

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCE OF ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN NEPALI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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This study explores how basic level teachers perceive and experience the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in under-resourced community schools in Nepal. We conducted this qualitative interpretative research adopting a narrative inquiry research design. For this, we selected four participants from under-resourced community schools in Dang district who had observed and experienced the phenomena. We collected data and information through in-depth interviews with the participants. The findings reveal that implementing EMI in under-resourced community schools is highly challenging due to a lack of adequately qualified teachers, low proficiency of the teachers in English and limited resources to manage the EMI classrooms effectively. Moreover, basic level teachers, without having an academic background in English, often face greater challenges and difficulties in adopting EMI. The study also highlights the lack of adequate training and professional development supports for the teachers, further complicating the transition to EMI.

Keywords: English medium instruction, quality education, linguistic capital, perceptions, under-resourced school

1. Introduction

English as medium of instruction is a debatable issue and has become a subject of international discourse (Phyak & Sharma, 2020). Educators and stakeholders hold different opinions and perspectives on it, particularly in multiple countries like Nepal, where English is not used as a first language (Ghimire et al, 2025). In this regard, Joshi and Paneru (2025) point out that using it in multilingual countries has both advantages and disadvantages. EMI provides access to global markets, but at the same time it poses a threat to local languages and cultures. Despite this ongoing, many community schools in Nepal have been adopting it in recent years. According to Richards and Pun (2022), the use of English language to teach diverse academic disciplines such as math, science, or economics in English rather than the students' native tongue or dominant language is known as English Medium Instruction.

Similarly, English-medium instruction (EMI), defined as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro, 2017, p. 35). Paudel (2021) mentions that EMI is a model of teaching in which non-English subjects are taught through the medium of English. It is an instructional practice of using English to teach non-academic subjects: finance, medicine, engineering, and science (Zhao & Dixon, 2017). So, basically, EMI is considered the practice of teaching classroom content through English in a context where English is not used as the first or official language.

EMI is the global trend and has been extensively researched both in home and abroad (Joshi & Paneru, 2025). The Nepali community schools have been implementing EMI for two significant reasons. The first motive is related to the

institutional support, sustainability and globalization. If they do not implement EMI, the basic level classes will run out of students (Paudel, 2021). With the growing influence of globalization and the perceived value of English for academic and career opportunities, many community schools have adopted EMI to enhance their competitiveness and attract students (Khadka, 2024). Similarly, the second motif behind EMI is the parental choices and pressure (Sah & Li, 2018). It's true that in Nepal parents prefer EMI and send their children to private schools. They associate EMI with quality education which is partially true.

The shift of EMI has raised concerns about its impact on students' learning, cultural identity, and educational equity in multilingual Nepal. Supporters of EMI argue that it opens doors to global knowledge and career prospects. On the other hand, critics warn that it can create language-related obstacles, undermine local languages, and deepen the divide between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Paudel, 2021). English as a medium of instruction (EMI) have reinforced a specific form of social injustice, epistemic injustice, for language minoritized and indigenous parents and students (Phyak & Sah, 2024). EMI is often associated with prestige and quality education in Nepal. Paudel (2021) states that many private schools have persuaded many well-to-do families because these private institutions have assured quality education through EMI. Justifying the reasons for introducing the EMI policy in community schools of Nepal, Neupane (2023) argues that the mushrooming of private schools, increased globalization, and migration from villages to towns for better education raised concerns about the survival of community schools, making the shift in the medium of instruction a pressing necessity.

Teachers', parents', stakeholders' and students' perception on EMI play vital roles in the effective implementation of it in the classrooms. Among them teachers and students are directly connected to the classes and activities. In this context, Khadka (2024) emphasizes the balanced opinions on the adoption of EMI in schools, with parents preferring EMI over Nepali medium. Similarly,

Paudel (2021), based on the data from secondary level teachers and students' parents, finds that the use of EMI in school education is a contentious subject due to concerns over the loss of local knowledge, despite its benefits. In the similar vein, Rai (2024) indicated that the students used their EMI experience to build their confidence both personally and academically, despite the difficulties they faced in and out of school.

