

**ETHNICITY, EQUALITY, AND EDUCATION:
A STUDY OF MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN NEPAL**

*Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy*

by

Uma Pradhan

Wolfson College
University of Oxford

Hilary Term 2016

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

Name: UMA PRADHAN

Candidate number: 7760

College: WOLFSON COLLEGE

Supervisors: PROFESSOR NANDINI GOOPTU
PROFESSOR DAVID GELLNER

Title of thesis:

Ethnicity, Equality, and Education: A Study of Multilingual Education in Nepal

Word count: 91,004 words

I am aware of the University's disciplinary regulations concerning conduct in examinations and, in particular, of the regulations on plagiarism.

☐

The thesis I am submitting is entirely my own work except otherwise indicated

☐

It has not been submitted, either wholly or substantially, for another degree of this University, or for a degree at any other institution.

☐

I have clearly signalled the presence of quoted or paraphrased material and referenced all sources.

☐

I have acknowledged any assistance I have received in addition to that provided by my supervisor(s).

☐

I have not sought assistance from any professional agency.

☐

I have not repeated any material from other pieces of work that I have previously submitted for assessment for this degree, except where permitted.

☐

I agree to retain an electronic copy of this work until the publication of my final examination result, except where submission in hand-written format is permitted.
I agree to make any such electronic copy available to the examiners should it be necessary to confirm my word count or to check for plagiarism.

☐

Candidate's signature:

Date: 29 February 2016

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the issue of ethno-linguistic identity through an examination of everyday practices in two mother-tongue schools in Nepal. While language and ethnicity have remained highly politicised subject in Nepal, the everyday cultural politics of language use inside minority language school has received very limited academic attention. In this thesis, I focus on the ways in which different people understand, experience, and interpret mother-tongue education in their everyday life. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of social field, I argue that mother-tongue instruction not only concerns the introduction of minority languages in education, but also constitutes an 'arena of struggle', where the idea of an 'educated person' is (re)imagined, and the social positions of ethno-linguistic groups are negotiated. To explain this further, I show that minority language education function as a subfield within the larger social field of national education. On the one hand, everyday language practices in the schools display inward-looking characteristics through the everyday use of mother tongue and the construction of unified ethnic identity within the subfield of minority language education. On the other hand, there were outward-looking dynamics of actively engaging with the national education system. The salience of these processes is the simultaneous membership to multiple groups, claims over public spaces and in the spaces of nationalism, hitherto associated with Nepali. Using the idea of 'simultaneity', I show that social actors in minority language education might not necessarily select between subfield and social field, but instead thrive in their tense intersection. In this process, ethno-linguistic groups are able to construct their own subjectivities by negotiating what it means to be educated in a minority language. This emerging narrative of minority language education may help us to understand the issues of language and ethnicity in a more open-ended way and appreciate the multiple scales in which identities are expressed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of of Figures	1
List of Tables	1
List of Acronyms	2
Notes on the use of terms, transliteration, and names	3
Glossary of terms	4

INTRODUCTION 5

1. Education as a 'social field'	7
2. Why mother-tongue education?	9
3. Research framework	12
4. Fieldwork	14
5. Thesis argument	15
6. Chapter plan	17
7. Contributions of the study	20

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGES OF DISTINCTION: MINORITY IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

1. Introduction	22
2. Education and the 'educated person'	24
2.1 Education as modernity and development	25
2.2 Education as domination	27
2.3 The paradox of minority language education	29
3. Education as 'an arena for struggle'	31
3.1 Bourdieu and social field	32
3.2 Subfield of minority language education	35
3.3 Internal contradictions	37
3.4 Simultaneity in the fields	39
4. Ethnic identity, languages, and education	41
4.1 Nationalism and monolingual ideology	42
4.2 Ethnicity and politics of recognition	46

4.3 Language ideology	49
4.5 Fluid language boundaries	51
4.6 Language as a lens to social dynamics	53
5. Minority language education in Nepal	56
6. Conclusion	61

CHAPTER TWO

RETHINKING LANGUAGES, RETHINKING NEPAL

1. Introduction	63
2. Tensions of diversity in Nepal	64
3. Contentious languages in education	73
3.1 Instituting Nepali language	75
3.2 The English dilemma	81
3.3 The threat of Hindi	85
3.4 The Sanskrit controversy	88
3.5 The mother tongue 'problem'	89
4. On continuities and changes	99
5. Conclusion	104

CHAPTER THREE

FIELDWORK SETTING, METHODS, AND THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction	106
2. Method and Analytical Framework	107
2.1 The 'Home' and the 'Field'	107
2.2 Studying the school	111
2.3 Ethics of conducting research	113
2.4 Making sense of tensions	116
3. Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB)	117
3.1 Nepal Bhasa and Schooling	118
3.2 History of JSB	120
3.3 JSB School Profile	123
3.4 Financial Support	124
3.5 Uncertain Future	127

4.	Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS)	128
4.1	Tharu community and schooling	129
4.2	JKHS School Profile	131
4.3	Multi-Lingual Education	132
4.4	Financial Support	133
5.	Different Contexts, Similar Positioning?	134
8.	Conclusion	138

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIVATE LANGUAGES, PUBLIC PLACES

1.	Introduction	139
2.	New languages of schooling	141
2.1	You need to learn Tharu to work here!	141
2.2	<i>Bhay Chhya sa Bhay Lyani</i>	150
3.	New ways of coming together	159
3.1	New collaborations: Book-writing workshops in JKHS	159
3.2	New Traditions in JSB: Bhintuna Rally and Car Rally	162
4.	Mediating Tensions, Managing Pluralism	168
4.1	'Nepal Bhasa is not Newar language, it is Nepali language.'	169
4.2	Using multiple languages a strategy for mother-tongue education	172
5.	Simultaneous memberships in multiple groups	175
6.	Conclusion	180

CHAPTER FIVE

CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE, CONTESTING LEGITIMACY

1.	Introduction	182
2.	Legitimate knowledge and school education	183
3.	Engaging with the state	188
3.1	School textbooks: Bringing the 'local' and the state together	188
3.2	Seeking legitimacy through legal provisions	193
3.3	Writing the language: Standardisation, grammar and phonetics	195
3.4	Using a common script	199
3.5	National curriculum framework	202

4.	Engaging with the 'local'	204
4.1	The faraway Pashupatinath	205
4.2	Geographies of Nepal	209
4.3	New national heroes: Siddhidas Mahaju, Kinnu Tharu	211
5.	Expanding the 'local'	215
5.1	Searching for astronauts and computers in Tharu	215
5.2	Affirming the nation	218
6.	Changing Languages, Changing Identities	220
7.	Conclusion	224

CHAPTER SIX

CLAIMING QUALITY, (RE)CLAIMING EQUALITY

1.	Introduction	227
2.	Quality discourse, language ideology, and imageries of competence	228
2.1	Smart students - dull students	231
2.2	Not becoming fools	236
2.3	The label of 'low-quality education'	239
3.	Measuring quality	241
3.1	National-level examination	242
3.2	Quality in mother-tongue education	246
3.3	'I learn English too'	250
3.4	Higher education	254
4.	Quality and equality in languages	257
5.	Conclusion	261

CHAPTER SEVEN

ETHNICITY, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT

1.	Introduction	263
2.	Linguistic capital and the market	264
3.	Language, new capital and the emerging new market	265
3.1	Working in the new market: Namrata Pandey	266
3.2	Speaking different languages: Ram Bahadur Yadav	272
4.	Language, class, and the mainstream career	277

4.1 Overcoming the language barrier: Indu Newa	278
4.2 Becoming modern: Santosh Tharu	283
5. Two roles of language in linguistic market	287
5.1 Language as labour	288
5.2 Language as access to the mainstream market	294
6. Disparate language markets	288
7. Conclusion	299

CHAPTER EIGHT

SIMULTANEITIES IN MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION

1. Language, identity, and social change	302
2. Education and the 'educated person'	307
3. Ethnicity and contemporary politics in Nepal	310
4. Scope and limitation of this research	314
5. Further questions	317
6. Conclusion	318

APPENDIX I	The Dramatis Personæ	321
APPENDIX II	List of Schools with Mother-tongue Education	325
APPENDIX III	National and International Legal Frameworks	328
APPENDIX IV	Distribution of Population (percentage) of Nepal by mother tongues	330
APPENDIX V	Research Checklist and Questions	331

BIBLIOGRAPHY	335
---------------------	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Teachers meeting in JKHS
Figure 2	Bhintuna Rally in 2013
Figure 3	Textbook and school flyers
Figure 4	Pictures of school textbook coverpage
Figure 5	Devnagari script used in mother-tongue textbooks
Figure 6	Representations of geography in mother-tongue textbooks
Figure 7	National symbols in JKHS and JSB
Figure 8	Signboard with pictures of student achievement in SLC examination

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Changing census numbers
Table 2	Population percentage for nine major ethnic groups
Table 3	Medium of instruction desired in 1956
Table 4	Percentage of people speaking Nepali language (Census 2011)
Table 5	Percentage of people speaking Hindi language (Census 2011)
Table 6	Percentage of people speaking in mother tongue (Census 2011)
Table 7	Use of transitional language support in primary school
Table 8	List of subjects taught in JSB
Table 9	History of JKHS
Table 10	Financial support received by JKHS
Table 11	JSB and JKHS Overview
Table 12	JKHS school timetable
Table 13	List of school textbooks in mother tongue
Table 14	List of language-related employment in JSB and JKHS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Centre, Government of Nepal
GoN	Government of Nepal
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
JKHS	Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School
JSB	Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MLE	Multi Lingual Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities <i>(Nepal Janajati Adivasi Mahasangh)</i>
NESP	National Education System Plan, 1971
NFDIN	Nepal Federation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NNEPC	Nepal National Educational Planning Commission, 1956
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
UNESCO	United Nations Education Social Cultural Organisation

Notes on the use of terms, transliteration, and names

In this thesis, I have used the term 'mother tongue' to reflect both popular and official usages. The census formally classifies the Nepali population using 'mother tongue' as a category on the basis of language spoken by any ethnic groups as their first language or language associated with the group as their heritage language. The terms '*matri bhasa*' (mother tongue' in Nepali and Tharu language) and '*ma bhay*' (mother tongue' in Nepal Bhasa language) were frequently used in my fieldwork site to allude to these associations.

I have used mother tongue education and minority language education synonymously to indicate the sense of belongingness and minority status attached to these languages.

I have used roman letters such as I, II, III to refer to cohorts in the school e.g. Class V following the conventions used in school.

All Nepali, Nepal Bhasa, and Tharu terms were transcribed based on the pronunciation. Transliteration style in this thesis does not distinguish between long and short vowels.

The geographical names of the research sites and the names of the school are real. I have anonymised the names of school administrators, teachers, and students in the school. I have referred to government officials and NGO staff by their official positions to indicate them as representatives of their formal affiliations.

All pictures were taken by the author.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Awadhi	Awadhi language is mainly in the terai region of Nepal. It is closely associated with Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh and Nepal.
Boarding school	The word 'boarding' in the name of the school is used colloquially to signal that the school teaches in English. Whether the school has provision of hostel accommodation is not much consequence in this nomenclature.
Devnagari	Writing system and script used for Nepali, Tharu and Awadhi language
Nepal Bhasa	Nepal Bhasa is the language spoken by Newars, one of the ethnic groups in Nepal. Although 'Nepal Bhasa' literally means Nepalese language, it is different from 'Nepali' which is the official language of Nepal. Nepal Bhasa is also commonly known as Newari.
Prachalit lipi	Prachalit lipi is the most common script associated with Nepal Bhasa.
School Leaving Certificate (SLC)	The School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam is a national-level secondary school examination administered conducted annually for grade 10 students by the Ministry of Education and marks the completion of school education.
Tharu	The Tharu people are an ethnic group indigenous to the Terai. Tharu is also the name of their language.

INTRODUCTION

Each community shall have the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to its children.

(Article 18.2, Fundamental Rights, The Constitution of Nepal 1990)

Every Nepali community living in Nepal shall have the right to acquire education in its mother tongue up to the secondary level, and the right to open and run schools and educational institutions as provided for by law.

(Article, 31.5, The Constitution of Nepal 2015)

In 1990, the Constitution of Nepal declared Nepal a multi-ethnic (*bahu jatiya*) and multi-lingual (*bahu bhasik*) country, with all the languages spoken as mother tongue recognised as 'national languages' (*rastriya bhasa*) and Nepali as 'the language of the nation' (*rastra bhasa*). This provision was carried over to the subsequent Interim Constitution of 2007 and the new Constitution of 2015. These constitutions also granted the right to primary education in the mother tongue as a fundamental right of citizens. This marked a radical departure in a historical context where the use of languages other than the national language, Nepali, was considered communal and therefore against the law. However, despite these constitutional provisions, mother-tongue education remained a contentious issue in Nepal. Some ethnic activists and policy-makers favour mother-tongue education from the standpoint of social justice, human rights and access to education, and as a challenge to the hitherto homogenising tendency of the Nepali state (Bhattachan, 1995; Phyak, 2011; Awasthi, 2004; Giri, 2009, 2011). By contrast, others identify mother-tongue education as predominantly groupist in its orientation, and as hindering the prospect of a unified national community (Sharma, 1992; Bandhu, 1989). Further studies (Pettigrew, 2000; Turin, 2013) have

shown that younger people no longer prefer to speak in their mother tongues, and minority languages are being circumscribed by the low status given to them. Such divergent discourses on mother-tongue education serve to elucidate the tensions between the disparate roles of education, especially with regard to language. On the one hand, education is seen a social good that provides ethno-linguistic groups with access to cultural capital, such as the dominant language, which can, in turn, promote successful functioning in society (Goody, 1975; Dreze and Sen, 1995). Minority languages are either considered to be unnecessary, or to hold instrumental value only in the early years of schooling, where they can enable a smooth transition towards operating within the dominant language and identity. According to this view, education facilitates assimilation and acts as a 'great leveller' of social differences. On the other hand, education is also seen to legitimise and reproduce the dominant cultural capital, to propagate a hidden curriculum (Bowles and Gintis, 1976), and to exacerbate social inequalities (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), thereby further marginalizing minority populations. Minority language education is here viewed as being in opposition to and rejection of the dominant language and identity.

This contradictory conception also uncovers one of the core tensions in education: 'education as development' versus 'education as domination' (Levinson and Pollock, 2011). This tension leads to what Hornberger (2000) calls the 'assimilation-pluralism paradox', in which minority language education is pulled to multiple directions: firstly, to offer education in the minority language and secondly, to work closely with the homogenising national systems of education. Taking this contradiction as a point of inquiry, this thesis seeks to

answer the following questions. What are the ways in which different people understand, experience, and interpret mother-tongue education? What are the meanings and significance attached to mother-tongue education by various actors in these schools? How does the idea of ethno-linguistic identity play out in people's everyday life? Asking these questions, I seek to explore the implications minority language education might have on both educational practice and ethno-linguistic identity.

1. Education as a 'social field'

This thesis emphasises the necessity to investigate the conflicts and contradictions embedded in the process of education as analytically instructive vantage points. Instead of relying on either the simplistic theory of education as 'development' or the over-deterministic theory of education as merely a means of social reproduction, in this thesis, I investigate the entanglements between these ideas. Bourdieu's notion of 'social field' illuminates this tension in education most effectively, and following Bourdieu I conceptualise education as 'an arena of struggle'. In every social field, Bourdieu argues, social actors compete for field-specific capital into order to occupy certain positions in the hierarchy. Social actors seek to influence this process in order to make it work to their advantage. Within this view, the contradictions embedded in the education, discussed in the previous section, could be fruitfully analysed as the ongoing negotiations on various field-specific capital and struggles for the production of an 'educated person'. Many other researchers have followed a similar line of inquiry by analysing education as 'an intense site of cultural politics' (Levinson et al., 1996).

Within every broader education system there may be several strands, minority language education being but one example. Since minority language institutions function as parts of broader education systems, in this thesis, I analyse them as 'subfields' within the 'social field' of education. Bourdieu alerts us to the fact that actors in the social field of education struggle constantly to possess the symbolic capital of knowledge and language competence; the possession which in turn enables social actors to position themselves well in a given social hierarchy. A similar process animates the 'subfield' of minority language education, which uses minority language to impart education. Though minority language may be considered important within the subfield, it might not be valued within the broader social field of education. The social actors in the subfield of minority language education, therefore, may face 'internal contradictions' within the subfield and in relation to the social field (Grenfell and James, 1998:82; Urla, 2001).

Bourdieu leads us to believe that, struggles notwithstanding, the social field determines the subfield. Drawing on Bourdieu, but also departing from him, I suggest that the presence of the subfield also shifts the characteristics of the social field when ethno-linguistic groups seek to gain simultaneous membership of both the 'subfield' of minority language education and the 'social field' of national education. The idea of 'simultaneity' (Bakhtin, 1981) helps us to appreciate the fact that social actors in minority language education might not necessarily select between subfield and social field, but may instead thrive in their tense intersection. In this process, ethno-linguistic groups are able to

construct their own subjectivities by utilising the various resources available to them, and can respond in, sometimes, unpredictable ways.

2. Why mother-tongue education?

Minority language education has remained a highly contentious but highly politicised topic in Nepal. In the recent years, many ethnic organisations have put forward demands for mother-tongue education, and for the use of minority languages in official contexts (Gellner 1986; Bhattachan, 1995; Sonntag, 1995). Among the forty-point demands put forward by the Maoists before the start of the 'People's War' (1996-2006) was a call for the right to use all Nepali languages and dialects. Also, during the 'People's War', the Maoists routinely attacked school buildings, not only as symbols of state institutions, but also as icons of ethnic subjugation and discrimination (Pherali, 2011). The 1994 election manifestos of the three main political parties - Nepali Congress Party (NC), Nepal Communist Party (Unified Marxist-Leninist, UML), and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) - included a commitment in general terms to the promotion of mother-tongue education (Whelpton, 1997: 64), and many parties subsequently continued to keep the topic on the political agenda. In response, the Government of Nepal eventually launched a pilot multi-lingual education (MLE) project in seven primary schools in 2009, with mother tongues, Nepali and English as mediums of instruction.¹ This was followed by the School Sector

¹ The term Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) indicates a model that involves starting education in the medium of the language that a student already speaks i.e. the mother tongue. Inside a classroom this means learning school subjects like maths, science and social studies in student's first language (usually mother tongue -L1), then introducing a

Reform Plan (SSRP), in which the government proposed to make multi-lingual education mainstream in 7,500 schools by 2015. In addition, several ethnic organisations have been teaching ethnic languages to the younger generation in their mother-tongue schools across Nepal.

Despite the emphasis on minority language education in Nepalese political discourse, the everyday cultural politics of language use in minority language school has received limited academic attention.² While the existing studies on minority language schools in Nepal have equipped us to appreciate a variety of perspectives, we are yet to understand what happens inside minority language schools. Previous studies have covered: the benefits of minority languages in education (Awasthi, 2004, Yadav, 1992); minority language education as a linguistic human right (Shrestha and Hoek, 1995); power relations between various languages (Phyak, 2011; Giri, 2009, 2011); the gradual shift to dominant languages (Pettigrew, 2000; Turin, 2013); and the incongruity between the discourse and practice of ethnic activists (Gellner, 1997, 2014). Building on insights from these studies, this thesis draws attention to the everyday cultural politics of language use inside minority language schools.

Mother-tongue education provides an ideal site for exploring the dynamics of cultural politics in education. The professed objective of mother-tongue schools

second (Nepali -L2) and third (English-L3) language as 'subjects', and gradually transitioning to L2 and L3 as medium of instruction, if needed (UNESCO, 2011).

² Academic interest in mother-tongue education schools has increased in recent years. At the time of my fieldwork, there were at least three other PhD students studying mother-tongue education in Nepal via the following disciplinary perspectives: educational linguistics (University of Pennsylvania, USA); linguistics (Tribhuvan University, Nepal); and education (Kathmandu University, Nepal).

in Nepal is to cultivate and normalise minority languages and identities, thereby apparently positioning them in opposition to the overall objective of the Nepali national education system, which is to inculcate a uniform, nation-state sustaining the national identity. The schools discussed in this thesis can thus be seen as arenas for multiple narratives on nationalism and competing assertions of ethno-linguistic identity. In addition, they also bring together different ethnic groups, providing an ideal opportunity to examine how members interact with each other as individuals and as members of those groups. Lastly, in the multi-lingual schools, it is possible to observe children and parents negotiating their expectations regarding education and their expressions of solidarity with ethno-linguistic movements. Such schools, therefore, provide an opportunity to understand how children and parents express and negotiate their ethno-linguistic identities and position themselves within these polarised debates.

A number of scholarly approaches have been employed to study minority language education around the world. One of the dominant sets of literature on minority language tends to be motivated by normative concerns about the rapid extinction of minority languages. Within this literature, concepts such as linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), linguistic genocide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998), minority language rights (May, 2000; 2005), and language ecology (Muhlhausler, 1996; Hornberger, 1995) help us to appreciate the historical processes by which dominant languages are replacing many minority languages. Meanwhile, the second type of literature builds on this and explores how language is often used as an important way of negotiating social power, building solidarity within ethnic and indigenous

mobilisation campaigns, and in challenging dominant hierarchies and creating alternative identities (Gustafson, 2009; Aikman, 1999; Bilanuik, 2005). However, both types of literature tend to view language and identity as fixed units, to place dominant and minority languages in opposition with each other, and to overlook the socio-political circumstances of minority language speakers.

The third set of literature challenges this top-down and macro-level approach to language, and views language as a social practice. Concepts such as language ideology (Silverstein, 1979; Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994; Gal and Irvine, 1995) allow investigation of the political economy of everyday language practices. The fourth type of literature has increasingly challenged the static view of language and identity and has proposed fluid ideas such as translanguaging (Garcia, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2010) in order to refer to varied and discursive practices in multi-lingual contexts where speakers draw on several languages simultaneously. While rightly emphasizing language fluidity, translanguaging overemphasises free movement between different languages, and ignores that the movement of a linguistic code is usually from a powerful language to a less powerful one and is rarely the other way round. Translanguaging, thus, does not pay attention to the inequality between languages and the power relations inherent in social relations.

3. Research framework

By drawing on the literature introduced above, this thesis locates itself in an approach that understands language as a social practice rather than as a reified

entity, regardless of whether language is seen as fixed or fluid. The various approaches, discussed in the previous section, indicate that people utilise a variety of discursive practices in order to make sense of the circumstances around them. A focus on social practice, therefore, directs our attention towards the way people make sense of languages, rather than only towards their competence in a particular linguistic variety. In this thesis, I place a spotlight on various practices relating to language, in order to uncover the implicit and explicit discursive processes through which notions of education and ethno-linguistic identity may be negotiated. This research thus investigates the tensions and apparent contradictions in minority language education in order to explore the dynamic interplay of historical context and power relations in everyday language exchanges.

This thesis also explores the analytical necessity and advantage of looking at various languages and identities in interaction with each other. In a heterogeneous social context such as that of Nepal, minority language education is a 'zone of contact' (Pratt, 1991) where the dominant and less-dominant groups are 'in their relation with each other'. The practice of identification with a particular group usually concerns a (re)construction of social positions and involves a (re)allocation of power. Given that identities have historically been hierarchically interconnected, the new space created in minority language education involves a rethinking the nature of this connectedness. Therefore, the understanding of identity as an expression of social positioning leaves room to understand identities in an open-ended way. Thus, rather than focusing only on the cultural production of an ethnic identity in education through linguistic

practices, this thesis seeks to explore the ways in which these identities have changed over time, and to understand the varying ways in which they are entangled with other identities.

4. Fieldwork

Between August 2013 and March 2014, I conducted fieldwork in two mother-tongue education schools in Nepal: Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) in Kathmandu and Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) in Kapilbastu. Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) uses the local language Nepal Bhasa (Newari)³ as the official medium of instruction from nursery to grade 10, although subjects such as English, Science, and Maths are increasingly taught in Nepali. Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) uses the local language, Tharu, as the official medium of instruction at primary level (1-5).

During my fieldwork, I spent time interacting with students and teachers, observing classroom teaching and staff meetings, studying school textbooks, and participating in the everyday life of the schools during formal and informal interactions between parents, guardians, students and teachers. During this process, I also conducted many informal conversations, and held semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. I also examined the different ideas that

³ Nepal Bhasa is the language spoken by Newars, one of the ethnic groups in Nepal. Although 'Nepal Bhasa' literally means Nepalese language, it is different from 'Nepali', which is the official language of Nepal. Nepal Bhasa is also commonly known as Newari. However, many ethnic organisations have strongly opposed the use of the term 'Newari'. The census of Nepal now uses 'Nepal Bhasa' to denote the language spoken by Newars. In this thesis, I have used Nepal Bhasa, to reflect the term chosen self-consciously by Newar ethnic activists and used by Nepali state as census category.

might have shaped the institutional design of the schools, a process that extended from looking at the school curriculum to recording iconography and school songs. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with a number of government officials, development workers and ethnic activists. Chapter Three presents a detailed discussion of the research setting and methods.

In my research, I have paid close attention to localised practices relating to language use, while at the same time attending to broader historical contexts. Instead of focusing only on the production of ethno-linguistic identities by minority language schools, I have found it more helpful to focus on localised language practices in these schools. It is in these localised exchanges that people can position themselves while mediating with the larger structures, and find space for authoring (Holland et. al., 1998). This vantage point of everyday language practices also allows for identification of the ways in which people draw on their linguistic and cultural resources to position themselves in relation to each other.

5. Thesis argument

Drawing on the everyday practices in JSB and JKHS, I show that the students make meaning of their everyday worlds by maintaining a multi-lingual repertoire that includes concurrent use of their mother tongue, Nepali and some English, leading to multilingualism being used as a strategy for mother-tongue education. In this thesis, I will argue that mother-tongue instruction not only concerns the introduction of minority languages in education, but also constitutes

an 'arena of struggle', where the idea of an 'educated person' is (re)imagined, and the social positions of ethno-linguistic groups are negotiated.

I elaborate on this by highlighting two distinct, but interrelated dynamics. On the one hand, the actors in JSB and JKHS display inward-looking characteristics when constructing internal ethnic cohesion, by standardising varied forms of mother tongue; by normalising the use of the mother tongue on school premises and in public places; by using 'local' practices to develop 'useful' pedagogies in the classroom; by adhering to particular cultural practices to articulate 'authentic' ethnic identities; and by asserting distinction from the dominant Nepali identity. Through these processes, schools assert their distinctiveness by negotiating the legitimacy of minority languages for the purposes of education.

On the other hand, this image of distinct ethnic identity is used by students to assert simultaneous membership of multiple groups, and to make claims in the universal spaces of national education, public places, and notions of nationalism, all of which were previously associated only with Nepali. In doing so, the students display outward-looking dynamics that transcend ethnic boundaries and allow for their engagement as members of the national and international community. This thesis shows that the minority language schools such as JSB and JKHS do not seek to validate mother-tongue education by pursuing radically exclusive schooling system, but by negotiating a position for the subfield of minority language education within the broader social field of the national education system.

6. Chapter plan

This thesis is presented in eight chapters; through which it elaborates the interplay of the 'subfield' of minority language education with the 'social field' of national education in the production of an 'educated person'.

In Chapter One, I will present the theoretical and analytical framework of this research. Firstly, I will discuss various strands within the literature on education in order to position education as an arena for struggle. Secondly, I will briefly review some approaches used to study the issue of language and identity in education. Drawing on this, I will discuss the approach of this thesis, which is to use language as a lens to view social dynamics. In the final section of this chapter, I will present an overview of the existing literature on minority language education in Nepal and the specific contribution this thesis seeks to make.

In Chapter Two, I will lay out a historical overview that explains the salience of this issue in the contemporary context of Nepal. By tracing the development of language-in-education policy in Nepal, I will specifically highlight controversies over the use of various languages in official contexts, and the ways in which schools have been made use of in promoting and legitimising a range of political visions.

Chapter Three will present the ethnographic context and methodological details of the research, and will also discuss my research position and my engagement with the topic, the participants, and the process of research. In this chapter, I will

also contextualise the two schools, JSB and JKHS, and describe their histories and contemporary situations. I will then discuss the differences and similarities in minority language education in these two schools, and lay out my research approach.

Chapter Four will discuss the ways in which the schools seek to normalise minority languages on school premises and in public spaces. Both schools use minority languages for teaching purposes and in official communication, and in JSB students also participate in ethnic festivals. While the students speak in Nepal Bhasa and Tharu on school premises and in public spaces, they also use their 'translanguaging' practices to use multiple languages, without dislodging the Nepali language from its overarching position as the one bringing speakers of different languages together. In this chapter, I will also show that students participate in ethnic festivals by dressing up in traditional clothing, displaying their 'talent' in ethnic music, and building various informal groups. However, while they mark their 'ethnic' presence in public spaces through the participation in these activities, they also affirm symbols of Nepali nationalism such as the Nepali flag and the Nepali language. By simultaneously claiming more than one social identity, these schools and students challenge the apparent binary opposition between notions of ethnicity and nationalism in Nepal.

In Chapter Five, I will discuss the ways in which Nepal Bhasa and Tharu textbooks are being used to construct minority languages as 'legitimate languages' in education. I will pay particular attention to local stories, names, contexts, and pictures, and to how these have been used to establish mother

tongue education as legitimate pedagogy producing legitimate knowledge for the purposes of school education. While these textbooks served as spaces for language standardisation and localisation of education, they also made closer interaction with the state possible. Both of the schools worked very closely with the Government of Nepal (GoN) Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and followed its guidelines, both when publishing the textbooks and also when shaping these textbooks by including local contents. Within the context of these local textbooks, I will demonstrate how the two schools attempted to develop the 'subfield' of minority language education while working in alignment with the 'social field' of national education.

Chapter Six will highlight the way in which the notion of 'quality education' is used to challenge the 'language ideology' that minority language education is a low-quality type of instruction. In order to unlink this inherent association, the schools and students actively espouse external measures of quality such as excellent School Leaving Certificate (SLC) results, mother tongue proficiency, high English language levels, and good achievements in higher education. The idea of 'quality education' provides a space where parents and students are able to navigate their way through a range of interests and expectations by demonstrating that mother tongue use does not obstruct high education achievement. By doing so, JSB and JKHS negotiate a legitimate role for mother-tongue education in the production of 'educated' people.

In Chapter Seven, I will explore the link between minority language education and employment. Using the idea of the 'linguistic market place', I will

demonstrate that the emergence or creation of such new markets as FM radio stations, television channels, folk music and dance, and textbook writing, are seen as small but important ways in which minority languages can be used as labour to gain employment. Although these new opportunities seem to have shaped the aspirations of some students, many others also want to be chartered accountants, nurses and laboratory technicians. This chapter will discuss the ways in which ethnic identification resonates with student aspirations and is articulated within emerging labour markets, and, most significantly, will identify the shift towards a new vision of local language that sees it as a valuable form of linguistic capital, and as a marker of emerging groups.

7. Contributions of the study

The main contribution of this thesis is that it uses mother-tongue education as a lens, within the dynamic context of ethno-linguistic politics, to understand the process of production of an educated person and the negotiation of inter and intra-group relations. The thesis uses the tensions inherent in education as ‘an arena of struggle’ to understand the ways in which social actors engage with the contradictory nature of minority language education. The themes discussed in this thesis will be of particular relevance in multi-lingual contexts where ethno-linguistic movements are claiming space within national frameworks.

This thesis aims to contribute to an empirical study of Nepal by complicating the existing understanding of language issues. In the current political context, where polarised and often simplistic positions on ethnicity have resulted in the

ossification of political debate, I will suggest new ways in which various social groups identify with ethno-linguistic identity. By approaching the issue of identity in a more open-ended way, and exploring ethnic and national identities in close interaction with each other, this thesis aims to contribute to the continuing dialogue on issues of ethnicity in Nepal. By asking broader questions about ethno-linguistic politics and education, I intend this work to be of wider analytical relevance to issues of language, education and identity.

CHAPTER ONE

Languages of Distinction: Minority Identity and Language Education

1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of literature on education, minority identity and languages and discusses the theoretical and analytical framework for this thesis. In this chapter, I draw on Bourdieu's idea of social field to illustrate minority language education as an arena of struggle for the production of an 'educated person'. An educated person, according to Levinson et al. (1996) is a valued social identity. This identity serves to assure people that one possesses the valued disposition or symbolic capital, including a particular kind of knowledge and language competence that is required to position oneself well in social hierarchy, a way to claim distinction from other groups. Mastery over the dominant language, which is authorised by the nation-state, market, and other institutions, is one of the important ways in which an educated person is socially constructed. In the contexts where minority languages are used for the purposes of education, since the state institutions and market may not fully endorse such languages, the symbolic capital acquired through such education institution seem to hold less value.

Consequently, in these settings, people may need to negotiate the legitimacy of the very language, and associated identity, it is attempting to institutionalise. While people compete to gain this symbolic capital through education, they may negotiate their positions in a variety of ways in order to assert their distinct

linguistic identity and to claim socially-approved distinctions. Accordingly, they also engage in the continuous construction of these very distinctions through affirmation of certain identities. In this regard, minority language schools perform apparently contradictory functions of promoting diversity and ensuring membership in larger national community - an assimilation-pluralism paradox (Hornberger, 2000).

In this chapter, I review existing approaches on minority language education and discuss the approach adopted in this thesis to explore everyday language practices in the minority language schools. This chapter is presented in four sections. In the first section, I review the literature on education to locate this thesis in relation to the literature that understands education as a space for symbolic negotiation. The second section teases out several analytical themes on the study of language and identity, and explains that, in this thesis, I approach language as a lens to understand the social dynamics. In the third section, drawing on Bourdieu, I will present education as a social field – an arena of struggle. Since the social field is formed by ongoing negotiation between actors moving within and between various social fields, it is also fraught with internal contradictions. In this view, it is possible for conflicting but simultaneous use of different languages and positions in multilingual settings. Using Bakhtin's notion of simultaneity, I explore the ways in which people may assert their claims over more than one social identity. While they may be apparently contradictory, they may be neither incompatible nor binary opposites. Through the discussion of this dynamic process, this chapter discusses the ways in which minority language education might open up the possibility of re-imagining the idea of the 'educated

person'. In the final section, I discuss the literature on minority language education in Nepal to contextualise the current study.

2. Education and the 'educated person'

With the expansion of mass schooling, modern schools are considered central to the social and cultural shaping of the young for the production of an 'educated person' through cultural practice of inculcating a set of skills, knowledges, and discourses that undergird the modern nation-state (Levinson et al, 1996). The social institutions such as state and market endorse these skills, thus rendering them more legitimate than others e.g. embodiment of nationalism and competence in dominant language. People who possess these valued dispositions or symbolic capital are deemed to have claimed distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) from other social groups and are positioned well in social hierarchy.

Two distinct theories have been put forward to explain the role of education. Scholars who see 'education as development' argue that education is a way to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skill required to function well in the wider society (Goody, 1975) and to enjoy certain freedom and opportunities (Drèze and Sen, 1995). On the other hand, scholars who see 'education as domination' argue that education draw students into dominant projects of propagating ideologies (Althusser, 1971; Bénéï, 2008) and reproduce class inequality (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Many scholars now agree that the contradictory idea of 'education as development' versus 'education as domination' idea is one of the core tensions in conceptualising education (Levinson and Pollock, 2011). Intervening in this debate, many others (Willis,

1977; Levinson et. al, 1996; Simpson; 2003) have highlighted the need to acknowledge the conflicts and contradictions embedded in the process of education. They argue for the possibility of understanding education as a process of symbolic negotiation where schools could serve as a space for new form of learning and social relations. In the following sections, I will discuss these various strands of literature on education in order to situate this thesis.

2.1 Education as modernity and development

Premised mainly on human capital theory (Schultz, 1971), education is most commonly perceived as a key determinant of an individual's economic and social performance. It is believed to impart skills that determine upward social mobility and life chances. Individuals, through education, are expected to gain knowledge, skills and language that equip them to cope with the demands of the increasingly globalizing world (Anderson, 1979). Within this conception, the ideal education is assumed to reflect academic excellence, proficiency in language of the market, higher education, critical and creative skills that increase access to high-status jobs, nationally and internationally.

Similarly, Goody (1975) claims that education institutions played a critical role in pulling individuals out from self-contained primitive communities to economic activity and progress. Thus through an introduction to the alphabet, individuals can claim 'high culture' and power in the society, and also 'seize the opportunity to break away from the barriers of tradition.' Universal education is thus charged with the responsibility to provide symbolic capital to all so that individuals are positioned well in the society. This process of claiming individual mobility and

social status, as Urciuoli (1993:203) points out, represents the 'triumph of individual virtue.' In her study of language and class, she highlights how different groups are expected to embark on the course of progress through education and shift the dominant language in order to imbibe middle-classness.

In this respect, education is considered as a 'great leveller' of class and social differences and schools are seen as a means through which the disadvantaged may gain access dominant social capital, including language. The institutional design of the school is believed to contribute to this process through the propagation of a common culture, common language, a shared sense of history, and a common set of expectations (Coulby, 1997). Within this conception, schooling is expected to minimise any disparity amongst the citizens through the uniform education that the state imparts. The components like uniform curriculum, identical language of instruction, standardised evaluation and teaching systems intends to ensure that all children receive the same education (Lynch, 1989). A common national literature and a national language are thus essential to inculcating civil loyalty. The overall aim of the education system in this direction, broadly, of social homogenization (Coulby, 1997). In the larger project of nation building, the adoption of the dominant language that aims at linguistic integration is seen to improve one's chances of social mobility.

Minority language education, within this view, is considered to have only instrumental value to give access to mainstream education. UNESCO (1951: 691) states that 'pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school

life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible'. Some authors also point out that in certain circumstances, minority language education may not be desirable at all. Fraser-Gupta (1997) asserts that education in mother tongue is not preferred if mother tongue leads to social and ethnic divisiveness. In multilingual settings, she argues, social cohesiveness may be of more importance. Moreover, she points out that in the context where language is linked to social class, mother-tongue education could further marginalise the minority social groups. She further argues that 'the empowerment of individuals should have primacy over the development of an individual's mother tongue, and even over the preservation of a language. If language maintenance gets in the way of empowerment, then the individual's language rights may be being maintained but the educational and social rights are not' (Fraser-Gupta, 1997: 497).

2.2 Education as domination

The conception of education as a linear pathway to development is often criticised for its vision of education in universal and ahistorical terms. Authors such as Street (1984) have vehemently argued that this view of education as a 'neutral' technology assumes its existence independent of the cultural context and meanings. He claims that educational models are inextricably linked to cultural and power structures of the society and have effects in creating 'inequality for those who lack it and advantages for those who have it' (Street, 1984: 2). Education is understood a social process, in which particular socially-

constructed technologies are used within particular institutional frameworks for specific social purposes.

Social reproduction theorists have thus pointed out that the main function of the school is the reproduction of the dominant ideology and distribution of skill needed to reproduce that social hierarchy. Developed around the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976), they have pointed towards the role of a 'hidden curriculum' in education. They claim that the underlying values of educational systems are merely a legitimization for its true practical function of providing a steady stream of labour. Similarly, Althusser's (1971) theory discussed how ruling-class domination is secured in school through the systematic use of ideology. Through the system of meanings, representations and values embedded in concrete practices, schools act as a site for interpellation of the dominant ideology. Moreover, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) revealed the way in which education plays a particularly important role in legitimating and reproducing symbolic capital. Students whose social backgrounds do not have a close connection with the dominant symbolic capital are thus at a decided disadvantage. Ethnographic studies (Willis, 1977) have been used to illustrate the ways in which pupils' social class background contributes to the extent of their academic achievement or the lack of it.

The social reproduction theory thus views education as a tool for domination where schools serve to exacerbate social inequalities. In the views of scholars such as Althusser (1971), Young (1971), Bernstein (1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), schooling responded less to popular

impulses for advancement and empowerment, and more to the requirements of discipline and conformity demanded by capitalist production and nation-state. However, this emphasis on the structural-functionalist approach tends to focus on the intentions of the institutions rather than on the way education actually plays out in practice. Similarly, critical scholars like Phillipson (1997: 239) explains that language becomes a 'vector and means' by which an unequal division of power and resources between groups is propagated thus hindering social and economic progress for those who do not gain competence in dominant languages.

2.3 The paradox of minority language education

These divergent views on minority language education highlight one of the core tensions in understanding education: contradictory conception of 'education as development' versus 'education as domination' (Levinson and Pollock, 2011). This contradiction also affirms that education in a minority language is embodied in a highly complex social space. Drawing on the link between language and power, educators like (Freire, 1987) argue that if the students are to find their own voice, then the relation of community language and dialectic to the standard language has to be confronted. However, Freire also urges us to recognise the role of other languages. According to Freire (1987) 'the goal should never be to restrict students to their own vernacular. Educators should understand the value of mastering the standard dominant language of the wider society.'

Minority language education thus embodies what Hornberger (2000) calls the 'assimilation-pluralism paradox', an ideological paradox wherein a traditionally standardizing education is increasingly called on to make room for diversity within its framework. Consequently, minority language schools are expected to perform apparently contradictory functions of promoting diversity and ensuring membership in larger national community at the same time. Arguing the similar position, in the case studies from different countries, Martin-Jones and Heller (1996:10) illustrate that the tension between assimilation and pluralism is revealed in classroom teaching/learning situations where the 'tension between valuing an indigenous language and valuing the language of a former colonial power' is quite evident in language practices. In this sense, minority language schools negotiate the institutional spaces for less-dominant languages from a comparatively powerless position.

Minority language education thus presents a paradox in transforming the education system that is expected to perform multiple functions: to ensure unified national identity and to promote diversity; guarantee student's access to dominant languages and support institutionalisation of minority languages; and engage in crossing of language boundaries while working within the existing language hierarchies. One of the important yet unanswered question, as Ricento (2000: 208) points out, is - 'why do individuals opt to use or not use particular language and varieties for specific functions in different domains, and how are they linked with the institutional language policy decision making'. Minority language education thus emerges as a socially, culturally and politically complex

space where different groups engage in making claims to different positions while making sense of the circumstances they find themselves in.

3. Education as 'an arena for struggle'

Instead of relying on the simplistic theory of education as development and the over-deterministic theory of education as merely a means of social reproduction, some scholars now increasingly emphasise the need to investigate the conflicts and contradictions embedded in the process of education. Drawing on the localised everyday practices in educational institutions, another set of literature has highlighted that education has proven to be a contradictory resource for those who interact with it.

Ironically, schooled knowledge and disciplines may while offering certain freedoms and opportunities, at the same time further draw students into dominant projects of nationalism and capitalist labour formation, or bind them even more tightly to systems of class, gender, and race inequality (Levinson and Holland, 1996:1).

Other scholars (Giroux, 1981) have similarly advocated for a more complex understanding of 'popular and dominant forces' that together come to constitute the school environment. Giroux criticises the reproductive perspective on schooling, such as those of Althusser (1971), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), for deterministically conceiving the school as serving to inculcate only the culture, ideologies and social relations necessary to build and sustain the status quo (Giroux, 1981). He reminds us that schools can function as a 'terrain of contestation' and serve as spaces for new forms of learning and social relations. The classroom, textbooks and everyday interactions

can provide spaces where individuals and groups in concrete relationships negotiate, resist, accept or generate various ideas.

Scholars such as Willis (1977), Stambach (2000), Anderson-Levitt (2003), and Simpson (2003) have highlighted that the way children make sense of the education process and show that this does not necessarily follow the structures of the school alone. 'Social agents', wrote Willis (1981: 175) 'are not passive bearers of ideology, but active appropriators who reproduce existing structures only through struggle, contestation and a partial penetration of those structures.' His work highlights that schools did not unilaterally socialise the 'lads'; they themselves were very much part of the dynamic process. Based on the ethnographic studies of education, these studies move beyond the more deterministic formulation of education and highlight the ways in which social agents construct their own subjectivities by negotiating various resources available to them; i.e. to view education as a 'site of intense cultural politics'.

3.1 Bourdieu and social field

In order to understand the complex dynamics of language in education, I draw on Bourdieu's idea of 'social field'. The notion of field provides an opportunity to appreciate the tensions inherent in education from the perspective of relational dynamics of social actors in a given context. According to Bourdieu a social field is an arena of symbolic struggle in which agents compete to establish 'monopoly over the capital effective in it' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 17). The possession of this capital determines dominant or subordinate positions occupied by the agents in the field. The idea of a social field is thus inherently relational in nature,

where there is a) a configuration of positions and b) the process of position-taking by the actors (Hanks, 2005:72). Scholars in the field of education have increasingly begun to highlight the relevance of Bourdieu for exploring various themes in education (Grenfell and James, 1998, 2004; Levinson et. al., 1996, Lingard et.al., 2005). Grenfell and James (1998: 511) highlight that 'to employ field as a tool of analysis is to use the concept that is dynamic and everchanging'. The interaction between positions and position-taking makes the social field an arena dynamic activity rather than fixed structure; a space in a state of continuous reconstruction.

Grenfell and James (1998: 20), using Bourdieu's concept, illustrate that activities in education field is governed by interplay between various education agencies such as schools, curriculum development offices, examination boards etc. and the recognition conferred on them by people both within and outside of the field. In the context of France, Bourdieu has emphasised the importance of the formal educational route through which symbolic capital is acquired in the form of prestige, recognition, and authority. Schools therefore play a significant role in establishing 'institutional symbolic capital' and in providing credentials that are in line with other institutions, such as state and market. In an attempt to create a unity amongst various allied social field, the school might valorise certain capital and devalue others such as higher value place on learning dominant language and knowledge.

In order to understand the struggle in education, we need to keep in mind that the very definition of education is one of the disputed issues in the field. The

stakes of competition in the field are often about the meaning of education and the process of producing an educated person. Building on these ideas, Levinson et al. (1996) put forward the idea of the 'educated person' to focus on how various cultural processes develop a model of how one becomes a fully knowledgeable person embodying a maximum symbolic capital, within and against larger societal forces and structures operating in schools (Levinson et al. 1996:14), in order to position oneself well in social hierarchy and 'become somebody' (Luttrell, 1996). Education is thus seen as a 'struggle to make one's aspiration and desire real' (Mills and Morton, 2013:16). In this process, people come to acquire various knowledge, competence, and subjectivities.

One of the symbolic struggles in the field of education, therefore, is on the idea of 'an educated person'. Luttrell (1996) discussing the self-making process in non-formal education classes, points out that the institutional spaces of education encourages some forms of subjectivities more than the other, in relation to specific historical contexts. In some places, educated person may mean 'devotion and service' inspired by Chinese Confucianism (Shaw, 1996) and in others it could be 'chanting and toolmaking' (Rival, 1996). In the case of Nepal, scholars have variedly defined the production of educated person in terms of inculcation of Nepali nationalism through the history of valour and bravery (Onta, 1996), the idea of urbanised and westernised self (Pigg, 1992), as a 'good citizen' embodying the national identity (Skinner and Holland, 1996), as someone who exercises agency (Ahearn, 2003), and as a process of 'modernising' self (Valentin, 2011). An educated person is, thus, a valued social identity though highly contested.

In this thesis, I approach education as an area where different social and political actors make contesting claims about the very definition of education and the educated person. The mastery over the language authorised by the state, market, and other institutions, is one of the important ways in which an educated person is socially constructed. This symbolic struggle could take place in school textbooks, examination, curriculum, classroom instructions, and other public places. In these places, the struggle in the education could be represented by a continuum of 'orthodoxy': from the defenders of the existing form and distribution of capital and 'heterodoxy': those that are oriented towards redefining this orthodoxy through attempts to legitimate an alternative so as to re-distribute the field-specific capital to their advantage (Bourdieu, 1993).

3.2 Subfield of minority language education

Bourdieu also alludes to the fact that no field ever exists in isolation and 'there is a sense of subfields within a field' (Grenfell and James, 1998). Within every education system, there may be several strands of education such as minority language education. Since minority language institution function as a part of broader education system, it may be fruitfully analysed as a 'subfield' with the 'field' of education. Steinmetz (2010: 6), discussing the dynamics of subfield of historical sociology within the academic discipline of sociology, points out that, like any social field, the subfield is characterised by competition for subfield-specific stakes. However, the subfield may not be able to generate the forms of symbolic capital independent of the field. Nonetheless, each subfield will have its own internal logic: its own legitimate means and ways of being in relation to the

larger overarching fields. The subfield of minority language education, social actors may utilise the logic of 'belongingness' (Urcioli, 1995; Turin, 2014), 'authenticity' (Jaffe, 2001), or negotiate its position as 'legitimate language' (Bourdieu, 1977:650).

Many scholars remind us that the idea of Bourdieu's field position is inherently relational (Gorski, 2013; Grenfell and James, 1998; Swartz, 1997). As individuals move across the various fields and subfield, the capital that they possess may dictate varying social positioning within each field. Drawing on the idea of subfield, Steinmetz (2010: 6) notes:

Like any field, a subfield is typically characterised by two axes: One is defined by the volume of subfield-specific symbolic capital. The second is defined by the degree of autonomy from external forces... All of the subfield's members also participate in the enviroing field and have to pass through the same gate-keeping procedures as all of its members. But the subfield may revise or invert the values placed on different sorts of activities in the broader field.

In the case of education, the dominant language and identity is the more valued capital both in the field and the subfield. The minority language and identity are less valued capital in the field even while they might be valued more in its subfield as an indicator of authenticity and belongingness. This places minority language speakers and dominant language speakers in differential positions in the field and subfield. In this context, minority language competence or bilingualism may be declared 'valued assets' or dismissed as 'having no language' (Blommaert, 2005: 197) The education field is thus polarised between those players who occupy dominant positions in terms of capital and try to maintain their dominance by defending the status quo, and those who subvert them.

3.3 Internal contradictions

Bourdieu argues that the orderliness of the social fields exists due to the social actors' agreement on the 'rules of game'. However, Swartz (1997: 128) points out that 'his work thus far has acknowledged but not stressed the importance of interfield contradictions'. Since the social field is in constant flux, many scholars now identify that there is a possibility in Bourdieu's work that each field might value the same capital in different ways - 'as if they were legitimate for one groups whilst being in opposition to other groups' (Grenfell and James, 1998:82). In this regard, there is a scope of 'internal contradiction' within and between social fields. Studying the Basque youth in public spaces, Urla (2001) demonstrates the creative utilisation of their minority language in alternate forms such as street graffiti, zines, mini FM radio, rock music etc. Through these sub-fields of language activity, Basque youth engage in very different ways to establish their distinct identity from the dominant languages. Arguing similar position, Haeri (1997:795), in the study relationship between the state, the dominant classes and language in Iran, argue that the process of the reproduction of symbolic capital by the state and its institutions is always hindered by the constraints of history. The claims of rival institutions such as the religious establishment to particular kinds of symbolic capital can render the state's relation to the latter ambivalent. Since the social fields are relational in nature, any shifts made in one field can have implications for others within the field and in other fields.

'Changes *in* the field', Grenfell and James (2004) argues, is 'changing the field.'

Since each field is made up of an internal logic in relation to various symbolic capitals, shift in the field is likely to shift the value of the capital associated with it. The status quo, even when it is enduring, is always susceptible to challenge from new forms. The changes could originate internally, due to competing actors, or externally, due to new actor coming into play. In this analysis, based on shifts in ideas and actors, the social field of education could be sites of re-configuring the ways in which symbolic capital is distributed. In Bourdieu's own words, there are 'no transhistoric laws of the relations between the fields' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 109). In the process of struggle, actors in social field could attempt to 'restructure the capital configuration by trying to accumulate more capital and to introduce new forms of capital' (Gorski, 2013:28). Relations between fields are historical but not permanent; they can therefore change as the field.

From the viewpoint of action, any field is a space of 'strategic possibilities' (Bourdieu, 1993: 314; Hanks, 2005) in which actors have potential moves and courses of action. Based on varied activities within the field, social fields continuously reflect changing positions of relative dominance and/or subordination in what counts as capital in the field. In this sense, minority language education could be understood as sub-field within the larger social field of school education. The varied language practices, which will be discussed in section four, reflect the internal contradictions within this field. By this account, when individuals and groups move between different social fields, they are likely to simultaneously accumulate and utilise various forms of symbolic capital even while they may apparently be in contradiction with each other.

In this regard, many studies of language education programmes by various indigenous groups in different parts of the world (Gustafson, 2009; Aikman 1999), show, while the minority language schools use various forms of multilingual practices in the teaching learning process, they also emphasise the linguistic distinction of minority language. The early seminal work by Cummins (1976, 1977) makes a similar case by differentiating the practice of *additive bilingualism* where the second, usually dominant, language (L2) is taught along with student's first language (L1) and *subtractive bilingualism*, where the students' first language (L1) is replaced by second language (L2). Bilanuik's (2005) study shows that as an assertion to distinct linguistic identity, in Ukraine the public media, prefers 'non-reciprocal bilingualism' where each language is ensured a distinct characteristic through the process of ongoing correction of Ukrainian and Russian. The language revitalization processes often take the form of bi/multilingual education, where bilingual practices serve for dual purposes: to institutionalise the use of minority languages and to ensure learning of dominant languages.

3.4 Simultaneity in the fields

The notion of simultaneity provides a helpful framework in explaining these contradictions in social field. Since the actors moving within/between various social fields form the social field in ongoing negotiations, it is fraught by internal contradictions. Within this view, it is possible for conflicting but simultaneous claim on different positions. The idea of 'simultaneity' is influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptual system that rejects binarism. Woolard (1999:4), discussing

the theoretical utility of this concept, identifies that simultaneity allows the possibility of real co-presence of apparently 'contrasting elements in tension'. The idea of simultaneity helps us to broaden our understanding of multilingual settings and appreciate that social groups are embedded in multi-layered sub field and field, which may co-exist.

This interaction, this dialogic tension between two languages and two belief systems, permits authorial intentions to be realized in such a way that we can acutely sense their presence at every point... (Bakhtin, 1981:314).

While the idea of simultaneity does not reconcile the power hierarchies, it nonetheless opens up the possibility of multivalent identities to emerge. With this view, it is possible to imagine that various minority languages co-exist along with other dominant languages, even when they may or may not share similar symbolic capital and/or exist in a harmonious relationship. The framework of simultaneity thus helps us to appreciate that in multi-lingual and multi-ethnic contexts, where social groups might make claims on more than one identity ⁴ While there might be various tensions present in co-existence of various identities, within this framework, various levels of 'unresolved co-presences' are possible. Through these mechanisms, in a multilingual and multi-ethnic setting, not only of various languages and linguistic forms coexist, but also different positions, voices and identities.

At still another level, simultaneity is a dialogue between the different meanings the same word has at different stages in the history of a given national language, and in various situations within the same historical period (Holoquist, 1990:67)

⁴ Woolard (1999:4) notes that simultaneities can occur in various forms such as: hybridity (the mixing of two or more forms), polyglossia (the simultaneous presence of two or more languages within a single cultural system) and heteroglossia, (where same language exist in its official and unofficial forms).

In the context of minority language of education, the subfield can thus represent a space that belongs simultaneously to the subfield and the field. The idea of simultaneity in social field is a helpful analytical lens that can bring to light various social processes that tend to cross boundaries. Ethno-linguistic complementarity, May (2005) argues, 'need not be constructed as irredeemably oppositional.' This helps us to re-conceptualise the boundaries of social life and move away from reductionist approach to language and identity. By placing the focus on the multi-lingual speakers, as Woolard (1998:3) shows, we are able to appreciate the ambivalent but 'simultaneous messages that are communicated in linguistic contact zones, and speakers' simultaneous claims to more than one social identity.' Especially in changing political contexts, individuals can engage simultaneously with more than one social identity and languages, while making sense of changing circumstances around them. This process of simultaneity opens up the possibility of re-imagining the idea of 'educated person.'

4. Ethnic identity, languages, and education

The focus on language and education thus allows us to draw our attention to the tension between the disparate meanings of education and the ideas of educated person. The choice of language in education can potentially play a critical role in the purpose and processes of school experiences, and change the patterns of exchanges in a given social context. Many researches show how indigenous and language movements around the world, often utilise language as important ways to make claims on the state (Bilanuik, 2004; Gustafson, 2009), articulate ideas about ethnicity and nationalism (Aikman, 1999; Heller, 2007), and express

community memberships (Turin, 2014). Education, in this context, serves as one of the significant arenas for the 'cultivation' of language (Garcia and Flores) and to influence the 'framing' (Bernstein, 1971) of curricular contents.

Though the connection between language and ethnic membership is highly contested, we cannot ignore the centrality of language in making the social and political claims through education. Whether it is in the form of organised indigenous movements for minority languages (Aikman, 1999; Heller, 2007; Bilanuik, 2004; Gustafson, 2009) or informal translanguaging practices in teaching-learning process (Garcia, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2010), a variety of discursive practices are utilised as a response to homogenising impulses of mainstream education and in order to negotiate the legitimacy of the minority languages in education. In the following section, I will draw upon the literature on language, ethnicity and education to highlight some the prominent themes in the current literature.

4.1 Nationalism and monolingual ideology

Scholars have long demonstrated that the discourses around language are strongly linked with the imagination of the nation-state (Hobsbawn, 1990). The apparent unity of language, Bourdieu notes, is the result of historical process. Although the ideological association of monolingualism and nationhood has now been widely critiqued, the belief that the citizens of a nation-state should have one shared language has proven to be particularly persistent, to the extent that the absence of a distinct language may raise doubts about the viability of a

particular nation-state. Given these contexts, authors such as Heller (1999) points out that the notion of linguistic minority is a consequence of an ideological context of 'linguistic nationalism' where a particular language is supported by the state and is seen as central to nation-building.

When acquiring competence in state-supported languages is an important way to claim membership to the national community, that language gains the status of a legitimate language. Legitimate language, according to Bourdieu (1977:650) is uttered by a legitimate speaker, in a legitimate situation, to legitimate receivers and formulated in legitimate phonological and syntactic forms. Through the process of endorsing a particular language as official language, language policies often facilitate the process of standardization and its institutionalization through the state institutions such as courts, public media and schools; this of course accentuates the importance of the state-supported language in everyday language exchange.

Consequently, monolingual ideology occupies a central role in affirming the idea of nationalism. In Nepal, for example, during the Panchayat period (1960-1990) the institutionalisation of language played a very important role in the nation-building process. As we will see in the following chapter, Nepal embarked on an exclusive state building project, which was popularised as 'uniquely Nepali' system. This placed an importance on homogeneous national identity and monolingual ideology where Nepali language was positioned as a very powerful symbol of Nepali nationalism (Gaige, 1975; Onta, 1996). To date, even while the constitution has been amended to include all the languages spoken in the country

as national language, the state regularly rejects the use local languages in state institutions (see Chapter Two for a detailed discussion).

Many scholars around the world have drawn our attention to the ideological basis of state-supported development of languages through these language-planning policies (Tollefson, 1991; Phillipson, 1992; Ricento, 2000). Scholars such as Tollefson (1991: 16) argue 'planning language' is 'planning inequality.' He disagrees with the definition that language planning is a neutral effort to systematise language varieties. Instead, he argues that language policy should be defined as the 'institutionalisation of language as a basis of distinction among social groups.' Drawing from the example from countries such as Britain, the USA and Australia, he points out that 'standard English' is not an arbitrarily chosen standard. It represents the language of the dominant social class, thus giving that particular class an advantage. Thus there has been a widespread discussion on the issue of 'domain loss' as a product of language politics (Salo, 2013). Locating the growth of English in the context of post-colonialism, Phillipson (1992) argues that expansion of one language, in the form a hegemonic language, is an example of linguistic imperialism. When one language expands rapidly, it takes a form of a 'killer language' resulting in the death of other less powerful languages. Activist-linguist Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls this phenomenon 'linguistic genocide'.

Normative concerns about disappearing languages and the positive role of mother tongue in better access to education has been one of the recurring themes to counter the forces of nationalism and consequent monolingual ideology. In

Nepal, authors such as Phyak (2011) have vehemently raised issues against 'monolingual hangover, elitism, and displacement of local languages'. Others (Yadav, 1992; Awasthi, 2005; Ghimire, 2011; Yadav and Turin, 2005; Tumbahang, 2010) have pointed towards the needs to use mother tongue at least in primary education. They argue this on the grounds of social justice and to enable children from minority language groups to have better access to education.

These analyses have made significant contribution to the development language rights as an academic paradigm (May, 2005). Concepts such as linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998) for the institutional support of different languages, minority language rights (May, 2000; 2005) for protection of minority language and its speakers, and language ecology (Muhlhausler, 2000; Hornberger, 1995) situating loss of languages within the wider ecological framework, have raised questions on the centrality of dominant language as 'inevitable, apolitical and unproblematic.' These approaches have also been critical in drawing our attention to its central concerns: questions of inequality, relations of power, and social justice (May, 2005) and understanding the historical process of normalizing dominant languages.

