Discourses shaping the language-in-education policy and foreign language education in Nepal: an intersectional perspective

Prem Prasad Poudel & Tae-Hee Choi

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

⧉ OPEN ACCESS | Check for updates

Discourses shaping the language-in-education policy and foreign language education in Nepal: an intersectional perspective

Prem Prasad Poudel ⬤ and Tae-Hee Choi ⬤

Department of Education Policy and Leadership, The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China

ABSTRACT

Language policy and planning in Nepal has been contested due to the co-existence of multiple contradictory discourses concerning teaching and learning of local, national, foreign, and international languages. Recently a multilingual policy was issued to create space for the once-banned ethnic/indigenous languages in public schooling, further complexifying the landscape. A few studies have paid attention to teaching and learning of the lesser taught ethnic/indigenous and foreign languages; however, what discursive orientations have contributed towards enabling (or constraining) the use of such languages in education and how have yet to receive scholarly attention. Framed by the perspectives of the intersectionality of discourses, and drawing on in-depth interviews with policymakers, headteachers, teachers, students, and their parents of five schools of Nepal, this paper concludes that the interplay between broader discourses such as globalisation, neoliberal marketisation and nationalism has played a significant role in shaping language policy decisions and localised practice of language(s). It also reveals that the spaces for ethnic/indigenous languages in education are delimited, in preference of English, Nepali, and other emerging foreign languages, leading to their further marginalisation. Such trends diminish the potential use of lesser taught languages, threatening Nepal's multilingual education policy towards sustaining existing linguistic diversity.

Introduction

The global dominance of English has been viewed in diverse ways and addressed with sundry policies and practice initiatives in different contexts (Choi, 2021; Dearden, 2014). While English has been an enabling factor for international mobility, in multilingual contexts, in particular, it has been a powerful tool for linguistic superiority and economic benefits (Giri, 2011). This predominance of English as an international language

has raised concerns about its negative impact on linguistic diversity of several multilingual communities. This trend has also been criticised as limiting the role of home/indigenous as well as other foreign languages in education (Liddicoat & Curnow, 2014; Liddicoat & Kirkpatrick, 2020). Moreover, recent developments in cross-border mobility for education and employment opportunities has instigated changing ecologies of foreign language education, especially the teaching and learning of non-English foreign languages such as Korean, Japanese, and Mandarin (hereafter Chinese). Besides, language policies have also been affected by regional as well as global development projects. One such instance is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a connectivity project that has appeared to have opened spaces for other non-English foreign languages such as Arabic, Malay, Russian, Urdu and many more in the territories connected by this project (Han et al., 2019). Such geopolitical and development initiatives are likely to lead nation states to develop new language policies which negotiate between local demands for affirmative action and the expanding challenges posed by regionalisation and globalisation, especially regarding the place of English, national language(s) and ethnic/indigenous languages in education. Globally, while the motivation for learning new foreign languages has been expanding along with language-in-education policies (LEPs) that opened up the space for foreign language learning (Nettle & Suzanne, 2000), there has been little systematic research on (1) how the LEPs at schools are negotiated in relation to local, national and global discourses and (2) what implications they have in linguistic ecologies in multilingual contexts on school-level practices of teaching local/national/foreign languages.

This paper explores the co-existing (sometimes contradictory) discourses shaping school level LEP decisions, especially regarding the choice of medium of instruction (MOI) and teaching languages as subjects of the curriculum in secondary schools, and reports how such discourses intersect to create policy ensembles in schools. Implications are drawn on their impact on the promotion and protection of the linguistic diversity and foreign language education in multilingual educational systems in Nepal.

Contextual background

Nepal's language education in schools is dominated by Nepali (the national language) and English (the foreign language) despite its multilingual diversity constituted by more than 129 languages of the nation (Language Commission, 2019), which are being distributed across 125 caste/ethnic groups (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2012). English and Nepali are not only used as MOIs, but also taught as compulsory subjects in the curriculum mandated by the macro governmental policy on education. Alongside of Nepali, English and other ethnic/indigenous languages, foreign languages such as Korean, Japanese, Chinese and German are learnt for various purposes such as employment, trade, and education, especially by youths and adults. Courses for such foreign languages have been offered mainly by educational institutes and consultancies outside the formal schooling system (Poudel & Choi, 2021). Following the Nepal government's signing of the BRI in 2017, involving a multinational infrastructure project (https://bit.ly/35ph7n5), the teaching and learning of Chinese in schools has gained momentum. Since this agreement, Chinese has been perceived as a language of power, prestige and commodity value in Nepal (Sharma, 2018), and has been taught as an

additional foreign language by some private schools (Dhakal, 2019). Alongside Chinese, a government-to-government agreement with South Korea (hereafter Korea) has contributed to expanded learning of the Korean language (albeit outside of the formal schooling system), especially by youths who aspire to secure employment in Korea. The Korean government's allocation of 10,050 quotas for Nepali migrant workers in the year 2020, and the requirement for potential employees to pass a Korean language proficiency test (The Himalayan Times, 2019) have rapidly increased the number of Korean learners.

The practice of foreign language learning in Nepal is not a new phenomenon. For instance, the National Education System Plan [NESP]- 1971-76, which aimed at modernisation of Nepal's education system, positioned the teaching of English, French, Chinese, German, Spanish, etc. under the category of United Nations languages (Ministry of Education [MOE], 1971). However, with English being a powerful language at the global level, the educational spaces of other foreign languages were historically limited. But with global migration trends (the flow of migration workers), the potential for better-paid jobs and higher earnings and Nepali youths' aspirations for education abroad, the teaching and learning of other foreign languages such as Chinese and Korean is expected to increase (Gazzola et al., 2018; Poudel & Baral, 2021).

