A Sociolinguistic Study of Kochila Tharu
in Southeast Nepal

Stephanie R. Eichentopf
Jessica R. Mitchell

Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN)
Central Department of Linguistics
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
and
SIL International
2013
# Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION ..........................................................................................................................1
   1.1 GEOGRAPHY ..........................................................................................................................1
   1.2 THE THARU PEOPLES ..........................................................................................................2
   1.3 LANGUAGE ...........................................................................................................................4
   1.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH .........................................................................................................5

2 PURPOSE AND GOALS ..............................................................................................................7

3 METHODOLOGY .......................................................................................................................9
   3.1 INSTRUMENTS .....................................................................................................................9
   3.2 SITE SELECTION ..................................................................................................................11
   3.3 SUBJECT SELECTION .........................................................................................................12

4 LOCATION OF SPEAKERS .......................................................................................................15

5 INTELLIGIBILITY .....................................................................................................................17
   5.1 DIALECT MAPPING RESULTS ............................................................................................17
   5.2 LEXICAL SIMILARITY ..........................................................................................................17
   5.3 INTELLIGIBILITY TESTING RESULTS ...............................................................................18
   5.4 POST-RTT QUESTIONS .......................................................................................................21
   5.5 INTELLIGIBILITY SUMMARY ..............................................................................................21

6 ATTITUDES ...............................................................................................................................23
   6.1 POST-RTT QUESTIONS .......................................................................................................23
   6.2 CONTACT AND ATTITUDES ...............................................................................................24
   6.3 ATTITUDES SUMMARY ......................................................................................................25

7 LANGUAGE VITALITY ..............................................................................................................27
   7.1 DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE ............................................................................................27
   7.2 INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSFER ....................................................................................28
   7.3 EXTENT OF READING AND WRITING ............................................................................29
   7.4 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS .....................................................................................................29
   7.5 DESIRES FOR DEVELOPMENT .........................................................................................29
   7.6 LANGUAGE VITALITY SUMMARY .....................................................................................30

8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE-BASED DEVELOPMENT ........31
   8.1 LOCATION OF SPEAKERS ....................................................................................................31
   8.2 INTELLIGIBILITY .................................................................................................................31
   8.3 ATTITUDES ..........................................................................................................................31
   8.4 LANGUAGE VITALITY ..........................................................................................................32
   8.5 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS .......................................................................................32

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................................35
Table of Figures

Figure 1: Sample size for informal interviews in each site by age and gender ........................................ 12
Figure 2: Reported (PM) and Census populations of Kochila Tharu speakers by district .................. 16
Figure 3: Lexical similarity percentages matrix ..................................................................................... 18
Figure 4: RTT results ............................................................................................................................. 19
Figure 5: Relationship between test averages and standard deviation .................................................. 20
Figure 6: Self-reported intelligibility after hearing east RTT ................................................................. 21
Figure 7: Positive responses to if RTT stories contained “pure” Kochila Tharu ................................. 23
Figure 8: Reported contact between speakers of various Kochila Tharu varieties ............................. 24
Figure 9: Responses regarding degree of difference between varieties ............................................... 24
Figure 10: Reported language use among children ............................................................................. 28
Table of Maps

Map 1: Map of Nepal .................................................................................................................. 2
Map 2: Kochila Tharu and neighboring languages ................................................................. 4
Map 3: Reported varieties of Kochila Tharu ........................................................................ 15
Abstract

This report presents the results of sociolinguistic research conducted among Kochila Tharu communities in Southeast Nepal. The following topics were studied in order to inform any future language-based development activities: identifying major varieties of Kochila Tharu, assessing intelligibility and attitudes between the varieties, and determining the vitality of the language. Based on the findings of this research, it is our recommendation that future language-based development activities could take place in any of the varieties of Kochila Tharu and could be usable and acceptable to all other varieties. This study also shows that Kochila Tharu language vitality is high.
सारांश

यस प्रतिवेदनमा दक्षिण-पूर्वी नेपालको कोचिला थारु समुदायहरू तथा सामाजिक-भाषिक अनुसंधानमा प्राप्त कुराहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन्। भविष्यमा गरिने भाषामा आधारित कुनै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रियाकलापहरूको लागि तथा भाषामा आधारित कुणै पनि विकास क्रि...
Preface

This sociolinguistic survey of Kochila Tharu was conducted in partnership with the Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN), Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal. The data collection portion of this survey was carried out in February, March, and April of 2013 in Bara, Rautahat, Siraha, Saptari, and Morang districts of Nepal. The purpose of this survey was to obtain a basic understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Kochila Tharu.

Without the assistance of numerous people, this research would not have been possible. We are grateful for continual encouragement and support from our colleagues at Tribhuvan University. We thank Mr. Prem Lal Gachhadar, Mr. Sampat Lal Chaudhary, Mr. Agin Lal Chaudhary, Mr. Triyogi Narayan Chaudhary, Mr. Ananda Chaudhary, Mr. Dinesh Chaudhary, and Mr. Prithvi Chaudhary, who collected participatory methods data in numerous Kochila Tharu villages and shared that data with us, without which, this report would be incomplete. Pre-fieldwork research and development of tools, as well as fieldwork itself, would not have been possible without the generous contributions from Mr. Sant Kumar Chaudhary, in addition to several of those listed above, who spent hours assisting us with translation, logistics, and many other aspects of the research.

We are indebted to the many people that opened their homes to us as gracious hosts during fieldwork as well as the Tharu people we worked and interacted with during our research. We especially thank our friends in Jamtoki for allowing us to use a photo showing their traditional Tharu dress on the cover of this report.

It is our hope that this report will be useful for the Kochila Tharu communities in pursuit of language development. We are open to receiving comments and suggestions regarding the contents of this report.