These approaches have been quite fruitful in recognizing the macro-level dynamics of languages and making a strong case for safeguarding minority languages. However, critics have derided that they often ignore the micro-level power dynamics in everyday language encounters by the minority language speakers, while negotiating their positions in the contexts that support dominant languages. Several empirical contexts around the world show that, even when

minority groups gain language rights, the effectiveness of the school-based language maintenance is dependent on variety of contexts, such as status of language, the context of language interaction, and expected patterns of use. These cannot be assured by enforcing language rights.

4.2 Ethnicity and politics of recognition

Accordingly, language is often used as an important way to build solidarity in ethnic mobilisation, both to challenge the dominant hierarchies and to build alternate identities. Many indigenous and ethnic movements around the world have focussed on demands for official state recognition of their languages as a way to assert their claims on the state. Gustafson (2009:4), discussing the bilingual education in Bolivia, point out the how these schools reforms played out as a 'struggle over the (de) legitimization of inequality amid shifting strategy of elite rule and contested narrative of the trajectories of Bolivian nation-state.' His study illustrates the ways in which bilingual education reforms are instructive to understand the process of production of knowledge as a vehicle of self-transformation and socio-political transformation. Similarly, Bilanuik (2005) discussed the 'non-reciprocal' use of Ukrainian and Russian languages in the public media as a way in which newly formed Ukrainian nation-state constructed their distinct national identity. Aikman's (1999) study traces the indigenous language programme in Peruvian Amazonia to understand the ways in which indigenous communities sought recognition from the state.

These processes often referred to as the 'politics of recognition' call for limited forms of segregation, or to use Young's term 'differentiated solidarity', for the

purpose of alleviating social disadvantage (Young, 2000: 210–28). Identities are seen as a means to forge solidarity and as centres of collective action. The key feature is thus the recognition of difference, and often demand equality on the basis of the very grounds on which recognition had previously been denied. The demand is not for inclusion within the fold of ‘universal’ framework on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect ‘in spite of’ one’s differences but respect for oneself as different (Kruks, 2001: 85). This perspective suggests that the issue of equality in education is therefore not just about getting the marginalised groups in and out of the schools successfully, but also about changing the nature of education itself both in its organization and in its curriculum. It is also about the symbolic meanings that are attached to institutions that often significantly affect the social standing of persons and their opportunities (Young, 1999: 23). Two distinct claims are made in this regard. First, the groups that have been excluded need equitable access to education. And second, the education system also needs to consider the ways differences are recognised in education.

In the context of Nepal, language has remained an important way in which ethnic groups have been mobilised (Gellner, 1997; Turin, 1997, 2014; Shrestha and Hoek, 1995). Authors have pointed out the ways in which language is seen as a ‘universally recognised badge of identity’ (Turin, 1995), an indicator of belongingness to a community (Turin, 2014), and an emotive way to mobilise ethnic groups for political action (Gellner, 1997). Scholars have also analysed the higher value placed on written documentation of language compared to oral forms, especially to augment the ethnic mobilisation in Nepal. Turin (2012)

discusses the ways in which Thangmi community in Nepal expected him to produce a large dictionary of Thangmi language, similar to the length of his PhD, which could serve as a valuable resource to assert their distinct ethnic identity. Many other authors in Nepal such as Yadav (1992) have raised similar concerns on the centrality of written documentation and standardisation of language. In this thesis, the theme of written language forms much of my discussion in Chapter Five.

Ironically, in challenging the monolingual order, the social actors within language revitalisation movements also take on a discourse of linguistic nationalism and have to represent languages as clearly bounded system in promoting their cause, albeit on a smaller scale (Jaffe, 2001). These approaches have been highly criticised for their tendency to reinforce reified notions of group identity, in an intention to serve the interests of the disadvantaged groups. Templeton (1999) identifies this as a core dilemma in group-based approaches: though they aim to include the ethnic group they seem inevitably to have unintended exclusive effects of their own. Ironically, within this view, one can only combat marginalization of identities is by identifying more not less. This in turn is likely to lead to searches for new ways to preserve the 'endangered' ethnic identity. In these projects of crystallizing group identities, the emphasis on difference might reduce ethnic identity as a 'license for political and intellectual separatism' (Turner, 1993:414).

4.3 Language ideology

The third set of literature shifts focus to approaching language as a social practice and studies the micro-level power dynamics of everyday language encounter. Many scholars now argue that linguistic nationalism involves much more than whether people can speak one or more languages (Heller, 2006:10). It includes the process in which various languages come to represent certain meanings in a given context. Increasingly, the concept of 'language ideology' (Silverstein, 1979; Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994) has been used to make inquiry into the mediating link between overarching social structures and forms of everyday language exchange. Language ideology, Silverstein (1979: 193) argues, are 'sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization of justification of perceived language structure and use.' These authors investigate the 'shared bodies of commonsense notions' (Rumsey, 1990: 346) about language in a given context and argue that the meanings that every language represent are often shaped by the relationships from which it is generated. They argue that ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language, but also about the social relations that the language mediates. This body of literature reminds us the understanding of language is usually 'partial, contested and value-laden' (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994:58).

Following similar analysis, many scholars have investigated the construction of power and hierarchy in everyday language exchange and locate linguistic practices as a part of large system of inequality, encompassing states as well as local communities (Gal and Irvine, 1995, 2000; Irvine, 1989). Drawing on this

theoretical underpinning, these researches focus on everyday language practice to illustrate that people often use language to discern their 'locatedness' in a group and negotiate the dynamics of identity formation. Irvine (1989) finds that Wolof villagers construe linguistic differentiation as related to social differentiation, where people use inter- and intra-linguistic variation to discern the social groups of the speakers. Linguistic behaviour is, thus, seen as deriving from speakers' social, political, intellectual, or moral character (Gal and Irvine, 1995; Irvine, 1989).

In this context, Fishman (1997) argues, people who speak the less dominant languages may *experience* the link between language and identity, even while there might not be any scientific link between the language and identity. The ethnic identity is called into being when, through the medium of language, a particular ethno-linguistic identity is legitimised or devalued (Pavelenko and Blackledge, 2004:13) and indexed in society (Silverstein, 1979). In everyday language exchange, the hierarchical structuring of difference – often termed as 'markedness' – play out very strongly in ethnicisation and stigmatization of language varieties. Various studies around the world have demonstrated this phenomenon. Urcioli (1996) in her study of Puerto Ricans in New York shows that imposed racialisation due to the 'markedness' of both Spanish and English spoken by these groups.

Identity work may, thus, serve to underscore the distinction between group members and those outside the group on the basis of embodied symbolic capital. Ethnic identity, according to scholars such as Barth (1969) and Urcioli (1996),

emerges under the conditions of contact, as a way of reifying differences between people. According to these authors, ethnic distinction does not appear in absence of social interaction. On the contrary, it is through the social contact that the critical feature of self-ascription and ascription by others become visible. As a product of situated social action, identities may shift and recombine to meet new circumstances (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004: 376). Irvine's (1989) analysis of greetings in Wolof speaking groups in West Africa, demonstrate the creative use of language to impose high status on the addressee in order to accomplish social purposes such as gaining financial support. Many socio-linguistic researches (Gal and Irvine, 1995; Irvine, 1989; Gal, 1989) have now shown the way in which discursive exchanges influence process of boundary making in languages and linguistic identity. This approach, while has helped us to understand the construction of power and hierarchy in everyday language exchange, presents a minimal possibility for crossing language boundaries.

4.5 Fluid language boundaries

Fourth set of literature urges us to look at the language exchanges in multi-lingual settings and points towards fluidity across language boundaries. New developments in the socio-linguistic literature increasingly highlight the importance of paying attention to everyday practices and actual language exchanges. Drawing our attention to the multilingual contexts, several authors point towards the empirical realities where several languages co-exist with each other. Creese and Blackledge (2010: 106), in particular, have cautioned against 'conceptualising multi-lingualism as parallel monolingualisms'. Scholars (Garcia, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2010) use the term 'translanguaging' to refer to

varied discursive practices in multilingual contexts where speakers draw on several languages simultaneously. This term enables us to elucidate other communicative processes of the multilingual community that were referred to in various linguistic researches as: code-switching, interference, crossing, co-langauaging etc. The focus here is not on language but on the people who draw might on different languages in their multilingual discursive practices.

This analysis has made it possible to capture the perspective on multilingualism that is more complex and grounded in the everyday language use. The idea of 'linguaging' ('language' as a verb) explicates the dynamic process of the use of more than one language in 'making meanings, shaping experiences, gaining knowledge' (Baker, 2011). Unlike the situation where different languages have different functions (commonly referred as diglossia), in translanguaging different languages can co-exist in the same place and be used in an integrated manner to mediate make sense various activities in a given social context.

While this shift in linguistic analysis has drawn our attention to actual language exchange, the concept such as translanguaging presents an idealised view of coexisting languages. In actual practice, the linguistic hierarchy often denies acceptance of 'low-status' language into the 'high-status' language, and the flow of ideas is usually unidirectional. Bilanuik (2005) identifies the stigmatization of *shurzhyk* as a substandard form of speech in the context of language politics in Ukraine. We can discern the language hierarchies at play here, even as we appreciate that various groups of speakers may or may not share the same interpretive rule. May (2005) lists several examples of second language

acquisition, where there is negative characterisation of second language acquirers and speakers who use a mix of two languages is seen as failed monolinguals rather than successful bilinguals.

Even while we appreciate the fluid movement across boundaries, authors such as Heller (2007) argues for an approach to researching multilingualism that moves away from a highly idealised view of coexisting linguistic systems to a more critical approach that situate language practices in social and political context. Drawing on various literature on symbolic power of language and language ideology, discussed in previous section, I appreciate that 'historically associated languages continue to hold considerable purchase for members of particular cultural or ethnic groups in their identity claims' (May, 2005: 330; 2001).

4.6 Language as a lens to social dynamics

This thesis therefore approaches language as a social practice rather than as a reified entity, regardless of whether language is seen as fixed or fluid. I draw on the literature that emphasises on the centrality of language in nationalism (section 3.1) and ethno-linguistic mobilization (section 3.2). This set of literature provides an important insight on the macro-level social dynamics of language, power, and identity in order to understand the political location of language. Analytically, I draw on the literature on language ideology (section 3.3) to understand the micro-level response to macro-level dynamics and the literature on translanguaging (section 3.4) to understand the everyday communicative practice. In this thesis, I draw on these literatures on minority language education, in order to be attentive to both power-relations that construct

linguistic hierarchies and a variety of ways in which people use language in multi-lingual settings. Attentiveness to both these processes help me to appreciate how and why language boundaries coalesce, how do people use language as social practice, and what happens to languages and their users in this process.

In this thesis, I investigate language as a lens to understand the dynamic ways in which people position themselves and negotiate these social positioning. Bourdieu's discussion on language and power is particularly instructive here. 'No one acquires a language', Bourdieu states 'without acquiring a relation to language' (Bourdieu, 1977: 646). This power relation of languages configures that power relation between the speakers of those languages. Therefore, Bourdieu argues that language cannot be understood only within through the lens of purely linguistic analysis. Every linguistic exchange is a reflection of 'complex network of historical power relations between the speakers as well as between the respective groups to which they belong' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 118).

It is this historic power relation that gets manifested in the process of 'identity-making' when any language is used for the purposes of education. Whether it is in the ideals of monolingual nationalism (section 3.1) or in distinct practices of ethnic politics (section 3.2), as Silverstein (1998:402) argues, 'people participate in semiotic process that produce their identities, beliefs and their particular senses of agentive subjectivity'. And in this process, people use language as an 'emblematic of social, political, intellectual of moral character' of the speaker (Woolard, 1998, 18-19). In this thesis, I draw upon these identity-making

characteristics of everyday language exchanges to understand the interaction between the subfield of minority language education and broader field of education. In different chapters, I will specifically draw upon the ideas of translinguaging (Chapter Four), legitimate language (Chapter Five), language ideology (Chapter Six), and linguistic market (Chapter Seven) to analyse the everyday practices on language use.

The focus on everyday practices on language use also directs our attention to people and the ways in which they make sense of language rather than their competence in a particular linguistic variety. I argue that it is through the study of everyday practices that one can bridge the gap between macro-level and micro-level social dynamics. Whether it is in the form of organised indigenous movements for minority languages, everyday construction of language ideology or informal translinguaging practices, people utilise a variety of discursive practices in order to make sense of circumstances around them. Through this vantage point of everyday language practices, we can appreciate the ways in which people draw on their linguistic and cultural resources to position themselves and each other in the social field of education.

In this thesis, I place the spotlight on practices around language use in order to uncover implicit and explicit discursive process through ethno-linguistic groups may construct their own subjectivities. In this process, social actors might respond in, sometimes, unpredictable ways. Especially in the multilingual contexts, we might therefore find 'a mixture of oppositional and accommodative tendencies which have to be critically examined' (Cangarajah, 1993: 603). Since schools are seen as important sites for constructing, validating and legitimising

what counts as 'institutionalised cultural capital' for the production of 'educated person', it is also a place of conflict in which agents compete to over this capital. Instead of conducting an evaluation of the benefit of mother-tongue education in ethno-linguistic politics, in language preservation, or in educational success of minority groups, this thesis explores the ways in which various social actors use language and linguistic resources in order to negotiate their position in relation to each other in the social field of education.

This thesis also argues for an analytical necessity to adopt relational approach to studying minority language education. Empirically, in minority language schools the dominant and the less-dominant groups are in their relation with each other (Pratt, 1991). In this sense, minority language schools negotiate the institutional spaces for less-dominant languages from a comparatively powerless position. Consequently, in these multi-lingual settings, actors also negotiate the 'legitimacy' of the very language they are attempting to institutionalise. Analytically, this approach enables us to not look for the 'intrinsic properties of individuals or groups' but to 'construct their relational attributes' and conceptualise them as 'interdependent units in terms of broad networks of relations' (Gorski, 2013:22).

5. Minority language education in Nepal

The multiethnic and multilingual context of Nepal provides an empirical setting for this thesis. Nepal has highly heterogeneous population with 125 ethnic

groups and 123 languages (Census, 2011)⁵. The recent political changes – marked by end of monarchy (2006), a decade-long people's war (1996-2006), the mainstreaming of ethnic politics (1990), and the new federal restructuring of Nepal (2015) – has made the issue of language and ethnicity a much-debated political subject in Nepal (Gellner et. al, 1997; Hangen, 2010; Bhattachan, 1995; Sonntag, 1995; Giri, 2010). There is therefore a tendency, in the literature, to pay more attention to the high politics of state and analyzing ethno-linguistic mobilization as competition in formal politics, e.g. constitutional change and federal restructuring (Lawoti, 2007; Ghai, 2007), electoral arrangements (Vollan, 2012), and party politics (Hachhethu, 2008).

And yet, everyday cultural politics of language use in minority language schools has received very limited academic attention. The existing studies on minority language schools tend to focus on the normative concerns on the use of minority language in education. The work by Yadav (1992), Awasthi (2004) and Ghimire (2011) argue for the importance of language in education outcomes of ethno-linguistic groups. Similarly, Phyak (2011) and Giri (2009, 2011) discuss the differential levels of power enjoyed by the three languages (mother tongue, Nepali and English) and the consequent implication for the sustainability of mother tongue education. Scholars have argued that minority language education is a way to redefine educational systems within broader efforts to democratise, pluralise and reconstruct public lives (Tumbahang, 2010; Rai, 2009; Hangen, 2010), undo the effects of language 'unplanning' (Giri, 2009), and to recognise ethnic identity and influence the existing social hierarchy (Yadava,

⁵ For the detailed discussion on the different languages, language families, and language resources see Yadav and Turin (2005), Yadav (2007), Hutt (1986, 1988)

2007). Accordingly, activists contend that indigenous languages should be introduced at least as 'elective' subjects (Tumbahang, 2010). Shrestha and Hoek (1995) have discussed the link between ethnic activism and language education, while Gellner (2009, 2014, 1997) highlight the incongruity between rhetoric of language preservation and actual practice of ethnic activists.

While this literature is critical in emphasizing the salience of ethnic identity as an organizing principle, it does not sufficiently capture the practices of everyday lives where people are increasingly negotiating these concerns, especially at a time when the social hierarchies are undergoing a fundamental reconfiguration. There may well be different processes going on in schools quite beyond the national-level institutional changes. These dynamics are very important to understand the complex field of multilingual education. Undoubtedly more research is necessary to reconceptualise this phenomenon from the bottom up. I will follow the leads indicated by Shrestha and Hoek (1995) and Gellner (2009) and how language plays out in everyday life in minority language schools. I will specifically focus on dynamic aspects of language-in-education to understand the complex relationship between the ethnicisation of Nepali politics and educational policy agenda.

In addition, while there is a growing acknowledgement of ethnicity-based inequality, there is a tendency to analyze it focusing on separate ethnic groups. However, in a multi-ethnic society like Nepal, the real context of multi-ethnic settings is characterised by inter-group exchanges. There is, therefore, a need to extend the analysis on ethnicity beyond a single ethnic group and situate it in

intergroup relations. This research seeks to investigate the issue of mother-tongue education and the ways in which people position themselves within these polarizing debates on ethnicity. Through this, I aim to understand the ways in which ideas and practices of language-in-education might reveal the complex relationship between the ethnicisation of politics and the educational policy agenda in Nepal.

There have been several anthropological studies of education in Nepal. While these studies provide rich ethnographic material to foreground the social role of education, they do not focus on the issue of language and ethnicity. Most notable of them are Ragsdale (1989) and Ahearn (2003). Ragsdale's (1989) analysis reveals the disconnections between country's centrally planned education system's focus on national integration and rural community of Gurungs. Similarly, Ahearn (2003:155), in her analysis of love letters, literacy and agency in a Magar community also notes that in school textbooks 'development and nationalism' go hand in hand and demonstrate the government's desire to demonstrate a strong national identity. However, she also highlights that literacy gives a sense of agency in other realms of lives and connect them with 'development discourse', various notions of 'success', and a new sense of personhood.

Skinner and Holland's (1996) ethnography of school in Naudada presents an account of how national identity and nation-building efforts were tied to development. The lessons exhorted the students do 'good work' to develop Nepal and themselves as good citizens. They also note that in actuality, schools in Naudada did not provide a harmonious march towards nation building, and

they often offered a heterogeneous site of identity formation and demonstrated different voices for their understanding of themselves and the world. This process thus had 'implications, not only for their continued educational participation and future goals but also for potential changes in dominant ideology and self-understanding that resisted older forms of privilege' (Skinner and Holland, 1996: 291).

Similarly, Higbe's (1988) memoir of her time spent as a Peace Corps volunteer also outlines the hopes and aspirations that education brings in Banepa, a traditional Newar village. Through various portraits of individuals in the village, she highlights that villagers 'security of the past' is still theirs to claim but are also trying to enter the changing world through education (Higbe, 1988:164). In a similar line, Rothchild (2006) provides a narrative and the struggles of Nepalese girls in pursuing education. These ethnographies of schools in Nepal bring the focus on the agency of ordinary people in making sense of education that is imparted by the education institutions. All these works look at education as a 'process' for social change and indicate the potential to transform not just themselves but also society.

These themes were taken forward in the special issue of *Globalization, Societies, and Education* 9(1) in 2011. This collection of eight articles draws attention to the tensions and contradictions resulted by the education policy in Nepal. They explored 'the cultural implication of developmental modernity within the realm of schooling' (Carney and Rappleye, 2011:7). Most studies presented in this collection trace the legacy of National Education Planning Commission and the

ensuing challenges that the country faces in its unfulfilled promise of development.

Building on previous work on the anthropology of education in Nepal and drawing on the analytical framework used by Skinner and Holland (1996), in this thesis I examine education as a space of multiple meaning-making within a given socio-political context. Many authors (Whelpton, 1997: 39, Gellner, 2009) have repeatedly reminded us that the official vision and everyday life of the population might not overlap. In this thesis, I explore the way these diverse and often contradictory goals of ethnicity-based education play out in complex language practices in schools and the implications of this for rapidly changing national politics. Such an analysis is likely to offer a better account not only of the meaning and significance attached to education but also of the place of education within the broader reconstruction of Nepali public life.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated that language-in-education presents a very complex social space that cannot be explained through linear approaches to understanding education such as 'education as development' or 'education as domination'. I have drawn on Bourdieu's concept of social field to explain education as an arena of struggle where social actors compete for symbolic capital, embodied by the idea of an educated person. In this context, minority language education, a subfield in the field of education, accentuates the contradictory nature of education through an introduction of languages that are

hitherto undervalued in the field of education. Since this subfield is located within the broader field of education, the social actors of the subfield display various ways of 'being in relation to the larger overarching fields'. This simultaneous belonging in the subfield and the field of education could result in 'mutually oppositional and accommodative tendencies' demonstrated by the social actors in social field.

In relation to minority language education, this conceptualisation enables us to examine the language-in-education as a process of multiple meaning making within a given socio-political context, providing contradictory resources to those who interact with them. Since educational institutions play an important role in validating what counts as legitimate knowledge and identity, various groups of people with differing interests engage with schools in order to shape their relation with them. In this chapter, I have presented minority language schools as the 'zone of contact' where dominant and non-dominant knowledges, languages, and identities interact with each other. This relational approach to the construction of identity opens up spaces to imagine education as a symbolic site where 'new relations, new representations, and new knowledge can be formed, sometimes against, sometimes tangential to, sometimes coincident with the interests of those holding power' (Levinson et. al., 1996:22).

CHAPTER TWO

Rethinking Languages, Rethinking Nepal

Nepali should be the medium of education, exclusively from the third grade on, and as much as possible in the first two grades. No other languages should be taught even optionally, in the primary school because few children will have need for them, they would hinder the learning of Nepali...other language will gradually disappear and greater national strength and unity will result.

(National Educational Planning Commission Report, 1956:96-97)

All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal

(Article 6 (2), Fundamental Rights, The Constitution of Nepal, 1990)

1. Introduction

This chapter is a historical account on the process and nature of institutionalisation of various languages in Nepal. In this chapter, first, I discuss the ways in which the issue of language-in-education has been 'an arena of struggle', by tracing its historical development and situating the discussion in the changing politics of contemporary Nepal. I also trace the gradual shift in the narratives of Nepali nationalism in relation to different languages. Second, I draw attention to the contentions around the issue of language to illustrate how language-in-education has been used to construct varying visions of Nepal. Through a discussion on language politics, both before and after 1990s, this chapter aims to uncover the historical rootedness of the current ethno-linguistic movements. This narrative of language-in-education may help us to appreciate the evolving nature of inter-group and intra-group relations, whose salience cannot be ignored in understanding the contemporary Nepali context.

2. Tensions of diversity in Nepal

Nepal is a country with a population of approx. 29 million.⁶ However, it is extremely diverse. According to the census of 2011, there are 125 ethnic groups and 123 languages spoken in Nepal. This diversity in its population, and the varied response of Nepali state to this heterogeneity, has significantly shaped much of the inter- and intra-group relations in Nepal. As one of the prominent scholars (Malla, 1979: 135) points out, Nepal cannot be understood through the lens of neat segmentation of people into 'two languages, two peoples, or even two cultures – the language of conquerors, i.e. the Gorkhas, and the language of the subjugated people. Such segmentation is not very helpful for examining the complex ethnic, cultural, and linguistic situation in Nepal.'

Although Nepali state celebrated this diversity of the country in general, it did not officially recognise this heterogeneity in its official policies until the 1990s. The Government of Nepal, for the first time, collected and published data on caste/ethnicity for the first time in the census of 1991. Scholars note that post-1990 politics of Nepal mark a distinct departure from the previous systems due to an increasing political salience of ethnicity, diversity, and difference. During this period, the issue of language-in-education emerged as an important aspect of ethnic politics in Nepal. Various ethnic activists put forward campaigns for mother-tongue education as a focal point for wider social and political demands for the recognition of ethnic groups. Since then, there has been a gradual increase

⁶ According to Census 2011, the population of Nepal is 26.5 million. With the projected annual increase of 1.5-2.5%, the population in 2016 is projected to be approx. 29 million.

in the census figures on caste/ethnic groups and languages. These trends stand in contrast with the figures before 1991 when they were either not collected or considerably lower.

Table 1 Changing census numbers							
Year	<u>1952-54</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2011</u>
Total number of ethnic groups	----- Not collected -----				60	102	125
Total number of languages	44	36	17	18	32	92	123
Percentage of population returning Nepali as mother tongue	48.7	50.9	52.4	58.36	50.3	48.6	46.6
Percentage of population following the Hindu religion	88.9	87.7	89.4	89.5	86.5	80.1	81.3

Table 2 Population percentage for nine major ethnic groups			
	<u>1991</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2011</u>
Chhetri	16.1	15.8	16.6
Bahun	12.9	12.7	12.2
Magar	7.2	7.1	7.1
Tharu	6.5	6.7	6.6
Tamang	5.8	5.6	5.8
Newar	5.6	5.4	5.2
Kami	5.2	4	4.8
Muslim	-	4.3	4.4
Yadav	-	3.9	4.0

Source: Census 1981; Census 2001; Census 2011; CBS, 2014

As illustrated in Table 1, the period between 1952/54 and 1981 was marked by an absence of ethnic groups, a steady decrease the total number of languages (from 44 in 1952-54 to 14 in 1981), an increase in percentage of people returning Nepali as mother tongue (from 48.7 in 1952-54 to 58.36 in 1981) and an increase in population of people following Hinduism (from 88.9 in 1952-54 to 89.5 in 1981). Politically, this period was known as Panchayat period. During this period, with the promulgation of the Constitution of 1962, Nepal embarked on an exclusive

state-building project popularised as a ‘uniquely Nepali’ system. Through this constitution, the institution of the monarchy, state-sanctioned Hinduism, and a diverse population woven together by Nepali language and identity (Burghart, 1984:102) was envisioned as a true Nepali identity. This vision was represented by the slogan ‘*Ek raja, ek desh, ek bhasa, ek bhes*’ (one king, one country, one language, one dress). Discussing the manifestation of this centralised and top-down state practices in Tarai region, Gaige (1975: 202) states, ‘The Nepali language, perhaps even more than the Crown itself, [was] a powerful and pervasive symbol of Nepalese nationalism.’

Many studies on language policy in Nepal have pointed towards the Nepal National Education Planning Commission as one of the authoritative documents that directed state policy on language.⁷ The commission recommended that,

Local dialects and tongues other than standard Nepali, should be banished from the school and playground as early as possible in the life of a child ... The study of a non-Nepali local tongue would mitigate against the effective development of Nepali, for the student would make greater use of it than Nepali, at home and in the community, and thus Nepali would remain a ‘foreign’ language. If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language, then other languages will gradually disappear and greater national strength and unity will result (NNEPC, 1956: 96-97)⁸.

⁷ Dr. Hugh Woods from the University of Oregon was delegated by USAID to become Special Education Advisor to His Majesty’s Government, Nepal from 1953 to 1959. He was the principle advisor for Nepal National Commission for the Education Planning (NNEPC) that was charged to develop a system of education for the whole country.

⁸ Similar perspectives are referred to in Rai, (2009:274 citing Aryal and Joshi 1917) – ‘*Gorkha bhasha* (the Nepali language) is not widespread yet. The languages of the groups such as Magar, Gurung, Limbu, Sunuwar, Danuwar and Tharu, etc. are still in use. Until and unless *Gorkha bhasha* does not push other these languages out, it can neither develop nor become the chief language’. Similarly, Hutt (1986:6) also discusses the reference to minority language as the ‘speech of the illiterate’ or ‘the dialects of the jungle’ in Nepali literature.

This was augmented by National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971, which stated the following as the goal of education:

To strengthen devotion to crown, country, national unity and the panchayat system, to develop uniform traditions in education by bringing together various patterns under a single national policy, to limit the tradition of regional languages, to encourage financial and social mobility, and to fulfil manpower requirements essential for national development (Ministry of Education, 1971:1 as cited in Caddell, 2007: 266)

With the gradual opening up of spaces for the recognition of various languages spoken in Nepal, many ethnic organisations launched active campaigns influencing various ethnic groups to return the language associated with their groups as their mother tongue not the language that they may be most fluent in.⁹ These campaigns used the idea of belonging (Turin, 2014) as an important way to claim distinctiveness in the emerging ethnic politics in Nepal. The census data (Table 1) thereafter recorded a gradual increase in the number of ethnic groups (from 60 ethnic groups in 1991 to 125 ethnic groups in 2011), a steady increase in the number of languages spoken (from 32 languages in 1991 to 123 languages in 2011), a slight decrease in the percentage of population returning Nepali as mother tongue (from 58.36 per cent in 1981 to 46.6 per cent in 2011) and a decrease in population following Hindu religion (from 89.5 per cent in 1981 to 81.3 per cent in 2011).

During this period, while there was a general acceptance of Nepali as the necessary lingua franca, most organisations demanded active state support for the development of their mother tongue, insisting that mother tongue is used as

⁹ Gellner and Hausner (2012: 12) point out that the Nepal Magar Sangh campaigned for all Magars to return their religion as 'Buddhist' and their language as 'Magar' in 2001 census regardless of actual practice or knowledge.

the medium of instruction in school, at least at the primary level (Pradhan, 2002). The issue of equal rights for all languages and dialects was also one of the forty-point demands put forward by the Maoists before launching the decade long People's War (1996-2006). During the war, the Maoists routinely attacked school buildings, not only as a symbol of state institutions, but also as an icon of ethnic subjugation and discrimination (Pherali, 2011). This period also saw significant changes in the constitution of Nepal. As already pointed out in the introductory chapter, in 1990, the constitution declared Nepal a multi-ethnic (*bahu jatiya*) and multi-lingual (*bahu bhasik*) country. The Interim Constitution of 2007 and the new Constitution of 2015 endorsed this idea of Nepal.

All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal (Article 6.2). All the languages spoken as mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are that national languages of Nepal (Article 12). Each community residing in the Kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture (Article 18.1). Each community shall have the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to its children (Article 18.2). The State shall, while maintaining the cultural diversity of the country, pursue a policy of strengthening the national unity by promoting healthy and cordial social relations amongst the various religions, castes, tribes, communities and linguistic groups, and by helping in the promotion of their languages, literature, scripts, arts and cultures (Article 26, The Constitution of Nepal 1990). Each community shall have the right to receive basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law (Article 17.1, The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007)

Since 2006, Nepal has been going through a critical phase of reconfiguring its state institutions, drafting a new constitution, debating a federal system, where the role of language in state institutions is under intense scrutiny. Various ethnic organisations, since then, have been making demands to operationalise the provisions declared in the constitution.

Scholars note that this opened up space for Janjati¹⁰ activism making ethnic identities a site of strategic contestation (Gellner et al. 1997; Hangen, 2010; Lawoti and Hangen, 2013; Onta, 2006). The establishment of Nepal Janajati Adivasi Mahasangh (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities or NEFIN) in 1991, representing 59 member organizations from different ethnic groups, indicated the consolidation of 'ethnic identity' as a principle of collective action (Onta, 2006; Gellner, 2007).¹¹ Against this backdrop, Nepal also ratified the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal people in 2007. Several international actors like United Nation's (UN) Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples, the ILO and UK Department for International Development (DFID) have been playing an active role in the classification of populations in Nepal (Shneiderman, 2013). Scholars have also noted that these categories of ethnicity and language have spawned a significant political impact and influenced the ways in which people utilise them (Shneiderman, 2013; Tamang, 2012).

Scholars have thus identified post-1990 period as the time of 'ethnicity-building' (as opposed to the period of nation-building before 1990) where 'new identities have been forged, new organisations set up, and new claims made' (Gellner, 2007). Discussing the significance of ethnic politics, authors like Des Chene (1996) have termed this period as *janjatiyug* (an era of janjatis or ethnic groups). Des Chene argues that the discussion around the issues of identity has changed the

¹⁰ NEFIN describes Janajatis as politically marginalised ethnic nationalities with distinct collective features such as: own mother tongues, distinct cultural traditions and social structures, and who also have written or unwritten histories.

¹¹ These ethnic groups have been further categorised into five groups -Endangered, Highly Marginalised, Marginalised, Disadvantaged and Advantaged (Gellner, 2007)

nature of politics in Nepal and therefore should be give its due recognition. Other scholars such as Leve (2011), discussing the emergence of new Buddhism, have attributed this trend to the global 'identity machine' that are producing the categories of identity and encourage people to rework their selves. This is often contrasted with the previous period of nation-building (1950s), where diverse groups of people were brought together under the vision of unified Nepali nationalism (Burghart, 1984; 1993b; Whelpton, 1997) and 'one nation, one language' policy propagated through a uniform education system in Nepal.

Others have pointed towards the role of international institutions in pushing the ideas of indigeneity (Shneiderman, 2013). There have also been concerns over the practical consequences of following a politics of difference rather than a politics that focuses on social solidarity across differences (Whelpton, 1997). They remind us about common Nepaliness and caution against the trends of 'atomization and communalization of ethnic identity' (Sharma, 1992). Contesting these views, other authors have strongly challenged the image of 'ethnic harmony' as a 'blatantly manufactured myth' (Bhattachan, 1995: 125) and articulate ethnic assertion as an attempt to create new ideas of Nepali nationalism (Lawoti and Hangen, 2013). However, the view that ethnicity and identity are becoming salient in the post-1990 period has gained considerable traction.

Due to these dramatic changes in the nature of Nepali state in various periods, the language policy literature tends to present the historical account of language-in-education in Nepal three neat categories (Weinberg, 2013). The first period before 1950 is characterised by retaining formal education as an exclusive

resource. This period is popularly known as the Rana period (because of centralised executive power in the control of the members of Rana family who functioned as Prime Ministers of the country). Education, if any, was meant only for members of the royal family and was generally provided in English. Any literary activities, especially in ethnic languages, were actively suppressed. The second period, between 1960 and 1990, is marked for its emphasis on Nepali nationalism. This period, popularly known as Panchayat period, is characterised for its emphasis on Nepali language, central role of monarchy and the homogenising vision of Nepaliness. NNEPC (1956) and NESP (1971) are regarded as important policies that aggressively instituted Nepali language as lingua franca. The third period, post-1990, is known as a period of 'New Nepal' where a new vision of Nepal as a diverse country began to be instituted. Various policies and programmes for the promotion of local languages were launched.

Increasingly, authors have questioned this simplistic periodisation of language-in-education history in favour of a more complex periodisation that reveals the 'continuities between periods' and 'changes with the eras' (Weinberg, 2013:68). In addition, various ethnographic accounts of ethnic movements and organisations (Fisher, 1983; Hangen, 2010) and studies on the development of the Nepali language (Hutt, 1988; Onta, 1996b; Chalmers, 2003; Bandhu, 1989) have provided insights on the creation of identities and alliances as the contemporary manifestation of a process that has been going on throughout the history of Nepal. Furthermore, there is now a general acceptance that the appearance of people as a coherent ethnic group reflects a group's particular historical relationship with the state more than its cultural distinctiveness. Burghart's

(1984) analysis of Maithili's fate as dialect rather than separate language in India and Burkert's (1997) discussion of the strong presence of Maithil culture in Tarai politics in Nepal present interesting accounts of how ethnic and linguistic boundaries emerge in tandem with the development of Nepali state. Placing the analysis of ethnic consciousness in a historically situated way, Fisher (1983) illustrates the ethnic contestation that has resulted in the creation of new identities. Sonntag (1995:113) contrasts two ethnic groups in Nepal, showing how the diverse groups speaking the Tamang language have been in search of shared identity and the groups claiming the shared ethnic label 'Tharu' have been in search of a shared language.

Many studies now recognise that the social and political position of a language has to be understood in tandem with the development of Nepali state (Hutt, 1988; Gaige 1975; Onta, 1996b; Turin, 2007, Guneratne, 2002). In a linguistically diverse country like Nepal, the role of the state in placing diverse groups of people under specific category and positioning them in a particular social order is bound to have consequences of 'inter-group boundaries and ethnolinguistic identity within Nepal' (Sonntag, 1995: 118). While a neat periodisation of language history undoubtedly helps to focus on the major shifts in the way the Nepali state has approached the issue of language, it also obfuscates complex negotiations that took place within these periods, obscures the underlying tensions and contradictions, and tends to present language policy as if it were legitimated with a wide consensus among the population.

3. Contentious languages in education

In this section, I attempt to show that history and dynamics of language-in-education are more than just a question of adding new languages in the post-1990 period. A closer look at the language-in-education policies, through the history of Nepal, shows us the evidence of ongoing negotiation between various groups and various languages including Sanskrit, Tibetan, Nepali, English, Nepal Bhasa and other ethnic languages to gain the status of official language, in education, courts and civil service. The Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) Report, which is widely accepted as the key policy document that ushered Nepal into exclusivist project of nation-building through the introduction of Nepali as the sole language of education, also provides us with considerable evidence on attitudes to various languages in Nepal.

Table 3 Desired medium of instruction at different levels by region (1956)					
	<u>Kathmandu</u> <u>Valley</u>	<u>West</u> <u>Nepal</u>	<u>East</u> <u>Nepal</u>	<u>Tarai</u>	<u>Average</u>
Primary School					
Local	71%	48%	75%	79%	68%
National	38%	44%	13%	16%	28%
English	12%	17%	75%	4%	27%
Secondary School					
Local	18%	22%	25%	51%	29%
National	81%	69%	50%	50%	63%
English	26%	25%	12%	16%	20%
High School					
Local	20%	22%	5%	54%	25%
National	68%	67%	75%	45%	64%
English	52%	35%	73%	26%	46%

(Source: NNEPC, 1956: 53)

Table 3 is especially instructive because it provides us with insights into popular perceptions and deliberations on the issue of language-in-education before the

start of Panchayat regime. The NNEP committee conducted a nationwide survey on the medium of instruction.¹² A total of 12,000 people responded to the questionnaire; this sample included 551 illiterate people, 1270 educated layman, and 136 educationists. According to the report, between 48 and 71 per cent of the respondents are recorded to have desired primary education in the local language. This dramatically decreased to 5-54 per cent in higher secondary school. As illustrated in Table 3, the languages desired in different areas of Nepal also varies considerably, with 54% wanting high school education in the local language (presumably Hindi) in the Tarai, but only 5% wanting local languages to be used at this level in the eastern hills. Moreover, throughout various periods, especially before 1952, Nepal also had several parallel systems of education, including Sanskrit education through Gurukuls, Buddhist monastic education through Gompas and Vihars, English education modelled on the British system, and state-supported education through Bhasa Pathsalas, Islamic education in Madrasas, private instruction through apprenticeships with practitioners such as Ayurvedic doctors, etc. The national language-in-education policy has been an important way in which the Nepali state sought to mainstream or replace these different systems into a single national education system. In the following section, I will discuss negotiations on different languages to illustrate the ways in which language-in-education has played a crucial role in imagining varying vision of Nepali nation.

¹² According to NNEPC (1956: 48) report, 'the questions were submitted by the committees, discussed by the Commission as a whole, and refined for publication. Because replies were desired from all levels of the population, three different questionnaires were arranged, according to the level of education'. The report also mentions that, 'No effort was made to distribute the questionnaire on a systematic basis because of the high degree of illiteracy and problems of communication and transportation. Everyone who could conveniently be reached was invited to respond.' The questionnaire was also printed in the newspaper for wider circulation.

3.1 Instituting Nepali language

The studies on the history of Nepali language (Hutt, 1986; Onta, 1996b; Chalmers, 2003) identify the central role played by the Nepali state to institute Nepali as the main language of the nation. In this process, Nepali state drew heavily on the work of Nepali language intellectuals, both residing within Nepal and outside Nepal. Hutt (1986) illustrates that the emphasis on Nepali language served two main purposes. First, it sought to ensure internal cohesion between various communities that inhabit different regions of Nepal. Second, it also ensured external distinction especially with relation to India. In his study of nation-building process during Panchayat period (1960-1990), Burghart (1993) argues that the Nepali state sought to forge a nation (*desa banaune*: making the nation) by making 'a change in the political culture of the country through constitutional means'. For this purpose, ethnic and religious bases of national identity became a compelling preoccupation in the 1950s. Nepali language played an important role in this construction of uniquely Nepali political culture, and served to legitimate Nepali state's identity as a nation-state.

3.1.1 Construction of the Nepali language

It was not until 1900s that Nepali language gradually established itself as a symbol of Nepali nationalism. Many authors have noted the challenge that Nepali language faced in the early days of its institutionalisation (Hutt, 1987; Onta, 1996b), and have traced its initial development in Banaras, India (Chambers, 2003). It was through the political activities in Darjeeling (Onta, 1996b) and the publishing activities in Banaras (Chambers, 2003) that Nepali

began to establish itself as a distinct literary language. Onta also notes that in 1918 Parasmani Pradhan, one of the important Nepali language intellectuals, lamented that Nepali was called 'jungly' or barbaric language (Onta, 1996b: 166). Tumbhahang (2010) also cites similar observation excerpt by published by the Gorkha Agency office in 1917:

Till now the Gorkha Bhasa has not been able to acquire universality, and the jungly languages like Newar, Bhote, Magar, Gurung, Limbu, Sunuwar, Danuwar, Tharu also have not been able to leave their native places. As long as the one Gorkha Bhasa cannot replace all other jungly languages, Gorkha Bhasa cannot be the main language of the country. (Yakkha Rai, 2053 B.S.: 274-275, cited in Tumbhahang, 2010)

In his study of Nepali literature, Hutt points out that even the name Nepali has been applied comparatively recently to the language which has been known under several appellations for 700 years. Many authors have pointed out that even until 1980s, many Nepalese, especially those for whom it is not a mother tongue, still used terms such as *khas kura*, *parbatiya*, *pahari*, *gorkhali* and *gorkha bhasa* for the Nepali language (Hutt, 1988:34; Bandhu, 1989; Burghart, 1984). Citing an example of Gurkha soldiers, who came in close contact with each other despite from different ethnic groups, Bandhu (1989) claims that Gurkhas also helped to establish a common Nepali culture through the Nepali language as it gave them a shared identity as Nepalis in the external world.

Once the Nepali language had entered the printed page, its unstandardised nature and its dearth of literature became obvious to Nepali writers. Thus various Nepali writers actively sought to reform and unify Nepali grammar and spellings. This process to standardise Nepali also brought Nepali writers in different places to agree on a most acceptable form of literary Nepali (Hutt,

1988). Discussing the construction of Nepali language, Onta (1996b) illustrates that way in which the middle-class Nepalis living in India engaged in 'self-conscious fostering' of the Nepali language. Chalmers (2003) discusses the key role played by Nepalis living in Banaras and Darjeeling in this process of developing Nepali as a unifying language. He notes that the idea of *unnati* (progress) of the Nepali population was the key driver of much of the work on developing the Nepali language:

Development of Nepali as mother tongue (*matrbhasa*) was a recurrent theme of *unnati* discourse. Indeed, more than a theme, for the central role assigned to language in the overall project of social progress made it impossible for many writers to conceive of any *unnati* without *bhasonnati* (*unnati* of language) (Chalmers, 2003:135).

During this period, Nepali had a very limited literary role compared to many other languages used in India such as Hindi and Bengali. Nepali was characterised, Chalmers (2003:144) notes, by a lack of uniformity in spelling, grammar, and style. In addition, it was not the only language spoken by people of Nepali origin residing in India. The Nepali language revival movement, centred in Banaras and Darjeeling, followed a process of creating a uniform Nepali language in order to develop a coherent Nepali identity.

These cultural discourses, developed in places like Banaras and Darjeeling by small groups of people, were later adopted by the post-Rana and Panchayati states in Nepal for the development of Nepali nationalism. Through the discovery and rediscovery of cultural icons such as Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1869) by Moti Ram Bhatta (1866-1896), Nepali literature gradually developed through various literary activities (Hutt, 1988; Onta, 1996b; Bandhu, 1989;

Chalmers, 2003). In addition, the spread of education made it possible for the institutionalisation of standard Nepali.

There is a form of Nepali speech which can be called the Kathmandu dialect. It is the language of the schools and the Trichandra College and consequently of educated speech in the Valley... because of its prestige as the language of the educated people and because its use is being consolidated by being taught in the schools, it seems probable that when a received standard Nepali emerges it will be found to be essentially the speech of Kathmandu rather than that of the districts beyond the perimeter of the Valley. (TW Clark, *Introduction to Nepali*, London, 1977 p vii-ix. Cited in Hutt, 1988: 51)

In Nepal, the establishment of government-supported newspaper, the *Gorakhapatra*, in 1901 and the publication agency, *Gorkha Bhasa Prakashini Samiti*, in 1913 played a significant role in the development of Nepali. Standardisation of language through the publication of dictionaries and grammar books, inclusion of Nepali in Indian Universities, and growth of literary activities in Nepali helped to establish it as a national language.

3.1.2 Institutionalising Nepali as the language of education

During the Rana period, there were several attempts to institutionalise Nepali as the language of education. *Bhasa Pathshalas* (Language Schools) in 1901 and *Shrestha Pathsala* (School for civil servants) established by Rana Prime Ministers Dev Shamsheer and Chandra Shamsheer respectively used Nepali as a language of instruction. By 1934, Nepali was declared the official language of all School Leaving Certificate examinations. This was seen as especially important due to the increased nationalist activity against the British in India, and was thus an attempt to secure the continuation of Rana rule (Caddell, 2007).

With the democracy movement in 1950s, the image of Nepal as being closed off from the rest of the world during the Rana oligarchy influenced the attempt to reconstruct the idea of Nepal. The education sector was utilised as a crucial tool by the Panchayat regime. Schools, both as physical spaces and in terms of the curriculum promoted through them, were regarded as a medium through which to propagate a particular vision of the Nepali nation. In her study of Panchayat school textbooks Pigg (1992) shows that the textbooks highlighted the 'backwardness' of ethnic, rural and non-Hindu groups and placed them in an inferior position. Other authors note how the 'triumvirate of official Nepali nationalism' (Onta 1996a:38)—the monarchy, Hinduism and the Nepali language—provided the basis for an exclusionary national culture. This imagination of the nation and the subsequent idea of identity and modernity had a heavy influence on inter and intra-group relations in Nepal.

However, it was not until NNEPC (1956) that the school curriculum in Nepal was systematically institutionalised. The commission noted that in the primary school, language teaching often occupies 40% to 80% of the curriculum time. It also pointed out that most schools were devoting an unwarranted amount of time of the teaching of languages (foreign, as well as national and mother tongue) and to preparing for final examinations (NNEPC, 1956: 40). In order to contain the 'wasteful hotchpotch' (Pandey et. al 1956, cited in Onta, 1996a), the commission recommended that:

The medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle and higher educational institution, because any language which cannot be made lingua franca and which does not serve legal proceedings in the court should not find a place... The use of a national language can bring about equality among all classes of people, can be an anchor-sheet

for Nepalese nationality and can be the main instrument for promoting literature (NNEPC, 1956: 56).

It also devised an extensive teacher-training programme to promote the Nepali language and use it as medium of instruction (NNEPC, 1956:169). Though Nepali was introduced on the grounds that the majority of people spoke it, the report acknowledged that:

Another anticipated shortage on the part of trainees is in the Nepali language. It is known that many are not proficient in written Nepali and some are quite weak in conversational Nepali. If the teachers are to promote the Nepal language and use it as a medium of instruction, they will need intensive training in its use. Classification tests should be used to discover their status of language proficiency (in Nepali) and to group trainees according to their needs (NNEPC, 1956: 169).

NNEPC specifically instructed that:

... in non-Nepali speaking areas, the first grade teacher must communicate with his pupils in the beginning in their mother tongue but he can begin to build the Nepali vocabulary immediately. For example, the reading readiness pictures that are placed around the walls of the classroom can have their descriptive words printed in Nepali; orally the teacher can introduce Nepali words along with local counterparts. He can use introduced words and phrases of action, such as 'be seated', 'stand' etc. (NNEPC, 1956: 96).

Thereafter, Nepali as official language was gradually introduced to different other institutions. In 1962, the Constitution of Nepal declared that the ability of speak as well as write in Nepali is a prerequisite for naturalisation in Nepal. The Nepal Company Act, 1964 made it mandatory for all the companies to maintain records in either Nepali or English (Gaige, 1975:125). State-owned media, Radio Nepal, further supported this institutionalisation of Nepali language was by broadcasting school level lessons in Nepali language and ceased broadcasting programmes in Hindi and Nepal Bhasa in 1965. This helped to spread Nepali as the main language throughout the country, since Radio Nepal was the only

media and had a huge coverage including the remote areas. In addition, the state established that the knowledge of Nepali as an essential criteria for citizenship application making it an important aspect of a person's identity as a citizen of Nepal.

Table 4	
Percentage of people speaking Nepali language (Census 2011)	
Nepali as mother tongue	44.64
Nepali as second language	32.77
Total	77.41

Source: CBS, 2014

The recent census figures (2011) show that the total number of people who are fluent in Nepali is increasing (as shown in Table 4, see Appendix IV for comparative table). Languages such as Doteli, Baitadeli, Achchami, Bajhang, Dailekhi, Darchuleli, Jumli, Dadeldhuri and Gadhwali have been recorded as separate languages in the census of 2011, while they were treated as dialects of Nepali and merged into it in 2001 and other earlier censuses. Even while there has been a decrease in a total number of people returning Nepali as mother tongue (see Table 1), people who are returning Nepali as second language is quite significant.

3.2 The English dilemma

The NNEPC (1956:51-56) report was one of the most comprehensive documents, which noted that 'there is a mania for English education in some parts of the country.' While the report dismissed the need for English as the medium of instruction, as it was 'merely taught as a foreign language', it continued to use English as a subject in the school curricula. It recognised that there is 'preference shown to English educated people in government service.' However, the report

also noted that it had no other practical value. Since most children cannot learn several languages well, the report argued, if the schools offered education in languages such as English, the students will feel unnecessarily compelled to learn it as an 'evidence of erudition'. However, in practice, Malla (1977) notes that English remained the additional language in nearly all schools. English continued to count for 200 marks, i.e. the equivalent of two subjects in the overall curriculum in SLC.

Authors note that English has remained a central element in Nepal's language policy (Weinberg, 2013:73). The first school established in 1853, which marked the beginning of modern schooling in Nepal, was an English school. After his trip to Europe, then PM Jung Bahadur Rana brought two teachers from England and established an English elementary school at his residence to provide 'western' education (Sharma, 1990; Eagle, 2008). Later this school was called *Durbar* (Palace) School, where members of the ruling family received their education. English education was seen a marker of class and royalty. During this period, no provision for educating the general population was made as it was regarded a threat to the rulers. British historian Daniel Wright, had thus famously remarked that 'the subject of schools and colleges may be treated as briefly as that of snakes in Ireland. There are none' (Wright, 1877 cited in Hutt, 1988: 17).

In 1885, when Durbar School opened to the public, it continued to use English as both a medium of instruction and of examination. The content of the education provided under at the Durbar School was strongly influenced by external models of schooling and, in particular, the English system of education. Interest in

Western-style education for the ruling elite was motivated in part by a need to engage with the British in India effectively (Aryal 1977: 123, cited in Caddell, 2007). As Eagle (2008:182) mentions, 'From this time, a western style education, by definition, was English education. The ability to negotiate with this powerful political force was crucial for the continuation of the Rana regime, in terms of maintaining at least nominal sovereignty over the territory of the Nepali state and in preventing too much influence of external ideas. School education became a prerequisite for taking up a position in government and literacy came to symbolise political influence and social prestige (Bista 1991).

With the introduction of National Education Plan (1971-76), the government limited the time and space given to English in school education. In an attempt to establish a genuinely Nepali education system, the Panchayat government reduced the credit hours of English from 15 hours to 10 hours and in examination from 200 marks to 100 marks. It further removed English as compulsory subject and made a provision to opt for any UN language (including English) in schools. It is during this period that the government ensured the 'switch over from English to Nepali' as the medium of instruction (Caddell: 2007). Subsequent education policies, re-established English as a compulsory subjects in school education while retaining Nepali as a medium of instruction. Much disagreement has been raised against the homogenising ideals of NNEPC and NESP for instituting Nepali as official language, but the centrality of English in the school curriculum is largely accepted. The current primary school curriculum continues to hold 100 marks for compulsory English and additional 100 marks for optional English, if the school chooses to have one.

Thus the Nepali state has been quite ambivalent on the question of English in education. On the one hand, it has promoted English as a desirable language for international communication. On the other hand, it is also cautious that English might dilute a strong Nepali identity. Nepali has state sought to 'limit the dangers inherent in foreignness, and at the same time harness its powers' (Liechty 1997: 9) through English education. According to the Education Commission (1991) the acquisition of the English is mark of an educated person living in 'harmony with the national and international environment today, without losing his identity' (NNPEC, 1956: 10, 16). In an interview in *Ruprekha* magazine in 1977, King Birendra was quoted as saying:

We should not only be practical when discussing the medium of higher education, we should also consider the wellbeing of the people of Nepal. If Nepali reinforces Nepalese nationhood, then the international language aids its international existence. Therefore it seems to me that we should not consider the national language and the international language to be mutually opposed, but we should use each of them where it is most efficacious. (Yugeswor Prasad Varma and Churamani Bandhu, Ucca Siksako Madhyam Kathmandu, 1980: 24, cited in Hutt, 1988)

The ethnic movements and organisations also adopt a more consiliatory approach to English. Sonntag (2003:97) notes that for minority language activists in Nepal, the target is not global English. The ethnic organisation such as Mongol National Organisation (MNO) goes as far as to give preference to English as the potential medium of instruction because of its political neutrality in Nepal and the global currency. Hangen (2012), in her ethnography of MNO, shows that the organisation used English in many of its publications. Though the organisation advocated for the revival of local languages, they faced the challenge risking animosity by choosing only one of many languages that the 'Mongol' community

speak. Moreover, many 'Mongols' did not speak 'their' languages. English thus served as a neutral language. Even though endorsement of English seems to contradict the MNO's emphasis on local languages, it was 'an effort to avoid relying solely on Nepali' (Hangen, 2012: 118).

3.3 The threat of Hindi

Hindi has remained a language that continues to be one of the controversial languages in Nepal. Historically, in Nepal, nation-building meant distancing itself politically (through the Panchayat system) and culturally (through the Nepali language) from India or any legacy of previous rulers (Whelpton, 1997). In this context, Hindi is seen as an alleged loyalty to India. In 2008, when Vice President Paramanda Jha took oath of office in Hindi instead of Nepali, there was a huge public outcry against it (see Turin, 2014 for a detailed discussion). The Vice President later apologised publicly and clarified that it was not his intention to hurt national unity and sovereignty of the country. In 2009, changes were made to the law, requiring holders of offices of state to take their oaths in one of the languages of the nation. The Vice President accordingly took a fresh oath of office in Maithili, a language that is listed as a national language of Nepal.

Discussing language politics in the Tarai, Burghart (1993a, 1993b) notes that the 1971 census gradually eliminated Hindi when the census commissioners listed Tharu, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri as Tarai languages. These languages, which are enumerated within the category of Hindi in the Indian census, are listed in Nepal

as individual languages (see Burghart, 1993a for a detailed discussion)¹³. The census of 1981 revised the 1951/52 data on Hindi language and published the amended version that redistributed Hindi listed in Central East and Far East Tarai as Maithili, Eastern Tarai as Bhojpuri and those of Far-west Tarai as Awadhi (CBS, 1981).¹⁴ In the subsequent censuses, the number of persons returning Hindi as their mother tongue became so low that it was not mentioned as a language spoken in Nepal in the census of 1981. This administrative action removed Hindi as an important language of Nepal (spoken as mother tongue by 0.29 per cent of population according to census 2011, and at the same time elevated Maithili into Nepal's second-largest language group (spoken as mother tongue by 11.67 per cent of population according to census 2011).

This suspicion against Hindi is evident also in NNEPC report. NNEPC (1956:62), while making recommendations for languages of education in the Tarai, stated that 'no truly Hindi speaking people inhabit any part of country.' Scholars like Gaige (1975) have noted that this statement is especially contradictory because the same document mentions that 'Nepali bears closer affinity to Hindi than any other local languages' and therefore is easy to learn by the students in Tarai

¹³ According to the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India, Awadhi and Bhojpuri are 'Hindi belt' languages. Maithili, however, is recognised as distinct language in both Nepal and India.

¹⁴ CBS (1981: 69) amended that, 'According to 1952/54 census there were 300,768 Maithili, 16,335 Bhojpuri and only 27 Awadhi (see Table 9, Population census 1952/54, Part II). However, this was based on wrong classification of Terai languages (Maithili, Bhojpuri and Awadhi). If classifications of Terai languages were made on the basis of textual comments (as appeared in Part II section 2, pp. 60-71 of population census 1952/54), we would find that those classified as dialects of Central East and Far East Terai were actually Maithili, dialects of Eastern Terai were Bhojpuri and those of Far-west Terai were Awadhi. According to this classification the number of people speaking Maithili, Bhojpuri and Awadhi turned out to be 1024780, 477281 and 328408 respectively in 1952/54'.

region. Thus, there was a strong recognition of the importance of language as a means of differentiating Nepal from India, especially in Tarai. Bandu (1989:128) reports that during the 1950s, most of the schools in Tarai used Hindi and the textbooks from India for school education. There were no textbooks in Nepali and there was not a sufficient number of teachers who could teach in Nepali. Thus in 1964, Nepali Language Publication Corporation Act was introduced to expedite the work of producing education materials in Nepali (Gaige, 1975).

These attempts to underplay the role of Hindi in the Tarai region were met by the demands for the recognition of Hindi as a second national language (Gaige, 1975). In 1951, Nepal Tarai Congress (NTC) was established with the party objectives of demanding the recognition of Hindi as a state language and adequate employment of Tarai people in the Nepal civil service. NTC later spearheaded the 'Save Hindi' campaign, which was soon joined by Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal, the United Democratic Party, and the Praja Parishad (Gaige, 1975). NTC was also reported to have raised its voice against the activities of the Nepali Pracharini Sabha that was vigorously promoting Nepali during those periods.

The recent statistics on Hindi show a rapid increase in number of people reporting Hindi as their second language (as shown in Table 5 below, see Appendix IV for comparative table). CBS (2014) also notes that the population returning Hindi as their mother tongue has declined considerably in last three censuses: 1991 (0.92%), 2001 (0.47%), 2011 (0.29%). However, at the same time there has been an increase in people speaking Hindi. The report attributes that

the rapid increase in the number of speakers of Hindi as a second language could be because of migration and exposure to Hindi electronic media (CBS, 2014:62).

Table 5	
Percentage of people speaking Hindi language (Census 2011)	
Hindi as mother tongue	0.29
Hindi as second language	4.62
Total	4.91

3.4 The Sanskrit controversy

Sanskrit has remained one of the controversial languages in Nepal. On the one hand, Sanskrit is used as a prestigious source language in order to elevate the literary standard of Nepali (Hutt, 1988). On the other hand, it has been regarded as a language central in upholding Hindu religion in Nepal and, therefore, a reflection of high-caste, and specifically Bahun, domination. The issue of Sanskrit has been debated since the beginning of mass schooling in 1950s. The National Planning Commission of 1956 estimated that there were 233 Sanskrit schools in Nepal. Wood (1965:38) in his paper for the US office of education reported:

The government has given these schools considerable recognition by providing separate supervision, a Directorate assistant in charge of them, and special financial grants. Their academic nature and the fact that they are not intended to provide education are recognised, but the place of the Sanskrit in Nepalese life is well established and this form of education will undoubtedly continue.

Thus, though the NNEPC (1956:56) saw Sanskrit system of education as ‘merely filling the minds of boys with ideas of heaven and hell’, the Sanskrit school continued to receive support from the government. The commission report lamented that ‘some of their ‘schools’ do not have a single student, even though they receive government aid’ (NNEPC, 1956: 66). Thus to optimise the governmental funding for education, the report recommended that the ‘schools for training priests and lamas or giving English education, or other special

training, should be operated on private fund. Private schools should not be discouraged but government money should be reserved for common education' (NNEPC, 1956: 76). In NESP (1971:25), it made a provision that Sanskrit high school required Nepali and Sanskrit but had the same optional languages as general high schools with the addition of Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Magar, Tamang languages of Nepal spoken by predominantly Buddhist groups. Sanskrit thus continued to be taught in schools as compulsory subject in lower secondary school and as optional subject in primary and high school.

