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Teaching Local Language in Metropolitan Multilingual Context: Teachers' Pedagogical Practice Experiences

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This research attempted to explore local language (Nepal Bhasha) teachers' pedagogical practice experiences with students from heterogeneous linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, it attempted to examine the various impacts to Nepal Bhasha with the implementation in education. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research was designed. Three schools and three Nepal Bhasha teachers one from each school were purposively selected. The semi-structured interviews and class observations were conducted for data collection. The findings revealed that they practiced multilingual approach including Nepali, English, and students' home languages to support learning while teaching the Nepal Bhasha. They integrated both global and local innovative teaching strategies to amplify activity-based learning engagement. They employed various creative methods and techniques to foster a deeper affinity to cultural identity for a lived learning outcome. They needed professional development and comprehensive training in language teaching. They experienced multilingually cognizant teacher education that can better facilitate competent language learning engagement in heterogeneous classrooms. It highlights the significance of local language in education to promote cultural awareness, learner motivation, and language development. Overall, it underlies the importance of local language cultivation to ensure their survival and development, while also addressing the challenges confronted by teachers and learners in multilingual spaces.

Keywords: local language, Nepal-Bhasha, localized approach, language revitalization

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

There are different issues of language use in education. They are monolingual, bilingual, multilingual approaches and mother tongue education. Language is an intertwined component of education, so effectiveness and efficiency of the education system or quality education is inherently associated with language planning and policing in education. Nepal is a multilingual nation and its constitutional provision as the fundamental right article 31(5) is " every Nepalese community residing in Nepal shall have right to get education in its mother tongue…" (Government of Nepal, 2015, p. 22) and has plurilingual people. The Government of Nepal has recently devised

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Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy which undertakes basic education or instruction of basic education shall be in mother tongue, mother tongue based multilingual education, Nepali, and English underpinning the linguistic diversity, needs and interest of students (MoEST, 2019). Various research findings suggest that multilingual or MTBMLE approaches have ample benefits for both learners and teachers rather than monolingual ones. Language is a means of learning and means to access knowledge. Children's language development begins with their mother tongue. So, they, are familiar with, enjoy communicating in and feel psychologically secure in learning with it. Various language skills and competences in mother tongue transfer to second or other languages (Ibrahim, 2001) that promotes learner's learning investment with their knowledge in their familiar language. Education is the means of transformation in learners whereas language is the means of education.

Selection of languages in education has an impact on teaching effectiveness and efficiency. Teaching learners in their familiar language is more effective than teaching in a strange language. Sardeshpande (2020) highlighted role of mother tongue as:

The role of mother tongue is vital at least in the formative years of a child. It provides a solid foundation in the making of every individual as concepts are best understood in the mother tongue and innermost thoughts of the individual are also best communicated in the mother tongue (p. 3852).

The medium of instruction is influenced by language ideology and disproportionate amount power (Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Nahrkhalaji, n.d.). Education in English as the index of globalization has the explicit influence to shape the ideology of Nepali parents, teachers and policy makers. Teacher education is also influenced by language ideology. If the ideologies contrast to the existing situation or reality, it might be counterproductive. Need-based education policy, innovative teacher education, and child-friendly pedagogical practices might ensure quality in education. Critical pedagogy (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011) is another demand of sociopolitical development and its influence in education at present in Nepal including ethnic languages. Educating children in their mother tongue is the human right and fundamental right of ethnic/local citizens even though its execution has various cross-cutting challenging issues. State is conglomeration of culturally and linguistically diverse people, it has a duty to protect citizen's right (Bello & Mohammed, 2022). Moreover, state should treat all the people equally and equitably if necessary.

Nepal's state policy and education policy seem to be ethnic language friendly (MoEST, 2019; Rai, 2018) but their practicality has some lacks and challenges. Education is the most potential field of language use for children in shaping their learning. Since almost all semi urban areas of Nepal are multilingual, children come to schools with different home languages. Teachers are the closest learning scaffolders of children (Tuttle, 2009) and foster the children's socialization process for their entire educational development (Wang, 2024). The more the Basic Level Teachers (BLTs), in multilingual context are familiar with and aware of children's home languages and multilingual issues, the more they can better facilitate and engage the children in learning (Garcia, 2008). Language policy in education and teacher education reference to pedagogical practices in

ethnic/local languages and multilingual context are the issues to deal with simultaneously. So, they should have a connection for the best practice.

Local language identity and global access language are the essential language issues in educating contemporary basic level school children in Nepal. Moreover, state policy documents and ethnic community people are in favour of local language protection and promotion whereas opposing this ideology the parents are aware of their children's future career weakening English as global social capital which creates an ideological tension (Phyak, 2016). Ethnic community parents (Jora, 2020) are in pressure of balancing the development of local language and national lingua franca (Nepali) (Bradley, 1996), and global language English (Crystal, 2003) in their children as multilingual or plurilingual speakers through education (Rai, 2018). Thuse, this contextual reality has added the side of challenges in using local languages in education. The children in multilingual or ethnic language community might be under the hindrance for learning contents due to language barriers (Salem-Gervais & Raynaud, 2020). Local language has the identity and learning efficiency (Rai, 2018) whereas national lingua franca (Nepali) (Bradley, 1996) and English have the national and global opportunities.

Local level governments and schools have their jurisdiction of policy making and practicing agencies, and they are in the juxtaposition of policing, planning and practicing local/ethnic languages in education. They underpin child rights, ethnic language protection, pedagogical efficacy, psychological owning in learning, engaging learner identity with a historical body and inclusive national education policy while planning, programming and policing. Urban or semi-urban societies or communities of Nepal are more linguistically and culturally heterogeneous comparison to rural ones. Natural urbanization is an indirect way of heterization. Since 66.17 percent of the population lives in urban and semi-urban areas of Nepal, it has a complex heterogeneity. With the political changes after 2006, the constitution and its aliening laws have emphasized the issues of protection and promotion of minority/ethnic/local languages using in education and public administration at provincial and local level as the initiatives of social justice and inclusion. Considering the constitutional provision and demand or needs of local/ethnic language community, some provinces and local levels have policized and been practicing ethnic/local languages in majority in public administration and education. Some of the local level governments have introduced local curriculum in education as an additional local language subject only at basic level. However, the constitution has given the jurisdiction to local level up to secondary level education. Due to some contradictions in the provision between the constitution and Local Government Operating Act 2018, local level governments' jurisdiction has been shrunk to Basic Level education (Government of Nepal, 2017).

