National level policy and local level practices: a multilayered analysis of language policy practices in Nepalese school education

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to analyze local practices of the National Level Language Policy in School Education (hereafter, LPSE) in Nepal. Offering examples of three schools from Tanahun District representing two broad categories of Nepalese schools, i.e. private and public, I discuss the following: How is LPSE practiced in each school? How do national policy and local practices interact during policy processes? On the basis of ethnographic study in three schools, I found that the national level LPSE is interpreted and appropriated differently in multiple layers of policy practices in each context, but not beyond the outmost-boundary proffered by the national level policy structure in Nepal.

Keywords: Private/public school, Aanboo Khaireni, negotiation, appropriation, policy layers.

1. Introduction

Nepal, throughout its history, has been a multilingual country. Yadava (2014: 53, 69) and Seel et al. (2017) mention that the Census Report-2011 has recorded 123 languages that are spoken by 59 ethnic groups as their mother tongue. Among them, 48 languages that are spoken by 82.10% of the total population are affiliated to the Indo-Aryan language family. The largest numbers (i.e. 68) of indigenous languages (such as Gurung, Magar, Tamang, etc.) spoken by 17.3% of the total population are affiliated to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Very few languages are affiliated to the Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian language families. Each family consists of only one language and is spoken by 0.19% and 0.13% of the total population respectively. 'Kusunda' (a genetically isolate language from other languages in Nepal) is the mother tongue of 28 speakers. About 0.18% of the total population speak non-specified languages and approximately 0.09% of the population speak some foreign and sign languages. According to Yadava (2014) English is now the mother tongue of 2032 people who have migrated from other countries.

This socio-linguistic scenario is the legacy of chaotic language policy within education throughout the long history of Nepal. Nepali, an Indo-Aryan language and the mother tongue of high-caste elites, was developed as a dominant language in the lives of people from different backgrounds. As Seel et al. (2017: 27) state- 'One Nation-One Language' policy, enacted during 1960-1990 with insistence on Nepali as the sole medium of education, was the main technique to exclude indigenous people from the dynamics of public life. The complexities were further intensified when English was also made a part of the curriculum as a subject in public schools and as a medium of instruction in private schools. In this way, languages other than Nepali and English were sidelined, resulting in complex ethnic/linguistic inequalities throughout the country. It finally led to the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990.

Since 1990, we have experienced a fluctuation in language policy in education. On one extreme, firstly, the Education Act-1971 (seventh amendment 2001) made provisions for mother tongue education in primary level but not mandatory in all contexts and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education of Nepal-2007 made it mandatory in Grade 1-3. Secondly, during 2007-2009, the Ministry of Education enacted the Multilingual Education Program for all Non-Nepali-speaking students of primary schools in six targeted districts. It reveals that some decades onwards the attention of the government is on the promotion of indigenous languages. However, it is widely reported that the results are not satisfactory in relation to investment. On another extreme, the Government firstly states the language policy in Education Act-1971 (added using

Amendment Act-2006) offering three nodes i.e. 'Nepali-only', 'English-only' and 'Both-languages' for making decisions on medium of instruction at a local level. Secondly, it has enacted the Company Act to give authorization to privatize education/schooling allowing people to establish private schools and to decide the medium of instruction in their contexts. Consequently, overwhelming numbers of English medium private schools have been opened throughout the country. There is an enduring popularity in English medium education from early grades in school education and the flow of students has been increasing in private schools. This has reversely affected the number of students in public schools. To cope with the situation, many Nepali medium schools have shifted their medium of instruction from Nepali to English and very few of them use both languages. Seel et al. (2017: 42) note that District Education Officials generally are the first to encourage schools to adopt English medium education in order to retain children in schools. Such a defensive motive of local government and school level actors directly influences the quality of education. Some evaluation programs found unsatisfactory learning outcomes of children. Most of the blames lies on the inefficiency of teachers in teaching English, the quality of textbooks and use of materials. Observing the situation, I realize firstly that there is a lack of detailed understanding of the nature of policy practices at a local level, although the government has taken many initiatives in policy development and their implementation. Secondly, the demand is for in-depth LPSE research to draw the enriched input for the further development of educational language policy in Nepal.

Against this background, the article asks the following overall research question. How is Language Policy in School Education (LPSE) practiced locally in Nepalese schools? To answer this question I expose an ethnographic study of three schools that were playing agentive roles in national policy implementation and engage in thick description of how policy is negotiated and appreciated. I further discuss the relationship between policy power and local level agencies during policy processes. With this aim, the current trends in Language Planning and Planning (LPP) i.e. ethnography of LPP are discussed, followed by an account of field making, and in turn followed by a historical trajectories of LPSE with the assumption that to understand the present, we should look at its history. Finally, the local level practices of LPSE are analyzed, illustrating examples of three schools in multiple layers.

2. On ethnography of LPP

The recent trend in LPP research is mostly based on a critical ethnographic approach. This approach sees policy as a 'multilayered process' (see Ricento & Hornberger 1996; Hornberger & Johnson 2007: 509) in which different layers ensemble in a way that the outer- layer surrounds the immediate inner-layer and that each layer is linked with others. It also focuses on analyzing the 'power and agency' of local actors (Ricento 2000: 199-200; Johnson & Ricento 2013: 16) in policy 'negotiation'[1], 'appropriation'[2] (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead 2009). It believes that ethnographic research provides a 'powerful seeing' and 'thick description' (Ricento & Hornberger 1996; Hornberger & Johnson 2007: 509) of roles of policy actors in LPP processes. It not only proffers the way of seeing how local actors (re)negotiate and appropriate official language policy while practicing but also provide robust thought on how local practices can create an official language policy (See Warhol 2012: 235-252).

