

Metrolinguistic Space, Youth and Identity: Implications for Linguistic and Language Education Research

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Abstract

This paper reports the findings of the research concerning how youth in a metropolitan context navigate a metrolinguistic space for constituting plurilingual identity. It applied content analysis as a methodological approach to investigating linguistic and multimodal information available in a metrolinguistic space. Besides, it applied a series of qualitative interviews with the key participants living in the metropolitan city, at least, for the last five years. Inspired by the theoretical and empirical scholarships of Appadurai (1996), Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) and Piccardo (2017), particularly relating the flows of different sorts (people, money, media, ideas, images, languages, ideologies) and identity, this research focused on how the migrant youth in Kathmandu metropolitan city navigated their linguistic identity across these flows. Three themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) contestant space of multiple languages, (b) creative construction of metrolingualism, and (c) creative linguistic and multimodal practices in various domains of life, all imperative in shaping youth identity in the metropolitan context. The study further points out that metroethnicity and metrolinguistic features challenge monolingual and monocultural borders and shape the identity of the youth in the metropolitan context. Finally, in the light of these findings, this study draws so implications for linguistics and language education research.

Keywords identity, language ideologies, metroethnicity, metrolinguistic space, youth

Introduction

Research Context

The historical and multilingual context of Kathmandu metropolitan city,

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construction of metroethnicity and the contestant multilingualism are worth discussing in the research context.

Kathmandu: Historicizing the Contestant Space of Multilingualism

Kathmandu, which is the capital city of Nepal, demonstrates itself as a contestant space of multilingualism. Sanskrit, Newari and Nepali languages always remained active in fulfilling different communication needs of the people for centuries. Sanskrit for accomplishing religious and ritual practices, Nepali in the form of the mother tongue among the Nepali language users and the common lingua franca among the members of different ethnolinguistic groups, and the Newari language, the mother tongue among the densely populated Newar ethnic groups, constituted a multilingual space. The inscriptions that the Lichchhivi and the Malla kings engraved at public sites during their reign demonstrate that the rulers themselves respected multiple languages and use. For example inscription carved in fifteen languages by the then Malla King Jaya Prakash Malla at the Kathmandu Durbar Square in 1654 AD and the one engraved in *Nepal Bhasha* and the Tibetan language at the Swayambhunath Stupa are a few notable examples of multilingual construction.

Although the unification of different principalities into modern Nepal under the leadership of the Shah rulers in the seventeenth century created a favourable space for the development of the Nepali language, there were still other languages prominent in everyday communication among the different Newar linguistic communities in the valley. It created a confluence of the *Khas Bhasha* *Parbate Bhasha* and the Newari language which was itself a more dominant language of everyday communication and the intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge transfer among the Newars in Kathmandu. The Royal sympathy and commitment to protect and promote the Nepali language and the religious predisposition with the Sanskrit language increasingly dominated the local Newari language and its dialects. Also, the functional extension of the Nepali language as the official language of the country during the Rana oligarchy, and the intrusion of the English language as the link language with the imperialist British India further intensified the interaction of multiple languages including English. However, there was still a significant amount of mother tongue usage within the Newar linguistic community. Therefore, there existed a scenario of linguistic diversity, interchange, communication, and coexistence of various languages and cultures both socially and personally (Piccardo, 2013).

Such co existence of multiple languages continued even after the establishment of democracy in the 1950s. Nevertheless, the monarch led Panchayat System promoted the Nepali language as the language of national unity, integrity and communication after the 1960s. The political shift, particularly in the 1990s, created

an environment that was favourable for the growth of Kathmandu's metrolinguistic space. Migration into Kathmandu Valley from the surrounding regions was to the maximum. In addition, the Valley was home to a large population of people with various ethnolinguistic habits, creating a complex linguistic environment known as metrolinguism. The metrolinguistic qualities were framed by innovative language practices in business, education, media and international communication. The deeper inclination of diverse ethnic groups towards their mother tongues on the one hand, and the other, the growing global interaction of Kathmandu with the global communities embraced multiple languages including English. However, political and linguistic ideologies connecting Nepali as the official language, English as the language of international connection, and local languages for everyday communication have not only developed linguistic hierarchy but also have pushed many local languages to the verge of extinction (Devkota, 2018; 2019; 2019; Giri, 2014). The hundreds of indigenous languages spoken in Nepal's diverse communities are in a fragile condition (Phyak, 2015), and the country itself favours monolingual ideology through the functional extension of Nepali and English in education, the media and other formal settings (Devkota, 2018; Giri, 2010). Nevertheless, in the metropolitan city, here Kathmandu, the speakers of various indigenous languages simultaneously negotiate a variety of local, national, regional and international/global languages. Members of the metroethnic community frequently engage in the creative use of multilingualism. The characteristics of the language are hybridized, as opposed to using the features of a single language in any of the social and cultural dimensions in the metropolis.

