

**The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal:
Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions**

by

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Statement of Originality

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Prem Prasad Poudel

7 July 2021

Abstract

This thesis describes an investigation of the enactment of mediums of instruction, the factors shaping them, their relationships, and tensions in the multilingual contexts of Nepal's secondary schools as a qualitative exploratory case study. Data were gathered from multiple sources: in-depth interviews with municipal level policymakers, headteachers, and teachers; separate focus group discussions with students and their parents; classroom observations of teachers; and case observations of three purposively selected public secondary schools in two provinces. The data were analyzed inductively, drawing on critical language policy approaches, such as historical-structural and nexus analyses. This approach provided a solid basis for understanding the historicity of language policies, the enactment of medium of instruction, and the interconnected relationships (interplays) and tensions among factors shaping the said policy in Nepal. The findings reveal that Nepal's language-in-education policies have been influenced by societal reforms (both intentional and accidental) at the local, national, and global levels. Diverse forms of medium of instruction policies were put into practice: dual English and Nepali, monolingual Nepali-only, and monolingual English-only. Nonetheless, English as a medium of instruction that begins as early as the outset of formal schooling was the most sought-after medium in school contexts, primarily motivated by the potential material, social, and educational benefits wrought by the world's lingua franca. However, English as a medium of instruction, advanced by the forces of globalization and neoliberalism, has come into tension with Nepali medium instruction and mother-tongue (ethnic/indigenous languages) education, which in turn have been promoted by the forces of nationalism, ethnic identity that relates to Nepal's official policy of multilingualism. Amidst this tension, ethnic/indigenous languages in education have been systematically restricted and even delegitimized in the education system. Although the policy, beginning in the 1990s, opened spaces for the minoritized or lesser taught languages, the education practices

continued to promote English and Nepali, which created tensions between macro-level and grassroots-level policies. This study thus further substantiates theoretical arguments related to ‘practice as policy’ and ‘practice informing policy’. Recent political and educational reforms have been intended to bring previously banned or lesser taught languages into the education system (through advocacy, preparation of textbooks and other learning materials). Yet, the English and Nepali language supremacy has continued, thereby excluding Nepal’s more than 129 ethnic/indigenous languages from schools. The present study reveals an unstoppable drive toward educating in the English medium, shaped by five major factors: aspirations for life chances, construction of individual and group identity, the role of state and non-state actors, the diversity context, and globalization. It was found that relationships among these (and several other) factors (and sub-factors) have been interwoven into practice (i.e., a nexus of practice) to produce a strong force of English as a key capital towards social mobility and contributed to reproducing deficit ideologies towards the ethnic/indigenous languages. These relationships, in turn, have inspired schools to enact (or imagine to enact) English medium instruction, which has been enabled by their silencing (or sometimes banning) of languages other than English and Nepali. As such, this thesis appeals to language policy scholars to investigate language policy and planning issues beyond linguocentrism and consider the broader social and political issues, such as caste/ethnicity and social class, in which medium of instruction policies are intricately embedded. Such approaches are crucial for thoroughly investigating the multilayered and multifaceted process of language policies.

Keywords: Language-in-education policy, medium of instruction, enactment, nexus analysis, practice as policy

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late parents who showered me with their blessings
and courage that made me who I am today.



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List of Abbreviations

AD	:	Anno Domini
ARNEC	:	All Round National Education Committee
AusAID	:	Australian Agency for International Development
BPEP	:	Basic and Primary Education Project
BS	:	Bikram Sambat
CBS	:	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	:	Curriculum Development Centre
CMI	:	Chinese Medium of Instruction
CPA	:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DFID	:	British Department for International Development
DoE	:	Department of Education
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
EFA	:	Education for All
EMI	:	English as a medium of instruction
ETTE	:	English for Teaching: Teaching for English
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
FHREC	:	Faculty Human Research Ethics Committee
GAN	:	Global Action Nepal
GoN	:	Government of Nepal
HEIs	:	Higher Education Institutions
HMG	:	His Majesty the Government
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing System
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
INGO	:	International Non-governmental Organization

LEP	:	Language-in-education policy
LPP	:	Language Policy and Planning
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
MOES	:	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOEST	:	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOI	:	Medium of Instruction
MTB-MLE	:	Mother-tongue Based Multilingual Education
NAM	:	Non-Align Movement
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCED	:	National Centre for Education and Development
NCF	:	National Curriculum Framework
NEFIN	:	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NEC	:	National Education Commission
NESP	:	National Education System Plan
NFDIN	:	National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NMI	:	Nepali as a medium of instruction
NEPC	:	National Education Planning Commission
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NTC	:	Nepal Telecommunication Corporation
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCL	:	Proficiency Certificate Level
PSC	:	Public Service Commission
RQ	:	Research Question
SEE	:	Secondary Education Examination

SLC	:	School Leaving Certificate
SSDP	:	School Sector Development Plan
TINA	:	There is No Alternative
TOEFL	:	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UN	:	United Nations
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	:	United States Agency for International Development



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Chapter I: Introduction

Background

I was educated in a public school where Nepali was the formal Medium of Instruction (hereafter MOI) and English as a foreign language was taught as a subject most often through translation. Nepali was the primary medium and English itself was the secondary medium in English class (based on the extent to which the languages were used in the classroom). I studied three languages during my school education – Nepali, English and Sanskrit. Nepali was taught as the compulsory subject, English as a compulsory foreign language subject, and Sanskrit (until grade 7) was an elective language subject. However, out of this trilingual school environment, my interest in English emerged as it was a language with higher prestige in the then-contemporary society (which is also the case even today; it is perhaps even more prestigious compared to its position 25 years ago), and speaking in English dominated, meaning that it was considered a panacea for all probable employment shortages. Similarly, in schools, my English teachers were highly valued over other teachers. I still remember one of my friends in grade nine saying, “our assistant-head sir is very smart, he even speaks in English, why is he not our head sir!” with a surprising note and a kind of sense of positioning him at a superior position among other teachers in the school because of his English proficiency. Similarly, our science teacher in grade eight, who was fluent in English, used to often shift to English from Nepali and was valued and preferred by all my classmates not only because he knew English well, but also because his English sounded good. Whenever there were school functions such as quiz or spelling contests, our English teachers would have more roles (although this trend has been gradually changing due to other subject teachers improving English proficiency). In quiz contests, some questions related to English spelling were asked, but none about Nepali punctuation or spelling were included in the list (as far as I remember). The whole schooling system preferred and even promoted “the better

the English, better the quality” ideology. Probably because of that initial impression in school life, I came to the field of English language teaching and teacher education. I continued my higher education specialization in English and Mathematics (at proficiency certificate level [PCL]), now restructured as a part of secondary school education equal to grades 11 and 12), and bachelor’s and master’s degree in English Education. While studying at the PCL level, I learned mathematics as an EMI subject, although the MOI of the subject was in Nepali in my previous school education. It was challenging for me to cope with the medium. Officially, Tribhuvan University, the oldest and the first public university in Nepal, adopts English as a medium of instruction (EMI) as its primary MOI. However, I also experienced Nepali-English mixed MOI, and faced the “English-only’ questions in non-language subjects” (e.g., Foundation of Education, Curriculum and Evaluation, etc.) in annual written examinations. While in the exam halls, some of my friends used to ask me, “What does this mean in Nepali?” as the questions were in English. Since then, I have had some initial curiosity about what the use is of MOI, and why students are being taught largely in Nepali medium yet they are assessed in English.

After completing my master’s degree, I embarked on my profession in English language teaching at a constituent campus of the same university and got an opportunity to work within the same system of pedagogy and assessment. I delivered sessions at the bachelor and master levels, and accordingly got involved in developing written and oral exams or exam-related activities such as field experience (teaching practicum), supervision of teaching, and mentoring students during their micro-teaching experiences. All these background work-experiences were confusing for me, especially regarding MOI, as there were messy, incoherent practices of enactment of MOI in schools and universities, and I realized that the underlying reasoning behind the MOI policy was unexplored. My primary interest in MOI was driven when I was asked by some of my students in a bachelor level class to translate

into Nepali and if possible, into their mother tongues so they could better understand the conceptual clarity of the content I was delivering through English in an EMI programme. This incident prompted me to question whether I was doing justice in providing my students a good education by teaching in English in multilingual classroom contexts or rather, was I producing a different form of inequality in the classroom where students participate for common learning goals? Parallel to this very personal pedagogical experience in my lectures, I also experienced a different scenario in which our intern students (the student teachers who were placed in public secondary schools for field experience in classroom teaching) were rejected by some of the well-known schools because of not being able to deliver classes in English or having poor English language proficiency. Beyond my personal-level control, when the students approached me, I asked them to contact the relevant department to find new placements. It was because the schools had enacted their institutional level MOI policies, and the university departments had no role in MOI-related decision-making or any other interventions in the schools.

These experiences, as well as similar other incidents, prompted me to explore the issue of MOI in Nepal's education system, especially in secondary school education, with some self-generated reflection questions such as “where did these MOI policies emerge from?,” “how have they been enacted,?” and “what factors shape the increasing use of EMI in the public schools which the teacher education program does not properly address the graduates in the current and future schools' contexts?” Now, I can see two competing claims moving parallel in the language-in-education policy discourse. The first is teaching all subjects other than language subjects in English with a more progressive and liberal orientation to attend to the globalization processes, while the second is the nationalist as well as rights-based perspective in which the national or the local/ethnic/indigenous languages are taught and used as the MOI in schooling, especially beginning from the pre-primary level as a response to Nepali

nationalism and Nepal's goal of sustaining multilingualism through the promotion of ethnic/indigenous languages in education. Between the two, while the first has become the major force driving EMI, the second has become a form of resistance against the wider expansion of EMI in schools and universities, and an attempt to sustain the nationalist as well as ethnolinguistic rights and identity. The second argument, i.e., promoting national language as well as mother tongues from the very beginning of formal schooling up to the secondary level, has been exclusively supported by macro policies such as the constitution and educational acts. However, in practice, the use of the globally dominant language (English) has already been established as the most sought-after MOI supported by both parents and local level policymakers (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009; Bhattacharya, 2013; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Taylor-Leech, 2013; 2019). In essence, despite the efforts to promote the mother tongue as an MOI, there has been a dramatic shift to EMI in Nepal's school education, beginning from the pre-primary level to the secondary level (Poudel, 2019). This shift towards EMI is facilitated by Nepal's liberal politico-economic system that emerged after the fall of the Panchayat system in 1990. In the *Panchayat*¹ autocratic political system in Nepal, nationalism was highly emphasized; as a result, the Nepali language (the national language of Nepal) was used as the MOI (details on the language policy in education during this period is elaborated in Chapter IV). Understanding the history of language policies in education requires exploration of the motivation behind the decisions on MOI policies and practices, especially in highly multilingual contexts such as Nepal.

Multilingualism in Nepal

Nepal is a multilingual, multicultural, multiracial and multi-religious country (Government of Nepal, 2007, 2015), and home to more than one-sixth of all the world's languages (Turin,

¹ A party-less political "guided" democratic system declared by then king Mahendra in 1960, which lasted till 1990. In this system, the supreme power remained in the hands of the Monarch. It is commented by some as a nationalistic movement in Nepal.

2007). This linguistic diversity in a small country situated in the Greater Himalayan Region comprises more than 129 languages belonging to four major language families, viz. Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic, and one language isolate, i.e., Kusunda (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2012; Language Commission, 2019; Yadava, 2007). In Nepal, the linguistic diversity is entangled with the socio-cultural and ethnic traditions, all of which are reinforcing connections among people in making a collective multilingual identity of the Nepali state. Nepali is spoken as a mother tongue by 44.6% of Nepal's population, which is followed by Maithili (11.7%), Bhojpuri (5.98%), Tharu (5.77%), and Tamang (5.11%), comprising the top five languages (CBS, 2012). The multilingual diversity of Nepal was well recognized after the 1990's political change into a democratic country. For instance, the Constitution of Nepal-1990, the Interim Constitution of Nepal-2007 and the Constitution of Nepal-2015 recognized Nepali, the dominant language, as the national and de facto official language (Yadava, 2014; Government of Nepal, 2015) alongside recognizing all the mother tongues (ethnic/indigenous languages) as languages of the nation. After the state restructuring into a federal system mandated by the Constitution of Nepal-2015, Nepal is politically and administratively divided into 7 provinces and 753 local levels (metropolises, sub-metropolises, urban municipalities and rural municipalities (Gaupalikas). Each province and local governments has been delegated authority to one or many languages spoken by the majority population as the official language(s). Recently, the Language Commission of Nepal has recommended regional and community languages spoken by more than 1 % of the population to be eligible as official languages in the respective local and provincial governments. However, such recommendation has met criticisms from language policy scholars raising questions regarding complexities and consequences facing its enactment (Chaudhary, 2021; Regmi, 2021).

While the relationship between language policy and multilingualism has remained a critical socio-political issue in Nepal and accordingly been addressed in the recent constitution by allowing each community to preserve and promote their languages, the schooling system, governance and businesses have yet to experience multilingual practices on the ground. The languages Nepali and English continue to dominate educational practices, with English taking the momentum as a key MOI in the school education. In the section that follows, I begin the discussion with the issue of MOI.

Medium of Instruction

Medium of instruction refers to the language in which curricular content is taught. As MOI is a ubiquitous phenomenon worldwide (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018), it has attracted a great deal of attention from language policy and planning scholars. While research studies on MOI earlier concentrated on the monolingual and bilingual practices in schools, increasing attention has now been given to multilingual settings such as in Nepal (Phyak, 2013, 2021; Phyak & Ojha, 2019; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Sah, 2020) where language issues are not merely associated with language alone, but rather the broader social, political and educational agenda of the relevant contexts. The global expansion of EMI in all phases of education and educational settings has fuelled this issue and has been explored by an increasing number of academic research studies (Dearden, 2014; Macaro et al., 2018). In this regard, Tollefson and Tsui (2018) claimed that the emergence of critical approaches in language policy and planning (LPP) and the language rights movements in the 1990s foregrounded the issues around MOI debates, taking the focus away from the pedagogy and content learning to socio-political processes as these processes form structural barriers for the implementation of right-based language-in-education policies. As a result, fierce scholarly debates concerning ethnolinguistic identity as well as the reproduction of several forms of inequality promoted through schooling systems have emerged (Rojo, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Tollefson, 1995; Tollefson, 1991).

Given the scenario that the English language has been co-opted as a major lingua franca of globalization and an essential key to success in major economies (Blommaert, 2010a; Johnson, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Ricento, 2018), the education sector globally has increasingly adopted it as the major MOI citing the benefits of learning in English being too great to be ignored (Aslan, 2018). The tension between the political and pedagogical agendas associated with the enactment of MOI policy in schools in bilingual or multilingual contexts has widened as the issue of social justice and protection of linguistic diversity has expanded to social as well as educational policies (see Pillar, 2016; Poudel, 2019; Tollefson & Tsui, 2003). Amidst this tension, governments and development partners in multilingual countries such as Nepal have made considerable efforts to promote national as well as local/ethnic/indigenous languages as MOIs, for both pedagogical and political reasons (Regmi, 2017; UNESCO, 2003). For instance, Nepal's current macro policies provide favourable conditions for the use of all the national languages (mother tongues and Nepali) as well as English as the MOI in schools (see Government of Nepal [GoN], 2015). These policies favour the political dimension of language policy; however, the mono/bilingual practices in the schools continue to grow unchecked (MOEST, 2019).

Research studies show some governments have strongly prescribed shifting teaching into the English medium as an alternative means to attaining competitiveness of individuals and countries (e.g., South Korea) (see Chung & Choi, 2016), while others (e.g., Nepal, Hong Kong) have taken a more liberal stand concerning which language to be used in the schools (GoN, 2015; Phyak, 2013; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, 2018). Because English has gained social, political, and linguistic capital in non-native English-speaking communities, it has continued to expand as the most preferred MOI, and in other cases as the most dominant foreign language to be included in the school curriculum (see Dearden, 2014; Macaro, 2019). Change in MOI, in many cases such as Nepal, was established as a reform

agenda, as shifting to EMI was perceived necessary for the modernization and internationalization of the education systems (Karim et al., 2021). Although these policies exist and are supported by scholars and development partners, EMI as a practiced policy continues to expand further. By “practiced policy,” I am referring to the policy which was undeclared officially, but was established and recognized through institutional practice for many years. The practice of EMI as a de facto institutional policy in Nepal’s private schools is a vivid example of a practiced policy. Sometimes such grassroot practices change the official policies. For instance, in South Korea, English was perceived as a means to ensure job security after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, and the public started to pursue English education to such an extreme degree as to be described as suffering from English fever, which partly drove the government-led initiatives such as English-speaking towns and EMI for English teaching in public schools (Choi, 2021). Macaro (2019) argues EMI has already been an unavoidable MOI that has gone global, while others (e.g., Hamid et al., 2013; Ramanathan, 2007; Sah & Karki, 2020) citing the cases from Bangladesh, India and Nepal, challenge the unprecedented growth of EMI referring to the effects that this MOI has had on the lived experiences of the students, their identity and the concerned culture. Tollefson and Tsui (2018) illustrate the cases of South Africa where MOI policies were used as tools to help resolve conflict, while in Nicaragua it helped promote social inclusion and in Ecuador to reduce economic inequality. Similarly, Heller (2010) noted that globalization, in which English is the only means of communication, has played a crucial role in organizing the political, economic, social, and educational agenda worldwide. She claims the expansion of English in a great number of countries is a consequence of the globalization process, and therefore exists in some forms (e.g., as ideologies) in all societal domains (also see Ricento, 2006). This also echoes Liddicoat’s (2013) claim that language policies “produce and reproduce a society’s ideological constructions of the social and political worlds” (Liddicoat,

2013, p. 13). Therefore, people in many multilingual and pluralistic societies have raised concerns about the political effects that MOI policies have in their social and educational transformations. This implies that such “profound social, economic and political transformations must be a central focus for language policy and planning research in the years ahead” (Perez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018, p. 728). Along with the historical and political changes in Nepal, the debates on MOI have continued as it shifts from EMI to Nepali Medium Instruction (NMI) and back again to EMI (further elaboration of this trend is presented in Chapter IV).

The Problem Statement

The present study investigates the enactment of the medium of instruction policy, its driving factors, as well as the tensions and interplay of the factors in Nepal’s multilingual educational contexts. As stated earlier, MOI policies have been historically, socially, and politically contested in many multilingual educational spaces, and they also link to individuals’ experiences and uses, and institutions’ practices. In Nepal, like some other countries, arguments on the promotion of local languages as MOI have emerged strongly parallel with the increasing support for EMI in public schools. At the macro level, the national policies promote multilingualism (including English; the global language, Nepali; the national language, and other local/indigenous languages) in education, whereas at the local/micro level, the mono/bilingual ideologies have continued to be promoted either through English-only or Nepali-only instructional practices. Some scholars (e.g., Giri, 2009; Phyak, 2013; Weinberg, 2013, 2021) have argued that such practices are the consequence of the national MOI policymaking attributed to globalization and historical hegemonic power exercised by the ruling elites. The reason is that Nepali was the native language of those who ruled the country for long (e.g., it was the language of the palace as well) and was promoted as the national language (Awasthi, 2011; Onta, 2009). The current emergence of EMI in school

contexts indicates that the macro policies that promote and recognize mother-tongue MOI have not materialized as intended. Although several attempts have been made to promote mother-tongue-based multilingual education and mother tongue MOI (e.g., Local Government Act, 1999, Multilingual Education Policy Guideline, 2010) by the establishment of mother-tongue schools in several parts of the country, such attempts have not been sustainable. The reasons for such ineffectiveness in MOI policy implementation are diverse and multifaceted, yet need to be investigated by further empirical research.

Scholars (e.g., Rizvi & Lingard, 2009; Zhao, 2011) have claimed that there are both state and non-state factors and actors that have influenced the policy processes in every country. In this process, policies can be interpreted and reinterpreted, by policy intermediaries, agents, administrators, or arbiters to fit their specific contexts (Johnson, 2013; Wiley & Garcia, 2016). Additionally, in the neoliberal economic and globalized age, “the foregrounding of social actors’ practices and forms of making sense co-exist with approaches that give greater attention to historical and structural forces” (Perez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018, p. 730).

Language policies also are affected by these forces. Some policies that have promoted or marginalized certain languages may have varied effects on the sociolinguistic situation as well. In such cases, fierce scholarly debates have emerged over the potentially “deleterious effects” (Kan & Adamson, 2016, p. 111) of the language policies. For instance, scholars (Giri, 2009; Phyak, 2013; Poudel & Choi, 2021) have pointed out that the existing MOI policies in Nepal can have such deleterious effects on several other ethnic/indigenous languages. Although the policies have been formed for the inclusion of local/indigenous languages as MOI up to the secondary level of schooling, they have not been translated into the actual practices as Nepali and English continue to be adopted as the only MOIs. A comprehensive understanding of the concern is essential by exploring the factors that influence the formation and adoption of MOI policy (i.e., English, Nepali, or local languages

as MOI), and the tensions associated with it, especially in language choice, in micro implementation spaces such as schools. Further, very little attention has been given to the role of actors and the effect of the policies at the sharp end of the policy process where the very enactment takes place (Ball et al., 2012). Understanding the factors that influence LPP decision-making requires a critical analysis of the existing policies, their historicity and the grassroot practices as well. Hence, the present study attempts to fill this gap through an exploration of the macro and micro-level MOI policies, their enactment and tensions in Nepalese secondary schools.

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim and objectives of the study are as follows.

- i) Aim: The understanding of MOI policies, their enactment, driving factors (shapers), and implementation complexities (such as interplays and tensions) in the linguistically diverse contexts of Nepalese public secondary schools.
- ii) Objectives:
 - a. To identify the MOI policy provisions for secondary schools in multilingual Nepal.
 - b. To explore the driving factors for the enactment of MOI policies at the school level.
 - c. To explore the tensions, interplay, and associated complexities with the enactment of national and institution level MOI policies in those schools.

Research Questions

The study has the following research questions.

1. What are the national level MOI policy designs/provisions and how did they evolve in Nepal's education system?

2. What are the enacted MOI policies in Nepal's public secondary schools?
3. What are the driving factors/shapers for the practice of MOI policies at the secondary school level?
4. In what ways do the factors shaping the implementation of national and school level MOI policies interplay and remain in tension with such contexts?

Significance of the Study

Language policy issues constitute an important part of the education policy discourse in Nepal. Although the policies for mother-tongue MOI have been fully supported by national and international agencies, these policies have not been widely put into practice in the schooling systems. Schools in Nepal are practising monolingual and/or bilingual policies (such as EMI-only and EMI-NMI dual MOI) (see Chapter V). Varied and multi-faceted reasons have contributed to this failure in bringing the ethnic/indigenous languages into the education systems. An in-depth understanding of the factors through microscopic scrutiny, both inside and outside the institutional settings, is a much-needed research concern, which this study emphasizes. Hence, the study will make a significant contribution to the existing literature in LPP research in general and language-in-education policymaking in Nepal in particular, both at the theoretical and empirical level. Theoretically, it will contribute to the understanding of the complex nexus of language policies, policymaking, and execution in the multilingual secondary school context bringing together a historical-structural approach (Tollefson, 1991, 2015) and a nexus analysis (Hult, 2015; Scollon & Scollon, 2004) into a holistic framework. Empirically, it will contribute to the understanding of MOI policies, practices, shapers of the policies and practices, their relationships, and associated complexities (interplays and tensions) in the diverse multilingual school contexts of Nepal. It will highlight the need for the consideration of the interplay among the contexts, the role of actors, and context-specific discourses in understanding the enactment of the MOI policy in

the public secondary schools of Nepal, and the need to analyse the language policy through both bottom-up and top-down processes to provide a clear picture of the situated complexities in LPP enactment.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapter I, this introductory chapter, has discussed the background of the study, including a brief introduction to the research concern, i.e., the medium of instruction policy, the problem statement, research aims and objectives, research questions, the significance of the study and outline of the thesis. Chapter II presents a detailed review of the relevant literature which provides the readers with a thorough understanding of the theoretical as well as empirical aspects of the notion of policy, language-in-education policy, and the driving factors for the enactment of MOI policies, the conceptual framework, and it concludes with the implications of the review for the study. Chapter III discusses the detailed methodology adopted for the study including the research design, methods, instruments, participants, ethical concerns, and researcher reflexivity. Chapter IV, V, VI, and VII relate to the findings, addressing each of the research questions stated earlier. Chapter IV presents a thorough descriptive account as well as a review of the language-in-education policy in Nepal since the early history moving from the beginning of formal schooling to the contemporary federal democratic period (i.e., analysis of the historical and contemporary policy texts and discourses). It specifically presents the trajectories of the political transitions, educational policies, and language policies in Nepal, which answers the first research question stated above. Chapter V presents the enactment of the MOI policy, with specific reference and empirical data from the three selected cases (Bhairav, Janak, and Laxmi school). This chapter also highlights the practiced policy and the role of the actors (policymakers, head teachers, teachers, parents and students) in regulating the MOI in their respective contexts. It also illustrates how different contexts of schooling have enacted

diverse MOIs in their schools, which forms what is practiced rather than what is intended by the macro policies. Chapter VI builds on the fifth chapter and presents the factors shaping the practice of the MOI policy consolidating data from all three case contexts. Chapter VII attends to the tensions and interplay among the factors in shaping MOI policy and its practices. It synthesizes the data presented in chapters IV through VI and presents how these macro policies, enacted policies, and several diverse factors relate to one another or interact in shaping MOI policies and their practice in multilingual schooling contexts. It also presents the interrelationships among multiple layers of the policy structures and the actors along those structures influencing policy decisions through their multiple and overlapping roles. Finally, Chapter VIII summarizes the major findings and provides theoretical and practical implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter explores the literature related to the issues of language-in-education policies, with a specific focus on the case of the medium of instruction (MOI) policy and related discourses, which form the background for the understanding of the issue under research. This research considers the MOI as a language policy case. Here, I initiate the discussion with general policy concerns (e.g., conceptualization of policy, policy analysis, nature of policy process) leading to an explanation of MOI policy, its shapers (driving factors), conceptual frameworks, and consequences of enactment of MOIs in education. I take critical policy perspectives for which I have drawn mainly on the Historical-structural approach (Tollefson, 1991) and Nexus-Analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). This chapter presents the relevant literature in thematic sections. As this study is based on the educational contexts of Nepal, frequent reference to the same has been made to relate the discussion of each thematic category to the research context.

Conceptualization of Policy

Over more than six decades, a large body of theoretical and empirical research has attempted to conceptualize the notion of ‘policy’. However, there have been controversies over exactly ‘what policies are’, perhaps due to the reason that policies could be articulated or sometimes silent. As studies of policies and policymaking come from several disciplines such as political science, public administration, sociology, history, education, and anthropology (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009), defining policy is rather complex and inconclusive. For instance, Harman (1984) defined policy as courses of purposive action that have and are aimed at accomplishing the desired set of goals, whereas Cooper et al., (2004) defined it as “a political process where needs, goods, and intentions are translated into a set of objectives, laws,

policies, and programs, which in turn affect resource allocations, actions, and outputs” (p. 3). Following these conceptualizations, a large body of literature has contributed to the claims on both sides that policies are official as well as unofficial documents, regulations, laws, practices, and interpretations. The sections that follow briefly illustrate the official and unofficial nature of policy, the complexities related to it, the notion of practice as constituting policy, and the discursive nature of the policy.

Policies as Official and Unofficial Documents

In general, policies are understood as documented provisions or regulations that come from the macro governmental level or the state machinery. The most general perception towards the policy is that it is a set of documents produced at the higher level of bureaucracy or institutional leadership and that is circulated down to the implementing agencies or end users for obtaining the policy-intended goals. However, diverse understandings about policy still exist, which are mostly contested among scholars. In other words, the state rules, regulations that form binding legal frames are official policies while the localized practices that contribute to shaping the policy or policy formulation constitute the unofficial forms of policy. However, traditional policy research studies have largely documented the official nature of the policy. For instance, Dye (1992) claims policy as “whatever governments choose to do or not to do” (p. 2). While his definition highlights the official nature of policy, Cibulka (1994) thinks “official enactments of government and something as informal as practices” (p. 106) are policies. In the same way, Jones (2013) conceptualized policy as the “value-laden actions” (p. 3) including the “inactions of government” (p. 3).

Policies are, therefore, both official and unofficial guidelines and/or practices including non-actions or what is missing. For some (e.g., Rizvi & Lingard, 2009), policies are texts and processes, while for others (e.g., Ball & Exley, 2010; Fairclough, 1992) policies are specific discourses within and across their texts and processes. Similarly, Ball (1994) claims that

policies are texts and actions, words, and deeds. Corson (1988) adds to Ball's ideas and believes policies as complex messages, which might sound simple for authors but are routinely scrambled for implementors. He also acknowledges the existence of a larger gap between the policy framers and the contexts of implementations making the implementation itself challenging. All these conceptualizations reveal that anything officially stated or unofficially supported usually framed in the forms of documents or directions through the involvement of a plethora of people and processes from diverse contexts can be termed as policies. Because of intertwined social, historical, economic, and political components and relationships among several factors, scholars have realized the complexity in understanding the policy. Within this intertwined relationship of factors, discourses and assumptions which operate at the supranational level exert effects on how the broader factors work together in policy decisions (Olssen et al., 2004). In that, policymaking in national and local contexts are affected by contemporary forms of "heightened time/space compression" (Maguire, 2002, p. 262). Blommaert (2010b) thinks that interplay among material and symbolic ties have often impacted policymaking in unpredictable ways.

The abovementioned discussion reveals an often-contested nature of policy understanding, due to its interconnectedness with multiple interdisciplinary factors. This context demands understanding of policies within the wider socio-historical, sociocultural and socio-political contexts (Ball, 2005; May, 2001; Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 1991), which are nevertheless the confluence of both global and local orientations, or 'glocalization' (Choi, 2016).

Practice Constituting the Policy

There are scholarly arguments regarding practice contributing to inform policy directions. Olssen et al. (2004) conclude "policy as a politically, socially, and historically contextualized practice or set of practices" (p. 3), and these practices resonate the value-laden actions in the contexts of policy implementation (Jones, 2013). Those involved in the practice can be

termed as the policymakers or potential makers of policy (Ozga, 2000). While Codd (1988) understands policy as an official discourse of the state, Ozga (2000) argues from a practice perspective of the policy illustrating that people at the implementational level, i.e., the practitioners are not merely the receptors of policy rather they have the power to generate policy. This notion gives rise to the concept of bottom-up direction of the policy process. In this process, as Ball (1994) also acknowledges, the significant role played by the agency of policy actors. He further argues that their agency and the structural constraints they work in have an implicit relationship. Both Ozga (2000) and Ball (1994) agree that actors play a significant role in policy generation and policy execution at different levels of the educational systems. In case of language policy, Baldauf (2006) argues that decisions of the actors contribute to the development of new policy through micro-planning, where by micro-planning, he refers to “cases where businesses, institutions, groups, or individuals create what might be recognized as a language policy and plan to utilize and develop their language resources” (p. 964). Education policy research, therefore, requires “reflection on the formal construction of practice by policy” (Ozga, 2000, p. 6) which also puts importance on the role of actors in the practice of language policy and planning (Zhao, 2011). However, the explicit focus on individuals as actors cannot capture the broader picture of social power dynamics and associated cultural influences on their interpretations of the policy (Jones, 2013) as the practice itself is “sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable so that policy will be open to erosion and undercutting by action, the embodied agency of those people who are its objects” (Ball, 1994, pp. 10-11). In this context, policies are value-laden actions (Jones, 2013), in which the individuals are mobilized by several discourses emerging from multiple references and spaces.

The Discursive Nature of Policy

The policy texts or policy provisions are likely to have multiple interpretations, especially shaped by multiple discourses such as globalization, nationalism, and localization. It has also been claimed that individuals' orientations towards diverse discourses influence the way they enact the policies or generate the policies from the bottom. For instance, the colonial project in India produced linguistic-cultural alternations, as Macaulay had envisioned (Bhatt, 2005). This colonial discourse created a class of people, that is, "the Indian middle class, with...relatively easy access to English" (Ramanathan, 1999, p. 211). Therefore, the language planning and policy (LPP) processes are subject to multiple discourses emerging from diverse social and political dimensions. The multiple interpretations producing different outcomes can vary from the policy-makers' intentions, or the policy goals to implementers' understanding, and therefore their implementation.

Theoretically, policy is also understood as a process of mobilizing specific 'discourses' within or across its various texts and processes (Ball & Exley, 2010; Fairclough, 1992; Jones, 2013). Codd (1988) claimed "a policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite' 'for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (p. 239), and thereby proposed two basic conceptualizations of policy which include "policy as a text" and "policy as discourse" (Codd, 1998, p. 44). For Jones (2013) the discursive policy is "in a sense a scripted mixing and matching of cultural codes derived from (and deriving) the schooling context, community, traditions and practices" (p. 10). Any policy that emerges within the social context, for example, the MOI policy, experiences 'interpretations of interpretations' creating dilemmas in reforms (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1987).

Discourse has also been understood as a 'social practice' or in Foucault's term 'a regulated practice' (1972), which is determined by "a set of conventions associated with social

institutions” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 17), where he further claims that the role of language is “socially determined by variables such as the social identities of people interacting, their socially defined roles and social settings” (p. 17). In this study, the case of MOI is understood as a form of social phenomenon, thus a social action, a ‘social practice’ or a ‘regulated practice’, which is shaped, contested, and mediated by several discourses that emerge from the social dynamics of the respective context of policy formation and enactment. Such an understanding integrates discourses with practice. This discursive perspective in understanding language policy allows room for the exploration of “the roles, identities or subject positions” (Jones, 2013, p. 11) offered for relevant actors such as students, teachers, administrators, policymakers and parents directly involved in education policies, practices, and interpretations. The section that follows discusses the complex nature of policy understanding.

The Complexity of Policy Understanding

The two opposing concerns in policy understanding, i.e., the technocratic understanding of policy and practice as a policy, make complexity in conceptualization of policy. In that, the former, i.e., the technocratic perspective, refers to the direct and straightforward nature of the policy process, where the policy production takes place at the top-level policy committee/agency (such as Ministry of Education [MOE]) and is circulated down through its line agencies to the implementation spaces. This direction of the policy process is the most common and has traditionally been practiced as a multi-layered hierarchical process. In other words, this direction tends to be associated with actors’ roles equipped with significant power (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015). Whereas, the latter, i.e., the practice contributing to informing policy directions, refers to the condition that the people who are subject to policies (such as teachers, students, and their parents) can redirect the macro policies or even form their basic

policies which ultimately lead to modification of incoming policies. (Ball et al., 2012; Howlett, 2009; Ozga, 2000)

In general, the complexity in understanding policy is rooted in the fact that both conceptualizations mentioned above are intertwined with several social, historical, economic, and political components of the national and supranational contexts. While policies are “discursive processes that are complexly configured, contextually mediated and institutionally rendered” (Ball et al., 2012, p. 3), understanding and interpretation of them requires a through exploration of the contexts in which the policies are embedded and enacted. For instance, Poudel and Choi (2020) claimed that the MOI policy in Nepal’s multilingual context is largely affected by the socio-political structures and the agentic roles of the policymaking agencies and individuals, which ultimately has created diverse nature of interpretations of the MOI policy across the local level government institutions. Similar claims are also made by Ball et al., (2012) as “policy is complexly encoded in texts and artefacts and it is decoded (and recoded) in equally complex ways” (p. 3). In their perspective, which also echoes Cooper, et al. (2004) that the whole policy process beginning from formulation of policy agendas to policy interpretation are complex processes, as they involve role and contribution of a surfeit of individuals, and institutions resulting in the fluidity of messages communicated in the policy documents. Barbehon et al. (2015) echo such claims stating, “policymaking and policy cycle can together thus be understood as a linear process, following a clear, circular pattern and a predictable order of different states” (p. 241). Similarly, in a more political tone, Ozga (2000) thinks of policy as a process that involves “negotiation, contestation or struggle between different groups who may lie outside the formal machinery of official policymaking” (p. 2) and thereby requiring a compromise among competing interests and discourses of people stitched together (Taylor et al., 1997). These competing interests associated with individual and social specificities impact policy

production and implementation. Hence, understanding of policy as a process requires a consideration that it is impacted by historical contexts, individual's orientations (ideologies and identities), and local realities of the implementational contexts. The discussions above, i.e., the policy as practice and policy as discursive process imply that policy is an interactive process. The following section illustrates this concern.

The Interactive Nature of Policy

More importantly, policy researchers have long tried to capture both top-down and bottom-up approaches to bring together the macro-micro interactions into a common policy agenda to “overcome the macro-micro divide” (Tollefson & Pérez-Milans, 2018, p. 11). While the increasing literature has presented the messy, often contested relations among various stages, aspects, and actors of the policy process, it has challenged the traditional understanding of policy as a linear or unidirectional top-bottom process (see, Ball, 1994; Jones, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). It has been argued (e.g., Howlett, 2009; Poudel & Choi, 2021) that the whole range of implementation structures and the roles of the actors along the structural levels are to be considered to bring into better effects of policy reforms. This discussion leads towards understanding the nature of the interaction between the top-down and the bottom-up policy processes (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) which is increasingly discussed by LPP scholars in the recent years, usually shaped by the interplay of multiple factors at multiple levels of enactment (see Chapter VII).

Jones (2013) also understands policy as an interactive process including “a continuous cycle where it is made, re-made during implementation” (p. 8). Kenway (1990) also presents a similar view stating that there exists an interaction among diverse, competing, and unequal forces within civil society, the state, and associated discursive regimes during policy formulation and enactments. Acknowledging the evolving nature of the policy, Ball et al. (2012) stated “policy is not ‘done’ at one point in time; in our schools it is always a process

of ‘becoming’, changing from the outside in and the inside out” (p. 4). Hence, the interactive nature of policy can be elaborated further by the identification of two main directions of the policy process discussed above; policy directing the practice and practice constituting the policy. This notion positions the practitioners as “policymakers or potential makers of policy, and not just the passive receptacles of policy” (Ozga, 2000, p. 7). They may also contribute to the development of new policy through micro-planning and professional practice with their own efforts and contextualization within their institutional settings (Baldauf, 2005). This concern can be linked to the understanding of school practices (in)forming a policy, and accordingly the practice having a bottom-up effect in the policy process, making it more interactive than one directional flow from the top to the bottom.

These conceptualizations signal constant interactions and influences between the local, national, and global forces in education policymaking, both from the top-down and the bottom-up. While evolving through the interactions at multiple levels and contexts, the policies are influenced and constrained by time, funds, political supports, and other contextual specificities. In this process, compromises of several types take place at various socio-political tiers such as at the legislative parliament (in case of the federal states, at the central federal level (macro-political level moving down to provincial parliament to the local executive bodies) to the infra-micro level of interest groups and individuals (e.g., teachers, and students at the school level) (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). This indicates an interactive nature of the policy process in which the policy makers and policy actors (Zhao, 2011) have considerable room to act to have intended policy goals modified or implemented based on their social, cultural, and material constraints as well as their power relationship with the established socio-political and economic structures.

Although analysis of the policy process alone is not the core concern in this study, this policy literature informs of the complexity in policy understanding. The conventional scholarship in

policy studies understands policy as a top-down process (Chua & Baldauf, 2011) in which the government is portrayed as machinery for solving problems in which the agendas of policy reforms are set at the macro level and any potential contestations are dealt with carefully to ensure the right direction of the future consequences. Such a process was reported to be predominant in LPP practice in the 1960s (Kirkpatrick & Bui, 2016). During this period, language policy studies tended to focus on national language policies, nation-building, standardization, and officialization at the macrocosmic level. While with the recognition of the human rights movement in the UN declarations and member governments' binding responsibilities to integrate the issues of equity, rights, equality in their respective national policies, the attention to the micro-level needs, contexts, and dynamics gradually obtained attention for consideration in policy decisions. One of such concerns in the field of education was the MOI, which was debated across the social, cultural, and political agendas, especially in the plurilingual countries. The case of MOI in Nepal provides a vivid example of this evolutionary policy process in LPP (see Chapter IV) that witnessed the attempts of strengthening Nepali nationalism while also addressing competing interests of ethnically diverse populations, all of them agreeing on sustaining historical linguistic diversity in Nepal. Hence, understanding of language-in-education policies needs a careful consideration of the broader socio-political and economic agendas that the communities are facing with.

Conceptualization of Language-in-Education Policies

Language-in-education policies are the part of wider LPP discipline. Scholars (Schiffman, 1998; Schiffman & Ricento, 2006) believe in socially constructed nature of language policy, with a repository of ideas, attitudes, and prejudices shaping policy processes. Fairclough (1989, 2003) believes that language is a form of social practices and is produced by text and talk. It is in and through language, the social world is built or constructed, and so is the policymaking process in education that is intricately connected with social, cultural,

linguistic, and ideological orientations. The education field today is multi-layered, stretching from the local to the global (Lingard et al., 2005) with new priorities and concerns.

Language-in-education policymaking is also affected by those emerging concerns and cultures that are made up of fluid ideas, attitudes, and prejudices originating from multiple spaces in the increasingly superdiverse world (Vertovec, 2007).

Language-in-education policies, therefore, have underlying historical and social components (Baldauf, 2006) and interpretational and representational history (Ball, 2005) that are negotiated with a range of contextual specificities of the institutions and the roles of actors. In the same way, there is constant interaction among the wider circulating global forces and the local realities in policymaking and implementation. Hence, it is important to recognize the complex interplay among the federal, provincial, and school-level policy and practices and the factors impacting the language-in-education policy (Chapter VII elaborates this concern further).

While anthropologists of education (such as Collins & Blot, 2003; Wortham & Reyes, 2015) have productively examined the creation of dominant and subordinate identities caused by the LPP mechanisms of the national and local systems, the sociologists of education (Ball, 1998; Ball et al., 2012; Ball, 2005) have raised the issue of social class, and new forms of inequalities produced by education systems that adopted different languages, curricula, and materials. The language policy debates have further expanded with the gradual shrinking of the physical and geographical boundaries of language use, especially instigated by the heightened form of globalization (Singh et al., 2012; Spolsky, 2008). Therefore, the decision-making concerning language-in-education policies has been an important aspect of educational policy reforms. Besides, the global expansion of migration and flexible inter-state relationships has added more concerns on the inclusion (or exclusion) of languages in education. While the global mix of humans and their linguistic and cultural identities draw

attention to more inclusive and justifiable language-in-education policies, for example, adoption of national and local/ethnic languages as MOIs in education, there is an increasing trend of adopting EMI to meet the new forms of global competition in the internationalized marketplaces.

As LPP research has gone through a series of theoretical and methodological shifts over the decades (Hornberger et al., 2018), it is important to see the intersecting relationship among the factors (such as wider discourses, identities and the actors) that operate within the school contexts while putting the language-of-instruction policies into action. It has also been reported that the relationship between factors and the associated actors have been positioned at multiple layers, with their multiple roles, for which Ricento and Hornberger (1996) proposed the LPP onion– an onion-shaped multi-layered structural frame to reveal the ideological and implementational spaces in which “local actors implement, interpret, resist and transform policy initiatives” (Hornberger et al., 2018, p. 157). These diverse processes taking place around interpretation, appropriation of language policies in education require language policy scholars to identify the intersectionality of ideologies, discourses, and the roles of actors at specific contexts influencing LPP processes, such as MOI (See Chapter VII).

The Conceptualization of MOI Policy

The MOI policies have received great deal of attention in LPP scholarship worldwide (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018), especially due to the heightened expansion of EMI globally (Dearden, 2014). The MOI debates began with concerns on monolingual and bilingual approaches of instruction in North America in the 1970s and gradually moved to the other parts of the world, basically in the territories where colonial, post-colonial, and nationalistic ideologies were embedded into the political, economic, and educational reforms.

Internationally, a substantial focus on mother tongues as MOI took place following the EFA

Jomtien Conference (1990) which appealed to the nation-states to consider learner identities and pedagogical values associated with mother tongue as MOI in early education. Research studies in the early 1990s revealed evidence that showed advantages for MOI policies that include use of learners' mother tongues, often in bilingual/multilingual approaches, not only in primary schools but also in secondary schools and adult education (Auerbach, 1995). Although some countries (such as the Americas - see Coronel-Molina & McCarty, 2019) favoured the use of indigenous languages as MOI, however, with the global spread of English (see Choi, 2016; Dearden, 2014; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), such types of attempts have been less successful in other multilingual countries such as Nepal, India, and Malaysia. The English-only ideology across the multilingual educational setting has been accelerated by the forces external to the classroom more strongly than before (Auerbach, 2016). As languages are increasingly perceived to have utilitarian values (Kan & Adamson, 2016), the decision-making in MOI is "no longer determined wholly by policy actors within the national state, but are forged through a range of complex processes that occur in transnational and globally networked spaces" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009, p. 22). While the education policy today has been stretching from the local to the global (Lingard et al., 2005), the priorities and concerns across several spaces connected with the policy have posed tensions in decision-making in language education. Perhaps due to the involvement of multiple actors, forces, and orientations, language-in-education policymaking has become more complex. Hence, understanding of 'why' (what factors), and 'how' as well as 'what' of the MOI policy will help illustrate the embedded complexities involved in the implementation of the policy in diverse contexts. The research questions in this study broadly relate to these concerns.

The Shapers of MOI Policies

Scholars have identified various factors that shape policymaking, which I have termed as "shapers" here. For instance, Howlett (2009) conceptualized actors, institutions, and ideas,

and Choi (2018) identified policy features, people, and contextual features as the critical factors shaping policy implementation and impact. Choi's framework indicates the iterative nature of the policy process and recognizes the complexity in implementing language-in-education policies due to the networked relationships among the factors. A similar interplay of several factors shaping language policies has also been presented by Hult (2010).

Among many, factors such as aspiration for better life chances and the protection of linguistic identity relate to individual and institution's language policy choices. When the concern of MOI arises, choice between English, national languages and local languages (where applicable) are debated. Research literature has revealed that there is an increasing tendency of people expecting the education systems or schooling practices to offer opportunities to learn in dominant language(s) to attain or maintain the dominant position in the society (Duff, 2017). Contrary to Graddol's (2006) prediction that the number of EFL learners to decline around the second decade of the century, the research studies reveal an increasing trend of learning English which has negatively impacted on motivation to learn other languages than English (Ushioda, 2017), and the same has been the choice of the parents. The root of higher motivation in learning English is that "learning the languages spoken by people from dominant groups will give their children the best opportunities for jobs and economic success, especially if they can acquire native-like proficiency" (Benson, 2019, p. 35). In many societies with multilingual social fabrics, where the minority languages are less likely to have heightened social and educational benefits, the tendency to acquire the most dominant national or international language would seem natural, as people have associated the proficiency in that language(s) with brighter life chances, higher social mobility, better employment prospects at the global level, opportunities for better and quality higher education, and chances to living a modern/urban life. Several processes of globalization such as migration on a global scale, the unprecedented increment in urban and semi-urban livings

in many countries have attracted scholarly attention to the issues of the language of instruction and its impact on the life chances of students.

These diverse factors discussed previously are situated in historical, socio-cultural, and contextual constraints influence the MOI policies in all polities. Within the situated constraints and conditions, while some institutions and governments accept to include minority languages in education, some others might refuse them citing issues of national as well as other social complexity issues (Spolsky, 2008). Based on the reading of the literature, I have identified several factors that shape MOI policies, and have thematized them as discourses, actor roles, and contexts (all of which are discussed in detail with relevant sub-themes). I have emphasized that these components are distinct but have intricate relationships in shaping policies and guiding the subsequent practices. The notions in this thematically presented literature has informed the findings and analysis reported in Chapter V, VI and VII in this thesis.

Discourses

MOI policies as being influenced by ideological and discursive constructs (McCarty, 2004) deserve critical scrutiny in every attempt for educational reform. From an ideological and discursive perspective, research in LPP needs to reveal the links between trajectories of individuals' life chances, their identity, and the socio-cultural contexts in which a particular language is positioned within an ongoing educational, political, legal, and media discourse. The perceptions and ideologies of the individuals and institutions about languages and the way the decision-making takes place are conceptualized broadly as discourses. The educational discourses equally relate to wider cultural, social, and ideological orientations, including the identities of the communities and actors concerned since education or schooling itself is implicitly embedded in the social fabrics of the respective communities. Also, as Ball (1994) states, most educational policies are struggled over and struggled with by those people

who are its object or those who form them or are targeted by reform. Taylor (1997) argued that analysis of a policy requires understanding of the linkage between contexts texts and the policy consequences. Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2011) state, “policies are not simply about doing things differently, but policies always have an object of intervention and subjects of focus in their discursive formation” (p. 74). Similarly, Tollefson and Perez-Milans (2018) appeal language policy researchers to explore “the interface between individual’s life trajectories and the culture and practices of the classroom, the street, the playground, or the home, and how these are linked with national and international ideologies, discourses, and policies” (p. 8) to understand the holistic picture of how the languages are perceived and placed to give life to them in the respective contexts. The sub-sections that follow continue to expand this concern, exposing the very intricate relationship between the discourses and contexts, that are constitutive to each other. Although there are several discourses in the field of MOI, I have synthesized them into thematic categories such as local languages vs English, commodity as a decision-making criterion, and globalization as an imperative, which deserve separate discussion here.

Local Languages vs English. Competing ideologies concerning the use of local/national languages vis-à-vis English have dominated the LPP scholarship in recent years. Scholars (such as Blommaert, 2007, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006; Woolard, 2016) claim that language ideologies are socially, politically, morally, and culturally embedded metalinguistic assumptions about language and their role in social life in a given society. In a similar vein, Irvine (1989) mentions it as “the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (p. 255). In other words, ideologies of languages lie within the socio-cultural dynamics of humanity, shaped by individual and group morale and interests. Currently, competing ideologies about linguistic homogeneity (due to wider use of English) versus heterogeneity (with a focus on

the use of local/indigenous languages) have dominated the language policy discourse.

Political notions such as ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic democracy (May, 2018) emerged for promoting social and political stability responding to the probable conflicts on the grounds of minority linguistic rights. Such ideologies have been the foundations for language policies of nation-states worldwide (Tollefson & Perez-Milans, 2018). In many cases, the nation-states are understood as the shapers of the language ideologies due to their policies that promote only certain languages from among many other languages. However, it is also equally important to explore how the language communities themselves have formed ideologies about their own languages.

In his research in Cameroon, Chiatoh's (2014) concluded that "decades of educational colonization and [colonial] language dominance have produced inferiority complexes so that the local or indigenous language [...] because of their unofficial status, are perceived as liabilities rather than assets, especially within formal education" (p. 32). Such a claim indicates the growing emotional and functional detachment of people from their languages. This study also echoes such trends (see Chapter VI and VII). More importantly, tensions between polyglossic language practices and monoglossic ideologies that are often espoused by top-down language policies have been reported by ethnographic LPP studies. For instance, Groff (2017) analyzed linguistic diversity in Uttarakhand of India from a language policy perspective and found that plurilingual language practices take place in the multilingual contexts which go beyond the expected official language policy implementation frameworks. She claimed, "at the classroom level, ideological space for multilingualism provides some implementational space not afforded in official policy" (p. 157). This indicates how ideologies formed at the national level can be constrained or expanded at the local level with orientations to different language ideologies formed within existing social and pragmatic constraints. It is, therefore, important to study how the teachers and students in the

multilingual pedagogical contexts unfold the national and/or provincial language policies interpreting and appropriating the macro policies into micro-practices in schools. Such a study could be completed through microscopic analysis of the school contexts, the discourses, attitudes, and actions of the relevant stakeholders. As people have ideological and emotional ties with the languages they own, a change in language policies that either promote or relegate the status would mean a lot, basically concerning their identity issues.

Critical scholars (e.g., Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Hornberger et al., 2018) claim that policies often reflect the dominant groups' interests and ideologies, generally supported by the state policymaking apparatus that contribute to reproducing unequal power relationships in the respective societies. More importantly, tensions between heteroglossic language practices on the ground and monoglossic policies or vice versa have been reported in LPP studies. It has also been observed (see Hornberger et al., 2018) that “many linguistically minoritized groups face the dilemma of claiming their rights to maintain their linguistic practices, while at the same time they promote purist or standard language ideologies that have oppressed them in the first place” (p. 168). Behind such dilemma might be the case that “language is no longer important just as an emblem of national identity, but also as a component of individuals' professional selves and their socio-economic standing” (Pujolar, 2018, p. 488), which is again a matter of identity. Review of the literature shows that there needs an exploration of how language policy discourses on MOI institutionalize and even legitimize the existing language practices and ideologies. This study attempts to fit into this major concern.

Ethnic/indigenous identity. While global and interstate forces have affected the arenas of ethnolinguistic patterns and cultural practices, decision-making in adopting the local/indigenous languages as MOI is extremely complex because the communities in modernity are mobile, intersecting, and connected with fuzzy and multiple boundaries (Wei, 2018). Globalization generated “new forms of identity that allow one to ‘escape’ the

‘confines’ of more localized (and by extension, fixed) identities, including the linguistic ones” (May, 2014, p. 216). In the pretext of such fluidity and loose boundaries across ethnic groups using either English, Nepali, or local/indigenous languages as MOI has been one of the sites of power struggles, especially between different traditionally inherited linguistic groups residing in certain territories or having roots to certain ethnic origins. Due to expanding superdiversity across the globe (Vertovec, 2007), there is a call for a reassessment of the traditional place – or ethnic-based definitions of communities (Tollefson, 1991) and their identity concerns. In Nepal, during the post-democratic period (after 1950), identity became an “anchor for a wide variety of gender, religious, linguistic, ethnic and caste-based mobilizations” (Gurung, 2009, p. 94). To put it simply, the democratic political context contributed to the evolution of identity discourse. For instance, following the establishment of multiparty democracy in 1990 (see Chapter V), the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) was registered as one of the umbrella organizations of indigenous nationalities with the initiation of ethnic activists who spoke openly about ethnic identity. This initiation coincided with global recognition of indigeneity as the UN, in 1994, declared the 1990s as a Decade of Indigenous Peoples. This global movement further reinforced Nepal’s indigenous communities’ struggle for identity, and consequently was politically recognized. Following this, in 2002, the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities was formed by the government with its Act recognizing the 59 nationalities in Nepal. Gurung (2009) noted that this initiation and the Nepal Government’s ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 169 on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples increased Nepal’s reputation in the global space on addressing the indigenous issues, and thereby embedded the linguistic identity.

Commodity as a Decision-making Criterion. Language in contemporary society plays an increasingly central role in the economy (Pujolar, 2018) due to which it has been highly

commodified, especially in the education sector. Commodification is a process of establishing economic value to any object, tangible or intangible, through straightforward purchase (I pay, I get) (Pujolar, 2018). Some scholars (Codó, 2018; Del Percio, 2018; Heller, 2003; Rojo, 2010) have reported that forces such as neoliberalism, and globalization have contributed to the reconfiguration of the role of language(s) in people's lives. English, for example, has been perceived as a capital within the economics of languages (Grin, 1996; Kamwangamalu, 2004, 2011), and nominated as a 'corporate language' (Lønsmann, 2011; Lønsmann & Mortensen, 2018; Sanden, 2020) in language policies in Northern Europe as well. Such claims are consistent with the concept of capital claimed by Bourdieu and Thompson (1991, as cited in Kamwangamalu, 2011) as "within the framework of the economics of language, linguistic products such as language, language varieties, and accents are seen not only as goods or commodities to which a market assigns a value but as signs of wealth or capital" (p. 895). so, the choice of a language as MOI (especially English) has been associated with such economic value. For instance, Kuchah (2016) identified that parental motivation towards economic and utilitarian values of the dominant language(s) in society has played an instrumental role in increasing EMI in schools. A similar situation was reported in India as well, where investment in learning English is perceived as worthwhile for potential economic gains in the future (Bhattacharya, 2013).

Similarly, the processes of a globalized new economy have also played an important role in the commodification of language and identity, sometimes separately and sometimes together (Heller, 2003). It seems that in many plurilingual societies, ideologies on the protection of linguistic identity, and the pursuance of economic benefits from the dominant language(s) exist hand in hand. The generation of this situation has also been attributed to the effects of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is "a specific ideology that posits that economic growth and stability is best achieved if governments abstain from intervening in how private companies

and entrepreneurs operate” (Pujolar, 2018, p. 488). The emergence of this ideology has contributed to the reduction of state intervention in linguistic matters and has encouraged the involvement of the private sector to fast-track linguistic commodification. In other words, the neoliberal hegemonic political/economic ideology has shifted the goals of educational systems from the production of national citizens to productive workers for global competitive marketplaces.

Globalization as an Imperative. Globalization refers to the “perception that economic, political, military, demographic, cultural and environmental processes are intimately interconnected at a planetary scale to the point that most social issues cannot be understood by attending solely to their local circumstances” (Pujolar, 2018, p. 488). Although the word ‘globalization’ has become a buzz word recently, Singh et al., (2012) claim that it has been well discussed in many different ways in political discourses of colonization, missionary activities, and global as well as regional alliances such as NATO, League of Nations, United Nations Organization, etc. Rizvi and Lingard (2010) also suggest that globalization can be understood in three different ways; an empirical fact that consists of profound shifts, as an ideology that consists of power and political interests, and as imaginary that shapes people’s identity. Ricento (2018) thinks globalization is synonymously understood as a pursuit of “economic liberalization”, or “westernization or Americanization, or “internet revolution” (the proliferation of new information technology) (p. 222). The arguments of the scholars mentioned above present the consensus on the notion that globalization is driven by an ideology of ‘free-market capitalism. This helped almost everything commodified, including the English language.

The rise of globalization of capitalism and the emergence of neoliberal ideology is traced back to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). Following this historical turn, the horizons of the internationally networked market expanded so that the transnational

actors had a greater share in policymaking and policy execution globally (Mundy & Ghali, 2009). As a result, policymakers in education today have increasingly participated in an emergent global policy community, working through locally, nationally, regionally, internationally, transnationally, and globally networked relations (Lingard et al., 2005). Due to such engagement, the global practices have impacted the policies pertinent to formal schooling through an enlargement of the private sector and trans-nationalization of educational institutions. Such trends put the English language as their means for communication and cooperation forcing national contexts and institutions to accommodate their programs in English medium. Hornberger and Vaish (2009) conducted a research in India, Singapore and South Africa exploring the impact of globalization in multilingual language policies and school linguistic practices. From an ecological and sociolinguistic approach, they depicted tensions between multilingualism and English across all three national contexts, in terms of their policy and classroom-level practices. They concluded that while large numbers of parents seek to educate their children in EMI schools, simultaneous promotion of multilingual classroom practices can work as a resource to facilitate learning of standard English as well as cultivating the knowledge of their own ethnic/indigenous/local languages.

However, in LPP literature and sociolinguistics, a range of contradictory views about the relationship between the English language and globalization have been noticed. For instance, while Phillipson (1992) warns off many harmful effects of the global spread of English on many other languages and cultures (e.g., linguistic imperialism), Van Paris (2011) states that English is no longer an imperial language, rather it is a global lingua franca. Amidst such contradictory views, there are growing agreements in the understanding that learning of English, the global lingua franca, improves life chances and strengthens the chances of upward social mobility of the people (Pennycook, 1998; Ricento, 2018). Echoing the second

belief, as Manan et al., (2019) reported in their study in Pakistan that parents' perception of English as the only panacea for obtaining quality education for their children has contributed to the expansion of EMI in the school contexts. Their claim also justifies the acceleration of EMI across plurilingual contexts. Globally, decision-making regarding MOI policy is affected by these diverse and contradictory arguments, and therefore the attempts for the maintenance of indigenous languages has been troubled (Chiatoh, 2014; Davis, 1999, 2014). Tollefson and Tsui (2004) stated: "MOI policies are not formed in isolation, rather emerge in the context of powerful social and political forces, including globalization, migration and demographic changes, political conflict, changes in governments, shifts in the structure of local economies and elite composition" (p. 283). In a similar vein, Appadurai (1996) spoke of forces from several spaces such as ethnoscaples, mediascapes, techonoscapes fiancescapes and ideoscapes that have heightened globalization which has eventually contributed towards spreading the transnational links, globalized economy, and globalized culture into national and local spaces. In other words, several forces emerging from ethnic discourses, media, technology, economy and ideology have direct or indirect influences on the language policy decisions and choices in the micro spaces of education.

The other force, closely related to globalization, and often taken synonymously in academia, i.e., neoliberalism, has impacted the attitudes and perceptions of people about their native/indigenous languages and English. Neoliberalism refers to "a specific ideology that posits that economic growth and stability is best achieved if governments abstain from intervening in how private companies and entrepreneurs operate" (Pujolar, 2018, p. 488). Such an ideology that advances the idea of reduction of state intervention in business and other public services, also contributes to the promotion of some languages and restriction of other languages. Therefore, neoliberalism is considered to be the hegemonic political/economic ideology that drives globalization (ibid), and that has shifted the goals of

educational systems from the production of national citizens to productive workers for global competitive market places. Both the powerful global forces, viz. the globalization and neoliberalism established English as having multifaceted values such as a tool for economic prosperity and opportunity. Guest (1883, as cited in Pennycook, 1998) stated, “English was rapidly becoming the great medium of civilization, the language of law and literature to the Hindoo, of commerce to the African, of religion to the scattered islands of the Pacific” (p. 133). He highlighted the multi-faceted values that the English language brings with it as a part of globalization, and the perception of ‘there is no alternative (TINA)’ continues to expand across people and communities, especially in the non-English-dominant countries (Ricento, 2018).

The Role of Actors

The notion of ‘actor’ is one of the key issues in LPP discourse (Zhao, 2011). Cooper (1989) proffered an overarching question “what *actors* attempt to influence what *behaviours* of which *people* for what *ends* under what *conditions* by what *means* through what decision-making *processes* with what *effect*?” (p. 98). This question has highlighted the role of actors in language policymaking and implementation, and it deserves context-specific research where the MOI phenomenon might have been handled or driven by various actors based on their localized ideological as well as pragmatic priorities.

