



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Language Group Specific Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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The Nepali Language

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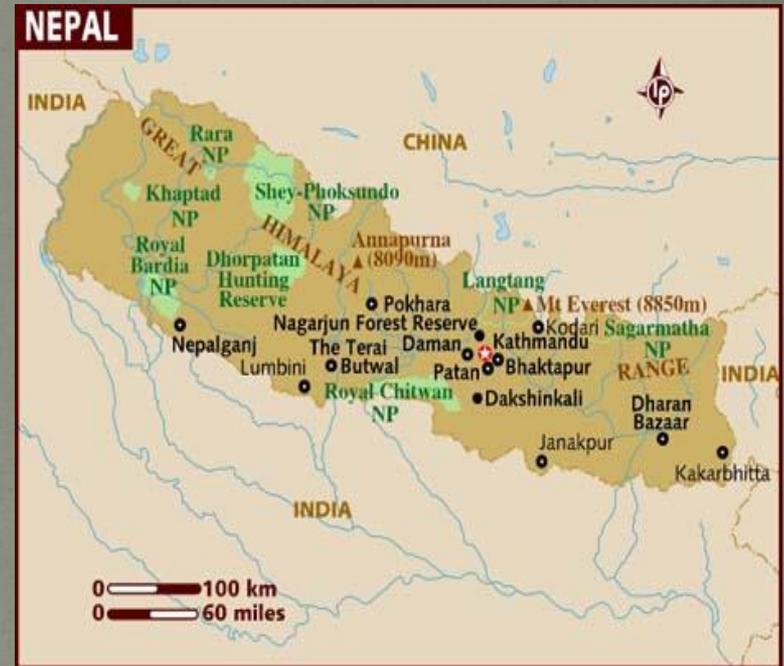
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History of the Nepali Language

- Nepali is the national language of Nepal.
- Spoken by 11 million people in Nepal, 6 million people in India and 156,000 in Bhutan.
- Nepali has several names, Nepali is used by English speakers, Gorkhali “the language of the Gurkhas” and Parbatiya “the language of the mountains”.
- Three major dialects: eastern, central and western.

(About World Languages, 2008)



(No author, Lonely Planet, 2011)

Nepali Writing System

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः	अँ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e, ē	ai	o, ō	au	aṅ	aḥ	āṃ
[ə]	[a]	[i]	[i:]	[ʊ]	[u:]	[e]	[æ]	[o]	[u]	[əŋ]	[əh]	[ā:]
प	पा	पि	पी	पु	पू	पे	पै	पो	पौ	पं	पः	पाँ
pa	pā	pi	pī	pu	pū	pe/pē	pai	po/pō	pau	paṅ	paḥ	pāṃ

(No author, Wikispaces, 2011)

- The Nepali alphabet is called Devnagari. There are 36 consonants and 12 vowels in the Nepali Language.
- Nepali writing does not use capital letters.
- The direction of writing is from left to right in horizontal lines.

(Swan and Smith 2001, *Nepali children in Hampshire schools*, 2008)

Useful Phrases in Nepali

- Hello/Goodbye (namaste)
- How are you? (tapaai/timi lai kasto cha?)
- Welcome (swagatam)
- How do you say...in Nepali? (ke tapain nepalima...lai kasari bhannu hunchha)
- Please say that again (pheri bhannus)
- Have a nice day (subha din)

(Ager, 2008)



Phonology

Vowels

- There are 12 vowels in Nepali as compared to 22 vowels in English.
- One vowel confusion is /e/ and /a/ in the words such as said and sad.
- Other vowel sounds that are difficult in English are /ay/, /i/, /oy/, /u/, /or/ and /oa/.

Consonants

- Consonants /p/, /t/, /k/ are pronounced without aspiration in all position in words such as the /p/ in pit is the same as the word spit.

