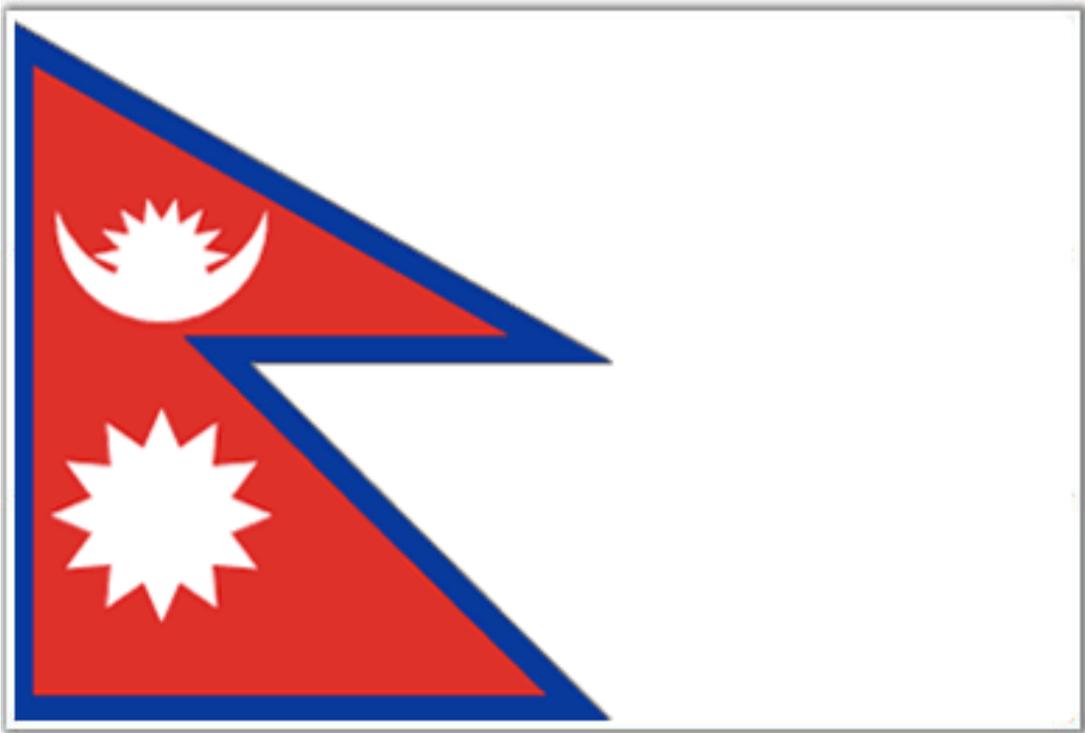


NEPALI MANUAL: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE



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Map



Linguistic Community

Nepali, a member of the Indo-Aryan group of languages, is the national language (*rā ra bhā ā*) of Nepal, the state language of Sikkim, and the sole language of most ethnic Nepali communities in Bhutan and northeast India. It was previously known as Khas Kurā (the speech of the Khas) or Gorkhālī. Nepali probably has about 17 000 000 mother tongue speakers, and is a vital second language for approximately 7 000 000 speakers of other Nepalese languages, many of which are Tibeto-Burman.

Nepali was introduced into the central Himalaya by immigrants who entered from the northwest before the 10th century. Its ascendancy over the other languages of the region is linked to a process of political domination and cultural assimilation. Written in the Devanāgarī script, its earliest records are 13th-century royal inscriptions from far western Nepal, though Nepali was rarely used for literary purposes until the 18th century, and its first major work, the *Nepālī Rāmāyaṇa* of Bhanubhakta Acharya, was written in the mid-19th century.

