Research Article/ Language & Migration

Migrants and Foreign Language Learners in Pokhara Metropolis: Attitudes towards National Development

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ABSTRACT

In Pokhara Metropolis, the trend of international migration has been a dominant issue in modern times. Many agree that globalization is one of the main reasons behind this migration to the rest of the world. Thus, it has become evident that there is a growing trend of migration especially among the youths of the country. Specifically, acquisition of languages is one of the factors for this migration trend. There is a growing tendency among the youths to learn languages to migrate in different parts of the world as a student or a migrant worker. The study attempts to find out the interrelationship between language acquisition and migration. Language proficiency has become a social norm for migrants of the study area. In this regard, this study purposes to explore how languages of the host countries play crucial roles to get access to migrant labor force in different parts of the world to generate national revenue. The paper has applied mixed methods. In order to collect data, surveys, observations, interviews, and focus group discussions have been taken into account. At the same time, the sources of secondary data have been used to bring a conceptual framework for research. The study concluded that the aptitude of language learners is remarkable to get access to other countries as a migrant labor force to generate national revenue for the country.

KEYWORDS: Migration, national revenue, foreign languages, language learners

INTRODUCTION

There has been a trend of international migration in Pokhara Metropolis. It has played a vital role to shape the economic development of Pokhara Metropolis.

Globalization, capitalism, and human capital have been the reasons behind a growing demand of low skill migrant labor force. This demand leads to migration in developed countries in the world. A tradition to join the army in India and the Great Britain started a history of migration in different parts of the world. This resulted in the movement of Nepali people in international labor market as migrant workers as well as students. Migrants have sought good wages, better employment opportunity in labor market. Language has become a barrier for the labor force to get good jobs because they lack primary language of the country.

Different countries demand proficiency in their native language. The residents of Pokhara Metropolis have lived and worked in the different parts of worlds. The countries like America, the UK, Australia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Europe have become a popular destinations of residents of Pokhara. The language is a crucial part for migrant workers. Migrant workers with proficiency in a host language are allowed to process further to enter in those countries. The emergence of different educational consultancies is to offer language learning classes to the migrants and students.

There is a prevalence of student and labor migration in Pokhara Metropolis. The traditional way of migration has played a significant role in national development through remittance in the country. The language barrier in different countries has made migrants to suffer in getting equal wages in competitive labor market despite a greater contribution in national revenue generation in the country.

Migration has become a popular trend among the migrant work force and students of the country. The language has a substantial effect to help migrants in the international platforms. Acquisition of different languages of the host countries has become a social norm for migrants in Pokhara Metropolis. In this regard, this study proposes to explore how languages of host nations play crucial roles to get access to migrant labor force in different parts of the world, which has resulted in the establishment of language institutions in Pokhara.

Students and migrant workers are bound to learn different language to migrate to other countries. Different countries have adopted the policy of language competency in students and migrant workers. It can be beneficial to the countries who are looking for a cheap labor force. In this regard, Burns and Roberts (2010) stated, "Migration is a huge component of modern urban living: The language teaching professional has to pick up many of the challenges that result from the benefits to society of cheap labor and unsociable jobs being filled by migrants" (p. 410). The urban life has a face of migration. International migrants are lured from economic benefits and permanent residency in the developed countries. They become a cheaper option to work in unsociable hours in those countries.

Globalization has been the key issue of migration. The migration, however, has a potential lead role of slavery in the world. There is a close relationship between globalization and slavery. LeBaron (2016) stated that "… whether there is a trade-off between globalization and slavery. Increasingly systematic efforts to measure and estimate the problem of slavery show that it is indeed widespread and not isolated to developing countries alone, while some have argued that the development of global capitalism and processes of globalization are in part to blame for the phenomenon" (382). Globalization and Global capitalism are the essential factors of the spread of migration and slavery in today's world.

