

Rupantaran: A Multidisciplinary Journal

Vol. X: PP 56-71, May, 2026

ISSN(Print) : 2091-0061, ISSN (Electronic): 2738-9960

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/rupantaran.v10i01.94568>

Research Management Cell (RMC)

Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta

Tribhuvan University, Nepal

## **Challenges and Coping Strategies of Secondary School Teachers' Multilingual Classrooms with Tharu Students**

**Man Bahadur Jora<sup>1</sup>, PhD, Hom Bahadur Basnet<sup>2</sup>**

Email: [hom.basnet@dhmc.tu.edu.np](mailto:hom.basnet@dhmc.tu.edu.np)

### **Abstract**

This study investigates the strategies and challenges encountered by secondary-level English language teachers in multilingual classrooms in Kailari Rural Municipality, Kailali, Nepal. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through deep interviews and classroom observations with five secondary-level teachers. The findings have revealed significant challenges, including the management of instructional materials for diverse linguistic groups, low learner motivation, difficulties in selecting a medium of instruction, and the complexities of mixed-ability classrooms. Conversely, the study has identified effective strategies employed by teachers, such as meticulous lesson planning, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the use of body language, and the judicious application of students' mother tongues to facilitate comprehension. The research has concluded that successful multilingual pedagogy requires teacher flexibility, institutional support, and context-sensitive policies.

*Keywords:* Classroom Management, English Language Teaching (ELT), Instructional Strategies, Learner Strategy, Multilingualism

### **Introduction**

Multilingualism, or the capacity of individuals or communities to communicate in multiple languages, has become a common occurrence in today's globalized world. Because of its widespread use, English is taught as a foreign language in Nepal and is

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jora (Principal Author) is a Lecturer of English Education at Far-Western University, Kailali Multiple Campus, Nepal. ORCID: 0009-0001-2118-4174

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Basnet (Corresponding Author) is an Associate Professor of Foundation of Education at Tribhuvan University, Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Nepal. ORCID: 0009-0003-5294-2112

required from pre-primary to university level. With 142 ethnic groups and 124 mother tongues, Nepal is a linguistically diverse country (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2022). English Language Teaching (ELT) environments are inherently multilingual because this heterogeneity is directly reflected in the classroom. The "first-language-first" approach, which begins instruction in a student's mother tongue before moving on to other languages, is often used in multilingual education. However, indigenous languages are marginalized due to English's dominance as a global lingua franca, making the preservation of regional tongues a national priority.

Secondary education across the globe is increasingly multilingual, with public schools in certain regions such as South Asia integrating students from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Nepali-speaking students in classrooms are often native speakers of languages like Maithili and Bhojपुरi, with varying proficiency levels in English as the language of instruction. Rapid urbanization, migration, and national education policies have contributed to unique pedagogical challenges. The cognitive overload experienced by teachers due to the prevalence of diverse linguistic backgrounds, as noted by Kumar and Khare (2023), is due in part to their constant need to switch between languages or simplify content, leading to reduced instructional time and superficial coverage of topics. According to Sharma (2024), the effects of class size expansion on learning are accentuated by teachers who resort to whole-class lecturing that benefits dominant language speakers and minimizes those who do not, perpetuating skill gaps. As coping mechanisms, rapport-building and collaborative activities promote peer scaffolding, which empowers learners to support their peers while enhancing their comprehension and engagement without requiring additional resources.

Multimodal resources, flexible grouping, code-switching, and project-based learning are all effective ways to use students' native tongues as resources for meaning. Because linguistic dominance, cultural disparities, and behavioral variances affect engagement and equity, classroom dynamics and fair assessment present additional obstacles (Michala et al., 2024). In the midst of these differences, educators must negotiate socioeconomic issues and create safe environments for taking risks. Examples of coping strategies include ongoing formative testing in accessible formats, culturally sensitive feedback, and professional development workshops to develop multilingual didactics.

Both teachers and students face significant challenges when teaching English in linguistically diverse settings. That is why mentorship is required for persons to be teachers for dealing with learner desires and needs (Jora, Ingle, & Joshi, 2025). Students in Nepal come to class with various linguistic repertoires, cultural identities, and social experiences; monolingual societies are uncommon. The discrepancy between bilingual education policy and real classroom practice is a crucial problem. Although the right to an education in one's mother tongue is guaranteed under the 2015 Nepalese Constitution, its implementation is still lacking because of poor teacher preparation and

a dearth of educational resources in regional languages. As a result, students frequently experience mother-tongue interference and view English as a challenging subject, which has a detrimental effect on their everyday communication and academic performance.