Metroethnicity, Metrolinguism and Identity

Globalisation has a serious impact on the construction and reconstruction of metroethnicity. The flow of people, money, technologies, media, images, ideas and ideologies at a sheer speed (Appadurai, 1996) has seriously challenged the primordial ethnicity and practices. Although it happened in the history of *Homo Sapiens* for centuries, people across the world today are widely experiencing the extreme form of deterritorialization and transculturality in mediation with rapid migration and advanced technologies (Appadurai, 2006). People from different ethnolinguistic backdrops gathering in a metro space make a regular interaction with multiple languages revealing a multilingual identity. Such a performance involves a remix of different ethnic features, speech habits, milieus, dress, eating, etiquette and association regularly (Maher, 2010). Multiple traditional ethnic communities provide cultural and linguistic resources for the construction and reconstruction of metroethnicity. In such a situation, fluidity and hybridity in the cultural construction and linguistic adjustment commonly occur. Similarly, multilingual/plurilingual lexical choice, syntactic construction and the use of prosodic features take place. The monolingual practices associated with

conventional ethnicity disappeared, and metrolinguism emerged on the grounds of the creative use of linguistic resources rooted in multiple languages and cultures (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2009; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015)

Thus, metrolinguism is the result of the complex interaction of multiple languages and the linguacultural sensitivities that these languages are associated with. Piccardo (2017) argues that when numerous languages and cultures of the migrants encounter the languages and cultures of the host cities, they act as catalysts of change. Such a linguistic process works quite creatively for constituting metro linguistic space. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) argue that “the metrolinguistic space gives us ways of moving beyond the common frameworks of language providing insights into contemporary, urban language practices, and accommodating both fixity and fluidity in its approach to language use” (p. 240). This constitutes metrolinguism which Otsuji and Pennycook define, thus:

Metrolinguism describes how people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language; it does not assume connections between language, culture, ethnicity, nationality or geography, but rather seeks to explore how such relations are produced, resisted, defied or rearranged; its focus is not on language systems but on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction. (p. 246)

This notion of metrolinguism rooted in metroethnicity provides a new epistemic framework for understanding language production and use in metropolitan and sub metropolitan cities across the world (Peláez & Castaño, 2015). Globalisation processes inextricably embed with this process of developing and sustaining metrolinguism (Bolander and Mostowlansky, 2017). The syntactic and lexical features from different languages are used in their everyday life creatively (Pastor, et al., 2015). Otsuji and Pennycook (2015) argue that metrolinguism emerged as the creative and innovative linguistic behaviour that metro citizens demonstrate. The conventional conception of a language and multilingualism may not be appropriate for capturing the complex, yet creative use of language embracing multimodality, mixing of genre, styles, accents, and texts' materiality with pragmatic relevance (Jaworski, 2014). Also, it cannot capture the transfigured identity that the creative use of languages reveals in the migrant citizens, and/or the identity that the migrants constitute through the fluidity of translangaging (Canagarajah, 2012). Rather than sticking identity onto the conventional ethnicity and monolingual sensitivity, the metroethnic youth navigate multi/plurilingual identity through the creative utilization of the linguistic codes of multiple languages in a fluid and hybridized manner. Thus, the main conceptual argument this study has put forth is that the current language study and language education research needs to be well informed about the linguistic practices and

identity construction in the emergent multilingual spaces. Thus, this study sets out to explore the way the metroethnic youth navigate metrolinguistic space in shaping their identity.

The study stemmed from three specific queries:

How has metrolinguistic space been constituted in the Kathmandu metropolitan city?

How do the youth of the metropolitan city navigate metrolinguistic space in constituting their identity?

