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In this issue of Journal of NELTA, we publish 12 interesting and thought-provoking articles and research reports. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing confusion of whether or not the Journal would be published this year, we have had a number of submissions from Africa, Australia, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Japan, the UK, and Nepal. These 12 articles, which are among the 25 percent of the submissions selected carefully from our rigorous peer-review processes, address a wide range of topics. Promoting critical thinking has become an important aspect of English language teaching. Iram Mehrin explores if and to what extent classroom activities on culture can work as effective incentives in promoting critical thinking in Bangladeshi tertiary level English language classes. Email communication between students and teachers has become a common practice. But is there a standard for writing emails? Are there rules students must follow for writing emails? Do the native English students and non-native students write emails differently? These are some of the questions Shama E Shahid explores in her article. Pointing out a dearth of research on such a practice, she examines the formal email writing conventions of non-native students under a regulated environment. Staying in Bangladesh, Arpita Haque looks into the influence of English on the local languages, especially Bangla. She finds out the attitudes of the English medium (EM) students and their parents towards Bangla and English and explores the issue of the hegemony of English in relation to the Bangla language and culture.

Suman Laudari and Julia Prior’s article is significant in that it provides insights into the teacher-educators’ competency in the use of educational technology and how the lack of such competency potentially impacts the ICT practices of trainee-teachers. The article points out some valuable implications for various stakeholders of educational technology in contexts like Nepal. Tied to the ICT practices, especially in the existing pandemic situation is Karuna Nepal and Saban Kumar KC’s article. COVID-19 pandemic has thrust virtual teaching and learning. But are we exacerbating inequalities between well-resourced and under-resourced people, institutions, and geographical location? Karuna Nepal attempts to address this question in her very timely article.

Qualitative research is still at its initial stage in many contexts. Many researchers, particularly, novice researchers have to deal with numerous issues while analysing qualitative data. Saraswati Dawadi offers practical guidelines to ELT practitioners and/or early career researchers on how a thematic analysis approach is employed to interpret raw data. This article is a useful contribution to those who are engaged in qualitative research.
In addition, there are three articles that look into three different, nonetheless, important areas of classroom practices. Nani Babu Ghimire explores multiliteracies pedagogy practices in Nepal and finds answers to why teachers engage in a bilingual practice when they should be creating multilingual space for student learning. Similarly, ELT practitioners in many developing countries are catching up with critical pedagogy. Purna Kadel looks into the reasons why. He explores teachers’ perception of the existing practices of critical pedagogy and investigates how they view its usefulness in the Nepalese ELT classrooms. Central to the effective implementation of classroom practices is teacher-language. Kamal Kumar Poudel takes a grounded approach – describe- analyse and evaluate, to study ‘teacher English’ of content teachers at a reputable institution in the Kathmandu Valley. He begins by diagnosing and analysing the actual state of their teacher English before analysing it in terms of the grounded theory and interpreting it by linking it to some of the relevant studies. As an outcome, he produces an intervention which he plans to implement in order to ameliorate the situation in the said institution.

There are two articles on grammar and its teaching. Prithvi Raj Bhatt explores the role of grammar in EFL as perceived by the secondary teachers of English, and finds out the ways in which they develop accuracy, fluency, and restructuring in their student language, J. Saravanan and B. Laxmikantham find out the difficulties in learning and using the preposition combinations. They analyse the causes of such errors, and recommend implications for students, teachers and materials developers. Finally, in the Journal of NELTA Forum, Jagadish Poudel looks into the current North American theory of teaching philosophy to examine his own. He makes a statement of his own teaching philosophy, his evolving beliefs towards teaching writing, and his personal approach to teaching writing which are likely to inspire readers to explore and examine their own teaching philosophies.

This issue is the Silver Jubilee edition of the Journal of NELTA. In order to commemorate the occasion, a piece of history is provided here. As the reader would be aware, NELTA was formed in 1992. Though we intended to publish a journal, we did not have enough resources to do so at that time. Therefore, we started with the publication of the NELTA Newsletter. The first issue of the Newsletter appeared in 1993.
As it can be seen, the very first issue of the Newsletter provided a background of the formation of NELTA, its major aims, information about the historic first formal meeting of NELTA which formed a three member-constitution drafting committee, and the support we received from the British Council Kathmandu and American Language Center, Kathmandu. The page also reveals that NELTA did not have its own post box at that time. The British Council kindly let us use their post box services.

The Newsletter published news about ELT activities in the country (above) and organised competitions among NELTA members for short articles on practical teaching ideas. The winning entries were published in the Newsletter (below).

The Newsletter also published information about forthcoming events (cited below):
The Newsletter also published information about forthcoming events (cited below):

The letters about conferences (cited below) and other seminars and workshops of NELTA were type-written, and/or hand-written and mostly hand-delivered. Only a limited number of letters were posted.

As for the publication of the Journal of NELTA, it was only in 1996, NELTA started publishing the Journal. In the first year, it published two issues (see below), but limited to one publication owing resource constraints.
I am thankful to my predecessors and their respective teams for bringing the Journal to its current state. The Journal is now known as a quality journal around the region and beyond and its popularity is growing by the day. I commend their contribution and support of the past editors-in-chief, NELTA presidents and advisors who the Journal is indebted to for their contribution, and whose guidance, advice and wisdom have helped develop and establish the Journal as an academic Journal in the region. On behalf of NELTA and the Journal of NELTA Editorial Team, I thank the following personalities for their chief-editorship.

- Ms. Jyoti Shrestha
- Mr. Chandika Prasad Bhatta
- Professor Govinda Raj Bhattarai
- Professor Jai Raj Awasthi
- Dr. Prithvi Narayan Shrestha
- Professor Vishnu Singh Rai

I also thank members of the editorial teams, and of reviewers’ panel whose roles are often misunderstood and their contributions are rarely acknowledged. I also thank the current Central Executive Committee of NELTA, NELTA President Motikala Subba Dewan in particular, for her unfailing support and encouragement.

Journal of NELTA, with a view to making its processes more consistent, transparent and manageable, is set to make changes in its manuscript accumulation, peer-review and editorial processes. This will help the Journal establish itself further as a quality journal. We thank the growing readership of the Journal and wish everyone a very productive year ahead.

Happy reading
The Editorial Team
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**From the ELT World**

**From the ELT World**

**Information about Journal of NELTA**

**Submission Guidelines for Journal of NELTA**
Promoting Critical Thinking through Cultural Topics in Bangladeshi Tertiary EFL Context

Iram Mehrin

Abstract
Promoting critical thinking among students has been a topic for extensive study for a long time. However, this is quite a new area of exploration and investigation in the Bangladeshi EFL context. This paper explores whether classroom activities on culture can work as effective incentives in promoting critical thinking in Bangladeshi tertiary level English language classes. Cultural topics were designed for the tertiary level English class and used accordingly for critical thinking in a class of 36 students in a private university of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Classwork and home assignments on different cultural topics were evaluated against a rubric of critical thinking, and at the end of the semester, an open-ended discussion-based interview was conducted. The gradual development of critical thinking among students was observed from the data gathered from both classes and interviews. Finally, the author presents implications for the EFL instructors, course designers, and book writers regarding the modifications required in the topics and teaching style to promote the development of critical thinking among the Bangladeshi tertiary level EFL students.

Keywords: Critical thinking, Culture, Bangladeshi EFL students, tertiary level.

Introduction
In today’s world, with all the advancements in communication and technology, thinking skills have become more significant in education than ever before. The sole idea of ‘global village’ entails tolerance, intercultural competence, and inter-community respect. With every technological step forward, critical careful evaluation has become more urgent. Critical thinking, as the name suggests, is reflecting critically on different aspects of a topic from many different points of view and angles. Paul and Elders (2002) define critical thinking as “the art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better: clearer, more accurate, more defensible” (p.316).

Amrous and Nejmaoui (2016) define critical thinking as:

being an intellectual activity of reasoning, critical thinking is the use of the cognitive skills of analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information in order to get clear, precise, and consistent thinking…. Finally, it is the type of thinking used in decision-making and problem-solving. (p.144).
Siegel (1985) notes critical thinking as an “educational ideal” (p.71) and further states that critical thinking prepares a learner to be autonomous, self-sufficient, and responsible for his/her adult life and socio-cultural contexts which denotes that this is a skill significantly important for adult learners who are engaged in real-life problems; hence, this is an inevitably necessary skill to develop at tertiary educational contexts.

Ministry of Education of Bangladesh (2019) emphasizes that education needs to be “pragmatic, productive and creative with a view to bringing about changes” and that it should foster “tolerance of one another’s views and help develop life-oriented, realistic and positive attitude”. Although, there is no explicit mention of critical thinking in the 12 objectives of education, the components of critical thinking, as the ones mentioned above, can be found among them. However, in teaching, it is considered a new area of exploration in Bangladesh. It is even more so in the EFL context. Few studies have been conducted to evaluate the level of critical thinking of Bangladeshi EFL learners or to suggest ways or techniques to promote and improve critical thinking in English language classes.

For this reason, the author of the paper designed class materials for 36 students enrolled in a fundamental English language course in a private university in Bangladesh to practice and explore critical thinking. As these lessons were prepared for skill-based classes, it was possible to incorporate issues related to intercultural competence and cultural habits, biases, or practices due to the fluidity of topics to promote the four skills of English. The topics were contextualized and target culture topics were incorporated with native culture ones to enable students to analyze, compare-contrast, describe, and above all, explore culture from a critical point of view.

The author decided to use cultural topics like these have the potential to be used for debate, discussion, and reflection and will ensure spontaneous participation from students; thus, enhancing their motivation to work both in and out of the class which will not only ensure their continuous involvement and practice but also enable them to grow better at thinking critically.

Theoretical framework

The author uses the revised version of Bloom’s Taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) which is titled 21st century Bloom’s Taxonomy as the theoretical framework of this research. In this revised version, the six stages are as following:

Stage one: Remembering (instead of Knowledge) where students remember the topics learned

Stage two: Understanding (instead of comprehension) where students show a complete understanding of the concepts learned

Stage three: Applying (instead of Application) where students apply the concepts understood and recalled previously to new situations
Stage four: Analysing (instead of Analysis) where students analyse the small parts to understand the assumptions and grow the awareness towards patterns and theories

Stage five: Evaluation (instead of Synthesis) where students critically value something to provide opinions, recommendations or assessment

Stage six: Creating (instead of Evaluation) where students create new ideas by using the five previous stages together.