Mahara (2023) undertakes significant research on EMI while considering the opinions of teachers. The findings of his research revealed that teachers generally hold the positive perspectives on EMI, also they encounter significant challenges and hardships in its effective implementation. There are different reasons behind such challenges including poor English language proficiency of teachers, insufficient professional development opportunities and institutional support. In another context, Rauteda (2024), explored the non-English subject teachers' ideologies towards the use of EMI in community schools of Nepal. He concluded that teachers hold different ideologies on EMI. Some of the ideologies include internationalization of English language, linguistic capital in the education market and linguistic hegemony of English language in developing countries.

There are no clear-cut criteria defined by the government or other related documents to determine under resourced community schools in Nepal. However, references can be drawn from Education Regulations, 2002 and School Sector Development Plan, 2016. The number of students in under-resourced community is relatively low compared to other community schools. The standard number of students per class in community schools is fifty in the Valley, forty-five in the Terai, and forty in the hilly and Himalayan regions (Education Regulation, 2002).

Similarly, in under-resourced community schools, teachers are assigned extra classes or workloads due to the lack of an adequate number of teachers. Article 84 of the (Education Regulations, 2002) clearly mentions that a teacher in a community school shall conduct at least 24 teaching periods per week. The principals of under-resourced community schools also face a heavy workload,

as they are responsible for multiple administrative and academic tasks. However, they receive very low allowances for their positions. According to Education Regulations (2002), the monthly allowance for headmasters is as follows: (a) Headmaster of a secondary school – Rs. 500, (b) Headmaster of a lower secondary school – Rs. 300, and (c) Headmaster of a primary school – Rs. 200. In economically strong community schools, the school management committees add extra allowance to the teachers and head teachers.

Schools should have certain infrastructures to maintain a child-friendly environment. Classrooms should be at least 9 feet high, safe from heat and rain, spacious, clean, and well-ventilated with sufficient natural light (Education Regulation, 2002). Schools must also provide adequate furniture, teaching materials, blackboards, maps, globes, and mathematical instruments. In addition, there should be a library with curricula, textbooks, and reference books, as well as laboratories, safe drinking water, separate toilets for boys and girls, and first aid facilities (SSDP, 2016). A school must have a spacious compound where students can gather, along with a playground and sports materials. Likewise, the minimum required number of teachers is five for secondary schools, four for lower secondary schools, five for primary (classes 1–5), three for primary (classes 1–3), and two for pre-primary schools (Education Regulation, 2002). Community schools that lack the above-mentioned facilities and requirements are categorized as under-resourced schools.

The scenario of medium of instruction is quite confusing. The major sufferers are the basic level teachers who are assigned and appointed to teach any subjects in basic level (grades 1–5). The basic level teachers (1–5) who do not read English as major subject in college level and working in low resourced community schools are my research participants who are compelled to teach academic subjects like Math and Science in English. The aim of this research is to explore the perception and practices of basic level teachers on the adoption of EMI in low resourced community schools in Dang. It also aimed to explore how the teachers' practices and how they prioritize English, their attitudes toward the utilization of

Nepali, which is a nationally dominant language, as well as other local/indigenous languages. In particular, basic level teachers' (1–5) opinions and ideas on EMI adoption in low resourced community schools in Nepal remain under explored in existing research. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring their perceptions, specifically in the context of teaching academic subjects in English within Nepal's multilingual classrooms.

2. Theoretical framework

This study is guided by Bourdieu's Theory of Linguistic Capital, which claims that language proficiency can serve as a form of social power, influencing individuals' access to resources and opportunities. In the context of English as a Medium of Instruction in Nepal, English efficiency is perceived and valued as a valuable asset that can enhance students' academic and socioeconomic prospects. However, the effective utilization of this linguistic capital depends on the adequacy of teacher preparation, resources, and institutional support and so on. In this sense, EMI has become desirable linguistic capital, the embodied cultural capital that confers access and power, and provides advantages in achieving a higher social status in society (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu (1993) argues that when a certain lingual capability has higher power than others, it becomes linguistic capital that has the power to regulate the value of lingual utterances and the spread, accumulation, and reproduction of them. EMI as linguistic capital can help develop an "alternative hegemony," which can potentially "challenge both traditional linguistic hierarchies as well as the elite appropriation of English" in Asia (Rao, 2017, p. 284). EMI is an indispensable tool to improve English skills among their citizens so that they can enter the global job market (Macaro, 2017).

