

II. ARTICLES

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Language shift in urban spaces and its impact on language pedagogy: Case of Sherpa, Maithili, Newar and Tamang communities in Kathmandu Valley of Nepal

ABSTRACT. This paper examines the trends of language shift and its impact on language pedagogy, especially in the increasingly multilingual case context of the Kathmandu Valley. The data for this mixed-method study were collected through a survey, interviews and focus group discussion among Sherpa, Newar, Maithili and Tamang speakers who have been living in urban spaces in the Kathmandu Valley. The findings indicate that language shift was commonly observed among these speakers and this shift was towards the dominant languages such as Nepali, English, and Hindi. Such a shift was influenced by the positive socialisation experiences associated with these languages. The research further outlines myriad patterns of language usage and attitudes within the cosmopolitan context impacted by factors such as migration, intermarriage, media discourse, and the social, cultural and educational dimensions associated with these languages. These findings imply that language pedagogy, such as the teaching of Nepali, English and other ethnic languages, should be reconsidered in relation to the changing language shift trends, so that students who have migrated to Kathmandu and are from migrant backgrounds can benefit from the schooling system. Doing so will make an important contribution to revitalising these minority languages and promote the linguistic diversity of the Valley.

KEYWORDS: language attitude, language shift, ideology, linguistic imperialism, language functionality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Kathmandu Valley is the urban space with a huge migration population that makes it a rich multilingual space. It is uniquely known for its rich religious, cultural and political and linguistic characteristics. Linguistically, this valley accommodates languages such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Sherpa, Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar, Maithili, and Newar including many other languages of the nation. Having this huge linguistic diversity that enables languages to get mixed in several ways, language shift phenomenon has been observed as a common practice (Gautam 2021). Historically, instances of language shift were also observed during *Malla Period* in Nepal's history as we find the evidence that the Maithili language, for example, has also been used in the Kathmandu Valley, and was used as one of the languages of the court during Malla period¹ (Gautam & Poudel 2022b; Malla 2015). The migration of people from outside districts to the Kathmandu Valley has been increasing after the political change in 1990 that established multiparty democracy as a system of governance. This trend of migration to the capital city was caused by peoples' aspirations and expectations of better employment opportunities and living conditions. While people are on the move to the Kathmandu Valley, language contact becomes a pivotal aspect in shaping community identity, influenced by social networks, relationships, attitudes, and ideologies among speakers. The intensification of migration features the significance of understanding how interactions between speakers of different language varieties influence one another. The phenomenon of language contact, which also affects language shift, can be a point of contention in assessing community identity because of social networks and relationships as well as attitudes and ideologies that speakers hold (Milroy & Gordon 2003). When the countries turn into urban places, geographical mobility remains a dramatically increasing resulting in higher chances of language contacts and shifts (Matras 2009; Trudgill 2020). The dynamic multilingual landscape of the Valley is influenced by a plethora of factors, including migration, globalization, tourism, media, and communication. Amidst the increasing mix of linguistic communities, the multilingual situation of this area has been largely affected by the penetration of the conventional Newar and Nepali language speaking patterns by the languages brought in by the migrant population.

¹ Malla period is the time (1201–1779) during which Kathmandu was ruled by the Malla dynasty.

2. THE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY

In Kathmandu, individuals often communicate in three or more languages which showcases the linguistic richness of this area. It serves as the ancestral homeland for various ethnic groups, including the currently residing population of Newars (19.2%), Khas Brahmins (22%), Chhetris (20.8%), Tamangs (12%), Magar (4.5%), as well as communities like Rai, Gurung, Sherpa, Tharu, Rajbansi, Dhimal, along with diverse ethnicities from the Terai region known as the Madhesi (NSO 2023). The major religious groups in the Kathmandu valley include Hinduism (78.5%), Buddhism (16.3%), Islam (1.3%), Christianity (2.4%), and others (NSO 2023). This demographic diversity is very much parallel to the linguistic diversity in the valley. Within the linguistic diversity of the Kathmandu valley, Newar serves as the primary indigenous language, while Nepali functions as the lingua franca and official language. Moreover, English and Hindi are widely used and understood, particularly in domains such as business, law, administration, tourism, education, and communication. Table 1 shows the three major languages focused in this study to explore the language shift phenomenon.