September 2013
Stephanie R. Eichentopf
Jessica R. Mitchell
Kathmandu, Nepal
प्राककथन

कोचिलाबारुको यस समाजिक-भाषाप्रबन्ध सम्बन्धमा, नेपालको भाषाप्रबन्ध सामाजिकको लिनसुन, त्रिभुवन बिश्वविद्यालय, कीतिपुर, नेपालसङ्ग संयुक्त रूपमा गरिएको थियो। यस सम्बन्धमा तथ्याङ्क संकलन कार्य बार, रोङ्गह, सिराहा, सम्रास र मोरङ्ग जिल्लाहरूमा सन् २०१३ मा फेब्रुअरी, मार्च र अप्रिल महिनामा संचालन गरिएको थियो। कोचिलाबारुको सामाजिक-भाषास्थितिको आधारभूत ज्ञान प्राप्त गरेका स्थानको उद्देश्यको थियो।

थेरे मानिसहरूको सहयोगका यो अनुसन्धान सम्बन्धमा हुने थिए। त्रिभुवन बिश्वविद्यालयका धार्मारहेको सहकर्मीहरूको निरन्तर सहयोग तथा प्रतिसाहनको लागि हामी कृतज्ञ छौं। हामी श्री प्रेमलाल गच्छ, श्री सम्पतललाई चोधरी, श्री अमिनलाई चोधरी, श्री तिब्बुवन बोधालयको तथा श्री पृथ्वी चोधरीलाई धन्यवाद दिनेछौं। जसले भुम्यस्थलको कोचिलाबारु गाउँहरू सहभागितामा प्रदर्शित दिनेछौं।

हामीलाई धन्यवाद दिनेछौं। जसले यो प्रतिवेदन अपूर्ण हुने थियो। धार्मिक उल्लेख गरिएको केही का अतिरिक्त, श्री शान्त कुमार चोधरी जसले हामीलाई अनुवाद गरेछ, सामाजिक र बन्दोबस्त मिलाउन तथा अनुसन्धानका अन्य पक्षहरूको सहयोग गरेका घटनात परिस्थिति परिहार गर्ने उद्देश्यका लागि देनिएको फिल्डको काम पूर्ण गरेछ।

हामीलाई धन्यवाद दिनेछौं। जसले यो प्रतिवेदनको गाउँहरू उदार देनिएको फिल्डको काम ने पनि सम्भव हुने थिए।

हामो फिल्डको कामको समयमा हामीलाई आ-आफ्नो घरमा सुनुल र आफ्नो घरमा धार्मिक सहयोग गरेछौं। धेरै धेरै महानुभावहरूको साथै हामीको अनुसन्धानको अवसरमा हामीलाई लागि हामीलाई अपनी र आफ्नी काम र अन्तर्जातिक गर्न तथा जनहरूको सहयोग गर्न गरेछ। हामीलाई यस प्रतिवेदनको गाउँहरूको परम्परा र धार्मिक निर्नयको तत्काल प्रमाण गरेछ। हामीलाई यस प्रतिवेदनमा धन्यवाद दिनेछौं। यस प्रतिवेदनमा धार्मिक र सुभावहरूमा सहयोग गरेछ।

हामीलाई अशा छ निर्नयता दिनेको प्रतिवेदनको कामसमयका लागि भाषास्विकासलाई धन्यवाद दिनेछौं। यस प्रतिवेदनमा धार्मिक सम्बन्धी डिटा-डिप्पणी र सुभावहरूमा प्रतिवेदन गरेछ।

सेप्टेम्बर २०१३

स्टेफनी आर, आइकन्टो पफ्
जेसिका आर, मिचेल
काढमाडी, नेपाल
1 Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to assist in providing a sociolinguistic profile for Kochila Tharu through identifying major varieties, investigating intelligibility between those varieties, assessing the attitudes of the varieties toward one another, and determining the vitality level of the language. This research hopes to inform future language-based development activities, should the Kochila Tharu communities wish to pursue them.

The meaning of the term Tharu should be clarified at the beginning of this report. In published articles and books, the term Tharu sometimes refers to all types of Tharu people living along the Nepal-India border, including Chitwan Tharu, Rana Tharu, Dangaura Tharu, Kochila Tharu, etc… However, sometimes the term refers to a specific Tharu group, such as Kochila Tharu. For the purposes of this report, the term Tharu will be used only when discussing all Tharu people groups within the Nepal Tarai as a whole. This report is not addressing Tharu people located in India and therefore they will be excluded from the term Tharu in this report.

1.1 Geography

Nepal is divided into 14 administrative zones and subdivided into 75 districts. The districts where Kochila Tharu people live are shown in Map 1, and from west to east are Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusa, Siraha, Udayapur, Saptari, Sunsari, Morang and Jhapa. Excluding Udayapur district, all lie on the Nepal-India border.
1.2 The Tharu Peoples

The Tharu ethnic identity is comprised of many separate groups that vary in culture and language. Politically, the term Tharu refers to a large minority group that spans the entire Tarai. In actuality, there are many ethnic and language groups under the umbrella term Tharu. “Outsiders generally view the Tharu as one homogeneous group... The Tharu, however, recognize many different subgroups distinguished by clan, region, cultural differences, and language” (Webster, 1993: 4). “Among the more recognized groups are the Rana, Dangaura, Kochila/Morangia, Chitwania, and Kathariya” (Boehm, 1997: 19). Many of these Tharu groups recognize differences within their own group based on cultural uniqueness. The 2011 Nepal census reports Tharu as the fourth most populous ethnic group with 1,737,470 reported Tharu people. This number, however, does not account for individual ethnic varieties of Tharu. This survey focuses specifically on Kochila Tharu speakers.

---

1 Ultimate Treks Nepal Pvt. Ltd.
1.2.1 History

Little research has been published regarding the history of the Kochila Tharu. On this topic, van Driem says, “The Kosila Tharu of the eastern Terai were historically under influence of the Brahminical and Vaisnava culture of the Mithila kingdom” (2001: 1167). Regarding the ethnonym of their language name, Krauskopff says, “The ethnonym Koshila or Kuchila could be related to the name of the river Koshi on the bank of which they used to live” (1995: 190). He goes on to say that it can presumed “that people called Tharu have been living in the eastern Terai for at least a millennium” (1995: 190, 191).

1.2.2 Culture

Kochila Tharu culture is unique from that of their other Tharu neighbors. Boehm says they are distinguishable by dress, customs, and language (1997: 19). Krauskopff agrees by saying, “…Published and unpublished studies show a striking diversity from one group to another, in social organisation, rituals and religious practices, village and domestic organisation, mythology and festivals” (1995: 191, 192).

While on fieldwork in the Kochila Tharu areas, we noticed some differences in housing and clothing types. The scope of our research did not allow for investigation into the details of these differences. However, it should be noted that slight variations in these cultural markers may be an indication of historical differences between different groups within Kochila Tharu.

