



## Implementation of Yakthung-Pan Curriculum: A Pedagogical Practices in Classroom

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### Abstract

This study intends to explore the implementation practices of Yakthung-Pan curriculum in community school of Nepal. To explore this, the basic qualitative design was used to collect the verbal information from the informants. For this, the three participants of Yakthung teachers were selected from three community schools those who were teaching this curriculum at the basic level. These participants were selected through the purposive sampling method. From these participants, I collected the data by administering in-depth interview. I also observed the classroom of these teachers. The data were analyzed in thematic approach. The major finding is that Yakthung teacher used the inductive, code switching, listening, speaking, reading, writing and verbal learning methods in teaching in Yakthung-Pan mother tongue curriculum. Similarly, these teachers were used the textbook as a core instructional material in teaching this curriculum. Along with, teachers were used the theme based evaluation, formative and summative evaluation, theoretical and practical evaluation methods in classroom teaching. However, the teachers were little used the instructional materials in implementing this curriculum in the classroom.

*Keywords:* Yakthung-Pan, Mother-tongue, Code-switching, Instructional materials, Formative and summative assessment

### Introduction

Nepal is a multicultural, multilingual and ethnically diverse country. Here are various caste and ethnic people who live in the Mountain, Hills and Terai region. These people have their own identity, culture, religion and language. 142 castes /ethnicities and 124 languages are spoken in Nepal (National Statistics Office, 2021, p. 1-8). Among them, 1.2 percent of people speak the Yakthung (Limbu) language (National Statistics Office, 2021, p. 9). The Limb ethnic group people live in eastern part of Nepal. They have their own language, culture, faith and rituals (Limbu, 2020). Limbu language is a major language of the Tibeto-Burman family. While the native speakers refer to themselves as Yakthungba and their language as Yakthungba-Pan and commonly called Limbu (Tumbahang, 2013). To protect their identity, the constitution of Nepal-2015 assures the mother tongue-based education as a

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fundamental right of people. Due to this legal provision, ethnic people are curious to inquire and study their mother tongue-based education. This mother tongue-based education preserve the indigenous languages and oppose the language hegemony through curriculum and education system. Hence, most of the indigenous people emphasize making and implementing this mother-tongue based local curriculum at school level. Specifically, this curriculum focuses on ethnic identity and own mother tongue. In this context, the eastern part of Nepal (Arun Purva) is historically Limbu ethnic territory also called Limbu-Wan land (Chemjong, 2017). In this area, the mother tongue curriculum development practices are increasing day by day. Among the mother tongue curriculum, the Yakthung-Pan curriculum also developed and implementing in some basic level schools in the eastern part of the hill region. The Limbu language is spoken in nine districts of the eastern part of Nepal (Arun Purva). The territory of Limbu-Wan starts from Arun River in west and Kanchenjunga Mountain and the Mechi River in the east of Nepal. This area covers nine districts viz. Jhapa, Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung, Morang, Sunsari, Dhankuta, Terhthum and Sankhuwashava. From the time of King Sirijunga Hang to King Mahendra, the Kipat system was practiced in semi or full autonomy of land (Chemjong, 2017). Although, before the restoration of democracy, the government had not taken any efforts to preserve the ethnic culture and language through the formal education system. The national education commission 1992 recommended to develop the one mother tongue subject be developed for primary level students first. However, this recommendation was not implemented by the government. After ten years, the primary education curriculum-2005 made the provision of one local or mother tongue subject in the primary level school curriculum. However, this provision was not effectively implemented at the school level. Instead of this curriculum, the majority of schools taught the English language and computer subjects at primary level (Subedi, 2018). After federalism, the constitution of Nepal-2015 assured to protect the ethnic people's language, culture and customs as a fundamental rights of people. To implement this aspiration, the local governments and schools are started to develop and implement the mother tongue based curriculum in some schools in the eastern part of Nepal. As a result, the Yakthung-Pan curriculum is implementing in some schools of Panchthar district to protect the Limbu culture, identity and language. In the area of mother tongue education, various studies have explored the realities on local people's perceptions on mother-tongue language curriculum. However, there appears to be a lack of research on pedagogical practices in implementing Yakthung-Pan mother-tongue curriculum at schools. In particular, little attention has been given to exploring the instructional methods, materials and assessment process while implementing this curriculum in the classroom. Due to these scenarios, this paper tried to explore the how local teachers (Limbu language teachers) are implementing the Yakthung-Pan mother tongue (Limbu language) curriculum at schools. Specifically, three pedagogical dimensions viz. teaching methods, instructional materials and assessment process were analyzed from the local language teachers' experiences.

