

Genderlect

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SUMMARY:

The use of language among the Dura people in Nepal highlights differences in language between males and females.

Research suggests women used a different language from that used by their male counterparts and the endangered West Himalayish Tibeto-Burman language has survived in the oral tradition of the many Gurung, but few Dura women.

However, many linguists consider it to be extinct. Research highlighted the reasons for many integrating as the Gurung; Gurung–Dura; Dura-Gurung; Rai; and Thapa.

Many of the latter changed their names as they were recruited into the British, Indian and Nepal armies. Another reason cited was a desire to climb the social order.

A recent theory suggests that the Dura, realizing their identity after their inclusion in a 2001 population census as a distinct ethnic group and having own mother tongue, moved over to use the Nepali language.

Analysis of genderlect, including lexical, syntactic, morphological and phonological differences, shows how these function towards the expression of gender roles. In Hindu societies and communities that traditionally use the Nepali language, women's speech has been associated with cooperation and politeness whereas men's speech can be described as aggressive and dominant. Nepali language has first level honorific, second level honorific, third level (low) honorific, third level (mid) honorific, and third level (high) honorific. However, this presentation indicated that the Dura society was matriarchal and the Duras had recently declared that they have decided to register their property in the name of their females in particularly wives. Not only that, they have proposed to make a Dura colony in Kathmandu to preserve and promote language and culture. Gender differences and discrimination are not overt in this language. Watching the conversation of the males and females, the presenter has observed that there are patterns in which link the speakers of like gender across ages. At every level, women oriented to each other with the alignment of their bodies and gaze far more directly than did men. However, it was also noted that the new generation has shifted to the Nepali languages and no more speaks the language their ancestors speak in the domain of households. Regardless, the suggestion remains that complexities based on morphological and syntactical features, in addition to generational and contextual features could shed light on gender roles within ethnolinguistic communities.