The rubric used was an adapted version of the ‘Depth of Reflection Rubric’ by McBride (2010). The following Table 1 shows the adapted rubric that was used to evaluate the students in this study-

**Table 1:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of rubric [adapted and abridged from McBride (2010)]</th>
<th>Name of the level</th>
<th>Actions evaluated</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st-2nd level (no name)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only description or narration of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd level</td>
<td>Technical Rationality</td>
<td>Describing/ labeling events with terminologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th level</td>
<td>Descriptive Rationality</td>
<td>Expressing personal perspective about a practice, product or perspective (3P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th level</td>
<td>Dialogic Reflection</td>
<td>Including multiple perspectives while describing a practice, product, or perspective (3P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th level</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Showing changes in perspective or thinking; acknowledging the differences with respect and reason.</td>
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</table>

This rubric was personalized using Bloom’s Taxonomy. The first two stages in Bloom’s Taxonomy- Remembering and Understanding were conjoined and narrowed down into the activity of identifying the terminologies and the situations discussed in the class (the 3rd level in the rubric). This stage is titled ‘Technical Rationality’ which shows students’ awareness of the concepts discussed in the class and their ability to identify and label those with terminologies. Stage 3 Applying and Stage 4 Analyzing from Bloom’s Taxonomy were narrowed down to the activities of the 4th level of Descriptive Rationality and 5th level of Dialogic Reflection. These two stages were involved when students in the EFL classes incorporated multiple perspectives with their own interpretation of a situation in their classwork and homework. The Stage 5 Evaluation and the Stage 6 Creating are joined in the 6th level ‘Critical Reflection’ where students evaluate their present beliefs and create a new perception of their everyday realities. The rubric was adapted this way to make it appropriate for the 3rd semester.
EFL students. The number of classes was another reason why the author needed to abridge the rubric since including all the levels and skills would be impractical for the class in question.

**Critical thinking and its significance**

There have been a number of studies and debates on the importance of teaching critical thinking skills in the United States (US). For instance, Halpern & Riggio (2003) cite the National Commission on Excellence in Education which claims that the United States is in peril for being unable to teach thinking skills to its students which according to the commission is “the most essential component of education” (p. 1983). A substantial number of studies show that majority of the teachers, employers and general public in the US perceive critical thinking as one of the most important goals of education (DeAngelo, Hurtado, Pryor, Kelly, Santos, & Korn, 2009; Bok, 2006; Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), 2013; Northeastern University Survey, 2013).

Brookfield (1987) defines critical thinking with five primary themes which indicate that critical thinking entails innovation, productivity, and creativity in thinking. Brookfield (1987) further explains the main components of critical thinking among which the most important is recognizing and questioning the ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions. The other components are an awareness of the context and its influence on us, the application of multiple perspectives in our daily thinking, and lastly, ‘reflective skepticism’ which entails being dubious of any idea or fact which is strongly accepted and supported by the context in which the critical thinker is.

The definition by Paul and Elders (2002), which defines critical thinking as “the art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking” (p.316) also points to the fact that critical thinking is a continuous conscious process; thus, is teachable and learnable with steady practice.

Critical thinking is, indeed, the most significant part of an education system irrespective of countries and communities. Multiple studies are demonstrating that students need critical thinking for real-world problem solving and to be more effective thinkers (Stein, Hynes, Redding, Harris, Tylka & Lsic, 2010; Bok, 2006; Halpern, 2001). However, in Bangladesh, critical thinking is still a quite new area of teaching and learning. Although this is a skill without which learners miss ‘the essential component of education’, there has been no government official study investigating the present level or scenario of critical thinking among Bangladeshi learners nor is it mentioned or emphasized explicitly in the educational objectives provided by the Ministry of Education in 2019. This condition largely suggests that without explicit teaching and emphasis on critical thinking, it is unlikely that Bangladeshi students would possess the competence of this skill. This situation indicates the importance of teaching critical thinking for enabling students to be better thinkers and able performers.
What is culture?

Frank (2014) describes culture using a 3P model where the 3P’s stand for ‘Perspective’, ‘Practice’ and ‘Product’. The perspective stands for the thoughts, beliefs and values of members of a culture; practices stand for the ways these members connect, interact and share information with each other; and finally, products stand for all sorts of tangibles and intangibles created, distributed and inherited by the members (Frank, 2014). Frank’s (2014) 3P division can be aided with Hall’s (1976) analogy of ‘cultural iceberg’ in which the tip of the iceberg signifies the products of cultures which are readily visible or perceivable by the senses whereas the submerged part of the iceberg is the bigger, hidden and deeper part of the culture which embodies practices and perspectives that underlie every aspect of a culture.

Brooks (1969) divides culture into five types and the fourth type is titled ‘patterns for living’. He defines the fourth type of culture as a model of living, acting and thinking for human being where the members are supposed to or “expected” to think, believe, say, do, eat, wear, pay, endure, resent, honor, laugh at, fight for, and worship, in typical situations’ in a typical manner (Brooks, 1968).

Critical thinking and the relation of culture and language

It is quite evident from the definitions that culture is an almost all-encompassing aspect of human life and language is the medium of expressing this culture. Several studies have demonstrated how language and communication portray not only the visible sides, but also the deeply rooted invisible sides of culture (Levinson, 2003; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Geng, 2010; Xiangyang, 2016). As culture is often embedded in our actions and thoughts, being aware of that actively needs practice and critical thinking is one way to develop this skill. In foreign language classes, foreign as well as the native culture of the learners can be good resources to exercise and improve critical thinking; thus, enabling learners to gain multi-fold benefits: the practice of the target language, being aware of the cultural bindings and above all, be a critical thinker which is a ubiquitous skill for continuous development of the self.

Martinez and Nino (2013) emphasized certain tasks that have the quality to enable students to exercise critical thinking, and they included topics related to socio-cultural issues like ‘injustice, inequality, discrimination, manipulation, coercion, oppression, and exclusion, among others’ (p.21). They further postulate that these issues make learners reflect, observe, examine, and posit solutions to the problem.

Lu (2013) investigates the teaching of critical thinking with intercultural topics in a Taiwanese Medical University and explores ‘an intercultural approach, in which a ‘Self’ encounters an ‘Other’, and an understanding of ‘the difference’ between them emerges (p.8)’. Brookfield (1987) argues that adult behavior, norms, values and beliefs change from culture to culture and while we take these norms and traditions for granted in our childhood, we start to question and analyze these with adulthood and the emerging critical sense with it. He further emphasized on learning about oneself labeling it as
the most significant learning which enables one to question those culturally embedded ideas that control and guide one’s life. Thus, it is evident that Brookfield focused on the utilization of critical thinking in understanding and analyzing culture which, according to him, provides multiple opportunities to exercise critical thinking. Guo (2013) examines how deep culture influences thinking style and shapes or determines critical thinking in the Chinese EFL context.

There are many studies where researchers used critical thinking as a tool to teach different skills of English. For example, Bataineh & Alqatnani (2017) investigate the role of critical thinking maps to promote critical reading in Jordanian EFL classes. Xu (2011) also formulated a model for applying critical thinking to teach English reading in EFL classes. Mehta and Al-Mahrouqi (2014) explore how to teach critical thinking with contextualized discussions and subsequent writing. Asraf, Ahmed, and Eng (2018) described how guided and focused free-writing in the pre-writing stage can foster critical thinking and enable students to formulate ideas more proficiently.

This considerable amount of works linking critical thinking, culture, and ESL/EFL confirms that it is high time to conduct research like this in Bangladesh as well. To that end, this research work was undertaken to explore critical thinking in tertiary language classes.

**Methodology**

This article follows a qualitative method. The research is conducted on 36 Bangladeshi tertiary-level 3rd semester students of the course ‘ENG 102- Fundamentals of English-I’ in a private university of Bangladesh. For data triangulation, multiple instruments were used: lesson-plans to promote critical thinking in-class activities and a semester-end focus group interview.

**Sample**

The author conducted a purposive sampling to choose this course (ENG 102) as these students have completed the Essential English (ELL 099) and Basic English (ENG 101) courses before appearing for this course and now on an average, hold a quite homogenous and better competence (not all though) than the students of the two previously mentioned courses. There were 20 male and 16 female students all of whom are learning English as a foreign language and they are aged between 19-21 years. The sample size was kept small intentionally to gather insightful data and to conduct a rigorous study (Creswell, 2015, p. 208).

At the beginning of the semester, they were informed about the author’s intention of conducting this research with adequate information and the fact that the author respected their right to not take part in it. It was also clarified that students who opt out would still have to take part in the classwork and homework designed for this research but those would be treated as regular classwork and not as the data for the research. With this knowledge, all 36 participants agreed to take part in the study and agreed
to be recorded without explicit mention of their actual names. Around the end of the semester, interviews were conducted with 15 students who volunteered to participate.

**Instrument: The lesson plans and classes**

There were 22 classes in the selected semester among which critical thinking is utilized in 10 classes.

In the first class, students were familiarized with the notions of culture and critical thinking. There were lessons on the 3p model of culture, superstitions, stereotypes and description vs. assumption. They were familiarized with the rubric about to be used to assess their performance. It was imparted precisely to students with examples that they need to describe events with terminologies, show their own as well as multiple perspectives and at the end of the work, reflect on the total process and try to find changes (if any) in their previously held beliefs or perspectives.

These concepts were used as topics for brainstorming, writing, sharing an opinion, discussion, presentation, and debate in these classes. There were take-home assignments as well. For example, in ‘Descriptive Writing’ class, students, in groups of 4-5, performed a guided analysis and presentation on a 3P model of culture of the university they are studying and the take-home assignment was to describe a 3P model of culture of their own homes.

