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Editorial

The year 2021 has been important for the Journal of NELTA for two reasons. First, the Editorial Board of the Journal has been reconstituted. The tenure of the previous team ended earlier this year. The previous team must be congratulated and thanked for setting new trends and new editorial processes for the Journal of NELTA. NELTA and the Journal's Editorial Board thank them for their hard work. Their contribution to uplifting the quality of the Journal is highly appreciated by one and all. The new Editorial Board has, since its formulation early this year, contributed to enhancing the quality of the Journal and to making the editorial process more transparent and on par with international journals. Each one of the Editorial Board members is immensely experienced and has widely published. On behalf of NELTA, we welcome them and hope that during their tenure, the Journal will reach new heights.

In order to avail of the expertise of the Editorial Board members, the Journal of NELTA Editorial Board, in conjunction with NELTA has, for the first time in Nepal, organised a journal article writing workshop series. The workshop series comprises 10 workshops on various aspects of article writing. Based on the hands-on approach, the workshop series trains 35 hand-picked NELTA members and potential journal writers. For every workshop, the participants prepare a write-up on the workshop theme. The workshop facilitators, then work with them in order to assist them in improving their write up. At times, the Board also invites expertise from outside the Board to facilitate a session. We are grateful to Professor Abhi Subedi, Chair of our Advisory Board, and Dr. Saraswati Dawadi from Open University, UK, and NELTA member for sparing time to conduct a workshop session. We also thank Editorial Board members, Professor Laxman Gnawali, A/Professor Nabaraj Neupane, Dr. Madhu Neupane Bastola and A/Professor Kashiraj Pandey for their wonderful sessions. Thanks are also due to Mr. Ashok Raj Khati, and Mr. Guna Raj Nepal in anticipation of their session in the days ahead. Mr. Bikas Rimal deserves special thanks for coordinating the workshop series.

The next important thing of 2021 is that the Journal has set another record with 70 submissions from all six continents – Africa, Americas, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Though the vast majority of the submissions are from South Asia, it is heartening to see that the Journal of NELTA is reaching far and wide. More than three-quarters of the manuscript, despite some merit in them, unfortunately, had to be rejected simply for the reason that they

were not prepared according to the Journal's guidelines and/or academic conventions. The selected articles may be divided into the five thematic categories – challenges of ELT, teaching languages skills, language policy, language testing, and Englishes. Md Abdur Rauf and Harun Rashid, for example, look into the challenges teachers of English face in teaching online during the current pandemic, while Saraswati Dawadi elucidates the pressure and anxiety high-stake test-takers experience. In addition, Michael Nycyk provides ethnographic reflections of beginning teachers; in a similar vein, Kamala KC explores the challenges novice women teachers of English experience for their professional growth; and Parmeshwar Baral and Kabita Khadka investigate strategies university teachers employ to deal with the disruptive behaviours they encounter in their English classrooms. These articles are insightful and have further research and pedagogical implications.

In terms of English language skills, Motikala Subba Dewan makes an illuminating application of stylistics to one of the most dramatic poems of English, 'the Raven'; Shafinaz Sikder, Nur Filzah Ahmed Nadri, and Laneesha Karunagaran elucidate how secondary students sequence nouns in writing; Syeda Tabinda Sadaf looks into the problems of reading, while Basanta Dhakal explores strategies for differentiated reading. Next, Vidhya Pokharel shows us how to teach English in a non-textbook environment, and Jagadish Paudel unpacks teachers' perspectives of academic writing. Similarly, Govinda Puri and Rameshwar Thakur respectively explore the impacts of global Englishes and textese on teaching; and Basanta Kadel and Prakash Chandra Giri, in their separate articles, provide an autoethnography of a micro-level (English) language policy. Finally, Shotaro Ueno and Jonathan Aliponga tell us what strategies Japanese school students employ to learn vocabulary. All of these articles provide practical insights into various aspects of teaching English.

The Journal of NELTA is also a forum for its authors and readers to interact, query, and respond to some of the issues raised by the articles and materials that are provided. In addition to the regular feature of 'Journal of NELTA Forum article', we encourage our readers to send their queries and responses also on any articles, practical pedagogical ideas, blogs, and books reviews included in this issue.

Finally, with a view to assisting prospective authors, we have provided updated information about the Journal, revised manuscript preparation, and submission guidelines, and other relevant materials at the end of the journals.

We hope that you find the materials published in this issue useful. Happy reading!

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Online Teaching during COVID-19 in Bangladesh: Challenges Faced by the EL Teachers

Md. Abdur Rouf & Harun Or Rashid

Abstract

The study explored the challenges faced by secondary and higher secondary English language (EL) teachers in Bangladesh while teaching their learners online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like teachers in most countries across the world, Bangladeshi EL teachers had to abruptly switch to online mode of teaching from in-person classes without much preparation. Following the constructivist research paradigm and a qualitative multiple case study approach, four secondary and four higher secondary EL teachers were interviewed to gather in-depth data on the challenges they encountered. The findings showed that the main challenges for the teachers included: unavailability of devices, falling interest, poor attendance of learners, less interaction in classes, lack of technological skills and training, financial hardship, unstable internet connections, almost no practice of language skills, lack of online testing schemes, negative mental and physical impacts, and the overall perceived inefficacy of online EL classes. The paper also discusses the implications of the main findings and proposes some recommendations for the teachers and other stakeholders concerned.

Keywords: *Online teaching, COVID-19, challenges, EL teachers, Bangladesh*

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected almost all areas of human life including the education sector (Islam, Alif, & Emon, 2020; Nepal & Kumar, 2020). In fact, the education sector has been one of the worst hit areas worldwide. Educational institutions were forced to shift their teaching mode from physical classes to online classes (Marshall, Shannon, & Love, 2020). However, this sudden paradigm shift in teaching-learning was managed differently by different countries depending on their socio-economic status. Managing online teaching with the required technologies and teacher expertise was a difficult task for all countries to some extent. Even a developed country like New Zealand could not ensure equal learning opportunities for all its learners

across the country (Mutch, 2021). Many parts of the country had no internet connectivity, and poor learners could not afford laptops and other gadgets essential for online learning. Moreover, only just half of the schools in New Zealand believed that their learners would be able to attend online classes (Mutch, 2021).

Bangladesh, like other South Asian developing countries, is fighting a tough battle against the corona virus. The first COVID-19 positive case was detected in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020, and since March 18, 2020 all the educational institutions have postponed physical classes to protect the students, teachers, and officials from the infectious virus (Ela et al., 2021). As many as 40 million students are now being deprived of formal in-person schooling (Islam et al., 2020). Most of the secondary schools and higher secondary colleges started teaching their students online since July 2020 as the virus continued to wreck its havoc nationwide. However, this sudden shift to online classes was not done in a planned way, rather it was an “emergency conversion” (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020, p. 1). None of the stakeholders - learners, teachers, officials, and guardians - had any idea about online teaching-learning (Khan, Basu, Bashir, & Uddin, 2021).

Literature Review

Reich (2021) claimed that teachers won't be able to use technological tools and teaching platforms effectively unless they are given adequate training. Furthermore, the curriculum, assessments, and all other aspects of education must be supportive of online teaching. In another study, Marshall et al. (2020) in the U.S.A found that teachers did not receive meaningful training for remote teaching, so they found online teaching challenging. It was also difficult to hold learners accountable online for learning purposes. Lack of real-time interactions with learners i.e., asynchronous lessons also negatively affected online teaching. However, Gautam (2020) affirmed that in Nepal EL teachers attended different types of professional development programs to adapt to online teaching which made them more confident in technology use. Additionally, Altavilla (2020) asserted that EL teachers must be careful about three challenges related to technology use for teaching English - ensuring learners' access to technology and proper use, using software and virtual learning platforms in effective ways, and ensuring interaction for the EL learners.

Moreover, Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) reported that tertiary level ESL teachers and learners in the U.S.A faced problems “regarding health, employment, finances, and other concerns” (p.140). The pandemic enhanced their level of stress across different contexts and reduced the importance of teaching-learning in their lives as they faced other emerging problems. Similarly, MacIntyre et al. (2020) found that language teachers from different countries felt a good amount of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ela et al. (2021) also noted that tertiary level students at a public university in Bangladesh faced mental pressure and frustration due to the disruptions in educational

activities. In addition, Casacchia et al. (2021) stated that Italian university teachers faced both technical and psychological difficulties. The absence of eye contact with learners, difficulty with concentration, sleeping disorder, energy loss, and mild depression were some other challenges mentioned by the teachers.

Furthermore, different studies (Efriana, 2021; Nashir & Laili, 2021; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021) in Indonesia with pre-service and in-service high school EL teachers found that teachers faced different problems with online teaching: learner management, learners' poor comprehension of the class contents, lack of interest, assessments confined to quizzes and assignments only, teachers' poor technological skills, heavier workload, limited technological facilities, expensive internet data packs, unstable internet connections, difficulty with sharing materials and giving assignments and feedback, lack of learners' seriousness and participation in class activities. Lukas and Yunus (2021) in their study in Malaysia with primary ESL teachers also reported similar challenges. Likewise, Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) argued that teachers at EL Institutes in Iran could use the online teaching platforms efficiently, but shortage of teaching materials and inadequate budget were some of the challenging issues. Additionally, Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) stated that lack of direct interaction with students and the new setting affected Chilean EFL teacher candidates' learning.

Similarly, Alhumaid, Ali, Waheed, Zahid, and Habes (2020) in Pakistan, Rahim and S. C (2020) in Afghanistan, Hakim (2020) in Saudi Arabia, Chiatoh and Chia (2020) in Cameroon, and Tarrayo, Paz, and Gepila (2021) in the Philippines in their studies with the tertiary level EFL teachers found that learners' uneven access to e-learning, callous attitude, low motivation, poor comprehension of the teaching contents, and irregular electricity supply, limited ICT resources, unstable internet connections, costly internet packages, teachers' lack of technological competency, and inadequate training on online teaching were the main challenges of online teaching. Studies with university teachers and learners in Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2021; Parvej, Tabassum, Mannan, & Ahmed, 2021) also reported related challenges along with teachers' limited knowledge of online pedagogy and assessment.

Research Objective and Significance of the Study

The study reviewed above investigated different aspects of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined the challenges of online teaching faced by the secondary and higher secondary EL teachers in Bangladesh. Therefore, to uncover those challenges, the present study was carried out based on the following research question (RQ):

RQ: What were the major challenges of online teaching faced by the secondary and higher secondary English language teachers in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The findings of the study would help the policy makers and other stakeholders formulate pragmatic policies and devise an effective mechanism for tackling the challenges of online teaching faced by the EL teachers.

Research Design

This section describes the research methodology used for conducting the study. It discusses the approach, participants, data collection tool and method, and how the collected data were managed and analysed.

Approach and Rigour of the Study

The present study was carried out following the constructivist research paradigm and a qualitative multiple case study approach. Constructivism implies that human interactions create knowledge, and the constructivist research paradigm emphasises a profound comprehension of an issue (Magoon, 1977). Moreover, a multiple case study involves more than one case, so we selected eight EL teachers as individual cases. As rigour or trustworthiness is an important issue in qualitative research (Robson, 2011), the rigour of the present study was ensured through collecting data from different sources, maintaining a case study data base, and using self-reflections and bracketing for avoiding bias (Chenail, 2011; Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Participants

Four secondary (S) and four higher secondary (HS) English language (EL) teachers were selected for interviews following the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique helped to select participants who could provide rich data on the examined issue (Stake, 1995). Different researchers claimed that four to ten cases can produce enough data for comprehending an issue by depth (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stake, 2006). Alpha numeric labels (T1S-T8HS) have been used throughout the paper to safeguard the anonymity of the participating EL teachers (Zein, 2016). The demographic details of the teachers are given in Table 1.

Table 1 *The Participating Teachers' Demographics*

Teachers	Gender	Age	Designation	Teaching Experiences	College, School Type	Location
T1S	Female	31-35	Assistant Teacher	5 Years		Rural
T2S	Male	51-55	Assistant Teacher	25 Years		Rural
T3S	Male	26-30	Assistant Teacher	5 months		Urban
T1S - T7HS	Male	26-30	Assistant Teacher	5 years	Non-government	Rural
T5HS	Male	41-45	Assistant Professor	16 years		Urban
T6HS	Female	36-40	Lecturer	8 years		Urban
T7HS	Female	31-35	Lecturer	10 years		Urban
T8HS	Male	46-50	Assistant Professor	16 years	Government	Rural

Data Collection Tool and Method

A semi-structured interview checklist was developed for collecting the relevant data from the teachers. The interview checklist had ten items relating to different aspects of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The rigour of the items was ensured through a literature review and a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted with two EL teachers, and necessary modifications were made in the interview checklist. The interview checklist is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 *The Interview Checklist*

SL	Interview Items
1.	Both teachers' and learners' interest, participation, and interaction in classes
2.	Training and technical support from the authority concerned
3.	Technological barriers (equipment/devices)
4.	Network/connectivity related issues
5.	Study materials related challenges
6.	Teaching the four language skills
7.	Online continuous assessments and tests
8.	Financial aspects
9.	Emotional wellbeing, psychological and physical impacts
10.	Effectiveness of online teaching and learning

Data were collected by conducting individual phone and Zoom interviews with the participating teachers. The semi-structured individual interviews helped the iterative nature of data collection (Merriam, 1988; Tellis, 1997). Interviews with the teachers were stopped when we reached the stage of data saturation (Trotter, 2012). For getting rich data, interviews with the teachers were conducted in Bengali (L1), but T5HS responded in English.

Data Management and Analysis

All the interview data were securely recorded using cell phones and personal computers, and later they were transcribed verbatim. An iterative approach was used throughout the data analysis phase to obtain a holistic picture of the emerging scenario. The thematic analysis framework as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used for data analysis (Dawadi, 2020). Thematic analysis consists of six iterative steps: getting familiarised with data, producing initial codes, discovering themes/subthemes, re-evaluating themes, naming themes, and producing a report. The reliability of the findings was ensured through member checking and the participants' verifications. The excerpts presented in the findings section have been translated into English by the first author. Throughout the study, the researchers were cautiously aware of their role as 'human instrument' in qualitative research and ensured that their professional and personal disposition and beliefs did not impact the study.

Findings

The key findings of the study, according to the RQ, are presented in this section supported by representative excerpts from the participating teachers.

Unavailability of Devices

The EL teachers used different technological tools for teaching online, but their respective schools and colleges could not provide them with the required technologies. Most often, they managed their own technological devices like cell phones, laptops, cameras, tripods, boards, etc.

*My college has only one camera for the use [recording classes] of all teachers.
(T8HS)*

The teachers faced problems with connecting their learners to online classes. Some of the learners did not have the financial ability to buy the required devices to join online classes.

Some of the students, especially in the rural areas, they are not connected, and they also don't have the ability to join online classes. (T5HS)

The teachers, especially at the secondary level had to use Facebook as an online teaching platform as most of their learners could not access Google Meet and Zoom because of device unavailability and poor technological knowledge.

Our learners are from different socio-economic backgrounds....Facebook is easily available for all. (T3S)

Falling Interest, Poor Attendance and Interaction

One of the main challenges the EL teachers faced was teachers' and learners' low interest, poor class attendance, and inadequate interaction in classes. Initially teachers, though unprepared, felt interested in conducting online classes, but gradually they lost their interest and no longer liked teaching online.

I do not like online teaching that much. Now, I am compelled to teach online; so, I am teaching. (T6HS)

I am not that much interested in online classes as learners do not participate [On Facebook]. I just go on talking in a teacher-centred manner. (T2S)

As for the learners, teachers found that they were initially interested in attending online classes, but slowly they also lost interest, especially in the pre-recorded classes on Facebook. A good number of learners attended online classes at the beginning, but gradually the number significantly dropped. Sometimes learners even tried to mislead the teachers regarding their class presence. Guardians were not very careful about online learning, as well.

They are not sharing, they are not supporting, they are not doing the classes with the enthusiasm they had at the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. (T5HS)

Sometime learners join the class, but when we call them by name, they do not respond; that means they have already left the class after ensuring their class attendance at the beginning. (T7HS)

Again, the teachers could not interact with learners at all in pre-recorded or live classes on Facebook. The learners, in general, did not play an active role in classes. The senior learners were more reluctant to respond and participate in class activities than the

younger ones.

Only 20% learners respond in the class. The rest of the learners, they join but do not speak. (T6HS)

When I ask my students for feedback, they do not answer. Only a few of the students give me feedback. (T5HS)

Poor Technological Skills and Lack of Training

Despite their poor technological skills, most EL teachers received no training from their institutions for teaching online. So, they could not make effective presentations in online classes using digital teaching materials. Table 3 gives details about teachers’ training, and devices and online platforms used by them.

Table 3 *Teachers’ Training, and Devices and Online Platforms Used by Them*

Teachers	Training	Teacher Device	Online Platforms Used by Teachers
T1S	No Training	Mobile	Live or Recorded Classes on Facebook
T2S	No Training	Mobile	Live or Recorded Classes on Facebook
T3S	No Training	Mobile	Facebook Live (mostly), Zoom, Goggle Meet
T4S	No Training	Desktop Computer	Facebook Live (mostly), Zoom, Goggle Meet
T5HS	Received Training	Laptop, Mobile	Zoom
T6HS	Received Training	Laptop, Mobile	Zoom
T7HS	No Training	Laptop, Mobile	Facebook Live, Google Meet, Zoom
T8HS	No Training	Mobile	Recorded Classes on Facebook

Moreover, many teachers did not know that class recording was possible on Zoom. The young teachers were comparatively better in using platforms like Zoom and Google Meet.

Especially the elderly teachers initially faced technological difficulties with handling Google Meet, Zoom, and Facebook platforms. (T7HS)

Many of us do not understand the technologies that well. (T6HS)

Online classes could be effective if we were given training on how to teach online. (T8HS)

Teachers' Financial Hardship

The EL teachers faced financial hardship mainly for two reasons while teaching online during the pandemic. First, they had to buy the devices and internet data packs with their personal fund. No financial allowance was given from their schools and colleges to buy tools and data. Second, educational institutions across the country, especially the private ones reduced teachers' salary and paid only the basic as their incomes generated from the learners significantly dropped. So, unfortunately, many teachers gave up teaching.

I bought and used my own data packs at home for teaching online. Our school used to give us the house rent allowance, but now it is postponed. (T2S)

I watched some news on NTV [a private TV channel in Bangladesh] showing that a kindergarten teacher selling vegetables on the street. (T6HS)

Insecure Internet Connections

The unstable internet connection was another challenging issue for the teachers. They got repeatedly disconnected in the middle of classes due to the unstable internet connections both in the rural and urban areas. It wasted valuable class time as they had to reconnect, and they also lost their focus. Many learners left the class during the network disruptions. Moreover, learners could not understand the discussed contents properly due to poor audio quality.

This is really frustrating to get repeatedly disconnected in the middle of a class. It disrupts the natural flow of a class. Many learners also leave the class. (T3S)

Many learners cannot join classes due to network problems. They always complain about unstable internet connections. (T6HS)

Even though some teachers used broadband internet service in cities like Dhaka, they could not depend on that for uninterrupted services.

Though I am using a broadband service, I always keep alternative data packs ready as broadband does not guarantee uninterrupted services. (T3S)

Developing Learners' Four Language Skills Online: An Uphill Task

The teachers could not teach and practise writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills in online classes. As learners were not directly involved in classes on Facebook, teachers

had no way to develop their four language skills. The recorded classes were mostly contents-based, not skills-based as teachers usually explained the contents and activities of a specific lesson.

We cannot teach these four skills properly online. Learners are only listening to the teachers. (T4S)

If the learners do not directly participate in the class [Recorded class on Facebook], how will I develop their four language skills? (T8HS)

Sometimes teachers tried to involve them in writing tasks, but they could not ensure whether learners completed those tasks, and teachers were not able to give feedback. Besides, it was difficult to develop learners' writing skill through take-home tests and assignments as guardians might help or learners could copy from other sources.

I ask them to write something and send me through email, but many learners are not interested. (T5HS)

If the learners do not put their cameras on, if I cannot see their scripts, and if they do not speak, then how will I teach them writing online? (T6HS)

As for the reading skill, teachers tried to engage learners in reading, but most learners did not want to read. Besides, they could not do the post-reading activities.

Most learners do not want to read in online classes....Nobody simply responds. So, sometimes I feel helpless. (T6HS)

Even on Google Meet and Zoom we cannot do effective reading practices as time is limited, and there are too many learners. (T3S)

Moreover, all the teachers stated that they could hardly practise speaking and listening skills online.

We rarely practise speaking and listening skills in online classes. Our focus is on those two skills that are covered in the exams - reading and writing skills. (T1S)

Lack of Online Testing Schemes

The teachers could not assess their learners online as they had no experiences in online assessments, and the institutions also had no learning management system (LMS) for assessments. So, learners were given offline assignments instead of class tests and quizzes.

We give assignments, but now it is postponed as per the order of the government [as the COVID-19 situation has worsen]. (T1S)

For technological limitations, we cannot carry out continuous assessments and tests online. (T3S)

As the half-yearly and yearly tests were also postponed, learners were given take-home tests by some institutions. Teachers uploaded the question paper on an online platform, and learners wrote those tests at home and later submitted their exam scripts to their respective institutions. However, reliability was a big issue with the take-home tests as teachers were concerned about possible cheating by learners.

They are writing at home and later submitting the scripts at schools. ... Are they copying or taking help from their guardians? We cannot sort that out. (T4S)

Negative Emotional and Physical Impacts

The teachers taught online for more than one year and were negatively affected both emotionally and physically. Many of them were experiencing stress, anxiety, backpain, seeing and hearing problems, and sleeping disorder. They taught learners looking at the screen for a long time, and some of them also used the headphones. They had to spend a significant amount of time taking preparation for online classes which created pressure, as well.

Recording a class in a closed room switching off the fan is a very stressful task. (T8HS)

I am always in a doubt whether my learners are understanding my class lecture online. It creates anxiety. No self-satisfactions. (T3S)

Online classes create stress. I cannot sleep properly. (T2S)

When teachers taught from home, they were frequently distracted so could not concentrate on classes fully. The female teachers found it more challenging to teach classes from home as they had to manage their children and chores, as well.

Working from home and babysitting make life difficult. My little baby wants to get my attention during the class, again I am preparing foods, and then I must teach the class - whenever I think about all these, I lose my temper. (T6HS)

Moreover, learners' non-cooperation and disinterest in classes also made teachers feel frustrated, bored, and demotivated.

But, sometimes, when the students do not respond - when they do not prepare their lessons, in those situations sometimes I feel irritated and bothered. (T5HS)

Making Classes Effective: The Toughest Challenge

The key challenge for the teachers was making online classes effective. They emphatically stated that the online EL classes were not being that much effective for factors discussed above along with short class duration and inadequate digital teaching materials.

I do not think online teaching is that much effective, especially for the school level learners. (T2S)

Teachers' poor knowledge of the pedagogical aspects of online teaching is making classes ineffective. (T5HS)

Moreover, as learners were not physically present in front of the teachers, they felt that they were speaking 'to a void'. This distance barred teachers from giving full attention and efforts in online classes. It was basically a teachers' show as learners were hardly involved in group work, pair work, and other interactive tasks.

Eye contact is a great factor in teaching which is missing here. (T5HS)

When I call, they listen to me, but they don't respond. (T6HS)

Besides, teachers did not provide learners with class recordings. Again, the number of classes for each subject was reduced to half. Teachers then could not manage online classes properly.

Before the pandemic, I used to teach eight EL classes per week, but now I teach only four classes. (T4S)

Learners, especially the younger ones go on talking without muting their microphones. That's why the online classes [On Zoom] become chaotic like a fish market. (T7HS)

While attending classes online, children got easily distracted and went for some other activities like watching cartoons and playing games forgetting the class.

Children are more interested in playing games or something else on mobile, not attending classes. (T2S)

Eventually, online teaching became sort of a ritualistic activity. No body cared about the effectiveness anymore. However, the teachers said that they had no other alternative, so they must continue teaching online.

Now, the official order is that we must continue the classes online. It does not matter whether the learners attend the classes. (T2S)

Discussion

Arranging the required technological devices was a key concern for both the teachers and learners as also found in previous studies (Altavilla, 2020; Hakim, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Parvej et al., 2021). One fact was that most of the teachers were not given any financial help from their respective institutions for buying the required technological tools (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020). Again, the learners' poor socio-economic conditions did not allow them to buy devices for online classes (Alhumaid et al., 2020; Ela et al., 2021). Additionally, the learners' falling interest was substantiated by their poor attendance in online classes (Efriana, 2021; Hakim, 2020; Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020) which ultimately made teachers lose their motivation for teaching. The learners were not interested in playing an active role in classes, as well (Efriana, 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Tarrayo et al., 2021).

Moreover, the teachers' poor technological skills as reported in other studies (Altavilla, 2020; Casacchia et al., 2021; Chiatoh & Chia, 2020; Efriana, 2021) could be explained by the fact that many of them, especially the senior teachers could not handle smartphones and laptops properly in their daily use, let alone using them for online teaching. The situation aggravated as most of the teachers did not receive any training for online teaching (Chiatoh & Chia, 2020; Marshall et al., 2020) unlike the EL teachers in Nepal (Gautam, 2020). Teachers, especially those who were working in the non-government educational institutions were then usually poorly paid in Bangladesh. They faced financial hardship as they had to buy different technological tools and expensive data packs with their personal fund (Chiatoh & Chia, 2020; Nashir & Laili, 2021), and their salaries were reduced.

Additionally, many other studies also reported the negative effects of unstable internet connections across different contexts in Cameroon, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Afghanistan, and the Philippines (Chiatoh & Chia, 2020; Hakim, 2020; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Nashir & Laili, 2021; Rahim & S. C, 2020; Tarrayo et al., 2021) and in Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2021; Parvej et al., 2021). Both the broadband internet service providers and the mobile phone companies in Bangladesh miserably failed to upgrade their networks and ensure better services for their subscribers during the pandemic (Alhumaid et al., 2020). Furthermore, online teaching exerted negative impacts on teachers' mental and physical health (Casacchia et al., 2021; Ela et al., 2021; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020) as they had to teach classes looking at the screen for a long time every day. The absence of physical movements during online classes and the associated anxiety for extra preparation, digital materials making (Nashir & Laili, 2021), poor

internet connections, and the overall inefficacy of online teaching also contributed to their mental stress.

Again, for lack of technological pedagogical knowledge (Khan et al., 2021; Koehler & Mishra, 2009) and access to appropriate online platforms (Alhumaid et al., 2020), teachers failed to practise and develop learners' four language skills in classes. They did not know how to interact with the learners meaningfully using the inbuilt add-ins like the breakout room on the online platforms like Zoom and Goole Meet (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Besides, the teachers simply did not make the efforts and were not willing to go beyond their comfort zone to involve learners in language skills practice. The learners' unwillingness to take part in class activities also rendered practices of language skills in classes difficult. Furthermore, as all the stakeholders - teachers, learners, guardians, and officials - were exam-driven in Bangladesh, lack of online testing schemes could explain the learners' poor interest and participation in online classes. Teachers also had poor knowledge of online assessments (Khan et al., 2021). Therefore, continuous assessments and tests were confined to offline assignments and take-home tests only (Efriana, 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Nashir & Laili, 2021).

Finally, the perceived inefficacy of online teaching could be explained by the fact that online teaching was started in Bangladesh as an emergency alternative mode of teaching without much preparation (MacIntyre et al., 2020). As the EL teachers failed to manage classes properly, sometimes the class went chaotic (Marshall et al., 2020; Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021). It seemed that the teachers and learners could not aptly handle 'the void' in between them in online classes. Learners' poor comprehension of the class contents was a key concern for the teachers (Efriana, 2021; Tarrayo et al., 2021). The teachers and learners did not become habituated to online classes, especially they failed to think beyond the traditional classroom model (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Lack of teachers' and learners' commitment and motivation also made online classes ineffective (Alhumaid et al., 2020; Hakim, 2020; Marshall et al., 2020). Then, delivery of quality online teaching was not prioritised by the teachers and authority concerned. There was no rigorous monitoring for ensuring quality online teaching, as well.

Conclusion and Suggestions

There is a strong possibility that the educational institutions will follow the hybrid mode of teaching-learning, once the pandemic ends. So, teachers should no longer consider online teaching an emergency alternative mode rather they must be equipped and skilled to make it effective. For lack of devices, the teachers could not teach classes effectively, and learners failed to join. Moreover, teachers' poor technological skills did not allow them to make the best use of available tools and online platforms. Besides,

financial hardship could be a strong demotivating factor for any professionals, not only for the teachers. Then, unstable internet connections, dropping interest, low attendance, less interaction, inadequate language skills practices, and short class duration combinedly lessened the efficacy of EL classes. As Bangladesh has a test-driven education system, online teaching-learning would never be successful until and unless a reliable online assessment framework is put into place. Additionally, the negative impacts on teachers' mental and physical health highlighted the fact that they must be more careful about digital wellbeing.

On a different note, the case study reported here did not target to generalise its findings rather aimed to understand the challenges of online teaching faced by the EL teachers by depth. Future studies can be carried out with a larger sample to get the general scenario across the country. Based on the key findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for the EL teachers and other stakeholders concerned:

- a) Essential devices and stable internet connections must be ensured for the teachers and learners across the country. The respective school authority should support teachers financially in this regard. The government can arrange soft loans for the learners if it cannot arrange free devices for them.
- b) Teachers must get intensive training on online teaching so that they can improvise their technological skills and come to know the pedagogical aspects of online teaching. In the training programs, a separate module can focus on teaching and practising the four language skills in online classes. Thus, they would be able to make classes more interesting, interactive, and ultimately, effective.
- c) The schools and colleges must arrange efficient online assessment platforms for the learners and teachers.
- d) There should be institutional counselling for the teachers so that they can properly deal with the negative mental and physical impacts of online teaching and retain their motivation.
- e) Teachers can use teacher agency to tackle all challenges related to online teaching and collaborate among themselves to exchange experiences. The EL teachers must engage in reflective practices for improving their online teaching, as well.

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High-Stakes Test Pressure and Anxiety in the Nepalese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners

Saraswati Dawadi

Abstract

Despite a growing body of research on language test impact, little is known about the impacts of a high-stakes test on students in the Nepalese context. This paper reports on a study that explored the impact of an English as a foreign language (EFL) test on students in Nepal. The data generated through a student survey (n=247), oral diaries (n=72) and semi-structured interviews (n=24) with students and parents indicate severe impact of the English test on students. The majority of students reported that they were under tremendous pressure to perform well on the test and they had a high level of anxiety associated with the test. There were several indications that students had test related anxiety mainly because of their perception that poor performance on the test has negative effects on their social prestige and on career prospects. Additional reasons of their anxiety included high expectations from their parents and teachers. Finally, some of the pressing policy, pedagogical and research implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: High-stakes test, test anxiety, test pressure, English as a foreign language

Introduction

Test anxiety (TA) and test pressure (TP) have become serious issues in this contemporary society because of the widespread use of assessment. TP usually refers to a situation in which students are forced to work hard for a test whereas TA is an intense psychological state experienced by test-takers concerning the evaluation of their test performance and possible consequences that would happen in their personal or academic lives after test results. It is students' apprehension over their academic evaluation which is usually a fear of failing in test contexts. According to Sommer and Arendasy (2015), TA comprises two components: cognitive components (such as worry and test-irrelevant thinking) and affective components (such as emotionality and bodily symptoms).

¹ Parts of this article are taken from the author's unpublished PhD thesis: Dawadi, S. (2019). Impact of the secondary education examination (English) on students and parents in Nepal. An unpublished PhD thesis, The Open University, UK.

While the cognitive component worry refers to test-takers' negative thoughts about the possibility of failure on a test and its consequences, the affective component emotionality comprises physiological reactions (such as headache and increased heartbeat) and feelings of nervousness and tension. Failure in this context does not only refer to the doubt over securing the minimum required grade or pass mark but also to the failure to meet the requirements for their career progression or to meet parents' expectation and so on (Joy, 2013).

Kleijn, van der Ploeg and Topman (1994 cited in Birjandi & Alemi, 2010) present three models to explain possible causes of TA. The first model is termed as the 'learning-deficit model', which mentions that the problem lies in preparing for a test, but not in taking the test. Students with high TA tend to have inadequate learning during the preparation phase. According to the second model called the 'interference model', students with TA focus on task irrelevant factors during tests which negatively affect test performances. Two kinds of distractions are reported during test tasks: physical distraction (that indicate heightened autonomic activity such as sweaty palms and muscle tension) and inappropriate cognitions (includes comparing themselves with other test-takers and feeling bad during the test). Both distractions are supposed to negatively affect test performance. The third model includes students who think they have prepared very well for a test but in reality, did not. Those students have anxiety after the test that creates anxiety during the next test (Birjandi & Alemi, 2010).

In the context of the SEE English test, the major focus of the study, it is likely that the test creates a high-level of pressure and anxiety as it is a high-stakes test. High-stakes tests refer to any measurement of student attainment which carry significant consequences (either positive or negative) to test-takers, their teachers, parents and schools/educational institutions. Most people in Nepal believe that good performance in the SEE creates more career opportunities and leads to a better life. Therefore, parents, irrespective of their educational and social background, contribute to the development of such psychology in their children's minds so that their children consider the SEE to be everything in their life; "failure in the exam equating to failure and meaninglessness in life" (Bhattra, 2014, p.70). Nevertheless, almost no research has explored the psychological impact (pressure and anxiety) of the test on students. Hence, this study aimed to fill the gap in research.

Empirical background to the study

Previous studies have reported that students overwhelmingly become test anxious. For instance, Takagi's (2010) study indicated that students experienced a psychological burden while preparing for and taking the University Entrance Examination in Japan; they also suffered from extreme pressure to perform well on the test. Similarly, Triplett and Barksdale (2005) found that the elementary students in the USA were overwhelmingly

stressed, worried, anxious and isolated as a result of high-stakes testing. Reports of high-level of anxiety related to high-stakes testing are not confined to these two countries. Test-takers from several other countries or social and educational contexts are also reported to be test anxious. For instance, test-takers in China (Li, Zhong, & Suen, 2012; Xiao & Carless, 2013), India (Joy, 2013), Iran (Aliakbari & Gheitasi, 2017), Turkey (Basol & Zabun, 2014), USA (Segool, Carlson, & Goforth, 2013) and UK (Denscombe, 2000; Putwain & Daly, 2014) were found to be test-anxious.

Some studies have also reported psychological, physiological and behavioural changes in students. For instance, Kirkpatrick and Zang (2011) reported that high-stakes testing in China led to inadequate psychological development, self-hatred and repressed personality, and a general lack in the development of other abilities. In Newspoll's (2013) study, parents reported that National Assessment Programme- Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) had negative impacts on their child's self-esteem and their child showing signs of stress and anxiety due to NAPLAN; the children had a fear of freezing up during the examination. Similarly, the majority of students in Wyn, Turnbull and Grimshaw's (2014) study reported the feelings of stress associated with NAPLAN and a smaller number also revealed some physical reactions, such as nail biting, hyperventilation, headaches, profuse sweating, migraines and stomach aches. Furthermore, Aydin (2013) found that the EFL test-takers in Turkey had some negative physical effects, such as rapid heartbeat, trembling, anorexia, panic, worry, depression and apprehension about the future.

Previous studies indicate various factors that might cause TA in students, such as test format, test techniques, test environment, test difficulty (Aydin, 2013), students' attitudes towards tests (Aydin, 2012), teacher attitudes, time limit, test length, (Gursoy & Arman, 2016), parental expectation (Peleg, Deutch, & Dan, 2016) and academic buoyancy (Putwain, et al., 2015). Nonetheless, the factors that cause anxiety to students vary from person to person and from situation to situation (Basol & Zabun, 2014).

Indeed, students in a high-stakes test context are usually forced to work hard for the test by their family members and teachers. For instance, the test-takers of General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in Taiwan (Shih, 2007) experienced pressure because of the exams. Similarly, the Greek students in Loumbourdi's (2014) study stated that they suffered much pressure from parents and teachers to perform well on high-stakes tests. Kirkpatrick and Zang (2011) further reported that the Chinese students felt moderate pressure to excel in school. Shohamy (2007) has beautifully presented her own personal narrative to indicate how high-stakes tests create anxiety and pressure on students.

However, almost no research has explored the extent to which the Secondary Education Exam (SEE) creates pressure and anxiety in Nepalese students. Therefore,

this study aims at addressing the research gap in the literature. To be more specific, the study addressed the question: ‘To what extent and in what ways, do SEE students suffer test pressure and anxiety?’

It is worth pointing out that the major focus of the study is on the impact of the SEE English test on students. It explores the extent to which the test creates pressure and anxiety in students.

Theoretical background to the study

The study was guided by critical language testing theory (Shohamy, 2001) which argues that tests have power in society. Shohamy presents some examples that indicate how tests can manipulate human behaviours and their lives suggesting that tests sometimes have detrimental effects on test-takers because the results obtained from those tests often determine high-stakes decisions for individuals. Indeed, tests have been widely used without considering their possible effects on students. Shohamy (2001) rightly argues:

“Test-takers are the true victims of tests in this unequal power relationship between the test as an organisation and the demands put on test-takers; they do not have the right actively to pursue or understand the inside secrets of tests. It is rare for a test-taker to protest, complain or claim that the test did not fit their knowledge; the authority of tests has been accepted without question (p.386).”

Similarly, Bourdieu (1991) views that tests are instruments of symbolic power which set a major criterion of individual worth and they contain a competitive element which is illustrated by the fine line between success and failure. The use of tests for control and power can be seen as a top-down educational change strategy that is undemocratic, unethical and detrimental to test-takers.

The study

Participants

The participants in the study included secondary level students (n=247) studying at Grade 10 in rural public schools and their parents (n=6) in Nepal. The students had been learning English as a foreign language for 10 years and their age ranged between 14 and 16 years old. All of them were Nepali native speakers and they were studying at Grade 10 in state schools. Participants for the survey were selected by using a random sampling procedure from eight public schools which were purposively selected for the study.

Among the six parents, three were with high education (at least SLC/SEE graduates)

but the rest parents were not able to read and write. Their age ranged between 35 to 62 years and they had different professions: teacher (n=2), farmer (n=2), shopkeeper (n=1) and stonebreaker (n=1). They could represent different socio-economic classes.

The test

The SEE English test, being a summative test, mainly aims to record the achievement of the SEE candidates in the SEE English curriculum (Dawadi & Shrestha, 2018). The total mark of the SEE English test is 100 and it is divided into two: speaking and writing. The SEE is a high-stakes test in the Nepalese context as it carries significant consequences (either positive or negative) to test-takers. For instance, in order to be eligible to study certain courses in higher secondary level, students must get a good grade on the test and the test is used as a basic licence to find most official jobs in Nepal. Most people in Nepal believe that good performance in the SEE creates more career opportunities and leads to a better life.

Data collection

This study featured a mixed-methods design with a survey and six case studies. Since a convergent parallel mixed-method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) was employed, both qualitative and quantitative data were concurrently collected (but independently).

In order to collect quantitative data, a questionnaire survey was carried out with 247 students. A sub-sample of the survey participants (n=6) were asked to record oral diaries once a week intermittently for three months: first during the usual classes (i.e. in the fifth month of their academic year), second during the test preparation (i.e. around two months before the test) and final during the time they were waiting for the test results. All the diary students were interviewed twice: around six weeks before the test and two months after the test results publication.

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (2018) were followed to maintain the ethics in this study and informed consents from children and their parents were obtained before collecting any data from them.

Data analysis

The data gathered through the close-ended questionnaire was analysed using SPSS version 25 and descriptive statistics were calculated. Qualitative data was looked at through the lens of critical language testing theory and a thematic analysis approach was

employed. As thematic analysis is an iterative process (Braun & Clarke, 2006), several procedures (such as familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for main themes, and reviewing themes) were followed.

Findings

The findings of the study have been organised into two sections. The first section presents the findings related to the test pressure on students whereas the second section concerns the test related anxiety in students.

Test pressure on students

The data indicates that almost all the students (234 out of 247) reported that they were under tremendous pressure to perform well on the test. Students' responses to the questionnaire have been summarised in Figure 1.

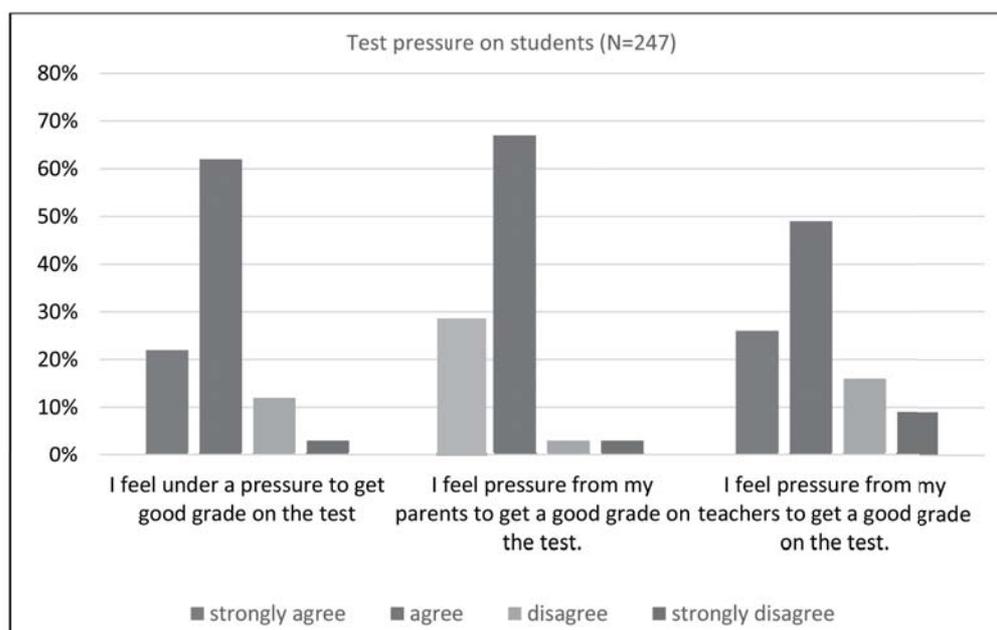


Figure1: *Test pressure on students*

The vast majority of students reported that they felt under pressure to get good grades on the test. The results also indicate that they received more pressure from their parents than their teachers.

The quantitative results were supported by the qualitative findings as all the diary students (except S6) reported that they were under enormous pressure to work hard for the test. However, contrary to the quantitative results, students reported that they got more pressure from their teachers than their parents:

“I got more pressure from my teachers than my parents. Our teachers made a very strict rule that we all had to stay in the school accommodation for three months. So, I am staying in the school accommodation nowadays (S5).”

The findings also indicated that the test increased workload for students. All the diary students reported that they had to study till late at night:

“My parents do not allow me to go to bed early. I have to study till 11pm” (S1).

“When the examination was very close to him, he was working so hard that he did not even have enough time to have food” (P3).

Indeed, there were several indications that the test increased workload pressure both for students and their parents. When the researcher went back to the field for the second phase data collection in mid-January, it was very hard to find diary students at their home. Two of them were staying in the school accommodation and would come home only on Friday evenings and go back to school on Saturday afternoons while four others would leave home at 5:30 am and come back home around 7.30 pm (Sunday to Friday) as they were taking extra classes in their schools in the mornings and evenings. Then, they were guarded by their parents for a few hours at home to ensure that they study till late at night. Similarly, the students who were staying at the school accommodation reported that they had to work very hard for the test.

Test related anxiety in students

Almost all the students reported that they had test related anxiety. The quantitative results, summarised in Figure 2, indicate that students had test related anxiety mainly because of their perception that poor performance on the test has negative effects on their social prestige and on career prospects. Additional reasons of their anxiety included high expectations from their parents and teachers.

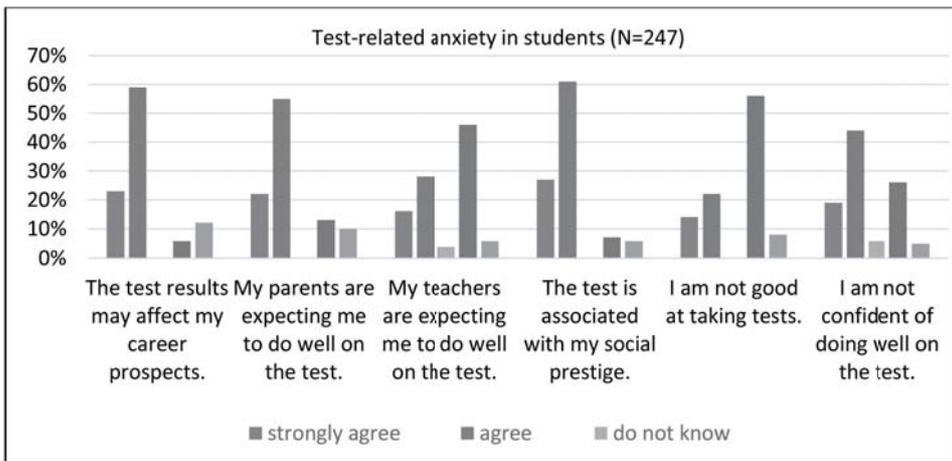


Figure 2: Test anxiety on students

Similar findings emerged through qualitative data. Test anxiety was one of the most recurring sub-themes in the qualitative data analysis. All the diary students (except S6) were found to have test related anxiety because of the possible test consequences to their career prospects and social criticism associated with poor performance on the test:

“I am very much worried about the test as it is very important for my future. If I cannot do well on the test, I will not be allowed to study science at Grade 11. I think, my future will be dark (S3).”

“One of the main reasons of my worry is that everybody in my village will know my test results and if in case I cannot do well on the test, they will criticise me (S1).”

Furthermore, the diary students (except S6) reported that they had the test related anxiety because of their parents’ high expectations from them:

“My parents are expecting me to do well on the test. They have spent a lot of money hoping that I can do well on the test. If in case I cannot do well on the test, they will be very much cross with me. Therefore, I am very much worried these days because of the test (S5).”

Although the quantitative results indicated that half of the surveyed students (46% disagreed, 4% strongly disagreed) were not worried because of their teachers’ expectations, all the diary students (except S6 and S2) reported that they had test anxiety because of their teachers’ expectations from them:

“I am worried thinking that if I cannot do well on the test, my teachers would not be happy with me (S4).”

“My teachers are expecting me to do well on the test as I usually get the highest scores in my class tests. However, I am not very sure whether I can get A+ on the test. So, I am worried these days” (S1).”

An additional reason for the test anxiety in four of the diary students was a lack of test-taking skills: *“I do not feel comfortable with any kind of test. I do not know what happens to me. Something goes wrong with me when I start taking a test (S2).”*

Furthermore, students had test related anxiety because they seemed to have low level of confidence in doing well on the test: *“I am quite petrified about the SEE as I think the test will be very difficult for me” (S2); “I am very much scared of the English test as I know that the test will be very hard for me. I do not really think that I can get good grades on the test” (S5).* However, it was found that teachers did nothing to support students tackle the test anxiety as indicated in the following excerpts from pre-test interview.

Researcher: Does your teacher tell you not to worry much about the test?

S3: No, he just asks us to work very hard for the test.

It was also found that students' anxiety increased nearer the test. In comparison to the first phase diaries, second phase diaries indicated more anxiety and nervousness in students. S2 in particular felt so stressed that she was demotivated to expend any effort in improving her performance when the test grew closer.

Students' anxiety was also accompanied by their bodily reactions such as loss of appetite, headache and fever:

"He did not even have good appetite. He would tell me that he was feeling like his mouth was completely dry and he was not able to swallow food properly. Actually, he had fever just the day before the test (P3)."

Furthermore, waiting for the test result was very much stressful for the students: *"I am very much worried about the test results these days. So many things come to my mind. Sometimes, I cannot even have a good sleep at night"* (S1), and the anxiety continued even after the test results: *"Last week, I was very much worried because of the test results. I was feeling bad. I would just be thinking about why my grades were lower than I had expected"* (S3).

However, the personality of individual student needs to be considered. It was found that 12 of the surveyed students and one of the diary students (S6) did not have test-related anxiety.

Discussion of the findings

The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of previous test impact studies that EFL students experience an intense level of anxiety of taking high-stakes tests. For instance, the findings that SEE candidates had pressure associated with the English test are consistent with some previous findings (e.g. Cheng, 1997; Li et al., 2012; Xiao & Carless, 2013) that EFL students feel enormous pressure to perform well in a high-stakes test. Kirkpatrick and Zang (2011) also report that high scorers in China garner praise while low scores lead to punishment. The situation seems to be worse in Singapore as so many students in Singapore commit suicide because of high-stakes test pressure and "two-thirds of Singaporean parents have punished their children for performing poorly by caning them" (Gregory & Clarke, 2003, p.71). However, none of the students in the current study reported that they were punished by their parents though many of them could not perform well on the test and I did not hear any news about

suicide cases associated with the SEE during the time of my study.

High pressure on students both from their parents and teachers suggest that, very similar to the Chinese parents and teachers (Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011), the Nepalese parents and teachers consider test scores to be the only criterion to judge students' abilities. The exam-centric education in Nepal evaluates students' quality and skills based only on test scores. Parental pressure on children might have also resulted from the perceived importance of the test along with their poor economic condition and hope for future through good education. Most parents in Nepal seek their children's secure future through education (Bhattraï, 2014). Consequently, they put pressure on their child for high achievement on the test.

Schools' pressure on students to perform well on the test might be associated with the accountability use of the test. In other words, the main reason why schools pressurise students for better achievement would be because of the increased use of the SEE scores by the Nepalese government as the sole criterion to judge the quality of school education. The public schools in Nepal are rewarded or penalized and also supported with funding based on students' performances in the SEE and it is obvious that every school wants to have good results to be rewarded or to save their reputation and prestige (Bhattraï, 2014). The SEE results have also been used to judge the quality of individual teachers. Therefore, the fear of poor results in the SEE and the associated punishment, shame, or embarrassment might have led teachers to strive for high SEE scores. Consequently, they might put pressure on their students to achieve high scores.

There were several reasons behind students' anxiety associated with the test. One of the most apparent reasons included their perceived social prestige associated with the test because of the lack of confidentiality of the test results. Contrary to most western countries, individual students' performances in the SEE are publicised by most schools (in some cases individual students' photographs along with their Grades in the SEE are even displayed on the school walls and in different public places) to attract students for admission. Because of this practice, it is clear that the achievement of high grades in the SEE is likely to earn social prestige while low grades may degrade the prestige. This also suggests that the achievement of high scores/grades on a test receives high prestige in the Nepalese society without necessarily considering the knowledge and skills the student has in the related subject.

As reported by previous studies (e.g., Basol & Zabun, 2014; Peleg et al., 2016), parental expectations and the perceived importance of the test results also seemed to trigger anxiety in students. All the parents, irrespective of their educational background, contributed to the development of such psychology in their children's mind that their children consider the SEE to be everything in their life, "failure in the exam equating

to failure and meaninglessness in life” (Bhattraï, 2014, p.70). Indeed, it has now been a general phenomenon that poor performance on the test is a failure in an individual’s life; most students consider the SEE to be a landmark in an individual’s life as they believe that the examination provides the ladder for one to get higher education and also opens up the vista of developing his/her career (Giri, 2011).

Some students were also anxious because of their perception that they lack test-taking skills. This anxiety seems to be related to our one-off exam system. It is true that all the students cannot perform efficiently under time pressure. Furthermore, it could be the result of the mark-oriented and rigid practice in the SEE as the exam focuses on one-off examination system which does not seem effective enough to capture the real skills of students, and also does not offer opportunities for students of being assessed in a natural setting.

Students’ anxiety could also be a result of their thriving interest in getting good scores on the test, rather than learning English. Ahmad and Rao (2012) argue, “Students suffer from examinations when their primary concern becomes to perform well in exams, not to learn well” (p.179). As discussed above, the students in this study were under an intense pressure to perform well on the test. Thus, the findings suggest that students, who are obliged to perform a task under pressure, may experience anxiety (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Furthermore, the SEE students’ test anxiety was rooted in their self-confidence; many students had a low level of confidence of doing well on the test. Hence, they would feel insecure about their test performance.

It is highly important that both teachers and parents are aware of such issues. While it may sound trite to state this, it cannot be denied that the role of parents and teachers is paramount in moderating anxiety. Therefore, both of them should be “provided with intensive training on how to behave around sensitive students at school and at home. As well, the students should be counselled to reduce exam related anxiety and emotional distress” (Bhattraï, 2014, p.82). Bhattraï further argues that school level teachers in Nepal do not take any counselling training for stress and anxiety management. Similarly, parents receive no training on how to understand their children’s psychology and problems to be able to support them in an appropriate way.

Students’ anxiety was not static nor was it a one-off result created by their class tests or mock tests. As reported by Aydin (2013), the students in this study suffered anxiety both before and after the test. Indeed, students’ diaries indicated that they had test related anxiety throughout the year but the level of anxiety steadily increased when the date of the test grew closer. Similar findings were reported by previous test impact studies (e.g., Gosa, 2004; Huhta et al. 2006; Joy, 2013; Lotz & Sparfeldt, 2017; Tsagiri, 2006).

Heightened anxiety in students nearer the test date might have resulted from the intensification of teaching and learning at school in view of the imminent exam. There was an intense level of preparation for the test nearer the test date in each school from where the data for this study was collected.

As reported by previous studies (e.g. Aydin, 2013; Birjandi & Alemi, 2010; Newspoll, 2013; Takagi, 2010; Tsagiri, 2006; Wyn et al., 2014), test anxiety revealed some physical responses. These findings highlight that there is an urgent need for stress management sessions and workshops for students (Bhattraï, 2014). Addressing students' anxiety and fears about tests can make students more proactive and careful use of tests may encourage students to use deep instead of shallow approaches to learning and also improve students' study habit.

Implications of the study

The study has several implications. One of the implications concerns teachers' and parents' awareness of students' anxiety. This means, students seemed to have elevated anxiety related to the test, but the study did not evidence any attempt made by teachers to mitigate students' anxiety. It is worth noting that "while moderate levels of test-related anxiety can actually improve motivation and test performance, an unmanageable amount can have an adverse effect" (Abrams, 2004, p.24). In other words, heightened level of anxiety is likely to hinder the process of learning. Therefore, it is highly important that effective therapeutic interventions for reducing the adverse effects of the test on students are considered and students are educated on the coping strategies to ameliorate the adverse effects of test anxiety. For this, teachers also might need some trainings on how to support their students. Teachers should understand that they need to do more than preparing students with the test contents to make students perform to their potential. Furthermore, it is equally important to educate parents as parents are one of the main sources of student anxiety. It is highly important that parents are made aware of their roles so that they allow their children to feel more relaxed at home. For example, parents ensure that there is a proper balance between work and play or rest.

Another implication of the study concerns the test related pressure and anxiety in students. The findings indicated that students experienced test related anxiety throughout the year and they had enormous pressure to perform well on the test. Parents influenced their children in such a way that students considered the SEE to be so important in their life that their whole life would be ruined, if they were unable to perform well on the test. Therefore, parents need to be aware of their roles and should not put unnecessary pressure on their children to perform well on the test. Instead, they have to play an important role in moderating stress and pressure on their children.

The study suggests avenues for further research in the field of language testing to expand the findings of the study and also to explore test impact issues in a greater depth. In the first instance, what is lacking in this particular context is that this study could not collect and benefit from classroom observation data that would add more insights and make the evidence of the test impact clear. This study could also be extended to a greater number of participants so that the findings could be generalised. Furthermore, it would produce a more comprehensive picture of the test impact operating therein, if the study was extended to other stake-holders of the test including teachers, teacher trainers, policy makers and test designers.

Limitations of the study

The study has revealed interesting findings regarding the impacts of the SEE English test on students. Nevertheless, the study has three major limitations that need to be acknowledged. The first limitation of the study concerns its sample size as it was limited to 247 students (for the survey) and six parent-student pairs (for the case studies). Hence, it is difficult to generalise the findings of this research to the entire population of the SEE students in Nepal. However, it should be noted that the participants shared important common attributes of the entire population.

The second limitation is pertinent to the data collection to the study. The data in this study was collected only from the students studying in public schools but nearly 20% students in Nepal study in private schools; most of which use English as a medium of instruction. That is why, this study does not represent the voices of the students studying in private schools in Nepal; generalization of the findings is limited by this constraint as well. However, there is no reason to suggest that the findings of this study are not generalizable to other students, particularly public-school students, across the country.

The third limitation of this study is from a methodological point of view. This study was limited to the data collected from students, but it would have benefited from additional classroom data collected through observation and teacher interviews. However, this shortcoming was, to some extent, compensated for through students' oral diaries. This study is one of the few test impact studies that has explored the test impacts over an extended period, and used both qualitative and quantitative data to study test impact.

Conclusion

This paper is dedicated to present and discuss the findings regarding the SEE test impacts on students' psychological domains. Having brought both the qualitative and quantitative data together, this study has unpacked the test impact issues very well. The

findings indicated that the test had negative psychological impacts on most students; they had an intense level of anxiety and pressure associated with the test. However, neither parents nor teachers seemed to be aware of the issue. Therefore, it is crucial that secondary schools consider the issue without any delay. Furthermore, it is highly important that the test designers understand how the SEE English test is used in the Nepalese societies and how its stakeholders are affected by the test use.

The Author

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Language of Dramatic Monologue in Poe's "The Raven"

Motikala Subba Dewan

Abstract

Dramatic monologue had been used as a powerful tool to express emotions and feelings through the characters in the ancient Greek drama. It received the proper recognition in the Victorian era as a new form of literary device when the various poets and writers started using it in their works. Edgar Allan Poe was not an exceptional. This article explores the language of dramatic monologue in Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven". It aims to look at the poem through the three perceptible features of the dramatic monologue: speaker/narrator, audience/listener, and occasion. It examines how the speaker's soliloquy speech—moaning for the loss of his wife—changes into a powerful dramatic monologue. Obsessed with pain and agony, the speaker's dramatic monologue escalates finding a listener, ebony raven inside the room. Throughout the poem, the occasion of the cold December becomes the vital point to bestow cryptic feelings to readers. In addition, the article provides an analysis of poetic structures through figurative languages which have made the poem pedagogically rich and their impact has taken the speaker's dramatic monologue in different level.

Keywords: dramatic monologue-soliloquy-figurative language-features-poetic structures

Introduction

"The Raven" (1845) is Edgar Allan Poe's famous classic American poem written in gothic style in the gloomy setting fabricated with the elements of death as well as memory of love, full of emotions with the mixture of fear and suspense. The article explores the three features of dramatic monologue such as the speaker, listener, and the occasion in "The Raven." Such as the speaker's emotional state of soliloquy transforming into a dramatic monologue with the apathetic attitude of the listener, the raven and the particular chosen time occasion of a winter night are responsible to create uncanny mood in the poem. Furthermore, it tries to analyze the poetic structures like the use of rhyme, meter, repetition, etc. and the use of figurative languages such as personification, simile, symbol/metaphor, imagery, allusion, onomatopoeia, etc. in the poem and their impact in the dramatic monologue.

The Plot Summary

Poe's works express the psychological state of subconscious mind of the character leading to the mysterious abysses. Most of his characters as narrators appear isolated and aberrant. In "The Raven" too, the narrator is half asleep and trying to read a book subconsciously to release his suffering and loneliness caused by his wife's death. It is the midnight of a cold December. He is awakened by a tapping at his door. His basic instinct makes him awake fully hearing the sound. The sound creates a ghostly occasion at bleak night and makes him think it might be his dead wife, Lenore, coming to visit him. At the very moment, his soliloquy begins. He peeps outside into the darkness and calls his dead wife's name "Lenore" persistently but there is no one, only the sound "Lenore" echoes back. He returns to the room however, the rapping and tapping sound come repeatedly louder than before. He thinks it might be the sound of the wind beating on the window's shutters. However, his anxiety makes him open the window, and a dark ebony creature flies inside the room. It perches on a bust of Pallas (Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom) above the chamber door. He is surprised to see the "grave and stern" (Poe, 1845, stanza 8, line 2) looks of the raven. He tries to address the unknown visitor, pronounces its name "raven" and in response, he hears the answer "Nevermore." His soliloquy changes into monologue, the speaker's instinct makes him enquire about the dark bird: who is this raven, why it is here in the midnight, why it does not want to leave, and why it responds his queries with only one word "Nevermore." Throughout the poem, the narrator's monologue seems to be possessed with the raven's presence. As Rachel McCoppin (2019) writes "Edgar Allan Poe's works are defined by obsessed narrators—that the narrators' obsessions come from within their own unexplored unconscious. Poe's narrators repress natural, yet fearful and unwanted, impulses, which results in irrational obsessions and ultimately leads to horror" (p.41). The unnamed narrator obsesses with his own unconscious thoughts that generate a series of dramatic monologue and dismay in the poem.

The narrator is sitting in front of the raven, looking at it directly, trying to understand what it means by "Nevermore", but the raven's lexis is limited to "Nevermore" and does not utter other words. The speaker's mumbling, speaking himself—it will leave him as his loved ones and friends did—however, he gets the response from the raven one more time "Nevermore" The word "Nevermore" becomes melancholy. As Harris (2020) states "Melancholy, for Poe was the "most legitimate" poetic tone. Thus, the tone of "The Raven" would be melancholic, continually underscored by a one-word refrain, "Nevermore," a word chosen based on its sound, "sonorous and susceptible to protracted emphasis" (p. 869). It sounds resonant and reminds the speaker his wife will never return to him. And the word "Nevermore" recurring in the poem expresses that death is inevitable. Kelly (2020) writes, "According to Sigmund Freud, the distinguishing feature of melancholia concerns what he describes as the "lowering of the self-regarding feelings

to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment” (p. 68). The “self-torturing” becomes the synonyms of “melancholy” for the speaker in “The Raven” that is forcefully replicated in his monologues.

Every time the same answer “Nevermore” of raven makes the speaker angry and he commands raven to leave him alone: “Leave my loneliness unbroken! —quit the bust above my door! Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!” again, he receives the similar answer “Nevermore” (Poe, 1845, stanza 17, lines 3-4). The word “Nevermore” appears repetitively in the poem through the voices of the raven. It gives the impression that the raven is trying to convey the ultimate truth of life. At the end, the narrator concludes his monologue by saying that the devil-eyed bird is still sitting on the bust of Pallas, casting a shadow over his soul. As the speaker speaks the final lines: “And my soul from out that shadow lies floating on the floor. Shall be lifted—nevermore!” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 18, lines 5-6). The speaker is in deep pain, he will never forget his wife and her memory will haunt him forever. We can relate the speaker’s sufferings and self-torturing with the Poe’s real-life story. Poe’s beloved wife, Virginia Poe, whom he deeply loved, died of tuberculosis in 1842 bursting a gush of blood while singing, and two years later he wrote “The Raven.” The poet chose the bird raven to express his own sorrow. “It seems, Poe was delighted in self-torture deliberately, he picked the melancholy mood and stormy night with the bereaved character in the poem. “The Raven” suggests his need to control emotions and thoughts this particular poem elicited in him” (Harris, 2020, p. 869). Thus, the element of melancholy becomes important and real in the poem.