In what ways do metrolingualism open a new avenue for language education research and ident

Research Methods

Methodologically, this research blends online ethnography and multiple case study designs. It has applied ethnographic principles, perspectives and methods for investigating how the metropolitan youth situate their communication patterns in virtual and/or digital settings (Hart 2017). Online ethnographers are not only interested in exploring the situated activities of the people in online spaces but also in seeing how these activities and communication patterns are related to the large social, historical and cultural contexts. Referencing the multiple cases of metropolitan youth residing in Kathmandu for more than the last five years, this study investigated how these youth navigated their ethnolinguistic grounds, language use and identity. Guided by online ethnography, it used online interviewing (O'Connor & Madge, 2017), online focus group discussion (Abrams & Gaiser, 2017), and internet mediated participant observation (Hart, 2017) as the main methods of data collection. Each of the seven participants, ranging from seventeen to twenty one years old, was interviewed thrice focusing on their experience and explanation of being engaged in online communication. Upon their consent, observation continued for three months to investigate their online communication patterns through Facebook and Messenger chats. During the observation, the linguistic and multimodal communication practices were collected targeting their social, cultural and educational repertoires. The artefacts and comments that they posted in their Facebook and Messenger groups were collected so that the linguistic and multimodal features could be explored. Though it was online, a multi site observation remained rich and imperative for data collection in this study (Devkota, 20

For data collection, we purposively sampled the research participants. However, while selecting them, we considered gender and original linguistic and ethnic backgrounds well. The seven participants, four females and three males were

originally from Magar, Rai, Maithili and Nepali mother tongue backgrounds. Four participants were studying in higher secondary grades and three had joined the university colleges while there took place the fieldwork. Before we involved them in the research, we communicated with them about the purpose of the research and ensured their interest and consent for the participation. During the fieldwork, a series of interviews were conducted with each of the participants. They also shared with us the sample conversations that they had had with their relatives and friends. During the interview, they were asked about the patterns of communication that they used while conversing with their peers, seniors and juniors. Moreover, they were also inquired about the languages, symbols, YouTube Videos, popular quotes, images and pictures that they generally posted on their Facebook walls and messenger chats. However, the study was not restricted to the participants' language and linguistic expressions in social media only. Rather, this study attempted to capture their overall language use and multimodal communication in the metrolinguistic space.

As mentioned above, the data for this research comprised linguistic and multimodal expressions that the core participants used in the digital spaces, peer conversations that the participants used while shopping, participating in sports, expressing creative feelings, and following different lifestyles and artefacts. The data derived from different sources were thematically analyzed (Clarke and Bra 2013). Each of the participants was portrayed comprising the field notes on their biographical and socio cultural repertoire of language use (Lawrence Lightfoot & Hoffmann, 1997). The theoretical perspectives based on the contributions that Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) made on metrolingualism provided insights for coding, categorizing and drawing themes. These themes have been discussed below in light of online field reflexivity, researcher subjectivity and theoretical empirical references on metrolingualism, youth and identity.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed three major themes: contestant spaces of using multiple languages, creative construction of metrolingualism, and youth identity associated with the creative use of languages in the metrolingual space. These themes are discussed in light of the field data, field reflexivity and theoretical empirical understanding.

Contestant paces sing ultiple guages

My parents always speak Tamang when they talk themselves in the morning. I use [it] little when I talk to them and with my siblings. I use

¹ Magar, Gurung, Rai are the all the ethnic groups having their own rich language and cultural traditions. Brahmin-Kshatriya is a caste group and use Nepali as the mother tongue.

English and Nepali with my friends in my college hours. But in my workplace, I use Hindi, Newari and Nepali whenever I need to talk to my customers. Sometimes, I doubt if I am speaking English, Nepali or Hindi as separate languages. I mostly use them like a typical language that adjusts words from different languages. (Sukanya, Online interview)

Sukanya's remarks first and foremost challenge how the youth in metroethnic spaces navigate multiple languages while engaging themselves in her daily life. Although Sukanya is not the unique participant to have such expression, her navigation of multiple languages in her daily life is evocative. Her ethnicity, Sukanya belongs to the Tamang community. She uses the Tamang language while speaking to her parents and siblings. However, the extent she uses her mother tongue is not remarkable because of the metropolitan context which demands that language users use multiple languages, mainly more dominant languages. Although her parents are the 'ideal' native speakers of the Tamang language, their detachment from the indigenous community for more than two decades and attempts to attune the metropolitan city prepared them to encourage their children to learn Nepali and the English languages instead of their mother tongues even at home. As a result, they use their mother tongue when they talk themselves but shift from the mother tongue to Nepali while speaking to their children although the children are also well versed in the Tamang language.

