

ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEPAL: AN
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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AN ABSTRACT

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Title: *English Medium Instruction in Public Schools in Nepal: An Ethnographic Study*.

Abstract Approved by

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English medium instruction (EMI) has been one of Nepal's most debated educational issues. It has heavily influenced the academic sectors in Nepal. Many public schools, particularly in urban areas, shifted the medium of instruction to English. This study aimed to explore the students' perception on EMI in a public school. This study aimed to explore how eighth-grade students studying in a public school perceive EMI and its effects on their academic performance. This study delimited the perception of students studying in an English medium public school.

I employed ethnography as a research method to study my research participants' beliefs, actions, feelings, and experiences toward EMI. I selected four eighth-grade students, including one boy and three girls as my research participants. I explored students' perception on EMI by observing context constantly and gathering information personally. Based on my research objectives, I recorded and jotted down my participants' perceptions, experiences, feelings, and gestures on EMI. Similarly, I observed every activity minutely and then transcribed and generated themes and sub-themes accordingly.

To explicate my research participants' beliefs, actions, feelings, and experiences towards EMI, I adopted Bourdieu's language as symbolic power and linguistic, cognitive capital, Cummins' CALP, and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. To some extent, my participants believed English was the language of power, prestige, preference, and privilege. Based on my prolonged engagement with the participants and their perception, I explicated EMI from three perspectives: first, as an instrument to enhance the student's English language proficiency, second as a barrier to the students' academic performance, and third, as an imposed and aggressive attempt to overshadow mother tongues/ first languages of the students. My study showed that EMI promoted rote learning and memorisation instead of enhancing students' language proficiency and creativity.

The study concludes that EMI is an important instrument for enhancing the English language proficiency of students. It is instrumental to creating career opportunities on the one hand and, whereas the other hand, the students' home language or first language as a medium of instruction delivers quality education, enchainning socio-psychological advantages and sound academic achievement of the students. Therefore, using children's first language and EMI specifically to address basic-level students' needs in a public school is a must.

.....

12 January 2023

Yagya Prasad Dahal,

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DECLARATION

I hereby state that this dissertation has not been submitted for candidature to any other degree programs.

.....

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents

and equally

to

my respected Gurus and colleagues who are connected to English medium of instruction practices in Nepal and abroad with their hearts filled with struggles, pains, pleasures and accomplishments for making a difference in the lives of the students.

This dissertation entitled *English Medium Instruction in Public Schools in Nepal: An Ethnographic Study*, presented by Yagya Prasad Dahal on 12 January 2023.

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I am aware that this dissertation will be kept in the Kathmandu University Library's permanent collection. I hereby permit the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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.....
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ABBREVIATIONS

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
EFA	Education for All
EMI	English Medium Instruction
IB	International Baccalaureate
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEB	National Education Board
NEC	National Education Commission
NESP	Nepal Education System Plan
NMI	Nepali Medium Instruction
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
SEE	School Education Examination
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I started my early education at a public school in Bhadrapur Municipality. I had not heard a single English word until I was in class four. After class four, my teacher taught us English using Nepali medium instruction. At that time, I had no idea of the medium of instruction. In class five, I heard about English medium school because my younger brother and sister went to an English medium school founded by my uncle in Bhadrapur. I did not go there because I could not adjust to the English medium, but I frequently visited that school. I saw a foreigner in the school for the first time. Later I came to know he was an Anglo-Indian who spoke English with a very different accent which motivated me to learn English. The thirst for learning English sprouted in my mind; when I heard my young brother and sister speaking English fluently. The sprouted thirst for learning English became a part of my life.

In 2057 BS (2000 AD), I moved to Kathmandu to pursue a university degree. Still, that year, I could not join the university because the money I had brought from home was insufficient to sustain myself in Kathmandu. Then, I started searching for a job to manage money to pursue a university degree. Immediately I could not get a job in Kathmandu. However, I became an English teacher in a private English boarding school at Malekhu, Dhading. There I got a taste of teaching and learning activities and started understanding the pathos and bathos of teachers and students regarding English medium instruction (EMI). Since I became an English teacher, I frequently asked the question to myself, ‘Are my students able to understand the subject matters deliberated in English?’ This question was still triggering me.

Expressed or unexpressed feelings, gestures and activities of students inside and outside the classroom germinate questions in a mind of a good teacher and lead the teacher toward exploring the answers to the questions. Based on students' oral expressions, feelings, gestures and activities, the present study, "Students' Perception on EMI in Public School: An Ethnographic Study," explores and analyses the students' perceptions of EMI in public schools. This study critically presents the eighth-grade students' opinions/perceptions on EMI.

In the past, only private schools adopted English medium instruction in teaching-learning activities. On the other hand, most public schools use learners' mother tongues as media of instruction for teaching-learning activities. Only the Durbar High School, founded by Junga Bahadur Rana in 1854 AD, offered pedagogical instruction in English (Sharma, 1990). Similarly, in 2007, the National Curriculum Framework stated that the medium of school-level education might be Nepali or English (National Curriculum Framework, 2007, p.34). According to Sah and Li (2018), since 2010, many public schools in Nepal have embraced EMI. Since then, public schools have had the option of using either English or Nepali as their primary language of instruction. After that, most public schools in city areas and the Kathmandu valley began English language instruction in their curricula. The public schools started EMI practices because English medium schools became popular among the parents, and they demanded it. Even the better achievement level shown by the private schools further pressurized the public schools to begin pedagogical activities in EMI.

Currently, from pre-primary through university level in Nepal, English is taught as a compulsory subject. Except for compulsory Nepali, all subjects are taught in English in private schools. Many public schools explicitly located in cities in Nepal

have begun their pedagogical activities in the English language. And some universities, such as Kathmandu University and Pokhara University, have implemented EMI practices in their teaching-learning activities. It clarifies that EMI has a strong grip on the academic sectors of Nepal. In this context, this study attempts to explore how the students studying in public schools perceive EMI practices and their effects on their academic performance. Following an ethnographic research methodology, this study explored the students' perception of EMI practices in public schools. As an ethnographic researcher, I collect ethnographic data through prolonged observations and in-depth interviews with a small group of students studying in an English-medium public school. Similarly, I analyze data using the thematic analysis technique.

English is an international language. It is spoken all over the world. English is a global language (Crystal, 2003). English is bridging, connecting and uniting people of different nations having different languages, cultures, races, religions and ways of life. It is a lingua franca, too (Jenkins, 2007). It has been the most important language of media and business. It has been the most important tool to get a good job and the language of education too. Poudel (2021, p.5) mentions that everyone who wants to get a high-paid job, such as a doctor, professor, engineer, or chartered accountant, must be proficient in English.

Similarly, Sah (2020) asserts that one of the most important and crucial tools worldwide has been teaching the English language. That's why it has been the globally accepted language, and Nepal can't be an exception regarding the use of the globally most prestigious and powerful language. Today, many public schools in urban areas of Nepal have adopted EMI. For example, Birendra Namuna Secondary School, Bhadrapur and Kankai Secondary School, Kankai Municipality, have adopted

EMI. Similarly, many schools of Kathmandu valley, such as Medha Siksha Sadan, Bhaktapur and Ratna Rajya School, Kathmandu, have shifted to English medium instruction. Supporting this view, Sah and Li (2018) state that many public schools in Nepal have shifted to EMI since 2010.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2011), 123 languages are spoken in Nepal as mother tongues. Recently, six new languages have been discovered in Nepal. They are Rana Tharu, Nar phu, Chum, Nubri, Poike and Serake. Lava Dewa Awasthi, PhD, the Language Commission, Nepal Chairperson, submitted the commission's annual report to Bidhya Devi Bhandari, the President of Nepal. The report mentions six newly discovered languages reaching the total number of languages in Nepal 129 (Poudel, 2021, p.3). The constitution provisioned that primary-level schools in Nepal can use local languages as instruction mediums (Constitution of Nepal, 2015).

I have been teaching English for the last two decades. I have taught in both public and private schools in Nepal. As an experienced English teacher, I have felt, realized, experienced and encountered a plethora of challenges regarding EMI in the classroom. EMI has been a linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barrier to the academic access of students (Poudel, 2021, p. 53). My colleagues and students from my previous schools expressed that EMI increased the unnecessary cognitive load on the students (Macaro and Akincioglu, 2018, cited in Poudel, 2021, p. 53). Even, still today, they are expressing similar difficulties in adopting EMI. Even in the advanced schools and universities of Kathmandu valley, to some extent, the teachers and professors are facing the same challenges of using English as a medium of instruction despite the fact that these advanced schools and universities are equipped with all the

advanced teaching learning resources and technology. In fact, using EMI has been a serious challenge in the context of Nepal.

Nepal is very rich in cultures, traditions, languages and religions. Nepal has a golden history. Many researchers, scientists, educators and students from different countries come to Nepal for educational and scientific research. This richness has been included in our school-level curricula. We know that the students can easily understand and perceive these when teachers explain and describe the contents in their local language or mother tongue. Language plays a crucial role in a nation's development; it carries an intangible heritage and introduces its ethnocultural, mythological, and psychological experiences and ideas (Divasa et al.,2007).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that children learn more effectively in their native tongues (UNESCO, 2016). I have frequently realized and experienced that when we describe and explain our culture and tradition to students in the English language, they fail to understand, perceive and internalize the beauty, sweetness and truth of Nepalese cultures, traditions, natural beauty and many more. In this context, Divasa et al. (2007) assert that Nepal is a language storehouse, and the Nepalese languages are vehicles for intangible cultural heritage. As a scholar of M.Phil. in ELE at Kathmandu University, I have researched important issues contributing to language planning, policy and practice levels. Thus, I have selected the issue 'Students' Perception on EMI in Public Schools of Nepal. I hope this study helps me dig out the factual challenges and effects of EMI on students.

The Rationale of the Study

Innumerable research studies have been carried out on EMI across the world. Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty (2009) argue that EMI does not facilitate learning but is an imposition on children. In response to the linguistic rights of children and the

scientific findings, it is claimed that children learn better in their mother tongue. Similarly, South Asian nations have also acknowledged that multilingual education programs are appropriate and ideal (UNICEF, 2019).

In Nepal, EMI has also been an important issue of debate. In spite of the fact that Nepal is a multilingual country, the government of Nepal has legitimized EMI in public schools as well. In this scenario, this research can be a rationale at different levels. The shift to EMI from Nepali medium instruction certainly brings mixed effects on students and their academic activities in public schools. Therefore, the first rationale of this research is to perceive the deeper feelings of the students on EMI. The reality generated from this research will be an invaluable experience for me as a teacher and researcher.

It is widely accepted that English medium instruction is a fundamental and essential instrument for creating innumerable opportunities and possibilities. EMI is believed to uplift people's economic status and enhance the students' English language proficiency and academic performance so they can compete in the national and international markets for any opportunity. Therefore, my second rationale for this research is to perceive the deeper reality expressed by my participants, which can be an invaluable aspect to me as a researcher and teacher and to other stakeholders of English medium private and public schools to make proper plans and policies regarding EMI.

The shift from their mother tongue or Nepali language to English directly affects the teachers and their professional activities. From this perspective, this research is essential for teachers to cope with students of heterogeneous backgrounds. This research may also benefit all in developing innovative ideas and strategies to

implement in teaching-learning activities. Thus, the present study can be a stimulus to add new dimensions to educational policy.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, English medium instruction has been popular in the educational intuitions of Nepal. The worldwide spread of EMI in the educational sector has tremendously penetrated the school education system in Nepal (Sah & Li, 2018). Innumerable privately funded English medium schools have increased tremendously throughout Nepal (Phyak, 2016). Most parents in urban areas of Nepal have become more aware of the importance of English language education for their children. Regarding the use of English, Pennycook (1994) noted that one's status in social, educational, and professional contexts is seen to be determined by their command of the English language. (p.14).).

Similarly, Sah and Li (2018) assert that most students, parents and teachers view EMI as a crucial linguistic capital that enhances advanced English proficiency, academic progress, economic and social prosperity, and access to higher education. On the one hand, many private schools have persuaded many well-to-do families because these private institutions have assured quality education through EMI (Poudel,2021, p.4). Similarly, a few so-called internationally renowned schools in the name of advanced international curriculums, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge and Montessori programs, have lured many well-to-do and elite parents. These schools have already brought many students in their strong grip. On the other hand, the charms of EMI have led to the closure of many public schools in many parts of Nepal (The Himalayan Times, 15 Jan 2020, p.7).

Similarly, because of the demand and importance of English education in Nepal, the Ministry of Education legitimized English and Nepali medium instruction

or both languages in public schools (National Curriculum Framework, 2007). This education act influenced many schools to convert instruction medium to EMI. Currently, many public schools in Nepal have been carrying out their teaching and learning activities in English. Many reports show that English medium private schools have shown better achievement levels of the students in different national-level tests and examinations in Nepal. According to Phyak (2016), private English-medium schools in Nepal have consistently surpassed the ones in terms of academic achievement in different national-level tests and examinations such as SEE and NEB. Due to the outstanding performance of private schools in Nepal, many Nepalese guardians and even students have believed that EMI is necessary for quality education. But do these schools' English-medium programs succeed in developing students into capable people to use English and learn subject matter? The concerned authorities need a mindful plan and preparation to find out the answer to this question. Therefore, this question triggered me to explore the students' perception on EMI and its effects on academic performance.

The constitution has provisioned to use of mother tongues in primary-level schools (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). This provision has also created a dilemma among the concerned authorities and stakeholders regarding whether to opt for EMI, Nepali medium instruction, or both English and Nepali languages. Regarding this perspective, Hayes (2018) mentions that EMI is Nepal's most important educational issue (p. 1). Even Giri (2009 b) argued that the elites imported English to Nepal for educational benefits and ideological and political reasons (as cited in Poudel, 2021, p.29). Therefore, it has been essential to explore the realities of EMI. I have not yet found any study that states English medium schools are better and more qualitative than those schools which do not have it. However, most parents and students still

seem to believe that the schools that have practiced EMI are better. In this context, it has been crucial to conduct educational research to explore students' perceptions of EMI practices in public schools and their effects on academic performance. Thus, I determined to carry out this study on Students' Perception on EMI and its Effects on Academic Performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study is to explore the students' perception on EMI who study in English medium public schools in Nepal, focusing on the practice of EMI and its effects on the learning and academic performances of the students.

Research Questions

How do students perceive EMI in public schools?

How does EMI affect the students' academic performance?

Delimitation

This study is delimited to explore the students' perception on EMI, studying in English medium public school in Kathmandu. The participants were selected from the eight-grade, including three girls and a boy. Using an ethnographic methodology, I perceived their understanding and meaning on EMI and its effects on their academic performance. The study was focused on ethnographically interpreting the students' perception on EMI and its effects on their academic performance.

Organization of the Dissertation

I have organized the present dissertation into six chapters. In the first chapter, I introduced my context, interest and research agenda to explore and explicate EMI. In Chapter two, I examined the relevant literature that I underwent during my study process. Chapter three focuses on my methodological journey. Chapters four and five answer my first and second research questions, respectively, as proposed in Chapter

one. Chapter six presents the reflection on my M.Phil. journey and concludes the study with the possible implications of this study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I reflected on my first encounter with English words and my experience and involvement as an English language teacher and an M.Phil. scholar to set the context for my interest in EMI. I argued for my rationale for the study and problematized the issue, referring to the field practices of the EMI debate. Then I framed the research questions to set my research to the desired destination, followed by delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I first briefly review the literature related to this study. The chapter begins with a brief history of Nepal's language planning and policy, a thematic review on perception, medium of instruction, and English medium instruction (EMI): an issue of debate in schools of Nepal. And then, I discuss the relevant theories connected to my research, viz language as a symbolic power and linguistic cognitive capital (1993), and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Similarly, I review empirical literature relevant to my study. Finally, I present the research gap and conceptual framework for my study

A Brief History of Nepal's Language Planning and Policy

As a researcher, I cannot ignore history, as the present is the product of the past. The current policies and planning are rooted in historical narratives and events. In this context, Ferguson (2007) states that it is essential to recognize history to understand language policies, planning and practices. The language policy and planning in education in Nepal have been debatable issues for a long time. Innumerable debates and discussions on the issue of medium of instruction policies have been experienced. As Nepal is a multi-lingual, multiethnic, multireligious and multicultural country, the language policy, planning and practices have also been chaotic and challenging (Weinberg, 2013, p.61). Despite the facts that happened and the narratives of the facts can be different, it is imperative and essential to grasp and to be familiarized with the current scenario of the language- in- education policies, planning and practices (Weinberg, 2013).

The history of language policy and planning in Nepal has been divided into three phases (Weinberg, 2013, p.63). They are periods before 1950, between 1950 and 1990 and after 1990.

Period before 1950

This period, which lasted until 1950, is believed to have started with Prithivi Narayan Shah's struggle for the unification of Nepal. It continued until the end of the Rana regime. The then Shah Rule patronized the Khasa language, now commonly known as Nepali and widely used in education. The Khas language, patronized and promoted by the Shah rule in Gorkha, has now become an official language and language of education. However, the then-Rana rulers did not want to promote language and inculcate nationalistic feelings in Nepalese people (Burghart, 1984 in Weinberg 2013, p.63).

Indeed, before Rana's rule, Nepal had not any formal educational system. Nevertheless, it's been asserted that Nepal received its first formal education immediately after Jung Bahadur Rana, the first Rana Prime minister of Nepal, established Durbar High School in 1854 (Poudel, 2021). Jung Bahadur Rana considered his clan superior to the common people of Nepal. In fact, he established Durbar high school to maintain his superiority and to provide English-medium education for the Ranas' children (Stiller,1993, as cited in Poudel, 2021). The establishment of Durbar high school planted the seed of a formal education system in Nepal and pioneered English Education in Nepal. The first English-medium institution in Nepal was Durbar High School, where ordinary Nepali People were not allowed. (Sharma, 1990). It is believed that the then Durbar school was established to please the British power so that Ranas could get support to continue their autocratic Rana Rule (Weinberg, 2013).

The Ranas have long been against education for the general populace. They believed that the Rana legacy would be politically threatened if public education were to continue. That's why the language in education policies did not get any space during the Rana regime. Nepal's first language policy declaration, issued in 1905, is thought to have made Nepali the country's official language (Eagle, 1999). Nevertheless, there is no published evidence of the declaration (Hutt, 1988, as cited in Weinberg, 2013, p.63).

About fifty-four years after establishing Durbar School, the nation's first Tribhuvan Chandra Intermediate College, also referred to as Tri-Chandra College, was founded in 1918. Until 1950, this was the only college in Nepal offering tertiary education. Educational policy during the Ranas was mainly in English, as English gained a high status as the language of education. It achieved the symbol of prestige, power and privileges. The main purpose of establishing Tri-Chandra college was to shelter students of Durbar school and prevent them from going abroad (India). In this perspective, Poudel (2021, p.23) argues that during Rana's rule, many Nepali youths went to India for higher education and returned with the ideology of the anti-British movement, which threatened the Ranas' relationship with the British in India. And to stop the movement of youths to India for higher education and resist western influence, the Ranas established Tri-Chandra college.

