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Message from the President of NELTA

We are in an era of new challenges and opportunities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The shocking history, on the one hand, created a ground for us to cope with our life and vocation at the same time, and on the other hand, we are forced to boost our immunity to divulge a new era in the academia with a need to equip ourselves for smarter ESL pedagogical garner. NELTA is such an enduring organization that it never froze its accountabilities in any kind of turbulence. The examples are NELTA-Think-in 2021 and NELTA-Think-in 2022 both of which were hosted virtually with input from globally outstanding experts, researchers, and professors.

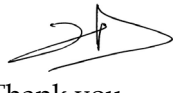
Moreover, our publications did not cease to appear online and in their physical volumes. Typically, the Journal of NELTA 2021 was published online and in hardcopy both. Similarly, this year too, the Journal of NELTA 2022 is going to be published online and in hardcopy with the support of the Regional English Language Office (RELO). I hope it has met your expectations with a coverage of the themes of our critical concerns. NELTA ELT Forum is always in our web portal on a periodic basis to share our practical experiences and skills with the key ingredients of ESL pedagogy.

A volunteer organization that had inception in 1992, in Kathmandu, has now not only become one of the largest but also truly a professional association in Nepal and beyond. Its operation through 58 branches with 7 Provincial committees across the country, with the strength of more than 5000 life members, ranging from pre-primary teachers to the university professor, authors, researchers, and experts from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology has been uniquely instrumental to reach in the grassroots.

We have also witnessed our district branches and the provincial committees consistently encouraging the professionals to read NELTA journals and contribute to writing. The Journal of NELTA plays a significant role in disseminating new knowledge in English language pedagogy, including research. It provides a platform for teachers, researchers, and writers from across regions. I commend the Journal's efforts in creating a platform for ELT practitioners to interact and share their expertise.

I express my sincere gratitude to RELO for supporting the publication of NELTA Journals in 7 Provinces along with the center's Journal, the NELTA Editorial Board, my entire team, NELTA office bearers, contributors, and readers for their support and time. The end, I would like to announce that NELTA is organizing the 27th NELTA International Conference-2023 on February 17-19. I hope to meet you in person at the NELTA Conference.

I wish you all the best!



Thank you
Motikala Subba Dewan
President, NELTA.

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Editorial

Despite a difficult year for all of us, readers of the Journal of NELTA showed keen interest in the journal this year. We had a large number of submissions in all categories from many countries including the USA, China, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Nearly 50% of the submissions did not proceed to the next stage of the editorial process because they were not prepared according to the recommended guidelines. This is a reminder to the authors how important it is to follow the manuscript preparation guidelines (please visit our website for the guidelines in all submission categories. Guidelines are also provided at the end of this Journal). Overall, our manuscript acceptance rate remains around 25 percent.

The articles of this volume broadly address four major themes of English language teaching: (a) perspectives on teaching online during the pandemic, (b) ELT, and EL teacher development (c) education, and academic writing, and (d) world Englishes. Starting from the last category, there is an ongoing conversation about what space world Englishes (WE) should be accorded in an educational system, whether and to what extent they should be included in the curricula and the classrooms, and whether WE have made its way to assessment and examinations particularly English language assessments. So far as the teaching and learning of English are concerned, *Shankar Dewan* argues that Nepali English (NE), which has emerged due to the influence of indigenous languages, nativization of English to local contexts, and exposure from the non-native teachers, has a potential for a place in the Nepalese education. He suggests that Nepali teachers of English favour NE as it is more intelligible and easier to teach and learn than the other varieties of English. *Laxmi Prasad Ojha* takes the debate further by critically examining how the existing assessment practices fail to represent the multilingual repertoires and actual language practices of the diverse range of test-takers around the world. Based on the documentary analysis of the issue, he highlights the progress, challenges and possibilities for the incorporation of more diverse models of language tests. *Bishnu Khadka* puts English language teaching (ELT) in Nepal in its historical context and argues that like many developing contexts of the region, ELT is set to grow further in Nepal.

The largest number of submissions, as expected, was around the issues ELT practitioners, students and institutions faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. Each of these articles, nonetheless, presents a different perspective on the issues. Based on a large-scale study with students and teachers, *Wenjung Wang,* for example, provides useful reflections on managing virtual/online teaching. He investigated teacher strategies employed in the three phases of pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching respectively, and has summarised strategies and key factors teachers need to know in order to manage technology-assisted English language teaching effectively. He suggests that online teaching is a compromise and a solution to a crisis that is completely out of the control of the teacher. He concludes that the application of technology has presented some problems, but the same technology helps overcome the problem. *Motikala Subba Dewan, Ahmed Bashir* and *David Tchaikovsky Teh Boon Ern's* transnational research adopts a Comparative Case Study (CCS) to explore the experiences of a cross-border ELT professional community and identify five key challenges of transitioning to online teaching during the pandemic which are (i) teaching and learning difficulties, (ii) unreliable and invalid assessments, (iii) infrastructural hurdles in home learning environment, (iv) student

displacement, and (v) compromised teacher wellbeing. They conclude that the concerned stakeholders need to remain vigilant and put a robust scheme to deal with such crises in the future. Similarly, *Prakash Rai* and *Uttam Singh Rai* present teachers' perspectives and the strategies they adopt to deal with the problems of teaching online. Prakash Rai, presenting some of the issues teachers face due to the sudden transition to online teaching, suggests that, despite technological inefficiency, social barriers, and psychological fear, teachers manage to apply technology effectively and productively because of their self-initiation, self-discovery, and cooperative approach.

Uttam Singh Rai's study conducted in an outlying area shows that teachers have had negative experiences such as technology-related anxiety and mental stress due to the lack of basic knowledge of ICT in English teachers. The constraints such as unstable electricity, low-speed internet issue, low rate of students' absence, and unavailability of ICT devices may have contributed to the negative experience. However, students and teachers manage to have some positive outcomes out of the difficult circumstances. In order to assist teachers in coping with stressful and difficult situations and in managing teaching and learning well, teachers need mentoring from those who are more knowledgeable and experienced. *Krishna Kumari Upadhyaya* article, which is based on a small-scale study, finds that mentorships help boost the confidence level and improve self-sufficiency. On a loosely related theme, *Md. Abdur Rouf* presents a case of novice teachers in Bangladesh. These teachers work in challenging circumstances with conflicting pre-service perceptions and in-service actualities. Such teachers require support and resources to play a proactive role during their induction. Looking into the future with teaching machines, *Janapha Thadphoothon* presents a perspective of artificial intelligence in ELT. He points out that English language teaching today is in the middle of a rapid and disruptive transformation and the teaching machine is driving this transformation. ELT practitioners, therefore, have to acquire additional (digital) skills and competencies, in addition to pedagogic skills, so as to be functional and thrive in this rapidly changing world.

Writing academically is a struggle for many of us ELT practitioners. *Jagdish Paudel* shares his experiences and struggles and offers some strategies for advancing academic writing skills. Similarly, intending to help novice writers, *Padam Chauhan* provides an overview of the fundamental concepts and process of academic writing. Both of these articles highlight key features of formal, academic writing and the strategies one can employ in order to enhance their academic paper writing abilities.

Our regular section of "Book/material Reviews," has one entry. The book review, which is contributed by *Pushpa Priya*, offers a review of a recently published book. We encourage readers of this Journal to write their own reviews of books and other appropriate materials and send their reviews to us.

With a view to informing readers about what is happening around the ELT world, the Journal has included a number of useful ELT-related blogs. They can benefit just by reading them or they can get involved in taking part in the conversations therein. With a similar objective, we have included news "From the ELT World," which contains information on regional and international conferences. Many of these organisations have sponsorships for emerging and early-career professionals. Interested NELTA members should contact the organisations directly.

We take this opportunity to thank all the authors for submitting their valuable work and for maintaining patience during the long review process. We thank our reviewers for taking time out of their busy schedules to review the submissions. Their hard work helps us improve the quality of the Journal. We thank Ms. Motikala Subba Dewan, president of NELTA, for her unfailing support.

Happy reading!

Journal *of* NELTA

Board of Reviewers

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Reflections on Online EFL Teaching during COVID-19: A Case Study of Yunnan University in China

Wenjun Wang

Abstract

The paper is a case study on a whole-term online English teaching practice of non-English major postgraduates from March to July 2020 at Yunnan University in China. By attempting to probe into the strategies employed in the three phases of pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching respectively, reflections upon the mega-scale online English teaching for 30 classes of approximately 1200 students are analyzed by qualitative research in the forms of online interviews and class video observation. The research aims to summarize useful strategies and key factors teachers need to attach importance to in technology-assisted English language teaching with mixed applications and approaches to meet an urgent need in practical situations. The practice can be an example of the effective "localization" of college English teaching in China. It also shows that effectiveness-oriented online teaching can be feasible and useful in shaping and enriching the new normal of foreign language teaching in post COVID-19 era.

Keywords: *Online EFL Teaching, COVID-19, New Normal, Pedagogical Reflections, China*

Introduction

On February 5, 2020, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) issued a document entitled "Guiding Opinions on the Organization and Management of Online Teaching at Colleges and Universities during the Period of Pandemic Prevention and Control " (MOE, 2020a). As a speedy and timely official response to cope with the negative impact of COVID-19 on the spring term of 2020, the national document clearly stated the requirement of adopting the three synchronic dimensional approach (MOE, 2020a), which is characterized as being government-led, school-based, and society-participating, to jointly implement and ensure online teaching at all levels from kindergartens to universities in Chinese mainland.

The emergency of containing the pandemic has been exerting serious impact and unseen changes on traditional and normal modes of teaching and learning for teachers and students nationally and internationally (Murgatrotd, 2020; Guo, 2020). The impact is related to the contagiousness of respiratory viruses because the classroom can be a relatively small venue in which students and teachers are prone to infection. As for the changes, information technology is no longer an auxiliary, but a dominant substitute to ensure the normal implementation of teaching. According

to the official data in 2019 from MOE, there were 530,100 schools at all levels nationwide with a total number of 282 million students. The total number of students in various colleges and universities of higher education in China is 40.02 million, and the average per school is 11,260. Besides, 397,635 foreign students from 202 countries and regions were studying in China in 2019 (MOE, 2020b). These data have undoubtedly brought unprecedented challenges to the normal conduct of teaching in a country with such a large number of students and diversified needs in education. The negative impact of COVID-19 has posed challenges to university students who need to finish all the courses within the stipulated 3 or 4 years in their twenties, which is of great importance for their career. In light of this, it is essential and basic to keep their academic life going without long pauses or delays. It is also the collective responsibility of the government, the society, the school and the teaching staff to take actions.

Context

Since the 1990s, language teachers, researchers and educationalists have been practising, researching, and exploring the relevant pedagogic theories and practice of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). According to the data collected by Chinese scholars from 1171 papers relating to CALL from five influential academic journals *Computer Assisted Language Learning, Language Learning & Technology, ReCALL, CALICO Journal, and International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching,* there are three significant periods the initial period, the rapid development period and the in-depth application period (Deng & Chen, 2018). This initial stage (1995-2003) originally explored the role of computer network media in promoting teaching and learning English as a foreign language learning, as well as the impact of new technology applications on traditional language teaching (Chapelle, 2003). In the second period of rapid development (2003-2010), there was research on blogs, voice chat, computer literacy, teacher education, and computer-mediated communication, which put forward higher requirements for teachers' and students' computer literacy and the acquisition and application of information technology. The third period of in-depth application (2010-2019) mainly focused on research such as data-driven learning, second language acquisition, and collaborative learning. During this period, the deep integration of technologies such as social networks, big data, learning management systems, and learning analysis made MOOCs (massive open online courses) one of the important application modes of CALL, which can better support learners' online self-learning and collaborative learning (Deng & Chen, 2018).

As for the specific needs of college English teaching in China, CALL can alleviate the shortage of teaching staff, meet different needs of individual learners, and stimulate students' interest in learning. With the deepened scope and the diversified attributes, information technology, to some extent, has never gone beyond its position of being assistant, supplementary, or facilitating. Face-to-face teaching in class has been attached irreplaceable importance. However, the sudden outbreak and quick spread of COVID-19 has completely challenged and changed the traditional classroom teaching practice with information technology as assistance overnight. The emergency of coping with the pandemic has been exerting serious impacts on normal modes of CALL in English teaching and learning at both national and international levels. Hence, the research focuses on EFL teachers' first-hand online teaching experiences and discusses and exemplifies

what we did and how we prepared ourselves for the challenges in the so-called "There's no best Method" age (Prabhu, 1990, p. 161).

Methodology

First, this study focuses on the implementation of online public English teaching for postgraduates in Yunnan University during the initial phase of Covid-19 and employs a combination of two workable methods: online interviews (10 teacher correspondents and 20 student correspondents) and classroom observation (20 recorded online class videos) to explore useful online large-scale teaching strategies under emergency at the micro level and discuss the development trend of information technology to optimize blended English teaching at a macro level.

Second, the study explores the online English teaching experiences of the first term from March to July 2020 at Yunnan University of China by following the route of response, planning, practice, and reflection. It attempts to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of online pedagogical approaches step by step from the three phases of pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching. Under the pressure of emergency, the Graduate English Teaching Department (GETD) members at Yunnan University effectively finished the EFL teaching tasks for more than 1200 students in 30 classes as scheduled.

Third, the study reports how English language teaching faculty members at GETD responded to and adjusted to the challenges by bending efforts for the author's self-reflection. In the research field of foreign language teaching and learning, there have been numerous theories in terms of methods, approaches, and ways. The linear and dynamic development of EFL, to some extent, has reflected the constant external challenges and internal demands. There is no fixed English teaching theory that can meet all the needs of changing reality, not to mention the unseen pandemic since the 20th century.

In the following illustration of the case study, the macro strategy of pre-class, while-class, and after-class is adopted as the overall guidance (see Figure 1). At each stage, microscopic and specific teaching theories or methods are used, which resemble the cocktail (combination) methods to optimize teaching in a state of emergency.

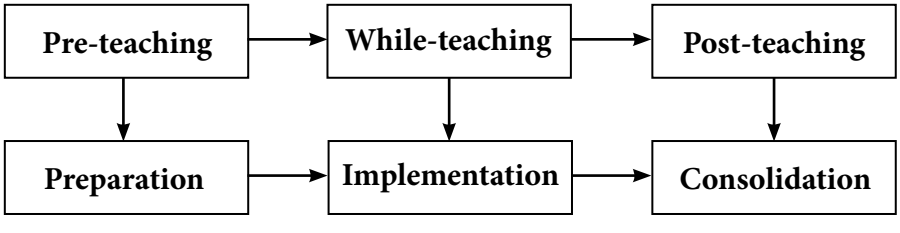

Figure 1: Overall Guidance of Teaching Procedure

In the first place, Production-Oriented Approach (POA) (Wen, 2015) is adopted in the part of teaching planning and teaching design to promote effective output through links between "motivating-enabling-assessing" via "learning through doing" (p. 548). Secondly, the course draws on the theories of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Littlewood, 1981& Richards, 2006) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Prabhu, 1987 & Ellis, 2003), and emphasizes the feasibility and effectiveness of online learning by integrating all of the available resources.

Discussion

Pre-teaching

According to the online interviews of 10 teachers who fulfilled the whole-term online teaching tasks in my department, all the teachers (100 %) reached a consensus that smooth and successful online teaching places more emphasis on pre-class preparation than traditional English classes. The pre-teaching phase highlights planning and preparation. Teaching planning is essential for EFL teachers. As for the unpredictable emergence, teachers need to redesign the course framework, be sufficiently familiar with the applications of information technology, and select suitable materials for online teaching tasks.

Redesign course framework

Before the detailed discussions, it is necessary to give a brief introduction to the course framework at Yunnan University. Yunnan University, founded in 1922, is one of the earliest comprehensive universities in Southwest China. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs for Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees in a variety of majors with national research strengths in ethnology, anthropology, ecology, and historical studies. As for master candidates, the students are categorized into two parts: academic master candidates and professional master candidates. The Graduate ETD is responsible for the English teaching tasks of academic master candidates. To reduce the burden and increase efficiency, students can apply for English course exceptions if they meet the minimal requirements set by the Graduate School at Yunnan University. The students, who need to take the English classes as shown in Figure 2, have two compulsory courses and one optional course. The framework serves two functions: English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As for EGP, the courses focus on general English language abilities: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. We combined reading and writing as one course (Du-xie); while listening and speaking as another course (Ting-shuo). Both are categorized as compulsory courses. For ESP, academic priority for master's candidate of master's degrees lies in the improvement of scientific research. They need to focus on the specific field, do research, collect data, analyze the data, and have papers published. Therefore, ESP for them is oriented toward Academic English Writing. The course is set as an optional course for extra credits. So basically, there are three English courses for master's candidates. For the emergency, our department decided to cancel the optimal course of academic writing temporarily and guaranteed the teaching of two compulsory courses "Reading& Writing" and "Listening and Speaking".

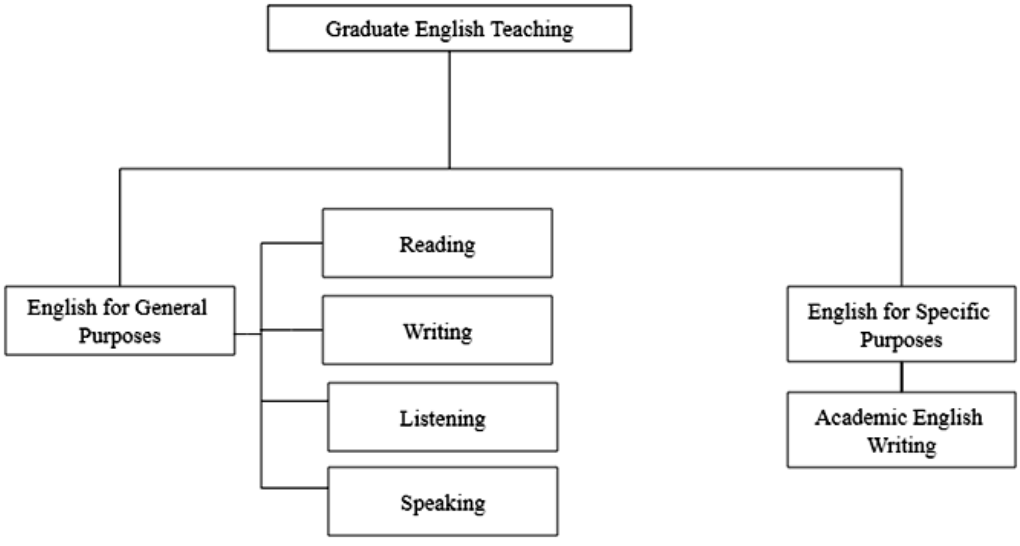

Figure 2: Course Framework for Graduate English at Yunnan University

Since the paradigm must be shifted from the traditional classroom to virtual classes, English teachers, from the experienced to the novice, from professors to the lecturers, need to adapt to new modes of teaching positively, actively, and effectively online. All the available information technologies are not as assistant as they used to be. In the context of the pandemic, they became the ways that the teachers must rely on. With wide coverage and complicated learning conditions, English teachers in our teaching department made appropriate adjustments in response to the crisis and give full play to our subjective initiatives.

Ensure familiarity and proficiency in employing information technology

Teachers need to know how to make typical classroom activities electronically. As an important phase of online teaching, the organization and planning of teaching need to be by the actual situation of the school and match the network environment conditions of both teachers and students. The basic conditions are computers (laptops or smartphones), and the coverage of the network. According to the online survey conducted by the information centre of Yunnan University, all of the teachers in the Postgraduate English Teaching Department possess internet-connected computers. For students who need to take the courses, the coverage rate of smartphones is 100%, and the coverage rate of Internet-connected computers is 76%. In addition, 1% of the students in the school were unable to attend classes because they were not connected to the Internet for financial reasons. For the 1% of the students, free SIM cards were delivered to them by the university with support from internet service providers such as China Mobile and China Unicom.

The next step is that with the guidance of the Graduate School and technical support of the Information Center at Yunnan University, all the teachers received formal training in using different applications of smartphones and computers like Tencent Meeting, ZOOM, Rain Classroom, Ding Talk, Chaoxing and so on. Systematic online training sessions were carried out with Q&A. Frankly speaking, different applications have their strengths and weaknesses and there is no one-for-all solution. After 5 times of collective training (some communication or consultation for individual questions or queries are not included), teachers in Graduate English Teaching Department had trial classes by rotating the roles of teachers and students to simulate teaching to test the effective and smooth uses of different applications. Three main factors which made us reach a consensus were free accessibility, user-friendliness, and EFLT efficiency.

First of all, 96% of the teacher and student interviewees believe that free accessibility of available online applications is the primary factor when choosing an application. Luckily, with the unpredictability of the exact duration of online teaching, the MOE of China ensured that all the high-quality online courses and virtual simulation experiment teaching resources are open to college teachers and students nationwide for free. Meanwhile, numerous social online course platforms provided free high-quality online course resources. In the past, the cost of a computer and network connectivity was the chief limiting factor of online teaching in China. Now with the high owning rate of smartphones, some basic functions of computers can be done on mobile phones with the technology of 4G or 5G. Therefore, except for the computer/laptop or mobile and network environment, there was no extra need for teachers and students to purchase any electronic equipment.

The second factor is user-friendliness. Although there is no perfect solution, 58% of respondents in the interviews mentioned directly and indirectly that "convenient to use" is somewhat more important than "free to use". The users consist of teachers and students. Most English teachers are skilful in using Microsoft word, PowerPoint, and some basic word processing software. However, online classes posed great challenges to computer technology. Teachers had more concerns than before, for example, picture quality, sound quality, demonstration operations, the efficiency of individual work and group work, teacher-student interactions, student-student reactions, assignments, evaluations, and so on. After the 5-day trial and testing, our team decided to take the following operations collectively: first of all, set up a Tencent QQ group (communication group) for each class. Since QQ is one of the most popular chatting apps in Chinese mainland, it is easy and convenient for teachers to send and share information and materials with students. Also, the Tencent QQ group provides the function of the virtual class. The app can list the names of the teacher and students clearly and legibly; secondly, use Tencent Meeting as the teaching platform. When students get the pin code of each class in the QQ group (a periodical and recurring meeting pin can be set), they log on to the platform and the online classes start soon. Comparatively speaking, Tencent Meeting is simple and easy to use for Chinese users. The most important reason was that teachers and students can flexibly access multiple platforms, such as iOS, Android, Windows, Mac, OS, web pages, and small programs by just one-click login; finally, use Rain Classroom (Yucatan) to do automatic attendance taking, assign and check online homework. Based on the teaching practice of our team, the three applications or platforms are convenient, stable, and safe to achieve synchronous online English teaching and learning.

Select or design suitable textbooks and relevant teaching materials

Teacher respondents in the interviews agree that it is necessary to select a suitable textbook for each course (100%) and design teaching materials (60%) to make online teaching easy to be followed. There have been controversies on whether language learners need unified textbooks under different backgrounds of TESOL (Cunningsworth, 1995). The reality of college English teaching for non-English majors at universities in China has been proving the need for students to have a textbook and supplementary materials in English classes. The reason is that with many language learners at different levels in a single class from different provinces of the country with a vast territory, textbooks can help to achieve consistency and continuation of English teaching and learning. Furthermore, it can give learners a sense of organization, systematization, and cohesion. It also helps teachers save time and overcome deficiencies in preparing teaching materials.

As soon as our team got the document issued by the Graduate School at Yunnan University, we selected two textbooks for the two compulsory courses. A list of textbooks was shared on the official website of the university. Students had four weeks to prepare the materials. Even in the relatively remote places of the country, the delivery can be achieved within two weeks. In case of some unpredictable situations, teachers photocopied the contents of each lesson and shared them online with the authorized permit from the presses. It was for emergency use, not for commercial use. To some extent, it is also the social responsibility of the press.

As for teachers, we made and revised slides of PPT for each session on the aspects of adaptations in forms, contents, tasks, durations, and even language points. It means that in the past, teachers can make the slides in a general way, even in a casual way, because face-to-face communication can compensate for the information gap to some extent. In the context of online teaching, teachers can switch the webcam to let students have a sense of full participation and active interaction. However, from the classroom observation of videos, the author noticed that two factors can restrict the actual effect. First, the screen of the teacher's video image was relevantly smaller when sharing the screen of PPT or other materials. Even with attractive gestures, students could not be attracted all the time. Second, teachers' personalities differed a lot. From the randomly selected 20 videos of recorded teaching (45 minutes each), 6 switched on the webcam from the beginning to the end of each online teaching session, 11 turned on or off the webcams according to the teaching contents and tasks, 4 kept the videos off all the time because of the considerations of privacy and preference. Nevertheless, it is interesting that teacher respondents believed that the PPT slides should be of high quality in terms of contents, layout, and effects to attract students while student respondents hold the view that the focus and commitment of teachers in teaching online are more important than any form of material.

Another concern is the supplementary materials. We prepare a well-selected reading list. Take the reading and writing class in our department, for example, there are eight units for the 18-week spring term. For each unit, there are three tasks Reading Passage A, Reading Passage B, and Writing. Passage A is taken as intensive reading and passage B as extensive reading. They share the same or similar topic but vary in authors, styles, tasks so on. To order to meet the learning needs of candidates for master's degrees, more reading materials related to the topic can

be provided. On the one hand, the novelty and authenticity of new materials can be guaranteed. On the other hand, the academic needs of young adults can be met to the maximum. Since they are more likely to be attracted by materials with new and interesting topics.

For the final point of material preparation, 8 teacher respondents (80 %) asked students to integrate the materials and do a preview according to their needs and wants. Previewing the textbooks and supplementary materials is an important part of learning which can arouse students' awareness of autonomous learning. This is the first step for students to learn independently. While teaching English, teachers can provide students with some learning websites and application software, demonstrate how to use them, and also encourage students to exchange their experiences in using resources.

While-teaching

While-teaching plays a vital role in the whole process of teaching implementation. From the discourse analysis of interviews, all the teacher and student respondents mentioned "interaction" in different contexts. Besides interaction, teacher respondents also paid attention to tasks. From the beginning to the end of each class (session), the teachers in our team focused on the principle of making each class interaction-focused and task-based. At the first glance, these popular terms in English language teaching may look nothing new. However, something that has stood the test of time and practice is useful.

Being interaction-focused

Interaction is a prerequisite for successful communication. From the perspective of classroom management, interaction is one of the key issues in teaching and learning activities. Since the interactions of online teaching take place in the virtual environment. The techniques and skills of the teacher in initiating interaction play an essential role in ensuring smooth and effective teaching. Online teaching during the pandemic focuses more on interaction. Teachers in our team were required to organize online interactive activities, and encourage students to participate in online interactive activities such as quick answer questions, topic discussions, news broadcasts, cultural sharing, and group project presentations. Students shared their thoughts, acquisitions, and views as a form of output in the interactive session. The principle of "learning by doing" could not only enrich students' online learning experience but also ensured the effectiveness of online teaching and learning for both teachers and students.

There is no need to list the usage of information technology in detail. Technology can be deployed to its best advantage. However, teachers' roles lie in something that technology cannot replace. In this sense, teacher-student and student-student interactions can bridge the gaps, which make the teaching sessions live, real and communicative. Below is a summary of classroom observation of an online meeting (class) of our real teaching practice during the whole term of online teaching. When students got the Meeting ID, they keyed in the numbers and joined the meeting. If the teacher set the recurring "meeting", students just needed to click the icon of "join again". When joining

the meeting, students (attendees) had the options of "Turn on Mic", "Turn on Speaker", "Turn on Video", and even "Beauty Filters". For the teacher, except for the audio and video functions, the most useful application was "Share Screen". The teacher selected the contents to share by the pre-planned teaching procedure, the detailed task requirements, and the learning output drives. There were three categories of "share screen": basic, advanced, and Tencent documents. The basic "share screen" functions consist of "Desktop", Whiteboard" and "Only PC audio". When using desktop sharing, teachers shared Microsoft PowerPoint. The operation was the same as what we normally do in the classroom. Students just needed to focus on the screen of their PCs or smartphones and follow each step of the teacher's instruction. Another useful application was "whiteboard". The teacher could "write" anything necessary on the whiteboard simultaneously. They keyed in or wrote down the words with the available changes of fonts, sizes, colours, and other related word functions. Also, then there was no need to share videos or presentations, the teacher selected "only PC audio". According to the experience of our team, this function was rarely used, while "Desktop" and "Whiteboard" were the most useful ones in presenting. As for the advanced "share screen", there are "partial screen" and "External Video Source". The third one was about the "Tencent documentary". The teacher shared all related documents available on the application.

During the part of the interaction, the teacher and students needed to make sure their microphones and webcams work. Both audio and audio functions are essential in a virtual classroom. 90% of the teacher interviewees argued that the biggest challenge is that teachers need to be maximally effective in keeping the students maintaining their full participation and being on task. In the interview, the top four frequently mentioned ways were "Asking Questions", "Group Work", "Pair Work" and "Video Making".

The most direct and easiest one is "Asking Questions". It is a way of teacher-to-student interaction. When the teacher clicks the icon of a student who is supposed to answer the impromptu question, the online interaction is connected. There are at least three reasons for the practice. First, from the perspective of the teacher, asking questions is a basic teaching strategy. It is an easy way for the teacher to get a quick response from students. Second, students can keep focused and alert because their performances or their answers to the questions will be assessed by the teacher. The impetus to deliver high-quality answers can help students get involved in teaching and learning. By cooperating with their peers, they can repeat, paraphrase and explain in English. Third, it is a part of live communication. Most of the students won't feel left out or isolated. Objective and subjective needs to follow the instruction make them follow the teaching procedure from the beginning to the end of each session.

Another useful way of interaction is group work. Each teacher shared the topics taken from the textbook. Then the name list of groups with specified topics was arranged and posted online. The principle of topic selection is its relevance to Chinese history, culture, politics, economy, etc. culture. The topics we selected were:

Socialism with Chinese Characteristics; The Four Great Inventions of Ancient China; One Belt and One Road; Chinese Zodiac; The Chinese Dream; The Great Wall of China; The Chinese Spirit; Chinese Diet Culture; Community of Shared Interest; Chinese Crosstalk; China's Favorite Colors; Chinese Dragons; An All-Round In-Depth Reform; Chinese Calligraphy; Community with a Shared Future; Lucky Numbers in Chinese Culture; Made in China 2025; The Twenty-four Solar Term in China; Matters of Confidence; Chinese Wuxia Novels; The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence; Traditional Chinese Medicine; The System of People's Congress; The Forbidden City; Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation; Chinese Silk; The Two Centennial Goals; Hutong; China's Mobile Payment; The Sharing Economy; The Craftsman's Spirit; Peking Opera. Meanwhile, tasks with an analytical and discussion nature are suitable for small groups, such as writing reviews, article reviews, translation of difficult sentences, test explanations, etc.

Pair work is effective for introverted students in the sense of peer interaction. Since home-based online learning often lacks a classroom learning atmosphere, it is necessary to organize and mobilize students. However, some individual needs could be neglected. "Pair work "in the forms of dialogues and role-plays in our online teaching practice was not just confined to activities and tasks. It was extended to information sharing, communication, mutual help, and even psychological support in so-called "crisis". According to student interviews, they did feel the pressure of taking online classes at the beginning of the term. But pair work facilitated the process, relieved the anxiety, and maintained the motivation by having a friend who was "in the same boat" and provided help.

Video making also appealed to the students because most of them were interested in information technology and could have a sense of achievement in providing high-quality videos. As mentioned in the above part of group work, each group was required to select one topic and submit a video within the stipulated time. They adopted different forms of recording the videos, such as role-plays, interviews, and performances. Again, different students have different personalities and preferences. Some introverted students were influenced by the members of their group. Peer cooperation and collaboration can be more useful in motivating the participation of students than the instruction of the teacher. The essence of teaching and learning is the process of teacher-student communication, active interaction, common improvement, and development.

Being task-based

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) originated from communicative language teaching, which emphasizes the principle of task (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). As Ur (1996, p. 123) points out that "a task is essentially goal-oriented; it requires the group, or pair, to achieve an objective that is usually expressed by an observable result".

When asked what makes effective online teaching in terms of task designing, the majority of teacher respondents pointed out that tasks are an effective means of implementing the process of learning and teaching online. Through task designing, teachers could know how to "diagnose" the students' engagement, learning patterns, and behaviours. Our team members adopted the framework: Pre-task (introduction to topic and task); Task Cycle (Task-Planning-Report); Language Focus (Analysis and practice: review and repeat task) (Willis, 1996, p. 135). Students

were instructed to use the strategies of listing, ordering, sorting, making comparisons, sharing personal experiences, and solving real-life problems.

The following demonstration is taken from the recorded video of an online class. It was an interview with a doctor about pleasure. First, students watched a three-minute video about stress. Then the teacher led them into the listening task. Five questions were asked at the beginning of the task and students needed to answer the questions as soon as they finished the listening task. Students were required to write down the answers and then had discussions with their classmates.

The questions are:

(1) What things give people the most pleasure?

(2) What is the purpose of pleasure?

(3) Why does pleasure exist?

(4) What is pleasure?

(5) Is pleasure good for you?

Interviewer: *"Pleasure is the beginning and the end of living happily." Those are the words of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, who lived 2,300 years ago. People have always tried to find pleasure and today we have many more pleasures than the Ancient Greeks had. And yet we still don't know a lot about this important part of life. Here in the studio is Dr Jonathan Shamberg. Good evening, Dr Shamberg.*

Shamberg: *Good evening. It's a pleasure to be here.*

I: *Yes, indeed. Well, what things give people the most pleasure?*

D: *We don't all enjoy the same things. Pleasure means different things to different people. Some people get pleasure from jumping out of aeroplanes or driving at 200 kph. For others, pleasure comes from relaxing in a hot bath or playing with children. Doing a crossword or repairing the car give other people pleasure.*

I: *What's the purpose of pleasure? Why does it exist?*

D: *Well, if pleasure didn't exist, we wouldn't exist. Pleasure is important for human survival. If we want to survive, we have to do three things-eat, have children, and get on with each other. If these things give pleasure, we want to do them. So we survive. That's why we get so much pleasure from food, being in love, and socializing.*

I: *But what is pleasure?*

D: *Pleasure is a chemical reaction in the brain. When we do something that we enjoy, endorphin and noradrenaline are produced. These stimulated pleasure centres in the brain.*

I: *And is pleasure good for you?*

D: *Oh, yes. The happier you are the longer you will live. But it isn't the great moments of pleasure that are important. Happy people enjoy the ordinary everyday things of life, like cooking a meal, going for a walk, or chatting with a friend.*

I: *I see. Well, let's talk some more about your research into pleasure...*

(Excerpted from Graduate English Listening and Speaking (2019, pp. 213-214)

Another significant feature of our tasks was integrating Chinese value education into English teaching. The new era has given higher education a fundamental task for moral cultivation. It is an important measure to promote the ideological and political construction and reform of the curriculum. While cultivating students' English language proficiency and cross-cultural communication awareness, it is necessary to implement ideology and value education by boosting cultural confidence. The following task is a speaking task about introducing Chinese culture. The Twenty-four Solar Terms in China divide the year into 24 solar terms (Jie-qi). The Twenty-four Solar Terms indicate the changes of seasons and climate, closely associated with Chinese agricultural production. The Twenty-four Solar Terms are as follows:

a) Spring: Start of Spring（立春）, Rain Water（雨水）, Awakening of Insects（惊 蛰）, Spring Equinox（春分）, Clear and Bright（清明）, Grain Rain（谷雨）;
b) Summer: Start of Summer （立夏）, Grain Buds（小满）, Grain in Beard（芒**种**）, Summer Solstice（夏至）, Minor Heat （小暑）, Major Heat（大暑）;
c) Autumn: Start of Autumn （立秋）, End of Heat （处暑）, White Dew（白露）, Autumn Equinox（秋分）, Cold Dew（寒露）, Frost Descent（霜降）;
d) Winter: Start of Winter（立冬）, Minor Snow（小雪）, Major Snow（大雪）, Winter Solstice（冬至）, Minor Cold（小寒）, Major Cold（大寒）.

Table 1: The Twenty-four Solar Terms of Chinese Culture

Students chose one term and introduced it specifically or make an overall introduction of the Twenty-four Solar Terms. While learning a foreign language, students strengthen their study of the cultural elements of their own country and increase their ability and confidence in cross-cultural communication. Language is the carrier of culture. The inheritance and development of culture need to be realized through language, and language teaching must not be separated from the cultural elements of the nation.

Post-teaching

The focuses and strategies in the part of post-teaching for online English teaching are more important than normal ones in terms of assignments, feedback, and assessment (or evaluation). From the interviews, two key points were taken into consideration.

First, the assignments can be done via internal and external systems. The internal system means the online exercise and test bank of our teaching department. So far, we have set up the testing system for four courses: English Reading and Writing, Listening and Speaking, English Academic Writing, and International Academic communication. There are more than 10,000 items in total in the testing system and we renew the banks with 20% of the new materials each term. The external system means the online resources from the different presses of textbooks. The contents are closely based on the textbook and the teacher can select the suitable materials for the assignments according to the needs of teaching practice.

Second, assessment has to be valid, reliable, and practical by teacher assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment. Through our platform (see the Pic. Below), teachers and students can easily upload or download various materials required for the course. Students can also use the message board function for self-evaluation and give feedback about the course. In addition, teachers have also built blogs, WeChat, QQ, and other online mobile platforms for students to help students get supportive feedback from the assessment.

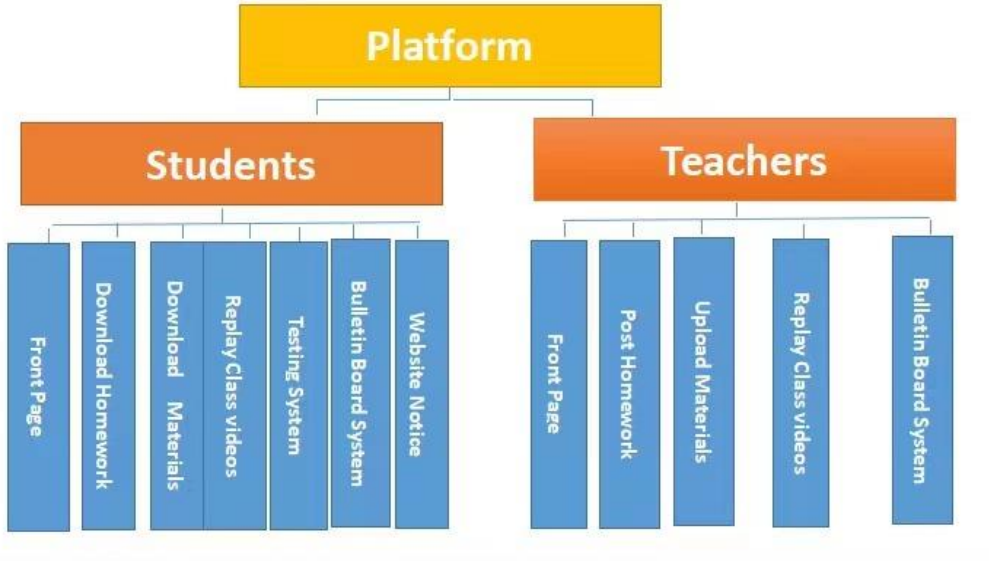

Figure 3: Platform of Online Teaching of Yunnan University

At the beginning of September 2020, with the successful containing of the virus and effective measures to prevent and control the pandemic, the holistic situation of the whole country was back to normal without a widespread national outbreak of epidemic. The students who took the online English course for the whole term were back to school. In the first week, a formal test

automatically generated from the test banks with 100 points was arranged on the two campuses of our university for 1123 test-takers. The scores ranges are listed as follows. From the distribution of the data, we noticed that the number of students in Band C (79.5-70) occupied the largest section, while in the former term in July 2019, the number of students in Band B (89.5-80) had the highest ranking. There are many reasons for the change. But from the data, the difference is not significant. At least, the whole term of online teaching was formally assessed, which put an end to the emergency practice.

Table 2: Final Exam Score Range

Grades	Number of students	Percentage
100-90 (A)	139	12.38%
89.5-80 (B)	256	22.80%
79.5-70 (C)	325	28.94%
69.5-60 (D)	272	24.22%
< 60 (F)	131	11.66%

Conclusion

No one likes the sudden change in teaching and learning during the pandemic. In a sense, fully-scaled online teaching is a compromise and a solution to a crisis that is completely out of the control of the teacher. However, we cannot wait and see. Han Yu (768-824 A.D.), a famous scholar in the Tang Dynasty of China once said "a teacher is the one who can propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts". Teaching is the original aspiration of teachers. My research is small-scaled without abundant data and sophisticated statistical software. But I do believe that practice is the sole criterion for testing "truth" and the first-hand online teaching practice is beneficial for the individual growth of an EFL teacher.

Compared with traditional face-to-face classes, online teaching has its advantages, such as abundant high-quality teaching resources, and flexible time and place. However, depending on the nature of the course, the application effect of online resources will also vary. In this process, students' responses and feedback directly affect their interest and willingness to learn online. As emphasized in the first part of the paper, information technology cannot completely replace human beings no matter in the case of an emergency or a normal period. Based on the needs of both teachers and students to improve teaching and learning efficiency, we need to reflect on the valuable teaching practice.

Realize the effective integration of technology and teacher education

In the era of "Internet +", online education requires high-quality technological reforms to achieve the deep integration of technology and education. At present, there are mainly two education modes in online English education: video-on-demand mode and online live broadcast mode. Video-on-demand mode is the most primitive online education mode and still occupies an important position. Its disadvantage is that learners lack a sense of participation and can only watch passively. From the need to deal with the emergency, English teachers need to know how to

realize the effectiveness of teaching. Online English language teaching is not simply a combination of online technology and education, but to achieve internal deep integration. We need to have the awareness to be efficient in CALL and keep up with the needs of EFL teaching and research development.

Innovate Learner-centered Curriculum with Information Technology

Changes always result from stress. In the post COVID-19 period, the blended mode of online and offline teaching has brought the great potential for innovating learner-centred curricula with information technology. For the design of online courses, teachers not only need to keep pace with the teaching planning but also be skilful in designing and implementing the teaching for the needs of students and the needs of education. So different teaching activities need to be based on personalized and diverse teaching modes. Since curriculum resources are not static, which cannot fit all. Therefore, online language teaching should continuously and positively change to the actual needs of localization and regionalization. Teachers do not only need to ensure the unity and continuity of the overall design of online courses but also pay attention to the diversification and multi-level real needs of course subjects by continuously improving and optimizing the effect.

Give full play to students' participation and cooperation

For online learning, due to the invisibility of the learning process and the inability to monitor the real-time learning status of students, students are prone to fall into a state of disengagement and passive learning, especially students with a low sense of self-discipline, they can easily lag behind the learning and even form a negative attitude towards it. Therefore, teachers need to give full play to students' participation and cooperation by innovating teaching methods, improving teaching design, and guiding students in using information technology to improve learning efficiency. Teachers and students need to work together, know the strengths and weaknesses of online teaching, explore more reasonable and efficient teaching models, and realize a symbiotic education ecosystem of "teachers, students, teaching approaches and learning resources".

In a word, in the post pandemic era, we must attach great importance to online education as it is related to the overall development of international Chinese education, and lay a solid foundation for the formation of a new English teaching ecosystem in which online and offline education complement each other and are deeply integrated. When facing the pandemic, we need to stay positive and keep positive. In retrospect, it is information technology that helps us overcome the hindrance and keep going. It is necessary to let students have a sense of responsibility and cultivate all-around development.

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Education during Pandemic: Perspectives of Secondary School English Teachers from Malaysia, Nepal, and Bangladesh

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Abstract

One of the most affected sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic was education. Abrupt and sudden changes in teaching and learning practices that teachers and students experienced were unprecedented, and the effect is still felt today. Hence, the study sought to identify the challenges secondary English language teachers in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal faced during the pandemic. Adopting a *Comparative Case Study (CCS)* research model, this was a transnational effort to explore the experiences of a cross-border ELT professional community teaching under various restrictions and limitations imposed by the governments in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Five key challenges emerged during the findings, namely: *(i) teaching and learning difficulties, (ii) unreliable and invalid assessments, (iii) infrastructural hurdles in a home learning environment, (iv) student displacement, and (v) compromised teacher wellbeing.* In retrospect, there was a cause for optimism as teachers acquired crucial survival skills, yet most challenges remain valid to this day. So various stakeholders must remain vigilant and devise robust measures in anticipation of future events of this kind and scale.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, impact, challenges, comparative case study*

Introduction

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 significantly impacted every aspect of human life, including economic, social, educational, and health around the world. Millions of people around the world were affected, and many of them lost their lives and life as we knew it no longer existed as we experienced unprecedented challenges (Khanal, 2020). The impact on the educational system was severe, resulting in the forced closure of all educational institutions due to social distancing restrictions. UNICEF (2021) reported that millions of children were displaced from schools due to these lockdowns, with 1 in 7 children missing up to three-fourths of their in-person learning. Different educational institutions responded to the closure with a variety of interventions, depending on the resources, both materials and human, that were at their disposal.

Particularly, the pandemic forced teachers to reconsider and recalibrate social interaction and organisation and, by extension, the existing education sector (Lukas & Yunus, 2021; UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). Teachers struggled to shift from physical, in-person teaching and learning as they were caught unprepared, lacking the knowledge and skills for digital pedagogy. By exploring the challenges faced during pandemics by secondary school teachers of English in three countries: Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Nepal, this paper presents a vertical and lateral understanding of a globalised community of English language practitioners via a comparative study. While teachers from these contexts experienced similar problems and the challenges faced during the pandemic, collecting narrative accounts from these respondents allows experiences unique to individual contexts to emerge. In short, the following research question is central to this investigation: *What are the major challenges that secondary school English language teachers in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Malaysia experienced while teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

Teaching during the pandemic in Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal

As an emerging subject of intense research and study, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector are widely researched and well-documented (Bashir et al., 2021; Jan, 2020; Loose & Ryan, 2020). Undeniably, for teachers, the pandemic was a challenging time for teaching as the looming financial and economic crisis inhibited progress in the field. Previous studies showed that stress and trauma negatively influence academic achievement and, more specifically, language acquisition among learners (Saigh et al., 1996; Söndergaard & Theorell, 2004). Worse, this was exacerbated by school closures worldwide, where "more than 1.2 billion students at all levels of education worldwide had stopped having face-to-face classes" (UNESCO, 2020, p.1). The emerging and widening technological gap in students of different socioeconomic groups meant that those without access to functional technology were far more disadvantaged in digital or remote learning (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). Over time, the COVID-19-induced economic hardship is likely disproportionally severe to children from marginalised groups, especially concerning their participation and engagement in alternative forms of learning such as distance learning (radio, TV, and internet) and the difficult conditions to learn using self-learning materials (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). The following sections include brief discussions on the situations during the pandemic in the Bangladeshi, Malaysian and Nepalese education sector.

Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the first COVID-19-positive case was officially reported on 8 March 2020, and as a result, the government shut down all educational institutions on March 17, 2020. After extending the closure several times, schools were finally reopened on 12 September 2021 after nearly 18 months of closure, and about 38 million students were affected by the pandemic-related school closures (Hasan, 2021). According to the UNICEF (2021) analysis of school closures report, Bangladesh ranked 3rd across the globe. The report shows the education sector in Bangladesh was severely affected due to the pandemic.

Although after the initial closure, most higher education institutions shifted their classes online,

it was not possible for schools to begin online classes due to many reasons, including the lack of logistics, technological support, internet and digital devices. Very few schools started synchronous online remote teaching, while others took the initiative to record lectures and upload them on social media platforms, mainly Facebook. Under these circumstances, it was very difficult for teachers and students to continue teaching-learning during the pandemic. As Rouf and Rashid (2021) reported, secondary and higher secondary English language teachers in Bangladesh faced many challenges, including unavailability of devices, students' poor class attendance and lack of interaction in classes, teachers' lack of technological skills and training, financial constraints, poor and unstable internet connections, lack of online testing systems, negative physical and psychological impacts, and the overall perceived ineffectiveness of online classes.

Similar kind of barriers that were faced by teachers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic are also reported in other studies (c.f. Ahmed, 2021; Bashir et al., 2021; Das, 2021; Datta, 2022; Farhana et al., 2020; Khan, Jahan, et al., 2021). In another study, Shrestha et al. (2022) categorised the challenges in both Nepal and Bangladesh contexts into three groups: school-level barriers (first-order barriers), teacher-level barriers (second-order barriers) and system-level barriers. They identified a lack of ICT infrastructure and poor Internet connection as first-order barriers, a lack of teacher efficacy and confidence in using online teaching-learning tools as second-order barriers, and lack of institutional policy and clarity in the assessment as the system-level barriers. The study reported poor internet connection, frequent power cuts, lack of ICT competence, and mental wellbeing issues as the major challenges. Although physical classes have resumed for over a year now, some of the challenges teachers faced during the pandemic are still prevalent and need to be addressed for successful teaching-learning.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, the education sector was severely impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Malaysian students suffered several abrupt school closures (Abdullah et al., 2020; G. Karuppannan et al., 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021) and a sudden transition to online teaching (S. Karuppannan & Mohammed, 2020; Mansor et al., 2021; Yong et al., 2021). Moreover, attempts to resume face-to-face physical learning were truncated by sporadic outbreaks in schools and dormitories (Loganathan et al., 2021; Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2022).

The Malaysian public quickly accepted that reopening and closures of schools would be part of the "new" normal during the pandemic, evident from the number of handbooks and guides produced to help manage home learning (MOE, 2020, 2021b; Sabah State Education Department, 2021), school reopening (MOE, 2021a) and conducting public examination administration (Exam Syndicate of Malaysia, 2021).

These challenges undoubtedly complicated and obstructed efforts to continue and sustain education during the pandemic (Loganathan et al., 2021; World Health Organisation, 2020). This was and is still mitigated through a series of interventions by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. Intervention programmes were specifically designed to address students' academic deficiencies

depending on diagnostic tests (Curriculum Development Division, 2022), whereas official home learning guides were produced and disseminated to hard-to-reach teachers and students in rural areas (MOE, 2020, 2021b). Nevertheless, even several years into the pandemic, teachers, students and even parents are struggling to redefine and understand how and what education should look like during a disaster of this scale.

Nepal

The impacts of the pandemic were profound in the education sector in Nepal. The government of Nepal imposed a nationwide lockdown from 24 March 2020, prohibiting domestic and international travel, closure of borders and non-essential services in the first stage, which was later eased on 11 June 2020. After that, most educational institutions, private and public included, were completely closed. The National Examinations Board postponed the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), a centralised board examination for Grade 10 students. All examinations in universities, colleges and schools were postponed indefinitely. Students were 15 weeks behind the regular academic calendar (UNESCO, 2020b).

In response, the education system in Nepal shifted towards remote teaching and learning, utilising various digital tools (Dawadi et al., 2020; Gahatraj, 2020; Pradhan, 2021; UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021). The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) produced numerous education guidelines and protocols to address this crisis (MoEST, 2021). These include the COVID-19 Education Cluster Contingency Plan 2020, approved on 7 May 2020 (CEHRD, 2020), with an aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from education institutions into local communities by providing safe learning environments by putting in place appropriate prevention measures in schools and awareness activities in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)/ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) centres, community, institutional and religious schools and communities. Similarly, the Student Learning Facilitation Guidelines 2020, approved on 4 September 2020 (MoEST, 2022), ensure learning through an alternate system. This system will also be considered even in the time of another pandemic. With the implementation of the guideline, schools will have easy access to keep the record of the admitted students, collect fees as allowed by the local level and implement the evaluation methods by downsizing the credit hours of the class. Another guiding document is Emergency Action Plan for School Education, 2020, approved on 22 September 2020 (MoEST, 2020a), which enabled a record of the activities of school management in education during the pandemic. The MoEST developed School Reopening Framework, 2020, approved on 5 November 2020 (MoEST, 2020b), based on the suggestions received from the province and local levels by reviewing the situation of COVID-19 at local and school levels. The objective is to make "children's teaching-learning and examination and assessment processes simple and run classes and schools in a fear-free and safe manner or by reclosing schools for a fixed duration". This framework detailed "the basic activities that the provincial governments and local levels can carry out after preparing strategies suitable to their local conditions on subjects such as children's safety in the schools in their areas, protection from the contagion of the pandemic, and building of an easy learning environment are incorporated". The MoEST developed Closed User Group (CUG) Service Implementation Guidelines (in process of being approved) to facilitate communication among teachers and students (UNICEF & UNESCO, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic inadvertently redesigned the education institution and its instructional norms, with greater focus devoted to digital or blended teaching and learning processes, hybrid learning environments, and mitigative measures to improve learning outcomes (MoEST, 2021). For instance, the main objective of the Education Cluster Contingency Plan 2020 (CEHRD, 2020) was to restrict the spread of the COVID-19 virus among teachers and students by providing safe learning environments with appropriate preventive measures in place (CEHRD, 2020). These initiatives of the government helped teachers continue teaching and learning during the school lockdowns. For areas lacking access to digital devices and a reliable internet connection, teachers relied on televisions and radios for remote learning.

