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Himalayan Linguistics

Twenty years of Himalayan Linguistics

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ABSTRACT

This issue of Himalayan Linguistics marks twenty years for the journal. We reflect on the early history of Himalayan Linguistics, its contribution to the field, and the future of the journal.

KEYWORDS

Himalayan Linguistics, Linguistics

Tables of contents, abstracts, and submission guidelines are available at
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Twenty years of Himalayan Linguistics

Lauren Gawne, Gregory Anderson, You-Jing Lin
Editors, *Himalayan Linguistics*
Kristine Hildebrandt, Carol Genetti
Editors Emeritae, *Himalayan Linguistics*

1 Introduction

In early 2004, the first issue of *Himalayan Linguistics* was published. This first issue contained a single article: "An Analysis of Syntax and Prosody Interactions in a Dolakhā Newar: Rendition of The Mahābhārata", by Carol Genetti and Keith Slater. In 2024, with the publication of Issue 23.1, Himalayan Linguistics celebrates twenty years of publishing fee-free Open Access research scholarship on the languages of the Himalayas. In these twenty years, Himalayan Linguistics has published almost 200 pieces of scholarship, all freely available online. In this special introductory article, we chart the history of the journal and look to its future.

2 Foundation of *Himalayan Linguistics*

The inaugural editorial team at *Himalayan Linguistics* comprised of Carol Genetti (University of California, Santa Barbara), Tej Ratna Kansakar (Tribhuvan University) and Michael (Mickey) Noonan (University of Wisconsin Milwaukee). A central tenant of the journal since its founding days has been to work within an Open Access model where fees are not charged for publishing or for accessing article. This contrasts with the majority of Open Access publications, which have "article processing charges", which often prevent many researchers from publishing in those journals (Borrego 2023), in particular scholars in countries with low GDPs (Klebel & Ross-Hellauer 2023).

Mickey was the first to consider the idea of an online model for a new journal. He initially mentioned the idea to Carol in a phone call, but it was at the 6th Himalayan Languages Symposium that Mickey hosted in Milwaukee in June of 2000 where the first real conversation about the journal was had. The online-only model was still very novel, and there was some scepticism in the academic community about online scholarship. However, the traditional publication model was not serving the global academic community; in the early 2000s, scholars who were resident in the Himalayan area had quite limited access to contemporary academic work and getting books to the region was both time consuming and expensive, not to mention access to journals. A free online journal seemed like an excellent way to go. Two other core features of the journal were established in these early planning conversations. The first is that there would be two parts of the journal; as well as regular articles, there would be an archives section for texts, wordlists, and grammars. The second is that the journal would operate with a broad conceptualization of "Himalayan", not just focusing on Tibeto-Burman languages, but on all linguistic work in the region.

The *Himalayan Linguistics* website was originally to be hosted at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, but the institution wasn't ready for this, so it was hosted at Santa Barbara with support from the College of Letters and Science. The journal originally published two or three volumes a year, before settling into the routine of publishing two issues of a single volume

every year. For those of you who astutely noted that we are publishing our 23rd volume in our twentieth year, this is the reason.