School education system is an application site for teacher education since teachers execute and imply, their theoretical content and pedagogy knowledge enhanced at university as the teacher education, at school as the teachers. “Thus, *teacher education* refers to the structures, institutions, and processes by means of which men and women are prepared for work in elementary and secondary schools" (Britannica, 2024). Teachers are supposed to be prepared at university for teaching at school level. Teacher

education at university level and education policy at school level should synchronize the phenomena of teacher learning and teacher professional practices. Otherwise, the gap between teacher learning and teacher professional practices can deviate the expected outcomes at school level education. Policy has envisioned MTBMLE at school level but teacher educating agencies are still practicing traditional monolingual biased approach. Universities which were established before political change in 2006 have not revisited their curriculum for multilingual or ethnic language teacher education. Even though many other new universities have been established after 2006, they have not seriously included the issues of multilingual/ethnic language teacher education in their teacher education curriculum. This circumstance shows the lacks in mother tongue/ethnic/multilingual teacher education that may lead to MTBMLE policy practice challenges however some of the local level governments have initiated the local language as a subject in education within their political jurisdiction. Policy makers seem more aware of sociopolitical dimensions rather than pedagogical practices of local/ethnic languages therefore practical procedures and actions have not been developed.

The existing situation shows that teachers are teaching local/ethnic languages with their local language acquisition competences rather than their learning competences from their formal teacher education. Introducing ethnic languages in school education is praiseworthy at sociopolitical level because it has flashed positive vibe on protection, promotion and development of local languages. On the contrary, educating teachers and creating justice at pedagogical sphere in the classroom might be gigantic experiences in practical ups and downs. Using a local language at a local level may not absolutely be judicial, however this sort of initiative in as many as needy local levels will contribute to protecting and promoting several local/ethnic languages. Since classes are heterogeneous, they might have engaged learners from the local language community, but others might be a learning deficit in a particular language. There might be different logics/rations of language learning.

Lalitpur Metropolitan City, which is a metro-linguistic local level government unit out of 753 in the federal political administration system of Nepal. It is a historically, archeologically and anthropologically treasured city of Nepal that possesses diversity in terms of culture, heritage languages, people, and human civilization. Its main dwellers are still *Newars* and speak *Newari* formally (Pradhan, 2020, p. 1) defines "'*Nepal Bhasa'* literally means language of Nepal", however others community people such as *Tamang, Kshetri, Barahamin* and permanently and temporarily residing migrated people are also the dwellers of the city that makes the city a metro-linguistic city. *Newari [Nepal Bhasha]* is one of the ancient languages of Nepal which has an ample literature, vocabulary and dialects. Before the unification of modern Nepal by *Gorkhali King Prithivi Narayan Shah*, it was a language of public administration. It is being taught as a subject for long at *Tribhuvan University* Nepal even though it was not included as a medium of instruction nor as a subject in the modern school education system of Nepal. After the promulgation of the federal republic constitution in 2015 and other following legislations in 2017 and onwards, local governments are authorized to develop local curriculum and introduced a subject which might be a local language.

This Metropolitan City has first time introduced local language (*Nepal Bhasha*) as a subject of social studies nature from ECD to grade 3 in the academic year 2024/25.

Literature Review

Nepal has fluctuating historical traces on language policy in education. Various vernacular languages were used in education during medeival period but during the early modern period Nepali and Sanskrit languages were promoted in education then English was intriduced during Rama regime (1846-1951). After the establishment of democracy in 1951 and restoration of democracy in 1990, multilingual policies were constitutionally introduced however it was poorly materialized. Ghimire (2015) pointed out "Multilingualism was officially recognized in this special juncture of medieval Nepal when vernaculars were flourishing and even the immigrant languages, like Maithili in Kathmandu valley, were accepted as the formal languages in state affairs" (p. 63). This context was again revitalized officially after 1990, and ethnic languages were gradually introduced after 2015.

Preparation of teachers for the effective execution of the underlying language policy in education is a challenging issue for countries. Benson (2017) has critically assessed the multilingual education policy and practice initiating in Spanish Basque County and later following in South Africa, Bolivia and Sri Lanka. They introduced non-dominant local or heritage languages in combination with regional and international languages for teaching aiming at their recognition, promotion and protection. South Africa practiced educational policies that underlined "…called for the use of people's own language as the medium of instruction at primary basic level and, …call for speakers of the two DLs to have access to competence in at least one of the nine NDLs" (p. 104). Similarly, in Boliva Spanish-speaking dominant elites are called to indigenous language. Sri-Lanka taught the other's language to each group despite of not achieving aims as in Bolivia and South Africa due to lack of teachers and trainers.

There should be alignment between teacher preparation and sociao-cultural needs of the target children. Sah (2021) analysed primary English teacher preparation in linguistically and culturally diverse Nepali context. He concluded the gaps between primary English teacher preparation and socio-cultural needs of the children in response to the progressive laws and policies of inclusive education. Moreover, he further highlighted the need for critical designing of teacher education and training to meet the needs.

Arabala, et al. (2023) have concluded the mixed or contradicting result using of mother tongue in education. "…MTB-MLE instruction improved the acquisition of Khamer and English languages among primary school students" (p. 64) in Cambodia however some findings have no significant differences in English language skills maybe because of other variables.

Philippines has introduced MTB-MLE policies for a decade its success is not satisfactory. Evidencing factors for low level of effectiveness of MTB-MLE are insufficient reference and instructional materials in local or minority languages, gaps between teacher skills and necessary skills (Cansino, 2023).