Research Framework

A robust framework is required to anchor this cross-border investigation. As each country represents a unique and distinct educational context, identifying areas or domains of analysis is necessary for analysing and synthesising similarities, differences and patterns (Goodrick, 2014). This study adopted the Comparative Case Study (CCS) research framework by Bartlett and Vavrus (2016).

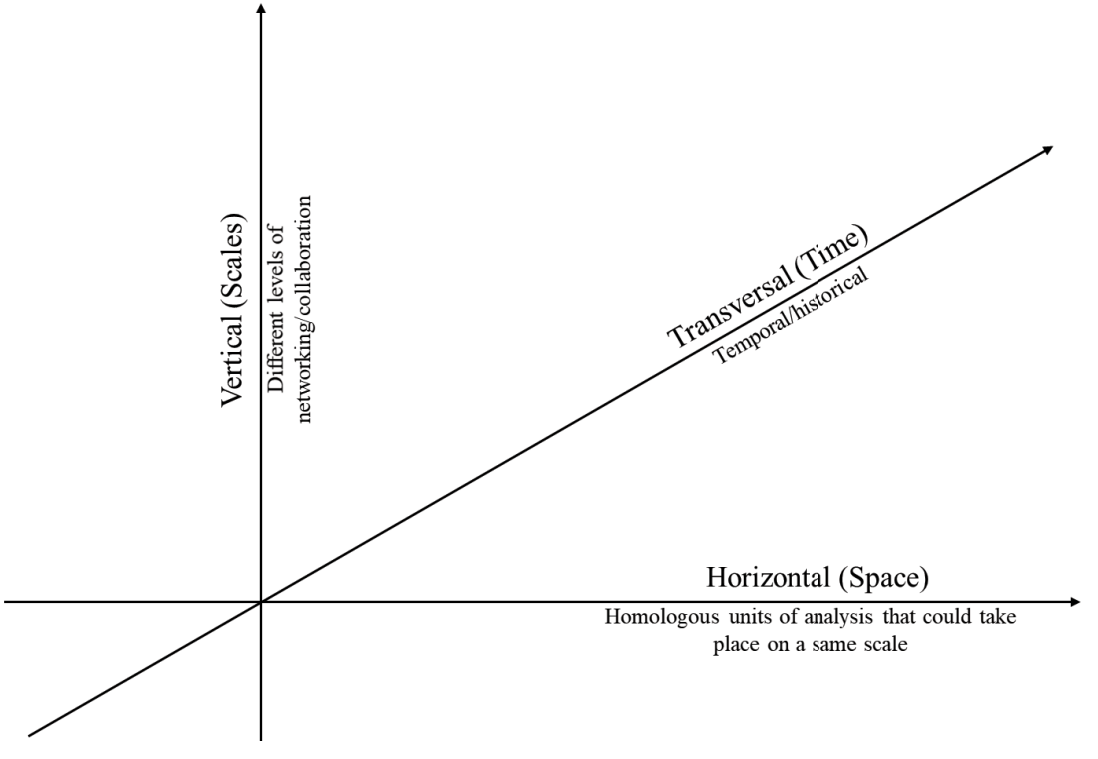

Figure 1: Comparative Case Study Research Model (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016)

The CCS research framework proposed an investigation using three axes (do Amaral, 2022). The vertical axis, also known as "scale", locates the comparative study at a specific level of networking or collaboration. This comparative study, involving Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal, occurred in

a transnational, regional setting. More specifically, this axis narrowed the focus to the challenges that secondary English language teachers face in an "English as a foreign language setting"[1].

Table 1: The domains and corresponding challenges

Domains	Challenges
Pedagogy	Teaching and learning difficulties
Assessment	Unreliable and invalid assessments
Infrastructural	Infrastructural hurdles
"Habitus"[2] (re)configuration	Social displacement
Personal Wellbeing	Threats to personal wellbeing

Secondly, universally or commonly shared homologous units of analysis are located on the horizontal "space" axis. This permits a lateral analysis that depicts commonly shared struggles across three national contexts whilst allowing unique emergent experiences to arise. However, most CCS studies were either typological/demographic-driven (Buheji et al., 2020), intra-national (Cao et al., 2021; Cárdenas et al., 2022; Reimers, 2022), or highly oriented towards higher education (Huang et al., 2022; Su, 2020). Therefore, identifying these units of analysis was far from straightforward, requiring an intense literature review on English language education in these national contexts and the threats and opportunities brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, five major domains and their corresponding challenges were identified through the literature review, which became the coding framework for this study. These applied to teachers and students, although the respondents were primarily teachers.

Lastly, the transversal axis investigates the cases temporally, locating experiences in a specific timeframe. This study collected anecdotal experiences of teachers from all three national contexts in their initial transition from physical, face-to-face teaching to a digital pedagogical setting. Many may continue to experience the aftereffects of this transition even to this day, which is why reviewing the challenges undergone is vital in anticipation of future school closures or disruptions to learning and teaching activities.

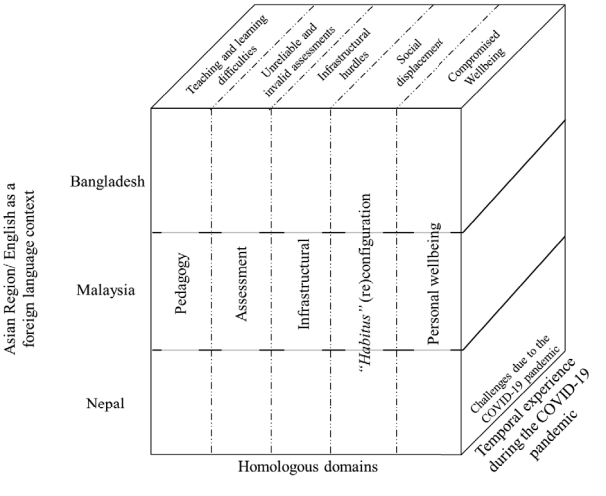

Figure 2: Adapted Comparative Case Study (CCS) model

[1] English is often operated as a de facto second language in Malaysia but in many suburban and rural contexts, English operated very much like a foreign language.

[2] "Habitus" refers to the Bordieuan definition of learned behaviour, where it represents a learned set of preferences or systems by which individuals orient socially with the larger community (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014)

In short, the adapted CCS framework permitted a three-dimensional investigation into the participants' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transnational nature of this study set itself apart as similar studies employed a self-contained perspective of the challenges that educators faced as a homogenous community (Bashir et al., 2021; Dawadi et al., 2020; G. Karuppannan et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2020; Khan, Basu, et al., 2021; Mansor et al., 2021; Rouf & Rashid, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2022). The investigation can position the participants' unique perspectives across different national contexts and domains that other studies were incapable of providing.

Methodology

This qualitative study was designed to collect participants' experiences and recollections of the challenges and struggles they experienced when continuing education throughout the pandemic. The study employed a two-stage data collection process. Firstly, an advertisement was disseminated digitally on various social media platforms, calling for and inviting research participants, and individual teachers were contacted over the phone, drawing a total of thirty-five (n =35) English language secondary school teachers from Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal operating in government/public or private/independent schools. Secondly, upon receiving the participants' submissions, which were in the form of extended textual responses, the raw data was tabulated, where follow-up questions were proposed for individual video conferencing interviews with each participant. For participants who declined to be interviewed, these questions were emailed and sent to them via WhatsApp or Telegram to procure their further input. Those who agreed to a semi-structured interview were interviewed via teleconferencing tools such as Zoom and Google Meet. The follow-up interviews were conducted in English, and exchanges with these participants were transcribed using MaxQDA. Basic quantitative data analysis about the participants' backgrounds was generated (Table 2). The participants were relatively distributed in terms of their nationality and gender but were slightly disproportionate when it came to their academic qualification, teaching experience and school type. This suggests that the participants were academically high achievers, although most have relatively young teaching careers.

Table 2: Participants' demographic information

Sample Profiling			
No.	**Variables**	**Frequency, n**	**Percentage, %**
1	Country		
	• *Bangladesh*	12	34.3
	• *Malaysia*	12	34.3
	• *Nepal*	11	31.4
2	Gender		
	• *Male*	16	45.7
	• *Female*	19	54.3

3	Highest Academic Qualification		
	• *Bachelor's*	11	31.4
	• *Master's*	24	68.6
4	Teaching Experience		
	• *0 to 4 years*	8	22.9
	• *5 to 9 years*	13	37.1
	• *10 to 14 years*	5	14.3
	• *15 to 19 years*	5	14.3
	• *20 or more years*	4	11.4
	School Type		
	• *Government*	27	77.1
	• *Private/Independent*	8	22.9

Next, the transcriptions were coded according to the proposed CCS framework (Figure 2). Intercoder agreement exercises (Table 3) were undertaken before research team members individually coded transcriptions by country:

Table 3: Intercoder agreement report

Calibration Attempt	Kappa Coefficient (Brennan & Prediger, 1981)	Interpretation
1	.02	Slight agreement
2	.24	Fair agreement
3	.52	Moderate agreement
4	.73	Substantial agreement

The research team members coded the transcriptions individually once a Kappa Coefficient of .50 was attained. Analysis of the findings only proceeded after the research team members reviewed, negotiated, and finalised the coded transcripts.

Findings and Discussions

The findings resulting from the semi-structured interviews were rich and dense. The responses were coded and categorised based on the five homologous domains in the adopted CCS model (Figure 2), with each response corresponding to a specific episode or event.

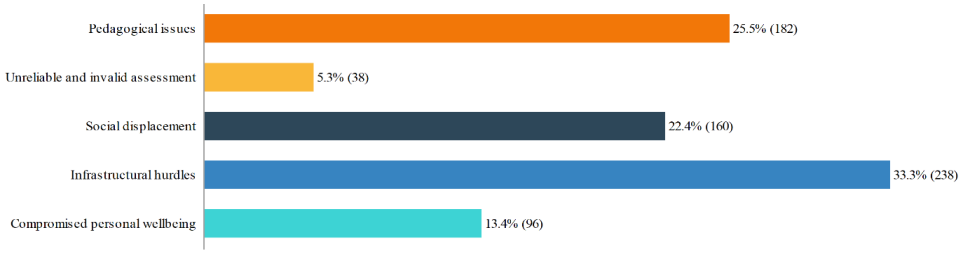

Figure 3: Challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Noticeably, the teachers and students struggled to adapt to online instruction (25.5%), which was further compounded by inadequate infrastructure to support the sudden transition (33.3%). The teachers were concerned about being displaced by enforced school closures resulting in hastily planned studying/working-from-home arrangements (22.4%). Additionally, there was doubt and anxiety over formative and summative assessments during the pandemic (5.3%), as the standard pen-and-paper assessments were restricted and reserved for candidates sitting for "national examinations"[3]. These restrictions were in place to ensure social distancing in examination halls, mainly when access to COVID-19 vaccines was limited. These issues cumulatively threaten the teachers' and students' wellbeing (13.4%), where concerns about their mental, emotional, social and financial welfare persist. These threats likely resulted in a massive surge in early retirements and resignations among teachers during the pandemic, as many could no longer cope with the added workload and stress. This phenomenon was widely reported globally (Allen et al., 2020; Carver-Thomas et al., 2021; Diliberti et al., 2021; Lachlan et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2022; Zamarro et al., 2022).

a. Pedagogical Issues – Teaching and learning difficulties

As implied, "Pedagogical Issues" collected challenges that complicated the teaching and learning process during the pandemic. Five sub-themes emerged, encompassing learners being disinterested during lessons, choosing to skip lessons, being unwilling to complete assigned work, and lacking access to effective learning materials and academic supervision (Figure 4).

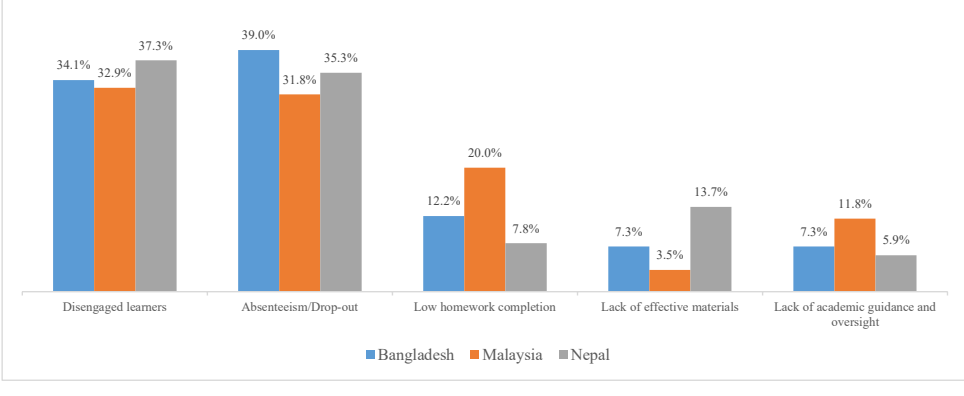

Figure 4: Teaching and learning difficulties faced by teachers

[3] Referring to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) equivalent national school leavers qualifications such as the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) in Bangladesh, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) in Malaysia, and the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) in Nepal.

Cumulatively, absenteeism and disengaged learners dominated the findings across all three contexts. Very few students attended online lessons consistently; even when they did, they were inattentive or non-participatory. They recalled instances where students seemingly entered and left the class at will. More frustratingly, those who attended online lessons regularly were often students with better proficiency. Students who needed the most help were often absent. Over time, this enlarged the proficiency gap among their students.

> *Most of the time, half of my students were absent from the lessons. I had to try to reach them personally, which took more time from an extremely reduced classroom interaction. Most of the time, my calls went unanswered. But when I did reach them, they cited various problems and reasons for not attending my lesson. (BGM05)*

> *My students who hadn't achieved the minimum band were the ones who refused to attend lessons! Sadly, even for the best class of the year, the first set, only 8 out of 30 students attended the online lessons regularly. (MGF03)*

> *My students were frequently absent from my lessons. Most of them would conveniently join the lesson when it was close to finishing. And even those who were present were passive and reluctant to participate in the lesson. (NPM05)*

A low homework completion rate among Malaysian students (20%) was cited more frequently than the Bangladeshi (12.2%) and Nepalese (7.8%) counterparts. Granted, Malaysian teachers experienced fewer issues with disengaged and absent students, meaning they were better positioned to assign more homework to their students. In most cases, very few students return their work on time, so the teachers had to be empathetic and understanding, tolerating such tardiness:

> *In terms of return rates, only a few return their work on time. But generally, I don't reprimand students for returning their work late as long as they return their tasks. The return rate is far less than 100%, but it's more than I can ask for. On a good day, I can get about 80% of homework submissions for the elite classes. (MGF09)*

Providing in-person academic guidance to their students was challenging for the Bangladeshi teachers. Technical and labour-intensive skills were difficult to teach and carry out virtually, as the students were afforded personal attention and encouraged to engage in peer discussions in conventional face-to-face lessons. These were not possible during online lessons. Resultantly, teachers opted against teaching these labour-intensive skills and revisiting them once in-person learning resumes:

> *They have become slow in writing for the lack of practice in the class, which was not always possible in the virtual class. The students received proper instructions and guidelines for improving their writing skills. (BPF12)*

Nepalese teachers struggled with a lack of effective materials to teach during the pandemic, as they no longer had access to physical learning materials and resources during school lockdowns. Six respondents noted that their students could not access their textbooks due to prolonged school closures. Lacking alternatives to these valuable learning materials would further paralyse any efforts to teach and learn during the pandemic:

The students had no books at all. Clearly, the school and local government were unable to provide these books to them. At the same time, they were not ready to produce materials or resources for self-learning for the students. (NGM04)

b. Unreliable and Invalid Assessments

Collectively, conducting assessments during the school lockdowns was problematic and challenging (Figure 5). The validity and reliability of these assessments were dubious and time-consuming as there were no suitable alternatives. Additionally, teachers relied on assessment standards that were unintended for remote teaching and learning. They must also deal with unrealistic expectations from school leaders and parents.

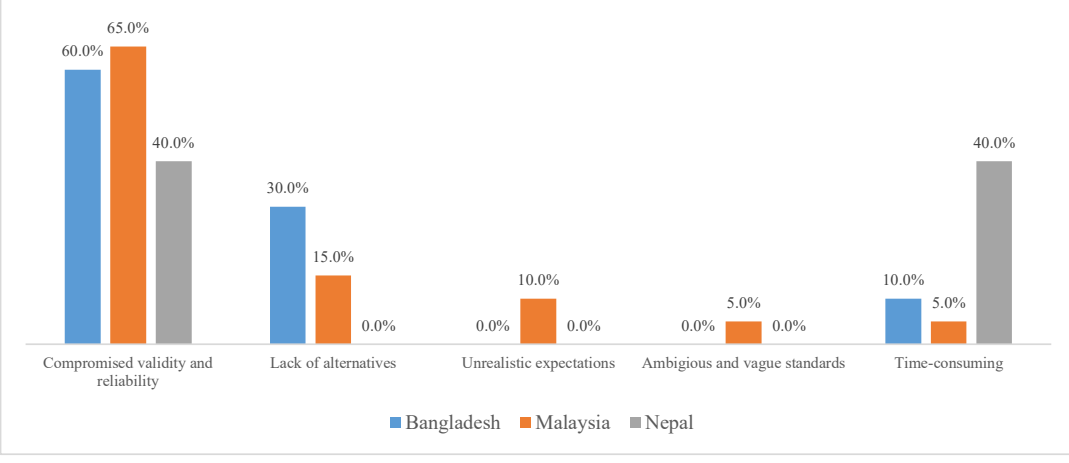

Figure 5: Unreliable or invalid assessments

Mainly, the validity and reliability of their assessments were highly compromised as administration and invigilation of in-person examinations were impossible during the lockdowns. Resultantly, many teachers resorted to computer-assisted assessments (Bashir et al., 2021; Khan, Basu, et al., 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021) using digital survey forms such as Google Forms and Survey Monkey. However, there was no way to ascertain if the students had elicited help from other individuals or referred to external sources.

I realise many students provided identical answers, meaning they could be copying their answers from the same source (BGM07)

Assessing work online was relatively easy to do. But at the same time, I find this worrying as my students submitted work they copied from Google. I know this because sometimes I copied a chunk of their answer and found the exact words on the internet (MGF12).

Consequently, many students progressed to the next academic year without experiencing a proper assessment of their learning attainment. In most public and government schools, academic progression occurs by age group, although some private and independent schools still retain students who failed to show satisfactory academic progress (Sharma, 2016). Regardless, a lack of viable alternatives to assess the students validly and reliably during school closures was a severe

problem. One Nepalese teacher remarked:

> *For almost two years, the students had not studied properly in school. They became so weak in their academic performance but indiscriminately progressed to the next academic level without reliable or valid assessments to measure their learning attainment. Granted, schools were compelled to do so because it was a government policy. Consequently, it is very difficult to deal with the students because of this large gap in their English language proficiency (NGM04).*

In the short term, this allowed schools to manage their students efficiently in terms of classroom logistics and teacher deployment. However, the academic gap among students of the same age group will manifest over time without sufficient intervention to address this gap (Bailey et al., 2021; Goudeau et al., 2021). Some schools emphasised greater use of formative assessments to compensate for their inability to assess the students summatively. However, issues related to unrealistic expectations placed on students and vague standards used impeded efforts migrating to such forms of alternative assessments. A Malaysian teacher recounted her experience carrying out a classroom-based assessment mandated by the Ministry of Education:

> *So I tried to carry out a Ministry-mandated classroom-based assessment called PBD. But I was told to base this classroom-based assessment on the prescribed learning content according to the stipulated learning outcomes all students must attain within the stipulated curriculum. That's not realistic. The curriculum was written for a normal academic year that did not account for long-term school closures like what we had due to COVID-19. Furthermore, the descriptors used in PBD are vague and unhelpful, such as "hardly understand", "limited understanding", and "adequate understanding". But there's nothing or nobody for me to refer to that could help me define these descriptors. (MGF03)*

In addition, processing these assessments during the pandemic was challenging. Teachers had to handle their students' work digitally, which became a time-consuming and physically challenging process. The teachers struggled to mark scripts digitally, especially when procuring a writing pad or stylus was too costly.

> *We carried out summative examinations and class tests online, which was relatively easy to do. But checking these scripts online became way more time-consuming. (NGF07)*

> *Marking scripts on a laptop was difficult. I experienced muscle aches and back pain. Also, the marking process took longer than usual. (MGF06)*

c. Infrastructural Hurdles – Home learning environment

Figure 6 depicts the challenges that the students faced when learning from home. These include a lack of digital tools and the required competency to operate them, unaffordable and poor internet connectivity, distracting home surroundings, and poor parental involvement in their learning.

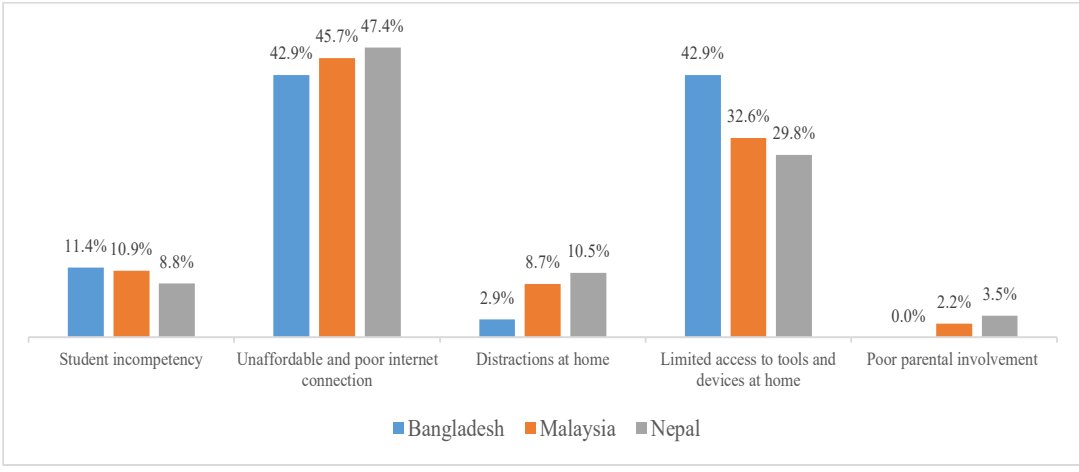

Figure 6: Infrastructural hurdles in a home learning environment

Unsurprisingly, infrastructural hurdles in the home learning environment were a common shared experience in all three contexts. Nepalese respondents cited unaffordable and poor internet connection and limited access to digital tools and devices as two main stumbling blocks for their learners. However, even for those who were lucky to have access to these resources, constant power cuts and geographical challenges further restrict their access to these alternative forms of learning:

> *During the first national lockdown, I was working in a rural area in the Taplejung district where the students didn't own any devices that they could use to access alternative forms of education. They didn't even own a radio or television, let alone a digital device or internet connection. On top of that, we experienced frequent power cuts, which rendered these electricity-dependent alternatives ineffective. What can I do when the electricity supply is inconsistent? (NPM05)*

However, having reliable access to digital tools and internet services did not guarantee that the students could learn effectively. A Bangladeshi respondent recounted his experience with several parents who were technology-sceptic and critical of technological use in schools. They were reluctant to acquire devices or services necessary for their children to participate in online lessons:

> *Infrastructure-wise, many students were unable to access online activities as they lacked proper devices. As many lived in poverty, their parents were not able to provide them with these devices. However, there are parents who were against their children learning using electronic gadgets. These students could be curious about and eager to attend my lessons but couldn't because their parents didn't want them to use the internet. (BGM10)*

This posed serious challenges to Bangladeshi teachers. The mandated school closures had crippled all forms of physical learning, yet some parents negatively perceived efforts to compensate for this loss using digital or virtual learning.

On the contrary, Malaysian students had better access to reliable internet connections and digital tools for online learning than their Bangladeshi and Nepalese counterparts. Nevertheless, the respondents were more concerned about their students navigating myriad different applications and tools when learning. Commonly popular real-time video conferencing tools such as Zoom, WebEx and Google Classroom have screen share functions that promote visual engagement during lessons, akin to that of a whiteboard in a physical classroom. However, unlike in physical classrooms where students can easily access other resources such as a dictionary or a thesaurus, they would have to switch programmes or applications during online learning. Switching or jumping between applications on low-end devices is disruptive to students and teachers alike:

> *The students mostly had to share devices with their parents or siblings. That's why sometimes they were absent during online lessons because their parents might be using the devices. But even those who can afford their own devices struggle to log on and off Google Meet to other applications when I am using different learning tools. I sometimes use applications that are less resource-hungry, such as Google Docs, but there were some students who did not have enough storage on their devices to install it. (MGF03).*

d. Social Displacement – Student displacement from schools

As students were displaced from schools, the participants noted troubling consequences (Figure 7). These include a lack of learner autonomy, disciplinary supervision and learner privacy. The students also suffer from extended isolation from school and burnout.

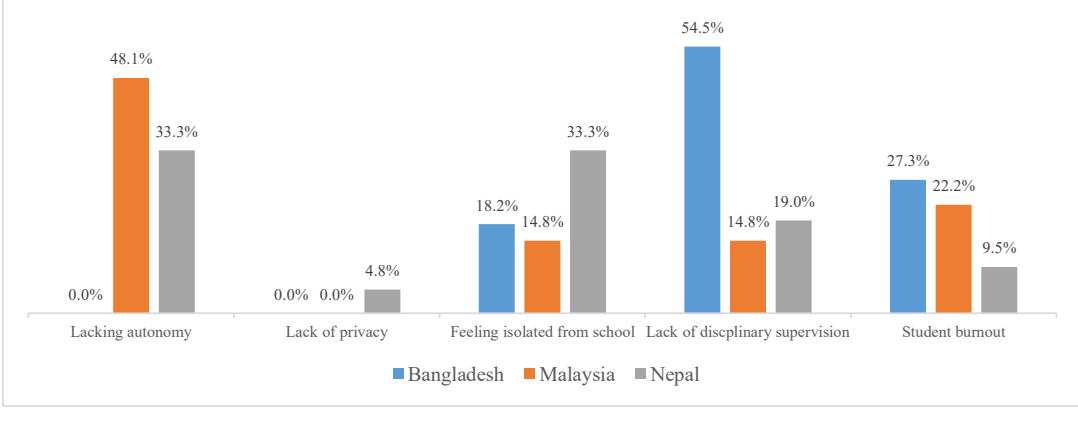

Figure 7: Student displacement from schools

Comparatively, teachers from each country had different concerns regarding their students being displaced from schools. Bangladeshi teachers were troubled by being unable to supervise their students during the pandemic. They felt helpless when their students misbehaved. For instance, if their students were absent from or disruptive during online lessons, they had no way to manage their students' belligerence.

> *It was difficult to draw their attention, ensure their presence in class, and control their classroom behaviour. It's really difficult to monitor them, and they tend to take advantage of this. (BGM10)*

Optimally, the parents need to supervise their children when learning from home (Dayal & Tiko, 2020; Lukas & Yunus, 2021), although they were arguably unprepared as the teachers. Often, the parents, be it earning a livelihood or fulfilling other commitments, had to leave their children unattended, thus leaving their children with an unprecedented amount of unbridled freedom:

> *Many guardians thought that it was not necessary for their children to participate in online classes. Furthermore, if their children were not attending online classes, then they wouldn't have to pay any tuition fees. So, most students took advantage of this and skipped lessons. On the other hand, their guardians may not necessarily know how to help their children learn digitally, even if they were eager to learn. Not every adult can teach children how to operate online applications to learn. (BGF03)*

Malaysian teachers also observed this phenomenon. Their main complaint revolved around their students' inability to be responsible for their learning, resulting in students often making poor decisions about their learning. One respondent believed her students were not ready to be vested with greater autonomy as they were accustomed to being spoon-fed and coached into adhering to prescribed learning habits and norms:

> *I don't think that the students are ready for that. I allowed my students, from the best class, mind you, to focus on subjects they needed rather than attending my lessons and completing my homework. This was done informally, of course. But this went out of hand really quickly, and almost everybody stopped attending my lesson. I set up strict ground rules, only allowing a few to skip my lessons because I felt their English was good enough. I cannot strike such an agreement with other classes because they will abuse this. (MGF09)*

The Nepalese teachers echoed these lamentations. The school lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that their students were removed from schools for nearly two whole years. This significantly impeded their social skills as much as their academic progression. But more severely, students became accustomed to a no-rule, no-restriction learning environment, which made it harder for them to focus and remain on track:

> *When we returned from the school lockdowns, we had to deal with students who were habituated to being free. They have been learning from home, with no uniforms, no rules, and minimal supervision. Now that they were thrust back to school, it was difficult to keep them focused and challenging to keep them on track. It still is. (NGF01)*

e. Personal wellbeing – Compromised teacher wellbeing

The participants reported a myriad of challenges they faced that threatened their wellbeing (Figure 8). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has posed financial, social and health issues. More critically, it magnified the mental and emotional stress of the teaching profession.

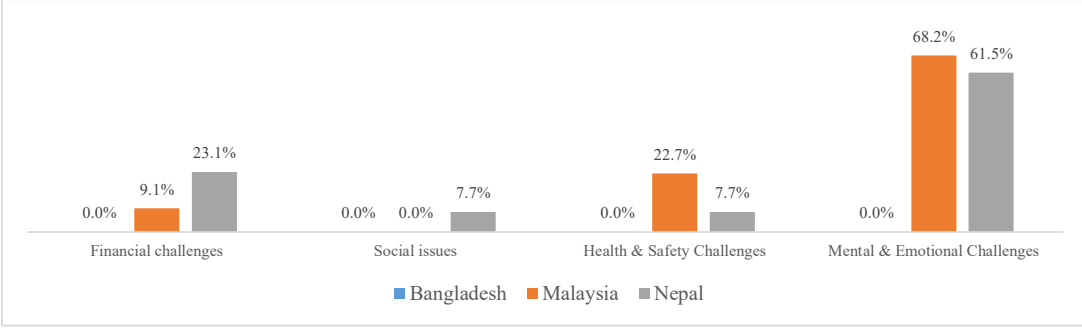

Figure 8: Compromised teacher wellbeing

Heider (2021) pointed out that teachers have exhibited similar psychological effects to that experienced by healthcare workers and yet are less likely to be heeded when they speak out against school reopening or raising awareness about teacher burnout. This was echoed in the responses from Malaysian and Nepalese respondents. They described their experience of struggling with various challenges to their wellbeing throughout the pandemic. Predominantly, the enforced school closures and sudden transition from physical, face-to-face learning to digital pedagogy wrought upon them significant mental and emotional challenges. While Nepalese teachers expressed slightly more concern about their financial challenges, Malaysian teachers were more conscious of contracting COVID-19 or other related ailments.

The Nepalese respondents recalled their initial response to the sudden shift to online teaching and learning. It was a transformational experience as much as it was traumatic. While it enabled some form of teaching and learning to continue, albeit to a limited extent, many teachers were not ready for an aggressive and abrupt transition. This led to confusion, anxiety and fear, compounded by prolonged contact hours to compensate for the lack of in-person administrative and pedagogical duties:

> *We shifted our classes online in the first two or three months of the initial onset, but we were unprepared for that. We were confused. There were so many other challenges too. We struggled with the infrastructure related to having classes, managing our household, taking care of our children…I was suffering from anxiety. (NGF01)*

Notably, the teacher's relationship with technology is why mental and emotional stress skyrocketed during the pandemic. Technology has long been central to schools and teachers as an administrative or pedagogical tool. However, if technology mainly complements physical, in-person teaching, it has since become a staple to digital and virtual instruction. What was once optional became mandatory overnight, putting many teachers under great stress. One Malaysian respondent lamented, almost close to tears:

> *To be fair, even before the pandemic, we get messages on Saturdays and Sundays instructing us to carry out certain duties; it could be administrative or academic or related to co-curricular activities. This became far worse during the pandemic. We now had to do everything that we used to do in person, virtually and digitally. Can you imagine teaching Physical Education (PE) through the screen, organising an English drama competition virtually, or facilitating test registration digitally? These brought me endless anxiety. I had to text them individually*

and communicate with them to find out why they were absent during online lessons. All this administrative work is killing me. (MGF03)

Worse, this Malaysian respondent was diagnosed with moderate stress, bad depression and anxiety, but she received little help from the school or district-appointed counsellor. While there were plenary talks addressing teachers on managing their mental health, this plenary intervention was ineffective:

I really expected some help. I asked the school counsellor if it was possible for me to get counselling from the district education officer. But, I was told that I must be referred to the district counsellors before I can get counselling. In the end, the office did organise a brief talk on mental health. It's a plenary talk for the school's academic and administrative staff. We were shown PowerPoint presentation slides telling us we shouldn't feel stressed and how to manage stress. It did not help me one bit. (MGF03)

Interestingly, none of the Bangladeshi respondents expressed worries about their wellbeing resulting from the pandemic. In fact, they were more concerned about their students' learning loss. Unfortunately, the data at hand does not clarify why, as this went unnoticed until the latter stages of this investigation. Future studies, however, should explore the impact of the pandemic on Bangladeshi teachers' wellbeing.

Conclusion

Figure 9 compiled the major obstacles that the participants experienced in continuing education throughout the pandemic. It is very likely that they will continue to experience these. While these anecdotes and recollections were tales of struggles and challenges, they were not intended to demotivate nor dispirit teachers who may resonate with these experiences.

Figure 9: "Code cloud"[4] correlating to challenges teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Nepal

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector is undeniably unprecedented, and its effect lasting through the coming years, if not decades. The teachers and students were

[4] The larger the font size of a particular code, the more frequent it was cited by the respondents.

subjected to social issues, financial stress, emotional distress and threats to their health and safety. To a limited extent, adapting and shifting to remote teaching and learning helped alleviate some of these challenges, yet more is needed to understand how teachers address these challenges and ensure continuity in their teaching practice.

The challenges that Bangladeshi, Malaysian and Nepalese teachers faced during the COVID-19 pandemic were remarkably similar. There was a clear indication that the public authorities in these countries needed better digital infrastructure to address the effects of teachers and students being displaced from physical, in-person teaching and learning. More importantly, this cross-border study suggested that closer collaboration among various stakeholders is necessary, allowing us to learn from each other's experiences.

Retrospectively, policies and emergency measures enacted by various governmental bodies in these respective countries may have produced mixed outcomes, but greater intranational and transnational discourse is vital for critical reflection and improvement. ELT associations like BELTA, MELTA, and NELTA can play a vital role in motivating and developing skilled practitioners for future endeavours. Their members can form internal and external networks that promote skill and knowledge sharing, both of which are crucial cornerstones for 21st-century education.

Researchers, educators, and school leaders can draw useful insights from this study in preserving the resilience of the education sector and draft flexible strategies and models to optimise ELT approaches. These efforts must, at the very least, train teachers to be adaptive and versatile so that they are equipped to utilise the latest pedagogical practices and resources at their disposal. They must be resourceful and creative in contexts where infrastructures are underdeveloped.

Lastly, it is more important that teachers are empowered to share their stories and narratives of their experiences in continuing education. They were pioneers and front liners who, through trial and error, navigated one of the most challenging periods in history, striving to continue education against all odds. The importance of their perspectives on surviving and navigating such a treacherous and challenging time cannot and should not be understated.

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Coping Strategies of University EFL Teachers for Online Instruction during COVID-19 in Nepal

Prakash Rai

Abstract

This paper aims at exploring the perceptions, and practices of University EFL teachers in Nepal, particularly the challenges found and strategies adopted to deal with teaching English through online instruction during the pandemic. The in-depth unstructured interview as a research tool under narrative inquiry has been employed to collect the data while the concept of thematic analysis by Riessman has been exploited to analyze and interpret the collected data. The research finding reveals that despite technological inefficiency, social barriers, and psychological fear teachers underwent through the initial phase, the subsequent online classes with some of the coping strategies such as self-initiation, self-discovery, and cooperative approach have been found profoundly effective and productive both for EFL teachers and students. It also is found that online classes truly materialized the theoretical idea-ELT with ICT into the application to make English language teaching proceed ahead with IT. Such classes in EF during the pandemic lockdown forcefully shifted the paradigm of teaching from chalk-and-talk instructor-centered to a digtal interactive learner-centered.

Keywords: *Online, Instruction, Paradigm Shift, EFL Class*

Introduction

The Nepal government imposed a rigorous lockdown across Nepal from 24 March 2020 to 21 July 2020 by banning national and transnational travel and closing educational institutions, services, and businesses when COVID-19 severely affected the world towards the end of 2020, including Nepal (Sharma et al., 2021). The unprecedented pandemic triggered a great crisis in every sector, including education. Nepalese educational institutions such as schools, and universities remained closed for about two months at the beginning of 2020 (Dawadi et al., 2020). However, for ensuring students' right to education, the Nepal government and Nepalese universities decided to shift teaching mode from physical to virtual by formulating a plan and policy to continue teaching and learning at schools and campuses to engage students for persistent learning, helping continue teachers' professionalism and ensuring students' rights to education (EAPSE , 2020). The transformed educational paradigm emphasized the rise

of e-learning, thereby conducting teaching and learning through digital mode. In the beginning, teachers at schools and colleges were not completely able to conduct online teaching and training in the new normal situation since most of them were new to using ICT tools. However, sticking to the decision that the Nepal government circulated for educational institutions, teachers and educators forcefully readied themselves for adopting a new mode of teaching-virtual teaching. It was also challenging for them to handle online classes as teachers in Nepal and around the world lacked the essential trained skills, technical knowledge, and pedagogical professionalism to assimilate digital technology into virtual classes prior to the global pandemic (Schleicher, 2020).

To overcome the crisis brought by the pandemic to starting online classes for teaching English, school and university teachers obtained technical support and facilitation guidance to virtual classes through using ICT tools. Initially, Nepalese university EFL teachers went through many challenges and hardships because of unfamiliarity with Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and other apps for teaching English. With the gradual practice of using online tools, teaching professionals at schools and universities commenced conducting online teaching in the same way as the educational institutions in most of the world from lower to higher levels ceased physical classes for the time being to resume remote learning through online instruction. Although EFL teachers lacked the resources, skills, and expertise to operate the ICT tools properly for English language classes, they continued teaching online. As a university EFL teacher, I experienced the same in terms of challenges and coping strategies while teaching English through virtual means.

In such a scenario, EFL teachers working at different universities began teaching English slowly through online mode. Online classes either reluctantly run or willingly conducted became part and parcel of educators' and teachers' lives in the run. Despite the challenges that teachers faced while using online tools for teaching English, the virtual mode of teaching almost displaced the physical classes during the pandemic. Experienced teachers belonging to the old generation and fresher teachers from the new generation alike engaged in handling online apps, for instance, Zoom, Ms.Teams, and Google Meet to run classes despite difficulties. Throughout the pandemic, online classes conducted by university EFL teachers in Nepal became an important mode to bring a new normal situation. The strategies universities' EFL teachers use during classes to deal with the challenges of transitioning face-to-face classes into online has been remained unexplored in the Nepali context. Thus, the paper examines the gap that exists in the course of shifting physical classes to online classes, particularly for EFL classes at Nepalese universities. Fulfilling the research gap is based on two major questions: a. how did university EFL teachers perceive and practice online teaching during the pandemic? b. what were the challenges the teachers encountered and then what coping strategies did they employ to overcome the challenges?

Literature Review

During the pandemic, EFL teachers in Nepal majorly engaged in three kinds of activities to overcome the adversity brought by COVID-19: a.Training workshop to familiarize themselves with IT, b. Program for acquainting e-resources, c. PDT for promoting teaching skills (Gautam, 2020). These activities that were run online empowered teachers' pedagogic expertise, and skills in using ICT tools for real online teaching. In terms of challenges that EFL instructors and learners confronted during the pandemic in Nepali and Bangladeshi higher educational contexts, Shrestha et al. (2022) report that shifting from physical teaching to virtual instruction entailed chief challenges such as weak internet service, inadequate institutional assistance to teachers, and unfamiliarity to online tools.

In this regard, Sharin (2021) states that virtual learning during the pandemic in the Malaysian context witnessed challenges, including stress, anxiety, and turbulence in students due to their unfamiliarity with IT use. In order to find out the efficacies of ICT integration in teaching and learning in Indonesia, Fitri and Putro (2021) researched how teachers perceived online instruction during COVID-19 with descriptive quantitative research questions by using online questionnaires to 126 primary and secondary teachers research tools and found that due to the pandemic, academic organizations-schools and colleges-obliged to shift physical teaching to virtual teaching, making EFL teachers employ ICT in the classes. In a sense, the ELT hugely witnessed a paradigm shift in the teaching field due to the emergence of the online mode of teaching. This study finally concluded that the majority of EFL teachers positively favored ICT integration in ELT.

Likewise, Altam (2020) conducted research using a closed-ended questionnaire Google forms in quantitative design on Yemeni learners to explore the effectiveness of online social-instructional means, for example, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook on English language teaching, in Indian universities, thereby drawing takeaways that learners most effectively improved their listening skills while using online tools. Besides the improvement in listening skills, students developed practicing new vocabulary by reducing spelling errors.

Similarly, Huang (2020) conducted research on e-learning instructional tools for English language teaching that China used during the pandemic. Based on the interviews with Chinese educational specialists attending two online national seminars, the research found that OER and OEP both played a pivotal role to overcome the challenges brought about by the pandemic. The efficacious use of both tools OER and OEP contributes much to promoting both the teaching and learning of the English language.

EFL teachers majorly tried transforming themselves by participating in training events, learning how to handle online resources and tools, and running virtual classes to teach English. Bhattarai (2020) conducted qualitative research with unstructured questions

and informal conversations to find out how secondary EFL teachers in Nepal experienced and perceived the challenges and adversities in English language teaching caused by the pandemic. It was a challenging job for teachers and educators because online teaching was completely new so they had to learn a lot while it was an opportunity as it opened a new space of exploring and experimenting with a new world of online teaching.

Having observed and examined research conducted by researchers in the field of ELT through ICT during the pandemic, most of the research has been carried out to focus on English language teaching at secondary schools and other issues that this paper does not incorporate. Thus, the paper fulfills the gap that has been left for opening up in EFL and EL teaching through virtual means during the pandemic.

Methods

The paper is fundamentally based on qualitative research, which (Hussain et al., 2013) define an interpretive paradigm as the constructivist, humanistic, and anti-positivist paradigm. Though it relates to a group of methods, it gets closely associated with the qualitative approach. The source of knowledge and reality lies in the participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. Because our senses primarily function to mediate the issues in interpretive epistemology, the knowledge that we acquire through sense is always subjective and fluid. Regarding it, Cohen et al. (2007) aver that it is not the researchers, but the participants who are involved in activities that understand the phenomena through their direct participation and engagement.

Narrative inquiry as a research design entails storytelling and researching whether employing narratives as the data or exploiting recounting stories functions as an important tool for interpreting or showcasing findings (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). It is an approach to linking stories and events with the actual practices in which the narratives by University EFL teachers regarding challenges and coping strategies for teaching English online during the pandemic as well as my own experience of virtual teaching English language greatly contribute to constructing and understanding the research the issue in detail.

The data used in the research were collected through taking in-depth interviews with university EFL teachers employing Zoom video recording. I discussed my research goals, research objectives, and minimum expectation from them before I recorded the audio video. Focusing more on their experience and practice they adhered to teaching English through virtual classes rather than class observation, the extensive interviews were centered on how they perceived and practiced online teaching in the new normal situation and what challenges they faced, and what strategies they used for tackling the challenges. The interviews ranged from initiating preparation to employing strategies to triumph over adversities. Since the research aim is to explore the practice, challenges, and strategies adopted by EFL teachers while online teaching English, interviews were conducted for exploring narratives relating to teachers' experience and practice.

The interviews with four EFL teachers with pseudo-name working in different four universities were conducted through Zoom recordings with their consent. They told their stories of adapting online teaching in midst of confusion and fear from the point of view of failure to success. Then the transcribed data were coded into definite themes for interpretation based on the idea of Riessman (2008), who asserts that narratives by the participants function as the building blocks of the research. The narratives by teachers have been analyzed in the light of constructive and collaborative learning theories.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data (qualitative) collected from the semi-unstructured interview have been analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. As to manipulating narrative data, Fan Tang (2002) recommends three steps: a. reading the narratives and putting them into possible groups, b. categorizing them based on similar nature, c. representing for interpretation. The data have been grouped into five thematic topics: shift of virtual learning from physical mode, updating with technology, shift to learner-centered learning, opulent space for speaking and listening skills in English, and strategies adopted in online teaching. The refined data in each thematic topic have been interpreted by using constructivist, and cooperative learning theories.

The shift of virtual learning from physical mode: Chewing an iron

Although the University provided training and workshops on how to conduct virtual classes by using ICT tools and teaching applications to EFL teachers, they were first unaware of it. All of the participants said that they underwent a hard time since it was a very new practice and an approach to teaching the English language. Considering this changing approach in a sociological context, Jaffee (2003) puts forward three major aspects to be taken care of: the relationship between a learning environment and the social roles, the learning atmosphere and existing pedagogical practices, and the transformative roles, relations, and pedagogy while shifting from physical to virtual classrooms. When the teachers commenced virtual classes for teaching English to bachelor and master-level students, they said that they faced multi-dimensional underlying challenges. With this reference, Nabin said:

> *The major challenge I faced at the beginning of initiating online classes included social disbelief, lack of resources, physical pain, and psychological fear. Some of my colleagues had said that teaching thro*ugh online classes was like the union of the sky and the earth in a place like Mugu.

All of the participants agreed with what Nabin shared about online instruction for teaching English that teemed with crucial challenges such as adequate online resource materials, physical discomforts, social disbelief, and psychological anxiety. In addition, Nira said, "Though online instruction was not completely new to me, I felt a kind of

mental stress, and anxiety about facing the camera, using apps for presenting slides, and videos, and setting up the sound. Likewise, another participant, Mohan viewed, "Initially, I faced many problems simultaneously, for example, poor internet access, lack of ICT tools, social distrust on behalf of teaching faculties and students and psychological turbulence".

In this way, all of the participants expressed that they chiefly had psychological stress, insufficient online-related materials, physical discomforts, and social disbelief as the major challenges. However, all of them thought that it was a time of adapting to the new normal situation, shifting teaching learning modality from face-to-face to online mode. Despite having several difficulties and challenges, University EFL teachers adopted and adapted to the online culture and virtual platform assimilating the idea expressed by Harasim (2000) who states that the 21st century commenced with a paradigm shift in every sector including attitudes toward online education that indeed transformed both teachers and students worldwide into adopting and adapting network of collaborative teaching and learning.

It was not easy for EFL teachers to adopt a new culture of online teaching and learning because they immigrated to the digital world during their adult life, thereby adapting to the new culture of virtual teaching and learning proving to be challenging (Toledo, 2007). In this sense, it was extremely tough for them since they faced physical, technical, psychological, and sociocultural problems when they initiated conducting classes through online mode. Nonetheless, taking help and training from the university and collaborating with colleagues and students gradually advanced the teachers to familiarize with online culture for running teaching-learning activities. As to how they grew up for conducting virtual classes, Nira said:

> *Although I took training on how to use the apps for classroom purposes, I did not learn all aspects for practical use. I did not know how to share and play videos and set sounds in Google meet. In order to resolve the problems, I consulted with colleagues, students, and YouTube videos.*

The self-initiation and self-discovery, collaboration, and co-operations seemed greatly helpful for the teachers to overcome the challenges. It shows that all of the participants in the research applied the self-initiatory and self-discovery and collaborative strategies of teaching and learning for shifting the teaching-learning paradigm from face-to-face to a virtual model.

Virtual ELT: Updating with technology

When the university colleges decided to run classes in the virtual mode during the lockdown, EFL teachers at the universities of Nepal did not have the necessary skills at handling the online tools, apps, and ICT-related materials. Although the policy by

the Nepal government to develop teachers' ICT skills and efficiency for teaching and learning in the classes emphasized training the teachers (Rana & Rana, 2020), EFL teachers at university colleges in Nepal are not found to be efficient users of ICT tools for teaching in online classes. When inquired about the efficiency of exploiting online instruments for the virtual platform in the initial stage, Nira said as other participants:

> *I was a semi-efficient user of ICT tools for teaching though I had been taking online classes for M.Ed. students more asynchronously and less synchronously for a year. In spite of training and workshop that the University organized for teaching faculties, I learned many things about how to operate ICT for online classes from colleagues and students.*

Despite the challenges they faced in the beginning, the participants forcefully learned how to use ICT tools-GoogleMeet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, etc. through friends and students, as well. Slightly similar to what Nira said, Nabin viewed, "Besides learning how to use online tools from the workshop training from university, I learned many features of online apps from googling and viewing the YouTube video". With regard to using technology in language pedagogy, Hafifah (2020) draws a conclusion that ICT in the form of digital literary plays a great role in current language teaching equipping the teachers as the front-liners in education to find, create, and communicate content in context with both cognitive and technical skills. Assimilating the core value of digital skills into the online mode of teaching, the university English language instructors enhanced and updated themselves with ICT to ELT with institutional support, self-discovery, self-initiations, and a cooperative approach.

Online teaching: A shift to learner-centered learning

The paradigm shift of EFL classes from physical to virtual mode changed not only the channel of English language instruction but also the way of instructional methods and techniques. In this regard, Yehya (2020) reports that online teaching and learning through ICT tools have brought a paradigm shift in education for enhancing knowledge and skills and for promoting learners' engagement in learning the language in contexts. Virtual instruction embracing students' complete engagement refers to a high degree of work, faith, interest, and emotional attachment to attain a higher level of critical thinking skills and learning aptitude. Regarding the shift to learner-centered learning that online teaching brought forth, three-quarters of the participants said that online teaching integrated ICT with ELT for making classes learner-centered and participatory. Given the change that online instruction yielded, Nabin said:

> *When I enhanced my skills to use Zoom and other apps, I started involving students in sharing their learning experiences on the topic. Consequently, students engaged in interactive and autonomous learning activities which enabled me to lower my work pressure. They began working in groups and pairs to share; this was the reason that they developed their self-confidence and efficiency in the use of English.*

The enhancement of ICT skills developed among university teachers over a short period greatly helped them change the way of conducting teaching-learning activities from a teacher-centered model to a student-engaged model. The transformation of the teaching paradigm stemmed from the fact that student-centric methods reduced the burden of the teachers thereby assigning the students to work, self-engage, and cooperate. The dynamism of teaching and learning through online instruction develop a high level of cognitive, critical thinking, interpersonal and managerial skills in students. The ICT tools enable students to be independent learners, creators, researchers, and contributors to producing new ideas and skills (Lan, 1999). In line with the same idea and teaching-learning experience, Mohan expressed:

> *I found ELT has more advantages than other subjects because all resources in English can be found on online platforms such as websites and other digital domains. ELT integrated with ICT emphasized interactive and cooperative teaching strategies for teaching English skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening as well as critical thinking and creative thinking skills.*

English language teaching at the bachelor and master levels through online mode benefits a lot from virtual domains since such online sites and online videos provide both students and teachers with adequate teaching and learning materials. As both teachers and learners took part in language learning activities in virtual mode, both parties-teachers and students-engaged equally with interactive and collaborative approaches. The individual work, pair-share, and group work greatly enhanced students' reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills along with critical and creative thinking.

Opulent space for speaking and listening skills

The global pandemic, COVID-19 obliged educational institutions from nursery to advanced university classes to run through online mode. Due to the changes in teaching-learning activities from physical classes to online, EFL teachers did not remain untouched in their delivery and meaningful learning. As to how the online mode of teaching helps learners enhance different skills of language, Soliman (2014) claims that the virtual mode of teaching and learning enhances students' overall language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing through a variety of online materials and resources. When asked about the impact of online instruction on English language teaching, Nira shared her experience:

> *The effectiveness of English language teaching depends on how teachers have been trained in different skills of teaching speaking, listening, reading, writing, creative and critical thinking. Regarding my online classes experience, I found the virtual mode of instruction for ELT was completely resourceful and effective since my University regularly trained me and my colleagues for interactive and effective classes.*

The experience expressed above shows that online teaching for English language teaching is more resourceful and effective than physical classes since the online mode of teaching can benefit from online platforms such as websites and digital libraries. Thus, both teachers and students can utilize the resources and materials for English language teaching and learning. However, other English teachers shared different experiences of English language teaching through online mode. In this regard, Nabin revealed:

> *I found students more actively engaged in class activities in virtual classes than they did in face-to-face classes since they could easily access texts and materials for practicing all skills. As a result, they had more exposure to speaking, listening, and reading skills than writing.*

The online instruction that changed the approach to teaching and learning activities from traditional to modern/updated emphasizes the student-centric, interactive and participatory mode in ELT. However, among the four skills of the English language, writing lags behind other skills though Banditvilai (2016) contends that online teaching is much more beneficial to develop the four language skills equally with independent learning and high motivation. Active engagement by students, easily accessible materials such as audio video on the subject matter, relevant text documents, and two-way communication between teachers and students mattered a lot in English language classes.

