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Rethinking Teacher Education from the Perspective of English Language Teachers for Addressing Multilingual Issues in Nepalese Classrooms

Lok Raj Regmi, PhD[1] & Resham Acharya[2]
[1]*Department of English Education, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal*
[2]*Department of English Education, University Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal*
Corresponding Author Email: resham.acharya@cded.tu.edu.np

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Abstract

This study explores English language teachers' lived experiences of multilingual classrooms in Nepalese secondary schools. It focuses on multilingual issues relating to rethinking teacher education. The study adopted an interpretative phenomenological research design, involving five English language teachers from five community schools in Kathmandu, employing purposive sampling. This study collected data through interviews and analyzed them using the thematic approach proposed by Van Manen (2016). The findings show that multilingualism is an essential feature of Nepalese English language classrooms, where learners bring diverse linguistic and cultural resources. The findings also reveal that teachers faced several multilingual issues, such as balancing English with learners' home languages, addressing varied levels of English proficiency, insufficient teaching materials, and learners' reluctance to participate in English. English teachers developed their professional identities through deliberate classroom experience and reflection, moving beyond rigid English-only orientations towards linguistically diverse perspectives. The findings indicate that teachers expected teacher education programs to be rethought, preparing them with the knowledge and skills required for enacting multilingual realities of English classrooms. Based on these findings, we argue for rethinking English language teacher education by incorporating multilingual pedagogies, using learners' familiar languages as teachers' strategies, and constructing and using language-inclusive materials.

1. Introduction

Multilingualism in classrooms has remained a major issue that challenges traditional beliefs about language pedagogy and teacher preparation. Classrooms have become multilingual sites because of migration, globalization, and increasing linguistic diversity, where learners bring diverse linguistic repertoires and experiences (García & Li, 2014; May, 2019). In such scenarios, language pedagogy is no longer perceived as teaching a single language, but as complex relationships among languages, cultures, identities, and educational practices (Canagarajah, 2013). This changing linguistic reality requires a critical reconsideration of how English language teachers are prepared to respond to multilingual classrooms.

Nepal provides a particularly significant context for examining multilingual classroom realities. Nepal is a linguistically diverse country, comprising more than 120 languages (Language Commission, 2021), where Nepali functions as the dominant official language and English is widely used in education, employment, social mobility, and international communication. The education system in Nepal has increasingly emphasized English language

education, intending for learners to compete in the global market. However, English language classrooms in Nepal do not seem to be homogeneous. These classrooms represent heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds of Nepali and other regional and indigenous languages.

Although Nepal is linguistically diverse in reality, English language pedagogy has historically upheld the assumptions of maintaining English-only environments (Phillipson, 1992; Cook, 2016). These assumptions are creating tensions between institutional expectations and learners' demands. Consequently, teachers are frequently facing challenges related to language choice, classroom interaction, students' varying linguistic competencies, and expectations regarding English proficiency. These realities raise important questions about how English language teachers understand, negotiate, and respond to multilingual issues in their everyday teaching practices.

Recent perspectives on multilingual education challenge deficit-oriented traditional views of learners' home languages and recognize multilingualism as a valuable pedagogical resource. For example, notions like translanguaging emphasize how multilingual learners use their complete linguistic repertoires to construct meaning, participate in learning, and negotiate identities (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014). Following this view, students' first languages and other linguistic resources are not barriers to English learning but important assets supporting comprehension, participation, and academic achievement (Cummins, 2007; Acharya & Regmi, 2025). Therefore, English language teachers require pedagogical knowledge and professional preparation that enable them to engage with multilingual classroom realities in meaningful ways.

However, teacher education programs often continue to reflect monolingual assumptions about language teaching. In many contexts, such as in Nepal, English language teacher preparation has traditionally focused on English proficiency, methodology, and curriculum implementation, while relatively less attention has been given to multilingual pedagogies (Phyak, 2016; Sah & Li, 2018). Consequently, the existing practice shows that many teachers enter multilingual classrooms without adequate preparation to recognize and utilize students' diverse linguistic resources, although teacher professional knowledge is often developed through classroom experience, personal reflection, and negotiation with local teaching realities.