Besides these, the ethnography of LPP bridges the gap between macro and micro level policies for the practical understanding of how individuals' everyday activities are linked with a larger historical, ideological, political and social framework (Ricento 2000: 208; Tollefson 2015:

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[1]   Negotiation: is the term used by Levinson et al. (2009: 779) as a way to account for processes of meaning making.
[2]   Appropriation: is the concept used by Levinson et al. (2009: 769) as a form of creative interpretive practice necessarily engaged in by different people involved in the policy process.

188). For this respect, Ricento & Hornberger (1996) and Johnson & Ricento (2013: 16) point to the need for textual and historical analyses of policy in order to capture the historical trajectory, attitudes, and ideologies in the production of the policy at hand along with the analyses of creative interpretation and implementation of policy in detail. Similarly, Shore and Wright (1997: 14-15) and Levinson, Sutton & Winstead (2009) call for 'study through' the policy which includes both 'study up' and 'study down'. They point out that policy research should attempt to study from authorized policy formation processes to local practices or vice versa, not as antidotes but as a complement of one another (789).

Thus, ethnography of LPP is methodologically rich and highly relevant for a detailed understanding of LPSE practices in the Nepalese context. As a part of a broader framework of LPSE research developed for my PhD project, this paper provides the multilayered analysis of everyday practices of national LPSE in three different schools located in Aanboo Khaireni, Tanahun. Grounded on an ethnographic approach as proposed by Ricento & Hornberger (1996) and Hornberger & Johnson (2007: 509), this paper not only unpacks how local actors develop policy negotiation and appropriation in multiple layers, but also analyzes how the power of the national LPSE structure limits the space of local actors in policy negotiation and appropriation. Moreover, it discusses how LPSE actors in each layer exercise different amounts of power in relation to other individuals either of the similar layers or of different ones.

3. Methods

This paper is a part of nine-month ethnographic fieldwork for my PhD project that was conducted at Aanboo Khaireni; a business hub of Tanahun District and some parts of Gorkha and Lampung Districts in Western Nepal. While researching possible fieldwork locations among three neighboring districts of Gorkha i.e. Dhading, Lamjung and Tanahun to study LPSE practices, I selected Aanboo Khaireni from Tanahun as my study site. The rationales behind selecting this city were, firstly, that it represented one of the newly-emerging urban areas in Nepal where different practices of both public and private education could be observed; secondly, it was geographically accessible for me to conduct ethnographic fieldwork maintaining my university job which was on a contract basis; and thirdly, the place was neither completely familiar nor entirely new to me in order to maintain rapport and distance among the people living there.

During the fieldwork I experienced three faces of Aanboo Khaireni for which I use terms such as new, old and mixed (both new and old). However, I am not suggesting that this is inherently true as there is no such explicit demarcation apparent to my knowledge. The new face is the main business hub where crowds of people, rows of hoarding boards and compact houses along the sides of the road are found. In contrast, traditional houses and huts hidden among tall trees embedded with cattle sheds, dung heaps and goat pens give the glimpse of the old face. The mixed face is experienced in the inner part. It is a newly emerging residential area of both migrated and long-term-resided people composed of both cemented and old-fashioned houses.

In the city, I purposively selected three schools representing two broad categories of Nepalese schools, both of which play agentive roles in national policy practices. Among them, Shakti and Jyoti Schools (pseudonyms) were private and Tara School (pseudonym) was the public. The selection was made on the basis of a survey of Gurung students from Grade Nine studying in English-Medium whose mother tongue was Gurung. It was found that five students from Tara School, three from Shakti School and two from Jyoti School could speak Gurung with a different degree of fluency. Such selection was made to understand how the same policy was practiced in two almost identical situations and in two different situations respectively.

The fieldwork included documents collection, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Different educational reports, acts, rules, school curricula, constitutions and articles

relevant to LPSE and availed documents of three schools such as minutes of meetings, students' records, academic calendars, notices, etc. were collected and analyzed to unfold the historical trajectories of language policy, attitudes and ideologies of elites and authorities as suggested by Ricento & Hornberger (1996) and Johnson & Ricento (2013: 16). Participant observation was conducted holding different roles at different times and sites. Extra-curricular activities, classroom interaction, and occasional events were observed and field-notes were developed. In-depth interviews were conducted not only with students but also with teachers, principals/founders, SMC president, District Education Authorities, parents, local residents and villagers. Interviews were conducted in Nepali, audio recorded and transcribed as exactly as possible. The data was collected and used as complementary of others. Thus, the fieldwork started from schools and ended up with the community.