Dramatic Monologue as Powerful Tool

Looking back in the history of dramatic monologue, it was used from the theater of the ancient Greece. However, we find its proper use in the Victorian era. According to Howard (1990), “[i]t was in the Victorian age that the dramatic monologue received the development which entitles it to the rank of a new type of poetry” (p. 60). Romantic poets like William Wordsworth and Samuel Tayler Coleridge, not only embodied these qualities, but directed them to a considerable extent in their poetry (Howard, *ibid*, p.56). In the early part of the nineteenth century, before the opening of the Victorian era, Byron employed this form. Howard, (*ibid*) writes, “The movement and freedom of his verse and the vigor of his expression enabled him to use the dramatic monologue effectively. The forcefulness of “Jeptha’s Daughter” is certainly due to the monologue form” (pp. 56-57). Byron has employed the three features of the monologue in the poem. The occasion is extremely dramatic in the scene when strong warrior as a speaker hesitates before fulfilling his vow of daughter’s sacrificial (Howard, *ibid*, p. 57). It shows that “The dramatic monologue before the reign of Victoria was the result of an unconscious art of

construction” (Howard, *ibid*, p. 58). The dramatic monologue is the mental state spurt out from the speaker. In “The Raven”, the speaker as the first person begins his soliloquy lamenting for his dead wife Lenore unconsciously and later his soliloquy constructs into powerful dramatic monologues. As Encyclopedia Britannica defines:

A dramatic monologue is any speech of some duration addressed by a character to a second person. A soliloquy is a type of monologue in which a character directly addresses an audience or speaks his thoughts aloud while alone or while the other actors keep silent (“Monologue,” & “Soliloquy,” 2021).

It is the inner thoughts the speaker voices aloud to himself and nobody listens to or the speaker is unaware of who is listening to him. Some creative writers like Robert Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and Alfred Lord Tennyson also used dramatic monologue through their fictional characters who speak to an audience without break and became early pioneers. In the 20th century, T.S. Eliot’s famous poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and Ezra Pound’s a collection of short poems *Personae* are the examples of dramatic monologues. Browning’s one of earliest dramatic monologues is “My Last Duchess” where he illustrated his method of having the speaker reveal his character in his own word (Howard, *ibid*, p. 70). Howard further writes (1910):

Browning’s dramatic monologue enabled his form to reach the climax of its development, as the drama did in the hands of Shakespeare. He saw within it its potential powers and with his dramatic genius he developed it into a type of poetry peculiarly adapted to modern times. He raised it to the stage of conscious literary art and gave it its laws of construction (p. 79).

Browning has given significant recognition to the dramatic monologue as one of the new essentials of literature. He states that:

The development of the dramatic monologue may be divided into these two stages of unconscious and conscious construction. The first period of this development extends from its origin to its use by Browning; the second from its use by Browning to the present time (Howard, 1910, p. 43).

Dramatic monologue is consistently used by Browning as a tool in his works. The poets and epic writers use it as a powerful tool to express emotions and feelings of the speaker. Wiandari cited M.H Abrams (2002) who says, “The monologue is so organized that its focus is on the temperament and the character that the dramatic speaker unintentionally reveals in the course of what he says” (Wiandari, 2017, pp.1-2). Monologue depends on the mental state of the character and, in the process, the character reveals his inner thought unknown to the reader/audience. It is the method of continuing inner flow of

speech by the speaker. Moreover, as Fadhilah Wiandari (2017) cited Sen (2010) writes, “The dramatic monologue is essentially a narrative spoken by a single character. It gains added effects and dimensions through the character’s comments on his own story and circumstances in which he speaks” (p.1). It shows that dramatic monologue is the speech of an individual speaker with no dialogue coming from any other characters depending on the speaker’s thought what he is thinking and feeling at the moment and conditions. Mainly, it is a single narrative in a scene. As Wiandari (2017) compares the dramatic monologue with soliloquy:

The dramatic monologue is a narrative spoken by a single person...the root meaning of the term “monologue” is a single man’s conversation. Of course, that may sound slightly paradoxical because conversation by its very nature means a talk between two persons– in the dramatic monologue, though the active speech is ascribed to a single person, the presence and the reactions of other person are conveyed naturally in the course of the single man’s talk. The listener does not actively interrupt the current of speech. Thus, the dramatic monologue, unlike the soliloquy, implies the presence of some other character or characters, listening and reacting. In a soliloquy, the speaker delivers his own thoughts, uninterrupted by the objections or the proportions of other persons. In a dramatic monologue; however, the reactions of the listener, or other persons, are woven into a speaker’s word (p. 2).

It expects someone to be addressed to listen as the speaker speaks, there is no interruption from the listener however, in soliloquy speaker speaks his thought and others are expected to be silent. However, the word ‘monologue’ is used synonymously with ‘soliloquy’. “The speaker in the soliloquy is merely thinking aloud. His thoughts proceed freely and unmodified from his own individuality. In contrast to this, the speaker in the dramatic monologue is influenced more or less by the personality of the hearer” (Howard, 1910, p. 40). We could see many examples of it in Shakespeare’s dramas such as in Hamlet. In “The Raven” too the narrator begins his soliloquy, his speech without any disruption and after the entry of raven his soliloquy becomes dramatic monologue. Then speaker’s speech is directed to the second person, the raven.

Robert Browning’s poem, the “Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister” is an example of dramatic monologue by the character unnamed Spanish monk including audience, occasion, interplay, character, revelation, and dramatic interest. According to Sessions (1947), “[t]he only lacking prerequisite is that the “audience” does not hear the speaker, despite the fact his every move induces imprecations” (p. 512). We could observe in “The Raven”, Poe used soliloquy to dramatic monologue effectively. Its importance is highlighted with the use of figurative languages by the poet. Its overall control is within the narrator. The occasion has intensified the narrator’s emotional expression and

helped to erupt the narrator's pain and anxiety aloud through monologues. As Fletcher and Browning state that "Dramatic monologue is found to be represented as a literal transcript of words spoken, written, or thought at some definite time by some person who may be either historical or imaginary" (Sessions, *ibid*, p. 505). It speaks about the state of the narrator at that time and moment. The use of it will explain us what's happening at that time. It could be anyone's literal transcript who performs as a speaker in the text. As Sessions cited Howard that "One of the first examples of a dramatic monologue with the three characteristics of speaker, listener/audience, and occasion was Drayton's sonnet beginning "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part" (Sessions, *ibid*, p. 506). Drayton's poem:

Employs all the embryonic elements which are later developed into the dramatic monologue. The occasion or situation is one of dramatic intensity. At the parting of the lovers for the last time, the emotions cannot be inhibited, but well up and receive their most forcible expression in the form of the monologue (Howard, 1910, p. 48).

We see the speaker is speaking in monologue assuming the listener/audience is listening to him and we feel the expression in the romantic occasion. There are many examples like this in literature using of three traits in dramatic monologue. And some believe in:

7 characteristics of dramatic monologue such as speaker, audience, occasion, revelation of character, interplay between speaker and audience, dramatic action, and action which takes place in the present. Judged by these seven characteristics, a poem or prose work may be a perfect example of the dramatic monologue type (Sessions, 1947, p. 508).

Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" fits in the description. "The Raven" follows the three features of the dramatic monologue as it has the speaker as narrator, listener the raven, and the occasion, that is, melancholic, gloomy freezing night. These features of dramatic monologue are convincingly used by the poet in the poem. Every use of words and phrases become authentic and relevant in the poem. Besides these features, monologues are classified in various forms such as quoted monologue, quoted interior monologue, memory monologue, autobiographical monologue, etc. All these classifications have distinctive use in the literature.

Quoted monologue has to be spoken aloud using imagination. It is frequently used as a form of ingrained narrative in a traditional form of the novel. We often find this when a new character is introduced (someone who gives his or her life story), or when a character has been off-scene for some time and returns to tell the others what has happened

(Hughes, 2002, p. 104). It is like a story telling or narration. It plays with ambivalences between spoken and written modes of narratives. The sentences broken with the dashes suggests oral narratives, just as mention of “the moral at the end of story” may suggest traditional fables or children’s tales. (Hughes, *ibid*, p. 105). Quoted monologue is the story of own retelling or narrating other’s story. Someone quotes and narrates the story in this monologue. We can classify the poem “The Raven” as an excellent example of quoted monologue. The speaker in the poem starts with the narration of his story, he mutters himself alone: “Tis some visitor,” “tapping at my chamber door— Only this and nothing more” (Poe, 1845, stanza 1, lines 5-6). The speaker is trying to convey his inner feelings through quoted monologue. Because from the beginning, narrator is narrating his own sufferings and feelings to the reader/listener. Poe’s quoted monologue reflects the existing situation and the condition of the narrator. As Hughes (2002) cited Dorrit Cohn:

*We are given a discourse that has not been spoken aloud and thus has no listeners, but that expresses a character’s intimate thought. In such passages we find the great paradox of modern narrative fiction: it “attains its greatest ‘air of reality’ in the presentation of a lone figure thinking thoughts (Hughes, *ibid*, p. 107).*

James Joyce’s novels are the best examples of quoted interior monologue. It is the expression of the character’s inner thoughts like stream of consciousness in the speaker’s mind. In this type of monologue, we as a reader are able to hear the narrator’s thoughts without seeing him. Poe has used this trait too in “The Raven” when the speaker is thinking in pain about his wife Lenore. In the poem soliloquy to dramatic monologue, we hear the inner voices of the narrator. Fatima H. Aziz and Ukaal Ghailan (2018 cited Sinfield 1977) defines the Dramatic Monologue as: “a poem with a speaker who is clearly separate from the poet, speaks to an implied auditor, who while he stills silent, remains clearly present in the scene” (P.64). In the poem, the speaker’s mind is “weak and weary” (Poe, 1845, stanza 1, line 1) the narrator does not speak only he ponders even though his inner mind is talking with the reader. He is mentally exhausted and grieving for his love. The quoted inner monologue occurs in every stanza in “The Raven.” The third one is memory monologue. In the words of Hughes (*ibid*), “In memory monologue it is the act of remembering that structures the monologue, directs the attention of the narrator toward events, and decides on their importance” (p. 109). The character’s speech moves towards the sharing of memory in monologue and describes about the events and experiences of life. “The Raven” is an example of using memory monologue where the narrator continuously speaks it out his love for his wife and memory of the time they spent together. It is the memory of his wife haunting him in his monologue. Similarly, autobiographical monologue tries to bring the life of the author in the conversation. We do not see the appropriateness of this monologue in “The Raven.”

Dramatic monologue has become an effective tool and rationalized the whole occasion and mental state of the narrator in the poem. From his monologue, we could guess that character is in pain, trying hard to control his emotions. One way speaking as the Oxford English dictionary defines a “dramatic composition for a single performer” or “a long speech or harangue delivered by one person” (Hughes, *ibid*, p. 104). Monologue is structured by the single character continuously speaking and talking long without any disturbance. From the ancient period to the present time, it is observed that dramatic monologue has been used as a powerful tool to express the writers’ works which we see in “The Raven.” The whole poem illustrates the significance of dramatic monologue through the speaker’s prevailing domination in use of language.

The soliloquy changes into monologues when there is the entry of the raven and the speaker opens the window and it perches upon the bust of Pallas (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 7). His monologue becomes dramatic when he starts speaking with the raven, his monologues target towards the listener as the raven: “Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven, Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!” Quoth the Raven “Nevermore” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 8, lines 3-6). Somewhat beguiled by the raven’s appearance, the speaker asks its name however he gets the reply “Nevermore.” We could apply here DeVries’s theory of dramatic monologue. According to him in the process of growth, elements of dramatic monologues are “differentiated somewhat sporadically and independently, yet the term “process of development” is legitimate when used with certain limitations and it is certainly indicative of the nature of its growth” (Howard, 1910, p.41). We see the power of monologue in the poem changes its tone from subtle soliloquy to infuriating dialogue with the raven. The language usage in speech spoken aloud by the speaker: “Wretch,” ... “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee” Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!” And again, raven answers “Nevermore.” (Poe, 1845, stanza 14) directs us to extended monologue. Here the growth of speaker’s monologue reflects the memory monologues too. The speaker is trying to forget the pain and suffering in the absence of his wife. Pronouncing his wife’s name “Lenore” repeatedly tells us he could not forget his wife; memory becomes vital to flow monologues. As Kelly (2019) states:

At first blush, it would indeed appear that the mourning of the physical loss of the speaker’s love object, the sorrow resulting from her absence and the pain induced by her memory, is the event around which the poem’s narrative turns (pp. 67-68).

The monologues of the speaker swear with the punitive language take us to the climax “Prophet!” ... “thing of evil! —prophet still, if bird or devil! —Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore, Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, ...Is there—

balm in Gilead?” Quoth the Raven “Nevermore” (Poe, 1845, stanza 15). The speaker asks the bird if he is wicked and if he has brought healing medicine to him however similar answer he gets “Nevermore.” The speaker shrieks, the tone of monologues change from low to high note:

“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” ...

“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! —quit the bust above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore” (Poe, ibid, stanza 17).

The narrator orders the raven to leave him alone. However, it replies “Nevermore.” The speaker is angry seeing the unwelcoming attitude of the raven. However, there is no interruption in the speaker’s dramatic monologues, it is used as a powerful tool in the poem.

Textual analysis of “The Raven” through poetic structures and figurative languages

The poetic structures and figurative languages are useful devices in teaching language. They help learners to improve grammar, increase vocabulary, understand sentence structures, clear the concepts, abstracts and ideas. They connect us with the text and enhance the imaginative power and critical thinking to express emotions and feelings through visualizing description. They are effective to develop language skills in both written and spoken communication and help to draw conclusion.

The poetic structures comprise lines, stanzas, rhyme schemes, meters, repetition, and refrain in the poem. “The Raven” has 108 lines with eighteen six-line stanzas and it follows the ABCBBB rhyme scheme. Poe’s rhyme arrangement is very intentional in a planned way. Looking at the rhyme of the words in the poem: Lenore, lore, door, before, implore, floor, explore, yore, wore, more, bore, store, core, ashore, shore, implore, adore, and nevermore show beautiful implication in expressing the speaker’s inner thoughts. Poe has created a musical aura to interact with the readers using rhythmic words. At the end of first, second and third lines in the first stanza **weary/ lore/tapping** follow ABC rhyme and the use of the word **door** in the fourth and fifth lines repeatedly with the **more** in the sixth line are BBB rhyme as in **lore**.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and **weary**,

Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten **lore**—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a **tapping**,
 As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber **door**.
 “‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber **door**—
 Only this and nothing **more**.” (Poe, 1845, stanza 1)

And the poem has internal rhyme like AA, B, CC, CB, B, B. In the first line of stanza **dreary** and **weary** follow AA rhyme. Second line has B rhyme as **lore**, and third line follows the CC rhyme as **napping** and **tapping** and in the fourth line has CB rhyme **rapping** and **door**. At the fifth and sixth lines follow B, B rhyme such as **door** and **more**.

Once upon a midnight **dreary**, while I pondered, weak and **weary**,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten **lore**—
 While I nodded, nearly **napping**, suddenly there came a **tapping**,
 As of someone gently **rapping**, rapping at my chamber **door**.
 “‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber **door**—
 Only this and nothing **more**.” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 1)

All the stanzas and lines follow the similar rhyme pattern in “The Raven.” With the rhyme, we see the rhythmic pattern with metrical feet of stressed and unstressed sounds/syllables in the poem. “The lines of the poetry fall into short units called feet and are described by how many feet each line has, thus a foot might be one of several links” (Rush, 2005, p. 88). Generally, a metrical foot has one stressed and one or two unstressed syllables. Analyzing “The Raven”, more or less all the stanzas follow trochaic octameter. Trochaic octameter is a poetic meter of eight metrical unit or foot per line. Each foot has one stressed syllable followed by unstressed syllable word in line. For example: **But** the **fact** is **I** was **napping**, **and** so **gently you** came **rapping**,... (Poe, 1845, stanza 4, line 3). It has followed the trochaic octameter metrical unit. There are repetition and refrain of words in the poem as in line “Quoth the Raven ‘Nevermore’” repeated in stanzas 8, 14, 15, and 16 and this line repeated sometimes after a gap as a refrain. “The Raven” is the masterpiece of the Poe where we could find the heavy use of dramatic form of meter and a melodic pattern of rhyme.

Similarly, Poe spontaneously used full of figurative languages that help the poem to heighten the dramatic monologue. Anggi Desatria Budiargo (2020) states that in the Poe’s “The Raven”, there are eight types of figurative language as mentioned in theory of Abrams (1999). They are personification, symbol/metaphor, allusion, hyperbole,

alliteration, simile, imagery, and onomatopoeia (p.12). It has created the ominous and mythic mood of the poem. As Budiargo (2020) states that Poe has used eight types of figurative language:

The Personification figure head gets a higher percentage than the others and the percentage is 25%, imagery language that takes second place appears more after Personification figure which gets a percentage of 22.5%, then Metaphor figure appears 7 times and the percentage is 17,5%, Hyperbole figure that appears 5 times the percentage of this figure of speech is 12,5%, Alliteration figure that appears 4 times the percentage of this figure of 10%, then Allusion figure which appears 3 times the percentage of 7,5%, Simile figure appears 1 time is 2,5 same with Onomatopoeia figure which appears 1 time percentage 2,5% (p. 12).

The use of personification in “The Raven” could be seen in most of the lines that treats inanimate objects as human. The personification helps to increase the murky atmosphere in the poem. The poet personified the raven as ‘lord’ or ‘lady’ (Poe, 1845, stanza 7, line 4), and uttering the word “nevermore” through the raven’s states that raven is treated like a human. Observing the lines “Other friends have flown before—On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 10, lines 4-5), the raven is personified as ‘friends’ and ‘he’ who left him before and the raven will as well. Likewise, the poet has used symbols/metaphors in the poem. The whole poem is a symbol of the narrator’s grief and fears about his mortality and the “Raven” traditionally symbolizes death. According to Wakhid Harits & Rizkyanita Sari (2016) states:

The words “Pallas” and “Night’s Plutonian” symbolize the God and angel, “balm in Gilead” refers to the holy land and medicine that is stated in the Bible becomes the traditional medicine and cures the pain. The words “midnight” and “December” symbolize the decline of Poe’s life. This fact is strengthened by word “chamber” which represents the misery (p.128).

The multiple times metaphors appear in the poem. Such as when the speaker says, “each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor” (Poe, 1845, stanza 2, line 8), here, the diminishing light of the fire is casting shadows upon the floor compares to ghosts. The narrator does not see Lenore, only her name echoes in the dark night, like a ghost, no mortal body, only feelings of despair. Metaphorically, Lenore is compared to the ghost like dying fire casting the shadow. The dying embers reminds the narrator, death of Lenore, the shadows remind him of her spirit. Similarly, when the narrator speaks the words “Prophet!” “thing of evil! —prophet still, if bird or devil!” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 15, line 1), here the poet is comparing the raven with the devil, demonic figure. “fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core” (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 13, line 2), eyes of the

bird are compared with fire. The use of symbols help the poem to express narrator's emotions and feelings strongly. Pervasiveness of these symbols/metaphors relate the speaker's mourning in death of his wife. Furthermore, we see the use of mythological allusion in the poem when the raven perches on the bust of Pallas just above the speaker's chamber door (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 7, lines 5-6). Pallas is an allusion or reference to the Greek Goddess, Pallas Athena, the goddess of wisdom. The allusions connect us to the universal meaning that will help us to understand the use of language in the literary piece.

Another figurative language is hyperbole. It is an exaggeration of speech that is used for effect. It provokes and attracts the readers to give attention to the lines or sentences in the text. It also helps to express emotions and feelings of the character. In "The Raven", it emphasizes the narrator's mental state and his relationship with the raven. In the poem, the narrator claims that he is 'Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before' (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 5, line 2), "all my soul within me burning" (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 6, line 1), "To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core" (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 13, line 2) all hyperbole of language use has a greater impact in the dramatic monologue. We feel and see the narrator's agony in the power of his monologues.

And the occurrence of the alliteration (consonance and assonance) in the poem has a musical impact. Such as repetition of the consonance, the letter or sound /w/ in **while**, **weak**, **weary** (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 1), /f/ in **filled**, **fantastic**, **felt** (Stanza 3), **flung**, **flirt**, **flutter** (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 7), /d/ sound in **deep**, **darkness**, **doubting**, **dreaming**, **dreams** (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 5) make the poem rhythmic and influential. Equally, the use of assonance vowel sound /æ/ in **rapping**, **napping** **trapping**, and /ε/ in **December**, **ember**, **chamber**, **remember** (Poe, *ibid*, stanzas 2-3) as well as /i/ in **fitting**, **sitting**, **still**, **seeming**, **dreaming**, **streaming** (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 18). The simile has another impact in "The Raven." "On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before" (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 10, line 5), the poet compares the "dreams and hopes" to a bird's flight. The narrator's wife and friends all left him shattering his dreams and hopes. Similarly, tomorrow the raven will also take a flight and leave him alone.

Poe attempts to describe an occasion, the speaker and listener's mood, emotions, pain, and grief in "The Raven" by using imageries craftily. They are seen vividly and subjected in the poem to signify the objects, things, feelings, and thoughts. For example, "dark night and ancient" (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 8, lines 1-4), "as the king from the Night's Plutonian shore" (Poe, *ibid*, stanza 8, line 5) imageries are used to describe the raven. Equally, raven's image suggests the death, not only literally but also figuratively. The sound of rapping and tapping created by the raven at night and the speaker whispering the word "Lenore" and echoing back, gives the gothic picture. And the images of "the

silken”, “sad”, uncertain”, and “rustling of each curtain” provide the feelings of terror (Stanza 3, lines1-2). They invite readers to ponder upon the supernatural world.

Moreover, the use of onomatopoeia as such tapping, rapping sound, flung, flutter, croaking, etc. have created excitement with grotesque feelings at night. Effect of these words reign the speaker’s monologues that dominates the whole speech and grabs the readers’ attention until the end. The supremacy of dramatic monologue of the speaker has intensified the occasion in proper use of figurative languages with poetic structures.

Conclusion

“The Raven” is a powerful poem with adept use of the dramatic monologues. The frequency of using poetic structures through figurative languages has boosted the strength of dramatic monologue and made it pedagogically affluent. It will be useful for learners to analyze and understand any kind of poem or literary text through these poetic structures and figurative languages in ELT. The dramatic monologues have played a supreme role in the poem. The poet has used figurative languages and poetic structures intentionally to have a larger impact in the narrator’s dramatic monologue. The narrator, as a speaker, begins with his soliloquy and when he gets the audience/listener as raven he starts confronting it; however, most of the time the narrator’s monologue is evoked by the word “Nevermore.” The figurative language in monologue becomes significant in the occasion of confrontation between the raven and the speaker. The impact of language could be seen in the speech of the speaker and that leads to powerful dramatic monologues through melancholy, emotions, and time to time refrained by the sonorous words “Nevermore.” The use of poetic devices has doubled the effect in the mood and setting of the poem that give us gloomy eerie feelings.

In “The Raven” dramatic monologue begins from the main character’s soliloquy, thinking about his dead wife. He narrates his story as the speaker. The whole poem is about the speaker’s dramatic monologue that takes into height when a bleak bird, raven enters into his room in the dark night. The raven becomes the listener and the occasion of confrontation is reflected in their conversation. Poe has deliberately composed the dramatic monologues with the figurative use of language with poetic structures to bring its impact in the speech of the narrator. The narrator’s grief for the loss of his beloved wife forces him to begin with soliloquy to monologue that continues with the raven until the end. The features of monologues are fully justified in the poem from the beginning to the last. The speaker as a narrator starts his soliloquy, it changes into monologues when there is an entry of the raven, then raven becomes a listener.

The substantial use of figurative language and poetic structures has heightened the effect of monologues. Symbolic use of the word “Nevermore” has a profound effect

on narrator's mental state. It reminds him that his lost love Lenore will never come back to him. And death is inevitable. Repetition of words and sounds, use of allusion, hyperbole, simile and metaphors vitally play an important role to express sorrow and pain of the speaker through monologue. It is clear that use of language gives voices to the words. In the poem death has become a melancholy poetic topic to lead the narrator's monologue. It has disclosed the narrator's soul in front of the raven, thus his interaction with the raven meaningfully becomes a dramatic monologue. The narrator's action, and the occasion of midnight, tapping and rapping sound at his door make him to rise from the subconscious mind to real world. The narrator is desperate to find solace in the occasion of cold December night. However, it is not possible, one cannot ignore entirely the presence of death. The supremacy of dramatic monologue rules the application of words and phrase repetition. Each and every word is chosen prudently by the poet to create melancholy atmosphere.

The raven witnesses the speaker's misery however the raven refrains to answer his queries. We see the speaker's quoted internal monologue shifts to memory monologues. Self-torturing loneliness opens with the questions however his condition does not improve. His quoted monologue fails to get consolation in the occasion. He is obsessed with "Lenore" and "Nevermore" that create the overall atmosphere. The language unity of effect could be seen in the ABCBBB rhyme scheme. In every stanza at the end, we see the same phrase "Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore,'" that reflects the speaker's agitated soul. Poe is successful to produce a powerful dramatic monologue by using brilliantly poetic structures and figurative language in "The Raven." In the summing up, "The Raven" is a beautiful creation and masterpiece of the poet where we could see the great example of dramatic monologues.

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Addressing Problems with Reading in English: A Case Study of Five Bangladeshi Teachers

Syeda Tabinda Sadaf

Abstract

Reading is generally considered as one of the essential language learning skills. Unfortunately, in most Bangladeshi government secondary schools, reading is not given its due respect. Recent research indicates that reading is as much important a skill as speaking or writing and therefore, Bangladeshi teachers need to change their mindset towards the significance of reading in classroom, to make the L2 learning a helpful experience for students. Five Bangladeshi teachers from three different schools took part in the study. This study is aimed to see Bangladeshi teacher's analysis of reading problems of their students and the teaching strategies they use in classrooms for teaching reading skills by using questionnaire and interviews as research tools. The research found that teachers recognise students' reading problems and sincerely try to address these but their biggest impediment is the class size for which students are left alone with their reading difficulties. If this skill is not aptly addressed at this level, learning the other three language skills will be difficult for the second language learners. Hence this research suggests that teachers' analysis of the reading problems should be given importance to ensure students' maximum L2 learning.

Keywords: Second Language (L2), discourse, schema, reading aloud, word recognition.

Introduction

Reading is used as a technique to teach quality writing skill and as an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking skills while reading aloud, especially in Bangladeshi classroom settings. So, reading skill is undoubtedly an important one of the four language skills because poor reading skill badly affects L2 learning (Alderson, 2000). So in order to improve English language skills of students in government schools it is necessary to identify problems associated with reading skill at first and address them in appropriate way. (Jagig & Wan Mohammad, 2016; Parvani & Md Yunus 2018; Wong & Abdul Aziz, 2019). In this regard I tried to investigate L2 reading problems of

Bangladeshi students from perspective of experienced teachers rather than students, to get an in depth understanding of the matter.

Research Questions

To investigate students' problems with reading in English, the point of view of five Bangladeshi teachers have been analysed in this research study. They are asked different relevant questions on the based on two research questions. These are:

- 1) What are the main reading problems encountered by Secondary school Bangladeshi students as perceived by their teachers?
- 2) What are the strategies teachers adopt in solving students' reading problems?

Literature Review

The existing literature on problems and strategies in developing students' L2 reading skills are critically reviewed here. The focus will be on such core issues in L2 reading that are particularly relevant to this study.

Problems of Teaching Reading Skills

Researchers like Alderson (2000) and Smith (1994) found that there are many problems with teaching reading skill in the L2 classroom setting. The poor reading comprehension skill of students is one of the challenges teachers face in their classrooms (Shea & Ceprano, 2017). So, reading strategies need to be taught so that readers have the freedom to choose strategies for reading effectively. The inability to recognise the more important information in text, skim, preview, use context to avoid misunderstanding, extract information from the text and engage with the text (Alderson, 2000) are resulting inefficient readers.

Secondly, it is often presumed that learners who acquired the reading abilities in their first language are thought to acquire second language reading capabilities automatically. Alderson (2000) mentions, 'in second-language reading, knowledge of the second language is a more important factor than first-language reading abilities' (p. 23). Students are naturally aware of the language structure of their L1 but in, L2 reading problems occur due to inadequate knowledge of the language (Alderson 2000). At times L1 and L2 reading skills correlate not because of transfer of skills but because these reading skills rely on automatic activation of cognitive processing resources (Grabe & Stoller, 2019). This assertion becomes evident in the South Asian context as students

are more used to the Grammar Translation Method and try to understand every second language text by translating into their first language and do not focus on linguistic features of the language.

Thirdly, the lack of schematic knowledge and interest may be one of the major problems of reading. Harmer (2001) also says that students who are disinterested or unfamiliar with the text genre may become reluctant to engage fully with the text. So, students should be given the freedom to choose books according to their interests. An increasing body of research on reading (Widdowson, 1990; Alptekin, 1993; Cook, 1997; Grabe, 1991) recognises the importance of schematic knowledge in reading. It is seen that very often literary text and authentic texts of English-speaking world are used as materials for language teaching classes. Harmer (2001) says ‘it is when students come into contact with “real” language that they have to work hardest to understand’(p. 205). So, it can be argued that it is important for the readers to be able to relate their pre-existing information with the content of the text (Alderson, 2000). It helps learners to interpret new references of the target the language and teachers cannot ignore the fact that schema theory is an important part of discourse analysis (Cook, 1997).

There is another L2 reading problem that can be seen in Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan which is of ‘reading aloud’. At the junior schools very often, students are asked to read loudly pointing to the words on the page with their index fingers. This practice may be a reason of their incomprehensible reading. Many students get habituated with this practice and their reading becomes loud, slow and incomprehensible. According to Smith (1994), ‘it overloads short-term memory and leaves the reader floundering in the ambiguity of language’ (p. 153).

Strategies in addressing reading problems: Implications for teaching

Since all the language learning skills are interlinked, a student who has a problem with reading may also be deficient in the other language skills. Teachers should put more focus on developing students as efficient readers, so that learning other language skills become easier. In light of existing literature, several issues for improving reading are discussed below which can be seen as a solution to the problems teachers face in South Asian countries.

‘Automaticity of word recognition’ (Paran, 1996) is a very important aspect of reading which is normally developed in reading in the first language. To develop this same reading strategy in second language readers, students should be inspired to read a lot as practice is the only path to develop automaticity in reading. Exercises of word recognition can be turned into computer games to initiate interest in readers (Paran, 1996). Grellet (1981) agrees with Goodman (1967) and says that ‘one does not read all

the sentences in the same way, but one relies on many words or cues' (p.56). Students learn more if the connection of new words can be drawn with words they already know (Grabe, 1991).

According to Harmer (2001) students may not understand every word of the text, teachers should teach them how to continue reading in such situations as guessing meaning of unknown words is one of the reading skills students should develop. According to Stanovich's (1980) interactive-compensatory model, 'reader who has deficient word analysis skills might show a greater reliance on contextual factors' (p. 63).

Learners can also be encouraged to choose texts following their interests. Extensive reading improves readers' comprehension skills, automaticity and vocabulary (Colin Davis, 1995). Even in the case of intensive reading, teachers engage students by discussing the topic, showing a relevant picture and asking them to predict the subject matter based on some selected words and titles (Harmer, 2001). Classroom instruction that specifically focuses on asking open-ended questions and examining text content is more productive strategic instruction (McKeown et al., 2009).

Students should be taught how to work interactively with both top-down and bottom-up processes and encourage students in developing automaticity, confidence and interest in reading by initiating group work and discussions after the activity (Rumelhart, 1980; Grabe, 1991). Classroom instruction in reading comprehension led by teachers, group work or pair work of students seemed to be more fruitful and commonly known as guided reading (Ford, 2015; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017) and according to Fountas and Pinnell (2012), "The goal of guided reading is to help students build their reading power-to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts" (p. 272)

Researchers like Swaffar (1985) suggests that texts for teaching should be selected keeping in mind the schematic knowledge of teachers which they are going to transfer to the students. Authentic texts that include everyday material like newspapers, travel, tourism can be used to enhance students' interest as it is written in 'natural situations rather than to the stilted, artificially concocted laboratory materials that accompanied many textbooks' (p. 16) It gives teachers the independence to change and use authentic materials based on students' language competence. If teachers find the text is too problematic concerning 'cultural schema', it would be advisable to choose an alternative (Cook, 1997; Alderson, 2000).

Grabe (1991) mentions that if reading is taught in the context of the content, learner's motivation is developed and the purposeful activities of integrated language skills will enhance learning as 'reading comprehension should not be separated from the other skills'. Moreover instructional approaches like guided reading help students to

become independent and strategic readers (Ford & Opitz, 2011). Cameron (2009) states that reading comprehension can be developed by teaching the strategies explicitly, flexibly and using these in all learning areas and developing lexical resources. Considering students' benefits, teachers should try to overcome the problems associated with reading and make efforts to solve these problems for maximum L2 learning.

Methodology

Research Settings and Participants

Five Bangladeshi L2 teachers participated in this study and are selected based on fixed criteria. The participants are all non-native English Language teachers from different schools in Bangladesh. The schools are located in different parts of the country and are under the same board of education following the same curriculum. The medium of instruction in public schools in Bangladesh is Bengali and the English language is taught as a compulsory subject.

All the teachers have experience of teaching in similar academic settings in Bangladesh for many years. They are teaching students of classes V to X within the age of 10-15 years. The participants are given pseudonyms due to anonymity of the study and they are named as Azan, Ayat, Murad, Salim and Mehmet. A consent form (Appendix A) is given to them with a brief description of the research topic along with this clear assurance that all the pieces of information of the interview and questionnaire will be confidential and anonymous. The number of participants of this qualitative case study is kept small to support the depth of case-oriented analysis.

The Research Design

It is called a qualitative case study because it is based on a particular context with a definite number of teachers and mostly open-ended questions are used to get detailed analysis of students' reading problems from teachers' point of view. The perspectives of the participants are analysed to understand the phenomena involved in a case study. Cohen et al., (2000) suggested, 'a case study focuses on individual actors or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events' (p. 182).

The questionnaire (Appendix B) and a semi-structured interview (Appendix C) used for collecting data is kept anonymous to initiate honest answers. The questions of the semi-structured interview allowed changing or modifying the questions according to the interviewee's response and helped to gather some more ideas and perspectives of looking into this research with clear explanations (Cohen et al, 2000; Silverman, 1993). In this research one-to-one interview was done after the filled in questionnaires were

emailed back. Therefore, the participants had a good understanding on the research subject before the interview and the interviewer got the platform to discuss some of the answers they had documented in the questionnaires. The thirty minutes' semi-structured online interview with each teacher helped the researcher to elicit practical teaching perspectives of the participants and get a detailed understanding of the problem.

According to Cohen et al. (2000), 'if a site-specific case study is required, then qualitative, less structured, word-based and open-ended questionnaires may be more appropriate as they can capture the specificity of a particular situation' (p. 247). The methodology framework greatly serves the purposes of this study, to analyse how L2 teachers address reading problems in Government schools of Bangladesh.

Data Analysis

This section analyses the data obtained through the questionnaires and interviews employed for the study. As mentioned in the previous section, the teachers were all involved through questionnaires and interviews. The data analysis is based on teachers' views about Bangladeshi students' problems in reading skills.

Problems with Reading

The first question that was asked to all the teachers during both the interview and in the questionnaire was to identify the most common problems with reading English among Bangladeshi students. Almost all of them identified similar kinds of problems. There are many reasons that cause problems to Bangladeshi students while dealing with English reading. The data received from each of the teachers are analysed below:

Teacher Azan says that due to a large number of students in the class, teachers cannot concentrate on an individual student's problems with reading. He further says that his class consists of 62 students and most of them are from lower-middle class society who prefer schools with free or fewer tuition fees. The teacher implies that a huge imbalance in the student to teacher ratio does not allow teachers to ensure that each of his students learns the fundamental reading skills properly. He says-

'Bangladesh being a poor country doesn't have enough number schools to meet the requirement of a huge population. So, in a public school 60 to 70 students seat in one class.'

Moreover, almost all the teachers mentioned that they teach classes of large number of students, which is a reality of the government schools in Bangladesh. The tight schedule of class coupled with pressure to finish the syllabus within the established

academic framework does not give them much opportunity to help the students at an individual level. After the class, students are left on their own to fight with their reading problems.

Teacher Ayat on the other hand relates students' habit of memorising whatever they read without understanding as a big obstacle in the way of becoming an effective reader. He particularly mentions the comprehension test where students do well only on the passages they have practised before. If they are given any new passage for a reading comprehension test, they fail to comprehend. He blames students' habit of memorising without understanding as a big impediment in the way of becoming effective readers. This keeps them away from reading thoughtfully and comprehending the meaning. He also evaluates that students' bad habit of translating everything they read in English into Bengali makes them slow readers and hence makes reading a very tiring exercise.

Teacher Murad identifies students' reading problems with word meanings and pronunciation. Since there are many students in a class, only the randomly selected students get a chance to read aloud in the class. Therefore, the students' lacking of word recognition and pronunciation stay unidentified due to inadequate reading practices in the classroom.

'Students pronounce the words peculiarly, do not understand punctuation, and their reading shows no understanding...'

According to him, this problem with word recognition occurs due to students' lack of hold over the language as a whole. As a result, they cannot interact with the text and become reluctant towards reading.

Teacher Salim however, seems to believe that Bangladeshi student' problems with reading English are due to the lack of proper lessons on reading the English language at the initial stage. Due to this poor foundation, reading in English appears like a difficult task to them and their anxiety and lack of confidence make them more reluctant towards reading. He also points out that most of the texts used in teaching English in Bangladesh are about English-speaking countries whose social context is not familiar to them.

Teacher Mehmet feels that the reason that gives rise to reading problems among Bangladeshi students is the lack of interest in learning English as a foreign language. He says that,

'Most of the students do not recognise the necessity of learning this international language. They think it as extra burden as they do not have any contact with the language.'

Mehmet laments that students' lack of exposure to the English language outside the classroom makes the task of learning the language gruesome and boring. They fail to relate themselves with the real implication of the language and English becomes a language confined in books only. So, students fail to interact with the text, lose interest and treat it as an extra burden. He says that, '*...in Bangladesh maximum students live in villages and the environment they live in is not favourable to learn English*'.

Teacher Azan also feels also that students' overall disinterest in the English Language itself makes it difficult for them to generate interest in L2 reading. The students do not use the English language in their daily life and therefore it just becomes a subject to study at school rather than a subject to comprehend and treasure.

Teacher Mehmet incorporates all the reasons mentioned above by the four teachers and says that students get apprehended by the English language as it is difficult for them. They just want to memorize blindly without understanding whatever they read to pass the examination. This fear and anxiety make them disinterested in reading in English.

The majority of teachers mentioned that one of the most important reasons for reading problems of their students was their inability to understand the social context of the text they read. Teachers apprehend that lack of schematic knowledge creates hindrance for students in understanding English as the materials used in teaching the English language in Bangladesh are written in the context of English-speaking countries. Almost all of the teachers feel that at initial stages students should be given to read something whose social context is familiar to them to generate interest in reading.

Lack of quality teaching at the primary schools, poor classroom environment, lack of interest in language learning, ineffective way of assessment, lack of contextual materials and discourse incompetence are among few reading problems analysed from Bangladeshi teachers' point of view.

Research Findings

After bringing light to the reading problems, the researcher tried to find out teachers' adopted ways to tackle the difficulties of students. Although the responses are diverse and different from one teacher to another, everyone came up with his own way of handling students' problems and adopted strategies to help them. Following are the strategies teachers adopt in solving reading problems:

Vocabulary and Pronunciation

All the five Bangladeshi teachers seemed to give importance to understanding the word meanings of the texts and reading aloud in class with the correct pronunciation. Teacher Azan mentions that most of the students do not know the word meanings and

becomes nervous in reading. When they tend to ask the word meanings to the teacher, they pronounce the words incorrectly. In such situations, he gives time for correcting their pronunciations and teaches different meanings that one-word form might represent.

Teacher Mehmet says that reading aloud in the classroom helps the student to a greater extent. It allows the teacher to figure out student's problems and to address them. Moreover, reading comprehension tests also help teachers in figuring out students' reading difficulties. Mehmet mentioned that he sets questions from the text which students have been asked to read. If they can answer correctly, it is understood they have comprehended the text correctly. To make the whole class interactive he says,

'In the classroom I never allow the student to be silent or a passive listener, while someone is reading other listeners are asked questions about their comprehension of the topics read out'

All the participants talk in favour of reading aloud as it helps them in identifying students' problems with word recognition and pronunciation. Teacher Ayat identifies that to make the reading session interesting in the classroom he has to employ the practice of reading aloud despite its slow reading practices. He seems to underscore the problem that it is not possible to engage every student in this class-room activity.

Proper Instruction

Teacher Ayat along with the other four teachers believes that students should be given instructions before reading and it should be done in every class until students become independent and confident readers. He has to guide students in understanding each paragraph of the text and then focus on the questions mentioned in the syllabus about the text. He also says that he has to go through line by line of the text in the class and explain every difficult word he comes across. Sometimes, he makes a vocabulary list and explains the word meanings to the students before starting the lesson. He says,

'To engage the students in the class, I read aloud individual paragraph in the class. I ask them to explain in their own words what the paragraph wants to say. Sometimes I allow them to explain in their mother tongue what they have just read.'

Ayat gave a very interesting suggestion to help Bangladeshi students in reading. He suggested that students should be given texts written in easy language so that the flow of reading is not hampered to develop an interest in reading. He says, *'If the text is full of difficult vocabulary, students lose interest in reading'*.

He requests teachers not to discourage the student by rebuking him in front of the class if he tends to be a slow reader. The teacher should have the patience to deal with his queries and give him extra attention. He also suggests that in the case of a large class, small groups of students can be made and each group will be handed over to an individual English language teacher. So, the teacher can focus on every student and help them in developing language skills like reading.

Teacher Mehmet says, *'I as a teacher become a role model of reading text. After reading I ask them a question to evaluate how much they could understand. Sometimes I compare the text of reading with other current affairs in a manner that makes them laugh. In this way I make the class of reading enjoyable to all the students.'*

This is how Mehmet tries to make reading enjoyable for the students and does not want them to feel that they are reading something in a foreign language. He presumes that students' lack of interest and fear of learning a foreign language could be a reason for students' problems with reading.

The reason they do not want to practice reading in English is that they are not confident enough to handle the language and understand it all by themselves. They need the constant help of a teacher to guide them through their reading. This dependency might sometimes become an obstacle in becoming an effective reader. But as a teacher he believes that helping the students constantly at the initial stage of reading is necessary.

Interesting Reading Materials

Teacher Salim appears to be very optimistic in using authentic real-life text materials in classroom language teaching. He says, *'the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom will help students to get a real flavour of the language. They will see how the language is used in a day to day life and English language might become more tangible to them'*. He informs that in Bangladesh many newspapers publish news in English. So, varieties of options are available for the teachers. Teachers can pick up any newspaper whose topic and structure of a language might be suitable for the students and show a variety of language structures used in different newspapers in reporting on the same topic. That will create an interest among the students, and they will realise the importance of learning the English language. Teacher Azan also feels that teachers should have the freedom to choose authentic materials and texts outside the syllabus and use attractive and contemporary issues to attract students' attention to make reading a pleasurable experience for them. Authentic texts are more lively and better than concrete materials of textbooks (Swaffar, 1985). If the subject matter is familiar, they will be enthusiastic in reading and will be able to concentrate on the sentence structure of the

language. Discourse competence is necessary for being an effective reader.

Other teacher participants did not directly mention about using authentic texts in classroom language teaching but they suggested using texts whose language is simple and the social context is familiar to the students. All the teachers agree on the fact that at the beginning, learners should be given to read something whose social context is familiar. They rather insist that it will be better if texts are written from a Bangladeshi context. Teacher Murad says, “*texts of Bangladesh contexts would provide a better understanding of the language. Once they get used to reading, we can provide them texts of dynamic tastes.*” Two other teachers also suggest that as beginners, students should adopt the language and skills of reading in English. They want students to focus on the structure of the language and then on the context. Grabe (1991) also believes that contextual knowledge can overcome linguistic barriers. Teacher Mehmet says, “*it is natural to comprehend anything from the known circumstance. We would prefer the text to be written in a Bangladesh context.*”

Peer Interaction and Guidance

In response to the question of helping a student in practical settings, Teacher Salim says that ‘*I help a student in my class who is struggling with English reading and ask the above-average students to assist him as well.*’ He also groups struggling students with students who have better understanding of the language and reading skills. The teacher encourages slow readers to read more outside the academic texts and suggests names of books. He believes that reading problems can be overcome through extensive reading practices and says ‘*no matter how much a teacher helps students with reading, if the students do not practise reading, they would not be able to overcome the problems.*’

The teacher also thinks that schools should issue the practice of going to the library a mandatory task for each student and during every week separate hours should be allotted for library visits. In this way, students may feel that reading is an important aspect and they are being assessed on it.

Changes in Students’ English Language Evaluation

At present, the examination system allocates no marks for classroom performance; the students do not concentrate on the class lectures. They only cram the answers for the exam from the selected text without understanding the meaning. Teacher Azan addresses the urgency for the Bangladeshi education system to change the mode of testing and examination by saying, ‘*I think only a few marks should be fixed for the examination. Most of the marks should be given on class performance. Then the learners will try to give full concentration in the class room.*’

Teacher Ayat also gives importance to classroom activities and does a random selection of students to participate in the class activity of reading. He tries to ensure that every student, no matter whether he is the one reading or listening, is fully engaged in the reading activity. Grabe (1991) mentions that reading for purpose motivates students in becoming effective readers. Moreover, Ayat also asks students to write the summary of their reading as a class-work or home-work to figure out whether they have understood the reading assignment properly and mark them.

Reading is an important language learning skill and learning to read is the first step of language learning. Teacher Murad, like Teacher Azan suggests that students should not be assessed only based on examination rather marks should be allotted on their class performance as well. In the class, teachers make students practice reading by reading aloud so that teachers can correct their mistakes and make them read as they are very reluctant to do it. In summary, data underscores that if reading is to be made effective for Government-run school students, teachers need to concentrate more in the class instead of assessing their students through annual exams.

Teacher Mehmet suggests that Bangladeshi schools should have more English language teachers and government should give proper teaching training to them so that they can make the class a more interactive one. He emphasizes that the ratio of a number of students to the teacher should be balanced, only then students will be able to get proper attention and guidance from the teachers and language learning will be a feasible and exciting experience.

On the question of using reading strategies like skimming, scanning, predicting and inferring in the classroom, most of the teachers found the question difficult to answer. In the interview it became evident that the learning environment has a direct bearing on teaching reading strategies. Teacher Azan feels that students do not have enough hold over the English language required to teach them these reading strategies. Teacher Ayat's answer on the role of prediction in developing effective reading skills is noteworthy. He says that it is not possible to practice reading strategies like predicting and inferring due to large number of students and short duration of classes. Teacher Mehmet seems to use prediction in teaching 'word guessing' and shows students how to go on reading without looking for the word meaning in the dictionary. The rest of them did not give a proper answer even on the question on prediction and using reading strategies in the classroom. They somehow avoided the question by saying that due to students' English language problems, these four reading strategies are far beyond their understanding.

Discussion

The data received from the respondents suggests that they were not aware

of the effective reading strategies. One of the respondents seemed to follow bottom-up approaches where they could teach their students how to focus on words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. It may be argued that students following this approach may focus on smaller parts of the texts thereby failing to grasp the basic meaning of the text (Harmer, 2001).

Most of the teachers gave more importance to vocabulary and correct pronunciation over reading strategies. Some of them mentioned that these reading strategies are difficult to be taught in an overcrowded class where each student needs proper attention and guidance. It can be considered as a fact to a certain extent but in the long run students need to learn these reading skills to be efficient readers. Surveying, skimming, scanning, inference, predicting, and guessing are important reading skills and teachers should select reading strategies for teaching according to students' needs (Grabe, 1991).

Almost all of the teachers mentioned that they teach classes with many students, which is a reality of the government schools in Bangladesh. According to Harmer (2000) large classes cause difficulties for both teachers and students. "National Council of Teachers of English Guidelines" and "The Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates" suggests that a foreign language class size should not be more than twenty-five students. Classes larger than that do not allow teachers and students to interact. In addition, the tight schedule of class coupled with pressure to finish syllabus within the established academic framework do not give them enough opportunity to work on the student's weakness at an individual level. This echoes with Kumaravadivelu (2005) who talks about teacher's limitations to go beyond the rules set at ministry levels. The ideal kind of classroom environment which is in favour of language teaching rarely exists in public schools of Bangladesh.

It is noted that the medium of teaching in Bangladesh is their L1, which is Bengali. Even teachers use Bengali while taking an English class. This constant interference of the first language while reading and dependency on the Grammar Translation Method hinders effective reading. Students try to understand reading by translating it to their L1 which makes them slow readers and gradually they lose interest in the foreign language. Alderson (2000) mentions that the dependency of L2 learners on their L1 is due to their insufficient knowledge in L2. In L2 reading, the overall understanding of the second language is important than reading in L1.

Data further show that if the context and content of the text is familiar to the pupils, they can concentrate on the sentence structure with greater involvement. Grabe (1991) also believes that contextual knowledge can overcome linguistic barriers. The students should be made familiar with the sentence structure of English so they can easily identify and comprehend what they are reading. Cook (1997) also notes that schemas

help students to comprehend the text quickly. Widdowson (1990) and Alptekin (1993) also identify the importance of schematic knowledge in reading. Some of the teachers even feel that authentic materials like newspaper articles can be used for reading tests to make them feel the real use of the language.

The study reveals that there is a dearth of well-trained English language teachers in Bangladesh. One teacher teaching a class of sixty to seventy students cannot be expected to help individual students with their reading problems. There should be a balanced proportion between several students and teachers. Large classes cause difficulties for both teachers and students (Harmer, 2000) and Bangladeshi students, in general, need more help in improving their English language skills. Pre-teaching activities can develop students' ability for word guessing and automaticity of word recognition, according to Paran (1996). This will reduce students' stress and they can engage more with the text.

It became quite evident that teachers make their students practice reading by reading aloud. This is a practice that has been carried out for a long. It is discussed in the literature review that most students in South Asian countries like Bangladesh are expected to read aloud pointing to the words on the page with their index fingers. As a result of this approach, these students may get habituated with this practice and their reading becomes loud, slow and sometimes incomprehensible. But teachers mention that reading aloud with correct pronunciation can help them in independent reading. Teachers feel that by asking students to read aloud they can judge students' reading capabilities and level of competence in reading.

Data demonstrates, it is very necessary to develop students' awareness on importance in learning the English language as they do not have much exposure to the language outside the classroom. Grabe (1991) says that if students realise that they are reading for a purpose, it will motivate them to be good readers. Thus, data further identifies that students should be constantly made aware that English is an international language and they need to learn it to communicate with other parts of the world. In the long run, the English language is going to help them to a greater extent. Even in the job market, higher education, travel and in many other aspects, competence in the English language is very necessary. Therefore, in the globalising world, students should be motivated to learn this international language. The education system should also allot marks on class performance to make students feel that reading is an important aspect and they are being assessed on it. Harmer (2001) also reviewed that students should be encouraged to do extensive reading and authentic texts will be able to motivate students to a greater extent. It is important to make learners realise that the English language is the only way to see the world outside their territory of Bangladesh. Even authentic materials like newspaper and magazine articles can be used for reading tests to make them feel the real use of the language.

In sum, the study reveals that most Bangladeshi government school teachers are not adequately equipped to address this problem of reading as some teachers themselves have mentioned that they need proper training. The participants regret that the reality of the classroom has been ignored by the policymakers as there is a communication gap between policymakers and implementers (Rahman & Pandian, 2018a; 2018b). School systems that practice complex curriculum and are less concerned about the learners' needs, actually illustrate the inefficiency of the school administration system of a country (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 2018) and hence making language development difficult. Over crowdedness is an issue that is beyond teachers' control and teachers would benefit from an appropriate environment and a manageable number of students to deliver their teaching.

Conclusion

This research work has attempted to identify some of the major problems the Bangladeshi students encounter when reading English text. Problems like poor L2 learning environment, students' reluctance to the English language learning, ineffective way of assessment, lack of contextual reading materials and discourse incompetence are identified but a much deeper and longitudinal study would reveal more. The study tried to find out the strategies teachers adopt to deal with students' reading problems and their suggested solutions which seem to be consistent with the literature on second language reading. Their strategies are fruitful but cannot address the reading problems of every students of their class due to imbalance in teacher-student ratio and the findings to a large extent are representative of the situation in Bangladesh.

The Author

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Appendix- A

Consent Letter and form

Dear Participants,

I would like to invite you to take part in a survey questionnaire and my research is based on teachers' analysis of students' problems with reading in English. I would like to know your impression and experience related to Bangladeshi students' problems in second language reading. It will be highly appreciated if you could kindly fill in the questionnaire at your earliest convenience. After you send me back the questionnaire, I would like to take an interview to discuss the issues related to reading in English. I would like to conduct the online interview by using 'Skype'. Your co-operation will be invaluable for this study.

The information you provide will be confidential and used only for this research. I also guarantee that your identities will remain completely anonymous.

Thank you for your keen interest and thorough cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Participant's Consent Form

Please tick each box if you agree with the statement.

- I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved and have been explained to me.
- I understand that my involvement in this study will remain strictly confidential and that data collected will be made anonymous
- I hereby fully and freely consent to participation in the study.
- Having given this consent, I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's name

(BLOCK CAPITALS):

Participant's signature:

Date:

Appendix B

Questionnaire

- 1) How many students do you teach in each class?
 students (write numbers)
- 2) What are the most common problems Bangladeshi students faces with reading in English language?

- 3) How would you describe the reading level of the students in your class?

- 4) How often students need instructions before reading? Could you explain the reason for your answer?

- 5) Are the students interested in reading in English? If not, then why?
- 6) What are the reasons that cause Bangladeshi students problems with reading?

- 7) Do you think at initial stage you should give students to read something whose social context is familiar to the students? Could you explain the reasons for the answer?

- 8) How do you make students practice reading strategies to develop their reading skill?

- 9) When do you help students in understanding new words of their prescribed textbook?

- 10) Do you ask students to identify the main ideas of what they have read and how?
.....
- 11) How do you assess their understanding of what they have read? Could you explain in details?
.....
- 12) How do you help students in using prediction as a reading strategy? Could you explain your answer?
.....
- 13) What is the best way to make reading pleasurable for the students?
.....

Appendix- C

Questions for interview

1. According to you, what are the main problems that Bangladeshi students face with reading in English?
2. What are the reasons that cause reading problems to Bangladeshi students?
3. Do you think a student having difficulties in reading in English will also have problems with the other skills of English language like writing and speaking?
4. How important is it to teach reading strategies (skimming, scanning, predicting, inferring) to the students?
5. Do you think contextual knowledge of students is important for reading? Would you prefer the text (at least at school level) to be written under Bangladesh contexts rather than using contexts of English -speaking countries?
6. What is your view on using more authentic materials (like: newspapers, magazines, leaflets etc) in classroom language teaching?
7. What would you suggest to a Bangladeshi student who is facing difficulties with English reading? Or In practical settings how do you help a student in your class who is struggling with English reading?
8. Do you feel the English curriculum followed in the country could be improved to better assist the students in learning reading skills? If yes, then in what ways (in brief)?

Differentiated Reading Instruction: Teacher Beliefs and Strategies

Basanta Raj Dhakal

Abstract

With an increasingly diverse student population in the classroom, it is imperative that teachers feel confident about their ability to teach reading to children who have varied reading proficiency to read. This study has explored in-service teacher beliefs on learner differences in reading instruction in school classrooms that instigated teacher strategies in meeting learner needs. Data were collected from classroom observation and interviews from two experienced teachers. Transcripts and field notes were coded and analyzed thematically. The result indicated that the teachers had high expectations for their students, however, they lacked sufficient skills to differentiate reading instruction to address the needs of students on a regular basis. Classroom instruction was mostly dominated by lecture methods and the materials and activities were limited to textbooks. The teachers saw reading differences as a classroom reality, recognized students reading differences in the classroom, and felt the need to grow every learning potential in reading. Some of the teaching strategies that aligned with differentiated reading instruction were: flexible grouping, library lesson and choice in reading, differentiated support, multisensory presentation of lessons, extension activities for high achieving readers, activating background knowledge and making connection, peer tutoring, exploratory activities, curriculum compacting, ongoing assessment and feedback, differentiated questioning, differentiated assignment, repeated instruction, and using technology.

Keywords: strategies, reading, motivation, readiness, interest, learning profile

Introduction

In English language education, studies on teacher views in reading instruction have recently gained considerable research impetus. The notion that teacher beliefs are critical for understanding and improving educational processes and instructional practice has sparked a surge in study interest (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Teachers' professional expertise, general classroom approach, and actual practices may differ depending on the types of ideas they hold, and their classroom instruction decisions are founded on their theoretical beliefs about teaching and learning (Wan, 2015).

Belief is a person's subjective judgement that can be positive, negative or ambivalent (Boyd 2003, as cited in Dhakal 2016). Pajares (1992) pointed out that attitudes, values, perceptions, understanding, and images are beliefs in disguise. Culture shapes teacher beliefs into teachers' everyday decisions and actions (Gay, 2000). This resonates with Bandura (1986) when he pointed out that all individuals have internal force that drives their actions (Murtiningsih, 2014). Borg (2003) admitted that beliefs have a number of characteristics, including the truth element, which indicates that the individual accepts the beliefs as truths. She also claimed that one's beliefs can be conscious or unconscious and that one can examine one's own beliefs (Murtiningsih, 2014).

Beliefs can be of different types: examined or unexamined (Kindsvatter et al. 1988, as cited in Murtiningsih, 2014); core or peripheral (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and controversy exists between the relationship between beliefs and practice (Murtiningsih, 2014). For instance, Richardson et al. (1991) discovered a strong link between teachers' perceptions about reading process and their teaching strategies (Murtiningsih, 2014). However, analysis of several studies by Pajares (1992) has shown that practices in the classroom do not always reflect teachers' beliefs.

In classroom instruction, student differences are not always taken into account (Dijkstra, Walraven, Mooij, & Kirschner, 2016). Teachers who deliver the same activities to all students rather than using assessment data to provide diverse sorts of activities to students with different ability levels often fail to meet student needs (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Teachers play a critical role in influencing the lifelong academic achievement of students, including their ability to read. Based on the meta-analysis of Hattie (2009), teachers impact at least 30% of student learning. Evidently, teachers have the power to influence student learning more than any other school-related variable.

Existing current student diversity in Nepali classrooms (Dhakal, 2016), brain research (Tomlinson&Imbeau, 2010), theories concerning learning styles (Tomlinson, 2001) and the multiple intelligences (Gardner,2011) all provide rationale for differentiated reading instruction. Student centered instruction requires educators to match curriculum and instruction to what students learn and how they learn to ensure every student grows to their full academic potential. Research has proved that students learn in various ways (Tomlinson, 2005). While educators in Nepal understand that all learners are different, and that their needs are diverse, few teachers accommodate these differences in their classrooms (Dhakal, 2016). Contemporary classroom instruction in Nepal is dominated by uniformity, rather than attending to students' reading diversity. It is evident that every learner benefits from an engaging learning experience, needs to be treated with respect, and requires opportunity to to grow and reach his or her fullest potential. This cannot be possible without the recognition of differentiated reading needs of the learners in

the classroom. The current education system in Nepal does not adequately recognize differentiated reading needs of the students in the classroom. As a result, transmissionist classroom instruction dominates the classroom instruction assuming all the students in the class have the same instructional needs (Dhakal, 2016) neglecting the fact that their reading needs greatly vary. Therefore, teachers view in meeting learner needs in reading in classroom and teacher instructional strategies require to be explored.

Literature Review

Studies have shown that teachers tend to form their beliefs about students based on their own life experiences and not necessarily based on actual experiences with others who might be culturally or linguistically varied (Pajares, 1992). This is significant when we consider how the teachers' attitudes, experiences, and expectations influence the type of reading instruction teachers can deliver, as well as the facts that all teachers require meaningful and strategic support in order to satisfy all students' reading requirements.

Previous research (Coubergs, Struyven, Vanthournout, & Engels, 2017; Tomlinson, 2005; Wan, 2015) has shown that differentiated reading instruction can meet the diverse learning needs of students in a classroom. Differentiated reading instruction is considered as the most effective strategy to tailor to learner diversity in reading. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, differentiated reading instruction gives emphasis to the roles of teachers who have to address students' diversity in readiness, interest, and learning profiles (Rhonda & Akane, 2018; Tomlinson, 1995; Wan, 2015).

The current study was framed using Tomlinson's (2001, 2014) theory of differentiated instruction and the theory of mindset (Dweck, 2006). Differentiated instruction has been described as both philosophy and praxis (Coubergs, Struyven, Vanthournout, & Engels, 2017). Tomlinson (2001) has described differentiated instruction as a form of adaptive teaching which aims to provide all students with ideal learning environment through proactive plan, adjustment of curricula, instructional approaches, resources, activities, and student products to address the different requirements of students, to maximize learning prospects for every student in the classroom (Coubergs, Struyven, Vanthournout, & Engels, 2017).

Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) specified that a teacher's mindset can affect the successful implementation of differentiated reading instruction in the classroom. Dweck (2006) distinguished between fixed and the growth mindsets. Teachers with fixed mindset believe that the students' qualities, such as talent or intelligence, are fixed traits that determine their success, ignoring student effort. Fixed mindset teachers believe that some students have what it takes to succeed while others do not. Teachers with a growth mindset, on the other hand, feel that the majority of learning can be accomplished

via devotion and hard work. From this perspective, if a student works hard enough, he or she can succeed. Such educators believe that intelligence and talent are just only the beginnings of learning. Teachers with a growth mindset are more likely to accept differences between students and consider student diversity as part of a rich learning environment (Hattie, 2009). Such teachers welcome challenges in the classroom and attribute students' failure to the lack of effort rather than the lack of intellectual ability.