This paper aims to explore the pedagogical practices in implementation of Yakthung-Pan mother tongue curriculum at basic level community school of Nepal. In particular, this study focused on analyzing the three pedagogical dimensions viz. teaching methods, instructional materials and assessment process in implementing Yakthung-Pan curriculum.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study employed the basic qualitative research design to explore the implementation practices of Yakthung-Pan mother-tongue curriculum in a community school (Merriam, 2009). In this regard, I used both primary and secondary sources of data. I collected the data from in-depth interviews with teachers as a primary source. Similarly, I

also observed the classes taught by these selected teachers in teaching the Yakthung-Pan subject. Additionally, as a study area, I applied purposive sampling to choose three community schools from Panchthar district where this Yakthung-Pan curriculum was implemented. In addition, the three teachers were chosen from these schools who were teaching this subject in those schools. This interviewing process offers open-ended conversations with these informants for deeper exploration of realities (Legard & Ward, 2003; Creswell, 2012). The interview process evolves naturally from the context and is more flexible asking the questions (Merriam, 2009). Taking this into account, I administered the interview with teachers in a flexible format. These interviews were recorded. These audio recordings were transcribed, coded, categorized and organized into themes and sub-themes aligned with research purpose. The thematic data analysis approach was employed to interpret the collected data from the field (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## **Results and Discussion**

The Yakthung-Pan is a mother tongue curriculum of Limbu tribal community. Here, this paper discusses the three pedagogical dimensions viz. teaching methods, instructional materials and assessment process of this curriculum implementation at schools. Within these three themes, this paper has analyzed the implementation situation of the Yakthung-Pan curriculum in the basic level school education.

### **Teaching Methods Used in Implementing Yakthung-Pan Curriculum**

Yakthung-Pan curriculum expects the active participation of learners and their autonomy in teaching learning process. The Limbu teachers were recruited to implement this curriculum in the school. These Limbu teachers were more focused on learner centered, code switching, listening speaking and reading (LSR) as well as repetition and drill methods in implementing this Yakthung-Pan curriculum.

#### ***Learner Centered versus Teacher Centered Approach***

The learner centered approach was used to implement this Yakthung-Pan mother tongue based curriculum. Within this approach, students were actively engaged in the classroom activities. Apart from this approach, teachers were also taught by the explaining and interpreting method where they felt to clarify the concept of different terms and vocabulary. However, teachers agreed that the students' engagement should be assured because students can read, write and communicate through their active participation in the classroom activities. On the other hand, one teacher (T-1) said, 'I use the learner centered approach in teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum. In this language teaching, I use the question answer method where ask the questions to the students. As well, I engage the students in reading and writing activities in the classroom'. Conversely, another teacher (T-2) said that he use the rote learning method for both Limbu and non-Limbu community students in teaching this curriculum at classroom. In his opinion, this method helps to memorize the word meaning. Similarly, another teacher also agreed with the findings and said that the Yakthung-Pan curriculum suggests to use the learner-centered activities in teaching this language curriculum. Nonetheless, in practice, they are still using the lecture, question and answer methods in teaching this subject. Even though, all teachers agreed that the learners' engagement must be assured in teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum at schools. The curriculum also recommends the learners centered approach to teach this mother tongue curriculum. However, teachers are using both teachers and learners centered approach in teaching this subject. In policy documents, the national curriculum framework-2019 raised the issue of mother tongue as a subject or medium of instruction. Along with, curriculum

implementer/teacher must be considered the learner centered, competency based and inclusive principles while implementing the curriculum at school (CDC, 2019).