Cultural bumps and intercultural competence were utilized in the ‘narrative paragraph’ class where one incident of conflict was narrated by each student from two perspectives: one his/her own and the other - of the person/s with whom she/he had the conflict. In this case, the micro-intercultural context was the focus. Superstition and stereotypes were incorporated in both listening and writing tasks. Students wrote ‘opinion paragraphs’ on these two notions where both of these topics promoted debates and discussions in the class. On superstition, they watched two videos on Indian and American superstitious practices and utilized the information to write a compare-contrast paragraph. At the end of the class, some of them shared their experiences of being compelled by various factors to abide by superstitious practices despite their disbelief.

A similar lesson was planned with ‘assumption versus description’ class. Students were shown pictures and were asked to describe those. Students, while describing, included plenty of assumptions about the persons or places in the pictures that were identified later and were used to direct attention towards the conjectured assumptions surrounding us.

The lesson in a narrative writing class and the lesson of using pictures to test assumption-these two ideas were adopted and contextualized from an online course the author took in 2017 titled “Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting” which was jointly organized by American English E-Teaching Program of the U.S. Department of State, FHI 360, and World Learning.
The Interview

The interviews comprised of three questions which were open-ended and discussion-based. It was a focus-group interview with three groups, each comprising of 5 students. The author followed the approach of the focus group as it yields detailed information from all the participants and it is one of the best instruments to gather shared or collaborative information from similar participants such as students from the same class (Creswell, 2015, p. 217). Students were informed in the class about the interview and about voluntary participation. An appointment was made for each group for the focus-group interview. With due permission, their responses were recorded. Students of the first group were labeled as P1 to P5, the second group as P6 to P10, and the third group as P11 to P15. Questions for the focused group interview were:

1) How would you describe these classes in terms of content and class-work/home-work? Can you share your opinion?

2) Have you learned anything about your way of thinking and interpreting that shocked/surprised you? If it is so, can you share that with us?

3) Do you think these lessons changed your thinking in ways? If yes, how?

They used both Bangla and English while replying and frequent code-switching and code-mixing occurred. For this reason, those parts were translated into English while transcribing.

Findings

The findings section is divided into two subsections to provide the information gathered through the two instruments: the course work (classwork, homework, etc.) and the focus group interview.

Findings from the classes

The classwork and homework findings are presented below in separate sub-sections according to the topics utilized to promote critical thinking.

Classes on the 3P Model of culture

The ‘Descriptive Paragraph’ on the 3p model of culture resulted in new insights for my students. One such example would be a paragraph from one student (S25) who wrote about a bronze spoon used every day in his house as a token of good luck and prosperity. Before this assignment on 3P Model, he claimed that he was unaware of this ‘metaphysical or supernatural’ quality of this spoon which is believed by most of his family members although he used it every day at the dining table. While presenting this, he also shared his own disbelief in such things but acknowledged that he would rather keep this spoon in the house than remove it. Findings from the written pieces and presentation show fulfillment of the following aspects of the rubric:
Table 2

The Findings from 3P lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Level name</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Technical Rationality</td>
<td>Students used terminologies of 3P: labeled actions at home and university as Cultural Practice, tangibles, and intangibles as Cultural Products and Cultural Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Descriptive Rationality</td>
<td>Students shared their own perspective behind the 3P’s of their home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Dialogic Reflection</td>
<td>Students brought in their family members’ perspectives while explaining 3P and showed how their own perspectives sometimes differ from that of their families. They also talked about new realizations that occurred due to the labeling of the 3Ps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Not found</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classes on the cultural conflicts

The narrative paragraph class on cultural bumps was deliberately designed to bring out the skill of utilizing multiple perspectives while thinking and forming opinions or judgments. Moreover, it also helped students to explore alternatives to what is already established. Here the classwork required them to describe a moment of conflict from the perspectives of both the parties involved.

S15 shared his argument with another man in the public bus regarding vacating his (man 2) seat for one old man and formulated the second man’s viewpoint this way-

To him, the idea may be first come, first serve or he might have been very exhausted, well, he did look exhausted and cranky. It is possible, that he behaved the way he did because of how hot the day was. At that time, it felt very rude and inhuman. But I never thought from his point of view

The conflicts ranged from small conflicts at home to chaotic ones with strangers. This lesson resulted in the following findings:

Table 3

Findings from Cultural Bump lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Level name</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Technical Rationality</td>
<td>Students utilized terminologies like ‘micro-culture’, ‘contextual/cultural differences’ and ‘cultural bumps and intercultural competence’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Descriptive Rationality</td>
<td>Students described their ‘version’ of the story and explained their perspective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here students tried to explore an alternative version of their story. Hence, they attempted to incorporate the perspective of the other person/s involved in the conflict. They ventured to find out what the other person/s found wrong in the situation and thus, presented a different construction of the situation.

Students remarked about a changed understanding of the situation; shared that the cultural bumps can be reduced with intercultural understanding which can be fostered by being tolerant and by considering the alternative perspectives. Some of them also cautioned against the practice of judging a story/person from partial details.

The ‘Opinion paragraphs’ brought out some of the frequently found stereotypes and superstitions in our society. Two such stereotypes that the majority talked about are the gender-discriminatory stereotypes and the stereotyped identity of private university students in Bangladesh where public universities are the most coveted, admired and valued. Students tried to incorporate multiple perspectives while describing these incidents with terminologies and thus, attempted to evaluate the situation critically.

### Table 4

**Findings from Stereotype lesson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Level name</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Technical Rationality</td>
<td>Students labeled practices and perspectives as Stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Descriptive Rationality</td>
<td>Students shared their own experiences of both stereotyping and being stereotyped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Dialogic Reflection</td>
<td>They tried to bring the perspective of the prejudiced people and also, that of stereotyped people and the social consequences of such practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>A few students expressed their cognizance of the situations when they stereotyped someone ‘just for fun’ and their realization of how that may have affected the victims negatively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compare-contrast writing on ‘superstitions’ and ‘assumption versus description’ sheds light on our everyday life as one quotation from S15’s paragraph shows: ‘Some superstitions are like a religion to the followers.’ Students shared their confusions regarding situations when they felt compelled to be part of a superstitious practice mainly because of their families. They spoke about the frustration and despair that followed from the tendency of blindly following many absurd/immoral practices without questioning it. The video (The New York Times, 2016) on Indian superstition of labeling women as witches and murdering them for the disguised intention of owning
their property provided one such example to them. In student11’s word:

‘According to me, superstition is at times just a lame excuse to capture property or land rights. Surprisingly, not even the police always help the victims in such a situation.’

The lesson on ‘assumption versus description’ followed interesting findings from the class. After realizing the number of assumptions and opinions mixed with fact, the first association that students made was with that of ‘yellow journalism’ found in online news portals or in social media which finds its way due to the lack of critical thinking among the readers.

Evaluation of the findings from these two lessons is presented below:

**Table 5**

**Findings from Superstition and Assumption vs. Description lessons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Level name</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Technical Rationality</td>
<td>Students used terminologies while describing actions and beliefs as Superstitions or Assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Descriptive Rationality</td>
<td>Students expressed their opinions regarding superstitious practices and beliefs they know of or experienced themselves and how compelling the social pressure to conform to it can be. Students also identified different assumptions they make frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Dialogic Reflection</td>
<td>They tried to bring the perspectives of the victims and discussed the harms inflicted on them. They also tried to bring the perspectives and deliberation of the people who formulate such practices intentionally. Additionally, students talked about the social consequence of assumption and amalgamation of facts and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>Students shared their realization about the extent of opinion/assumption mixed in their description which, according to most of them, is a completely new finding. This is one of the note worthiest parts where Critical Reflection was observed among students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present four levels of critical thinking measured via the rubric in students’ class-work and homework which demonstrate a gradual development of the skills of critical thinking. The initial phase of critical thinking is found in students’ ability to identify the situations and to label those with terminologies introduced to them. Gradually, the practice improved their ‘Dialogic reflection’ which enabled them to bring alternative perspectives with their own to a situation and consequently, fostered tolerance and empathy. Finally, with further practice, students showed the final stage- ‘Critical Reflection’ in their speech and writing where they voiced their changed understanding and reasoning behind the situations in question. They acknowledged
the differences in their thoughts and (mis)behavior and talked about the importance of humane qualities to foster a peaceful world.

Findings from interview

Responses from the first question

As is mentioned in the methodology part, my first question was—“How would you describe these classes in terms of the content (class-work/homework)? Can you share your opinion?”

All the participants here shared their perception of these classes and described the activities they learned to do. Regarding the content of the class, some of the most significant findings are connected with students’ expectations, satisfaction, and awareness. The replies demonstrated students’ satisfaction in learning both English skills and critical thinking from these lessons. Learning about their own thinking style was a surprising experience for them which they expressed recurrently throughout the study. This frequently emphasized observation demonstrated the latest growth of awareness regarding critical thinking among students.

According to P2-

We learned how to open up our minds, how to think critically and do brainstorming, how to gather knowledge; ….. We should bring critical thinking in all stages as when we critically think, we think about all the aspects. When we brainstorm we look at things from many different angles.

While talking about the activities, all 15 participants echoed their writing once again. They discussed the conflicts and biased discourse that they are part of and further opined that these classes have taught them more than English as they have learned to evaluate, think, weigh and reflect on the actions and words surrounding them.

Thus, interview responses, in general, here suggested that students found these topics to be different and helpful in multiple ways and better suited to practice the four English skills than the regular, usually de-contextualized topics.

Responses from the second question

The second question was, “Have you learned anything about your way of thinking and interpreting that surprised you? If it is so, can you share that with us?”- Almost all of them replied in the affirmative while answering the second question. For most of them, the most surprising lesson was the one with assumption and description lesson with pictures. That their description consisted of a good number of assumptions was a surprising yet interesting revelation for many of them. As P3 remarks, ‘It was a very interesting and new experience for me to realize that my thinking included such assumptions. It made me wonder about how often I do this without even realizing that.’ Replies from other students also had similar emphasis.

A second theme that surfaced from students is that they, at times, felt perplexed to
realize that they can be condemnatory subconsciously and confuse facts with opinions without possessing a slight cognizance regarding that. P13 shared her disappointment- ‘I thought I am an open-minded prejudice-free individual which I am so not’.

