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----- ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE -----

Using English as a Medium of Instruction: Challenges and Opportunities of Multilingual Classrooms in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

English as a medium of instruction has great influence in school education in Nepal. It is taken as a pluralistic language which promotes harmony and tolerance, and increases career, opportunities, hope and progress. At the same time, there is a danger of survival for local languages due to the imperialistic role of English. In such a context, this paper has tried to explore the results created due to the extensive use of English as a medium of instruction. To address this objective, the study employs a phenomenological research design under the qualitative approach. The information was collected from eight teachers and eight parents of eight different community schools through interviews and purposively selected two focus group discussions. The collected information from both the tools and sources were coded, triangulated, analyzed, interpreted and presented into three different themes. The results show the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in school education as a debatable issue due to the fear of loss of local languages despite its advantages. This implies that the government should make an appropriate language policy and education system to maintain a harmonious and mutual relationship between English and other

languages in school education so that children can get opportunities in English language, and become aware of their languages.

KEYWORDS: Curricula, English language, English language teaching, mother tongue education, multilingual classroom

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of social interaction, and interaction is a means by which social relations are constructed and maintained. The development of new technology has

enabled people to maintain relationships with the people of far distance, who have diverse national, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. New technology has made the world a global village. In order to have successful communication among the people with diverse nationalities, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they need to learn a common language. In this context, Ke (2015) argues that a common world language is to be aspired for human beings to prevent miscommunication among people who otherwise speak different languages. Global language is expected for comprehensive communication and prevents possible miscommunication. In this connection, Friedline (2019) states that English language provides a system in which people of diverse linguistic backgrounds can coexist peacefully in a harmonious environment with more or less equal opportunities to share their power in their own languages. English language provides rights, justice, equality and freedom to the entire languages that exist in the society and using it as a medium of instruction provides a comprehensive exposure of knowledge and communication.

English is also used widely in the world for different purposes such as in product promotions, television programs, newspapers, education, law, and so on. In this context, Modiano (2001) states that English language cannot be avoided and he claims, “English is now a prerequisite for participation in a vast number of activities. The global village is being constructed in the English language, as are the information highways” (p. 341). English language has become a means of global communication. Similarly, Pennycook (2010) calls English language as a gatekeeper that gives access to different advancements achieved by different sectors: business, education, science and technology to the people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Though English is learnt with norms of native culture along with English language, still countries like India, Africa, Malaysia, etc. have come up with their own English norms through their own varieties such as Indian English, West African English, or Malaysian English. This shows that English has become Englishes. However, Honey (1997) supports that only standard form of English is prestigious and people should learn and follow only standard form of English to enter the world academia. Crystal (2003) affirms, “English fosters cultural opportunity and promotes a climate of international intelligibility” (p. 32). English as the lingua franca of the world has been used in several shares of education in different forms and perspectives. English is described as a destructive, pluralistic and imperialistic language (Gradol, 2002; Gil, 2005). The extensive spread of English language and excessive use of it have brought crucial issues in the multilingual contexts.

English as a language of hope, progress and knowledge, lingua franca cannot be ignored. The use of English for global communication and its extensive use in education have given major priority to use English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in developing countries including Nepal. EMI is a model of teaching in which non-English subjects are taught through the medium of English. The use of EMI is linked to the demand of English for economic progress and global communication (Phillipson, 2017; Sah & Li, 2018). With the increasing demand of English from both parents and students, EMI has become a well adopted and preferred phenomenon in public schools of Nepal. However, EMI has become a debatable issue due to the lack of adequate education policy of the government. In this context, Sah (2015) states that EMI has been receiving great attention from the language policy researchers due to the lack of government to sustain a single educational policy with effects. Khati (2016) finds that public schools in Nepal are shifting the medium of instruction to English to attract a large number of students and EMI has been implemented without any logical guidelines. The policy, curricula and the teachers’ efficiency are always in question for effective implementation of EMI. In this context, Macaro (2017) concedes that qualified academics, effective course books or all