4.   On language policy in Nepalese school education

The LPSE in Nepal has had unique historical trajectories from the nineteenth century onward. In the mid-nineteenth century, English gained its space both as a subject and a medium of instruction in Nepalese formal education. Replacing the common metaphor 'Gai khane bhasha' (language of cow eating people), it became a language *of* power in reinforcing Rana's brutal rule and *for* power for segregating people (see Sharma 1990: 3; Eagle 1999: 284; Weinberg 2013: 63). It was the policy of the Rana Prime Minister to strengthen his power by imparting English education inclined to British India to his sons and keeping mum for others (see Daniel Wright 1877: 31; Wood & Knall 1962: 25). The policy was continued until the time of Dev Shamsher; a succeeding Rana Ruler (see Onta 1997: 69) but was shadowed by the Nepali language during his rule. However, English regained its status when Chandra Shamsher seized power from Dev and continued until Rana Rule was overthrown and democracy was established. Simultaneously, Nepali was also being developed and its functions were elaborated throughout Nepal.

In 1956, the 'Nepal National Education Planning Commission' (henceforth, NNEPC-1956) was established and dedicated to Mahendra, the Prince from Shah Coterie. The commission not only recommended Nepali as a medium of instruction but also enforced its use in different domains of children's lives (see NNEPC-1956: 96). Within a decade of its establishment, King Mahendra snatched a coup against democracy and established the Single-Party-Panchayat System. Along with other sectors, he dissolved NNEPC and formed the 'All-round National Education Committee' in 1961. The Committee changed contents inclined to faith to Crown and also included English as a subject in the curricula, but retained Nepali as the medium of instruction. In 1971, the King commanded the formation of the 'National Education System Plan' (henceforth, NESP) which brought a drastic change in education but retained same language policy. On the basis of NESP, the 'Education Act-1971' and 'Education Rules-2002' were developed. The Act and Rules are still active with a series of amendments. To implement them in the classroom, different curricula were developed and enacted throughout the country.

In 1990, overthrowing the Panchayat System, multi-party democracy was reestablished with the mandate of the Nepalese people. The 'National Education Commission' (NEC) was formed in 1992. It, firstly, recommended mother tongue education at primary level and the inclusion of ethnic languages as subjects in curricula. Secondly, it highlighted Nepali as the means of state business, national solidarity and integrity (NEC-1992: 11). Thirdly, it also realized the vitality of English for expanding knowledge/ access in science and technology (See NEC-1992: 11). Accordingly the present language policy in education is: '*The medium of education in a school shall be Nepali language, English language or both languages*' (Education Act-1971: 11 [italics added for emphasis]). Moreover, the provision of mother tongue education at primary level has also been made.

Such historical trajectories reveal that the LPSE in Nepal was dominated by English in Rana's time and by Nepali in the Panchayat System where English is a foreign language and Nepali was/is a mother tongue of Brahman/Chhetries[3]. It shows that the red-thread ideology of policy makers in different times was to diminish the use of the mother tongue of ethnic children and to maximize the use of Nepali. Accordingly, most of the ethnic languages are becoming heritage languages for the succeeding generations. The present perception of people regarding Nepali/English/other languages and their practices is the legacy of the history of language policy. Therefore, I argue that the present LPSE provisioned in the Education Act (1971: 11) did not emerge in vacuum. It represents long exercises of authorities to conceal their domination over other languages. It reflects the concept that:

> The creation of policy is a result of inter-textual and inter-discursive links to past and present policy texts and discourses. The policy is open to diverse interpretations by creator who created it and by those who practice it and are expected to appropriate it, once it has been created and put into motion (Johnson & Johnson 2015: 223).

The local level practices of the above policy statement are the departure of our discussion throughout the article. The following sections deal with how the present policy texts and discourses are practiced or appropriated at local levels.

5.   National level policy and local level practices

The national LPSE, which states that 'the medium of education in a school shall be Nepali language, English language or both languages', has now been in effect throughout the country. Illustrating the ethnographic account of three schools, this section unpacks the multilayer policy practices. Firstly, it delineates different willpower to policy decisions made by the principal of each school and their administrative trajectories; secondly, it deals with language practices on school premises; and thirdly, it explains the classroom interaction in relation to language used.

Layer 1: determination for policy decision and trajectories of practices

The national LPSE quoted above proffers different nodes for policy creation. Among three schools, Jyoti and Shakti Schools preferred English-only ideology while Tara School promised to start Nepali and English education. Although both private schools decided English medium education and the public school decided Nepali and English language education, the determination of the founder/principal of each school was contextually constructed (see Levinson et.al. 2009: 772). It was the departure of negotiation and appropriation of policy leading to different trajectories in policy practices. This layer unravels different determinations to policy decision and administrative trajectories of the schools.

Jyoti School

Jyoti School was established in 1988 as per Company/Education Acts and adopted English medium education. The willpower of the founder to adopt such policy was shaped by his family contexts. Being from Malla Coterie, he was economically and educationally more privileged, having the construct of being a more prestigious person in his community. As such, maintaining such status became the most important thing in his life. For this purpose, he preferred to establish a private school in Aanboo Khaireni with English-only ideology. The following excerpt clearly indicates his aspiration while establishing a private school with English-only ideology:

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[3] Brahman/Chhetries: are so-called higher castes in Nepal who have been more privileged politically, economically and educationally for centuries.

'Naam pani aaunchha, Daam pani aaunchha' (To earn both fame and wealth)
>   In fact, I would live in Chitwan …However; I would frequently come to Aanboo Khaireni
>   to meet my mother. My friends would say..."You are educated. Please, open a school. This
>   place has a future." …Now it is going in profit…It is not bad both in terms of money and in
>   terms of social fame… If you do well, you can earn both fame and wealth (Naam pani
>   aauchha, Daam pani aauchha)… you will win good wishers/friends. Good wishers and
>   friends are the wealth for you." (From interview transcript)

His utterances reveal that he established the school as a platform for earning both 'name and wealth'. His double-fold determination was the foundation of administrative trajectories of the school.