Research findings, overuse of mother tongue or local language in learning English, do not have the uniformity because using mother tongue for metalingual purpose seems effective whereas it seems less effective for second language development. Cansino (2023) has logically analyzed the use of mother tongue for learning English. Teachers were reported undecided on use of mother tongue positive relation to learning English as a second language. He reviewed various findings that teaching English using the mother tongue showed a decline in English literacy, but children can learn best English using English itself. Establishing strong foundation on mother tongue rather than using it in English teaching helps children to use it in arranging second language data consciously and subconsciously for efficient learning.

Based on their research participants' responses, Metruk & Rafajdusová (2024) concluded that planned use of L1 in teaching and learning English. L1 has certain role in English teaching and learning however L1 use should be differentiated accordingly that L1 should be used as supporting tool during grammar or vocabulary work whereas use of L1 ought to be controlled and medium of instruction should be only English in such a situation while doing pair-work and group- work tasks.

Tamang (2024) presented the positive consequence of MTB-MLE in promoting ethnic languages and effective learning of English with the principle of equal and inclusive education.

Tonegawa (2025) critically examined the official documents and related studies on mother tongue education in Ethiopia. Ethiopia had introduced the policy of mother tongue as medium of instruction and Amharic as lingua franca, but its implementation was not satisfactorily successful. As a result, there were divisions and distrust among the ethnic groups instead of efficient communication and unity. Moreover, failure of Amharic as lingua franca and strengthening the ethnic identity through mother tongue education seemed to influence the heightened sense of ethnocentrism among the ethnic groups.

Sundqvist et al. (2025) have discussed macro, meso and micro level tensions and variation in the patterns of participant teachers' responses on the use background languages in English in Sweden. Almost all participated English teachers agreed that students' multilingualism serves as resource for learning English however they were divided on the issue about the involvement or use and role of background (students') languages in both teaching and learning English. Contrasting other research findings, many teachers reported their beliefs that use of students' previous languages hinders in learning English.

Research review suggests that how local/ethnic/indigenous languages are used and contribute for teaching and learning second languages specifically English, and overall impact in the academic upliftment. Many of the reviewed research are related to using L1 in English classes however they not all but some lack how a local language is taught and practiced as a subject or medium of instruction in the classes where students are linguistically heterogenous. This is the context that this research has.

Statement of the Problem

An obligatory front liner agency in education is teachers; they have therefore the lived experiences on the practices of educational policy or language policy in education. Teacher education, language education and pedagogical practices in the classroom should approach the same direction otherwise educational or language policy implementation practice may not take the right way ahead.

Constitutional development, state policy reformation and awareness rising among ethnic communities have reshaped language ideology and language policy in education. Abiding the needs and interest of the people, Nepal's policy documents at federal level related to education have underlain MTBMLE policy.

Based on the national level policy, various local levels have introduced local/ethnic language subjects in Basic Level education in their respective political jurisdictions so did Lalitpur Metropolitan City. Basic Level Teachers are endeavouring to educate children in multilingual society where they need to balance and reshape their language repertoire among ethnic (local), Nepali (government official language) and English (global) languages. Lalitpur Metropolitan City has initiated to teach a local subject in *Nepal Bhasha* in Basic Level in its political jurisdiction. Metropolitan City has deployed *Nepal Bhasha* native speaker teachers with short term orientation. It was a new phenomenon for Metropolitan, schools and teachers. Schools have been practicing English and Nepali as MoI and subject irrespective of children's home language for years. Since it is a metropolitan city, many people are non-permanent residents and have heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds. Based on informal observation, majority children in city community schools belong to informal unskilled and semi-skilled non-permanent residing working class people from almost all over Nepal. It means the children are linguistically heterogeneous and local home language children are in a minority in community schools. One subject has been introduced with an additional language [*Nepal Bhasha*] so, it is a new phenomenon for all concerning agencies. For me as a researcher, it was an unexplored phenomenon- how the teachers are practicing teaching learning engagement and experiencing as the becoming teachers of local language. Moreover, this is relatively more original and unexplored language policy practice issue to explore because Nepal is in the beginning phase of MTBMLE policy in education shifting to multilingual education from monolingual one.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- How are Basic Level Local Language Teachers (BLLLTs) practicing pedagogy in multilingual classes?
- What the positive impacts can the policy of using local language [*Nepal Bhasha*] in education make in terms of its protection, promotion and development?

Research Objectives

This research attempted:

- To explore the Local Language Teachers' (LLTs) lived pedagogical engagement and

experiences in teaching local language in multilingual classes.
- To critically analyze the possible impacts that local language may contribute to the existing repository of *Nepal Bhasha* from its use in education.

METHOD

The brief of the methodology for the proposed study has been mentioned in terms of the following subsequent sections:

Research Design and Sites

It was interpretative phenomenological qualitative research design (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Since research question and objectives were set to explore local language teachers' pedagogical practices and experiences on teaching local language in their multilingual contexts, phenomenological research design was used for the research. For the exploration of in-depth information on the phenomenon, semi-structured interview technique was used with a small sample size whereas class observation was used for the triangulation of the data collected from the interview. There were individual semi-structured interviews with participants and passive participant class observation. For the ethical considerations, the participants teachers were coded for the anonymity as T1, T2 and T3.

The research sites were three community secondary schools of Lalitpur Metropolitan City. Those schools were from three different locations of the Metropolitan: Kupondole, Patan and Ekantakuna were purposively selected because different locations may represent different heterogeneous clusters of students' sources.

Participants

Three community schools' *Nepal Bhasha* newly appointed teachers were the participants. Three female teachers, one from each selected school, were automatically selected because each school had only one female *Nepal Bhasha* teacher. Their age ranged from 25 to 35 years whereas their academic qualification ranged from grade 12 to master's degree. One of them was novice one but two of them had few years teaching experiences however they all were first time engaging in teaching language subject including local language. The important common thing among them was none of their academic degrees were related to language teaching and pedagogical sciences but all participants teachers were *Nepal Bhasha* native speakers/ from *Newar* community so, *Nepal Bhasha* was their mother tongue.

