

# **A Sociolinguistic Study of Dotyali**

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## Abstract

This report presents the results of sociolinguistic research conducted among Dotyali communities in west Nepal. Because of the recent ISO designation of Dotyali as an independent language, the presence of various development organizations in the region, and the overall goals of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN),<sup>1</sup> basic sociolinguistic information was sought. The primary goal of this research was to gain a better understanding of the dialects of Dotyali and the level of comprehension between those dialects. Specifically, this research sought to clarify the level of comprehension of the Dotyali spoken in Doti district among Dotyali speakers from other districts in order to determine the ability to share language-based materials. To ensure a holistic picture of the sociolinguistic situation, language attitudes, ethnolinguistic identity, and language vitality were also addressed in this study.

This research identified four main dialects of Dotyali and established that comprehension between these dialects is high. The findings of this research indicate strong language vitality. The implication is that all dialects of Dotyali are able to share language-based materials.

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<sup>1</sup> LinSuN Proposal 2008

## सारांश<sup>2</sup>

यो पश्चिम नेपालको डोट्याली समुदायमा संचालन गरिएको सामाजिक-भाषिक अनुसन्धानमा प्राप्त परिणामहरूको प्रतिवेदन हो। हालैको आइ एस् ओ को छनोटमा डोट्यालीलाई एउटा छुट्टै स्वतन्त्र भाषाको रूपमा राखेको हुँदा, यस क्षेत्रमा विभिन्न विकास संगठनहरूको उपस्थिति औ नेपालका भाषिक सर्वेक्षण (लिन्सुन)को समग्र लक्ष्यहरू, आधारभूत सामाजिक-भाषिक जानकारीहरूको खोजी गरिएको थियो। यस अनुसन्धानको प्रारम्भिक लक्ष्य डोट्यालीको भाषिकाहरूको राम्रो भन्दा राम्रो बुझाइ तथा ती भाषिकाहरू बीचको बोधगम्यताको तह थाहा पाउनु थियो। विशेषतः यस अनुसन्धानले भाषामा आधारित सामग्रीहरू प्रयोगमा ल्याउनका लागि, क्षमता निर्धारण गर्न डोटी जिल्ला र अन्य जिल्लाका डोट्यालीभाषी बीचमा बोलिने डोट्यालीको बोधगम्यताको स्तर प्रष्ट पार्न खोजेको हो। सामाजिक-भाषिक स्थितिको समग्रतामा नक्शा सुनिश्चित गर्नका निम्ति भाषागत प्रवृत्ति, जातीय-भाषिक जहिकान औ भाषिक सजीवताहरू यस अध्ययनमा समावेश गरिएको थियो।

यस अनुसन्धानले डोट्यालीका प्रमुख चारवटा भाषिकाहरूको पहिचान गरेको छ र यी भाषिकाहरू बीचको बोधगम्यता उच्च छ भनी स्थापित गरेको छ। यस अनुसन्धानका प्रतिहरूले बलियो भाषिक सजीवताको संकेत दिन्छ। सबै डोट्याली भाषिकाहरू एकार्काका भाषामा आधारित सामग्रीहरू प्रयोमा ल्याउन सक्छन् भन्ने हाम्रो आशय हो।

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<sup>2</sup> Nepali sections of this report were translated by Krishna Rana of CAS Nepal.

## **Preface**

This sociolinguistic survey of Dotyali was conducted in partnership with the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN), Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal. One of the goals of LinSun is to produce “a sociolinguistic profile for each of the languages of Nepal.”

The data collection portion of this survey was carried out during two separate fieldwork trips. The first trip was in February 2014 in Doti district and was conducted with fellow researcher Sara A. Boon. We had the invaluable assistance of two language helpers, Mr. Thakkar Saud and Mr. Raj Manral. The second fieldwork trip was in March 2014 in Baitadi, Darchula and Bajhang districts. Kimberly D. Benedict assisted with this fieldwork trip, in addition to the help of our language helpers and guides, Mr. Raj Manral in Baitadi, Mr. Narendra Bahadur Pal in Darchula, and Mr. Hark Prasad Regmi in Bajhang. Without the assistance of each of our language helpers, this research would not have been possible.

My colleagues Holly Hilty and Klaas de Vries provided extensive guidance in the analysis and writing of this report, for which I am extremely thankful. Loren Maggard offered his expertise in the analysis and editing of the report as well. I also thank Matt Benjamin, SIL cartographer for his dedication in creating the maps used in this report.

I am indebted to the many people who graciously opened their homes to me and my team during fieldwork, as well as the Dotyali people we worked and interacted with during our research.

It is my hope that this report will be useful for the Dotyali communities as well as any organizations working with Dotyali communities in pursuit of language development.

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## प्राक्कथन

डोट्यालीको यस सामाजिक-भाषिक सर्वेक्षण लिन्सुन, त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय कीर्तिपुर, नेपालसँगको सहकार्यमा संचालन गरिएको हो। लिन्सुनका लक्ष्यहरुमध्येको एउटा लक्ष्य, नेपालका हरेक भाषाको लागि एक एकवटा सामाजिक भाषिक रूपरेखा तयार पार्नु हो।

यस सर्वेक्षणको तथ्याङ्क संकलन अंश दुइटा अलग अलग फिल्डवर्क भ्रमण गरी संचालन गरिएको थियो। पहिलो भ्रमण फरवरी २०१४ मा डोटी जिल्लामा भएको थियो र सह-अनुसन्धानकर्ता सारा ए बूनसँग मिलेर यो अनुसन्धान गरिएको थियो। हामीले दुईजना भाषा सहयोगीहरु श्री ठक्कर साउद र श्री राज मानरलबाट अमूल्य सहयोग प्राप्त गरेका थियौं। दोस्रो फिल्डवर्क भ्रमण मार्च २०१४ मा बैतडी, बझाङ्ग र दार्चुला जिल्लाहरुमा भएको थियो। यस फिल्डवर्क भ्रमणमा हाम्रा भाषा सहयोगी र पथप्रदर्शकहरु बैतडीमा श्री राज मानरल, दार्चुलामा श्री नरेन्द्र बहादुर पाल, र बझाङ्गमा श्री हर्क प्रसाद रेग्मीका अतिरिक्त किम्बर्ले डि बेनिडिक्टोको सहयोग प्राप्त गरेका थियौं। हाम्रा हरेक भाषा सहयोगीहरुको सहयोग विना यो अनुसन्धान सम्भव हुने थिएन।

मेरा सहकर्मीहरु हली हिल्टी र क्लास डि त्रिसले यस प्रतिवेदनको लेखन तथा विश्लेषण कार्यमा ब्यापक मार्गदर्शन दिनुभयो जसका लागि म अत्यन्त आभारी छु। यस प्रतिवेदनको विश्लेषण तथा सम्पादन कार्यमा लोरेन मग्गार्डले पनि आफ्नो सीप प्रदान गर्नुभयो। म् एस् आइ एल कार्टोग्राफर म्याट बेन्जामीनलाई पनि यस प्रतिवेदनमा प्रयोग गरिएका नक्शाहरु बनाउन योगदान दिनुभएकोमा धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु।

फिल्डवर्कको बेलामा म र मेरा टोलीका सदस्यहरुलाई अनुग्रहकासाथ आ-आफ्ना घरहरुमा आउन स्वागत गरिदिनुभएकोमा कैयौंको संख्याका मानिसहरु तथा तथा डोट्याली जनहरु जससँग हामीले अनुसन्धानको क्रममा अन्तर्क्रिया गर्नुभयो उहाँहरु सबैप्रति म ऋणि छु।

यो प्रतिवेदन डोट्याली समुदायका साथसाथै डोट्याली समुदायमा भाषा विकासमा अग्रसर कुनै पनि संघ संस्था का लागि उपयोगी हुनेछ भन्ने मेरो आशा छ।

अगस्त २०१४

स्टेफनी आर आइकानटोफ्

काठमाडौं नेपाल

# 1 Introduction

Dotyali has recently been recognized by the Ethnologue as a language of Nepal. It was previously classified as dialect of Nepali, the national language.

In the far west, the district name often affects what speakers call their language. This was found to be true during field trips and background research. Understanding the terms used to identify Dotyali dialects is fairly straightforward; however, for clarification, Figure 1 lists the various terms used for the language in each district.

**Figure 1: Terms used for language name by district**

District	Terms used for language name
Doti	<i>Dotyali, Doteli</i>
Dadeldhura	<i>Dotyali, Dadeldhuri</i>
Baitadi	<i>Baitadi, Baitadeli, Dotyali</i>
Darchula	<i>Darchuleli, Dotyali</i>
Bajhang	<i>Bajhangi,<sup>3</sup> Bajhangi Nepali, Nepali</i>

Nepali is listed as one of the language names in Figure 1; however, this is referring to *village Nepali* and not the national language. This is further clarified in section 6.1.

