

Welcome to a New Platform for Productive Discourse: A Call To Action

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Abstract: This editorial review introduces the inaugural issue of the Journal of Productive Discourse (ProD), which aims at fostering critical reading and research across disciplines. It starts with a background to the journal, highlights the themes as they emerge in the issue, summarises the articles, suggests their potential readers, and concludes with a call to action in support of the new initiative at productive discourse. Acknowledging the individuals and institutions involved in bringing the journal from its conception to fruition, the review ends with a call on researchers and practitioners to cross over disciplinary boundaries and create an international platform for intellectual exchange that can lead to positive change in the society.

Keywords: Productive, Discourse, Critical, Reading, Interdisciplinary, Collaboration, Communication, Change



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1. INTRODUCTION

A visiting faculty, invited at the start of 2023 to join the college publication team, I now beam with delight to bring this inaugural issue of the Journal of Productive Discourse (ProD) before you. I met the publication team in the first week of January. It formed panels of advisors, reviewers and editors to work on the journal. A subsequent meeting, of the advisors and editors, gave the journal its name, Editor-in-Chief, and Managing Editor, formalised with rounds of handclapping. The Editorial Board then developed guidelines, registered the journal and issued a call for articles to be published on the 3rd of the Nepali month of Jestha, coinciding with an important day on the college calendar, the Madan-Ashrit Memorial Day (Nepal Press, 2021). All teams got down to their tasks, spreading words and inviting potential contributors to consider original submissions.

The brand new journal began to receive articles from researchers and practitioners of repute, coming from several disciplines and countries, with their thoughtful research and analysis on a range of themes that, we believe, can lead to useful outcomes. To meet the deadline of a few months away, we sent

most of the articles received for editorial consideration and peer review. This issue features ten of the peer-reviewed articles. Their themes range from linguistic analysis to more practical and business-oriented topics.

The first few articles focus on the impact of language and cultural heritage on education and discrimination. Then the articles progress to discussing the impact of colonial language architecture. Practical topics of dispute negotiation and resolution, construction contracts, human capital management, and active listening follow. As a topping for the inaugural issue, the last article focuses on technology management, with insights from UK-based practitioners to deliver change and enhance business operations.

Overall, the first edition aligns with the journal's goals (MBMC, 2023) to foster critical reading, research and discourse (Vasquez, Janks, & Comber, 2019) and facilitate collaboration, communication, and innovation across domains.

In a world facing complex and interconnected global challenges (Govt, 2023), the need for productive discourse, that is, using language beyond

and above the word to get things done in the world (Shiffrin, 2013), has never been greater. However, in several instances, the ongoing discussions have led to a persistent lack of progress on the most pressing problems of the day, such as the economy of Nepal (Ghimire, 2016). The journal aims to address this gap. In favour of a competitive system of economy and discourse, it seeks to enable people to express their views freely, provide constructive criticism and develop productive forces, without any polarisation and exploitation in the society (Bhandari M. , 2021). A peer-reviewed journal, ProD publishes original research articles, reviews and perspectives that advance our understanding of scholarship and practice across disciplines (Norris & Jones, 2005) and improve human conditions. Submissions are welcome from liberal arts, science and management.

2. INAUGURAL THEMES

Articles in this issue explore language, communication, and business practices, seeking to build bridges for collaboration, innovation, and effective problem-solving. However, communication barriers, cultural differences, and conflicts often challenge productive conversations.

The first set of articles (#1-4), numbered and cited from this journal for ease of thematic organisation here, focuses on linguistics and language use. For example, Article #1, (Singh, 2023) examines the ergative case marking of Nepali language. Article #2 (Devi, 2023) analyses the cultural significance of colour terms in the Manipuri language. Article #3 (Chaurasiya, 2023) delves into the phonological analysis of the Chhatthare Limbu language. Article #4 (Pattanayak, 2023) discusses the use of mother languages in education, particularly for local communities in the multilingual state of Jharkhand, India.

Subsequent articles focus on the impact of colonial language architecture and discrimination (Article #5), followed by practical topics of dispute negotiation and resolution, construction contracts, and human capital management (Articles #6-8). Article #5 (Pulami, 2023) provides a postcolonial perspective on the geography of Nepal and the effects of colonial and imperial domination. Article #6 (Sauden, 2023) looks at the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques for road projects in Nepal, while Article #7 (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2023) focuses on price fluctuations and adjustment practices in the construction industry. Article #8 (Gautam, 2023) discusses the importance

of human resource management in the rapidly changing business world, using examples from Nepal's pharmacy sector. Article #9 (Bhandari S. , 2023) calls for a practice of active listening as a response to survivors of the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSVs) in Nepal's armed conflict.