the other requirements are of great importance when scrutinizing EMI in education. Without considering these facts, EMI has been announced to be mandatory in public schools on one hand and on the other hand, the government has encouraged mother tongue education in its policy. EMI has not been investigated, assessed and analyzed properly. In this context, researching teachers' and parents' perspectives on whether EMI is an opportunity or challenge in the multilingual classes of Nepal is a significant.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English as a global language plays a crucial role in accessibility to education. Access to educational opportunities, career development, and a huge resource of knowledge and technology are the prime factors that have enriched the practices and uses, and motivation of the teachers, parents and learners to English language in school education despite their fear of the possible loss of their local languages. In this circumstance, most of the nations have developed bilingual and multilingual education systems that recognize the child's native language as a second language, which may be the official language of the nation. In this context, Teevno (2011) claims that the syllabus is not as per the needs of the learners and English teachers are not given any proper training, which makes the English teachers difficult to teach in multilingual classroom contexts. Moreover, Noom-Ura's (2013) study suggests the proper trainings, seminars, workshops and study trip for both teachers and students for their academic and professional career in linguistically diverse situations. Likewise, Ismaili (2015) realizes the need of using the first language (L1) in teaching English rather than imposing only English as a medium of instruction. Similarly, Gopang et al.'s (2015) research also reveals that students feel comfortable in speaking in their native language and feel hesitant to speak in English due to fear of committing mistakes. In the same issue, Cholakeva's (2015) study exhibits that, in monolingual environment, the speakers generally use English as an obligatory subject in the classrooms. They used English outside the classroom but in the context of multilingual setting, they used English both inside and outside the classroom to avoid the possible conflicting situation. This usually occurs to the people who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Language used in education is crucial for learners' academic success. In this context, Ewie and Eshun (2015) insist that nations where native languages are not the languages of education have promulgated the language policies to solve communication problems in their school education system. Further, Albakri's (2017) study shows that majority of the participants accepted EMI, but they faced great problems in their study due to their insufficient language competence. Similarly, Chan et al. (2020) state that instructions applied in the EMI classes were more topic-centred than the problem-centred, focusing on activating a new learning and knowledge presentation through demonstration.

In the Nepali education system, English has been used from basic level to advanced level either as a core subject or an optional subject. All the studies on Nepali languages with great concern of international societies are written and expressed only in English. Nepal is a multilingual country where CBI (2011) records 123 languages spoken as mother tongues; however, Awasthi (2020) mentions that this number has reached 129. The constitution of Nepal (2015) has made the provision that all the languages spoken in the country are national languages and Nepali is the official language. However, a federal state can decide its own official language. Education Manual (2015) states that English or Nepali or both can be used as a medium of instruction; however, primary education can be given in the mother tongue. Though Nepal has adopted the bilingual or multilingual language policy, Ethnologue (2016) records that 32 languages are in a vigorous state, 54

languages are in trouble and eight are dying out. Wanta (2017) concedes that Nepali education providing institutions have not made any mechanism to preserve these languages; instead, they are promoting and spreading writing only in English. The government aided schools have started shifting their medium of instruction to English where private institutions have made only English environment. Sah (2018) mentions that there are very limited success stories of EMI and the ad hoc implementation of it without any adequate policy may be counterproductive. Similarly, Paudel (2017) from his research concludes that EMI implementation is difficult in the context of Nepal due to poor English competence of the teachers and lack of suitable training to handle it in the multilingual situation. If the trend of using English goes at the same speed, there is high possibility of developing English as a variety of English in Nepal as it was developed in the form of Indian English, Malaysian English, etc. This shows that the implication of English as medium of instruction has mounted local languages in danger situations. The people who are advocating mother tongue education are worrying about the possible death of their local languages and loss of cultural identity due to Englishes or use of English as a medium of instruction.

The diverse and complex situations created due to spread of English in multilingual classes of Nepal enticed me in exploring the challenges and opportunities of English as a medium of instruction in multilingual classes of Nepal.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical stands behind this study are pluralism and linguistic imperialism. They are discussed in details below.