Readiness, learning styles, and interests are the recognized forms of differentiated instruction that respond to the differing student needs in classrooms (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). Readiness based differentiated instruction focuses on differences according to a student's learning position in relation to the learning goals that must be met within a given subject at a specific time, which is referred to as state of preparedness. Differentiated instruction based on learning profile attempts to adapt instruction based on student's chosen mode of learning, such as learning styles, intelligence, preference, gender, culture, and context (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). Differentiated instruction based on students' interests tries to adjust instruction by allowing students to choose between assignments, subject matter, and teaching methods (Tomlinson & Eidson, 2003). Tomlinson (2001) advocated a variety of instructional strategies to differentiate instruction in the classroom, including learning contracts, tiered instruction, and learning centers. These strategies help teachers to meet varied reading needs of the students in the classroom.

Children who have higher learning potential as well as children who struggle to read grade level texts typically have misaligned needs, abilities, and prevalent teaching techniques, resulting in them not working effectively (Dijkstra et al., 2016). A limited number of studies have specifically explored teacher belief on differentiated reading instruction. However, there are a few trends and themes that should be recognized from these investigations. Dijkstra et al. (2016) cited studies (Al Otaiba et al. 2011; Connor, Morrison, Fishman, et al. 2011; Firmender, Reis, and Sweeny 2013; Reis et al. 2011) that found differentiated instruction in small groups to be beneficial for children of all abilities in terms of oral reading fluency, study habits, social interaction, cooperation, attitude towards school and general mental health.

Classroom instruction that meets the reading needs of all students is really challenging. In the same classroom, differentiated instruction accommodates children with various comprehension and reading levels from high achievers to at risk students (Tomlinson, 2001). When instruction is differentiated, teachers use mixed ability groupings and utilize multiple pathways to achieve the same result, however, most educators are not skilled in adapting to this form of instruction (Erickson, 2010). Teachers can enhance learning for all children in a differentiated classroom by providing additional support for struggling readers and enrichment activities for those who are ready to move ahead more

quickly (Dijkstra et al., 2016).

Based on the literature review, differentiated reading instruction avoids the drawbacks of the one-size-fits-all curriculum; and includes current research into the workings of the human brain; supports learners in the classroom based on their learning styles and multiple intelligences; engages learners in learning; creates opportunities for success for all students based on their readiness, interest and learning profile. In this context, it is significant to explore and analyze carefully how teachers of English in Nepal view learner differences in reading instruction and how they adjust instruction to meet learner needs.

Nepali context

Studies on reading instruction in Nepal are limited. Education Review Office (2015), has recently reviewed and summarized some of the earlier research studies (BPEP, 1994; CERID, 1993,1993,1999; CERSOD, 2001; Fulbright, 2008) that give attention to reading instruction and these studies indicate poor reading instruction in schools.

The data in 2013/14 showed that on average, 48 percent of grade 3 students, 51 percent of grade 5 students, and 52 percent of grade 8 students did not achieve their grade level in English, according to the data (NIRT, 2017). The causes of such poor proficiency are yet to be explored. A recent study by Educational Review Office (2020) has revealed startling evidence of reading proficiency of the grade three students. The study found that more than 10% of grade three students couldn't read a single word correctly. The average achievement percent in reading was found to be 43.53%. Similarly, average non-word reading ability of grade three students was 48.99% and oral reading fluency was only 25.04. Additionally, students were able to comprehend less 47.68% of the questions (Education Review Office, 2020).

Lack of qualified subject teachers, infrastructures, resources, and professional development are very common and these factors certainly impact quality of education, instruction, and achievement. Primary level teachers are supposed to teach any subject they are prescribed to teach. Reading is not taught as a separate subject in primary schools of Nepal although most countries teach reading as separate subject up to grade three globally.

Based on the empirical literature reviewed above, it can be deduced that reading is fundamental and reading related problems can be reduced if the differentiated reading instruction is practiced in regular classrooms. Although there is growing concern in researching differentiated reading instruction at international level, an acknowledged

and decided gap in the literature in this area in the Nepali context exists and continued research is warranted. The objective of this study was to add to research on this topic and inform stakeholders by exploring school level English language teachers' beliefs on differentiated reading instruction and their instructional strategies in Nepal. To fulfil this purpose, the following research questions were employed:

1. How do teachers view learner differences in reading instruction?
2. What strategies do the teachers use to meet the learner needs?

Research Methodology

This qualitative case study was carried out in two community schools in Kathmandu. Research on second language teacher beliefs and instructional strategies can most appropriately be conducted using constructivist paradigm (Alzaanin, 2020). This paradigm regards knowledge as a 'human construction' with researchers and participants as 'co-constructors of knowledge' (Hatch, 2002, P. 13). Researchers who adopt constructivist paradigm tend to employ qualitative research methodologies to explore, interpret and describe social realities (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). This study explicitly seeks out the multiple perspectives of cases, aiming to gather diverse notions of what occurred. Furthermore, ontological belief of this study is that reality is local and specifically constructed. This study is multiple case study in the sense that the participants were two in-service teachers who were invited to be the cases in the study. They were purposively selected for the study; had qualification of M.Ed. in English; and earned the experience of more than ten years teaching experience. One of the participants was male and the next was female, hereafter referred to as teacher A, and teacher B respectively.

Both participants in this study were identified by school administrators and English subject department head as effective teachers of English in their respective schools. The nature of the schools was different. School A was highly resourceful. School B was also resourceful, but in comparison to school A, it was far less in many ways. School A had better physical infrastructure such as buildings, furniture, playground, swimming pool, hostel, and resourceful library in comparison to school B.

In school A, only limited number of students coming from different districts are admitted. There were four sections in each class and each section contained 30-35 students. But in school B, the number of sections and students differed class wise. It ranged from 2 to 6 sections. The number of students in each section in school comprised of at least 50 students to maximum 60. Only the students with good proficiency in English, Mathematics, Science, and Nepali subjects were admitted based on entrance exams in school A. Both schools screened students for admission in school, however, in school

B number of struggling students were more. Across all observed lessons, both teachers consistently exemplified characteristic of active, motivated teachers. I interviewed and observed both the teachers separately.

Semi-structured interviews and classroom observation were used to collect data. Classroom observation guidelines and interview guidelines were the tools for data collection. Interviews were taped but classroom observations were written down in the form of field notes. Researcher's reflections were also captured in the form of field notes. The data was analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994), interactive approach which included data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. First, a set of topical codes was created based on the study objectives and a broad construct from literature on differentiated reading instruction. The results were analysed using Tomlinson's framework of differentiated instruction and quotes from the answers were used to provide more specific evidence to support the issues and themes highlighted.

Results

Teacher A's primary manner of classroom instruction followed the traditional Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) pattern. This pattern, which was first described by Sinclair and Coulthard (as cited in Molinari, Mameli, & Gnisci,2012) to analyze the classroom discourse, is made up of three turns (Molinari, Mameli & Gnisci,2012). First, the teacher initiated a linguistic interaction directing question to the student. Then the student provides a response. Next, the teacher replies with a feedback. This pattern was dominant classroom discourse in teacher A's classroom. In majority of the lessons, text reading was done through choral reading supervised by the teacher. Because the children could read the texts independently, they seldom stumbled over words and had limited opportunities to apply high-level comprehension strategies such as making inferences from the text, monitoring comprehension, and learning text structure knowledge. Teacher A often used verbal scaffolding during interactions with students.

Teacher B also followed IRF patterns in the lessons. However, her lessons were different in several ways. She prepared lesson plans on a regular basis. She was more interactive with students; made every lesson goal clear to her students before she started the lesson; and used a variety of materials and resources in the classroom to meet learner needs. Students read text nearly independently, with teacher guidance when needed. When students required help to decode or comprehend the text, teacher B offered various forms of verbal as well as other materials to scaffold student learning. She was readily available to students outside the class and assisted if they had any troubles. She created motherly environment in the classroom.

Both teachers provided prompts when students had difficulty in reading comprehension and the prompts provided seemed to lead to open-ended and diverse answers. During observation I could see that teacher B expected students to share their thinking and elaborated, rather than merely repeating, responding to help deepen their understandings.

The following sections represent the findings related to the views of these in-service teachers on learner differences in reading instruction and teachers' instructional strategies to meet their needs.

Teachers view on learner differences

The first research question of this study was to find how in-service teachers view learner differences in reading instruction. Both participant teachers recognized that classrooms were filled with diverse students with varied reading readiness, interests, and learning profiles. They asserted the need to recognize; be responsive to the needs of learner variance in reading instruction; and be aware of the existing student differences in the classroom. Four themes emerged from the teachers' view on learner differences. They are reading readiness; reading interest, motivation, and engagement; teaching philosophy; and reading profiles. They are as follows:

Reading readiness. It is evident from the interview with the teachers that students' prior knowledge is one of the major causes of learner variance in reading. Both participant teachers believed that students' reading readiness differed even before they got admitted to school due to the factors such as home environment, opportunity to learn, developmental readiness to read, and home language. Some children joined school with basic literacy skills such as recognizing the alphabets and some others began to learn those skills only after joining schools. Teachers had to deal with all of them and meet their needs which was really challenging for them. Teachers were found to be cognizant of the learner differences in reading from the very beginning of schooling. Therefore, they indicated the need for differentiated reading instruction to meet the varied reading readiness of the students in the classroom.

Reading interest, motivation, and engagement. Teachers also saw learner differences in their interest, motivation and engagement to read. Some students came the classroom already motivated to read and teachers didn't have to do much for them to engage in the reading task because they were intrinsically motivated to read by themselves. Such students seek help from teachers, engaged themselves in the reading activities, and enjoyed reading variety of texts. These students had a strong will to read that drove their reading in large volume which consequently formed their reading habits. The teachers reported that they only facilitated to develop and maintain their will to read

for such students. Moreover, teachers were cognizant that it was challenging for them to maintain student motivation to read because it might decline later for some students. Interviewed teachers revealed that all students they taught were not self-motivated to read. Some students loved to avoid reading. When they read, they read just to complete the task or assignment. They read because they had to. Therefore, teachers attempted to motivate such students by giving interesting reading materials, choice in reading, finding the topics or books that interests them, modelling reading, ongoing assessment, focusing on the students' progress in reading, scaffolding reading instruction, and providing feedback to ensure success. They reported that they focused on process and effort in reading to make their students feel that ability is not fixed, rather it develops with effort. Additionally, students were interested in reading varied genres of texts.

Teaching philosophy. Participant teachers believed in student centered, interactive view of teaching reading. I asked the participant teachers if they had changed their philosophy of teaching in the classroom when they started teaching to the date. Both of these teachers told that they had changed their philosophy of teaching. In the beginning they believed on the teacher centered methods of teaching but years of experience had changed their beliefs from being teacher centered to student centered. In this regard teacher A said:

“Change in philosophy is common. In earlier days of my instruction, I used to be more active. I used to use teacher centered methods but now I use student centered, child friendly methods and involve the students in activities. This keeps learners more engaged in learning activities and their reading proficiency grows. The shift in my teaching style resulted from my experience. Student involvement in activities keeps them less distracted from the lesson than passively listening to the lecture (Field Note, 2021).”

Teacher A's remarks showed that experience of dealing with students provided teachers the opportunity to test his beliefs and saw whether their beliefs worked or not. Action and experience changed teaching beliefs. Teachers recognized that learner differences within the same grade existed; expressed the need to be responsive to the needs of learner variance in the classroom; and believed that all students could read if they got the opportunity. But ironically, during classroom observation I noticed that these teachers' classroom instruction didn't necessarily matchup with the ways they wanted to teach despite their claim as constructivist during their interview. These teachers were overtly transmitting information expecting students to assimilate with the information provided rather than to construct their own meaning. This showed the inconsistency in their beliefs and practices and indicated a gap between the philosophy they hold and their actual classroom practice.

Both of these teachers believed that all students could achieve success academically despite the fact that their learning pathways are different. They wanted all of their students to perform better; believed reading skill as a foundational to succeed in all academic disciplines; and pointed out that reading success at lower level signalled academic success in the higher level. Regarding teacher expectations on students, teacher B said:

“Teacher expectations directly affects students learning. Teacher has important role to play. I think this applies to most students. If the teachers look at them negatively, and presented himself disliking attitude develop. As a result, they loss interest, become disengaged. The teacher should have the capacity to motivate positively. Negative attitude of teacher is a barrier to students’ learning. The teacher should have the ability to encourage the students to read. Students become tired in the classroom reading for long hours in schools. Teachers negative attitude hampers students’ reading. Solely, only the teacher is not responsible for students’ ability to read. Forcing students to read by teacher does not ensure to learn. The teacher can motivate the struggling readers. I have seen many students who are poor in early grades but they can be better readers later. Students willingness is also necessary. Only the teachers’ effort is not enough. Teachers can positively impact struggling readers (Field Interview, 2021).”

Teacher B, revealed a belief system that was more aligned with growth mindset. For example, when asked in the interview what she felt was important in teaching reading she answered:

“Learner differences are important. Every single student in my class is different. Each child needs individual attention in the classroom to grow at their own pace; they all learn in differently. Each child needs different things, sometimes word recognition, sometimes word meaning, sometimes the process of reading and understanding the story. Some students catch the lesson on quickly, some need more time to understand and practice (Field Note, 2021).”

In this example, Teacher B shows a belief that student responses to instruction vary for a variety of reasons, and she encourages the use of several strategies based on the student’s need and context.

Both teachers believed that students who develop reading skills faster are likely to succeed in future learning endeavor as well than their struggling peers. However, they also cautioned that all the students might not be equally successful academically.

Reading profiles. Teachers also recognized that students differ in their reading profiles. They asserted that these students needed different types of help in reading. Some

learners had problems in word recognition, some in fluency, some in text comprehension, and many others in combination of all these. Students reading profiles can point to their instructional needs. Teachers indicated to the importance of assessing componential abilities in reading comprehension which may include orthographic knowledge, vocabulary, and sentence integration. Teachers need to teach students based on their needs to improve their reading profile. The following section presents various strategies teachers used to cope with varied reading needs of students.

Strategies for Differentiated Reading Instruction

Wide variety of reading levels in students exist in the same classroom. Teachers need to employ different strategies to meet the varied needs of the students in teaching reading. Teaching strategies teachers reported include: flexible grouping, library lesson and choice in reading, differentiated support, multisensory presentation of lesson, extension activities for high achieving readers, activating background knowledge and making connection, peer tutoring, exploratory activities, curriculum compacting, ongoing assessment and feedback, differentiated questioning, differentiated assignment, repeated instruction, modelling, integration of language skills, and using technology. They are described below.

Flexible grouping. Flexible grouping was one of the strategy teachers used for differentiated reading instruction. During classroom observation, I saw that they initially began lesson from whole group instruction. They inquired background information about the lesson from students. Then they showed pictures or told something related to the lesson. Then they asked students to find the new words in the lesson and pre-taught vocabulary. Sometimes, they asked students to find key ideas in the lesson in small groups and share. Groups were formed differently. I also saw them giving pair work during the exercise in the lesson. The teachers often observed the classroom activities and provided feedback and guidance to students individually as per their needs. This variation in grouping patterns reveal that teachers prefer to use flexible grouping as a strategy to meet students' reading needs.

Library lesson and choice. Second differentiated strategy teachers used was library lesson and choice in reading. Teacher A took students to library once a week. The students could choose any book they liked for reading. But to ensure they read the book, they had to write a review of the book and submit to the teacher. Many students could easily choose the books but some couldn't. At that time the teacher and the librarian would guide them. Sometimes, teachers would take books from the department to the classroom and assign all the students to read the same book. Then they would discuss about the book in the classroom.

Differentiated support. Differentiated support was the third strategy teachers used for differentiated reading instruction. All students don't need the same level of support in reading. Advanced students may have already mastered the content while struggling readers may need more support. During classroom observation, I saw that some students were seeking support themselves. Then the teacher was available for them to help at their desk. Some students didn't ask for support but the teacher saw them confused and offered help to them. The type of support I observed included telling word meaning, retelling the information, paraphrasing, explaining, and giving examples as per the students' needs.

Multisensory presentation. Multisensory presentation was the next strategy teachers used for differentiated reading instruction. During classroom observation, I saw that the teachers were presenting the lessons with visuals, videos, graphic organizers, text-to-speech software, explanation, annotations, and zooming the text. This helped students to grasp information from multiple senses. This helped students from variety to learning styles and intelligence preferences.

Activating background knowledge and making connection. The fifth differentiated reading strategy teachers used was activating background knowledge and making connection. In the beginning of the lesson teachers asked if the students had heard or learned about the topic. The teachers wrote topic on board, showed related videos, pictures, or told an anecdote and asked to guess about the lesson. This allowed students to connect with prior knowledge. During the reading lesson, teachers frequently asked the students to predict what would happen next. After the reading lesson, teachers asked students to connect the text with other texts, text to their own experiences, and text to the world. Here all students got opportunity to connect the reading lesson to their personal experience.

Peer tutoring. Peer tutoring was the sixth strategy teachers used. For the teachers paired struggling readers with better readers. Better readers were assigned to help the struggling readers. This helped teachers to share their workload and meet the needs of struggling readers in such a large class. Students also remained open to share their problems with their peers.

Extension activities. Teachers also sometimes used extension activities for advanced readers. Whenever high achieving readers completed the reading tasks in the classroom, they needed to be engaged, while the struggling readers were still doing the task. One way teachers engaged them was involving them to help their struggling peers. Sometimes the students themselves asked for permission to read extra books in the class and the teachers allowed them. Such students kept some extra books in their bags for reading when they were free during class time. Other times, the teachers provided them

with more challenging questions such as extending the story even further or answering some additional creative questions that required higher level thinking skills.

Curriculum compacting. Curriculum compacting was the next differentiated reading strategy used by the teachers. Textbooks and reading lessons might contain the contents that students had already mastered. In that case, after the teachers assessed the students formally or informally to know how much of the course content students had already mastered. The contents that students had already mastered could be skipped or learned faster. In such situation, lessons or even the course contents could be finished earlier than the prescribed time. In this context, teachers said that they used new reading texts, books, or practice books to such students and classes to ensure students didn't feel bored. This way students got opportunity to enhance their reading proficiency.

Other differentiated reading strategies teachers reported included: Ongoing assessment and feedback, using technology, modelling of reading strategies, breaking up reading tasks, helping to choose grade level texts, repeating instruction for struggling readers, differentiating questions, and involving students in exploratory activities.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to find out what teachers think about reading instruction; what strategies they use; and their experiences in addressing learner needs in the classroom.

The findings of this study support and extend previous studies on preservice teacher beliefs in general and reading in particular. The in-service teachers in this study attributed the formation of their beliefs to personal experiences, pedagogical experiences, and coursework. This confirms earlier findings that beliefs are formed through personal experience, experiences with schooling and instruction, and experiences with formal knowledge (Leko, Kulkarni, Lin, & Smith, 2014). The findings are also consistent with previous research by Dweck (2006) and Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) who advocate for teachers to adopt a growth mindset. Both of the participant teachers believed that abilities were malleable and they had high expectations for their students.

The outcomes of this study also confirm the assertion that beliefs are multidimensional and complicated constructs (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2012). Some beliefs are strongly ingrained and reoccur throughout time and space. These are fundamental beliefs that are unlikely to alter. Teachers, for example, always felt that reading instruction should be based on students' interest and preferences in order to make it enjoyable and stimulating. Because of their own experiences as in-service teachers, they have a deep belief in this. This makes sense, according to Kumaravadivelu

(2012), because this notion is essential rather than peripheral to the teachers' identity. This also demonstrates how in-service teachers' put their seeing, doing and believing are into practice.

Another deeply held belief was that reading instruction should be tailored to the individual. I believe this belief was strong because of the idea of individualization for each students' background, abilities, interests, proficiencies, and choices are unique. This message is consistent with Tomlinson (2005) and Tomlinson & Imbeau (2010).

Finally, the findings of this study contribute to the field of belief transformation research. According to the findings of certain studies, changes in beliefs come before changes in behaviour (Richardson et al., 1991). Other studies, on the other hand, support the idea that changes in beliefs arise as a result of positive improvements in practice (e.g., Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 1986; McLeskey, Waldron, So, Swanson, & Loveland, 2001). The latter is supported by the findings of this research. It was obvious throughout our research that the in-service teachers' classroom experiences had a significant impact on their beliefs. When they saw what they thought were successful techniques in their classrooms, they instantly incorporated them into their belief system. The teachers even claimed that they would consider adopting a certain reading method or approach before committing to it.

Based on the findings from this study it is clear that children differ in terms of reading readiness and achievement from the beginning of formal schooling and teachers require to respond to these students needs in the classroom through a variety of curricular and instructional strategies (Brighton, Moon, & Huang, 2015). The findings of this study support Brighton, Moon, & Huang's (2015) empirical investigation, which found that schools lacked resources, and had little or no experience in differentiation or acceptable approaches to push advanced readers in the classroom where they frequently put the needs of struggling readers ahead of those advanced readers. Finally, advanced readers in schools were frequently the last to be considered, and they were usually ignored. Rather than serving the needs of these children, they were used to teach other struggling youngsters.

The research has significant limitations as well. First, the findings of this study may not be generalizable due to the small number of participants. Therefore, survey study can further examine in-service teachers' views on differentiated reading instruction. Second, this study explored teacher as one of the most important school related variable for developing each student's reading proficiency, however, other factors include intellectual and sensory capacities, early literacy experiences, support for reading-related activities and attitudes, learning environments that are favourable to learning, and fulfillment of basic need for better reading to occur in the classroom, which need

to be explored in other researches. Third, large scale study can be conducted to explore reading instruction in practice in Nepal and elsewhere because differentiated reading instruction is still under researched.

Conclusion and implications

Some major conclusions may be derived from the findings of this investigation. First, reading is fundamental to all academic disciplines. Second, teachers' beliefs guide their action and profoundly impact students' performance. Third, effective teachers believe that all students can learn and grow in reading. Fourth, teachers need to know that all students are different; their needs vary; and the teachers need to be responsive to the needs of students.

This study's findings have significant implications for future research and practice. To begin, teacher education programs should provide explicit teaching and assistance on how to apply differentiated instruction. Pre-service and in-service teachers need sufficient opportunity for professional development where they could see the models and apply such skills in their classrooms. Teachers require sufficient practical experiences that will provide them with a range of differentiated strategies to expand their repertoire and skills. Second, ways to reduce teacher workload and number of students in a class should be identified so that teacher could get sufficient time to plan and care students. Third, causes of student indifference in learning and their misbehavior in their classrooms need to be identified and explored. Fourth, all the stakeholders should be responsive to the needs of the students and act accordingly to develop learning potential of every students and improve interests and abilities of school level students in learning to read and reading to learn. Fifth, not only the teacher, there are other important factors that impact students reading abilities, which need further exploration.

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Unpacking Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Writing at the Undergraduate (Bachelor) Level in Nepal

Jagadish Paudel

Abstract

Teachers' experiences prove that second language writing (L2 writing) is a challenging task. Embracing a phenomenological approach to research, this study unpacks teachers' lived experiences of teaching English as a second language (ESL) writing at the undergraduate (bachelor) level in Nepal. Specifically, it explores how teachers teach writing, what kind of assignments they assign to their students, what they feel comfortable and uncomfortable with teaching writing, what they want to improve in their teaching, and what their students struggle with in carrying out their assignments. For collecting data, I used a written open-ended questionnaire as a research tool and I analyzed the resulting data thematically. The study reveals that, out of nine teachers, only four strove to embrace a process approach to writing. The findings show that, as reported by the teachers, students most often react negatively to writing assignments and struggle in their writing. The teachers assign several long and short assignments, and, by their responses, it can be understood that all intended to improve their teaching, ranging from coherence and cohesion to contextualizing their teaching.

Keywords: Teaching writing, teachers' experiences, undergraduate (Bachelor) level, ESL, Nepal

Introduction

Though English is taught as a compulsory subject in Nepal from primary education to the undergraduate level, English teachers consider teaching writing in English challenging, and students approach writing as a "scary task" (Paudel & Joshi, 2017). In their study, Lee and Pandey (2019) state that there is no specific L2 writing course at Nepali educational institutions. In most college-level courses, I knew from my teaching experience at the college level for over a decade that writing exercises are embedded in compulsory English courses without providing proper guidelines and approaches to teaching writing.

The present article aims to clearly delineate teachers' lived experiences of teaching English-language writing at the bachelor level in Nepal. Particularly, in this study, I strive to seek answers to the questions: What strategies do Nepali writing teachers embrace in teaching written composition in English at the undergraduate level? What would they like to improve in their pedagogy? On which topics and aspects do they feel prepared and unprepared to teach? and What kinds of assignments do they assign and how do their students respond to writing assignments?

To this end, first, I discuss some disciplinary literature from home and abroad. Through this, I find research gaps and discuss the theoretical aspect of teaching writing. Then, I explain the methodology part of the research. After this, I present the data (results) of the study, and based on the results, I discuss the findings and derive implications.

For this research, I embraced the phenomenological approach to data collection, which attempts to obtain insightful descriptions of the way. People experience, without taxonomizing, categorizing, and complicating the experience (van Manen, 2016). So, the phenomenological approach neither offers theory nor controls the world, instead, it offers a more plausible world, giving more direct contact with the world (van Manen, 2016). In this article, I neither offer a particular theory nor do I control the participant teachers writing experience, rather I try to gain some insightful descriptions of the teachers based on their direct experience in teaching writing at the undergraduate level in Nepal.

Literature Review

In this section, first, I discuss some empirical studies that are conducted on writing in Nepal, and then, I present some writing literature that deals with teaching writing broadly. In this study, I use the two phrases: English as Second Language (ESL) and Second Language Writing (L2) to refer to the same—teaching writing in English in non-English speaking countries.

Very few studies have been executed in the context of Nepal regarding teaching writing. One of the recently carried out studies on writing is “The Potential of Blogs as Discussion Forums for Developing Collaborative Writing Skills in Higher Education” by Ojha and Acharya (2020). The study explores how using blogs as a platform supports collaboration for the development of students' writing skills and promotes teamwork and collegiality in higher education in Nepal; it also discusses some potential challenges of using blogs as a learning platform. Another latest study on writing that of Nepal is, “Improving academic writing skills of English language teacher trainees through ICT” by Poudel and Gnawali (2020). The purpose of this action research was to explore how online teaching and learning arrangements can be of assistance in developing writing skills collaboratively. It showed that an ICT-based academic writing activity helped

trainees to advance their academic writing skills through writing and peer editing. Karki (2019), in his study, “Writing instruction in secondary schools: Unraveling practices and challenges” discusses the practices and challenges of teaching writing to secondary level students in Sunsari, Nepal: Large class size, low proficient learners, pressure on course completion, lack of practical training for teachers, and insufficient resources including ICT facility in the classroom context. I believe that this study is useful to know the school level problem of teaching writing and to see whether the same problems exist at the bachelor level or not. Sapkota (2012) executed action research on, “Developing students’ writing skills through peer and teacher correction: An action research” and the study was focused on the development of writing skills through peer and teacher correction techniques. The study showed that both techniques were productive in teaching writing through action research as a whole.

Lee and Pandey (2019) carried out qualitative research with the aim of reporting primary, secondary, and post-secondary level English teacher preparation and continued development, class successes and challenges, and resources and support system. Their study indicated that the practice of top-down professional development and other logistics constraints such as classroom space and students’ varied linguistics abilities hindered motivated teachers’ professional development in L2 writing. The study also showed that the teachers teaching writing did not write themselves. In their study, Lee and Pandey appeal for more local collaboration between teachers and trainers to make their professional development more productive. The available literature from Nepal reveals that there is still a dearth of research on English teachers’ classroom experiences regarding teaching writing. Hence, there is a dire need of executing research for unpacking teachers’ experience teaching writing at the bachelor level in Nepal. Now, I intend to discuss literature that deals with teaching writing broadly, including both theoretical and empirical studies that are outside Nepal.

Writing needs a rigorous process regardless of whether students are L1 (first language) or L2 (second language); “even in one’s native language, learning to write is something like learning a second language... No one is a ‘native speaker’ of writing. For the most part, everyone learns to write at school” (Leki, 1992, p. 10). Writing is learned through a number of back-and-forth learning processes, and it takes considerable time to become a fluent writer whether one is learning one’s own mother language or a different language of instruction. Silva (1993) asserts that “both L1 and L2 writers employ a recursive composing process, involving planning, writing, and revising, to develop their ideas and find the appropriate rhetorical and linguistic means to express them” (p. 657). As pointed out by Silva, all writers go through a number of processes and procedures for articulating their ideas more coherently and cohesively.

Wahleithner (2018) states that in order to teach writing, complex knowledge is

required. Therefore, a writing teacher needs to know more than how to write well. In this regard, Hillocks (1991) presents three combined elements. First, it requires general knowledge of the teaching writing process—for example, the knowledge of approaches to prewriting, preparing a draft and revising the draft. Second, teaching writing requires genre-specific knowledge, for instance, the process that we follow to write an editorial differs from the process we use to write a research report. Last, the knowledge of understanding of developing the content of a particular text. The content needed for one genre differs from another, for instance, developing content for a business letter differs from developing an argument for a persuasive essay.

Along with various knowledge, a writing teacher should know instructional strategies for teaching writing. There exist some strategies and approaches for teaching English-language writing. In recent generations, writing pedagogy in English has explored everything from a mainly product-oriented approach to a rigid and mechanical process approach (follows writing processes, e.g. brainstorming, preparing the draft, revising, editing, and producing final draft), to a genre approach (follows writing conventions of a particular genre, e.g. writing official letter following the format of it and using the language needed to the official letter writing), and ultimately to a post-process approach (the process which follows with interaction with others after the completion of writing, for example, discussion about their writing with writing center consultant about their writing draft).

Silva (1990) argues that a process approach is needed in order to create “a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes. The teacher’s role is redefined as a coach to help and provide strategies in different stages of writing” (p.15). Cheung (2016) argues that teachers must understand the recursive nature of the writing process as well as know what constitutes “good” writing. He further argues that writing competence encompasses, along with linguistic knowledge and skills (word choices, sentence variations, punctuation choices, and other linguistic tools for cohesion and coherence), the techniques of structuring and developing arguments at the micro and macro levels, and characteristics of thinking processes that are essential to good writing. Genre approaches to writing came into composition pedagogy and gained popularity with the influence of the “social turn” (Trimbur, 1994, p. 109). The writing was recognized as an activity to be carried out quite differently for different purposes in different social contexts, largely determined by writer-reader relations (Halliday, 1994; Hyland, 2003).

However, whatever model of writing pedagogy may be applied in the classroom, assignments play a vital role in students’ writing development. They have an even greater role in consolidating L2 writers’ writing. A plethora of researches show that engaging

English language learners in additional writing practice are beneficial to advance their composition skills as well as their fluency in English. Horbacauskiene and Kasperaviciene (2016) write that “writing assignments are significant in teaching, testing and developing students’ competencies in a non-native language (p.130). Writing assignments are useful tools for teachers since they unite language, content, and context (Hyland, 2013). Indeed, composition assignments unify students’ language skills, the content they learn, and the context in which they learn.

Horbacauskiene and Kasperaviciene (2016) carried out a study with the aim of investigating to what extent writing assignments assist university undergraduates of various study programs in developing the ability to use foreign language professionally. In comparison to students from the technical field, the study noted that students majoring in human and social sciences tended to show more positive attitudes towards writing assignments. Arshavskaya (2015) argues that L2 composition instructors have long been concerned with providing extra language exercise opportunities for L2 writers. She states that the creative writing assignment is helpful for improving students’ writing ability as it intensifies students’ eagerness for writing skills development and supports students’ creativity. In her study, with the aim of involving less motivated students, she employed a series of creative writing assignments in an L2 writing course, and the study revealed that all the participating students found the assignment both pleasurable and valuable for progressing their writing ability.

In their study, Graves, Hyland and Samuels (2010) analyzed syllabi from one university college to determine the types and frequency of assignments and how these assignments vary by program and level. Their study showed that the most common type of assignment was the term or research paper, though task labels were highly variable. The term paper included reading the summary, book review, sight poem, literature review, dissertation, description, opinion piece, and analysis.

Teachers are required to teach various types of writing assignments. Sometimes teachers might feel unprepared to teach a particular language item. Vasquez and Pilgrim (2018) note that teachers may feel unprepared to teach due to a lack of professional development on the subject at hand. When teachers feel better prepared, they are obviously “more confident and successful” in teaching their students (Shreve, 2005). Examining why teachers feel unprepared to teach, Shreve (2005) states that teachers may feel difficulty teaching due to “not being able to communicate with students and parents, lack of appropriate materials, and a lack of accurate information about exactly what academic content their students already know and what they need to learn”(n.p.). Conversely, students perceive difficulty in learning writing for any number of reasons.

Methodology

I undertook a qualitative research study adopting a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of an individual (van Manen, 1997)—the participant-teachers who are involved with the issue that is being investigated. Through the approach, I tried to search for a deeper and fuller meaning of the experience of the participants (van Manen, 1997) “in their own terms — to provide a description of [their experiences] as it is experienced by [them]” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96).

This study was executed with Institutional Review Board’s approval from a US University in the U.S. The participant-teachers were selected purposively from two public universities of Nepal who have been teaching English to Education and Humanities streams for more than a decade at the bachelor level. The teachers teach courses ranging from compulsory English courses to major courses in English. The courses have embedded writing exercises for students. I chose the sample population based on my judgment and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Schwandt, 1997; Greig & Taylor, 1999), seeking the population who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988, p. 150).

In order to collect data, I prepared a written open-ended questionnaire (see appendix) seeking teachers’ teaching writing experiences at the undergraduate level in Nepal and then sent them to the teachers through an online platform—Questionpro. Before commencing the actual study, I did a pilot study, sending the questionnaire to three potential participants. I then improved, making the questionnaire more comprehensive and relevant, and again sent them to the participants. After obtaining the data, participants were pseudo-named in order to anonymize data and maintain the confidentiality of participants’ responses.

To analyze the obtained data, I used In vivo coding, also known as “Literal coding” and “Verbatim coding” (Saldana, 2009). The root meaning of In vivo is “in that which is alive,” and a code denotes the actual words, phrases that are used by the participants—“the terms used by [respondents] themselves” (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). In this study, I directly quote some participants’ words and phrases in order to honor and preserve their voices (Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2009). I coded the data multiple times to manage, filter, highlight, and focus the salient features of the data for generating categories, themes, and concepts, grasping the meaning, and/or building theory (Saldaña, 2009).

Results

This section presents results derived from the open-ended questionnaire distributed to the participants. Altogether, I have grouped the data into four parts.

Strategies Embraced by Teachers in Teaching a Writing Lesson

Analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire discloses that out of nine teachers, only four of them (Harish, Dipika, Sushil, and Dil Bahadur) consciously embraced writing processes in their writing lessons. Dil Bahadur recently taught a five-paragraph essay, following the process approach (planning, drafting, revising, and preparing the final draft). Harish recently taught a lesson on “Paraphrasing” in his academic writing class. He responded that he first defined paraphrasing, and then followed stepwise procedures for teaching the topic: First, giving a reading passage to the students, he asked them to read the passage several times; second, he made the students note down the key ideas from the text; third, he asked them to prepare a paraphrase without looking at the original text; and fourth, he asked the students to compare their paraphrased text with the original text; and lastly, he made them cite the original text in the paraphrased version. Further, Harish responded, “few of his students were able to produce a well-phrased version of the text, but some of the students could not produce well-paraphrased version text.” After that, he suggested the students consult with their peers and get help from them on the parts where they were confused. Similarly, Dipika answered that she taught proposal writing, following step-by-step procedures. First, she taught key components of proposal writing, and then presented components of proposal writing with examples, and displayed some model proposals. She stated that though students were enthusiastic about the topic, they seemed a bit confused because they did not have any background knowledge on proposal writing. Likewise, Sushil taught a “Summary Writing” lesson, and he described his recent writing lesson as follows:

I gave a short introduction to the topic ‘summary writing’ with lesson objectives and clarified why summary writing is important. Then, I presented a short biography of a famous [person of Nepal]. I asked my students to read two or three times or more and mark the main ideas in the text. They prepared all but only the important and relevant points. Students had an open discussion on the marked ideas in groups for a better understanding of the text. After having a short discussion in the group, they prepared a rough draft in their own words. They exchanged their drafts with each other to check what is missing in their draft. I helped them to find some similar words, to maintain lexical and grammatical coherence and cohesion. At last, they prepared their final version of the summary. And a member from each group presented the summary and received feedback.

Sushil’s response shows that he followed writing process procedures in teaching summary writing, and engaged the students in group work.

The remaining five teachers, Umesh, Suresh, Hark Bahadur, Rima, and Dayaram did not follow the process approach in teaching writing. The data showed that Suresh followed the lecture technique, and Hark Bahadur, Umesh, Rima, and Dayaram just assigned writing assignments, but they did not teach how to do the task.

Teachers' Improvement Areas in Writing Pedagogy

As per the teachers' responses, they intend to improve their writing pedagogy in different areas. One of the teachers (Rima) responded that she would like to focus on exploratory research-based writing tasks. That is, she intended to explore students' interests and problems and wants to direct her teaching to address the students' concerns. Three of the teachers (Umesh, Dayaram, and Sushil) wanted to improve their teaching on sentence construction, cohesion, coherence, unity in writing, the syntactic and semantic arrangement of the writing, mechanics, and selection of formal and academic vocabulary. Among the three, Dayaram also wished to improve his teaching on the descriptive, narrative, argumentative, persuasive essay, and at the same time, he wanted to learn to teach the three parts of an essay: the beginning, the middle (body) and the end (conclusion). Dipika intended to improve her pedagogy in enhancing joint productive activity and contextualizing teaching writing. Like Dipika, Dil Bahadur also wanted to make his teaching writing contextual. Similarly, he wanted to improve his teaching writing in large classrooms and mixed ability classroom, engaging students in writing in the classroom.

Regarding his teaching improvement plan, Harish answered, "the areas of writing that I want to develop personally are writing reports of the field visit, journal writing, and reflective writing." For teaching enhancement, Hark Bahadur responded that he is frequently haunted by teaching writing, particularly teaching the students to write a concise message/writing in a comprehensible language with a strong argument and proper organization. So, he wished to improve his teaching in helping students to write concisely and in comprehensible ways.

Teachers' Preparedness and Unpreparedness in Teaching Writing

There are varied responses from the teachers regarding their preparedness and unpreparedness to teach writing. Rima responded that she feels confident and prepared to teach "mid/while -writing activities," i.e., writing steps used while actually composing and writing text. While Dil Bahadur stated that he feels most prepared in teaching pre-writing and post-writing activities as in carrying out these activities he does not need to think about dealing with mixed ability students. Further, he mentioned that he feels more confident when he teaches an academic writing course since he has a long experience of teaching the course. Sushil stated that he feels most comfortable in teaching "preparing a CV," as students most often come from lower grades with some sort of knowledge in preparing a CV; he mentioned that students already know the parts and format of a CV and the language used in CV writing. Harish answered that he feels at ease teaching the last stage of the writing process, i.e. post-writing, as he feels it does not demand much work on his part. For Hark Bahadur, teaching grammar and letter writing are easier and

light since he believes they require no rigorous teaching plan in comparison to teaching other aspects of writing.

Unlike Rima, for Harish teaching pre-writing and mid-writing activities need much preparation. He finds difficulty in teaching these activities because he believes he should first draw the students' attention towards teaching, and then should exemplify writing "for making understand the writing he is teaching." Umesh feels unprepared for teaching post-writing activities, teaching letter-writing, and essays. Dil Bahadur stated that he feels difficulty in while-teaching activities due to the heterogeneous group of students in his classes. Harish writes that he feels difficulty in teaching paragraph development, coherence, and cohesion, and teaching writing with supporting details and arguments. Sushil feels unprepared in teaching to write references, following the in-text citations rule, and teaching the idea of plagiarism, because the students did not have any prior knowledge regarding these concepts. In his words, "They are completely unknown to in text-citation, referencing, APA and MLA format." For Hark Bahadur, teaching the idea of maintaining proper organization with a composite style was problematic, as he does not have any idea of how to teach the topic effectively and appropriately.

Varied Assignments, Students Reaction, and Struggles

In Nepal, as teachers typically teach a range of English courses (compulsory courses to various major courses), they necessarily assign widely varied assignments. Teachers sometimes design assignments themselves, and sometimes they select assignments from exercises in a prescribed textbook. Explaining the kinds of assignments, he gives to his students, Hark Bahadur writes:

- i) Reviewing book/film, case study, story writing, biography writing, writing reflection, describing information in figure and table, report writing, application writing (as prescribed in the course), etc. [are assigned as] long assignments.*
- (ii) [S]ingle paragraph writing on a particular topic, guided writing (short story, a news story), short answer, writing advertisement of any products (as with the sample given in the coursebook), making a sentence with the help of words or phrases given [in the textbook], grammatical exercises,... abstract writing, summarizing story and poem, single-paragraph essays (as given in Cambridge Academic English, An integrated Skills Course for EAP).*

The responses of the nine teachers showed that they commonly offered short assignments including précis, guided stories, short question-answers, personal responses, paraphrasing short texts, short letter writing, comprehensive questions, grammar exercises, preparation of instructions, and writing for advertising. For long assignments, the teachers assign descriptive, narrative, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect

essay writing, long-answer questions, writing a CV, story writing, preparing research reports and field reports, journal writing, writing a reflection, paraphrasing long texts, summary writing, preparing prospectus and brochure, biography writing, etc.

Four teachers responded that their students react negatively to writing assignments due to lack of interest, fear of making grammatical errors, and not having skill in maintaining coherence, cohesion, and syntactical usage. Umesh wrote that in Nepal, higher education students have not often developed the habit of actually getting assignments done. Only some students faithfully do assignments. Similarly, Harish responds, “In the case of writing class the students who are really eager to learn something react positively and do the assigned task. But, few students who are least motivated towards study try to escape from the assignment and submit lately [i.e., late].” His point is that reacting positively and negatively largely depends on students’ motivation toward writing. Sushil stated that if students are familiar with the title of the assignment and its content, they are more eager to do assignments. However, if the students are not acquainted with the content of their assignments, they want to have teacher-prepared notes. Hark Bahadur responds that “almost 95% of students, so far I have found, fear with writing assignment who take(s) it negatively because they simply are away off obligatory writing environment [which I think must be improved] and even we teacher tend to be both lazy and negligent” in giving assignments and providing feedback.

Discussing students’ struggle in doing assignments, Rima and Umesh stated that their students struggle especially with analytical, critical, logical, reflective, and research-based assignments. Rima mentioned that students are simply not interested in doing long assignments. She blamed our educational system, which, she complained, has never given students the opportunity to be exploratory, analytical, or critical; rather, the system has fostered rote memorization. Harish and Sushil responded that their students feel difficulty in writing reports, since report writing is new for them, differing from the essay writing which they normally practice in their writing, and also because they lack knowledge of the technical aspects of report writing. Dipika responded that students feel difficulty in technical writing. She further stated that students struggle with writing academic papers, particularly identifying a research gap, writing references, citing properly following a particular style, and formulating research questions. Dayaram stated that his students struggle with writing argumentative and persuasive types of writing since they do not have the knowledge of how to express ideas logically and reasonably. Both Dayaram and Sushil indicated that students struggle with writing due to a lack of exposure to real-world examples of this type of writing. Similarly, Harish stated that his students from rural areas tend to be less resourceful, and they find themselves more dependent on teacher-provided materials and notes only. Sushil pointed out that his students feel trouble in expressing ideas due to a lack of confidence in their grammar and lack of vocabulary power. Hark Bahadur stated that his students struggle with writing

essays. In his concluding remarks, Hark Bahadur argued that grammar should not be primarily focused while dealing with writing assignments in the preliminary phase, as it might possibly lead towards “linguistic phobia.”

Discussion and Implications

The teachers’ responses revealed that out of nine teachers, four of them (Harish, Dipika, and Sushil, Dil Bahadur; see results) followed a product-based approach to teaching writing. The five teachers did not embrace either the process approach and genre approach and seem to prefer a more scatter-shot, off-the-cuff pedagogy rather than any identifiable systematic approach. When teachers do not follow the process approach to teaching writing, they are likely to face difficulty in teaching writing. So, to better facilitate the writing class, the teachers should embrace some form of the process approach to writing. While focusing on the process approach, the teacher should also be aware of the genre of writing and when appropriate, follow a genre approach to writing assignments. As Cheung (2016) notes, besides helping students in idea generation, and teaching the rhetorical moves of the particular genres, teachers should understand and teach a number of specific strategies for fostering students’ writing competence:

Teachers also need to teach students a socio-cognitive approach to writing, which takes into consideration readers’ expectations, socio-cultural contexts, and thinking processes involved in planning, organizing, and writing/revising their essays and assignments. Teachers need to make clear to the students that writing is a recursive, complex activity, that in order to move forward in composition we all need to read, re-read, and revise our writing. A good piece of writing has to go through multiple revisions. This applies not only to novice writers but to the most confident and experienced writers as well. Understanding this can help clarify a misconception that many students may have – that only non-proficient writers will need significant revisions to their work. (pp.17 -18)

There is no denying that L2 writing teachers should teach their students socio-cultural contexts as well, along with thinking processes and writing processes, and make them understand writing as a socially determined activity. Further, they should teach the students to go through multiple drafting processes and revision processes in order to find their own weaknesses and thus, correct their writing themselves and yield better writing.

The teachers’ responses showed that they wanted to improve their teaching in different areas, including exploratory research-based writing tasks, the mechanical aspect of writing, grammatical correctness, coherence, and cohesion, teaching report writing, contextualizing the teaching of writing and teaching different types of essays. Similarly, the teachers felt unprepared to teach some lessons, for instance, teaching pre-writing,

while-writing, and post-writing activities, teaching about citation and plagiarism. The data showed (one of the participants mentioned; see results) that students are not taught about plagiarism at the school level. Through my own teaching experience at the college level for more than a decade, I also came to know that students are rarely taught anything about writing references, citations, and plagiarism before their college years, and thus, teaching these aspects of composition becomes a bit challenging in writing class. Thus, the teachers should prepare themselves in these areas, and their colleges should also provide professional development opportunities and resources that assist them to be prepared in the areas.

Discussing the difficulty of teaching academic writing to L2 students, Evans and Green (2007) argue that students may perceive all aspects of academic writing as a difficult task. They explored that L2 students perceive language-related components to be difficult rather than structure/content-related components of academic writing. Language-related difficulty refers to the difficulties of expressing ideas situationally, accurately and fluently and structure-related difficulties refer to mechanical aspects of writing such as sections/parts of writing, writing references/citations and others mechanics of writing. Evans's and Green's (2007) finding is corroborated by the results of Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) and Dalsky and Tajino (2007), in which students faced problems and difficulties in maintaining the coherence of writing (organizing) ideas and arguments, employing proper styles of writing, and articulating thoughts clearly in English. Marshall's (1991) study revealed that students may oftentimes have more difficulties with the structure of a paper than the strictly language-related components. Similarly, Kubota (1998) advocates that the greatest difficulties in teaching L2 writing may well be instigated by teachers' instructional emphasis on accuracy at the sentence level rather than on broader discourse organization.

To mitigate difficulties and unpreparedness for teaching L2 writing, teachers can embrace some strategies. Swenson (1996) suggests, "teachers who feel uncomfortable or unprepared to teach writing would benefit from workshops or by reading educational literature that emphasizes techniques and strategies on how to teach writing in the foreign language classroom" (p.2). She further argues that if a teacher is familiar with teaching writing through the process approach, both teacher and students may find writing as a rewarding experience, and thus, students can learn writing better and may enjoy writing tasks that are assigned to them.

The teachers expressed that their students react negatively to writing assignments due to lack of interest, fear of making grammatical errors, and not having skill in maintaining coherence, cohesion, and syntactical usage. And also, they do not often have the habit of actually getting assignments done. So, from this, it can be inferred that teachers should be prepared to back up them to the areas and the aspects on which they

feel difficulty in carrying out their assignments. In order to help in their writing, teachers can create a peer-support group, which provides them an opportunity for students to learn from each other. In peer review, students engage in the collaborative activity of “reading, critiquing and providing feedback on each other’s writing, both to secure immediate textual improvement and to develop, over time, stronger writing competence via mutual scaffolding” (Hu 2005a, pp. 321–322).

Writing assignments play a vital role in advancing students’ proficiency in writing. However, as above-stated, students do not enjoy and often struggle with writing assignments in general. But the assignments can be entertaining and engaging if students embrace a narrative style and rhetorical moves (Cheung, 2016) in their writing. Cheung further argues that when students are aware of purpose, audience, and context in their writing, they can better and more effectively use basic academic discourse skills including paraphrasing and direct quotation, lexical variety, passive voice (when to use the passive voice and when not to use it), thinking processes, and structuring and developing an argument, in their writing.

In Nepal, teaching writing is mostly guided by final-exam-driven, product-based writing assignments that encourage students to faithfully replicate what they have learned in the classroom (Belbase, 2012). Students face difficulty in writing when they do not know the rules of the “writing road” (Paudel, 2020) and the true dynamism of writing. Talking about the Nepali scenario of composition pedagogy, Sharma (2018) writes, “Teachers talk about students’ “poor writing” when students fail in exams i.e. if they don’t assume that the students would have written perfectly if they knew what to write but writing mediates and can make both the process and product of learning and assessment” (n.p.). Attuning with Sharma’s argument, I say that rather than talking about students’ bad writing and blaming them, it would be better to ask the right questions: “Did we teach them to follow correct writing procedures? Did we provide meaningful and specific feedback on their assignments? What did we do to lead them to become better writers?”

In this article, I discussed teachers’ lived experiences in teaching L2 writing at the bachelor level in Nepal. But, I did not examine how teachers actually teach in the classroom and I also did not seek to survey students’ views on how their teachers teach writing or how these students feel about writing assignments. Hence, future researchers need to observe teachers’ actual classroom teaching strategies and ask students for their views on writing assignments, what they feel necessary to execute the assignments, and what are their main difficulties in executing assignments.

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Appendix (The following questions were sent to the participant-teachers via questionpro platform)

Please provide current information so that I can explore a real scenario of teaching writing at the Bachelor (undergraduate) level in Nepal. Your information will be kept confidential and anonymous. To keep your information confidential, I will store the data in coded form. On request, I will gladly share the final anonymized and compiled results of these questions with anyone who participates in the survey.

Questions about Your English Composition Pedagogy and Current Teaching Practices

- How long have you been teaching English at the Bachelor's level?
- Please state whether you teach at a public or private college, or at a university.
- Which undergraduate English courses do you typically teach (first year, second year, third year and fourth year courses respectively)?
- Please summarize in about 100-200 words your general approach to teaching English writing.
- Briefly describe (in about 100-200 words) an actual writing lesson or assignment that you have recently taught at the undergraduate level.
- List the various types of written assignments you most often assign to your undergraduate students during a given English course. Please indicate which are usually major (long) assignments, and which assignments take the form of a brief, daily writing practice, composition exercise, précis, summary or short personal response.
- What are the specific areas that you most want to improve in your own writing pedagogy? Please elaborate.
- What aspect of English writing (any particular subject, lesson or chapter, or specific pre-writing, mid-writing, or post writing activity, etc.) do you feel most prepared to teach, and which do you feel least prepared to teach? For each of these aspects, please also briefly explain why you feel this way.
- Please share your experiences, in general terms, as to whether your students usually react positively or negatively to writing assignments, and why.
- In your experience, which kinds of written assignments—or genres of writing—do your students struggle with most and why?
- If you have other concerns regarding your students' relationship to English-language writing and composition, please indicate these as well.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies of Japanese University Students

Shotaro Ueno & Jonathan Aliponga

Abstract

One of the many recent research interests in English language teaching in Japan is to develop student's language skills through vocabulary learning, especially focusing on vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). Our study examined the different vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) that proficient and non-proficient Japanese university students used to accomplish the learning tasks in the English language classrooms. It also sought to find out the significant difference between the two groups of students in vocabulary learning strategy use. The findings revealed that as many non-proficient students as proficient students used the same various VLSs in their English language classes. There were significant differences found between the two groups of students in their use of VLSs, specifically in four kinds of VLSs. These differences in VLSs use included social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive VLSs. In fact, there were instances when non-proficient students used VLSs more than proficient students. Implications for EFL as well as further research directions are discussed.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, English as a Foreign Language, learner strategies

Introduction

As the society becomes more globalized, improving English skills is becoming more important. In response to globalization, Japanese government has been making drastic changes to its education system. In 2001 and 2002, the following were done: the revision of the curriculum guidelines and the implementation of the foreign language activities in elementary school (MEXT, 2014a), the Strategic Plan to Cultivate Japanese Abilities in English and English Activities in Elementary School as well as English Classes in English in junior high school. In 2013, three major plans took into effect: English Education Reform Plan Corresponding to Globalization, in which English became a regular subject in elementary schools; English classes were taught in English in senior high schools; then the National University Reform Plan, in which one of the goal was to implement TOEFL in 2021 as a standardized proficiency test to examine

student's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. In short, Japanese students are required to enhance much higher English language skills. How students can develop their English skills is for individual schools to plan and implement.

Especially in Japan, one of the many recent research interests in the field of English language teaching to develop student's language skills is vocabulary learning. Many researchers have insisted the importance of vocabulary learning to improve English skills. For instance, Akagawa (1997) and Takeuchi (2003) underscored that English learners need to memorize considerable amount of vocabulary because it is the fundamentals of four skills. Laufer (1992) argued that learners should learn approximately 95 percent of the words to understand English passages. Laufer further argued that this knowledge of vocabulary is necessary so that they can successfully employ reading strategies, such as guessing the meaning of words from context or skimming the passages. Many other researchers support the important role of vocabulary learning in the success of language learning. One example is Tanaka (2012) who explained that it is impossible to do performance without learning certain amount of vocabulary. Also, Ikeda and Takeuchi (2005) found that English learners who have memorized a lot of vocabulary were much better than those who have not memorized vocabulary when reading sentences in English. However, other previous studies have argued that language learning will not improve by simply learning vocabulary without using any strategies. It was also strongly suggested that learners have to consider about phonemes and syntagmatic relation through vocabulary learning. Others like Yoshida et al. (1998) have emphasized that Japanese English learners do not have enough vocabulary to understand English. However, many studies have shown that learners who carried out vocabulary learning frequently was not an assurance for an increase in English skills. What is worse, as explained by Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2008) is that Japanese English learners face difficulties in vocabulary learning. This is because there are effective vocabulary learning strategies and ineffective vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), which they can use (Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2008; Schmitt, 1997). For instance, proficient learners of English seemed to understand about how to learn vocabulary, while low proficient students lacked this ability. Furthermore, Takeuchi (2003) has illustrated some examples of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) used by both proficient students and low proficient students in English learning. One of the examples is that proficient learners memorized vocabulary used in sentences at the onset, while low proficient learners did not. Another example is that proficient learners confirmed the pronunciation of new vocabulary, while low proficient learners did not. The third example, on the other hand, revealed that low proficient learners memorized vocabulary using the list, while proficient learners did not. As seen from these previous studies, English learners utilized vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) in learning English.

Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLSs)

Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are considered as part of learner strategies (LSs), which can be defined as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Researchers like Wakamoto (2009) grouped LSs into four, namely: cognitive, communication, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies. However, Robbins (1996) simply grouped them into three, when focusing on on-line processing of language learning. These were cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective.

As far as understanding language materials in direct ways, Oxford (1990) explained that learners use cognitive strategies (Oxford (1990)). Examples of these cognitive strategies are reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, and outlining. Regarding memory strategies, learners frequently use them because of their directness and familiarity. They are easy to use because these strategies are simply rote-memory strategies. When communicating with people, learners use communication strategies. Examples of these strategies are using circumlocutions or synonyms to maintain communication in English. As far as managing learning process, learners use metacognitive strategies, which include identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success and assessing success of any type of learning strategy. Sanaoui (1995) explained that metacognitive strategies are also important when learning vocabulary. English proficient learners who understand effective vocabulary learning strategies often use metacognitive strategies. Likewise, Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) and Rasekh and Ranjbary (2003) have clarified the effects of instructing vocabulary learning strategies including metacognitive strategies. Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2008) suggested that metacognitive strategies for vocabulary learning were fairly correlated with TOEIC scores. As evident from these previous studies, metacognitive strategies are very important vocabulary learning strategies for English language learning.

One of the most famous taxonomies of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) is that of Schmitt’s (1997), which he categorized into two groups. The two categories are discovery strategies and consolidation strategies. Discovery strategies are used to discover meanings of new vocabulary. Consolidation strategies, on the other hand, are used by learners to keep on memorizing the vocabulary meanings. Discovery strategies consist of determination strategies and social strategies, while consolidation strategies include social strategies, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and metacognitive strategies. Social strategies are found in both categories because they can be used at any stage of vocabulary learning. Years later, Nation (2001) came up with another category

of all vocabulary learning strategies and grouped them into three classes, namely: planning, source and processes.

Variables affecting choice of vocabulary learning strategies

Yongqi Gu (2003) explains the important role of learning tasks in vocabulary learning strategy choice as follows:

“A learning task is the end product in the learner’s mind. It can be as broad as mastering a second language or as specific as remembering one meaning of a word. He further explained that this conception of the learning task includes the materials being learned (such as the genre of a piece of reading) as well as the goal the learner is trying to achieve by using these materials (such as remembering, comprehending, or using language). In other words, different types of task materials, task purposes, and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learner strategies. For example, learning words in a word list is different from learning the same words in a passage. Remembering a word meaning is different from learning to use the same word in real life situations. Likewise, guessing from context would mean different things for texts of different levels of new word density (p. 2).”

Learning context is another consideration for vocabulary learning strategy choice, which Yongqi Gu (2003) defines and explains as follows.

“Learning context refers to the learning environment, where learning takes place. The learning context can include the teachers, the peers, the classroom climate or ethos, the family support, the social, cultural tradition of learning, the curriculum, and the availability of input and output opportunities. Learning contexts constrain the ways learners approach learning tasks. A learning strategy that is valued in one learning context may well be deemed inappropriate in another context. For instance, when a person approaches a relatively challenging task, s/he adopts certain strategies to solve the problem. The problem-solving process is constrained by the learning context where the problem is being tackled (pp. 2-3).”

Then there are learner factors, which are also crucial for vocabulary learning choice. The strategies a learner uses and the effectiveness of these strategies very much depend on the learner himself/herself (e.g., language ability/ proficiency, attitudes, motivation, prior knowledge).

Tseng and Schmitt (2008) and Mizumoto (2011) explained that learner’s motivation is one of the most important factors for vocabulary learning.

(2011) expounded that learners do not intend to use vocabulary learning strategies without motivation. In the same manner, even though learners have high motivation but without enough knowledge of vocabulary learning strategies, they cannot improve their English skills. In short, the relationship between motivation and vocabulary learning strategy is significantly important.

As important as motivation for vocabulary learning is learner language ability. Successful learners are those with high language ability. These successful language learners have been characterized by Rubin (1994) as those who use broad repertoire of language learning strategies. These learners are able to adopt a particular strategy to facilitate their language learning. Compared with less proficient learners, successful learners demonstrate better application of language learning and adopt language learning strategies more frequently (Javid et. al., 2013).

Our Research Focus

Based on these previous studies, there is no doubt that understanding the vocabulary strategies that learners use will enable us teachers to assist students to master the use of appropriate vocabulary learning strategies for specific learning tasks. It will also give us some useful insights when designing a foreign language curriculum that integrates vocabulary learning strategies so that students will become successful in accomplishing whatever is the assigned task.

Our study, which is exploratory in nature, focuses only on assessing the vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) proficient and non-proficient EFL university students used in learning English as a foreign language. To guide this research, the following research questions were formulated.

- (1) What were the vocabulary learning strategies that proficient and non-proficient students used in their English as a foreign language class?
- (2) Was there a significant difference between proficient students and non-proficient students in their use of vocabulary learning strategies?
- (3) What are the implications of these results for EFL?

Participants

A total of 40 students (20 proficient learners and 20 non-proficient learners) were involved in this study. Participants, who are Japanese, were chosen using convenience sampling. These participants were first year to fourth year levels, English majors, and were learning English as a foreign language at three private universities in Kansai region

in Japan. They were divided into two groups, namely, proficient learners and non-proficient learners based on their institutional TOEFL ITP and TOEIC scores. TOEFL and TOEIC tests are standardized assessments which are widely used in Japanese universities. Both tests have different focus, but many Japanese universities use them as placement tests. ETS (2021) defines TOEFL ITP as ‘an assessment that offers colleges and universities, English-language programs and other organizations the opportunity to administer a convenient, affordable and reliable assessment of English-language skills’ (p. 1).

Instrument

Survey questionnaire was utilized in this research. This questionnaire was used to find out about the participants’ vocabulary learning strategies and motivation toward vocabulary learning. It is the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) type of inventory, which is an easy-to-use inventory to evaluate learner’s strategy use.

The first part had personal information, such as gender, year level, age, test scores (TOEIC, TOEFL), years of studying and or living abroad, length of studying English, reasons for studying English, and motivation for studying English.

The second part, consisting of 15 questions, was about vocabulary learning strategy, which was created based on Schmitt’s classification of vocabulary learning strategies.

Table 1: *Vocabulary learning strategies based on Schmitt’s classification*

	Discovery		Consolidation			
	Det	S	S	M	C	Met
1. Checking vocabulary meaning your own way	✓					
2. Checking vocabulary meaning by using dictionary	✓					
3. Checking vocabulary meaning by asking to other people		✓				
4. Memorizing vocabulary through communication			✓			
5. Memorizing vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms				✓		
6. Memorizing vocabulary by utilizing audio visual materials				✓		
7. Memorizing vocabulary by utilizing prefix and suffix				✓		
8. Memorizing vocabulary by writing					✓	
9. Memorizing vocabulary by pronouncing					✓	
10. Memorizing vocabulary in sentences					✓	

11. Memorizing vocabulary by using a word list					✓	
12. Making the best goals before carrying out vocabulary learning						✓
13. Maintaining high motivation through vocabulary learning						✓
14. Learning vocabulary by using the best strategy						✓
15. Evaluating vocabulary learning after finishing it.						✓

Det-Determination S-Social M-Memory C-Cognitive Met-Metacognitive

Table 1 shows the vocabulary learning strategies in the survey questionnaire. There were three discovery strategies (Items 1, 2, 3). Discovery strategies were subdivided into Determination (Item 1 and Item 2), and Social strategies (Item 3). On the other hand, Consolidation strategy group had twelve items (Items 4 through 15). Consolidation strategies were subdivided into Social (Item 4), Memory (Item 5, Item 6, Item 7), Cognitive (Item 8, Item 9, Item 10, Item 11) and Metacognitive (Item 12, Item 13, Item 14, Item 15).

The questionnaire was written in English and translated into Japanese and back translated into English to verify consistency. The Japanese version was administered to the participants.