Table 1. Population of Sherpa, Newar, Maithili and Tamang in the Kathmandu Valley

| SN | Language | 2001 | 2011 | 2021 |
|----|----------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Sherpa | 21064 | 24748 | 27152 |
| 2 | Newar | 560969 | 677613 | 597885 |
| 3 | Maithili | 8786 | 52176 | 61524 |
| 4 | Tamang | 92962 | 221813 | 362550 |

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2001, 2011; National Statistics Office 2023).

Within this diverse urban sociolinguistic space, it is crucial to examine the dynamic trends, causes and impacts of the language shift and how these influence language teaching, particularly among the Newar, Maithili, Tamang and Sherpa-speaking communities. It is noteworthy that the Newar community represents the indigenous ethnic group native to the Kathmandu Valley, Tamang represents the language of the valley's bordering areas on the hills and the Sherpa and Maithili communities originate from the mountainous and Terai regions of Nepal, respectively. Understanding of the trends of language shift across these language communities, featuring a diverse history of geographical origin, can offer valuable insights into the broader dynamics of language change and sociolinguistic adaptation.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study draws on the theoretical premises of language shift, a complex and multifaceted process often characterized by the systematic simplification of both *langue* and *parole* (Turin 2019). Language shift shows how languages penetrate each other, which is enabled by social mobility while also continuing to face several forms of political control in multilingual social contexts. It is a global phenomenon since it shows how languages are distributed on a functional ground (Annamalai 2001). In other words, this paper draws on the perspectives of functioning multilingualism, the idea that languages are distributed, used and maintained based on their functionality in the concerned community context (Annamalai 2001). Functional distribution of languages also depends on how languages have established their domination and what social and political purposes they have served. For instance, in a global scale, the dominance of English, particularly, is emblematic of linguistic imperialism, marginalizing linguistic nationalism and leading to unbalanced language interactions in multilingual contexts and their power relations (Bhatt & Agnes 2022; Mühlhäusler 2015; Phillipson 1992). At the community level, the societal ideologies and the level of public acceptance, alongside of the functional scope of the languages, determines the life of a language and its prominence in the language shift process. In this connection, Sharma (2023) claims that in a complex multilingual society language shift toward the dominant languages is often the result of deficit ideology, impacting the reduced use of the minority languages. In addition, the neoliberal logic associated with the economic and educational (dis)advantages contribute to valuing of languages (Choi & Poudel 2024; Johnson et al. 2020) ultimately affecting the direction of language shift. Fishman's (1991) argument shows that the sociocultural context of language shift in various domains and the processes of social, cultural and political changes contribute to language contact.

Relating to the context of this study, as elsewhere in urban spaces across the world, the dominant languages (national or international) receive more attention and experience the tendency to be used. There is a gradual disinterest or loss of motivation to use the local ethnic as well as indigenous languages forcing the people of such languages to assimilate to the dominant ones. This trend has been further exacerbated by the current young generation's diminishing awareness and use of their mother tongues (Gautam & Poudel 2022a; Poudel & Costley 2023). This paper contends that the dynamics of language contact and shift are intertwined with the forces of globalization and the neoliberal economy, which perpetuate linguistic imperialism in multilingual contexts. All these broader processes collectively impact the functional distribution and scope of languages.

In what follows, we focus on the language use situations, trends of language contact in different activities of the speakers of Sherpa, Maithili, and Tamang and its impact on language teaching.

4. METHODOLOGY

This mixed-method study utilized the data collected through a survey questionnaire, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with participants from Sherpa, Maithili, Newar and Tamang communities. While collecting the data from all these communities, we adapted the questionnaire developed and used in Gautam (2021). The questionnaire was translated from English into Nepali and administered between 2019 and 2023. Moreover, the data for the Sherpa and Maithili were used from the previous study conducted and published by Gautam (2021) whereas the data from the Newar and Tamang community were collected later using the same questionnaire. The data collected in Nepali were translated back into English wherever relevant, and the same translated extracts were used as qualitative data sets reported in the findings. Participants were purposively selected from the Kathmandu Valley that comprises of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur district. The three languages – Newar (spoken by the local indigenous community), Sherpa (the language spoken by an ethnic group migrated from the high Himalayan areas of Nepal), Maithili (the language spoken by the Maithili speaking population from the south eastern part of Nepal) and Tamang (the language spoken by Tamang population dominant in the outskirts of the Kathmandu Valley in Bagmati province of Nepal) are in focus of this study.