### ***Use of LSR Learning Method (Listening, Speaking, Reading)***

The three activities such as listening, speaking and reading commonly used in teaching this Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Supporting this, the second teacher (T-2) said, 'I use the listening, speaking, reading methods for teaching Yakthung pan subject'. Again, another teacher (T-1) argued that language cannot learn without speaking. Thus, he always motivates the students to speak in the Limbu language during the classroom teaching. These arguments show that the three activities viz. listening, speaking and reading are used to implement this mother tongue curriculum.

### ***Code-Switching Method***

Limbu teachers were using the code-switching method in teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum. This method refers to the alternative use of more than one linguistic code in language teaching (Lin, 2008). Similar to this, the teachers (T-1; T-3) are using this code switching-method in teaching the Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Supporting this, the teacher (T-1) put their opinion in this way;

*'We use the Limbu language as the medium of instruction for teaching Yakthung-Pan at the basic level in the community school. But, there are non-Limbu language background students also studied this Yakthung-Pan subject. I use the code-switching method for these non-Limbu language group students. For instance, we taught them translating the Limbu language words into Nepali and English.'*

In a similar vein, another two teachers also said that they are using this method for those students who belong to non-Limbu language groups. Thus, the code-switching method is popular in teaching mother tongue language for non-Limbu language group students.

### ***Repetition and Drill Method***

The Limbu teacher uses the repetition and drill method in teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum. This method emphasizes the memorization and repetition of words. Supporting this, the teacher (T-1) said;

*'I use the repetition and drill method in teaching the Yakthung-Pan curriculum at the basic level in a community school. Primarily, I use Yakthung language in teaching this curriculum in the classroom. But, many cases, I use the repetition and drill method in teaching this Yakthung-Pan curriculum for those students who have come from non-Limbu language groups.'*

In his opinion, this repetition and drill method is more useful in memorizing the words and their meanings. Again, he added that this method is suitable for non-Limbu community students to learn word meaning. Consequently, in the experiences of teachers, they prefer the different teaching methods for teaching this language curriculum. These all teachers' voices are not similar and prefer different teaching methods for teaching this subject. All teachers accepted that the learner centered pedagogy is more useful than teacher centered in teaching this mother tongue curriculum. However, they are employing the teacher centered strategies while teaching this language curriculum at school. Teachers were using the Limbu language (Yakthung) as a medium of instruction for those who belong this language group community. In addition, the Limbu language and code-switching methods were used to teach this subject to non-Limbu community students.

### **Instructional Materials Used in Implementing Yakthung-Pan Curriculum**

The textbook is the major source of teaching materials in implementing Yakthung-Pan curriculum at schools. All the teachers agreed that they only used textbook in teaching this subject at schools. Supporting this, the teacher (T-2) said that; 'I only use the textbook as an instructional material for teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Apart from this textbook, there is no availability of others instructional materials to teach this subject.' This verbatim justifies that teachers have limited access to instructional materials for teaching this Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Due to this reason, teachers are using the textbook for teaching this subject at school. In a similar vein, another teacher (T-1) argued in this way;

*'We have not any kinds of instructional materials for teaching this Yakthung-Pan curriculum in school. The local and federal governments did not prepare the instructional materials. As well, Yakthung-Pan dictionary is not available for us and we do not have teacher's guide similar to other Nepali and English subjects.'*

In the opinion of the teacher, the textbook is the sole source of knowledge in implementing the Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Consequently, the teaching learning process is oriented by the textbook. Correspondingly, another teacher (T-2) said that 'I am teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum based on the textbook. We prepared this textbook in coordination with local government. However, we do not have dictionary and a teacher's guide for this language subject.' Agreeing with this, another teacher (T-3) put his opinion in this way;

*'Instructional materials are necessary in teaching this subject. But, there is not availability of materials in teaching this subject. I have only used the textbook as instructional material. And, Yakthung-Pan language dictionary and teacher guide are not available here.'*

It clears that textbook is the main instructional material in teaching Yakthung-Pan mother tongue curriculum at schools. Teachers do not have Yakthung-Pan language dictionary and teacher guide at schools. Therefore, teachers are using the textbook as a sole materials and resource in teaching this subject. Apart from this, there are not sufficient materials for teaching this language curriculum at schools.