The founder was the principal of the school. He formed SMC and Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) as per the national policy. Regardless of its provision regarding the roles of SMC and PTA, he centralized all decision-making power within him granting them a ceremonial space. He could conduct or postpone the program and hire and fire any teaching and non-teaching staffs whenever he realized.

As a private company, Jyoti School was within the networks of both government and non-government organizations. It was a member of the Association of Private Boarding School of Nepal (PABSON[4]). Although no school could go beyond the prescribed frame of government policy, it was inclined to follow the Academic Calendar prepared by PABSON for opening/closing days, long-vacation and examination schedules and use the textbooks selected by it. On the basis of policy of PABSON, it prepared its Academic Calendar every year. Early completion of course and daily exam at secondary level was the main strategy of the school with the assumption that "the more testing, the more learning".

Shakti School
Shakti School was also registered as per the Company/Education Acts of Nepal. The bizarre experience of the founder not getting admission into an Indian school due to his lack of good English inspired him to open an English medium school in Aanboo Khaireni. During his childhood, his father took him to India from his village for a good education, but he was not admitted that year because his English was poor. He improved his English and reapplied the following year. He was admitted and continued his study. After he completed intermediate education he returned to Nepal, and since that time 'English' and 'opportunity' became synonymous for him. He started teaching in schools, and after some years he joined 'SAVE the Children[5]' to work as a social facilitator. Two year after, the project was terminated and he returned to Aanboo Khaireni realizing the need of good English for the community children. Coincidently, people in his community were looking for a child-care center in their locality. He established a child-care center there and finally it was converted into an English medium primary school and in turn it evolved into a secondary school. His determination to adopt English-only policy in Shakti School is reflected in the following excerpt:

'The realization of a need of good English'
>   I am from an ordinary family and a son of an Indian Army… My father took me to India to
>   give me a good education but I could not get admission due to lack of good English… spent

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[4]   An organization established for the welfare of private schools.
[5]   An International Non-Government Organization.

a year to improve it for admission. …completed intermediate education …returned to Nepal…for me 'English' and 'opportunity' was synonyms…worked as a teacher…. Later…joined 'SAVE the Children' as a social facilitator... I started Nursery to Kindergarten in 2001and…got approval from District Education Office (DEO) for primary level. Gradually, it was upgraded to secondary school... (From interview transcript)

This excerpt exposes a two-fold realization of the founder and of a community of people regarding the need for good English. The bitter experience of the founder in his childhood and people's realization of the need of a childcare center jointly constructed his determination to open an English medium school resulting in different administrative trajectories.

Like Jyoti School, Shakti School was also within networks of both government and non-government organizations. As a member of PABSON, this school followed the policy of PABSON while using Textbooks and Academic Calendar. However, it would prepare a detail academic calendar each year, but no part of which could contradict the DEO policy.

The School formed SMC and PTA, leaving a ceremonial space in decision-making. However, it was handled by a School Board of three shareholders. The board was the supreme administrative body in the school. The founder was the Managing Director holding intermediate level decision-making power as every decision had to be approved by the School Board. As helping hands in daily academic management, the school had appointed a Principal, Vice-Principal and an ECA teacher.

Tara School

The school was a leading public school in Aanboo Khaireni with a high flow of students until 1990s. But, the situation changed due to the establishment of English medium private schools nearby. In 2004, those private schools were closed due to the private school closing campaign of Maoists throughout the country. It caused a flood of students in Tara School. The following year, the schools were reopened, and therefore students returned to their schools leaving very few in Tara School. Those who were left were from low socio-economic background which changed the school as if it was only 'the school of the poor'. Most of local middle-class people paid little attention to the public school and were motivated to admit their children to the private schools. This made the situation even worse for Tara School. It encouraged the head teacher to be committed to make the school a 'School of the well-off, not only of the poor'. As the first initiative, he made the decision for a bilingual policy in education in the school. The situation which constructed his determination to bilingual policy in the school was reflected in the following excerpt:

The local middle-class-people... would send their children to private schools. It made the situation worse which led me to make a commitment that I must change this school to the 'School of the well-off, not only of the Poor!' The key to maintain it as the 'School of the Well-off' was 'English medium education' and to make it the 'School of the Poor' was 'Nepali medium education'. (From field note)

It reveals that the head teacher decided both Nepali and English medium instruction would reduce the cleavage between the well-off and the poor and would hopefully regain the status of school as a social agent of all members of the community. Such a determination shaped a unique administrative trajectory in the school.

The school had three layers of committees i.e. first, SMC and PTA which were formed as per national policy, second, teacher-based committees and third, student-based committees which

were formed as per school policy. The SMC was a supreme administrative body in the school.

The school started two-medium education from Grade Six in 2005. Grade Six was divided into two sections. In one section, all the subjects except English were taught in Nepali medium, but in another section some subjects were taught in English and remaining subjects were taught in Nepali. Thus, subjects were added to be taught in English when the class was promoted each year. Simultaneously, the school also started completely English medium education from primary level too. As such, the school practiced three types of education in terms of medium of instruction i.e. English-only medium, Nepali and English medium and Nepali-only medium, although the underlying motivation was to enhance English medium education with the continuation of Nepali medium education.

