

# **A Sociolinguistic Study of Western Tamang in Nepal**



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## **Abstract**

This report presents sociolinguistic information on the Western Tamang language. This survey sought to understand the sociolinguistic situation of Western Tamang in alignment with the goals and purpose of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN). Fieldwork was carried out in the fall of 2013 and winter of 2014. It has been clearly established that there is a linguistic divide between Eastern Tamang [taj] and Western Tamang [tdg], but the relationships between the varieties of Western Tamang have been less clearly defined in the past. At the time of the research, there were four ISO codes listed in the Western Tamang grouping: Western Tamang [tdg], Northwestern Tamang [tmk], Southwestern Tamang [tsf], and Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge]. Southwestern Tamang [tsf] was found to be similar to Eastern Tamang [taj]. This report suggests the following ISO changes: 1) [tdg] and [tmk] should be merged into one language; 2) [tge] should be maintained as a separate language due to more divergent linguistic traits; and 3) [tsf] should be included with [taj]. The three varieties (Western Tamang, Northwestern Tamang, and Eastern Gorkha Tamang) in focus during this research were found to be linguistically similar and could likely use shared language resources. Data to support these recommendations is presented in this report. All of the language varieties have strong language vitality evidenced by high degrees of mother-tongue use in the domain of the home. Currently there is not a high level of vernacular literacy education in spite of the communities' positive desires for language development.

## सारांश

यस प्रतिवेदनले पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषा बारेमा सामाजिक भाषिक जानकारी दिएको छ । यस सर्वेक्षणले नेपालको भाषिक सर्वेक्षण (लिनसुन) को लक्ष्य तथा उद्देश्य अनुरूप पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको सामाजिक-भाषिक परिस्थिति बुझ्न खोजेको छ । यसको फिल्डको काम सन् २०१३ को शरद र २०१४ को हिउँदमा सम्पन्न गरिएको थियो । पूर्वी र पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको बीचको भाषिक बिभेद छ भन्ने कुरा स्पष्टसँग स्थापित भइसकेको छ, तर पश्चिमी तामाङ्गका विविधताहरूको बीचको सम्बन्धहरूबारे बिगतमा कम स्पष्टसँग परिभाषित गरिएको छ । अनुसन्धानको समयमा, पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग, उत्तर पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग, दक्षिण पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग, पूर्वी गोरखा तामाङ्ग गरी पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको समुहमा चारवटा क्षुद्र संकेतहरूको सूची बनाइएका थिए । दक्षिण-पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग पूर्वी-गोरखा तामाङ्गसँग मिल्दोजुल्दो पाइयो । यस प्रतिवेदनले निम्न क्षुद्र पखिर्तन लागि सुभाव दिन्छः- पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग र उत्तर पश्चिमी तामाङ्गलाई एउटा भाषामा गाभ्नु राम्रो हुन्छ, पूर्वी गोरखा तामाङ्गलाई एउटा छुट्टै भाषाको रूपमा कायम राखिनुपर्छ किनकि यसमा बढी छरिएका भाषिक गुणहरू पाइन्छन् र दक्षिण-पश्चिमी तामाङ्गलाई पूर्वी तामाङ्गसँग समावेश गरिनुपर्छ । यस अनुसन्धानमा तीन थरीका तामाङ्गहरू (पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग, उत्तर पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग, र पूर्वी गोरखा तामाङ्ग) केन्द्रविन्दुमा थिए, तिनीहरू भाषिक हिसाबले समान भएका पाइएका थिए र एउटै भाषिक श्रोत प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ जस्तो देखिन्छ । यस प्रतिवेदनमा यी सिफारिशहरूलाई मद्दत गर्ने तथ्याङ्क प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् । सबै थरीका भाषाहरूमा बलियो भाषिक सजीवता पाइन्छ जुन परिवारभित्र मातृभाषाको प्रयोगको मात्रा उच्च भएको बाट पनि प्रमाणित हुन्छ । बर्तमान अवस्थामा समुदायहरूमा भाषाको विकासको लागि सकारात्मक विचार हुँदाहुँदै पनि मातृभाषाको साक्षारता शिक्षाको स्तर त्यति उच्च छैन ।

## Preface

This sociolinguistic survey on the Western Tamang language of Nepal was conducted in partnership with the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN), Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal. Data collection occurred over three different trips in three different districts. The first fieldtrip was to Sahugaun (Nuwakot district) during August 2013, the second was to Jharlang (Dhading district) and Sahugaun during September/October 2013 and the final trip was to Kashigaun (Gorkha district) in January 2014. The purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Western Tamang for the purpose of informing language development among the Western Tamang communities.

There have been multiple individuals who helped in profound ways over the course of this survey. I am very grateful for the valuable assistance offered by professors at Tribhuvan University. Holly Hilty, Jessi Mitchell, Stephanie Eichentopf, Loren Maggard and Ben Hilty all provided crucial advice and guidance during the development and execution of this research. During fieldwork Prem Tamang, Ian Cunningham and Lok Bahadur also provided valuable help. I would especially like to thank Dhan Tamang for his assistance on several survey trips. The confidence I could place in his wisdom, kindness, and patient help made work that was challenging much more enjoyable and efficient. Without the assistance of these individuals this research would not have been possible. I wish to say thank you to the Rapid Assessment team from the Nepal National Languages Preservation Institute (NNLPI) who conducted research in Rasuwa to help with this survey. Thank you also to Krishna Rana of CAS Nepal for his translation of the summary chapter into Nepali.

In each of the sites visited we encountered Tamang community members who were very welcoming and hospitable. They also were very giving with their time to help in data collection. Thank you to the communities of Kashigaun, Jharlang and Sahugaun for your assistance; may this report be helpful to you as you seek to develop your valuable language and culture. Thank you also to the three Tamang women who gave us their permission to use their photo for the cover of this report.

I hope this report will be a useful tool for the Western Tamang community in the development of their language. Although I believe that this report accurately reflects the data we collected, any comments and suggestions are welcomed.

June 2014  
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## प्राक्कथन

नेपालको पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषाको यस सामाजिक भाषिक सर्वेक्षण, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, कीर्तिपुर, नेपाल, अन्तरगतको नेपालमा भाषिक सर्वेक्षण (लिन्सुन) सँग संयुक्तरूपमा संचालन गरिएको हो। तथ्याङ्क संकलन कार्य तीनवटा फरक फरक जिल्लाहरूमा तीन पटक गरी फरक फरक समयमा सम्पन्न भएका हुन्। पहिलो फिल्ड भ्रमण नुवाकोटको साहुगाउँमा अगस्त २०१३ मा भएको थियो, दोस्रो चाहिँ सेप्टेम्बर - अक्टोबर २०१३ मा धादिङ्गको भालाङ्ग र नुवाकोटको साहुगाउँमा र अन्तिम चाहिँ गोरखाको काशीगाउँमा जनवरी २०१४ मा भएको थियो। यस सर्वेक्षणको उद्देश्य, पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग समुदायहरू बीचमा भाषा विकास बारे जानकारी दिनका लागि पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको सामाजिक-भाषिक अवस्थाबारे अझ बढी बुझ्नु हो।

यस सर्वेक्षणको क्रममा कैयौं किसिमले सहयोग पुऱ्याउनु हुने बहुसंख्यक ब्यक्तित्वहरू हुनुहुन्छ । त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालयका सहकर्मीहरूद्वारा प्रदान गर्नुभएका मूल्यवान सहयोगका लागि म अति कृतज्ञ छु । हली हिल्ली, जेसी मिचेल, वेन हिल्ली र स्तेफेनी आइकनतोफ सबैले यो अनुसन्धानको तयारी तथा परिचालनमा बहुमूल्य सल्लाह र पथ प्रदर्शन गरिदिनुभयो। फिल्डको कामको बेलामा, प्रेम तामाङ्ग, इयन कनिङ्गहम र लोक बहादुरले पनि बहुमूल्य मद्दत दिनुभयो। म विशेष गरी धन तामाङ्गलाई उहाँले सर्वेक्षण भ्रमणको बेलामा दिनुभएको सहयोगको लागि धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु। उहाँको बुद्धि, दयालुपन, धीक्शजता मैले राख्न सकेको आत्मविश्वासले त्यो काम जुन चुनौतीपूर्ण थियो त्यसलाई अझ बढी रमाइलो र सफल बनाउन मद्दत गर्‍यो । यी ब्यक्तित्वहरूको सहयोग बिना यो अनुसन्धान सम्भव हुने थिएन । म नेपाल राष्ट्रिय भाषा संरक्षण संस्था (एन एन एल पि आइ) लाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु, जसले यस सर्वेक्षणलाई सहयोग गर्नका लागि रसुवामा अनुसन्धान संचालन गरिदियो। यसको सारांश भागलाई नेपालीमा अनुवाद गरिदिनुभएकोमा म कास नेपालका कृष्ण रानालाई पनि धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु ।

हामी गएका हरेक ठाउँमा हामीले भेटेका तामाङ्ग समुदायका मानिसहरूले हामीलाई भब्य स्वागत र आतिथ्य दर्शाउनुभयो। उहाँहरूले तथ्याङ्क संकलनका लागि पनि आफ्नो धेरै समय दिनुभयो।

काशीगाउँ, भालाङ्ग, र साहुगाउँ समुदायकाहरूलाई तपाईंहरूले दिनुभएको सहयोगका लागि धन्यवाद। तपाईंहरूले आफ्नो मूल्यवान भाषा र संस्कृतिको विकास गर्न प्रयास गर्दा यस प्रतिवेदन सहयोगी हुन सकोस्।

मलाई आशा छ कि यो प्रतिवेदन पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग समुदायकाहरूलाई उनीहरूको भाषा बिकासका लागि उपयोगी सामग्री हुनेछ। यद्यपि मलाई विश्वास छ कि यस प्रतिवेदन हामीले संकलन गरेको तथ्याङ्कको वास्तविक प्रतिविम्ब हो, कुनै पनि टीका-टिप्पणी वा सुझावहरूको स्वागत गर्दछु।

जून २०१४

तिमोथी इ लिप्

काठमाडौं नेपाल

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# 1 Introduction

This survey explored language varieties that fall within the “Western” Tamang language area. The raging Trisuli River has, over the centuries, marked a dividing line between varieties of the Tamang language, limiting communication between the people living on either side of it. While linguistic and sociolinguistic work has been done on Eastern Tamang [taj], far less has been explored among the varieties west of the Trisuli River. This research investigates the extent of variety among the different Western Tamang dialects, the possibility of them using shared language resources, their sociolinguistic situation and a cursory understanding of the community’s interest in language development work.

For the purpose of this report, the term ‘Western Tamang’ will refer to the Tamang varieties spoken in Kanchanpur, Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Makwanpur districts. Currently, the *Ethnologue: Languages of Nepal* (2012) lists four languages in the Western Tamang area: Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge], Northwestern Tamang [tmk], Southwestern Tamang [tsf], and Western Tamang [tdg]. The term ‘Western Tamang’ will be used to encompass all of these varieties in a language grouping, but it does not mean that all communities are ethnically Tamang. This report will further explore the relationships between these varieties.

## 1.1 Geography

Nepal is divided into 14 administrative zones and subdivided into 75 districts. Western Tamang speakers live in four zones (Mahakali, Gandaki, Bagmati and Narayani) and twelve districts in far western and central Nepal. The districts where Western Tamang are reported to live are: Kanchanpur, Gorkha, Rasuwa, Dhading, Sindhupalchok, Nuwakot, Kathmandu, Chitwan, Makwanpur, Parsa, Bara and Rautahat. The field research for this report focused on the varieties spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa (Map 1). The population of ethnic Tamangs in these four districts according to the 2011 Nepali Census is: Gorkha, 13,339, Dhading, 74,239, Nuwakot, 118,873, Rasuwa, 29,782.