A similar kind of reaction emerged with a cultural bump and intercultural competence lessons. The majority of the participants remarked that in conflicts they very seldom attempted to consider the other person’s perspective. According to P5, ‘this lesson taught me a way to be more considerate and tolerant, and I think, thinking critically in situations with conflicts or misunderstandings can help us understand others better and avoid cultural bumps.’ The majority of the students opined that they are not accustomed to evaluating a situation, especially that of a conflict from the other party’s perspective. They, further, shared that they believe it can also help them in being less judgmental and biased, thus, more respectful and tolerant of others’ practice and perspective.

**Responses from the third question**

Finally, all of the participants replied in the affirmative while answering the third question which asked them whether these classes have brought any change in their thinking style. The answers were congruent with those of question 2. They referred back to their realizations and awareness of these presumptions they hold. The theme here points towards students emerging awareness of their previous unsuspecting and unobservant thinking manner and thus, leads to the suggestion that students felt more in control of their thinking manner and more empowered with the newly learned skill of critical thinking. They concluded that they learned how to be more critical of the decisions they make, opinions, or judgments they form, or beliefs they hold. Students seemed very interested and enthusiastic in sharing these experiences and realizations.

**Discussion**

The classroom output findings show a gradual development of critical thinking skills among students in four layers- firstly, they learned to differentiate and identify the situations used in the lessons in everyday life language use which shows their ‘technical rationality’. Secondly, they learned to provide well-thought opinions and counter opinions on those events which align with the 4th level of the rubric – ‘descriptive rationality’. Thirdly, they also tried to bring multiple perspectives to a situation that echoes the skill of ‘dialogic reflection’, and finally, they attempted to find changes in their previously hold beliefs which is the final level called ‘critical reflection’. The rubric and the checklist used for each student’s assignments showed a clear picture of this development.

The interview presents students’ perspectives more clearly. They contrasted these contextualized, culture-based authentic lessons against the traditional lessons found in the various EFL books. They shared their appreciation and enthusiasm to work with topics that not only develop language skills, but also higher-order thinking skills. One important point here is that these lessons were definitely part of the course and hence, students were technically bound to do the assignments. However, being an
EFL teacher for three years, the author could quite easily differentiate between the interesting authentic information found in the student output from the monotonous write-ups mostly found in the assignments that students feel compelled to finish. The positive classroom attitude, the higher frequency, and willingness to share their opinions in the sessions, and the outspoken attitude with which even the meek students acknowledged their old prejudices and judgments presented a highly energized and engaged classroom.

The 3rd interview answers directed to mainly three findings regarding students’ perception. The changes that students believe these lessons have induced in their thinking style are- firstly, an awareness of the assumptions in their description or opinion, greater control over their thinking which previously, according to most of them, they lacked, and finally, an ability to critically evaluate their as well as others’ beliefs and decisions.

Although these ‘changes’ are provided by students explicitly which caution us against biased responses, their classwork and take-home assignments reiterated these responses and thus, support the findings to be authentic and not biased to a large extent.

From the above discussion, it can be posited that topics that are sensitive to biases and problems regarding culture, gender and race, should be the substitutes of the regular surface-culture-level lessons found in the international text-books of EFL teaching in Bangladesh. As we are yet to cross the threshold of critical thinking skills in our university EFL context, our EFL stakeholders must look into this domain.

**Limitations**

As already mentioned in the findings section, there is a chance that students’ responses were biased to provide the ‘expected’ response as the researcher was their teacher as well. However, data triangulation through the classroom findings that were evaluated with the rubric reduces this chance of having solely biased responses from the students.

Another limitation of this study is the various constraints present. There were only 10 lessons on critical thinking. Due to time constraints, it wasn’t possible to continue with these lessons for the whole semester. Critical thinking, being a process, (Debela & Fang, 2008; Brookfield, 1987) needs much practice which couldn’t be fostered as needed due to the above-mentioned problems.

**Conclusion and recommendation**

As is pointed out earlier in the paper that this is one of the inceptive works on critical thinking in the Bangladeshi tertiary EFL context, the author believes that Bangladeshi learners have a long way to go before being apt in critical thinking. This situation calls out fellow Bangladeshi EFL researchers to carry out further critical thinking researches and to formulate plans and strategies to develop more critical thinkers in Bangladeshi universities.
The findings from this study demonstrate that cultural topics are effective to bring out critical thinking from learners who are almost at the beginners’ level of this skill. These issues make students question pre-hold beliefs and ideas, thus, bringing changes in their thinking and potentially making them more tolerant, considerate, and less prejudiced. Utilizing these topics also promotes spontaneous development of the four skills of English as more engagement means more participation and more participation translates into more practice of the four English language skills. It is also crucial for the instructors to ‘design tasks in which the learners can bring forward their knowledge and expertise’ (Báez, 2009, p. 74). In the Bangladeshi EFL context, this is a new development; hence, it is pertinent that instructors design the lessons keeping students’ interest and ability in mind. Baez (2009) also emphasizes ‘thought-provoking feedback’ in the shape of questions and statements (p. 74) to help students guide towards the desired outcome.

Thus, this study has implications for EFL instructors as instructing students on English without enabling them to participate in an international domain successfully would be a futile wastage of time and resources. To ensure this participation and membership of a global village, critical thinking is imperative. The implication for the national education board, course designers and independent EFL textbook writers are massive too as we need a thorough revision of the EFL textbooks to incorporate contextualized topics that address such issues that promote and better the level of critical thinking among our students. Consequently, stakeholders are invited to consider the importance of the above-mentioned changes in the course-packs prepared for EFL contexts, especially in the tertiary contexts.

To conclude, the guided approach that the author adopted here can be fruitful if utilized properly. Scaffolding with its various techniques such as confirmation checks, clarification requests, reformulations, summaries of students’ contributions, and completions, may be utilized in class (Baez, 2009). Educators need to revise techniques to promote language competence while developing criticality among learners. Utilizing pressing socio-cultural issues to practice the skills of English shows a higher probability of fostering the growth of critical thinking since it allows learners to examine and analyze the normalized malpractices and faulty perspectives in society; thus enabling them to make informed decisions and to face the challenges of the real-world as an autonomous, self-sustaining human being.

References


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Formal Email Writing Convention: Differences Between Native and Non-native Students\textsuperscript{1}

Shama E Shahid

Abstract

The use of emails in student-faculty communication is a regulated process. The regulations are formulated in order to ensure that the correspondences are in line with the institutional requirements and maintain professionalism. There is limited information about such regulations amongst native students and non-native students regarding formal email writing conventions. This study examines the formal email writing conventions of non-native students under a regulated environment. A purposive non-probability sampling of 10 non-native students from a British university was collected. The findings indicated that language prowess, request letter acts, and the use of formality had positive impacts on formal email writing among non-native students. It can be concluded from the above findings that teachers of ESL should pay attention to how students formulate the structure and content of emails as these matters directly impact their writing capability.

Keywords: Email, English as a second language, Environment, Formal email writing conventions

Introduction

Increased interconnectedness of the world has resulted in a higher level of interaction among people of different backgrounds. Consequently, the diversity created by globalization is more prevalent in the institutions of learning, such as universities where local students are instructed together with international students. English is a lingua franca; hence non-native speakers have to learn it as a second language. As a result, differences have been observed between comprehension and expression aptitudes among native speakers (LI students) and foreign speakers (L2 students in this case).

Advancement in technology has increased the efficiency of the communication process among individuals. As a result, in many cases, instances of face to face communications have been continuously phased out by the newest forms of information sharing. One of the new modes of interaction is the use of emails accompanied by its ability for attachment of multiple files of different forms. The inexpensive, fast, convenient,

\textsuperscript{1} The article is drawn from my thesis submitted to the University of Roehampton as my master's dissertation.
and environmentally friendly nature of emails have popularized their use in college education (Peck, 2014). Consequently, the use of formal emails has gained popularity in professional and academic contexts due to its efficiency. Emails are consistently used as a means of communication and interaction among students and faculties (Danielwicz-Betz, 2013). However, the pragmatics of language used in emails sent by university students when they make requests to their professors and faculty remains a controversial issue. Danielwicz-Betz (2013) maintains that there are no specific guidelines that inform the choice of form and style of constructing email messages among students.

There are notable differences between students who use English as a first language and those who use English as a second language with respect to the pragmatics of language used in email conversations. The differences can be attributed to students’ lack of awareness regarding the identity of the recipients with whom they wish to converse. As a result, ESL learners often face uncertainties regarding the decorum on linguistic forms to be used in emails in academic settings. Hendricks argues that the divergence in the language used by ESL students compared to the native students can be observed in basic grammatical competence and practical competencies in business writing skills (2010). As a result, ESL students have glaring inadequacies in composing emails following the norms of academic and formal communication settings.

The insufficient alterations in the communication of ESL students are a result of limited and non-elaborate strategies of politeness (Hendricks 2010). Krulatz and Park identified the use of directness in the communication of Norwegian and native American speakers in terms of direct words such as ‘want’ (2016). Imperatives implied by the improper use of punctuations also contribute to the level of directness, differences observed between email communications of native-speaking students and the non-native learners. Other factors that may influence the divergence found between the use of language in emails by native speakers and non-native include the practice level, anxiety level when writing different information, and culture shocks.

**Literature Review**

The use of email as a means of communication in academia is a form of interaction between academics and students. The interaction between non-native students and their professors, who are scholars with higher knowledge of language use, presents a chance for the students to exercise their learning of the desired language (Gan, 2013). When professors deem that the messages written by students are not understandable, students are forced to reconstruct to convey their intended meaning. The guidelines by some instructors on the composition of email messages during the interaction process reinforces the language learning process (Gan, 2013). As a result, interactionism email interaction between L2 students and the faculty impacts the development of writing skills among such learners (Gan, 2013).