Finally, significant progress has been made in teaching and learning and officialisation of mother tongues. Textbooks have been prepared in 24 languages for basic level (grade 1-5) (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MOEST], 2017), and the language commission has recommended that 24 languages could be used as MOI up to grade 3 (Language Commission, 2020). Despite these efforts, there is higher motivation of youths towards learning foreign languages that have stronger utilitarian benefits (see Poudel & Baral, 2021), causing decline in youths' motivation in learning their home/ethnic languages (Gautam, 2021). These contrasting trends co-exist and influence language policy decisions (such as that of MOI) in Nepal's schooling system (Poudel & Choi, 2021). The key factors that have driven the public to choose to learn one or the other language are: an aspiration to participate in the globalisation processes, reaping economic benefits, promoting nationalism, and protecting ethnolinguistic identity. These motivations or drives are in constant interaction and create tensions around learning of English, Nepali, ethnic/indigenous and other foreign languages. Despite the government's rights-based and equity policies to promote lesser taught languages (especially the ethnic/indigenous ones), e.g. their inclusion as part of the school curriculum and the provision of choice of MOI from among Nepali, English and other mother tongues (MOEST, 2019), which is a significant move from traditional assimilatory policies that promoted only Nepali and English in general practice, a large number of ethnic/indigenous languages have not been accommodated into schooling systems.

In Nepal, the language policy and planning (LPP) phenomenon has been embedded in complex social structures such as histories, social class, ethnicity, caste, and religion. LEP decision-making in schools, therefore, is affected by several discourses pertaining to these social structures, and to values. While the complex interplay of social, educational, geopolitical, and economic aspects of national and international languages has been well documented in the research literature (see, Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Tollefson & Tsui, 2003), how discursive forces such as globalisation,

nationalism, ethnicity, social inequalities and equity intersect as inherent part of policy-crafting in the schools' LEP in Nepal deserves scholarly attention.

Theoretical underpinning: discourse as an approach to language policy

Discourse, a form of 'social practice' (Fairclough, 1989), implies 'a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s), which frame it' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). The discursive practices are embedded in and related to the broader sociopolitical and historical contexts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009), which are determined by 'a set of conventions associated with social institutions' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 17). Notably, such discourses contribute towards rationalising individuals' ideologies and decision making, for example, the choice of MOI in the multilingual schooling contexts. This is because discourse 'constitutes, naturalises, sustains and changes the significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations' (Fairclough, 1992, p. 67) and drives the practice which ultimately shapes social structures in return (Fairclough et al., 2010).

In this paper, we bring in the construct of 'intersectionality', as well as discourse, to understand how intersecting discursive forces collectively shape LEP decisions at the school level in Nepal. Several scholars (e.g. Barakos & Unger, 2016; Johnson, 2011; Williams, 2020) have explored language policy by conducting critical discourse analysis; however, how several discursive constructs intersect each other to shape policy decisions has yet to receive due scholary attention. This approach does not necessarily involve discourse analysis that adopts analytic tools for exploring the values in the texts (talks and written). Our perspective is closer to that of Ball and Exley (2010), who propose policy as a process mobilising specific discourses within or across its various processes. We take policies (both formed and enacted) as outcomes of discoursal contestations or negotiations of multiple material (e.g. economic) and social (e.g. identity and mobility) orientations of the subjects of the discourses. The discourses shaping policies are highly context-specific as the 'context of powerful social and political forces, including globalisation, migration, and demographic changes, political conflicts, changes in governments, shifts in the local economies', and influences LPP decisions (Tollefson & Tsui, 2003, p. 283).

Nepal's language policies and practices in education are no exception, as studying (in) English, Nepali, other ethnic/indigenous languages or foreign languages relate to individuals' economic and social class relations, and other socio-political specificities such as ethnicity, nationalism, and equity (also see, Awasthi, 2011; Poudel, 2019). Synthesising the discourse concerns in LPP, Barakos and Unger (2016) claim that the LPP phenomenon 'is constituted and enacted in and through discourse' (p. 1). In other words, the discourse shapes which languages to be prioritised and which not to be, in the education policies and their enactments. To illustrate, while the advancement of English as a MOI in schools is driven by the discourse of globalisation and modernisation, the promotion of Nepali is driven by nationalism. The dominant discourses that apply in formulating language policies in schools represent power relations among languages in that the dominant discourses shape probable policy actions sidelining non-dominant discourses. Due to asymmetrical power relations among languages projected unequally by more widely circulating discourses, inequalities emerge (Tollefson, 1991). For instance, while

the dominant discourses of neoliberalism recognise English as a tool for globalisation and the free-market economy, they marginalise ethnic/indigenous languages. With societies coloured by several ideologies which 'enmeshed in a variety of discordant, incoherent and contradictory discourses' (Ball, 1993, p. 15), intersections of these develop, contest and reproduce language policy at different levels, and this study looks into these intersections in schools.

Intersectionality of discourses shaping LEP

The concept of intersectionality, first introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, is considered to have been helpful in developing interdisciplinary analysis of the convergence of multiple forms of forces to shape people's lives (Artiles, 2011). This perspective enables understanding of social relations that are formed by socio-historical and structural conditions, and influences individuals' and institutions' decision-making (McCall, 2005; Varcoe et al., 2011). The recent emergence of increasingly mobile communities has brought multiple but interlocking discursive forces such as globalisation, neoliberal capitalism, nationalism and ethnolinguistic identity into schools and their language policies. Some of these are aligned with each other and thus create synergy, while others are in conflict and cancel each other out. In such contexts, the theory of intersectionality as an analytical framework (Gay, 2018) unravels the relationships between different but co-existing and interconnected forces shaping LEP. The framework befits Nepal's case, where plural and multilingual social characteristics interact with the country's culturally, ethnically, linguistically and socially diverse identities.