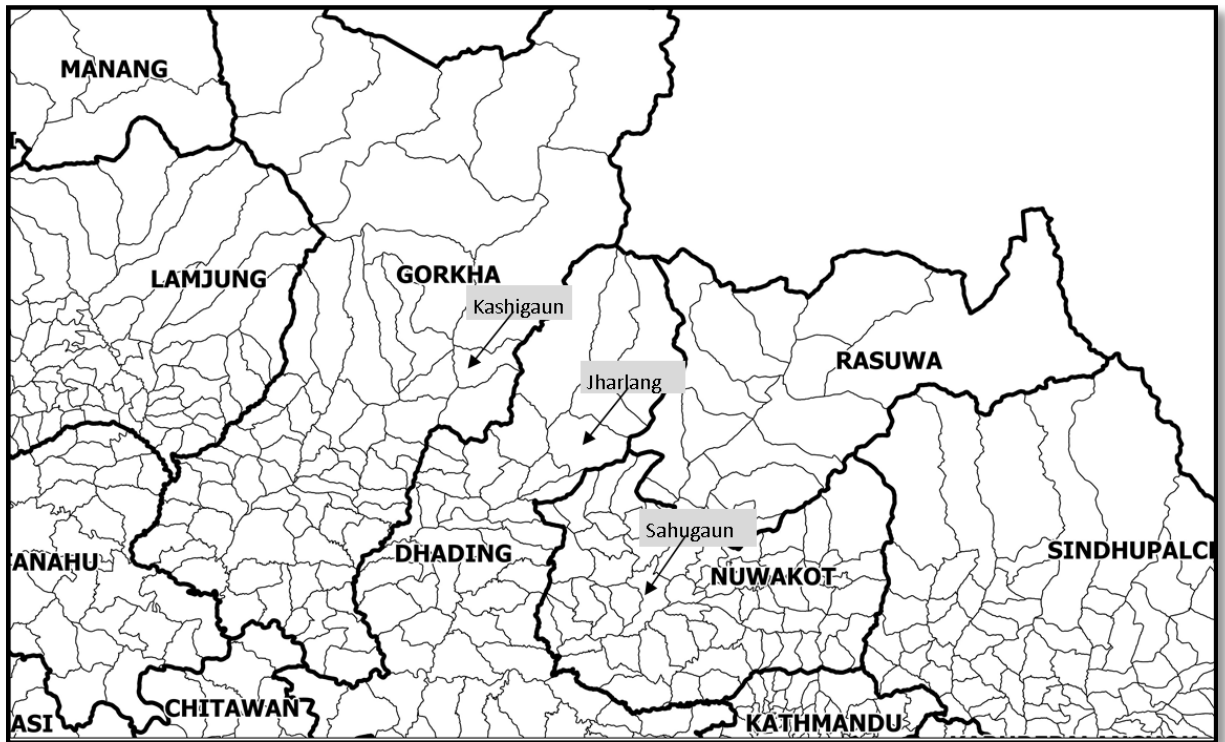
**Map 1: Area of Western Tamang research<sup>1</sup>**



In reference to the location of Tamang speakers, Varenkamp (1996: 19) says, “Their wide geographic distribution finds them on high rocky mountainsides just below the Himalayas and down to the sup-tropical plains.” This research has focused entirely on the Tamangs residing in the hills closer to the Himalayas. The three village sites we visited (Kashigaun, Jharlang and Sahugaun) are represented within their districts in Map 2.

<sup>1</sup> Ultimate Treks Nepal Pvt. Ltd. <http://www.ultimatetreksnepal.com/page.php?title=General-Information>. Circle added for the purposes of this report.

Map 2: Sites visited



Many of the Tamang residents in Kanchanpur (in southwest Nepal) emigrated from Jharlang (Dhading) as a result of multiple landslides over the past century. Additionally, families from Nuwakot have immigrated to Gorkha and Lamjung, but the communities we visited in Gorkha did not have this background.

Community members in Jharlang declared that Dhading is the primary district for Western Tamang speakers with the VDC's of Lapa, Reegaun, Tipling and Sertung representing the most concentrated population centers. However, the Nepali Census data suggest that there is a higher population of Tamangs in Nuwakot than in Dhading (118,873 in Nuwakot, 74,239 in Dhading). Tamang speakers also live in Maidi VDC (Dhading) and moved there from Jharlang.

## 1.2 Peoples

While there have been several terms used in the past to refer to Tamang people (such as *Murmi*, *Bhote*, *Say* and *Lama*), the term of choice for the Tamang community is *Tamang* (van Driem 2001: 963). Though the Thakali also use the term *Tamang*, van Driem notes that they only use it in their own language and identify themselves as *Thakali* when speaking Nepali. Van Driem distinguishes the “proper” Tamang as “Just the largest subset of the ethnolinguistic groups which designate themselves as Tamang” (van Driem

2001: 963). Though the language that is the focus of this study (Western Tamang) has a name highlighting itself as a further subset of Tamang, there is little, if any, evidence that Tamangs who speak Western Tamang use a term other than the generic *Tamang* when referring to themselves. The term *Western Tamang* is likely one imposed by outsiders to distinguish between the linguistic differences found within Tamang. Ethnically, there is homogeneity between Eastern and Western Tamang. For this reason, people on both sides of the Trisuli River call themselves *Tamang*, even though they recognize differences between the language varieties they speak.

The speakers of what is labeled by the Ethnologue as *Eastern Gorkha Tamang* do not refer to themselves as *Tamang*. Jeff Webster's survey of the language spoken in Kashigaun and Kerauja of Gorkha district stated that these community members refer to themselves as *Gurung* or *Ghale* (Webster 1992: 6). This was confirmed during interviews in Kashigaun where the village secretary and other respondents described themselves as *Gurung* or *Ghale*. There have also been reports of groups in Dhading and Nuwakot who refer to themselves as *Ghale*, but speak Tamang. It, therefore, must be understood that in the context of this report, *Western Tamang* refers to a grouping of similar speech communities (including Eastern Gorkha Tamang).

### **1.2.1 History**

The Tamang community does not have a clearly defined and agreed upon history. Dor Bahadur Bista describes Tamang history as unclear saying: "No one seems to have any idea how long they have resided on the slopes of the Himalaya" (Bista 2004: 57). The most commonly held theory is that they came from Tibet originally, possibly as part of Tibetan King Songsten Gampo's army. Alternatively, several scholars believe that the Tamang were original habitants of the Kathmandu valley (Varenkamp 1996: 10–11).

### **1.2.2 Culture and religion**

Tamang society is united more by the term *Tamang* than by cultural solidarity. Varenkamp concludes from his research that they do not have a unifying *cultural* identity (1996: 7). Holmberg (1989: 22) further describes that "Tamang ethnic identity, then, derives not from common culture but in contrast to the ethnic identities of other Hindu and Tibeto-Burman groups." Yet, there have been some recorded similarities in marriage patterns and religious practices, which are described in the following paragraphs.

Tamangs are divided into several different clans or “thars” (Bista 2004: 61). Varenkamp (1996: 21) notes that there is no list of “completely identical” clan names across the different Tamang groups. There does not seem to be evidence that these clans form the basis for a hierarchical system, rather Tamang society is what Fricke (1993: 31) calls an “extraordinarily egalitarian group.” The different clans are integral to ethnic identity and members of the same clan are treated with special hospitality (Varenkamp 1996: 21).

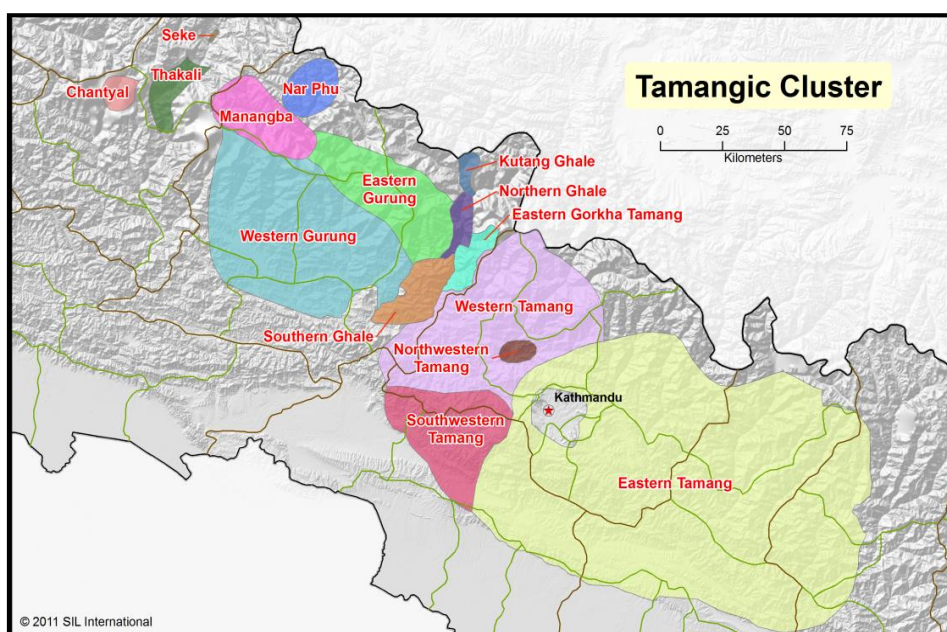
One important function of the different Tamang clans is to govern marriage practices (Höfer 1981: 9). An individual may not marry someone from their own clan or their “brother” clan (Varenkamp 1996: 21). The ideal marriage is cross-cousin marriage, marrying a mother’s brother’s daughter or father’s sister’s daughter (Bista 2004: 61). Bista describes the three main methods of marriage: arrangement, capture and mutual agreement (2004: 62).

Varenkamp lists three figures in Tamang religious practices: the Buddhist priest (the *lama*), the shaman (the *bombo*) and the *lambru* (the term used by eastern Tamangs is *tamba*) (1996: 22). Tibetan is used by Lamas as the evidence of their ritual authority; otherwise Tamang (or an archaic form thereof) is used (Holmberg 1989: xv, 183). Tamangs generally claim to be Buddhist, but also celebrate Hindu festivals such as Dashain and perform shamanistic activities (Bista 2004: 63–65). There are also known Christian churches in Kanchanpur, Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa among the Tamang communities.

### 1.3 Language

Tamang has the highest number (1,353,311) of speakers of Nepal’s Tibeto-Burman languages (2011 census). The language classification of Western Tamang is Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Gurung-Tamang, Tamang (Eppele, Regmi, & Yadava 2012). Western Tamang is a member of the Tamangic cluster (see Map 3) and related to Chantyal [chx], Eastern Gurung [ggn], Western Gurung [gvr], Manangba [nmm], Nar Phu [npa], Seke [skj], Thakali [ths] and Eastern Tamang [taj] (Eppele et al. 2012).

**Map 3: Tamangic cluster**



### 1.3.1 Language description

Western Tamang uses subject-object-verb (SOV) sentence structure and is tonal (Eppel et al. 2012).

The scope of this survey included three different languages listed in the Ethnologue: Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge], Northwestern Tamang [tmk], and Western Tamang [tdg]. Initially, Southwestern Tamang [tsf] was considered for field research, but discussion with Eastern Tamang leaders led us to include it with Eastern Tamang and leave it out of the sites we visited.<sup>2</sup> Although speakers may describe the language in another area as different or prefix it with that location's name, there is no indication that Tamangs have consistent labels to distinguish between these different varieties. Communities living in the VDCs of Kashigaun, Kerauja and Manbu in Gorkha often refer to their language as *Gurung language* or *Ghale language*. Use of the term *Ghale* to describe themselves has also been reported in Tipling of Dhading and near Trisuli of Nuwakot. Since the communities do not markedly differentiate between the varieties of Western Tamang, one of the focus

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<sup>2</sup> Based on correspondence with members of the Eastern Tamang Language Team (ETLT). This information is regarded as significant and reliable especially because there is a Southwestern Tamang community member working on developing materials with ETLT and the wider Southwestern Tamang community has already started using previously developed, Eastern Tamang materials, with success.

points of this research was to determine if the distinctions currently listed in the Ethnologue are valid.

Western Tamang [tdg] is classified on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)<sup>3</sup> as 5, *Developing*. This EGIDS level means that “The language is vigorous and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community though literacy is not yet sustainable.” Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge] and Northwestern Tamang [tmk] are currently classified on EGIDS as 6a, *Vigorous*. This level means that “the language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.” Not only are many Tamang speakers maintaining their language, but there is also evidence that other ethnicities who live among the Tamang learn Tamang (Varenkamp 1996).

### **1.3.2 Previous research and language development**

Numerous scholars have conducted research among the Western Tamang communities, but there are no known ongoing language development activities in any of the Western Tamang communities.

David Holmberg and Thomas Fricke have spent time and published anthropological works on the communities in Nuwakot and Dhading. Van Driem lists several linguists that have written on the Western Tamang language, but reports that there is not yet a comprehensive Tamang grammar (van Driem 2001: 966–968). In 1972 Doreen Taylor, Fay Everitt and Karna Bahadur Tamang completed a vocabulary of the Tamang language in Nuwakot (Taylor, Doreen, Everitt, Fay, & Tamang, Karna Bahadur 1972). Doreen Taylor also completed a phonemic summary (1969) and several other linguistic papers. Jeff Webster conducted a survey of the languages and dialects of North Gorkha district in 1992. Part of this fieldwork included research on the Tamang speakers in Gorkha district. The current distinction of Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge] is based on Webster’s research of the Tamang spoken by Gurung people in Kashigau, Gorkha and the surrounding villages.

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<sup>3</sup> The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is often used to classify the level of vitality held in a community or language using a 0-10 scale with 0 representing strong vitality and 10 being extinct (Melvyn P. Lewis & Simons 2010).