Scholars consider email writing as a genre because it has its own repetitive patterns
The identification of the use of emails as a genre prompts a definition of the required textual characteristics such as grammar and spellings as well as the comparison between the observance of such requirements by ESL and EFL students (Hasan & Akhand, 2011). Much attention has been paid to the academic writing of ESL students with respect to the genre; this is because it is deemed that the frequent use of emails between the faculty and students, being a formal interaction, has an impact on how ESL students acquire their academic writing skills. Therefore, it is crucial to establish written emails from a faculty point of view on the learning and teaching of the English language.

Email as a Genre

Understanding email writings as a genre requires the consideration of context. Galabi (2011) identifies writing genres as those situations characterized by recurrent patterns in the usage of language. Different social scenarios demand different genres in response to the fact that “they are constructed socially and depend on unique contexts” (Galabi, 2011, p.3). There are diverse contexts readily observed in email conversations ranging from personal to professional. Personal contexts may have fewer demands regarding the construction of email (Galabi, 2011). On the other hand, professional and academic contexts require adherence to specific guidelines in writing emails (Ren, 2016). The adoption of different writing styles in other genres, such as letters, applies to email writing as well. Socially accepted norms to converse formally must be observed. Therefore, professional email conversations should observe politeness and correct grammar usage because the absence of these factors leads to a possible misunderstanding of the sender by the recipient (Ren, 2016).

Stephens, Houser, and Cowan (2009) mention that the interactions between students and teachers are formal and have a pattern that is based on and follows specific conventions and appropriateness in language. The breach of these conditions results in negative repercussions. Some of the negative feedbacks resulting from lack of proper decorum in the use of email as a means of communication are low opinions about the message by the student, low credibility associated with the message, and reduction in the probability of a professor in complying with the request being made (Stephens et al., 2009). Therefore, it is imperative for students to understand email writings as a genre that requires the consideration of context while drafting messages.

General Email Textual Features

Several studies have investigated textual features of email writing. Some of these features include presented in this section.

Openings

Multiple research studies have examined the use of openings in email conversations; the use of openings was mainly dependent on three main factors, namely cultural...
background, language proficiency, and the sequence of messages (Bou-Franch, 2011; Ko Eslami, & Burlbaw, 2015; Tajeddin & Pezeshki, 2014). Bou-Franch (2011) discovered that 93 percent of the emails from native Spanish students involved in the study contained a form of official opening (such as dear Sir/Madam) regardless of whether it was the first message in the conversation thread or subsequent message.

Regarding cultural background, Tajeddin and Pezeshki (2014) compared Iranian and American use of email written in English and observed that both groups tended to use official openings. However, the authors noted that Iranian students used small talk in the openings while other openings were denser. Cook (2016) further confirmed that cultural differences affected the types of openings that an individual used while writing an email. In view of the language proficiency, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) reported that the level of proficiency in English determined the use of openings and the use range from direct omission, grammatically wrong but acceptable, to those openings that disregarded title and may be considered offensive such as the use of ‘Mrs.’ instead of ‘Dr.’ or ‘professor.’ This paper will focus on the types of openings rather than the presence or absence of the element.

**Closings**

Closings are categorized into three aspects: pre-closing, farewell, and self-identification (Ko, Eslami, & Burlbaw, 2015). Cultural differences also affect the variations of closings used where Iranian students used a diverse composition of closings while American students used standardized forms of closings such as regards, yours sincerely, and so on (Eslami, 2013). Besides, Iranian students used longer closing moves that ranged from pre-closing markers of thanking, farewells, apologizing, to self-identification (Cook, 2016). However, closings were not prone to language proficiency mistakes.

**Email Request Head Acts**

Zhu (2012) defines email request head acts as the minimum elements required to achieve the desired output from a request. Head acts represent the central part of a request sequence, and they are classified by the request strategies and the different categories including direct (e.g. I want to meet you), conveniently indirect (e.g. are you available on next Thursday?) or hints (e.g. enclosed is the attachment of my student profile) (Ko, Eslami, & Burlbaw, 2015, p.8). Tyter (2015) compared the differences between request strategies used by L1 and L2 students in academic settings. The study discovered that native speaking students used syntactic modifiers (embedding, i.e. I would appreciate if you could help me) while ESL students employed lexical modifiers (e.g. subjectivizer, such as- I think, I wanted to know, and I was wondering if. and consultative devices, such as- is there any chance? and do you think that?) in their email request strategies (Tyter, 2015). Non-native students tended to use more directness in their head acts while native speakers were oriented towards conventionally indirect forms and use of hints.
Extra-Linguistic Factors

The application of deadlines and frequency of required academic texts imply that time and the likelihood of writing are considered essential in academic writing (Schüppert & Gooskens, 2011). Tyter (2015) found that non-native students took more time in composing their emails compared to native speakers while their likelihood of writing emails was lower compared to that of EFL students. To conclude, it is apparent that the academic writing language can be a first or a second language to the student, and ESL and EFL students have different attitudes towards the English language (Eshghinejad & Moini, 2016). Therefore, the investigation of writing emails in the field of academia needs to incorporate the identified factors.

Context

Social context cues are essential in the communication between individuals as they establish the required protocol and observe the politeness accorded to the hierarchy (Wang, Walther, & Hancock, 2009). In the academic field, the protocol indicates that members of the faculty are higher-ranking personnel compared to all students. Therefore, written communications from students to professors should contain various social context cues to reflect the difference in social hierarchy between them (Alvídrez et al., 2015). While native speakers of English may effectively employ the different social context rules, misuse among non-native students might often indicate aspects of impoliteness in communication between them and their professors.

Grammar

Grammar issues in email exchanges between the faculty and students are common in both ‘EFL’ with ‘native’ and ESL students but non-native students are more likely to commit serious grammatical errors compared to ‘native’ students (Island, 2016). Abdeen (2017) asserts that ESL students are more likely to commit serious text-level grammatical errors than sentence-level grammatical errors.

Text-level grammar errors involve the inappropriate use of words causing the loss of the intended message. Candlin and Hyland (2014) point out that every text contains a structure, which is meant to pass information in a specific way. As such, the commission of such errors in academic writing among students results in utter confusion and consequent misunderstanding by the reader. Text-level grammar is also characterized by the inappropriate choice of words by students writing academic materials such as articles or email correspondences. Bailey (2014) explains that an individual is required to use both verbs and nouns to create a comprehensible sentence. The failure to adhere to these rules often results in the loss of the intended meaning.

Sentence-level errors, on the other hand, entail arranging words and clauses in a way that does not make sense when read. Purpura (2013) points out that a writer is supposed
to consider not only the main clauses but also the compound or complex clauses when constructing a sentence in order to construct a logical statement. Andrews (2010) views that text-level grammar has more influence on an individual’s knowledge of a language compared to sentence-level grammar, thus, teachers should prioritize improving the former while teaching grammar. According to the author, L2 students are more likely to make text-level than sentence-level grammatical errors. By contrast, however, Datchuk and Kubina (2013) conclude that a majority of ESL students struggle with sentence-level adjectival mistakes more than any other aspect of writing. Students are fond of using short forms of words such as LOL for “laughing out loud” and 4 instead of “for” which affects their text-level grammar negatively (Ikeguchi, 2013). The trend can be attributed primarily to overgeneralization and ignorance of rule restriction (Tak, 2014). Text-level grammatical errors that are commonly made by L2 students include verb confusion (verb-subject agreement).

Other grammatical errors include wrong tense, word order, incorrect choice of word forms, and preposition errors (Matsuda & Cox, 2011; Yoosawat & Tangkiengsirisin, 2016). Island (2016) identified various grammatical issues that can be observed to ensure professional etiquette, that is, polishing through proper editing. Singh et al. (2017) maintained that ESL students are more likely to make serious grammatical errors than EFL students because they were also taught by ESL teachers. Besides, the students might have a cognitive inability to comprehend various subjects within the grammar system such as subject-verb agreement, tenses, and essential and nonessential clauses. Therefore, the remedies to improving grammar usage by ESL students in their academic writing include training ESL teachers adequately and employing strategies that will ensure students comprehend the various concepts aptly (Singh et al., 2017).

Hsieh (2016) discovered that ESL students who were allowed to use online resources to write an essay showed a significant improvement in how they expressed their thoughts with respect to the grammar rules. Therefore, the combination of technology and collaboration portrayed in a classroom learning environment that is facilitated by the use of Internet resources is a great resource for enhancing ESL students’ grammatical accuracy.

**Significance of the Study**

The frequent usage of emails in academic settings by ESL students indicates the need for educational and formal language in their communications. Classrooms and system-set evaluation mechanisms may reveal that ESL students are proficient in their use of academic writing due to their increased preparedness before examination periods. Standardized tests fail to reveal the ability of students to contextualize interaction scenarios (Roever, 2011). In this regard, this study is useful for various reasons. First, the language used in emails unveils ESL learners’ contextual and pragmatic capabilities in making academic and formal conversations. Second, the corrections and pointers in the correct usage of academic writing in a formal setting present educators with chances
to informally teach ESL students the proper usage of formal language in an educational setting. Third, instructors can use emails as an integral means of increasing students’ practice in academic writing skills. Finally, instructors can use emails as an approach to communication to ensure continuous and individualized assessment regarding the growth of students in professional communication skills.

**Research Questions**

- How do formal email writing conventions by non-native speaking students differ from the conventions of the native speaking students?
- What are the differences between non-native and native students in their formal email writing conventions?

**Methods and Participants**

A cross-sectional design approach under qualitative research was used in this study to measure the exposure and outcomes (Setia, 2016). Participants consented to quote the texts for use in the study. The participants were assured that their identity and personal information will be kept confidential. Therefore, it was easy to collect authentic email samples. The researcher used participants’ email copies to collect data on their naturally occurring behaviors of drafting and sending emails in academic contexts. Purposive non-probability sampling was used to obtain 10 non-native students from a British University to participate in this study. Six of them were males and the rest females. Eight of the students were Asians and two were from Africa. Their mean age was twenty-three years. The ten students were then requested to provide five emails each that they have sent to their professors in a formal context. The emails were then collected and documented in one file as shown in Appendix 1. A total of 50 emails were collected over a period of one week. The emails were then analyzed linguistically using guidelines from previous studies.