In the same way, Mohan revealed his experience relating online instruction with ELT, claiming that English language teaching got more advantages than other subjects because of abundant resources and materials for English language teaching in the online domain. When comparing the student's performance in different skills, writing seemed to lag behind other skills since students have been found to have copied and pasted for writing their assignments. The speech by eminent native speakers and authentic materials greatly help learners learn English. As a whole, online classes for English language teaching and learning have been a useful platform for live interaction, presentation, group activities, and autonomous practice.

Strategies Adopted in Online Teaching

Castañeda-Trujillo and Jaime-Osorio (2021) state that English teacher educators at Colombian universities during the pandemic adopt new teaching strategies by practicing information technology like teaching learning apps, and videoing software, etc. along with upgrading self-learning and adapting new practices to resolve the difficulties. Similar strategies: workshops and training and collaboration have been used by University teachers to mitigate the emergent challenges. To overcome the adverse situation coping strategies that EFL teachers sensed and adopted in the course of online teaching, Maya narrated:

When I started teaching English through online mode during the covid-19 pandemic, I found several challenges such as psychological distress, physical pain, and a lack of complete expertise in using online apps and tools. According to the quote, "when there is a will, there is a way", I took workshop training given by the central offices of the university. However, it was not adequate to handle IT tools, so I discussed the problems with my seniors and colleagues.

As Maya narrated how she faced the challenges with some of the remarkable strategies and techniques that she acquired from formal and informal training and personal efforts, all of the participants working as EFL teachers at the universities of Nepal adopted similar types of techniques and strategies to resolve the challenges.

When the teachers lacked perfect efficiency to use online apps such as zoom, MS Teams, and Goggle meet, they empowered their efficacy to handle the apps by sharing their skills with colleagues. In this regard, Laudari et al. (2021) who studies teachers' perspectives in Nepali higher education during the pandemic, conclude that teachers' attitudes and their professions are interlinked with each other to run effective online classes. The study also adds that not only external factors such as environment, internet, and tools but also inner zeal matter a lot for the successful accomplishment of teaching-learning tasks. At times teachers took help from students when they could not use some new features in the apps and tools. Meanwhile, in the same issue, Nabin reported:

When I lacked skills in using educational apps such as Zoom, MS Teams, and others, I googled related websites, searched Youtube, and consulted with IT experts and teachers. Chiefly, I learned to use online tools for teaching by watching Youtube videos. My self-initiation and discovery helped me a lot to resolve the problems to run effective online classes.

The report by Nabin reveals that the training and skill of handling ICT for English language instructors are inadequate to conduct online classes and it is essential for teachers to go for innovation and discovery. When they faced difficulty, it was their duty to self-initiate in solving the problem. It was the same problem Nabin faced and he used his intuition and self-discovery approach to tackle the challenges.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges COVID-19 brought to the fore that are equally same either in EFL, ELT, or other subjects in the initial phase, university EFL teachers faced challenges with embracing some important coping strategies. Adopting strategies of self-initiation, self-discovery and cooperation helped English teachers a lot to solve the problems of psychological distress, physical discomfort, and technical operation of ICT. With the help of coping strategies, English teachers at the university came out of the turbulence they underwent during the lockdown.

EFL teachers succeeded in bringing a new normal situation to their profession of teaching online. Virtual classes during the pandemic functioned as a remedy to such a critical situation. When it came to evaluating the way, virtual classes played the role in EFL classes, they are found to be profoundly useful and productive because IT as a tool of online instruction has resorted to the EFL for its operation and continuation. By all means, virtual classes truly materialized the theoretical idea of "ELT with ICT", into real practice to move English language teaching along with information technology.

Resources of ELT from interdisciplinary fields can easily be accessed from the internet that promotes four skills and other skills of English-reading, listening, writing, and speaking as well as critical thinking, and creative skill helped shift the paradigm of English language teaching from traditional fixed physical classroom to virtual mobile classroom. Considering the essence of the research findings into consideration, the paper would equally be beneficial for both teachers and university officials in the course of formulating plans and policies and implementing educational programs during the adverse situation, especially for running online classes. Majorly, EFL and EL teachers can draw ideas and strategies from the research, thereby implementing them in their online classes even in normal times. Based on the findings, universities would prepare policies and logistics to tackle the challenges that any disasters bring forth in the days to come. In addition, the paper would fulfill the needs of the researchers related to online teaching in the future.

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English Language Teachers' Experience of Virtual Class during COVID-19 Lockdown in Bhojpur: A Narrative Inquiry

Uttam Sing Rai

Abstract

This research aimed at exploring English teachers' experience of virtual class in the time of COVID-19 lockdown period in Bhojpur, Nepal. Using narrative inquiry as methodological lens, I collected four secondary level English language teachers' stories during the first lockdown phase. In-depth interview was conducted to enable the participants to reveal their individual experiences of virtual teaching. The findings revealed negative experiences such as technology related anxiety and mental stress being the absent of basic mastery of ICT in English teachers. The narrations further showed unstable electricity and low speed internet issue, low rate of students' absence, unavailability of ICT devices as the obstacles fronted by English teachers in the district. The result also displayed positive experiences such as the increase of knowledge and skills in ICT use, and students' autonomous and mobile learning.

Keywords: *Virtual Class, Narrative Inquiry, Teacher's Experience, Pedagogical Practices, Challenges*

Introduction

An outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, took place in December 2019 and expanded over and away from China. The WHO formally termed the sickness brought out by the peculiar coronavirus as Coronavirus Sickness 2019 (COVID-19) on February 12, 2012 (Zu, et al., 2020) as quoted in (Suryana, et al., 2021).

The initial instance of COVID-19 was officially spotted on january25, 2020 when a 32 –year Nepali student coming back from the city of Wuhan, China was checked positive. Following outcry of the media about the challenges of COVID-19 for its inactivity, the government of Nepal after a few weeks, declared legal measure and barriers on the open movability (Dawadi, et al., 2020). The lockdown and social distance gave rose to the urgent closing of academic institutions (Figueiredo et al., 2020). It is guessed that approximately nine million (8,796, 624) students in Nepal is impacted by virtue of school/university closing in response to the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020) as cited

in (Dawadi et al., 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 has compelled a lot of schools to conversion from classical classroom teaching to distance teaching, evident notify that both teachers' and students' experience will be impacted (Ried,2017). The COVID-19 pandemic imposed the closure of the schools over the nation.

Thus, traditional form of teaching shifted to virtual teaching which impacted both teachers' and students' experiences. Trust & Whalen (2020) carried out research exploring how easy it was for teachers to alter their method of operations from classroom to distance teaching in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual teaching is a soaring teaching learning activity where the teachers and students meet over information and communication technology. The teachers and students may collaborate with each other in actual time adopting teleconferencing (audio or desktop video-conferencing) or internet (Dede, 1996, p.11). We tend to use both terms ' online ' and 'virtual' for common purpose. However, online class differs from virtual class in their nature. In online class, the learners master at their own speed and at their convenience without engagement of the instructor in real-time. In this sense, online teaching is more personal, adjustable, competency based interactive paradigm for learning with in learning groups (Bates, 1995). Moreover, online content includes course materials in the form of Power Point slides, pre-recorded video lectures, additional reading materials, assignments that may be effortlessly approached by the learners enrolled on the course any time whereas virtual class is live session with the teacher. It does not make available materials as online does. It ensures smooth running of the program and full engagement of the students during the program. Current study is based on virtual mode but not online mode because the teachers were found to have used virtual mode.

Few studies have been conducted based on teacher's experience. Dawadi et al., (2020) explored the influence of COVID-19 on the school schooling arrangement of Nepal on the basis of secondary sources of data. Their findings revealed that COVID-19 has critical effects on pupils' mastering, social, emotional, and mental prosperity. Thapaliya (2021) discovered the application of Information, Communication and Technology (ICTs) attitude and knowledge of government officers, school principals and teachers to maintain learning damage in school by reason of the COVID-19 at Nepali secondary schools. The result reveals that using digital devices in school is crippled by a range of factors.

Studies have shown that virtual learning -teaching builds social disconnection and it is previous accepted rules that social distancing decelerate virus transmission in the time of influenza pandemic (Uscher- Pines et al., 2018). Majority of the schools seemed to have adopted virtual mode to pursue teaching learning process during pandemic. Therefore, virtual teaching is becoming famous in the time of pandemic phase. However, social distancing creates fear of confusion, physical pain, aloneness, anxiety,

stress and tension (Xiang et al., 2020) that unfavourably affects instructional activities at schools. The extended social distancing brings aloneness, anxiety, misery, sorrow and even mental ilness (Leite et al., 2020). Thus, the life style of teachers and students is impressed by the reason of COVID-19 pandemic and Nepalese masters and learners are not exception.

Researches have also reflected that teachers' impact on learners' learning may exceed the classroom barriers, even beyond the years of schooling adulthood (Hatie, 2012). As evident in Reid's (Reid, 2017), teachers' experience and the teaching environments have a relation or link where they work.

Furthermore, in a research undertaken in Australia, the investigator researched the experiences of teachers teaching by means of virtual mode. They explored that the teachers did not have positive experiences due to the new mode of teaching by reason of the following matters: isolation feeling, negative attitudes of staff and inadequate technical skills; as well as teachers' little knowledge in the use of technologies (Owens et al., 2009).

In case of Bhojpur, when COVID-19 hit across the country, local authorities imposed the lockdown in the areas where pandemic spread in rapid motion. As a result, the schools remained closed which impacted whole educational activities bitterly. So, the authorities of the school managed to run the classes through virtual mode. English language teachers along with other teachers were compelled to run the class through virtual mode. They shifted their teaching pedagogy from physical class to virtual class.

So, the students and teachers might have benefitted from virtual education with unique experiences during the lockdown imposed by local authorities. These unique experiences are yet unexplored for others. These kinds of experiences need to be explored and shared with teachers in order to widen the scope of English language teaching. Therefore, this research aimed at exploring English language teacher's experience of virtual class during the COVID-19 lockdown phase in Bhojpur, Nepal.

Research Questions

This research endeavours to answer five research questions which are as follows:

a. How did English language teachers experience while teaching English language through virtual mode in the time of the COVID-19 lockdown phase?

b. What digital tools did they use while teaching English language through virtual mode?

c. What differences and similarities did they find between virtual class and physical class?

d. What pedagogical activities did they adopt in the virtual class?

e. What challenges did they encounter while teaching English language through virtual mode in the time of the COVID-19 lockdown phase?

Theoretical Framework

From an understanding of how English teachers situate themselves in virtual environment is a crucial part of spotting the ways that virtual involvement may enhance understanding of teaching and foster professional development. To gain insight into these teachers' experience, I adopted narrative theory and extracted the stories English teachers told in a sequence of formal interview. My decision to gather the narrative from them is depending on the notion that stories organise human experience. One role of narrative is that it performs in arranging human experience (Bruner, 1986). Polkinghorne (1988) says" it is through the growth of narrative that individual makes bridge among episode to generate cohesive understanding of their experiences (p.18)".

Narrative theory can be introduced as the study of "how stories help people make sense of the world, while also studying how people make sense of stories" (The Ohio State University, 2020). At the centre of this explanation is the notion that story telling is a rational and psychological tool for forming the comprehending and meaning given to incidents and experience (Egan, 1999). Martin et al., (2000) adopted the narrative theory as an educational strategy in a high school literature class. The author wanted to transport ideal concepts through physical experience (Yang & Hsu,2017). Authors applied narrative theory as the strategy to convey abstract idea through experiences.

In the process of shaping narratives, participants confer a hierarchy of experience that reveals the crucial meaning. In this regard, Laslett (1999) states:

> *We reasoned that in the process of narrativising their virtual experiences, participating teachers would provide insight into what they valued and what they found troubling in the virtual contexts and provide us with an opportunity to access motivation, emotion, imagination, subjectivity and action (p.329).*

Thus, narratives allowed for the close study of personal experience and provided an opportunity to understand that experience (Riessman, 2003).

Methodology

This research set out on a qualitative approach and existed on the aspect of narrative as an interpretive method. Since English teachers' stories are subjective, a narrative inquiry was used to explore English teacher's experience of virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown. A narrative inquiry matches for this research as it explores human experiences through life-story interviews, oral history, biography or other narrative

approach of humane experiences (Ford, 2020). A narrative inquiry is needed to give in-depth information about experience of English teacher in virtual class.

The participants were selected using non-random purposive sampling. The narrative data were collected from four secondary English teachers involved in teaching English language through virtual mode during COVID-19 lockdown first phase. The research area of the study included community secondary schools of Bhojpur municipality of Bhojpur district. Life story interview was adopted as a narrative method for gathering stories in the process of data collection.

Research Design

Research design indicates a strategy for answering research questions. Research design determines how researchers collect and analyze their data. This study adopted narrative inquiry strategy in which individual interview was used for gathering the four stories as the data. The researcher visited four teachers and built rapport with them in their respective schools. The teachers were requested to tell their stories based on their narrative schema that reflects their personal knowledge and experiences about virtual class in the time of COVID-19 lockdown phase. Open-ended questions were developed for conducting interview with the participants.

Participants

This study attempts to explore English language teachers' experiences of virtual class. They were engaged in teaching English language to their students in Community Secondary Schools of Bhojpur municipality through virtual mode since COVID-19 outbreak. The schools included two community schools located in Bhojpur municipality of Bhojpur district. English teachers were requested to participate in the study, and four of them agreed to take part. Participants were given the options of choosing pseudonyms, and they chose pseudonyms as they preferred. Thus, all four participants, Rohan, Rabin, Mohan and Sanjib are pseudonyms in this study. Both schools and participants were selected by adopting purposively. The decision was made of choosing four English teachers considering that they had lived experience of virtual teaching.

Instruments of Narration Collection

In this study, semi structured interview was adopted as the method of collecting stories from the participants. Some questions were developed as interview guides and interview was taken of the participants in an informal conversational way. Interview is suitable for gathering stories because interview is a means of collecting teachers' own stories about their experiences of virtual class. Moreover, interview can help researchers to better understand teachers' experiences and behaviors (Andorson & Kirkpatrick,2016). Here, the researcher needed to do was how to bracket narratives within interview data.

Narrative is extensively considered as the representation of data as a series of actions that are momentarily and spatially arranged (Herman, 2009). Each narrative includes a representation of an obstacle that was included at least two linked and spatially ordered sequential events; a reaction and relevance to teachers' virtual participation associated to the exploration of teaching experiences. These characterize differentiated narratives from other interview data, exemplified that participants were narrativising their experiences. Thus, interview was used as means of gathering narratives from the teachers for exploring their virtual experiences that had happened in a sequence of events.

Procedures of Data Collection

The narrative inquiry method was adopted to collect, analyze and interpret the data in this study. The reason of adopting narrative inquiry in this study is that narrative inquiry includes retelling the life stories of the participants. Initially, participants were chosen and rapport building was established with the participants. Then, semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants in the conversational way.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A thematic approach was adopted for data analysis and interpretation in the study. A thematic approach matches for narratives that develop in the environment of interviews, and this was the case for all of the narratives in the data set (Riessman, 2008). Moreover, it is generally used to a set of texts such interview transcript. Analysis of data involves familiarization, coding, generating themes, and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. After gathering data from interview, each recorded interview was transcribed into script. While transcribing data into script, the researcher listened to the whole recording and wrote down any words the researcher needed to familiarize with the technical jargon or slang. Then, the researcher transcribed an initial rough draft. At last, the researcher revisited transcript and edited it. And then, each transcript was coded in order to generate themes. Themes are defined and named. Individual narratives were built on the basis of various themes.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, findings yielded from the data have been presented under the findings and they have been discussed under the discussion.

Findings

The stories have been organized based on themes so as to answer the research questions. The narratives of the participants have been managed under four common themes. Pseudo names of the participants have been used in order to maintain anonymity and integrity.

Theme (1): Virtual class and its' psychological effect

In the narrative, one of the participants, Rohan opined with an abstract summarizing what he experienced while running the virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown phase. He felt scared at first but later, it was exciting for him. Rohan stated:

> *"I felt somehow scary feelings at beginning. But later, I found that teaching through virtual class was an exciting task. I felt that virtual class was effective and useful during COVID-19 Lockdown."*

The narration presented by Rohan reveals that the virtual class scared him at the beginning. However, it was exciting for him later and he believes that it was effective mode during pandemic period.

Similarly, another participant, Rabin expressed his narrative offered during interview. He also experienced as Rohan did about the virtual class. He felt excited at first. However, he got tension and stress as he lacked inadequate skill and knowledge of operating ICTs usage. He summarized:

> *"To say honestly, it was my first experience for me. So, I got excited at the beginning. But I felt tension and stress later during the class because of my insufficient knowledge and skill in ICT usage. Now, I feel comfort with virtual class. In my experience, virtual class through MS Team can be effective during pandemic."*

The narration narrated by Rabin exposes that he was excited. However, it created tension and stressed him too as he lacked sufficient knowledge and skills of operating ICTs. In the narration presented by next participant (Mohan) in his story shared the same experience with Rohan and Rabin about virtual class. He felt uneasy at the beginning of the class because he lacked adequate knowledge and skill. Mohan could not download student's attendance, set up time and deliver content. Mohan learnt later. So, he felt comfortable. He improved ICT related skill as well. He mentioned:

> *"I felt to some extent uneasy at first because I did not have enough knowledge and skill at first. I got confused of using MS Team. I could not download student's attendance. I could not set up time. I could not deliver content. Now I feel comfortable using it. In my view, virtual mode is suitable for pandemic. I have improved my computer skill."*

The experience shared by Mohan reveals the fact that virtual class made difficult to him some extent. However, it provided an ample opportunity for improving ICTs skills during the pandemic.

Next participant Sanjib along with his students heard many new terms such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face

seal, holding centre. He was much afraid of hearing about the virus. He felt that the virus snatched his freedom of wandering outside the home. He was locked inside the home like in the prison. It made him little depressed. He stated:

> *"Including me and my students heard many new terms such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face seal, holding centre during COVID-19 lockdown phase. I was much afraid of hearing about the virus. Sadly speaking, this virus snatched our freedom of wandering outside the home. We were locked inside the home like in the prison. It made me little depressed."*

In the narration shared by Sanjib reveals that he as well as his students became familiar with new terms related to the pandemic. They experienced frustration and depression during COVID-19 lockdown phase as it compelled them to lock at home for long time like in the prison by snatching their freedom of moving outside home.

Theme (2): Virtual vs. Physical Class

One of the participants Mohan shared his experience regarding difference between virtual and physical class. He could not engage his students in classroom discussion in virtual class. He failed to divide the class into groups and pairs which he did in the physical class. Due to this fact, interaction and discussion decreased in virtual class. As a result, the students could not improve their speaking skill in virtual class. He shared:

> *"I could not engage the students in classroom discussion in virtual class. I was not able to divide the class into groups and pairs which I did in the physical class. Due to this fact, interaction and discussion decreased in virtual class. As the result, my students could not improve their speaking skill in virtual class. I meant to say virtual class was less interactive and innovative."*

The narration shared by Mohan displays that virtual class was less interactive than physical class. As a result, the students were unable to improve their speaking ability in English language.

Rohan in his narrative shared similar story. He expressed that the virtual class was less interactive, collaborative and co-operative than the physical class. His students turned off camera and muted microphone in virtual class. He could not keep direct eye contact with his students which happened in physical class. However, teaching pronunciation was more effective in virtual class. He told:

> *"The main difference between two classes is that the virtual class was less interactive, collaborative and co-operative than the physical class. Because, there is no direct eye and face contact with the teacher. The students turn off camera and mute microphone so that I cannot make sure whether they are paying attention or not. However, I found that*

teaching pronunciation is more effective because students make less noise. So, the students paid more attention which helped them to enhance their pronunciation."

Sanjib saw that there was less communication among students and the teachers in the virtual class. He found that the physical class could be more effective than virtual class. He explained:

"I feel less communication between teachers and students in virtual class than in physical class. I can communicate with everybody through eye-contact in the physical. In this sense, the physical class could be more effective than virtual class."

Rabin summarized his narration on virtual vs physical class that the teachers must require basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs in virtual class. They did not integrate ICTs in their traditional physical class. Integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning. The teachers used lecture method in both classes which was the main similarity between two classes. He said:

"The main difference between two classes is that basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs is required in virtual class which might need in the physical class. The teachers can run the classes without ICT in their physical class whereas virtual class is impossible without ICTs. One similarity between them is that lecture method can be used in both classes. In my view, integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning.".

The narration narrated by Rabin reveals that integrating ICT is must in virtual class which is not necessary in the physical class. Integrating ICTs might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning.

Theme (3): Pedagogical Practices

A participant Rohan in his narrative summarized that he prepared the lesson plan and implemented in virtual class. Though there was not hard and fast rule for teaching English through virtual mode, setting device, presentation, feedback and checking assignment were some pedagogical activities. Questioning was the main tool for assessing the students. He mentioned:

"I have designed teaching activities which include device setting - 5 minutes, presentation and feedback -15 minutes, checking assigned task-10 minutes and feedback -10 minutes. The students display their task on the screen and they send their homework into my messenger by taking image of the task. I assess the students regularly after the class. I ask questions for evaluating the students."

Next participant (Rabin) often used lecture method in virtual classes. Rabin developed and gave assignment to the students individually. He set up a small white board on the wall of the room and he fixed his device pointing to the board, so that, the students could see on it through camera of their own device. He stated:

> *"Normally, I use lecture method for teaching in virtual class. I have set up a small white board on the wall of the room and fixed my laptop pointing to the board, so that, my students can see on it through their camera. I use white board as I do it in physical class because I don't have basic knowledge of using ICT. I don't use power point and video as other teachers do."*

Since Rabin lacked ICTs skills and knowledge during virtual class, he was forced to employ lecture method as in physical class.

On the same issue, Mohan first had to struggle to develop PowerPoint slides, visit YouTube video, and use Word and Excel. Later, he learnt and used these ICT tools. He visited Websites and gathered information from internet. Mohan constantly used questioning technique to evaluate his students. He shared:

> *"In the initial state of the class, I had to struggle to develop Power Point, visit and download YouTube video. Later, I came to know to chat, and to share files in Word and Excel. I visit websites and collect information from internet. I always evaluate the students by asking the question during and after the class. I give assignment. Now, they seem more curious than before."*

In the initial stage, he struggled much to acquire ICT skills as he did not have basic skills for running virtual class. However, he used his self-exploratory approach to executing virtual teaching through searching educational website, YouTube video and internet.

Sanjib usually shared screen as the practice. Lesson plan was designed based on the lecture method. The students were assessed by asking the questions at the end of class. He said:

> *" I often share screen by capturing during the class. I sometimes down load video and display it to the class. I design lesson plan based on lecture method. I evaluate at the end of the class by asking questions. The progress of the students is found to be poor."*

For Sanjib, although it was virtual class that he ran during the pandemic, his strategies adopted for seemed to be as in physical class which were mainly based on lecture method. In fact, he could not handle apps and other ICT devices. As a result, students' progress was found to be unsatisfactory.

Theme (4): Virtual class and its' challenges

Unstable internet, electricity and shortage of devices were the common challenges faced by Rohan and his students. Another challenge was the students' low participation. He shared:

> *"When I began the class, I encountered the problems such as irregular supply of electricity, unstable internet and shortage of devices (laptop, mobile phone). Some students remain silent during the class. I have inquired the reason of remaining silence. They replied that they are imposed to stay long time in the room in the name of social distancing. So, they are not interested to talk to anybody. The students leave the class instead of replying answers. They also lacked devices because they could not afford for the devises. They depend on mobile and data pack."*

Due to the lack of physical amenities such as poor internet connection, unstable electricity, lack of ICT devices, Rohan faced virtual teaching much challenging. Consequently, students' participants and interest were found to be less participatory and encouraging during the class.

Rabin was disturbed by unstable electricity which was his main challenge. Rabin lacked basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICT in the virtual class. So, it was a big obstacle for him that he was unable to integrate ICT in the virtual class. He mentioned:

"The main challenges that I faced while conducting virtual class are that virtual class is disturbed by unstable electricity and internet. The next challenge for me is that I am unable to use ICT in virtual class."

Mohan faced rather distinct challenges in the virtual class. One of the main obstacles was the natural disaster. Thundering and lightening disconnected him from the students in Jun, July and August. The next challenge was the mindset. He did not get used to with virtual class. He shared:

> *"I have suffered from rather distinct challenges in the virtual class. One of my main obstacles was the nature. Thundering and lightening often disconnected me from my students in Jun, July and August. The next challenge was the mindset. I do not believe in virtual class because I did not get used to with virtual class. "*

When it came to challenge, Mohans' experience was found to be different from others. He faced natural thundering, lightening and his traditional mindset as major problems.

Sanjib quoted the challenges that some of the students could not purchase devices and mobile data due to poverty. Few of them did not have Wi-Fi access at home. So, most of the students could not enrol the virtual class. As a result, some students were deprived

of taking virtual class. Economically advanced students benefited from the virtual class. Poverty is an obstacle of virtual class. He claimed:

> *"Many of my students failed to purchase devices, data or Wi-Fi due to their poverty. I could not bring all of them into the classroom. Some of my students could not enroll in the class. I knew that only economically advanced students can benefit from the virtual class. So, poverty is one of the main challenges of running virtual class."*

The main challenge Sanjib faced while adopting virtual class made was less financial as a majority of the students could not afford for ICT devices purchase such as laptops, Wi-Fi, internet services. As a result, only economically sound students got benefit from virtual class.

It can be concluded that virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google meet and MS Team software has become common tools of interaction for the teachers and students during COVID-19 lockdown phase. However, the teachers had no basic idea of virtual teaching. Some of them had little experience about virtual class during the first outbreak of COVID-19. But, some of them were quite novice for virtual English teaching.

So, they were going to have new experience of virtual environment for the first time. They had to struggle to manage the challenges occurred during process. They might have had unique experience of virtual teaching. They might have felt anxiety, loss and stress because they did not have enough knowledge and skills of using technology. They might have suffered from various socio-economic, mental stresses related problems.

On the other hand, some teachers might have enjoyed virtual class. Virtual education is considered to be the best option for continuing educational activities during the pandemic time.

Discussion

In this section, the narratives of the participants have been analyzed and discussed by adopting interpretive approach. Four themes from the stories of the participants have emerged.

The result revealed that English language teachers were scared at the beginning. However, they felt excited later. Thus, virtual class created both fear and excitement on the students. It was explored that the virtual education created anxiety, stress, and tension. In this connection, Irawan et al., (2020) claims that virtual class can boost the stress level of the learners and teachers. The social distancing leads to fear of uncertainty, physical discomfort, loneliness, anxiety and stress that negatively affect teaching-learning activities at schools (Xiang et al., 2020). Social distancing, scarcity of knowledge and skills in technology are common reasons that create stress, anxiety and tension.

It was also identified that the COVID-19 brought new terms in to common use such as corona virus, COVID, lockdown, isolation, contract tress, social distancing, PPE, mask, face seal, holding centre. This virus snatched fundamental freedom of the people. Because, people were locked inside their home like in the prison. It made them little depressed. In this regard, Leite et al., (2020) argue that the extended social distancing increases aloneness, anxiety, depression and even mental illness.

It can be argued that virtual class not only creates tension and mental stress but also it makes learning autonomous. The teachers as well the students developed their ICT skills. They could visit various web tools and get information and learn language in their own pace. Thus, virtual class enhances learners and teacher's linguistic and communicative skill of English language.

We can argue that the virtual class seems to be less interactive, collaborative and co-operative in comparison with the physical class. Moreover, there is less communication between the students and the teachers in the virtual class. Azmuddin, (2020), states that there will be interpersonal barriers of virtual class by the reason of less interpersonal relationship between learners and teachers, impersonal teaching context and less interaction amid the students. The reason is that the majority of the teachers fail to divide the class into group and pair in virtual class which they do in the physical class. The next reason is that the students turn off camera and unmute microphone in virtual class. In this condition, there won't be direct eye contact between the teachers and the students in physical class.

However, virtual class might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning by replacing traditional chalk and duster with ICT tools. The teachers must have basic knowledge and skill of integrating ICTs in virtual class. The teachers do not require knowledge and skill of using ICTs in physical class. Thus, integrating ICT might lead to paradigm shift in English language teaching and learning.

The findings reveal that the majority of the teachers use lecture method as a main pedagogical practice in the virtual class. It is also identified that the teachers lack basic knowledge and skill in ICT. So they adopt teacher centred –method in the virtual class. Due to lack of knowledge in ICT, the teachers feel jealous and inferior. The use of virtual lecture has been identified as virtual teaching strategy which engages the students (Rapp-McCall & Anyikwa, 2016). It was explored that Power Point presentation is implemented as the main pedagogical activity in virtual class. Visiting internet resources and downloading pictures, YouTube and presenting them and giving assignment are found to be other pedagogical practices of virtual class.

It is explored that the poverty can be considered to be the main challenge in virtual class. The participants claim that the students could not purchase devices and mobile data due to poverty. Consequently, the students are deprived of enrolling the virtual class. The result indicates that only economically advanced students could benefit from

the virtual class. The natural disaster can be considered as the next challenge of the virtual class. Thundering and lightening disconnected the students in Jun, July and August. Finally, unstable internet, electricity, shortage of devices and lack of technical literacy has been discovered as the common challenges in the virtual class. In this regard, Mahaye,N.E. (2020) argues that the instructor also encountered ICT tools challenges because of a lack of technical literacy, network bandwidth, poor network quality and lack of technical skills for communication .

Conclusion

The COVID-19 has remarkably affected schools including English language teaching in Bhojpur. Virtual class has become a solution in this condition across Nepal including Bhojpur municipality. Based on the stories of the participants, it can be concluded that virtual class seems an alternative solution rather than effective solution to continue teaching process during pandemic. English teachers have both positive and negative experiences of virtual class. Some positive experiences include virtual class enhances learners' autonomous; promotes teacher's knowledge and skills of using ICT.

Negative experiences are: virtual education creates anxiety, tension and stress to the teachers at the beginning of the class. Virtual class lacks sufficient interaction between teachers and the students. There is less communication between the teachers and the students because they do not have direct facial and eye contact.

Unstable electricity and internet are the main challenges of virtual class here in Bhojpur. Poverty is the next challenge of the virtual class. Majority of the students cannot buy mobile and purchase data. They are deprived of virtual education during pandemic lockdown.

Implications

The findings of the study might be utilized by teachers who will face similar condition in the future and run their class through virtual mode. This study might contribute to the authorities to view virtual class from English language teachers' experience and empower them for running virtual class. Accordingly, this study provides practitioners information about what challenges English language teachers face and what strategies they employ while running virtual class during COVID-19 lockdown phase. This study also gives reliable information to the educational institutions which should give intensive attention to their infrastructure by upgrading their ICT system. This study can bridge the gap in the literature by exploring teachers' experience about virtual class. This study also might be taken as a base for opening door for the similar studies in days to come. Therefore, this study can contribute to the further research about virtual class.

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Mentoring Teachers during Covid-19: A Collaborative Organizational Approach

Krishna Kumari Upadhayaya

Abstract

Mentoring is an essential part of teacher development. It is generally acknowledged that a master talent in mentoring is the ability to make resources available to a novice protégé to help them educate successfully. This study illustrates how mentorship technique aided in boosting teacher motivation for online instruction during COVID-19. According to the research, learning is successful when there are close relationships between mentors and mentees, opportunities for growth, and a supportive atmosphere. The investigation took place in a Nepalese school in Kathmandu. Ten English Language (EL) instructors from Nursery - 10 participated in the study. They were mentored by the head of the English Department and a computer assistant for two months. The Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) model of mentoring was used, which stood on connectivism philosophy. The study employed a narrative methodology. Semi-structured interview and thematic analysis techniques were used to produce and analyse data. Standing on their stories, the teachers were familiarized with the concept of Web-Enhanced Language Learning (WELL), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Finally, teachers produced technology enhanced lesson plans fusing the content with technology for the new pedagogy. To assess the results of mentoring during the pre-phase, while-phase, and post-phase, in-depth interviews were carried out. The findings highlight the difficulties mentees faced: a lack of confidence or a sense of inferiority in online teaching environment, as well as how self-sufficiency was restored after mentoring. According to the study, effective mentorship can still take place in challenging educational circumstances.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Covid-19, TPACK, Connectivism, Professional Development*

Introduction

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007), mentoring is a process in which individuals with a great deal of expertise, information, and skills provide advice and assistance to individuals at work or who are getting ready for the workforce. Moreover, in the field of education, the process of guiding, instructing,

influencing, and encouraging a new or inexperienced teacher is known as mentoring (Koki, 1997). In a workplace characterised by mutual trust and belief, a mentor teacher is usually perceived as the one offering leadership, direction, and instruction to another educator with less experience. Additionally, mentoring is a continual opportunity in which beneficial, intimate, and reciprocal connections are made while putting an emphasis on success, with emotional support playing a crucial role, according to Wong and Prekumar (2007). It may be inferred from the conversations that mentoring is a nurturing, professional, and cooperative process that motivates mentees to realize their full potential. The mentorship experience during the COVID-19 epidemic is examined in this article as a lesson for enhancing professional mentoring in school sectors and promoting teacher development.

This reflection is a result of helping to foster and support the development of teaching skills while conducting online instruction. During the pandemic, there was a unique opportunity for everyone to pause, reflect, and reconsider. After investing in a mentor/ mentee association before the epidemic, where trust and chemistry had already been built, it was only logical to continue mentoring. This was a special chance for mentors to ramp up amid the emergency and for mentees to offer a new outlook on their future evolution.

After 1990, web-based online learning started to gain popularity, but it wasn't until Covid-19 that we fully recognized the advantages of this sort of education, when the Government of Nepal announced for full online courses starting in March 2020. Online teaching platforms for learning make use of terms like online learning, digital learning, distance teaching, mobile learning, computer assisted learning, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and web enhanced learning. However, except the nation's sole Open University (NOU) (Kunwar et al., 2020), the Nepalese government has not been successful in addressing the online environment. Before Covid-19, many schools in Nepal had never integrated online instruction into the classrooms. Nepalese Government's sudden announcement to transport teaching on this platform, caught the teachers off guard. Many schools in Nepal were unable to conduct successful web enhanced classes in lack of proper operating system.

Schools at all levels were required to make an urgent move to network education in response to COVID-19, which may be both an opportunity and a difficulty (Toquero, 2020). Because of this, there has been a lot of research on emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak. For instance, Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) used Google Meet to conduct a case study with 950 students. The outcomes demonstrated that the quick switch to online learning was successful. Likewise, the Zoom transformation, a significant degree of interactive distance learning, innovations for unintentional instructional reform, collaborative competence and self-help, technical difficulties, and pedagogical uncertainty are just a few of the interesting phenomena Langford and Damsa (2020) discovered in Norway. Additionally, Putra et al. (2020) looked into how Indonesian students learned about the COVID-19 pandemic by accessing ten websites

there. According to some academics, using an LMS that supported teaching and learning could address every problem with online education.

A number of learning tools are provided by the Learning Management System (LMS) for effective online teaching learning. It is a well-balanced software that allows teachers to check on students' progress, provide feedback, and form connections. It also enables easy access to learning resources (Kehrwald & Parker, 2019). Al-Fraihat et al. (2020) claim that a well-designed LMS connects people through online collaborative associations, seminars, and specialized trainings. Since Nepalese schools lacked a learning management system, students' learning was affected considerably during Covid-19. While many teachers looked to LMS for a good learning environment, many additional online interactive technologies were used in its absence. The successful stories that were shared by some well-known universities and schools turned out to be useful lessons with interactive tools. Self-awareness, passion, and intellectual engagement all decreased after switching to online classrooms, while technology use also merely improved (Patricia, 2020). Additionally, Coman et al. (2020) emphasized how teachers' poor organizational and technical skills as well as their ineffective teaching methods for the online environment may have led to the decline in learning and engagement. In the same way, Shrestha (2018) had voiced some concerns regarding instructors' motivation, understanding, and confidence regarding information and communication technologies in the setting of Nepal.

Research suggests that at the start of the lockdown, teachers felt isolated from their colleagues and students due to the physical distance (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Teaching students in the virtual world or cyberspace was unthinkable in Nepal at the outset. Concerns were raised about students requiring constant assistance from teachers were left on their own fates (Poulou, 2020). Concerns were also expressed concerning the logistics of delivering distant education, including how to modify lesson plans, give assignments and feedback, and conduct formative and summative tests. The COVID-19 pandemic had prompted people to reconsider schools' and teachers' roles (Colao et al., 2020). The majority of the time, teachers had to do their own preparations because, according to studies thus far, only a small number of schools offered expert-led training for preparing teachers for online sessions.

Theoretical framework

In order to perform mentorship, this study adopts a connectivist perspective. ICT is now a necessary component of the twenty-first century education. Today, it is thought that teachers should have a foundational understanding of ICT in order to best prepare their pupils for future success. Digital skills are now viewed to be essential for teachers as well as students. A digital-era theory is connectivism. It highlights how internet tools like search engines, web browsers, online forums, wikis, and social networks open up new learning opportunities. The instructors adopted connectivism as a way to improve and cascade their learning because they not only learned to connect with

other members of the school community online but also with teachers all over the world through webinars. Both connective knowledge and the connectivism learning theory are modern methods to understanding and studying learning in the digital age, both in terms of what they offer and what they question. (Siemens, 2005; Downes, 2006). Siemens (2005) states the eight principles of connectivism:

1. The diversity of opinion is the cornerstone of knowledge and learning.
2. Learning is the process of linking specialized nodes or information sources.
3. Non-human devices may contain learning capabilities.
4. Knowledge is not as important as learning.
5. Connections need to be maintained and fostered in order to encourage continual learning.
6. One essential skill is the ability to recognize links between different subjects, theories, and concepts.
7. Learning activities are intended to provide learners with current, correct information.
8. Making decisions is a learning experience in and of itself.

The researcher mentored the teachers using connectivism as the theoretical framework for the study. The mentorship process included the implementation of Siemens' (2006) connectivism taxonomy as a phased view of how teachers interact and investigate learning in a wired context. The taxonomy starts with the fundamentals before moving on to the more intricate units:

1. **Awareness and receptivity -** At this stage, the participants (in this case, teachers) are exposed to resources and tools and acquire the fundamentals of organizing a plethora of data. For instance, internet, wikis, blogs, and aggregators.

2. **Forming – connection –** After completing stage 1, the participants move on to level 2, where they actively participate in the learning environment by choosing and utilizing tools and resources. The needs of the participants have an impact on the resource choices.

3. **Contribution and involvement –** At this point, the participants must be able to select the tool that is most appropriate for the task at hand. Depending on what they need to know, do, or believe, a learner might decide to sign up for blog feeds, go to a conference, locate a mentor, or enroll in a course.

4. **Pattern recognition –** The participant moves from passively consuming content to actively contributing to the environment. They now know more about what is going on within the network or environment as a whole. A learner will become

better at identifying new informational connections or "changing winds" of knowledge the longer they engage in a learning environment.

5. **Meaning-making –** The participant is capable of understanding meaning at this level. What do the fresh patterns suggest? What do the adjustments and changes in patterns mean? How should a student react, change, and adapt? Action and shifting one's viewpoint on things are based on making meaning.

6. **Praxis –** The participant can conduct a critical analysis of the devices, procedures, and elements that make up an ecology or network through the cyclical process of praxis, which entails reflection, experimentation, and action. The development, modification, and renewal of their own learning network are actively supported by the learners.

According to connectivism, knowledge is activated when a learner connects to and shares information with a learning community, marking the beginning of learning (Kop and Hill, 2008). The digital taxonomy below, known as Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, illustrates the connectivism taxonomy in Figure 1 and Figure 2 giving the glimpse of the tools used in the digital taxonomy.

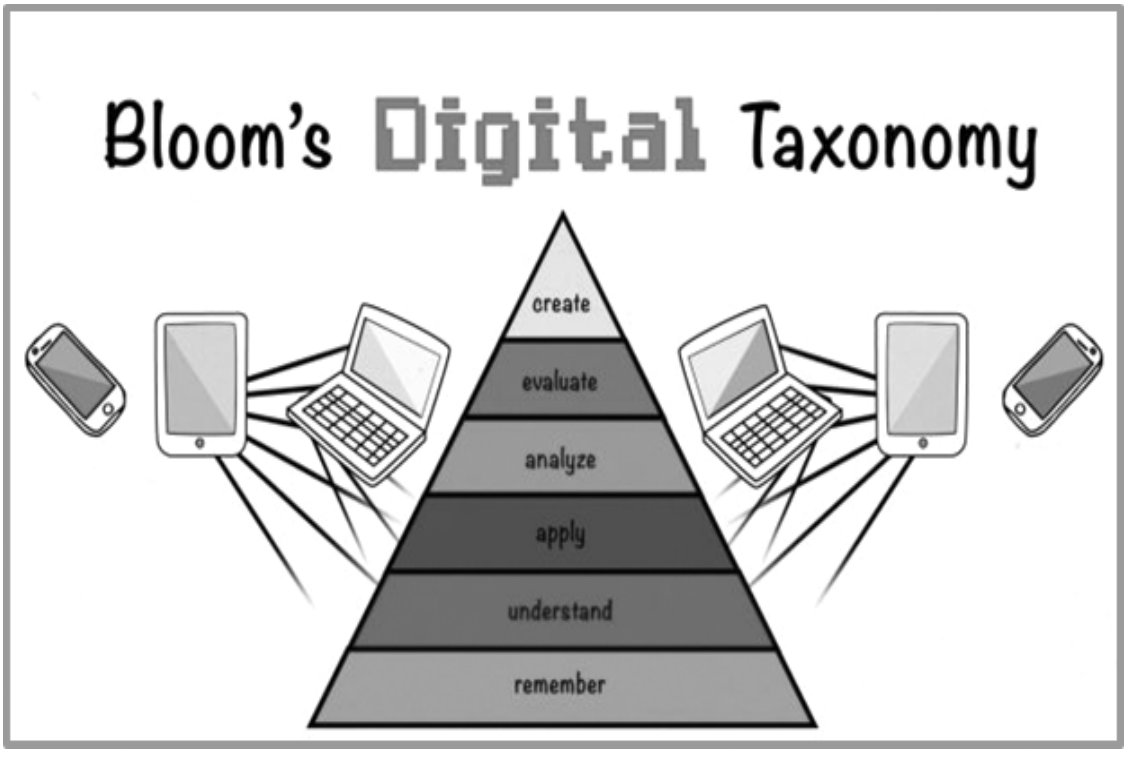

Figure 1: Bloom's digital taxonomy (source: www.educatorstechnology.com)

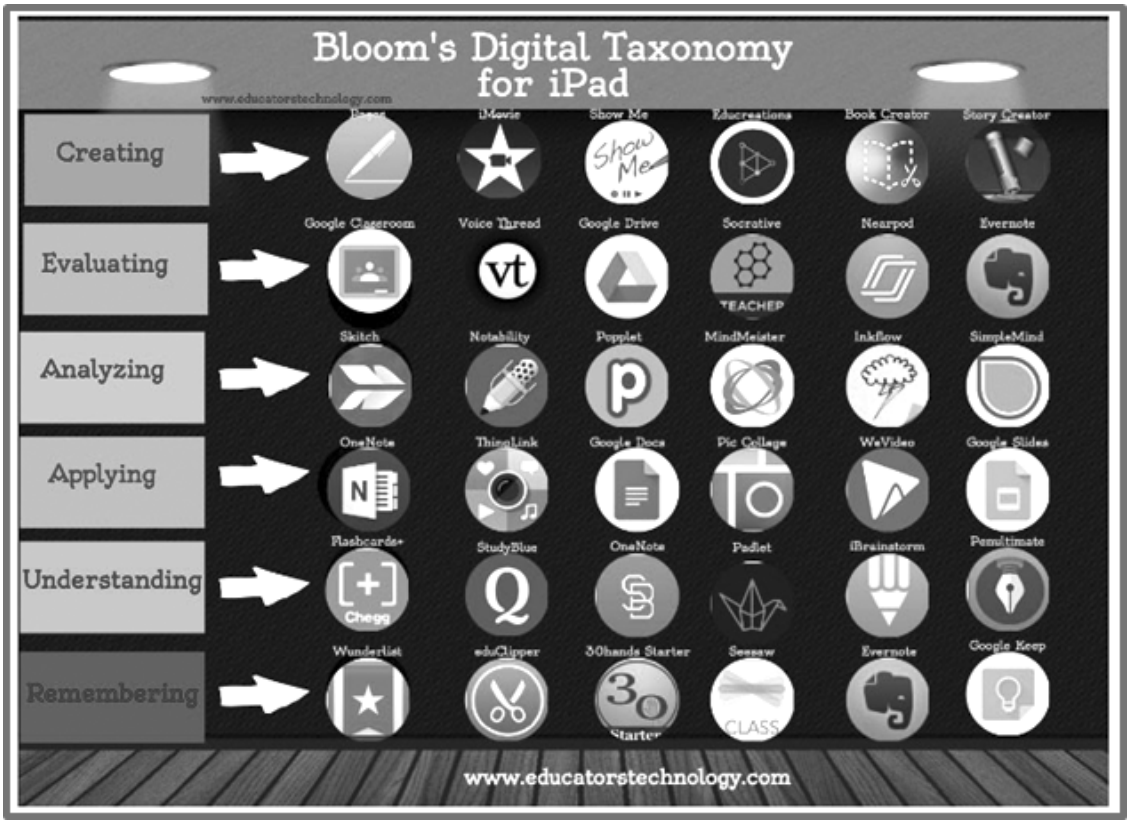

Figure 2: Bloom's digital taxonomy for iPad (source: www.educatorstechnology.com)

Teachers used digital tools such as Zoom, PowerPoint, Gmail, Google Drive, Google docs, Google slides, Power point slides, Canva, Padlet, Facebook, messaging tools and more to engage students in virtual teaching and learning, Teachers formed connections while choosing the most beneficial tools that facilitated self-organization and the spread of knowledge. Social media was used by teachers to apply connectivism in the classroom. During mentoring, the teachers were the learners and later on these learners helped in connecting to the knowledge while teaching other learners in classrooms. Teachers and students connected with each other using common devices including laptops, desktop PCs, and mobile.

In the study that I conducted for the purpose of the article, the learners (in this case, the teachers being mentored) were advanced to the sixth level by including them in various activities required for each level. Setting the goals and objectives for the mentoring process required a great deal of assistance from the taxonomy. Through communication nodes, the teachers had to produce and share their expertise with their connections. From the plethora of digital tools with the help of Bloom's Digital Taxonomy teachers were equipped with the technological tools.

Significance of the study

Several studies have established that online teaching learning provides numerous alternatives for both students and teachers (Koirala et al., 2020). However, as Zarei and Mohammadi (2021) point out, if the technological foundations are not in place, online learning could become a problem. Similarly, the epidemic highlighted a lack of a good system in higher education as well as educated teachers to use digital platforms and become aware of the world's fast-changing education atmosphere (Rashid & Yadav, 2020). Furthermore, two-thirds of 226 Nepalese college students preferred traditional classrooms to online classes, according to an online survey. Furthermore, Nepal et al. (2020) disclosed, 77.8% of children choose conventional schools.

The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016) emphasizes lifelong learning. Similarly, the secondary English curriculum specifically mentions creative learning (MoE, 2019). Unfortunately, many Nepalese schools still follow the conventional educational style. Despite the fact that SSDP (2016) highlights the importance of ICT-integrated teaching, numerous schools' challenges with online classes were visible during Covid-19 (MoE, 2019). From the empirical study and policy reviews above, it can be inferred that online classrooms can be effective in disseminating knowledge, but there are challenges with technology use, teacher efficiency and student satisfaction.

As a result, it was realized that in the process of knowledge dissemination, the crucial role falls on teachers. Consequently, the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) method of mentoring was maintained in order to develop competencies required to teach the technologically untrained teachers. Based on the connectivist idea, certain digital teaching and learning tools were presented while taking the Bloom's Digital Taxonomy into consideration. In the early stages of the study, different digital tools were employed for the remembering, comprehending, and implementing phases. The lessons were distinct from those in the earlier stages because they were intended to help students acquire higher-order learning abilities, such as analyzing, evaluating, and making tools. The teachers were required to create their lesson plans based on the taxonomy after receiving mentoring on the use of digital tools. Here, teachers were expected to stand on three aspects: technology, pedagogy, and content while fusing all the three would produce the TPACK lesson plans. The following research questions were addressed in the study:

Research questions

1. What are the experiences of the teachers teaching online classes during Covid-19?
2. What are the challenges faced by the teachers?
3. How mentoring can be helpful during difficult times for teachers?

Literature review

Studies on teacher mentorship show benefits for English teachers on a local and a global scale for teacher research, that is, teacher study into professional issues that affect them (Edwards, 2021). During the mentoring process, teachers who require assistance are watched over by teachers with more classroom experience, pedagogical processes, and classroom management responsibility. According to Mckingley (2017), mentor teachers are qualified educators with in-depth expertise in both their fields of speciality and the conditions of the educational setting. It is much more helpful in emergency situations since it gives senior educators the responsibility of problem-solving. Additionally, in a collaborative effort to support one another, teachers start expressing their problems and learning from each other. As stated by Moody (2020), formalizing the mentor role for seasoned instructors as opposed to an expert also helps to enhance academic professionalism by giving teachers a new position to hold on the career ladder. As a result, mentorship as a concept is evolving.

Mentoring responsibilities should not conflict with those of management, supervision, or training. Instead, it is one of the teacher-to-teacher professional discussions. For many teachers, COVID-19 caused an increase in stress, tension, and isolation. The relationships involving mentor and mentee and the cyclical nature of mentoring allowed for the issues caused by the epidemic to be resolved (Hudson, 2013). Instead of the mentee's normal reliance on their mentor and the idea that the mentor has all the solutions, the adoption of the mentorship can be dynamic and beneficial to both parties. At this particular moment, both mentors and mentees faced the same dangers, demands, and lack of fixed path. Additionally, COVID-19 promoted a sense of urgency for personal growth by promoting a greater understanding of what matters and the value of career ambitions (McMaster et al., 2020).

Mentoring is based on a variety of ideas in educational settings, including those concerning development, learning skills, teaching, coaching skill training models, leadership theory, and the researchers' own theory (Ehrich et al., 2001). The fundamental building block to start mentoring is reflection. According to Cherkowski (2019), the construct of reflection is a key finding in the field of education studies. Schon (1983; 1987) asserts that reflection is an essential task that experts (mentors and mentees) must engage in to aid in their quest for fresh perspectives on their field. According to Woloshyn et al. (2019), encouraging the general growth and wellbeing of the mentors and mentees is a shared commitment. Mentorship thus assists in the growth of instructors. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), qualified instructors constantly strive for both high standards of instruction and, more crucially, personal growth. As technology-enhanced trainings helped teachers run more effective online classrooms throughout the crisis, mentoring teachers acted as a kind of teacher development. Interactions were crucial to understanding the situation and giving the teachers the proper support during the process.

The review makes it very evident that mentoring is a technique for helping teachers think critically about their own experiences. It can help teachers who want to adapt their teaching methods or achieve their next goal. In the majority of mentoring relationships, educators and mentors examine their work and seek out solutions for any issues they see.

Research methods and procedures

Research design

The selected methodology for this research is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry, in the words of Clandinin (2013), is a way of studying and understanding experiences. The participants' narrated stories helped the researcher comprehend their experiences, which aided in the process of determining how prepared they were to conduct online lessons. The collection of narrative data, can be oral, written, or even audio-visual, can be done via interviews, observations, diaries, and written stories (Elliott, 2005). The participants' interviews, which were performed in a blended mode, were the study's main source of data.

Interviewing the teachers both in-person and virtually using Zoom was a significant part of the process of collecting and analyzing the data. In-depth interviews were conducted in four different settings. In the first month, there was a weekly meeting with the teachers. Teachers were educated on using the Zoom, interactive tools like Quizlet and Padlet, social media like Facebook, and messaging tools like messenger and WhatsApp in the first two weeks. In the other two weeks, through class observation, lesson planning with the concept of TPACK, and evaluation techniques via Google Docs, and Google Forms were put into effect. Finally, the teachers developed a log book to reflect on their classrooms throughout the second month helping to understand their progress in terms of confidence and context alignment with technology. Narrative inquiry was very useful in comprehending the teachers' experiences, which made it possible for the teachers to receive the proper mentorship.

Research site and participants

Participants of the study were purposefully selected. According to (Wolcott, 1994), the participants are carefully picked to reflect on a variety of experiences in relation to their learning environment, providing the researchers with material to rewrite their narrative. From Nursery to Class 10, ten English language teachers out of a particular school in Kathmandu Valley participated in this study. The research subjects were assigned pseudonyms in order to maintain ethical confidentiality. Before, after, and during the research process, these teachers were preparing for online classes in order to address the issues in classrooms like demotivation of students, online pedagogy, online teaching materials, lesson plans, interactivity, collaborative learning, digital tools and

so forth. When they were ready, the volunteers were selected for the study after being told of its objectives. Teachers used laptop computers and cell phones to instruct pupils online.