Regarding religious practices, Tharu people are mostly animistic, however many claim to be Hindu (Boehm 1997: 27). “Most Tharu practice an indigenous form of animism, in which shamanism, ancestor worship and tattooing play pivotal roles. This older religion has been overlaid with a veneer of Buddhism and has been influenced by Hinduism” (van Driem 2001: 1167). Similar to culture, differing religious practices are found between the different Tharu groups. “…Ritual organisation (specifically, priesthood) also differs greatly from one group to another and even from one sub-group to another. Another striking example is the impact of the Hindu festival calendar: for the Dangauras, Dasai is the main festival, for the Ranas, it is Holi (Dasai is not really celebrated) and for the Koshila, it is the new year of Baisakh called Siruwa Pavan or Jur Sittal (Dasai is also not really important)” (Krauskopff 1995: 192). While differences between groups is clear to the Tharus themselves, little has been published describing these differences. Two of the most influential and most well-known organizations working for the Tharu people is the Tharu Welfare Society (Tharu
Kalyankarini Sabha) and the Backward Society Education (BASE). These NGOs are not exclusively Kochila Tharu organizations, but rather aim to serve all Tharu people. According to Krauskopf, “The Tharu Welfare Society was founded in 1949, an early date for an ethnic association in Nepal. Today it is the representative body of the Tharu in the Nepal Federation of Nationalities (Nepal Janajati Mahasangh)” (2007: 200).

1.3 Language

Kochila Tharu communities are not found in isolation, but live in districts intermixed with speakers of other languages. “In contrast with western Terai where the Tharus are the only and dominant ethnic minority, the eastern – especially the far eastern – Terai is inhabited by several ethnic groups with very different linguistic affiliation” (Krauskopf 1995: 190). Map 2 shows where Kochila Tharu speakers and speakers of other languages are located.

Map 2: Kochila Tharu and neighboring languages

Kochila Tharu [thq] is classified as Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Eastern zone, Unclassified. The 2011 Nepal Census reports Tharu as the fourth most spoken language in Nepal (1,529,875) though this figure includes all Tharu varieties.

Kochila speakers live among Nepali [nep] and Maithili [mai] speakers. Many Tharus living in Maithili areas claim to be ethnically Tharu but speak Maithili (Boehm, E., p.c. 2010). In

---

2 2011 SIL International
our research, we encountered many informants that identified their mother tongue and caste as Maithili, when in fact it was Tharu. Upon further questioning, our informants seemed to be unclear about the distinction between the two.

There are some Tharu people that claim Kochila Tharu ethnically, but call their language Saptariya Tharu. These people live in Siraha, Udayapur and Saptari districts (Boehm, E. p.c. 2010). Saptariya Tharu is listed in the Ethnologue as an alternative name to Kochila Tharu.

Kochila Tharu is currently classified on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)³ as 5, Developing (Lewis, forthcoming), meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and has effective educational support in parts of the community.” This report suggests that this should be reclassified at an EGIDS level of 6a, Vigorous, meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.” (This is discussed in Section 6).

It is estimated that nearly all Kochila speakers are bilingual with the exception of older women, who are generally monolingual (Boehm. E., p.c. 2010).

1.4 Previous Research

There has been a considerable amount of research on the Tharu people in regards to economics, religion, and customs, but a fairly small amount of linguistic research has been published (Boehm 1997:13). In addition, much of the research done on the Tharu people focuses on the western Tarai varieties and excludes Kochila Tharu in the east.

In the 1970’s, R. R. Regmi published two pieces about Kochila Tharu customs and social structure. These articles (‘Kosika Tharu samudaya ra tinking parivartansila saskrit’ and ‘Kosika Tharu’) were published in Nepali and have not been translated into English. The majority of published linguistic research focuses on other Tharu varieties. Kelly Boehm (1997) has done research regarding the vitality of Tharu in her thesis Language Use and

³ The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is a convention 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, 2010). (See Appendix F for additional information about EGIDS).
Language Maintenance Among the Tharu of the Indo-Nepal Tarai. This research included two Kochila Tharu villages and concluded that vitality appeared to be strong at the time of her research.
2 Purpose and Goals

This survey aims to assist LinSuN in fulfilling the objective of producing “a sociolinguistic profile for each of the languages of Nepal” (LinSuN Proposal 2008). The purpose of this survey is to obtain a basic understanding of the sociolinguistic situation of Kochila Tharu in Nepal.

The goals of this survey are to:

1. Identify the population centers and major varieties of Kochila Tharu in order to inform the scope of this sociolinguistic study.
2. Investigate the intelligibility among Kochila Tharu varieties through lexical similarity, comprehension testing, and emic perspective (that of the speakers themselves).
3. Assess the language attitudes of the major varieties of Kochila Tharu toward one another to better understand their willingness to share oral and written materials.
4. Evaluate the language vitality of Kochila Tharu in each speech community.
3 Methodology

3.1 Instruments

The following instruments were administered using Nepali and/or Kochila Tharu where possible. Probes within each of these instruments were translated into Nepali and Kochila Tharu when necessary 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 word lists represent.

Procedure: Wordlists were elicited in Nepali from mother tongue Kochila Tharu speakers and transcribed by the researchers using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). A lexical similarity analysis was carried out on each pair of wordlists.

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

Disadvantages: Above certain levels of lexical similarity, wordlists cannot give conclusive evidence of intelligibility between speech varieties compared.

3.1.2 Recorded Text Test (RTT)

Description and Purpose: Subjects listened to recorded stories, with comprehension questions within the stories. After the subject had listened to a story, questions regarding language attitudes and self-reported intelligibility were asked.

Procedure: A narrative story was collected from a native Kochila Tharu speaker. It was then played for people in other Kochila 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 the story, subjects then answered questions about their understanding of and opinions toward the speech variety used by the storyteller. The tests were first administered in the community the storyteller is from to ensure the speech sample was representative for that variety. This is referred to as the home town test (HTT). Complete procedures for RTT administration is found in Appendix B.

Advantages: By using actual samples of selected speech varieties, an initial assessment of intelligibility and attitudes can be made.
Disadvantages: This test can be time consuming to develop. The type of RTT this survey used only evaluates basic understanding of narrative texts. In addition it does not measure reading and writing ability in the second variety.