Language can sometimes be political. There has been an emergence of anti-immigrant sentiments in the USA. Immigrants seem less likely to learn English language which has caused the spread of sentiment of hatred. Espenshade and Fu (1997) state, "An

important factor that sparks anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States is the perception that new immigrants are unwilling or unable to learn English as readily as did earlier waves of immigrants" (p. 1). Learning attitudes towards language has shifted dramatically in the immigrants. Their unwillingness to learn native language has caused the anti-immigrant sentiments in American citizens.

In the UK, the preference to English language is very high. There is a strong belief that the migrants should possess proficiency in English. YouGov poll (n.d.), a British international internet-based research and data analytics firm, suggests that immigrants should have a required standard of English. Rolfe and Stevenson (2021) assert, "Reflecting a preference for migrants to speak English, a recent YouGov poll on attitudes towards new immigration policy found having to speak English to 'a required standard' was supported by 84% or respondents" (p. 12). The respondents strongly believe that language proficiency is highly significant in terms of migrants' employment or permanent residency.

After Brexit, the demand of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has become very high. Non-European immigrants from outside has significantly increased which indicates the certain level of English language ability to work and live in the UK. The end of free movement resulting from the UK's departure from the European Union is highly significant for the future of ESOL. Net migration from the EU has fallen since 2016, while it has increased from outside of the EU (Rolfe & Stevenson, 2021). The language of the host country plays a vital role for the immigrants who want to settle in the UK. English language is evidently required by migrants from the other parts of the world.

The Japanese language and English language have a mixed perceived reality in Japan. The study has shown that Japanese is the official language in Japan that resulted in the use of English language in limited working environment (Mikhail et al., 2021). The Japanese language is widely used by native people. However, there is a growing trend of English language in certain business workplace. As for migrant workers, their respective jobs do not necessarily require them to understand and speak English (e.g. work in construction, factories, nursing homes). In fact, about 35% of foreign workers in Japan are engaged in construction and manufacturing industries, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (2020) (cited in Mikhail et al., 2021). It shows how language is shaped by the works which does not require English language at all. But certain business is shaped by English language. In Japan, in tourism sector the government has brought new policy to recruit English speaking manpower. Mikhail et al. (2021) stated, 'The Japan Tourism Agency' (2014) issued a guideline to improve and reinforce multilingual support throughout the nation. According to the guideline, "it is encouraged to have both Japanese and English translations of proper names, signs, and information" (p. 109). The growing demand of languages in business transection can be traced here. This indicates the importance of languages for migrant workers and students even in the country like Japan where native language speakers dominate other languages. This study explores the trend of migration in the Western and Middle Eastern countries. It studies the reciprocity economy and labor force in the international arena. The role of learning languages by both males and females to fulfill the demands of international labor market is the area of this study. The attributions of languages as a human capital and its impact on the economy of Pokhara Metropolis are explored in this study.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies mixed methods. In order to collect data, surveys, observations, interviews, and focus group discussion were taken into account. At the same time, secondary data were also used to bring a conceptual framework for the research.

During the qualitative research process, Likert scale data collection was done through the distribution of questionnaires in four different language institutions in Pokhara Metropolis. There were 25 questions included in the questionnaire dividing it into five different sections. The sections included socio-economic aspect, learning opportunity, learning attitude, skills and development, and other influence. Similarly, 40 samples were collected from four different language institutes and consultancies. The questionnaire also included variables like name, sex, age, marital status, address, and language. There were four language institutions included in the survey namely, English and Japanese. The Likert scale questions were based on strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. By applying qualitative research methods, the data responses were analyzed, exploring how languages bring economic transformation to migrants in Pokhara metropolis.