Pierre Bourdieu's Language and Symbolic Power (1991) framework is profoundly useful for studying analyzing the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in context of Nepali community schools, where English language choice is not just the pedagogical but also political, ideological, and symbolic.

English functions as a symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) in Nepal. It is often associated with modernity, upward mobility, higher education, and global opportunities. Students proficient in English often have better access to jobs, scholarships, and social networks privileges (Bourdieu, 1991) that students from community schools, where exposure to English is limited, often lack. English has become the legitimate language in education, business, and global communication (Bourdieu, 1991).

3. Method

For this study, we used narrative inquiry as a research method to explore participants' life experiences. As a qualitative research approach, this study explores the teachers' perceptions and experiences, which addresses the complexities of human experiences in a classroom and outside of it (Webster & Mertova, 2007). We employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Beginning with a narrative view of experience, researchers attend to place, temporality, and sociality, from within a methodological three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that allows for inquiry into both researchers' and participants' storied life experiences (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). The primary sources of the data were the basic level teachers of non-English academic subjects and not having English academic background from low resourced community schools of Dang district. Similarly, we used books, journals, previously carried out researches and policy related documents as secondary sources of data.

We selected four participants from low resourced community schools of Ghorahi Sub metropolitan city as my research participants. We purposefully selected information-rich participants (Flick, 2018) who can address the research questions. We selected participants having more than five years of teaching experiences in EMI classes in low resourced community schools and not having academic degree in English. Basant, Ambika, Aadhish and Dila (pseudonyms) participated in our study. All of them were from the under resourced basic schools of Ghorahi Sub metropolitan city, Dang. Basant, 43, completed SLC from one of the private schools of Dang had good communication skills in English. He

possesses over a decade of teaching experience. Ambika, 45, was another research participant of this study. She has been teaching Math and Science in primary classes for the last ten years. During the period of data collection, she was the primary level coordinator of the school. Before getting transfer to this school, she taught at one of the model schools of Rolpa district. Moreover. Aadhish, 33, was my third research participant, comparatively younger than others. He passed Teacher Service Commission (TSC) exam in 2017 and appointed as a primary level teacher. He completed bachelor's degree in Health Education from one of the constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. Lastly, Dila, 52, was the fourth research participant. She had experience of teaching at English medium classes for more than twenty years.

The first researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the participants individually in Nepali as they prefer it. Each interview was lasted for 40 minutes to 1 hour followed by further informal conversation with the participants in the same subject matter. We adopted interview questions to elicit the information about the EMI practices and experiences. We recorded the interview with participants' prior consent, and transcribed them for analysis. Coding is a significant process to generate themes and patterns (Saldana, 2016). After all, we coded, categorized, and thematically analyzed by comparing and contrasting with the earlier literature. We followed the thematic approach of data analysis proposed by Barkhuizen et.al. (2014) where the researcher reads the data repeatedly, codes it, categorizes, extracts and recognizes the thematic headings.

4. Findings and discussion

Based on the data analysis process the following five themes were generated as presented below for this research study.

4.1 Teachers' perception of English as a medium of instruction

Perception is a subjective phenomenon of understanding and interpreting something. Teachers have diverse perspectives on EMI, but have accepted its presence in the classroom. Participants acknowledged that despite cultural,

social, and economic constraints, English has played a crucial role in providing worldwide exposure to teachers and students, particularly in science, education, business, politics, and technology. English is a worldwide language. It is everywhere in the field education, technology, medicine, politics and diplomacy. So, almost all teacher participants agreed to accept the presence of English language even in basic level classes as well. Regarding this, Dila (Pseudo name), states that:

Learning English from early grades is beneficial. Students exposed to English early are likely to perform well in later, similar to private school children. I started learning English in grade 4. I'm still struggling to learn and speak English. I joined college with English as a major but I eventually left it and shifted to Health Education. If I had learned English from an early grade, I believe I could have done much better in my life. As a teacher of English medium, still I'm suffering a lot. Even at these old days, I'm learning English to teach my primary level students. Therefore, in my view, it is important to practice English from the early grades so that they can become proficient in English and gain greater benefits in the future.