Among the other major Indo-Aryan languages, Hindi is Nepali's closest cousin, and many literate Nepali speakers are proficient in Hindi. However, in its everyday vocabulary Nepali preserves many Sanskrit and Sanskrit-derived words (e.g., *ghām* 'sun', *khukurā* 'chicken', *ritto* 'empty') that have been displaced by Perso-Arabic loans in Hindi, and the Arabic and Perso-Arabic element of its lexicon is largely confined to law, war and weaponry, and governance and monarchy. Similarly, English loans are generally less common in Nepali than in Hindi, partly because Nepal was never colonized by the British.

This information was provided by: [Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics \(Second Edition\)](#)
Pages 595-596

Social Aspects

Languages

Nepal is considered a multilinguistic country. Their diverse heritage evolved from four major language groups: Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Mongolian, and various indigenous languages. According to the 2001 census, there are 92 different living languages spoken in Nepal. The major languages of Nepal include Nepali (69%), Maithili (7%), Bhojpuri (5%), Tharu (3%), Tamang (2%), Gurung (1.5%), Newari/Nepal Bhasa (1%), Magar (1%), Awadhi (1%), Rai (1%), Limbu (1%) and Bajjika (1%).

Nepali is the national language of Nepal and is considered to be its mother tongue. However the number of speakers has fallen from a high of 58.4% (in a population of 15 million) in 1981 to 48.6% (in a population of 23 million) in 2001.

Nepali was brought into the region from the far west by Khas and Rajput immigrants sometime before the 10th century. It is therefore strongest in the western hill regions: in some districts, it is the only language spoken. Since its introduction, the Nepali language and its speakers have moved steadily eastwards, and Nepali is now firmly established as the lingua franca throughout the hills and mountains. The strong relationship between ethnic identity and language, and heightened ethnic awareness in Nepal during the 1990s, have influenced 2001 census returns, but levels of bilingualism with Nepali continue to grow nonetheless.

*Information provided by: [Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics \(Second Edition\)](#)
Pages 594-595

Notable Americans of Nepali Origin

- [Kiran Chetry](#), news anchor, CNN.
- [Karishma Manandhar](#), Film Actress.
- [Samrat Upadhyay](#), Author.
- [Tara Devi Black](#), Dancer.
- [Prabal Gurung](#), Fashion Designer

*Information provided by:Wikipedia.com

National Holidays

- National Day: Republic Day, Jestha 15 (May 28)
- Democracy Day, Falgun 7 (mid-February)

*Information provided by: www.state.gov

Nepali Cuisine

- Contains spices and flavorings such as ginger, garlic, coriander, pepper, cumin, chilies, cilantro, mustard oil, ghee and occasionally yak butter.
- Dal Bhat (pulses and rice) is the staple food of Nepalese, it is eaten twice a day.



- Nepal Homepage: <http://www.nepalhomepage.com/society/recipes/recipes.html>
- Nepal Recipes: <http://www.food-nepal.com/support/recipeIndex/>