The secondary-level English classrooms in Kathmandu are important sites for exploring these complexities. As an increasingly diverse urban space, schools in Kathmandu hold students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. English language teachers in these classrooms need to negotiate national language policies, institutional expectations, examination-oriented practices, and students' multilingual realities. While national language policy dominantly emphasizes Nepali (the official language of Nepal), institutional expectations seek English-only classrooms. Similarly, examination practices demand English-only use while students expect the use of their home languages. Understanding how teachers experience these negotiations can provide important insights into the limitations and possibilities of current approaches to English language teacher education.

Although existing research has examined multilingualism, English language teaching, and language policy in Nepal, limited attention has been given to teachers' lived experiences of addressing multilingual issues in secondary-level English classrooms. Much existing research focuses on language policy (Phyak, 2013), multilingual classroom practices (Phyak & Ojha, 2019; Acharya & Regmi, 2025), or teachers' beliefs about multilingual education (Sah, 2024; Bohara, 2025), while fewer studies explore how teachers experience multilingual realities as a professional phenomenon and how those experiences can contribute to rethinking teacher education. Considering the multilingual backgrounds of the students, this study particularly explores what issues the secondary-level English teachers experience in English classrooms, how they address those issues, and how their experiences inform rethinking teacher education. Therefore, the present study was conducted to answer the following research question.

How do secondary-level English language teachers experience and navigate multilingual issues in their classrooms, informing rethinking teacher education?

2. Literature Review

Recent empirical studies have increasingly challenged monolingual approaches to English language teaching and emphasized the pedagogical value of learners' diverse linguistic and cultural resources. For instance, the study by García and Li (2014) and Acharya and Regmi (2025) showed that multilingual pedagogies facilitate learners' participation, comprehension, identity affirmation, and academic engagement. Similarly, Creese and Blackledge's (2010) study, in Chinese and Gujarati community language schools in the United Kingdom, demonstrated that flexible bilingual practices enabled teachers and learners to draw on multiple linguistic resources for learning and meaning-making. Further, investigating translanguaging among multilingual learners in South Africa, Makalela (2015) observed the supportive role of translanguaging in learners' participation and comprehension. These studies have reported that English language teachers increasingly recognize learners' home languages as pedagogical resources rather than barriers to English learning.

However, some studies such as Aneja (2016) and de Costa et al. (2019) have pointed to the tensions between multilingual realities and institutional expectations that prioritize English-only instruction. These studies demonstrated that teachers often negotiate competing language ideologies while attempting to create inclusive learning environments. Similarly, Menken and Sanchez's (2019) study in public schools of New York City revealed that teachers, emphasizing the importance of teacher agency, used translanguaging despite English-only institutional practices. Further, examining how teachers negotiate multilingual practices in a Chinese preschool, Shi and Rolstad's (2023) study showed that teachers, despite monolingual institutional policy, used translanguaging in English classrooms through instructional assistance, assessment, and opportunities for students to bring their multilingual and multicultural realities.

Within the Nepalese context, researchers have pointed to the growing multilingual character of English language classrooms and the challenges teachers encounter in implementing multilingual pedagogies. For example, employing a critical ethnography in a multilingual school in Nepal, Phyak (2013) demonstrated that language policy and classroom practices are shaped by competing linguistic ideologies and that local languages are not always adequately recognized as educational resources for learning English. Similarly, studies by Phyak (2016) and Sah and Li (2018) indicate that English language teachers frequently work within policy environments that simultaneously promote English-medium instruction against the multilingual realities of classrooms.

Building on these concerns, Phyak and Ojha (2019) found that teachers often enact multilingual classroom practices, and such practices are shaped by local needs rather than official policy prescriptions. Similarly, Phyak et al. (2022), drawing on ethnographic data from two public schools, demonstrated that teachers created translanguaging spaces to counter English-only orientations and used students' home languages to address learning needs and pedagogical issues. Further, Sah and Li (2022), examining English-medium instruction in public schools of Nepal, showed that teachers and students used English and Nepali flexibly to negotiate meaning. However, they also pointed out that minority languages still remained marginalized.