To date, the most thorough sociolinguistic information collected on Western Tamang was done by Bryan Varenkamp (1996) in his work *Tamang Tam: A Sociolinguistic Study of Eastern Tamang Dialects (in Nepal)*. While the focus of his research was on the eastern dialects of Tamang, he also includes valuable research on the Western Tamang dialects. Varenkamp states that his own work on Eastern and Western Tamang begs the question, “How much variety is there in Western Tamang?” (1996: 55). Varenkamp also comments that lexical similarities in his study indicate that Eastern Gorkha Tamang is even closer to other Tamang varieties than Webster posited (1996: 43).

Extensive language development work has been done in Eastern Tamang by ETLT (Eastern Tamang Language Team) and other groups, but limited language development work has been done among the Western Tamang. Several written materials have been produced in the Sahugaun variety and literacy programs have also been run (based on those materials) in Nuwakot and to a lesser extent in Dhading.



**View from the village in Jharlang (Dhading).**

## **2 Purpose, Goals and Research Questions**

This survey aims to assist LinSuN (Linguistic Survey of Nepal) in fulfilling the objective of producing “a sociolinguistic profile for each of the languages of Nepal” in light of the vision to “lay a foundation that provides for the linguistic rights of the citizens of Nepal so that all her people, regardless of linguistic background, will be included in the overall fabric of the nation” (LinSuN Proposal 2008). The purpose of this survey is to obtain a basic understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Western Tamang in Nepal in order to inform language development efforts. The more specific goals that help support this purpose are listed below.

### **2.1 Goal 1: Investigate relationships between language varieties within Western Tamang**

The first goal of this survey is to investigate the relationships between the different varieties of Western Tamang and the comprehension between the varieties through an emic perspective (that of the speakers themselves), lexical similarity and comprehension testing. The questions listed below are addressed with the tools indicated in parenthesis.

- What are the varieties of Western Tamang and where are they located? (Dialect Mapping, Knowledgeable Insider Interview [KII])
- What is the lexical similarity between the identified varieties of Western Tamang (Western Tamang, Eastern Gorkha Tamang and Northwestern Tamang)? (Word list comparisons)
- What is the comprehension between the identified varieties of Western Tamang (Western Tamang, Eastern Gorkha Tamang and Northwestern Tamang)? (Recorded Text Testing [RTT], Post-RTT Questionnaires)

### **2.2 Goal 2: Identify which varieties can use shared language resources**

For a language development program to be carried out most efficiently, it is necessary to determine which varieties can share resources. This goal includes some of the information on language relationships listed in Goal 1, but specifically focuses on level of comprehension, language attitudes and patterns of contact among the Western Tamang communities as they relate to extensibility of materials.

- Which variety is best understood throughout the Western Tamang area? (RTT)
- What are the attitudes held by each variety toward one another? (Post-RTT Questions, Informal Interviews and Dialect Mapping)
- What are the patterns of contact between the varieties of Western Tamang? (KII, Informal Interviews and Dialect Mapping)

### **2.3 Goal 3: Language vitality**

The vitality of a language shows the strength of current language use. Vitality also helps give indication of whether or not a language will be spoken in the future. This survey seeks to understand the vitality of Western Tamang by addressing the following questions:

- What language(s) are used in the home and other domains? (Informal Interviews)
- What is the extent of intergenerational transfer? (Informal Interviews)
- Are there any contextual factors that may influence the vitality of the mother tongue? (Informal Interviews)
- To what extent do Western Tamang people read and write in the mother tongue? (KII and Informal Interviews)

### **2.4 Goal 4: Desires for development**

Understand each speech community's desire for Western Tamang language-based development.

- What attitudes do these communities express for language-based development? (KII and Informal Interviews).
- What goals do these communities express for language-based development? (Informal Interviews).

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Instruments

The following instruments were administered using Nepali and/or the target language where possible. Probes for each of these instruments were developed in English, translated into Nepali and pilot tested prior to using them in fieldwork.

#### 3.1.1 Word list comparisons

Description and purpose: A comparison of word lists to estimate the degree of lexical similarity between the speech varieties the word lists represent.

Procedure: Word lists were elicited in Nepali from mother tongue Western Tamang speakers and were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). A lexical similarity analysis was carried out on each pair of word lists. The analysis practice is outlined in Appendix B-2.

Advantages: Data collection is relatively efficient. Word lists can provide some broad insights into possible dialect groupings.

Disadvantages: Above certain levels of lexical similarity, word lists cannot give conclusive evidence of comprehension between speech varieties compared.

#### 3.1.2 Recorded Text Test (RTT)

Description and purpose: Subjects listened to recorded stories with comprehension questions asked within the stories. After the subject had listened to the stories, questions regarding language attitudes were asked. This helps in the assessment of subjects' understanding of and attitudes toward actual samples of the language from various areas. A complete description of the development of the test is available in Appendix G.

Procedure: A narrative story was collected from a native Western Tamang speaker.<sup>4</sup> It was then played for people in other Western Tamang communities, who were not told the story's place of origin. As subjects listen to each story, they answered comprehension questions (recorded in their own dialect) about the story. After listening

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<sup>4</sup> The Nuwakot Text Test (NTT) was an exception. In that instance we used a written story and asked a speaker from that area to read it for the recording.

to each story, subjects answered questions about their understanding of and opinions toward the speech variety used by the storyteller. The tests were administered first in the community the speaker is from to ensure the speech is representative of that variety. This is referred to as the home town test (HTT).

Advantages: By using actual samples of selected speech varieties, an initial assessment of comprehension and attitudes can be made.

Disadvantages: This test can be time consuming to develop. This type of RTT only evaluates basic understanding of spoken text and it does not measure reading or writing ability in the second dialect.

### **3.1.3 Knowledgeable insider interview (KII)**

Description and purpose: A prepared interview specifically designed for someone the community views as knowledgeable regarding information about their community and language. This tool provides information from a reliable and knowledgeable source. The source for the interview in Kashigaun was the village secretary and in Jharlang a secondary school teacher was interviewed. In Sahugaun the church pastor was interviewed. The KII can be found in Appendix D-3.

Procedure: Administered to only one person at a time. Questions range from specific population estimates and locations to general information about vitality and other languages spoken in the community.

Advantages: Useful for obtaining village-level facts.

Disadvantages: Information is from only one person and, therefore may be skewed to their particular view.

### **3.1.4 Informal interviews**

Description and purpose: A prepared interview schedule guides interaction in order to gather information regarding specific sociolinguistic issues, while allowing freedom to wander from the schedule if it provides additional information relevant to the research questions of the survey. The informal interview questions can be found in Appendix D-1.

Procedure: An example of this procedure would be asking “What language do you usually speak with your children?” as on the planned interview schedule. If the interviewee responds with two or more languages, follow-up questions such as “Do you

speak one of these languages more often than the other?” might be asked. This allows the interviews to focus more on patterns of language use (and their impact on language vitality and shift) than on other topics, such as generalized trends of multilingualism.

Advantages: Depending on the length of the interview, the time in administration can be minimal, allowing for relatively large numbers of people to be interviewed. The informal nature of the interviews helps subjects feel comfortable and share openly, while allowing greater depth and providing context for their responses.

Disadvantages: Informal interviews are limited in that subjects may only report what they want the researcher to hear, or what they believe the researcher would like to hear.

### **3.1.5 Participatory methods (PM)**

This survey used one participatory methods (PM) tool. The purpose for using PM is to gain perspective from the community regarding what they see happening with their language. PM attempts to draw out the insider (emic) perspectives of the community.

#### **3.1.5.1 Dialect Mapping**

Description and purpose: This tool creates space for discussion of emic perspectives regarding dialects, their geographic location and perceived levels of comprehension between varieties. A description of the tool can be found in Appendix G.

Procedure: Participants describe their linguistic landscape by identifying other locations where their language is spoken and grouping those areas according to perceived similarity. They then identify the level of mutual understanding and which variety they believe to be the standard or most broadly understood.

Advantages: Provides a visual representation of: other communities which participants interact with, how well they feel they understand those varieties, how their language may or may not be altered in these circumstances and their attitudes about other varieties.

Disadvantages: May seem complicated or redundant, but each step contributes to a fuller picture of the local perception of the language situation. Emic perspectives do not always match linguistic reality.

Facilitations: The Dialect Mapping conducted in Jharlang (Dhading) was facilitated in Nepali by co-researcher Holly Hilty and clarified by our language assistants Dhan

Tamang and Prem Tamang. It was conducted during the early evening with about 40 people in attendance from various backgrounds.

In Gorkha, the tool was facilitated in Nepali by co-researcher Stephanie Eichentopf and clarified by Dhan Tamang. A group of seven people were involved from various backgrounds and it was held in the home of our host. Their observations primarily contrasted Western Tamang against other languages (such as Gurung and Sherpa) and did not distinguish between the different districts where Western Tamang is spoken.

Dialect Mapping was also facilitated in Kathmandu among Western Tamang speakers from Nawalparasi, Dhading and Lamjung. This was facilitated for background research, primarily for site selection, though the data also contributes to the final analysis as well.

### **3.2 Site selection**

Villages for testing were chosen based on background research, contacts in the area and Dialect Mapping. Background research provided the language picture described in the introduction which informed the selection of Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot as the sites for this research. The specific and most pertinent reason for choosing these districts is that they reflected three different language distinctions in the Nepal Ethnologue; namely Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge], Western Tamang [tdg], and Northwestern Tamang [tnk] respectively. Dialect Mapping conducted in Kathmandu confirmed these site choices.

The specific villages within each district were selected based on whether or not they were Western Tamang communities, and the presence of a reliable contact in the area.

It should be noted that Jharlang is more remote than Kashigaun, and especially more remote than Sahugaun. Jharlang was chosen to ensure that the speech variety was indicative of an exclusively Tamang-speaking village in Dhading. However, the level of remoteness could also cause the variety to be more idiosyncratic, and not necessarily reflective of the rest of Dhading's speech variety, due to isolation.

For the remainder of this report the district name will be used to refer to each site. Even though these individual sites cannot fully represent the language of the district, we believe they are indicative of the primary language features.

### 3.3 Subject selection

Subject quotas for this survey were based on a convenience sample. Each sample focused on four demographic groups (gender, age, education and geographic location), as these factors are known to influence language use and attitudes. People in these demographic groups often have varying levels of exposure to other languages.

#### 3.3.1 Word lists and RTT story elicitation subject selection

There were four requirements for subjects to be chosen for word lists and recorded story elicitation. These criteria are as follows:

1. Subject has grown up in the village under study, lives there now and if they have lived elsewhere, it was not for a significant amount of recent time.<sup>5</sup>
2. Subject has at least one parent from the target mother-tongue.
3. Subject has at least one parent from the village under study and that parent spoke the mother-tongue (MT) with them.
4. Subject speaks MT first and best.

#### 3.3.2 Informal interview subject selection

The informal interview schedule required that only criteria number one and two (listed above) be met in order for a subject to be eligible. In each test site, a minimum of 12 informal interviews were administered to a sample of Western Tamang speakers, stratified by age, education, and gender (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Sample size for informal interviews in each site, stratified by age and gender**

Sample size by strata		Age		Total
		<i>Young (15-34)</i>	<i>Old (35+)</i>	
Gender	<i>Male</i>	3	3	6
	<i>Female</i>	3	3	6
Total		6	6	12

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<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to define a specific time period (e.g. more than the last five years) for “a significant amount of recent time”. Thus, this criterion is intentionally subjective as it depends on how long the subject lived elsewhere and how long they have been back in the village relative to their age.

A minimum of 12 subjects were chosen from each site. Each site had to have a minimum number of three individuals in each age and gender category. We also kept track of the education levels of respondents to ensure that there was a mix of educated/uneducated individuals.<sup>6</sup>



**A man plowing his field near Jharlang (Dhading)**

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<sup>6</sup> Literate persons were classified as educated, which generally corresponds with the completion of primary level four.

## 4 Language and Dialect Variation

To understand the relationships between the languages of the sites visited, three main tools were employed: word lists, Recorded Text Tests (RTTs) and Dialect Mapping. Word lists were collected in Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot. RTTs were developed in Dhading and Nuwakot and tested in all three sites. Dialect Mapping in Gorkha and Dhading helped identify the varieties of Western Tamang according to an emic perspective. Additionally, previous lexical similarity and RTT data collected by Varenkamp (1996) helped corroborate our findings. Triangulation of data suggests that the varieties spoken in Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa are likely dialects of one language called “Western Tamang.” There is not enough conclusive data to confirm that the Eastern Gorkha Tamang variety could also be grouped with “Western Tamang.” The distinction between Western Tamang and Eastern Tamang is maintained through lexical similarity and emic perspectives.

### 4.1 Lexical similarity

Lexical similarity is a measure of the relative similarity of a sample of words from two speech varieties. Similarity percentages are determined by calculating the percentage of words in one speech variety that are pronounced the same or similar to the words in another speech variety. This survey used the software program COG, which applied the method outlined in Blair (1990: 31-32), further explained in Appendix B-2.