Data Analyses

The gathered data was analyzed using IBM SPSS. In order to determine the significant difference between two proficient groups in the use of VLSs, chi-square (χ^2) test combined with adjusted standardized residuals analyses was utilized. As we repeatedly used the chi-square test to compute p-values, which might have led to the issue regarding Type I error (i.e., despite no significant difference, a significant difference might be found between or among groups, see Mizumoto, 2014 for details), we adjusted the significance level with Bonferroni's adjustment before the data analyses ($p=.05 \rightarrow p=.004$). We also used a phi-coefficient (ϕ) as an effect size to show the extent to which VLSs use differed according to the student's L2 proficiency. Following Takeuchi and Mizumoto's (2014) data analysis, we set up the criteria for the effect size (ϕ) as follows: $\phi=.10$ for small, $\phi=.30$ for medium, and $\phi=.50$ for large.

Results

Table 2: *Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS) Use Between Proficient and Non-Proficient Students*

Items in the Questionnaire	Types of VLS	Proficiency				Sig	ϕ
		Proficient (n=20)		Non-proficient (n=20)			
		Used	Not-used	Used	Not-used		
1. Checking meaning of vocabulary your own way	Det (Dis)	15	5	12	8	ns	.16
2. Checking meaning of vocabulary by using dictionary	Det (Dis)	13	7	14	6	ns	.05
3. Checking meaning of vocabulary by asking to other people	Soc (Dis)	7	13	15	5	.002*	.40
4. Memorizing vocabulary through communication	Soc (Con)	11	9	12	8	ns	.05
5. Memorizing vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms	M (Con)	16	4	15	5	ns	.05
6. Memorizing vocabulary by using audio visual materials	M (Con)	7	13	8	12	ns	.05
7. Memorizing vocabulary by utilizing prefixes and suffixes	M (Con)	5	15	16	4	.001*	.30
8. Memorizing vocabulary by writing	C (Con)	12	8	16	4	ns	.02
9. Memorizing vocabulary by pronouncing	C (Con)	20	0	10	10	.001*	.50
10. Memorizing vocabulary in sentences	C (Con)	17	3	15	5	ns	.12
11. Memorizing vocabulary by using a word list	C (Con)	7	13	9	11	ns	.10
12. Making the best goals before carrying out vocabulary learning	Met (Con)	11	9	15	5	ns	.20
13. Maintaining high motivation through vocabulary learning	Met (Con)	15	5	13	7	ns	.10
14. Learning vocabulary by using the best strategy	Met (Con)	7	13	18	2	.001*	.06
15. Evaluating vocabulary learning after finishing it	Met (Con)	18	2	17	3	ns	.07

Notes: VLSs are specified as follows: Dis=Discovery, Con=Consolidation, Det=Determination, S=Social,

M=Memory, C=Cognitive, Met=Metacognitive, ns=not significant, * indicates $p < .004$. $\phi = .40$.

As shown in Table 2, many (more than 50%) of the proficient and non-proficient students used the same nine out of fifteen vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the use of these VLSs between the two groups. These VLSs included 1) Discovery strategy for checking the meaning of new words on their own way as determination strategy (Det Dis, Proficient=15, Non-proficient=12), 2) Discovery strategy for checking the meanings of new words using a dictionary as determination strategy (Det Dis, Proficient=13, Non-proficient=14), 3) Consolidation strategy for memorizing new words through communication as social strategy (Soc Con, Proficient=11, Non-proficient=12), 4) Consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms as memory strategy (M Con, Proficient=16, Non-proficient=15), 5) Consolidation strategy for memorizing new vocabulary by writing as cognitive strategy (C Con, Proficient=12, Non-proficient=16), 6) Consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary in the sentences as cognitive strategy (C Con, Proficient=17, Non-proficient=15), 7) Consolidation strategy, which is memorizing vocabulary by making the goal as metacognitive strategy (Met Con, Proficient=11, Non-proficient=15), 8) Consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by having high motivation as metacognitive strategy (Met Con, Proficient=15, Non-proficient=13), 9) Consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by evaluating it as metacognitive strategy (Met Con, Proficient=18, Non-proficient=17).

On the other hand, there was a significant difference between proficient and non-proficient students in their use of four out fifteen vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs). These VLSs included checking the meaning of vocabulary by asking others (Soc Dis, $\chi^2 = 6.5$, $df = 1$, $p < .004$ (.002), $\phi = .40$). Non-proficient students (15) used the strategy more than proficient students (7). Another significant difference was in the use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by utilizing prefixes and suffixes as memory strategy (M Con, $\chi^2 = 12.1$, $df = 1$, $p < .004$ (0.001), $\Phi = .30$). Non-proficient students (16) used the strategy more than proficient students (5). The third significant difference was in the use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by pronouncing it as cognitive strategy (C Con, $\chi^2 = 16.4$, $df = 1$, $p < .004$ (.001), $\Phi = .50$). Proficient students (20) used the strategy more than non-proficient students (10). Finally, there was a significant difference in the use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by using the best strategy as metacognitive strategy (Met Con, $\chi^2 = 12.9$, $df = 1$, $p > .004$ (0.001), $\Phi = .06$). Non-proficient students (18) used the strategy more than proficient students (7).

Discussion

1) *What were the vocabulary learning strategies that proficient and non-proficient students used in their English as a foreign language class?*

Out of the fifteen vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), nine were used by many (50%~90%) proficient and non-proficient students. Specifically, proficient students used five VLSs more than non-proficient students. These were checking meaning of vocabulary your own way (Det Dis), memorizing vocabulary with synonyms and antonyms (M Con), memorizing vocabulary in the sentences (C Con), maintaining high motivation through vocabulary learning (Met Con) and evaluating vocabulary learning after finishing it (Met Con) Although proficient students used these strategies more than non-proficient students, the data revealed no significant difference between the two groups in the use of these five VLSs. This is also true for the other four VLSs, wherein non-proficient students used them more than proficient students; however, the data showed no significant difference between the two groups. These four VLSs consisted of checking meaning of vocabulary by using dictionary (Det Dis), memorizing vocabulary through communication (Soc Con), memorizing vocabulary by writing (C Con), and making the best goals before carrying out vocabulary learning (Met Con).

The data simply tells us that non-proficient students used the same VLSs in their English language classes as much as proficient students. In fact, both groups used nine (60%) VLSs out of fifteen. Surprisingly, more non-proficient students used many VLSs. This means they were aware of various vocabulary learning strategies, specifically different kinds of memorizing strategies. This supports the claim of Kitao and Wakamoto (2012) who explained as follows:

Japanese students are capable of using a variety of strategies, but they heavily rely on rote- memory strategies to learn vocabulary. This might be the influence of strategies used for learning Chinese characters (Kanji) in elementary school, which is not easy to learn even for native speakers of Japanese. Children are trained to remember them by rote-memory strategies at elementary school.

Fujimura, Takizawa and Wakamoto (2010) termed these strategies as ‘bedrock strategies for Japanese learners of English from elementary school through college.’ Furthermore, using a dictionary to check the meanings of words is commonly practiced in Japanese schools from junior high school to college.

What is surprising was the use of metacognitive strategies by non-proficient students, which are categorized as high level strategies and are commonly used by proficient learners. There are two possible explanations for this. One is that students might

have been taught how to evaluate their own learning. Communicative related tasks are commonly practiced in Japanese universities. Thanks to English language organizations in the country, such as the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) and The Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET), which have been active and influential in holding international conferences for English language teachers not only in Japan, but also around the world. The organizations, especially JALT, have various interest groups and chapters around the country, which are responsible for professional development of English teachers every month, educating teachers about the different informed approaches, methods and techniques in English language teaching, vocabulary learning strategies included. Another reason might be non-proficient students, despite being taught the metacognitive strategies, did not know exactly how to use them to successfully accomplish the tasks. As Yongqi Gu, (2003) has explained, ‘different types of task materials, task purposes, and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learner strategies.’ Therefore, it is important to guide students, especially non-proficient students, what, when and how to use different VLSs.

2) *Was there a significant difference between proficient students and non-proficient students in their use of vocabulary learning strategies?*

Four significant differences were found. One significant difference was in the use of discovery strategy for checking the meaning of new vocabulary by asking others as a social strategy ($\chi^2(1) = 6.5, p = .002, \phi = .40$). This means significantly non-proficient students used the strategy more than proficient students. One possible explanation for this might be the curriculum focus of many Japanese universities for many years. That is, collaborative learning that encourages all students to help each other and not shy about asking for help when needed. The non-threatening and non-competitive collaborative learning classroom atmosphere might have played an important role for non-proficient learners to ask for help from those who were successful in language learning.

The other significant difference was in the use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by utilizing prefixes and suffixes as memory strategy ($\chi^2(1) = 6.5, p = .001, \phi = .30$). This data shows that significantly non-proficient students used the strategy more than proficient students. In fact, only five out of fifteen proficient students while sixteen non-proficient students utilized the vocabulary strategy. It seemed that non-proficient students needed this strategy to accomplish the English learning tasks more than proficient students.

The third significant difference was in use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by pronouncing it as cognitive strategy ($\chi^2(1) = 13.3, p = .001, \phi = .50$). The data revealed that significantly proficient students used the strategy more than non-proficient students. In fact, all proficient students while only half of non-proficient students used

it. The big challenge for many universities in Japan is to make students speak even in simple activities like pronouncing the vocabulary. Many Japanese students, especially non-proficient students are hesitant to speak in English even to do the-repeat-after-me or pronouncing the vocabulary because of the fear of making mistakes. This fear of making mistakes is slowly changing for the better due to the rampant communicative teaching and learning practices in the English language classrooms. Also, based on our classroom situations, more and more non-proficient students tried their best to communicate in English with their classmates.

The fourth significant difference was in the use of consolidation strategy for memorizing vocabulary by using the best strategy as metacognitive strategy ($\chi^2(1) = 12.9, p = .001, \phi = .06$). The data revealed that significantly non-proficient students used the strategy more than proficient students. Metacognitive strategies are considered as strategies used by successful learners or proficient learners. However, the data showed otherwise. It is possible that non-proficient students thought that their choice of strategy was the best when in fact it was not a good choice. Studies have shown that non-proficient students or unsuccessful learners struggled to make a wise decision about choosing the best vocabulary learning strategies to accomplish learning tasks.

3) *What are the implications of these results for EFL?*

Each student is unique and each possesses different vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) that they have learned by themselves or from their previous classes. Since these VLSs are influential in vocabulary learning, it is suggested that teachers assess each student's VLSs in reading, speaking, writing, listening and other English classes at the beginning of the academic year. Better yet, the department or school should keep records of students' VLSs, which teachers can access for reference to better understand each student's learning growth. The records can be updated each semester or yearly.

The findings showed that non-proficient students employed various VLSs as much as proficient students. Teachers should integrate the teaching of the VLSs in the syllabus, especially how the VLSs can be used effectively in writing, listening, speaking and reading classes.

When in doubt about the meaning of a vocabulary, non-proficient students asked others for help. Teacher should use this to create opportunities both inside and outside the classroom where students can help each other. For instance, teachers could maximize proficient students' potentials by designing tasks that will enable them to assist non-proficient students how to apply the VLSs. By doing so, not only proficient learners could apply through teaching the VLSs that they have learned, but also non-proficient students could learn the VLSs, while fostering cooperative learning among students.

Understanding the vocabulary strategies that learners use will enable us teachers not only in Japan but also in other countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language, to assist students to master the use of appropriate vocabulary learning strategies for specific learning tasks. It will also give us some useful insights when designing a foreign language curriculum that integrates vocabulary learning strategies so that students will become successful in accomplishing whatever is the assigned task.

Conclusion

In this exploratory study, which examined the different VLSs that proficient and non-proficient Japanese university students used in accomplishing the learning tasks in the English language classrooms, the findings revealed that non-proficient students as much as proficient students used the same various VLSs in their English language classes. Although the results were not significant, there were instances when non-proficient students used some VLSs more than proficient students. It shows that non-proficient students were aware of the VLSs, mostly different memorizing strategies. This could be attributed to the rote- memory strategies to learn vocabulary, which students started to use as early as elementary school years when they were learning Chinese characters. Non-proficient students also employed metacognitive strategies, which they might have learned recently in college. Many Japanese universities have been employing communicative related tasks, and teaching students to evaluate their own learning seems to be part of it.

Teachers should integrate the teaching of the VLSs into the syllabus, especially how the VLSs can be used effectively in writing, listening, speaking and reading classes by non-proficient students.

Future research directions

The next step that we will do to further the research related to VLSs is to include some variables, such as learning contexts, tasks, and more learner variables, such as attitude, motivation, and prior knowledge. These different types of task materials, task purposes, and tasks at various difficulty levels demand different learner strategies (Yongqi Gu, 2003). He further adds that learner's motivation, experiences, attitude and language ability are influential factors in the use and acquisition of VLSs.

We will utilize mixed method to gather data. These include quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative method, a survey questionnaire will also be utilized. This time, more strategies will be included. The survey will also contain some open-ended questions that will enable us to extract possible strategies that the closed-ended questions may not be able to cover. The qualitative method includes interviews

and classroom observations. While classroom observations can provide us with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities, interviews will provide us with insights into students' perceptions and experiences of a given phenomenon, which can contribute to in-depth data collection. This mixed method will enable us to 'determine causal relationships between learners' VLSs use and the variables related to vocabulary learning, such as motivation, self-regulation, and vocabulary knowledge, which are powerful predictors for successful motivational vocabulary learning' (Tseng and Schmitt, 2008).

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A Study of Written Noun Pattern Sequences among Secondary School Students in Malaysia

Shafinaz Sikder, Nur Filzah Ahmad Nadzri & Laneesha Karunagaran

Abstract

The following research work aimed to investigate the language change of learners through their usage of noun pattern in order to identify which words occur with which patterns and then create a repertoire of the three learners' particular ways of using them. In order to do so, like previous studies, the study relied on the theoretical framework of Hunston's Pattern Grammar Approach (1997) and the conceptual framework of Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory (2006). This mixed method study adopted a longitudinal research approach into Chau (2015) students' data to observe the commonly occurred noun pattern sequences within their writing tasks over three years. This helped to understand the changes on the noun pattern about language learning by associating meaning production via noun pattern sequences. Data collection and analysis method was adopted from Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010. The codification of noun patterns were done quantitatively and then its frequency was quantified. The five nouns have been identified from the analysis at keyness cut-off of 25 via Keywords Extractor followed by a codification of noun pattern sequences done via the framework by Collins Cobuild English Dictionary and Francis et al. (1998). The result of the analysis shows that students do follow noun patterns yet they also tend to produce structures in their very unique ways. Likewise, the repetition of pattern over the years observed in learners suggests language could be both regressing and progressing simultaneously, unlike the developmental leader metaphor applied in most educational settings. In other words, the study suggests that students should be acquainted with patterns instead of words in isolation because their association with different words makes them a natural accompaniment to a lexical approach. This paves the way for unorthodox scoring or marking system, shifting the focus from error analysis to meaningful production of language.

Keywords: Pattern grammar, noun pattern, longitudinal approach, isolation, lexical approach

Introduction

The introductory chapter discusses the topic of noun pattern and the background of the study.

Current educational settings of Malaysia prioritize the end aim of language learning as to achieve native like competency. Though in many settings, complete omission of error and native-like competency are often prioritized over actual meaning production, Garcia (2014) encourages translanguaging in classroom and likens language production to merely production of sounds and syllables that gives rise to meaning. Hence, with this, ascends, the question of weighing the significance of viewing language production as merely meaning production guided by sounds and syllables against the practice of achieving native competency that has been espoused by many English Language Teaching (ELT) enterprises. In this study, meaning production has been adopted to be synonymous to language change. In light of this, the study intends to investigate the significance of alternative methods in meaning production. One of the methods include pattern grammar that has been introduced by Hunston, Francis, and Manning (1997); which would be explored in detail throughout the study.

Hunston et al. (1997) suggests combining both vocabulary and grammar rather than treating them as separate entities to achieve accuracy, fluency, understanding and flexibility in language learning. They explain that pattern of a word is the regular association or co-occurrence of words and structures that contributes to meaning production. Therefore, a pattern can be recognized if a combination of words occurs relatively frequently, if it is dependent on a specific word choice, and if there is a clear meaning associated with it (Hunston & Francis, 2001, p.34).

Corpus research studies carried out by lexicographers at Collins COBUILD worked on illustrating the concept by providing examples on how patterns are created within certain contexts. For example, the adjective ‘afraid’ can be used with a that-clause (He was afraid that...) or a prepositional phrase with of (She is afraid of...) as stated in Wu, Chen, Chang & Chang (2017, p. 53). In Wu, Chen, Chang, & Chang (2017) words, “It is the study of the words that are used with a particular pattern and which do not form a random collection, but have meanings in common” (p. 53). What he meant is with this idea, most English words tend to follow only a limited set of patterns, which relates to the structure, usage, and the meaning of a word (p.53). Therefore, in light of utilizing pattern grammar against conforming to native speaker competency to produce meaning, this study investigates language change among learners via grammar pattern sequences.

As aforementioned, this study associates meaning production via noun pattern sequences to language development and language change. Thus, by highlighting the

variation of noun pattern sequences, instructors are given insight on alternative teaching methodology. Likewise, learners will be aware of the patterns that co-occur together increasing their knowledge on both vocabulary and grammar. This paves the way for unorthodox scoring or marking system, shifting the focus from error analysis to meaningful production of language.

This study therefore aims to look into the language change of three learners through their usage of noun pattern. This would be done in order to notice which words occur with which patterns and therefore build up a repertoire of the learners' particular ways of using them.

With this, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the noun pattern sequences that can be observed among secondary level students of Malaysia in a writing task?
2. What do the changes on the noun pattern (if any) suggest about language learning in Malaysian Contexts?

Literature Review

This chapter would give a brief summary of the main theories that were explored within the study.

History of Grammar Pattern

As early as 1966, Sinclair predicted that patterns of lexis “would not yield to anything less than a very large computer”, (Hanks, 2008, p.21). In his 1987 paper entitled “The nature of the evidence”, Sinclair stresses the importance of distinguishing significant collocations from random co-occurrences (Hanks, 2008). The notion of ‘pattern’ as a systematic way of dealing with the interface between lexis and grammar was used in Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1995) which proposed ‘Pattern Grammar’ with rules describing the intricate relation between word and grammar in one simple representational scheme, which explores the local regularities such as complementation structure, consisting of a headword with a sequence of preposition, noun phrase, verb phrase, clause (e.g., apologize for), or a limited set of special words and phrases (Wu et. al, 2017). This can be more clear with an idea of practical application of pattern grammar.

Applications of Pattern Grammar

Pattern grammar is importantly an application of corpus observation (Hunston, 2013). It began as a tool for lexicographers, giving them a simple way of noting how

a word is used for the benefit of learners of English. Apart from this, the other main application of pattern grammar is in language teaching, especially the teaching of English. It lends itself to a view of teaching grammar that focuses on “consciousness-raising” rather than explicit instruction (for example: Willis, 2003). This will be done so that learners would be encouraged to take notice of which words occur with which patterns. In other words, it will help to build a repertoire on both correct usage, and ways of saying things (Hunston, 2013, p. 35). One way of doing this is through noun pattern.

Noun Pattern

Hanks (2008) defined noun patterns in a simple way. Noun patterns do not necessarily have a syntagmatic structure (p. 56). He also stated examples; e.g. the noun ‘doctor’ has at least two senses: 1) medical practitioner, and 2) bearer of an advanced academic degree (p.56). The first sense is typically distinguished by collocation with any of a large number of words such as patient, dentist, surgeon or nurse (p.56). If these words are found close to it, the medical sense should be selected. On the other hand, if ‘doctor’ occurs near words such as degree, philosophy, divinity, or letters, the rarer academic sense is more likely to be the correct one (Hanks, 2008, p. 56). Now the question arises what usage noun pattern can have in case of language learning.

Usage of Pattern Grammar

The following are some of the usage of pattern grammar for which it has been studied and explored within language classrooms:

Interpreting Meaning

According to Hunston (1997), it seems remembering patterns is again another sort of memorization but the amount of information that the learner has to amass about each verb seems to be quite big. The load upon the language learner is not as great as it looks because the association between word and pattern is not random. Groups of words that share patterns also tend to share aspects of meaning (Hunston, 1997, p.43). This becomes apparent if, instead of taking a few examples of verbs with different patterns, as we have done above, we concentrate on a single pattern and look at all the verbs that have that pattern. The common aspects of meaning then become obvious (Hunston, 1997, p. 43).

Promoting Understanding

Patterns are formed in coherence. That is to say, “because patterns are used with words that share aspects of meaning, those patterns can themselves be seen as having meaning.

This in turn is useful for a learner who, for example, is trying to guess the meaning of an unknown word in context (Hunston, 1997, p.210) In other words, if a learner is guided towards using the pattern as a contextual clue to meaning, he or she may be able to deduce the meaning of a word without checking the dictionary (p.210). For example, She charmed the town fathers into letting her plant bulbs along our village streets (p.210). The meaning of the pattern is that someone does something as a result of persuasion, charm, or trickery of someone else (p. 210). Even when a verb with a very different meaning is used in this pattern, the meaning of the pattern remains the same.

Past Studies on Pattern Grammar

The past few years has shown that little research has been done to study pattern grammar based on a corpora of learners' written data (Ellis, O'Donnell & Römer 2015; Römer, O'Donnell, & Ellis (2014). Among the earlier attempts, researchers such as Francis et al. (1996) as cited in Hunston (2002) constructed a study on verb patterns based on the COBUILD project. Results from the study indicated that verb responses of all learner groups show effects of collocational transfer from the learners' first languages. In another study, Ellis (2013) incorporated the pattern grammar method to investigate child language acquisition. Results from the study suggested that "there are scale-free distributions in verb usage frequency within constructions" (Ellis, 2013, p. 21). This signifies how language acquisition is beyond categorization and cannot be confined to any given scale. Individual differences as cited in Man and Chau (2019) could influence the language development highlighted via pattern of noun sequences observed in the writing tasks.

These studies show how pattern grammar can reveal learners' language change through a series of frameworks and adaptations. However, they do not address how language develops over time. This study thus aims to address this research gap by replicating findings from previous studies in order to see how it can be applicable to the local setting of Malaysian context.

Research Methodology

As the last chapter focused on the overview of the theories related to pattern grammar, this chapter would lead to the research methodology used for the study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is the Hunston's Pattern Grammar Approach (1997) while the conceptual framework is based on the Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory (2006).

Pattern grammar sheds new insight in analyzing learners' language, as now meaning is viewed in the form of whole pattern rather than a word of its own (Hunston, 1997, p.213). It has been used to gain insights into how a language changes in usage and that made the researchers use Hunston's Pattern Grammar Approach (2009) as the theoretical base.

On the other hand, according to Larsen-Freeman (2006), language development is an organic and dynamic process. Therefore, the development of language in language learners could be measured via noun sequences because creation of meaning is possible via noun patterns rather than words/structure occurring in isolation. This is in line with Larsen-Freeman's (2013) view of innovation or errors. Therefore, the derived findings from the survey were discussed and described in the light of Larsen-Freeman's Complexity Theory (2006) which has suggested that second language development is non-linear and individual differences influence learners' language development.

This research employs a convergent parallel mixed method as its research approach. This is because it is a form of mixed method design in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2014, p. 43). Moreover, according to Creswell (2014), with this method, the investigator typically collects both forms of data at roughly the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results involving the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data (p.45). Therefore, this method was well suitable for carrying out this sort of study.

Apart from this, previous studies like (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010) also relied on similar approaches. More over the data analysis procedure is also designed on the basis of Tashakkori & Teddlie (2010) where the codification of the noun patterns are done quantitatively and then its frequency is also quantified.

Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected in the following two phases:

1st Phase

Five nouns have been identified from the analysis at keyness cut-off of 25 via Keywords Extractor website designed by Cobb (2015). This means that all these verb forms were at least 25 times more numerous and frequent in the chosen students' corpus than in the Brown corpus which was the first text corpus of American English as mentioned by (Johansson, 1961, p.32), and calculated on a per-million basis. The five nouns identified were pointed out as to occur in at least two out of the three students' data before they were codified.

A codification of noun pattern sequences was done via the framework adopted mainly from noun patterns by Collins Cobuild English Dictionary and Francis et al. (1998) as cited in Hunston (2009). For the patterns that were new to the students' data, another set of noun patterns was adapted from 'Collins English Dictionary', a website by COBUILD Grammar Patterns. (See reference for URL).

Sampling

For the purpose of this research, a collection of writings made by three anonymous students adopted from Chau's (2015) student data was used. Chau (2015) data (see appendix A) was undertaken from Chau Meng Huat's personal collection of students' essays of Faculty of Language and Linguistics, University of Malaya. Due to ethical and professional restrictions, details of the data have not been disclosed. In order to see a change in language use over a period of time, the longitudinal data from Chau's (2015) study satisfies the diachronic nature needed for the succession of this study. In addition, Chau's (2015) student data is also chosen for this study due to ethical issues involving the collection of authentic students' data.

Data Analysis Procedure

The following are the main nouns patterns taken into consideration for analyzing the students' data adopted from CCED and Francis et al., (1998):

1. Patterns with elements preceding the noun

- *a N; the N* The noun is preceded by an indefinite or definite article:
- *poss N* The noun is typically preceded by a possessive determiner
- *adj N* The noun is preceded by an adjective:
- *n N* The noun is preceded by another noun:
- *from N, on N, to N etc.* The noun is preceded by a specific preposition:
- *supp N* The noun is preceded by a range of the elements given above: determiner, possessive determiner or possessive noun group, adjective or noun.

2. Patterns with elements following the noun

- *N to-inf* All four teams have shown a desire to win.

- N that There was a suggestion that the whole thing was a joke.
- N n The noun frequently modifies another noun.
- N prep The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase introduced by a wide range of prepositions.
- N of n, N for n, N from n etc. The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase introduced by a specific prep.

Apart from these noun patterns, the noun pattern categories from the URL: <https://grammar.collinsdictionary.com/grammar-pattern> are also taken into consideration (see Appendix B)

Findings

This section would shed light on the findings of the study followed by a thorough discussion in the light of the existing literature.

Identification of Nouns

Phase 1 findings show that the keywords in the student data are ‘Flower’, ‘Fish’, ‘Friend’, ‘Girl’ and ‘River’ Use lower case in single words here which are 25 times more numerous in the input text as compared to the Brown corpus as mentioned by Johansson (1961) and Hunston (1997). Brown corpus is chosen as the reference corpus as it contains roughly over one million words collected from English language texts of 15 genres. This implies that there has been a more frequent use of these particular nouns among these students compared to the others. This might have several reasons including the fact that the students had encountered these words more often in their classroom teachings. They had enough exposure for these nouns via raising awareness as suggested by Hunston (1997). Usually students tend to use the patterns more which they got to identify in texts, for example, used in reading classes (Hunston, 1997). Table 1 shows the distribution of noun pattern variation frequency of each noun in the three students’ data throughout essays a, b, c, and d.

Noun	Example	Student 001	Student 002	Student 003
Flower	S001a- They also pluck <i>the flower beside</i> the lake (the N prep)	5	6	2
Fish	S001b- they got <i>a big fish</i> (adj N)	5	7	9

Friend	S002d- Ahmad with <i>his friends</i> (poss N)	6	1	4
Girl	S002d- Farah promised to her parents to be a <i>careful girl</i> (adj N)	4	1	8
River	S003d- went fishing <i>by a river at the end</i> of their village (by N at n)	1	0	11
Total		11	15	34

Table 1: *Distribution of Noun Pattern Variation in the Three Students' Data*

The distribution above exhibits that Student 003 had displayed the most varied noun patterns among the three students' data while Student 001 exhibits the least. This could infer that Students 003 possesses a wider range of noun patterns than Student 001 and Student 002. A further detail on each student's performance is analyzed in the following section.

Codification of Noun Patterns

In order to identify and explain each student's language progress, this section shall address the noun patterns produced by Student 001, Student 002, and Student 003, respectively. The following table shows the distribution of noun patterns produced by Student 001 throughout essays a, b, c, and d.

Student 001	A	B	C	D
Flower	the N prep	the N	N that	N p that N
Fish	num N	the N	a N	adj N of N for
Friend	poss N poss N for adj N	poss N adj N a N	poss N poss N that a N	poss N poss N to-inf
Girl	adj N poss N that N	adj N num N	adj N	N/A
River	N/A	N/A	the N	N/A

Table 2: *Variation of Noun Patterns by Student 001*

Table 2 shows that the first student used noun patterns associated with possessive

pronoun preceding nouns more than any other patterns. For example, in the initial stage, he/she used patterns with mainly poss N, as in ‘her friend’ or ‘his friend’. Though there were structures where noun was used with num, adj or that, but they were very negligible in quantity. This indicates that the student’s write up was quite simple during that time. In b, it can be said that the student used quite a number of patterns like the N and num N along with poss N. This indicates a change within his/her write up over the time. The essay in c shows a tendency to use ‘poss N that’ which was not in the previous write ups. This shows that the student was able to use patterns that were complex compared to the previous ones. The fourth essay d can also be marked with three items in the patterns yet this time the use of to-inf was seen. The student was using poss N to-inf to his/her noun patterns which showed that write ups becomes complex over time. This can also be interpreted from Chau’s (2012) idea that learners begin with a basic communicative resource of cluster than they slowly produce a flood of clusters before developing a systematic or refined set of clusters.

Student 002	A	B	C	D
Flower	the N of N	adj N n N a N the N	of N	the N N prep the N
Fish	to N-ing num N	to N-ing of N	to N-ing	to N of N
Friend	poss N	poss N	poss N	poss N
Girl	N/A	N/A	N/A	adj N
River	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 3: *Variation of Noun Patterns by Student 002*

Among the five nouns, Flower, Fish, and Friend exhibit more varied noun pattern sequences as compared to Girl and River. In fact, there is an absence of noun pattern in River for Student 002 although it is evident in the other two students. In ‘Friend’, for instance, a constant use of possessive pronouns preceding the noun can be seen throughout a until d. For both nouns Flower and Fish, a fluctuation in the number of pattern variation indicates that Student 002 utilizes new patterns, abandon the use of those patterns, and re-utilize those patterns again at a later time. For instance, the for ‘of N’ in Flower in essay a is not evident in b but reemerges in c. Another observation could be made for the pattern ‘to N-ing’ in the noun Fish which is essentially a gerund in this context (to fishing). This pattern is used in a, b, and c but is not used in d. Interestingly, the noun Girl is not evident at all until it the point of time essay d was written. In essence,

the emerging and neglecting use of a certain noun pattern is not static, it disappears and reappears randomly at various points of time in Student 002.

Student 003	A	B	C	D
Flower	N by n N n	N by n	N by n	N by n
Fish	poss N	N by n poss N poss N n N n the N n	N adj n to poss N n poss N n	N by N n poss N n the N n
Friend	poss N for poss N	adj N poss N poss N n	N/A	poss N
Girl	num N the N the N from num N to	num N the N the N off num N	num N the N the N from the N to adj N	num N the N the adj N num N
River	by N the N into N from N	by N into N to N	by N into N to N n	by N at n by N n into N with into N to N n the N n

Table 4: *Variation of Noun Patterns by Student 003*

Among the three students, Student 003 exhibits the most variation of noun patterns. This is predominantly due to the evidently longer length of essays produced by Student 003 as compared to the other two. In the table above, the noun *Girl* and *River* display the most number of noun patterns used in essays **a**, **b**, **c**, and **d**. The noun *Flower* utilizes the ‘N by n’ pattern consecutively throughout the four essays. In the case of noun *Fish*, an obvious increase of noun patterns use can be seen: from ‘poss N’ to ‘N by n’, ‘poss N n’, ‘N n’, ‘the N n’, ‘N by’, and ‘to poss N n’. This indicates a staggering amount

of new noun patterns being used. However, the opposite situation occurs for the noun *Friend*, in which Student 002 uses less varied noun patterns in essay **d** as compared to essay **a** and **b** in the beginning. Similar to Student 001 and 002, Student 003 also displays fluctuations in the use of noun pattern variations, as evidenced in the nouns *Girl* and *River*. This could signify that Student 003 also employs the same progress as Student 001 and 002 in terms of language development.

Discussion

The result of the analysis shows that students do follow noun patterns yet they also tend to produce structures in their very unique ways. As stated by Larsen Freeman (2006), there is a great amount of variation at one time in learners' performances and clear instability over time (p.53). Variation and fluctuation are important characteristics of dynamic systems (Thelen and Smith, 1994; van Geert and van Dijk, 2002 as cited in (Larsen Freeman, 2006, p.31) and should not be dismissed as measurement error. The fluctuation and variability is in part because language learners dynamically adapt their linguistic resources to the context, and the context is always changing (Tarone, 1979, p.43).

Likewise, the repetition of pattern over the years observed in learners suggests language could be both regressing and progressing simultaneously, unlike the developmental leader metaphor applied in most educational settings. Such regression and progression is likened to meaning production that tantamount to language change in this study. Similarly, linguistic sophistication, as suggested in Crossely and McNamara (2012), could be viewed here in terms of noun pattern sequences. Similar order of words used leading to simple meaning of production or variety order of words leading to sophisticated meaning production is still accounted as observed in data reflects linguistic sophistication.

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be said this study employs pattern grammar, a somewhat radical construct, on viewing language change and meaning production in comparison to error-analysis, target-language use analysis and developmental sequence analysis. Thus, it allows a new perspective of looking at learners' language and learner themselves as their meaning production through noun pattern sequences was utilized to gauge language change. This dismisses the lens of viewing learning as problems and mistakes. Therefore, the pedagogical implication of this study includes modelling grammar pattern practice to suit learners' needs. Also based on the findings, teaching grammar could be made centralized on meaning production as the ultimate criteria, rather than error analysis and lexical variations. In other words, the main focus should be on how the students are

making meaning with noun patterns other than anything else.

The limitation of the study is due to the ethical considerations, a small sample has been adopted for the study. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized and applied to other studies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Chau (2015) Students' Data

*Due to ethical and personal reasons, and in order to protect students' professional information, Chau (2015)'s students data was not permitted to be attached as appendices. However, a copy of the students' data can be requested upon special requirements from Dr. Chau Meng Huat, Senior Lecturer, Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages & Linguistics. Any queries regarding the issue can be sent to the following email address: chaumenghuat@um.edu.my.*

### Appendix B: Noun Pattern Categories

#### Noun Pattern Categories retrieved from

<https://grammar.collinsdictionary.com/grammar-pattern/nouns>

|                                             |                                        |                         |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| N <i>between</i> pl-n                       | <i>it</i> v-link <i>a</i> adj N that   | Mass nouns              |
| N <i>by</i> n                               | <i>it</i> v-link poss N that           | Singular nouns          |
| N <i>for</i> n                              | <i>it</i> v-link det N to-inf          | Plural nouns            |
| N <i>from</i> n                             | <i>it</i> v-link N to-inf              | Collective nouns        |
| N <i>in</i> n                               | <i>it</i> v-link poss N to-inf         | Proper nouns            |
| N <i>in favour of</i> n                     | <i>there be</i> det N                  | Nouns used in names     |
| N <i>into</i> n                             | <i>about</i> N                         | Vocative nouns          |
| N <i>of</i> n                               | <i>there be</i> det N <i>in</i> n/-ing | Nouns used as modifiers |
| N <i>on</i> n                               | <i>there be</i> det N <i>to</i> n/-ing | <i>a</i> N              |
| N <i>over</i> n                             | <i>at</i> N                            | <i>the</i> N            |
| N <i>to</i> n                               | <i>by</i> N                            | poss N                  |
| N <i>towards</i> n                          | <i>from</i> N                          | adj N                   |
| <i>it</i> v N to-inf <i>it</i> v n N to-inf | <i>in</i> N                            | n N                     |
| <i>it</i> v-link det N -ing                 | <i>into</i> N                          | num N                   |
| <i>it</i> v-link N -ing                     | <i>of</i> N                            | ord N                   |
| v <i>it</i> det N to-inf                    | <i>on</i> N                            | N that                  |
| v <i>it as</i> det N to-inf                 | <i>out of</i> N                        | N to-inf                |
| N <i>with</i> n                             | <i>to</i> N                            | N about n               |
| <i>the</i> N <i>be</i> that                 | <i>under</i> N                         | N against n             |
| poss N <i>be</i> that                       | <i>with</i> N                          | N among pl-n            |
| <i>the</i> N <i>be</i> to-inf               | <i>within</i> N                        | N as n                  |
| poss N <i>be</i> to-inf                     | <i>without</i> N                       | N as to wh              |
| <i>the</i> N <i>be</i> -ing                 | Count nouns                            | N at n                  |
| poss N <i>be</i> -ing                       | Uncount nouns                          |                         |
| <i>it</i> v-link det N that                 | Variable nouns                         |                         |

## Teaching and Learning English in a ‘Non-textbook’ Environment

Vidhya Pokhrel

### Abstract

This research paper aims at exploring the non-textbook environment in English classrooms. This study has portrayed the limitations of textbooks highlighting the effectiveness in learners’ achievements when teaching English in a non-textbook environment. With an ethnographic inquiry, the study reflects the author’s experience of being in the non-textbook environment through the portrayal of her subjectivity. The methods to collect data were participant/field observation and interview. The exploration of students’ learning while in the non-textbook environment has been depicted in the paper. Overall, the paper anticipated to extend the mindfulness upon the teachers who can think of including activities in an English language classroom without textbooks.

**Keywords:** Non-textbook environment, ethnographic research, exploration, activities, creativity, transformative learning

### Introduction

‘Textbooks’ are considered reliable materials in a teaching-learning context. They are the components that support teachers, and provide students with necessary inputs into lessons (Hutchinson & Torres, as cited in Gholami, Noordin & Galea, 2017). Textbooks give a pathway to teachers as they provide a guideline to carry on classroom instructions. Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) put their view saying teachers normally do not have much time and the support from school administration to use other teaching materials and this is where textbooks play their natural role. Textbooks are like a staple diet for learners as they present an official knowledge to learners from where they learn different skills, behavior, values, and attitudes (Cheng, Hung & Chieh, 2011). Textbooks give a clear framework to teachers and learners, save time as they contain ready-made tasks within and are convenient to carry (Ur as cited in Khodabakhshi, 2014). Textbooks are referred to as a guide just like a teacher, as a map to show the direction and as a resource that can be taken as the authority (Cortazzi & Jin as cited in Radic Bojanic & Topalov, 2016)). New teachers take textbooks as necessary resource since they are with less experience and are not familiar with subject matter/content and therefore heavily

depend upon textbooks (Ramazani, 2012). For learners, textbooks stand as the entity that carries everything that they need to learn. This idea about the necessity of textbooks is rooted worldwide.

Deviating a bit away from that idea, a newly emerging idea has taken space in many countries which is about not using textbooks in the classroom. Several researchers have seen the disadvantages of the use of textbooks in the EFL classroom. The process is found to be complicated when it comes to language teaching and learning and they are not achieved well just by being followers of textbooks which are the readymade teaching materials that are developed as a set of ‘prepackaged’ decisions (Allwright, 1981). This establishes the notion that textbooks are not the ultimate teaching-learning materials. Rather, various teaching-learning materials can assist learners in effectively learning English. The complexity of the textbooks affects students’ motivation and so they prefer rejecting textbooks (Schumm, Vaughn & Saumell, 1992). When different activities are introduced to learners, they enjoy the activities and get much knowledge out of them. Students when involve in meaning-making process, they develop an ability to use their ideas spontaneously (Bird, 2010). Different activities that go beyond textbooks can give learners meaning to their learning. This encourages them to be innovative and creative which is where their actual learning takes place. There are several textbooks for a single subject in the market and they all are not made in such a way that they meet the need of all learners. As Seguin (1989) stated that the role of a textbook is not only to facilitate teaching but its role is also to attract children towards it to develop their reading habit and to assist them in widening their mind to view the area of knowledge as well as information. Textbooks function well, can become the agent of change but this largely depends upon how appropriate they are in terms of meeting curriculum goals and learner needs (Kirkgoz, 2009). Teachers indeed feel secure to use textbooks as a guideline to make a lesson plan and deliver it in the classroom.

Most often, it is found that a textbook is made the first and last teaching material in the classroom in the context of Nepal. However, the idea “good teachers do not follow textbooks,” is acceptable theoretically. Teaching in a traditional way using textbooks and lecturing has made the teacher benefited in terms of comfort but they are not adapted to the change and this has hindered students’ learning process (Sparapani & Perez, 2015). Due to the mandatory textbooks in English class, learners become passive readers of textbooks rather than being flexible material users (Zhang, 2018). There is often a common notion about the textbook that if the students are aware of everything that is in the textbook, a person knows everything. Their common sense about textbooks makes teachers believe that textbook is everything for the teaching profession and it is the ideology for any kind of teaching-learning. A textbook is taken as the ultimate source of learning. Textbooks may stop teachers from being skilful and they may not meet students’ need. (Richards, 2001). Textbook dependency has encouraged teachers to be

the source of information by reading textbooks and pouring the same thing on learners and thus has discouraged learners to have a reading habit (Hinchman, 1992). For learner-centered education, the presence of textbooks in the classroom may not be efficient and imaginative (Lubben et al., 2003). Teachers indeed find it easy to depend upon textbooks but this may not be good for meeting learner needs. Normally, the commercial materials are developed in the same format which follows one unit after another (Charalambous, 2011). This causes boredom in learners. They are monotonous of the same pattern of textbooks and the similar exercises after every lesson. The activities are poorly thought of and written as the textbook-oriented tasks are focused more on repetition which the students want to get rid of (Ewing, 2010). Due to this, learners who are not of the ability to memorize the things from the textbook may not enjoy it and therefore the educational achievement cannot be obtained at the desired level. Textbooks are designed in such a way that teachers find it easy to get the teaching pattern of the particular subject to teach in a school culture (Moulton, 1994). While focusing on textbooks, educators need to look at their quality especially in terms of content, format and appropriateness for students. To analyse the value of the textbooks, students may need to conceptualize their appropriateness for them in terms of vocabulary, ethnicity and gender. What if we make our students read textbook time and again but they do not learn anything out of it? This is the question that often hits our minds.

## **Method**

My research site is Universe school. The research was carried out for two months. I collected the data through observation and interview. There were five participants, one teacher and four students (two males and two females), in this research. Ms. Agnes is an English teacher for Grade five who is in her mid-twenties. Alan, Seth, Teresa and Eva are the students from Grade five. With the ethnographic enquiry, field/participant observation and interview were the main techniques for data collection. I started observing what resources the participants used in particular to learn the English language when they are in a non-textbook environment. The resources appeared to be of various types. I sorted them out into different categories. These categories are based on suggestions, texts, and dates.

## ***Resources in EFL Class***

Based on the suggestions, I observed the use of resources in English classroom. I noticed, who suggest the resources. Then I saw that there are some resources available in the class which the students self-suggest and there are some which are suggested by the teacher.

| Self-Suggested                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Other Suggested                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Library at school</b></p> <p><i>Yeah, I use it like once a week because we have a library once a week but still I go to borrow books on other days. -Seth</i></p> <p><b>Television, mobile, iPad, tablets at home</b></p> <p><i>I use Google like as I said in English and the dictionary like when you are confused in the words you search like what it means and I want to use some idioms. I search for idioms too.-Emily</i></p> <p><i>You know... I mostly use Google. I use it for finding word meanings, vocabularies, more than dictionaries. Before, dictionary would help me to find the meaning of the words but now, I get help from Google search. -Seth.</i></p> | <p><b>Novel</b></p> <p><b>Other learning materials such as flashcard</b></p> <p><b>Movie in the suggested time</b></p> <p><i>It depends upon Ms. Agnes... We watch a movie when she lets us. I think we finished more than five or six movies. – Seth</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, we watch it at school and it's animated and it's so fun and the English is improved. But we watch only when the teacher asks us to watch -Eva</i></p> |

Table 1: Resources based on suggestions

| Textual Resources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Non-Textual Resources                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>The novel</p> <p>Different language-oriented activities</p> <p>The figurative meaning of some idioms such as</p> <p>‘pain in the neck’ meaning ‘annoying’,</p> <p>‘a drop in the bucket’ meaning ‘a part of a whole’,</p> <p>‘hang in there’ meaning ‘don’t give up</p> <p>‘smell a rat’ meaning ‘suspect’</p> <p>The fishbone activity was an activity to make learners critical thinkers by thinking about the causes for the effect given.</p> | <p>Seth’s presentation on ‘Smart Paani’</p> <p>Video and video related questions</p> <p>Picture description</p> <p>Teacher-student interaction</p> |

Table 2: Resources based on text

| Out-dated materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Newly arrived materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Chart paper presentations</b></p> <p><b>Whiteboard</b></p> <p><b>Television News</b></p> <p><i>My father watches some news. It is mostly the social things like about Prime minister and so on and that's not what I like. - Emily</i></p> <p><b>Newspaper</b></p> <p><i>"...I don't like reading newspapers nowadays because I search in Google. So, I do not use newspapers much." -Alan</i></p> | <p><b>Powerpoint</b></p> <p><i>"...It is not restricted away from them, kept away from them. It is their resource. So, we just share it. I share it, they share it. Maybe this is the reason why they are so much confident in their presentation."- Ms. Agnes</i></p> <p><b>Laptop</b></p> <p><i>"...for research yeah, sometimes I do...and presentations, we need to make it on the laptop."- Teresa</i></p> <p><b>Mobile</b></p> <p><i>"...I use it for watching some videos and dictionaries. I learn interesting things about the world. Everyone in this world uses mobile." Emily</i></p> |

Table 3: Resources based on date

### ***Different Activities as Resources to Learn English***

Learning resources are often the properties that are used as materials to learn. Certain activities make students learn better as the students get involved in those activities and learn through them, the activities that learners themselves can act as resources. Here are certain activities that my participants were engaged in through which they had good learning regarding language.

#### **Reading Novel**

Unlike reading textbooks, reading novel is something of entertainment. It helps the readers gain interest in reading and at the same time, the readers can imagine many of the scenes of the novel exactly like that of their real life. It is not the intended teaching material for students. Rather, it is with authentic texts and in authentic texts, there is a presence of real language (Berardo, 2006). Novels are written in such a way that they create imagination in readers which takes them to the world of fiction. Regarding their understanding of the novel 'Inside out and Back Again,' Emily expressed *Inside out and back again is a really... It's about a girl. She is explaining what happens to her life when the Vietnam War starts and when she lives in Vietnam and transports to other countries. Alan puts on, it is about war. It's about a girl whose father has been lost. They are trying to escape the Vietnamese war and in America, she is being teased by lots of people. Seth*

explained, *So, the setting of the story is in Vietnam and the main character is 'Ha' and that is all about the Vietnam war and Ha and her family are trying to escape that war. Teresa kept her view as it's basically about a girl and her childhood. She is at war and she needs to go to other places and it's kind of adventurous.* Novel reading thus is an effective activity that makes learners engage in it in a meaningful way.

## Book Talk

On about the alternative days, I saw that one of the students would go to the front, sit on the chair, and would tell something holding a book in his/her hand. I came to learn that it was 'book talk.' They had this activity almost regularly in their English class. I wondered why they do this and what they learn from this. To make me understand about it, Seth explained, *you hear about this book and the things that you like about this book, the title of the book, we read the blurb part and we share a summary. I don't say the main part of this book. If I do so, when people issue this book, they think that I shared the whole book and they don't issue those books. Alan talks about 'book talk' being excited about what they do. He expressed, Book talk is all about talking about a book by focusing on the favorite part of it. We need to talk about that book but should tell the summary of the book without spoiling the main part.* I could feel how they were being excited to talk about this activity 'book talk'. Ms. Agnes also sees the huge importance of the 'book talk' activity. She sees Book Talk as a language reformer. She opines, *usually, our book talks are outdoor for our students to talk. This is just a productive outdoor for them to express themselves through books and because I am a language teacher, I want them to see the world through language.* It is one activity that is done by every individual on their appointed date but it is amazing how they have understood the value of it. Ms. Agnes finds this activity important since it improves students' reading habit and presentation skills.

## Presentation

I noticed that students got an opportunity to go to the front and do presentations on what they prepared. One of my participants Seth went to the front and gave Powerpoint presentation. He is just a student of grade five and he was giving a presentation in front of more than thirty people. That was the time I realized that I was wrong in being always stuck in the thought "They are not ready yet." When I talked with Seth about his presentation, he said, *Yeah, it was about smart paani and they did this for people in remote areas. It is to help people drink clean water. I learned much about smart paani. As I had to make slides for the presentation, I worked hard to learn about it. It was good that I could present it in front of all.* I asked him why he chose 'smart paani' for the presentation. He told me that they were supposed to present something that is about social contribution. He thought smart paani has contributed many people clean drinkable

water. Other students gave their presentations on other days too. I came to notice that giving topics for presentations or even just a small theme such as ‘social contributions’ led students to learn much more on their own. They learnt about something completely new without a textbook. Classroom presentations thus could be made the finest resource for students to learn about certain topics as well as about gaining confidence to speak in front of the mass.

### Picture Description

I was in the class as usual, listening to students’ conversation, watching their behavior with one another. Ms. Agnes demonstrated some pictures on the board through a projector. There was a picture of the current president of Nepal, Bidhya Devi Bhandari. Ms. Agnes asked who that was, and the students replied *Bidhya Devi Bhandari*. Her hand was a bit raised in the picture and the teacher asked why it was so. The students said *she is flinging flowers*. The teacher said, *Yes, she is flinging flowers. It is to worship or honor something*. Moving towards the next picture, the teacher asked, *what was that?* The students expressed like they did not know about it. Then the teacher said that it is *Guraju ko paltan*. The next picture was *Kumari ko rath* (Chariot of the living Goddess Kumari). There were about fifteen pictures that were displayed. They were: a boat pushed away by the tide, an airplane, Lakhe, shooting bullets, a border between China and Russia, a bridge, a maze, Bouddha, Olympic winter, and other few. The students were very much excited to see different pictures along with their associated meaning. The teacher told them that she would leave those pictures on rotation and that they were supposed to use any of the pictures they had seen to create sentences. She even gave the format to create sentences:

was \_\_\_\_\_ ing

had \_\_\_\_\_ en

had been \_\_\_\_\_ ing

The students started doing their tasks. As they were assigned this task individually, they did it themselves though they were in a group. They discussed which picture their nearby friends used and tried to choose the new one. The pictures were on and being rotated. It was a writing task, exactly similar to what we normally have in the textbook. Only the difference was that it was done differently. First, the display of the pictures, then its description, and later, another task generated from the same pictures. Authentic resources provide information on target language by using the real world, culture and language which help students to have contextual learning (Ahmed, 2017). The pictures were the unprepared teaching resources that was used for teaching English. It was used to teach grammar, not even free writing and that was the sensation of knockout to me. I

learned that pictures can be an effective resource to make students learn what is going on in society and also it is fruitful for language learning.

### ***Fish Bone Activity***

There was another activity in English class where I saw students engaged in writing tasks but it was different in the sense that they were writing on the structure of fish. The activity was named fishbone activity. The students were engaged in it. They were discussing it and were talking about the cause and effect of certain events. Ms. Agnes believes that Fish-bone activity has a huge role in making students think critically. She claims, it was not just to express their ideas but it is also to make them understand the relation between cause and effect. The fishbone activity was the activity that was aimed at making students give reasons for any event. It was to assist them in making a scientific attempt for reasoning. Of course, language develops as they have to think and write but at the same time, it develops their skills of reasoning.

### **Field Trip**

Students learn the language out of field trips as well. This was found in this class. As I saw students being excited about their field trip even after they returned from there, I wanted to know if this was part of their curriculum. Ms. Agnes said, *As usual whenever we have things like that, we always use opportunities like that as a resource for writing practices because these are their real-life learning. Whatever occurred out there, has helped their reporting ability. They have learned reported speech, to be able to talk in direct and indirect speech. What we are doing might be direct, somebody else reporting it. So, they just learn to report all these things in English conventions whatever they learn in grammar, they have to learn to do that.* It was not only the entertainment part that the students were having but they were learning so many things at a time and that is why the teacher and students both were positive about the field trip.

### **Teaching and Learning in EFL Class through Teacher-Students Interaction**

Teacher students' interaction is something that happens in almost every class. It was like a normal conversation but Ms. Agnes always tried to show them the right track or would bring them out from some confusing matters. Ms. Agnes clearly said, *In the class, the things we share are relevant. They are related to the classroom context. Especially when we sit together, I just let the conversation go. So, children are not filled with the brimmed with lots of ideas of not talking. So, I try to find bits and pieces just to communicate.* Ms. Agnes used to make class a normal place where students can have a conversation in a relaxed mode. As I was like their everyday person to be in the class, everybody had taken me as part of the classroom. I could see that their way of

speaking with one another was natural. Within this natural scenario, I had a way out to give their conversation meaning. To process the information they get and to set a clear goal, students need to be encouraged by the teacher as the interaction between students and teachers has to do with effective learning (Laci, 2013). Keeping this in mind, I tried to capture their conversation to see the meaning in it. I noted that there were various moments where the children got aided by Ms. Agnes. Students know certain things on any subject matter but they may not be perfect. It is a teacher who needs to give them support to make them accomplish their task. Various events took place in class where students got aided by the teacher during their interaction with the teacher. Some of them are presented here as examples.

**Example 1:** Once a student was sharing about the story she read, she shared the story and told that the story has tried to give one advice. Listening to her, Ms. Agnes asked what that was. She said, *I also have a smaller sister and I understand what it means.* Ms. Agnes corrected her, *Is it smaller sister or younger sister?* The students said, *younger sister...*

**Example 2:** It was novel reading time. The teacher was reading a novel aloud. At one point, there came a discussion on salty things.

Ms. Agnes: *Why is it salty?*

Student: *Salty kura dherai tikchha...* (My translation: Salty things last longer.)

Ms. Agnes: *What does that mean? How do you say?* (With a smiling face...)

Student: *We use salt to preserve food.*

Ms. Agnes: *Yes...*

**Example 3:** It was a talk about a school election. Ms. Agnes started explaining why the students are giving votes. The discussion went like this:

Ms. Agnes: So, why do you vote for any person? Student 1: *Teacher! They should be nice.*

Student 2: *Teacher! They have to be good people.*

Student 3: *Teacher! What if they ask us to give a vote and they give two chocolates?*

Student 2: *That's ta ghush khayeko jastai ho...* ( My translation: That's like bribery.)

Ms. Agnes: *What do you call for that?*

Student 1: *Bribe....*

Teacher: *Why don't you use that word now?* (Looking at student 2)

Student 2: *Yes, teacher... if they give two chocolates and tell us to vote for them, that's a bribe...*

The strength of teacher-student interaction could be sensed here.

### **Encouraging Learners to Write in EFL Class**

I always thought that resources normally mean materials. In the case of teaching-learning, they are the materials that mean the usable, touchable things that we get. To use humans themselves as a resource to teach was beyond my thinking. This is what I saw during my research. The teacher, Ms. Agnes showed one book to the students and said that the author of the book was from the same school and he was from grade four, Mr. Smith. She demonstrated the whole book and read the book aloud for all of them. As Mr. Smith was a junior to them, the students did pick up some fun things the author had written but they were very excited about the publishing of the book. Ms. Agnes asked, "Do you like to publish your book?"

Student: *Teacher what about grammar errors?*

Ms. Agnes: *That's where I am going to help you.*

Ms. Agnes encouraged them saying she knows some of the publishers and that she can talk with them if the students are interested. Ms. Agnes told them that she would call the author himself so that the students could ask the questions about the book him. Ms. Agnes wanted to invite the author as an authentic resource to give learners an experience of a real-life context (Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). They all were excited about that. When the author appeared, he was honored as the author, was asked to sit on the chair in front of them and he was interviewed though it was informal. I could see how the students of that level can ask the questions. To be honest, it was not like the exact interview that we see in media with celebrities. The exciting thing was that the author, a student of grade four had become the resource of their learning. As authentic resources hold cultural content within them, they assist learners to get the cultural lens of the target language and to help them in language learning (Kilickaya, 2004). Students learned a lot by the visit of the author and through the information he gave. He was being honest in the answer he gave and at the same time, he was encouraging them to be the author.

Mr. Smith: *My father's friend is a publisher.*

Students: *Who helped you in writing this book?*

Mr. Smith: *Nobody helped in writing but in drawing, my mother helped.*

Students: *From where did you get the idea for the names of characters?*

Mr. Smith: *It just came to my mind.*

Students: *Why is the name of the place Ben La Den?*

Mr. Smith: *My imagination!*

Students: *How long did it take to write this book?*

Mr. Smith: *More than two weeks.*

Students: *Why didn't you put Nepali names?*

Mr. Smith: *Because I like English.*

Everybody was being concentrated on the author, Mr. Smith. That made me think that humans can be used as a resource to learn. Ms. Agnes uttered that she uses humans as a resource to teach students. She said, One of my other subjects is Social Studies that I integrate. In our school, we have another individual. She is also partly involved in helping to understand history. Whatever we are doing, things get mixed up and we have people to help out like a historian or any contributor to society. So, we get ideas from them as well. Ms. Agnes just plucks in bits and pieces to make things work with her kids and to assist students in learning through interesting resources.

### **Teaching English without Constructed Boundaries**

While teaching English, we talk about tenses, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and different forms of speech. The grammatical portion of English has become tough like mathematics as it is all about grammatical rules, to say this and that. I was concerned about ways of teaching English in grade five by Ms. Agnes. She was teaching figures of speech but in such a way that she would ask the students to find out figures of speech in the novel they were reading or in the conversation, they were having. Students of grade five knew about similes, metaphors, and onomatopoeia. I put her a question if it is not difficult for the children of that level and her articulation went as *Actually, it is not difficult because, in our figures of speech, I am using only those which help them in writing at this grade level. So, simple things like simile, metaphors... they already use in their daily lives. It's just that they do not know that it is called similes, it is called metaphors. Onomatopoeia is a technical term, it's a word but... they are already using it. So, because they have already used it, all I did was just introduced these words. Ok, this is an onomatopoeia that you have been using. So, I did not have to go and teach them. I just used their learning from previous experience and I put it out in their writing. So, this refines their writing.* That was exactly seen in her class when the students were learning about figures of speech. The teacher asked, Ok, what is the figurative meaning of 'drop in the bucket'? One of the students said 'a part of a whole' and the teacher said yeah. Again,

Teacher: *Pain in the neck?*

Student: *Annoying, irritating*

Teacher: *Hang in there?*

Student: *Don't give up*

Teacher: *Smell a rat?*

Student: *Suspect*

This was going on and on and students seem excited to use these figures of speech in their conversation. Alan said, *Oh I can smell a rat here. Someone must have done something.* The way of teaching students figures of speech was great. As they were using it in class, it was a kind of practice for them and this would be seen in their everyday speech.

### **Beyond English Learning in EFL Class**

Learning English is not only the thing that happens in an English classroom, and English class is not only to learn English language in particular. It is associated with other learning that takes place in classroom. It is to learn from each other that learning the language can be lifelong skills. In this regard, my participants were learning the following things while they were in English class.

### **Exploring Culture, Exploring the World**

Students were in English class where Ms. Agnes was trying to engage them with a discussion which was her habit of starting the class. She was asking students about a holiday that was just a day before. It was 'Indra Jatra' and she said Alan might have enjoyed it a lot as the festival is most important to the Newar community and Alan was from the Newar community too. In the interview with him, Alan described his background saying I am from *Newar... Newar* ethnic group and I live in *Maharajgunj*. That description of him was a symbol of one's own identity and I could see how proud he was of his identity. On that day, in his class too, he was being honest to say that he was a child from the Newar community. He shared a story about Indra Jatra.

*Indra's mother needed a flower. As they were in the sky, she could not get that. So, Indra wanted his mother to get a beautiful flower as that was for Pooja. He came down to the Earth to pick the flower up. He came being a human. He searched and searched the flower. He saw one beautiful flower. It was the flower 'Parijaat'. He plucked the flower and people thought that he was a bad person to steal the flower. They captured Indra. When Indra's mother knew this, she came down to the Earth with her rath (chariot) and she saved him.*

After telling the story, he said, *As they celebrated 'jatra' after saving Indra, we eat samayabaji, chhoyela...* He was opening the doors for others to know more and more about his culture. Upon my query with Ms. Agnes, whether the conversation on that day was something related to their learning, she replied, *As they have already learned about Jatras in grade four and that day was also indrajatra, it helped me to take curriculum to understand festivals of Kathmandu valley, whatever we celebrated. It was also to check on their prior knowledge if they still know it.* As per Ms. Agnes, it is to check their prior knowledge but it was to let students know about each other's culture. After Alan's story about Indra Jatra, a student nearby him said, nice story. Alan proudly said, *kinavane ma newar ho ni ta, malai thaha xa* (My translation: because I am Newar, I know about it.) Yes, it was normal sharing time but I could sense much more cultural discussion on the day.

Ms. Agnes had recently visited Russia. She explained Grade 5 about the places in Russia, the people there, food and clothes people prefer there in Russia and many more. I was probing her if that was just a sharing. She articulated

*The book we are doing 'Inside Out and Back Again', is taking place in a communist setting. Here, we are using Russia as an example. It so coincidentally happened that I had to go to Russia. Before that, we were showing some art pictures of the children who saw the war live at that time...1945, they saw the war live and they just illustrated what had happened then that they could see people dying in the street from their window. These pictures were all in a gallery in Russia. So, I decided to find about the history out there. For enhancing their learning, I extended my journey. So, that was the purpose to share them about my visit to Russia.*

The students were exploring many things about Russia. For instance, the teacher showed the picture of something like a vessel made up of wood and she told the price.

Teacher: *It cost 450*

Student: *Nepali?*

Teacher: *Noooo....*

Student: *God, it's expensive.*

They learned about the punctuality of people. The teacher told her that Russian people are very punctual. She said *when they say it is 9, it is 9.* One of the students showed his curiosity, *sharp?* The teacher said yes.

Teacher: *I went to one war area. Wherever you go, you do not have to line up. It's*

*because there are fewer people to line up.*

Student: *Did you stay there long?*

Teacher: *Yes, it was like you could spend the whole evening anywhere because of the Sunsets at around 8:00 at night.*

Student: *Teacher! When I was in the U.K., it was the same. It was not dark even till 9 or 10.*

Teacher: *Yes and it was so cold. I was dying of cold.*

Student: *Did you appreciate the weather in Nepal?*

Teacher: *Yes, I sort of started appreciating the weather of Nepal.*

Student: *Teacher! What was more expensive?*

Teacher: *Water... in compared to soda water.*

Student: *Teacher! What is soda water?*

Teacher: *It's like fizzy water. I don't like that.*

Students: *Teacher! Do you understand the Malaysian language?*

Teacher: *A few...*

Ms. Agnes started giving more information about the food of the Russian people. She said *They eat a lot of salad. They eat yogurt, beetroot salad. Do you know what beetroot is? (Explained what it is.) The ice cream there was oh... so delicious.... One interesting thing about the people here is you don't understand whether the people are angry or they are speaking normally. Their expression is different.* It was just a sharing about the teacher's visit to Russia but students got many ideas about the country and they were still curious.