The Period between 1950 and 1990

After the end of Rana Rule and the advent of democracy in Nepal in 1950, the Nepalese government began prioritizing cultural and linguistic unification. The Nepalese language served as a milestone in unifying Nepalese people culturally and linguistically. (Whelpton, 2005, cited in Weingberg, 2013 p.64). Education started getting important status. Many schools were established in various parts of Nepal. To

popularize the dominant cultural practices, the Ranas used the slogan *ek bhasa, ek bhes, ek dharma* 'one nation, one language, one dress code, one religion' was used throughout the country (Rai et al., 2011).

Similarly, during the Panchayat system in Nepal, the ideology of one nation and one language influenced the Nepali language system (Phyak & Ojha, 2019, p. 344). Then, immediately after the advent of democracy, a modern structure of the educational system was set up. The Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) was established in 1953. The commission led the foundation of the new education system in Nepal (Poudel, 2021). It led to the establishment of many schools to access education to general. Many teachers educated in the Indian system of education were hired in schools that widespread the feeling that being educated means being proficient in English (Wood, 1977, cited in Paudel, 2021). Nepalese parents were influenced to educate their children in the English medium. As a result, English became an integral part of the Nepali education system (Bista, 1991).

After 1950 AD in Nepal, some important educational commissions were formed to draft educational policies and plans, including the language of instruction. Tribhuvan University, the country's first university, founded in 1959, gave top importance to English education. Tribhuvan University had its curriculum in English, and English gained more popularity among the intellectual elites (Malla, 1977). The all-round National Education Committee was formed in 1961. This committee recommended the Nepali medium of instruction in school and college education. English was a compulsory subject from grade six onwards. Similarly, the Ministry of Education (1961) reported that the committee accepted English as the suitable language of education in higher education.

Similarly, the Nepal Education System Plan (NESP) was also established in the early 1970s, and it advocated Nepali medium of instruction could enhance national unity through linguistic and cultural assimilation (Ministry of Education, 1971). The plan focused on the Nepali medium of instruction up to secondary school, and higher education was spaced for EMI. Phyak (2013) mentioned that the Nepal Education System Plan (NESP) made a substantial attempt to alter Nepal's policy regarding the medium of instruction.

Period after 1990

We rarely find in Nepal's history the language policy provision mentioned in Nepal's constitutions. For the first time, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) declared the Nepali language in the Devanagari script as the language of the Nation. The constitution declared other languages spoken in Nepal as the national languages (His Majesty's Government, Nepal, 1990). Similarly, The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) declared Nepali as the official language. It also states that receiving basic education in one's mother tongue is a fundamental right. Similarly, the Constitution of Nepal ensures every child has the right to education in his mother tongue up to the secondary level (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). The provision of language policy stated in the constitution is a significant moment in Nepali history that every public school can carry out their teaching-learning activities in children's mother tongue. Regarding the constitutional provision, Phyak (2011, p. 272) asserts that various languages other than Nepali were given constitutional recognition as valid components of the country for the first time.

Similarly, Education for all (2001) recommended implementing three language policies. One of the languages was to be the language of the learners, and the others were Nepali and English. However, children speaking languages other than

Nepali rarely have opportunities of being taught in their mother tongues (Poudel, 2019).

Many significant language plans and policies were implemented in Nepal's school system after 1990. The National Education Commission (NEC) submitted its report in 1992. The Commission reported the need to produce local curricula preserving the indigenous knowledge system by contextualizing the learners' environment. On the other hand, the commission also emphasized the need for teaching English as a subject.

Similarly, Education for All 2004-2009 Core Document (Ministry of Education, 2003, cited in Thapa, 2018). The documents emphasized the need for mother-tongue medium-based education in primary schools. The document strongly emphasised teaching English from grade four (Ministry of Education, 2003, cited in Thapa, 2018). English was, however, a subject of study in school-level education starting from grade four. The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (2009-2015) declared basic education in learners' mother tongue as an inherent child right. The SSRP authorized the local bodies to decide the medium of instruction in the schools. It also recommended introducing English from grade one onwards. (Ministry of Education, 2009, cited in Poudel, 2021, p.87).

Indeed, after the 1990s, the demand for English education grew tremendously in the Nepalese Education system resulting in the dramatic expansion and establishment of Privately managed English Medium schools (Thapa, 2018). The School Leaving Certificate Examination (SLC) results showed that private English-medium schools performed better than public schools. This achievement of private schools motivates the private sector to invest in education, leading to the mass expansion of English language education (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Consequently, English language education started gaining power, prestige, preference and privileges throughout the country. A large number of private English medium schools were established, and textbooks in English were also published. The private English medium schools started prescribing and using English textbooks and other teaching materials published and produced in foreign countries. Even the schools prescribed additional English textbooks in their syllabi.

Currently, the School Sector Development Plan, 2016- 23, has documented a strategic need to balance demands for teaching in children's mother tongues, Nepali language, or English. It has also acknowledged the spread of EMI in public schools and has emphasized English as a second or third language to help pupils become more socially and economically successful in the future (Ministry of Education, 2016, cited in Thapa, 2018). As a result, teachers at schools and the school administration have opted for English as the primary language of instruction.

Perception

Perception is the process of deciphering information about individuals, animals, objects, settings, and events. Rakhmat (2011, cited in Tenika, 2022, p. 14) defines perception as an individual's knowledge of things and events acquired through gathering data and interpreting signals. From Rakhmat's view, one's perception can be defined as their perspective on things they have seen or experienced. When a person collects information by using his or her sensory organs, his or her mind starts to analyze and understand the messages given. Consequently, the person may opine on whether that is preferable or not. Similarly, Johnson (1994) mentions perception as the awareness, sensitivity, point-of-view, valuing and other's thinking towards a phenomenon.

Lindsay and Norman (1977, cited in Pickens, 2005. p. 52) disagree with several of the abovementioned concepts and think that perception is intimately tied to attitudes. Perception is how a living thing organizes and interprets its senses to have a meaningful world experience. Pickens (2005) concluded that people evaluate inputs as significant based on previous experiences. Based on Zeni (2009), perception is involved in analyzing information about a stimulus that is received through sensory receptors. Then it is changed into a perception of what we feel, hear, see, smell, taste, or think. Perception is recognizing and comprehending things like stimuli, events, and objects through the senses.

From the above definitions, we can conclude that perception involves both sense and interpretation that recognizes and comprehends things like stimuli, events, and objects through the senses.

Perception is a central phenomenon of this study. Perception plays a key role in teaching and learning activities. Teaching learning activities can't be effective unless a teacher or a mentor perceives the students' linguistic and cultural background of the students, cognitive level and interest in the particular phenomenon. Similarly, it is equally essential to understand their needs and interests to carry out teaching and learning activities effectively. Internalizing the students' perception of a particular phenomenon, interest in a specific subject or need, a teacher has to develop a lesson plan or strategies to carry out teaching-learning activities effectively. Therefore, students' perception plays a key role in whether a particular phenomenon is effective or not.

This study focuses on exploring the students' perception on EMI who are studying in an English medium public school. The knowledge generated from the students' perception on EMI in the EMI-loaded schools will help me to achieve my

research goal. According to Liza (2008), the individual's perception influences one's opinion, judgment and understanding of a phenomenon and how one responds to a situation. Minute analysis and interpretation of the gestures, ideas and activities expressed by the students in the natural setting will lead me to approach their perception of EMI.

Medium of Instruction

Medium of instruction is a language teacher uses to teach students in a formal or informal educational setting. It provides exposure to the learners in the classroom by using either the mother tongues of the learners, the first language, the foreign language, or the official language of a particular country. Medium of instruction is the language used to convey a specified curriculum in a formal or informal educational setting (Bhola, 2006). It is a vehicle through which content knowledge of various subjects is facilitated to the learners. Ferguson (2006) mentions that the primary purpose of introducing policy and planning on the instructional medium is to enhance student's educational achievement. Without mutual understanding and interaction between teachers and students in a formal setting through a particular language, the objectives and the goals of teaching-learning activities cannot be effective. It is believed that teachers can only impart quality education to their students through convenient and conducive instruction.

The medium of instruction in education is one of the highly raised issues in the world. It has been associated with various educational factors that can affect the quality of education (Benavot, 2016). Therefore, while carrying out different educative processes, there must be interactions between the students and teachers on the learning contents through the familiar and comfortable language of both the teachers and the students. Unless the medium of instruction is familiar and

comfortable to the teachers and the students, the learning cannot be effective. The students 'academic performance gets impaired due to their inability, inefficiency and difficulty in communicating in the language of instruction (Gillani et al., 2010). Therefore, the learners should be familiar with the discourse relevant to particular content subjects.

The medium of instruction plays a significant role in enhancing skills in learning. Therefore, learners must master the language of instruction to comprehend and internalize the contents and skills relating to the gist of the subjects or topics (Coyle et al., 2010). Globally, there is a drastic change in the language of instruction due to privatization and modernization. Quite recently, in Nepal, the medium of instruction policy in education has shifted to Nepali medium instruction from EMI and back to EMI (Poudel, 2019). In multilingual countries like Nepal, the concerned authorities, stakeholders, policymakers and language planners should be very cautious on the very highly raised issue of medium of instruction.

English Medium Instruction

Simply, teachers' use of the English language in the teaching process is referred to as English Medium Instruction (EMI). EMI also refers to the use of English as the primary instructional language. Dearden (2014) defines EMI as using the English language to instruct in academic disciplines in nations where English is not the majority language. Similarly, Sah (2020) states EMI is an instructional paradigm of teaching non-English academic subjects through the medium of English in educational settings where English is not the mother tongue of most students to make it easier for students to gain both content knowledge and English abilities. (p.1). In EMI classrooms, teachers instruct students in English and subjects like social

studies, science, and math using the English language. According to Dearden and Macaro (2016), the EMI system assumes that English is not the pupils' first language.

The practice of EMI is rapidly growing significantly in schools and colleges in Nepal. Most of Nepal's private schools and colleges have adopted EMI to teach academic subjects. Poudel (2019) claims that most public schools in urban areas have been rapidly shifting to English medium to assure quality education and encourage enrollment by taking into account parents' perceptions of the success of their offspring and the growing global demand for English education.

In non-native English-speaking countries, English medium instruction is strongly preferred (Bradford, 2016, p.2). Like Bradford's (2016) statement, EMI has a strong preference over other national languages in Nepal. Nepalese people commonly perceive that children will have a better future in English medium schooling. The School Sector Development Plan (2016) argued in favour of English as a prerequisite for the academic and economic progress of the country and its people (Poudel,2021). These all-EMI scenarios and the global popularity of English have influenced public schools to implement EMI practices. Private schools have been teaching their students in full-fledged English medium instruction. After the Education Act (Government of Nepal, 2010) made it legal for public schools to use either Nepali, English, or both as their primary language of teaching, such schools started switching to English. Recently, many public schools in Nepal have taught their students English. All the content subjects except Nepali subject are taught in the English language.

English Medium Instruction: A Debatable Phenomenon in Public Schools of Nepal

The Popularity of English is rapidly growing across the world. English is used chiefly in academics, international diplomacy, communication, trade and tourism.

English Medium Instruction (EMI) is now an ever-growing global phenomenon. In many emerging nations, English is recognized as the language of the living. In this regard, Dearden (2014) mentions that emerging countries are directing their language in education policies to EMI to provide their inhabitants access to the language of development, language of power, modernization, and technical advancement to integrate into the global economy. Nepal could not avoid being influenced by English-language education. Social activity in Nepal, primarily the education sector, is the most dominating one in Nepal (Giri, 2015).

There is no confusion that English has played a crucial role in many areas of interest. English is important in transmitting opinions, ideas, views, thoughts and experiences through conferences, webinars, workshops, journals and other forms of action today in Nepal. Poudel (2021) states that the English language has been an essential means and medium of communicating ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences through various formal modes of communication such as conferences, workshops, journals and other forms of actions today in Nepal. EMI, on the one hand, has influenced Nepalese society; and on the other, it has been an issue of debate. In this perspective, Jenkins (2014) argued that EMI experienced mixed arguments on its value in education and its impacts on learners' academic achievements. Similarly, many language educators and policymakers have raised voices advocating mother tongue-based education instead of EMI (Awasthi, 2004; UNESCO Nepal, 2011).

Despite EMI as a debatable phenomenon, privately funded schools and public schools in Nepal have adopted EMI policies and practices to carry out their teaching and learning activities. Despite its extensive application worldwide. The EMI strategy and policy are still being discussed. Saud (2020) believes that EMI policy and practice in Nepal's multilingual English classrooms appear against linguistic diversity (p.78).

Similarly, Sah (2015) argues whether English medium education enhances the quality of education and socioeconomic status of developing countries like Nepal.

The language policies of Nepal have created dilemmas and chaos regarding the medium of instruction. On the one hand, the Education Act of 2010 made it legal for Nepali, English, or both to be used as the primary language of teaching in public schools (Government of Nepal, 2010). On the other hand, the constitution of Nepal ensures the right to use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level of school education (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). The concerned authorities and stakeholders could not decide whether to follow the constitutional provisions or the education act. However, there are also contexts where EMI has been defended even by the court, arguing that the choice of the language of education should rest upon the parents and it should not be an imposition by someone else (John, 2012). Even the policymakers have different arguments regarding the medium of instruction. Ojha et al. (2019) state that the native tongues of the children must be used as a medium of instruction in school education. They understand the contents when they are exposed to their mother tongue. The native language of the children should be prioritized at the primary level in place of EMI (Awasthi, 2004; UNESCO Nepal, 2011) as it is advocated that the primary-level children feel comfortable learning in their mother tongue and easily understand the content and concept of the text.

The mainstream education for the common Nepalese learners takes place in public schools, where the medium of instruction is mostly in Nepali or a local vernacular language/ mother tongue. According to Education in Figure (2017), public schools occupy about 82.02 % of the total students of Nepal, whereas privately managed English medium schools occupy only 17.08 % (Ministry of Education,

2018). In such a context, EMI may be unfamiliar and unfit for the students of public schools in Nepal.

A Theoretical Review

I examined the EMI issue in this study from the theoretical perspective of Bourdieu's Language as symbolic power, linguistic, cognitive capital (1986) and Cummins' CALP (1996). Similarly, I also get insight from Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory in this study.

Language Functions as a Symbolic Power

Language as a symbolic power creates a wide gap, a breach, a division and inequality in society (Bourdieu, 1991, p.171). As a symbolic power, it emphasizes and enhances linguistic competence. There is no denying that a powerful means of communication is language and a crucial means of disseminating knowledge.

Bourdieu (1991, p.166) argues that language is a symbolic power that functions as an instrument for disseminating knowledge, information and skills.

Bourdieu defines the concept of symbolic power as the power to establish, reproduce and construct reality. Language is not only a tool for communication. It is a symbolic power in educational, social, cultural and political settings; it discusses ways to respond to and even resist symbolic violence. It is the power of symbolic action, symbolic representation, and symbolic reality creation. Similarly, Kramsch (2020) opines that language can produce symbolic reality through symbolic representation, symbolic action, and reality.

The power of English is so aggressive that it has penetrated the lives and cultures of the people who do not possess it globally. English has made a hegemonic dominance (Poudel, 2016), sidelining the use of other languages from the education landscape. Since the colonization period, the 'hegemonic power' of English has been

penetrating the world's language, cultures and geography of the world (Howson, 2013, cited in Poudel, 2019). Nepal is not away from the influence of the hegemonic power of English. English has overshadowed the status of the national languages of Nepal. The spread of English has broken all the ethnic and linguistic barriers in the country (Poudel, 2021).

English has replaced the Nepali language in many Nepalese public schools. Public schools have been replacing Nepali medium instruction with English believing that English is a language of power, prestige, preference and privilege (Lamichhane - Joshi, 2018). English enhances the socioeconomic status of the people. Earning expertise in English is an economic investment in education. EMI has been the dominant feature of academia worldwide (Abrar-ul-Hassen, 2021). The practice of EMI in public schools replicates the hegemonic power of English. I connected this theory mainly to explore the student's perception of EMI. The first research question replicates Bourdieu's concept of the English language as a symbolic power. Students' perceptions on EMI could shed light on the hegemonic power of English which has sidelined the Nepali language from the mainstream of public schools.

Linguistic Cognitive Capital

I found the theory of Linguistic Cognitive Capital relevant to my study. Language of learning acts as capital and as a resource, which influences the development of cognitive and social skills. Bourdieu (1986) regards language as cognitive-social knowledge, a cultural capital that can be accumulated and exchanged for possessing cognitive skills, knowledge and information. Language as the medium of learning in a school setting plays a key role in developing cognition and skills for further learning. The development of cognition is directly connected to the instruction language and the entire learning process. In this perspective, Becker and Varelas

(2001) argue that students' cognitive development directly affects education.

Developmentally appropriate language and instruction are significant for students regarding their cognitive abilities. In the same vein, Kobepa (2016) emphasizes the role of language as a cognitive capital and argues that the development of academic language and cognition are closely related.

I connected this theory primarily to understand the perception of the students on EMI and its effect on their academic performance. Bourdieu's concept of language as a cognitive- social knowledge, a cultural capital, informs the study's first and second research questions. Similarly, Cummins (1996) argues that there are two kinds of competencies: surface competence and academic-related language competence. The surface competence is called 'Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS). This competence concerns the day-to-day social functions of language. The academic-related language competence, called Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), is required for subject-matter expertise, higher-order thinking abilities, reading comprehension techniques, authoring techniques, and other skills (Cummins, 1996; Lillywhite, 2011). Cummins' idea of CALP as a linguistic capital implies that learning engagement through the first language background boosts academic abilities. Learners with a sound linguistic background can efficiently learn the content subjects. But when the learners do not have an excellent linguistic background, CALP becomes challenging for various cognitive functions such as thinking, reasoning and questioning essential for academic achievement. In this perspective, the mother tongue can be the best CALP basis to learn the contents, and other EMI in Public schools can be a barrier and an obstruction to the cognitive advantages for the students to enhance their content skills. In a similar vein, Butzkamm (2003) asserts that the local language or the learners' first language and its associated socio-cultural

and cognitive capital will be supportive of enhancing learning, but EMI practices deprive most of the learners of meaningful access to knowledge of different content subjects.

Language and cognition are closely interconnected. Pedagogic language and learners' cognitive development have a close relationship. According to theories, a language is a crucial tool for students' cognitive development. Chomsky (2006) claims that language directly corresponds to mental organs, and language structures boost cognitive development processes. Children who have learnt academic language in their native language are probably going to profit from their schooling more cognitively than those who haven't. On the other hand, the children forced to learn a foreign language risk losing their cognitive development as they progress through their education. Thus, teaching in children's first language is a better strategy for developing their cognitive-linguistic capital than other methods.