The questionnaire comprised 43 questions (see Gautam 2021) which were used to explore participants' beliefs about language shift, use, attitudes and impact on language pedagogy. The participants were selected based on factors such as sex, age, marital status, occupation, and educational background to expand diversity of participants; however, these factors were not considered for analysis. The participant categories included housewives, teachers, academicians, politicians, language activists, businessmen, shopkeepers, trekking guides, vendors, and students.

Following the survey, 21 individual interviews were conducted. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed where necessary for the analysis of the data. The same process was conducted with the four FGDs conducted in all four language groups consisting of six participants each. We intentionally used the data collected in 2019 (and those partially published in Gautam 2021) and the new ones collected in 2023, especially in the Tamang community, to understand

if there were any changing language contact trends across ethnic indigenous communities due to the rapidly growing urbanization in Kathmandu and the social mobility that has arisen in recent years. In this paper, we have presented these data iteratively which has enabled us to compare the language use and attitude trends across these communities.

The survey data were analyzed quantitatively using simple descriptive statistics such as percentages and means, while the qualitative data were analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke 2006). To ensure privacy and confidentiality, the names of the participants have been anonymized, and pseudonyms have been used. Table 2 includes brief information about the participants.

Table 2. Number and locations of the informants

| Languages | Number | Places from where the information was gathered |
|-----------|--------|--|
| Newar | 45 | Kirtipur, Patan, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu |
| Sherpa | 45 | Baudda, Jorpati, Swambhu, Bhaktapur |
| Maithili | 45 | Gaushala, Baneswor, Kupondol, Balkhu |
| Tamang | 45 | Dakshinkali, Bosan, Sundarijal, Nagarkot |

Source: own study.

The places indicated in Table 2 were purposively selected for the research purpose since these places (community areas) were the core areas for Newar, Sherpa, Maithili and Tamang speaking population. As mentioned previously, the 180 participants in this study had diverse characteristics in terms of their age, ethnicity and marital status. However, we used these criteria only to widen their representation rather than for analysis. The analysis focused on their language shift behaviour in several activities and across the community groups. This analytical rigor enabled the authors to understand the insights and attitudes of the speakers of the selected languages (Garret 2010; Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In general, the trends of language shift were derived from the questionnaire data and the thematic analysis of the causes and impact of the language shift in language pedagogy have been reported drawing on the data from the qualitative methods.

5.1. Trends in language shift

There is a noticeable trend in language shift across multiple domains such as interpersonal behaviour, family and friends, media and communication, culture and religion. The shifts reflect the attitudes and intentions of the speakers of Newar, Sherpa, Tamang and Maithili towards their home languages and other dominant languages. This shift has been observed in various informal situations and activities within the respective speech communities. The themes and category of the activities in each theme listed in the Table emerge from the questionnaire we adapted for the data collection.

5.1.1. Trends in language use in behavioral activities

This study explored the language use trends in the activities that the participants use in their daily everyday life. Such activities were while making friends, shopping, make calls, communication with workers, teachers, academicians, reading and writing activities and sitting in exams. Table 3 depicts the preferences of Sherpa, Newar, Maithili and Tamang speakers in engaging in these day-to-day activities.