### **Choice of Resources and Teachers' Passion: Sustaining Non-Textbook Environment**

Learning resources are significant in the case where the textbook is no longer the learning resource. When students are given the liberty to study without textbooks, they come up with a blank book which they fill themselves with the knowledge they get by using other resource materials (Dorenbusch, 1990). We say that learning is the most prominent thing to happen in school but we are to be careful about the learning resources that our students are engaged with. Students' learning environment, students' gender, year of enrolment in school, academic performance, attitude, and self-efficacy all prompt to affect their learning (Detlor, Julien, Serenko & Booker, 2010). As Ms. Agnes said that the resources she chooses do matter in teaching, it is the same with students. Whatever

resources are provided to them or being used by them does affect their learning. Ms. Agnes said, *Textbooks are not only the resources to learn, but museums are also places to learn, sites and internets are places to learn. It's not textbooks alone.* Resources are to be chosen and made the special activity for students and that does affect their learning.

Another important stuff to think about is teachers' passion. If there is no passion in a teacher, he/she cannot do anything innovative and if there is no innovation in today's class, they do not learn well. Ms. Agnes thinks that passion is a prerequisite for any teacher. Without it, their class goes boring. She stated, *Yes, I think prerequisite...First, as a teacher, we have to be passionate and determined. When there is no passion and determination you are dry to teach. I think before any kind of resources, your passion, your determination is kind of needed there.* Thus passion is the major entity that needs to be in teachers and this is necessary for the advance of thinking about different resources. Ms. Agnes is such passionate about teaching that she involves students in different project work and makes others read them, at least see them. This shows that she is thinking not only about her students but overall, she tries to share the knowledge she has with other people too. For this, the teacher's passion is the most prominent thing.

## Conclusion

Using a textbook in traditional way is not a bad idea but depending solely upon it can be a bad idea when there is so much in today's educational world that are available outside the specific textbooks. When teachers get the freedom to use teaching resources out of their idea or according to the demand of their lesson plan, they can make students achieve more. Where there are no textbooks, there is no restriction of finishing the course. Whatever the teachers teach, they teach to make students learn better. Learners engaging themselves in the subject matter with different activities develop problem-solving skills which make them learn in a meaningful way. To teach learners to move ahead with the maximum use of resources, and to make them competent and confident global citizen is what the parents of this generation seek for and this is what the children of this era look for. Therefore, Learning English language in the Global context, without a textbook... gives opportunities for learners to learn through various local resources in and out of the classroom letting them exploit more relatable, and authentic resources which are meant to make their learning experience transformative.

## The Author

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## Global Englishes and their Impact on Teaching

Gobinda Puri

### Abstract

English, a means of global communication for international diplomacy, trade, work, media, and academics, has been inclusively recognized as Global Englishes (GE). This paper reviews the wider spread of English throughout the world from GE perspective and examines its impacts on the teaching of English. Moreover, it argues for the significance of GE informed pedagogy, which incorporates codeswitching, polylinguaging or translanguaging, with due respect to the diversity of English in Nepal's context. By reviewing and analyzing related literature, it reports that GE perspective, as a paradigm that also includes World Englishes, English as Lingua Franca, English as an International Language and translanguaging, provides a new perspective for teaching English against the monolingual 'Standard English Model' pedagogy. Researchers have developed the teaching strategies incorporating the major themes of GE and reported positive as well as negative attitudes of the stakeholders in various contexts. This article has research and pedagogic implications as it provides useful insights for teachers and researchers for further research in this area.

**Keywords:** global English, diversity, GE perspective, GE informed pedagogy, intercultural communication

### Global Englishes and their Impact on Teaching

Globalization of English in various statuses such as English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and English as an International Language (EIL) has created multiple versions which have also created dilemmas and confusions for its teaching. For example, many students and teachers often get confused about whether to follow Standard English or its local varieties, traditional monolingual approach or Global Englishes Language Teaching (GELT) or postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2001), and English for international communication or global intercultural communication. To address these issues, this paper critically reviews the wider spread of English and its impacts on teaching from the Global Englishes (GE) perspective, and the attitudes of the stakeholders towards

the integration of GE in pedagogy. It also argues for the effective implementation of GELT pedagogy in Nepal it since enhances intercultural communication, awareness of language variations and functions, and analytical and multidialectal competence (Fang & Ren, 2018).

As English language is the property of no one, it was even not of the British until the fifth century because the original inhabitants of ancient Britons spoke a Celtic language (Galloway & Rose, 2015). As mentioned by Galloway and Rose, English came to Britain only after the Anglo-Saxon invasion from the northern part of Germany and Jutland in Denmark that were the homes of Saxons, the Jutes, and the Angles. New settlers and invaders contributed to establish English in Britain which was known as Old English that was reflected in 'Beowulf' too. Later, Norman-French domination influenced English and changed it into Middle English which was nearly endangered. Influential French language of that time contributed more than 10000 words to English. English became standardized only after the Chaucery English version was chosen as the language of administration in the early 1400s. As it was connected with political, social, religious, economic, and educational spheres, it emerged as a standard language. However, it underwent several modifications to arrive at the modern form since the 1600s which is understandable for today's English speakers (Galloway & Rose, 2015). These historical facts reveal that English is not confined to a particular geography and group of people. It has spread throughout the world as common property.

Then English extended to other territories with multiple variations such as American English, Australian English, and Canadian English. In this regard, Jenkins (2009) mentioned two Diasporas. One of them was the large-scale migration of English speakers from Britain to North America, Australia, and New Zealand in the seventeenth and eighteenth century which caused the development of new varieties of English in these regions. The next was the spread of English as a contact language to new communities with British colonizers in West Africa and Asia. However, the British entered India in the 1600s before English had spread in other parts of the world (McCrum et al., 1992, p. 256). Similarly, Galloway and Rose (2015) also examined the spread of English through four channels: settler colonization, slavery, trade and exploitation colonies, and globalization. According to them, English made its way to the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific regions through settlers' colonization whereas it reached West Africa, Singapore, and Hong Kong through trade and colonization. They further stated that the spread of English through globalization was concerned with the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) which is still spoken in Japan, Denmark, Thailand, and many other countries.

Regarding the spread of English, Kachru (1992) introduced the concept of inner, outer and expanding concentric circles. The countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia where English is spoken as native language belong to the

inner circle whereas countries such as India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Singapore which were once colonized by British belong to the outer circle. In these countries, English is often used as second language. Similarly, countries such as Nepal, China, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia where English is spoken as foreign language or lingua franca belong to the expanding circle. Jenkins (2015), in this regard, compared Kachru's three circles with the first diaspora for norms providing, the second diaspora for norms developing, and the third diaspora for norms dependent respectively.

Kachru's (1992) study reveals that the countries which fall into the inner and outer circles provide and develop the norms of English language for their speakers whereas the countries in the so-called expanding circles are dependent on the norms developed by inner and outer circles. It is evident from the various studies (Coulmas, 2005; Gray, 2010; Jenkins, 2015) and the observations that Kachru's model of decades ago might not be applicable in the time of rapid globalization. The countries which were supposed to fall in the expanding circles might have already come out of the circle because there is no clear-cut basis for the divisions. The changing perceptions of English as a Lingua Franca, rapid spread of multiple variations, and advancements in communication technology reveal that Kachru's concentric circles might have already been outdated.

### **English as a Global Language**

The spread of English as a global language has undoubtedly caused multiple variations. It has acquired official status in more than 88 countries in the world (Galloway & Rose, 2015) and has been functioning as the language of international diplomacy, workplaces, and media. Crystal (2003) stated that more than 150 million people listened to English radio programs in more than 120 countries, and among them, more than 100 million people listened to these programs from the BBC radio alone. Moreover; English still dominates popular culture and the entertainment industry. More than 75 percent of the world's mail and information is recorded in English (McArthur, 2002). Similarly, English functions as a common language in many sectors such as international trade and business, tourism, civil aviation and education. It has been indispensable in many academic disciplines, global communications, and publications too. Furthermore, it is widely used elsewhere as a foreign language and language of global scholarship (Coulmas, 2005). However, the status of English is different in different contexts. For example, Crystal (2003, p. 61) states that it is spoken as first language by 320-380 million, as a second language by 300-500 million people, as foreign language or lingua franca by nearly one million people around the world. Galloway and Rose (2015) also mentioned that more than a billion people are learning English worldwide, 750 million of which are English as foreign language learners.

In Nepal's context, English entered as business lingua franca when Malla King

traded with Tibet and Northeast India during seventeenth century (Giri, 2020) although British missionaries introduced it earlier in 1661 (Giri, 2015). However, in teaching, it started formally only after the establishment of Durbar High School in 1854. Now, it is taught from pre-primary to university as an EFL as the most widely sought language after Nepali although 2011 census identified 2032 English speakers as the first language in Nepal (Pandey, 2020). Several studies indicate that English has developed as a global language with multiple variations where non-native speakers outnumber native speakers. Moreover, all the variations of English have inclusively emerged as a GE perspective for pedagogical purposes. For example, Fang (2018) reported the Chinese language teachers' positive attitudes towards the integration of multilingualism into curriculum and pedagogy. He further stated that language policies and practices should multilingually be oriented rather than monolingually oriented. The expansion and use of English in multiple sectors worldwide have recognized it as a global language and eventually emerged into language education as global Englishes perspective.

### **The Global Englishes Perspective and its Underpinnings**

The Global Englishes perspective, as a paradigm covers the diverse and interconnected fields of Kachru's (1992) World Englishes (WE), Seidlhofer's (2011) English as Lingua Franca (ELF), Matsuda's (2012) English as an international language (EIL), and Canagarajah's (2011) translinguaging (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020) which commonly highlight the diversity of English and how it functions in the globalized world with global ownership. Similarly, more hybrid concepts have recently emerged in teaching such as polylinguaging (Jørgensen et al., 2015), plurilingualism (Dooly & Vallejo, 2019), contemporary urban vernaculars (Rampton, 2011), translingualism (Canagarajah, 2013), metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), and multilingualism (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012). Despite having different orientations, these terminologies, collectively under the single umbrella term Global Englishes, have more or less the same pedagogical implication, that is to enable the English language learners understand linguistic realities of worldwide English use (Galloway & Numajiri, 2020). Pennycook (2007) earlier suggested 'to locate the spread and use of English within critical theories of globalization' (p.5). Presenting the complex vision of globalization in the forms of 'resistance, change, appropriation, and identity', he emphasized the heterogenization of English (p.6). He further argued that GE supports a critical understanding of globalization and language. As he argued, GE might suggest a 'blend of critical theories of globalization which is seen as inherently destructive force homogenizing the world and GE which is seen as a pluralized entity' (p.18). This indicates that GE adopts the multiple variations of English language against native speakerism.

The following underpinnings of GE as also stated by Galloway and Rose (2015) elucidate what Global Englishes entails and how it functions according to the specific

contexts.

- English has a changing nature.
- Englishes are in contact with one another.
- The ownership of English is viewed as global.
- English is adaptable, fluid, and ever-changing.
- Its code gets appropriated and adapted in varied contexts of use.
- Many users of English might have a multilingual repertoire that they utilize to successfully communicate in English.
- Knowledge of another language is a help, not a hindrance.
- Meaning is achieved through communication and negotiation, not through adherence to a native speaking –norms.

GE particularly addresses issues related to English uses in education, language policy, and planning. It also challenges the monolingual and native speakerism ideology in language teaching. For example, Fang (2018) in China and Prabjandee (2020) reported that even non-native speakers of English are also perceived as good English language teachers. Further, they reported that teachers had been trained in the GE perspectives in teaching and teachers' professional development. The evidence reveals that GE has been recognized in the field of teaching as an emerging perspective.

### **Global Englishes and English Language Teaching**

GE has a connection with teaching particularly English language teaching (Lu & Buripakdi, 2020) since it challenges the traditional norms of native speakers dominated English language teaching (Cogo, 2012) and informs for a new pedagogy with the inclusion of diversities. Many researchers have recommended GE-informed pedagogy to integrate it into the classroom materials and teaching as it contains a complete package of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Fang & Ren, 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2017). GE-informed pedagogy seems to impart the knowledge of English expansion, its varieties, nature of diversification, and changes. It may also raise awareness of the significance of linguistic, cultural and socio-political diversities and their impacts on other languages. Moreover, it might develop positive attitudes towards the unprecedented expansion and diversification of English recognizing the legitimacy and co-existence of other varieties with the acceptance of diverse cultures as stated by Fang (2018). Likewise, it might foster the skills of interpersonal communication, mutual support and respect, multidialectal competence, and analytical skills.

Many researchers applied GELT pedagogy and highlighted the significance of it in teaching. For example, Kohn (2015) found a positive impact of GELT and argued for the inclusion of non-native speakers' own English version in classroom pedagogy to encourage learning activities and creativity against Standard English orientation. Similarly, Rose and Galloway (2017) reported that an independent awareness raising activity like 'Speak Good English Movement' was conducted on the issue of the acceptability and legitimacy of their own English versions like Singlish (Singaporean English) and the diversity of English with critical reflection although most of the participants adhered to Standard English at the end. They suggested such a pedagogical task to challenge the already established ideology in the Singaporean and Japanese classrooms. Likewise, Fang and Ren (2018) introduced GE oriented course in China that developed students' deeper understanding of cultural-linguistic landscapes. They also suggested GELT for large-sized tertiary classes to raise awareness on the diversity of language and particularity. While adopting GE in ELT, Norton and Toohey (2004) also made a critique that critical assessment of the effectiveness should be made to challenge the deep-rooted 'standard language ideology'. Similarly, Bayyurt and Sifakis (2017) proposed EIL pedagogy to incorporate in the curriculum, teacher training, and teacher professional development programs. However, Cogo (2012) reported that integration of GE-informed pedagogy in materials development is scarce. Similarly, Gray (2010) found that textbooks at local levels are still inclined to native-oriented for promoting the values and practices of the new capitalism. These trends indicate that global Englishes perspectives need to be adopted in English language teaching elsewhere because it is supposed to enhance the learners' interpersonal communication, mutual support and respect, multidialectal competence, and analytical skills.

Global Englishes has invited alternative pedagogy in language teaching since it embeds global perspectives into the local for effective learning. For example, some studies (Fang & Ren, 2018; Lu and Buripakdi, 2020) have also focused on mutual intelligibility for international communication and suggested to adopt various interactive strategies, adjustment skills and translanguaging to support language learning. GELT may inform the stakeholders such as teachers, curriculum designers, and materials producers to understand local creativity as resources. Moreover, it can highlight communicative effectiveness rather than accuracy and promotes authentic communication in English as argued by Fang and Ren (2018). So, GE informed pedagogy seems to be effective not only to challenge the stereotypes in teaching but also to critically evaluate the materials presented in the textbooks and classroom.

### **Attitudes towards Global Englishes**

GELT is a new orientation in teaching English along with a complete set of content knowledge, required skills, and attitudes against the preoccupied traditional approach.

Naturally, the stakeholders in education such as policymakers, curriculum designers, teachers, and students may not easily adopt it because they might be oriented by that traditional approach. So, how it is perceived by the stakeholders requires to be explored. Some studies in various contexts such as China, Japan, Germany, and Australia have reported mixed types of attitudes of the learners and teachers. For example, Rose and Galloway's (2017) presentation strategy raised awareness and found students' positive attitudes towards different varieties of English in Japan. However, Galloway's (2013) study found positive attitudes towards native versions of English, particularly Americans because they preferred to sound like native speakers. This indicates that the notion of Standard English still dominates ELT in many parts of the world. For avoiding such domination, Galloway (2013) suggested raising awareness through interaction strategies. Similarly, Galloway and Numajiri (2020) explored students' attitudes towards the GELT curriculum in the UK where the majority of the students were Chinese and found that GELT curricular innovation is complex due to the conceptual transition. They strongly suggested that classroom context should be explored before taking any pedagogical intervention. On the other side, the study of Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2017) in Australia reported that teachers' perceptions of GELT were affected more by their traditional education because they seemed reluctant to adopt alternative varieties. The study shows that stakeholders' attitudes towards GELT play an important role for successfully implementing GE perspective in teaching.

In Nepal's context, there are very limited studies on students, teachers, curriculum designers and policy makers' attitudes or perceptions regarding GE informed language teaching. For example, Sah (2017) explored the university teachers' and students' views on the use of the first language in language teaching and indicated their positive attitudes towards code-switching. Moreover, Pandey (2020) analyzed the sociocultural status and functions of English in Nepal and reported the positive attitudes of the English language teachers towards the global variations of English. He further suggested adopting the more improvised and suitable language pedagogies. These pieces of evidence reveal that the students, teachers, school administrators and curriculum designers need to have positive attitudes towards global Englishes for effective implementation of GE informed pedagogy.

### **Impact of Global Englishes on Teaching English in Nepal**

Nepal cannot be an exception to the impact of GE, particularly GELT in teaching since it has long-term historical relation with English. For a long time, the Standard English perspective reigned in teaching and it still remains dominant. For example, in Nepal's education system particularly in English language curriculum, British English was recommended as Standard English. It was also evident from the literature and practices that Received Pronunciation, Standard Vocabulary and Structures were

highlighted. However, nowadays, the impact of GE can be realized in teaching to some extent. For example, researchers have argued that English in Nepal should be recognized as a distinct variant with unique names such as Nenglish, Nepali English, Neplish, Nepanlish, and Nepalese English (Giri, 2020). This suggests that while teaching the English language in Nepal's context, we need to be aware of such diversities and respect them in practice.

Nepal is a multilingual country since 129 languages are identified and most of them are spoken as mother tongues (Language Commission, 2019). Despite the multilingual situation of Nepal, the studies (Giri, 2014; Sah, 2017) reported that the language policy of the government had not addressed such multilingualism and language diversities by incorporating them in the textbooks and pedagogy for a long time now. However, the constitution of Nepal, 2015 along with the Education Act and Regulations has recognized Nepal as a multilingual and multiethnic country articulating that all languages spoken in Nepal are national languages. Moreover, the goal of English teaching has also been changed recognizing the need to learn for instrumental and practical purposes. These changes in language teaching can be attributed to the impacts of Global Englishes.

In teaching practices too, some minor impacts of GELT can be observed. For example, traditional Standard English ideology has been changed to some extent because the new generation of English teachers seems to have shifted their focus on communication rather than accuracy. Moreover, the school-level textbooks have been prepared realizing the multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic background of the learners without adhering to the standard native writers' texts alone. Regarding the impact of GE, Giri (2020) argued that "there is large scale code-mixing and code-switching between Nepali and English, transliteration of English words into Nepali is common and standard English rules are modified at the lexis, grammar, and writing levels" (p. 329). These changes can also be realized in classroom discourses where code-switching, translanguaging, and polylinguaging (Valdés, 2019) are allowed to practice. Moreover, a few of the reading texts written by Nepali writers have been incorporated into the courses.

The implications of global Englishes perspectives in teaching and learning can exert both negative as well as positive effects. The positive effects, for example, in the context of Nepal are the acceptance of Nepalese variation of English, the focus of teaching English as a means of communication, shifts from native-like pronunciation to comprehensible pronunciation and incorporation of English texts written by local authors. On the negative side, it might equally make our learners' English incomprehensible to the international communities. However, more GELT interventions and researches seem to be required in English language teaching in Nepal.

## Conclusion

Global Englishes perspectives on language teaching have emerged inevitably due to the rapid spread, dynamism, and multiple functions of English throughout the world. Moreover, non-native English speakers have outnumbered the native speakers. In this context, GE has provided its own perspective for language teaching with the set of knowledge, skills, and attitude to be included in the pedagogy. Many scholars have promoted GELT in multilingual contexts of their own challenging the traditional monolingual model and emphasizing local varieties of English. In doing so, GELT shapes the local identity by employing recent methods like translanguaging and polylinguaging in the classroom. Furthermore, it enhances the learners with interpersonal communication, mutual support and respect, multidialectal competence, and analytical skills. However, GE, as a vehicle for international communication requires speakers to consciously care for intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability. So, GELT raises awareness in the students about the diversity of English for intercultural communication. It enables the students to understand English variations, its specificities, dynamic nature and acquire as they are required for specific purposes. The studies have shown that stakeholders not only need to learn a particular variety of English but also differentiate and negotiate other varieties of English through discursive practices in the classroom so that they become able to prepare themselves for competitive job markets. Sometimes, students might not perceive the GELT pedagogy positively as shown in Japan. In such situations, teachers can adopt variability, negotiability, and adaptability of GE with innovative interventions such as debate, presentations, comparison, and contrast, as suggested in the earlier studies. In the context of Nepal too, GELT pedagogy has influenced teaching strategies, materials, curriculum, policy, and even ideology to some extent. However, the attitudes of stakeholders towards GELT and its classroom practices are yet to be explored. This paper may encourage teachers to adopt GELT pedagogy in the classroom and researchers to investigate further in the Nepali classroom contexts whether awareness and respect for multilingualism, cultural diversity and identity exists.

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## Exploring Continuous Professional Development of Woman English Language Teachers

Kamala KC

### Abstract

This study explored woman English as a Foreign Language teachers' perceptions and practice of professional development. In this research, semi-structured interviews were used for data collection from purposefully selected participants. The participants were three secondary level woman English language teachers of Rupandehi district, state no. 5, Nepal. These teachers had a proper understanding of professional development and were found to put significant personal effort into their professionalism including the training given by the Ministry of Education. In this study, I used the theory of Liberal Feminism. Jaggar (1983) advocates that society as whole benefits from the public contributions of woman in general and educated woman in particular. The study contributes to all concerned stake holders including, teachers, students, teaching institutions, training centers and associations, and trainers to understand the value of professional development for woman EFL teachers, plan and provide more opportunities, and take it into the main stream of ELT discourse to improve the status of woman English language teachers in academia in Nepal.

**Keywords:** continuous professional development, woman EFL teachers, training

### My Experience as a Woman English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teacher

English as a foreign language teacher in general and a woman EFL teacher in particular, I start the write-up sharing my journey of teaching and professional development. In 2005, I entered Tribhuvan University as a part time lecturer. A young girl aged 22, I was assigned classes in bachelor's and master's degrees. It was comfortable to take classes in the bachelor's level as most of the students were younger to me but I felt quite odd to take classes in master's degree as many of the students were head teachers of the locality. The most obvious reason for this oddness was that I was quite young and a woman EFL teacher. Despite the hard work in content, I often felt less confident in presentation. However, I put every effort to pretend my full confidence in the class. Thereafter, I started to observe the classes of man counterparts to see the level

of their confidence secretly. They seemed more confident in presentation to me. At that time, I took that as my inferior complexity and put much effort into my teaching. But at this level of my career, I realize that there was nothing wrong with me and my teaching then. I had been the victim of the socio-cultural context of my country where boys are trained to be confident and leaders since childhood whereas girls are expected to be quiet and inferior to man members in the family. I guess, I was representing the stereotypical role of a woman unconsciously in my class. Apart from this, I was a novice teacher in the campus without any practice of induction and mentoring which are very important to support and guide novice teachers in the early stages of their career. Mohan (2011) argues that “induction, plays a key role in clarifying expectations and values, attending to risk management issues, assisting adjustment to the new work climate and providing necessary technical and professional information in order that the new staff member can become a productive and committed part of the university community” (p.85). After two years of teaching experience in campus, I became the life member of NELTA, and also an executive member of NELTA, Rupandehi. Conferences, seminars and work-shops helped me build up my confidence. I further developed reading habit of ELT journals and articles. This reading habit encouraged and enhanced my writing skill as I started writing articles and publish them in journals. Along with that I realized teaching job is challenging if one is not updated academically. Therefore, in 2019 I thought to continue for further studies. The journey of further studies kept me involved in reading, writing, researching and publishing. These activities have been very vital to grow myself professionally as an EFL teacher. Thus, my own experience of professional development led me to study the status of other woman EFL teachers and their understanding and practice on CPD.

Traditionally teaching was considered as the profession of men in Nepal. Woman in teaching were hardly found in the past. But the situation has been different now. Many woman have chosen teaching as a career although the number is still very low in comparison to men teachers. The lack of woman EFL teachers, and hence the absence of woman role models in schools, is one of the demotivating factors to lower participation of girls, and gender-based discrimination in education (Bista, 2006) in context of Nepal. Professional development of woman EFL teachers is very important to encourage more female students to get well educated and come into teaching. For this, woman EFL teachers need to be educated, mentored, and involved in different trainings for their professional enhancement.

Teaching is a continuous learning process; a teacher struggles hard to continue their professional development throughout their careers. An EFL teacher always wants to be linguistically and pedagogically better at teaching. For that she goes through additional training, seminars, workshops, conferences, publications etc. to update her knowledge and skills required in the 21st century for professional development. She is educated in three different phases: pre-service education, induction, and in-service

training. However, continuing professional development is crucial in teaching because pre-service education and induction training are not sufficient for teachers (Padwad, 2011, p. 8). In fact, the field of language teaching undergoes rapid changes, what teachers know about language learning and teaching changes over time. Therefore, teachers engage in a variety of professional development activities to expand their knowledge base, reflect on their practice, and adapt or change their practice or prepare for new responsibilities (Murray & Christison, 2011, p. 195). Therefore, teachers need to expand their knowledge and update themselves every now and then if they are to continue to find language teaching rewarding. Though some teachers upgrade their skills on their own, many need to be trained. Therefore, it is the responsibility of schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions to provide opportunities for teachers to develop longer-term career goals and opportunities over time. According to Richards & Farrell (2005), “Opportunities for in-service training are crucial to the long-term development of teachers as well as for the long-term success of the programs in which they work” (p.12).

In the context of Nepal, NCED (National Center for Educational Development) conducts various training and programs for teachers in order to improve the quality of education in Nepal. The main aim of such trainings is to strengthen and update knowledge, qualification, proficiency, and ability of the teachers. School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) has the provision of Teachers’ Professional Development (TPD) ensuring the access of all in-service teachers to the TPD training of 30 days within 5 years (MC, 2018). This training only cannot be sufficient for EFL teachers’ professional development. Therefore, they have to make lots of efforts individually for their professional growth. There are many other organizations such as British Council, American Embassy, Nepal English Language Teachers’ Association (NELTA), Teacher Educators’ Society, and Nepal English Scholars’ Association that conduct workshops, seminars, and conferences for English teachers face to face and virtually. Despite many opportunities, woman EFL teachers are found to update themselves less frequently than man teachers in our context due to house-hold responsibilities. Therefore, woman teachers of the present generation should put much efforts to bring change not only in ideology of equality but in practice at home and at work place.

If we observe the status of woman EFL teachers regarding professional development in Nepal, it is not satisfactory. My personal experience and available anecdotal evidence suggest that the main hindering factors for this are ‘time poverty’ and ‘family-work balance’ as woman are supposed to perform the processes of social reproductions from bearing and rearing children to house-hold activities although men have always done some of it too (Fraser, 2016). “Woman teachers’ participation in the in-service training courses is very nominal” (Bista, 2006, p. 161). However, teachers can create many opportunities of CPD themselves to develop their career and get

professionally sound, very few woman teachers take up these opportunities and manage professionalism. In this study, I desire to explore how EFL teachers enhance their professional development in general and woman EFL teachers in particular, as woman teachers' perceptions and experiences on CPD are found to be less explored.

The main objective of this study was to explore the perception and practice of woman EFL teachers on professional development with opportunities and the challenges that come their way. The main research question of this study is: How do woman EFL teachers at secondary level in community schools develop themselves professionally? To seek the answer of the main question, I set the following additional questions:

1. How do woman EFL teachers perceive continuing professional development (CPD)?
2. How do they narrate their experiences about opportunities and challenges of CPD in their career?

### **Theory of Liberal Feminism**

Liberal Feminism emerged in the eighteenth century, with a strong focus on political and legal reforms aiming to give woman equal rights and opportunities. Liberal feminists (Mary Wollstonecraft, Judith Sargent Murray, and Frances Wright in the late eighteenth century) argued that society holds the false belief that woman are, by nature, less capable intellectually than men. Such perception discriminates woman teachers in academia. The mainstream liberal feminism places great emphasis on the public world and typically supports laws and regulations that promote gender equality and ban practices that are discriminatory towards woman. Further, liberal feminists argue that society as a whole would benefit from the public contributions of woman in general and educated woman in particular. Though the area of woman teachers' professional development is less explored I found few studies that are discussed below:

In context of Nepal, Gurung (2018) studied "Female EFL teachers and professional development: The inside stories" in M Phil dissertation. In the study, she found her participants perceiving PD very positively. They preferred informal ways of PD far better for their professional upliftment. However, they stated that higher academic degrees and formal trainings of course boost up their self-esteem and confidence. Home responsibility and gender biased social construct were the main challenges for them. However, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations played vital role to help them grow professionally. Similarly, Bista (2006) examined 'Status of female teachers in Nepal' in relation to teaching profession of female teachers and status of different aspects i.e., demographic, household dynamics, working environment, gender environment. Regarding the professional development of woman teachers, the study concluded that

most woman teachers were either untrained or partially trained, which does not appear to be the case with man teachers. Many professional, institutional and family reasons prevented woman from participating in training courses.

Kagoda (2014) studied “Determinants of Career Professional Development of Female Teachers in Uganda”. Data indicated that woman were still regarded as second/third class citizens in some parts of Uganda. Woman teachers in rural areas were dominated by men and traditional culture. This gender inequality had roots in the community where schools were located, explaining why even men had no respect for woman teachers. The men dominated education structures discourage woman teachers to aspire for more education and promotion. Moreover, poor remuneration which was often delayed, poor unmotivated students in large classes and poor learning environment combined with heavy domestic work were factors which regarded by most respondents as hindering factors for women teachers’ professional development in schools. Similarly, Hassen, (2016) carried out a study on “Female Teachers’ Professional Development through Action Research Practice”. The participants of the study were 23 women English language teachers of schools and colleges. The methods of data collection were teacher reflection, and in-depth interview. The EFL teachers reported that the Action Research (AR) involvement helped them develop their professionalism.

In this way, the above studies show that woman EFL teachers in South Asia do not enjoy the equal status as men teachers do. The main reason behind this is the socio-political construct of the societies that see women as inferiors and more responsible for house-hold things. However, woman EFL teachers can be encouraged to be involved in CPD through action research, reflective writing and many others types of formal and informal practices of professional development.

## **Method**

The purpose of this study was to explore professional development of woman EFL teachers of secondary level in community schools in Rupandehi district. This study employed qualitative approach. I took in-depth interview with my participants as interpretive researcher relies upon the research work on qualitative data gathered from open ended interviews. I used interpretive paradigm in this study which demands the researcher to be one of the participants herself and understand the social phenomena “through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21).

## **Participants**

The participants of this study were three secondary level woman EFL teachers

of three different community schools in Rupandehi, in mid-western Nepal. All three participants had more than half a decade experience in teaching as secondary level English teachers in community schools. They have entered in community schools from open competition of Teacher Service Commission. One of the participants was the head teacher in her school. Another participant was about to complete M Phil in ELE from a university. The third participant lived away from home as she had been transferred to a remote place. I collected data through semi-structured interviews. There were 15 questions altogether but I was flexible enough to ask many probing questions as it was research about professional development, a big area of discourse in ELT. All the participants were made sure about confidentiality before they were interviewed. The interviews were recorded digitally taking permission of the participants and then were transcribed.

## Results

Analyses of the data revealed three different themes: perceptions of woman EFL teachers on professional development, their professional practice, and challenges that come their way.

### *EFL Teachers' Perception on Professional Development*

Before entering into the main issue of the study, I wanted to get some ideas of woman EFL teachers regarding professional development. It is because, I believe that if teachers have some basic concepts and understanding about the issue then only, they can further talk about their perception, practice, opportunities and challenges. Therefore, in the interview, I began with the first question of the study to get their perceptions and understanding about professional development. In the response to the first question about the perception of professional development, one of the participants said:

*“Teaching is a continuous process; one has to learn throughout the life. It is rewarding as it helps us grow professionally. We are given TPD training for 30 days after we are enrolled in teaching in community schools for five years’ time but this is not enough for a teacher to get updated professionally. So, one has to keep involving oneself in learning process every now and then’.”*

Similarly, another participant stated:

*“Professional development for me is developing myself professionally to meet the interest and expectations of my students. Until and unless I am professionally sound, I am unable to find their interest and expectations. Though, we are trained by TPD or CPD formally twice by the government every five year but this formal*

*training may not work for long time run therefore, we teachers have to find many ways to update ourselves personally for sound teaching career.”*

According to their views, teaching is a continuous process. Teachers keep learning directly or indirectly throughout their lives to meet the interest and expectations of the students. Training conducted by the government such as TPD or CPD were not sufficient for them. Therefore, teachers did many things on their own to sustain in this profession. Teachers can learn through Self-directed learning (SDL). SDL is “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (Knowles, 1975, p. 18). Apart from the formal trainings of the government, they need to go through several practices themselves i.e., read different scholarly journals that inform about innovative teaching pedagogies and new information in the field of ELT. Moreover, they can learn from their past experiences, peer-share, collaborate with colleagues to solve the practical problems in the institutions. Furthermore, they should be involved in research works, paper writing and publications. Further, they can also enhance themselves professionally attending many trainings like seminars, conferences, workshops conducted by many other non-profit forums i.e., NELTA, British Council, American Embassy and many more scholarly associations face to face or virtually in context of Nepal.

### ***Professional Journey as an EFL Teacher***

The main focus of this study was to explore how these woman EFL teachers are developing themselves professionally. When asked about their beginning journey as a secondary level English teacher in community schools, they replied that they did not get any induction and mentoring programs at schools. Regarding this, one participant said:

*“Though there is the provision of the government giving induction program to the newly appointed teachers by the schools, I didn’t get any type of induction and mentoring from my school.”*

Another participant stated,

*“No, I didn’t get any opportunity of induction and mentoring though it was a model school of the district but I am now planning to manage induction and mentoring program for newly appointed teachers in this school where I am working as a head teacher.”*

From the above responses, it is clear that though induction and mentoring programs are mandatory for new teachers, these have not been properly adopted by many community schools in Nepal. However, these teachers did not face many problems as they had long teaching experience in private institutions before they were appointed as secondary level English teachers in community schools. But it becomes challenging for the new inexperienced teachers to adopt themselves in the school environment and teaching without induction and mentoring in the beginning journey of their career. According to Miao (2009), “The urgent problem that we are facing is that many new teachers are either not inducted at all or not appropriately inducted to meet the challenges they encounter in their early career, which can lead to other problems” (p.1). Therefore, induction and mentoring play significant role to adjust in the school environment for the new teachers.

Regarding in-service teacher training programs, they shared their own experiences. In the response to the question ‘What sort of practices did they go through for professional development after they got enrolled in teaching in community schools professionally and personally?’ They revealed multiplicity of ideas which are further thematized in the following sub-topics:

### ***Opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD)***

Participants agreed that they got opportunity to get TPD training from the Ministry of Education after they were appointed in community schools as English teachers and it particularly helped them carry-out action research, plan lessons and design project work.

#### ***Regarding this one participant stated,***

*‘I got TPD training from the government twice. After getting two modules, it got over. This training particularly helped me carry out action research prepare project work, and reports. We continuously carry out action research each year, this is the system in our school’.*

Similarly, another participant said, *‘There is TPD or CPD training for teachers in the TPD centers. I got this training twice in five years’ time for 30 days. We got trained in action research and lesson plan. We need to conduct action research, prepare report, and submit it to municipality per-year. It also helps us in our promotion’.*

These responses of the participants revealed the fact that TPD training of the government is the first formal in-service training of their professional journey. However, it is conducted for a short period of time. It particularly makes teachers trained in carrying

out action research so that they can solve everyday problems in their classroom as well as for their promotion. Action research is highly recommended for teachers since it enables them to reflect on their classroom activities (Babcock, 2001, as cited in Hassen, 2016). Although these trainings certainly groom new teachers in teaching in the initial phase, they need to go through other activities for their professionalism continuously.

### ***Self-directed learning (SDL) for Professional Development***

Participants stated that short formal trainings were not sufficient for the long-term teaching career as many things in education go changing. Particularly, they stressed on practicing several other things individually for professional development. When I asked them what other things they carried out themselves for professional development apart from formal trainings of TPD, they came up various things as presented below:

### ***Trainings organizations in relation to Professional Development***

These participants revealed that many trainings conducted by other teacher training centers were very fruitful to them in their professional development apart from TPD. In this context one participant said, *'I attend many trainings conducted by British Council, NELTA, The Research and Innovation Center, KU etc., time to time and these have helped me a lot'*. Similarly, another participant stated, *'I take part in other trainings occasionally. I attend NELTA conferences and trainings. I have experience of a trainer for primary level English teachers in NELTA at Palpa and Gulmi. I also participate in some webinars conducted at national and international level'*.

This indicates that these woman EFL teachers were managing their time and were involved in other training organizations to enhance their professionalism. These organizations helped them not only to be trained but have also developed them as trainers. "The teacher associations are making their efforts in their respective countries by organizing seminars, conferences and other events" (Khanna, 2011, as cited in Gnawali, 2013, p.37). This indicates that teacher training organizations in Nepal play important role in CPD of EFL teachers.

### ***Reading, Writing and publishing***

A good teacher always manages time for reading, writing and publishing if s/he has to exist in teaching profession competing with others in present time. When I asked my participants on this aspect of professionalism they came with these ideas.

One participant said:

*“As an individual I am interested in reading, writing and publishing. I keep reading journals to update myself with recent publications. I have been writing articles these days and I am seeking the ways where and how I can publish them.”*

In this regard, another participant said,

*“Reading is very important. I manage time to read at least half an hour every day. In this lock-down period, I worked elaborately with my husband in writing a book for secondary and lower secondary level. I was asked to write some chapters. I worked as a co-author. Apart from this I write articles and have published some of them.”*

From these responses, it is found that they were involved in reading, writing and publishing to keep them informed and updated to the new explorations in the field of ELT. Furthermore, reading and writing are very important for overall development of their cognitive, emotional, economic and professional development. It is also believed that the more teachers lack these, the more hindrances appear in the classroom teaching. In this regard Suh, Wang, and Arterberry (2015) argue that “SDL is the tool to facilitate... lifelong learning” and acts as a driving force in enhancing knowledge and acquiring skills in adult education beyond the classroom context (p. 688).

### ***Challenges of woman EFL teachers in CPD***

There were many challenges that female teachers encountered. When I asked my participants about the challenges, they face they came up with the following challenges:

#### ***Responsibility at home and at work-place***

If we see the social construct of our country, women are found to be more responsible for the children than men as both the participants stressed that although they get support of their family in rearing the children, they are more responsible for them. They said these are not only the case of their family but our society wants women to perform like this. It was a great challenge of the woman EFL teachers to manage personally and professionally at home and workplace, respectively. Due to this, they had to miss many professional activities. Regarding this one participant shared her experience, *‘Once there was a webinar organized by STFT, it started at 7 pm when I had to prepare food for the family. Though the webinar was very important for me as it was on ICT, I had to miss it’*. Regarding this one of the participants who stayed away from home for her job stated, *‘I stay away from home. I do not have home responsibility, but I feel lonely here and always think about my family members and seek chances to get to them on holidays.’*

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### ***Believed to be less productive and less potential at work place***

When these participants were asked how they get treated at their work-place. They shared that they are treated as inferior, less productive, and cannot have good leadership.

Regarding this, one participant stated, 'People think woman teacher cannot give time, she cannot perform well because she is not bold. Such circumstances force me to think that I am really inferior to them. My leadership gets questioned as a head teacher. They think that with woman teachers, they cannot work together. We are just taken as representors. *'In this prospect, socialization theorists argue that women can perform as well as men can in schools if they are not treated unfairly or socialized into thinking that they cannot do well (Thompson, 2003). This concept of society about the woman teachers needs to be changed. Woman EFL teachers are as potential and productive as men teachers are.'*

### ***Problem of Time management***

Time management was one of the challenging factors for woman EFL teachers to balance their professionalism. Participants expressed that they always run short of time as they were equally responsible at home and workplace. It was very difficult for them to manage time to take trainings, read and prepare for classes. Regarding this one participant shared how she manages her time, *'Sometimes I wake up at 4 in the morning, prepare meal and leave for school at 6 a.m. for tuition class. So, I hardly can manage time to read'*.

Similarly, another participant said, *'I manage time to read or prepare myself after I finish my household things in the evening time. Even I have to cut off my sleeping hours for my professional life'*. The main hindering factors for this are 'time poverty and 'family-work balance' as women are supposed to perform the processes of social reproductions from bearing and rearing children to house-hold activities although men have always done some of it too (Fraser, 2016). Despite all these challenges, woman EFL teachers were making efforts to enhance their professionalism.

Though one of the participants seemed to have much time for PD as she stayed away from home for the job purpose, she seemed to perform less PD activities. The hindering factor behind this was her transfer to remote place for the job. She was staying alone for five years and was worried most of the time when she was transferred to a local school. In her vacations she preferred to meet her family instead of taking part in PD related activities. Geographical barrier was another reason that hindered her from PD. The internet service was very poor in her area.

## Discussion

Woman EFL teachers seemed to have good understanding of CPD and put much effort into it. Ministry of Education and other training associations played an important role in their professional enhancement. However, they reported that they have double loads as they had equal responsibility at their home and workplace. They could hardly manage time to update themselves professionally and compete with men counterparts. The situation now has been changed in comparison to past. Although, family seems a bit supportive to them in present time, the household responsibility and children again were major responsibilities. Transfer to remote place was another barrier for PD.

The society needs to be changed in the roles women and men are given in the family. The major change agent for this is education. We can bring the change in the thoughts of people and the social construct if gender issues are seriously kept in education since the elementary levels in the schools. A gender-neutral education needs to be provided to students from the basic level because gender images and roles are essential parts of any culture, hence, the manner in which the genders are depicted in the textbooks play a part in building the image of male and females in a learner's mind. As a result, schools can ensure fairness in gender which, in turn, benefits society. According to Mkuchu (2004) textbooks shape attitudes by transmitting a society's culture. Therefore, our present curriculum should come out of it and represent gender issues, female participations and their constructive roles as one of its major agendas of education to change the rooted social construct of gender discrimination. Both men and women should be taught about cooking, cleaning, making household repairs, doing laundry, washing the car, and taking care of children. Then only there won't be any type of work that is gender specific and thus women get opportunity to enhance themselves professionally. Liberal feminists struggle to remove barriers that prevent females from reaching their goals, whether in education or in the work force. Furthermore, woman teachers need to be trained to be trainers so that they get opportunities to develop leadership in them and can also empower other woman teachers uplifting them professionally.

## Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to explore the professional development of EFL teachers. Therefore, the participants were asked about their perception and practice of their professional growth. The findings revealed that they had proper understanding about professional development and were found to put considerable efforts individually for their professionalism in addition to the trainings given by the Ministry of Education. However, they are found to be more responsible for house-hold activities. The other major challenge they faced was patriarchal society which often doubts their intellect and leadership capabilities. Another great challenge in PD was their transfer to remote

places. Despite the challenges, woman EFL teachers at present were smart, career oriented and dedicated enough to compete with men counterparts. The study has some limitations about the selection of participants, and limited number of participants selected purposively. Similarly, the findings do not represent all of the teachers' perception and practice on professional development in the country. Despite having some limitations, it contributes to all concerned stake holders like, teachers, teaching institutions, training associations, and trainers to understand the value of professional development of woman EFL teachers and take it in the mainstream of ELT discourse to improve the status of woman teachers in academia.

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## Languages in Education: A Critical Ethnography of a Micro-level Policy

Basanta Kandel

### Abstract

This article explores the language policy in education (henceforth, LPE) at the local level. Adopting the critical ethnography study for 6 months at Vyas Municipality, I reveal what ideological awareness the policymakers and arbiters have on LPE and how do they interpret and appropriate it in multilingual school setting. The information collected through in-depth interviews, FGD, participant observation, and document reviews have been analyzed, interpreted, and triangulated critically. The study shows three major findings regarding LPE in local government; first, LPE has created a public debate and ideological discrepancy in multilingual school contexts; the second, the local LPE has diverse interpretation, appropriation, and practices; and the last, the English language policy (ELP) appears as a ‘black hole’, which has been gradually swallowing other local and indigenous languages. However, the language policymakers and arbiters have been gradually raising critical awareness for appropriate LPE and its practices that seems a positive advancement at the local level.

**Keywords:** language policy in education, critical ethnography, ideological discrepancy, English as a ‘black hole’, critical awareness

### Introduction

Language policy in education (LPE) diversely termed as; language education policy, language-in-education policy, medium of instruction (MOI) policy – focuses on educational settings within language policy and planning (LPP) research, generally from basic to tertiary level (Menken & Garcia, 2010; Tollefson, 2013). Beginning in the 1970s, research on LPE focused primarily on debates about the value of monolingual and bilingual approaches to instruction. Nowadays, LPE is ubiquitous worldwide which has fascinated a great deal of consideration from scholars in LPP (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018). The field of language policy has rapidly expanded to include an increasingly diverse body of research including LPE which focuses on how language policy creation, interpretation, and appropriation in schools impact educational processes, and

communities with particular attention to the minority and indigenous language users to use their languages (Johnson, 2013; Johnson & Pratt, 2014). Johnson (2013) states that schools are studied as sites of language policy processes that rely on the ideological spaces unique to the classroom, school, and community. Ricento and Hornberger (1996) present the metaphorical “LPP onion”, meant to depict the layers of LPP activity, and place the teacher at the center, thus emphasizing the power of teachers. “LP layers” of Johnson (2013) asserts the processes of creation, interpretation, and appropriation where policies are first shaped as a result of intertextual and interdiscursive links to past and present policy texts and discourses. After the creation of the policy, that is put into motion and made open to diverse explanations by language policymakers and arbiters. In a similar vein, critical ethnography creates a connection between policy texts and the role that various actors play to resist and appropriate those policies in multiple layers (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011). The critical ethnographic approach interprets language policy as a multilayered construct where power relations, social structure, economy, politics, and ideology are intricately interwoven (McCarty, 2011, cited in Phyak, 2013). McCarty (2011) further claims the approach is an appropriate outline where LPP actors’ (e.g. policymakers, students, teachers, and communities) voices contend with each other reflecting their social, ethnic, political, and economic meanings, agendas, and connections.

In the context of Nepal, the LPE has been a major disputed subject tracing from Rana autocracy to federalism with numerous trajectories. LPE under the Ranas served to boundary education to privileged, mostly Rana family members where the LPE was English. Durbar High School, the first school of Nepal had employed English language policy. Awasthi (2004) states that the LPE developed during the Panchayat regime focused the Nepali language and declared linguistic nationalism; therefore, the Nepali became a part of the nationalistic movement across the country during the period. The 1990 Constitution was a milestone from monolingual ideology to ‘multilingual turn’ (May, 2014), and ideological transformation in LPE in Nepal. However, the provision of educational and cultural rights was overtly stated in the constitutions for Nepal’s minorities but lacked the practical implementations. Until the adoption of the Interim Constitution in 2007, the Nepali was the single language of government affairs, business, and education. The Nepali-medium mandate had come (directly or indirectly) from the Nepali monarchy, an authoritarian regime that held power for more than 240 years, and was part of the greater hegemonic, nationalist ideology that promoted ‘one religion, one culture, and one language in the name of national unity (Awasthi, 2004; Yadava, 2007). At present, the political transformation of Nepal from a constitutional monarchy to a federal democratic republic, and from a Hindu polity to a secular country has brought some crucial changes in LPE (Phyak, 2016). The proliferation of the Constitution of Nepal (2015) legitimately transformed the country into a Federal Republican-Democratic nation that delegated the power of decision-making in LPE to the local governments

(Poudel & Choi, 2020). The constitution provides 22 functions and matters of the local governments including basic and secondary education (schedule 8, no. 8) and protection and development of languages, cultures, and fine arts (no. 22). The local government is the authorized body to design and develop LPE at the local level concurrent with the federal and provincial government policies and framework. Therefore, the local government has been managing and adopting new challenges and opportunities to address the local issues in education and LPE. In addition, the responsibility of managing schools, teachers, education, language policy, or MOI in pedagogy has been transferred to the local government. Further, it can support framing curriculum and textbooks, conducting training for teachers, allocating budget, managing resources, and adopting plans, policies, and programs in schools. According to the constitutional provisions, the local governments have formed an education committee including experts, politicians, head teachers, and education officials headed by the Mayor/Chair of the municipality which is legally responsible for planning and monitoring local curriculum, create, implement, and appropriate LPE, MOI policies, and financial support for educational institutions. The constitution has provisioned that every Nepalese community residing in Nepal shall have the right to get education in its mother tongue (MT), to open and operate MT schools and educational institutes, in accordance with law (Article 31), and every person and community shall have the right to use, promote and preserve their languages and scripts (Article, 32).

In this milieu, the policymakers at local government and their ideology shape the LPE. However, very few local governments have drafted language policy document and LPE. Regarding Gandaki province (my study site), the provincial government has passed the education policy, 2021 and implemented to the region where the LPE has been addressed in the article no. 11.5. The article 11.5.1 and 2 state that multilingual education policy (trilingual) will be implemented for the basic level, and the textbooks, teaching and instructional materials, and other resources will be developed, printed and distributed with the effective supervision and evaluation. Similarly, Vyas Municipal Education Act (2017) and Bylaw (2018) instruct to implement trilingual education policy i.e., Nepali, English, and mother tongue in its territory. The policy states, the local LPE will be Nepali, English, or both languages. Further, it states, mother tongue policy may be imparted up to the basic level (grades 1 to 5) and language subjects will have the same language policy.

With this backdrop, this study explores the ideologies of local-level policymakers and arbiters in creating, interpreting and appropriating the LPE in schools at Vyas municipality. The literature explores, the LPE in local government is a fresh scheme and the most wanted issue that has been diversely interpreted in national and local level and is debated widely in Nepalese academia and media (Poudel & Choi, 2020). Fewer studies have been conducted on the issue; therefore, I determine a gap to accelerate the

study which may contribute to the policymakers and arbiters for creating equitable LPE at local government addressing the local context, needs, demands, and necessities.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study intended to explore the ideologies of policymakers and arbiters on LPE, and the practices of LPE at Vyas Municipality.

### **Review of literature**

Here, I present the brief reviews of theoretical, empirical, and policy literature related to LPE in Nepal and LPE in federal Nepal that have been related, compared, and contrasted.

#### ***LPE in Nepal: An outline***

LPE receives critical contemporary concern in multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural country Nepal. The historical route of LPE has been a prime concern in the country from Rana monarchy to federal democracy having numerous bends and jerks. The LPE in Nepal was formed concerning historical, social, political circumstances. When we observe history, numerous efforts, acts, and policies in the education sector have addressed the issues of language, and have influencing roles in LPE. Especially, these documents, policies and acts like: Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC, 1956); All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1960); National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971); Education Act, 2028 B.S. (1971); National Education Commission (NEC, 1992); National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (NLPRC, 1994); High-Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 1999), Bilingual Education Study Report (2001); Vulnerable Community Development Plan (VCDP, 2004); Education Act of Nepal (2006); National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2007); School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2015); Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines (2010); MLE Policy (2016); Federal Education Act (2018); Local Government Regulation Act (2018); National Education Policy (2018) concern to LPE and other issues in education. Here, I briefly sketch the reviewed literature and documents of LPE in Nepal after the establishment of federalism.

#### ***LPE in Federal Nepal***

The Constitution 2015 introduced ‘Federalism, Republican, and Secularism’ in the country that eliminated the Constitutional Monarchy system and Kathmandu-centered government structure. Nepal is identified as a multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural country, and the Constitution has preserved the language rights of all citizens, and assures

the citizens will not be discriminated against in terms of linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and they have the right to use and promote mother tongues (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015). The state has explicit LPP and acts guided by the constitution, and the Language Commission Nepal (LCN) advocates for the promotion and preservation of all the languages spoken in Nepal. Although the paradigm shifts have occurred in state and government ruling systems, the issue of LPP seems disputed subject among others. The manifesto has lots of advocacy on the different rights to its citizen which includes the rights to language, education, culture, and other ethnic heritages, specifically; I have discussed the provisions of LPE in the subsequent sections.

With the advocacy to ensure dozens of rights to the citizen, the Constitution of Nepal (2015) addresses in the article (6) and (7) about the languages of the nation and official language, respectively. Briefly to analyze the provision of language in the constitution, Nepal's multilingual way of life assimilated in the preamble, multilingual nation mentioned in Article 3, the national language included in Article 6 and Article 7 (1), (2) and (3) on the provision of official language, section 18 of the right to equality mentioned in article 7 (2) and (3), Article 31 (4) and (5) focus for right to education through Braille and sign language, Article 32 (1) and (2) envisions for the rights related to language and culture. Clause (6) of Article 51(3) provisions for language protection and development policy, in clause (7) of Article 51(3) highlights the multilingual policy. Similarly, article 57 focuses on the distribution of state power, includes the protection of the language of the states mentioned in the sub-schedule of sub-section (2). Similarly, subsection (4) spotlights the authority of the local body related to language protection and development are the important constitutional provisions related to the jurisdiction of the LCN. Further, the constitution states the rights relating to education and language in the article (31 and 32) as: *“Every Nepali community living in Nepal has right to education up to the secondary level in their mother tongue and start and operates schools and educational institutions as provided in the law and have rights to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civilization, and heritage”*.

The constitution has provisioned ideological and implementational spaces to the use of mother tongue at local level; this can be an upward step of opening the constitutional door for the transformation of Nepal towards a multilingual nation. For the protection, promotion, and development of languages in Nepal, the Constitution has furnished a new provision to establish LCN in article 287. The functions, duties, and powers of the Commission as specified in sub-clause 6 (c) and (d) are to measure the levels of development of mother tongues and make suggestions to the Government of Nepal on the potentiality of their use in education, and study, research and monitor languages (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015). In federal Nepal, no doubt, the country will transform into a multilingual nation system where the state can use the local languages in government, administration, offices, and education.

Being specific to LPE in federal Nepal, the MLE policy (2016) is identified as a prime document to regulate the MTB MLE program in the country which has endorsed a policy for recruiting a native-speaker teacher of the local language in each school. The guidelines further state that ...basic level education can be given in mother tongue to ensure access to quality education and the medium of instruction at pre-primary level shall be the local mother tongue except for other language subjects. The Medium of Instruction and Languages for Education (MILE, 2015) suggested drafting a comprehensive ELP and mother-tongue instruction policy in Nepal to ensure the children's literacy and basic cognitive ability (Phyak & Ojha, 2018). After the MTB MLE policy in the country, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has published curriculum and textbooks in 23 mother tongues and reference materials in 15 different mother tongues. Kandel (2016) states 6,598 schools are using their mother tongue as an additional medium of instruction in 70 districts with 732,962 students and more than 11,000 teachers are trained to teach in their mother tongue nationwide.

In addition, Higher Education Commission Report (2017) emphasizes to arrange mother tongue policy to teach Nepali and English languages and other subjects, to implement multilingual education in a multilingual community, and to use mother tongue as a language, as a subject, and as a medium. National Education Policy (NEP, 2018) has provisioned that to manage the linguistic diversity of Nepal, multilingual education policy based on students' mother tongue will be implemented. The policy instructed that the local level will make arrangements, plans, and implements to provide opportunities for learning in mother tongue in single mother tongue classes, and the multilingual medium based classes in mixed language groups.

Federal Education Act (2018) addresses that in addition to the national curriculum structure, the state government or local level may determine the curriculum of an additional subject of interest to inform the specificity, geography, history, or local language or culture of the concerned level. Local Government Regulation Act (2018) emphasizes the development, preservation, and promotion of local languages, use scripts and culture in education, focus to mother tongue policy in basic level, open mother tongue in schools, and enhance indigenous languages and multilingual policy in education.

The Gandaki Province Education Policy (2021) states "*concerning the linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity in the region, the government adopts multilingual education policy i.e., Mother Tongue, Nepali and English*". Especially in the basic level, to enhance the teachers' capacity to manage multilingual policy, the local governments will be assisted for trainings and required assistance. The policy aims to develop, print and distribute textbooks, teaching and instructional materials, and other resources mobilizing the local stakeholders and subject experts, and effective supervision and evaluation will be conducted. In collaboration with the local governments and private sectors, mother

tongue communication materials, audio-visual materials and instructional materials will be developed and the schools will be motivated to adopt in teaching-learning.

Specifically, for the secondary level education, the policy instructs that while science, mathematics, and computer subjects should be taught through EMI but moral education, social studies, and health and physical education in Nepali medium instruction (NMI). The policy aims to have uniformity in the MOI in all the schools established in the province. The policy further has made provision for initiating the formulation and implementation of local curriculum to address the local needs, demands and necessities (Gandaki Province Education Policy, 2021).

Similarly, Vyas Municipal Government has prepared and implemented trilingual education policy concurrent with Gandaki Province Education Policy. For the formation of education act and bylaws of the government, the municipal government authority, policy makers, language policy experts, arbiters, and stakeholders conducted series of discussions and interactions regarding various educational and language issues in the territory as well as its effective interpretation and appropriation (G. S. Sharma (pseudonym) personal communication, August 20, 2021). Finally, the municipal government has produced the local gazette regarding the Education Act (2017) and Education Bylaws (2018) that instructs the educational institutions to adopt Nepali, English, and Mother Tongue education policy in teaching-learning process. The manifesto mentions that the language policy in school can be trilingual (as discussed previously), but for basic level (grades 1-5), mother tongue-based education is required, and to teach language subjects the same language policy should be adopted. Additionally, the government's Bylaw permits and assures to open MTB School within its territory and the right to establish a school by any community for giving education to their children in their mother tongue aligned with the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 and Gandaki province law and education policy.

The theoretical, historical, empirical, and policy reviews on language policy in education in federal, provincial, and local governments significantly informed my understanding of the area. Reviewing the historical trajectories of LPE in Nepal and recent literature, I realize that there is a lack of study on LPE at local level. The knowledge gap generated two questions in my mind; what ideological constructs the policy makers have for the creation of LPE at local government? And how the LPE is implemented and practiced, and what is its impact? Being guided by these questions, I conducted the study at local government level (i.e., Vyas Municipality).

## **Methodology**

The study employs the theoretical lens of 'critical ethnography of LPE' (McCarty,

2011) of qualitative research linking to the ‘critical-interpretative’ paradigm. This study is a part of six-month critical ethnographic fieldwork of my PhD project at Vyas Municipality in Gandaki Province, Nepal. A critical ethnography of LPP is a method/theory of examining the spaces for agencies, actors, contexts, and processes across the multiple layers of language policy creation, interpretation, and appropriation marrying with a critical approach focused to the educational context (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). This approach uncovers ‘peeling the onion’ (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), and ideologies and practices of the policy actors (i.e., policymakers, students, teachers, parents, and communities) who engage in policy creation and implementation procedures. Employing the non-probability purposive sampling, I selected Vyas Municipality because of its linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity as well as geographical and personal accessibility. I critically engaged in the fieldwork from February 2021-July 2021, especially at different wards of the municipality. During the fieldwork, I conducted eight in-depth interviews with policymakers, three with English, Social Studies and Science teachers, and two with parents from basic and secondary school at different wards of the municipality. Moreover, I observed two classes (one basic and one secondary level) to gather more information, conducted one homogenous focused group discussions (FGD) with community school teachers, and triangulated the data by obtaining their informed consent. For interviews, I developed guidelines to ensure uniformity and set the context, each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes where I allowed maximum flexibilities in structures and contents. During the time, I thoroughly maintained collaboration with the participants, maintained ethical considerations like the risk of harm, informed consent, deception, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012) until I unpacked my fieldwork. I assigned codes for policy makers, schools, teachers, and parents respectively (PM: 1, PM: 2, PM: 3, PM: 4, PM: 5, PM: 6, PM: 7, PM: 8, S: 1, S:2, T:1, T: 2, P: 1, P: 2). Specifically, the schools that were selected purposively constitute significant student heterogeneity in terms of caste/ethnicity, language, diversified society, and culture. For the analysis of recorded interviews and information, I transcribed interview in Devnagari script, translated it into English, then drew codes to develop themes following step-by-step form making ‘web-like illustration’ (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Web-like illustration is similar to thematic networks and web-like map where I drew basic themes, organizing themes and global themes illustrating the relationship between the texts. Further, I utilized ‘critical discourse analysis’ (Fairclough, 1992) to interpret the sociopolitical meaning of what participants argue, and their ideologies on local LPE and practices in their contexts.

## Results and discussion

This section explores, analyses, and interprets the ideologies and practices of language policy makers and arbiters on LPE based on the empirical evidence. Their views have been discussed thematically within the border of objectives and research questions.

The collected data have been broadly interpreted and analyzed into three global themes: ideological discrepancy on LPE, diverse practices of local LPE, and English as a ‘black hole’: Swallowing other languages that have been linked with accessible theories and quotation of the participants.

### ***Ideological discrepancy on LPE***

Nepal’s Constitution 2015 has distinctly declared the rights of the local governments for ‘protection, development and use of languages, scripts, cultures, fine arts and religions’ (The Constitution of Nepal, 2015, Schedule 6 and 8), therefore, the right to get education to every Nepalese community in their mother tongue, and open and operate language schools has been provisioned in the manifesto. The federal system in the country has created ‘ideological and implementational spaces’ to LPE and MLE as a major argument and debate in the local governments. During my fieldwork, I encountered with multiple and divergent ideologies of the policy makers and actors regarding the creation, interpretation, and appropriation of LPE that has produced ideological discrepancy, mismatch, and tensions among the stakeholders. To be specific, Vyas Municipal Government has prepared and implemented Local Education Act (2017) and Local Education Bylaw (2018) with the clear instructions of trilingual policy in education, and the teachers as the final arbiters have expressed divergent ideologies regarding the existing LPE, here, T: 3 shared his views in favour of Nepali language policy in school:

*I think, teaching and learning in Nepali language is good, the field of knowledge becomes wider and students also learn a lot. In fact, their knowledge is narrowed down due to English language. Students who have studied through English language medium have less than 50 percent knowledge than those who have studied in Nepali language medium. Of course, there is no English environment outside the classroom to practice. (From interview transcript, T: 3)*

In the divergent way, the next teacher participant (T: 1) expressed his agency focusing the demand, need and necessity of English language policy (ELP) in education. He stated:

*English language policy in education is necessary to produce manpower who can grab the opportunities in the world market; therefore, we have adopted ELP in school for five years. First, it was the demand of time, second, the pressure from parents ignited to adopt the policy. Majority of parents demanded for ELP in education, now it has been successful, for example, students’ discipline, reading standard, enrollment and pass rate is increased. (Form interview transcript, T: 1).*

But expressing the neutral perspectives on LPE, a teacher participant (T: 2) expressed that everyone has the right to exercise the powers granted by the constitution and the Local Education Act...Nepali language should be promoted as an MOI in Nepal but the English language should not be neglected because of international communication; therefore, LPE should be created by considering these things. The teacher noted people have migrated abroad; for that reason, LPE in Nepal have been declared observing foreign countries' policies that have shadowed our culture, tradition, and local flavor. He stressed every school should have the freedom to use LPE according to the resources, expertise, demands, and contexts, but imposed ideology and policy is against of nationality. Similarly, a policymaker (PM: 4) argued that there should be two/bi-lingual policy in education i.e., Nepali and English according to the time and context. He reasoned that the international world is Englishized, consequently; the schools in his ward have started English language policy (ELP) and EMI but weak students prefer Nepali language policy (NLP) and Nepali medium instruction (NMI). He added the logic behind adopting EMI is employment, attraction, and international opportunities.