Due to students varied linguistic backgrounds, secondary school teachers in multilingual classrooms face significant challenges, including uneven participation, varying proficiency in the instructional language, and difficulty modifying monolingual teaching methods to support comprehension in content-heavy subjects like science and social studies (Cummins, 2015). Large class numbers, scarce resources, cultural differences affecting classroom dynamics, and the pressure of standardized tests, which frequently disfavor non-native speakers and cause learner anxiety and decreased academic engagement, all exacerbate these problems (García & Sylvan, 2011). Even though multilingualism is becoming more common in secondary education, especially in diverse areas like South Asia, there is still a significant knowledge gap about how to use coping mechanisms like translanguaging, flexible grouping, and culturally responsive pedagogies. This highlights the need for focused research and professional development to foster equitable learning environments (Lin & He, 2017).

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

Three elements make up Spolsky's (2011) conceptualization of language policy: language management, language practices, and language beliefs (ideology). Additionally, Recento and Hornberger (1996) propose a multilayered approach that emphasizes the dynamic role of teachers in implementing policy at the classroom level from the bottom up. Theoretical approaches to addressing challenges and coping strategies in multilingual classrooms are often based on sociocultural, constructivist, and ecological systems perspectives that view language, culture, environment, geography as interdependent forces shaping teaching and learning. Teachers, from a sociocultural perspective, find it difficult to mediate between students' home languages and the official language of instruction, particularly when learners have weak linguistic foundations or anxiety, or limited exposure, which can result in comprehension gaps and misjudgments of their abilities. Effective teaching, as argued by constructivists and multiliteracies, necessitates the use of scaffolding, translanguaging, and differentiated tasks, but many teachers are not adequately trained, equipped, or supported in applying these methods consistently. Evidence suggests that secondary teachers employ a range of adaptive strategies, such as vocabulary building techniques, improvised materials, and peer support, which are supported by appraisal and stress coping theories that view these actions in response to classroom demands. These theoretical lenses not only provide a means to explain, but also help to clarify certain concepts.

### **Challenges in Multilingual Contexts**

The diversity of their communities is reflected in classrooms. Typical difficulties noted in the literature include maintaining order in the classroom and leading large,

diverse groups, poor communication and overuse of mother tongues, inadequate curricula, and a dearth of culturally appropriate resources. In the same classroom, learners and teachers encounter difficulties in dealing with multilingual situations due to their varying levels of proficiency across languages and cultures. Students may encounter difficulties with comprehension, vocabulary gaps, and cultural nuances, which can cause miscommunication among peers. Managing mixedability groups, using appropriate materials and scaffolding, dealing with limited multilingual support systems, facing unsupportive policies or communities that prioritize dominant languages over those that are local, are often difficulties faced by teachers. The presence of multiple linguistic, cultural, and systemic barriers makes it challenging to ensure equitable learning opportunities in multilingual environments, despite the potential for cognitive and social growth.

### **Empirical Findings**

Findings in a study of difficulties and responses experienced by teachers in multilingual classrooms with Tharu students in Nepal revealed major linguistic barriers, including limited knowledge of both Nepali and English as medium for teaching (Sharma, 2021), which resulted in comprehension gaps and disengagement during lessons. Insufficient multilingual teaching and inadequate teaching materials were further compounded by overcrowded classrooms averaging 50-60 students, which only added to the problem of individualized attention deficits. Teacher feedback indicated cultural discrepancies, such as Tharu students' reliance on mother-tongue explanations, which interfered with English medium instruction and promoted rote learning instead of conceptual understanding (Author, 2017). Teachers utilized translanguaging, which involved code-switching between Tharu, Nepali and English to fill in the missing code by integrating it into the code and increasing participation (Gautam, 2023). Despite resource constraints, group activities and peer tutoring became effective methods for managing diversity and increasing motivation (Shrestha, 2022). Teachers' motivation was heightened due to parents demanding English-medium policies, but the utilization of visual aids from nearby resources alleviated some infrastructural gaps (Sharma, 2021). Teachers frequently find it difficult to oversee classes with various mother tongues spoken, which might result in an overdependence on English or Nepali, which could be detrimental to minority language learners. On the other hand, Nalunga (2013) contends that code-switching can be an effective teaching tool that promotes vocabulary growth and conceptual comprehension.