Research tools

Interviews, and digital artefacts were used to understand how the classes were being taken. The digital artefacts included the teachers' lesson plan, pictures, videos, audios, documents etc. The teachers were subjected to a hybrid semi-structured interview to learn more about their workplace environment and to understand exactly their prior and subsequent classroom experiences. Over the period of two months, four interviews with the teachers were conducted. After the initial interview, others were also performed to find out more about current events, employees' working conditions, their comfort level with media technology, and the effectiveness of online courses. Interviews were intended to material production, homework, classwork, and feedback, as well as formative and summative evaluation design. The interviews provided the glimpses of practices adapted in online classrooms.

Data collection, analysis, and mentoring

Interviews with participants were conducted in order to gather data since the tales of the participants would be crucial in the process of creating meaning. They were given semi-structured open-ended questions to answer, and were free to do so (Bartholomew, Henderson & Marcia, 2000). In order to be transcribed afterwards, interviews were taped. Second, the evaluation of the online classes was aided by the usage of digital artefacts such as presentations, audio, video, files, photos, etc.

This study used a procedure of data gathering and analysis to obtain the required data. Following the analytical phase, coding and categorization were used to extract information, as well as the participants' common and unique experiences, which had to be related to the chosen study issues. Thematic categorization in relation to research questions was used to evaluate and explain the data (Miles et al., 2014). Inductive coding methods were applied in the study. To gauge the effectiveness of each mentoring week, emergent words, phrases, and paragraphs in the translated data were labeled during the coding process. While in data analysis process, the weekly mentoring stages could be used to gauge how well the teachers were doing in their online courses.

Findings

The results showed that in a learning environment, mentoring can aid in examining co-workers' needs. The instructors' stories demonstrated how the mentors supported them. When we asked them if they appreciated mentoring, they all responded enthusiastically, saying they did since it gave them access to technological aspects they had never

experienced before. The mentoring had a positive impact on the teachers' ability to provide online classes. The ability to create the syllabus for online classes was valued by the teachers. Teachers may experience some pressure during mentoring because of the additional work they must complete, but they may also experience happiness if they receive appropriate professional development guidance and advice. The mentors saw the mentoring relationship as supportive and left them with feeling encouraged, motivated and enthusiastic. They recognized the mentees' needs and encouraged their growth by fostering an environment of openness and affirmation in the classroom. The mentees and mentors worked together to resolve challenges with the online classroom.

The results of this study showed that the TPACK mentorship strategy was effective in teaching teachers how to incorporate technology into their lesson plans and subject matter. The findings indicate that the instructors' confidence levels in their Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) and Content Knowledge (CK) were greater than their confidence levels in their Technological Knowledge (TK) and Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK). After being able to apply technology in their subject matter, their classroom pedagogy, and in both of them, the teachers revealed that the development of the skills necessary to teach using technology was aided by TPACK. It was anticipated that if technology usage in education continued in the future, these instructors would be able to mentor other inexperienced teachers once they had mastered the use of digital tools (see figures 1 and 2) to integrate them with curriculum and pedagogy. The teachers began conducting live online lessons as soon as they were finally able to create their lesson plans using the TPACK paradigm. The teacher accounts from the first two weeks to the next two weeks show how they gradually gained power through technological utilization. The first two weeks were spent introducing the online teaching resources to the teachers and providing them with the necessary technological equipment. The teachers, however, received training to use the technologies in their online lesson plans throughout the course of the remaining two weeks. The teachers were happy and felt more professional because they were familiar with the communication tools. Below are the teachers' comments from the first two weeks.

> *I don't have a laptop. I just feel so anxious how I will be able to run online classes without it. (Nursery Teacher)*
>
> *I have a mobile. I would be happy if I could run online classes with it, but I worry about the durability of the battery. I have six classes in a day. (Class I teacher)*
>
> *Now, I have a laptop and I can also run Zoom classes on it. (Class II teacher)*
>
> *I have a laptop but I am still facing the problem with designing the PowerPoint slides. (LKG teacher)*

In the lateral two weeks, teachers responded this way.

I feel really great that we teachers have started sharing each other's stories to learn how our classes have been running. It feels so comforting when we get someone ready to help. I feel empowered. I guess, now I can guide the new teachers in the use of technology in online classes. (Class UKG teacher)

I had never tried PowerPoint, Videos, audios, or even the pictures in my class. Now, I feel so comfortable with these as my students are more motivated toward completing their assignments. (Class VIII teacher)

Mentoring has helped me so much that I can confidently run online classes. (Class VI teacher)

Additionally, TPACK-trained teachers said it was incredibly straightforward to engage with students using numerous connective tools available online, such as Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp. Through the contacts they formed at worldwide conferences, the instructors' empowerment to choose what they wanted to learn also benefited from Zoom. Instead of waiting for mentors to teach them, they may uncover their zone of proximal growth on their own by interacting with like-minded individuals, including other teachers from around the world. By learning about the authentic teaching resources that were available through open resources, the teachers were able to connect their own learning to what they were doing in the classroom. The teachers asserted that the connectivism concept served as the learning framework for COVID-19. As they provided virtual classes for both themselves and their students, they claimed that the advent of connectivism was inevitable. They also came to understand that knowledge has many faces and is not confined to one field, the teachers connected with the appropriate tools from many learning platforms rather than relying solely on one. Since connections are more common outside of classroom boundaries, learning shouldn't be limited to its four walls as narrated by the teachers. The best strategy could be letting the students to look into the matter on their own. Let's look into the teachers' narratives.

I believe that our educational system is perhaps too outdated, making it difficult to handle situations like this. However, because of this circumstance, the teachers have had to sharpen their digital skills, which could be useful for the upcoming new educational system. (Class VII teacher)

I created a Messenger group communicated with each other and provided my opinion on their tasks. This way, it was easy to connect with students. Thank God, technology could be used this way! (Class V teacher)

Previously, I used to have very less activity-based teaching strategy. After connecting myself with the OPEN Community of Practice, I can discuss and ask for help about finding the right teaching materials for my students. This connection worldwide is so useful in shaping my professionalism. (Class X teacher).

I didn't know that knowledge was so pervasive and we could grasp them through communication. (UKG teacher)

The teachers received training on connectivism's application to online teaching as a part of the mentoring process. They were the active participants rather than the mere receivers of information. Teachers were able to connect with other educators from around the world because of the mentorship strategy. During the process, the teachers realized the feeling of togetherness in overcoming the problem. In the beginning, all teachers were found perplexed especially, the foundation level teachers; Nur-UKG. Later, when they worked together with the whole school teachers and mentors, their sense of belonging was developed, which helped in asking and interacting without any fear. As a mentor I learnt, teachers can be the real change makers in school if provided with proper mentoring. It was revealed that, mentoring is useful for both the new and experienced teachers to work and explore the changing classroom pedagogies.

Mentoring was created to assist teachers in their professional development. I realized that online education, in the hands of qualified teachers, benefited the children. Furthermore, inexperienced teachers gained ideas and knowledge about the importance of CALL, MALL, and WELL as the students and teachers used the computer-based teaching, mobile learning and finding resources from the web.

Data analysis gave the mentors a clear map on how to help teachers. For example, from the first interview, the administration decided to provide laptops to all teachers on the condition that the cost be deducted from their salaries over time. In other phases of data analysis, it was understood that the administration needed to organize mentoring to familiarize the teachers with online classes. Mentoring was organized by the head of English department and a computer teacher to guide the teachers with the content's fusion with the technology. In the second week, the teachers received training on how to run Zoom classes. During the third week, the information on teaching methods was collected. According to the data, despite the fact that teachers could now share the screen and teach simultaneously, students' attendance in class was declining day by day. At this price, we had to reconsider whether our classes were inspiring enough to motivate our students.

Then, personally, the researcher set up an interview with students in classes IX and X to find out what was causing the students' distraction. They claimed that they were given a lot of work, that the lecture method was boring, and that they only had a mobile and no laptop. I sought help and began attending webinars hosted by educators who had previously taught online courses. These webinars taught me, using digital tools, teachers could make their classes more interactive and engaging. Teachers also were suggested to look for help on their own so that we could collaboratively work on the problems. Then, we (I and computer teacher) worked on to provide the teachers with online learning mode of teaching environment; WELL (Web Enhanced Language Learning), CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), and MALL (Mobile Assisted

Language Learning). The teachers provided some videos, pictures, audio and texts for the students to download and do their homework, which addressed CALL approach. Similarly, those students without laptop also could download the files in their mobile and do their tasks addressing the MALL approach. Moreover, the teachers searched for already made available material on the internet through the WELL approach.

After all, the teachers started taking class tests using Google Forms, and Microsoft Forms. They used Padlet most often for interactive classes. Likewise, they also used WhatsApp, Messenger for communication and feedback. Finally, the teachers started running improved online classes after the 4th and the final meeting. The data collected from the students and teachers helped to understand the situation with the school's readiness to run online classes which helped in mentoring the teachers.

During mentoring, the two most important tools used were interviews and feedback, which were used in a progressive manner: one after another. The teachers received some feedback following each meeting to help them improve their teaching. The classes of the teachers, then, reflected again on their classroom proceedings. The gap was discovered after listening to the teachers' narratives, and feedback was given once more. This procedure followed a sequential order that lasted for four different sittings, as shown in the diagram below.

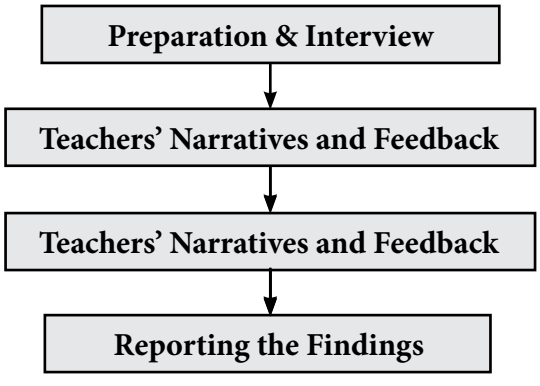

Figure 3. Teacher mentoring steps

Figure 3 depicts the four stages of mentoring in sequential order, highlighting the objective of each stage and its relationship to the next.

As teachers, we had never done such collaborative work together in school before. However, working together, we learnt a great deal of challenges and the benefits of it. The base level teachers were the most anxious teachers in school, but their anxiety was overcome when they were mentored through discussion and search for solution. I clearly recall the LKG instructor calling me the first time she used Zoom to take a video class. I also recall how parents loved the first-grade teacher for her amazing, interactive teaching methods that included the use of photos, videos, and online games. When teachers were later moved to Microsoft Teams, there was no longer any tension between

them, and instead, they appeared more enthusiastic and upbeat. Some instructors even showed me how to use Microsoft Teams' chat features. Additionally, they stated that they had begun utilizing Microsoft Forms for formative assessment. The teachers, then started designing the classes as if in face-to-face teaching, even arranging circle time for Nur-UKG students. From class I-X, teachers used PowerPoint slides as well taught the students to present their projects in PPT slides. Finally, teachers started self-exploratory approach to identify and search for solution in their classes.

Anyone involved in the teaching of children will gain from this study. It motivates teachers to pursue training in technology-assisted learning. My research indicates that if teachers have the right guidance in school, they can give good online classes.

Conclusion and implications

This study focused on the difficulties faced by mentees in a school where they collaborated with mentors to receive the right guidance on managing the online classes. The difficulties the mentees had were examined in order to offer useful suggestions that helped with the issues of technologically ineffective classes. Few could have predicted the issues that educators and school administrators would confront as a consequence of the COVID-19. This small-scale research project demonstrates what it was like for Nepali teachers to teach online throughout the pandemic.

From the examination of teachers' experiences using technology in the online classes, the mentors and the mentees were able to learn a lot about the psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the conversation on how mentorship can help teachers through challenging circumstances in the classroom while empowering them to feel competent, independent, and connected to their students. If schools implement mentoring in all challenging situations, it will improve both the working environment and the overall well-being of the instructors. Mentoring occurs when teachers feel, they need assistance in implementing effective pedagogy in the classroom. Mentoring is a bottom up approach addressing the needs of teachers and for professional school environment.

In educational systems, mentoring is intended to assist in luring, inspiring, and developing future leaders. There are frequently even additional advantages associated with the use of mentorship programs. Schools with mentoring programs significantly improve student success, effective teaching, and classroom teaching methods for new teachers. When instructors collaborate, schools become more consistent, which has a good impact on the learning environment, student involvement, and school atmosphere. There are two significant, long-lasting effects of mentoring for both students and teachers in educational settings. The teachers meticulously construct the learning process for the pupils while keeping in mind the challenges they face in a variety of circumstances. The senior instructors are always prepared to mentor and coach the new teachers, which is another important factor supporting the teachers' overall wellbeing.

The third benefit of organizational development is that it increases the possibility that exceptional teachers will emerge from less-experienced ones when employees discover a motivating environment among their co-workers. Mentoring is a great method to show that you are human. Therefore, management of the institution must have a structure in place to cultivate an environment that supports mentoring, whether it be in a school or university. The ideal way for organizations to implement mentorship policies is through action research, where teachers begin working on the issues independently after obtaining the most recent information from the literature or assistance from a highly senior person. The organizations should provide a time frame to address specific difficulties the teachers have once mentoring policies have been created. The length of a mentoring relationship might range from a few months to a full year and beyond. Once the problem has been resolved, the teachers may go on to another one in the same way as previously described or conduct another cycle of mentoring. As shown in figure 4 below, the mentoring process is a circular one.

Figure: 4: The circular process of teacher mentoring

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World Englishes, Monolingual Bias, and Standardized Tests in a Multilingual World: Ideologies, Practices, and the Missing Link

Laxmi Prasad Ojha

Abstract

As English continues to spread as an international lingua franca, there is a growing diversity in its use around the world. As a result, there are calls for embracing the diversity in the teaching, learning and assessment of the language. At the same time, there is a growing criticism against the widely taken language tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for being guided by the pervasive ideology of monolingual native speakerism and devaluing the multilingual speakers and the multiple varieties of Englishers. Against this backdrop, this conceptual paper focuses on the influence of the World Englishes movement on these so-called standardized tests and critically examines how the existing assessment practices fail to represent the multilingual repertoires and actual language practices of the diverse range of test-takers around the world. Based on the critical analysis of relevant literature on World Englishes, the paper highlights the progress, challenges and possibilities for incorporation of more diverse models of language tests in a translingual world that we live in today.

Keywords: *multilingualism; linguistic diversity; World Englishes; standardized language tests; language ideologies, language bias*

Introduction

The use of the English language has grown multifold in all spheres of life around the world in recent times. Scholars (e.g., Horner et al., 2011; McKay, 2002) argue that most of the users of the English language are people who speak more than just one language. With the rise of British colonies, the English language flourished in different parts of the world mainly in Africa and Asia since the seventeenth century. English expanded further due to the use in business and administration in the colonial countries as it promised economic benefits to the local population ultimately developing as a language of power and prestige (B. Kachru, 1986). Evidently, even after the fall of the colonial power, English has continued to enjoy its spread and dominance. In fact, it is growing

faster now than it did in the past because of globalization and technological innovations (Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019), and has now become the dominant language in countries outside of its core areas with historical eminence resulting in more non-native speakers than the native speakers (Crystal, 2003; Davies, 2004)

With the widespread use of English in education, mass media, business, and technology (Phyak, 2011), English is gradually used in everyday life in many countries outside the historically English-speaking countries which B. Kachru (1986) terms the Outer and Expanding Circles. In the so-called Outer Circle countries, English enjoys the status of one of the official languages in many countries such as India, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, South Africa, and Pakistan. In these countries, English is extensively used in all spheres of life, primarily as a contact language between speakers of different languages but it is also used as the first language by many (Alsagoff, 2010; Haidar & Fang, 2019; Kirkpatrick, 2020, Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2006; Taiwo, 2009). English was introduced—or rather imposed—in these countries through colonialism but the language has penetrated in everyday lives with several local varieties evolving in this process. India can be taken as a good example, in this regard, where, according to Mukherjee and Bernaisch (2020), a semi-autonomous variety of English has evolved as English came in contact with local languages and cultures. Similarly, many countries that B. Kachru (1986) initially classified as Expanding Circle countries have also witnessed an exponential growth in the spread of English mainly through internet-based mass media and inclusion of English as a subject and medium of instruction in education. For example, the growing use of English has made it "anything but foreign language" (Giri, 2015, p. 95) in Nepal, a country with no colonial history and direct connection with the English language. Similar to many other developing countries, English is spreading in everyday lives in Nepal mainly due to the influence of neoliberal education policy giving rise to the English medium instruction in school education (Phyak & Ojha, 2019). Various studies (E.g., Ojha, 2018; Phyak, 2016; Poudel & Choi, 2021; Sah & Li, 2019) have documented how the local educational policies have contributed to the growth of English in the country as children are introduced to English through teaching of English as a subject and medium of instruction.

Although finding the exact number of English language users is not possible, various scholars (e.g., Crystal, 2008; Schneider, 2011) estimate that nearly two billion people now use English around the world. Most of these speakers use English as an additional language and now outnumber the native speakers in the historically English-speaking countries known as the Inner Circle countries. As English has expanded in countries outside of its historical territories, it has also gone through significant adaptations and modifications (Mukherjee & Bernaisch, 2020). In these situations, English needs to serve a diverse range of functions for the people coming from various contexts and this has given birth to multiple forms of this language. Various factors related to history, politics, economy and culture and technology can be attributed to the unprecedented spread of English resulting in the emergence of various new varieties of English (Sharma, 2008).

As Jenkins (2015) states, Kachru's Three Circle Model has remained influential over the years to understand the "sociolinguistic realities of the spread of English" (p. 15). The growth of use of English in the Outer and Expanding Circle has brought the new varieties of Englishes to the center of discussion and research. As the demand of English in these countries grows, textbook writers, teachers and test constructors are bound to divert their attention to these countries to make them more appropriate to the local needs. The growth of local varieties of English in different parts of the world has brought scholars to an agreement that "English is a heterogeneous language with multiple norms and diverse grammars" (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 232). Discussing the changes English has witnessed in recent times, Jenkins (2006) argues that "English has been developed as a nativized language in many countries of the Outer Circle…where it performs important local roles in the daily lives of large number of bilingual and multilingual speakers" (p. 42). Besides, English is also used as an international lingua franca for communication among the people from different countries (McKay, 2002; Pennycook & Candlin, 2017). Furthermore, Jenkins (2009, p. 143) argues that English has gained the status of "a contact language used amongst speakers with different first languages. ELF is used in contexts where speakers of different first languages need a common language to communicate with one another". As a widely used language in diverse contexts, English has greatly been affected by the local languages and cultures in different parts of the world, and has gone through many adjustments in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and overall pragmatic features which Lowenberg (2012) calls as process of 'nativization'.

For a long time, these changes were not accepted and adopted in English language teaching, material development and assessment because English used in the traditionally English-speaking countries such as, the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand persisted as the yardstick of the standardized English and 'a prestige variety' (Jenkins, 2015, p.15). However, there is a strong voice from scholars (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006a; Kubota 2012) to embrace the variation in the use of English and celebrate the diversity. This has created a pressure on the testers to rethink and revise the content, approach and tools they use to measure the English language proficiency of the candidates who take these tests. Consequently, scholars now argue that different types of Englishes used by people in various contexts should be taken as innovation and not as a deviation (Saraceni, 2015) because they come up with new ways to communicate the message. The WE movement seeks to challenge the monolingual ideology that prefers the norms of English mainly used by the educated British and Americans, and speakers from other Inner Circle countries. However, the WE movement is also criticized for being too theoretical a notion that has failed to bring much practical changes in the field of classroom teaching, materials development and assessment. Therefore, as Canagarajah (2011b) argues, we need to move away from 'romanticizing' the concept and make some practical changes.

In this conceptual paper, I discuss the developments in the field of WE and its impact on the assessment of English as an international language (EIL). More specifically, I

focus on a critical analysis of the recent discourse to develop a WE-informed approach to standardized language tests such as TOEFL and IELTS. In the section that follows, I present an overview of the impact of the WE movement on assessment of language proficiency through standardized tests. This is followed by a discussion of the connection between such tests with higher education and transnational student mobility. The last two sections before the conclusion part critically examine the status of multilingual approach in standardized tests and challenges of assessing English as an international language.

World Englishes, assessment, and standardized language tests

Assessment is one of the most important factors related to language teaching and learning. It affects the way courses are developed, lessons are planned, materials are designed, and activities are delivered in a language class (McKinley & Thompson, 2018; Shohamy et al., 1996). The English language tests in the past focused only on two-standardized varieties of English, American English and British English (Davies, 2009; McArthur, 1999) and people had to adhere to the norms of these varieties in the standardized proficiency tests to be considered as successful learners. The varieties of English used by people in other parts of the world were taken as an inferior variety and invalid, and the learners were penalized for using these varieties in the standardized tests, mainly due to the "power, economics, and attitudes" (Jenkins, 2015, p.15) associated with the people from the Inner Circle contexts speaking the language. Scholars have also criticized the notion of standardized language tests from different perspectives such as raciolinguistic ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015) and linguistic racism (De Costa, 2020; Dovchin, 2020). Although this situation has not changed much till date, there are some positive changes to embrace the diversity of English practiced by people in different contexts in both the teaching and testing of the English language globally.

Despite the push to establish the legitimacy of varieties of Englishes in recent years, the international language tests have been consistently designed to test the language proficiency of the candidates guided by the pervasive ideology that the ultimate goal of English language learning is to achieve the 'native speaker' proficiency (Holliday, 2006). They continue to use the approach and tools guided by the monolingual ideology of the English language disrespecting the changes in the way English is used in the multilingual world today. However, they are criticized for this continued indifference and are under pressure to design the tests that can cater the needs of the students with diverse linguistic and cultural diversity. Standardized language tests are also criticized for creating and maintaining language hierarchies historically prevalent in the world. For example, relating the practice of standardized tests with the social hierarchies, Lowenberg (2012, p. 88) argues that "norms for standardized English are the linguistic forms that are actually used (original emphasis) by institutions and individuals that have power and/or influence" in different domains of standardized English use. Davidson (2006) is also critical about the standardized tests and states:

> *Large, powerful English language tests are fundamentally disconnected from the insights in analysis of English in the world contexts. These exams set forth linguistic norms that do not necessarily represent the rich body of English varieties spoken and used in contact situations all over the world. (p. 709)*

One recent question, however, is regarding how valid these tests are in terms of measurement of the actual ability of the candidates in using the English language for the purpose of communication. As more people come in contact with each other globally, they require skills to negotiate meaning with interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural and social backgrounds and speak different varieties of English. In supporting this view, Canagarajah (2006a) asserts that "to be really proficient in English today, one has to be multidialectal... One needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication" (p. 233). He further argues that proficiency to communicate with the traditionally English-speaking communities, mostly living in the Inner Circle Countries, is not enough as most of the communication in English today takes place among the multilingual speakers using English as an international lingua franca. However, scholars such as Canagarajah have refrained from advocating for norms based on Outer and/or Expanding Circle countries as a model that explicitly draws from the new varieties used in non-traditional English-speaking contexts because such norms will also be based on the English used by a limited number of people in certain areas and, thus, cannot be representative of the entire population of English users in the world.

The growth of new and legitimate varieties of English especially in the Outer Circle countries have created pressure to embrace diversity both in teaching English and assessment of English language proficiency. However, this does not mean that the English learners need to master all the varieties used in the world. Rather it is important for them to develop negotiation skills for effective communication between communities (Canagarajah, 2006a). This requires a shift in assessment practices that can cater to the needs of the changing purpose, users, and contexts of use of Englishes. This new landscape of EIL, according to Hu (2012, p. 123) "requires a critical examination of the established practices".

One of the major changes embraced by language tests in recent years is the use of non-native speakers as the markers of the tests, but this is not enough as they continue to use the test items and evaluation criteria that adhere to the norms followed by the so-called 'native speakers' in Inner Circle countries. Unfortunately, these tests, which are meant for the 'non-native speakers' are biased against the bi/multilingual users of English and discredit their multilingual ability, diversity and cultural sensitivity (Freimuth, 2022) and also impact test-takers perception and performance (Altakhaineh & Melo-Pfeifer, 2022). Therefore, the existing assessment practices also fail to replicate the real-life use of the English language as the bi/multilingual students draw a lot of linguistic and non-linguistic resources from various codes (Canagarajah, 2006a). The language tests should also find ways to respect the cross-linguistic resources and translanguaging skills that

multilingual speakers use while communicating across cultures. They should recognize the fact that multilingual speakers use codes from different linguistic resources in real life communication (Canagarajah, 2013). Therefore, testing the ability of people to use English in multinational contexts by multilingual speakers is more relevant and timelier than doing it with reference to the homogeneous contexts of monolingual speakers.

Two notable and most widely used language test systems in the world are IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). More than 10,000 institutions in 150 countries accept TOEFL scores, and over 35 million people from all over the world have taken the test since it started its operation in 1964 (Educational Testing Services, n.d.). Similarly, IELTS is offered in 130 countries and recognized by 6,000 organizations. Each year 1.5 million people who want to migrate, study or work in English-speaking countries take these tests (British Council, n.d.)

To address the concerns and criticism from various stakeholders, a few notable changes have been made in the standardized tests. According to Taylor (2002), IELTS tests have started including reading and listening texts that are representative of social and regional varieties of English and involve proficient non-native material writers and test raters from counties other than Inner Circle countries. Hu (2012) observes that similar changes have also been made to revise the TOEFL test. Despite these claims, the limited attempts made to accommodate non-native speakers of English (Llurda, 2004) have not been able to create an impact on the overall concept of diversity and WE. The changes in both TOEFL and IELTS do not accommodate the non-native varieties of English except the fact that the 'proficient' nonnative speakers are also included as the examiners for oral and written tests. If the administrators want to develop these tests as tools that measure the candidates' English language ability to communicate in a diverse range of situations, they should incorporate content and test items that are adapted from a range of contexts including the Outer and Expanding Circles. They should embrace the sociocultural and linguistic features of the different varieties of Englishes used around the world.

Higher education, transnational student mobility and assessment of English

With the growing number of students traveling abroad from the Outer and Expanding Circle countries to the Inner Circle countries, the standardized tests need to be more inclusive and address the different contexts they need to communicate using English. According to Migration Policy Institute (2018), 4.6 million students were studying in counties other than their home countries in 2017. The US leads the table with more than a fifth of these enrollments and as more than a million international students are admitted in US higher education institutions annually (Israel & Batalova, 2021). Most of these students in the US are from countries such as China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Taiwan where English is not a historically dominant language.

The UK draws the second highest number of international students and had 19% students studying in its higher education were from other countries in 2017. Among the international students, 6% were from the European Union and 13% from the rest of the world (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2018). Some Australian universities have international students at the rate of more than a quarter of their total enrolment. While nearly a third of the international students are from China, there is a significant presence of students from India, Nepal, Malaysia and Vietnam as well (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2018). The data on higher education institutions suggest that international students from non-English dominant countries are important populations in the Universities in the Inner Circle Countries with half of the total international students traveling to these Inner Circle countries for higher education (Study International, 2018). The fact that standardized tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, Cambridge ESOL are mandatory requirements for college admission for multilingual students in these countries (Zhang-Wu & Brisk, 2021) indicates the importance placed by the universities in these tests. Therefore, as argued by Hamid et al. (2018), standardized tests are functioning as gatekeepers of higher education and transnational student mobility.

Since the candidates of these standardized tests are non-native English-speakers coming from different social and cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is expected that the content and tools adopted in these tests should recognize different varieties of English used around the world. Unfortunately, these tests use the so-called standardized English as the only norm to assess the English language proficiency of the candidates that do not represent different varieties of Englishes used around the world (Davidson, 2006). These tests fail to recognize the reality of the newly established legitimate varieties of English used in many regions, especially in the Outer Circle countries where English is used beyond academic and formal settings and expands to everyday lives of people. At the same time, these tests do not indicate much about the success of the students in contexts such as in the US where they encounter many varieties of English both on and off campuses, which leads them to question their ability to communicate in English (Zhang-Wu & Brisk, 2021). Interestingly, international students' scores in these standardized tests have been proved to be an insignificant predictor of even their academic success in English-dominant countries (Ginther & Yan, 2018; Hill et al., 1999; Krausz et al., 2005). Therefore, these standardized tests have been questioned for their ability to predict the success of the students who want to study in the Inner Circle countries.

As a mandatory requirement for admission in universities in the English-dominant countries, students willing to study in these countries are required to prove themselves in standardized language tests. Since these tests over emphasize the Inner Circle norms for assessing English language users (Davidson, 2006), students are bound to follow the standards set by these tests to get a good score for their chances of admission in their chosen universities. This encourages them to focus on learning the so-called standardized variety used by White middle class educated people in these countries limiting their

success in multilingual contexts (Khan, 2009). This orientation might pose a challenge for both the universities and the students as they are not able to communicate well with their peers coming from different countries and cultures due to lack of awareness of different varieties of English (Zhang-Wu & Brisk, 2021). As the number of non-native English-speaking professors is increasing in the American, British or Australian universities, the ability of the students to use English following the 'standardized English' norms might not guarantee their academic success. In this regard, Davidson (2006) discusses the concerns of the WE scholars about the standardized language tests and states:

> *There is a well-established and legitimate concern that large, powerful English language tests are fundamentally disconnected from the insights in analysis of English in the world context. These exams set linguistic norms that do not necessarily represent the rich body of English varieties spoken and used in contact situations all over the world. (p. 709)*

Those students who opt to go to the US for higher education need to be aware of the different varieties, such as Black English Vernacular and Spanish English to be able to adjust in the communities in US cities as they do not merely interact with the White middle-class people speaking the so-called standardized English in their lives both within the academic institutions and beyond (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002). If they have not been exposed to the features of English except the standardized English, they will likely face a difficult situation as they need to spend a significant amount of time traveling, shopping, and engaging in different activities outside the academic contexts. This might further make their stay abroad even more difficult. Therefore, they need to have language awareness and cultural sensitivity (Canagarajah, 2006a) towards the diverse groups of people they meet. Since students' standardized language test score might not be the true representation of their ability to communicate well in American universities and multilingual societies, there is a need for these tests to reflect on their current policies and practices and revise them in light of the ongoing shift in the linguistic landscapes.

Despite his critical observations on the standardized tests, Canagarajah (2006a) agrees on the legitimacy of language tests for people moving to the Inner Circle countries for education and employment purposes. However, he finds such tests problematic and/or invalid when used for recruitment and promotion in an Expanding Circle context, such as a company in Japan. However, the designers of these international language tests need to understand that American society and universities constitute a large number of multilingual speakers. And these students are expected to be able to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds to live in the US successfully. It is, therefore, important to recognize that students' language proficiencies and their diverse skills are not isolated, and English is a part of their sociolinguistic tapestry they have. Hu (2012, p. 129) emphasizes the need to respond to the "changing sociolinguistic realities" of English as an international language.

Standardized language tests and (lack of) assessment of multilingual abilities

Despite the growing awareness of the WE movement, standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS are disconnected from the core ideas that WE scholars have proposed. According to Davidson (2006), these tests continue to promote the ideologies and beliefs that do not necessarily represent the diverse Englishes used in different contexts around the world. Therefore, the tests are problematic for many students because they might not represent the actual ability to negotiate meaning in a multilingual communication using the English language. Moreover, they devalue the bi/multilingual abilities of these students and focus on testing only the monolingual ability. Therefore, there is an urgent need to diversify the approach they use to make these tests more scientific and representative of the linguistic repertoire that the multilingual candidates have. For this, the standardized tests should try to be valid to measure the communicative competence of the candidates for international communication in English that involves people from multilingual contexts.

Jenkins (2006) criticizes the standardized language test on the ground that they focus overtly on the formal lexical and grammatical features that are not used even by the so-called native speakers in their everyday conversations. She discusses some examples of how the standardized tests penalize the candidates even though they are widely intelligible. Jenkins further states that "There is nothing 'international' about deferring to the language varieties of a mere two of the world's Englishes, whose members account for a tiny minority of English speakers" (p. 44). Y. Kachru (2011) supports this argument and argues that the international language tests should aim to test multiple varieties of Englishes (both native and non-native alike) to ensure that the candidates are sensitive to the diversity of Englishes around the world.

To make the discourse of EIL assessment more productive, Hu (2012) has suggested five broad principles that are based on the realities of the different group of people that use English in different contexts. The principles include: (a) Determine linguistic norms for a test according to its intended use, (b) Choose a standardized variety of English if more than one variety is adequate for the intended test use in a society, (c) Provide candidates with exposure to multiple native and non-native varieties of English, (d) Broaden the construct of EIL tests to incorporate intercultural strategic competence, and (e) Make allowances for individual aspirations to Inner-Circle norms. Similarly, Brown (2014) discusses the problems that have emerged due to the ongoing debate on inclusion of WE in language testing and suggests how various Englishes can be included in the language tests. He has made the following recommendations for more productive intersection of WE and language testing: (a) Better describe WE in all three circles, as well as ELF and EIL, (b) Broaden and narrow our views of what English assessment can be, (c) Recognize that test items come in many forms, (d) Base tests on context, needs, and decision purposes, (d) Clearly explain the purpose and target English(es) of every test, (e) Discourage misuse of test results, and (g) Do much more research on WE,

ELF, EIL, as they relate to language testing. Comparing these lists reveals that both Hu (2012) and Brown (2012) have focused on engaging a diverse range of items and people engaged in different stages of test preparation, administration, and implementation.

Hu (2012) critically reviews the established principles and practices for assessing English proficiency when it has grown as a language of global communication and suggests developing "a set of macrostrategies grounded in a sound understanding of the postmodern conditions of EIL that can guide an informed redefinition of the test construct for a fair, relevant, and valid assessment of EIL proficiency" (p.139). The test developers have to acknowledge that the use of English by the people from the Outer and Expanding Circle might differ from the 'standardized' norms of these tests "not necessarily because they are deficient in English, but because they inhabit communities where English is acquired non-natively and particular nonnative features have assumed the status of stable varietal differences'' (Elder & Davies, 2006, p. 288). It might be worth quoting Canagarajah (2006a) in this context who argues that in most cases involving multilingual individuals:

> *proficiency means, then, the ability to shuttle between different varieties of English and different speech communities. In this sense, the argument becomes irrelevant whether local standards or inner-circle standards matter. We need both and more – that is, the ability to negotiate the varieties in other outer- and expanding-circle communities as well. (p. 233)*

Scholars in recent years have discussed how multilingual individuals engage in translanguaging practices drawing on the multiple linguistic and nonlinguistic resources (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Li, 2014; Lin, 2019; Li, 2018). According to Lin (2019), translanguaging perspectives takes a "fluid, dynamic view of language" (p. 5) especially in multilingual individuals. Lin (2015, p. 23) uses the term "trans-semiotising" to describe this phenomenon, whereas Canagarajah (2011a) refers to this process as "shuttle between languages" (p. 401) and argues that people use translanguaging as a strategy for communication in multilingual communications as the need to communicate with diverse communities grows (Canagarajah, 2013). Translanguaging has been proposed as an approach with transformation in the teaching, learning and assessment of multilingual individuals by scholars and can be adopted by the standardized language tests to make them more appropriate to test the translingual competencies of the candidates (Baker & Hope, 2019; Garcia & Lin, 2017; Van Viegen & Jang, 2021). Despite these arguments, however, there are practical challenges related to development and administration of standardized language tests that can truly assess the language proficiency of the multilingual people. I discuss this issue in detail in the next section where I elaborate on the ideological, practical and financial constraints in achieving the desired changes in the field of standardized language tests.

Challenges of assessing English as an international language

Along with the growth of English as a global language in diverse contexts several challenges have emerged in both teaching and assessment of English language proficiency of the language learners (Canagarajah, 2006b). As a result, the international language tests are under pressure to test the pragmatic ability of the candidates to use English in diverse international contexts that includes users from a range of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, as Hu (2012, pp. 137-138) argues, one of the major challenges for the EIL test developers is selection of the "appropriate language tasks to elicit…those pragmatic strategies that facilitate effective communication".

To stand by their names as true international tests, the standardized tests need to reflect the way English is used around the world and make necessary changes in various dimensions such as the selection of contents and test items, testers, and overall belief on what counts as English language proficiency in an extremely globalized world. The inhabitants of the Inner Circle countries are not required to take any of these so-called standardized tests to prove their ability to communicate with an international audience in English. However, the tests are designed in such a way that favors the candidates who are familiar with the norms followed in these traditionally English dominant countries. This practice raises critical questions on the validity of these tests as they test the skill to use a limited type of English which is not used in most of the communicative contexts that involve the use of English around the world.

If the standardized tests want to claim themselves as international tests in true sense, they must "develop instruments with imagination and creativity to assess proficiency in the communicative needs of English as a lingua Franca" (Canagarajah, 2006a, p. 240). However, the ongoing discussion on the notion of WE has not been able to provide clear ideas on how these tests can actually cater the needs of the diverse population they aim to serve. It might not be practical to design multiple sets of test items to test candidates from different backgrounds as the tests need to be consistent and fair. Therefore, the biggest challenge for these tests could be figuring out how to embrace the variation in the use of English without compromising their ability to provide a consistent and reliable framework for assessment of the English language ability of the extremely diverse candidates.

A survey of the existing literature shows that the testing agencies are facing a tough time to maintain consistency and embrace diversity in their approach. Jenkins (2006), for example, states that "some of the examination boards…are already confronting the issues of how to make English language testing more relevant to the international needs of many test-takers" (p. 48). To overcome this problem, as Canagarajah (2006a) notes, the testing agencies need to develop tools that test the intelligibility rather than grammatical correctness. Kubota (2012) concurs with these arguments and asserts that these tests should be designed to assess ability to use English as a lingua franca and tool for border-crossing communication.

Despite the attempts to support the advancement of WE-informed language tests, much of the scholarship in this area has focused on describing the features of the English language used in different contexts and argued that teaching and testing of English should embrace those features. There is a lack of empirical studies that explore how inclusion of WE features has an impact on predictability of the success of the candidates in communicating with the diverse range of communicative contexts in both Inner and Outer Circle contexts. Besides the material and human resources, as Kubota (2018, p. 97) argues, "The major obstacle in…implementation of world Englishes amounts to language ideology that constitutes and reflects the biases people have toward linguistic varieties and speakers' race/ethnicity". Therefore, having an ideological clarity among the key stakeholders is the most important factor in making a progress towards WE-informed assessment practices. It should also be noted that a single model of language test that adheres to particular norms of English language use and usage is bound to have more limitations than the benefits it may offer.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the recent developments in the field of world Englishes and its impact on the assessment of English as an international language through the standardized tests. While doing so I argue that the current practices of assessment of proficiency of English as an international language are biased, inadequate and invalid, and, therefore, need a serious revision both in the content and the process involved.

A critical examination of the recent developments in the field of language teaching and assessment shows that despite scholars fiercely advocating for more inclusive practices both in English language teaching and testing, little changes have been made by the classroom teachers and assessors in line with the emerging trends in the English language in the world. Despite this, a noted shift in the attitude of the test takes from standardized norms to multiple norms is evident in the recent literature. However, more research in this area is required to get a clear picture of the ongoing shift in the use of the English language. This might also require studies that explore the relationship between the nature of tasks, testers and various testing approaches on the predictability and success of the candidates in international communication. The field also needs to shift the research agenda from describing the features of WE and EIL to more practical issues like experimenting with the contents and test items that can be used by the standardized tests to assess the ability of the candidates to communicate effectively in international communication.

We might not be able to see the changes in our teaching approaches unless there is a shift in the way we test the ability of our students as Jenkins (2006) has argued, "it is changes in teaching which keep pace with changes in testing and not vice versa" (p. 49). Although some changes are possible by the classroom teachers, the much-desired changes in the overall testing industry will be possible only when the standardized tests embrace the diversity of Englishes people use in different parts of the world. Therefore,

if we want to bring change in the overall field of English language teaching, we should revise the approach used in testing language.

On a more personal note, as a so called 'non-native' user of English and a transnational scholar having an experience of these standardized tests at some point in my life, I strongly feel that standardized tests are not open to inclusiveness and, therefore, have not been able to embrace the diversity of Englishes used around the world. The speakers from the Inner Circles also have a need to diversify their English as they come across multiple communicative contexts that demand them to negotiate diverse varieties of English. While I argue that there is a need for these language tests to shift from their current model and diversity their approach, I am not advocating that these tests should embrace the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle norms leaving their existing norms guided by the historically dominant Inner Circle standards. Otherwise, this will be a shift from one extreme to another one as Canagarajah (2006a) argues:

> *Posing the options as either "native English norms" or "new Englishes norms" is misleading. A proficient speaker of English in the postmodern world needs an awareness of both. He or she should be able to shuttle between different norms, recognizing the systematic and legitimate status of different varieties of English in this diverse family of languages. (p. 234)*

Therefore, one needs to be careful not to fall into the trap of setting 'the' standards for these tests and advocate for a more flexible, fluid and practical approach that can capture the everyday realities of multilingual uses of English. Kumaravadivelu (2016, p. 66) aptly covers this as he argues that if we wish to "effectively disrupt the hegemonic power structure, the only option open to it is a decolonial option which demands result-oriented action, not just intellectual elaboration (original emphasis)". Highlighting the need for a more practice-oriented approach, Jenkins (2006) makes similar comments and argues that "practical outcomes are trailing badly behind theoretical good intentions" (p. 48). Scholars advocating for WE, therefore, should not just get engaged in scholarly discussions on the issue, but also try to help teachers and testers design and administer the tests in a way that can truly assess the ability of the English language learners to use English as a 'dynamic language' (Mahboob, 2018) with people from a diverse range of contexts.

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Nepali English or Other Varieties of English: Perspectives from English Language Teachers in Nepal

Shankar Dewan

Abstract

This qualitative content analysis article aims at exploring the perspectives of English language teachers on Nepali English (NE). I purposively selected six college level English language teachers from Sunsari and Morang districts and collected the required data through a semi-structured interview. The study reveals that NE has emerged in Nepal as a result of mother tongue influence, nativization of English to local contexts, and exposure from the non-native teachers during the second language acquisition process, and it is practically more appropriate than other varieties of English in Nepal. All the research participants favour NE as it is more intelligible and easier to teach and learn than the other varieties of English, promotes Nepali identity, boosts confidence, reduces anxiety, and helps to resist the hegemony of British English (BE) or American English (AE). They, however, believe that more research and discourse on NE, its codification and standardization, and power (political, economic, and ideological) are necessary for bringing NE into concrete form. These perspectives from the English language teachers on NE pave the ground for appropriating English language policies, English language curriculum, textbooks, and pedagogy in Nepal, and rethinking the traditional treatment of errors.

Keywords: *World Englishes, identity, practicality, intelligibility, nativization*

Introduction

Globalization of English (Crystal, 2003), nativization of English (Kachru & Nelson, 2011; Rubdy, 2015), localization of English (Sharifian, 2016), and both global and local, or centrifugal and centripetal forces (Schneider, 2016), have paved the way for the emergence of different English varieties worldwide. They are known as transplanted or transported or twice-born Englishes (Kachru, 1981), World Englishes (WEs) (Kachru, 1985), twice-born varieties (Patil, 2006), postcolonial Englishes (Schneider, 2003, 2007), New Englishes (Ferguson, 2006; Jenkins, 2006; Rubdy, 2015), reincarnated Englishes (Kachru, 2011), and unequal Englishes (Tupas, 2015; Tupas & Salonga, 2016). These different terminologies reflect how new English varieties are perceived differently around the world.

With the emergence of WEs, three different schools of thought have emerged in the world. Many scholars around the world hold the Universalist position and argue for BE or AE as an appropriate pedagogical model. They perceive BE or AE as "the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English-speaking country" (McArthur, 2003, cited in Farrell & Martin, 2009, p. 3) since BE or AE is a highly developed, well-organized, systematic, and codified variety which needs to be followed everywhere for maintaining mutual intelligibility. Supporting the standard BE or AE, Prator (1968, as cited in Ferguson, 2006) claimed that to recognize non-native English varieties as teaching models would be most unwise since there is doubt regarding their existence as coherent, homogeneous linguistic systems and, despite their existence, they are qualitatively varied from and inherently less permanent than native varieties of English. Similarly, the conservative viewpoint was adopted by Quirk (1985), who argued in favour of a single monochrome standard. In Nepal, Sharma (2008) claimed it is premature to teach NE as the target language without considering its ideological implications and its potential effect on students' future careers. Duwadi (2010) argued that there is doubt about whether NE is an unavoidable fact or merely a mirage, that making a NE campaign is impractical, and that when English is deviated from the standard variety, it only brings chaos to the community. For Giri (2015), Nepal is developing its own local variety of English, but it is only in the inception or conception stage, which clearly implies that Nepal is not currently in the position of choosing NE as a pedagogical model.

However, supporters of indigenized varieties of English argue that those who advocate Standard English neglect the sociolinguistic realities of different varieties of English (Kachru, 2011). Local Englishes are autonomous Englishes in their own right rather than interlanguages or subordinate varieties (Canagarajah, 1999), and to insist on Standard English is to "devalue new or local varieties of English that exist around the world" (Farrell & Martin, 2009, p. 3). Some scholars advocate for new varieties of English because it is neither necessary nor desirable for the non-native speaker to use English in the same way as native writers do (Achebe, 1965); the localized variety expresses identity and solidarity (Nur Aida, 2014); the texts written in nativized English facilitate comprehension (Alptekin, 2006; Jalilifar & Assi, 2008); indigenized Englishes are practically appropriate to local contexts (Canagarajah, 1999); and such Englishes are socioculturally determined innovations rather than errors (Kachru, 2011) and are linguistically equal. Patil (2006) opined that Asian English teachers believe that their own acrolect variety of English is easier to use as a model for teaching and testing purposes because most teachers are local; they hold influential positions that allow them to make decisions; and they usually set exam questions and evaluate the answers written by the students. The acrolect English variety is a high or standard variety connected to the top of the social and educational scale, whereas the mesolect variety is an informal variety used by people with a noticeably lower level of proficiency as well as competence in English, and the basilect variety refers to a variety that incorporates various reduced and pidginized forms of English (Mukherjee, 2010). Even in Nepal, Shrestha (1983) argued that it is necessary to avoid the native model entirely and replace it with the

acrolect variety of NE, which will satisfy the needs criteria and be sufficient for the comprehension of classroom lectures and for interpersonal communication. Brett (1999) also claimed that non-standard English does not cause confusion but rather plays an important practical role by compensating for those areas of cultural disparity to facilitate communication. Because of the inappropriateness and impracticality of native varieties in local contexts, non-native English speakers have appropriated English to fulfill their desires, needs, and aspirations (Canagarajah, 1999). Such localized Englishes are as equal and as functional as native varieties of English.

Between the two extreme perspectives, a balanced, or "third way" perspective has come into existence. Widdowson (1993) argued that nativized Englishes and Standard BE / AE "have their proper place in the scheme of things and both are of crucial concern in English language education" (p. 329). He maintained that Standard English can be used for institutional, formal, and international communication, whereas nativized Englishes for intranational communication. Academic institutions should provide a place for both variants, assigning Standard English as "an end of learning" (p. 326) and nativized Englishes as "a means for learning" (p. 327). This third way position balances the use of different varieties of English depending on the contexts and needs. In today's world, it is not enough to be proficient in one's own variety of English (Canagarajah et al., 2012). Therefore, it is essential to learn all varieties of English, not just standard BE or AE (Farrell & Martin, 2009), recognize their contextual appropriacy and expose students to different varieties of English (Canagarajah, 1999), and develop competence in multiple varieties of English (Canagarajah et al., 2012) so that they can communicate easily with the speakers of different varieties of English and adapt to any countries. This perspective goes against the 'either-or' position and places equal importance on all the varieties of English.

Studies conducted by scholars from home and abroad (e.g., Adhikari, 2018; Brett, 1999; Dewan, 2021; Dewan & Laksamba, 2020; Giri, 2015; Hartford, 1993; Jora, 2019; Karn, 2012; Rai, 2006) indicate that NE has its own distinctly identifiable features at different levels of language. Although scholars claim that NE is one of the South Asian standardizing Englishes (McArthur, 1987), an officially recognized variant (Brett, 1999, p. 85), an established variety of English (Daniloff-Merrill, 2010, cited in Pandey, 2017, p. 39), a separately developing variant of English (Sharma et al., 2015), and a divergent variety of English (Jora, 2019; Karn, 2011), the English language used in Nepal still awaits a detailed empirical description (Mukherjee & Bernaisch, 2020). Since NE is one of the preferred varieties of English in Nepal, it should not be regarded as a subordinate or inferior form of communication (Paudyal, 2019), but rather as a variety of English that is gradually gaining its status (Kamali, 2010). NE has a special place in WEs or (South) Asian English inquiries since three different types of English exist in Nepali society, namely English as a primary language, English as a secondary language, and English as an additional language, which influence the way people negotiate their identities and the way they communicate with the speakers of other Englishes in certain contexts and in which they can find traces of other Englishes locally blended and brewed into NE (Giri,

2020). Such hybrid English reveals linguistic co-existence and the hybrid identities of its speakers, reflects their bilingual creativity, maximizes linguistic economy, and helps to reduce their linguistic anxiety (Dewan & Laksamba, 2020). In this paper, I explore the perspectives of English language teachers on NE.

Literature review

Advocates of WEs hold different perspectives towards Englishes that have developed in different territories. Rao's (1938) Kanthapura provided the first conceptualization of his perspective on Indian English. Kachru (2011) described Rao's five perspectives. The first perspective is concerned with how the medium is related to the message. It is inadequate to express one's own spirit in a language that is not their own (Rao, 1938). Therefore, English should be appropriately localized to convey the message effectively. The second perspective focuses on rethinking how appropriate English is as a medium of instruction in various contexts. The third perspective is concerned with the creative vision and innovation as well as the relevance of hybridity. Rao (1938) maintained that "We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us" (p. vii). Therefore, hybridity is a part of life, and only hybridized English can satisfy the English language needs of the present-day world. Rao's fourth perspective is concerned with linguistic appropriateness, the relevance of language variety, and identity. He is optimistic about the Indian variety of English that "will someday prove to be as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American" (p. vii). The fifth perspective relates to the stylistic relevance of cultural discourse and its relationship with local parampara. For Rao, "The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression" (p. vii). He attempts to justify the idea that English needs remaking to convey the nuances of Indian cultures and to continue local parampara. All of these perspectives explain why nativized English is more relevant and appropriate in local contexts.

The perspectives on WEs also reside in the intelligibility issue, identity, the nature of standards, practicality, and acceptance (Dewan, 2022; Ferguson, 2006). Advocates of WEs claim that early discussions on intelligibility were one-sided because they focused mostly on native speakers. In the present era, intelligibility is a two-way process – from non-native speakers to native speakers, and vice versa. It means that intelligibility is a joint enterprise. In this context, "intelligibility" was defined by Seidlhofer (2010) as "being intelligible to native speakers, and being able to understand native speakers" (p. 366). Kachru (2011) claimed that local Englishes are mutually intelligible and functionally effective and appropriate to their users. A study by Dewan (2022) indicated that almost all participants agreed that English spoken by NE speakers is more intelligible than that of native English speakers.

Another crucial reason for advocating local Englishes is concerned with identity. The personal, ethnic, social, or national identities of their users are projected by local Englishes (Ferguson, 2006). English was borrowed, recreated, transcreated, stretched,

expanded, and distorted in India in order to project identity and claim English as their own (D'Souza, 2001). The reason for doing so is that the English language, without its changed form in the Indian context, cannot express Indian identity.

Advocates of WEs do not agree with the view that other English varieties are non-standard, and BE or AE is standard. Every variety, including sociolects and registers, will have standards of varying degrees of generality for the respective communities (Canagarajah, 1999). It implies that all English dialects must be treated equally and accepted on a par with Standard English (Mahmood, 2009). Even if we accept that Standard English is proper English, it is appropriate in some contexts only, and other English varieties are appropriate in other contexts (Widdowson, 1993). Since other varieties of English have different sociolinguistic realities, the traditional notion of Standard English ignores them. Similarly, none of the native speakers can claim the ownership of English or declare which varieties of English are non-standard and which are standard. The standards of English are decided and created by the respective speech communities only (Widdowson, 1994). Therefore, the notion of standard is subjective and contextual.

It would be unfair to argue that BE or AE is practically more appropriate than other varieties of English because practicality has to do with context and purpose. In different contexts and purposes, different varieties of English can be appropriate (Fairclough, 1992). To be more specific, the practicality or appropriateness of language is determined by the immediate context in which communication takes place (Baratta, 2019). As BE or AE is practically inappropriate to the local context, English has been appropriated to accommodate local speakers' desires, needs, and values (Canagarajah, 1999). The study by Tan and Tan (2008) revealed a clear appreciation of the value of Standard English; however, Singlish serves a significant social role in the community. The results confirmed that Singlish is not "bad English," but a variety that the pupils value because they prefer to use it regularly. Cavallaro et al. (2020) explained that the high-variety Singapore English and the low-variety Singlish are used in varying contexts with different functional purposes.