The controversy around Sanskrit intensified in Nepal when, in 1992, seventy-six members of the Parliament signed a petition urging the National Education commission to include compulsory Sanskrit for primary and secondary education in their education bill. For many ethnic activists the Sanskrit controversy reflected the domination of Hindu high caste groups, state support to Hindu religion, and disdain towards other religions (Rai, 1992:2). This galvanised ethnic activists to demand action on the constitutional provision of mother-tongue education. The government thereafter changed the education policy by making Sanskrit mandatory in lower secondary but not in primary education. This controversy also led to the formation of Commission on language policy in education that recommended a multi-lingual policy for education and broadcasting (Sonntag, 1995).

3.5 The mother tongue 'problem'

The earliest example of a Nepali ruler expressing any objection to local language comes from Ranabahadur Shah (1774-1805) who complained on receiving the

communication written in Maithili. He is claimed to have ordered the petitioner to 'put all the letters which come to you into your own language in *nagari* script before you send them on' (Bhattarai, 1976: 24 cited in Hutt, 1988). The Rana rulers also followed a similar approach. Jang Bahadur Rana issued an order barring the use of languages other than Nepali in government service in 1854. Similarly, Prime Minister Chandra Shamser declared in 1921 that documents written in non-Khas language could not be submitted in court as a proof and in domestic dealing (Hutt, 1988). He also barred ethnic groups, Chhantel and Magar, who worked in the mines, from using their mother tongue.

With the establishment of Gorkha Language Publication Committee in 1913, the literary work on other languages was aggressively opposed. It is claimed that the committee members destroyed genealogies, hand-written inscriptions in copper and stone, and burnt 30,000 hand-written documents of indigenous peoples (Gurung, 1985:47). By the 1950s, the government had adopted pro-active policies. The National Planning Commission of 1956 stated that 'to solve the problems of multiplicity of language stress and importance will have to lay on one language, if the integrity and sovereignty of Nepal is to be maintained' (NNEPC, 1956).

3.5.1 Role of mother tongue for assimilation

Authors note that Nepali state's policy towards minority languages ranged from overt suppression (Gurung, 1985) to 'benign neglect' (Hutt, 1986) and 'unplanning' (Giri, 2011). Since Nepali was the mother tongue of a bare majority of population (48 percent in the 1950s), the official rhetoric continued to support the development of minority languages in order to facilitate a smooth transition

to Nepali language. 'The General Policy of the Nepal Government towards Languages and Dialects in Current Nepal', published in national daily, *Gorkhapatra*, in October 1957 (Hutt, 1986: 5) stated that 'the government has not adopted, nor does it intend to adopt a policy which suppresses the language of any ethnic group or region'. It further stated that since Nepali had attained the status of administrative language, it had been 'a major factor favoring the promotion of national unity and the government believes that a working knowledge of the language is utterly essential for every Nepalese citizen'. Therefore, the policy recommended the use of the mother tongue in schools up to primary level with the intention that 'the capabilities of Nepalese citizens and officials will be enhanced, in this age of progress and democracy, as a result of their increasing proficiency in Nepali.'

In 1956, NNEPC recommended that primary school education should use mother tongue so that the children could gradually transition to Nepali. The report also mentioned that 'children can be easily made literate if they are taught in their mother tongue' (1956: 93). The report cautioned that education policy should emphasise on 'the love of mother tongue instead of distaste for the national language' (NNEPC, 1956: 62). The Education Act 1962 followed similar provision

The medium of education in every school shall be the Nepali language. But the teaching and examination of any subject prescribed in the curriculum may be held in language other than Nepali, in a prescribed manner. (Act, Nepal Gazette, Vol XII, extraordinary issue no. 12, July 25, 1962, cited in Gaige, 1975).

Similarly, the National Education System Plan (NESP) also made a provision that the words and phrases from different regional languages could be assimilated

into the national language so that it may be further enriched and developed into a more effective medium of instruction. It further mentioned in its clause 7 that:

- 1) The medium of education at the School shall be in Nepali language. The education up to primary level may be given in mother tongue (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in Sub-section (1), while teaching the subject of language the medium of education may be in same language.

NESP also made a provision that the students at the lower secondary level (4-6) would spend 55% of school hours studying Nepali, 5% on elementary Sanskrit, and 10% studying one of the UN languages. An addition 10% was given for optional subject that could include Sanskrit, Hindi, Tibetan, Urdu, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Nepal Bhasa, and UN languages (NESP, 1971).

As the broad agreement on Nepali as the official language coalesced in 1950s, there was sharp debate on the role of regional language in public life, especially in education and mass communication (Burghart, 1993). This was further aggravated when, as noted above, Radio Nepal terminated the daily ten-minute news broadcast in Nepal Bhasa and Hindi in 1965. The government de-recognised MA degrees in Hindi, Nepal Bhasa and Maithali as a basis of promotion and the Public Service Commission henceforth recognised only Nepali and English (Dahal, 2000). The proponents of minority languages view these practices as the continuation, by more subtle means, of the more direct repression of the Rana period. Discussing the severe punishment linguistic activists faced under the Ranas, Tumbhahang (2010) lists several people who were exiled, hanged, or put in prison for literary work in different languages.¹⁵

¹⁵ Lalsor Sendang, Nisthananda Bajracharya, Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, Yogbir Kansakar, Chittadhar 'Hridaya', Siddhicharan Shrestha, Fatte Bahadur Singh were some

3.5.2 Demands for the use of mother tongue in public institutions

The period of the interim government in 1990 saw an upsurge of ethnic assertiveness, with the demands for mother-tongue education and the use of local language in public offices.¹⁶ Analysing the dynamics of 1990 revolution, Hutt (1993:32) argues that the demands made by Tibeto-Burman language communities reflected a gradual growth of ethnic consciousness during the last years of the Panchayat regime, and growing opposition to the ideology of Hindu state. Other authors such as Des Chene (1996) and Hangen (2010: 37) make similar observation in the context of Mongol National Organisation. Her study illustrates that ethnic movements have actively made efforts to preserve ethnic languages. The education programmes in these languages as a challenge to the existing hierarchy. Ethnic activists have also sought to revive their languages through language classes, publications, and cassettes of films and songs.

By the 1980s, there were several researches that indicated the 'systemic exclusion' experienced by ethno-linguistic groups. These studies primarily criticised the highly centralised and top-down mechanisms in the education system that undermined local realities. Ragsdale (1989), discussing the third grade test in the Tarai region, demonstrated that the school curriculum often required an abstract understanding of Nepali. This curriculum and examination had an inherent

of the people who were imprisoned and/or exiled for their literary work in their mother tongue (Tumbahang, 2010).

¹⁶ Kathmandu Metropolitan city (25 Aug 1997) announced that it would use Nepal Bhasa, and Dhanusa DDC (18 November 1997) and Rajbiraj Municipality (25 November 1997) announced that they would use Maithili, as their official language in addition to Nepali. These decisions were legally challenged and cases were filed at the SC. A single bench of the court by an interim order prohibited the use of local or regional languages in March 1998.

cultural content: while comprehensible to students in the Kathmandu Valley, it was sometimes outside the experience and vocabulary of Gurung students. This study, while it did not problematise the use of Nepali in school, illustrated the implicit cultural biases in the school curriculum. He asserted, 'Nepal's small, elitist system of education had been expanded without regard for its suitability to the country's needs, leading to its functioning as a mere psychosocial adornment' (Ragsdale 1989: 15). Webster (1994) conducted a study on Nepali proficiency in rural Nepal using the Nepali Sentence Repetition Test.¹⁷ He concluded that 'those who are uneducated and illiterate are nowhere near as proficient in Nepali as those who are educated and literate' (Webster, 1994: 45). Yadav (2007) cites school-level educational statistics compiled in Nepal in 2005, and shows that the drop-out rate for ethnic minority children in grade 1 is 50%, which places them significantly more at risk of academic underachievement than is reflected in Nepal's overall national literacy rates.

Authors such as Gopal Gurung (1994) and Neupane (2000) have drawn attention to the skewed representation of Bahun/Chhetris in state institutions. Neupane's work (2000) showed how two thirds of the top jobs are held by less than one third of the population. Similarly, Hangen (2007:10 citing Neupane, 2000) also points out that caste Hindu elite groups occupied 77% of judiciary, 77.6% of security forces, 60% of the parliament, 62% of the cabinet, 77.35% of educational

¹⁷ The sentence repetition test (SRT) consisted of 'a set of carefully selected and tape-recorded sentences. Subjects listen to each sentence one by one, on headphones, and are evaluated according to a four-point scale (0-3) on their ability to accurately repeat each sentence. Essentially any deviation from the recorded sentence is counted as an error. The sentences are not related in meaning, but gradually increase in length and complexity. In general, there are 18 sentences – three practice sentences followed by 15 which count towards the subject's score.' (Webster, 1997:242; 1994)

leadership and 75.9% of civil society leadership. Authors thus argue that that question of ethnic inequality is linked with the political system (Phyak, 2009) that maintains the dominant group's advantage through ideologies of 'bahunvad'.¹⁸

With the constitution of 1990, the languages spoken as mother tongue within Nepal were given the status of 'national languages' (*rastriya bhasa*) while Nepali in the Devanagari script retained its position as the 'language of the nation' (*rastra bhasa*) and the official language of government. The constitution also guaranteed the right to operate schools up to the primary level in mother tongues. Radio Nepal started airing five-minute news bulletins in 18 different languages from different parts of the country. Similarly, NNPOA (2003:47) mentioned the objective to develop new policies or reorient the existing policies on inclusion of ethnic, minority, Dalit and females on the development and use of local languages and on cultural flexibility. It also announced a three-language policy in order to remove the language barrier in education and address the rapid language shift among the younger generation of many ethnic groups.

Table 6
Percentage of people speaking in mother tongue

	Census 1991	Census 2001	Census 2011
Tharu	83.2 ⁺	86.8 [☒]	88.1 [☒]
Newar	66.6 ⁺	66.3 [☒]	64 [☒]
Tamang	88.8 ⁺	92.0 [☒]	87 [❖]
Rai (group)	16.4 [*]	-	25.7 [☒]
Limbu	14.5	92.8 [☒]	88.7 [☒]
	64.4 ⁺		
Santal	-	94.3 [☒]	88.7 [☒]
Gurung	50.7 ⁺	62.4 [☒]	62 [❖]
Magar	32.1 ⁺	47.5 [☒]	41.8 [☒]

(Source: [☒]CBS, 2014, ^{*}Whelpton, 1997; ⁺CBS, 2001, [❖] my calculation based on Census 2011)

¹⁸ First used by Bista (1991) to indicate the domination Hindu high caste groups and exclusion of minority groups.

As illustrated in Table 6, census data shows that the level of language retention is varied in different ethnic groups.¹⁹ While groups such as Tharu and Tamang shows higher retention of above 80 per cent, Newars show the retention rate of 64 percent. Census data also show that the majority of the Magars and Gurungs (49.3 speak Nepali as their first language (Whelpton, 1997). The percentage of people speaking in Rai is even more less (though this is also due to the difficulty in ascertaining Rai as a group).²⁰ The government also published a list of endangered languages, so as to concentrate efforts towards the preservation of disappearing languages. The National Language Policy Recommendation Commission (1992-94) suggested four language groups based on literary tradition of languages.²¹ On the basis of these levels, the commission recommended a three-phase implementation process for mother-tongue instruction. In the first phase, the languages with written traditions will start instruction, textbooks will be developed for the languages with some written tradition, and linguistic research conducted for languages without a written tradition. In phase two, languages with some written tradition will start instruction and textbooks will be developed for languages without written

¹⁹ As Turin (2014) points out the census figures on language may not always reflect the actual language proficiency. The census figures are highly influenced by the active campaigns by the ethnic organisations urging them to return their ethnic languages as mother tongues regardless of actual competence in the language (also see Gellner, 2012: 12).

²⁰ The Rai are a collection of people speaking mutually unintelligible languages (Whelpton, 1997)

²¹ The most developed languages with written tradition (Nepali, Nepal Bhasa, Maithili, Limbu, Bhojpuri and Awadhi); the languages in the process of developing a written tradition (Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, five different languages of the Rai group, Thakali, Sherpa, and Rajbanshi); the languages without a written tradition (some thirty languages including Chepang, Marwari, Jirel, and 'other languages of the Rai group', among others); and finally, dying languages including Raute, and languages of the Rai group that have not yet been enumerated yet, among others. (Sonntag, 1995:112)

tradition. In the final phase, all languages will have instruction in schools (Sonntag, 1995).

This was further taken up by the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015, which placed a target of 7500 schools using mother tongues in grades one to three. In line with this, the Government of Nepal launched a pilot project on Multi-lingual education in seven primary schools in 2009 (mother tongue, Nepali and English as mediums of instruction). Multi-Lingual Education is used in Nepal to indicate a model that involves starting education in the medium of the language that a student already speaks, i.e. the mother tongue. Inside a classroom this means learning school subjects like maths, science and social studies in the student's first language (usually mother tongue -L1), then introducing a second (Nepali - L2) and third (English-L3) language as 'subjects', and gradually transitioning to L2 and L3 as mediums of instruction, if needed. Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Ministry of Education, also developed textbooks in 21 different languages²². The draft education bill (2010) states that the local state authority will recommend the medium of instruction appropriate for the locality.

The most recent Flash Report (2014), the Government of Nepal's education statistics, reported that a total of 69 local languages have been used as a medium

²² The Curriculum Development Centre published textbooks in 21 languages - Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tamang, Limbu, Bantawa Rai, Chamling Rai, Sherpa, Gurung, Nepal Bhasa, Sunuwar, Rajbansi, Yakha, Mugali, Tharu, Tamang (Sambota Script), Dhimal and Magar. In addition, reference materials based on stories, biographies and culture are have been published in 15 languages: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Limbu, Thary, Awadhi, Magar, Nepal Bhasa, Doteli, Thakali, Chamlig, Gurung, Bantawa Rai, Urdu and Sanskrit (CDC, 2069:24). Though timely publication and distribution of these books is still an issue, Nepali state is increasingly endorsing mother-tongue education as a much-needed pedagogy in the diverse and multi-ethnic country such as Nepal.

of instruction in primary level (as shown in Table 7 below). According to this report, 6081 schools used one local language, 422 schools used two local languages, 23 schools used four local languages, and 10 schools used five local languages. The report, however, doesn't clearly discuss if these schools use mother-tongue textbooks. The Department of Education has, however, also committed to collect information on local curriculums, textbooks, and the use of local language training skills in the next school census, 2015-16 (GoN, 2014).

Table 7
Use of transitional language support in primary school

S.n.	Languages	Primary level classes					S.n.	Languages	Primary level classes					S.n.	Languages	Primary level classes				
		1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5			1	2	3	4	5
1	Byangshi	1	1	1	1	0	24	Lepcha/Lapche	4	3	6	4	2	47	Danuwar	17	19	41	43	32
2	Pahari	1	1	0	0	0	25	Manjhi	9	7	11	6	7	48	Jhangar/Dhangar	21	20	35	33	13
3	Dungmali	1	1	2	0	0	26	Dhimai	3	3	6	6	3	49	Kulung	38	38	42	28	13
4	Puma	2	1	2	0	0	27	Nachhiring	5	4	6	4	2	50	Santhali	29	24	51	49	22
5	Baram/Maramu	1	1	2	2	1	28	Raute	3	3	6	6	3	51	Chamling	32	27	53	49	26
6	Ghale	2	2	2	0	1	29	Chhantyal/Chhantel	3	4	6	6	3	52	Newari	42	27	55	42	23
7	Hariyanwi	1	1	2	2	0	30	Kumal	4	4	8	4	2	53	Chepeng	28	39	68	36	17
8	Lohorung	1	1	2	2	0	31	Yakkha	3	6	6	6	3	54	Hindi	33	36	51	55	28
9	Nepali Sign Language	1	1	2	2	1	32	Bhujel/Khawas	3	5	6	8	3	55	Bote	52	55	91	68	29
10	Sam	1	1	2	2	1	33	Sunuwar	6	6	8	8	4	56	Sherpa	71	74	85	64	32
11	Dumi	1	1	2	2	1	34	Thulung	7	6	12	4	3	57	Rajbanshi	61	55	108	95	50
12	Dura	1	1	2	2	1	35	Hayu	5	6	10	8	5	58	Gurung	131	95	174	117	59
13	Jero/Jerung	1	1	2	2	1	36	Bahing	8	7	14	10	5	59	Urdu	145	189	286	182	78
14	Kisan	1	1	2	2	1	37	Koi/Koyu	8	7	14	10	5	60	Limbu	298	296	441	333	164
15	Angika	2	2	2	2	1	38	Bangla	12	9	16	10	5	61	Bajjika	238	337	632	526	246
16	Punjabi	1	2	2	2	1	39	Thami	17	11	25	24	9	62	Magar	414	354	628	420	195
17	Tilung	2	2	2	2	1	40	Others	9	7	15	13	7	63	Awadhi	450	442	538	613	292
18	Thakali	2	2	4	2	1	41	Tibetan	16	15	16	9	6	64	Nepali	463	488	929	803	381
19	Sanskrit	3	7	2	2	1	42	Wambule/Umbule	16	14	24	12	6	65	Bhojpuri	261	628	1,189	1003	465
20	Darai	1	2	4	4	2	43	Magahi	11	14	23	21	9	66	Tharu	668	658	924	1,121	555
21	Khariya	3	3	6	2	1	44	Wantawa	19	17	35	23	11	67	Tamang	935	791	1,336	920	433
22	Yamphu/Yamphe	3	3	4	4	2	45	English	34	27	36	26	32	68	Doteli	1067	991	1,931	1,567	799
23	Sangpang	4	3	4	4	2	46	Mewahang	23	17	37	26	19	69	Maithili	765	1,204	2,296	1,897	875
Total																6524	7130	12385	10361	5001

(Source: Flash I Report, GoN, 2014)

In addition, many ethnic organizations have been running a number of schools that use the mother tongue as one of the media of instruction and some mainstream private schools have been offering mother-tongue education as a subject. (See Appendix II for a list of schools offering mother-tongue education.)

4. On continuities and changes

This historical account of language politics illustrates that language-in-education has been an issue of negotiation for the Nepali state both before and after 1990. From the above discussion, we can discern some significant continuities and changes across the periods. In the following section, I will highlight some important continuities such as the persistence of negotiation over the issue of language-in-education, availability of space for the use of mother tongue, emphasis on developing competence in Nepali for national unity, and ambivalence on the issue of English language. In terms of changes, I will discuss the shift from discourse of assimilation to the discourse of diversity in terms of four key points.

First, the discussion presented in this chapter highlights that the persistence of negotiation over the issue of language-in-education before and after 1990s. Language has continued to remain an important way in which Nepali state extends its political vision. There has been ongoing contestation amongst various groups in order to negotiate the position of various mother tongues as official language in education, courts and civil service. Analysing the education reforms in Nepal, Caddell (2007) illustrates that each shift in political regime has been followed by a revision of the education system and re-articulation of relationship between the state, school and the people. Different constitutions of Nepal have addressed the issue of language in various ways. With the 1990 constitution leading to the current provision on mother-tongue education, there is some opening up of spaces to use mother tongue in primary education. However, the

state is not obligated to financially support mother-tongue schools thus leading to the incoherent and non-committal positions.

Second, while the popular perception of Nepal National Education Planning Commission Report (NNEPC, 1956) as the document that ultimately 'banished mother tongue from school premises' is accurate, the close reading of this document shows that the report did provide some space for the use of mother tongue in school education (Weingberg, 2013). While the recommendation put forward by NNEPC was gradually used by subsequent policies to close all the spaces for the use of mother tongues in school education, the NNEPC had several provisions that allowed for use of mother tongue in order to facilitate children's education in the school. NNEPC, in fact, recognised that 'children can be easily made literate if they are taught in their mother tongue' (1956: 93). As discussed above, the main emphasis of NNEPC was to ensure assimilation of all ethnic groups in Nepali identity to facilitate 'modern education', the commission however recognised the centrality mother tongue in order to achieve national integration.

This opened of some spaces in the curriculum, where language could be taught in 'mother tongue, leading to Nepali' (NNEPC, 1956: 93). Furthermore, it also mentioned that, 'For example, the reading readiness pictures that are placed around the walls of the class-room can have their descriptive words printed in Nepali; orally the teacher can introduce Nepali words along with local counterparts' (NNEPC, 1956: 96). The close reading of the report also reveals that mother tongue was taught in schools when NNEPC conducted its survey. It

mentions, '(foreign, as well as national and mother tongue)...language teaching often occupies 40-80% of the curricular time' (NNEPC; 1956: 40) and '... mother tongue is taught. Hindi and Maithili may be taught as optional subjects (NNEPC; 1956: 43). The survey conducted by the commission, in fact, included a question on preferred-language for education. The data presented in the report (also mentioned in section 1 of this chapter) reports that 68% of total people who responded to the questionnaire preferred mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary education compared to 29 % who preferred Nepali and 27% who preferred English (NNEPC; 1956: 53).

Third, the Nepali state continues to put emphasis on the significance of Nepali for national unity. As Bandhu (1989) argues, Nepali language provides Nepal with both unity and identity. Firstly, different ethno-linguistic groups are unified with a common vehicle of communication. Secondly, it also establishes Nepal as a separate country and distinct from its neighbouring countries, especially India. The approach towards the mainstreaming Nepali language, which is most aptly represented by this statement in NNEPC report, still stands true, 'If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language, then other languages will gradually disappear and greater national strength and unity will result' (NNEPC, 1956: 96-97). Similar provisions have been made in SSRP (2009: 82): 'Grades four and five can follow a transition from the mother-tongue medium of instruction to Nepali medium of instruction. From grades six to eight, the medium of instruction can be fully in Nepali'.

Fourth, the ambivalence on education in English still continues in both state policies on language and in ethnic activism. The observation made by NNEPC team that 'there is a mania for English education' is, if anything, even more true today than it was in the 1950s. However, the Nepali state also seeks to 'limit the dangers inherent in foreignness, and at the same time harness its powers' (Liechty 1997: 9). English continues to remain one of the important policy objectives. The School Sector Reform Programme mentions that, 'English will be taught as a subject from grade one onwards. (SSRP, 2009: 82). This increased importance placed on English language is a recurring theme throughout this thesis (especially in Chapter Four and Six).

In terms of changes, one of the significant shifts has been from discourse of homogeneity to the discourse of diversity. As illustrated in the previous sections, we may discern that what marks the nature of post-1990 demands on language is a shift from the use of minority languages from the private confines of home and community to public places. With the Nepali state becoming increasingly vocal in its discourse of diversity, multi-ethnicity and social inclusion, the mother-tongue education has also been used to showcase its commitment to these values. Within these spaces, different ethno-linguistic communities have sought to define and redefine their languages in order to differentiate itself from other groups to gain recognition and resources from the state (Sonntag, 1995; Turin, 2007). The vocabulary of diversity, equality and inclusion, articulated through demands for mother-tongue education, can thus be seen as an attempt to shift that power relations of the groups in public and political spaces. As Hutt (2012: 307) points out in his analysis of the new national anthem, the celebration of multiple

ethnicity, language and religion is presented as 'symbolic shorthand for inclusive and progressive nation'.²³ The idea and practice of mother-tongue education is thus played out largely in changing discourses of social inclusion, multi-ethnicity and social justice increasingly espoused not just by language enthusiasts, but by the Nepali state itself.

Discussing the language politics in Tharu and Tamang languages, Sonntag (1995) argues that the new language policy has consequences, intended or unintended, for intergroup boundaries and identity in Nepal. Though the Nepali state did not directly set out to create these ethnic categories, it is an outcome of a specific historical process that shape a society's experience (Guneratne, 2002). There is also a significant shift in terms of who is involved in the process of ethnic classification. Many scholars (Shneiderman, 2013; Hangen, 2010; Tamang, 2012) have drawn our attention to the fact that, contrary to the previous periods, Janjati actors themselves are engaged in this process of identification. Unlike the pre-1990 period, where the state imposed these categories of hierarchy on various social groups, the post-1990 classification is a result of negotiation between the state and various ethnic group actors such as NEFIN and NFDIN. These are thus seen as projects of self-identification (Shneiderman, 2015). Moreover, categories are expected help the state identify the groups that have been historically marginalised for the purpose of affirmative action programmes. Many studies (Shneiderman, 2013; Hangen, 2010; Des Chene, 1996) have shown that, in the recent years, ethnic communities have been engaged in the process of self-

²³ *Bahul jati, bhasha, dharm, samskriti chan bishala. Agrabami rastra hamro, jaya jaya nepala* (The multiple ethnicities, languages, religions and cultures are vast. Ours is a progressive nation, Jaya Jaya Nepal (Hutt, 2012: 315)

definition, which could later be articulated politically with the broader national agenda. Tamang (2012) avers that the current process has been essentially different from the ones that were propagated by the state. He calls the contemporary period one of 'breaking hierarchy, making identity', where instead of being used as a tool for marginalisation, various categories are linked with the promise of constitutional safeguards.

Given this context, various ethnic organisations and linguistic movements have also articulated alternate visions of the nation by demands for different language-in-education policies. These demands have been mainly articulated with a general acceptance of Nepali as lingua franca, but with active state support for the development of various ethnic languages and their use as the medium of instruction in school (even though in practice these groups may or may not have actually used mother tongue). Various ethnic activities, language movements and Maoist groups, demanding mother-tongue education, have maintained that these demands are efforts to challenge the inequalities in the state policy and against the exclusivist vision of a nation. Thus, there have been programmes to promote mother-tongue education within the framework of the nation-state, through the revision of government policies and curriculum framework. Though various hierarchies remain pervasive, the current political context has been seen as a space for the collective imagination of an egalitarian 'New Nepal' in place of the hierarchical *Nepaliness* that existed earlier (Lawoti and Hangen, 2013).

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a historical account of contentions on language issues within a broader context of socio-political changes in Nepal. In doing so, I have illustrated that language has served as an important aspect in promoting and challenging varying visions of Nepal throughout its history. Nepali state and various language movements have utilised the issue of language-in-education as a site to negotiate inter-group and intra-group relationship between various groups inhabiting the country. These negotiations have been also critical in shaping the social and political position of different ethno-linguistic groups and their relationship with the state. This narrative of language policy complicates the current interpretation of language history that is neatly divided into three distinct phases in order to highlight major shifts in Nepali state's approach to languages. The focus on contested language dynamics across the periods helps us to appreciate the post-1990 manifestation of ethno-linguistic movements in a more historically-situated manner.

CHAPTER THREE

Fieldwork Setting, Methods, and the Context of the study

1. Introduction

It is amidst these political contestations, discussed in the previous chapter, that two schools – Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) and Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) – started using the ‘mother tongue’ as their medium of instruction. In this chapter, I will draw attention to the key features that shape the socio-political contexts of these two schools. Here, I also foreground schools as my primary research site. Many scholars of education now agree that schools are the site where various ideas and practices are both produced and transmitted (Bénéï, 2008), constantly in dialogue with other institution and society at large (Stambach, 2000). In this research, I have attempted to ‘capture multiple and multistranded’ relationships that shape how education is understood and practiced (Mills and Morton 2013:62). What takes place within schools both reflects and informs wider conceptions and debates, including those pertaining to the locality, the region, and the nation. In particular, I will aim to highlight two themes. First, I will explore the ways in which these schools are implicated in both educational and political agendas and the potential tension between the two. Second, I will also draw attention to the use of different languages and perspectives that are at play in these schools. Through discussion of these multiple and yet interconnected issues, I aim to contextualise the themes that follow in the subsequent chapters.

2. Method and Analytical Framework

I conducted fieldwork in Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) and Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) between August 2013 and March 2014. I started with JSB as it was well known for using the mother tongue as a medium of education and was also one of the oldest of such schools. Moreover, it was logistically easier for me to start with a school in Kathmandu. This also gave me more time to finalise my second research site, JKHS. In both schools, JSB and JKHS, I used participant observation and unstructured interviews as my main method of data collection. I participated in the school routine, attended classes, spent time in the school grounds during breaks, chatted with teachers in the teachers' room, and also worked as substitute teacher when needed. I also spent time with parents, when they came to drop their children in the morning and sometimes walked home with them when they came to pick their children up in the afternoon. During this time, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the education bureaucrats in the Department of Education, the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centre and several NGOs working on the issue of mother-tongue education.

2.1 The 'Home' and the 'Field'

In order to do this research, I returned 'home'. I had grown up in Nepal and had spent a substantial portion of my young adult years in Kathmandu. However, I had also been away from Kathmandu for at least ten years prior to my research fieldwork. Though I frequently visited my parents, my stays were shorter in length and were more of a holiday. In addition, during this period that I was

away, the discourse on ethnicity and identity had become much more mainstream in the Nepali public sphere. It is possible that I felt this to be more prominent because I was meeting language activists, NGOs working on these issues and frequently visiting school that taught in mother tongue. However, I also noticed more signboards on the streets of Kathmandu written in Nepal Bhasa scripts, especially in the tourist areas. There were more celebrations of 'ethnic' festivals in public places. The official holiday list included many ethnic festivals which were not there ten years previously.

Though for this fieldwork I returned 'home', it was a very different 'home' than the one I was familiar with. This was even more pronounced during my research fieldwork. I had gone to a private 'English-medium' school, where most of the classroom instruction took place in Nepali and we wrote our exams in English. The idea of 'mother-tongue' education was very new to me. Not only I had never been to any such school, I had not met anyone who had attended mother-tongue school. This was even more so for my fieldwork in Kapilbastu, a part of Nepal that I had not visited before, except for a visit to Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace.

Nonetheless, in studying language practices, I was inextricably entangled in the discourses and practices that I sought to understand (Mills and Morton, 2013). This was especially true in JSB, where I found myself using Nepal Bhasa more than ever before. Teachers, parents and other administrative staff in the school always spoke to me in Nepal Bhasa. I had never 'learnt' Nepal Bhasa in school. My pronunciation and choice of words easily gave away my limited competence

in the language. I often mixed English and Nepali words, I was not sure about my grammar, and most of the time, I could not sustain a long conversation in Nepal Bhasa. Nonetheless, the teachers in JSB would continue in Nepal Bhasa with me instead of switching to Nepali, as would often happen generally elsewhere. They tolerated my version of Nepal Bhasa and encouraged me to continue using it in daily conversation. This conscious effort to encourage Newars to use Nepal Bhasa was quite evident in the way they dealt with my language competence. This also aligned with the shifting discourse in Nepal Bhasa activism. In one of the Nepal Bhasa teachers training seminars that I attended (see the detailed discussion in Chapter Four), the trainer and the teachers discussed, for hours, on the pros and cons of letting children speak 'imperfect' Nepal Bhasa. At the end of the discussion, there was a general consensus that the teachers need to focus on allowing children to speak the language more than insisting on correct Nepal Bhasa usage. Since, increasingly, the younger generation is shifting to Nepali and English, there was a general agreement that it is the responsibility of the teachers to continue to talk to students without making them conscious of their relative lack of competence in the language.

During the course of this research, I also had to undergo many 'tests' to prove my language competence, especially of Nepal Bhasa. Many did not believe that I could converse in Nepal Bhasa because, as I was often told, I spoke 'unaccented' Nepali. There were at least 10-15 occasions, when I was given a sentence to translate into Nepal Bhasa. They then commented on my speed, my accent, my pronunciation etc. In many occasions, these 'tests' were often given by those

working in the NGOs who did not speak Nepal Bhasa themselves. I therefore found them easy to pass. Even though, as discussed in the previous paragraph, those who 'studied' Nepal Bhasa might not rate my language competence highly, many were surprised to see that I could converse in Nepal Bhasa at all. I found this experience very instructive for this research. The overwhelming perception of monolingualism as a normal practice and the expectation that the younger generation (who grew up during and after Panchayat) did not speak in their 'mother tongue' was quite obvious, especially in Kathmandu. The fact that I spoke in Nepali was enough for many people to conclude that I would not speak in Nepal Bhasa. While it is true that people, who were competent in it, used Nepali as a marker of class, ethnicity, education etc., it was seen as the equivalent to 'unlearning' the other (mother) tongue.

In Kapilbastu, however, where most of the people spoke at least two languages, people were not very surprised that I could speak more than one language. It was a very common practice for most people. But the language activists and NGO staff who were working on the mother-tongue education were reassured when I passed my 'test'. For them, it demonstrated that it was possible to speak unaccented Nepali, even when one spoke minority languages. My language competence in other languages was seen as an advantage only because I was also competent in Nepali and/or English. If not, it would have been perceived as a hindrance to social mobility, education and an unmarked Nepali identity. This insight informs much of the discussion in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

2.2 Studying the school

Doing research in school is doing research in one of the most familiar places. Nearly all of us have been to schools, so it is one of the most universal of experiences. Since school experiences form most of our childhood, fieldwork activities - such as attending classes, observing the ongoing interactions in the classroom, and following the regular routine of the school - are potentially a very difficult site to study because of their familiarity. Though the individual activities of the school might differ from place to place, most schools follow a similar routine of morning assembly, attendance register, timetabled subject teaching, and didactic teaching method. It took me at least a few weeks of feeling lost in the most predictable activities of the classroom before I started noticing the ways in which teachers 'corrected' the language of the students (Chapter Five), the ways in which students switched from one language to other while speaking to each other (Chapter Four), the ways in which different subjects were associated with perception of student's educational competence (Chapter Six), and the ways in which different people saw the use of language in the employment market (Chapter Seven).

During my fieldwork, I also 'studied' Nepal Bhasa for the first time. While sitting in the classroom, I was able to appreciate the difference between the spoken language and the written language. My absolute incompetence in using my 'mother tongue' for written work, teaching the subject and reading the newspapers, uncovered many ways in which various kinds of language competence - speaking, reading and writing - are seen, quite erroneously, as synonymous to each other. Most of my competence in Nepali, I realised, came

from years of 'correction', repetition, training and examination in the schools I attended and/or language socialisation outside school. Though these were fairly universal strategies, this process seemed more prominent the classes that taught minority languages and the contexts that were less mainstreamed. This experience has informed much of Chapter Five.

In the Kapilbastu school, I learnt other lessons. I had very limited competence in Tharu. Though Tharu is close to Hindi (a language I am conversant in), it followed very different sentence patterns and has a different grammatical structure. Especially in the initial days of my fieldwork, I usually sat with one of the teachers or students who would translate the conversations for me. This arrangement helped me quite a bit to understand ongoing activities in the school; it also made me experience the ways in which language could form a barrier not only in school education but also in social interaction. Since most of the teachers and student spoke in Nepali, I was able to have regular interaction with them. However, my interactions with village elders and women were very limited. I usually waited for one of the teachers, Rita BK, who had kindly agreed to be my interpreter during her free time. In classrooms, I noted when and where they used the language that I could not understand, in order to discern a pattern of language use. This experience was an important lesson in the difficulties of minority language speakers in a context where another language is used for mainstream communication.

I have been careful not to take it for granted that schools are a site for uniform ideas and values. Discussing the different perspectives of different social actors

inside Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB), Gellner (2014) has reminded us that all the members of the organisation need not subscribe equally to the values of the organisation. Analysing the diverse motivations of parents, teachers, students and founders in JSB, he contends that 'it is possible for the aims of the different participants to be wholly distinct and incommensurate, and yet the whole can function and flourish.' Different members could come together for different reasons. Nonetheless, even while there is 'disjunction between the aims of different parties', the organisations can function perfectly well. Drawing on this insight, in this research, I have been mindful of the 'plurality of voices' in both the schools.

2.3 Ethics of conducting research

I also encountered several ethical issues while conducting this research. Before I started my fieldwork, I was aware of potential ethical issues of conducting research with children (Morrow, 2008; Alderson and Morrow, 2011). During the fieldwork, these issues became only more prominent. In the school, I was sometimes given the responsibility to cover for teachers who were on leave. This positioned me as their teachers and with obvious power hierarchies. In this context, requesting for an informal interview and/or conversation meant that the students would feel obliged to agree. This would violate the ethnics of 'informed consent'. In addition, since I was seen as one of the teachers, they would have felt the need to 'perform' their language competence. For this reason, I did not do my individual/group interviews for at least two weeks after my first visit. During those two weeks, I participated in the school activities regularly and so that student could get used to having me around. I also interacted with them and

gave them time to ask any questions or raise any issues. In the initial days of my research in the school, I also visited most of the classrooms in order to introduce my research. I also spent time in the playground during the school breaks.

When I requested students for an informal interview, I informed them 1-2 days before conducting the actual research. This gave them time to think about my request and change the mind if they wished to. Before I started the conversation, I clearly explained that if they wanted to opt out, in the beginning or at any point during the conversation, they were free to do so. I also assured them that their names would be kept anonymous. I informed them that neither the school administrators, the teachers, nor anybody else would be able to identify that they had given a particular response. I also asked them to discuss this with their parent, teachers, guardians or any other adult that they feel comfortable with. Once they were willing to speak to me, I asked for direct oral consent to speak to them and recorded the date and time when the consent was given. I also anonymised the names in all my written records and did not reveal the identifying information to anyone. I also tried to put the participants at their ease and to establish, as much as possible, an equal non-threatening relationship. I will always sit on a same level with children when talking to them, observed their body language, avoided interrupting them and respected their decisions to end a conversation when they wanted to do so. I did not offer financial or any other rewards to the children.

I followed similar methods when speaking to parents and teachers. I did not insist on receiving written consent because in Nepal signing papers is seen as

threatening and dangerous. Signatures on paper are associated with signing off property in somebody else's name or the fear of information being used against them subsequently. Moreover, many parents/guardians were not able to read/write etc. However, I paid careful attention to the research protocol and all the information was given verbally and asked for explicit consent before proceeding with interview.

In order to be beneficial to the school while I was conducting research, I offered to help in classroom and other school activities, if required. While my competence in Nepal Bhasa was not good enough to conduct a lesson, I tried my best to keep the students involved during the teaching time. This helped me to understand the school routine much better and facilitated my acceptance in the school. In JKHS, I could not teach Tharu but tried to be some help to the teacher while I was around.

One of the main challenges that I faced during the period was the expectation from the language activists, in both the schools, that I would support and join them in their efforts to institutionalise these languages. In JSB, the Nepal Bhasa teacher expected my help in maintaining the monolingual use of Nepal Bhasa at least during their lessons. Following the way in which school curriculum was structured, I followed this pattern and refrained from using any other language during Nepal Bhasa lessons. However, many students also used Nepali outside the classroom or during other lessons. I was not sure if I would be breaking the rules of the school, if I spoke to the students in Nepali. Since I wanted to understand the actual 'practice' around languages, I spoke to students in the

same language in which they approached me.

2.4 Making sense of tensions

I found these tensions very instructive for the research. These practices were not only the dilemmas I faced as a researcher, but were indicative of the complex issue of perception about language competence and practices in Nepal. The language practices, especially in these schools, complicate the simplistic compartmentalisation of languages and identities. In both these schools, I noted that there were no uniform ways in which languages were used. Minority languages such as Nepal Bhasa and Tharu were used as a conscious choice of language for instruction. However, as discussed in the earlier section, English and Nepali were compulsory school subjects.

Examining these tensions as an important aspect of my research process, I have tried to pay attention to what actually goes on in schools rather than what is assumed to be going on. This process is not only helpful in exploring the perspectives but there is also recognition that social dynamics is 'structured by how they interpret the world' and therefore the recognition of 'actual or potential conflict' within and between perspectives (Hammersley, 1999:2). The method I followed in this research, therefore, does not seek to trace the ways in which ethnic identities are produced through the inculcation of 'mother-tongue' in schools and evaluate its success and failure. It, instead, foregrounds the tensions in linguistic practices, and seeks to understand the varying ways in which they are entangled with other identities.

3. Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB)

As someone who grew up in a Newar family in Kathmandu, I had often heard about Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) as the Nepal Bhasa School, located somewhere on the banks of the Bisnumati river. I had never seen the school in person. When I visited to school for the first time after I started this research, I asked several people in the locality for directions. I soon realised that Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) was known more as ‘the Newa School’ than by its name. This distinct identity of the JSB as a place that teaches Nepal Bhasa seemed to have drawn both appreciation and suspicion. As I was did not know the exact location of the school, I entered one of the shops near the school locality to ask for directions. When he heard my question, he bombarded me with a series of questions: ‘Do they have a lots of students? What do they teach? What is the use of a Newa school in today’s day and age?’ He did not wait for my answer before he started again, ‘I don’t think they are doing well. Which parent sends their children to a Newa school? I am a Newa. I don't send my children there. It is good that there is a Newa school but what do they teach in school? Are they closing down soon?’ These were precisely the questions that I had in my mind before I stopped to ask for the direction to the school.

My parents sent me to an ‘English-medium’ ‘boarding’ school, like most children from middle-class families in Kathmandu.²⁴ I never ‘learnt’ Nepal Bhasa in school. My grandparents, parents, uncles, and aunts spoke to each other in Nepal

²⁴ The word ‘boarding’ in the name of the school is used colloquially to signal that the school teaches in English. Whether the school has provision of hostel accommodation is not much consequence in this nomenclature.

Bhasa, so I picked up the language along the way. My parents primarily used Nepali to speak to me, so that I would learn to speak Nepali without any accent. Growing up in these contexts, I made very little attempt to gain competence in Newa Bhasa. I was therefore personally as intrigued to find out more about Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB), as the gentleman in the shop. He finally stopped probing me, as his shop got more customers, and pointed me towards a bridge. He said, 'Walk straight on this road until you reach a bridge. Don't go on the bridge. Walk on the new *pitch* road on the side of the bridge and you will see a building with a blue roof.' Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) school building is a three-storeyed concrete building with distinctive blue-coloured tinned roof. There were two buildings adjacent to each other in L shape enclosing the school playground. The school building was located alongside the newly constructed tarmacked road by the Bisnumati river.

3.1 Nepal Bhasa and Schooling

Within the first few minutes in the school premises, I encountered several languages. I had naively expected to see and hear only Nepal Bhasa exclusively used in the school premises. As I entered the school gate, I noticed a colourful school wall painted with pictures of fruits and flowers. These were labelled in English. As I walked in, I saw a big board with school name written in Nepal Bhasa script. Under the school name, the board also clearly mentioned 'instruction in Nepal Bhasa'. As I continued to walk toward the school building, the school caretaker noticed me. He stopped me and asked me in Nepali, 'Who do you want to meet?' The caretaker directed me to go to the head-teacher's office in the second floor. The stairs were next to the classroom marked 'V' (year

5). I could hear children talking in Nepali to each other. As I climbed up the stairs, two children walked down. They greeted me in Nepal Bhasa - 'Jwajalapa'. On the first floor, there were three students sitting on the benches against the wall. One of the students had a Nepal Bhasa newspaper in her hand. Next to her were two other newspapers, a Nepali daily and an English daily.

The school was known for using Nepal Bhasa as the medium of instruction. This was of particular importance because it made it one of the very few schools in Nepal that used one of Nepal's 'languages of the nation' (*rastriya bhasa*) and not the 'national language' (*rastra bhasa*) Nepali. During my conversation with various people in the school, I particularly noted that the idea of mother-tongue education as the constitutional provision predominantly shaped the discourses around the mother-tongue instruction in these schools. It was one of the 'much-trumpeted gains of the 1990 Constitution' (Gellner, 2004: 7) that the right to have primary education in mother tongue was declared as 'fundamental right'. Scholars of Nepal Bhasa present different evidences for the use of Nepal Bhasa for literary purposes in the fourteenth century. Shrestha and Hoek (1995, quoting Lienhard 1992) note that Shah kings at the beginning of the nineteenth century, such as Ranabahadur and Rajendra Vikram served as patrons of the language and even wrote in Nepal Bhasa themselves. However, the language saw a rapid decline after Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shamsheer banned the use of Nepal Bhasa in the court (Malla, 1977:5) and Juddha Shamsheer criminalised any use of Nepal Bhasa for literary purposes.

Nepal Bhasa as the medium of education was first introduced in Nepal Rastriya Vidyapitha (1951) in Birgunj (Shrestha and van Hoek, 1995). Following this, Nepal Bhasa was introduced, in 1953, as a subject that could be studied as an 'Oriental language' in Kathmandu. Nepal Bhasa was thus one of seven to nine subjects taught in school; it was never used as an official medium of instruction. The New Education Policy of 1971 further limited Nepal Bhasa as 'optional' subject to be chosen between mathematics, science and other vocational subjects. After the 1990 constitution guaranteed the right to mother-tongue education at the primary level, the schools are open to make an application to use mother tongue as language of instruction. Schools may also introduce the local language as a subject. In Class IX and X, the students can choose Nepal Bhasa as an optional subject to be taught along with six other compulsory subjects.

3.2 History of JSB

Over the next nine months that I visited Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB), I learnt about the history of the school from various people. The school was established in 1990, after the constitution of the Nepal recognised the right to basic education in the mother tongue as a fundamental right of citizens (also see Shrestha and Hoek, 1995, and Gellner, 2009, for detailed discussion of the history of JSB). The name of the school comes from one of the prominent personalities in working on the promotion of Nepal Bhasa - Jagat Sundar Malla (1882-1952). He was a schoolmaster from Bhaktapur, one of the districts in Kathmandu, who is well known for translating Aesop's fables into Nepal Bhasa. Recognising his contribution, the school was named after him and his statue erected in the school premises in 2001 (Gellner, 2014, JSB, 2010). The school officially started on the

‘Education Day’ (12 Falgun 2047 BS) in the leadership of nine-member governing committee comprising of language activists, academics and teachers.

When we started this school, there was a big difference in what we had imagined and the way things happened. In the beginning, when we had to register, the District Education Officer did not have enough knowledge that they could register a school that aims to teach in mother tongue. So they would just send us back. In our application letter, we had to clearly write on the provision in the constitution that allows us to do so.²⁵

Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi registered as a private, but government-recognised school in 1990. The headteacher recalls the difficulty she had in the initial days:

We started school the in one of our founding committee member’s house. He gave his house for free. We volunteered to teach. Since the education was free most of the economically poor families readily sent their children. However, we faced a lot of problems. We did not have books. In the beginning years, we took inspiration from Galaxy School’s course for other subjects. And for Nepal Bhasa, we made our own books.²⁶

The Letter of Permission from the District Education Office, Ministry of Education (dated 26.04.2048 B.S. [1991]), mentions that the permission is on condition that the school adheres to the terms and conditions mentioned in the Nepal Education Act 2028 and Education Regulation 2018 (8th Amendment). This meant that for the school could use Nepal Bhasa for the purpose of education, as long as they adhered to the curriculum guidelines and taught subjects as stipulated by the government’s curriculum development office (MoE). The school thus teaches the following subjects:

Table 8	
List of subjects taught in JSB	
Primary School (1-5):	Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, English, Science, Maths, Social Studies

²⁵ Founder Member of School Governing Committee, Interview, 20 Aug 2013.

²⁶ JSB School Principal, Interview, 18 August 2013.

Lower Secondary (6-8):	Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, English, Science, Maths, Social Studies
Secondary School (9-10):	Nepali, English, Science, Maths, Social Studies, Nepal Bhasa OR Optional Mathematics

The students in Class IX, in addition to five compulsory subjects, can opt for one subject of their choice. They study this as optional subject in Class IX and X and sit for 100 marks exam for SLC. Different schools offer choice of different subjects that the school want to specialise in. JSB offers a choice between Nepal Bhasa and Optional Mathematics (Trigonometry). The school now run classes from Nursery to Class X. However, the extension of the approval to higher secondary was not easy. In almost all the interviews I conducted with the founder members of the school and many teachers, they shared the story of the initial struggle that the school faced. Most of the schoolteachers mentioned bits and pieces of this story in my conversations with them:

We applied every year and we got approval till Class VII. But it was very difficult to get approval to extend beyond Class VII. They would just send us back. The constitutional provision only mentioned primary school. We had to wait for many years before we could register. In addition, we had to show that we had adequate manpower i.e. graduate teachers for social, maths, science, English and Nepali.²⁷

The Principal of the school, however, acknowledges that many other organisations and schools have joined this effort now. The growing number of actors in the field of mother-tongue education has made it a little simpler than earlier days.

Now there are many other schools where they are teaching Nepal Bhasa. There are groups such as Syanami Pucha. They have teachers who go to different schools and teach Nepal Bhasa as a subject. The Municipality (Nagarpalika) also has a quota for teachers (of the local language). But those schools focus only in the pre-primary level. But this is not enough. It

²⁷ JSB School Principal, Interview, 18 August 2013.

has to be at least till the end of primary school... till Class V. Otherwise, children will not get to study various forms literature – novels, stories, poems. In our school it is compulsory at least till Class VIII.²⁸

3.3 JSB School Profile

JSB drew its student body from the nearby locality, at least in the initial years. It is located in the central part of Kathmandu, largely populated by Newar groups. The principal mentioned, 'There are currently 275 students. Most children come mainly from the nearby area. They usually walk to school. But some come from Nayabazar, Thankot etc.'²⁹ Though in the previously, the students were mainly from the Newar community, now they have children from other social groups as well. 'Approx. 5 per cent of our students are non Newars; mainly Kushwaha, Tamang, Brahmin, Thapamagar. Since Nepal Bhasa is the compulsory subject in the lower grades, they also learn Newari. We have seen that most non-newars in our student body talk and do very well in Newari.' Consultation of the school register confirms the spread of ethnic groups she mentioned.

During my fieldwork in JSB, I mainly attended classes. I noticed that some children in Class III looked older than others in the class. The teacher explained:

Some children enrol in school very late. The school therefore takes children in lower classes based on their academic level. Some children would never have gone to school, we therefore have to take them in Nursery. That is the reason why there are some older students in Class III. There are years when some students are over 18 years or more (well beyond age to appear in the SLC examination). Some children would never have gone to school so we have to start right from the beginning.³⁰

²⁸ JSB School Principal, Interview, 25 August 2013.

²⁹ These are areas from which it would be necessary to come to school by bus.

³⁰ Nepal Bhasa teacher and the founder member of JSB, Interview, 20 August 2013.

The number of teachers who were working in the school fluctuated. At the time of my fieldwork, the school had ten core full-time teachers, ten part-time teachers (eight of them were alumni of the school), one finance officer, and three support staff. They also had visits from a doctor and a dance teacher, as and when required. Now we also have some old students who are working as new teachers. The school principal shared with me in the interview that most of these students have opt for commerce and science stream. Some of them sometimes write poetry and essays in Nepal Bhasa.³¹

Not all the subjects were taught in Nepal Bhasa. Language subjects such as Nepali is taught in Nepali. Ramita Malakar, the Nepali language teacher explained. She said she teaches Nepali in Nepali medium but sometimes explains in Newari. There were two Rai-Tamang researchers who wanted to know if she taught Nepali in Newari. She told them that she does not. The office told her she should have told them that she taught in Newari.³² The students in Class IX and X also had extra lesson in Optional Maths and Science, as an extra lesson for SLC preparation. The students in Class VII and VIII also had extra lessons for English.

3.4 Financial Support

The much talked-about 1990 constitution, while it guaranteed the right to primary education in mother tongue, did not oblige the state to financially support the schools. JSB thus struggled to support the costs of the school. In the initial years, JSB started from the ground floor of one of the founding member's

³¹ School Principal, Interview, 18 August 2013.

³² Nepali language teacher, Interview, 23 Aug 2013.

house that had been provided he offered without any rent. Three female teachers volunteered their time to run the school. As Gellner (2014) rightly notes, JSB pupils are largely from poor and/or low-caste backgrounds. The families could not pay school fees to cover the cost of the school. The principal of the school recalls the financial struggles in their initial days:

I volunteered, along with two other teachers, to start the school. We started going from house to house, publicising the school in Malchhataar (Chhauni). Many parents were not interested in sending their children, even when we were providing free schooling. After our one-month long campaign, we officially started the school on the day of Sikhshya Diwas (Education Day). We had a classroom, teachers and children but did not have anything else. So many of our friends gave donations to buy various things that we needed. There was one American friend who donated dusters and chalk. Gauri Pradhan and Bijay Sainju from CWIN also donated money to cover some children's education costs.

Within a year, JSB started a financial support programme that they call 'sponsorship'. Each 'sponsor' is requested to cover the school fees and other additional costs such as books, stationary, notebooks etc. of a 'sponsored' student. Selection of the children for sponsorship is carried out by the staff of the school and is on the basis of need. Teachers from the school interview the parents in the home to assess the economic level of the family. Once the school makes the match between 'sponsor' and the 'sponsored' student, they facilitate regular contact and update them about the student's academic progress. The sponsors are expected to contribute a fixed amount ranging from Rs 10,000 – Rs 12,000 per child per year to cover school fees. As the word spread, many other people involved in Nepal Bhasa language movement joined in the sponsorship programme. Though they had found many well-wishers, the school still struggled financially until they started their collaboration with HIKIVA, a Japanese social service organisation.

In 1991 a Japanese woman called Kumashiro, who was on her way to Swayambhu, happened to pass the open-air shelter where, before the move to Jahkami's house, the women of the Nepal Bhasa Misa Khala were teaching. Impressed by the teachers' spirit of social service, she made the first foreign donation of \$70. Then contact was made – via Shobhana Shrestha Masoka, a Newar married to a Japanese and living in Japan – with a non-governmental social service foundation called HIKIVA (Hirakata Katao International Volunteer Association), based in Osaka (Gellner, 2014:7).

There were approximately 100 children who are supported through HIKIVA. HIKIVA also supported the cost towards constructing the new building and school hall. Other organisations like Newa of America (NoA), an association of diaspora Newars, sponsors 20 children. The NoA provides \$100 per child, regardless of any currency fluctuation. There are also several individual sponsors who sponsor approx. 30 children. Though they have now found other individual and institutional sponsors, Rs. 7000 per year per child barely covers the cost of the school completely. The full-time teachers in the schoolwork for much lower salaries than they would receive in other private school nearby, to make the school run at a very low cost:

I started teaching in this school right from the beginning. I worked without salary for many years, especially in the first few years. I had completed my MA degree in culture, so I was very much interested in the idea of this school. Since I was also single, I could focus on these voluntary activities. We are having difficult time finding new teachers. Our salaries are much less than what other schools offer.³³

The school has now started charging a nominal fee to the students. The teachers told me that the school used to have almost 50-75% children with sponsorship. However, it has reduced drastically now. Most of the students pay a fee of Rs. 1100 per month. They also have to pay additional cost for school uniform,

³³ School Principal, Interview, 18 August 2013.

stationery, and notebooks. The students with sponsorship have pay approx. Rs 150-600 per month, depending on their class.³⁴ One parent said:

I have to pay 500 and 650 for my two children. One is in Class III and another in Class VI. I used to send them in a nearby boarding school, the fees was around 1100 per child. I could not afford the cost for both my children. So my sister-in-law, who also sends her child to this school, told me about this school; we shifted them.³⁵

3.5 Uncertain Future

Though the school has been getting 100 per cent pass rate in national-level school leaving certificate examination (SLC), and won many awards, the school population has been gradually decreasing since 2011. The school magazine (*smarika*) records a total of 341 children in the year 2001. The total number of students during my fieldwork in 2013 was around 275. The emergence of new English medium 'boarding' schools in the vicinity has also threatened the viability of a mother-tongue school in the locality (this is discussed further in Chapter Six). One of the teachers explained:

Earlier, we had only up to Class VII. But we had almost 300 students. But now, our school run classes up to 10 and yet there are just around 275 students. Ward 14 has become very competitive in terms of schools now. There are approx. 47 registered private schools and 1 very reputed government school in ward 14. The competition is therefore very high. The students pay almost the same amount as the fee in other schools. Even the ones with sponsorships have to pay almost 600.

In our first cohort of students, all the students got distinction. Some of them also went to Delhi for studying. But two of them left studying after 11 and 12. Students here are economically poor and they find it difficult to continue spending money in education, so they sometimes leave education and start joining work that their parents are doing. Though children get distinction, there seems to be less confidence for SLC. When they say that they have been studying Nepal Bhasa, they feel that their employability is less. So there is not much attraction.³⁶

³⁴ Teacher, Interview, 20 August 2013.

³⁵ Parent, Interview, 17 September 2013

³⁶ Nepal Bhasa Teacher, Interview, 20 Aug 2013.

JSB has now set up several prizes and awards to recognise the students who do well in their exams e.g. Shanti Manandhar Prize of Rs. 15,000 prize for the highest score in SLC exam for 1 girl and 1 boy student in JSB and Laxminarayan Shrestha Prize of Rs 30,000 prize for the highest score in Nepal Bhasa in SLC exam for 1 student at the national level. Through these prizes, the school hoped to attract more students to opt more Nepal Bhasa.

4. Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS)

I came to know about Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) during my interviews with government officials and NGOs in Kathmandu. Since JSB was a private school, established by the language activists, I was also keen to understand how mother-tongue education functioned in government schools. The much talked-about pilot project on Multi-lingual Education (MLE), funded jointly by Finnish Government and Ministry of Education, in seven government schools had already concluded by the time I started this research. There were several research reports that indicated that the pilot schools are no longer running the MLE programme after the project ended. The expected 'cascade effect' had not taken off.

However, during my interaction with different NGOs and individuals working on minority language education, many talked about JKHS as one of the most successful example of Multi-lingual Education (MLE). Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) had been running Multi-lingual Education (MLE) programme since 2007, with the financial support of United Mission to Nepal

(UMN), a faith-based NGO working in Nepal, along with other education programmes in this school. After my meeting with UMN Education department staff, I accompanied one of the UMN staff to the school during his regular monitoring visit.

4.1 Tharu community and schooling

Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) is a government school in Barkulpur VDC, Kapilbastu district, in the Nepal's Tarai, i.e. the plains adjoining India (in this case eastern Uttar Pradesh). The school was well known in the locality as the school with the big gate which was constructed to mark 50-year anniversary of the school. JKHS is one of the oldest schools and the only higher secondary school in the locality. The school had two-storeyed concrete building for lower secondary and secondary levels and a line of one-storeyed classrooms for primary levels. The school also served five 'feeder' primary schools – Sri Kisan Primary School (Champapur), Jan Jyoti Primary School (Dhamauli), Kotiyadada Primary School (Charigawa), Pipaldada Bal Bikas and Gawa Dahawa Primary School. Children from these schools join JKHS after the completion of their primary school (Class V). JKHS also works as a resource school for 12 other schools and conducted several training programmes for nearby schools while I was there.

According to the school's golden jubilee magazine (JKHS, 2010), 90 percent of the students are Tharus. Tharus are listed as an indigenous nationality (adivasi janajati) by the Government of Nepal. According to the Census of Nepal 2011, there are 1,737,470 Tharus in Nepal, making up 6.6% of its total population. As

Guneratne (1998, 2002) has pointed out, the category Tharu is used to denote several disparate groups of people living in the southern areas of Nepal, popularly known as Tarai. Although they share the same name, they belong to many communities with very different languages and cultural practices living across the Tarai. However, as Guneratne (2002) points out their encounter with the Hill people have sharpened the sense of Tharu being a distinct group of people, even though different Tharu groups might speak different languages. At least five distinct groups are popularly known - Rana Tharu in the far western region, Kathariya Tharu to their east, Dangaura Tharu near the Dang valley, Chitwaniya Tharu in the Central Tarai and Kochila Tharu in the eastern region of Nepal's Tarai. Teachers in the school listed nine different kinds of Tharu language: Dangaura Tharu, Desauri Tharu, Rana Tharu, Saptaria Tharu, Chitwaniya Tharu, Deukhariya Tharu, Bhaurahia Tharu, Nawalpuria Tharu and Sunsariya Tharu.

These languages are primarily oral languages, with very limited written literature. This has meant that none of the Tharu languages have been used for education purposes, neither in the school nor in higher education. Unlike the Nepal Bhasa in the Kathmandu district, Tharu languages development and the literary activities have been limited to the local areas. Recently, several national and local level social organisation of Tharu such as the Tharu Welfare Society and the Backward Society Education (BASE) have been working on various development projects for the welfare of Tharu population (Krauskopff, 2008; Guneratne, 2002). McDonough (1989:200) records the establishment of 'the association for the improvement of Tharu language and literature in the west of

Nepal’ in 1970s. Many of these organisations relied on ‘cultural and language activities’ to organise various Tharu communities to stand together in the struggle for their rights against the landlords and against the Kamaiya system of bonded labour. In this context, education has long been seen as an important part of the mobilisation process.

4.2 JKHS School Profile

Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) is believed to have established c. 1985 BS (1928 AD). According to the local history recorded in the school magazine (*smarika*), the school is believed to have been started by a family of three brothers Husaini Tharu, Kudan Tharu and Sipahi Tharu, who hired a private tutor from India for their sons’ education. Later one of their brothers, Kinnu Tharu, started to informally teach the groups of children in the locality. As this informal teaching started to become popular in the locality, they slowly formalised it as a school. The family then donated 10 *kattha* (approx. 3000 sqm) land to build the school. The school was formally registered in 1957 as Nepal Rastriya Primary School. Since then the school had gradually developed itself as a higher secondary school.