For the purposes of this report, *Dotyali* will refer to the varieties of Dotyali in Doti, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. When referring to a specific variety within Dotyali, that variety will be identified accordingly.

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<sup>3</sup> There are several sub-dialects under Bajhangi that are not listed in Figure 1.



## 1.1 Geography

Nepal is divided into 14 administrative zones and subdivided into 75 districts. This research encompassed all areas where Dotyali speakers are reported to reside, which includes Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Doti, the southern parts of Bajhang and Darchula, and the northern parts of Kailali and Kanchanpur (Map 1).

Map 1: Map of Nepal<sup>4</sup>



This survey did not include speakers of Dotyali residing in India.

## 1.2 History of the people

The districts of western Nepal have a number of mixed ethnicities, historically called *Khas*. The Nepal Constitution Foundation, in their review of “The Khasas of Nepal” by Shirshak Ghimire, cite “several sources in claiming that the Khas people were the early Caucasians who migrated into the Himalayas from Eurasia, at least over three thousand five hundred years ago” (via New

<sup>4</sup> A Nepalese Home Page [ncthakur.itgo.com/map04.htm](http://ncthakur.itgo.com/map04.htm). Circle added to highlight the Dotyali-speaking area. (Last accessed on Oct 2, 2014).

Spotlight News Magazine, Vol. 05, No.-16 March 02-2012). Van Driem notes that due to inter-caste marriage over time, “the Khas became a linguistic community of slightly mixed ethnic origins” (2001: 1105).

The original homelands of Khas were west of the Gandaki River in Doti and Jumla (van Driem 2001: 1106, 1135). Historically, as the Khas language spread eastward, it encountered and mixed with other languages of Nepal. The model for how to speak this travelling language was set by high caste speakers (van Driem 2001: 1135). “In a long and drawn-out process which lasted centuries, the Khas infiltrated parts of western and central Nepal, and their Eastern Pahadi Indo-Aryan language came to function increasingly as a *lingua franca* in western Nepal” (van Driem 2001: 1107).

“Though the language is now officially known as Nepali, the older terms Khas Kura, Parvatiya or Parvate and Gorkhali are still widely used throughout Nepal, especially by non-native speakers of Nepali to designate the national language as well as by native speakers of the language outside of Nepal” (van Driem 2001: 1137).

This *lingua franca* in western Nepal is still spoken by different castes and ethnic groups, such as Chhetri, Thakuri, Brahman and Dalit, major castes of this region. These caste and ethnic groups speak the Dotyali language as their mother-tongue, according to Sapkota and Shahi (2012: 206).

Khas, as it is today, is looked upon negatively. This is because, according to Dor Bahadur Bista, only poor and uneducated people remain under this term. Educated and wealthier Khas people bought titles through Bahun priests into higher castes – primarily Chhetri (Bista 2004: 75-80). This is why many “anthropologies who have done their studies in Nepal in the past have missed the Khas people altogether as everyone told them that the Khas are included within the Chhetri community” (Bista 2004: 75).

Many people have abandoned their Khas heritage for reasons of prestige and to escape exploitation by Bahuns. This persecution is because Khas people were non-Hindus and seen as impure. “Khas people continue with their tribal or ethnic Shamanic deities and are guided and led by their Shamans in their cultural ritual needs” (Bista 2004: 84). The most prevalent

religion in the area of Dotyali speakers is Hinduism, though in some areas toward Chainpur in Bajhang district, evidence of Buddhism is easily seen.

It is important to remember, as inferred above, that Dotyali and Khas are separate terms. Khas is merely part of Dotyali history and helps explain how they became an inter-ethnic community.

### **1.3 Language**

Until recently, Dotyali was considered a dialect of Nepali [npi], the national language of Nepal. Van Driem notes, “There are various Nepali dialects, particularly in western Nepal, and some of these western dialects make a decidedly unfamiliar impression on Nepalis from eastern and central Nepal who have only been exposed to standard Nepali” (2001: 1099).

In 2012, Dotyali was reclassified by the Ethnologue as a distinct language of Nepal and assigned the ISO code 639-3 dty. This re-classification occurred after an ISO request for change was submitted by R.D. Prabhas Chataut, a speaker and lexicographer of Dotyali. The Ethnologue recognizes Dotyali [dty] and Nepali [npi] as two separate languages that comprise the macrolanguage of Nepali [nep]. Macrolanguages are defined as “multiple, closely related individual languages that are deemed in some usage contexts to be a single language” (Lewis 2009: 9).

Dotyali and Nepali are both classified as Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Northern zone, Eastern Pahari. The Ethnologue lists no known dialects of Dotyali. However, this report will present four dialects of Dotyali that have been identified through this research and the research of others (Section 4).

Estimates as to the number of Dotyali speakers vary widely. The 2011 Nepal census reports 787,827 mother-tongue ‘Doteli’ speakers, while the Ethnologue estimates the mother-tongue population of Dotyali to be approximately 250,000 (Epple *et al* 2012: 45). However, the latter population estimate does not include speakers identifying themselves as Baitadeli, Bajhang, Dadeldhuri, or Darchuleli because those are currently listed as dialects of Nepali [npi].

Dotyali is currently classified on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)<sup>5</sup> as 4, *Educational*, meaning “The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education” (Lewis and Simons, forthcoming: 81). This report will suggest an updated EGIDS Level of 6a in section 7.3.

Most Dotyali speakers are bilingual in at least one other language. The majority of questionnaire respondents speak between two to four languages (45% of informal interview respondents speak two languages, 24% speak three languages and 20% speak four languages). This is consistent with LinSuN research reporting high multilingualism in these districts (Chalise and Pandit 2012: 187 and Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 219; 225). The most common languages, aside from Dotyali, include Nepali, Hindi and English.

#### **1.4 Other nearby languages**

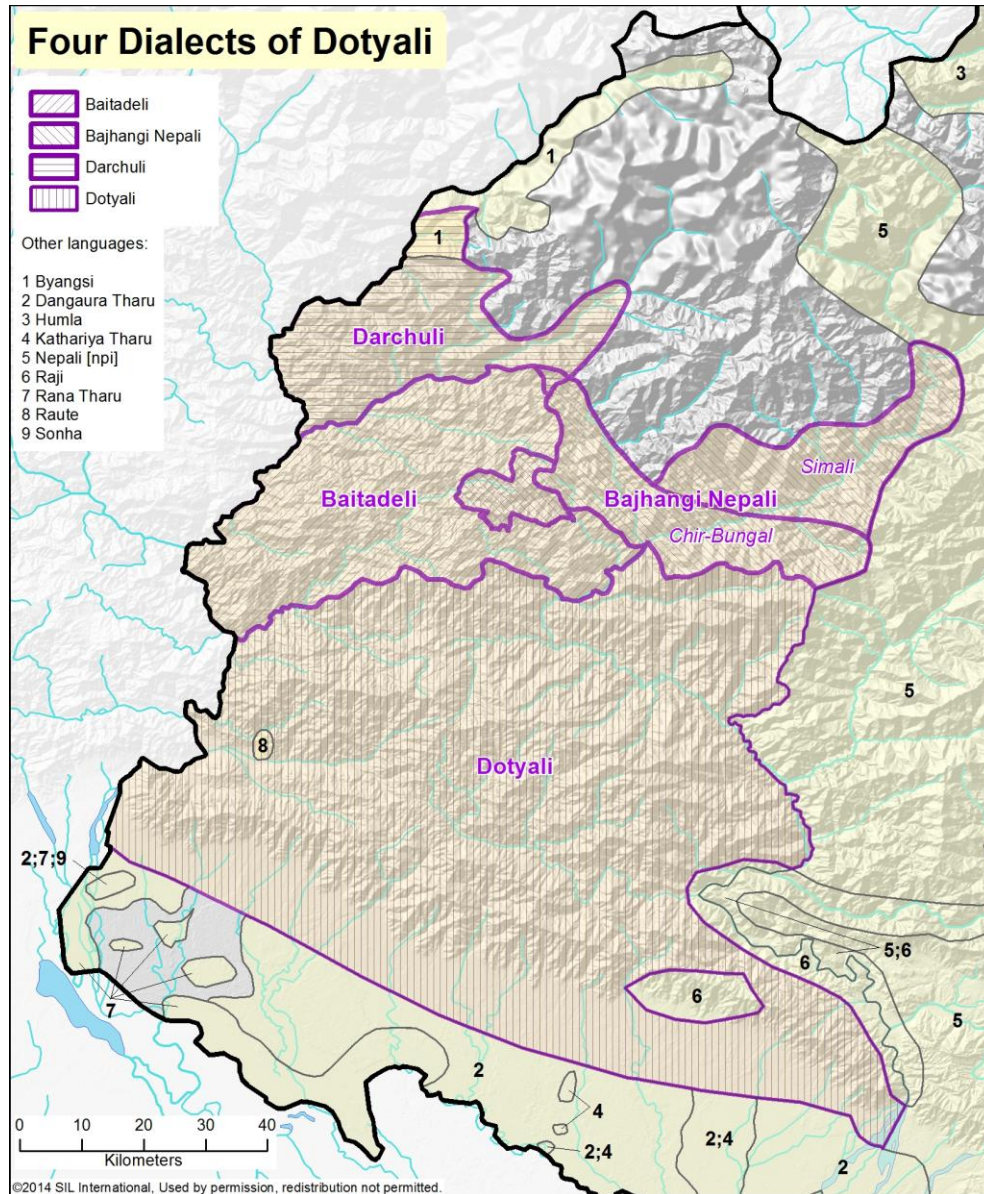
Speakers of other languages<sup>6</sup> known to reside in the Dotyali speaking areas include Achhami, Bajureli, Byangsi, Kumaoni, Raji, Rana Tharu and Raute. A brief description of each of these languages is discussed in alphabetical order.