Socio Cultural Theory

I found Vygotsky's sociocultural theory useful in addressing the issue raised in this study's first and second research questions. The theory evaluates the development of language and cognition. This theory influences the development of language and cognition (Vygotsky, 1986). Vygotsky argues that language acquisition and learning are pivotal to cognitive development. This theory assumes interaction, discussion and dialogues with peers and groups in a conducive pedagogical environment enhance learning. When the learners lack sufficient CALP and fluency in the language used for instruction, they develop lower-order cognition skills for memorizing subject-related terminologies. Instead, they lack creativity and cannot apply the acquired knowledge for problem-solving, reasoning and questioning; they develop lower-order cognitive skills for memorizing subject-related terminologies. In

such a context, insufficient proficiency in the language of instruction becomes a barrier to the student's academic achievement. Ultimately, students opt to the language that supports enhancing their academic performance.

I connected Vygotsky's sociocultural theory because it argues learners create meaning and understanding when they engage in social behavior. Vygotsky (1978, p.86) introduced the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept. According to ZPD, the difference between a person's potential problem-solving abilities and their actual developmental level as measured by their ability to solve problems on their own or in collaboration with peers who are more competent than they are. Similarly, Brown (2007) believes that the ZPD was developed by Vygotsky from a social interactionist perspective, emphasizing the importance of others in assisting learners in learning what they are unable to do on their own. Cook (2016) claims that the assistance provided by the experts closes the gap between the learners' current level of knowledge and what he or she is going to acquire. He holds that social connection is necessary for learning so that the learner can assimilate knowledge by doing (p.229).

Vygotskyan's theory takes the individual as a learner who has a certain level of language proficiency, knowledge and skills that needs to be assessed and then learning can be geared up, engaging them in group work, pair work, individual work and collaborative work. According to the ZPD model concept, a teacher first needs to assess the student's needs, interests, challenges, and underlying learning abilities. Then, the language familiar to the learners should be used to develop their learning proficiency. In this perspective, to enhance students' motivation and their learning abilities, the first teacher needs to use the language of instruction familiar to the students.

A classroom is a small learning community of students and teachers. Vygotsky argues that students get support from the learning community through group work and peer work. As Briner (1999) asserts, as soon as students get exposure to learning communities, their zone of proximal development will expand. To reach the proximal development level, a teacher needs to provide scaffolding to the students to support their understanding through an evolving discourse, modelling and collaborative work.

I primarily employed this theory to investigate how EMI affected students' academic performance. The classroom is a small society; the practice and methods of pedagogical activities form a culture. To understand the impact of EMI on the students' academic performance, we must evaluate, assess and diagnose their academic achievement. Vygotsky (1978) argues that the teacher needs to understand the students' current level of abilities and provide them with a conducive environment to enhance their academic performance. This theory enables me to explore the academic performance of students who are not proficient in English and who are from Nepali medium backgrounds.

Sociocultural theory highly prioritizes a conducive environment for better academic achievement. The theory stresses the active participation of the students to reduce the challenges. Tomlinson (1999) posits that there must be a conducive class environment for the students' better academic performance. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory stresses creating a conducive pedagogical environment. With the second research question, I investigate how children studying in English medium public schools perceive their educational experience. I was interested in understanding from learners' perspectives if the EMI environment was conducive or not and if it enhanced their academic performance. The sociocultural theory assumes that students who feel

threatened, unsafe and unaccepted are not able to perform well academically. On the contrary, a safe and friendly pedagogical environment promotes and enhances better academic achievement of the students (Tomlinson & Edison, 2003).

Teachers are the most accountable persons for students' academic progress. The foremost duty of teachers is to satisfy their students. A safe and conducive learning environment ensures a sense of competence and freedom in pedagogical activities. In this regard, Hue and Li (2008) argue that effective classroom management is the key to creating a conducive environment for better academic performance. Therefore, I conclude that if the EMI setting is challenging for a conducive pedagogical environment, we opt for learners' mother tongue or child-friendly language. A step in this line helps children feel safe, secure and accepted to be motivated to enjoy learning.

It is the first and foremost responsibility of the teachers, school's management and concerned authorities to create a conducive environment to maximize learning and minimize distress, stress and intimidation for better academic achievement of the students. In this context, Molse (1990) asserts that there are students of varied abilities and interests in a class, and it is essential to create a conducive physical learning environment to support better students' academic achievement. Students must be motivated and inspired in every activity conducted in a classroom to enhance meaningful learning. This theory stresses that a conducive classroom environment constructs an active learning community.

Similarly, Kurt (2020) asserts that teachers are the main source of motivation, knowledge and thoughtful discussion. They must create learning opportunities for the students. Students show their interest when teachers activate them to learn languages. Therefore, it is very important and essential to creating an environment where the

students actively participate and engage in teaching and learning activities to enhance their second language proficiency as well as their academic performance.

Review of Empirical Literature

This section integrates the recent studies relevant to English medium instruction and presents the perception of the students on EMI and its effects on their academic performance.

In a public school in Nepal, Saud (2020) examined the opinions of the principal, teachers, ethnic parents, and students regarding the necessity and use of English as a language of teaching as well as the usage of English in the classroom. This study's conclusions show that there has been an increase in parental demand for EMI because they perceive learning English as an investment in their children's education and as linguistic capital in the global socio-economic market. On the other hand, there appears to be a significant disconnect between public school instruction and the true spirit of the EMI policy. Bi-/trilingual language policies are reportedly used in the classroom by teachers while ignoring the spirit of EMI. The study also shows that EMI should only be adopted by public schools in Nepal after extensive consultation with all relevant authorities and stakeholders in order to ensure that the necessary conditions are in place for its successful implementation in educational settings.

This study guided me to conceptualize some relevant theories and ways to connect to this study. It also helped me understand language plans and policy and their effective implementation.

Thapa (2018) explored the perception of the basic level English teachers on the policy and practices of EMI in public schools and its effects on the student's academic performance. The study comes to the conclusion that basic-level English

teachers view EMI as a universal language and a necessity and demand of the stakeholders, parents and teachers, which improves pupils' English language ability. Similarly, they regard English language skills as a milestone for their students' future prosperity. But on the other hand, the study reflects EMI policy as a whimsical move of the schools without a clear vision, support, resources and necessary plans of action. Similarly, the study reflects that the teachers are compelled to employ very traditional pedagogical techniques while delivering the classes in English medium due to the students' relatively low skill in the English language and their lack of confidence in their ability to use it. The teachers frankly confess that the shift from Nepali medium to EMI has limited the learning opportunities and achievement of the students. It has been a hurdle to open up for quenching the students' curiosities and has stifled the students' creative and critical thinking skills.

This research helped me since it showed me how to make the problem statement more specific, along with possible strategies to implement and to carry out pedagogical activities. Similarly, this study fully guided me to strike the challenges created due to language policy and plans.

Desai (2016) examines the debates in South Africa on the role of English education and explores the learning of English in three different contexts to explain the strategies to address the issues of quality, equity and social justice in EMI perspectives from various contexts. The study concludes that the success and failure of EMI depend on the context teachers and learners find themselves. The study also infers that there cannot be a solution for all contexts.

This study gave me a clear picture of EMI and its impacts on the overall academic performance of learners in multilingual, social and economic contexts of Nepal and throughout the world. On the one hand, this study gave me an insight that if

the learners' productive and receptive knowledge of the medium of instruction is limited, they should be given opportunities to learn English and acquire academic language skills effectively. On the other hand, it emphasizes utilizing learners' pre-existing linguistic proficiency by creating terminologies and translating important literature into their native tongues so that learners can be sufficiently cognitively and linguistically developed for improved academic accomplishment.

Mishra (2021) explored the practice and perceptions of stakeholders on EMI in schools. The research concludes that EMI is an essential instrument that creates tremendous career opportunities and possibilities, develops the English language proficiency of the students, helps to gain adequate expertise in communication and information technology and uplifts the economic status of the people. But on the other hand, the research argues that the English language is marginalized, causing hurdles to the students' creativity and overall academic performance.

From this study, I got a clear picture of EMI and its impacts on the overall academic, social and economic scenarios of Nepal and the world. The study also provided a vivid concept of essential areas of inquiry with the research participants.

Sah (2022) documented the ideology embedded in the adaptation of EMI in the school of Birgunj. The data was gathered through interviews and focus groups with teachers, students, parents, school administrators and participant observations of EMI lessons at a secondary-level school. The interviews were held in English, Nepali, Bhojpuri, or a mixture of all three languages. The study concluded that EMI became Nepal's most well-known but haphazard and unfair educational strategy and policy as well. EMI has created divides, differences and inequalities in society. The study also reflects that the school with EMI policy has been notorious for producing categories, inequalities and discrimination among students of various economic statuses. The

study specifically reflects EMI as a symbolic capital via EMI policy in Nepal has developed a case of political struggles for certain social groups along the lines of class and ethnicity.

This study informed me about the methodological process of data collection. The study also helped me understand how properly planned language policy addresses the needs and interests of a diverse group of students and how unplanned language policy produces inequalities, biases, tension and injustice for minoritized students. This study guided me to get the relevant theory to connect to my study.

Research Gap

After I reviewed the above research studies thoroughly and minutely, I found the research studies mostly devoted to the perception of teachers, parents, headmasters, policy-makers and administrators on the issues of the medium of instruction. But my research is devoted to the perception of eighth-grade students of the English medium public school of Nepal. Furthermore, I have selected those students previously from Nepali medium backgrounds so that the participants could find out the exact pros and cons of EMI, and the data gathered from these research participants could be more convincing and reliable as well. In this perspective, my research is different from previous research studies. It could effectively scrutinize the reality of EMI and its impacts on their academic achievement through students' perceptions.

My research is different from the research studies reviewed above as these researches specifically have propagated the need and importance of EMI in the public schools of Nepal, but my research is purely connected to the impacts of EMI on the students' academic performance. The research above shows that the teachers, stakeholders and the concerned authorities seem to be appreciating the English

language without understanding its detrimental effects on multilingual countries like Nepal. Even the policy makers and educators seem uncaring and apathetic towards the dignity and value of the indigenous languages of Nepal. Therefore, my research tries to give messages to the concerned authorities that before making and implementing any language and educational plans and policy, they should be caring and responsive towards the future of learners and the value of the indigenous languages of Nepal.

My research is totally different from other research from the methodological perspective that the narrative inquiry research methods guided most of the research I reviewed, but I employed the ethnographic research method that helped to immerse me in the real world of my research participants to achieve a thorough knowledge of the selected area, to understand and interpret what my participants say, do, and believe and to capture and explore the first-hand experience of the selected social or cultural setting. From this perspective, the ethnographic research method could gather thick, authentic, reliable and trustworthy data compared to other research methods. Remarkably, the research studies reviewed above present mixed perceptions towards EMI, which created a space for me to examine the students' distinctive perception on EMI and its effects on their academic performance in the context of public schools in Nepal. It is believed that only the divers know the depth of the seas, and thus the students are the keys to unveiling the reality of EMI. In this perspective, my research can be fruitful to learners of various levels, researchers, teachers, teacher trainers, educators, and authorities to have a crystal-clear concept of the medium of instruction, particularly on EMI.

Conceptual Framework

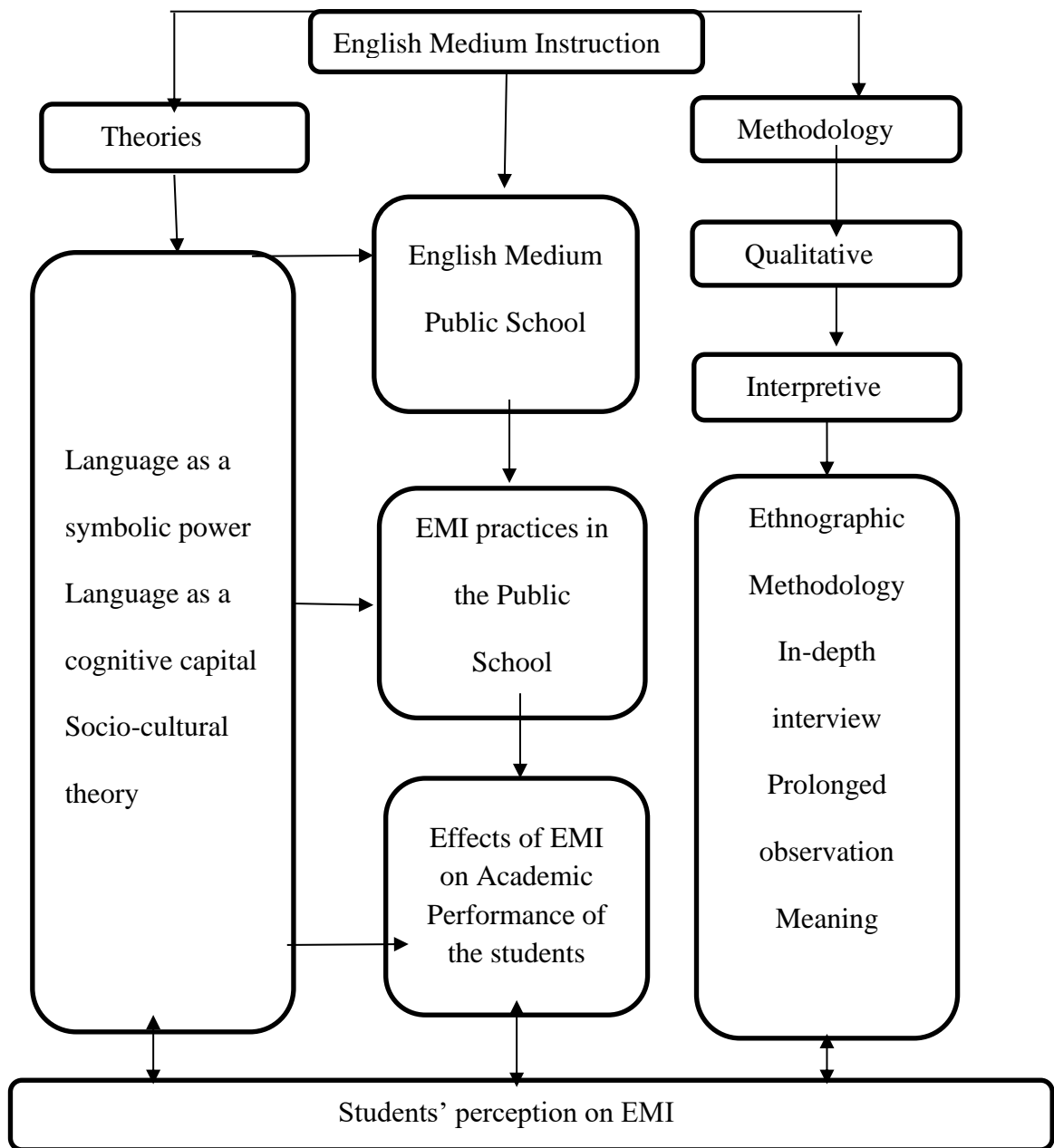


Fig.1: *The Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework given above is the synopsis of my entire study. The study explored the perception of the students on EMI who were eighth-grade students in a public English medium school in Kathmandu. Based on a qualitative research design, the study was guided by an ethnographic research method. I collected data through in-depth interviews, prolonged engagement with them, and prolonged

observation of their activities to explore participants' perceptions on EMI and its effects on their academic performance. Finally, I interpreted the findings of the study and analyzed them within the theoretical insight of language as symbolic power, language as a cognitive capital and socio-cultural theory.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a brief review of the literature related to my study. I began the chapter with a brief history of the language policy and planning in Nepal, a thematic review on perception, medium of instruction, English medium instruction and English medium instruction as a debatable issue in public schools of Nepal. And then, I discussed the relevant theories connected to my research viz language as symbolic power and linguistic, cognitive capital (1993) and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. Similarly, I reviewed empirical literature relevant to my study. Finally, I presented the research gap and conceptual framework for my study.

One step is all it takes to start a journey of a thousand miles. -Lao-tzu

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological journey that guided me to carry out this research project. For Denzin and Lincoln (2018), the methodological research journey is an inquiry strategy. I describe my research strategies and articulate my rationale for selecting the study area, research site, research participants, research design and research methods relevant to my research project. The methodological journey enabled me, as a researcher, to collect essential and relevant information appropriately during my field study. Good research always transparently articulates what research design, methods and rationale are selected by the researchers and how the field information is gathered and analyzed (Hatch, 2002, Seale & Silverman, 1997; Yin, 2016, cited in Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. C., 2017, p.46). Similarly, this research presents my research design, methods, and rationale, concentrating on information generation and analysis. Thus, the section below describes my research strategies and my rationale for selecting and adopting different methodological components to carry out this present research. I adopted all these strategies to explore the students' perceptions of EMI. First, I begin this chapter with my philosophical assumptions and, then, my rationale for selecting and adopting a particular study area, research site and research participants respectively. Finally, I present the ethical considerations to maintain rigor as qualitative research followed by the quality standards to authenticate my study.

Philosophical Assumptions

As a researcher, I spent most of my days on the research site interacting and engaging with my participants to understand their day-to-day activities, practices, their voices, actions, feelings and their perceptions. My philosophical assumptions guided me to interpret my interactions to understand the social world of my participants and construct knowledge. I discuss my philosophical assumptions, i.e., ontology, epistemology and axiology, in the following subsections. These assumptions provided a road map and a basis for my study about my view of social reality, my nature of knowing and claiming social knowledge and my belief, perception and value on social knowledge and social reality.

Ontology: Multiple in Nature

As an interpretive researcher, I believe ontology is a philosophical view or belief system about the nature of social reality. Neuman (2014) asserts that ontology focuses on the nature of reality that is multiple and subjective. Similarly, Leavy (2014, p. 3) mentions that ontology is a philosophical view or belief system which includes 'what I can learn about this reality and how I can do so.' While I was in the research field dealing with the nature of reality, a question that frequently triggered my mind was, 'How is truth or reality on a particular phenomenon constructed?' Similar to my question, supporting my curiosity, Guba and Lincoln (1988) also posit that reality is constructed circumstantially, situationally and contextually. In a similar vein, Saldana (2011) believes that reality is not absolutely ready to be discovered but is contextual, multiple, and subjective. I, as a researcher, believe that reality is subjective and differs from person to person. Therefore, I ontologically stand for multiple realities that I believe in my participants' perceptions, understandings and

experiences of my participants on EMI. I respect all the participants, although they may have different stories, experiences and perceptions on EMI.

Epistemology: Nature of Constructing Knowledge

Epistemology is based on the theory of knowledge construction (Saldana, 2011). It addresses how I constructed the knowledge or how I knew about the nature of social reality while I was at the research site. I constructed knowledge through my participants' voices, interviewing them, observing their activities, interacting and engaging with them, and listening to their stories and experiences.

As an interpretive researcher, my epistemological position was the nature of knowledge and how it was constructed. My concerns regarding 'what generated valid knowledge and how it was acquired and constructed (Soini, Kronqvist & Huber, 2011) is a perplexing question that overwhelms every researcher during the research process. My interpretive, relative and subjective stance on the nature of valid knowledge led me to believe that valid knowledge is generated through the perception, stories, and overt and covert expression of the students studying in EMI-loaded public schools. To construct knowledge, I respected my participants' voices, stories, experiences and feelings. My epistemological stand was that I could understand the students' perception on EMI through interpretation, interaction, observations and interviews. Ocejo (2012) believes that a researcher should take a series of steps to develop relationships with participants. Thus, as an ethnographic researcher to construct reality on EMI, I made a concerted effort to interact with my participants on a regular basis in order to manage the relationship.

