

MOTHER TONGUE INTERVENTION

AT

PRIMARY LEVEL

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents major findings which are derived from the analysis and interpretation of data in the previous chapter. Also, judgement of the study team is used to arrive at these findings. The findings are presented under the major components which very much reflect the spirit of the objectives of the study. Based on these findings, recommendations have been suggested in order to improve the effectiveness of MT instruction.

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Medium of instruction policies and MT medium school practices

a. Language used in the classroom and school premises

- The language use was found different in different districts. The schools of Kathmandu and Dhanusha used MT as the language of instruction, as classroom language and was spoken by the teachers as well as the students, whereas in Nawalparasi, teachers and students used Magar and Nepali languages in classroom instruction. The language of conversation among the students was MT whereas the teachers used Nepali in their general conversation. The picture of Bardiya was some

how different where the students also speak Maithili language apart from the languages of instruction that is Tharu and Nepali.

- It was found that teaching through MT is in practice in schools where monolingual, bilingual or trilingual situations exist- where the teachers were found to have used both native and Nepali languages while teaching different subjects in their classes. Similarly, the interactions between the teachers and students and among the students were also found in both the native and Nepali languages.

b. Code Switching

- Language switch was found in all the districts except in Kathmandu. Switching language is used in bilingual classes where MT as well as Nepali language was used as the medium of instruction.

c. Use of MT

- The use of MT was found to have different trends. The school of Kathmandu was found ahead in using MT as the medium of instruction which used MT up to grade seven, whereas the school of Dhanusha used Maithili up to grade five. Similarly, schools of Dhankuta used Limbu as an optional subject up to grade five. In case of Bardiya, some teachers were found to have used MT upto grade three and while others up to grade seven. In case of Nawalparasi and Dolakha MT was used only when translating some of the contents to the students, but not strictly as a medium of instruction.
- Views on using MT up to certain level were different. The opinion of Kathmandu was that the MT should be used upto higher education. On the contrary, the other districts opined that MT should be used up to primary level. Some districts like Dhankuta preferred MT to be included only as an optional subject up to secondary level.
- With regard to the use of MT, it was found that preference in using MT was there for different occasions- students' day-to-day life, with friends, at home and community.
- Three different views on using MT as the medium of instruction were found- using MT as the medium of instruction helps the students learn faster. Atudents cannot make any progress in future and offer MT as an optional subject so that the other lingual people can have alternatives.

d. Problems of teachers in instruction

- It was found that almost all the teachers faced problems in the resource materials and teaching learning process in terms of their quantity, availability and the type. Due to the lack of the materials, teachers have to translate the Nepali textbooks into the children's MT which, according to them, is tedious and time consuming and it seriously affected students' learning.
- It was also found that that teachers faced the problem of making children understand of what is expected from the curriculum and textbooks.

e. Concept regarding multilingual materials

- Teachers wanted materials either in Nepali or in their own MT. But the teachers of Dolakha had different version in that they preferred English due to the flow of tourists in the community. It indicates that materials should be developed according to the demands of the particular community.

f. Teaching of script

- Regarding teaching of the script, only one school of Kathmandu teaches the script of its MT. The strategies the teachers used in teaching were similar to teach the other scripts. The school (Jagat Sundar B K) was established with a view to developing all the materials in MT, using MT as the medium of instruction. This concept was quite different in other schools of the same community. The other schools had multilingual students and teachers. Other districts do not have their own script so they did not teach the script of their own MT. They used Devnagari in the books though the languages are of different type.

5.1.2 Strategies and modalities of MT medium education at primary level

a. Use of local knowledge, skill and ability

- It was found that all the teachers gave examples to use local knowledge, skill and ability. But in Bardiya and Dhankuta, they used different strategies. For example, teachers of Bardiya used children to think and explain about their locality whereas the teachers of Dhankuta compared the situation with others during instruction.

b. Availability of textbooks

- It was found that textbooks were available in some MTs like Newari, Tharu, Maithili and Limbu languages only and used differently. It was also found that only Newars are conscious in using the textbooks written in their MT.

c. Provision of teaching language with multiple dialects

- It was found that teaching in monolingual classes was easier than in multilingual classes. It was also found that MT was used where non-MT students were also admitted. It was injustice to the students without MT of the majority students.

d. Provision of transfer from MT to Nepali

- The problem of transfer was only seen in Dhanusha where they had to translate from Maithili to Nepali. Rest of the districts either taught in MT or Nepali or both from early stages or they used Nepali as the medium of instruction.

e. Language coexistence

- It was found that almost all the teachers were found against the discrimination made to different languages and emphasized giving equal treatment to all the languages. Some teachers were also in favour of creating interactive atmosphere to enhance the coexistence of languages.

f. Classroom management for different dialects

- Teachers were found to have been teaching in common language or in Nepali. Their reason was the difficulty in managing the class in monolingual situation because of the higher incidence of internal migration.