#### 4.1.1 Results from this survey

The lexical similarity among the word lists from Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot varies between 62-77% (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Lexical similarity**

Nuwakot		
77%	Dhading	
70%	62%	Gorkha

The highest level of lexical similarity is between Nuwakot and Dhading (77%), while the lowest is between Dhading and Gorkha (62%). The lexical similarity between Nuwakot and Dhading lies in the middle of these two numbers at 70%.

### 4.1.2 Results from Varenkamp<sup>7</sup>

During the course of Varenkamp's fieldwork, word lists were collected from Western Tamang speakers in the following districts: Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa. The lexical similarity percentages are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Lexical similarity results from Varenkamp**

Borang, Dhading			
94%	Sahugaun, Nuwakot		
82%	82%	Syabru, Rasuwa	
77%	79%	72%	Kashigaun, Gorkha

Overall, the lexical similarity percentages between the Western Tamang varieties Varenkamp sampled were higher (72% - 94%) than the percentages on the word lists we collected (62% - 77%). On both sets of word lists, the lexical similarities between the word lists in Nuwakot and Dhading were the highest. Of particular interest here is the fact that the lexical similarity between the word lists from Rasuwa and Nuwakot and Rasuwa and Dhading are both 82%, rather high. These high percentages give support to grouping the Tamang spoken in Rasuwa with the Western Tamang language group. Also, worthy of note, the lowest lexical similarities are between the word lists in Gorkha and all other sites (72% - 79%). The lower lexical similarity between the Tamang word lists in Gorkha and the word lists in other districts supports the recommendation to leave Eastern Gorkha Tamang as a distinct language.

### 4.1.3 Summarizing lexical similarity results

Blair reports that lexical similarity percentages below 60% indicate that the varieties are separate languages. No lexical similarity results are below 60%, thus no variety of Western Tamang can be considered a separate language. For results higher than 60%, comprehension testing is needed (Blair 1990: 24). The comprehension testing is discussed in Section 4.2.

The word lists sampled from Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa have higher lexical similarity with one another, while the word lists from Gorkha had lower lexical

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<sup>7</sup> This data comes from *Tamang Tam: A Sociolinguistic Study of Eastern Tamang Dialects (in Nepal)* (Varenkamp 1996: 46).

similarity with all other word lists. Lexical similarity results suggest that the Western Tamang varieties are dialects of one language, but comprehension testing is required.

## 4.2 Recorded Text Testing (RTT)

The level of comprehension between Tamang speakers in the various sites can be clarified through Recorded Text Tests (RTTs), which were developed in two locations: Nuwakot and Dhading. Post-RTT questions and Dialect Mapping are also helpful in revealing the community's perceived level of comprehension between varieties. The results from these tools suggest that Nuwakot is the variety most easily understood, though only moderately, while comprehension of the Dhading variety is lower.

### 4.2.1 Understanding RTT scores

In order to interpret RTT results properly, three pieces of information are necessary. The first is average score, which is the mean or average of all subjects' individual scores on a particular story at a particular test site. Another important piece of information is a measure of how much individual scores vary from the community average, which is known as standard deviation. The third important component of the data is the size of the sample of people tested on each story.

Blair (1990: 25) has written about the relationship between test scores and their standard deviation, as seen in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Relationship between test averages and standard deviation**

		Standard Deviation	
		High	Low
Average Score	High	<i>Situation 1</i> Many people understand the story well, but some have difficulty.	<i>Situation 2</i> Most people understand the story.
	Low	<i>Situation 3</i> Many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly.	<i>Situation 4</i> Few people are able to understand the story.

In general, average RTT scores of around 80 percent or higher with accompanying low standard deviations (usually ten and below; high standard deviations are about 15 and above) are taken to indicate that the subjects from the test point display adequate

comprehension of the variety represented by the recording. However, RTT average scores lower than 60 percent are interpreted to indicate inadequate comprehension.

#### 4.2.2 Recorded Text Test results

Figure 5 displays a summary of the Recorded Text Test results from this survey of Western Tamang. The sections following Figure 5 will describe the results in more detail. The highlighted boxes represent the hometown test scores. *Avg* represents the average score for all subjects. *Sd* represents the standard deviation, and *Num* stands for the number of subjects.

**Figure 5: Recorded Text Test (RTT) results**

		REFERENCE POINT (Story)				
TEST POINT		Nuwakot Story Test (NST)	Nuwakot Text Test (NTT)	Dhading Story Test	Varenkamp Nuwakot	Varenkamp Rasuwa
(Subjects)						
Sahugaun Nuwakot	<i>avg</i>	96	90	75		80
	<i>sd</i>	8	13	13		18
	<i>num</i>	10	10	12		10
Jharlang Dhading	<i>avg</i>	83	66	90		
	<i>sd</i>	5	22	8		
	<i>num</i>	11	10	12		
Kashigaun Gorkha	<i>avg</i>	88	60	72		
	<i>sd</i>	11	18	13		
	<i>num</i>	10	10	10		
Syabru Rasuwa	<i>avg</i>				86	
	<i>sd</i>				11	
	<i>num</i>				12	

#### *Comprehension of the Nuwakot variety*

Two stories were developed in Nuwakot for testing elsewhere, one from a community member's life experience, and the other from a segment of text developed in the local variety. The first story will be described as the Nuwakot Story Test (NST) and the second as the Nuwakot Text Test (NTT). Respondents displayed different levels of comprehension based on the complexity of the story.

The results of 83% (Dhading) and 88% (Gorkha) on the NST show a fairly high level of comprehension. The Dhading results have a very low standard deviation (5) and a high average score (83%) indicating that most people understood the story quite well. In Gorkha, the average score was higher (88%), but the standard deviation was 11. A standard deviation score of 11 is in-between what is categorized as high and low but suggests that most people in Gorkha understand the story well, but some may have difficulty. The results on this test in both sites suggest a fairly high level of comprehension of the Nuwakot variety.

Triangulation of data with other tools will help confirm this high level of comprehension.

The text used for the NTT was from work published in Western Tamang by Doreen Taylor and Karna Tamang in 1992. It provides some contrast with the NST since it is a narrative text that has been orally recorded and has been said to be a pure form of the Nuwakot variety with no Nepali loan words.

The NTT received fairly low scores in both Dhading and Gorkha. Test subjects in Dhading averaged 66% while those in Gorkha averaged 60%. High standard deviation in both sites (22 and 18 respectively) suggests that the form of speech used in the NTT is poorly understood in Dhading and Gorkha, but there are a few people who can answer correctly.

The NTT consistently had higher standard deviation than the NST in the hometown test and in the other sites. This could suggest that the speech found in the NTT requires a more specialized knowledge of Tamang than the NST, which a limited number of the test subjects possessed.

Varenkamp also developed two RTTs in the Western Tamang speaking areas: one in the Sahugau, Nuwakot variety and one in the Syabru, Rasuwa variety. The average score on the Nuwakot test in Rasuwa was 86% with a standard deviation of 11. This means that most people understood the Nuwakot story well in Rasuwa, but some people may have difficulty. The average score on the Rasuwa test in Nuwakot was 80% with a standard deviation of 18.

In addition to the information gathered from the test scores themselves, inferences can be drawn from the Post-RTT questionnaire. After both the NST and the NTT,

respondents were asked, “How much of the story did you understand? (all, most, half, any or less than half).”

All respondents from Gorkha reported that they understood “all” or “most” of the NST story, indicating high reported comprehension, which is consistent with RTT scores. Respondents in Dhading reported lower understanding of the NST than Gorkha (54% reported that they understood “all” or “most”).

Respondents in both Dhading and Gorkha reported lower comprehension of the NTT than the NST, which also corresponds with RTT scores.

#### *Comprehension of the Dhading variety*

The comprehension of the Dhading Story Test (DST) among participants is moderate in both Nuwakot and Gorkha.

Respondents in Nuwakot and Gorkha seem to understand a moderate amount of the Dhading story (75% and 72% respectively). The consistent standard deviation (13) from both sites suggests that most community members understand the story to a moderate extent.

Following listening to the story, we asked respondents in Nuwakot and Gorkha the following question regarding their perceived understanding of the story: “How much of the story did you understand? (all, most, half, less than half).” The majority of respondents said they understood “all” or “most” of the DST (73% in Nuwakot and 80% in Gorkha), this self-reported comprehension is consistent with RTT scores.

#### **4.2.3 Summarizing RTT Results**

Results from the testing of the Nuwakot variety in Dhading and Gorkha suggest that both varieties understand the Nuwakot speech variety fairly well, with Gorkha having higher comprehension than Dhading. However, both areas have a low understanding of the more complex written form of Tamang. The respondents’ perception of their understanding of the tests yielded similar results. The RTT scores and self-reported comprehension on the Dhading story suggest a moderate level of understanding in both Nuwakot and Gorkha. Comprehension testing suggests that the language varieties spoken in Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot have moderate to high levels of comprehension, though there are noticeable dialectical differences. One particular

difference is that the Nuwakot variety is more widely understood than the Dhading variety. Additionally, based on Varenkamp's work, we can see that the Nuwakot variety is well understood in Rasuwa.

### **4.3 Dialect Mapping**

In order to understand the complex sociolinguistic situation of Western Tamang, a framework that takes multiple perspectives into account must be established. One of the most important perspectives is that of the community members themselves. Dialect Mapping is one tool that elicits the emic perspectives on language boundaries and relationships. The communities' descriptions seem to group the different varieties into one language with different dialects.

The Dialect Mapping in both Dhading and Gorkha was conducted in Nepali by co-researchers Holly Hilty and Stephanie Eichentopf with the assistance of Dhan Bahadur Tamang (more information on these facilitations is in Appendix G). The results suggest that both communities see the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa as being one language. The community in Dhading reported that they find Gorkha, Rasuwa and Nuwakot's language just slightly different from their own. This suggests that the grouping of Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa under the same language with geographical dialect variation aligns with an emic perspective.

### **4.4 Summary and conclusions**

Lexical similarity results indicate that the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot is highly related. Comprehension testing suggests that the Nuwakot variety is understood more widely than the Dhading variety, but only in a simple oral form. The scores on the RTTs were not high enough to rule out the possibility of significant dialect variation. Based on the data in this chapter, the variety spoken in Gorkha is somewhat different from the other language varieties. While it's possible that Gorkha could also use the same written materials as Western Tamang speakers in the other districts, materials testing should be conducted in Gorkha for extensibility. The communities' perspective gained through Dialect Mapping suggests that the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa could be understood as the same language, but acknowledges variation in local varieties. This data suggests that the relationship

between the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa and Nuwakot is that they are highly related varieties.



**Kashigaun Village (Gorkha) during the winter.**

## **5 Ability to Use Shared Language Resources**

Understanding the feasibility of different language varieties using shared language resources is crucial for planning language development work. Likely, the most important aspect of ability to share resources is the community's attitude toward other varieties; if negative attitudes are present toward a variety then it will be difficult for a community to use language resources from that variety. Through informal interviews, post-RTT questionnaires and Dialect Mapping, this section will seek to understand the Western Tamang community's attitudes towards shared language resources. This section also draws upon the RTT scores used in the previous section to suggest the most widely understood variety. Finally, patterns of contact will be considered as indicators of which dialect has the greater potential for extensibility.

### **5.1 Community attitudes**

Attitudes were assessed through informal interviews, Dialect Mapping and the responses to post-RTT questions. These tools help bring to the forefront any negative attitudes that a community might have toward other varieties. Absence of negative attitudes is a positive factor when considering language extensibility.

Informal interviews did not reveal any negative language attitudes between people in the districts where Western Tamang is spoken. Respondents were asked if they had been to Dhading, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Makwanpur, Gorkha, Chitwan or Kanchanpur and, if so, were then asked how they liked the language spoken there. Despite recognizing differences in the way Tamang is spoken in the different districts, there were no negative language attitudes presented in any of the research sites in response to this question.

To further understand attitudes held towards other varieties, respondents were asked which variety they believe to be the purest or "best." Community members from Dhading did not see any site other than their own as the most pure. In Gorkha, the most frequent response was that they see their own language variety as most pure, but there was no consensus; there were mixed responses to this question. Twenty five percent of respondents from Nuwakot identified Sindupalchowk (Eastern Tamang) as the most pure. Since sites generally identify their own variety as "best," these responses do not

reveal any specific indications of which site would be preferred for developing shared resources.

One of the questions posed to the communities in Gorkha and Dhading as part of Dialect Mapping was which district they would prefer for mother tongue material development. The first choice in Dhading was Dhading and the second choice was the language spoken in Kanchanpur (likely because many of the Tamangs in Kanchanpur emigrated there from Dhading, see Section 1.1). Gorkha chose either Dhading or Gorkha without a preference between the two. This seems to suggest that Dhading is a preferred location for mother tongue materials development, but this conclusion should be balanced with the fact that there was no Dialect Mapping data collected in Nuwakot.