Pluralism

Pluralistic is an approach which addresses all the issues in diversity being far from the notion of domination or imperialism. Pluralism is social diversity, which can be rendered as linguistic, political, religious, cultural and philosophical stance. In linguistic pluralism, all the language users whatever the number of speakers, can enjoy their pride and privilege in their language without any feeling of being superiors or inferiors. For Spickard (2017), linguistic pluralism is not only diversity but it is an energetic engagement with such diversity in the society for equality, tolerance, peace and harmony in using and practicing languages in the society.

English as a pluralistic language is not the language of only inner circle countries where it is acquired as a native language. Kachru's (1985) report shows that a number of native speakers in comparison to non-native speakers of English have been decreasing and the countries are shifting from one circle to another. English either in the native language form or non-native language form has created opportunities for all the speakers and the people of different cultural backgrounds. In this vein, Gil (2005) mentions that the spread of English as a global language has led to a number of local varieties as Indian English, African English, etc. Such varieties are called non-native varieties and they express the identity, culture and peculiarities of their speakers. Addressing this issue, Yano (2001) argues that the line between native and non-native speakers is beginning to blur (as cited in Gil, 2005, p. 73). In many countries which were under outer circle in Kachru's (1985) classification, people have begun to consider themselves to be functional, not genetic native speakers of English. In this context, Legrain (2002) writes that countries traditionally designated as part of the inner circle or English as native language territories have a large number of immigrants living within their borders and claim that if this trend goes on, by the year 2050 one third of Americans will have Asian or Hispanic roots (as cited in Gil, 2005, p. 27). The widespread of English as a second language or a

foreign language has made English as a native language questionable. The prime focus in communicative competence rather than linguistic competence at present day world has made English as a second language or foreign language more popular and prestigious than English as a native language.

English language as a medium of instruction has made the students enjoy the dignity, prestige and opportunities in the world. As a pluralistic language, it has created homogeneity in terms of geographical location and English has become more diverse in its forms, functions and cultural associations.

Linguistic Imperialism

Linguistic imperialism refers to the transfer of a dominant language to the speakers of other languages. Phillipson (2007) writes that linguistic imperialism describes the export of English language teaching too many post-colonial countries and that currently English plays the role of imperialist language. Phillipson (2007) uses “neo-colonialism” (p. 42) to refer to the role of English language in many foreign countries. Dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.

Though English is serving as an international language but it does not follow the characteristics of a denationalized language. In this background, Pennycook (2001) states that English is not investigated critically because English lacks a social, historical, cultural and political relationship as an international language. In the same issue, McKay (2002) argues that an international language should be “de-nationalized”, the cultural norms of native speakers should not be imposed on the learners; and the goal of learning an international language should only be enabling learners to interact with people from different cultures (p. 12). But English as an international language compels the learners interact only in it, but not in their own languages. In this connection, Graddol (2006) insists that the future of English is going to be determined by all users around the world, not only by its native speakers as English has become an international lingua franca. English and English language teaching have certainly served both American and British interests. The global spread of the English language can be seen as linked to linguistic imperialism, in particular, where English becomes dominant at the expense of indigenous languages. The use of English as a medium of instruction may marginalize other languages due to people’s attraction on English as the language of gatekeeper to education, employment, business opportunities and popular culture.

METHODOLOGY

Based on the constructivism as a philosophical stand point, and pluralism and imperialism as theoretical bases, this study has adopted the following methodology.

Study Design

For this study, I have used a phenomenological research design under qualitative inquiry. Finlay (2009) states that phenomenology is the study of phenomena, their nature and meanings (as cited in Kafle, 2011, p. 181). Similarly, Van (1990) concedes that phenomenological research seeks understanding of the meaning and significance of a particular phenomenon as it is lived (as cited in Diaz, 2015). Similarly, Willis (2007) asserts that phenomenology allows the researcher to focus on subjective and multiple realities (as cited in Campbell, 2015, p. 288). It provides a rich textured description of lived experience and reality. In this study, I have taken English as a medium of instruction in multilingual classes of the school education as a phenomenon in which I

delved the teachers' and parents' experiences and attitudes towards the use of English as a medium of instruction in multilingual classes of school education.