My Axiological Stance

Axiology focuses mostly on the values and presumptions made by a researcher about a particular phenomenon during the research process. It is concerned with how

a researcher applies values and presumptions to influence a research process and what actions the researcher takes to tackle his value stance (Lincoln & Lynham, & Guba, 2013 as cited in Spencer, Pryce & Walsh, 2014, p. 83). It is the theory of the value system. Creswell (2007) asserts that axiology focuses on the participants' expression, perception, value and experience. A certain value system guides everyone, and each value system is never the same. The voices of participants are given value indiscriminately. The perception and realization of an individual mostly influences the truth. Though Sumner and Tribe (2008) assert that a researcher should not be value-laden and his/her personal views should not influence the research, the research I conducted was value-laden. Every individual is value-laden and each student may value EMI differently. Therefore, on the one hand, I believe that EMI may not be an effective tool for a student in a public school to achieve competency in the content subjects and in learning a second language or any foreign language like English or Chinese. But on the other hand, I value that the learner's mother tongue or first language plays a crucial role in learning a second language or achieving competency in content subjects.

Interpretivism as a Research Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm made me understand and construct a new meaning of EMI as a researcher. People view the world from different perspectives. According to Rowlands (2005), the interpretive paradigm believes that there is no one observable reality and that reality is socially produced. Thus, people can have diverse points of view on the same event. We view the world from different perspectives, angles and lenses. (Saldana, 2014). As an interpretivist, I claim that beliefs and realities are not similar. Thus, my set of beliefs is subjective, and my realities are multiple. An interpretive paradigm interprets the subjectively constructed social reality through

meaning discovery (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). It describes how people interact with one another, how they perceive the world and the environments in which these interactions occur.

As an interpretivist, I was concerned with participants' subjective experiences and multiple realities. I aimed to investigate the experiences that my participants had to understand and interpret the meanings effectively. The interpretive paradigm guided me to have prolonged engagement and interaction with the participants in the natural setting. In a similar vein, Taylor & Medina (2013) argue that an interpretive paradigm enables researchers to immerse in the natural setting and understand every perception, experience and the stories of the participants.

As an interpretivist, I view the realities differently from person to person to identify the learners, their needs, their challenges, and their perceptions of a particular subject or context. It means that social reality is not objective but entirely subjective. In this regard, Neuman (2014) asserts that social reality depends on how people view it. Therefore, I stressed the principle of inter-subjective. The interpretive paradigm guided me to have prolonged engagement and interaction with the participants in the natural setting. The worldview of interpretivism allowed me to enquire about the reality connected with EMI among my participants. Interpretive paradigm helps researchers construct insightful understandings of the reality embedding the ideas, beliefs, values, and worldviews of teachers and students (Taylor, 2014); it enabled me to explore the meanings my participants constructed for using EMI in the public-school setting.

Ethnography as a Research Method

This study incorporates an ethnographic research methodology, which directs a researcher to tell a convincing, rigorous, and real tale while observing locals go

about their daily lives in their communities (Fetterman, 2010). Similarly, LeCompte & Schensul (2010) also argue that the ethnographic research method gives a researcher a roadmap that guides him/her to understand and culturally interpret what the research participants believe on a particular issue, phenomenon, or concept. Ethnography typically relies on a thick description of events, people's life stories and experiences. In this perspective, Geertz (2008) asserts that ethnography gives a thick description of people's life stories, experiences, ordinary activities and behavior. As an ethnographer, I use a cultural lens to understand observed actions when they are placed in meaningful and relevant cultural contexts. I asked questions about the community's and people's cultural backgrounds for this study. Culture is the central element taught by integrating explicitly and linguistically (Newton, 2010 b, cited in Nguyen, 2013). As culture is a core element of inquiry in ethnography, my core element of inquiry and a matter of description, analysis and interpretation is English medium instruction and its effects on the student's academic achievement.

My research was based on interpreting stories, values, beliefs, experiences and perceptions of eighth-grade students of an English medium public school in Kathmandu. According to Gullion (2021), immersion in my participants' daily life is one of the characteristics of an ethnographic technique. Thus, I consequently immersed myself in the daily activities of my participants to explore and achieve an in-depth understanding of EMI. Adopting ethnography as my study method, I documented and explored the first-person experience of the selected social or cultural settings (Atkinson, 2007). Through my prolonged stay in the research field, I examined shared patterns and the interaction of my research participants in the natural settings and gave meaning to behavior, language, and interaction among them,

focusing on individual experiences in the context of their culture and a group that shares that culture (Creswell, 2007).

Ocejo (2012) asserts that to construct knowledge; a researcher should take a series of steps to maintain a relationship with participants through regular communication. Thus, I penetrated my inquiry into the informal networks of my participants' norms and values, actions, beliefs, practices, and social arrangements to construct ethnographic knowledge. Saldana (2014, p. 157) argues that creative thinking is a necessary method of mind that challenges a researcher to consider the practical as well as the useful value of his/ her work to others. In this study, following Saldana (2014), I drew a new meaning by creatively thinking, analyzing, interpreting and reflecting on the perception, feelings and experiences of my research participants on EMI

I used an ethnographic research approach, which typically entails an investigator spending a significant amount of time observing, listening to, and/or asking questions about what is happening in people's daily lives through informal and formal interviews while also gathering artifacts and documents. (Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography is a narrative of a social group, organization, or community's life that focuses on one specific feature of that environment (Humphreys & Watson 2009). Ethnography requires the presence of a researcher on the scene. I was with students, asking about their perception and understanding of English medium instruction for six months. Following Gullion (2021), I consequently immersed myself in the daily lives of my participants to excavate an in-depth understanding of EMI. My prolonged engagement with my participants at their school was insightful and rewarding, allowing me to get into the students' shoes.

In the EFL context, ethnography has been a popular research method that takes a cultural lens to study people's lives within their communities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Similarly, Gautam (2016) asserts that ethnography has become one of the most effective methods for examining social behavior and human life all around the world. I employed ethnography as a research method to study my research participants' beliefs, actions, feelings and experiences toward EMI. Similarly, I explored students' perception on EMI by observing context constantly and gathering information personally. Creswell (2014) further states that researchers interpret what they find. In this sense, I got involved with the students to gather their personal views, beliefs and perception on EMI formally in and informally out of their classroom. Therefore, I adopted the ethnographic research method to document, analyze and interpret the participants' values and perceptions integrated into EMI.

Research Site and the Selecting of Research Participants

I have been living in Kathmandu for almost twenty years. After completing my bachelor's degree from Jhapa, I came to Kathmandu to pursue higher studies. I originally hail from Bhadrapur Municipality of Jhapa District. Though my twenty years stay in Kathmandu was not very fruitful, I completed M. A and M.Ed. in English and started my professional career as an English teacher. And I joined M. Phil at Kathmandu University in 2019. All these contexts and circumstances stimulated me to contribute academically to my country, and, therefore, I was considerably determined and pre-meditated to select Kathmandu Metropolitan city as my study area from where I could be able to outshine the issue of EMI.

Thus, for this study, I selected an English medium public school in Kathmandu Metropolitan city as my study site. Kathmandu metropolitan city is largely inhabited by people with multilingual, multiethnic, multireligious and

multicultural backgrounds. Except for Newars, the original inhabitants of Kathmandu valley, most people residing in Kathmandu metropolitan city are originally from other districts of Nepal. The selection of the school and the participants was purposive. Before selecting the school, I consulted my professors and colleagues from Kathmandu University, who recommended the English medium public school, which could be helpful to address my study on EMI.

I visited the school in August 2020, immediately after defending my research proposal on EMI. I found the school doing far better academically and in terms of school infrastructural development, school management and coordination among teachers and other staff, a number of students and stakeholders' involvement in school activities, among others. Because of the worldwide spread of Covid-19, immediately I could not carry out my study project. I had to wait until the situation became normal.

I selected my research site and participants purposively. I attempted to explore the perception of EMI from an English medium public school in Kathmandu Metropolitan city. I selected four students (three girls and a boy) as my key participants from the public school who were previously studying in a Nepali medium public school.

My Research Participants

It was a beautiful winter day on 10 November 2021. I was fully prepared to accelerate my fieldwork. I selected an English medium public school as my research site. I was very curious to carry out my research project. I came out of my room with the equipment essential to collect data. I reached my research site after 15 minutes walk from my rented flat. When I confirmed the presence of the principal in the office, I went to the office and told him my purpose in detail. He advised me to consult the vice principal for the necessary help to find my purposive research

participants so that I could converse with them for rapport building and acceptance.

The vice principal introduced me to two Grade Eight Teachers who could manage the respective class of the research participants for observation. It was perhaps my good luck that I found the school's principal and the teachers so cooperative and friendly.

One of the female teachers whom the vice principal had introduced me was the class teacher of grade Eight. She took me into class Eight and introduced me to the students to whom I described my purpose of visiting the school and meeting them, but no students responded to me. I had heard from my colleagues that selecting purposive research participants was difficult. Then I recalled my college friends saying, "It is one of the most challenging research tasks to find out purposive participants." As qualitative research needs the selection of participants and the inclusion of their voices purposefully, I would have to select purposive participants to accomplish my research project on EMI.

Despite the fact that the task of selecting purposive participants was difficult, four students from grade eight agreed to be my research participants. Even I physically visited their parents and asked for their consent orally and in written form as well. They showed interest and curiosity in expressing their perception on EMI. Maintaining privacy as an ethical standard of ethnographic research, I have not disclosed the names of the participants. I have used aliases instead of their real names. The names and addresses of the research participants mentioned below are pseudonyms.

Ranita was my first participant, who was from a Hindu Brahmin family. She was not a local inhabitant of Kathmandu. She originally hailed from Dhading. She was in a Nepali medium school in Dhading before joining the present school. She had studied in both Nepali medium and English medium Schools. To some extent, she

could differentiate between the pedagogical practices of both the Nepali and the English medium schools. She was staying with her family. Her father owned a photo studio near the school, and her mother helped him in the studio when she was free from her household chores.

My second research participant was Kisan from Gorkha. His family's name was Gurung. As he belonged to a Gurung family, his mother tongue was Gurung. He could speak both Gurung and Nepali languages fluently. Before enrolling in Kathmandu's English medium public school, he studied up to grade seven in a Nepali medium public school in Gorkha. He confessed that he was not good enough in English, severely affecting his academic performance. As academic subjects like science, math and social studies were taught in English medium in his school, he frankly and frequently expressed his inability to understand many chapters of these subjects. Therefore, he wanted his teachers to carry out pedagogical practices in Nepali medium.

My third research participant was Nisha. She was a permanent habitant of Kathmandu. She had been studying in the school since she was enrolled in class three. She was one of the witnesses to know the stories of the success and struggle of the school to come to the present stage. She was the only participant who was not from any Nepali medium school background. Though she had been in an English medium school since she was in kindergarten, she had mixed perceptions of EMI. She advocated the wise use of Nepali or any mother tongue while teaching content subjects such as health education, science, social studies and math.

My fourth participant was Paru from Bhakundebeshi of the Kavre district. She came from the Tamang community. As she belonged to a Tamang family, her mother tongue was Tamang. She could speak both Tamang and Nepali languages fluently.

She studied up to grade Seven in a Nepali medium public school in Bhakundebeshi, Kavre. Though she was willing to enroll in a Nepali medium school, she joined the English medium School in Kathmandu because of the pressure from her family. She always expected her teachers to teach using the Nepali language. She faced many challenges because of the English medium Instruction in her first term examination; she did not pass five content subjects. She was planning to drop out the school if she did not do well in the annual examination.

In qualitative research, we select participants and include their voices purposively. I could not mention every participant I encountered and conversed with during my field visit. Ethnographers typically use an informal technique called a judgmental sampling technique to begin fieldwork. In this technique, they start their fieldwork wherever they can sneak a foot through the door. For the most part, ethnographers rely on their own judgment to choose the most suitable participants based on the research issue and the research questions (Fetterman, 2010, P. 35). Therefore, I selected those participants who could provide me with the essential information relevant to my issue and research questions and included their voices, perceptions and beliefs in my research project.

Collecting and Organizing Field Information

It is believed that although human beings are complex instruments, they are very reliable and authentic data-collecting tools. An ethnographer, as a human instrument with numerous conceptual guidelines in mind, immerses into a culture to collect information and analyze them (Fetterman, 2010, P. 33). Guided by Ethnographic data collecting methods and techniques, I carried out this research primarily by collecting information through in-depth interview, prolonged observation, field notes, thick description and reflection.

I collected the ethnographic information through in-depth interview sessions, prolonged observation, field notes, thick descriptions and reflection. LeCompte and Schensul (2010) assert that participatory observation and face-to-face interview sessions are crucial tools for collecting ethnographic field information. Similarly, Blaxter et al. (2006) opine that in comparison to questionnaires and observations, in-depth interviews are more useful techniques that offer ample opportunity for the researchers to access information. As in-depth interviews are flexible techniques for collecting information, I used these to elicit participants' perceptions on EMI practices.

I conducted ethnographic interviews to elicit in-depth information on relevant topics, participants' life stories, cultural backgrounds and beliefs related to EMI practices. Similarly, after the consent of my participants, I recorded participants' voices and jotted down the interviews for future analysis.

Similarly, using prolonged observation, I jotted down every situation and event to make meaning from these naturally occurring situations and events. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2007), assert that the observation technique offers ample researcher prospects in collecting information from naturally occurring social situations. Firstly, the prolonged observation helped me record the participants' activities, events, conversations, and interactions. Secondly, it helped me figure out deeper feelings, meaning, beliefs, emotions, and perceptions of my participants on the research issue, i.e., EMI.

I made notes about various facts and experiences I had while conducting my research. I made notes of nonverbal means of communication, such as gestures, posture and facial expressions, to support the meaning-making process. Likewise, I presented a thick description as an essential instrument of ethnographic research. It

provided enough context for me as a researcher to make meaning of the behaviors expressed by the participants. Geertz (2008) asserts that a thick description provides cultural context and meaning that people place on their life stories, experiences, day-to-day activities, and behaviors.

Reflexivity is a very significant process in ethnography as it enables an ethnographic researcher to reveal his/her self-perception, methodological setbacks and mental states (Heath, Street, & Mills, 2008, p. 123). I maintained self-critical and inter-subjective reflection. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) state that a knowledgeable ethnographer must be aware of the text's reflexive relationship to its subject matter. Reflective practice is an internal reverberant process (Saldana, 2014) that provided me with a road map for my research journey to achieve authentic meaning from the various components of the research, such as information, notes, photographs, artifacts, and recordings that I collected from my participants.

To my knowledge, there is no distinct procedure for the analysis of ethnographic data. Instead, data analysis procedures begin as soon as the researcher formulates and develops the research question (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p.47). Because there is no set method for analyzing ethnographic data, I followed some potentially fruitful ways of data analysis procedures similar to the thematic analysis technique. As the data analysis procedure of my research inquiry incorporates making sense out of texts, first, I consolidated and reduced the data, and then I interpreted them for the meaning-making process.

As soon as I collected data, I organized them carefully, considering my research questions. Firstly, I read thoroughly all the data and transcriptions several times until I reached to make clear sense of the information. My data analysis process involved creative insight and careful attention to the purpose of my study. After some

rounds of reading, I started making notes on the texts and attention to traces of patterns, connections, similarities, or contrastive points.

As an ethnographic study is rich in data besides field notes, I reduced the collected information from the research site. I used only certain parts of the documents that were closely connected to my research questions. I intensively reflected on the terms, words and concepts expressed by my participants. As a qualitative researcher, I sought to identify the themes and the specific local meaning, including the alternative understandings that I excavated from my interpretation and analysis of the collected information.

As an ethnographic researcher, I collected a plethora of ethnographic information from the research site. As Brewer (2000) opines, coding is the first process to be done in conjunction with content analysis (p. 111). Therefore, firstly I coded the information into categories and themes. In the coding process, I listened to the interview sessions multiple times and made a list of the most frequent words and ideas. I categorized these words and ideas, and these categories helped me develop the themes. It was a forward and backward process, i.e., I had to revisit the codes, categories and themes. Finally, I came up with two major themes: perception of EMI and its effects on students' academic performance. I interpreted and analyzed them critically, connecting the ideas based on my research questions, statement of the problem and the participants' perception on EMI.

Ethical Considerations

In this section, I've discussed the ethical considerations I maintained while carrying out my study. I have also outlined a few theoretical approaches and principles which guided me to maintain the ethical considerations for this research.

Ethical Considerations are considered a crucial component of research. No harm of any kind should ever be done to research participants. The study's confidentiality and the research participants' privacy must be protected. Primary data should not be biased, and most importantly, the anonymity of the participants must be maintained (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Similarly, researchers must regard their participants as an end in themselves, not just a means to an end (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.339). While carrying out my research and being entirely aware of the ethical principles and practices, I maintained my ethical responsibility for the people and places I studied.

It is difficult to distinguish between ethnography's politics and ethics. The ethical issues for ethnographers are inextricably related to their work's ontological and epistemological assumptions (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.339). As a responsible ethnographic researcher, my beliefs regarding the nature of reality, how much we may know about it, and the veracity of truth claims have guided my ethical consideration of this study. Thus, while carrying out this study, I have been much concerned about not affecting my participants' rights and interests (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.347).

In my research, I have connected two ethical theories or approaches to justify my ethical stand. The first one is a consequentialist approach which focuses on the outcomes of research that researchers should avoid harming their participants. (Mill, 1863, as cited in Frankena, 1973). The second one is a deontological approach that concentrates on the research participants' rights, such as the right to self-determination, respect, or the right to privacy (Beauchamp, Faden, Wallace & Walters, as cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.339). Following these two approaches, as an ethnographic researcher, I focused mainly on four rights of my research participants, such as the right to privacy, the right to respect, the right to

autonomy and the right to justice, so that I could protect my research participants from harm, and respect their inherent rights as well. Firstly, as a consequentialist, I focused on whether my acts harmed my participants, and secondly, as a deontologist, I concentrated on the rights that belonged to my research participants, including the rights to justice, respect, privacy, and autonomy.

As an ethnographic researcher, I followed four ethical principles while carrying out my research. Beauchamp et al. (1982, cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p. 339) listed four ethical principles that guided my study: non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy or self-determination and justice.

Non-maleficence is essentially concerned with the consequential approach. According to this principle, researchers should focus on the outcomes of the research, and they should avoid harming participants. Fully maintaining this principle, I protected my research participants from any harm. Beneficence is also concerned with the consequentialist approach. According to this principle, the research carried out on human subjects should have some positive and identifiable benefit rather than simply be carried out for its own sake. My study on EMI certainly produces remarkable benefits by enhancing a conducive pedagogical environment in schools and academic institutions.