Instruments

Since design of this research was phenomenological, interview guideline questions and interview recording device were the basic tools. One digital audio recording device, an android mobile, and observation note making diary were other tools for data collection.

Data Collection

First, I prepared guideline questions comprising teacher's awareness and perspectives on language teaching, teaching learning engagement and their lived experiences. I developed rapport and took consent for interview and class observation with the both

the respective head teacher and the respective *Nepal Bhasha* teachers in the respective research sites. They (the participant teachers) were busy with their daily class activities. I interviewed T1 after her full class with her co-tutor. I interviewed T2 when she was in leisure period. Similarly, I interviewed T3 in her break time. T2 and T3 were interviewed in separate palaces at the reading room and at cafeteria zone respectively. Interviews, for 25-35 minutes, were recorded on a digital recording device and an android mobile. After their interviews I observed their classes and noted the information though I did not have any observation checklist. Three participant teachers' classes were the observation sites. I observed classroom teaching learning engagement, made observation notes, and took some photos for further analysis of classroom engagement. Four classes with the teachers' regular period T1 (grade 1) and T2 (grade 2) one class observation for each, and T3 two classes (grade LKG and 3) were successively selected and observed.

Language Use

While collecting the data generally through interview, language in communication is one considering factor. I can communicate in two languages Nepali and English well; the teachers can communicate in *Nepal Bhasha* and Nepali well. We have one mutual language that is Nepali. I have prepared a list of guideline questions for semi-structured interview in English. I clearly in brief requested to them the purpose and inclination of my research, and data collection while developing the rapport. I interviewed them in Nepali abiding the sense in English medium guideline questions.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This research devised the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2015) for data analysis and interpretation. First data were gathered and transcribed. Observation notes were organized approaching the themes. Then the data were translated into English language. If some data were in English, they would only be transcribed. Different themes were developed considering thematic areas of the data. Two activities, questions for interviews and observation notes, and repeatedly reading and study of the transcribed data helped to develop the various themes. Data were thematically interpreted and meaning was explored under different themes. Findings were further elaborated in the discussion section for the extension and theorizing of findings.

FINDINGS

First research question was related to teachers' pedagogical practice experiences while teaching local language in multilingual early grades that include five main thematic areas of experiences. They are teachers' language teaching awareness, classroom context and practice in terms of language/s, teaching learning engagement (language use, presentation and practice engagement techniques, locally innovated techniques), experience based multilingual pedagogical approach, language and contents, learner motivation and teachers including entire school family's attitudes toward local language experienced the participants teachers.

Similarly, second research question was about exploring the possible positive impacts over local language after using it in education. It has three main thematic areas generated based on the experiences and opinions shared by the participant teachers which are local language vanity, cultivation, and extension and studies. They are dispersed as follows:

Teachers' Language Teaching Awareness

Teachers were reported that they did not have any formal education in language teaching and learning. Moreover, they were not trained before deploying to the respective schools. They were only oriented for a few days then deployed. Even they did not have pedagogical education as well as the experiences before joining as a novice teacher. Since teaching is a profession, the teachers are supposed to have professional competences. They were native speakers of *Nepal Bhasha*, but they had not even been exposed formal education in *Nepal Bhasha*. They experienced differences between colloquial and academic versions of language. T3 shared her experience,' *Sir! I found differences between language in day to day spoken form and language in education*". It indicates that the teachers were not exposed *Nepal Bhasha* in their academic acquaintances and experiencing various parameters of differences in academic language of *Nepal Bhasha* from its colloquial form. As they reported during the data collection, they consult to their teachers who orientated them when they need the support.

Classroom Context: Linguistic Heterogeneity

Obviously, the demography of the metropolitan is heterogeneous. Children in the same class interact various cultural and linguistic histories. In the early grades, many of them are monolingual so, they do not interact across their home language group. With the gradual intervention of language of instruction, they gradually reshape new language in their linguistic repertoire. All three participants teachers shared that in early days, the students are more passive, receptive, and less social among the friends and with teachers. Then they begin to communicate across the home language groups and extend classroom socialization. Compartmental heterogeneity reshaped into iceberg homogeneity. First teachers attempt to teach in target language but gradually they let their learners scaffold multilingualism through home language investment when they learners are unable to engage in the target language. Non-native *Nepal Bhasha* children were in majority and somewhere there was no child from *Nepal Bhasha* community in the classes which I observed. As the teachers reported, the children share Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tamang and Doteli languages in the same class.

Teaching Learning Engagement

Language Use

Since classes are heterogeneous in terms of children's home language, in the early grade the teachers need using multiple languages in the same. For this, they should be multilingually or plurilingually competent. Beyond the medium of instruction provision in the education act, the teachers were using multilingual Nepali as lingua franca, some other language if teachers understand them, Translation into Nepali occasionally into English since schools were prone to shift to EMI. Children in early grades expected and

enjoyed using their home languages rather than in the 2nd and 3rd grades. T1's co-teacher shared, "*I am from Terai, so I can speak Terain languages a little bit. When I found they have not understood Nepali, I try to facilitate them in their home language Maithili they are excited however I do not know Tamang and Newari. I wish they all would learn in their home language".* If teachers are literate in children's language, they can use several in the same class which facilitate learners promptly. They found it more effective than a monolingual approach.

Children are heterogeneous in terms of language and culture. Despite ignorable differences due to their linguistic background, the children who can speak Nepali well are more benefited in learning *Nepal Bhasha.* The teachers use at least bilingual approach comprising *Nepal Bhasha* and Nepali.