Sources of Data

I employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of the research were the basic level English subject teaching teachers and the parents of the students of the same level of community schools and the secondary sources of data were the basic level curricula, previously carried out research, books, journal articles and electronic versions related to the issue.

Sample Design

The population of the study was the entire English subject teaching teachers at basic level and the parents of the students studying at the same level of community schools. But it was impossible to involve the total population in the study due to the nature of study as it is a phenomenological qualitative method. So, I selected 10 basic community schools (eight for interview and two for focus group discussion) using the purposive non-random sampling. From the selected schools, eight English teachers (one from each school) and eight parents from the same schools were selected purposively for the unstructured interview and two schools and basic level English subject teaching teachers and the parents of these schools were purposively selected for focus group discussion in which two teachers and two parents were involved in each focus group discussion

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Since this is a phenomenological research, the unstructured interview and focus group discussion were the major tools for data collection.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were coded first, and they were analyzed individually. Then, the separately analyzed data were triangulated, classified, and categorized into various themes. After that, I entered them into phenomenological reduction by delineating the data into three specified themes. The results were interpreted along with the discussion and analysis.

RESULTS

English as a global language is taken as widely used and most powerful means of communication between or among the people of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Along with its global importance, the trend of using English as a Medium of Instruction has been growing in the global phenomenon of present day world academia. In the education system of Nepal, Nepali was taken as a medium of instruction a few years ago though English was used in private schools. The medium of instruction has remained as a debatable issue among the academics both in and across the country. However, with the advent of democracy in 1990, the government of Nepal has made the provision of mother tongue education (MTE) in consonance with the UN declaration made in 1951. As a result of which the national commission for language policy (1992) has recommended mother tongue as a medium of instruction at primary level education (Singh et al., 2012). On the one hand, mother tongue education is in acceleration and, on the other hand, English language has been used and enforced in classroom teaching. The education manual (2015) suggesting English or Nepali or both as medium of instruction widened the debate more, that is, MTE is being promoted by the government plans and policies

while the motivation towards English language is too high since it is taken as the language of identity and dignity. In this motive, public schools in Nepal have been directed their efforts towards English as a medium of instruction. All the teachers and a few parents were known to the concept of EMI. When the researcher described the parents about the concept of EMI, they put their views and arguments as if they were familiar to the concept.

Though both parents and teachers were positive and hopeful towards the role and position of English as a global education in Nepal, they have presented their mixed opinions regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction. Considering their viewpoints, both in interviews and focus group discussions on the questions raised on EMI, the data can be analyzed and interpreted into three different sub-themes: EMI is suitable and obligatory for classroom instruction; EMI is irrelevant for classroom instruction; and it is difficult and challenging to implement in multilingual classes of Nepal.

Need and Suitability of English as EMI

During interviews and focus group discussions, a few teachers and parents realized the need and appropriateness of English using as a medium of instruction in public schools at basic level education. They believed that it was better to shift the medium of instruction from Nepali to English in our environment because English language competency makes our children able to cope with the challenges of world communication. One of the teacher informants (T1) expressed:

Our country is linguistically very complex where 129 languages are spoken. One language community does not understand the language of another community even they do not understand our national language, Nepali. In this complicated situation, shifting medium of instruction from Nepali to English is the demand of the parents from grassroots level rather than imposition from any policy of the government.

In the remark, EMI was parents' demand rather than the government policy. P6 agreed and affirmed that those children who had been enrolled in private schools and instructed in English had better results and performance in each field of opportunities than the children who had studied in public schools and instructed in the Nepali language. Thus, they requested the school management committee and school administration to teach their children in the English language.