Finally, Article #10 (Blair & Pagano, 2023) focuses on the management of technological change, emphasising the significance of staying up-to-date with new techniques and technologies to enhance business operations.

Linguistic features, language use, and mother language in education (Articles #1-3) are essential bridges for productive discourse. Articles #4-6 offer insights on how language architecture and discrimination impact discourse. Practical topics (Articles #7-9) are critical for building efficient business practices. Article #10 is useful on technology management in the post-pandemic context.

Overall, by exploring language, communication, and business practice, we hope, the journal can lead to new ideas and solutions to benefit the society as a whole.

3. SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

For your quick viewing, a stripped-down summary of each of the articles is given below:

Article #1, on Nepali language, discusses ergative case marking, theta position, and aspect heads, with themes such as individual-level readings.

Article #2, on Meiteilon language and its cultural significance, explores local and English languages, through colour terms.

Article #3, on Chhatthare Limbu language's phonological analysis, using Optimality Theory, focuses on laryngeal, voicing and aspiration contrasts as well as markedness and faithfulness constraints.

Article #4, on Jharkhand education, discusses indigenous communities and mother languages, high dropout rates, and the M-TALL Akhra research centre's culture-sensitive responses to address the problem.

Article #5, a postcolonial studies article on Nepal and its history, focuses on British East India Company's domination, colonial discourse, Eurocentric geographical architecture, and state identity.

Article #6, on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), discusses its application to road projects in Nepal, using negotiation, conciliation, mediation,

and adjudication to mitigate disputes and ensure zero-dispute projects.

Article #7, on RCC T-beam and pre-stressed bridge construction contracts, discusses price fluctuations, price adjustments, compensation provisions, constructability, and time, cost, and quality parameters.

Article #8, on human resource (HR) practices in Nepal's pharmacy sector, discusses optimal procedures, strategic plans, customer service, and the socioeconomic and political-legal status of the industry and its HR management practices.

Article #9, on the theory of listening and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSVs) in Nepal's armed conflict, discusses survivors, interim relief, access to work, education, and good health, participation, engagement, psychosocial support, and stigmatisation.

Article #10, for the types of technological change and techniques used by UK-based practitioners, discusses requirements, framework, practice, and academic perspectives.

4. WHO SHOULD READ THE ARTICLES?

In this section, we offer our recommendations for who could find something relevant for them in the journal.

Language lovers and linguists: Articles on Nepali, Meiteilon, and Chhatthare Limbu, as well as those that focus on the importance of mother languages in education.

Educators and policymakers: Articles that discuss the challenges facing indigenous communities in multilingual states like Jharkhand, and efforts to improve education through bilingual picture dictionaries, culture-sensitive textbooks, and foundational literacy and numeracy roadmaps.

Postcolonial studies enthusiasts and activists: Articles that delve into the impact of colonial language architecture and discrimination on the state identity of countries like Nepal.

Legal or engineering contract professionals and policymakers: Articles that discuss practical strategies and techniques for negotiating and resolving disputes, including Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and the RCC T-beam and pre-stressed bridge construction contracts.

Business professionals and entrepreneurs: Articles that focus on human capital management practices, including customer service, optimal

procedures, strategic plans, and the socio-economic and political-legal status of Nepal's pharmacy sector.

Technologists and managers: The article on managing technological change in the UK.

Of course, anyone interested in linguistics, education, postcolonial studies, dispute resolution, human capital management, or technological change management will find valuable insights and perspectives in these research articles.

5. CALL TO ACTION

The inaugural issue offers a collection of articles that can lead to productive conversations across domains. We understand the journal can be better with your support and more of our effort, time and resource. Therefore, while pledging to improve future issues in line with the journal's aims, we invite you, the researchers, educators, students and professionals, to consider submitting your original works of research, critical readings, reviews and perspectives to us as and when you can. Together, we can turn this journal into a vibrant platform for discussions that cross over disciplinary boundaries, yield insights and lead to positive action and change in the society through collaboration, communication and innovation.

If the inaugural issue has piqued your interest, we also ask you to explore the topics covered in it, looking for connections and overlaps between different disciplinary perspectives. For example, Article #4 on mother language in education for indigenous communities in Jharkhand, is a topic that can benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that brings together education, linguistics, and anthropology. Upon collaboration, researchers from these fields can design and implement programmes exploring cultural and social factors that impact educational outcomes.

Similarly, Article #5 focuses on the impact of colonial and imperial domination on geography, which can benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that brings together history, geography, and postcolonial studies. Scholars from these fields can explore the ways in which colonialism has shaped geographic knowledge.