In general, individual(s) or groups with their various defined or undefined capacities working in the frame of socio-political structures play substantial roles as actors in education policy generation and implementation. Within the multidimensional and multifaceted nature of policymaking (Rist, 1994; Weiss, 1982), diverse actors (such as national and transnational actors) and agencies play significant roles in forming and executing the policies. The major shift in the world economy and interstate systems that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s have increased the influence of international and transnational policy actors on domestic decision-

making processes in education (Lingard et al., 2005; Lingard, 2018; Mundy & Ghali, 2009). Their roles as actors along the layers of the policy ecology contribute to the reform process in many countries including Nepal. For instance, the international and transnational organizations (e.g., the British Council, American Embassy, Australian Embassy, etc.) have been directly and indirectly supporting the promotion of the English language in educational spaces (see Pradhan, 2018), which can be taken as an instance of how transnational forces can contribute to the spread of language(s) through their visible and/or invisible impact on the policymaking and practices. The policy impacts for promotion of the English dominance continue through their support in English language teaching/learning programmes. The “English for Teaching and Teaching for English (ETTE)” phase 1 and 2, which was implemented in association with the National Center for Educational Development (NCED), Department of Education (DoE), Global Action Nepal (GAN) can be taken as one of the examples on how the state and non-state actors contribute to the education system that values the dominant language (Pradhan, 2018) (For further details see <https://bit.ly/3akqozJ>).

Besides the global actors, actors at the national and local level contribute to the promotion of certain languages through their “involvement in implementation, interpretation, resistance, and transformation of policy initiatives” (Hornberger et al., 2018, p. 157) based on their contextual constraints. The ETTE programme above provides an example of the collaborative work of the actors in English language promotion in Nepal. It is, therefore, imperative to capture “the local actors’ perspectives and roles” (Zhao, 2011; Zhao & Baldauf, 2012) for understanding the implementation of MOI policies in the contexts where ethnolinguistic discourses have emerged against the discourse of globalization. In the implementation spaces, as Bailey and Mosher (1968; as cited in Cooper, et al., 2004) stated: “competing interest groups, legislative forerunners, academic colloquies, bureaucratic innovations, and personal political and administrative initiatives” (p. 22) collate to shape policy or block it. According

to Zhao and Baldauf (2012), these actors belong to one of the four categories, viz. people with expertise, people with power, people with influence, and people with interest, and their roles are likely to distribute across several layers of the policy process and implementation. In that process, while enacting their agency, they are likely to influence one or the many stages of the policy process: initiation, involvement, influence, intervention, and implementation, for accomplishing language planning goals in their respective contexts. Besides, while undergoing the policy process, tensions are likely to emerge among diverse actors and their roles, which influences the decision-making in policy implementations. This concern, that is, the tensions and interplays in agentic actions of the individuals and institutions have been well elaborated in Chapter VII.

Claims have been made that the private sector, as well as the professional groups and organizations, have promoted the EMI in school education in Nepal. For instance, Bhatta and Budhathoki (2013) reported that the public preference for private schools “largely stems from the impression created by private schools that they are inherently superior to their public counterparts and can expand the life chances and opportunities of those who attend them” (p. 3). Similarly, the language of instruction and performability have been consistently correlated to EMI schools outperforming the public schools in the national competitive examinations (such as SEE [Secondary Education Examination] and SLC [School Leaving Certificate examination]). These attractions and motivations have strengthened the public as well as local government orientations towards shifting the public schools to EMI (Poudel & Choi, 2021). This has made the parents, local-level policymakers, as well as local intellectuals, believe that shifting to EMI would enhance the quality of education, and therefore compete with the flourishing private school education in their local contexts. For instance, in an all-party meeting organized by Bal Secondary School in Badganga of Kapilvastu district of Nepal, all the parents expressed their commitment to support in all forms (cash and kind) for

the school to educate in English medium (<https://bit.ly/2P3KIDn>, retrieved on 18th April 2021). In the meeting, both the chairman of the School Management Committee and the Head of the Ward expressed their commitment to facilitate and support the school to fully shift to EMI. Graddol (2006) reported parental pressure is one of the twin drivers for the incessant growth of English in schools, the other being government ambitions for a country to be bilingual to attend to the processes of modernization and globalization. Other scholars (Baldauf et al., 2010; Coleman, 2011; Jenkins, 2017) claim that the English language being a global lingua franca, a common language between people who do not share the same native language equally contributed to promoting this as an alternative language for non-English-dominant countries. For instance, reporting the case of Hong Kong, Tollefson and Tsui (2018) concluded that parental demands, as well as private-sector resistance, were the reasons for MOI shift from Chinese Medium Instruction (CMI) to EMI in Hong Kong schools, and the same was supported by the government with the intention of ‘fine-tuning’ of the language education policy.

It can be concluded that the choice of MOI is not only encapsulated within the broader economic, social, political agenda but also on the learning performance measured through assessment mechanisms at the national and local level. With the invisible pressure exerted by the private schools and visible pressure from parents, many of the public schools had to shift their MOI into English, and this trend is increasing exponentially across the country, with the collective support of the parents and other related stakeholders. It seems that the MOI itself is one of the “hot cakes” for the private and public schools’ competition on school education.

Contexts

As language policy is a context-specific non-generalizable field (Canagarajah, 2006; Lo Bianco, 2010), it is crucial to understand such policy through broader historical, political, and socio-cultural configurations. The concerns such as ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘how’ the language

has been used for what purpose are usually contextualized. The context itself can be enacted, negotiated, and made sense of in situated discursive practices across space and time (Perez-Milans, 2018) which facilitates to conceptualize the rationale for the prevailing language policy of a community. Understanding the context facilitates visualizing the interaction among complimentary or contesting ideological or instrumental forces associated with language policy. Ricento (2000) claims that understanding ‘why’ certain language(s) have a higher status compared to the other requires exploration of the connections between community attitudes, engagements, and language policies. In other words, putting the LPP discourse in specific contextual settings provides a micro understanding of inequalities and conflicts among languages and language learners’ identity (see Gao, 2018) in the educational policy processes.

Ball et al. (2012) realized “the material, structural and relational contexts of schooling need to be incorporated into policy analysis to make better sense of policy enactment at the institutional level” (p. 148). These contexts and school practices have mutually inclusive relationships in such a way that any contextual change influences the subsequent educational practices in the community. Since the ethnic and linguistic diversities, the socio-cultural patterns and institutional structures allow or deny the use of the language(s), the political interests of both minority as well as dominant groups or communities influence decision-making concerning language use in education. In that, initiatives for bilingual or multilingual education face with localized socio-political obstacles and debates. For example, in the polities with colonial histories (viz. India, Hong Kong, etc.), EMI has been easily promoted by the governments and weakly resisted by the civilians compared to some of the countries with non-colonial histories (viz. China, Nepal, Japan, etc.). The notion here is that histories of varied types, linguistic and cultural diversities, religious and social structures, and changing landscapes of language use collectively constitute a context that dictates the language policy.

In linguistically diverse contexts, some languages are likely more equal than others creating more often hierarchical than neutralized structures (Piller, 2016), which ultimately form the heart of power processes in the environments with super-diversity (Blommaert, 2010a; Vertovec, 2007; Wiley, 2013). In contemporary societies, primarily the English language has occupied the ‘hyper-central’ position (De Swaan, 2001) among other colonial languages (such as French and Spanish). Although there is a massive population migration, emergence of the national ethnic and linguistic identities, and formation of several regional networks and unions, English has continued to be the most preferred language (Kuteeva, 2020). Kuteeva, in her study in a Swedish University, concluded that the notions such as power relations, group dynamics, social integration, and learning collectively contributed to the conceptualization of English as a standard language, lingua franca, and a part of translingual practice (Canagarajah, 2012). Hence, the choice of English as the MOI could be much driven by the motivation of people, and their power relationships which also translate in the form of language policies in their respective social and educational contexts. For example, the desire to join the ‘elite’ group dynamics, people (including those from local or indigenous ethnolinguistic communities) might ascribe superior values to the super-central language(s) or the dominant languages, that indirectly (re)produces the ‘deficit’ ideology towards the minority ethnic/indigenous languages. Additionally, the current surge in the use of English in science and technology, media, and internationalization efforts for higher education across the world has placed this language in a superior position compared to the other languages. So, it has contributed to the promotion of EMI over other languages as MOI in the multilingual school contexts. Several studies have also concluded that every EMI context consists of its own characteristics (Doiz et al., 2013) and has its own language regimes (Busch, 2012).

Another important contextual constraint for language promotion is the historical social structure in the communities. There is always a dialectical relationship between the human

agency (individual action) and social structures (Choi, 2019) in which the actions are produced. Structures are basically envisioned as both the medium and the result of human actions (Tollefson, 1991), and are likely to exert influence on the policies that either adhere to or resist them. Social structures can be formed based on class and/or the castes/ethnicities. Haidar's (2019) study in Pakistan, in which the data were collected through interviews with administrators, teachers and students from four different types of school, concluded that instruction in English language prepared the students for variant roles, helped them develop different linguistic resources and social capital which ultimately contributed towards perpetuation of the conventional class structure in the society. Another study in Spanish public university conducted by Dafouz (2018) the data from university lecturers found that EMI had enhanced the lecturers' linguistic and social capital providing the younger ones with enhanced "international professional identity and a promising academic future. These studies informed that EMI has influenced the social capitalization of individuals at school as well as higher education levels at different sociolinguistic contexts such as Pakistan and Spain. Although I presented the examples of these two contexts, studies (e.g., Choi, 2019; Hamid & Jahan, 2015; Bhattacharya, 2013; Poudel & Choi, 2021) have presented similar social capitalization of English in other contexts such as South Korea, Bangladesh, India and Nepal. As the contemporary neoliberal economy has functioned to widen the class division (Block, 2018), it has also impacted the language policymaking in education. Similarly, in the Hindu system, for example, the social structures are primarily formed based on the traditional caste hierarchies (*Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra*) in which Sanskrit obtained an important position, especially as a religious language. To elaborate, within this socio-cultural structure, some languages (e.g., Sanskrit and Nepali in Nepal, and Sanskrit/Hindi in India) are partially associated with the social constructs of caste/ethnicity. This is the reason that the case of the relationship between language and socio-cultural structure in Nepal is typically

different from those discussed in other capitalist societies. Exploration of this situated context will contribute to the existing literature in LPP. At the same time, speaking English could be a prestige issue for people in some communities, and could probably be an indicator of social mobility, similar to those reported in India, Bangladesh, and Malaysia. (Bhattacharya, 2013; Hamid et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2018). In all these country contexts, language has become one of the arenas that is struggled with by different groups to maintain the social order or hierarchies, and systemic pressure to learn English continued as a part of the struggle for obtaining the higher social status and mobility. It is sometimes argued that this struggle is led by dominant groups in the societies gaining control over languages (Fairclough, 1989; Tollefson, 1991). For instance, in Nepal, historically ruling elites had held the power so they exercised an invisible politics of privileging their own language (i.e., Nepali), and deliberately ignored the issues of the minority and ethnic languages to promote the languages of their choice (Giri, 2009). Therefore, Nepali (the national language) has been attributed to strengthening the *Khas-Aryan*² hegemony over other ethnic/indigenous groups (Gurung, 2009). Although the boundaries of the traditional divisions and hierarchies have become more flexible, some residual impacts are still functional in contemporary policymaking and practices.

In conclusion, the above discussion has three foci; discourses, actors, and contexts, which I have identified as the driving forces for MOI policy formulation and implementation.

However, I assume that the degree of prevalence of those factors for guiding MOI policy formation and enactment would certainly vary in diverse historical and socio-political contexts (illustrated in Chapters V and VI). It is, therefore, relevant to understand the role of

² Khas-aryan are the Indo-Aryan ethnolinguistic groups, including both upper-class *Khas* (basically the Brahmin and Kshatriya) and lower status occupational *Khas* groups (blacksmiths, tailors, and leather workers). The upper-class *Khas* groups were supposed to be the most dominant and ruling groups of the country for long, and their language was Nepali (also known as the *Khas bhasa*)

actors' agency (individuals and collectivities such as parents, teachers, students, schools, and the local governments), the circulating discourses (such as globalization, nationalism, and ethnicity), and situated contexts (such as largely multilingual, largely monolingual or bilingual communities) in MOI policymaking and implementation in diverse educational contexts. However, understanding both the processes of language policy formulations and their enactment in plurilingual societies is complex. The section that follows illustrates such complexity.

Complexities in MOI Policy Implementation

Abundant literature in LPP has highlighted the complexities and challenges in the implementation of MOI policy, especially in the multilingual contexts where several competing ideologies regarding international, national, and ethnic/indigenous languages exist simultaneously. Studies (Choi, 2018; Kuchah, 2016; Simpson, 2017; Tollefson & Tsui, 2003) have reported complexities due to the overlapping and dialogical relationships among the contemporary discourses, the involvement of actors, and the diverse contexts of implementations. Adamson and Feng (2013) in their study in ten provinces of China concentrated on the models of implementation of multilingual policies, and found that while different provinces practiced diverse forms of trilingual education, there remained tensions in the context of policy implementation. Their study also reported prevalence of consensus among key stakeholders regarding potential benefits of trilingual education, which is also the case in many other multilingual countries regarding promotion of multilingualism. This research has adopted the tools used in their study, as the current study resonates such conditions of complexity in decision-making regarding the language choice in education. Although the context of China and Nepal differ politically, the language-in-education issues are similar since English continues to be promoted as a foreign language and has been expanding as one of the preferred MOI in both contexts. Conclusions have also been made

concerning the messy as well as incoherent relationships among the wider LPPs and grounded practices. Moreover, due to socioeconomic junctures (Heller, 2018), ideological shifts and contextual metropolises, and global-local tensions (Choi, 2016), the decision-making on MOI has been further complicated. The choices to be made from international, national, and local languages, with concomitant tensions concerning linguistic hegemony, identity, and social equality issues have caused further complications (Kan & Adamson, 2016). As LPP develops within the interaction of language practices, language ideologies, and management practices (O'Rourke et al., 2018; Spolsky, 2009), such interaction forms a “nexus of practice” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 12). The implementation of language-in-education policy can be taken as a nexus of practice, a form of social action, that brings discourses, actors, and contexts into an interactive and integrative framework. More importantly, the nexus of practice is largely fluid, and in that case, the phenomenon itself should be understood in a contemporary moment. In LPP, the nexus can be understood as an intersection, or coming together, of language policymaking, interpretation, and/or implementation. Analysis of a policy and its implementation should capture this relationship both within and across the scales. The scales can range from individual to sociopolitical spaces. Hult (2010) states “if the implementation of educational language policy were taken as a nexus of practice, relevant scales where social actions could occur might include the state legislature, teacher training programmes in universities and other institutions, schools, and classroom, among others” (p. 218). In other words, a collection of actions together in those scales forms a nexus of practice. Unraveling the nexus might show where to work on if to shift the balancing point. Some other scholars (e.g., Blommaert, 2010a; Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; Hult, 2010) take scales as the categories of practice, which permit the researchers to understand complex as well as fluid relationships among language, agents and the relevant contexts (also see Gu, 2021). The current dissolution of “old social inequalities into the new diversity of milieus,

subcultures, lifestyles, and ways of living” (Flick, 2009, p. 12) has reformed the roles of languages in many cases, including the choice of MOI. Hence, the literature shaping this study consists of the cross-cutting issues and exploration of scalar relationships among the circulating discourses, actors, and the contextual specificities about the enactment of MOI policy.

Besides, there is a growing body of scholarly work that has attempted to analyze how discourses circulate across the language policy cycle (Canagarajah, 2006) and how actors position themselves vis-à-vis such discourses to open up or narrow down ideological spaces for the use of certain languages or linguistic varieties (Block, 2018; Johnson, 2011). Research literature informs that there are some complexities formed within nested relationships among the ideologies and discourses, actors, and their respective contextual specificities. Similarly, the complexities are situated within the historical and structural trajectories and are driven by varied actors with their diverse roles ascribed within the socio-historical structures. For instance, Choi (2018) identifies confronting policies and policy trajectories, actors’ roles, and discourses while taking up implementation of any well-intended policies. Similarly, Hult (2015) mentions the need to explore the relationship between social issues that are often complex and mediated by a confluence of factors from individual to sociopolitical scales. These concerns also appeal the LPP researchers to explore language issues from a broader perspective for in-depth understanding of where and how the global, as well as local societal forces, intersect (or separate). These concerns are relevant to the issues emerging around MOI policies and practices. Some of such issues are: value systems (language rights vs economic rights), structural patterns (class and castes), parallel policy trajectories (education as fundamental right vs privatization), agentic roles (resistance vs promotion of a language), agency paradox (identity vs internationalization), geopolitical situations (territorial and cross border relations influencing language choice), negotiations and contextualization, and many

more (see Chapter V, VI and VII). Within the plurilingual educational spaces, such issues cannot be easily isolated in a discussion, so that they require a holistic understanding through identification of the nexuses they form both in policymaking and enactment within the contextual specificities.

Moving to the research concern here, MOI policies adopted in school contexts have been tied up broadly with certain political, historical, and social patterns. Although MOI policies are ubiquitous, they are surely not consistent in their patterns across diverse contexts and layers, for example, across monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual contexts, and diverse forms of governance such as centralized or federal systems. Many scholars (e.g., Ball, 2006; Choi, 2018; Kuchah, 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2009) have suggested that there are demarcations and gaps between policies formed (at the macro level) and policies enacted (at the micro-level) in many cases including LPP, which pose complications in policy understanding and enactment. Because policies are sometimes poorly thought-out and/or poorly written and become ‘rewritten’ or ‘retro-fitted’ due to changes in priorities of governments or missionaries across time and physical contexts (Ball et al., 2012), further complications arise in relationships among factors that shape the policies. It has also been reported that any language policy is driven at diverse levels by diverse actors (Johnson, 2011). To capture the factors that shape and the ways that are utilized and negotiated by such actors in implementing the MOI policies, this research draws on the critical ethnographic perspectives for understanding the factors, their interplay, and associated tensions and complexities concerning MOI policy and its enactment in multilingual school contexts in Nepal.

Conceptual Framework

The previous discussion of the literature implies that there are intricate interrelationships between the policies, institutions, and the sociolinguistic world. All those aspects are subject to be connected by human activities, and analysis of this connection has been a long-standing

sociolinguistic challenge for LPP researchers (Hult, 2015; Johnson, 2018). Several scholars (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Hornberger et al., 2018; McCarty, 2015; Menken & García, 2010) have suggested exploration of the links between the national or institutional policies and the individual language behaviour through the utilization of the ethnographic tools. The practices taking place in school premises can be linked to wider societal configurations and the historical orders beyond the educational contexts. There is an important role of the local actors in driving the situated practices of language policymaking. Such actors, with their historical and socio-political backgrounds, can exert influence in (re)production and enactment of the policies, and thereby emerges an intersection of the agency and structures (Block, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2015; Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2020; Poudel & Choi, 2021). Recent LPP works have also identified the tensions and contradictions arising from the practice of language policies across different institutional and geographical contexts, especially when language learning is embedded in the relevant contexts' sociocultural, historical and political dimensions (Gao, 2018). Understanding the nexus among these factors within diverse implementation spaces will illuminate the contextualized complexities in implementing the MOI policies. In other words, LPP researchers can't stand outside of the policy issues embedded in the history as well as socio-political dimensions of the respective societies (Moore & Wiley, 2015). Hence, this research utilizes the historical-structural approach and the nexus analysis as the conceptual and analytical lenses in understanding the factors shaping MOI policies and complexities in the enactment of those policies in the multilingual secondary schools of Nepal. The sections that follow elaborate the conceptual bases of these approaches of analysis and justification for their use in this study.

The Historical-Structural Approach

Tollefson (1991) proposed the historical-structural approach that claims, “the major goal of policy research is to examine the historical basis of policies and to make explicit the

mechanisms by which policy decisions serve or undermine particular political and economic interests” (p. 32). This approach assumes that “the primary goal of research and analysis is to discover the historical and structural pressures that lead to particular policies and plans and that constrain individual choice” (Tollefson, 1991, p. 32). On the historical aspect, studies have paid attention to the language policymaking and practice in post-colonial countries (e.g., Hong Kong, Malaysia, Cameroon, etc.) which have attributed the ideological power causing the spread of the colonial languages (such as English, French or Spanish). Together with the ideological pressures, other factors such as globalization, the rise of indigenous identity politics, the rise of international human rights movements for minority rights and indigenous languages, etc. have been much instrumental for the shifts in national policymaking, including language-in-education policies. Currently, the LPP discourse has concentrated on the political, social-structural, and economic values attached with language(s). As Poon (2000) mentioned that language policy usually has “a social, political, and/or economic orientation” (p. 116), analyzing the historically evolving trends and associated changes facilitates us to understand how language policies are contextualized (also see, Gao, 2011). The historical-structural approach to LPP emphasizes the social, political, and economic factors (Tollefson, 2015), or socio-historical factors (Davis, 1999) or the complex and changing relationship between linguistic capital and socio-economic stratification (Gao, 2011) which constrain or impel changes to language structure and language use. Arguably, the MOI policies in educational systems in many polities are strongly driven by those factors and have contributed to sustaining the socio-economic class (see Gao, 2011). In other words, the choice of English or any other language as the MOI has been rationalized and even justified based on the economic, social, and political benefits that can be attainable from learning these languages. As diverse socio-cultural and structural patterns work simultaneously in policymaking and practices, understanding the nexus of relations can be

well documented through the utilization of the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis in an integrative framework.

The historical-structural analysis is not a research method, but instead, it draws on various other methods applicable to the research question(s) (Tollefson, 2015). This approach is greatly influenced by research on critical theory (Tollefson, 2006), imperialistic understandings (Phillipson, 1992), etc., and has been much efficiently used in understanding the role of language planning in creating and sustaining systems of inequality (Tollefson, 2015), and relationships between groups about class dominance and oppression (Block, 2018; Davis, 1999). Through this approach, Tollefson calls for the critical understanding of the structures that lead to language policies preventing people from using their native languages to support their access to educational, employment, political, and economic gains. The main concern was that nation-states have devised language policing as a mechanism to reproduce inequalities of various types on social, political, economic, and educational grounds. This approach has “the broad aim of discovering the historical and structural factors that lead to policies and plans that sustain systems of inequality” (Tollefson, 2015, p. 141). In addition to this, Tollefson and Tsui (2004) suggested: “research within a historical-structural perspective should place individuals’ language practices within the social, cultural and political context in which they occur” (p. 293). Hence, this orientation equally recognizes the context (social, political, linguistic, educational) as the driving factor for language policy and practices. Moreover, this approach facilitates to include both macro and micro level of data and analysis integrating the policies and practices at multiple levels (Tollefson, 2015). In this, the macro data may include ideologies reflected in the official state policies that have created disadvantages (if any) to certain communities or groups, whereas at the micro-level how the discursive practices in schools promote or restrict the access and opportunities for the children coming from diverse home/ethnic/indigenous language backgrounds. In other words,

the microanalysis may explore how the school institutions, the individuals, and collectives contribute to appropriation, interpretation, and enactment of the policies, and the impacts they exert in the equitable justice in the educational systems.

The Nexus Analysis

Utilizing the claims made above, I presume that understanding of historical, social, cultural, and political contexts of MOI policy deserves an important foreground in LPP research, and can be explored through integrating the historical-structural analysis (Tollefson, 1991, 2015) and nexus analysis (Hult, 2015, 2017; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). Both the approaches come into close relation with enactment theory as all of them consider the importance of understanding the context and situated complexities by exploring what happens with policy in schools, away from potential monolithic way of investigation that inhere in most studies of policy implementation (Ball et al., 2012; Heimans, 2014). This perspective facilitates LPP researchers to capture the social stratifications and hierarchies (Rojo, 2013) reproduced by the language policies at times in the historical continuum. The practiced policies in the schools and the macro technocratic policies have dialogic relations which form a perennial tension between what is intended and what is practiced, and what is needed (see Chapter VI and VII). Such complexity calls for an analysis of the nexus (Hult, 2017) as well because “nexus analysis is an emerging meta-methodology in the ethnographic sociolinguistic tradition, as a tool that is especially well suited to the systematic investigation of LPP discourses” (Hult, 2010, p. 10). It has also been argued that LPP discourses in both macro as well as micro levels of educational systems, relate to broader socio-political issues such as globalization and localized issues such as ethnolinguistic vitality and identity. In other words, the school policies and practices interact with the broader systems of policymaking at the provincial, national, and international levels, and such interactions can be figured out through a holistic analysis of the intersecting factors in different contextual specificities. Such

constraints could be historical, economic, ideological, territorial, religious, and many more. Compared to the earlier approaches that focused on top-down and bottom-up policy directions which inform us much linear and multi-layered analysis, the historical-structural approach combined with the idea of nexus analysis would better inform the intersections among ideological, contextual, and personal historical values and orientations towards the MOI policy and practice in the secondary school contexts of Nepal.

Some scholars (e.g., Davis, 1999; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) have criticized the historical-structural approach noting that it doesn't depict the language policy processes and pays little attention to the agency of language policy actors. By integrating it with the nexus analytical approach, we can identify the actors' agency attending to connections both within and across scales (Hult, 2015). This methodological innovation with an integration of the two, the bigger picture of MOI policy enactment can be better illustrated. I have drawn on the conceptualization of enactment as "an understanding that policies are interpreted and translated by diverse policy actors in the school environment, rather than simply implemented" (Braun et al., 2010, p. 549). This can be achieved through studying the policy texts, publications and media reports, and the case study (related to Research Question [RQ] 1), exploring what different factors (e.g. life changes, identity issues, other policies, agency, and contexts) are contributory to both MOI policymaking and policy interpretation (Choi, 2019; Menken & García, 2010) (related to RQ 2), and what interplays and tensions are created in the enactment of the MOI policy due to interaction among the factors such as other intertwined policies, people and the contexts in implementation spaces (related to RQ 3) forming it a complex whole.

The two approaches are the conceptual and analytic lens, within the broader scope of Critical Theory (also drawn from Tollefson, 2015; Hult, 2010). Both Historical-structural approach and Nexus Analysis complement each other, to provide proper explanation of how language

policies at multiple levels of social organization interact. The Historical-structural approach is greatly influenced by research on critical theory, and efficiently used in understanding the role of LPP in creating and sustaining systems of inequality (Tollefson, 1991, 2015) that also relate to the interrelationships among factors causing the unequal distribution of linguistic, socio-cultural as well as semantic resources. In the same way, “the nexus analysis is the emerging meta-methodology in ethnographic sociolinguistic tradition, as a tool that is especially well-suited to the systematic investigation of LPP discourses” (Hult, 2010, p. 10). It claims that research focusing on only a single dimension will miss much of the complexity inherent in LPP processes, and the same is the rationale behind the emergence of enactment theory that puts emphasis on ‘how policies are done’ than ‘how policies are implemented’ (Ball et al., 2012). Hence, both analytic lenses complement the enactment theory and expand into the exploration of how schools do with LPP. Although enactment theory looked at the educational issues and tried to understand the contextual complexities, this research advances it to the language policy research in the multilingual settings, its integration with the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis as analytical frames provides a solid framework for the understanding of the contextual as well as structural complexities in MOI enactment in schools.

The Implication of the Literature Review for this Study

Hence, the review of the literature highlighted a need to explore the nexus between the overarching sociological and anthropological strands in language policy and planning. It also justified a need to go beyond linguocentrism, considering that language policy “exists within a complex set of social, political, economic, religious, demographic, educational and cultural factors that make of the full ecology of human life” (Spolsky, 2004, p. ix). On a broader theoretical note, it also illustrated the discursive processes of language policies that are “complexly configured, contextually mediated and institutionally rendered” (Ball et al., 2012,

p. 3). Both Spolsky (2004) and Ball et al. (2012) understand that language policy remains within the intersection of the political, cultural, historical, and social values that originate from the national as well as supranational travelling to the recipients such as the schools and communities. These policy ideals are ascribed with multiple interpretations and reinterpretations, and therefore, varied forms of enactments can be observed. Referring to the research literature on policy studies, Ball et al. (2012) critiqued that conventional policy studies ignored the integrated role of all the other policy actors (and policy subjects) in shaping the policies. Following this argument, ample literature has identified important roles of the factors that are intermediators, and external to schools influencing school's policy decisions concerning MOI (Dearden, 2014; Macaro, 2019; Macaro & Han, 2020; Poudel & Choi, 2021).

Since the 1960s, with Haugen's (1966) use of the phrase 'language planning' (as mentioned in Johnson, 2013), and the related discourses in the area have widened the field of LPP. This move has contributed to establishing LPP study as a multi-layered and multi-sited study with the integration of the ideas from diverse interdisciplinary subject areas such as political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and many more. Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) onion metaphor and the need for its systematic slicing (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007) further highlighted the issue of the interconnectedness of LPP with the broader social-political issues. Recognizing this phenomenon, in the pretext that EMI has been established as an educational phenomenon, scholars (e.g., Macaro et al., 2018) have called for further research to capture the processual, dynamic sociocultural practice embedded within the historical-structural trajectories of diverse contexts and communities to understand how MOI phenomenon is enacted,

This review of literature started with general policy conceptualization, issues pertaining to it and moved to the language policy issues at global scale, drawing on the research studies from

several country contexts. The details of the language policy evolution and the place of MOI in Nepal's education system are analyzed and systematically presented, both in terms of context and history, in Chapter IV. In that chapter I have illustrated the debates around MOI and issues of social justice, equity, and linguistic diversity drawing on some authors such as Brown (2018), Giri (2008), Phyak (2013), and Sah and Li (2017). These authors have criticized the dominance of English and Nepali as the major languages of MOI in schools, but further investigation in terms of factors emerging from the historical, cultural and sociolinguistic domains will contribute to further this debate, and expand the LPP literature. This research attempted to address this concern. The findings and discussion reported in chapter VI and VII provide an elaboration of the factors such as globalization and global mobility influencing participants' aspirations for the selection of EMI in the school rather than their national and native languages as MOI. In this sense, the review of the literature from different contexts of education policies and LPPs and the relevant issues such as complexities, interplays and tensions provide necessary literature support to the findings. The findings of the study reported in Chapter V, VI, and VII fit into the extant literature presented in this chapter.

Chapter Summary

The discussion in this chapter illustrated the conceptualization of policy in general and language policy in particular. It also discussed the theoretical and empirical concerns related to MOI policies and their enactment organized into thematic categories such as factors shaping MOI policy decisions and implementation and the complexities and tensions associated with them. This formed a background for understanding the extremely complex and sometimes confusing picture of MOI policy formation and enactment in multilingual contexts (see, Macaro et al., 2018). As the literature review is “a means to an end, and not – as many people have been taught to think—an end in itself” (Yin, 2018, p. 13), it facilitated

me to frame this study concentrating on what policies are formed, how are they enacted and what factors and their relationships shape it. For instance, as the existing literature highlighted the contentious issues in and around the MOI policies and also has pointed out the need to studying the changing nature of priorities and driving forces as well as categories of actors involved in shaping the language policies in education, I framed this research to explore those issues, concerning the case of MOI policy and its enactment in Nepal. It also identified an inexorable increase of EMI in education globally, in which scholars called for more locally contextualized microscopic exploration to understand how the MOI policies have been shaped, enacted and what tensions these policies are facing in the enactment processes. Understanding of these tensions required adopting a critical perspective, for which I have provided justifications for the adoption of the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis as the major conceptual perspectives. Further to this is how several factors such as those emerging from Nepal's national and ethnic histories, political and social systems interplay in promoting and/or marginalizing certain languages from the educational systems. Hence, this section also identified this research gap, and the overall framing of this study addressed this gap. The next chapter elaborates the detailed methodology for the study.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

This section of the dissertation discusses the methodological concerns of the research project. It starts with an elaboration of the nature of the qualitative research paradigm followed by the details about the case study, its types, sampling, and the methods and tools adopted, ethical considerations, my reflections, and positionality as a researcher, analytical framework, and finally delimitations of the study.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

This research has adopted the qualitative paradigm. Therefore, the basic principles of qualitative case study research are considered in data generation and analysis. Qualitative case study “has gained a spotlight within social science” (Yin, 2018, p. xv) and is widely used in the field of education. In this research, the adoption of qualitative case study facilitates to explore, explain and critically interpret the written (officially stated) and enacted (written and unwritten) language-in-education policies in macro governmental and micro-school levels, their driving factors, and the related complexities in implementational spaces, with due focus on the medium of instruction (MOI), in the under-researched multilingual context of Nepal. In other words, this research focuses on understandings about the MOI policy concerning its shapers and associated tensions generated by evolving nexus of social, political, and economic forces influencing MOI-related decision-making. To explore this, approaching the MOI phenomenon in schools by adopting qualitative case study has been useful to go deeper into the analysis of the factors and people involved in the negotiation, reconfirmation, and implementation of the macro as well as micro institution-level MOI policies.

The qualitative inquiry facilitates in-depth and full inductive understanding of the characteristics of an event or phenomenon, peoples' perceptions, and grounded reality (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Flick, 2007). In this research, the historical, socio-cultural, political, and pedagogical dimensions of MOI have been explored through an in-depth analysis of the national, provincial, local government as well as school-level policies and practices. In doing so, the relationship among wider circulating discourses and priorities, local actors' perception and roles, and the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the selected case schools has been explored. For this, a "linear but iterative process" (Yin, 2018, p. 1) of data collection and interpretation was adopted, and a wide range of interconnected methods such as semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, case observation and reflective diary writing were adopted to get a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter under consideration (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) were deployed. Besides, various methodological dimensions such as personal experiences/narratives, observational and historical information obtained directly and indirectly relevant to the MOI issue during the field visit have been used as references for the arguments made throughout this research report. Such methods in educational contexts visualize the tensions and complexities around MOI. To understand the complexities that surround the MOI policy and its practice, a qualitative case study proved useful because it facilitated understanding the nexus of the global and local contextualized factors that collectively shape the MOI policy and the practice. In other words, as language and language policy issues are typically contextualized and negotiated within the socially and culturally embedded structural frames (Block & Cameron, 2002; Choi, 2016), it is important to explore these social, cultural, and linguistic phenomena and processes holistically focusing on human dilemmas, and the situated specificities, including diverse nature of structures and agency (Poudel & Choi, 2021).

Additionally, this research has adopted an ethnographic perspective on a case study (Jackson, 2004) in which the researcher is involved in experiencing, enquiring, and examining through the analysis of documents and artefacts, media debates, and generation of empirical data from the field. Utilization of the ethnographic methods (Canagarajah, 2006) (such as semi-structured interview, focused group discussions, classroom observation, and case observation/field visit) facilitate us to explore MOI related emic perspective and point of view of the respective communities in relation to MOI policy and practices. By an ‘emic’ orientation, I am referring to my in-depth understanding of the enactment of MOI policy in the contexts of the case schools, which was also supported by my prior experience of being a teacher educator, material writer and teacher trainer. This experience supported my understanding of micro-level MOI enactments in schools and colleges, and the perceptions of the relevant communities so that as a researcher, I could engage in capturing the dynamics and complexities in local-level language policy practices. Besides, these methods/instruments are used to explore the “practices, ideologies, attitudes, and mechanisms that influence people’s language choices” (McCarty, 2015, p. 83) including interpersonal relationships, conversations, and everyday life and language experiences of the members of linguistic communities. Hence, the researcher used the ethnographic methods to explore the practices and opinions of the parents, teachers, students, headteachers, and policymakers at the school and community level, as an analyst, interpreter, and inquirer (Wolcott, 2008). In the same way, adopting ethnographic methods of inquiry to identify the micro-level dynamics in MOI choices also relates to critical sociolinguistic ethnography as an analytical perspective that addresses the linguistic practices at the institutional level (Heller, 2011; Pérez-Milans, 2015; Rojo, 2010). It also connects with broader socio-political and economic transformations in contemporary societies (Pérez-Milans, 2015; Relaño-Pastor, 2018) by providing a critical lens to complex social phenomena and processes such as language-in-education policies.

While being critical, I tried to understand the micro level links and relationships between people's practice of language, their attitudes and the social dynamics in the respective contexts. Focus was made on the links between schools and the processes of social, cultural, linguistic, and economic transformations in the social organizations (Hult, 2017). This perspective enabled me to understand how the participants position themselves concerning the language policies and practices in schools and beyond. This prompted the researcher to formulate the research questions that were "open-ended, designed to understand complexity, not reduced to a yes-no response or to measure cause and effect" (McCarty, 2015, p. 83). This helped to ensure that the investigations were holistic and deeply contextualized. However, naturally, as a part of the research process, the research questions changed over time frequently back and forth, through my interaction in the field, especially influenced by the opinions of the people and the specificities of the cases. In other words, the ethnographic perspectives in language policy research studies have fundamentally contributed to the expansion of the notions of top-down and bottom-up policies into intersecting relationships by repositioning educators at the centre of the policy and planning. Moreover, Hornberger (1996) and McCarty (2015) think that the ethnographic orientation enables researchers to investigate language policy from the bottom-up, and this bottom-up approach facilitates to explore the often messy and contested but socio-culturally integrated language policy issues, so that we can identify how the communities, languages and cultures are interconnected through power relationships, identity and values (Canagarajah, 2006). This process facilitates the researcher to indulge in the explorations of tensions arising from the contextualized inequalities, alternative practices (if any), and policies created to resist (or appropriate) the existing dominant language policies in multilingual contexts.

Case Study

Case studies are “analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods” (Thomas & Myers, 2015, p. 7). This design of study enables us to make an in-depth analysis of any kind of phenomenon in its natural setting. Although classic case studies show that a person or an individual was taken as a case (Bromley, 1986; Yin, 2014), the coverage and modality of this approach of research has changed over time. Yin (2018) agrees with Thomas and Myers (2015), and Miles et al. (2014) that ‘case’ can also be some event or entity other than a single individual, and also case studies have been done about a broad variety of topics, including small groups and their roles, communities, decisions, programs, processes, cultures, organizations, and specific events. For Denscombe (2017), a case is a naturally occurring phenomenon, it can be anything like an “event, organization, policy, location, and process” (p. 57). As demanded by the focus of the research to answer, “why and how some social phenomenon works?” (Yin, 2018, p. 4), I have adopted a broad paradigm of qualitative exploratory case study with multiple embedded cases to understand ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the MOI policy and its enactment. Adoption of the case study is preferred “when the desire is to study some ‘contemporary’ event or set of events” (Yin, 2018, p. 7), for example the MOI policy and practice in this study. The case of MOI policy enactment in Nepal has been debated in terms of the injustices created by the governmental systems favouring the dominant languages (i.e., Nepali and English) while also promising the promotion and protection of multilingual policies (see Chapter I and IV).

The main purpose of the case study is to understand the complexity and dynamic nature of the particular entity and its relation with the relevant participants’ context-bound experiences and behaviour (Duff, 2007). Denscombe (2017) suggests that it enables the researcher “to delve into the intricacies of the situation to describe things in detail, compare alternatives, or

perhaps provide an account that explores particular aspects of the situation” (p. 59). Each case that involves humans is complex as it operates “within a constellation of linguistic, sociolinguistic, sociological and other systems, and the whole may be greater than – or different from – some of its parts” (Duff, 2007, p. 37). The language education policies are formed with human actions and such actions are socially situated and subjectively negotiated at certain levels. For instance, exploration of the ‘what, why, and how’ aspects of the MOI phenomenon required an understanding of the actors and their opinions in shaping this policy in their respective contexts of education. As case study is embedded within the broader methodological frameworks of qualitative inquiry, the recursive and inductive nature of the analysis is perceived as one of the strengths (Harklau, 2011) that allows the researcher to make an in-depth and complex understanding of a phenomenon in a sociocultural, political and educational context.

On the broader philosophical dimension, case study emerges from the constructivist ontological understanding that believes in how knowledge is created in interaction between investigator and respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and in that, contexts and the actors contribute towards making sense of the underlined policies, practices and associated tensions. Through the detailed study of the micro contexts of policy enactment in the case contexts, this research has illustrated the factors that drive the shifting trend of MOI to English and the tension among several discourses in MOI policymaking and execution.

Exploratory Case Study

This research employed an exploratory case study as a method. Although there are large overlaps among other types of case studies such as descriptive and explanatory (Yin, 2014), the exploratory case study has been selected because it focuses on understanding a real-world case, and such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to it (Yin, 2014, 2018). While the descriptive case studies require a theoretical description of

the concerned phenomenon as a starting point, the explanatory cases suitably work for doing inductive studies that attempt to explore why the phenomenon has been taking place this way, and how it is reacted by the relevant stakeholders (Yin, 2018). Among the six possible uses of a case study, i.e., description, exploration, comparison, explanation, illustration, and experiment (Denscombe, 2010), the exploratory perspectives supports the researchers to “explore the key issues affecting those in a case study setting (e.g., problems or opportunities)” (Denscombe, 2010, p. 55). In other words, unlike the descriptive and explanatory studies that focus on thick description based on theory and analysis of the case or the case-related phenomena to identify causal relations, the exploratory type allows interpretation and understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of the problem in its natural setting (Denscombe, 2010; Johnson, 1991). Besides, the exploratory study facilitates the interpretation of the subjective world of human experience and attitudes, situations, meanings, and actions (Cohen et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2012) focusing on the crucial relationships and processes revealed by data from relevant literature and the selected cases (Denscombe, 2010). This process helped to interpret the issue of MOI more objectively and realistically, illustrating the shapers as well as associated tensions and complexities in its enactment. In this study, the exploration of the MOI policy took place in multiple sites, and consideration for case selection was made based on their relevance to the issue being researched.

Multisite Case Study

This case study focused on revealing the particular situation of the MOI phenomenon, understanding it comprehensively through consultation, and the generation of data from cases from multiple contexts. This selection makes it a multiple case study (Stake, 2006), also in Merriam and Tisdell's (2009) words, a “multi-case or multisite” study (p. 49). Irrespective of the subject matter, case studies involve “the conscious and deliberate choice” (Denscombe,

2017, p. 60) on the selection of cases from wider possibilities. They are selected based on their distinctive features so that the cases become intrinsically interesting to the wider audience (Stake, 1995, 2006). That said, a multisite case study inculcates “collecting and analysing data from several cases”, and the cases could differ in terms of their situatedness such as physical, historical, and social locations (Denscombe, 2017). In this study, the data were collected from three schools (or three cases) from two provinces of Nepal that have diverse demographic, social, cultural, and linguistic characteristics, making the cases extreme examples of the practice of MOI. An extreme instance of a case “provides something of a contrast with the norm” (Denscombe, 2010, p. 57). The three schools selected have varied levels of practice of the MOI, and therefore make extreme case examples. To illustrate, *Bhairav School*³ had practiced dual medium (i.e., English Medium Instruction [EMI] and Nepali medium of instruction [NMI] simultaneously), *Janak School* had implemented NMI, but with the use of the local languages in school premises, and *Laxmi School* practised EMI as official policy but is in the state of transitioning from NMI to EMI. All these cases have diverse experiences of highly contextualized enactment of MOI (see Chapter VI for further details).

The Validity of the Case Study

While case studies are often associated with qualitative research designs, some scholars critique that qualitative research itself is too subjective (Bryman, 2016), and that ‘subjective’ judgment – something that tends to confirm a researcher’s preconceived notions (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Ruddin, 2006). This perception affects the validity of a case study as well, as subjective orientations influence data interpretations. While methodologists (Denscombe, 2010; Thomas

³ All the names of schools and individuals are pseudonyms. *Bhairav*, and *Laxmi* are the names derived from the God and Goddess, and *Janak* is the name of an ancient King who ruled then known Mithila kingdom. All of these names are frequently used as names of people and schools as well. They also intrinsically relate to the places where the schools were selected. However, for ethnical reasons, here such references are kept anonymous.

& Myers, 2015; Yin, 2018) acknowledge that establishing an absolutely objective interpretation is not possible, the strategies such as triangulation of data sources and methods used can fairly contribute to instituting better validity. Being conscious about the potential risk of researcher biases, self-bracketing was carefully considered while collecting the data. Bracketing, in qualitative research, is a process of mitigating potential deleterious effects of researcher's preoccupations pertaining to the issue under investigation (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Besides, Ruddin (2006) thinks that "a bias towards verification" (p. 799) is one of the misunderstandings people have about case study research. Depicting the reality in greater detail with thickly descriptive analysis to provide the convincing argument and interpretation of the context and micro relationships of the phenomenon with the context increases the validity (Warren & Karner, 2005). Also, the qualitative case study researchers do not normally attempt to establish the external validity through seeking generalizability (Flick, 2009; Thomas & Myers, 2015; Yin, 2018).

Case study sometimes leads towards identifying "black swans" because of its in-depth approach while exploring the case in the field (Campbell, 2003, as cited in Ruddin, 2006, p. 804), and also "being there is a powerful technique for gaining insights into the nature of human affairs in all their rich complexity" (Babbie, 2017, p. 326). In that process, while gaining powerful insights from the in-depth study, what appears white may turn out to be black (Ruddin, 2006), meaning that unexpected results may be obtained due to the possibility of the researcher identifying unanticipated but exciting data sets and the hidden issues.

Scholars (such as Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2013) have put forward the significance of trustworthiness and rigour to explain the validity and reliability in qualitative research, and the selection of multiple cases that provide contrasting and robust findings eventually leading to better validity (Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). The other aspect that established better validity in this research is that the interviews were coded

by multiple raters. Two other academic friends were invited to rate the interviews after an initial briefing on the process and the research concern. Both were professionals from language education and were familiar partly with the issues around language policies and English language teaching. The multi-rater coding was largely consistent across the interviews, which also developed reliability of the themes discussed in the finding chapters (Chapter IV through VII). After initial drafting of the finding chapters, a thorough discussion was made with the principal supervisor that crystalized condensation and reorganization of the sections and themes.

It was learned that coding and analysis are interwoven (Aspers & Corte, 2019) in an inductive process of qualitative analysis. To ensure the consistency of the results and the interpretations while also identifying the emergent themes, data triangulation (Cohen et al., 2018; Harklau, 2011), a frequently encountered technique in data quality assurance in the qualitative inquiry was adopted. This increased robustness of analysis, and thick and thorough utilization of the data made the report further coherent and convincing. It reduced the potential accusation of findings being artefacts of a single method or single source of data or investigators' bias (Patton, 1990, 2015). As discussed in the subsequent sections below, the collection of data from multiple sources, and multiple people from multiple contexts of schooling, along with researcher reflexivity as a teacher/teacher educator have further enriched the depth, robustness, validity, and quality of this research.

Data Sources

As the case study approach does not dictate a particular method (s) to be used (Yin, 2018), it allows the selection of a variety of methods based on the need of the situation, availability of data, and the research problem under consideration (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In that, a multitude of practical and contextual factors have a bearing on the selection of cases such as the finite amount of time, resources, and abundance of logistical problems, which eventually

influence the type and depth of the data. The other equally important factor was feasibility that relates to time, money, access to the proposed informants, and the researcher's style and confidence in work. As qualitative studies draw from "an ever-expanding list of types of data sources" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 179), in addition to the interviews, observations, and documents, audio-visuals were also collected when available in the natural setting of the case contexts. As this research attempts to obtain the data related to the policy and practice, it consisted of both first-hand freshly generated data and the ones obtained from the recorded documents such as policy papers, reports of the educational commissions, constitutions, and other relevant literature. Yin (2018) claims that two of the primary sources of evidence that case study researchers heavily rely on are: direct observation of the events being studied and interview of the persons who may still be involved in those events. Both types were generated and utilized in this study. For this, 18 individual interviews and 6 focus group discussions (a total of 21 hours), and 12 classroom observations were the major sources of qualitative data (see Appendix K for details). However, the research equally utilized the documentary sources (Bryman, 2016) such as mass-media outputs, official documents deriving from the international, national, provincial, and school levels, reports of the development partners, research outputs from non-governmental as well as and private sector organizations. For instance, the international declarations, Nepal's constitutions, development plans, reports of the education committees, minutes of school meetings, and other similar education policy-related documents were collected and analysed. Based on these document data, Chapter IV in this dissertation presents the findings on the historical development of MOI policy in Nepal based on the review of the archival documents.

Population and Sample

The study employed purposive samples. For practical reasons, and with consideration to time and resources, the selection of cases included convenience as a criterion (Denscombe, 2017).

While “case study research is not a sampling research” (Stake, 1995, p. 4), this research adopted purposive sampling as it needed to identify and talk to the people who are ‘really’ “concerned and experienced with the issue under study” (Flick, 2007, p. 29). This provides a stronger justification for the selection of the case schools and the sample participants in each case (mentioned later). The political and administrative structure and linguistic specificities were considered while making decisions on data collection sites and sample population. Currently, Nepal has seven political and administrative provinces (according to schedule-4 of the Constitution of Nepal–2015), and each province consists of varied demographic and linguistic characteristics. Cases from two provinces were selected. The two purposively selected provinces (province 2 and province 3, in which province 3 is now named Bagmati province) provided contrastive contexts where the language issues were contested in social, political, and educational spaces. These provinces differ to a greater extent in terms of cultures, ethnic combination, and geopolitical location (see details in the paragraphs that follow).

Province 2 is the second most populous and smallest province in Nepal. This province borders with Province 1 on the east, Bihar of India on the south, Bagmati Province on the north and west. In this province, language is an important marker of ethnolinguistic identity and identity politics. For instance, the parliamentarians have not been able to come to a consensus in the name of the province, and the official language due to varied ideological differences among political parties. Due to policymakers having differing opinions favouring and/or rejecting the languages such as Hindi, Maithili, and Bhojpuri, the decision on provincial-level official language policy remained contentious (Yadav, 2018). This province is linguistically, ethnically and religiously rich and diverse, as people from a total of 119 castes/ethnic groups belonging to different religious orientations (such as Muslims, Hindus) reside including Yadavs (15%), Muslims (11.6%), Tharu (5.3%), Teli (5.1%),

Koiri/Khushwah (4.6%) as the major ones among many other smaller groups (The Province 2 Policy and Planning Commission-2020). Similarly, major languages spoken as mother tongues include Maithili (45.3%), Bhojpuri (18.6%), Bajjika (14.6%), Nepali (6.7%), Urdu (5.9%) along with several other minority languages (CBS, 2012). The three major languages in the province, i.e., Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Bajjika are specific to particular regions within this province (i.e., Bhojpuri is spoken mainly in Bara and Parsa districts, Bajjikai in Rautahat, and Maithili in Dhanusha, Siraha, and Saptari districts). Although this geo-linguistic distribution is not exclusive, it provides a broader scenario of primary languages used, irrespective of the infra-micro language mixes and exchanges across the fragile district-specific linguistic boundaries. This makes language-related decision-making further complex and is, therefore, the primary reason for the provincial parliament's inability to declare the official language policy. This localized complexity prompted some parliamentarians advocating the Hindi language to make it the potential official language, a language imagined to be a potential lingua franca across Mithila and Bhojpura regions within the province (Yadav, 2018). Although these discursive stands are emerging in the region, at political level across the micro communities, language policy decision-making has been contested.

Bagmati province (also known as Bagmati Pradesh; 'Pradesh' is a Nepali word equivalent to 'province' in English) is home to the country's capital. This province, with its provincial capital being Hetauda, connects with Tibet Autonomous Region of China on the north, province 2⁴ on the south, Gandaki province on the west, and Province 1 on the east. It is the most populous province with people from diverse caste/ethnic groups such as Newars, Tamang, Brahmins, Chhetries, Chepang, Jirel, Madhesi, Tharu, Dalits, and many other

⁴ The naming of this province was contested, and the current provincial parliament has not been able to settle the name of the province. In the debate, linguistic, cultural, religious and political interests of the members overlapped and contested. The similar case was with province 1 as well.

indigenous communities (Central Bureau of Statistics, [CBS], 2012) as in-migration is a common phenomenon in this region. Along with the ethnic and cultural diversity, geographical and geopolitical diversity are the other attractions. Its territorial elevation ranges from as low as 141 meters from the sea to 7227 meters high

(<http://ocmcm.bagamati.gov.np/>). This province is rich in terms of Hindu and Buddhist religions as Pashupatinath and Swyambhunath⁵, including others are located in the Kathmandu Valley, the capital of Nepal. This province is also the home to several extremely marginalized communities such as Majhi, Hayu, Thami, Jirel, Surel, Danuwar, Pahari, Kumal, Baram, Chepang, Hyolmo, etc. (CBS, 2012). All these diversities also impact the linguistic diversity of the province. Among a total of 113 language speakers, Nepali native speaking population is the largest one (CBS, 2012). The provincial linguistic figures reveal speakers of Nepali (57.42%), followed by Tamang (18.32%), Newar (12.30%), Magar (1.82%), Tharu (1.34%), and others (8.8%) (CBS, 2012; Language Commission, 2019).

These descriptions of the provincial diversity and demographic information provide justifications for the selection of the provinces. Within the provinces also, some contrasting cases were selected. Initially, I had planned to visit four schools, but as data collection and field visit to three of the schools were completed, I came to realize that most of the data patterns were saturated in issues around MOI, and any further work would just repeat the similar data. This led me to drop the fourth school, on the condition that the school could be visited after the initial data collection, coding, and analysis. However, it is to be noted that the selection of those three case schools would not give “compelling” representation for the two of the provinces, neither would it represent the country Nepal at large. The primary goal of the case study is not about making a wider generalization of the findings (Miles et al., 2014;

⁵ Pashupatinath is the holiest temple for Hindu God, Shiva so is popular among Hindu devotees of Nepal and India; Swyambhunath is one of the holiest temples for Buddhists. There are many other stupas, Gumbas, Masjids, and temples in this province.

Thomas & Myers, 2015; Yin, 2018), but about studying the phenomenon under consideration in detail. However, the selection captures different sociolinguistic dynamics that involve the issues around at least three languages, viz, English (the international language), Nepali (the national language), and other local/indigenous languages (e.g., Maithili, Newar, Tamang, Bhojpuri, etc. as the nature of the linguistic scenario differed across the provinces described above). It also reflects maximum diversity in terms of contexts (social and geographical), language backgrounds (e.g., native speakers of Nepali, Maithili, Tamang, Newar, etc.), and other demographic features (such as literacies, the development index, and employment ratios, the detail of which is provided in the case descriptions in Chapter V).

Within-case and Multiple-case Sampling

As the activities, processes, and events related to particular cases are “nested” within the relevant contexts (Miles et al., 2014), case study researchers decide to take a sampling from within the cases themselves and from multiple cases. Table 1 below illustrates a generic overview of the participants, case contexts, and the methods used for data collection. Further detail about the pseudonyms of participants, the length of the interview, observations, location of the school is given in Appendix K.

Table 1: Informants and methods for the study

Category of informants	No. of informants from province 3		No. of Informants from province 2	Tools/methods used
	School 1	School 2	School 3	
Headteachers	1	1	1	Interview/case observation/casual talks
Teachers	4	4	4	Interview, classroom observation

Parents	5	5	5	FGD
Students	5	5	5	FGD, classroom observation, casual talks
Policymakers	3 (elected representatives of local governing bodies or authorized education officials of the rural/urban municipalities).			Interview

In total, there were forty-eight participants. Each case included sixteen participants that consisted of one policymaker, one headteacher, four teachers, five parents, and five students. Although the participants were selected purposively, the teachers were selected considering the subject categories such as English, Math/science, Nepali/social studies, and others. However, in doing so, consideration to diversity in terms of ethnic/indigenous background of teachers was made expecting to understand if there were any differences in terms of their perception toward the issue under investigation.

Instrumentation for the Study

Generally, qualitative research paradigms demand more open-ended and less-structured protocols for the collections of data, preferably with “little prior instrumentation” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 38) that allows the researcher’s autonomy to provide rich context description and inductively generated meanings based on micro socio-cultural dynamics in the research field. Qualitative researchers collect data through examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants, and using protocols to record the information tending not to use or excessively rely on the instruments previously developed by others (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Firstly, this research used the semi-structured interview as one of the major tools for data collection. The interview protocols were partly derived from Feng et al., (2013). These authors carried out research in several provinces in China and examined factors shaping the trilingual policy, in a largely top-down regulated policy context. As their research exhibited

very contextualized nature of language policy implementation, I decided to adopt this validated tool, and modified based on Nepal's contexts. For designing the protocols for this study, I adopted some ideas such as relationship among national language policies, local government policies, and school language policies, including some other questions related to what languages are supported by the current structural conditions and what others are marginalized, and how the trilingual/multilingual policies/practices in schools (if any) impact the choice of MOI and students' learning motivation. As demanded by the research focus and the opted methodologies along with the semi-structured interview, guidelines for focus group discussions (FGDs), and field observation forms were developed (see Appendix F and G). The sections that follow illustrate details of the research instruments adopted in this study.

Desk Review

Desk review, as one of the methods of qualitative data collection, requires a thorough review of the official as well unofficial documents pertaining to the study. The documents published by the constitutional bodies (e.g., National Planning Commission [NPC], Election Commission [EC], etc.), ministries and other educational offices, reports of the local governments and their policies, online and offline media outputs, legal documents, circulars, webpage postings, courses prescribed, training materials (packages), artefacts and other relevant documents including meeting minutes and event records in case contexts are all considered collectively as the policy documents in this study. Previously published academic papers such as dissertations, journal articles, and book chapters were also reviewed to explore findings concerning the macro policy provisions and contemporary discourses. More specifically, such a review provided an in-depth understanding of the wider discourses on language education policies in the global as well as national spaces. For example, at the national level, reading of the reports (such as periodic plans of the Government of Nepal) published by NPC provided with a fundamental understanding of the emerging educational

trends, priorities, and potential policies of Nepal, both educational and political. As document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009) or as a complement to other methods, it provided me with cross-cutting issues and their relation with the historical and contextual information while interpreting the data obtained from the other major sources such as interviews and observation. It was also useful in seeking convergence and corroboration through the use of different sources of data to contribute towards building credibility and drawing plausible conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Miles et al., 2014).

Observation

One of the major characteristics of qualitative research is to gather the up-close information by “talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 181). I made an in-case observation in the schools and avoided bringing the participants into a contrived situation. Observation is an act of noticing activities often with the use of instruments for a particular purpose. It is a process of looking and noting people, events, behaviour, settings, artefacts, routines, and so on (Simpson & Tuson, 2003), which allows the researcher to think at the scene of action (Babbie, 2017). Therefore, observation provides a first-hand experience in the field for qualitative researchers (Flick, 2009). In this research, as also mentioned earlier, observation was used as a supplementary method for data triangulation. It helped to identify how language practices have been conducted in the schools, and what is happening in the classroom, and how the classroom enactments confirm (or do not confirm) claims made by teachers and school leaders concerning language policies and practices. In other words, it provided me with a concrete description of “what teachers know, think and believe” (Borg, 2006, p. 231). However, it has to be noted that observation in this research was used not to evaluate the teachers or schools in terms of one or the other language use, rather was to form an overall picture of how MOI

policies are enacted, and how languages in multilingual school contexts contest with each other or are marginalized through their institutional policies or practices. While there are various dimensions and processes of observation such as participation, authenticity in the behaviour of those observed, disclosure of being observed, awareness of being recorded, etc., (see Borg, 2006), in this study, I conducted the participant observation that allowed me to understand the participants' beliefs, awareness, and practices in their respective workplaces. For this, two major observations, i.e., the field observation and classroom observation are worthy of mentioning here. Observation forms were prepared beforehand. For instance, for a case observation, a form (*see Appendix F*) was prepared to compile the information based on the categories such as physical setting, human setting, interactional setting, and program setting, with flexibility on the addition of emerging information as written records. In this case, it was a semi-structured observation (Cohen et al., 2018).

Field Observation. By field observation, here I referred to the case context observation that included the researcher's casual as well as focused observation of the language practices and policies enacted in the selected schools, sometimes involving interactions with observees. In qualitative research, making a full and accurate account of what goes on in the field is vital (Babbie, 2017). The case observation offered me "first-hand, live data in situ from naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 542), and documented some aspects of life-worlds that are verbal, non-verbal, and physical (Clark et al., 2009). These helped me to understand how languages are used during teaching and non-teaching activities in the school. As it was not possible to record all the activities going on around, I recorded the most pertinent ones that directly linked to my research concern (e.g., what language did the teachers speak during distributing the question papers, while greeting students, and what language students used in their group gathering, etc.). Although the significance ascribed to some happenings is a subjective matter, I tried to record some events or instances that of

interest to me and were related to the broader research concern I had in mind. Some of the ideas that I obtained from the interview needed further credibility so that I focused on these concerns while observing the micro activities inside each case. For instance, in Bhairav school, some teachers claimed that the local languages are exclusively banned in the school premises. This was not convincing for me in the first place so that I went observing what language(s) are used where for what purpose. This provided a micro picture that some teachers within their groups, outside of the classroom in the playground and the cafeteria used the local language for communication, which contradicted with what they claimed to have enacted ‘only bilingual’ policy in the school. Although I observed all these minute activities in the schools, I realized what is important and what is not during the data analysis stage so that I had to contact the teachers frequently via telephones and Facebook messenger chats regarding some details (such as are EMI students more valued than the NMI). While in the field, although I thought that I had a photographic memory, I found that what had been observed had been forgotten, so that I began to write the notes immediately or as soon as possible after the observation was over. It applied to both classroom observations and field observations. I began with taking sketchy notes, with some phrases, and later these helped me to recall the activities so that I could develop these notes into larger meaningfully elaborated sections.

Ball et al. (2012) claimed that in policy studies, documents such as posters, planners, texts, and materials reveal the contexts of policy realization and representation in practice. During the observation, I was encouraged to note down what was written, what was available around in the case contexts. Some photos were taken as well. Babbie (2017) thinks that field observation in qualitative research is effective for studying subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviour concerning social phenomena. My interaction with the people in and outside of the school contexts, and the observation of the community in which the case schools are situated,

provided me with insights on how language policies are likely to be affected due to the social practices and people's attitudes outside of the educational institutions. As the policies interplay both inside and outside the institutional settings, it was worthwhile to understand and locate how the practices were taking place and what opportunities and constraints were created for the implementation of the MOI policy in the case contexts. Therefore, it is important to work at the peripheries – engaging in a talk to people who are not central to the phenomenon but are neighbours to it, to people no longer actively involved (Miles et al., 2014). During the field work, I spent some days strolling around, observing what people were doing, listening to their language practices, and noticing the signposts around the peripheries of the case contexts. For instance, I spent some hours in small local tea shops that are popular among the *Marwari Community*⁶ near Bhairav school. At the tea shops, I could talk to the people from Marwari background and some others (such as Bhojpuri, Maithili, Tharu, and Newar native speakers) about their home language practices and their attitudes towards the language of education of their children. Such casual talks provided me some background information about their beliefs concerning their home/heritage language(s). In the same settings, their opinions about the influence of foreign languages such as Hindi and English were also openly discussed. Miles et al. (2014) stated that spending a day in an adjoining village, school, neighbourhood, or clinic is also worth the time, even if we do not see the sense at that point of time. I learned a lot through some other additional engagements such as gaining some contrastive and comparative information about some people favouring Hindi and some not, some softly preferring Bhojpuri while others rejecting it (labelling it as being less smooth-tuned language), and some having deficit ideologies towards their home/heritage languages and providing higher values to the foreign languages such as English, Hindi, and

⁶ Marwari is a community in Nepal, usually engaged and supposed to be successful in business sector, with close ties with Indian businesses. Marwari is their language that belongs to Indo-Aryan language family.