Presentation Practice Engagement

They use drill techniques at word level for meaning and pronunciation, queue drill at sentence level for new word use and communicative skills. The teachers utter a particular word and let the students imitate orally repeatedly which could develop students' oral habit of the given word's pronunciation and word memory. T1 "*Saparu* [a traditional cow festival]" Ss "*Saparu*, *saparu*.....". Then the words are drilled with translation for their meaning. T2 "*Swati Vaneko-Tihar* (Swati means Tihar [a Nepali famous festival])." Ss "*Tihar*". They practice question and drill following the queue drill. T3 *"Chhimi Ajiya ña chhu Khaa* [What is your grandmother's name]?" SS "....." *Jimi Ajiya ña.....khaa*." . T3 asked a student her grandmother's name in Nepali and use it in a sentence in *Nepal Bhasha* and let the children imitate it. T1 kept asking questions during the class presentation and discussion like, "*Gaijatralai ke bhanchha* (What is called Gaijatra [a cow festival])?" Ss chorus in Newari term "*Saparu*". She did such drill practices repeatedly in the class to revise her previous teaching. These are common drill techniques. The techniques and number of drills are different from class to class. Number of drills in ECD is higher than in 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades, however there are pros and cons of drills. Drills in senior classes like in 2nd and 3rd grades are relatively less effective than in ECD.

Singing and Dancing

This was an excessively popular technique for girl children. When the teachers asked the children to rhyme Newari song, many girl children including some boys looked blooming in their faces and became ready for it. T2 started rhyming the Newari song and children followed her. The children understood the songs' sense translation meaning, they were more interested in Newari song because they might perform such singing and dancing performance in other co-curricular and extra-curricular performance. They beautifully expressed the meaning of songs via acting, miming and gesturing. The girl children found themselves more active and interested in singing and chorus dancing than the boys.

Games with language

The students are exposed to different outdoor and indoor games. In Newari language classes as much as possible Newari culture related games are used. Traditional cultural

gaming techniques are supposed to offer more language opportunities. Their interest in games directly goes to language skill listening and speaking. Boys are as active as girls in classroom games. Some games seem to be gender based. They are designed to maximize language exposure. Language game contents are originally from Newari culture. It appeared as a good technique to motivate and engage learners in *Nepal Bhasha* learning. They used more amount of Newari language in gaming technique rather than others.

Project Work

They use project work techniques. The teachers teach different socio-cultural contents of Newar community and assign them to prepare different drawings, artifacts and designs to reflex the socio-cultural contents. It has multiple benefits for learners. It widens learners' creativity, hardworking, sometimes teamwork, learning collaboration, learning from field visit, cultural exposure and language cultivation.

Meditation and Learning

Dhyan (Meditation) is a traditional approach and technique of eastern civilization for metal refreshment. It is a process of mental tranquilization through the detachment of all the mental disturbances and loads. When a person is in a meditation, s/he is supposed to focus himself/herself in depth on a particular issue. Then they can pay full attention to a particular issue. For children it is a way of character shaping through discipline maintaining. T3 practiced the meditation technique. As she reported that they do not have certain timeframe work for meditation, they can practice when she realizes it is necessary. During my T3's LKG class observation first she made some other teaching learning activities then they performed the meditation classes. The children performed spellbindingly. I really enjoyed the practice and observed the effectiveness in the class. The students were enthusiastic about the practice. They prepared their sitting posture as the teacher instructed and followed all the instructions sincerely. I felt their both mental and physical tranquillity.

Field Visit and Indigenous Learning

Languages are the means of symbolizing human thoughts and natural or man-made objects. Naturally language acquisition is far better for natural use of language than language learning in the formal conscious setting. The language acquisition process can be espoused partially in language learning and teaching. The textbooks have contained various contents of local monuments, temples, and historical and archaeological sites. Learning with eyewitness or field observation is far better than learning from the text. As they reported they have planned field visit program. They can observe what they read in the text, and they read in the text what they observed in the field. It helps the children widen their multidimensional epistemic horizons like history, culture, architecture, archaeology, sculpture and others. The children can develop their level of awareness and positive attitude towards ethnic/indigenous culture and knowledge.

Learner Differences and Learning Treatment

Junior children (ECD-Nursery, LKG and UKG) found more critical in learning deficit due to language in the case that the children do not have the access to both teaching language (*Nepal Bhasha*) and instructional language (Nepali). T3 shared "*One child from wester part of Nepal did not understand even Nepali. He is being parented by his grandmother neither does she speak Nepali. I started teaching different things like dancing, singing and playing. He used to smile only. After six months he able to communicate as others can."* Similarly, T2 added, "*I have not found any Newari children or teachers but some there are some Newari children from outside (out of Kathmandu valley) cannot speak Newari. Few Children are from Terai who cannot speak Nepali. I think they are experience difficulties in learning Newari.*" T1 *"I individually care and support the child who could not catch up with others. We use good children to help other learning deficit learners."*

Experienced Based Multilingual Approach

They are not oriented to any specific approach of language use as a medium of instruction. Based on their lived experiences and classroom practice situation the teachers are devising the multilingual approach. They use Nepali and English to teach *Nepal Bhasha* if they realize the necessities. Sometimes, they use other home languages of the children at ECD level. Co-teacher of T1 shared "*I am also from Madesh, so I understand their language and use it if they do not understand Nepali*". They have been using their own consensus and cooping context-sensitive strategic practices.

Materials and Use

Textbooks and some references artifacts, charts multilingual, not as sufficient to support in teaching learning, use e-sources from let's read (developed by The Asia Foundation) in their comfort time, meta card, drawing, smart board, video, reading apps 'let's read '

Teacher Development Effort

The teachers are not from teaching background, nor do they have teacher education for language teaching. They were requited and trained very shortly and appointed to schools. They are native speakers but do not have any formal education in *Nepal Bhasha* however, their academic qualification ranges from proficiency level (equivalent to grade 12) to master's degree. They are experiencing differences in colloquial and academic form (Imamovic & Weger, 2018) of *Nepal Bhasha*. They are used to colloquial form, but they are first time practicing academic form of *Nepal Bhasha*. T3 took short course on *Nepal Bhasha* grammar from a local language institution which is a *Nepal Bhasha* (*language*) teaching institution and realized the differences between colloquial and formal academic language.