The ten participants were obtained through well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria for selecting participants included the following; non-native English speakers, have regular formal communication with the academics using email and must be a university student. The exclusion criterion also entailed the last time the student contacted their academics. Non-native students who contacted their academics more than six months ago were excluded from the study. Further, non-native students speaking English for the last ten years were also excluded.

This study involved the use of both primary and secondary data even though a mono method research strategy was employed. Secondary data was also collected using an advanced web search strategy. First, the characteristics of emails composed and sent by non-native students to their academics were identified in terms of emails’ openings and closings, email request heads, extra-linguistic factors, punctuations, spellings, context, and grammar. Then the same keywords and key-phrases were used to search
the Internet for journal articles, educational books, and other resourceful materials to do a comparison helpful in identifying how formal email writing conventions by non-native-speaking students differ from the conventions of the native students. The advanced search strategy included the use of Boolean connectors in various online databases particularly EBSCOhost, T and F online, JSTOR, and many others. Other sites such as Google Books and Google Scholar were used to search the materials. The Boolean connects that were used include ‘AND,’ ‘OR,’ and ‘AND NOT.’

Data Analysis

The primary set of data was analyzed in comparison with the secondary data as proposed by Peck (2014), who asserted that email composition should be formed in a professional language and with considerations given to the writer or writer’s position (Peck 2014). The process of analyzing email requests as proposed by Chen and Baker (2010) entails examining the entire orientation of the email, that is, the general features in the text (general email textual features) such as openings and closings. It also involves assessing samples of the request sequence which majorly focuses on head acts. The general content of the non-native students’ email to faculty members is also considered to determine the margin of directness or indirectness which, in turn, would influence the judgment of the politeness of the email. Overall, the data were analyzed using linguistic analysis. Barceló-Coblijn et al. maintained that currently there are no specific methodological approaches to carrying out a linguistic analysis (2017). The latest software that can analyze language effectively is called Netlang. After analyzing the secondary data, the researcher did a linguistic analysis. Data from previous studies, educational books, magazines, and other resourceful materials were used to make the comparison.

Findings

This study conducted a simple and unique linguistic analysis based on Chen and Baker’s (2010) approach. This study utilized a corpus of 50 emails sent to the faculty by 10 non-native students. The entire orientation of an email message can be determined by examining the following aspects: emails’ openings and closings, email request heads, extra-linguistic factors, punctuations, spellings, context, and grammar.

Openings

All the students were well-informed on recognition and use of salutations which was observed throughout their emails. However, the fifth student considered the use of grammatically informal and unacceptable phrases such as ‘Dear Mam’ instead of ‘Dear Miss/ Mrs.’ (See Appendix 1). Depending on the context, five students used greetings as listed below, but they also omitted the element in sequential emails.
Table 1: Summary of Greetings Used by the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student No.</th>
<th>Email number</th>
<th>Number of greetings used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, the third, fourth, seventh, ninth, and tenth students did not use greetings at all. This finding corresponds to Hallajian and David’s (2014) findings which indicated that most students often start with an opening, which can be considered as a "greeting" or "self-explanatory" (Hallajian & David, 2014).

Closings

Most students were familiar with pre-closing markers such as ‘thank you,’ ‘looking forward to hearing from you,’ ‘yours sincerely’ ‘good-bye’ and such (See Appendix 1). The same was omitted in sequential emails of a number of the students, for instance, the fifth email of the third student, the third email of the sixth student, and the fourth emails of the ninth and tenth students. The findings of this study regarding this aspect coincide with the findings of prior studies. For example, a study that was conducted by Hallajian and David indicated that students mostly used closings in their first emails but failed to continue using them in the sequential emails (2014). This phenomenon is currently unexplored and there is a need to explore as it has potential implications in teaching English as a second language.

Request Letter Acts

The findings of this study of email request acts correspond to the CCSARP framework of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) which this study followed. The findings from this study suggest that most non-native many (49%) applied direct request strategies to their lecturers.

Table 2: Percentage of Requestive Directness (N=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request type</th>
<th>Request strategies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct request</td>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>1/50 (02%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct questions</td>
<td>6/50 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Want statement</td>
<td>6/50 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectation statement</td>
<td>3/50 (06%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need statement</td>
<td>29/50 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13/50 (26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Linguistic Prowess and Grammar Rules**

Most of the emails were composed using simple words that are easy to comprehend by the reader. It is also notable that the non-native students who participated in this study observed grammar rules, although there were a few mistakes. The following is an excellent example of an email that uses simple language with flawless grammar:

“I am writing this time for a query. As far as my visa application process is pending for a decision, I would like to know about the payment system of my accommodation fees. Can I pay the whole accommodation fees in one single installment, instead of three separate installments? Thanks in advance.”

The example above is flawless and uses simple words to communicate the point. The student’s other emails were also fairly accurate (Refer to Appendix 1 for more details). However, some other students had grammatical errors in their emails and their language was complicated. The following (student 8, mail one) email illustrates the case in point. This is to be noted that this student’s other emails also contained some errors.

“Greetings!!! I am hereby too pleased to receive this email to enroll in a Ph.D. program which was always my dream. Please let me know the criteria for admission. However, after completing MSC in Project Management, I haven’t yet appear in the IELTS exam and will be appear my April. Is it possible to enroll in the program without IELTS? Moreover what is the tuition fee structure?Waiting to hear from you.”

The above email has a lot of grammatical errors, including tense confusion. The email was also poorly punctuated, thus, rendering it a poor form of communication in the context of student-faculty interaction. This can result in the professor developing a negative perception. Many students will naturally adhere to that format to receive responses and feedback from the professor. Further, there were some emails that passed the intended messages clearly despite the multiple grammar and punctuation errors. However, some emails had serious mistakes, just like the one shown above.

Overall, the average outlook for the language prowess and grammar usage among non-native students when emailing was outstanding. Most of the students wrote emails in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventionally indirect requests</th>
<th>Query preparatory</th>
<th>10/50 (20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>Strong/mild hints</td>
<td>8/50 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Gratitude, assurance, etc.</td>
<td>3/50 (06%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings also correspond to those of Ko, Eslami and Burlbaw (2014) who investigated the pragmatic development of non-native students in requestive emails. The authors discovered that non-native students used different request letter acts from those of native English students.
a well-articulated manner and they displayed their prowess in the language through their writing. Most of the emails could be accepted in a formal setting based on the guidelines provided by Peck (2014). However, the trend observed from this analysis is that as much as the larger portion of the participants portrayed themselves as being average, there were also severe cases. This finding corresponds to the findings of Jewels and Albon (2018) which found that most non-native students often used a simple language with little to a few grammatical and punctuation errors. The aim of comparing each finding with the findings of prior studies is to try to put the phenomenon under investigation in the context of what is already known.

**Formality and Informality**

It was observed that most non-native students wrote formal emails to their professors adopting the guidelines provided by Peck (2014). Most of them addressed their academics using titles such as ‘Dear Sir/Madam’. Only a few students referred to their professors using their first names. For example, the seventh student never used a title but instead referred to the professors using their first names. This act may sound rude and impolite, but it is also important that one understands the cultural underpinnings that may have influenced the student’s choice of openings.

Collectively, the results of the linguistic analysis indicated that the participants of this study had a certain level of proficiency in writing formal emails. This conclusion is based on the grounds that they registered an outstanding performance with respect to most of the aspects of this linguistic analysis. Their only notable weaknesses were on punctuation and a few grammatical errors. Thus, there is a need to find a similar research report that examined the above aspects among native English students.

The second phase of data analysis yielded divergent results. Hallajian and David (2014), who looked especially at Iranian students studying in Malaysia, were used in analyzing the findings of openings and closings. Regarding the openings, the comparison of primary data and secondary data confirmed that indeed most non-native students mostly used openings in their emails to the academics. Openings can further be classified into greetings and self-identification. Most of the openings were components of greetings or self-identification. Another notable thing was that openings or the greetings and self-identification phrases or statements can be grammatically incorrect or be offensive depending on the titles used.

Further, a comparison of secondary data and primary data revealed that most non-native students used closings when writing emails to their professors in the context of academia. Additionally, closings can further be subdivided into pre-closing, farewell, and self-identification (Hallajian & David, 2014). These categories of closings do not necessarily exist in emails, but they are the most dominant across various cultures. Further, it was discovered that students from certain cultures such as Iraq tend to use formal styles of communication and use more thanking, apologizing, and farewell than
American natives (Hallajian & David, 2014). Despite the fact that several recent studies have explored this topic; no current study has examined the use of closings. Therefore, further research examining the use of closings in emails in student-faculty interaction should be conducted.

No research has examined the relationship between the use of directness and indirectness and academic writing from the perspective of non-native students. However, several studies have examined directness and indirectness in many languages including English and Russian. An investigation revealed that native speakers tended to use indirectness in their requests, whereas non-native use directness when making requests (Almegren, 2017). This finding partially agrees with the outcome of this study.

Areas directly related to academic writing include formality and informality and language prowess and grammar rules. A study indicated that the relationship between the professor and the student determines formality and informality in email composition (Shim, 2013). The investigation also revealed that involuntary usage of informal language in a formal context affects the decorum required in academic writing (Shim, 2013). This study indicated that most non-native students used formal language when formulating emails to the faculties.

**Discussion**

This section summarizes the general remarks concerning the research and findings. Second-language acquisition is affected by various factors, among them the first language interference, environmental elements of interaction, and mastery of content. Many theories have come up with tenets to explain how the second language is acquired. The linguistic analysis of the emails showed that most non-native students could send structurally acceptable emails to their academics. Besides, most of them were also able to generate appropriate content for the emails. Some of the challenges that were noted among the non-native students were various barriers to effective learning. These barriers differ from one context to another, and that is why different non-native students have different levels of mastery of the English language.

Besides, the findings of this study also showed that non-native students’ language prowess, use of request letter acts, and the use of formality are directly related to the level of their academic writing skills. Students who had satisfactory language prowess, the ability to apply directness and indirectness in emails appropriately, and could embrace formality in emails to the faculty could also compose academic texts efficiently.