Autonomy or self-determination falls under the deontological approach. According to this principle, the ethics and choices of research participants should be respected by researchers. The research participants have certain rights, notably privacy, respect or autonomy/self-determination. However, these rights have been frequently infringed. As an ethnographic researcher, I focused on the autonomy of my participants by giving due respect to the values and decisions of my research

participants. In this regard, Macintyre (1982) observed people could be wronged, even when they are not harmed (cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.346).

Similarly, justice is the final ethical principle primarily concerned with the deontological approach (Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.346). As justice is related to fair dealing with participants, a researcher should treat all the research participants equally and give them equal respect. All my research participants were equal, and I gave them equal respect irrespective of their caste, gender, knowledge, geography and language.

Except for the four principles discussed above, I remained mindful of the privacy and anonymity of my research participants. Although the concept of privacy and anonymity is complex, it is an important ethical issue in research. The lines between public and private are not always apparent (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I believe that the greatest risk in ethnography arises at the time of action (Cassell, 1978, 1979; Wax and Cassell, 1979, cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.341). Therefore, as an ethnographic researcher, I protected settings and participants by removing the identifiable information of the participants and the setting by using aliases and altering non-relevant details (Burgess, 1985; Turmell, 1998, cited in Murphy & Dingwall, 2007, p.341).

Quality Standards

I believe that a single or constant method cannot address the issue of quality standards in ethnographic research. It addresses the issue under research through several quality elements like credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability. In this perspective, Richardson (2008) asserts that the researchers may follow multiple quality standards to ensure trustworthy and successful qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2005) list four criteria to maintain the quality and rigor of qualitative

research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Therefore, I rest the quality of my ethnographic research on credibility, transformability, dependability and confirmability to maintain my research's trustworthiness and rigor.

Credibility

I assume that credibility is an important aspect or criterion in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. Credibility advocates uniformity issue between the views of the participants and the researchers on a particular phenomenon (Kalu, & Bwalya, 2017, p.50). To ensure the research's credibility and originality, I had a prolonged engagement with my participants in their ordinary settings and persistent observation that provided me with a plethora of different data to understand the world views of my participants.

While collecting data, I immersed myself in the world of my participants, which helped me get insight into the context of my study and the context and culture of my research participants. Similarly, following a strategy of member check (Guba, 1981, p. 85) to establish the credibility of my research, I rigorously checked the field information and interpretations solicited from my research participants. I ensure that I have maintained persistence and uniformity between the portrayal of the world in my research and the ways the participants actually perceived EMI. Like Creswell (2009), my research and my interpretations have maintained a faithful representation of the context and the participants' constructs on EMI.

Transferability

Transferability was one of the important criteria I adopted to ensure the quality of my ethnographic work. Transferability focuses primarily on the richness and depth of the facts so that I can apply the conclusions to different contexts, circumstances, or people (Kalu, & Bwalya, 2017, p.50). I argue that good research outcomes apply to

any context, situation and individual. As Bitsch (2005) asserts, transferability is the interpretive corresponding of generalizability by which the findings of my study can be applied to various scenarios with readers and other respondents. Thus, following Bitsch (2005), I maintained transferability through the thick description and purposeful sampling (p. 85). Similarly, following Brewer (2000), I provided my readers with my participants' detailed day-to-day stories and experiences in their context and culture so that they feel as if they were with me in the field. As an ethnographic researcher, I gathered enough information through in-depth interview sessions and observations. to maintain transferability and to achieve generalisation at different levels to attain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of EMI.

Dependability

The next quality standard I adopted to ensure the quality of my work was dependability. The constancy of study findings is referred to as dependability, that the researcher tries to explain and justify in light of any modifications to the phenomenon under study, the methodology, or the design (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017, p.51). In an evolving social environment, dependability is challenging to forecast. as there is a periodical change in research study, design or methodology (Silverman, 2016). A researcher needs to maintain two important works to establish the dependability of his work: (1) the researcher should provide enough information to the readers to determine the stability and dependability of the research and researchers (Ryan et al. 2007). (2) he must debate, communicate, and understand the study's analysis and conclusions with the data gathered from the field (Cohen et al., 2011). As an ethnographic researcher, to assess the dependability of my work, I examined, analyzed, and communicated the analysis and study's conclusions using the information acquired from the field developed by my research participants using data

from the field to offer fresh perspectives, deeper comprehension of a topic, and well-informed practical actions (Kalu, & Bwalya, 2017, p.51).

Confirmability

Confirmability was the last quality standard I adopted to maintain the quality of my ethnographic work. Confirmability denotes the steps the researchers take to confirm that they cannot fathom the findings drawn from the evidence. However, they emerge from the fieldwork through various analytical and theoretical interpretations (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). When the researchers ensure that the findings originally emerged from the field, then other researchers could establish or substantiate the findings (Baxter & Eyles, 1997, as cited in Anney, 2015, p. 279).

Therefore, to ensure the confirmability of my study and to enable readers and researchers to confirm whether my data analysis procedures were trustworthy or not, I provided a detailed account of the research processes (Streubert, 1998; Creswell, 2007). Confirmability is attained by guaranteeing credibility, transferability, and dependability (Ryan et al., 2007). As an ethnographic researcher, I affirm that the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability standards made my research work trustworthy, authentic and applicable for the readers and researchers.

Chapter Summary

As an ethnographic researcher, I had a prolonged engagement in my participants' world to understand the multiple social realities and subjective experiences and then constructed my knowledge. I spent almost six months in the research field and examined the interaction and the shared pattern of my participants in their ordinary settings, made meaning to their behavior, language, and interaction among themselves, and listened to their lived stories and experiences in their own culture and context. Then, I physically and digitally noted and recorded their multiple social realities and subjective experiences and their perception.

In this chapter, I discussed the methodological journey that guided me to carry out this research project. First, I began this chapter with my philosophical assumptions. Then I articulated my strategies and rationale for selecting and adopting a particular study area, research site, research participants and research design, respectively. Next, I outlined ethnography as a method to generate information relevant to my research project. Finally, I elucidated the ethical considerations to maintain rigor as qualitative research followed by the quality standards to authenticate this study

Then, I described ethnography as my chosen research strategy for gathering data. My techniques related to getting involved in the field, include observation, interviews, field notes, and reflections. After that, I mentioned my research site and participants. Then I described the data analysis procedure. Finally, I elucidated quality standards and ethical issues to maintain quality and authenticate my research inquiry.

*One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door
along the way. - Frank Smith*

CHAPTER: IV

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

This chapter explores the students' perception on English medium instruction in a public school. I answer my first research question: How do students perceive English medium instruction in a public school? I have generated themes based on the in-depth interview sessions, prolonged observation of the participants' activities inside and outside of their classroom and interaction with them. I have combined my ethnographic field works with EMI practices and students' perceptions of it by connecting Bourdieu's language as symbolic power, linguistic, cognitive capital, Cummins' CALP and Vygotskian Socio-cultural theory. I have developed insights after a prolonged engagement with my participants. I collected rich data from four students of class eight. I rigorously dug out their pathos and bathos on English medium instruction.

Breaking the Ice

It was July 2020, and I was in a dilemma about whether I could visit my research site or not because the whole world was engulfed in COVID 19 and Nepal was not an exception. I could not visit my research site because the Government had announced a lockdown for an indefinite period. Only hospitals, clinics and pharmacies were open 24 hours during the lockdown period. Some groceries were allowed to open for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. In such a critical condition, all the schools and colleges remained closed. So, data collection physically was beyond my access. My research method was guided by ethnography,

so meeting my research participants during the lockdown was impossible. My head was vacant to take any prompt decision regarding collecting data to enrich my dissertation. Then I contacted my research supervisor and the HOD of Kathmandu University about the challenges of collecting data. They advised me to be embedded with the narrative inquiry as it is possible to collect data online as well because it was impossible to collect data during lockdown using the ethnography research method.

Although selecting purposive participants for my research was difficult during the lockdown, I contacted a few eighth-grade students with the help of a school teacher, which was my research site. I started connecting with the students in the zoom meeting and tried rapport-building with them. I had a good talk with them and made them close to me. They were ready to be my research participants, but I was already determined not to go away from the ethnography research method. Therefore, I waited for a normal situation.

I looked at the calendar, which showed me 10 November 2021. I came out of my room with a bag containing a notebook, a pen, and a mobile phone, the necessary items for me to collect rich data. After 15 minutes, I reached my research site. After being confirmed the presence of the principal in the office, I entered the premises of my research site, a secondary English medium public school in Kathmandu. I asked a teacher about the location of the principal's office. He pointed to the principal's office upstairs. I went directly to the office. I took his permission and entered his office. I gave him a friendly smile as I said hello. He enquired about my identity and the reason for my visit. He welcomed me with more friendliness than I had anticipated. I introduced him to myself and my purpose in detail. He advised me to consult the vice principal for the necessary help to find my purposive research participants so that I could converse with them for rapport building and acceptance. The vice principal

introduced me to two teachers of grade eight who could manage the respective class of the research participants for observation. It was perhaps my good luck that I found the school's principal and the teachers so cooperative and friendly.

My Encounter with the Class and Selection of Participants

As a teacher, I worked for several years in schools and colleges and didn't hesitate to speak in front of students. One of the female teachers whom the vice principal had introduced me was the class teacher of grade eight. She took me into class Eight and introduced me to the students. While introducing myself to the students, I communicated my purpose of visiting the school and meeting the students. I had heard from my colleagues that selecting purposive research participants was difficult. I told the students that I needed support from some students so that I could state the voices and feelings of the students on English medium instruction (EMI). No students responded to me. Then I recalled my college friends saying, "It is one of the most difficult research tasks to find out purposive participants." As we know, selecting participants and including their voices in qualitative research is a must to select purposive participants to accomplish my research work.

My First Participant's Voice on EMI

I spent about twenty minutes building rapport with the students in class eight. I observed the pedagogical activities there in the class and noted them in my diary. I even got an opportunity to record their activities. I tried my best to clarify my purpose of visiting the class, but no students willingly agreed to be my research participants except Ranita. I wrote some names of the students, their Facebook IDs and contact numbers in my diary with a little hope of convincing them in the second meeting in the class. I thanked the class teacher and the students for their valuable time and cooperation. Assuring to meet the next day, I bade them goodbye and left the school.

It was about 8 pm. My dinner was not yet ready. I was just leaning on the plastic chair of my bedroom cum study room and listening to music. I opened my diary, where I had noted down the names and contact numbers of some students who were supposed to be my research participants. But I was not sure that they could shortly accept to be my research participants. Then I saw in my diary the name Ranita who had assured me to be my research participant. I dialed her number. In fact, it was her father's number. He received my call, and I told him the purpose of calling. Fortunately, Ranita was there, and she received my call. I told her to accept me as a Facebook friend so that I could talk with her on messenger. Ranita was an extroverted Student. She immediately accepted my friend request, and we even started chatting with her on messenger. I was lucky enough to find such a smart participant who could share her perception of EMI. My wife gave a knock on the door for dinner. I stopped chatting with Ranita but messaged her to meet in her class tomorrow.

I spent almost seven days in school. I could build rapport with those students who were not willing to be my participants initially. I had been very close with my participants. I could comfortably converse with them on any topic. Despite being familiar with teachers and students, I did not directly ask any questions, but I was observing the class activities, jotting down, clicking pictures and even making videos so that I could type on the screen of my laptop.

It was a tiffin break. Most of the students were playing on the ground as it was not hot outside because November was not hot enough in Kathmandu. I was enjoying black tea in the school canteen. Every sip of the tea increased my curiosity to ask questions about EMI. Suddenly, I saw Ranita eating chowmein sitting on a bench next to me. I quickly went to her table and sat beside her. She welcomed me fairly. I felt

comfortable and immediately asked her why she chose the school, although there were many good private English medium schools in Kathmandu.

Ranita was from a Hindu Brahmin family. She was not a resident of Kathmandu. She was in a Nepali medium school in Dhading before she got admitted to the present school. She had the experience of studying in both Nepali medium school and English medium School. She was staying with her family. Her father owned a photo studio near the school, and her mother helped him in the studio when she was free from household chores. She, without any hesitation, quickly answered my question. *“This is one of the best schools in Kathmandu, and it is an English medium public school,”* she said.

I asked her whether she chose the school for English medium instruction or for other reasons. She replied;

First, it is one of the best English medium public schools in Kathmandu and perhaps Nepal. This school’s fee is cheaper than other good private English medium schools. Then why do we need to go to other private schools if we have a very good public school where teaching-learning activities are carried out in English medium instruction? As English is the need of time and we are getting an opportunity to learn English spending only a small amount of money. I was planning to join a private school, but my uncle advised my father to admit me to this school. So, I am here now in a good English medium public school. English is an international language, and everybody needs English. If you do not understand English, people might say you an illiterate. We need English anytime and everywhere.

As soon as she stopped speaking about the need for English in the present era, I inquired about her perception of EMI in the content subjects in which the students need to elicit the concepts to secure good marks in the exam. She answered,

Yes, sir, EMI is not always appropriate in all subjects because we have to understand the content of science, mathematics, social studies and accounts. If a teacher uses only EMI in these subjects, many students face difficulties in internalizing the subject matter. We are facing similar challenges in science, math and social studies classes. I love English and understand the content and concepts taught in the EMI setting, but my many friends are not competent in English and share their pains and griefs created by EMI. But our teachers don't listen to us. Once, a few students requested our math teacher to use the Nepali language while teaching math, but he advised us to write an application to the principal we were afraid to write an application because we were strictly advised not to use Nepali and any other languages in the class except English.

Generating Theme and Connecting Threads

I commuted from my residence to the school on foot as I had left my motorcycle at my hometown, Jhapa. I was feeling tired. I was in my residence and expecting a cup of milk tea. There was no one to provide me with a cup of tea. For me, milk tea was good medicine to get rid of my tiredness. I was just sitting on my chair and planning to begin my write-up. In fact, every evening was very important for me as I kept myself busy in categorizing and organizing themes, thematizing, recording information and field notes obtained from the conversations with my participants and observations of their class activities.

The expression of Ranita was knocking on my head. Her spontaneous utterances about choosing an English medium school and supporting the need and importance of English created plenty of dilemmas in my mind. Yes, she was correct in saying that English is an international language that is crucial for everyone. On the one hand, due to technological development, English is a must in the 21st century. We are in the modern age. It is felt that students without English face difficulties in growing up in the 21st century.

But on the other hand, it was difficult to instruct in English academic subjects as the students needed to understand the concepts of the subjects. Ranita seems to have understood that EMI is a need of time and is a must to improve her proficiency in the international language. She was indirectly opposing EMI in content subjects. Her mixed responses to EMI created plenty of dilemmas in my mind. Yes, she was right that English as a global lingua franca (Phillipson, 1992) is important for everyone. On the one hand, due to technological development, English is a must in the 21st century. It is felt that students without English face difficulties in growing up in the 21st century. But on the other hand, it has been difficult to teach content subjects in English as the students need to understand the concepts of the content subjects. Ranita seems to have understood that English medium instruction is a need of time, and it is a must to improve her proficiency in the international language. According to Crystal (2003), English has been playing a special role globally, and it is an international language, a global lingua franca (Phillipson, 1992).

Ranita's mixed responses on EMI had created plenty of questions in my mind. There is no denying that English has been a social identity and value language. It has its own prestige in Nepal as well. According to Morgan (2002), the students, the teachers and whole communities have established a belief that English is a social

identity and a cultural construct. It is a must to identify oneself in society. Similarly, Poudel (2021) argues, at present, the power of English has penetrated the lives and cultures of people who do not possess it globally. In this regard, Ranita's views on EMI can't be an exception as other people in the community. That's why EMI has a strong grip on schools in Nepal.

But on the other hand, Bourdieu (1986) argues that language functions as a linguistic capital. It acts as capital and a resource that helps develop the learners' cognition and social skills. As Kobera (2016) states, cognition and language development go simultaneously as they are closely related. Therefore, learners proficient in their mother tongues can be cognitively advantageous in the academic language and in the second language if child-friendly teaching-learning activities are created in the class. Here, Bourdieu (1986) emphasizes that students who are incompetent in a language that is used in their schools can be inert and slack in their future education. Therefore, it has been an emergency to make the school environment conducive so that the learners can be cognitively strong enough to immerse themselves in the EMI setting.

The Voice of Kishan on EMI

It was 4:30 pm in November 2021. The school was over, and a massive crowd of students was coming out of the gate. I was waiting for another participant, Kishan from Gorkha, at the gate. Kishan's rented room was on the way to my residence as well. I met Kishan at the gate and started moving toward our residence. I was fully prepared to talk with Kishan, who had been very close to me. I didn't know why he was so close to me. We briefly talked in a Zoom meeting about EMI a few days ago. Although I guessed his perception of EMI, I wanted to listen to his words physically and feel his gestures on EMI. When the social studies teacher explained the process of

drafting the constitution by the Constituent Assembly, he was not seriously listening to the teacher. His eyes were going through the window of the class. I asked him why he was not paying attention in the social studies class. *“I didn’t understand what she was teaching,”* he replied.

Perhaps, he was right. I observed his gestures while he was uttering words. His words and gesture expressed the same about Social Studies class. I inquired why he didn’t understand the process of drafting the constitution. He said,

I am from a small village in the Gorkha district. I don’t use the Nepali language while speaking with my grandparents. We mostly speak the Gurung language with our friends and relatives in the village. I am weak at English. My teacher teaches social studies in English. Social Studies itself is a very difficult subject. Many friends in my class say the same thing about social studies. This chapter of the constitution is more difficult than other chapters. Perhaps I will not understand this chapter if she teaches in my language. Sometimes, I understand her teaching when she speaks Nepali. Frankly speaking, I have not understood many chapters of social studies. Last year, when I was in class seven in my village school, I used to understand, but here in this school, it has been very difficult to me to understand the lessons.

Meaning Making: Kishan’s Perception on EMI

Every day at my research site, I observed the teaching-learning activities of class eight. I gave special attention to each gesture of my participants. In fact, Kisan was right that he had yet to understand the chapter on social studies. Even though I could not grasp some of the English terminologies used in the social studies lesson, then how Kishan, *a Gurung Student* from a Nepali medium background, could understand.

Many students in public schools feel challenged learning in EMI classes due to a lack of English language exposure. The students who are good in English are enjoying EMI classes, and the students like Kishan are facing innumerable challenges in the school. Indeed, the English language as a symbolic power has created division and inequality among the students (Bourdieu,1991, p.171).

EMI has been the dominant feature of academia worldwide (Abrar-ul-Hassen, 2021). EMI is now widely spreading in public schools, similar to private schools in Nepal. In this perspective, Phyak & Ojha (2019) argue that several public schools have switched to an English-only curriculum after imitating the language policy of private English-medium schools. Due to the perception that English is a language of status and power (Bourdieu,1991), several public schools in Nepal have currently switched to teaching English as their primary language. Without knowing the English language efficiency and competency of their children, the majority of parents send their kids to public schools with an English medium. Although these students study in the English medium public schools, they use their mother tongues at home and in their communities. Therefore, these students need to be more competent to understand EMI classes. This is the case with Kishan, who fails to grasp the lesson of social studies taught in English medium.