Despite the growing body of research on multilingual pedagogy, an important gap remains. Few studies have adopted a phenomenological perspective to examine how secondary-level English teachers make sense of their lived experiences of addressing multilingual issues in classrooms, particularly in linguistically diverse classroom contexts of Kathmandu, Nepal. Moreover, limited attention has been paid to how these lived experiences can inform the rethinking of teacher education. Therefore, we realized the need of understanding teachers' experiences to prepare future teachers with shifted multilingual perspectives.

Theoretical Lens of the Study

This study is based on translanguaging theory of multilingual education and the theory of linguistically responsive teacher education. The translanguaging theory conceptualizes multilingualism as a dynamic process in which multilingual individuals draw upon their integrated linguistic repertoires to communicate, construct knowledge, and negotiate meaning rather than using languages as separate and autonomous systems (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014). This perspective challenges monolingual ideologies that have traditionally dominated English language teaching and positions learners' diverse linguistic resources as pedagogical assets. Within multilingual classrooms, teachers are, therefore, expected not merely to manage linguistic diversity but to recognize, value, and incorporate students' multiple languages into English language teaching and learning.

While translanguaging theory explains the multilingual nature of classroom interaction, the theory of linguistically responsive teacher education provides a framework for understanding the professional knowledge and competencies teachers require to teach effectively in multilingual contexts. According to Lucas and Villegas (2013), linguistically responsive teachers develop language awareness, understand multilingual learners' sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, and employ pedagogical practices that build upon learners' linguistic resources. Rather than treating multilingualism as a challenge to overcome, this perspective views linguistic diversity as an educational resource that should inform teacher preparation. From this standpoint, teachers' everyday classroom experiences become valuable sources of professional knowledge that can contribute to improving teacher education. Accordingly, this study explored how teachers' lived experiences reveal existing gaps in teacher preparation and generate insights for rethinking teacher education to better prepare future teachers for multilingual classrooms.

3. Methodology

This study employed an interpretative phenomenological research design to explore how secondary-level English language teachers experience and navigate multilingual issues in their classrooms and how these experiences contribute to rethinking teacher education. Interpretative phenomenology refers to understanding the meanings individuals construct from their lived experiences within particular social, cultural, and historical contexts rather than merely describing the phenomenon itself (Van Manen, 2016). Since multilingual teaching is shaped by teachers' interactions with students, institutional language policies, classroom practices, and broader sociocultural contexts, this approach provides an appropriate methodological framework for interpreting participants' experiences. Guided by Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world, the study acknowledges that teachers' understandings of multilingualism are inseparable from the contexts in which they teach and the professional realities they negotiate (Heidegger, 1962; Van Manen, 2016).

The participants of the study included five secondary-level English language teachers from five community schools in Kathmandu. The schools were purposively selected, as community schools are linguistically and culturally diverse to private institutional schools; as such, schools are easily accessible to all internal immigrants who may not be economically strong, while private schools are only accessible to higher-class people. In addition, teachers from those schools were selected realizing that they have long experience of teaching English in multilingual classroom contexts so that they could provide in-depth information for the study. The data for the study were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which enabled participants to describe their experiences in their own words while allowing the researchers to probe emerging meanings and significant events (Seidman, 2019). Each interview was audio-recorded with participants' informed consent. Alongside this, field notes and reflective memos were maintained throughout the research process to document contextual observations.

The collected data were analyzed using Van Manen's (2016) phenomenological thematic approach, which emphasizes thoughtful reflection on the meanings embedded in lived experience. The analysis involved repeated reading of interview transcripts to gain a holistic understanding of participants' narratives, followed by selective and detailed reading to identify significant statements and experiential meaning units. These meaning units were then clustered into thematic structures that represented shared patterns across participants while preserving the uniqueness of individual experiences. Throughout the analytical process, we interpreted meanings as having recursive interaction between teachers' experiences, the themes, and continuous reflection.