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<sup>5</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 (Lewis and Simons 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Some of these ‘languages’ are actually dialects of Nepali [npi] according to the Ethnologue. They are discussed in this section independently of Nepali in order to isolate each variety.

Map 2: Dotyali and languages of Western Nepal<sup>7</sup>



Achhami speakers live primarily in Achham district to the east of the Dotyali speaking area. Achhami was identified by Dotyali speakers as a separate language and described as unintelligible. Two informal interviews with Achhami speakers confirmed that Dotyali was unintelligible to them as well and Nepali is reported to be used between the communities.

<sup>7</sup> ©2014 SIL International, Used by permission, redistribution not permitted.

Interaction between Achhami and Dotyali speakers is frequent. Achhami is currently listed in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Nepali; however, comprehension testing between Achhami and Nepali has not been done.

Bajurali is listed in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Nepali and is located in Bajura district, east of Dotyali-speaking areas. This language is sometimes called ‘Bajurali Nepali’ because speakers identified their language as *Nepali* and their dialect as Bajurali (Chalise and Pandit 2012: 192-193). Bajurali speakers identify closely with Nepali and report that comprehension between Bajurali and Nepali is not a problem. “Bajurali communities have strong feeling of Nepali identity” (Chalise and Pandit 2012: 200). During DM facilitations, Dotyali speakers reported Bajurali as separate from Dotyali and said it is difficult to understand.

Byangsi [bee] speakers live in the Byas valley of Darchula district and in India and Tibet. Byangsi is a Sino-Tibeto language, unrelated to Dotyali.

Dotyali is related to Kumaoni [kfy] (Epele 2012: 45). Kumaoni speakers reportedly live among the Dotyali speakers in west Nepal, though their primary population of mother-tongue speakers is in India. It is reported that Kumaoni and Dotyali are sometimes mixed in southwestern Darchula district.

Raji [rji] speakers are found in Achham, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali and Surkhet districts, but their use of the Raji language is declining and they use Dotyali as the language for wider communication (LWC) (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 206). Raji is a Sino-Tibetan language and linguistically unrelated to Dotyali.

Rana Tharu [thr] is located in the Terai in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts (Epele 2012: 90-91). Dotyali speakers report that the Tharu languages in the Terai, including Dangaura and Kathariya Tharu, are completely unintelligible.

Raute [rau] speakers are located in Jogbuda and Sirsa VDCs of southwest Dadeldhura (Epele 2012: 78). Raute is a Sino-Tibetan language and unrelated to Dotyali.

## **1.5 Previous research and resources**

“Ojha (2066 VS) has pointed out some historical findings, present situation, feast and festivals, caste system, language and script, and the district profile of Darchula, Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Doti, Achham, Bajura, Bajhang, Kailali and Kanchanpur with some archeological history. He

has mentioned that there are somehow uniformity between Dadeldhura and Doti districts in terms of history, language and culture” (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 207).

Research has been conducted by two LinSuN research teams on the varieties of Bajhangi, Bajurali, Dotyali, Achhami, Baitadeli and Darchuleli. Research was completed in 2012 and publication of reports is forthcoming.





## 2 Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this survey was to gain a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Dotyali in Nepal. Following are goals and research questions which guided the course of the research.

### ***Goal 1: Dialect areas***

Identify the major dialects of Dotyali and the comprehension among the dialects.

- What are the major dialects of Dotyali and where are they located?
- What is the lexical similarity between these dialects?
- How well do these varieties understand Dotyali spoken in Doti district?

### ***Goal 2: Language attitudes***

Assess the language attitudes of the identified Dotyali varieties toward one another to better understand their willingness to share oral and written materials.

- What are the language attitudes held by each variety toward one another?
- What are the language attitudes held by these varieties toward the Dotyali variety spoken in Doti district?

### ***Goal 3: Ethnolinguistic identity***

Investigate whether Dotyali speakers see themselves as a cohesive ethnic community.

- How do Dotyali speakers identify themselves?
- Do those who speak Dotyali see themselves as a cohesive language community?
- Do those who speak Dotyali see themselves as a cohesive people group?

### ***Goal 4: Language vitality***

Investigate the language vitality of Dotyali in each speech community.

- What language(s) are used in the home?
- What language(s) are used in other domains, such as in school and at markets?
- What is the extent of intergenerational transfer?
- To what extent do Dotyali speakers read and write in the mother-tongue?



## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Instruments

The following instruments were administered using Nepali. Probes within each of these instruments were translated into Nepali and pilot tested prior to using them in fieldwork.

#### 3.1.1 *Wordlist comparisons*

Description and Purpose: A comparison of wordlists to estimate the degree of lexical similarity between the speech varieties the wordlists represent.

Procedure: Wordlists were elicited in Nepali from mother-tongue Dotyali speakers and were transcribed by the researchers using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). A lexical similarity analysis was carried out on each pair of word lists. A full description of the wordlist analysis used for this comparison is in Appendix A.

#### 3.1.2 *Recorded Text Test (RTT)*

Description and Purpose: Subjects listen to recorded stories with comprehension questions asked within the stories. After subjects listen to the stories, questions regarding language attitudes are asked. This helps in the assessment of subjects' understanding of and attitudes toward actual samples of the language.

Procedure: A narrative story was collected from a native Dotyali speaker. It was then played for people in other Dotyali communities, who were not told the story's place of origin. As subjects listened to the story, they answered comprehension questions (recorded in their own dialect) about the story. After listening to each story, subjects answered questions about their understanding of and opinions toward the speech variety used by the storyteller. The test was administered first in Doti, the district the speaker is from, to ensure the speech was representative of that variety. This is referred to as the home town test (HTT). A full description of the procedures used for the RTT are in Appendix B.

### **3.1.3 Knowledgeable insider interview**

Description and Purpose: A prepared interview specifically designed for someone the community views as the most knowledgeable regarding information about their language. This tool provides information from a reliable and knowledgeable source about the language.

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 by the community. The knowledgeable insider interview used in this research is in Appendix D.

### **3.1.4 Questionnaires**

Description and Purpose: A prepared questionnaire to gather information regarding specific sociolinguistic issues related to the goals of this study.

Procedure: Administered one at a time. Nepali was used for administering the questionnaire and a translator was used when needed. The complete questionnaire is listed in Appendix C.

### **3.1.5 Dialect mapping**

Description and Purpose: A Participatory Methods tool used to gain perspective from community members regarding what they see happening with their language. This tool creates space for discussion of emic perspectives regarding dialects, their geographic location and perceived levels of comprehension between speech varieties.

Procedure: Participants are invited to describe their linguistic landscape by identifying the locations where their language is spoken. They then identify how large they perceive the differences to be between their variety and the other varieties, as well as their level of perceived comprehension. They also identify which variety they use in conversation with people from other areas and which variety they believe to be the standard or most broadly understood.

## **3.2 Site selection**

Site selection for the RTT story collection was based on background research that indicated Doti district as the possible origin and most pure form of Dotyali. Background research indicated that Dadeldhura and Doti districts' varieties are viewed as very similar, and testing in only one of the two districts would be necessary.

The remaining three test sites were chosen based on the results of dialect mapping that indicated where possible boundaries of the differences in Dotyali are known to exist. The RTT story collection and HTT was conducted in Ranagaun and Gholtada villages in Doti district, as well as other nearby villages. The RTT test sites were: Dhole in Baitadi district, Dethala in Darchula district, and Chainpur in Bajhang district (Map 3).