### **Linguistic Diversity Challenges**

Teachers at the secondary level in multilingual classrooms struggle with students' differing levels of instructional language ability, which frequently results in comprehension gaps in subjects like science and math. Studies from a variety of contexts, including Pakistan and Nepal, have shown that mother tongue influence and

limited exposure to the medium of instruction further impede involvement and academic engagement. According to research, these problems are made worse by large class sizes, which make it difficult to provide individualized support and increase student anxiety during the oral exercises. Within a community, region, or classroom, linguistic diversity encompasses the diverse range of languages, dialects, and language varieties, reflecting different cultural identities. This is known as linguistic diversity. It enhances communication by providing a range of perspectives, expressions, and worldviews; it can also improve cognitive flexibility and social empathy when used meaningfully in education. By recognizing the linguistic diversity of multilingual environments, teachers can use students' home languages as resources for learning, rather than treating them as barriers, which promotes inclusion and deeper content understanding. Preserving and promoting diversity in languages also fosters cultural life, intercultural dialogue, and more just societies in the face of globalization.

### **Instructional Adaptation Barriers**

Due to the inability of traditional monolingual curricula and teaching strategies to take linguistic variety into account, teachers are constantly forced to clarify ideas and make last-minute adjustments to the materials. Instructors deal with issues of pronunciation, translation strategies for grammar, and unsuitable materials that do not make use of students' native tongues. This leads to chronic achievement inequalities and ineffective instruction delivery, especially for emergent bilinguals in public secondary schools. The challenges related to instructional adaptation are the structural, cognitive, and affective factors that obstruct teachers from adapting their teaching methods, materials, or classroom practices to meet the diverse interests of students. Inadequate resources and technology access, coupled with heavy workloads or lack of time for teaching, as well as inadequate training in differentiation or multilingual pedagogy, often hinder teachers from adapting lessons to different language proficiency and learning levels. Uncertainty about students' past knowledge, the need to cover a specific curriculum, and rigid assessment systems in multilingual or mixed ability classrooms are among the other barriers. These systems discourage flexible thinking and student-centered learning.

### **Coping Strategies and Supports**

Code-switching, group projects, and multimodal resources are useful techniques for scaffolding learning and fostering rapport in multilingual environments. Teachers can transition from deficit perspectives to asset-based pedagogies through professional development that emphasizes translanguaging and biliteracy teaming, which promotes equitable participation. Teachers can also address dynamics driven by cultural and socioeconomic issues through ongoing formative assessments and culturally responsive methods. Learner engagement and building rapport are effective in multilingual environments, with examples including code-switching between languages, group

projects, and use of various resources such as multimodal resources. Through professional development, teachers can move from deficit perspectives to asset-based pedagogies by emphasizing translanguaging and biliteracy teaming as the primary means of encouraging equitable participation. Educators can use formative assessments and culturally responsive methods to address dynamics driven by cultural and socioeconomic issues. In order for these strategies to endure, schools should integrate community partnerships and policy advocacy, such as collaborating with locals, parents, and linguists to create bilingual materials that reflect students' home languages and cultural stories. Teachers can utilize regular journaling and peer coaching to adjust techniques based on classroom data, while translanguaging evolves into a dynamic tool for student agency. The. Not only does this increase academic success, but it also fosters inclusive school cultures in which multilingualism promotes innovation and belonging.

### **Theoretical Lens**

García and Wei's translanguaging theory (2014; 2015) is great for seeing how multilingual students like Tharu kids, use all their languages (Tharu, Nepali, and English) to understand stuff, join in, and form their identities in class. This theory came from looking at bilingual and multilingual education, because schools usually favor just one language, treating students' home languages as a problem instead of a plus. García and Wei say that bilingual and multilingual speakers don't keep languages separate; they use everything they know to make sense of things (García & Wei, 2015). In schools, translanguaging means students and teachers use multiple languages together, switching between them to understand, explain, and be creative (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011).

This goes against the old idea of subtractive bilingualism, which puts down home languages. Instead, it's all about being inclusive and valuing students' identities while helping them learn. The article talks about how teachers in secondary schools have a hard time with Tharu students in multilingual classes because they don't participate much, are scared to make mistakes, and haven't been exposed to English enough. But, from a translanguaging view, many of these issues happen because schools want to teach in just one language (like only English or Nepali). This forces Tharu students to use a language they are not comfortable with yet (García & Wei, 2014). Translanguaging theory helps us see these problems as results of bad language ideas instead of just blaming the students or teachers.