Article #9 also presents an opportunity for interdisciplinary investigation, as it focuses on the theory of listening and the psychosocial support needed for survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSVs) during Nepal's armed conflict. Scholars from psychology, sociology, and conflict resolution can design programmes that promote

listening and responsiveness to the needs of CRSV survivors.

By looking for connections and overlaps, interdisciplinary investigations on topics covered in the articles, or other topics related with pressing needs of the society, for that matter, can potentially yield more comprehensive and nuanced understandings of the issues at hand for addressing them.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This inaugural issue of the journal would not be with you today without the support of some institutions and individuals. Drawing strength from the work of the Editorial Board, in my current role as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, I wish to extend my gratitude to the College Management Committee (CMC) of Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC) for inviting me to conceptualise and launch this journal. Journal advisors, Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Chair, MBMC and Madan Bhandari Foundation, and Ramesh Chandra Paudel, Campus Chief, MBMC, deserve the first mention for their support to the full editorial team. Campus Chief Paudel gave us a go-ahead while nudging us all along to make our best efforts and look at things from the publisher's point of view as well. Dr. Kundan Aryal, a CMC member, had reached out to me for giving a push to his initiative at MBMC in publishing a flagship international journal. He then coordinated efforts to build the journal teams and also agreed, on our request, to sit on the Review Board, a channel within the journal for us to access wider rosters of peer reviewers and subject experts. Without his insistence on getting started right away and focusing on the deadline, this inaugural issue would not be with you so soon. On behalf of the editorial team, I thank him for his lead role in the CMC initiative, which brought professors from different departments of the college and Tribhuvan University together on this project. Gathered in the Mechi hall of the college for the first meeting, they all deserve special thanks for setting the tone and direction for this journal. We are grateful to our Review Board, through which Dr. Dhruva Karki, for example, actively helped us, the editors, to get in touch with authors and expert reviewers in seeking their support and contribution.

I cannot praise the Editorial Board, comprising scholars Dr. Bhim Lal Gautam, Dr. Raghu Mainali, Sujit Mainali, and Dr. Pramod Raj Upadhyay enough. They oversaw editorial policy and practices, reviewed manuscripts, and took part in meetings,

when asked, providing support to maintain the highest standards of research conduct and reporting, in terms of language, content and ethics of the journal. Dr. Gautam was instrumental in exploring resources and articles, without which the inaugural issue would be far poorer. I single out Managing Editor Dr. A.K. Mishra for a special note of appreciation – he maintained his cool, even as we scrambled for clarity in the early days and weeks of embarking on this journey. We needed guidelines on journal aims, scope and ethics, for example, as well as clarity on our own individual roles and tasks. With his research background and experience, Dr. Mishra knew what was important to do, when and how, while putting this journal together. Implementing the steps in starting an international peer-reviewed journal in a community college, setting up its website, developing guidelines, making a call for submission or inviting authors to send articles, securing journal registration and article reviews was no easy task.

Together, the journal advisors, reviewers and editors are grateful to the authors, who contributed their research articles, case studies and theoretical perspectives, for consideration in this issue. Although we would not be able to include every submission, the articles included in this issue and about the same number of articles left out this time, gave us confidence to develop the journal as a forum for exchange of ideas, opening avenues for more of cross disciplinary research to understand and solve today's problems in different domains.

Finally, the journal teams acknowledge the support of the college administration, publication committee, teachers and students to this new initiative. Kamal Neupane, R.K. Singh, P.B Jha, Sarita Agrawal, Ganga Maharjan, Mohan Saud and Poshan Niraula of MBMC, for example, set aside time despite their busy schedule to help us.

The inaugural issue is just the beginning of what promises to be a valuable and long-lasting contribution to academic discourse. We look forward to receiving original submissions from scholars around the world for its future issues.

7. CONCLUSION

The editorial review has introduced the Journal of Productive Discourse (ProD) and highlighted the importance of critical reading, research and communication that cross disciplinary domains to address the pressing issues of the day. The journal provides researchers, practitioners, and educators with an interdisciplinary platform (Norris & Jones,

2005) to explore and advance our understanding of the problems and address the persistent lack of progress in addressing the issues.

In terms of organisation, the review provided some perspectives while focusing on the inaugural issue and themes, summarised the articles in it, discussed their connections, and highlighted the potential implications of the articles for academic and public discourse. On top of this all, it made a call for submission of articles to the journal, supporting its mission of creating a new platform for exchange of ideas that produce insights and positive change. The editorial review also acknowledged the teams of editors, reviewers, advisors, authors, college staff and students for their support to the journal.

We hope the inaugural themes exploring language, communication, and business practices in building bridges for productive discourse will inspire further research. With your feedback and support, we pledge to work harder in future for the improvement of the journal as a platform for exchange of ideas, collaboration, communication, and innovation in various domains.

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