**Map 3: Test sites<sup>8</sup>**



### 3.3 Subject selection

Subject quotas for this survey were based on a convenience sample and focused on four demographic groups: gender, age, education and geographic location. Individuals in these demographic groups often have varying levels of exposure to other languages. The informants used for the knowledgeable insider interview are provided by the community and do not strictly have screening requirements; however, they are generally leaders in the community and, by default, meet the screening of wordlist and RTT subject selection. No screening process was used for participants involved in dialect mapping.

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<sup>8</sup> Map created on Google Earth after importing GPS data.

### 3.3.1 Wordlists and RTT story elicitation subject selection

The four requirements for subjects chosen for wordlists and recorded story elicitation are as follows:

1. Subject has grown up in the village under study and currently lives there. (If they have lived elsewhere, it was not for a significant amount of recent time).<sup>9</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 Dotyali with them.
4. Subject speaks Dotyali first and best.

### 3.3.2 Questionnaire and RTT subject selection

The questionnaire and RTT required that only criteria number one and two were met in order for a subject to be eligible. In each test site, a minimum of 12 questionnaires were administered to a sample of Dotyali speakers, stratified by age and gender. Figure 2 shows the distribution of this sample.

**Figure 2: Sample size for questionnaires 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

In each test site, a minimum of 10 RTTs were administered to a sample of Dotyali speakers. Because of the nature of the testing procedure, younger, educated community members (those under the age of 35) seem better equipped to understand the testing method. However,

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<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to define a specific time period for “a significant amount of recent time”. Thus, this criterion is intentionally subjective as it depends on how long subjects lived elsewhere and how long they have been back in the village relative to their age.

researchers attempted to administer the RTT to at least 5 men and 5 women<sup>10</sup> as well as both younger and older community members in each test site.

Educational background was also accounted for during data collection and analysis of questionnaires and the RTT. For this analysis, literate persons are classified as educated, which generally corresponds with the completion of primary level four.

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<sup>10</sup> In Baitadi, only four women were tested on the RTT. The results of the fifth female test taker were discarded because it seemed as though she was uncomfortable with the testing procedures resulting in abnormally low scores.





## **4 Dialects of Dotyali**

In order to assess comprehension levels and language attitudes between the various dialects of Dotyali, those various dialects had to first be identified. Following the identification of the major dialect of Dotyali, lexical similarity and the level of comprehension were tested.

### **4.1 Dialects of Dotyali**

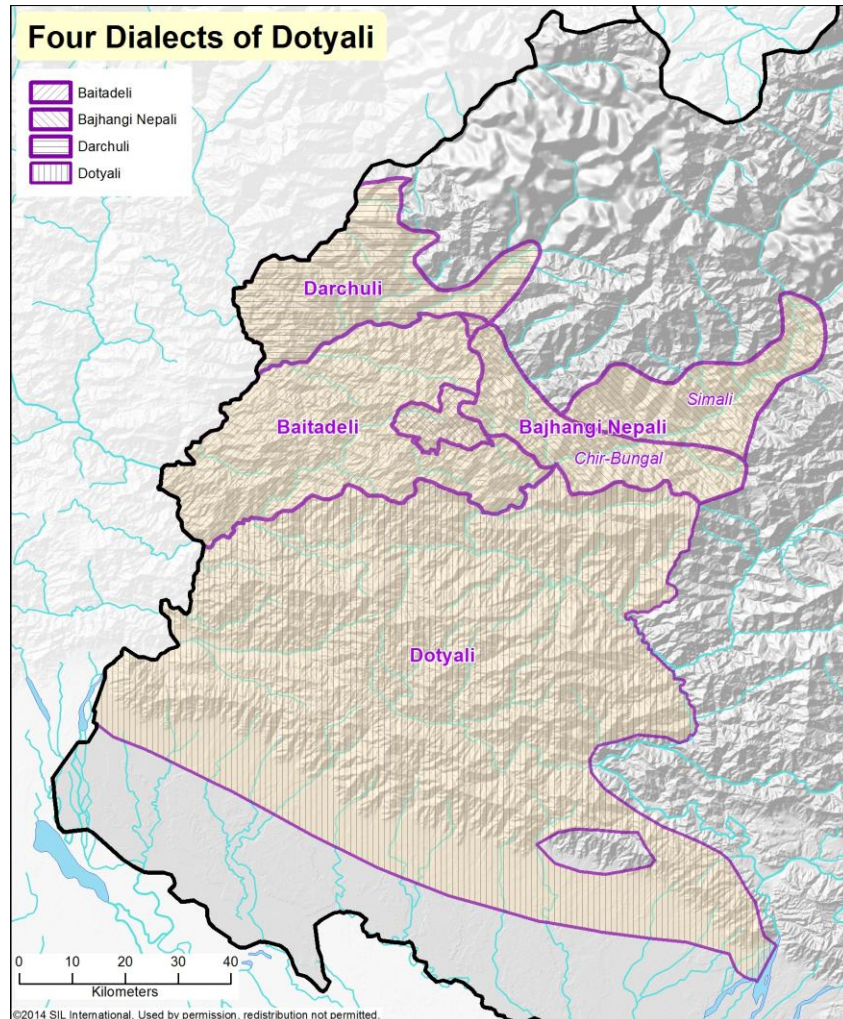
In discovering the borders of a language area, it is not only important to identify where people live, but also where they do not live. Communities in all four test sites identify the languages spoken in Achham, Bajura, Kalikot, Dailekh, Jumla, and Humla districts as separate from their own. Dotyali communities reported extreme difficulty in understanding the language used in Achham and Bajura and said Nepali is often used to communicate instead of their mother-tongues. Two of the four Dotyali communities believe the languages spoken in Achham and Bajura are similar to each other, but different from Dotyali.

Previous research in the Dotyali speaking area provided a foundation as to the location of possible major dialects and names for those dialects. Particularly, the LinSuN reports of Sapkota and Shahi (2012) and Chalise and Pandit (2012) were found to be instrumental in providing a starting point for possible dialects.

In addition to the research of others, this survey used several tools in order to identify and confirm the major dialects of Dotyali. Dialect mapping was facilitated with community members in all four test sites. While varying degrees of differences were reported by participants in the different test locations, combining the data from the facilitations revealed overlap and consistencies among the communities' ideas of where Dotyali is spoken and its dialect areas. Questionnaires were used to determine the degree of difference between the districts where Dotyali is spoken.

Four main dialects (Dotyali, Baitadeli, Darchuli, and Bajhangi Nepali) and two sub-dialects of Bajhangi Nepali (Simali and Chir-Bungli) were identified and are displayed in Map 4. These dialects are discussed in detail in the following sections.

**Map 4: Major dialects of Dotyali<sup>11</sup>**



#### **4.1.1 Dotyali dialect**

In all four DM facilitations, communities grouped the Dotyali spoken in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts as similar. Dadeldhura and Doti districts were often grouped together as having similar speech. Dialect mapping in Badar, Doti, facilitated by T.U. researchers, reported similar results, and states “the language varieties spoken in these areas [Kailali, Kanchanpur, Doti, Dadeldhura] are mutually intelligible” (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 221). This is congruent with interviews prior to fieldwork that suggested Doti and Dadeldhura as part of one dialect.

<sup>11</sup> ©2014 SIL International, used by permission, redistribution not permitted.

Facilitations in Doti and Baitadi districts provided more precise dialect variations at the Village Development Committee (VDC) level within Dadeldhura and Doti district. Participants in Silgadhi VDC in Doti district reported few speakers of Dotyali along the Bajhang-Doti border in the north of Doti. Similarly, they reported few speakers along the Achham-Doti border in the east. All of this data suggests one dialect, identified on Map 4 as Dotyali, to include the Dotyali spoken in Doti, Dadeldhura, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts.

#### **4.1.2     *Baitadeli dialect***

Sapkota and Shahi (2012: 208) suggest that, though currently listed in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Nepali, Baitadeli is a likely dialect of Dotyali. Dialect mapping facilitated in Doti, Baitadi, Darchula, and Bajhang, all reported that the language spoken in Baitadi is part of the Dotyali language. Participants said the dialect is called Baitadi or Baitadeli (identified on Map 4 as Baitadeli). The language spoken in Baitadi was reported to encompass all of Baitadi district and extend into the southwest corner of Bajhang.

Within Baitadi district, several small sub-dialects were reported. The general areas of these reported sub-varieties are: (1). Mathairaj and Hat VDCs in the northeast; (2). Sreekot VDC and Dasharathchanda N.P. in the northwest; (3). Raudidewal and Melauli VDCs in the southwest; (4). Rauleswor and Patan VDCs in central Baitadi and 5. Shikharpur, Chaukham, Gajari, Thalakanda VDCs in southeast Baitadi and Syandi VDC in Bajhang. The differences in these sub-varieties are minimal and not included in Map 4.