Table 3. Behavioral activities and language use

| Activities | Sherpa (%) | | | Newar (%) | | | Maithili (%) | | | Tamang (%) | | |
|---------------------|------------|-----|----|-----------|----|----|--------------|----|----|------------|----|----|
| | S | N | E | Ne | N | E | M | H | Ne | T | Ne | E |
| Making friends | 58 | 84 | 29 | 73 | 93 | 16 | 78 | 71 | 35 | 70 | 95 | 12 |
| Shopping | 7 | 100 | 13 | 71 | 98 | 7 | 18 | 84 | 2 | 60 | 87 | 15 |
| Telephone calls | 7 | 96 | 20 | 80 | 93 | 22 | 18 | 73 | 4 | 70 | 87 | 23 |
| with workers | 20 | 94 | 18 | 60 | 93 | 22 | 78 | 75 | 29 | 56 | 90 | 4 |
| with teachers | 7 | 73 | 29 | 22 | 93 | 36 | 60 | 87 | 42 | 23 | 95 | 24 |
| with academicians | 11 | 80 | 27 | 29 | 96 | 27 | 2 | 71 | 7 | 25 | 90 | 15 |
| Getting a job | 2 | 64 | 36 | 13 | 78 | 40 | 67 | 64 | 40 | 5 | 90 | 35 |
| Reading and writing | 2 | 78 | 47 | 36 | 91 | 47 | 16 | 82 | 4 | 8 | 96 | 25 |
| Exams | 4 | 56 | 44 | | 67 | 42 | 27 | 87 | 18 | | 98 | 56 |

Note: S = Sherpa, N = Newar, Ne = Nepali, E = English, M = Maithili, H = Hindi, T = Tamang

Source: field data collected in 2019 and 2023.

Table 3 illustrates that Sherpa and Newar speakers predominantly use the Nepali language in nearly all activities, limiting the use of their native languages to

the minimum. However, Sherpa and Newar speakers use their native languages in making friends and conducting telephone calls, while English is extensively utilized in reading, writing, and exam-related tasks. The use of English in academic activities relates to the global expansion of English as the major language of the academia. Conversely, among Maithili speakers residing in the capital, Hindi is widely utilized compared to Nepali and other languages. During the FGD, the participants were asked about the reasons for their language preference. Namita (38 F), a Newar speaker says "Using English feels more natural for us than other languages because it is widely respected, understood, and common among educated individuals in Kathmandu". Namita's expression highlights the emerging trends in the language shift: from the local and/or national language to the dominant academic language, i.e. English. This shift, as other participants also mentioned, was driven by education, modernization and other market forces such as employment opportunities and business. Several factors contribute to these trends, including the globalization's impact on business and interpersonal communication, as well as the widespread use of the English language in media and technology (Gautam & Poudel 2022b). The functional distribution of the local languages was limited whereas the space for English expanded, making English as the most preferred language compared to the local and national official languages.

5.1.2. Language use trends in cultural events

The events and activities related to various religious and cultural practices within the Newar, Sherpa, Maithili and Tamang language communities were recorded. These events were related to birth ceremonies, death rituals, marriage ceremonies, religious and cultural celebrations. Our primary concern was to explore what language practices exist among communities speaking the four selected languages. Table 4 presents the language usage trends among speakers of Sherpa, Newar, Maithili and Tamang speakers across various cultural – activities.

Table 4 shows that mother tongues are commonly utilized in religious and cultural activities among Sherpa, Newar, Maithili and Tamang speakers residing in the Kathmandu Valley. The Nepali language follows their native language use in such activities. In the Newar speaking community, the position of the Nepali language use is stronger compared to Maithili, Tamang and Sherpa. In the Maithili community, Hindi constitutes the third prominent language used in the cultural and religious activities. The use of English is negligible all these communities. The language use among relatives and friends reflects diverse cultural

Table 4. Language shift trends in cultural activities

| Activities | Sherpa (%) | | | Newar (%) | | | Maithili (%) | | | Tamang (%) | | |
|---------------------|------------|----|---|-----------|----|------|--------------|----|----|------------|----|----|
| | S | Ne | E | Ne | N | E | M | Ne | H | T | Ne | E |
| Religious festivals | 98 | 9 | 4 | 84 | 27 | – | 84 | 22 | 2 | 87 | 24 | 3 |
| Cultural programs | 98 | 33 | – | 80 | 49 | 2.22 | 67 | 60 | 11 | 78 | 56 | 12 |
| Death ceremonies | 100 | 16 | – | 87 | 29 | – | 87 | 22 | 13 | 67 | 68 | 20 |
| Marriage ceremonies | 100 | 18 | – | 87 | 42 | 2 | 87 | 29 | 11 | 89 | 56 | 5 |
| Birth ceremonies | 100 | 16 | – | 89 | 33 | – | 87 | 24 | 9 | 76 | 68 | 9 |
| Cultural festivals | 91 | 27 | – | 87 | 48 | 2 | 80 | 45 | 18 | 80 | 78 | 7 |