Rupa, another participant, has a story similar to Sukanya's. She lives with her parents and junior siblings. Coming from a populated Magar community in the central hill district of Nepal, Rupa prefers to use the Magar language with her parents, siblings and friends from the same ethnic community. For example, the online chat between Rupa and her friend from the same linguistic community below reveals how their mother tongue is still preferred to establish communal solidarity and ethnolinguistic identity even in the metropolitan context where the dominant language is one other than their own.

Rupa: jhorle (namaste)

Her friend: O jhorle (namaste)

Rupa: hi le khabar? (How are you?)

Her friend: he na, he na kooni (Just fine, and what about you?)

Rupa: he lay (What's going on?)

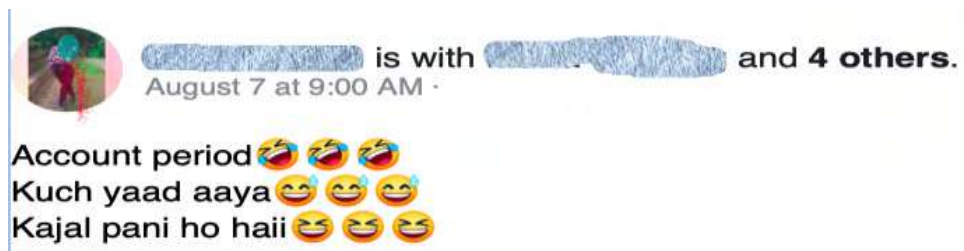
Her friend: kusikhata (with whom?)

Rupa: lafako khata (with friends)

Like Rupa, Sufia has a similar language practice at her home. Sufia, born and brought up in the Maithili community in the Terai, can communicate in her L1. Sufia's home environment always demands the use of Maithili. Since the family had a deeper connection with its community in the Terai, most of the conversation between parents and children, and even among children themselves takes place in Maithili. However, Sufia and her siblings when they need to communicate outside their family, they use Nepali and English. In her communication with her peers, she uses the language mixed up with the lexicons from Nepali and English.

I can use four languages fluently Maithili at home, Nepali and English in the office and college. I can also use Hindi when I talk to my friends and siblings about Hindi Tele Serials. I also understand Korean as I am fond of watching Korean movies when I get free...In many cases, I use English and Hindi words in Nepali sentence structure (Sufia, Interview)

Sufia's remarks are reflected in her Facebook chat as well. In the following chat, she has used three languages side by side.



The linguistic practices of Sukanya, Rupa and Sufia show some creative construction of the languages in different domains of their lives. All three female participants were well versed in their respective L1, though they have been living in the metropolitan city for several years. As these participants reported, they generally use kinship, religious and cultural terms in their respective L1. However, as they come out of the home environment, they use multiple languages as a single entity. Both Rupa and Sufia find their L1 dominance while communicating with relatives or colleagues of their own L1 community. But, in the case of Sukanya, L1 is again not so dominant in either case. In the case of communication at schools, colleges and other formal spaces, all three students used English and Nepali languages simultaneously. In social media and networking like Facebook they use multiple languages simultaneously and creatively.

Creative construction of metrolinguism in a multilingual situation

Earlier, the discussion was made on how multiple languages co exist shaping language use of the metroethnic citizens. This section, referencing communication

patterns and shreds of evidence from the field, delves into how such contestant languages provide space for some creative construction of metrolanguage in the metroethnic city. The part of a conversation between a student and a journalist extracted from YouTube shows how multilingual creatively apply their linguistic knowledge and skills in a single conversation. In a close reading, this extract seriously challenges the linguistic boundaries among the languages that the multilingual have had. Rather, the multilingual uses more languages and linguistic features to constitute a new form of language which makes adjustments of the lexical and grammatical properties of different languages to meet the communication needs of the metroethnic society. The extract is given below:

A: तपाईं A level पढ्न किन आउनु भयो ?