#### **4.1.3     *Darchuli dialect***

Darchuli is listed in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Nepali; however Sapkota and Shahi (2012: 208) found that it is a dialect of Dotyali. This was confirmed in the DM sessions of this research study.

The Darchuli variety reportedly covers the midwestern section of Darchula and extends into the northeast section of Baitadi. A DM session facilitated in Dethala VDC, Darchula, reported that the majority of Darchuli speakers are located in Dethala, Gokuleswor, Ranisikhar, Rithachaupata, Sikhar, and Latinath VDCs along the Darchula-Baitadi border. They also reported speakers living in Bramhadev, Dhari, and Pipalchauri VDCs to the north near the India border. Very little information was provided for the VDCs west of these areas. This could be

because of their location closer to India, where Kumaoni is used as the LWC, which may cause mixing of languages.

The name Darchuli has been used in previous reports and is logical to use because of the naming convention used by other dialects; however, informants during this research identified their language name only as ‘Dotyali.’ Map 4 uses the name Darchuli for clarification from the Dotyali dialect in the south.

#### **4.1.4 *Bajhangi Nepali dialect***

The language spoken in Bajhang (often referred to as Bajhangi or Bajhangi Nepali) was reported to extend from the Chainpur area to the southern border of Bajhang and across into the southeast corner of Baitadi. This causes some overlap in the reported dialect boundary between Baitadeli and Bajhangi Nepali.

This study has identified Bajhangi Nepali as a dialect of Dotyali. However, there is room to question whether it should instead be considered a dialect of Nepali. The rationale for its inclusion as a dialect of Nepali, as well as the reasons for the naming convention for this dialect is discussed in section 6.1.

#### ***Bajhangi Nepali sub-dialects***

Chalise and Pandit (2012: 185) identified several possible sub-dialects within the district of Bajhang. Two main sub-dialects were confirmed during this research: Chir-Bungal, also called Bungli, which follows the Kalanga River and highlands, and Simali, sometimes called Churali, which follows the Seti River and mountains. These sub-dialects are identified as Chir-Bungal and Simali in Map 4.

Chalise and Pandit also report several additional sub-dialects of Chir-Bungal from the DM data from their fieldwork facilitation in Sunkuda, Bajhang, in 2012. These sub-dialects include Bungli; Chirali, which is reported to be closely related to Baitadeli (due to its location near the Baitadi border); Garkhali, which is reported to be closely related to Kumaoni; and Jyabani. Because Chir-Bungal and Simali were the only two sub-dialects reported by DM participants during our research and it is consistent with the findings of previous research, they can be considered the main varieties in Bajhang (and thus are the only two sub-dialects displayed on

Map 4). It should be noted that Chir-Bungal and Simali were both labeled as *Bajhangi* during our DM facilitations, though identified as two separate varieties.

#### **4.1.5     *Dialectal differences***

The differences between Dotyali dialects are reported to be minimal. Questionnaires asked respondents if they have spoken with Dotyali speakers from various districts where Dotyali speakers are known to reside. Informants with positive answers were then asked if the speaker(s) they interacted with spoke “the same, a little different, or very different” from their own way of speaking. The majority of responses (72%) said the speech of others was “a little different” from their own, while “the same” and “very different” received relatively low responses (15% and 13% respectively). Responses were consistent even between districts/dialects geographically most distant from one another.

#### **4.2     Lexical similarity**

According to Blair, it is common practice that lexical similarity percentages below 60% indicate that the compared lists represent different languages. Lexical similarity above 60% requires intelligibility testing to confirm if the varieties are dialects of the same language or if they are different languages.

Because Dotyali is closely related to Nepali and Kumaoni, they were included in the comparison. Figure 3 shows the lexical similarity percentages between the four Dotyali dialects, Nepali, and Kumaoni.

**Figure 3: Lexical similarity comparison percentages**

<b>Baitadeli</b>					
87%	<b>Darchuli</b>				
82%	82%	<b>Dotyali</b>			
81%	78%	75%	<b>Bajhang Nepali<sup>12</sup></b>		
72%	70%	70%	72%	<b>Nepali</b>	
61%	58%	60%	54%	53%	<b>Kumaoni</b>

The lexical similarity percentages among the Dotyali varieties range between 75% and 87%. The highest percentage of similarity is between Baitadeli and Darchuli with the lowest between Dotyali and Bajhang Nepali. Baitadeli has the highest average lexical similarity among the varieties, while Bajhang Nepali has the lowest. Comprehension testing is needed to determine the level of understanding between these varieties.

Percentages of similarity are lower between the Dotyali varieties and Nepali (70-72%). These percentages are above the 60% threshold that Blair established for separate languages.

Intelligibility testing is thus needed to determine comprehension between the Dotyali varieties and Nepali; however, that was beyond the scope of this research.

Lexical similarity of the Dotyali wordlists with Kumaoni<sup>13</sup> range between 54% and 61%, indicating relatively low similarity. According to Blair's 60% guideline, Dotyali can, on the whole, be considered a separate language from Kumaoni.

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<sup>12</sup> Chainpur was the test village in Bajhang district, which lies in Simali sub-dialect. Data was not collected in Chir-Bungal sub-dialect, as it was expected to have relatively high similarity between Simali.

<sup>13</sup> The Kumaoni wordlist used for this comparison was taken from van Riezen (1999). The Supai variety was used because it is believed to be the dialectal center of Western Kumaoni (van Riezen 1999).

### 4.3 Comprehension of Doti Dotyali

Because Doti district is seen as the possible origin of Dotyali and is located slightly farther away from the transportation hub located in Dadeldhura, Doti was chosen for the Recorded Text Test (RTT) story collection. It appears that the Doti dialect has fairly high comprehension in the other Dotyali districts.

As explained in section 3.2, the Doti story was tested in Baitadi, Darchula, and Bajhang districts. Figure 4 displays the RTT results (the gray sections are results of the *hometown test* [HTT]).

**Figure 4: RTT results**

	Test Site			
	Doti	Baitadi	Darchula	Bajhang
Average Score	95%	79%	94%	87%
Standard Deviation	8.54	23.67	7.28	13.55
n =	10	10	11	10

In order to interpret RTT results properly, three pieces of information are necessary. The first is average percentage (shown as *average score* in Figure 4), 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 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 (shown as *n =* in Figure 4).

Blair (1990: 25) has written about the relationship between test scores and their standard deviation, as seen in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Relationship between test averages and standard deviation**

		<b>Standard Deviation</b>	
		<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>High</b>	Many people understand the story well, but some have difficulty.	Most people understand the story.
	<b>Low</b>	Many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly.	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.

The test scores in the three sites range from 79% to 94%, with an average score of 87%.

Darchula respondents had the highest average score (94%) with low standard deviation. This indicates that most people understand the story well.

Respondents from Bajhang had an average score of 87% with scores ranging between 64-100%. Six of the ten test-takers missed one or no questions. Three respondents struggled in answering comprehension questions and two of them reported difficulty in understanding the story.

Overall, most respondents understood the story well.

The average test score in Baitadi was 79% with a high standard deviation of 23.67. Three subjects reported a high degree of difficulty in understanding the story, which correlates with the three lowest test scores. Removing these subjects from the results provides a standard deviation of 6.2. This data suggests that while many people understand the story well, some have difficulty.

Post-RTT questions allow test-takers to express how well they felt they understood the story. Results from the three test sites are shown in Figure 6.



**Figure 6: How much of the story did you understand?**

	Test Site		
	Baitadi	Darchula	Bajhang
<b>All</b>	20%	64%	20%
<b>Most</b>	30%	36%	50%
<b>Half</b>	40%	-	10%
<b>Less than half</b>	10%	-	20%
<b>n =</b>	10	11	10

Post-RTT responses were consistent with actual testing results. A greater percentage of Darchula respondents reported understanding “all” of the Doti story than the other test sites (64% compared to 20%). It is interesting to note that Darchula is geographically farthest from Doti, yet every Darchula RTT subject said they understood all or most of the Doti story, suggesting overall high comprehension. Only half of the Baitadi subjects reported understanding all or most of the story, suggesting varied comprehension. Bajhang was between these two with 7 out of 10 subjects saying they understood all or most of the Doti story.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Dialect mapping identified four main dialects of Dotyali: Dotyali, Baitadeli, Darchuli and Bajhangli Nepali. Respondents noted minimal differences between the dialects. Lexical similarity showed high similarity between wordlists from the four Dotyali dialects, and moderate similarity between the Dotyali and Nepali wordlists. Recorded Text Tests revealed overall good comprehension of a story from the Dotyali dialect played in the other three dialects; Darchula understands the best, followed by Bajhang and then Baitadi. Responses of perceived comprehension from post-RTT questions were consistent with test results.