3.1.3 Knowledgeable Insider Interview (KII)

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

Procedure: Questions range from specific population estimates and locations to general information about vitality and other languages spoken by 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. The community members should lead you to the best-suited person, which, ideally, shows their trust in this person as the community expert on the topic of language.

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.

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: Dialect Mapping. 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 emic perspectives of the community.

**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.

**Procedure:** Participants were invited to describe their linguistic landscape by identifying locations where their language is spoken. They then identified how large they perceive the differences to be between their variety and the others, their level of understanding, which variety they use in conversation with people from other areas and which variety they believe to be the standard or most broadly understood. A full description of this tool is in Appendix E.

**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.

3.2 Site Selection

Dialect Mapping was performed in Kathmandu with a group of Kochila Tharu speakers from various districts in order to gain an initial assessment of the districts where Kochila Tharu is spoken. Based on the results of these Dialect Mapping facilitations, three districts were chosen for testing: Bara, Siraha, and Morang. RTT stories were collected and home town tested in Bara and Morang districts. RTTs, wordlists, knowledgeable insider interviews, and informal interviews were administered in all three districts. Additional details regarding site selection considerations can be found in Section 4.
3.3 Subject Selection

The quota sampling used in this survey was based on the four variables of 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 and therefore different attitudes.

In each test site, a minimum of 10 RTTs were administered to a sample of Kochila Tharu speakers stratified by gender and 12 informal interviews stratified by age and gender. The informal interview sample chart is shown in Figure 1.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample size by strata</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young (15-34)</td>
<td>Old (35+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within these demographic groups, we required subjects to meet four screening criteria for wordlists and the RTT:

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.
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 (L1) with them.
4. Subject speaks L1 first and best.

The informal interview schedule required that only criteria number one and two be met in order for a subject to be eligible.

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.
Educational background was accounted for during data collection. Due to the high levels of education in the data collection sites, most subjects were educated. For this analysis, literate persons are classified as educated, which generally corresponds with the completion of primary level four. Because most subjects are educated, analysis was not stratified by education.
4 Location of Speakers

In order to appropriately address the goals of this survey (intelligibility among dialects, attitudes, and language vitality), we had to first identify the geographic locations of the major varieties of Kochila Tharu. Only after identifying the locations of the major varieties were we able to appropriately choose sites for administration of the research tools.

Because little has been published on the different varieties of Kochila Tharu, the first goal of this survey, to identify major varieties, was foundational in accomplishing the other goals of this research. A Dialect Mapping facilitation provided first-hand reports of the major varieties, their approximate locations and populations. The six participants in this facilitation were from three districts: Rautahat, Sunsari, and Morang. The complete results from this facilitation are in Appendix E.

Through Dialect Mapping, participants identified three major groupings, which we will refer to throughout this report as western, central, and eastern. These titles of western, central, and eastern are for the purposes of this report only. Western consisted of Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, and Sarlahi districts. Central contained Mahottari, Dhanusa, Siraha, Udayapur, and Saptari districts. Sunsari and Morang made the eastern variety. We were told that the Kochila Tharu spoken in Jhapa was different from the other three, but that there are relatively few speakers living there. Map 3 shows the districts of these reported varieties.

Map 3: Reported varieties of Kochila Tharu

Dialect Mapping participants also helped identify major population concentrations within these areas by noting if each district had “many,” “some,” or “few” Kochila Tharu speakers.
We compared these responses with the population figures from the 2001 Nepal Census\(^5\) of Tharu speakers by district. Figure 2 shows the population estimate of the participants as well as the population figures from the census.

**Figure 2: Reported (PM) and Census populations of Kochila Tharu speakers by district**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Census Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunsari</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>97,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saptari</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>95,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morang</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>61,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bara</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>40,059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udayapur</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>21,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siraha</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>17,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rautahat</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>13,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarlahi</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>7,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhapa</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>5,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsa</td>
<td>Many</td>
<td>3,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahottari</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>2,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhanusa</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After comparing the data, one district from each of the identified speech varieties was chosen based upon the Kochila Tharu population and availability of contacts in those districts. The three districts chosen for testing were Bara, Siraha, and Morang.

Due to the large area spanned by this survey, it was decided that research done in any one variety area (western, central, or eastern) would be grouped together. Meaning, testing done in one district within the identified three varieties would be assumed to represent attitudes and intelligibility of the other districts of that variety. For example, Bara and Rautahat would be considered the same variety. Similarly, research in both Sunsari and Morang districts would be grouped as eastern.

\(^5\) This type of data is not yet available in the 2011 Census stratified by district. Therefore, this data is from the 2001 Census.
5 Intelligibility

The second goal of this research was to investigate intelligibility among Kochila Tharu varieties. Intelligibility was examined through the use of Dialect Mapping facilitations, wordlist comparison, recorded text testing, and post-RTT questions. This data confirms that the western, central, and eastern varieties are in fact varieties of Kochila Tharu and not separate languages. Intelligibility between varieties could be high enough for sharing language-based materials, although extensibility testing during material development is recommended. This chapter is divided into sections that discuss the results for each tool.

5.1 Dialect Mapping Results

Dialect Mapping was facilitated by researchers in 16 villages throughout the Kochila Tharu area. These facilitations led to a basic understanding of how well those Kochila Tharu speakers believe they understand speakers of Kochila Tharu from other areas. (A description of the procedures for Dialect Mapping as well as complete results are available in Appendix E).

Some generalizations can be made based on the data reported by those Kochila Tharu speakers that participated in the facilitations. First is the affirmation that the districts between Parsa and Jhapa, including Udayapur, is seen as one language, though variation was reported within the one language. Secondly, participants understand the districts lying closest to their own district; the farther away the district, the less they understand.

5.2 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. Specifically, this survey used the comparison method outlined in Blair (1990: 31-32), further explained in Appendix A. 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.