Similarly, Basant (Pseudo name), has a similar opinion as Dila, He further stated that:

Last year, I visited the US to see my daughter and son-in-law. Although I teach Maths in primary classes in EMI, my English is not very strong. My daughter advised me to take English classes before visiting, so I joined nearby language center to learn English. I also often search for ideas on the internet, especially using ChatGPT, which requires English skills. Today, with digital literacy becoming essential, most information and tools are in English—even using a mobile phone requires it. Therefore, I strongly support introducing English from early grades so students can become competitive users of the language in the future.

In a similar vein, Aadhis (Pseudo name) posits the same view as the other participants. He added:

Yes, it is true that EMI has negative impact on learners' mother tongue to some extent. However, these days it is largely a parental choice. How can we deny? Since parents willingly send their children to EMI classes, we cannot do much about it. Moreover, it is not only a parental choice but also a global trend. There is nothing wrong with EMI as it creates better opportunities in the workplace as well. Although I didn't study English as a major subject my higher studies, I have been able to handle EMI classes because I studied in a boarding school.

Khati (2016) posits the similar views as our participants. He argues that EMI is a gateway to joining the global economic, academic, and diplomatic community due to English being an international language and a global lingua franca. Ambika (Pseudo name), said that, “the government of Nepal has decided to implement EMI in community schools, particularly from the primary level, due to excessive pressure from the parents, we can't neglect it.” According to the Constitution of 2015, school-level education has been handed over to the authorities of local governments. The local government started to implement the EMI policy in most of the community schools across the country.

There are many researches which have the similar findings as our participants' perception on EMI. Regarding this, (Rai, 2024), claims that EMI practice has been considered supportive to the students for acquiring higher English proficiency so that they are prepared for better future settlement. By analyzing the participants view, it is clear that they have positive perception towards the use of EMI in community schools of Nepal.

All the participants accept the presence of English language even at the lower grades, as they believe it provides benefits for the future. These benefits include securing better career opportunities, travelling to foreign countries where English is required and meeting the language demand of the job markets. English is often regarded as the “key to a better future” and an index of social, economic, and even cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

4.2 English as linguistic capital: Redefining school competitiveness

Despite the many indigenous languages, Nepali was made the medium of instruction in 1976 (Eagel, 1999; Weinberg, 2013). Nepali only ideology remained very strong until 1990 within the “one -nation- one -language” framework (Poudel, 2019).

English medium instruction was popular in Nepal since when Jung Bahadur Rana established an English school named Durbar High school in Kathmandu to teach his off-springs English (Poudel, 2021). He brought two teachers from England as well. Since then, English has been creating a kind of space in Nepal. Nepal has been a multilingual or plurilingual society, though histrionically, the country's elites have arguably exploited language as a means of controlling the uneducated populace (Giri, 2020). Private schools have been adopting English as a medium of instruction in schools whereas majority of community schools are running in Nepali medium. It's true that private schools are celebrating high number of students due to EMI. The success story of private EMI schools has led to many Nepalese parents wanting an English medium education for their children regardless of their socio economic status (Sah & Lee, 2018). Ambika, one of my participants, shares a similar experience on this matter.

The situation is that many parents want to send their children to private schools because of EMI. They believe that EMI is associated with quality education, which I know is not true. Last year, during my admission campaign, I tried to convince many guardians that EMI does not necessarily mean quality education, but they were unwilling to listen. Most of these parents come from low income families. back ground family, yet even without earning much, they still want to send their children to private schools, thinking that English language will create lots of advantages and opportunities for their children in the future. To end this myth and to increase students' number, our school adopted EMI.

Similar perceptions of EMI as an effective means to compete with private schools were also shared by other participants as well. They also noted that the first reason for adopting EMI is to compete with private schools and the second reason is that English is everywhere in the world. It is a way for the students to keep up with globalization. Mr. Basant mentioned in the interview:

English language has been creating job opportunities both in national and international markets. My brother is currently working at Dubai-based company and holds a respectable position because his English is strong. Nowadays, learning English feels like a necessity, as it is the language of technology and online business.

These days, community schools have two kinds of education system within the same school periphery. My participant, Dila (Pseudo name) states that;

At one point, Our school experienced a significant decline in students enrollment at the primary classes In response, the school management committee decided to introduce EMI with less fees in comparison to private schools. This decision resulted in a dramatic increase in students enrollment the following year. At present, there are four sections in each English-medium stream, while the Nepali-medium stream has only one section. Furthermore, English medium students continue their studies even during summer vacation, whereas Nepali medium students typically celebrate a month long vacation.