B: ह, त्यै abroad जान सजिलो हुन्छ र +2 भन्दा university मा अलि राम्रो पढाई हुन्छ भनेर हो । अलि different छ, त्यो भएर हो ।

A: किन, के difference पाउनु भयो ?

B: हो मैले फरक पाए । As we can learn practically here.

A: A level प्रति मानिसहरूको misconceptions पनि छ नि, गान्छो छ ?

English translation

A: Why did you come to study A Level?

B: Umm....just it is easier to go abroad and there is better study at university than that of +2. It is little different, so that.

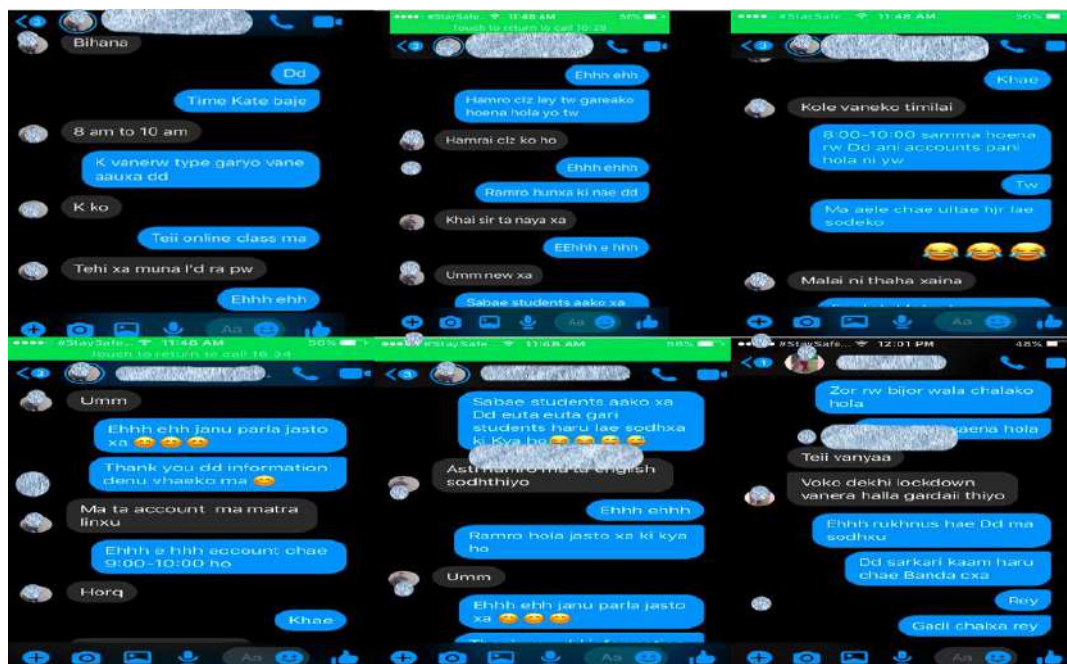
A: Why, what difference did you find?

B: Yes, I found differences. As we can learn practically here.

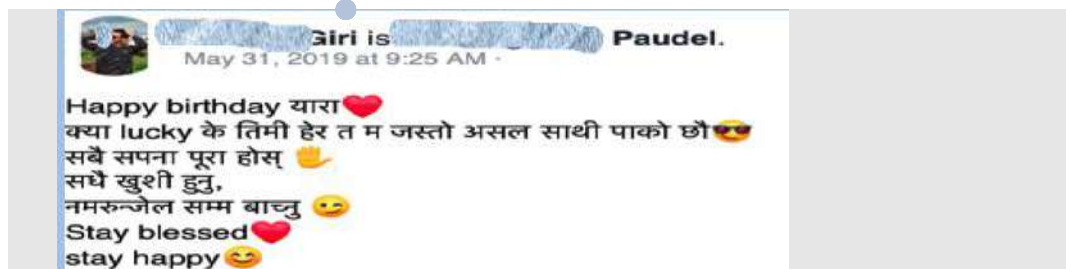
A: People do have some misconceptions about A Level. Is it difficult?

B: Regarding our study, we have to be logical, we have to use

This example is quite common among the people of the metroethnic city since they go across predetermined linguistic and cultural boundaries. For example, Sukanya's chat in Messenger with her colleagues and relatives below provides some evidence of the creative use of languages in a multilingual situation.