Restaurants

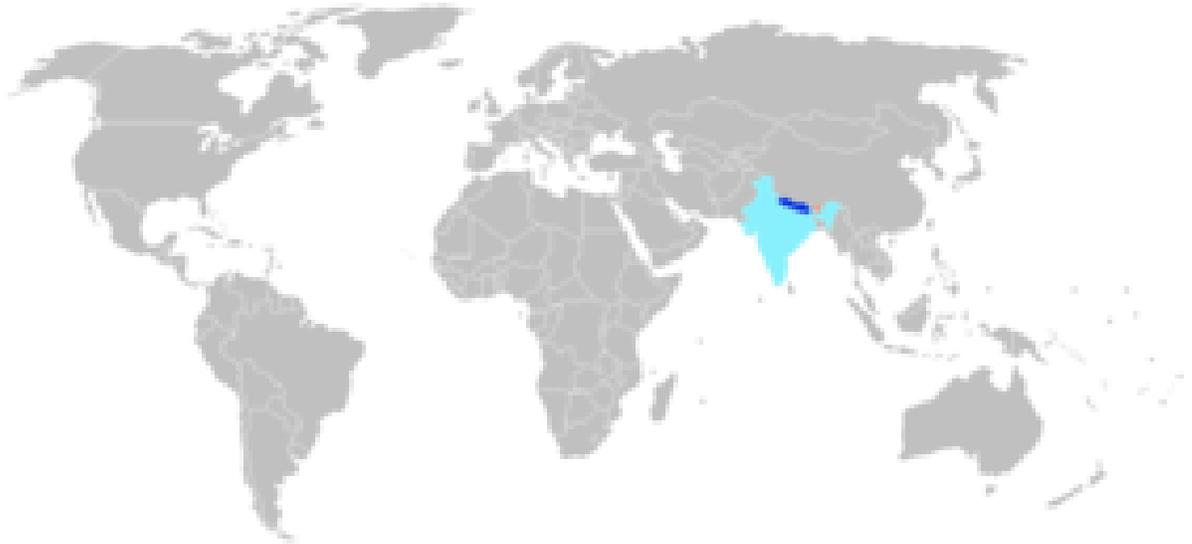
- Indian Spicy Kitchen
500 Canyon Ridge Dr
Ste L-275
Austin, TX 78753
(512) 828-6909
indianspicykitchen.net
- Kala's Kuisine
12117 Pecan St
Austin, TX 78727
(512) 257-9900
www.kalaskuisine.com/

Grocery Stores

- Gandhi Bazar (Northwest Austin)
Indian Supermarket
12809 N FM 620 #3
Austin, TX 78750
(512) 249-7600
Open Daily 11am – 9pm
- Gandhi Bazar (North Austin)
Indian Supermarket
2121 W Parmer Lane #113
Austin, TX 78727
(512) 837-9701
Open Daily 11am – 9pm

Geographical Distribution of the Language

The geographical distribution of the Nepali language includes Nepal, Sikkim, and most ethnic Nepali communities in Bhutan and northeast India.



Dark Blue: Main official language, Light blue: One of the official languages, Red: Places with significant population or greater than 20% but without official recognition.

*The previous information was found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepali_language.

Demographics of Nepal

Nepal is officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. It is located in the Himalayas in South Asia and is bordered to the north by the People’s Republic of China and to the south, east, and west by the Republic of India. The population is about 30 million people. Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal and the country’s largest metropolis. According to Nepal’s 2001 census, there are 102 castes and ethnic groups.

The following table displays the regions with the most populations of Nepalis:

Regions with significant populations	
 Nepal	29,519,114
 India	4,100,000
 Myanmar	400,000
 Saudi Arabia	350,000
 Malaysia	300,000
 USA	110,616
 Japan	100,000
 Qatar	100,000
 UAE	50,000
 United Kingdom	50,000
 China	20,348
 Hong Kong	15,950
 Bhutan	11,000
 South Korea	10,000
 Australia	7,000
 Canada	3,780
 Pakistan	1,000 ^[1]

Religion

Religion is a very important part of Nepali culture. Nepal is considered a secular state with the majority of the population practicing Hinduism. The other religions practiced include Buddhist, Muslim, and Christianity. Buddhist and Hindu shrines and festivals are respected and celebrated by most Nepali. Also, certain animist practices of old indigenous religions survive.

Politics

Nepal was a monarchy for most of its history. It was ruled by the Shah dynasty from 1768. In 2005, a decade-long Civil War by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and several weeks of mass protests by all major political parties led to the 12 point agreement on November 22. Elections for the constituent assembly took place on May 28, 2008 and the results favored the abdication of the Nepali monarch Gyanendra Shah and the establishment of a federal multiparty representative democratic republic. The first President of Nepal, Ram Baran Yadav, was sworn in on July 23, 2008.

*The previous information was obtained from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_nepal.