The study

Research sites and cases

This paper draws on data gathered from a qualitative case study conducted in five secondary schools (three public and two private) in Nepal between May 2019 and June 2021. Each of the schools exhibits unique demographic and linguistic characteristics among the students and the community contexts. The schools were purposively selected to reflect the maximum diversity in terms of contexts (social and geographical), language backgrounds (Nepali, Maithili, Tamang, Newar, and several other native-speaking communities) and the nature of the establishment (public and private). For instance, School A (hereafter, Bhairav[1]) is in the centre of a densely populated metropolitan city, primarily inhabited by a Bhojpuri-native speaking population. However, languages such as Hindi, Marwari and Nepali are frequently used in the community, and the school is attended by students from those backgrounds. School B (hereafter, Janak) is in a rural municipality that is mainly inhabited by a Maithili native-speaking population and is attended by the students from a Maithili monolingual background with a negligible number of non-Maithili native speakers. School C (hereafter Laxmi) is in a community with mixed demographic characteristics such as migrants from several parts of Nepal, speaking Nepali, Newar, Tamang, Magar and Rai languages. Bhairav practices English and Nepali dual MOI, while Janak practices Nepali-only MOI, and Laxmi practices mainly EMI. School D (hereafter Mandala) is an elite EMI private school largely attended by

children from well-off families, while school E (hereafter Kalika) is a low-fee EMI private school. Mandala and Kalika have been teaching Chinese as an additional foreign language since 2018. Although the five schools do not represent Nepal at large, they provide typical example cases of the diverse LEP and foreign language teaching practices in various socio-cultural and demographic contexts. The policies and practices enacted in these cases provide us with a comprehensive picture of intersection of discursive forces shaping the LEP and foreign language education, and illustrate their impact in language policy decision-making, thereby creating power asymmetries among languages and their position in education.

Participants and methods

A total of 48 participants were involved in the study. From each public-school (Bhairav, Janak and Laxmi), 15 informants including 1 headteacher, 4 teachers, 5 parents, and 5 students, were purposively selected. From each private school (Mandala and Kalika), only the principal could be invited for an interview. Three policymakers from the local government administering the respective case-study schools were interviewed. The major data for this study was obtained from the public schools as the case of LEP (especially the MOI) was much debated therein. However, the data exploration was extended to two private schools, which have been teaching Chinese as an additional foreign language subject, alongside EMI. Therefore, the interviews in Mandala and Kalika schools focused exclusively on the case of Chinese language teaching. Informed consent was sought before the field-based case study observation, semi-structured inter-views (with head teachers, teachers and policymakers) and focus group discussions (with students and parents) took place. All interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Nepali, transcribed, and translated into English. The translation was literal, but the idioms and cultural terms were translated semantically by the first author, who had prior experience translating from Nepali into English. The translations were reviewed by another Nepali-English bilingual scholar. The interviews lasted approximately 12-minutes to an hour. Online interviews (through Facebook messenger and telephone calls) were conducted with the private schools' principals (pseudonyms Sanjog and Sheetal are used hereafter). After the preliminary analysis of the data, follow-ups were made online and face-to-face to obtain supplementary information when needed, which helped deepen the interpretation and sharpen the themes (see Cohen et al., 2018). Supplementary data were obtained from the policy papers, reports, other published materials and media reports.

The data were coded thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006), first with micro themes, and later organised into the larger themes (Miles et al., 2014). They were coded both inductively and deductively. While open to new themes, participants' utterances were coded on their linguistic aspirations and decision-making, their rationales, and the dis-courses they refer to. This way, the perceived discursive forces were tapped into. Because the interviews were undertaken in Nepali, and the data were translated into English and co-coded by the second author, who does not have local language knowldge, a thematic analysis was deemed more appropriate rather than detailed conversation or discourse analysis.

Discussion of findings

The findings are reported in interrelated thematic categories (Miles et al., 2014) presented in pairs, based on associations made by the participants and for ease of discussion, that is, ethnolinguistic identity and globalisation, nationalism and neoliberal marketisation, and equity and equality. However, the findings presented in this paired categorical organisation represent the discourses that interrelate and co-exist–though sometimes contradict and come into tension–in shaping school stakeholders' ideologies toward making LEP decisions and foreign language education. For instance, choosing ethnolinguistic identity over globalism does not necessarily result in adoption of a mother tongue or Nepali MOI, as these pair of discourses coexist and interact with the discourses of equity and equality. Although sometimes what discourse prefers which language is clear, how the diverse discourses intermingle and position languages collectively is quite complex.

Ethnolinguistic identity and globalisation

Language policies are closely tied to concerns of ethnicity, as well as people's aspirations for future opportunities created by the forces of globalisation. To address such concerns, liberal democratic polities focus on ensuring that students attain language skills necessary for equal participation in schooling and employment prospects, as well as the need for protection and promotion of their diverse ethnic identities (Tollefson & Tsui, 2003). Such concerns create tensions in the selection of languages for educational purposes. In Nepal's case, while the state policies provide spaces for lesser taught languages such as the ethnic/indigenous and foreign languages other than English as part of the curriculum, English and Nepali language, as compulsory subjects and major MOIs, continue to dominate such spaces and are particularly marginalising ethnic/indigenous languages in educational systems. In recent years, foreign languages such as Chinese have begun to be taught peripherally as an extra-curricular course or an additional language subject due to the limited space in the curriculum in terms of school hours, and have been taught especially in the private schools (Dhakal, 2019; Sharma, 2018). While English and Chinese are supported by the imperatives created by the discourses of globalisation and regionalisation, this has created tension with the request to teach ethnic/indigenous languages, which were invoked by the discourse of the need to preserve ethnolinguistic identity.

Most participant parents referenced globalisation discourses and supported EMI rather than mother tongue use in educational spaces. For instance, a parent from Bhairav school said, '*I do not want my kids to learn in the mother tongue, rather I want them [to learn] in English, so I admitted them here in the EMI school*'. Parents in other case study schools echoed such perceptions assuming that English-only education would empower their children to ride the tide of globalisation and global mobility. They thought that schools should promote global values rather than local ethnic ones as the latter can be learnt at home and in the community, and even stated that they are less important. Similar concerns were raised by students from ethnic/indigenous language backgrounds as well. Whenever the discourse of minority language use in education was evoked, the participants continued to project the 'deficit ideology' concerning these languages, which basically emerged from the socio-historicity of Nepal's Englisized

education, which projected English as the language of global power, economic potential and a tool for mobility. The dominant discourse of globalisation was linked mainly with learning English (Ricento, 2018), and sometimes with the learning of other foreign languages.