In the chat above, two languages have been used along with the emojis. Nepali and English are used in the conversation. However, the Nepali has been Romanised. Still, the participants in the chat have used different codes such as ‘Dd’ for the Nepali word ‘*chha*’ meaning ‘yes’ in English, ‘Dd’ for the Nepali word ‘*chalccha*’ meaning ‘it works’, ‘Dd’ for the Nepali word ‘*did*’ meaning ‘elder sister’, and the like. The important aspect that needs to be highlighted here is the way the participants have used the multilingual resources. The communication event shows that the members involved in the chat have used multiple languages at a time, and have not shifted from one language to another. Rather, they have constructed a new form of the language using the resources from multiple languages and paralinguistics (symbols). Such a construction has creatively adjusted multiple hybridity and diversity (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2009). The chat extracted from Pratima’s Facebook wall of Pratima, another female studying at the higher secondary level with Sukanya, Rupa and Sufia, is other evidence of the creative use of multiple languages in social media in the metropolitan context.



Another example from Sushila's Facebook wall transcends the orthographic and linguistic boundaries.



WhatevA u do they will lop u
 Even if they dont lop u
 They r connected to u till u die
 U can b boring n tediois with sisters..
 Whereas u hav to put
 on a gud face with frns
 Lop u alots #nakkaliharu

These two examples show that the new form of language constructed in social media adjusts certain deviations in the use of lexicon and grammar. However, the meaning and the communicative functions are not broken down. For example, in the chat above, the participant has used 'r' for 'are', 'u' for 'you', 'lop' for 'love', 'hav' for 'have', 'frns' for 'friends' and 'gud' for 'good'. Such use in the metrolinguistic context needs to be understood and interpreted as creative and spontaneous processes rather than from the perspectives of standardization, normality and grammaticality.

Negotiating identity in and through metrolanguage

One more theme that emerged from the analysis of the data derived from both the interview with the participants and the observation of their communication patterns in social media is the negotiation of identity in and through metrolanguage. The way the youth use languages is connected to broader social and cultural practices. Otsuji and Pennycook (2010) argue that the creative use of languages in the metrolingual cities challenges the fixed categories of linguistic and cultural identity. Rather, the participants sometimes see the fluid and hybrid self construction in and through the linguistic practices they have had in their metrolinguistic communication repertoire. The example of Pemba, the male participant originally from the Rai community of the eastern district of Nepal, shows how the metrolinguistic identity transcends from the primordial fixed ethnolinguistic identity. Pemba explained his story,

My parents often tell me that we were from the Rai community of the eastern hill district. They left for Kathmandu right after I was born. I was brought up in this capital city and was not familiar with my L1 and the culture there. Although my parents speak a little bit Rai, I don't know at all. Rather I know the Newari language as I acquired it from my Newar friends since my childhood... I can speak many languages, I mostly use Nepali, English, Hindi, Korean and Japanese, I am still learning Korean and

Japanese as I am trying to go to any of these two countries. (Pemba, Interview)

Pemba's remarks imply that migration from rural villages to metropolitan and metropolitan contexts forces people to detach themselves from their fixed ethnic and linguistic boundaries. The migration of Pemba's parents from the remote village of eastern Nepal to the Kathmandu metropolitan city obliged them to adjust linguistically, socially and culturally. They use kinship terms from their L1 while using Nepali, the lingua franca among the people from different language backgrounds in Kathmandu. However, Pemba spent his childhood in the metropolitan context and acquired several languages circulated in the city. The Nepali and English languages were dominant in his communication repertoire, nevertheless, he also acquired the Newari language from his peers from the Newari speaking community. The social media have provided him ample exposure to the Hindi language at the same time. Additionally, he learnt Korean and Japanese targeting at some kind of job abroad. However, in most of the cases, he would constitute a hybrid form of language that comprised the lexicon and sentence structure from Nepali, English and Hindi.