### **Student Assessment Process in Implementing Yakthung-Pan Curriculum**

The subject teachers evaluated the students' based on thematic, formative, summative and practical assessment approaches. These approaches align with the national curriculum framework-2019 and are also similar to the national standard curriculum.

#### ***Theme Based, Formative and Summative Evaluation***

Subject teachers used the theme-based, formative and summative assessment approaches in assessing the students' performance. Supporting this, the teacher (T-1) said that 'I have used the theme-based evaluation system in grades one to three. This system is concerned with the grade-wise learning outcomes what curriculum expected. Basically, this evaluation process align with the integrated curriculum.' On the other hand, another teacher (T-2) put his experience in this way;

*'I use both formative and summative evaluation systems for assessing the students' achievement of grades one to eight. In formative assessment, attendance, homework, project work, and participation in classroom activities are the major criteria in assessing performance. And, the different terminal exams are conducted for summative evaluation.'*

In a similar vein, another teacher (T-3) shared their experiences as;

*'I have used both formative and summative evaluation in assessing the students' performance in the Yakthung-Pan curriculum in the classroom. For formative assessment, students were involved in different activities such as reading lesson, doing exercise, memorizing words, making sentence etc. For summative assessment, I have followed the provision of the national curriculum framework-2019 which is similar with the national standard curriculum.'*

Equally, he added that they were administered the first term, second term and final exam for certification of students' performances. Although, all teachers agreed that they provide the classwork to the students during the classroom teaching. Through this, they were provided feedback to the learners on what they need to improve. In policy documents, the National Curriculum Framework-2019 also prescribed the formative and summative assessment for students' evaluation. Even if, local curriculum development guideline including mother tongue-2019 provides the space to take the decision on the local assessment process while implementing mother-tongue based curriculum. Even though, the curriculum development center has developed this curriculum by the experts of this language group.

### ***Theoretical and Practical Assessment Process***

Both, the theoretical and practical assessment processes were used in the implementation of Yakthung-Pan curriculum. The theoretical performances were assessed through the different terminal examinations. Specifically, this theoretical assessment intends to judge the grammatical composition, sentence structure and recalling the words through the terminal exams. On the other hand, practical assessment focuses on how students can communicate through the Yakthung language practically. In line with these findings, the teacher (T-1) shared his experience in this way;

*'I have used the two types of assessment process viz. theoretical and practical. The different terminal exams are administered for theoretical assessment within the academic year viz. first, second and final exams. And, the practical assessment is administered during the teaching learning activities. For this, I give the various project works such as writing a poem, writing a story and writing the names of his/her family members in Limbu language'.*

Apart from this, teachers were provided feedback for each student during the teaching and learning activities. They agreed that it is necessary to give feedback in formative assessment to improve the students' performance. However, teachers said that students were graded based on their different terminal examination scores. They did not record and use the formative assessment results in their schools. Therefore, the provision of formative assessment is not implemented well at schools.

### **Conclusion**

The three teaching methods such as code-switching, LSR, as well as drill and repetition have primarily been used in teaching Yakthung-Pan curriculum in schools. The teachers are giving priority to both teacher centered and learner centered methods while implementing this mother-tongue curriculum. Similarly, teachers continue to rely on textbooks as the main source of instructional materials. Still, the federal and local governments have been not able to develop the resource materials and the teacher's guide for this Yakthung-Pan curriculum. Additionally, the formative and summative assessment processes are generally adopted from the national curriculum framework. In addition to this, the theme-based and practical assessment practices are also popular in assessing students' performance of the Yakthung-Pan curriculum. However, formative assessment is not used for

grading the students' achievement. Still, the students' assessment is dependent on the terminal examinations rather than continuous or formative assessment.

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