Chinese. All these experiences and interactions outside of the schools enriched my understanding of the phenomenon in the context. Besides, it also helped me to understand why or why not people would love to use a language by decentring myself from my subjective way of viewing the cases.

Therefore, the field observation was utilized to obtain an overall picture of the cases in terms of *physical setting* (physical environment and its organization), *human setting* (people, group formations, gender, ethnicity, etc.), *interactional setting* (interactions taking place, formal, informal, planned and unplanned, verbal, non-verbal, etc. among teachers, among students, between teachers and students), and *programme setting* (resources and their organization, pedagogical styles, curricula and the related), as Morrison (1993, as cited in (Cohen et al., 2018)) suggested. The information were collectively obtained from the interactions in the case contexts and my observation of the events and activities. Any emergent information was noted in a separate diary as reflective notes after the observation was over on the daily basis. During the observation, data were gathered to illuminate the issues under consideration in a far less predetermined or systematic manner, however, flexibility was also maintained to note down the emerging evidence (Cohen et al., 2018). Some of the official information (records of the language-related data such as student enrolment, teachers' training, and evaluations, etc.) were obtained from the school administration (with the help of the head teacher and administrative support staff), and other information through the naturalistic observation where the researcher was "around the place, to listen and watch, to be immersed in the locale, to 'hang around' and make field notes" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 143), usually recording what was seen and heard. Full consent was obtained from the school leadership to do so.

Classroom Observation. Along with field observation, focused classroom observations were carried out to locate how the languages were utilized by teachers and/or students in their

classroom situation as well. This observation was semi-structured participant observation (Curdt-Christiansen, 2020). The classes of the teachers selected for the interview were observed in their respective periods. As this method was not the main method of the study, the observation was utilized for generic information about getting insight on how the language practices were taking place inside the classroom, not being specific to any content of the presentation. The information from the observations were also utilized as the food for thought for other interviews then after. There were 12 classroom observations from three schools each consisting of four observations (see Appendix K for total length of classroom observation data). Although some of the teachers were teaching in lower classes too, only their classes in grades 9 and 10 were observed because the focus of this research was MOI policy and practice in secondary level education. Each period lasted roughly 45 minutes (as the scheduled class time for each period was 45 minutes, but depending on the type of content taught, and teachers classroom management, the length of observation period varied). Out of 12, only four of the classroom observations were audio-recorded while others were not, depending on the permission of the respective teachers. In case recording was not allowed, I used the observation portfolio (Appendix-G) and sometimes noted down significant points on the diary.

Interviews

Interview is one of the dominant methods of producing qualitative data (Flick, 2007) and “often the major source of the qualitative data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2009, p. 114). In this study, it was utilized as one of the primary methods for data collection. As mentioned earlier, this study being exploratory and inductive, minimum prior instrumentation was made (Miles et al., 2014) thinking that “the questions, probes and prompts” are likely to change based on the interview patterns specific to individual cases and participants (Warren & Karner, 2015, p. 126). However, some loose

guidelines were prepared for semi-structured, largely open interviews (see, Appendix B and Appendix E attached). Each interview focused around the core prompts that implicitly represented the research questions, so that even if the nature of the interviews differed across cases and individual participants, the core focus of the research did not change. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and in all cases, interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. In policy research studies, verbatim data is often used, as sources of data analysis. Hence interviews with the participants (e.g., head teachers, teachers, and local education authorities) facilitated me to draw thick information for the research concern.

Braun et al., (2011) position teachers as both policy subjects and policy actors within the policy process, and interviews with such actors of policy would provide us with insights into how policies have been enacted. The interviews facilitated to elicit personal experiences and meaning-making processes that also relate to individual participants' personal issues as well as the broader issues such as social, political, cultural and historical aspects in relation to the phenomenon under consideration (Flick, 2007). Elicitation of such data requires an effective interviewing skill as well. As mentioned earlier, guidelines were prepared as "protocol questions" (Yin, 2018, p. 99) which reflected the line of inquiry or the main focus of the study, i.e., enactment of MOI policy in multilingual schools. The main purpose of the protocol questions was to explore what MOI policies were formed, and enacted, and what factors shaped their decision-making and created tensions in MOI policy choices in multilingual secondary schools (see Appendices B, C, D, and E).

I had an awareness of the notion that interview is a field for power battles between the researcher and the interviewees, as "both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes and physical characteristics that affect the interaction, and the detailed elicitation" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2009, p. 109). Therefore, a warm and welcoming relationship between the interviewer and interviewee or participant is to be established, so that a fluid rather than the

rigid stream of questions could flow to make an intensive interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Weiss, 1994). Hence, a qualitative interview can be understood as a “form of social interaction in which the interviewer’s desire to know impels the interaction” (Warren & Karner, 2015, p. 145). However, issues of validity and reliability are raised concerning interviews as a method of data generation. To address these issues, how an interviewer takes a non-judgmental, sensitive, and respectful stance while interacting with the interviewee deserves consideration. Section 3.7. illustrates how I attempted to maintain those values to increase the reliability and validity during the interview process, and therefore the data.

Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs)

Focus groups are discussions in which typically people (5 to 15) “are brought together in a private, comfortable environment to engage in a guided discussion of some topic” (Babbie, 2017, pp. 321-322). FGDs are adequate if we want to study interaction in a group about a specific topic (Flick, 2007). The reason for using FGDs, not individual interviews, is that if the research under consideration is a debatable issue, it may be argued among participants. When they talk or share their values, attitudes, and experiences in the group that increases the depth of information as people put varied (and sometimes) contrasting arguments, and some other times they may surface contentious arguments related to the topic which the researcher had not anticipated before. In other words, unlike individual interviews, focus groups are “likely to give rise to lively debate” (Barbour, 2013, p. 134), and the researcher can invite the participants to “problematize” (Barbour, 2013, p. 135) the taken-for-granted assumptions about the MOI. In this study, the groups were formed considering homogeneity, meaning that the groups consisted of the same category of participants (such as students, and parents), and separate FGDs were conducted with parents and students in each case school. The discussion was focused on the language-in-education issues, MOI, their perceived reaction towards the use of English, Nepali, and other local/ethnic/indigenous languages in education. Some

contradictory arguments emerged during the group discussions, which prompted the researcher to explore the topic further or the emerging issues around MOI. For instance, while some parents who had more political engagement and awareness preferred their mother tongues, other parents who had low social profiles rejected it, citing the values and opportunities associated with the languages such as English and Nepali. Chapters VI and VII illustrate this concern in detail.

Engagement in FGD became not only a useful process of data collection but also another learning experience for me. In some groups, for example in a group of parents of Bhairav school, one of the members was more outspoken than others, probably because he was comparatively more confident and empowered (or was perhaps from a relatively well-off family), and was dominating the talk reducing the participation of the other members. As a moderator, I immediately realized that I have to change my strategies in asking questions. I instantly decided to ask targeted questions to the particular member to reduce the problem of “group conformity” (Babbie, 2017, p. 322) with due consideration and awareness that they did not necessarily need to answer the questions I asked. Rather I encouraged them to respond first. That did not threaten their face as the environment for conversation was already very comfortable. The problem is that, usually, the silent members of the group are likely to follow the opinions and decisions made by the other dominating members. Only after the less talkative participant responded, I moved that issue to the dominating member(s) to put his/her observation on that issue. I tried the best to make the discussion as interactive, as inclusive, and as representative as possible by engaging every one of them directly and indirectly during the talk. Resisting my biases, and resisting the dominant speakers’ overstatements contributed to the detailed and focused discussions. The in-depth data obtained helped me in conceptualizing the ‘views’ about MOI as a “socially and situationally constructed ” phenomenon (Barbour, 2013, p. 136) which individuals try to interpret according to their

experiences and priorities. Hence, such ideas were generated through inductive meaning-making of the language issue in the social and educational contexts. Each FGD was conducted for approximately 1-1.5 hours, audio-recorded, and some notes were taken during the talk.

Procedures for Data Collection

The consultation was made in person in the first phase, and later they were consulted through telephone calls and/or social media (Facebook messenger) texts and audio/video calls. After taking consent from them, the schedule for the interview was decided upon their convenient time and place. For the case of FGD with parents, the headteachers (and in some, the teachers orally appointed by the headteacher) of each school were requested to connect to the parents, and upon their availability, the discussion was organized. In case 1 and 3 (i.e., Bhairav and Laxmi school), the parents attended the school to talk to, while in case B (i.e., Janak school) I was invited to talk to the parents in their community, at the home of one of the teachers whom I was introduced to in the case school. There were two reasons for approaching the parents in their community contexts. First, most of the parents in that area did not wish to frequently visit the school (as they were busy with their family chores and managing livestock), and the second, I wished to observe their community contexts so that I could understand the data patterns about what they say and what I could observe in the field. The latter experience would also increase the reliability of the data, and their interpretations.

Quantity, Quality and Credibility of the Data

This study involved data collected from 18 interviews, 6 FGDs and 12 classroom observations, making a total data length of approximately 26 hours. In that, the total length of interview data was approximately 14 hours, the FGD data was 6 hours, and the classroom data was 6 hours (details in Appendix K).

Ensuring all voices, values, perspectives, concerns, and claims of the participants are represented is significant to establish fairness and quality, and credibility in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Several methodologists have proposed the criteria such as validity and reliability (Silverman, 2017), reflexivity, transferability, and shared assumptions in interpretation (Malterud, 2001). All these criteria have common concerns about whether the research was conducted convincingly, including the rigorous process to ensure that the researcher has investigated what was intended to be explored, and in a trustworthy and traceable way. In other words, the credibility, validity, and reliability of the data account for the quality of qualitative research (Choi, 2013). However, this research adopting the constructivist approach, the notions such as interpretative validity, generalizability, plausibility and truthfulness are all subjective beliefs so that they depend on how the researcher and the participants co-construct the meaning or ascribe values to them (Choi, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Duff, 2007). Duff's (2007) three criteria of interpretative validity- the sound research methods, thorough data collection and analysis, and consideration of readers' values while reporting the findings - were found more relevant for this study. Considering the need for coherent methodology, I collected data from multiple stakeholders and from multiple case contexts, which enabled me to understand how diverse actors of MOI policy construct their values and beliefs about it. It was also convenient for me to understand the internal dynamics of language policy and practice not only because I was born, grown and educated in similar contexts experiencing similar language policies in schools, but also because I had a decade-long experience of working as an educator and teacher trainer in several teacher education and professional organizations in Nepal (see Chapter I).

As mentioned earlier, this research involved interviews, focus groups, and observations as methods of data collection. To ensure that the data collection is efficient enough, I had

practised the interviews in Hong Kong and Nepal before I visited these three case contexts. First, I conducted two interviews; one with a parent from Mainland China who educates her single child at an English-medium international school, and the other was with a teacher who works in an English medium international school in Hong Kong. The parent was a native speaker of Mandarin, a fluent speaker of Cantonese and English, while the teacher was a native speaker of English. Both were pursuing their doctoral degree at a university in Hong Kong. From these two interviews, I learned that English-medium instruction has already been established as a social discourse so that both of the interviewees observed it critically from a rights-based perspective. The parent claimed that “not educating in EMI would lead to an injustice for her and her child” while for the teacher, educating in EMI international schools is “not only about learning English, but also about maintaining the social status quo, and prestige in Hong Kong”. This insight also facilitated me to revise the initially developed interview protocols as well.

After initial revision of the existing proposed interview protocol, I conducted two other in-depth interviews in Nepal with two policymakers in two municipalities in Kathmandu regarding how they exercise their agency against the structural constraints in implementing equity-based MOI policies in their respective political and administrative units. Based on these two in-depth interviews, a paper entitled “Policymakers’ agency and the structure: A case of the medium of instruction policy in multilingual Nepal” (Poudel & Choi, 2021) was published. The first interview task mentioned above was conducted with mentoring from the course instructor who is an expert in qualitative methodology, and the second was with my principal supervisor. I had obtained very insightful suggestions which enriched my fundamental knowledge and skills in interviewing, coding, and methodological rigour. These two engagements provided me with further understanding of not only the methodological coherence but also the contents about the issues in Nepal’s MOI policy pitching and

enactment in public schools. Based on learning from these previous experiences, I reworked the interview protocols. These prior activities enhanced the validity of the data collection, especially the interviews which are the major sources of data in this research.

As interviewing involves human participants, I was aware of the fact that a plethora of values, personalities, qualities, and conditions shape the quality and even validity of the information shared or obtained during the interaction. Moreover, “the interviewers and respondents may also, perhaps unexpectedly, experience emotional reactions to the topics or processes of the interview” (Warren & Karner, 2015, p. 146). While taking into consideration the plethora of the terms and conditions that are used for ensuring the validity of qualitative methods (such as an interview), Cho and Trent (2006) proposed two types of validity; “transactional and transformational validity” (p. 321). They claim that the transactional validity indicates “an iterative process between the researcher, the researched and the collected data that is aimed at achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy and consensus through revisiting facts, feelings, experiences, and values or beliefs collected and interpreted” (p. 321) whereas the transformational validity refers to “progressive, emancipatory process leading toward social change that is to be achieved by the research endeavour itself” (Cho & Trent, 2006, pp. 321–322). In their understanding, for interview data to be valid, it should come out of an uninterrupted interaction and is aimed at addressing a social phenomenon or issue. Similarly, Kvale (2007) termed such a notion as a pragmatic validity relating it to the utility of the data and research findings. Finally, while reporting the findings, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained, and member checking was conducted with participants from Bhairav school and Laxmi school to make sure that the sensitivity of the data coding and analysis and interpretation made does not upset or threaten the participants’ values.

However, Richardson (1997) reiterates that arguments concerning validity in qualitative research are influenced by “an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach” (p. 92, (as cited in Lincoln et al., 2013, p. 251). He proposes imagery of ‘crystals’ claiming that crystals grow, change, alter but are not amorphous, and claims that ‘crystallization’ provides a better understanding than triangulation of data for qualitative research. This concept deconstructs the traditional idea of ‘validity’ by stating that there is no single truth and crystallization provides us with deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understating of the topic. The validity of research is concerned with ethics as well. For instance, Lather (1993) states that the post-structural forms of validity “bring ethics and epistemologies together” (p. 686). Considering this integrated notion of ethnics and epistemologies in qualitative research, I established friendly and open rapport, took consents from schools and participants before I entered the discussion on the sensitive content of language policy in the respective case contexts. Finally, acknowledgments of the researcher reflexivity stating the limitations of cultural as well as contextual knowledge, potential biases, confusions, and contradictions have enhanced the reliability, credibility, and validity of this research.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are highly foregrounded in qualitative research, and because they usually involve interviews, focus groups, and observations as methods of data generation, and are often focused on some social as well as sensitive issues. To put it differently, all forms of social research raise ethical issues as the researchers come into intimate contact with the human participants, and play around their values, interests, and more personalized information. Therefore, one of the major developments in social science research in recent years has been a growth in ethical concerns, regulations, and governance, sometimes described as “ethics creep” (Haggerty, 2004, p. 391). According to Haggerty (2004) ethics

creep “involves a dual process whereby the regulatory structure of the ethics bureaucracy is expanding outward, colonizing new groups, practices, and institution, while at the same time intensifying the regulation of practices deemed to fall within its official ambit” (p. 394).

Similarly, Winkler (2017) thought, “ethics are a system of moral principles and norms that guide the relationships between humans and their natural and artificial environment” (as cited in Amundsen & Msoroka, 2021, p. 564). However, thinking through ethical issues is not a moral matter only (Silverman, 2017) as there are complex issues of relationships among humans. When we ask people to reveal their thoughts, and actions then perhaps it might cause trouble to recall all these experiences which is again an issue of ethics for researchers (Babbie, 2017). Hence, credible qualitative research carried out based on the field data involves and confronts several ethical issues, and as a result, it significantly changes the overall landscape of qualitative research (Miller et al., 2012). Ethical concerns have become more demanding due to the increased use of information technology that raised issues of confidentiality and privacy of data even after they are collected.

These conditions set moral boundaries which I had to be confined and consistent with from the very inception (data generation) to the presentation of the research findings. I have followed the standard procedures recommended by the Faculty Human Research Ethics Committee (FHREC) of The Education University of Hong Kong to ensure that I maintained the codes of ethics both on professional and academic grounds. In doing so, during the fieldwork, an assimilatory approach to deal with the participants in their respective workplaces was adopted. This approach facilitated me to avoid or minimize any potential coercion, harm, and risk to the participants (Miller et al., 2012). To be specific, the following steps were undertaken to strengthen the ethical standards in this research.

Informed Consent

In research that involves human subjects, they need to be fully aware of what and how of the research, meaning that there must be informed consent before the research. Informed consent “entails giving as much information as possible about the research so that prospective participants can make an informed decision on their possible involvement” (Silverman, 2017, p. 59) so that the research avoids the possible deception. The research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of the research in which they participated (Babbie, 2017). It is also about the respect and consideration of their freedom and autonomy, and voluntary participation in this research. For this, I sought out their consent based on full and open information provided in the written form which developed a trust between us (Miles et al., 2014). The written consent was sought at the start of the research in the case schools. The form explicitly mentioned that they could withdraw from participation anytime without any negative consequences (see Appendix 1-7). All the information written in the consent forms was open to revision and questioning (Silverman, 2017). The information sheet and the consent forms were prepared in the language they could understand easily (both in Nepali and in English). In the information sheets, the subjects were well-informed of the duration, methods, possible risks, and purpose of the research. In every research that involves the “vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, or adults with learning difficulties, every effort should be made to secure their informed consent” (Silverman, 2017, p. 59). As this research also involved the minors (the students studying in grade 9 and 10 who were under 16 years of age), their parents or guardians (whoever available) were asked for consent. However, the students were also informed clearly about the research purpose, potential risks, and methods of data collection, and the discussion began only after they signed the consent forms. They were also informed that they could withdraw from participation during the focus

group discussion or any other time following that stage. Hence, this research does not involve any form of deception while involving minors as informants.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Along with their consent for participation, I had orally and in written form (in the information sheet) informed them of the arrangements made for the anonymity and confidentiality of the data obtained. Codes of ethics insist on safeguarding “people’s identities and those of research sites” (Babbie, 2017, p. 135), and professional etiquette “uniformly concurs that no one deserves harm or embarrassment as a result of research practices” (Babbie, 2017, p., 136). As a researcher, I had ensured that “research data and its sources remain confidential unless participants have consented to their disclosure” (Silverman, 2017, p. 59). To comply with the principles of anonymity, their identity (both people and schools) was anonymized by using pseudo-names, codes and adopting data protection measures (such as storage in a password-protected folder in the computer). Possible measures such as deleting the data from the recording device and memory cards were undertaken to minimize the risk of data being lost or stolen. Similarly, for confidentiality, the data protection was maintained for five years following the unidentifiable code. The data will be kept protected for some time even after submission of the thesis, based on the relevance and usefulness of the data. The distinction has been made between the accidental and deliberate breaking of confidentiality (Wiles et al., 2005). For instance, researchers may inadvertently compromise confidentiality discussing their research outside of the research team (Ritchie et al., 2014), or by reporting the results with some characteristics or circumstances that might reveal the identity of individuals. Therefore, while presenting the findings in conferences and home university/department-level presentations, all personal particulars of the informants were anonymized. Hence, I have maintained the best “balance between disguise and distortion” (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 98) to make sure that the quality of the research is maintained while also considering to avoid the

possible risk of breaching confidentiality. The sections that follow deal with how I ensured the voluntary participation of informants as well as avoidance of the risk/harm in participation.

Voluntary Participation and Participant Diversity

Research participants should “participate voluntarily, free from any coercion” (Silverman, 2017, p. 59), and the researcher “should reveal sensitivity to participants’ testing of her and their reluctance to participate, unquestionably respecting their right not to participate in the study” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 120). The participants were provided with clear statements (through information sheets) and in oral forms that they were free to withdraw from participation anytime and for whatever reason they wish. No incentives were offered to the participants for the cause of participation, as any incentives are likely to create pressure for them to take part in the study. A declaration of no material benefits was made before selecting them for data collection. While I had to sample the students from the classrooms to participate in the group work, I had provided this information clearly and asked the students to raise their hands if they wanted to take part voluntarily in the research. From among those who raised their hands, in the presence of their class teachers, the selection was made considering selecting them from diverse language and ethnic backgrounds. In qualitative research, as a part of “responsibility to society and to the particular population represented in a piece of research to ensure that diverse perspectives are included” (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 103), the participants were invited for focus group discussion. Hence, the student groups, as well as their parents’ groups, represented diverse linguistic and ethnic communities of the school’s catchment area.

Harm/risk of Participation and Conflict of Interest

Any potential harm to the research participants should be avoided by at least not disturbing their interests, well-being, and social identity by participating in the concerned research (Silverman, 2017). As a researcher, I was aware of the possibility of the results being misconstrued, and the potential of a third party's use of the data against the interest of the researcher or the research participants and their social/community identities. In this research, some of the participants (e.g., the parents, and students) did not mind disclosing their identities while asked before and at the end of the data collection. They also did not think there is any risk or negative consequences of disclosing their identities or ideas as the contents discussed during the interviews and FGDs were not of grave sensitivity. Despite their permission to disclose their identity in whatever form, I attended to the notion of 'responsive ethics' (Amundsen & Msoroka, 2021) which suggests researchers not take unethical advantages from the honesty of the participants.

Similarly, researcher impartiality and independence are also equally important so that the results of the data are not misinterpreted, miscommunicated, or mishandled. Ensuring the professional integrity of a researcher following the principles of research design was an utmost priority as well. I did not hesitate to acknowledge those who directly and indirectly contributed to the research, either through collaboration or cooperation (but with utmost anonymity and confidentiality). I had no undeclared conflict of interest at any aspect (such as personal, academic, or commercial) in the research work with anyone (person, institution, or community). Besides, I have mentioned my control, as a researcher, over the results of the data, and my subjective positioning in not mishandling the information I obtained from the field. All these considerations eliminated the risks/harm for participants as well as minimized the potential conflict of interest in the research.

Researcher Reflexivity: Fieldwork Experience and Reflections

Reflexivity is one of the key aspects of qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) which prompts a researcher to be involved in self-critique regarding the process of research involved. The reflection on personal background, culture, and experiences that the researcher is endowed with has the potential for shaping his/her interpretations in terms of the “themes advanced and meanings ascribed to the data” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 182). As every qualitative research is interpretative, the researcher(s) is engaged in a “sustained and intensive experience with participants” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 182), which requires consideration of a range of strategic, interpersonal, and ethical issues. The researcher is engaged in choosing conceptual alternatives and making value-laden judgments on any form of human activity (Thomas & Meyers, 2015). In such a context, the researcher’s biases, values, personal backgrounds might influence the way the participants are behaved. Therefore, reflection on who I was (see chapter 1), and what I did, how, and what I learned from the field adds clarification to the attempts I made in understanding the values, opinions, and practices of the participants. In case some typical incidents were noticed or faced, I wrote short memos about them, and such memos helped me to identify some themes during reading the data. Memos are the “notes written during the research process that reflects on the process, or that help shape the development of codes and themes” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 184). Also, reflection on what was observed, felt, and learned from the fieldwork is one of the aspects of researchers’ integrity. A sample of field notes is attached in Appendix H. While agreeing on my subjective beliefs and interpretations, I was also aware of the need of limiting my discussion about personal experiences to avoid the possibility of overriding the importance of the chosen content or methods in this study. The sections that follow present my overall reflection on different dimensions of the fieldwork such as approaching

the cases, passing through the gatekeepers, and making decisions on the field based on the immediate circumstances.

Approaching the Field

The procedures and activities for the fieldwork were predesigned. However, no preparation was made for how to get access and manage the relationships with the participants after getting access. I frequently reflected on the question that my supervisors asked during and before the candidature examination “Can you get access to the cases?”, and my reply “I think access to the field won’t be a huge problem for me”. That might have been a surprising and to an extent an exaggerated answer, I guess especially for academics from those contexts where the social and educational issues are widely researched so that access to the field is not easy. To qualify that response, I further explained “I can use my professional and personal networks to identify the potential contexts and the case schools. In Nepal, as I worked at Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tribhuvan University, the oldest teacher education campus of the oldest and the largest public university in the country. Working in this institution for more than a decade and also being a member of the larger professional organizations such as Nepal English Language Teacher Association [NELTA], Teacher Educator’s Society of Nepal [TESON], Society of Translators’ Nepal [STN], and so on had enhanced my strengths to form a network with people (colleagues and students) and institutions (such as constituent and affiliated campuses, and schools) in many parts of the country. This prior professional capital and network facilitated me to be connected before, during, and after the collection of the data

Despite utilizing the network to connect to the potential participants, I had to spend a considerable amount of time exploring the right place and the right case to make sure that the future data meets the requirement of the research objectives. Several such concerns were to be addressed for obtaining ethical approval from the university before stepping into the

fieldwork as well. For this initial inquiry about the potential field, I talked to some people across the professional networks through telephone calls as well as social media such as Facebook messengers and Twitter while I was in Hong Kong.

Following the approval for data collection from the Faculty Human Research Ethics Committee (FHREC) of The Education University of Hong Kong, I began exploring and collecting information about the potential schools and initiated formal and informal communication with friends within my previous and newly established personal network. Given the less efficient communication system in the public institutions such as government offices and public schools in several parts of Nepal (Rana et al., 2020), establishing personal networks was very effective for me to access the cases and to find the people. Many of the public schools and local government offices lacked information-rich web pages. But recently, especially due to the pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic that caused closures of face-to-face modes of teaching requiring the schools to take up broader IT-based transformation (Poudel, 2020), many of them have been shifted to online mode and have developed their official web pages. These days, the schools' Facebook pages include the notices and pictures of activities and events that helped me to follow the educational as well as language-related practices in these cases.

Dealing with Gatekeepers

The first and foremost step to get access to the cases is dealing with the gatekeepers.

Gatekeepers are not only the people who let us enter the case but also the ones who take us in or welcome us to the case contexts. Unlike some people who have trouble in accessing fieldwork due to the unavailability of predetermined gatekeepers (e.g., Rana, 2018), I approached the cases in a different modality. It was made easy by “a simple, honest self-introduction and a reminder of the project” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 120). It was also reported that researchers face social issues, micro-politics, and moral dilemmas while getting

access to the field (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016), and in that case negotiations from formal and informal gatekeepers are the alternatives which I adopted in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For instance, after I fixed the site from where I was going to select the case school, I travelled there (i.e., Bhairav, a pseudonym used for the place name as well) and explored the surrounding there. With the help of a friend who was working in a college, who was also familiar with school conditions in that community, I decided on the school as a case since it had been implementing dual MOI, which was equally fascinating for me as a case. After a friend of mine introduced me to one of the teachers in the school, I visited them there. The newly introduced teacher welcomed me at the gate, which eased me to pass through the school security as the gatekeeper. While I introduced myself to the headteacher and other teaching and non-teaching staff in the school, I tried to be myself, true to my identity and interest in the context and/or topic. A similar process was adopted in getting access to the school cases in other two different contexts.

Asking Questions

Asking a good question can elicit good responses. Yin (2018) points to the notion that case study interviews require operating at two levels of questioning. The level 1 questions are specific questions (basically about the professional experiences and contexts) whereas the level 2 questions represent the line of inquiry of the researcher, i.e., the content questions specifically related to the research under consideration. The level 1 verbalized questions asked facts about teaching experiences, language backgrounds, trainings and so on. While in the field, I had continuously been putting the level 2 questions at the back of my mind and began with asking level 1 questions. It was very difficult to separate and strictly manage the order of the level 1 and level 2 questions as I had sometimes proceeded to level 1 questions from the level 2 questions. This took place repeatedly. Irrespective of the nature of the questions, I was ready to listen carefully to their responses and valuing them. This helped

reduce the possibility of interviewer dominance in interviews. The level 1 questions that were simply rapport building, friendly, empty-content, and non-threatening proved useful to lead to a meaningful discussion. However, the overall process of interviewing proceeded through a sequence of ‘what’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ questions. The ‘what’ questions related specifically to the informant’s background information, and the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions were related to their understanding of the issue of MOI (see Appendix B, C, D, and E).

Similarly, the questions asked at level 1 differed according to the nature of the participants, as individual participants’ linguistic, ethnic, and other demographic features differed, and their responses lead to the different emerging questions. Due to this, the sequence of questions in interview protocols was reshuffled many times and some new were added based on the responses obtained and learning from the previous interviews. In this process, the need to ask more focused questions emerged as some of the informants did not have awareness about the topic of my research. For instance, to some parents, I asked, “Do you know which language is used for teaching your children in the school?”, and some did not understand about ‘language used in teaching’, rather they replied that their children ‘learn English and Nepali’. This means that learning a language as a subject was synonymous with learning the subjects in a language. In such cases, I had to clarify the concept of MOI and language subjects with localized examples, and that sometimes made more foregrounding than required. However, the effects of the simplified and detailed foregrounding while asking interview questions were positive and very useful as prompts for the parents to continue expressing their beliefs.

From Institutional Ethics to Personalized Ethical Practice: A Dilemma

Some scholars (e.g., Simons & Usher, 2000) have suggested different approaches to improve the enactment of institutional ethical principles into practice during the research process, such as acknowledging the notions of cultural relativism and situated ethics. The situated ethics is “local and specific to particular practices” (Simons & Usher, 2000, p. 2). Others (e.g.,

Silverman, 2017) have indicated that in developing countries, seeking more individualized ethical procedures by social scientists has been perceived as inappropriate or meaningless. Simons and Usher (2000) have realized that educational research consists of various forms of social practices, and each is endowed with its own set of ethical issues. For instance, while I was seeking ethical approval at my university, I had filled out the form with an expectation of providing the presents to acknowledge the contribution my participants provided to my research, I was questioned, and I had to omit it from my application. More importantly, what I was concerned about here was not providing the presents (souvenir) to the participants, but about the considerations and dilemmas that remain within the specificities of the situated contexts where the notion of ‘giving’ is perceived differently. In an ethnographic study that requires the researcher to be in the field with the people participating together with them, in some contexts not accepting what was offered (e.g., tea/coffee, afternoon tiffin, lunch, etc.) would be impolite. In Nepal, I was visiting the culturally sensitive places (i.e., locations of Bhairav and Janak schools located), and also the hinterlands where people warmly welcome the newcomer as a guest, I had to be more aware of the local cultural and interpersonal sensitivities. In case 1 context, I was invited for a lunch at the home of one of my friends, but I had to reject that friendly offer because I had nothing to offer to him in return (which I could not do as it was a part of the ‘defined’ guidelines for researcher ethics). I was aware that not visiting his home for lunch was impolite, for which I felt sorry. Such type of ‘ethics dilemma’ consistently emerged in my mind while I was in the field. There was an invisible pressure emerging from the cultural side on the one hand, and the academic ethical standards on the other. For instance, I was hesitant of seeking participants’ cooperation being empty-handed because I was not supposed to breach the ethical code of conduct suggested for me from my home institution. This study, therefore, provided me with this insight while I was in the field. A similar experience was reported by Amudsen and Msoroka (2021), reported cases

of complexities in understanding and implementing research ethics who needed to operate within the regulations of a New Zealand university's HREC principles whilst doing fieldwork in African community in Tanzania, and appealed for a responsive ethics. They felt a dilemma between what was ethical and what not, due to the diverging cultural and academic ethics. Scholars have pointed out that in multilingual and multicultural situations, differing cultural values and communicative practices have influenced the design of research and procedures on conducting interviews and addressing ethical issues (see Robinson-Pant, 2009). In a nutshell, the prescribed ethical standards of educational institutions in one part of the world might be challenging (and perhaps incompatible) to the distant socio-cultural contexts of research.

Researcher's Self-bracketing

Bracketing of researchers' personal experiences and biases is important because it allows them to perceive the phenomenon "freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 118). However, based on my field-work, I have realized that it is "difficult to fully bracket one's experiences as a qualitative researcher" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 118), as my life-worlds and the exploration of the worlds of the individuals consulted collectively facilitated me discover new relationships and patterns. The process of "condensing and interpreting the flow of meanings" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 38) included the co-construction of messages between the researcher and the participants based on how they understand the language policy phenomenon.

Analytical Framework and Procedures

This research is grounded on the exploratory case study as an overarching methodology for data generation and data analysis. The interviews (including the FGDs) were conducted in the Nepali language as preferred by the participants (except one participant who wanted to talk in English). Before the analysis, the data were transcribed and translated into English. Two

Nepali-English bilinguals were hired for transcription and translation of most of the interviews, which the researcher thoroughly checked for consistency of the translations and to minimize any potential data misinterpretation and data loss. Whenever a confusion occurred, a back translation was requested to a friend working in the field of linguistics and translation. Both versions of translations were verified for consistency. Data analysis (initial coding) began after each translation was reviewed, and higher-level reliability was ensured as higher consistency across the codes developed was found across multiple coders, including me. These initial codes were further discussed with the principal supervisor to ensure whether such reading of multiple people made sense to discuss the issues within the current field of inquiry, i.e., LPP and MOI. This strengthened the analytical rigour as well as credibility of the thematic findings reported in each chapter.

In exploratory procedures, the art of interpretation of the data is important. As qualitative data analysis is iterative and reflexive (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009) and the “art of interpretation produces understandings that are shaped by genre, narrative, stylistic, personal, cultural, and pragmatic conventions” (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, p. 507), the overall process of analysis is understood as craftsmanship, an art, and also a process of detective work (Patton, 2002; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). In this process, “categories and themes emerge; they are teased out in relation to the researched and their concerns and problems rather than in relation to policy shifts” (Maguire & Ball, 1994, p. 282). Hence, the frequent reading, rereading, and data checking to locate the relationships among data patterns and the themes that emerged during coding, recoding, and categorizing.

In this research, I have discussed the MOI issue in the three levels of analysis; a) understanding the context (the social, political, economic, cultural, and organizational matters) of policymaking and policy enactment in Nepal with a reference to the global and national forces (Chapter IV, and V); b) understanding individual actors’ experiences,

attitudes and actions towards MOI policy implementation (Chapter V), and c) understanding interactions/interplay among various discourses, agentic actions and contextualized socio-cultural underpinnings (Chapter VI, and VII). All these three concerns conceptualized in this research reflecting the historical and structural contexts of Nepal, the global, national, and local contexts have complex relationships within and across them. This complexity has been well explained adopting the concepts from a nexus perspective (Hult, 2010; Scollon & Scollon, 2004) (discussed in detail in Chapter II) together with historical-structural approach (Tollefson, 1991) that integrates the information from several dimensions such as history, the global and local contexts, people and their actions at institutional level enactments, and discourses forming structures at the macro and micro socio-cultural and educational levels of policymaking and policy implementation. The research questions of the study reflect similar concerns (see Chapter I). The primary concern is how the MOI policy is positioned within the national and local educational contexts, and how it has been negotiated within the nexus of various factors such as discourses in place (global and local), individual actions (actor roles), and educational spaces (contexts). With these major concerns, the data have been analysed adopting the “interactive model” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 14), the model that relates the emergent themes with the research literature, the research questions, conceptual framework and the historical-structural contexts (Chapter IV and V) and shapers (driving forces) (Chapter VI) and tensions and interplays associated with them (Chapter VII). Hence, the analysis and interpretation presented in each finding chapter are interrelated, and complement one another. While analysing the data, three main activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verifying were adopted (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis was iterative and continuous, and also required an understanding of constant interactions within the interconnected themes. It also reflected the “interplay between data and theory”, for example, policy enactment (Ball et al., 2012, p. 138).

Hence, an inductive approach facilitated organizing the data patterns and themes, and categories that emerged from an inquirer's interpretations and the epistemologies. While constantly reading the data, the themes were plotted on a table (see Appendix-I) that summarizes the overall issues that emerged and are discussed in the analysis chapters (mainly from Chapter V through VII). The constant "reflexive turn" (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003, p. 416) to the data and the themes reflect what insights were gained, and has also sharpened the focus of the analysis made (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). This represents the way knowledge about MOI is constructed and produced through the researcher's reflections on epistemological and ontological grounds. While analysing, any claims made based on the grounded data were contrasted and/or referred to the existing theories and/or previous research discussed in the literature in Chapter 2 above so that the findings and discussions are integrated into each chapter and in that each chapter provides a comprehensive picture of the data, the interpretations and relevant pieces of literature referred.

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations.

- The primary data were collected based on the samples mentioned above in two of the provinces of Nepal only, so this research does not intend the findings to be generalizable to other contexts in Nepal. Every different province of Nepal is likely to have diverse and distinct linguistic, cultural, and social characteristics which might influence the nature of the arguments made. Given the time and resource limitations, I did not include empirical data from other provinces of Nepal.
- The desk review for the study was done purposively selecting legal and educational policy documents (such as constitutions, reports of the education commissions, national plans, education acts, and other documents related to policy and practices).

Therefore, the information reported in these documents is considered to be valid and

reliable (as they largely come from government agencies), and I have relied on the secondary information regarding the historical information (e.g., about Nepal's early history, Rana period and so on).

- Amidst many theories applicable in the language policy studies (e.g., post-structuralist theory, Marxist-oriented theories, decolonization theory, etc. [see Kubota & Miller, 2017]), in this study, the data have been analyzed utilizing the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis both of which provide critical lens on language policy analysis. However, adoption of different perspectives would have led toward exploring diverse forms of critiques of inequalities, resistance and injustices while analyzing the enactment of the medium of instruction policy.
- However, I consider that some instances of data loss and semantic gaps might have taken place during the translation process from Nepali to English, as these two languages have grown in diverse cultural contexts.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology, the methods and instrumentation, ethical consideration, and researcher's reflexivity during the fieldwork to the selected case contexts in Nepal. The enactment of the MOI policy was investigated through exploratory case study that included three cases (Bhairav, Janak, and Laxmi, pseudonyms used). The empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, participatory observation of the case contexts, and the classroom presentations of the selected teachers. The data were collected twice, in that in-depth data were collected during first fieldwork, and follow-up data were gathered during the second fieldwork. All the data were analysed inductively and extensively to find out the patterns, themes, and their relationships across all the data sets. Every preliminary analysis was followed by a comprehensive discussion with the principal supervisor, both through Zoom video conferencing and face-to-face in-person

meetings. Every single talk and meeting provided new ways of organization and recategorization of the sections within the drafted chapters. The next chapter presents the discussion on the findings of the data obtained from desk review and document analysis.

The findings are organized and presented in four chapters (i.e., Chapter IV, V, VI, and VII) that link to research questions about LPP overview, enacted MOI in the case schools, the factors shaping the MOI choice or decision-making and finally the interplay among factors shaping the policy and the practice. Although these chapters are organized on the basis of the order of the research questions, and justification of what, why and how of the MOI policy, they are interrelated, and support to answer the broader research aim stated in Chapter I.

Chapter IV: Language Policy in Education in Nepal: A Diachronic Perspective on Policy Developments and Trends

Introduction

This chapter presents the historical trend of language-in-education policymaking in Nepal in general and Medium of Instruction (MOI) in particular. The historical trend reveals that there was a practice of the Nepali language as the MOI in the traditional (mostly informal) teaching and learning centers in many places in the country during the beginning of the 19th century (Bandhu, 1989). However, English remained the first recognized MOI in Nepal's formal schooling. Although the historical data revealing concrete policy and practice of MOI in Nepalese schools is not rich enough, the sketches of the language policies can be identified in the parent education policy literature such as recommendations of the reports of educational commissions established at various times (e.g., Nepal National Education Planning Commission [NNEPC]- 1954; All Round National Education Committee [ARNEC],-1961; National Education System Plan [NESP]-1971), National Curriculum Frameworks [NCF]- 2007, 2019, provisions in the statutory documents (i.e., Constitutions of Nepal from 1950 onwards), periodic development plan reports (i.e., reports of National Planning Commission), books (such as Sharma, 2011; Sonntag & Turin, 2019), and key articles (Poudel & Choi, 2021; Phyak, 2013; Giri, 2015) published in this area. Based on an in-depth reading of these policy documents, and the available literature in the field, in this chapter, I have presented the development of education policymaking that includes language as a point of departure, and to the highest extent possible, the case of MOI concerning Nepal's political changes affecting language-related decision-making, modernization of education and choice of MOI, privatization and language choice for education, and so on.

The Historicity of Language Planning and Policy in Nepal

Nepal, a relatively small country covering an area of only 147, 516 square kilometres⁷, is situated between India and China in the Himalayan region. It passed through many historical changes within some centuries beginning from *Kirats*, *Lichchavis*, *Mallas*⁸, Shah's early 19th-century unification, Rana autocratic rule, the establishment of democracy, Panchayat rule, and multiparty democracy to the federal democratic-republican political system. During the transitions at various periods of history, the moves and motives of the rulers have wielded an impact and paved the way forward for the development of education and positioning of some languages over others. As language is a dynamic entity with defined boundaries, it has long been used as a tool to promote social, political, and economic ideologies by the individuals, groups, and institutions (such as the governments) to continue to exercise the conventional status quo and power relationships (Shohamy, 2006). The prescription of the MOI in school education and learning of national and/or foreign language(s) as subject(s) were the issues dealt with during the reform processes initiated at the macro-governmental level in Nepal. This creates an imperative for the understanding of historicity in language policy, which this chapter elaborates on by reviewing the policies stated in the education acts as well as other relevant legislative documents since the beginning of formal schooling in 1854 in Nepal.

In recent years, the educational policymaking concerning language-in-education in Nepal has witnessed changing but contradictory discourses especially in terms of choice of language.

The political and economic backlash, conflict, and compromise following the political turmoil especially between the 1990s (2050s BS) and 2000s (2060s BS) stagnated the educational reform, and education was utilized as a matter of political gain by the then

⁷ The Government of Nepal in 2020 claimed its lost land approximately 335 km², so the total area expanded from the earlier 147181 km² to 147516 km².

⁸ *Kirats*, *Lichchavis*, and *Mallas* are the ruling groups in several principalities of then-Nepal, and belong to several ethnic groups in Nepal. They had their own Kingdoms in several parts of Nepal.

agitating political parties. However, it is to be recognized that the political struggles contributed towards rediscovering Nepalese identity-driven education policy that provides equitable justification to all the languages, cultures, and ideological orientations of the people living in diverse socio-political and territorial strata. For instance, beginning from the establishment of democracy in 1950, all languages were equally respected, however, after forty years, the Constitution of Nepal (1991) ensured the rights of all the minority languages to be used in education as MOIs. Despite this favourable legislative provision, the unprecedented rise and spread of English instigated by the rapid globalization and developments in information and communication technologies continued (Dearden, 2014), and was enacted in schools as par with its position in global marketplaces. While the expansion of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) remained unstoppable, on the other, ethnolinguistic discourses countered the adoption of English and Nepali in the schools. Hence, Nepal's language policy discourse evolved amidst the competing discourses of Nepali nationalism, Englishized globalization, and ethnolinguistic identity. In this section, the same has been discussed as a historical dimension of language policy based on analysis of the policy documents such as constitutional documents, education acts, artefacts, research publications, and media sources. The historical dimension begins with the early history of education in Nepal starting from the Gurukul era to the contemporary period of full-fledged democracy enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal –2015.

The Early History

The ancient history of education in Nepal can be traced back to the *Gurukul*⁹ era when the priests in temples and monks in the monasteries used to bestow behavioural knowledge,

⁹ Gurukul is an ancient tradition of education primarily in Hinduism, and this word in Sanskrit means an educating practice in which the students (disciples) learn with guru at the latter's house or near there in the residences (e.g., Ashramas) in which religious and educational services are provided.

skills, and attitudes to a small number of disciples. The pupils were children of the ruling elites or Brahmins (Sharma, 2011). Even in the *Lichhavi*¹⁰ period, the period also known as a renaissance in Nepalese arts, architecture, education, and culture, formal education was conceptualized as not mandatory, and therefore was not in the state priority. Realization of the importance of education evolved gradually during the *Malla* period¹¹ (1243-1769 AD/1300-1826 BS). This is evident from an emphasis placed by King *Jayasthiti Malla* who stated, ‘education as a process of preparation for life’. However, the spirit that he had for the promotion of education could not be materialized as intended since the successive kings did not enforce any substantial endeavour for the promotion of mass education. Sanskrit (the language of the Hindu religious texts) was the most popular language for religious scriptures and courts. However, it is reported that Newari was used in the Kathmandu valley for public communication (Shrestha & Singh, 1972). Some *Malla* kings then were skilled in many languages including English (e.g., King Pratap Malla was skilled in many languages). Although he was good at English, there lacks recorded evidence on how he learned this language.

It is reported that the British entered Nepal as Christian missionaries during the 17th century. Craybrawl, “the first British citizen to Nepal, entered in 1628” (Sharma, 2011, p. 40). Similarly, the Anglo-Nepalese war (1814-16), because of the border dispute between Nepal and colonial British India, ended with the *Sugauli Sandhi* (*Sugauli Treaty*) in 1815. As the India-based British were expanding their imperial mission, this treaty settled the dispute, and as a result, Nepal remained an independent state. Importantly, this treaty was established as a

¹⁰ *Lichhavi* period in Nepal’s early history refers to the period between 464-725 AD, also known as the golden age in the history of Nepal, and is compared to the Elizabethan age in the history of English language and literature since there was unprecedented development in architecture, literature, astrology, and medical science.

¹¹ *Malla* period, also known as *Malla dynasty* in the medieval period, in Nepal’s early history refers to the time that the particular groups, called ‘Mallas’ were ruling across the country in various principalities of Nepal. It existed during 1300-1826 Bikram *Sambat* (13th century to early 19th century, 1243-1769 AD)

milestone for the independence of Nepal, a country that was never colonized. Moreover, it opened the door for British-Nepal diplomatic relations. Historically, the Embassy of the United Kingdom (an English native country) is the first diplomatic mission in Nepal, established in 1816 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The spread of English was supported (though partially) by the establishment of this mission. In this sense, the presence of English in Nepal can be traced back to *Sugauli Sandhi*¹² (*Sugauli treaty*) after which Nepal-Britain relations flourished. Although there doesn't exist any particular official record regarding whether English was taught in any territory of Nepal before the 19th century, it has been supposed that Christian missionaries who travelled to Nepal during the 17th century brought in this language in Nepal's territory (Giri, 2015). Amidst these fuzzy perceptions about the evolution of English in Nepal, a strong orientation towards the British-based education system that used English as the primary language was observed among the rulers during the Rana regime. Regarding the beginning of English education in Nepal, Giri (2015) writes, "the commencement of the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers as part of the famous *Sugauli* treaty in 1815, the training for which took place in English" (Giri, 2015, p. 94). The *Sugauli* Treaty was signed by the Shah dynasty with the East India Company. Following the treaty, Nepalese youths were recruited in the British Army in the name of Gorkhas. Following this treaty, after 30 years of rule, the Ranas took over the power to rule the country from the Shah Kings, which raised Rana's autocratic regime as a form of a new dictatorship in Nepal.

The Rana Regime

The Rana Regime (1846-1950 AD), the dictatorship under Ranas during which the delegation of powers of the state was surrendered to the contemporaneous *Shree Teen Maharajas*¹³ is

¹² *Sugauli sandhi* is a treaty signed by the Government of Nepal (then *Gorkha* empire) and the British East India Company on 2nd December 1815 AD.

¹³ A special title ascribed to the Rana rulers as a symbol of power and dictatorship. The kings were given the title of *Shree Panch*, and Rana Prime ministers were entitled *Shree Teen*.

equally significant in Nepal's education system. The Rana regime is the early foundational period for the establishment of English teaching and English medium instruction (EMI) in Nepal. Following the visit to Europe by then Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana in 1851, the school named Durbar High School was established in 1853 at *Thapathali* of Kathmandu Valley and was open for the children of the *Rana* family only (Sharma, 2011). It was a "British-type" school (Wood, 1965, p. 9), and was the first formal school opened by the government agency in Nepal. The establishment of this British-type school is vivid evidence of the formal beginning of English as a foreign language teaching in Nepal. In this regard, Wood (1965) noted, "the formalized primary education in Nepal is a replica of the British schools which were established in India" (p. 29). The operation of this school not only invited teaching of British culture and history but also heightened the motivation towards teaching and learning English. This motivation is explicit from the expression of the first Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana who ordered his relatives to, "अरुका कुरा छाडीदेऊ, आफ्ना छोरालाई अंग्रेजी पढाउ" [neglect other people's voices, teach English to your son(s)] (Sharma, 2011, p. 39). This self-centric motivational current towards promoting educating the Rana children in English, in other words, the 'English mania' among the Ranas, emerged due to an immediate need for them to deal with the British to strengthen the diplomatic ties and ease official communication between the parties. For this, translations from Nepali to English and vice versa were required as official processes, which motivated the Ranas to train children and youths in English. Due to this motivation, some of the Ranas sent their children to India to learn English to compensate for the scarcity of English-speaking bilinguals in their families (Sharma, 2011).

Although the Rana regime is regarded as the period of opposition to education for the general public, significant educational initiatives such as the establishment of Tri-Chandra College (the first college in Nepal) and a board to supervise secondary school examination were the

solid foundations laid by the Ranas (Wood, 1965). Despite the restricted access to education by the rulers then, towards the end of the Rana oligarchy, education was highly valued, as in 1948, Rana Prime Minister Padma Shamsheer Rana declared a constitution that recognized the right of each child to education (Wood, 1965). As far as the language in education is concerned, both school and university education then adopted English as the medium of instruction, which illustrates the historical fact that EMI evolved parallel to the development of education in Nepal.

The precedence of high motivation towards learning in and/or of English continued in a similar trend or became even stronger as many reports of the education commissions reported the same. For instance, nearly after a century since the establishment of formal school in Nepal, the report of the Nepal National Education Commission [NNEPC] stated, “There is a mania for English education in some parts of the country and the reason given in upholding this system is the preference shown to English educated people in government service” (MOE, 1954, p. 49). This statement reflected the need and motivation to learn English in Nepal since the beginning of diplomatic ties with the East India Company during the early 19th century, where English-fluent employees were needed at the government level to deal with bilateral relations between Nepal and then-colonize India. This precedence continued “through overt and covert mechanisms” (Shohamy, 2006, p. xv) in the subsequent governments to manipulate language policies and practices. While Nepali was established as the national language through overt government mechanisms such as using it in the media, bureaucracy, education, and so on, English was covertly established as an alternate language to Nepali in the same domains. For instance, the covert promotion of English is seen in the government practices promoting it not as a second language but as the most preferred language of instruction and the primary foreign language to be taught in schools.

The discursive analysis of the policy documents (such as reports of the education commissions, and some published books/papers (e.g., (Giri, 2009; Phyak, 2013; Sharma, 2011; Wood, 1965) proves the existence of the English language as an MOI in Durbar school, although the authentic (original) historical document as evidence of the MOI used in the school was not available during my field visit to the Department of Archaeology, Kathmandu in August 2018. Hence most of the claims made here in this regard are from secondary sources. Sharma (2011) mentioned that Durbar School was operated with close observation, monitoring, and inspection by English native speakers. Although the early years of the Rana regime imposed limited access to education, especially controlled by them as a part of their political grip, it gradually expanded across the country especially with the generous discretion of the *Rana* Prime Minister *Shree Teen* Dev Samsher Rana. When the number of schools expanded and diverse community access enhanced, the schools adopted multiple languages such as Sanskrit, Nepali, English, Hindi, and other local community-based languages as parts of their education systems. Despite this practice of multiple languages in use in education, the Interim Constitution promulgated in 1948 (2004 BS) by then *Shree Panch* Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah and *Shree Teen Maharaja* Padma Samsher Jung Bahadur Rana raised the status of Nepali as the national language and language of the law. For instance, article 44 of this constitution stated, ‘All proceedings in the legislative assembly shall be conducted in Nepali, the national language’. This official policy was enacted accordingly, and it ultimately contributed towards the exclusion of other languages of the nation from the governance system as it ignored the potential of other local languages to be used for the official purpose. Due to these provisions, the Nepali language was established as a marker of “Nepaliness” (Caddell, 2007, p. 5), and was subsequently promoted as the language of instruction in schools. Such constitutional provisions constitute the macro structures that, in many societies “create and perpetuate de facto language policies and

practices” (Shohamy, 2006, p. xvi). This provision of language use in the administrative and public institutions functioned as a tool for the creation of real policies and practices in educational spaces as well. In addition to this, this constitution did not mention anything about the identity, promotion, and protection of linguistic diversity of the nation. This is how, historically, the state, especially in the Panchayat regime, was turning a deaf ear to the multilingual identity of the nation and trying to promote Nepali and English bilingualism.

Additionally, the geopolitical situatedness of Nepal with an open border to then-British-colonized India exerted an influence in spreading English through education, communication, and trade affairs. It is not only because Nepal had to communicate through English with the colonial government in India, but also because these two countries share similar social, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Moreover, the history of the Nepal-India fraternity is one of the notable contributory factors for the expansion of political, social, and educational exchanges between these two countries. The inclusion of English as a part of the curriculum in India and Nepal’s schools’ and universities’ historical affiliation to the Indian institutions can be attributed to the establishment of English as the most preferred language of education. This historical legacy of co-opting English in academia continued throughout the subsequent educational reforms, despite several nationalistic and ethnolinguistic movements countering its unprecedented expansion.

Establishment of Democracy in 1951 and the Spread of English

The establishment of democracy in 1951, with the promulgation of the Interim Constitution of Nepal Act- 1951 played an instrumental role for Nepal to open up to the rest of the world. In other words, the post-1951 period was presented as an “opening up” to the outside world (Caddell, 2007) since the interconnectedness between Nepal and the rest of the world in terms of democracy and modernity became a ‘clarion call’ (De Chene, 1996). Among many, one of the essential tools for connecting to the external world was education. The first Five-

year Plan for Education in Nepal (1956) rightly mentioned that whether we like it or not, Nepal will no longer remain isolated from the rest of the world, as the world has come to us, and without education, we cannot meet this world (Ministry of Education, 1956). This statement rationalizes Nepal's thrust for modernization, aspiration for attending to the global processes, in terms of its education. In this process, English became the tool, for many countries like Nepal, for responding to the rapid socio-economic changes as well as the political engagements (Ramakant, 1973) (see Chapter V).

The democratic turn instigated the reforms in educational policy as well. For instance, the political ideologies of linguistic human rights, and the rights of the ethnic and minority groups, etc. were widely discussed in the social, educational, and development contexts, and thereby appealing to the national governments to tune their policies in line with the ideals of such democratic philosophies. Despite emerging pressures from ethnic/indigenous communities in engendering the spaces for mother tongues in education, Nepali and English languages remained at the forefront of education and communication in the name of nation-building, identity, unity, and solidarity. These practices increased the status of the Nepali language as a symbol of national unity and identity. At times, the enhancement of Nepal is also interpreted as a consequence of the historical legacy of Hill-Brahmins/Chhetri's interest in promoting Hindu-based Nepali hegemony at the cost of other indigenous languages in Nepal, and so was explicitly presented as the macro policy. For instance, the report of NEPC (1954), the policy and planning document of the government, stated:

Teaching of other local languages will mitigate against the effective development of Nepali, and ...if the youths are taught to use Nepali as the basic language then other languages will gradually disappear and greater national strength and unity will result.
(p. 8, chapter 8:2)

This statement exclusively recognizes the Nepali language supremacy and strengthens Nepali monolingual ideology amidst Nepal's linguistic diversity. It also legitimizes the understanding that the teaching of local/indigenous languages jeopardizes the development of Nepali. This 'linguistic diversity as a problem' (Ruiz, 1984) ideology was deeply rooted in Nepal's education system since the beginning of democracy. This presents a paradoxical scenario in which while democracy promised the children's linguistic rights, the education policy promoted Nepali rather than the mother tongues of the ethnic/indigenous languages in education. On the other hand, despite the focus on Nepali monolingual ideology in the education system, the expansion of English schools continued. Wood (1965), who was also an advisor and an active member of the NEPC -1954, mentioned after a decade that "there are about 1000 English primary schools in Nepal today" (p. 29) and approximately 161 English secondary schools until 1961. He also added, "Though the curriculum of primary school included language, arithmetic, history, geography, and civics, much of the time is devoted to learning English, which is taught from the first year of schooling and is the medium of instruction" (p. 29). This reveals the fact that learning of English constituted a large part of the curriculum. Similarly, the survey for people's preference for the type of schools carried out by the NEPC- 1954 found that a total of 55% of the people opted for English schools (Sharma, 2009), and the main reasons for such a choice were reported to be the recruitment priorities given to those proficient in English in the government services (public service jobs), and people's comparison of their status with those of the others with better English language proficiency.

This case of parental choice constituting the pivotal position in MOI in schools, affected by various other supra-national and micro contextual factors is consistent with the findings drawn from the empirical data in this study (see Chapter VI). Therefore, the parental choice for educating their children in English medium schools is one of the major reasons for

schools to shift to English from Nepali. Even today, while the promulgation of the new constitution guarantees linguistic rights and multilingualism as a fundamental right (the macro statutory provision working as the policy), the school practice continues to be widely Englishized, especially permitted by the liberal legal provisions justified based on ‘choice’. Even though the linguistic and social-cultural rights of the ethnic/indigenous communities have been well defined and ensured at the legislative level, the teaching and learning in/of the mother tongues have not been successful as the educational institutions given more autonomy on the choice of the MOI are shifting towards only Nepali and English. Besides, the scholarly activism of the indigenous rights activists has not brought any substantial contribution in altering the already established practice of teaching and learning of/in Nepali and English, and policy documents reviewed here acknowledge the same trend.

The review and discussion inform us that the governments in Nepal, since the initiation of formal schooling, have been not only enhancing public education but also promoted education in English. As also indicated above, Nepal’s dependency on Indian education in which English was the only MOI that continued until Tri-Chandra College (established in 1918) shifted its affiliation from Patna University to Tribhuvan University (established in 1959). Up until that time, the curricular standards, including the language of instruction, were adopted as par with the guidelines obtained from Universities in India (firstly to the University of Calcutta, and then to Patna University). MOE (1954) in its report explicitly stated in this regard as:

The system of education prevailing in Nepal is patterned to some extent after that of India, and several distinct types of education exist side by side. The English type follows the British model of India, which at one time was accredited based on the Oxford and Cambridge examinations (p. 26).

The above quote from the government-level policy document qualifies the claims concerning the historical root of Nepal's formal education in the British education system. The government recognized the English schools and provided them with financial assistance as well. For instance, MOE (1954) mentioned "Government English schools were provided with 2 lakhs (two hundred thousand rupees) financial support" (MOE, 1954, p. 28). These types of support from the government further encouraged the ruling elites to maintain a strong interest in emulating the English-medium education system (Caddell, 2007), and this also led towards maximizing the time of learning English in the schools. For instance, the MOE report of 1954 mentioned an unwarranted amount of time (reportedly 40% to 60% of the school time) was spent on the teaching of languages, much of which was spent on learning English for various reasons. Two of the major reasons were; a) only the English programme could lead to a bachelor's degree, and b) the curriculum of English schools was patterned after that of the English schools in India, which required English to be the mandatory language of instruction. These two curricular provisions directly contributed to the promotion of English the prominent foreign language in school education.

All these policies and practices inform us that teaching in English was deliberately promoted by the government as well as public motivation and aspirations in the attempts to modernize Nepal's schooling. The development of competitive English language proficiency was a step ahead in modernizing efforts as proficiency in an international language is a prerequisite in global marketplaces. The teaching of least one foreign language, usually a major international language, was a common practice. As English was the principal language of the globalizing world (Spolsky, 2004) and the most common language of the UN, it was taught as the major foreign language as a part of the curriculum globally. In Nepal, together with English, several other languages such as Nepali, Sanskrit, and some mother tongues were included in the curriculum as well. In this regard, MOE (1954) mentioned, "English is taught from grade 3,

and the medium of instruction in the high school is usually English; Sanskrit and Nepali are required for the final school-leaving examination, and the mother tongue is taught” (MOE, 1954, p. 41). Here, the provisions of teaching in mother tongues often paid “the lip-service to inclusive ideologies” (Shohamy, 2006, p. xvii) rather than being driven by the community and individual interests. Despite instances of the teaching of mother tongues in some communities (e.g., Hindi in the schools in the Terai, Newar in the Kathmandu Valley), English and Nepali gradually dominated as the language of instruction, and the same was fundamentally supported by the government. In the case of the Kathmandu valley resided by the majority Newar community, for example, Nepali, Hindi, and Sanskrit were taught as the compulsory subjects, and Newar was studied only as an optional subject (Gellner, 1986). In this case, teaching and learning of mother tongues was devalued as these languages were not strongly supported by the structural and agentive acts of the governments and the relevant communities. For instance, Geller (1986) reported:

Many Newars, even those inside the Kathmandu Valley, are speaking Nepali to their children in preference to Newari, feeling that this will give them a better chance at school and that Newari is ‘good for nothing’: their children will already have to master English if they go on to higher education, why burden them further by making the national language of their own country a second tongue to them? (p. 120)

This historical reference of parental demotivation towards their community languages was found consistent across the data obtained for this study as well (see Chapter VI). Language practices in schools were driven by local community engagement, and in that case the government agencies (such as education ministry and its line agencies) were unable to take control over this phenomenon as they had to responsively negotiate with several linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identities of several people and communities, and their demands for education. This difficulty is also resonated in Nepal government’s policies since its political

shift to multiparty democracy since 1990 that aimed at promotion and protection of diversity (GoN, 2007). Since then, implicitly, or explicitly, language policies have been negotiated around diversity issues, that led to delegation of authority in language policy decisions to the local government (MOES, 2019).