Table 9
History of JKHS

Nepal Rastriya Primary School	2018 BS (1957 AD)
Nepal Rastriya Lower Secondary School	2038 BS (1981 AD)
Jana Kalyan Secondary School	2044 BS (1987 AD)
Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School	2063 BS (2006 AD)
Buddhabhumi College	2065 BS (2008 AD)

The first cohort of students registered for SLC examination in 2043 BS (1986 AD) via Siddharth Smarak Secondary School, where 50 per cent of the students

passed SLC examination. The following year, 2044 BS (1987 AD), the school registered as a secondary school with a new name - Jana Kalyan Secondary School (as there was already another school with the name 'Nepal Rastriya'). The school is still very proud that the 85 per cent of their first cohort passed the SLC examination and also received the highest grade in the district. Since then JKHS has been one of the schools in the locality that is known for good SLC results.

JKHS has a comparatively large student body of approx. 1048 students: 304 in primary level, 442 in lower secondary level, 149 in secondary level and 153 in higher secondary level, from the nearby area of Bakulipur, Barkulpur, Asanhara, Maitahawa and Dumara. According to the statistics printed in the school magazine, 810 students are Janjatis, 31 are Dalits and 241 are categorised as 'others' (JKHS, 2011:13). 484 students are girls and 588 students are boys.

4.3 Multi-Lingual Education

A big signboard in the school playground with the teachers' code of conduct reads (in Nepali) - 'Use mother tongue in the lower grades; and assist in making JKHS Kapilbastu's model school'. The school indeed was well known for its MLE success; the school received a regular stream of visitors who came to the school to understand the ways in which they had been implementing MLE programme. The school has a five-member committee to coordinate the MLE activities in the school. The Head of School Management Committee (SMC) served as the chair of MLE committee. The school principal and 3 senior teachers worked as the members of the committee.

JKSS had been running multi-lingual education in primary school since 2010, with the support of United Mission to Nepal. Multi-Lingual Education has been used to indicate a model that involves starting education in the medium of the language that a student already speaks, i.e. the mother tongue. Inside the classroom this means learning school subjects like maths, science and social studies in the student's first language (usually mother tongue -L1), then introducing a second (Nepali -L2) and third (English-L3) language as 'subjects', and gradually transitioning to L2 and L3 as mediums of instruction, if needed.

According to the school values printed in the school magazine, the school endeavours to 'work towards the preservation and development of local languages'. The school has printed textbooks for subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Social Science in Tharu and Awadhi language (discussed in detail in Chapter Three). These books used three languages - Nepali, Awadhi and Tharu - in each book in order to facilitate multi-lingual teaching classroom.

4.4 Financial Support

JKHS receives financial support for 10 teachers and an administrative member of staff from the government. However, since this school has very big student population, the school has employed several teachers through local fundraising - '*niji shrot*' (literally private resources). The local NGOs and forest user groups have been supporting the salaries of some of the teachers in school. The school has also been collaborating with various International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) such as Save the Children, Opportunity International and United Mission to Nepal to run several School Improvement Plans (SIPs).

In addition, the school owns 10 *kattha* (approx. 3000 sq. m) land donated by a family of Husaini Tharu, Thage Tharu, Kudan Tharu and Sipahi Tharu, where the current school building stands. The school also owns the land covered by the nearby *Baijalwa* pond and 1 *bigha* (6000 sq. m) land adjacent to the Siddharth Community Forest. The school uses these properties to raise money for the school by allowing people to collect forest products. The school has a library with a collection of about 2500 books. Though the library was established using the school budget, the ongoing cost has been supported by several other organisations such as Room to Read and Opportunity International.

Table 10
Financial support received by JKHS

<u><i>Name of Organisation</i></u>	<u><i>Purpose of financial support</i></u>
United Mission to Nepal, Rupandehi Cluster	MLE programme, teachers training and overall support
Siddharth Social Development Center	overall support
Jana Adarsha Social Development Center	Support for science lab
Siddhartha Community Forest Users Group	Social awareness programme
Hariyali Community Forest Users Group	Financial support for school expenditure and in-kind support of forest products
Husaini Community Forest Users Group	
Kanchan Community Forest Users Group	
Kisan Community Forest Users Group	
Shankar Jyoti Community Forest Users Group	
Buddhabhumi Community Forest Users Group	
Gramin Bikas Karyakram Nepal (Rural Development Programme Nepal)	Local handicraft and social awareness
Room to Read	Library support
Opportunity International	Computer lab and books support

5. Different Contexts, Similar Positioning?

Jagat Sundar Bwone Kuthi (JSB) and Jana Kalayan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) have not only very histories, as introduced above, but function in very different ways. JSB is a private school located in an urban setting of Kathmandu.

JKHS, on the other hand, is a government school located in a rural village of Kapilbastu. This empirical context had implications for the way language was used in the everyday life. Most of the students in the JSB were fluent bilingual students. They spoke Nepali and Nepal Bhasa with almost equal ease. In most cases, the younger generation were more fluent in Nepali than they were in Nepal Bhasa. Many gained more competence in Nepal Bhasa only after a few months in JSB. In JKHS, all the students spoke mainly Tharu. The younger students in the lower grades did not understand Nepali. I observed, and the teachers agreed with me, that the students start speaking fluent Nepali only after a few years in the school.

Table 11					
JSB and JKHS Overview					
Jagat Sundar Bwone Kuthi (JSB)			Jana Kalayan Higher Secondary School (JKHS)		
Private School			Government School		
Urban -Kathmandu			Rural - Kapilbastu		
Newar/Nepal Bhasa – written literary tradition			Tharu – some literary but mainly oral Tradition		
High language shift in new generation			Minimal language shift in new generation		
Teachers with higher degrees in Newari			Teachers with no formal education in Tharu		
Language Maintenance model			Language Transition model		
Group	Total population (%)	Language retention (%)	Literacy Rate (NA=66)	Urban Population (%)	Districts highest in number
Newar	5.0	64	80.7	48.6	Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur
Tharu	6.6	88	64.5	-	Sunsari, Dang, Bardiya, Kailali

(Source: Census, 2011)

In this context, scholars have observed that JSB followed what has been called Language Maintenance model (Ghimire, 2015) where the schools actively encouraged students to use their mother tongue inside and outside the school. In JSB, the students spoke Nepali very fluently, and were slowly shifting away from

Nepal Bhasa. In this context, the school actively sought to create an environment where students learnt not only to speak Nepal Bhasa fluently but also learnt to read and write in it. Most of the teachers in JSB also had higher degrees in Nepal Bhasa. By contrast, JKHS's language practice conforms to what has been identified as a Language Transitional model which encourage language minority students to use the mother tongue to gain command over school subjects and slowly to learn the national language. Most of the students spoke mainly Tharu when they joined the school, and learnt Nepali in school.

Though these two schools have seemingly very different specific contexts, they seem to display some similar dynamics, possibly because they sought to use minority language for the education purposes. During my conversation with various people in the school, I particularly noted that the idea of mother-tongue education as the constitutional provision predominantly shaped the discourses around the mother-tongue instruction in these schools. In my interviews with the government officials, language activists and even some parents, one of the important ways in which people argued for the use of mother tongue was through the language of constitutional rights. This discourse gave legitimate resolution to very deep-rooted tensions between various groups. As one of the government officials explained to me when I asked if MLE was a response to ethnic activism in Nepal:

The MLE programme is the government's effort to translate the fundamental right guaranteed in the constitution. We appreciate the value of mother tongue in child's education. It is not a programme that has come about because we gave in to the pressures of ethnic organisations.

The constitution plays a mediating role in otherwise very conflicting positions. One of the prominent language activists mentioned, 'What we are asking is already promised in the constitution. On the one hand, the constitution says that Nepal is a multi-lingual country. And on the other hand, there is not enough effort from the government to promote and preserve the language.' One of the ways in which language activists and the state were able to come to conversation with each other, in these schools, was through the production of textbooks. Both the schools printed textbooks in languages other than Nepali. And in doing so, engaged actively in a knowledge-making process that sought to draw from the 'local' contexts and standardise languages (see the detailed discussion in Chapter Six).

In this process, the schools also worked very closely with the Government of Nepal to institutionalise these efforts. They functioned as 'model school' / 'resource school' and conducted several trainings and observation visits for other individuals and schools. The analysis of practices in these schools thus makes it difficult to conceptualise mother-tongue education as only educational agenda or political agenda. This research thus contributes to the body of anthropological studies of education in Nepal that highlight the ways in which schools, society and the state are intermeshed with each other.

Moreover, both JKHS and JSB are faced by an uncertain future. In JKHS, the MLE programme was financially supported by UMN. In JSB, the school was largely sustained by the financial support of HIKIVA. There was no financial support from the state. Moreover, the increasingly popularity of the 'boarding' schools

were drawing students away from these schools. In this context, even while these two schools were seen as 'model schools', the school administration was extremely uncertain whether these schools would be able to sustain themselves in the longer run. In this context, both schools focused on 'quality education'. In practice, this meant ensuring good grades in national exams and teaching English (detailed discussion in Chapter Seven). In this way, both the schools balance their precarious position as a minority language education by seeking space and seeking to excel within the national education system that they sought to transform.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the empirical context of the study and the specific details of both the schools that would serve as an important basis for the discussion in the following chapters. I have also discussed the ways in which my own language competence, my education and my social position influenced my fieldwork. As in any research of this nature, the data I collected was very much a response to my positionality. However, this has also been highly instructive in understanding the complex issues of language practices and dynamics of ethnicity in Nepal. The ways in which I was invariably implicated in this research highlights the ways in which different identities are inter-meshed with each other and the ways in which social dynamics can often take very different forms than what might have been expected.

CHAPTER FOUR

Private Languages, Public Places

1. Introduction

'Jwajalapa!' A group of students on the playground greeted me as I entered the JSB building. I replied 'Jwajalapa', with a bit of awkwardness. The most common greeting in Nepal is 'Namaste', the one that I was most comfortable with. Jwajalapa is a fairly recent practice that has been revived and popularised as genuinely Newar greeting. Many other ethnic groups have sought to evolve their own equivalent greeting such as 'Sevaro' among the Rias, 'Phayphula' among the Limbus etc. In JSB, teachers encourage the use of Jwajalapa within the school premises, especially in Nepal Bhasa lessons. While the students also use Namaste in informal communication and Good Morning/Afternoon in the classroom, Jwajalapa is used more often in official communication and informal conversations. The use of Nepal Bhasa terms such as Jwajalapa is an important part of everyday life in JSB.

This practice is considered to be in line with the Nepali state's definition of mother tongue education. According to the Inclusive Education Information Booklet published by the Government of Nepal, 'If the *language-spoken-at-home* is used for instruction in *language-at-school*, such education is understood as mother tongue education' (GoN, 2060: 13). Here, the languages hitherto confined within the private spaces of the home, family, and personal relationships were called on for the use in public places such as schools. The political significance of these schools was that they also enacted the right to mother tongue guaranteed for in

the constitution of Nepal. Drawing on these legal provisions, in JSB, the school consciously worked to institute Nepal Bhasa, the language that has seen a decline in use by the younger generation, through everyday use in school education. In JKHS, the school drew on the existing linguistic use of Tharu to make new collaborations and negotiate its status as the official language of instruction. However, as I will illustrate in this chapter, the students and teachers used a combination of various languages that included mother tongue, Nepali and some English, dressed up in ethnic attire and held Nepali flag while participating in public programmes, and by articulating ethnic language and identity as national identity. The negotiation of the spaces for multiple languages and their speakers within one national collective is often articulated through the possibility of speaking different languages and without dislodging the position of Nepali language as the national language and English as an international language.

This chapter argues that the dynamics in the public places reveal a lot about the process of negotiation of symbolic power that is underway in changing the socio-political landscape of Nepal.³⁷ By performing a particular language in a particular situation, people assert the legitimate domains of that language and shape relations of symbolic power, thus making public space a social field. Through the process of 'normalisation' of minority languages (May, 2012; Hornberger, 1995), the minority groups might seek to shift the power relations and influence the ways in which various identities are positioned. However, as minority groups negotiate these positions from relatively less powerful positions,

³⁷ In Nepal, the use of languages other than Nepali for official communication and in public places has historically been quite controversial as discussed in chapter two.

they may contrast against or align with dominant language for symbolic power, turning public places into the spaces of competing and multiple interests.

In this chapter, I will discuss this relationship between languages in public places to highlight the complex ways in which multilingualism is produced while placing an emphasis on mother tongue. In particular, I will illustrate that even while the students and teachers conformed to the overarching language hierarchy in schools, they engaged in these transforming spaces by the use of multiple languages in various ways. These practices unsettle the neat boundaries between the notions such as private-public and ethnicity-nationalism by asserting simultaneous memberships in multiple groups, making claims over public places, and reconstructing notions of nationalism, hitherto associated with Nepali.

2. New languages of schooling

In the following section, I will present an analysis of everyday linguistic performances in JKHS and JSB to discuss how minority languages are used, inside and outside the schools. While doing so, I will also highlight the ways in which the boundaries between compartmentalised languages and identities might have been transcended or transgressed in certain circumstances.

2.1 You need to learn Tharu to work here!

On my first day in JKHS, I wrote in my field diary: ‘Students talk to each other in Tharu, especially the younger ones in the primary classes. I can hardly hear

Nepali spoken in the playground’. In the corridors, there were a group of older students talking to their friends, again in Tharu. When they saw me a bit lost and looking for the teacher’s office, they spoke to me in Nepali and told me the direction to the school office and reverted to Tharu. When I entered the staffroom, I heard teachers talking mainly in Tharu, though I could hear some conversations in Nepali as well. As I began to explain the purpose of my visit, Rama Khanal, a primary teacher, promptly asked me if I knew how to speak in Tharu. When I told her that I could not speak but understand it, she told me, ‘You will need to learn Tharu to work here, if you want to work well!’ The lack of competence in Tharu, which an outsider like me embodied, was seen as a hindrance to the professional success in these contexts. Even while my competence in Nepali and English definitely comprised valued social capital, it did not equip me with the skills required in these contexts. My request to translate the Tharu conversations was a proof of my incompetence in the language and inability to function as an insider in the community.

2.1.1 Speaking Tharu in school

JKHS and its five feeder primary schools have recently started using Tharu/Awadhi and Nepali as the official language of instruction in primary education. Based on the composition of the student population, JKHS and two primary schools use Tharu and three other schools use Awadhi as the medium of instruction. This programme was initiated through a joint collaboration of

Ministry of Education and United Mission to Nepal (UMN).³⁸ These three languages were officially introduced as the new languages of schooling, complying with the recent multi-lingual education guidelines approved by the Ministry of Education.³⁹ It is based on the principle of 'first-language-first' in order to help the children make a better start, and continue to perform better, than those for whom school starts with a language they don't understand (UNESCO, 2011). Secondly, it also operationalises the provisions in the Constitution of Nepal that declares the country multi-ethnic (*bahu jatiya*) and multilingual (*bahu bhasik*) country. The idea and practice of mother-tongue education is thus played out largely in changing discourses of social inclusion and multi-ethnicity.

The school is situated in the middle of a Tharu community. Tharu is the most common language that was used by the students, especially to talk to each other. However, most of them easily switched to Nepali, especially the older children, while speaking to me. Tharu was thus the language of close relations – between friends, between family members and the other members of the same community. For outsiders like me, the language was Nepali. It was the language associated with formality, education and exposure. This was not unexpected. However, within a few weeks in this school, I realised that the boundaries

³⁸ United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has been working in Nepal since 1954. It has been implementing various development programmes in the Rupandehi cluster (Kapilbastu, Rupandehi, and Nawalparasi districts) since 2005.

³⁹ The Curriculum Development Centre has already published textbooks in 20 languages: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tamang, Limbu, Bantawa Rai, Chamling Rai, Sherpa, Gurung, Nepal Bhasa, Sunuwar, Rajbansi, Yakha, Mugali, Tharu, Tamang (Sambota Script), Dhimal and Magar. In addition, reference materials based on stories, biographies and culture are have been published in 15 languages: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Limbu, Thary, Awadhi, Magar, Nepal Bhasa, Doteli, Thakali, Chamlig, Gurung, Bantawa Rai, Urdu and Sanskrit (CDC, 2069:24).

between this private language and public language are not impermeable. The language of instruction was a mix of Tharu and Nepali. This practice was more common in primary classrooms, which had officially been using Tharu for as medium of instruction, but also in higher grades. The students and teachers in these schools were positioned in a unique situation where they use the mother tongue in a formal institutional setting, which was conspicuous by its absence earlier and is still absent, on the formal level, in other schools.

The everyday role of the mother tongue was quite obvious in Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS). Most of the students spoke Tharu as their first language, both at home and in school. Teachers often used Tharu to explain the lessons in the classroom and most of the teachers spoke fluent Tharu. Homkala Khanal often told me, 'Most of us who have lived here for a long time have learnt to speak Tharu. It is otherwise difficult to do our job as a teacher properly'. She belongs to a Nepali-speaking hill community; commonly referred as *pahadi mul* (with the roots in the hills) in the locality. She started in this school some 20 years back when she got an appointment. 'Primary teachers need to know all the languages', many teachers often told me. 'I need to explain the lessons in the student's own language. I have to explain even Nepali lessons in Tharu, otherwise, they will not be able to understand it. Take the word *dai*, it means mother in Tharu but *dai* means elder brother in Nepali. If the teacher is not able to differentiate between the two, it can get very confusing. The teachers need to understand these local terms and respond to the students accordingly'.

These attempts to learn and use the local language on the school premises manifested in a variety of ways. As Rama Khanal entered the classroom, all the student stood up and greeted, 'Good morning ma'm!' She replied, 'Good morning. Sit down.' (English) As the students settled down in their seats, Homkala called out the students' names for the regular attendance call. Each student stood up after their name was called and shouted, 'Present, ma'm'. (English) After this morning ritual was over, she explained the task for the day to the class, 'Aaja samuhik kaaj garne. Timi haru najik au' (Nepali). (We will do group work today. You [pl.] come closer.) She then divided students into groups, 'aur aage aav' (come closer in Tharu, when children do not respond) and assigned maths problems to students. She went around to have a look at student work. She stopped in one of the groups and asked them, '16 se pahal kadna hou? Hei kadna likhi?' (What comes before 16? What have you written here?). She sat next to the group and explained the series of numbers to the group in Tharu. Some students answered correctly, some did not. Others asked some more questions. The conversation between her and the students took place mainly in Tharu. She looked at me and asked, 'How can I explain the maths concept in Nepali if the students do not understand the language?'

Firstly, whether or not she used the language properly is an important but a different question. Nonetheless, the discourse of local language as an important part of pedagogy, which was showcased as a desirable language to be used in school teaching, stands quite in contrast with the earlier education policy (discussed in Chapter Two) that sought to prevent the use of local language in the school premises. Being one of the very few schools in Nepal that use mother

tongue, JKHS is showcased as an example of successful pedagogical innovation. According to the teachers' code of conduct displayed on a board in the playground, the school strives to become a 'model school'; the use of mother tongue in the primary grade is one of the ways to achieve it. JKHS frequently had visitors who came to understand how this is implemented.

Secondly, Rama Khanal's classroom also portrays the everyday language practices in the multilingual contexts, where two or more languages are used in a given situation. The sociolinguistic research refers to these flexible language practices as 'translanguaging'- a process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two or more languages (Garcia, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; Garcia and Wei, 2013). In informal learning contexts, teachers and students often ignore the language norms and use languages flexibly to support understandings and building conceptual knowledge. However, in the formal learning context, these instances of translanguaging marked students' emerging literary skills and students' personal intellectual activity in order to gain competence in the formal language. As I spent more time in and around JKHS, I increasingly realised that I could understand the Tharu that was spoken in the school by teachers and students better than the Tharu spoken by community members, as various Nepali and English words/sentences always made their appearances in the Tharu spoken in the school.

2.1.2 Institutionalising Tharu

With the official recognition of Tharu in JKHS, by the government and the school administration, the use of Tharu in the classroom was beginning to be accepted as a legitimate pedagogy. This perspective also aligned with the Ministry of Education and International Organisations such as UNESCO and United Mission to Nepal (UMN) policy to develop Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) programmes. According to one of the high officials in the Ministry of Education, the local language such as Tharu was accepted as an important tool to deliver the school curriculum. He emphasised,

MLE needs to be understood as a pedagogic intervention. In Nepal, we have an assumption that everybody knows and speaks Nepali. But that is not the case. If you look at the classrooms there is crosscutting practice of 'code-switching'. In many places, Nepali is learnt as a second language. MLE is meant to facilitate this process'.

JKHS followed a national school curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education. This meant that JKHS taught the same subjects as any other school in Nepal as shown in Table 12. JKHS students studied other languages such as Nepali and English. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal 2005, requires all the schools to teach Nepali language for eight periods a week (6 hours), English for six periods a week (4.5 hours), and mother tongue for four periods a week (3 hours), where mother tongue is not Nepali (CDC, 2008:4). In addition, it also mandates that languages, as subjects, shall be taught in (UNESCO, 2011:29). In addition to these mandatory subjects, JKHS also taught Tharu as a local subject and used Tharu to teach Science, Maths, and Social Studies lesson. They published Science, Maths, and Social Studies books using

Tharu, Awadhi and Nepali languages simultaneously for each lesson (more discussion on this in Chapter Five).

Table 12
JKHS school timetable (Sunday – Friday)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>1st period</i>	<i>2nd period</i>	<i>3rd period</i>	<i>4th period</i>	<i>5th period</i>	<i>6th period</i>	<i>7th period</i>
1	Nepali	Nepali	Maths	English	Science	Social Std	Tharu
2	Nepali	Nepali	Maths	English	Science	Social Std	Tharu
3	Nepali	Nepali	Maths	English	Science	Social Std	Tharu
4	Maths	Social Std	Science	Nepali	English	Opt Eng	Extra cur
5	Maths	Social Std	Science	Nepali	English	Opt Eng	Extra cur

Despite the use of different languages and the national curriculum, official adoption of MLE generated both support and suspicion amongst the parents. Some of the parents thought that JKHS teaches Tharu and therefore will keep their children ‘backward’, away from Nepali and English. In the context of Nepal, where an aspiration of social mobility through dominant language competence is a common phenomenon, the competence in mother tongue did not symbolise the valued social capital. The parents who could afford fees in private schools moved their children to a ‘boarding’ school in the nearby market area of Imiliya. According to one of the teachers, these schools charge Rs 400-500 per month (compared to Rs 40 annual registration fee in JKHS). One of the schools operated their bus through the village every morning to pick up children. One day on my way to JKHS, I observed that most of the children in the school bus were boys. Rama Khanal sent her son to one of these private schools. However, her daughters completed their studies in JKHS. Her husband explained, ‘Children become smarter in private school. Since parents pay more money, they also pay a bit more attention the children’s homework and progress they are making in school.’ Class, gender and ethnicity of students and their parents undoubtedly mediated the schooling choices.

Nevertheless, the statistics on the student enrolment in the JKHS show that the student population has not dramatically changed in the last few years. The parents of those students who stayed, mainly shared that children have learnt to speak good Tharu, along with Nepali. 'Earlier they used to speak *phohor* (unclean) and *je payo tyehi* (unsystematic) Tharu. Now they speak *ramro* (good) Tharu, while they are learning Nepali', one of the Tharu parents whose child is in Class II told me. The legitimacy of MLE amongst the parents came mainly from the assumed sanitisation of Tharu language and proficiency in Nepali. As Rama Khanal mentioned, 'It is very important for the students to be proficient in Nepali after class three. And by the time they are in class four, it is essential that they are able to do comprehension in Nepali. We use Tharu to help us gain that efficiently'. In JKHS, the students and teachers thus used Tharu primarily for the smooth transition into Nepali language, the more valued social capital.

I did not take any formal lessons in Tharu during my fieldwork in JKHS despite being repeatedly reminded of my incompetence. First, I could not find any Tharu language teaching programmes. Second, though my lack of competence in Tharu was often mocked, my competence in Nepali was accepted as 'good-enough' (*kaam chalcchha*) to function in the locality. This embodied social capital that I performed seem to position me well compared to those who may not be able to speak Nepali. Teachers like Rama had picked up Tharu by living in the community. Tharu teachers and community members usually appreciated this effort as being considerate (*ramro manche*) and never as mandatory requirement of the job. There were many other teachers, especially in teaching in the higher

classes, who did not speak Tharu. Since the students spoke Nepali fluently by the time they were in high school, Nepali-speaking teachers were not considered incompetent. However, this was not the case for the students. The students were expected to know Nepali. Even though JKHS provided formal space for Tharu language, the school did not displace the premium placed on Nepali language competence.

2.2 *Bhay Chhya sa Bhay Lyani* (If the language is used, the language will survive)

In Kathmandu, where Nepal Bhasa is not as commonly spoken by younger generation, the deliberate use of Nepal Bhasa in the JSB premise was a conscious effort to institutionalise it as a language of formal spaces in schools. The head teacher of the school often told me, *Bhay Chhya sa Bhay Lyani*, meaning ‘if the language is used, the language will survive’. The school signboard also clearly mentioned that the school uses ‘mother tongue as a medium of instruction’. As a flagship programme of Newar ethnic activism, JKHS was established with the objective of teaching Nepal Bhasa to the younger generation. The school management and administration used Nepal Bhasa for all official communication and insisted that the students use it at least within the school premises.

2.2.1 Keeping the language alive

JSB was faced with two responsibilities. Firstly, JSB school administrators sought to encourage students to speak Nepal Bhasa as much as possible. The ways in which JSB teachers dealt with my Nepal Bhasa competence was quite instructive

in understanding the school's approach. As discussed in Chapter Three, the teachers were very 'tolerant' of my competence, or lack of it, in Nepal Bhasa. The teachers in the school, however, encouraged me to use it and always responded to me in Nepal Bhasa instead of switching over to Nepali (which is a very common practice in Nepal). They also treated students in the same way. Each time a student would speak in Nepali, the teachers responded in Nepal Bhasa. Thus, setting an informal rule around the language of communication.

Secondly, they also sought to ensure that the children used the 'correct' language. This raised various concerns. As Bandana Shrestha, a student of Class V, mentioned: 'Many of my friends speak Nepal Bhasa only in front of the teachers. But whenever the teachers are not around, they prefer to use Nepali.' Bandana is one of the top students in her class. She speaks Nepal Bhasa both at home and in school. She is fluent in Nepali as well. In many of the classes that I attended, the teachers often held her up as an example that other students should follow. In the Nepal Bhasa classroom, she sometimes helps fellow students in correcting spoken and written work. The students' lack of interest in mother tongue has been the common concern of the teachers and student-helpers such as Bandana. In one of the training programme for teachers, that I attended, the teachers discussed the difficulty in teaching 'correct' Nepal Bhasa in detail. The problems included – general lack of competence in using correct grammar, pronunciation, range of vocabulary, and the mixing of words from other languages. This anxiety was mainly on two specific issues: one, the younger generation increasingly shifting to Nepali/English and second, even in the situations where the student do speak the mother tongue, they were highly influenced by these dominant

language codes. Nepal Bhasa teachers saw this as huge challenge in teaching Nepal Bhasa.

Inside the classrooms, especially in Nepal Bhasa classes, teachers made special efforts to use Nepal Bhasa. On the blackboard dates were written in Nepal Sambat, the calendar that is considered to be 'authentic' Newar calendar e.g. *N.S. 1133 Gunla Thwa 14 Chaturdasi* - 20 August 2013 (more discussion about calendar later in this chapter). Though this date is not commonly used in Nepal⁴⁰, in JSB, the teachers and school administration used this in all formal communication. Similarly, Nepal Bhasa teachers insisted that the students use Nepal Bhasa terms for the punctuation signs, e.g. *Purwa chi* for fullstop (|), *Nhyasa chi* for question mark (?), and *Dipa chi* for comma (,). I observed that the students in the primary grades found these especially difficult to remember, as these were not commonly used terms. The teachers also continuously reminded the students to use Nepal Bhasa words to refer to festivals that were coming up such as *Gunpuni* instead of *Janai Purnima* or *Rakhya Bandhan*, *Saparu* instead of *Gaijatra*.⁴¹ Similarly, as mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, *Jwajalapa* was the form of greeting that was most commonly used inside the school, instead of *Namaste*. Responding to my confusion on the need to use these not-so-common words, the

⁴⁰ Unlike in India, the Bikram Sambat calendar is commonly used in all government communication and media, such as newspapers and radio. Increasingly the Gregorian calendar is becoming more popular in the urban areas like Kathmandu.

⁴¹ *Gunpuni/Janai Purnima/Rakhya Bandhan* is a festival where Newar families prepare soup with nine lentils. The elders of the family tie a sacred thread the wrists of family members as a symbol of protection. In some communities, brothers tie thread around sister's wrist. The later is increasingly becoming popular through Bollywood movies, and was been expressed as a matter of concern by many teachers in JSB. *Saparu/Gaijatra* is a festival where the Newar families, whose family members died in that year, go around a city for a procession with one or more children symbolically dressed as a cow. Some families also take actual cow in the procession.

JSB teachers explained that if all the Newars gradually started using these everyday, they would soon become common practices.

Nonetheless, this institutional effort to teach mother tongue in the school provided an environment to learn the language even to those students, whose primary mode of communication at home is not Nepal Bhasa. Sunita Shrestha is one such students in JSB: 'My mother is a Gurung and my father is a Newar. Though my father occasionally speaks Nepal Bhasa, we do not use it often at home. That is why my father sent me to this school. All my siblings have studied in this school. My elder brother was a student here. My younger sister is still here. I learnt Nepal Bhasa in school; I did not know it earlier. I can read and write in Nepal Bhasa now. My father came to know about this school through his friends.' Like Sunita, most of the students learn to read and write in Nepal Bhasa by the time they reach Class III. Though the actual spoken use of mother tongue may vary, the students in both the schools were using the mother tongue for reading and writing. Even those students, who speak Nepal Bhasa at home, the school is a place where they gain the literacy skills in their mother tongue. They sometimes publish their poems, stories and essays in local newspaper or magazines. In the context, where there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of younger generations who speak their mother tongue (Turin, 2013) and when the intergenerational transfer of language is weakening (Pettigrew, 2000), the regular use of mother tongue in the school is a significant achievement.⁴²

⁴² According to the census of 2001, about 33.7 percent of Newars no longer speak Nepal Bhasa as their mother tongue (Onta, 2006).

The emphasis of mother-tongue teaching in these schools was also about the survival of language. Sarita Manandhar, Nepal Bhasa teacher, often exclaimed to her students that ‘If you don’t speak Nepal Bhasa, who will speak this language? We must continue to use this language.’ In JSB, every week one hour was dedicated even to learning *prachalit lipi*, one of the commonly used Nepal Bhasa script. Especially given the increasing language shift in the younger generation, the school used several incentives to the students. JSB has a cash prize of Rs 25,000 for the student who scores highest grade in Nepal Bhasa in the SLC examination.⁴³ In addition to this, one of the founder members of JSB, Laxmidas Manandhar also announced Rs 1000 cash prize for all the students who opt for Nepal Bhasa in SLC examination. In the staffroom, teachers often talked about the urgency in keeping the Nepal Bhasa alive. As one of the teachers mentioned, ‘Even if we have our internal differences, we have to continue speaking Nepal Bhasa outside.’ In this effort to mainstream Nepal Bhasa, the school and the teachers sought to present in its unified and distinct forms.

2.2.2 Everyday practices

In everyday language exchanges, however, these linguistic demarcations were transcended in many instances. One day, as Bandana Shrestha proceeded to the playground during the lunch break, I accompanied her. She grouped together with four of her other friends to play hopscotch. One of the girl in a group shouted at her, ‘*Tyo phyala na, Tyo 2nd ma phyala na!*’ (Throw that there, throw it on

⁴³ In 2013, two students scored 71 in Nepal Bhasa (Manish Shrestha from Paropkar School and Pragati Hyumata from Jagat Sundar). The prize was shared between the two students.

the second box – in Nepali language). Bandana threw the piece of flat stone out of the box. Another girl shouted with happiness, ‘*Ye, chha out jula* (You are out! – in *Nepal Bhasa* with English words). *Wa line ye thila chha* (You touched that line – in *Nepal Bhasa* with English words). The third girl who was waiting for her turn came forward, ‘Out! *Mero turn aba* (You are out. It’s my turn now – in Nepali with English words)’.

Ethnographies of youth culture around the world have documented how youth and adolescents play with diverse languages and language varieties in multiracial contexts (Alim, 2009). Inside and outside of classrooms, students appropriate and use languages in often ‘unpredictable, idiosyncratic ways to build identity, affiliation and cultural practice’ (Canagarajah, 1993). In this context, becoming multilingual is a dynamic process of achieving different levels of proficiency in different languages. Students used a variety of language, understanding, and learning styles that they possess in their everyday exchanges. These were seen as normal where speakers are situated on different points along the bilingual continua (Garcia, 2009). Woolard (1985: 744-5) argues that the groups seen as passively accepting the order of authority are also inventive in responding to it and capable of opposing it in their solidarity, creating spheres of alternative norms.

In Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) the use of language was varied. In the school playground, students used a mix of Nepal Bhasa and Nepali with their friends. At home, most of the students spoke in Nepal Bhasa with their grandparents but mainly Nepali with their bilingual parents. In social settings outside the school,

the students spoke to their friends in Nepali. Most of the students were thus proficient both in Nepali and Nepal Bhasa but probably used Nepali more often than Nepal Bhasa. While the school's use of Nepal Bhasa did not seem to have direct pedagogical value, as children already spoke Nepali, the school drew on Nepal Bhasa words commonly used in ritual practices, festivals, and places to make the lessons more meaningful. The school used this active engagement with the Nepal Bhasa as a way to ensure that the students learned their subjects better.

There were different unpredictable ways in which various languages came together. In one of the Nepal Bhasa lessons, Class II students had a letter-writing assignment. The instruction in the books read, 'Write a letter about your school to your aunt. Describe what you learn and things that you do in school in your letter'. Before the students started writing, the teacher talked about various components of letter writing. Some of the students gave examples of what they would write in the letter. After discussing different ideas, the teacher dictated the contents of the letter.⁴⁴ The students wrote the following letter in their notebooks (in Nepal Bhasa).

Maru Twa, Yei
Gula 14, 1133

Marutole, Kathmandu
20 Aug 2013

Yamha Nini,
Chhanta ji yakwa lumanka. Seelu yata school bharna yaye dhuna la? Ji la nigugu tangi na tha bharna jui dhuna. Jigu school ya naa Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi kha. Thwa school jhigu twa ya likka sa la. Jigu tangi ya pasa pi gyani. Thana bwonkigu ji nhyagu thu. Thana jhigu he mabhay Nepal Bhasan

Dear Aunt,
I often think of you. Have you enrolled Seelu (cousin) in school? I have enrolled in Class II. My school's name is Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi. My school is very close to my home. My class friends are well behaved. We also have a playground. I understand what we learn in school. Here, they teach us in

⁴⁴ This style of teaching is very common in Nepal. The teachers often dictate 'correct' answers to questions. The students then learn these answers by heart and reproduce them in the examination.

bwankigu. Mhitegu thay na du. Jigu English bhay bamala. Da ana we baley English syana byu nhi? Pau ya lisa yakana chwaya hi nhi. Cha Yamha Bhincha	our mother tongue, Nepal Bhasa. There is a playground too. My English is not good. Would you teach me English when I visit you? Please write to me soon. Your Niece
--	--

The way in which this letter is written illustrates the complex ways in which boundaries between languages and associated identities are navigated, sometimes by aligning within dominant frameworks and other times by contrasting against it. Drawing on various resources at hand, the students and teachers facilitated a process where self-making occurred through a continuous process of identification with multiple languages. Jolly (1995) discussing the situation of language maintenance programmes in Australia notes that official language revival programmes tend to assume that learners must know a language right through so that they use it to say all they want to say in all circumstances. However, in practice, different language may be used in differently in different contexts, each of which involves different language abilities. Describing similar contexts in Nepal, authors such as Hangen (2010) and Sonntag (1995) have pointed out that ethnic movements in Nepal do not necessarily position themselves in opposition to English. English language is utilised as a neutral language and often serve to elevate the status of the mother tongue speakers.

What also comes out very strongly, through the instances such as these, is that even as the languages are fluid and flexible it was not infinitely so. As Bandana Shrestha explained to me talking about the problem she faces while speaking Nepal Bhasa. She mentioned, 'I speak in Nepal Bhasa with my family members and cousins. I speak Nepali to other friends in my neighbourhood. But when I

speak Nepali I have Newa accent. So my friends sometimes point it out and say that it is not correct. That happens quite often'. Having an accent, i.e. speaking with the phonology of another language, served as a marker of underlying identity of the speaker. The issue of accent often appeared as one of the common 'problems' discussed in JSB staffroom as well. Teachers often mentioned the instances where people made fun of their accents. As Babita Malakar, one of the teachers furiously explained one day, 'When I was in college my friends often laughed at me. They said that Newars couldn't differentiate between *ta* and *t.a* [retroflex 't']. They said eating buffalo meat made our tongue thicker'. She proudly asserted that she never let them get away with it. She would ask them to pronounce the combined consonant sounds such as *nhya*, which her friends were unable to do. She then told them that they needed to eat *chyau* (Nepali for mushroom, a vegetable that is not eaten by higher castes as it is believed to be 'impure' food) to be able to pronounce that sound.⁴⁵

This heightened concern about one's accent reflects the context of inter-group tensions where these linguistic exchanges are played out. It also brings out scepticism on the legitimacy of various embodied social capital, especially of the minority language speakers. Given the apparent linkage between the linguistic competence and membership in a social group, linguistic performance often judged through the lens of linguistic hierarchy. The practices such as language mixing, though highly prevalent in multilingual contexts such as Nepal, were treated with caution. By judging the language through its intermixing, people

⁴⁵ The saying 'Bahun le chyau khaye po swad thaha pauncha' (Only if Bahuns ate mushrooms would they be able to appreciate its taste) is used to mock the habits of high-caste social groups and indicate that they have been missing a lot.

could accord it social authority or undermine their authority, based on the social position of the language that is being used. For instance, the mixing of English words was acceptable in Nepali and Nepal Bhasa. Similarly, Nepali words were acceptable in Nepal Bhasa. However, the reverse was not true.

3. New ways of coming together

In addition to using mother tongue in school instruction, JKHS and JSB also facilitated new ways of coming together in public places. These emerging practices drew on the existing collective life of the school but also expressed solidarity with other events outside the school. In the following section, I will focus on two specific events to discuss the ways in which schools facilitated the new forms of coming together. First, I will discuss the book writing workshop in JKHS to show the ways in which different actors come together for the purpose of mother tongue education. Second, I will present new ethnic celebrations in JSB.

3.1 New collaborations: Book-writing workshops in JKHS

17 Jan 2014 was a Friday; the schools had half day off that day. Bhola Ram Chaudhary, the main editor of MLE textbooks, had invited several teachers from the nearby feeder schools to JKHS for a follow up workshop on textbook writing. Every 2-3 months a group of teachers from JKHS and five feeder schools meet in JKHS to discuss the progress on Class III textbooks. JKHS, with the financial support from UMN, had already written and printed textbooks for Science, Maths, and Social Studies in Tharu, Awadhi and Nepali, in addition to separate

Tharu and Awadhi language textbooks for Class I and II (the detailed discussion on the textbook is presented in Chapter Five). During my fieldwork, the school was working on Class III textbooks. There were eight teachers present who had already agreed on writing for different books. There were several pieces of writing discussed on that day. There was an essay on the seasons of the year and a song on sounds of animals. One of the teachers presented a number poem that counted numbers 1-10 with various examples. Another teacher read a story on the importance of brushing teeth.

Figure 1
Teachers meeting in JKHS



Book writing workshop in JKHS



MLE progress meeting in JKHS

These meetings served multiple functions. Firstly, it brought different teachers from different schools together for the purpose of writing textbook in minority languages. The village teachers, instead of 'experts' in the capital city of Kathmandu, were writing these books. In the workshop, Bhola Ram Chaudhary distributed Government of Nepal curriculum guidelines for primary school textbooks. After each teacher read out their pieces, he asked the group to comment: if the sentence structures were complex, if words used were longer than 2-3 letters, and if the vowel sounds (*matras*) were not simple. The group then gave suggestion on how the piece could be improved.

Secondly, the teachers also engaged with and mobilised non-school knowledge actors. These bilingual and biliterate teachers, through their engagement in writing these books, drew from the stories that village elders told, complied with curriculum guidelines issued by the department of education and represented correct Tharu texts to the external world. In this way, the teachers served as intermediaries between several other non-school knowledge actors, including village elders, and the curriculum development centre and external audience. They also entered into a dialogue with outsiders, such as NGOs and government officers, who brought their own orientations to the process. Nonetheless, these teachers held central position in this process.

The teachers performed various roles: they were state functionaries (as school teachers), NGO collaborators, village representatives and grassroots thinkers, and they often merged these roles over time. They worked to transform the local knowledge, characters and stories to fit the national and global framework. As they worked on the process of writing textbooks, they also engaged in the process of transforming Tharu language for the purposes of education. They documented spoken Tharu into written Tharu, developed the contents of the book in devnagari script (the script in which Nepali is written) and used the spellings that were closer to Nepali. As Bhola Ram Chaudhary closed the session, he asked all the teachers to work on their texts over the vacation. As next steps, he also requested all of them to identify students or anyone from the village who could draw pictures for them. In the next meeting, they planned to type up the texts and illustrate their pieces for the textbook. He also informed them that he

would be facilitating a book-writing workshop in Rukum, a district in far eastern region of Nepal, where they are planning to work on Kham Magar language.

This process of converting the oral language into written form is one of the important ways in which various ethnic activists have worked on their languages. The Government of Nepal also encouraged these literary activities in mother tongues. Since 2011, Nepal Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) instituted 'Mother Tongue Service Award' to recognise the outstanding writers in various languages. Every year, NFDIN announces a call for application through national newspapers. The awardees are selected based on the breadth and depth of their contribution for the enhancement of different languages. The award is presented to the winners on International Mother Tongue Day on the 24th of February.⁴⁶ In 2013, six writers were felicitated: Jeet Syanjali (Dhut Magar language), Bayansingh Yalungchha (Chamling), Atit Kyuticha (Sumuwar), Amar Tumyahang (Limbu), Som Chatela (Dhimal), and Padam Walahang (Bantawa). NFDIN also published a collection of their work in book form.

3.2 New Traditions in JSB: Bhintuna Rally and Car Rally

In JSB, the efforts to form collectives around ethno-linguistic practices took various forms. The Bhintuna Rally is one of such public events in which the students participated on 4 November 2013. The Bhintuna Rally has been

⁴⁶ United Nations instituted the International Mother Tongue day on the occasion of the Bangladesh Independence Day on the 24th of February. It is in recognition of the struggle for Bangla as national language that eventually culminated in the formation of Bangladesh as a nation-state.

celebrated every year since 1979 during the months of October-November. Bhintuna in Nepal Bhasa means 'good wishes'. Every year, Bhintuna celebration committee organises a rally extend good wishes and to celebrate Newar New Year, popularly known as Nepal Sambat, starting A.D. 879. Gellner (1986: 122), describing the early development of Bhintuna Rally, show the scepticism against Nepal Sambat that 'the campaign for it is an attack on national unity and will be followed, if successful, by an attempt to impose a minority language on the majority.'

Shankha Dhar Shakwa, a mythical figure, is believed to have started this calendar after clearing the debts of people in Kathmandu. On 18 November 1999, the government declared Sankhadhar Sakhwa as one of the national heroes of Nepal. Since its first public celebration, various Newa ethnic organisations have been active in celebrating Shankha Dhar Shakwa and Nepal Sambat as a symbol of 'authentic' Newar and Nepali identity. More recently, Nepal Sambat has been promoted as Nepal's 'homegrown' calendar that marks the beginning of the more equitable society rather than a victory of a particular ruler (See Shrestha, 2015 for a detailed discussion).

Every year, the Bhintuna celebration committee extends an open invitation to public through newspapers. In addition to the open invitation, the organising committee also distribute invitation cards to various people in and outside the valley.

'Nepal Sambat, Our Identity'

*On the Occasion of National Calendar Nepal Sambat 1134
Best Wishes to All Nepalis - Best Wishes to the World*

We extend our heartfelt invitation for the
Cultural Rally and Post-rally Congregation
In Basantapur, 6.30 am onwards
On Kachalathwa Paru (18th day of Kartik month) Monday

President, Dr. Chunda Bajracharya
Nepal Sambat New Year National Celebration Committee 1134

This A3-size invitation card was printed in Nepal Bhasa on one side and Nepali language on the other. Both sides used Devnagari script. The president of the organising committee explained that the committee used Nepali language and devnagari script so that both Newars and non-Newars could easily read it. Nowhere in the invitation card mention that it was an exclusively Newar celebration. In fact, the invitation card extended best wishes to all Nepalis (*sampurna Nepali*) and to the world (*Biswa*); thus presenting this celebration as a national celebration (if not international). Through this, the committee sought to make claims on Nepali identity, while simultaneously displaying distinct ethnic identity. This celebration and the invitation card sought to 'normalise' Nepal Sambat and Nepal Bhasa as Nepali identity. Moreover, the committee also invited the Prime Minister to preside over the ceremony as the chief guest. This practice of inviting the Prime Minister has been followed since 2006 (2066 BS) when Krishna Prasad Bhattarai (then Prime Minister of the Interim government) inaugurated the programme as the chief guest. This year, the chairperson of the Ministerial cabinet presided over the programme, as the parliament had been dissolved. Echoing similar perspective, Shrestha (2015: 124) in his paper on Nepal Sambat concludes:

... the term 'Nepal' does not belong to a certain group but to all Nepalese. Therefore, no reason exists for only the Newar to feel proud of Nepal Sambat because the term 'Nepal' implies that it belongs to all the Nepalese people'.

Figure 2
Bhintuna Rally, 2013



The rally passes the old royal palace, Hanuman Dhoka. Students from JSB are in the lower left corner

JSB participated in this event every year. This year around 50 students and teachers from JSB had come to join the crowd of around 5000 people. As more people joined in and the crowd got bigger, the teachers asked us to stand together behind the JSB school banner. While waiting for the rally to begin, I started talking to Bandana Shrestha, a Class V student who actively participated in this rally. She said it is fun to come to Bhintuna rally because it is the day to get dressed up. She was wearing 'traditional' Newar attire, red and black saree wrapped around like a knee-length skirt. She told me that this is her own dress, but some of her friends hired or borrowed the dresses they were wearing. She met at her friend's house and helped each other dress up. 'I can't do this hair on my own, so I asked my friend to do it for me', she said. She had tied her hair up in a bun. She wasn't too keen on talking to me, as she was joining her friends in shouting the slogan *Nepal Sambat, Rastriya Sambat* (Nepal Calendar, National

Calendar). While she was walking, she waved at and met many friends and family on the way who were standing on the side of the roads watching the procession. She shouted *Nhu Daya Bhintuna* to the onlookers; many reciprocated. It was a fun moment for her and her friends to be part of this annual public spectacle that has gradually begun to come into practice especially in Kathmandu.

Bandana also participated in car rally on 3 November 2013, a day before Newa New Year (*Nepal Sambat*). The rally was jointly organised by a groups of approximately 45 schools that used Nepal Bhasa as medium of instruction and/or subject.⁴⁷ They planned to visit and greet each other on the occasion Newa New Year (*Nepal Sambat*). The school had been preparing for this car rally for weeks now since the proposal was made by one of the Newa school principal. A series of meetings took place thereafter to plan various activities. Each school agreed to arrange for one decorated vehicle and mobilise an average of 5 to 10 people to visit. The management committee (comprising of representatives from 10 schools) drew the route for the car rally.⁴⁸ They also decided to stop in 10-14 different schools to meet and greet each other.⁴⁹ JSB was one of those schools. For

⁴⁷ See Appedix II for a list of schools using Nepal Bhasa as a medium of insitruction and/or subject. There isn't any reliable database on the number of Nepal Bhasa schools in Nepal. However, according to a rough estimate by one of the activist, there are around 100 schools in Kathmandu that formally teach Nepal Bhasa in school. This number is also reported in one of the online news article - Nepal Mandal, 2013. Rato Bangala School ye Nepal Bhay, Online resource accessed in Dec 2014 <http://www.nepalmandal.com/content/19558.html>, 3 May 2013.

⁴⁸ Car Rally Route – Chikadabu Tinkhya, Nhu Satak (New Road), Basantapur, Maru, Jaisidewal, Paropkar, Chaga, Dallu, Dhalko, Khusibu, Naya Bazaar, Balaju, Gwangabu, Tokha, Maharajganj, Lazimpat, Lainchaur, Darbar Mark, Putali Sadak, Singh Darbar, Pulchowk, Mangal Bazar, Ha Kha, Pya Pukhu, Lagankhel, Ring Road, Sunaguthi, Thechwo, Kipu Dhwakha

⁴⁹ They stopped in Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi, Bidyodaya School, Future Star School, Kathmandu Newa School, Lasana Pre School, Bindhyabasini and Oasis English School,

this day JSB, playground was cleaned up, decorated with colourful flowerpots and the banners with school name were put above the school gates. The second entrance door, which is usually kept closed, was opened up for the occasion.

The vehicles were decorated with balloons, streamers and banners with various slogans. The slogans on the cars read: Teach in Newa Bhay, Teach Newa Bhay (*Newa Bhasan bwanka disa, Newa Bhay bwonka disa*), Our language, Our progress (*Jhigu Bhaye, Jhigu Nhyaye*). Let's teach in Nepal Bhasa, Let's retain our identity (*Newa Bhaye Bwonke, Jhigu Mhasika Lyenkey*), We are Newars, We will always be Newars (*Newa Jhi, Newa ye Jui*), Each of these cars carried teachers and students from different schools. When the cars stopped in front of JSB, the teachers and students got down and greeted each other Happy New Year. Two motorcycles, with traffic policemen, escorted the vehicles and redirected other vehicles on the road, so that the rally cars could pass through easily. Bandana stood next to the main entrance of the school with the teachers of JSB to welcome the visitors with *khadas* (a piece of cloth put around the shoulders as a symbol of felicitation) and red vermillion *tika* on their forehead.

The Bhintuna rally and the car rally portrays an effort to build sense of community between Newa schools and attempt to express solidarity. Like Bhintuna rally, this car rally was a public display of distinct identities that the schools stand for, it was not a private programme conducted inside the school. In addition to these programmes, the school also participated in various other

Modern Newa School, YMBA School, Yala Newa School, Yashodhara School, Bhasara School, and Sunguthi Newa School.

programmes such as inter-school script-writing (*lipi*) competitions, and celebrations of the birth anniversaries of Siddhidas Mahaju and Jagat Sundar.

These attempts to pluralise the public places have been one of the important features of Nepali public activities post 1990s. There is five-minute news broadcast on Radio Nepal, the state-run radio station, in a number of 'languages of the nation' and a weekly page in the *Gorakhapatra*, the state-run newspaper, for various languages other than Nepali. The Royal Nepal Academy has included research on ethnic languages in its programmes since the 1990s. Though the Nepali state introduced some minor reforms in the 1990s, they have not been enough to bring about major changes (Kramer, 2008: 192). It nonetheless has opened up spaces for more plural public places for production of knowledge and demonstrates the Nepali state's commitment to embrace the diversity in its population.

As the onlookers watched the Bhintuna rally's display and performance of Newa culture and tradition, more people joined in. The morning Bhintuna rally is followed by motorcycle rally in the afternoon, where people will follow an expanded route around the Kathmandu valley on their motorcycles. As the Bhintuna rally moved around the old city of Kathmandu, some other students joined in waving the Nepali flag. The shouting of Newa slogans while carrying the Nepali flag was not seen as contradictory in any way.

4. Mediating Tensions, Managing Pluralism

These practices facilitated the normalisation of mother tongue in different public places. However, the interaction of various languages also presented the tensions inherent in transforming the public spaces into spaces of multiple and often competing interests. In the following section, I will discuss the ways in which these tensions were navigated, firstly through the discursive reconstruction of minority languages as national languages and secondly co-presences of other languages along with minority language. The use of the mother tongue in JSB and JKHS was as much about claiming space of Nepali national identity, as it was about an assertion of distinct ethnic identity.

4.1 ‘Nepal Bhasa is not Newar language, it is Nepali language.’

Jigu dei jita: ya:, jigu bhay jita: ya:	I love my country, I love my language
Jigu mama bhasha, tasakan jita: ya:	My mother tongue, I love it very much
Jipi he thwo dey ya, tisa kha: chha maya	We are the jewels of this country, o’ mother
Jimita tiya chha, chaka: sa nhilabyu.	Adorned by us, smile at least once
Pahad, Parvat, Himal, Tarai.	Hills, Mountains, Tarai
Guli na du jaati, bhasa phukka ya:	We love all ethnic groups and all languages
Jugu dei jita: ya:, jigu bhay jita: ya:	I love my country, I love my language
Jigu mama bhasha, tasakan Jita: ya	My mother tongue, I love it very much

Every morning JSB students gathered in the school hall to sing this school song. Students, lined up neatly in their class rows and dressed in school uniform (markedly ‘western’ attire of navy blue pants/skirts, light blue shirts and a tie), sing this song in Nepal Bhasa as a matter of routine. One day, I stood in the front part of the room, where most teachers stand. I could see that most of the students knew this song by heart including the non-Newar students who make up about 5-10 percent of the school population. The song is sung in Nepal Bhasa. However, the song does not mention the word Nepal Bhasa in its verses. It celebrates the love for one’s mother tongue by calling upon the love for one’s

country. It draws on the image of Nepal of diverse terrain – Hills, Mountains, and Tarai – where different groups speaking different languages live. As Subba (1999: 95) points out ‘what binds all the (janjati) groups together, therefore is not the language but a common sense of having lost their respective language in the wake of the spread of Nepali language with or without state patronage’.

This discursive move to invoke the love for one’s country, while declaring the love for one’s mother tongue, was one of the important ways in which school sought to institutionalise Nepal Bhasa as their language of education. Consequently, JSB advocated for all the mother tongue as ‘jewels of this country’, at least in its rhetoric. As Pfaff-Czarnecka (1997: 443-450) notes, the recent period in Nepal is characterised by the ‘patchwork of minorities’ as a new notion of nationalism (cf. Hangen and Lawoti, 2013). Within this view, the discourse of mother tongue was seen as a way to position ethnic groups as an important element of this vision. In JSB and JKHS, though the school was known as mother-tongue school, they positioned themselves as the schools where different languages could be used.

In one of my conversations in the staffroom, the teachers were discussing the difficulties that the JSB management committee faced in registering the school. The head teacher Bina Manandhar explained, ‘One of the reasons why it is difficult to work on language issue is because Nepal Bhasa is considered the responsibility of only Newar community. But Nepal Bhasa is Nepali. It belongs to Nepal not just Newars’. I asked her to explain it further. She explained that all the languages of Nepal are Nepali. And the language that is conventionally called

‘Nepali’ should be known as something else. The implication of this discourse was that the schools were extending the meaning of languages to imagine Nepal as multi-lingual country where ethno-linguistic groups occupied central position. At a discursive level, then, mother-tongue education was presented as a way to rethink Nepal as a country with diverse population and diverse languages where each social identity would fall within a broader framework of being a Nepali.

The negotiation over the nomenclature of different languages represented this reconstruction of this new idea of being a Nepali. Firstly, the language activists have been advocating for the use of the name ‘Nepal Bhasa’ or ‘Newa Bhay’ for the language spoken by Newars, instead of the commonly used name ‘Newari’. The census of Nepal now uses ‘Nepal Bhasa’ as the official name. Secondly, they have also been urging to use the term ‘Nepali’ to be used as an umbrella term for all other languages spoken in Nepal. This discursive move attempts to emphasise the plurality associated with the very term Nepali.

For ethnic groups, such as Newars, textbook mentioned that ‘to love your *jati* is to love the country’ as one of the objectives of mother tongue textbooks. The classroom discourses reflected these sentiments. A Class IX student described similar ideas in a short write up in Nepal Bhasa notebook:

People living in different countries in the world have different languages. In Nepal, we have a number of languages. These languages are special characteristic of Nepal. Nepal Bhasa is one of many languages of Nepal. Not only Nepal Bhasa but all the languages in Nepal are important. We must learn to read and write in Nepal Bhasa in order to demonstrate the importance of all the languages in Nepal and to preserve our language.

Post 1990, availing institutional sanctions such as mother-tongue education was

seen as a process of taking one's role as a part of plural society. The political significance of these schools was that they represent the constitutional right guaranteed for minority groups. These served the purpose to provide public place for the use of minority languages at local level (institutionalising local knowledge and practices) and for national level (minority languages as national language). The dynamics in these schools show that the idea of Nepal persists, often in a strong nationalistic terms. What was under contestation was the idea of Nepal, with a move towards evolving conceptions of language practices for a strengthened national identity.

4.2 Using multiple languages as a strategy for mother-tongue education

The use of mother tongue in these schools were about creating institutional spaces for the continuous use of mother tongue in the school premises. However, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, students made meaning in their everyday world by maintaining the multilingual repertoire that included their mother tongue, Nepali and some English; multilingualism was used as a strategy for mother-tongue education. Though both JSB and JKHS were well known for their use of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu respectively, combination of different languages were used in everyday communication in school, the school curriculum, and teaching learning practices.

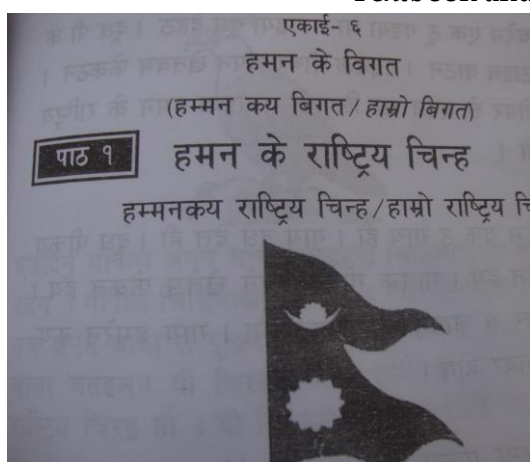
In this context, the practices around Nepal Bhasa and Tharu were shaped by two main concerns. At one level, there were continued concerns about the

normalisation of minority language in schools and in other public places. In the situation where the younger generation were increasingly moving towards Nepali and English, the school sought to counter this trend by creating formal spaces of learning and using mother tongue, in school and in public places. In this process, the schools also engaged actively in constructing mother tongue in its new emergent forms, in the monolingual spaces within the formal language teaching sessions and multilingual spaces in the informal spaces. The teachers encouraged the students to use their Nepal Bhasa and Tharu inside the classroom and in their interaction, and during this process sought to 'correct' their grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structures.

Secondly, even while Tharu and Nepal Bhasa were increasingly used for official communication in these schools, this normalisation was often articulated through the possibility of speaking different languages. In the informal spaces, inside and outside the classroom, the school administration tacitly accepted multilingualism in various forms, including the hybrid practices such as translanguaging. In addition, different languages were seen as important for different purposes. 'Each language has its own role', I was often told in my conversations with teachers, students and parents. An Awadhi teacher, Bikram Tripathy, explained, 'Mother tongue can never replace Nepali because Nepali is the contact language (*sampark bhasa*). Nepali can never take a place of English because it is an international language. Similarly, Nepali and English cannot take the place of Awadhi because it is the language close to our hearts'.

The use of multiple languages served many purposes. Firstly, it provided the students an access to different language competence and the assurance of mobility associated with respective languages. Secondly, it helped to manage the tensions by avoiding an elevation of any particular social groups at the cost of dominant national identity. JKHS textbooks, as shown below, each chapter throughout the book, was written in three different languages - Tharu, Awadhi, and Nepali simultaneously. Since Tharu language did not have any specific script associated with it, devnagari script (script associated with Nepali) was used in the book. This use of different languages was a reassurance that different language and identities were given equal importance.

Figure 3
Textbook and school flyers



Class II Social studies textbook (lesson 1, pg 61) using Tharu, Awadhi, and Nepali



School flyers using Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, and English scripts

In Kathmandu, JSB and other schools in the Newa Basti, Newa School campaign endorsed similar perspectives. In the publicity flyers, as presented in the picture below, the schools affiliated to Newa Basti, Newa School used different languages and scripts simultaneously on the same piece of paper. The name of the included the word 'Newa' and 'English' at the same time, indicating that they

also teach in other language such as English in the school. Moreover, the use of the word 'English' also assured the quality of education provided by the school. In order to avoid any miscommunication, one of the flyer clearly stated (again in three different languages), 'We teach all subjects same like in other schools of Nepal and we use Newa language as well'. The rest of the content inside the flyer was written in English and Nepal Bhasa, using devnagari script.