There are 5 dependent variables used to explore the relation and impact of learning languages with migration for this survey. There are 25 close ended questions in each of 5 constructs which include socio-economic aspects, learning attitude, learning opportunities, skills and development, and other influences. Descriptive research design was adopted in the research process and survey method was conducted to analyze data obtained from all the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

This study was based on a survey done in four language institutions in Pokhara Metropolis. Forty respondents voluntarily participated in this research. The study was based on two international languages i.e. English and Japanese. The result of the study was, particularly focused on the language and its impacts on migration. The correlation was found between these variables that the language acquisition is an important factor. Language is a significant variable that helps the language learners to attain entry clearance to the different parts of the world.
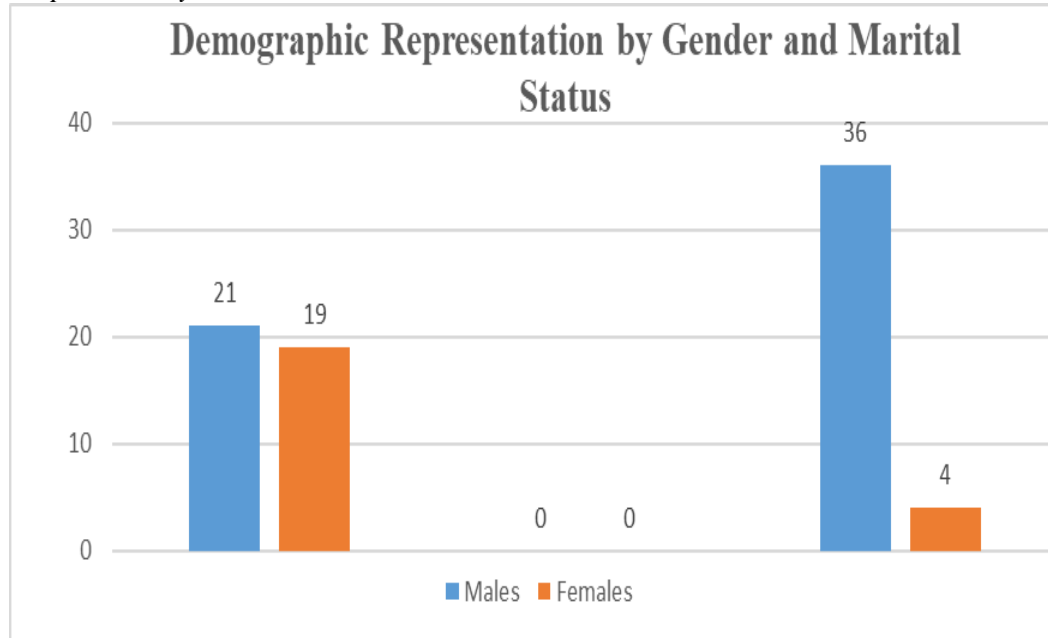
The study attempted to analyze variables on the basis of socio-economic aspects, such as learning attitude, learning opportunities, skills and development, and other influences using Likert scale. Each variable included 5 close ended questions. It looked into these variables to understand the relationship between language and migration. The questionnaire was limited to language learning curve of students and language learners. This paper does not answer other variables of migration such as globalization, capitalism, national policy, and stakeholder's concern about migration among young students. Other research works can be carried out on national policy, family's role, and future development of our country.

Demographic Representation

Gender and marital status of respondents have been presented in demographic representation. Thera are 40 respondents who participated in the research process. The participation by gender is proportionate in number. However, the marital status of female respondents is comparatively low.

Figure 1 below shows the demographic representation which includes gender and marital status who are currently undergoing language classes in Pokhara Metropolitan City. As can be seen, there are 40 respondents aged between 18 to 26. Out of 40 respondents, there are 21 males and 19 females.

Figure 1

Respondents by Gender and Marital Status

As shown in Figure 1, the number according to gender is proportionate. Similarly, 36 respondents have single marital status where 4 respondents' status is married. The number of single respondents is very high because of the age factor. It also indicates that age plays a significant role for marriage among females. The trend of migration between males and females seem to be proportionate. However, there is a huge difference in single and marital status of respondents. Out of 40 respondents, 36 respondents are single which include the males. The age between 18 to 26 has a significant role in marriage. For instance, 4 females who are above 20 years of age are married. It shows a huge discrepancy between marriage age between males and females. The majority of participants belong to under 20 of age. The figures show both males and females who are equally distributed in learning language from different language institutions.