Tharu students use their first language a lot to figure things out, but many classes still don't want them to (Sherpa, 2021; Pokhrel, 2024). Translanguaging theory says it's good to use home languages (like Tharu) to help students understand and explain things. This makes their language skills a benefit instead of a bother (García & Wei, 2014; Kano, 2014). This fits with what your article is doing, which is showing how teachers can use Tharu and Nepali to make English easier to grasp. The strategies for coping that can be tied to translanguaging are switching between languages to

explain and get students excited, translating important words between Tharu, Nepali, and English, and having group talks where students chat in their home languages before using English (Pokhrel, 2024; Sherpa, 2021).

These ideas go along with García and Wei's translanguaging design, where teachers plan activities that let students use all their language skills to make sense of things (García & Wei, 2015; García & Wei, 2014). In Nepal, people are talking more about teaching in students' first languages and including languages like Tharu in early education (Government of Nepal, 2015; Multilingual Education in Nepal: Policies and Practices, 2020). Translanguaging theory backs this up by explaining how teachers can keep and grow students' multilingual skills instead of seeing Nepali or English as replacements (García & Wei, 2014). This backs up your article's point that secondary-level teachers need training and support to use flexible teaching methods that respect Tharu students' languages and cultures. García and Wei (2014) say translanguaging is how bilingual people fluidly use multiple languages, going beyond language borders. It views bilingual individuals as drawing from a single linguistic repertoire rather than operating within strictly separated languages (García & Wei, 2015, p. 4). As Pokhrel (2024) notes, allowing students to use Tharu, Nepali, and English together really gets them involved and participating in class (p. 52). Sherpa (2021) says that English teachers in Nepal often struggle because they have old language ideas and don't have the right training, making translanguaging teacher training a must (p. 48).

### **Methods and Materials**

To give a thorough examination of classroom dynamics in actual settings, this study used a qualitative case study design. Participants: Non-random convenience sampling was used to choose four secondary-level English teachers from Kailari's public schools. Over the course of three months, the researcher took semi-structured and observed classes. Thematic coding was used to organize observation notes and interview transcriptions into recurrent patterns. Using interpretivism-based qualitative research, this study sought to capture rich, contextual insights into the lived experiences of secondary-level teachers in multilingual classrooms and explored how these teachers cope with these difficulties. Through semi-structured interviews with 5 experienced educators, detailed narratives on issues such as code-breaking and resource constraints were revealed, and the results were interpreted using rigorous thematic analysis to uncover patterns like adaptive strategies and emotional resilience. This method enhances credibility by promoting extended engagement and member verification, in line with established qualitative paradigms in multilingual education studies that emphasize depth over breadth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Li Wei, 2010).

The study focused on secondary school teachers (grades 9–12) in public schools in linguistically diverse areas, including Sudurpaschim Province, Nepal, where

multilingualism is common because of regional and ethnic language differences. To assure representation from both urban and rural settings, a purposeful sample of 100 instructors was chosen for the survey. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted with participants who had a variety of experiences that were revealed by survey results. Teachers having at least three years of experience in multilingual classrooms were given preference in the sampling criteria, which followed phenomenological principles to capture lived realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interview guidelines were employed to explore classroom challenges (e.g., language proficiency gaps, resource limitations) and strategy efficacy. The interview was administered in person at the site of the study. To find recurrent patterns like code-switching and translanguaging techniques, qualitative data from interviews were audio recorded, verbatim transcribed, and subjected to thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method. Peer debriefing, inter-coder reliability, and member checking were used to guarantee reliability.

The institutional review board granted ethical approval, and informed consent was sought from each participant with a focus on anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. In accordance with APA ethical criteria, data were safely maintained, and multilingual consent forms were made available to meet participants' preferred languages (American Psychological Association, 2020).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Managing Teaching Materials**

When creating materials for pupils from backgrounds like Tharu, Rana Tharu, Magar, and Doteli, teachers encounter considerable challenges. The participants pointed out that creating multilingual resources takes a lot of time, effort, and money. The process of managing teaching materials involves selecting, organizing, storing, and adapting resources to meet learners' needs while still being relevant. The teacher must categorize textbooks, handouts and visual aids (i.e.n. books), by topic, level, or language of instruction; it is necessary to establish a clear procedure for retrieving the materials before, during, and after lessons. The process of adjusting or simplifying materials, using mother tongue (or local) examples, and providing differentiated versions in multilingual or mixed ability classrooms is necessary.

