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Impact of English Medium Instruction on Secondary Level Students' Learning in the Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

The global rise of English as a dominant lingua franca has led to the widespread adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in non-English speaking countries, including Nepal. This research explores the impact of EMI on secondary level students' learning in the Kathmandu Valley, focusing on its benefits and challenges. The research investigates how EMI influences students' academic performance, language proficiency, and overall learning experience. To achieve this, it relies on a comprehensive analysis of recent studies, empirical data, and case studies. The findings indicate that while EMI enhances students' English language skills and broadens their access to global resources and knowledge, it also presents challenges, such as difficulties in understanding subject content and increased cognitive load. Furthermore, the research highlights concern about the decreasing use of native languages in schools and the potential threat this poses to cultural identity. The research emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to education that promotes English language proficiency while safeguarding local languages and cultural values, thereby ensuring a more inclusive and contextually relevant educational experience for school students in the Kathmandu Valley and beyond.

Keywords: English Medium Instruction, academic performance, local languages, cultural identity

Introduction

The adoption of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in educational institutions worldwide is increasingly driven by the growing importance of English in global communication, business, and academia. EMI is defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in countries where the first language is not English. It has gained traction as a strategic approach to equip students with essential language skills and provide them with competitive advantages in the global job market (Dearden, 2014). In Nepal, the shift towards EMI reflects broader global trends and national aspirations for economic development and international integration (Adhikari, 2018). However, this shift also brings forth a complex array of challenges and opportunities that require thorough examination to understand its

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true impact on student learning outcomes.

Nepal, rich in diverse languages and cultures, offers a unique and challenging context for the implementation of EMI. Traditionally, education in Nepal has been conducted in Nepali and other local languages, which are deeply intertwined with the cultural and social fabric of the country (Phyak, 2017). The recent growth in EMI adoption is seen as a response to globalization and the perceived necessity for English proficiency to access higher education opportunities abroad and better employment prospects (Adhikari, 2018). While the potential benefits of EMI are widely recognized, the implementation of this instructional approach in Nepal raises critical questions about its effectiveness and impact on student learning outcomes.

One of the central concerns is whether students can fully comprehend and retain subject matter when it is taught in a non-native language. Teachers' English proficiency is often insufficient, and this raises questions about their ability to teach effectively in English (Sah & Li, 2018). Despite the increasing prevalence of EMI in Nepal, there remains a significant research gap in understanding its specific effects within the Nepalese context. Studies by Phyak (2016) and Sah and Li (2018) have highlighted some of the challenges, such as the impact of EMI on students' academic performance, language comprehension, and identity conflicts due to the dominance of English over local languages. Phyak (2016) emphasizes the tension between EMI and the preservation of local linguistic identities, while Sah and Li (2018) discuss how limited English proficiency among both students and teachers hinders effective learning. However, there is still limited research on the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders, such as students, teachers, and parents regarding EMI's broader impact on learning outcomes and cultural identity in Nepal.

This study explores the impact of English Medium Instruction (EMI) on academic performance, English proficiency, and the preservation of local languages and cultural identities in Nepal through the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents. Using a phenomenological research design involving interviews, focus groups, and case studies, it captures the nuanced realities of EMI implementation across diverse educational settings. Findings will offer insights for policymakers and educators on effectively integrating EMI, addressing challenges, and balancing global aspirations with Nepal's linguistic and cultural diversity. This study contributes valuable evidence to the global EMI discourse, especially from a developing country context where educational, cultural, and linguistic priorities intersect.