School practices reproduced and reinforced such dominant discourses pertaining to some languages, and restricted the spaces for lesser taught local languages. For instance, the head teacher of Bhairav school said, '*We do not allow the children to use their mother tongues in the school premises, rather we encourage them to use English*'. He perceived English as the best tool for survival, saying, '*If you learn Chinese, you cannot survive in India, but if you know English, you can survive in China as well. So, wherever you go, you can use English and survive*'. Such a view is shared by staff in other schools. For instance, a teacher from Janak school added, '*English is mandatory, otherwise how can our students reach to the global community, and compete with other students, especially those coming from the private schools?*'. These arguments and practices legitimised and sustained the dominant discourse of globalisation associated with EMI. Also, they contributed towards narrowing the school spaces for lesser taught languages (both domestic and foreign). The policymakers in the local governments are aware of their possible dangerous consequences, but note that tensions around globalisation and ethnolinguistic identity would continue.

While language policies are the products of ideological and discursive constructs (McCarty, 2003), the tensions among discourses and related power lead to a failure to successfully implement linguistic social justice policies such as legitimisation of ethnic/indigenous languages as MOI. Despite the existence of discourses promoting the mother tongue as an MOI and teaching ethnic/indigenous languages as subjects in the curriculum, the more powerful discourse of globalisation affected people's ideological positions. This discourse advances learning of (in) English as important, and reinforces people's ideology that learning of English as well as the other emerging regional foreign languages, for example, Chinese, will provide the social, economic, and political advantages (e.g. Farr & Song, 2011). The influence of this ideology led participants to disregard the discourse of ethnolinguistic identity that aims to promote and protect local ethnic/indigenous languages and, therefore, the linguistic identity of the respective communities.

Nationalism and neoliberal marketisation

The discourse of nationalism or national identity competed with the discourse of neoliberal marketisation that frames language as an object 'rendered available for conventional exchange in the market' (Heller et al., 2014, p. 545). In political terms, the nationalist agenda in education promoting a standard language ideology is most likely to suppress linguistic diversity in multilingual contexts (Pillar, 2016). Nepal's nationalist agenda has been reflected in the LEPs formulated since the 1950s, which aimed to ban ethnic/indigenous languages and intended to develop a unified national system of education and produce people who are loyal to the nation (Bandhu, 1989; Pandey et al., 1956; Upraity, 1959; Weinberg, 2013). Aiming at developing Nepali-fluent national citizens and uniformity in the curricula, the government created a primary school curriculum that made the teaching of Nepali mandatory for all the classes in the schools across

the country in 1959 (Onta, 2009). The National Education Planning Commission [NEPC]-1956 recommended that the Nepali language was made the only MOI, and none of the other languages were allowed in school education, assuming that teaching of these languages will hinder the teaching of Nepali (Pandey et al., 1956; Weinberg, 2013). The historical practice of teaching Nepali, the official state language, to children of non-Nepali language background, which puts more than 129 ethnic/indigenous languages at risk and continues projection of Nepali-only national language policy, can be taken as an instance of heightened Nepali nationalism.

This agenda conflicted with the discourse of globalisation that promotes English. However, in practice, the rapid expansion of English in the schooling system supported by neoliberal marketisation has challenged the official Nepali MOI. The unchecked expansion of EMI illustrates the growing tension between the two discursive forces of Nepali nationalism and neoliberalism in LEP decision-making in schools. Amid these tensions in LEP, hierarchies between EMI and Nepali medium instruction (NMI) have been formed within school education, where the former is perceived more as a key marker of quality and social capital (Pradhan, 2020). Prestigious language(s), such as English and Nepali, collectively regulate access to material resources and therefore reproduce existing socio-economic hierarchies.

In practice, supporting either of these discourses does result in excluding the other dominant language. To illustrate, one of the parents from a non-Nepali mother-tongue speaking background relates, '*We need Nepali as we are the citizens of Nepal, and learning Nepali would be the best way*'. While reproducing the discourse of Nepali nationalism, he does not resist the continuation of the use of EMI, thinking that learning English would provide more access and opportunities beyond the nation. The comment from another parent from Janak school is reminiscent of a neoliberal discourse when saying, '*This language or that language, this is all not significant unless our kids get good employment and other opportunities in and outside the country*', and she is open for their children learning Nepali. She noted, '*I needed Nepali to survive in this city, and in the community people also use Nepali more than our native language*'.

However, both disocurses are used by students, teachers and parents of all schools to delegitimise their own native languages in schools, and policymakers simply accept them. To view the case of Bhairav school, a student notes, '*Leaning of Nepali and English is beneficial for us, as the former is our national language and the other is a global language. If I am in Nepal, then learning Nepali is important. But if we go abroad, English is needed*'. Echoing similar views, another student said, '*If we know foreign languages, we expand our job opportunities and have better earnings in the future, so we need to learn these languages now. Our local languages do not work outside of the current community*'. The parents also maintained similar views and orientations towards learning in English and Nepali. One parent asked a counter question as '*Where will our children go and what job will they find if they do not know Nepali and English?*'. Another concurred: '*Schools do not need to use or teach in mother tongues, as these languages are learned at home and in the community, rather schools should teach various other languages useful for their future employment and education.*'

Perhaps pressured by the expectations of his students and parents, the head teacher remarked:

> *We want our students to have opportunities at the national and global level. For that we need to teach them Nepali and English, and if possible other foreign languages. If we teach mother tongue, no one will come to this school. We need to be practical also.*

He seems aware of the bottom-up force (i.e. emerging from parents and students) to provide eduation of/in the dominant langauges that relate to national identity (through Nepali) and global access (through English).

Similar practice is observed in Laxmi school. Laxmi marketed EMI for its survival, projecting this MOI as a key marketing tool[2], and students and parents positively responded to this mission. A student from Laxmi school observed, '*I think we learn our local language at home and community, and that is sufficient*'. A parent from Tharu background similarly notes:

> *In our village, the school used Tharu, and Nepali, and my children did not learn English. We were worried about their future. What jobs would they get if they do not know English well? If our children learn English, they will find high-income jobs.*

Her arguments were applauded by other parents during the FGD. The working-class parents expected that EMI-education would facilitate their children's greater mobility and opportunities in the future.