4. Findings and Discussion

In this section, we present an analysis of data, interpretation of results, followed by discussion of findings, which are thematically discussed in the following sub-sections.

Experiencing Multilingual Reality in English Language Classrooms

The purpose of this section was to explore the classroom reality of multilingualism in English classrooms as experienced by the teachers. The participants described their classrooms as linguistically diverse with students' varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Regarding this issue, one of the participants (T1) shared:

> *Yes,… My class is linguistically diverse … The students are from different language backgrounds such as Nepali, Newari, Tamang, and Magar. I encourage my students to use English … but I often use and allow the students to use learners' home languages, mostly Nepali, while discussing difficult concepts. The students also use the Nepali language while working in pairs and groups. I find it natural in the learning process.*

Similarly, another participant (T4) reported:

> *I teach English in a community school … My students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds … English is the medium of instruction … Yet, I frequently use Nepali to explain difficult vocabularies, grammar and other concepts. Students also respond to my questions in Nepali … I feel they express easily and completely.*

A similar experience was shared by T3 as:

> *Yes, … almost all of my classrooms are multilingual … My students belong to various linguistic background such as Nepali, Maithili, Limbu, Bhojpuri and Bajika … They bring their language and culture into English classrooms … I experience that such linguistic diversity enriches classroom interaction by providing examples from any language … However, it requires thoughtful pedagogical planning … The goal of instruction is not to replace English, but to use learners' existing linguistic resources to facilitate deeper understanding, reduce anxiety, promote participation and strengthen English proficiency.*

The interview excerpts show that multilingualism is a natural characteristic of English language classrooms as experienced by the participating teachers. The teachers reported that students belong to diverse linguistic backgrounds such as Nepali, Tamang, Magar, Newari, Maithili, Limbu, and others, creating multilingual learning environments. Despite English being the dominant medium of instruction, teachers and students frequently use Nepali and other home languages to explain complex concepts clearly and facilitate pair and group discussion. This finding indicates that Nepalese English language classrooms are not exclusively English-only; they allow spaces for diverse linguistic and cultural interaction. This finding is similar to Phyak (2013) that multilingual classrooms in Nepal are shaped by complex linguistic realities and competing language ideologies, where multilingual realities challenge a monolingual pedagogy in English.

To address such complex linguistic realities, as the participants' responses show, the teachers make strategic and pedagogically motivated use of learners' home languages as alternative and supportive means to English-only instruction. For example, T1 and T4's responses show that they use Nepali (a lingua franca in Nepal) while explaining difficult concepts, vocabulary, and grammar, and let their students use Nepali while working in pair and group activities. This suggests that the use of learners' familiar languages can function as a form of pedagogical support in English classrooms. This finding reflects the notion of translanguaging in which multilingual speakers draw on their available linguistic resources to make meaning and participate in the learning process (García & Li, 2014). The finding also resonates with Cummins' (2007) argument that rigid separation of languages and exclusive reliance on target language may unnecessarily limit learners' access to meaning. This indicates that multilingualism is perceived as a pedagogical resource rather than a barrier to English language learning.

The teachers' responses also show that multilingual practices contribute to learners' participation, confidence, and identity. For example, T3's account indicates that the use of learners' existing linguistic resources helps learners achieve deeper understanding, reduces anxiety, and promotes participation. Similarly, T4's response shows that the use of Nepali language helps learners express ideas easily and completely. These findings suggest that multilingual practices have both affective and cognitive functions, and that allowing learners to draw on familiar linguistic resources may reduce communicative pressure and create a safer environment for interaction. This idea supports García and Li's (2014) translanguaging theory that learners' linguistic resources are an integrated repertoire for making meaning rather than separate linguistic systems.