The ideologies of policymakers and teachers at local level concern the impact of LPE and MOI on employment, income, and various measures of economic aspects (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018). The ideological mismatches between the policymakers and arbiters have created tensions and challenges for the effective implementation of LPE at local level rather than a common understanding. To adopt EMI and NMI in education, the monolingual/bilingual, and dominant language ideology influenced the mindset of the policymakers, arbiters, and teachers greatly to.

The diverse ideological expressions of the policymakers and stakeholders in local government make a meaning that there still exists ideological variance, challenges to policy creation and implementation, dominations of Nepali and English languages, habits of monolingual and bilingual mind set, lapses on effective implementation of constitutional provisions, gaps in local education policy, and lacks of local government's expertise and monitoring. It reveals that local LPE formed by Vyas Municipal Government has been interpreted and appropriated differently by policymakers and teachers and practiced diversely in the schools. The policy is interpreted according to their determinations, interests, and rooted in vested ideologies. The local government's LPE could not be interpreted and appropriated effectively because of ideological discrepancy of policy arbiters and actors.

### ***Diverse practices of local LPE***

As a critical ethnographer, I conducted series of interviews and informal interactions with the policymakers, arbiters, and actors at the different wards of municipality, and observed the classrooms and the practices of local LPE (how the local LPE formulated

by local government has been practiced/used in school premises? Is that completely or partially practiced? How do the policy arbiters implement and appropriate it?) in school premises. School is the center of language policy practices where the policy actors like teachers, students, and parents involve, interact and communicate, and reveal ideological and implementational space. When I visited two schools and observed classrooms as a participant observer, there appeared discrepancy between local LPE and its practices. Both the schools followed bilingual policies and practices in their documents, communication, teaching-learning process, and other activities. The signboards of the schools, quotations-pictures-drawings and charts on the wall, calendar, and letter pad were written in both the Nepali and the English languages but no sign of local languages was observed. The schools had practices of bilingual policy (i.e., Nepali and English) in their daily activities; although the local LPE instructed the use of mother tongue in basic level classes. Here I present a classroom scene and interaction where the teachers and students practiced bilingual policy.

### ***#Vignette 1: language policy in school and classroom (School: A)***

It's Friday, 4 September 2021, and the time is 1:00 pm. The bell rang for fourth period in School: A. It was English period in Grade 6. The female teacher entered to the classroom and I followed her taking the permission from her and the Headmaster as well. There were 17 students in the class who greeted standing together in English, saying "Good afternoon, Miss". The teacher greeted and signaled them to take seats. Then she asked them to show their homework (in English). She checked homework of 4 students randomly and informed the students about that day's topic (in English). She wrote the topic "T. S. Eliot" on the board and informed them that the topic is T. S. Eliot's biography. Then she asked the background information of the poet, Eliot to students (in English). The conversation was like:

*T: Who is TS Eliot?*

*S1: He is a writer.*

*T: Who is he? (Can you guess?)*

*S2: English poet*

*T: (very nice) He is an English poet.*

Then the teacher asked S3 (boy) to read the first paragraph of the text. The student stood up and read in fluctuated voice with less correct pronunciation. Meantime, the teacher corrected his pronunciation. Then she asked S4 (girl) to read the second paragraph and also assisted her in pronunciation as well. Likewise, she asked S5, S6 and S7 to read the different paragraphs. After they read the whole text, she asked the

students to copy word meanings as she wrote on the board (in English). She wrote the words playwright, critic, propagator, ancient, philosophy, inclination, landmark and so on with their meanings in simple English and equivalent Nepali words in the bracket. While writing the vocabulary, the teacher missed 's' in the spelling of 'masterpiece', the students pointed her mistake and said to correct (in English). The teacher excused and corrected the spelling, then asked... yes, it is ok now? Meantime, one of the students could not read the last word from the back seat and asked in Nepali language 'Miss tyo ke word ho last ma? (Miss, what is that word at the last?) Then the teacher replied in Nepali as 'tyo stirring ho. (That's stirring). After the students copied the words and meanings, the teacher instructed them to read the meanings with correct pronunciation.

*T: (students please follow me, ok?) Playwright - playwright - playwright... What's the meaning of playwright?*

*Ss: (together) a person who writes drama or play.*

*T: Yes, playwright is a person who writes drama or play. Good.*

In the similar way, she first reads, then asks and confirms the words and meanings. After the practice of all the words and meanings written on the board, she instructed the students to read and memorize those at home. The bell rang for next period. The teacher managed her teaching materials and thanked the students (in English). The students stood and said in loud voice 'Thank you Miss for teaching us nicely'. The class ended.

The language policy in school and classroom expose the inconsistency between policy-ideology and practices as instructed by local government. The language policy adopted by the school have been interpreted and appropriated randomly by the teacher in their classroom and teaching-learning process. Although the teacher was teaching English subject, the communication was bilingual (i.e., English and Nepali). The Vyas Municipal Education Act (2017) has instructed clearly to teach language subjects that the same language as the medium of instruction should be adopted but the teacher and students preferred speaking and writing in Nepali language since both the subject and medium was English. Similarly, when I observed School: B and one secondary level class (social studies), the teachers and students were interacting in English and Nepali language since the local education act urged to teach Social Studies in Nepali medium. To draw the collective voices from teachers on LPE, I conducted a FGD with teachers at community school, where they stated about the practices of ELP in their classes in this way:

*We do not have 100 percent EMI policy in classroom; we use about 70 percent English and 30 percent Nepali when teaching social studies, moral education,*

*history, and cultural subjects. Teaching in both English and Nepali has made easier to understand contents. So the bilingual policy is very good. We have been adopting mixed medium. (From focused group discussion, July 24, 2021)*

I found three language policies in the schools i.e., English-only, Nepali-only and Hybrid (mixed) language policy but most of the schools followed hybrid language policy (i.e., mixing both Nepali and English language) as per the need and preferences of the students and teachers.

Opposing the ELP and its impacts on education, research participant (T: 2) advocated that studying in English does not do justice to social studies, science, history, and geography subjects...teachers who teach in English medium have only linguistic skills rather than content knowledge, the depth of the subject and the language are completely different. Therefore, he suggested the entire schools and teachers to adopt common Nepali medium instruction (NMI) policy to preserve Nepali culture, knowledge, and skills in the education system. Addressing the issue of MTB-MLE policy at schools, he emphasized that teaching in mother tongue seems like a regression because in a multilingual society it is almost impossible to teach through everyone's mother tongues. He expressed language and culture must be preserved, however; separate mother tongue classes cannot be conducted in schools because of inadequate resources and contents in the majority of the language. To solve the emerging dispute of Nepali and English language medium policy in education, PM-4 stated that he had proposed for merging those schools but the municipality board did not allow such merging.

Ignoring the supporters of NLP and ELP in education, the mother tongue campaigners emphasized to establish mother-tongue-based schools in their territory. PM: 6 asserted that there has been a demand from Bhujels and Magars that the children should be educated in their mother tongue, where ninety percent of Bhujel and Magar students enroll. He assured to take the initiative to operate MTB MLE classes in those schools in near future. In the equivalent layer, next PM: 7 assured optimistically to establish basic level mother tongue-based schools in his area. He added "*there are 12 Darai pocket villages that make up 50 percent population in the ward; therefore, we plan to establish basic level mother tongue schools for the preservation and promotion of Darai language...the board meeting has decided to allocate a budget for the construction of MTB School. We will move it forward*". In a divergent way, the PM: 6 showed anxiety and disability to set up MTB-MLE school, and to appoint language teacher because of budgetary and policy problems in the ward. He uttered:

*... it is not possible to establish mother tongue school at ward level ...we do not have the capacity to hire teachers by spending 15-20 thousand on remuneration. Similarly, it is difficult to teach all subjects in the same language. We cannot*

*implement such policies unless the municipality approves them. (From interview transcript, PM: 6).*

But PM: 4 accentuated with the suspicion that if they establish a language or MTB school, only the school would remain, the students of those communities would not go there because of Nepali and English medium schools' attraction. For example, they had hired a Newari language teacher from Kathmandu to teach the children for 6 months at the ward but to their surprise, the children did not attend. Their parents did not allow. He blamed that people have been guided by Nepali and English language policy and ideology, the mother tongue has been less prioritized.

On the other hand, the remotest ward in the municipality has developed and implemented a basic level local curriculum in Magar language in the schools as a fine example of mother tongue policy in education. The Ward Chair (PM: 5) stated in optimistic way that:

*The ward has a 92 percent Magar population. To conduct classes in the Magar language, initiatives are taken. Now, class 4 and 5 textbooks include the detailed type of religious rites, while at the lower level; we have created a curriculum by including songs and language rites in Magar language...The course has been implemented here since this academic year. We have created this course to cover the linguistic, cultural and religious aspects of the Magar tribe. (From interview transcript, PM: 5)*

The chair added that to prepare the local curriculum, Municipal Education Section provided some budget, and for the process – leaders, experts, and local people were invited in seminars and interactions – gathered and discussed to understand the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural aspects of Magar tribe to include in textbooks. After the implementation of that curriculum to all the schools of the ward, he clarified; the students were amazed and happy, he explained, the textbook contents have been prepared in Devanagari script but have been processed for next set of curricula in 'Akha' (i.e., Magar language script), and plan to run a Magar MTB school in the ward. Despite the sophisticated demand of Nepali and English language medium policy in education, ward-14 has given exemplary work to prepare and implement locally prepared curriculum and textbooks. The noble work of the Magar community in the ward has altered the EMI and NMI as the default policies in the education system in Nepal (Poudel & Choi, 2020). The local people perceived the relevance of the mother tongue policy in education for their life chances, and practicality, and moved accordingly.

Adopting the mother tongue classes at the local level, the Chief of Education Section pinpointed that there seem possibilities of mother tongue classes in junior level

but there are difficulties in upper classes because of teacher and resource shortage. He emphasized unless the federal, provincial, and local government has a clear provision in the rules, policies, and constitution, it is not possible and meaningful to give education in the mother tongue. It seems mother tongue education has been challenging unless textbooks are created, assessment systems are adjusted, jobs are provided and available, he stated. However, the officer (PM: 3) positively forwarded that Vyas municipality has created a local curriculum for grades 1 to 3, printed the textbooks of grade 1, and is preparing the curriculum and textbooks up to grade 8. These initiatives appear to suggest a positive way forward for the promotion and development of local languages. He clarified as the rights and responsibilities of education transferred from the center to the local level, its form and curriculum have to be changed and updated, needs to embrace geographical and linguistic diversity in the education policy. The policymaker (PM: 2) stated *“in order to preserve the language, the languages of different tribes should be introduced in the schools as an elective subject up to basic level in practical way, and the language policy in education should be made on the basis of geography, context and population”*. Additionally, the policymakers (PM: 1 and PM: 3) insisted that the creation and implementation of local curricula and textbooks, and the inclusion of nine different languages work as a milestone to preserve the local language and culture. Although the resources and materials have been prepared, the pandemic of COVID -19 and the nationwide lockdown hampered its effective implementation, they appended. A parent (P: 1) praised the work of the municipality to prepare local curricula and textbooks but suggested for using modern methods of learning, digital technology, virtual and social media to way forward the issue of language preservation and promotion at school.

The expressed ideologies and arguments of different policymakers in this section reproduce the meaning that LPE is an arena for action in influential movements for social change and benefits’ (Tollefson & Tsui, 2018), as a result, local governments have created spaces for varied ideologies on it. The emerging super-diversity in the municipality and the flow of people from ethnic, territorial, and linguistic backgrounds, policy makers-students-parents’ interests, domination of Nepali, and hegemony of the English language have complicated the local LPE, accordingly, the practices of LPE seem diverse in the region.

### ***English as a ‘black hole’: Swallowing other languages***

With the growing significance and the rising demand for English language policy in education, the superiority and hegemony of EMI is worldwide, and Vyas Municipality is not isolated from the global phenomenon. The Chief of the Education Section of Vyas municipality (PM: 3) informed that the Ministry of Education has instructed for LPE as; the first language should be Nepali and the second language would be the local language, and the third would be English. Although, the Constitution, 2015 has not given

the English language a official language status, it has been used in an unprecedented way in all the sectors as well as education. The officer stated in detail that the majority of the community schools in the municipality have adopted English language policy (ELP) because of replications. He expressed as:

*There is no such compelling situation for ELP but seeing the students of the institutional schools wearing ties and boots, boarding the bus, and studying in English medium ... the parents have developed the mentality that studying in English medium makes the children qualified ... That is why even in community schools, students are taught in English for sustainability and continuity. Additionally, the community schools and their teachers have resorted to the English medium for their livelihood and professional security as the institutional schools have taken the students. (From interview transcript, PM: 3)*

He asserted the national and international context and the pressure from the higher authorities have forced the implication of EMI in schools that has decreased the local flavor in education. It seems the power of the federal policy makers and LPE structures have limited the space of local government in the negotiation and appropriation of local LPE. Similar to the officer, one participant (Head) teacher (T: 1) conveyed the reality of adopting ELP at his school:

*In our school, classes from nursery to ten are taught in English... First, it was the demand of time; second, it was imposed because people from other places came to our school society and demanded ELP. Majority of the parents said in the annual festivals and meetings that English medium is needed to increase the number of students. Therefore, it has been decided 5 years ago. (From interview transcript, T: 1)*

Despite the implementation of the ELP at school, the school's environment and teachers' expertise have been a great challenge for the success. The teachers are not proficient in English medium, but school is adopting the policy by hook and crook, and has created pressure, the participants expressed with sorrow. Although the school employed the EMI practice for five years, the participant teachers have realized that it would be good if the NMI is applied in schools since the students can acquire real, authentic, and practical knowledge. Hence, the LPE and MOI policy seem to indicate discrepancy between the officially stated and enacted policies across the schooling system (Poudel & Choi, 2020).

A similar ideology is understood and enacted by the next policy maker (PM: 7) who strongly advocated the importance of ELP in schools. He added that 'aspiration for employment, economic and personal development' impulse the students and parents to

learn in English in Nepal. His understanding lines up with the discourse of globalization and neoliberal ideological orientations with the ability in English for quality and successful life. The idea can be inferred that most Nepali take the English language as a vehicle or tool for their career development, job opportunity, security, adjustment, global communication, and survival; consequently, they are devoted to the English language by the heart and mind (Kandel, 2018). Guided by mother tongue language policy, PM: 8 of a typical Magar village described the impact of ELP in education, and stated:

*There are no students in our community schools, everyone went to boarding school. All became market oriented. ... English language has pulled them... only English is not right. We also need to know our languages. If we say “don’t teach in English, it’s like being shot”. (From interview transcript, PM: 8)*

The expressed views make sense the private schools in Nepal commodify the value of English as a language of globalization, international market, and quality education (Phyak, 2016); as a result, most of the parents seem interested to enroll their children in those schools, especially located in market areas. Giri (2015) mentions that people receive English as a matter of pride and prestige, therefore, the magnitude of the ELP has been powerful in Nepal. The students and parents from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the region have high charm and attraction in English language and want to fulfill their dreams, and grab the opportunities and be secured through it, subsequently; the schools have been adopting ELP to make the students and parents happy, and sustain the school. Next participant (T: 1) claimed that teaching in EMI policy increased the pass percentage of students and improved the efficiencies, he added, the desire of the parents is the same; the small classes to implement EMI, that’s why the demand of EMI classes has been increasing. He informed that after adopting ELP in school, 100 new students have been enrolled in this academic year. English is thought to open the door of possibilities for superior academic and economic offers at the local and international levels, and for endurance in the world, English is a must; it serves as ‘oxygen to the life’ (Kandel, 2018). A teacher leader (T: 2) showed his disagreement to adopt ELP in schools and blamed the implementation of EMI in Nepal is like producing workers for foreign countries; therefore, teaching English is for self-pity and remorse. He blamed that because of English, the trend of brain drain is excessive which has badly affected the country’s educational and economic system.

In reality, the practice of ELP in education has shadowed the ‘linguistic human right’ of the students and has left little implementational space for vernacular languages, it perceives as a ‘black hole’ – (a mysterious, giant, and invisible hole in the universe having unlimited power to pull any objects towards self) gradually swallowing other languages. Phyak (2013) claims “due to its instrumental value, English is perceived as the most important language (even more important than Nepali) in education” (p. 5).

In Nepal, people take English language as a matter of pride and prestige, therefore, the gravity of the language has been powerful and mysterious, like a ‘black hole’.

## Conclusions and Implications

LPE has been a challenging and debatable issue in the multilingual school setting in Nepal. The study revealed some weaknesses and limitations of local LPE at Vyas Municipality besides it unravels on-ground reality how the LPE is created, interpreted, and appropriated in schools. In addition, it shows ideological and implementational mismatches at Vyas Municipality; as a result, the LPP arbiters (teacher) appropriate and practice local LPE haphazardly. The constitution, and the local government’s policies and acts have instructed for effective implementation of LPE concerning the need, interest, and necessity of locals. However, the local government authorities seem unsuccessful to capitalize the local linguistic diversity; for example, the mother tongue policy at basic level is not assured and practiced; only limited to the slogans. Similarly, the globalized and centralized ideology and legacy of LPE has badly influenced and shadowed the local LPE, consequently, the existence of local indigenous languages have been endangered. Next, the schools and teachers are obliged to adopt dominant languages and policies (such as EMI and NMI policies) in education because of competitive and imitative ideologies. The language policy arbiters claim that they are not informed and critically engaged in policy creation, interpretation, and appropriation processes by the concerned bodies. Therefore, the LPE in local government should be formulated with multilingual identities considering its real stakeholders and arbiters before its implementation in societies and schools. The EMI policy in education has pulled and pushed the global attention and Vyas Municipality in not an exception, therefore, local languages have been displaced because of EMI policy as a de facto policy in education. The LPE in Nepal is greatly influenced by political, social, and economic factors, and there reflect vested ideologies and interests of policymakers which ultimately have produced tension between ideology, policy and practices. However, some initiatives have been taken for local LPE, but the majority of the local governments have been unable to create, implement, and appropriate multilingual policy in their territories. To conclude, I suggest for raising more critical awareness to language policy stakeholders, arbiters, and actors for creating appropriate local LPE at local level concerning the context, demand, and necessity.

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## University Teachers' Strategies in Dealing with Disruptive Classroom Behaviours in Nepal

Parmeshor Baral & Kabita Khadka

### Abstract

Unwanted behaviours of students that impede the normal functioning of the classroom has become a centre of concern of the majority of the teachers and university teachers are also no exception to this matter. This paper is an attempt to explore teachers' approaches and strategies in dealing with "disruptive" behaviour in Nepalese university classrooms. Using non-random sampling, 15 university teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience in the corresponding fields were chosen as the participants of the study. The tools for data collection were an open-ended questionnaire and a semi structured interview and they were administered following all ethical considerations. The study, based on Dreikurs's mistaken model for classroom management (1968), found that teachers divided teachers' talking time (TTT) and students' talking time (STT), minimized their talking time, played an instrumental role in not allowing students to divert the academic discussion into non-academic ones. Then, the teachers and students collectively formulated dos and don'ts before the semester began and whenever there was a disruption in most of the contexts, those rules and regulations were acknowledged and stopped students from monopolizing classroom discussion.

**Keywords:** University teachers, disruptive behaviour, teachers' approaches, strategies,

### Introduction

Inappropriate behaviours which obstruct the normal functioning of the classroom can be termed disruptive behaviours (DBs). The term "disruptive" refers to problematic instances and noise that spoils normal discipline in educational settings (Stanfeld, Haines & Brown, 2000). It is a cover term for students' behaviour which is socially and academically unacceptable while teaching and learning activities are going on. Students' behaviour can often be variously interpreted as misbehaviour, problem behaviour, immoral behaviour, delinquent behaviour, maladjusted behaviour, deliberately disruptive behaviour, disruptive behaviour (Porter, 2008). Charles (1999) defines DB as "behaviour which is taken inappropriately for the setting or situation in which it occurs" (p. 2). Such

behaviours have been further divided into five categories which include aggression, dissolution, defiance of authority, class disruptions, and goofing off. According to Charles (1999), the first three types are more serious while the rest are less serious misconduct found in a classroom. Mishra (2009) characterises DB as the conduct that interferes with the college or college supported activities, including yet not constrained to the exercises related to classroom considering learning, teaching, research, academic or innovative works, management, service or the arrangement of correspondence, computer or emergency administration related to classroom teaching and learning.

As teachers, we have experienced that identifying learners' learning attitude and behaviour becomes a major responsibility of a teacher and supporting them in their learning comes next. Charles (2008) explains that DB violates class rules, humiliates others, and is incompatible with the legal or social norms of society. DB interferes with institutional discipline comprising classroom-related actions such as studying, instruction, research, intellectual or creative endeavours, management and other services (Mishra, 2009). In one survey, teachers throughout the state of New York agreed that managing disruptive children in classrooms as the most stressful problem in their professional lives (Gallup, 2013).

Classroom disruption is a serious concern for both teachers and educational institutions across the world. Because of classroom disruption, teachers become unable to complete the lesson they have prepared to present in a particular class (Howard, 2013). Undisciplined behaviour of students seems to be one of the common problems in schools. For example, Hong (2012) reported that many teachers from all around the world leave the teaching profession because of the stress they get from students' behaviours. Students' classroom disruptive behaviour is one of the major issues that sensitises the problem of recruiting and holding qualified English teachers in the United States of America (Pedota, 2007). Walker et al., (2003) reported that inadequately prepared and amateur teachers with diminutive urban school experience were unable to deal with students at risk engaging in long-lasting patterns of inconsiderate behaviour and misbehaviour in urban school classes in the USA. Moreover, experienced teachers refused to teach students with disciplinary issues and rather they left the schools and moved to the city's private English medium schools (Walker et al., 2003).

In Nepalese contexts, DB has been creating a serious problem for English teachers. For example, Karki (2017) concluded that secondary level English language teachers faced the problem of not paying attention to studies, involvement in addictive behaviour, and, getting angry with a minor matter Classroom became disruptive because secondary level English teachers have not prepared lesson plans effectively, and have not used teaching aids and materials (Budha, 2012). Shrestha (2016) listed problems of classroom management among secondary students comprising of no training for

classroom management, and, lack of coordination between lesson plans and teaching-learning activities. As there are limited studies, for example, Karki, (2017); Budha, (2012); Shrestha, (2016), that were oriented towards students' DB but little focus has been paid towards the strategies and approaches that university teachers employ to mitigate the classroom DB of their students. Therefore, this paper attempts to address the gap in the existing literature.

## Literature Review

Studies investigated how teachers plan their lessons, teach lessons, organise learning materials and engage students in learning tasks in the classroom to address the issues of classroom disruptive behaviour of their students. For example, Fecser (2015) in an American study concluded that teachers emphasised good relationships and trust in the students for classroom management. He reported the activities like, keeping a predictable schedule, providing alternative measures, teaching students about good manners and consequences, movement break and utilising logical consequences of the behaviour as supplementary approaches teachers implemented to manage the classroom. Earlier, Gallup (2013) reported that the strategies the teachers adopted during the class activities included making the classroom condition relaxing, staring at the one who tried to hamper the functioning of the classroom and reminding the discipline and decorum of the classroom. Teachers' strategies of dealing with disruptive behaviours of students may be context-specific, especially associated with the school environment, socio-cultural background and teachers' professional qualities (Day & Gu, 2013). For example, teachers in American schools apply various strategies to minimise disruptive behaviours of students such as enquiry with students (Kuhlenschmidt & Layne, 1999), formulation of specific rules (Ali & Gracey, 2013), displaying classroom incidents on the board as soon as the behaviour occurred in the classroom (Bucher & Manning, 2007) and engaging students in a systematic interaction in the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In Romania, teachers considered seating arrangement and space management in the classroom for educational activities and interactive teaching strategies to prevent unwanted behaviours of students (Popescu, 2014). In the Netherlands, in a similar context, teachers diagnose students' social background, plan their lessons to fulfil the requirements of diverse students and involve students in a diverse way (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). However, Goleman (2006) argued that in Germany, teachers were unable to diagnose and address students' hostile behaviour and impulsivity. A Spanish (Cruickshank et al., 1995) study suggested teachers build up a rapport with students, make equilibrium between praise and criticism in the classroom and generate energy to prevent disruption in the English classrooms.

Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) reported that in England, teachers were stressed by classroom disruption as the most problematic aspect of classroom teaching and classroom management and that teachers adopted classroom rules and recorded behavioural problems. The survey of Howard (2013) among the Association of Teachers and Lecturers in the UK indicated that 99% of teachers dealt with disruptive students, 71% considered leaving the profession because of students' bad behaviour in the classroom and 37% suffered from mental health problems. Howard (2013) reported that teachers allowed interaction, used non-threatening language and properly managed the seating pattern of the students to control students' mischievous behaviours. Moreover, a survey (Sadik, 2017) in Spain found that student's disruptive behaviour was one of the major inhibitors for classroom management and teachers used non-verbal clues, took the issue to the discipline in charge of respective college and openly talked about the cause as the strategies to mitigate the problem of classroom disruption. However, Adiguzel and Culha (2016) recounted that in Indonesia, teachers considered classroom management as one of their regular activities in the classroom and that they were capable enough to address the issues of classroom management. Yoşumaz's (2013) study of Iranian teachers about their approaches to classroom management revealed the fact that even teachers used many techniques like reminding the religious values about discipline but paid more attention to male students' behaviour than female ones. Finally, the studies state that teachers around the world applied various approaches, and strategies to deal with issues of classroom management. Although some teachers could maintain a good rapport with students by adopting various strategies, some teachers found the issue more stressful and even wanted to change the profession.

However, the issue has received little attention in the Nepalese context. For example, Budha (2012) conducted research among secondary and lower secondary English teachers revealed the strategies Nepalese teachers employed comprised of preparation of lesson plans, used adequate teaching aids and materials, involved students in-class works, and promoted student-student interaction. Later, Shrestha, (2016) listed the challenges facing teachers in Nepal was not having a clear-cut policy of the Government of Nepal regarding the ways to manage disruptive behaviour, no training for teachers about classroom management, lack of coordination between teachers' lesson planning and teaching in the classroom. More recently, Karki (2017) attributed the occurrence of disruption towards large class size, not practising disciplinary habits, lack of coordination between lesson plan and real teaching among the secondary teachers in Nepal. Even so, those previous studies could not cover strategies and approaches university teachers have adopted in dealing with the disruptive behaviours of their students. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate teachers' approaches to managing classroom behavioural issues-particularly laying attention towards the problems of mitigating disruptive behaviours.

## Objective and Research Question

The primary aim of this study is to explore university teachers' perceptions of the issues of classroom disruption and the strategies and approaches they formulate in dealing with such issues. To address this objective, the study is an attempt to address the following research question:

- How do the English language teachers of the community colleges in Nepal perceive disruptive behaviours of their students and in what ways do they deal with such behaviours?

## Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature as it utilizes descriptive data since it collected the strategies and approaches of university teachers' to deal with students' disruptive behaviour as data was collected in a natural setting without any intervention (Denzin, 2019). The participants in the study consisted of 15 English language teachers teaching in different universities and colleges in Nepal. Those universities teachers were selected using a convenient sampling procedure as most of them have at least five years of teaching experience with university-level students and the selection of them was made based on the convenience of the researchers as suggested by Kumar (2019). An online questionnaire (open-ended questions) was prepared and after though piloting, it was sent to respective teachers with sufficient guidelines and information about the questionnaire. Those questions contained information about rules and regulation formation, types of actions they take while they encounter misbehaviour, teachers' actions and decisions about the issues of students' classroom disruptive behaviour. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with those university teachers as the purpose of the study was to elicit comprehensive, lived, and rich information within their frame of reference (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2010; Denzin, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The interview contained questions about the strategies and approaches those teachers devised to deal with the issues of classroom disruption. The semi-structured interview and questions in the questionnaire and were guided by Dreikurs's Mistaken Model of Classroom Management (1968) which asserts to use a democratic approach to deal with the issues of classroom management. Moreover, the interview was conducted with prior information and informed consent, anonymity and assurance about confidentiality about the information provided by the participants were maintained.

## Data Analysis

The data from the interview were transcribed in the following way adopting the thematic analysis procedure of Braun and Clark (2006). The following steps of data

analysis were followed during data analysis

- a. **Step 1 – Familiarization with the data** - We transcribed the data, read it several times and initial notes were made to generate ideas for coding
- b. **Step 2 – Generation of initial codes** - The transcripts were independently analysed to identify the pattern in the data and some ideas were grouped in a meaningful way.
- c. **Step 3 – Ensured reliability of coding** - The result was compared and necessary changes were made. Those codes were identified as directed by the research questions.
- d. **Step 4 – Search for themes** - Those codes were listed into various possible themes. Based on the prepared codes, six themes were developed
- e. **Step 5 – Review of themes** - Smaller themes generated from codes were merged into a bigger theme. A thematic map comprising six themes were developed with the working title.
- f. **Step 6 – Defining and naming themes** - Further refinement of those themes were made and they were revised to make them concise and reader-friendly.

## Findings

### *Preparation of Rules and Regulation before Classes Begin*

Researches done during late 1960s encouraged teachers to formulate rules and regulations about classroom management, urged to provide verbal/non-verbal praise and, whenever possible recommended them to ignore minor mistakes committed by the students (Gable, Hester, Rock, & Hughes, 2009). In the present study, the university teachers have different reactions towards the formulation of rules and regulations before the commencement of class. The study found that most of the teachers set rules and regulations or dos or don'ts about optimal classroom behaviour before beginning the class. For example, one of the participant teachers reported the following:

*Yes, I make the rules before beginning the class mostly at the beginning of the session and if necessary I make changes. I also encourage students to prepare classroom rules and regulation collectively and paste on the wall in front of the classroom and based on those rules, decisions about misbehaviours will be made (T-5).*

Furthermore, it was found that the rules and regulations were not pre-formulated but when there was disruption, only at that time rules were made to address such rules and regulations violations (T-3). All dos and don'ts are formulated in collaboration with students and its acknowledgement is made at first (T2 and T-9). Likewise, full authority was given to students to make classroom rules by one of the teachers and they were also made accountable for all the consequences and violations (T-8). However, some teachers reported that they did not make rules for class before the class (T-1, T-7 and T-10).

Therefore, the study found that most teachers pre-formulated rules for the class before the session or semester began whereas some teachers gave authority to the students regarding the formulation of rules and regulations. On the other hand, very few teachers were found not preparing rules at all before beginning the class but in some cases, the teachers made rules only after the class was disrupted. Thus, regarding the issue of preparation of rules before the commencement of the class, different teachers have a different perspective towards rules and regulation formation but the point of reconciliation that can be drawn is that either they pre-formulated rules before the beginning of the class or specified those rules once misbehaviour is encountered.

### ***Specification of TTT and STT***

Teachers always do their best efforts to make their students participate in-class activities, use English as the target language while doing the activities at the same time and specify when they have to make the presentation and when they have to allow students to speak. However, we found that Teacher Talking Time (TTT) is still high while Student Talking Time (STT) is still low (Patte, 2019) since most of the teachers spent a significant amount of time delivering lectures. Fisher (2005), in a study, identified lower-order tasks in classroom evaluation which consists of checking students' understanding, and higher-order tasks to develop cognitive skills, and to express an opinion and enhance the discussion. The present study found that the majority of the teachers' allotted teachers talking time and student talking time. For example, one of the teachers reported the following:

*Yes, I specify the talking time for teachers and students separately. The first 25 minutes of the class is specified for me to teach and the remaining time is separated as students' talking time where I encourage students to participate in classroom discussion. In students talking time, I encourage them to speak themselves or talk to me about the issue being discussed (T-6).*

Furthermore, the study found that some teachers have not exactly separated time as a TTT and TTT but preferred their students to talk more than teachers (T -9 and T-1). However, T-2 did not specify teachers and students talking time but as per the need, he

allowed students to talk. In a nutshell, the majority of teachers have reported that the initial session of the classroom teaching and learning was for TTT and the later session was for SST (T-5, T-8, and T-4)

Consequently, the study disclosed that the most of the teachers were aware of separating time for the teachers and students to talk whereas few teachers provided time for the classroom interaction whenever the necessity is felt. Even so, some were very conscious about specific time for themselves and students. The study further revealed that within STT teachers preferred them to talk to each other and the reason behind it might be they learn better from their peers.

### ***Teachers' First Action towards Unnecessary Noise***

Controlling students' unwanted behaviour can take long time which directly hampers teaching learning activities, even teachers can be frustrated and such lead to failure on the part of students (Ruiz-Olivares, Pino, & Herruzo, 2010). Duesund and Odegard (2018) in their study found that most of the students reported that their teachers reacted to disruptive behaviour by "asking them to be quiet" or "raise their voice and tell them to be quiet". But in reality, teachers should be very active to take good initiation towards unexpected behaviour and noises in the classroom. The present study discovered that the most of the teachers first suggested keeping quiet and reminded the classroom rules as the first action towards unnecessary noise. For example, one of the participant teachers reported that:

*I first politely suggest students stop making unnecessary noise. Even after that too, if there is noise, I remind them of the classroom rules that were collectively formulated before the commencement of the class. By doing so, I raise my voice so that they could understand that I am not satisfied with their behaviour. This is what I do as the first action to make class silent and create an environment for learning (T- 2).*

Furthermore, the study found that some teachers used staying silently and listening to their unnecessary noise as the first action towards the unnecessary noise (T1). But in the case of some teachers even giving a stern look at the students was also the first action (T-7). Some teachers even reminded the rules and even the class did not become silent, the teachers gave stern looks with being silent (T-3, T-8, and T-10). Additionally, some teachers asked questions to the students who were making noise as the first action to handle the unwanted noise and the actions those teachers made (T-4 and T-6).

Thus, teachers had different perspectives towards their first action towards unnecessary classroom noise and the majority of the teachers reported reminding students

about rules and regulations that were formulated before class commences, giving stern looks, remaining silent and asked questions to those students. In a nutshell, the teachers played an active role as the first action towards the unwanted classroom behaviour.

### ***Specific Approaches to Deal with Disruption***

Disruptive behaviours are problems not only due to their immediate effects on classroom processes but also because they interfere with the development of cooperation and pro-social attitudes that are one of the most important objectives of schooling in most countries (Araujo, 2005). Studies like, (Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005) have shown that coercive strategies, that have an aversive character, seem to be associated with increasing disruptive behaviour, whereas supportive strategies, that help to develop and construct adaptive behaviour patterns, seem to have the opposite effect. Moreover, using democratic approaches like providing attention, counselling in private and praising in public helped minimize disruption in the class (Driekurs, 1968). The present study discovered that the most of the teachers used supportive approaches to handle disruptive behaviour. For example, one of the participant teachers reported that:

*I prefer to use supportive strategies rather than coercive strategies to deal with disruption. In my experience, I have found the harsh approaches developed negativity in students towards teachers so; I use supportive strategies. I do not proceed towards penalisation but implementing supportive strategies, worked in my context (T-13).*

Furthermore, the study found that some teachers used strict rules and regulations and were even penalised for unanticipated behaviours (T-5). Whereas, some teachers took the help of the administration to deal with the disruption (T-12 and T-15). In some cases, the teachers were found taking the help of parents to deal with disruption in serious cases (T- 11). Even when the case was found worse, the invitation of psychologists and psychiatrists were also invited (T-2). Praising good habits in public and counselling in private (T-4), making the student stand up and bombarding questions to humiliate (T-6), and comparing the disruptive student with a decent student and urging the disruptive to behave like decent (T-10) were strategies employed by the teachers to mitigate the issue of disruptive behaviours in their classes.

Overall, the study found that the approaches used to deal with disruption depended on the nature of disruption and how did the teacher respond to the behaviour. Various approaches were used which varied from the positive approaches to coercive approaches depending on the nature of disruption. Finally, some actions teachers took included supportive strategy, penalisation, being hyperactive as some of the strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviour.

## Discussion

The study explored the ways English language teachers of the university and colleges of Nepal perceived the DB of their students and the strategies and approaches they adopted to mitigate such behaviours. Although the study did not yield any significant findings, teachers employed democratic and psychological approaches to deal with such behaviours in English language classes (Driekurs, 1968) since college-level students are grownups and using corporal punishment caused more disruption. From the above findings, those teachers specified rules and regulations or dos and don'ts before the commencement of the academic calendar which is similar to the study of Mussa, (2015) since formulation rules and regulations yielded smooth management of the class. It is because after the collaborative formulation of rules and regulations, such rules and regulations were acknowledged and consecutive actions were taken accordingly which was agreed upon by all the English teachers in the study. Moreover, a study, (Hesse et al., 2015), concluded that acknowledging rules and regulations collectively formulated earlier helped in maintaining discipline and decorum. Moreover, as teachers have been found more active in delivering lectures, their talking times need to be reduced, students should be allowed to speak more sharing their experience about the content being taught, and STT has to be increased. However, Krebt (2017) cautioned that STT should not liberate a particular student to monopolize classroom discussion, so special care should be given.

As the students of university-level are grownups, remaining silent, giving a stern look to the student who shows disruptive behaviour, and asking questions to those who impede the functioning classroom are the strategies that can be used to mitigate the issue of troublesome behaviour and Mueller (2009) asserted that asking the disruptive student stand up, remaining silent and giving a gazing can work to those who are conscious towards their career. Additionally, using corporal or harsh strategies to mitigate such unwanted behaviour was found counterproductive but some teachers still believed in it, however, from a pedagogic point of view, democratic actions towards disruptive behaviour (Dreikurs, 1968) have been found quite useful and effective. Nevertheless, (Colvin, 2021) pointed out that using corporal punishment is beyond imagination in this era, rather diplomatic strategies have to be employed. Finally, teachers used psychological strategies like praising in public and counselling in private, making the troublesome student stand up and bombarding questions and diplomatic strategies like making comparison and contrast between troublesome and a decent student and urging the former to behave like later were also the strategies and approach university-level English language teachers used to mitigate the disruptive behaviour of their students. Glorifying a student in public and taking action in private, wishing birthdays, and other achievements in the class helped in mitigating DBs (Skovholt & Trotter – Mathison, 2014). Hence, university-level English language teachers have to take immediate action once there is a disruption in the class.

## Conclusion

The study explored how did English language teachers in the university and colleges in Nepal experience the DBs of their students and what strategies and approaches they employed to mitigate such behaviours. The findings of the study recommend that the formulation of rules and regulations or dos and don'ts about optimal classroom behaviour played a significant role to mitigate the occurrence of DBs. It is because whenever there occurred DB, the teachers have been found to have acknowledged those rules and regulations. Hence, university-level English language teachers are required to formulate rules and regulations or dos or don'ts about behaviours that their students are supposed to show in the classroom and if it can be done, the chances of occurring DB can be minimised in one side and on the other, the student should be made accountable for the consequences of the projected behaviour according to formulated rules and regulations. Also, teachers need to decrease their talking time and student taking time needs to be increased so that students can share what they have learned and based on that whether classroom discourse can proceed further or re-teaching has to be done can be ensured. Increasing the voice, giving a stern look making the student stand up and bombarding questions for humiliating in exchange for the unwanted behaviours are some other strategies that can be adopted to mitigate the issues of classroom unwanted behaviours. Additionally, a psychological approach like if a troublesome student does something good, s/he can be praised in public so that positive encouragement can be made and if the same student shows unwanted behaviour, s/he can be invited in private and counselling can be done so that the chances of occurring DB can be minimized. Moreover, troublesome students can be compared and contrasted with a decent student and the former can be urged to behave like that of later can also help in mitigating the disruptive behaviour of university-level English language students.

Finally, further studies are needed on the same area as it is very difficult to pinpoint the types of disruptive behaviours found in Nepalese English as Foreign (EFL) or English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms. As different types of disruptive behaviours impede the normal functioning of the classroom and it is still unknown that which types of behaviour (s) are most prevalent in our university-level ESL or EFL classes. On the other side, more studies are needed to explore the reasons for showing disruptive behaviour as there are very few studies that dedicated their attention towards the specific reasons behind showing disruptive behaviour as these days different instances of disruptive behaviours have been found yielded by electronic gadget, the influence of peer and teachers' unprofessional treatment towards the students. Therefore, it is very essential to investigate different reasons for showing disruptive behaviour by university-level English language students in the Nepalese context.

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## Textese and its Impact on the English Language

Rameshwar Thakur

### Abstract

The growing interests of college students towards using Facebook (FB) features have invented newer texts for a faster online communication. Such unique textese and digitalese reside in their minds and hearts. Many scholars, therefore, currently advocate for exploring a new avenue to adapt certain linguistic contents (LCs) of FB in promoting and developing a language. Amidst, the LCs of such social networking sites allow users to entertain better interactions. Nevertheless, their indiscriminate use exerts threats to the existing body of the English Language (EL). In this context, this qualitative study tries to reconnoitre typical characteristics of textese based on purposively selected observation data from FBs of 20 college students and documentary data from published journals or books. It further analyzes how such contents affect phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels of the EL. The study concludes that the LCs impose problems to the EL; however, they require integrations into current form of the EL without causing serious problems because of their influences on netizens.

**Keywords:** textese, netizen, self-regulation, lexical, alphanumeric

### Introduction

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has extensively encroached on the time and space of humans' existence with its multiple wings. The increasing invasion of digital inventions deserves praise for their miracle-working power in meeting humans' needs and interests; however, their improper handling and misuse results in contempt. Digital users additionally employ such inventions, as Ratheeswari (2018) says, to 'handle and communicate information for learning purposes'(p. 45). ICT, developed as 'building blocks of modern society'(Sharma, Dahiya, & Verma, 2016, p. 663) in a very short period, has become an indispensable 'part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy'(p. 663) in most countries. Besides education, almost every aspect of human life has got invaded and transformed though it is consumer-driven. It highlights the dominating role of humans' institutions and infinite intelligence in directing digital devices for their sake.

Thus, the contents should appropriate social and communal cultural norms and values without any fundamental transformations in any aspects of a language. Furthermore, Raheeswari (2018) accentuates ‘High quality, meaningful, and culturally responsive digital content’(p. 46) for teachers and learners for high academic standards. Slim and Hafedh (2020) state that Social Media (SM) like FB has expanded due to ‘the human craving for discovery, boundless connection and exchange of information and opinion with other users’(p. 56). Because an SM grips educational arena, academicians and educationalists emphasize its inevitability in teaching learning activities. FB specifically creates a common effective platform for sharing ideas and messages. Out of various features of FB, chat/status or text message is quite popular not only among the youths/adults but also the aged in order to promote resilience and register; and connect for easy communication and continued attention (as cited in Oseni, Dingley & Hart, 2018, p. 56). In course of time, transformations made to statuses and chats LCs are straying away from preserving orthographic features of English language. Hamzah, Ghorbani and Abdullah (2009) claim that the written language should be creatively adapted, developed, and enhanced to meet the need of electronic communication (p. 75). Does it mean that the beauty, originality, and purity of the EL should be changed? Can’t we uphold unalienable features of English even in electronic messages? Certainly, we can if we try. If such traditions continue, the day is not so far when our struggle to preserve and promote a language will confront hurdles. Similarly, Van Dijk, Van Witteloostuijn, Vasić, Avrutin and Blom (2016) argue that textese positively affects children’s grammar performance and remains neutral in improving children’s executive functions (p. 1). Nevertheless, my question is ‘ How do erroneous structures of textese preserve grammar system?’ Do they not encourage language violation? Yes, language is dynamic but shouldn’t be deteriorated because of digital inventions; rather cultural values attached to it should be protected. Thus, this study attempts to pinpoint deviant forms of textism and aware social media users about its effects on different levels of English language so that remedial steps can be exercised to minimize such absurdity. Specifically, the research discovers how textese of FB statuses and comments affects phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic systems of the English language with the help of observation and document data.

## Methodology

The researcher employed qualitative research design throughout the research processes. This study chiefly focuses on practical linguistic expressions of the target groups in natural online settings and has made sense of the observation and documentary data organizing them into different categories. Moreover, the researcher has deeply investigated the reasons behind their occurrences in reference to relationships, feelings and social contexts of the users.

In order to find effects of LCs of FB on the English Language, this study mainly used data collected purposefully from FB statuses and chat contents of 15 BBS and 5 B.ed first year students studying in private and public colleges of Kavrepalanchok district. Each participant's name was collected from the lectures working in the respective colleges and the researcher then searched each one's FB. But their names are not revealed for maintaining ethical issues.

As private chats are not publicly open, the linguistic contents were observed from comments, responses and statuses. Moreover, the deviant forms especially words and phrases were extracted from the full sentences. This study though does not include any primary data collected from such students. Besides, the researcher has used online authentic text messages mentioned and quoted in journals and books. Thus, both observation and documentary texts are basic sources for exploring new dimensions of textese's effects on the English language. The data gathered in such ways have been analyzed and interpreted qualitatively; and the conclusion has been drawn.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A writer uses codes to impart messages through communication channels expecting the receiver will decode and understand what is intended. When interlocutors belong to different linguistic communities, the code so forth created for sharing information may be hybridized. Sometimes, the sender should code-switch basing on the needs of audience. Turner (2009) states that code-switching can take place 'between registers or styles such as from textese to standard English' (as cited in Achuff, 2017, p. 20). Humans love to enjoy what they feel like doing and want to guide their behaviours, thoughts and feelings to attain goals without any interventions. Bandura (1991) says that the ongoing exercise of self-influence motivates and regulates human behaviours in social cognitive theory (p. 248). It means what a person does depends on the social factors that influence him/her. Likewise, peers and online communities of textese users highly leave traces on the use of LCs to communicate due to which they form a habit of using non-standard English. Bandura further says that self-regulatory function encompasses self-monitoring and self-judgement of an individual's behavior relative to personal standards and environmental circumstances; and affective self-reaction (p. 284). Thus, rapid texting causes weak monitoring resulting in creating erroneous words, phrases and sentences. Moreover, they fail to accurately judge their actions and behaviours because of the newly set standards. This theory claims that such regulatory systems mediate the impacts of external influences and provide grounds for purposeful actions. An individual being regulated by forethought forms beliefs, anticipates possible consequences, sets goals and plans courses of actions. When s/he fails to set the right goals and course of actions, the consequences diverge. Self-regulative capability enables a person to exercise controls over his/her thoughts, motivations and feelings so that s/he can command present

behaviours. However, self-regulation needs adequate attention to fidelity, consistency and temporal proximity of self-monitoring (p. 250). Bandura argues that ‘systematic self-observation can provide important self-diagnostic information’(p. 250) but faulty self-observation results in ill manners and wrong behaviours. The individual therefore exercises erroneous utterances and flawed writing traditions. Social cognitive theory of self-regulation can help discover why texters use deviant forms of LCs in online textual communications. This study thus uses the theory of self-regulation to guide the researcher throughout the entire process of the research.

### ***Facebook and English Language Teaching***

The FB is epidemically widespread among people, mostly youngsters, due to its various utilities in our social and personal life. Many academicians, teachers and students use it to make their opinions, ideas and thoughts open so as to build up a strong online academic community. The ease and brevity in imparting latest information enables us to maximize intimacy, loyalty and self-confidence. Teachers and Students of the EL can highly benefit by using various functions provided in FB. Sirivedin, Soopunyo, Srisuantang and Wongsothorn (2018) note that FB helps improve accuracy, meaningfulness, clarity and relevance in writing; and enhance fluency, confidence, satisfaction, value and self-efficacy belief in teachers (p. 183). Furthermore, Yunus and Salehi (2012) mention the vitality of FB group in promoting writing activities, especially brainstorming, learning new vocabulary from reading the comments of others and reduce spelling errors with the help of spell check features (p. 95). Altakhaineh and Al-Jallad (2018) recommends the need to ‘utilize social media to enhance students’ L2 writing skills in general, and the mechanics of writing in particular’(p. 12). Similarly, Shih (2013) takes Language learning through FB as a way to effectively improve the grammar skills (tense) and sentence structures; and enhance the learners’ desire for learning (p. 58). Proper and careful use of LCs of various features in FB can promote and enhance language development.

Teachers can utilize the FB for creating a vibrant and lively classroom environment; and students can have authentic interactions with English native speakers as well as teachers. Chen and Wang (2013) find the unique functions of FB for teachers to develop activities including communicating, collaborating, and sharing strategies that positively affect student’s learning attitude and learning achievement (p. 141). Such strategies help both teachers and students to participate in oral communication, help in finding materials online for assignments/project works and build up intimacy for academic purposes. Bosch (2009) notes a significant contribution of this social site for fostering social connectivity/micro-communities, general communication and teaching and learning activities (p. 193). Kharbach (2014) mentions that FB provides teachers access to different valuable educational apps to uplift their teaching activities; and TeachThought (2012) recommends ‘Booktag’ to share books in English and ask students to comment on

them; ‘Knighthood’ to promote reading skills in English; ‘Language Exchange’ to help students to get connected with foreign language practice and ‘Flashcardlet’ to create flash cards for students to learn vocabulary words in English (as cited in Espinosa, 2015, p. 2207). Blattner and Lomicka (2012) claim that FB ‘helps to provide students with extra L2 practice of interpretative and interpersonal communication skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening’ (p 35). Bayucan (2017) advances the contribution of FB in improving ‘reading, writing, digital literacy, information gathering, and communication with students and parents’ (p.13). The aforementioned information strongly suggests an essential role FB plays in language teaching. Furthermore, the LCs used in FB chats seem to help students coming in contact with different genres through which they can enrich their cognitive aspect and improve their writing skills, reading skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills. Different scholars also accentuate the inevitable role of FB in widening the sphere of the EL.

Nevertheless, indiscriminate use of social media features may distract learners’ attention away from study. The intentional or unintentional violations of netiquette create psychological disturbances and social problems. Espinosa (2015) states students, constantly using social media, do not pay attention to the classes, always chat, post pictures, etc. (p. 2206). To save time, they frequently use ill-formed structures, non-existent words/phrases and even irrelevant lexemes that may spring conflicts and misunderstandings among people. Most students, Manan, Alias and Pandian (2012) report, interact using ‘Manglish’ (like Nenglish), or any other combination of languages, but very few use the Standard English to interact with each other (p. 7). As a result, the original quality of English used in such online interactions is eroding. Joshi (2017) argues Short Message Service can have a destructive effect on English language if not checked properly in time and ‘left to accept words, choppy lingo, sloppy spelling and grammatical errors to get a quick and short message’ (p. 146). The overall sphere of FB users is rising; however, majority of youngsters/college and university students outdo the older people. Their purposes, time and ways to handle FB features, differ in many respects. Even the characteristics of SMS contents pose variability in promoting the EL.

The LCs of FB chats not only help promote social intimacy but also affect English Language. Moreover, they spoil concentration of students in the classroom; encourage them to use non-standard forms of English both in writing and speaking; and depreciate different aspects of the EL as well.

### ***Characteristics of Chat Languages***

Textese is a form of written language by online users in order to communicate with virtual community members. Contents of such written forms carry most features of speech rather than formal writing characteristics. The development in digital world

and media universe is pushing its users to adopt newly emerged scripts though different in nature. Thus, young generations expect transformations in the EL to meet needs and demands of existing societies and their current needs. The charismatic uniqueness of ICT has fascinated not only youngsters but also the aged people though in varying degree. In this scenario, the relation between spoken language and written ones especially online/FB has made a comfortable space to enjoy communication easy and reachable to some extent without any proper attention to textese. Consequently, formal and genuine aspects of the EL currently are at risk and this dynamics of increasing violation of formal rules of the EL is posing difficulties to different facets of the EL in pretention of meeting technology lovers' demands to walk in hands with time and technology. The very situation has forced academicians and linguists to discover pertinent remedies to maintain and promote linguistic originality so that future generations will not have problems in comprehending fundamental phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic spheres.

The SMS/Chat is the process of communicating, interacting and/or exchanging messages over the Internet that involves two or more people. FB Users can send messages and exchange photos, videos, stickers, audio, etc., and react to other users' messages and interact with bots. These text messages are composed in 'textese' or 'digitalese' or 'CMC language' and such textiquette doesn't follow standard language convention (Lieke, 2019, p. 9). Thus, the linguistic or orthographic contents used to share our ideas in chat need to be studied for finding their significant features, and utility in enhancing the standard and correct use of the EL in formal and informal contexts. Citing Ling (2008), Kahari (2014) says that the language of texting has its own style which involves the use of abbreviations, slang, syntactic reductions, asterisk emoting, deletion of parts of speech especially subject pronouns, prepositions, articles, copula, auxiliary or modal verbs and contractions (p. 156). Besides, users from different geographical, cultural and linguistic identities show their 'increased indulgence in code-switching and code mixing' for texting that leads to 'entirely novel linguistic varieties' (Anjaneyulu & Gabriel, 2009, p. 4). For this purpose, many studies have been conducted to explore stereotypes of chat language. Segerstad (2002) mentions the followings as linguistic features of text messages:

*punctuation (omitting punctuation, unconventional punctuation and omitting blank space), spellings (mispredictions, spoken-like spelling split compounds, consonant writing, conventional abbreviations, unconventional abbreviations, either all capitals or all lower-case and exchange long words for shorter), grammar {omission of subject pronoun, omission of vp (copula, auxiliary, or modal verb + preposition}, omission of article, preposition and possessive pronoun) and graphical means (emoticons, asterisks and symbol replacing word). (p. 215)*

Randall (2002) argues that the writing style on internet messaging tends to come

very close to speech. Punctuation, grammar and other prescriptions of formal writing are lost, capitalization remains unimportant; and slang and abbreviations get priority (p. 12). Similarly, a quick exchange of messages forces the parties to type something without taking time to consider. The users are also free to create the discourse system regarding acronyms (LOL-Laughing out loud, F2F-face to face, CU-see you, L8r-later) and abbreviations (v-very, Vg-Very good, Y-why, Ppl-people, b4-before) they need or simply want (p. 14). Because the writers have little time for thinking, they do not ‘compose fully formed, grammatically correct, rhetorically effective sentences and paragraphs complete with transitions, flow, and carefully considered style and tone’(p. 16). Such messages consist of non-conventional uses of spellings, sentences, punctuation, diction, and vocabulary to make the message sound and feel like spoken discourse as possible.

Merchant (2001) takes chat interactions as rapid written conversations having features of face-to-face talk with explorations in interactive writing. Younger people, more adaptable than other sectors of a society and quicker to adapt to new technology, are, to some extent, the innovators, the forces of change in the new communication landscape who experiment and create new forms of writing in their online interactions. Besides, they ‘write often with little thought for the accuracy of keystrokes, spelling conventions, traditional punctuation or grammatical completeness’(p. 296). The use of rapid writing reflects the intimacy in the informal, conversational style of the writing that lacks correct capitalization and punctuation except the apostrophe. The creative approach to spelling includes different uses of spellings as speech: ‘u’, ‘av’, ‘wot’ and ‘woz’, the lower case: ‘i’ and ‘ok’(p. 301), abbreviations and jargons to save typing time and increase the pace of the dialogue. Merchant further claims that abbreviations are common in informal text messaging and roughly categories abbreviations into four types. First, non-alphabetic characters to construct icons relating to emotions (emoticons); second, initial letters as shorthand like ‘SWALK’ for ‘sealed with a loving kiss’; third, combinations of numbers and letters like ‘gr8’ for ‘great’ and fourth, phonetic spelling like ‘cu’ for ‘see you’ (p. 302). Although writing system in chatrooms help impart messages with less efforts, the erroneous spellings, abbreviations and sentence structures violate writing system of the EL.

Crystal (2001) examines ‘the role of language in the Internet and the effect of the Internet on language’ (p. x) and focuses on the ‘Netspeak’s relationship to written and spoken language’ (p. 23). He further says that text ‘messages cannot overlap’ (p. 33) unlike spoken conversations; and takes the language of asynchronous chat different from that of synchronous, ‘which causes most radical linguistic innovation’(p. 130). Crystal notes that word play is ubiquitous in messaging through the use of linguistic strategies which entail repeated letters (hiiiiii, ooops), capitalization, smileys, short responses(p. 145), single sentences or sentence fragments, reduced word-length through abbreviations and initialisms(p. 157), use of nicknames (159), rebus-like abbreviations, colloquial elisions

(are > r, you > u, and > n), transcription of emotional noises (hehehe, owowowowow), filled pauses (um, er, erm), comic-book style interjections (ugh, euugh, yikes, yipes)(p. 164), perverse spellings (outta, seemz, gonna, dunno, wanna), the omission of a copular verb, prepositions and an auxiliary verb, non-standard concord (165) and abbreviations (BBL, BRB, LOL)(185).

Yunis (2019) argues that the networking texting brings a new type of writing, which includes omitting some letters, adding numbers next to the letters and logograms, deleting mostly vowels, adopting and applying short forms (p. 312). He further says 'Abbreviations and acronyms ground lexical ambiguity while texting'(p. 311). The use of homonymous shortenings like 'LOL' for 'Lots of Love' or 'Laughing out Loud' or 'Little Old Lady', 'BF' for 'best friends' or 'boyfriend', 'FYI' for 'for your information' or 'for your interest' and 'BAC' for 'by any chance' or 'back at computer'(p. 312) etc, and Synonymous abbreviations like 'CU/SU/S you/C you/ See U' for 'See you', 'IG/ Insta' to mean 'Instagram', 'TBH/2beh/2bh' for 'To be honest' 'brings highly ambiguous in clinical notes'(p. 313) between the texters. The usage of such textese gives rise to the possibility of a new style of spelling system in the EL.

Stapa and Shaari (2012) identify the linguistic features of online texting. Innovations and modifications in spellings, combinations of letter and number homophone, vowel reduction or omission, replacement of /s/ with /z/, using a letter to represent a word, playful jargons, acronyms, abbreviations and emoticons (p. 817) offer a room for non-native English speakers to communicate without any worries of being judged by others. However, such online 'writing behaviors do not meet requirements of standard writing form and structure'(p. 822) because of limited space and urgency of spontaneity. They further predict for the potential emergence of a new set of language rules and cultures despite the lack of 'specific models in leading the development of online communicative language' (p. 828). The occurrences differ on the basis of cultures, ethnicities, geo-linguistic conditions and people.

The aforementioned researches point out distinctive features of LCs in this electronic communication age. Their results found so far in such researches project both positive and negative effects of such variant textese in practical as well as academic lives. The growing challenges emerged with scientific and technological inventions in language sectors keep forcing experts and academicians to come up with a panacea to belittle possible dangers to the English language because of violation of orthographic and grammatical norms and rules throughout the digitalese.

### **Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The present study uses the social cognitive theory of self-regulation to analyse the data collected from the FB of the intended participants. The participants seem to have used

LCs basing on the closeness and intimacy they have with their friends, and the contents have consistency in use. They were found to be using such forms mainly with peer groups rather than with seniors or teachers. Additionally, mood or mental conditions at the time of chatting decide the type of variations in contents. Because of openness and mutual relationships between friends, they become a bit careless in self-regulating and self-monitoring their online behaviours. Consequently, occurrence of non-standard LCs occupies a greater space in a chat box. Therefore, the researcher has attempted to analyse the collected data embracing self-regulatory qualities of the participants.

The following table shows the appearances of word, phrases and sentences that are picked up from FB statuses and comments/responses; and online reliable sources with their possible intended meanings:

| Chatword/s | Real word/s      | Chatword/s | Real word/s    | Chatword/s | Real word/s  |
|------------|------------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| b4         | before           | l8r        | later          | tq         | Thank you    |
| vfyf       | very fine        | r8         | rate           | bt         | but          |
| d/da       | the              | m8         | mate           | 4get       | forget       |
| u          | you              | ic         | I see          | msg        | message      |
| bcoz/coz,  | because          | gd         | good           | ppl        | people       |
| ?4u        | question for you | f2f        | Face to face   | tym        | time         |
| 121        | one two one      | ezy        | easy           | hapi       | happy        |
| 143        | I love you       | ef4t       | effort         | thanx      | thanks       |
| 1432       | I love you too   | 6y         | sexy           | tc         | Take care    |
| i8u        | I hate you       | 2moro      | tomorrow       | Str8       | straight     |
| 2nt        | tonight          | T+         | Think positive | pic        | picture      |
| bw         | between          | wc         | welcome        | fren       | friend       |
| b4u        | Before you       | rite       | Right/write    | Wan2tlk    | Want to talk |

Some text messages beyond word/phrase level(Chaka et al., 2015, pp. 4/5)

|                                                                                                              |                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Y r u ntfyn- Why are you not fine? Coz nt r8.                                                                | U jokn-Are you joking?/You are joking.                                                     |
| Um havin da best I thanx u 2 hv a very gudnyt!-umm having the best, I thank you too. Have a very good night. | Baby I hope u hv a gudnyte. Lv u 4eva-baby I hope you have a good night. Love you forever. |

|                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hi u, I miss u & so hwwsur week. I wl like 2 sy I luv u-hi you! I miss you and so how was your week. I will like to say I love you. | mrngmyluv, irmbrth day we met it ws joy in my hrt and a blssng 2 my lyf-Morning my love. I remember the day we met. It was joy in my heart and a blessing to my life. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table1: *appearances of word, phrases and sentences on FB*

The above table shows both the data collected from the FB of students and documented source. The former illustrates that unconventional shortenings/Elision in LCs like ‘vfynd’, ‘bw’, ‘gd’, ‘wc’, ‘tq’, ‘msg’, Alphanumeric including signs writing like ‘b4’, ‘?4u’, ‘2nt’, ‘b4u’, ‘T+’, ‘m8’, ‘18r’, ‘eft’, Phonetic abbreviations like ‘cu’, ‘d’, ‘u’, ‘ic’, ‘bt’, Numeric homophones like ‘121’ and Numerals to show a word/sentence like ‘2’, ‘143’. Furthermore, deletion of vowels gets importance like in ‘ppl’, ‘msg’. The deviant forms thus seem to run at word, phrase and sentence levels. The patterns of tone or stress or intonation from the textual contents are difficult to decipher but changes in spelling system exert problems to phonemic system of the EL.