Classroom Management and Students' Behaviors

All the classes I observed were heterogeneous. Teachers' skills, physical set up, children's background, teachers' instructional planning, instructional materials, teachers' preparedness and dedication, learners' motivation, and teachers' motion and voice commanding are classroom management influencing factors. "The ability of teachers to

organize classrooms and manage the behaviours of their students is critical to positive educational outcomes" (Oliver & Reschly, 2007, p. 13). If the number of students is small or manageable, teachers can manage the class well, however there are other factors too of classroom management. Junior classes with large number of students and in the post break periods found more disruptive. Disruptive behaviours and learning engagement seem to contrast with each other.

Language and Contents

The name of the book is *Yala* (Lalitpur) that is ancient name of present Lalitpur city. The *Nepal Bhasha* textbooks are in *Nepal Bhasha*, but scripts are Devanagari instead of having its own Ranjan script. Contents are from socio-cultural domain like family and kinship, foods and festivals, and culture and dresses. The textbooks seem content based and language oriented rather than about language. Contents, vocabulary and frequencies have theoretically been emphasized rather than grammar and accuracy. The course looks to be developed for language protection, extension, promotion, and socio-ethnos acculturation and accommodation.

Learner Motivation

Learners are excessively motivated towards communicative form of Newari language since it is their second or community/local language where they are temporarily residing. They enjoy greeting in Newari. They show the provoking interest in the language. T3 shared *"They asked what a particular thing is called in Newari madam, and I helped them."* T1's co-teacher added, "*I am a grade teacher of this class. Madam* (*Nepal Bhasha* teacher) *comes to class and goes to another class, but they are using Nepal Bhasha*. *Next day she comes and asks them, they correctly answer but I have forgotten*". During my observation I found the children except some disruptive ones were devotedly using language and participating in classroom activities. Their interest might be because of Newari language communicative potentiality in the location where were staying. They learn Newari chunks at school and could use them in the community after school.

Stances Towards Local Language

Other colleague teachers, administration and parents were reported with positive stances towards local language. T3 "*Parents are positive after joining two meetings with parents"*. They say "*Our children learn a new language; they say this and that madam. They talked to landlord/lady. We did not use to understand* ". T1's co-teacher "*You know the parents of community school. They are not active and do not show interest. We at the beginning called a meeting and informed us, "we are going to do this and that"*. They responded, "*All right, it might be alright, they can learn a new language ".* Some parents are worried on their children's Newari learning. As T2 reported, *"Some parents met and told me that their children cannot learn it at any cost and would fail. I persuaded them not to be worried. It is a matter of learning. They can gradually learn it ".* The parents are positive towards local language *Nepal Bhasha* however some of the parents were reported worried on their children's learning success. They have not been oriented on the purpose, importance, and needs of local language for children, schools

and entire society therefore some of parents have in confusion and anxiety. In this case concerning agencies should work on such concerns and confusion among parents for the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the policy and practice.

Pedagogical Purpose of LLs

There are certain philosophical stances on why a language is important for pedagogy. The concern agencies like teachers, parents and school administration should well be oriented to the significance of pedagogic values of local language. The more the policy of local language in education is magnitudinous the more its pedagogical practice model is compatible conjugant of policy. Using local language in education may improve learning engagement, learner identity, learning investment and psychological secureness. Teachers also have supports for the policy of offering local languages in education or instruction at school (Sundqvist, Gyllstad, Källkvistb, & Sandlund, 2025) because it increases efficiency at pedagogical sphere, and social justice at political sphere.

Possible Impacts of *Nepal Bhasha* Use: Language Promotion

Language is living phenomenon because it emerges from, exists, and reshapes in its speech community. It has an inseparable enticement to its mother speech community naturally but in the modern and globalized context, it is more political and ideological (Nahrkhalaji, n.d.; Johnson & Johnson, 2014; Phyak, 2016). Use and selection of a language for official communication, academic use, and public lingua franca is shaped by the political power and ideology of the state. In the modern time, if any language is confined only to its natural communication excluding from or not including in education and public spheres, it leads to the direction of the slow decay and ultimate death. On the other hand, if any local or ethnic language is used in education it not only supports learners in their learning but also promotes language acquisition. Nambajimana, Andala, & Faustin (2023) showed the relation between local language and its acquisition "Correlation values also indicated that teaching in local language positively influenced language acquisition levels" (p. 44). This implies that use of a local language in education widens local language acquisition and improves academic performance. The use of local language/ *Nepal Bhasha* in education may lead the following possible positive impacts for the promotion and empowerment *Nepal Bhasha* entirely.

Local Language Vanity

If any language is not included in education, the children from this community at school feel psychologically inferior and experience the learning deficit. They have low level of motivation in learning engagement. The teachers shared when they first joined school as students, they experienced various learning difficulties in comparison to their peers whose home language was used as medium of instruction at school. They had to make extra effort in learning because of language beyond their home language. Every ethnic child has a psychological affection towards its mother tongue. (Pradhan, 2020, p. 2) quoted a participant in her research "...Nepali and English can never take the place of the mother tongue because it is the language close to our hearts". At present they trace

back their childhood memories and experience pride in using their home language as a subject at school. T3 shares "*Nepalese are learning Japanese, Chines, Korean and other languages why we do not learn our Nepali Language (*Nepali language refer to languages spoken in Nepali*)."* T1 "*They are living here in Lalitpur and need to understand local language and culture that helps them to accommodate in the society*." It implies that all Newar community people are experiencing vanity when their language is begun to be used in education. Other community children learn their language which could encourage Newar community children to use *Nepal Bhasha*. As the participants teachers' enthusiastic verbalization entails that they are fondling the belongingness to the nation.