Monolingual MOI Ideology and Bilingual Practice

Following the abolition of the Rana oligarchy in 1950, public initiatives in establishing schools and general freedom movements in Terai provided a tremendous contribution to the rapid expansion of education (Wood, 1965). At the same time, the nation opted for an inclusive and social justice policy of zero tolerance to all kinds of discriminations regarding race, religion, gender, age, origin, language, etc., and people's fundamental rights (such as rights to elementary education, basic employment, property ownership, and freedom of speech). The governments formed afterward prioritized the development agenda such as systematic intervention for the eradication of illiteracy, national integration, and preservation of the national heritage. These policies played an instrumental role in the monoglossic and monocultural ideology in governance and education.

This explicit focus on the Nepali language promoted by the state language planning contributed towards establishing Nepali as the most dominant language followed by English and was accordingly adopted as the MOI. Wood (1965) writes, "In 1955, the government made Nepali the official medium for all schools, and it is now the medium of instruction in most schools, except for some along the Indian border which teach in Hindi" (p. 32). Wood (1965) also claims that before 1947, Hindi, Nepali, and other local languages were studied to a limited extent, but the major emphasis was on EMI. That means, through one or the other way, the two dominant languages, i.e., English and Nepali, were promoted by the state mechanisms as well as the community engagements. This reveals that bilingual Nepali and English practice continued despite increasing Nepali monolingual ideology in education.

The increasing bilingualism impacted the language learning needs and ethnic/indigenous communities' ideological construction towards their home/native/heritage language(s) (Gellner, 1986). In such contexts, the indigenous or local language speakers needed to seek to maintain their “own languages and/or along with the acquisition of the ‘power’ language and to develop bilingual patterns” (Shohamy, 2006, pp. 35-36). Research literature from the multilingual contexts has documented the linguistic dilemma faced by the speakers of the minority languages while making language learning decisions. For instance, Hornberger et al. (2018) claim, “Many linguistically minoritized groups faced the dilemma of claiming their rights to maintain their linguistic practices” (p. 168). They further mentioned that the same groups have promoted the “purist or standard language ideologies that have oppressed them in the first place” (p. 168). Such a dilemma roots in the structural constraints formed by the upliftment of Nepali languages supported by an ideology of strengthening national unity, economizing education costs, and the earlier-the better language learning principles (see Chapter V and VI). In other words, the economic rationales, the commodified values associated with languages and language-based social imaginaries have nested interconnections and have collectively strengthened some dominant languages (such as Nepali and English) while others (such as the minority languages) are marginalized. These planning processes have impacted ethnic/indigenous people's perceptions, and the deficit language ideologies have emerged therein. For instance, Gellner (1986) also reported that the people from the ethnic/indigenous background (e.g., Newars) had a “good for nothing” perception and a feeling of confinement within the frames of ethnic and cultural identity, rather than access and mobility.

In many multilingual polities, the practice of adopting one of the indigenous languages as the principal language to be picked up for official or constitutional purposes within the state is not unusual. The Nepali language was privileged with this opportunity. The overall emphasis

at the policy level was towards the promotion of Nepali-only monolingual ideology. For example, the Government of Nepal Act- 1948 (2004 BS) stated, in article 44, that all proceedings in the Legislative Assembly shall be conducted in Nepali, the national language, and nothing more about the use of other languages of the nation is mentioned therein. The same provision was echoed in the NEPC (1954) report that came after six years as “The medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle, and higher educational institutions, because any language which cannot be made lingua franca and which does not serve legal proceedings in court should not find a place...” (p. 95). These overarching policy provisions do not mention anything about the position of English and the ethnic/indigenous languages in education. Also, this means that there were no legal provisions for restricting the use of English as the MOI. So, this silencing towards the status of English meant an unplanned consent given for English as the MOI. With all these policy loopholes and policy silencing, both Nepali and English made the way through in educational practices and collectively contributed towards minimizing (or even eliminating) the role of ethnic/indigenous languages. Following this democratic turn that also supported Nepali language supremacy, the Panchayat system further reinforced the same providing higher-level values to Nepali in educational spaces and governance.

Panchayat Regime and the Language Policy in Education

The political transformation in 1960, especially King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah’s declaration of the Panchayat system¹⁴ squeezed the earlier liberal policies towards language rights and language use ensured by the democratic government. Following this, he took charge of the state and promulgated an Interim Constitution in 1962 provisioning party-less ‘homegrown indigenized democracy’ which he claimed to be an alternative to democracy and

¹⁴ Panchayat is a partyless political system, also known as Panchayat autocratic regime, incepted by King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev in 15th December 1960 AD (1st Poush 2060 BS)

communism put forward by the western powers such as the US and the USSR (KC & Kharel 2017). Grounded in his idea of ‘suitable to the soil’ nationalism and an integrationist approach (Burghart, 1996), this movement marked a substantial control on language policy formation and implementation in school education. The three pillars of national identity that King Mahendra emphasized were Hindu religion, Nepali language, and Monarchy- as the foundation of Panchayat (KC & Kharel, 2017). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the Nepali language assimilationist ideology that the Panchayat process adopted made a substantial impact on language use in education.

The report of the All-Round National Education Committee [ARNEC, 1962] introduced major changes in education based on the Panchayat system. This report recommended the implementation of ‘uniform’ education in terms of its pattern and the MOI throughout the country (Sharma, 2009), and to be controlled by the central government, i.e., the monarchy. The report mandated Nepali MOI in schools as, “the medium of instruction in all other subjects (except language-related subjects) should be the Nepali in both primary and secondary school education” (Sharma, 2009, p. 177). The practice of this monolithic MOI policy was in effect throughout the Panchayat period (from 1960-1990), especially in public schools. Language learning (including the national, local, and foreign languages) was highly considered important as the commission prescribed teaching and learning of any one of the languages of Nepal (other than Nepali), or any other foreign language (from among French, German, Spanish, Chinese and Russian) as an elective subject even for the students in the Sanskrit-streamed¹⁵ education system. This provision that provided equal treatment to Nepal’s indigenous languages and foreign languages across the curriculum did not make a substantial contribution towards enhancing the place of mother tongues in education.

¹⁵ Nepal was then a Hindu country. There were/are Hindu religious schools across the country who teach Hindu philosophy, especially with the adoption of Sanskrit language.

On the curricular side of the school education, this report prescribed the English language as a compulsory subject (with full credit of 100 marks) at grades 6-8, however, its weightage was increased to 200 full marks for the grade 9 -11 of general mainstream education. In Nepal's curricular provisions, the compulsory subjects taught as a part of the curriculum are prescribed with 100 full marks, which was the case of teaching English as a subject. The same provision of compulsory learning of English was mandated for technical secondary education as well, but that was exempted for the Sanskrit schools. The Sanskrit schools could use the Sanskrit language instead of a foreign language English (the provision was in practice then). The report reveals tension among the members while addressing the language issues, especially regarding the position of English and other mother tongues. For instance, Mr. Ranabir Subba, one of the members of ARNEC in his speech while launching the report in 1962 largely highlighted the need of teaching in English from the secondary level of schooling in Nepal due to several reasons; a) problem in understanding the complex contents in the translated books (the Nepali medium books of mathematics prepared by direct translation from English were faced less comprehensible), b) English being used as a medium in higher education, and c) instances of international contexts (that of India, Sweden, France, Italy, etc.) where English or any other foreign language teaching was in practice (as cited in Sharma, 2009). Although a common consensus was reached among members in refining and continuing the use of Nepali as the preferred MOI, contradictions continued about the teaching of English or using it as the MOI in school education. For instance, while Mr. Ramhari Joshi disagreed with the potential use of English, Dr. Dhruvaman Amatya strongly favoured English as the MOI at least for 40/50 years. He proposed to continue EMI until the full standardization of the Nepali language to be used as a medium across the country (especially in Terai and remote hilly regions where other native languages were commonly used) (MOE, 1962). Similarly, Mr. Bedananda Jha, another member of the committee,

proposed the idea of language management in three levels, viz. national language, regional language, and the mother tongues. Despite those proposals and suggestions, Nepali and/or English (bilingual) continued to be enacted in schools. This historical literature reveals continuing tensions and dilemmas in decision-making in MOI in Nepal's educational policy. The findings of this study also acknowledge such tensions and dilemmas (see Chapter VII).

Hence the overall idea of the report that exclusively represented the educational reform agenda of the Panchayat government was to convince that the education system remains supportive of the promotion and protection of national identity, sovereignty, and integration. The government and its bureaucracy assumed that a stronghold on the linguistic, cultural, religious, and educational system could facilitate the achievement of the goal of nationalism, i.e., the national identity primarily based on three pillars: Hindu religion, Nepali language, and monarchy. With these goals, the Panchayat regime attempted to perpetuate Nepali language supremacy in the schooling system. Therefore, the education system then inevitably served to perpetuate existing social relations of the Panchayat system. Besides continuing to develop loyalty towards the party-less government, the educational policies were influenced by Nepal's aspirations for modernization. The modernization efforts in the 1960s and 1970s (with the emergence of the Panchayat model of governance and initiation of NESP- 2071-76) collided with the nationalist ideology. Reinforced with this ideology, Nepali was taught as a subject and was used as the MOI in public schools whereas English was confined within the curriculum as a compulsory subject. During this regime, the modernity and development discourse ended up in a form of the interlinked process of Nepalisation and modernization (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 1997) that proficiency in Nepali symbolized being a patriot and English as being 'educated and modern'. This means, both Nepali and English collectively constituted imagery of an educated and patriot Nepali identity. This trend eventually contributed to the enhancement of nationalism through privileging Nepali as the language of instruction, and

English as the first “other language” (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2019, p. 6) to be taught in schools. English was widely taught as a part of the curriculum but was restricted to be used as MOI. Cobarrubias (1983) pointed out that languages “may be widely taught, for instance, as part of the education process, but not be used at any stage as a medium of instruction” (Cobarrubias 1983 as cited in Ricento, 2016, p. 281). Nepal’s education system during the Panchayat period reflected this trend, especially in the case of positioning English and other mother tongues in education. While the major objective of the state was to establish unity or sense of oneness but in a monolithic sense through its several processes, diversity in linguistic and cultural terms was less emphasized. The idea of modernization of Nepal and its education did not recognize the value of ethnic/indigenous languages. This ‘historical move’ and precedence of undermining the national linguistic diversity continued after the collapse of the Panchayat regime in the 1990s. Following the multiparty democratic turn in the country, the ideologies of globalization, nationalism, and ethnic/indigenous identity were contested in the education systems in Nepal (see Chapter VI and VII).

Modernization of Education and English Language Policy after the 1990s

The increasing engagement of the government in the international forums and endorsement of international declarations especially after the 1990s collectively contributed towards the globalization of the education system of Nepal. For instance, the government’s aspiration for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)- 2000-15 by reducing poverty, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality constituted the core processes of participation in the modernization and globalization processes. As the Nepali society is heterogeneous and is in constant flux (Bista, 1991), every modernization effort is needed to address issues of diversity, democracy, and rights of individuals and communities to protect and promote their languages and cultures. These concerns influenced political, legislative as well as educational policymaking. For instance, the Constitution of

Nepal (1990) provided a conceptual design to remove all sorts of economic and social inequalities against indigenous nationalities through planned attempts in developing their languages and cultures (National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities, [NFDIN], 2003). The same was supported by international organizations (e.g., UNESCO) by emphasizing raising awareness about the inclusion of indigenous history, culture, language, and identity in educational systems. Besides, the questions of identity, power, and nationhood were largely discussed concerning the choice of language of instruction (UNESCO, 2003), as a result, learning and/or being taught in a dominant language became the issue of social mobility, prestige, and modernization. The global discourse set by UNESCO Position paper entitled “Education in Multilingual World” urged, based on its philosophy of ‘first language first’, the national governments to reconsider their policies in education by supporting “mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of learners and teachers” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 27). Despite all these efforts at the national and international level, the social valuing of the English medium continued in education.

In many contexts (e.g., Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, South Korea), English has remained a class-marker, a prestige bearer, and an engine for upward mobility and modernization, and also was protected by the elite (Bhattacharya, 2013; Choi, 2016; Hamid, 2011; Rahman, 2019), so was the case in Nepal (Poudel & Choi, 2021). After the liberal policies in the 1990s, with the promulgation of the multiparty democratic constitution, the use of English further expanded, especially driven by the private sector’s active engagement in providing public education. The active participation of the private sector to complement and/or compensate the quality deficit of public education played an important role in promoting English. This aligns with Kachru’s (1992) claims and projection about an increment of English speakers in the expanding circle countries (such as Nepal, Bhutan, Fiji, Japan,

Thailand, Myanmar, and many others in East and South Asia). He also claimed that English played an important role in “modernization and westernization in non-western regions” (p. 10). The growing participation of Nepal in international diplomatic relations and trade also partly contributed to shifting the status of English from the language of the rulers to everybody’s language (Giri, 2014; Sharma, 2010).

However, the choice of MOI remained within the tensions between traditional ethnic and nationalist orientations, and modernization. Since the introduction of the National Education System Plan– 1971, the neoliberal educational policies together with the nationalist ideological orientations promoted the aggressive expansion of private sector investment in education. The private schools adopted English as the de facto MOI and attracted the public sentiment by selling their agenda of teaching ‘in English’ which was (mistakenly) synonymized with quality education. The same has continued even today in public institutions where we see their advertisements stating, “*English medium*”, tempting rhetoric of quality education that the parents are misguided by. In whatever form they come with, the emerging ‘English fever’ (Choi, 2013, 2016) and English mania (Poudel, 2019; Poudel & Choi, 2021) has contributed to (re)shaping and sustaining the capitalization of English in Nepalese society. Hashim (2009) reported a case in Malaysia that in the 1990s, the challenges of globalization and internationalization brought about the pressure for developing proficiency in English. Nepal’s liberal policies that allowed wider use of English in education, media, and governance (especially in the private sector) had a covert impact on the promotion of English as a free-market commodity (Cameron, 2012). The less interventionist language policy (Shohamy, 2006) that the Nepal government adopted contributed to the institutionalization of the dominant languages (e.g., Nepali and English) at the cost of ethnic/indigenous languages. This expansion of English in ‘plurilingual social and educational contexts’ has attracted counter-discourses of nationalism that favours Nepali over

English. There emerged an ideological divide between Nepali and the local languages vis-à-vis English. This divide is shaped by a complexly intertwined nexus of various factors (such as economic, educational, political, and social-cultural) shaping the local and global discourses (see Chapter VI).

In a nutshell, it can be observed that the official language policy that came as a part of reform with the establishment of multiparty democracy in 1990, recognizing the extent of linguistic diversity in the country allowed primary schools to use the mother tongues as MOIs. The involvement of international development organizations (such as UNESCO, UNICEF, DFID, etc.) remained crucial in promoting and advocating the agenda of educational reforms, including mother-tongue based multilingual education, owing to its slow development (Rana et al., 2020; Regmi, 2017; Taylor, 2010).

Therefore, the aspirations for development, reduction of poverty, improving literacy, and participation in the international community, which were the priority areas of political change and development plans, impacted language policies as well. Any form of disregard to the linguistic diversity of the country would be perceived by the majority of indigenous communities as state hegemony to promote the dominant language Nepali (Gurung, 2009). All political changes that took place after the 1990s were affected by development discourses and modernization, all of which valued, at least in policy, the linguistic diversity of Nepal.

Republic Democracy, Education Policymaking, and Language of Instruction

Despite the prevalence of democracy in the 1990s, that also recognized constitutional monarchy (also known as monarchical democracy), some political parties (e.g., the then Communist Party of Nepal [Maoist]) continued to demand for state restructuring (Bhattarai, 2003, as cited in Pherali & Garratt, 2014, p. 43) emphasizing the full inclusion of people from diverse social dimensions, especially the ones from the linguistically, politically, and

economically minoritized and marginalized groups. In other words, the socio-cultural and economic inequalities persisting across different sectors of life in multiple forms such as ethnicity, language, religion, and culture needed attention (Lawoti, 2005; Pandey, 2010).

While the political revolution continued, some of the issues raised by the agitating parties were gradually addressed in the government policies and plans, including the projects funded by the development partners. For instance, the Basic and Primary Education Programme II [BPEP-II, 1999]) initiated the development of primary level textbooks, teacher guides, and curriculum materials in the languages such as Limbu, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, and Newari among others (Pherali & Garratt, 2014; Shields & Rappleye, 2008). However, given Nepal's wider diversity, dissatisfaction concerning the identity and social justice of the minoritized and disadvantaged communities and their respective rights. In the meantime, as a result of the ongoing political struggle for ethnic and national identity, some regional political parties (e.g., Tarai-Madhes Loktantrik Party, Tharuhat Party, etc.) struggled discriminations and deep-divides in the socio-cultural and political system in Nepal.

On the political side, the decade-long political turmoil/revolution in Nepal (between 1996-2006) concluded with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the revolting group (CPN-Maoists) and the Government of Nepal on 21 November 2006. This agreement impacted educational policymaking as promises were made for restructuring the state mechanism from right-based inclusive perspectives. Consequently, the Interim Constitution—2007 provided indigenous communities with rights to adopt the mother tongues in education. Despite the macro policies that legitimized indigenous language use in education, it did not turn into practice as expected as hegemonic use of English and Nepali continued in education, media, and the public spaces. De Santos (2015) terms this continuation of dominant languages as epistemicide, referring to the new forms of linguistic injustices in the multilingual societies where collective efforts of policy actors and enactors of policy

contribute to creating novel language policies that negatively impact the community-based minority languages. Kymlicka and Patten (2003) referred to Taras' (1998) study in Eastern Europe that concluded, "Countries that had accorded a range of minority language rights (at least on paper) under the Communist regime often shifted to a policy of official monolingualism, and linguistic minorities responded with a range of mobilization, from peaceful protest to violent succession". Nepal's context echoes this scenario as well since both pro-democracy parties (i.e., Nepali Congress) and pro-communism parties (i.e., Nepal Communist Party- UML, Nepal Communist Party- Maoist) agreed that all languages are equal in law, all of them favoured the mono/bilingual practice in governance and education. For them, as it seems based on the current situation, that multilingual education is just an ethnic agenda. The 'why' of the historical legacy of monolingual practice despite the multilingual state-backed policies is an unanswered question, which this research attempted to explore (see Chapter VI and VII).

After the institutionalization of the Federal Republic democracy by the Interim Constitution—2007 (on Article 3), the nation was further as "multi-ethnic, multilingual, multireligious and multicultural" (GoN, 2007; p. 3), and the same continued in The Constitution of Nepal-2015, the new constitution promulgated by the Constitution Assembly. The Interim Constitution (in Article 35[2]) at the same time endorsed the neoliberalism-influenced discourse of development as, "The state shall pursue a policy of developing economy of the country through the governmental, cooperative and private sectors" (GoN, 2007, p. 19). While the constitutional provisions focus on ethnic, national, and neoliberal globalization issues, the choice of MOI in schooling was affected accordingly. For instance, the Constitution of Nepal-2015 states, "In addition to the Nepali language, a province shall select one or more national language that is spoken by the majority of people in that province as the language of official business, as provided for by the provincial law" (Article, 7[2]). This legislative

provision provides legitimacy to the ‘chosen’ MOI from among Nepali, English, and mother tongue. Due to this, the political, as well as educational discourses concerning language use in education (mainly the MOI), have remained inconclusive owing to complex linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity in Nepal. The ‘choice’ from among English, Nepali, and the mother tongues reflects this concern. Continuing with the earlier policy provisions, the newly developed National Education Policy–2019 provides freedom to use the mother tongues in addition to Nepali and English. The choice of MOI and related decision-making has now been transferred to the discretion of the local governments, i.e., the municipalities. Although this decentralized governmentality considered and valued the local linguistic specificities, the local governments’ inactions and silencing continued, which led to not implementing the mother tongue policies in the respective schools of their political and administrative unit (Poudel & Choi, 2021). This practice is ultimately shaped by the long-standing deficit ideology concerning ethnic/indigenous languages. There has been a dilemma in MOI policymaking and the practice in Nepal’s schooling system. The section that follows illustrates such a dilemma.

The MOI Dilemma in School Education

The decision-making on MOI phenomenon a form of ‘social practice’ (Neustupny, 2006) was also subject to the notion of social structure (see Tollefson, 1991) specific to Nepal’s plurilingual contexts. The complex diversity itself that emerged from social, political, geographic, economic, and religious dimensions of society led the language policymaking in a dilemma. In Nepal, along with the historical evolution of education, English schools outnumbered the Nepali medium or Sanskrit schools (Sharma, 2009, referring from NEPC report 1954). Currently, the trend of shifting the MOI to English in public schools is likely to revive the historical trend of the predominance of English as the most preferred language of instruction in school education. A British Council-sponsored survey study carried out by

Ranabhat, Chiluwal, and Thompson (2018) revealed more than 52% of public schools in the Chitwan district shifted to EMI in the previous 10 years, and the trend is accelerating.

While Nepali continued to be established as a national language and the primary language of communication even across several ethnic/indigenous communities, it informed both policy and practice. This ideology reinforced the perception that learning any minority language was “no longer useful beyond the specific territory of the nation-states” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 35-36) which eventually influenced the MOI policies and practices in schools until now.

However, it is to be noted that language policies and the subsequent practices exist in “highly complex, interacting and dynamic contexts, and modification of any part of which may have correlated effects (and causes) on any other part” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 6). The fluctuation in the institutionalization of Nepali and English as MOIs in the education systems in Nepal and negligence towards ethnic/indigenous languages (see Table 1) is likely to exert far-reaching consequences to the ethnolinguistic diversity in the society. In multilingual and multicultural contexts, many diverse but complementary elements interplay in policymaking and execution processes. Nepal’s attempt to maintain the equilibrium within the complex multilingual context by raising the status of Nepali yet being open to ethnolinguistic rights was challenging. In maintaining such an equilibrium, by status planning, as Cobarrubias (1983) claimed, at least two distinct forces, i.e., language nationalism and urge to modernization, interplay in responding to such change. Many other factors that interplay in language policy processes are discussed in detail in Chapter VII. Spolsky (2004) commented, “a central controversy in language education policy is over the issue of what is regularly referred to as mother-tongue education” (p.47). The controversy over which language to adopt and which not constituted the debates in educational policy in Nepal. Some scholars argue that monolingual practices in multilingual contexts have committed ‘symbolic linguistic and cultural violence’ (Bourdieu, 1991) against marginalized communities by silencing their

voices, prohibiting them from speaking their mother tongues (Phillipson, 1992, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The historically rooted dilemmatic upbringing of language policy issues (i.e., which language to adopt at what level and for what purpose) continues to exist where local, national, and international interests contradict in shaping language in education policies and practices. As this chapter concentrates on the historical development of language policies in education in Nepal, the following section synthesizes the overall trends observed and identified from the reading of the policy documents.

The Trend of Policy Changes and Priorities: A Glimpse

From the above review on the historical trend of language policy provisions, especially in the legislative and educational plans and policy texts (education acts and regulations), and shreds of evidence mentioned in the reports of the educational commissions, the following conclusive remarks have been inferred (Table 2).

Table 2: Trends of language policy changes in education

Period	Trend	Explanation
<i>Malla</i> period to 1816 (before Rana Oligarchy)	Focus on Sanskrit and Nepali dialects	<i>Pratap Malla</i> knew many languages, Priests in the temples and <i>Guthis</i> used Sanskrit as the language of instruction and learning, and several Nepali dialects used in their respective principalities, Pali was the language of instruction in Gumbas, and Urdu/Arabic in the Madrasas
<i>Rana</i> Regime (1816-1950)	Active development and promotion of English as a medium of instruction and neglect to other languages of the nation, status planning for Nepali	Rana Prime Minister established the first school that taught English and other subjects in English, focused on the importance of learning English, Nepali was the language of public communication, the status of Sanskrit was reduced, other

Period	Trend	Explanation
		languages were not promoted to the national mainstream
Monarchical democratic period (1950-1962)	Increased focus on Nepali national language as the medium of instruction, English was taken as the major foreign language taught, EMI was questioned.	The democratic constitution provided a basis for respect and promotion of other languages of the nation, and education in the mother tongue was not prevented, the teaching of English as a major foreign language continued
The <i>Panchayat</i> autocratic regime (1962-1990)	Focused on monoglossic national identity, extreme Nepali nationalism, and assimilationist language policy	‘One-nation-one language policy’ of the state flourished Nepali as the MOI in schools, other national languages were neglected and that promoted ‘deficit’ ideology concerning ethnic/indigenous languages. However, English remained a major foreign language taught in schools
Multiparty democracy to Federal Republic democracy (1990-2015)	Liberal language policy, promoted EMI in the later part of this period, ‘choice’ at the center of language policy adoption for schools	Constitutional provisions assured promotion and protection of all the languages of the nation and enshrined the language rights to every ethnic minority; however, the liberal global trends and privatization heightened the use of English in the service sector including education so that EMI in public schools was synonymized with ‘quality’ standards. However, revived interest in mother tongue education intensified in the social and political as well as academic discourse.

Period	Trend	Explanation
Federal Republic democratic period (2015 onwards)	<p>Liberal language policy, however, language use in education preferred bilingualism (i.e., English and Nepali) limiting the imagined multilingual practices</p> <p>Provisioned teaching of social studies and indigenous culture-related subjects in Nepali (NCF, 2019), whereas the translation of the textbooks into English continued by CDC.</p>	<p>Previously existing gaps between policy goals and practices continued, the constitutional provisions were flexible for the use of languages in education. However, the public preference for EMI expanded, and thus resulted in the growing adoption of EMI in public schools.</p> <p>The educational policy urged the teaching of social studies in NMI for cultural, pedagogical, and political reasons, while it allowed the use of EMI in teaching Sciences and Mathematics. Current practice shows a continuation of EMI in all non-language subjects.</p>

Table 2 presents the historical glimpse of political transitions and language policy changes embedded in educational policies in Nepal. As language resides within the complex socio-cultural and political settings, the formation of consistent and sustainable MOI policy was challenging throughout the history of educational development in Nepal. Although the equity discourses as a part of development rhetoric and planning consistently focused on promotion and protection of linguistic diversity, implementation of multilingual education was perceived as being onerous since it was taken as a problem rather than a resource. This ideological framing, which came as a part of democratic transition and modernization in Nepal beginning in the 1950s contributed to undermining the relevance of multilingual education, and

multilingualism itself. In other words, EMI was fully conceptualized as parallel to modernization (Blommaert, 2007), and learning or speaking a mother tongue was perceived as being primitive, backward, and less developed (Song, 2019). The review of the policy also revealed tensions around the formation of multilingual policies in education and governance owing to the complex nature of the constitution of the diversity itself and the associated inequalities. Spolsky (2004) says “it is even more difficult to define a national policy when there is a tension between federal and local policies, as in India” (p. 13), which also equally applies to Nepal’s case as each province is likely to have diverse nature of linguistic composition requiring a diverse form of societal multilingualism (Edwards, 2008), and that results in inconsistent understanding about the role of English, Nepali, and local ethnic/indigenous languages across provincial and municipal level government agencies (see Poudel & Choi, 2021).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a descriptive account of the development of language policy in education in Nepal synthesized based on the provisions in the statutory documents, reports of educational commissions, periodic plans, and curricular and pedagogical guidelines developed at the national levels. It also shed light on how the political and societal reforms in Nepal influenced language-in-education policy and practice. It was learned that despite well-accepted ethnic/indigenous language rights in Nepal’s education policy as suited for international treaties and conventions, the issue of language alone did not constitute the core of the political struggles, and therefore the political transitions had a limited impact on language policies and their implementation in public governance, and education. Nepal experienced an unsteady path in adopting English and Nepali as the MOIs, and thereby the acceptance of a rights-based perspective in language education (multilingual education) had a minimal impact on changing the existing practices. Spolsky (2004) acknowledges this as a

central problem around the world, especially in countries with linguistic and cultural diversity. The larger portion of the history since the beginning of formal schooling showed preference for EMI over NMI and the progress towards adopting mother tongues as MOI was negligible. More importantly, the democratic political turns in Nepal institutionalized autonomy for ‘choice of language’ in education, which could not prevent the pragmatic and nationalistic forces promoting the Nepali language over the other languages of the nation. This history of language policy reflects the swing of attention from the sociocultural unit “nationalism” and political integrity “nationism” (Nekvapil, 2011, p. 875) towards internationalism. Alternatively, Nepal’s MOI policy decision-making is largely shaped by the discourses of nationalism and globalization (see Chapter II and VI). As the policy review informs, although nationalism constituted the influencing factor for raising the position of the Nepali language in education policies, the aspiration for globalization dominated policy decisions in the language of instruction (see Chapter V). While the heightened emphasis was given to the use of mother tongues (both as subjects and MOI from basic to secondary level) in the policies formed after the introduction of democracy, discrepancies between these policies and practices continued, which were also acknowledged in several major policy documents such as the reports of the education commissions and periodic development plans. Due to such policy-practice discrepancies, and agency silencing (or inaction) in the execution of their well-intended policies (Poudel & Choi, 2021), scholarly debates regarding the effects of such practices in the promotion and protection of languages, and maintenance of the social order have emerged. Follow-up questions now are how and why is this happening? These questions will be answered in the subsequent chapters.

In the next chapter, I have discussed the enactment of MOI policy in the schools, which sheds light on how MOI policy has been appropriated and implemented across diverse contexts of schooling, with the empirical data obtained from the three selected cases schools. The data

discussed in the chapter were obtained from observation and interviews with classroom teachers, students, and headteachers.

Chapter V: Enacted Medium of Instruction Policy in Schools

Introduction

Conventional language policy research has largely conceptualized language policy as texts and documents produced at the macro governmental level, including any guidelines or directives transferred from the federal or provincial governments to the school districts or individual schools. Many language policy and planning (LPP) studies looked at this top-down process extensively assessing whether or not the macro policies have been put into practice. However, recent LPP scholarship has reversed this traditional pattern of research and has provided more focused attention to understand the contextualized institutional practices of the stated policies (Spolsky, 2008) and exploration of major forces affecting such policies in place (Tollefson, 2013), especially in the educational spaces of schooling. In other words, the notion of ‘policy as value-laden actions’ or ‘policy as practice’ (Jones, 2013) has been drawing scholarly attention. Despite the central blanket-type policies in many contexts that create rigid boundaries in using one or the other language in education, at the micro or even meso level of governmental processes the policies experience interaction with diverse and the context specificities which require understating of how the practices are evolving as actual or potential policies.

In the previous chapter (i.e., Chapter IV), I discussed the macro-level language-in-education policy with due attention to the case of the medium of instruction (MOI) in Nepal. That discussion centered around the governmental level policy, prescribed and forwarded through policy texts such as legislative documents, reports of the education commissions, and the national plans published at various points in the history of Nepal’s educational reforms. Analysis of these documents shed light on the stated and intended policies, which largely shaped the macro-structural conditions for the language policymaking and execution in local

governments and individual schools. It was understood that the discourses set by these macro-level policies revealed the foci of the political and educational reforms in Nepal. Such policies have contributed to the construction of normative standards in language policy in education. In other words, they created ideal policy frameworks and standards for schools and educational institutions to follow. For instance, during the Panchayat regime, the provision of Nepali medium of instruction (NMI) was perceived as an essential norm of nation-building and education (see Chapter IV). However, the establishment of democracy enabled the voicing of the marginalized communities concerning their linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identities and knowledge capitals. The prevalence of democracy paved two clear paths- firstly, the ideologies of language rights emerged from the ethnic/indigenous community backgrounds, and secondly, the neoliberal free-market competition penetrated Nepal's educational spaces, where English was allowed to be adopted as the MOI, especially in private schools. This freedom for MOI decision-making in the respective communities provided two possible alternatives to NMI, i.e., mother-tongues MOIs, and English MOI. Between the lines of these trends, people, those from the elite groups, disadvantaged, ethnic and indigenous communities continued to be increasingly motivated by the fashionable growth of English medium of instruction (EMI). They expected that educating their children in English would enable them to join the workforce that mandates a substantial knowledge and skill in this language (see Awasthi, 2011; Poudel & Choi, 2021). This orientation greatly influenced the enactment of MOI in schools, which this chapter illustrates.

Nepal, a country with plural ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities, has accommodated the abovementioned orientations through schooling across diverse cultural and educational contexts. Provided with considerable leverage in practice, schools have formed their own (un)official policies and purposive actions, especially designed to cater to the needs of the concerned communities. Understanding of this concern is essential with the perspective that

the practices can be the policies (Jones, 2013) or enacted policies may no longer conform with the officially formed policies. I have used the term ‘enact or enactment’ here drawing on Braun et al. (2011) in which they perceive enactment as “an understanding that policies are interpreted and translated by diverse policy actors in the school environment, rather than simply implemented” (p. 549). It may include the ways the concerned interpret, appropriate, or even regenerate their practical strategies which may or may not adhere to the macro policies. Their arguments also echo what Ball (1994) claimed about policies responsible for creating circumstances in which a variety of options will be available while making decisions on what to do and what not. Hence, in this section, I have discussed the overall scenario of how the MOI policy has been enacted in the case schools, with an elaboration on how they have produced their take on their policy considering the situated necessities, ethos, and epistemologies. Moreover, the ‘practice’ perspective allows me to identify how the MOI policies are created, situated, distributed, and put into practice within the institutional contexts and how they are influenced (if any) by the wider societal or community discourses. This perspective enables me to highlight how the teachers, students, and parents play roles in (re)shaping the institutional as well as classroom-level practices.

Very limited scholarly attention has been paid to such micro institutional as well as individual (where appropriate) practices, where macro language policies are interpreted and implemented. While analysing this enactment of MOI, I have drawn on the Nexus Approach (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) that enabled me to explore how the macro policies are accepted or resisted, and how the school-level actors play proactive roles in language policymaking therein dealing with multiple internal as well as external pressures contesting in the educational spaces. While co-opting this approach, there are three stages: engaging the nexus in practice, navigating the nexus of practice, and changing the nexus of practice (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). While engaging the nexus of practice, I have presented the study, the setting,

the participants, before zooming into data analysis that illustrates what happens while navigating the nexus of practice. This chapter presents the real status or change in the nexus of practice, i.e., the changing landscape of MOI practice in the individual case contexts. As nexuses of practices are found in all the policy and practice contexts, it is imperative to understand how the community or school level policies are chosen and practiced by the relevant stakeholders with their strategic actions, or how their micro-actions contribute to informing wider policies. Situating itself within this concern, this chapter presents an elaboration of how the state-mandated MOI policies have (or have not) been enacted in the case schools, or what new forms of practices have been (co)constructed by school stakeholders' self-initiation, appropriation, and/or (re)generation of (potential) policies. This concern brings the policies and practices into a dialectical relationship that reflects Spolsky's (2008) perception that policies and practices cannot be kept distinct. This understanding goes beyond the normative conceptualization of policy as a text or document produced officially at the macro governmental level, towards capturing the locally practiced policies.

The Context of Practice

Choice of the language of instruction (in other words, the MOI) in schools has been a contested issue globally due to the rapid influence of globalization on national and local contexts, concerns of nation-building amidst fluid national boundaries, and recognition of the local/indigenous languages in the education systems. As discussed in the previous chapters, the policies formed at the macro contexts have some intended and/or unintended outcomes in the implementational spaces due to diverse contexts of practice. For such a thing to happen, the lower level (regional and local) agencies play key roles in adapting (or resisting/flouting) the guidelines to meet their local and institutional needs based on and influenced by their situated, professional, materials, and external contexts (Ball et al., 2012). In other words, diverse sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts provide institutions and individuals with

opportunities to exercise their agency in appropriating language policy texts through their diverse enactment practices (Johnson, 2018). In this section, I have discussed what has been practiced at the school level in which multiple (but sometimes contradictory) policies planned at distant contexts (e.g., federal, their respective municipal or provincial government levels) are imposed on them, and how the actors at the micro-level have (co)constructed their practice to inform, appropriate or resist the incoming policies. Although, in general, schools must be accountable for many of their decisions against policies formed centrally or beyond their institutions, the specificities of the enactment contexts might prove such distantly generated policies non-functional and might face unintended or unexpected consequences forcing them to generate their own. This makes policy enactment more complex. Ball (1998) pointed out this concern by stating that policymakers do not normally recognize enactment environments and the pressure that schools have in responding to multiple policy expectations (what different policies enter the schools is elaborated in Chapter VII). Enactment of the incoming (some of them might be contradictory) policies embedding them into the schools' institutional culture and local dynamics largely depict how the enactments are taking place. Hence, the case schools' diverse strategic accommodations as well as generation of their contextualized policies as explored in this chapter provide explicit reference to the micro-level LEP enactment, which I discuss here on a case-by-case basis.

Practice at the School Level

The three case schools selected in this study are situated within diverse socio-cultural contexts, and are at different institutional capacities, though at the same time are operated within the same federal level generic educational policies. However, they are also entitled to be influenced by their respective provincial as well as local institutional policies while considering the aspects of their culture, ethos, and situated necessities (Ozga, 2000). As language(s) are closely associated with relationships among individuals across multiple scales

of social organization (Haugen, 1966; Mühlhäusler, 2002), and therefore are interconnected in every aspect of the sociolinguistic system together with several factors that need to be teased out through an in-depth analysis of the real practice, I delved into school and classroom level enactment to identify the micro-practices. The relationships among languages are further complicated in multilingual contexts where different languages are likely to be used for diverse purposes such as family communication, education, the celebration of religious rituals, etc. The communities of the three selected case schools are typical of such cases. All three contexts are of diverse socio-economic status, sociolinguistic setup, and educational and geopolitical backgrounds. Case 1 (*Bhairav*) lies in an urban area, case 2 (*Janak*) in a rural area, and case 3 (*Laxmi*) in a semi-urban context. All three schools serve different populations. For instance, case 3 is serving the students largely from migrant families, while case 1 is serving the mixed communities (including migrants and largely local populace), case 2 is serving students from purely local monolingual communities. Case 1 and case 2 are in province 2, while case 3 is in province 3 (Bagmati province), in the periphery of the Kathmandu Valley, the capital of Nepal. It was found that all three cases were undertaking different MOI practices considering their localized needs, demands, and strengths. The description of each case hereafter provides a synthesis of their institutional language policy and practices.

Bhairav School

Bhairav school is in Parsa, a district in the western part of province 2 of Nepal. In this province, the top five languages spoken by more than 5% population are Maithili (45.29%), Bhojpuri (18.57%), Bajjika (14.64%), Nepali (6.66%), and Urdu (5.86%) CBS, 2012). In addition to this, there are several other languages (such as Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Magahi, ...) spoken as mother tongues by more than a hundred thousand people as their native language (Language Commission, 2019), which is a result of increasing transnational

migration. Considering this linguistic set up, the Language Commission of Nepal recently recommended the use of Maithili, Bhojpuri and Bajjika for official use beside Nepali in Province 2 (The Himalayan Times, 2021). Bhairav school is located in a multilingual setting, with majority Bhojpuri-speaking population. However, speakers of languages such as Newar, Marwari, Maithili, Hindi, Tamang, and Nepali are frequently found in the marketplaces as well as in the school premises (usually a few students and some teachers from those backgrounds). Bhairav is one of the oldest schools in the region, opened outside of the capital of Nepal by the then Rana government, especially with the benevolent sanction and patronage of the then Rana prime minister (here, the name of the then prime minister is undisclosed for case privacy). It is one of the legendary schools bearing a long history of formal schooling in Nepal. With the history of 80 years of establishment (since 1941AD/1997 Bikram Sambat¹⁶[BS]), the school has been able to protect its public image as one of the best schools in the region. It is located at the core market area of the metropolitan city, the city with a population of one hundred and forty thousand people (CBS, 2012). It is 192 kilometers south of the federal capital, in a city that is also one of the major trade ports on the India-Nepal border.

The Enacted MOI in Bhairav School. This school, similar to many other public schools in Nepal, started the implementation of EMI four years ago and has been practicing dual MOI (Nepali and English medium). To mitigate the resource constraints, and address the increasing demands from parents to educate their children in EMI, the school adopted dual MOI in two separate shifts. While in the morning the medium is English, in the afternoon it is Nepali. As EMI was the main choice for students coming from the private (boarding) schools and was an attraction for educated and well-off families, the school faced a large number of

¹⁶ *Bikram Sambat [BS] is the official calendar of Nepal. It is also practiced in Indian subcontinent as Vikram calendar and was named after the late King Vikramaditya.*

applications so that it had to run entrance examinations for admission into the EMI mode of education. Entrance exams for student admission in public schools in Nepal is uncommon as many of such schools are experiencing a reduced number of students and need more admissions for their survival. However, a few good performing schools, like Bhairav, have received high pressure for admission due to their recent developments in infrastructure and shifts in MOIs.

It was reported that there is a huge difference between students studying in EMI and NMI. The headteacher claimed that the shift to EMI has enabled to bring good performing students from the private boarding schools in the periphery to this school. He stated:

We have seen that many families have migrated to this area from different neighbouring districts (such as Rautahat, Bara, Makawanpur) to educate their children in this school. Had there been no EMI, he would not expect such a shift of people in search of better education.

He added, “*Our EMI has become a good attraction*”. Due to this, “*We obtain a huge number of applications but we cannot admit and accommodate all the students in EMI, as our infrastructure and resources are much limited*”, a teacher who is in charge of the admission and other managerial support in the school stated. The school allowed students to choose their preferred MOI. The assistant headteacher in a casual conversation during my field visit said, “*Students can choose the MOI according to their interest and ability*”. The school has also allowed teachers to take classes in both modes of MOIs based on their interests and capacity.

However, the dual MOI in this school is a representative example of many of the recognized public schools that are going through this transitional management, to move fully from traditional NMI to EMI. While the current macro-level governmental policy structure intends

not to emphasize the EMI in the schooling system, the micro practice in the schools refutes such intended policy goals and prepares for a fully established English-only MOI. Although a full-fledged monolingual EMI might be a distant dream for the public schools that are operating within the multilingual contexts accommodating students speaking varied family languages, there is a smooth MOI transition to learning non-language subjects in EMI from NMI. This transition, like in other contexts such as Hong Kong (see Loh, et al., 2019) where such is a new normal trend, it is identified that dual MOI has served different nature of the population and has contributed to reinforcing the previously existing educational inequalities.

Serving Different Population through Different MOIs. As discussed in the literature (for example, Chapter II), the situated contexts of schools where the ‘de facto’ policies and practices are constituted and negotiated (Blommaert, 2010a; Rosén & Bagga-Gupta, 2015) need to be considered to understand the full picture of language policy enactment. As also described earlier, owing to the strikingly diverse contexts across the country, the schools are required to create policies of their own or appropriate national policies to suit their local or institutional needs. In this study, Bhairav school had to implement the dual medium, while Janak and Laxmi did not have to do so, and these differences are the consequences of their response to the respective community contexts (the external contexts according to Ball, et al., 2012). The dual MOI was not something they intended but were obligated to implement it, as there was growing pressure from the parents together with the trend of EMI across the other community schools. *“All other schools around here are teaching in English, so why not we do it? If we do not change, we may not be as recognized as we were for a long time”*, the headteacher mentioned. He added, *“To maintain our historical legacy of being a reputed school in the community, I had to make this reform based on the market trend and demand”*. He thinks that the need to shift to the EMI was a market-driven practice, and not adhering to

this would result in low student enrollment, and consequently negatively impact their institutional reputation.

While inquired about the rationale behind the enactment of the dual medium, the headteacher said, *“At the current moment, we have to address the needs of the students coming from different backgrounds, with different abilities”*. He thinks that the NMI is good for those who have weak English language proficiency, and EMI for those who have either prior EMI education experience (in private schools) or those who have good English language proficiency and better academic record. He said, *“Students who enroll in English medium classes come from families with a better economic condition, but in the Nepali medium, usually students are from marginalized communities, Dalits, and so on”*. Similar claims were made by teachers and parents as well, which clearly illustrated the EMI and NMI serving different types of population in the community. In this school, shifting to EMI policy went through an engagement of government agencies and parents. It was found that the decision to shift to EMI was consented to by the municipal office and endorsed in the parents' meeting. While this decision came into effect, there was overwhelming support from the parents. *“I have been inviting parents for a meeting every Saturday. Every Saturday, there is a grade-wise parents' meeting. In these meetings, 99 % of the parents are of the students studying in English medium”*, the headteacher stated. His experience provides us an understandable scenario that parental activism is playing a key role in the implementation of EMI in the school. He relates this activism as an outcome of the awareness of parents about their children's future opportunities and access if educated in English. The headteacher also reported that the parents attending the meeting to push towards EMI are largely the educated ones compared to those who do not attend the meetings. He acknowledges this parental agency through their engagement in decision-making in school policies (also in Chapter VII) as a motivating factor for him and is happy with the ability to engage the educated parents in

school activities by shifting the MOI, otherwise, the legacy of NMI would only limit to mostly working-class, less educated and illiterate parents. It seemed to me that the schools' linguistic practice was influenced by the rising demand for linguistic capital of English, especially co-opted by the elite/educated parents.

Ideologies Towards the Enactment of MOI in the Schools. EMI has been perceived as a landmark for the success of the school and the educational system in the community. This ideology has been promoted by institutional actions stemming from the formal policies both at the macro (federal) and meso (municipal) levels. Language ideologies are formed of people's social experiences and their assumptions (Gynne et al., 2016) as in the case contexts, the assumption is that not learning in EMI reinforces the traditional social inequity, which has driven people's actions. The teachers and the policymakers of this case school positioned themselves within the frames of ideologies of neoliberalism, in that they thought their students and communities cannot be detached from the globally open market and competitive employment opportunities that essentialize English language proficiency. In addition, linguistic ideologies are also (re)produced through people's languaging acts and practices, not through language itself (Blommaert, 2010a; McCarty, 2015). The interview data revealed that the teachers' ideologies shaped by neoliberal orientations favoured the EMI practice in the school. They are afraid of the possibility that not learning in EMI would lead to the children's limited access to the globally distributed benefits. It was also evident from their emphasis on English language use in their classroom contexts even if the MOI was supposed to be Nepali. In other words, observation of the classroom deliveries of the teachers showed that a bilingual practice continued in NMI mode, and English code-mixing was frequently noticed. Such practices illustrate how language policies and practices are negotiated in the educational spaces.

These settings of formal education where diverse actors' ideologies interact are regarded as the fundamental societal arena for the generation, implementation, and negotiation of language policies (Gynne et al., 2016). In these settings, though teachers, parents, and students heavily prefer the use of EMI and NMI in the schools, they do not present binarity between their home/local/ethnic languages and English or Nepali. However, it can also be noticed that this dual MOI policy adopted by Bhairav school has been collectively constructed and practiced with overwhelming support from the relevant community (represented by parents, and the policymakers) at the societal and institutional levels. The parents' primary ideology relates to the belief that learning in English and Nepali benefits their children's life chances, social mobility, and (re)construction of social imagery. They perceived that only learning Nepali and English in the schools would suffice for their children to get access to everything for their future, in that learning in English is understood as a panacea. Similar beliefs were echoed by students studying in EMI mode as well. The students in the group interviews presented their ideas that learning in English would empower them for future opportunities at the national and international spaces. With these ideologies towards English and Nepali, their actions have been constructed in their educational endeavors at home and in the schools. One of the parents said, *"I am very happy with the schools' implementation of the EMI, as this supports my child's English language proficiency"*. Moreover, the overwhelming parental support for the enactment of EMI in this school lies in the economic rationales (low or no fee for EMI) and urgency towards developing competent bilinguals in English and Nepali. To put it differently, they act as resisters of the mother tongue MOI policy, and this resistance has been deeply entrenched in the schools' structures and practices. They have exercised their individual agency in affecting the policy process (Zhao, 2011; Zhao & Baldauf, 2012) with their actions in legitimizing EMI over the potential Mother Tongue MOI simultaneously. Agency is the individual or group's

ability “to make free or independent choices, to engage in autonomous actions, and to exercise judgment in the interest of other and oneself” (Campbell, 2012, p. 183). The consequences of the collective efforts of the relevant stakeholders in upholding dual MOI in Bhairav school are that fee-paying EMI has been embedded in the free education campaign of the government and bilingual practice in a multilingual school context.

Low-fee EMI: The ‘Why-not’ Argument. Nepal's government provisioned free education up to the secondary level, and this applies to education in public schools only (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2019). Previously, as public schools were running classes in NMI there were no such additional costs. However, shifting to EMI would cost them extra as they had to manage teachers who can teach in English. In public schools, very few teachers can teach in English, the root of this problem lies in the teacher recruitment policies.

One of the parents said, “*If we can educate our children in English medium paying very low fees, then why not?*”. With the overwhelming support of the parents from lower SES sections of the society, the low-fee private EMI schools have rapidly expanded. This parent's perception emerges from the economic perspective that English education costs a lot, and if that has been provided by the public school at no or very little cost, then it becomes a better option. One of the students in the school who shifted from English medium to Nepali medium due to some economic reasons said, “*It is because of the lack of money for my father to pay for my education, I shifted Nepali medium because it is free*”. This relates to my earlier claim that MOI is equally associated with the social class system in the communities, in which those who can afford to, educate their children in EMI, while others who cannot afford to, educated their children in NMI. Here, parents' implicit discourses about the valuing of languages, and their social realities are mutually constitutive. This notion leads me to understand the situated interplay between individual (inner) actions and forms of social

organizations (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). The current practice of schools charging fees for the EMI also informs that the micro institutional practices have disregarded the “declared language policies” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 68) formed at the macro levels of the government. In other words, it reveals the gap between the proclaimed policies and the practices at the real ground. Also, the trend of low-fee-paying EMI education has challenged the government’s promises of ‘free’ education by creating “unfree” or “fee-paying” conditions in mass public education. However, given Nepal government’s promises to ensure free-public education up to secondary level, it is likely if this trend continues, that the schooling system has moved towards the state-funded EMI in the public schools. The ‘why-not educate in English’ argument in educating children in (low)fee-paying EMI schools lies in the understanding that language choice and use is a ‘need-based’ phenomenon.

Bilingual Practice in a Multilingual School Context. Although the macro policies and community dynamics are promoting multilingual language practices, the school as a social organization is continuing and even emphasizing bilingual educational practices. Its bilingual patterns of practice are collectively shaped by the proactive role of school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. They all emerge to support this practice from multiple perspectives. The head teacher said, “*We continue to implement Nepali medium and English medium since this is very important for now. I think use of other languages is unlikely recently*”. Similarly, the majority of teachers thought that Nepali is to be there as an indicator of national identity and English as the indicator of social capital. Students thought that Nepali and English bilingual competence would mean a lot for them to realize their ambitions of obtaining higher education from the EMI institutions in the urban contexts such as the capital city, and beyond national borders. This reveals that these bilingual students engaged to make sense of their bilingual world from multiple discursive practices (García, 2009b). One of the parents said, “*You know our children need to know Nepali as a language of our country, and*

they also need English to go abroad and make better income". The participants' motivation for the choice of dual MOI is shaped by their discursive understandings of nationalism, globalization, and commodification of language, as they related the Nepali language with nationalism, and English as an entity to be sold in the global market.

In addition to that, guided by the above-mentioned discursive constructs, the school adopted the restrictive language policies by discouraging the use of local/indigenous languages in school premises. For instance, the head teacher said, *"We do not allow students to speak other languages than English and Nepali in the school because they need to practice this here"*.

The same policy is a selling point for the school as well, given the widespread perception that prohibition of the use of local languages in schools contributes to enhancing students'

English and Nepali language exposure leading to better proficiency in them. All the participants from this school echoed the views expressed by the head teacher above. Neither the teachers nor the students think that this practice may negatively impact students' learning, the learning of mother tongues, and their participation in the learning process. For instance, the parents also think, *"Our children have learnt native language at home, it is better if they learn new languages in the schools"*. The students also expressed their aspirations for developing bilingual identity, basically in Nepali and English, amidst the preponderance of 'English-only' MOI expectations. Some students during the FGD said, *"If our teacher or any of us use our native language in the classroom, our friends laugh at that, because they think that this class needs to use only English and Nepali"* (Students-Bhairav). It illustrates that mother tongues are directly and indirectly restricted or stereotyped in the school contexts.

These cases of stakeholders inform me of social action undertaken in excluding or restricting indigenous languages in educational spaces. Hult (2010) states that social actions (e.g., the practice of dual MOI here) are the nexus points at which multiple discourse cycles, historical trajectories of people, places ideas, and practices meet and intertwine.

Enactment of MOI and Student Participation. Every social action has consequences. The MOI alternation in the school has caused the students' uneven participation in the school activities. While asked about whether there has been any selective preference for the students studying in different MOI systems, it was reported that the students from the EMI stream had more preferred participation in the school activities and celebrations compared to those from the NMI. Such concern was reported by a student from the EMI stream as *"I sometimes feel that whenever there is a programme, we have been frequently participating in them, but when Nepali medium students do not get such chances, I feel odd"*. Similarly, another student thinks *"Some school teachers sometimes say that they don't need to focus much on Nepali medium and attention is to be paid on English medium"*. These views of students indicate differential ideological orientations they have experienced in their school towards EMI and NMI. The choice of MOI has set barriers for students for their equal participation in school activities, which is likely to negatively impact their engagement in the overall learning process, including their presence in extracurricular activities in the schools. This gravely raises concerns about emerging macro-level educational inequalities developed by an enactment of dual MOI policy in the school (also, see chapter VII).

Hence, the enactment of the dual MOI to serve the diverse population, supported by teachers and parents' ideological orientation is a key example of practiced language policy action and a policy-in-process in the implementational space. This practice functions as a gatekeeper of the interaction order, as teachers are likely to orchestrate the classroom interactions as well as students' participation in school activities accordingly. Such practice also relates to reshaping the communicative asymmetries in the family language practices, as evidenced by an opinion of one of the parents who focused on *"More English and Nepali, less Bhojpuri, and least Hindi"* during communicating with children. She believed that the practice of English and Nepali at home would improve her children's school participation and academic

achievements since the school bans the local community languages and promotes English and Nepali, which is evidenced by the head teacher's argument mentioned above. Once the school has restricted the use of other mother tongues in the school premises, the same applied in the classroom as well. The classroom observation also reflects a similar orientation, in which most of the teachers wrote the topic and related information in English even though the students had possessed textbooks in Nepali medium. None of the teachers observed in this school used their or their students' mother tongues (except Nepali) in the classroom, and the same applied to students as well.

Janak School

Janak school is in province 2 of Nepal, in the Dhanusha district. It is approximately 6 kilometers away from the provincial capital, Janakpur. The school is situated within a largely Maithili-speaking community in a rural municipality. Maithili, one of the Indo-Aryan languages, is spoken in Nepal and India, especially in the Mithila area of Province 2 of Nepal, and some adjacent districts of India. Mithila was an independent state in ancient times, during the pre-historic period, ruled by King Janak. Mithila is equally known for religious importance, as it is the birthplace of Janaki (also called Sita, wife of Lord Ram, according to Hindu religious tradition). Although officially known as the Maithili language, it is also called Methili, Tirahutia, Trihuti (Gautam, 2020). Maithili represents both ethnic and territorial identity in the region. However, debates for and against co-opting it as the provincial official language have been heightened in recent years, as this province is largely dwelled by Maithili and Bhojpuri language speaking population. It is the second-largest language spoken as mother tongue in Nepal, the first in the province followed by Bhojpuri and Bajjika.

Located within the Maithili speaking community, Janak school is mainly attended by the Maithili speaking students (with one or two students not speaking it as mother tongue). It

shows that this school in general has been serving a linguistically homogeneous student population. The number of students with different-than Maithili language backgrounds is negligible (e.g., in this school I found a single Nepali native speaking student from Tamang ethnic background).

Enactment of Monolingual MOI through Translanguaging. As also stated earlier, nearly all the students in the school are Maithili native speakers. However, the MOI in the school is Nepali, which is also an official language of the country. While asked about the institutional MOI policy in the school, all teachers unanimously agreed on Nepali-only monolingual MOI. Further to this, they intended to promote the use of Nepali in the school, i.e., in the classroom and beyond. However, my observation (both in the classroom and the school premises) showed widespread use of Maithili mother-tongue among students. In the classroom scenario, in grades 9 and 10 which I observed, irrespective of the subjects, the enacted MOI remained quite complex to be defined, as the teachers' primary language of teaching was Nepali while inter-student communication took place in Maithili. In some subjects, teachers' use of Maithili while asking questions was common. However, most often whenever the students' replied to their teachers' queries, then the medium was Nepali (an example is illustrated in the vignette below). In addition to that, the teacher took attendance in English, and students also responded in English (which is a structured and routine process). Observation of these practices informed me that officially stated or stipulated language policies did not control the mechanisms of actual language use in the schools, and they were manifested in diverse ways subject to their enactment situations. Such classroom practices have complicated the understanding of MOI as there are gaps between officially proclaimed policies and enacted policies in the schools. This also raises questions on the legitimacy of language policy, i.e., which policy is the real language policy in place, and is recognized by the state? This is a typical question raised in school situations where community language is not the language of

formal education. In the case of Janak school, the enactment of NMI was teacher-controlled rather than the student-engaged. This is one of the instances of “doing” of the MOI in public schools that are situated within the communities resided by both homoglossic and heteroglossic population.

In the classroom, all the teachers claimed that they have adopted NMI, with very little shift or translation into the mother tongue. However, substantial translanguaging to Maithili was found in accountancy subject teaching, and to English in teaching science subject.

Translanguaging as a new practice in bi/multilingual classroom contexts reinforces the perspective that languages and language speakers are not fixed or neutral, rather emerge in the historical contexts and as a result of socio-ideological voices (Bakhtin, 1981; Hamman, 2018). Some scholars (e.g., Garcia et al., 2015) perceive this as a way of ‘doing bilingualism’. In that, the nature of language practice in the classroom differed according to the nature of the subject and content, and that might also have been facilitated by the respective subject teacher’s language proficiency as well as their motivation for utilizing bi/multilingual learners’ linguistic repertoire. Hence, translanguaging practice is about how teachers and students push the fixed boundaries of named languages (e.g., English and Nepali in this case) aside and consider employing linguistic features of several languages to negotiate meaning and linguistic identities in the school as well as classroom contexts. Theoretically, therefore, translanguaging is to be understood as an integrated linguistic system, not as a shift from one language to the other (code-switching) (Garcia & Lin, 2016).

An NMI-based science class began as follows (translation of an ethnic language in parentheses; English embedded in an ethnic language is *Italicised*, henceforth):

Teacher: Good morning, class.

Students: Good morning, sir.

Teacher: Ok, sit down. ल ल बस्! (All students sit down)

Teacher: हिजो के पढेको हामीले थाहा छ? (Do you remember what did we learn yesterday?)

Students: Heat को बारेमा पढेको हो हिजो, आज के पढ्ने त सर? (Sir, we studied about *heat* yesterday, what are we going to study today?)

Teacher: ओके, आज Heat equation पढ्ने। (Okay, today, we study about *heat equation*.)

This representative example of initial classroom discourse, highly common across classes in majority of the cases, informs me of the trends and the related complexities of language mixing in the educational spaces. Although the officially proclaimed policy is the Nepali-only monolingual MOI, in practice, the MOI is increasingly diverted towards English. This shift reflects students' preferences and expectations as well. They expressed that their happiness will increase if they are taught in Nepali rather than their native language, and they would be further grateful if EMI was implemented in the school. In the group discussion they said, "We will be happy if our teachers teach in Nepali and in English. I think except some students all others want this way". Meaning that the students taught in NMI in the school in Maithili speaking community aspired to be educated in EMI than in their mother tongue. According to teachers, partial response to the students' aspirations resulted in increasing instances of translanguaging as an emerging method in multilingual educational contexts. The majority classroom observations (3 out of 4) revealed that teacher-student interactions largely took place in Nepali, while students' side-talks were in Maithili. The translanguaging into Nepali was very little in an English language classroom. In non-English subjects, the textbooks used by students were also in the Nepali medium published by the government agency, i.e., Janak Educational Materials Publication Center with approval from the Curriculum Development Center, the central governing body in curricular issues. It seemed

that students did not have any problem in dealing with Nepali language proficiency in using the textbooks in Nepali medium. However, while some students during their group interviews reported that students having low-level confidence in Nepali experienced low participation in the classroom interactions, others reported that they were benefitted from NMI and all of them preferred EMI as the most preferred MOI.

However, all the non-English subject teachers thought that teaching in English would be a major challenge due to their low-level proficiency in English. One of the teachers during an informal interaction in the school said, *“It is very difficult for us to teach in English, because we did not learn that way before, and it will be almost impossible for us to learn English to teach in English at this stage of the profession”*. He sees that there is no use of learning English to teach in English at the age of 56, 4 years before retirement. His argument reflected the case of many such teachers in public schools who do not have a fundamental proficiency in teaching in English. The teacher recruitment process in Nepal also does not mandate English language competence as a selection criterion, nor the local/indigenous language. Irrespective of whatsoever provisions were made in the policy level by Teacher Service Commission, all the teachers agreed that Nepali must, at least, be the language of the school, however, were not attracted by the discourses of local language use in education.

Teacher Agency as Resistance against EMI. Many of the teachers (except the English subject teacher) resisted the use of EMI at the current status of the school. Although they expressed their support for bringing EMI into the school education system, they implicitly presented their resistance in terms of the implementational challenges in EMI. Firstly, they were assertive of their low or no confidence in teaching in English, and secondly, the lack of school’s preparedness in teaching in English. The same were the challenges for shifting to mother tongue MOI. Regarding the second, they thought that the school lacked sufficient infrastructure (including teaching-learning materials and conditions) and faced poor English

language proficiency of the students. However, they contended that whether to adopt EMI or not was highly contested in the school as well as at the municipal level. The chairman of the rural municipality office thought that the schools were not willing to adopt the EMI, while the headteacher of the school claimed that the municipal officials did not create a supportive environment for the effective implementation of EMI. Throwing the ball into each other's basket was observed as a common blame game between the local government official and the school leadership. The chairman of the rural municipal office said, *“The teachers, for example in Janak school, are doing nothing, they are sleeping. This is a secondary school. Some 2/4 teachers show their power and claim or argue that they can do whatever they want to do.”* He expressed his dissatisfaction indicating teachers’ non-cooperation in a local government initiative to initiate reform in public education including shifting to EMI. He blamed that teachers’ increased engagement in party politics rather than professional service affected schools’ quality of pedagogical service delivery. He further added:

What I said is, at least start teaching in English from grade three. If earlier, in grade 1 or 2, if you want to teach, that is also fine. They may teach basic alphabets of English and so on. I urged them to implement EMI at least from grade 3.