Post-RTT questionnaires are a valuable tool for ascertaining language attitudes since the participant first hears the speech variety (as part of the RTT) and is then asked for their immediate impression. Because RTTs were developed in Nuwakot and Dhading, they provide information on the attitudes of Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot towards those varieties. There were no negative attitudes expressed in any of the sites toward the speech varieties of Nuwakot or Dhading, but people generally noticed that the language in the stories was different from their own. After listening to the story, respondents were asked for their perception of where the storyteller's home is located. Approximately 50% of respondents (all young people) in Dhading identified the Nuwakot story as being told by a storyteller nearby. The Dhading variety was accurately identified more frequently (70%) than Nuwakot's (40%) in the Post-RTT Questionnaires. The identification of the Dhading variety more accurately in the other sites could be because it is geographically more similar to both sites, or it could support the hypothesis that Dhading represents a more idiosyncratic dialect.<sup>8</sup>

The preferences of the communities where Dialect Mapping was conducted seem to suggest that materials developed in Dhading could also be used in Gorkha. Neither

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<sup>8</sup> Other reasons for Dhading representing a more idiosyncratic dialect include: (1) The fact that people from Dhading distinguished themselves from others in Dialect Mapping while people in Gorkha did not. (2) The lower scores on the Dhading RTT. (3) The Dhading variety was accurately recognized elsewhere. (4) Our Western Tamang colleague from Lamjung reported that the Dhading variety was harder for him to understand than Nuwakot even though they are closer.

informal interviews nor Dialect Mapping revealed any negative attitudes among the varieties of Western Tamang. Respondents noticed differences between their own variety and the Nuwakot and Dhading stories, but they did not express any negative attitudes. The Dhading variety was identified more readily than the Nuwakot variety which could suggest it is a more idiosyncratic dialect.

## **5.2 Most understood variety**

Recorded Text Testing was administered with speech samples from Nuwakot and Dhading, so it is only possible to contrast those two varieties for extensibility to other areas. Nuwakot had two different samples, one of a simple life story and the other of written materials previously developed in that variety. In order to have consistent factors for analysis, the life story (described as the NST in Section 0) will be considered in comparison to the Dhading test and the recorded written story (NTT in Section 0) will be analyzed individually.

Section 4.2 illustrated that in Gorkha people scored higher on the test from Nuwakot (88%) than the test from Dhading (72%). People tested in Dhading also scored quite high on the Nuwakot test (83%). This suggests that both varieties have the potential to be understood elsewhere, however, the difference in scores (over 10 percentage points) communicates the higher possibility for extensibility of the Nuwakot variety. This was confirmed during the Post-RTT questionnaire, where respondents in Gorkha identified less difference between their variety and the Nuwakot test than they did with the Dhading test, although this may have been influenced by the shorter length of the Nuwakot test.

Low scores on the NTT in both Dhading and Gorkha emphasizes the need for extensibility testing during material development. There are several factors which make previously written materials more difficult to understand, so low scores do not rule out this possibility but underline the need for extensibility testing of materials as they are developed.<sup>9</sup> As discussed in Section 0, responses in both Dhading and Gorkha indicate relatively low understanding of written materials that were previously developed in

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<sup>9</sup> Such factors could include: (1) a more literary form of speech, (2) words no longer in everyday speech (the text was 30 years old) (3) a more concise, detail rich account which makes it more difficult for respondents to understand and answer correctly.

Nuwakot. However, the HTT for this text in Nuwakot also had lower than desirable results.

Based on RTT scores, both Nuwakot and Dhading seem extensible to other varieties, but Nuwakot is more widely understood. However, the results suggest that there is some difficulty in understanding this variety in a written form. Language development in any variety will need to include extensibility testing to ensure a wider audience.

### **5.3 Patterns of contact**

Informal interview respondents were asked which other Western Tamang speaking areas they had visited. Patterns of contact among Western Tamang communities provided insight on different Tamang speech areas since an increase in level of contact often correlates with the possibility of increased comprehension between varieties. In addition to travel patterns, respondents were also asked what they thought of the language spoken in the districts they had travelled to. The number of respondents who had been to other districts was relatively low (the number ranges between  $n = 3$  and  $n = 8$  for each site), making it difficult to make strong inferences based on this data.

The three individuals from Dhading who reported on the language they encountered in Gorkha all described it to be the same as their own. Individuals from Gorkha and Nuwakot recognized Dhading as being the most different. The four respondents from Gorkha who had been to Dhading had a higher perceived similarity with it than did the four respondents from Nuwakot who had been to Dhading. Dhading and Gorkha both saw Nuwakot primarily as a “little different.” One individual from Dhading who had been among Tamang speakers in Rasuwa said their language was quite different. Yet, of the two individuals from Gorkha who had been to Rasuwa, one said it was the same and the other said it was a little different. Three out of the four individuals from Nuwakot who had been to Rasuwa said it was a little different while one person said it was the same.

These results align with two general themes presented elsewhere in this report: first, that Nuwakot is moderately understood in both Dhading and Gorkha (Section 0) and secondly, that the Dhading variety is seen as more unique (Section 0). It is also apparent that the Rasuwa variety is understood as being similar since six out of seven individuals who had travelled there from other districts saw it as the same or “a little different.”

There is a limited amount of contact between the different Western Tamang communities this survey is focused on (35 out of 62 respondents have been to another Western Tamang community), and there is no evidence of a consistent pattern. Respondents who visited other sites had mixed reviews of the language spoken there, but seem to think Gorkha is the most similar to their own variety and Dhading is the most distinct.

## **5.4 Summary and conclusions**

No negative attitudes were expressed in the sites visited, but subjects did report, after hearing a speech sample, that the Nuwakot and Dhading varieties are different from their own. The preferences of the communities where Dialect Mapping was conducted seem to suggest that materials developed in Dhading could be used there and in Gorkha, which gives the Dhading variety a degree of extensibility. However, RTT comprehension scores seem to suggest that Nuwakot could be more extensible than Dhading, and there are some indicators that Dhading is an idiosyncratic dialect. Patterns of contact do not provide any strong indicators of which dialect would be more widely extensible; however, Gorkha was identified as the least different. The evidence suggests that no site is ruled out as a candidate for shared language resources as a result of negative attitudes; however, higher comprehension of Nuwakot highlights it for consideration. Extensibility testing and involvement of each community would be important in order for materials to be developed for a wide audience.



**The hills near Sahugaun (Nuwakot)**



## 6 Language Use and Vitality

Language vitality is foundational to understanding the sociolinguistic situation of a community. Properly understanding the vitality of a language requires not merely a current understanding of the situation, but making inferences on how future generations will use the language. This section assesses the vitality of Western Tamang by examining domains of language use, intergenerational transfer, vernacular literacy, and other contextual factors of mother tongue language use. One method used to quantify language vitality is the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS).<sup>10</sup> The current EGIDS level for Western Tamang is 5 (*Developing*), “The language is vigorous and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community though literacy is not yet sustainable.” However, this research has found that an EGIDS description of 6a (*Vigorous*), “The language is used orally by all generations and is normally learned by children as their first language” would be more accurate. This is because, although Western Tamang vitality is confirmed to be high, there is not significant evidence that Western Tamang is being used consistently by the community for the language of literacy.

### 6.1 Domains of language use

Domains of language use are one of the most important aspects in assessing the vitality of a language. It is generally accepted that the greater the number of domains in which a language is spoken, the stronger the vitality of that language becomes.

#### 6.1.1 Language use in the home

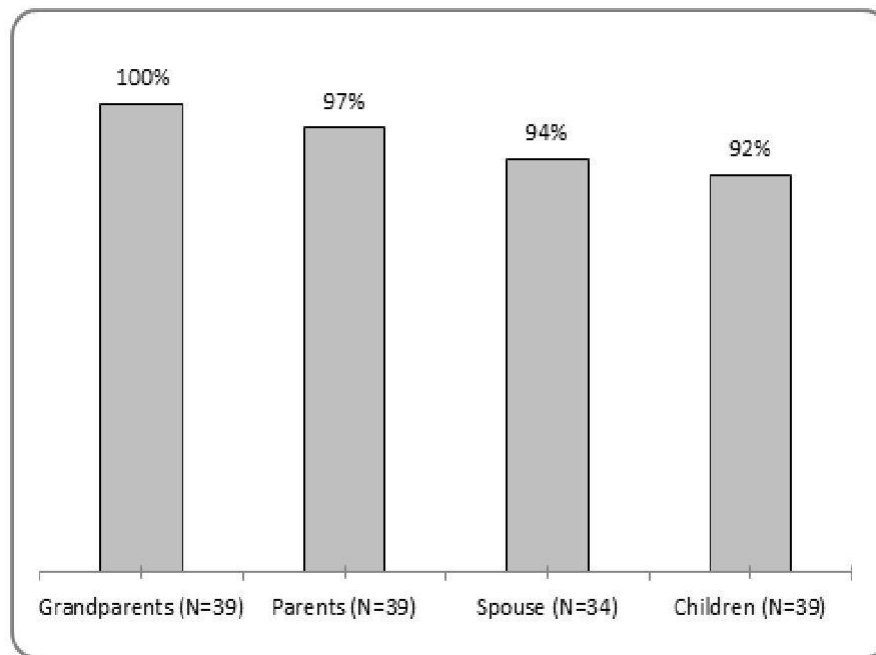
Within the rural Nepali context, the home is where most individuals spend the majority of their time and, therefore, the home domain has the greatest weight of all domains of language use in determining the vitality of a language.

Because language use often varies between generations, respondents were asked which language they use most often when talking in the home to people from different age groups (Figure 6).

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<sup>10</sup> The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is often used to classify the level of vitality held in a community or language using a 0-10 scale with 0 representing strong vitality and 10 being extinct (Melvyn P. Lewis & Simons 2010).

**Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who use Tamang in the home with different generations**



Regardless of who they were interacting with, respondents from all three test sites overwhelmingly replied that Tamang is the most frequently used language in the home domain. Of the individuals who listed Western Tamang as their mother tongue during the screening criteria, over 90% reported that their parents spoke Western Tamang with them while growing up (likely in the home domain). This is an indicator of high language vitality.

### **6.1.2 Language use in the village**

Another significant domain of language use is village interactions. Western Tamang is used more regularly in the village than Nepali in daily interactions. Every informant except one or two reported that they use their mother tongue on a daily basis. By contrast, 27% reported using Nepali on a daily basis. Figure 7 shows the reported frequency of Nepali use.

**Figure 7: Frequency of Nepali use**

Site	N =	Daily	Rarely
Dhading	14	7%	93%
Gorkha	12	50%	50%
Nuwakot	12	25%	75%
Total	38	27%	73%

The frequency of the use of Nepali varied based on test site. Dhading respondents reported the least use of Nepali on a daily basis (1/14), followed by Nuwakot (3/12), while half of the Gorkha respondents reported using Nepali on a daily basis (6/12). Despite the report of more frequent use of Nepali in Gorkha than Dhading and Nuwakot, the fact remains that the use of the Western Tamang in public interactions is much higher than the reported use of Nepali. Fieldwork observations support this data that Tamang is used more frequently than Nepali in village interactions, especially in Dhading. Men reported using Nepali more than women, but the consistent use of Tamang in the public sphere by all groups strongly supports language vitality.

All individuals who participated in any of the tools answered the question “What language do you speak best?” Out of 69 total responses 87% listed Western Tamang as their best language. Men and the educated were more likely to list Nepali as their best language (21% for each group).

Almost all individuals use Tamang with their Tamang friends. About a fourth of respondents said they use Tamang with their non-Tamang friends (26%). However, this again varied by test site with Dhading subjects using the least Nepali with non-Tamang friends (53%), then Gorkha (75%), and Nuwakot (100%). Leaders from Dhading and Gorkha reported that their local variety is the main medium of communication between different ethnic groups in the village, while the leader interview in Nuwakot revealed that Nepali is used. For meetings in Dhading, the local vernacular is used, but in Gorkha and Nuwakot Nepali is used. Despite the use of some Nepali for non-Tamang interactions and some village meetings, the use of Tamang by speakers in most public interactions indicates strong language vitality.

Recent language assessment work in Rasuwa by NNLPI<sup>11</sup> has described a similar setting in which Tamang is being used in many domains of life, indicating strong use of the mother tongue.

### **6.1.3 Language use in education**

Within the Nepali context, the medium of education is almost always Nepali or English, which was reflected in all sites visited. Village leaders reported that Nepali or English was the medium of instruction at both primary and secondary levels. In primary schools in Gorkha and Dhading, the vernacular was used occasionally by teachers in explaining concepts.