Table 1

Socio-economic Aspects

Statement	Code
You have made your decision to take language for going abroad.	Q1
You want to go abroad because of family pressure.	Q2
You want to go to learn skills.	Q3
You believe the skills you learn abroad will help you in the future.	Q4
Government is supportive toward migrants and foreign language learners.	Q5

Note: Survey 2024
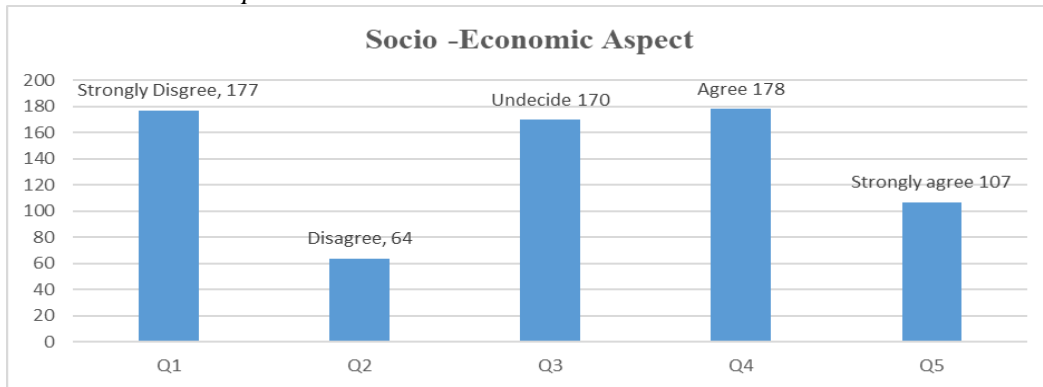
Figure 2
Socio -Economic Aspect

Figure 2 represents the socio-economic aspects of language and migration. As can be seen, most of the respondents agreed that they made their own decision to take language classes for the abroad study. They strongly agree about their decision of going abroad. Family pressure scores 64. The rest of respondents does not feel any kind of family pressure. Most of the respondents agree that skills which they will learn will help them in the future. It has the highest score of 178. The government is supportive scores of 107, which indicates that the respondents are aware of the government's role in migration.

The figure shows that participants who are below 26 of age are likely to make their own decision. There is 178 score for learning skill that will help in the future. It indicates a positive future prospect that the majority of respondents will be benefitted with the skills they learn in the host country in the future. The lowest score is 64 which indicates that family has less interference on the decision made by the respondents.

Table 2
Learning Attitude Construct

Statement	Code
My language learning aptitude is pretty high.	Q1
Speaking the other language will help me to socialize.	Q2
Better job prospects motivate you.	Q3
I need to learn another language to do my job well abroad.	Q4
language is a must thing to do for migrants to go abroad.	Q5