Lexical similarity comparisons further confirms the differentiation between Kochila Tharu and other Tharu languages. Wordlists collected in October 2011 in Dangaura Tharu and its closely related varieties of Deukhuri, Desauriya, and Malhoriya, as well as Kathoriya Tharu
were compared to this survey's 268-item wordlists. Similarity percentages were all below the generally accepted cutoff of 60%, showing the significant difference between the languages. (The full lexical similarity percentages matrix is in Appendix A). The lexical similarity percentages among the three Kochila Tharu varieties of this survey are displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Lexical similarity percentages matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central (Siraha)</th>
<th>Western (Bara)</th>
<th>Eastern (Morang)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 shows that the lexical similarity percentages vary from 65% to 73%. No comparison falls below the cutoff (60%) where they would be considered separate languages. Lexical similarity follows a geographic pattern of the central variety having similar results for the eastern and western varieties, while the similarity percentage between the eastern and western varieties is slightly lower. “If the results of a word list comparison show greater than sixty percent similarity between two speech varieties, dialect intelligibility testing must be done” in order to determine the amount of intelligibility between varieties (Blair: 24).

Lexical similarity comparisons show that the western, central and eastern varieties of Kochila Tharu are varieties of one language and not independent languages from one another.

5.3 Intelligibility Testing Results

Recorded Text Testing (RTT) was used to evaluate comprehension between the varieties of Kochila Tharu. One RTT was developed in the eastern variety (Morang district) and one in the western variety (Bara and Rautahat districts). Further description of the testing procedure can be found in Appendix B. Figure 4 displays the results of the intelligibility tests. The gray sections display the results of the hometown test (HTT), whereas the others are RTT results.
In order to interpret RTT results properly, three pieces of information are necessary. The first is average percentage (shown as Avg % 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 much individual scores vary from the community average, which is known as standard deviation (shown as SD in Figure 4). 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.

---

6 HTT scores as close to 100% as possible are ideal with a cutoff of 90%. The HTT scores on these stories were lower than desired. We found that many subjects had difficulty understanding testing procedures, which lowered the average score. Despite this, we used the test and believe the information is still accurate and useful. A more complete description of HTT principles is found in Appendix B.
Figure 5: Relationship between test averages and standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Situation 1</td>
<td>Situation 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many people understand the story well, but some have difficulty.</td>
<td>Most people understand the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Situation 3</td>
<td>Situation 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly.</td>
<td>Few people are able to understand the story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

When the western RTT was administered to Kochila Tharu speakers in Morang (east), the average score was 67%. The standard deviation was 16.2. When administered in Siraha (central), the average score was 64% with a high standard deviation of 19.0. These results, as seen in Figure 5, show low average scores with high standard deviation, which means that many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly. There is no apparent correlation between RTT scores and the factor of gender.

The scores for the eastern RTT were similar to the western RTT. When administered in the western and central varieties, both locations scored an average of 65% with high standard deviations of 15.1 (western) and 15.8 (central). This shows, like the testing on the western RTT, that many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly. Again, the factor of gender does not appear to correlate with RTT scores, although women

---

7 One subject from the central variety (C3S08) scored considerably lower than the other respondents; their score was 18% whereas the next lowest score was 55%. Due to the abnormally low score of this individual, concerns were raised as to if there were distractions or confusion during test taking. If this informant is removed from the sample, the average score moves from 67% to 70% and the standard deviation lowers from 16.2 to 10.1. This does not significantly change the results of the test.
tended to score slightly higher than men in both test locations (72% average score for women versus 58% for men in both locations).

Overall, RTT scores suggest that the test takers had a difficult time understanding the stories they heard. This data shows that intelligibility of the eastern variety is very similar to the intelligibility of the western variety.

5.4 Post-RTT Questions

Post-RTT questions were used to corroborate participants' understanding of the RTTs. After each RTT we asked “How much of the story did you understand?” Four response options were provided: All, most, half, and less than half.

Following the eastern RTT, in both western and central locations, the majority of respondents felt they understood all or most of the story (shown in Figure 6). Only two respondents in each location answered differently.

Figure 6: Self-reported intelligibility after hearing eastern RTT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n =</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Half</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the western RTT, most respondents from the central area felt they understood all of the story (62%) while the majority of respondents from the east felt they understood most of the story (69%).

Self-reported intelligibility suggests that all varieties understand the eastern and western varieties most of the time.

5.5 Intelligibility Summary

Dialect Mapping facilitations and lexical similarity comparisons show that the western, central and eastern varieties are in fact varieties and not independent languages from one another. RTT scores on both tests (eastern and western) show that many people cannot understand the story, but a few are able to answer correctly and that intelligibility of eastern and western varieties are similar. Despite relatively low RTT scores, self-reported
intelligibility shows that all varieties understand the eastern and western varieties most of the time. This suggests that respondents feel they understand more than test results show.
6 Attitudes

Assessing the language attitudes between people representing these Kochila Tharu varieties is an important aspect of this sociolinguistic research. Understanding how Kochila Tharu people in the various areas view themselves and others provides a guide for how to assist with any future language-based projects. In order to assess attitudes, we used post-RTT questions and various questions on the informal interview.

6.1 Post-RTT Questions

After informants listened to the western and eastern stories, they were asked if they thought the way the speaker spoke Tharu was pure or not. Responses are shown in Figure 7 (HTT results shown in grey).

**Figure 7: Positive responses to if RTT stories contained “pure” Kochila Tharu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>n = 17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>n = 11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For both the eastern RTT when played in the west and the western RTT when played in the east, the majority of respondents felt the Kochila Tharu speech sample was not pure. However, in the central location, the majority of respondents reported that the speech samples were pure Kochila Tharu; 77% of respondents said the western speech sample was pure and 58% reported the eastern speech sample as pure. This suggests that the central variety views both the western and eastern as pure most of the time. It also shows that the central variety views the western variety as more pure than the eastern variety for these speech samples.

After each RTT we also asked, “Is the speech in the story the same, a little different, or very different from the language here?” The majority of respondents identified other varieties as “a little different” from their own. The exception to this were the respondents in the west after listening to the eastern RTT story who reported the variety as “very different” (45%) followed by “a little different” (27%). Very few respondents reported that the speech varieties they heard from other locations was the “same” as their own. The highest average for respondents reporting “same” were central informants after listening to the western
speech sample (38%). This data suggests that speakers from the central variety feel the western variety is more similar than the eastern variety.

The post-RTT data suggests that the eastern and western varieties recognize differences in their way of speaking Kochila Tharu. It also suggests that the central variety may see their variety as more similar to the western variety.

6.2 Contact and Attitudes

Informal interviews were used to inquire about contact and attitudes between the eastern, central, and western varieties. Informants were first asked if they had ever spoken to Kochila Tharu speakers from the other varieties. Figure 8 shows the extent informants reported interacting with speakers of other varieties.