However, even when languages were considered fluid and flexible, they were not infinitely so. The evaluation of the language and the social position of the speaker were invariably influenced by the ideas on purity and separation of language. The students often mentioned that their 'accent' positioned them in varying social hierarchy. This problematic of accented language is rooted in the interethnic and interlinguistic relations. It also shows that though the boundaries of the linguistic categories were blurred, it is usually unidirectional. The words such as bench, class, and roll number were constantly used in the conversation in classroom and in the playground. These words were considered part of Nepal Bhasa or Nepali. The intermixing of Nepali and English in Tharu and Nepal Bhasa was considered acceptable but not the other way round. The efforts to maintain purity in dominant languages but mixing of codes in the non-dominant ones demonstrate the hierarchy inherent in these languages.

5. Simultaneous memberships in multiple groups

The dynamics in these schools draw our attention towards the simultaneous membership in multiple groups displayed through various linguistic practices.

The negotiation of the spaces for multiple languages and their speakers within one national collective was often articulated through the simultaneous presence of different languages. As discussed in Chapter One, I draw on the concept of 'simultaneity' to explain these dynamics (Bakhtin, 1981; Woolard, 1990). As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the students and schools sought to maintain their membership with the ethno-linguistic identity and at the same time strengthening their hold on Nepali and English. These dynamics manifested in different ways – through translanguaging practices, discursive positioning of ethnic as national, and co-presences of multiple languages. While there are obvious power-hierarchy between these languages and ideas, in the discussion presented in this chapter highlights that it is possible for different ideas and identities to exist simultaneously.

In the context of ethnic activism (in JSB as flagship programme of Newar ethnic activism) and state-approved minority language school (in the case of JKHS), mother-tongue education present itself as a distinct 'social field' where a strong emphasis is placed on Nepal Bhasa and Tharu. However, this social field exists within the broader social field of national education that prioritised Nepali and English. As the discussion in the previous sections illustrates, in the heterogeneous social context such as Nepal, minority social groups did not necessarily choose only one language in their everyday life. Various actors, placed between these fields, navigated the tension by playing by the rules of both the social fields. Thus, in these schools, students and teachers used different languages in different combinations, even when they might appear to be contradictory.

This possibility of actors choosing to act ambiguously, maintaining uncertainty of meanings while they gauge how to proceed, open up the new ways of practicing identities in everyday life. Approaching from this perspective, we could see that students negotiated their claims to identities and positions spaces multivalent ways. Woolard (1999:4) refers to this as bivalency of multilingual contexts where speakers make 'simultaneous claims to more than one social identity'. On the one hand, the students participated in the construction of distinctive ethnic identity and cultural practices through the everyday use of mother tongue in schools and by participating in ethnic celebrations. On the other hand, students dressed up in traditional attire for these occasion, played traditional music instruments and celebrated ethnic festivals and participated holding Nepali flags and spoke not only Nepal Bhasa but also Nepali and some English. For the students, these occasions were also an opportunity to get together in a new way.

Although the overt struggle over control of symbolic values continued, in some spheres, use of multiple languages served to manage the tensions between different languages by opening up spaces for its co-presences. Through these practices, the students engaged in the process of gradually transform the terms in which social identities are represented, often claiming legitimate membership in multiple sources of identity. The students and teachers in these schools were positioned in a unique situation where they use their mother tongue in an institutional setting. The otherwise standardising public places were increasingly called on to make room for other languages, which were limited within the confines of private places of home, family and personal relationships. The

students were increasingly engaging in efforts to normalise minority languages and practices through the use of mother tongue in everyday linguistic exchanges, its deliberate use in public places and participation in new traditions. This reconfiguration of the public spaces also reflects the evolving socio-political landscape of the country where the idea of Nepal is being reimagined in plural terms.

While the presence of various languages in the public place challenged the monolingual model of nation, it nonetheless upheld the ideology of linguistic nationalism to a large extent. The use of mother tongue in the schools were thus done through varying use of multiple languages and without dislodging the position of Nepali language as an overarching language that brings speakers of different languages together. Nepal Bhasa and Tharu did not replace Nepali in either of the school. Nepali was a compulsory subject in both schools till they completed their school. Moreover, in the secondary level (9-10) Nepali was the preferred medium of instruction so that students could be prepared for their final exams (usually taken in Nepali or English). In the primary level, JKHS used Tharu and Awadhi only along with Nepali.

In practice, the coexistence of language did not always assure their equality. Teachers and activists who were committed to the revival of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu feared that multilingualism ultimately would favour Nepali and English, since it was the more established and powerful language. However, many others believed that the opportunity to speak different languages was to be applauded, because it opened up spaces for minority language users in public places. In

these disagreements over language use, people expressed the social valuation of various linguistic forms, judgement of their speakers and more significantly embodied ambiguities and conflicts over existing social hierarchy. The mother tongue schools, in this context, presented itself as contact zone not only of various languages, linguistic forms and its usage but also different positions, voices and identities indicated through linguistic practices.

The everyday practices in these schools show that neither the ideals of homogeneous Nepali national identity nor the reified ethnic identity can explain the complex ways in which people negotiate their everyday lives. At both levels, the ideas of homogeneous cultural unity has led to sharp boundary-making between different groups, where ethnic and national identity is often seen as mutually exclusive. The students and teachers in these schools transcend the compartmentalisation of their social life on the basis of these categories but confirm to these as an expression of their belongingness. Contrary to the essentialist categories espoused in both nationalist discourse and ethnic activism, students in these school display affiliation to multiple languages and identities. Even as they engaged actively with putatively particularistic mother-tongue education, they did so along with Nepali and English and displaying varying identity positions. As illustrated in this chapter, with simultaneous memberships in multiple groups, the school and the students through their practices engaged in redefining these universal spaces of public places.

6. Conclusion

It is not an intention of this chapter to present a systematic linguistic analysis of various languages spoken in JSB and JKHS. Such an analysis, while very important, is beyond the scope of this thesis. In this chapter, I have discussed language practices in the schools to illustrate the complex ways in which mother tongue has come to occupy a role in public places and on school premises. Given the complex array of social categories in play, identities were increasingly defined across multiple social dimensions. The students and teachers engagement in the public space displayed claims on both distinct ethnic identity and national identity. Moreover, events such as Bhintuna Rally were discursively positioned as national festival. In this chapter, I have proposed the notion of simultaneity to explain the apparently contradictory processes in which people make 'simultaneous claims to more than one social identity'.

The specific patterns of language use in JSB and JKHS were different, given their different contexts. And yet, there were many similarities in the way it manifested in everyday language exchanges. In JSB, language was deliberately reintroduced in the students' lives though they may or may not use it in their everyday lives outside the school. JSB teachers showed more concerted efforts in ensuring that Nepal Bhasa is used in all official communications, though as illustrated in this chapter, they were not always successful. In JKHS, however, Tharu was already the language commonly used by students in their regular lives. The use of Tharu in the school was therefore an extension of the patterns of language use in the community. However, both schools provided institutional space for minority

languages, along with Nepali and English. In the informal spaces of both the schools, multiple languages were simultaneously used in variety of ways.

The schools also sought to 'normalise' the use of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu in their school premises. In the formal spaces of teaching, especially inside the minority language classes and in official communication (in JSB), the school created monolingual spaces where Nepal Bhasa and Tharu were taught as distinct languages. However, in the informal spaces of communication, including when the teachers were explain the lessons, the students created multilingual spaces for 'translanguaging' practices. Given the overwhelming presence of dominant languages in the public places, schools put increased emphasis on teaching Nepal Bhasa and Tharu at least in the classrooms. This was one of the important strategies to mainstream minority language. Nonetheless, in everyday life the boundaries between formal monolingual spaces and informal multilingual spaces were easily blurred.

This chapter illustrates that the choice of language in education can potentially play a critical role in school experiences, and change the patterns of exchanges in a social context. The opening up of institutional spaces for minority languages in the national education system provided an opportunity to use Nepal Bhasa and Tharu in public places. While the students and teachers engaged in everyday use of minority languages they also sought to use multiple languages, and utilised this to make claims over public places and in the spaces of nationalism, hitherto associated with Nepali. This illustrates the negotiation in an overlapping subfield and field of education, where the 'changes in the field' over time may lead to the 'changing the field' (Grenfell and James, 2004).

CHAPTER FIVE

Constructing Knowledge, Contesting Legitimacy

1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the contested process of knowledge making in JSB and JKHS through an analysis of school textbooks and classroom instruction events in these schools. Scholars in education have drawn our attention to the ways in which social power and control manifests in the process of knowledge production in education institutions. In this context, the school curriculum has long been seen as a site of valuing certain knowledge over others and establishing 'what it means to be educated'. In the context of Nepal, several authors (Ragsdale; Piggs, 1992; Ahearn, 2001) have pointed out the ways in which school textbooks disseminate a particular kind of school knowledge to students. Precisely because of this centrality of curriculum in knowledge making process, school textbooks serve as an 'arena of struggle' in the sub-field of minority language education where knowledge actors negotiate the symbolic positions of the social groups.

This chapter argues that the introduction of mother tongue in the school curriculum is, therefore, more than an addition of new language but also a struggle over symbolic resources. In both schools, mother-tongue education was also a process of negotiating what it means to 'know' things in school and positioning the mother tongue as 'legitimate knowledge' for school education. In order to establish mother tongue as one of the languages of schooling, within the subfield of mother-tongue education and the field of national education, the

schools discursively drew on the idea of familiarity with ‘daily life in the locality’ is to articulate the role of the mother tongue as an effective pedagogy and the validity of the ‘local’ as legitimate knowledge.

In this chapter, I argue that the struggles around the textbooks shed light on the struggles in the social field of minority language education to simultaneously assert distinct identity and claim space within the national identity. I elaborate on this by paying particular attention to two distinct dynamics. First, I illustrate that there were efforts to construct the ‘local’ by standardising the local language for educational purposes, using local names/characters/places in the textbooks, and introducing new historic icons into the school curriculum. Second, there were attempts to bring this idea of ‘local’ within the framework of the national education system through school textbooks and engage with the state in a more meaningful way. In this ‘simultaneity’ illustrated in the school textbooks, schools engage in the dynamic process of re-signification of local languages, knowledge and identities.

2. Legitimate knowledge and school education

‘Nepali is a language of official papers (*kagaj patra ko bhasa*) and language of the educated (*padhe lekheka le bolne bhasa*); a village elder explained when I told him that I was keen to understand about Tharu language education in his neighbourhood school JKHS. This popular acceptance of Nepali as ‘the language of the educated’ was common in not only this Tharu village of Kapilbastu but also the one that was largely endorsed by the state. Until 1981, the census of

Nepal defined as 'literate' as someone who could read and write in Nepali only, the country's national language.⁵⁰ This was in line with the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) framework that sought to promote Nepali language in the education institutions.⁵¹ The idea of schooled literacy, both for the common person and for official purposes, was thus learning to read and write in Nepali and/or English. A study on Nepali proficiency in rural Nepal using the Nepali Sentence Repetition Test, conducted by Webster (1994), made a similar observation. His study concluded that 'those who are uneducated and illiterate are nowhere near as proficient in Nepali as those who are educated and literate' (Webster, 1994: 45). Nepali (and English) was thus legitimate language for educational institutions.

Legitimate language, according to Bourdieu (1977:650) is uttered by a legitimate speaker, in a legitimate situation, to legitimate receivers and formulated in legitimate phonological and syntactic forms. Further, he argues that the production and reproduction of relations of power are legitimised through ideologies of language (Bourdieu, 1977) and accomplished through local social and discursive practices in a number of institutional sites, one of the most important one being educational institutions (Bourdieu, 1979). Through the process of endorsing a particular language as official language, using it for

⁵⁰ According to Census Monograph 1971 (Pg 160), 'For the purposes of the censuses, a literate person was considered to be one who could read and write in the Nepali language.' By 1981, the Census Monograph (Pg. 127) revised its position and defined literate person as 'one who has the ability to both read and write in any language with understanding'.

⁵¹ Nepal National Commission (NNEPC) recommended that the state should refrain from any support to the local languages, other than standard Nepali, so that greater national strength and unity will result (NNEPC, 1956:97). A detailed discussion on the recommendation of this commission has been presented in chapter two.

schooling purposes, and providing accreditation, education institutions legitimise the use of one dialect over others. Education institutions, thus, serve as a key site for conferring social authority and legitimacy to the use of specific language in society. The language that is used in textbooks, classroom instruction and examination easily takes the form of legitimate language to construct the legitimate school knowledge. The language practices of educational institutions are thus bound up in production, legitimisation and distribution of the knowledge that is gained through schooling.

The issue of knowledge construction in schools has remained one of the most contentious issues in the discussion around school education. Discussing 'what it means to be educated', Young (1971:34) argues that academic curricula involve an assumption that 'some areas of knowledge are more worthwhile than others. Through this process of stratification of knowledge, education institutions establish a relation between the patterns of dominant values and the distribution of rewards and power and the organization of knowledge. On the similar line, authors like Bernstein (1971) and Blum (1971) have drawn our attention to the ways in which knowledge is organised and assembled. As Bernstein (1971: 47) put it in his influential essay, 'how a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and principles of social control'. Scholars thus argue that these forms of social power then manifest itself in 'hidden curriculum' (Bowles and Gintis, 1976) that serves to maintain stratification of knowledge.

Many studies in language education have therefore argued that the issue of language choice in education institutions is more than a simple issue of language use in school premises. Authors like Onta, Ragsdale and Pigg, studying primary schooling in Nepal, have pointed out that school language and school knowledge can be highly ideological in its content. Onta traces the making of monolithic historical narrative through 'self-conscious fostering of the Nepali language' and the 'celebration of selective historical icons' (Onta, 1996: 214). Similarly, Pigg (1992) analyses the ways in which school textbooks present the ideology of modernisation and the politics of representation that places village locality as incompatible with the notion of progress. She discusses the ways in which an ideology of modernisation alters the formulation of local identities with an implicit scale of social progress: from rural locality to urban modernity (represented by educated and elite city dweller) and from ethnic identities to national identity (represented by high-caste hill identity); thus creating categories of social differentiation. Drawing on the perspective of students in primary school, Ragsdale (1989) notes that school curriculum and examination often required students to demonstrate an abstract understanding of Nepali. The curriculum and examination had inherent culture content, which (while comprehensible to students in the Kathmandu Valley) was frequently outside the experience and vocabulary of Gurung students in a hill village where he conducted his research. As pointed out in Chapter Two, textbooks have come a long way since this blatant Kathmandu centric bias the Ragsdale (1989) documented. There is much more attempt now to be multicultural and inclusive though this ideological bias still continues to be central to many mainstream textbooks.

Precisely because of this ideological nature of school education, language can form one of the key sites for the construction of legitimate knowledge in the social and political struggles of a given country. Many ethnographic and sociolinguistic researches, studying language education, have thus discussed the ways in which introduction of a minority language in school education could allow for the possibility of revaluing languages within the same institutions (Gal, 1995; Heller, 1996; Martin-Jones and Heller, 1996). This growing body of research illustrates how particular social groups may organise themselves to claim space in these education institutions and implement alternative educational arrangements to legitimise the use of minority language and forms of knowledge associated with it. These researchers argue that discursive exchanges in the education institutions can tell us about the specific kinds of language practices that are legitimised. They illustrate the ways in which particular practices help to advance or marginalise the interests of different groups and in the process alter the relations of power between these groups.

Drawing on these ideas of legitimate knowledge, in the following section, I will explore the linguistic practices in mother-tongue education school in Nepal. In the following sections, I will discuss the ideas presented in mother-tongue textbooks to illustrate the ways in which schools seek to shift the logic of monolithic national identity propagated by the state by seeking a legitimate place within the state education system. These discourses also shift the logic of deficit discourse, where the languages like Tharu, Awadhi and Nepal Bhasa is seen as inherently pushing them to backwardness, and articulate 'local' as a way to

reposition mother-tongue education. Through the processes of textbook production, the schools sought to firstly engage with the state and, secondly, shaped the school curriculum with the local contents and local languages.

3. Engaging with the state

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Constitution of 1990 and 2007 declared Nepal a multi-ethnic (*bahu jatiya*) and multilingual (*bahu bhasik*) country. Abiding by the constitutional provision that provided the right to primary education in mother tongue, Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) and Jagat Sundar Bwonakuthi (JSB), introduced mother-tongue textbooks as legitimate pedagogical practice in their primary school curriculum. In both the schools, the publication of textbooks was an important element in this process of creating institutional spaces for the official use of local languages other than Nepali and English in the school premises. However, this process also transformed these languages into new forms.

3.1 School textbooks: Bringing the 'local' and the state together

When I started my fieldwork for this research, I had not expected to see school textbooks as such an important aspect of mother-tongue education. In my interviews with the officials in the Ministry of Education and in my visits to Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), I had learnt about the publication of textbooks in 19 different languages. I understood from the government officials

that these textbooks were published in Kathmandu and were provided to schools that used mother tongue as a local subject.⁵² However, as I met more people working in this field, I found out that the textbooks published by CDC had not been very successful. School administrators in JKHS complained that the contents of those books were translated from Nepali textbooks. The schools such as JKHS, therefore, realised that CDC books not only lacked proper contextualisation of the material, the language used in the book did not match with the local variant of that language. Seven schools, where government piloted MLE programme, had rejected the government-provided books outright. Moreover, since the printing and distribution of these books were coordinated centrally, the schools always faced problems in its timely distribution and shortage in its availability. Because of these ongoing issues, both the CDC and the school felt that local publication of books was both relevant and practical. Within this state-sanctioned space, both schools have sought to actively engage in producing their own textbooks.

Table 13 List of school textbooks in mother tongue				
Name of Textbook	Class	Published by	Language used	Subject
Paleswa	I – V	JSB	Nepal Bhasa	Nepal Bhasa
Luhiti	I – V	Government of Nepal (GoN)	Nepal Bhasa	Nepal Bhasa
Apane Bhasa, Apane Sikhi	I-III	JKHS, UMN, and GoN	Tharu	Tharu
Apane Bhasa, Apanen Shikhav	I-III	JKHS, UMN, and GoN	Awadhi	Awadhi
Sahajey	I-III	JKHS, UMN, and GoN	Tharu/Awadhi/Nepali	Science
	Sikhi I-III	JKHS, UMN, and GoN	Tharu/Awadhi/Nepali	Maths

⁵² The provision for ‘local subject’ has been made in addition to other regular subject – Nepali, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The local and school level bodies like – School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) are charged with the responsibility to make a decision on choosing a local subject. This is where mother tongue is introduced as a subject. School can also opt to use local language as ‘medium of instruction’ for other subjects

Hisab

Hausille Sikhi I-III JKHS, UMN, and GoN Tharu/Awadhi/Nepali Social Studies

Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) introduced a series of book in Tharu called *Apane Bhasa*, *Apane Sikhi* and in Awadhi called *Apane Bhasa*, *Apanen Shikharo* (Let us learn our language). In addition, for subjects like Science, Mathematics and Social studies, books were prepared in three languages: Nepali, Tharu and Awadhi. Jagat Sundar Bwonakuthi (JSB) also put together a set of books in Nepal Bhasa called *Paleswa* (The lotus), which they used alongside the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) books called *Luhiti* (The golden tap).

Figure 4
Pictures of school textbook coverpage



Mother-tongue textbooks printed by the Government of Nepal



Mother-tongue textbooks used in JSB and JKHS

Though the Government of Nepal published mother-tongue textbooks in several different languages, they followed a similar format. As presented in the Figure 4 above, the book covers depict exactly the same pictures and same scripts for all the languages – Magar Dhut, Rana Tharu, Anering, Santhali, and Uraw. As mentioned earlier, the contents of the book were also translated from the Nepali textbooks. On the contrary, the books published and used in JSB and JKHS were

printed locally. The book covers, in the second picture of Figure 4, depicted various objects that are used in the locality. As discussed in Chapter Four, in JKHS, a group of schoolteachers and representatives of the local community formed a committee to decide the subject matter, pictures, and the presentation of the book. In JSB, though the CDC centrally printed the books, various representative of Newar community were part of the publication committee. The books, therefore, were published in Kathmandu using the Kathmandu version of Nepal Bhasa as the standard.

These books were introduced as 'local' subjects as per the Government of Nepal's 2003 (2060 BS) provision for a 'local subject' in the primary school curriculum. The local and school level bodies, the School Management Committee (SMC) and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), are charged with the responsibility of choosing a local subject. This is where the mother tongue is introduced as a subject. Schools can also opt to use the local language as a medium of instruction for other subjects. In addition to this, the curriculum guidelines for primary education also set aside 20 percent of the curriculum for subjects like social studies and health & hygiene to be based on locally relevant material (CDC, 2007). The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) also published Model Curriculum for Mother Tongue and Textbook Guidelines 2007 (2064 BS) outlining the minimum skills and competence to be delivered by textbooks in all languages. It further requires all the school materials to adhere to the guidelines and be approved by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). The subject material could be prepared in coordination with the local resource centre and district curriculum coordination committee.

It is also important to note that the schools, at no point, sought to establish themselves as separate from the state. On the contrary, their efforts were geared towards engaging with the state more effectively. For the schools, strong engagement with the state was essential for gaining both recognition and legitimacy for mother-tongue education and strengthening the relationship with the state. As Sarita Manandhar, Nepal Bhasa teacher in JSB, says: 'It is important to use CDC books. If we want the government to respond to our needs more, we must use these books and work with them.' Though JSB has printed a series of books called *Paleswa*, she insists on using *Luhiti* (the Nepal Bhasa textbook printed by the government). This is despite the fact that *Luhiti* series is not easily available in the market and is usually out of stock at the CDC office, especially for primary level. She usually asks previous students to return the books to the school so that the new cohort of students can use them. While other teachers who teach Nepal Bhasa appreciate this, they find it difficult to follow in practice. The school thus uses a combination of books: *Paleswa* in Class 1 and 2 and *Luhiti* in 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10. For Classes 6, 7 and 8, the school compiled a collection of literary materials to be used in lieu of textbooks.

This emphasis on working with the state is also prominent in the diamond jubilee souvenir book, 2011, published by Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) and the ten-year souvenir book, 2001, by Jagat Sundar Bwonakuthi (JSB) both begin with the letters of commendation from then Prime Ministers: Dr Baburam Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala. In the souvenir book published by JSB in Nepal Bhasa, the Prime Minister commends them for the 'exemplary' work done

by the school and hopes that this inspires other schools to follow the path (written in Nepali). This was followed by a letter by the president of the governing committee, Mr Laxmidas Manandhar, appreciating the Prime Minister for supporting the school (written in Nepal Bhasa). Various other letters included in this collection refer to the constitution of 1990 that ensured the right to education in mother tongue. The school magazine by JKHS includes a letter of appreciation from the Minister of Education - Mr. Dinanath Sharma, Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare - M. Dan Bahadur Chaudhary, Secretary of Education - Mr. Kishor Thapa, and District Education Officer - Mr. Shankar Bahadur Gautam.

3.2 Seeking legitimacy through legal provisions

This endorsement from the state was very central to claiming the legitimate space in the national education practice. In this process of seeking space within the state, JSB and JKHS drew upon different legal provisions for the development and use of minority languages. One of the most important ways in which various actors sought legitimacy of the mother-tongue education was by referring to the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Nepal (Article 18.2). The constitution provided a widely endorsed framework that served to bring various conflicting groups in consensus. The language activists, who were in the management committee, always referred to their demands for mother tongue education as demands to make the state accountable to provisions guaranteed in the constitution. The reference to the constitution made these demands a legitimate one.

The state officials also readily accepted the discourse of legal and constitutional provision. As one of the high ranking officials in the Ministry of Education mentioned, 'In Nepal, these days there is national level political consensus around diverse language... there is an inclusive discourse. It has become the foundation of our constitution (*sambidhan ko aadhar*). Even in the popular media, such as TV and radio, we can hear advertisements in different languages. So it is impossible to say no to mother-tongue education'. Based on these provisions, the education policies such as the National Education Committee 1992, the Higher Education Commission 2000, the Basic Primary Education Programme 1991-2004, School Sector Reform Programme 2010-2015 also focuses on mother tongue education (UNESCO, 2011: 28).

The process of writing textbooks also brought different issues and actors together. In JKHS, the local community, teachers, the school management and United Mission to Nepal (UMN) worked closely with the Department of Education and Curriculum Development Center (CDC) for the production of these books. In JKHS, since various international organisations also collaborated, the discourses often included reference to international treaties and provisions. In my interviews with various NGO personnel, language activists, government officials, and the teachers, I was often told about several international covenants that Nepal has already signed and ratified. The most commonly referred one was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 24, that asserts:

All language communities have the right to decide to what extent their language is to be present, as a vehicular language and as an object of study, at all levels of education within their territory, preschool, primary, secondary, technical and vocational, university, and adult education.

As I continued my fieldwork, I came to know about several other important international conventions and policies that support mother tongue education. These conventions were either mentioned in the various publications, advocacy materials, and magazines published by the Government of Nepal, various I/NGOs, and the schools. Some of the international provisions that were commonly referred to are: The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960, The 1990 Jomtien Conference on Education for All, The Dakar Framework of Action 2000, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – 1966 (Article 13 and 14), The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (Article 18), The Millennium Development Goals 2000, and The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People 2007 (See Appendix III for the detailed list of national and international provisions).

The constitution also guaranteed that ‘all communities will have the irrevocable right to preserve their cultures, scripts, and languages’ (Article 26.2). This constitutional provision provided the language activists and various I/NGOs space to develop different languages and publish literary materials including school textbooks. As the literature on language planning has pointed out the notion of language an autonomous entity is not solely the construction of linguistics, it is also a product of wider politics. Therefore, the effort to open up the boundaries of the nation-state and its regulatory mechanism is an important way in which minority social groups seek legitimacy.

3.3 Writing the language: Standardisation, grammar and phonetics

Drawing on the provisions made in various provisions in the national and

international law, the language activists and school administration engaged in a process to systematise the language for the purpose of schooling. As Bhola Ram Chaudhary, one of the teachers who contributed to the textbooks, said, 'School textbooks are the best way to develop a language.'⁵³ During this process we refined our language (*parimarjit garyau*); we removed "bad words", systematised it and made it suitable for written form.'⁵⁴ The writing of textbooks thus facilitated the larger project of where grammatical descriptions could be developed for the purpose of written literature. 'In the cases, where different names were used to denote the same thing, we chose the one that was closer to Nepali.'⁵⁵ Comparing his efforts to contributing to textbooks with his early experience of publishing Tharu newspapers, he reasoned: 'Writing school textbook is more meaningful than publishing newspapers. Once approved, it is printed in 1000s of copies and the younger generation read it and learn about it. Besides, there is always an opportunity to improve it in later versions.'

According to the introductory section of the Nepal Bhasa textbook, *Luhiti I*, one of the objectives of the textbook is 'to strengthen students' competence in speaking, reading, writing and understanding the language'. This emphasis on various aspects of the language competence, that included reading and writing in addition to speaking and understanding, meant that the language needed a systematic written tradition. In the situation where the language did not have

⁵³ Bhola Ram Chaudhary had been an editor-in-chief of a local newspaper called *Bihaniya*. He drew from these previous experiences to consolidate his work on Tharu textbooks.

⁵⁴ By bad words he meant the rude words (*gaali*) and forms that denote less respectful way to addressing people (*tu* instead of *aap*)

⁵⁵ Similar language dynamics have been documented by Hutt (1986) in his analysis of Nepali language standardisation process, where Nepali intellectuals deliberately chose Sanskrit words that were different from the Hindi words, in order to establish Nepali as a language that is distinct from Hindi.

well-developed written tradition, the process of writing books also transformed the language in new ways. This meant developing an internal process of abiding by the phonological rules, grammatical structures and developing age-grade appropriate literary vocabulary.

The legitimacy of a language as an acceptable tool for education is often linked to 'correct' use of the linguistic code. This constant process of 'correction' of the language served a dual function, firstly to ensure distinctiveness and secondly to gain acceptance. Nepal Bhasa, Tharu and Awadhi, adapted the already available Devnagari framework script. This allowed them to negotiate space within the state institutions, as languages with fully developed writing rules and grammar. In addition, it also helped to stabilise and standardise the language by transitioning it from oral to written form. For languages like Tharu and Awadhi, which are primarily spoken languages with very limited written tradition, this process was also seen as a way to demarcate the languages from each other and to prevent a language from being labelled as a dialect of another language.

Bhola Ram Chaudhary added, 'Awadhi and Tharu are very different languages. In addition to the use of distinct set of adjective and grammatical structure, one of the distinctive feature is that Awadhi is closer to Hindi whereas Tharu is closer to Nepali.' He had also substantiated this in his MA thesis entitled 'Comparative Analysis of Tharu and English Adverbs', first version of which also included a collection of Awadhi adverbs. As Burghart points out 'mutual unintelligibility with other languages' is not necessarily the main criteria for determining a language. The difference between *bhasa* (language) and *bhashika* (dialect) is

determined by its social and political status. *Bhasika* is local by definition and spoken (*sthaniya boli*). A *bhasa* exists in a formal sense (dignified by grammatical description) and possess a written literature, making schooling in that language possible. Since writing is also seen as a symbol of 'high culture', it is also seen as a way to develop a distinct literary culture.

In the case of Nepal Bhasa, this process of standardisation had been ongoing. Since some schools and universities have been offering education in Nepal Bhasa as a subject, there was a rich corpus of knowledge to draw from. Though there were numerous variations of the language spoken in different places – Bhaktapur, Kirtipur, Banepa, Chautara, Tistung, Dolakha etc. – the Kathmandu variant of the language is generally accepted as standard. Occasionally, some books made a cursory mention of different variants of Nepal Bhasa. In most of the cases, published materials on Nepal Bhasa grammar and literature were used as reference documents, which mainly used the Kathmandu variant of Nepal Bhasa. Thus the process of writing the textbooks, also included to the process of agreeing to a particular form/rule, as opposed to multiple ways in which it was spoken.

'Writing' was seen as a way to prevent a language from being labelled as a dialect of another language. In addition, it also helped to standardise the language by transitioning it from 'oral' to 'written' form, thereby gaining a status of a developed language through which schooling could be possible. In the case of Tharu language, the standardisation process was more complicated. There are at least nine different Tharu languages spoken across Nepal (Guneratne, 1998). This is one of the reasons why the textbooks that were published centrally by the

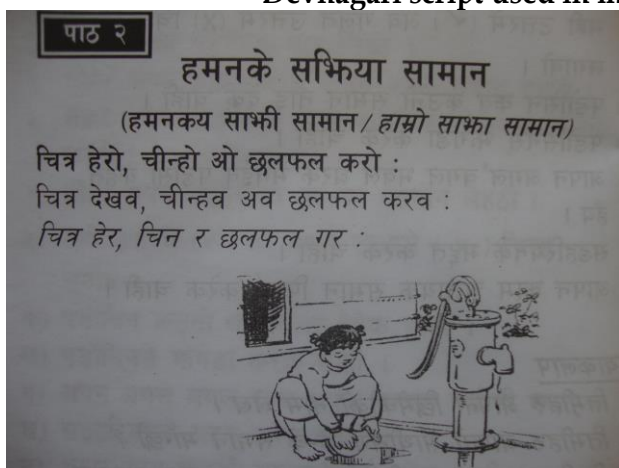
curriculum development centre were not accepted in JKHS, as they did not match with the locally spoken Tharu at all. The variant spoken in Barkulpur, Kapilbastu is called Dangaura Tharu. The new textbooks produced by JKHS were written in Dangaura Tharu. Through this variant had some written tradition, it had not been systematised earlier. Drawing mainly from the oral traditions and limited written material available, Tharu textbooks were prepared. In the case of Awadhi language, though it had fairly well-developed grammar and written tradition, there were disagreements regarding the use of some vowels. In spoken Awadhi, the vowel 'ya' is more commonly used. The vowel 'ai' was absent. The first set of text books printed in Awadhi used the vowel 'ya' in its text e.g. *padhaya* (to read), *banakaya* (in the forest). However, in the later versions, they decided to use the vowel 'ai' instead of 'ya', so that written Awadhi becomes closer to Nepali system and easily used in school education. e.g. *padhai* (to read), *banakai* (in the forest).

3.4 Using a common script

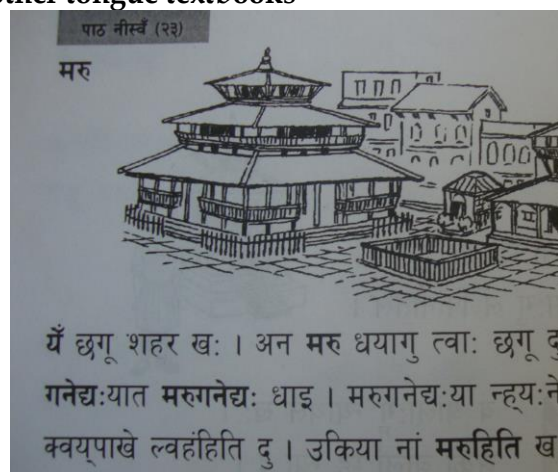
As I began to attend various mother tongue classes in JSB and JKHS, I soon realized that I was able to read the books and the written work in the classroom, though different languages were used in these schools. All the books were in written in Devnagari script (the script that is commonly associated with Nepali language). Except for a weekly class in JSB, where teachers dedicated one hour every week to learning the most common script associated with Nepal Bhasa, the *prachalit lipi*, all the other written work done in Devnagari script. Bhola Ram Chaudhary, in JKHS, explained that the use of a common script makes it easier for all the various people involved. The writers and the teachers can follow it easily. The students learn it faster as the same script is used in most of the

subjects. Since many languages either do not have a separate script or have more than one scripts associated with that language, it is easier for the language workers to use devnagari.

Figure 5
Devnagari script used in mother tongue textbooks



Class II Social studies textbook, Lesson 2, pg 40 written in Tharu, Awadhi, and Nepali, using devnagari script



Class I Nepal Bhasa Textbook, Lesson 23, pg 80 written in devnagari script

Using a common script was seen as a way to make the language legible to the state and to other people who were literate in Nepali. According to the recommendations presented in a Report on Primary Education in Mother Tongue⁵⁶ (GoN, 1997).

Devnagari script must be used when using mother tongue as a language of instruction, while protecting the authenticity of the language (*niji visheshta*). If different languages are used, the students will face difficulties when they graduate to higher grades. This might hinder the overall development of education in Nepal. In order to avoid this problem, a common script i.e. Devnagari, must be used. Historically, we have seen that the languages such as Maithili and Newari have used devanagari script. This will serve many purposes: It will strengthen the unity of the country, the students will not be overburdened with the additional script, and it will also facilitate easier learning of Nepali texts.

⁵⁶ This five-member committee was chaired by Dr. Ramavatar Yadav with Dr. Ballavmani Dahal, Dr. Chudamani Bandhu, Dr. Tej Ratna Kansakar, and Dr. Madhav Prasad Pokharel as members. The members of this committee are well-known academic and language activists working on the issues of language in Nepal. The report was presented to the Government of Nepal on June 1997 (1.3.2054 B.S.)

Various other book-writing instruction manuals recommended similar positions. The Support Material for Implementation of Multilingual Education Programme (Kadel, 2010: 83) cautions the mother-tongue writers against place emphasis on the language rather than the script. It urges the writers to follow the phonetic pronunciation of the word in mother tongue and use devnagari script to codify it in writing. If there are any popular ways of writing any words in mother tongue, Nepali or English language, the book suggests, a similar convention must be used in writing them in mother tongue. Similarly, Report on Primary Education in Mother Tongue recommends that every language should collect at least 5000 basic words so that it could be used for the purpose of primary education. In addition, 1000 additional words related to different subjects needs to be added. In a situation where some (technical) words are not available, these words can be taken from other languages.

This concern to have a standard script for different languages seems to mediate various tensions. Firstly, different languages that do not have a standard script could seek to transform their language into written form. Secondly, it mediated potential internal tensions within the language group if there were more than one script that are commonly used. Thirdly, and most importantly, the use of one standard script made the language legible to the state and helped to ensure its identity as one of the languages of Nepal. Thus, in both JSB and JKHS, the school textbooks were printed in devnagari script.

3.5 National curriculum framework

The textbook writing was also an important way to engage with the state effectively via its curriculum development framework. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, GoN) rejected the first set of books, written at JKHS, when they were reviewed against the criteria for school textbooks and learning objectives specified for each school year. Sharing his experiences, Bikram Tripathy, a writer in Awadhi and one of the resource persons for a book-writing workshop in JKHS, said, 'The school had misunderstood the local textbook guidelines. If the schools publish their own textbooks, they need to abide by the criteria set out in the curriculum development guidelines and apply for approval from the Ministry of Education'.

The curriculum framework demarcated the boundaries of what is considered as appropriate school knowledge. The curriculum evaluation proforma, used by the Government of Nepal to evaluate the additional school textbooks, lists several criteria for the evaluation of the textbooks. One of the important criteria for approval is adherence to the guidelines on the subject matter of the textbook. This includes questions such as: Do the lessons comply with the topic mentioned in the curriculum guideline? Do the contents revere national value and integrity, respect Janjati identity, and preserve languages of the nation? Does it portray a balance in traditional and modern skills, technology, and employment? Do the books show localisation of the contents and pay attention to the inclusiveness of various identities? The CDC also mandates the textbooks to a balanced collection of different genres - local stories, essays and poems.

Through this process of selecting, classifying and distributing school knowledge, the Nepali state delineated the boundaries of the ways in which certain stories and representations could be expressed as public knowledge. The Mother Tongue Textbook Guideline (CDC, 2064 B.S.) mentions that one of the important objectives of primary education is to build the moral character of the student by instilling the values of national unity and democratic culture. This usually meant that the contents of the school textbook respected both ethnic identities and national identity. However, the possibility of pitting the ethnic identity against national identity was completely ruled out. The vigilance on the issues of national sovereignty and integrity was evident in various guidelines published by the government, and in the school textbook that was finally published.

This process also transformed language in different ways. As listed in the evaluation criteria, local language was reshaped to include not only words and concepts that are appropriate for the purpose of school education but also through re-organising the language through the rules of grammar and standardisation. For example, the curriculum evaluation proforma also had a section on linguistic evaluation: the richness of vocabulary, appropriateness of grammar, clarity of language, age-grade appropriateness of the subject matter, and appeal of the presentation. This required the textbook writing team to transform the spoken language into written language, thereby limiting various ways of expressing the language. This process also shaped the knowledge on which form of a language is considered as an appropriate form by the formal acceptance in the school textbooks.

After the first set of textbooks was rejected, the textbook team in the school revised them systematically. JKHS also had several rounds of trainings and workshops for all the writers in order to understand the process of writing school textbooks. The writers and editors of these books very carefully followed the existing curriculum guidelines while designing the textbooks. Bhola Ram Chaudhary mentioned, 'It was important for us to have Tharu textbooks in our school if we wanted to conduct MLE program properly.' Moreover, official approval of the publication of textbooks also meant that the approach of the school is endorsed by the state, thus making it a legitimate knowledge. In JKHS, the textbooks were approved on the second application. The result was three different seals on the textbook: from the Government of Nepal, from the United Mission to Nepal, and from JKHS School itself.

4. Engaging with the 'local'

On an everyday level, the notion of 'the local' (*sthaniya*) played an important role in this process of knowledge making. Drawing on the everyday practices of the Srilankan TESOL classroom, Canagarajah (2002) argues that when various forms of knowledge come together, the discourse of 'local' can emerge as an important process in the ongoing construction of relevant knowledge in a given history and social context. The discourse of 'local' had various socio political functions in Nepal. It was helpful in establishing local language as the relevant language; especially in a situation where the new generation is gradually shifting to Nepali and ethnic languages might no longer be their first language. Moreover, the

discourse of 'local language' is also aligned with the imagination of *Tharuhat*⁵⁷ and *Newa Rajya* as a separate state in potential federal arrangement. In the following section, I illustrate the symbolic struggle within the knowledge-making process in school textbooks and construction of legitimacy of these languages for school education. And in doing so, I will discuss the ways in which the idea of locality emerges as a legitimate way to position minority identity in the national education framework and in the new vision of the nation.

4.1 The faraway Pashupatinath

Maya - Which *mela* (fair) did you go to, Himmat?

Himmat - We went to *Shivgadi Mela*.

Maya - Where is *Shivgadi* and when does this fair take place?

Himmat - *Shivgadi* is in Kapilbastu district, on the southeast side of the *Dhan* river. There is a big fair on the day of *Shivratri*.

(An excerpt from Tharu textbook, Lesson 6 - *Shivgadi Mela*, *Apnen Bhasa Apnen Shikav*, Class II, Page 19)

I sat down with one of the Tharu teachers in the afternoon to understand his views on language teaching. He took out his textbook and pointed at this lesson on Shivgadi mela and said, 'Children can learn how to write an essay through a lesson on Shivgadi Mela which takes place in our district. A chapter on the faraway Pashupatinath Temple that the children have never seen will not help them to learn essay writing.' He explained that school adapted specific ways of presenting the school curriculum to students through the introduction of the 'local' content. Keeping the 'learning objective' of, for example, an essay writing or letter writing skill as the central objective, these textbooks used local names,

⁵⁷ Various groups advocating identity based federal state have been demanding for some parts of the Terai to be declared as *Tharuhat* and the Kathmandu valley as *Newa Rajya*. It is proposed that such federal states will have Tharu and Nepal Bhasa as potential regional languages in the respective federal state.

places, pictures, and drew upon local practices to present the lesson.⁵⁸ The above excerpt from Lesson 6, Awadhi textbook II, presents a conversation between two friends on the local fair, Shivgadi Mela. The lesson is used to discuss skills on writing a descriptive account of an event or a place.

When the class started, students in Class III gathered around in their small working groups to read lesson 10. It was a lesson on letter writing. Tharu-language textbook III had an example of a letter written by a boy to his sister describing his primary school. The lesson had a picture of a school from the nearby locality. As we read the lesson together, one of the students pointed at the picture and asked me, 'Have you seen this school? This is school is very close by. It is on my way. This school also has a swing within their school compound. Sometimes we go there with our friends.' Other students in the group agreed. The picture of the school building was familiar to most of the children. The character Ramu Barai who wrote the letter to his sister Sonya Barai were also familiar names. In the group, we talked about the school and related things for a long time. After the general talking was over, I suggested that they could try writing some of this in the letter they would write. Not everyone agreed to write more than what was required in the list of questions at the end of the lesson, but some of them mentioned a few points that they could add.

At an instrumental level, this space occupied by the 'locality' in the textbooks and its relevance to the everyday lives of students affirmed the pedagogic legitimacy

⁵⁸ Learning objectives for each lesson are set out in the 'Primary School Curriculum Guidelines' published by The Government of Nepal's Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).

of mother tongue as effective teaching practice. In the classes, teachers and students related easily to the lessons that made reference to local issues. Each time the teacher discussed a lesson based on a local topic, the students shared a lot more information than what was written in the book. It also added to students' enthusiasm in class. Pointing to the names and places mentioned in the book, students often exclaimed, 'His name is there in this lesson' or 'I have been to this place; this is where the weekly market takes place.' In the classrooms, the teachers utilised this local content to draw students' attention, make the lessons locally relevant and deliver the lessons more effectively. For the students, the examples were more real and tangible.

This was especially true in JKHS, where the student population was made up of 95% Tharu speakers. The use of mother-tongue textbooks had direct instrumental value. Most of the students till Class III used Tharu language for communication. In many of my teaching sessions in Class II or lower, I often observed that the children explained the stories or essays much better in Tharu language. This was especially true in *Balbikas* classes (entry-level nursery cohort of 4-6 years age group usually referred as early childhood development group), where all school-related learning took place only in Tharu language. One early morning, I was looking at the colourful posters and pictures drawn on the walls of *Balbikas* (early years) classroom. There were posters of animals, with the names written in English. I was looking at this poster when the students started to come in. When they saw me, they gathered around me and started telling me the names of the animals. Though this particular poster was in English, they pointed at the animals and told me their names in Tharu - *Chagariya* (Goat), *Harana* (Deer),

Bilariya (Cat), *Bhaisi* (Buffalo). *Bhaisi mane Bifello ho* (Bhaisi means Buffalo). Most of the students knew what these animals were called in Tharu, they were also beginning to learn the equivalent words in English. If any student was unsure, the other would join in to tell me the name. Some knew more than one name for the same animal.

Most teachers told me later that they had been using Tharu language in JKHS much before it started officially. Since most of the students spoke Tharu, it was not practically possible to use any other language to teach in the school. According to the teachers, though they used Nepali language in front of the government officials or visitors, the everyday instruction language was always Tharu. The official introduction of mother-tongue education legitimated the use of Tharu language, and removed their fear that they had been practising wrong pedagogy. In addition, the new textbooks provided the teachers space to use not only the local language but also local contents in their classroom teaching. I observed and teachers agreed that in JKHS, students do better in Tharu compared to Nepali, especially in Class I. According to one of the Class I teachers, 'Since we use devnagari script for both Tharu and Nepali, children usually start writing Tharu words earlier than Nepali.'

In the cases like JSB, where most of the students are already fluent in Nepali, Nepal Bhasa teaching focused on drawing from the daily life experiences in Kathmandu. In one of the Nepal Bhasa classes that I attended, the teacher spoke at length about *yanya punhi*. This is a weeklong festival that starts after the erection of a ceremonial pole in the city centre. The festival is dedicated to Lord

Indra, the king of heaven. An idol of Indrais displayed at various places.⁵⁹ In the class, students discussed the ways in which they participated in the festival, things they saw and activities they did. The teacher then moved on to give more information on the festival. Throughout this lesson, both teacher and students used Nepal Bhasa, with the teacher often correcting the grammar and words if not correct. Thus, even when the new generation has shifted to Nepali and the ethnic language (e.g. Nepal Bhasa) is not actively used, the teaching of the local content was seen as still relevant as it had a direct link to children's everyday lives.

Much research education in Nepal have shown that school textbooks portray villages and local contexts as the symbol of backwardness. Pigg (1992), analysing the images in school textbooks in Nepal argue that politics of representation renders 'the category of village' as the one that represents underdevelopment and therefore in need of change. Similarly, Mikesell (1993: 32) writes, 'an immense class of people is presently being schooled in Nepal to despise their own rural background'. Given this context, the centrality of 'local' in mother tongue textbooks indicates a distinct departure and a big change from the Kathmandu-centrism that Ragsdale (1989) complained of in the 1970s.

4.2 Geographies of Nepal

However, the use of mother tongue textbooks had far-reaching consequences. The closer look at the images used in the textbooks show that these books also

⁵⁹ According to local legend, Lord Indra came to Kathmandu disguised as an ordinary man and tried to steal a special flower called 'Parijat' for his mother. Local tantriks used their power to catch him red handed and bound his hands. Later, after he confessed his sin and asked to bless the city, after which he was released. And, people began to celebrate the Indra Jatra festival

portray a diverse representation of geographies and the people of Nepal. Bholu Ram Chaudhary, a teacher who contributed to the textbooks told me during one of my many conversations with him, ‘we have made a deliberate effort to show the geographies of the Tarai (southern belt of Nepal) in this textbook. The pictures in the book look like places around us. The characters in the illustrations wear clothes that we wear every day. The images look similar to what children see every day’. As he rightly pointed out, these representations attempted to affirm students’ lived experiences and local practices as a source of knowledge. This stands in sharp contrast with the Nepali-language textbooks that consistently represented hills as the most common background pictures and people wearing *daura suruwal* (the official national dress) as characters in the story, which is far from the local context of the school.

Figure 6
Representations of geography in school textbooks



A typical picture representing Nepal in Nepali-language book



A picture representing the Tarai and its people in Awadhi-language book

Several recent researchers on ethnic politics in Nepal (Bennike, 2013; Rai, 2013) have analysed these ‘place-making’ practice as a way of expressing political identities of people associated with these spaces. By locating it within the

contexts of the historical trajectory of Nepali state and contemporary demands of federal states, they argue that the specific discourse of space is also linked with the interrelated production of knowledge about this space. Drawing on the local realities, that the students could easily identify with, this process shifted the contextual setting of the lessons by using different pictures. It challenges the idea of Nepal that is popularly represented by a hilly landscape and people wearing *daura suruwal* and expands the geography of Nepal by including the plains of Tarai or the valleys of Kathmandu and people wearing other kinds of clothing. The knowledge that was produced in these textbooks did not limit itself to the idea of Nepal as a hilly country inhabited by the people belonging to a particular community.

This sense of locality did not simply map an identity into a place but presented a heterogeneous representation of Nepal's geography. Though this portrayal of diverse geography of Nepal was limited only in mother-tongue textbooks, it nonetheless offered an alternate imagination that contrasted with the mainstream representation. And in this process, these representations not only make claims of relevance in the locality, but also make more overtly political assertions on national space.

4.3 New national heroes: Siddhidas Mahaju, Kinu Tharu

Round Cap. Broad Forehead. Well-shaped nose. Proportionate Face. Dressed in *La Suruwa*. Scarf around the neck. Do you know who this person is? His name is Siddhidas. He is someone all Newars must remember. You might think - why should I remember this old man? It is this old man who worked throughout his life for our Newa *jati*.

(An excerpt from Nepal Bhasa textbook, Lesson 10 - Mahakavi Siddhidas Mahaju, Luhiti, Class IV, Page 48)

Similarly, the textbooks also presented several lessons on local histories. As illustrated in the above excerpt, the textbooks also presented the search and claims for *jati itihias* (ethnic history). The books introduced several new characters into the list of national heroes and presented new histories. For instance, Nepal Bhasa textbook *Luhiti* for Class IV talks about Siddhidas Mahaju,⁶⁰ who was honoured with the title 'The Great Poet' (Mahakavi). The lesson mentions that he is considered one of the 'Four Pillars' of Nepal Bhasa. Throughout the chapter, the lesson presents Siddhidas' contribution to a long history of Nepal Bhasa language struggle. *Paleswa* book for Class II has a chapter on Shankha Dhar Shakwa, a mythical figure, who is believed to have started the Nepal Sambat, a calendar followed by Newars. In addition to these lessons, the students also participated in the birthday celebration of Siddhidas Mahaju and made reference to Sankha Dhar Sakwa on various other programmes of the school.

Similarly, the Class II Tharu textbook presents a biography of Kinnu Tharu. According to historical records of the school, Kinnu Tharu founded the school that has today grown as JKHS. He is therefore considered as a respectable figure that brought education to Tharu communities in Kapilvastu. Similarly, the Class III Tharu textbook has a story of Raja Dangisharan. Raja Dangisharan is a mythical king who is supposed to have ruled the district of Dang located in the far-western region of Nepal. Following this, Lesson 16 again mentions him in a 'national song', and highlights that the district Dang was named after him. The

⁶⁰ Siddhidas Mahaju was at the forefront in the endeavour to revive literature in Nepal Bhasa, especially during Rana period. In his lifetime, Mahaju wrote more than 44 books of poetry, epics, short stories and essays.

form of Tharu spoken in JKHS is named after this district. This creation of alternate history, that is specific to different ethnic groups, has been one of the important ways in which various ethnic movements have responded to a monolithic history-making process in Nepal. Given that school textbooks in Nepal had historically been used as the space to represent a monolithic vision of the nation (Onta, 1996), these representations mark a clear departure. In this context, the introduction of new characters in the school textbook marked a significant change from the earlier version of textbooks. It shows an attempt to represent varied national history and diverse groups that resonates with the changing political discourse of Nepal.

Students learnt about new national heroes through these textbooks and lessons in the school. Teachers played an important role in this process. Their position as multi-lingual speakers displayed their own multi-layered identity. While they worked their way through the textbooks in the classrooms practices, they negotiated the everyday knowledge-making processes in the school. As one of the Class VI students in JSB, Bandana Shrestha said,

Our teachers often tell us the stories of various Newa personalities who had to go through a lot of trouble for the sake of our language. We also participate in various programmes to celebrate their birthdays. I now know a lot about the contribution of these personalities for the benefit of Newas.

Another student of JSB, Sunita Shrestha, who recently passed SLC said:

I learnt a lot about our (Newa) culture. From learning to read Nepal Bhasa to learning about our culture and tradition... I learnt about the festivals in detail. I learnt a lot ... about our culture, our language and different Newa personalities. It is knowledge however we gain it.

This process of establishing this information as knowledge was done not only

through textbooks but also various programmes such as *Bhintuna Rally* to celebrate Newa New Year (as discussed in Chapter Four). These contents represent an important distinction from the Nepali textbooks, where these characters did not find much space. As Onta (1996) also notes the school textbooks have often propagated a monolithic state-sponsored national history. Taking an example of valorization of *Bir Balabhandra* and removal of *Jamadar Gaje Ghale* in the history textbooks, Onta argues that state aimed to socialise the students to a 'particular vision of Bir (brave) Nepali nation' that supported a monolithic vision of brave Nepali national culture and sought to create a sensibility of shared national history (*rastriya itihas*). In this context, the introduction of new characters in the school textbook marked a significant departure from the earlier version of textbooks. It represents an attempt to make different claims on the national history and ensure the presence of diverse groups in Nepal.

The mother-tongue education was therefore not just about getting the marginalised groups in and through the schools successfully, but also about changing the nature of education itself both in its organization and in its curriculum. As Stroud (2003) points out legitimate discourses in local languages have been rhetorically constructed in three main ways for purposes of education. Firstly, using the notion of authenticity, local languages are presented as truly able to articulate the roots and social identities of their speakers. Secondly, using the concept of ownership, local languages are closely tied to their speakers so that they can claim ownership over it. Thirdly, using the idea of relevance, local language responds to the everyday needs and priorities of the community.

5. Expanding the 'local'

While the textbook writers negotiated these spaces for the 'local' in the formal education space, the notion of this local was not always confined to the locality. The school textbooks and everyday instruction events in the school demonstrated that the process of knowledge making constantly was confronted by ever-expanding global knowledge and over-arching national knowledge. In this context, even while the knowledge production was embedded in the locality, the schools were not able to limit mother-tongue education only to the traditional knowledge. In order to construct mother-tongue education as more relevant knowledge, they sought to engage with global and national knowledge.

The literature on school curriculum has attempted to grapple with this complexity in several ways. Responding to the complex demands on school curriculum, Sassen (2001) calls for a new spatio-temporality to education, one that includes simultaneous fixity and mobility, local and global, presentism and futures orientation of schooling and pedagogies. Cangarajah (2002) in his study in Sri Lanka argues that the local has been changing its positionality in relation to the changing practices of the global. In these contexts, he suggests that we need to adopt the position that the 'local is a relational and fluid construct'. This framework allows us to understand the seemingly contradictory dynamics that I present in this section.

5.1 Searching for astronauts and computers in Tharu

Even while the 'local' occupied the central role in constructing knowledge, as

Caddell (2007:10) in her study of education institutions in Nepal explains, the more educated children are, they are expected to be more acquainted ideas outside their locale. This expectation from education required reinventing the local languages further in new ways. In one of the book-writing meeting, Pushpa Tharu, one teacher suggested, 'We do not always have to show ancient Tharu artefacts in our books. We can have lessons on astronauts and computers in Tharu.' The textbooks writing had primarily focussed on documenting various Tharu objects that the younger generation no longer used. Though there was a general consensus amongst the book writers that textbooks hold the Tharu life world as it used to be, many writers wanted it to look forward to a different future.

In this way, the writers of the school textbooks problematised the construction of local as a static idea, the one that is limited to the local space and in the past. Instead it had a more dynamic view of the local, the one that could change with the changing time. While most of the established teachers continued to bring in 'traditional' aspects into the textbooks, the younger teachers were keen on engaging with new knowledge. In the book writing workshop, the teachers were torn between these ideas. The established teachers saw mother tongue education as one of the ways to recreate their disappearing cultural worlds. However, the younger teachers were of the opinion that the local could easily be expanded to incorporate the global, while maintaining the distinctiveness of the local. While this tension was mostly unresolved, the writers seem to have made some conscious effort to interpret the modern world in local languages.

This dual interest, to engage with the local and to expand the local, is clearly visible in the textbooks. The representation of people in the book included traditional occupations like pottery and farming but also included student journalists and teachers. *Luhiti IV* had an illustration in the book where children were shown taking pictures of temples for their Nepal Bhasa newspapers. The image of the student journalists in the textbooks, wearing western clothes and taking pictures local places for the ethnic language newspapers, show these attempts to focus on the local yet represent it a completely new form. Students were expected to understand and know about things that are far away (such as geography and history) and abstract concepts (such as mathematics and science) but these were mediated through the 'local' as a fundamental pedagogic tool. The school textbook also included stories and biographies of people outside Nepal. *Luhiti V* has a chapter on Florence Nightingale, which presents a concise biography and celebrates her contribution to the world. *Paleswa III* has a lesson on Issac Newton.

And even though there is reiteration of message about the direction of progress, i.e. the idea of progress is usually represented as a movement from rural to urban (Pigg, 1992), the mother-tongue textbooks sought to re-imagine local languages as not impeding this notion of progress. This framing of mother tongue as compatible to other knowledge sources played an important role in gaining legitimacy where education is commonly perceived as a route to modernity (Valentin, 2011). This also allowed space to reconcile the multiple, and often divergent, conception of legitimate knowledge expected from schooling. And in this process, the textbooks depicted a specific image of the 'local' that is

simultaneously similar and different from the locality.

5.2 Affirming the nation

I noticed similar relationship in the way school engaged with the practices of nationalism. In one of the morning assemblies in JKHS, the vice principal of the school spent the entire assembly time explaining the importance of national anthem. Every morning students started the school day by gathering around the school ground to sing the national anthem. Sometimes the students, who entered the school premises late, did not join the anthem immediately. He reminded the students to leave everything they were doing, and stand still out of respect of the anthem.

The national anthem is very important. Those who cannot respect the country cannot succeed in life. Only those who can respect the country wherever they are can do good deeds for the country. Once you enter the school grounds, you must stop everything and sing the national anthem.

He reiterated that students who do not show respect to the National Anthem couldn't be good human beings. He instructed all the students put their right hand on their heart and sing the song. Following his instruction, one of the teachers asked the cleaning lady to stop and stand for national anthem. The school ensured that loyalty to Nepal and Nepali nationalism was instilled in the students, as demonstrated in this morning routine.

As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the school textbook displayed diverse representations of geography and people. However, it is also notable that these books retained most of the familiar stories from the 'history of

Nepal': martyrs of Nepal, the great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota,⁶¹ and the history of the monarchy in Nepal. Since the contents of these lessons were regarded as important knowledge in itself, these were retained its place in most of the mother-tongue textbooks in addition to Nepali and Social Studies textbooks.

The school iconography also displayed various symbolic affirmations to the nation. Both JSB and JKHS school walls had painting of national symbols such as the national bird *Danphe*, the national flag, the national flower rhododendron, the national animal cow and national colour crimson. Inside the classroom, as presented in the picture above, one could see pictures of national flags pasted on the windows. These images in the school premises, though not part of the formal school curriculum, represent the ways in which school depicts the idea of the nation to its students.

Figure 7
National symbols in JKHS and JSB



National symbols in JKHS classroom



Pictures of national flag in JSB classroom

The recent scholarship on Nepal has pointed out that the key characteristic of ethnic movements in Nepal is the attempt to seek redressal within the nation-

⁶¹ See Onta (1996) for how various icons of Nepali nationalism were established in school textbooks.

state framework (Subba, 1999:129) and to make state institutions more inclusive (Lawoti and Hangen, 2013). As schools exemplify the most visible symbol of the state, various authors highlight the important for educational institutions to open up spaces where plural notion of nationalism can be imagined (Hangen, 2012; Pherali, 2011).

6. Changing Languages, Changing Identities

In one of the conversations in school, Jeet Ram Chaudhary, a teacher in JKHS said, 'We realised that we can impart education in the Tharu language, only after our school started MLE was officially and we started using these new books.' This was quite an odd realisation because JKHS had been using Tharu in the classroom as a medium of informal instruction much before the programme officially started in 2010. Nonetheless, it was only after the introduction of state-supported initiative that the teachers acknowledged it as an acceptable pedagogy. The official introduction of mother-tongue education provided it an institutional space and a much-needed legitimacy. As Jeet Ram Chaudhary added:

If the children write Tharu words in their exam paper, we consider it OK now. In this school, especially at the primary level, we place importance on ensuring that the students understand concepts and express them well. Instead of insisting that they write only in Nepali, we try to assess what they have learnt.