The theory of linguistic, and cognitive capital assumes that the language of learning acts as capital and as a resource, which influences the development of cognitive and social skills (Bourdieu (1986). According to this theory, children who have learned academic language in their first language cognitively get more benefits in their education than those who have not. On the other side, children who learn a language they find difficult run the risk of losing their cognitive development as they progress through their education. According to Cummins (1996), raising children's

cognitive capital through instruction in their first language is preferable. Therefore, it is essential to implement a liberal medium of instruction or the student's first language in the class as per the need to ensure students' complete cognitive development.

Indeed, EMI has been an obstruction for the students like Kishan Gurung, who was neither competent in Nepali nor in English. On the one hand, the use of EMI in public schools sidelined the mother tongue, and on the other hand, the students like Kishan have difficulty grasping lessons in English. The case of Kishan is not a unique one. Erling et al. (2017) report that students of Ghana and India face similar cases where the language of home and school differs, leading to low learning achievement.

Nisha's Voice on EMI

The days were flying by without any possibility of slowing down. I was also fully drowned in my field study. I did not realize how time was fleeting rapidly. It was the fourth week of November. As my research site was in Kathmandu and the cold was increasing. Some of the students began wearing sweaters. However, many students and teachers were still in light summer clothes. I felt they were strong enough to evade the chilling air of Kathmandu. As usual, I was enjoying a sip of hot milk tea in the school canteen; I happened to encounter one of my research participants, Nisha, who was moving toward the canteen with her friends. When she moved closer to me, I requested her to give her time. Like other participants, she was also open to me; perhaps she was interested in the issue that I wanted to talk to her. I immediately started jotting down her words regarding her perception of EMI.

Today, the world has become a small village. We may encounter people speaking different languages. We have to use English to talk and share our culture with them. We need English to get admitted to better colleges for higher studies. English has been an ornament to expose ourselves to the

world. Only English can connect us with the people of the world. My father admitted me to this English medium school so that I could learn English and be as good as other students studying in good English medium schools in Kathmandu. We can improve our English language proficiency when we are in English medium school; otherwise, we cannot be competent in English.

I immediately supported her perception on EMI, and I asked her whether she enrolled in the English medium school to improve her English or if she had any other reasons to be enrolled there. I further inquired her whether Nepali and other local languages were equally important to understand content and concepts of science, social studies and even English or EMI was enough to understand these content subjects. She frankly answered;

One thing is true: EMI has improved our English, but I don't mean that only English is essential and important. Nepali and other local languages are equally essential to understand math, science, social studies, optional math and accountancy. Suppose teachers use Nepali or any other local languages in which students are competent. In that case, we understand the content subjects easily, but our teachers are not permitted to use other languages except English in the Class. It has made us face plenty of challenges to be competent in other subjects.

Meaning Making: Nisha's Perception on EMI

My rented residence was to the west of my research site, just about a kilometre away, located at a bit higher altitude. Perhaps people know about Syuchatar Height. Comparatively, Syuchatar is colder than the neighbouring places. I lived on the ground floor, which was a bit colder than on other floors of the building. It was about 6 p.m. As usual, I was sitting on my chair and recalling the voice of Nisha on EMI). I

observed that most parents want their children to be admitted to a good school and get a good education, ensuring fluency in speaking and writing. My participants chose the school because it was an outstanding English medium public school in Kathmandu. Hoping the same other students get enrolled in the school.

Bourdieu (1991, p.171) defines symbolic power as the ability and strength to create and recreate reality. Language serves more than just a means of communication. It has symbolic power in social, political, cultural, and academic contexts. In a similar vein, Kramsch (2020) asserts that Language is a power for symbolic action, symbolic representation, and symbolic reality creation. At present, the power of English is so aggressive that it has penetrated the lives and cultures of people who do not possess it globally (Poudel,2021).

Yes, Nisha's clarification of choosing the English medium public school was right that there must be a better English medium institution to learn English. English is an international language; without it, getting admitted to better colleges for higher studies has been difficult. English medium instruction has developed access to higher education (Sah and Li, 2018).

English is regarded as a prestigious language in Nepal as well. Giri (2015) mentions that only schools with EMI settings can be the best platforms where learners can improve their English. The majority of people have placed a higher priority on English language learning. As a result, private English medium schools have been opened everywhere like mushrooms (Phyak,2016) which compelled public schools of Nepal to carry out their teaching-learning activities in EMI.

To some extent, Nisha seemed happy to have enrolled herself in the reputed English medium school in Kathmandu, where she was hopeful to learn better English and become competent in English so that she could get opportunities to get admitted

to nationally and internationally reputed colleges in Nepal and abroad as well for higher education in future. According to Sah (2022), EMI has been a strategy to convince parents and students that EMI will provide a quality education so they can be competent in national and international markets.

Cummins's idea of CALP (1996) as a linguistic capital implies that learning engagement through the first language background boosts academic abilities. Learners with a sound linguistic background can efficiently learn the content subjects. In this perspective, the mother tongue can be the best CALP basis to learn the contents. On the other hand, EMI becomes an obstruction to the cognitive advantages for the students to enhance their content skills.

Similarly, on the one hand, Nisha seemed content to have been a student of an English medium school where she was getting a better opportunity to learn better English, but on the other hand, she expressed her anxiety and despair that English medium Instruction had been an obstruction to internalize the content subjects like mathematics, science and social studies. Therefore, she anticipated that the learners would need their mother tongue or first language. That makes learning more effective. It is proven that students cannot learn or cannot understand the subject matter taught by the teachers if they are not familiar with the medium of instruction (UNESCO,2016).

Paru's Voice on EMI

Days passed by, but I was not caring about the days. I was fully immersed in my field study. As usual, I was inside class eight and observing the class activities minutely. The science teacher was teaching. She instructed in English. The students in the front rows were jotting down what she was dictating, and the students sitting on the last benches could not follow the teacher, so they were moving their heads hither

and thither so they could note down what the teacher was explaining. And some students were just sitting still without doing anything. The teacher was just explaining her lesson. She was not monitoring the students, whether they were following her or not. One of the students who was not writing was my participant named, Paru. I could not understand why they were not jotting down the teacher's note. I thought they did not have pens to write. I heard the bell ring.

The students were stretching their hands and moving their fingers. One of the students whispered to his friend, '*Lekhda lekhda hat nai dukhyo. Science Class ma lekhne bahek kehi kam nai hudaina.*' - Which means *my hand is aching because I have been writing a lot. There is nothing to do in science class except writing.* Perhaps it was a tiffin break. The students started coming out of the class. I waited for a while, letting students go first. I kept my diary in my bag and started following the students going to the canteen. Tiffin time was only the opportunity to meet my participants and jot down their perception on EMI.

Paru, one of my participants, had already agreed to meet me in the canteen. I had ordered a cup of milk tea for myself and a plate of momo for Paru. Paru arrived on time and took her seat near me. Without much ado, I asked her the cause of not jotting down the teacher's note in the science period. She abruptly replied;

She was dictating so fast that I could not jot down her notes. Not only me in the class faced this problem. Most of the students could not follow the Science teacher as she dictated so fast. Sometimes, we requested her to be slow, but she angrily answered that completing the course on time would be difficult. Therefore, we don't write in class but later, we will copy the note from our friends.

I interrupted her and reminded her that other students were following the teacher, but some students, including you, were sitting still without writing. I told her that the reason given by her was suitable to some extent, but it was not fully appropriate. I asked again if there were any more reasons for the inability to write the teacher's note in class. Then she sadly replied;

Science is a very tough subject for me. This school is an English medium school; therefore, teachers teach all subjects in English except Nepali. The vocabularies of science are very difficult to understand, and spellings are not easy to memorize. In fact, I was planning to admit me to a Nepali medium school, but my father forcefully admitted me there because of the school's name and quality. My friends have similar reasons. We all are planning to leave this school next year because we do not understand English medium instruction. If the teachers teach us in Nepali medium, then we may not leave this school. There was Nepali medium instruction in my previous school, and I also used to understand it. Really, sir, I can't do well in the exam this time too. In the first term exam, I could not do well in science. Now we have District level Examination from the first week of April. I am really in trouble.

Meaning Making: Paru's Perception on EMI

My wristwatch showed 6. pm. I was sitting on my chair and sipping a cup of hot coffee. The weather was favourable for sipping coffee as it was 3 December 2021. Winter season had already gripped Kathmandu valley. I put on warm jacket and trousers. It had been my routine of categorizing, organizing, thematizing and recording the information gained from everyday observations and conversations.

I recalled my meeting with Paru and her each expression on English medium instruction. I was thinking about how I could analyze and interpret the perception of

Paru on EMI and its challenges in the Science class. I was observing the science class and the students' gloomy faces. I witnessed how the students reacted to the pathetic condition of the science class created by EMI.

In fact, Science class in the EMI setting had not addressed the need of the students. According to the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), a teacher should understand the learners' needs and has to create a conducive environment where learners feel secure and free to interact with each other to grow, but contrary to Vygotskian sociocultural theory, EMI setting seemed unsafe and threatened for the learners like Paru.

Paru's perception of EMI and my observation were enough to realize the reality that EMI has been a challenge to students who are from Nepali Medium backgrounds. According to Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2007), students with less command of English medium instruction face difficulties comprehending their teachers' lectures, leading them to water down the subject content. My observation of the science class of grade eight was transparent that EMI had been a nuisance to many students, including Paru, who was on the verge of leaving the school. Many studies have shown that Children learn better through their mother tongues or through their most familiar languages. Therefore, during the first few years of school, all subjects should be taught to children in their native language or in a language they are familiar with (Tsui and Tollefson, 2004).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I focused on how I used an ethnographic interpretation to evaluate and analyze the data. to answer my first research question, 'How do students' perceive EMI?' I have analyzed and interpreted the eighth-grade students' perception of EMI in the school in Nepal. I combined my ethnographic field works with EMI

practices and students' perception on it by connecting specifically Bourdieu's language as symbolic power, linguistic, cognitive capital, Cummins' CALP and Vygotskian Socio-cultural theory. From my ethnographic analysis and interpretation, I found that the students had mixed perceptions of EMI. On the one hand, they perceived EMI as a demand and need of the 21st century. They favoured the prestige and value of EMI, but on the other hand, they perceived it as a hurdle or an impediment to their learning. They, directly and indirectly, confessed that EMI had challenged them to comprehend the content subjects. I even sensed that the students were unaware that they were learning English as a language or as a subject.

Men respond well to communication in a language they can understand.

Speaking to him in his own tongue will touch his heart. - Mandela, Nelson

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

I highlighted my ethnographic interpretation and analysis of the information pertaining to my first research question in the preceding chapter, “The Students’ Perception on English Medium Instruction.” I analyzed and interpreted the eighth-grade students’ perception of EMI in the Nepal public school by connecting Vygotskian Socio-cultural theory, Bourdieu’s linguistic, and cognitive capital, and Cummins’s CALP. My ethnographic analysis and interpretation displayed the participants’ mixed perceptions of EMI. They confessed that EMI had challenged them to comprehend the content subjects, including the English course.

This chapter seeks to answer my second research question, “How does EMI affect the student’s academic performance?”. This chapter uses ethnographic accounts to describe, interpret and analyze the participants’ views, feelings and gestures, along with the minute observations in the class. This chapter examines how EMI has affected students' academic performance and their learning activities in their classes and homes guided by the theoretical framework of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Bourdieu’s linguistic, cognitive capital and Cummins’ CALP.

I had not been to my research site for almost a week because my participants were having their Second Term Examination. I did not have a schedule to visit my research site and meet my research participants. During the day, my participants were at school taking their examinations, and during the morning and evening, they were

busy preparing for their examinations. I had a tight schedule in the morning because I was teaching English at a college. It was not easy to spend my time in the afternoon without any remarkable work except reading research books and writing and proofreading my articles to be published soon. Although I could not meet my participants physically, I thought to meet them virtually just to ask about their examination. But again, I cancelled my plan to meet them virtually because I did not like to disturb them during their examination. I had no option left except to wait for a few more days.

It was 13 December 2021. My watch clicked at 11 a.m. I rushed to my research site excitedly. I got information that the students of my research site were taking their last exam that day. I was familiar with the site and my research participants because of my regular visit there. I decided to observe their classes after their exams. I reached School at 11.30 a.m. The guard at the gate greeted me and welcomed me warmly to the school. I asked him whether the principal was in the office. He nodded his head. I entered the school and went directly to the principal's office.

I noticed the principal sitting on his chair and perhaps writing a notice on an A4-sized paper. I asked his permission to enter. I greeted him and sat on the sofa comfortably. I intended to ask him how he was and how his school's activities were going on. But before I asked him, his voice echoed, asking me, "How are you getting to this school?" "I found the school better than I had expected", I replied. My response made him grin cheerfully. But one sentence from the principal made me a little bit unhappy after five days; the school announced a month of winter vacation. "*Oh my god!*" I took a long breath. "*Again, my research work will take more than one month*", I thought. The principal noticed the grief on my face and said, "*Yagya sir,*

don't worry; after a month, you can get enough time to observe classes and meet your participants. I will cooperate with you, sir." His assurance relieved me, but within four days, I could only observe class Eight twice and meet two participants because I had already scheduled to meet my research supervisor at Kathmandu University.

My Meeting with Ranita at her Rented Flat

The third week of December started, and the everyday life of Kathmandu began to be affected by the dip in minimum temperature. Kathmandu was bracing for a cold wave. And this was just the beginning. The most punishing month of January for those underprivileged was yet to come in Kathmandu. It was a matter of survival for many. It was time we asked ourselves whether we were prepared enough to deal with this annual hazard

I was fully immersed in my research site. I was not caring about the cold weather of Kathmandu as I only cared about how to collect rich and authentic data for my ethnographic study. I was inside class eight, where a lady teacher was teaching English. I began to minutely observe every moment and gesture of the students, including my participants. My four research participants were all present in the class. It was an English class, and I was observing the class to explore whether she was teaching English as a language or a subject. She was teaching English-like content subjects from the exam point of view rather than practical use as a language. Ahmed (2017) asserts that we should teach English as a language by integrating all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) effectively with fun activities and games so that we can develop students' English communicative skills.

The teacher was only speaking as if she was telling a dull story, and I felt students pretended to listen to their teacher. In fact, she was teaching English as a subject, not as a language. She did not carry out any student-centered activities in the

class. The teacher spoke fast and did not interact with the students. There was no interaction in the class. Frequently I noted my concern about whether my participants could comprehend a teacher speaking so quickly. I asked myself, “If English as an easy course was like this, what would be the condition of content subjects like science and math when taught in an EMI setting?” I watched my participants’ faces and felt pity for them.

I had scheduled to meet Ranita after the observation of her English class. But the English class was in the last period. Therefore, I was waiting for her at the gate so that I could ask some questions at her based on the English class I observed a few minutes ago. It was already 4:15 p.m. The school was over, and a huge crowd of students came out of the school gate. I saw her in the crowd of students. She also saw me at the gate, and we started moving towards Ranita’s rented house, where her father was running a studio.

I was fully prepared to have a talk with Ranita. As Ranita’s rented flat was located very near to school, we reached there in no time. When I reached there, Ranita’s father was busy in the studio, and her mother was there too. As soon as she saw me, she greeted me and welcomed me to her flat happily. She pulled a chair for me and rushed into the curtailed kitchen to make a cup of tea. My presence at Ranita’s flat strengthened my rapport with Ranita and her family. Without much ado, I enquired Ranita how often she asked questions to her English teacher,

Rarely! We never ask questions to our teacher. She sometimes asks us. We are afraid to ask questions to the teachers. Sometimes, she writes the answer on the board, and we copy them.” “In fact, we don’t know what to ask and what not to ask. Our English teacher goes on teaching, and we keep on listening. We always consult our friends and get help from them. Some students in the

first rows occasionally ask questions to the English teacher. But we cannot grasp properly what the teacher tells them. Our friends don't argue with the teacher. There is no discussion with the teachers.

I further asked Ranita how she could write in the exam if she were afraid of asking questions to the teacher. She answered:

We have to depend on our friends. We always ask for our friends' notebooks, and we copy them. Sometimes I try to ask the teacher some questions but feel afraid. The teacher is also not very close to us. She is not friendly as well. But we always expect the teacher to ask us because when she knows that we don't know, she scolds us first and then she gives the note on the whiteboard.

Again, I asked her how she could improve her English and improve her performance in content subjects, and she replied:

I still believe English needs, and an EMI setting can be a solution to improve our English. We need to study content subjects in English because many of my friends in this class and I aim to go to foreign countries for further study, but we are really in a dilemma about what to do and not to do. We cannot decide whether we are unable to grasp the teachers or our teachers are not competent enough to teach us in the EMI settings. Even we are made confused by the different pronunciations of the teachers. Some students in my class cannot even write simple sentences in English. This EMI probably leads to poor academic achievement. Many of my friends may leave the school from the next session.

Meaning Making: Ranita Claims EMI as a Cause of Poor Academic Performance

The watch on my wrist showed 8 p.m. I had just had my dinner. I was sipping hot water as if it was hot coffee. The temperature of Kathmandu was falling. Despite hailing from the Terai region, I could tolerate the winter season of Kathmandu. Perhaps having spent more than a decade in Kathmandu, I was accustomed to the severe winter season. I was well prepared in my room to protect myself from the cold weather. As usual, I was sitting on my chair and moving my eyes to the information and field notes collected from the class observation and in-depth interview sessions with my participants.

I recollected the observation of the English class in grade eight and my conversation with Ranita. I had spent almost thirty-five minutes in the English class of grade eight and sensed the pedagogical procedures of the class. My observation showed that the English teacher faced challenges in engaging children actively. The children were not asking questions to the teacher. Only the students in the first rows seemed to be open up. They asked questions to the teacher. However, the teacher could not respond to them immediately. She could not carry out interactive activities and discussions in class. The students only did the exercises given in the textbook. There was no interaction, debate or discussion between the teacher and the students. As a result, students remained inactive in class.

I even felt that per period thirty-five minutes for English class was too short for the proper engagement of the students in the activity-based teaching techniques. Even the students were unwilling to participate in activities due to their English language incompetence. Students did not take part in discussions and other activities. Carrying out an interactive class was challenging for students with very low linguistic

and conceptual competence levels. The class I observed was transparent that the teacher did not perform well. She was not practical and innovative. It was completely traditional teaching. The students seemed passive receivers, and the teacher seemed an active dictator. She just lectured as if she was teaching at a university. She forgot that she was teaching English to eighth graders in a public school. She had to engage her students actively.

I believe that the teacher must manage active, interactive, dialogic, collaborative and discursive actions and activities. Unless the students get enough time to participate and engage in pair work, the group works, interaction and discussion, they cannot internalize the concept in English. Regarding the effects of English medium instruction, Seel et al. (2015) argue that EMI-loaded classes with many students with low-level English proficiency consume more time. As a result, the students remain inactive listeners devoid of a deeper understanding of the content taught by the teacher in the class, which is totally against the principles of learning.