In each strategy, the initial motivation i.e. to make a 'school of the well-off, not only of the poor' was reflected. The initiation of English medium education was to motivate local well-off people and the continuation of Nepali medium education was to save space for the poor. Thus, the number of students in the school started increasing gradually.

General curricula of the secondary level provisioned six compulsory and two optional subjects to be taught in each of grade nine and ten. Out of two optional subjects 'Optional I' was for the choice of students whereas 'Optional II' was for the choice of school. Nevertheless, the school chose both subjects leaving students no room for their choice. From the list of subjects included in the curriculum, 'Health Education' was selected for English medium students whereas 'Business and Account' and 'Education' were selected for Nepali medium students. The underlying interest of the school in this policy was:

> English medium students are relatively better than Nepali medium students. So, they likely study medicine, engineering and nursing. If they study 'Health Education'…., it will better support their future. But, most students from Nepali medium are resources for our Grade Eleven. Those who study 'Business and Account' and 'Education' will admit to Faculty of Management and Education respectively. Furthermore, it is the strategy to make weaker students pass SLC easily. (From field note)

Here, no matter whether students were interested to study a particular subject or not they were required to study what was decided for them. This policy eased the administration but violated students' rights.

Besides these, as a public school and within networks of DEO and HSEB, the school had to follow academic calendars of both systems to run their programs accordingly. Not going beyond the major schedules or programs, it would prepare a detailed Academic Calendar making it workable in their context.

The above examples reveal that the same national policy has been interpreted and appropriated differently. The policy was interpreted on the basis of their determinations which were contextually constructed. In the examples, two private schools decided on an English-only policy whereas the next one decided on Nepali and English language education policy to suit their wealth/prestige-oriented, need-oriented and equality-oriented aspirations respectively. Such aspirations to policy entailed negotiation and appropriation in LPSE practices (see Levinson et al. 2009: 768), although the way of interpretation and appropriation might or might not reflect the national level LPSE intent (see Johnson & Johnson 2015: 223). Secondly, they reveal that the policy could not be functionalized without creating a supportive environment. The environment is the composition of quality of teachers, the salary, students' placement, fee structure, textbooks used, administrative structure, power distributed to teachers, and so on. Thirdly, they reveal how all the schools that were playing agentive roles for the same policy practices finally ended up

developing dissimilar institutional trajectories[6] while attempting to put the policy into motion. For example, the Jyoti and Shakti schools were identical in terms of their registration, affiliation, language policy they selected, academic calendar, and textbooks they implemented; however, Jyoti School remained as a family property but Shakti School was the property of three shareholders including the founder. This difference directly influenced the power gravity of two founders, as discussed in Johnson & Johnson (2015), i.e. the founder of Jyoti School had more power gravity than of Shakti School. But, as a head teacher of a public school, the power gravity of the principal of Tara School was less than that of the two founders. Thus, the principal of Jyoti School was more powerful between the two. Again, the head teacher of Shakti School was more powerful than that of Tara School in terms of autonomy in decision-making. Therefore, as Johnson & Johnson (2015) argue, the determination to policy entails policy trajectories, and different trajectories create different 'arbitrators' with different amounts of power.

The next layer of policy analysis concentrates on how language was practiced on the school premises outside the classroom.

Layer 2: language practices in school premises
This layer explores language practices in school premises. Providing detailed accounts of languages used in different dynamics, it reveals policy appropriation in three school sites.

Jyoti School
Jyoti School was established with the commitment of providing an English-only medium education with the enhancement of English-environment in the school. Such agenda motivated people from different backgrounds to admit their children into that school. However, I experienced disparities in policy-ideology and practice; during my fieldwork i.e. Nepali-dominated bilingual practices were manifested in different dynamics of school premises. The signboard of the school was in English, but, some quotations such as 'Shiksha Nai Savyatako Muhan ho'- Raajaa Birendra (means 'Education is the source of civilization'-King Birendra) and some others on the front wall of the main building were in Nepali. Similarly, the academic calendar was written both in Nepali and English. The name-list of students in the attendance registers and daily-routines were in English. Similar discrepancies were observed in other daily activities too. The following is a glimpse of them.

As usual at 9.30 AM, the bell rang for morning assembly on Wednesday, 25 February 2015. The ECA in-charge conducted the assembly (in English) and the students followed him. He instructed them to sing the Nepalese national anthem (in English). Students started singing it (in Nepali). When they finished, he commanded them to perform morning prayers (in English). Following him, a boy went to the front and started praying word-by- word and all students imitated him (in English). After they finished, the ECA in-charge commanded students to start Physical Training (PT) and continued it during the activities (in English). But during PT, teachers and students were speaking Nepali in low voices. The assembly was over and the mass was dispersed, making noise in Nepali. In the office, teachers talked about the assembly (in Nepali). Immediately, the principal entered the office and asked a teacher regarding the papers of his subject (in English) and the teacher replied to him (in English). The principal immediately went out and teachers started conversation: "Yo paper check garda pani tauko dukhayo. Aaja balla balla sakyo pheri bholi arko thikka!" (Meaning: "I have a headache checking papers. Today we finish, tomorrow other papers are ready" in Nepali).

