

Declaration – ICLAP 2018

4th International Conference of the Linguistic Association of Pakistan

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Pakistan being situated in HKH region and, according to Ethnologue, a home to 74 living languages, is included in one of the linguistically and culturally the richest part of the world, and therefore, is in ideal position to explore and plan for the best possible linguistic research related to multilingual contexts. In the present scenario, the Linguistic Association of Pakistan present a declaration on the occasion of its 4th International conference which has five parts:

- a) Commitments and clarifications,
- b) Practical steps to be taken by the association,
- c) Suggestions and recommendations for academia and the higher education commission
- d) Suggestions and recommendations for other institutions of policy making and public at large
- e) Announcement of ICLAP 2019

a) Commitments and clarifications

We recognize the importance of diverse linguistic landscape in the country and the need to maintain it for the social and all other types of development. Based on this requirement to maintain diversity, the first objective is to protect this multilingual beauty of the nation.

Further to secure a mutually beneficial environment for all minor languages along with the stronger more developed ones, we recognize and consider the documentation of all Pakistani regional languages on priority basis.

Engage communities and language activists (as active partners) to work for the promotion of their languages and cultures. The association urges scholars to explore aspects of the linguistic competencies and practices of our multilingual speakers who cross existing social and cultural boundaries, adopting or adapting themselves to new and overlapping linguistic spaces. We particularly invite our young scholars to work on (multiple) language acquisition and learning, psycho- and neurolinguistics of multilingualism; translanguaging; early bilingualism and heritage language development; speech processing in multilinguals; multilingual education; multiculturalism; multilingual language policies; literacy in multiple languages-pluriliteracy; intercultural and globalization issues related to multilingualism; multilingual issues in literature and translation.

We also need to clarify many myths related to the subject of linguistics. Some of them include, for example:

- Linguistics is not about English only. It is the scientific study of language as a human faculty and may investigate all languages of the world on scientific grounds.
- ELT is not the whole of the applied linguistics. It includes many other aspects of studies related to human language such as corpus linguistics, computational and forensic linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and many other sub disciplines.
- Linguists are not always the polyglots. They must be experts of their relevant fields of knowledge but not necessarily of many languages.

- Linguistic research on some particular language does not mean that the scholar has become more informed about that language only but his/her overall understanding about human language faculty is enhanced.

b) Practical steps to be taken by the association

LAP intends to hold 'summer schools' and 'National Olympiad' on linguistics in collaboration with the academic institutions of the country for the promotion of the field in the country.

LAP appreciates the efforts of some universities by introducing new research journals in linguistics and applied linguistics and it also plans to create further opportunities for publications by launching the Journal of the Linguistic Association of Pakistan.

Support and where appropriate, undertake collaborative research projects (in collaboration with NSF and other leading funding agencies or maybe to our national ADP and PSDP).

Encourage and support the sister organizations of LAP to help them formalize, grow and mature to meet their objectives and goals.

c) Suggestions and recommendations for academia and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan

The universities in Pakistan should launch degree programs in linguistics and applied linguistics in parallel with degree programs in literature. Departments of computer science and information technology of renowned universities should launch degree programs in computational linguistics.

At least one third faculty members in any department of language should be from linguistics background. In the postgraduate and doctoral degrees in linguistics, research on Pakistani languages should be encouraged.

We request authorities of Quaid-i-Azam University to restore admissions in the Department of Linguistics and of FAST-NUCES to resume its MS program in Computational Linguistics.

The higher education commission of Pakistan and the higher education departments of the provinces should devise/recommend criteria for equivalence of degrees in language, linguistics and literature and the same should be communicated to the public service commissions for adopting in requirements of different posts.

The conference proceedings also should be given significant weightage alongside journal publications in the evaluation of a candidate for appointment, promotion and in the evaluation of the department and the institution.

d) Suggestions and recommendations for other government institutions and public at large

We suggest that parliament should prepare and pass the bill for languages of Pakistan in line with the UN declaration on linguistic rights (Barcelona declaration). Debates on language bill with the required zest and consultancy from the relevant sections of the society at the floors of provincial as well as national assembly need to be continued.

Allocate sufficient funds for the development of local languages alongside English and Urdu. Spare equal funding for regional languages and promote diminishing and endangered languages on priority basis. Establish and maintain language development councils at federal and provincial levels (we welcome the funding of the KP government for the promotion of Hindko andOrmuri BUT other languages should also have their share from the ADP and PSDP of PC).

Provide necessary conditions and further support to all minor languages (e.g., by teaching them at the primary schools of their respective areas AND as an additional non-credit course at colleges).

Initiate and strengthen collaborative partnerships among local, regional, national and international development organizations including Pakistani HEIs and reputable foreign universities for promoting regional languages and initiating technology based projects.

Celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity of indigenous communities of the country in its true spirit for a whole week each year, preferably the 2nd week of August.

e) Announcement of ICLAP 2019

The conference ends on the announcement that the 5th International Conference of the Linguistic Association of Pakistan (ICLAP 2019) will be hosted by Department of Applied Linguistics at Government College University, Faisalabad, from November 6 to 8, 2019. As UNESCO has declared 2019 as International Year of Indigenous Languages, scholars are highly encouraged to submit and present their research work on indigenous languages in the coming conference.

Thank you all so very much for your participation and encouragement!