Tej Ratna Kansakar joined Mickey and Carol as a fellow editor. In addition to the main editorial team, there were three Assistant Editors; Kristine Hildebrandt, Karen Grunow-Hårsta, and Balaram Prasain. These roles were created to provide experience and support for junior scholars, and help them build professional pathways. The journal has gone through various shifts in its editorial structure over the course of its history. Eventually Carol took over as the primary editor, and Mickey and Tej as Associate Editors. Other Associate Editors in the history of the journal have included Shobhana Chelliah, David Bradley, Elena Bashir, and Yogendra Yadava. When Carol took on the role of Editor, Carlos Nash joined the team as the webmaster. Volume 9, Issue 1 in 2010 saw the introduction of our modern publication style, with a dedicated cover-page using the *Himalayan Linguistics* logo. Thanks to the work of Carlos, the journal took on the professional look that we enjoy to this day. Below (Figure 1) you can see the first page of the first article published in the journal (Genetti & Slater 2004), and the first page of an article from 9. 1 in 2010 with the new house style (DeLancy 2010).
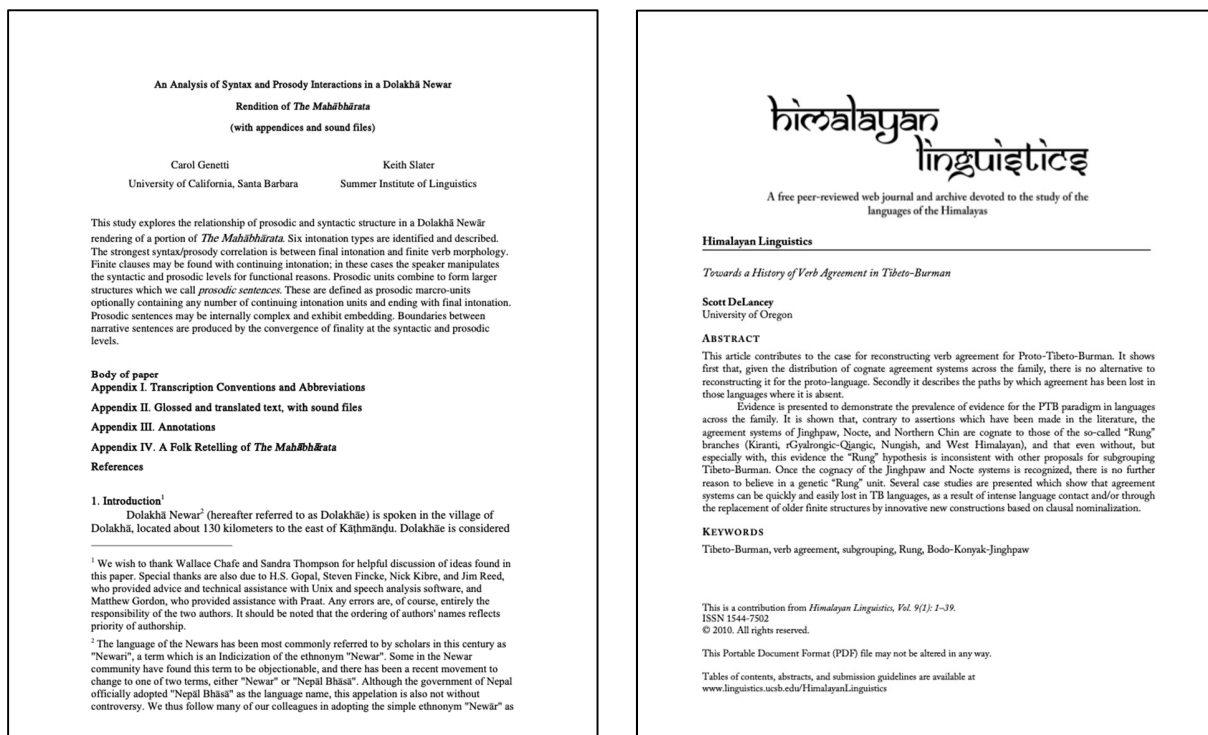

Figure 1. Genetti & Slater (2004) in the original publication style for *Himalayan Linguistics* and in the new style DeLancy (2010)

You-Jing Lin joined Himalayan Linguistics as a copyeditor at this time as well, a role she continued as she moved to a tenured role at Peking University. In 2010 a formal Advisory Board was also established to provide more general advice and support to the editorial team.

In 2014 Carol stepped down as editor, and Kristine Hildebrandt took on the role. With the *Himalayan Linguistics* on solid footing due to the work by Carol, Tej Ratna and Mickey, Kristine saw her editorial role as continuing to shape and grow the editorial board to represent and provide fair and careful peer review for articles with broader typological and theoretical perspectives.