5.1.3 Framework for Teacher Preparation and Material Development

I. Framework for Teacher Preparation

a. Teacher Preparation

- Monolingual Situation:* Majority of children studying in a school sharing the same mother tongue with teachers in their native language.

- ii) *Nearly Monolingual Situation but Multi-lingual Teachers:* Majority of children speak the same language and some teachers are native and some are non-native. Both native and non-native teachers teach subjects in the children's mother tongue.
- iii) *Bilingual Situation but Monolingual Teachers:* Children share the same mother tongue but teachers speak different languages. The classes are conducted in the Nepali language.
- iv) *Bilingual Situation:* The children are from two language communities and thus speak two different languages in the class. Teachers use mixed language i.e. sometimes children's mother tongue and sometimes Nepali.

b. Efforts made by the teachers to handle the situation

- Teachers were found to have made some efforts to address the language problems faced in the class. Some of the notable approaches were translating the terms into the children's mother tongue, switching the code when they found that the students did not get the message across, using Nepali language throughout the class etc. Code switching was found a more common strategy in Maithili and Limbu community where as it was observed less common in Magar, Newari and Tharu communities.
- Use of mother tongue was found regular in Newar and Limbu community schools. Newar community school is the only school where the entire classes were found to have been conducted in the Newari language. In other language communities, the translation technique was found as a strategical technique when the students did not understand what the teacher wanted them to understand. In Tamang school of Dolakha, the teacher used elder students to translate the sentences and expression into the students' mother tongue. In Maithili school, teachers tried to give examples from the students' mother tongue when the students had difficulty in getting the message across.

c. Mother tongue as a subject and a medium of instruction

- Mother tongue was used as a subject in Newari, Tharu, Maithali and Limbu schools where as it was also used as a medium in Newari and Limbu schools. In the schools of Magar and Tamang community, it was used only as a medium of instruction.
- The teachers were found to have used different languages while they speak with their students. In Newari and Maithili schools, mother tongue was used as a language of conversation between the teacher and

students where as in Tharu school both Tharu and Nepali were used while conversing with the students. In case of Magar, Tamang and Limbu Schools, Nepali language was used as a medium of conversation.

d. Teaching of Script

- The teachers were also found to have taught the script of the children's mother tongue in Newari, Maithili and Limbu schools. In Newari School, it was taught the way the Nepali script is taught in Nepali medium school where as in Mathili and Limbu schools, the script was taught by comparing them with the Nepali (Devnagari) script. In case of Magar, Tharu and Tamang schools no mother tongue script was taught.

e. Teachers' knowledge about the policy on mother tongue primary education

- The teachers presented mixed response about their knowledge about mother tongue primary education. The Newari school teachers said that they are aware of the policy and they want this to continue up to higher level of study. In case of Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Maithili and Limbu schools, the teachers said that they are aware of the policy but they are of the opinion that it should go only upto primary level. Tharu school teachers feel that such policy is not good and it has not been properly implemented. All the teachers in the sample unanimously said that the policy is not adequate and it is not without flaws.

f. Strategies adopted by teachers with no knowledge of children's mother tongue

- Teachers use different strategies when they don't know the children's mother tongue. They use materials, and asked children and/or their friends who speak the language to help them explain the concept in the students' mother tongue.

g. Preferred language of education

- A mixed response was found from different respondents on the language of their preference. In Newari schools, all the respondents (students, teachers, parents, SMC members and community members) preferred

Newari as the medium of instruction in schools. In case of other languages, they preferred both mother tongue and the Nepali language as the medium of instruction in schools. Students and parents from Tamang, Limbu and Magar schools and community members of Tharu, Tamang and Limbu schools wanted English, Nepali and mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Parents from Dolakha stressed that English has to be used as the medium of instruction in all community schools of Nepal.

- Various reasons were found behind this preference of language. Use of mother tongue is helpful for children to understand the subjects in school and its contribution in the preservation of language and culture, and learning will be more facilitating if the children are taught in their mother tongue.
- There was also a mixed response in the use of mother tongue up to different levels of education- the respondents from the Newari language would like it to go up to higher level where as all the other respondents said that it should go up to primary level only. Only the students of Tharu School and parents and SMC members of Maithili have said that it should go up to secondary and lower secondary level respectively. Interestingly, the teachers of Tamang School said that no mother tongue should be used in the instruction.

h. Teacher training for MT medium instruction

- Training of teachers has been demanded by all categories of respondents in order to implement the mother tongue instruction effectively.

