



English as a Medium of Instruction in Community School: Boon or Bane, a Case Study of Nepal

Ramesh Prasad Adhikary

Assistant Professor, Tribhuvan University
M. M. Campus, Nepalgunj, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Ramesh Prasad Adhikary
Email: rameshadhikary29@gmail.com



Article Info

Article history:

Received 20 April 2020
Received in revised form 28
April 2020
Accepted 2 May 2020

Keywords:

Instruction
Medium
Community School
Mother-tongue

Abstract

The main aim of this research paper is focused on the present debatable issue of Nepalese academia whether the use of English as a medium of instruction in community school is judicious or not. In this research, both the primary and secondary data are used to complete this research. The data are gathered through the questionnaire and interview. For the Primary sources of data twenty-five teachers were selected from the community schools by using purposive sampling procedure. From this study, it is justified that the use of English as a medium of instruction in community schools is beneficial. The use of English helps the progress of the students rather it hampers in their learning activities. The social assumption of Nepalese people that English as medium of instruction as in the private boarding school could make the student excellent has been proved correct. The government should provide all training, courses and infrastructure for the community school for instruction in English medium.

Introduction

Nowadays, in Nepal, many communities' schools and people are demanding to teach their students in English medium rather than in Nepali Medium though it is their mother tongue. They think English medium instruction is the best teaching method and it will make the students excellent in learning. The private boarding schools are imposing English medium of instruction in Nepal and they think English makes their children's personality better. Therefore, this researcher has tried to understand the attitudes of teachers towards this issue. In Nepal, there is the vast gap in terms of exam result between community based school and private English medium school; as people determine it from the annual SEE result in Nepal.

As we know instruction means the act, practice, or profession of teaching. Instruction can be defined as the methods for preparing, evaluating, and justifying teaching activities in each content area for students. Instruction is also understood as the selection of teaching and learning strategies (Jones, 1987; Duschl & Gitomer, 1991). Instruction is the strategy for motivating and encouraging student success (Harlan & Rowland, 2002).

Penny (1996) states "instruction is the interaction between a teaching agent and one or more individuals intending to learn knowledge that is appropriate for students to learn." So also, Phillipson (2007) defines it as "the action context within which formal teaching and learning behaviors take place".

As an international language to interact with each other across international boundaries, English is established as lingua franca. Colonization of British Empire had created the shape of the present world related to this metropolitan language. Many nations use English as their native language, and they speak English or use English in official work in collaboration with their native language. Due to the concept of global market and majority of developed countries are European countries which have English as their native language, if the rest of the world has to deal with these powerful countries and then it is in their interest to adopt the English language. Keeping this in mind one can say that knowing English brings not only national opportunities to the door step but also opens new avenues on the international front. In fact, it is easy to say that a person of having well knowledge in English is more likely to get selected in an interview for a job.

Use of English as Medium of Instruction

English is taken as a foreign language for the speakers of Nepali. It has been taught as a school subject. People think the purpose of English in Nepal is to give students a foreign language competence for communication to the foreigners and to understand the world.

But now, English has taken a new tool in the higher education of Nepal. Private schools and universities have begun offering several courses in English. But, state-owned schools and colleges deliver education in Nepali language, which is also the mother tongue of more than 80% of Nepalese people. The culture of sending children to English medium schools and colleges has begun as English mania today in Nepal. Because of it, students who read in Community schools are decreased and students in private English medium schools are increased. For that reason, some of the Community schools are nowadays started their instruction in English medium. The government policy is silent in this case. The government does not tell anything to its schools. But some of the schools are closed because of the lack of students. Though Community schools are run but they have very few amounts of students mainly from the poor family background. Mostly this happens in urban area. In the private schools and colleges today, Nepali is taught as a subject.

The English speaking countries adopted English for instruction as their mother tongue. But, those countries which take English as a second language for are norm-developing countries. In those countries, English is used as a second language as well as official language. English has great importance there in society too. Their medium of instruction is also generally in English along with their mother tongue from school level to university level. Those countries that use English language as a foreign language are called norm-dependent countries. Here, the English language has no official status. The countries like Nepal, Japan, China, etc. take English as a foreign language. In those countries instruction is run in their mother tongue and it is taught as a foreign language.

Now, those countries who adopt English as a foreign language also started instruction in English medium. In norm-developing countries like India, Nigeria, etc. English was developed in colonized period. These countries were colonized by English because of this reason they developed much in English. Because of such global spread of English language, different English varieties have emerged e.g. Nenglish, Hinglish, Japanglish, chinglish, etc.

In Nepal also English is used as an instruction mostly in private schools and colleges. These private sectors attract the flow of students because of their English medium. If government will not think and take the decision in time after sometimes the Community schools and universities will be closed and there will be monopoly for private sector. Or, the government will compel to give authority to private sector for education like the road transport.