**Conclusion and implications**

The central assumption that was made in regards to this study to what extent non-native students’ formal email writing conventions differ from that of NS students. Due to time constraints, the researcher opted for a cross-sectional design as a way of observing the corpus that consisted of 50 emails of 10 non-native students from a renowned British University. A longitudinal design study would have provided a
comprehensive perspective of the phenomenon under investigation because of time adequacy and methodological advantages. Even though this study is characterized by significant methodological shortcomings, its findings can make a small contribution to teaching English as a second language. Besides, the results of this study can serve as a resource for future studies intending to explore this problem further using more structured and comprehensive research methodologies. Moreover, the best research methodology for this study would be the use of mixed methods.

The findings of this study suggest that to perfect their writing skills, L2 students should work harder to learn the language used in academic work besides attending the regular curriculum involving professors, lecture attendances, and assignment submission. For instance, students can participate in workshops that aim to improve speech and writing of academic papers. A study revealed that the workshop approach could be used efficiently in teaching English Composition writing among non-native high school students (Lin & Enchelmayer, 2014). The writing workshops should be student-centered to enhance the development of English writing competence (Lin & Enchelmayer 2014). Such workshops may feature areas such as:

a) Review of reason, tone, and voice and their match with the relationship to scholarly written work.

b) Review of stages in the written work process, including prewriting, composition, revising, and altering of the written work.

c) Engagement in composing exercises that mirror each progression depicted previously.

d) Review and survey of the relative significance (or insignificance) of normal second language blunders in scholarly composition.

e) Exploration of normal sorts of composing requests understudies will experience in school, including explanatory expositions, outlines, evaluates, article exams, accounts, and abstract investigation.

Students in the same institution and location can attend symposiums organized amongst themselves. Symposiums or seminars have also been used to effectively teach English as a second language in Canada and other countries (Uchihara & Yanagisawa, 2017). Those performing better can help the less performing at different levels to improve their English language competence. Non-native students can also take the initiative to empower each other in academic performance. Empowerment encourages a student who raises his or her interest in self-development. The students can get a professor or a faculty member willing to work with them to achieve the goal. Students can engage in practical public speaking before others and one-on-one participation in in-depth, extensive discussions. Public speaking and open talks enhance the development of speaking and builds confidence while minimizing anxiety about making errors. Students should also have a humble attitude towards positive and constructive criticism. According to Gillen (2006), criticism enables individuals
to interpret persuasive articles hence boosting the learning process. Also, it has been observed that ESL students in some institutions perform better compared to other institutions due to the surrounding and the effect the surrounding has on them. If the native speakers embrace and accommodate the non-native students at a personal level, the non-native students will develop a more in-depth focus on the foreign language. The teachers should have strategies of engaging native speakers to accommodate non-native students at personal levels for improved learning. Furthermore, teachers need to be well informed on how to execute various instructional approaches efficiently. Teachers should also consider the use of mobile learning to facilitate second language acquisition (Ahmad Zaki & Md Yunus, 2015).

While doing the linguistic analysis, the researcher coincidentally noted some trend regarding the content and structure of emails and the average number of words used by email. A well-structured study should be conducted to confirm this trend. Its implication in linguistics is diverse; this was just an additional observation to the purpose of this study. Good research is the one that raises more questions than it answers (Meadows, 2013).

Further study is needed to establish whether the trend of omitting the closing marks is also similar among students who are native speakers. Additionally, further research should be conducted to determine why non-native students often forget to include an acceptable closing tag at the end of their sequential emails.

Another area that needs further study is the differences in the directness level of requests between native and non-native students. It is imperative to confirm if this is the same among native speakers who are students. Understanding this difference will have significant implications in English Language Education.

Regarding grammatical errors, the situation can be attributed to the notion that students do not have enough time to interact with their professors, thus, they are not well versed with the aspects that influence the composure of emails to the faculty members. An excellent example of a controlled environment in emailing is when the receiver or the professor, in this case, provides preconditions that can allow him to respond to one’s mail. In this regard, the professor can come up with a particular format of emails that he can only reply to.

Finally, further studies on this topic should be conducted using different methodological strategies. As mentioned earlier, the researcher opted for a cross-sectional design study because of time limitations. This methodological approach has proved to have several shortcomings. Hence, a future study employing mixed methods and longitudinal design should be conducted to confirm the findings of this study.
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Appendix 1: The Corpus

Here are the primary data of 50 formal emails from 10 non-native speakers of English.

Student 1

1. (Date-03.02.2018)

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a current student of Mathematics in your reputed University. Some of my close friends and family members want to visit London to meet me. For this purpose, I need to invite them first. Please let me know the procedure of invitation. Thanks.

2. (Date-07.02.2018)

Sir,

How are you? It is been over a month I couldn’t manage to contact you due to my adjustment here. I am doing well, although very slow in study. Hope you are doing well. Please keep me in your prayers.

3. (Date-07.03.2018)

Sir, thank you sir for your kind reply. I am enclosing here the number of the person. Keep me in your prayers.

4. (Date-08.03.2018)

dear Sir, Here is the mail confirming about the payment of my total accommodation fees in a single term. Thanks

5. (Date-05.04.2018)

Dear Madam,

I am unable to open my student portal at all with my student portal ID and password after the spelling of my name has been changed. Would you please kindly provide me my new student portal ID and password so that I can use it probably which is crucial for my study? Thanks.

Student 2

6. (Date-06.02.2018)

Dear Sir,

I have not been issued for a debit/credit card yet, so I would be very grateful if it is possible to make a bank transfer of the entire accommodation fees from my bank account.
As such, it would be of great help if you can kindly provide me your bank account details so as to pay my accommodation fees.

7. (Date-10.02.2018)

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your kind reply. As far as my visa application process is pending for tomorrow, I would like to initiate the payment process option the day after tomorrow hopefully.

8. (Date-15.02.2018)

Dear Sir,

I am writing this time for a query. As far as my visa application process is pending for a decision, I would like to know about the payment system of my accommodation fees. Can I pay the whole accommodation fees in one single instalment, instead of three separate instalments?

Thanks in advance.

9. (Date-18.02.2018)

dear Sir/Madam,

I am a new International Postgraduate student at the University in Applied Chemistry which is going to be started from September, 2017. I am a student of on-campus accommodation. I have already deposited £250 and made an accommodation fee payment plan in three instalments. Also, I hope to complete and submit my online enrollment within a day or two. Thanks

10. (Date-03.06.2018)

Dear Sir, I have got my CAS form very recently and managed to apply for the tier 4 general student visa by September 06, 2018. Due to my delay in visa application, I am afraid, I will be late arriving at my allocated room and miss the orientation program starting from 13 September, 2018 as well as some of the earlier classes starting from September 18, 2018. The visa application will take maximum three weeks from September 6, 2018. I do apologize for the unexpected delay.

Looking forward to hearing you soon

Student 3

11. (Date-02.03.2018)

Dear Sir,

I have got an unconditional offer recently to study at your University. As now I have
to complete my CAS form and apply for the tier 4 visa, I need to make some changes in my main application. Please let me know the procedure. Looking forward to hearing you soon.

Yours sincerely,

12. (Date-05.03.2018)

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your kind reply. According to my unconditional offer letter, it is stated that a CAS request form is issued to me with the following documents required:

- YOU MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT WITH YOUR CAS REQUEST FORM
- YOU MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF THE FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO SHOW MONEY AVAILABLE TO YOU

Unfortunately, I am confused with the second condition. How much money do I need to show in my account? In addition, I also have forgotten whether I have written my correspondence address and permanent address correctly.

Under the circumstances stated above, please let me review my application.

Thank you

13. (Date-07.03.2018)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your kind response. About the change in my personal details, my present as well as correspondence address in my county is: Please let me know whether these information are written correctly.

14. (Date-07.03.2018)

Dear Sir, I would like to change the payment option section as I myself will finance my expenses. As far as I remember, in my application, I mentioned that my father will finance my expenses. Thank you.

15. (Date-10.03.2018)

Dear Sir, I apologize for all the inconvenience that have incurred. I am re-sending my masters certificate including transcript along with the email confirming my deposit payment which were the requirements of my conditional offer at University. Please find these documents in the attachments.

Student 4

16. (Date-08.03.2018)
Dear Sir, I am re-sending these files in PDF format.
Please let me know if these documents are in compliance with my conditions.

17. (Date-12.03.2018)
Dear Sir,

I am an international student applying for a master’s degree on the University. As a part of my application, I have got a conditional offer requiring a scanned copy of my master’s degree certificate and a deposit of £2500 which I have submitted already. Please kindly let me know the further procedure of my application. Looking forward to hearing you soon.

18. (Date-17.03.2018)
Dear Sir,

Please let me know my Student ID so that I can deposit 2500 GBP to the university which is required as a condition for admitting in this university.

19. (Date-18.03.2018)
Dear sir, please let me know the program schedule and venue. hope to meet you all in the program soon. thanks in advance.

20. (Date-23.03.2018)
Dear Sir, with due respect, I sincerely apologize for this belated response as I was actively engaged with my current job.

Student 5

21. (Date-04.04.2018)
Sir, I can confirm you that I am ready for the allocated interview on 10th April 2018 at 11 a.m. since I do not have any classes to take on that day. Looking forward to your kind response.

22. (Date-06.04.2018)
Dear Mam, How are you? Are you currently living at USA? Mam, I am trying to apply for higher studies. For this, I need your permission to use your address as a primary recommendation. Please grant me your permission. Take care mam.

23. (Date-07.04.2018)
Dear Mam, as far as I remember, I was under your tutorial course in my Hons. 3rd year, and I got some of your classes on American Literature and some novels.
24. (Date-05.05.2018)
Dear Mam, can I kindly have my letter of recommendation today? Please let me know when I have to come. Tried to text and call you, but the phone number was off.

25. (Date-06.05.2018)
Dear Sir/ Madam, I am unable to open my student portal at all with my student portal ID and password after the spelling of my name has been changed. Would you please kindly provide me my new student portal ID and password so that I can use it probably which is crucial for my study? Thanks.

Student 6

26. (Date-01.04.2018)
Dear Sir, Is double occupancy available at your hall? If so, then what is the procedure? Thanks in advance.