In private schools, the economic discourse promotes non-English foreign languages as well. Sheetal from Kalika school thinks the '*Teaching of Chinese' is private schools' strategic appropriation to expand the schools' branding*'. Sanjog, the head teacher of Mandala school also notes:

> *Our parents chose Chinese instead of [ethnic] languages to be taught in school thinking that China is expanding in the global market, and it would be a useful language if any of the students studying today would choose to do business linking with China in the future.*

The business motives and therefore the competition for branding of schools is an instance of the expanding structural effects of neoliberal marketisation. The policymakers of the municipalities, who govern the case schools, largely support the economic discourse. The policymaker responsible for Laxmi school claimed, '*You know finally we see the economic value … we have to see where the future is and invest predicting the market of the coming 20 years … I think teaching of Chinese language is an investment for the future*'.

These cases illustrate community disengagement in upholding mother tongues in LEP despite recent education policy guidelines ensuring safe spaces for ethnic languages. Parents' demotivation and students' reduced interest in learning of/in other languages than the dominant langauges, such as Nepali and English (and Chinese), has led to schools' reluctance to introduce those langauges into the school curriculum. None of the participants in this study expressed their discontent about the lack of offerings of their ethnic languages, and they took knowledge of the dominant languages as a powerful tool for higher economic benefits. Therefore, the school stakeholders' ideologies in relation to English, Nepali and other foreign languages reflected the discourse of commodification of language (Heller, 2003; Pujolar, 2018) that is an essential characteristics of neoliberal market.

In sum, the participants' narratives illustrate their support for the discourses of nationalism and neoliberal marketisation. Nationalism established Nepali as the

primary language of education, the discourse of neoliberal marketisation established English as a primary foreign language and Chinese as an emerging additional foreign language – though now with only limited spaces in the education system but with potential of future expansion, which both policymakers and parents perceive as a new language to be invested in. Their perceptions relate to the formal and informal employment market in Nepal, particularly the one created by private sector education and business organisations that prioritise English language proficiency as one of the requirements for employment. The expansion of teaching and learning of Chinese also correlates with the potential of future employment in the tourism and hospitality industry given the increasing trend of Chinese trade and investment in Nepal (Sharma, 2018). The commodification of language has made English (and an emerging regional language Chinese) a winning semiotic resource (see, Kallkvist & Hult, 2016; Poudel & Choi, 2021), which has been utilised by EMI schools to justify the quality rhetoric in education. Above all, the logic of the 'market' has given English teaching or teaching of other dominant foreign langues (e.g. Chinese) a strong foundation, by benefitting children in globalised marketplaces. This shows that there is a buy-in of English and other foreign langauges from ordinary community members.

Equity and equality

The terms 'Samatā' (equity) and 'Samānatā (equality) have been frequently circulated in Nepal's education policies. While equity discourse has been invoked to promote teaching and learning of ethnic/indigenous languages, the discourse of equality has been used by people who promote adoption of EMI or NMI, associating them with better social mobility and job prospects. Often the former was used by the government, which emphasises the teaching and learning of/in ethnic/indigenous languages. In contrast, the latter was used by parents who demand educating their children in English and Nepali. At the macro level, aware of the tension and hierarchies between different languages (Pradhan, 2020), the Government of Nepal addressed the right of children to get education in their native language as well as the currently dominant EMI and NMI, through policy provision in the National Curriculum Framework – 2019 as:

> To facilitate learning in school education, the medium of instruction at the basic level will be the mother tongue or Nepali language. However, English can be the medium of instruction for teaching subjects other than social studies, values/moral education, and any other subjects related to teaching Nepali art, culture, and fundamental indigenous identity.

Although this macro policy aimed to incorporate equity and equality concerns by creating spaces for all languages, it did not check the expansion of EMI in school education. These concerns, however, do not seem to reach the grassroots level as the stakeholders continue to legitimise the predominance of EMI in Nepal's schools that unintentionally restricted the ethnic/indigenous languages in the educational spaces, raising equity and quality concerns. In a group discussion, a student in Bhairav school said:

> If we know our language only, how can we communicate with people from other districts, especially in the hilly region [where jobs are available]? So, we learn our language from home and community, that is enough, so it is better for us if we learn English and Nepali in school.

These students visualise the wider national spaces where Nepali and English are valuable than their home languages for their personal and career growth. Similarly, the Tharu-speaking[3] migrant students in Laxmi school and their parents believed that they do not regret leaving their ethnic language aside to pursue school education either in English or Nepali. One of the parents said, 'हामी त पछि परेम नि सर, थारू भाषामा मात्र पढेर के हुन्छ र?' [We have lagged behind, what is the use of learning exclusively in Tharu?']. Saying so, she was referring to public schools in her place of origin, i.e. the Tharu community, in which Tharu was the language of communication inside and outside the classroom, although Nepali was the official medium of instruction in that school. The notion of 'lagging behind' originates from her belief that education in EMI is superior and of better quality, and considers it inequitable if her children are excluded from EMI education. In general, parental motivation for EMI is rooted in this ideology that (wrongly) projects education in ethnic/indigenous languages as inferior or in deficit. Pradhan (2020) identified that the ideology of Nepali/English as 'the language of the educated' has influenced individuals' language learning decisions. Amidst these concerns, the current practice and the perceptions of the stakeholders illustrate their distancing from equity discourse and prioritisation of equality discourse in relation to MOI choices, thereby demanding EMI-education as a process of reducing social inequalities and gaps in quality education between the currently existing private and public modes of education. These discursive orientations lead to differential practices of LEP in the case study schools. For instance, with overwhelming support from the parents, Bhairav school adopted a restrictionist policy of not allowing the use of any regional/local or ethnic languages (such as Bhojpuri, Bajjika, and Maithili) on the school premises while running a dual-medium schooling programme, i.e. EMI and NMI. Janak adopted NMI despite the fact that nearly all students are from Maithili native-speaking backgrounds. While none of the public schools thought about teaching other foreign languages than English, the private schools, i.e. Mandala and Kalika, taught Chinese as an additional language prompted by a free-teacher support scheme from the Chinese government (see Dhakal, 2019). Delving deeper into the Janak school case, it shows tensions around the practice of MOI policy. While teachers consider equity of education through providing access to lesson content via students' mother tongues, the students aspire to develop English fluency and expect to be educated in EMI. One of the students said:

> There are some students who have difficulty in understanding Nepali as well, so that teachers sometimes shift to Maithili while teaching English, Nepali, and other subjects. This is good in one sense, but not being fluent in English will also hamper our future progress and opportunities.