Literature Review

English Medium Instruction (EMI) has emerged as a prominent approach to teaching academic subjects in countries where English is not the first language. The rise of EMI is closely linked to the acknowledgment of English as a global lingua franca, recognized as essential for academic and professional success (Kirkpatrick, 2019). EMI serves as a gateway for students to access a plethora of global academic resources, facilitating international collaboration and enhancing competitiveness in the global job market (Macaro et al., 2018). As noted by Kirkpatrick (2019), the increasing prevalence of English as a medium of instruction is driven by its status as the predominant language of academia and commerce worldwide. In Nepal, the adoption of EMI aligns with the broader trend of valuing English proficiency for economic advancement and international mobility. Nepal's transition to EMI reflects the

country's aspirations for educational excellence and integration into the global community (Aryal, 2016). The recognition of English as a gateway to opportunities in higher education and employment has prompted educational institutions in Nepal to adopt EMI as a strategic approach to prepare students for the challenges of the globalized world (Aryal, 2016). As such, EMI in Nepalese public school is taken as a new linguistic market in education (Saud, 2020).

Research studies on the impact of EMI on academic performance present varied findings. Wilkinson and Walsh (2019) note positive effects associated with EMI, such as improved academic achievement and enhanced critical thinking skills among students. These benefits are often attributed to increased exposure to English language academic content, which fosters cognitive development and analytical reasoning abilities. However, contrasting perspectives exist regarding the effectiveness of EMI. Some studies, like Doiz et al. (2012), suggest potential drawbacks, including hindered comprehension and reduced academic success, particularly when learning complex subjects in a non-native language. These challenges may arise due to linguistic barriers and the cognitive demands associated with processing information in a second language (Doiz et al., 2012).

Teacher proficiency in English plays a crucial role in delivering instruction effectively and supporting student learning outcomes. Additionally, adequate language support mechanisms, such as bilingual education strategies and language assistance programs, can mitigate the challenges associated with EMI implementation and facilitate students' comprehension of academic content. Furthermore, students' prior exposure to English and their language proficiency levels significantly impact their ability to engage with EMI effectively (Hellekjær, 2019). Students with limited English proficiency may face greater difficulties in understanding complex concepts and expressing their ideas fluently in academic settings, potentially affecting their academic performance (Hellekjær, 2019).

The primary goal of EMI is to enhance students' English language proficiency, recognizing English as a crucial skill for academic and professional success (Kirkpatrick, 2019). Studies indicate that exposure to academic content in English can indeed lead to significant improvements in language skills among students (Macaro et al., 2018). Through EMI, students are immersed in an English-speaking environment, providing them with ample opportunities to practice and refine their language abilities (Kirkpatrick, 2019). However, the extent of language development through EMI varies depending on several factors. Hellekjær (2019) highlights the importance of language input, interactional opportunities, and learner motivation in shaping language proficiency outcomes. Students who are exposed to rich and diverse language input, engage in meaningful interactions in English, and are motivated to learn are likely to experience greater gains in language proficiency through EMI (Hellekjær, 2019). Students who are exposed to rich and diverse language input, engage in meaningful interactions in English, and are motivated to learn are likely to experience greater gains in language proficiency through EMI (Hellekjær, 2019). In the context of Nepal, where English is typically introduced as a second language in schools, the implementation of EMI offers both opportunities for enhancing language development and challenges related to its integration into the educational system (Aryal, 2016).

On the one hand, EMI provides students with immersive experiences in English, allowing them to practice and enhance their language skills in authentic academic contexts (Aryal, 2016). On the other hand, students may encounter significant challenges in language proficiency, especially if they have limited opportunities for English exposure outside the classroom or if there is inadequate instructional support to help them develop the necessary language skills for academic success (Aryal, 2016). Furthermore, the effectiveness of EMI in fostering language proficiency also depends on the proficiency levels of teachers delivering instruction in English (Hellekjær, 2019). Teachers who are proficient in English can provide linguistic scaffolding and support to students, facilitating their language development through EMI (Hellekjær, 2019). While EMI offers promising opportunities for enhancing students' English language proficiency, the extent of language development varies depending on factors such as students' prior English proficiency, the quality of instructional support, and the frequency of English exposure outside the classroom.