Phonology Continued

- The /d/ replaces the /th/ for “them” which would be pronounced “dem.”
- Other sounds in which these learners might have difficulty differentiating between /v/ and /w/, /s/ and /sh/, /t/ and /th/.
- R, h, ed and s are often pronounced when they are seen written.

(Swan and Smith 2001, *Nepali children in Hampshire schools*, 2008)

Morphology

- The rise of tone that we use in English to ask questions is used to express surprise in Nepali.
- Stress is on the first syllable of words which gives speech a “sing song” pattern.
- A final vowel or an ending may be added to a noun to make it plural.
- Most masculine nouns do not make a change to form a plural which causes confusion with English plurals.

(Swan and Smith, 2001)

Syntax

- Prepositions come after the noun for example “in the box” would be “box in”
- To make a negative statement, Nepalese people use the word “no” or “not” before a verb.
- The words would, could, can, shall, should and will do not exist in the Nepalese language
- Verbs are usually placed at the end of a sentence.
- Articles are difficult to understand. Frequently, “the” is omitted and “one” is used as an indefinite article.

(Swan and Smith, 2001, *Nepali children in Hampshire schools*, 2008)

Semantics

Some vocabulary words have been borrowed from British English.

For example:

Hotal which looks like the word hotel
mean cafés and restaurants

Furlong means a race track

Roof means a ceiling

(Swan and Smith 2001)



Pragmatics

- “Pronouns are used to express various levels of politeness depending on gender, number, distance and status of the person.” (About World Languages, 2008)
- “During conversation, the Nepalese people will ask personal questions such as the price of your possessions.” (Landers and Grossman, n.d.)
- Nepalese will not say “no” right away. The word “no” is considered to be very rude. Nepalese people will usually tell you “yes” just to be polite. (Landers and Grossman, n.d.)

Nenglish

- Nenglish is words or phrases that have been influenced by the English and Nepali Languages.
- One example of a word used in the Nenglish language is “dadu”. This was taken from the English word “dad” and it has the same meaning in Nenglish.
- “No?” in Nenglish is used in the same way as “isn’t it?” in English
- The word “typical” in English means the opposite in Nenglish

(Rai, 2006)

Personal Space and Eye Contact



- It is offensive to touch a Nepali student on the head or shoulders. Some people believe it is the resting place of the gods.
- Nepali students will not answer a teacher's questions directly. It is seen as disrespectful to do so.
- It is considered rude for Nepali children to look you in the eye.
- Nepali children like to wrestle and play rough.

(Nepali children in Hampshire schools, 2008)

Gestures and Taboos

- Pointing your finger at someone means “Wait and I have something against you!” (Landers and Grossman, n.d.)
- “Avoid giving or receiving any item with your left hand. The left hand is usually used for toilet purposes.” (Landers and Grossman, n.d.)



Resources

Books

Swan, M., & Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems. Second edition.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Journal Article

Rai, V. S. (2006). English, Hinglish and Nenglish. *Journal of NELTA*, 11(1-2), 34-39.

Internet Sites

Ager, S. (2012). Nepali language. *Omniglot: Writing systems & languages of the world.* Retrieved on September 11, 2011, from: <http://www.omniglot.com/>

Landers, M., & Grossman, L. (n.d.) Nepali. *Culture Crossing: A community built guide to cross-cultural etiquette and understanding.* Retrieved on September 11, 2011, from: <http://www.culturecrossing.net/>

The Technology Development Group. (2008). Nepali. *About world languages.* Retrieved September 11, 2011, from: <http://www.aboutworldlanguages.com/>

Resources continued

Powerpoint Presentation

Subba, R. (2008). *Nepali children in Hampshire schools*[PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/nepali-children-in-hants.pdf>

Images

Map of Nepal. (No Photographer). (2011). Retrieved on September 15, 2011, from: URL <http://lonelyplanet.com>

Devanagari Script. (No Photographer). (2011). Retrieved on September 15, 2011, from: URL <https://tsl6zoatnaz.wikispaces.com>

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