Yet, the findings also reveal that multilingual pedagogy requires careful professional judgment. For example, T3's account of the requirement of "thoughtful pedagogical planning" is crucial in multilingual classrooms in the sense that unrestricted use of a dominant additional language like Nepali may reduce opportunities for English interaction, while English-only instruction may constrain comprehension and participation. Similarly, the use of Nepali as the only additional language in English classrooms does not necessarily ensure equal recognition of students who are from other minority language backgrounds. This finding is similar to Sah and Li's (2022) finding that minority languages remained marginalized although English and Nepali were flexibly used in classrooms. This indicates that multilingual pedagogy does not only mean allowing another language into the classroom but critically looking at whether all the minority languages are recognized in the classrooms.

Negotiating Professional Identity in Multilingual Classroom Contexts

In this section, we explore how English language teachers negotiate their professional identity in multilingual classroom contexts. Regarding this concern, one of the participants (T2) explained:

> *… I am a community school teacher … I teach English at secondary level. As an English teacher, I regard English as a medium of instruction … However, I also value the linguistic reality of the classrooms. My students represent diverse linguistic backgrounds … I do not use all those mother tongues … but allow students to bring their linguistic and cultural reality into English classrooms. However, I often use Nepali language whenever the situation demands … I believe that the use of learners' language in the classroom does not weaken my identity as an English teacher.*

Similarly, T5 shared her experience as:

> *In the beginning of my career, I believed that a good English teacher should use English throughout the class. However, along with my experience, my*

perception changed … and realized that strategic use of learners' languages in English classrooms increases students' participation and confidence.

Moreover, T1 shared:

… As an English teacher, I do not entertain the use of languages other than English in English classes during the teacher talking time … but it occurs during student talking time to some extent. However, I also think that students' L1 can be used to facilitate them in learning English.

The above interview excerpts show that teachers negotiate their professional identities by balancing their commitment to English with the multilingual realities of their classrooms. For example, T2's response shows that teachers recognize the importance of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds despite English being considered a key medium of instruction. Teachers' willingness to use learners' familiar languages when necessary and to allow learners to draw on their linguistic resources suggests that multilingual practices are not perceived as incompatible with being an English teacher. Rather, they frequently construct their professional identity by responding to learners' linguistic needs while maintaining the central role of English. This finding reflects Phyak's (2013) observation that English teachers negotiate between institutional expectations associated with English-medium instruction and the multilingual realities of their classrooms. The finding also reflects García and Li's (2014) notion of translanguaging, in which learners' linguistic resources can be mobilized as pedagogical resources for learning rather than viewed as obstacles to English development.

The data also show that the teachers' professional identities are dynamic and can change through classroom experience and reflection. For instance, T5's response reveals a clear shift from an initial belief that a "good English teacher" should use English throughout the class towards a more flexible orientation that recognizes the strategic use of learners' languages for enhanced participation and confidence. Similarly, T1's account reflects that teachers maintain a preference for English during teacher talk but acknowledge the role of learners' familiar languages during student interaction and learning in the target language. This evidence shows that teachers do not simply implement stable beliefs about language use, but they continuously reconstruct their identities as they encounter the practical demands of multilingual classrooms. These findings resonate with Norton's (2013) idea that identity is dynamic, relational, and continuously negotiated through social practices and experiences, indicating a context-responsive professional identity.

Altogether, the findings suggest that teachers are moving beyond a narrowly defined English-only professional identity towards a more multilingual and context-sensitive understanding of their roles. This shift does not mean the rejection of English as the medium of instruction, but symbolizes strategic mobilization towards learners' familiar linguistic resources to facilitate comprehension, participation, and confidence.

Addressing Pedagogical Issues in Multilingual Classrooms

In this section, we discuss what issues the teachers face in multilingual classrooms and how they address them. Concerning the issues in multilingual classrooms, teachers shared a common response that balancing English and students' languages remains a big issue. For example, one participant (T2) maintained:

The biggest issue I have ever faced is on maintaining a balance between English and students' home languages … If too much Nepali is used, exposures in English might be limited … While using only English makes it difficult in learning for many students.