The data reveal that majority of the teachers put emphasis on the use of EMI than other medium of instructions. They are aware of the significance and implication of English using English as a medium of instruction in teaching various subjects that incorporate different themes and domains. For instance, T6 affirmed:

I think, in the beginning of implementing EMI, teachers were just for giving content either by rotting or taking note but slowly and slowly, they are now able to speak English taking ideas from themselves and from students. In this sense, EMI promotes teachers' confidence and prefers learners' voices more than imposing anything to them.

Teaching has been shifted from the teacher to the learner with inception of EMI as T7 stated, "EMI builds up students' strength in English and it becomes easy and enjoyable for them." EMI, in the words of teachers, provides comprehensibility and regards students' voice while shaping the classroom activities.

Most of the parents were very happy and thankful towards school administrations who had implemented EMI and provided an exposure of language and the content to their children in the same way as the private schools did. However, they were still skeptic on

the ability of public schools' teachers who in the words of parents are not well trained and habituated to teach all subjects in the English medium. Sharing the experience of their children's success after implementation of EMI in schools, one of the parents (P2) conceded:

My daughter was very worried when I was unable to attend her in a private school considering the content and command in English of her friend in my next door. But with the use of English as a medium of instruction and implementing the textbooks that private schools have been using at her own school, she has become happy, more energetic, curious and conscious in her study.

Another parent also agreed with this experience as he had also the similar experience with his son who was in grade five and added that his son totally lost his shyness in speaking English and his result has been improved. Agreeing with these parents during focus group discussion, the teachers expressed their happiness, considering their students' enthusiasm of borrowing books from the library and asking several questions and curiosities in learning English. They said that students at basic level education have felt very happy as being equal to the students of boarding schools. The information given by the parents shows that English as a medium of instruction motivates their children to be the world citizens, improving their local proficiency in the foreign language.

Both parents and teachers' perceptions towards EMI are optimistic to see the good position of their children and students since they have found changes in their students' behavior and teachers' performance. They take English as a language of pedagogical usefulness, academic excellence and global standard.

EMI is Irrelevant in Multilingual Classes

Some teachers and parents stood against EMI in basic level multilingual classes of Nepal. They argued that the use of English as medium of instruction is a form of colonizing students, their languages and cultures on the one hand; it does not provide any solid foundation for better understanding of the students on the other. They also added that EMI is difficult for teachers, too. One of the teacher participants (T3) expressed his experience as:

The school administration and management committee decided and asked us to teach all the subjects (except Nepali) into English, which was very difficult for us because we had to learn English before we went to the classroom as we were habituated teaching in the grammar translation method. The students' happiness in English was only due to their feeling of equality between private schools' students and themselves, but it was difficult to learn and comprehend. Teaching in English to English has created great difficulty to the teachers due to lack of vocabulary, grammar and teaching habit.

Teachers' demotivation, lack of confidence and imposed administrative policy do not bring better results in the performance of students. In this vein, T4 added "I don't think EMI brings good results in multilingual classes like us where there are students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds." In this statement, T4 argued that students enjoy and understand more when they are learning in their own tongues or in Nepali language even if they feel equal when learning in English. They are forcefully pushed towards the English language, which may not give the result as they expected by a few parents who were also worried about English language in teaching social studies and moral education. They expressed that their children are neither good in English nor they know their own language. Teachers also agreed with the parents and asked the school to let them teach some subjects in their own languages, if not, at least in the Nepali language. One of the parents (P1) stated, "His son was better in performance and well-

disciplined when the subjects were taught in Nepali, but now they are showing their rude manner due to English influence on them." They thought that knowledge in English makes them superior.