This two streams of education within the same school creating a gap in the society between poor and elite. English has become powerful language in Nepal and it has assumed linguistic superiority over Nepali and local minority languages. Caddell (2007) argues that, rather than equalizing education, promoting English at the expense of local language create an increasing gap in quality schooling between poor and rich because “valuable indigenous language and culture resources, as well as the potential for effective bilingual/multilingual education, are being lost (p.150).

From the above discussion, we can say that English is creating a big space of its in Nepalese educational setting. From the teachers' views, it can be said that English has been adopting in community schools to increase the flow of the students and another reason is that they cannot ignore its presence in educational sector as it is language used in every sector including education as well.

4.3 Teachers' experience of training and workshops on EMI

In fact, switching to EMI, without enough preparedness, caused a comprehension crisis in content learning, low proficiency in both Nepali and English, and loss of mother tongue for the students, resulting in the wider gaps in quality education (Sah & Li, 2018). Similarly, training and workshop prepare the teachers for the real classrooms. The researcher asks a question to the participants that whether they are getting training and institutional support for the effective implementation of EMI or not. The participants responded differently. Participant Ambika responded:

Yes, my previous school, which was the big school where I taught for more than 15 years, provided extensive training and workshops related to EMI. Notably, it was the first community schools to adopt EMI in Dang district. The school brought two foreigner volunteers from abroad to conduct training on EMI which lasted for two and a half months. That training was very effective. However, after transferring to my current school, I have not received any training or workshops, as this school is not financially strong.

According to Richard and Farrell (2005), Teacher professional development is a kind of self-agency. It means that teachers themselves must be active to grow in their profession. Our participant Dila from another low resourced school has similar opinions. She said that:

Professional development is self and continuous process. In this modern era, we can't only rely on the training provided by schools or training centers. We have to learn and grow ourselves. There are lots of ways to

do it. We can take help from internet and sometimes even from our children. My children helped me a lot to improve my English. Its true that professional development is ongoing process and needs teachers motivation as well.

My third participant, Basant has different opinions. He further said that:

It's true that these days teachers can learn by using the internet, but online materials and resources are not superior to human interaction. Face to face training are very insightful and enriching for the teachers. Regarding EMI training, our municipality conducted a five-day training session on EMI for the primary-level teachers in 2020. It was very fruitful programme, focusing on a pedagogy and language. However, no similar training sessions have been conducted since then. Last year, our school planned to conduct workshops on EMI, but they couldn't take place due to limited funds and resources.

Aadhis (Pseudonym) has shared interesting experiences regarding professional development activities. He explained:

Last year, we requested the local ward office to allow us to observe how model schools implement EMI. As the ward office provided very limited funding, we covered the expenses ourselves. We observed two schools and their commendable, particularly on EMI. Both schools are model schools in the Rupendehi district, and both have drawn dramatic improvement. Both model schools rose dramatically. Behind this change there are various reasons and most obviously, EMI is one of the main reasons.

From the above discussion, we can say that teachers need training, mentoring, workshops and conference to grow professionally. It is also important factor for the success of any educational institution. Professional development is directed towards both the institution's goals and the teacher's own personal goals (Richards & Farrell, 2005). So, teachers need professionally support to grow personally and professionally

which ultimately lead to the success of the institutions.

In this regard, Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital helps explain why such training workshops, professional development activities are so crucial to EMI settings. By enhancing their language proficiency and pedagogical skills, teachers accumulate valuable linguistic capital that enhance their status and empowers their classroom practices. This practice contributes to students' academic success within EMI dominated education field.

4.4 EMI as a burden for teachers

EMI is really a burden for basic level teachers who are not from English background in their academic journey. All the participants have similar views on this. Their English proficiency is not good but they are compelled to teach in English medium classes. Reading this, Participant Ambika has shared her emotional story. She states that:

Before being transferred to this school, I was teaching at one of the public school in Rolpa, in Nepali medium classes. When the transfer process proceeded ahead, I faced many challenges because of EMI. Although I am a permanent teacher, I was compelled to take an exam in English so the school administration could assess and measure my English proficiency. I had no options but to take the exams. This reflects the real struggle of teacher when trying to transfer to city-centred schools.