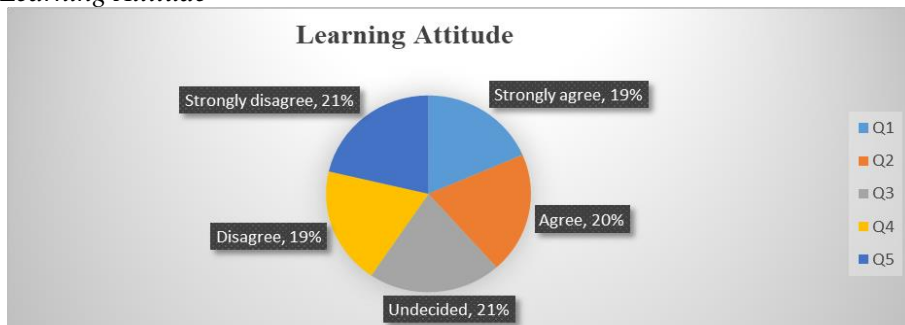Note: Survey 2024

Figure 3
Learning Attitude

Figure 3 highlights the learning attitude of the respondents. It shows a similar pattern for each questions raised in Likert scale. As can be seen, 21 percent of respondents are strongly disagreed that their learning aptitude is very high. Likewise, 20 percent respondents think that language helps to socialize. Similarly, 21 percent respondents have a strong disagreement that learning language is a must for migration. The same 21 percent respondents are undecided that learning language may help them have better job prospects. However, 19 respondents strongly agree that language is necessary for migration.
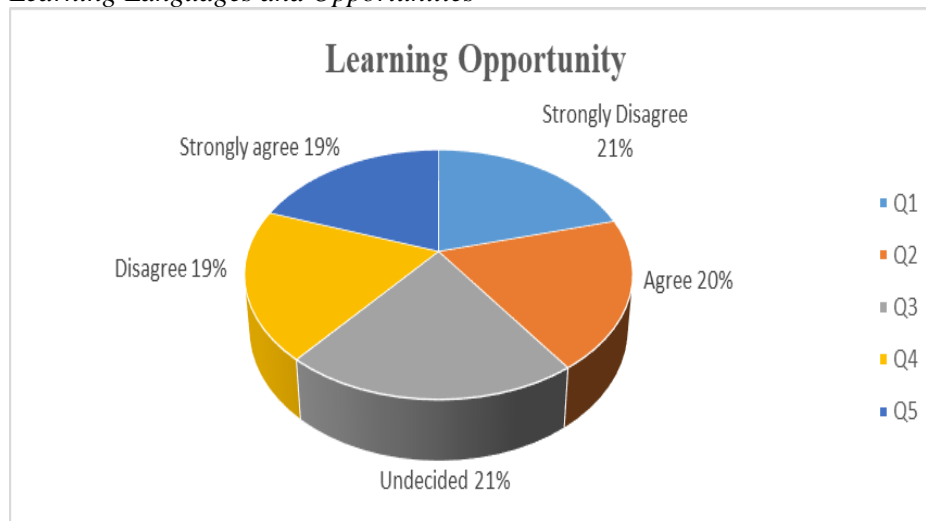
The distribution of response by the respondents are equal in percentage. There is a similar response for language aptitude that learning language helps them for migration. The huge number of participants are undecided which is equal to strongly disagree. This shows the students' understanding that learning language does not help them. Especially the students who were learning Japanese language.

Table 3
Learning Opportunities Construct

Statement	Code
Language helps you to understand others.	Q1
Language institutes are accessible.	Q2
The language teachers are helpful and supportive.	Q3
Language Teachers encourage you to learn this language.	Q4
Teaching and learning materials are available.	Q5

Note: Survey 2024

Figure 4
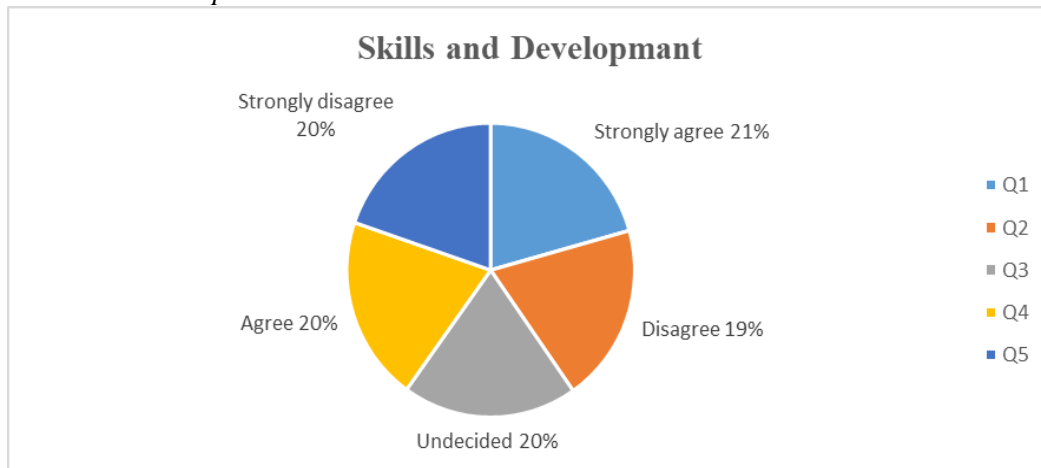*Learning Languages and Opportunities*

