in the same domain, tick both G & N.

No.	Sex / age group	home		commu ity		MT speakers outside commu ity		religious		cultural		social		market		Meeting official		school	
		G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N	G	N
1																			
2																			
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G= Ghale N= Nepali

Age group 1= age 20 or below, Group 2= age between 21 and 40, Group 3= age 40 and above

LANGUAGE ATTITUDE (ask the reason why)

No.	Prefer to speak in which language	Prefer to read and write in which language	Parents want their children to speak in MT	Parents want their children to read & write in MT	Parents want their children to speak in Nepali	Parents want their children to read & write in Nepali
1						
2						
3						
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