(Policymaker_Janak).

His views explicitly illustrate the local governments’ exercise of agency in implementing EMI from early grades of school education. While saying so, the policymaker did not provide any evidence of He frequently referred to the quality of private school (probably) as a model for the public school and emphasized EMI as a *“has-to-be”* phenomenon in the public-school system. This also relates to his additional claim *“the public schools in this area have zero quality”*, and the main reason for this is the unprofessional conduct of the teachers and the schools’ inability to shift to EMI. He thought that teachers are not ready to face the challenges of any type of educational reforms he wishes to implement as a local policy

leader, including implementation of EMI in the public schools from early grades of schooling. While he presented the lack of teacher support in school reforms, the teacher leader (i.e., the headteacher) of the school claimed that he could not obtain adequate assistance from the municipal office to initiate reforms in the school. Because of the limited resources provided to the school, it was impossible to take a proactive role in school-wide development, including initiating a change in the language of instruction policy as demanded by the contemporary market. The teachers as intermediators in the policy process exercised their agency in developing classroom-based practices of translanguaging to mediate between the receptive top-down policies and the local community realities. Although both school and municipal leadership pointed to the teacher inefficiency, teachers unanimously argued that their agency in undertaking any forms of reform including shifting MOI was constrained by resource limitations and lack of teachers' voice in policymaking.

Student Diversity and Language Use. In addition to having Maithili as the mother tongue, some students in the school (e.g., the case of grade 9) knew Urdu and Hindi as well. Their Urdu language exposure is related to their religious backgrounds as they were from the Muslim religion. Even though Urdu has not been taught in the school, they learned it as an additional language in the Madrasas¹⁷ in their communities. Similarly, Hindi, a language that has a common genetic root emerging from Sanskrit, is picked up through the media. Hindi is also one of the minority languages listed by the Census in Nepal. For some, it is also a lingua franca among people in the Terai region, especially for those with family relations across the border in India. The social scenario is that many people of the Terai region share common culture, language, and have historical family relationships.

¹⁷ Madrasas are the religious schools for Muslim children where they learn the religious ethics through Urdu and Arabic.

However, during the observation of the school context, teacher interactions in the official spaces, and students' interactions in and outside of the classroom contexts took place in the community dominant language, i.e., Maithili. Occasional shifts to Nepali were observed between the Maithili language speaking teachers whenever they were talking about the school rules, and wider issues (such as the national government, the leaders of some political parties, and so on). While I was interacting with some teachers in the office during their midday break, all of them fluently communicated in Nepali (probably because of me not being able to speak in Maithili, which is in a sense a valid reason).

Laxmi School

This school is situated in the periphery of Kathmandu Valley, in a sub-urban area nearly 6 kilometres outside of the Ring Road, established in 2008 BS (1951 AD) as a primary school, and upgraded to secondary school in 1980 AD. The school is located in a multilingual, multicultural community resided by people mainly from Newar, Tamang, Brahmin, Chhetri, and Dalit backgrounds. The municipality houses fourteen different language speaking populations (Language Commission, 2019) in which the Nepali native language speaking population outnumbered the others followed by the Newar-speaking population. The other languages spoken as mother tongues are Tamang, Maithili, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tharu, Bhojpuri, and so on. Newars and Tamangs are the indigenous people of the territory, however, due to growing urban migration, the population of Brahmins and Chhetries including the people from Tarai-Madhes (e.g., native speakers of Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu) is increasing rapidly expanding its multicultural and multilingual social context. This background context is also well-recognized by the school in its report stating that the school community is made up of all types of people belonging to Hindu social class systems such as Brahmins, Chhetries, Vaishya, and Shudras as stated in the School Improvement Plan [SIP]-2019. It is, therefore, natural that the school must accommodate students from plurilingual

backgrounds, students from a total of 25 districts from across various parts of the country, the plan mentioned. Despite this diverse linguistic and cultural reality in the school itself, EMI has been established as the primary MOI, squeezing the potential of embracing the linguistic capital of the students. Hence, Laxmi school differs from Bhairav and Janak school in terms of its situatedness, material and external contexts, that impact the enactment processes. In a policy enactment research, it is important to take into account schools' "particular histories, buildings, and infrastructure, staffing profiles, leadership experiences, budgetary situations, and teaching-learning challenges" (Ball et al., 2012, p. 19) to fully understand the policy implementation on the ground.

Enacted MOI in the School: Disconnect Between Promises and Practices.

Implementation of EMI was understood as a reform in Laxmi school. This school has promised to enact the monolingual EMI, as this shift of the MOI was a necessary condition for the school's survival. It was not unusual for the school to do so, as the shift of MOI to EMI has commonly emerged as a global reform agenda in education (Graddol, 2006). The headteacher believed that shifting to EMI was one of the major leaps for the school amidst its struggle for survival due to the diminishing student enrolment and lack of community support. He thought that community negligence towards the school emerged from the inability of the school to cater to the EMI needs of the students as expected by the parents. This impacted diminishing student enrolment from the local community. The school was attended by the children from the migrant wage-worker families, rather than the children from local communities. While a leap to implement EMI was a bigger challenge, teaching in NMI was also not an easy cup of tea for the teachers as the children from the migrant communities had a low level of Nepali language proficiency. Reflecting on his experience of teaching such children, the social studies teacher said, "*Teaching in Nepali medium was even problematic, leave aside the EMP*". He thought that the school-specific factors and individual

students' linguistic capacity acted as constraints, pressures, and enablers of policy enactments (Ball et al., 2012).

Despite the language proficiency-related challenges experienced by teachers, the shift to EMI was strongly mandated by the school management committee, and the same was widely used as one of the important advertising tools by the school for increasing student enrolment.

Preparation for implementation of EMI was rigorous and perhaps the only alternative for them to uplift the school's status from the current situation. The assistant headteacher of the school, who comes from the Maithili language background, says, *"We are utilizing our full strength to meet the community needs and our school's need of educating the children in EMI since we started it some years ago"*. He mentioned their proactive role in *"advertising and strengthening EMI by conducting the door-to-door visits to persuade parents to enroll the school-going children in our school"*. While teaching in English was a promise communicated by the school to the community, the local linguistic communities' resistance to it was absent. This silencing of the locals and glorification of EMI reveals the existence of a strong disconnect between the macro policies that aspire to mother tongue MOI and the local communities' engagement in implementing them. In other words, the policy promises of the governments disconnected with the practices on the real ground, and local community disengagement on mother tongue MOI issues indirectly reinforced the ambitions of the schools and then forced them to shift to EMI. While at the same time, the school's promise to implement English-only MOI was partial success, as translanguaging to and from Nepali and English was frequently observed in the classroom. In response to the query about this classroom reality, the headteacher associated it to the transitional state of the MOI shift from NMI to EMI, where preparations ranging from materials to teacher's English language proficiency development remained incomplete. In this school, observations consistently revealed a gap between what was promised and what was practiced in terms of MOI

enactment. The following vignette provides a descriptive account of a typical EMI class (mathematics) in the school based on my participant observation.

Vignette

In a mathematics lesson of grade 9, a Newar-native speaking teacher started his class with greetings in English. The students responded in English. He wrote the lesson title in English on the board. He started presenting in English, and students tuned on their English medium textbook accordingly. The mathematics textbook was published by the government agency. While he presented in English, asked the questions in English and Nepali simultaneously. In addition, the language used in explanation of the content was largely Nepali (approximately 90% Nepali, and the rest in English). Most of the students responded in English and interacted with the teacher in English with some shifts to Nepali. While the students used Nepali as the most dominant language for their peer interaction with occasional shifts to English. The teacher used Nepali while instructing students in group or pair works. The materials he used were in English. Although the class is attended by 8 different ethnic/indigenous language speaking students excluding Nepali (i.e., Tharu-3, Tamang-1, Newar-1, Maithili-1, Rai-2, Magar-1), none of their native languages except Nepali were used in the classroom displays. While summarizing lesson content, he used Nepali, but used English while providing assignments at the end of the lesson.

The classroom was full of bilingual displays. Out of 15 displays (small and large), 7 were in English and 8 were in Nepali language. However, these displays included contents related to different subjects taught in the school curriculum.

Despite being partial English in EMI, the teachers tried their best to use English whenever possible (e.g., the mathematics teacher started the lesson in English, presented the content in English, and provided the assignment in English). The emergence of translanguaging practice as a method, when was inquired about, the teachers linked it with their low proficiency in English, and the content comprehensibility pressure from the ethnically and socially mixed nature of the student population in the classrooms. In an interview with the teacher after classroom observation about the reason for the frequent shift to Nepali in an EMI class, he said, “Many students are not good at English, so they cannot comprehend if I speak all the

time in English”. He utilized translanguaging as a convenient practice to address the learners’ needs, however, regretted his low-level English language proficiency that barred him from teaching maths through code-mixing. This means that the management of English and Nepali language use in the classroom was a way of mitigating between teacher’s and students’ language levels and for pedagogical effectiveness. Their languaging was therefore shaped by the context of schooling and individuals’ linguistic repertoire. Their heteroglossic practices (or translanguaging), for whatever reasons, can also be understood as the instances of their consciousness of multiple co-existing norms brought into the classroom by the students from multiple ethnocultural backgrounds.

Addressing Mother Tongues: But ‘HOW MANY’? All the teachers and parents were aware of the diversity in the school. While inquired about any possibility of adopting mother tongues as MOI, many teachers expressed their concern about “*whose language?*” and “*how many languages?*” to be adopted in the school context signalling toward parents’ concerns. Although teachers expressed their positive attitudes towards this issue, their concerns were shadowed by the migrant parents’ push to educate their children in EMI or NMI rather than their ethnic/indigenous languages. For instance, the majority of students in this school were from ‘Tharu’ language background, but neither parents nor students expected their children to be educated in their languages arguing that wider exposure to English and Nepali would leave a positive impact on their future life chances. Investment in NMI or EMI education of their children constituted their primary purpose of migration to the capital as well. The migrant students’ parents believed that exposure to diversity in the urban contexts (e.g., with diverse languages, culture, and community contexts) would be useful for their children to prepare them for a potentially super-diverse future. For instance, in a focus group a parent from Tharu community said, “*What do we get from educating in Tharu language? It was all there in the villages, so we wanted to move to here thinking that our children will learn English and*

Nepali to be able to get job in the future, and also learn from other cultures”. Other parents from Tamang and Rai language background also supported her ideas. The exposure to cultural diversity in the urban contexts and opportunities to learn English and Nepali were their priorities.

Although the parents did not explicitly reject the mother tongue use in education, they believed that increasing diversity in different forms and younger generation’s diminishing motivation toward their home/heritage languages and cultures have negatively affected the mother tongues to be foreseeable alternative MOIs. This impact leads to schools’ diverse stated and unstated (or written or unwritten) policies. Both NOT adopting the MTs as MOI and not teaching the MTs as subjects are the unwritten institutional policies of the school, while EMI is the written one. Braun et al. (2011) also reported that they found “evidence of some ‘unwritten’ policies that nevertheless constitute and change educational practices” (p. 552). In the case of Laxmi school, at the institutional level, the written policy (i.e., EMI) had a more visible impact by its translation into classroom practice. This practice contradicted the macro-level written policy that allowed (and perhaps intended) the schools to adopt mother tongues as MOIs. While implementing the EMI, other unwritten but enacted policies (for instance, the “Speak English” policy) were in place in the school as well. In other words, the ‘how-many?’ and ‘whose language’ arguments of teachers and policymakers represent their ideological construct that provides a justified excuse towards not implementing multilingual policies in schools and the stakeholders’ desire to provide linguistic resources in English and Nepali thereby contributing to glorify these dominant languages.

Teacher Management: Language Teachers Handling Non-Language Subjects in EMI.

The enactment of EMI has compelled the school to alternate subject assignments to teachers beyond their qualified subject areas. One of the typical examples of teacher management in the school is that the social studies course has been taught by an English teacher. The existing

social studies subject teacher's low English language proficiency and confidence in handling the course in English medium compelled the school to assign the English teacher to teach social studies. While doing so, the content compatibility and competence were overlooked, rather the fluency in English was emphasized. This practice raised questions such as whether social studies should be taught in English or not. Recent discourses in Nepal have also highlighted this concern, and some local government agencies have discussed and have intended to teach social studies in Nepali rather than in English. Despite the arguments like that, teaching and learning of non-language subjects in English continues and is unchecked primarily in EMI private schools and well-performing public schools. This trend has already been established as a common practice, and Laxmi school has also followed the same. However, the teacher preparation part to fit this trend is still lacking. In my own experience of working as a teacher educator and teacher training in the university context in Nepal, I have observed that although the teacher education programme is principally in EMI except for the language subjects, teaching in English is rarely practiced and that has not contributed to the enhancement of students' English language proficiency. Even though there is no macro-level policy to appoint teachers to teach their non-graduated subjects (e.g., Social studies for English education subject qualified teachers), it has been in practice in schools for long citing the human resource constraints and lack of English proficiency of non-English subject graduates. However, this practice of cross-subject teacher assignment was a form of strategic management to cope with the current transition from NMI to EMI. The English teacher teaching social studies said, *"I was requested to teach social studies because the existing subject teacher does not do so after the school shifted to English medium"*. The headteacher also contended this trend and claimed that it has to be continued until the subject teacher can handle the task. He further referred to the school policy stated in the School Improvement Plan [SIP] that to overcome such problems of resource management, the school

implemented teachers' professional development programs and conducted English language enhancement training and workshops for teachers (SIP, 2019). The core purpose of such micromanagement of teachers in the school was to enhance the teaching effectiveness and meet students' learning needs in EMI. However, further studies regarding how such non-subject social studies teachers' classroom practices support students' content learning requirements would further help us to understand the policy and practice gaps in EMI school contexts.

Practice Informing the Policy

Eliminating all kinds of discrimination based on language, ethnicity, religion, caste, class, region, and gender is the provisioned promise in the Nepal government's legal and political documents. In addition, the political struggle since the mid-20th century included inclusion and social justice issues, in which the position of language in education was also equally debated. Language policies formed at the governmental levels can be understood as political documents intending to mitigate the legal promises. However, recent scholarship has increasingly focused on whether these policies coming as promises have been translated into real-life practices or not as a new research arena. of LPP. Shohamy (2006) states even if "Explicit language policies are in place, it does not guarantee that such policies will turn into a practice, and there are situations when the use of languages is in opposition to declared policies" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 51). In Nepal, though the explicit articulations about the eligibility of mother tongues as the potential MOI are made, in practice only the dominant languages especially English and Nepali are in place in educational spaces, which contradict the well-intended national policies that equally respect indigeneity and ethnicity. Despite the macro policies valuing the local indigenous languages, the school policies and practices have restricted such policies to enter into the school contexts. For instance, in this study, Case 1

and Case 3 largely discouraged the use of students' ethnic languages in their institutional premises, which demonstrates the exclusionary practices in the schools.

The headteachers believed that the lack of normal educational response towards embracing linguistic diversity in the schools is due to the disconnection between the macro policies and micro-practices. Expressing their discontent on what has been articulated in the macro policies, they claimed that the national level blanket policies are unrealistic for their institutional contexts because their priorities and struggles are different than centrally projected. This scenario prompts the micro-level institutions and individuals to refute the macro policies from the bottom up, and those (people and institutions) in the local levels of the constituency might want to create their language policies through their socio-cultural practices flouting the policies centrally designed and proceed towards rearticulating micro language planning (Baldauf, 1994, 2006). In that, the practiced policies, the policies shaped by bottom-up initiatives, in many contexts differ from the top-down imposed policies. The above-mentioned instances of micro-management of enactment of MOI policies in Laxmi school represent Shohamy's (2006) claim "Language policies and planning are often totally ignored as there are bottom-up forces in society that will try to introduce their language ideologies and agendas within their priorities, pace and processes" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 51). For instance, the parents' demotivation towards educating their children in their mother tongues reflects the deficit ideologies associated with ethnic/indigenous minority languages. This ideological orientation seems to have driven the practiced language policies in schools in such a way that resulted in the practices constituting the policies, not necessarily policies shaping the practices.

The Practice as Policy

The practice of language-in-education is closely linked with acquisition planning. Acquisition planning has the most relevance to education since it involves the formulation of policies that

guide practice on a large scale, including the determination of MOI (Tollefson, & Tsui, 2004). Language acquisition planning, unlike status and corpus planning that focuses on language only, emphasizes the formation of educational language policy in the historical and contemporary contexts (Wiley & García, 2016) of different polities. Language education itself is one of the key areas for understanding many aspects of social organizations, such as socio-cultural institutions and schools. These also include concerns of structural forces, ethnic and linguistic conflicts, and utilization of linguistic resources while understanding why language A or language B is used (or not used) in the education systems.

While Nepal's multilingual habitus provides fertile ground for all languages to grow from a national policy perspective in recent time, the changing scenarios of bilingual practices in education challenge the minority language revitalizing efforts on the ground through the integration of such languages in education systems. The practices themselves have been unfavorable to the macro policies that imagine diversity as a resource. Several scholars have proposed actions as ideals of policy, referring to policies as "the operational statements of values and authoritative allocation of values" (Kogan, 1975, as cited in Jones, 2013, p. 5). In the case of Nepal's schooling, bilingualism remains a real practice in education while the ultimate goal achieving multilingualism in practice continues. Besides, the current practices support institutionalization of bilingual practices in dominant languages (e.g., Nepali and English) at the cost of local/indigenous languages. In other words, although the macro governmental policies imagine multilingualism as the goal for Nepal's prosperity and equity, the schools are continuing English-only monolingual and/or English-Nepali bilingual practice. While the glorification of Nepal's multilingual identity continues in policy, the mono/bilingual practices in education and governance have been established as the norms. The bilingual practices have been institutionalized as policies at all levels of education and governance. This practice also contradicts with Nepal governments' 'Nepali as the main

official language’ policy since there is a parallel practice of Nepali and English in the formal systems of official communication, business transactions, education, and tourism industry. For instance, the schooling systems have long been practicing either through adopting ‘English-only’ monolingual policies or ‘English-mainly’ English-Nepali bilingual practice of educating, including the use of textbooks either in English or Nepali, and Nepali-English translanguaging in the classroom. Although some progress has been made in policy to officialise some of the regional ethnic/indigenous languages, the practice is dominated by Nepali and English. This mono/bilingual Nepali-English hegemony imposed through the practice of educating in the schools of multilingual community contexts plays a significant role in promoting endangerment and vulnerability of ethnic/indigenous languages in Nepal. Both Bhairav and Janak schools have been practicing largely monolingual MOI, while Laxmi has practiced bilingual MOI. Here, bilingual MOI is different from dual MOI. In dual MOI (practiced by Bhairav school) refers to the enactment of two media of instruction in the same school serving different categories of students. Besides, the notion and nature of practice are largely dependent on the way the actors appropriated and interpreted the policies and subsequent practices. In the cases above, the actors (especially, the teachers, students) have formed, appropriated, interpreted, and enacted the policies concerning MOI taking into consideration their personal, institutional, and community contexts.

Role of Actors in the Localized Practice of MOI

Schools are the policy sites largely “mediated by time, place and policy actors with different professional backgrounds, perspectives, and practical tactics” (Ball et al., 2012, p. 98). The role of the actors in the schools determines the success in the enactment of the MOI policies. Actor roles in language planning have been conceptualized widely. For instance, Weinstein (1983) made a distinction between two major types of actors in decision-making in language choice in the societal contexts: a) governmental planning, and b) language strategists (key

individuals in language choice). However, Johnson (2013) provides an explicit account of the role of arbiters or *de-facto* planners in language planning and practice. While the individuals and agencies at different levels play significant roles, it has been reported that individuals at the lower-level institutions such as schools or universities, and their strategic roles might shape or influence the policy from the bottom up (Hornberger 1996; McCarty, 2011). In other words, all these agents or actors at the grassroots levels contribute to the shaping of practice and ultimately forming a strong force for shaping future policies, which is why the case of practice shaping the policy exists. Bottom-up efforts (Wiley & García, 2016) at the school and community levels in appropriating English-Nepali bilingual practices have created tensions between the macro policies and micro-practices, and thereby have informed the policies.

The decision-making and the related actions of the school-level individuals in the case contexts exhibited how the actors influenced the policies from the bottom up. Ball et al. (2012) claim, “Policy actors are always positioned; how policies are seen and understood is dependent on where we are figuratively and literally” (p. 28). Some actors (e.g., headteachers and parents) have a more confident take on their policies than others, subject to the privileges they have in their respective institutional and community contexts. For instance, in Bhairav school, the school administration together with the parents collectively formed their policies for running dual MOI in the school, and it has also obtained overwhelming support from the local governmental body. It is more privileged in the sense that it has additional funds for managing teachers either by assigning the EMI classes to the existing teachers or hiring teachers from outside using its internal funds. Due to this favourable material context (Ball et al., 2012) and other societal reasons, the endorsement of EMI in the school was easier for Bhairav school. While it organized parents’ meetings to endorse the implementation of the EMI policy of the school, it obtained overwhelming support from them. All these conditions

enabled the school administration to undertake a proactive role in the implementation of EMI. While doing so, it did not face any resistance from the relevant community and the local government. This shows that Bhairav school obtained community as well as local government support for implementing EMI, even though the local community had a separate language strongly used in the community, i.e., Bhojpuri, the language associated with the community identity in the Bhojpura region of province 2. However, the context for Janak school was comparatively less supportive. One of the most prominent constraints for it was the low socio-economic status of the community it is serving, and the low-level participation of parents in school initiatives. The headteacher reported such a concern pointing to a largely ethnically and culturally homogenous community of students whose parents do not actively attend to the school activities and their children's progress learning. Although the school is well-informed of parents' willingness for EMI, their disengagement from school activities and lack of demands for EMI left the school in limbo in shifting the existing MOI. The headteacher associated such inaction/negligence of parents to their low educational and socio-economic background and awareness. *"Had there been strong pressure from the parents, we would have been compelled to adopt EMI and find alternative sources of teacher management"* he said. Between Bhairav and Janak schools, the former had been much proactive due to parents' (as actors) active participation, while the latter did not do so due to parental demotivation and lack of activism in school activities. Studies (e.g., Mohamed, 2021) have reported that parents' engagement in school activities is affected by their educational status. In this sense, parental disengagement in school activities in the case of Janak school might be because of their low level of formal education, as the community itself was comparatively less literate than the other two case contexts. One of the teachers of Janak school said, *"The community is still backward, parents are not educated and some are still*

illiterate. So, they do not care much about what the school does and do not engage in school activities to improve the quality of it”.

Unlike Bhairav and Janak, Laxmi school is serving an ethnically and culturally mixed community and has also experienced the active participation of teachers, parents, and students in the implementation of EMI. Despite acute resource constraints, this school strategically managed to proceed through a middle path in which while continuing using the Nepali language, it also gradually pushed the teachers towards heightened use of English in the classroom. Although teachers usually had a little say in management decisions regarding the school policies, the headteacher of this school acknowledged the team spirit among the staff to aim for a full-fledged EMI. While working along that path, the teachers tried to achieve their goal through bilingual pedagogical procedures (i.e., a translanguaging strategy) in their respective classrooms as par with the needs and capabilities of both themselves as instructors and their students. This is how the teachers as actors played active and creative roles in generating their own individualized as well as an institutional policy to cope with the smooth transition from NMI to EMI. Similar practices have been well-recognized in the LPP literature in transitioning from the traditional MOI to EMI in many multilingual contexts (e.g., (García, 2009a; Mohamed, 2021; Turner & Lin, 2020). This reveals that teachers as actors at the micro implementation spaces, through their implicit language practices in the classroom, can generate their own contextualized policies in which they may not well-receive, perceive, or implement the macro policies (Wiley & García, 2016). The contexts of policy work are affected by factors such as the history, location, intangible values of participants, availability of materials, and expectations of the relevant community (Ball et al., 2012; Van Huy et al., 2016).

However, the policies and practices are interconnected and dependent on each other, as they are contextualized by the actors based on their ethos, histories, personal orientations, and

positionings. For instance, in the three cases of this study, the majority of teachers agreed on the necessity of EMI, while few others (i.e., those who have nationalist orientations) positioned their beliefs on the necessity of NMI and none wished to use mother tongues as MOI. Although in Case 1 and Case 2, most of the teachers were from ethnic/indigenous backgrounds, they did not wish to use the community languages in the educational contexts. Most of them associated the language-in-education issue with the situated social complexities caused by heightened heterogeneity caused by the mobility of people with diverse linguistic, cultural, material, and religious values.

Regulative Mechanism for Enacting MOI

Implementation of MOI was associated with several other regulatory mechanisms that included creating spaces for encouraging the practice of some languages while restricting others. Among the three cases, Bhairav school exercised the highest level of restriction on students' mother tongue use in the school premises. The assistant headteacher who overlooks the students' disciplinary behaviour in the school regarding my inquiry about if there was any penalty for students not following the language rules in the schools, during our unrecorded conversation, said, *"We do not penalize the students straight away if they do not follow schools' language rules, but we discourage them to use their home/ethnic languages in the schools. This is what we do, expecting that they will have more Nepali and English language practice opportunities in the school"* (diary note). She felt happy that such practice of the school was appreciated by both parents and students. By doing so, they (the school and the parents) wished to convey the message of ethos and tones (Ball et al., 2012) of EMI schools to prove that their children are studying in the school not different from the private ones who are strictly following EMI. In this school, speaking exclusively in English or Nepali was tightly regulated, and that was further associated with school order and discipline. Field observation in the case school revealed such practice. Although students were found to be

using their mother tongues in the playgrounds and during their casual talks, they used only Nepali and English while communicating with the teachers. During the classroom observation, I found that students sought permission in English while entering teachers' rooms and offices even if the teachers there were talking in Nepali among their colleagues during the break time. Teachers' language swiftly shifted to English when the students sought permission in English, and immediately shifted to Nepali while continuing communication with their colleagues. Some teachers used Bhojpuri while talking with each other. It seemed that there were no specific regulations for teachers outside of the classroom in choosing the languages for communication. However, whenever their communication was directed towards students or student-related affairs, they used Nepali and English depending on the mode of MOI of the particular shift. As the school conducted dual MOI programmes, the extent of use of Nepali and English differed. For example, in the EMI shift, they used more English whereas, in the NMI shift, they used Nepali as the primary language of communication with students. This description of language use scenario is based on the data obtained from case observation recorded as notes in a diary.

The classroom scenario also revealed similar trends of switching. Almost all the sessions (except the Nepali subject) began with greetings in English irrespective of the designated MOI. While students asked for permission to enter the classroom in English, the teachers responded in English even if the class was conducted in Nepali medium. In other words, the use of the English language was frequently observed during NMI classes as well. In Bhairav school, hybridity in language use was more frequent compared to Janak and Laxmi school. In Janak school, as the primary MOI was Nepali, Nepali dominated in all communications followed by the local language Maithili. However, in Laxmi school, English and Nepali were simultaneously used in communication among students. In Laxmi school, the choice of language for communication with students largely depended on the individual teachers. For

instance, the headteacher used English all the time while talking with the students, while other teachers (e.g., Mathematics and science teacher) frequently used Nepali even though the official institutional MOI policy was EMI. It seemed, from all these trends, that enactment of MOI was affected by individual teachers' beliefs and school contexts, and were less-affected by macrostructures and multilingual state ideologies. This informs me how people create policies to meet the contingencies of their work, moving away from an understanding of policies as incoming entities towards understanding them as meaning-making and generative processes. It also illuminates the voices and experiences of teachers in the creation and enactment of their self-generated language policies at the individual level. Although teachers needed to adhere to the institutional policies in language use in the classroom, in the assessment processes (e.g., while developing test papers) and the selection and use of the curricular materials, they used their agency in creating the most relevant practices in service to the students and communities in their respective contexts. Hence, with this discussion, it can be concluded that some schools have enacted some strict regulatory mechanism for language choice, while others are left to the decision-making of the individual teachers and students themselves.

Chapter Summary

As the enactment of MOI is embedded within the broader language policy processes, societal and community dynamics, the exploration of how it has been understood, owned, constructed, and practiced by individuals and institutions in changing social fabrics of multilingual societies can facilitate comprehensive understanding of the practice as shaping the policy. This case study identified that written policies and their enactment have significant differences, as the three case schools did not offer mother tongue MOI despite the multiple policy guidelines (legal and educational) permitting the right to do so. Although this case study cannot represent the case of Nepal as a whole given the very diverse social,

linguistic and educational context of Nepal, it provides an example of non-implementation of state's multilingual policy goals that encouraged use of mother tongues in public schools. To be specific, there were implicit policies and practices in the schools that contradicted the broader policy directions and regulations intended by the state. It also revealed how the MOI policy was negotiated at an institutional and interpersonal level in the schools of multilingual educational contexts. Recognizing this context as a background, in this chapter, I discussed the enactment of MOI policy in the three case schools, which differ considerably in terms of their demographic, educational, and community contexts. I have also presented the practical processes adopted by the schools in streamlining the MOI policies to create a conducive environment for realizing their goals of shifting into EMI. Although the "policy of requiring everyone learn a single dominant language is widely seen as a common-sense solution to the communication problems of multilingual societies" (Tollefson, 1991, p. 10), in these case contexts, slightly diverse and flexible school level policies were adopted despite their common goals of realizing a full-fledged EMI in the future. For instance, Bhairav school adopted dual MOI, Laxmi adopted English-mainly MOI, and Janak adopted Nepali-mainly MOI. In addition to that, the MOI policies they put into practice were mediated by positioned relationships among government agencies (e.g., the local municipal governments), individual schools and their contexts, and individual teachers' capabilities and possibilities. For instance, in case of Bhairav school, the metropolitan city office provided each school with a circular to implement EMI, and that was appropriated by the school. In Janak, the local municipal government wanted to implement EMI, but the school resisted so continued to implement NMI. The Laxmi school did not get any direct guidelines from the local government, but allowed the school to shift to EMI. All these agencies/institutions and actors attempted to ideologically rationalize their practices (or policies) in terms of power relationships among people and other competing institutions (e.g., boarding school-going

children, and neighbouring schools) while setting their long-term goals of establishing EMI as a form of institutional monolingualism. In other words, their ideologies towards essentializing EMI as the most preferred MOI affected their decision-making, interpretation, and enactment of the language policies in their respective institutions. While doing so, they were also aware of the potential consequences of responding or not responding to the macro policies (Ball et al., 2012), and therefore had carefully designed their practices to meet the specific contextual needs and demands.

Besides, in this chapter, I also presented that the mother-tongue use was stigmatized among students since a student speaking a mother tongue during class time was ‘ethically restricted’ (in students’ words). The classroom observation provided a rather deeper understanding of how the cycle of discourses passes through and shapes such language ideologies that impact language practices (or generate policies) in the classroom and institutional spaces. It revealed that teachers and students co-constructed their contextualized practices as policies to be beneficial for them. For instance, none of the cases intentionally involved local language to be used in the school premises, and this initiative was supported by the community as well as local governmental level forces. That enactment of MOI (a form of social action) took place within the intersection of discourses in place, interactions, or interrelationships among languages that are collectively shaped by the historical precedence of NMI and EMI in the case schools. It also revealed that tensions between the macro policy recommendations and micro classroom teaching and learning practices continued (see Chapter VII). The next chapter (Chapter VI) presents the shapers (driving factors) of the emergence and choice of MOI policies and practices in the case schools.

Chapter VI: Shapers of MOI Policy and Practice

Introduction

This chapter explores the factors contributing to the shaping (i.e., shapers) of language-education policy and its associated practice, especially the MOI policy and practice in secondary schools. As discussed in earlier chapters (especially in Chapters I and V), Nepal's Mother Tongue Based–Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) has been rather unsuccessful, and the public motivation and preference have shifted towards EMI. Despite the state-mandated policies for adopting mother tongues and the national language, Nepali, as the MOI in the school system, basically up to the secondary level, an unprecedented drive towards EMI has been occurring. While the studies in language education in the 1970s and 1980s largely focused on educational concerns, the understanding of how language policies shape or are shaped by broader social and political issues still needs attention (Pérez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018; Tollefson, & Tsui, 2003). Exploring the context-specific factors playing instrumental roles in shaping Nepal's MOI policy within the social and political framework is equally important. The findings in this chapter, reported in thematic form, drawing on the empirical data obtained from the fieldwork in three case schools from two of the seven provinces of Nepal is organized within three broad categories of shapers (alternatively, factors); viz. life chances, identity, and actors embodying societal and global forces in shaping the MOI. The details regarding other factors is discussed in association with these three overarching shapers. The all-encompassing understanding is that these factors have driven the schools and/or communities to resort to two of the most sought-after MOIs, i.e., EMI and NMI in public schools of Nepal amidst controversies, contradictions, and discursive confluences (see chapter VII) concerning the adoption of English, Nepali, or any other local/indigenous languages as MOIs.

Life Chances

EMI has become a norm in educational contexts globally, which includes policy discourses driven by rationales such as improvement of life opportunities through access to further education and employment, social capital and global systems. Although the move to EMI has been critically debated in multilingual countries where the policy and the practice are already well-justified in favour of national and local/indigenous languages, and their cultures, the English language has been expanding as the de facto MOI in schools and universities globally. Although research findings have been inconclusive regarding the benefits of EMI in language learning, the participants of this research (presented later) claimed that learning in English and Nepali would impact future opportunities by increasing their access to quality higher education, better study prospects and opportunities for employment in national and international organizations. These perceived opportunities have visibly and/or invisibly been driving the choice of English as the most sought-after MOI, followed by Nepali in the public-school contexts of Nepal. Here, I discuss the ‘life chances’ as one of the primary driving factors concerning EMI because it is assumed to be impacting people’s employment at the national and international job market, and their access to education at different levels.

Employment

At the global level, the higher motivation to use English for employment prospects is unquestionable (Ushioda, 2017). Based on the specific national and local contexts of Nepal and the data that emerged in the three cases selected for this research, I have discussed the frequently emphasized employment motivations in the learning of English, especially regarding expectations of job prospects at the global and national scale.

Global/Foreign Employment and Motivation. Globalization has generated new spaces for employment beyond national borders. Due to this, the education policies developed in the contemporary world work in different ways although they are constructed in specific national

contexts (Lingard, 2018). This scenario can equally be associated with the rapid expansion of EMI in schools and universities globally (Dearden, 2014). Nepal, being one of the suppliers of labour to the Middle East, East Asia, Europe, and many other regions, the trend of foreign employment, in the form of labour migration, is increasing on a year-on-year basis. Foreign employment has become a preferred as well as an alternative for the youths lacking employment opportunities at home. Department of Foreign Employment, Ministry of Labour in Nepal reported that every day, nearly 1500 Nepalese youths leave the country for employment abroad. In 2018/2019, a total of 508,828 individuals were given official approval to work in 136 countries (Department of Foreign Employment, [DFE], 2019). This reveals that, on average per month, more than 42,000 Nepalese get official approval to work abroad. This trend of youths fleeing in search of employment has wider implications for the socioeconomic, cultural, and educational dimensions in Nepalese society, including the impact on the choice and place of English and other foreign languages in the education system. Although labour migration is common across all regions, ethnic groups, and social categories, studies have revealed that the youths from poorer sectors of society constitute the largest portion of those who work abroad (Jones & Basnett, 2013; World Bank, 2011). A study in India carried out by Hornberger and Vaish (2009) concluded that people from “disadvantaged communities are increasingly demanding access to English so that their children can join a workforce that mandates knowledge of this language” p. 305). Even though this kind of community-urge and/or attitude is still implicitly impacting the educational systems of Nepal, the participants in the present research reported that many parents who are in foreign employment wanted their children to study in English medium private schools. To meet their demands, public schools in urban, suburban and rural municipal communities have had to shift to EMI. In this sense, these migrant parents (Vertovec, 2001) employed abroad have shaped an ideology that values the English language

and undermines their own local/indigenous languages. The trend is that even the national language Nepali is less preferred compared to English. These migrants not only send financial support to their families but they spent much of their income in educating their children in EMI schools, ultimately influencing educational practices at home and their communities at large.

This scenario can also be further validated with the claims made by students whose parents are migrant workers. The data revealed that the children of migrant parents were sent to EMI schools because the former wanted to enhance their English proficiency which would improve their employment opportunities. Consequently, schools that serve the communities of those parents feel pressured to shift their MOI to English. One of the policymakers of the metropolitan city that Bhairav school lies in, stated:

Everyone expects their children to study in English medium, be saleable in the international market, and get employment. That is what they want, and the local private schools are taking advantage of this opportunity. The public schools also have to sell themselves with EMI. (Policymaker_Bhairav).

Accordingly, the parents of the same case context focused on their job prospects by learning in English and Nepali as, “*For private companies and foreign employment, English is the popular one. So, English is also necessary for the children. The children should also be able to talk in English.*” A similar argument was also forwarded by a Nepali language subject teacher of Laxmi school as,

Parents did not believe us as we could not teach in English like the private schools. That is why some students who were admitted here were also shifted to private schools thinking that learning in English brings a better future by studying and working in foreign countries.

This perception of parents narrated by the teacher represents the former's ideological standpoint towards English being the language of economic opportunity. This economics of language (Grin, 1996, 2015) has not been sufficiently discussed in the LPP literature. In other words, the arguments above pose an economic question concerning language, where the parents frequently linked English language proficiency to better job opportunities, which means better earnings. Some research studies have documented this concern as well. For instance, Roshid and Chowdhury (2013), in their study on Bangladeshi graduates' English language proficiency and employability in the Australian job market, reported that EL proficiency influenced the prospects of employment, and it contributed to secure and better job opportunities. The Nepali subject teacher recalled her conversations with parents: *"If the school does not teach in English, then our children will not get a job later even in our own country leave alone the employment in the foreign lands"*. Her observation was that parents are occupied with the belief that only through learning in English can employment opportunities in the home country and beyond be ensured.

Hence, the economic perspectives that parents hold concerning EMI might be (partially) contributing to their increasing mistrust towards the public schools that use Nepali as the MOI. They still believe that EMI or teaching English as a subject develops students' proficiency in that language, and that English proficiency will give them national and international employment opportunities. This is how the globalization of the English language has created "new and complex markets of linguistic and communicative resources" (Blommaert, 2010b, p. 3) and those with low linguistic resources (e.g., lacking command of English or national official languages such as Nepali) will feel inferior, which Blommaert (2010a) claims is "a problem not just of difference, but of inequality" (p. 3).

Local and/or National Employment and Motivation towards Learning in English. Most of the students and the parents of the three cases schools stated that English is necessary for

local employment opportunities because proficiency in reading and writing in English was essential for jobs in the local markets. By local market opportunities, they were referring to the job vacancies advertised by schools, and some private companies that required a sound knowledge in reading and writing in English, along with good skills in the Nepali language. My personal exposure to these advertisements also echoed the participants' perceptions as Nepali and English language fluency requirements have become common in job postings for teaching and the corporate sector, including the hotel and hospitality industry. Similarly, the public service commission (PSC) examinations for officer level positions in Nepal also have English tests for officer level vacancies.

All the students unequivocally claimed that knowledge and skills in Nepali and English have become mandatory for all public as well as private-sector jobs, and it was also perceived that these knowledge bases and skills would be largely developed by adopting these languages as MOIs. They preferred to have English as MOI to develop further proficiency and fluency, especially proficiency in speaking skills. They thought that proficiency in Nepali would be enhanced additionally through community communications, media exposure, and family environments. The wider opportunity to use Nepali in social spaces developed their confidence in this language making it a less preferred MOI in schools. However, they claimed learning in English was limited to schools as their community environment is not English-friendly. The students in the non-Nepali native language speaking communities (e.g., the Maithili and Bhojpuri language-speaking areas) were aware of the immediate benefits/importance of English for social inclusion and international communication. This finding was similar to Yuan et al., (2015), who claimed students' strong motivation to learn English (in China) lies in their expectations of immediate and long-term benefits of proficiency in this language. Further, one Bhairav student claimed, *“those who study in English medium can speak English well, and such people are valued in job markets*

everywhere.” All other students assume that proficiency in speaking and writing in English enhances their chances to seize job opportunities at the local and national level, including both public and private ones. One of the parents indicated the employment prospects of learning these languages:

I am a Bhojpuri native speaker. As our language of public offices is Nepali, we need to have proficiency in Nepali. But for private companies and in foreign employment, English is the popular one. So, English is also necessary for our children. The children should also be able to talk in English (Parent_Bhairav).

She also stated what the students thought about the role of English in their life. Her demotivation towards educating her children in Bhojpuri emerged due to her lack of confidence in the functional relevance of that language in the job market where Nepali and English are the dominant ones despite Bhojpuri being currently used in her community. The reason appears to be that the “material and symbolic values of languages are produced and distributed” (Duchêne & Heller, 2012, p. 223) in workplaces where language is a means and an end of production. The claim made by the parent above relates to the dynamic nature of the current social context in which the languages constantly change in the job markets “due to demographic, economic, and sociopolitical reasons” (Feng & Adamson, 2018, p. 172). Both parents and students prioritized languages such as English and Nepali based on employment opportunities. This implies there is a need to empower the economic and sociopolitical status and benefits of the ethnic/indigenous languages in Nepal by using them in schools as MOIs which can ensure macro educational policies prescribing mother tongue MOI in schools.

In addition to the parent’s general observations on the spaces created by these two dominant national and international languages in the employment sector, she further elaborated that access to the national level government jobs requires writing the PSC examinations in both Nepali and English, but she cannot find her native language in these processes. In order to go

through the PSC process, command over Nepali and English is essential. For instance, the curriculum for the PSC examination for the position of Female Development Officer [*mahilā bikāsh adhikrit*] mentions [लिखित परीक्षाको माध्यम नेपाली वा अंग्रेजी अथवा नेपाली र अंग्रेजी दुवै हुनेछा], translated as- *that the medium of the written examination will be Nepali or English or both*. Although it states the medium for written examination only, it can be assumed that Nepali, as the official language, will be the language of the oral examination (i.e., the interview). Although the policy does not restrict use of other languages during this process, my personal experience of working in similar public organizations (e.g., once as an expert interviewer in teacher service commission) shows that Nepali has frequently been used as the medium in such exams. Further, the same examination includes an aptitude test (weighted score: 40 marks) that is to be taken in English. In the same way, the question papers for PSC examination for technical officers (such as Engineers, and Surveyors) for local government offices are in English; however, the candidates can answer the test papers in Nepali or English or both (Public Service Commission, 2020). This structural provision compels the parent to feel that her children's learning of her native language (e.g., Bhojpuri) would only be confined to her community, and if community member's proficiency is weak in Nepali and English, that will disadvantage them from mainstream public jobs (e.g., the civil service). Her position echoes the voices of all other parents who thought that studying in English and Nepali would enable their children compete locally and globally, both in the public and private sectors. The parents prioritized access to the global marketplaces over their ethnolinguistic identity. They would not jeopardize their children's future job opportunities and career security for the sake of their ethnolinguistic identity. One of the parents, who works in the police force and has a Masters' degree in sociology, claimed:

As we are living in Nepal, we have to work in Nepali. We have to handle the official processes in the government offices in Nepali. In private offices, and other

organizations, they have used English, and whatever government offices are there, they have used Nepali. To fill up some forms in the government offices, there are some words to be written in English actually. So, English is necessary for our life as well.

(Parent_Bhairav)

His argument, during the group interview, was overwhelmingly accepted by other illiterate participants as well as less-educated parents. It seemed that all of them, irrespective of their education status thought there is no alternative to learning English and Nepali. Here, his agentic act (e.g., the decision on educating his child in EMI) was guided by his beliefs and goals, and they are ultimately enabled and constrained by the societal structures (Hamid et al., 2013; Poudel & Choi, 2021). For them, there is a structural hierarchy among languages, with English at the top and their native language at the bottom. All of them wanted their children to benefit from learning English and Nepali to embrace social mobility and participate in the economy. Haidar and Fang (2019) also concluded that the availability of linguistic resources enabled graduates from elite schools taught in EMI to better adjust to higher education and professional life compared to their counterparts who graduated from general schools. A similar finding was reported by Feng and Adamson (2018) who claimed, “the examination system, regional economy, and mobility of population determine how key stakeholders perceive the relative importance or usefulness of the languages in question” (p. 175). This aligns with the claims of the participants that English and Nepali pragmatically constitute the main two language choices in Nepal’s educational and social contexts because they significantly contribute to their future employability.

Education

The schooling and the MOI in the educational institutions played a significant role in the students’ life chances including access to educational opportunities at the national and international levels. In many contexts, English was an asset for seizing these opportunities,

while studying in other languages developed a sense of deprivation among students (Haidar, 2019; Haidar & Fang, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018). Proficiency in English and Nepali also positively affected students' chances of obtaining scholarships for further education as discussed below.

Access to Higher Education at the Global Level. Interview data suggested that future access to higher education at the global level formed the basis for parents and students preferring EMI, at the cost of Nepali and other local/indigenous languages. One of the parents stated, *“If they know English, then there is no problem when they go abroad for study.”* Her belief largely represents the attitudes of most of the parents and their motivation towards enhancing proficiency in English with an expectation that it will be helpful for higher education opportunities abroad. Her attitude relates to Nepali students' increasing trend to pursue higher education elsewhere in the world, usually to the USA, Europe, Australia, Canada, China, India, and so on. They think that the higher their proficiency is in English, the higher their chances are of getting enrollment opportunities in world-class universities. Some of them were also referred to the admission requirements of universities abroad where proof of English language proficiency is mandatory. This policy structure in higher education plays a role in influencing parents' and students' attitudes towards English. In this sense, the supra-national structural and institutional factors, e.g., the trend of spreading English in higher education, have exerted influence in language use practices at the micro-level. The parents' understanding is that if their children learn English well, then they will be able to pursue higher education easily in English-speaking countries. As they have seen many children working hard to score high in internationally recognized English language proficiency tests such as IELTS and TOEFL, they think that educating in EMI schools will ease their children's future endeavours. Although the scores in these tests may not be the only decisive factor for successfully entering into higher education institutions abroad, the common

assumption is that this proficiency in English would provide them with opportunities to be enrolled in better courses in better-ranked universities.

With this assumption, the parents in this study insisted on developing their children's positive attitudes towards English and English tests (see Dawadi, 2019) which also contributed to heightened motivation toward education in EMI. The students of Bhairav school also reflected similar assumptions about the benefits of learning English. One claimed: *"in the future, if we go to foreign countries for study, then studying in EMI now will be very useful for us in the future."* This claim visualized the expectations of most of the high-achieving students who wanted to study abroad to experience a world-class education. This associates EMI with the quality of education in many non-native English-speaking communities. Studying abroad and getting a quality higher education can bring better job prospects for them. Similarly, the science teacher at Laxmi school emphasized, *"the main thing is who wants to stay in Nepal these days? I mean there is an increasing attraction towards foreign countries for higher education."* From a discourse analytical perspective, his question indicates his belief that many Nepali youths want to go abroad after completing their school education in search of better higher education, a better quality of life, and employment opportunities. He further states the expectations of the youths: *"They think that if they have some knowledge of the international language, then they will be able to study there, be salable there, and will find employment and will have an ease in conversation there."* He understands youths' motivation to learn in English from a functional perspective and links it to the communicative use of this language regarding their potential future education, social life, and employment. This is how he perceived that the imagined and potential future higher education have driven students' motivation towards learning English during their schooling. The student participants revealed their awareness that the main language of instruction in higher education institutions (HEIs) globally is English; thus, studying in EMI mode will help

them prepare for the learning environment in their future HEIs. In this sense, they prefer early exposure to EMI, which is against the mainstream policy understanding that early exposure to an unfamiliar language would jeopardize their comprehension of course content. One of the students said, *“If we go abroad to study and if we don’t have experience in learning in English medium, then at that time we will be embarrassed, and probably will not be able to meet the course requirements”* (student_Bhairav). This claim was overwhelmingly applauded by all other student members in the group. Their responses also illustrated how deeply the belief in English (Shim & Park, 2008) has shaped students’ linguistic orientation, especially concerning their access to higher education at the global level.

Access to Higher Education at the National Level. In Nepal, like many other countries, higher education programs are run principally in English. Almost all universities, except those that focus on language-related subjects, have developed most of their courses in English, and (largely) require students to take exams in English. Although the system does not restrict students from using Nepali as the medium of examination in some programs of higher education (e.g., Master’s Degree in Education, Master’s Degree in Arts, etc.), and English-Nepali bilingualism is also accepted, preference for English still exists, which has indirectly shaped students’ orientation towards this language. One of the parents claimed, *“if they have good English, they will get more opportunities in higher education in the future,”* which was also echoed by another parent’s claim: *“If they study in English medium now, they will be able to study any subject in the future in their higher education after SLC.”* For both, English proficiency is a tool to get access to studying high-profile subjects such as medicine, engineering, and sciences. This kind of belief system is not uncommon as people are seeing the benefits of being a member of a “mobile and educated workforce, with populations that can learn, speak and write in the international language” (Kirkpatrick & Bui, 2016, p. 5).

Similarly, Haider (2017) identified that unequal access to the English language in education contributed towards limiting the prospects of socioeconomically marginalized groups in higher education. Referring to the case of Sri Lanka, Walisundara and Hettiarachchi (2016) claim that the English language has also been positioned within the nexus of the love-hate relationship as people love to study in this language with the hope of promoting social mobility while also fearing that it has the power to exclude them from the upper echelons of society. Although the decision-making in MOI in higher education is left to the discretion of individual institutions, due to market competition, youths' motivation to learn in English, and universities' targets to produce globally competitive human resources, EMI has become the default MOI in HEIs in Nepal. Admission to popular courses in the universities requires some level of English (although there are no official requirements of language proficiency test scores for this purpose). One of the teachers who is from Science and Mathematics subject background expressed his concern over the future challenges in higher education if English is not taught:

Another problem is that at the level of higher education, we don't have books in our language. When we were doing I. SC (Intermediate degree in sciences), there were no books in our language, and it was difficult to handle the course in Nepali medium. Therefore, pupils wish to learn in English thinking that it will help them to study higher education which is in English medium. (Teacher_Bhairav).

His opinion relates to the scarcity of learning resources in languages other than English in higher education, especially in the subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Medicine, and so on. Looking back to the history of higher education in Nepal, the Indian education system was adopted as the first established Tri-Chandra College was affiliated with Patna University in India and was teaching in English since that time; however, learning materials in the Nepali language are still lacking. Ensuring the availability of adequate learning resources is

one of the key areas of language policy implementation (Chua & Baldauf, 2011; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003) and any lack of such resources in the home languages (e.g., Nepali and other languages of the nation) can result in jeopardizing the policies that intend to use such languages as the MOI in schools and higher education. The science and mathematics teacher's understanding of EMI in higher education comes from his own experience as a science subject student and as a teacher and a parent of two children who have been educated in an EMI private school. He thinks that a lot has changed already concerning schooling and language of instruction since his college days. Resources are easily available in digital and hard copy in the English language which also supports the expansion of EMI in higher education.

Having worked as a teacher in an NMI public school some years ago, his trust in the education delivered by his own school decreased due to the low-level of English language proficiency of the students, their poor performance in the national examination (e.g., SLC, now SEE), and parents' dissatisfaction with the quality of education provided to their children. He claimed *"English medium improves both proficiency in English and their achievements in the national competitive examinations"*, and the *"achievement scores in such examinations (such as SEE) play decisive roles in enrollment in higher education institutions."* Although there is a lack of evidence concerning whether mere proficiency in English contributes to better achievements in high-stakes examinations in Nepal, the teacher's assumptions are repeatedly echoed across the cases among parents and students as well. He further added, *"In school education, there must be classes in English medium; otherwise, NMI students will not be able to compete for higher education in better institutions."* He referred to the extremely 'Englishized' practices, especially in the private institutions, and also referred to the notion that public school students performed poorly in

SEE/SLC compared to the private ones (see Dawadi, 2019; Thapa, 2015). For him, English has been playing a gate-keeping role for admission into higher education.

Government Scholarships. The current policy of the Government of Nepal provides scholarship for students who have continuously studied in public schools from grade 6 up to grade 12; 45% of the scholarships are reserved for the graduates from public schools (MOEST, 2020). These quotas will further be distributed based on the criteria of affirmative action policy of the government (affirmative action is not the focus of this research and so is not discussed here). In Nepal, scholarships in higher education are provided to study several subjects including medicine, engineering, agriculture, and other technical and general subjects in state-funded HEIs. Competition for scholarships is fierce among students who graduated from public schools. Most of the exams targeted for the scholarships are conducted in English and therefore, require a substantial knowledge-base in English. The students think that studying in EMI programs now would benefit them to prepare for such exams. One of the teachers at Bhairav school, who has a Maithili language background, said, *“You know, the main reason students from well-off families come to study in this school is to get a scholarship in the future for their higher education”*. The other students there also revealed similar beliefs such as, *“If the student studies in an English medium public school, it is easy for them to get a scholarship. If students are successful to get the scholarship, it will carry prestige for their parents as well”* (Student_Bhairav). Students are well-informed about the scholarships provided by the government for students graduating from public schools. Those families who are well-informed of this future opportunity have gradually shifted their children from private EMI schools to public schools at the secondary level (especially from grade 6 to 12) to prepare the background for future scholarship opportunities. This scholarship provision is beneficial in two ways: first by increasing the enrolment starting from grade 6, and second by supporting schools’ temptation to successfully shift to EMI.

The scholarship does not directly require students to have studied in English because a certain functional level of English proficiency will suffice for this purpose; however, the competitive exams that include (and even prefer English fluency) are implicitly promoting EMI in public schools of Nepal. In other words, this macro-level policy has set structural pressure by encouraging students to study in English. The same policy structure also visualizes the English-fluent/EMI-based quality interpretation of education. Although this provision of addressing inclusion and equity issues collides with a government initiative to promote the quality of public-school education, it has contributed to an English-mania in these schools. The same understanding has penetrated the government decision-making and accordingly has allowed (or even pushed) public schools to adopt EMI instead of NMI for promoting quality education and ensuring EMI to the pupils coming from poorer families.

Identity

I draw on Norton's (1997) definition of identity as the way "people understand their relationship to the world, and how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (p. 410). The identity characteristics of language involve choice because speakers constantly need to choose one feature over another to accomplish their purposes (García, 1995). Regarding language choice, whether it be in education, business, or public spaces, the issue of identity emerges as to what to choose when and for what purpose. The choice of MOI phenomenon is also embedded within the discourse of identity, as people intend to have one or the other language(s) as MOI based on their varied ideological stances, which supposedly contributes or relates to their identity. Identity can be ethnic, linguistic, or cultural. Several scholars have discussed conflicting aims of bilingual education, one that relates to the preservation of ethnic or religious identity, and the other with the harmonization of different linguistic and political communities (Garcia & Lin, 2017). As Nepal has a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual make-up, the identity

discourse constitutes one of the key concerns of political activism. Evidence from research and national/international policies (such as UN resolutions) is consistent with offering learners an education aligned with the language they speak and understand. However, as Nepalese society has several distinct but closely related social elements such as religion, ethnicity, caste, region, language, and social class, the identity discourse is further complicated. Rai and Shneiderman (2019) claim that understanding identity is full of complexity as it has been “negotiated through a series of relationships between diverse Nepali citizens, the Nepali state, and a range of non-state social formations, such as political parties, ethnic association, NGOs and community-based organizations” (pp. 83-84). Due to the involvement of a multitude of factors affecting identity, it can be seen as a “fluid and multi-layered concept” (Rai & Shneiderman, 2019, p. 84), and is therefore subject to change across time and space. Identity also involves desires – desires for recognition, affiliation, security and safety, and such desires cannot be separated from the distribution of material resources (West, 1992 as cited in Norton, 1997). In educational contexts as well, the greater movement across time and space has contributed to fluidity and complexity in the desire for students in the formation of linguistic identity (Choi, 2018). The present study thus presents how the identity construct is a force for the choice of English, Nepali and mother tongues as the MOI in public secondary schools in multilingual educational contexts.

The increasing challenges facing Nepal’s recognition and definition of identity are partly due to the current ethnolinguistic diversity (Rai & Shneiderman, 2019) with more than 123 languages (CBS, 2012). The mobility of people from ethnolinguistic communities across regional and national borders to the emerging urban spaces has turned into a complex space of identity struggles in terms of linguistic and cultural dimensions that influence at the group as well as individual levels. While interacting with participants in the field regarding the choice of MOI in public schools, issues on nationalism/national identity, ethnic/indigenous

identity, professionalism, prestige, and social class have emerged which I have reorganized separately into three categories: group identity, personal identity, and institutional identity.

Group Identity

By group identity, I am referring to the identity of the relevant communities using specific languages where their language also facilitates the construction of their collective identity. For instance, the Nepali language is perceived as the symbol of “Nepaliness” and “Newar” as an identity marker of a member of the Newari-speaking community. In other words, identity is something that people identify themselves with as groups or individuals. As mentioned earlier, the notion of identity is spatial, temporal, and fluid, so the categories mentioned hereafter are not necessarily exclusive to one another.

National Identity/Nationalism. Language constitutes one of the important markers of national identity as “having a national language is often important for enhancing the feeling of nationalism and unity” (Gill, 2004, p. 136). Nationalism is “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation” (Smith, 1998, p. 187). When asked about the importance of teaching in Nepali or teaching Nepali as a subject, most of the participants (the policymakers, teachers, parents, and students) favoured Nepali as the language of national identity, which ultimately relates to their identity as Nepalese or with Nepaliness. For the parents and teachers, not being educated in Nepali would mean a lack of nationality or national identity. One of the parents opines: “*We are Nepali so that our children should learn the Nepali language.*” With this ideological mindset, none of them reacted against the teaching of Nepali in schools as a subject, but not as an MOI. The science teacher stated, “*Nepali, the national language, the language of the national conversation, should be known by all students*” irrespective of their native language background. Although he is not from a Nepali-native speaking background, he visualized better prospects from

learning Nepali and English than his native language. He argued, *“If the child studies in the local language only, then s/he cannot work in the whole country. The graduates (from the secondary level education) should be able to work at the national level, so Nepali is necessary.”* As well as appreciating the instrumental role played by Nepali for the students’ access to mainstream political and economic opportunities, he thought that without learning Nepali, he would consider himself as an incomplete Nepali national. He further states, *“I feel proud that I can speak Nepali as every other native-speaker of Nepali, and this is an indicator of me being a Nepali.”* He also related this feeling towards Nepali immigrants in other countries where Nepali diasporas are celebrating their festivals and other cultural rituals using the Nepali language:

If you see today many Nepali nationals living abroad for long using Nepali. It is not because they do not know English, but because they would like to be identified as Nepali by using the Nepali language in their cultural practices. (Teacher_Bhairav)

Here, he shows that the national identity has been shaped, along with other factors, by the national language, which is to be learnt through schooling, especially by children from ethnic/indigenous non-native Nepali language backgrounds. In this sense, his claim is consistent with the Panchayat era policy where Nepali was promoted strictly for enhancing Nepali nationalism, with the intention of establishing unity in diversity (Giri, 2009).

The notion of “unity in diversity” [*anekatāmā ekatā*] has been the state-supported socio-political concept of Nepal since the beginning of the unified Nepali state, and especially since the Shah dynasty and Nepal’s national unification. The discourse of unity (one nation one language ideology) equally applies to the Nepali language as a common thread binding the people from different language backgrounds. This national identity discourse (perhaps wrongly) presumed diversity as a basis for potential division across communities with diverse

linguistic, territorial and cultural (ethnic) histories and identities. The promotion of the Nepali language as the sole MOI in schools during the Panchayat regime, especially by late King Mahendra through a new education plan called “National Education System Plan [NESP]-1971,” is the result of the force of Nepali-based national identity (see details in Chapter V).

This planned attempt to promote Nepali as the language of the nation can be understood as state homogenization to shape people’s national identity with an overwhelming belief that people’s national language consciousness is an emblem of their identity. This case of Nepal is not the only case as such practices have occurred elsewhere in multicultural-country contexts. For instance, the Malaysian government shifted to Malay as the MOI after independence as a form of nationalist movement to protect and promote national identity (David & Govindasamy, 2005; David & Govindasamy, 2007). In other words, the practice of linguistic homogenization for national identity is not unique in Nepal. However, this practice has raised some historiographical debates about ethnicity and languages (Smith, 2000), and dominant and dominated languages. Such debates have been prevalent across academia, particularly concentrating on the ideological and pedagogical dimensions (Poudel, 2019). These debates have emerged out of controversies surrounding cultural identity and modernity (Walter & Benson, 2012), and have influenced reform agendas in policymaking. As a result, the settlement of the issue of teaching and learning in English, Nepali, and/or local/indigenous languages within a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual population of nearly 30 million people has become an important concern in the identity discourse, especially accentuated by socio-political transformations after the 1990s (See chapter IV).

Despite such debates, the motivation towards learning in the English medium has not diminished as many public schools are shifting their MOI from NMI to EMI. This trend is further heightened by the widespread use of English in global marketplaces, travel and tourism, education, and trade. Although there are arguments about the preservation and

promotion of local languages as symbols of collective nationality or national multilingual identity, the participants in the present study expressed slightly different opinions, and even reacted against it: *“What is nationality? Is it only learning our mother tongue to assure us that we have full nationality? I don’t agree with that.* (member of education committee, Bhairav).

His reaction against the notion of promoting indigenous languages to strengthen national identity is largely built on his experience of facing the fragile indigenous politics in the name of language and ethnicity in Nepal. He said, *“All this discourse about local language use in school is just the politics of opportunists.”* His opinion is also supported by the headteacher of Bhairav school who expresses disbelief in what politicians say about language:

That was just an issue for doing politics. Politicians need some issues to sustain their politics. Therefore, I don’t believe in political issues. I don’t have a belief that teaching Bhojpuri, Maithili, or Urdu can develop the personality of the students.
(HT_Bhairav)

For both, the identity issues (in terms of language and ethnicity) that were raised in the *Madhesh*, constituted important aspects of the political agenda during the past decade, although the political agendas could not be implemented. This concern about identity is how the MOI issue is associated with the broader sociohistorical and political domain. The head teacher thought, for example, the use of mother tongues of various language groups in schools was a false policy in the current globalized world. One of the teachers who is a non-native speaker of Nepali and English said, *“Children learn their mother tongue at home before they come to school, so why do we need to teach in them, rather than teaching in Nepali and English?”* Here, she expresses a negative attitude towards her students’ native language as the MOI in schools. Similar results were found by Mohanty (1990) in his

research in India; people's negative attitudes towards their own language led to a cycle of exclusion of their linguistic potential. The same sentiment was repeated by participant headteachers who are the main school-level policy decision-makers and heads of the school administration. They thought that learning Nepali would promote and protect national identity while learning English would allow global access where both languages are associated with identity and access to economic benefits.