## 5 Language Attitude Assessment

Questionnaires asked “*Of the languages you speak, which one do you love the most?*” The majority of respondents (65%) replied that they love Dotyali the most, followed by Nepali (26%), and then English (9%). Informants were asked what language they think children should learn to speak first and 74% replied that Dotyali should be learned first. They said Dotyali should be learned first because it is what the local community speaks and that it is easy to understand. Twenty-six percent of respondents reported that Nepali should be learned first. Reasons given for this were that it is the national language, it is easier for traveling and because it is written. This suggests an overall positive outlook toward Dotyali.

In order to evaluate the willingness of Dotyali speakers to share oral and/or written materials with Dotyali speakers in other districts, language attitudes were assessed. Assessment was aimed at the language attitudes held by speakers in each district toward the other dialects and especially toward the Dotyali dialect in Doti and Dadeldhura districts. The data collected shows that positive attitudes are held toward the speech in all districts and that Dotyali spoken in Doti district is seen as the most pure.

Questionnaire respondents were asked if they had been to a particular district and, if they had, were then asked how the Dotyali spoken in that district makes them feel. The districts inquired about were Kailali, Kanchanpur, Doti, Dadeldhura, Baitadi, Bajhang, and Darchula. Only 2 people (out of 134) reported negative feelings toward the speech in another district. Similar results of positive attitudes were also found by Sapkota and Shahi in their research (2012: 233).

Following the Doti RTT, participants were asked how the storyteller’s speech made them feel. All 31 respondents said the speech in the story made them feel good or indifferent and no negative attitudes were reported toward the speech used in the story. This suggests favorable attitudes toward the Doti speech variety.

Ninety percent of respondents from Darchula recognized differences between their own speech and the Dotyali spoken in Doti district. Despite the identified differences, respondents in Darchula reported that the language in Doti is more pure than their own speech. The other test sites (Baitadi and Bajhang) reported Doti as the most pure after their own variety. Each test site

reported their own language as the most pure during questionnaires, except Darchula where respondents reported Doti as the most pure variety. Doti reported only itself as the most pure. Interestingly, some Dotyali speakers in Doti reported that only older women know the pure form of Dotyali because everyone else mixes Nepali. Overall, Doti district is viewed as having the most pure form of Dotyali.

Summarizing, three conclusions related to language attitudes can be made: First, the social outlook of Dotyali is positive. Secondly, speakers of Dotyali generally do not hold negative attitudes toward Dotyali spoken in other districts. And thirdly, Doti district is reportedly recognized as having the purest Dotyali.

## 6 Ethnolinguistic Identity

“Nepal is a multiethnic nation, and its ethnic diversity is coupled with its linguistic plurality (Lewis 2009: 4). As discussed in section 1.2, speakers of Dotyali represent a variety of castes. Therefore, one of the goals of this research was to determine whether or not speakers of Dotyali see themselves as one cohesive language and ethnic community. This chapter will first show that Dotyali speakers view themselves as one language community – sharing a linguistic identity. The chapter will then present findings suggesting few markers of ethnic cohesiveness.

### 6.1 Linguistic identity

Questionnaire respondents would sometimes refer to their language name as ‘Nepali.’ Using follow-up questions for clarification, it became evident that the ‘Nepali’ they referred to was not the same as ‘official Nepali’<sup>14</sup> [npi]. The researchers spoke official Nepali during conversation and asked if their language was the same as what is used in the village. Strong negative replies were given and clarification was provided that their language is *gauko Nepali* (village Nepali) or *stanja Nepali* (local Nepali) and that the Nepali used in Kathmandu was not intelligible with their own. This was evident to researchers in their difficulty in understanding the local Nepali, while being able to communicate effectively when participants spoke in official Nepali. Informants insisted that official Nepali was not the same language they spoke in their village, even if they called the village language Nepali. This is consistent with the research of Chalise and Pandit (2012: 201) who reported a distinction between local Nepali and official Nepali.

In the ISO request for change,<sup>15</sup> R. D. Prabhas Chataut states that Nepali [nep] is only understood by Dotyali speakers after education or extensive contact with speakers of the language. He also states several points of distinction between Nepali [nep] and Dotyali identity (2011). It should be noted that during interviews and conversations with outsiders (non-Dotyali

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<sup>14</sup> The term ‘official Nepali’ was used by Chalise and Pandit in their forthcoming report. Therefore, this term is used in this report for consistency. During fieldwork, researchers often used the term ‘Kathmandu Nepali.’

<sup>15</sup> [http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr\\_files/2011-158.pdf](http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr_files/2011-158.pdf) (last accessed 02 Oct 2014).

speakers), Dotyali is consistently referred to as a dialect of official Nepali, and not an independent language. Outsiders insist that Dotyali speakers understand official Nepali, while the speakers themselves claim that they do not.

As discussed in Section 1.3, speakers of Dotyali sometimes identify their language based upon the district name where they reside. However, when asked where else their language is spoken, they included neighboring districts, even though the language names are different. For example, Baitadi residents identify their own language name as ‘Baitadeli’ and say that ‘Bajhangi’ is spoken in Bajhang district. But they reported that people in Bajhang speak the same language spoken that is spoken in Baitadi, though spoken a little differently.

Particularly in Bajhang district, speakers referred to their language as *Nepali* (different from official Nepali). Chalise and Pandit (2012: 182) report that speakers asked them to identify their language as ‘Bajhangi Nepali.’ Lexical similarity percentages of Bajhangi Nepali with Nepali is 71%, only 3-9% lower than Bajhangi Nepali with the other Dotyali dialects. There are some Bajhangi speakers who report that the westernmost valley of Bajhang, where the sub-dialect has been identified as Chir-Bungal, is Dotyali and that it is similar to the language spoken in southern Darchula (John Eppel p.c., 2012). Because Bajhangi speakers were often identified as part of Dotyali, both by people residing in Bajhang and outside Bajhang district, this survey suggests that Bajhangi Nepali be included as a dialect of Dotyali. However, in order to acknowledge Bajhangi Nepali speakers’ connection with Nepali, it is recommended that they keep the name Bajhangi Nepali.

In contrast, speakers of Bajurali Nepali in neighboring Bajura district reportedly identify very closely with Nepali. They expressed suspicion that researchers wanted to remove their classification from Nepali and list their language under Dotyali instead (Chalise and Pandit 2012: 193). While discontentment was shown toward this idea in Bajura district, there did not appear to be the same opposition in Bajhang district. However, this leaves questions as to whether Bajhangi speakers identify closer to Dotyali or Nepali.

## **6.2 Ethnic identity**

There is little evidence to show that Dotyali speakers share a common ethnic identity.

One marker of ethnic identity in Nepal is a shared caste or group name. During the research, respondents were asked to identify their caste. Responses were congruent with Nepali caste names. High castes include Brahman, Thakuri, Bohora, and Chhetri, while low castes include Dhalit and Lohar. Previous research in these districts found the same results (Chalise and Pandit 2012: 174 and Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 206). This data is also in agreement with statements made about the history of the Khas (as explained in section 1.2), which suggests that Dotyali ethnic identity has roots in the mixed and complex history of the Khas people and region.

Researcher observation did not identify any markers of ethnicity, such as styles of homes, ethnic foods, or traits specifically used by Dotyali speakers. However, because they are outsiders, researchers are often unable to identify traits exclusively belonging to one ethnic group.

Marriage patterns were examined in order to determine who Dotyali speakers identify as members of their ethno linguistic group. It was found that marrying Dotyali speakers from other districts is fairly common. The farther away the district, the less likely intermarriage becomes, but at least some marriages are known between most of the districts where Dotyali is spoken. Despite the lack of cultural markers unifying Dotyali-speakers into one ethnic identity, inter-marriage between the dialects of Dotyali suggests they view themselves as one group to at least some extent.

### **6.3 Ethnolinguistic identity summary**

Dotyali speakers distinguish clear lines between Dotyali and Nepali, both linguistically and ethnically.

Different names are given to the various dialects of Dotyali and the speakers identify differences between these dialects. However, they appear to share one linguistic identity. Results in Bajhang are less concrete and, while evidence suggests Bajhangi Nepali speakers relate more closely with Dotyali than Nepali, this cannot be said with certainty.

Except for inter-marriage among the Dotyali community, they exhibit few markers of ethnic cohesiveness.





## 7 Language Vitality

Language vitality is the extent to which a language is being used. “The current vitality status of a language...serves as a baseline for making language development decisions” (Lewis and Simons, forthcoming: 14).