The acceptability factor is the ultimate test that determines whether any variety of English is an innovation (Bamgbose, 1998). The acceptability factor is linked to attitudes, beliefs, and confidence. To determine acceptability, it is necessary to determine one's own attitude towards a variety, the perception of others towards the variety, and the attitudinally determined functional allocations of a variety (Kachru, 2011). In his study on the University students and teachers, He (2015) found that teacher participants preferred standardized English, while students showed their positive attitudes towards China English. The findings suggested that the native-speaker-based teaching model should incorporate the well-codified features of China English. In a study by Kamali (2010), the response of most teachers and students was that NE should be developed in Nepal. They showed their positive attitudes towards NE. Another study by Dewan (2022) also showed that most participants preferred NE more than BE or AE.

The studies discussed above were conducted in different countries and focused on the attitudes of teachers and/or students towards different varieties of English. However, no non-linguistic qualitative studies are available on NE. Although some features of NE have been identified at the phonological, lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels (see Adhikari, 2018; Brett, 1999; Dewan & Laksamba, 2020; Jora, 2019; Karn, 2012; Rai, 2006), the perspectives of English language teachers towards NE have not yet been explored. Therefore, I claim that this is a new research area in Nepal.

Research question

The study is primarily aimed at answering the question: How do English language teachers perceive NE in terms of its existence, reasons for its use, promotion, and future prospects?

Methods of study

This study employed a qualitative content analysis, which analyzed perceptions after close reading of texts (Given, 2008), particularly the manifest and latent content or meaning of texts (Bryman, 2016; Schreier, 2013), or the main contents of data and their messages (Cohen et al., 2008). I purposively selected six English language teachers, particularly four from Morang and two from Sunsari district, as the sample because they were experienced English language teachers and were familiar with NE and other varieties of English. Among them, three teachers had the experience of teaching English from the school to masters' level students, and the rest of them had the experience of teaching English from the school to bachelors' level students.

At first, I informed the purpose of the study to the participants and briefed them on how their privacy would be maintained. To ensure anonymity, I used an alpha-numeric identity (T1-T6) for all participants involved in this study. After obtaining their written consent, I conducted semi-structured interviews with them and recorded the interviews by mobile phone. The interviews included open-ended questions about the NE and its existence, the reasons for speaking it, its promotion and prospects, and ways to concretize the NE. After the collection of interview data, I defined the units of analysis; organized the recorded interview data and transcribed them into Nepali first, and then into English; coded the data; made different themes; and analyzed and interpreted the contents of the transcribed data (Cohen et al., 2008; Creswell, 2017). I discuss the findings of the study in the following section.

Findings and discussion

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from six participants, I have explored some findings which have been discussed on the following themes: NE and its existence, reasons for its use, teachers' logic for its promotion, its future prospects, and ways to bring it into a concrete form.

NE and its existence

All the English language teachers in my study agreed that Nepal has its own unique variety of English because of mother tongue influence, hybridization, nativization, and exposure from non-native English speakers. Regarding the mother tongue influence, T2 said, "The influence of Nepali or the mixing of Nepali with English makes Nepali English. The influence can be felt in tone, stress, and words." Such mixing has created a hybrid English in Nepal (see Dewan & Laksamba, 2020). Similarly, T3 stated, "I think it is not practical to use English exactly like the foreigners because of the influence of our mother tongue." Consequently, a new variety of English is created through the acquisition of English as a second language by a whole speech community of users (Ferguson, 2006). Similarly, T1 explained:

> *I don't think we can sound just like native English speakers in our accents. We have our own Nepali way of English. If we try to make it English-like, we can't be successful. Therefore, we should establish our variety of English.*

This perspective endorsed Achebe's (1965, p. 28) assertion that "it is impossible for anyone ever to use a second language as effectively as his first." Both views justify why Received Pronunciation or British Standard have gone out of use in Pakistan while remaining in academic reference (Hashmi, 1989, cited in Kachru, 2011, p. 55), why many countries have started legitimizing the local variety of English (see Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 2011), and why the goal of English language teaching has changed from developing native-like pronunciation or competence to communicative competence or intercultural communicative competence (Farrell & Martin, 2009; Sowden, 2007). As Baratta (2019, p. 136) stated, "Importantly, the students' success is not dependent on mimicking American pronunciation (and perhaps by extension, the relevant standard grammar); instead, the goal is for effective communication in a global context." Therefore, Nepali people have appropriated English to Nepali contexts. In this regard, T4 said, "We are formally using Nepali words in our texts and discourses and making English Nenglish… [.]" The deliberate attempt to make English as Nenglish endorsed Raslan's (2000, as cited in Kachru & Nelson, 2011, p. 181) claim that "We appropriate and reinvent the language to our own ends." The authors' reasons for appropriating English in their literary texts were to reflect their individual and sociocultural values, to search for identities and dignity in the vast body of WEs literature, to reveal some empathy towards English, and to bring Nepali social values to the outer world (Karn, 2012). Similarly, T5 explained:

> *Let's see the English language spoken by Nepali speakers in the Nepali context. They don't speak English as native English speakers. They appropriate vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar to their context. They can't pronounce the words like native English speakers, or follow the rules as strictly as native speakers.*

This perspective endorsed Canagarajah's (1999) claim that students will "appropriate the language in their own terms, according to their needs, values, and aspirations" (p.

176) by changing their pronunciation, vocabulary, and language structures. They own it, shape it as they desire, and assert themselves through it (Patil, 2006), since only the new or changed English according to the new surroundings can bring out the message best (Achebe, 1965). Therefore, nativization is a natural phenomenon in multilingual environments.

Reasons for speaking NE

All the English language teachers opined that Nepali people speak NE because it is practicable to the Nepali context, it is intelligible/comprehensible, they received exposure to NE, and their English naturally becomes NE when they speak. As for a reason for speaking NE, T1 said, "We produce English words in the Nepali way… [.] If we pronounce them in Standard English, such as /təmɒrəʊ/ for "tomorrow" and /bɔːl/ for "ball," our students laugh and teachers feel ashamed." It implies that even if the teachers are aware of Standard BE or AE pronunciation, they may not use it because the students are not accustomed to it due to a lack of exposure. The teachers knowingly adapt their pronunciation to save their faces. In this regard, T3 stated, "As there is the influence of the mother tongue in English, I think it is not practicable to use English just like the native English speakers… [.] We all are using our context-appropriate variety… [.]" The views expressed by T1 and T3 are akin to Fairclough's (1992) assertion that "Different varieties of English, and different languages, are appropriate for different contexts and purposes, and all varieties have the legitimacy of being appropriate for some contexts and purposes" (p. 36). English in Nepal is learned and used in different contexts and for different purposes. Larsen-Freeman (2007) emphasized, "…what is important is intelligibility, not in perfection in pronunciation, or even in grammar" (p. 70). Therefore, the teachers need to use the kind of English that their students need and understand.

Students in Nepal generally learn English in formal classrooms, with limited exposure from non-native English teachers. In such a context, learning English is very much based on the localized input received from the teachers. It is echoed in T4 view:

> *I speak Nepali English because I have got exposure to it. When I was a student, I did not receive exposure from native British and American English speakers. We did not have email, the internet, technological facilities, or authentic materials written by the native speakers. We had to learn English based on what our teachers taught us… [.]*

This perspective supported Kachru and Nelson's (2011) claim that English, in Outer and Expanding Circles, is learned through formal instruction without exposure from native speakers and, in some cases, even without materials from the Inner Circle. In such contexts, most learners never get opportunities to interact with a native-variety speaker during their acquisition period and the learners get exposure to English only in the English class at school (Sridhar & Sridhar, 1986). Even the English teacher does not speak English much in the class. T5 claimed, "We did not learn English in [ah]

native-like situations. We were taught by the Nepali English teachers, and so were our teachers." This viewpoint supported Sridhar and Sridhar's (1986) claim that indigenized varieties of English are taught by non-native speaker teachers and their teachers were possibly also non-native speakers. Therefore, Nepali people speak NE, not BE or AE. Likewise, T6 explained:

> *The choice of which variety of English to speak depends on the context. For example, in my classroom, I try my best to simplify my English to help my students understand what I say, so I use Nepali English. When I am exposed to international programmes such as NELTA, IATEFL, and other conferences, I try to speak Standard English.*

This perspective is somehow consistent with Bhattarai and Gautam's (2008) recommendation that teachers should "adopt more flexible approach in the selection and use of English in an eclective manner rather than being prescriptive" (p. 13). The teachers are the active agents who can use their agency to nativize English according to the needs and levels of the students because the Nepali students comprehend NE better than BE or AE. The perspective of T6 endorsed Baratta's (2019, p. 45) statement that "…one variety is simply more appropriate than the other, not based on any inherent 'betterness' but simply based on the immediate context of communication, largely involving one's audience" (p. 45). The teachers need to "adjust their speech in order to be intelligible to interlocutors from a wide range of L1 backgrounds" (p. 88). They should use the type of English that their students understand. Likewise, T5 stated, "Even if we think that we are speaking English in the class, it naturally becomes Nenglish… [.] Sometimes I try my best to make it Standard English-like, but it naturally becomes Nenglish." It validates the fact that cross-linguistic influence is an unavoidable phenomenon in the speech of bilingual and multilingual speakers.

Teachers' logic for promoting NE

The study indicated that NE should be promoted because it is impossible to follow BE or AE; use of NE gives Nepaliness; students are motivated to read the texts written in NE; NE, compared to other English varieties, is more intelligible/comprehensible; students feel easy to learn it – learning English will not be a burden; use of NE develops their confidence and reduces their anxiety; students are less frustrated from learning English; promoting NE will make the job of a teacher easy; NE promotes their identity; and NE should be promoted to resist the hegemony of BE or AE. As for the logic of promoting NE, T4 stated, "In Nepal, we use neither British English nor American English completely. It can't be appropriate in our context… [.] The English we speak doesn't sound English-like." This view is echoed in Rao (1938) and Achebe (1965). Similarly, T1 explained:

When I asked my B.Ed. first-year students to read the story "Martyr" written by Vishnu Singh Rai, I found them more interested in reading the text than the texts written by English writers because of the use of Nepali words… [.] They responded that they could better understand the content because of the use of some key Nepali words.

The Nepali students can better understand the texts produced in NE because of their background knowledge. Schema theory asserts that comprehension depends upon the activation of readers' previous knowledge to generate meaning (Alptekin, 2006). Research on L2 reading based on schema theory has indicated that "the more the content and/or formal data of a text interact with the reader's culture-specific background knowledge, the better the quality of comprehension" (p. 496). Similarly, T1 further explained:

> *If we develop Nepali English, our children, our students, and future generations will not take English as a burden or a difficult subject. There will be originality as well as ownership in English. And it will reduce their fear of English.*

Once Nepali people promote and own English, they can design their own window to look into the world. Karn (2011, p. 34) claimed, "Owning English that incorporates local values and cultures is the only way to secure the position of English in Nepal... [.]" Furthermore, ownership of English also has to do with proficiency. Widdowson (1994) claimed that "Real proficiency is when you are able to take possession of the language, turn it to you advantage, and make it real for you" (p. 384). In addition to this logic, T4 responded:

> *If Nepali English is promoted, it makes us easy to teach. Our students can also understand it and become ready to communicate with us. When we use it, students feel relaxed and close.*

The promotion of NE benefits both teachers and students. In addition, the speakers of WEs want to show a distinct identity in, and through, their local variety (Ferguson, 2006). A similar view was expressed by T3:

> *Nepali English should be promoted. It is our identity. It also has two advantages in today's globalized world: the world will recognize it, and learning English will be easier. Nepali students do not have to follow British or American English and get frustrated by learning it.*

NE should be promoted to let the world know that Nepali people speak a distinct variety of English, which projects their national identities. T3's perspective endorsed Karn's (2011) claim that Nepali people can invent their identity through NE when they use it, and its recognition can help develop local scholarship in English. Similarly, Daniloff-Merrill (2010, cited in Karn, 2011) argued in favour of NE's recognition since it allows Nepali learners to express their identity. In a similar vein, T2 said, "Promotion of NE is an automatic process. If we recognize our variety, it will develop our confidence level. We will not have any doubts whether we are speaking it correctly or not." However, T5 was a bit sceptical about promoting NE in Nepal because of the lack of codification and publications:

> *We have not developed the textbooks in Nepal; I mean the Cambridge or Oxford kind of English books. We do not have our own publications. We do not have our own resources. Then how can we promote Nepali English here in Nepal?*

Despite these challenges, periphery students have resisted English hegemony by using nativized varieties of English, unique English discourses in post-colonial literature, and the hybridization of languages (Canagarajah, 1999). A similar view was expressed by T6:

> *If we want to reduce linguistic imperialism, we must accept and promote Nepali English openly. In these days, people are more interested in learning how English has been modified and re-modified in their own way to make it user-friendly than in knowing the strict use of English. Promotion of Nepali English will help reduce the anxiety students have when using English and fight against linguistic imperialism.*

I also agree with Baratta (2019) that if we do not accept WEs (e.g., NE), the white supremacy model will be promoted further worldwide. Therefore, promotion of NE is necessary to fight against the hegemony of BE or AE, make English user-friendly, and reduce students' anxiety since speaking BE or AE might be an anxiety-provoking factor for many students.

Prospects of NE

In this study, English language teachers were found to be more positive and optimistic about the future of NE. As the tourism sector, private schools, English medium classes, and educated people are increasing in Nepal, the teachers claimed that NE will be more nativized, developed, established, and accepted as a model or norm. To the prospect of NE, T1 responded, "I guarantee that there is no alternative to Nepali English" since NE is practically advantageous (Brett, 1999). Furthermore, T2 explained:

> *It will be established in the future, sooner or later… [.] Its usage is increasing in schools and colleges as a medium of instruction and subject. The population of people who speak English has dramatically increased. The number of educated people is increasing who will learn Nepali English. As we have a huge number of educated human resources, Nepali English will remain an established dialect in the future.*

The future of NE depends on the number of English speakers and its functional uses in Nepal. Crystal (2003) estimated that 27.6% of people speak English as a second language in Nepal. Similarly, 30% of people, according to current estimates, speak English as a second language (Bolton & Bacon-Shone, 2020). As an anecdote, the estimate of some linguists is that "around 40–50% of urban Nepalese are functionally literate in English" (p. 56). This statistic indicates the increasing number of NE speakers in Nepal. Functionally, English in Nepal serves all the instrumental, regulative, interpersonal, and creative/innovative functions (Giri, 2015, 2020; Pandey, 2020; Shrestha, 1983). These

functions of English have led to the nativization of English in Nepal. T5 explained that the effort to promote NE is not enough:

> *There are very few scholars who are trying to promote Nepali English. I don't think they can make a big difference, but in the future, there is no doubt we can develop a separate variety in Nepal since we have been promoting our tourism sector and then we have made English, you know, our medium of instruction in many cases. So if we keep on doing such things, the future of English being like Nenglish [ah] is possible.*

I agree with T5 that fewer scholars are only making campaigns for the promotion of NE, which cannot guarantee the future of NE. However, the promotion of tourism, the change of medium of instruction from Nepali to English in schools and colleges, an increase in educated people, science and technology, media, and foreign trade will help NE thrive in the future.

Bringing NE into a concrete form

The study indicated that to bring NE into concrete form, more research should be conducted on NE and more corpora on it should be built up; local English teachers should be employed; students' English should be valued; it is necessary to write more articles, conduct workshops, seminars, and conferences, and have more discourses on it; NE needs to be codified; and clear-cut policies should be formulated to standardize it. For example, T3 explained:

> *First, we should hire or employ local teachers, not foreign ones. Second, we should not discourage the new words spoken by students. We should accept when our cultural words are mixed up since it is a natural process. Furthermore, we need more discourse and research on it.*

In addition to discourse and research, the local teachers need to be employed since they speak the localized variety of English and are more positive towards the new variety. Like localizing pedagogy, localizing English is easy for the local teachers because such teachers can "recognize the contextual appropriacy of different Englishes and teach students as many variants as possible" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 181). Similarly, the local English teachers value the kind of English produced by the students as innovations rather than deviations or errors. Besides discourse, research, material development, and publication, T5 stated:

> *We should accept their pronunciation. We need to value English spoken in the Nepali style. I just want to add the matter of power or power relations – how powerful our nation is in the international arena that matters for the development of the variety of English in Nepal. If we are powerful, if our voice or the voice of our academicians is heard well in the international forum, it will be recognized very quickly ke… [.] No power, no impact. And if there is no impact, we cannot claim ourselves that it is a separate variety of English.*

T5 maintained that English spoken in the Nepali style should be accepted and valued, which is akin to Farrell and Martin's (2009) assertion that the learners' own English has its own value even if it is significantly different from what is presented in the class. Therefore, the teachers should value their students' current English usage. T5 agreed with Rai (2006) that it is very difficult to argue that Nenglish is an established variety just like Manglish and Hinglish. The role of power is crucial to bringing NE into concrete form. Some powerful countries like India and Singapore have institutionalized their varieties of English, which are now accepted around the world. It is power that determines what is accepted or rejected, what is right or wrong. This notion of "power" endorsed Kachru's (2011) statement that "A language acquires its value from what it can do for its users, and its spread is accelerated by the power that is beyond it: political, economic, ideological, religious and so on" (p. 232). The clear English language policies and power of the government are necessary to concretize NE. Following and slightly adapting Yano (2001), both military and economic powers are necessary to establish, maintain, and expand NE. Unless Nepal gains all such powers and establishes a clear policy for English, concretizing NE will really be a hard nut to crack.

Conclusion and implications

This study reveals that a Nepali variety of English exists in Nepal which needs to be codified and standardized since Mahmood (2009) pointed out that codification demarcates what errors and deviations are, and systematic deviations will be considered "norms" of this variety. In my study, all the English language teachers are positive towards NE and find some benefits in promoting and concretizing NE. The study reveals that Nepali people, whether they are teachers or students, speak NE; NE is practicable and comprehensible or intelligible; NE is easy to teach and learn; and students are motivated to read the English texts written by the Nepali writers. Such local realities should be duly considered in designing curriculum and syllabus and preparing textbooks and other materials, which will only address the needs and interests of both teachers and students. The textbook writers need to include local texts, that is, poems, essays, stories, novels, plays, and articles written in English by Nepali writers, to a greater extent, which are comprehensible for the students and help them develop their intercultural communicative competence.

The study also reveals that Nepali people feel difficulty following Standard BE/AE pronunciation, which implies that English needs to be nativized or appropriated according to local contexts to own it, to meet the needs and interests of Nepali people, and to resist English hegemony. Such appropriation confirms Nepali people's active role as agents who utilize English in a creative and critical manner rather than in a mechanical and diffident way (Canagarajah, 1999). In addition, more research and discourse on NE need to be conducted to establish the Nepali variety of English, which promotes the Nepali identity, preserves Nepali linguistic and cultural heritages, liberates the users from the so-called standard norms and practices, and empowers its speakers. As this study is only based on the data collected from six English language teachers on some

issues, future researchers can work with a larger sample of English teachers teaching in community and private schools on various aspects of NE. However, the findings of this study can contribute to everything from policymaking to pedagogy. Future studies on NE can involve learners, teacher educators or trainers, and policymakers to explore their perspectives on NE.

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Appendix- I

Semi-structured Interview Guideline Questions

Code:

Participant's name:

Name of institution:

Academic qualification:

Teaching experiences:

1. Have you heard about Nepalese English or Nenglish? What is it?
2. Do you speak English or Nepalese English? Why?
3. Does Nepali variety of English exist in Nepal? If yes, how do you know that it exists?
4. Are we in the position to call Nepalese English or Nenglish, the English used in Nepal? What is your take on it?
5. Do you think we should promote Nepalese English in Nepal? Why?
6. How do you perceive the prospect of Nepalese English?
7. Your suggestions to bring Nepalese English in a concrete form?

Thank you for your co-operation.

Development of ELT in Nepal: An Overview

Bishnu Kumar Khadka

Abstract

English language teaching (ELT) journey in Nepal needs to be explored from its historical perspective as there is only few literature available in this area. In this respect, there is a need of analysing historical development of ELT from various dimensions in chronological order. Therefore, this paper aims at presenting an overview of the development in terms of the policies and practices of ELT reviewing and analysing the available literature collected from different sources. After analysing the data, the research claims that English language teaching has been an integral part of education system in Nepal from nursery to tertiary level as a subject and/or medium of instruction throughout the history. Furthermore, the trends of development of ELT in Nepal seem to continue both in its quantity and quality in future due to the increasing use of English in multiple sectors.

Keywords: *English in Nepal, English in Education, EMI, ELT*

Introduction

Nepal is rich in its linguistic diversity having a diverse range of diversified cultural and linguistic richness with more than one hundred and twenty-three living languages along the ecological zones (Bhattarai & Gautam, 2007; Giri, 2009; Yadava, 2013; Phyak, 2013). Hence, in terms of its linguistic and ethnic diversity, Nepal is claimed as a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual country. Though English is not the language of everyday communication in Nepal, it has been the language of almost all sectors at present, and is being taught and learnt as a non-native and/or foreign language in Nepal. As it is claimed that English has become much more popular and considered the language of being used for various purposes such as in education, media, diplomacy, tourism etc. (Adhikari, 2018; Shrestha, 2016). Regarding the status of English in the Nepal, Shrestha (1983) argues that English is not a second and/or one of the official languages of the country. It is neither an intra-national nor a dominant working language. Rather, it is a foreign language and/or library language, i.e. a language having an access to textbooks, lectures, and journals as it is taught as a subject of study; used to a limited degree as a medium of instruction; used in academic, technical, public affairs etc. in Nepal. It plays the role of a lingua franca across international communication in various policies,

programs, and domains. Moreover, it has been playing a crucial role in increasing the career and economic opportunities among the new generation in Nepal (Malla, 1977; Shrestha, 1983; Bista, 2011; Khati, 2013; Giri, 2014).

Furthermore, English is being used as the medium of imparting education, evaluation system and the subject matter to be taught and learnt or both for more than one and half centuries with a wide range of coverage from nursery to tertiary education. The increasing demand for English medium education even in the public schools is one of the examples as the trade mark of so-called quality education. In this respect, Poudel and Choi (2021) claim, "English and Nepali are not only used as medium of instruction (MoI), but also taught as compulsory subjects in the curriculum mandated by the macro governmental policy on education". Hence, in the present context, English is an integral part of the school to university level education system as well as official and media documentation due to the impact of ICT and globalization in Nepal.

Regarding the entry of English in Nepal, Poudel (2021) argues that it has been in Nepal for about two and half-century now, formerly as a contact language between the ruling elites of Kathmandu and the East India Company of British India (p. 4). However, the formal journey of teaching and learning English begins with the visit of the then Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana to Britain who for the first time introduced English-language education for educating his children and close relatives which was claimed as the formal starting of English language teaching (ELT) in Nepal (Eagle, 2000). In this context, it is worth exploring the various dimensions of the historical development of ELT in terms of policies, programs and practices with their ups and downs from the past to present.

The Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to review the historical development of ELT practices in Nepal chronologically in terms of its policies, programs and practices and past to present status with the purpose of documenting the significant junctures of Nepalese ELT in particular.

Methodology

The methodology of the study was a descriptive survey based on the literature related to ELT development in Nepal from the available secondary sources. They are analysed, interpreted and presented in the chronological order from past to present status. While searching the literature related to ELT in Nepal, I used the web-based online as well as physically published journals and books focusing on the historical development of English in education, media, governmental as well as the academic administrative policy and practice related documents in particular.

Literature Review

The historical development of English language teaching practices in Nepal takes its roots from the 19th century. To review it's about one and half-century journey, the researcher has reviewed the ELT literature related to the Nepalese context. Regarding the ELT development in Nepal, the journal articles were reviewed such as Awasthi (2003), Phyak (2013), Uda and Sharma (2006), Sharma (1990), Bista (2011), Shrestha (1983), Bolton and Kachru (2006), Bhattarai and Gautam (2007), Subba (1980), Giri (2014), Weinberg (2013), Khati (2013) and Adhikari (2020). Similarly, the books and book chapters contributed by Malla (1977, Duwadi (2018), Ojha (2018), Bashyal (2018), Karki (2018), Metsämuuronen and Ilic (2018), Paudel (2019), Phyak (2016), Pandey (2020), Poudel (2021) and Shrestha and Gautam (2022) etc. were reviewed. Furthermore, the policy documents were also reviewed such as Nepal National Education Planning Commission (1956), National Education System Plan, 1971 (2028 BS), the research reports conducted by the Government of Nepal, the Constitution of Nepal (2072 BS), the National Curriculum Framework (2077 BS), Curriculum Development Centre (2021), curricula of different levels and periods published by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), policy documents of Government of Nepal, universities and other professional organizations such as Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). While reviewing the policy related documents, it has been accepted that English is found to be taught and learnt as a language of international linguafranca and therefore it is the need of teaching and learning from class one to bachelor level as the compulsory subjects and medium of teaching too (CDC, 2021; NCF, 2020, NESP, 1971). Moreover, English is being used as the language of disseminating education from its historical origin to till today in Nepal (Malla, 1976; Subba, 1980; Giri, 2014; Weinberg, 2013; Khati, 2013; Adhikari, 2020; Poudel, 2021). English language is gradually becoming a de facto medium of education in both, government funded public and private schools in Nepal (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022; Paudel, 2019; Phyak, 2016).

Analysis, Interpretation and Result Discussion

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of literature reviews related to the ELT policies and practices in Nepal, the findings and discussion is described in the following sub-headings:

ELT in Pre-Rana Period (Before 1850)

If we review the historical documents of ELT in Nepal, the use of English in Nepal, was found before the beginning of formal education system in the seventeenth century. In Nepal, English did not entered as the language of ruling by English speaking people like British or any others like other countries of South Asia such as India and Pakistan. In this regard, Poudel (2021) claims, "Nepal has never been a political colony of the English people. Therefore, English has not been politically imposed on the people of Nepal, as the case was in neighbouring countries of the Indian subcontinent during

British rule" (p. 2). Justifying this fact, Subba (1980) argues, "English was not brought to Nepal as the language of conquerors, as it was in most countries in South Asia" (p. 84). The historical record of Nepal regarding the entry of English is claimed to be used by King Pratap Malla during the Malla Period in Nepal. "The earliest record about the English language in Nepal is about the 17th century; an inscription at Hanuman Dhoka states that King Pratap Malla (1641-44) knew English as one of the fourteen languages he knew" (Uda & Sharma, 2006, p. 60). Further, English was found to be used for providing training to the soldiers by the European military trainers before and during the unification mission of Nepal. In this respect, Giri (2014) claims,

> *"The early presence of English in Nepal could have been the result of the entry and first settlements of European missionaries, in particular, English missionaries in 1661. They trained Nepalis to assist them with their intrastate as well as interstate activities. A landmark of English education, however, was the commencement of recruitment of Gurkha soldiers as a part of the famous Sugauli Treaty in 1815, the training of which took place in English" (p. 192).*

The Education system of Nepal was based on religion, Sanskrit language as the medium of instruction, which was mainly for the Brahmins and Chhetris only. "The religious schooling in Hindu Pathshalas and Buddhist Gombas were using the mediums of Sanskrit and Tibetan respectively" (Eagle, 1999; Phyak, 2011 as cited in Weinberg, 2013, p. 64) before the introduction of the formal English Education system officially by Junga Bahadur Rana. In this respect, Bashyal (2018) claims that the settlement of European missionaries in 1661 and recruitment of Gurkha soldiers after the Nepal-British East India Company Sugauli treaty in 1815 contributed to spread English in Nepal though, it was formally imported into Nepal during the Rana oligarchy (p. 221). Therefore, this period in the history of ELT in Nepal can be said to be the period of importing English and getting exposed to English practices without formal pedagogical system.

ELT in Rana Period (1850-1951)

The formal journey of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal is claimed to be started in the early 19th century. To be more specific, when the then prime minister, Jung Bahadur Rana opened a school in 1954, the English language received a place in mainstream education (NELTA, n.d.). So, it can be said that Rana period is the founding period for ELT in Nepal, though it is blamed as the dark age of education in the history of Nepal. In this regard, Adhikari(2020) claimed that English entered in the formal education system with the visit of Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana to Britain, and establishment of school, popularly known as Durbar High School where English was introduced. It is argued that he was impressed by the achievements of England and the English education system when he visited the European countries. As a result, when returning back from England to Nepal, he brought two English teachers (Mr. Rose and Lord Canning) from there and established an English school at Thapathali Palace. In this regard, Sharma (1990) further supports that "after his trip to Europe, Jung Bahadur

realized the importance of English for communication with the outside world and felt that his sons should be given a "western" education" (p. 3).

The first formal government-run school of Nepal, Durbar School was an English medium school. Though it was initially opened only for children from the ruling Rana family, has played an important role in establishing the foundation of English language teaching in Nepal. Supporting this view, Weinberg (2013) further argues that since the Rana rulers wanted their children to learn in English, medium of instruction, the curriculum, teaching-learning materials etc. were in English. Sharma (1990) further claims that English was both the medium of instruction and examination as it was affiliated to Calcutta University (p. 4).

During the Rana period education system, English was taught both as a compulsory subject and medium of teaching and learning. Furthermore, it was the medium of examination too. When the SLC Board of Examination in Nepal was established in 1934,"English was a compulsory subject, medium of instruction and examination whereas Nepali came to be compulsory subejct only in 1951. It was the language which was voluntarily opted by the SLC candidates of the forties and fifties" (Malla, 1977, Shrestha, 1983). Furthermore, in the revision of 1953 and 1965, English carries more than 20 % of the total marks allocation for the level whereas Nepali only 5%. In the sixties, the medium of education was both English and Nepali at the secondary level (HMG, 1961, pp. 99-101 as cited in Shrestha, 1983). During this period, Tri-Chandra College established in 1918 as the first higher education institution. It also used English as the medium of education (Weinberg, 2013). Although the educational policy during the Ranas period served to limit education to elites, mostly their Rana family members only, for the limited people, the language of education was English.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the Rana Period of Nepal in the history of ELT can be called as the period of formal entry of English in education system of Nepal. In other words, the formal education system of Nepal was started with the English medium school where English was taught and learnt both as the subject and medium of teaching, learning and examinations which continue up to the SLC and higher education level during this period. Therefore, it can be claimed that Rana Period is the foundation period for ELT in Nepal.

ELT in Democratic Period (1951-1960)

Democracy was established in 1951 after demolishing the 104-year long Rana Regime in Nepal. With the establishment of democracy in Nepal education is readily available to the general public, although well-to-do families had been educating their children (mainly boys) in India prior to that (Duwadi, 2018). According to the NNEPC survey (1954) it was revealed that nearly half of Nepal's population wanted English to remain as the medium of instruction" (Wood, Pandey, & Upraity, 1955; Sonntag, 1980 as cited in Giri, 2014). In this respect, Malla (1977) argues,

> *"[t]he withdrawal of British power from the Indian subcontinent has been a crucial factor in the changing status of English language in the educational setup of the whole South Asia, including Nepal. Till the 1940s and 1950s even in the secondary schools English language and English curriculum occupied an important place". (p. 21)*

The government-formed National Education Commission chaired by Sardar Rudra Raj Pande (1956) officially recommended using Nepali medium education throughout the country with the aim to unite the nation by using a single language (Ojha, 2018, p. 190) for the first time. *"Nepaali bhaasaa nai padhaaiko maadhyam hunuparchha" [Nepali language should be the language of instruction]* (NEPC, 1956, as cited in Rai, 2013). During this period, as per the policy recommendations by NEPC (1956, p. 56 as cited in Yadava, 2013) mentions that the medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle, and higher educational institutions, no other languages should be taught, even optionally, in primary school (p. 133). Later, the K. I. Singh government also continued Nepali medium education in 1957 by prescribing Nepali as a medium of teaching and learning.

Tribhuvan University was established in 1959 as the higher education institution for providing tertiary level education in Nepal. Shrestha (1983) claims that the colleges of Nepal were affiliated with the Indian universities before the inception of Tribhuvan University in 1959, therefore, the courses were taught accordingly such as English was a compulsory subject and the medium of instruction and continued to be so even after founding the native university. In respect to the English courses, he further claims that in the intermediate level syllabus of 1975, compulsory English carries 15 hours whereas Nepali carries only 9 hours. At the post-secondary levels the status of English, both as the medium of instruction and examination, remained unquestionable till the 1960s (Malla, 1977). Likewise, Subba (1980) further justifies, "English is the recognized medium of instruction but Nepali is fast becoming the inevitable medium of instruction" (p. 84). In her research findings she argues that English currently remains the medium of instruction within tertiary education in Nepal; but a vast number of students do not have adequate English language skills, which places them at disadvantage. Regarding ELT curriculum and methodology of ELT Shrestha (1983) argues,"the English syllabuses were literature-based and methodology that of grammar-translation. Teaching-learning of English was equated with teaching-learning of the formal grammatical system, reading literature and philosophy, inculcation of classical and humanistic spirit, cultural enrichment etc." (p. 49). So, this period in the history of ELT in Nepal is the "Period of ignorance towards English", however, the use and attraction of English in higher education continued as the subject and medium of instruction and examination with the use of grammar-translation method in ELT.

ELT in Panchayat Period (1961-1990)

English was treated as one of the compulsory subject during the Panchayat period from 1961 to 1990 as Shrestha (2018) claims, "the role of English was changed from

medium of instruction to a subject of study" (p.172), though the then "King Mahendra, during the one-party dictatorial Panchayat Era (1960-1990) adopted a policy to promote the Nepali language (Ojha, 2018). During Panchayat Period, the All Round National Education Commission (2018 B.S.) also recommended Nepali language as the medium of education (p. 20). In this regard, Rai (2013) further argues that it recommended Nepali as the medium of instruction and Sanskrit as a subject in the curriculum. Furthermore, Uda and Sharma (2006) claims, "English, of course, had been a compulsory subject at Durbar School; the compulsory status for English retained till 1971. In this year, a drastic change was carried out: The National Education System Plan was introduced, where English was defined as one of the UN languages" (p. 60). In this regard, Malla (1977) further justifies that the National Education System Plan (1971-1976) deleted English as a compulsory subject from the primary school curriculum (Class I to Class III) and did not make a specific mention of the English language in the secondary curriculum (Class VIII to Class X) either rather it prescribed one of the U. N. languages as a compulsory subject (p. 9).

Regarding the medium of teaching and learning, NESP (1971-76) outlined the policy of medium of instruction clearly that Nepali as the medium of instruction except teaching the language itself. As the NESP (1971, p. 29) mentions,

> *"The medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools will be Nepali. However, while teaching a language other than Nepali, the medium of instruction may be in the language concerned. The medium of instruction in higher educational institutions will remain as it now" (as cited in Subba, 1980).*

Despite of the policy regarding medium of instruction, Dawadi (2018) argues that NESP (1971) mandated English as a subject to be taught in schools in Nepal and increased interest and stress in both teachers and students. Furthermore, Awasthi (2003) claims, "the introduction of ELT in Nepalese education started only in l97l with the implementation of National Education System Plan (NESP) until then English language teachers were not trained. It started only in 1971 when Institute of Education (IOE) of TU initiated B.Ed. programme in English education" (p. 22). Regarding the medium of instruction at university level, Malla (1977) makes a similar claim that when Tribhuvan University was incorporated by law in 1959, the University Act envisaged that Nepali would be adopted as the medium of instruction and examination by 1974. Likewise, Shrestha (2018) concludes that although English was not medium of instruction throughout the Panchayat era, it was taught as a compulsory subject from grade four onwards (p. 172).

There was a drastic change in the ELT curriculum designing and methodology in tertiary education in Nepal, particularly at Tribhuvan University during this period. Malla (1968) claims, "In 1964, the Board of English Studies was reported to have felt the need to separate the teaching of language from the teaching of literature" (p. 77 as cited in Shrestha, 1983, p. 49) at Tribhuvan University. Moreover, Malla (1977) further clarifies that "the Board of English Studies framed the new English syllabuses- splitting

the old courses into the compulsory English courses and optional literature courses. The new courses were introduced from 1964 for the Intermediate and Degree students taking their finals in 1966 (p. 1). Moreover, he remembers the two-day seminar on objectives and methods of implementing the new courses held in 1964 having made some specific recommendations on teaching methods and techniques of examinations. Another remarkable event during this period to be noted is a National Conference of College Teachers of English that was held in October 1968 and the report was published in 1969 in which David Rathbone (1969, p. 9) pointed out that English must be taught as a foreign language, not as a second language in Nepal (Shrestha, 1983). Moreover, in the early 1980s, Davies' report, after an extensive study of the ELT situation in Nepal, reported that the overall situation of English was quite deplorable and the standard was considered quite low (NELTA, n.d.).

Regarding the teacher training programs in ELT during Panchayat system, Awasthi (2003) claims,

> *"The National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971-76) brought a new impetus in teacher education and making the teacher training mandatory to obtain tenure in schools...All these institutions such as College of Education, National Vocational Training Centre, and Primary School Teacher Training Centres came under the single umbrella of the Institute of Education (IOE) under Tribhuvan University (TU)" (p. 6).*

There was a replacement of teaching methods in ELT from the Grammar-Translation Method to the Audio-lingual Method during the Panchayat period. In this respect, Shrestha (1983) claims that "the grammar-translation method was replaced by pattern practice. The emphasis naturally is on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening as units of teaching were introduced for the first time in 1971 (p. 49). The focus of English language teaching shifted to the development of language skills. Therefore, the method of teaching language skills was practised mostly as structural-functional and the functional value of English and school level syllabuses were reshaped accordingly (NELTA, n.d.). Furthermore, at the university level, the syllabus for English for specific purposes was also designed. It was a major departure from the past; the education system was restructured and centralized as a full government undertaking.

From the above discussion, it can be said that during the period, there was a reentry of English indirectly as one of the compulsory subjects in the name of the UN language in school education and as a core and major subject as well as the medium of instruction in higher education. Furthermore, during this period, the ELT trainings and teacher education programs of the universities, governmental and non-governmental agencies were launched and the pedagogy of ELT also transformed from grammar-translation method to audio-lingual method. Therefore, it can be claimed that there was a paradigm shift in ELT not only in curriculum designing but also in pedagogy and can be said as the "Period of Foundational Transformation of ELT" in the history of ELT.

ELT in Restored Democratic Period (1990-2006)

Along with the success of Jana Andolan I [People's Movement I], democracy was restored in 1990 in Nepal. After a year of the restoration of democracy, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 2047 (1990) was declared in which Nepal is identified as the multiethnic and multilingual country (Article 4.1) and all the languages spoken as the mother tongue in various parts of Nepal are national languages of Nepal (Article 6.2). However, nothing was said about the status and position of the English language and its use in the constitutions and other official documents. Regarding the spread of English in Nepal after the restoration of the democracy period, Phyak (2013) claims,

> *"The English language became the de facto language in education, mass media, and government offices. As the most of the developmental projects are supported by foreign agencies, official proposals and reports are prepared in English. Due to its instrumental value, English is perceived as the most important language (even more important than Nepali) in education, mass media, and other job markets (especially due to technological requirements)" (p. 5).*

With the restoration of democracy in 1990, many professional organizations related to ELT in Nepal were founded which are contributing a lot to the access and quality of ELT till today. A number of governmental, non-governmental, and private academic and non-academic institutions opened during this period which has been formally and/or informally contributing to the development of Nepalese ELT. At the governmental level, the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) was established in 1992 with a view to training manpower involved in the field of school education. "The sole responsibility of imparting teacher education in ELT was given to Faculty of Education (FOE) of Tribhuvan University until other universities started one or the other kind of teacher education programmes in the late 90s (Awasthi, 2003). Likewise, other universities such as Kathmandu University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Purbanchal University,Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) of Nepal etc. also started academic programs in ELT which ultimately supported to developmentof human resources in the field of ELT across the country during this period. In this respect, Awasthi (2003)claims, "the courses offered by the universities responsible for conducting ELT teacher education comprise language/linguistic contents and ELT pedagogy" (p. 24).

At the outset of the restorationof democracy period, "Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) was founded in 1992; the Literary Association of Nepal was founded in 1992; the Society of English Writers was formed in 2000 and Asian English Language Teachers Creative Writers Group was founded in 2003" (Giri, 2014). The informal meeting among Ram Ashish Giri, David Pottinger and Jai Raj Awasthi marked the conceptualization of NELTA… Both print and electronic publications from NELTA and their continuity over the years have benefitted its members. Furthermore, its activities in collaboration with various national and international agencies have yielded long-lasting results in ELT (NELTA, n.d.).

NELTA, a professional organisation of English teachers from pre-primary level to tertiary level, runs various ELT programmes throughout the country. More than a thousand English teachers from different parts of the country have received short-term training and it has also been actively involved in the ELT teacher development activities (Awasthi, 2003).

During this period, there was increasing trend of opening the professional organizations, academic institutions, private and government funded schools, campuses and universities, which played a crucial role in the development of ELT in Nepal. Besides, the open policy of the government and the international exposure of ELT practices due to the participation in international conferences, seminars, trainings and workshops, graduation from international universities as well as the researches and publication also contributed to develop the ELT in Nepal. Moreover, there was a drastic change in the practices of teaching methodology from audio-lingual method to communicative method and use of multi-method practices in ELT. Therefore, this period in the history of Nepalese ELT can be regarded as the fertile period for the development of ELT in Nepal.

ELT in Republican Period (2006- onwards)

There was a great political change in Nepal in 2006, and the new identity of new Nepal was established due to the People's Movement – II in Nepal as a secular, multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural federal democratic republican country. In this regard, Phyak (2013) narrates,

> *"In 2006, the People's Movement, Janaandolan-II, not only overthrow a long history (about 240 years) of monarchy and ended the 11-year-long , Maoists insurgency, but also paved the way for declaring Nepal a secular, multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural Federal Democratic Republic (p. 5)".*

Regarding the medium of education in school education, the multi-lingual policy has been adopted during this period especially at the elementary level, mother tongue is prescribed where Nepali or English or both of them are also free to choose as the medium of education at the school level education. In this regard, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal (CDC, 2007, p. 24) mentions that:

> *"Mother tongue will be the medium of elementary education. The medium of school-level education can be in Nepali or English language or both of them. However, in the first stage of elementary education (Grades 1-3), the medium of education will generally be in the mother tongue (Karki, 2018)".*

The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-15) ensured to choice of anyone or a combination of English, Nepali and mother tongue as a medium of instruction (MOE, 2009 as cited in Pradhan, 2018). Although the Government of Nepal ensured the mother tongue-based

multilingual education policy in Nepal, the English medium education is increasing and most of the private schools are practising it (Khati, 2013). In this respect, Phyak (2016, p. 200 as cited in Karki, 2018) raises the questions of the future of mother tongue education and the cause of increasing EMI as

> *"Instead of teaching through ethnic-minority language, English is increasingly used as the de-facto medium of instruction from grade one onwards. This raises the important question: despite the official policy promoting the use of local languages, why does English receive more attention in practice"?*

English language and/or English language teaching and learning is one of the core components of the Nepalese education system, therefore, English is not only the compulsory subject from primary level to bachelor level but also one of the popular specializations subject in the Nepalese university programs. After the restructuring of the political system as the Federal Republic of Nepal, the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education and Sport approved the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal as the restructuring the school education system of Nepal. It restructured the school education system into two levels: basic and secondary in which English is one of the compulsory subjects from grade one to twelve. Likewise, the National Curriculum Framework, 2020 was again designed for the development of school education courses for the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has recently developed the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2020 to address the changed socio-political condition of the country and the current needs of the learner (CDC, 2020). It has also continued English as the compulsory subject from grade one to twelve with the choice of optional subject in the secondary level. In this respect, Ghimire (2019) writes, "the English subject area of the integrated curriculum is based on the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CLT) consisting of language skills, language functions and also themes. Thus, it aims to develop comprehensive communicative competence in the learners". The National Curriculum Framework (CDC, 2020) has taken English as a basic foundation for their further studies in and through English and aims at developing a comprehensive communicative competence on the part of learners at elementary level.

> *"The major focus of this curriculum is on language skills viz., listening, speaking, reading and writing. By the end of Grade 3, children will be able to use English effectively in a limited set of situations. This curriculum is based on the principle that children learn English better when they get ample exposure to spoken and written English and sufficient opportunity to use it in a stress-free environment (p. 17)".*

The basic level curriculum of English (grade four-five) has also focused on language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing so that the children will be able to use English effectively in real-life situations. Therefore, it has given equal status to all skills: listening and speaking (50% with 20 weightage) and reading and writing (50% with 16 weightage) while evaluating them (CDC, 2020). Likewise, the basic level curriculum

(grade six-eight) aims to enable the students to exchange their ideas with the people who speak or write English with a focus on language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing to develop communicative competence on the part of students. Similarly, the secondary education curriculum (grade 9-10) aims to enable the students to exchange their ideas in the English language with due consideration on a strong grammatical foundation expecting to enable them to communicate in the English language with confidence. The grade 11-12 English curriculum has focused not only on language and language functions but also on a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts (CDC, 2021).

English has been criticized as one of the major subjects which is taken synonymous to the failure making subject from school to university level. All the universities and higher education institutions have designed their curricula in English and English is the medium of instruction and examination in almost of them except language-related subjects, however, in practice, Nepali language is mostly used as a facilitating and/ or alternative language of pedagogy in higher education in Nepal. As Bhattarai and Gautam (2007) claim, "Almost all university education, tertiary educational colleges and privately-run academic institutions use English for all academic purposes – teaching, evaluation and research". Likewise, Duwadi (2018) claims also that universities in Nepal have "given high priority to having its curriculum in English and it is a compulsory subject until the bachelor's level irrespective of students' specialization in their studies" (p. 180). Teaching English as a medium of teaching, learning and examination is popular in universities and colleges in Nepal, which is taught through to degree level at university as a compulsory subject and as a medium of instruction exclusively English in science, engineering, medicine, and technical institutes in the universities of Nepal (Shreshtha, 2008; Bista, 2011; Lama, 2016).

During this period, Mid-West (MU), Far-West (FWU), and Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU) were established in 2010. All the newly established universities including other technical higher education institutions also have been teaching English as the compulsory subject as well as medium of instruction and examination in most of the subject areas. In addition, both MU and FWU have been running English as the major subject both in master and bachelor degree programs under the faculty of education and humanities and social sciences. Both of the universities have been conducting ELT courses in the semester system and updating their courses too.

Almost all the universities of Nepal where English is taught and learnt as a specialized subject at bachelor, master, M Phil and PhD level, are updating their ELT curricula and ELT methods and techniques incorporating new trends and technologies. The focus is found to be in English language, linguistics and pedagogy under the Faculty of Education whereas English language and literature under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. As Poudel and Sharma (2019) claim, "English under the Faculty of Education (FoE), which fundamentally focuses on linguistics and language teaching, and the Faculty of Humanities (FoH), which primarily emphasizes arts and literature" (p. 2).

Regarding the teaching-learning pedagogy in ELT, most ELT professionals and practitioners are still practising the traditional teacher dominant methods and techniques mostly lecture methods at the university as well as school level. The ELT methodology in the Nepalese higher education classroom, like at schools, is largely dominated by the excessive lecture method, however, in the last three decades, English language teaching has improved greatly in Nepal in terms of the structure of education, pedagogies and institutions of higher learning (Bista, 2011, Poudel & Sharma, 2019). Due to the massive use of internet and web-based resources and exposures, there is a great influence of international practices and globalization in the field of Nepalese ELT. To be more specific, Nepalese ELT in enriched because of the research findings, sharing of best practices of national and international professionals and practitioners, participation and presentation of national and international conferences, seminars, workshops, professional development trainings etc. organized by the governmental, non-governmental and professional organizations related to ELT. Furthermore, during this period, there is a paradigm shift in ELT methods practising the multi-method to post-method pedagogy in ELT. Therefore, the journey of ELT in Nepal is smoothly going on crossing the various bends of challenges and opportunities with the implementation of ELT curriculum from nursery to tertiary level of education English as the compulsory to optional subject as well as the medium of instruction as well as enjoying ICT friendly e-pedagogy using the best ELT methods and techniques during this period.

Conclusion

The chronological development of ELT in Nepal reflects that the entry of English was for the elite class to common people. It is the ground reality that English language teaching in Nepal has been an integral part of the Nepalese education system. English language teaching as a subject and/or medium of instruction is being practised from the early grades to the university level in Nepal. It is the language of providing better opportunities for students and language of better career. Though English is not accepted as the official language in Nepal, it has been used in almost all the governmental official documents and it has been the language of all the sectors informally. Teaching and learning of English in Nepal has been a growing interest in the field of academia and research as well as creating the job opportunity both home and abroad. In this respect, the journey of Nepalese ELT has successfully crossed various ups and downs and has arrived at the juncture of enhancing quality in its various dimensions. So, it is necessary to work on developing inclusive access and quality for quality education in general and ELT in particular in Nepal.

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EL Teachers' Induction Phase in Bangladesh: Practices, Challenges, and Expectations

Md. Abdur Rouf

Abstract

This study aimed to explore the English language (EL) teachers' induction phase in Bangladesh, focusing on the usual practices, challenges they face, and their expectations. Teachers' induction phase is immensely significant as they make a transition to the teaching profession. Following the qualitative phenomenological approach, qualitative data were collected from six (6) EL teachers working at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels across Bangladesh through interviews. The collected data were analysed using the thematic analysis framework as advocated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The key findings included a three-segment teacher recruitment mechanism, absence of pre-service teacher preparation and adequate initial training, varied initial experiences of teachers, no mentoring and observation, limited collaboration, and inadequate opportunity for professional development. Moreover, the findings also revealed that many such teachers are confused regarding their career because of discrepancies between pre-service perceptions and in-service actualities, lack of required support and resources for novice teachers, the significance of teachers' proactive role in induction, and their confusion about career planing.

Keywords: *EL teachers, induction, practices, challenges, and expectations*

Introduction

Effective teaching is highly essential for the emerging demands for different sets of knowledge and skills of the present society (Darling-Hammond, 2006). And among all the stakeholders, teachers play the most significant role in the English language teaching and learning. They profoundly influence the achievements of their learners in language learning (Darling-Hammond, 2003). However, the initial years of teaching are really challenging for novice teachers (Alhamad, 2018; Kutsyuruba, Walker, Matheson, & Bosica, 2021; Westerlund & Eliasson, 2021). "One might argue that there is no period as important to a teacher's career as the first few years of teaching" (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 109). It is essential that the new teachers are provided with all the support they need. Otherwise, many of them may decide to leave the profession. It is argued that new teachers can be better teachers and contented with their early experiences if they go through effective induction programmes (C. Flores, 2019).

Teacher preparation is being given increased attention all over the world as teaching quality substantially impacts learners' achievements (Moir & Gless, 2001). The induction phase must positively ensure new teachers' effective classroom teaching and learners' achievements (Moir & Gless, 2001). In the UK, teachers must attend one year of induction for teaching in the public schools. They are also supposed to complete initial teacher education programmes at their undergraduate or postgraduate levels. This preparation encourages them to develop their professionalism and enhance the academic performance of their learners (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018). Moreover, Kearney (2019) asserted that the induction programmes in NSW, Australia were full of divergences and contradictions. He recommended to initiate more structured induction programmes for novice teachers so that they become effective teaching professionals. As for Bangladesh, teacher preparation is not taken seriously, and people are inclined to believe that anybody can teach (M. A Rouf, 2021). Against this background, the present study targeted to examine the induction phase of the English language (EL) teachers in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

This part reviews the related literature and shows the gap for the present study.

Defining the Induction Phase

Teacher induction programme was started in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s (Kearney, 2019). Induction programmes can be defined as the "support, guidance, and orientation programmes" (R. Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 28) for the newly appointed teachers. Again, Mitchell, Keese, Banerjee, Huston, and Kwok (2021) asserted that different induction programmes try to assist novice teachers in their initial years in a planned way so that teachers can develop their teaching skills and professionalism. According to C. Flores (2019, p. 1) "… induction is a complex process that cannot be separated from the social context of schooling practices in which beginning teachers are plunged. The process of introducing a beginning teacher into a school system is a complex one." The institutional contexts also play a major role in teachers' induction programmes (Shanks et al., 2020). Therefore, novice teachers are required to adjust to the prevailing culture of the institutions they have joined (Paor, 2017). Feiman-Nemser (2003) argued that quality induction programmes do not solely focus on retaining new teachers rather those programmes help teachers become good teachers and encourage teachers' professional learning.

Mentoring in the Induction Phase

One of the main components of any induction programme is mentorship (R. Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). It is widely agreed that novice teachers can benefit significantly if they get help from experienced mentors (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Mentoring the new teachers

also eliminates isolation and facilitates collaboration among teachers (Shanks et al., 2020). Mentors can also help new teachers by sharing professional knowledge which ultimately facilitates new teachers' construction of professional and individual identity (Paor, 2017). Through mentoring, novice teachers then learn how to accept critical feedback and use it to improve their instructional practices (Wexler, 2019). Additionally, teacher leadership can be developed through quality induction programmes and mentoring (Gilles, Wang, Fish, & Stegall, 2018). However, for mentoring to be successful, proper selection and preparation of mentors is essential (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Moreover, the professional learning of mentors must be given due attention so that they can effectively help their mentees (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Locating the Gap for the Present Study

Novice teachers get different benefits from induction programmes. R. M. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that initial support for teachers had positive effects on commitment and retention of teachers, their pedagogical practices, and achievements of learners. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) also reported that induction programmes exerted a positive effect on the retention of new teachers. Similarly, Mishra, Gupta, and Shree (2022) reported that faculty members were benefited from attending a faculty induction programme as they learned about micro teaching, materials development, lesson plan preparation, taxonomy of Bloom, and constructivist teaching and learning. Then, Gilles et al. (2018) found that novice teachers became teacher leaders with the help of induction programmes and their mentors. Farrell (2016) also claimed that novice ESL teachers in Canada were helped by a new teacher reflection group. Reeves, Hamilton, and Onder (2022) then asserted that team teaching, keeping portfolios, writing journals and dairies, and online tasks were helpful for new teachers.