Similarly, the latter one includes basically unconventional shortenings of words or deviant spellings or phonetic abbreviations like ‘r’ for ‘are’, ‘u’ for ‘you’, ‘hv’ for ‘have’, ‘luv’ for ‘love’, ‘nyt’ for ‘night’, ‘gud’ for ‘good’, ‘rite’ for ‘write/right’, ‘lyf’ for ‘life’, ‘hrt’ for ‘heart’; alphanumeric like ‘4eva’ for ‘forever’; and numeral homophone like ‘2’ for ‘to’. Moreover, elision of vowel letters, violation of syntactic rules and influence of speech on writing play a pivotal role in isolation and connected speech. Such occurrences are basically influenced by LC features at word and phrase levels; however, a little impact falls on the discourse level.

### ***Phonetic/Phonological Misses***

LCs used in statuses and chats seem to be deviating from the correct Pronunciation in isolation or connected speech; and their popularity among users gives a new dimension, which strays from the real course of writing system of the EL. The use of deviant spellings, alphanumeric abbreviations, colloquial elisions, etc., allow the recipients to transform the symbols into speech that can pass from people to people or generations to generations. This phonetic/phonological tendency of SMS contents causes a serious threat to standard oral production. Replacing a word or part of a word with a letter or digit or leaving out vowels changes the whole phoneme i.e. the /ði:, ðə/- d /di/, should /ʃʊd/-shud /ʃʌd/, Holly /’hɒl.i/-holy /’həʊli/, a short vowel into a long one i.e. tonight/ tə’naɪt/-2nt/tu:naɪt/, etc. Similarly, the negligence of stress creates non-rhythmic patterns with change in meaning as in thank you /’θæŋkjʊ:/ vs /θæŋk ‘ju:/-tq; however, ‘stress assignment does not determine the nature of deletions’ (Kul, 2007, p. 43). Additionally,

the use of digits to replace words may not match with its real pronunciation i.e. 1432 (one four three two) to mean 'I love you too'. Omission of some sounds as well affects the pronunciation, Chaka, Mphahlele and Mann (2015) calls 'Aphaeresis'(p. 5) ' , i.e. because/bi'kɒz/-/kɒz/ and Friend /frend/-fren/fren/. Moreover, juncture in connected speech as in 'b4u' for 'before you' is highly undermined leading the EL from stress-timed to syllable-timed language; as a result, it becomes difficult to identify exact sounds. It places obstacles for fluency as well. Thus, erroneous and indiscriminate use of online texting for what so reason places problems to pronunciation of a word in isolation and tone/intonation in connected speech as well. The users, therefore, should pay attention in using contents to avoid grave mistakes that can cause serious phonemic problems.

### *Morphological leftover*

LCs are quick graphical representation of utterances or speech-like utterances; so, they don't obey formal and standard form of writing a word. The collected observation and documentary data include unconventional shortenings like 'gd' for 'good', alphanumeric form like 'm8' for 'mate', phonetic abbreviation like 'bt' for 'but', digits to replace word/s like '121' for 'one two one', deviant spellings like 'rite' for 'right/wright'; and missing out vowel letters like 'msg' for 'message'.

Van Dijk et al. (2015) points out that the use of such textese may 'leak into their general writing, ultimately deteriorates language' (p. 1). In this line, lexical reductions and graphical techniques are 'ways to reduce time, effort and keystrokes' during text messages production (Segerstad, 2019, p. 201). The mutual understanding in the netizen subculture allows independent use of special vocabulary and style to differentiate netizens from lay-strangers; and this freedom of introducing novel linguistic elements causes violation of the formal norms of English language.

The freer use of unconventional acronyms as in 'icwum' for 'I see what you mean', 'ptmm' for 'please tell me more' (Crystal, 2004, p. 85), etc., and unconventional or ad-hoc abbreviations (as cited in Segerstad, 2019, p. 72) as in 'cu' for 'see you', 'ic' for 'I see', 'vfyn' for 'very fine', etc., which are generally not accepted in common language and not found in dictionaries, adds difficulties in morphological structures of words. Normally, we can guess the meaning of a word by breaking into different parts but reductions and elisions of texting betray us in predicting meanings in such a way. For example, we cannot guess meanings of 'b4' and 'because', but we can from 'before' (before) and 'because' (bi-cause). Similarly, the negligence of suffixes ('tnx' for 'thanks'), omission of vowel letters ('ppl' for 'people', 'msg' for 'message') and alphanumeric Rebus writing-morpheme, Lothington (2004) calls 'Hybridised codes' (p. 318) ('2moro' for 'tomorrow', 'l8r' for 'later', 'ef4t' for 'effort', 'str8' for 'straight') still add hurdles to formal rules of word formation. In the same way, alphanumeric phrases i.e. 'b4u' for

'before you', 'me 2' for 'me too', phonetic abbreviations/respellings (Kul, 2007, p. 45) i.e. 'bt' for 'but', 'u' for 'you', 'y' for 'why', 'r' for 'are', 'n' for 'and', 'ur' for 'your', 'plz' for 'please', repeated spellings and punctuations i.e. 'sooooo' for 'so' and numeric homophones for morphemes i.e. '2' for 'to/two/too' impose misunderstanding of spellings as well as the particular words that are intended to be received. Some studies suggest that these shortenings are meant to save time and cost and foster speed in communication; however, they have undermined the destructive nature of such textese on the English language. Rumsienė (2007) argues 'The multiplicity of the original words and symbols, abbreviations and combinations of the graphical signs may lead to the usage mistakes and deviation from the earlier established norms' (as cited in Kardauskienė, 2008, p. 32). This means the new form of morphological creations hinders the existing lexical world of the English language and proposes a novel space for linguistic confluence. Chaka et al. (2015) explored that the distinctive features of morphological structures in textese deviate from those used in formal English (p. 7). The morphological features certainly throw pressures on English language scholars, teachers and experts to find new ways to protect and preserve ornaments of this language. For this, linguists should adopt emerging trends in the LCs of FB without causing fundamental changes in the morphological system of the EL.

### *Syntactic liberalism*

Like morphological attack of text messages, syntactic realm of the English language is also encroached. The phonetic abbreviation like 'Y r u' for 'why are you', unconventional shortenings like 'hv a very gudnyt' for 'have a very good night', combination of phonetic abbreviation and alphanumeric like 'Lv u 4eva' for 'Love you forever', leaving out helping verb like 'U jokn' for 'Are you joking?', use of numerals to replace an entire sentence like '143' for 'I love you'; and missing vowels and spacing between words like 'hwwsur...' for 'how was your...' and 'mrngmyluv, irmbrth...' for 'morning my love, I remember the...' are some fundamental features discovered in the textese. Furthermore, using a lowercase letter even in sentence initial runs through the LCs.

Lotherington (2004) identifies newly emerged grammatical shapes in text messaging; and clarifies sentential acronyms like 'gtg' for 'got to go' or 't tyl' for 'talk to you later' and diminished grammatical capitalization like 'are you having a happy chanuka?' (p. 322). A formal syntactic structure obeys the rules of spellings, punctuations, capitalization, concord and proper constructions. However, the written utterances, Nasr, Damnati, Guerraz and Bechet (2016) note, can contain orthographic or grammatical errors or 'typographic deviations due to high speed typing, poor orthographic skills and inattention' (p. 178). Thus, the use of unconventional acronyms (awhfy- are we having fun yet?), alphanumeric patterns (2day z gr8-Today is great), phonetic respellings

(ic,ltnsdts gr8-I see, listen that's great), negligence of sentence mechanics (punctuation and capitalization), deletion of auxiliary verbs and vowels and replacement of the entire sentences with digits happen to violate formal rules of syntactic structures. The texting culture does not include proper use of punctuations, and some repeated punctuations make structures look vulgar. Non-traditional punctuation symbols such as #, dots, hyphens, commas and semicolons are also used and repeated in any number. Likewise, irregular patterns like using only lowercase (my sis z ok, cz on a d8 2day) or upper case in message; and omission of helping verbs and replacement of subject pronoun with an object pronoun (Wt u dng?-what are you doing, me goinwl-I am going well)are some areas of violation of syntactic rules. No rules of syntax validate the correctness in 'u jokn,Um havin da best I thanx u 2 hv a very gudnyt and mrrngmyluv, irmbrth day we met it ws joy in my hrt and a blssng 2 my lyf'. Lyddy, Farina, Hanney and O'Neill (2014) regard missed capitalization as the most frequent form of nonstandard spelling in texting (p. 559). Thus, freedom to use grammatically incorrect structures encourages users to continue such uses even in formal writings like exams, applications, etc. Haryono, Leleno and Kholifah (2018) claim 'Diction, spelling, and sentences that they express tend to violate grammatical rules'(p. 179). As to our astonishment, how does '1432' to mean 'I love you too' meet grammar rules? Does prescriptive grammar validate such erroneous constructions? Certainly not, these attack formal system of writing and sentence formations. Though Hamzah et al. (2009) take syntactic reductions as strategies to reduce effort, time and space; they accept the use of ungrammatical sentences in text messaging (p. 75). We cannot stop the growing pace of using new forms of sentence structures especially on social media as it's the current demand of the present era. That is why; scholars and experts working on language evolution and change should find medieval ways to address novel syntactic phenomena maintaining original qualities of the EL.

### *Semantic Bizarre*

Linguistic features of chat language are thought of a quick representation and expression of speech. With a purpose of imparting required information within limitations, users freely use variant lexical and syntactic constructions that may lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation of messages. The unconventional short forms like 'bw' for 'between' and 'wc' for 'welcome', alphanumeric form like 'b4' for 'before' and 'l8r' for 'letter' and digits to replace a sentence like '143' for 'I love you' can impose variations in understanding.

Certain features of the LCs can have misleading impacts on the meaning aspect of the English language. On the basis of the discovered data, further meanings can be deduced which place difficulties in getting the intended meanings. Typical texting features of using short forms like 'Pic' for 'Picture' or 'Piece', alphanumeric morphemes

like 'L&r' for 'Letter' or 'Latter' or 'Later' and 'B4' for 'Before' or 'Be number four', Acronyms like 'Wc' for 'Welcome' or 'Water Closet' or 'Who Cares', 'Rip' for 'Rest In Peace' or 'Rape In Park' and 'Tc' for 'Take Care' or 'Transfer Certificate'; and digits to replace a full sentence like '143' for 'I love you' or 'I hate you' or 'I kiss you' do not show clear-cut meanings as each may have multiple full forms and meanings. Furthermore, misinterpretation and misunderstanding of such codes may lead to discontinued communication, even physical or mental tortures to both senders and receivers. Despite ill-effects of LCs on semantic aspects of the EL, the burning requirement of new forms of LCs should be adopted to reflect clear meanings.

## **Conclusion**

Textese netizens keep rising in numbers with novel cultures of a writing system. Time and space allow the FB users to communicate in their subcultures efficiently and effectively; however, newer patterns of online textese and digitalese create difficulties for the English language lovers. Such deviant forms don't entirely tally with different systems of the EL. It is also argued that the LCs of FB do not keep standard forms of the EL due to intimacy and freedom of the users, but we can not avoid their emergence.

The interests of netizens towards using the FB encourage them to use the EL frequently in online communications. Consequently, the LCs used on such a platform necessarily receive pivotal importance for researchers working in language sectors. It is to be crystallized that novelty appeared in the LCs of the FB strays away from the existing body of the EL. This sphere thus needs continuous explorations in order to maintain balance between such LCs and the EL.

The FB users take advantages of freedom in importing changed writing systems for statuses and comments to save time and efforts. This study discovers various features of such writing systems and explores the extent of impacts they have on phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects of the EL so that scholars and netizens can be aware about them and pay attentions towards such an issue. Furthermore, it digs the role of self-regulation in dealing with the issue of the LCs. It also calls for the combined efforts to minimize negative effects of the LCs on the EL. The urgent need advocates for integrations of the newly developed words or phrases into the current arena of the EL. Moreover, the demand for dynamic transformations in the EL to meet current requirements of netizens who use textese for communications is still on route.

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## **Application of English as a Medium of Instruction Policy in a Private School in Nepal: An Examination**

**Prakash Chandra Giri**

### **Abstract**

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) has become an important academic issue for further discussion in the context of Nepalese education system. Many parents and community members believe it gives children a viable route toward Socio-economic mobility and global citizenship, although researchers have mixed opinions about its effectiveness. In south Asian countries such as Nepal, EMI has been adopted as a mandatory practice as early as possible, particularly in the private schools and also increasingly in government schools. Based on a small-scale action research on teachers and students of a private school situated in the Western Nepal, this article examines the conditions in which the school level decision-makers are forced to adopt EMI as a school's language-of-education policy. In this article, I analyze both students' and teachers' views and reflections on EMI to argue that it can be effective and relevant if conducted in a way that suits the local context and enables participants to recognize its value.

**Keywords:** English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), International, English, learning, Local contexts

### **Context**

The English language has been called as a preferred global communication tool, the primary means of communication and collaboration, and the medium of communication among the people of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For the people of Nepal, English is a foreign language. It is a compulsory subject taught in school. Phyak (2013) mentions that the mandatory use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and of exams in higher education has become an issue in many multilingual countries such as Nepal, attracting considerable attention from stakeholders and researchers. Currently, Nepal primarily uses Nepali in primary and secondary levels as the language-of-education, but higher education institutions and private schools have applied EMI in greater extent and have intentionally discouraged local language use in education. Many

government schools have attempted to apply EMI switching from Nepali to English, while several others are in the process of applying EMI. Making policy on language planning and implementation it is not an easy task. Today, making a policy on EMI has become a controversial issue in teaching and learning activities in various countries where English is not spoken as a primary language. The rapid shift to EMI is attributed to the constantly increasing value of English. Knowing English, for example, is essential for success in many sectors, including tourism, education, and media. It has become the main way to have access to the world resources and gain globally relevant knowledge and skills. It brings the symbolic value of modernization and internationalization. Consequently, the application EMI from an early stage has increased several folds throughout the developing world including Nepal. The recent surge in EMI policy application in Nepal seems to run counter to some reports which claim the ineffectiveness of EMI policy implementation (Sah & Karki, 2020). Such reports contend that there is a lack of adequate infrastructure and required resources. Most important of all, the teaching force is incapable in applying EMI effectively. On the other hand, other recent studies have showed that teachers in public schools generally had a positive view of implementing EMI in their daily pedagogical practices and activities (Khatri, 2019).

### **The debate on adopting EMI**

EMI has both good and bad aspects. On the positive side, EMI can open doors to new opportunities to interact in English and provide more exposure to help students to become globally competitive in English language skills. EMI, for example, can provide a lot of exposure to the contents, vocabulary and skills needed to cope with the increasing demand of learning from the world resources. In considering the suitability and/or feasibility of implementing EMI, the local condition is the most crucial factor to examine. There are several factors influencing the decision of applying or adopting EMI in a school. First, in some contexts, there is community and parental pressure to introduce EMI. In Nepal, for example, private EMI schools have attracted many students and families. Similarly, Khatri (2016) reveals that community schools adopting EMI have also been able to lure students. In addition to this, there is a public perception that EMI offers the opportunity to become a global citizen, opens up professional and academic opportunities nationally and internationally, and is viewed positively by various employers. In the two-tier education system of Nepal consisting of both government-led and institutional schools, the amount of English use varies across these two types of schools, but generally it is significantly greater in the private schools than in the government schools. Most parents who enroll children in private EMI schools trust their educational programs, and the students at these schools are viewed as talented and outstanding, contributing to the EMI's popularity. Seemingly, the only logic behind the current rapid shift to EMI is the urgent need to keep up with globalization and market forces. On the other hand, it can be argued that in the current global situation, if English is taken as a great means of

communication and medium of instruction, then more English language use is better. In addition, some people contend that English is a way to improve students' ability in other subject areas. Consequently, increasing number of parents has started to move their children from public schools to private schools forcing many schools to close.

In order to address the problem, many public schools have hastily adopted EMI without developing adequate infrastructure and preparation. Moreover, according to Khati (2016), all teachers in a school must be adequately trained in order to implement EMI systematically and to apply it consistently. As mentioned by Sah & Li (2018), studies show that teachers at the secondary level faced multiple challenges in adopting EMI; students' weak exposure to English, mother tongue interference, limited resources, and linguistic diversity in the class, Khati, 2016). They further mention that some researchers have criticized the EMI implementation in multilingual contexts. They have argued that EMI introduced without reasonable guidelines and policies, or with little or no preparation and planning produce disastrous consequences.

The EMI debate is an important part of academic and pedagogical practice in the Nepalese educational context. There is no denying that EMI has produced significant progress in education in many school settings. However, without adequate teacher preparation and infrastructural support, EMI can lead to negative outcomes. Furthermore, imposing EMI in multilingual classes could be less effective, and it may not work well for teaching and learning the contents of other subject areas. There is also a psychological aspect of resistance to EMI in that some people fear that their mother tongue will go out of existence.

### **Action research: Implementing EMI policy in a private school**

In the early of 2019, I carried out an action research study examining the application or usage of EMI in a private school in the western Nepal where I am professionally affiliated. The motivation for this study was the pressure coming from parents, the community, and the administration of the private school to adopt EMI. The study was designed in a series of action research steps. First, I identified the problems faced by teachers using English, the most prominent of which was students' apathetic attitude towards learning. Then I planned and carried out the actions and interventions in the form of enhancing and supporting the implementation of EMI. Finally, teachers and students' views were collected to analyse and interpret the effectiveness of the intervention. The three steps may be represented diagrammatically as follows:

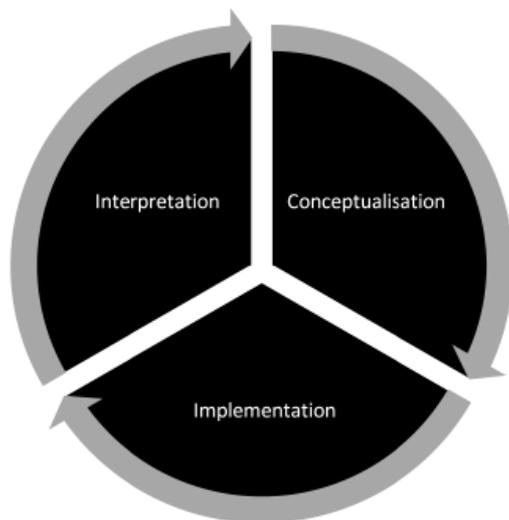


Figure 1: *The three components of EMI intervention*

As the figure above illustrates, three main steps were taken to examine the application of EMI were conceptualization, in which the intervention was conceived, implementation, in which EMI was implemented and then interpretation in which its effectiveness was examined based on the teachers' and students' views.

Students in grades 9 and 10 (45 students) were selected using purposive sampling, and asked to use only the English language in the classroom, which was designated an "English-Only Zone," and teachers were asked to present all course contents in the English language. Next, as a participant researcher (I was a teacher as well as a researcher), with the support from the institution, I organized various English enhancement activities to support the curriculum, including community service activities, computer-based activities, and language games. I also encouraged the students to take some units/courses related to science, mathematics and health in English via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This article reports teachers' views and reflections on the implementation of EMI as a school language-of-education policy in private school located in the western part of Nepal.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the stakeholders' (teachers and students) attitude to EMI?
2. What are their perceived benefits of EMI?
3. What challenges they point out for the effective implementation of EMI?

To collect data, I used open-ended questionnaires along with soliciting reflections and feedback from both the students and purposively selected six teachers. I also observed about three weeks and recorded the students' participation and teachers' interventions in the classroom. Finally, I collected the teachers' feedback and reflections on the implementation of EMI.

The qualitative data collected through questionnaire, observation and teachers' written reflections were analysed applying the thematic data analysis approach. In thematic analysis, I followed the following process:

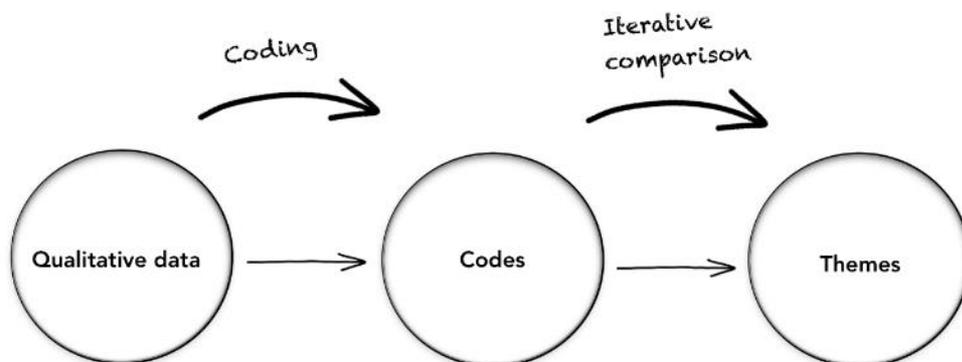


Figure 2: *The process of qualitative data analysis (source – nn/g.com)*

As it can be seen in the figure above, the qualitative data are first reviewed to familiarise oneself, then based on the research questions, codes produced. These codes then are generated into themes and then these themes are followed through the data.

## Findings

To address the mentioned above research questions, the findings are presented under the following three broad themes:

### *Teachers' and students' attitude*

I observed and recorded the students' and teachers' activities both in and outside the classroom. I also discussed their feelings towards EMI during semi-structured interview. I found that they had a very positive attitude towards EMI. Teachers experienced positive results as teachers started to use English as a Medium of Instruction. The teachers' and students' positive attitude towards the English language played a very significant role in the adoption of EMI in school. A student, Hari said:

*I also like to use more English language while seeing spoken by the teachers. I become so encouraged thinking and talking in English. I would like to be better than teacher in speaking English language (S1).*

This statement shows that the students like to get more ideas and to elevate the level of English-speaking skill. Students also get opportunity to practise English language. The students can learn new skills and ideas.

Although initially, I, as a teacher, felt pressured by parents and administrators, the collaboration among the parents, administrators, all the staff and students made the use of EMI successful and effective. The school's reputation also improved once we adopted EMI. So, with regard to the debate over whether to go with EMI, I argue that the decision should be made after careful considerations of the local factors on the basis of the local context and stakeholder opinions. In order to implement EMI, the school will need well-equipped learning labs with computers and internet access, audio and visual aids, and other resources. Most importantly, the teachers need to be prepared. Such supports enable teachers to adopt EMI very effectively and achieve good student participation. A student shared her opinion in the following terms:

*We would like to explore using Google in different subjects. If we have a good internet accessed library, we can learn more and get more exposure in different subjects. We can share and teach new ideas to the junior brothers and sisters (S2).*

Similarly, teachers want to apply different materials which support the EMI at school. A teacher, Paras (pseudonym) said:

*I want to bring the students in the computer lab and let them present the ideas in groups. I want them to explore idea of my subjects by using different technology tools (T1).*

In brief, both teachers and students were excited to adopt EMI in the classroom because they were getting opportunity to explore using different links and resources. For instance, teachers were using different sources for developing vocabulary like dictionary, mobile apps and different links related to their own subjects. They were presenting the ideas in different subjects using English as a medium of instructions respectively. The students had strong desire to interact with the teachers as teachers were using the English instructions in the classrooms. The teacher as well as the students reported positive feedback and reflections on applying EMI. Likewise, the stakeholders such as school administration and parents also gave a positive feedback for adopting EMI. A great motivation from the stakeholders to the teachers and students really made the school environment lively and effective. The concerned teachers also reported during their

interviews that the unit tests and terminal tests results taken by the students went up after applying the EMI.

## Perceived benefits of EMI

### *International Dimension in Learning*

Applying EMI has provided a new lens in teaching which has received important feedback and appreciation from the concerned students and teachers who participated actively in the action research. The participants pointed out a number of benefits in adopting EMI. Their comments revealed that they were impressed by the merit of EMI. For example, a student expressed his opinion by saying that:

*We can learn different skills and bring international dimension in our learning which may not be found in our Nepali context. We have eagerness to speak more and learn more. (S3)*

In this study, the students and teachers preferred using English so that they can get more exposure on international terms and cultures. The study shows that a person who knows good English and who has strong command of other subjects as well can gain great international exposure and opportunities. Citizenship skills are among the 21st-century skills that are most important in making students globally competitive. To develop the needed international dimension, students need a solid knowledge base across various subjects. Considering the questions of what will the world be like in 2050? What attributes and skills will be required? And how EMI can support for this? The teachers interviewed suggested three main answers: 1. networking 2. citizenship skills 3. exchange program experience. For example, a teacher mentioned:

*This is the age of science and technology. Today we are connected with many educators nationally and internationally. We have learnt to network openly with others as a global citizen. We have been sharing and exchanging the ideas and resources each other. To keep on winning in the field of teaching and to make the better future, we need network, global citizenship skill and exchange program among the educators (T2).*

To enhance the international dimension of education and make more opportunities available, EMI could be very helpful in terms of networking and exchanging the resources. EMI could encourage the teachers and learners for collaboration and communication skills with other local, national and international level partners.

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***EMI as an effective form of ELT practice***

EMI can be described as one form of English Language Teaching (ELT). If an ELT teacher likes to add a flavor in his or her teaching dinner, the salt is EMI. A good English teacher wants his or her learners to speak, listen, and think in the English language. Therefore, EMI is an ideal tool for teachers and students who are passionate about learning English. Today's parents demand EMI because they want their children to become strong both in English and in other subjects so that they can compete globally. It is a major advancement beyond ELT. An English teacher said:

*English language teaching has become very effective after applying EMI in our school. The apathetic attitude of the students has been reduced. They want to know different vocabulary items related to other subjects too. They have been taking part actively in the pair and group works and enhancement activities after adopting EMI at school (T3).*

The statement showed that EMI has become an effective form of ELT. Likewise, English teachers were pleased to see good classroom management with English environment. The students also started to make a good English environment in the classroom. While observing the classes, it seemed very pleasant in the way that they spoke about what they require. Unnecessary talks stopped after applying the English environment and English as a medium of instruction in the classroom. Teachers and students' reflection showed that the classroom management took place well with the support of other teachers' instruction and English language exposure.

***Challenges of adopting EMI***

Despite the benefits discussed above, the implementation of EMI faces a number of challenges. The following section discusses some important and notable challenges occurred among the school teachers and students.

***Limited Exposure***

Some of the students faced challenges to understanding the English explanation while adopting EMI. The students pointed out that they wanted to translate some jargons while explaining the topics. They wanted to use the mix (English and Nepali) language usage while explaining in unfamiliar topics. Sometimes the courses were run without any understanding because of less exposure of English language. A student, Ram said:

*I do not understand some topics but courses are completed. Most of the explanations are shared in English which I feel difficulty to understand and catch. I want teachers*

*use both English and Nepali language in such cases. I also do not understand meaning of some words (S4).*

This above-mentioned statement indicates that the students were learning without understanding the unfamiliar topics. Similarly, they also wanted the teachers to explain in the mother tongue when they experienced difficulties. They wanted to use the Nepali language when they faced difficulty in understanding English words. A science teacher mentioned:

*I can use English as a Medium of Instruction in the early classes but I feel tired after some hours of teaching. I want to use my mother tongue (Nepali language) when I feel tired (T4).*

This statement reports that teachers also need more exposure in the English language so that they feel easier to talk in English even though they are tired.

### ***Barrier to Effective Communication and Collaboration skills among the teachers and students***

Most of the participating students replied that they hesitated to ask questions while they did not understand. Teachers expected students to use English in EMI classrooms but students felt shy. Some of the jargons were not be understandable but the students felt hesitation asking questions in English language. One student said:

*While teachers are teaching in English, I feel hesitation asking questions and adding some ideas and points in my mother tongue (Nepali language). Likewise, I cannot communicate in English with the teachers even though I understand and comprehend the topic in English (S5).*

This statement suggests that the students did not become friendly enough during EMI. They felt shy to collaborate and communicate with the teachers. The students felt difficulty to communicate with the teachers even though they know the topics well. They could not respond and collaborate with the teachers as like they could do with the teachers in their mother tongue (Nepali language). Moreover, a teacher said:

*Classes seem collaborative and communicative when EMI is not adopted. The students become silence while applying EMI (T5).*

The statement indicates that students do not collaborate well while applying EMI. They follow and listen to the teachers passively in the classroom.

No policy can be perfect. But the implementation of any innovative education policy should start at the bottom level, in particular the school level. EMI should thus be introduced as a bottom-to-top policy. Students in urban areas might adopt EMI more easily than schools in remote areas where schools may experience difficulties in following the mother tongue because of the lack of resources or a less supportive environment. According to Sah & Li, (2020) , some people believe that translanguaging can be taken one of the best strategies to avoid the language hegemony of English over other local languages, but this is a challenging approach since teachers must be trained to function in multiple languages. Translanguaging creates a dynamic and flexible space of language use and is widely considered a transformative pedagogic approach to teaching. On the other hand, it is also questioned the notion that languages should not be treated as a separate translanguaging pedagogy. Dearden (2014) says that there is an urgent need for the research on the effectiveness of EMI in teaching and learning process. Likewise. Tsou & Kao (2017) recommend that to apply EMI among the educators, adequate training at all levels is needed. According to Coleman (2006), the main outcomes of EMI are internationalization, opportunities of employment, exchanges of the students program and research materials for integrating both content and language learning. Selvi (2014) indicates that the widespread use of English is a reality in this globalised world, but still there are some challenges such as lack of the qualified and resourceful trained educators as well as the maximum usage of mother tongue by the students.

Phyak (2013) discussed a long top-down monolingual and implicit language policy which promotes English language usage and teaching from the early ages or grades that is the one of the main forces affecting the use of local languages in Nepalese schools. He further suggested to observe and understand the local perspectives to find out the gaps and challenges between practice and policy. Similarly, implementing EMI policy remains complex (Phyak & Sharma, 2020). One other concern about EMI is that a heavy emphasis on English in education may diminish social, cultural, and national identities. Rana (2018) boldly recommends that English teachers in Nepalese multilingual contexts, should apply the community and national based responsibilities. However, the study here finds out for overcoming such situations, a bottom-up policy and strategy should be implemented so that EMI can be made relevant in the particular contexts.

## **Conclusion**

In response to the global education market demand, the scope of EMI is expected to continue growing in the upcoming years. Although EMI's effectiveness remains a matter of debate, there is a growing trend in Asia, and particularly in Nepal, to introduce content instruction in English at different levels. This trend suggests that the ability to speak and

teach in English will become widely required among subject teachers. Moreover, EMI in Nepal has been encouraged and promoted with great effort, both where its implementation is realistically achievable and even where it is less so. This is because EMI has become a key selling point in demonstrating the capacity to deliver quality education. As this paper has argued, however, EMI must be conducted with sensitivity to local contexts and the participating institutions must integrate essential supportive resources to make EMI successful. Moreover, the majority of students and teachers reported that English as a Medium of Instruction can be applied with the preparation and further explained that EMI is a great key to academic success. The analysis of wide range of information explored through observation and reflection has informed that EMI can be applied to bring international dimension and to elevate the level of English playing the role of an associative idea for English language teaching. Therefore, this study suggests that EMI has become a great means for bringing international dimension, an effective form of English language teaching if applied bottom to top strategy.

### The Author

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## JOURNAL OF NELTA FORUM

**[The next somewhat opinionated article has been included in this issue of the Journal with a view to creating a forum for its readers. Readers wishing to respond to the article may send their response or opinion to the editorial board. Selected responses will be included in the next issue of the Journal- Editors]**



## **But How Am I Doing? Autoethnographic Reflections of a Beginning English Language Teacher**

**Michael Nycyk,**

### **Abstract**

Beginning English Language Teaching (ELT) brings many issues teachers experience that questions one's teaching confidence and abilities. Seeking feedback from teaching peers can be invaluable, but self and student feedback can quell fears and doubts. Sharing such experiences with others involves risk, but can assist others on their journey to becoming confident ELT teachers. To reflect on my experiences as a beginning ELT teacher, an autoethnographic account is presented. It displays my fears, the need for constant feedback and the eventual acceptance that I did not need constant reassurance to evaluate my teaching performance. This account also demonstrates the usefulness and contributions that an autoethnographic account of me as a beginning teacher may bring. First, it discusses the field of beginning teaching and challenges doing ELT may bring. This is followed by an explanation of writing an autoethnography, ethical considerations and background details on this account. The autoethnographic account is written using constructed vignettes to demonstrate moments of crisis and resolution. This account closes with a discussion and some conclusions about the value of using autoethnography in the ELT field.

**Keywords:** Autoethnography, beginning teaching, culture, English Language Teaching (ELT), Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL), vignettes.

### **Introduction**

Becoming an English Language Teacher (ELT) and contributing to helping students become part of a society by knowing how to speak and write fluent English is a crucial profession. At a global level, knowing English reduces a person's social marginalization. As Kadel (2020) argues, a classroom is a miniature society through which injustice, inequality, malpractices, and the undemocratic culture of a society is transformed to a place of democracy and social justice for the student. This responsibility to teach English

to support this is a large weight placed on teachers, but especially beginning ELT teachers. It must be learned from observations of the experienced teacher and interactions with students from many countries.

This account's purpose is to reflect on my experiences as a beginning ELT using autoethnography that tells of my transition from worried beginner tutor to confident teacher. Autoethnography is defined by Ellis as a way of researching and writing that describes and analyzes personal experiences to understand cultural and individual experiences (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). Studies do exist debating best practices, and giving advice, to beginning teachers. However, insights gained from first person autoethnographic accounts are rarer, providing a unique perspective and analyses of the problems and successes beginner teachers have.

Obtaining feedback from other ELT teachers, and students, on the beginning teacher's teaching style and practices is crucial for their self-improvement. This is also needed to deliver quality student outcomes in English language proficiencies. A teacher learns much theory in their Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) courses as well as practice classroom teaching. Yet this beginner training does not emphasise what an ELT teacher should become (Varghese, 2006). While it is argued this can only be developed over years of classroom experience, such knowledge needs to be documented early for future teachers. An autoethnography can make such a contribution in informing beginner ELT teaching practices from a reflective and personal point-of-view.

This autoethnographic approach is undertaken by working out general themes to encompass problems experienced by using what Erickson (1986) and Humphreys (2005) call vignettes, the vivid portrayal of the conduct of events in everyday life. Both Humphreys (2005) and Louis (1991) aptly state, that is applied to my autoethnography, that I am the instrument of the inquiry that is inseparable from me. The account is underpinned by the overarching problem that I wanted constant feedback as to my performance, lacking confidence initially as I headed into the classroom to teach. We as teachers need feedback, both from ourselves, our experienced teaching colleagues and our students, so we can constantly improve our English teaching practice.

This account is structured as follows. The literature review argues beginning ELT is a unique endeavour where theory meets with practice that challenges the person's feelings of identifying themselves as an effective teacher. A discussion of autoethnographic methods, ethics and background details and context of this account is provided. The themes and supporting vignettes tell my story of a struggle to know if I, as a beginner, was an effective teacher. The paper ends with a discussion and some conclusions about my account, as well as arguing autoethnography can contribute much to understanding the personal experiences of beginning teachers.

## Literature Review: Beginning English Language Teaching (ELT)

Studies of beginning English language teaching is a field of inquiry encompassing a range of disciplines and research methods. To perform this role, the ELT teacher learns both a set of procedures, such as English grammar rules, and appropriate responses to supporting differing student nationalities and their unique scholastic issues. Cultural sensitivity and understanding are a crucial skill an ELT teacher must obtain quickly (Taylor & Sobel, 2011). Teaching cultural narratives before beginning classroom instructions is a useful strategy to employ (Ates, Kim & Grigsby, 2015). Getting teaching performance feedback from peers if they have acquired this skill can be difficult to obtain in a busy classroom with a crowded English curriculum. Formal and informal processes for performance feedback may not often be done. The beginner ELT teacher may be unsure if they are effectively teaching well and displaying the necessarily empathy towards students who may be struggling with settling in to a new country and culture.

Studies examining the development of individuals from beginner to confident ELT teacher often show self-feedback to be a crucial part of their career development. In one example, Naseh and Shahri (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study where they focused on one student undertaking a Master of Teaching English degree and accompanying practical classroom teaching. Their study's results described how her emotions and identity as a beginner teacher was challenged by her classroom teaching. The subject of the study felt a need to support the students beyond just teaching technical English knowledge. She used techniques such as encouraging her students to be proud of their accents and to not to feel estranged from society, but work towards feeling included within it by being able to speak and write English (Naseh & Shahri, 2018). Kadel (2020) states, techniques similar to these used by an English teacher addresses injustices and inequalities students often have experienced because they did not know how to write and speak correct fluent English. Teaching English encompasses not just giving students technical speaking and writing skills. It also requires displaying cultural sensitivity and a willingness to describe how to negotiate the often-difficult daily contexts that an English language-based society presents to the student.

English teachers also need to be encouraged to be creative and collaborative meaning-makers for their students (Cahnmann-Taylor & Hwang, 2019). Dogancay-Aktuna (2006) argues teaching English is a complex process governed by a variety of individual, instructional and contextual factors requiring careful preparation of teachers to meet a multiplicity of challenges that will occur in the role. Teachers need feedback to make sure they are fulfilling their responsibilities, but also to address serious issues that might make them not feel a part of a teaching culture. For example, a study by Aneja (2016) reported that one female ELT teacher changed her name and accent to sound 'American' to fit in with her colleagues and students. Such issues need to be addressed by

supportive teaching staff to ensure the teacher feels included as part of their profession.

These issues arise for beginning English teachers that need addressing. Such issues should be examined early in their career within a supportive environment where they can express their need for feedback to improve their teaching practice and interpersonal skills. In Faez and Valeo's (2012) study of TESOL student teachers, the dilemmas they faced in becoming proficient and culturally sensitive teachers were described. Moving from the teacher's practice learning in a classroom to actual teaching was seen as a difficult reality check. Some participants in the study felt they were not able to make that adjustment and questioned their ability to continue teaching TESOL (Faez & Valeo, 2012). The researchers called for a more integrated practicum before moving into the classroom setting. This included having a safe and supportive peer environment to receive constructive feedback and express their emotional and professional concerns with their teaching ability (Faez & Valeo, 2012).

Starting ELT can be challenging as a beginner negotiates the many technical, cultural and interpersonal factors that come with teaching English to diverse students. In terms of helping the beginning teacher to remain in the profession, researchers such as Nuske (2015) state it is important to study beginning ELT teachers to find out and address their concerns early in their career. Saylag (2012) further argues the importance of ELT's discussing their personal beliefs and experiences in constant self-reflection while they teach. The challenge is to implement these practices in the teacher's busy daily commitments.

Reading the insights of a beginning teacher's autoethnography has the potential to inform future teaching practice in the ELT field. Yazan's (2019) autoethnographic account illustrates such an example of this. He wrestled with ideological and identity issues while studying teaching English and conducting his classroom lessons. Such honesty from Yazan assists in documenting and understanding the beginner ELT's experiences, struggles and successes as they move towards feeling confident and confident to teach English.

### **Constructing My Autoethnographic Account: Methods and Issues**

Autoethnography has had a controversial history with issues of credibility around representation, objectivity, data quality, legitimacy, and ethics (Wall, 2008). Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) argue though that the method is a storytelling approach but with traditional analysis of data:

*When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture*

*and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences. (p. 4)*

Disclosing these epiphanies, or significant moments, in my account are aided by the presentation vignettes, as used by Humphreys (2005) in his autoethnographic studies of teaching and learning. They assist in, what Ellis and Bochner (2000) state about this method, the idea that an autoethnographer attempts to make sense of their experiences. My three vignettes tell of those significant moments that illustrated my struggles to become a competent, professional yet caring English teacher. Vignettes are meaningful for showing my involvement and emotions, and placing myself in the situation rather than being a detached observer (Humphreys, 2005; Saldana, 2003; Butler, 1997).

One important concept in autoethnography to clarify is the frequent use of the term culture. Although a contested term, it is defined here to show how it is used in an account. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) describe it as having patterns of beliefs and values, individual and group, that influence behaviours. In an educational context, Frank (2013) includes thoughts of the members as well as their beliefs and values, in turn influenced by practices from these that result in connections and information sharing. Teaching English is about imparting the beliefs and values of a society through the written and spoken word. When I say culture, I refer to myself operating within a classroom where the prescribed and followed beliefs and values result in practices to maximize student learning of English language protocols.

Although it takes an almost storytelling approach, there is a methodological framework autoethnographers will, in some form, follow. The following documents the procedures I used to research and write my account. A first step was to observe myself, my senior teacher and the students. As I had previous ethnography experience, I was able to write fieldnotes, a core practice in field research, after classes. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's (1995) fieldnote writing advice was taken as I constructed detailed observations that happened and my interpretation of them. This was important because I aimed to construct and explain important themes that guided the reader through my journey to resolution.

The purpose of using narrative vignettes is to illustrate situations where my anxieties came to light about how I was progressing as an ELT. From this comes an analysis and interpretation of my place within the culture of the classroom and how what occurs links with my consistent need for teaching feedback.

## Ethical Considerations

Autoethnography has received much criticism for its ethical practices. It can be a high-risk activity for the researcher who discloses much private information and to those who they portray in the account. Two published education autoethnographies provide evidence of this claim. First, Campbell (2018) risked her professional reputation to write about her struggles with the taboo subject of depression and anxiety in academia. Second, school teacher Lee (2018) was conflicted in naming the person, even though it was not his real name, who was bullying her while she undertook educational doctorate studies. Both demonstrate, as autoethnographers experience, the difficulty of assessing risk and remaining committed to the universal research oath of doing no harm to those who take part in studies. As Grant (2010) argues, it is a morally ethical practice to carefully consider what is said about people, places and events to avoid protentional harm from these being identified.

Obtaining informed consent from others can be difficult when doing autoethnographic research. The researcher is, as Edwards (2021) states, representing the self and their experiences, not those who were present when the experiences occurred. I agree with Lee (2018), who defended her personal narrative of bullying, that it is not about exposing secrets. Rather, it is writing a retrospective and a reflection on life events in the culture in which the writer lived. Therefore, care was taken in constructing the narratives in my account to avoid such practices. Names of students were masked with other names given to further protect them from identification.

## The Account's Context and Background Details

Before presenting the account, the context and details of it are provided as a background. First, this account takes place in an English teaching classroom located in a publically funded, fee-paying college in Brisbane, Australia. The classes' students came from a variety of countries, especially from Asia, Eastern Europe and South America. The classes were taught in a classroom environment and in computer laboratories. However, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), some classes were conducted using video conferencing software. This was not frequent because of the low rates of community transmission in Brisbane, but did occur.

My training and teaching began in early 2020. I worked under the guidance of a formally qualified teacher in the classroom. My educational experience was an undergraduate degree in Communication, Language and Cultural Studies. I was also an adult high school tutor and an individual tutor working with those living with mental health disabilities. Before undertaking this work, I completed basic TESOL training and researched English as a Second Language teaching resources. The decision was made

for me to provide teaching and support to Level 2 students. Those students had English proficiencies that were judged as competent, but they needed more tuition to improve their understanding of grammar and interacting in social situations. My teaching load was twice to three times a week.

To construct the vignettes, I had decided to keep reflective notes to see how my teaching was progressing from my perspective. The decision to write an autoethnographic account was inspired by using this method on other projects. Data collection consisting of notes and reflections was collected over one and a half years. For the purposes of this account, the selection of presenting data as evidence examples was difficult. This required grouping the notes into themes that reflected how I felt about my teaching journey. The vignettes presented in this account were analyzed and judged as significant to include to demonstrate how I reflected on the insecurities and successes of learning to become an English as a Second Language teacher. The account is now presented to reflect this collection and analysis process by the telling of the vignette stories.

### **How Am I Doing as an ELT? Themes and Supporting Vignettes**

My first day assisting my new teacher was easy, with an intense but rewarding lesson on prefixes and suffixes. Over the weeks of lessons, a sense of unease and doubt that I could be a competent English teacher arose. I noticed more mistakes in my teaching presentation than my competencies. I was anxious that the students may not understand my teaching style. For example, under pressure I got confused at what was the adverb and adjective in the sentences my students were writing. However, when mentioning this, my teacher remarked that under pressure things like that ‘just happen’ and to say to the student ‘let me check that’. I took that remark as a strategy to maintain credibility in my student’s eyes and practiced that to minimize this reoccurring.

I now present the themes and vignettes that form my autoethnography to illustrate my journey from needing constant feedback with how I am doing, to a resolution of experiencing a growing confidence in teaching English.

#### ***Theme 1: Responding in the Moment***

My students would surprise and challenge me each lesson with various requests to assist them in their tasks. Often, I had to respond quickly in the moment to explain grammatical rules. One task they had was to write a biography about their childhood. The first vignette illustrates where I learned how important it was to respond in the exact moment to both correct and praise a student for grammar use. Soon-Ying was struggling with using ‘have’ and ‘had’, getting confused by past and present participles:

*Soon-Ying stumbled over the sentence “I have been to school in Vietnam”. She struggled with the awkwardness of the sentence, confessing she was unsure of the past and present use of grammar. The sentence was almost an obsession as she could not grasp the difference between ‘had’ and ‘have’ and was not convinced had was the right sentence in the essay’s context. I also struggled to find a way to explain that had was the right word to use in the sentence. I got her to read out the sentence twice, once with had and once with have. After a few tries, she surprised me by understanding the context; that is, had was right to use because it was an essay about her past. She smiled and expressed gratitude for my patience in repeating the sentence and explaining why it was the right word to use.*

In that moment I had to make a decision how to correct her but not place undue pressure on her to understand the reasons for the need for the specific word. Other students were asking for help concurrently, but I reassured them I would be with them soon. Seeing Soon-Ying’s facial expression change from confusion and stress to understanding confirmed I had done the right thing in repeating the sentence, then getting her to read it out with both terms. In the moment I responded with patience, for if I had been abrupt or annoyed this may have eroded her confidence. My teacher expressed to me that patience is a vital skill and repeating instructions and going over grammar was a key skill to practice.

### ***Theme 2: Taking Over from the Teacher***

Weeks into my ELT position where I moved from a support tutoring role to more active teaching duties, another important moment occurred. Part of the curriculum was to discuss the lives of famous people, such as: John Lennon, Queen Elizabeth and Australian philanthropist Caroline Chisholm. The task was to read a short biography and match terms from the text to questions, followed by a challenging short answer task. I was asked to take over from the teacher in reading a comprehension and discussing the answers with the class.

I was very nervous despite having done class presentations and teaching during my undergraduate degrees and previous tutoring. However, one incident where I took over from the teacher resulted in an informal appraisal of my ability that helped my confidence in this area. This is described here:

*My teacher decided to teach idioms using a case study from a text of two computer workers, one a lazy worker, the other one a hard worker, with a number of grammar and sentence construction exercises to do. Asking me to take over a group and guide the exercises, the five students vigorously debated the topic. As they wrote the answers, they continued talking and asked me for constant help to check if*

*the sentences were grammatically correct. It was overwhelming as my attention was being constantly diverted. I thought quickly how to manage this in a calm way. I stopped the conversations and drew attention back to the sentences as I had seen my teacher previously do. This made them focus back on the task. They began asking me questions about working conditions in Australia. I asked them if they wanted to share information about working conditions in their country. Our discussion balanced talking and completing the task. My teacher told me later that upon observation, my taking over the group task was well-done. The feeling of relief was almost euphoric.*

What this vignette shows is, despite my hesitancy to take over my teacher's role, I was able to take charge of a situation confidently. This was important as I focused on being mindful about raising my voice tone and level.

During my pre-service training, it was discussed that some students can react from fear due to past traumas they experienced in their country of origin. Monitoring my voice volume and reassuring myself I not causing distress to the students helped greatly. I also made sure at the end of the exercise to check with the students that they were satisfied with the sentences they had written. I had not noticed my teacher, who had been managing other students' issues, was watching me. Later my teacher remarked how taking over from her helped her manage helping other students who struggled with understanding the task.

### ***Theme 3: Seeking Performance Feedback***

Examining these two vignettes, it can be viewed that I was having a crisis of confidence in my ability to teach. Although I had taught adults for two decades, TESOL to me involves a differing skill set. I was constantly aware of potential cultural issues, but also the need to develop empathy towards the students' backgrounds and current English proficiency levels. That was to me a crucial part of this teaching. Taken-for-granted words like 'have' 'had' 'going' 'gone', as examples, took time for my students to understand their different uses and become proficient in using them correctly as past and presents use. I admired the persistence of the students as I observed how willing they were to constantly go over sentence construction.

I needed teaching feedback. My anxiety levels over the weeks were decreasing. In asking "but how am I doing" I told my teacher I needed at least informal feedback and where to improve. This occurred:

*I must have had a facial expression of fear. While I was not anticipating praise or bad feedback, the need for some form of feedback was vital. I had questioned if my*

*fears were irrational. I had read that beginner teachers of all types questioned their abilities, but I asked myself was it neurotic to seek feedback so soon? It was only three weeks. But in seeking feedback, I was reassured by the teacher my teaching style was good. I pressed for more information and in doing so discovered my main issue. I wanted to be liked. Hearing good feedback brought relief. It was finally realising I had the issue of wanting to be liked as a teacher. While not a problem in itself, I had no control over that aspect of teaching. Thus, my detachment from seeking approval to focusing on the goal of educating students began.*

The reflection here was my realization that I had focused heavily on being liked rather than on the teaching job itself. Although formal reviews of teacher performance do occur where feedback is given by other staff, reflective self-feedback after lessons is also important to do. An obsessive need to seek approval is not a shameful human trait, but can be an impediment if a beginner teacher only focuses on the negative aspects of their teaching performance. I learned these lessons after a while teaching the students: pick the right time to see formal feedback, record notes on my personal performance and reflect on what can be done better, and release that developing the confidence to interact with different cultures takes much time and experience to become competent and empathic in.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

This account's purpose was to demonstrate how autoethnography can be one way of understanding the ELT beginner teacher's experience. As Liu (2010) argues, the frankness of writing an autoethnography telling how a teacher negotiates technical, cultural and procedural demands is difficult and risky. Yet it can play a significant role in becoming a competent English teacher from reading honest experiences. Liu felt by deconstructing her sense of inferiority, it made her feel empowered by writing and publishing it, in turn helping her become an effective English teacher from what she learned about herself (Lapidus, Kaveh & Hirano, 2013; Liu, 2010). These is why autoethnography can be useful for any teacher to read to see how others managed their journey to feeling it was the right career decision to serve students who needed to learn English.

In analysing my experience, a conclusion is that culture is about practices that are informed by one's beliefs. I had believed needing constant feedback in my early teaching careers had to be ongoing. Asking "but how am I doing" constantly was a sign of a lack of confidence. In researching for this account, I did find other beginning ESL teachers struggled with similar issues. One important issue that is concerning is that your students may have experienced traumas such as war. This regulates the types of behaviours as a teacher you can do, such as being mindful of tone of voice. Being aware of the feedback your students give in terms of their body language and facial expression when they do

not understand something is important for example. Asking ‘did you understand or do you need more assistance’ assists in building a relationship where the student trusts that I will not show negative emotions at having to repeat grammar rules.

The conclusion is that self-disclosure in the form of autoethnographic accounts of ELT are valuable despite the possible risks they can bring to the beginning teacher’s reputation. Moving through the first classroom day full of fears and doubts to confidence is a valuable experience to document. In selecting my vignettes, I demonstrated that through consistent teaching actions and self-reflection after the class, I could improve on my own teaching practices over time. Formal feedback is still important, but in developing the unique personal and professional skills to teach English, self-assessment is vital.

Autoethnography is useful in providing knowledge of the types of hopes and fears, as well as solutions, the beginning teacher faces. It can be therapeutic for the researcher, but may also confirm for the reader such a journey to being an ELT has stumbling blocks, fears, doubts and mistakes. Telling the stories of that journey, that may have discussions of personal failings, helps other beginning teachers interpret their own journey of teaching English. At a broader level, autoethnography assists in understanding the cultural journal of teaching English; that is, how the teacher’s and student’s beliefs inform their behaviours and practices. This method contributes much to understanding a culture through one’s own experiences and is, therefore, a way of academic inquiry that can bring much value to improving English language teaching and practice.

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**PRACTICAL PEDAGOGIC IDEAS**



## Poetry in the language classroom: Humanizing teaching material

Samikshya Bidari

Globally, teachers have advocated that creativity and language learning are inextricably linked. Kramersch (2009) expressed her belief concerning language learning by asserting that “the language learning experience is likely to engage learners cognitively, emotionally, morally and aesthetically” (p. 43). Traditionally, it is argued that using poetry has positively impacted the EFL classroom. According to Bobkina and Dominguez (2014), poetry has universal themes shared by people from all over the world in different cultural contexts, making it accessible to a wide range of EFL teachers. Incorporating poetry into the teaching is linked to the concept that students should be provided greater freedom to express themselves creatively. Hanauer (2012) suggested that adding poetry into the classroom has helped foster a safe learning environment by providing opportunities for self-expression. According to Gutkovskii (2021), “poetry can be utilized to focus learners’ attention on both tales and specific language qualities employed by authors” (p.14). The emphasis on reflecting emotional experiences empowers students to discover their motivations for writing creatively in English. Language learning is a personal endeavor that intersects with a broad spectrum of human potentials. This lesson plan aims to inspire teachers to humanize the teaching process with poetry.

Engaged students adhere to behavioral norms such as regular attendance and participation, and they seldom engage in disruptive behavior. Gutkovskii (2021) mentioned that with poetry learners are more invested in the writing process and focus on emotional significance. Students who are cognitively engaged will be invested in their learning, strive to go above and beyond the requirements, and embrace the challenge. Bidari (2021) also emphasized that active student participation in the language classroom is crucial for a practical, student-centric teaching approach. Adding poetry entails participating in a realm of enhanced experience through the living power of language and the act of manifesting the world through exclusively chosen words. In another study, Schroeder (2010) observed that poetry writing also provides students a sense of accomplishment by offering them engaging activities that do not emphasize mistakes and motivate them. Kalogirou, Fernández, and Mnguez-López (2019), argued poetry has long had a poor connotation in education, and it is perhaps the most poorly taught and disregarded subject in the classrooms. Despite such discouraging findings, educators continue to explore new strategies and approaches to help their students better experience poetry. In a

similar vein, this practical pedagogical idea aims to contribute to poetry teaching and its overall benefit in a second language classroom.

As with any artistic or other topic woven into an English lesson, there will be very excited students, as well as those reacting with disdain or apathy. An adept, resourceful teacher can demonstrate to all students that there is something in poetry for them too. Teachers can bring a poem to be analyzed or discussed. Students can find a poem that they like and share in the class. Forms of poetry can be presented, including; couplet, tercet, quatrain, haiku, senryu, tanka, cinquain, clerihew, limerick, roundel, to name a few. Students can choose one form and try to write their own. Famous poets can be studied. Small groups of 2 to 5 students can write a poem together, choosing a topic, and writing one line each. Illustrate a poem. Read a picture book depicting a poem. There is so much about poetry to discuss with your students. Poems are not usually fully understood after just one reading. Why is that? Poetry is an art. Discuss or define what art is. Is art just for artists? What does art do? What is art for? Which is the best art? What is the role of art in history? What are the grammatical requirements of a poem? What is “poetic license”?

The following sample lesson plan aims to demonstrate how to use poems to teach linguistic skills. The poem entitled “Our Deepest Fear” by Marianne Williams is used to create this lesson plan.

**Proficiency Level:** Advanced

**Age group/ Time:** 15-19 years old 45 minutes

**Material:** Worksheet of the poem with 10 missing vocabulary.

**Objective:** By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. be inspired to use creative writing to enhance self-expression.
2. will experience mindful reading, listening, and writing.

| Time | Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5    | <p><b>Warm-up</b></p> <p><b>Discuss in pairs, what does the author mean by these lines?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Greetings: Say hello!</p> <p>Ask students if everyone around them is safe from Corona or any illness. (Allow extra 2-5 minutes if they have something to share, this helps us to build rapport with our students and show that “we care” for them.)</p> <p><i>“Poetry looks like a game and is not: a game does indeed bring men together but in such a way that each forgets himself in the process. In poetry on the other hand man is reunited on the foundation of his existence. There he comes to rest; not indeed to the seeming rest of inactivity and emptiness of thought, but to that infinite state of rest in which all powers and relations are active.”</i><br/>                     “Martin Heidegger (1949)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 15   | <p><b>STEP 1</b></p> <p><b>Communicative activity (Building background/ setting context)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Make groups of 3-4 students and make one leader per task. Explain the role of a group leader: take a lead to ask questions and make sure the conversation doesn’t stop. Others should expand and form new questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was the first poem you ever read? How old were you then?</li> <li>2. Do you have a favorite poem/poet?</li> <li>3. Do you think poetry should be a part of our English lesson? Yes, or no? Why?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 10   | <p><b>STEP 2</b></p> <p><b>Poetic activity</b></p> <p>What word do you think fits in each gap?</p> <p><b>(Answers)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>fear</b></li> <li>2. <b>powerful</b></li> <li>3. <b>light</b></li> <li>4. <b>frightens</b></li> <li>5. <b>talented</b></li> <li>6. <b>enlightened</b></li> <li>7. <b>insecure</b></li> <li>8. <b>manifest</b></li> <li>9. <b>permission</b></li> <li>10. <b>liberated</b></li> </ol> | <p>Ask students to read carefully and try to guess what words fit into the.....blanks.</p> <p>Share the worksheet and send them to breakout rooms with the poem in which there are 10 words missing. Ask the students to read the text carefully and think of words that could fill in the gaps.</p> <p>Our deepest (1...) is not that we are inadequate, but that we are (2...) beyond measure.</p> <p>It is our (3...), not our darkness, that (4...) us. We ask ourselves. Who am I to be amazing, (5....) and fabulous?</p> <p>Actually, who are you not to be?</p> <p>You are a child of God.</p> <p>Your playing small does not serve the world.</p> <p>There is nothing (6....) about shrinking so that other people won’t feel (7....) around you.</p> <p>We are all meant to shine, as children do.</p> <p>We were born to make (8....) the glory of God</p> <p>That is within us.</p> <p>It is not just in some of us; It is in everyone.</p> <p>And as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people (9.....) to do the same.</p> <p>As we are (10.....)from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.</p> |

|    |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 | <p><b>STEP:3</b><br/><b>Give answers</b></p> <p><b>Allow self-expression</b></p> | <p>Tell students the right answers and then have two of them read.<br/>In the first reading, students will try to understand the meaning and in the second reading they will prepare themselves to share their understanding.<br/>Now, ask students, “How does this poem make you feel?”</p> <p>Listen to their answers. 1-2 sentences each.</p> <p>Now, share students. Which is your favorite line and why?</p> <p>“It is not just in some of us; It is in everyone.<br/>And as we let our own light shine, we consciously give other people permission to do the same.”</p>                                                                                                                                            |
| 5  | <p><b>STEP:4</b></p> <p><b>Analysis of the poem</b></p>                          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does the title of the poem mean?</li> <li>2. What is the tone of the poem?</li> <li>3. How does the poem illustrate the current social situation in your life?</li> <li>4. What lines motivated you?</li> <li>5. What does the poet mean by saying:</li> </ol> <p><i>“We were born to make manifest the glory of God<br/>That is within us. It is not just in some of us; It is in everyone.”</i></p> <p>Alternatively, teachers can create a space such as google doc, where different groups can write their agreed answers. Teachers can make a few queries around their answers before revealing recommended answers.<br/>Assign homework and say bye to the class</p> |

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## Appendix

### OUR DEEPEST FEAR

Adopted from — **Marianne Williamson,**

#### **A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of “A Course in Miracles”, 1992**

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

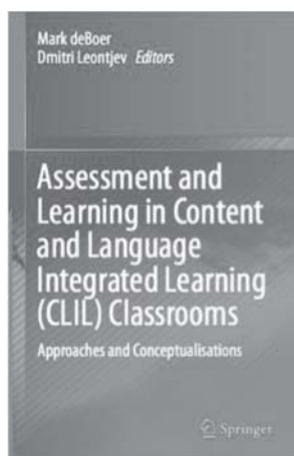


## BOOK REVIEWS



## Insights into classroom-based research in teaching, learning, and assessment in CLIL and beyond

Rejina K.C.



### Book details

*deBoer, M. & Leontjev, D (Eds.). (2020). Assessment and Learning in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classrooms: Approaches and Conceptualization. Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG. Pages-263. ISBN 978-3-030-54127-9, ISBN 978-3-030-54128-6 (eBook)*

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for teaching and learning of both content and language (Coyle et al. 2010). In an educational environment where teachers' assessment literacy with regard to CLIL is lacking, there was a need for text focused on assessment and learning in the context of CLIL.

Assessment and Learning in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classroom: Approaches and Conceptualization (2020) is a combined work by editors and contributors with the purpose to foster classroom assessment in promoting learning. The section on about the editors and the contributors' highlights detailed information about them. The contributors and editors come from diverse professional backgrounds such as university professors, assessment developers, schoolteachers and doctoral/post-doctoral scholars from countries such as Finland, Japan, Spain and the UK.

The book consists of eleven chapters that open with a discourse on classroom-based assessment in CLIL context. There is a dual focus on learning content and language (Geenes & Hamayan, 2016) and used for balancing content and language in assessment such as the assessment for learning and learning-oriented assessment. The first chapter,

written by Dmitri Leontjev and Mark deBoer, features the importance of assessment promoting learning in CLIL classrooms with classrooms-based assessment promoting learning, CLIL, and teaching, and assessment in CLIL. That mainly discusses the purpose of the classroom-based (for monitoring and regulating learner' activities in the class) assessment to teaching, learning assessment. Matrix conceptualization framework technique gives a clear discernment of how learner performance is interpreted, and what feedback to learners is given.

Chapter two, by Stuart D. Shaw, begins with an interrogation on second language literacy (L2) and focuses on concept and competence to assessment for supporting learning and teaching in L2. This unfolds various concepts on language learning and awareness with assessment process. Four sets of interlocking language teaching methodologies are described to scale the language proficiency such as CEFR, CLIL, TBLT (task-based language teaching), and LOA (learning oriented assessment). These are used in language testing development that helps students to learn in a localized context to reinforce academic language proficiency.

Chapter three, written by Alexander Nanni and Chris Carl Hale, discusses on how Liberal Arts University of Asia includes self-assessment in CLIL as a speaking course in Thailand and self-assessment in CLIL writing course in Japan. This presents example of self-assessment in CLIL to help student language learning and achieving other goals of university, providing opportunities for learners. Self-assessment in CLIL provides two major benefits such as metacognitive skills and students' voice as a member of community experts (p. 74).