**Figure 8: Reported contact between speakers of various Kochila Tharu varieties**

| Respondents who reported contact with Kochila Tharu speakers from... |  
|---|---|---|
| Bara/Rautahat (western) | 8/29 |   |
| Siraha (central) | 14/31 |   |
| Morang (eastern) | 9/29 |   |

The responses indicated that contact between speakers of the different varieties is low (30/89). Because of low interaction between the different varieties, Figure 8 is not stratified by test location. Of the total 30 respondents who had interacted to some extent with speakers from other varieties, only 6 were female. Those 30 respondents were also asked if their own speech is the same, a little different, or very different from the speakers of the varieties they encountered. Results of this second question are shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Responses regarding degree of difference between varieties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the way people speak who are from ... the same, a little different, or very different from people here?</th>
<th>Bara/Rautahat (western)</th>
<th>Siraha (central)</th>
<th>Morang (eastern)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n =</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little different</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very different</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that no correlation was found between the test site of the respondents and their responses to this question. That is why the demographic of test location is not included in Figure 9.
There are several noteworthy things from Figure 9. The first is that the response “same” is not included in the chart. This is because no respondents reported that the speakers they encountered spoke the same as them. Secondly, the majority of people from the central and eastern areas reported that the western variety is very different from their own. And the majority of the western and central areas reported the eastern variety as a little different. This data is opposite from that found through intelligibility testing and self-reported intelligibility. Lastly, opinions toward the central variety are split between little different and very different.

The last question these 30 informants answered was how the other speakers’ Kochila Tharu made them feel. No respondents reported negative attitudes, suggesting no negative attitudes are held toward any of the varieties.

Overall, little contact was reported between speakers of the different varieties. Of those who have interacted with speakers of other varieties, differences in their speech were reported. The western variety was reported as the most different. Despite differences, no one interviewed expressed negative attitudes toward the other varieties.

6.3 Attitudes Summary

Post-RTT data shows that the eastern and western varieties recognize differences in their way of speaking. Contact appears to be low between the different speakers of varieties of Kochila Tharu. When interaction has occurred between speakers of the different varieties, differences in their way of speaking are reported, however, negative attitudes were not reported. There is conflicting data making it difficult to determine if speakers in the central variety identify more closely with the eastern or western variety of Kochila Tharu.
7 Language Vitality

The language vitality of Kochila Tharu appears to be high. The majority of informal interview respondents (91%) reported that they speak Kochila Tharu best. This, combined with the factors of domains of language use, intergenerational transfer, the extent the language is used for reading and writing, contextual factors, and the communities’ desires for language-based development, suggests high language vitality for these communities and an EGIDS level of 6a: Vigorous. As mentioned in section 1.3, the current EGIDS classification is 5: Developing, meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and has effective educational support in parts of the community.” However, because Kochila Tharu does not have educational support, this report recommends a reclassification to an EGIDS level of 6a: Vigorous, meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.”

7.1 Domains of Language Use

Language use in the domain of the home is one of the most significant factors in language vitality. Children learning and using the mother tongue at home is an indicator of strong language vitality. The use of Kochila Tharu in the home is high among all generations in the communities visited during this research. The majority of respondents (above 92%) reported that they use Kochila Tharu with their grandparents, parents, spouse (if married), and children in their own home. This shows very strong use of the mother tongue in the home domain within all generations.

Within the domain of education, village leaders reported that children speak Kochila Tharu (or their own mother tongue) with other children, while in school. This is in contrast to the language used by the teachers for instruction, which is primarily Nepali. Although Nepali is used for instruction, explanations are sometimes given to the children in Kochila Tharu for easier understanding. In one school we visited in Morang district, we were told that non-Tharu teachers occasionally need assistance from Kochila Tharu speaking teachers to explain things. The ethnic make-up of teachers in all the areas we visited was mixed. While the language of education is Nepali, the fact that children do not speak Nepali before arriving at school suggests high vitality for Kochila Tharu.

Another important domain of language use is village events, such as weddings and meetings. Village leaders in each of the varieties were asked what language is usually used
for these events in their village. Regarding weddings, three of the four leaders said that their village uses Kochila Tharu for weddings. The other said that they use Nepali, Kochila Tharu, and Sanskrit for weddings. When asked about village meetings, these leaders said they usually use Kochila Tharu, although one of the four leaders said they use Nepali and Kochila Tharu equally. This further indicates high vitality in the communities.

Religion is another domain of language use. The majority of individual interview respondents (76%) reported that they use Kochila Tharu for puja (worship) in their own home. Other languages reportedly used for puja were Nepali (13%), Sanskrit (7%), and Hindi (2%).

Overall, the use of Kochila Tharu appears to be high in most domains.

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.

The Kochila Tharu communities of this survey appear to have a high degree of intergenerational transfer from parents to children. Informal interview respondents were asked what language they hear children in the village using with other children. Figure 10 shows the answers to this question stratified by location.

**Figure 10: Reported language use among children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Playing with other Kochila Tharu children?</th>
<th>Playing with children from other castes?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All respondents (45/45) reported that in the village they hear children using Kochila Tharu when playing with other Kochila Tharu children. This shows high intergenerational transfer. When playing with children of other castes, respondents reported varying data. In the western and central locations, the majority of informants reported that they hear children using Kochila Tharu. However, in the east, they reported Kochila Tharu (47%), and Nepali (53%).

Observations in each location confirm the reported frequent use of Kochila Tharu by children.
Intergenerational transfer appears to be high within the communities visited during this fieldwork. Contact with other languages does not appear to effect the ability of children to learn Kochila Tharu.

7.3 Extent of Reading and Writing

As mentioned in Section 7.1, Nepali is the medium of instruction for schools in Kochila Tharu areas. No village leaders that we interviewed have heard of schools using Kochila Tharu textbooks. There are some Kochila Tharu publications, including Holi Pariwar magazine (Morang) and Chirka magazine (Siraha). We also encountered several people during fieldwork that have printed and published poems in Kochila Tharu.

Of the 39 informal interview respondents that can read and write, 21 (54%) reported that they can read and write in Kochila Tharu. Kochila Tharu shares a script with Nepali and Hindi, and therefore it is difficult to determine the extent to which informants are able to read and write in Kochila Tharu versus Nepali or Hindi. This was found to be beyond the scope of this research.