The majority of questionnaire respondents (91%) reported that they speak Dotyali best. “Language vitality in Dotyali, ...Baitadeli and Darchuleli is found to be high” (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 232). Chalise and Pandit (2012: 187-190) reported high mother-tongue use in Bajhang district as well. This, combined with the factors of domains of language use and intergenerational transfer, suggests high oral language vitality of Dotyali. The extent the language is used for reading and writing is minimal. These factors suggest an EGIDS level of 6a: *Vigorous*.

### 7.1 Domains of language use

#### 7.1.1 Home domain

One of the most concrete ways of measuring the vitality of a language is to examine the language used in the home. This is because the language used in the home generally determines the first language a child will learn to speak, which is an indicator of the maintenance of the language. During fieldwork research, questionnaires were used to ask what language subjects use most often in the home with different generations. Answers are shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Languages used most often in the home**

		Dotyali	Nepali
When talking with your spouse	n = 40	97.5%	2.5%
When talking with a child	n = 48	90%	10%
When telling a story to a child	n = 48	92%	8%

Dotyali was reported to be used in the home with different generations by 90% to 97.5% of respondents, while Nepali was reported as being used rarely.

The high use of Dotyali in the home was confirmed by researchers in most test sites through observation. In Baitadi, Darchula, and Bajhang, the mother-tongue was observed to be the primary language of communication in the home. In Doti district, however, observation revealed that Nepali is sometimes used in the home as well, particularly in talking with children. This is seen in the questionnaire results when they are stratified by test site (shown in Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Reported mother-tongue use in the home stratified by test site**

<b>Doti</b>	Talking with your spouse	n = 9	100%
	Talking with a child	n = 12	75%
	Telling a story to a child		92%
<b>Baitadi</b>	Talking with your spouse	n = 10	90%
	Talking with a child	n = 12	92%
	Telling a story to a child		92%
<b>Darchula</b>	Talking with your spouse	n = 11	100%
	Talking with a child	n = 12	92%
	Telling a story to a child		92%
<b>Bajhang</b>	Talking with your spouse	n = 10	100%
	Talking with a child	n = 12	100%
	Telling a story to a child		92%

Despite some Nepali use in the home in Doti district, the reported use of the mother-tongue is very high. The use of Dotyali in the home suggests strong language vitality.

### **7.1.2 Other domains**

Social and cultural domains were inquired about in order to assess the use of Dotyali outside the home. High mother-tongue use was found in the village outside the home.

Villages are reportedly homogenous in the sense that they almost all speak Dotyali.

Knowledgeable insider interviews in all sites visited reported that 100% of homes in their village are Dotyali-speaking and that Dotyali is used most often among villagers.

Ninety-four percent of questionnaire respondents said they hear children using Dotyali most often in the village. Nepali was the only other language reportedly used the most often between children in the village, but to a much lower extent (only 6%). A few respondents reported occasionally hearing English and Hindi between village children, but said these languages were rarely heard and it was only a few words in the sentence or a basic greeting.

When community leaders were asked what languages are used regularly in their communities, Nepali and Dotyali were the only answers provided. Use of Dotyali was reported more frequently than Nepali in the communities. Community leaders said that Dotyali is the primary language used for both marriage ceremonies and village meetings. Occasionally Nepali is used, but its use is secondarily to the mother-tongue and generally only if there are participants present who do not know Dotyali. Sanskrit is sometimes used for prayer during marriage ceremonies.

Another question asked during these interviews was *“How many people in your village do you think cannot speak Nepali, even though they may understand it?”* Most respondents estimated that half of their village cannot speak Nepali, except the informant in Darchula who reported that only a few cannot speak Nepali. In Bajhang, it was reported that only women and old people cannot speak Nepali. Researchers informally assessed the level of Nepali proficiency while administering the RTT and questionnaires and feel most participants have a high level of ability in Nepali (defined as either ‘literate’ or ‘understands and speaks a lot’).

In the market, Dotyali, Nepali, English, Kumaoni, and Hindi were all said to be used, but, as seen in Figure 9, Dotyali was reported to be used in the market most often. This was confirmed via researcher observation in market and transit areas.

**Figure 9: Languages used most often at the market**

	<b>Dotyali</b>	<b>Nepali</b>	<b>Kumaoni</b>
n = 47	57%	40%	2%

Stratified by test site, Darchula reported the highest rate of Dotyali use in the market (73%), while Doti reported the lowest (50%).

## **7.2 Intergenerational transfer**

An important aspect of language vitality is the extent to which the mother-tongue is being passed to the next generation, known as *intergenerational transfer*. This research found that the intergenerational transfer of Dotyali is strong and supports language vitality.

The language used in the home is an indicator of what language children will learn to speak first and best. As discussed in the previous section, Dotyali is the language that dominates the home domain.

Questionnaire responses indicate that 97% (33/34) of respondent's children can speak the language of their parents.

In order to assess what language parents are using with their children, respondents were asked what language their parents spoke with them when they were a child. Everyone except one reported that their parents spoke Dotyali with them when they were a child.

## **7.3 Reading and writing in Dotyali**

The extent to which a language is used for reading and writing can affect the vitality of that language. Lewis (forthcoming: 85) writes, "The introduction of literacy can serve powerfully to improve the prestige of a minority language and may increase its prospects for survival in many cases." Knowledgeable insider interviews were used to clarify that Dotyali is rarely used for reading and writing. This affects the placement of Dotyali on the EGIDS. Dotyali is currently listed in the Ethnologue as level 4 *Educational*, but this section will provide evidence that the correct EGIDS assignment should be 6a *Vigorous*: "the language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable."

According to Lewis (forthcoming: 84), a level 4 on the EGIDS is assigned to "languages that are used either as media or instruction or as subjects of instruction in a system of institutionally-supported, widely-accessible education." This means that a level 4 language should be taught in schools or the medium used for teaching in schools. Lewis (2014: 85) continues to say that "institutional support for literacy acquisition and maintenance found at the EGIDS level 4 is required for ongoing transmission of local-language literacy from one generation to the next."

Primary schools in all test sites were located in or near the test village. All the schools employ Dotyali mother-tongue speakers and some Nepali mother-tongue speakers as teachers. Instruction is in Nepali, with the exception of the lowest level classes with small children who do not yet understand Nepali. In those instances, Dotyali is used for explanations. In secondary school, Nepali is primarily used and sometimes English, but never Dotyali. Textbooks and teaching materials are solely in Nepali and English. It has been reported that some speakers are trying to prepare multi-lingual education (MLE) materials in Dotyali, though these materials are not yet used on a wide-spread basis (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 223). Therefore, Dotyali does not currently fit the requirements of EGIDS Level 4.

Level 5 on the EGIDS requires that the language “is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.” While level 5 is defined as being in the beginning stages of literacy, “the existence of an orthography or the production of beginning literacy materials are not, in themselves, sufficient to qualify a language as having achieved EGIDS level 5” (forthcoming: 85). The definition requires that at least some part of the community is effectively using the language for reading and writing. All knowledgeable insider interview respondents said they have heard of Dotyali materials. However, on questionnaires during a 2012 T.U. research trip, very few respondents (11% of male respondents) reported having knowledge of written materials in their mother-tongue (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 224). Books and magazines in Dotyali are known to be available as well as some songs and newspapers. Newspapers and magazines that have been occasionally been printed in Dotyali are not available on a regular basis (Sapkota and Shahi 2012: 223). A Dotyali dictionary, poems and proverbs, cultural literature, and at least one novel have been published in Dotyali.<sup>16</sup> However, these materials are not wide-spread or readily available. Because the availability of Dotyali materials is not wide spread, there is no standardized orthography, and evidence shows that no significant segment of the language community is using Dotyali for reading and writing, Level 5 should not be assigned.

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<sup>16</sup> A more comprehensive list can be found in R.D. Prabhas Chataut’s Request for Change form.

Dotyali is used minimally as a written language, but as demonstrated in the previous sections, has strong vitality as an oral language. Strong oral vitality is seen through various domains of use and intergenerational transfer. As such, an EGIDS Level 6a is appropriate for Dotyali.

According to Lewis (forthcoming: 85-86), a level 6a language is one where “the vast majority of adults, parents, grandparents, and great grandparents are using the language and making it possible for children to acquire and use the language for every day communication.”

#### **7.4 Language vitality summary**

Overall attitudes toward Dotyali are positive. The majority of respondents report that they love Dotyali the most and they report that children should learn to speak Dotyali first.

High use of the mother-tongue is evident in social and cultural events. There is significant use of Dotyali between children in the village, as well as at weddings and village meetings. Dotyali is the most used language in the village and some people are not conversational in Nepali, the second most common language.

Overwhelmingly, Dotyali is being passed from parents to children. It is evident that children are speaking the language of their parents and that people think children should speak Dotyali first.