Different studies also examined the practices of induction programmes and needs of novice teachers. Kelly, Cespedes, Clarà, and Danaher (2019) found that the nature of relationship with colleagues, arrangement of induction programmes, and mentoring influence teachers' decision to leave or continue the job. Mitchell et al. (2021) also argued that mentors, curriculum, and the ways learning is managed help create effective induction programmes. Kutsyuruba et al. (2021) claimed that with passage of time teachers get less support from the schools, and their employment satisfactions reduce and chances of changing the profession increase. In another study, two new teachers in northern Chile claimed that they were highly benefited from external network that they themselves created in the beginning years (C. Flores, 2019). Sikma (2019) claimed that the teachers valued the social support network during their initial years, and they expected "emotional, contextual, relational, academic, and social" (p.317) support. Finally, Sela and Harel (2018) argued that beginning teachers can play an active role in their own induction by demonstrating strong attitudes, developing communication skills, collaborating with colleagues, and constructing their personal beliefs.

The difficulties encountered by novice teachers vary according to the context and culture of teachers' socialisation (Veenman, 1984). New teachers face the challenges of everyday classroom teaching considering their own educational experiences and theories they were taught (Moir & Gless, 2001). The induction into teaching positions can be a stressful one for novice teachers (Veenman, 1984). Kearney (2019) mentioned that new teachers are usually asked to teach the tough classes and assigned too many classes and duties beyond the classroom. Sydnor (2017) also claimed that sometimes they feel overwhelmed facing the hard realities of classroom teaching and other duties. Then, Goktepe and Kunt (2020) argued that the new teachers' identity construction can be impeded due to the imbalanced mentor-mentee relation, and the resistance they face in applying their pedagogical beliefs in classrooms.

Teachers faced many other challenges during the induction phase across the world. Westerlund and Eliasson (2021) reported that the Swedish novice physical education teachers faced seclusion and reality shock during their induction. Tammets, Pata, and Eisenschmidt (2018) found that Estonian novice teachers were inadequately supported by their colleagues and tertiary level experts. Similarly, Kourieos and Diakou (2019) found that the novice primary level EL teachers in Cyprus faced difficulty in dealing with learners who spoke different languages and came from various cultural backgrounds. Whalen, Majocha, and Van Nuland (2019) also reported that the novice EL teachers in Canada confronted different challenges - limited scope for getting a mentor, non-involvement of experienced teachers in induction, and limited observation opportunity. Again, Alhamad (2018) reported that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia faced different challenges like learners' low proficiency in English, their negative attitude to English, selection of appropriate method and learner-centred approach for teaching, management of learner behaviour, the course outlining, and communication with guardians. New teachers also experienced a divergence between their pre-service assumptions and in-service realities in the teaching profession in Israel and the USA (Haim & Amdur, 2016; Knotts, 2016; Shayshon & Popper-Giveon, 2016).

Research Objective and Significance of the Study

Different elements of teachers' induction programmes in different contexts across the world were examined by the studies mentioned above. However, as far I know no study has examined the induction phase of the EL teachers in Bangladesh. So, to unearth the practices, challenges, and their expectations as far as induction is concerned this study was carried out guided by the following research question (RQ):

> *RQ: What were the practices, challenges, and expectations related to the EL teachers' induction phase in Bangladesh?*

The findings of the study would assist stakeholders concerned in designing effective induction programmes for the EL teachers in Bangladesh so that teachers can teach effectively inside classrooms, grow professionally, and positively impact their learners' academic achievements.

Research Methodology

Different aspects of the research methodology used for conducting the study are described in this section.

Approach and Rigour of the Study

This study was carried out following the qualitative phenomenological approach (Sela & Harel, 2018). Here the phenomenon was the 'induction phase' of the EL teachers in Bangladesh, and the study comprehensively examined the phenomenon through the lived experiences of the EL teachers (Creswell, 2015; Whalen et al., 2019). Again, the rigour or trustworthiness of this qualitative study was ensured by maintaining an interview data base, collecting data from various sources, and using self-reflections for eliminating bias (Chenail, 2011; Noble & Smith, 2015).

Participants

One primary (P), three secondary (S), and two higher secondary (HS) EL teachers were purposively selected for collecting data on the induction phase. The purposive sampling technique was used so that the selected teachers could provide relevant and deep data on the phenomenon explored. The participants were told about the aim of the study and their role in it. They were assured that their identity would be protected, and the collected data will not be used for any other purpose (Sela & Harel, 2018). Finally, all the teachers agreed to participate in this study voluntarily. The paper uses alpha-numeric labels (T1P-T6HS) for the participants for ensuring anonymity. Table 1 shows the demographic details of the participants.

Table 1: The Participating Teachers' Demographics

Teachers	Gender	Age (Years)	Teaching Experiences	College, School Type	Location
T1P	Female	21-25	3 Years	Government	Rural
T2S	Male	21-25	2 Months	Non-Government	Rural
T3S	Male	26-30	2 Years	Non-Government	Urban
T4S	Male	31-35	4 Years	Non-Government	Urban
T5HS	Male	26-30	1 Year	Non-Government	Rural
T6HS	Male	31-35	8 Years	Government	Urban

Data Collection Tool and Method

The researcher devised a semi-structured interview checklist (presented in Table 2) for carrying out interviews with the participants. It consisted of fifteen items, and the trustworthiness of these items was ascertained through a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature. Moreover, a pilot study was carried out with an EL teacher to ensure the relevance of the interview items. Necessary changes were made in the final interview checklist according to the findings of the pilot study.

Table 2: **The Semi-Structured Interview Checklist**

SL	Interview Items
1.	The teacher recruitment process
2.	Pre-service teacher preparation/education programmes
3.	Initial training/orientation programmes
4.	Duties during the initial months/years
5.	Initial days/experiences: classroom teaching, collaboration with other teachers, mentoring/observing senior teachers' classes
6.	Getting adequate support from institutions
7.	Emotional conditions/stress; job satisfaction
8.	Scope and opportunity for professional development
9.	Making differences/improvement in teaching and learning
10.	Preservice perceptions and in-service realities
11.	Challenges: support from the institution, classroom teaching/pedagogical issues, school culture adjustment, professional development
12.	Expectations/needs as novice teachers
13.	Teachers playing an active role in their induction phase
14.	Continuing in the teaching profession
15.	Any other comment on the induction phase

All data were collected through individual phone interviews as arranging face-to-face interviews was not a viable option due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh. Semi-structured interviews help the researchers to move forward and backward in the data collection phase (Merriam, 1988). Thus, semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to examine the induction phase comprehensively. Individual interview schedules were developed for each of the participants considering their availability. The researcher stopped interviewing when no new data were emerging (Trotter, 2012). All the interviews were conducted in Bangla (L1) to get rich data from the participants.

Data Management and Analysis

A cell phone was used to record the interview data, and the collected data were stored with a personal computer and a thumb drive. Later, all data were transcribed verbatim by the author for analysis. The thematic analysis framework, as espoused by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used for analysing the data. This framework consists of six stages: getting familiarised with the data, producing initial codes, discovering themes/ subthemes, reevaluating themes, naming themes, and producing report. The data set was analysed in its entirety to get a holistic picture of the phenomenon examined. Moreover, the participants verified and confirmed the findings to ensure reliability, and the findings were also matched with similar studies. The author translated the excerpts used in the findings section into English.

Findings

The main findings of the study are presented here supported by illustrative excerpts from the participants.

A Three-Segment Teacher Recruitment Process

The teachers at government and non-government institutions, in most cases, had to go through a rigorous recruitment process that consisted of several elements: a written test to assess teacher candidates' subject knowledge, a viva voce to gauge their oracy skills, and a demonstration class in front of experts, administrators, and schoolteachers to test their teaching skills and personality. However, in different recruitments, these three elements were organised differently. Whoever performed well in all these three segments, were finally appointed as the EL teachers.

> *I had to take a written test, then a viva voce and a demonstration class as part of the selection process. (T5HS)*

> *I had to teach a demonstration class in front of schoolteachers, and they observed my teaching methods, classroom management, and my pronunciation. Then, I sat for a viva voce. (T4S)*

Absence of Pre-Service Teacher Preparation and Adequate Initial Training

None of the participating teachers attended any pre-service teacher preparation programme before joining their jobs. However, most of them had completed their bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature, Applied Linguistics and English language teaching, and as learners they studied some courses related to pedagogy and language skills.

I have not attended any pre-service teacher education programme. (T6HS)

Moreover, as far as teachers' initial training was concerned, the emerging scenario was not encouraging as shown in Table 3. It is surprising that teachers were sent inside classrooms for teaching after joining without any initial training. Those who attended the three-day orientation programme and basic teacher training were introduced to other teachers, told how to teach their learners, how to behave with other colleagues, how to use teachers' guide (TG), and given primary ideas about administrative aspects.

Table 3: Teachers' Initial Training Data

Teachers	Teachers' Initial Training
T1P	Three-day orientation programme
T2S	No initial training
T3S	No initial training
T4S	No initial training
T5HS	Attended a basic three-day teacher training in the first week
T6HS	No initial training

However, T3S, T4S, and T5HS attended training programmes after being into teaching for sometimes arranged by their respective institutions and British Council. That training focused on syllabuses, marking scripts, materials use, setting creative questions, pedagogy, and attitude and role of teachers. But those training sessions were not adequate and did not focus on application rather on theoretical knowledge.

> *I received a three-day basic teacher training in the first week of joining. It was rather theoretical. No focus was given on application in real classroom teaching. (T5HS)*

I joined as a teacher and started teaching without any initial training. (T3S)

After four months of my joining as a teacher, I attended a three-day training programme. (T3S)

Conventional Initial Duties and Varied Experiences

These teachers taught different classes both online and offline, checked exam scripts, set question papers, invigilated exam halls, met learners' guardians, checked and corrected homework, worked as academic coordinators and class teachers, and prepared lesson plans in their induction phase.

Initially, I had to teach classes, set question papers, check exam scripts, and interact with learners and their guardians. (T2S)

The teachers had both positive and negative experiences in their beginning years. Among the positive experiences were feeling good as the learners responded to the new teachers in classes, a positive institutional environment, helpful colleagues, and gradual adjustment to the whole experience. On the other hand, the negative experiences included too many learners in classes - about 100 to 175, some learners, especially the brilliant ones did not attach much importance to the novice teachers, and learners' poor subject knowledge and language skills. Moreover, feeling stress, nervousness as a new teacher, lack of initial training on different aspects related to teaching and mental wellbeing, confusion as a novice teacher, problems with classroom management, difficulty in making learners understand the class contents, and giving lecture-based classes were some other negative experiences. Then, some teachers had to teach online classes initially due to COVID-19, so they could not make their classes interactive. Interestingly, when offline classes started during the post-COVID period, learners did not show much interest in interaction in classes rather they expected lectures from their teachers.

I enjoyed teaching as a new teacher. It was a positive environment. My new colleagues were helpful. (T2S)

I had to teach too many learners in a single class. So, it was basically lecture-based classes. (T6HS)

In the initial classes, I was a bit nervous. So, I used to take a lot of preparation before the class. After one week, things were getting normal. (T5HS)

I faced difficulty in making the weak and mediocre learners understand the class contents. (T4S)

In the same vein, some teachers received support from their institutions, some did not. Some were given the chance to conduct classes using digital contents in the multimedia room. Some of them also received different teaching aids, materials, and teachers' guide. On the other hand, some teachers did not get adequate support from schools, so they faced different problems. They got no board in the class for writing, no sound system, no library facility, and other logistic support.

Though my school is a rural one, the government has allocated a laptop and a projector. (T1P)

I got different teaching aids and materials from the school. (T2S)

There was no sound system in the class. So, learners could not listen to me. (T5HS)

I did not get much support from school. I had to learn and manage myself. (T4S)

No Mentoring, Observation, and Limited Collaboration

None of these teachers was assigned an official mentor during their induction phase. And there was no arrangement for them to observe the experienced teachers' classes. All the participating teachers claimed that they could do much better with the help of an official mentor in their beginning days.

> *I felt the need of a mentor as I initially faced problems with class management as the class size was large. (T5HS)*
>
> *Nobody was assigned as my official mentor in the initial years. (T1P)*
>
> *I was not given the chance to observe senior teachers' classes. (T4S)*

However, the new teachers sometimes had informal conversations with their experienced colleagues. They discussed different issues like managing the weak learners in the class, setting question papers, facing different emerging challenges, sharing contents, and solving subject related issues. On a different note, many of their colleagues were not helpful, and the novice teachers felt isolated in the teachers' room. In the absence of mentoring, classroom observation, and collaboration, some new teachers ultimately tried to sort out things on their own.

> *When we get time, we discuss classroom issues among ourselves. (T3S)*
>
> *My colleagues helped me when I faced any problem in the class. I talked to them about classroom management and question setting. (T2S)*
>
> *I did not have that much collaboration with my new colleagues. (T5HS)*
>
> *Basically, I relied on my own experiences and the Internet for help. (T4S)*

Limited Opportunity for Professional Development

There was limited scope and opportunity for professional development (PD) of the teachers at their respective institutions. Sometimes, there was sporadic training for them arranged by some external bodies like British Council. And the subject teachers discussed different issues among themselves. Then, on a personal level, they tried to learn different aspects of teaching and learning. Teachers also reflected on learners' feedback to improve their performance. But these initiatives were not adequate for their PD. And their respective schools and colleges rarely took any initiative for their PD. Teaching loads and other duties did not leave much time for their PD. The teachers asserted that teachers themselves should initiate the first steps for their PD.

> *Teachers cannot manage time for PD as they have to work as guide teachers and different committee members. (T6HS)*
>
> *No formal initiative was taken by the school for new teachers' PD. (T5HS)*
>
> *I need more opportunities for my PD. Whatever I have received is not enough. (T4S)*

Perceived Improvement in Teaching and Learning

The teachers reported improvements in their teaching and learning. Some of them were initially introvert but gradually they opened up. Particularly their teaching skills were improving as they employed varied effective techniques in their classroom teaching. They came to know how to manage classrooms and help individual learners - weak, mediocre, and standard. They built up rapport with their learners, and the learners started to appreciate them, and vice versa. They learned about their individual learners' strengths and weaknesses, and their emotional conditions. More importantly, they started teaching in the ways learners wanted to be taught, not their ways. Teachers then could plan and use materials better to make classes interactive. Ultimately, they became more confident as teachers.

> *Initially, my classes were lecture-based, but now I follow interactive classroom techniques. (T6HS)*
>
> *I have become skilled in lesson planning. Moreover, my teaching techniques and learner handling have improved. (T5HS)*
>
> *Now, I can manage my classes better. Initially, my classes were chaotic. (T3S)*
>
> *I have improved a lot as a classroom teacher, especially in teaching techniques. Now, I better understand how to help individual learners. (T1P)*

Conflicting Pre-Service Perceptions and In-Service Actualities

A few conflicts existed between teachers' pre-service assumptions and in-service actualities. Lack of cooperation among colleagues, teachers' and schools' beliefs and philosophy, challenges to maintain cordial relations with colleagues, poor quality of learners, poor salaries, teaching not being an easy job, rigidity of school authority, class preparation taking a good amount of time, working outside office hours, and too many duties outside teaching were the main areas of conflict. However, as expected some of them enjoyed a more positive environment.

> *I found no conflict between pre-service assumptions and in-service realities. (T1P)*
>
> *But I found teaching very complex. I had to think about the overall development of the children. I had to manage the classes, materials, and consider learners' psychological aspects. (T4S)*
>
> *There are many duties outside classroom teaching, so teachers are not satisfied. (T6HS)*
>
> *As a profession, it demands a lot of time and is full of pressure. (T5HS)*
>
> *I expected better salaries and incentives for the teachers. But no incentive was given. (T3S)*
>
> *It's not so easy to maintain working relations with the colleagues and students. (T2S)*

Key Challenges Faced by Teachers

Many challenges were faced by the participating teachers during their induction phase. The first group of challenges included adjusting to the new environment/culture, building and maintaining relations with colleagues, and lack of collaboration with colleagues. The second group of challenges then included difficulties with question paper setting and exam script checking without training on them, learners being afraid of English and exam-oriented, lack of materials, getting negative feedback from the learners, problems with retaining learners' attention in classes, and many learners being irregular.

Additionally, the third group of challenges included lack of formal activities for PD, heavy teaching load - 20 to 22 classes per week, working extra hours, lack of logistic support, quick change of curriculum and the difficulty to adjust to it, and problems dealing with guardians as they wanted schools and teachers to run things as they wished.

> *Quick change of curriculum creates problems. (T6HS)*
>
> *It was difficult to adjust to a new environment at the school and maintain good relations with the colleagues. (T5HS)*
>
> *The school authority did not arrange any programme for teachers' PD. (T4S)*
>
> *Learners are more interested in studying only for the exams. They are not interested in background and fundamental knowledge. (T3S)*
>
> *Guardians want to see that the institution is running according to their wishes. (T2S)*

Required Support and Resources as Novice Teachers

The teachers mentioned that they wanted to get different support and resources from their respective institutions during the induction phase. First, they would like to receive initial training as new teachers, and regular training at schools would ensure their PD. Arrangement for official mentors was another expectation. They also wanted better financial support. Then, they expected more teaching aids, materials, and other logistic support. Provision of more digital materials would facilitate the practice of listening and speaking skills. It would be better for them if they are not assigned too many duties beyond teaching. They would also appreciate a friendly environment at their respective schools and colleges, not a rigid one. They also wanted to see that the school authority respects their personal beliefs. Teachers then must be evaluated regularly and get feedback on their performances so that they can take necessary steps for further improvement. Usually, the new teachers were given too many duties; that should be reduced. Finally, there must be an official and structured induction programme for all the novice teachers.

All institutions must ensure logistic support for the novice teachers. (T6HS)

Somebody needs to observe my classes directly and give feedback on all aspects of my teaching. (T5HS)

Teachers' personal beliefs must be respected and should not be treated negatively. For new teachers, there should be proper guidance from the school authority. (T4S)

There must be induction programmes for all the teachers. We also need regular training at the institution so that we can enhance our skills. (T3S)

Remember, it's Your Induction

According to the participants, novice teachers can play an active role in their own induction by different ways. Teachers must enter their classes with adequate preparation so that they can prepare and implement the lesson plans properly. Then, they must have class management skills, ideas about teaching methods and techniques, and adequate subject knowledge. If there is a lack of materials, they must ask for materials from the school authority. When they face a problem, they can talk to their colleagues. They must communicate with each learner inside and outside the class. And they must try to relate classroom contents to learners' practical life. New teachers also need to adjust to the culture of the institution. Besides, they can attend training and courses personally for their PD. They can also use digital platforms - websites and YouTube - for their PD. They can observe experienced teachers' classes as well with their permission. It is also essential for them to be dedicated to their profession.

Novice teachers must try to enhance their subject knowledge and classroom management skills. (T6HS)

They must give efforts for their PD. For example, they can read a lot. (T4S)

It is very important for the novice teachers to enter the class with adequate preparation. (T3S)

Learners are very interested in new teachers. New teachers can call them by names and assign different tasks and praise them. Learners will be happy. (T1P)

To be or not to be in Teaching

T2S and T4S opined that they were satisfied with their present job and would be in the teaching profession. T1P, T3S, and T5HS claimed that they will be in the teaching profession, but not in their present job. T1P wanted to give up her present teaching position as she was looking for better opportunities, and many people in Bangladeshi society looked down upon the primary school teachers. They think that primary school teachers have no status. Besides, T6HS was planning to give up teaching profession as teachers in general were not given enough respect and were given too many assignments outside teaching. Teachers had no executive power, so society did not attach importance

to them and recognise their contributions. T3S and T5HS would also like to change their present jobs for better salaries.

> *I will be in teaching as I like to deal with learners. (T5HS)*
>
> *A teacher is not given much importance in the society as given to a doctor or a magistrate. (T6HS)*
>
> *I will switch school if I get better opportunities. (T3S)*
>
> *They (people) say that you have completed your master's. So, why are you teaching at a primary school? (T1P)*
>
> *Two teachers were managing the load of three or four teachers. (T5HS)*
>
> *Sometimes, I was very upset and stressed. I decided to resign. Then, gradually I tried to cope up. I struggled a lot. (T4S)*

Discussion

Firstly, the three-segment teacher recruitment process ensured that quality teachers were appointed at government and non-government educational institutions. However, the story should not end there. These young and bright minds must be adequately supported during their induction phase and beyond so that they can sustain in the teaching profession, utilise their potential, and enrich the quality of education in Bangladesh (C. Flores, 2019; Hulme & Wood, 2022; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Then, the absence of pre-service teacher preparation and adequate initial training aligns with other studies (M. A Rouf, 2021), and contrasts with the UK context (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018). If teachers are sent into classes without any initial training, they will start teaching following their personal beliefs, and once internalised, in the long run it would be difficult to change those beliefs through further training (Moir & Gless, 2001). As the in-service training focused on theoretical knowledge (M. A. Rouf & Mohamed, 2017), it might not develop teachers' practical teaching skills. Again, as for the support from educational institutions, the fact is that the non-government educational institutions are managed by private stakeholders, and their financial abilities and management ethos vary.

Secondly, during the induction phase, mentors play a significant role in guiding the teachers. And literature (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Gilles et al., 2018; Hobson et al., 2009; R. Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2021; Wexler, 2019) has focused on mentoring and collaboration during the induction phase. The absence of mentoring, observation, and consequent limited collaboration among teachers corroborate the fact that the concept of mentoring has not been practised in the schools and colleges; rather, it has been conceptualised as a theoretical construct. Teachers are then conservative in their pedagogical beliefs and reluctant to allow their colleagues to observe their classes (Richter & Herrera, 2016). Again, the culture of knowledge sharing is missing in Bangladeshi academia. So, they cannot reduce the isolation among them and work together for improving their professional practices as advocated by Shanks et al. (2020).

As the in-house mentors face different obstacles like limited time, conflicting interests, and vagueness regarding their role, schools can appoint external paid mentors for guiding the novice teachers (Ewing, 2021).

Thirdly, limited scope and opportunity for teachers' professional development (PD) has also been reported in other studies (M. A. Rouf & Mohamed, 2017). The fact is that both teachers and institutions are negligent about teachers' PD. They cannot grasp the fact that a teacher must grow every day of her career otherwise she will fail to prepare her learners for the emerging needs of the society (Darling-Hammond, 2006). It is also true that teaching loads and other duties work as barriers to their PD. Besides, teachers' personal initiatives for their PD are conspicuously missing (M. A. Rouf & Mohamed, 2017). As they went on teaching their classes and gained experiences, some of the teachers naturally became more open and improved their teaching skills.

Fourthly, conflicting pre-service perceptions and in-service realities are corroborated by some previous studies (Haim & Amdur, 2016; Knotts, 2016; Shayshon & Popper-Giveon, 2016; Westerlund & Eliasson, 2021). The fact is that many people in Bangladesh usually take teaching as an easy profession without knowing different subtleties of the profession. They cannot see the big picture of education and teachers' role in that. When they join the profession, they find that teaching is not only about reading and classroom teaching; it's about handling human beings and shaping their characters and lives and more. Then, the negative experiences and challenges faced by the teachers are aligned with some other studies (Alhamad, 2018; Kearney, 2019; Kutsyuruba et al., 2021; Sydnor, 2017; Veenman, 1984; Westerlund & Eliasson, 2021; Whalen et al., 2019). The truth is that lack of exposure, training, and other profession related realities create these challenges for the novice teachers.

Fifthly, this is not a surprise that teachers wanted to get initial and regular training during their early career days (R. M. Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This training and mentoring would prepare them for facing the challenges in their initial years. Again, many prospective candidates do not want to join teaching as the salary is poor. Their demand for increased salaries is justified if we want to recruit and retain the brightest ones in teaching. Then, more materials and less duties would help them perform better as teachers. A rigorous and structured induction programme, regular evaluation and feedback would help them sustain the transition to teaching profession (Kearney, 2019). As Shanks et al. (2020, p. 11) commented "whether there is a national teacher induction scheme or not, does not appear to be as important as the infrastructure of support, training and education involved and how support is shared and communicated."

Finally, the novice teachers can play a proactive role in their early career days by honing their skills in teaching and classroom management, collaborating with colleagues, adapting to the culture of the institution (Paor, 2017; Sela & Harel, 2018), and ensuring PD. This would definitely give them an edge over others, and help them keep swimming

during the initial days rather than sinking (Glazzard & Coverdale, 2018). Then, given the existing realities, some teachers wanted to change their present institutions; some wanted to give up the teaching profession (Kelly et al., 2019; Kutsyuruba et al., 2021). The reality is that teaching is no more a prestigious profession in Bangladesh. The traditional societal respect for teaching and teachers is gone. Moreover, the absence of structured induction programmes in Bangladesh clearly shows that the stakeholders do not care that much about the novice teachers' transition to the profession, and they are negligent about teacher preparation as is the case in Portugal (M. A. Flores, 2021).

Conclusion and Suggestions

The present study targeted to explore the practices, challenges, and expectations related to the EL teachers' induction phase in Bangladesh. The key findings included a three-segment teacher recruitment mechanism, absence of pre-service teacher preparation and adequate initial training, varied initial experiences of teachers, no mentoring and observation, limited collaboration, and inadequate opportunity for professional development. Moreover, the findings also revealed perceived improvement in teaching and learning, conflicting pre-service perceptions and in-service actualities, different challenges faced by teachers, required support and resources as novice teachers, the significance of teachers' proactive role in their induction, and their confusion about career planning. Finally, generalising its findings to the whole target population was not a target of this qualitative phenomenological study rather it aimed to understand the examined issues broadly through teachers' lived experiences. Further studies can be carried out with a bigger sample to uncover the general picture of teachers' induction in Bangladesh. As per the findings of this study, some recommendations are given below for stakeholders' consideration.

a) There must be a structured induction programme for the novice EL teachers in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Education can assign some teacher education experts to design an induction programme.

b) Assigning the experienced teachers as mentors of the novice teachers would help them face the challenges of teaching in the initial years. Both - mentors and mentees- need to manage adequate time for developing an effective mentoring relationship.

c) All novice teachers must be allowed to observe the classes of experienced teachers. Later, they should reflect on the observed classes.

d) All aspiring teacher candidates must attend pre-service teacher education programmes. The concerned authority should stop recruiting candidates who have no pre-service teacher preparation.

e) Supporting the novice teachers' smooth transition to the teaching profession must be an immediate policy priority in Bangladesh.

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Fundamentals of Academic Writing: A Literature Review

Padam Chauhan

Abstract

In order to write for academic purposes, all novice ESL and EFL writers must be well-informed about the fundamentals of academic writing (AW) in English. Developing academic writing skills for all students is crucial because they must produce good writing skills to meet the standards of college and university course writing assignments. The typical college and university writing assignments include descriptive writing, analytical writing, persuasive writing, critical writing, and inquiry writing. In the meantime, it is also crucial for them to understand that writing is a recursive process involving various stages, such as generating ideas, outlining, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing. During the writing process, the writers should not only consider the elements of AW, comprising content, organization, purpose and audience, critical thinking, word choice, grammar, and mechanics, but also its basic conventions, including objectivity, formality or style, citation style, simplicity, clarity and conciseness, and genre awareness. Against this background, the primary purpose of this paper is to review the fundamentals of academic writing. The paper first defines AW as an art, science, and craft. It then briefly discusses the main types of writing students must produce as a part of their college and university course assignments. Finally, the paper highlights some key features of research-based writing tasks generally assigned to graduate students, such as reading responses or reaction papers, reflection papers, research papers, and theses and dissertations.

Keywords: *Fundamentals of academic writing, writing process, elements of writing, conventions of academic writing, genre awareness, citation style, research-based writing*

Introduction

Defining Academic Writing

Academic writing (AW) refers to the writing used in the college and university-level writing courses (Johnson, 2016). Therefore, AW has become the primary communication medium between scholars in academic subjects and disciplines in higher education (Greene & Lidinsky, 2015). AW uses standard written English that is simple, clear, focused, and formal. It is also technical, objective, impersonal, concise, logical, and

well-organized. An academic writer must meet genre-specific expectations and stylistic conventions (Ferris, 2018; Giltrow et al., 2014; Osmond, 2016; Starkey, 2015). AW is specific to context, task, purpose, and audience (Ferris, 2018; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Starkey, 2015). In parallel with these ideas, Gottlieb and Ernst-Slavit (2013) stated that "[t]he distinct purpose, audience, and context of communication result in clear differences in terms of language use in the selection of words, formality, sentence construction, and discourse patterns" (p. 2).

AW is seen differently by scholars based on its features. For example, Osmond (2016) argued that AW projects writers' in-depth knowledge, critical thinking skills, and analytical skills while studying different academic subjects within their disciplines and majors. It is also seen as an inquiry because writers can discover their values, beliefs, strengths, and areas to improve in writing (Starkey, 2015). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) recommended that each writer understand AW through the lens of an ethnographic approach. Before creating any written text, they must ask this fundamental question: who writes what to whom, for what purpose, why, when, where, and how? (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Echoing similar ideas, Ferris (2018) has summarized the features of successful academic writers and standards of writing used in academic and professional contexts as,

> *[s] Successful writing in academic and professional settings requires a complex range of skills and knowledge bases. Writers must have at least an adequate grasp of the content about what they are writing. They must understand the rhetorical situation, including the purpose of the writing and the knowledge and expectations of their audience of readers. … writers need advanced control of the linguistic features (vocabulary, spelling, grammar, cohesive ties) and extra-linguistic features (punctuation, capitalization, formatting) appropriate for the content, genre, and target audience for their text. (p. 75)*

Johnson (2016) added that AW has three main characteristics. AW "is an art, a science, and a craft" (Johnson, 2016, p. xi).

Academic Writing as an Art

AW is an art because the writer expresses their ideas and thoughts, which are not identical. No specific method or technique works best for all academic writers because their writing skills differ (Johnson, 2016; Singh & Lukkarilla, 2017). Therefore, each academic writer discovers the unique strategies and techniques that best work to develop their AW to convey their ideas, thoughts, and messages to their intended audience.

Academic Writing as a Science

Johnson (2016) and Lester and Lester (2012) argued that AW is viewed as a science because the writer uses a particular style to cite sources and format academic texts. Different academic disciplines and programs use different citation styles and formats

in higher education. American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA) are predominantly used citation styles in the world's higher education contexts. For example, the APA style is used in social sciences, but the MLA style is used in literature, arts, and humanities. Likewise, the American Medical Association (AMA) is used in medicine, health, and other biological sciences. Chicago and the American Sociological Association (ASA) styles are used in sociology, geography, and history (Johnson, 2016).

Academic Writing as a Craft

Johnson (2016) argued that AW is understood as a craft. By craft, he means it is a skill or set of skills that enable the writer to write texts appropriate for academic contexts. So, academic writer is continually developing skills throughout their academic life, as it is challenging to master with limited exposure. Instead, the writer enhances their writing skills through constant practice, critical thinking, seeking feedback, and revising it multiple times.

In the present context, AW is understood in a broader sense than in the past. It is a social practice guided by various social and cultural values of academic institutions. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argued that AW "should be seen as a set of practices that are socially contextualized … academic writing is simply one valued set of practices appropriate to the context rather than a single set of cognitive skills" (p. 17). In the higher education context, AW has become "a peer-to-peer communication about knowledge and inquiry within research communities…. [It is] a scholarly writing, the research genres and writing in the disciplines" (Giltrow et al., 2014, p. 313). Additionally, AW is a medium of communication among the members of a discourse community. It is a group of recognizable people who share the same social values, beliefs, specialized knowledge about the world, and the ways they use language (Giltrow et al., 2014).

Types of Academic Writing

University and college students must produce different types of AW. According to Bailey (2015), AW's most common types include notation, letter, resume, summary, annotated bibliography, paragraph, report, essay, research paper, and thesis or dissertation. Each type of AW has a specific purpose, style, and length, as decided by the academic program and disciplines. Different schools and departments require students to follow different formats and citation styles in their academic papers.

Different types of academic writing are combined to write a single academic paper. For instance, the writer uses different genres while writing a research paper. For example, while writing a literature review, critical writing is used. Descriptive writing is used to write the methodology section of the research paper. Descriptive and analytical writing styles are used to write the results and discussion sections. Also, the writer needs to interpret the research study's results (Johnson, 2016). Therefore, based on language features and purposes, four types of AW are used in the higher education context.

Descriptive or Expository Writing

Descriptive writing is the most basic type of AW. Its primary purpose is to describe, explain, and deliver information on a particular topic or issue (Johnson, 2016). According to Kirszner and Mandell (2015), in descriptive writing, the authors use words to paint a picture for their readers, using "language that creates a vivid impression of what has been seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched" (p. 70). They further state that the more details the writers can include, the better the descriptive writing will be.

Analytical Writing

Most academic writing in higher education contexts is analytical. Analytical writing is used to show relationships among pieces of information. Specifically, analytical writing is used to compare and contrast and critically evaluate different theories, models, approaches, methods, and results of empirical studies (University of Sydney, 2019). Lerych and Criswell (2016) argued that analytical writing follows "a cycle of development: a five-part process that includes a claim, context, evidence, analysis, and synthesis. When these elements are presented logically, with enough specific detail, the result is a unified, developed, organized, and coherent [writing]" (pp. 120-121).

Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasive writing goes deeper than that of analytical writing. In persuasive writing, the writer makes a coherent argument or addresses at least one point of view on a topic or issue, followed by supported by details (University of Sydney, 2019). The supporting details can include reasons, explanations, examples, experiences, observations, and credible research results. Johnson (2016) argued that "the purpose of persuasive writing is to make a case for or against an issue using concise, objective language, and sound reasoning" (p. 4). Kirszner and Mandell (2015) argued that in persuasive writing, the writers try to convince readers to act or think in a certain way. Such type of writing is used in research proposals, argumentative papers, and research papers.

Critical Writing

The writer must consider at least two points of view, including their views, in a critical writing task (University of Sydney, 2019). Specifically, the writer explains an author's interpretation or argument in a research article, evaluates their argument's strength, and gives their interpretations in this type of writing. Writing a critical review of a journal article or writing about the credibility of research results can be an excellent example of critical writing. The writer also presents their agreements or disagreements with the author's views (University of Sydney, 2019). Critical writing consists of three steps. First, the writer summarizes the whole or part of the research article. Next,

the writer offers their opinion on the author's argument presented in the article by highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the writer presents their point of view supported by relevant supporting details (University of Sydney, 2019).

Inquiry Writing

As inquiry writing is research-based writing, it is also called research writing. According to Johnson (2016), the primary purpose of this type of writing is "to describe all phases of the inquiry process" (p. 4). In this type of writing, the writer answers a question or responds to a common issue by gathering data from primary sources such as observations, interviews, surveys, and secondary sources such as peer-reviewed research articles, educational websites, and seminal books (Lerych & Criswell, 2016; Johnson, 2016). Lerych and Criswell (2016) argued that this type of writing has seven essential steps in the research process. They include posing a solid research question, finding sources, limiting research results, evaluating, and selecting the most credible and suitable sources, taking good notes, and integrating sources into writing.

Academic Writing Process

AW is not a task that the writer can complete in a single sitting; instead, it is a process that takes many sittings. Johnson (2016) and Zamel (1983) stated that AW's process involves thinking, generating ideas, note-taking, outlining, planning, drafting, revising, rewriting, proofreading, and editing. In this process, academic writers must focus on what they are communicating, how they communicate, and with whom. Johnson (2016) argued that the AW process involves the following six steps:

Research to Collect Data or Information Gathering

One can only write if they have something to write about. So, at this step, the writer finds credible sources, critically reads them, and takes notes. This stage is also called information gathering or consulting resources to generate ideas. The writer mainly gathers ideas by repossessing information from their long-term memory or reading online or printed sources or materials (White & Arndt, 1991). Additionally, if the writer plans to write a research-based article, data can be collected using various tools such as surveys, observations, interviews, and document reviews (Johnson, 2016).

Predrafting

This stage takes place before writing the first draft. It also involves planning, outlining, and generating ideas. Bailey (2015) argued that careful outlining helps the writer to make their writing easy later. Johnson (2016) added that reading extensively and note-taking sensibly is vital at this phase. He added that the ideas could be gathered using different techniques, such as brainstorming and semantic maps.

Writing the First Draft

At this stage, the ideas generated at the earlier stage are jotted down on the pages. Starkey (2015) claimed that writing the first draft is the most challenging phase for most writers because it requires filling blank pages with words. Johnson (2016) recommended that writers "strive for quantity versus quality at this stage" because once they have written the draft, it can be refined through multiple revisions. White and Arndt (1991) emphasized that every writer must revise and rewrite the first draft.

Revising

Revising is a crucial step in the AW process because writing is all about revising. A good writer is a rewriter (White & Arndt, 1991). Likewise, Starkey (2015) believed that revising is "re-seeing" (p. 153), including rearranging the ideas, replacing them, and addressing the significant issues of the paper. Bailey (2018) recommended leaving the first draft for a day or so and rereading it critically to ensure the paper answers the questions in the title. Johnson (2016) suggested that the writer revise their writing at least four times by focusing on higher-order concerns (HOCs) such as content, organization, word choice, and meaning. They need not worry about lower-order concerns (LOCs) such as grammatical, spelling, and punctuation issues at this phase. So, the writer "writes, rereads, reshapes, addresses feedback, and revises the draft many times" (Starkey, 2015, p. 5). At this phase, the writer must share their writing with peers or reviewers to seek feedback.

Editing

After the draft is revised multiple times, proofreading and editing should be done to avoid any remaining HOCs, such as issues with the thesis, audience, purpose, organization, and development, as well as to address any LOCs, such as sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues (Bailey, 2018; Purdue Online Writing Lab, 2020). Proofreading is checking one's writing for minor errors. Editing is broader than proofreading because editing involves checking for grammatical, punctuation, and spelling issues and adding and deleting ideas. Also, editing means checking the organization or structure of the paper on a macro level (i.e., checking the organization of the entire paper) and Meso-level (i.e., checking the organization of only a single paragraph of a paper) (Johnson, 2016; Singh & Lukkarila, 2017; White & Arndt, 1991).

Starkey (2015) and Johnson (2016) added that the issues of grammar and style are addressed at this phase and also recommended using the updated version of word processer programs, citation machines, and grammar checks, such as Grammarly, for checking grammar, word choice, style, and citations.

Sharing and Publishing

Sharing and publishing is the final step in the writing process. At this stage, the paper's final draft is submitted to the professor if it is a part of an assignment in a particular course. However, if it is written for publication, it is sent to a journal published in the field (Johnson, 2016; Hyland, 2003).

Elements of Academic Writing

There are many elements to be considered in good academic writing. The main elements of academic writing are briefly discussed below.

Content (Generating Ideas)

Hirvela (2016) highlighted the significance of connecting reading and writing in the second language teaching and learning process and argued that reading supports writing and vice versa. So, reading multiple sources around the research area helps the writer to generate ideas about the topic. One technique to generate ideas is brainstorming, in which the writer haphazardly jots down all the ideas that come to their mind about the topic (Bailey, 2015: Write & Arndt, 1991). The second technique to generate ideas is by using mind maps. The final technique to gather ideas is selecting credible resources, reading them critically, and taking notes of the critical points (Johnson, 2016; Write & Arndt, 1991) because AW "includes only academically credible information that is relevant to supporting and forwarding the writer's argument" (Singh & Lukkarila, 2017, p. 6). Highlighting the ESL teachers' role, especially in the higher education context, Hyland (2003) mentioned that they "need to help learners to acquire appropriate cognitive schema or knowledge of topics and vocabulary they will need to create an effective text" (p. 15).

Organization and Flow of Ideas

Organization refers to the logical presentation of ideas and information in a "structured format appropriate for a particular type of text" (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 8). In other words, the organization is also a presentation of ideas coherently and cohesively. The academic writer must follow specific patterns of organization to meet the readers' expectations. Also, there should be a sentence-to-sentence connection in each paragraph of the paper to maintain its flow. Kirszner and Mandell (2015) stressed that "each body paragraph should be unified, coherent, and well developed" (p. 55). White and Arndt (1991) maintained that structuring information involves several organizational processes of grouping ideas together and deciding how to sequence them to communicate the writer's central message effectively. Based on its organization, the introductory five-paragraph essay is divided into three main parts, each with a unique organization.

Introduction

The introduction section of an essay introduces the topic and states the purpose and scope (Bailey, 2015; Johnson, 2016). Starkey (2015) argued that the introductory paragraph should include three things. They are hook or attention-getter (for example, a thought-provoking question, anecdote, statistics, or famous quotation), a little background information or overview of the topic, and a thesis statement at the end. Starkey (2015) suggested that a good thesis statement should answer a question, which can be stated or implied in the writing prompt. The thesis statement also "provides unity and sense of direction" (Jester & Jester, 2010, p. 168) to the paper. A thesis statement embodies all the main points presented in different paragraphs of the paper. More specifically, a good thesis statement has an exact topic, the writer's opinion, and three to five reasons or points to support their opinions. These reasons or points function as topic sentences of the paper's body paragraphs (Starkey, 2015). Hence, the topic sentences of all the body paragraphs should be in line with the thesis statement. Unlike in an introductory five-paragraph essay, the introduction section's format differs in the case of research papers and theses or dissertations. In the introduction section, the writer introduces the topic, problematizes the research issue or problem, establishes the significance, creates the research gap, and states its purpose and research questions or hypotheses (Lewin, 2010).

Body Paragraphs

After completing the introduction section, the academic paper is further structured into body paragraphs. Body paragraphs are between the introduction and conclusion (Cozby & Bates, 2018; Starkey, 2015). The body paragraphs are organized by seriation, headings, and sub-headings (Johnson, 2016). The number of body paragraphs depends on the nature of the topic and the writer's points to support their argument. As far as possible, the body paragraphs should be concise. However, a one-sentence paragraph should be avoided. Starkey (2015) suggested that body paragraphs should have at least four components. First, every paragraph should have a topic sentence congruent with the introductory paragraph's thesis statement. Second, the topic sentence should be further supported by evidence, i.e., supporting details such as reasons, explanations, examples, experiences, statistics, and in-text citations. Third, body paragraphs should have the writer's analysis and commentary demonstrating why the evidence supports their topic sentence. Finally, they should also have a concluding sentence(s) that restate the concerned paragraph's topic sentence.

Conclusion

Conclusions can vary depending on the type and purpose of the paper. According to Bailey (2018), the conclusion provides a clear answer to any question about the topic and summarizes the key points discussed in the paper. In other words, the conclusion restates the thesis statement and summarizes the main ideas discussed in the paper

(Johnson, 2016). The conclusion section ends with the writer's closing note, including a clincher, a persuasive quotation from an expert, an excellent call to action, a striking statistic related to the topic, and a prediction (Kirszner & Mandell, 2015; Starkey, 2015). In the case of the research paper, the writer sums up the main results. The writer then identifies the study's limitations and implications and recommends future research areas (Kirszner & Mandell, 2015).

Unity, Coherence, and Cohesion

A paragraph is a group of sentences that deal with a single topic (Bailey, 2015). If a paragraph deals with only one topic or idea, it is considered rich in unity. In other words, the writer maintains unity by dealing with only one idea in a paragraph. So, juxtaposing different ideas into a single paragraph violates the principle of unity. It also does not help the writer stay focused on the same idea. Singh and Lukkarila (2017) argued that AW is organized as per the logical principles of argumentation. The first sentence of the paragraph introduces the topic. Apart from unity, coherence and cohesion play a crucial role in maintaining the overall organization of AW. In line with these ideas, Min (n.d.) highlighted the importance of coherence and cohesion in AW as,

> ***Coherence*** *means connecting ideas at the idea level, and cohesion means connecting ideas at the sentence level. Coherence refers to the writing's rhetorical aspects, including developing and supporting arguments (e.g., thesis statement development), synthesizing and integrating readings, organizing, and clarifying ideas. The cohesion of writing focuses on the grammatical aspects of writing. Cohesive writing refers to the connection of ideas both at the sentence and paragraph levels. (n.p.)*

Overall, AW should follow a specific organizational structure both on a macro level (i.e., across the entire academic paper) and meso-level (i.e., within a single paragraph of an academic paper). The writer maintains cohesion in AW by using different types of linguistic devices such as reference words and conjunctions (Bailey, 2015), transition words and expressions (Singh & Lukkarila (2017), and hedging devices within and across paragraphs(s) (Lewin, 2010).

Purpose and Audience

Before writing anything, the writer should be clear about the purpose of writing. Kirszner and Mandell (2015) argued that the purpose limits the writer to what to say and how to say it. According to Bailey (2015), there are three main reasons for writing: (1) to argue on a subject of common interest and give the writer's view, (2) to report on a piece of research study and create some new knowledge, and (3) to synthesize research conducted by others on a topic. Therefore, AW is unique because the writer shares inquiry-based knowledge to inform a particular academic community (Singh & Lukkarila, 2017).

Before the author writes any text, they need to consider their audience because they will determine their writing (Swales & Feak, 2012). Likewise, Kirszner and Mandell (2015) argued that while writing any text, the audience should be kept in mind because they determine the paper's purpose. While writing, academic writers envision a specific audience who share knowledge regarding a topic or issue they are writing about (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Singh & Lukkarila, 2017). By highlighting the role of the audience, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) added that the audience is always at the center when creating a text because they play an essential role in the writing's meaning-making. For example, writing a thesis or dissertation fulfills a graduate degree requirement. Although it is primarily written for thesis or dissertation committee members, the thesis or dissertation writers keep the entire academic discourse community in mind.

Audience and purpose are typically interrelated because the purpose is often educational if the audience knows less than the writer on a particular topic. However, if the audience knows more than the writer, the writer's purpose is to share an understanding and knowledge with the audience (Swales & Feak, 2012).

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is considered a fifth skill in the present context; the other four skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Osmond (2016) argued that critical thinking is a way of thinking about the writer's sources to write or present their argument in their papers. Bailey (2015) stated that although the academic text is source-based, it is vital for the writers to adopt a critical attitude. Critical thinking means not accepting or taking things for granted but questioning and assessing the source from a critical lens. Bailey (2018) argued that ESL and EFL writers require the development of close and critical reading skills that will enable them to read different academic texts in a formal style. They must learn to scan, skim, and survey the information in academic texts. Training them with study skills to read academic texts, including journal articles, is crucial.

Word Choice, Grammar, and Mechanics

The knowledge of basic grammatical concepts, academic vocabulary, and mechanics helps the writer correct their AW (Osmond, 2016). Bailey (2018) stressed that academic vocabulary items are essential as they embody meaning in AW. So, the writers should be careful in choosing appropriate academic vocabulary items specific to a particular genre. Using informal words and uncommon abbreviations in AW should be avoided. Jonson (2016) stressed that the academic writer should be familiar with basic grammatical rules because grammar knowledge supports and maintains accuracy in writing. Different word processor programs and software can be used for checking grammar in AW. Equally, AW should be free from punctuation and spelling issues because punctuating the text helps the readers understand what the writer means (Bailey, 2015).

Basic Conventions of Academic Writing

Johnson (2016) argued that AW is "formal, precise, purposeful, and objective" (p. 35). Furthermore, Johnson (2016) stated that AW should follow additional basic rules that include (1) using Times or Times New Roman 12-point font, (2) leaving a one-inch margin on the top, bottom, and sides, (3) double spacing between lines and paragraphs, (4) aligning paper flush left only, and (5) indenting all paragraphs except abstract in a research paper. In addition to these formatting conventions, AW should follow the following basic conventions.

Objectivity

AW should not be subjective. Instead, it should be objective, impersonal, and formal because objective writing is more convincing than subjective (Bailey, 2018; Johnson, 2016; Osmond, 2016). According to Osmond (2016), establishing objectivity in AW is maintaining a thoughtful gap between the writers and the topic they are writing about. To be objective, AW should be guided by research data and existing literature or reading, not by the writer's prior experiences and knowledge. Osmond (2016) argued that objectivity could be achieved in four ways. First, it can be achieved by avoiding first and second-person pronouns. Instead, using third-person pronouns helps the writer to maintain objectivity. The second way to achieve objectivity is by concluding the research paper based on how the research has led the writer, not their personal opinions and thoughts. Third, objectivity can be maintained by avoiding colloquial language and contractions. Finally, it can also be achieved by referencing other authors' or researchers' works to show the writer's involvement with academic discussion on a topic or issue.

Using Formal Language or Style

AW is formal in the sense that informal or colloquial language is avoided in it. AW should be formal regarding the "message being conveyed and the audience" (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 14). Using formal language also helps the author to establish objectivity (Bailey, 2018; Osmond, 2016). AW can be formal by using academic language (not colloquial), academic vocabulary, and abbreviations of some specific words and phrases. It can also be formal by avoiding first and second-person pronouns and contractions (e.g., did not instead of didn't) (Osmond, 2016). Instead of using first and second-person pronouns, it is better to use third-person pronouns such as he, she, the writer, and the author.

Simplicity, Clarity, and Conciseness

AW should be simple (direct), precise (accurate), clear (using only the necessary words to make it easy to understand), and concise (using as few words as possible to make the point briefly (Johnson, 2016; Osmond, 2016). Lewin (2010) suggested that clarity of

writing can be enhanced by avoiding the use of heavy sentences, ambiguity, punctuating the text meticulously, using ellipsis for missing information (which is signaled by three dots, but if the ellipsis is at the end of the sentence, it is signaled by four dots), and using dashes and parentheses. Starkey (2015) noted that the writer "can modify a quotation by adding one or two words in [square] brackets to indicate that [the writer has] made a slight change for clarity's sake" (p. 125). Lewin (2010) and Bailey (2018) stated that AW's conciseness is maintained by avoiding repetition and redundancy, avoiding jargon, replacing long phrases with shorter words or connectives, and changing compound sentences into complex ones changing into passive voice and using compression.

Avoiding Biased Language

AW should not use discriminatory language based on geographical region, exceptionality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, power, or religion (Johnson, 2016). Similarly, Starkey (2015) suggested that good AW should be neutral because it should not offend any potential readers. Discriminatory language is avoided by using more neutral language than biased one, especially for gender (not always male and female), pronouns (not always he), and vocabulary items (not always chairman and humankind).

Using Abbreviations

Abbreviations are "words grouped together, then referred to by their first letters" (Osmond, 2016, p. 11). There is a specific way to use abbreviations in AW. When the writers do that, they spell the words first and mention their corresponding abbreviations in parentheses next (Osmond, 2016). For example, nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), teaching English as a second language (TESL) and teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). However, many abbreviations are generally not written in full because they are familiar to the academic discourse community. Some examples of such abbreviations include AIDS, DNA, and UNO.

Genre Awareness

According to Hyland (2003), the genre is a socially organized way of using language for a particular purpose. Similarly, Martin (1992) defined the genre as a goal-oriented stage social process because members of a culture interact to achieve them. For Starkey (2015), the genre is a type, or a category of writing used in a specific field. For example, an argumentative essay differs from a cover letter. These two writing types differ in structure, style, purpose, context, and audience. Hyland (2003) states that writers are required "to follow certain social conventions for organizing messages" (p.18) in their writings with a fixed purpose. Tardy (2016) suggested that academic writers should have genre awareness because genre conventions have "characterize[d] academic and professional communication [and] research" (p. 5). Johns (2002) stated that academic writers should know different genres because they often combine genres in the same

writing task. Starkey (2015) states that the most frequently used genres are "analyzing a text, arguing for a position, proposing a solution, and making an evaluation" (p. 191). In these types of texts, the academic writer should meet distinct patterns and techniques per their audience's expectations (Starkey, 2015). Lewin (2010) added that AW requires the writer to meet genre conventions and social realities because the audience may forgive the writer for making a grammatical error but not for violating a social norm. So, AW is required to be grammatically correct and socially appropriate.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an unethical work in which the writer claims someone's work or ideas as their own by not giving credit to them. It is perceived as academic theft or crime (Bailey, 2018; Jester & Jester, 2012; Johnson, 2016; Swales & Feak, 2012; Starkey, 2015). According to APA (2019), "[p]lagiarism is the act of presenting the words, ideas, or images of another as one's own; it denies the author's credit where credit is due. Whether deliberate or unintentional, plagiarism violates ethical standards in scholarship" (n. p.). Common examples of plagiarism include cutting and pasting, not citing sources, and buying a paper from online sources. In an academic discourse community, the writer must acknowledge the sources used in their writing to give credit to the author and maintain academic integrity.