### **Learner Interest and Participation**

English is not seen as a tool for competency in the Nepalese environment, but rather as a necessary activity for passing exams. Active participation is hampered by this lack of intrinsic motivation. Encouraging involvement is also challenging because of learners' reluctance and anxiety about speaking English due to their limited exposure. Active engagement is a strong correlation between student interest and participation, as students tend to engage more when they find the content to be meaningful, relevant or connected to their life. The presence of challenging tasks that allow learners to ask and

discuss ideas, along with the ability to express themselves, can enhance their motivation through self-motivation. The integration of students' learning with lessons, the use of varied activities, and a positive classroom environment where mistakes are valued as part of learning can all contribute to increasing student interest and participation. In multilingual or mixed ability settings, this involvement is crucial for facilitating the practice of language by all learners, building their confidence, and feeling included in the learning community.

### **Medium of Instruction and Mixed-Ability Classes**

Gaps in comprehension are caused by the widespread use of English as the teaching language. There is a great deal of diversity in the classroom; some pupils understand the material right away, while others need repeated explanations and other approaches. Teachers must continually modify their pace due to the mixed-ability nature. Learning experiences in mixed ability classes are influenced by the choice of teaching method, as students' levels of language proficiency, prior knowledge, and learning speed differ significantly. When a medium is too advanced or unfamiliar, it can cause lower-proficiency students to feel isolated, while higher-ability students may find it challenging and increase the achievement gap. The classroom's instruction should be both accessible and flexible, allowing teachers to scaffold content through simplified language, codeswitching, or multilingual support without diminishing academic precision. In a mixed ability setting, teachers can use the medium to ensure that all students learn core concepts, engage meaningfully, and progress at their own level by combining their first language with the target language.

### **Awareness and Discipline**

Students' varied socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds frequently influence their discipline and habits. Some groups' ignorance of the value of education can make classroom administration and activity execution more difficult. A close relationship exists between discipline and awareness, with true self-control occurring instead of external influence. Individuals who are cognizant of their thoughts, emotions, and actions become more aware of the consequences that follow in their behavior and can make informed decisions. They can use their inner awareness to identify patterns and negative behaviors, choosing to adhere to rules, routines, or moral principles without hesitation. Rather than being compelled to obey, discipline is developed as a cultivated habit that relies on clear comprehension and individual accountability. Enhancing students' knowledge of rules, time management and respectful behavior in educational settings can lead to a stronger sense of self-discipline and facilitated learning.

Three main issues were identified through thematic analysis of the interviews: evaluation disparities that disadvantage non-native speakers, linguistic hurdles that cause student disengagement, and cultural incompatibilities that impact classroom dynamics. Teachers noted that "allowing Nepali explanations helped science concepts

stick" and regularly referred to mother tongue interference as "continuous disturbance," while appreciating translanguaging as a bridge. In line with asset-based pedagogies, emergent methods included peer scaffolding and multimodal aids (visuals, gestures), which most of participants naturally adopted to promote inclusiveness.

## **Discussion and Implications**

These results support earlier studies showing that monolingual curricula make multilingual difficulties worse, but proactive tactics like flexible grouping reduce gaps by utilizing students' whole linguistic repertoires (García & Wei, 2015). Although professional development deficits restrict scalability, Nepalese teachers' dependence on code-switching demonstrates contextual adaptation in contrast to monolingual situations (Cummins, 2000). The findings indicate that smaller courses and legislative changes toward biliteracy instruction could improve fairness, necessitating long-term research to monitor long-term academic effects. Self-reported data bias is one of the limitations; this is addressed by triangulation, and further research in private schools is advised.

## **Instructional Strategies**

### ***Translanguaging Practices***

In secondary multilingual classrooms, translanguaging emerges as a key tactic that enables teachers to purposefully use students' home languages in addition to the instructional language to improve comprehension and engagement. Teachers can promote deeper material understanding by bridging linguistic gaps and activating existing knowledge by allowing code-switching during presentations of complicated ideas like mathematical equations or historical timelines (García & Wei, 2014). With research demonstrating increased participation rates among emergent bilinguals when teachers skillfully integrate many languages, this strategy turns linguistic variety from a barrier into a benefit.