Population in the USA

The current population of Nepali in the USA, 110,616, is displayed in a previous table. This is the 6th largest region in terms of Nepali population. The first five are Nepal, India, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia. The poor political and economic conditions caused by the Nepalese Civil War from 1996 and 2006 caused an increase of emigration from Nepal. Significant communities of Nepali in the USA include New York City, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Gainesville, Florida, Portland, Oregon, Houston, Philadelphia, and St. Paul and areas of California.

*The above information was provided by http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_American.

Linguistic Features

Pragmatics

- Nepali is traditionally a gender specific language but more recently women have been leading men, and the younger generation has been leading the older generation to a more gender-neutral language.
- While greeting Nepali speakers do not generally touch. In place they use a palms together position and slightly bow to one another.

Dos and Don'ts

Do...

- Use two hands rather than one when giving or receiving something, even money. This shows appreciation and respect.
- Remove your shoes when entering a home, temple or monastery (and leather items in Hindu temples)
- Avoid smoking and wearing scant dress in religious settings.
- Remember that some people from Nepal might prefer the term “Nepalis” to identify themselves versus the term “Nepalese” as they believe it is an Anglicized term.

Don't...

- Do not offer food from your plate, nor eat from a common pot, and avoid touching your lips to a shared drinking vessel.
- Do not point with a single finger. Use a flat extended hand especially to indicate a sacred object or place.
- Among Hindus, avoid touching women and holy men the traditional palms-together “Namaste” greeting is preferable.
- Don't eat with your left hand.
- Don't eat beef among Hindus.
- Try not to step over or point your feet at another person, a sacred place or a hearth.

*Information provided by: www.visitnepal.com

Phonology

Table 1: Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e	a	o
Low		aa	

Table 2: Consonants

		Labial	Dental	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	Voiceless	p, ph	t, th	T, Th	c, ch	k, kh	
	Voiced	b, bh	d, dh	D, Dh	j, jh	g, gh	
Fricatives			s				h
Nasals		m	n				
Resonants			r, l	R, Rh			
Glides		w			y		

- There are three major dialects: eastern, central, and western.
- Nepali speakers can hardly make any difference between the sound /s/ and /sh/, /g/, /jure/, and /f/.
- No difference between “swah” and /ʌ/.
- Nepali lacks the H. phonemic distinction of /s/ /v/ from /s/ /b/.

*Information provided by: Facts about World Languages & Wikipedia.com

Morphology

- All nouns are masculine and feminine
- Articles are not present in their language
- The English suffix “less” is often used with Nepali words.
- Unlike Hindi, Nepali distinguishes between existential (*chanu*) and definitive (*hunu*) functions of the verb ‘to be’, e.g., *pānī ho?* ‘is this water?’, *pānī cha?* ‘is there [any] water?’
- Like Bengali, it uses numeral classifiers, e.g., *tīnjanā mānche* ‘three [-person] men’, *tīnva ā mec* ‘three [-object] chairs’ and accords feminine gender only to female human nouns. It forms most plural nouns through the affixation of *harū*; and generally forms negative verbs by the adaptation of verb endings, e.g., *ma jānchu* ‘I go’, *ma j dina* ‘I do not go’.
- Four honorific grades plus a royal honorific are available for personal pronouns. Clauses are commonly linked by the use of infinitives and participles and seldom by conjunctions: thus, *H. vah ādmī jo kal āyā* ‘the man who came yesterday’ is *Ne. hijo āeko mānche* ‘the yesterday having-come man’.

Table 3: Compound Tenses

Imperfective-Progressive	Present	gar-dai cha	'is doing'
Imperfective-Progressive	Past	gar-dai thiyo	'was doing'
Imperfective-Progressive	Future	gar-dai hunecha	'will be doing'
Imperfective-Progressive	Presumptive	gar-dai holaa	'may be doing'
Perfective-Stative	Present	gar-eko cha	'has done'
Perfective-Stative	Past	gar-eko thiyo	'had done'
Perfective-Stative	Future	gar-eko hunecha	'will have done'
Perfective-Stative	Presumptive	gar-eko holaa	'may have done'
Infinitival-Factitive	Present	gar-ne cha	(Predictive Future)
Infinitival-Factitive	Past	gar-ne thiyo	(Counterfactual)

*Information provided by: Facts about World Languages

*This information was provided by: [Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics \(Second Edition\)](#)

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Syntax

- The unmarked word order is SOV.
- Many words are influenced by Sanskrit, Arabic and Hindi.