There are some materials available in Kochila Tharu, but the language is not used formally in educational structures or taught on a wide-scale basis.

7.4 Contextual Factors

It is common that people from many different language and ethnic groups live among the Kochila Tharu communities. This was the case in the villages we visited. However, although other castes were present in the communities, based on interviews with village leaders and observations, the vast majority of these communities were primarily Kochila Tharu in ethnic make-up. The location of each village effects the amount of ethnic mixing in the community. For example, the village of Jamtoki in Morang district is located only a few kilometers from the large city of Biratnagar. Approximately half the village is said to be Kochila Tharu and half the village is comprised of other castes. This is a much higher mix of castes than other villages located away from cities.

7.5 Desires for Development

Informal interviews were used to gain a better understanding of the communities' desires for language-based development.

Ninety-one percent of informal interview respondents (42/46) said that they think children in their village should learn to speak Kochila Tharu first. Those respondents were then
asked why Tharu should be spoken first. The most frequent responses included that it is their own language and culture and it is what parents know and villagers use. Other responses included teaching Kochila Tharu because it is easiest, it is tradition, and that Nepali can be taught in schools after the children already know Kochila Tharu. These responses suggest that people in the communities we visited expect their language to continue being spoken and their desire is that children continue to learn Kochila Tharu as their mother tongue.

7.6 Language Vitality Summary

Kochila Tharu appears to be the primary language used for all oral communication in the communities we visited. The only exception to this is educational instruction, which is generally in Nepali. Children are learning Kochila Tharu within these communities. The communities we visited expressed a desire to continue using Kochila Tharu as the first language for children in their villages. There is currently no educational system for teaching how to read and write Kochila Tharu. However, there are some people within the communities that have published written materials. Therefore, an EGIDS level of 6a: Vigorous should be assigned to Kochila Tharu, meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.”
8 Summary of Findings and Implications for Language-based Development

This section will specify how the findings of this research can inform and guide the community as they pursue language-based development.

8.1 Location of Speakers

Three major varieties of Kochila Tharu were identified through this research and have been geographically identified as western, central, and eastern.

8.2 Intelligibility

Based on Dialect Mapping facilitations, lexical similarity comparisons, RTT results, and informal interview responses, we conclude that:

- The Tharu spoken between the districts of Parsa and Jhapa, including Udayapur, are varieties of the same language: Kochila Tharu.
- RTT scores show that intelligibility of the eastern variety is very similar to the intelligibility of the western variety.
- RTT scores suggest many people cannot understand the test stories.
- Participants felt they understood more than results of the RTT showed.

This suggests that the eastern and western variety would be comparably intelligible by the other varieties, making either suitable for language-based development. However, these scores highlight the importance of extensibility testing during language development activities.

8.3 Attitudes

Responses to informal interview questions and post-RTT questions show the following:

- The eastern and western varieties recognize significant differences in their way of speaking Kochila Tharu.
- Data is conflicting as to if the central variety identifies more closely with the western or eastern variety’s way of speaking.
- Contact between the Kochila Tharu areas included in this research is low.
- No respondents expressed negative attitudes toward other varieties of Kochila Tharu.

Even though Kochila Tharu speakers recognize differences in other varieties, no negative attitudes were expressed suggesting that any variety could be acceptable for language-based
development. Conflicting data regarding if the central variety speaks more similarly to the western or the eastern may indicate that dialect differences are not very pronounced.

8.4 Language Vitality

Informal interviews and observation reveal that the mother tongue is the primary language used for oral communication in all the communities visited. Therefore, this research suggests the appropriate EGIDS level for Kochila Tharu is 6a, Vigorous, meaning “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.” There are a variety of activities which are appropriate for a community at an EGIDS level of 6a that desires language-based development. Because vitality was uniformly high across the areas we surveyed, we suggest these activities be done across the entire Kochila Tharu area. Where language-based development is desired, fundamental literacy development would be an appropriate place to begin. The development of a practical orthography combined with development of literacy acquisition materials is recommended.

8.5 Overall Recommendations

As a result of the research in Kochila Tharu communities, we conclude that the Kochila Tharu communities are ready and eager to engage in language-development activities. Based on intelligibility testing and language attitude results, it appears as though the entire Kochila Tharu area could share development materials. It is not readily evident that one geographic area or district would be more advantageous over another for language-based development. The recommendation of this report is that one variety be chosen for language-based development and then tested for extensibility into the other varieties. This is because lexical similarity percentages and intelligibility testing results show that, although materials may be accepted by all varieties, the varieties may be too distinct from one another for combined use in language development. If collaboration between all varieties during language-based development products occurs, it is possible that the speakers of those varieties will not see the product as their own and reject materials.