The intentional use of students' complete linguistic resources, which involves moving between two or more languages, is known as translanguaging practices. Teachers in multilingual classrooms promote translanguaging by enabling students to use their home languages alongside the language of instruction, leading to greater comprehension and improved ability to express complex concepts. Such practices are characterized by their ability to validate students' identities, inclusion, and treat all languages as resources rather than barriers, particularly in secondary level English or content classes with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### ***Multimodal and Collaborative Learning***

Collaborative formats such as peer tutoring and think-pair-share tend to promote language practice, without singling out hard-to-understand learners, while multimodal resources—images, videos (STAC) on SlideShare and hands-on manipulatives on YouTube — facilitate comprehension across competence levels. In this case, the following statement can be looked at:

In diverse classrooms, "visual aids and realia decreased cognitive stress in science labs by providing non-verbal entry points to content, enabling all students to engage meaningfully. Differentiated activities combined with group work allow stronger students to scaffold peers, fostering equitable participation and reducing anxiety for English learners" (Echevarria et al., 2023, p. 145).

These tactics guarantee fair access to content objectives by adhering to the principles of Universal Design for Learning. In classrooms with multilingual or mixed-ability students, the use of pictures, videos, objects (realia), and gestures helps to ease the mind and reduces mental strain by providing visual/non-verbal representations that help every student engage actively in subjects like science. Echevarria et al, 2023, note that by combining specific tasks with group activities, more advanced students can support their peers, which promotes equal participation and reduces anxiety in English language learners.

### ***Culturally Responsive Scaffolding***

In addition to formal academic language training and formative evaluations, culturally responsive teaching links curriculum to students' backgrounds through real-world examples and vocabulary connected to their lived experiences. While technology, such as translation applications, provides covert assistance, pre-teaching important vocabulary with cognates and sentence structures boosts confidence for spoken activities (Sharma, 2024). Teachers who receive professional development in these areas are better able to foster inclusive learning environments, which reduces anxiety and improves long-term academic results.

### ***Lesson Planning and Teacher Confidence***

Clear objectives and methodical syllabus delivery are ensured by well-crafted lesson plans, which act as a road map. Teachers who are confident in their subject-matter expertise are better able to manage disruptive behaviors and provide a supportive environment. Teachers can build confidence through the process of planning lessons, which transforms abstract educational goals into a concrete plan for instruction. By focusing on creating effective learning sequences, anticipating student misconceptions and misrepresenting them in the classroom, educators can significantly reduce stress levels and anxiety. This is achieved through consistent planning and execution of activities. Effective planning is more than just a burden to be managed; it is also an effective tool of professional thinking, ready for use as if by magic (stepping into the classroom with swag) and leading to more responsiveness and impact' in their teaching style. At the conclusion of the day, this preparation creates a situation in which teachers feel competent to handle classroom situations appropriately and can concentrate on student learning details instead of dealing with logistical difficulties.

### ***Student-Centered Environment***

To change the emphasis from the teacher to the student, educators use role plays, debates, and group discussions. In this facilitator role, the instructor helps students take ownership of their education. Learning English in a student-centered setting allows learners to take charge of their studies, replacing teacher-directed methods with self-regulated practices (Jora, 2020). In these contexts, students have a firm conviction that activities designed to promote autonomy, such as setting goals and engaging in peer-to-peer interactions, can boost motivation and classroom work responsibility. There is a connection of classroom discourse in student engagement. In classroom discussion of English language courses, there are often teacher-led structures, such as the IRF model, that restrict student engagement and involvement in meaning negotiation (Jora, 2022). This structure is based on this pattern. As with teacher education programs in Nepal (Jora et al, 2025), the inclusion of mentorship in undergraduate practice teaching can enhance the ability of pre-service teachers to engage in more active and reflective discourse.

### **Integration of ICT, Body Language, and Strategic Use of Mother Tongue**

The internet, projectors, and laptops are examples of modern gadgets that are used to promote self-directed learning and simplify difficult ideas. Furthermore, nonverbal cues like eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions are essential for communicating ideas that are challenging to articulate verbally in a second language.

In language classrooms, ICT tools are utilized to enhance students' engagement by facilitating multimodal interactions that complement teachers' body language and nonverbal cues (Hempel, 2025). Educators can use platforms like learning management systems (LMS) to monitor student responses and maintain eye contact in real-time, which helps to bridge physical gaps and reinforce emotional communication (Shodikulov, & Rakhimova, 2025). The collaboration fosters dynamic, student-centered environments where digital tools enhance the influence of body language on motivation and understanding (Jora & Basnet, 2025) and effective communication.