Chapter four, by Clau dia Kunschuk, highlights the value of varying language-testing methods. Why CEFR, CLIL, TBLT, and LOA are supposed to be a toolkit for every teacher? Further argues why CEFR is adopted as a local concept of language learning whereas CLIL is adopted as a methodology in the same process. However, CLIL helps students to be integrated with a task-based language-teaching (TBLT) environment. In the English medium school of Japan and normal Japanese school, the four sets of language learning tools have been applied and these are considered a very essential toolkit to every teacher of Japan such as CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) CLIL, TBLT (task-based language teaching), and LOA (learning oriented assessment) that is based in Japan related applied perspective.

Chapter five, written by Ana Xavier, has discussed the issues of bilingual education in the CLIL context in the Portuguese education system where the summative assessment system has been highly valued from the beginning. Formative assessment has been used very little in secondary school and university. Learning in CLIL context is being introduced in the early primary education of the country as ISCED (International

Standard Classification of Education). So, the bilingual education may help to achieve a high level of proficiency in the language learning process.

Chapter six, by Taina Wewer, briefly describes the bilingual CLIL approach in Finland education and CLIL for basic level Finish education and its practices, challenges, and points for development in primary teaching. The need of upgrading CLIL education in the primary curriculum has recently been set in Finland that mainly focuses on assessment recommendations for primary CLIL teachers.

Chapter seven, by Hidetoshi Saito, presents a nutshell, which aims to state the current situation of Japanese junior high schools, where the teachers are slowly familiar and moving from CLT to CLIL. A report on communicative language teaching (CLT) seems to be commonly used approach for adopting CLIL in the learning process. Only a handful of private schools in Japan have conducted their learning in the CLIL context. Although CLIL in Japan is still in its infancy, there is a growing understanding of the value on CLIL (p. 167).

Chapter eight, by Rachel Basse and Irene Pascual Pena, has argued on assessment in CLIL as discussed in chapter 1 of this volume and tries to explore how assessment for learning (AfL) can be feasible to promote communication. The integration of AfL in CLIL classrooms has potential to be a valuable tool for teachers who may have more content-based focus to provide opportunities for language learning (p. 202). So, the main focus seems to be communication between teachers and learners enhancing language development in CLIL context.

Chapter nine, by Dmitri Leontjev, Teppo Jakonen, and Kristiina Skinnari, presents a report on how CLIL teachers comprehend assessment through learning and practice based through interview data and main goal is to raise teachers' awareness of assessment and its role in the CLIL classroom (p. 225). An in-depth awareness in development of teachers' assessment and CLIL literacy are practical tool in teaching rather than a theoretical concept (p. 205). Moreover, chapter emphasizes usefulness of assessment in training and for achieving goals that is for teachers' practices to understand their learners and next is to promote their learners. Chapter concludes with learning to understand and with learning understanding are interlinked ideas.

Chapter ten, written by Mark deBoer, begins a chronological report in the year 2000 Japan began to have a less economic presence in the world. So, Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI) 2010 brought some solutions by "putting the onus on higher education systems to create Global Human Resources" (p. 229). Chapter presents an idea of adopting CLIL for cognitive discourse function where course could be conceptualized under the umbrella of language integrated with content to develop

learners' abilities of understanding English language as preparatory. So, this helps in understanding how learner mediates each other and teachers promote learning through classroom-based assessment.

The final chapter, by Mark deBoer and Dimitri Leontjev, is a conclusion of the arguments and findings of the chapters presented in the rest of the book. The conceptualization of integration content and language and assessment is crucial for understanding how teaching, learning, and assessment are organized at different levels of education (p. 261) and also questions on promoting learning in CLIL and its conceptualization in general. However, rests of above in this volume have discussed assessment in CLIL from a different perspective, and mainly argues the users viewing the relationship among teaching, learning, assessment between content and language as dialectical.

Explicitly, the book has tried to shed light upon progressive teaching that heightens the learning through classroom assessment in the CLIL context. Moreover, book aims to broaden the ideas on enhancing self-regulation skills through formative assessment in the CLIL context that involves self-reflection and peer reflection and both play a major part in skills development at the end. The implicit idea of the book is to call for change in education system and share valuable insights for CLIL researchers and educators, especially in teaching and learning process by using CLIL in assessment learning.

I found the book useful for Nepalese context as well as for understanding the learning process through the assessment in CLIL. I am inspired by how classroom-based research in teaching, learning, and assessment in CLIL and beyond can provide valuable insights for conceptualizing and developing practices in assessment in CLIL. The School Sector Development Plan (2016) of Nepal focuses on both formative and summative assessment for learning outcomes. There is yet a high dependency on summative assessment and continued with early grade reading assessment and national assessment of student achievement. Thus, it is rightly pointed out that educational policy research focusing on assessment in CLIL is needed

The book offers a guideline on how we can integrate assessment in CLIL. This can be impactful learning, which emerges in teaching, learning, assessment between content and language. Therefore, this has become an archive of conceptualizing assessment-promoting learning in CLIL. Further work in this area is also needed for achieving new tools and approaches on assessment in CLIL. In order to address this, the book has suggested some directions for further research regarding this such as curriculum and pedagogy, participant perspective and also classroom practices. Books like this one can be an important source for researchers and educators in the development of teaching-learning practices through assessment in CLIL. However, the book does not cover the

issue of CLIL in the context of developing countries such as India and Nepal.

- Reviewed by **Rejina K. C.**

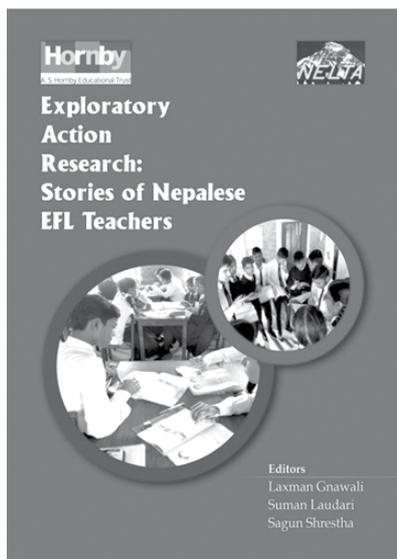
**The Reviewer: Rejina K. C.** a Nepalese ELT teacher-researcher. She is currently pursuing Ph.D. at Kathmandu University School of Education, Kathmandu. She has a Master's degree in English from Tribhuvan University and a Mphil degree in Interdisciplinary Education from Pokhara University. Her research interests are literature in the language classroom, creative writing in EFL, and teachers' wellbeing and motivation. She has more than a decade-long experience as an ELT teacher from ECD to the University level.

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**This book will help teachers, teacher educators and researchers on solving commonly faced classroom problems.**

**Pushpa Priya**



### **Book Details**

*Exploratory Action Research: Stories of Nepalese EFL Teachers, by Laxman Gnawali, Suman Laudari, Sagun Shrestha, published by Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), 2021, supported by A. S. Hornby Educational Trust, page 180, ISBN 9789937087100 (eBook)*

### **General Information**

Teaching is a platform where teachers impart knowledge to the students the more they share, the more they learn. To engage in a teaching profession as a teacher is challenging as it requires a lot of patience,

determination, dedication and hard work. Exploratory Action Research (EAR) has especially facilitated the teachers to explore classroom issues or problems and implement strategies after findings to address the problems. This book presents overall concept on EAR and the ways the teachers solve their classroom issues. For this, the book comprises a collection of 15 stories from different EFL teachers from Nepal who teaches from primary to higher secondary level and are from private, public and charity-run schools. The book covers two sections ; first section ranges from page 1 to 8 where there is a summarized presentation of the concept of Exploratory Action Research (EAR) in terms of its purposes, significances and EAR stories contributed by EFL Nepalese Teachers; second section comprises EAR stories from Teachers where they implemented EAR to solve their classroom issues. The information about editors and contributors are on the inside blurb of the book. Each section is well elaborated below.

## General Overview

First section of the book is on introducing EAR and Teachers' EAR stories by Laxman Gnawali, Suman Laudari, Sagun Shrestha. They initiated this section with introduction of EAR, meaning of EAR has been presented elaborately through perceptions of different authors. Next, they discussed on the steps of EAR that mainly comprises two phases, that is exploration of the problem that comes under first phase. And second phase is focused on intervening activities to address the problems that comes under second phase. Furthermore, they discussed on Teachers' EAR Stories that gives a great idea on how teachers addressed their classroom problems or puzzles with solutions through exploratory action research. In addition, they have very well presented in brief how the teachers adopted two phases in EAR. Section one depicts a clear picture on exploratory action research like : what is exploratory action research, what are the steps to be proceed while conducting this research, who made this research popular and from when it is practiced, how this research results in professional development of the teachers.

In the second section, there is presentation of stories where fifteen teachers have adopted EAR to solve teaching and learning issues. In each story, there is well demonstration of exploratory action research to solve the faced problems in a classroom by the teacher. Different issues related to English language teaching are well addressed with solution. And how the teachers proceeded mainly with two steps that is exploration and intervention is also well interpreted. Different commonly faced classroom issues are addressed by the teachers like: Low Participation of Learners in Speaking Activities by Bhesh Kumar Khadka from page 10-18. Improving the Reading Comprehension of Grade 10 Students by Debraj Karki from page 19-25, Lack of Participation in Classroom Interaction by Jeevan Bhattarai from page 26-37, Why does Homework Cause Stress in students? By Jenny Rai from page 38-50, Enhancing Speaking Skill of Higher Secondary Level Students by Manda Pokharel from page 51-63, Encouraging Students to Communicate in English by Parshu Ram Shrestha from page 64-78, Enhancing Students' Interests in Creative Writing by Pema Kala Bhusal Pandey from page 79-94, Students' Reluctance in Using English as a Means of Interaction in the Classroom by Pushpa Raj Paudel from page 95-104, Enhancing Reading of Basic Level Students in English by Puskar Raj Bhatta from page 105-125, Involvement of All the Secondary Level Students in Free Writing Activities by Rima Karna from page 126-134, Why do my Students Lack Interest in Creative Writing? by Saloni Nhemafuki from page 135-143, Lack of Confidence in my Learners by Sanjeev Kumar Singhal from page 144-150, Why are my Students not Interested in Writing? by Shanti Devi Sharma from page 151-165, Increasing Reading Ability of Grade Four Students by Suman Shrestha from page 166-169, Encouraging Students for effective Learning by Tarka Bahadur Khatri from page 170-180

## Chapter-wise Gist

Chapter 1 entitled “Low Participation of Learners in Speaking Activities” is written by Bhesh Kumar Khadka. To solve this issue, he motivated his students to speak whenever possible, taught vocabularies for general communication as an intervention after knowing the cause of problem through questionnaires to his students. And it addressed this issue with solution since students turned out to be confident and started to speak in English.

In Chapter 2 “Improving the Reading Comprehension” Debraj Karki adopted using computer lab as an intervention to improve students’ reading comprehension after knowing the cause of the problem. This implementation results in students’ improvement in reading comprehension.

In chapter 3 “Lack of Participation in Classroom Interaction” Jeevan Bhattarai took motivation as an intervention to address this issue after knowing the causes of problem by distributing questionnaires to the focus group.

In chapter 4 “Why does Homework Cause Stress in Students” Jenny Rai adopted intervention like: creating homework routines, changing the homework design, increasing the deadline for submission after knowing the cause of the issue. And this implementation improved homework submission rate of the students.

In chapter 5 “Enhancing Speaking Skills of Higher Secondary Level Students” Manda Pokharel exclusively focused on speaking skills, created motivational environment, encouraged individual and group presentation, not tried to correct while students committed some grammatical errors as an intervention to bring positive outcome. This intervention was only proceeded after knowing the cause of problem through interview, focus-group discussion with the students. These intervention activities enhanced speaking skills of the students.

In chapter 6 “Encourages students to Communicate in English” Parshu Ram Shrestha took some intervention like English Conversation through various activities like: storytelling, group discussion, role playing, brainstorming, interviewing and reducing his speaking time in class as an intervention to enhance English communication skills of his students after finding the cause of the problem through interviewing his students. Such intervention increases the students’ participation and enhanced their communication skills.

Chapter 7 “Lack of Interest in Creative Activities” Pema Bhusal adopted some intervention like: teaching vocabulary, task-related words as pre-teach activity, brainstorming to make her students curious towards creative activities after examining causes and findings. Such implementation improves writing abilities of the students and also made them curious towards writing.

In chapter 8 “Students Reluctance in Using English as a means of Interaction in the Classroom” Pushpa Raj Paudel adopted intervention like: more interactive activities, offering more time to practice English Language, group quizzes based on reading comprehension, used audio/video resources, to make his students confident in using English after finding the causes of this issue. These implementations increase students’ interest in using English as a means of communication.

In chapter 9 “Enhancing Reading of Basic Level Students in English” Puskar Raj Bhatt adopted intervention like: taught phonics to improve pronunciation, engaged in interactivities, and for vocabulary extension- pre-taught vocabulary in his lesson after examining the causes and finding of this issue through questionnaires, interview his students and asked his colleague to observe the reading session of his classroom. Adopted intervention made students more comfortable in reading.

In chapter 10 “Involvement of All the Secondary Level Students in Free Writing Activities” Rima Karna engaged her students in story writing, paragraph writing, journal writing as an intervention to arouse interest in her students towards free writing activities after examining the causes and finding of this problem. Her interventions arouse interest in students.

In chapter 11 “Why do my Students lack Interest in Creative Writing” Saloni Nhemafuki addresses the problem with an action plan that comprises group division and discussion through finding the cause of the problem.

In chapter 12 “Lack of Confidence in my Learners” Sanjeev Kumar Singhal examined causes of the problem through informal discussions with students, engaged them with questionnaires. Developed an action research and allowing more freedom to the students as an intervention that result in students’ improvement in terms of developing their good confidence while speaking.

In chapter 13 “Why are my students not Interested in Writing” Shanti Devi Sharma examined the causes of the problem through survey and asked her colleagues observe her classroom activities. After finding the causes of the problem, she helped her students learn new words by engaging in different activities in class and also used mind-mapping activities before assigning any written task as interventions. Positive outcome was observed in terms of improving overall writing skill of her students.

In chapter 14 “Increasing Reading Ability of Grade Four Students” Suman Shrestha adopted interventions like: increased time for reading practice, organized group activities, vocabulary using games as interventions after finding the cause of problem through the technique like: close observation of the students with their reading abilities and through interview. Positive results have been observed.

In chapter 15 “Encouraging Students for effective Learning” Tarka Bahadur

Khatri held meetings to raise awareness of parents, grouped and paired parents and changed his teaching strategies and classroom practice as interventions after finding the cause of the problem through interviewing students and their parents, and conducted meeting with the management committee members. It showed with positive result to some extent.

### **Strengths and weakness of the book**

The book is useful guide for the teachers, teacher educators, researchers as it gives sufficient idea of exploratory action research. EAR stories are presented in simple and understandable language. The book is well formulated with the concept on exploratory action research that gives the readers step by step idea on conducting exploratory action research. EAR can serve as one of the best approaches for professional growth as it employs systematic inquiry to solve classroom issues in an efficient manner. This book will help teachers, teacher educators and researchers on solving commonly faced classroom problems. It may be filled with optimism too. Trainers can use some stories as sample stories in different teacher training programs. The detailed explanation presented in this book on conducting exploratory action research will mainly help teachers to solve their classroom issues by themselves from where they develop self-esteem too. Most importantly, in this book, I have found the discussed classroom problems or puzzles are commonly faced by almost every teacher that may certainly help them with some solution. In addition, after reading this book the teachers who have not engaged in any research activities to solve classroom issues will certainly engage and develop themselves as a researcher. However, I have found couple of weakness of this book. First, it covers stories of classroom issues by only teachers from primary to higher secondary level. Second, it only discusses on exploratory action research as a research process to address the problem; it could have added other action researches as well.

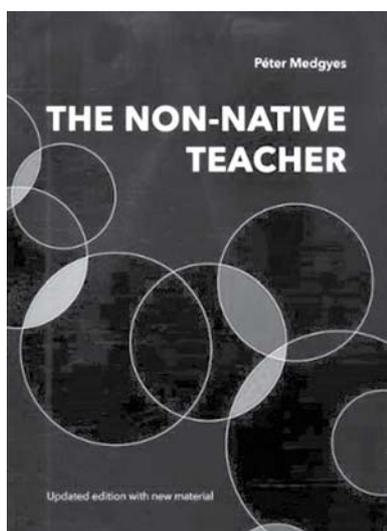
**- Reviewed by Pushpa Priya**

**The Reviewer: Pushpa Priya**, MPHIL Scholar, KUSOED, Lecturer of English at Global College of Management, Samriddhi College and K & K International College; Columnist of English National Daily of Nepal like: The Rising Nepal, The Himalayan Times, and acting program Associate of AWIH (Association for the Welfare of Intellectual Handicapped), NGO working for the welfare of differently able people. Her interest areas are: psychological wellbeing, writing articles, transformative education system. Educational leadership, women empowerment; etc. She can be reached at [pushpaapriya@gmail.com](mailto:pushpaapriya@gmail.com)

## Book Review 3

**Non-native teachers of English have to prove that they have equal advantages that need to be taken into account.**

Prateet Baskota

**Book Details**

*The Non-Native Teachers.* Peter Medgyes London: Macmillan. Swan Communication Limited, 1994; 2017, Edition-3 (Illustrated), ISBN- 1901760111, 9781901760118, 172pp

As a reader, I found that this research-based book of Peter Medgyes published in 1994 took quite a while, almost 25 years, to generate interest in researchers in this issue, and then consequently, because of the tremendous interest people took in his ideas, came his second version of the book in 2017. There is a widespread stereotype that native speakers were most knowledgeable, natural and suitable people to teach English as a foreign language. According to this assumption, we see a very limited room and opportunity for a non-native teacher to be knowledgeable in the language that does not belong to them. The book aims to research the differences among these teachers to prove that non-native teachers have equal advantages that need to be taken into account. The writer expects that the result of this short book could be a valuable input to the area of teaching English as a foreign language.

Tallying the different parts of the book, he offers three versions of the interlanguage continuum to demonstrate the controversial relationship between native and non-native speakers. In the first versions is the ‘pseudo- native speaker’. The non-natives who speak English with a proficiency that may exceed that of the typical native speaker have been referred to them as “pseudo-native speakers” because they are competent speaker with native-like proficiency in the language. And then there are people between these two categories. It will be extremely difficult to separate them from “true” natives in most situations. With that said, some details, however could give them away. The simplest

indication that they are pseudo native speakers might be their accents, which could reveal pronunciation from several different regions. In addition, they typically either refrain from using colloquialisms, catchphrases, and slang or use them exclusively, as they may be unaware of some conceptual knowledge.

As such, most pseudo-native speakers are very curt and business-like in their communication, preferring to eschew chit-chat. This may appear rude to some. They have trouble being consistent in their language use and their judgment of other people's language use. Besides, classroom teaching should be embedded in an endless flow of two-way interaction between the teacher and the students. The author mentions the use of formal, business-like languages may create a delicate power relationship between the teacher and the students in terms of duties and responsibilities. In contrast, while challenging current interpretations of learner-centeredness, he claims that students can only be motivated and helped when teachers understand them well. He demonstrates some features distinguishing them from teachers of other school subjects, namely the features of assuming role. And the language teachers speak plays an important role in the role assumptions.

Medgyes, criticises the NEST/Non-NEST dichotomy because it is complex, context-based and irrelevant which should not be looked at from language teaching perspective alone. He claims that native speakerism is a continuum with two extremes – on the one extreme there are what is traditionally known as 'native speakers' and on the other the so-called non-native speakers with inseparable cases between the two extreme options.

He has brought the native/non-native dichotomy problem back within the framework of ELT and situates them into four primary hypotheses. To pave the way for substantiating these hypotheses, he introduces three surveys to deal with highlighting questions. First, researchers from Indonesia added a new view adding NESTs in 'who is worth more: the NEST or the non-NEST?' Second, Medgyes evaluates items in his surveys associated with non-NEST's language deficiencies and examines major problems areas in some detail. Third, although different people have different assumptions, the writer added to content in which the question of selection between a NEST and a non-NESTs might emerge. Respondents were interviewed about their preferences and, therefore, the arguments underlying them. Finally, he contends that the vague concept of the 'ideal teacher should no longer be reserved for NESTs'. Having studied the implications in three dimensions, he had offered a tentative definition of the perfect NEST and, therefore, the ideal non-NEST. He encapsulated that the cooperation depended, among other things, on the availability of NESTs in the school.

The book is divided into six parts, each containing two chapters. Part I of the book looks into the relevance of NEST and non-NEST dichotomy in terms of the global

spread of English ('The juggernaut called English') and prefers to call the dichotomy a continuum ('Is the native speaker really dead?'). In this part, he raises questions that will stimulate readers to think about their own contexts and how relevant the continuum is in their own contexts. He begins by describing English as a lingua franca and the standard variety of Englishes, then moving on to the concept of being a nonnative and a pseudo-native speaker of English language.

Part -II talks about the status of NESTs and non-NESTs as if they were in 'opposite trenches'. Equally, Chapters 5 and 6, in part III, touch on essential points, such as the negative aspects of being a non-nest and the "inferiority complex" that can arise as a result of this. However, these chapters also discuss the numerous benefits of being a member of one. Such as anticipating language difficulties and finding ways to help learners overcome them. So, part IV of the book delves into the perceived importance of NESTs and non-NESTs and the need for collaboration between the two. Finally, chapters 9 and 10 of Part V are devoted to the teacher-learner or in-service teacher who is motivated to learn while teaching, along with practical ideas on how non-NESTs can improve their language proficiency.

Finally, part VI provides background information on the research on which the book is based and information on how it was carried out. The reader will find all of the questionnaires that were used in the study, as well as other information about the participants, in the appendices. The full text of the previous edition (with some updates) is printed in black on the cover of this book's revised (2017) edition, while entirely new elements reflecting changes in the profession over the last 25 years are printed in blue on the same cover. Blue margin notes, which expand on, and update points raised in previous editions, are included in this edition. These notes also suggest ways in which the reader can connect the text and their own life.

In conclusion, I am happy to recommend this book because, as I indicated above, the issues raised by Peter Medgyes more than 25 years ago are still alive today. These issues are clearly reiterated in many sidebar comments and questions with a view to assisting readers to reflect and reassess their position on the matter. The book is very stimulating, and therefore, I am confident the readers will find it useful too. Those readers who want to pursue their interest further, can find a list of additional resources at the end of each chapter. I am totally shocked to see that 'native speakerism' is still alive in the conversations of teachers like me. I thought the issue was dead and forgotten in my generation of teachers. But that is not the case. The ELT professionals of my generation need to reconsider Medgyes's arguments, and continue to contribute to the conversation against the unjustifiable distinction between NESTs and non-NESTs.

**- Reviewed by Prateet Baskota**

**The Reviewer:**

**Prateet Baskota** is Research Scholar at School of Education, Kathmandu University, Nepal. He is a member of Nepal English Language Teacher Association (NELTA), Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM), American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Australian Linguistics Society (ALS), The International Cognitive Linguistics Association (ICLA), STEM Foundation Nepal (SFN), and International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL). As a teacher of English, he has contributed articles in few journals

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## POPULAR ELT BLOGS

### EFL Magazine - The Magazine for English Language Teachers

EFL Magazine was born out of the idea of bringing truly great content from the best people to English language teachers worldwide, to improve the lives of those teachers and their students. The following are two creative and interactive teaching resources for ESL Online which appeared on EFL Magazine.( <https://eflmagazine.com/>)



An online lesson always seems to be lacking something. Regular exercises and textbooks are boring and mundane because they lack *'real language situations.'* Let's make online lessons **more fun and interactive** by finding out about new creative teaching materials!

#### What is interactivity online?

For most people, the first thing that comes to mind when they think about interactivity online is **interactive exercises**. Language teaching is when students click, move things with their finger, **check tasks automatically**, and then see the answers.

As for me, interactivity is not just moving things with your finger, and it is not just *auto-checking*. **Interactivity is about getting people engaged via communication and keeping them active** throughout a lesson and after. Eventually, we should make students go to the **outside world**, outside the classroom, and make them communicate with

people. It will be especially beneficial for adults and more confident adolescent learners. This is interactivity as **active communication**, besides just interactive exercises with auto-check.

*“Teachers will need to expand their ability to locate resources online, introduce learners to techniques for self-directed learning, and promote a healthy sense of adventure through risk-taking and goal setting.”*

## 1. Creating Computer-Animated Stories in the EFL Classroom

Creating learning environments that are engaging and have real-world applications for EFL learners can be challenging. This article addresses this challenge by integrating STEM into the EFL university classroom and by having learners create computer-animated stories using free online software like Scratch.

### The Short Version

Creating learning environments that are engaging and have real-world applications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners can be challenging. One way to meet this challenge is by having students create stories or scenarios using free computer animation applications. One such application is called Scratch. Scratch is a web-based application developed by the Scratch Team at the Lifelong Kindergarten group at MIT Media Lab. This article looks at ways to integrate basic computer programming into the EFL university classroom by having learners create computer-animated stories using Scratch.

### Introducing SCRATCH

Engaging our learners in the classroom can be a challenge. You might be teaching in a classroom where students are reluctant to speak, or your students might have difficulty staying focused. I have experienced both scenarios in my teaching career. I found that creating tasks relevant to both the ‘real world’ and the curriculum brings a more visual sense of purpose among my learners.

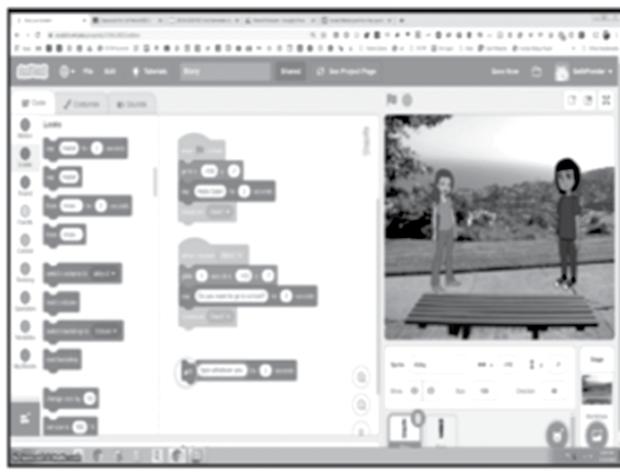
That is, to bring more realism to the classroom my tasks are based on situational learning theory. Situational learning, in the



sense I am using it for this article, was brought forth by Lave and Wenger (1991). According to these authors, situational learning is an active process where the learner plays an active part by physically becoming involved in ‘real-life’ activities, not just listening and taking notes (See also Gawande & Al-Senaidi, 2015). I have found that this can be particularly challenging in the EFL classroom with science and engineering students. One way of connecting with students in a relevant way is by harnessing educational technology that is more relatable to their educational interests, and that is more hands-on. Specifically, the use of the Scratch iPad application to teach English as a Foreign Language through real-life skills like problem-solving and teamwork. In this article, I will explain what Scratch is and how I use this Ed-Tech tool in the university classroom. I will also discuss how this tool can be used in a social distancing learning environment.

### What is Scratch?

Simply put, Scratch is block-based visual programming language that is freely available at <https://scratch.mit.edu/>. Designed by the MIT Media Lab’s LifelongLearning Kindergarten Group, the purpose of this coding language platform is to encourage 8- to 16-year-olds to learn programming. This open-source, free programming language application encourages learners to create animations, games, and stories. (See also Sáez-López et al., 2016). Since its inception, Scratch has been utilized in other areas of education that do not focus on computer programming, like teaching English as a Foreign Language.



### Engaging EFL Students with Scratch

Using Scratch in the classroom provides another avenue to engage students in a meaningful way. Even those learners who are apprehensive about computer programming will find using the basic programming language user friendly, which has been my experience. I stress to my students that the application was designed for children to learn programming. The other aspect of calming their nerves is to tell them that they do not need to use Scratch in the English mode. They can switch the user interface language to their first language. I stress to my students that I am only interested in the output of

their creations which need to be in English. Another part that I highlight is that Scratch is an open-sourced application so that they can search the Internet and locate pre-made programs and adapt those programs to their task.

To get the students started, I created a vocabulary worksheet that has the vocabulary associated with the user interface. I then asked the students to bring their laptops or iPads to class. This is followed by a step-by-step introduction to the Scratch application. I provide a few short practice sessions on creating simple programs. For instance, I have the students make their characters move across the screen or change the background. I also have them create voice bubbles and record their voices in the program. The next step is to show them where they can locate sample programs on the Internet. That is, I provide them with a list of websites that have tutoring sessions. For my lower-level language learners, I provide a list of websites that are in their first language. These links and steps are also posted on the class Moodle page.

### Types of Projects with Scratch

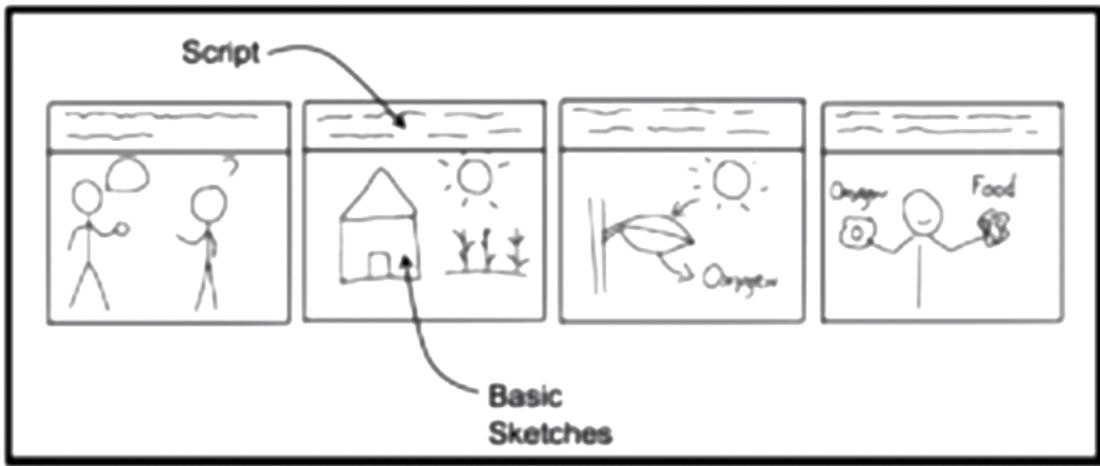
As mentioned earlier, allowing students to have more control of their learning is very important. Scratch fosters this type of learning where students collaborate, and solve problems while improving their English skills.

I have used Scratch for both speaking and writing classes. For the speaking class, the students will record their voices and embed these recordings into the program. Similarly, for the writing class, students will insert their written conversation into the program. Each project is scaffolded.

The first stage of the project is for the students to choose their team members and their project topic. This is frequently a topic connected to the themes taught in class or with topics connected with their other courses. However, I have allowed students to venture into different topics as they are appropriate for a university learning environment. I also make sure that each group has a different topic or focus of a topic. I do this to make sure there is enough difference between the projects to create diversity. The next stage is for each group to create a storyboard.



## The storyboard



This part of the project aims for the students to create a visual outline of their project that includes the spoken or written dialogue (the script) between the characters. Once they have finished their storyboard, I have the students hand in their work. I stress that I am checking their language, not their artistic skills. I also provide feedback on how they can make their dialogue better. While I am checking the dialogue of each project, the students begin writing their programs. If they need assistance in troubleshooting the program, I will help them.

## The Last Steps

The second to last stage of the project is for each group to receive peer feedback. The students will post their projects on a designated YouTube site. From here, the students will comment on the posted projects. Each group will then make final changes to their projects and submit them for grading. As a final step, the students will present their projects to the class. That is, the class will watch each group's project followed by a question-and-answer session.

## Group Work and Social Distancing

Building a situational learning environment in the age of COVID-19 can be a challenge. However, as educators, we have found ways to circumnavigate this challenge. There are many online tools that educators can utilize to bring students together in a safe environment. For creating a storyboard, learners can use either Google Drive or Microsoft Teams. This will depend on which platforms are freely available to your students. I do not want my students to spend money on products that are freely available. Some of the students may not be familiar with these products. To write the programming

code as a group is a little more complex. I offer a few suggestions to the group, like the share screen function on Zoom. My chief focus on this part of the process is to facilitate. I want the students to take control of their learning.

### **Final Thoughts**

Creating learning opportunities for our students in the EFL classroom with real-life applications is crucial for fostering deeper language acquisition. By using Scratch to build meaningful learning environments, EFL learners will have another means of associating the language skills they have learned in a different context. Thus, improving their overall language skills.

### **Bibliography**

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## 2. Making the Most Out of Coursebooks



The role of coursebooks in EFL is a topic of some controversy. For many, language books form the backbone of their curriculums, and some EFL teachers have a strong loyalty to a particular series. On the other hand, many teachers find them restricting, especially the way the coursebooks seem to compartmentalise the language. The ‘unplugged’ movement, associated with Scott Thornbury and Luke Meddings, derives from a sense of frustration with coursebooks-or at least coursebooks in their contemporary form. As a result, some coursebook writers have felt the need to defend the coursebook and demonstrate how teachers can better use them.

This piece summarises and reflects upon an excellent talk that Andrew Walkley gave at English UK Scotland’s Academic Conference, held in February 2019 in Edinburgh. Andrew Walkley is well known in the EFL sector as a teacher trainer and coursebook author. Along with Hugh Dellar, he is co-director of Lexical Lab. <https://www.lexicallab.com/> In recent years, he has been involved in the successful Outcomes series of coursebooks <https://www.eltoutcomes.com/> published by National Geographic and used by many EFL schools and teachers. It was interesting to hear the views of a leading coursebook writer on the limitations of coursebooks (and why these limitations exist) and how teachers can make the most out of them.

## A hindrance or help?

Walkley began by discussing the view that a coursebook can teach by itself- that it can do virtually everything for you as a teacher. This is, of course, an erroneous view. Simply following the book is unlikely to be enough- the teacher must use coursebooks judiciously and as a tool for teaching. Walkley related this to the ‘demand high’ arguments of Adrian Underhill and Jim Scrivener. They argue that there is plenty of speaking going on in lots of lessons but a lack of focused language input. In short, a lack of clarity about what is the target language. A good coursebook can, argued Walkley, provide that clear focus.

Walkey argued that coursebooks can help teachers, but they can also hinder. They can hinder because the grammar point is sometimes isolated from other grammar. It neglects that most conversations include a variety of grammar forms. For example, the different responses you could imagine to the question – fancy a coffee?:

- I’d love one
- Cheers
- I’ve just had one
- To be honest I’m not a fan
- I’m trying to cut down

Coursebooks, argued Walkley, tend to artificially limit things because many of these forms are seen as too advanced for that level and may confuse students. This does not fit the usual approach of coursebooks (one grammar point per lesson). Also, many of the short conversations we teach at lower levels are inauthentic. For example, the use of auxiliaries in answers to basic questions. Have you been to Italy? Yes, I have/ no, I haven’t. Instead, we should be teaching authentic answers such as ‘yeah, I was there last year’ (‘yeah’ should be taught as well as ‘yes’- it’s probably more common among native speakers).

## Recycling

There is also a tendency for coursebooks to fail to revise and recycle language from previous lessons. Teachers generally don’t like repetition/ going over the same language again (they like variety)- but students need it. Their first exposure to a language form is unlikely to be enough for the point to sink in. There tends to be insufficient continuity between different sections of many coursebooks. Publishers can see such recycling as unnecessary or repetitive. As a consequence, these sections are often cut

when it comes to the final edit. There is a continual desire-from the publishers- to keep points to a two-page spread. This often leads to the crammed feel of many coursebooks. This is undoubtedly my general impression when looking at a typical two-page spread. It feels as if there's too much to cover and a lack of cohesiveness. Often, lesson planning consists of selecting which sections to use and in what order. The time spent doing this can aggravate some teachers, who usually do not get paid for preparation time.

## Dialogues

The importance of dialogues is often overlooked in textbooks. Walkley was involved with the earlier series Innovations, which was very much dialogue based. Walkley and his co-authors received feedback that some teachers found it difficult to teach from, and perhaps it was more suited for experienced teachers. I think that the Innovations series is underrated and, though the books are dated, I still use sections from them. The dialogues are a great way to get students to use authentic chunks of language. The Teacher's Resource Books that accompany the Innovations coursebooks are also excellent and can be used independently. I would strongly recommend that teachers dig out copies of Innovations. Though the Outcomes series had many plus points (not least the fabulous photos, which stimulate a lot of discussion in class), its relative lack of dialogues was a blemish.

Teachers can, Walkley argued, make up for the lack of dialogues in coursebooks by using the language from the coursebooks in dialogues and promoting dialogue creation between students. Walkley also discussed the very purpose of dialogues in coursebooks. Teachers should, he argued, remember that the dialogues in books and listening activities are there 'modelling the conversation rather than the grammar.' The aim is to get students to hold good conversations, not necessarily using specific grammar. There was a tendency, especially with grammar points, to 'force' the target language into dialogues, often rendering them inauthentic and unnatural.

In terms of identifying authentic language to teach, Walkley suggested involving your colleagues. One thing that teachers should do regularly is to do the speaking activities in the coursebooks themselves with a colleague and see what language comes out of that. Doing so will provide dynamic language that coursebooks may not be able to offer. I have tried this, and it is often surprising what proficient speakers say as opposed to what the coursebook suggests they might say.

## Active note-taking

Walkley proposed that teachers should regularly integrate revision activities into their classes. Using the students' notebooks as the source for these would help students

promote sound, more conscious note-taking. In my experience, there is insufficient attention paid to what students put down in their notebooks and then what they do with their notes after class. Ideally, students should be doing something with their notes—reviewing them, typing them up, etc. Walkley suggested that every so often, get your students to go through their notebooks and find:

- 5 words they have forgotten the meaning of.
- 5 words you've not used yet.
- 10 words you have used or could have used.

### **Divergent CCQs**

Not all texts in the coursebooks are interesting. Some will fail to engage some or all of your students. All teachers will have used materials that fell flat in the classroom. However, Walkley emphasised that all these texts will have interesting language, which you should highlight and use. In short, do not be disheartened if a text fails to engage – it is the language that it contains which should be your central concern. To test whether students have understood a particular word/ phrase, teachers should be using 'divergent' concept checking questions (CCQs). For example, to test the understanding of the word 'exhausted,' we might ask the students, 'why might you be exhausted?'. Or 'when were you last exhausted -and why?'.

### **Going off-topic- how problematic is it?**

Lots of the off topic 'chat' that occurs in the classroom is rich in language. However, it is often ignored by teachers who want to/need to focus on the language point set out in the coursebook. Dealing with this 'emergent language' there and then may lead to some relatively unstructured lessons. So, suggested Walkley, why not turn the 'chat' into material for future lessons. Instead of creating something on the spot, go away and find the ideal material for that language point. I have done this and found that students appreciate it if you create lessons in this way. They see that the teacher is engaged with the language used by the students, not just robotically churning out lessons by the book.

### **A variety of users**

Walkley tried to answer why contemporary coursebooks have a similar form and feel, dominated by the two-page spread packed with language and activities. In contrast, coursebooks from previous eras often had a different look, with less crammed pages. For Walkley, the main issue was the tendency for editors to strip away speaking activities. There was a perceived need to have a clearly defined grammar point for each section.

There was also the issue that the coursebooks are for a mass market. In short, well-qualified and experienced teachers in the UK are not the principal market. So, this is where teachers may need to adapt the course materials. This is a product of the growth and spread of ELT across the world. It raises the question of whether different editions of books are required for different types of teachers and levels of experience. This is unlikely to be practicable, so love them or loathe them, mass-market coursebooks are likely to remain a core aspect of language teaching. Using some of the ideas outlined by Andrew Walkley may assist teachers in getting more out of the coursebooks they use.

## News from the ELT World

1. ICELT 2022: 16. International Conference on English Language Teaching Website: <https://waset.org/english-language-teaching-conference-in-august-2022-in-sydney> August 30-31, 2022 in Sydney, Australia

### DIGITAL



Conference Code: **22AU08ICELT002**

**International Conference on English Language Teaching** aims to bring together leading academic scientists, researchers and research scholars to exchange and share their experiences and research results on all aspects of English Language Teaching. It also provides a premier interdisciplinary platform for researchers, practitioners and educators to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of English Language Teaching

### Call for Contributions

Prospective authors are kindly encouraged to contribute to and help shape the conference through submissions of their research abstracts, papers and e-posters. Also, high quality research contributions describing original and unpublished results of conceptual, constructive, empirical, experimental, or theoretical work in all areas of English Language Teaching are cordially invited for presentation at the conference. The conference solicits contributions of abstracts, papers and e-posters that address themes and topics of the conference, including figures, tables and references of novel research materials.

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2. **AsiaTEFL 2022 International Conference with TEFLIN and iNELLTAL**  
Hindsight, Insight, and Foresight in ELT in Multilingual Asia  
August 5-7, 2022; Malang, Indonesia (Hybrid)  
Aug. 4: Preconference Workshops  
Web: <http://asiatefl2022.um.ac.id/>
  
  3. **JALTCALL 2022**  
Exploring the Intersection of Games and Technology in Language Education  
June 17-19, 2022; Online & Kyoto, Japan  
Web: <https://jaltcall2022.edzil.la/>
  
  4. **LLL2022: The 9th International Conference on Language, Literature & Linguistics**  
Cultural Unification Through Language Development  
July 25-26, 2022; Singapore  
Web: <https://languages3000.com/>

## Information about Journal of NELTA

This page contains information about (a) the Journal, (b) submission categories, (c) submission guideline, (d) copyright policy, and (e) general information.

### A. About Journal of NELTA

First published in 1996, the Journal of NELTA, a double blind, peer-reviewed journal, is a premiere publication of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). The journal, an integral part of NELTA's mission of enhancing the quality of English language teaching and learning through professional networking, supporting ELT practitioners and collaborating with ELE institutions and organisations, is a means of achieving Association's goal of providing a 'forum for exchanges of ideas and experiences at national, regional and international levels'.

Journal of NELTA as a peer-refereed journal is devoted to publication of quality materials on the theory and practice of English language teaching (ELT) in developed as well as under-resourced contexts. It publishes articles, research reports, practical teaching ideas, book reviews and other useful materials which have local, regional and global relevance. As the premium publication of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), the Journal particularly welcomes contributions that add to the contemporary discourses on ELT practices. Contributions that deal with ELT theories and methods will serve the professional community only when they are situated in the authors' own practices and/or in the contemporary educational and social contexts. Therefore, materials published in the Journal of NELTA are relevant to and situated in local, national, regional, and/or contexts.

The Journal considers contributions on any aspect of the ELT theory and practice, including but not limited to the following:

- **ELT theory:** works that discuss or interpret ELT theory critically from local/regional perspectives
- **Innovative teaching and/or research practices:** works that describe and explore how authors have developed or adapted any innovative methods or practices in ELT

- **Professional development practices:** works that raise new issues of ELT that deserve the attention of the professional community, government, or society (e.g. ‘reconceptualising teacher education)
- **Success stories:** scholarly articles that narrate and reflect on successful implementation of ELT theory, method, or practice,
- **Any other ELT related issues/subjects** that is relevant to ELT professional community.

## B. Submission Categories

**Contributions may be submitted for one of the following categories**

### **Full Length Feature Articles/Reports (5000-6000 words):**

- **Empirical studies:** full length articles based on the fieldwork on issues of ELT, language education, teacher development or training, language testing and other relevant issues of language teaching. Because local practices have been relatively little researched outside the university context, submissions that represent this area will get high priority for the publication.
- **Knowledge-based perspectives:** articles that articulate a comprehensive and critical discussion of innovative ELT concepts. Such articles must present the author’s clear voice on the perspective that is of interest to the readers of the Journal.
- **Classroom research and teacher reflections:** articles coming directly out of the classroom teaching or teacher’s own reflection of his/her teaching. These can be stories in the form of narrative descriptions or they can follow the typical format of cyclical action research reports.

### **Action Research Reports (3000-5000-words)**

- This new section of the Journal of NELTA includes well-written action research report. The report may be 3000 word long and should include succinct description of (a) the research context, (b) brief literature review (a) research methodology (d) Data collection, (e) data analysis and interpretation, (f) discussion of findings and implication, and (g) references. These reports are not peer reviewed; however, they will be reviewed and edited by the editors.

- The Journal of NELTA is also a platform for its readers to interact and share their ideas and opinions. For this reason, the Journal publishes an opinion-based article and invites its readers to send comments, responses, or critiques of the position of the author, which may be published, in the following issue of the Journal. The requirements for this article are the same as the full-length article but it may be shorter in length.

### **Practical Pedagogic Ideas (2000 words):**

- Many teachers look for ideas on the daily/regular basis which they can quickly adapt and put to practice. A short and simple teaching idea, which is illustrative and supported with relevant activities and materials, can address the need.

A pedagogical idea addresses any element/aspect/skill of the English language. As a micro-level teaching tip, the idea is purposeful and principled in the sense that it addresses a particular teaching objective and is based on or guided by some pedagogic principles.

- The write up of the idea may be 1500-2000 word long plus references (3-5 references only) and appendices.
- Ideas that are useful for teachers in the classroom (e.g., tips for teaching particular skills/aspects of language, lesson plans, tasks for teaching poetry, etc.) may be submitted under this category. A template is available in the Journal of NELTA website.

### **Book reviews (1500 words):**

- Reviews of recently published ELT books that are of professional significance to the readers. Reviews should generally provide a short introduction of the author and the purpose of the book, its descriptive summary, followed by its evaluative comments and its significance to the researchers and practitioners in Nepal. Reviews should not exceed 1,500 words including references.

### **C. Submission Guidelines**

Submissions must follow the guidelines provided by NELTA. To access submission guidelines, authors should visit the Journal of NELTA website under [www.nelta.org.np](http://www.nelta.org.np).

Manuscripts must be submitted as an email attachment accompanied by a well-written cover letter to the editorial address: [neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com](mailto:neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com). The cover letter email should include author's full name, institutional affiliation, title of the paper, and any other pertinent information

#### D. Copyright Policy ©

The Journal of NELTA, a double-blind peer-reviewed journal, is copyrighted by Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). Apart from citing/referencing in academic works, no part of any materials may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from its copyright owner – NELTA. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights may be addressed to NELTA or the editorial board at [neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com](mailto:neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com).

#### E. Submission Review (Policy) Process

Submissions received for Journal of NELTA undergo through a rigorous three-stage review process. In the **first stage**, the editorial board screens submissions which meet the requirements of originality, and appropriateness, and follow the Journal of NELTA style and format for the second stage. In the **second stage**, the articles are sent to two external reviewers for their blind reviews. Depending upon the review reports, articles are either rejected or selected for the next stage which may involve revisions. In the **third stage**, the re-assigned reviewers and the editorial board decide if the submissions meet all the Journal of NELTA requirements. All selected submissions are edited for language clarity and space. All short-listed articles go through a **plagiarism check** before they are considered for acceptance.

#### E. General Information

- (i) Frequency: Currently, Journal of NELTA is published once a year.
- (ii) Rates and subscription: Its Owner decides the subscription rate of the Journal on the yearly basis. Readers interested in subscribing the Journal should write to the Central Committee of NELTA or its editorial board.
- (iii) Ownership: The Journal of NELTA is owned and published by Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA).

# Journal of NELTA

## Manuscript Submission Guidelines

### Submission Guidelines

As a peer-reviewed professional journal, the **Journal of NELTA** requires contributors to follow the guidelines given below for their submissions to be considered for publication by the Editorial Board. Please note that selection for consideration for publication does not guarantee publication. Contributors are encouraged to work with the Editorial Board to make their work publishable.

### Articles

1. Please do not write the author's name in the manuscript until the editorial board has selected the article for consideration towards publication.
2. Articles should be 5000 - 6000 words (excluding abstract and references and appendices).
3. Articles should be related to an area of Applied Linguistics, ELT, SLA, Sociolinguistics, Teacher Education, ICT in ELT, Training and Development and their professional development. In addition, we also accept practical training session plans to teach any skills and aspects of language and reflections on any teacher training program, articles coming out of classroom teaching experience or professional collaboration in ELT. An article must be original, professionally relevant, and intellectually engaging.
4. The manuscript should be typed in Time New Romans, 12 font size, with double space, typed in A4 size paper. Manuscript should be sent as an e-mail attachment as a MS Word file.
5. If the manuscript includes any special fonts, please send the fonts attached along with the manuscript.
6. The deadline for submissions is **July 31**. However, we encourage authors to submit their article as soon as possible. Reviewers will be able to give you more substantial feedback if you submit early.

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### **Practical Pedagogic Ideas:**

- The writing related to pedagogical ideas may be 2000-2500 words excluding references (3-5 refs only) and appendices.
- Ideas that are useful for teachers in the classroom e.g., tips for teaching particular skills/aspects of language, lesson plans, tasks for teaching poetry, among others may be submitted under this category. A template for this may be provided upon request.

### **Book reviews:**

- We also accept reviews of recently published ELT books that are of professional significance to the readers. Reviews should generally provide a short introduction of the author and the purpose of the book, its descriptive summary, followed by its evaluative comments and its significance to the researchers and practitioners in Nepal. Reviews should not exceed 1,500 words including references.

### **Submission of manuscripts**

Manuscript must be submitted as an email attachment accompanied by a well-written cover letter to the editorial address: [neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com](mailto:neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com). The cover letter email will include author's full name, institutional affiliation, title of the paper, abstract and a short biodata. The manuscript must be anonymized completely for the blind review process.

A manuscript will be accepted on the understanding that it is plagiarism-free, an original contribution which has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Contributors must make sure to abide by scholarly practices including intellectual property and copyrights standards in the strictest manner. They are also encouraged to read past NELTA journals and build upon both the conventions and scholarship of the association. Some issues of the journal can be accessed online at Nepal Journal website page (<http://www.nepjol.info/index.php/NELTA/issue/archive>) as well as at NELTA's homepage (<http://www.nelta.org.np/> via the link "journals" on top right).

### **Publication Process**

In order to improve the quality and professional rigor of the journal, submissions will be taken through a review process followed by subsequent revisions and

improvements after their initial submission. The editorial board will make the initial selection completely anonymous and will continue to do so, as much as practicable, when the submission is sent back to the author for revision.

- We will acknowledge the receipt of each manuscript.
- The manuscript will be peer reviewed by two anonymous reviewers.
- The acceptance or rejection of the manuscript, based on the feedback from the reviewers, will be notified to the author within 5-7 weeks of submission.
- Comments of the reviewers will be forwarded to the author for final submission of the article (if the work is accepted in subsequent assessments). Initial consideration for publication based on one or more rounds of revision of a work will not guarantee the final publication of the work.
- Authors must submit the revised draft within one week of receiving the comment on the first draft. A second round of comments, if deemed necessary by the editorial board, may be offered to the author with five more days of extended time. Late submission, at any stage of the review process, may be considered as opting out of the publication process.

## Manuscript specifications

### 1. FORMAT

The entire manuscript, including the abstract, the reference list, and any tables or figures and their captions, should be presented as A4 doubled spaced typescript and in Times New Roman font.

- **Sections:** A manuscript should begin with a **title page** that includes the **full title of the paper**, a suggested **shorter title** for running heads, and a list of **keywords**. T
- **Notes:** Footnotes must be avoided.
- **Structure:** The structure of the manuscript depends on the type of article. For example, if an article is research-based, it might include an introduction, research questions or objectives, rationale and significance of the work, a review of literature along with the theoretical framework, research design conclusion and implication and procedure, results and discussion, conclusion.

Similarly, if an article is a knowledge-based theoretical one, it might begin with a general introduction that clearly states what the article is about and how the author is going to organise his/her writing, followed by sub-headings that connect the section and expand the central issue.

**However**, all articles must include the following sections/components:

## 2. SECTIONS

- **Title:** Title of the work must be precise and suggestive of the work's main idea. It must be in keeping with the tone of the work (but not cute or fancy).
- (Please note that a work's title can only be changed if approved or suggested by the editors after acceptance).
- **Abstract:** No more than 200 words.
- **Keywords:** Authors should list up to five keywords related to their article.
- **Introduction**
- **Methodology**
- **Results and discussion**
- **Conclusion**

### Things to consider

- **Style of Referencing:** APA 6th style should be adopted throughout the manuscript.
- **Uniformity:** For uniformity please follow the same spelling, punctuation and other mechanical and format conventions throughout the manuscript. For example, if you spell a word as 'organisation' in the beginning please do not write 'organization' next time in the same manuscript.
- **Tables:** If there are any tables in manuscripts, they should be numbered and have a brief title.
- **Figures:** If there are figures and maps in the manuscript, please include under each figure a clear and brief caption describing it.

### 3. STYLE OF REFERENCE/DOCUMENTATION

#### RECOMMENDED REFERENCE STYLE – APA 6th

##### Journal Articles:

Lavery, L. & Townsend, M. (1998). Computer-assisted instruction in teaching literacy skills to adults not in paid employment. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 33, 181-192.

Tse, S.K., Lam, J.W.I., Lam, R.Y.H., Loh, E.K.Y. & Westwood, P. (2007). Pedagogical correlates of reading comprehension in English and Chinese. *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 7 (2), 71–91.

##### Books:

Naglieri, J. A. (1999). *Essentials of CAS assessment*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

##### Edited books:

Richards, J. C. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). (1997). *Second language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

##### Chapters in Books:

Torgesen, J. K. (1996). A model of memory from an information processing perspective: The special case of phonological memory. In G.R. Lyon & N.A.

Krasnegor (Eds.), *Attention, memory, and executive function* (pp. 157-184). Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Teale, W. & Yokata, J. (2000). Beginning reading and writing: Perspectives on instruction. In D. S. Strickland & L.M. Morrow (Eds.), *Beginning reading and writing* (pp. 3–21). New York: Teachers College Press.

##### Online resources:

Gallaudet Research Institute (2003). *Literacy*. Retrieved on 25th Jan. 2009 from:<http://gri.gallaudet.edu/literacy>

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 8(1). Retrieved on 25th Jan.

2009 from <http://www.epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1>

### **Three to Six Authors**

Tse, S.K., Lam, J.W.I., Lam, R.Y.H., Loh, E.K.Y. & Westwood, P. (2007). Pedagogical correlates of reading comprehension in English and Chinese. *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature*, 7 (2), 71–91.

### **More Than Six Authors**

Nichols, W.D., Zellner, L.J., Rupley, W.H., Willson, V.L., Kim, Y., Mergen, S. et al. (2005). What affects instructional choice? Profiles of K-2 teachers' use of reading instructional strategies and methods. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 37(4), 437–458.

### **Newspaper article:**

Schultz, S. (2005, December 28). Calls made to strengthen state energy policies. *The Country Today*, pp. 1A, 2A.

(**Note:** For more details on APA style, please go to <http://www.apastyle.org/>).

## **IN-TEXT CITATION**

### **Short Quotations (less than 40 words)**

Lave and Wenger (1991) argues for 'legitimate peripheral participation' (p. 34).

### **Long Quotations (more than 40 words)**

Eckhert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) define community of practice as follows:

An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. Likewise, there must be a mutual interaction among the members. (p. 464)

### **Paraphrasing:**

#### **Single author:**

The construction of teacher identity is a process in which teachers engage in interaction not only with other members but also with broader socio-cultural context (Wenger, 1998).

***Multiple authors:***

Identity is constructed through the reflective practice in which teachers listen to opinions of students in the classroom and change contents and methods of teaching for better learning (Bartlett, 1990; Richards, 1990).

(**Note:** if you are citing more than one work of the same author published in the same year, please put a, b, c after the date of the publication in a chronological order).

# Journal *of* NELTA

## BOOK REVIEW GUIDELINES

### **Book Review: Word limit: 1,500 words including references**

A review conveys an opinion of the reviewer, supporting it with evidence from the work of art; the review describes, analyses, and evaluates the work of an artist/writer/author. A book review, in this context, includes an analysis of the author's intent with thematic elements. It should give opinions of the author, and include review-writer's personal views as well.

A book review is similar to a book report in that the important information in a book is summarized for someone who hasn't read it. However, a review is not the same as a report; so, first of all, let's be clear on the difference between a book report and a book review. Following is an explanation of the two:

- A book report is a summary and its structure is simpler than a book review. It gives information about the author and his background to help the reader understand a bit about the author's perspective. It also gives a brief summary of the plot, characters (if any), and setting.
- A book review, on the other hand, is an in-depth analysis of the text; an examination of its contents. The purpose here, should be to evaluate the value of the ideas that the book covers, and whether to recommend the book to future readers or not.

The difference is that a book review has qualitative judgments about a book that would not be found in a book report. A good book review will point out strengths and weaknesses in the work and looks at what the author/s has/have intended to do in the book.

### **Here are some basic steps that a reviewer can consider:**

#### **Before reviewing,**

- s/he should anticipate how would the title of the book go with its contents!

- s/he should see how the preface or introduction section provides important information about the author's intentions or the scope of the book.
- s/he should look at the Table of Contents, see how the book is organized, and how the main ideas are developed (chronologically, topically, etc.)
- s/he should identify any limitations such as whether the author ignored important aspects of the subject.

**While reviewing; yet, we do not have to answer every question; these are only suggestions.**

- What's the general field or genre? From what point of view is the work of art prepared (eg. book written)? What is the author's style? Formal/informal? What is the theme of the book about? Is it suitable for the intended audience?
- Do we agree or disagree with the author's point of view?
- Are all concepts well defined? What areas are covered/not covered? Is the language clear and convincing?
- Who are the main characters (if any), and who is our favorite character? Why?
- Do the main characters run into any problems? Adventures?
- Is the concluding chapter/summary convincing? What did the artwork book well-accomplish? Is there more work needed?
- If there are footnotes, do they provide important information? Do they clarify or extend points made in the text?
- Can we also compare the book to others by this author, or books in this field by other authors?

**While writing the review, the reviewer should...**

- include title, author, place, publisher, publication date, edition, pages, special features (maps, etc.), price, ISBN.
- try to hook the reader with our opening sentence. Set the tone of the review.
- stay away from bias while we review books by people we know, love, or hate, and make sure we are not intimidated by famous authors as well who

many have written mediocre books.

- be familiar with the guidelines -- some editors want plot summaries; others don't.
- review the book we read -- not the book we wish the author had written. Is the review for readers looking for information about a particular topic, or for readers searching for a good read?
- think about the person reading our review, who could be a librarian buying books for a collection, or parents who want a good read-aloud book for their children.
- think whether her/his conclusion summarizes, perhaps includes a final assessment; they should not introduce new material at this point!

**A reviewer should try to include her/his personal experiences and give opinion:**

- Did we like the book? What was our favorite part of the book? Do we have a least favorite part of the book?
- Have we ever done or felt some of the things, the characters did? If we could change something, what would it be?

**Reviewer's recommendation:**

- Would we recommend this book to another person? What type of person would like this book? Does the book worth other people's time and money?

**Knowing how to write a good book review is extremely necessary to scholars who want to write book reviews for the consumer market.**

**Here is a suggestive Book Review structure:**

- Book Title including complete bibliographic citation for the work (i.e., title in full, author, publisher, date of publication, edition statement, pages, special features, price, and ISBN. Please follow the Journal of NELTA referencing Guideline.
- One paragraph identifying the thesis (purpose), and whether the author achieves the stated purpose of the book.

- Two - three paragraphs critically summarizing the book. Here, the reviewer may highlight pertinent points/arguments/issues raised in various chapters of the book.
- One paragraph on the book's strengths.
- One paragraph on the book's weaknesses.
- One (concluding) paragraph on reviewer's assessment of the book's strengths and weaknesses.

### Five common pitfalls a Book Reviewer should avoid:

1. **Synopsising the book:** Evaluate the book, don't just summarize it. While a succinct restatement of the book's points/contents is important, part of writing a book review is making a judgment. Is the book a contribution to the field? Does it add to our knowledge? Should this book be read and by whom? One needn't be negative to evaluate. For instance, explaining how a text relates to current debates in the field is a form of evaluation.
2. **Covering everything:** Do not cover everything in the book. In other words, don't use the table of contents as a structuring principle for your review. Try to organize your review around the book's argument or your assessment of the book.
3. **Passing reviewer's own judgement:** Judge the book by its intentions, not yours. Don't criticize the author for failing to write the book you think that he or she should have written.
4. **Focusing too much on limitations or gaps:** Don't spend too much time focusing on gaps. For this reason, the most common criticism in any review is that the book doesn't address some part of the topic. If the book purports to be about ethnicity and film and yet lacks a chapter on, say for example, Maithils or Latinos, by all means, mention it.
5. **Focusing too much on reference gaps:** Don't focus too much on books the author did not cite. Do not use their bibliography just to display your own knowledge. Keep such criticisms brief.
6. **Using large chunks of author's text:** Don't use large chunks or too many quotes from the book to support your argument/assessment. It is best to paraphrase or use short telling quotes within sentences.

# Journal of NELTA

## Book Review

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### II. Five Common Pitfalls a Book Reviewer should Avoid:

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## Journal of NELTA

### *Template - Pedagogical Ideas for English language teaching*

Many teachers look for ideas on a daily/regular basis which they can quickly adapt and put to practice. A short and simple teaching idea which is illustrative and supported with relevant activities and materials can address the need.

A pedagogical idea addresses any element/aspect/skill of the English language. As a micro-level teaching tip, the idea is purposeful and principled in the sense that it addresses a particular teaching objective and is based on or guided by some pedagogic principles.

The write up of the idea may be 2000-2500 word long plus references (3-5 refs only) and appendices. A suggestive template for this may be provided.

**Sections of the Pedagogical ideas**

**Element/aspect/skill addressed:**

|                                                                         |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objectives:                                                             |                                                                                       | Age group                                                                                                          |
| Target Proficiency level:                                               |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Preferred number of students:Class                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Time:                                                                   |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Procedures (number of activities depend on available class/lesson time) | <b>Interaction pattern</b><br><i>Teacher – students</i><br><i>Students - students</i> | <b>Resources/materials</b><br>Materials may added as an appendix or URL may be provided of the source of materials |
| <b>Activity 1:</b> What is aimed? What prompt provided?                 |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Time for this activity:                                                 |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Rationale of the activity:                                              |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| (e.g., Activate ideas or generate Interest in the topic)                |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity 2</b>                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity 3</b>                                                       |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Activity ...</b>                                                     |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Assessment:</b>                                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Conclusion:                                                             |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |
| Possible Follow-up                                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                    |

**Appendices**

**References (a short list of references)**

**Review of Practical Teaching Ideas**

1. **Clarity (clear in terms of presentation and language)**
2. **Originality (should be the author’s own, must not be published elsewhere)**
3. **Practicality (Should be adaptable in the target teaching contexts)**
4. **Presentation (Easy to follow).**
5. **Self-contained (All materials needed are provided in the appendixes or links or sources clearly indicated.**

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