While the teachers addressed the equity-related learning concerns through judicious shift to native language(s) needed for some disadvantaged students from school's Nepali medium, the students frequently referred to an EMI private school as a reference point as their imagined educational space. The student perceives the lack of EMI as an issue of inequality.

However, these issues of equity and equality are not stand-alone concerns, they are rather embedded into the earlier discourses of globalisation and economic rationales in language learning. This illustrates the discourses of globalisation, access to economic

resources, equity and equality intersect in multiple ways in schools' LEP decisions, and complicates the goal of ensuring equitable learning opportunities for children from a minoritised language backgrounds. Therefore, the LPP scholarship needs to move beyond conventional 'taxonomies and dichotomies which have dominated since its inception' (Ricento, 2000, p. 208) towards understanding multiple discursive forces influencing LEP.

Conclusions and implications

Through a case study in five Nepali secondary schools, this paper illustrates how decision-making in LEP, aspirations, and choice of foreign language education are influenced by intersections of discursive forces that link to the global, national and local specificities. It also reports how policy actors in Nepal's schools reference dominant (e.g. globalisation and nationalism) and dominated (local ethnolinguistic) discourses and their power relationships while making LPP decisions. These schools' LEP decisions and individuals' perceptions are shaped by historical and contemporary socio-political experiences and complex interactions between external and internal forces (McCarty, 2003; Taylor-Leech, 2013). The dominant forces, such as globalisation, neoliberal marketisation, and nationalism, have attributed to ascendence of English-only monolingualism-in-practice in the schooling contexts of Nepal since the beginning of formal schooling in mid-nineteenth century, contrasting with macro multilingual policies' imagined goal of sustaining linguistic diversity that has promoted ethnic/indigenous languages since the last decade of twentieth century. EMI also contradicts Nepal's goal of establishing internal cohesion (national unity) and external distinction (national identity) via the promotion of Nepali as the primary official language (Bandhu, 1989). Policy actors (i.e. participants of this study) project the imagined future through language policies and aim to bring this into existence (Liddicoat, 2013), guided by multiple discursive orientations such as globalisation and national identity.

Such orientations and subsequent practices have several implications for linguistic diversity in multilingual contexts such as Nepal. For instance, the existing practices such as English-only (e.g. Laxmi), Nepali-only (e.g. Janak), English/Nepali dual MOI (e.g. Bhairav) and Chinese as an additional language (e.g. Mandala and Kalika) might potentially lead to further marginalisation of the minority languages, thereby constricting the linguistic diversity (albeit this claim needs further research evidence). While authorities in the case schools tried to negotiate with multiple value-laden ideals (or discourses) to develop LEPs which are most suitable to their context, the discourse of globalisation and neoliberal commodification of language superseded the local ethnolinguistic identity and equity concerns, and this helped promote English at the cost of ethnic/indigenous languages. Persuaded by the dominant discourses, the parents have spent their resources on their children's education in the English medium or private schools (Bandhu, 1989). The head teachers' belief 'English as an emblem of social capital' and the policymaker's belief about learning 'Chinese as an investment for the future' revealed that particular discourses (such as globalisation, neoliberal marketisation) are inseparable from language policies enacted by individuals in their respective spaces of jurisdiction (see Farr & Song, 2011). They imply that the government-generated equity-based policies, which open spaces for ethnic/indigenous languages, did not

correspond to the school level stakeholders' beliefs about languages and their practice, as diverse contradictory discourses, e.g. equity and equality, and ethnocentric identity, globalisation, nationalism and neoliberal marketisation, differentially affected stakeholders' perceptions. The findings contrast with Choi's (2019) findings in which policy officers made a decision which minimises the role of English in education. Its rationale is that students from disadvantaged backgrounds will never be as competent in English as those from privileged backgrounds. This decision, which is now criticised as being myopic by some, shows the complexity of dealing with multiple discourses at the same time. The findings also show the significant, sometimes counter intuitive roles played by the grassroots stakeholders (Hornberger & Vaish, 2009). Despite a national policy that opened a space for ethnic languages in education, these languages were neither taught as subjects nor used as MOI at the school level. This was in part due to resource limitations, but primarily due to the lack of community support and engagement for adopting these languages in education systems. Such disengagement in teaching local languages was also observed across public and private schools. Mandala and Kalika schools taught Chinese as an additional language, rather than the ethnic language. It was assisted by free teacher support from the Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu and parents' desires to have their children learn Chinese as an investment for the future.

Although the data overwhelmingly confirmed an unprecedented impact of the discourse of globalisation on the ideological construction of EMI and foreign language education, globalisation alone was not deterministic, rather the discourses of nationalism, neoliberal marketisation and ethnicity interpenetrated in school-level LEP decision-making. In this process, not only are global and national values and structures shaping the local, but so too are the local and national renegotiating the global. For example, schools and parents, who are at the bottom of the educational processes, are buying in the discourse of globalisation and this enables both discourses to interpenetrate each other in subtle and fluid ways (see Canagarajah & De Costa, 2016; Choi, 2016).

In conclusion, understanding of LEP in multilingual contexts of schooling needs to be situated within a broader societal, economic, and political framework that acknowledges the intepenetration of multiple discourses shaping people's ideologies towards dominant and dominanted languages. In Nepal's case, the hard-earned developments at the political level for protection and promotion of linguistic diversity, which translate into practical initiatives such as indigenisation of the curriculum, development of learning materials in ethnic/indigenous languages, and teaching in (of) mother tongues, attest to the government's sincerity of promoting multilingualism but will face challenges due to their interpretation by the school level stakeholders promoting inequality, resulting in a preference towards EMI and learning foreign languages rather than the ethnic/indigenous ones. This is the consequence of emerging social and symbolic capitalisation of foreign languages that have higher utilitarian values in the globalising world (Shohamy, 2006), which prioritise English, and to some extent Chinese, in this study. And, if the communities continue to disengage from their native languages, and the government do not go further to address the dominant discourses (Weinberg, 2021), linguistic diversity will be threatened (Pillar, 2016). Even though English is not an official second language in Nepal, it has constituted a dominant part of education, thereby limiting the spaces even for the national language, as well as ethnic/indigenous and other foreign languages (Giri, 2011; Phyak & Sharma, 2020; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Sah, 2020).