Source: field data collected in 2019 and 2023.

interactions in everyday activities, where they share their feelings and opinions through various languages. Newar, Sherpa, and Maithili-speaking communities exhibit distinct trends in language use with friends and family members. Tamang community was found to use Nepali more extensively compared to Sherpa and Maithili followed by Newar.

The above findings indicate that individuals predominantly use their respective mother tongues when communicating within their family circle. In contrast, Nepali is the preferred language among friends and neighbors outside the immediate family circle. The attraction towards using Nepali over their respective mother tongues appears to be more pronounced among Newar, Tamang, Sherpa speakers compared to Maithili speakers. The reason for such trends could be that the Newar are the indigenous historical residents of the Kathmandu valley where the capital lies and the Tamang population is also quite high in the periphery of the Valley, making it higher individual and community level interaction and language contact with Nepali speaking local as well as migrant population in Kathmandu.

5.2. Causes of language contact

Like elsewhere, language contact in the Kathmandu Valley has been influenced by a multitude of internal and external factors that relate to human mobility, cultural, political, educational and several other social factors. The data in this study explored several factors contributing to it. However, in this paper we present the factors divided into three major categories – media, globalization and language politics and employment prospects.

5.2.1. Use of media

Media, especially the social media in the present digitalized world, has influenced language contact contributing to language shift which can be seen through people's increasing trend of language mixing in social media. This trend is evident in the growing preference of individuals to watch Nepali TV channels, using Facebook and other social media that involve use of the dominant languages such as Nepali and English. The same is true about the use of entertainment media such as movies, radio and so on that covers information related to entertainment, sports, and international news coverage. Furthermore, the emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google, Skype, WeChat, and Viber has made it easier for people to use and understand different languages through machine translation and artificial intelligence (AI), thereby further facilitating language exposure and familiarity. Table 5 illustrates the use of languages across various communities in different media types.

Table 5. Language use in media

| Activities | Sherpa (%) | | | Newar (%) | | | Maithili (%) | | | Tamang (%) | | |
|-------------------------|------------|------|------|-----------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|------------|----|----|
| | S | Ne | H | N | Ne | H | M | Ne | H | T | Ne | H |
| Watching Movie / Serial | 4 | 98 | 64 | 36 | 80 | 76 | 16 | 40 | 82 | 23 | 82 | 79 |
| Watching News | 4 | 100 | 16 | 22 | 98 | 29 | 18 | 80 | 71 | 15 | 95 | 4 |
| Listening Music | 51 | 80 | 33 | 57.77 | 84.44 | 77.77 | 37.77 | 40 | 84.44 | 24 | 78 | 87 |
| Listening Radio / News | 4.4 | 95.5 | 12.3 | 42.22 | 97.77 | 11.11 | 44.44 | 75.55 | 40 | 30 | 87 | 12 |
| Listening Interview | 6.6 | 95.5 | 8.9 | 40 | 97.77 | 22.22 | 37.77 | 77.77 | 37.77 | 12 | 80 | 23 |
| Reading Newspaper | 6.6 | 82.2 | 2.2 | 28.88 | 82.22 | 4.44 | 19.99 | 80 | 8.88 | 2 | 90 | 12 |
| Reading horoscope | – | 82.2 | 2.2 | 20 | 93.33 | 2.22 | 13.33 | 71.11 | 19.99 | – | 90 | – |

Source: field data collected in 2019 and 2023.