The teachers at the secondary schools in all test sites were said to be from non-Tamang speaking ethnic groups. With the exception of Sahugaun, there are vernacular-speaking teachers in the primary schools.

The majority of parents (69%) responded that they use Western Tamang when discussing school matters with their children, although some respondents said they also use Nepali (11%). Educated and young people are more likely to use Nepali to discuss school matters with children, but even the majority of educated (58%) and young (58%) people still use Western Tamang. It was reported that children use the vernacular with one another while playing at school.

Although there are secondary schools near Jharlang (Dhading) and Kashigaun (Gorkha), most children attend and board near other secondary schools further away (at least a day's journey). From Jharlang the main location that students travel to is Dhading Bhesi, and from Kashigaun it is Gorkha (the town). The majority of children from Sahugaun (Nuwakot) go to the local secondary school.

### **6.1.4 Language use in the religion and music domain**

Almost all Christians use Nepali in public worship (90%) and most Buddhists use Western Tamang (at least 69%).<sup>12</sup> The majority of respondents in Dhading use Nepali for

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<sup>11</sup> Nepal National Languages Preservation Institute

<sup>12</sup> Several Buddhists listed Tibetan as the language used which could mean they were referring only to certain religious activities. Section 1.2.2 describes how different religious practitioners use different languages. Our questions failed to probe into this since they did not distinguish between Western Tamang or Tibetan use by religious professionals.

prayer, while respondents in Gorkha are almost equally divided in their use of Nepali and Tamang for prayer. Christians are more likely to use Nepali than Buddhists, while uneducated and old people are more likely to use Tamang for prayer in their homes.

When asked what language they prefer for listening to music, the majority of respondents listed languages other than Western Tamang (59%). Young and educated people especially reported Nepali as their preferred language for music, which is likely a reflection of the greater amount of Nepali music available through the internet, cell phones and other mediums. While in Dhading, we met a young Tamang musician who had recorded songs in Tamang which are played on the radio.

## **6.2 Intergenerational transfer**

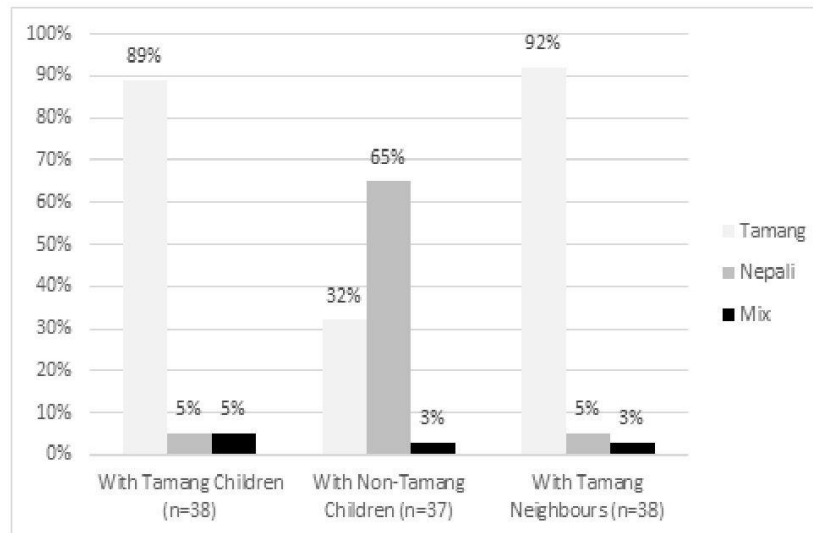
Intergenerational transfer is the extent to which the language is being passed on from older to younger generations. This is a strong indicator of longevity for the language since it anticipates how well future generations will be able to speak their language.

### **6.2.1 Language use by children**

Considering the language use of children helps anticipate trends of future language use. In our research we did not interview children directly but relied upon the observations of others as reported in the informal interview as well as researcher observations.

Tamang children's use of Tamang shows moderately high mother tongue use. Figure 8 shows which languages Tamang children reportedly use with: other Tamang children while playing, children from other ethnic groups while playing, and with Tamang neighbors.

**Figure 8: Language use of children**



Respondents overwhelmingly reported that Tamang is used by children both with other Tamang children (89%) and neighbors (92%).

In regard to languages that children use with non-Tamang children, responses varied significantly by test site. In all test sites, informants reported that they hear children using at least some Nepali when children are speaking with non-Tamang friends. Dhading reported the least amount of Nepali use (43%), followed by Gorkha (58%), while all Nuwakot respondents reported that children use Nepali with non-Tamang friends. Children were observed both in Dhading and Gorkha speaking Tamang.

When we tried to communicate using Nepali with some of the non-school aged children they did not seem to understand us. Language use by children in all test sites indicates strong vitality since it is used frequently in public domains. Vitality appears to be highest in Dhading, followed by Gorkha, and then Nuwakot.

### **6.2.2 Attitudes regarding mother-tongue use by children**

The views of community members on how the younger generation currently uses Tamang and opinions on how they will use the language in future generations can provide further insight on intergenerational transfer. Informal interviews revealed that the great majority of respondents (89%) believe young people speak the language well, the way it should be spoken. Almost everyone expected that their grandchildren will speak their mother tongue and most (84%) would feel good if their grandchildren continued to speak it.

Responses to “In your opinion, what language should children in your village learn to speak first?” show that 89% think children should learn Western Tamang first (100% in Dhading, 92% in Gorkha and 75% in Nuwakot). The realization of this desire is observed in that 96% of parents said that all their children speak their mother tongue.

Based on informal interview responses regarding what languages children currently use in the community and what languages parents are passing onto children, it is evident that there is high intergenerational transfer in the Tamang communities visited.

### **6.3 Contextual factors influencing language vitality**

Group dynamics, education, religion and economics all influence the vitality of the Western Tamang language. These contextual factors’ influence on language vitality is mixed in that some support and some detract from ethnolinguistic vitality.

#### ***Group dynamics***

According to Landweer (2000), “One of the ways that core of fluent speakers is either supported or undermined is through the language use characteristics of those who immigrate to a speech community.” Tamang communities are generally homogenous and immigrants often learn the language, which supports language vitality.

In all three sites, village leaders reported that all or nearly all homes in their communities are Tamang. When asked about inter-caste marriage, they responded that the non-Tamang spouse will learn to speak Tamang, but that such marriages occur rarely. Interview respondents indicated that they had heard of non-Tamang people learning to speak their language and most often said it is learned for its “practical value.” The strong ethnic homogeneity of the Tamang communities studied and frequency of immigrants learning Western Tamang in all sites are reflective of group dynamics that are supportive of language vitality.

#### ***Travel and economics***

The differing levels of proximity to trade centers leads to different levels of Nepali influence, but use of Western Tamang for trade strengthens the vitality irrespective of distance to trade centres. According to Landweer (2000), perceived economic advantages available in a language other than the vernacular influence the community to shift towards that language. Western Tamang ethnolinguistic vitality is supported by

the use of Tamang as a trade language, but is not supported by desirable local employment opportunities.

The nearest bazaar to the sites we visited varied between a two to 11-hour trip, and Tamang was spoken in each bazaar. However, observation confirmed that the further away the village was from a bazaar, the more Tamang was used. Jharlang (Dhading) was located the farthest from a bazaar. This perhaps explains our observation of it as the community with the lowest amount of Nepali use. Sahugau (Nuwakot) was the village closest to a trade center compared to other sites visited and Nepali was used most frequently there.

Interviews with village leaders indicated that Western Tamang has sufficient status to be used as a trade language in the community and, to a moderate extent, with people from other ethnic groups. Interview respondents also indicated that they had heard of non-Tamang people learning to speak their language and most often said it is learned for its “practical value.” This implies that there are economic incentives for Tamang speaking ability.

Village leaders report that men frequently leave the village for work; the leader in Dhading said that every house has two or three people living abroad for work purposes. Finding young men to interview was difficult in Sahugaun (Nuwakot). Economic opportunities outside the community encourage men to travel elsewhere for income. This, in turn, detracts from vitality of Western Tamang by removing speakers from a Western Tamang-speaking environment. Women, however, who are the main transferors of the language to children, are more likely to be engaged in farming and less prone to leave the village for extended periods of time.

There were varying levels of Nepali ability observed among Western Tamang communities, relative to their proximity to a trade center. It has been demonstrated, however, that Western Tamang is a viable medium of communication for local trade. The travel of men outside of the language area for employment opportunities weakens language vitality, but not unduly because women tend to remain in the community. The travel patterns and economic factors of the Western Tamang communities are neither supportive nor undermining of language vitality.

### ***Prestige***

The value placed on a language (both by the community itself and by external groups) indicates its prestige and can influence language vitality. Western Tamang has sufficient prestige as a language both from an emic and etic perspective. None of the village leaders interviewed recollected instances of ethnic-based persecution. Respondents were asked to list their “favorite language” and the majority (58%) listed Western Tamang.<sup>13</sup> Appreciation of Western Tamang was highest in Nuwakot (70%) while Gorkha and Dhading were 50% and 48% respectively. A lack of ethnically-based persecution and positive attitudes towards their own language suggest that Western Tamang has sufficient prestige which supports language vitality.

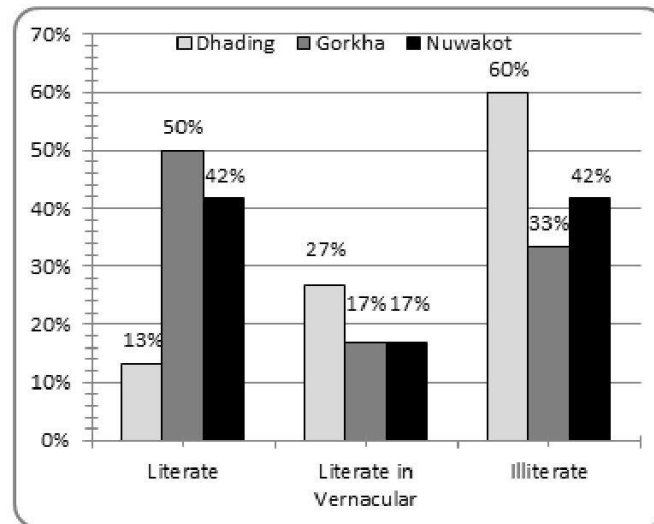
### ***Mother tongue literacy***

Western Tamang people read and write in their mother tongue to a minimal extent. Of the 21 respondents who reported they can read and write, eight said they are able to read their mother tongue. Village leaders said community members do not write in their mother tongue, although the leader in Dhading said some would if they were educated in it. Figure 9 highlights the percentage of vernacular literacy in all sites.

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<sup>13</sup> There were several instances where respondents said they liked “all languages” (three responses) or chose English even though they didn’t speak it (five responses). It could be possible that they gave these responses out of a culturally-based desire to make the interviewer (an English-native speaker) feel welcome and appreciated. This is especially true in Dhading where appreciation of Western Tamang was lowest.

**Figure 9: Literacy among respondents**



The low vernacular literacy in all sites is not surprising considering the lack of opportunity to learn to read and write in the mother tongue. As discussed in Section 6.1.3, Tamang is not formally taught in school. Dhading and Nuwakot are the only sites which have had any vernacular literacy programs, which were not long-term.<sup>14</sup>

## 6.4 Summary and conclusions

There are many indicators of vitality among Western Tamang communities, especially in the most significant sectors (home domains and intergenerational transfer). Frequent use of Western Tamang between all generations in the home and with friends is a significant indicator of strong ethnolinguistic vitality. Vitality is further strengthened by the use of Tamang in public interactions in the community. Community members reported a high level of intergenerational transfer and positive attitudes towards their children speaking the language.

Currently, there are no significant threats to continued mother tongue use by coming generations. While Nepali is used in the school domain as well as other domains like religion and music, it appears that this bilingualism is stable and does not threaten vitality. Additionally, vernacular literacy levels are fairly low. However, respondents'

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<sup>14</sup> This information is based on personal correspondence with Jessie Glover who led a literacy workshop trip to Jharlang. Also, in Nuwakot the storyteller for our RTT had taken Tamang literacy classes.

interest in the possibility of learning to read and write in their language indicates positive attitudes about increasing use of their mother tongue.

Since vernacular literacy is not regularly used by the wider community, it seems a classification of 5 (*Developing*) on the EGIDS scale is inaccurate and that 6a (*Vigorous*) would be a more appropriate description of the Western Tamang ethnolinguistic vitality.



## **7 Desires for Development**

An important aspect of understanding the sociolinguistic situation of a community is becoming familiar with the community's language goals. One of the factors that influenced the planning of this research was interest from the language community in language development. Field research did not reveal specific goals for language-based development in most communities visited, but they did have a desire for their language to be written down so they could learn to read and write in Tamang.