As any other formal educational curriculum, mother-tongue textbooks attempted to transmit objectified knowledge that is selected, organised and presented according to the predetermined aims. However, the process invariably conferred new forms and uses of the language at the school and societal level. This process

aimed at making transformations in school knowledge by adapting varying sources of knowledge, both local and external, and thereby offering a new dimension to mother tongue education. Jeet Ram Chaudhary added:

We have no problem in speaking in Tharu. We can read fluently as well. But writing is difficult. When we went to school, we did all our education in Nepali. You ask me to talk to you in Tharu, I can do it very easily. But the written language is also a bit more formal than the spoken one. We are learning to do that in school while teaching. We sometimes write informal letters in Tharu now.

As Bhola Ram Chaudhary summarised it:

When we went to school, we did not learn to read in Tharu. We only used it for speaking. Here, we are teaching it for the first time. The government has introduced it in other places ... in Kanchanpur. But they speak Rana Tharu there. We speak Dangaura Tharu. The language here is different from the one spoken there... nouns, adjectives they were all different. If it does not relate to the local language, it does not make sense to use it in school. We found it difficult to understand, and naturally so did the children. So we made the books ourselves using local language and local content. But children also need to know national history and other subjects. So we have republished the books in Science, Maths and Social Studies in Tharu and Awadhi. In this way, they learn about other topics through the local language.

In JKHS, though teachers (including those with Nepali as first language) spoke both Tharu and Nepali, writing in Tharu was new. The institutionalisation of mother tongue did not only mean being multi-lingual but also multi-literate. This was different from teachers' own experience of education, especially in JKHS. This transformation from oral to written form of language (cf. Noonan, 1996) made it possible to imagine it as language in which written communication can be done. This invariably required a project of intellectualisation of local languages, its systematic cultivation for academic purposes and results in conferring languages a new form. Nonetheless, it repositioned local languages and locality as a valuable capital for the construction of school knowledge within

the subfield of education. As Canagarajah (2002) reminds us, local knowledge is a process of negotiating dominant discourses and engaging in an ongoing construction of relevant knowledge in the context of our social history, in such a way that locality shapes social and intellectual practice.

This process also brought together the local expertise, international actors and grassroots organisations in an interactive way that facilitated the emergence of different ways of knowledge construction. The idea of local knowledge here is not informal discourses that circulate unofficially at the local level. A particular kind of 'local' is constructed where familiarity of the locality is utilised in a variety of ways, as discussed in the previous sections of this chapter. This process thus combined multiple sources of knowledge to create new knowledge that could not have been expressed within the conventions of either existing textbooks or through oral expression of local language. The local knowledge, there was not 'undistorted' but was deliberately constructed in an attempt to reconcile the dynamics at the global and local level (Canagarajah, 2002).

This process of knowledge construction was not without conflict and contestation. In the several sections of this chapter, I have highlighted some of the tensions between formal and informal knowledge systems and the ways local language had transform into new forms in order to be accepted a legitimate knowledge. The national education framework prioritised scientific and written modalities over creative and oral expression of mother tongue. These limited the ways in which various local languages could be represented. While the language activists might have preferred to retain more 'traditional and 'authentic'

expressions of the language, these processes were necessary for the local languages to be legible to the state. As a result, the logic of authenticity and local utility used in these textbooks needed to move beyond the intellectual practise where minority languages were seen as unchangeable reminiscence of the past. At least in some lessons, the textbook writers constructed and reconstructed local knowledge to fit the purpose of education within the national curriculum framework.

Not everyone was happy with this arrangement. Some of the pahadi mul teachers, while they were actively using Tharu in everyday teaching practices, they considered the formal introduction of Tharu was unnecessary. One of the teachers said, 'They have introduced confusion in our school by introducing written Tharu. It is long-winded and complicated' In his opinion, the primary school teachers were already using Tharu to teach the younger children. Since the school was well known for its MLE programme and was regarded as an exemplary school, all the teachers supported it formally. However, the introduction of Tharu textbooks and written work in Tharu meant that even the Pahadimul teachers required to learn how to write 'correct' Tharu. MLE had implications not only for the ethnic groups who spoke local language as their mother tongue but also other social groups, and in this case dominant group, living in the locality. Another teacher stated bluntly, 'We have also become Tharu, after living with them for last 30 years.' These tensions surfaced again and again during my fieldwork. As a consequence, while MLE had been quite successful in JKHS and some of the feeder school, not all school administrators in the locality wanted to implement it in their schools. Even some of the schools where UMN had been implementing other educational programmes, therefore

did not take MLE programme on board.

These new ideas of school knowledge carry a range of socio-political implications on the ways local identities are perceived and understood. It is through managing these new forms of knowledge that mother-tongue education sought to embody the process of transformation underway in the wider socio-political context of Nepal. The school relied on different but interacting knowledge-making processes and utilised both the state and the local to creatively occupying legitimate spaces in the school curriculum. Though some of the tensions were never reconciled, this seemingly contradictory process enabled the schools to reach out to its students, negotiate new identities and pursue school knowledge in a different way than had been conceived before. The discussions in this chapter also illustrate the complex manner in which different identities are being understood and asserted in changing political context of Nepal. This process of construction of legitimate knowledge, through a close engagement of the local, redefine the boundaries of what constitutes the process of knowledge production for school education.

7. Conclusion

Through an analysis of mother tongue education, in this chapter, I have presented the subfield of minority education as a symbolic 'arena of struggle', where the knowledge-making takes place through the negotiation of legitimate spaces within the social field of national education system. This production of knowledge can take place in a number of ways, and in a number of sites. In this

chapter, I have foregrounded the analysis of textbooks and classroom discourses. In this process, I have illustrated the process in which meanings of education are negotiated through both construction and contestation over legitimate knowledge. This generated a productive space where a complex negotiation of epistemic legitimacy could take place, albeit in a limited space sanctioned by the state.

In JSB and JKHS, the mother tongue was not always 'relevant' in the local context. In JSB, most of the students were competent in Nepali and the mother tongue Nepal Bhasa was not always used as a language of everyday communication. In JKHS, however, students learnt Nepali mainly in school and the mother tongue Tharu was the main language of communication. However, this level competence in their mother tongue did not determine the legitimacy of these languages as the language of education. Both JSB and JKHS, despite the level of language competence in the student body, made use of state-sanctioned space to negotiate the position of mother tongue as the language of education.

I elaborated on this process of legitimisation of language choice and construction of knowledge by highlighting three aspects. Firstly, local languages were transformed in new ways via constructing structures similar to those used by the state language and thereby enabling them to engage actively with the state. Secondly, local languages were discursively presented as locally relevant languages and used in reconstruction of local and national narratives. Thirdly, local languages were further reinvented to allow interaction with changing global context. The schools thus sought to reposition mother tongue, firstly,

through the reconstruction of the local and secondly, through the negotiation of spaces for the local within the state.

The discussion in this chapter also illustrates that the construction of knowledge is intimately linked with changing not only content of the knowledge but also terms of knowledge construction. What emerges strongly from the practices in these schools is a knowledge-making process that has to constantly confront the challenges posed by local, national, and global knowledge and identities. The knowledge-making process in these schools demonstrate various levels of negotiation between different sources of knowledge and a variety of ways in which people draw on various resources to construct legitimate knowledge. It also points out that these individual and collective experiences are inevitably framed, and constrained, by wider historical and ongoing social relations. And while there might be no cohesion and consensus, it nonetheless generated a process where the production of school knowledge was seen to be possible through the use of local languages and local knowledge.

CHAPTER SIX

Claiming Quality, (Re)claiming Equality

1. Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate the ways in which the notion of ‘quality education’ is used to establish mother tongue as the language of education within JSB and JKHS. Given the wider context where the subfield of mother-tongue education is considered as low-quality education, this discourse of quality education helped the students and the school to secure ‘imaginaries of competence’. Drawing on the concept of ‘language ideology’, this chapter will highlight complex and contradictory processes of appropriation and repurposing of multiple sources of ‘quality’ in education. In this process, students and the school sought to unlink the association of mother-tongue education with ‘low-quality’ education.

Further, in this chapter, I argue that the discourse on quality education not only facilitated the day-to-day functioning of the school as a reliable educational institution, but also served to mitigate the doubts, if any, on the relevance of mother-tongue education. In the following sections, I will discuss the ways in which schools navigated the discourses of quality education that are mediated through the ideologies of language. These dynamics illustrate the unequal power relations between languages that determine the access to the other symbolic and material resources allied with them. They also show how these are connected to the ways in which various groups pursue their interests. These, in turn, influence the specific practices undertaken to address the situation in which teachers and students in these schools find themselves.

I will elaborate on these ‘struggles’ in the subfield of mother-tongue education by focusing on the ‘outputs’ expected of the education institutions. I particularly discuss two distinct dynamics. Firstly, there were attempts to develop academic competence in the mother tongue and through the mother tongue. And secondly, they sought to ensure and improve the overall quality of education delivered by achieving high scores in national level exams, being proficient in English, and enabling students to continue higher education in good colleges. Moreover, the idea that mother-tongue education is geared towards uniform national education goals provided an acceptable framework in the general context of under-achievement in education and is utilised to mitigate the deep-rooted tensions around issues of ethnicity and inequality.

2. Quality discourse, language ideology, and imageries of competence

Given the key mandate of any educational institution is to develop the academic competence of their students, achieving quality education both in and through the mother tongue remained central to the everyday functioning of both schools. As already discussed, minority languages such as Tharu and Nepal Bhasa were an integral part of the curriculum in both schools. The use of the mother tongue in these schools primarily sought to create institutional spaces for the use of these languages. However, even while they were actively constructing the legitimacy of these languages in an institutional setting, this legitimacy was constantly being contested while measuring the quality of education in school. In the historical

context, where school education did not include languages other than Nepali, this institutional change also demanded a significant attitudinal shift.

The more widely accepted justification for the introduction of mother-tongue education in both schools was the pedagogical one. Many studies in early-years education have substantiated that learning through the mother tongue improves the well-being of children by supporting positive identity construction and has a positive influence on school results (Ames, 2012). Cummins (1979) provides a theoretical explanation in his theory of 'language interdependence'. He also argues that children have 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) in their native language. If they are taught in a language they already know, students will understand more of what they are taught and develop Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1979). This is usually known as 'step incremental learning', moving from the known to the unknown. This has been found not only to enhance their academic performance but also make education system child-friendly. This approach of 'first-language-first', according to UNESCO (2003), helps children to make a better start and continue to perform better, than those for whom school starts with a language they do not understand.

In Nepal, this perspective has guided the Ministry of Education and International Organisations like UNESCO and United Mission to Nepal (UMN) to develop Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) programmes. According to the 2001 census, 52 per cent of Nepali people do not speak Nepali as their first language. In 2011, this increased to 55 per cent. Even while the census data are highly controversial,

these statistics indicate the partial reach of Nepali language across the population. Many researchers have, therefore, claimed that the use of Nepali-only policy in education institutions systemically disadvantages the non-Nepali speaking population (Awasthi, 2004). This 'language disadvantage' leads many children to be left out of the education system. The government of Nepal and institutions like UNESCO now advocate that if education is imparted in the language that the child speaks, it will ensure better education outcomes and also tackle the issue of low admissions, high rate of school absenteeism and high dropout rates (UNESCO, 2011; MoE, 2003).⁶² MLE is thus offered as a technical solution to address the deep-rooted tensions around issues of ethnicity and inequality that exist in Nepal.

Despite these widely accepted discourses around quality education, the relationship between language and education remained complicated. The idea of quality in education was circumscribed by the 'language ideology' that renders low status to any other language other than Nepali. Recent studies on education in Nepal (Valentin, 2011, Burnett, 2012) concur that type of school and medium of instruction used by school shape the attitude towards the imaginaries of competence that could be acquired through those schools. In a comparative study of three schools in Nepal, Burnett (2012) calls this Nepal's educational dilemma where the choice of languages in schools poses dilemmas for ideas of success in school. Valentin (2011), in her study of an ethnographic study on the impact of

⁶² Several recent reports on implementation of MLE point out that the use of mother-tongue education bridges the gap between the school and the community (UNESCO, 2011; Limbu, 2006; Yadav, 1992 and Awasthi 2004) and bring 'positive education outcomes' (Taylor, 2010). These reports also claim that children not only learn easily in their mother tongue but also express themselves more confidently when mother tongue is used as language of instruction (UNESCO, 2011; Phyak, 2011).

schooling on children living in squatter settlements of Kathmandu, notes that mastery of schooled identity was seen to be possible by gaining knowledge promoted by particular kind of formal education. Imaginaries of the competence that could be acquired from private schooling were very strong and often associated with the mastery of English (Valentin, 2011:110).

In educational contexts, these linguistic practices can unfold 'identity-making' process that sort students as members of particular groups with particular characteristics (Paris, 2011, Cummins, 2011). Many scholars have recognised the critical role of language in constituting and negotiating this education space for individuals and groups. Their insights have revealed that social and political power relations play an important role in the ways in which a particular ethno-linguistic identity is legitimised or devalued (Pavelenko and Blackledge, 2004:13) or indexed in society (Silverstein, 1979). Ochs (1992) notes that linguistic structures become associated with social categories not directly but indirectly through a chain of semiotic associations. In any linguistic exchange, we need to pay attention to the social location of the subject and this cannot be understood without the relational dimension, where subjects interact with different people. Such ideas about languages and speakers of those languages are an important aspect of the 'creation and representation of various social and cultural identities' (Kroskrity, 2004).

2.1 Smart students - dull students

These 'identity-making' activities in the school were unsolicited acts that label students as members of particular groups with particular characteristics. I

discuss this through a narrative shared by Janak Shrestha, a student in JSB, and Santosh Tharu, a student in JKHS (All the names used in this thesis are pseudonyms). Teachers often talked of Janak Shrestha⁶³ as one of the exemplary students in JSB. He was part of the first cohort of students who appeared in SLC exam from JSB in 2010 and passed with distinction. He was one of the six JSB students who achieved a distinction in SLC that year. He went on to study a short course in India. He is now studying Chartered Accountancy. He is also the president of cultural committee in his college, where he coordinates Newa music lessons and *lipi* classes. He has also been working part-time teaching optional maths in JSB for the past two years. Throughout the ten years of his schooling in JSB, he studied Nepal Bhasa as a subject. When I asked him if he took Nepal Bhasa in SLC, he said: 'I studied here since nursery. So I did Nepal Bhasa from then till Class 10. In the final year of my schooling, I took Trigonometry as an optional subject in SLC. I took Nepal Bhasa classes, but did not give Nepal Bhasa exam in SLC.'

Like Janak Thapa, many students in JSB choose Trigonometry as an optional subject in Class IX. The choice is between two optional subjects – Nepal Bhasa and Optional Maths (Trigonometry). Based on what they choose in Class IX, they give their School Leaving Certificate Exam at the end of Class X. Many students prefer not to choose Nepal Bhasa because it is considered an 'easy subject'. Maths and science are agreed to be the difficult subjects and therefore confer higher prestige. Kavita Shrestha, Nepal Bhasa teacher in Class IX and X often lamented, 'Top students always take optional maths. We do not get quality students in

⁶³ Interview with Janak Shrestha was conducted in JSB premises over several sessions, Kathmandu (between 25 Nov - 3 Dec 2013)

Nepal Bhasa.’ Most students chose Optional Maths at the first instance and only when they fail, they would opt for Nepal Bhasa. Since Optional Maths requires skills in solving complex mathematical questions, the students who chose Optional Maths are considered the ‘one who can study’ (*padhna sakne*), i.e. the smart ones. The students, who choose mother tongue, were written off as ‘one who cannot study’ (*padhna nasakne*), i.e. the dull students.

This binary of smart students (*padhna sakne*) vs. dull students (*padhna nasakne*), based on the subject they choose in their final exams, secured students certain imageries of competence. This idea was invariably linked with the ‘language ideology’ that associates certain moral judgement based on the language competence of the speaker. Luttrell (1996), in her ethnographic study of women’s adult literacy programmes in the USA, argues that this process of self-making process inherent in the educational pursuit of ‘becoming somebody’. She illustrates that these aspirations of ‘becoming somebody’ is linked with individual’s gender, race, and class positions. In this process, individuals choose from the options offered by the society in very unpredictable ways. In JSB, students such as Janak Shrestha chose to position themselves as smart students by choosing ‘difficult’ subjects, even though the school was well-known for its education in Nepal Bhasa.

Moreover, this perception pushed several students to choose Optional Maths even when they were not strong in maths. Saurav Khadgi is one of such student in Class IX. Kavita Shrestha, Nepal Bhasa teacher, told me, ‘Look at Saurav. He fails in Maths every year. Since the time he was in Class V, he has had to repeat

maths exam several times. And yet, he chose Optional Maths.’ Several teachers in JSB tried to talk Saurav out of it. However, he insisted that he needed to find out for himself whether he could do Optional Maths or not. In the first term examination in Class IX, he failed this paper; no one in the school was surprised. Kavita Shrestha tried to get him to opt for Nepal Bhasa before it was too late. Nevertheless, Saurav Khadgi continued in Optional Maths.

Consequently, fewer students attended Nepal Bhasa lessons in Class IX and X. During my fieldwork, in 2013-14, seven students had opted for Nepal Bhasa from a cohort of 25 in Class IX. This decreasing number of students opting for Nepal Bhasa in higher grades was not unique to JSB. Other schools that offer Nepal Bhasa in higher grades and are located nearby such as Paropakar School, Kanya School, and Nepal Adarsha School have also recorded falling numbers of students in recent years. Kavita Shrestha reported, ‘Paropkar School was one of the schools where many students used to opt for Nepal Bhasa. There was a time when they used to have more than 100 students in a cohort. Now, there are hardly any students.’

Several reasons have shaped this perception towards Nepal Bhasa. Not too many colleges offer higher education programme in Nepal Bhasa. Patan Multiple Campus and Nepal Bhasa department, Tribhuvan University, run a successful MA programme in Nepal Bhasa (where Kavita Shrestha received her MA degree). In addition, ever since the government de-recognised MA degrees in Hindi, Nepal Bhasa, and Maithali as a basis of promotion in 1965 and the Public Service Commission recognised only Nepali and English (Dahal, 2000), higher

education degrees in mother tongues are not considered valuable for employment.

Many teachers see the choice between mother tongue and mathematics as an unfair choice. In the staffroom, several heated debates were around the new proposal where the government will introduce Computer Science as an optional subject. Many felt that if a much sought-after subject such as computer science is pitted against Nepal Bhasa, no student will opt for it. Nepal Bhasa teachers in JSB, along with the Newa Thay, Newa Bhay Campaign, planned to put forward a proposal to the government to revise this policy. They proposed that, out of two optional subjects in SLC, one option should be for different languages and the second option for technical subjects, so that students do not have to choose between languages and technical subjects.

For JSB, this problem of Nepal Bhasa was paradoxical. The school was indeed proud that students were able to do other subjects and therefore the use of mother tongue was not hindering their education. But at the same time, this very success was stopping students from choosing Nepal Bhasa, due to the obvious advantages associated with optional maths. As a response, JSB has now set up several prizes and awards to recognise those students who do opt for Nepal Bhasa and do well in their exams. Through these prizes, the school hoped to attract more students to opt for Nepal Bhasa. Every year, the 'Shanti Manandhar Sirapa' of Rs 15,000 each is awarded to one male student and one female student in JSB who score highest marks in Nepal Bhasa in the SLC exam. The school also awards the 'Laxminarayan Punamaya Sirapa' of Rs 30,000 to the student who

gets the highest score in Nepal Bhasa exam in the SLC exam. In addition to these awards, on Jagar Sundar Malla's birth anniversary in 2013, the chairperson of JSB's management committee, Laxminarayan Shrestha announced a cash prize of Rs 1000 to all students who fill in the form to give the Nepal Bhasa exam in their SLC. This prize was promised to the students regardless of whether the student passes or fails the exam.

2.2 Not becoming fools

I observed similar process of identity-making in JKHS. Santosh Tharu is one of the students in JKHS.⁶⁴ He studies in Class V, lives in the same village where the school is located, with his parents and younger brother and sister. He is very proficient in Tharu and speaks good Nepali. Telling me about his life, he shared, 'I speak Tharu with my friends and family. I teach my sister and brother in Tharu when they cannot do their homework. It is easier to understand the lesson when I explain in our own language. I was in JKHS before MLE started. When I was in primary school my teachers used both Tharu and Nepali. They explained lessons in Tharu but the books were in Nepali. I teach my younger brother and sister Nepali too. It is important to learn Nepali otherwise people will make a fool out of us (*buddhu banauchha*). We need to learn Nepali to not become fools.'

In Santosh's conception the idea of 'not becoming fools', in practice, meant gaining competence in Nepali. This link of imageries of competence and knowledge with the competence of language was directly associated with the

⁶⁴ Interview with Santosh Tharu was conducted in JKHS premises, Kapilbastu on 2 Jan 2014.

idea of Nepali as 'the language of the educated' discussed in the previous section. Nepali was widely used as official language in government documentation, legal papers, and any financial transaction in Kapilbastu. Incompetence in Nepali is invariably seen as an inability to work in these circumstances. One of the main concerns of the students was to ensure that they had control over these languages in order to become the knowledgeable person that school education promises. Scholars of education (Levinson and Holland, 1996) have discussed that the idea of the 'educated person' as key to the culturally constructed character of education. They argue that this shapes the expectations for and hopes in the transformative capabilities of formal education, further mirrored in everyday discourse.

One day I was talking to one of the Tharu teachers in the school canteen, who articulated similar doubts. He recalled an incident with his relative who had to face a property dispute in the village. The relative was an elderly gentleman who was not educated and did not speak Nepali. When he was asked to give his statement in court, he could not understand most of the conversations as all the official communication was in Nepali. The judge could not understand him either as he could only speak Tharu. Though the lawyer translated most of what he said into Nepali, it was not the same as saying it himself. He eventually lost the case and his property. I had no way to verify whether this story was true or not. However, this story made its appearance in several rounds of my conversation with teachers in JKHS. The teacher often referred to this story to talk about the unfair judgment and skewed importance that Nepali language held in the material lives of people. The story was often cited also as a cautionary tale to

‘not become fools’. Moreover, during my stay there, I often heard Nepali-speaking community use the statement ‘I have become Tharu’, in a derogatory way to indicate that they have also become stupid.

Several authors have documented that historically Tharus have suffered due to the unfamiliarity with the Nepali language and the organs of the state. McDonaugh (1997:280) notes that ‘the progressive extension of the apparatus of the Nepalese state was accompanied by a steady erosion of local Tharu influence’. Guneratne (1998) also observes that soon after Malaria was eradicated, the land in Terai became a valuable asset and a new legislation on land tenure and revenue was brought into action. For the indigenous Tharus, this meant that:

... much of the land formerly controlled by Tharus passed into the hands of immigrants mostly Brahmins, Chetris, and Thakuris from the hills. Many of these immigrant used their education, and their caste and kinship affiliations with local government functionaries to, appropriate Tharu land. In addition, thousands of Tharu peasants fell into debt and became bonded labor for their new landlords (Guneratne, 1998: 754).

Santosh’s concern and this story also indicate the pervasive mistrust against the *pahadi mul* (commonly used term to refer to Nepali people belonging to hill community). This also indicates deep-rooted intergroup tension that exists in Nepal’s Terai region. One of the parents, one day on the way to school, pointed out the disparity in the village. He asked, ‘how many *pukka* [cement or brick-built] houses have you seen in this village that belong to a Tharus?’ Though I did not conduct any systematic survey in the village, a cursory glance confirmed that approximately 8 out of 10 *pukka* houses belonged to *pahadi mul* families. There were many reasons: most of them held government jobs, they had sold their hill property, many members of the family were in paid employment, etc. The fact

remained that Pahadis had better houses than Tharus, a very visible sign of disparity in wealth.

These discourses indeed indicated the inter-group tensions in the area, expressed through linguistic terms. In addition, though Tharu is the language of everyday communication and is now the official medium of instruction in the school, Nepali and English are still the dominant languages of the society. This internal relation of power between different language languages played an important role in establishing the legitimacy of the language in everyday life of the students. As Noonan (1996:5) has noted, young people therefore consider Nepali (and English) as a language needed to 'make their way in the world' and the school was the place to acquire the knowledge on these languages. Formal education in Nepal is associated with future opportunities and notions of modernity (Carney and Madsen 2009). Hence, as a symbol of modernity and development, many children and young people placed the importance in mastery of a schooled literacy and associated it with schooled identity.

2.3 The label of 'low-quality education'

Moreover, these imageries of competence functioned not only to gauge the ability of the students but also of the schools, as Janak Shrestha further elaborated:

'When I scored distinction, my friends from other school were surprised. My friends used to make fun of my school because it teaches in mother tongue. They thought I might not be able do well in SLC because I study in a Newa School. When I got distinction in SLC, they finally shut up.'

Janak Shrestha and his friends' perception that JSB students will not do well in exam indicates the language ideology that inherently links mother tongue with

'low-quality' education. This judgement on the quality of school education was not based on the actual examination results of the school, since Janak's cohort was the first group of students to appear in the SLC exam. It reflected a prejudice against the role of mother tongue in ensuring quality education. This judgement, even while may not be true, had real impact on students' self-evaluations. Janak further elaborated:

But even after getting distinction in SLC, we thought we might not be able to do well outside the school. I was a bit worried in the beginning. After my SLC, I went to Prime College. There were students from schools such as White House ... big schools. I had to compete with them in the same class. But I topped the class. Despite coming from this school, I got 84 %. I was the top student in the entire college. After that incident I realised no matter which school you come from, it really depends on you. When I stepped out of this school, I definitely had doubts. Now that I have met students from other schools, I don't feel that any more.

As the headteacher of JSB said, 'In the initial days of the school, we were warned of going against the grain by delivering communal education and 'playing with student's future (*bhabishya barbad yayegu*).' It was therefore important, both for the school and students, to prove that they could achieve overall quality in education through the use of languages other than Nepali. The school's overall performance played an important role in gaining acceptance as a good school. She continued, 'It was only after 100% of our first cohort performed well in SLC and some even got distinction, that our school started to be seen as giving good education (*padhai ba la gu*).'

Given the low status rendered to languages other than Nepali, the use of the mother tongue in school was perceived as possibly hindering overall quality of education. Students in these schools often expressed the pressure to work harder

and perform better. I witnessed similar incident in JSB when a group of students were leaving for an inter-school quiz competition. These students were competing with students from other private schools. Though JSB is a private school, it did not enjoy the same status as other 'English-medium' schools. The students as they were leaving said, 'We have to try to win this competition. If we lose, they will say it is because we go to Nepal Bhasa school. Those who do not know us, expect us to do badly.' Many students in JSB felt this pressure to constantly prove themselves and the quality of their education. Some students responded by not participating in inter-school competitions. Many studies in Nepal's emerging private education sector argue that private schools are fast becoming the preferred education choice for parents (Caddell, 2006, Valentin, 2011). Parents who sent their children to private 'English-medium boarding' schools in Kapilbastu always mentioned that they consider private school as providing higher-quality education. One of the parents proudly told me, 'Boarding school students are smarter.'

3. Measuring quality

These narratives on quality education shed light on the contradictory responses that MLE advocates struggle with: firstly, maintaining the dignity of languages and its speakers and secondly, mitigating the differential treatment on the basis of linguistic practices. Difference in its usage notwithstanding, the discourse of 'quality education' remained an important aspect in the everyday functioning of both the schools. Given this complex processes that shapes 'imaginaries of competence', where language plays an important role, the schools negotiated

quality education through various measures such as national level examination, quality in mother-tongue education, English language proficiency and higher education.

The individual student aspiration and institutional commitment to these external measures played an important role in the negotiation of collective meaning construed around mother-tongue education. In these circumstances, external measures of 'quality education' not only facilitated the day-to-day functioning of the school as an education institution but also mitigated the doubts, if any, on the relevance of mother-tongue education. The idea that mother-tongue education is geared towards 'uniform national education' goals provided an acceptable framework in the context of general under-achievement in education. In the following section, I will discuss these further.

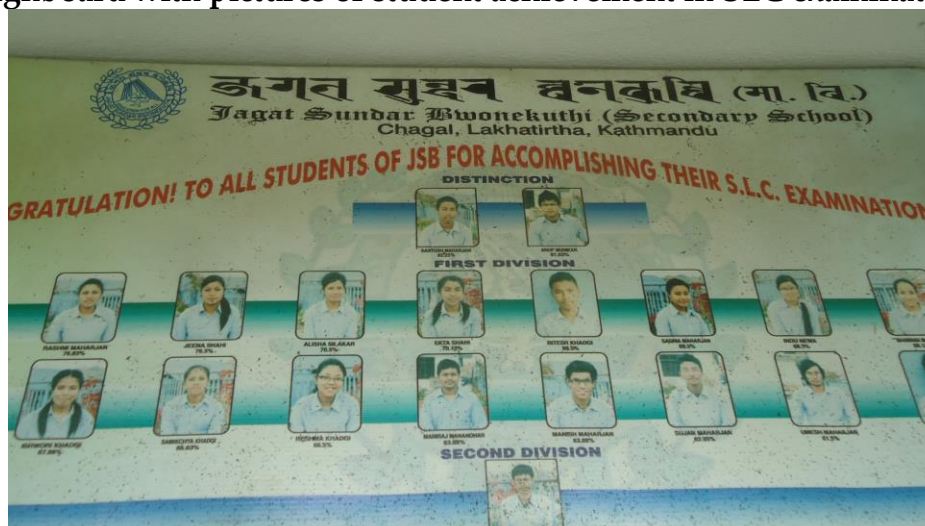
3.1 National-level examination

As I entered Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) building for the first time, I noticed a board with photos of 23 students who passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination in 2010.⁶⁵ Under each photo was the name of the student and the percentage they obtained in the SLC examination. The board clearly displayed that two students achieved 'distinction', twenty passed with 'first division' and two with 'second division'. This board was strategically placed above the accounts section window, where parents often visited to pay school fees. In the

⁶⁵ Such advertising boards are commonly used by schools that want to attract pupils. It is therefore a common practice in fee-paying private schools to place them in the street, not just inside the school.

head teacher's office too, there were certificates of appreciation for achieving 100% percent pass rates in SLC.

Figure 8
Signboard with pictures of student achievement in SLC examination



The School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam is a national-level secondary school examination administered by The Controller of Examinations Division of the Ministry of Education. It is conducted annually for year 10 students and marks the completion of school education. It is also mandatory for all the students in the country who wish to continue their higher education. The examination consists of six mandatory subjects (English, Nepali, Compulsory Math, Science, Social Studies, and Health & Population Studies) and two elective subjects chosen by schools. Though the value of this exam is questioned, it nonetheless acts as a gateway for higher education and an important credential for entering the labor market (Thapa, 2013; Valentin, 2011) and is often referred as an 'iron gate' that students must pass through in order to have a bright future. At the national level, the pass rate of this exam is quite dismal. In 2014, only 43.92 per cent students, of the total 548,248 students, passed the exam (The Himalayan, 2014). In 2013 and 2012, the pass rates were 41.57 and 46.16 per cent respectively. A very small

proportion of students achieved high grades. In 2014, only 3.3 percent got distinction (80%) and only 15.2 per cent of the total students sitting in exam got first division (60%).

This academic achievement of the school was well accepted by the parents. The parents confirmed that one of the reasons that they sent their children to this school is because the 'education is good' (*padhai ba la*) here despite using Nepal Bhasa, and, furthermore, it was affordable or free compared to other private schools in the neighbourhood.⁶⁶ In this general context of underachievement in education at the national level, the educational outcomes gained by both these schools were remarkable. JSB has been getting 100% pass rates in SLC since its establishment, with many students getting distinction. Over the course of my stay there, I often heard teachers, students and parents say that, in their experience, 'the use of mother tongue has not hindered quality education in this school.' This helped the students and school to overcome the common conception that mother-tongue education could potentially act as an obstacle to quality education; especially in the context where Nepal Bhasa was not the language of everyday communication for all the students. As Sunita Shrestha, one of the past students in JSB told me:

Many people told me that education would not be good in Newa School. But because of our good performance in SLC, they got to know that education in this school is not bad. Our result was not bad... it was very good. That is why I think people know better now. Earlier they used say... even in front of us. Now it has changed a lot. People do not say anything now.

⁶⁶ Around 50 per cent of the students receive full or partial scholarships funded by Japanese organisations - HIKIVA, Newas of America (NoA) and some individuals. Monthly fees range from Rs 500-1000 (£5-10), depending on the level (interview with the head teacher of JSB). See Gellner(2014) for detailed discussion on history and financial support for this school.

Students of JSB, like Janak Shrestha and Sunita Shrestha, were regarded as good students mainly due to their good grades in the SLC examination, regardless of their schooling in mother-tongue schools. Like Santosh Tharu, most of the students in JKHS are working to pass in the first division in SLC. This also helped them to gain acceptance from other schools, parents and students. The head teacher told me, 'After we got good performance in the SLC, our student population began to increase.' During my conversation with parents, teachers, and students, one of the common concerns was if the SLC results of the school would fall below the level in the previous year. Both the schools were continuously working towards measuring up to the national standard of good education through their SLC performances. The high level of performance in the examination continued to remain one of the main indicators by which the school was assessed as good school.

In JKHS, the board listing educational outcome of the school was displayed in the head teacher's room. The board showed that JKHS has achieved 60–100% pass rates in the last few years. Both schools displayed a board with the annual SLC examination results. These displays served two purposes – firstly as a 'social audit' mechanism of good governance in school policy, where each school is required to publically display their results and be accountable for it. And secondly, they were also a testimony of 'quality education' provided by the school. Especially given the low educational achievement of the ethnic

population in Nepal, achieving high educational outcomes was one the key goals of the school.⁶⁷

This emphasis on national-level examination also reflects the attempts of the school to be part of the national education system. The schools, at no point, intended any exclusive form of education. As Caddell (2007:16) asserts, the ideal of a uniform education system promotes the view that it provides a 'level playing field' that open up greater opportunities for the student. Both schools thus endorsed the national system and claimed space within it. For the Ministry of Education, as long as the use of mother tongue complied with the national education framework, it was considered acceptable. A key person in the Department of Education, on the condition of anonymity, said: 'When we talk about issues of language and education, we need to understand that the responsibility of Ministry of Education to ensure quality education to all children rather than to save languages. We want students to learn in school and do well in their SLC.' School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination result was thus constantly used as important education outcomes and an indicator of quality of education.

3.2 Quality in mother-tongue education

Both the schools, JSB and JKHS, invested a lot of time and effort to ensure quality in Nepal Bhasa and Tharu as a subject. As the schools that teach mother tongue,

⁶⁷ Yadava (2007) cites school-level educational statistics compiled in Nepal in 2005, and shows that the drop-out rate for ethnic minority children in grade 1 is 50%, which places them significantly more at risk of academic underachievement than is reflected in Nepal's overall national literacy rates.

their mandate also included achieving quality in mother tongue as a subject. In one of the Tharu lessons I attended, the students of Class I were learning the alphabet using Tharu words. The wall on the right hand side of the black board was painted with letters, pictures and, words in Tharu. The teacher asked one of the children to come in front and read it aloud – ‘*Ka se karai.*’ (Ka, a letter in devnagari script, for Karai, a water pot.) The entire class repeated after the child. The students went on, ‘*Kha se Khatiya, Ga se Gagari.*’ A comprehensive list of words to teach the alphabet through Tharu words had been recently developed for Class I, keeping in mind the national-level learning objectives for that level. After the student completed reading out the alphabet, the teacher asked all the children to write two words each from first five letters of the series. The students, who were done, came to the teacher to show their notebook. Teacher looked at the notebooks and made some corrections with her red pen, if the words were spelt or written incorrectly.

I observed similar efforts to teach Nepal Bhasa in JSB. In Class VII, the students were copying paragraphs from *Lipi Pau*, a Nepal Bhasa newspaper printed in *Prachalit lipi*.⁶⁸ They were practising for their upcoming inter-school *lipi* competition. When the students completed a section, they came to the teacher to show it. The teacher then corrected the mistakes and asked the children to write it out again. JKHS also received training on continuous assessment system (CAS), which trained teachers to evaluate the progress of students on a regular basis. Similarly, JSB sent two teachers to Japan for an exposure visit to primary schools

⁶⁸ *Lipi Pau* is a weekly newspaper published in Nepal Bhasa script called *Prachalit lipi*. Since it uses the script that is very different from devnagari, it has a very limited readership. Some of the JSB students are regular readers. The teachers at JSB sometimes use *Lipi Pau* for its weekly lesson on *Prachalit Lipi*.

in Japan. Like most other schools, both these schools work their way through the past exam papers and the questions to ensure that the students perform well in their examination. As Kavita Shrestha, Nepal Bhasa teacher for Class IX, said, 'If you practice well, students can get good marks in exam. In Nepal Bhasa literature, if they only describe the piece they get only 3 marks. If they do analysis, they can get up to 8 marks very easily. In every exam paper 45 % is for Sahitya (literature), 30% is Sampada (knowledge on culture), and 25% is for Byakaran (grammar).'

It is through this constant repetition, correction and practice, that the students were learning and perfecting literary proficiency in their mother tongue. The process of teaching these languages in schools was also a process of making oneself an educated person who both spoke and wrote correct linguistic codes in the mother tongue and other inter/national language. Consider this example by Sarita Manandhar, a Nepal Bhasa teacher in JSB. She insists in her classes that children speak Nepal Bhasa in a grammatically correct way. She says, 'Children usually make mistakes in *bibhakti* (prepositions), e.g. instead of *ma ya gu* (mother's), they often say and write *ma gu*.' She is not always happy with the students, as they tend to mix up the various languages. She frequently complains that students use Nepali and English words while reading Nepal Bhasa, as illustrated in the following classroom instruction event on counting.

Teacher writes the number 1603 on the board.

The students read it as *sohra saya tin* (sixteen hundred and three in Nepali).

Teacher instructs: We have to call it *jhin khusa wa swa* (sixteen hundred and three in Nepal Bhasa). In this way, we need to learn to read *anka* (numbers in Nepali) in Nepal Bhasa. We need to remember to use Nepal Sambat (Newar calendar) as well, not just *Nepali gatey* (Nepali calendar). Whenever there are numbers written we need to read it in Nepal Bhasa.

One should never say *hazaar* (thousand in Nepali) instead of *dwochhi* (thousand in Nepal Bhasa). Always remember this.

Her difficulty reveals how complicated it is to try to maintain a sharp distinction between languages under current conditions of language contact. This practice is particularly visible where numbers and dates are concerned, especially because most Newars tend to use Nepali rather than Newari numbers. It also reveals that, at least conceptually, the concern for quality in the mother tongue is tied to the awareness of Nepal Bhasa as distinct from Nepali. Thus the counterpart of what constitutes a good language is an identification of what it is not and emphasis on the maintenance of its purity. She insists that students speak to her in Nepal Bhasa during her classes and says that she encourages students to speak as a general medium of communication in school. One would seldom hear her use Nepali in school premises, except with non-Newar visitors. She further says, 'The school teaches students Nepali and English. They will eventually be fluent in these languages anyway. I focus more on Nepal Bhasa so that they don't give up Nepal Bhasa in order to gain Nepali and English.' She speaks, reads and writes in Nepal Bhasa and Nepali and communicates well in English.

Nonetheless, this deliberate education (Varenne, 2007) of the mother tongue in the institutional setting of the school provided an environment to learn the language even to those students, whose primary mode of communication at home is not Nepal Bhasa. Though the actual spoken use of mother tongue in JSB and JKHS may vary, the students in both the schools were using the mother tongue for reading and writing. Even for those students, who speak Nepal Bhasa at home, the school is a place where they gain the literacy skills in their mother

tongue. They sometimes published their poems, stories and essays in local newspapers and magazines. Nonetheless, the practices in these schools also indicate the shifting and changing sense of what it means to be a Newar and Tharu and being educated in the mother tongue.

3.3 'I learn English too'

One day I asked Janak Shrestha what his friends thought of him attending a Nepal Bhasa school. He said:

My friends, outside this school, often asked why was I wasting my time there? Is the education there good? Why don't you study in an English-medium school? When they ask that, I often I tell them – I learn English too. They think that we study only Nepal Bhasa here. They think that even Nepali is translated in Newa here. So I tell them even though it is Nepal Bhasa school, we study English here. Other subjects are also similar. I tell them that the only difference is that unlike in your school where English instructions are explained in Nepali, in our school it is explained in Nepal Bhasa... They think that we do not study Nepali or English. They think that we do not know English at all...

During my interaction with other students in JSB, many students shared similar experiences. They assured their friends that they learnt English too. During these conversations with friends, neither Janak nor other students of JSB had to prove their English competence. The very fact of being identified as a Nepal Bhasa school made JSB suspect in this social hierarchy defined by language. In the context where English-medium education is rated highly, the fact that JSB also taught in English was an assurance of good education and acceptance in the youth world. This placed them on an equal footing with other friends who are gaining putatively more useful and prestigious English education. This allowed the students to increase their sociability and the ability to sustain and utilise one's

social network. This also helped the students to demonstrate agency in manipulating their languages differently across settings of school and home.

In Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS), the narratives were slightly different, as I observed in one of the English lessons. The teacher asked Class I students to make a circle. Each student was then asked to choose a letter from English alphabet and introduce as if it was his/her name. The teacher gave an example in Tharu. 'Mein 'A' holu. (I am 'A'). *A se apple* (A for Apple).' Students followed the same pattern. Each student picked one letter from the alphabet, introduced it as his/her name and made a word using the same letter. The teacher gave all the instructions in Tharu. The students made all the sentences in Tharu; except the letter from the alphabet and words they made. The students and teacher talked to each other in Tharu, if they needed to clarify any doubts. Since the students spoke Tharu as their first language, it was used as classroom language to teach 'important' subjects such as English, Nepali, Maths and Science. After the lesson was over, the teacher explained to me that it is important to use their mother tongue to convey the lessons properly: 'The use of mother tongue helps us to teach English better.'

Both JSB and JKHS taught English as a compulsory subject. In addition, JSB also had English conversation lessons and JKHS offered optional English classes to their students from 4th grade onwards. This was guided not only by the school curriculum framework but also the notions of quality education and social mobility associated with English. Schools, through their medium of instruction, are implicated in the reproduction and production of advantage in society.

Schools that offer access to a high-status language are seen as offering better life chances for those who can take that language. Burnett's (2012) study of different schools in Kathmandu has also highlighted the perceived role of English for greater chance of success. English-medium instruction, usually offered by private schools, is fast emerging as a key dimension of 'the selling of dreams' (Caddell, 2006). Bhatta and Budakothi (2013), in their study on privatisation of education in Nepal, concur that use of English in the schools is one of the important factors in their popularity. English proficiency is simultaneously seen as 'the key to a better future, an index of social capital, and a ticket out of Nepal' (Liechty, 2003: 213). This provided the youth with a symbolic space for negotiating new social identities and for imagining a future that to be pursued in various ways.

'English' also appeared as an important part of school nomenclature in 'Newa Locality, Newa Language' Campaign' (*Newa Thay, Newa Bhay Abhiyan*). The member school used the word 'English' in their names - 'Modern Newa English School', 'Thechwo Newa English School. (See Chapter Four for a picture of school's publicity flyers). Parents also felt reassured that these schools taught English and therefore their 'quality of education' was comparable to other schools in the area. The importance of English is also being reiterated in the school's policies. The education ministry was planning to introduce English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. Both schools pursued mother-tongue education along with English. In one my conversations with the head teacher of JSB, I mentioned an American student who might want to volunteer in the school. The head teacher promptly answered that our students could learn English from her and in return, she could learn Nepal Bhasa from them. This

ability to trade languages to gain one that is more valued at that point, also indicates the conceptual shift in value of Nepal Bhasa in these places. As discussed in Chapter Two, the ethnic movements in Nepal see English as a neutral language; therefore, ideologically acceptable.

Those who support education in English stress that it was never the native language of an oppressive government, colonial or domestic; it is therefore a comparatively neutral language in the national political debate. It has a long history as the language of Western education and it remains important for the development of science, technology, and modernisation in Nepal. English is closely tied to the identity of a modern, educated, international citizen (Eagle, 2008:202)

In JSB, the school thus portrayed an ideal student as the one who claims authority in both mother tongue and Nepali, and English as far as possible. In one of my many conversations with Janak Shrestha, he said:

Nepal Bhasa school has its own importance... it is to promote our own language. Especially now, when less and less number of people are speaking it at home... schools like ours are needed to continue to use Nepal Bhasa. I am not saying that we have to depend only on Nepal Bhasa. We can have Nepal Bhasa and English.

He further clarified:

We have to take three languages together. Each one has its own importance. If we hold on to one language and leave the other, it will affect the other language negatively. If we learn Nepal Bhasa and do not learn English, we will not be able to compete well. English is required everywhere now. Nepal Bhasa is our own language so we must learn it. All three languages have to be taken together. It is even better if we are able to learn more than three languages.

Sunita Shrestha expressed a similar sentiment:

It really is dependant on people's perception. Even though in this school teaches in Nepal Bhasa, it does not avoid Nepali and English. These languages are not ignored here. The school has Nepal Bhasa, but it also has Nepali and English. Knowledge can be gained from in different ways. In this school, English grammar classes are good. Students are also doing well. If we compare this school with government school, all three languages are good here. In the government school, Nepali is strong but English is weak. They don't do Nepal Bhasa at all. It is not like that in our school.

I did not get into in-depth inquiry into English language teaching in these schools. However, it was clear in most of my class observation that there was a lot of room for improvement. The wall painting in Class II in JKHS had wrong spellings of the days of the week and some months e.g. 'Thusday', 'Teusday', 'August', and 'Novmber'. Children were rote-learning these spelling. Some children pointed out the mistake and learnt it from the book. But the fact that it was written on the school wall, made it more accessible for most students and they continued to use the incorrect spelling.

Authors like Phyak (2011) and Giri (2010) have cautioned against this haphazard use of English in schooling. They argue that effective learning and teaching of English needs to be done 'at the right time, by the right people and for the right purpose' (Phyak, 2011:13). Nonetheless, Caddell (2006:213) notes, the 'use of English, even of a very poor level, is considered to connect students to a wider international project, offering a greater potential for mobility'. Acquisition of English skills was one of the possible ways to a 'world of promises and new opportunities' (Valentin, 2011:110). This linguistic capital was thus seen both the medium and outcome of better life chances mediated through school.

3.4 Higher education

As more students graduated from school, their life trajectory after school became a very important reference point to measure the quality of education. As the

students of JSB, Sunita Shrestha⁶⁹ and Janak Shrestha, their admission into good reputed colleges and in sought-after courses like Biology and Chartered Accountant was an important measure of the success of the school. Though Janak Shrestha's friends in the college, and he himself, doubted his educational abilities, given his background in mother-tongue school, he was able to prove himself through good results and his further education. Many students of JSB had gone on to study subjects like Nursing, Lab Technician and Science; some of them were doing Management and Commerce. At the time of my fieldwork, there were at least 6 ex-students teaching various subjects, including Nepal Bhasa, in JSB. In JKHS, many students studied Education and Management in the nearby College. Some students also went to Kathmandu for higher education. Many of the current studied in JKHS and some had done their higher education in linguistics, specialising in Tharu language. The range of higher education and career options demonstrated by previous students of the school demonstrated the success of school in giving good education.

Higher education thus played an important role in shaping students aspirations. Santosh Tharu, from JKHS, shared an aspiration for higher education as most of his counterparts:

There is Buddhabhumi Campus nearby. But I want to go to Butwal or Kathmandu for higher education. I want to get a good education. I do not speak only Tharu as my parents do. I speak Nepali and can read and write in English. I will learn to speak English well. I want to study Management.

⁶⁹ Sunita Shrestha passed SLC with distinction in 2011. She is now doing her BSc. In her third year, she is planning to take Zoology. After the completion of her studies, she plans to apply for jobs to teach science in colleges.

As observed in other studies of formal education in Nepal, schooling was seen as a means to reach higher education goal and associated with future opportunities it promises (Carney and Madsen 2009; Valentin, 2011). As increasing number of students were able to make the transition to higher education, the mother tongue education offered by the schools is coming to be seen as acceptable formal education through which students could aspire to future opportunities.

Higher education also served as a testimony to the success of the schools. Modern Newa English School took pride in the fact that many of its students went on to reputed private schools after completing pre-primary level in their school. The school maintained detailed documentation of all the students, including their exam performance and the name of the school that they joined. This record demonstrated the 'quality education' provided by the school. The principal of the school maintains that this has been the main reason why every year they have application from more students than they can take. This focus on quality education has helped school to unlink the association of mother-tongue education with low-quality education. Newa Locality, Newa Language Campaign (*Newa Thay, Newa Bhay Abhiyan*) now claims to have extended Nepal Bhasa as a subject to 100 schools in Kathmandu.⁷⁰ One recent report claims that mother tongue is being taught in elite private schools such as Rato Bangla School, GEMS, and Malpi International in Kathmandu (Nepal Mandal, 2013).

This was well taken by parents and students. Many parents chose these schools because have had their relatives in this school who scored very high marks in

⁷⁰ Personal communication with the Principal of Modern Newa English School

exams and are now studying in good courses. According to Saurav Maharjan's (Class II, JSB) mother, she sent her children here because the education is good.

'My sister-in-law sends her two children in this school. They are both doing very well. She is now studying Nursing. Education is good here (*parhai ba la*). Some people say that this is *Newa Bhay* School and education is not very good. No. Not in my experience. I think all the schools in this locality are similar. Earlier, I sent my children to some other school, but their level was still the same. The education there was not much different than what they get here. Here they learn Nepal Bhasa, but the books for other subjects are exactly the same. So I do not think that there is much difference.'

Though not all the students from the schools chose higher education after the completion of school, the range of higher education trajectories of most of the students provided a sufficient basis to shape the local perception of these schools as good schools.

4. Quality and equality in languages

The practices in both the schools, JSB and JKHS, demonstrated a very complex negotiation of quality and equality in education. The pressing issue that the school and the students faced was to minimise the binary of smart students vs. dull students and ignorant vs. educated on the basis of languages they chose in education. More often than not, these negotiations illustrate moments of tension, usually unresolved, on hierarchical positioning of different languages and its speakers. The schools and students worked deliberately to counter the perception that mother tongue is low quality by demonstrating high achievement. The school cautiously validated the success and relevance of the mother-tongue education in relation to the well-established quality indicators of national

education. This, in turn, led the schools like JSB and JKHS to maintain a fine balance between their two roles simultaneously: firstly to be uniquely able to respond to distinct minority groups and secondly to prepare students to become the 'knowledgeable' person that school education promises.

The ambivalence over the nature of what constitutes quality reflects processes of social construction of dominant and subordinated languages and their speakers. Students unequivocally saw English and Nepali as languages of power due to their perceived role in providing access to opportunities. Though this hierarchy of languages has been increasingly questioned in contemporary Nepal, these hierarchies still played important role in the lives of the students. Nepali and English were not only languages but also 'knowledge' in itself; it presented an identity of educated person. It is this social meaning of language, rather than as a simple communicative code, that determine its position in educational institutions. Bandana Shakya, one of the students in Class VII explained:

Some people say that this school is not good. But I think don't think so. People think so because this school is Nepal Bhasa school. Non-Newars will never like this school, but even Newars are going to other schools. I don't like it when people say that I am not going to a good school; I am learning the same subjects like other schools and our school gets good marks in SLC. It is because of this I think some people do not like using Nepal Bhasa in public. I don't do that. Why should I?

Teachers faced similar challenges. According to Bhola Ram Chaudhury,

There is still a lot of confusion regarding Tharu education. Some people ask: This is the 21st century, why are we teaching Tharu? Once people realise that we are also teaching Science, Maths and English, it gets easier.

The use of particular language or absence of it in the public space then demonstrates a close link between use of language and power. Some linguistic codes carry more authority than the others. These linguistic practices have

different meanings and different effects in a given institutional and cultural context. Bourdieu (1977) remarks about this linguistic domination: by authorising some linguistic practices and not others, the institution appears to demonstrate the inferiority of those who use unauthorised forms. The language speakers' choice to use or not use particular languages was also indicative of struggle to produce one's own separate socially significant discourse. As Bourdieu argues, linguistic forms have no power in themselves, they only reflect the power of the group that they index.

In these contexts, these schools were a 'site of mediation' where different linguistic codes sought to find space. As presented in various student narratives discussed in this chapter, people negotiate the dynamics of identity formation underlying different forms of language embedded within the given social particularities (Pavelenko and Blackledge, 2004). In this process, different individuals engage in making claims to different identities and positions (Giampapa, 2004:200) in an attempt to shift the structures of power in the process. The process of, one, improving the mother tongue teaching and, two, linking with the external measures of quality had important functions not just within the school, but also to people outside the school and students own self-perceptions. The issue of language and education, in these schools, was seen a product of situated social action, where through appropriation of quality indicators, they were able to shift identities and recombine them to meet new circumstances. Through this process, the school attempted to shift the 'language ideology' that rendered mother tongue as potentially low quality education. Though these changes do not point towards unanimous acceptance of mother-

tongue education as good education, it mitigated some of the pressing doubts against it.

The narratives of the students also illustrate the constant tension between affirming the existing hierarchies and asserting autonomy as a member of a distinct linguistic community. The student narratives, thus, evidence a continuous process of self-making ridden with tensions that these simultaneous identifications bring to the fore (as discussed in Chapter Four). This seemingly stands in tension with their attempt to validate their use of the mother tongue. Students such as Janak Shrestha, Sunita Shrestha and Santosh Tharu do not want to be limited to education only in Nepal Bhasa or Tharu. They want to gain education in a way that they can have access to higher education and employment prospects of their choice. However, these students are also unlike their parents who faced constraints in education or language ability. And they are also unlike their counterparts in other schools, who are rapidly shifting to Nepali as the language of everyday communication and education.

Nevertheless, these tensions also illustrate their attempts to negotiate multiple sources of quality and forge multiple identifications, not necessarily in lieu of the each other but simultaneously. While parents, teachers and students may or may not agree on a specific indicator of quality education, they agree on the need for the quality education to be provided by the school. Given the socio-historic context where lack of competence in the national language was considered synonymous with deficiency, and responded through subtractive linguistic policy and practice, the dynamics in these schools broaden our understanding of

language and education through the negotiation of multiple sources of quality and attempts to reposition mother-tongue education as 'quality education'.

5. Conclusion

Quality of education, as discussed in this chapter, is a negotiated concept. In both the schools, the use of the mother tongue in education drew complex, and often contradictory responses. On the one hand mother tongue education was seen as a resource to enhance quality in education and, on the other hand as an obstacle that might hinder quality in education. Given this complex position of mother tongues in education, students, teachers and the school administrators navigated multiple sources of quality in education. For students, gaining good marks in SLC and being able to learn English in school was important. While the schools actively utilised these external indicators to make mother-tongue education more desirable, they were gradually able to unlink the inherent association of mother-tongue education with low quality education. This also helped the schools to maintain quality in mother tongue as a subject and through mother tongue for other subjects in the curriculum simultaneously; thereby not obstructing the aspiration for social mobility promised by school education.

It is not my intention here to engage with the complex debates over the definition of quality in education. I am aware of the limitations of using proxies such as exam results, English language and transition to higher education to indicate quality in education. What I have attempted to do is to highlight the collective meanings construed around the *notion* of quality of education and how this plays

an important role in the way mother-tongue education is understood. The idea of mother-tongue education is accepted, at the most instrumental level, via the endorsement of indicators of quality education. The use and appropriation of various measures of quality, as discussed here, illustrate various moments of tension between, on the one hand, the desired equality of different languages and, on the other, the shared notion of quality of education imparted through these languages.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Ethnicity, Education, and Employment

1. Introduction

In the previous chapters in this thesis, I have presented the dynamics of mother-tongue education in public spaces, in school textbooks, and in negotiations over educational quality. The main focus, in the previous chapters, has mainly been on the analysis of redistribution of discursive resources, and the ideological dimension of language education. This chapter explores the relationship of language education with the employment market. Scholars have argued that language and literacy is not only ideological in nature and linked with institutional structures, it also has direct material consequences (Luke, 2004). It is therefore important to assess the ways in the subfield of mother-tongue education poses as an 'arena of struggle' in order to shape social relations and access to material resources. The key question posed in this chapter is: Do people use language as convertible capital in the employment market and if so, how?

Bourdieu (1991: 66) argues that 'linguistic exchange is also an economic exchange, which is established within a particular symbolic relation power between producer, endowed with a certain symbolic capital, and a consumer, capable of procuring a certain symbolic profit'. Drawing on this idea of linguistic marketplace, various scholars have explored the ways in which language is seen to have a convertible exchange value as forms of capital (Cameron, 2000, Heller 2010). These authors argue that in order to understand the ways in which language interacts with the labour market, we also need to understand whether

the linguistic practices are performed as labour or are used as social communication. When we distinguish these two functions of language, we are able to discern the contestation and negotiation (LaDousa, 2005, Haeri, 1997; Foley, 1990; Woolard, 1985) in the linguistic market, thus indicating the possibility of multiple language markets: minority language markets and the dominant language markets. This chapter draws on these insights along with Bourdieu's elaboration of the linguistic marketplace to discuss the ways in which linguistic value is negotiated in JSB and JKHS.

In this chapter, I will draw on the life stories of four young people, who are or have been students of JSB and JKHS. Through the analysis of these life stories, I aim to place the ethnographic accounts of language use against the broader economies of language. Through their life stories, this chapter points towards the multiple language markets (LaDousa, 2005) where different languages hold different value, and highlight the complex ways in which students negotiate the role of various languages in their lives.

2. Linguistic capital and the market

In JSB and JKHS, the issue of employment was often one of the most common issues of discussion. The teachers often argued, debated, disagreed on one of the very common questions: What is the need of learning mother tongue if it does not help in getting employment? In the primary school level, one of the strong justifications for the use of mother tongue continues to remain the pedagogical importance of using first-language-first for quality education. However, as the

students moved to higher grades and as they became more fluent in Nepali, both the schools were presented with visible tensions between different languages, primarily due to their respective roles in the employment market. This was especially evident in the context of JSB. Since JSB used Nepal Bhasa in secondary level, the significance of Nepal Bhasa in facilitating student pathways employment market remained a difficult question.

3. Language, new capital and the emerging new market

One day as I entered the classroom the air in the staffroom was particularly tense. The daughter of one of the teachers, who studied was in Class IX in JSB, had received a low grade in her termly test results. The mother was particularly concerned about her daughter's future, her SLC results and her employment prospects. She often wondered if she should have enrolled her in a different school before she started her high school. This topic often escalated into very heated discussion between teachers with young children on one side and Nepal Bhasa teachers on the other. There were visible tensions, even amongst the teachers as they negotiated their roles as both parents and teachers. After a long discussion, one of the Nepal Bhasa teachers exclaimed in frustration:

See what has happened to Nepal Bhasa! People are too concerned about employment. We cannot let employment dictate our language use. We have to speak our mother tongue not because we want good job, but because it is our language. If we are proud of it and use it more, we can always create a new market for it. Look at Namrata Pandey. She is an example.⁷¹

⁷¹ Nepal Bhasa Teacher, staffroom conversation, 3 Dec 2013.

This reference to creation of new market for Nepal Bhasa, while it did not convince everyone, did provide the much needed hope for the future. The emerging employment opportunities in minority languages in places such as FM radio stations, language teaching, NGOs etc. were seen as small but important arenas where this linguistic capital was commercially viable economic capital. It also re-imagined the competence in mother tongue as distinctive employable skills in these new markets.

3.1 Working in the new market: Namrata Pandey

When I met Namrata Pandey for the first time, she was with her notebook and a pen talking to teachers in JSB. It was one of the busiest days in the school. The school was celebrating Newa New Year's day and welcoming the Bhintuna Car Rally visitors (discussed in Chapter Four). There were many teachers and students from other Nepal Bhasa schools in the JSB playground that day. They would be visiting around 10 different schools teaching Nepal Bhasa in the Kathmandu Valley. 40 schools participated in a car rally this year for the first time, and were hoping to continue this as an annual event to build solidarity and partnership between different Nepal Bhasa schools. I was talking to a group of the teachers when Namrata Pandey came to one of the teachers to ask if the teacher was free for a short interview.