Common Words

man:	maanche	long:	laamo
woman:	aaimaaii	small:	saano
water:	paanii	yes:	ho/cha
sun:	ghaam	no:	hoina/chaina
three:	tiin	good:	raamro
fish:	maachaa	dog:	kukur
big:	Thuulo	tree:	rukhh

*Information provided by: Facts about World Languages

- Nepal's influence on English
- Karma
- Avatar
- Bazaar

*Information provided by Youtube.com; Nepali Language Group Interview: Written and Spoken Aspects of the Language <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kvy5vPPEuo>

Errors and Reasons (Linguistic Transfer)

Some generalizations of linguistic errors that Nepali speakers might make when speaking English include vowels, consonants, and syllable structure. Some error of vowels we may see are: final obstruent devoicing, interdental fricative to stop, alveopalatal to alveolar, and non aspiration. Consonants include: vowel shortening, vowel raising, vowel backing, vowel fronting, and vowel lowering. They may not make a distinctio between the sound /s/ and /sh/, /g/, /jure/,and /f/. Nepali speakers may interchange “swah” and /^. They also lack the H. phonemic distinction of /ś/ /v/ from /s/ /b/. Syllable structure errors we may see are liquid deletion. Another error, in the area of syntax, is that articles may not be present because these do not exist in Nepali. The word order of sentences may also be influenced by the Nepali order of SOV.

*The previous information was found at

http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=find&language=nepali.

Videos

Nepal and nepali culture

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfpuMc9HuWw>

Learn Nepali Language. Epi 1 (Basic Sentences)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0qgHfqu3oA>

Nepali Language Group Interview: Written and Spoken Aspects of the Language

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kvy5vPPEuo>

Speech therapy for Sagar and Jasmine

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inFqI0J6QtY>

Audio Recordings

Speech accent archive

http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=find&language=nepali

Tests

There is little information regarding standardized tests and assessments in Nepali. There was a Master's student, Bhavani Pradhan, at the All Indian Institute of Speech and Hearing who completed their thesis on a *Deep Test of Articulation In Nepali Picture Form*. This can be found here: <http://aiishdigilib.in:8080/digitallibrary/HomeGuideTitle.do?jGuide=Savithri,%20SR>. You can also contact the Indian Speech and Hearing Association - <http://ishaindia.org.in/index.htm>.

SLP's

Speech language pathologists that practice in the language of Nepali were not available from the ASHA web-site. The following are providers that specialize in "Other Language" in Texas and may prove helpful.

Chakraborti, Suparna M.A.

2804 Humming Bird Circle
Cedar Park, TX 78613

[Map of this location.](#)

512-258-0872

Email:

SuparnaChakraborti4@hotmail.com

Director:

Facility Type: School

Payment Type:

Referral Restrictions:

Healthsouth

3033 West Parker Road
Plano, TX 75023

[Map of this location.](#)

972-769-8940

Email:

Director:

Facility Type: Rehabilitation Hospital

Payment Type: Medicare, Medicaid, Health Insurance, Credit Card, Reduced

Referral Restrictions:

Kumar, Mithilesh Au.D., CCC-

5438 LINDEN ROSE LANE

SUGAR LAND, TX 77479

[Map of this location.](#)

832-758-6272

Email: kmithilesh@yahoo.com

Facility Type: Audiology/hearing clinic

Payment Type:

Referral Restrictions:

Resources

➤ **Preparing instruments for transcultural research: use of the translation monitoring form with Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees**