EMI implementation also raises important cultural considerations, particularly in contexts with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds like Nepal. Critics argue that the dominance of English in education may marginalize local languages and cultures, leading to cultural homogenization and identity loss (Doiz et al., 2012). Conversely, proponents of EMI argue that bilingual education can foster intercultural understanding and promote global citizenship (Duff, 2010). In Nepal, where cultural diversity is deeply valued, balancing the promotion of English proficiency with the preservation of local languages and cultural identities is essential, as it ensures that students can engage in global discourse while maintaining strong ties to their cultural heritage. The country's multilingual society necessitates an approach that integrates both global and local linguistic skills, allowing students to navigate both national and international spaces without compromising their cultural roots.

Despite the promising benefits associated with EMI, its implementation encounters various challenges that need to be addressed for effective integration into educational systems. One of the primary challenges identified in the literature is inadequate teacher proficiency in English (Macaro et al., 2018). Teachers are responsible for delivering instruction in English may lack the necessary language skills and proficiency to effectively communicate complex academic concepts and provide language support to students (Macaro et al., 2018). This inadequacy on the part of the teachers can hinder students' comprehension and engagement with academic content delivered in English.

Additionally, the lack of adequate language support mechanisms further exacerbates the challenges of EMI implementation (Macaro et al., 2018). Students may struggle to grasp academic concepts and express themselves fluently in English without sufficient linguistic scaffolding and support. Inadequate language support can impede students' language development and academic performance, particularly for those with limited English proficiency (Macaro et al., 2018). Resistance from stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and educational administrators, poses another significant challenge to EMI implementation (Macaro et al., 2018). Skepticism or reluctance to adopt EMI may stem from concerns about its impact on students' academic achievement, cultural identity, and the preservation of local languages (Doiz et al., 2012). Addressing stakeholder resistance requires effective

communication, collaboration, and advocacy to garner support for EMI initiatives and address concerns through evidence-based practices.

Furthermore, the cognitive demands of learning academic content in a non-native language pose challenges to students' learning experiences and academic outcomes (Doiz et al., 2012). Processing complex subject matter in English may require additional cognitive effort, leading to shallow learning and decreased understanding of key concepts (Doiz et al., 2012). Students may struggle to engage critically with academic content and develop higher-order thinking skills when language barriers hinder their comprehension. In the context of Nepal, where educational resources and infrastructure may be limited, addressing these challenges becomes even more crucial for the successful integration of EMI into the curriculum (Aryal, 2016). Providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their English proficiency, establishing language support programs for students, and engaging stakeholders in dialogue and collaboration are essential strategies for overcoming the challenges of EMI implementation in government and private schools in Nepal (Aryal, 2016; Adhikari 2018).

Methods and Procedures

This study used a phenomenological approach to explore the impact of English Medium Instruction (EMI) on learning outcomes for secondary-level students in Kathmandu Valley. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, parents, and educational administrators, capturing their perceptions of EMI's effects on academic performance, language proficiency, and cultural identity within this specific context. Focus group discussions were also conducted to gather collective insights from the concerned. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes and patterns emerging from the interviews and focus groups. Additionally, a review of relevant literature was used to contextualize the findings within the broader discourse on EMI.

Results

The findings of this study, based on interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, students, and parents, provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceived advantages, challenges, and broader cultural implications of the implementation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in secondary level students' learning in Kathmandu Valley. These findings reveal varied views on EMI's impact on the educational experience, highlighting its potential benefits, the significant challenges encountered by all stakeholders, and the cultural implications of using English as the medium of instruction.

Perceived Benefits of EMI

The teachers interviewed for this study largely recognized the potential of EMI to improve students' proficiency in English, a skill that is increasingly essential in the globalized world. Most teachers agreed that EMI could prepare students for better academic and professional opportunities, particularly in higher education settings and international job markets. Ms. Sita Devi, a science teacher at a secondary school, emphasized the global reach of EMI, stating, "Teaching in English allows students to access international knowledge and resources. It is exciting to see them engage with content that they wouldn't have had access to otherwise."