Language Cultivation

Language is a living phenomenon. It is originated, used and reformed by language community. A language needs careful cultivation for its livelihood and upliftment. Language cultivation refers to the process of living use of it in the various dimensions of human life. Educational institutions can explicitly contribute to local language cultivation, engaging teachers and parents in planned language practice. Yenda, Michelle, Elizabeth, & Jenny (2022, p. 19) "… culturally and linguistically diverse teachers and parents engage in concerted cultivation of students' language use, with evidence of organization of daily life, language use, and institutional intervention as key strategies". Using language in various forms like texting may foster the creativity of learners in the language. "... children have an increased sense of the way in which language functions and understand the connections between sound, word, meaning and text..." (Mehta, 2012, p. 17). Language cultivation leads to language development. Language development refers to the process of language promotion, widening use and recognition. Traditionally language was only a means of communication and people used natural form of language but in the modern and postmodern era of human civilization it has several other crosscutting dimensions of language cultivation. Some of them are language in day-to-day communication, public administration, education, national or internal lingua franca, international communication, and mass media (Fazakas, 2014). The more any language is rigorously cultivated the more it longs and widens its status planned and as a tool of communication (Nekvapil, 2010) for the livelihood. Language cultivation contexts depend upon the socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-techno contexts. Mckenzie (2022) suggested different roles and responsibility different stakeholders that scholars should increase their understanding and support to indigenous learning and resource; educator and educational institution should focus on teacher preparation and provide resources to community and family; and indigenous communities should be aware and positive towards their language programs. World's axiomatic ethnological evidence suggests that the more languages were cultivated, the more they were widened and extended.

Nepal Bhasha is one of the historically traced and richer language in Nepal, but it was not widely included in modern education, public administration and mass media. Education is one important domain of language cultivation (Moeliono, 1986). Except some cases, *Nepal Bhasha* has not been induced in national education system, national level media, and public administration. *Nepal Bhasha* as a local language subject in

some of the local levels in Kathmandu valley is begun to use in education which could lead to further *Nepal Bhasha* cultivation zones.

Language Extension and Studies

Natural languages to some extent have homogeneous speakers. When a natural language is used in formal domain of language cultivation like in education, public administration, mass media and technological innovation, it is reshaped with a new repertoire. It gets the adoption of new vocabularies from other languages if such words are not available in the languages. It is a way language enrichment. The new shape of language has heterogeneous properties and heterogeneous speakers. This is known as language extension. T3 opined "*This language at present is only up to grade 3. If it is continued up to grade 10, it will be better. I think so*". Various factors shape language extension or shrunk. Some of them are language power, language politics, language identity, language right and language ideology. If a language dynamism is integrated into social dynamism, the language gets developed and extended. Once English had limited speakers, with its dynamism, it gets wider extension. "...the borders of language studies have been pushed beyond the limitations of previously conceived margins" (Mehta, 2012, p. 17). On the contrary, if a language is not integrated into social dynamism it leads to decay. Children from other communities will learn *Nepal Bhasha* as a subject in school education. This language will have second language speakers. It will be extended in the speakers beyond its natives one.

Language studies do not take place unless its cultivation goes beyond the day-to-day communication in colloquial form. "...language studies have emerged as empowering the user, the end-consumer, thus redefining its usage, very often pushing the boundaries of language itself to create new movements and new worlds... " (Mehta, 2012, p. 12). Use of *Nepal Bhasha* in education will open the gate of language studies. Language studies may include literature writing and study, dictionary development, vocabulary collection, theoretical and applied linguistics, phonetics and phonology, language teaching learning theories and practices, material development, and others.

DISCUSSION

Teaching a local language to the non-native children is a titanic load on the shoulder of poorly educated or trained local language teachers. However, their practices and experiences have given us epistemic crystal at policy and practice level. The findings suggest that local teachers' engagement and innovative classroom practices are remarkable and praiseworthy however there are still four immediate and intertwining issues that need to be better addressed for effective, efficient, and sustainable local language use in education policy implementation. The first is teacher education still needs further empowerment, reformation, renovation, and substantial supports. The second is the holistic engagement of all concerning agencies including students, teacher, parents, school administration and other concerning. The third is that the pedagogical practice context is multilingual but distinct because one local language *Nepal Bhasha* is being taught to other many indigenous/minority/vernacular and dominant language community children in the metropolitan multilingual context. So, the teachers, who are teaching or will teach, should have specific and strategic trainings or teacher education

that could impart effective and strategic skill training to practice for teaching local language in metropolitan multilingual contexts. Eventually the fourth is the further policy impact assessment research which could explore various feedback and ways ahead for its better, efficient, and long last sustainability. These thematic issues are further discussed in the following themes.

Priority Calls for Teacher Education

Based on their lived experiences, they have realized need for teacher education. They have not been educated and trained on how to teach language comprising theories of language teaching, language learning and teaching second language. If teachers are well prepared for the materialization of underlying policy, the policy cannot be fully functional and implementation remains ineffective (Tonegawa, 2025) including other factors. If there is gap between teacher education and linguistics plus cultural needs and interests of the learners and programs are designed without criticality, the gap will be there between policy and practice (Sah, 2021). Teachers are the front-line executors of educational language policy, so they should be aware, prepared, educated, oriented, and trained for the successful implementation of the underlying language policies in education (K. C., 2022). Immediate and long-term visions for teacher retention, acquisition, and development seem to be the waiting policies and programs for sustainable local language policy practice. Since *Nepal Bhasha* teachers are the native speakers of it, they can use it fluently as its colloquial form but not with academic features of the language. They need teacher education including content and methodological language pedagogy education or long hours teacher training package otherwise the policy and its practice phenomena may encounter tragic failures.

Parents-Students Engagement

Both parents and students are also the key stockholders of educational language policy and practice therefore they should explicitly be involved in the various stairs of policy formulation and practice engagement. Since parental beliefs, motivation, and engagement in their children's education play various roles and enhance their contribution, they can motivate their children and work with teachers and school in collaboration (Boyle & Benner, 2020) for their children's better academic performance in cooperation with the school community. Parents' engagement is for improved outcomes for students and teachers and schools can support parents' engagement to the school and home learning (Australian Government Department of Education, 2025). For the effective and successful implementation of the local language policy and practice, metropolitan authorities, school agencies, and teachers should engage, involve, orient and hear the parents in the various layers of policy and practice. Policy informed parents can well contribute to practicing engagement. This sort of engagement enhances the ownership and responsibility of the parents in their children's education and supports the school community.