Ethnic/Indigenous Identity. The decision-making on MOI is also associated with the identity of the people belonging to the chosen language(s). The integration of minority/indigenous languages into education systems (either as subjects of the curriculum or the MOI) is one of the concerns of linguistic human rights discourse (Hough & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2005; May, 2014; Spolsky, 2004). Such a discourse is associated with the promotion, preservation, and enrichment of ethnic and cultural identity of the peoples concerned as it is a form of their cultural capital. Therefore, it is important to see how nation-states with sociocultural and linguistic diversity accommodate and preserve this capital through their policies and practices. Some governments attempt to celebrate this diversity as a resource while others attempt to squeeze them by promoting one or a handful of languages while marginalizing the others. In the context of Nepal, “the impact of the state policy of Hinduization and homogenization of cultural diversity threatened identities and severely constrained indigenous nationalities and other marginalized communities to practice and promote their languages, cultural traditions, and religions” (Gurung, 2009, p. 7). The homogenization effort promoting Nepali as the national language may have fuelled the promotion of English. In province 2, for example, the emergence of arguments in favour of adopting Hindi as the link language can be attributed to ongoing localized disagreements between the two major languages of the region, viz. Maithili and Bhojpuri. Their debates are grounded within the localized linguistic identity struggles via a competition to be privileged

with either Maithili or Bhojpuri as the regional/provincial language. A Maithili native-speaking teacher teaching technical subjects in a public school said, “*The local language here is Bhojpuri, but while speaking Bhojpuri, it looks quite rough. It is a straight language...due to this, generally, we use Nepali medium while talking here*” (teacher_Tech_Bhairav). He further added, “*Maithili is the politest language among languages in Nepal. But Bhojpuri is not a respectful language, little rude language.*” In presenting his views here, it is not about which language has what characteristics (subjective interpretations associated with languages differ), but to indicate that there are deeper divisions in the communities due to intersections (and even tensions) between local languages and cultures, which may have generated spaces for the language(s) imported from beyond their current community or the region. However, some other participants thought that the use of Hindi as a link language is just a political illusion, and just “*an outcome of the ongoing debate between the Bhojpuri speakers and Maithili speakers*” (HT_Bhairav). He added, “*The Bhojpuri speakers say it should be Bhojpuri, and Maithili speakers say it should be Maithili. So, the politicians might have demanded Hindi in the middle of the debates between these two primary local languages. However, in practice, it will not be possible.*” The conflicting beliefs of these two participants here reveal unequal power relations and dynamic interplays of variables such as ethnicity, language, history, and access to social capital (see Wei, 2018) in enacting language policies in schools (also see Chapter V). Most importantly, there is a struggle for linguistic and cultural identity, and this is transferred to schools’ MOI decision-making.

Due to such localized and micro-level conflicts in terms of language and identity, politicians and scholars have been engaged in blame games about the state’s or the state agencies’ exclusionary policies and practices that challenge the potential of ethnolinguistic vitality. For instance, “the Panchayat system of governance (1960-1990) legitimized the singular identity of the male, Hindu, Nepali-speaking, hill caste elites as the national ideal” (Rai &

Shneiderman, 2019, p. 86). Here, they refer to the historically established exclusionary practices against indigenous nationalities and their identities in the name of strengthening national identity by promoting the language and identity of the higher caste elites of the hills (e.g., *Bahun, Chhetries, and Thakuris*¹⁸). This planned governmental system negatively impacted the re(construction) of the linguistic identity of people speaking non-Nepali languages, thereby alienating them from their native languages in favour of Nepali. The 2001 census reported that almost 33.7 percent of Newars no longer speak Newar as their mother tongue (Onta, 2006) and the trend is increasing until today. Such kind of practices are also noticed in other ethnic/indigenous populations and have been interpreted as instances of intergenerational language shifts (Gautam, 2020). One of the student participants stated, “*My mother tongue is Newar but I do not know it*”, and he attributes this inability (or unwillingness) to speak his ethnic language to the changing context in which he is growing up. His family migrated from Nuwakot (a district to the north of the capital) to Lalitpur (a district in the Kathmandu valley) when he was young, and he grew up in a community that is largely inhabited by speakers of Nepali and Tamang, and Nepali is the lingua franca. The social space prompted him to learn neither Newar nor Tamang, as his home language in practice was Nepali, not Newar. He identifies himself as Newar (surname Shrestha) not because of the Newar language, but because of his ethnic belonging to this community. Here lies a mismatch or fluidity between language and identity in modern societies in multilingual contexts, making the language identity issue further complex.

Understanding such complexities around language and identity, the headteacher of Laxmi school, similar to the perceptions of the headteacher in Bhairav school, perceived the current mother tongue MOI discourse as a political game at the community level:

¹⁸ These three categories of people are supposed to occupy the first two levels in Hindu caste-based social hierarchy.

Indigenous people are raising their voice and they want their language to be taught in school, which I think is language politics... We have seen that people talk outside about linguistic rights concerning their native language, but at home they want their children to speak in English.

Here, although he is aware of the fact that the empowerment of indigenous languages is a genuine issue and is also related to linguistic rights in education (May, 2014), he thinks that such issues are utilized just for political purposes. He believes that language policy begins from the family language planning, especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts where languages have diverse but interrelated functions. The very survival of several indigenous languages lies largely in how respective speakers keep it alive, and how the macro policies enable conditions for languages to flourish. He claims that ethnic identity politics in terms of language have not been materialized due to a lack of indigenous communities' readiness in educating their children in their native languages. He questioned, *"If the indigenous languages are excluded from the concerned people's own families, then how can we imagine that these languages will be used in the schooling systems?"* He thought that such exclusionary practices in the respective communities themselves lead to the ineffective implementation of the well-stated multilingual policies. He also worried that, in the long run, the new generation may not be willing to continue with conventional ethnolinguistic legacies.

Social Class Identity: English as a Liberating Tool. The impact of colonialism and globalization perpetuates is the conventionally existing inequalities and keep the disadvantaged poor (Blommaert, 2010b), while reinforcing the existing class structure (Bhattacharya, 2013; Hamid et al., 2013). In Nepal, like in many other societies of the non-native English-speaking world, the MOI in schooling is linked, although not exclusively, to the social-class hierarchies. Discussion in this section draws on the participants'

understanding of relationships between social-class hierarchies and the preference for languages, which is rarely discussed in language policy discourse.

In Nepalese society, there is a confluence of social stratification based on financial strength and the traditional Hindu caste system (excluding the non-Hindu religious population). Traditionally, in the Hindu caste system, Brahmins, Chhetries, and Thakuris were at the upper level of the hierarchy, and their native language was Nepali (though debates around Nepali dialects still exist). The same group, especially those from the Hills (Hill Khas-Arya¹⁹ population), also ruled the country for a long time. The state-sponsored planned promotion of the Nepali language in education and governance has sometimes been interpreted as a hegemonic practice of the traditional ruling class (Gurung, 2009; Phyak, 2013). In other words, the NMI in school education was associated with caste/class-based identity. In the same way, the promotion of EMI is arguably associated with elite class individuals' appropriation which also generates a new form of social classification in education; EMI-educated, and NMI-educated, a division between the elites' and non-elites' practice of MOI. Diverse forms of understanding were recorded concerning MOI and social class during the present study's fieldwork. The local level policymakers considered the transition of MOI from NMI to EMI was a strategy to minimize the classed division in education by attracting children from middle or high social class to the public schools. *"It is not only about teaching in English, it's more about public schools representing the society,"* a member of the education committee claimed. She added, *"These days, public schools have been the places for children coming from the poor families, marginalized communities and disadvantaged groups because rich ones send their children to EMI private schools."* Here, she explicitly signals the social class dynamics regarding the choice of MOI. Although the identification of

¹⁹ Khas-Arya population comprises of Brahmins, Chhetries, Thakuris, Dalits and all non-Mongol people whose mother tongue is usually Nepali (or dialects of Nepali)

social class is vague as the economic social classes sometimes clash with traditional Hindu religious social hierarchy in social stratification, here it is largely related to the economic one, i.e., the identification of people based on their wealth. The general trend tells us that the rich are educating their children in private schools while the poor go to public schools; thus, social class hierarchy is (loosely) associated with school type.

One of the members of the Metropolitan city education committee recalled his experience of a meeting attended by several stakeholders of education consisting of scholars, politicians, teachers, and policymakers in which participants' views clashed regarding the teaching of the local languages as well as the shift to English medium. There, he remembered a point he raised: *"Your children are studying or have studied abroad, some of the others have studied in English medium, and then why should the children of the Madhesi general public study in Bhojpuri?"* His argument not only points to the matter of ethnicity and place of origin (such as *Madhesi* and *Madhes*), but also to the classed politics in the name of equity in society (a sense of class orientation). In other words, he thinks that those who hold power in various form (as scholars, educators, policymakers, etc.) and are economically well-off either sent their children abroad to study or have them enrolled in private English-medium schools. For him, the discourse of teaching in a local/indigenous language is just the rhetoric used by the people from well-off social backgrounds to hold power by raising ethnolinguistic issues (clarified from a follow-up interview). In his understanding, the discourse (of using local/ethnic languages as MOIs) further contributes to the deprivation of the children from the general public from attaining the widely required language proficiency (especially in English) and thereby restricts their access to national and global opportunities. He claimed that the issue of language was used as a means of social control, influenced by "ideology, social class, and power relations" (see Leibowitz, 2005, p. 662), to restrict access of the already marginalized to the economic and political life, as many of the occupations in the

contemporary world require fluency in English. From a discourse analytical perspective, his choice of the term, “your children,” points to the scholars and officials gathered in the seminar who (presumably) had educated their children in EMI schools. Thus, he notes a clear mismatch between the expert discourses and local practices or needs (Bhatt, 2005), especially concerning language choice in education.

Similarly, the students in Bhairav school also unequivocally uttered that the public school’s shift to EMI is a good strategy that provides justice to those who are from low SES who cannot afford the high fees to educate their children in private EMI schools. One student commented:

You know boarding schools are teaching in English medium and charging a lot of fees. But in public schools, they are now teaching in English medium and charging a little fee or almost free of charge. This is a good opportunity for families of poor background to educate their children in English medium just paying 1100 rupees/month. (Student-Bhairav)

The student, also applauded by other students in the group, believed that the implementation of EMI in public schools has served the poor by improving their English proficiency, thereby contributing to their confidence in competing in higher education and marketplaces. Their arguments were also reflected in the claims of the policymakers, and the policies in local government offices. For instance, the metropolitan city office of Bhairav school circulated a directive in favour of implementing EMI in the public schools within its constituency, and accordingly many schools made the shift, while some plan to shift to EMI. This directive was overwhelmingly welcomed and supported by the public as well as stakeholders of education, guided by the assumption that proficiency in English would facilitate their social mobility. The head teacher said, “We got a letter from the local government office, and we want to follow it. I think the mayor wants all schools to shift to EMI because it is necessary now;

otherwise, parents will not send their children to public schools like ours.” This initiative did not face any resistance from the largely monolingual (i.e., Bhojpuri speaking) community suggesting that the community overwhelmingly supported this initiative at the local level. All the parents supported this shift to EMI, and the school implemented it after the policy change was endorsed in a parental meeting (the evidence obtained from the minutes of parents’ meeting in the school). This policy change was enacted by the newly elected mayor, who, during his election campaign, promised stick to the agenda. Brutt-Griffer (2002) claimed that English has been established as a tool for socio-economic mobility, and that intentional exclusion of the pupils from vulnerable groups of society from improving their proficiency would deprive them of access to wealth. One of the mayors of the local government also claimed: *“Not teaching in English would lead us in the opposite direction. The world is moving towards English, not the local languages”* (In a follow-up interview). He stated that teaching in local mother tongues might privilege the elites in the job market while restricting the poor from access to the linguistic resources demanded by the contemporary world. Hence, teaching in English, as the participants agreed, can liberate the students from insecurity and social-class inferiority.

Similarly, the headteacher of Laxmi school stated, *“Some years ago, more than 80% of the students hailed from the working-class families.”* He added that his school was *stereotyped as being Nepali medium and thus was showing poor performance.*” To keep with the times, he had to shift to EMI even if it may not have been the right path for the school in the long run. However, now he realizes that after the shift to EMI, the overall perception towards his school has changed. He said, *“The rich and middle-class families have gradually turned positive to what the school has been doing, and those who are of low SES have overwhelmingly appreciated our labour and have sent their children to our school.”* Thus, his arguments are consistent with the parents and students’ views quoted above. In this sense,

diverse MOIs in school contexts have signalled and even served the different classes of people in the society. For instance, EMI is largely serving the class of people consisting of professionals, businessmen, senior government officials, educators, and so on. Although the data in this study does not identify the type of families the students come from and their parents' professions at the micro-level, symbolic references to such classes of people were made by students, teachers, and parents. The shift in MOI to English attracted the parents from the working-class families, who previously wanted to educate their children in private EMI schools. One of the parents who came from the western part of Nepal (from *Tharu* mother tongue background) who worked at a farm in the same locality was happy to send her children to an EMI public school assuming that, *"the children would learn everything. They learn English, Nepali, and many other things which are useful for them."* She presumed that EMI education would provide extensive and in-depth learning (i.e., in her words, "everything"), which she thinks the children from rich families are already privileged with. Not only the teachers and parents but also the policymakers are aware of this linguistically generated social class divide in education, especially driven by the choice of MOI. One of the policymakers in the local government body of Bhairav school municipality provides a frequent reference to the case of EMI in India and other countries in Asia: *"Even the people from low-socioeconomic classes wish to send their children to EMI schools motivated by the higher SES families doing so."* His claim reflects the findings of Hornberger and Vaish's (2009) study in India that concluded that socio-economically disadvantaged communities have been making increasing demands for English recognizing that it will play a gatekeeping role to access higher education and higher-paying jobs. The policymaker linked this scenario to that of his current community. For him, not challenging or countering the current structures of glorifying English and connecting it with the 'elitist' ideology would enable him to prosper in his school leadership. The current surge in enrolment in public schools after they shifted to

EMI is what he thinks supports the success of his leadership. One of the social studies teachers from the same school commented:

Most of the students here are from the lower social classes. The lower classes include people from the lower castes as well, and most of them are farmers or wage-working families. When we started English medium, the number further increased.

Here, he associates the notion of social class with both the economic and cultural systems (e.g., lower castes) of social stratification. Even though the traditional Hindu system of social class²⁰ (caste) does not directly associate with English since the language of Hindu religion is Sanskrit, the social perception in a majority-Hindu country (e.g., Nepal) is that the higher caste groups (e.g., Brahmins and Chhetries) have more access to education facilitated by their language proficiencies in Nepali and English. Nepali is the native language of these caste groups and English is the alternative one, whereas the indigenous groups (some of which traditionally have different caste hierarchy, e.g., Newars) have their native languages and learn Nepali as their second language. The teacher's understanding of EMI being related to student enrolment from both social classes (economic social classes and traditional cultural social classes) indicates how this phenomenon has been deeply embedded into the social processes, especially through a process of intersectionality (Carbado et al., 2013; Tefera et al., 2018). As the families coming from low social classes/castes value English, schools in the communities have had to shift to EMI; otherwise, these families may choose to send their children to the low-cost EMI private schools established for commercial purposes. And again, if this trend does not continue, it might challenge the governments' political commitments of ensuring affirmative action to provide free quality education to all (MOE, 1956; MOEST,

²⁰ In the Hindu system, the social class hierarchy ranges from Brahmins, Chhetries, Vaishya and Sudra, a four-tier caste hierarchy. Usually, people from Brahmins and Chhetries enjoy relatively higher social benefits compared to other caste groups due to their access to mainstream politics, education and other opportunities, as rulers, policymakers, educators and so on.

2019), with special privileges provided to the marginalized and disadvantaged. Hence, choosing (or not choosing) a particular MOI is linked to the political goals of government as well.

However, due to the current changes in MOI, public schools have experienced increased participation and the sustained interest of local people in school programmes and activities.

The headteacher of Laxmi school said, *“Even if the local rich people do not send their children to community schools, they have started caring about it and at least they have started recommending their neighbours or others to admit their children to our school.”*

Although he favoured the empowerment of Nepali and other local languages through the schooling system, he did not have any regret in shifting to EMI. He concedes that EMI has already become established as a part of the educational system in Nepal and is gradually reducing the already classed-based education quality. For him, the current implementation of EMI in public schools has to some extent reduced the inequities in English language proficiency between the students from private and public schools, and at the same time has weakened the public perception about rich people educating their children in EMI and others in NMI. For him, EMI is already a societal resource that has the potential to influence several aspects of society.

However, scholarly arguments (e.g., Giri, 2009; Pradhan, 2020; Skutnabb-Kangas & Mohanty, 2020) have been put forward about the implementation of EMI as a potential force for reproducing and reinforcing the already established social stratification and education inequities. The headteacher of Laxmi school was aware of this, yet he frequently referred to the economic notion of English capital as a tool to access opportunities in the global marketplace (see Bhatt, 2005). He thought that good English proficiency would shower them with powerful linguistic capital, and those without that proficiency would be deprived of such

opportunities and consequently be marginalized in their academic and employment prospects at domestic and global levels.

Personal Identity

I conceptualized that educating, studying, or teaching in a specific language is related to how individuals themselves or outsiders form opinions about individuals, such as their social prestige, professional recognition, and access to opportunities. It was reported that locals with strong affiliations to the English language earned higher social prestige and power compared to the ones having no English proficiency (Walisundara & Hettiarachchi, 2016). Also, individual choices are important as they influence how language policies are played out within a particular polity (Baldauf & Nguyen, 2012).

Social Prestige: English is ‘Gold’. Educating children in an EMI school remains one of the most important concerns for parents to build their social prestige. Not only is the medium important, but also the type of school can be linked to the extent of prestige, which helps parents make educational decisions for their children. For instance, one of the parents regretted her inability to educate her children at a private EMI school: *“If I send my children to boarding school, then it will have a good impression in society. People will think I am able to send my children to English medium boarding schools.”* Here, the issue was more about her prestige in her current community as she had seen that well-off people have sent their children to elite as well as low-fee private EMI schools. Although her children are in a public EMI school, she still feels inferior, perhaps due to her low-level confidence in the quality of the schooling. A similar concern was also raised by students studying in a public EMI school (i.e., Bhairav school). *“These days, even most of the poor people send their children to the boarding schools [because they want to] show that they are also able to educate their children in boarding schools just like rich people in society,”* one of the students claimed. This reveals that there is a deep social divide caused by the mode of schooling (public and

private) and the MOI (EMI and NMI) in Nepal's schooling system. Although I asked about their views on educating their children in private schools, their main concern was about educating in English. One parent said, *"If possible, we wish to send our children to English medium schools"* (while conducting FGD with parents in Laxmi school). Another student added, *"And rich people have sent their children to English medium public schools these days."* She reported that the trend of sending children to private EMI schools has been gradually shifting as many public schools are implementing or preparing to implement EMI. From their claims, it can also be learned that there exists a matter of prestige in educating the children in EMI or NMI schools. As discussed earlier, the parents directly linked EMI with English competence, and having good competence in English would lead to better confidence, success, and prestige (Haidar & Fang, 2019). As reported, most parents have similar feelings to the one quoted above. They said they would feel socially inferior if they had to educate their children in NMI schools, usually the public ones, because in principle, all private schools teach in EMI. Their happiness increased following the shift of traditionally NMI schools to low-fee or no-fee public EMI schools where they are educating their children. For them, it is not only the capacity to afford the fees, but also the prestige the parents accrue in the community. In other words, the mode of schooling and the schools' MOI were connected to their social status and prestige in the community.

However, the notion of social prestige is very fluid as well as complicated. For different classes of people, social prestige may mean different things according to their orientations. In response to the query, *"Why don't the local public send their children to public schools that have shifted to EMI from NMI?"* the headteacher replied that it was not only a matter of English teaching but rather other socio-cultural factors playing instrumental roles in shaping these peoples' understanding about their educational practices:

“Maybe it is ‘social prestige matters’ that are playing an important role, like their children being with the children of marginalized communities. The public schools open the door for all kinds of families (poor and rich) but the private boarding schools are selective to some extent while admitting the students. Maybe the local rich people do not want their children to be educated together with the ones from the poor families” (HT_Laxmi)

Here, the headteacher connects the notion of educating in English with social status and prestige. In the community, *“English has become a gold,”* he claimed. His ‘gold’ metaphor mirrors the cultural belief in the community. This metaphoric expression echoes Ager’s (1996) understanding that in language planning bottom-up campaigners focus on image and prestige. In Nepalese society (and in Hindu-based cultural patterns), wearing gold is something about prestige as well as a symbol of financial strength. Similarly, investment in learning English means investment for long-term benefits, like investing in gold. He recalled cases when parents came and urged him to educate their children in English like that of neighbouring private boarding schools. The parents came and said, *“If you can provide that quality, we will bring our children to the school where you are leading it.* In response, he noted with a sigh, *“It has become a challenge for me, a kind of acid-test for me.”* He added, *“I cannot avoid parents’ pressure because teaching in EMI is related to our institutional prestige as well”.* The discussion above reveals that EMI has become an issue of social prestige for both individuals and institutions. For a school, shifting to EMI is one of the reforms undertaken at the institutional level, which is associated with schools’ stability, teachers’ job security, and community service. Attempts to maintain the social prestige of all stakeholders by shifting to EMI is perceived as a time-bound necessary response of the school. It was time-bound because they thought that EMI is the current necessity, and the continuation of it will depend on the changing linguistic contexts and policy structures.

This finding, however, drawing on the data obtained from a multilingual country such as Nepal is not surprising. Studies in many other similar contexts have reported similar conclusions that were mostly driven by the effects of globalization. Haidar (2019), in the case of Pakistan, claims that globalization, which has facilitated English as the chosen MOI, has made ordinary people's linguistic capital valueless even within their own communities or country. Also, the low-level English language proficiency in Pakistan has led to an increasing vertical hierarchy in society, whereby poor English is "a source of shyness, frustration, failure, and disappointment" (Haidar & Fang, 2019) among students, especially for those from public schools which in turn can lead to low achievement. Therefore, in many countries, attempts by parents, students, and schools to shift to EMI may be a process of (re)adjustment to fill the gaps caused by globalization that divide and exclude people (Blommaert, 2010b). The struggle to integrate within the globalization process and minimize the gaps are the prime concerns relating to social prestige. Thus, learning in EMI and improving English proficiency can (partially) support the realization of a new identity for the underprivileged serving to fulfil their ambitions of living a dignified life.

Teachers' Professional Identity and Job Security. In language policy studies, the impact of language policy on teachers' lives (professional and personal) is seldom investigated.

However, the present study indicates that it is equally important to understand how teachers perceive themselves as individuals and how they relate the current MOI policies and practices to their professional life. The interview data in the study points to these concerns as well.

More importantly, understanding how teachers feel about teaching in a language other than their native one, or how they feel about shifting the MOI to English in their schools, can help capture how language policies have been or will be enacted in schools. This study reveals that teachers face both linguistic and pedagogical challenges due to the shift of MOI in public schools. Hence, the MOI is not only concerned with the survival of students in academic life

(Haidar, 2019), but also with the professional security and identity of teachers. Studies have reported better institutional and social benefits for teachers in shifting to EMI. For instance, Dafouz's (2018) study on Spanish university teachers found that the lecturers "unanimously agreed that EMI had enhanced their linguistic and social capital providing the younger teachers with a more international professional identity and a promising academic future" (p. 2). During interviews with my teacher participants, some teachers claimed the Nepali-only medium was leading to the deterioration of their institution's reputation and the social capital of teachers which led to a feeling of inferiority. However, with the introduction of EMI, they gradually regained social capital and this was directly linked to their professional identity.

One teacher commented:

Not being able to teach in English will be shameful for me, as the school and the community want us to teach in English. Firstly, it is the wish of society that the school has to have EMI, and if we cannot do that, then you know how they think about us!

As identity is "social positioning of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586), this teacher's feeling of shame in not being able to teach in English concerns how she relates her individual self with the "other" in professional as well as the social spaces and it has become a matter of her personal as well as professional identity. However, as identity is "a relational and socio-cultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than [being] a stable structure" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, pp. 585-86), her struggle for the (re)construction of professional identity as a teacher who can teach using English is a temporal one, possibly to be reshaped by the changing educational contexts and change in teachers' language proficiency as well as the market demands. She believes that language-based identity concerning her profession is time-bound. She expressed her expectation that the current demands of the local community and the global orientations

towards getting an education in EMI might take a different course over time. However, as a language teacher, she is not worried about not being able to speak English even if the school has shifted to EMI.

In an interview, one of the social studies teachers from Laxmi school commented: *“If we do not shift to English medium, we would have to either quit our job or transfer to some other schools in the remote places. We had to have door-to-door visits to encourage parents to enroll their children in our school.”* This statement reveals that EMI was also used as a tool to stabilize their profession and as a consequence, teachers were required to develop proficiency in English to continue their job. Another Nepali subject teacher underscores this development:

Though there is no problem for me because I teach Nepali. I feel like I need to learn English to fit into the English environment emerging in this school. Unlike me, other subject teachers are struggling to learn English; otherwise, they have to face job threats.

She further added, *“You know, in many schools, English teachers are teaching social studies as the previous teachers could not teach in English, so they are transferred to the schools in rural contexts where Nepali is the medium.”* Here, she reveals the higher importance of English proficiency in urban areas than rural ones. This also raises questions on inequitable learning conditions across different territories or spaces in Nepal, where the MOI is compromised based on the context of schooling, which means language policies are conditioned by the time and space nexus (Hult, 2010) that eventually affects how the MOI policies are enacted.

Institutional Identity

Institutional identity is largely constructed with the services that institutions provide through their constant interaction with the community they are located. Accordingly, the individuals working in the institutions (re)construct, (re)negotiate their social and professional identities as legitimate members of those institutions (Fotovatian, 2015) while interacting with the local community. In the next section, I discuss how the choice of MOI relates to the formation of an institution's identity in a multilingual educational context.

Public Schools' Survival Crisis: The Sink or Float Situation. The comment, *the current challenge has been a kind of acid-test for me*" made by the headteacher of Laxmi school indicates the pressure that public schools feel regarding the shift to EMI education. He perceived that traditional NMI is no longer useful, as almost all schools in the community have been teaching in English. He had to struggle for more than half a decade since he joined this school as a headteacher to promote EMI amidst very limited resources (such as very few English-fluent teachers and the lack of English language teaching materials including audio-video tools). Community participation was negligible when he took the lead. However, with his commitment to revive the school's status by shifting into EMI, he felt hope and positive signs in improving his school's back status. Shifting from NMI to EMI became instrumental in uplifting the school from a sink or swim situation. Public schools teaching in Nepali medium saw a huge downturn in enrolment, leaving the schools to serve only students only from low SES and migrant families. Teaching in Nepali medium was one of the reasons for his schools' attrition. Parents discredited the way the public schools were performing despite having trained teachers, good physical infrastructure (for many), and government investment. They questioned the performance of these schools and developed distrust towards their education processes, including the language of instruction. Understanding the micro public sentiment and adopting the global flow of English, the government had to be receptive

towards public schools shifting their MOI from Nepali to English. The schools that attempted to offer mother-tongue MOI and those that traditionally taught in NMI suffered from low enrolment, making them less sustainable in the community. A similar case was also reported in Singapore (a highly globalized nation) where by 1986, enrolment in schools offering Mandarin, Tamil, and Malay as media of instruction was so low that the government had to close them down (Shepherd, 2005), and now the primary MOI is English despite legitimate recognition of multiple languages in education. This can be taken as an instance of the government's inability to implement policies to maintain and preserve the languages of the nation through interventions in the schooling system. Some scholars in Nepal (e.g., Angdembe, 2014; Regmi, 2017) have argued that the ineffective role of the government in preserving the right to be educated in the mother tongue was responsible for many schools teaching in Nepali and English rather than in the mother tongues.

However, it has been reported that student enrolment in public schools has increased after shifting from NMI to EMI. The Deputy Mayor of the metropolitan city where Bhairav school lies said, *"The students studying in private boarding schools have shifted to public schools' English medium classes from grade 8."* Observations like this were consistent across all three cases that informed me of the policymakers' awareness of the MOI shift from NMI to EMI in increasing student enrolment in public schools. The policymakers attributed this shift to their local level government policy directions that did not restrict schools from choosing the MOI. They believed that the adoption of EMI in public schools, and funding for it is one of the strategies for sustaining the public schools and enhancing their quality. Both political and administrative officials of the local governments are convinced of this strategy. They think that saving and uplifting the public schools is the current priority, and the implementation of EMI was the most sought-after strategy. An education official of the municipality in which Laxmi school is situated said, *"The policy of the municipality is English medium for now. The*

office thinks that the English medium can revive public schools, and this medium can save its image, and finally can be re-energized." Here, he implicitly refers to the deteriorating social image of the public schools because of their Nepali medium instructional practices and poor performances in high-stakes examinations. He expects that implementation of EMI will improve children's academic achievement at the national level examinations (such as SEE, and SLC), and that the current social perception and public trust towards public schools would ultimately change. He further claims that learning in English has already become an established norm in our society, and if the children do not go to EMI schools, they are not much valued in the public spaces. He claims the current status of English as "*not[being] only the language of English native speakers, [but] it is our language as well...English should strongly be promoted.*" Although he does not actively engage in the promotion of teaching in English, he sees that there is no alternative to it, and so it has been directly and indirectly promoted through government systems. His argument also relates to the statements made in nearly all the historical documents in education policies and plans such as reports of the Education Commissions at various times (see Chapter IV) and the government's periodic development plans. This concern reveals that English medium education was historically valued and was shaped by multiple factors including the protection of the institutional identity of the public schools, and therefore, it is unlikely that suffering public schools would resist the widespread adoption of EMI.

Actors Embodying Societal and Global Forces

LPP has become increasingly complex and dynamic due to the involvement of multiple actors playing important roles in diverse spaces and scales (McGroarty, 2013; Zhao, 2011). As the rapid processes of globalization have affected the social, political, cultural, educational, and economic fabric of societies, the roles of multiple actors in varying structures interplay in decision-making in language policy in education. Heller (2007) claims

that language as a set of resources is “called into play by social actors, under social and historical conditions which both constrain and make possible the social reproduction of existing conventions and relations, as well as the production of new ones” (p. 15). In other words, the actors (both at macro and micro levels) (re)produce certain forces which impact language policy decisions in education. In the next section, I discuss them as national and local actors, and international (external) actors.

National and Local Actors

By national and local actors, I’m referring to the individuals or groups (or their institutions) from multiple out-of-school environments influencing language policies in education, such as parents and the private sector.

Parents. Headteachers, policymakers, and teachers claimed that parental choice has been one of the key drivers for the unprecedented shift to EMI in public schools, and this drive is a response to the changing global and national scenarios set forth by the wider circulating neoliberal forces that put pressures on receiving education in dominant languages and the learning world culture and economy (Spring, 2000). Although parents agree that teaching in the mother tongue minimizes the gap between the home and the school environment, they think that learning in English from the very beginning of schooling will enhance their children’s proficiency in the language and will ultimately benefit them for future schooling and other opportunities. Their motivation lies in their belief in promoting their children’s “access and participation in the larger society” (Wiley, 2013, p. 63). There lies a major challenge in translating the linguistic right of getting an education in the mother tongue amidst the parental belief that students must be proficient in international and national languages to gain access to wider societal benefits and meaningful participation in the global processes, at least beyond the current provincial borders. Referring to the parental pressure the schools have received, the headteacher of Laxmi school claimed:

Parents do not come with a demand for teaching in any other language; rather they come with a demand to teach their children more in English. They ask us to make their kids smart in English. Sometimes parents visit our school and they say, 'Oh, the children of my relatives go to private school, they speak in English. But sir, my children cannot speak in English so do something for our children and make them as smart like our relatives' children. Otherwise, we will take our children out from your school to the private ones. (HT_Laxmi)

His statements explicitly tell us about the pressure that public school administrations have received from their current and potential parents regarding their aspirations for enhancing their children's English language proficiency. Another mathematics teacher echoed the view that the school had to address the parental choice by shifting to EMI: *"The parents' wish had to be fulfilled; if not students won't come to this school. Otherwise, there is another school nearby; they would go there. The situation could be very competitive with another school, and we may lose that."* Here, he reveals that schools are responding to two forces – meeting parental demands and institutional survival while shifting the MOI to English. However, these stories across schools in implementing EMI are different and grounded in various social contexts.

Parental expectations are also grounded in their understanding that learning in English can benefit their children in many ways: better speaking skills (fluency) and access to better higher education (ability to study the subjects such as engineering, medicine, IT, etc.). One of the parents linked her children's language proficiency and the school's MOI to the future career path stating, *"The elder one [child who studies in Nepali medium] will be an engineer, and the younger one [who studies in English medium] will become a doctor."* Her perception of her younger child who attends EMI school is that he is superior to the one attending the NMI school because she valued the medicine more than engineering. When she was queried

about whether she would be happy to educate her children in the schools that teach in the regional/local languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Bajjika, Tharu, etc., she outright rejected the notion of education in local/regional languages, although she hoped they would learn these languages. Another parent in the same group claimed, *“In English medium, the children will be talented and bona fide but they are not like that in Nepali medium. In the future, the education in English medium will be good and beneficial for their life.”* The voices of both parents from different case schools represent the general perceptions of many parents who prioritize English and think that their children, if educated in EMI, will have a better-quality education, and thus will enjoy better opportunities in the competitive global marketplace. The English language is associated not only with quality education, but also with intellectual capabilities as is clear from the parent’s (mis)perception that English educated children will be bona fide. In other words, the parental demand to accelerate EMI is one of the responses to the threats posed by the neoliberal globalization that prioritizes meritocracy, freedom, reduced state funding on public services, competition, and economic openness.

Similar instances of parental pressures driving MOI are also found in Malaysia and China. David and Govindasamy (2005), in their research in Malaysia, reported that Chinese and Tamil MOI in primary schools existed due to parental choice irrespective of the wider influence of English, whereas Xiaoyang and Yangyang (2014) reported that a large segment of Chinese society emphasizes the importance of English for their children to be able to read and understand western scientific books and research journals and participate in global economic and educational activities. These research findings underscore the belief that educational language policies are best understood in relationship with the broader and dominant beliefs that have evolved in the communities or societal contexts and are driven primarily (though largely implicitly) from the bottom-up.

Private Sector. The operation of private schools was highly discouraged during the Panchayat regime (1962-1990) as recommended by NESP – [1971-76]. However, the establishment of multiparty democracy in Nepal in the 1990s coupled with Nepal's commitment to participate in global economic systems and neoliberal processes fundamentally accelerated the aggressive involvement of the private sector in education. The neoliberal processes provided safe ground for the private sector to invest in education to cater to the needs and/or demands of the elites to educate their children in English. Since developing countries are considered emerging markets of the neoliberal movement (Sayer, 2015), their education systems are largely influenced by this trend in their policymaking and practices. Also, reduced government funding in education, and free trade and investment policies of the state further accelerated private sector investment in education. Consequently, English obtained a greater space as the most preferred MOI in private schools and was later adopted by the public schools in the hope of surviving in the increasingly globalized marketplace. To supplement public education, the private sector used EMI as a tool to commercialize their education. Using the English language as a commodity through private schooling contributed to the social capitalization of these schools as well (which is also a matter of institutional identity as discussed above). However, issues of inequality and social justice were raised concerning their establishment in alignment with EMI, as the graduates from the private schools, on average, outperformed the public ones, thereby producing two types of graduates in terms of language proficiency and achievements.

Due to the private schools' operation in English, public schools struggled to compete with them and to reverse the declining enrolment and deteriorating public trust towards their quality of education. Although it looked like an institution-level competition, one of the main factors that created gaps between education in private and public schools was the MOI in which the private schools adopted EMI. The headteacher of Laxmi commented:

Generally, parents, those who can afford it, send their children to private schools. And one key component, out of many other components, for this choice, has become language, the so-called English language now. So, to compete with private schools, it is very important for us to teach in English. (HT_Laxmi)

This headteacher associates the choice of MOI with the socio-economic status of the community's families – as rich ones educated in private EMI schools and poor ones in the public ones. As teaching in English has impacted the social, cultural, and linguistic identities of the people, it has become established as a tool to minimize the divide between the rich and the poor (implicitly relating to private and public education). In this regard, Van Parijs (2000) argues that the provisions for access to English as a global lingua franca have stimulated socio-economic justice for those who have been left out of the mainstream. It is also possible that language policies in schools (e.g., EMI) are mediating access and equity in education (Tollefson & Tsui, 2014).

International Actors: International Agencies

Globalization has created such complex processes that decisions, events, and activities emerging in one part significantly impact individuals and communities elsewhere in the world as the values and resources are rapidly travelling eased by the development in science and technology and worldwide networks. In this globalized world, like other policies, language policies are also increasingly recognized as dynamic and multilateral (Blommaert, 2010b; Lo Bianco, 2010; Tollefson, 2010) with considerable involvement of international multilateral agencies in domestic policymaking in developing countries such as Nepal (Regmi, 2017). In other words, the active involvement of international agencies has impacted the choice of language in education as well, leading towards the global surge of EMI (Dearden, 2014; Hamid et al., 2013) as an outcome of the globalization processes (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). Thus, the rapid expansion of EMI is not only a linguistic

concern, but also a geopolitical, economic and ideological phenomenon (Walkinshaw, et al., 2017). These processes and the status of English have, in a sense, awakened individuals and institutions in customizing their policies and practices towards embracing relevant MOI policy, i.e., EMI.

The involvement and role of external donor agencies/International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) in development programs including educational policymaking cannot be underestimated, especially in countries that heavily depend on foreign aid for their infrastructure and social sector development. Research has also pointed out this concern. For instance, Hamid, et al. (2013) argued that behind the global force of EMI, there are other roles (e.g., English language promotion) supranational agencies such as the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), British Department for International Development (DFID), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank play in various country contexts. They (ibid) further claim that “if there had not been a steady flow of English Language Teaching (ELT) aid, the ELT policy and curriculum landscape would have been significantly different than what it is now in low-income countries” (Hamid, et al., 2013, p. 5). Similarly, referring to the context of Nepal, Regmi (2017) reported the active involvement of the World Bank in educational policy recommendations has been guided by fundamental tenets of neoliberalism that mainly focus on “marketization, privatization, and decentralization” (p. 1) and the primary medium of their communication is English. The World Bank and other INGOs (such as DFID, UNESCO, USAID), etc. have also equally participated in education sectors, largely driving the principles of neoliberalism, in that the role of such organizations has contributed to bringing in the neoliberal ideology in education, especially by supporting the engagement of the private sector while advocating the reduction of public funding to cater for the educational needs of the general populace. Due to the government's inability to combat such external

forces (the agencies) driving neoliberal ideologies, their influences persist and have increasingly influenced Nepal's education policymaking and practices. Both macro and micro-level engagement of these organizations, the language of which is English, have affected the public perceptions of English.

Among those interviewed, one local government education official who has extensive experience of working with donor agencies while positioned at the Ministry of Education agreed to the notion that INGOs and development partners have a huge say in Nepal's education policymaking and practice. He says, "*Our policies are donor-driven*" but also claims that "*They have not focused on English-only, rather they have advocated education in the mother-tongue.*" However, he asserted that the donors from English-native countries such as Britain, Canada, the USA, and Australia have given priority to English, although implicitly, and that may have formed structural pressure among the general public about the importance of English, inciting them to educate their children in EMI schools. He contends that there is, to some extent, an ideological impact of English, supported by such organizations in both macro and micro policy interventions and subsequent practices in the education sector.

Notably, during my field visit, I met one high-level personnel employed by one of the donor agencies working in Nepal. During our conversation, he said, "*To be very frank, the organizations like the ones I work for are making all other government and non-government organizations 'Khetala' (meaning; wage workers who have no power to influence policy of these organizations), even it makes the government a Khetala.*" This comment was satirical but with a strong reference to the role of INGOs working in Nepal, so his word "khetala" made sense to me. The term "*khetala*" here contextually refers to the people or organizations that take for granted what is already designed or directed. The core concern he made here was that Nepal's development sector is largely donor-driven, and therefore the policies and

practices are influenced by donor agencies' agendas and are followed accordingly by the government agencies and NGOs. The participants in the study, along with the education officer at the local government quoted above, also communicated similar beliefs that the increasing involvement of international donor agencies has directly and indirectly influenced education policymaking, and their engagement has contributed to the capitalization of the English language in education.

The Contexts and Role of Languages

Context, which is made up of the specificities of the physical, cultural, temporal, and spatial references (e.g., Block, 2012; Choi, 2018), plays a significant role in shaping the policies and practices in education, including the language of instruction chosen by the educational institutions. The current contexts of globalization, the globalized economy, urbanization and migration, interconnectedness and dependency among nations, and expanding super-diverse contexts of education (Blommaert, 2010a; Sierens & Van Avermaet, 2014; Tollefson & Tsui, 2014; Vertovec, 2007) have impacted the education policies and school practices. The same concerns are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

Globalization, Marketization, and the MOI

Within the globalization processes, proficiency in English has been understood as a tool for economic well-being as it may potentially impact individuals' international access and employment opportunities. Some countries (such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, etc.) assume that proficiency in English is important for their citizens to be integrated into the global economy (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). For instance, Gill and Shaari (2019) describe the case of Malaysia where meeting the communicative demands of the globalized economy and the scientific and technological advancement in a competitive world requires the mastery of English, and as such is the common aspiration of people in many other countries. In

multilingual societies, the teaching and learning in minority local languages (such as mother tongues), the national language, and international language is being debated in light of the economic benefits as new forms of dominant-subordinated linguistic encounters (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). The rationale behind learning English as a dominant language is also associated with global employability since multinational companies and organizations often have English language proficiency as a requirement. In this context, choosing to learn English or through English as the MOI relates to children's aspirations for participating in the global marketplace. For instance, in the student group discussions, the claim that not being able to compete with other students who have good English language proficiency made them feel inferior. One of the students studying in a NMI school (Janak school) compares himself with students from EMI private schools: *"I think I cannot compete with them because of my English proficiency, and that makes me feel hesitant to take part in the competitions."* He thinks that having proficiency in English would make him feel smarter and intelligent and will enable him to compete with the ones with a higher level of English language proficiency. However, other students in a different EMI implementing public school (i.e., Laxmi) claimed that they are equally competent (and even better) than the students from the private EMI schools. This also supports my earlier claim that EMI has been reproducing a new form of inequity in education.

Similarly, the headteacher of Bhairav school reiterates his stance towards teaching in English and questions the market value of the local language (i.e., Bhojpuri): *"I know our language is Bhojpuri. I feel proud of being able to speak it. But after studying or learning our Bhojpuri language, which market are we saleable in? Where?"* Here, he strongly accepts the existential values of local languages but cannot accept using them as MOIs in schools. Thus, he has lost confidence in his language's instrumental role in the current and future spaces. He also claimed that access to the English language potentially maintains socio-economic justice

rather than injustice for the students coming from lower social-economic status. His argument echoes Van Parijs (2000), who claimed that access to the global lingua franca would help the marginalized who have been left out of the mainstream educational processes. All the headteachers understood that the access of students from poor families to learn in English is a form of social justice. They thought that such children's families would not be able to afford to educate their children in English if the public schools did not teach in EMI. While I inquired about the possibility of developing English language proficiency through teaching it as a subject, one of the headteachers responded that such provision will not be as effective as using it as MOI. He claims, *"If a language is used as MOI, it will be well-practiced with increased exposure which will contribute to the enhancement of the proficiency in listening and speaking with a high-level of confidence"*. The same was also reflected in the arguments of the students. For instance, during a group interview, one student studying in EMI mode at Bhairav school stated, *"If we can talk with our friends in English, then that will improve our habit of speaking in English with an improved level of fluency. We get this opportunity more in EMI contexts."* For them, extensive exposure to English develops their fluency and confidence in using English, which they think is unlikely if English is studied only as a subject.

In line with the understanding of teachers and students, the policymakers, and politicians (the members of the education committee) were also aware of the market value of English. The policymaker at the metropolitan office where Bhairav school is situated claimed that teaching in a local language reduces the quality of education in schools which may, in the long run, negatively affect students' eligibility and capability to engage in the global marketplace. He referred to the parents' endorsement of the municipal decisions on shifting the MOI in public schools to EMI from grade one. He further added:

In this age of globalization, many parents have also understood that quality education might be reduced if they only favour local languages, or maybe any other reasons such that the children have understood the Bhojpuri language, we have been able to run our daily activities, but as children may need to study Medicine or Engineering, or go abroad, we have not seen the parents demanding the Bhojpuri language in education. (Policymaker-Bhairav)

As one of the public relations officers dealing directly with the public, he claimed that globalization has shaped parents' orientation to educate their children in English medium. Another policymaker from the same metropolitan city similarly commented:

Everyone here expects their children to study in the English in the first place (in private boarding schools); if they cannot, then in the public schools. Some schools even in the villages, have started English medium from grade 1 collecting some low fees from the parents. (Policymaker_Bhairav)

Here, she refers to the expansion of EMI in low fee-paying private schools which are serving the interests of the parents wishing to educate their children in English. She thinks that this trend has jeopardized any attempt to empower local languages through the schooling system, as she adds, *"In this situation, how can you expect local languages in education? It is only English and Nepali."* Thus, she thinks that the locally elected government has not been able to resist such trends of EMI.

Another member of the board of the metropolitan office (the board member who was also one of the parents) claimed, *"Even if the education programmes in Bhojpuri are run, or even if it is imposed by the metropolitan office, the parents of the Madhesi community will not agree to educate their children in Bhojpuri."* Bhojpuri is the local language spoken by the majority in

the Bhojpura²¹ areas. The parents also expressed their despair about the declining standard of English language abilities in their children. They assumed that EMI would develop their children's standards in English. At the same time, their demotivation towards learning a local language or learning in the local language stems from their belief that an excessive focus on the home or community language would jeopardize their children's English standard. Another parent who has been serving in the security force (Nepal Police) added to the importance of English: *"If we don't make our children learn English in the schools, then their education in their life is useless."* He attributes this need to the growing context of globalization and advancement in information technology. The same understanding was reported by an education officer: *"English is the medium of international communication and the medium of technology which makes it essential for the current and upcoming generations."* However, none of them thought about English as a threat to their native languages. They did not see English and their local/community languages as competitors. In this regard, the education officer provided a reference to the increasing value of English in countries with larger economies such as Japan, South Korea, China, etc. For him, the strong political will at the governmental level, through strong policies to combat neoliberal flows, can sustain the implementation of mother tongues as MOI in schools; otherwise learning in English cannot be altered.

All these orientations of the stakeholders of education (e.g., education officials and policymakers, parents, teachers, and students) have contributed to establishing EMI as part of the public school's reform policy agenda. This trend is highly influenced by the ideologies of globalization and neoliberal marketization that values the English language. These

²¹ Bhojpura area is the geographical coverage where Bhojpuri, the third largest language, is spoken as mother tongue in Southern part of Nepal.

stakeholders are engaged in EMI policy generation at the micro-level, which has created pressures on schools to move to English-only monolingual practices.

Urbanization, Migration, and the Choice of Language of Instruction

The world is witnessing an unprecedented growth in the mobility of people at all levels, including the movement within their communities and across national boundaries and borders. This kind of transnational mobility has had a considerable impact on language the attitudes of minority communities including a feeling of insecurity and stigmatization of their own local/ethnic languages (Choi, 2017). In this context, English has played a positive role in increasing employability and international mobility through migration, tourism, and studying abroad (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007). Similarly, Condon (2019) noticed that the worldwide rural-to-urban migration, declining global fertility rate, and the disappearance of the middle class have overlapped and formed intricacies in terms of linguistic and socio-cultural identities. These intricacies have impacted policymaking in language education in multilingual countries such as Nepal. One of the important concerns in language education policymaking in such a context of rapid migration and mobility is how schools can design and implement curricular policies, including MOI, to prepare children to deal with the changing demands instigated by demographic changes in the communities.

Meanwhile, critical discourses in applied linguistics have problematized the traditional hegemony of dominant languages as MOIs. The spread of English is unchecked and expanding in multilingual contexts as a vehicle for global human mobility, and it has raised concerns over language-related problems such as reclaiming the local language shifts and losses (Canagarajah, 2006; García, 1995). Arguments have also been put forward concerning the widespread existence of bilingual practices that have largely privileged English and Nepali at the cost of indigenous/minority languages due to the inaction of local level actors (including the policymakers in local governments and relevant communities themselves)

despite macro-level ideal multilingual policies (Poudel & Choi, 2021). Such privileging has raised debates on the benefits of using English, Nepali and/or other mother tongues. This has further complicated the issue of teaching “whose language” to “what extent” and for “what purpose” if the ideal policy of teaching in the mother tongue is to be implemented, especially in plural societies. A plural society is made up of ethnic contrasts, where people from different ethnic, linguistic, and socio-cultural backgrounds meet for common purposes such as trade (Sanders, 2002). Complexities emerge in such societies along national and/or ethnic lines (Blommaert et al., 2017).

Most of the participants in this study conceptualized migration as one of the contextual factors that has contributed to the expansion of English and Nepali as the MOIs even in schools attended largely by linguistically homogenous population. Although the macro policies have been formed to enable the implementing agencies to provide education in local/indigenous, national, and international languages (see Chapter IV), the impact of such policies is still dismal, and the MOI continues to be either English or Nepali. Based on the data and contextual observations of the case contexts, I conclude that MOI decisions and practices are highly contextualized. For instance, in Province 2, the demographic changes due to the migration of people from various neighboring districts of the Hilly region (*Pahad*) to the newly urbanized places in *Terai*²² along the East-West Highway have generated high social and demographic mobility, cultural and linguistic contacts. These processes have ultimately impacted the educational spaces by bringing in students from plural socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Similarly, the field data reveals an awareness of the policymakers, teachers, students, and their parents about the challenges posed by migration and urbanization in shaping their micro-level language policies in educational contexts. They

²² The Terai region of Nepal is one of the ecological belts in the Southern part on the plain, largely inhabited by various ethnic/indigenous groups and other communities speaking various languages such as Maithili, Tharu, Bhojpuri, Bajjika, Marwari, Hindi, and Nepali.

all agree that incorporating learners' mother tongues as the MOI as provisioned in the national education policies would be challenging and perhaps unlikely if demographic and social changes continue creating new avenues of super-diversity, which will force communities to adopt the most dominant language as the MOI. One of the teachers expresses his experience while working in different schools of the same district within the past 10 years:

I am not from a Bhojpuri language background, but I am here teaching within the Bhojpuri language community context. When I started teaching in a school near the East-West highway, I used to use Nepali with everyone, but when I was transferred to this school, I have learned and used Bhojpuri in the community and only Nepali and English in the school. Parents are preferring to use Nepali and English than other local and transnational languages (e.g., Bhojpuri and Hindi respectively²³) because in the community now the migrant population is increasing gradually due to the inflow of the business communities (such as Newars, Brahmins, Marwaris, etc.), educationists and civil servants. [Teacher_Bhairav].

Here, he thinks that the choice of English and Nepali as the only MOI in the previous and current school is driven by the evolving urbanized and linguistically and culturally mixed social spaces. For him, the context itself is demanding these two languages to be used as MOIs, and the reclamation of local languages such as Bhojpuri, Maithili, and Tharu in this heterogeneous educational context is unlikely despite the long socio-historical existence of these languages in the region. One of the members of the executive body of the Metropolitan city who is also a local Bhojpuri native-speaking parent recalled a statement he made in a meeting of experts, scholars, and local stakeholders of education: *"Your children are*

²³ Bhojpuri is one of the major languages in the neighbouring Indian territory, and Hindi is the national official language of India.

studying or have studied abroad; some of the others have studied in English medium in boarding schools, so why should children of Madhesi general public study in Bhojpuri?" His question seems representative of the majority of parents who see inferior values attached to their local/ethnic languages. He reported that those people who are advocating the local language (i.e., Bhojpuri) as MOI in the public schools have sent their children to the EMI private schools. Hence, he does not trust their arguments for mother-tongue MOI, thinking that this is just political rhetoric. He is neither interested nor hopeful in the successful implementation of the mother tongue MOI in the schools. He felt that urging public schools to teach in local languages is discriminatory on social and cultural grounds since there is already a gap created by the existing practices of educating their children in EMI by the well-off families. He believed the adoption of EMI and/or NMI as the best choice to address the educational needs of linguistically and culturally mixed communities.

In the same way, another member of the same municipal level education committee who is, a Tharu (*Chaudhary*) by ethnicity, but speaks Bhojpuri as the native language added:

Of course, I feel proud of having my native language, but I am not hopeful that this works for me outside of this community. Today, there is huge mobility of people around the country and the world, so that to fit into all probable situations, either Nepali or English is to be learned from schools. (Policymaker_Bhairav)

Her understanding of the MOI policies and the practices in public schools is grounded on the notion that a language should be functional in a specific geopolitical context. Her arguments also challenge the straightforward assumptions that the implementation of mother tongue MOI will do justice to the students and the community. She understands the complexities, hybridity, and linguistic impurity (Blommaert et al., 2017) in the current social and community space. She further adds: *"I do not know where my children will go after their schooling. I think they will move to the capital or to other countries where they must use*

Nepali and/or English.” She is more optimistic about her children’s cross border mobility, so expects extensive exposure to the linguistic resources (e.g., English) believing that “people with fewer resources will not have the same possibilities and will thus be left with even less room to maneuver” (Van Mensel, 2016, p. 12). She further claims, “*English language as the MOI is essential, ... despite the huge government investment, the public schools not being able to teach in English is a matter of injustice.*” Here, she counters the existing discourse about EMI creating injustice to students from other native language backgrounds, referring to the current diverse, mobile, and fluid linguistic contexts. Her comment also strongly supports the notion that parental beliefs and attitudes are powerful factors for children’s language use inside and outside of their home. The student participants’ demotivation for learning in their own languages also relates to the concerns raised by parents that for them not learning in English would create an injustice, which understates new educational specificities and micro-sociolinguistic contexts on what contributes to language policy generation and enactment. This drive contradicts LPP discourses that increasingly emphasize education in the mother tongue from a linguistic human rights perspective (e.g., Skutnab- Kangas, 2000). Students claimed that home practices of their native language would suffice for them to have the required fluency and did not see any use in learning in the same language in the schools. One of the students who migrated from the Hilly region said,

My family came here 6 years ago, and I have seen that many new families speaking different languages have moved into this city for several purposes. They might have their own languages, but they do not want to use them here because other people do not understand them. Even my parents want me to speak in Nepali and study English and Nepali, not other languages. (Student_Bhairav)

This student migrated from the hills where Nepali, as well as other indigenous languages, are spoken (e.g., Tamang in his previous community). His parents’ expectations for him to speak

Nepali and learn English are driven by their belief that proficiency in these languages will support him to actively participate in the wider society. Other parents thought that there is no harm in learning a different language as learning a new language would allow their children to learn something new (either about the language or the related culture). Some still believed that knowledge of an additional local language or language of the migrants would contribute towards establishing a stronger social harmony.

Another parent relates language use in school to social harmony: *“We are Tharu speakers. If the other children learn Tharu from our children and if our children learn Newar or Tamang here in the community, then this is always good because it makes the relationships between them stronger.”* Despite the existence of such orientation to linguistic and social harmony, the discourse of quality education by learning in English or Nepali influenced parental motivation for EMI in Laxmi school. These students and their parents who are from various districts of province 5 (nearly 450 km away from the capital, Kathmandu) thought that education quality in the schools in their previous home was not good even in Nepali medium. For them, a heterogeneous social space is better than a largely homogeneous space and thus they are not worried about potential detachment from their language and culture. For instance, a student from the Tharu background said:

Schools there [in their old village] are not good. Even the teachers speak Tharu in the school there, so our Nepali language did not become good. There was very little English. But here, many teachers teach in English. This school has good quality.

This student and her parent (mother) value the materialistic and cultural benefits from being in the current social and educational space. She said:

Our children are learning a lot of good habits. They are learning about Newar culture, Tamang, and Brahmins here. But in our home village, mainly people speak

Tharu and the majority of the people are Tharus. So, children do not learn new things there.

Her comments reveal her focus on her children's learning potential in the currently evolving multicultural contexts created by expanding migration and urbanization. This is one of the reasons for her decision to move to a (semi)urban space. This orientation can be associated with the current time-space compressions caused by globalization, where people are characterized by interconnectivity (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007), multiculturalism, and urbanization where values are flexible and interpenetrating.

Technology, Development Discourse, and Choice of MOI

The widespread belief about English as the language of technology persisted across the participants in all three cases. This association of English with science and technology has formed an invisible societal structure. In other words, there exists a persistent belief that English is the language of technology and development. It has gained an instrumental value in both domains. One of the students in a group interview claimed:

Many scientific developments can be seen in the English language. For example, scientific formulas and many other new inventions in the sciences are in English. So, if we become engineers, scientists, doctors, etc. in the future, then we will be benefitted as we will learn which words mean what if we learn in English medium now. In Nepali, such words cannot be learned in that way. (Student_Bhairav)

This statement of a student studying in the English medium was overwhelmingly supported by all other students in the group. They were not only against the use of their home languages as MOIs but also against the use of Nepali. They thought that the Nepali language is not rich enough and cannot be used in the field of technology. English for them is not only the language of innovation, but also a part of their daily life, e.g., to handle the devices (such as

computers, printing machines, and other electronic products) connected with technology. One of the students stated:

Currently, no one in our family has studied English and knows English. For example, if there is a message from the telecom company, e.g., NTC, NCELL, then parents have to ask their children to read it for them and translate. So, if we know English, then that is good for them and us too. (Student_Bhairav)

Here, she refers to the use of English in her daily chores to assist her parents at home to handle media devices. Although her statement describes the general use of English, it also refers to the larger framework of language use in the technology sector that has indirectly valued English in the social spaces in Nepal. The same was echoed by one of the parents whose children study in an EMI school. She thought that their EMI-based school education would support them to proceed to technical education in the future.

Lack of Community Support for Local Languages: Choice of English vis-a-vis the Local Language(s)

All the Nepali and non-Nepali mother-tongue-speaking parents in this study wanted to educate their children in EMI schools, despite their emotional attachment towards their native languages. Their motivation is supported by both macro and micro level government policies in their educational systems that allows the schools to shift to EMI from NMI or mother tongue MOI. One vivid example came from case 2 municipality that houses more than 90% of the people speaking a local language as their mother tongue where no initiative to teach the local language or teach in the local language in any of the schools has occurred. The policymaker at the metropolitan office claims: *“Our Metropolitan city office has not made any policy decision in teaching the local language as a subject or using it as MOI yet.”*

Rather, the office has officially promoted English as the MOI in public schools through the

circulation of a directive to do so. However, he contends that there were attempts made to prepare a local curriculum, including the development of materials, and so on, but its implementation was left to future demands from the parents. He said, “*Unless the parents demand it, I think the office cannot implement mother tongue MOI.*” At the same time, he was not optimistic of this demand-based education in the mother tongue would occur as there is an increasing disengagement of parents from the local ethnic/indigenous language communities in promoting local languages in education. Due to the lack of support from the relevant communities and local governments, mother-tongue-based multilingual education and/or use of mother tongues as MOIs has been abandoned. A similar condition was reported in Hong Kong by Tollefson and Tsui (2014) where working-class and middle-class parents fought vehemently for EMI despite their awareness that children best learn if they are taught in the Chinese mother tongue. Hornberger and Vaish (2009) report the case of South Africa where despite the constitutional provisions of embracing multilingualism as a resource and raising nine major languages to official status, the parents still wanted to place their children in EMI schools. For most parents, educating their children in their native language was unnecessary, and if done, would mean an inferior quality that might not enable the children to compete in the global marketplace. They related the knowledge of English to a tool that accesses the global knowledge economy and were willing to pay high fees for education in this language. However, in Malaysia, Chinese parents fought to maintain their mother tongue thinking that it would guarantee quality education (Gill, 2004; Gill & Shaari, 2019).

Despite these contrasting examples, there has been a global push towards EMI from the bottom-up. Given this situation, however, the local governments’ active push towards shifting to EMI has been contentious and has attracted the attention of critical scholarship, particularly in multilingual contexts. The decision to shift to EMI in such contexts (e.g., Bangladesh) has been justified based on aspects such as the enhancement of English language

abilities, development of human capital that can access the global economy, improvement in the quality of education, and internalization of education (Hamid et al., 2013). As community support for the successful implementation of local/indigenous languages as MOI is reported, the data of the present study reveals there is little motivation by the concerned communities to use their native languages as the MOI in schools, thus generating doubts about the materialization of macro-level well-intended bi/multilingual MOI policies. Developing a culturally responsive curriculum that harnesses local languages as MOIs requires communities to be deeply involved in school programmes and activities (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008); this was lacking in the case contexts of the present study. Although critical arguments (Giri, 2009; Phyak, 2013; Poudel, 2019) have been put forward concerning the ideological spaces shaped by the historical legacy of promoting Nepali as the national language, in the current political context of the country, the agency of the community stakeholders and their engagement in turning the well-justified policies into practice have not been strong enough to materialize ideal multilingual LPP goals. In this regard, the belief of one of the parents from the Bhojpuri native-speaking community is worth noting:

I know my native language, and when I need it while shopping in the local market, I use it; otherwise, I rarely use my mother tongue (i.e., Bhojpuri) at home with my child. My husband, who is an engineer also does not prefer to use it. (Parent_Bhairav)

As family language planning is the root of micro-level language planning, her practices at home have important implications for her motivation to educate her children in EMI or NMI schools. Similarly, the majority of the participants in this study reported very flexible native language use practices at home, which have weakened local language use and expanded the use of Nepali and English (for the participants in case schools of province 3) and Nepali, Hindi and English (for the participants of case schools in province 2).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the factors largely responsible for shaping the institutional, societal, and individual-level MOI policy formation and enactment in the selected case contexts of Nepal. Hence, it answered the second research question. As the MOI cannot be decontextualized from its social, geographical, and historical context (Hamid et al., 2013), the discussion has made frequent reference to Nepal's situated geopolitical and socio-cultural context while dealing with the broader issues influencing the choice of any language (English, Nepali or mother tongues) as MOI. While profiling the broader issues, globalization and the associated discourses come into play as major forces shaping the macro as well as micro policies in education. I explored these issues along with localized understandings concerning the factors driving the choice of language of instruction and organized them into four broader categories, i.e., life chances, identity, actors embodying societal and global forces, and the context specificities. I also realize that all these factors are implicitly complementary to each other, despite their tensions in some cases, creating a collective synergy for choice of MOI. For instance, concerns about identity also emerge when responding to the possibilities of life chances, and individuals' taking up roles in dealing with societal and global forces. Specifically, the parents and students' language choices involved their ethnolinguistic identity on the one hand, and on the other, their heightened attention to preparing to tackle the forces of neoliberal marketization, and therefore the internal tensions leading to a dilemma between the global and local ethnolinguistic identity.