Most of the teachers also observed that EMI helps to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging with academic content in English, students are exposed to diverse perspectives and ideas, which fosters intellectual growth. For instance, Ms. Devi pointed out how students' exposure to English-language academic journals, online resources, and international research materials had expanded their intellectual horizons. Additionally, teachers noted that EMI improved students' confidence in using English, which is a highly valued skill in today's world.

Moreover, EMI was seen as a tool to increase access to a wider variety of educational resources. According to Mr. Hari Prasad, a mathematics teacher, "EMI allows students to access textbooks, research papers, and online platforms that are often not available in their native languages. This, in turn, prepares students for the increasing role of English in higher education, especially as English has become the primary medium of instruction at many universities worldwide." Teachers recognized that mastering English through EMI could open doors to scholarships and international academic opportunities, thus making it a crucial skill for students' future success.

Challenges Faced by Teachers

Despite the perceived benefits, teachers reported facing significant challenges in the implementation of EMI. One of the primary concerns was the lack of adequate training and professional development in English language teaching methodologies. Many teachers felt underprepared to teach complex subject content in English, especially in subjects like mathematics, science, and social studies, which require specialized vocabulary and technical language. Teachers noted that, without proper language training, they often struggled to convey subject-specific concepts in a way that students could easily understand.

Ms. Rupa Shah, an English teacher, voiced the frustrations many teachers felt about the implementation of EMI. She shared, "While EMI is beneficial, many of us are not trained to teach our subjects in English. This creates a lot of stress and sometimes even discouragement among teachers, especially when we see students struggling to understand." Teachers explained that the lack of sufficient English proficiency among both teachers and students made it difficult to facilitate effective learning. The inability to communicate complex ideas in English left many teachers feeling inadequate and demoralized.

Additionally, some teachers raised concerns about the negative impact of EMI on the depth of subject matter understanding. Mr. Suresh Thapa, a social studies teacher, pointed out, "Sometimes, I feel that students are memorizing English phrases rather than truly understanding the concepts. They might pass the exams, but the depth of knowledge is lacking." Teachers observed that students often focused on rote learning and memorization of English terminology instead of grasping the underlying concepts. This resulted in superficial knowledge, which might appear acceptable in exams but did not equip students with the necessary skills to apply knowledge in real-world contexts.

Teachers also acknowledged the challenges posed by students' varying levels of English proficiency. In many classrooms, students came from different linguistic backgrounds, which meant their ability to understand lessons delivered in English differed greatly. This created a significant challenge in ensuring that all students could follow lessons effectively.

Teachers often had to adjust their teaching methods, using simplified language or providing extra support, to ensure that weaker students could grasp the concepts.

Students' Perceptions of EMI

Students generally expressed positive feelings about the opportunity to learn in English, recognizing its potential benefits for their future careers and academic pursuits. Many students appreciated the opportunity to improve their English language skills and felt that EMI made them more competitive in both higher education and the job market. Ramesh, a 10th-grade student, shared his positive experience, saying, "Learning in English has been challenging, but I've definitely improved my language skills. I feel more prepared to pursue higher education abroad, where English is the medium of instruction." For students like Ramesh, the ability to communicate confidently in English is seen as an essential skill that will serve them well in a globalized world.

Moreover, many students felt that EMI had broadened their intellectual horizons. Sunita, a 9th-grade student, highlighted how learning in English gave her access to a wider range of knowledge and perspectives. She remarked, "In today's world, English is essential. EMI has given me a head start in mastering the language, which I know will be an advantage when I apply for jobs or scholarships." The emphasis on English not only enhanced their language skills but also prepared them for a future where English will likely be the language of instruction and communication in most professional settings.