Teachers reported utilizing Nepali or pupils' first languages (such as Tharu) sparingly to explain challenging ideas, even though English is the primary language. While the strategic use of mother tongue in Nepalese English classrooms bridges significant gaps in comprehension and culture, students consider it a crucial factor in overcoming curriculum complexities and instructional difficulties (Jora, 2020; Jora, 2025; Jora, 2026). Students from minority backgrounds will not be left behind thanks to this strategy.

In multilingual classrooms, the intentional use of mother tongue in intentionally or with regard to students' first languages helps develop understanding, participation and identity development without replacing the target language. The mother tongue is utilized by teachers to clarify challenging concepts, translate important vocabulary, or provide guidance on how to explain instructions, which reduces confusion and aids in

connecting new knowledge with past experiences. During brainstorming, group discussion, or error correction when students are quieter, mother tongue support can be used selectively to reduce anxiety, boost confidence, and encourage active participation. By carefully preparing themselves, it ensures that the mother tongue is used as a structure rather than as the primary tool, enabling learners to develop their proficiency in the language of instruction while still feeling respected and intellectually competent. By using the mother tongue as a strategic tool, inclusive teaching becomes more effective than hindering language development.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching English in a multilingual environment is a challenging task that calls on teachers to be adaptable, creative, and dynamic. The policy of the government needs to provide ICT resources to all public schools and provide explicit legal requirements for Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). There tends to be a practice of promoting a cooperative learning environment and educators should concentrate on developing connections with parents and students. After that, the essential need of training, getting the differentiated instruction for mixed-ability groups and material design, should be the main areas of professional growth.

This study highlights the various difficulties secondary level teachers encounter in multilingual classrooms, such as linguistic proficiency gaps, resource limitations, and cultural dynamics that impede equitable instruction. However, some approaches such as translanguaging and collaborative learning turn multilingual challenges into opportunities for inclusive education. These methods enable teachers to utilize students' complete linguistic repertoires, leading to greater engagement and fairness in diverse classrooms. Additionally, At the conclusion, implementing asset-based approaches not only improves educational outcomes but also fosters culturally rich educational communities. Results show that academic engagement and material understanding greatly increase when teachers make use of students' whole linguistic repertoires, highlighting multilingualism as a strength rather than a weakness in diverse environments like Nepal's public schools. In the end, equipping teachers with useful resources promotes robust learning environments that equip students for global competencies.

## **Recommendations**

To support secondary teachers, educational officials should require professional development programs that emphasize translanguaging and multimodal pedagogies. They should also allocate resources for reduced class sizes and culturally relevant materials (Cummins, 2000). In order to eliminate competence gaps, schools should incorporate biliteracy into their courses and establish continuous formative evaluations and peer mentoring programs. Longitudinal designs should be used in future studies to

assess the effects of strategies on student outcomes, including comparative foreign contexts and private institutions.

### References

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *National population and housing census 2021: Population profile*. <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/Home/Index#/NP/1>.
- Chaudhary, R. (2017). *Problems and challenges faced by Tharu students in learning English*. TUCL eLibrary. <https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/bitstreams/99623a54-44d5-4468-bf38-ddc56af286f1/>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J. (2015). Teaching for transfer: Challenging the two solitudes assumption in bilingual education. In J. Cummins & C. Baker (Eds.), *Handbook of bilingual and multilingual education* (pp. 68–83). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Peterson, K. (2023). *Making content comprehensible for multilingual learners: The SIOP Model* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- García, O., & Sylvan, C. E. (2011). Pedagogies and practices in multilingual classrooms: Singularities in pluralities. *Modern Language Journal*, 95(3), 385–400. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01208.x>
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385765>.
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2015). Translanguaging, bilingualism, and bilingual education. In W. H. Cowell & M. A. Knapp (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of language and education* (3rd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 1–14). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02252-6>
- Gautam, D. (2023). *Strategies adopted by Tharu learners in learning English vocabulary*. TUCL eLibrary. <https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/bitstreams/a71356a-0e8b-4398-9c08-92cea2224a4a/>