There are two ways to avoid plagiarism: in-text citations and referencing (APA, 2020). In-text citing sources means mentioning authors in the text where the writers have borrowed ideas from other authors. This helps the writers give credit to the authors and add credibility to their writing (Bailey, 2018; Johnson, 2016). According to APA (2020), three ways to in-text cite sources include direct quotes, long quotes, and paraphrasing. First, a direct quote is "bringing the original words [39 words in APA style and four printed lines in MLA style] of the author into writer's work" (Bailey, 2015, p. 55) by placing quotation marks around the quote and indicating its source in parenthesis (Starkey, 2015). Next, the writers use long quotations that are longer than 39 words or four printed lines to support their arguments (APA, 2019; MLA, 2016). The final way to in-text cite sources is referencing, in which the writer restates only the source text's relevant information in different words and structures without changing its meaning (Bailey, 2015; Starkey, 2015). One important point to note while paraphrasing is that the paraphrased text may be longer or shorter than the source text, but it must maintain the author's same intended meaning as expressed in the source text (APA, 2019; Bailey, 2015).

The second way to avoid plagiarism is by listing all sources in-texted in the alphabetical order of the authors' last names or the first significant word of the source if there is no author (APA, 2019; Bailey, 2018; MLA, 2016; Starkey, 2015). The reference list appears on a separate page. Like in-text citations, referencing sources is very important in all academic papers because it helps guide the audience to refer to the sources if they desire to explore the topic further. Next, it helps the writers to demonstrate that they have read

the leading authorities on the subject or research area, which ultimately adds academic rigor to their writing (Bailey, 2018; Osmond, 2016; Starkey, 2015).

Research-Based Report Writing

Identifying and Utilizing Sources

For research-based writing, Bailey (2018) stated that it is vital for the writer to identify and understand the most relevant and appropriate sources to write a good paper. The writer should be trained to examine the most appropriate and credible resources, explore multiple ways of locating resources, and explain the use of electronic resources. In line with these ideas, Starkey (2015) suggested that "the CARS Checklist" (p. 84) should be used for evaluating online sources. The CARS Checklist stands for credibility, accuracy, reasonableness, and support. In other words, the writer must ensure that the resource is primarily credible, updated, evidence-based, fair, consistent, and supported by other sources (Starkey, 2015). Some credible sources that the writers can utilize for their research include textbooks, reference books, peer-reviewed articles, government reports, websites, newspapers and magazines, popular periodicals, conference proceedings, and e-books.

Note-Taking, Outlining, and Summarizing

Note-taking is jotting down the most critical points from the source (written or spoken) text. Nevertheless, summarizing is the condensed form of the source text, including its main points. So, both notetaking and summarizing contain the source text's main information in two different forms, in the form of points in notetaking and in the form of a concise text in summarizing (Bailey, 2015, 2018; Starkey, 2015). Notes do not have a specific style, as they are taken for personal use. They will support the writer by outlining, including main points, sub-points, and sub-sub-points. Also, outlining helps the writer summarize (Bailey, 2018). College and university students should develop notetaking, outlining, and summarizing skills because they are an indispensable part of preparing for tests, class discussions, research papers, and theses or dissertations (Cozy & Bates, 2018; Starkey, 2015; Swales & Feak, 2012).

Reading Responses or Reaction Papers

The writer should have practical reading skills to write good reading responses (Starkey, 2015). In higher education contexts, students are required to write many essays or papers responding to different types of written texts. Swales and Feak (2012) argued that in reading response or reaction papers, students are expected "to draw on their own experiences, feelings, and ideas as well as to make methodological and analytic comments about a talk or a written text" (p. 270). According to Swales and Feak (2012), students answer these questions when they write reading responses or reaction papers:

> *what was the text or talk about? Who wrote the text or gave the talk?, what was the main message of the text or talk?, how do you feel about what you read or heard?, what impressions did the text or talk have on you?, why do you agree or disagree with?, how does what you read or heard relate to the course in which the reaction paper was assigned?, can you identify with or do you see yourself in what you read or heard? (p. 270)*

These types of assignments are challenging for ESL and EFL students. However, they benefit them because the students participating in these assignments integrate observations and experiences that reflect their social, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Reading responses can also be an eye-opener to the instructors as they contain students' new thoughts and ideas on reading or lectures (Swales & Feak, 2012).

Thesis or Dissertation

A thesis or dissertation is prepared based on the findings of an original research study. In most of the world's graduate programs, students must " plan, conduct, write, and defend an original research study" (Roberts, 2010, p. 2). Additionally, Willis et al. (2010) argued that thesis or dissertation writing is a significant task in graduate programs. The thesis or dissertation's length can be from 100 to 300 pages depending on the program's nature, academic level, and types of the research methodology employed to conduct the research study. A traditional five-chapter thesis or dissertation typically contains Introduction, Literature Review, Research Design or Methodology, Results or Findings, and Discussions, Conclusions, and Implications (Willis et al., 2010) explicitly.

Similarities between Thesis and Dissertation

There are two main similarities between a thesis and a dissertation. First, the thesis and dissertation are research reports prepared as partial fulfillment of graduate programs (Joyner et al., 2014). Second, they reflect the researchers' capabilities to conduct research studies that make new contributions to theory or practice (Roberts, 2010).

Differences between Thesis and Dissertation

A thesis differs from a dissertation based on educational level, specialty area, and audience. First, in the US university context, master's students write a thesis, while doctoral students write dissertations because doctoral students are required to go into greater depth and detail than those master's students (Bui, 2009; Joyner et al., 2014; Paltridge & Starfield, 2020). Therefore, a doctoral dissertation is more rigorous than a master's thesis (Joyner et al., 2014). Second, a dissertation is longer than a thesis in terms of its volume and the gravity of data collection, which depends entirely on the specialization area. Finally, the dissertation is written for a broader audience of academic scholars, whereas a thesis is written for a limited audience, such as the

research supervisor and the second reader, who are often from the same program (Bui, 2009; Clark, 2007; Roberts, 2010).

According to Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015), the terms 'thesis' and 'dissertation' are used to refer to different things as they refer to different connotations in the UK, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. For instance, master's students write dissertations in the UK, but they write theses in the USA, and the term thesis is used at both master's and Ph.D. levels in Australia. A smaller research is mentioned as a dissertation, but a more extended research project written for a master's or a Ph.D. degree is considered a thesis in New Zealand.

Reasons for Writing a Thesis and Dissertation

The thesis or dissertation writing projects skills and knowledge of framing research, conducting a research study, and preparing research reports in a particular citation style. The graduate school journey demands the successful completion of a thesis or dissertation, which Roberts (2010) calls the summit of academic achievement. A thesis or dissertation is written for two reasons: (1) writing a thesis, or dissertation provides graduate students with an opportunity to conduct fundamental research studies and prepare their reports in prescribed citation styles, and (2) it makes a new contribution to the theory or practice in the world's academia (Brubaker & Thomas, 2000; Roberts, 2010; Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015).

Scholarly Article

A scholarly article reports on an original research study or existing literature on a particular topic (Roberts, 2010; Swales & Feak, 2012). Scholarly articles, as Singh and Lukkarila (2017) claimed, are "peer-reviewed by other researchers within the topic area before they are published to ensure the quality and credibility of research (p. 14). Swales and Feak (2012) argued that scholarly article writers live in a very "competitive environment" (p. 284) because their articles need to undergo a rigorous peer-review process before they are accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. To get accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, the study's purpose and research questions should be specific and convincing for the audience. The writer should also justify the significance of their article, show relevant literature reviewed and that their research questions have not been answered yet, and clearly state the study's methodology and results, followed by a discussion and conclusion. Overall, the scholarly article should be convincing regarding the writer's positioning by "showing that their research studies are relevant and make some new contribution to the field" (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 284).

Types of Scholarly Articles

Singh and Lukkarila (2017) and the University of California (2019) grouped scholarly articles into four types. The first type of article is an empirical or research article that aims to report an original research study in a prescribed citation style. According to Swales and Feak (2012), a research article's main components are title, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, and references. The second type of scholarly article is a literature review or meta-analysis article. The writer surveys the scholarly sources to provide an overview of the existing literature on a particular topic. In this article, the writer also critically evaluates the sources, focusing on their contributions to the field and their shortcomings. The third type of scholarly article is a propositional article in which the writer reviews the existing theories and models to propose a new theory or modify the existing theory in a new perspective or direction. The fourth scholarly article is called a response article. In this article, the writer critically reviews the research published by other researchers and prepares their responses in the form of the article.

Differences between Scholarly Article and Thesis or Dissertation

Two main differences between a scholarly article and a thesis or dissertation exist. First, a scholarly article is shorter than a thesis or dissertation in terms of length. A scholarly article is about 15 to 25 pages, as required by journals, while a thesis or dissertation is from 100 to 300 pages, as required by the nature of the academic program and the research methodology used to conduct the research study. Second, the scholarly article has a broader audience as it is written for a journal publication. In contrast, a thesis or dissertation has a limited audience (i.e., thesis or dissertation committee) as it is written as a requirement for a graduate degree (Joyner et al., 2014).

Conclusion

To become an excellent academic writer in English, it is imperative to have a solid foundational knowledge of AW. In doing so, college and university ESL and EFL students can develop their writing skills to complete their writing assignments. Some college and university students writing assignments generally include descriptive or expository writing, analytical writing, persuasive writing, critical writing, and research-based writing. As academic writers attempt their writing tasks, they must strictly understand and follow the writing process. The multi-step writing process involves generating ideas, outlining, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing or sharing. In addition to the writing process, they should maintain not only essential elements of AW, namely content, organization, purpose and audience, critical thinking, word choice, grammar, and mechanics, but also the fundamental convention of writing that include objectivity, formality or style, citation style, simplicity, clarity and conciseness, and genre awareness. Finally, some research-based writing that college and university students need to gain mastery include reading responses or reaction

papers, reflection papers, research papers, theses, and dissertations. These are major research-based writing assignments for master's and doctoral students.

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Demystifying Writing: Strategies for Developing Better Writing

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Abstract

Students are often afraid of writing tasks, regardless of whether they are writing in their own native language or are second language writers. I share examples of my own writing experiences and struggles, and then I argue how writing can be demystified, offering some strategies towards advancing one's writing skills: understanding writing, doing free writing, identifying writing weaknesses, practicing enormously, visualizing purpose and audience, revising writing, articulating writer's own voice, obtaining feedback, reflecting on own writing, and embracing mimesis approach. I discuss the strategies drawing on ideas from renowned writing theorists, including Elbow (1998), Harris (2006), Vilardi and Chang (2009), and Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2016), etc. This paper is particularly relevant to early career ELT teachers to understand and demystify the student writing process; however, it might also be helpful for any academic level of students to advance their writing.

Keywords: *Demystifying Writing, Strategies of Developing Writing, Student Writing Process*

Introduction

Whether it be first or second-language writers, they generally feel that writing in English is the most challenging task (Barkaoui, 2007; Cheung, 2016). Of course, "even in one's native language, learning to write is like learning a second language… No one is a 'native speaker' of writing" (Leki, 1992, p. 10). This statement is a highly significant observation. Regardless of whether students are L1 (first language) or L2 (second language), they need to follow a rigorous process in writing. Writing is learned through several recursive learning processes, and it takes considerable time to become a fluent writer. As an emerging writer, I have passed through several learning progressions and trajectories in English from my primary level education to my current Ph.D. journey in Rhetoric and Composition Studies.

As an ESL learner, I started to learn the English alphabet (A-Z) in grade four. In that grade, being able to copy the English alphabet and reproduce some minimal words would be "writing" for me. When I reached high school reciting grammatical rules,

essays, short question-answers, discrete-point grammatical exercises, reciting word meanings given in the prescribed texts, and being able to reproduce assigned texts, all rote learning, was "writing" for me (Paudel, 2020a). Even at the undergraduate level, I would recite essays and question-answers. At the schools and colleges, I attended, reproducing passages from prescribed texts in the exam papers were highly valued. Prior to my teaching career, I rarely wrote anything on my own, except reproducing some responses from prescribed textbooks for the final examinations. So, during my student life from school to master-level education, I did not write with power—my writing lacked the necessary control over words and sentences, targeting the audience and making my writing persuasive to intended readers.

When I began to teach at the college level, only then did I start to write on my own; I wanted to write, as described by Elbow (1998), getting power over myself, over the writing process, and without being intimated or helpless in writing, gaining an understanding of the process of writing. Similarly, I started to observe others' writing more, especially academic writing. I would observe (I still observe) how other writers compose written text. For some time, writing became, for me, an exercise in observation.

During my student life, up to the master level, I rarely received feedback on my writing. When I started to write for publication, only then did I receive honest feedback on my writing from peer reviewers. The first time in my life that I received comprehensive feedback on my writing was in a journal manuscript. There I received massive feedback in terms of grammar, coherence, cohesion, developing arguments, and the format of the manuscript. Though much feedback was offered to revise the manuscript, it was not damaging or humiliating to me—the reviewers provided feedback starting with my strongest points, which kept me encouraged to revise the manuscript. From the feedback, I identified my strength and my level of writing, and what I should do to improve my writing.

After teaching ESL for more than a decade and now completing the coursework of my Ph.D. journey, my perspective on writing has further developed. I have also fully understood writing as fluid (Paudel, 2020a). Now I believe that writing is not an act of an individual autonomous entity but rather is an expression of a collective entity—a writer's experience, culture, context, audience, genre of writing, people, race, politics, subjective position and a multitude of other factors come into play when writing (Paudel, 2020b). Among these, before starting to write, a writer should understand the genre of the writing, that is, what type of writing will be attempted, such as an academic journal article, argumentative essay, descriptive essay, expositive essay, narrative essay, research paper, report writing, instructions writing, letter, dialogue, and so on. Another vital aspect a writer should understand is the context of writing—for whom you are writing (audience) and the purpose of your writing (informing, persuading, etc.).

Based on my teaching experiences, writing experiences, and readings, I now understand that to articulate better writing, a writer should first understand and embrace several

writing processes. In this paper, I argue how writing can be demystified, presenting some ways of producing compelling writing.

Understanding the core concept of writing

To produce better writing, a writer needs to understand what writing is, what influences writing, how writing is composed, and what leads to better writing. Adler-Kassner and Wardle's edited book, Naming What We Know (2016) answers these questions. Drawing on ideas from the book, I have addressed a bit of the question below.

Writing is a social and rhetorical activity (Roozen, 2016) as writers articulate their ideas as per audience, society, purpose, situation, and other contextual factors that influence the understanding of writing. Considering these aspects, writers attempt to make meaning with their writing. Roozen (2016) writes that "Writers are engaged in the work of making meaning for particular audiences and purposes, and writers are always connected to other people" (p. 17). Writers knowingly and unknowingly strive to address the intended audience to convey their ideas through their linguistic repertoire. Factors such as what they are writing about (subject and content), whom they are addressing (intended audience), and what is their background and experience (culture, race, and education) play a decisive role in writing. Understanding such rhetorical aspects in writing assists writers in discerning the audience's needs, the exigence within which they are writing, the genre they should embrace, and rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) they should utilize for accomplishing their communicative goals in their writing. Indeed, writing is, in all cases, a social and rhetorical activity, since without understanding and taking account of rhetorical and social aspects, it is almost impossible to convey the intended message through writing.

Scott (2016) argues that the writers' ideologies are inevitably replicated in their writing. Writers knowingly and unknowingly embed and reveal their ideologies in their writing. No writers can express themselves on paper without mirroring their ideologies. In their writing, they bring their ideologies, including religious, economic, cultural, mythic, linguistic, legal, and many other aspects. Scott (2016) argues, "Writing is always ideological because discourses and instances of language use do not exist independently from cultures and their ideologies" (p. 48). Of course, writing disseminates their cultural inclinations and ideological perspectives. Specifically, what is written speaks about their ideological views and intentions on the topic they are writing about. If we look at writing by lawyers, bankers, or company managers, we can see their ideologies in their genres, conventions, and vocabularies. Writing both creates and reflects their identities and enacts their ideological proclivity in their works and services. Indeed, ideology permeates through what is written.

Doing free writing

Various writing scholars argue the importance of free writing for advancing writing skills. Elbow (1998) writes, "Put your effort into experiencing the tree you want to describe, not on thinking about which words to use. Don't put your attention on quality or critics. Just write" (p. xiii). Elbow argues that as writers, we should first try to express what we feel about a particular subject and what we know without being worried about the language. Of course, we should draw ideas (content) about the topic first. Starting with whatever comes into mind would lead to better writing. Regarding creating and criticizing processes, Elbow (1998) states:

> *First, write freely and uncritically so that you can generate as many words and ideas as possible without worrying whether they are good; then turn around and adopt a critical frame of mind and thoroughly revise what you have written – taking what's good and discarding what isn't and shaping what's left into something strong. (p. 7)*

One of the obstacles in writing is the fear of appearing foolish: "What prevents most people from being inventive and creative is fear of looking foolish" (Elbow, p. 10). Free writing is the best way to start chasing away the fear of putting words on a blank sheet of paper or screen. This "[ultimately] improves your writing. It doesn't always produce powerful writing itself, but it leads to powerful writing" (Elbow, p. 15). Elbow argues that if writers are struggling to get the main idea in their writing, they should produce a lot of raw writing without being critical of their writing draft, and this helps them to figure out the main point of their writing: "Do more raw writing…This new burst of unworried words after you have been wrestling, helps you find that main idea" (p. 130). In fact, starting with whatever comes into mind would lead to better writing.

Private freewriting is one of the classroom practices that can help us express ourselves and make us confident in writing (Marshall, 2019). In private freewriting activities, we can practice writing without "being judged or graded, needing to think about spelling and grammar, making sense, staying on topic, being written for an audience, and more formal and correct than speech" (Elbow & Belanoff as cited in Marshall, 2009, p. 11). As "freewriting goes to the heart" (p. 13), we can express our own voice and true feelings through it. It has the power "to stimulate self-knowledge, sharpen focus, enhance creativity and promote fluency for individual writers while at the same time foster[ing] a unique sense of community in the classroom" (p. 14). Valuing our own thoughts, experiences, and feelings, private freewriting leads us to become better writers. I like the idea of "speaking himself" (Chaim Perelman as cited in Marshall, 2009, p. 18), that is, writing to ourselves being the audience. Writers are themselves an audience of their own writing. Aligning with Marshall (2009), I say, first, we should see for ourselves whether the writing persuades us or not, communicating clearly the intended message. Then we should presumably imagine whether our writing can persuade other audiences. If we are not persuaded, it is an open question of whether our writing may persuade readers or not. Private freewriting indeed helps students to express themselves and

gives them a chance to play with language. However, I am also attuned to the idea that "private freewriting is not and was never meant to be a substitute for carefully structured, revised, and edited writing. Rather it is a way to encourage and enhance writing in the long term by intuitive means" (Marshall, 2009, p.19). Free writing is a way to improve one's skill and ability to write well greatly.

Identifying weaknesses

Recognizing their own weaknesses helps lead writers to write with power (Elbow, 1998). Taking myself as an example, to attain this level of writing, first, I identified my own problems with writing. Before identifying my weaknesses, I often struggled to choose the right words, maintain coherence and cohesion, and produce grammatically correct sentences. I would present many ideas without putting them down coherently and cohesively, in grammatically correct sentences, and provide supporting details and arguments. However, once I identified my writing problems, then I gradually started to pay more attention to the weak areas in my final draft.

I would check whether the words, sentences, and examples are organized well, grammatically correct, and comprehensible to the intended readers or not. The present writing skill that I have is learned through the conscious attention that I have given to my writing weaknesses. Indeed, learning my own weaknesses and problems, targeting them, and treating them with care leads to writing with power. But, in order to do this, writers should have the desire to understand their own writing problems better and should carefully focus on these areas as well.

Practicing enormously

Practice (in the sense of repeated attempts to gain expertise) is the most important technique for improving writing. No matter how much knowledge a person has about writing, practice is always needed to produce better and more compelling writing. So, "When you try to write something right the first time, don't try to get it absolutely right" (Elbow, 1998, p. 45). The habits and strategies that writers have for composing a particular genre may not be particularly useful for composing other kinds of genres and writings. When they start a new kind of writing (e.g., rhetorical genre), they need practice to produce persuasive writing. It is wrong to expect a writer to produce better writing without having sufficient practice. When writers practice writing through repetitious tasks, they get a chance to test, invent, and even fail in their writing, and that makes them familiar with the writing conventions and mechanics of a particular genre. Even for an expert professional writer, it is virtually impossible to produce good writing in the first draft. As renowned writer Lamott (1995) observes, "Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere" (p. 303). Yes, all writing should start with a terrible first draft, moving to an improved second draft, a better third draft, and multiple drafts, which can finally make a solid and compelling final draft. No writer is naturally born; all go through the practice stage.

Agreeing with Elbow (1998), I assert that writing takes time to improve. No magic wand turns one's writing into something compelling and persuasive overnight. Attempting to write the first time and for the first draft correctly is the "dangerous method" (Elbow, 1998). Writing is something that gradually develops through long recursive practice. Thinking of producing powerful writing in a short period is nothing more than a stupid illusion. In this world, unless magic happens, nobody gets mastery over writing without sufficient practice in his or her areas of weakness.

Indeed, to advance writing needs a sustained and extended period of practice. Talking about the need for an extended period of practice for writing, Elbow (1998) presents a part of a self-evaluation written by a student, Joanne Pilgrim. The student wrote:

> *I've learned the value of not expecting a twelve-year-old child to come out when you're giving birth to a baby; that any writing needs time after its birth so it can change and grow and eventually reach its potential. I've come to realize that you most probably won't find a pearl if you only pick up oysters once a year. So, I will try to write a lot – a whole lot – and not expect that every piece emerges as a gem (p. 6).*

As a child takes time to mature, learn to speak, eat, and play, in the same way, writers need time to develop their writing skills. It is an ability that slowly advances through sustained and dedicated effort. Furthermore, all writers should understand that, as noted by Elbow (1998), not all the writings produced become compelling and strong. Everyone produces strong writing at times and bad writing at other times. However, they also learn through their bad writing; they improve their writing little by little and become more able to write with power over the course of years.

Revising

Revising is the process of making writing better, where writers arrange, add, and amplify their ideas, examples, details, and arguments in their writing. Elbow (1998) argues that for revising, writers need to have ample practice and experience in writing; only then can writers effectively revise their writing: "[Revising] requires wisdom, judgment, and maturity. There is no way to get these qualities except through practice and experience" (p. 121). Yes, revising cannot be done best without having judgmental skills (what to include and what to remove from drafts) and experience. Revising is a messy job; it varies from one writer to another. Elbow states that the first job of beginning writers while revising writing should be to focus on ideas and purpose, and only then should they make an attempt to visualize and serve their audience.

Revising takes much time to know how best to adjust the writing to become one smooth, comprehensible, and well-organized work. One must pay special attention to what communicates better and what does not convey one's intended message. For this, writers should attempt to look through their intended audience's eyes to judge whether the writing is powerful enough "to change [readers'] minds" or not (Elbow,

1998, p. 122). In this regard, Elbow further writes, "the most trustworthy motive for revising is the desire to make things work on readers" (p. 122). The writing should have an impact on the audience's minds. But, for this, writers should have patience since achieving this goal takes time and hard effort. Especially for beginner writers, revising may take a lot of time and effort, often considerably more than what was required for the original composition. To make their revising better, writers may need to leave the writing aside a couple of days (or weeks, or even months or years) before revising: "Putting [writing draft] aside for a couple of days is easiest and best" (Elbow, 1998, p. 129). Leaving writing aside some days without revising gives writers a fresh look at their own writing and can spark changes in their writing from readers' perspectives. Elbow states that writers should "Learn when not to revise" (p. 125). His point is that a beginner writer should know what to revise and what not to revise. All sentences, ideas, and arguments may not need thorough revision. Indeed, if the writers' ideas are composed of appropriate words, sentences, examples, and arguments, writers need not revise their writing just for the sake of revising. For example, if some part of writing is already good enough to communicate ideas to their intended audience, the writers obviously should not revise that section.

Another important aspect that writers should deem essential in revising writing is visualizing their purpose and the audience. To articulate ideas well, writers need to visualize what they want to do with words (Elbow, 1998). They should be clear to themselves about what they want to convey to whom. Elbow (1998) asserts, "[Clear] grasp of your audience and purpose may focus your thinking in such a way that you immediately realize just what you need to say and how you need to say it" (p. 41). Visualizing who the audience is, what the writers want to get done through the words, what effect the writers want to make on the audience, what results the writers want to accomplish, and how to change the audience's mindset, all this is crucial in producing successful writing. Discussing the audience's place in writing, Flusser (2011) states, "[f]orgetting others while writing is the result of forgetting oneself" (p. 38), and thus Flusser also reiterates the importance of keeping one's audience in mind while writing. Certainly, envisioning the intended audience, purpose, and context keeps writers focused on lucidly communicating their messages.

Until a couple of years ago, I would not have considered the audience that much in my writing. Rather, I would put my whole energy into producing sophisticated writing. The reason I would put effort into producing "sophisticated" writing with advanced vocabulary, complex structure, and challenging ideas was the value people usually give to such writing in my country. Nowadays, I am becoming more and more aware of my audience, considering that writing is done with the primary aim of communicating with the targeted audience. Hence, to communicate ideas better to the audience, writers must take into account the audience's level of knowledge and culture and accordingly, should present examples and ideas so that their audiences understand and value the writing and are convinced to agree with the writer's ideas.

Therefore, reiterating Elbow's idea, I would say that while revising, writers should attempt to visualize their audience with as much precision as possible—who are their audiences, what kinds of language usage are they familiar with, what is their socio-cultural background, what kinds of examples and arguments do they understand, etc. All this must be taken into consideration. But, at the same time, attuning to Elbow's idea, I say that writers, especially novice writers, should not overthink their audience while revising their writing. Because in the process, they may lose their ideas and the purpose of their writing if they give all their attention to pondering the question: who will be my intended audience? So, while revising their writing, the first job of beginning writers should be to focus on ideas and purpose, and only then should they make an attempt to visualize their audience as far as possible.

One of the techniques that writers can embrace in revising state is reading out loud a prepared draft. Elbow (1998) argues, "The psychological transaction that helps most in cutting is to read your words out loud. Look for places where you stumble or get lost in the middle of a sentence" (p. 135). This assists writers in being aware of where they are lost in their writing. Radical revision is another strategy that helps in producing compelling writing. In this kind of revision, students (and other writers) do not simply make surface changes, such as syntactical and vocabulary, but rather they are required to make drastic conceptual changes in their writing. According to Lester Faigley and Stephen Witte, in this kind of revision, rather than making "conventional copy-editing operations" students make "meaning changes" either by "adding of new content or the deleting of existing content" (as cited in Moore, 2009, p. 121). Usually, changing content and concepts of written text is rather difficult, especially for novice writers, since they ordinarily view proofreading as synonymous with revision. In fact, I myself would also view it in the same way, narrowly: changing syntactical structure, words, organization, and grammar. Though it is a bit difficult in the beginning stage, a much deeper concept of revision is advantageous to students, as it leads them to change their thinking and revamp their writing. Moore (2009) writes that radical revision "[helps] students revise more deeply, for a more sustained amount of time, more effectively, and with more agency" (p. 123). This makes students ponder over the content and concept of their writing and re-envision their writing. But, if we are asking students to make radical changes in their writing, we should provide some prompts (radically revising essays: prompts for generating missing text; prompts for making connections; prompts for clarifying an essay's focus on argument; radically revising poems: prompts for reimagining; prompts for clarifying and tightening by cutting at least five lines from a poem) (Moore, 2009).

Understanding revision is a challenging job since instructors often see the product of the writing process only. The revision processes, sweat, and effort writers make to produce the final draft are most often hidden unless we demand documentation of the student's revision process. It is complicated to predict what troublesome stages our student writers go through while producing the final draft, since "it is also an activity that tends to be hidden from view…final form [comes]—with many of the hesitations, repetitions,

digressions, false starts, alternative phrasings, inconsistencies, speculations, infelicities, and flat-out mistakes of earlier drafts smoothed over, corrected or erased" (Harris, 2006, p. 99). Indeed, the final draft is the upshot of multiple unseen steps of revising. Since to get to the final draft revising goes through several concealed mental, psychological, and mechanical processes, we should never:

> *"[try]to conceive and draft an entire text from start to end in a single sitting, without pausing to consider [alternative]…ways of developing their ideas, or by worrying so much about issues of editing and correctness that they hardly allow themselves to think about anything else at all" (p. 102).*

Clearly, any significant writing goes through several revising processes to come to the final draft; it takes time to make it compelling, and thus, it is wrong to think too much about editing and correctness while preparing the first draft of writing. Worrying too much about editing and accuracy early in the process may be futile since initial drafts can be completely changed before we get into the final draft.

Scholars argue that writing "an abstract" in the revising stage leads to the production of compelling writing. Writing an abstract provides a "lucid overview" of writing the draft. Harris (2006) states that the abstract pushes writers to think on two levels: "(1) your project as a whole; and (2) how you develop your line of thinking" (p. 110). Indeed, an abstract gives a picture of the draft—the aim of writing, the method used in writing, and the materials (examples and evidence) used to craft the intended message to convey. It is certain that if the abstract is clearly written, it can provide a clear direction for revising writing, suggesting where the draft is effectively advanced and where it does not.

As in the case of abstract writing, conclusion writing is also considered an important aspect of revising. A conclusion leaves a clear message to readers, so great attention should be paid to producing a conclusion. Harris (2006) states, "the best kind of conclusion usually presents a powerful close to an essay or book [and] responds to two questions: *So what?* and *What's next?"* (p. 118). That is, the best kind of conclusion offers implications and future action for consideration.

There is no doubt that radical revision can help writers to construct better writing. However, at the same time, both instructors and students should understand that "[radical] revision is not a cure-all and it will not instantly turn inexperienced writers into expert or even experience writers, but it helps students create some scaffolding for the act of re-seeing…it's only one tool, of several" (Moore, 2009, p. 131). Absolutely, radical revision cannot be used for all as a panacea for articulating ideas better way, but, for sure, it can be used as a tool for supporting and re-envisioning students' writing, and for making conceptual changes in their writing.

Harris (2006) introduces the four moves of rewriting for revising writing:

- What's your project? What do you want to accomplish in this essay? (Coming to Terms)
- What works? How can you build on the strengths of your draft? (Forwarding)
- What else might be said? How might you acknowledge other views and possibilities? (Countering)
- What's next? What are the implications of what you have to say? (Taking an Approach) (p. 99).

The first move, "coming to terms," is about understanding terms and concepts of writing through shorthand writing, direct quote, and paraphrasing. The move is very helpful in defining writers' projects. For this, Harris (2006) provides the following three points to consider in a form reminiscent of a scientific report:

> *Aims: What is a writer trying to achieve? What position does he or she want to argue? What issues or problems does he or she explore?*
>
> *Methods: How does a writer relate examples to ideas? How does he or she connect one claim to the next, build a sense of continuity and flow?*
>
> *Materials: Where does the writer go for examples and evidence? What texts are cited and discussed? What experiences or events are described? (p. 19).*

The second move, "forwarding," deals with putting forward others' ideas/thoughts/views using terms and concepts in the writing (text). The third move, "countering," is about "reading against the grain of a text", that is, countering ideas and phrasings that strike [writers that often they find] mistaken, troubling, or incomplete" (Harris, 2006, p. 6). This move roughly corresponds to what in classical rhetoric is more commonly called "refutation." The final move is "taking an approach," which deals with "applying a theory or method of analysis advanced by another writer to a new set of issues or texts" (p. 7), that is, it is the practical application (and perhaps extension) of existing theory or method in one's own writing, drawing ideas from other writers, other times and other situations and making them one's own.

From the above description, it can be implied that revising is not "a mere fiddling with sentences, ...editing for style and correctness, but [something] that also, on the other hand, avoids lapsing into mystical exhortations for risk-taking or critical self-awareness or some other vague but evidently desirable quality of mind" (Harris, 2006, p. 99). Of course, revising is more than editing, proofreading, polishing, and making a smooth text flow. It's a rather critical awareness of writers that occasionally needs a complete revamping of a draft. Revising goes through rethinking and restructuring the draft in terms of ideas, along with relevant examples and supporting details. In Harris's terms, this phenomenon is known as making "global" changes in writing the draft. Since

revising is associated with the restructuring of writing a draft, often with additional ideas and examples, the task of revising does not turn out to be as simple as it may be initially described in textbooks and discussed in the classroom.

Articulating voice

Every writer has their own voice to articulate in their writing. Elbow (1998) states, "everyone…has real voice available; everyone can write with power" (p. 304). I completely agree with Elbow's point that anyone who writes has their voice in writing, no matter whether they are an inexperienced and unskilled writer or a master author. Voicing has such power that it draws readers' attention as well as makes them better understand the underlying meaning of the writing, making writing suitable to readers instead of mere mechanical language: "Writing with real voice has the power to make you pay attention and understand—the words go deep" (Elbow, 1998, p. 299). Elbow points out that writers should consider the level of readers while writing. Further, he states that writing should be appealing both in terms of content and style: "The most plausible answer is that for words to have the power, they must fit the reader. You must give readers either the style or the content they want, preferably both" (p. 279). Indeed, the writer should bring content that is suitable for the reader and use the appropriate style and tone in their writing so that they feel writing is useful and enjoyable while reading the writing.

We commonly find some people speaking artificially. This happens when speakers are over-conscious in their speech. I note that people who speak over-consciously typically do not reveal their real voice. Elbow (1998) states, "some people…have developed a habit of speaking in a careful or guarded way so that you cannot hear any real rhythm and texture. Their speech sounds wooden, dead, fake" (p. 290). Fake-sounding does not favor those who are listening to speech and reading. Fake words can be perceived by an audience as boring, annoying, and sometimes even insulting. However, surprisingly, sometimes people need fake-sounding words. Elbow (1998) writes, "It's no accident that the greatest number of fake-sounding people are in professions where they must constantly meet and impress an audience: salesmen, announcers, politicians, preachers [Teachers, too]" (p. 294). Certainly, this skill, convincing/making an impression in artificial ways, is sometimes needed, for some people may not always be able to spontaneously impress their audience through their own authentic voice. Thus, I say sometimes it is good to be artificial for a good reason. In fact, this is neither more nor less than one aspect of the art of rhetoric in practical use.

It is often said that badness in writing is unavoidable, no matter how experienced a writer is. Elbow (1998) says, "Getting rid of badness is an infinite and impossible task. There will always be bits of badness in your writing, lurking here and there for some sharp-eyed reader to find, no matter how hard you try to remove them" (p. 303). Of course, it is almost impossible to turn our writing completely good—It is the nature of writing. Bad writing is required to make our writing better. In my educational career,

I went through several bad writing trajectories, and that led me to reach this stage. Writing is never a finishing project. Most importantly, writers should strive to voice themselves in an understandable way to targeted audiences. Discussing how a real voice can be expressed, Elbow (1998) writes, "Be there! See it! Hallucinate! Hear it! Feel it! Be that person! Close your eyes and don't let yourself write down any words until you can actually see and hear and touch what you are writing about. To hell with words, see something"! (p. 336). I love these lines, as these could be helpful strategies for bringing out the real voice of writers.

Here I would like to present the idea of voicing in writing through my own verse-less poem:

Voicing in writing
Dear developing writers,
I am wondering about the power
Not for material power
But for writing power.

Read the book, Writing with Power
And found voicing the most important
Voicing is the DNA of writing
This makes us different from others
My target is also to be different.

To write voicing my thought
I want to sing my own song in my writing
I want to be real
Articulating my voice makes me real.

Without a voice, writing is a dead body
Like a body without breathing
When I do not hear breathing in writing
I rarely read the writing.

To make my writing compelling
I try to be real, writing words from the heart
For this, I start writing without an audience in my mind
I put the audience in my mind in revising the stage
This strategy helps me to be heard
This saves my writing from being woody.

Dear developing writers,
I do not like to be artificial
Like salesmen, announcers, politicians, preachers

I do not want to impress like them
I feel their voice is like an elephant's teeth
Showing one thing out, having another inside.

Dear developing writers,
Bad writing is natural
It is like death
As we bring death along with our birth
Like this when we write
We articulate bits of bad writing
Do not worry about it
It is the bad writing
That leads us to better writing.

Moreover, bad writing is subjective
Our writing can be sweet for somebody
While for some it may be woody
Pondering excessively about it meaningless
But we should always strive to be real
It is the voicing that makes our writing real.
(I composed this poem based on Peter Elbow's 1998, chapter "Voicing")

Receiving feedback

Feedback plays a crucial role in improving students' writing. Provided meaningful feedback and comments, students can see what they need to improve in their writing and how they should shape their writing. Talking about the importance of commenting on students writing, Sommer (2014) writes:

> *Comments create the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comments create the motive for revising. Without comments from their teachers or from their peers, student writing will revise in a consistently narrow and predictable way. Without comments from readers, students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of their text. (p. 333)*

The point is that feedback should motivate students to advance their work. Starting with a strong point in students' writing can motivate them to work further and put extra effort into the work. Similarly, offering feedback and commenting through soft language can stimulate writers to work more on the project. Contrary to this, if harsh language is used for providing feedback and commenting if an instructor's red-inked comments are as hot and angry as blood on students' paper, it is sure that that makes the students humiliated, demotivates them, and makes them less confident in their work.

Elbow (1998) asserts, "Some safe readers are tough and demanding but they listen hard, they respect us, they want to hear what we have to say, and in this way, they bring out our best skills in writing" (p. 185). Of course, writers need some safe readers to read their drafts and provide genuine feedback without humiliating and disrespecting their ideas. Safe readers' feedback surely helps improve writers' writing, motivating them to put in more effort. Damaging feedback and harsh comments are never good but only lead students and even working writers and scholars to hate feedback. Elbow (1998) states "One of the main reasons so many people hate feedback or fail to learn from it is that it makes them feel so helpless. Getting feedback has always felt like putting themselves entirely into someone else's power" (p. 247). This could happen if somebody is bombarded by negative feedback. But if writers receive some directive feedback, along with some positive feedback, that may not humiliate and discourage them. The feedback should make the writers feel that they can and should improve their writing somehow.

Writing instructors and reviewers/commenters should know how to make their feedback more effective and meaningful. The feedback that does not give a concrete direction does not yield a productive result. So, feedback must be concrete, to the point, and offered in simple language so that students can understand and work accordingly. Meaningful feedback and comments on students' writing make students recognize their writing weaknesses and know the specific sort of effort they should put into further cultivating their writing skills. Without feedback, even an experienced professional writer can have problems in his/her writing, let alone beginning and second-language student writers (Paudel, 2020a).

Elbow (1998) discusses two types of feedback: criterion-based feedback and reader-based feedback. He presents four broad foundational questions that could be used for providing criterion-based feedback (What is the quality of the content of the writing: the ideas, the perceptions, the point of view? b. How well is the writing organized? c. How effective is the language? and d. Are there mistakes or inappropriate choices in usage? (p. 240). Similarly, to providing reader-based feedback, he also offers three broad questions about how the writer's words affected the readers: a. what was happening to you, moment by moment, as you were reading the piece of writing? b. summarize the writing: give your understanding of what it says or what happened in it. c. make some images for the writing and the transaction it creates with readers (p. 255).

Wilson and Post (2019) discuss the effect and action of feedback through critical engagement on students' writing development. Here the authors try to focus "on existing narratives by representing students' dispositions toward and engagement with instructor feedback solely as the students themselves identified and described them in relation to their writing development" (p. 30). In their studies, they define critical engagement with feedback in terms of one or more of the following actions: 1. Using feedback to develop an awareness of purposes for writing beyond the assignment; 2. Using feedback to develop an awareness of broader audiences than the instructor; 3.

Using feedback as a springboard for reflecting on one's own writing; 4. Analyzing or evaluating the feedback itself, rather than accepting it without question (p. 32). The study reveals that critical engagement with feedback supports writers in their efforts to develop their writing rather than simply embracing or rejecting whatever feedback they receive on their writing from their instructors. Concerning this, Wilson & Post (2019) write, "one powerful way to promote students' development as writers is to teach them to seek out and critically engage with instructor feedback" (p. 54). The point is that critical engagement makes meaningful and productive feedback. Elbow (1998) states that feedback should support writers in seeing how readers experience their writing: "Your main task in getting feedback is to listen and see if you can experience what your reader is experiencing. If you succeed in doing so you will be able to see whether there's really something there to fix and if so how to fix it" (p. 145). This could assist writers in improving their writing based on readers' experiences, expectations, and reactions.

Reflecting on own writing

Reflective practice makes writers autonomous learners, allowing them to see their own practices closely and evaluate their own progress—what went well and what did not go well in their writing. Further, this supports writers in planning to overcome their weaknesses. The reflective strategy gives writers a chance "to notice how reading and writing strategies work for [them] and for our students [and] makes us more reflective practitioners" (Vilardi, 2009, p. 2). Indeed, it allows writers to step back and think about how their problems can be solved. Previous learning becomes food for further understanding, thought, and insight. The reflective practice seems very scientific for developing writers, as it goes through the chain of experience, reflection, and learning. Guy (2006) writes that we should [pay] attention to what happens while [we] complete a task; [it] puts [us] in a better position to perform that task more effectively (p.59). So, it seems helpful to ask students to reflect on their learning, providing some prompts, for instance, "what were you trying to accomplish in this essay? Where did you have success, and where did you run into trouble? What would you do next if you were to work more on this essay?" (Guy, 2006, p. 55). Of course, these kinds of prompts help students ponder their own practices and rectify them if needed, further enhancement.

A dialectical notebook is a tool that can be used for reflecting on reading texts in notes (Bledsoe, 2009). In the notebook, reading the assigned text, students first write (reflect through writing) their understanding, feelings, reactions, arguments, difficulties, challenges, satisfactions, ambiguities, and contradictions towards the reading text, and then peers are required to read the reflective writing and respond to the writers' reflections. The American Heritage Dictionary, third edition defines, "dialectic" as "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in an opponent's argument and overcoming them," and "dialectics" as "a method of argument or exposition that systematically weighs contradictory facts or ideas with a view to the resolution of their real or inherent contradiction" (as cited in Bledsoe, p. 100). Indeed, such a method is a tool that helps students to arrive at a conclusion through recursive

discussion among classmates. It is a kind of negotiation between a text and reading responses. In this regard, Bledsoe (2009) writes, "[Dialectical] notebooks help students learn to negotiate between a written work and the ranges of responses that readers might have to it" (95). This tool "[helps] students in the slow work of developing habits of mind that support a more authentic encounter with texts" (p. 107). Indeed, this allows students to observe authentic text and reflect on the text through writing. To make the students' jobs easier, teachers can provide some prompts: "something you really understand, something you have questions about, something you notice about your process" (Bledsoe, 2009, p. 98). And under these prompts, students can write their reflections in a dialectical way. As students get a chance to reflect (understandings and challenges) on the text dialectically, if this strategy is embraced in classes, it might foster students' writing.

Embracing mimesis (imitation)

Providing model writings (essays, poems, stories, letters, etc.) gives students a path to travel down, following the model writing style and form. It emboldens students to write and articulate ideas more confidently. Model writings make students' writing more systematic and save them from getting lost. Discussing sample writing, Butler (2002) writes, "As a new academic writer, I found that these sample 'themes' helped me give form to my ideas, to construct essays that were organized, clear, and coherent" (p. 25). Further, he states, "[the samples] gave me the freedom to develop ideas by offering a form for me to imitate, a model from which to structure my own essays" (p. 25). Certainly, sample writings facilitate students' writing, providing form to emulate and leading student writers to construct their writing more cohesively and coherently.

Discussing imitation strategy in teaching poetry, Brannon (2012) writes, "Part of what makes Miss Stretchberry's poetry instruction so effective is the use of imitation in her lessons. Good teachers realize the importance of finding model poems that inspire both students' thinking and writing" (p. 51). Clearly, asking students to imitate some model poems could be an effective strategy for fostering students' thinking and articulating their ideas better. The idea of mimesis is most highly fruitful for those "unskilled writers who . . . lack a sense of form at all levels—word, sentence, paragraph, and entire work" (Donna Gorrellas cited in Butler, 2002, p. 26). Imitating others' writing gives students a chance to write convincingly and confidently. As we all go through enormous practices of imitation in learning our own spoken mother language in our childhood, in the same way, for writing too, we should all go through the same process for better articulating our own ideas. Some might say imitation is not a good way to make students better writers because it is sometimes tedious and boring and seems unoriginal. For those who oppose imitation as a learning technique, I say they are ignoring a great natural method of learning language—imitation, and they may not have understood the dynamism of written composition and of language itself. Imitation is not a mere mechanical process, but rather it is proceeding to a new step. In this regard, Vygotsky (1986) writes, "To imitate, it is necessary to possess the means of stepping from something one knows to

something new. With assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself-though only within the limits set by the state of his development" (p. 187). He further argues that "In learning to speak, as in learning school subjects, imitation is indispensable. What the child can do in cooperation today he [sic] can do alone tomorrow" (p. 188). Vygotsky's point is that imitation leads children to work independently. If imitation is embraced to some extent in teaching writing, I believe that this can lead students to become better writers.

To some extent, imitation is actually a creative process of writing. In order to articulate ideas compellingly, we need to manipulate reading texts creatively. For instance, writers need to replace model writing with new words, sentence structure, new ideas, and examples. Butler (2002) writes, "Imitation can be considered a creative act. It is not merely copying or reproducing the work of another, but transforming it in some important respects" (p. 27). While imitating, writers need to contextualize their writing, consider the audience, and put in their own stories. They always need to invent something in their writing, imitative as it may be. Brannon (2012) states, "Like any writing lesson, imitation lessons require careful attention to the writing process, and students need some sort of invention activity to get started" (p. 53). I agree with Brannon's point that creative writing is not solely the result of an individual writer's ideas; instead, it is the product of a social process. Good writing has an intertextual relationship rather than being a mere mechanical imitation of somebody else's writing. Discussing the intertextual nature of writing, Butler (2002) writes, "When we write, we are not drawing exclusively upon what is within us but also upon many other factors in our lives: our environments, upbringing, past readings and writings, and conversations in many different contexts. All these factors mix and match and affect what comes out on the page" (p. 30). Writing is all about the accumulation of different ideas from different sources, intertextuality; it is the pastiche from great texts (Polette, 1996). Even writing that we assume is completely original is not actually original but rather is always and necessarily a collection, compilation, and remix of existing ideas, words, and structures from different sources. In this regard, Bakhtin states "the word in language is always half someone else's," (as cited in Butler, 2002, p. 27). Of course, our writing is the upshot of imitation and borrowed ideas from various sources. All writing is necessarily an imitation in some way. It would be utterly incomprehensible even to the author if it were not so.

In order to lead students to mimic poetry writing, Polette (1996) presents production processes for producing pastiches: The students (a) read a variety of master- texts without initially concerning themselves with what these poems "mean" …and (g) share their pastiches (p. 288). I find these processes very useful for engaging students in learning and leading them to be creative. Based on his successful workshop experience, Polette (1996) indicates that the production processes direct the students to discover multiple things: content, form, and meanings. When approaching a poem, as a reader and an instructor, I find the following questions very useful for a pastiche production: (a) What words or images struck you? (b) What did you connect with? (c) What did you

not connect with? (d) What pictures did you produce in your mind as I read the poem? (e) What does this poem seem to be doing? (Polette, 1996, p. 290).

Even though the mimesis approach may not be currently popular or stylish, it can be argued that imitating model writing is not just recommendable but required for successful writing pedagogy, for it makes teaching-learning enormously easier as well as vastly more productive.

Conclusion

Writing is often considered an intimidating task. Almost all students usually do not want to write unless they are required to do so. This is because written composition demands significant effort and investment in terms of time, practice, and thinking. Students need to follow specific procedures and conventions to articulate writing. Nobody is born a good writer, and all conscientious writers, even scholars, and professional authors, continuously struggle to produce better writing.

However, if they embrace the above-described strategies (understanding writing, doing free writing, identifying writing weaknesses, practicing enormously, visualizing purpose and audience, revising writing, articulating the writer's own voice, obtaining feedback, reflecting on own writing, and embracing mimesis approach) and understand the dynamism of writing they can gradually improve their writing and have the chance to become better writers in the future. However, producing magical writing skills overnight or in a month without learning, practicing, and understanding the complexities of written composition is extremely difficult. Sadly, nothing can magically turn people into better writers overnight or even in a couple of months. Instead, the task requires years of firm perseverance, diligent effort, productive practice, and endless patience.

During my Ph.D. journey, I have read about many writing strategies that writers can embrace to enhance their writing skills. The above-accounted strategies are a few of them, so I encourage readers to explore more writing strategies and embrace them in their writing processes and practices.

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[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]

ELT in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI): Working with Machines

Janpha Thadphoothon

Abstract

Since 2016, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has been strong and pervasive, including its roles in business and education. In ELT, in particular, several machine learning models have been implemented such as speech recognition, grammar correction, chatbots, and translation. ELT is in the middle of a rapid and disruptive change and the magnitude of which is paramount that we have never witnessed before. Under this situation, ELT practitioners may have to acquire additional skills and competencies so as to be relevant and thrive in this rapid change and move the field forward to the next level. In this paper, the researcher proposes ELT 3.0, a new vision where working with the machines needs to be incorporated into the existing roles of the ELT teachers.

Keywords: *ELT 3.0, Chatbots, Artificial intelligence, Teacher roles, Technology-enhanced language learning*

Introduction

In the sphere of computer science, a significant event in 2016 brought an end to the so-called AI winter. Following the defeat of the chess champion, the world's Go champion was also beaten by a computer program - AlphaGo. Confidence in the power of machines was at an all-time high. Since then, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has been strong and pervasive, especially its roles in education. In ELT, in particular, several machine learning models have been implemented such as speech recognition, grammar correction, chatbots, voice cloning, and translation. ELT is in the middle of a rapid and disruptive change and the magnitude of which is paramount that we have never witnessed before.

Prior to 2016, the changing situation was limited, mainly, to theory and speculation. In 2017, Klaus Schwab published his seminal work titled 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution', proposing that the digital revolution would impact all disciplines and industries, including education (Schwab, 2017). Academics have cited the situation everybody is in as the VUCA world (Gläser, 2021), the context that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Of course, there are other challenges such as climate change and wars, including trade wars. Indeed, uncertainties affect our ability to make prudent decisions.

Indeed, the situation has changed. The Covid-19 pandemic has pushed the learning and teaching onto the online platform. Technology is not just optional, but necessity. ELT has always been a field heavily affected by technological change.

English is the language of business, science and technology, so changes in society are impacting ELT in one way or another. Can ELT teachers keep up with this new shift of rapid development and integration of information technology into ELT? Teacher development is the key answer. Sun (2014), a former TESOL president, recommends that ELT professionals engage in "continuous professional development activities in order to keep current on trends, research, development, and practices as well as to remain effective and competitive" (p. 15). The coming of AI necessitates the need for ELT to be dynamic and agile and the teachers be competent in both pedagogy and technology.

Good news is that the coping ability can be trained and cultivated. Technology affects all, not just older generations. It must be noted here that technology is alienating people – and it's not just those who are older. No one is immune to the coming of AI. AI is encroaching into our innermost lives (Harari, 2018). Many academics caution us to make sure that their goals and ours are benign and coherent. Despite several criticisms, machines are here to stay and with several breakthroughs in biotech, humans need to adapt to function well in the 21st century (Harari, 2018).

ELT and technology are almost inseparable now. Whatever happens with technology, ELT is eventually affected. The coming of the AI age, undoubtedly, alters the practice and conception of ELT.

Aim

The paper aims to propose an intellectual framework on ELT in the age of machine intelligence where humans work with machines, in addition to human-human cooperation.

In short, three questions will be answered:

1. How would AI affect ELT?
2. What is ELT 3.0?
3. Why and how to work with AI?

The underlying assumption is that AI affects all industries and everybody, including ELT as a field and a set of tasks. It must be acknowledged that ELT has embraced technology since its inception. The coming of AI has made several key components seem vulnerable to negative impacts of the new technology. This paper as mentioned proposed a framework - ELT 3.0. Working with AI requires our understanding of how it works.

Goals of ELT

In 1946, the first issue of the ELT Journal mentioned the term 'the enterprise of teaching English as a foreign or second language,' but did not explicitly mention the goal of teaching and learning of the English language. David Crystal, in his seminal book 'English as a Global Language' (1997), implies that English is a major global language that people need to learn and master. This implies a few things: (1) it is a global activity, (2) it is an important language because of its political and academic significance. The status of English has shifted from the language of the inner circle to that of the language that belongs to everybody. As a global language, English is embedded with several values, and one of which is cosmopolitism.

The rise of machines has prompted us to take a closer look at the field as a whole. A plenary paper by Yilin Sun, the former President, TESOL International Association states the goals of ELT as follows:

In the 21st century, the goals of ELT have changed from focusing solely on developing language skills and mimicking native English speakers to fostering a sense of social responsibility in students (Sun, 2014, p. 8)

It seems that the emphasis has been shifted from language skills to character-building. In other words, it is not about teaching English for no purpose, but for the good of society and self-development.