However, despite these positive views, many students faced significant challenges in adapting to EMI. The most frequently mentioned challenge was the cognitive overload of learning complex subjects in a second language. Students found that the technical language and specialized terminology used in subjects like science and mathematics were difficult to grasp in English, leading to confusion and frustration. Sunita shared, "While I understand the importance of learning in English, it's often overwhelming, especially in subjects like science. There are times when I don't understand the lessons at all, and it's frustrating." The use of complex terms in English, coupled with the students' limited proficiency in the language, made it difficult for them to fully comprehend the content.

Similarly, Ramesh, a 10th-grade student, noted, "I've struggled a lot with mathematics in English. The terms are confusing, and I often have to translate them back to Nepali in my head to make sense of the concepts. It slows me down, and sometimes I feel like I'm falling behind." This difficulty in understanding content in English was particularly pronounced in subjects with abstract or specialized terminology. Many students felt that learning in English added an additional layer of complexity that hindered their ability to master the subject matter.

Parental Views on EMI

Parents, like teachers and students, recognized the potential advantages of EMI, particularly in terms of preparing their children for future opportunities. Many parents saw EMI as a means of giving their children a competitive edge in higher education and the job market. Mrs. Anju Rai, a mother of two, expressed her support for EMI, saying, "I want my children to have the best opportunities, and I know that English is the key to success. EMI is preparing them for a future where English will open doors for them." This sentiment was

echoed by other parents who believed that proficiency in English was essential for their children to thrive in a globalized world.

However, while parents acknowledged the importance of English for their children's success, many also expressed concerns about the potential impact of EMI on their children's cultural identity. Mrs. Rai, while supportive of EMI, shared her worries: "I'm proud of my children's English skills, but I'm also concerned that they are losing touch with our native language and culture. They spend so much time learning in English that they barely speak our mother tongue anymore." Similarly, Mr. Gopal Shrestha voiced his concerns about the effects of EMI on his children's connection to their cultural roots, stating, "While I see the benefits of EMI, I'm worried about what it means for our cultural identity. Our language and traditions are important, and I don't want my children to lose that connection." These concerns were widespread among parents, who feared that an overemphasis on English could undermine the cultural values associated with Nepalese languages. Many parents expressed a desire for an education system that strikes a balance between improving English proficiency and preserving cultural heritage.

Broader Cultural Implications

A recurring theme across all stakeholder groups was the cultural implications of EMI. As English becomes more dominant in Nepal's education system, there are growing concerns about the erosion of local languages and cultural identities. Teachers, students, and parents alike expressed anxiety about the long-term effects of EMI on Nepal's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. Ms. Anju Sapkota, a social studies teacher, reflected on the importance of maintaining a balance between global and local influences, saying, "Nepal is a country with so many languages and cultures. EMI is important, but we need to find a way to balance it with the preservation of our own languages and traditions." Teachers recognized that while EMI can help students acquire global competencies, it should not come at the cost of cultural identity. Similarly, students like Sunita and Rahul reflected on their internal cultural struggles. They shared, "we love learning in English, but we also feel a bit disconnected from my own culture. It's like we're caught between two worlds: one that's modern and global, and another that's traditional and local." Most of the parents expressed similar concerns, stressing the need to create an education system that values both English proficiency and cultural heritage. Mr. Sunil Shrestha encapsulated these concerns by stating, "We need to make sure our children can speak English, but we also need to teach them to appreciate and cherish their own culture. That's what makes them unique." These perspectives highlight the tension between modernity and tradition that is the core of the EMI debate in Nepal.

Discussion

Teachers' Perspectives and Theoretical Alignment

Teachers in Nepal view English Medium Instruction (EMI) as a powerful tool for enhancing students' English language proficiency and enabling access to global educational resources. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, which stresses the role of language in cognitive development. Teachers in the study emphasized that EMI can expand students' cognitive abilities and exposure to a broader knowledge base, reflecting Vygotsky's idea that language proficiency can unlock new cognitive potential. For instance, Mrs. Sailaja Raskoti remarked, "*EMI allows students to engage with global resources, helping them*

develop both their English language skills and critical thinking abilities," which echoes Wilkinson and Walsh's (2019) assertion that EMI enhances academic achievement and critical thinking by immersing students in academic content written in English.