Although this report recommends products be completed in one variety, participation and communication between all varieties, when possible, is valuable. This is particularly important during product testing and distribution.
८.अनुसन्धानबाट प्रास कुराहरूको सारांश तथा भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि सुभाष्यहरू
यस सखण्डले समुदायलाई उनीहरूले भाषामा आधारित विकासलाई निर्देश दिदा यस अनुसन्धानबाट प्रास कुराले कस्री जानकारी दिन र अगुवाइ गर्न सबै भने कुरा स्पष्ट पाँच ।
८.१ भाषा बोल्नेहरूको स्थान
यस अनुसन्धानबाट तीन मुखिक किसिमको कोचिला थारुका विविधताहरू पश्चिम गरिएका चन्न्र र भौगोलिक रूपमा पश्चिम गरिएका पश्चिमी ( पर्सा, बारा, सैतहट, तर सलाही जिल्लाहरू), मध्य (महावसरी, धनु, सिराहा, उदयपुर र सभापति जिल्लाहरू) र पूर्वी ( सुनसरी र मोरखा जिल्लाहरू ) हुने ।
८.२ विभागम्यता
स्थान विशेषको भाषाको नक्षाङ्क प्रक्रिया, शब्दमूलहरूको तुलना कार्य, कथा बुझ्ने, क्षमता परीक्षण र अनौपचारिक अन्तर्वेताका ज्ञानहरूको आधारमा हामी निम्न निर्देशिकामा पुरुषी:
• उदयपुरमें पर्सा र भाषा जिल्लाहरू बीचमा बोलिने थारु भाषाएको एउटै किसिमको भाषा हो; कोचिला थारू ।
• कथा परीक्षणको प्रासाङ्कुले पूर्वीको किसिमको भाषाको भाषाको पश्चिमको किसिमको भाषाको विविधतमा धेरै समान (उस्ते) देखाउछ ।
• कथाको परीक्षणको प्रासाङ्कुले परीक्षणको कथा धेरै मानिसहरूले बुझ्न सक्दनु भने देखाउछ ।
• सफलीहरूले उनीहरूको कथाको परीक्षणको प्रासाङ्कुले देखाउछएको भन्दा धेरै बुझ्न सक्ने कुरा बिराएका छन् ।
यसबाट यो बुझेको कि पूर्वी र पश्चिमी किसिमहरू तुलनात्मकरुपमा अन्य किसिमकाहरू द्वारा विविधतमा हुन्छ र भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि जुने पनि उपयुक्त हुन्छ । जे होको, यी प्रासाङ्कुले भाषा विकासको क्रियाकलापहरु छैन विनृतता परीक्षणको महत्तमा जोड दिन्छ ।
८.३ मनोवृत्तिहरू
अनौपचारिक अन्तर्वेताका प्रश्नहरू र पछिीको परीक्षण कथाको प्रश्नहरूको जवाबहरूले निम्न कुराहरू देखाउछनु:
• पूर्वीको र पश्चिमको किसिमको कोचिला थारू बोल्ने तरिकाहरूका स्पष्ट भिन्नताहरू भएको मानिन्छ ।
• बीचको किसिमको बोल्ने तरिका, पश्चिमको किसिमको बोल्ने तरिका कि पूर्वीको किसिमको बोल्ने तरिकामा बीचको र पश्चिमको बोलने तरिकासम्म बहिने नजिक छ भने बारे मा तथ्याङ्क स्पष्ट निर्धारित छ ।
• यस अनुसन्धानमा समावेश गरिएका कोचिला थारू क्षेत्रहरू बीचमा सम्पर्क कम छ ।
• कोचिला थारू बोल्नेहरूलाई सोहिएको प्रश्नहरू जवाबमा जुने किसिमको बोली बोलेले पनि अर्को किसिमको बोली बोल्ने बारे नकारात्मक मनोवृत्ति प्रकट गरेनु ।

८ All Nepali translations in this report were translated by Krishna Rana.
यद्यपि कोचिला थारू बोलेहरुले अरु किसिमको बोलीहरूमा भिन्नता थाहा पाउँछन्, भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि कुनै एउटा किसिमको भाषालाई तोकेक त्यस्तही नै किसिमको बोली स्वीकार छन् भनेर अन्य कुनै पनि किसिमको बोली बोरे नकारात्मक मनोवृत्ति प्रकट गरेका छन्। बीचको किसिमको बोली पश्चिमको किसिमकोसित कि पूर्वको किसिमकोसित नै भनेर बारेमा बाबहिएको तथ्याङ्क विशेषको भाषाको भिन्नताले त्यति धेरै महत्त्व रहेदेन भन्ने संकेत दिन सक्छ।

8.4 भाषाको सहजीवता
अनौपचारिक अन्तर्वात अथवा अन्यथा गर्दा सबै भ्रमण गरिएका समुदायहरूमा मौक्षखक संचारका लागि प्रयोग गर्नु प्रबुद्ध भाषा संति उनीहरूको मालूमपाइएको हो भनेर देखिन्छ। अतः यस अनुसारैले कोचिला थारुको उपयुक्त प्रयोग स्तर संकृत छ भनेर देखाउँछ, अर्थात् “यो भाषा सबै पुस्तकाधिकार्यासमय हरूले वाक्याङ्क बोल्नु र बालबाबालीकार्यासमय उनीहरूको पहिलो भाषाको रूपमा सिक्ने आएका छन्।” हामिले सर्वश्रेष्ठ गरेका सम्पूर्ण क्षेत्रको भाषाको सहजीवता एकै उद्देश्यले उद्य भएको हुन्छ, भाषामा आधारित विकास गतितवक्षधहरू सारा कोचिला थारू क्षेत्रको संचार गरिएका भनेर हाम्रो सुभाव छ। भाषामा आधारित विकास अपेक्षा गरिएको ठाउँमा, आधारभूत साक्षरता विकास थुरू गर्न उपयुक्त ठाउँ हुने छ। साक्षरता सिक्ने र व्यावहारिक हिज्रहे सिक्ने सामग्रीहरूको संयुक्त रूपमा विकास गर्न सिफारिश गरिएका छ।

8.5 समग्रमा सिफारिश
कोचिला थारू समुदायहरूमा गरिएको अनुसार र परिणामस्वरूप, हामीले कोचिला थारू समुदायहरूमा भाषा विकास कियाउँछु प्रमाणित छ तथा र इच्छुक छ भन्ने अर्थात् निष्पक्षित निकालेको छो। बोधगम्यता जाँच तथा भाषण निकृतिको परिणाममा आधारित सम्पूर्ण कोचिला थारू क्षेत्रमा एउटा किसिमका विकास सामग्रीहरू प्रयोग गर्न सकिने ठाउँमा देखिन्छ। भाषामा आधारित विकासका लागि कुनै एउटा भौगोलिक क्षेत्र बनेको अंतर्वेदन र बालबाबालीकार्यासमय सहयोग भनेर स्वीकार गरिएको हुन्छ। भाषामा आधारित विकास गतिका रूपमा एउटा स्वीकार गर्न संहिता देखिन्छ। कृतिका थारू क्षेत्रमा संभव छ तकि तौर पर यो देखिन्छ, सबै तकक्षसमको सामग्री भाषामा संचार गर्नु मूल्यवान्छन्। सामग्रीको दृष्टिकोण महत्त्वपूर्ण छ। यदि यस प्रतिवेदनले कुनै एउटा किसिमको बोलीमा पूरा सामग्री तयार पाने सिफारिश गरिएको हुन्छ, सम्भव भएको छ। सबै किसिमकाले सामग्री सहभागितात संचार गर्नु मूल्यवान्छन्। सामग्रीको दृष्टिकोण महत्त्वपूर्ण छ।
References


Webster, Jeff. 1993. A Sociolinguistic Profile of the Tharu Dialects of the Western Indo-Nepal Tarai. Ms.