Learning languages can create opportunities has been shown in Figure 4. As shown in the figure, 21 percent respondents are strongly agreed about learning opportunities in Pokhara Metropolis. Accessibility of language institutes, instructor being helpful, encouragement by the instructor, learning materials and instructor's helpfulness were included in this construct. There is equal share in percentage by Q1 and Q3. The students are undecided about the support and helpfulness of the teacher. Similarly, in other constructs, the response to Q2, Q4, and Q5 has a thin gap in the total percentage with 20, 19, and 19 percent.

Table 4

Skill and Development Construct

Statement	Code
Do you think that learning language will help the growth of your mind?	Q1
Do you think that learning language will improve your personality?	Q2
Do you think that learning language will open more job opportunities for you?	Q3
Do you think that learning language will help you in higher academic achievement?	Q4
Do you think that learning language will help you in promoting business?	Q5

Note: Survey 2024

Figure 5

Skills and Development

The response in skills and development is equally distributed. The percentage distributed from 19% to 21%. There are 19% respondents who disagree on language that helps in the growth of mind. Similarly, 21% respondents are strongly disagreed that language helps to increase their personality. Other 20% respondents believe that language helps them to achieve academic success and helps to promote business in future. It is interesting to note that 20% respondents are undecided about learning language that helps them earn skills and development.

Table 5

Construct of Other Influence

Statement	Code
Languages are important skill in today's world.	Q1
Learning language has become compulsion.	Q2
It will provide an opportunity to develop new skills for future.	Q3
Language learning has good economic prospect in future.	Q4
Language proficiency helps you to migrate.	Q5

Note: Survey 2024
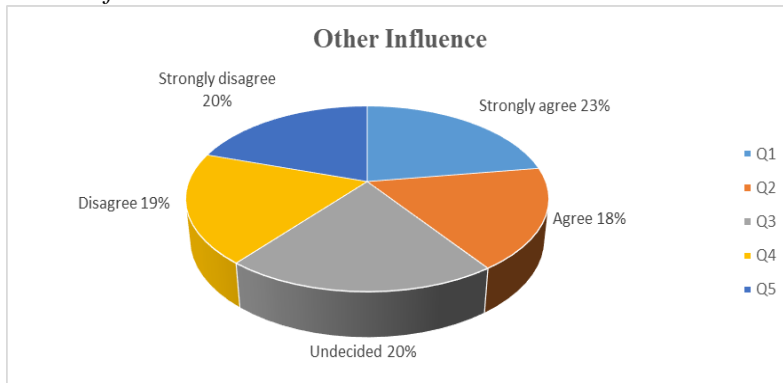
Figure 6
Other Influence

Figure 5 shows other influence in terms of language acquisition by the respondents in Pokhara Metropolis. As can be seen, 23% respondents strongly disagree that there are no other influences behind learning languages for migration. The percentage of respondents who agree and strongly agree is 19% and 20 % respectively. However, 21% respondents strongly agree that learning languages is high in demand at present.