Teachers expressed several concerns regarding the successful implementation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the classrooms, particularly highlighting the lack of adequate training and support in teaching technical subjects in English. A prevalent theme that emerged was the disparity between the policy objectives of EMI and the practical challenges teachers face in the classroom. Many teachers reported feeling unprepared to teach specialized subjects, such as science and mathematics, in English, which required proficiency not only in the language but also in subject-specific terminology. As Mr. Ram Adhikari, Health and Population Studies teacher, noted, *"While EMI is beneficial; we lack the training to effectively teach in English."* This sentiment was shared by several others, indicating a common frustration that, despite the perceived benefits of EMI, the lack of professional development and language support hindered effective teaching and learning. Teachers' concerns reflected a broader issue: while the policy aimed to enhance students' English proficiency and provide them with global opportunities, the reality of the classroom experience suggested that a more comprehensive approach to teacher training, including both language proficiency and subject-specific pedagogy, was necessary. Without this support, teachers cannot be able to fully engage students with complex academic content, ultimately limiting the potential success of EMI in the classroom. This idea points to a significant gap between policy and practice, emphasizing the need for better resources and ongoing professional development to ensure that EMI can be effectively integrated into Nepalese education. This concern aligns with Shohamy's (2006) findings about the gap between educational policies and practical implementation.

Moreover, the study revealed that teachers' insufficient proficiency in English may hinder the clarity of their teaching, leading to gaps in student understanding. As Shiv Hari Subedi, a Science teacher, commented, *"If I don't fully understand the English terms myself, it becomes difficult to explain them to students."* This is consistent with Macaro et al.'s (2018) argument that inadequate teacher proficiency can undermine the effectiveness of EMI, as educators struggle to communicate complex academic concepts and provide necessary linguistic support.

Teachers recognized improvements in students' English proficiency, highlighting the potential of EMI to strengthen language skills. However, they emphasized that realizing its full benefits requires a stronger focus on teacher training. As Ms. Babita Joshi, an Account teacher, observed, *"With better training, we could use EMI more effectively, and students would gain more from it."* This perspective aligns with Hellekjær's (2019) argument that teacher proficiency is essential for the effective delivery of content and the enhancement of student learning outcomes. Teachers' reflections emphasize the need for continuous professional development to ensure that educators are equipped to maximize the potential of EMI and support students' academic success.

Students' Experiences and Cognitive Challenges

Students' experiences with EMI were multifaceted, reflecting both positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand, many students recognized improvements in their English skills

and understood the long-term value of English proficiency for academic and career advancement. Dhirendra Ojha, a 10th- grade student, shared, *"Learning in English helps me to understand global academic material and will give me a better chance to work abroad."* This perspective aligns with Cummins' (2000) theory, which distinguishes between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). While BICS can be acquired relatively quickly through everyday communication, CALP, which is crucial for academic success, demands more focused and context-specific practice. In the context of Kathmandu Valley, the implementation of EMI has the potential to significantly foster CALP development, thereby improving students' academic performance and enhancing their competitiveness in a globalized world (Aryal, 2016). This underscores the importance of integrating EMI not just for language acquisition but as a tool for advancing students' academic capabilities, positioning them for future success both locally and internationally.

However, the study also uncovered significant challenges that students face, particularly in terms of comprehension and cognitive overload. Sohan Singh, grade 9 student, explained, *"Sometimes the technical terms in English are so complex, I have to ask my teacher to explain them in Nepali for me to understand."* This echoes Skutnabb-Kangas' (2000) argument that learning complex academic content in a second language can result in cognitive overload, hindering deeper comprehension. This is especially problematic in Nepalese schools, where the shift to EMI is often abrupt and lacks adequate support. As Sohan noted, *"I feel like I'm learning two things at once: the subject and the language."* This struggle is consistent with Doiz et al. (2012), who identified similar issues in contexts where EMI is introduced without adequate linguistic scaffolding.