Through my observation, I found that the English teacher spent much of her time describing and explaining the chapter. Perhaps, she was trying to clarify the concepts to the students. Her lectures seemed to demotivate the students who had no time for interaction. Sometimes, the teacher and the students seated in the front rows appeared to communicate and interact. But it was only for the sake of formality. It was, in fact, a teacher-dominated interaction where the learner's autonomy had no space. The teacher was just lecturing and writing answers on the board so that the students could complete their exercises. Consequently, this sort of teaching-learning activity could not provide time for the student's engagement and participation in communication, discussion, interaction and creation.

Vygotskyan's sociocultural theory (1978) argues that learners create meaning and concept when they engage and participate in discussion, interpretation and communication in social behaviour. It assumes that interaction with other people in society is the foundation of learning. This theory asserts that pair works, group work, discussion and interaction are essential for meaning-making and creation that leads to students' strong academic performance.

Similar to Vygotskyan sociocultural theory, I witnessed the same in the class where the English teacher clarified the concept and gave notes to the students. This provided students with very less time for engagement and participation in pair works, group works, communication, discussion, interaction and creation. In this regard, Kioko (2015) also argues that teachers should not spend much time clarifying the concept and giving notes to the students because it deprives them of discussion interaction, creation and communication. Unless students are given enough time for pair work, group work, discussion and interaction, then the students cannot enhance their English proficiency, and as a result, it leads to poor academic performance of the students.

My Visit to Research Site and Conversation with Kishan

It was February of 2022. I began the second phase of my field visits in the third week of December 2021. I could not continue my fieldwork in the month of January because all the schools and colleges had announced winter vacations. My research participants had gone to their villages to celebrate their vacation. Therefore, I had to wait until February to continue my field visit. I spent a few weeks in Jhapa enjoying myself with my kith and kin. Then I spent two weeks at Kathmandu University, meeting with my colleagues and Professors. I spent a few days in the KU library as well. After being engaged in educational activities at Kathmandu

University, I returned to my research site. Although the intolerable chilling winter of Kathmandu valley was gradually decreasing, mornings were still very cold due to the lack of warm sun rays. Tap water was still freezing cold to the touch. It was really difficult to take a bath without warm water. People in the streets and markets were seen puffing steam through their mouths. A crowd of people was seen in the Mo-Mo house eating hot Mo-Mo and sipping tea and coffee in the cafes of the corner streets.

Winter vacation was almost over. School and college buses began to move in the streets. Students were seen in sweaters and coats. I did not directly visit my research site. At first, I made a call to the principal and then to my participants. It took almost five days to connect with my research participants. Then I notified the principal and the participants that I could meet them in the school so that I could continue class observations and interviews with my participants purposively.

It was the third day of school after a long winter vacation. After being confirmed the presence of the principal, I went to his office directly. He was busy preparing teachers' daily class routines. The door of his office was kept ajar. As soon as I pushed the door to his office, he said, "hello, good morning, Yagya sir." He welcomed me with a sweet smile. He stopped his work and asked me, "How far have you moved ahead with your research work?" He encouraged me to complete my research on time. After a short conversation with the principal, I left his office to continue my fieldwork.

I had already planned to talk with Kishan, one of my participants from Gorkha. He had also assured me to meet in the canteen at 1.30 p.m. The grip of the winter season was still strong. I was sitting on a chair in the canteen and waiting for Kishan. I was in the mood to order a cup of coffee because I was feeling chill in my body. Meanwhile, a voice at the back attracted my attention, "*Good afternoon, Sir*" I

looked back. He was Kishan. I wanted to listen to him seriously about how EMI affected his academic performance. The tiffin break was only 45 minutes, and we had already spent 5 minutes. Therefore, I immediately asked him how EMI had affected him and his academic performance. Kishan replied in a thoughtful tone,

I had not heard about English medium instruction before I came to Kathmandu. I found it a hindrance to making me understand the subject matter taught by the teachers. I happened to understand the subject matter of Nepali subject only. I have found it very difficult to carry out the exercises in all subjects except Nepali. In my previous school, I was habitual in learning science, mathematics, HPE and social studies in Nepali medium instruction. Before I joined this school, my relatives and my neighbouring friends told me that the teachers in this school were better and very talented and could teach us confidently, even in English medium instruction. But I found it different. Even some of my friends in this class tell us that some teachers are not confident in EMI. EMI has been a barrier not only in the teaching-learning activities in my class but also in my home. No member in my home is able to support me in doing my home assignments. I am sure EMI will make me fail the examination. If I do not pass grade Eight, I will not repeat the same class next year; rather, I will join another school where teachers teach in Nepali medium instruction.

I nodded. I kept on listening to him seriously. He paused for a moment and continued.....,

Every day, I spent my time doing nothing except copying notes written by the teachers on the whiteboard and from friends' exercise books. I am getting more help from my friends than my teachers. I have been able to submit my

home assignments with my friends' help. I am, frankly speaking, sir. I don't know what the teachers are teaching us in the class. This EMI has paralyzed me. Therefore, I have not seen any options except leaving this school next year. In fact, EMI has been a nuisance to me. Unless we get a conducive academic environment, we cannot achieve good academic progress.

Meaning Making: Kishan's Views EMI as a Barrier to Academic Progress

In Kathmandu, February is generally warmer than January, but I felt February was as cold as January. It had been difficult for me to tolerate the cold weather of February. It was probably due to my recent visit to Jhapa, where I took a bath in the warmer sun, and my body was still expecting the same warmer sun rays in Kathmandu. Although I was mentally prepared to mingle with my participants and the surroundings pleasantly, I was having difficulty coping with the cold season of Kathmandu. As a permanent resident of Terai, I had been accustomed to warmer weather. Therefore, cold weather had been a matter of sorrow for me. Howsoever, I went to my study room to continue my write-ups. Sitting on my plastic chair, I felt freezing wind hovering around me. Whatsoever, my write-ups took its speed; all I could think of was my meeting Kishan which hovered around my mind.

I recollected my conversation with Kishan. Probably, the administrators and stakeholders of the school where Kishan was studying feeling proud of carrying out teaching-learning activities in the EMI setting, but the truth of EMI, as told by Kishan, was different. Even I had not expected that EMI could be a severe phenomenon against the students' interests. Thus, I analyzed the data, particularly the voice of Kishan, from two perspectives: EMI as a barrier to the learners' academic progress and as a burden for both the teachers and students.

Vygotskian Socio-cultural theory (1978) asserts that teachers and school stakeholders must understand the level of learners and provide an essential environment to enhance their learning potential. The students in a class are different types of learners. Some are proficient in English, and some are weak in English. A teacher needs to explore specific pedagogical techniques to address the problems of all the students. Contrary to this theory of Vygotsky, EMI classes in Nepal public schools follow the principles of learning. According to the Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky (1978), a teacher should understand the learners' needs and has to create a conducive environment where learners feel secure and free to interact with each other to grow but contrary to Vygotskian sociocultural theory, the EMI setting seemed unsafe and threatened for the learners like Kishan. Therefore, students must have a conducive learning environment (Tomnilson & Kalbeish, 1998) for better academic achievement.

From the voice of Kishan, it is clear that he could not fulfil his needs in the class where teaching and learning activities were carried out in the EMI settings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school to create a conducive teaching-learning environment where the needs of the students are addressed, and they feel familiar with what they are learning and attachment. Still, EMI has been against the sentiment of the students like Kishan. Regarding this issue, Bhabha (2005) states that EMI has created a feeling of linguistic detachment that students don't have an affinity with EMI.

Kishan's reaction against EMI had a transparent message to the stakeholders of the schools that EMI has been a burden not only for the students like Kishan but also for teachers. Thus, creating a familiar environment in the class is a must. The students' progress depends on the class enhancing self-respect and motivation.

According to Yahaya et al. (2009), EMI is demotivating students. They are feeling demotivated, unaccepted and disrespected in the EMI environment. Therefore, as expected by Kishan, who was from a Nepali medium background, it has been necessary to implement Nepali medium instruction or learners' first language, which motivates the students to learn. Brock-Utne and Quorro (2002) argue that the learner's first language can be the foundation for meaningful and effective learning that enhances the student's academic progress. Similarly, it has been probed that students' home language as a medium of instruction can deliver quality education, enchaining socio-psychological advantages and sound academic achievement of the students (UNESCO, 2016).

I was completely sunk into my fieldwork. My daily schedule was to observe grade eight and jot down the teaching-learning activities. I did not get even a hint of how time rapidly flew. The freezing gush of January had already dropped down. The cold gush of February was gradually losing its grip and giving way to March's warmth. Though the cold wave of winter had turned into a warm wave, the people in Kathmandu were still wearing light sweaters and windcheaters. Some old aged people were seen in thick Himalayan jackets as well. I had already planned to meet Nisha, one of my research participants.

It was a warm afternoon in March 2022. I was waiting for Nisha at the canteen. The school canteen for me had been like a human resource office where job seekers visit to face interviews because, at the canteen, I had been interviewing my research participants since November 2021. As usual, I was sipping a cup of tea at the canteen and waiting for Nisha to discuss how EMI affects students' academic progress. It was 2 p.m. The tiffin break was about to be over, but Nisha had not arrived yet. Therefore, I went to her class to know why she was unable to meet me at

the canteen. I got information that she had a meeting with the class teacher about collecting fines from students who speak languages other than English.

Nisha asked for an apology for not informing me on time that she had a meeting. Though Tiffin's break was already over, the school authority permitted me to have a conversation with Nisha at the canteen. As soon as Nisha arrived and sat on a chair in front of me, I ordered a glass of milk for her and for me a cup of tea again. Indeed, I was tea addicted. Without much ado, I asked Nisha how EMI affected the student's academic performance. She replied,

English medium instruction has both positive and negative effects on student's academic performance. English is an international language. Most people of the world speak English. It is the lingua franca of the world. We must learn English. English-speaking people have a special status in society. Without English, we can't get enrolled in the better and reputed schools, colleges and universities abroad and even in our country. We don't get visas from foreign countries with good command of English. Because of the high demand for English and its value, I have enrolled myself in this school.

"You are talking about the importance and need of English, but I want to know the effects of EMI on the academic performance of the students, including you, Nisha," I further inquired. "Yes, I am telling you the same thing, sir." she continued.

I have learnt a lot in this school. Nowadays, I can speak English better. Before I joined this school, I could use even two sentences in English. Now, I can write an essay in English. I have learnt plenty of new English technical words from science, social Studies, and mathematics. I had not heard the words such as constituency, constitution, federalism, altitudes, hexagonal, perimeter, or respiration. I can speak English with foreigners as well. Last week, I met an

American at Kalimati. He was asking me the way to Kirtipur. I told him the direction to Kirtipur. He thanked me. Frankly speaking, EMI has made me competent in English. Many of my friends have accepted this reality. Aren't these positive effects of EMI on the academic performance of the students like me, sir?

"Let me say more, sir," She went on.

I secured good grades in many subjects, including science, in the first term examination held in August 2022. Despite having plenty of positive aspects of English Medium Instruction, it also has negative aspects. We have to accept it frankly. Our class becomes silent in all subjects except Nepali subject. Most of the students do not understand English. They cannot ask questions to the teachers. There is much less interaction and discussion in the class. We don't use English while speaking with our friends outside the class. We are not permitted to communicate with our friends in Nepali in class. Even the teachers do not speak English much. They use English while describing and explaining the contents of the subject. But in Nepali, pair, group, and collaborative works occur. We frequently ask questions to the teachers as well. Indeed, most of the students like Nepali subject and Nepali teacher the most. There are many difficult terminologies in science, mathematics and social Studies. Even the teachers can't pronounce these words clearly. Teachers spend their time in clarifying the meaning of these words. Perhaps, our course can't be completed on time. Most of my friends are not able to understand the subject matter of the content subjects. They want these subjects to be taught in both Nepali and English medium instructions. Otherwise, many students will be failed in the coming examinations. We are planning to write a

complaint letter to the principal, but we are afraid to do this, sir. Truly speaking, EMI has many negative effects on student's academic achievements. Therefore, Nepali and English instruction should be used per the need while teaching science, mathematics, social studies, health, and even English language class.

Generating Meaning: Nisha's Voice on the Effects of EMI

The watch on my wrist showed 11 a.m. on 12 March 2022. I did not go to my research site as it was Saturday. After my meal, I sat on my chair. I was sleepy but did not nap because I had my research work to complete on time. I switched my laptop on and started flipping the pages of my diary where I had jotted down Nisha's expressions on the effects of EMI on students' academic progress. My eyes were so busy scanning the notes that I wrote in the diary and on my laptop screen. My fingers were equally busy on the keyboard of my laptop.

I recollected my conversation with Nisha. Her emphasis on the need and importance of English was irrefutable. English is indeed an international language (Crystal, 2003). We cannot ignore the importance of English. It is a lingua franca (Phillipson, 1992). English has been regarded as a very important ornament for everyone, especially in Asian countries. The people who speak English have a special status in Nepalese society. It has been a very important linguistic capital, a language of prestige and power (Bourdieu, 1986).

Many Asian countries have used English as the language of instruction in academic institutions where the first language is not English. In Asian countries, EMI has been defined as the use of the English language to teach content subjects where most people do not speak English as their first language (Macaro et al., 2018). EMI has been accepted as a preferred medium of instruction, and we believe that students

get more opportunities to learn English in an EMI setting school. In recent days in Nepal, many schools have started adopting EMI because economically poor children have opportunities to learn English at cheaper fees and cannot afford the expensive fees of private English medium schools.

English medium education has been very popular in Nepal. EMI, specifically in public schools, has developed into a new language market (Rubagumya, 2010). The people involved in education have adopted English as a cultural capital for greater possibilities and affluent social standing. As a result, EMI in the classroom has influenced common discourse about linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Many guardians and the parents of the students, expressing their dissatisfaction, blame the students of schools are not able to speak English even after completing the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). Phyak (2016) mentions that the SEE result of privately run English medium boarding schools is always high, whereas the SEE result of Nepali medium public schools is very poor. As a result, many public schools now provide EMI as their primary form of education, citing the community's necessity, desire and demand.

English medium instruction, despite having its popularity, demand and better status in Nepalese communities, the expression of Nisha regarding the effects brought by EMI on the academic performance of the students cannot be neglected. We cannot ignore that EMI, on the one hand, to some extent, has improved the English proficiency of the students (Setyowati, 2019) in the school, but on the other hand, it has been a burden for both the students and the teachers.

Language as a medium of instruction plays a very important role in students' cognitive development. Bourdieu (1986) views language as the cognitive and social knowledge that is directly linked to the students' instruction and learning. Reflecting

on my minute observation of the science and social studies class of grade eight, I found that the teachers of these content subjects had encountered innumerable challenges in providing content in English, and the students were not motivated toward teachers. I found more severe conditions in mathematics class.

When I recalled the expression of Nisha and matched my ethnographic observation of the class of content subjects, I found the severe challenges EMI brought to the student's academic performance. Unless both the teachers and the students are competent enough in the English language proficiency, neither the teachers deliver their lessons perfectly for the students nor the students understand the concepts and contents of the lessons. The difficulties EMI poses in schools raise a question of how students would learn if they were unable to comprehend the teachers' instructions (UNESCO, 2016). Similarly, we could ask teachers how they would clarify the concepts of the content subjects to the students in English if they were not proficient enough in English. Consequently, a question can be raised against EMI, 'Does EMI have a positive impact on the academic achievement of the students of the schools of Nepal?'

My Conversation with Paru

I spent almost six months in the research field. My field observation and conversation, marked from the perception of the students on EMI to its effects on the students' academic performance, were not made possible unless the selfless cooperation and motivation from the respected principal and the teachers of my research sight. Throughout my field visit and conversation with my participants, I always kept my mind inquisitive, investigative and active. I was never satisfied with the knowledge and information that I obtained from my participants. I felt as if I was

delved and drowned deep in the issue of EMI and its overall impacts on the academic performance of grade eight students.

It was 16 March 2022. Time was flying rapidly in its motion. My research work was also moving ahead steadily at a tortoise's pace. The cold gush of the winter season had already loosened its grip as it was defeated by the spring season of Kathmandu. Along with the end of the winter season, my stay at the research site was also coming to an end. The annual examination of all grades was also knocking on the doors of the students, teachers and school administrators. The scene of the hustle and bustle in and out of school's premises, the students scampering and hurrying for coaching classes, collecting notes and preparing for the examination, teachers scurrying to complete their course, and preparing questions for the coming final examination made a picturesque day image in my mind.

I had already made a schedule to meet Paru at the school canteen, the usual place where I could listen, jot down and record her version of EMI and its effects on the students' academic performance. Paru arrived at 1.45 p.m. and had a seat in front of me on a bench. When I interviewed Paru in December, the shivering cold of winter might have made her reluctant to express her feelings on EMI. However, having spent more than six months in my research field, I had established amity with my participants and when the month was March, which I felt was the most pleasing month of the summer, especially in Kathmandu, as it was neither scorching hot of July and August nor the freezing cold of December/January. Though the day was perfect for me, I felt a little bit hot. As soon as Paru had her seat, I asked her what effects EMI had on her academic achievement then.

Four months ago, when I asked about her perception on EMI, she told me that she was facing difficulties in understanding the contents and concepts explained in

English medium instruction as she had studied up to grade seven in a Nepali medium school. Like her previous utterance, she gave a slight asymmetric smile and shared her feelings.

You have observed our class many times, haven't you?" oratorically, she replied. You have read our faces; you have studied our feelings and expressions. Perhaps, you know our academic condition better than others. In my previous meeting with you, I told you that I was from a Nepali medium school and could not grasp the contents and concepts explained in English medium instruction, and now I have the same condition. There is no change, sir.

Yes, she was right, perhaps. I remembered every sentence that she had expressed to me four months ago. She had enrolled herself in the English medium school not because of her interest but because of her father's interest. I was attentively listening to what she was saying. She continued.

Since joining this school, I have not clearly understood most science, social studies, health and physical education lessons. In the second term Exam, I failed these three subjects as well. The teachers of these subjects probably face difficulties in making students understand. These teachers perhaps know the contents but cannot explain us in English. Even the teachers are not proficient in English. Most of my friends say this. We have requested our math teacher to instruct us in Nepali medium. He uses the Nepali language as well. But he always does not instruct us in Nepali because our school management committee has given written orders to the teachers to use English as a medium of instruction. We have a little relief in math class. I know our teachers can teach us very nicely if they are allowed to instruct us in the Nepali language.

Our math teacher lives near my room. He is my uncle as well. A few days ago, he visited my room to enquire about my exam preparation. He even solved my two math problems. He instructed me in Nepali Languages. I understood so clearly. Even our teachers have confessed that wise use of Nepali language as a medium of instruction is very beneficial to make the students understand the concept and contents of the lessons. It's okay for us to teach English in English medium instruction, but it is not appropriate to teach health, social studies and science in an EMI setting. These subjects are practically related to our day-to-day life. That's why teachers should use Nepali medium instruction or the first language of the children while teaching these subjects. Then only we can do well in the examinations. Otherwise, we will be academically paralyzed due to English medium instruction.'