So, some community schools and government aided universities are started their instruction in English to face the challenges with private sector. This is the current need as well. But the

issue is how they are running and what kind of result they will give is the matter of concern. For that reason, this research tries to address the issues in this research paper.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to find out teachers' perception towards using English as a medium of instruction in Community Schools.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant as it tries to find out the merits and demerits of using English as a medium of instruction in such types of Community schools. It also aims to find out changes in teaching- learning situation, progress of students and attitudes of teachers towards it, this study will be useful to all the people who are in the field of language teaching and learning, the school management committee, Headmasters, teachers and learners as well as the policy makers.

Review of Related Literature

Some researchers have tried their best to study on this field. These research works have focused on importance of English and benefits of English in the context of Nepal. The review of these research works has been presented as follows:-

Shrestha (1991) has said that medium of instruction plays vital role in learning language. Since it is very difficult and complicated to teach foreign language to the learners, it is necessary to provide appropriate method as well as medium of instruction. There is no single medium of instruction appropriate for teaching all the language aspects and skills.

Bhandari (2000) in thesis has concluded that the students taught through Nepali medium, performed nearly double than the students taught- through English medium. He further states that teaching English preposition through Nepali medium is far better than teaching through English medium and also suggests the teacher to- teach English prepositions through Nepali medium.

Khanal (2004) conducted an M. Ed thesis and states that the English teachers frequently use Nepali to explain something, to give instruction and to suggest the students. The Teachers of rural areas use more Nepali than the teachers teaching in urban areas. She concluded that moderate and judicial use of the learners' mother tongue facilitates the learning and teaching of the target language bur if we use mother tongue excessively in the English classroom, it hinders or creates obstacle in learning target language.

The above studies have left the issue of English instruction regarding the assumptions of teachers who are involved into teaching in Community school. So, the research is focused on the issue which is now considered as a burning one in the context of Nepal.

Methods

For this research, the researcher has used the following methods:

Sources of Data

The primary and secondary sources were used to collect the data. The primary data of this study was collected from the teachers of five Community schools of Banke district, Nepalgunj, Nepal. As secondary sources, journals, reports, articles, research studies, internet etc are used in it.

Sampling Procedure

In this research, the researcher purposively selected Narayan Secondary School, Saraswati Secondary School, and Dhambojhi secondary School, Yuddha Secondary School, and Mangal Prasad Secondary School of Banke district, Nepalgunj district as my study area. In the same way,

all the teachers of primary lower secondary and secondary levels were selected. They were altogether 25 in number. I had used purposive sampling procedure there.

Tools for Data collection

A questionnaire prepared for teachers was major tool for data collection. Beside this, the interview was also used as a major tool. A set of questionnaire which had 10 questions was prepared for data collection. The questionnaire included the following:

Limitations of the study

This study was limited to only five Community schools of Banke district, Nepalgunj, Nepal and it was limited to only 25 teachers of five Community schools.

Results and Discussion

To find out the teachers' perception towards using English as a medium of instruction in community schools of Nepalgunj, the data were collected from the teachers of five community based school which were Nepali Medium School. The attitudes, views and perceptions of teachers are tabulated and analyzed from various angles and perspectives.

Many of the teachers involved in this research as informants of this school, they started English medium for improving Students performance in English, learning achievement, and to fulfill the desire of parents and students. But to analyze all, the following results can be seen as below:

Percentages of the Teachers Perceptions

The perceptions of teachers have been tabulated under the following sub headings:

Teachers Experiences in Teaching Field

More than 10 years	5 years	3 years	Newly appointed
15%	45%	25%	15%

The table shows that out of total teachers (25) selected 15% have the experience of teaching for more than 10 years, 45% have 5 years, 25% three years and 15 % newly appointed teachers.. This shows that majority of the teachers (60%) have spent their active time of life in the career of teaching.

Teachers' opinion Towards English Medium

Positive	Negative
90%	10%

The teachers who are positive towards English medium they think English is the global and internationally recognized language and it is the current need of this century. They also take English is the sign of strongest personality and parents are demanding education in English medium. They think English is beneficial to the students in higher studies.

The teachers who were negative towards English medium replied that it is very difficult to teach because it is a foreign language. And Nepali is our mother tongue. They said students do not understand so it becomes the burden to the students. They argued that we should protect our mother tongue.

In which Medium did the informants start to teach?

English Medium	Nepali Medium
40%	60%

In the past, there was no English medium in community schools. Due to the development and global change, community Schools are now started the English medium. Therefore, only the forty percent new teachers are started to teach in English medium. However, sixty percent teachers are started their teaching in Nepali medium who had started to teach since previous times.

Why had Their School Started English Medium?