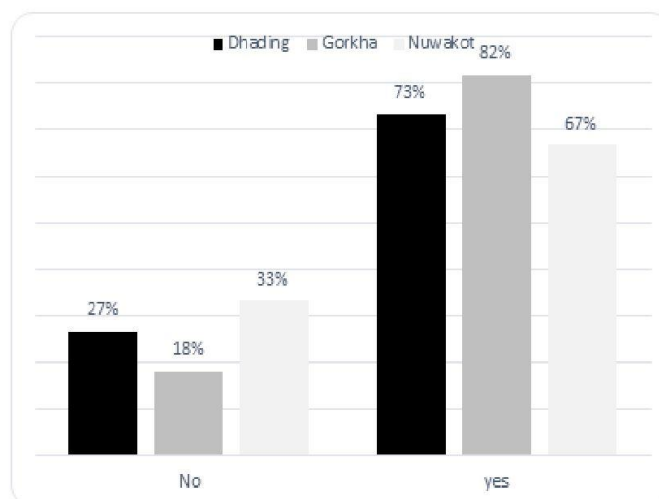
### **7.1 Community goals**

The Western Tamang communities expressed interest in the development of their language. This was evidenced through their responses to interview questions regarding literacy and education, as well as through participatory methods data.

#### **7.1.1 Literacy interest**

Two questions were asked related to literacy interest. The first dealt with whether or not the mother tongue should be written down. The second question was regarding whether or not respondents would want to learn to read and write Western Tamang. Eighty-seven percent of community members we interviewed think their language should be written down. Respondents in Gorkha are in favor of their language being written, while respondents in Nuwakot and Gorkha have similar interest (83% and 75% respectively). Seventy-four percent of respondents would want to learn to read Western Tamang if it was written down (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: “If your mother tongue was written in magazines or books, would you want to learn to read it?”**



The majority of respondents in all sites expressed a desire to learn their language if it was written. Gorkha had the highest number of respondents (82%) who said they would like to learn Western Tamang if it was written. Young people and men especially show an interest in learning to read their own language (90% and 88% respectively). These responses suggest that community members have favorable attitudes towards vernacular literacy.

### 7.1.2 Language of education

As discussed in Section 6.1.3, Nepali is the main medium for education in both primary and secondary schools, although Western Tamang is sometimes used for explaining concepts. When asked which language respondents preferred for primary education, across all sites 87% listed Nepali or English (Dhading 80%, Gorkha 82%, Nuwakot 100%). Several of the responses included comments like, “Nepali, because they already know Tamang,” or “Nepali, because there are Nepali teachers.”

Inquiring explicitly into the goals of the community was beyond the scope of this survey, but informal interviews revealed positive attitudes towards their language being written.>NNLPI conducted an Appreciative Inquiry participatory methods tool in Gatlang, Rasuwa, which specifically listed a “Tamang language school” as a goal, in addition to general culture and language development.

## **7.2 Summary and conclusion**

The Western Tamang communities believe that their language should be written and most individuals interviewed expressed a desire to read the materials if they were available. Aside from Rasuwa, no significant interest was expressed in Tamang becoming the initial medium of education.



**The trail to Jharlang (Dhading)**



## **8 Summary of Findings and Implications for Language Development**

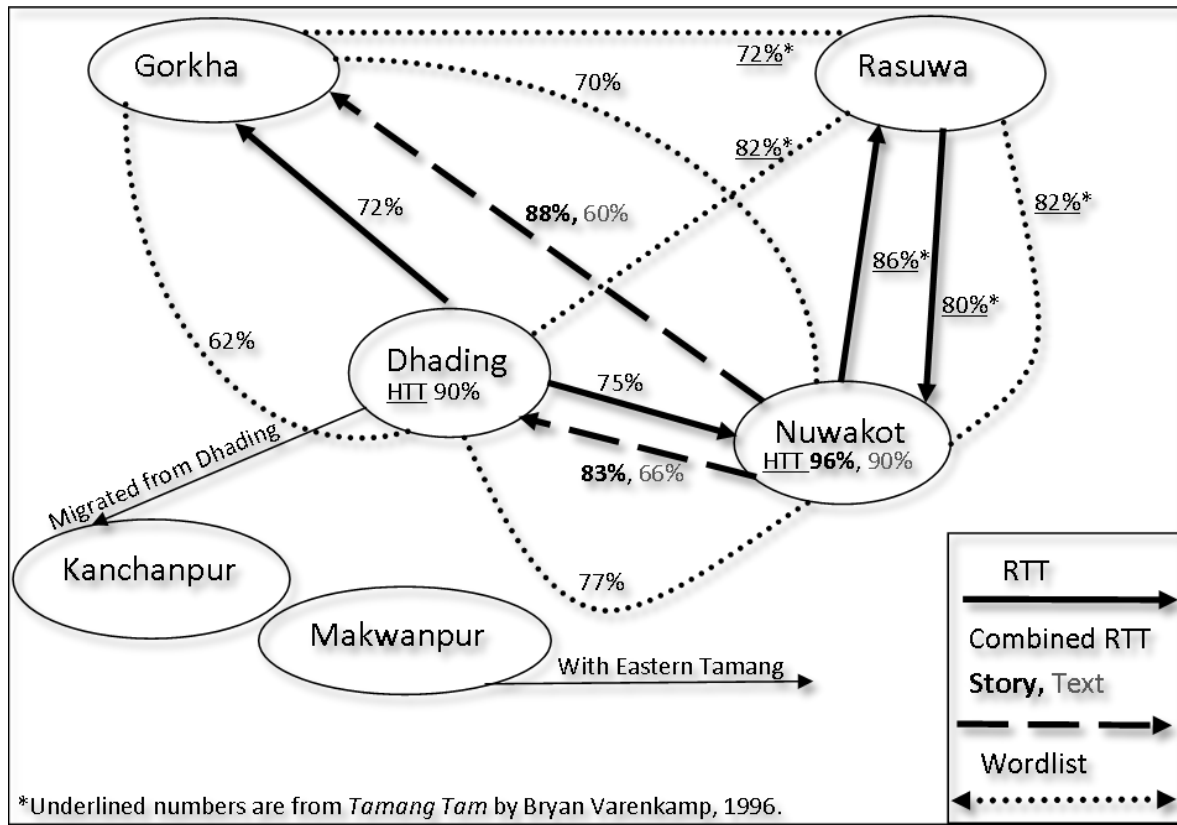
The complexity of the Western Tamang language situation is reflective of the unique and varied contexts that comprise the larger Western Tamang community. This section provides a summary of the research conducted on the Western Tamang sociolinguistic situation and briefly explores implications for language development by addressing the four research goals listed in Section 2.

### **8.1 Relationships between languages**

#### **8.1.1 Summary of findings**

Lexical similarity results indicate that the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot is related. Comprehension testing suggests that the Nuwakot variety is understood more than the Dhading variety, but only in a simple oral form. The scores on the RTTs were not high enough to rule out the possibility of significant dialect variation. The variety spoken in Gorkha is somewhat different from the other language varieties. The communities' perspective gained through Dialect Mapping suggests that the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot and Rasuwa could be understood as the same language, but acknowledges variation in local varieties. This data suggests that the relationship between the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa and Nuwakot is that they are highly related varieties. A graphic summary of this research is expressed in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Visual summary**



### 8.1.2 Implications

The lack of any strong opinions by the community supporting language distinctions between the districts, and the similarity that linguistic analysis (such as comprehension testing and lexical similarity) reveal between the dialects imply that they are a unified language. One factor which does not support this conclusion is the different ethnic identity held by the Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge] community, as discussed in the Introduction (Section 1.2), as well as the borderline low lexical similarity percentages between Gorkha and Nuwakot, Gorkha and Dhading. This report suggests that the language spoken in Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot is likely one language with notable dialect variations between the varieties in each district. As a result of this conclusion, the distinction between Western Tamang [tdg] and Northwestern Tamang [tmk] in the Ethnologue is unnecessary and the entries should be merged. Southwestern Tamang [tsf] bears close similarity with Eastern Tamang [taj] (as revealed by the background research outlined in Section 1.3.1) and should be included with Eastern Tamang since the Southwestern Tamang community is already successfully using materials developed in Eastern Tamang. Although further linguistic research could confirm the relationship

between Southwestern and Eastern Tamang, there is sufficient reason to believe that the two should be considered dialects of the same Eastern Tamang language. Eastern Gorkha Tamang [tge] could likely be merged with Western Tamang [tdg] and Northwestern Tamang [tnk] on linguistic grounds but the differing ethnic identity, and slightly lower lexical similarity, suggests that it should be maintained as a separate ISO code.

## **8.2 Ability to use shared language resources**

### **8.2.1 Summary of findings**

No negative attitudes toward any speech samples were expressed in the sites visited, but informants did report, after hearing a speech sample, that the Nuwakot and Dhading varieties are different from their own. The preferences of the communities where Dialect Mapping was conducted seem to suggest that materials developed in Dhading could be used there and in Gorkha. However, RTT comprehension scores seem to suggest that Nuwakot could be more extensible than Dhading, and there are some indicators that Dhading is an idiosyncratic dialect. Patterns of contact do not provide any strong indicators of which dialect would be more widely extensible; however, Gorkha was identified as the least different.

### **8.2.2 Implications**

The evidence suggests that no site is ruled out of being a candidate for shared language resources as a result of negative attitudes; however, higher comprehension of Nuwakot highlights it for consideration. Although this report suggests that Eastern Gorkha Tamang be identified as a separate language, it is linguistically possible that it could use shared language resources. Extensibility testing and the involvement of each community would need to be done during materials development to help enable the use of shared language resources.

## **8.3 Language vitality**

### **8.3.1 Summary of findings**

High use of Western Tamang in the home and with friends is a significant indicator of strong language vitality. Western Tamang is not an official medium of education, but is sometimes used in explaining concepts at the primary level. Community members also

reported a high level of intergenerational transfer and positive attitudes towards their children speaking the language. There are some trends which are not conducive to vitality, but they are balanced by several supportive contextual factors. Vernacular literacy levels are fairly low.

### **8.3.2 Implications**

The Western Tamang language has indicators of vitality, especially in the most significant sectors (home domains and intergenerational transfer). Currently, there are no significant challenges to continued mother tongue use by coming generations. However, since vernacular literacy is not regularly practiced by the wider community, it seems a classification of 5 (*Developing*) on the EGIDS scale is inaccurate and that 6a (*Vigorous*) would be a more appropriate description of the Western Tamang language vitality.

## **8.4 Desires for development**

### **8.4.1 Summary of findings**

The communities believe that their language should be written and most expressed desires to read Tamang materials if they were available. Aside from Rasuwa, no significant interest was expressed in Tamang becoming the initial medium of education.

### **8.4.2 Implications**

Currently there is a positive context for language development programs among the Western Tamang language communities. As the communities begin to act on their desires to see their language written and work together to ensure developed materials are extensible to different areas, their language will continue to be cherished by further generations due to strong vitality. This will be a great asset both to the Western Tamang communities by affirming their own value in the global context and to the nation of Nepal as a whole, reflecting valuable ethnic diversity.