The speakers of Newar, Maithili, Sherpa and Tamang were found to use their home languages, i.e. Nepali and Hindi, for entertainment and communication reasons. The data in Table 6 shows that there is extensive use of the Nepali language for watching movies, and the use of their home languages is negligible. For example, the Sherpa used 4%, the Newar 36%, Maithili 40% and Tamang 23%. This practice might have been affected by the availability of media

and entertainment materials in these ethnic languages. Interestingly, the use of Hindi is highly prevalent across all the communities. In most, the use of Hindi for watching movies tops the list. The Maithili and Tamang speakers used Hindi while listening to music, given the widespread presence of Hindi movies and songs. The Nepali language covers the highest level of use in watching, listening and reading news. It is because Nepali is the national official language in practice and many media broadcast news in Nepali. The similar trend in the Nepali language use was found in reading horoscopes.

5.2.2. The impact of globalization and language politics

Global influences have had a significant impact on the language use practices in multilingual cities that have experienced urban sociolinguistic contexts created by heightened human mobility. Although these trends are quite common, instigated by the increasing pressure from globalization, adapting one or more languages for communication is also a political matter. As Joseph (2006: 10) notes, the politics of language choice becomes especially contentious when institutions need to decide which language(s) the state will formalize for conducting its affairs and communicating with citizens through language policies.

In Nepal, the influence of neoliberal ideology in education has been particularly pronounced in the post-1990 era following the restoration of multiparty democracy (Poudel et al. 2022). The role and value of English was emphasized as a global and powerful language, creating a hierarchy of languages (Gautam 2021). This ascended the use of English as a medium of instruction in schools, firstly by the private schools followed by the public schools in the name of quality education. Consequently, English has become a status symbol in Nepalese education system. Various ethnic boundaries of language and culture have been changed in the context of politics and livelihood strategies of the people (Gautam & Giri 2024). In the countries like Nepal, the influence of the globalization drive is paramount, affecting people's choice of languages and the culture. During an interview, one Tamang speaker said, "I use my language at home to communicate with the family but I use Nepali and sometimes English to talk to the people outside, and also use these languages in the media because they help us connect to the world that we are living". This shows that the participants' ideology towards mother tongues and other languages is affected by the ideology of globalization.

5.2.3. Employment prospects

Employment serves as a significant catalyst for language shift within numerous minority communities in Nepal. It can be commonly observed that educated youths are inclined towards dominant national, regional, and international languages due to the myriad employment opportunities they could achieve in the national and international fronts. This inclination ultimately fosters and accelerates language shift (Pillar 2016). We could evidence of this in our data. Our study suggests that Sherpa, Newar, Tamang and Maithili languages are primarily used for informal and family-oriented activities in their respective local communities. However, these languages have not been widely used in formal education and academic institutions despite Nepal government's numerous efforts to materialize mother tongue based multilingual education (Poudel & Costley 2023). The employment prospects and parents' preference for exposing their children to languages like Nepali and English are perceived as key factors contributing to the observed ascendance of the dominant languages.

During one interview, Pasang, a student from Salleri (Solukhumbu) studying Bachelor in Management at a private college, said, "As Sherpa people, our primary goal is to engage in business and achieve financial prosperity. That's why we have come to Kathmandu, seeking better educational opportunities that are not readily available in Salleri. Once I complete my bachelor's degree, my plan is to seek employment abroad and earn a living. In this pursuit, I question the necessity of learning and speaking Sherpa when there is limited recognition and job prospects for it." (Interview August, 2023). Pasang's comment here indicates that how people of different heritage languages shift to other global languages because of job and employment opportunities. This mobility of youth across cities has instigated the increasing language contact occasions. Rabita Maharjan (43 years) indicates that the current educational practices have become more market-oriented so that the younger generation is automatically detached from their local languages for learning global languages like English, French, Chinese etc., which are more useful in workplaces or higher education. The education system that responds to the employment of children adopts and prioritizes the dominant languages consequently, affecting even more the shifts towards these. As she says, "My children no longer speak Newar; it's only the older generation that does. There's no requirement for them to learn to read and write Newar in school. Instead, schools emphasize proficiency in Nepali and English. As a result, my children excel in Nepali and English but have little to no proficiency in Newar" (Interview July, 2019). This personal narrative also indicates the reduced force created in learning ethnic languages in comparison to the dominant official ones in educating practices.