Linguistically speaking, all these participants are multilingual to some extent. They often negotiate their identities concerning different languages they know and use in their practical life worlds. For example, Rupa negotiates English, Nepali, Magar, Newari and Hindi; Pemba negotiates English, Nepali and Newari; Sufia does with Maithili, English, Nepali and Hindi; Sukanya with Nepali, English, Newari, Tamang and Hindi; and Yubak with Nepali, English and Hindi. Of course, the degree of proficiency, the degree of use, and the context every language demands in their real life situation considerably differ. Still, they enact somewhere amidst these languages while performing verbal communication. Rather than using these languages as discrete codes, they creatively use the utterances and words of different languages or dialects in their real life situation. Especially, following the language used in multiple media spaces, the formation of language seems to be deviated from the regular form(s). However, these deviated forms are the creative use of language utterances and vocabulary items. Further, these forms are the language use deeply intersecting with gender, age group, choice of fields, fashion and linguistic, cultural as well as youth cultural identities at individual and/or collective levels. Sukanya's additional remark is worth mentioning here:

Umm...I know, my physical features may make people guess I am *Tamang* However, I am far away from my native language and culture. I know I go to perform the *Tamang Selo* (typical music that the *Tamangs* perform) at *Tundikhel* (the big public ground in the Kathmandu metropolitan city) once a year. I put on the *Tamang* attire; try to perform how other *Tamang*

perform it; and listen to the songs the other people sing. This much. But if you see my daily life, as I told you earlier, I use English, Hindi, and Nepali as a mixed language.

Sukanya's remark shows that the Kathmandu metropolitan city provides people with a space to act as polyglots. The monolingual and monocultural identity is challenged, and they start enacting as a member of multilingual and multicultural spaces. The flow of images, messages and texts shapes their language use and usage. As the metropolitan context demands, people especially the youth like Suknya, get attracted towards the languages which ensure better opportunities in the job market in the city. Although the linguistic boundaries are blurred and intermingled in the metropolitan context, the languages that evoke more market opportunities in the city space remain as the linguistic capitals desired by the people there (Pauwels, 2014; Park & Wee, 2012; Bourdieu, 1991)

Discussion

Mahar (2010) argues that metroethnicities are not mix of the ethnic characteristics of the ethnic groups A and B. Rather, it is a remix of speech habits, food habits, dress, customs and overall identities. As a creative and productive process, metrolanguaging continues remixing the features associated with these characteristics, and the current globalisation forces including the sheer media and migration attribute multiple dimensions to such production and creation (Appadurai, 1996). People with diverse linguacultural specificities actively contribute together to the formation of metroethnicity on the one hand, and on the other, they need to enact metro identity through the productive and creative communication practice (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). In this regard, we closely observed that the linguistic and communication practices of the youth living in Kathmandu metropolitan city for a long time are producing and enacting the metroethnic identity. As members of the metroethnic community, these youth use multiple languages not as separate entities but as a single entity of the whole communication system. Such a finding echoes Pelaez and Castano (2015) who argue:

Metrolingualism transcends monolingualism, bilingualism, code mixing, or switching. Instead of mixing these concepts, metrolingualism applies them to a city context. Metolingualism focuses more on linguistic features rather than languages, trying not to look at each language as an individual, but as a whole communication system in a determined place (p. n.d.)

This implies that in the metrolinguistic space, multiple languages interact in such a way that the conventional linguistic boundaries are blurred. The linguistic features of the multiple languages are interfused to form and enhance a linguistic

practice that fulfils the communication needs of the metroethnic community. In this regard, Piccardo (2017) argues that the linguistic features and visual data go beyond linguistic fixity and are situated amid linguistic plurality. Dovchin, Pennycook and Sultana (2018) observe that popular culture underlining talks and the lives of the youth shapes the metrolinguistic space. The youth participating in this research were engaged in different media, languages, images and emojis which have ultimately been indexical for revealing their identity as metro citizens. As observed in Sukanya's narratives, the metroethnic workspace has pushed her beyond the parental ethnic and linguistic boundaries to enact as a metro citizen and metrolingual. Similarly, Rupa, albeit from a typical ethnic community originally, is not now stuck into only her ethnic and cultural boundaries. In her conversations with her colleagues from the same Magar community, she has used the features of multiple languages simultaneously.