During the day, classes ran smoothly. Meanwhile, some students from grade nine and ten

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6   In this context, institutional trajectories refer to the overall administrative routes that were created in each school for policy practices.

were called to rehearse a dance to show on the forthcoming 'Literary Declaration Day' organized by Aanboo Khaireni VDC. The dance-teacher explained the choreography (in Nepali). The music played and the song started with –ho ho re… hurra…kaha na janme…(in Nepali with some Tharu vocabularies). Right away, the principal came and commented on the students' performance saying, *"bag bagaicha ra khetharu bhaneko thaunma eutai hawbhaw gareu"*(meaning: "You did the same for both words" (i.e. garden and field) (in Nepali). The students rehearsed until they felt tired. Meanwhile, the bell rang for a short break. All the students came out of their classrooms talking to each other (in Nepali). When I entered the office, teachers were also talking (in Nepali). Similarly, there were small temporary shops on the school ground during Tiffin-break. Some students went to buy things talking to each other (in Nepali).

Shakti School
Shakti School was also dedicated to giving English-only medium education to children from different backgrounds by creating a good English-environment in the school. Such English-only commitment attracted people not only from elite groups but also from ethnic backgrounds to enroll their children into the school. Consequently, the majority of students were from Janajati (indigenous) backgrounds and others were from other socio-economic strata. However, like in Jyoti School, I experienced disparities between ideology and practices of language policy in the school during my fieldwork. Although the school adopted an English-only policy, Nepali-dominated bilingual practices were manifested in different dynamics of the school premises. The Accounts Office of the school was located in a building by the entrance gate. Above the table, on the wall, a flex with the pictures of the Karate team was displayed. At the top and bottom of that, some information was written (in Nepali). Next to it a silver-framed certificate written in Nepali was hung on the wall. A school bus labeled in Nepali was parked next to the Accounts Office. In the front part of the main building the name-board of the school was displayed in English. In the teachers' office a daily routine written in English was pasted on the wall. The Academic Calendar-2071 (i.e. 2015) prepared by PABSON, Tanahun was written in both Nepali and English. Similarly, some official documents such as rules and regulations and the names lists of students were also written in English. The daily activities were conducted both in Nepali and English. The following is a glimpse of them.

As usual, the bell rang at 9.45 AM for Morning Assembly on Friday, 27 February 2015. Students were gathered and stood in their lines talking each other (in Nepali). The Director commanded students to come for PT (in English) and students performed the activities. After PT was finished, he commanded them to sing the national anthem (in English). Students started singing the national anthem (in Nepali). When they finished, the Director commanded them to say the morning prayers (in English) and students prayed (in English). When they finished praying, he asked them an IQ question (in English) and students replied to him (in English). After this, he instructed them to do PT again (in English). During PT, some students were side-talking (in Nepali). When the Assembly finished, all students and teachers talked to each other (in Nepali).

Tara School
The commitment of authority of Tara School to decide on 'Nepali and English as medium of education' was to regain the status of school as a 'School of the well-off, not only of the Poor'. To make the 'School of the well-off', it was the commitment of authority to provide English-only medium education creating an enhanced English-learning environment in the school. Similarly, to maintain 'the school of the poor', the commitment was to continue a Nepali-only medium education with advanced learning environment. Thus, students from different socio-economic, linguistic, ethnic and educational backgrounds were studying in the school.

However, like other schools, some discrepancies were experienced in this school, too. Although the school had run two different programs, Nepali-dominated bilingual practices were manifested in official documents, conversations, and programs organized at the school. The signboard of the school was in Nepali, but the signboard of Aanboo Khaireni Campus was written both in Nepali and English. Some quotations next to the pictures of national heroes drawn on the front walls of the buildings were in English, some were in Nepali and others were in both languages. A self-evaluation rubric for teachers displayed on the sidewall of teachers' office was in Nepali. Two bilingual academic calendars prepared by the DEO and developed by the HSEB were displayed side by side. Next to them, a school calendar was also written in Nepali and English. Most of the school documents such as minutes and reports were written in Nepali and very few were in English. The walls of the Nursery and Kindergarten classes were painted white and decorated with charts and pictures, posters and drawings. Some of them were in English, some were in Nepali and some were in both languages. Bilingual practices could be observed in the daily activities of school, too. The following is a glance of them.

As usual, the bell rang at 10 AM for Morning Assembly on Thursday, 5 March 2015. All students were gathered in three clusters on the playground and stood in lines. The three clusters consisted of small children, secondary and higher secondary level students and secondary level students studying in English medium. The ECA teacher started the assembly and asked the students to begin PT (in Nepali). When they finished PT, a music track was played. Following the track students sang the national anthem (in Nepali). After they finished singing, he asked them to go to the classroom (in Nepali). Following him, students dispersed to their classrooms talking to each other (in Nepali). Teachers also started talking in Nepali.

These examples reveal discrepancies between policy and practices. Regardless of underlying motivation for making policy decision, all the schools had English-only ideology. Even Tara School which was continuing Nepali medium education negotiating the context of students who were from feeder schools was inclined towards English-only education. However, bilingual practices were experienced in the premises of all three schools. The documents were displayed in two languages. The live conversations among teachers and students were mostly held in Nepali.

Layer 3: languages used in classrooms
This layer focuses on languages used in classroom interaction in three schools. Taking one example from each school, my aim is to unpack the LPSE practices. As the classroom is the central part of a school, it is also the focal point of policy practices where two main policy actors i.e. teachers and students are involved and all the policy processes in upper layers are centralized.