## ६.प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश तथा भाषा विकासका लागि सुभावहरु<sup>15</sup>

पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषाको अवस्थाको मिश्रण, अद्वितीय तथा विविध परिपेक्ष्यहरुको प्रतिविम्ब हो जसले विशाल पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग समुदाय निर्माण गर्छ। यस भागमा पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको सामाजिक-भाषिक अवस्थाबारे संचालन गरिएको अनुसन्धानको सारांश दिइएकोछ र भाग २ मा सूचिकृत चारवटा अनुसन्धानका लक्ष्यहरुलाई सम्बोधन गरेर भाषा विकासका सुभावहरु संक्षेपमा पत्ता लगाउँछ।

### ६.१ भाषाहरु बीचको सम्बन्ध

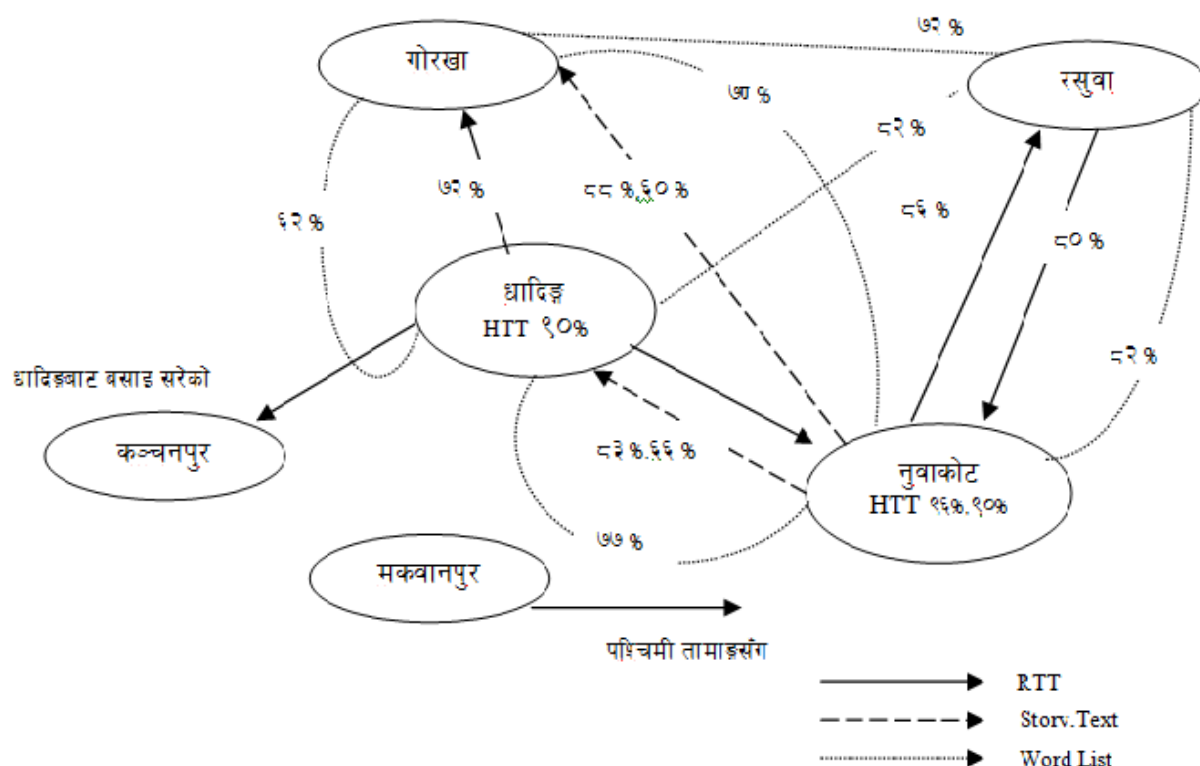
#### ६.१.१ प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश

शाब्दिक समानताको परिणामले यो संकेत दिन्छ कि गोरखा, धादिङ्ग र नुवाकोटमा बोलिने भाषा अत्याधिकरूपमा सम्बन्धित छन्। बोधगम्यता जाँचले यो देखाउँछ कि नुवाकोटमा बोलिने भाषा धादिङ्गमा बोलिने भाषाभन्दा ब्यापक छ। तर यो केवल साधारण बोलीको रूपमा मात्र हो। टेपमा कथा भरेर गरिने जाँचको लब्धाङ्कहरु, उल्लेखनीय भाषिक विविधताको सम्भाव्यतालाई नकार्न का लागि पर्याप्त उच्च छैन। गोरखामा बोलिने किसिमको भाषामा अरु ठाउँमा बोलिने भाषाहरुमा भन्दा केही मात्रामा भिन्नता पाइन्छ। भाषिक नक्शाङ्कनद्वारा प्राप्त समुदायहरुको दृष्टिकोणले बुझाउँछ कि गोरखा, धादिङ्ग, नुवाकोट र रसुवामा बोलिने भाषाहरु एउटै भाषाको रूपमा बुझ्न सकिन्छ तर स्थानीयरूपमा विविधतालाई पनि स्वीकार्दछ। यस तथ्याङ्कले यो बुझाउँछ कि गोरखा, धादिङ्ग, नुवाकोट र रसुवामा बोलिने भाषाहरु बीचको सम्बन्धले गर्दा तिनीहरु उच्चरूपले सम्बन्धित भाषाहरु हुन्। यस अनुसन्धानको ग्राफको सारांश तालिका १ मा दिइएको छ।

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<sup>15</sup> After this translation was done some further edits were made to the final chapter in English. For this reason, the Nepali and English translations may have some slight variation.

तालिका १- दृश्य सारांश



तल धर्का तानिएका संख्याहरु तामाङ्ग tam वारेनक्यामबाट १९९६मा

### ६.१.२ सुभावहरु

जिल्लाहरु बीचको भाषाको भिन्नतालाई समर्थन गर्ने समुदायद्वारा कुनै बलियो मतको अभाव र भाषिक विश्लेषण (जस्तै बोधगम्यता जाँच र शाब्दिक समानता) ले प्रष्ट्याउने स्थानीय बोलीहरु बीचको समानताले तिनीहरु एउटै भाषा हुन भन्ने बुझाउँछ । एउटा तथ्य जसले यस निष्कर्षलाई समर्थन गर्दैन त्यो हो परिचय (भाग १.२) मा छलफल गरिएको जस्तै, पूर्वी गोरखा को तामाङ्ग समुदायद्वारा लिइएको फरक जातीय पहिचान र त्यसका साथसाथै गोरखा र नुवाकोट बीचको र गोरखा र धादिङ्ग बीचको न्यून शाब्दिक समानता प्रतिशतहरुको विभाजन रेखा । यस प्रतिवेदनले यो भन्छ कि गोरखा, धादिङ्ग र नुवाकोटमा बोलिने भाषा हरेक जिल्लाको विविधता बीच बलियो भाषिक विभेदका साथ एउटै भाषा हो जस्तो छ । फलस्वरूप, निष्कर्षमा संस्कृतिशास्त्र अन्तर्गत पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग र उत्तर-पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग बीचको विभेद आवश्यक छैन र तिनीहरुलाई एउटै ठाउँमा गाभिनु राम्रो हुन्छ । दक्षिण-पश्चिमी तामाङ्गले पूर्वी तामाङ्गको जस्तै निकटको समानता बोकेको हुन्छ (भाग १.३.१ मा ब्याख्या गरिएको पृष्ठभूमि अनुसन्धानद्वारा प्रकाशमा ल्याइएको) र यसमा समावेश गरिनुपर्छ, किनकि दक्षिण-पश्चिम तामाङ्ग समुदायले पूर्वी तामाङ्गमा विकास गरिएको सामग्रीहरु प्रयोग गरिसकेको छन् । दक्षिण-पश्चिम र पूर्वी तामाङ्ग बीचको सम्बन्धबारे अरु भाषिक अनुसन्धान गर्न सकिन्थ्यो, तर उही पूर्वी तामाङ्गको स्थानीय बोली बुझ्न सकिने प्रशस्त प्रमाणहरु भएको जस्तो देखिन्छ । भाषिक आधारमा, पूर्वी गोरखा तामाङ्गलाई पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग र उत्तर-पश्चिमी तामाङ्गमा गाभ्न सकिन्छ जस्तो छ तर, फरक जातीय पहिचान र न्यून शाब्दिक समानताले यो भन्छ कि यसको लागि छुट्टै क्षेत्त्र परिसूचक कायम गरिनु राम्रो हुन्छ ।

## ६.२ साभा श्रोत-साधनहरु प्रयोग गर्ने सामर्थ

### ६.२.१ प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश

भ्रमण गरिएका ठाउँहरुमा बोलीका नमुनाहरुबारे कुनै पनि नकारात्मक मनोबृत्तिहरु ब्यक्त भएनन्, तर बोलीको नमूना सुनेपछि जवाफ दिनेहरुले भने कि नुवाकोट र धादिङ्गको बोली उनीहरुको आफ्नोभन्दा भिन्दै छन्। स्थानीय भाषा नक्शाङ्कन परिचालन गरिएका ठाउँहरुको समुदायहरुको रोजाइको सुभाव यस्तो देखिन्छ कि धादिङ्गमा बिकास गरिएको सामग्री त्यहीँ र गोरखामा प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ। जे होस्, टेपमा भरिएको कथाबाट गरिएको जाँचको बुझाइको लब्धाङ्कले यस्तो बताउँछ कि नुवाकोट धादिङ्गभन्दा बढी बिस्तार गर्न योग्य छ र केही यस्ता परिसूचकहरु छन्, धादिङ्गको स्थानीय भाषा आफ्नै किसिमको छ। सम्पर्कको ढाँचाले कुन स्थानीय बोली बढी ब्यापकरूपमा बिस्तारयोग्य छ भन्ने कुनै बलियो परिसूचक देखिदैन। जे होस्, गोरखा कम भिन्न रूपमा भएको भनेर चिनिन्छ।

### ६.२.२ सुभावहरु

नकारात्मक मनोबृत्तिको परिणामस्वरूप साभा भाषाका श्रोतहरुका लागि साधन भएकोमा कुनै पनि स्थानलाई परित्याग गर्न सकिदैन भन्ने कुरा परिणामले देखाउँछ र नुवाकोटको बढी बोधगम्यताले बिचार गर्नका लागि यसलाई बढी प्रकाशमा ल्याउँछ। यद्यपि पूर्वी गोरखा तामाङ्गलाई बेग्लै भाषाको रूपमा लिइयोस् भनेर यस प्रतिवेदनले सुभाव दिन्छ, भाषिक द्रिष्टिकोणले यसले साभा भाषाका श्रोत सामग्रीहरु प्रयोग गर्न सम्भव छ। साभा भाषा श्रोत सामग्रीहरुलाई प्रयोगयोग्य बनाउन मद्दत गर्नलाई भाषाको विकासको बेलामा बिस्तार कार्यको जाँच तथा हरेक समुदायको संलग्नता गर्न आवश्यकता हुनेछ।

## ६.३ भाषिक सजीवता

### ६.३.१ प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश

घर तथा साथीहरुसँग पश्चिमी तामाङ्गको बढी प्रयोग बलियो भाषिक सजीवताको महत्वपूर्ण परिसूचक हो। पश्चिम तामाङ्ग शिक्षाको सरकारी माध्यम होइन तर, कहिलेकाहीँ प्राथमिक तहमा अवधारणाहरुको ब्याख्या गर्नका लागि प्रयोग गरिन्छ। एउटा पुस्ताबाट अर्को पुस्तामा बढी मात्रामा सरेको र उनीहरुको बालबच्चाको आफ्नो भाषा बोलेको प्रति उनीहरुको सकारात्मक सोचाइ भएको प्रतिवेदन पनि समुदायका सदस्यहरुलाई दिएका छन्। केही यस्ता प्रवृत्तिहरु छन् जो सजीवताको लागि सहयोगी हुँदैनन्, तर केही सहयोगी कुराहरुको परिप्रेक्षमा तिनीहरुलाई सन्तुलनमा ल्याएको छ। मातृभाषाको साक्षरता स्तर धेरै तल छ।

### ६.३.२ सुभावहरु

पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषामा, विशेषगरी सबभन्दा महत्वपूर्ण परिस्थितिहरु जस्तै घर र एक पुस्ताबाट अर्को पुस्तामा सर्ने जस्ता ठाउँहरुमा सजीवताको परिसूचकहरु छन्। तत्कालै, मातृभाषाको प्रयोगको निरन्तरतालाई, आगामी पुस्ताकाहरुबाट कुनै महत्वपूर्ण चुनौतीहरु छैनन्। तर, बृहत समुदायद्वारा मातृभाषाको साक्षरता निरन्तर रूपमा अभ्यास नगरेको हुँदा, भन्स्क् प्रणालीमा ५को बर्गीकरण

अनुपयुक्त छ जस्तो देखिन्छ र पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषाको सजीवताको अरु उपयुक्त ब्याख्या ६ क (भयङ्कर) हुने छ।

## ६.४ विकासका लागि आकांक्षा

### ६.४.१ प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश

समुदायहरु विश्वास गर्छन् कि उनीहरुको भाषा लेखिनुपर्छ र धेरैले आफ्नो तामाङ्ग भाषामा लेखिएको सामग्रीहरु उपलब्ध भएमा त्यो पढ्ने आकांक्षा ब्यक्त गरे। रसुवामा बाहेक, शिक्षाको शुरुको माध्यम तामाङ्ग भाषा हुनुपर्ने कुरामा उल्लेखनीय चासो कहीं पनि ब्यक्त गरिएन।

### ६.४.२ सुभावहरु

बर्तमान अवस्थामा पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग भाषा समुदायहरुमा भाषा बिकास कार्यक्रमका लागि सकारात्मक सोचाइ रहेको छ। जब समुदायहरु उनीहरुको भाषा लेखिएको हेर्ने आकांक्षामा कार्यरत हुन थाल्छन् र बिकास गरिएका सामग्रीहरु विभिन्न भेगहरुमा बिस्तारित छन् भन्ने कुरा सुनिश्चित गर्न सँगै मिलेर काम गर्छन् उनीहरुको भाषा बलियो सजीवताको कारणले भावी पुस्ताहरुद्वारा प्रेमपूर्वक निरन्तर रुपमा संरक्षण गरिनेछन्। यो विश्व सन्दर्भमा उनीहरुको आफ्नो महत्व उद्घोष गर्न पश्चिमी तामाङ्ग समुदायहरु र महत्वपूर्ण जातीय अनेकता प्रतिविम्बित गर्न सम्पूर्ण नेपाल राष्ट्र दुवैलाई ठूलो सम्पत्ति हुनेछ।

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