

Enhancing Quality Education through Multilingual Pedagogy: A Critical Perspective

Authors : Aita Bishowkarma

Abstract : Ensuring quality education in primary level in multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multilingual country Nepal which accommodates 123 ethnic languages (CBS 2011) has come across a big challenge. The discourse on the policies and practices to take advantage of the rich heritage of cultural and linguistic diversity in the pursuit of quality primary education to ethnic/linguistic minority children in Nepal gives in a critical observation of Nepalese perspective in the global academia. Situating the linguistic diversity of Nepal, primary education to children is better through mother tongue. Nepali as official or national language is another important language to be taught to the children. Similarly, craze for English has been inevitable for international communication and job opportunity in the global markets. This paper critically examines the current use of trilingual policy in mother tongue based multilingual education (MT-MLE) in Nepal from the perspective of exploiting linguistic diversity in classroom pedagogy. The researcher adopted mixed method research design applying descriptive measure and explanatory research methods. 24 teachers and 48 students from 6 multilingual schools were selected purposively to dig out their language use, language attitude and language preferences to reveal their preference and attitude towards mother tongue, Nepali and English through questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion. The study shows, in a true multilingual system, all languages (mother tongue, languages of region, nation and wider communication) can have their legitimate place; bridging from the mother tongue to the regional language and national to international language; further leading to meaningful participation in the wider democratic global context. Trilingual policy of mother tongue, national language and international language seemed pertinent however, not sufficient. The finding of the study shows that for quality education in primary education mother tongue based critical multilingual pedagogy through language coexistence approach with contextual variation seems enviable.

Keywords : critical pedagogy, language co-existence, linguistic diversity, quality education

Conference Title : ICMELT 2017 : International Conference on Multilingual Education, Learning and Teaching

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : January 19-20, 2017