Similarly, T5 noted, "*One of the major issues I have experienced … that the students have different levels of English proficiency as they come from linguistically different backgrounds … Some students can easily and quickly understand … while many others remain unlearned*."

The data show that teachers experience balancing the use of English and learners' home languages as a prime pedagogical issue in multilingual classrooms. The data indicate that teachers recognize the importance of maintaining adequate exposure to English, but they also experience difficulties when English is used exclusively, particularly with learners who have limited proficiency. For example, T2's response shows tension between the use of English and learners' home languages: excessive use of Nepali and other home languages may reduce opportunities for English exposure, while exclusive use of English may hinder comprehension and participation. Similarly, T5's experience reveals that the students' varied levels of proficiency in English invite difficulties for the teachers to address their learning needs uniformly. Thus, the issue is not simply whether to use English or learners' home languages, but how, when, and to what extent diverse linguistic and cultural resources can be used to enhance learning. These findings reflect García and Li's (2014) translanguaging perspective, which considers learners' linguistic and cultural repertoires as resources for meaning-making, and Cummins' (2007) argument that learners' existing linguistic resources can scaffold additional language learning. This perspective suggests that strategic multilingual practices can help teachers negotiate the tension between English exposure and learners' immediate needs for comprehension.

The responses from the participants also show that structural and pedagogical limitations in the existing classroom environment are other striking issues in multilingual classrooms, particularly insufficient linguistically and culturally responsive materials and difficulties in encouraging student participation. For example, T4 noted, "*All the teaching and learning materials are designed with the assumption that all the students have similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds*." This assumption seems to be linguistically biased in the sense that all the students are not provided with linguistically democratic learning materials. In addition, the teachers also experienced the issue in students' participation in English learning activities. For example, T1 explained, "*When I focus on institutional expectation that English should be taught in English, my students often hesitate participating in learning process*." This reveals that institutional expectations of teaching English only through English may result in students' reluctance to classroom. These findings suggest that multilingual pedagogical issues are embedded not only in classroom language choice, but also in curricular assumptions, teaching materials, and institutional expectations. Hence, addressing multilingual issues requires more than encouraging teachers to use learners' home languages; it requires using resources that recognize learners' diverse linguistic and cultural experiences. This finding reflects Conteh's (2015) argument that teachers need to be prepared for the use of language-inclusive approaches.

Concerning how they address these issues, the teachers demonstrate context-responsive pedagogical agency by adopting their classroom practices to learners' linguistic and cultural realities. For example, T2's experience shows that teachers make strategic use of Nepali and other familiar linguistic resources to facilitate comprehension and participation rather than abandoning English as the dominant language of instruction. Teachers' responses also show that they create student-friendly learning environments and supplement English-oriented materials by drawing examples from learners' languages and cultures. For example, T4 argued, "*To minimize the gap between English and learners' home languages,…I try to be as friendly as possible with the learners … In so doing, I often bring examples from Nepali and ask students to bring examples from their language and culture… so that learning English is supported*." These practices suggest that teachers actively mediate between institutional expectations and multilingual classroom realities rather than simply following an English-only orientation, similar to Phyak's (2013) finding that teachers in Nepal negotiate between monolingual language expectations and multilingual classroom realities.

As a whole, the findings suggest that effective multilingual pedagogy depends on teachers' capacity to make informed, context-sensitive decisions about language, materials, and

classroom environment, which informs the need to rethink teacher education from a multilingual perspective, going beyond monolingual pedagogy.