What about the goal of AI? Several scholars have raised concerns over the alignment of human goals and that of the machines. One often cited example is the construction of roads and the demise of ants. The constructor does not hate ants but they simply get in the way of the construction path.

ELT and AI

The first and foremost thing to remember is that English is very AI friendly. Why is it so? Partly, it has a lot to do with the datasets. Also, English is a global language, and also the language of business and technology. So, it is natural that any development in technology would affect the language, positively or negatively, including how it is acquired, assessed, and used.

In fact, language is where AI is vividly manifested - generally speaking, it is the core of everything (Fridman, 2022). Tortermvasana (2022) reported that Thailand's Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (DES), for example, has a high hope for Thailand to be the first to adopt the metaverse technology and commercialize it to reap the benefits. Of course, now there are several online courses aiming to develop teachers' AI skills. A recent one is a chatbot application in the classroom online workshop by Edutech

(EduTech Thailand, 2022). The workshop was advertised as being useful for teaching in promoting efficiency and saving time.

The thesis here is that the two goals should be aligned. AI has a goal to enhance human capabilities. The danger of AI lies not in its malice, but competence, as many experts say. If, for example, the goals of ELT and those of the AI cross and one can imagine what the outcome would be. Hence, it is highly essential for the field (ELT) to talk about the threats and opportunities arising from this new development in computer science.

ELT with AI Elements: ELT 3.0

ELT 3.0 is simply ELT with AI, both concepts (theories), hardware, software, and practice. The field of English language teaching (ELT) could benefit from AI development. Without AI, ELT may be handicapped. The situation may not be one direction or another, but a gradual characteristic. The adoption of AI seems inevitable, just a matter of time before AI has reached its threshold of surpassing the intelligence of humans in general, or the so-called Artificial General Intelligence or AGI. At the core of this general intelligence is the language and communication.

English and technology are two close buddies. English surely has its presence in the metaverse. Mark Zuckerberg is CEO of Meta, formerly Facebook, conceptualizes Metaverse as being both a virtual place and time where people spend their lives the same way people live their lives in the physical world (Zuckerberg, 2022).

ELT 3.0 is an intellectual framework that outlines ELT as having three stages: 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0. At present, ELT is moving into the 3.0 era where AI elements begin to perform key functions with the field. As a matter of fact, ELT has already embraced a significant portion of digital elements in its practice. From text to photos to video. According to Mark Zuckerberg (2021), the metaverse will be even more immersive compared with social media. He said that it is "an embodied internet where you're in the experience, not just looking at it. And we call this the metaverse." In the Metaverse, according to Zuckerberg (2021), we will be able to do almost anything we can imagine, including getting together with friends and family, working, learning, playing games, shopping, and working out. Metaverse would connect people.

Table 1: Technology use in ELT

Dimension	ELT 1.0	ELT 2.0	ELT 3.0
Media	Books, Radio	Computer + Software	Chatbots, Speech recognition
Instruction	Teacher-centeredness	Students-centeredness	Individualized Instruction

Infrastructures & Tools	Sound labs	Computer labs	Smartphones
Chatbots	ELIZA	Pandora bots	AI Chatbots
Classroom	Classroom with Cassette players	Classroom with Desktops	No Physical Classroom
Knowledge	Experts	Experts + Teachers	The World

In terms of media use, ELT 1.0 relies on the use of traditional tools, relying on printed books and basic media such as radio and TV programs. It must be noted here that the movement from 1.0 to 3.0 is not a clear-cut demarcation, but a matter of degree and intensity. In ELT 2.0, computers arrived and computer labs were installed. The year 2016 marked the beginning of English 3.0.

Why Work with Machines

There are several benefits in the cooperation. Machines with better cognitive performance would enable us humans to set goals and procedures in order to accomplish mutual benefits. Kai-Fu Lee (2019) gave an interview, saying that, in addition to jobs that require creativity:

Another type of job that is much numerous would be compassionate jobs that require calm empathy and human touch … AI is cold calculating and even if it can fake that to some extent it will make errors and that will make it look very silly.

In the age of machine intelligence, we humans have to adapt and adjust ourselves to the new environment. We have been ardent and efficient tool makers and users for centuries, but now many aspects of the machines that we have built could exhibit intelligence.

Garry Kasparov (2016) has proposed a principle of excellence based on his chess-playing experience. He said that a human plus machine is superior to a human alone. Later he added another dimension - a superior process. He tweeted to explain his principle as follows:

> *The full "Kasparov Principle" isn't simply that human+machine > machine or human, but that human+machine+superior process is the key.*
>
> *(Kasparov, 2016)*

Obviously, one thing that is certain is that a human alone cannot compete with another human with a machine. After that, it becomes who understands how the machine works best.

Soon, humanoids would be available in many homes. "Tesla's humanoid robot will one day be the most valuable part of the company's business", CEO Elon Musk (Vega, 2022).

How to Work with Machines

One may ask," how would you do?" After the rationale for proposing the ELT 3.0 model and the need for ELT professionals to embrace AI. This section is an example of how teachers could work with machines. The how here should begin with the changing mindset, that is, that machines have the capacity to get things done or achieve their goals, like us humans.

As discussed earlier, the reason why humans should work with machines is primarily better performance. This is tricky as a new form of collaboration because it hurts our pride. Nevertheless, a better mindset, according to Garry Kasparov, a former chess player champion, is to welcome the intelligence of machines (Teicher, 2018).

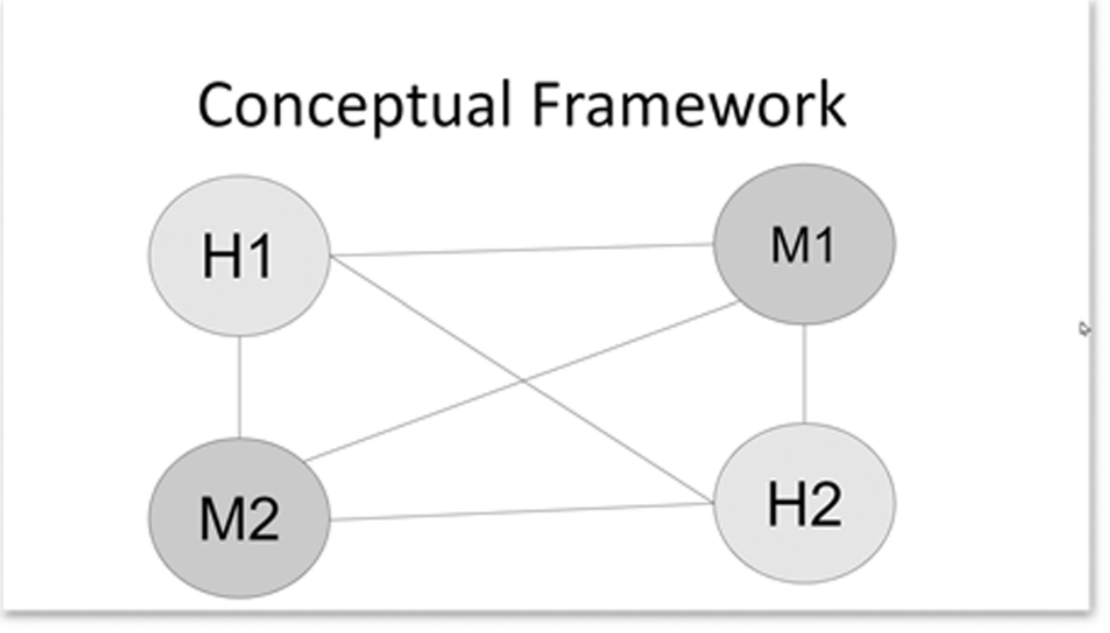

Figure 1: Human-machine collaboration

Julie Shah, an associate professor of aeronautics and astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and her team have proposed an idea of having humans and machines working together. She explains the need for humans and machines to work together beyond traditional ergonomic design:

> *"This idea of designing for a combined human-machine system is something that grows out of aerospace – a development of pilots working with intelligent systems in the cockpit to fly complex aircrafts… building on these principles, collaborative robots can work alongside humans in a variety of systems, from factories to hospitals."*
>
> *(MIT, 2022)*

One may argue that we are actually working with machines at the moment. It is also true that we need to learn more about how machines work. Professor Mag Tegmark, a physicist and machine learning researcher, has called for AI safety, that is, we humans should make greater efforts to understand machines (Tegmark, 2017). In the bigger picture, he suggests, we need to make sure that AI and humans share the same goals, known as goal-alignment. This means that AI algorithms we develop need to be explainable. It might be the case that ELT practitioners, too, need to conduct research on AI-related disciplines, especially natural language development and applications.

Another point I would like to make here is that we need to have our principles in place. The proposed principle has four elements, namely, criticality, creativity, productivity, and responsibility (CCPR). The model has been proposed as a solution and means to reform education (Sinlarat, 2011). Under this model, learners are expected to be critical, creative, productive, and responsible.

1. Learners with critical thinking skills are thorough in their analysis. They have a deep understanding of society and see the factors and construction of the society and the world.
2. Learners with a creative mind refer to those that seek to add something new to the existing ideas, looking for opportunities to create and adapt the existing tools. This mind that looks at the same event or phenomenon with fresh new perspectives and manages to solve problems under constraints.
3. Productive Mind - The mind that aims to make things happen, including the seeking of new methods, and adding values to the products. This mind is alert to new ideas and would look for ways to create new tools, products, and ideas.
4. Responsible Mind - This mind means having moral integrity, being ethical and responsible for the society, and observing professional ethics. In teaching, responsible teachers perform their duties with integrity and dedication.

In order to work with the machine, one needs to know how the machine works, its capacity, and limitations. This may mean that English teachers learn or acquire additional skills. Lee and Qiufan (2021) suggest two roles for teachers: (1) they can be human mentors and connectors, (2) they can program AI teachers and companions. Machines are good at doing repetitive tasks, but tasks that require creativity and compassion will be better done by humans.

Some Worries and Concerns

The coming of AI is not without skepticism and doubts, including anxiety and worries. There are essentially four big worries: (1) Fear of AI going rogue, (2) Effects on employment, (3) Access and equality, and (4) Human dignity.

First, can AI go rogue? The rise of AI also brings worries. One of them is the values embedded in the system. Malik (2022) wrote that what we should be worrying about is the values we put into the system. An AI chatbot with millions of datasets may still produce texts with prejudice and biases. As we know, algorithms and other forms of software are trained using data from human societies. Without intervention, they will likely replicate the biases and attitudes prevalent in our societies.

Similarly, Hundt et al. (2022) reported that many training datasets have demonstrated spew racism, sexism, and other detrimental biases. They called for measures and regulations governing the design and training of robots and other AI systems.

It was reported that the social media chatbot developed by a Korean startup was shut down on after users complained about the use of profanity or abusive words. This incident is similar to Microsoft's Tay chatbot collapse in 2016 when it sent racist tweets. This raises ethical issues on how to prevent the misuse and abuse of artificial intelligence (Kwon and Yun, 2021).

In ELT, basic decency and standards of rights and wrong must be upheld and maintained in machine learning models and NLP models. A recent incident by a Google's whistle-blower who came out and told the world that the company's AI has come to life, sparking fears that AI might have gained a certain level of consciousness (Tiku, 2022). Similarly, Tay, an AI chatbot designed by Microsoft, was removed from service when it began using abusive and racist language (Schwartz, 2019, November 25). Thus, there should be rules and regulations or guidelines governing the use of AI systems in language education. Indeed, chatbots, mostly, have been trained from datasets from the Internet such as from Facebook and Twitter. They, hence, exhibit human values, reflecting the real-world language use.

Second, will AI take our jobs? To address this question, it is necessary to accept the fact that many aspects of AI have helped us improve our work e.g. translation and grammar correction. In the age of AI, we may have to adjust the way we do things. What AI lacks are compassion and creative elements (Baruch, 2019; Lee, 2019). These areas should be emphasized more in English language education (Preachey and Maley, 2015).

Thirdly, the problem of digital divide remains a thorny issue. We may have to accept the imperfect world we are living in. The treatment of this issue is certainly beyond any single organization or an individual country.

Lastly, the feeling of dignity is being challenged by machines. This is why the need is that we work with the machines. In the past, machines did not have cognitive functions or had limited capacities. Now and the near future to come, machines could offer paths and options for us to make. There is no need for humans to compete with machines in many domains such as carrying tons of goods from A to B. Neither should we feel dehumanized if machines (e.g. cars) can go faster than us. Tasks that are dangerous, boring, and repetitive, should be left to machine automation. We are already cyborgs, according to Elon Musk. Mark Zuckerberg also said that we may be living in the digital world without realizing it. Yet, the acceptance and normalization of our perceptions might take time.

Despite challenges and issues, the development of AI in all spheres of life and industries does not slow down at any rate, primarily due to new geo-political conflicts. Elon Musk, on many occasions, has provocatively warned us that AI is more dangerous than nuclear weapons. Similarly, Harari (2017) also warns us against the inequality of abilities and skills of many people. Some among us stand the risk of being made less relevant and some would end up being 'irrelevant'. All of these predictions seem to signal us that we need to seriously and urgently study the impacts of AI in education, especially language education. As the core of AI is language, working with machines with AI elements, perhaps, is a strong force we are all being gravitated into.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper proposes an intellectual framework, ELT 3.0, for ELT professions to function well in the age of AI. This is only a suggestion. Many examples given may sound like an alarmist. We need to realize that we create AI to help humans. It will be harder and harder for us not to take the path of technology. If it were a success, it would be a small part in a debate on the future of ELT, opening up more discussions. Working with machines is not an option; it is likely to be a new normal. AI and its applications are not something out of the field among ELT researchers and practitioners, but something highly relevant to our goals and main activities, against the backdrop of language being the core of everything.

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BOOK REVIEWS

An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 6th edition by Uwe Flick, published by Sage Publication Ltd, 2018, pp. 696, ISBN 1526445654, OCLC Number-1043585625, Language –English.

- Reviewed by Pushpa Priya

General Information

Qualitative research mainly influences humanities and social science time and again with new methods. This book is the outcome of being acquainted with new approaches in qualitative research that is revised and updated in 6th edition form. The book was published by sage publication in the year 2018. The author designed the contents of the book in the way that mainly facilitates the novice researchers and also experienced quantitative researcher who is new to qualitative researcher. It is simply practical guideline to assist readers through step by step with an intention to make each and every concept of the qualitative research clear. How to make an approach for qualitative research and how to enhance research skills related to qualitative is well elaborated throughout the book. In total, there are 34 chapters in this book that is divided into six sections; and every chapter begins with specific objectives with an aim to generate awareness among the readers towards the upcoming discussion; later it is followed with checklist in order to reinforce the readers' level of understanding. First part of the book comprised 1 to 5 chapters that discusses on foundations of qualitative research; second part covered 6 to 13 chapters that mainly focused on research design; third part covers from 14 to 17 mainly emphasized on data collection; fourth part contains from 18 to 22 chapters that discussed on data beyond talk; fifth part of the book ranges from 23 to 28 emphasized on ways to data collection and sixth part of the book covers chapter from 29 to 31 that emphasized on the strategies on making reporting of the conducted research.

Part Wise Gist

Part 1 of the book entitled "Foundations of Quality Research" ranges from chapter one to five in which the author discussed in-depth concept on qualitative research in terms of why and how to conduct qualitative research; focuses on the essential features of qualitative research like: correct choice of appropriate methods and theories; etc; limitations of qualitative research, theoretical perspectives in the form of theoretical framework; positivism and constructivism as a epistemological assumptions, effect of feminist position in qualitative research; distinction between qualitative and quantitative research.

Part 2 entitled "Research Design" ranges from chapter six to thirteen mainly discussed on practical methodological issues; formulating research question as the whole research revolves around finding answer of the posed research question for particular research study; what makes good and bad research questions; question designing is also a vital part of the discussion in this part; concept on how to design in qualitative research is well elaborated; concept on ethical considerations are brilliantly shown too; how and when to use existing literature; theories, theoretical literature; empirical and methodological literature and how to search for literature, how to enter the field and make access to institution and participants; very well interpreted on strategies to gain access to field for research study; furthermore discussed on the ways of qualitative research sampling method in-depth; concept on data triangulation in terms of how to do it is also well explained. In brief, overall research design is well interpreted in this part.

Part 3 entitled "Verbal Data" covers from chapter fourteen to seventeen and reveals on practical issues relevant for conducting qualitative research. This part discussed concept on verbal data in terms of its types, aims and targets. Similarly, concept on interview in qualitative research well presented. Concept on what makes narratives, focus group explained Characteristics is well explained, possible approaches for verbal data collection interpreted in a meaningful way, different types of conducting interviews like: focused interview group interview, semi-standardized, ethnographic interview, problem-centered interview, online interview, narrative interview; and the ways to analyze interview are explained in depth, strategies to use narrative data are described.

Part 4 entitled "Data Beyond Talk" ranges from chapter eighteen to twenty-two examined on how the data can be collected beyond talk. Observation, visual data and some related documents made a significant place in qualitative research that is well explained in this part; different ways of data collection and analysis process are explained in terms of collecting data through offline and online along with each method's advantages and disadvantages, data collection strategies through interview, using documents, field notes, analysis of even a document like websites; and also discussed on social media and digital data in terms of how social media like facebook, youtube, twitter, blogs can be used for studying social issues with qualitative method.

Part 5 entitled "Texts as Data in Qualitative Research" ranges from chapter twenty –three to twenty-eight discussed on qualitative data analysis in terms of establishing relevant theoretical insights from the collected data and further text produced after analyzing. In-depth analyzing concepts are explained like: data management, transcription, coding, thematic coding, naturally occurring data, and also discussed on using software for qualitative data analysis. In brief, this part of the book explained on analyzing data in qualitative research.

Part six of the book ranges from chapter twenty-nine to thirty-one where there is a discussion on the use of traditional quality criteria along with some alternative criteria; and there was also a discussion on the ways of answering questions of quality in qualitative research. Furthermore, there is an explanation of how to make reporting of the conducted research; and finally, chapter 31 provided with outlining for qualitative research in terms of its further development in the future.

Perceptions on the strengths and weakness of the book.

This book presented comprehensive ideas on conducting qualitative research. The ideas presented brilliantly in simple and understandable language. Chapter contents, objectives are well illustrated that provided the readers with an idea of the intended things to be discussed in the particular chapter. Checklist provided in every chapter reinforces readers' level of understanding of the particular discussed contents of the chapter. Features of qualitative research, ethical consideration, data collected methods, techniques are well elaborated too. This book is beneficial for novice researchers, experienced quantitative researchers who aimed of conducting qualitative research and even for the experienced qualitative researcher this book is a toolkit as it guides the whole process of conducting qualitative research in a comprehensive way. However, I found only one weakness that is t data analysis technique in qualitative research should be more elaborated in terms of giving a comprehensive effect. Apart from this only one weakness I found many strengths of this book; and I recommend this book to the ones who have interest for conducting qualitative research.

The reviewer: Pushpa Priya is Mphil Scholar, Kathmandu University, and Lecturer of English at Global College of Management and Samriddhi College. She is Columnist of English National Daily such as "The Himalayan Times" and "The Rising Nepal". Her research interests are: educational leadership, psychological well-being, public speaking and emotional intelligence.

POPULAR ELT BLOGS

1. EFL Magazine - The Magazine for English Language Teachers

Japan 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. Link: eflmagazine.com

A. Five Icebreaker Activities for EFL Students

EFL Magazine - The Magazine for English .. by Hall Houston

At the beginning of a course, students are often meeting each other for the very first time. Therefore, it's advisable to use icebreakers or "getting to know you" activities, so that students can become more familiar with each other and get along better as the course progresses. The activities featured in this article enable students to find out what they have in common with classmates, as well as help students feel comfortable communicating in English.

For more icebreakers, read the article "My Favorite Icebreaker Activities for New University Classes" by Tory Thorkelson

1. **Write on the board a selection of six or seven topics** for students to discuss (for example, your favorite animal, a movie you saw recently, your idol or favorite celebrity, your favorite color, what you like to do in your free time, where you like to go on Saturday, the last book you read). Students choose three topics and write on a small slip of paper three sentences related to the topics. You may wish to provide some examples before they get started writing. Give them a few minutes to write. Next, collect the papers. Choose one slip at random. Read out the three sentences on the slip of paper, and ask students to guess who wrote it. Next, get the author to identify him or herself. Ask the student a question about his/her answers. Then, ask a different student to ask the writer a question about one of the sentences. Repeat a few more times with different slips of paper.

2. **Ask students to each write a short paragraph introducing themselves.** Give them a few areas to focus on, such as their personality, hometown, family, interests, and goals for the future. When everyone's finished writing, put students into pairs and ask them to swap papers and read their partner's paragraph. After reading, they should ask each other questions to get more information. Finally, students work in groups of four and introduce each other.

3. **Hand a student a pen.** The student writes one of his interests on the board (for example, a sport, a hobby, his favorite band, his favorite celebrity). Next, he hands the pen to another student, who writes one of her interests. Repeat until there are at least ten items on the board. Ask a few students who didn't write anything on the board questions about the topics, such as:

   "What do you think of…?"

   "What's your opinion of…?"

   "What do you know about…"

   "How do you feel about…?"

   or perhaps "What's one fact you know about…?"

   or even "What's something you can't stand about…?"

   Next, students talk about the topics in small groups.

4. **Prepare seven incomplete sentences** that students can finish with their own information, such as:

   After class, I like to _____.

   When I'm very angry, I usually _____.

   Even though I'm a _____ person, sometimes I can be extremely _____.

   Something not many people know about me is _____.

   If I have some extra money, I like to spend it on _____.

   Three things I like about this city are _____.

   _____ is the most unique person in my family, because _____.

   In class, read the incomplete sentences aloud as students write them. Repeat each sentence a couple of times. Afterwards, write the partial sentences on the board so students can check their work. Next, give students a few minutes to complete the sentences with their own information. Finally, students work in small groups to discuss their sentences and ask questions to get more information about each other.

5. **Write five conversational questions.** Here are some examples, or you can substitute them with your own ideas.

   "What's your favorite smell?"

   "How much money do you usually spend over the weekend?"

   "Where do you usually go on Friday night?"

   "What is your least favorite vegetable?"

   "What are three goals you have for this year?"

   In class, choose a student to come to the front of the classroom. This student will ask you the questions and you answer them. After the student has finished, thank her and ask her to return to his seat. Next, ask the class if they can recall the questions. Write them on the board as the students say them, correcting when necessary. Put students into groups of four or five to ask each other these questions.

   If you enjoyed reading this article, please take a look at my new book from iTDi Publishing, 101 EFL Activities for Teaching University Students:

   https://itdi.pro/community/publishing/101-efl-activities-for-teaching-university-students/

B. How to Choose ELT Coursebooks or Materials

EFL Magazine - The Magazine for English .. by Philip Pound

There are so many different coursebooks, worksheets and other resources available for teaching English nowadays; how can teachers or directors of study choose which ones to use?

Additionally, as other posts in EFL magazine have discussed, how can we use them most effectively? (See, for example, "Making the most out of your coursebooks" by Charlie Ellis.)

The best way to choose a set of ELT materials for use in your classes is to analyse and evaluate key features of the material to make an informed decision. In this article, I want to share some advice on how to do this in a systematic way.

"Many evaluations are impressionistic, or are at best aided by an ad hoc and very subjective list of criteria." (Tomlinson, 2013: 24).

Of course, any evaluation is a judgement – in this case about a material's suitability –

and never entirely objective. To avoid basing judgement on a flick through a book and our gut feeling, it is helpful to come up with a system for analysis. In this way, we can make our evaluation more rigorous and reliable. This usually requires a set of criteria that we can use to make evaluative judgments based on our principles of what makes materials 'good.' These will include knowledge of the target audience, general points, more detailed elements, and thinking beyond the specific materials at hand.

What are your principles?

As a first step, teachers or materials evaluators need to be aware of their own beliefs about what makes for good teaching, what leads to learning, and therefore, what makes materials effective in general. These principles might be related to learning and SLA theories, and/or be based on what we have studied, read, or researched, and on our own experiences as teachers and learners. We need to aim to **make our beliefs transparent** to others, so they can understand how we are approaching the evaluation. Then, we can draw up focused criteria, to create, for example, a form that can be used to analyse points in a thorough and systematic manner and to serve as the basis for evaluation. And, because evaluating with this list of criteria shows our beliefs explicitly, it is also **good for professional development** because it means reflecting on our own principles and where they come from.

Kath Bilsborough has written several useful articles on discovering your own principles as a teacher and/or materials writer, for example this one for IATEFL's Materials Writing Special Interest Group entitled "More on emerging principles".

Who is the material for?

Before we move on to creating our criteria checklist to analyse a material, we need to be aware of the fact that we are usually not evaluating material in isolation, or in a vacuum. Instead, we are evaluating the effect it is likely to have on the learners and teachers who use it. Therefore, we need to know about those people and the kinds of contact they will have with the materials.

To be as specific as possible, our evaluations need to assess the suitability and effectiveness for certain learners in a certain context.

Regarding the learners, we need to know a whole range of things that will impact upon our evaluation of the material: How old are they? What level are they working at? For what goals or purposes do they need English? What are they interested in? What are their expectations and preferences for learning? What other languages do they speak that might influence their English? And so on.

We also need to know about the teacher(s) and their preferences, about class format,

and about what equipment and infrastructure is available to them. These factors form something of a reference point which takes account of the people and context, and they need to be kept in mind when we do our evaluative analysis.

What do we look at when evaluating materials?

In getting to the heart of the evaluative analysis the key question is: What is it that we look at when we evaluate a material?

For my trainee teachers, I group features to analyse and evaluate into **three categories.**

1) General points to evaluate

Firstly, a group of features that are quite general: we don't need to look too closely to judge these points. We can start with the overall **design**: Is it easy on the eye and will it appeal to the learners? For example, analytical points here might look at the amount of text, or the images: the number or type (for example – photos/cartoons), the representation of different social groups (professions, races, disabilities), the images' accessibility (colour schemes), and so on. You can then evaluate how suitable this makes the material, based on what we know about the specific learners and teachers.

We also need to judge whether the design and layout are logical to follow and not confusing. This is linked to overall **clarity**: Is everything clear – the order, the instructions, the language input? Note that 'clear' is not a good criterion for analysis. Instead, we should aim to first define measurable criteria on aspects that contribute to clarity. For example, are symbols or numbering systems used, and are they consistent? When it comes to evaluating clarity, we also need to consider whether the input and the explanations are comprehensible for the level, and so need to analyse specific markers of this.

Naturally, we will also want to look at what type of **content** and input there is. For example, what Englishes are used/presented? What topics or input sources are included? How are they presented and approached? Is it mainly text based or does the material work with other media, such as videos or audios? If so, where are these found – CDs, online? Our tool will need to include concrete measurable items to analyse these aspects.

The last point in this first category is what kinds of **activities** there are; we can analyse the constellations of working (individually, pairs, groups), or numbers and sequencing of closed or open-ended exercises. This can help us to evaluate whether the content and activities are repetitive or varied, whether they target different thinking skills, and in general, whether they fulfil our criteria for effective materials.

In sum, in this category, you are evaluating overall whether the material looks and seems like something that you deem "good/effective" in general, based on your principles of what makes for good teaching, and what leads effectively to learning.

2) Digging deeper into materials evaluation

Secondly, we have a group of aspects to evaluate that require us to look at the material more closely and to inspect things in more detail. These aspects are a bit more specific, and the evaluations will depend more on the particular context that you are thinking of using the materials in.

For me, the most important facet here is the material's **relevance** to the learners and the course context. This means considering the points from above on the learners' needs, goals, interests, ages, etc. For an evaluative analysis, it helps to think about how you can match features of the material to characteristics of the learner group and context. For example, if it's a conversation class for learners wishing to holiday in Australia, how relevant is a material on writing business emails?

In this category, we should also assess the **validity** of the language points, skills, and topics covered. Does everything logically relate to what the material and course are trying to achieve? And link this to the **viability** of the material and activities, and whether it seems likely that these are going to successfully generate the learning we're aiming for: are the learning objectives achievable with the input and activities in the material?

2a) Practical considerations for ELT materials

As a sub-category here, there are some concrete considerations regarding actually employing these materials in lessons. Thinking about practical **usability** in the context will mean considering whether the activities are intended for individual lessons or include group work, for example, or whether you will be able to manage to cover the material(s) in the time you have. Analytical questions here will include how many units or sections there are or how long the activities will take, which will then enable you to gauge whether this fits with the lesson format.

Within this list of practical considerations, we should also think about **teachability** and **flexibility**. Can the relevant teachers teach with the material, or does it not fit with their teaching approach, preferences, or classroom personality? A helpful point to analyse here is the guidance given for teachers; is there input on preparing lessons, running activities, and assessing learning using these materials and activities? And further, can the material be adapted for different groups of learners, local contexts, set-ups, learning preferences, and so on, if necessary? Is there guidance for teachers on how to do this?

As you can see, there are quite a few in-depth points to consider in this category. Still, many can be covered by yes/no or Likert-Scale points in our analytical tools. Moreover, these things are arguably more important than, for example, an appealing design. This is why I feel these points really form the heart of any evaluation.

3) Evaluating aspects beyond the materials

Finally, there are some aspects or considerations that move us further "off the page" so to speak: They require us to make calculations and judgments that go beyond the immediate use of the materials. We are still thinking about a particular context/group of learners, and attempting to assess how well accepted the materials will be, how learners will work and learn with them, and the less concrete outcomes of using these materials with these learners/in this context.

One facet here is **motivation**: will the materials motivate the learners to engage both cognitively and affectively, and thus be drawn into learning through active interaction with the materials? This is a hard aspect to break down into measurable criteria – but thinking back to the characteristics of the learners can help: If they're interested in different cultures and traditions, for example, then we could count how many are presented in the material.

Another factor is the level of **difficulty** and support. Ideally we want learners to be working in their zone of proximal development. This 'zone' is just a little bit above the level they are currently using English at, and so it needs materials that build up to a manageable challenge, supporting the learners in moving to the next step in their development – both linguistically and cognitively. This idea is from Vygotsky's constructivist theory, and you can read about how it can apply to ELT materials in Gargi Sarkar's post "Constructivist theory, connection and rubrics".

The aspects of motivation and difficulty are perhaps easier to define, and in my experience, likely to be linked to **personalisation**. So, an analytical point could ask whether there are opportunities for individual practice which allow learners to make connections to their own lives. Does the material enable users to personalise their own learning, the way they learn and activities they enjoy, according to their preferences?

The final consideration in this category takes us further "off the page" and looks beyond the course at hand: to the **long-term effects** of the material. This is hard to predict, but nonetheless worth considering: do the materials do what we need in the long term? For example, will working with these materials help learners to continue to learn after the lesson/course? Will they take something away that they can use in future?

Evaluative analysis: worth it in the end

Overall, what I aim to show my trainees and the readers of this article, is that a good materials evaluation is not something that can be done in a rush. There are quite a number of points that all deserve attention in any analytical tool or form we draw up as the basis for our evaluation. But I believe the time and thought that goes into looking at these aspects and applying our beliefs to them to formulate criteria with which we can set up a system to analyse materials evaluatively, is helpful for teachers' and directors of studies' professional awareness and development – as well as giving us a tool we can use over and over to evaluate teaching materials in a systematic, principled, thorough and reliable manner.

Over to you

What experience do you have with drawing up criteria for evaluating ELT materials? Is there anything you'd like to add to this list of points to consider?

The post How to Choose ELT Coursebooks or Materials appeared first on EFL Magazine.

2. ESL Podcast Blog

Los Angeles, California, US

ESLPod.com's English as a Second Language (ESL) Podcast is run by a team of experienced English as a Second Language professors with over 30 years of high school, adult, and university ESL teaching experience. This podcast aim is to make people learn English language.

Also in Language Learning Blogs, English Language Blogs. Link: eslpod.com/eslpod

Say It Right!

If you are looking for an easy, convenient way to improve your English, choose from more than 1800 daily and cultural English lessons with our Unlimited English Membership. One can listen to as many lessons as they want each month on dozens of different topics. Click on the link above for more information.

3. ELT planning

Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam

TEFL tips, ideas and thoughts from a developing teacher. Link: eltplanning.com

Try something new today!* Material design for beginners**

September 25, 2022 by Anka Zapart

One of my favourite EFL quotes is what Katherine Bilsborough started her presentation at TESOL Greece in 2019 that we, the teachers, we are all material writers. Because we simply are, all of us. Even if we don't ever produce a coursebook, even if we don't ever get to share ideas on our Instagram or in our blogs. Even if we never get to be famous and renowned, we produce materials for our students, day in day out.

If you want to read more about creating materials, don't forget to check Katherine's blog on material writing **here** and her interview with some great advice **here.**

In this post here, I would like to share some ideas from a low-key but an advanced material writer, hoping that my everyday material creation, design and adaptation might help some of my fellow material writers, those with less experience.

Why do teachers adapt, supplement and design?

Methodology aside, the very subjective and personal answer to this question is very easy: the students are boread, the teacher has noticed that something does not go as well as planned, the teacher has found something that they really want to use, the teacher does not like whatever is in the coursebook, the teacher is bored…

The three concepts to take into consideration: the material, the activity, the aim

The material aka the physical resource that we have at hand, the photograph, the drawing, the poster, the puppet, the flashcards, realia, the song.

The activity aka the game, the reading task, the matching activity, the odd one out, in other words – a set of instructions of how to do something.

The aim aka why we bother and what exactly we want to achieve.

The understanding what these three are (and what they are not) is the absolute first step in starting your own blazing career in material design because at the stage of creation these three can be the source of inspiration and, at the later stage of reflection and readjustment, one or two of these three will be the elements that can be tweaked and manipulated in order to perfect the initial desing.

This is why, in this particular post, I am going to share ideas that had their starting point in the material, the activity and the aim.

Example #1: the coursbook

Using the sample of the unit 1 from Superminds 5 published by Cambridge University Press **here**, page 1 (which is page 10 of the students' book).

The material here is an illustration, a scene from the Pompeii and three characters from the book, Patrick, Phoebe and Alex, a set of numbers and a set of words as well as the audio track which here is the list of words.

The activity is to listen and to repeat the words and to check with the partner.

The aim is for the students to become familiar with the key vocabulary in the unit and to be able to practise them before they move on to the following exercise which introduces the kids' first adventure as time travellers.

When we started to use it in class, I kept all of the coursebook material but I decided to adapt and to extend the original activity for my students (A2 level, aged 7-8-9 years old) seemed to be ready for a more challenging task that would involve more communication and language production. One of our favourite activities here is to play riddles in which the kids work in pairs and describe one of the items in the picture either by giving their definition (It is big, it is made of, it is used for) or by providing their location in the picture (It is behind Patrick).

This way the material and the aim stay the same and only the activity is slightly adapted.

Example #2: Own materials on Miro

This is a task that I designed for my 1-1 online student, aged 6 y.o. who cannot read yet.

The material here, created using Miro Board, is a picture of a tractor, a set of photos of animals, and a set of colourful cards with simple descriptions of animals.

The activity is a riddles game in which the teacher reads out the definitions of the animals in the order chosen by the student. The student listens and guesses the animals which is later revealed by the teacher.

The aim is to practise listening skills, to develop the ability to focus and to practise the names of animals. In the long run, this activity is used also to prepare the student to start producing similar riddles about a chosen animal.

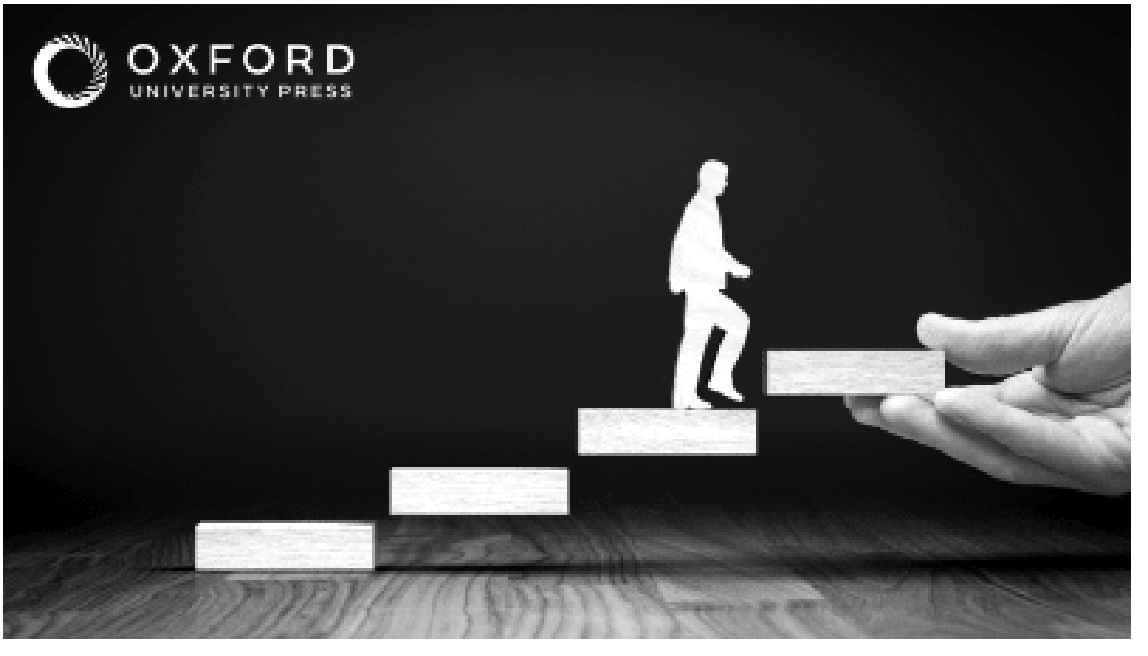
Now, the next step will be the three follow-up posts devoted to resources whose existance started from **finding a new material,** coming up with a new game or with a very specific aim for the lesson. Don't forget to check them out!

4. Oxford University Press | English Language Teaching Global Blog

Oxford, England, UK

Welcome to Oxford University Press Blog. This blog is intended for teachers, trainers, lecturers, authors and anyone else with an interest in keeping up with what's happening in the world of ELT and what we're up to. We'll bring you resources you can use in your classrooms, hints and tips for teaching, insights into the lives of publishers and authors. Link: oupeltglobalblog.com

Effective professional development for English language teachers



We all know good quality teaching leads to better learning outcomes. It's therefore in the interests of everyone involved in education, whether this be government authorities, schools, parents, or the students, that teachers are well prepared and practice professional development throughout their teaching careers. Effective professional development also contributes to better job satisfaction and is an important factor in teacher wellbeing. Despite this, English language teachers (EFL and ESL) are often left to navigate the professional development journey themselves and find the time to carry it out.

Considering both the importance of teacher professional development and the time constraints most teachers face, it needs to be as effective and time efficient as possible. Achieving this is no easy task because professional development is an ongoing and complex activity. But we're here to help, and have pulled together the following foundations of effective professional development.

Teacher choice

Every teacher will follow a unique professional development (PD) path because of differences in context, needs, interests, and opportunities. Teachers will need to reflect on their interests, what is relevant to current ministry/school requirements and their students' needs. Selecting topics is only one part of this process. There is also the question of what format or combinations of formats the professional development will take.

Teachers want PD to fit their individual needs, so offering one "model" of professional learning doesn't work. The scope of professional learning can be limitless. It can be a podcast a teacher listens to on the way to work, or a blog read during a lunch break. It can be the professional learning network you follow on Twitter or other social media channels, or it could be a talk at a conference or online event. Professional development should focus on active learning and regular self-reflection on pedagogical practices, professional needs and student needs.

The points below illustrate some of the available options:

- Bite-sized vs. in-depth content
- Text vs. multimedia
- Face-to-face vs. online
- Live vs. on demand
- At the level of one's own institution vs. international events

Our research shows that 85% of teachers say that their own personal interest in a topic was the most important factor in choosing professional development. You can access professional development on a wide range of topics and in a variety of formats **on our**

PD homepage, allowing you to find the most relevant and practical resources for you.

Practical and classroom-based

Effective professional development is always linked to the workplace. For teachers, this means it should be both practical and classroom-based. Teachers are sometimes reluctant to try new ideas because they are unsure how to implement them and because of the frustration they report when things don't work as planned. The route to being the best possible teacher is through incremental steps.

Once a teacher has decided what changes they would like to make, they should try out small practical changes, and reflect on what happens to identify what does and does not work well. Any time something is less than successful, this should be seen as a learning opportunity rather than a failure. The best learning comes from reflecting on why things worked differently from what was expected.

Our research shows that 77% of teachers want new ideas, tips and inspiration that they can link to their classroom practice. OUP works with leading researchers and practitioners to empower the global ELT community to teach and learn in the most successful way. **Our expert guidance** advises on the key issues shaping language education today and offers a wealth of insights to power your teaching.

Discussion and collaboration

Teachers should be constantly reflecting on what is happening in their classes and looking for ways to improve. However, this is often a richer and more rewarding experience when teachers discuss and collaborate with other colleagues and share new ideas and insights. While this can potentially be time-consuming, it is typically time well spent. This can be done at the level of the teacher's own institution and can include observing others and working on team teaching projects. Teachers should also be encouraged to engage in discussions with teachers outside their institutions.

Teachers can also benefit from connecting with teachers outside their institutions. Online events and communities are often the most effective avenues, allowing teachers to connect with a global community of educators. Thousands of English language teachers across the globe learn and share new ideas and engage in discussion on our social media channels and at our live events.

Reflection

As has been mentioned in the three previous sections, reflection is an integral part of professional development. Teachers need to reflect on their needs and interests when choosing a pathway. They need to reflect on how ideas can be put into their classes.

Then once having tried things in the classroom, think about how successful or not their actions have been, while at the same time seeing all results as learning opportunities. Teachers should also not struggle on their own but use discussion and collaboration as opportunities to take their professional development in new directions.

So, there you have it. Four considerations that are the foundations of a self-directed approach to effective professional development: teacher choice, practical and classroom-based formats, discussion and collaboration, and taking the time to reflect on your needs and interests.

We hope this has given you plenty of inspiration and some resources to help build your own PD journey.

Using Classroom Presentation Tools to deliver engaging lessons

Since I started this beautiful journey as a teacher, I knew it was going to be a great challenge. We all know that we must spend a lot of time planning classes that keep our students engaged and motivated. During these twenty years teaching, I have witnessed all the changes and advances in English Language Teaching, from working with tape recorders, using only print books, and designing materials to fit the right level to all the fantastic classroom presentation tools we have today.

Classroom Presentation Tools have come to make our lives easier. We need to take advantage of all the benefits we get from them. They help us create an interactive learning experience, deliver engaging lessons and save time when planning. What are those features that make Oxford University Press' Classroom Presentation Tools unique? Well, grab yourself a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy this tour.

Let's start with the amazing Oxford English Hub, where you can now access Classroom Presentation Tools for our best-selling international courses. Along with accessing Classroom Presentation Tools, Oxford English Hub provides one place for easy access to ALL your digital course materials, for every step of the teaching journey. With interactive content and smart tools to save your time, and integrated professional development tailored specifically to your course, to support your teaching.

Let's take a closer look at the features of Classroom Presentation Tools. Although all of them are important and useful, we are going to highlight five of them:

1. Embedded audio and video

All audio tracks and videos are just one click away and embedded in the right place in the Student Book or Workbook. The audio player provides great listening practice! You can adjust the speed of the track to support your students when they don't understand or challenge them to listen to it faster. With the AB loop, you can select one specific part to play on repeat.

The video player supports your teaching by showing students the use of the language they are learning. One recommended strategy is to play it without sound first to make your students guess what is happening and help activate their schemata about the topic. Some videos have the script embedded in them to use them for role plays or discussion.

2. Focus

Focus is an effective tool to help students concentrate on one task at a time and make it easier to answer in class. By opening an exercise full-screen, it allows you to project one activity and not the whole page. Within this tool, you have access to all the other necessary tools such as Draw and Highlight, Check Answers, Show Answers, and the audio and video players.

3. Show answers tool

Most of the time, the answers to all exercises are in the Teacher's Guide. However, having them embedded in the CPT saves you a lot of time! You can show all the answers at once by clicking on the big eye or request individual answers at the small eye. It will help students to check, correct and review their answers.

4. Notes tool

One way to use the Notes tool is to write or record reminders for your classes. However, you could also use the Text Note to write instructions for specific tasks. You can substitute writing on the physical board, a platform board, or dictating. Alternating them is a way of breaking with the traditional way of teaching.

5. Switch books tool

Saving time has become a key element when planning and teaching your classes. In your planning and teaching, you may use two CPTs: one for the Student's Book, and one for the Workbook. The Switch books tool helps you change from one book to the other in one click in your CPT. Imagine that you assign an activity in the Student Book, and you'd like to complement it with the related pages or exercises in the Workbook. Simply click the link to switch to the relevant page of your second book. You can go back to your first book using the Switch book icon in the toolbar.

These are just five of many features you have in your Classroom Presentation Tools, available on Oxford English Hub. I'm sure you'll love them as much I do!

"Bring your coursebooks to life in the classroom. Simply present your learning resources on screen for highly engaging lessons either face to face or online."

ELT NEWS AND CONFERENCES

1. The 2023 AsiaTEFL International Conference

Asia TEFL officially announces **2023 Asia TEFL Hybrid International Conference** to be held on Aug. **17-20, 2023,** including one pre-conference day (Aug. 17) The conference theme is **"Celebrating ELT in Asia: Visions and Aspirations."** The call-for-presentation proposals will be posted here with more information of the conference soon.

We look forward to meeting you in Daejeon, S. Korea next August!

For more Information: https://www.asiatefl.org/

2. KOREA TESOL Conference

Korea TESOL International Conference
"Advancing Collaboration: Exchanges Among Scholars, Instructors & Students."
Hybrid (Seoul + Online)
April 29-30, 2023

Link for more information: https://koreatesol.org/ic2023

3. CLESOL Conference

CLESOL 2023

Wellington, New Zealand

September 29-30, 2023

Link for more information: https://www.clesol.org.nz/

4. AILA World Congress

AILA 2024 21st AILA World Congress
"Linguistic Diversity, Inclusion & Sustainability."
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
August 11-16, 2024

Link for more information: https://aila2024.com/

5. Asia-Pacific ETT Conference

5th Asia-Pacific Conference on Education, Teaching and Technology 2023, Bangkok, Thailand

20th to 21st July 2023

Website: https://educationconference.info/asia-pacific

Contact person: Dr. Prabhath Patabendi

You are invited to present your valuable research at the EduTeach2023. This two-day knowledge-building event is the premier forum for the presentation of new trends, advances and research results in the fields of Education & Technology.

Journal *of* NELTA

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.

Journal of NELTA Forum

- 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.

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. Manuscripts must be submitted as an email attachment accompanied by a well-written cover letter to the editorial address: 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 © and Ethics Guidelines

Ethics Guidelines

Ownership: Journal of NELTA is a premium journal owned by **Nepal English Language Teachers' Association** (NELTA), whose central office is located in Kathmandu, Nepal. It is distributed in print and electronic form to its members everywhere. The journal is read and contributed by ELT practitioners, ELT experts, teacher educators, and researchers in scores of countries. The Journal is double-blind, and peer-refereed. Each article published in the journal undergoes an initial review by the editors. If the editors decide that it fits within the guidelines outlined in the Manuscript Preparation and Submission Guidelines, then it is further peer-reviewed by at least two knowledgeable scholars in the field.

Plagiarism checks: All accepted articles undergo plagiarism checks. The similarity reports are then sent to the respective authors to address the plagiarism/paraphrasing/ citation issues. Only upon satisfactory revision, the manuscripts are accepted for publication.

Comments, complaints & queries: Authors, contributors, reviewers and readers are advised to address any comments, complaints, advice and queries concerning any issues including matters relating to the materials published in the Journal to the owner/ publisher, NELTA, and/or the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal whose contact details/ emails appear below:

Owner/Publisher: GPO Box 11110, Kathmandu, Nepal, Phone: 977-1-44720455 E-mail: ccnelta@gmail.com

Editor-in-Chief: neltaeditorialboard@gmail.com.

Privacy Statement: The names and email addresses entered in this journal site will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party.

Publication ethics: For queries, complaints and appeals related to the matters published in the Journal, or any matters related to ethics or ethic guidelines, such as unethical practices in collecting information, data and materials to prepare manuscripts for the journal, please contact the publisher or the editor-in-chief. A response will be sent to the inquirer immediately and actions as appropriate will be taken.

Handling Complaints and Appeal Process: NELTA in consultation with the NELTA Editorial Board will review and approve any amendments to published articles (retractions, withdrawals, expressions of concern), advise on publication ethics issues, establish and implement ethical policies, and support investigations of ethical concerns affecting the Journal. In case of complaints, a team of 2-3 members is formed and made responsible for investigating or supporting the investigation and resolution of ethical issues in assigned areas. The team is accountable and provides advice to the Central Committee of NELTA.

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 double-blind **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, Sociolinguists, 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.

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. 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.

- **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 7th 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. RECOMMENDED REFERENCE STYLE – APA 7th

Reference list

Make sure to:

- Start the list on a new page before any tables, figures or appendices.
- Arrange alphabetically.
- Include all authors (up to 20) in each reference.
- Include author initials after surnames, and a comma between all authors.
- Always use "&" between the last two authors. Author, A. A., & Author, B. B.
- Use a hanging indent: Mac: cmnd + t or PC: ctrl + t
- Include DOIs for journals and books when available. Do not place a full stop after the DOI.

Commonly asked questions:

I can't find the date for my reference?
Use n.d. instead of a year.

What is a DOI?
DOI stands for digital object identifier, it is a unique location for digital documents.

Can I abbreviate a long organisation name?

- **Names in the reference list should not be abbreviated. However, you may abbreviate long names in-text.**
- **First time in-text: (University of Technology Sydney [UTS], 2019) or University of Technology Sydney (UTS, 2019)**
- **Later in-text (can use either format): UTS (2019) or (UTS, 2019)**

In-text

1 author
(Smith, 2020) or Smith (2020)

2 authors
(Gu & Lin, 2018) or Gu and Lin (2018)

3+ authors
(Patel et al., 2009) or Patel et al. (2009)

Citing multiple works
(Aziz, 2013; Keller, 1999; Saito, 2000)
Arrange alphabetically by surname.

Same author, same date
(Mckie, 2020a) and (Mckie, 2020b)

Source citing another source
(Rabbit, 1982, as cited in Chan, 2019)
Place the 2nd source in your Ref. List.

Quoting

You must supply a page number or paragraph number when directly quoting from a source:

"Direct quote" **(Hopwood, 2017, p. 98)**
"Long quote" **(Su, 2019, pp. 87–88)**
"No page quote" **(Cruz, n.d., para. 2)**

Books

Whole book
Author, A. A. (Year). *Title* (edition). Publisher.

Brown, L. S. (2018). *Feminist therapy* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association.

Chapter in an edited book
Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of chapter. In E. E. Editor & F. F. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (edition, page range). Publisher.

Balsam, K. F., & Martell, C. R. (2019). Affirmative cognitive behaviour therapy with sexual and gender minority people. In G. Y. Iwamasa & P. A. Hays (Eds.), *Culturally responsive cognitive behaviour therapy: Practice and supervision* (2nd ed., pp. 287-314). American Psychological Association.

Online book
Author, A. (Year). *Title*. Publisher. DOI/URL

Baker, K. G. (2019). *Anatomy quizbook: For students studying or intending to study medicine*. University of Technology Sydney ePress. https://doi.org/10.5130/978-0-9945039-3-0

Articles

Journal article (1 author)
Author, A. (Year). Article Title. *Journal Title, volume*(issue), page range. DOI

Alderton, Z. (2014). "Snapewives" and "Snapeism": A fiction-based religion within the Harry Potter fandom. *Religions, 5*(1), 219-267. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel5010219

Journal article (2+ authors)
Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Article Title. *Journal Title, volume*(issue), page range. DOI

Gursoy, A., Wickett, K., & Feinberg, M. (2018). Understanding tag functions in a moderated, user-generated metadata ecosystem. *Journal of Documentation, 74*(3), 490–508. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-09-2017-0134

News article (online)
Author, A. (Year, Month Day). Title. *Newspaper*. DOI/URL

Darby, A. (2004, August 10). Furious Butler quits as governor. *Sydney Morning Herald*. http://www.smh.com.au.articles/2004/08/09/1092022411039

Commonly cited

Webpage (individual author)
Author, A. (Year, Month Day). *Title of webpage*. Title of Website. URL

Taylor, B. (2019, September 27). *Small grants make a big difference in mental health*. NSW Health. https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/Pages/20190927_00.aspx

Webpage (organisational author)
Organisation. (Year, Month Day). *Title of webpage*. Title of Website (if different from the Organisation). URL

Queensland Health. (2018, October 30). *Cancer screening*. https://health.qld.gov.au/public-health/cancer-screening

Report (organisational author)
Organisation. (Year). *Title of report* (Report number). Publisher Name (if different from the Organisation). DOI/URL

National Cancer Institute. (2018). *Facing forward: Life after cancer treatment* (NIH Publication No. 18-2424). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health. https://www.cancer.gov/publications/patient-education/life-after-treatment.pdf

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

I. A suggestive book review structure:

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