A language can be classified as having strong vitality as an oral language, but weak or low vitality as a written language. Dotyali fits this description since there is no widespread use of Dotyali for literacy and no institutional or educational support for learning to read and write in Dotyali. An EGIDS level of 6a is appropriate for Dotyali, which means the language is being spoken by all generations and the language is usually passed onto children in the speech community.

## 8 Summary of Findings and Implications for Language-Based Development

This chapter summarizes the findings for each goal of this research project and then discusses the implications of these findings for language-based development.

### ***Goal 1: Dialect areas***

Identify the major dialects of Dotyali and the comprehension among the dialects.

- There are four major dialects of Dotyali: Dotyali, Baitadeli, Darchuli, and Bajhangi Nepali.
- The four main dialects of Dotyali share high lexical similarity (75-87%) and speakers identify minimal differences between the dialects.
- There is high comprehension of the Dotyali spoken in Doti district among Dotyali speakers in Baitadi, Bajhang, and Darchula districts.

### ***Goal 2: Language attitudes***

Assess the language attitudes of the identified Dotyali varieties toward one another to better understand their willingness to share oral and written materials.

- Speakers of the major Dotyali dialects do not hold negative attitudes toward other Dotyali dialects.
- Doti district is recognized as having the purest Dotyali.

### ***Goal 3: Ethnolinguistic identity***

Investigate whether Dotyali speakers see themselves as a cohesive ethnic community.

- Dotyali speakers share a common linguistic identity.
- Dotyali speakers appear to not share a similar ethnic identity.

### ***Goal 4: Language vitality***

Investigate the language vitality of Dotyali in each speech community.

- The language vitality of Dotyali is strong.

### ***Implications***

Evidence suggests that the variety of Dotyali spoken in Doti district is prestigious and could be a good area for language-based development. All Dotyali dialects appear to be able and willing

to share language materials developed in the Doti variety. This research does not rule out other Dotyali dialects as possible candidates for language-based development, but, because differences are recognized between the dialects, materials should be based in one dialect and tested elsewhere for acceptability and comprehension.

Because there has not been wide-spread use of Dotyali as a written language, it is recommended that oral materials be used as a starting point for language development. Due to high language vitality and positive language attitudes, oral materials developed in Dotyali are likely to be well received and shared by all Dotyali-speaking communities. Mass media materials, such as radio advertisements and health-related public service announcements, could be potential starting places for oral materials. Recordings of local folklore stories may also be well accepted.

If the community wants to pursue further strengthening of the vitality of the language, expanding reading and writing of Dotyali is recommended. The first step of expanding reading and writing is developing and agreeing upon a standard orthography. Following orthography development, several options for materials development are available. Possibilities include: organizing a local group to translate important documents and stories into Dotyali, producing signs and posters for public announcements related to health and other public domains, and providing community workshops to teach others how to read and write in Dotyali.



## ९ भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि प्राप्त कुराहरु र सुझावहरुको सारांश

यस अध्यायमा यस अनुसन्धान परियोजनाको हरेक लक्ष्यका लागि प्राप्त कुराहरुको सारांश दिइएका छन् र भाषामा आधारित विकासकालागि यी प्राप्त कुराहरुको सुभावमाथि छलफल गरिन्छ।

लक्ष्य १: भाषिका क्षेत्रहरु

डोट्यालीका प्रमुख भाषिकाहरु र ती भाषिकाहरु बीचको बोधगम्यता पहिचान गर्ने।

- डोट्यालीका प्रमुख चार भाषिकाहरु छन्:-डोट्याली, बैतडेली, दार्चुली, र बभाङ्गी नेपाली ।
- डोट्यालीका चारवटा प्रमुख भाषिकाहरु बीच उच्च शाब्दिक समानता (७५-८७%) पाइन्छ। औ बोल्नेहरुले एउटा भाषिकाबाट अर्को भाषिका बीचको सानोभन्दा सानो भिन्नता पनि पहिचान गर्न सक्दछन्।
- डोटी जिल्लामा बोल्नेको डोट्याली बैतडी, बभाङ्ग, तथा दार्चुला जिल्लाहरुमा डोट्याली बोल्नेहरु बीचमा बोधगम्यता उच्च छ।

लक्ष्य २: भाषागत मनोबृत्तिहरु

मौखिक तथा लिखित सामग्रीहरु एकार्कामा आदानप्रदान गर्ने आकांक्षा अझ राम्रोसँग बुझ्नलाई पहिचान गरिएका डोट्याली विविधताको एकार्काप्रतिको भाषागत मनोबृत्ति जाँच्ने।

- प्रमुख डोट्याली भाषिका बोल्नेहरुले अन्य डोट्याली भाषिकाप्रति नकारात्मक मनोबृत्ति राख्दैनन्।
- डोटी जिल्लालाई सबभन्दा ठेट डोट्याली बोल्ने भनेर चिनिन्छ।

लक्ष्य ३: जातीयभाषिक पहिचान

डोट्याली भाषीहरुले आफूहरुलाई संयुक्त जातीय समुदायको रूपमा हेर्छन् कि हेर्दैनन् अन्वेषण गर्ने।

- डोट्यालीभाषीहरुले साभा भाषिक एकरूपता मान्दछन्।
- डोट्यालीभाषीहरु समान जातीय पहिचान नमान्ने देखिन्छन्।

लक्ष्य ४: भाषाको सजीवता

डोट्यालीको हरेक बोली समुदायमा भाषिक सजीवता अन्वेषण गर्ने।

- डोट्यालीको भाषिक सजीवता बलियो छ।

## सुझावहरू

दृष्टान्तहरूले देखाउँछन् कि डोटी जिल्लामा बोलिने डोट्यालीको विविधता इज्जतदार छ र भाषामा आधारित विकासका निम्ति राम्रो क्षेत्र हुन सक्छ। सबै डोट्याली भाषिकाहरू, डोटी किसिमको भाषिकामा विकास गरिएका भाषाका सामग्रीहरू चलाउन सक्षम र इच्छुक देखिन्छन्।

यस अनुसन्धानले अन्य डोट्याली भाषिकाहरूलाई भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि सम्भावित सामग्रीका रूपमा मात्र अस्वीकार गर्दैन, तर भाषिकाहरू बीचको भिन्नताहरू पहिचान गरिएका हुँदा, सामग्रीहरू एउटै भाषिकामा आधारित हुनुपर्छ र जताततै स्वीकार्य र बोधगम्यताका लागि जाँचिएको हुनुपर्छ।

लिखित भाषाको रूपमा डोट्यालीको व्यापक प्रयोग नभएको हुँदा, भाषाको बिकासको लागि शुरुवातको बिन्दुको रूपमा मौखिक सामग्रीहरू प्रयोग गर्न सुझाव दिइन्छ। उच्च भाषिक सजीवता तथा सकारात्मक भाषागत मनोबृत्तिको कारणले डोट्यालीमा बिकास गरिएको मौखिक सामग्रीहरू धेरै ग्राह्य हुने र सम्पूर्ण डोट्यालीभाषी समुदायहरूद्वारा प्रयोग गर्ने देखिन्छ। आम संचारका सामग्रीहरू, जस्तै रेडियो विज्ञापनहरू, स्वास्थ्य सम्बन्धी सार्वजनिक सेवाका सूचनाहरू, मौखिक सामग्रीका लागि असल शुरुवातका सामग्रीहरू हुन सक्छन्। टेपमा लोक कथाहरू भर्नु पनि सर्वस्वीकार्य हुन सक्छ।

यदि समुदायले भाषाको सजीवतालाई अभि सुदृढ बनाउन समुदाय अग्रसर हुन चाहन्छ भने डोट्यालीको पढाइ र लेखाइ कार्यको विस्तार गर्नु पनि राम्रो हुन्छ। पढाइ र लेखाइ कार्यको विस्तार गर्ने पहिलो कदम एउटा स्तरीय हिज्जे लेखन विकास गरी त्यसमा सहमत हुनु हो। हिज्जे लेखन अनुशरण गर्दा सामग्री विकासका केही विकल्पहरू पाइन्छन्।

सम्भावनाहरूमा निम्न कुराहरू पर्छन्: महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेजहरू तथा कथाहरू डोट्यालीमा अनुवाद गर्न एउटा स्थानीय समूह गठन गर्ने, स्वास्थ्य तथा अन्य सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र सम्बन्धी सार्वजनिक सूचनाका लागि संकेत चिन्हहरू तथा पोस्टरहरू निष्कासन गर्ने, औ अरुलाई डोट्यालीमा कसरी लेख्ने र पढ्ने सिकाउन समुदायमा कार्यशाला गोष्ठी संचालन गर्ने।

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