During focus group discussions conducted in various locations among the participants from the selected ethnic communities in the Kathmandu Valley, many participants shared their experiences of how their children have predominantly shifted towards using Nepali and English instead of their respective local languages. For instance, Tashi, a 51-year-old tour guide and seasonal migrant worker from Solukhumbu, residing in Kathmandu, speaks English hesitantly but is proficient in Nepali. His wife runs a small liquor shop in Handigaun, Kathmandu, and their two children attend an English medium private boarding school. She mentioned, "If my children do not have good English or Nepali they will not find a good job. You know all higher level better paying jobs require fluent Nepali and English. We want our kids have this for their future." Tashi's personal narrative highlights the crucial role of schooling and education in accessing job opportunities and other avenues, which significantly influences language choice in education as also claimed by previous research studies (Choi & Poudel 2024; Gautam & Poudel 2024). The higher use of English and Nepali in the academic domain, as illustrated in Table 3, also provides a supportive case for such trends. The emphasis placed by schools on dominant, state or global languages like Nepali and English ultimately encourages the younger generation in the city to disregard and forsake their mother tongue, also due to intercultural convergences. This matter has an important implication for the future initiatives in language. For example, these trends of increasing language shifts and preferences in multilingual societies might lead to extensive translanguaging instances in education, countering the conventional pedagogical practices that promoted monolingual traditions.

As we have previously discussed, factors such as increasing media use in dominant languages, globalization and local language politics, and changing dynamics of the employment prospects have influenced the language choice and therefore language contact. A majority of the individuals who took part in our study, especially the youth, have reported that they are more inclined to learn languages with a broader scope and usage (in terms of population and geographic reach) rather than their heritage languages and the same trends were also found in parents concerned about their children's future employment prospects. In Kathmandu, Sherpa, Newar, Tamang and Maithili speakers use their respective mother tongues when it comes about talking about or engaging in the activities that are related to preservation of their ethnic, cultural, and religious conventions. However, they question the practical relevance of their mother tongues in formal, official, and administrative settings, despite government policies aimed at protecting these languages. They are not very optimistic that their home languages will attain similar educational, administrative, and formal status as Nepali and English.

5.2.4. Language shift and language pedagogy

The ideological foundation of youths and parents toward their home languages have important implications for the teaching and learning of these languages in schools. Several previous studies have also reported that language shifting trends have various effects on the survival and development of many minority and endangered languages, and the schooling practices can contribute towards promotion of these languages. One of the important areas that such language shifts impact is the language pedagogy. Schools' language policies and practices cause long-term impact on the promotion and revitalization of linguistic diversity. If schools do not address the language shift and language contact contexts and do not help learners learn these languages then their practices will further reinforce the already privileged languages. Because of the education system that prioritizes dominant languages, the new generation of Sherpa, Newar, Tamang and Maithili people used Nepali, Hindi, and English in most of the activities they are engaged in. The participants from these communities believe that if schools do not understand the status and shifting trends in languages in the societies, then positive ideologies will be formed for dominant languages and negative ones for minority languages, enhancing an unequal position of these languages in the education system (Gautam & Poudel 2022a). This is one of the major concerns that pedagogues and policymakers should take into account. So, this study reports that the language pedagogy should embrace the realistic language use situations to create space for minority languages. For this, the development of an agentic role of key implementors, such as teachers, students, parents and administrators, is essential. A 70-year-old Maithili speaker from Saptari, residing in Kupondole, Lalitpur, expressed, "We speak Maithili very well here, but our children do not want to speak this language. Even those who are educated prefer to speak English and Hindi instead of Maithili and the children love to learn these languages rather than the home languages." It suggests that the younger generation of native speakers is increasingly inclined to adopt dominant languages such as Nepali, Hindi, and English, primarily due to the influence of education and globalization. Creation of a favorable environment for the promotion and protection of multilingual and inclusive language practices in education system requires collective efforts from governments, community and concerned stakeholders.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It is possible to conclude that language shift within multilingual social settings is noticeably on the rise, manifested in various patterns influenced by social, cultural, personal, political and economic factors. In every society, diverse language ideologies intersect and create a collective force that favours particular languages and marginalizes the others. For instance, the language shift trends observed among Newar, Sherpa, Tamang and Maithili speaking communities were affected by factors such as media use, globalization and employment prospects set out by the changing market dynamics. In addition, the shifts were also driven by people's attitudes towards languages and their functional distribution in multilingual settings (Garret 2010: 16). One of the striking findings of this study is that the speakers of the four selected communities share a deficit ideology towards their own language, which forced them to use the dominant languages more than their ethnic languages. While the speakers of the minority languages were aware of their functionality, and tried to use them accordingly, they were constrained by other forces such as economic prosperity, employment prospects and social capitalization of the languages. It was clear from their practices as most of them used their native languages more than other dominant languages in the cultural activities and when it comes to expressing and promoting their identity. Further to this, the speakers' choice of languages for certain purposes are also affected by the structural factors such as culture, national policies, societal norms, economic rationales and so on (Poudel & Choi 2021). The attraction towards the use of English and Hindi besides Nepali among Newar, Sherpa, Tamang and Maithili speaking communities shows the impact of neoliberal force that is unstoppable in several ways (Gautam 2022a, 2022b; Pillar 2016).