Preparing Teachers for Multilingual Pedagogies

In this section, we discuss how future English language teachers need to be prepared to respond to multilingual classroom realities. Regarding this concern, one of the teachers (T1) argued:

> *I think … The future English language teachers should be prepared in such a way that … They recognize and reflect multilingual realities … Not assuming that all the students have similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds.*

With a similar tone, T3 shared:

> *In my view, the future teachers need more practical exposure to multilingual classrooms during their teaching practices … I think they should be practically trained to use translanguaging, collaborative learning and learner friendly instruction … so that they can address to students' diverse linguistic needs.*

Similarly, T5 claimed:

> *Future teachers need to learn how to design and adopt teaching materials for multilingual classrooms … Most textbooks are designed with the assumption that all the students have similar linguistic backgrounds … but need to be designed realizing linguistic diversity … Thus, teachers need to be prepared for designing language-inclusive resources.*

The teachers' responses indicate that recognizing multilingual realities is a fundamental component of preparing future English language teachers. For example, T1's response shows that future teachers need to be prepared to recognize and reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners rather than assuming that all students share similar backgrounds. This finding suggests that teacher preparation has to move beyond the traditional conception of English teaching that treats the classroom as linguistically homogeneous. Rather, future teachers are expected to develop multilingual awareness and understand learners' linguistic and cultural resources as integral components of the teaching and learning process. Such preparation is believed to help teachers develop a more context-responsive professional orientation and respond to the actual linguistic conditions of Nepalese classrooms. This finding reflects García and Li's (2014) translanguaging perspective that recognizes learners' diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires as resources for learning.

The data also indicate that multilingual awareness needs to be accompanied by practical pedagogical knowledge and skills. For example, T3's response shows the importance of practical exposure to multilingual classrooms during teaching practice, emphasizing the need for training in translanguaging, collaborative learning, and learner-friendly instruction. Similarly, T5's response emphasizes teachers' ability to design and adapt teaching materials in response to linguistic diversity. These responses suggest that having multilingual awareness is not enough, but future teachers need to transform multilingual awareness into classroom practice so that they can identify learners' diverse needs and develop language-responsive pedagogical strategies. This finding resonates with Conteh's (2015) argument that teacher preparation needs to focus on practical knowledge and language-inclusive strategies to engage effectively in multilingual classrooms.

In addition, teachers' responses demonstrate the need to rethink teacher preparation as a continuous process of professional learning rather than something completed at graduation. For example, T1 argued, "*Teacher preparation should not end after graduation … but should continuously go*." This shows that teachers need ongoing opportunities to reflect on their experiences and develop their multilingual pedagogical practices. Such ongoing professional learning helps teachers respond to changing classroom realities, evaluate the effectiveness of their language practices, and develop greater pedagogical agency. This finding is similar to

Norton's (2013) argument that professional learning and the construction of professional identity are a continuous process.

As a whole, these findings suggest that rethinking teacher education in Nepal requires an integrated model that subsumes multilingual awareness, practical classroom experience, translanguaging-oriented pedagogy, collaborative and learner-friendly approaches, and the development of language-inclusive materials.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore what multilingual issues the secondary-level English language teachers experience in English classrooms of community schools and how they address them. Bound to the tone of the objective, we draw the following key conclusions.

The study shows that multilingualism is an inherent feature of English language classrooms in Nepalese community schools that shapes teachers' pedagogical practices and their identities. The teachers viewed linguistic and cultural diversities as providing valuable pedagogical resources in the classrooms, facilitating comprehension, participation, confidence, and natural development in the English language. While addressing multilingual classroom contexts, the teachers face issues like balancing English with learners' home languages, tackling variations in students' English language proficiency, limited multilingual teaching materials, and students' lower participation in classrooms. To address these issues, the teachers adopt context-responsive pedagogies by strategically using learners' home languages, creating learner-friendly learning environments, and drawing on multilingual and multicultural resources in classrooms. Finally, the teachers also viewed the need to rethink teacher education policy and practices so that future teachers need to be prepared, focusing on multilingual competence and encouraging them to design language-inclusive materials reflecting their experiences.

The findings suggest some implications. The findings of the study indicate that curriculum developers and textbook writers can design teaching materials reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of classroom realities. Similarly, teacher educators are suggested to rethink teacher education programmes, recognizing multilingual and multicultural realities of Nepalese classrooms. In addition, teachers can adopt context-responsive and learner-friendly pedagogic practices like strategically using learners' home languages and designing and using language-inclusive materials.

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