Vignette 1: classroom interaction in Science (Jyoti School)
The bell rang at 12.30 PM for fourth period in Jyoti School. It was a Science period in Grade Nine 'B'. The teacher went to the classroom. I followed him and asked if I could observe the class, which he allowed. When we entered the classroom, students greeted him by standing up and took their seats after he signaled. He said nothing but wrote some questions on the board (in English). Then, he asked the students to read the questions and answer orally (in English). Asking students to read, he went out of the classroom carrying a chair and sat by the window facing opposite to the class. Immediately, a girl followed him, talked and returned to the classroom. Instantly, another boy went to him, talked and came back. I was curious and asked my informant what the teacher was doing and why students went to him individually. Then, she replied, "to answer the questions" (in English). I was more curious to know the questions and the answers. Coincidentally, the girl who followed the teacher at first came closer to me and I asked her 'Why did you follow the teacher immediately after he went out (in English)? Pointing to the board she said, "To answer the

questions" (in English). I asked again, "How did you remember the questions" (in English)? Showing the board she replied, "They were asked in our last exam" (in Nepali). Then, she went to the teacher again, talked and came back. I asked her, "Why did you go to him again" (in English)? She replied, "To know the answers of some questions beyond these (pointing to the board)" (in Nepali). Afterward, she went to her bench and started chatting with her friends (in Nepali). I encouraged my informant to go to the teacher, but she said, "I am not confident to answer the questions. Those who know the answers can go (in Nepali)."

As such, the focus of teaching was to enable the students to remember the answers to the questions that were asked in the previous examination. The teacher used an interview technique which was unique in teaching Science. Regardless, how fruitful it was in terms of the development of students' creativity and level of knowledge, it worked well to engage students. Some students were making noise (in Nepali) but most of them were reading and talking about the content (in Nepali). The bell rang. The teacher came to the classroom and asked students to read the next passage at home (in English).

Vignette 2: classroom interaction in Mathematics (Shakti School)
The bell rang for the first period in Shakti School. All teachers immediately started going towards their classrooms. I followed one teacher and when he entered the classroom, students greeted him saying, 'Good Morning sir!' He replied, "Good morning! Sit down" (in English). Then, he wrote an Algebraic problem of 'Relation' on the board and explained: 'See the denominator and put the similar ones together, then use the formula' (in English). Students were confused and asked for clarification (in Nepali) and the teacher explained again (in Nepali). A boy said, 'I could not solve problem no.3' (in English). All the students started solving the problem. Meanwhile, some students asked the teacher to clarify each step to be followed (in Nepali). He explained to them (in Nepali). While solving problems students talked to each other in Nepali but wrote each step in English. A girl asked the teacher to solve exercise no. 3 (in Nepali). Then, he started solving it, explaining each step (in Nepali and English) and gave students another problem with instruction (in Nepali and English). Students started solving the problems and talking to each other (in Nepali). Some of them asked for help. The teacher explained the steps in the following way:

> Look at the denominator of the first; it has 1. Look at the second; it has also 1. Look at the third; it has 2, but we cannot factorize it and the last one is 4 that cannot be factorized too. So, take the LCM of denominators having power 1 (in English).

Then, he asked students to solve the problem (in Nepali) and monitored the class. When students asked for help, he explained the steps (in Nepali). Finally, he solved the problem on the board with a step-by-step explanation (in Nepali and English). The bell rang and the class was wrapped up.

Vignette 3: classroom interaction in Social Studies (Tara School)
The bell rang for the fourth period in Tara School. A middle-aged male teacher entered Grade Ten 'A' to teach social studies in English medium. When he entered the classroom, students greeted him standing from their seats and sat again. Instantly, he wrote 'Peace and Order' on the board and asked students to open their textbook (in English). Then, he asked, "What is meant by Peace and Order?" (In English) and waited for the students' response. But the class was pin-drop silent. Standing in the middle of the classroom he repeated, "What is meant by peace and order?" (In English), but students still remained silent. Some were gazing at the texts, some were reading silently and some were talking quietly (in Nepali).

The teacher started reading the text line by line and paraphrased them (in Nepali and

English). Most students imitated the pronunciation but some remained quiet. During the lesson, he was mostly busy giving word meanings in isolation (in Nepali) and pronouncing difficult words. Showing the image of 'Comprehensive Peace Accord-2063' in the textbook, he described the people and the event (in English and Nepali). But most students were talking amongst themselves (in Nepali) and some were fiddling as if they were in leisure time. The bell rang and he wrapped up the lesson.

These classroom interactions practiced in three schools reveal the discrepancies between policy-ideology and practices. Each vignette can be analyzed from different perspectives such as classroom management, teaching methodologies/strategies, second language acquisition, etc. However, if analyzed from the perspective of a language policy aspect, they exemplify how language policies adopted by the school authorities are interpreted and appropriated by a teacher in classroom interactions. Although all teachers were teaching in English medium classrooms, they interacted in two languages (i.e. Nepali and English). Regardless the curriculum specified for monolingual teaching in the respective medium education, most teachers practiced Nepali-dominated bilingual teaching and students also preferred speaking Nepali while they were involved in classroom interaction.