In this chapter, I began a discussion on the issue of life chances as one of the factors responsible for the formulation and practice of MOI policies in schools. Employment and educational prospects are also factors concerning the choice of MOI. Similarly, I considered the overall understanding of identity concerning issues around the choice of MOI, which included group, personal and institutional identity, which is also linked to the choice of MOI.

For instance, the choice of NMI is associated with national identity while minority-language mother tongue MOI is towards protecting and promoting ethnic/indigenous identity. Further, EMI remains a symbol of social class prestige, social hierarchy, teachers' professional identity, and job security. This was followed by a discussion of how the actors (both national and international) embodying diverse discourses and forces emerging within and beyond their social environment contribute to English as the most preferred MOI thus impacting the educational institutions' language policy decisions. Finally, I discussed the changing contexts where global and local values converge due to expanding migration, cross-border mobility, technological advancement, and the evolution of new forms of diversity have impacted the decision-making in language-in-education policies.

As the main concern of this research, particularly this chapter, was to explore the “factors shaping the choice of either English, Nepali or local languages as MOI” (related to RQ 2), this section reported major forces contributing to the shift of MOI from NMI to EMI including: neoliberal marketization, public schools' survival crisis, parents' pressure, increasing privatization, expansion in technology, the involvement of external (non-local) agencies, and the lack of community readiness in adopting local/ethnic languages as MOI. Therefore, I conclude this chapter with an understanding that factors emerging from global, national, and local levels have collectively contributed to the shift of the MOI from NMI to EMI in public schools, and this shift has undermined and restricted the potential for using local languages as MOIs or even as subjects to be taught. However, there are tensions, contradictions, and intersecting relationships among these factors that have collectively formed nexuses that push towards the adoption of EMI in school education in Nepal's multilingual contexts.

The next chapter discusses the interplay among the factors, their intersections and associated complexities formed by historical, structural, agentic, and contextual relationships (referring to RQ 3).

Chapter VII: Interplay and Tensions among the Shapers in Medium of Instruction Policy and Practice

Introduction

Building on the previous chapters, especially chapters IV, V, and VI, this chapter presents a comprehensive picture of the ongoing tensions and complexities around language-in-education policies and practices in Nepal's continuing efforts to protect and promote multilingualism. It also reports how various factors and forces (see Chapter V) interplay within the network of broader socio-structural influences, which at a larger scale contributes to the success or failure of the well-intended language policies in the respective educational contexts. It also presents an understanding of the complexity in MOI policy enactment where policy actions interplay among individual motivations, available resources, and affordances set by broader historical and structural constraints. In the previous chapters, I discussed the factors associated with educational, social, cultural, religious, and geopolitical aspects of Nepali society, and the case contexts, and their impacts on MOI-related decision-making. For instance, Chapter VI illustrated factors such as life chances, identity, actors' agency, and the broader constructs of globalization, urbanization, and neoliberalism shaping MOI policy decisions at the macro as well as micro-level of educational policy and the related governance. However, it was also reported that the relationship among these factors is not fragmented; rather they are entangled in multifaceted dynamic relationships within their respective social systems. Unfolding the nexus of such a relationship (also see Hult, 2017) is one of the goals of this study.

Early research in LPP missed capturing the interplay of microscale interactions of the factors shaping language policy decisions in social organizations (Johnson, 2013; McCarty, 2015; Ricento, 2000). The data in this research have uncovered interactions and/or interplay of

factors as well as the role of the actors at various levels of policy ecology (i.e., macro, mezzo, and the micro-levels) in both normative (i.e., macro policies) as well as practised/enacted language policy (i.e., the institutional policies), especially concerning MOI.

An understanding of the interplay and interactions emerges from the works of Scollon and Scollon (2007), Hult (2015, 2017), and De Costa and Canagarajah (2016) in which they claim that there is no single point to be located around which the problems of societal discrimination, institutional structure, and social change are rotated. Societal problems are the outcomes of various inequities caused by certain policies and their practices, including language policies in multilingual contexts. In many plurilingual contexts, some languages are empowered while others are shelved or marginalized. Such is the nature of nexuses evolving over time and space, influencing the languages to be used as forms “located in social actions” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 29), which is also a nexus of practice. Scollon and Scollon (2004) used the term “nexus of practice” for “the points at which historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some way as those trajectories emanate from this moment of social action” (p. viii). Analyzing these points is the primary goal of nexus analysis, in which the mapping of semiotic cycles of people, discourses, places, and mediational means are involved. Scollon and Scollon (2004, p. 9) further emphasized the role of discourse in social actions as, “how things are talked about is one of the major processes by which our worlds are constructed, legitimated, ratified, and contested.” This calls for scholarly attention on understanding how “the micro-level research (the sociolinguistics of language) will need to be integrated with macro-level investigations (the sociolinguistics of society) to provide a more complete explanation of language behaviour [...] than is currently available” (Ricento, 2000, p. 208-209). While the roles of the policy actors have no specific boundaries between the scales of social systems, it is important to understand the intersections of roles and

relationships among factors influencing policy processes and actors involved in those processes through nexus analysis. As discussed in the previous chapters, there is a dynamic relationship between the macro-micro divide, as in some cases, policies inform practices, while in others, practice informs macro policies (see Chapter V). Hence, this study goes deeper into the macro-micro interplay that is crucial for understanding how language policy is influenced by a multitude of factors that interact in an entangled space.

The Interplay of the Shapers of MOI

This section presents the interplay of various factors that have contributed to the shaping of MOI and the related decision-making at the institutional and governmental levels of the case contexts. The categories reported here are presented in binary terms for ease of discussion and because those matched together are often discussed together in the media and elsewhere.

The Interplay between Pedagogical Rationales and Ethnolinguistic Ideologies

Language policy discourses reveal that protection of ethnic/indigenous languages and improving students' quality of learning are the two major issues. For instance, Tollefson and Tsui (2004) claim that in most liberal democratic states, the discussions on MOI usually focus on ensuring that "students gain language skills necessary for successful subject content instruction, equal educational opportunities, and future employment" (p. 285). In the case of Nepal, as discussed in Chapters V and VI, the legitimization of EMI in schooling is associated largely with the discourse of opportunity and equality, and this discourse has shaped parental preference to educate their children in English. However, the increasing preference for English in public schooling conflicts with ethnolinguistic demands on integrating ethnic/indigenous languages in education systems which highlights equity concerns. Tollefson and Tsui (2004) state:

The decision about MOI is often justified with pedagogical rationales, the MOI policies are not formed in isolation, but rather emerge in the context of powerful

social and political forces, including globalization, migration, and demographic changes, political conflicts, changes in governments, shifts in the local economies, and elite competitions (p. 283).

Tensions have also arisen in many contexts between two contradictory ideologies of monolingual nationalism and the demands for language rights by ethnic and indigenous nationalities (Poudel, 2019). The arenas offered by language policies may instigate marginalized ethnolinguistic groups to assert their claim for rights and privileges (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). This debate leads to the wider understanding that MOI policies are products of ideological and discursive constructs (McCarty, 2004) situated within the rationales of the social and economic goals of the communities concerned. One vivid instance is New Zealand's Maori medium of instruction which was linked with the broader socio-political systems of the country's Maori community (Hill & May, 2014).

Bista (1985) claimed that issues of ethnic, religious, linguistic, or regional conflict are pervasive, intertwined, and interrelated with economic, political, and development issues of the country. However, despite wide diversity in Nepal since its early history, there has never been an upheaval or crisis rooted in social bigotry, rivalry, or intolerance (Malla, 1980), which can be attributed to Nepalese culture of inclusiveness. However, in recent years, the emergence of ethnolinguistic extremism, and linguistic nationalism have become a major component of the political discourse. Gurung (2009) believes that the historical dominance of the Nepali language and the Nepali-native speaking rulers have undermined the potential for ethnic/indigenous languages in governance and education. The use of Nepali and English as the most dominant languages of the curriculum is perceived as a state-supported homogenization policy (Giri, 2009; Phyak, 2013). While the recently promulgated Constitution of Nepal (2015) imagined establishing “an egalitarian society founded on proportional inclusive and participatory principles to ensure economic equality, prosperity

and social justice, by eliminating discrimination based on class, caste, region, language, religion and gender and all forms of caste-based untouchability” (p. 1), the promotion of Nepali written in Devanagari script as the only language of official business has been interpreted by the ethnic/indigenous communities as a residue of the earlier assimilatory policy (Sah, 2020).

Despite scholarly criticisms, all the teacher participants in this study revealed their whole-hearted support for the current constitutional provisions about languages. For them, using Nepali and English were the best pedagogical choices for the current purpose, with some minimal shifts to the regional language(s) (e.g., Maithili, Bhojpuri) in the classroom. They expressed their awareness of the potential benefits of teaching in the mother tongue; however, they thought that the current debate on the protection of local/ethnic languages was politically rather than pedagogically motivated. This also reveals the dilemma faced by policy actors who are influenced by the interplay of nationalist as well as ethnolinguistic ideologies. This agency paradox is also frequently discussed by scholars (e.g., Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Nekvapil, 2012) who have tried to distinguish between LPP as a political enterprise and as value-free scholarship.

The Interplay between Diversity as Threat vs Diversity as a Resource

Nepal’s domestic diversity in sociocultural practices, historical legacy of indigeneity, and differences across languages, regions, ethnic orientations, castes, and classes has been occasionally understood as a threat in the political aspect of nationalism. This orientation has impacted all processes of governance, including education. However, the ideology of diversity as a resource has also emerged as a strong force for creating counter-discourses in Nepal’s social and political spaces. For instance, Nepal, as a proactive participant in global agendas as a signatory of many of the treaties and declarations, has posed further pressures on integrating domestic diversity with globally circulating discourses of equity and social

justice. Mitigating the wider global developments in policymaking and addressing local needs is a great challenge for countries like Nepal. However, the historical processes that were functional before Nepal participated in the global ideological spaces of social justice, linguistic human rights, and inclusive democracies equally influenced the way linguistic diversity is understood. In other words, Nepal's diversity is historically informed.

May (2001) claimed that the historical processes have privileged certain language(s) while others have been marginalized and most often stigmatized in the multilingual national and community contexts. These processes developed the perceptions that all “other languages are threats” to the already standardized languages (Shohamy, 2006). The non-existence of explicitly overarching educational language policy in Nepal has been attributed to the interplay between conflicting ideologies towards multilingual diversity as a resource versus diversity as a threat. Although national policies continue to expand the diversity as resource ideology, which ensures the implementation of mother tongues as MOIs (see MOES, 2016; MOEST, 2019), the Nepali-only, English-only, or Nepali-English bilingual MOI practices have created fissures between expected and enacted language policy. The interplay of these ideological strands ranging from the local to the national level has created tensions in the language policymaking in the multilingual context of Nepal. While language policies and practices may promote or restrict the teaching of languages (Wiley & García, 2016), it has been found that enacted language policies at the school level largely restricted languages other than Nepali and English. However, from an interplay perspective, this practice is not only a non-alignment between the macro and micro policies but also an instance of micro-practices feedback to the macro policies that value Nepali and English more than the mother tongue in education and governance.

The National Curriculum Framework–2019 reiterates plurality in Nepalese society as one of the striking challenges for the implementation of the multilingual policies due to the

country's huge number of indigenous epistemologies, cultures, languages, religion, and its complex geography. Due to this diversity, complexity in the implementation of mother tongue MOI has been acknowledged in a NCF- 2019 statement:

“एउटा कक्षामा दुईभन्दा धेरै मातृभाषा बोल्ने बालबालिका भएका विद्यालयहरूमा भाषा नीति कस्तो हुने? न्युनतम शिक्षक संख्याको समेत व्यवस्थापन गर्न नसकिएको बास्तविकतामा बहुभाषिक विविधतालाई सम्बोधन गर्ने गरी शिक्षकको व्यवस्थापन कसरी गर्ने? कस्तो प्रकारको पाठ्यक्रम तथा पाठ्यक्रमसम्बद्ध सामग्री तयार गर्ने?” (पे. १४) (*translated: What will the language policy be like in a classroom that consists of children from more than two language-speaking backgrounds? How can teachers be managed to handle multilingual education in the context of the current insufficient teacher positions in schools? What type of curriculum and curricular materials is best for such contexts?*) (p. 14).

The underlying ideology behind these questions is the perception of language diversity as a challenge, which has posed problems in fine-tuning multilingual policies in schools.

The Interplay between Economic Vs Identity Capital: The Individual 'Desire'

The choice of a functionally dominant language as the MOI is associated with economic rationales as proficiency in that language accelerates the chance for better earnings, which improves the economy. In the current global context whereby, language(s) have been commodified, individuals think that developing proficiency in the commodity will enhance their chances of economic gains. The United States, for example, which since the 19th-century has suppressed indigenous languages, has justified the action as a need to create economic opportunities for indigenous people (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). A similar case was reported in India in which people from the urban middle class as well as the rural poor associate English with urban opportunities and economic prosperity, and therefore English has become a tool for decolonization (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). In this sense, the aspirations for economic progress come into conflict with protecting the indigenous culture

and identity unless the indigenous languages are given economic value. The participants acknowledged this divide between economic gains and maintaining ethnolinguistic identity. The choice of EMI continues to be supported by the economic forces associated with the English language. Therefore, not teaching in English was not an alternative for them as they saw the mother-tongue resource as less important than proficiency in English because better English proficiency was associated with improved life chances (discussed earlier in this chapter).

Recent policy documents (such as NCF, 2019; SSDP 2016-2023) have projected the influence of the widespread neoliberal ideologies that emphasize the global expansion of advanced capitalism (Piller & Cho, 2013). This advancement increasingly advocates economic advantages based on a free-market economy. The development of the country is also largely interpreted in economic terms. Two major strands, i.e., economic well-being and the preservation of ethnic identity have been portrayed as the core goals of development plans, of which the first, which utilizes English as the language of the development missions, has priority. In other words, economic orientations are central to the parents' choice of MOI in schools. The fifteenth plan paper explicitly mentions the utilization of the nation's diversity as well as its situatedness between the two larger economies (i.e., China and India) as the basis of economic development. It states:

देशको भुबनोट, विविधतायुक्त प्रकृति, समाजको उत्पति र बनोट, सभ्यता र बिबिधता युक्त संस्कृति, भाषा, प्राकृतिक श्रोत र साधनको अतिउत्तम परिचालन, उदयमान दुई छिमेकि देशको अर्थतन्त्र, देशभित्रको क्रियाशील जनशक्ति, अन्तराष्ट्रिय छेत्रमा सुरु भएको असल सम्बन्धको विकास र कायम रहेको समस्तिगत आर्थिक स्थायित्वनै आर्थिक सम्वृद्धिको आधारको रुपमा रहेका छन्। (पे. २)

[translated as “*The geographic structure of the country, natural diversity, the origin of the society and its structure, diversified civilization, and culture, language, natural*”

resources, and their maximum mobilization, the rapidly emerging economy of two neighbouring countries, the active human resources of the country, and the cordial relationship with other countries and maintenance of our economic stability are the pillars of our economic prosperity.]

This statement provides a representative example of the Nepalese governments' focus on economic prosperity collectively using diversity as a resource as well as taking advantage of its geopolitical status. Although this statement does not mention the role of English, it implies that English as an international language of diplomacy occupies an important role when engaging with the global community. Such visible and invisible promotion of English has influenced the educational and community spaces where even illiterate people understand English is the language of global communication. Their desire to educate in EMI lies in this aspiration to enable their children's global engagement. The parents and teacher participants in this study stated that not educating in English or Nepali would mean losing their economic capital, while also being aware that not learning the mother tongues would weaken their ethnic identity capital. However, in education, they preferred EMI and NMI rather than mother-tongue MOI. This desire, which is now established as a norm, has expanded EMI to the public schooling system. However, economic desire is not the only shaper, as parents observe many other social issues (for example, equity issues associated with MOI, discussed later) as considerations for their decision-making.

Contradictory Policies: Policy Intersections and Trajectories

As discussed in previous chapters (i.e., Chapter IV, V, VI), MOI is very much associated with the broader social, political, and economic aspects of society. Several policies associated with education intersect in the same school spaces influencing each other, both positively and negatively. For instance, policies related to inclusion, privatization, scholarships, and assessment influence decision-making on the language of instruction. In addition to the wider

national policies, policies specific to the local context also influence decision-making on MOI. For instance, in the case of Janak school, the headteacher claimed that the lack of English language proficiency of the existing teachers, and the lack of funds for hiring new teachers for handling EMI prevented the school from implementing EMI despite pressure from the rural municipality (i.e., the local government). However, for Laxmi school, increasing privatization in education created pressure for the school to shift to EMI.

The main concern in this section was on the sandwiched nature of MOI policy (Poudel, 2019), meaning that MOI policy has been influenced by multiple policies or policy structures (see Poudel & Choi, 2021) working in the same context simultaneously such as those supporting neoliberal ideologies, economic growth, privatization, internationalization of higher education and national provisions or institutional assessment policies that exclusively promote and/or adopt English. Such policies intersect in the educational contexts, and form nexuses of policy trajectories, as illustrated in Figure 1.

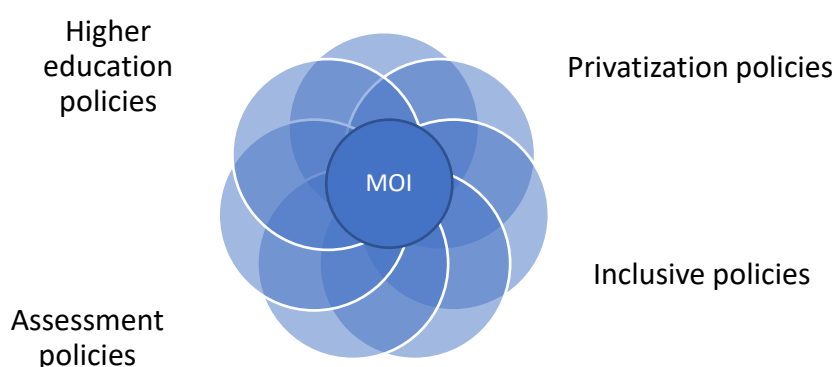


Figure 1: Policy trajectories influencing MOI decision-making.

Figure 1 shows the interactions and entanglements among policies influencing MOI decision-making both at macro and micro levels (consisting of the roles of the local governments and the schools). The Figure labels four major policy areas; assessment, inclusion, privatization and higher education, each of which have sectoral policies that the unlabelled lines indicate.

For example, the inclusive policies include social inclusions based on caste ethnicity, special needs/disability, marginalization, religious minorities working through several constitutional agencies such as the Muslim Commission, Dalit Commission, and Tharu Commission. Hence the circles unidentified are intentionally included in the figure to show the entanglement of multiple policies associated with language policy issues. In other words, the local governments and the schools must respond to a multitude of wider circulating policies while deciding on what language to use in schools and how. Different stakeholders prioritize different points to educate their children in EMI/NMI. In other words, the priorities and the nature of school responses differ across contexts. For instance, for Bhairav school, the assessment results were prioritized, whereas, for Janak school, gender disparity was a key priority for the school's agenda. Laxmi school did not value these two concerns, but rather focused on its own survival while competing with private schools in the community. Laxmi school's case reflects how the broader policy of privatization and neoliberal economic marketization influences micro-level schooling practices.

As societies become complex due to the intersection emerging from rapid policy changes and frequent reforms (Poudel & Choi, 2021), the students and communities are also stuck at the intersection of macro language education policies and micro enactments of the said policies (Hornberger, 2009). While multiple policies and reforms enter school contexts, some policies can conflict with overlapping values and concerns. For instance, the higher education and assessment practices that largely adopt EMI contradict the policies of language preservation and promotion through the teaching and learning in and of mother tongues. Many other educational policies, for example, the scholarship opportunities for higher education, are designed based on meritocracy (competition) within allocated quotas and the examination systems that put English as one of the required proficiencies, and these invisibly orient

students and their parents towards choosing EMI, rather than educating their children in NMI schools that teach English as one of the major subjects.

However, policy trajectories and nexuses are context-specific. For instance, in the case of Janak school, gender-specific policies (e.g., a campaign like *Beti Padhau Beti Bachau* [BPBB] [Educate the girls and save their lives]) came into play with the choice of MOI for the education of the children. The parents and teachers supported the practice of girls being sent to public schools that teach in Nepali and the sons to the private schools that teach in English. This practice is a continuation of the conventional socio-cultural construct of son-preference in patriarchal societies. However, this trend has been diminishing along with recent developments in education and social awareness. Janak school prioritized this concern and supported the provincial government's initiative to prioritize the enrolment of all school-going children into schools, especially the current campaign entitled *Beti Padhau Beti Bachau* which came as a form of educational reform (<https://bit.ly/3xC3rCZ>). Therefore, the shift in MOI from NMI to EMI was not the priority.

Tensions

Building on the notion of the interplay of various shaping factors for MOI, this section of the chapter reports on the tensions in the formation and implementation of the MOI policies in Nepal's secondary schools. Tensions were identified about the use of Nepali, mother tongues or English as the MOI in secondary-level education. The sections that follow report several tensions on a thematic basis, synthesizing the data-based findings presented in the previous chapters (Chapters IV, V, VI). Specifically, "which language to be used when for what purpose for whom" remained the core of such tensions in language-in-education policies.

Tensions between Competing Discourses

Schiffman (1996) claimed that language policies are, after all, "cultural constructs that develop through the same social processes that shape human activity" (p. 22). Due to the

emerging hybridity of the ethnolinguistic ideologies and identities, the fine-tuning of the MOI policy has been problematic and incomplete. In other words, the lack of fine-tuned MOI policy in Nepal's schooling is strongly associated with the tensions related to some competing discourses and cultural constructs that have formed difficult-to-penetrate nexuses. The intersections among discourses travelling through a multi-layered policy process, i.e., through macro, mezzo, and micro levels (see Figure 2), create tensions in MOI policy enactment. The discourses concerning the social actions or the nexus of practice can contradict each other, as language policies are coloured by the ideologies of policymakers (Lo Bianco, 2005). Specifically, there are discursive tensions across global, national, and local policies (based on belief systems related to indigeneity and ethnicity). The tensions can be observed in both policies and practices, as bi/multilingual people engage in meaning-making processes using their ideological standpoints and identity constructions. For instance, the ideological tension between globalization and ethnolinguistic identity creates tension, as the former favours EMI while the latter, the mother tongue MOI. Such tensions can be observed as forms of interaction order (Scollon & Schollon, 2004; Hult, 2010) which is "useful for investigating LPP for how language policies relate to sociolinguistic circumstances on the ground" (Hult, 2010, p.11). The study of the interaction order may reveal "how people interact with and about policies" (Hult, 2010, p. 11) while making language choices in social settings (see, Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). While engaging in the interaction order, the individual social actor's habits and practices influence the social action they are involved in. Scollon and Scollon (2004) refer to this as a historical body that individuals bring with them. This historical body is important in analyzing relevant actions of individuals involved in social action, for example appropriating and implementing MOI in schools.

This study revealed that three major forms of discursive tensions have shaped MOI-related decision-making and enactment:

- Global-local tensions
- Nationalism vs ethnolinguistic identity
- Equity and equality

Global-Local Tensions. Globalization is the process of “widening, deepening, and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness” (Held, et al, 1999, p. 2), and this process has impacted various spheres of social and political life globally. The processes of globalization “are not new in substance, they are new in intensity, scope, and scale” (Blommaert, 2010b, p. 1). In other words, globalization has multiple manifestations (Appudurai, 1996) and its relationship with local dynamics can be largely contextualized. Foreign language education or teaching in English can be taken as one of the instances of the deep effect of globalization (e.g., Lo Bianco, 2014) on the choice of medium of instruction in schools and universities, usually in non-native English-speaking countries. Thus, the entry of globalization in education and the social spheres has prompted scholars to explore the relationship and/or tensions between the local and the global. Understanding the influence of global forces on local ones regarding the adoption of MOI is one of the key concerns of sociolinguists (e.g., Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Block & Cameron, 2002; Hornberger, 2009; Hult, 2010). Consequently, there has been increasing scholarly focus on the impact of globalization on local pedagogies (such as curriculum planning and pedagogical practices). This has led to the need for dialogue between teachers of English regarding traditional foreign languages, heritage/community languages, and other categories of languages to foster a comprehensive understanding of the enterprise of language education (Lo Bianco, 2014). While policy actors such as teachers have multiple ideological orientations towards languages, globalization and localization (i.e., local ethnolinguistic identity) remain in tension.

In this study, as discussed in Chapter V, the students reflected their bi-directional focuses in learning, i.e., the learning of global values through a global language (English) and maintaining the knowledge of national and local values through learning the local/regional/national languages. Although the motivation to learn in English was dominant, they continued to carry their emotional sentiments towards their ethnic/indigenous languages, which shows an implicit tension regarding decision-making in language learning in schools. In other words, there was a tension caused by global-local nexus formed in their learning spaces. Teachers' translanguaging practices may have served to minimize this tension, however. In non-Nepali native language speaking contexts, they indicated a bi-directional focus for learning English and Nepali, whereas, in the Nepali-native speaking contexts, their focus was more towards English medium. Most of the students claimed that proficiency in the global language would benefit them compared to proficiency in the local language. Some parents argued that global forces have been shaping the local orientation towards English, while others believed that the locals can infuse global values into the teaching and learning process, not necessarily by teaching in English. How this global-local has been negotiated in the curricula clearly needs further scholarly attention. The perceptions and beliefs of participants (data discussed in Chapter V and discussed later in this chapter) illustrate that both global and local scales interpenetrate each other in subtle and unpredictable ways (see Blommaert, 2010b; Canagarajah, 2006, 2012). In other words, the non-deterministic role and relationship between the global and local nexus have created tensions regarding whether to adopt EMI or local language MOI in the pedagogical processes. There were also concerns at the local level regarding the spatial distribution of languages. For instance, in province 2 of Nepal, two of the competing languages are Maithili and Bhojpuri at the local level generating local-level tensions regarding their use in education. In this social space, Hindi surfaced as an equal link language, basically affected by the geopolitical, cultural, trade, and linguistic links

among people of Terai and that of the neighbouring districts of India. However, no such concerns were raised in the school in Bagmati province which was attended by most of the migrant students speaking Tharu as their native language.

Tensions between nationalism and ethnolinguistic identity. Fishman (1972) claimed in his early reflection on language and nationalism that languages serve three critical functions in “nationing:” a) producing efficient administration; b) invoking cultural authenticity; and c) promoting unification politics. The great emphasis on Nepali and English can be interpreted as the nation’s goal of increasingly homogenizing the population and the administrative systems. This deliberate attempt, especially through macro policies and institutional practice has been unfavourable to the historical specificity of the linguistic diversity of the country. In this sense, there is a challenge in managing the tensions regarding the choice of language of instruction that exists between nationalist and ethnolinguistic identity agendas. The historical practice of teaching Nepali as the official state language to children of non-Nepali language background can be taken as one of the instances of linguistic nationalism, which has long been objected to by the people from ethnolinguistic backgrounds (Giri, 2014; Gurung, 2009). The linguistic consolidation of Nepali enhanced the political and social images of this language over the other languages of the nation, and consequently, their teaching and learning in schools was undermined. Therefore, the ongoing tensions around Nepali and other indigenous/ethnic languages is a kind of “historical body” to use Hult’s (2010) term. The promotion of Khas-Arya’s traditional *Gorkha Bhasa* (later renamed as the Nepali language) through status planning as a national language has been highly debated and criticized as a form of historically practiced linguistic hegemony (Gurung, 2009; Phyak, 2013). Amidst such debates and criticisms, the state continued to project the Nepali language as the main official national language. As a result, the language planning process remained full of ambiguities, tensions, contradictions, and outright failure, giving rise to new forms of the discourse of

inequality, hegemony, and discrimination. Critical scholarship can be found about the rights of the minority (or minoritized) languages. However, such scholarly arguments did not match the attitudes and views of the participants (i.e., the teachers, students, parents, and the policymakers) in this study.

The discourse of ethnolinguistic rights often comes into conflict with the rapidly changing social dynamics (such as the creation of highly mixed societies due to the rapid trend of migration, changing identities, and socio-political systems). Multiple forms of human movement enabled by globalization and flexible cross-border relationships have forced communities to struggle with the co-existence of multiple languages, especially ethnic/indigenous languages. The field data in this study reflects this complexity. Issues such as language rights, identity, and the notion of citizenry emerged frequently during formal and informal talks (e.g., during a friendly talk at a local tea shop). One of the parents in this study said, *“We need Nepali as we are the citizen of Nepal, and learning in Nepali would be the best way on condition that English is taught well as a subject to develop our children’s required level of proficiency in this language”* (Parent_Bhairav). His opinion is related to the concerns of language and citizenship, and the choice of MOI and English language proficiency. His concern was about dual needs, i.e., obtaining Nepali national identity and the need to develop English language proficiency. In article 5(4) of the Citizenship Act (2006) it states: “any foreign national intending to obtain Nepali citizenship shall have to be able to read and write Nepali or any other language in practice in Nepal” (GoN, 2006). Although this provision does not restrict any foreign national who can speak any of the languages in practice from obtaining citizenship, in practice it is likely that Nepali language proficiency is preferred over other languages due to its official status. The parent quoted above does not think that teaching in the mother tongue would be the best choice at the current time but also does not reject the notion of promoting and protecting local languages. He claimed that ethnic

languages should be protected to preserve cultural and ethnic identity at the community level through various other initiatives rather than teaching them in schools. Most of the parents also offered similar views:

Schools do not need to use or teach in mother tongues, as these languages are learned at home and in the community through their everyday activities; rather, schools should teach the various other languages useful for the children for their future employment and education. (Parents_Laxmi)

This excerpt shows the contradiction between parents' ideologies and the current critical scholarship in the area of LPP. While scholars focus on the need to promote mother tongue education and argue that it should be promoted in schools to facilitate the learners' cognitive development and simplification of the learning process, parents want to educate their children in English. Similarly, none of the education policymakers opposed the adoption of EMI, as they thought that this medium was a powerful tool for the survival of public schools, and a testing kit to enhance public/parental trust towards the quality of the public-school education. However, the changing socio-cultural and demographic patterns in Nepali society have been affecting the successful implementation of the macro policies resulting in inefficient accommodation of the multiple linguistic identities of the students coming from diverse backgrounds, especially in urban settings. This leaves the implementation of macro-level ethnolinguistic policies uncertain and unattended. Moreover, the blanket policies formed in the macro level of governance have not responded well to the territorial and ethnolinguistic diversities of Nepal. While the "territory and ethnolinguistic identity are rarely perfectly match" (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004, p. 289), the tensions and complexities continue concerning language choice, identity, and territorial integrity. Such tensions counter the LPP efforts. For instance, in this study, the cases were responding to the same macro policies of MOI differently based on their own social, political, demographic, and linguistic characteristics

forming their own institutional level practiced/enacted policies (see Chapter VI). Both parents and the policymakers were largely hesitant about promoting ethnolinguistic identity through the school system, but rather focused on the immediate educational needs in the dominant language(s). Identity is a fluid construct (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004), and therefore, migration trends, inter-ethnic cultural ties (e.g., marriages), and other forces like social mobility can lead individuals to develop multiple and even changing identities in such a way that direct association of language and identity may not be accommodated by them. The perceptions of the participants in this study reflected these trends (see Chapters V and VI). However, these trends were counter-productive at a certain level because they may upset the rights of the individuals who are not members of the officially recognized ethnolinguistic groups as they will not have equal access to their language rights (Tollefson & Tsui, 2004). Responding to this language-rights concern, the Nepal government has recognized or legitimized multilingual citizenry, perhaps with concurrent identities. Pradhan (2018) also indicates that because Nepalese are emerging with simultaneous identities of ethnicity and nationalism, which is also true of ethnic nationality (Shrestha, 2007), a response is needed to the increasing state-based policy discrimination against various ethnic nationalities.

The Tension between Equity and Equality Concerning MOI

Discourses of equity are always at the heart of Nepal's educational reforms and development. Addressing the diversity issues with inclusion and affirmative action are some of the challenging reforms that need to be made. In Nepal, while English and Nepali are understood as languages of paramount importance, the protection of ethnic/indigenous languages is equally important to maintain Nepal's ethnolinguistic heritage and the embedded epistemologies. The choice of MOI also constitutes one of the agendas of the equity debate. There are two major debates regarding the enactment of MOI in schools. First, whether the shift itself from NMI to EMI is justifiable on the grounds that all students coming from

different language backgrounds are benefited equally. Second, if the EMI shift continues in private schooling and is unchecked, then whether not implementing it in public schools would gradually marginalize the students educated in NMI. In the enactment process, diverse practices were observed where some cases completely restricted students' mother tongue use on school premises, while others partially or fully allowed it (Chapter V provides elaboration on this issue). For instance, Bhairav school did not allow Bhojpuri or any other regional/local or ethnic language both on the school premises and or in the classroom. In this school, the use of English was enforced for EMI students, while the use of Nepali was enforced for NMI students, and the use of local languages such as Bhojpuri, Bajjika, Maithili, etc. on the school premises and the classroom was completely restricted. However, in Janak school, despite Nepali being the official MOI with students being encouraged to use it, almost all students and a few teachers reported that flexible use of Maithili was allowed in the classroom. The classroom observation confirmed their claims. The use of Maithili (the language of more than 95 % of the students and teachers) was allowed and used as a mediating language during teaching and learning. When they were asked about the rationale behind such flexible language use, the students and teachers claimed that such translanguaging would benefit those who did not have the confidence to use only Nepali or English. They believed that the use of multilingual resources played a significant role in their pedagogy (Ou et al., 2020). In the case of Laxmi school, although the school officially adopted EMI, English-Nepali translanguaging was observed frequently in the classrooms, especially in subjects such as social studies, science, and mathematics. These practices of language use raise equity concerns regarding educational justice to the students coming from minority (alternatively minoritized) language backgrounds.

The linguistic restrictions (such as that of Bhairav school) are not the only instances of institutional practices per se but are also outcomes of the monolingual historical practices in

Nepali schooling that began in the 1850s and have been highly debated from social justice and equity perspectives (see Chapter IV). The practice of restricting the minority languages in education as MOIs and in the court were historical matters. “Nepali, the official language of administration, has been privileged through systematic political maneuvers throughout its history” (Giri, 2010, p. 87), and this language has also been utilized as one of the means of sociocultural unification of the Nepali state (Bandhu, 1989). Similar trends have continued until the multiparty democratic political turn in the country. Because of the democratic turn in the 1990s, inclusive policies in the state mechanisms were introduced to strengthen the implementation of affirmative action as forms of equity for the people from minority, disadvantaged, marginalized groups as well as backward communities. However, adoption of English further continued generating inequalities between EMI-based and NMI-based schooling. The National Curriculum Framework - 2019 addressed the equity agenda as:

बिद्यालय शिक्षाको सिकाई सहजीकरण प्रक्रियाका लागि आधारभूत तहमा माध्यम भाषा मातृभाषा वा नेपाली भाषा हुने छ । सामाजिक अध्ययन र मानवमुल्य/चारित्रिक शिक्षा लगायत नेपाली कला संस्कृति र मौलिक पहिचानमुलक बिषयबस्तुहरुबाहेक अन्य बिषयका लागि भने अंग्रेजीलाई पनि माध्यम भाषा बनाउन सकिने नीति अबलम्बन गरिने छ । (पे. ३६)

Translated as: “For the facilitation of school’s teaching and learning process, the mother tongue or Nepali could be the language of instruction. However, English could be the medium of instruction in the subjects other than social studies, values education and those pertaining to Nepali art, culture and indigenous identity.” (p. 36)

Although this policy explicitly articulates the use of the mother tongue or Nepali as the only MOI in basic-level education ²⁴, in practice, EMI has been well-established starting from the

²⁴ In Nepal, the recent school restructuring recognized schooling from grade 1-8 as basic level education, and grade 9-12 as secondary level education.

ECD level up to higher education. The English language also enjoys special status and privileges in education despite being labelled a foreign language (Giri, 2010). Also, the provisions stated in the NCF-2019 above may lead to the situation where the core subjects such as Maths, Science and Technology, and other technical contents will be taught largely in English and the rest in Nepali, and if the mother tongues are used, they will be confined to the teaching of non-core subjects or part of the local curriculum. This shows that the current provisions also do not remain free from equity tensions.

Tensions in Agentic Actions Across Scales

The complex system of language policy is built by interactions among actors with various roles across time and space (Hult, 2015; Johnson & Ricento, 2013). The data in this study pointed to the tensions due to overlapping roles of the policy actors at different layers of the policy enactment process. The broader structural constraints pertaining to historical, political, social, and economic rationales enabled and/or constrained the actions of the individuals and agencies while enacting MOI policies in Nepal (Poudel & Choi, 2021). Hult (2010) emphasizes that “all language policies and cultural constructs are situated in a particular discursive TimeSpace” (p. 14). While every social phenomenon is situated within nested scales of space and time (Blommaert, 2007; Hult, 2010; Scollon & Scollon, 2004), the “processes at one scale are constitutive of the processes at the next highest scale, and the processes at that next highest scale condition what can happen at the scale immediately below” (Lemke, 2000, p. 277). Language policy enactments as forms of social processes involve actors from several layers of policy processes interact in top-down and bottom-up directions. The successful enactment of the said policies, and every process, action, social practice, or activity occurs on some timescale (Lemke, 2000; Hult, 2015) so that the top-down and bottom-up processes of interaction create tensions. Such tensions emerge with multiple and overlapping roles played by multiple agents across scales. For instance, the head

teachers of Bhairav and Laxmi school influenced their municipal level policymaking as members of schools, so their roles were overlapping across the scale of micro level and at meso-level interactions. This illustrates that the boundaries between the scales of social organization remain porous in terms of the roles of the policy actors and their jurisdictions. The sections that follow discuss how the policy actors (such as policymakers, parents, headteachers, teachers, and students), i.e., the participants in this study, perceive MOI policies, play critical roles (across scales), sometimes separately and sometimes collectively, in appropriation and interpretation of incoming policies, while also generating their own practice-informed policies.

Perceptions of Policymakers. Policymakers at the macro and meso level (or those at the intermediate levels) of the policy generation and enforcement have presented inconsistent beliefs towards the rationales for the choice of Nepali, English, or mother tongues as MOI in the education systems. For instance, the NCFs (2007, 2019), which were developed out of wider consultation with the relevant policymakers and are also the representative policy document of the Government of Nepal, promised to use mother tongues, Nepali, and English as MOIs in school education up to the secondary level. The frameworks aspire to address the national needs embracing diversity while responding to the international trend of neoliberalism. Hence, due to the dilemma of what to focus on (i.e., the local needs or the global trends), the policymakers could not make specific policy decisions and put them into practice for their respective constituents. However, this dilemma is context-specific, shaped by multiple structural elements and constraints. For instance, the contextual constraints, such as physical space, history, cultural patterns, and the semiotic resources, significantly impacted the MOI decision-making in the schools of the multilingual spaces of Nepal (Poudel & Choi, 2021). While the policymakers have realized that there is a need to respond to both broader global trends as well as the local specificities, they have not been able to

enact the policies due to the EMI pressure coming from the supranational levels (global forces) and the micro-levels (e.g., community-level forces, especially from parents). The MOI remained one of the concerns that required the policymakers to negotiate between local and global forces. Hence, going global versus preserving the local has remained a matter of constant tension in LPP enactment in the educational spaces in multilingual countries like Nepal, and the policymakers' understanding exhibits the nonlinearity as well as interactive nature of policy process and LPP enactment.

Perceptions of Parents. Parents are important agents in the schools' language policy decisions in their respective communities. Their engagement in the community for creating policies and shaping practices significantly influences what the schools or the educational institutions do. The data indicates that parental engagement has pushed schools to shift to EMI. Similar findings have been reported in Pakistan (Rahman, 2019) and Bangladesh (Hamid, et al., 2013). Parental pressure in bringing EMI into the public schools reflects their aspirations for social mobility and expectations for improving their children's life chances at the global level. The institutions, while responding to the individual or community concerns, have streamlined their MOI policies shifting to EMI accordingly, as their primary purpose is to serve their immediate communities, especially addressing the demands and expectations of the parents, the key MOI policy reform agents in the respective communities.

Parental pressure has resulted in increasing the adoption of English and Nepali in the educational system. Such pressures have contributed to the gradual exclusion of mother/ethnic tongues, especially in the urban and suburban areas (Giri, 2010). Parents' motivation emerges from societal-level beliefs regarding languages such as English and Nepali. One of the parents stated, *"When our children speak English and Nepali well, people in the community think that they are educated, can earn more, and are placed at the superior position in the society"* (Parent_Bhairav). Here, she refers to the semiotic resources ascribed

to English in society. Her children have learned Nepali as the third language (as they learned Maithili at home, Hindi partially at home, and Nepali in the schools). She does not remember anyone speaking Nepali with the kids at home, although most of the people who encounter her children have working-level knowledge of Nepali. She continued: “*We did not need Nepali then, but now our children need it for various purposes such as higher education, civil service employment opportunities, and communication with people from other language backgrounds.*” She relates the value of language to timescales comparing the current moment with the past one. Her belief is a representative perception of many other parents in this area, where Nepali and English language proficiency is privileged. One of the parents from Bhairav school, who is also a political activist in the region, expressed anger over the political and scholarly debates in promoting regional languages as well as mother tongues in schools:

Your children are studying or have studied abroad; some of the others have studied in English medium, and then why should the children of Madhesi general public study in Bhojpuri? I know our language is Bhojpuri. I feel proud of being able to speak it. But after studying or learning our Bhojpuri language, which market we are saleable in? where? (Parent_Bhairav)

This excerpt illustrates that the parent conceptualizes an imagined space where the children of common people can benefit from learning the English language. He interacts with the past, present, and future time scales and spaces in educating his children. He places himself within the emotional space of the Bhojpuri language and thinks it is important; however, he wants to educate children in the language that he culturally and emotionally does not belong to for the pragmatic (or perhaps material) future benefits. Other parents in this case also expressed that no legal condition restricts them from educating their children in English or any other foreign language. This illustrates their awareness of their lack of control over their language choice in

this complex social system (Siiner et al., 2018). Therefore, they are preparing for the predictable consequences of education in English and Nepali, rather than learning about and in the local language through the school system.

Perceptions of Headteachers. Headteachers, with top-level leadership roles in schools, have struggled in fine-tuning their MOI policies despite pressures from national/provincial level political bodies and the respective communities where parents play the role of key policy actors. While responding to the municipal policy guidelines was their immediate action as this was the meso-level local governmental body monitoring the school management, they also had to respond to the parental demands for whom the schools are serving. Therefore, they were trapped within the tensions between macro- and micro-level orientations in managing their MOI policies. The headteacher of Laxmi school said, *“I am not actually in favour of implementing EMI, rather I would focus on NMI, but, you know, the community wants EMI to enrol their children to our school.”* Here, he reveals his awareness that teaching in the mother tongues of the students would ease both teaching and learning, but he cannot do so due to both local and global pressures in educating in English. His agentive actions and/or roles are constrained by transnational, national, and local level scripted and unscripted policies that value economies and privileges associated with dominant languages such as Nepali and English. All the headteachers were convinced that without enabling the indigenous languages for economic advantages, the current public demotivation towards these languages will not improve. Abandonment of the indigenous languages by people from these communities is not uncommon. Toba et al. (2005) concluded that “the speakers of indigenous languages feel compelled to abandon their mother tongues to succeed economically” (p. 21).

The headteachers also believed that control over languages and language-based policymaking at the school level has been limited due to the changing social dynamics and mobility in

which “the traditional motives for acquiring or maintaining particular languages (e.g., that they are authentic symbols of identity or prestigious vehicle of high culture) are increasingly yielding to a more calculative economic rationalism” (Cameron, 2012, p. 354). Economic rationalism, as also expressed by Toba et al. (2005) above, applies to dominant languages such as English and Nepali, as the public perception valuing proficiency in these languages can improve social mobility. In addition, the desire to go global, a belief system increasingly acquired by more affluent families by sending their children to English medium schools, continues to expand. In other words, various forms of social processes, values, and associated practices have been instrumental in constraining the agentic actions of the school leaders in fine-tuning the policies from the social justice perspectives. One of the headteachers expressed his stance: “*We cannot seek justice by creating injustice for students on the other side of their life.*” Here, he is referring to the current language practices in the schools that do not teach in English because those who are not given chance to learn in English will feel insecure and less confident in front of those taught in English. His inclination goes towards English as it is a tool to fight against the expanding inequalities. It seemed that headteachers’ leadership actions are squeezed by confusions around notions of justice and this has created tensions in agentic actions.

Perceptions of Teachers. Teachers reflected discursive tensions between policies, public perceptions, and classroom realities. They indicated an incompatibility between what is intended at the political level, what is expected at the community level, and what they can do in the classroom. They reported that the priorities set in the global and local spaces played key roles in influencing their agentic action regarding classroom language use and assessment. One of the teachers said, “*Look at the cases of other countries. How many of the countries in the world are NOT teaching in English?*” He was trying to indicate the cases of the countries holding power in the world and thought that the global space (i.e., the context of

developing countries) is what the current generation is looking for. Along with this globalized space, he also pointed to the social space:

Look at the marketplaces in Nepa, where either you find Nepali or English, and NO other languages. So, what will our students do after they complete their schooling? Will, they just live here and do nothing, or will they move away to seek employment, higher education, business, and so on? (Teacher_Laxmi).

He thinks that schools have to work for the enactment of policies that are compatible with both local and global spaces that current students are looking for. His position justifies the global-local tensions reported earlier. It also echoes what Blattes (2018) reported through her research in French universities that “the (in)compatibility of EMI and linguistic diversity remains a fundamental point of disagreement” (p. 25), which is why the tensions or escalations are ignited in language policymaking in multilingual contexts. In her research Blattes (2018) concluded that two opposing arguments – the authorization of the courses in English as a problem since English might eventually replace all other languages, and not teaching in English potentially affecting access and the employment prospects of students in the global marketplaces – has created tensions in MOI decisions. Nepal’s MOI policy-related tensions also reflect similar trends, where arguments are put forward in terms of both equitable learning (pedagogical) and access to global opportunities (political), which lead to never-ending confrontation in language-in-education policy processes.

Amidst these discursive tensions, teachers are exercising their agency in enacting the MOI in the classroom. One of the Mathematics teachers said, “*When I go to EMI class, I use more English and very little Nepali. And in Nepali medium-class also, I try to use more English than Nepali and I expect students from both media to compete equally, and not lag behind only because of language proficiency.*” This shows that the teacher is creating his own practiced policy ignoring the school’s policy of NMI mode. He perceives that exposure to

English is students' future need demanded by changing time-space relations. Despite the school policies of adopting dual MOI, the teacher expects not to disadvantage any student from his teaching, which reflects an equitable perspective on policy enactment by a policy actor. He thinks that whatever MOI they are taught in, all the students are likely to encounter the same marketplaces, which the school needs to prepare them for.

Perceptions of Students. Although there is a conceptual dilemma among the communities whether to aspire for mother tongue-based education, NMI or EMI, the students clearly stated that EMI and NMI are the only alternative MOIs for their education. Despite their emotional attachment to their home/first language, they aspired to learn in English to improve their potential opportunities in the future. Many of them realized that learning in their mother tongue would not provide them with the scaffolding for future opportunities, including education, employment, and social images (see Chapter VI). This aspiration illustrates that students are believers in the elitist ideology favouring the dominant language(s) as the MOI. The students' beliefs echoed that of their parents and teachers. Understanding these actors' perspectives and roles is very important in managing the tensions between the dominant and dominating languages in place in the educational contexts of multilingual settings (also see, Zhao, 2011; Baldauf & Zhao 2012).

Therefore, the perceptions of the policymakers, headteachers, teachers, parents, and students reveal that the tensions have continued around the adoption of MOI. A series of regulated actions might be required to hold the spaces for ethnic/indigenous languages. The largely EMI-dominated public schools are unlikely to shift to NMI and/or adopt mother tongues as the MOI unless measures are taken to (re)claim language-in-education policies. It is also equally important to understand how several agents work collaboratively in transforming school practices, public perceptions, and broader educational systems.

The Tensions Across Scales and Layered Interactions

LPP scholars (Johnson & Ricento, 2013; Özörencik & Hromadová, 2018) have reported the interface of the social processes that “move and develop on a continuum of layered scales, with the strictly local (micro) and the global (macro) as extremes” (Blommaert, 2007, p. 1). The tensions that emerge while indigenous languages interact with languages of wider communication intersect across scales of sociolinguistic dynamics by forming several nexuses. Understanding of such nexuses requires a multi-scalar perspective to integrate the concerns of some complex sociolinguistic contexts such as that of Nepal where language(s) are disproportionately associated with ethnicity and cultural patterns such as religions. Scalar analysis captures how the various individuals and agencies interact across the scales of social organizations and processes. In the previous sections, I discussed how several factors interplay in LPP decision-making and enactment, and what tensions emerge at different layers of the policy process. I also discussed how multiple factors (see Figure 2) and agentive roles overlap making LPP an interactive process. Figure 2 summarizes the concerns discussed in this chapter.

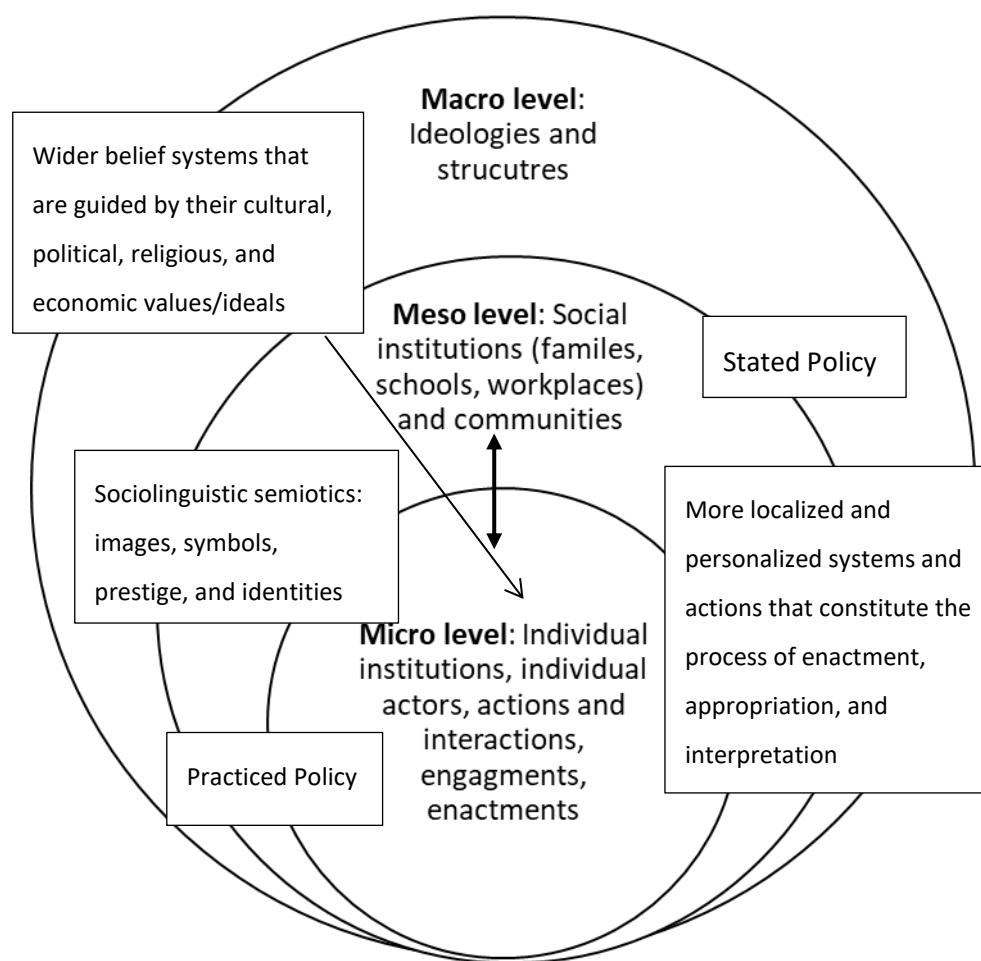


Figure 2: Scales and interactions in MOI policy appropriation and enactments

Figure 2 illustrates the ecological relationships among multiple levels of policy processes, including both structures and agencies. It summarizes LPP as a multi-layered construct where “agents, levels, and processes permeate and interact with each other in multiple complex ways as they enact various types of approaches and goals of LPP” (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 419). It also illustrates the interactions taking place across the macro, meso, and micro level scales of the MOI policy process. In Figure 2, the texts in the boxes illustrate the processes and constructs influencing language policy decisions (e.g., semiotic resources) and the arrows across macro, meso and micro spaces/layers indicate interactions between them. As illustrated, the policy process is largely hierarchical, but at times direct interaction

between the macro and micro levels is possible. For instance, the role of development partners or NGOs might directly encounter local governments or individual schools rather than going through the provincial (i.e., meso level) level. This indicates that it is possible to jump a scale in policy processes where macro or supramacro level forces directly influence the micro ones. Thus, while there is a hierarchical relationship among the wider ideologies such as globalization and localization, both of which emerge in different spaces (i.e., the supranational space vs. the local space) with the involvement of institutions and individuals, they still interact in school spaces and cause tensions. Hence, to better understand LPP holistically, it is imperative to explore the nexuses of interactions and tensions. At the supranational space, for example, transnational institutions (such as the United Nations) provide a broader framework for policy initiatives informing national governments (i.e., the ministries and their line agencies) to fine-tune educational policies, which also include language-in-education policies. However, their efforts alone cannot be successful if local levels refuse top-down initiatives. Nepal's case of enacting mother tongue MOI remains within this trajectory where the macro-level policies (and institutions) promote it, but the micro-level agents and institutions (such as parents and public schools) do not own it or remain reluctant to implement it which can result in policy limbo. Policy limbo is an indeterminate state, not fully implemented as aspired. It implies that it is imperative to think beyond the input-output model of LPP by understanding the interplay and tensions among "interconnected actors, practices, and events across multiple levels of organization" (Larsen-Freeman, 2018, p. 211). Figure 2 illustrates how several factors such as sociolinguistic semiotics, broader ideologies, and localized practiced policies interact through macro, meso, and micro-layers of the LPP process.

Therefore, in a multi-layered LPP process, the internationally established values, belief systems, and ideals are transferred to the lower levels, sometimes through scale jumping. Due

to this, the policy arenas and processes are affected by global and interstate forces interpenetrating each other, and these forces may remain in constant interaction in the socio-political spaces forming nexuses of several types that are hard to unfold, through top-down and bottom-up approaches (Mazzoni, 1993). Such processes generate interplays and tensions across scales. Hence, this is the rationale for exploring the “battle between the top-down and bottom-up processes (Shohamy, 2006, p. 51). Figure 2 above illustrates this concern by positioning the shapers of the MOI policy on the interactive and scalar relationship.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed interplay and tensions between several components and domains that play an influential role in MOI decision-making. The interplay and interactions among a multitude of factors nested in macro, meso, and micro levels of policy processes have made the fine-tuning of MOI policies and practices more complex, especially in multilingual communities. What is most striking is the inconsistency between policies and practices in the adoption of MOI due to multiple contradictory orientations that emerge from historical, social, political, cultural, and linguistic forces. These inconsistencies and contradictions appeal to language policy studies to adopt more transdisciplinary approaches to facilitate a holistic understanding of the issue of MOI, one of the major concerns of LPP. The formation and enactment of MOI policy is a clear instance of social action, and this social action has been made complicated due to the simultaneous impact of various forms of nexuses formed through an interplay of policy trajectories, ideological orientations, and contextualized practices. Although there are significant developments in the policy regarding the indigenization of the curriculum, development of local curriculum and learning materials, including recommendations for the officialization of multiple local languages, the micro-teaching and learning contexts are flouting such policy provisions due to community level aspirations related to the globalization of their children’s language abilities and educational

standard. While discursive tensions exist regarding minimizing outside influences on the local languages and cultures, the resistance measures have not been effective enough to prevent the increasing use of English and Nepali in schools. The ethnic/indigenous languages have been marginalized from mainstream education, and this trend raises serious equity concerns in language policy discourses.

Despite recent policy developments in realizing multilingual education goals, some communities and individuals continue to demonstrate a conceptual dilemma regarding the adoption of the local languages in education; thus, they have disagreed about the roles of local actors in adopting, appropriating, interpreting, and enacting macro-level MOI policies in the local schools (see Baldauf & Zhao, 2012; Zhao, 2011). Concurrently, national ethnolinguistic discourses have emerged against the discourse of globalization. As “globalization involves the ‘scaling up’ of production and the ‘scaling down’ of social reproduction” (Cravey, 2005, p. 358), the indigenous communities’ arguments from a rights perspectives legitimize the concern that the use of English has threatened their languages by scaling down social imagery and linguistic capitalization. Further, “the development of globalization, and the growing role of international organizations, have accelerated the movement of peoples and have challenged the sovereignty of states in the twenty-first century” (Garcia, 2009, p.15), providing a motive for English to expand across borders. In many multilingual Asian countries, there is a growing trend of teaching in English starting from the primary level, which Baldauf et al. (2010) believe is “often framed in terms of the need to compete both with other Asian neighbours and with competitors in other parts of the developing world” (p. 430). The belief systems of the participants in the present study and the changing trends of educational practices in Nepal also reflect such trends.

This implies that the understanding of teaching English and teaching in English are positioned within the histories and contexts, where for some it is a resource and for others an intrusion into the ecology

of languages and social order. Hence, Tollefson and Tsui (2003) stated, “MOI policies are not formed in isolation, rather [they] emerge in the context of powerful social and political forces, including globalization, migration and demographic changes, political conflict, changes in governments, shifts in the structure of local economies and elite composition” (p. 283). Further, “language policies have not only political consequences but also political origins” (Sonntag & Cardinal, 2015, p. 3).

The attempts by the Nepal Government to promote and preserve the already endangered languages have been futile due to the policymakers’ inaction or silencing regarding the implementation of the currently well-intended multilingual policies (see Poudel & Choi, 2021).

The next chapter will present the conclusions and implications of the study.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion and Implications

Introduction

While there are several studies in Nepal that describe the inequalities among languages that have especially been caused by the traditional assimilatory monolingual state policies in the name of Nepali nationalism, national unity, and integrity, studies that critically observed the factors shaping such processes are rare. This thesis explores this research gap by investigating the macro policies as well as micro-level dynamics in MOI enactment in the secondary schools of diverse socio-political and geographical contexts of Nepal. The field data were generated through qualitative interviews in the case contexts, while others were obtained from the review of policy documents, observations, and the analysis of research reports and media outputs. They were critically analysed drawing on the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis. These two perspectives enabled me to explore and identify the tensions and interplay among the factors shaping MOI policy formation as well as the overlapping roles of actors and their dilemma in MOI policy enactment. This research was also informed by my own reflections of my decade-long professional experience of working in the field of teacher education, English language teaching, assessment, materials development, and training, all of which are closely related to this research (see Chapter III). Hence, data from multiple sources including researcher reflexivity were synthesized.

Three main research objectives were plotted in this study. They aimed: a) to identify the MOI policy designs/provisions and their development in multilingual Nepal; b) to explore the driving factors for the enactment of MOI policies at the school level; and c) to explore the tensions interplay and associated complexities of the enactment of national and institution level MOI policies in schools. These objectives were synthesized based on the research aim of ‘Understanding of MOI policies, their driving factors (shapers) and implementation

complexities (such as interplay and tensions) in the linguistically diverse contexts of Nepalese public secondary schools' and covered in the four research questions following the objectives (see Chapter I). Each of the four chapters (Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII) responded to the research questions (1, 2, 3 and 4). For instance, Chapter IV dealt with the MOI policy designs and provisions in Nepal, Chapter V dealt with enacted MOI policies, Chapter VI discussed the shapers of MOI policy enactment and Chapter VII presented how such factors interplay and create synergy as well as tensions in MOI policy enactment in multilingual educational settings. The sections that follow synthesize the findings of this research.

Research findings

Medium of Instruction Policy for School Education in Nepal

Chapter II and Chapter IV collectively presented comprehensive details of the LPP literature and development of language-in-education policy in Nepal. Chapter II synthesized the theoretical and empirical literature while Chapter IV provided greater detail starting from the early history to the current provisions of MOI in educational policies as well as the legislative documents. Table 2 illustrated the summary of trends in LPP in Nepal from the Malla Period to the Federal Democratic Period (2015 to the present). It was found that Nepal's language-in-education policies were influenced by political and societal reforms at the national and global levels. Throughout history, Nepal has proceeded unsteadily towards enacting MOI policy provisions and practice in education as there were shifts from EMI to NMI and vice versa during the Rana period, Panchayat period, and the democratic period of Nepal's political history. While Panchayat promoted the politics of nationalism and thereby emphasized the Nepali language as the medium of education and governance, the introduction of democracy promoted a neoliberal ideology providing wider space for the English language as a MOI. This shows that political transitions influenced language policy decisions in multilingual Nepal. For instance, the Panchayat government promoted Nepali

resisting English, whereas the democratic government policies promoted English along with Nepali as well as other languages of the nation delegating authority to schools to select the language(s) as MOI. These two ideological and discursive approaches shaped substantive legal frameworks for the promotion as well as the marginalization of minority languages, while addressing the issues of inequality.