II. Material Development

- *Availability of materials:* Availability of the Materials is another key issue in implementing the mother tongue education in schools.
- *Adequacy of materials:* The existing materials were found to have been adequate by the respondents of Newari school where as they were recorded inadequate by other school respondents.
- *Quality of materials:* The quality of the materials was recorded good by all respondents from all schools. As far as the coverage is concerned, the respondents also rated it to be all right.

a. Current Textbooks in the Nepali Language

- Currently, the textbooks of different subjects are written in Nepali language and they are taught in Nepali language except in the Newari school where the textbooks of other subjects are also written in Nepali. The respondents did not find any problem in them except that some cultural gaps have observed by the teachers.
- The respondents from other language communities said that the textbooks written in Nepali language are uninteresting for the learners as they do not include their native culture. Similarly, the contents of the textbooks are taught through the children's mother tongue and the teachers find them difficult to translate from Nepali to the children's mother tongue.
- It was also found that the textbooks written in Nepali language are good but if they could be prepared in the children's mother tongue, it would be easier and better both for the teachers and students.

b. Materials for Multi-lingual Situation

- It was found that in a multi-lingual situation Nepali medium textbooks should be used as it is understood by the children of all language communities.

5.1.4 Implementation Strategies

a. Policy measures

- Regarding the type of language policy, diverse opinions were found- the emphasis should be given in the preparation of textbooks in the children's mother tongue and the training must be conducted on their use, teaching materials to facilitate learning in the first language should be prepared, and the textbooks at the primary level should be prepared in the children's native languages.

b. Teaching Children with Different Scripts/Languages

- The respondents admitted that it is difficult to teach children with different scripts used for other languages and therefore it can be best taught by comparing with the Nepali script.

- Though the respondents are in favour of mother tongue primary education, they still feel that Nepali could be used as a medium of instruction where children speak different languages. Some of the respondents have also expressed that there should be multilingual teachers in schools and the teachers should be using COMMON TONGUE rather than mother tongue in multilingual situations.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the discussion of results and findings, following recommendations are made for the effective implementation of the mother tongue intervention at the primary level.

5.2.1 Strategies for teaching children of different languages

Throughout this study, the child has been placed at the very centre and the discussion in the previous sections has been made on how a child can learn best in the classroom and how his/her learning can be facilitated through the language. Thus, no child should suffer due to language barrier and every child has a right to learn in the language that he/she feels comfortable with. The following strategies have been suggested to facilitate learning in the classroom in reference to the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the primary level:

- a. As there is a provision of having 20% local curriculum, the schools should be encouraged to develop pre-textbooks and post textbook materials to reinforce MT learners' achievement, and materials that include native culture and values in them. Such materials can be developed in MT and also in Nepali, the former helps the MT learners and the second encourages Nepali learners to know about the "others" language.
- b. In a school where the class is highly multilingual (rural areas of Kathmandu or district headquarters where the population distribution is heterogeneous) and no mother tongue use is possible, practice of language co-existence teaching should be made. In other words, teachers should teach a Nepali word in one language, get the meaning of the same word in another language of the students of varied language background that are present in the class. But if the students are already Nepali speakers and feel easy to understand words then Nepali could be used as the medium of instruction.
- c. The schools which have been handed over to community receive intensive support from the government and the teachers of such school receive Rs 6000 to learn the local language. This message has to be communicated to the teachers who are teaching in a setting where mother tongue teaching is feasible but they are from other language communities.
- d. In order to provide the students with easy transformation skills from native language medium education to Nepali medium education, it is suggested to use Nepali as a subject from grade one to three and use native language as the medium of instruction. When the children go to grade four the reverse should be done i.e. use Nepali as a medium of instruction and retain MT as a subject.

- e. As there is a strong connection between the language spoken at home and language used in school, the parents should be given due orientation how they can help their children learn better at home and school.
- f. In order to provide exposure to the children with the native language materials, Community Learning Centres (CLC) need to be strengthened with such materials. CLC strengthening should be a part of the EFA goal. This can be done by encouraging CLCs to develop MT materials by themselves. Besides, CLC Indigenous People's (IP) organizations can be asked for their help to produce MT materials.
- g. Orthography/script is yet another issue in mother tongue education. There are two different opinions in the use of script in MT education. The first opinion is that MT script should be used right from the beginning and the other opinion is that as the scripts are not standardized in many languages, Devnagari script should be used as Roman language as used in Vietnam. Thus the following suggestions are made regarding the use of script:
 - i. use the script if the language does have orthography
 - ii. use Nepali script if it is not available as an entry point
 - iii. Prepare teachers to understand the orthographic composition of students' language and help them transfer their learning skills from one to the next language. For example, 9, 7 of English and 4 of Nepali can be borrowed from Sirjunga script for Limbu students.