She was quite fluent in Nepal Bhasa. She also took particular care to speak Nepal Bhasa without mixing any Nepali or English word. Namrata Pandey works in FM radio station, *Radio Upatyaka* 87.6. She produces and runs a weekly programme called *Macha Jyajhwah* (Children's Programme) that is presented in

Nepal Bhasa. As a person who runs Nepal Bhasa programme in the radio, she had worked hard to craft a distinct and 'pure' language competence that could be showcased in emerging new public sphere in Nepal. Since 1990 constitution, there was small but gradual opening up of spaces in the Nepali public sphere for different ethnic languages spoken in Nepal. Namrata worked in one of the several FM radios that had opened up during this period. Since the car rally was one of the new programmes that the Nepal Bhasa schools started this year, she wanted to cover the programme for her FM. She was very busy that day; interviewing the participants of the car rally, taking notes to prepare her script for the programme and talking to the students.

Namrata Pandey's story is an example of small but significant change that is taking place in the employment landscape. Onta (2006), reviewing the Adivasi Janjati Movement in Nepal, notes that there has been a growth of janajati language programs in FM radio. In the Kathmandu Valley, this growth has taken place in Newari/Nepal Bhasa and Tamang and in other parts of Nepal, this has happened in other Janjati languages. Onta (2011), quoting Basanta Maharjan (2002), highlights that Nepal Bhasa programs in FM radios have managed to generate interest in their language amongst Newars. Maharjan observes that these programmes have provided spaces for Newar music and songs, where the younger generation has participated much more than the literary activities promoted by the language activists. This new trends in minority language broadcasting has created a much larger public sphere for minority language activities than the one that existed earlier. This is quite in contrast with 1965

when Radio Nepal stopped broadcasting programmes in languages such as Newari and Hindi.

Many teachers in the school had mentioned Namrata's name to me before I finally met her that day. Clearly, school and the teachers were very proud of her and often showcased her as an example of school's success. What made Namrata Pandey so special was also the fact that Nepal Bhasa is not her mother tongue. She is from a Nepali-speaking community, i.e. is not even a Newar, and learnt Nepal Bhasa after she came to school. Teachers told me that she started in this school in pre-primary level usually known as UKG (upper kindergarten attended by 3-5 year olds) and studied here till Class X. She recently gave her SLC examination last year and achieved first division. I could not speak to her that day, as she was quite busy. She gave me her mobile number, so that I could get in touch with her. A few days later, we arranged for an informal chat in the school and she told me about her life in JSB. She clearly spoke the language very fluently, much better than I did. 'I started in UKG. I was quite young, so I don't really remember. But it must have been difficult. I definitely could not talk like now,' she told me as we started talking about her early years in JSB. She was studying in a different school, when her mother heard about this school from her friend. Her mother's friend told her that this school was good and the fee was less than Green Valley School, the school that she was attending then. So her mother enrolled Namrata in JSB. Since Namrata began to do well in this school, they did not want to change schools. After 2-3 years, when the teachers saw that she was doing well, she was offered a scholarship (called 'sponsorship') in this school. And they decided to continue with JSB.

I started working in FM radio by *chance*,' she told me. 'I got connected with FM because of Bigyan Sir. When I was studying in Class X. Sir came to this school for Radio Upatyaka. There is a programme at 4 pm. That was Bigyan Sir's programme. He had come here to take interviews with children in this school. He was very impressed with the way I spoke in his interview. So after the interview, he asked me if I would be interested in working in his FM. I was very excited when he asked me. I wanted to learn new things so I went for 2 months' training. Bigyan Sir made all the arrangements. In the training, I learnt about the script, how to start, how to end, and what to put in the middle. Santosh dai, Chahana ma'am, Deepak dai, all of them helped me. I had no idea about FM programmes. It was a lot of work but I learnt a lot.

After receiving the intensive training, she started her own programme, *Macha Jyajhwah* (Children's Programme).

My programme is broadcasted four times a month. Each programme is divided into three segments. The first segment is *Balgatibidi* ['children's news'], I present a short report on various activities involving children. For the second segment, I read materials from books, children's articles, etc. The final segment is on general knowledge. For this section, I take information from newspapers like the *Sandhya Times*. And in the last programme of the month, I invite children from the schools and talk to them on various issues. This month it's the day after tomorrow.

Namrata learnt Nepal Bhasa in JSB. She does not speak Nepal Bhasa at home. 'My sister knows a bit', she told me. 'She studied in this school till primary level. My two sisters are in different schools now, so they do not speak Nepal Bhasa well any more. My parents also understand a little but they do not talk in Nepal Bhasa.' In JSB, she took Nepal Bhasa as an optional subject in SLC. She explained, 'I find maths very difficult; therefore, did not want to take Optional Maths (Trigonometry). We could choose between Optional Maths and Nepal Bhasa. And I chose Nepal Bhasa.' While Namrata deliberately opted for Nepal Bhasa, this is often not the case with many students in JSB. In 2013, when I was doing my research fieldwork, there were eight students in Class IX and nine students in Class X who had opted for Nepal Bhasa. None of the students opted for Nepal

Bhasa as their specialisation for higher education in the colleges. I asked one of the past students to draw up a list of subjects that her classmates were studying after their SLC. The list had 13 students studying BBS (Bachelor in Business Studies), 1 studying CA (Chartered Accountancy), 1 studying Engineering, 1 studying Engineering, 1 studying Humanities, and 2 had joined their family business. Namrata, however, took her Nepal Bhasa lessons very seriously. While in this school, Namrata also participated in activities outside the school. When I asked her about her extra-curricular activities, she answered:

I did not write for the papers but I used to go for competitions. I have also won a lot of books. I also have certificates. These days I have been focusing on my studies so I have not had much time for the writing work. But earlier, I used to write for the competitions.

Her competence in Nepal Bhasa was quite evident when I was conducting an interview with her. I felt quite uncomfortable while speaking to her, as her version of Nepal Bhasa was more 'pure' than mine. I often mixed English and Nepal words in my Nepal Bhasa and I did not always use correct grammar. She however spoke very clearly with very carefully crafted diction, pace and clarity of every sound. She particularly took care not to mix languages, as often was the case with me and amongst the students in JSB. During my conversation with her, she did not use the words such as *Kitab* (Nepali word for book), 'class' (English word used to indicate the cohort in school), *madat* (Nepali word for help), or *mahina* (Nepali word for month), as typically used in the everyday Nepal Bhasa conversation. Instead she always said *safu* (Nepal Bhasa word for book), *tangi* (Nepal Bhasa word for cohort), *gwahali* (Nepal Bhasa word for help), and *la* (Nepal Bhasa word for month). The Nepal Bhasa that she used was thus not the informal version of the language that the students used in the playground. It was

the 'correct' version of the language that the Nepal Bhasa teachers taught in the classroom. In the Nepal Bhasa market, where she worked through her FM programme, this version of language gave her a competitive edge. Through the use of this distinctive language, she not only gained employment in this market but also helped in continuously maintaining it while actively engaging with it. She is aware that the fact that she is not Newar and speaks Nepal Bhasa places her in a unique position.

In today's day and age where even Newa children do not speak in Newa language, I could speak it. So this was taken up very well by the FM radio. Bigyan sir thought that I had a unique 'talent.' And that is why he gave me this opportunity. I am not sure I will continue working in FM for a long time, but I am enjoying this at the moment.

I asked her if she would have been equally successful if she were from Newar community. She answered:

It would depend on how well I spoke the language. Bigyan sir and other would have definitely helped. When I started my training, we were a group of four girls. But they did not continue because of various reasons. The training was tough. We had to work on our language. We also had to learn how to produce a FM programme.

For Namrata, her Nepal Bhasa competence was a 'talent' that was nurtured by ethnic language FM sector. She clearly put in a lot of time and effort in learning the craft of Nepal Bhasa and FM radio. During training, they worked together to construct the correct version on Nepal Bhasa that was considered more 'authentic' as it was free of other languages. This was carefully crafted monolingual zone for Nepal Bhasa that was designed to counter the effects of overall forces of Nepali monolingualism. The space created by FM radio was similar to the one created inside the Nepal Bhasa classrooms in JSB. These were minority language monolingual zones that were meant to produce multilingual

students. This construction of official monolingualism did not exist outside these time and spaces. Nonetheless, it allowed for the production of standardised version of minority language that was distinctively separate entity from the dominant language; 'non-reciprocal bilingualism.' It was through this crafting of distinct Nepal Bhasa that Namrata could use it as an employable skill.

Namrata Pandey is a model student, both for JSB and Nepal Bhasa movement. In the context where younger generation did not speak Nepal Bhasa, Namrata spoke fluent Nepal Bhasa even when she did not belong to a Newar community and held a respectable employment based on her linguistic competence. Her story served as a perfect example to counter the discourse that highlighted the difficulty in speaking Nepal Bhasa: as it is assumed to be linguistically complex, required too much effort, and is likely to 'mark' the Nepali language with its accent. She served as a great spokesperson for the promotion of mother tongue. In my conversation with her she mentioned, 'we should save languages and culture of our country. We should not let the modern life take away our culture.' She also saw languages as a way to broaden your prospects. 'In the 21st century, English is equally important. I want to learn Japanese too. We must learn as many languages as possible,' she told me as we ended our conversation.

3.2 Speaking different languages: Ram Bahadur Yadav

In JKHS, by contrast to the official position in JSB, the boundaries between different languages were quite fuzzy. The official language of communication in JKHS is Nepali, unlike JSB where the official language is Nepal Bhasa. Moreover, Tharu was used only in the primary level. Even in the official discourse, the use

of mother tongue was to gradually ease the student into national language. In this context, mother tongue was not expected to link the students to the employment market. Even when many of the teachers evidently gained and retained their employment in JSB due to their competence in Tharu language, as we will see in the following section, the competence in Nepali and English were viewed as a way out of the village and into more respectable middle-class employment.

One day I accompanied Ram Bahadur Yadav, a teacher and MLE coordinator in JKHS, in his visit to one of the nearby feeder school. He speaks Awadhi as his mother tongue and speaks good Tharu as he grew up in the Tharu locality. On the way he briefed me on the MLE programme in the area. During our conversation, I asked him about his thoughts on the value of the mother tongue in the employment market. Ram Bahadur played a very important role in MLE programme in JKHS. He acted as a liason between UMN, JKHS, five feeder schools, parents and school management committee. He had regular meeting with these groups, ensured that all the activities were conducted as planned, and wrote regular progress reports both for the school and UMN. In one such meetings that I attended, he brought teachers, governing body members, parents, and UMN representative for a quarterly review of MLE programmes in JKHS. To me, as an outsider, it appeared that his multilingual skill was critical in acquiring this job. However, he replied:

the role of mother-tongue education is not for employment. It is difficult to say if the competence in your mother tongue will lead you to better employment. But since mother tongue makes it easy to understand the classroom instructions, it could have an indirect effect on the employment.

Despite his job as MLE coordinator, Ram Bahadur did not see competence in minority language as an employable skill. Ram Bahadur's father Chunni Yadav, a senior maths teacher in JKHS, was one of the main persons who wrote the Awadhi version of textbooks in JKHS. He also told me that his mother drew some of the illustrations for the textbook. They were all engaged with the MLE sector in various ways and gained monetary compensation for their skills, though on a very small scale. However, none of them saw mother-tongue competence as an employable skill. Given that the salaried jobs, such as the one Ram Bahadur was engaged in, require a working knowledge of Nepali and/or English, in JKHS, despite the 'successful' implementation of MLE, languages such as Tharu and Awadhi were not seen as languages that could possibly enhance employment prospects.

Ram Bahadur's response to the link of language with employment was quite different from what Bhola Ram Chaudhary, the chief editor of the mother-tongue books shared with me earlier. In response to my question, he replied, 'As you can see, it has definitely helped me. I have just completed my MA thesis on adjectives in Tharu and English Languages. It has come very handy in my work in the textbooks.' He added:

'In the past, I had been involved in publishing newspapers in Tharu language. But we looked at it as a contribution to the development of our community. We put money out of our pocket to meet the cost of the paper. Now we have different groups of people interested in these issues, including the government of Nepal.'

While textbook writing is definitely not a lucrative employment opportunity, it is certainly indicative of the gradual change that is underway in Nepal. This had

opened up new employment markets for the multilingual speakers like Bhola Ram Chaudhary.

With the opening up of spaces for mother-tongue education, many organisations such as UMN have been working on developing MLE programmes in state schools. Though this programme is centrally coordinated, as discussed in the Chapter Five, the idea of ‘local’ continues to remain crucial in the legitimacy of these programmes. Most of the activities are thus locally designed and conducted by locally hired personnel. Ram Bahadur Yadav and Bhola Ram Chaudhary are therefore an important part of this minority language sector that is slowly emerging. They are responsible for overseeing the MLE activities in JKHS and maintaining the linkage between school and the UMN. Ram Bahadur Yadav and Bhola Ram Chaudhary are multilingual and educated, that makes them uniquely suited for the demands of this kind of work. Ram Bahadur Yadav speaks Awadhi as his mother tongue, and speaks good Tharu. This helps him to work very closely with the school and the local population and his skill in Nepali helps him in communication with people outside Kathmandu. His multilingual skills positioned him as a bridge between various groups. Other teachers like Rama Khanal, introduced in the Chapter Four, learnt Tharu along the way to gain the ‘capital’ required to work in the setting where the knowledge of Tharu was essential. As illustrated in previous chapters, in order to work in the Tharu locality, she learnt the language during her time there.

Despite these discernable links to the employment market, Ram Bahadur’s hesitation to see Awadhi and Tharu as employable skill is quite justified. Ram

Bahadur's role, as an MLE coordinator, is part time and contractual. He also works as a part-time teacher in JKHS and teaches Social Studies in 8, 9 and 10 grades. He is also one of the very few people in the village who is working on the official use of mother tongue. He said:

When the UMN programme started, we were a bit confused about how we could use three languages in teaching in school. When I studied in this school, the school did not have MLE. The official language of instruction was Nepali. Gradually we learnt Nepali as we completed school. Now we are more comfortable in Nepali, especially in writing. Even when we speak in Awadhi and Tharu, I sometimes use Nepali words. As we are using this language more in formal way now, this should gradually improve.

His ambiguous response towards the role of mother tongue in employment had two reasons. Firstly, Nepali is the official language of communication in JKHS. And secondly, Tharu and Awadhi are seen as a way to gradually learn better Nepali. The deliberate separation of mother tongue from Nepali by creating a distinct monolingual zone was not as visible in JKHS, as it was in JSB. As discussed in previous chapters, primary level classrooms increasingly used mother tongue as official medium of instruction, it was rarely used as exclusive language. Besides, the presence of Nepali-speaking students (*pahadi mul*) students in the classroom made the situation more complex. One of the main challenges for the schools like JKHS was to craft an image of 'inclusive' school where multiple languages could be used simultaneously. In reality, this meant that Nepali continued to play a very important role inside and outside classrooms.

For Ram Bahadur Yadav, therefore, competence in Tharu and Awadhi could lead to employment only if you were also competent in Nepali. His story tells us the

varied ways in which minority language speakers engage with various language resources available to them. The precarity of this new emerging employment market raises a lot of uncertainty for the younger generation like Ram Bahadur. His narrative shows the contradictory ways in which the role of mother tongue is articulated in the employment market. The emerging employment opportunities such as FM radio stations, language teaching, music industry and textbook writing etc. were seen as small but important arenas where these linguistic 'cultural capital' were commercially viable 'economic capital'. However, they are also not willing to be limited within these languages but have access to wider possibilities. The social meaning of linguistic capital was inevitably circumscribed by the material consequences and the challenges that lie therein.

4. Language, class, and the mainstream career

Sociolinguistic research has repeatedly drawn our attention to the correlations between language and perceptions of class. An 'educated person' is expected to engage in particular kinds of employment: a salaried job that is associated with middle- or upper-class social status. Since an employment of this nature required engagement with the mainstream market, competence in dominant language is considered an essential skill, as Ram Bahadur Yadav's case elucidated in the previous section. The possible alienation of the students from the mainstream market usually raised suspicion around the usefulness of mother-tongue education. As one of the senior officer in the Ministry of Education mentioned in his interview, 'we need to situate the language education in context of community. The benefit of mother tongue is not visible. It does not enhance the

‘capability’ of the students in the market. There is no economic ‘convertibility’.⁷² He is one of the very few bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education who had been actively supporting MLE programmes. And yet he pointed quite explicitly to the issue of employment as one of main barriers to MLE in schools.

In a historical context, where minority languages were not a part of formal institutions, the student narratives highlight how language practices have developed in relation to particular social and cultural ideologies, and remained coupled with employment market. These material dimensions of language thus tend to shape the overall perceptions of language and class. Fraser-Gupta (1997:496) claims that ‘where patterns of language use are linked to social class, mother-tongue education could further diminish access to power structures by underprivileged groups.’ While the emerging new markets were gradually shaping the aspiration of the students, not all the students wanted to choose a career making use of their mother tongue. Many students saw mainstream careers, such as chartered accountants, banking jobs, nurses and lab technicians as their employment choices.

4.1 Overcoming the language barrier: Indu Newa

Indu Newa was teaching Science in Class V when I met her for the first time. She worked as a part-time teacher to cover for one of the senior teachers, Shova Manandhar, who had been unwell for a while. She explained, ‘I teach Nepal Bhasa classes mainly for Classes VI, VII and IX. But I also teach in IV and V when the teacher is absent.’ She had been teaching for 6 months when I met her. When

⁷² Secretary, Ministry of Education, Interview, 3 Nov 2013.

I asked her if she felt comfortable teaching Nepal Bhasa, she answered, 'I took Nepal Bhasa in my SLC. I got first division in my exam, 68 per cent. So I know the school curriculum well'. She was one of the few students who took Nepal Bhasa in her SLC in her cohort. As we progressed in our conversation, I was increasingly becoming aware of my own limited competence in Nepal Bhasa contrasted with her fluent and confident command over the language.

Indu was teaching Nepal Bhasa script to Class V students that day. She asked the class to take out their notebooks and write three words each using the 'combined consonant' – *Nhya*, *Khya*, and *Dhya*. After a few minutes for students to write on their notebooks, she asked two students to write their words on the blackboard. The students wrote the words. She then asked the class to comment if it was correct or not. They then identified 'correct' way of writing, which Indu wrote on the board. Clearly, Indu was proficient in written form of Nepal Bhasa, both in *lipi* (script) and grammar. She guided students very well throughout her class. Children were very comfortable talking to her as she was perceived to be less 'threatening' than the senior teachers. Her fluency in speaking and competence in writing Nepal Bhasa was quite evident in the way she was teaching in the class.

'I have always spoken Nepal Bhasa at home', she explained, 'It was not difficult for me at all to learn Nepal Bhasa in school. I even took Nepal Bhasa in my SLC.' Indu Newa's family lives in the nearby area. Her parents work in a local grocery shop. The school was just established when she started in JSB. In the initial days, the founding teachers went for several outreach visits to local community (Gellner, 2014). Some of the teachers from JSB had visited Indu's house and told

them about the school. She also received 'half sponsorship', so her parents were not required to pay the full fee. She started in this school at nursery level. Her brother and sister are currently in Class III and VI respectively.

Throughout her class, she spoke in Nepal Bhasa when she was explaining how to write the words. However, she did not refrain from explaining it in Nepali to students when she moved from desk to desk and checked individual students' notebooks. As most of the teachers in JSB, Indu speaks fluent Nepali and Nepal Bhasa. In the classroom teaching, she used various combinations of various languages. During her class, she moved across the 'formal' monolingual Nepal Bhasa space as she was explaining the lesson in front of the class and 'informal' multilingual space as she was moving from desk to desk. This performance of language in her classroom teaching also reflects the ambiguous position that JSB has on the use of different languages. JSB, while very committed to the use of Nepal Bhasa in formal communication, does not prohibit the use of other languages within its premises. This allowed various languages to thrive within its institutional space,

She appeared, to me as a teacher-in-training who might take join the school as a teacher in a few years' time. So I asked her about the future plans. She considered the teaching job that she was doing in JSB, on the basis of her Nepal Bhasa competence, as a transitional job; a job that would keep her busy till she found the job she wanted

'I did not continue Nepal Bhasa in my college', she told me. 'I am currently a first year Bachelor in Business Studies (BBS) student in National College of Computer Studies. I studied management for my 'plus two' (12th grade); I got 68% there as well. I wanted to study engineering

but the fees were very expensive. So I studied Management. My parents and I have now decided that going for 'Banking training' might be a better idea. We have a few training institutes in mind. Once the first-year exam is over, I will go for the training.'

In the context of Nepal, this general uncertainty on the role of mother tongue for employment also emerges in the historical context of Nepal where languages other than Nepali were not recognised by the state. Until 1980s the definition of 'literate' for the census of Nepal was the one who could read and write in Nepali. Knowledge of Nepali was established as an essential criterion to apply for citizenship certificate of Nepal. Moreover, in 1965, the Nepal Public Service Commission derecognised the higher education qualifications in all other languages except Nepali and English. Over the years, languages other than Nepali and English gradually moved away from the mainstream public sphere, as both schools and the mainstream market focused on using only Nepali language in the public sphere.

Indu said: 'The only problem is that I have a Newa accent when I speak in Nepali and my English is not very good. I feel that this might be a problem when I apply for banking jobs.' Though her competence in Nepal Bhasa was very high and much higher than many others in her generation, she did not seem to see it as an advantage. She perceived her 'marked' Nepali as a potential barrier to the employment that she had wanted. For the minority language speakers, this linguistic capital can, in fact, act as a disadvantage in mainstream employment market. Since each language holds an assumption of class positions and symbolic value, the interference of minority language tend to devalue the currency of

dominant language. This is a widespread assumption that is used as justification by members of ethnic group.

Defending her school, she explained, 'JSB is a private school. It is not like government schools where only Nepali language is taught. We learn all three languages. This is a strength of this school.' This portrayal of the school as private school is an interesting discursive move. Especially in the context where JSB is labeled as low-quality education, due to its use of mother tongue, this move allows the students to reposition themselves better than some other schools. Indu's articulation of JSB, however, was not based on mother-tongue teaching but was based on the use of English. Compared to other government schools, which supposedly used only Nepali in their teaching, Indu saw JSB's use of English as allowing it to claim the status of respectable private school. With this articulation of JSB as a better school, Indu also sought to elavate her skills as someone who knew more languages, compared to her counterparts in other schools.

My parents did not want me to work while I was still doing my college education. Since my father knows Shanti ma'am, he allowed me to work in this school. Otherwise he would not have let me work while I was still studying. I am working here to get some work experience while I am still studying. But I do not think that I would like to be a teacher, besides this school does not pay very well.

Her competence and skill in Nepal Bhasa teaching is the school does not come across to her as an economically viable option. Language education, in the school like JSB, is still seen as social service. The teachers in the school are paid minimal salaries, compared to other private schools in and around the area.

The teachers' salaries, during the time of my fieldwork, ranged between Rs. 5000 and 7000. Part-time teachers like Indu Newa were paid between Rs 500-3000 depending upon the number of classes and the level that they teach. 'I hear that there are some school that pay Rs 15,000 – 25,000 for a Nepal Bhasa teacher. But there are very few schools that do so,' she shared her dilemma with me. The employment landscape for minority-language educators has slowly opened up in some private school as well. Some of the private schools like Rato Bangala pay Rs 25,000 to their teachers (conversation with Deepak Tuladhar). But this new market is outside the reach of schools such as JSB. Throughout my various conversations with Indu, she continued her employment in Nepal Bhasa teaching while maintaining ambivalence on the value of her mother tongue competence and seeking employment in other fields.

4.2 Becoming modern: Santosh Tharu

'If you do not know Nepali, you will be *gawar* (an uneducated rural person). People will make a fool out of you,' Santosh Tharu told me in one of our conversations (also referred in Chapter Six). Santosh Tharu studies in Class VII in JKHS. He lives, with his parents and siblings, in the same village that JKHS is located in. 'Tharu is inside me. It will never go. But it is not enough to know only Tharu. If I have to speak to people like you properly, I have to use Nepali. After I complete my SLC, I want go to Kathmandu. There I will learn English as well. I am a Tharu, but a modern Tharu.' Tharu language is Santosh's mother tongue, the language that he uses to speak to his family members and the language that is associated with his social group. As he said, it was inside him. Nepali and English were languages external to his immediate social world. However, his

desire for competence in these languages indicated his aspiration for being 'modern' and aiming for upward social mobility.

As many scholars (Noonan, 1996:5; Liechty, 2003) have noted, young people consider Nepali (and English) as a language needed to 'make their way in the world' and the school was the place to acquire the knowledge on these languages. This idea is only further accentuated by the lack of any employment opportunity based on the Tharu language. Santosh learnt Tharu at home; it was used as the primary means of communication at home and in the village. In school, he hoped to learn more Nepali and get more exposure to English. Though Santosh's access to education was facilitated by Tharu language in the primary level, he did not consider it as central to his employment prospects.

Santosh's interpretation is justifiable because in his village, apart from the MLE schools, there was no other place where Santosh's skill in Tharu could lead him to employment. Though Tharu was the main medium of communication in the village, it was hardly associated with employment. Apart from people like Ram Bahadur and Bhola Ram whose Tharu skills have been remunerated in monetary gains, there were no other visible examples. Moreover, even in the case of Ram Bahadur and Bhola Ram, it was their bilingual skills that had been rewarded. Their success in their employment in MLE programme was not only because of Tharu but also because of Nepali. Tharu language hardly has any visible employment market in the world that he inhabits in the village or the world he wants to inhabit in the city.

As I sat down in the open space in front of his thatched house, his father asked me to put some sense in 'Santosh's head.' He said,

'He needs to concentrate on his studies more than he does. 'If he does not get first division, how will he go to study in Kathmandu? He has been good in his studies, but he needs to work hard. He is our eldest son, we are looking forward to him growing up and taking responsibility of the family. I am only primary-pass, I got stuck in this farm work. There is not much one can do here.'

Santosh and his father's idea of education as a way out of economic hardship reflect the mainstream discourses that shape narratives around education. School is a place to get good education that would prepare them for better employment prospects in the city.

They had been working on his trip to Kathmandu with his family and friends. Santosh told me that he knows friends and cousins who are currently studying in Kathmandu. 'After I complete my SLC I am going to stay with my cousin.' His cousin has assured him that he will get a part-time job as an office assistant. He is therefore confident that he will be able to earn enough to live in the city. 'When I am in Kathmandu, I will learn English as well. With a degree and English language, I should be able to get good jobs in Kathmandu.' As a first-generation multilingual member of his family, he perceives language as an opportunity for better prospects for his family. In his idea of progress, the movement in language i.e. from Tharu to English is as important as the movement in space i.e. from his village to city. Here, limiting himself in Tharu was inevitable interpreted as restricting his social and spatial mobility.

This creation of an apparently naturalised link between language and its social value, referred as language ideology (Silverstein, 1979; Gal and Irvine, 1995), is a judgement based on the existing social hierarchy. Santosh's eagerness in mastering Nepali and learning English reflects the language hierarchy in contemporary Nepal. He mentioned, 'when I speak Nepali, the Tharu in me comes out.' My conversation with Santosh was in Nepali and he was fluent in it. I asked him to explain what he meant by it. He said, 'When we speak Nepali in our village, it is not like the Nepali that you speak. We say *Garho bhai halchha* instead of *Garho hunchha* ((It) is difficult). This shows that we are not well educated. That is why I want to go to Kathmandu and learn there.' During our conversation, he had already made a social judgment based on our versions of Nepali. For him, his language could give away his rural background as my Nepali revealed my urban background; thus his need for unmarked Nepali.

The preference for language, in Santosh and his father's case, was not only about linguistic skills for the purpose of communication. In the village, Tharu had a lot of currency in terms of gaining confidence in local bargains and other monetary exchange. The emphasis learning the dominant language is also about 'fitting in' in the city. As Pettigrew (2000: 28) points out in her analysis of language use in Gurung community, many Gurung parents are 'very aware' that they do not speak fluent Nepali. They, therefore, want their children to acquire 'the fluency that they lack'. This is not only about communication required for education and employment. It is also about the communication of social background that it portrays. 'The choice is not merely practical, it is also about adopting

strategies that lessen the chance of children being discriminated against' (Pettigrew, 2000: 28).

This role of language in gate-keeping employment prospects and social position further decides the value of language in any linguistic market. Many studies in education have illustrated that access to education and dominant language, while it may provide the individual with the credentials, does not always guarantee the employment prospect that it promises. Nonetheless, the lack of education, and the consequent lack of dominant language, is unquestionably assumed the employment, with each language having differential access to it. Santosh Tharu and his family's life experiences have taught them that monolingual proficiency in Tharu hinders their access to other opportunities that might be there. Their strategy for opening out their option is to gain proficiency in different languages. Santosh Tharu's story echoes what Rodriguex (1982) calls a 'dilemma of socially disadvantaged', for whom the burden of public life that eventually overburdens the private life.

5. Two roles of language in the linguistic market

These life stories illustrate that the idea of 'educated person' was inextricably linked with the idea 'employable person'; the one who could fit into the mainstream employment market. One of the students' main concerns was to ensure that they had control over language that would not only make them knowledgeable but also employable persons, as promised by their school education. Within this view, the students measured the relevance and success of

language education on the basis of prospects for employment. Consequently, in JSB and JKHS, the use of mother tongue accentuated the tensions between different languages that already existed in the linguistic market. The apparent potential for employment determined the varying levels of value attached to each language.

The students' responses to the tensions between different languages indicate the complex dynamics of the linguistic market, where linguistic practice assumes two distinct roles: 1) performed as a labour and 2) used as a communicative practice and (Cameron, 2000; Heller 2010). The first response was to imagine a possibility of creating an alternate market for the respective mother tongue. Though there were very limited employment options available in the emerging new markets that sought to use ethnic languages, such as FM radio, newspapers, language teaching etc., this served as a way to argue for the relevance of mother tongue in the alternate employment market. The second, and most common, response was to see the use of the mother tongue as a communicative practice that at least does not hinder the linkages with the broader employment market, thus, opening up spaces for the use of multiple languages.

5.1 Language as labour

As illustrated in Namatra Pandey, Ram Bahadur Yadav, and Bhola Ram Chaudhary's life stories, mother-tongue education provided an opportunity to see minority language skills as labour that is directly exchangeable for economic capital, i.e. they received remuneration for their skills in minority languages. Various scholars such as Urcioli and LaDausa (2013), Cameron (2000), and Heller (2010) concur that one important result of the many ways in which

communication in general, and language in particular, has become central to the workplace is the emergence of language work, and therefore of the language worker. When the labour power depends on their knowledge of particular linguistic practices, language acts as a good (Heller 2010). Language, here, functions not only as a means of communication for work, but performed as the work that is directly exchangeable for material goods and money.

The life stories of the students show a gradual emergence of new language markets such as minority language radio stations, newspapers, language teaching etc, as an alternate market to seek employment. Depending on the ways in which various languages are ordered in this marketplace, each language held some potential to gain economic capital and a symbolic role in positioning the people in the linguistic marketplace. Within the subfield of minority-language market, the students could find spaces where their minority language skills could be seen a valuable resource. During my fieldwork, I came across the following work where students and teachers in JBS and JKHS directly used their mother tongue for paid remuneration, though in many occasion they received only a very small amount as an appreciation of their work.

Table 14
List of language-related employment in JSB and JKHS

Language Teaching	3 Tharu language teachers in JKHS, 3 Nepal Bhasa teacher in JBS, 1 part-time Nepal Bhasa teacher in JBS, 1 language teacher for foreign students.
Literary Work	32 books published by NFDIN with stories, essays and poems in minority languages, 1 newspaper in Nepal Bhasa prachalit lipi - <i>Lipi Pau</i> . 1 set of Nepal Bhasa language textbooks printed by JSB (<i>Paleswa</i>) for Class I-V, 1 set of Nepal Bhasa language textbooks printed by GoN (<i>Luhiti</i>) for Class I-V, 1 set of Tharu language textbook for Class I-III, 1

set of Awadhi language textbook for Class I-III, 1 set of textbook in Tharu/Awadhi/Nepali for Science, Maths and Social Studiss for Class I-III.

Standardisation	Dictionary and grammar books for Awadhi language published by Nepal Academy, Textbook writing for Tharu, Awadhi and Nepal Bhasa textbook published by JKHS and CDC.
Media	Programme host for FM radio station – Radio Upatyaka and TV channel - Image
Performance Art	<i>Dhime</i> music performance, Newa dance performance, Cultural groups
NGO	Resource person for Kham Magar language, MLE coordinator for UMN programme.

This new market has emerged, in the case of Nepal, due to the careful cultivation of language by language-activists and gradual opening up of spaces within the Nepali state. Onta (2011:15) claims that there are approximately 350 Janjati magazines published in Nepal. These include 60 Tharu publications, 73 Tamang periodicals, 25 Limbu Magazines, 34 Magar publications, 60 Nepal Bhasa publications and 30 magazines for Janajatis in general. Of these publications, almost half of them were started during the decade of 1990s by various ethnic organisations. Though many of these publications have been shortlived and the demands is in declaine, many are still ongoing. According to the Nepal Academy Annual programme and Plan, the Academy is spearheading the work on standardisation of Maithili language, phonology of Nepal Bhasa, and a dictionary of Limbu language. Similarly, the Nepal Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) has been felicitating the writers of minority languages through awards such as *Adivasi Rastra Gaurav Puraskar* and *Matri Bhasa Puraskar*. NFDIN also has an earmarked budget for publishing 7-10 publications in minority languages every year. In 2014, they had

published over 50 different publications in different minority languages spoken in Nepal.

In addition to the print sector, Onta (2006) points towards the growth of Janajati language programme in FM radio. Similarly, he cites Maharjan's (2002) observation that 'Nepal Bhasa programs in FM radios have rejuvenated interest in their language amongst Newars who were on the verge of giving up on their language'. This creation of popular public space, through FM programs, has enabled the reach of Nepal Bhasa to a larger number of people compared to the 'erstwhile small group of hardcore language and literary activists'. The proliferation of this non-print medium has also increased in the production of music and songs.

Despite the short-lived nature of this new market and low remuneration, many appreciated these spaces as a way to reconfigure the existing linguistic market.

As Bhola Ram Chaudhary, once shared with me:

When I was the editor of *Bihaniya*, a Tharu language newspaper, I volunteered my services. I even invested a lot of money from my own pocket to meet the cost. I saw it as my contribution towards the progress of our language. For the school textbooks, I do not need to think about money.

Given the political context of Nepal, where no other language could be used in official spaces, the publication of minority language newspaper was seen as a political act. Language activists such as Bhola Ram Chaudhury did not expect to receive any remuneration for it, instead contributed his own money. He thinks that the situation is different now. For Bhola Ram Chaudhary, the emergence of

new minority-language market indicated both change in the existing market and which is, in turn, changing the broader market by its very presence.

Now, there is a lot of awareness on minority languages. When I write textbooks, I do not think about how much money do I get paid. I feel happy that now I can work on developing my language without having to pay my own money. It feels very nice to see that a lot of other people are also interested in it.

This minority-language market, though it functions only as a subfield within the broader language market, has its own internal logic of functioning and is guided by the idea of authentic ethnic identity. In this context, as various ethnic organisations or the Nepali state work to develop this new market, a standardised form of language begins to gain significance through the erasure of variability in its forms (as discussed in Chapter Five on school textbooks). Namrata Pandey's performance of language skills using the words such as *Jyajwoh* (programme), *Tangi* (class), and *Jwajalapa* (greetings) is considered a more authentic and 'purer' form of the language, than the one that is spoken in practice (which, as discussed in Chapter Four on public places, is much more mixed with other languages). However, the construction of this 'pure' language is central to the maintenance of this new market, where various ethnic organisations display their authentic culture and the Nepali state to showcase its diverse public space. Even in highly politicised language movements, unless local languages fit into such standardised forms the 'language work' cannot take place.

The paradox of constructing this authentic minority-language market was that the members of other social groups could also learn language. While Ram Bahadur Yadav, Bhola Ram Chaudhary, and Indu Newa could use their language skills as convertible capital, others such as Namrata Pandey could also

cultivate the language to occupy rightful place in it. This creates a situation where new minority-language market is portrayed as a space linked to the identity of the group but at the same time it could function in complete separation from supposed identity of the person. In this context, teachers like Rama Khanal could learn Tharu to function effectively as a teacher in Tharu community and Namrata Pandey can learn Nepal Bhasa to work as an FM programme host. The tension between the ideology of language as a technical, universally available skill and the ideology of language as tied to identity is most evident in this field (Jaffe 2001).

Similar language markets also exist for dominant languages such as media, schools, legal services etc. However, this language market is considered the mainstream market. Even while similar logic of authenticity, rules and grammar exists in the mainstream market, these characteristics are not 'marked' as this language is likely to be spoken by the dominant group and supported by the state. Bourdieu calls this the internal logic of the social field to establish unity in the functioning of the various aspects of the field. In the presence of these distinct language markets, the minority-language market and the dominant-language market, accentuates the tensions between different languages. In this context, the students employed in the minority-language market saw their employment as transitional employment, the work that they engaged in until they found a real employment in the mainstream market. As Bourdieu (1977:652) explains, 'Those who seek to defend a threatened capital are forced to conduct a total struggle because they cannot save the competence without saving the market'.

5.2 Language as access to the mainstream market

The life stories, presented in the earlier sections, also indicate towards another role of language: as a mode of communication to access employment market. This was the most common way to understand the role of minority language. Within this view, the minority language held limited value vis-à-vis employment prospects. Even when the students were able to seek employment in the minority language market, the dominant languages such as Nepali, and sometimes English, mediated this negotiation with this market. Thus, Santosh Tharu articulated Nepali as the language that is 'useful in all spheres of life.' Due to this overarching role of dominant languages in gate-keeping the employment market, the students and teachers saw the need to couple the proficiency in mother tongue with dominant languages. This was an assurance that mother tongue will not hinder access to broader employment market.

This ability of the dominant languages to play a gatekeeping role in the employment market, in turn, contributes to establishing the higher linguistic value of dominant languages. Foley (1990), in the ethnography of North Town High, discusses the ways in which language was often seen as communicative labour that had an instrumental role in the broader culture of the mainstream market. She elaborates that the students from the locally dominant classes use their speech patterns to adapt to the most appropriate communicative style suited for the existing employment market, which she refers as capitalist culture. Here, language practice is assumed to play a significant role in negotiating with the market.

As narrated by Indu Newa and Santosh Tharu, the mainstream employment market was mediated not only by the knowledge of dominant language but also performance of embodied capital associated with it. Thus, Indu's accent or Santosh's rural background present themselves as potential obstacles for better prospects. These performance aspects of language, usually operated outside the awareness of people, often function as a significant element of the communication process. Thus, the mainstream market could subtly undermine the minority language skills when people whose accents index ethnic identities are considered as having unclear communication skills. These complex ways in which the mother tongue plays a role in these stories highlight the way in which language practices have developed historically in relation to particular ideologies.

This perspective helps us to appreciate the ways in which symbolic capital associated with each language is shaped by ongoing social relations and material circumstances. Within this conception, the value of each language emerges within a particular market that is contingent on the socio-political context, and is likely to reflect the existing social hierarchies. These perceptions on the role of the mother tongue in employment uncover the deep-rooted tensions around issues of ethnicity and inequality that exist in Nepal. In the case of Indu and Santosh, their decision to gain mastery in Nepali and English is not driven by the overtly restrictive policies of the state. But it is tied to their aspiration for upward social mobility, social judgement of language, and limited employment prospects in a minority language market. In this context, one's linguistic capital is greater if it includes the ability to communicate across language lines to be proficient in a

language other than that of one's own state and lesser if it consists only of the ability to use a single language.

6. Disparate linguistic market

This contradictory response to the role of mother tongue in employment allows us to discern multilayered social fields: the social field of mainstream employment market and the subfield of mother-tongue employment market. LaDousa (2005), discussing the multilingual arena of Banaras in India, explains this as disparate market for different languages. The complex language context of Banaras is similar to Nepali ones where there are disparate markets could engage with each other in very dynamic ways, sometimes through contestation or other times through collaboration. In Banaras, as LaDausa explains, the relevance of Hindi medium and English medium is interpreted within the juxtaposed market of different languages. The market for Hindi is local and within the Hindi-speaking elites of Banaras. The market for English stretches beyond Banaras. These different but somewhat independent socio-economic hierarchies thus sometimes lead to the very different, and often opposite, valuations of linguistic competence.

As Bourdieu has argued, language is symbolic capital that can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered. Drawing on this, various studies (Urla, 2001; Haeri, 1997) have illustrated that new markets can potentially reconfigure the power relations. Studying Basque youth in public spaces, Urla (2001) demonstrates the creative utilisation of their minority language in alternate forms such as street graffiti, zines, mini FM radio, rock music etc. Through these sub-fields of language activity, Basque youth engage in very

different ways to establish their distinct identity from the dominant languages. In the same way, a sudden political change or gradual transformation in symbolic power relations can impact the valuation of any language. The study by Herne (1997) shows the way in which religious community provides the legitimacy for the use of Arabic in Iran even though English is the language supported by the state.

Contrary to the view that centres on the role of institutionalised official languages in the labour market, these studies have pointed towards the ways in which these may be negotiated, contested or resisted by various poles of authority. Within the subfield of minority language market, the use of a minority language signals the possession of authenticity and a distinct identity; under certain circumstances, this may constitute capital with value in the market. While multiple language markets might exist, the state or the broader language market ultimately determines the pecking order of different languages, thus creating a tension between new markets and the dominant market. However, the very presence of these disparate markets means that there are multiple forces operating in a given social field. These multiple forces, in turn, result in competing ways in which values of different languages are ascertained.

These competing markets however are not necessarily a rupture in the ideology of language as a bounded system. As many scholars (Heller, 2003; Haeri, 2007; Urcioli and LaDaousa, 2013) have pointed out, these are an appropriation and extension of the same ideology under new conditions. As discussed in section 5.1 of this chapter and Chapter Five, JSB and JKHS's approach to language reflects the primacy of linguistic purity, ethnic authenticity, and standardization as the

basis of creating alternate markets for Nepal Bhasa and Tharu. The maintainance of this alternate market is challenging, as seen in the cases of Namrata Pandey, Ram Bahadur Yadav, and Bhola Ram Chaudhary. It requires a concerted effort and interest from the groups like ethnic organisations, NGOs, or language activists to create and maintain these markets, as the Nepali state usually does not invest in these markets. In the places that do not actively maintain these markets, as in Santosh's story, minority language skill does not acquire any value for employment.

Nonetheless, where this subfield of minority language market is present seeks to reconfigure the mainstream language market by bringing new actors and new rules into play. Unlike the mainstream Nepali language market that existed earlier, in the new market values the minority language skills as a social capital. This, in turn, shifts the contours of broader employment market to include spaces for these new emerging markets. In these contexts, several linguistic and education systems are seen as allowing for differential access to different labour market and paths of social mobility. Within this view, learning mother tongue opens up more options for employment than those who spoke only Nepali, if both mother tongue and Nepali are unmarked as in the case Rama Khanal and Namrata Pandey. Heller (2006:17) makes a similar observation in the study of a French school in Ontario. She discusses the way in which the Franco-Ontarian education system sought to produce students who would be able to take up jobs that required French while also participating in the Anglophone-dominated networks. As seen in the quote by a Nepal Bhasa teacher in JSB, earlier in this chapter, the use of mother tongue was seen as not necessarily hindering access to

the mainstream market. In both the schools, there was a general acceptance that competence in Nepali is critical to negotiate the employment market within the country and English in the new globalised market. The school, while emphasising mother-tongue education, did not oppose the dominant languages in any way. This ambiguity in the school's institutional space thus allows students to negotiate spaces within, otherwise non-reconcilable, tensions between different languages.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated the multiple language markets that exist in a broader linguistic social field: new market for minority languages and broader market for dominant languages. As seen in the life stories, the emergence of new markets provided the students with some avenues for employment in minority languages such as FM radio, newspapers etc. Within these markets, minority language competence was an employable skill that could be exchanged for economic capital. However, since these markets are created by different groups and without much support from the state, they have been short-lived. The uncertainty of this market thus brings out another contradiction, where the dominant language was required to mediate negotiation with the minority language market. This pushes the student to interact very closely with the mainstream language markets where one's linguistic capital is greater if it includes the ability to communicate across language lines. JSB and JKHS respond to this tension between by maintaining ambiguity in the school's institutional space for various languages. This allowed space for the use of mother tongue without potentially threatening the access to mainstream market and respond to, otherwise non-reconcilable, tensions between different languages.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Simultaneities in Minority Language Education

1. Introduction

This thesis was motivated by an interest to understand the ways in which ethno-linguistic identity plays out in everyday life. Ethnicity is a highly politicised topic in contemporary Nepal. As discussed in earlier chapters, the category of ethnic identity is increasingly used to question inequalities underpinning the Nepali state, including its educational institutions. In this context, not only ethnic activists but also the state has put forward mother-tongue education as one of the important agendas to address educational disparities in minority groups. In this thesis, I have approached mother-tongue education as a lens to understand the everyday negotiation in both political and educational arenas. For this purpose, I have presented a close examination of everyday practices in two mother-tongue education schools in Nepal: Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB), Kathmandu, and Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS), Kapilbastu.

Rather than looking at education as a top-down process, in this thesis I have drawn attention to everyday cultural politics of language use inside minority language schools. I have argued that in a heterogeneous context like Nepal, different identities have to be approached in relation to each other to appreciate the varying ways in which they are entangled with other identities. In this thesis, I have paid attention to language practices within mother-tongue education in relation to the national education system in order to uncover the ways in which different people understand, experience, and interpret mother-tongue education.

To explain these dynamics, I have drawn on Bourdieu to argue that education is a 'social field': an arena of struggle where the idea of an educated person is (re)imagined, and the social positions of ethno-linguistic groups are negotiated. As social actors negotiate their positions in the subfield of minority language education and in the field of national education, they draw on the linguistic capital of both the fields simultaneously and display apparently contradictory dynamics. In order to explain this 'unresolved copresences' (Woolard, 1999: 6), I have drawn on Bakhtin's idea of simultaneity,

The discussion in the various chapters of this thesis shows that the students in minority language schools did not neatly choose between ethnicity or nationalism, mother tongue or dominant languages, local or national/global. Instead the dynamics in the JSB and JKHS show the simultaneity of these apparently contradictory ideas. Nepal Bhasa and Tharu were discursively positioned as emblematic of both ethnic and national identity and therefore of local and national consequence simultaneously. In different chapters of thesis, I have presented these struggles around language-in-education by discussing them in a historical context (Chapter Two), in public spaces (Chapter Four), in school textbooks (Chapter Five), in the discourses of quality education (Chapter Six), and in employment (Chapter Seven). This thesis illustrates that people draw on their linguistic repertoire 'sometimes against, sometimes tangential to and sometimes coincident with the interests of those holding power' (Levinson et. al., 1996:22) in order to negotiate their position in a given social hierarchy. In this concluding chapter, I draw attention to these dynamics by discussing three inter-related themes that have emerged throughout this thesis: the issue of linguistic

identity and social change, the idea of education and 'educated person', and the issue of ethnicity in the context of political transformation in Nepal.

2. Language, identity, and social change

One of the important themes that runs through this thesis is the issue of language, identity, and social change. When a minority language is considered as a language of education, it unsettles various taken-for-granted assumptions on education by calling upon multiple, and often competing, interests within its framework. The interactions in minority language education, therefore, present discursive struggles where the concern is not only whether people have the right to speak different languages or have competence to do so, but also about conditions in which values of different languages are constructed (Heller, 2006) and the ways in which they are performed (Irvine, 2000). In these contexts, language represents a set of socio-cultural practices where the use of language both reflects and constructs the social reality.

In this thesis, I have attempted to explain these struggles by drawing attention to the interaction of the subfield of minority language education and the broader field of national education. While the specific patterns of language use were different in JSB and JKHS, given the varied level of language loss and instrumental use of language in everyday contexts, the position of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu as minority languages brought some distinct ways in which these languages manifested themselves in education. As discussed in different chapters, in JKHS and JSB, language activists, teachers, and the school

administration created spaces for Nepal Bhasa and Tharu in classrooms (in JSB and JKHS) and in official communication (in JSB). In this process, schools sought to reproduce Nepal Bhasa and Tharu as field-specific capital within the subfield of minority language education. At the same time, the Nepali state sought to maintain the uniformity of national education framework, including Nepali and English as compulsory subjects, and reproducing these languages as field-specific capital in broader education field.

Approaching from this perspective, I identify two distinct impulses. Firstly, the practices in these schools display *inward-looking* dynamics to construct a sense of unified ethnic identity. This included standardisation of varied language forms, ensuring the use of mother tongue in everyday conversations, reconstructing ethnic histories, teaching mother tongues in school, and creating an employment market for minority languages. In the context of the gradual disappearance of many languages in Nepal, this reconstruction of ethnic identity and language is seen an important strategy for the survival of minority languages. Through the transformation of these ethnic languages into standardised written forms, as discussed in Chapter Five, the schools and language activists were successful in making them legible in the eyes of the Nepali state. The activists, in this process, negotiated the pedagogical importance of the textbooks by bringing the idea of the local into the centre of education dialogues. For the students, as discussed in Chapter Four, it meant learning their mother tongue in a different form – not only as spoken language but also learning how to read and write in these languages.

Although these attempts to save minority languages constructed a sense of unified ethnic identity, it was far from the 'return to tradition'. As discussed in Chapter Five, the process of producing school textbooks in Nepal Bhasa and Tharu was also a process of positioning these languages as legitimate language for education. In this process, the language activists and the school administration standardised Nepal Bhasa and Tharu, thus transforming these languages in different ways. While minority languages were indeed used in JSB and JKHS to signal ideas of authenticity, belongingness, and relevance in the locality (Chapter Four and Five), the use of these languages also indicates a wider process of social change underway in Nepali society. The minority language schools such as JSB and JKHS used the new symbolic value of otherwise disappearing minority languages to mobilise new forms of cultural capital and transform the terms in which social identities are represented. This reconfiguration of the social spaces also reflects the evolving balance of power and emergence of potential new hierarchies in the context of political transformation in Nepal.

Secondly, the practices in these schools also simultaneously display *outward-looking* attempts to transcend ethnic boundaries and engage as a member of national community. JKHS and JSB did not seek to establish separate systems of education or disengage from the larger society. Rather the schools were concerned about having opportunity to maintain their distinct language and identity within the overall national framework and engage closely with contemporary changes. As I have shown in different chapters, writing school books served to engage closely with the state (Chapter Five), ethnic festivals and

histories were articulated as national histories (Chapter Four), the quality of mother-tongue education was validated through national exams (Chapter Six), and the minority language was used to create a distinct space in the employment market (Chapter Seven). Contrary to the idea of ethnicity being anti-state or anti-market, the school and students engaged closely with multiple arenas of social change such as public places, state institutions, employment market and educational institutions.

Situated in the overlapping subfield of minority language education and the broader field of education, social actors in these schools played by the rules of both subfield and the field, and thereby constructing new ways in which languages were practiced. In this thesis, I have used the notion of simultaneity (Bakhtin, 1981) to explain the multiple ways in which languages were used and identities are expressed. As discussed in Chapter Four, the students used translanguaging practices to claim membership in multiple groups. Similarly, the schools articulated ethnic languages and festivals as simultaneously representing ethnic as well as national identity. In both the schools, the everyday use of various languages and the simultaneous claim of multiple identities were not seen as oppositional. As shown in different chapters of this thesis, the contradictory ways in which mother tongue is used as one of the languages of education facilitated claims over the universal spaces of education, public places, market and nationalism, hitherto associated with Nepali.

These co-presences of various languages also illustrate different positions, voices and identities indicated through linguistic practices. As discussed in previous

chapters, simultaneity does not necessarily mean absence of conflicts but the possibility of various unresolved co-presences. This process was indeed fraught with a lot of tensions. Linguistic proficiency, while important, was not the only way in which the value of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu in education was assessed. As discussed in Chapter Six, the students were labelled as 'not smart' because they attended a minority language school. The students attempted to unlink this association by achieving high education outcomes and by seeking competence in other languages such as English. As discussed in Chapter Five, both Nepali state and language activists used the provisions guaranteed by the constitution as a common ground for extending dialogue in otherwise very conflictual positions. As discussed in Chapter Seven, while small efforts were made to create emerging alternate market for minority languages, this was not mainstreamed and the efforts to find spaces in the market were complicated.

Throughout this thesis, what has strongly emerged is that the actors in the subfield of minority language education facilitated social change by conforming to the existing norms of Nepali state. The school administrators, while making increasing efforts to normalise minority languages and practices, did not seek to replace Nepali language (Chapter Four). Language standardisation and textbook writing was done by following the national curriculum, in devnagari script, and by adhering to the rules of national education system (Chapter Five). Moreover, the credentialisation of mother-tongue education was done through the national-level examination that is centrally administered by the Ministry of Education (Chapter Six). The schools negotiated the status of mother-tongue education as a legitimate education by holding the state accountable to the provisions made in

the constitution. The construction of a particular ethno-linguistic identity was evidently framed through affirmation of Nepali national identity. Through this complex interplay between subfield of minority language education and broader field of education, even while each field sought to reproduce their own languages as field-specific capitals, it facilitated the process of change by transforming minority languages and by opening up the national education system in unpredictable ways.

3. Education and the 'educated person'

Another important theme in this thesis is the ways in which language dynamics are linked with the idea of education and the educated person. Since Nepali and English are generally taught in school as compulsory subjects and used in all official papers in Nepal, these languages were commonly perceived as the 'language of the educated' (*padhe lekheka le bolne bhasa*). While colloquial Nepali is increasingly acquired through exposure to Nepali-speaking communities, popular media such as Radio and Television, and migration to urban areas (Pettigrew, 2010), the mastery over written Nepali is either acquired or developed through continuous exposure and training throughout their school years. The study by Webster (2011) with different ethno-linguistic groups (Magar, Gurung, Thakali, Limbu) shows that 'number of years of formal education is the single greatest determinant of Nepali proficiency' (Webster, 2011:69). This proficiency in the dominant language is therefore seen as an important characteristic of an educated person.

In the context of JSB and JKHS, the use of a minority language for education raised questions about the very idea of education and the educated person. In these schools, the school administrators, teachers and students were therefore faced with a situation where they needed to negotiate the legitimacy of the very language that they were attempting to institutionalise. The lack of uniformity in minority languages (Chapter Five), the association of minority-language education as low-quality education (Chapter Six), and the limited employment opportunities using minority language skills (Chapter Seven) appeared as significant obstacles in negotiating the legitimacy of minority languages for the purpose of education. The language practices of educational institutions are thus closely implicated in the production, legitimisation and distribution of the knowledge that goes on in the defining what is education and what is involved the production of an educated person.

In the context of Nepal, where the census of Nepal until 1981 defined as 'literate' as only those who could read and write in Nepali, the use of mother tongues in education was also about articulating new ideas about what it means to have schooling in one's mother tongue. In this process, the textbooks, classroom instruction and examination easily took the form of an 'arena of struggle' to credentialise minority languages for the purposes of education. As discussed in Chapter Five, this process involved using 'local' as an important part of school curriculum, writing new histories and repositioning the mother tongue as school knowledge. As discussed in Chapter Six, the idea of 'quality education' was used in order to reconceptualise the possibility of education and the production of 'educated person' through minority languages. Mother-tongue schools function

as a 'social field' for negotiating social authority and legitimacy to the use of minority languages through the process of providing accreditation, standardisation, and using it for schooling purposes.

As discussed in different chapters, though Nepal Bhasa and Tharu functioned as a relatively valued field-specific capital within the subfield of minority language education, Nepali and English continue to occupy dominant positions. Especially, in the context where JSB and JKHS did not seek to establish schooling systems that were in opposition to the national system, the schools negotiated spaces with the national framework for the establishing Nepal Bhasa and Tharu as legitimate languages of education. This brought the subfield of minority language education with close interaction within the broader field of education. Moreover, the idea of the educated person is also inextricably linked with the idea of a person whose skills, including linguistic skills, could be used in the market. In this context, as the empirical chapters of the thesis show, contrary to the idea of mother-tongue education being against the state or market, the school and students engaged closely with multiple arenas such as public places, state institutions, employment market and educational institutions.

This resulted in apparently contradictory ways in which students utilised various languages in JSB and JKHS. The idea of education and the educated person was redefined as someone who was literate in their mother tongue, but also in Nepali and English. 'We are not like students in other schools who are taught only Nepali,' as Indu mentioned (in Chapter Seven), 'we know all three languages: Nepal Bhasa, Nepali, and English.' The schools also provided ambiguous spaces

for the use of different languages, though they were officially known for their use of mother tongues in education. They aligned with national school curriculum to clear spaces for alternate knowledge forms to emerge. As discussed in various chapters in this thesis, multilingualism was used as a strategy for mother-tongue education.

The idea of an educated person constructed in JSB and JKHS was very similar to the ones constructed in other schools in Nepal, and yet it was very different at the same time. As many studies of schools in Nepal have illustrated, JSB and JKHS promoted a specific model of educated person by teaching Nepali and English, following nationalised curriculum and standardised textbooks, adhering to the discourse of nationalism, and upholding the ideas of social and economic progress. However, at the same time, JSB and JKHS's use of Nepal Bhasa and Tharu for the purpose of school education transformed this idea by opening up possibilities to imagine the construction of educated person through the use of minority languages.

4. Ethnicity and contemporary politics in Nepal

The third theme in this thesis is the issue of ethnicity in the context of political transformation in Nepal. Throughout this thesis, the discussion of language practices has provided an important lens to the inter-group and intra-group dynamics that have shaped much of Nepal's recent politics. Especially in the context where ethno-linguistic identity has been one of the important ways in which various social groups in Nepal have sought to make claims over the state,

educational institutions and in the market, the close analysis of minority language schools provides an interesting insight on how these categories are played out in everyday life and in the ways in which different social groups engage with each other.

Bourdieu's idea of social field has been very fruitful to explain this negotiation between various groups. As discussed in various chapters of this thesis, language-in-education is distinctly a site where the social positions of ethno-linguistic groups are negotiated. In JSB and JKHS, the official space to use mother tongue in education facilitated a process where the students studied ethnic languages such as Nepal Bhasa, Tharu and Awadhi in school. This was definitely significant because before 1990 the use of languages other than the national language Nepali was not permissible. Since the Panchayat period (1960-1990), language had been one of the most visible and emotive issues around which ethnic mobilisation was centred in Nepal. The controversies around the official recognition and active state support for the development of ethnic languages continue to reflect deep-rooted intergroup and intragroup tensions in Nepal. In this context, both Nepali state and ethnic activist have used the common language of 'inclusion' and 'diversity' to make provisions for the use of mother tongues, at least in primary education.

However, as discussed in the previous sections, this state policy, while it opened up opportunities to use mother tongues in school, did not automatically translate into a very smooth acceptance of these languages for the purposes of school. Heller (2007:17) describes this as a discursive struggle produced by the

contradiction of the minority condition. In JSB, though the school mandated the use of Nepal Bhasa in their premises, and in fact conducted all its paper work in Nepal Bhasa, the everyday language exchanges in the playground reflected a mix of different languages. In JKHS, the use of Tharu in the school premises played an important instrumental role in making classroom teaching more effective. However, this practice was seen as an important way to gain competency in Nepali and English. And in both the schools, Nepali and English continued to be taught as compulsory subjects in all grades.

These practices in these schools challenge the popular conception of ethnicity as opposed to the ideas of the state and nationalism. These schools were invariably spaces where different groups, identity positions, and interests come in close interaction with each other. In JSB and JKHS, as the subfield of minority education overlapped with the broader field of education, the students and teachers engaged in an apparently contradictory process of managing both minority language and dominant language. Though both the schools were well known mainly because they placed explicit emphasis on the ethno-linguistic identity of the (majority of) their student population, the schools also sought to work in close collaboration with the Nepali state. JKHS insisted that students stood up while singing the national anthem. JSB participated in various Newar festivals but discursively presented them as Nepali festivals. Both JKHS and JSB published their own textbooks for the school education, but followed the guidance stipulated by government's curriculum development framework. Through these practices, the schools sought opportunities to develop minority languages and express a distinct identity while maintaining membership in the

national community and seeking spaces within the framework of nation-state.

The everyday practices in these schools show that neither the ideals of homogeneous national identity nor those of bounded ethnic identity can explain the complex ways in which people negotiate their everyday lives. In the contemporary political context of Nepal, due to the essentialist categories espoused in nationalist discourse and ethnic activism, ethnic and national identity are often seen as mutually exclusive. The students and teachers in these schools, however, transcended the compartmentalisation of their social life on the basis of these ethno-linguistic identities but confirm to these as an expression of belongingness while not being in opposition to the Nepali state. These languages and identities were discursively positioned as being Nepali, where being a Newar or Tharu was simultaneously an expression of ethnic and Nepali identity.