Another participant Dila has shared her story like that:

EMI is really a headache for me when this school adopted it. I had not studied English at the college level. The school administration assigned me to teach Science and Math up to grade five. I couldn't refuse because I was appointed as a primary level teacher and required to teach all the subjects. It was real a struggle for me. At that time, the school adopted Lotus English series, following the tradition of private school. I sought help from my children and spent entire night reading the

books. How can I even describe my nightmare with English?

We can say that implementing EMI in community school has different facets. The first one is to increase the flow of the students, otherwise, the local education body cut the quotas of the teachers in ration with the number of students every year. The second reason behind adopting EMI is related to economical aspects of the schools. Regarding this aspect, participant Aadhish responded:

Our schools offer two mediums. Nepali medium has fewer students compared to English medium. Students must pay fees to enroll in EMI classes. This strengthens the school's economic features. Teachers are required to teach in EMI at all costs, or else the SMC will request their transfer. This is the fate of teachers teaching in EMI.

From the discussion, we can say that the introduction of EMI the introduction of EMI was merely a strategy to sell the tag of EMI education in the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1977) dominated by English as a lingua franca. And the only beneficiary of this market strategy was the school for its sustainability and teachers to save their employment (Sah & Lee, 2018).

4.5 Challenges and sustainability in multilingual background

As we all know that Nepal is multilingual and multicultural country. The Medium of Instruction (MOI) is a crucial and often debated issue in multilingual Nepal. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) guarantees the right to receive basic education in one's mother tongue and the right to establish schools according to legal provisions. Similarly, the Education Act and related guidelines align with these constitutional linguistic rights. The eighth amendment to the Education Act (2028) specifies that the MOI can be Nepali, English, or both. Additionally, the MOI can be the same language used for teaching the language subject, and at the primary level—part of Basic Education the MOI can be the mother tongue. However, despite these provisions, many community schools have transitioned to English as the MOI, leading to

challenges for both students and teachers due to their limited language proficiency.

Aadhis has supported the above view like that:

Yes, I believe that children have right to get education in mother tongue, specially at the primary level. Our primary classes are also multilingual, with majority of the children coming from Tharu community. Even though they are from Tharu community, their parents enrolled them in EMI classes. Our municipality has even designed textbook on Tharu language, and we tried to implement them in our schools as well. However, the classes remained vacant. Once again, we are compelled to adopt EMI. The major problem with EMI in lower grade is that students don't understand English well, so we have to use Nepali to make them understand the content. EMI is essentially in name only as most activities are conducted in Nepali. I often use translation techniques in the class, even though my English is quite well. This is the ground reality of EMI in primary classes.

Its constitutional provision that the children have right to get education up to primary level in their mother tongue. There is mismatch between the governmental policies regarding the use of MOI in schools. Regarding this, National Curriculum Framework 2076, clearly states that the schools can adopt EMI to teach subjects likes Math and Science. These policies and provisions create confusion to the teachers and schools. My participant Ambika supports this view and responded:

Last year, the municipality office organized curriculum dissemination programme. The trainer discussed the policies and provisions of EMI in the curriculum. According to the NCF 2076 document, the schools can teach the subjects like Math and Science in English at primary classes. Students don't understand English well. As a result, translation and rote learning are often used as techniques to teach them in the class. Students don't want to speak in English. The students are reluctant to speak in English and remain silent most of the time.

Participant Basant has shared his interesting incident how a parental choice on EMI leads to further problem to their children. He explained:

Last year, a Grade 4 student cried in class while I was checking Science homework because she didn't know the answers and had no one at home to help her with English. I didn't punish her, but she stopped coming to school for over a week. I called her mother, and when she came to school, I explained that her daughter was struggling with English and suggested enrolling her in a Nepali-medium class. She refused, saying she wanted her daughter to study Science in the future and needed her to learn English.

This is just the representative story from the parents. Parents are pressurizing their children to read in English medium classes. Same experience has been shared by another participant Dila. She explained:

Three boys from grade five from English medium dropped out school this year. Last year the dropped out rate of the students from English medium was high. Parents have high expectation from their children without knowing the real interest and level of the children. We can't do anything at this point. It is the parental right to select the medium of instruction for their children.