Mother tongue education is the key of students' morality and discipline. But P4 does not think that EMI is better than other mediums of instructions. He claims that the use of only English is making our children forget our Gurung language and our culture. In the same manner, P3 added that only English should not be permitted; instead, English as a vocational subject can be taught in English. Subjects like social and moral studies should be taught in Nepali and both teachers and parents accepted that EMI causes greater difficulties in comprehending the course content and inhibited them from expressing fluently in the classroom. Both the parents and teachers are susceptible in the implementation of policy of the government. Their opinions reveal that without preparing teachers and parents for implementing EMI without any policy level research, the decision of implementing EMI has become destructive and irrelevant in the context of Nepal. The teachers and parents are worried about their local languages and cultures, and students' behaviours and achievements created due to EMI. They agreed that EMI introduced the overloaded content and foster rote learning both in teachers and learners. All those who were against EMI demanded such medium that can address the multilingual and multicultural nature of our classes. The teachers preferred to use intercultural and multilingual approaches so that our languages would not be destructed and students would not be prevented from getting global knowledge. Their opinions about IMI imply that English should be used but it should not be imposed as a medium of instruction. It can be used for a particular level/class where its full marks can be increased rather imposed as EMI.

Challenges of EMI in Multilingualism

As a multilingual country, Nepal government is responsible to preserve, protect, respect and promote all national languages. At the same time, it is obliged to have global communication and access to rapid advancement of technologies, which is possible only through the knowledge and exposure of English language. Realizing this fact, public schools of Nepal have shifted their medium of instruction into English, which has given rise to a number of challenges for its implementation and use at basic level of school education. During the interviews and focus group discussions, both teachers and parents were worried about the possible loss of their mother tongues if they accept English as in the same rate and ratio of present day time. One of the teacher informants (T5) found students' levels, backgrounds and economic conditions are the major challenges in implementing EMI. In the same context, another teacher (T7) agreed with T5, stating, "There is weak exposure of English language to all the students which imbeds the effective and efficient implementation of EMI at our basic school levels." Another teacher T3 added, "Our students are from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and English language cannot provide equal justice to all the languages." All the parents asked the policy makers, school administrators and the teachers to provide English language teaching training so that they could be able to teach with determination and confidence. In this vein, P1 expressed, "EMI is difficult due to our teachers' poor knowledge in English language." Agreeing with P1, P6 blamed the teachers that they were not motivated from core of heart to use EMI because they did not know English language.

All the teachers during the focus group discussion accepted some of the ideas expressed by parents as true in the sense that EMI at their schools was forcefully implemented without giving them any training and exposure of English language. However, they recognized that the class size, parents' awareness and care towards

children's study, behavior and performance, economic condition of both schools and parents, and students' desire towards learning English were the major challenges that they encountered with. In this regard, the teacher participant (T3) expressed:

EMI has been introduced in my school since last year to catch the whim of the society and its pressure. So far I know, EMI prefers group activities, collaboration and cooperation and monolingual situation. But the classes in my schools are very small with poor desks and benches where we are compelled to keep sixty students and the students even do not understand Nepali. In this situation, a teacher cannot do what he/she wants.

Students' mother tongues and classroom environment should be conducive for both teachers and students in the classroom. Parents realized that their pressure on EMI was untimely without considering teachers, their level and schools' infrastructures. They strongly demanded teacher training and furniture management in the schools. They also showed their readiness to support in this fact. Teachers have found to be facing pressure from parents, administration and the interference of students' mother tongue during the classes were more challenging. They also conceded that they were deprived of encouragement and support from the stakeholders on the one hand, and the less motivated environment, poor resources and facilities in schools on the other.

DISCUSSION

The practices of using English as a medium of instruction in basic level education of Nepal have become a matter of discussion among the stakeholders. The teachers' and parents' responses reveal both positive and negative aspects of using English as a medium of instruction in the multilingual classrooms. Some of them take English as a medium of instruction is better and suitable in Nepal for facing the challenges of world communication. It is the language to know world politics, business, education and, science and technology. Their claim reflects what Ressoal (2013) argues about English that it is the key to social, political and economic prosperity. English is the language of harmony and relation being accessible to all, which made English as a medium of instruction in the Nepali education system based on demand rather than imposed by any policy, observing it as 'interconnectedness and means of inclusion' (Pennycook, 2010). English as a medium of instruction increases teachers' confidence, and brings methodological changes in their teaching, increasing students' strength and comprehensibility as English is the language storing a huge resource of knowledge and innovating new methods and techniques. It provides the students of public schools a sense of equality, motivation and encouragement equipping with a huge exposure of language and resources for good performance. These accounts expressed by teachers and parents on EMI match with Hung's (2015) claim that EMI in the multilingual classroom promotes teaching and learning motivation and ease the learning pressure. English as a medium of instruction as parents and teachers perceive improve both teachers' and learners' career prospects and facilitates them to pursue higher education as Ibrahim (2001) calls EMI for cognitive advantages both for teachers and students, exposing them with a huge resource in English language and chances to achieve.