5.2.2 Materials development

Learning becomes effective if the materials are supportive and learner friendly. Children should get sufficient learning materials in school and the materials need to be prepared as per their level and interest. Thus, following suggestions have been made in developing the materials for mother tongue education at the primary level:

- a. The textbooks and learning materials need to be prepared in each language and supplied to the children. To begin with, the existing primary level textbooks can be used as the templates and materials can then be prepared in line with the native language situation in different languages. In doing so, attention should be given to replace the Nepali names and cultural identities by the words and identities of the translated languages. For example, the name Rajendra of Nepali language can be translated as Rajendar to represent Maithili language; Norbu to represent Sherpa language.

- b. Since the kinds of materials prepared at the national level may not have included address the locally available things- the nature, culture, dialects and practices, on one hand, while practising teachers have also demanded for the locally prepared materials on the other. Hence, the approach to address the issue should be locally oriented. DOE and NCED through their local hands such as ETC (A), and ETC (B) are suggested to facilitate *the preparation and use of materials* through their Resource Centres and resources (material and human).
- c. So far the medium of materials is concerned, it is suggested that they should be prepared in bilingual form. Bilingual groups should be there so that they can be teacher and students friendly in using them both by native and Nepali language users.
- d. Textbooks should be accompanied by teacher's book and students' workbook. The teacher's book should explain in detail how mother tongue education should be implemented effectively in reference to a particular subject.
- e. Till now, the practice of involvement of both the linguists and educationists in preparing the materials seems to be poor with a lack of both- language and pedagogy. Hence, involvement of both the linguist and the educationist should be ensured so that they can contribute to it from their respective perspectives.
- f. So far the kinds of materials to be available is concerned, it is suggested that there should be materials for both the teachers and the students for the language(s) they are using. At the same time, multilingual dictionary for the children and multilingual conversational guides for the teachers including vocabulary should be prepared to last the process of using the language by both the students and the teachers of any language. This can be done by:
 - Encouraging teachers to compile student-made dictionary
 - Encouraging teachers to write conversational dictionaries with their multilingual students
 - Inviting publishers and authors to write conversational dictionaries and dictionaries across the languages of the same family

5.2.3 Teacher preparation

- a. Introducing MT effectively in the multilingual and multicultural situations like Nepal is not an easy job unless teachers are well equipped and prepared with various skills they require. They need to be trained in materials preparation skill in different children's languages such as preparation of worksheets for the students in different languages. This will help the students of their respective language group(s) to use different worksheets simultaneously.
- b. Since NCED is the apex body in teacher training and the government has also started supporting the deserving teachers in language training, intensive language

training for teachers is suggested especially in the use of MT approach in teaching. In course of the training, the teachers should be trained not only in the language(s) but also in respecting the culture of local language, teaching techniques through MT, classroom management skills in handling bilingual and multilingual situation, designing and developing multilingual materials through the students, localizing the curriculum, multilingual presentation of poems, stories, food sharing, celebrations and research skills/action research or mini-research. This mosaic approach will do justice to the speakers of native and non-native languages.

- c. In the existing NCED lower secondary and secondary teacher training programme, there is a provision of using local culture and local language. This needs to be extended to the primary teacher training programme as well.
- d. It is also suggested to establish language corners at each school where students speaking different languages can belong to their respective language groups and work together. In the end, they can present their group-work in the class in their respective languages. This is also desired by the responding teachers regarding the coexistence of languages inside the classroom. The language corners of different schools can be facilitated as language promoting circles.
- e. As the students are great asset, they bring a lot of innovative ideas and can create immense amount of work by themselves. It is true that they can also be involved in preparing the learning materials in the native language. The teachers should, therefore, be equipped with the skills of using the students' resource in the preparation of learning materials. This will be very useful in using native language materials in multilingual settings where children from different languages can prepare materials in their native language and share them with the speakers of the other languages.
- f. Since NCED has already introduced the concept of localization and glocalization (globalization +localization) as pedagogical process for the lower secondary and secondary school teachers, this content should be incorporated in the primary teacher training programs as well.

5.2.4 Collaboration

- a. Since the teachers pointed out cultural gap between MTI and the translated version of the textbooks and were in favour of localization, community involvement in material preparation is suggested to be an effective measure. Also, there are language advocacy groups and linguistic communities possessed with one or the other kind of experiences which can be materialized in meeting the learning needs of the children.

- b. Currently, Community Learning Centres (CLC) are working to meeting the goals of Education for All (EFA) in various communities. These CLCs can be potential partners for the schools to implement MT education. Their resources can be utilized in teacher training and material development and the state can facilitate and promote CLCs in MTI in primary education.
- c. Since VDCs are also provided with fund for the development of education in each VDCs, they can prepare plans for the development of the kind of materials compatible with the MT and prepare the teachers in their respective VDCs. Involvement of VDC and other government's extended arms to make the community aware about this is strongly recommended.
- d. As there are language activists and advocacy group in different languages, exploration can be made in making use of their volunteering spirit in preparing the materials and training teachers in the children's native language. Similarly, research can be collaborated with the concerned stakeholders about the efficiency of the MTI at the primary level.