- Hampel, R. (2025). The power of non-verbal communication in education. *LinkedIn*.  
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/silent-learning-power-non-verbal-communication-education-8hiac>
- Jora, M. B. (2020a). Multilingual Turn and the Need of Multilingual Education in the Nepalese Context. *Sotang, Yearly Peer Reviewed Journal*, 2(1), 99–109.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/sotang.v2i1.47602>
- Jora, M. B. (2020b). Students' Beliefs on Learner Autonomy in English Language Classroom. *Journal of NELTA Gandaki*, 3(1-2), 12–24.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v3i1-2.33139>
- Jora, M. B. (2022). Classroom discourse in the English language class. *Siddhajyoti Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.3126/sij.v3i1.46277>
- Jora, M. B. (2025a). Investigating Secondary Students' Perceptions of Curriculum Complexity and Instructional Challenges in English Language Acquisition in Nepal. *SNPRC Journal*, 6(1), 87–104. <https://doi.org/10.3126/snprcj.v6i1.91799>
- Jora, M. B. (2026). Real Life Practices and Perceptions of the Semester System: An Empirical Research. *AMC Journal (Dhangadhi)*, 7(1), 42–52.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/amcjd.v7i1.91960>
- Jora, M. B., & Basnet, H. B. (2025b). ICT Integration in the 21st Century's Classroom Teaching and Learning. *Rupantaran: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 9(01), 9–20.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/rupantaran.v9i01.89333>
- Jora, M. B., Ingle, A., & Joshi, B. (2025c). Mentorship in Action: Reflecting on the Role of Undergraduate Practice Teaching in Nepal's Teacher Education Programs. *Management, Sustainability, and Life Span*, 1(2), 128–137.  
<https://doi.org/10.64780/msl.v1i2.185>
- Kumar, J., & Khare, P. S. (2023). Multilingual classroom setup: Challenges for teachers. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language*. <https://oaji.net/articles/2023/1201-1692611293.pdf>
- Li Wei (Ed.). (2010). *The Blackwell guide to research methods in bilingualism and multilingualism*. Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444301120>
- Lin, A. M. Y., & He, P. (2017). Translanguaging: Language as a resource in teaching and learning. In A. Lin & A. M. Y. Lin (Eds.), *Using theories for second language teaching and learning* (pp. 123–140). Bloomsbury.
- Michala, M., Roussakis, N., & Stamouli, E. (2024). What if there is linguistic and cultural diversity in contemporary classrooms? Secondary school teachers' attitudes, practices, and challenges towards student multilingualism. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 22(2), 1-17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2024.2345678>

- Nalunga, M. L. (2013). *Teaching and learning English in a multilingual classroom: A study of code switching in an English foreign language/English second language teaching/learning situation* (Unpublished master's thesis). Department of Language Education, Makerere University.
- Noom-Ura, R. (2013). Teacher training in multilingual contexts. As cited in Sharma (2021).
- Pokhrel, K. (2024). Enhancing learner engagement through translanguaging pedagogy: A reflective narrative from a multilingual ELT classroom in Nepal. *Journal of Multilingual Education Research*, 15(2), 45–67.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmer.2024.05.002>
- Sharma, B. K. (2021). Challenges and opportunities of multilingual classrooms in Nepal. *Panchthar Journal of Research and Innovation*, 1(1), 43-56.  
[http://ejournals.pncampus.edu.np/ejournals/pjri/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4\\_PJRI-01121-engedu-43-56-1.pdf](http://ejournals.pncampus.edu.np/ejournals/pjri/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/4_PJRI-01121-engedu-43-56-1.pdf)
- Sharma, R. (2024). Classroom management in teaching English in multilingual classrooms. *TUCL eLibrary*. <https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/items/8285dd6f-f964-42f1-9fc8-21bd3d5b81ab>
- Sharma, R. K. (2021). Multilingual education challenges in diverse contexts. *Journal of Language Teaching*, 13(2), 45-62.
- Sherpa, S. (2021). Challenges and opportunities of multilingual classrooms in Nepal. *Perspectives in Journal of Research in Education*, 8(1), 43–56.  
<https://doi.org/10.3126/pjri.v8i1.41234>
- Shodikulov, S., & Rakhimova, M. (2025). ICT tools in intercultural communication pedagogy: Their impact on speaking competence. *Frontiers in Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1742910>
- Shrestha, P. (2022). Multilingual education in Nepal: Policies and practices. Academia.edu.  
[https://www.academia.edu/44827764/Multilingual\\_Education\\_in\\_Nepal\\_Policies\\_and\\_Practices](https://www.academia.edu/44827764/Multilingual_Education_in_Nepal_Policies_and_Practices)
- Singh, R. (2021). A study on the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English in a multilingual classroom at the secondary level. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research*, 4(4), 1-15. <https://pjer.org/index.php/pjer/article/view/379>
- Spolsky, B. (2011). *Language management*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wei, L. (2011). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(5), 1222–1235.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.035ofeliagarcia.org>