The data collected from both teachers and parents through interviews and focus group discussions also show a few informants' position against EMI. They believe that forceful implementation of EMI without plan and preparation, and teachers' motivation will be more descriptive. Their views implied that the use of EMI is decreasing the learners' actual understanding of the content. The teachers have to rote all the content and recite it in the classroom, which cannot improve either the teacher's competency or students' comprehensibility. These accounts of teachers and parents affirm Macaros

(2017) and Macaro and Akincioglu's (2018) argument who claim that EMI increases unnecessary cognitive load and encourages rote learning due to the poor proficiency of practitioners in the language. Their responses also reflect that EMI has raised a question in students' manner, discipline and behavior on the one side and in position of local tongues and culture on the other hand. It has created "Linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barriers" (Baer, 2008, p. 3; as cited in Author, 2017) for getting access of education in their own language. The teachers' and parents' responses recognize the possible losing condition of mother tongues, classroom size, students linguistic and cultural background, lack of adequate exposure of English language, insufficient support and encouragement, lack of training for professional growth and development and the challenges of using EMI in multilingual classes of school education in Nepal. The parents' questions on teachers' skill, knowledge and proficiency in English indicate that teachers are to be trained, given an exposure to English, and encouragement and support from the school administration.

The use of EMI in multilingual classes in the basic level of school education is a matter of serious thought. The Nepal Government, policymakers, curriculum designers, teachers and parents are in need of being conscious and determined to analyze the context, need, level of knowledge and linguistic landscape of the country before making policies and implementing them in practice as the data revealed its beneficiaries and irrelevancies.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study intended to investigate the usefulness of English as a medium of instruction in multilingual classes of Nepal from teachers' and parents' perspectives as a phenomenological inquiry. The results show that it is a debatable issue among the academics of the Nepali education system as both parents and teachers put their views in favour and against it. Those who support it believe that EMI is the demand of the world to take our teachers and learners in the global market since EMI enhances exposure to a huge resource of knowledge, by which teachers and learners can be updated and exposed with methodological shift, updated knowledge, science and technology and world interconnectedness. Those who opposed it claim that comprehension can be better in the mother tongue than in English since our students do not have an exposure of English language at home. Their views reflect difficulty in its implementation because the administrators forced the teachers to teach in English without any plans, policies, preparations and teachers' motivation. EMI adds an unnecessary load on teachers and promotes rote learning rather than understanding and bringing change in the students' behaviour. This dispute needs to be addressed by framing appropriate policies, curricula and textbooks to be implemented at school level. The teachers are unable to deal with multilingual contexts due to lack of proper training, workshops and knowledge in the current and updated methodologies which requires appropriate refresher and updated courses for them so that they can maintain a linguistic and cultural harmony.

Despite the fact that this study contributes to an understanding of teachers' and parents' perspectives towards EMI in multilingual classes in school education of Nepal, it has a number of delimitations. First, it was a small scale phenomenological research design incorporating only teachers' and parents' perspectives; therefore, its findings may have limited applicability. A large scale survey research or convergent parallel design incorporating multiple layers of participants like policymakers, course designers, experts, teachers and all the concerned stakeholders is needed to evaluate and determine usefulness of EMI in our context. Nonetheless, it is believed that this study provides feedback to the policymakers, curriculum designers and administrators to make teachers

well trained, skillful and knowledgeable to establish harmonious relationships between English and mother tongues and to handle multilingual classes effectively.

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