The consequences of the above mentioned language shift trends can be costly for multilingual communities and their schooling system because it contributes to the marginalization of indigenous languages, relegating them to religious, cultural, and domestic spheres. Studies to document how the language shift can affect the broader sociolinguistic context and language pedagogy would be helpful for further designing policies and plans aiming at revitalization of the marginalized languages through their use in schooling system. Therefore, there is a requirement for a broader study on language contact, shift, and their outcomes, incorporating tangible evidence for developing a planned and equitable language pedagogy. Further to this, the ethno-linguists and sociolinguists must meticulously assess the negative impacts of language shift on language pedagogy including the broader educational environment to safeguard and enhance linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

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**Zmiana językowa w przestrzeniach miejskich i jej wpływ na pedagogikę językową.
Przypadek społeczności Sherpa, Maithili, Newar i Tamang w Dolinie Katmandu w Nepalu**

ABSTRAKT. Celem artykułu jest analiza tendencji zmiany językowej oraz jej wpływu na pedagogikę językową w zróżnicowanym językowo kontekście, jakim jest Dolina Katmandu. Dane empiryczne do niniejszego badania, o charakterze ilościowo-jakościowym, zostały pozyskane za pomocą ankiet, wywiadów oraz dyskusji fokusowych przeprowadzonych wśród użytkowników języków Sherpa, Newar, Maithili oraz Tamang zamieszkujących miejskie obszary Doliny Katmandu. Wyniki wskazują na powszechnie zachodzące zjawisko zmiany językowej w kierunku języków dominujących, takich jak nepalski, angielski oraz hindi, wśród przedstawicieli analizowanych społeczności językowych. Respondenci wskazywali, iż proces ten jest silnie związany z pozytywnymi doświadczeniami socjalizacyjnymi, jakie towarzyszą posługiwaniu się wspomnianymi językami. Badanie identyfikuje również zróżnicowane wzorce użycia języka oraz postawy wobec języków w kontekście kosmopolitycznym, kształtowanym przez takie czynniki, jak migracja, małżeństwa mieszane, przekazy medialne oraz społeczne, kulturowe i edukacyjne uwarunkowania funkcjonowania języków. Uzyskane wyniki sugerują konieczność ponownego przemyślenia strategii pedagogiki językowej, w tym nauczania języka nepalskiego, angielskiego oraz języków etnicznych, w odpowiedzi na obserwowane zmiany językowe. Dostosowanie praktyk edukacyjnych do potrzeb uczniów z doświadczeniem migracyjnym może przyczynić się do skuteczniejszego włączenia ich w system edukacyjny oraz odegrać istotną rolę w rewitalizacji języków mniejszościowych i promocji różnorodności językowej Doliny Katmandu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: postawa wobec języka, zmiana językowa, ideologia, imperializm językowy, funkcjonalność językowa.

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