She also spearheaded the biannual issue schedule, because with an editor, copyeditor, and editorial board comprised entirely of uncompensated volunteers, this frequency was more manageable for the volume of submissions received. Around 2014, the journal moved to the University of California's eScholarship platform that we still use. This platform allowed for much easier publication of articles, and houses our submission and peer review facilities in one location. Additionally, as the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) system was then proliferating through the publishing world, Kristine worked with the staff at eScholarship to set up DOIs past and newly published *Himalayan Linguistics* articles. Kristine also worked with organizations such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)[1] and EBSCO Information Services[2] to establish indexing for *Himalayan Linguistics* articles in online databases.

In 2019, Kristine, Carol, and You-Jing worked with Stephen Morey, Linda Konnerth, Kellen Parker van Dam, and Mijke Mulder to move *North East Indian Linguistics Society* (NEILS) publications to the Himalayan Linguistics site as a companion publication: *Language and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region* (LPEHR), with its first issue published in 2020. *Himalayan Linguistics* now published three issues a year. The second issue of the year is published as *Languages and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region* (LPEHR). This series publishes papers specifically related to languages of North East India, including papers presented at NEILS Conferences. From 2023, Kellen van Dam is chief editor of *LPEHR*.

In 2022 Kristine Hildebrandt stepped down as editor of *Himalayan Linguistics*. We took this opportunity to return the journal to a triumvirate model for editorial, to ensure continuity without asking a single individual to take on too much work. You-Jing Lin (Peking University), the long-standing production editor, was joined by Lauren Gawne (La Trobe University) and Gregory Anderson (Living Tongues Institute).

In its twenty years of publication, *Himalayan Linguistics* has published 144 original research articles, 18 review articles, and 14 Archive and Field Reports. The Archive publications include grammars, dictionaries, text collections and extended descriptive works. Additionally 17 articles have been published in the LPEHR series.

3 Future of *Himalayan Linguistics*

Over the last two decades, *Himalayan Linguistics* has gone from being a scrappy, self-run university website, to being a banner journal in an academic environment where books and paper journals are almost passé. What has not changed is that *Himalayan Linguistics* has always been run entirely by dedicated and passionate volunteers.

Himalayan Linguistics is well-placed to continue into the next twenty years. Indeed, the need for accessible online journals, which do not gatekeep with article processing charges, is even greater. The rise of digital-first research publication has seen an even contraction and concentration in the publishing market, which is now predominantly an oligopoly of a few giant commercial publishers (Larivière et al. 2015). This landscape creates a barrier, particularly for scholars who cannot afford processing fees.

In 2024 the eScholarship team at the University of California are updating the publishing platform that hosts *Himalayan Linguistics*. While infrastructure updates are not a particularly glamourous part of publishing, we are pleased that eScholarship is still committed to the mission of providing fee-free publishing for academic research. We also hope that this new interface will make your next submission or peer review with *Himalayan Linguistics* even easier.

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[1] https://doaj.org

[2] https://www.ebsco.com/open-access

Himalayan Linguistics will continue to grow and change, with new editorial and board members bringing new ideas to the journal. In 2025 Gregory Anderson will step down as editor. We are currently making plans for a new member of the team in 2025. If you would like to contribute to the future of Himalayan Linguistics, we always welcome new nominations to the editorial board. We would like to remind readers that we accept manuscripts on topics in linguistics from across the Himalayan region, as well as book reviews, and we are happy to receive proposals for themed issues with guest editors.

Himalayan Linguistics can only continue to publish Open Access scholarship without fees for authors or readers because of the volunteered contributions of our editorial team, reviewers and authors, as well as the ongoing support from the eScholarship team at the University of California. For *Himalayan Linguistics* to continue to thrive, we rely on the community of linguists and language scholars who submit high-quality work for publication, and to our community of reviewers.

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