Despite the government's promotion of multilingualism as a desirable norm, the parents' and students' motivation for learning English, Chinese and other foreign languages rather than the ethnic/indigenous ones is possibly producing a new linguistic ecology in schools, which might prove tougher for local governments to have control over.

Hence, this paper points towards the development of a multi-level, and multi-dimensional approach in promoting local ethnic/indigenous languages and other foreign languages against the dominance of English and Nepali. Such an approach will involve persuading stakeholders across levels and spaces by creating a system that appreciates the marginalised languages and newly emerging foreign languages. This will help prevent further marginalisation and narrowing down of existing diversity in multilingual polities. Finally, in LEP research, we reiterate the need to go beyond linguocentric arguments toward a dynamic intersectional analysis of the forces shaping peoples' language policy and practice decisions. In other words, incorporating the fluid and complex interactions among policies, discourses, structure and actors will positively contribute to understanding the ever-changing balancing point made by individual schools in a multilingual context.

Notes

1. All names of the schools (and participants where applicable) hereafter are pseudonyms.
2. Schools with NMI are facing challenges regarding recruiting sufficient students (see Poudel & Choi, 2021 for further discussion).
3. Tharu is one of the ethnic/indigenous languages spoken in the Terai ecological belt of Nepal. The total population of this community is 5.77% (CBS, 2012)

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

Conflict of interest

The authors do not have any conflict of interest in preparing this paper.

Declaration

This paper is an outcome of our original research, and no part of this in this form has been published elsewhere.

Notes on contributors

Mr. *Prem Prasad Poudel* is a Lecturer at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He has also served as a teacher educator, teacher trainer, and materials developer in several governmental and non-governmental organisations. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK), Hong Kong SAR. His areas of research interest include language education policy, educational reforms in the sglobalised world, with a particular focus on issues of equity and equality in the multicultural and multilingual contexts.

Dr *Tae-Hee Choi*, Associate Professor, researches education policy and reform processes, teacher change therein, and their interrelationship with languages. She is currently heading up the Education Policy Research Hub at the Faculty of Education and Human Development, The Education University of Hong Kong. Choi has extensive experience in English language teaching and teacher education, as well as in policy advisory with UN ESCAP countries. She is also a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK and of the East–West Centre, US. For more details on her research, please visit https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tae_Hee_Choi

ORCID

Prem Prasad Poudel 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7360-9998
Tae-Hee Choi 🔟 http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8840-4082

References

Artiles, A. J. (2011). Toward an interdisciplinary understanding of educational equity and difference the case of the racialisation of ability. *Educational Researcher*, 40(9), 431–445. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0013189X11429391

Awasthi, L. D. (2011). The making of Nepal's language policy: Importation of ideologies. In L. Farrell, U. N. Singh, & R. A. Giri (Eds.), *English language education in South Asia: From policy to pedagogy* (pp. 73–88). Cambridge University Press India.

Ball, S. J. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *The Australian Journal of Education Studies*, 13(2), 10–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630930130203

Ball, S. J., & Exley, S. (2010). Making policy with 'good ideas': Policy networks and the 'intellectuals' of new labour. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(2), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930903486125

Bandhu, C. M. (1989). The role of the Nepali language in establishing the national unity and identity of Nepal. *Kailash*, 121–133.

Barakos, E., & Unger, J. W. (2016). Introduction: Why are discursive approaches to language policy necessary? In E. Barakos, & J. W. Unger (Eds.), *Discursive approaches to language policy* (pp. 1–9). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53134-6_1

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Canagarajah, S., & De Costa, P. (2016). Introduction: Scales analysis, and its uses and prospects in educational linguistics. *Language and Education*, 34, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.09.001

Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS]. (2012). *National population and housing census 2011*. CBS. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Nepal/Nepal-Census-2011-Vol1.pdf

Choi, T.-H. (2016). Glocalization of English language education: Comparison of three contexts in East Asia'. In C. M. Lam & J. Park (Eds.), *Sociological and philosophical perspectives on education in the Asia-Pacific region* (pp. 147–164). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-940-0_10

Choi, T.-H. (2019). Structure, agency and the "teaching English in English" policy: The case of South Korea. In J. Bouchard & G. P. Glasgow (Eds.), *Agency in language policy and planning: Critical inquiries* (pp. 214–236). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429455834

Choi, T.-H. (2021). English fever: Educational policies in globalised Korea, 1981–2018. *History of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2020.1858192

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education (8th edition)*. Routledge.

Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction-a growing global phenomenon*. British Council.

Dhakal, S. (2019, June 15). Mandarin made mandatory in many schools. *The Himalayan Times*. Retrieved on 25 June 2021. https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/mandarin-made-mandatory-in-many-schools/

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge.

Fairclough, N., Mulderrig, J., & Wodak, R. (2010). What is critical discourse analysis? In T. A. Van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction* (pp. 357–378). Sage Publications.

Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, *2*, 357–378.

Farr, M., & Song, J. (2011). Language ideologies and policies: Multilingualism and education. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, *5*(9), 650–665. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818x.2011.00298.x

Gautam, B. L. (2021). *Language contact in Nepal: A study on language use and attitude*. Palgrave-McMillan.

Gay, G. (2018). Foreword: Considering another view of intersectionality. In N. P. Carter & M. Vavrus (Eds.), *Intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class and gender in teaching and teacher education* (pp. vii–vxi). Brill Sense.

Gazzola, M., Templin, T., & Wickström, B. (2018). *Language policy and linguistic justice*. Springer.