From the above discussion we can say that EMI is a real challenge for both teachers and students as both of them have lack of proficiency in English language. Strong parental preferences are also creating challenges for both teachers and students. Most of the parents want their children to take Science as their major subjects in post-secondary education that is offered in English-medium instruction, so their children can become either doctors or engineers (Carney, 2003).

5. Conclusion

The study investigated how basic-level teachers from low resourced schools perceived and experienced the medium of instruction in community schools in Nepal. The data analysis revealed that teachers held strong ideologies regarding EMI, viewing it as a form of linguistic capital that could help students develop English

skills and enhance future opportunities. The findings also showed that EMI is the strongly preferred by parents over the Nepali medium in community schools of Nepal.

However, the governmental policies on medium of instruction have created confusions among educators and teachers. Although the government of Nepal has made the provision for a local curriculum and delegated the responsibility of designing it based on the demands of local communities. However in practice, community schools and local education body often include English as an optional subject instead of developing local curriculum. This practice indicates the hegemonic influence of English in the Nepali education field.

From the data, it is also revealed that the same school has adopted two mediums within the single school boundaries, which has created gaps between students, parents and even the wider communities. Without adequate preparation, community schools have been adopting EMI. In fact, switching the MOI, without enough preparedness, contributed to a comprehension crisis in content learning, low proficiency in both Nepali and English, and loss of mother tongue for the students, resulting in wider achievement gaps between the rich and the poor (Sah & Li, 2018).

It is evident that EMI is neither associated with quality education nor effective in the acquisition of English. Moreover, EMI is not effective for content teaching either. Many students who studied English for more than 10 to 15 years still cannot speak English fluently. The teachers in EMI classrooms often rely on translation and code mixing to deliver lessons. EMI poses a real challenges for those teachers who don't read English as their major subject in their universities classes and are not getting relevant training and workshops on EMI. If the teachers don't have fluent English, how can they improve the proficiency level of the students? Therefore, the introduction of EMI was merely a strategy to sell the tag of EMI education in the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1977).

The data also revealed that many community schools have adopted EMI for two main reasons:

the first reason is due to the parental choices and the second reason is to compete with the private schools in terms of number of students and perceived quality education. The community schools that do not implement EMI in primary classes are lacking the number of students. There is a clear gap between the parental understating on EMI and the governmental policies. As the government of Nepal aims to promote mother tongue based education at the primary level, many parents prefer to send their children to EMI schools at least up to the classes of primary level, believing that learning English will guarantee quality education. As a result, the local curriculum exists only in name. Textbooks written in local languages are often left unused, rendering them practically useless. Therefore, language planning and policy need to be guided by a guarantee of children's (human) right to an education in their mother tongue. Additionally, a public awareness campaign on the value of the mother tongue and the meaning of quality education is urgently needed for poor and working class parents (Sah & Li, 2018).

The implementation of EMI in low-resource community schools requires careful consideration. The government, policymakers, curriculum developers and designers, teachers, and parents must be aware and determined to analyze the country's context, need, level of knowledge, and linguistic landscape before making policies and putting them into practice, as data revealed its beneficiaries and irrelevancies both.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) concept of linguistic capital and symbolic power by illustrating how English language functions as an essential resources in Nepali educational field, shaping teachers' ideologies and perceptions, parental and stakeholders choices, and institutional practices.

The findings show many people believe using English as the medium of instruction helps students gain linguistic capital that can potentially enhance students' social status and economic opportunities. However, this symbolic power of English simultaneously reproduces existing social and educational inequalities, as low-resource community schools adopt EMI without adequate

preparation, resulting in comprehension crises, minority language loss, and widened achievement gaps.

This study builds on Bourdieu's theoretical framework by examining how the market-oriented value of English language influences community schools to adopt EMI, not mainly for instructional purposes, but as a strategic tool to gain legitimacy, attract more students and parents, and compete with private schools. It highlights that language policy decisions in Nepal are closely connected to wider systems of power, capital, and social inequality. Therefore, the study calls for a critical examination of the different ideologies behind EMI, going beyond its surface-level claims of improving quality and promoting modern education.

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