

Phonological Parameters in Nepali Sign Language

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Central Department of Linguistics,
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Master's Degree in Linguistics**

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Ms. Sharada Sapkota has completed this dissertation on the topic **Phonological Parameters in Nepali Sign Language** under my guidance and supervision. I recommend this dissertation for evaluation.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that **Phonological Parameters in Nepali Sign Language**, a dissertation submitted by Ms. Sharada Sapkota in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Linguistics has been duly approved for acceptance.

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ABSTRACT

This research presents the phonological parameters of Nepali sign language (NSL), such as, handshapes, place of articulations, orientations, movements, and non-manual characteristics. Based on A Prosodic Model of Sign Language Phonology (Brentari 1998), this study organized features of NSL into two types namely, inherent features, and prosodic features. The inherent features remain unchanged whereas the prosodic features can change constantly during sign production. In this study, both primary and secondary sources have been used for data collection. For primary source, the researcher recorded the conversation of NSL native signers, whereas the available dictionaries, texts, videos, and research papers on NSL have been used as the secondary sources. The HamNoSys i.e. Hamburg Notation System has been used in this study in order to transcribe sign data. The present study discovered 62 different handshapes in NSL among which 44 are from manual alphabet. Additionally, 22 handshapes detected as basic handshapes. NSL signs are articulated from the four major regions of the body such as, head, arm, body, and hand. However, there are signs in NSL that are articulated from over the head, behind the ear, and below the waist. Furthermore, based on palms or knuckles facing directions, there are six hand orientations found in NSL such as, upward, downward, leftward, rightward, forward, and backward. All these six orientations are found in NSL for palms and only five are found for knuckles. Besides, this study identified 35 hand movements in NSL. Likewise, non- manual features in NSL have been divided into seven categories.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Articulator Sign Language
adj	Adjacent
ASL	American Sign Language
b	Bent
c	Compact
d	Distant
H ₁	Active Hand
H ₂	Passive Hand
HS	Handshape
IF	Inherent Features
Mov	Movement
NM	Non-manuals
NSL	Nepali Sign Language
O	Orientation
PF	Prosodic Features
POA	Place of Articulation
s	Small
SL	Sign Language
th	Thumb
x	Extended

[Note: Abbreviations in small case have been adopted from Sinha (2012) and Wilber et al. (2006) in order to label the distinct handshapes of NSL.]