However, all the above trajectories were tunneled into the national examination system. The role of the present national examination system in Nepal has power of surveillance in each agency of a local actor in different layers of policy practices. Although students were free to use any language in classroom interaction if the teacher allowed them, they could never go beyond the government policy in examination. Students of English medium had to take examination in English except Nepali as a subject. Similarly, the teacher could use their own techniques in teaching which were not recommended in the curricula, but they could not implement the textbook anonymously, neither could they weigh up students' achievement beyond the examination grids developed by CDC to maintain the national standard.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This multilayered analysis proffered opportunity to study the local practices of national LPSE. Firstly, it revealed how official language policy was negotiated, re-negotiated and appropriated in different layers of policy process resulting in different policy trajectories. The seeds of such policy negotiations and creations were different attitudes expressed by school authorities in terms of policy decisions which were not emerged all of a sudden; instead they were, as in Levinson et al.'s (2009) words "constructed contextually". The negotiation and appropriation were continuously going on even in subtle events in each layer, resulting in different policy trajectories which finally resulted in different policy practices. Secondly, it unpacked the fact that policy negotiation and creation could not go beyond the outmost boundary of upper level policy appropriation as there was always power and agency interaction in different layers of policy practices. Thirdly, it disclosed how two-line power exercises exist in local level policy practices in different stages.

In these particular examples, the school authorities were able to use the national policy creatively with different determinations. From the same policy statements they searched for a suitable node from which they could generate their own policy. The authorities of three schools found three nodes in the LPSE statement i.e. English-only, Nepali-only and both languages. Two schools chose an 'English-only' node with two different determination i.e. one was 'fame and wealth' oriented and another was 'need' oriented. The third school selected the 'both languages' node from which it created policies for Nepali and English medium education so that the school could serve people from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Such 'service-oriented' determination for policy decision, as Johnson & Johnson (2015: 223) indicate, led the school to discover different routes in policy appropriation.

An unnoticed but embedded fact in each policy practice exposed from this multilayered analysis is that the beliefs, attitudes and ideology of elites, policy makers and authorities are not concealed only in top level policy formation processes but also in local level policy decision, interpretation and appropriation. These descriptions of LPSE practices situate to enhance the conceptual and methodological example of ethnography of LPP within a broader framework of critical socio-cultural practice approach to LPSE research which was the calls made by Ricento (2000: 208) and Tollefson (2015: 188). It illustrates that a socio-cultural approach in policy research sees policy as 'layer of layers'. Namely, a policy has at least three broad layers; formation, practice and results. Each layer consists of multiple layers. Within 'practice'; a layer in a broad policy framework, there are multiple layers such as 'determination to policy', 'institutional trajectory', 'languages in school premises', 'classroom interaction', etc. More layers can be explored if we delve into policy practice processes. Each layer can be unpeeled in multiple ways; for instance, the 'classroom interaction' is a layer which can be analyzed further from perspectives of methodology used, teaching strategies, and classroom managements and so on.

This multilayered analysis simultaneously unravels how the upper level policy power limits the boundary for the agentive roles of lower layer policy creation. Although the policy actors in a particular layer have space for their own policy creation, as Hornberger & Johnson (2007) argue, they are not completely autonomous to do so. Directly or indirectly they are navigated by the upper level policy power. The above examples explicitly show that each school brought at least some variations in creating their school level policy however; they could never go beyond the upper level policy boundary. For example, the schools could develop their academic calendar with detail activities; however, they could never change the PABSON's/DEO's policy for school opening/closing days, examination dates, long vacation dates. Similarly, as part of government policy implementation network they had to count its policy and norms while creating their own rules. Therefore, I argue that in the local level policy process there exist two-line power exercises; metaphorically, centripetal (i.e. the upper-level policy tends to bring uniformity in policy practices) and centrifugal (i.e. the lower-level policy appropriation tends to bring variation moving from the norms). Thus, there is a need for policy research through the socio-cultural approach for a detailed understanding of how the two forces of 'power and agency' are exercised in policy practices.

Another exploration from this analysis is that sometimes, the policy created by the actors to appropriate for their backgrounds and motives during its practices might turn out to be the means of injustice against the targeted group. To illustrate, firstly, English-only policy was the ideology of three schools which was the means of motivating parents to admit their children in these schools. Good 'English proficiency' of their children along with a quality education in other subjects was the main expectation of parents from English medium education. However, this expectation could not be fulfilled by Nepali-dominated bilingual practices in classroom interactions and school premises. Such practices diminish the amount of English language input that is needed to learn English and also other subjects. Secondly, one of the three schools mentioned above chose three subjects to be taught as Optional I and II from the list of subjects and made their policy for administrative ease for the school and procedural ease for students, but it turned out to be the means of discrimination due to medium of education. The assumption was that English medium students were better than Nepali medium students, so they likely study 'Science' and 'Medicine' (which are assumed the best subjects in higher study in Nepal) in future, as such, 'Health Education' was supportive to them. On the contrary, the assumption of school authorities regarding Nepali medium students that they would unlikely study 'Science' and 'Medicine' in higher level as they were weaker in study, therefore 'Business and Account' and 'Education' suited them best. They were likely the source students of the school for higher secondary level. Such restrictive policies created injustice to those students who were interested in studying alternative subjects in

future. Therefore, policy appropriation does not always benefit the targeted groups, instead they might create and/or deepen inequalities. As such, I argue that the ethnography of policy should count "the result of policy practices"; the most important layer of the whole policy process, which is still unnoticed in the field.

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