In this thesis, I have used the notion of simultaneity to discuss the ways in which the students display affiliation to multiple languages and identities. Given that, in the contemporary political context of Nepal, the issues of ethnicity and identity are increasingly getting ossified; the idea of simultaneous membership in multiple groups becomes even more significant. The translanguaging practices in the everyday lives of the students, the articulation of ethnic identity as national identity, and use of multiple languages for various purposes transcend the mutually exclusionary binary between ethnicity and nationalism. While considerable tension still exists around the question of these identity positions and reconciliation between the two positions is perhaps difficult, there is a need to keep them in 'constant confrontation' (Pennycook, 2006:71) to appreciate the

multiple scales in which identities are expressed.

5. Scope and limitation of this research

In this thesis, my intention was not to present mother-tongue education as the most privileged sites for ethnic activism or for re-imagination of national identity in Nepal. There are many ethnic groups in Nepal that do not pursue mother-tongue education as their agenda. Despite this limited spread of mother tongue education, the idea and practice of mother-tongue education have shaped much of the debates around education and national identity in Nepal. Given its significance in the changing political context of Nepal, I have approached mother-tongue education as a lens to understand the deeper issues of intra/inter-groups relationship and the changing nature of social identities. This thesis contributes to this discussion on mother tongue education in Nepali by studying its functions in practice.

The data collection for this thesis was, however, limited to the language practices inside the schools and during the school hours. This limited my interaction with the parents compared to the longer and continuous interaction with students, teachers, and school administrators. My interactions with the parents occurred only when they came to drop or pick up their children to school. In many cases, the time they spent in school was not enough for a detailed conversation. Whenever possible, I walked with the parents on their way back and asked them a few questions about the school and their children. In some cases, the teachers that I interviewed within the schools were also parents of students in the school.

Nonetheless, with the parents outside the school, my interactions were not similar to the sustained interaction I had with others inside the school. I have therefore been able to reflect very limited level of the parents' perspectives in this research.

Another site to conduct this research could have been in the community or in the homes of minority language speakers, where I could have investigated the use of language in a different social context. However, this approach would not have uncovered the implications of the official discourse on mother tongue, the transformation of languages, and its use in the production of an educated person. The performance of language in the formal spaces highlights different ways in which public spaces are shaped. While the investigation of mother tongue use in the community setting would have brought out similar dynamics of multiple language use, simultaneity of multiple identities, and translanguaging practices, it would have provided limited insights on the interaction with national systems of education and transformation of mother tongues in this process.

Similarly, this research has not done enough to uncover the complex interaction of social class that is implicated in language use. I have attempted to highlight this tension of social class by drawing on other research, highlighting students' reflections on how others perceive their language use, and by bringing my own language competence. However, since my fieldwork was located within these two schools, I was not able to trace their interaction with other people. Nonetheless, since these two schools drew students mainly from low-income families, the class divisions in school choices are clearly reflected. As many

scholars who have worked on language use in Nepal have pointed out, high-income families, including language activists themselves, usually send their children to English-medium private schools rather than government school or mother-tongue schools.

This thesis has also not covered the expanding sector of private education in Nepal. Although JSB is technically a private school, as it does not receive any funding from Nepali government, it does not follow the profit-making model of different private schools in Nepal. The expanding private schools in Nepal keep themselves away from the debates on mother-tongue education by foregrounding their priority of quality education over 'politics'. In reality, this usually translates into 'English-medium' education and supposedly more globalised exposure. Though in recent years, some elite schools such as Rato Bangala, Malpi International, and GEMS school have been teaching some minority languages as optional subjects, this practice is not very common in private schools.

This thesis, therefore, does not claim to represent the dynamics of the entire education sector in Nepal. This thesis however provides an insight into the dynamics between various ethno-linguistic groups and the Nepali state that is negotiated in the subfield of minority language education. And in doing so, it highlights the implications of mother-tongue education on the idea of education and ethno-linguistic identities. The contribution of this thesis lies in approaching education as a site of struggle, rather than a simplistic model of development or domination, where various groups negotiate the contradictory resources to

negotiate their positions in the social hierarchy. In this process, minority-language speakers may conform to the existing systems of education while at the same time seeking to transform these spaces.

6. Further questions

Even as this research has paid attention to the struggles between various social groups, languages, and identities in the field of education, these struggles appeared to be shaped very much by the existing social and political hierarchies. The idea of simultaneity thus reflected the difficulty in reconciliation between various social positions. However, the question still remains – ‘when two things or consciousnesses are together in a simultaneous relation, how much of each is present?’ (Holoquist, 1990: 132). Though this thesis has been able to capture the role of simultaneity in social change to some extent, through the competing process of reproduction of field-specific capital in the subfield of minority language education and the broader field of education, much remains to be explored.

During the final stages of my fieldwork, I was increasingly becoming aware of the ways in which the notion of social change and progress was articulated in both schools. The questions of developing language as an indication of advancement of a social group, mother-tongue education as repositioning of ethno-linguistic groups, the increasing spaces for English language for social mobility, and acquiring language as a skill in the market place draw our attention to the new ways in which language and education articulated notions of social

change and progress. In an attempt to make sense of tensions and contradictions in the mother-tongue education, this thesis has relied more on interpreting the dynamics in education as 'arenas of struggle'. Further research could investigate these impulses to understand the roles of such schools in the changing political context of Nepal, and probe deeper into the notions of social change and progress articulated in these schools.

7. Conclusion

The assimilation-pluralism paradox, which I presented in Chapter One, has been an instructive vantage point to understand the complex entanglements of various identity positions and language use. Instead of focusing on the simplistic model of education as *either* development *or* domination, this thesis has presented education as an arena for struggle where people negotiate differing ideas and visions for self and society: a social field. This lens has been very helpful in uncovering the tensions and contradictions inherent in education, and especially in minority language education. Using this perspective, this thesis has examined the ways in which different people understand, experience, and interpret mother-tongue education.

Since minority language institutions function as parts of broader education systems, I have approached them as subfields within the social field of education. Discussing practices in JSB and JKHS, I illustrated that schools relied on the notions such as local utility, authenticity and belongingness to establish minority language as field-specific capital. This logic within the subfield of minority

education resulted in impulses to reproduce field-specific capital in the form of standardisation of varied language forms, ensuring the use of mother tongue in everyday conversations, reconstructing ethnic histories, teaching mother tongue in school, and creating employment market for minority languages. I have identified these as *inward-looking* dynamics to construct a sense of unified ethnic identity and establish distinctiveness.

However, JSB and JKHS did not seek to establish separate education systems but negotiated spaces of minority language education within the national education system. This broader field of education functioned within the logic of national unity, uniformity, and nationalism. Here, the dominant languages such as Nepali and English were reproduced as the valued field-specific capital. This overlapping but hierarchical location of the subfield of minority language education and the broader field of national education resulted in what I have identified as *outward-looking* dynamics to transcend ethnic boundaries and engage as a member of the national community. This was expressed in the form of making claims in the universal spaces of education, public places, market and nationalism, hitherto associated with Nepali language. JSB and JKHS did not valorise the exclusive use of mother tongue but contested common spaces of national education system. In doing so, even while the school conform to the existing norms of the education system, they also transform those same conventions by the distinctive ideas and practices that they bring to the fore.

In this interplay of the subfield of minority language education and the broader field of education, the students played by the rules of both the fields. This was

demonstrated in the practices such as translanguaging, asserting national identity in ethnic festivals, seeking competence in other languages, and in their efforts to find space in the market. Contrary to the exclusionary ideas of difference espoused in ethnic activism and assimilationist ideas of homogeneity articulated in nationalist discourse, students made simultaneous claims to more than one social identity, all such identities being neither incompatible, nor binary opposites. This emerging narrative of simultaneities in minority language education may help us to understand the issues of ethnicity in Nepal in a more open-ended way and appreciate the multiple scales in which identities are expressed.

APPENDIX I

The Dramatis Personæ

(all the name listed below are pseudonyms)

1. Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS), Kapilbastu

Bhola Ram Chaudhary	He is the vice principal of JKHS and teaches Social Studies from Class VI - X. He was the main editor for mother-tongue textbooks. He also contributed one of the teachers who wrote many chapters in the Tharu textbook. He completed his schooling in JKHS and lives near the school premises. Previously, he was editor-in-chief of a local newspaper in Tharu called <i>Bihaniya</i> . In addition to his job in school, he also works as resource person on MLE for United Mission to Nepal (UMN).
Bikram Tripathy	He is a writer and has many publications in Awadhi language. He worked as one of the resource persons in JKHS for textbook writing training. He also works in collaboration with NFDIN for publication of Awadhi language. He has contributed to Awadhi dictionaries, grammar book and literary collections. During the time of fieldwork, he was working closely with Nepal Academy in their annual plan for development of Awadi language.
Jeet Ram Chaudhary	He is a primary school teacher in JKHS. He teaches Science and Tharu. He has been teaching the school for the last 15 years. He lives in the locality and runs a small family run teahouse behind the school premises.
Nanda Kumar Giri	He is the school principal of JKHS. He has lived in the village since he was posted as a principal of JKHS. He has been very active in seeking partnership with various organisations and with government departments. During his tenure as the head teacher of the school, he has mobilised resources for various school development projects including extension of school building, water supply facilities, toilet facilities, gardening programmes in the school premises, furniture in the primary classroom etc.
Pashupati Pandey	He is a school principal in the feeder school near JKHS. His school

	also used textbooks from JKHS for primary education.
Pushpa Tharu	She teaches in primary classes in JKHS. She is also an active member in the book-writing team. She has contributed several chapters in the textbook, currently used by JKHS.
Ram Bahadur Yadav	He is a part-time teacher in JKHS. During the time of my fieldwork, he was also MLE coordinator. He studied in JKHS and gave his SLC examination through this school. He worked as a link person for UMN to coordinate the MLE activities in JKHS.
Rama Khanal	A primary-level teacher in JKHS. She lives in Barkulpur village and is fluent in Tharu language. In the class, she speaks in Tharu language with the students.
Santosh Tharu	He studies in Class V in JKHS. He lives near the school premises. He has two siblings who also study in JKHS. He sometimes helps his parents in their farm.
Sudeep Chaudhary	Bhola Ram Chaudhury's son. When the MLE programme started in JKHS, he worked as one of the MLE coordinators (along with Ram Bahadur Yadav) and later appointed as the accounts officer in JKHS. He lives in Barkulpur village and actively participates in MLE programmes.
Parent 1	Rama Khanal's husband. They send their son to a private school in Imiliya (neaby market area). Their two daughters completed passed their SLC in JKHS, and are currently studying MA in Education and Bachelors in Business Administration respectively.
Parent 2	Santosh Tharu's father. He has three children who go to JKHS. He lives in the village, where he works as a farmer.
Parent 3	Village elder who does not think very highly of the MLE programme in JKHS. He believes that children should learn Nepali in school so that they can use it in government offices.

2. Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB), Kathmandu

Janak Shrestha	He was one of students in JSB's first cohort to appear for the SLC. He passed his SLC examination with distinction in 2010. He teaches Maths in Class IX and X in JSB as a part-time teacher. He is also studying Chartered Accountancy and B.Com. in one of the private colleges in Kathmandu. In his college, he is a member of the cultural committee and coordinates activities such as <i>prachalit lipi</i> (Newar script) classes and Dhime music classes. He also went to India for a short course in Accountancy.
Sarita Manandhar	She is a Nepal Bhasa teacher in JSB. She was the first principal of JSB. She teaches Nepal Bhasa to primary level. She also actively coordinates various extra-curricular activities in Nepal Bhasa. She acts as a point person for the sale of <i>Lipi Pau</i> , a Nepal Bhasa newspaper in <i>Prachalit Lipi</i> .
Saurav Maharjan	He studies in Class II, JSB. His elder sister is also in JSB, Class V. His mother drops and picks him up from school.
Sunita Shrestha	She was a student of JSB. She passed her SLC examination with Distinction in 2010. She is now doing BSc in Microbiology. She also works as a part time teacher and teaches Science and Maths. Her mother is a Gurung and her father is a Newar. Though her father occasionally speaks Nepal Bhasa, they do not use it often at home.
Bandana Shakya	She is one of the students in Class V, JSB. She is one of the top students of the class. The teachers often refer to her as an example whom other students should follow. In the Nepal Bhasa classroom, she helps fellow students in correcting spoken and written work.
Kavita Shrestha	She teaches Nepal Bhasa in Class IX and X, JSB. She has an MA degree in Nepal Bhasa. She also coordinates the scholarship distribution programme in JSB.
Babita Malakar	She is Nepali language teacher in primary level. Her daughter is also studying in JSB.
Shanti Manandhar	She teaches Nepal Bhasa in Class IX and X, JSB. She has an MA degree in Nepal Bhasa.

Namrata Pandey	She studied in JSB. She is not from Newar family and learnt Nepal Bhasa in JSB. During the time of fieldwork, she worked in FM radio and presented programmes in Nepal Bhasa.
Indu Newa	She studied in JSB. During the time of fieldwork, she worked as Nepal Bhasa part-time teacher.
Bina Manandhar	She is JSB School Principal. She also teaches social studies in Class VII onwards.
Parent, JSB	Saurav Maharjan's (Class II, JSB) mother, she sent her children to JSB because she thinks that the education is good. Other members of her family also send their children to this school.
Saurav Khadgi	Saurav Khadgi is student in Class IX. He insists on taking optional maths for SLC, even though he is not very good at it. He does not want to opt for Nepal Bhasa in SLC.

APPENDIX II

List of Schools with Mother-tongue Education

1.1 Government Schools

(Source: UNESCO, 2011 and Newa Basti Newa School Campaign Leaflet)

1. Sharada Primary School, Sunsari	Tharu and Uraw (MoI)
2. Rastriya Ekta Primary School, Jhapa	Rajbanshi, Santhal and Nepali (MoI)
3. Bhimsen School, Thulo Balkhu, Rasuwa District	Tamang (MoI)
4. Rastriya Lower Secondary School	Kanchanpur (MoI)
5. Saraswati Lower Secondary Schools, Thade, Rasuwa	Tamang (MoI)
6. Deurali Lower Secondary School, Dhankuta	Athpahariya Rai (MoI)
7. Nawa Jagrit Primary School, Dhaireni, Palpa	Nepali and Magar (MoI)
8. Paropkar Higher Secondary School, Bindhyopacha, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
9. Alok Vidhayashram, Guashala, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
10. Nepal Rastriya Lower Secondary School, Pula Dhalko, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
11. Dattatraya Lower Secondary School, Kwopa, Bhaktapur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
12. Palpasa Sikhshya Sadan, Thimi, Bhaktapur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
13. Bal Sewa Secondary School, Jhoche, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
14. Himalaya Secondary School, Newroad, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
15. Kanti Ishwari Secondary School, Pyafal, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
16. Kanya Secondary School, Yatakha, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
17. Shanti Nikunja Secondary School, Bhou Kyaba, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
18. Lokhit Secondary School, Thabahi, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
19. Saraswati Niketan Secondary School, Brahmna Twa, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
20. Navayug Secondary School, Jyatha, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
21. Bal Bikas Primary School, Dhalko, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
22. Gitamata Secondary School, Bijyasa, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
23. Nepal Adarsha Secondary School, Ganabahal, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
24. Juddhodaya Secondary School, Thabahi, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
25. Bhakta Vidhyashram, Tyanga, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
26. Nawa Adarsha Secondary School, Basantapur, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
27. Kanya Mandir Higher Secondary School, Ikha Pukhu, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
30. Kirtipur Secondary School, Kirtipur, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
31. Mangal Higher Secondary School, Kirtipur, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
32. Adarsha Higher Secondary School, Layaki, Bhaktapur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
33. Ganesh Primary School, Sakwa, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
34. Bhagyodaya Higher Secondary School, Sakwa, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
35. Jagriti Secondary School, Kwapa, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)

1.2 Private Schools (primarily run by ethnic organisations)

(Source: Kadel, 2011; Limbu, 2008; *Newa Basti Newa School Campaign Leaflet*, Miranda Wienberg Fieldnotes; Phyak, 2007)

1. Jagat Sundar Bwona Kuthi	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
2. Modern Newa School, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (MoI), Nepali and English
3. Thecho Newa English School, Thecho	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
4. Kathmandu Newa Kindergarten, Khusibu	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
5. Khwopa Newa English School, Bhaktapur	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
6. Yala Newa International School, Kobahal	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
7. Kipoo Newa English School, Naya Bazaar	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
8. Bhastipur Newa English School, Balambu	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
9. Siddhasaraswati Primary School, Panchthar, Phaktep	Limbu (MoI)
10. Tika Bhairung Primary School, Panchthar, Phaktep VDC	Limbu (MoI)
11. Balchetana Lower Secondary School, Duruwa VDC, Dang	Dangaura Tharu (MoI)
12. Halwar Lower Secondary School, Halwar, Dang	Dangaura Tharu (MoI)
13. Salanga Higher Secondary School, Yangnam, Pachthar District	Limbu (MoI)
14. Saraswoti High School, Sikaucha, Taplejung District	Limbu (MoI)
15. Janashikcha Sadan Primary School, Rajarani, Dhankuta District	Limbu (MoI)
16. Harihar Primary School, Jirikhimti, Terathum District	Limbu (MoI)
17. Mahendra Jyoti Secondray School, Charuikharka VDC, Khumbu	Sherpa and Nepali (MoI)
18. Yuba Barsa Lower Secondary School (Monjo), Khumbu	Sherpa and Nepali (MoI)
19. Himalaya Primary School, Namche Bazar, Khumbu	Sherpa and Nepali (MoI)
20. Khumjing Secondary School, Khumjung, Khumbu	Sherpa and Nepali (MoI)
21. Thame Lower Seconday School, Thame, Khumbu	Sherpa and Nepali (MoI)
22. SuryaMukhi Primary School, Morang	Limbu (MoI)

1.3 Private Schools

(Source: <http://www.nepalmandal.com/content/19556.html>, *Newa Basti Newa School Campaign Leaflet*)

1. Rato Bangala School, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
2. GEMS School, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject) under process
3. Malpi International School, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)

4. Marigold English School, Makwanpur	Nepal Bhasa and Nepali (MoI)
5. Lasana PreSchool, Gwangabu, Kathmandu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
6. Simran Academy, Khona	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
7. Peace Garden Secondary School, Khona	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
8. Rudrayani High School, Khona	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
9. Yuva Vidhya Mandir, Khona	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
10. Zing Boarding School, Khona	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
11. Kirtipur English Boarding School, Kirtipur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
12. Hill Town Higher Secondary School, Kirtipur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
13. Jagriti English School, Jyatha	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
14. St. Xavier's School, Jawalakhel - 2071	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
15. Shuvatara School, Sanepa	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
16. Mt Olive School, Thashi	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
17. Patan Higher Secondary School, Patan Dhoka	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
18. Bhassara Secondary school, Balkumari Lalitpur -2070	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
19. John Dewey School, Baluwatar	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
20. Uttar Bahini Boarding School, Gokarneshwor	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
21. Nava Kunja Sec School, Siddhipur, Lalitpur	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
22. Future Star School, Lubhu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
22. Future Star English School, Dallu	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)
23. Ananta English Boarding School, Thashi	Nepal Bhasa (as subject)

APPENDIX III

National and International Legal Frameworks

(Source: UNICEF, 2011)

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996)

Article 23

- Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language community of the territory where it is provided.
- Education must help to maintain and develop the language spoken by the language community of the territory where it is provided.
- Education must always be at the service of linguistic and cultural diversity and of harmonious relations between different language communities throughout the world.
- Within the context of the foregoing principles, everyone has the right to learn any language.

Article 24

- All language communities have the right to decide to what extent their language is to be present, as a vehicular language and as an object of study, at all levels of education within their territory, preschool, primary, secondary, technical, and vocational, university, and adult education.

Education for All (EFA)

- The Dakar framework for action for EFA is committed to “Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.”

Nepal EFA Action Plan

- Phase I (2003-2005): To boost up the teaching of 11 minority languages which have literate traditions and textbooks (e.g. Limbu, Rai Bantawa, Newari, Maithili, Urdu, Bhojpuri, Magar, Sherpa and Tharu) as a subject and medium of instruction in a multi-lingual context at the primary level.
- Phase II (2006-2008): To design curricula and textbooks in minority languages which are inclined towards developing their written system and to introduce those languages and subjects and medium of instruction in the multi-lingual context at the primary level.

- Phase III (2009-2011): To develop a writing system of the minority languages and to introduce those languages and subjects and medium of instruction in the multi-lingual context at the primary level.
- Phase IV (2012-2013): To design curricula and prepare textbooks in order to introduce all the minority languages including the most endangered ones as the medium of instruction at the primary level of education.
- Phase V (2014-2015): To establish at least one mother tongue school in each election constituency.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal (2005)

- Primary education may be provided in the mother tongue [first language].
- Languages [as subjects] shall be taught in the language (i.e. English in English; Nepali in Nepali).

The Education Act of Nepal (7th Amendment)

- (a) the medium of education at the School shall be the Nepali language provided that education up to primary level may be given in mother tongue;
- (b) Notwithstanding anything contained in Sub-section (a), while teaching the subject of language the medium of education may be in the same language.

MLE framework, Ministry of Education (2010)

- Local mother tongues [first languages] will be the MoI for pre-primary education.
- The MoI for all subjects, except Nepali and English, shall be the local mother tongue up to Grade 3.
- Basic education in Grades 4 and 5 shall be bilingual in which the MoI for all subjects, except Nepali and English, shall be the mother tongue and a second language specified as official for use in a given community.
- In Grades 6 through 8 of basic education, the MoI shall be the chosen second language and the mother tongue but other languages may also be taught as subjects. (MOE, 2010, p. 3)

APPENDIX IV

Distribution of Population (percentage) of Nepal by mother tongues

(The following table lists only 15 languages)

SN	Mother tongue	1952/54	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Nepali	48.74	50.96	52.45	58.36	50.31	48.61	44.64
2	Maithili	12.44	12.01	11.49	11.11	11.85	12.30	11.64
3	Bhojpuri	5.80	6.13	6.98	7.61	7.46	7.53	5.98
4	Tamang	6.01	5.62	4.80	3.48	4.89	5.19	5.11
5	Tharu	4.37	4.32	4.29	3.63	5.37	1.05	5.77
6	Newar	4.65	4.01	3.94	2.99	3.73	3.63	3.20
7	Magar	3.32	2.71	2.50	1.42	2.3	3.39	2.98
8	Urdu	0.40	0.03	-	-	1.09	0.77	2.61
9	Awadhi	3.99	5.07	2.74	1.56	2.03	2.47	1.89
10	Hindi	0.97	0.03	-	-	0.92	0.47	0.29
11	Gurung	1.97	1.68	1.49	1.16	1.23	1.49	1.23
12	Limbu	1.77	1.47	1.48	0.86	1.37	1.47	1.30
13	Bhote/Sherpa	0.85	0.89	0.69	0.49	0.66	0.57	0.43
14	Rajbansi	0.43	0.59	0.48	0.40	0.46	0.57	0.46
15	Santhali	-	0.11	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.18	0.19

Source: CBS, 2003 and CBS, 2014

APPENDIX V

Research Checklists and Questions

School Observation Checklist

Purpose: *to understand the underlying ideas, values, and assumptions in the institutional design of MLE schools and the perceived outcomes.*

- Observation: A typical day. Get a general sense of the way school functions immediate surroundings, physical location, facilities etc. Talk to different people as they come in. Observe interactions, what do parent/children/teachers do?
- No of students and teachers, logistical (school records)
- Social composition of location/students/teachers (school records/informal conversation)
- Admission criteria and process (school records/informal conversation)
- What is the language of instruction in classroom and usual medium of communication in playground/classroom/staff room? Which are the languages used and for what purpose? (observation)
- Social composition of area in which school is located/of the students and teachers (school records/informal conversation)
- Iconography in schools/classroom (observation)
- Practices/ rituals/celebrations/holidays/school songs (participation and observation)
- Textbooks and curriculum: images and stories on ethnic groups, nation, ethnicity, citizenship, education (school records/informal conversation/observation)
- Academic performance of children (school records/informal conversation)

Informal conversation with students

Purpose: *to understand how children perceive, value and experience mother-tongue education? To what extent is it used (or not used) and for what purposes? What might explain the varying levels of use, if any?*

The following questions were not asked in a single meeting, but informed the general conversation thought the duration of fieldwork. The questions below are only indicative and the discussion was unstructured.

Preliminary Questions

- Let them know about me and purpose of the study. Ask them about the school, which grades they are in? Where do they live, how far is it from school? What do they 'like' about the school? What do they not like?

Language background

- Language and ethnic background? What are the languages you can speak? What language do you speak in your family, with friends, with teachers? For what purpose? Which language are you most comfortable with? Which language do you like? Why?

Language in School

- What is the language used in your classroom? Which language is it easier for learning in school? Can you read, write and understand the books/teaching in classroom? What do you think about them? Is it useful to have textbooks in mother-tongue? How do you interact with other children who have different mother tongue? What do you think is the significance of mother tongue education?
- What are the important things that have happened in the school? Why are they important?

Motivation

- Why have you chosen to come to this school? What do you like the most about the school? What do you not like about the school? What do you think about the schools that do not use mother tongue in their school? Would you like to go to higher education institute that uses mother tongue? Why?

Goals of Education

- Why do they come to school? What do they expect to gain from education? Is education important? Why? What is a good education? What are their aspirations?
- What are do their parents do? What are their educational levels? What are their aspirations for their children? How does that affect their own aspirations?
- Who are the important people that you idealise? Why are they important?

3.1 Informal interviews with parents

Purpose: *to understand how children perceive, value and experience mother-tongue education? To what extent is it used (or not used) and for what purposes? What might explain the varying levels of use, if any?*

Venue: preferably in the school, when they come to pick up or drop children to schools. In the beginning, I had informal conversation with them to get general sense of their opinion on school. During this process of informal conversation, I identified some parents who might be willing for a longer interview.

Background Information:

- Language and ethnic background. Occupation? Where do you live? How far is it from the school? Which grade does your child study in? How did you know about this school? Admission process? Any difficulties? What did you have to do?

Use of Language

- Which languages can you speak? Which language do you use in your family, with your children, with teachers? For what purposes? How do you communicate with people with different mother tongue?

Motivation

- Why have you chosen to send your child to this school? What do you like the most about the school? What do you not like about the school?

Aspirations

- What do you want your child to do in future? What are do you do? What are your educational levels? What are your aspirations for the children? What do children think about it?

Interviews with School Principals/teachers

Purpose: To understand motivation behind the school, the underlying ideas, values, and assumptions in the institutional design of MLE schools and the perceived and intended outcomes of education.

Brief History and general information

- When was this school established? Could you briefly explain the history and purpose of school? Is there any student admission criteria and process? Where do the children usually come from? What are the fee structures? What are they required to do? What is the general schedule of school?

Language of Instruction

- When did your school start using mother tongue as the medium of instruction? Why and how was it chosen?
- What are the languages that you speak? Do you speak all the children's mother tongue?
- Do all the children speak the language used in the school?
- What textbooks and curriculum do you use in the school? Are they from the government or some other organization or developed from at the school?
- Do you receive any support from the government? If yes, what kind of support?

Impact

- What do you think about the use of MLE in your school? What do you see as advantages and disadvantages?
- What changes have you seen after the implementation of MLE? (only in the schools that introduced MLE later) – motivation, learning outcomes, drop out, interaction, any other dynamics. What do you see as an impact of MLE in your school?

- What are the challenges have you faced in the implementation of MLE? – parents’ perception, classroom management, multi-ethnic classroom, managing different subjects, teaching resources available etc.
- How has the use of mother tongue affected the educational achievement? Do you think it helps or harms? Why?

Ideas

- Why should children be taught in their mother tongue? Why or why not?
- What are the main advantages? Have you seen any visible changes?
- What are the main challenges? Could you please talk about the difficulties faced so far?
- What are the perception of parents and children?
- Is there any context where it should not be implemented? Why?

3.5 Interview Guideline for policy makers/educationist/ethnic activists

Purpose: *To understand the underlying ideas, values, and assumptions in the institutional design of MLE schools. What are the perceived and intended outcomes of education?*

- What is mother-tongue education/multi-lingual education?
- How and when was it started? What does it aim to do?
- How is it being implemented? What has been done so far?

Role of the Government

- What is the role of government?
- How are the schools chosen for MLE? What is the procedure? What kind of training and support given?

Impact

- What do you think about the use of MLE in your school? What do you see as advantages and disadvantages?
- What changes have you seen after the implementation of MLE? (only in the schools that introduced MLE later) – motivation, learning outcomes, drop out, interaction, any other dynamics. What do you see as an impact of MLE in your school?
- What are the challenges have you faced in the implementation of MLE? – parents’ perception, classroom management, multi-ethnic classroom, managing different subjects, teaching resources available etc.
- How has the use of mother tongue affected the educational achievement? Do you think it helps or harms?

Challenges

- How do you assess the effectiveness and sustainability of MLE?
- What are the main advantages? Have you seen any visible changes?
- What are the main challenges? Could you please talk about the difficulties faced so far?
- What are the perception of parents and children?
- Is there any context where it should not be implemented? Why?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Government Reports

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 1971. Ethnicity and religion (Ch3), *Population Monograph of Nepal 1971*, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 1987. Mother tongue and religious composition (Ch4), *Population Monograph of Nepal 1981*, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal. pp. 67-94.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 2001. Language (Ch4), *Population Monograph of Nepal 1981*, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal. pp. 137-171.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 2001. 'Social composition of the population: Ethnicity and religion in Nepal (Ch3), *Population Monograph of Nepal 1981*, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal. pp. 87-135.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 2003. *Population monograph of Nepal 2001*, Vol 1, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal.

Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). 2014. *Population monograph of Nepal 2011*, Vol 2, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal.

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) 2069 BS. *Pathyakram gatibidhi: Quarterly bulletin*, 14 (1). Ministry of Education. Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). 2005. *National curriculum framework for school education in nepal*, Ministry of Education. Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). 2064 BS. *Guideline for development of mother-tongue textbook and curriculum*. Ministry of Education. Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Department of Education (DoE). 2060 BS. *Inclusive education information booklet*, Ministry of Education. Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE), 2007. *Model curriculum for mother tongue and textbook guidelines 2007*, Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE), 2014. *Flash I Report*, Department of Education, Sanothimi Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 1971. *The National education system plan for 1971-76*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2003. *Education for All 2004-2009: Core Document*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2003. *National plan of action (NPoA)*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Ministry of Education (MoE). 2009. *School sector reform plan, 2009-2015*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC), 1956. *Education in Nepal: Report of the Nepal education planning commission*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal.

Dissertations

Awasthi, L. D. 2004. *Exploring monolingual school practices in multilingual Nepal*. PhD Dissertation. Danmark Pædagogiske Universitet/Danish. University of Education.

Bennike, R. 2013. *Governing the hills: Imperial landscapes, national territories and production of place between Naya Nepal and Incredible India*. PhD Dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

Burnett, R. G. 2012. *Mother tongue education: Nepal's educational dilemma*, Dissertation for Special Studies for Honors, Franklin and Marshall College, USA.

Chalmers, R. 2003. *Language, literature, and the formation of a Nepali public sphere in India, 1914-1940*. PhD Dissertation . School of Oriental and Asian Studies (SOAS), University of London.

Rai, J. 2013. *Activism as moral practice: Cultural politics, place-making and indigenous activism in Nepal*, PhD Dissertation, The University of Michigan, USA.

Newspapers, Websites, and Reports

BBC Radio 4, *Our language in your hands*. 17 December 2012.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p6zpl>

Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi (JSB) 2000. *Lumanti Pau*. Chaga, Kathmandu: Jagat Sundar Bwonekuthi

Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) 2012. *Swarna Smarika*. Barkulpur, Kapilbastu: Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School

Nepal Mandal, 2013. *Rato Bangala school ye Nepal Bhay*, Online resource accessed in Dec 2014 <http://www.nepalmandal.com/content/19558.html>, 3 May 2013.

The Himalayan Times, 2014. *SLC Results out; 43.92% students pass*. The Himalayan Times, 13 June 2014. Online Resource <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=SLC+results+out%3B+43.92+%25+students+pass&NewsID=417994>

UNESCO, 2003. *Education for All global monitoring report: Quality imperative*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO, 2006. *Education for All global monitoring report: Literacy*, Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO. 2011. *Multilingual education in Nepal: Hearsay and reality? A Report*. Kathmandu: UNESCO.

United Mission to Nepal (UMN) Website – www.umn.org.np

Journal Articles and Books

Ahearn, L.M. 2003. *Invitations to love: Literacy, love letters, and social change in Nepal*. Delhi: Adarsha Books.

Aikman, S. 1999. *Intercultural education and literacy*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.

Alim, H. S. 2009. Creating An Empire within an Empire: Critical Hip Hop language pedagogies and the role of sociolinguistics. In H.S. Alim, A. Ibrahim and A. Pennycook (eds.), *Global linguistic flows: Hip Hop cultures, youth identities and the politics of language*. New York: Routledge. pp. 213-30.

Althusser, L. 1971. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses, In Brewster, Ben (trans.), *Lenin & Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 127-186.

Ames, P. 2012. Young lives language, culture and identity in the transition to primary school: Challenges to indigenous children's rights to education in Peru. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 32: 454-462.

Anderson, L. 1979. *Schooling and citizenship in a global age: An exploration of the meaning and significance of global education*. Indiana University: Social Studies Development Center.

Anderson-Levitt, K. 2003. A world culture of schooling? In K. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Local meanings, global schooling: Anthropology and world culture theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Apple, M. 2000. Can critical pedagogies interrupt rightist policies? *Educational Theory*, 50 (2): 229-254.

- Baker, C. 2011. *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bakhtin, M. 1981. *The dialogic imagination*. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Michael Holquist,. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bandhu, C. M. 1989. The role of the Nepali language in establishing the national unity and identity of Nepal, *Kailash*, 15 (3-4): 122-133.
- Barth, F. 1969. Introduction, In F. Barth (Ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, London: Georg Allen and Unwin.
- Benei, V. 2008. *Schooling passions: Nation, history and language in contemporary western India*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Benson, C. 2002. Real and potential benefits of bilingual education in developing countries, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 5(6): 303-317.
- Bernstein, B. 1971. On the classification and framing of educational knowledge, In M. F. D. Young, ed., *Knowledge and control*, London: Collier-Macmillan. pp. 47-69.
- Bhatta, P. and Shak B. Budakothi. 2013. *Understanding Private Educationscape(s) in Nepal*. The Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI) Working Paper, Open Society Foundation.
- Bhattachan, K.B. 1995. Ethnopolitics and ethnodevelopment: An emerging paradigm, In Dhruva Kumar (Ed.), *State, leadership and politics in Nepal*, CNAS: Kathmandu.
- Bilanuik, L. 2005. *Contested tongues: Language politics and cultural correction in Ukraine*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Bista, D.B. 1991. *Fatalism and development: Nepal's struggle for modernization*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman
- Blommaert, J., J. Collins and S. Slembrouck. 2005. Spaces of multilingualism. *Language and Communication*, 25 (3): 197-216.
- Blum, A.F. 1971. The corpus of knowledge as normative order, In Michael Young. (Ed.) *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*. London: Collier Macmillan.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.C. 1979. Reproduction, Bourdieu and symbolic power. *Critique of Anthropology*, 4: 77-85.

- Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.C. 1970. *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Bourdieu P. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Transl. G Raymond, M Adamson. Cambridge: Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Bourdieu P. 1993. *The Field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. and D. Wacquant. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bowles S. and Gintis H. 1976. *Schooling in capitalist America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bucholtz, M. and Kira Hall. 2004. Language and identity. In Alessandro Duranti (Eds.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 369-394.
- Burghart, R. 1984. The formation of the concept of nation-state in Nepal. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 44 (1): 1-25.
- Burghart, R. 1993a. Quarrels in the language family: Agency and representations of speech in Mithila. *Modern Asian Studies*, 27 (4): 761-804.
- Burghart, R. 1993b. The political culture of Panchayat democracy. In Michael Hutt (Ed.), *Nepal in the Nineties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Burket, C. 1997. Defining maithil identity: Who is in charge? In David N. Gellner Jonna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton (Eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Caddell, M. 2006. Private schools as battlefields: contested visions of learning and livelihood in Nepal. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 36 (4): 463 479.
- Caddell, M. 2007. Education and change: A historical perspective on schooling, development and the Nepali nation-state, In Kumar, Krishna and Oesterheld, Joachim (Eds.), *Education and Social Change in South Asia*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 251-284.
- Cameron D. 2000. *Good To Talk: Living and Working in a Communication Culture*. London: Sage.
- Canagarajah, S. 1993. Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4): 601-26.

Canagarajah, S. 2005. *Reclaiming the Local in Language Policy and Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Canagarajah, S. 2002. Reconstructing Local Knowledge. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 1 (4): 243-59.

Carney, S. and Madsen, U.A. 2009. A place of one's own: Schooling and the formation of identities in modern Nepal. *Globalisation, Comparative Education and Policy Research*, 3: 171-187.

Carney, S. and Jeremy Rappleye. 2011. Education reform in Nepal: from modernity to conflict. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9 (1): 1-9.

Coulby, D., 1997. Educational responses to diversity within the state. In Coulby, D. et al. (eds) *Intercultural Education: World Yearbook of Education 1997*. London: Kogan Page.

Cresse, A. and Blackledge, A. 2010. Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching?, *The Modern Languages Journal* 94: 105-115.

Cummins, J. 2003. Challenging the construction of difference as deficit: where are identity, intellect, imagination and power in the new regime of truth?, In P. P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Pedagogies of difference rethinking education for social change*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 41-60.

Cummins, J. 1979. Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49: 222-51.

Cummins, J., and Early, M. 2011. *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools*. Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham.

Dahal, D. R. 2000. Nepal's governing elite: Their composition and role in constituting the state. In Dhruva Kumar (Ed.), *Domestic Conflict and Crisis of Governability in Nepal*. Kathmandu: CNAS.

Des Chene, M. K. 1996. Ethnography in the Janajati-yug: Lessons from reading Rodhi and other Tamu writings, *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 1 (1): 97-161.

Dreze, J. and Sen, A. 1995. *Economic development and social opportunity*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Eagle, S. 2008. The Language situation in Nepal, In Robert B. Kaplan and Richard B. Baldauf Jr. (Eds.) *Language Planning and Policy in Asia, Vol. 1: Japan, Nepal, Taiwan and Chinese Characters*. Bristol, New York, Ontario: Multilingual Matters.

Fisher, W. F. 1983. *Fluid boundaries: Forming and transforming of identity in Nepal*, New York, Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.

Fishman, J. 1997. Language and ethnicity: The view from within. In Florian Coulmas (Ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. London: Blackwell. pp. 327-343.

- Foley, D.E. 1990. *Learning capitalist culture: Deep in the heart of Tejas*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Fraser-Gupta, A. 1997. When mother-tongue education is not preferred. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 18 (6): 496-506.
- Freire, P. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the world and word*. London: Routledge.
- Gaige, F.H. 1975. *Regionalism and national unity in Nepal*. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Gal, S. 1989. Language and political economy. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18 :345-67.
- Gal, S. and Irvine, J. 1995. The Boundaries of languages and disciplines: How ideologies construct differences. *Social Research*, 62 (4): 967-1001.
- Garcia, O. 2009. Education, multilingualism and translanguaging in the 21st century. In A.K. Mohanty, M. Panda, R. Phillipson, & T. Skutnabb-Kangas (Eds.), *Multilingual Education for Social Justice: Globalising the Local*. New Delhi, India: Orient Black Swan. pp. 128-145.
- Garcia, O. and Nelson Flores. Multilingual pedagogies, In Marilyn Martin-Jones, Adrian Blackledge (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism*. Routledge. pp 232-246.
- Garcia, O. and Li Wei, 2013. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gellner, D. 1986. Newar: Caste and identity, *Arch. europ. social.*, 27: 102-148.
- Gellner, D.N., Jonna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton, 1997. *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Gellner, D.N. 2004. 'Children's Voices from Kathmandu and Lalitpur, Nepal' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 68: 1-47.
(<http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/book/journal/journal68.pdf>)
- Gellner, D.N. 2007. Caste, Ethnicity and Inequality in Nepal, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(20): 1823-8.
- Gellner, D.N. 2009. The Awkward Social Science? Anthropology on Schools, Elections, and Revolution in Nepal, *JASO-online* (NS) 1 (2): 115-40.
- Gellner, D. N. 2011. Not if but how, *The Kathmandu Post*, 2 May 2011.
- Gellner, D.N. 2014. Schools as Organizations: On the Question of Value Consensus, In A. Tervooren, N. Engel, M. Göhlich, I. Miethe, S. Reh (Eds.),

Ethnographie und Differenz in pädagogischen Feldern: Internationale Entwicklungen erziehungswissenschaftlicher Forschung, Bielefeld: Verlag, pp. 205-223.

Ghai, Y. 2007. *Restructuring and Federalism in Nepal*, Background Paper for the UNDP Conference, Kathmandu: Nepal.

Ghimire, L. 2011. Ideologies in the educational language policies of Nepal: Mother tongue instruction in multi-lingual schools of Nepal, *Nepalese Linguistics*, 26: 36-44.

Giampapa, F. 2004. The politics of identity, representation, and the discourses of self-identification: negotiating the periphery and the center, In Pavlenko, A and Blackledge, A (Eds.), *Negotiation of identities in multi-lingual contexts*, Multi-lingual Matters, pp. 192-218.

Giri, R.A. 2009. The politics of 'unplanning' of languages in Nepal, *Journal of NELTA*, 14 (1-2): 32-44.

Giri, R.A. 2011. Languages and Language Politics, How Invisible Language Politics produce visible results in Nepal, *Language Problems & Language Planning* 35 (11): 197-221.

Giroux, H.A. 1981. *Ideology Culture and the Process of Schooling*, Falmer: Flamer Press.

Goody, J. 1975. *Literacy in Traditional Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gurung, G. 1994. *Hidden Facts in Nepalese Politics*, transl. B. D. Rai. Kathmandu. Accessed - <http://mongolvision.com/HIDDENFACTSINNEPALIPOLITICS.doc>

Gorski, P.S. 2013. *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Grenfell, M. and David James. 1998. *Bourdieu and Education: Acts of Practical Theory*. London: Flamer Press.

Grenfell, M. and David James. 2004. Change in the field – changing the field: Bourdieu and the methodological practice of educational research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25 (4): 507-522.

Guneratne, A. 1998. Modernization, the State, and the Construction of a Tharu Identity in Nepal, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57 (3): 749-773.

Guneratne, A. 2002. *Many Tongues, One People*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Gustafson, B. 2009. *New languages of the state: indigenous resurgence and the politics of knowledge in Bolivia*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Hachhethu, K., Kumar, S., and Jiwan, S. 2008. *Nepal in transition: A study on the state of democracy*. Kathmandu: DSA/Nepal Chapter and International IDEA.
- Haeri, 1997. The reproduction of symbolic capital: Language, state, and class in Egypt. *Current Anthropology*, 38 (5): 795-816.
- Hammersley, M. 1999. *Researching school experience: Exploration of teaching and learning*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.
- Hangen, S. I. 2010. *The rise of ethnic politics in Nepal: Democracy in the margins*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.
- Hanks, W. 2005. Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34: 67-83.
- Heller, M. 1996. Legitimate language in a multilingual school, *Linguistics and Education*, 8: 139-157.
- Heller, M. 1999 (2006). *Linguistic minorities and modernity: A sociolinguistic ethnography*. London: Blackwell.
- Heller, M. 2011. *Paths to post-nationalism: A Critical Ethnography of Language and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Higbe, R. 1988. *A classful of Gods and Goddesses in Nepal*, California: The Boxwood Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Holland, D., William Lachicotte Jr., Debra Skinner, Carole Cain. 1998. *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Holoquist, M. 1990. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world*. London: Routledge.
- Hornberger, N. 1995. *Indigenous literacies in the Americas: Language planning from the bottom up*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Hornberger, N. 1989. Continua of biliteracy, *Review of Educational Research*, 59(3): 271-196.
- Hornberger, N. 2000. Bilingual education policies and practice in the Andes: Ideological paradox and intercultural possibility. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 31(2): 173-201.
- Hutt, M. 2012. Singing the new Nepal. *Nations and Nationalism*, 18 (2), 2012, 306-325.
- Hutt, M. 1988. *Nepali: A national language and its literature*. New Delhi and London: Sterling Publishers and School of Oriental and African Studies.

- Hutt, M. 1986. Diversity and change in the languages of highland Nepal. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 14 (1): 1-24.
- Irvine, J. 1989. When talk isn't cheap: language and political economy. *American Ethnology*, 16 (2): 248-67.
- Irvine, J. T., and Gal, S. 2000. Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities*, Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press. pp. 35-84.
- Jaffe, A. 1993. Obligation, error and authenticity: Competing cultural principles in the teaching of Corsican. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 3 (1): 99-114.
- Jaffe, A. 2001. Authority and authenticity: Corsican discourse on bilingual education. In M. Heller and M. Martin-Jones (Eds.), *Voices of authority: education and linguistic difference*. Westport, CT: Ablex. pp. 269 - 296.
- Jolly, L. 1995. Waving a tattered banner?: Aboriginal language revitalisation. *Aboriginal Child at School*, 23 (3): 1-19.
- Kramer, K-H. 2008. How representative is the Nepali state? In David N. Gellner (Ed.), *Resistance and the State: Nepalese Experience*. Social Science Press: New Delhi. pp. 179-197
- Krauskopff, G. 2008. An 'Indigenous Minority' in a Border Area: Tharu Ethnic Associations, NGOs, and the Nepalese State. In David N. Gellner (Ed.), *Resistance and the State: Nepalese Experience*. Social Science Press: New Delhi. pp. 199-243.
- Kroskrity, P.V. 2004. Language ideologies. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 496-517.
- Kruks, S. 2001. *Retrieving experience: Subjectivity and recognition in feminist politics*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- LaDousa, C. 2005. Disparate markets: language, nation, and education in North India. *American Ethnology*, 32 (3): 460- 78.
- LaDousa, C. 2007. Of nation and state: language, school, and the reproduction of disparity in a North Indian City. *Anthropology Quarterly*, 80 (4): 925-59.
- Lawoti, M. 2007. *Contentious politics and democratisation in Nepal*, New Delhi: Sage Publication
- Lawoti, M. and Hangen, S. 2013. *Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Nepal*, Oxford and New York: Routledge.
- Liechty, M. 1997. Selective exclusion: Foreigners, foreign goods, and foreignness in modern Nepali history. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 2(1): 5-68.

- Liechty, M. 2003. *Suitably modern: Making middle-class culture in Kathmandu*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- Leve, L. 2011. Identity. *Current Anthropology*, 52 (4): 513-535.
- Levinson, B.A. and Pollock, M. 2011. *A companion to the anthropology of education*, Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Levinson, B. A., Douglas E. Foley, Dorothy C. Holland, 1996. *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practices*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Limbu, A. J. 2006. *Effectiveness of mother-tongue education: Limbu language for education inclusion*, Kathmandu: Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF).
- Lingard B., Sandra Taylor and Shaun Rawolle. 2005. Bourdieu and the study of education policy: Introduction. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (6): 663-669.
- Lingard, B. 2007. Pedagogies of indifference. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 11 (3): 245-266.
- Luke, A. 2004. On the material consequences of literacy, language, and education. *Language and Education*, 18(4): 331-335.
- Luttrell, W. 1996. 'Becoming somebody in and against school: Toward a psychocultural theory of gender and self-making'. In B Levinson, D. Foley and D Holland (Eds.), *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Pp. 93-118.
- Lynch, K. 1989. *The hidden curriculum: Reproduction in education, A reappraisal*. England: Falmer Press.
- Malla, K.P. 1977. *English in Nepalese education*. Kathmandu: Nepal: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Malla, K.P. 1979. *The Road to Nowhere*. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.
- Martin-Jones, M., and Heller, M. 1996. Language and social reproduction in multilingual settings. *Linguistics and Education*, 8(1&2): 127-137.
- May, S. 2005. Language rights: Moving the debate forward. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9(3): 319-347.
- May, S. 2012. *Language and minority rights: Ethnicity, nationalism and the politics of language*. New York and London: Routledge.
- May, S. 1998. Language and education rights for indigenous peoples. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 11(3): 272-296.

- May, S. 2000. Uncommon languages: The challenges and possibilities of minority language rights. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 21: 366-385.
- Mikesell, S.L. 1993. The paradoxical support of Nepal's left for Comrade Gonzalo. *Himal*, (March/April): 31-3.
- Mills D. and M. Morton. 2013. *Ethnography in Education*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Alderson P. and Morrow V. 2011. *The ethics of research with children and young people: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Morrow, V. 2008. Ethical dilemmas in research with children and young people about their social environments. *Children's Geographies*, 6 (1): 49 – 61.
- Mühlhäusler, P. 1996. *Linguistic ecology: Language change and linguistic imperialism in the Pacific region*. London: Routledge.
- Neupane, G. 2000. *Nepālko Jātiya Prasna: Sāmājik Banot ra Sājhedāriko Sambhāvanā* (Nepal's Nationality Question: Social Structure and the Possibilities of Compromise). Kathmandu: Centre for Development Studies.
- Noonan, M. 1996. *The rise of ethnic consciousness and the politicization of language in West-Central Nepal*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
- Ochs, E. 1992. Indexing gender. In Duranti A and Goodwin C (Eds.), *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Onta, P. 1996a. Ambivalence denied: The making of Rastriya Itihas in Panchayat era Textbooks. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 23 (1): 213-254.
- Onta, P. 1996b. Creating a brave nation in British India: the rhetoric of Jati improvement, rediscovery of Bhanubhakta and the writing of Bir history. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 1 (1): 37-76.
- Onta, P. 2006. The Growth of the Adivasi Janajati movement in Nepal after 1990s: The Non-political institutional agents. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 11 (2): 303-354.
- Onta, P. 2011. *Legitimizing ethno-politics: Revisiting janajati magazines published during the early 1990s*, Paper presented in Kathmandu workshop on 'Creation of Public Meaning during Nepal's Democratic Transition'. Kathmandu: Nepal.
- Paris, D. 2011. *Language across difference: Ethnicity, communication, and youth identities in changing urban schools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Pavlenko, A and Blackledge, A. 2004. *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*, Bilingual Education and Bilingualism Series 45, Clevedon: Multilingual Matter Ltd.

- Pennycook, A. 2006, Postmodernism in language policy, In Ricento Thomas (Ed.), *An Introduction to Language Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp. 60-76.
- Pettigrew, J. 2000. 'Gurkhas' in the town: Migration, language and healing. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. 19 (Autumn): 7-40.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, J. 1997. Vestiges and visions: Cultural change in the process of nation-building in Nepal. In D. Gellner, J. Pfaff-Czarnecka & J. Whelpton (Eds.), *Nationalism and ethnicity in a Hindu kingdom: The politics of culture in contemporary Nepal*, Amsterdam: Haarwood Academic.
- Pherali, T. J. 2011. Education and conflict in Nepal: Possibilities for reconstruction, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9 (1): 135-154.
- Phillipson, R. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. 1997. Realities and myths of linguistic imperialism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 18 (3): 238-248.
- Phyak, P. 2009. Linguistic stratification and language planning: a critical ethnography of Nepalese context, *Nepalese Linguistics*, 24: 213-224.
- Phyak, P. 2011. *Language issues in educational Policies and practices in Nepal: A critical review*, Asian Development Bank, Kathmandu: Nepal.
- Pigg, S.L. 1992. Inventing social categories through place: Social representation and development in Nepal, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 34, 3, pp. 491-513.
- Pradhan, R. 2002. Ethnicity, caste and a pluralist society. In K. M. Dixit & S. Ramachandaran (Eds.), *State of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Himal Books.
- Pratt, M. L. 1991. Arts of the contact zone, *Profession* 91, New York: Modern Language Association.
- Ragsdale, T.A. 1989. *Once a hermit Kingdom: Ethnicity, Education and National Integration in Nepal*. New Delhi: Monohar Publications.
- Rai, R.K. 1992. Truth denied (letters). *Himal*, 5(4): 2.
- Rai, V.S. 2009. Language loss and their preservation in Nepal. *Nepalese Linguistics*, 24: 213-224.
- Ricento, T. 2000. Historical and theoretical perspectives in language policy and planning. In Thomas Ricento (Ed.), *Ideology, Politics and Language Policies: Focus on English*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins. pp. 9-24.

- Rival, L. 1996. In B Levinson, D. Foley and D Holland (Eds.), *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Rodriguez, R. 1982. *The Hunger of Memory: the Education of Richard Rodriguez*, David R. Goldine.
- Rothchild, J. 2006. *Gender trouble makers: Education and empowerment in Nepal*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Rumsey, A. 1990. Wording, meaning, and linguistic ideology. *American Anthropologist*, 92: 346–361.
- Salo, L. 2013. Crossing discourses: Language ideology and shifting representations in Sweden's field of language planning. *Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies*, Paper 61, Tiburg University.
- Sassen, S. 2001. Spatialities and temporalities of the global: Elements for a theorization, In A. Appadurai (Ed.), *Globalization*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp 260–278.
- Schieffelin, B.B. 1990. *The give and take of everyday Life: Language socialization of Kaluli Children*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press
- Schultz, T.W. 1971. *Investment in human capital*. New York. The Free Press.
- Sharma, G.N. 1990. The Impact of education during the Rana period in Nepal. *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, 10 (2-3): 3-7.
- Sharma, P.R. 1992. How to tend this garden? *Himal*, 5 (93): 7-9.
- Shaw, 1996. In B Levinson, D. Foley and D Holland (Eds.), *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Shneiderman, S. 2013. Developing a culture of marginality: Nepal's current classificatory moment. *Focaal – Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, 65: 3-12.
- Shneiderman, S. 2015. *Rituals of Ethnicity*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Shrestha, B.G. and B. Van den Hoek. 1995. Education in the mother tongue: The case of Nepalbhāṣā (Newari). *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 12 (1): 73-86.
- Silverstein, M. 1979. Language structure and linguistic ideology. In Clyne, P., Hanks, W., Hofbauer, C. (Eds.), *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, pp. 193–247.

- Silverstein, M. 1996. Monoglot 'standard' in America: Standardization and metaphors of linguistic hegemony. In Donald Brenneis and Ronald S. Macaulay (Eds.), *The Matrix of Language: Contemporary Linguistic Anthropology*. Boulder, CO: Westview. pp. 284-306.
- Simpson, A. 2003. *'Half London' in Zambia: Contested identities in a catholic mission School*. Edinburgh University Press/IAI.
- Skinner, D. and Dorothy Holland. 1996. Schools and the cultural production of the educated person in a Nepalese hill community. In B Levinson, D. Foley and D Holland (Eds.), *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. 1998. Human rights and language wrongs: A future for diversity? *Language Sciences*, 20: 5-27.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. 2000. *Linguistic genocide in education or worldwide diversity and human rights?* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sonntag, S. K. 1995. Ethnolinguistic identity and language policy in Nepal. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 1(4): 108-12.
- Sonntag, S. 2003. *The local politics of global English: Case studies in linguistic globalization*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Stambach, A. 2000. *Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro: Schooling, community, and gender in East Africa*. New York: Routledge.
- Steinmetz, G. 2010. Ideas in exile: Refugees from Nazi Germany and the failure to transplant historical sociology into the United States. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 23 (1): 1-27.
- Street, B. 1984. *Literacy in theory and practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B.V. 2011. Literacy inequalities in theory and practice: The power to name and define. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31: 580-586.
- Stroud, S. 2003. Postmodernist perspectives on local languages: African mother-tongue education in times of globalisation. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 6 (1): 17-36.
- Subba, T. 1999. *Politics of culture: A study of three kirata communities in the Eastern Himalayas*, India: Orient Longman
- Swartz, D. 1997. *Culture and power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Templeman, S. 1999. Constructions of cultural identity: Multiculturalism and exclusion, *Political Studies*, 47: 17-31.

Thapa, A. 2013. Does private school competition improve public school performance? The case of Nepal, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (4): 358-366.

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

Tumbahang, G.B. 2010. Marginalization of indigenous languages of Nepal, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 37 (1): 69

Turin, M. 1995. Too Many starts and not enough sky: Language and ethnicity among the Thakali of Nepal, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 24 (2): 187-199.

Turin, M. 2007. My tongue or yours? *Nepali Times*. (Retrieved on 13/7/2015. <http://nepalitimes.com/news.php?id=13232#.VaOKOk1FCAG>)

Turin, M. 2007. *Linguistic diversity and the preservation of endangered language: A case study from Nepal*, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Nepal.

Turin, M. 2012. Voices of vanishing worlds: Endangered languages, orality, and cognition. *Analise Social*, 205, 67 (4): 846-869.

Turin, M. 2013. *Our Language in your hand*. BBC radio programme. (available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p3hmv>)

Turin, M. 2014. Mother tongues and language competence: The shifting politics of linguistic belonging in the Himalaya. In Gerard Toffin and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (Eds.), *Facing Globalisation in the Himalayas: Belonging and the Politics of the Self*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Turner, T. 1993. Anthropology and multiculturalism. *Cultural anthropology*, 8(4): 411-429.

Urcioli, B. 1995. Language and borders. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24: 525-46.

Urcioli, B. 1996. *Exposing prejudice: Puerto Rican experiences of language, race, and class*. Boulder: Westview.

Urcioli, B. 1993. Representing class: Who decides? *Anthropological Quarterly*, 66(4): 203-210.

Urcioli, B. and Chaise LaDousa, 2013. Language management/ labour. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 42:175-90.

Urla, J. 2001. Outlaw language: Creating alternative public spheres in Basque free radio. In S. Gal and K. A. Woolard (Eds.), *Languages and publics: The making of authority*. Manchester: St. Jerome. pp. 141-163.

- Valentin, K. 2011. Modernity, education and its alternatives: Schooling among the urban poor in Kathmandu, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 9 (1): 99-113.
- Varenne, H. 2007. Difficult collective deliberations: Anthropological notes toward a theory of education, *Teachers College Record*, 109 (7), 1559-1588.
- Vollan, K. 2012. *Affirmative action and power-sharing instruments: Possible electoral arrangements for Nepal*, Conference on 'Inequality and Affirmative Action: Situating Nepal in Global Debates' 18-20 July 2012, Kathmandu, organized by Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University and Social Science Baha, Goldsmith, University of London and Yale University
- Webster, J. 1994. Nepali proficiency in rural Nepal. *Nepalese Linguistics*, 11:43-45.
- Webster, J. 2011. *Indicators of bilingual proficiency in Nepali among Tibeto-Burman peoples of Nepal*. Kathmandu: SIL International.
- Weinberg, M. 2013. Revisiting history in language policy: The case of medium of instruction in Nepal. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 28 (1).
- Whelpton, J. 1997. Political identity in Nepal: State, nation and community. In David N. Gellner Jonna Pfaff-Czarnecka, and John Whelpton (Eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Nepal*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Willis, P. 1977. *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon House.
- Wood, H. 1959. Development of education in Nepal, *Education Leadership*. pp 429-433.
- Wood, H. 1965. Development of education in Nepal, *Studies in Comparative Education. Bulletin* 65 (5). US Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
- Woolard, K. A. 1998. Simultaneity and bivalency as strategies in bilingualism. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 8: 3-29.
- Woolard, K.A. 1985 Language variation and cultural hegemony: Toward an integration of sociolinguistic and social theory. *American Ethnologist*, 12 (4): 738-748.
- Woolard, K. A. and Bambi B. Schieffelin. 1994. Language ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23: 55-82.
- Yadav, R. 1992. The use of the mother tongue in primary education: *Nepalese context, Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 19: 177-190.
- Yadava, Y. P. 2007. *Linguistic diversity in Nepal: Perspectives on language policy*, International seminar on constitutionalism and diversity in Nepal CNAS, 22-24 August, 2007 (accessed:

http://www.seameo.org/_1d2008/doucments/Presentation_document/Yadava_Linguistic_Diversity_Nepal.pdf)

Yadav, Y. and Mark Turin. 2005. The indigenous languages of Nepal: Situation, issues and analysis. In Yogendra Yadav and Pradeep L. Bajracharya (Eds.), *The indigenous languages of Nepal: Situation, policy planning and coordination*. Kathmandu: National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities.

Young, M. 1971. *Knowledge and control: New directions for the sociology of education*. London: Collier Macmillan.

Young, I. M. 1999. *Justice and the politics of difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Young, I. M. 2000. *Inclusion and democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press.