Giri, R. A. (2011). Languages and language politics: How invisible language politics produces visible results in Nepal. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, *35*(3), 197–221. https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.35.3.01gir

Han, Y., Gao, X., & Xia, J. (2019). Problematising recent developments in non-English foreign language education in Chinese universities. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *40*(7), 562–575. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1571072

Heller, M. (2003). Globalisation, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *7*(4), 473–492. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2003.00238.x

Heller, M., Pujolar, J., & Duchene, A. (2014). Linguistic commodification in tourism. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *18*(4), 539–566. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12082

Hornberger, N., & Vaish, V. (2009). Multilingual language policy and school linguistic practice: Globalisation and English-language teaching in India, Singapore and South Africa. *Compare*, *39*(3), 305–320. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920802469663

Johnson, D. C. (2011). Critical discourse analysis and the ethnography of language policy. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *8*(4), 267–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2011.601636

Kallkvist, M., & Hult, F. M. (2016). Discursive mechanisms and human agency in language policy formation: Negotiating bilingualism and parallel language use at a Swedish university. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *19*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2014.956044

Language Commission. (2019). *Annual report-2019*. Language Commission. https://languagecommission.gov.np/files/1

Language Commission. (2020). *The fourth annual report of Language Commission*. http://languagecommission.gov.np/files.pdf

Liddicoat, A. J. (2013). *Language-in-education policies: The discursive construction of intercultural relations*. Multilingual Matters.

Liddicoat, A. J., & Curnow, T. J. (2014). Students' home languages and the struggle for space in the curriculum. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, *11*(3), 273–288. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2014.921175

Liddicoat, A. J., & Kirkpatrick, A. (2020). Dimensions of language education policy in Asia. *Journal of Asia Pacific Communication*, *30*(1-2), 7–33. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.00043.kir

McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs*, *30*(3), 1171–1800. https://doi.org/10.1086/426800

McCarty, T. L. (2003). Dangerous difference: A critical-historical analysis of language education policies in the United States. In J. W. Tollefson, & A. B. M. Tsui (Eds.), *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* (pp. 71–93). Routledge.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.)*. Sage.

Ministry of Education [MOE]. (1971). *Report of the national education system plan (NESP)*. MOE. https://www.moe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/2028_English.pdf

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MOEST]. (2017). *Education in figures 2017 (At a glance)*. https://moe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/Education_in_Figures_2017.pdf

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MOEST]. (2019). *National education policy*. MOEST. https://moe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/Education_Policy.pdf

Nettle, D., & Suzanne, R. (2000). *Vanishing voices: The extinction of the world's languages*. Oxford University Press.

Onta, P. (2009). Rastriya itihas in panchayat era textbooks. In P. Bhatta (Ed.), *Education in Nepal: Problems, reforms and social change* (pp. 247–294). Martin Chautari.

Pandey, R. R., Bahadur, K., & Wood, H. B. (1956). *Education in Nepal: Report of the National Education Planning commission*. College of Education.

Phyak, P., & Sharma, B. K. (2020). Functionality of English in language education policies and practices in Nepal. In R. A. Giri (Ed.), *Functional variations in English* (pp. 321–335). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52225-4_21

Pillar, I. (2016). *Linguistic diversity and social justice: An introduction to applied sociolinguistics*. Oxford University Press.

Poudel, P. P. (2019). The medium of instruction policy in Nepal: Towards critical engagement on the ideological and pedagogical debate. *Journal of Language and Education*, *5*(3), 102–110. https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2019.8995

Poudel, P. P., & Baral, M. P. (2021). Examining foreign language teaching and learning in Nepal: An ecological perspective. *Journal of World Languages*, *7*(1), https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2021-0006

Poudel, P. P., & Choi, T.-H. (2021). Policymakers' agency and the structure: The case of medium of instruction policy in multilingual Nepal. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *22*(1-2), 79–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2020.1741235

Pradhan, U. (2020). Interrogating quality: Minority language, education and imageries of competence in Nepal. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *50*(6), 792–808. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2018.1559036

Pujolar, J. (2018). Post-nationalism and language commodification. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 485–504). Oxford University Press.

Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2009). The discourse-historical approach (DHA). In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (2nd ed., pp. 23–61).

Ricento, T. (2000). Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *4*(2), 196–213. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9481.00111

Ricento, T. (2018). Globalisation, language policy, and the role of English. In J. W. Tollefson & M. Perez-Milans (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning* (pp. 221–235). Oxford University Press.

Sah, P. K. (2020). English medium instruction in South Asia's multilingual schools: Unpacking the dynamics of ideological orientations, policy/practices and democratic questions. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1718591

Sharma, B. K. (2018). Non-English lingua franca? Mobility, market and ideologies of the Chinese language in Nepal. *Global Chinese*, *4*(1), 63–88. https://doi.org/10.1515/glochi-2018-0004

Shohamy, E. G. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. Routledge.

Taylor-Leech, K. (2013). Finding space for non-dominant languages in education: Language policy and medium of instruction in Timor-Leste 2000–2012. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *14*(1), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2013.766786

The Himalayan Times. (2019, March 12). *South Korea to hire 10,050 workers in* 2020. Accessed on 16 June 2021 at https://thehimalayantimes.com/business/south-korea-to-hire-10050-workers-in-2020

Tollefson, J. W. (1991). *Planning language, planning inequality: Language policy in the community*. Longman.

Tollefson, J. W., & Tsui, A. M. B. (2003). *Medium of instruction policies: Which agenda? Whose agenda?* Routledge.

Upraity, T. N. (1959). The national education planning commission. *Education Quarterly*, *3*(2-3), 3–7.

Varcoe, C., Pauly, B., & Laliberté, S. (2011). *Intersectionality, justice and influencing policy. Health inequities in Canada: Intersectional frameworks and practices*. University of British Columbia Press.

Weinberg, M. (2013). Revisiting history in language policy: The case of medium of instruction in Nepal. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics (WPEL)*, *28*(1), 61–80. https://repository.upenn.edu/wpel/vol28/iss1/6

Weinberg, M. (2021). Scale-making, power and agency in arbitrating school-level language planning decisions. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *22*(1-2), 59–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2020.1741207

Williams, E. A. E. (2020). Critical discourse analysis for language policy and planning. In E. Friginal & J. A. Hardy (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of corpus approaches to discourse analysis* (pp. 448–498). Routledge.