Recalling My Meeting with Paru and Meaning Making

I could not realize how quickly I completed six months of my field study. I was completely drowned in the research work; sometimes I even forgot to take my lunch. Frankly speaking, I never felt hungry during my field study. I never went to my kitchen without a recurring call from my better half. She was worried about my health. But I had not felt any symptoms of illness. I was only thinking about how to accomplish my write-up as the deadline was troubling me.

It was the last week of March 2022. I was in my room. I gave a gaze on my wristwatch. It showed 5 p.m. Though Kathmandu's temperature was gradually rising, I was still feeling chill in my room. My wife was busy in the kitchen, and I was busy transcribing the recordings, categorizing and organizing the themes, and thematizing the information and field notes gained from the observation of the classes and conversations from the research participants, respectively.

My experience as an English teacher in both private and schools has taught me that both teaching and learning processes are complex and systematic, and unless teachers follow proper steps systematically, then the learners will not be able to grasp the concepts and information given to them because the learners are of different cognitive levels. In this regard, Hoeven (2007) asserts that it is a crucial role of a teacher to plan for the systematic teaching-learning process. As teaching and learning are complex processes, a teacher needs to plan systematically to address the needs of the students.

Some learners quickly understand the lessons' concepts and contents, and others may not. Some learners are good at the Nepali language, and some are good in English. Here in this context, I want to connect Vygotskyan's socio-cultural theory (1978) that the learners have their own instinct abilities or cognitive capacities to receive information or knowledge depending on the culture where they are brought up. Every society always equips children with some skills and tools for receiving and internalizing the knowledge given and shared by teachers in schools. Similarly, Ankrum (2008) asserts that children come to schools with various ranges of learning abilities and experiences. The children coming from Nepali medium school backgrounds feel challenged to adopt English medium instruction, and the students from English medium backgrounds feel challenged in Nepali medium schools. To be more specific, the learners' cultural background plays a vital role in their learning.

Recollecting expression of Paru that she had not clearly understood the concepts and contents of Science, Social studies and Health and Education since she joined the English medium school. She even failed in these subjects as well. Her expression and poor academic achievement clearly indicate that EMI has demotivated and obstructed her learning. She was not psychologically prepared to learn in that

particular English medium school which could not enhance her academic achievement. In this regard, we can remember Fernell and Ek (2010), who said that students who are not psychologically prepared to learn in a particular environment could not achieve success academically.

When I retrospect the story of Paru that she was from a Nepali medium school background, and she preferred Nepali medium instruction because it was cognitively more beneficial to her. Paru frankly said not only the students of her class but also the teachers confessed that the wise use of Nepali medium instruction could benefit the students to understand the concepts and contents of the lessons. Bourdieu (1986) argues that language as a cognitive-social knowledge and a cultural capital works as a medium of exchanging and transforming cognitive knowledge, skills and information. Language plays a key role in developing cognitive capital in learners. There is a close tie-up between language and education (Kobepa, 2016). Therefore, the children instructed in their first language benefit cognitively more than the language unfamiliar to them. In this connection, EMI for Paru and other students in her class can be an uncomfortable and unfamiliar element leading to poor academic performance of the students.

My prolonged observations of class Eight and in-depth interviews with my participants have led me to conclude that students like Paru are facing many challenges in EMI-implemented schools. Here, I want to connect with Cummins (1996), who asserts that language provides a stimulus or strength for cognitive development in students. According to Cummins, there are two types of competencies; the first is surface competence, called Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS), related to social functions of language, and the second is academic-related language competence, called Cognitive Academic Language

Proficiency (CALP), interconnected to the linguistic resources and capital essential for various cognitive skills, knowledge and strategies for academic achievements of the students (Cummins, 1996; cited in Lillywhite, 2011). The concept of CALP as a linguistic capital signifies that teaching-learning activities carried out through the learners' first language enhance academic capabilities and strengths for the higher academic performance of the students.

EMI is believed to fulfil the parents' needs and demands and helps their children develop English proficiency, which is essential for quality education to become more competitive in future educational and professional endeavors. It is also assumed that EMI gives more exposure to the English language and increases motivation to study English because of its international significance and career opportunities. EMI prepares students to become active global citizens, spread their own cultures abroad, and more easily tap into foreign sources of knowledge, skills, and technologies (Wachter and Maiworm, 2008).

The data shows that forty percent of the total children of the world do not have access to education in their mother tongue or a language they understand (UNESCO, 2016). On the one hand, we cannot ignore the need and importance of English, but on the other hand, we cannot go against the fundamental human rights that all children should have linguistic rights to receive education in their mother tongues (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). Therefore, it is a must to use Nepali or the first language of the children as a medium of instruction to address the students like Paru, who have been the victim of EMI and are in the verge of dropping out of school because of poor academic achievement in the schools.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I foregrounded my ethnographic interpretation and analysis of the data related to my second research question, “How does EMI affect the student’s academic performance.” Here in this chapter, I have analyzed and interpreted the eighth-grade students’ pathos and bathos in connection to EMI and its effects on their academic performance. I combined my ethnographic field works with EMI practices and their effects on their academic achievement by connecting specifically Vygotskian socio-cultural theory, Bourdieu’s linguistic, cognitive capital and Cummins’s BICS and CALP as linguistic capital. From my ethnographic analysis and interpretation, I sensed that the students did not perceive EMI as it was believed to be the cognitive capital and essential access to quality education and career opportunities. Although they accepted EMI as an essential tool to enhance their English proficiency, they also perceived EMI as a challenge, a barrier and an obstruction in their academic performance. They demanded the wise use of both English and Nepali language as a medium of instruction in their class so that they could enhance their English competency and academic performance simultaneously.

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION, AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter presents the journey of research I went through, from the germination of the problem statement to the conclusion. In this concluding chapter, I outline the key insights and draw a conclusion based on the discussion and insights. Finally, I reflect on the issues of EMI that emerged in my mind and the personal and psychological obstruction I encountered from the beginning to the culmination of this research journey.

Key Insights

The study primarily excavated a thorough knowledge and understanding of English medium instruction and its effects on the student's academic performances in public schools. Public schools in Nepal shift to EMI because of two reasons. On the one hand, every student needs the English language for further study and career opportunities in the present era of science and technology. On the other hand, public schools shift EMI because of parents' pressure that many parents cannot afford expensive private English medium schools. I selected four eighth-grade students from a public school as my research participants. In fact, my research participants did not know the in-depth reasons for public schools shifting to EMI. They only knew that English was an international language as it was the need of time which could provide them with opportunities for further studies and career building.

Through in-depth interview sessions and prolonged engagement with my participants' real world, I explored my participants' perceptions of English medium instruction in public schools and the effects created due to EMI practices on their

academic achievement. Through the prolonged involvement with the participants' natural world, I listened to their stories, observed their gestures, realized their feelings and perceptions and observed their activities minutely. These activities enabled me to get insights into EMI practices. I had two research questions: (1) "How do the students perceive EMI? And (2) how does EMI affect students' academic performance?" I explored students' mixed perceptions on EMI through these two research questions. Every participant accepted the importance and need for English. They understand English medium instruction enhances their English language competence and enables them to connect with people from other parts of the world. My research participants understand English as a language of power, prestige, preference and privilege. They realize that English could be the key to opening the gate for an individual's personal and professional development. They perceive English empowers them with career and higher education opportunities worldwide.

On the other hand, my participants expressed their anxiety and despair that English medium instruction had hindered understanding content subjects like mathematics, science and social studies. They expected the need for the mother tongue or first language to make the teaching-learning activities more meaningful and effective. The children coming from Nepali medium school backgrounds felt it was challenging to adopt English medium instruction.

Through the minute observation of the class, I found that the students had not clearly understood the concepts and contents of science, social studies and health education since they enrolled in the English medium school. My participants confessed that EMI had demotivated and obstructed their learning. Most students were not psychologically prepared to learn in that particular English medium public school which could not enhance their academic achievement. Thus, I conclude that

most students preferred Nepali medium instruction instead of EMI. They frankly expressed that EMI was an uncomfortable and unfamiliar element leading to poor academic performance.

Conclusion

The English language is not just a means of communication; but a language of power, prestige, preference and privilege. The English language is instrumental in creating career and higher education opportunities. It enhances academic knowledge through different resources. EMI is a need and demand of every student and teacher to uplift their socio-economic status. The shifting of English medium instruction in public schools is growing tremendously, making students competent educationally and economically in Nepal. The study reveals that English as a prominent language has created space to access educational resources. The English language has received tremendous support in education and helped students access adequate communication and information technology knowledge. After implementing the EMI practices in public schools, the student enrollment rate has increased. EMI practice has enhanced the student's English language proficiency at the school level and paved comfortable access to university education. Indeed, EMI policy has become a milestone for the future.

They reveal that EMI in Public schools is important to compete with international students. It has provided access to English education to students who cannot afford expensive English medium private schools. Although EMI has been synonymous with quality education, it has created inequalities and divides between the students who possess English and who do not.

On the other hand, this study reveals that English as a medium of instruction has been a barrier to the student's academic performances. In fact, EMI has been a

burden to the teachers teaching all subjects in English without proper preparation and planning. Due to English medium instruction, teachers in public schools are in tension in addressing students' needs, interests, and learning abilities. EMI has compelled the teachers to spend maximum time explaining content rather than engaging students in different pair and group works. It has focused on rote learning rather than enhancing students' creativity. As per the Vygotskian sociocultural theory, pair works, group works, collaborative works, interaction, debates, discussion question-answers, creation, and communication enhance students' academic performance. Instead, EMI has restricted students from being interactive, dialogic, creative and innovative. EMI has restricted and limited the students' learning opportunities. Unless students get enough time for pair work, the group works, discussion and interaction then, the students cannot enhance their English proficiency, and as a result, it leads to poor academic performance of the students.

The study reflects that the school with EMI practice has been notorious for producing categories, inequalities and discrimination among students of various economic statuses and ethnicities. Therefore, following Bourdieu's concept of language as a cognitive capital and Cummins' CALP specifically for basic-level students, I argue that carrying out teaching-learning activities in the children's first language creates a conducive environment to boost students' academic performance cognitively.

Retrospecting my Journey of Writing Dissertation

It was 21 June 2019. My M.Phil. first-semester course at Kathmandu University was going to be over. My professor, who was teaching us Research Methods, assigned us to write a research proposal on any educational issue we felt comfortable with so that it would be easy for us to write a dissertation to pursue M.

Phil. Degree. I decided to work on EMI for my M Phil dissertation because it haunted me for a long time. The professor gave us seven days to submit the assignment.

Despite lacking appropriate research proposal ideas, I submitted my assignment on 26 June 2019. The next day, the professor wrote to me, *Dear Yagya, Sir, let's meet and discuss your research proposal tomorrow at one p.m. There are many things I could not write here.*

The next day, on 28 June, at one p.m., I met my professor at his office. Though I was a bit curious and excited with a sort of fear, my mind was full of questions and curiosity to pour into him. At one p.m., I entered his office. He was waiting for me with plenty of comments on my research proposal. He provided me with a lot of ideas and techniques for writing a research proposal. Frankly speaking, I understood I was really poor in academic writing, particularly writing a research proposal and article. I thanked him for his valuable comments. I promised him to work hard and left his office.

M.Phil. first-semester course was almost over. The end-semester examination was scheduled for July. My professor, who mentored us with the research method, would give us a final grade. For that, he assigned us to write a research proposal on the issue we were working on or on any other issues we preferred to write about. The deadline to submit the proposal was 16 July 2019, and the proposal PowerPoint presentation was scheduled for 17 and 19 July 2019. I worked hard, consulting my friends on writing a research proposal. I downloaded plenty of research papers and read them minutely. After spending ten days at the University library, I completed writing my research proposal. I submitted it to the professor on 16 July 2019. According to the schedule, I was going to present my proposal on EMI on 18 July 2019.

It was three p.m. on 18 July 2019. Though we had regular M.Phil. classes in the evenings, my professor called earlier so that all regular ELE group students could present their PowerPoint slides on time. All my colleagues were ready with their proposal PowerPoint slides and waiting for their turn. We had to finish presenting our proposal slides within fifteen minutes and ten minutes to address the professor's and friends' comments. Before I presented my proposal, my three friends presented their PowerPoint slides. I felt their presentations were perfect, but when they got harsh comments and criticism from the professor, I was alarmed that my proposal presentation would not be good enough. Then I presented my proposal. I also got severe comments from the professor. Even my colleagues gave me a lot of feedback on my proposals. The comments and feedback given by my professor and colleagues did not hurt me but encouraged me a lot and made me strong enough in academic writing. Then I learnt and improved significantly in the second and third semesters, respectively. Those all efforts, the ups and downs of my M.Phil. journey, resulting in this document.

Although my curiosity to conduct research on EMI became so aggressive immediately after I started my M.Phil. journey at Kathmandu University, the seed of EMI germinated when I started teaching English at Malekhu, Dhading. When I began teaching English in an English medium private school at Malekhu, I felt and witnessed the pathos and bathos of the students about EMI and its effects on their academic performance. There at Malekhu, I visited some private English medium and public schools. I met the principals, teachers and members of the management committees of those schools. I enquired them about the reasons for opening English medium schools. They replied that opening English medium schools required time and parents' demands. I even observed the classes of those private English medium

schools and found the teachers inexperienced and inefficient in carrying out English medium classes. Even the students of those schools were poor in the English language. In Dhading, I also worked in a public school. The public school was a Nepali medium school. Except for compulsory English, they taught all subjects in Nepali medium. More students from the Chepang community, a marginalized and endangered community primarily residing in Dhading, Chitawan and Makawanpur districts in Nepal, were poor both in English and Nepali languages than the students of other communities. Every day in the evening before I went to bed, I recalled the stories of the students and teaching-learning activities of my school. I even recalled the stories of the private school where I taught a few months ago. I compared and analyzed the stories and teaching-learning activities of English medium private schools and public schools in Dhading.

I found the perception of the students and teachers on EMI almost the same. Although the private English medium schools in Dhading used English medium books, all the teachers mostly used the Nepali language. Code-switching was common. Most of the students were not spontaneously motivated to English medium instruction. Due to their parents' pressure and the hues and cries of the English language, the students were compelled to enrol in the so-called English medium schools in Dhading. Indeed, the teachers and students carried out all the teaching and learning activities in Nepali. Only the script was in English. Although I was one of the best English teachers in Dhading, I mostly followed code-switching while teaching English. In fact, the poor language efficiency of the students compelled me to code-switching. Then, I began contemplating the issues of EMI. At last, all these stories, events and experiences evolved the idea for this research. Therefore, I started to

explore EMI issues to understand students' perceptions and their effects on their academic performance.

I formulated two research questions. To analyze the field information, I employed Bourdieu's concept of language as symbolic power, language as a cognitive capital, Cummins' CALP and Vygotskyan sociocultural theory. Similarly, I reviewed the relevant literature in different sections, including the thematic, policy, and empirical literature reviews. The thematic and empirical review provided me with a vivid direction on the issue of EMI. I employed ethnography as my research method. Based on my research objectives, I recorded and jotted down their pathos and bathos physically and virtually. First, I listened to their perception, experiences, feelings and gestures on EMI, observed every activity minutely and then transcribed and generated themes and sub-themes accordingly. Similarly, I searched and researched the relevant literature to connect with the themes that emerged from the ethnographic data.

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APPENDIX

Some transcribed sample questions asked to the participants during interview sessions and their responses

Me: Hello, Good morning

P1: Good morning, sir.

Me: Why have you chosen this school?

Me: My Baba and Mamu enrolled me in this school because they said it is an excellent English medium government school.

Me: Can you tell me some good features of this school?

P1: It is one of Kathmandu's best English medium government schools. The school's fee is affordable.

Me: Have you chosen this school because of EMI or for any different reason?

P1: Because of English medium instruction and its good SEE result.

Me: Is EMI always appropriate in all subjects?

P1: EMI creates difficulties in understanding the content and concepts of social studies and Science.

Me: How important is the English language?

P2: English is a must in the 21st Century.

Me: Why were you looking out of the window in which the teacher was teaching social studies?

P3: She was teaching social studies in English. I'm very poor at English.

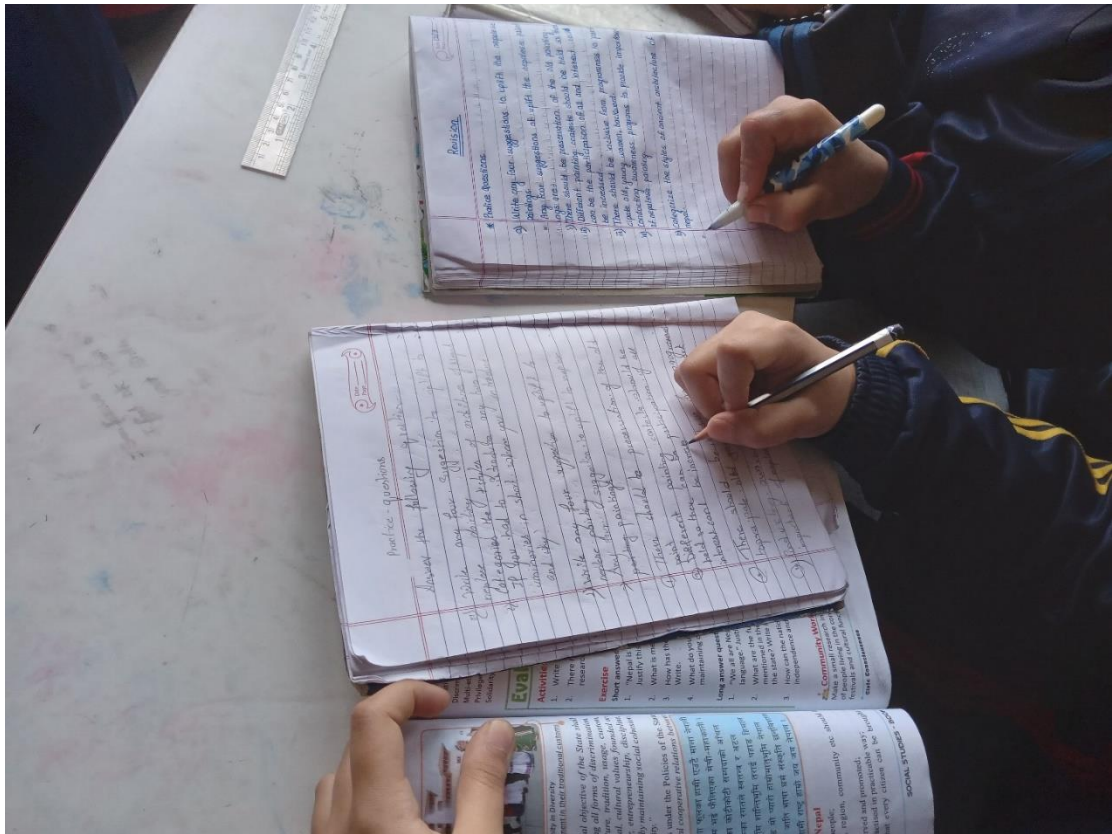


Fig. 1: Participants are doing exercises in social studies class.