Students are the direct service recipients, therefore they should be heard, supported, assessed and remediated critically and frequently which reduces learning barriers among students and teaching efficiency for teachers too. Students (even junior ones) are not consumers, but they are as the members of learning community, therefore their

representation, feedback, and engagement even in minor activities represent students' collective learning experience (Little & Williams, 2010). However, basic level children are not enough matured for better engagement activities, but they are enough for their learning level. In case of *Nepal Bhasha* in this research, majority of students whom I observed were from other home language rather than *Nepal Bhasha* one. Those students did not share *Nepal Bhasha* as a common language with the teachers, so they were struggling for learning it. This contextual reality should be seriously fixed then strategic moves could be materialized.

Critical Efficiency Strategies in Heterogeneity

Language is a means of epistemic negotiation. "...language as something that could be simply learnt, to one that could change, be used, re-used and in fact, even re-created, can perhaps be seen as the most significant movement in..." (Mehta, 2012, p. 12). If the learners and teachers have a mutual language, they have more teacher-student talks. Number of teacher-student talks not only shapes the amount of language exposure but also shapes the efficiency in epistemic negotiation. "...that the basic skills of teachers and students in managing conversations and providing feedback help students develop and improve their target language" (Tupalessy et al., 2024, p. 81). Classes are heterogeneous in terms of language. Since Nepal is a natural and tutorial multilingual nation, almost all urban school classes are linguistically heterogenous (K. C., 2022). Nepali is a mutual language as the ultimate alternate of classroom communication because it is a language of public administration, lingua franca and language of academia in Nepal however it is strange for many early grade ethnic children. The Nepali speaking children native or L2 learner/acquirer come across as more benignant in learning *Nepal Bhasha* over non-Nepali speaking children except Newari speaking children because the teachers and Nepali speaking children share Nepali as a mutual language in communication. Nepali speaking children use Nepali in the class and invest their learning experiences in new language learning engagement. Other children remain relatively passive in new language learning engagement due to language barrier learning space since Nepali is also new for them. Other children's historical body of learning experiences and learner identity have not been considered that deficits them in learning. Gradually this learning deficit is overcome with reshaping new language repertoire. Children and teachers have no communication when they do not share a common code. T2 shared "*There are some students from Terai. They did not understand Nepali language for long time. I could not do anything for them. After some time, they gradually began to receive Nepali as language in classroom communication. Then only they started learning Nepal Bhasha*".

Policy and Impact Assessment Research

Policies once introduced are not forever so when it completes a cycle, it is better to revisit by the introducing agencies for its reformation. On the other hand, the researcher can carry out ethnographic or any other methodological research to highlight the policy-practice gap and explore its intertwining dynamics (Hornberger, 2020). Until in-depth studies are not carried out, its impacts such as meaningful connection between learner representation/realities and the language policy-practice provision cannot be assessed

evidently (Ee & Sung, 2024). When *Nepal Bhasha* policy was first introduced, it was on assumption but later when it materialized, it was in practice context. Further research on it, therefore, provides insightful feedback to review, revisit, and reform the policy and practice realm.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Regarding RQ 1, interview and observation data revealed that introducing a local language [*Nepal Bhasha*] through a social type of subject named *Yala* in Lalitpur Metropolitan City from pre-school to grade three is a good step for MTBMLE. Although it has its own opportunities and challenges (Phyak & Awasthi, 2022), it will gradually overcome challenges, widen opportunities, and make its own path of success. This policy-practice realm needs wide support from, cooperation, and collaboration among teachers, students, schools, parents, municipal agencies, and informal agencies like UNESCO, UNICEFs, and others. In relation to RQ 2, participants perceived three positive impacts: political and social for long, and pedagogical for immediate. Local government can justify its exitance, power, and jurisdiction granted by the constitution in the federal system to serve people at their doorway and work for the preservation, protection, and promotion of ethnic, indigenous, heritage languages and cultures through education at political dimension. It promotes the concept of inclusive society preserving diversity as a *salad bowl* not a *melting pot* (Lessow-Hurley, 2014). Similarly, the young generation will shape a positive attitude among the people in society and towards local language and culture as a part of their identity and nationhood contrasting the rapid globalization pace at social dimension. Moreover, it will reduce the disparity among people based on their originality and backgrounds that promotes social harmony and national unity despite the tensions of policy formation and educational implication (Debbarma, 2025; Lessow-Hurley, 2014). Then it will restructure the language ideology, and language use in education that will increase learner participants and engagement in learning. As a result, it may make a new paradigm of relation and belongingness between community and schools.

Since *Nepal Bhasha* teachers are from other streams rather than language content and pedagogy, and have been deployed after short term course orientation, they are striving for effective instruction (K.C., 2022). The children in the classes are from multilingual backgrounds; therefore they (both teachers and students) use several languages for learning support, classroom learning engagement motivation and investment, and an index of learner identity (Acharya, 2021; Cummins, 2007; Garcia, 2008). Despite *Nepal Bhasha* being a local language, it is a second or third language for many students, they therefore go through struggle of the translanguaging (Vogel & Garcia, 2017) as a natural process of second or third language learning. The teachers are practicing locally innovated techniques like meditation, chanting local folk songs, dance and games in pedagogy. The teachers seem proud of the policy because it will extend its scope and vanity thus, the policy of local language implementation, even as a subject, has opened various possibilities of language development, extension and studies.

This policy- practice realm may set community concern and identity in education through local language (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008). Since teaching *Nepal Bhasha* in

formal education is a new phenomenon at metropolitan, they first prioritize the teacher education/training for teaching local language in multilingual context (Garcia & Kleyn, 2013). This research may be the reference to the teachers and administrators for their pedagogical innovation, and the policy makers for policy reformation and teacher education or development in overall.

Eventually, the teaching of *Nepal Bhasha* reflects a crucial effort in promoting local/ethnic language, cultural identity, and educational equity through multilingualism. Adaptive strategies and community involvement devised by the teachers provide a solid foundation for further local language education, however continued support for teacher development and resources is essential effort for its long-term success. This research is a just glance over the phenomenon so further intensive research can explore more insights on it in terms of policy, practice and further reformation.

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