Preparing instruments for transcultural research is a difficult task. Researchers typically do not publish their attempts to create equivalent translation. The quality of the translation depends mostly on the translators' ability to be consistent in identifying and correcting incomprehensible, unacceptable, incomplete and irrelevant translated items. This paper presents a translation monitoring form to enhance the methodical preparation of instruments for transcultural use. Use of the form requires the systematic use of strategies advocated by previous translation and adaptation researchers. A detailed example of use of the translation monitoring form with Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees illustrates the usefulness of the form as well as the difficulties of creating equivalent translation.

van Ommeren, M., Sharma, B., Thapa, S., Makaju, R., & Prasain, D. (1999). Preparing

instruments for transcultural research: use of the translation monitoring form with nepali-speaking bhutanese refugees. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 36(3), 285-301.

➤ [Nepali Language Resource Center](#)

This site gives a little bit of information on a spell-check tool for Nepali, how to type in Nepali using a computer, and some resources for children. This can be especially useful if we have a client who wishes to keep in touch with family back home via E-mail.

➤ Cornell University - <http://www.lrc.cornell.edu/asian/courses/nepali?d=basic>

This university offers a number of courses to learn Nepali. If an SLP wanted to study this language and then go work in Nepali, these courses would be beneficial to learn the language and structure. It is not the same as a Nepali course focusing on communication disorders, but it is a start.

➤ [Nepalese Youth Association Austin](#)

The commencement of NYAA began in 2009 as a small group of members with towering community spirit. The committee was given the vital task of building and strengthening community bonds among the Nepali and their friends living in Austin areas. The committee immediately initiated its imperative task by building strong connections through active and collective participation among the Nepali community members.

➤ [National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences](#)

This link takes you to the National Institute of Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). It is located in India and has a department focusing on Speech and Language Pathology. They might be a good resource in locating SLP's in India who do speak Nepali.

➤ [Indian Speech and Hearing Association](#)

This previous link takes you to the Indian Speech and Hearing Association (ISHA) home page. The Indian Speech and Hearing Association is the professional and scientific association for more 1500 members who are speech-language pathologists, audiologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists in India and internationally

- Ethnologue - http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=nep
This link takes you to the Nepali report from the Ethnologue Languages of the World – 16th Edition. It provides some information on the history of the language and where it is spoken.
- **The sociolinguistic variation of grammatical gender agreement in Nepali**
This study argues that Nepali speakers' language behavior as evident in the variable use of G-Agr rule is the sociolinguistic reflection of the variability in their adoption of the progressive perception of women and their social standing in Nepali society. The study finds female speakers leading male speakers and young speakers leading adult speakers in dropping the G-Agr rule and thus in the use of nonstandard language in conversational interaction. Their lead in the use of nonstandard language forms is meaningful within the changing socio-cultural context of Nepali society. The study indicates that the G-Agr rule may have lost its obligatory status and that Nepali may be moving towards becoming a gender-neutral language.

Upadhyay, S. R. (2009). The sociolinguistic variation of grammatical gender agreement in nepali. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 41(3), 564-585. doi:DOI: 10.1016/j.pragma.2008.06.006

- **Nepali requestive acts: Linguistic indirectness and politeness reconsidered**

The findings reported in this article show two important facts about language use in Nepali. First, language-specific linguistic means are employed in the communication of the social meaning of politeness in Nepali. Second, the selection of directives is motivated by those socio-cultural factors that are uniquely relevant to Nepali society. Accordingly, a significant conclusion derived from this study is that politeness does not have to be a function of linguistic indirectness and that the putative link between linguistic indirectness and politeness remains inconclusive.

Upadhyay, S. R. (2003). Nepali requestive acts: Linguistic indirectness and politeness reconsidered. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(10-11), 1651-1677. doi:DOI: 10.1016/S0378-2166(03)00076-6

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