During the face to face conversation with the respondents, a strong desire to migrate to the countries like the UK, Australia, the USA and Japan was found. It is interesting to note that most of the respondents were from different districts outside Pokhara Metropolitan City. The majority of respondents are from Baglung, Syngja, and Lamjung. The number of respondents from Pokhara Metropolitan City were very low. The popularity of taking language classes is high in neighboring districts rather than in Kaski District. It was found that there was a difference between English language learners and Japanese language learners in terms of academic qualifications. The English language learners have academic credential of Bachelor's level. However, Japanese language learners have intermediate level and secondary level of academic qualification.

Discussion

The descriptive data analysis was derived from Figure 1 to 5 which resulted in the exploration of the language's significance as a dependent variable. There is a positive impact of language for migration. The language has a better prospect to find a job in the international labor market. Migration is also related to economic benefits for the migrant workers. Students and migrant workers strongly believe that language of the host country helps not only to get good jobs but also it helps acquire skills and experience in the future.

During the process of survey, it was found that most of the language learners are from the neighboring districts such as Lamjung, Syngja, and Baglung. The number of language learners from Kaski is very low. The trend of learning language and migration is popular among the neighboring districts. Similarly, the academic qualification also varied among the language learners. Most of students taking English language have graduated the intermediate and bachelor's level but the students who are learning Japanese language are SEE graduates or currently pursuing intermediate level education. It is also found that there is a huge difference in academic credential of the language learners.

The data clearly show the association between independent and dependent variables, i.e., migration and language. The language proficiency is the most important

attribute for the language learners to be qualified for the visa process. The data analysis of different social and language constructs shows that the language helps in different sphere of life. It helps to socialize, learn skills, and understand culture of the host country. Moreover, working in other cultural contexts creates opportunities for business in the future.

This study attempted to analyze variables on the basis of socio-economic aspects, such as learning attitude, learning opportunities, skills and development, and other influences using Likert scale. It looked into these variables to understand the relationship between migration and language. The questionnaire was limited to language learning curve of students and language learners. This paper does not answer the other variables of migration such as globalization, capitalism, national policy, and the stakeholders' concern about migration among the young students. Other research works can be carried out on national policy, family's role, and future development of Nepal.

There are substantial impacts of language on migration. The signification of language acquisition is very high among the youngsters in Pokhara Metropolis. A good future economic prospect is one of the main reasons behind learning languages by students and migrants. All the dependent variable constructs are in relation with language. The socio-economic aspect, learning attitude, learning opportunity, skills and development, and other influence can be achieved from the mastery over language by the students and migrants.

CONCLUSION

The trend of international migration is popular among the age of 18 to 26 years old language learners in Pokhara Metropolis. Academic credential ranges to graduate and undergraduate students from different parts of the neighboring districts. The questionnaires were collected from forty respondents which clearly stated the popularity of migration in European as well as Asian countries like Japan. The attitude of migrant learners towards language acquisition has positive inclination. The number of students who are currently undergoing in language proficiency class is astonishingly high. They strongly agree that language plays a significant role in getting entry clearance to different parts of the world.

Migration and language are correlated variables. The research showed that the language is a key factor to achieve visa for migrant students and workers. The majority of respondents strongly agree that without language proficiency, the chance of finding works in the host country is very low. The future prospect of language is also very important. Students believe that the skill of other languages will help them in the future since it helps them to understand social and cultural aspects of the host countries. The experience of those social and cultural structures of other worlds benefits in the development of the country through a set of skills. From promoting business to learning skills, the language plays an important role. On the other hand, the economic prospect also relies on migration which helps to generate income and revenue for the family and the country.

In terms of gender participation, both males and female share a proportionate number. The number of male and female language learners in 4 different language institutes is 21 and 19 respectively. It shows the remarkable representation of females in the process of international migration. The reason behind the growth of females in migration may vary. But it is significant to note that equal participation is seen through this study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

I hereby wish to declare that I do not have any conflict of interests to disclose. However, I declare that the manuscript has not been published before and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

I declare that this manuscript is originally produced by me.

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