Of course, compared to Rupa and Sukanya, Sufia was more occupied with her mother tongue, i.e. Maithili, in her community and household environment. However, she moved beyond her original linguistic and cultural boundaries when she needed to interact with her peers at school and the metropolitan workspaces. The texts that she posted on her Facebook wall revealed that she had adjusted the linguistic resources from four different languages, viz. Nepali, Hindi, Maithili and English. However, she did not use the languages as separate entities but produced hybrid and liquified polylingual contents (Jaworski, 2014). One more fact for discussion here is deconstruction and multimodality in the metrolingual practice. As observed in the study, the participants are not confined to the conventional syntax for achieving syntactic and lexical accuracy. Rather, their use transcends from conventional orthography, syntax and modality. Short, contracted and simplified forms with emojis, images and symbols affirmed multimodal semiotic assemblages (Pennycook, 2017). Such a practice is all connected to the fulfilment of the communication needs in the metropolitan context. The participants' use of 'u' for 'you', 'lop' for 'love', 'frens' for 'friends' with the red heart emoji assemblage both language and emotions to fulfil the communication needs.

The linguistic practices in a metropolitan context are predominantly linked with the communication needs of the people seeking to adjust to the ones having different languages and cultures. However, such a practice equally motivates them to negotiate identities (Ostuji & Pennycook, 2010). People's intensive interaction with different forms of semiotics involving music, fashion, style, etc. all motivates them to the enactment of the metroethnic identity instead of the primordial ethnic identity. This process forces the youth to find themselves amid postmodern simulacrum as they navigate the rapid flow of popular music, signs, images, graffiti, languages, fashions and styles circulated in the urban sites more intensively. Jonsson et al. (2019) argue that youth language practice in urban cities goes beyond

bounded conceptualizations. Hurst Harosh (2020) equally points out that the language practice of the youth in metro cities transcends ethnic language distinctions. These arguments echo the language practice of the above mentioned youth in the Kathmandu metropolitan context. Pemba's adoption of Newari along with the other languages, Sukanya's practice of multiple languages in the metropolitan workspaces, and Rupa and Sufia's appropriation of multiple languages to adjust to the urban context all unequivocally justify that the language practice in the metropolitan context is a creative process for not just fulfilling the communication needs but also for enacting and redefining the metroethnic and metropolitan identity.

Finally, metrolingualism and metrolanguaging have strong impacts on education and sociolinguistics both. Otsuji and Pennycook (2018) argue that students often bring a rich metrolangaging practice into their classroom. Such a metrolangaging practice raises a challenge in metropolitan schools and classrooms where languages continue to be taught as bounded entities (Werner and Todeva, 2022). Therefore, language educators and teachers need to consider metrolingualism and metrolangaging as a new epistemic avenue about language education, language research and language teaching. Otsuji and Pennycook (2011) also point out that metrolangaging equally adds a new avenue both sociolinguists and researchers. Sociolinguists may seek to unfold the creative processes, features and practices of metrolanguage in the metropolitan context. Language researchers may seek to explore how the issues underpinning metrolingualism and metrolanguaging practice should be examined by referencing different fields of knowledge including gender and identity. The analysis of the narratives of the youth (participants in this study) reveals that metrolangaging is intricately connected to their metroethnic identities. Although their use of metrolanguage is targeted at fulfilling their communication needs, the linguistic practices relating to education, peer culture, English language learning, job market, media interaction, etc., are all associated with their motivation and identity as well. As apparent in their narratives, they all have crossed monolingual and monocultural boundaries through their metrolinguistic and multimodal communication practices.

Conclusion and Implications

The formation of metrolingualism is a grass root practice of language/code in the metroethnic community in Kathmandu metropolitan city. Rather than an imaginary archetype of a form of language(s), metrolingualism is a condition of sociolinguistic practice that the members of diverse ethnolinguistic communities creatively engage in to negotiate their life worlds and identity in the metroethnic society. Language keeps changing. Education, media, market, migration and

mobility are inherent in this change. Under the effect of globalization, these factors push the formation and practice of a form of language that goes across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Metrolingualism is an emergent linguistic condition in the sociolinguistic landscape of modern globalized cities across the world, such as Kathmandu, where the people especially youths have started to negotiate their identity in the in between space of multiple languages. This research is itself a small scale study. Yet, it has broader implications in the linguistic and (English) language education sector. In linguistics, this research provides some deeper level insights into how globalization urbanization have challenged traditional monolingualism and monoculturalism, and how metrolingualism has come about as a new field of linguistic research. Similarly, this research provides insights into language education as metrolingualism and metrolinguistic features to be considered in the (English) language curriculum and pedagogical practices. It also informs English language teachers working in the metropolitan context that they need to consider metrolinguistic features and metro plurilingual identity in language instruction.

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