To answer this question, the teachers have given the following arguments: (1) It is the global and internationally recognized language and it is the current need of this century. (2) It is the language of higher social status and personality marker. (3) Parents are demanding education in English medium because it is beneficial for the students in higher studies, etc. (4) They say to give the quality in education; they started English as medium of instruction.

Do they feel easy or difficult to instruct in English medium

Easy	Difficult
25%	75%

English is foreign language. We did no use in daily life and conversation. Most of the time, we use Nepali language. English is mainly used in school area. So only, 25% teachers are felt easy to teach in English medium especially who read majoring English in University level and remaining 75% teacher feel difficult to teach in English medium.

Teachers Using English in the Classroom

Sometimes	Most of the time	All the time
30%	50%	20%

Though they say it is English medium class, teaching in the classroom, only twenty percent teachers use English all the time. Fifty percent use most of the time and thirty percent teachers use English sometimes while teaching in the classroom.

Do Students get benefit through English as a medium of teaching?

No	Yes
20%	80%

Among the group of 25 teachers, 80% respondents reply that English is a better medium of instruction and the students are taking benefit through English medium. 20% respondents say that students did not get benefit through English medium.

Students' spoken ability in English

Better	Broken
20%	80%

The table shows that 20% students are fluent in English and 80% are using broken English, which do not match grammar, pronunciation, coherence and cohesion.

Is English the Appropriate medium of instruction?

Yes	No
70%	30%

The table shows that 70% teacher opine that English language is the appropriate medium of teaching in community schools. 30% teachers opine that it is not the appropriate medium of instruction.

Opinions of Teachers on English as a Medium of Instruction in all community Schools

Positive	Negative
80%	20%

The table shows that opinion of teachers on English as a medium of instruction in all community schools. Among the 25 teachers, 80% are positive towards it and 20% are negative towards it

Can all teachers use English accurately as a medium of instruction?

Yes	No
25%	75%

The above table shows that, among the 4 headmasters 25% Headmasters opined that their teachers can use English accurately and 75% opined that they cannot use English accurately while teaching in the classroom.

Progress of Students after implementing the English as a medium of instruction

Progressed	Not
70%	30%

Regarding the case of progress of students after implementing the English as a medium of instruction, 70 % Headmasters' state that the progress of students is improving and 30% opined that the condition is remain same/as usual. The students are progressing in the field of English but the quality of Nepali subject is decreased. The can speak but they cannot write accurately. However, in the case of English, they can write but they cannot speak accurately and fluently.

Getting Permission from Ministry of Education

Yes	No
0%	100%

This table shows that no single school gets permission to teach in English medium from ministry of education. However, they are using as English with the decision of school management committee.

Training or orientation got by teachers to teach their subjects in English medium

Taken	Not taken
0%	100%

This table shows that, regarding the case of teacher training no single teacher gets training to teach their subjects in English medium. They are throwing stone in the dark.

The main aim of this study was to find out the teachers perceptions towards English medium in community schools. After analyzing and interpreting the data the researcher came to the conclusion that seventy percent of teachers opine that English is the accurate medium of instruction. The government should start the English medium in all community schools but there should be appropriate training for teachers. Majority of them are positive towards English medium but they are untrained and less qualified to teach in English medium. In the same way, almost Eighty percent teachers say that English medium is beneficial for the students. Seventy-five percent teachers feel difficulty to teach in English medium but they are forced to teach in such medium, which does not become easy to them. No single teacher has got training to teach his or her subjects in English medium.

Conclusion

From this study, it is justified that the use of English as a medium of instruction in community schools is beneficial. Eighty percent teachers say that English medium is beneficial for the students. Seventy-five percent teachers feel difficulty to teach in English medium but they are forced to teach in such medium, which does not become easy to them. No single teacher has got training to teach his or her subjects in English medium. The government should provide all training, courses and infrastructure for the community school for instruction in English medium.

References

- Bhandari, N. P. (2000). *Effectiveness of medium of instruction in teaching English preposition: a practical study*. Thesis. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Duschl, R. A., & Gitomer, D. H. (1991). Epistemological perspectives on conceptual change: Implications for educational practice. *Journal of research in science teaching*, 28(9), 839-858.
- Harlan, J. C., & Rowland, S. T. (2002). *Behavior Management Strategies for Teachers: Achieving Instructional Effectiveness, Student Success, and Student Motivation-Every Teacher and Any Student Can!*. Charles C Thomas Publisher.
- Jones, B. F. (1987). *Strategic teaching and learning: Cognitive instruction in the content areas*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 125 N. West St., Alexandria, VA 22314.
- Khanal, B. D. (2004). *The Effectiveness of learners mother tongue in teaching grammar*. Thesis, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Penny, U. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Phillipson, R. (2007). *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University press.
- Shrestha, R.D. (1991). *A comparative study of the efficacy of Nepali and English as the media of instruction in teaching English*. Thesis, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.