Nepal's adoption of rights-based approaches in language-in-education has affected the macro policies, not the micro practice in individual schools' system. This shows there is a significant gap between what is intended and what is enacted in the multilingual schooling contexts of Nepal largely because the government responds to the political goals of education, while schools and school stakeholders respond to the pedagogical goals. In other words, the political discourses of ethnolinguistic vitality and the pedagogical discourse concerning globalization of human resources and capabilities have shaped language-policy decisions. It was also found that Nepal's MOI-related decisions were largely affected by discursive strands such as nationalism and globalization. Thus, it can be concluded that politically motivated and designed MOI policies, "polite-to-ethnicity," were not translated into the educational practices and were (invisibly) resisted by parents citing national and global demands to teach in Nepali and English. The desire to educate in English and Nepali medium was co-opted by the relevant community in the case schools. This research identified that improvement of "life chances" remained one of the primary shapers of the increasing desire to be educated in English.

The Enacted MOI Policy in Multilingual Schools

This study found that schools operated diverse MOI policies based on their contextual specificities, needs, and demands. The school-based enactment of the MOI policy was market-driven and was left to the collective decisions of the local governments and schools. In some contexts (e.g., case 2 and case 3), it was also found that local governments' control

over schools' MOI policy decisions was loose. Despite the contextual differences and the diverse modes of MOI enactment in the case schools, unequivocal concerns were raised about infusing the global language, cultures, and values into their local practices while not attending to the political and scholarly debates that have near-universal agreement on privileging the ethnic/indigenous languages in education. Although scholars (e.g., Cummins, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas & Mohanty, 2020) have called into question the assimilationist approaches in language policies in education citing instances of deepening inequality across schooling, in practice, in the case contexts reported here, EMI was used to bridge the already existing inequality in educational systems and processes. In other words, EMI was used as a tool for countering inequalities in the schooling system. In these schools, the motivation for adopting languages with global and national significance exceeded the motivation for adopting local ones, as the enactment of local languages, as the participants perceived, would pull down the status of the schools and face survival challenges. This survival concern of NMI public schools was unequivocal across all the cases. In the schools, it was not only the implementation of EMI as a form of languaging, but also as a tool to bring the global systems and processes into their microsystems of educational practices by altering the curricular contents or course materials, and assessment practices. This process showed me that discourses of globalization and neoliberalism have been established as powerful forces in Nepal's educational practices. The enactment of EMI in the case schools reflected these trends.

The data reveals that diverse forms of MOI (e.g., the dual MOI, monolingual Nepali-only MOI, and the English-only MOI) were enacted in the cases schools to serve different populations. For instance, Bhairav school used EMI for the children largely from affluent families and those who had better English proficiency, while Janak school used NMI for the children of the villages and those whose parents had relatively lower socioeconomic status.

However, addressing this gap, some low-fee EMI schools were established by the private sector in the neighbourhood of the NMI schools. In Chapter V, these issues are discussed in detail. In two of the case schools (case 2 and 3), translanguaging was a frequent practice in the classroom, irrespective of what institutional MOI policies were officially stated (Chapter V). The participants believed that low English language proficiency on the part of the teachers and students was the cause. They believed that translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy could mitigate the language-related gaps and inequities in the classroom. To manage this proficiency gap, some schools asked English subject teachers to teach subjects such as Social Studies, Health and Physical Education. In whatever forms the MOIs were enacted, the school practices informed the broader policies that allowed the adoption of English, Nepali, or any other ethnic/local language(s) as MOI in schools. This liberal policy stated in the macro governmental policy documents (e.g., the Constitution of Nepal–2015) has had an unintended impact on the schools' MOI practices as it has promoted EMI rather than NMI or other mother tongues as MOI. Further, these MOI policy asymmetries can be partly attributed to the rapidly changing demographic features in contemporary societies, and such asymmetries in policy enactment in the case schools are reproducing inequities of several types, such as marginalizing both the participation of students in the education system and their life chances in their future academic and career fields. Also, the practice of educating in diverse MOIs in schools relates to unequal power relations among people from various social, political, economic, and educational backgrounds. When we see language policy as an ideological construct, it is not unusual that such policies are linked to the interests of powerful groups that control state policymaking. Among the three cases, interviews with participants from Bhairav school revealed that EMI served the interests of socially and economically powerful groups, and that group, through their active engagement in parent-teacher meetings organized by the school, influenced the schools' language policy decisions.

The case schools lacked an ideal classroom delivery in the chosen medium, meaning that the said EMI was not enacted completely in English, nor was NMI completely in Nepali. Rather, classroom observations revealed frequent translanguaging practices. The translanguaging practices were unintentional and unplanned; instead, they were consequences of the teachers' and students' low English language proficiency. Despite their low confidence in English, the students in NMI schools perceived English as a language uncontested, while concurrently devaluing their native and/or community-based languages. This implies that the schools' enacted language policies have influenced students' perceptions of power asymmetries among languages around them. For instance, some students in all the case schools wanted to enhance their Nepali and English language proficiency; however, they had very little or no knowledge of their native languages and expressed less interest in learning these languages in school. This shows that language-minoritized students expect to replace their native language(s) with national and international languages such as Nepali and English. This subtractive orientation had a grave impact on the schools' plans for the appropriation of their institutional policy regarding MOI.

Other unintended consequences of EMI enactment were also observed in the schools. Some teachers who had low English proficiency developed a feeling of incompetency and insecurity in their current career positions due to their schools' shift to EMI. However, the implementation of EMI appears unstoppable due to the widespread support from local policymakers (see Poudel & Choi, 2021), local elites' desire, and appropriation (see, Sah & Karki, 2020), as well as parental preferences. This unstoppable EMI scenario, at least for some years, has created pressure for instructors to teach in English through translanguaging (see some examples provided in Chapter IV). This also implies that teacher professional development programs need to address these concerns to psychologically and linguistically

prepare teachers for the emerging pedagogical needs of developing capabilities for heteroglossic teaching and learning conditions.

Factors Shaping MOI Policy and Practices

This study concluded that five major factors shaped or at least influenced language policy decisions in schools: aspiration for better life chances; identity (individual, group, and institutional); actors' roles (state and non-state actors); the contexts of diversity; and globalization. These factors further include sub-factors such as employment, education, social prestige, social class, parental motivation, and aspiration to attend to the global process of urbanization and development. These factors influenced the way language policy decisions were made. However, the relationships among these factors were interwoven, as diverse actors had multiple priorities associated with the languages. For instance, English-medium education was perceived as a key to social mobility by students, teachers, parents, and the local government policymakers, while also being viewed as a survival tool for the public schools. Similarly, individual, group, and national identities made decisions on which language to accept and reject as the MOI. Despite understanding the value of the ethnic/indigenous languages, the community disengagement to multilingual language policing was influenced by a collective orientation for better life changes, upward social mobility, and improving social images. While community control over policymaking is the key to the success of MOI policies for benefitting linguistic minorities (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018), there was little hope for revitalizing the local language in education.

It was also found that language use in classrooms and on the school premises was associated with individual teachers' professional prestige, and also the school's institutional identity. Out of 12 teacher participants in this study, only one teacher used his home language openly in his classrooms (case of Janak school) while in all others (e.g., in the case of Bhairav and Laxmi school), not using the local language in the schools was a matter of maintaining higher

professional integrity, as students would laugh if the local language were. Educating in EMI was perceived as having higher prestige in society while teaching in local/ethnic languages was inferior and regressive, especially from the parents' perspectives. All the parents perceived educating in a private EMI school was related to self-esteem, and it was also guided by an expectation that their EMI-educated children would develop improved confidence and attain better success and higher prestige than their NMI or mother tongue-MOI educated peers. They also perceived that the content of EMI education is somehow better because it is in English. Their perceptions also echo the current trends of schools recommending English-medium reference materials published by private companies and approved by Curriculum Development Centre. Such home-language deficit ideologies affected not only parents but also teachers, school leaders, and the students. The policymakers had a neutral position in this regard, as in some contexts (e.g., Bhairav school case context), the municipality itself circulated regulations for shifting to EMI, but they could not directly impose restrictive language policies against the ethnic/indigenous language(s). This language policy diplomacy appears to be silencing the mother tongue issue and letting schools continue with the EMI. Their inaction concerning local language MOI is rationalized by the argument that students' academic performance in private EMI schools is better, which can be further associated with public discourses of globalization and neoliberalism that put meritocracy and free-market competition as the norm of quality education and employment. Thus, in the case contexts, community support for the local/ethnic/indigenous languages remained merely political commitments, rather than MOI policy enactments. Hence, this study supports Tollefson and Tsui's (2018) call for understanding MOI policy as a discursive construct that plays an important role in broader social and political struggles of the respective communities.

This study showed that parents, teachers, students and policymakers' ideologies towards the use of ethnic/indigenous languages in education were shaped by the broader social-political discourses, more than the local linguistic and cultural specificities. These discourses have extended their roots to the spheres of governmental systems and social life. Understanding these discourses as forms of social practice implies "a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s), which frame it" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). The participants' unquestionable legitimization of the contemporary social practice of EMI in schools confirms that the widespread presence of the discourses of globalization which form a structural frame in the educational spaces that continues to promote EMI as a social stratifier with educational capital in Nepal. As EMI has been creating educational inequities due to increasing gaps between English-educating and Nepali-educating schools and their students, the schools attempted to use EMI as a tool to level up to address the expanding inequality. This implies "language policy as a covert and implicit social process in which languages serve to construct social hierarchies" (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018, p. 5). Specifically, the MOI policy has been established as one of the instigators of social class stratification; however, it is largely invisible unlike other social variables such as caste (cultural) and class (economic). While MOI has been growing as a discourse, it is "bound to particular institutional settings or spheres of social life (e.g., academic, news, medicine, and so on)" (Bartesaghi & Noy, 2015, p. 2). The social contexts of Nepal that are a mosaic of linguistic as well as other socio-cultural diversities accommodate multiple (and sometimes contradictory) discourses simultaneously, hereby intersecting across several social, cultural, and economic orientations. Most often, the discursive confrontations (especially on ideological grounds), identified concerning the adoption of MOI in education systems, are grounded on two overarching concerns, viz. globalization and indigenization. This study demonstrated that choice of MOI

has emerged as a key area of contention, such as ethnic activism and nationalism, which are related to everyday language practices and the larger historical, ideological, and politico-institutional systems.

Interplay and Tensions Among Shapers of MOI Policy Decisions and the Practices

This research identified complex intricacies of several factors and tensions in MOI policy enactment, especially in the contexts where people from diverse linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds reside. This Nepal-specific study concludes that language policy scholars need to pay attention to the socially embedded issues of caste/ethnicity, social class, and other broader socio-cultural and political dimensions that influence policy decisions that move beyond the nuances of language-centric studies. While choosing a language for instructional purposes, it can be observed that beliefs towards language use (for present and future goals) seem to be the most dominant factor. A close observation of the language practices in the case schools revealed the symbolic domination of English and Nepali has affected at the micro-processes of educational systems, which was especially due to the increasing use of English and Nepali as MOIs as well as compulsory subjects of the curricula. The domination processes are never arbitrary (Heller, 1995), but are linked to wider power struggles among people with diverse linguistic and cultural identities (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). Power struggles can be observed between the valued and un(under)valued, the recognized and un(under)recognized, the visible and invisible, and the groups and individuals that occupy the deeper divides created by the socioeconomic gaps of access and privilege (De Santos, 2015). People's orientations on taking advantage of the increasing market-value of English and Nepali have indirectly suppressed the potential use of ethnic/indigenous languages in education. In other words, as also stated by Price (2014) in her study in Taiwan, marketization, choice, and competition play a significant role in glorifying English as an important part of the education systems.

In Nepal, the legislative provisions and the education policy documents reflect the trends of market, choice, and competition affecting language policy decisions. For instance, decision-making about mother tongue MOI was delegated to local governments and the relevant ethnic/indigenous community. Similarly, Nepal's educational plans and policies (e.g., National Curriculum Framework [NCF-2007; NCF-2019; School Sector Development Plan [SSDP]-2016-23, etc.) insists on the production of human resources to stay globally competitive, which shows that the market and competition are portrayed as key educational reform goals, and these indirectly highlight the value of English as the global lingua franca. Teaching English, and teaching in English are understood (perhaps, misconceived) by parents as the goal of educating their children. All these reveal that there are implicit discursive tensions between the global and the local as well as national and international orientations. These discourses ultimately relate to issues of identity, which clashes with economic and ethnocultural dimensions. For instance, choice of MOI is perceived in economic terms, as the rich educate their children in EMI schools, while the poor send their children to NMI schools. This study reported that language practices in multilingual polities are influenced by the nations'/communities' historicity, multi-layered structural constraints, and contextual specificities such as caste/ethnicity, indigenous identity, gender disparity, socio-economic gaps, which influences ideological underpinnings at both macro and micro levels of language planning and execution. These factors have complex and intertwined relationships, and therefore cannot be separated from enactment processes. The MOI enactment itself as a social action, forms the nexuses at diverse physical and educational spaces. For instance, the nexus between the MOI and gender (i.e., more boys attending EMI private schools while more girls attend public NMI schools) was observed stronger in Bhairav and Janak cases than in Laxmi because the socio-cultural contexts of schooling were different. These differences highlight

the role of context in language policy decisions. In the contexts of Bhairav and Janak schools, gender disparity in educational participation was larger than that of the Laxmi school.

Such differences across contexts also create differences and tensions in the roles of the policy actors as well. This study observed that there are tensions across scales of policy processes, and the key to the tensions are the overlapping and sometimes paradoxical roles of the policy actors (see Tollefson & Tsui, 2018). Therefore, coordinated efforts in facilitating LPP work in the multilingual social spaces are needed, where several forces have complex relationships and each of these forces operate in a world that contains all the others (Cooper, 1989). While considering this, an understanding of power differentials, role overlapping, and the multi-layered nature of the policy process is important. For instance, despite exhibiting a political commitment to multilingual education, policy actors (e.g., policymakers cum parents, and people with some political backgrounds who have power or have the potential for power exercise policy decisions in local governments) thought students' multilingual practices in the schools were deficient. They thought that if schools provided multiple language practice opportunities, it would negatively impact their children's fluency in English. This (mis)conception about the development of English-fluent children through teaching in EMI was persistently uttered by all the participants of this study. Such a perception promotes an ideology of "linguistic diversity as a problem" (Ruiz, 1984) rather than as a resource of multilingual learners. The policy actors in different roles across multiple layers of the language policy translate the same ideologies in their practice giving rise to tensions between linguistic diversity as a threat and linguistic diversity as a resource.

Referring to these upheavals in ethnolinguistic landscapes, the participants claimed (see Chapters V, VI, VII) that both not attending to English and not responding to the local/indigenous language rights discourses would lead to problems. Although they

prioritized English in education, parents also wanted their children to learn the local languages at the community level. In other words, they thought that not learning the mother tongues would create an identity crisis, and not getting education in English would harm them (Chapter VI). They also expressed their awareness that the divisions between English-fluency and non-fluency could lead to inequities in social life. Based on their awareness (and perhaps fear) of this, students and parents believed that educating their children in English would result in better English proficiency, eventually narrowing down inequities and potential social, educational, and economic gaps. Thus, it can be concluded that teaching in English is intricately tied to power relations and inequities in Nepali society, which values private education more than the public mode. Such differences also point to the need for fine-tuning the MOI policy through conducive micro policies and practices in multilingual contexts. However, notably, in plural societies, the issue of power and domination remain complex due to the intersectionality of people's ethnolinguistic identity, socio-economic levels, and other regional specificities that collectively contribute towards exclusion or marginalization from mainstream educational systems.

Implications

Language policy researchers have extensively examined top-down policy initiatives, especially since the early years of the emergence of the field of LPP. These initiatives are based on the understanding that language policies consist of texts produced at macro governmental levels are guided by rational beliefs and individual choices and activities of the policymakers and policy-making institutions (Dueñas, 2015). However, especially since the 1990s, a critical turn in LPP studies has emerged, beginning with the work of critical scholars such as Tollefson, Ricento, and Hornberger. Tollefson (1991) highlighted LPP studies should “discover the historical and structural pressures that lead to particular policies and plans that constrain individual choice” (p. 32), and the implications of such choices influence equity

and equality in the situated community-based linguistic diversity. Following such turns in policy studies, concerns have been raised that language policies have been “serving the interests of the oppressors” (Tollefson, 2006, p. 46), and are benefitting the already dominant groups and their institutions which are ultimately understood as attempts to perpetuate inequalities (Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, De Santos (2015) proposed a narrowing of injustice and differences through acknowledgment and respect of differences and the valorization of diversities. As presented in the previous chapters, the practice of EMI as the primary MOI in Nepal’s schooling may lead to further inequities in educational attainments of students from the non-dominant language backgrounds, challenging the SDGs targets which idealize equitable access to education by ensuring primary education in children’s mother tongues. Moreover, widening inequities can negatively affect the minority languages’ use in education and governance, resulting in the potential loss of indigenous linguistic and cultural heritage. To counter or resist this threat, individuals and institutions’ active engagement and collective actions in generating initiatives are essential. However, individuals or institutions alone are unlikely to succeed in enacting change as they are surrounded by multiple and diverse forces emerging from the global and the local spaces. These forces are also associated with macro-structural and micro-agentic ones. Therefore, in this study, the integration of the historical-structural approach and nexus analysis helped me understand the relationship between the structure and agency in policy formation and enactment. Based on a critical analysis of the macro, meso, and micro policies and practices concerning MOI in Nepal’s secondary school contexts, I have drawn the following implications for different levels which may contribute towards understanding standard language ideologies and contribute to less indiscriminate language practices in education.

Theoretical Implications

Cummins (2000, p. 2) claims a “theory addresses the educational practice not only in the narrow sense of what happens in the classroom but also in terms of how classroom interaction is influenced by the societal discourses that surround educational practices.” Theories are not always top-down, but rather can be built on empirical data that illustrate logical contradictions within societal discourses. This study identified diverse forms of MOI practices in educational organizations (e.g., with English-only MOI, Nepali-only MOI, and both MOIs implemented synonymously) while also being related to theoretical constructs of societal power relations influencing the decision-making on the language of instruction in the schools. There are more diverse forces beyond individual and institutional control (e.g., the socio-economic and political) which effect LPP decisions. Exploration of this requires a broader and more explicit theoretical perspective that helps critical scholars engage productively (see Block, 2018). In the present study, the participants’ claims echoed a sense that rapid expansion of EMI in public schools has contributed to erasing minority language practices in schools within multilingual societal contexts, thereby continuing to reproduce the hegemonic language ideologies. This understanding puts me within the space of critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001) which challenges how the hegemonic language ideologies play out around the choice of MOI in schools within multilingual contexts. In addition, the findings also point towards the integration of the context and ideologies into the broader conceptualization of language policy to understand how several interrelated factors collectively influence the success or failure of policies. This implies LPP research should also look at the issues beyond linguocentric understanding, which means that understanding the MOI phenomenon in contexts like Nepal is more than just about language. It concerns considering behind-the-scenes forces, especially those situated outside of the jurisdictions of educational institutions, such as class, mobility, ethnicity, etc.

My study echoes two major concerns about the growth of EMI as the most sought-after MOI in the non-native English-speaking world: Simpson's (2017) argument that there is a lack of evidence to support the prevalent view of EMI being better, and Macaro's (2018) argument that the EMI phenomenon is an unstoppable train which has already left the station. The findings of this research contribute to this theoretical discourse by asking whether EMI's advance can be slowed by the critical observations of scholars, educators, and parents' bottom-up resistance through the localized policy initiatives that promote local/national languages in education. In addition, this research identifies the pervasiveness of EMI practices in myriad educational contexts (Macaro, 2019), as there were different levels of English language use across three case contexts of schooling.

In praxis, what can be learned is that the MOI phenomenon in Nepal not only concerns language(s), but also notions of identity that are (in)visibly embedded into middle or elite class identities. As such, EMI has become a crucial vehicle of socio-economic mobility that the parents and students in this study idealized and aspired to. In conclusion, the findings lead to theoretical sociological issues such as class, mobility, equity, linguistic justice, and the economics of language concerning the growing expansion of EMI across schools and higher education.

Policy Implications

Policies serve as the structures that institutions and individuals interact and negotiate with. To achieve anticipated results from their implementation, there needs to be balanced coordination between the actions of individuals and institutions and the powerful social and political structures that have shaped the policies. Nepali society has been experiencing the stigmatization of minority languages without any critical awareness about using such languages in education. Thus, a strong de-stigmatization campaign needs to be conducted to break down the current negativity associated with ethnic/indigenous languages and to awaken

both the dominant and dominated groups about the potential of local languages and the knowledge systems associated with them. In other words, a public campaign to dismantle the attitudinal barriers is required in plural societies like Nepal. It was found in this research that the students belonging to mother tongues other than Nepali perceived that their languages are of inferior value and therefore they would be happy to be proficient in the dominant languages such as Nepali and English. This perception will continue to have merit unless minority languages are put into practice by raising their economic value to the level of dominant ones in educational and public spaces. In order to change this perception, further policy interventions are needed beyond the “language line,” meaning that unless interventions are made in language revitalization, standardization, and documentation, the negative beliefs about minority languages will continue and negatively impact the linguistic ecology and even endangered them. Hence, these negative self-images need to be reduced so that the students from minority backgrounds form about their languages.

The findings revealed there are tensions in the conceptualization of MOI, and the positioning of EMI points towards issues of power relations, social group dynamics, and learning opportunities (see Kuteeva, 2020). The intersection of these issues connected with wider social, political, economic, and educational dimensions requires further research to identify the grounded picture of MOI in practice in Nepal, which eventually should lead to concerned governmental agencies enacting new policies. My study has also revealed that local/ethnic/indigenous languages are part of a hegemonic linguistic hierarchy and have been intentionally (partially) excluded from the educational spaces. Such a conceptualization would need to be dismantled if a justifiable MOI policy is implemented in Nepal’s educational spaces.

Although the legal basis for parents and their children to opt for education in mother tongues is guaranteed in the recent legislative and curriculum frameworks, most parents and children

have a strong positive orientation towards EMI, while some others revealed an ambivalence towards it. The policy provisions for ensuring equitable education in the mother tongue, however, has provided only lip-service to the political discourse, and such provisions fall within the domain of tolerance-oriented policies (Wiley, 1998), which have only peripheral effects on the practice as they do not commit the state to promote the mother tongues for this purpose. When states adopt multilingual policies, the main concern for them is “opening up ideological and implementational space in the environment for as many languages as possible, and in particularly endangered languages, to evolve and flourish rather than dwindle and disappear” (Hornberger, 2002, p. 30). The same is true in the case of Nepal, and how the practice forms the policy to relocate the already excluded languages in education is significant. As Nepal has been adopting democratic principles, it should not undermine, at least in its policies, the linguistic rights of the speakers of ethnic/indigenous languages. Thus, this study proposes the following policy recommendations:

- The MOI policy should not be considered in isolation; rather, it must be understood within a broader framework related to the consequences of the choice on one or many languages as MOI while considering Nepal’s domestic social, economic, educational, geopolitical, and cultural dimensions.
- The choice of MOI policy is to be left to the discretion of the individual schools owing to the very complex nature of the social fabric including the diverse demographic composition of society. A centrally designed policy or even the prescribed policy at the regional and local governmental level should not be operationalized due to the situated differences and diversity of the concerned community.
- Although the policies at the constitutional level are well-justified on the grounds of democratic principles, the practices have been flouting it. Therefore, the practiced

policy should be considered, and the policymaking process should be bottom-up making the relevant communities more responsible for its ownership and operation.

- Unless more engaged community participation is ensured to (re)claim the MOI in ethnic/indigenous languages, the successful and effective adoption of ethnic/indigenous languages as MOIs is highly unlikely, as the preference to EMI and NMI will continue. Therefore, investment in increasing community engagement as well as equipping respective communities with necessary resources would be required to promote minoritized languages in education.
- One of the important policy implications concerns the preparation of teacher education programmes responsive to the changing socio-linguistic contexts, specific language-related inputs for them to handle the teaching and learning in the mother tongues they need to. Therefore, the teacher education programs and policies are to be designed to prepare teachers to respond to the multilingual educational needs in the schools.
- Increased attention should be provided towards empowerment of the mother tongues, their documentation, and material production in which the current initiatives are taken by the Curriculum Development Center, Department of Education, Nepal Academy, and university departments.
- The provisions to enhance use of mother tongues in education are not sufficient unless there is a strong community effort to revitalize/empower the languages which have been subjugated in Nepal's social and historical contexts. Therefore, community efforts should be expanded toward developing community language programmes at the grassroot level. Their practice should inform the macro policies.

Although there has been abundant research explaining how English, as the MOI, has been an agent of injustice and inequities, such discourses are both flawed and counterproductive

toward understanding the dynamic nature of language ecologies in multilingual countries such as Nepal. However, while scholarly discourses discuss the linguistic side of injustice, people with multilingual orientations feel (as learnt from the data in this study) that not learning English would equally widen the inequalities and inequities.

Practice Implications

This study focused on the enacted MOI policy documenting the practice of MOI in the respective case contexts finding that the practice does not adhere to the stated policies. This occurred because the policies are not able to capture the whole picture of the communities in which the schools exist. While the schools needed to serve the communities according to the emerging changes, their decision-making on MOI was equally influenced by their community demands (e.g., the parents' demand for EMI in Bhairav and Laxmi school). Therefore, language-related decision-making in the case schools was specifically tied to the community characteristics (such as linguistic homogeneity or heterogeneity). Adoption of the new language(s) may seem normal as the societies are changing rapidly; however, adoption of a new language should not be understood or even practiced as a way of abandoning the historically existing languages. It was also found that the adoption of local languages as MOI remained complex and incomplete due to the intersecting relationships among diverse forms of communities and their social, cultural, and educational characteristics across various regions in Nepal. The school practices not only reflect the local community but also nationally and internationally established standard practices, meaning that they are valuing the dominant languages that carry more prestigious status and benefit the learners for their future educational and employment opportunities. In general, the purposes of the schools' practices are two-fold: serving the local community and serving the national and global community. Some countries have developed strong and stricter language policies based on their priority goals. For instance, Malaysia, upon gaining independence, pursued the twin

goals of building a strong sense of national identity, and national unity/cohesiveness was signalled via the implementation of the language policies of the country (David & Govindasamy, 2007) by promoting Malay in educational practices.

Practice is primarily a collection of the roles of actors at different layers of the policy process. In other words, agency is equally important when dealing with the structures imposed by the policy texts and discourses (Poudel & Choi, 2021). In the case of successfully implementing ethnic/indigenous languages as MOI, I observed that the space for multiple excluded or lesser taught languages with more functional capacities should be opened. Thus, the following are practice-related recommendations:

- As many learners were anxious about being confined within a particular community or smaller spaces if they are educated in their community languages, a simultaneous practice of multiple languages (especially the children's mother tongue, the regional language, national language, and international language) should be considered.
- More translanguaging between learners' mother tongue or local language and the primary language of instruction should be practiced. For instance, in a Tharu-majority classroom, the teacher can switch between Tharu and English while teaching English, and a similar shifting between Nepali and Tharu while teaching other subjects in Nepali can be practiced.
- It is important to consider collective agentic actions of policymakers, school leaders, teachers, parents, and students. Until now, nearly all the participants in the study favoured EMI over other media of instruction, but their agentic actions differed around different priorities (such as national identity, economic well-being, future higher education, and elitist orientation of social mobility). Therefore, a common agreement among stakeholders should be made to fine-tune language policies in Nepal's multilingual schooling contexts.

As it has often been observed that educational linguistics is a problem-oriented discipline (Hult, 2008), a holistic approach to understand and address the problems and challenges is essential in this field, especially by integrating theory and practice, and research and policy (Hornberger, 2002). For this, the “linguistic silencing,” meaning, the way students and parents are silent (or are not advocating) the use of mother tongues in education, should be broken down by bringing their histories, experiences, and cultures into the pedagogical spaces (Siegel, 2006); this may require interventions for enhancing their critical awareness about ethnic/indigenous languages and their epistemologies.

Implications for Future Research

This study also points to areas for future research in the field of LPP in general. The LPP has been understood largely as a top-down process, with an explicit focus on neo-classical approaches. According to Tollefson (1991), LPP researchers are dominated by the neo-classical approach where the understanding of the field is scientifically neutral; however, this contradicts the historical-structural approach that focuses on social and historical aspects influencing the evolution of language policies (Johnson & Ricento, 2013). This research adopted the latter perspective on LPP. That said, in line with the changes in current time and space specificities, a closer look at the sociolinguistic and socio-historical dynamics is essential to develop more comprehensive and practicable policies. As also reported in the literature, critical scholars have too often focused their attention on social (in)equality limiting the discourse to educational issues, which has largely ignored economic class, or other factors that have or might have severely affected the individual or social agency in confronting the inequalities (Perez-Milans & Tollefson, 2018). This research also points to the need to revisit the findings of earlier research carried out exclusively focusing on mother tongue education in ethnic/indigenous languages adopting pedagogical perspectives and concluding that the school language policies have led to increasing numbers of

ethnic/indigenous language students who have dropped out. The findings of this research cast doubt on whether language caused the dropouts, at least in the case of Nepal which has experienced multiple forms of inequities such as gender disparity, class/caste, and geographical remoteness.

Systematic empirical research informing how the voices of the current generation of students can be redirected towards an increased motivation in learning the ethnic/indigenous languages could suggest future language-in-education policy directions for Nepal. In the words of Siegel (2006), “students should gain the critical skills to become aware of the ideologies that support the current power structure, and thus have the potential to reject them” (p. 166). As this research has shown that dominant language ideologies surround not only students, but also policymakers, school leaders, teachers and parents, an integrated intervention needs to be taken to develop a critical awareness towards the factors collectively shaping such ideologies in language policies in education to support Nepal’s ambition for participating in the globalization process and to protect its ethnolinguistic diversity. While an ideological nexus has been formed with English as the global language with its social capital influencing the local social and educational contexts, both macro political and micro community engagement in enhancing the social values of the ethnic/indigenous languages is essential for bringing such languages into the educational systems of multilingual Nepal.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Time and tasks/activities for data collection from each case.

Case 1			
Methods and tasks	Participants	Time and days	Remarks
Case observation (CO)	Whole school, and local discourses, etc.	D1* and D2 (2 days, 3-4 hours per day, beginning from the morning assembly to evening assembly [if any])	The first day will be spent more on rapport, familiarization, introduction, etc. The observation would be much more flexible in time, detailed notetaking will be done, and observation form will be filled up.
Interview	Teacher -1 and teacher-2	1 hours (D 3) 1 hours (D 3)	Depends on their availability
	Teacher -3 and Teacher -4	1 hours (D 4) 1 hours (D 4)	
	Head teacher – 1	1-2 hours (D 5)	More information will be sought out
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	5 Students (grade 9-12)	1-2 hours (D 6)	Will involve students from different language background, social groups, and different castes (if any) etc.
	Parents (5)	1-2 hours (D 7)	Will be contacted beforehand with the help of school administration, and planned according to their availability, however, visit to their local setting will be made, if required.
Case Document review	From HT	3-4 hours (if available), D 8 and D9)	Depends on if any policy documents are made, or are found.
Interview	Education authority	1-2 hours, (D 10)	More policy concerns will be sought out.
Contingency management days – 5 days Case reflection (writing memos, informal inquires, revisits and supplementary data generation, etc.), to and forth, etc.			Some public holidays, strikes, local holidays, festivals, waiting for informants' time schedule, etc.
Total			15 days

Note: each school case is likely to take the similar duration for data collection.

**D stands for Day of data collection.*

Appendix-B

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

The Interview Protocol²⁵ (Generic – for teachers and head teachers)

Interview date:

The language of the interview:

General information:

Gender:

Subject taught:

Teaching experience:

Language background:

Ethnic background:

Questions:

1. What comes in your mind when you hear about the language of instruction in your school?
2. Do you have a particular linguistic image when you think of language used in instruction?
3. Do you think we need to teach in English or Nepali? Or can it be in any other language? Why do you think so?
4. What medium of instruction has been used in the school context?
5. Which language has been increasingly favoured for use in schools? What is your observation on this matter?
6. Why do you think we need to teach in English?
7. Why do you think we need to teach in Nepali? Or any other language?
8. What do you think the role of the children's mother tongue or home language will be in their educational processes?
9. Which language would you like to use in the classroom? Why do you use one or the other language(s) during the classroom instruction? What are the benefits?
10. Which language do you think is used mostly within the school premises? Does it have to do something with the wider community?
11. Do you think teaching in English is necessary or only teaching of English as a subject would be quite sufficient?
12. What proportion of the school population would be exposed to English?

²⁵ The interview will be conducted using the semi-structured format. Hence, a set of questions or interview guidelines prepared here are utilized to keep track or focus on the concern. Though the interview questions to be asked to teachers and head teachers will be slightly different, I have presented here some major questions that are commonly applicable for the purpose. It will take approximately an hour for the interview.

13. What happens if the schools do not use English or Nepali and use only the community languages?
14. What happens if schools use only-English as a language of instruction in the schools?
15. What are the benefits of teaching in Nepali?
16. What are the disadvantages of teaching in Nepali?
17. What are the benefits (long term or short term) of teaching in the local languages, such as Tamang, Newar, Maithili, etc.?
18. Is it good teaching a foreign language as a subject or does it need to be the medium of instruction? Why do you think so?
19. When do you think schools should start teaching in a foreign language?
20. Do you think teaching in English improves or has improved academic achievements?
21. What are the facilitating factors for using EMI/NMI/MMI in the school instruction?
22. Are you aware of the national policies of language use in schools?
23. Who do you think holds the language in education policymaking power in the current political system?
24. As an administrator (for head teacher)/educator (for teacher) what is your imagined language policy in your school? Which language to be used as MOI, and which other languages to be taught as subjects?
25. What will be your position/role in language-in-education policymaking?
26. Have you participated or heard of any educational programs and policies that serve to local language needs?
27. What are the main problems in policymaking and policy implementation in the current educational system?
28. What factors hinder in implementing EMI in the school contexts?
29. How have you managed to teach (as a teacher) or run the classes (as a head teacher) in that particular language as MOI?
30. What complexities have you faced in using English, Nepali or any other languages as the MOI? In your institutional system?
31. Do you think that language policies in schools relate to community politics, values, and structures?
32. Currently, English is increasingly used as the MOI in educational contexts, do you think it is a threat or an opportunity or resource for our linguistic diversity?
33. How have you managed to develop students' English and Nepali language proficiency?
34. What changes have you noticed in your children after they attended the English Medium classes?
35. What changes have you noticed after shifting into EMI in terms of students' behavior, teacher behavior, parental responses, etc.?
36. Which languages do you think will be a language to be used in the schools in the future? Why do you think so?
37. What are the potential consequences in using English/Nepali or any other mother tongue as the MOI?
38. Finally, if you were the policymaker, what would be your stand on the political, economic and social aspects of the MOI practiced in the schools? Do you think these aspects are related to one another in policymaking and policy implementations?

Appendix C

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

The Focus Group Discussion Protocol²⁶ (with parents)

Demographic information:

Name/surname (optional):

Caste/ethnicity:

Native language:

Profession/occupation:

Family size and number of children:

Type of school the child/children study:

Questions:

1. What kind of school do you send your child to? Can you briefly tell me how you feel about the school?
2. Can you briefly explain the reason for sending your child to this school?
3. Which language do you think your child is taught at the current school?
4. What comes in your mind when you hear about the language of instruction in the school?
5. Do you think English matters for the education of your child, or can it be in any other language? Why do you think so?
6. Well, is there something that is related to the language of instruction which made you choose the school for your child?
7. How do you feel when you think of your child learning English aside from other languages?
8. How do you contrast the schools that teach in English only, or teach English as a subject?
9. Which language do you prefer to use at home, to talk to your child? And why?
10. How are you supporting your child's language learning needs at home?
11. Do you think there is a link between the languages taught in schools and the languages in the community? Does it have to do something with the children's life chances?
12. How do you feel about your own language to be used in school education? Will you be happy with your child learning in your native language only?
13. Do you think that there are any advantages of using the local languages in education in the long run?
14. How do you feel if the schools do not use English as MOI, and use only the community languages instead?
15. What benefits do you see in teaching in the local languages compared to teaching in English?
16. What other values do you think are attached to the learning of English, not just the proficiency in it?
17. Do you think teaching any other foreign language in school education is necessary? If yes, why do you think so?
18. When do you think schools should start teaching in a foreign language, such as English?
19. What do you say about the expansion of the English language in education? Do you think parents are investing a lot for the foreign language proficiency requirement of their children?

²⁶ This protocol will be translated into Nepali and/or the language that the parents feel comfortable in their respective places. The translation will be made only after making a preliminary contact with them before the focus group discussion takes place.

20. Some people still believe that English has a hegemonic value over other languages, what do you think about this?
21. Do you think teaching in English improves or has improved the academic achievements of your child?
22. What do you think about the relationship between your home language and English? Are they supportive of each other?
23. Are there any pressing factors you see in learning other languages than English?
24. Do you think learning a global language has to do with opportunity gains for the coming generation? Why do you think so?
25. Do you think that language policies in schools relate to community politics, values, and structures?
26. Is there something related to the social class (caste-based or economic status-based) in learning a language? Do you think the schools can facilitate or hinder such class divisions?
27. What values do you want your child to learn from the schools? Do you think any other values are associated with the languages s/he learns at school?
28. Sometimes, people argue that the growing use of English is producing the homogenizing ideologies. What do you think about this issue?
29. How do you think we can face the pressures of the global language (e.g. English) increasingly used in education? Do we need to embrace it or resist?
30. Are you satisfied with the language proficiency of your child? Which language do you wish your child to learn and use the most?
31. Do you think the school can address the language learning needs of your child?
32. What languages do you expect your child to learn? Do you have any priorities for your child to learn certain languages?
33. What difference do you see between Nepali medium schools and English medium schools? Do you expect any school that uses the local language as a medium in your community?
34. What changes have you noticed in your child after s/he attended the English medium schools?
35. As a parent, what pressing forces do you notice in educating our children in an international language, national language, and the local languages?
36. Why do you think the education in local indigenous languages has not been provided by the schools despite the fact that there are policies for the mother-tongue MOIs?
37. Some people believe that English language or Nepali language used in the schools have dominated and negatively affected other indigenous languages. How do you perceive this matter?

Appendix D

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

Focus Group Discussion Protocol²⁷ (with students)

General information:

No of students:

Ethnic background of the students:

Language background: mother-tongue, other languages they speak

Age range:

Grade they are studying at:

Questions:

1. How do you feel about being in this school?
2. Does your school use your mother tongue as a medium of instruction? Or is it taught as a subject? Or both?
3. Which language do you think you are taught in?
4. Which language do you feel comfortable being taught?
5. Do you feel confident in learning in that language?
6. Do you think the use of English is necessary as a language of instruction in your schooling? Why do you think so?
7. What are the perceived benefits of learning in English?
8. What are the perceived benefits of using Nepali or your local languages as MOI?
9. What happens if your mother tongue is not used in teaching and learning? Do you feel insecure or something else due to this?
10. Do you feel like treated differently due to the use of language in the school and classroom?
11. Which language do you think your teachers use frequently in the classroom? And outside the classroom?
12. Which language do you use to communicate with your friends in the class and in the school premises in other activities? Why not another language (s)?
13. Do you think your native language is to be used in the school for teaching and learning? If yes, what are the benefits out of this?
14. Do you use your home language in your school? If yes, on what occasion and for what purpose?
15. How do you feel if you have teachers who do not speak your native language as MOI?

²⁷ Most of the questions are adopted from the reference mentioned at the end of the questions. However, they are contextualized in the case of Nepal.

16. Do you think there should be different media of instruction for different language groups in the same school?
17. Which language would you like to develop proficiency in? And why?
18. Many schools are shifting from Nepali medium to English medium. Do you think this is necessary? How do you feel about that?
19. What comes in your mind when you compare yourself compared with the other students who study at the English medium private/boarding schools?
20. Do you think there is anything about the social status, prestige, etc. formed by the language you learn?
21. Which language do you think is the most important for your future? Why?
22. Do you have anything additional to say about the medium of instruction issue in your school?

References

- Feng, A. W., Adamson, B. & Dong, F. (2013). *Interview with policymakers*. Technical paper, models of trilingual education in ethnic minority regions of China project. Hong Kong: The Education University of Hong Kong.

Appendix-E

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

Interview protocol (with policymakers, Est. duration: 45-60 minutes)

Interview date:

The language used for interview: a) Nepali b) English c) others (specify)

Questions:

1. Could you please first of all briefly introduce about yourself? (such as ethnic and language background, experience in policymaking and execution, educational background, etc.)
2. Could you please say something about the locality you are responsible for education policymaking and execution?
 - Nature of the population: ethnicity and linguistic identities
 - Percentage of different language speaking people (if no data, tentative ideas)
 - The socio-economic condition of the population (more reflective)
 - Number of schools in the area: public () and private ()
3. What is the language of instruction/Medium of instruction in the schools in general?
4. What do you think about traditional practice and recent changes in the MOI policies in the schools?
5. Are the home/indigenous languages of the students used in the teaching and learning processes? (If yes, how, and if not, why?)
6. Is there any local level policy on the MOI for the secondary schools?
7. Are there any differences between the national or provincial policies and the local level policies in MOI to be implemented in the secondary schools?
8. How do you think the national level policy about MOI been implemented through the local educational body like yours?
9. Is there any policy for the use of local languages as the language of instruction in the schools? If yes, how is it implemented? or are there any different policies for different levels of school education?
10. Who is more responsible for the enforcement of such policies in the schools? Who is supposed to make the decisions on MOI policies to be implemented in the schools?
11. Some people argue that the use of children's mother tongue in education has beneficial effects. But there is increasing use of English in public schools from pre-primary level. What is your opinion on this issue?
12. It has also been reported that using a foreign or unfamiliar language as MOI hampers the creativity of the learners? What do you think about that?
13. Recently, it has been reported that schools have shifted the MOI into English from Nepali. What is your observation on this? Do you think this shift is necessary?

14. Why do you think such shifts in MOI are taking place? Why do we need to have the English language as MOI in our schools?
15. At the national level policies, it has been stated that the mother tongues of the students can be used as MOI. But it has not been implemented as intended. What do you think is the problem or barrier for that?
16. Are there any socio-cultural constraints for implementation of indigenous languages as MOI (such as class hierarchies, religions)?
17. What is your general view on the relation among students' L₁, L₂, and L₃ (if applicable) in the educational setting?
18. What will be the local policy for the local languages to be used as MOI? Has there been any progress towards managing those languages in education?
19. Do you think the language of instruction and the quality of education are related to each other? If yes, how?
20. Which language(s) do you think the current infrastructure supports to be used as MOI?
21. How do you think the schools (basically the public ones) have managed to teach in English or in any other language?
22. What do you think about the future consequences of the increasing use of English in our schools? What complexities do you see in implementing the national, provincial and local MOI policies in the secondary schools of your locality?
23. Finally, do you have any other comments on how the MOI issue can be settled well?

References

- Feng, A. W., Adamson, B. & Dong, F. (2013). *Interview with policymakers*. Technical paper, models of trilingual education in ethnic minority regions of China project. Hong Kong: The Education University of Hong Kong.

Appendix F

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays and Tensions

(Field Observation Form²⁸)

This observation form is prepared to gather information about the overall context of the case schools. The context includes the physical, human, interactional, and programme (educational) settings in which language use is directly and/ or indirectly takes place. This form will be utilized to record the relevant information in the heading as listed. This information will be used as supplementary data for analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the semi-structured interview and focus group methods.

- A. Physical settings:
 - a. Language the posters used in the school premises,
 - b. Is there any difference in building types and the language used?
 - c. Is there any difference in the student types (if any, such as Nepali medium instruction and English medium instruction groups) and language use?
 - d. Signposts used in the school classrooms and the offices
 - e. the codes and/or scripts written in dresses or any other materials used (linguistic observation)
 - f. Location of the school, and its community surrounding (such as what ethnic population, what language in the neighborhood, etc.)
- B. Human setting:
 - a. The nature of the staff (their ethnicity, languages, age groups, qualifications, subject-specific information, experiences)
 - b. The proportion of the teaching and non-teaching staff
 - c. Nature of the students (their profiles based on their ethnicity, language, caste (if applicable), religion (if any), gender, etc.)
 - d. Nature of the combination of the school management committee (SMC) members
- C. Interactional setting:
 - a. The way teachers' talk to each other in the offices
 - b. The way teachers' interact with students in the office, outside the office, outside the classroom, etc.
 - c. The language used in planned and unplanned meetings, casual talk, etc.
 - d. The verbal communications, the non-verbal communication (such as the language used in the pictures, signposts, instructions, etc.)
 - e. The language students use to interact in the playground
 - f. The language students use within their group or across their groups
 - g. Is there anything linguistic feature in students' and teachers' own group formulations?
 - h. The language used in the assembly (before and after school, if applicable)

²⁸ The thematic categories of this form are based on the ideas taken from Cohen, et al. (2018) listed in the reference below.

- i. The language used in the other functions (such as school days, and celebrations, if any)
 - j. The language used to communicate with parents, and other guests/visitors in the school premises
- D. Programme setting:
 - a. Classroom resources
 - b. Resources for extracurricular activities
 - c. Textbooks used (textbooks languages: Nepali, English or other)
 - d. Language teaching workloads in the curriculum, routines,
 - e. Additional language learning courses (if any)
 - f. Any language improvement programmes, (if yes, which languages)
- E. Emerging linguistic evidence: (any other striking evidence of linguistic practice not covered in the above-mentioned headings (A-D) will be recorded here.

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References

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th Ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Appendix G

The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

(Classroom observation form)

A. General information:

1. Class background data:

- school:
- date:
- total number of students in the class:
- gender balance: (boys and girls):
- Teachers' estimated SES about their students:
 - 100% from well-to-do families
 - 70:30
 - 50:50
 - 30:70
 - 100% from low-income families
- Subject taught: School subject other than English ☐ English as a subject ☐

2. Language profile of students in the class: The ethnic background of students:

- What ethnic groups do students belong to by birth:
- Percentage of students belonging to different groups:
 - Bahuns/Chhetries:
 - Madhesis:
 - Indigenous communities (such as Newars, Gurungs, Tamangs, etc.):
 - Others:
- Strongest language of the students in this class:
 - percentage of students whose strongest language is indigenous:
 - percentage of students whose strongest language is Nepali:
- Are the indigenous languages taught in the school? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - If yes, how has it been used.....

3. Language profile of the teacher:

Ethnic background:

Highest education received:

Teaching experience (years of being a teacher):

Subjects taught: (such as English, social study,...)

Age range: 25 or below ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 and above ☐

Languages known: (international, national and local/indigenous): (Self-rated perception of the proficiency)

Languages	Fluent	Average	Limited	Not known
English				

Nepali				
Native language (if applicable)				
Additional languages known (if any)				

4. Materials used in the classroom:

Language of the textbook(s):

Textbooks published: Government agency ☐ private companies ☐

B. Classroom observation (Activities in the classroom)

1: Classroom and the language shifts (in lesson structures)

Activities		Rarely	Occasionally	very often	Always
<i>Beginning of the lesson</i>					
Languages used in greeting the pupils	English				
	Nepali				
	Other				
Languages used by students in response	English				
	Nepali				
	Other				
Language of teacher's response	.....			
<i>During the lesson</i>					
<i>Aspects/Activities</i>	<i>Remarks (events, sequences, and frequency of language shifts or transitions in the activities during the lesson presentation)</i>				
Language written on the board	.....			
Languages used in asking questions	.....			
Language used in the explanation of the contents	.....			
Language of students' peer interactions	.....			
Language of teacher-student interactions	.....			

Nature of contents and language used for explanation	.....
Teachers' language use in questioning	.....
Teachers' language use in dealing with group or pair work activities in the class	.....
Language of the materials used in lesson delivery	
Other emerging notes. (Specify)	.....
<i>Closing of the lesson</i>	
The language used in summarizing	.....
The language used in the explanation of the assignments	.....
language in which assignment provided	.....

2. Does the teacher respect the native-language use of the students? Or are there any issues generated due to other languages used than the language of instruction specified?

.....

3. Method/approach assumed to have been used: Communicative ☐ Task-based ☐ Grammar translation ☐ Other ☐

4. Does the teacher use different languages to address the whole class and to the individual students? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, specify the level and nature of the language use.

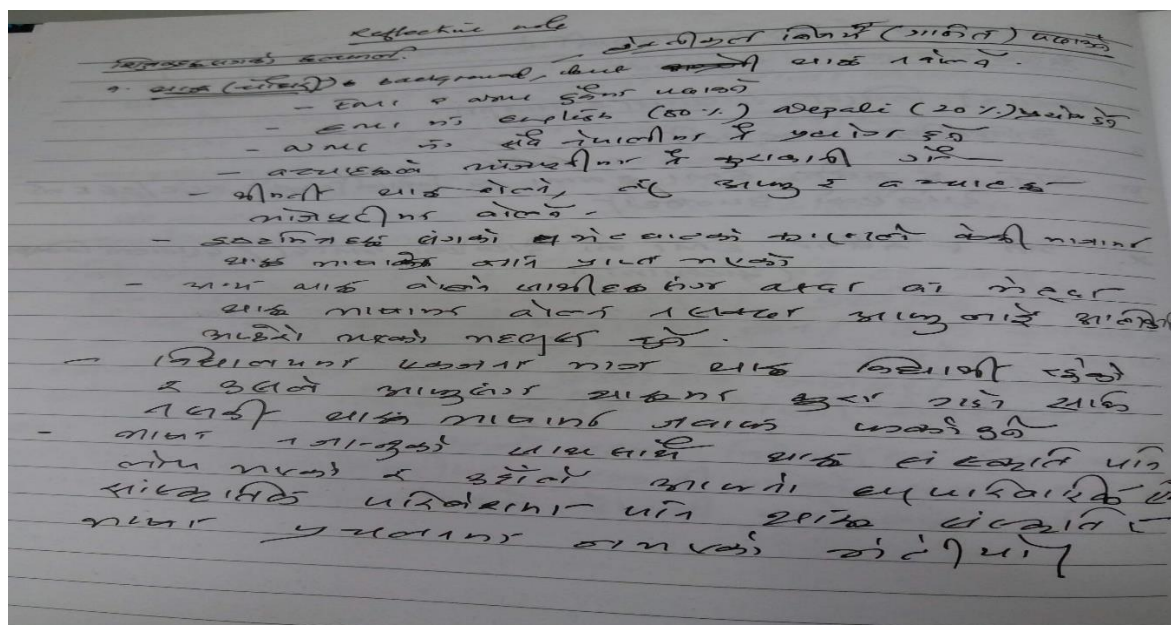
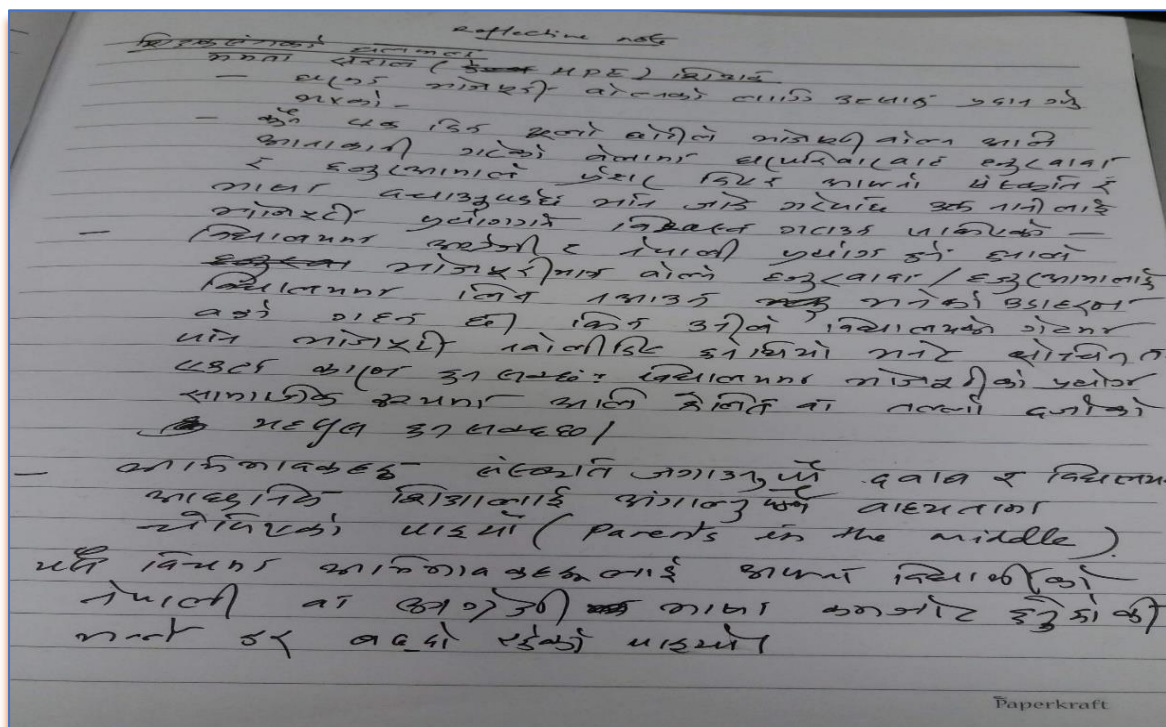
- All or predominantly in English
- All or predominantly in Nepali
- In mixed languages (Nepali and English)
- In mixed languages (Nepali, English and other languages)

C. Any other comments not addressed above:

.....
.....

Appendix H

The sample pictures posted here are the reflective notes taken down by the researcher during the field work in the respective case contexts.



Appendix I: Tabling of the data (initial coding)

Factors		Actors/people and contexts														
		Case 1					Case 2					Case 3				
		PM	HT	Ts	Ps	Ss	PM	HT	Ts	Ps	Ss	PM	HT	Ts	Ps	Ss
Global	Globalization															
	Quality education															
	Opportunity															
	Higher education /study abroad															
	Global competition															
	Foreign employment															
National	Nationalism/national identity															
	Privatization															
	Influences of Media															
	Access to Higher education															
	National assessments (high stake examinations)															
	Survival of public-school system															
	Historical precedence															
	Public service opportunities															
Local	Community Prestige															
	Opportunities/employment															
	Studying better subjects															
	Local/ethnic/indigenous identity															
	Social mobility															
	Competition with private schools															
	Schools' survival and job security															

Note: This table, after the discussion with my principal supervisor, was revised, and the thematic organization changed accordingly, as presented in appendix J, which I adopted to organize the findings.

Appendix J: Revised and reorganized table for thematic data analysis

Factors			Actors/people and contexts														
			Case 1					Case 2					Case 3				
			PM	HT	Ts	P s	S s	P M	H T	T s	P s	S s	P M	H T	T s	P s	S s
Life Chances	Global	Foreign Employment															
		Participation in global knowledge economy															
		Access to higher education															
	National	Studying better subjects															
		National Assessments															
		Access to higher education															
	Local	Employment in local organizations															
Identity	Global	Being global															
	National	Nationalism/nati onal identity															
	Local																
		ethnic/indigenou s identity															
		Social mobility															
		Community prestige															

		Social class identity															
Actors Responding to neoliberal discourses, and the emerging contexts	Global	Transnational mobility															
	National	Media influence															
	Local	Survival of schools															
		Competition with private schools															
		Teachers' job security															
		Social mobility															

Appendix K

Demographic information of the participants and Interview and observation data

SN	Data type and participants	Interview	Focus group	Class observation		Subject taught	Participant's language background	Total duration
		Audio	Audio/video	Audio	Note taking			
Case 1 (Bhairav) (All names here are pseudonyms)								
1	Aasa	A*(31:04+20=51:18)	-	25:32 min	notes	Language	Marwari	83:43
2	Chauhan	A(1:17:52)	-	35 min	notes	Science/Maths	Bhojpuri	1:52:52
3	Sajan	A(1:08:28)	-	38 min	notes	Social studies	Bhojpuri	1:46:28
4	Magul	A(39:05 + 10.00=49:05)	-	36 min	notes	Others (Technical)	Maithili	1:25:05
5	Kamal	A(1:05:08)	-	-		Head teacher	Maithili	1:05:08
6	Parent group		A (47:24) + 17	-	-	-	Bhojpuri and Maithili	1:04:24
7	Student group	-	A (51:18)	-	-	-	Bhojpuri, Maithili, Bajjika	51:18
8	Jharana	A(44:12)	-	-	-	Policymaker	Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu	44:12)
Case 2 (Janak)								
9	Yamu	A(39:20)		26:16	Notes	Language	Maithili	1:05:36
10	Jit	A(37:57)		25:30	Notes	Science/Math	Maithili	1:03:27
11	Nayak	A(39:20)		14:07	Notes	Social studies	Maithili	53:27
12	Dambar	A(49:38)		25:10	Notes	Others (Account)	Maithili/Urd u	1:14:48
13	Rain	A(37:40+10.00)	-	-		Head teacher	Maithili	47:40
14	Parent group	-	A/V(1:05:39)	-	-	Parents	Maithili	1:05:39
15	Student group		A(45:24)	-	-	Students	Maithili and Tamang	45:25
16	Budha	A(32:46) + 15:00		-	-	Policymaker	Maithili/Urd u	47:46

Case 3 (Laxmi)								
17	Maya	A(27:17)	-	22:00	Notes	Language	Nepali	47:17
18	Pradhan	A(30:25)	-	32:00	Notes	Maths/science	Newar	1:02:25
19	Mandal	A(38:27)	-	30:00	Notes	Social studies	Maithili	1:08:27
20	Kanchan	A(45:10)	-	25:00	Notes	Other (HPE)	Nepali	1:05:10
21	Pius	A(1:09:42+12:00)	-	-	-	Head teacher	Nepali	1:21:42
22	Bandhu	A(1:12:37)	-	-	-	Policymaker	Nepali	1:12:37
23	Parent group	-	1:16:10	-	-	Parents	Nepali, Tamang, Magar, Newar, Tharu, Rai	1:16:10
24	Student group	-	A(49:50)	-	-	Students	Tharu, Nepali, Newar, Tamang, Magar, Rai	49:50
Total lengths of data from 48 participants (C1**+C2+C3)		18 interviews: 14:18:59	6 focus groups: 06:15:15	12 class observations: 05:56:58	-			26:02:51

**Audio-recorded; ** case*

Appendix 1

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (FOR SCHOOL)

Project title: *The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal:
 Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions*

My school hereby consents to participate in the Doctor of Philosophy research project supervised by Dr. Tae Hee Choi (Associate Professor) and conducted by Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel (Ph.D. student) of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership in The Education University of Hong Kong.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and may be published. However, our right to privacy will be retained, i.e., the personal details of my students'/teachers' will not be revealed.

The procedure and details as set out in the **attached** information sheet have been fully explained. I understand the benefits and risks involved. My students'/teachers' participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that we have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Signature:

Name of the Head teacher/Delegate:

(Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss)

Post:

Name of School:

Address:

Date:

INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal:
Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

Your school is invited to participate in a project supervised by Dr. Tae Hee Choi (Associate Professor) and conducted by Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel (Ph.D. student) of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership in The Education University of Hong Kong.

This research aims to explore the medium of instruction (MOI) policy, its shaping factors, interplays and tensions in the implementation of the policy in the secondary schools of Nepal. It involves schools as cases. A total of 48 participants (3 local education authorities, 3 headteachers, 12 teachers, 15 parents and 15 students) will be involved in this study. From your school, one headteacher, four teachers, five students, and five parents will be involved as participants. During this research process, the headteacher and the selected teachers will be interviewed. Similarly, the students and the parents will be engaged in separate focus group discussions (FGDs). Each interview and FGD will take place for approximately an hour and 1.5 hours respectively. Both interviews and FGDs will be audiotaped. In addition to this, case observation will be made to collect information about the language practices taking place in school premises. The observation includes note-taking, collection of the visuals (such as still pictures) and audio-video recordings especially those that depict various forms of language use.

It is to be noted that participation of all the informants is voluntary, and there is no known risk in participating in this study. They have every right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All the information related to them will remain confidential and will be anonymized when the results are disseminated. The results of this research will be disseminated in the form of a thesis, journal articles and oral/visual presentations in the conferences and seminars.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel at prempd@s.eduhk.hk or his supervisor at choith@eduhk.hk.

In addition to this, if you have any concerns about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee by email at hrec@eduhk.hk or by mail to Research and Development Office, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Prem Prasad Poudel

(Principal investigator)

Appendix -2

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (for individual participants)

Project title: The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers,
Interplays, and Tensions

I _____ hereby consent to my child participating in the captioned research supervised by Dr. Tae Hee Choi (Associate Professor) and conducted by Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel (Ph.D. student) of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership in The Education University of Hong Kong.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and may be published. However, our right to privacy will be retained, i.e., the personal details of my child will not be revealed.

The procedure as set out in the **attached** information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefits and risks involved. My child's participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that we have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____

(In case of minors)

Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Date _____

---/---/2019 _____

INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: The Enactment of the Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Nepal: Shapers, Interplays, and Tensions

Your school is invited to participate in a project supervised by Dr. Tae Hee Choi (Associate Professor) and conducted by Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel (Ph.D. student) of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership in The Education University of Hong Kong.

This research aims to explore the medium of instruction (MOI) policy, its shaping factors, interplays and tensions in the implementation of the policy in the secondary schools of Nepal. It involves schools as cases. A total of 48 participants (3 local education authorities, 3 headteachers, 12 teachers, 15 parents and 15 students) will be involved in this study. From your school, one headteacher, four teachers, five students, and five parents will be involved as participants. During this research process, the headteacher and the selected teachers will be interviewed. Similarly, the students and the parents will be engaged in separate focus group discussions (FGDs). Each interview and FGD will take place for approximately an hour and 1.5 hours respectively. Both interviews and FGDs will be audiotaped. In addition to this, case observation will be made to collect information about the language practices taking place in school premises. The observation includes note-taking, collection of the visuals (such as still pictures) and audio-video recordings especially those that depict various forms of language use.

It is to be noted that participation of all the informants is voluntary, and there is no known risk in participating in this study. They have every right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All the information related to them will remain confidential and will be anonymized when the results are disseminated. The results of this research will be disseminated in the form of a thesis, journal articles and oral/visual presentations in the conferences and seminars.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Mr. Prem Prasad Poudel at prempd@s.eduhk.hk or his supervisor at choith@edu.hk.

In addition to this, if you have any concerns about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee by email at hrec@edu.hk or by mail to Research and Development Office, The Education University of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Prem Prasad Poudel

(Principal investigator)

The End