The findings of the study highlight the need for targeted language support to mitigate these cognitive challenges. As Dr. Saurav Chaisir, an educator and Nepali teacher, pointed out, *"We need to integrate language support within the curriculum, not just as an add-on."* This resonates with Hellekjær's (2019) assertion that adequate language input, interaction, and motivation are essential for shaping positive language proficiency outcomes. In Government schools in Kathmandu Valley, where most of the students come from the family background that has limited exposure to English, providing tailored language assistance programs is critical for bridging the gap between students' existing language abilities and the demands of EMI.

Parental Perspectives and Cultural Considerations

Parents in Kathmandu Valley largely supported EMI, viewing it as crucial for their children's future opportunities. They believed that English proficiency enhances access to higher education and improves job prospects, both locally and internationally. As Mr. Himal Shah, parent, stated, *"EMI is preparing them for a future where English will open doors for them."* This support reflects the growing societal value placed on English for academic and professional success. However, some parents also express concerns about the potential erosion of native language skills and cultural identity, calling for a balanced approach to EMI that considers both language development and cultural preservation. Rabin Shrestha, parent, expressed, *"English is the key to better job opportunities; I want my child to be proficient in it."* This belief aligns with Becker's (1993) human capital theory, which links investments in

education and language skills to enhanced career prospects. In Kathmandu Valley, where English proficiency is often seen as a gateway to better academic and professional opportunities, most of the parents view EMI as a strategic tool for their children's future success.

However, many parents also voiced concerns about the potential cultural implications of EMI. As Dr. Saurav Pokharel stated, *"I'm worried that my child will lose touch with our language and culture if they only focus on English."* This reflects Pennycook's (2000) argument that the dominance of English in education may marginalize local languages and cultural practices. In Nepal, where there is considerable linguistic and cultural diversity, the prioritization of English in education can create tensions between global integration and local cultural preservation. As Ms. Sabina Rajput, parent, observed, *"It's important to learn English, but we must also make sure that our Nepali language and culture are not forgotten."* This concern is in line with Kachru's (1992) concept of "linguistic imperialism," which emphasizes the risk of undermining local languages when English becomes dominant. The findings suggest that while parents acknowledge the practical advantages of EMI, they also recognize the need for a balanced approach that preserves local languages and cultures.

Conclusion

Use of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in teaching secondary level students in Kathmandu Valley offers both transformative benefits and nuanced challenges, revealing a complex impact on student learning and cultural identity. EMI has proven to enhance English language proficiency, an increasingly vital asset for students aiming to seize global academic and career opportunities. It is especially valued by parents and students who view English proficiency as a gateway to success. However, the adoption of EMI also presents challenges, particularly in complex subjects like Science and Mathematics, where the language barrier may hinder comprehension. Moreover, there is concern that EMI could contribute to the erosion of local languages and cultural identities, which are deeply valued in Nepal's diverse linguistic landscape. A balanced approach to EMI is thus crucial, requiring comprehensive teacher training in English fluency and instructional strategies to effectively convey complex material, alongside sufficient resources like bilingual materials and language support to ensure students grasp content thoroughly. Policymakers play a vital role in this balanced approach by fostering frameworks that integrate both English and local languages, preserving cultural heritage while enabling English proficiency. Ultimately, EMI should be embraced not as a replacement for native languages but as a culturally inclusive strategy that bridges local identity with global competitiveness. The key takeaway for educational leaders is that EMI, when thoughtfully adapted to Nepal's unique context, can empower students with global skills without severing their connection to their cultural roots. A balanced, inclusive approach will ensure that Nepalese students thrive academically, remain grounded in their heritage, and emerge as a generation that is both globally capable and culturally enriched.

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