27. (Date-04.04.2018)
Dear Sir/Madam:
I am trying to apply for an M.Ed. course in your respected university. I have a question. What is the minimum required score of IELTS for M.ed in TESL at this university? somewhere it is written as 6.0 n somewhere it is written as 7.0! My band is 6.5 and 6 in individual (Listening-6.0, reading-6.0, writing-7.5, speaking-6.5). Can I apply for the course? I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

28. (Date-07.04.2018)
Dear Sir, I have recently applied for the position of Probationary Officer in your reputed bank. An ID number was given to me immediately after successful submission of the application. But unfortunately I have lost it somehow.

Under the circumstances stated above, I would be greatful if you kindly help me retrieving my ID number and oblige me threreby.

29. (Date-10.06.2018)
Dear Sarah, I would like to register for the Post-Graduate Studies in order to express my ideas more coherently with appropriate references to academic literature. Thanks

30. (Date-18.06.2018)
Dear Sir, I am a current post graduate student of your University. Please let me know the upcoming conferences and meetings to be held on relevant subject in this university. Thanks
Student 7

31. (Date-02.02.2018)
Dear Mary, Can I meet you on Wednesday, February 14 at 2 p.m. regarding my individual assignment? Thanks

32. (Date-03.04.2018)
Dear Sally, Due to huge course load in this semester, I am afraid, I would not be able to continue this Academic Writing module.
Thanks

33. (Date-25.05.2018)
Dear Anne, Can I meet you on Tuesday, January 30, around 3.30 p.m.? I did not get any marks from your course. Thanks

34. (Date-28.05.2018)
Dear Sandra,
I would like to register for your course in order to express my ideas more coherently with appropriate references to academic literature. Thanks.

35. (Date-31.05.2018)
Dear Margaret, Can I meet you on Thursday, December 14, around 12.30 p.m. for the purpose of individual research project structure? Thanks

Student 8

36. (Date-05.01.2018)
Dear Rafael!!
Greetings!!! I am hereby too pleased to receive this email as to enroll in PHD program which was always my dream. Please let me know the criteria for admission. However, after completing MSC in Project Management, I haven’t yet appear in the IELTS exam and will be appear my April. Is it possible to enroll in the program without IELTS? Moreover what is the tuition fee structure?
Waiting to hear from you.

37. (Date-06.01.2018)
Dear Sir/ Madam,
Greetings!!! I am from India. I would like to enroll in the PHD program of Management. Before then let me introduce myself briefly. My last degree was from United Kingdom, MSC in Project Management held on 2015. After completing masters from UK not yet appeared in the IELTS exam. Please let me know the entry requirement and tuition fee structure. However, is it possible to get admission by this year?
Please feel free to contact me without any hesitation. Waiting eagerly to hear from you.
Bes regards

38. **(Date-07.01.2018)**

Dear Sir, Hope that you are doing well. I appreciate your prompt response towards my enquiry. Best regards

39. **(Date-08.02.2018)**

Dear Sir, Thank you for your feedback. I guess the tuition fee is quite high for me. Is there any option for stipend the tuition? Or installment method? If so that would be bit easier for me to bear. Hope that you will take me as your consideration. Best regards

40. **(Date-10.02.2018)**

Dear Sir, I am sorry to know that you couldn’t catch me on cell. However I am now available on this number. If you are available now please give me a call for any query. Waiting to hear from you soon.

**Student 9**

41. **(Date-03.03.2018)**

Dear Carine,

Hope that you are doing well. I have been read through your research paper on google and I am eagerly interested to work with you. I have completed my MSC from a reputed University in London and my major was Marketing. Currently I am in my home country, working as student counsellor and in admin in a private university of my country. As my MSC was in Marketing, I would appreciate if you provide any guideline to me or be peer with me on this topic.

Waiting to hear from you soon.

42. **(Date-05.05.2018)**

Dear Sir, Thanks very much for your time and for consideration. Please send me the course timetable, it is not showing in my moodle. Kind regards.

43. **(Date-18.05.2018)**

Dear Madam, Thanks you very much for increasing my course starts date. But Ukvi haven’t send my documents back yet, I haven’t receive any response from them. Without documents I can’t travel. Today is the last working day, I am afraid that I’ll be late. Look forward to hear from you,

44. **(Date-21.05.2018)**

Dear sir, With due Respect I have emailed the registrar for course change with my statement. I want to confirm that how much time university take in this process, Because course starts date is the 2nd of October. Is it possible that the process complete before course starts so that I join on first session.
Dear Sir, My enrollment is complete and My Student ID number has been provided recently. But my oyster card is not approved yet they said your Education establishment do not provide evidence.

Student 10

Dear Sir, I have send Cas request form along all documents. If you need any other documents please tell me I will provide you as soon as possible because I don’t have enough time my class start date is 14 August 2018. I need Cas no so I will file my visa application ASAP.

I hope you are well. I am one of your post graduate students. I am hospitalized at the moment thats why I couldn’t come today. I apologize you to informing late.

Dear Sir, With due respect it is stated that I am not feeling well due to temperature and skin allergy. I am new here and still not register in surgery. I started my work on first draft and it is almost complete, but i need to improve it. Please give me favor i need 3 more days to complete my task.

Dear Sir, I collect my BRP. I will submit on Monday. Please inform me about your office direction. Because yesterday I tried to submit it but I can’t find ur office.

Dear Sir, I’m trying my best to get appointment soon ‘nd successfully I got it tomorrow from another center near my city. Hope to see you soon. Thanks.

**Contributor:** Shama E Shahid is a lecturer at International University of Scholars. She has completed her M.A. (English Literature) from department of English, Dhaka University. She holds a Master’s degree in Applied Linguistics and TESOL from University of Roehampton, London. Her research interests are: Applied Linguistics, English Language Teaching and Technology in Education.
Examing the Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge of Nepalese Teacher Educators

Suman Laudari and Julia Prior

Abstract

Teacher-educators’ TPACK profile suggests whether and/or to what extent they can help future teachers to develop competencies required to teach with technology. However, teachers-educators’ digital competencies are not well understood because of the limited number of research studies. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the Nepali teacher-educators’ competencies in the use of educational technology. The study collected data from 153 teacher educators from 63 teacher education campuses in Nepal using a TPACK questionnaire combined with an ICT confidence survey. The findings reveal that teacher educators were more confident about their pedagogical knowledge (PK) and content knowledge (CK) than their technological knowledge (TK) and technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK). The findings suggest that the teacher educators lacked competencies to teach and to demonstrate technology integration in educational practice. The implication of this finding is that pre-service teachers will miss the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge required to use technology in their future practice.

Keywords: TPACK, ICT, educational technologies, teacher educators, Nepal

Introduction

Teacher educators are an important group of professionals because their behaviour about technology use in teaching and learning renders a substantial contribution to the development of pre-service teachers into digitally competent teachers. As teacher educators teach the future teachers, their practices influence the pedagogies of teachers in school (Murray & Male, 2005; Nelson, Voithofer, & Cheng, 2019). In other words, the way teacher educators use technology in their classes influences what pre-service teachers learn about technology use in their future practice. Therefore, it is imperative to explore teacher educators’ readiness to teach with digital competencies in order to understand whether future teachers, in the teacher-education programmes, will learn the skills required to teach with technology.
For the purpose of this study, teacher educators refer to the faculty members who teach Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) courses. Data for this study were collected using a five-point Likert scale survey with 39 items, combined with an ICT confidence survey which comprised fourteen items. Descriptive analysis was carried out to understand teacher educators’ confidence in using a range of digital tools and perceived TPACK practices. The findings of this study contribute to addressing the gap in the knowledge area about teacher educators’ technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK).

Background

Teacher education programmes in Nepalese universities are predominantly face-to-face, and only a few institutions have managed to integrate technologies to blend their pedagogical practice (Laudari, 2019). Research (Maski Rana, 2018, Rana, Greenwood & Fox-Turnbull, 2019) has also suggested that many in-service teachers are ill-prepared to teach with technology because they did not experience technology use during their own pre-service courses. The lack of experience can be understood well when the curricula of teacher education courses are considered. Dhakal and Pant (2016), in a review of teacher education curricula, found that there was no dedicated course on technology use in the Nepalese universities. Inadequacies of the policy of ICT use in the teacher training faculties were also identified by Maski Rana (2018) and Laudari (2019).

Likewise, studies have also documented paucity in resources, policy-related issues, and lack of technology use training. For example, Laudari and Maher (2019) found that factors related to ICT policies, training for teacher education, and technological resources hindered technology use. Similarly, a study by Shields (2012) also argued that in addition to the paucity of resources, the policy on technology in education lacked clarity.

While there are myriad issues in technology use, government policies expect teachers and teacher educators to use technology in their practice. For example, the teacher competency framework (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2016) identifies the ability to use technology as a key competency of teachers. Furthermore, the policy on higher education (Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, 2015) emphasizes on the use of technology. Whilst these policies are introduced to align with the global trend in the educational practices (Rana et al. 2019), they do not consider how pre-service and in-service teachers will gain those skills (Laudari, 2018). As B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees are teacher preparation courses, teacher educators’ technology-use related practices and ICT competencies influence the development of technology use knowledge and skills in future teachers. Therefore, teacher educators’ digital competencies must be studied and inadequacies addressed.

This study aimed to provide a deeper understanding of teacher educators’ readiness to teach with technology. It investigates their technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) profile and ICT confidence because they can predict teacher
educators’ digital readiness (Albion, Jamieson-Proctor & Finger, 2010). This inquiry, therefore, addresses two research questions:

- What are the perceived ICT confidence and TPACK profile of teacher educators?
- What do the teacher educators’ ICT confidence and TPACK profile suggest about their readiness to teach with technology?

**Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK)**

Developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), TPACK has been founded on Shulman’s (1986) construct of pedagogical content knowledge. TPACK characterises the knowledge base required to effectively teach with technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The framework posits that teachers need to possess three different kinds of knowledge in order to effectively teach with technology (Blackwell, Lauricella, & Wartella, 2016). This is consistent with Koehler and Mishra’s (2009) claim that “at the heart of good teaching with technology are three core components: content, pedagogy, and technology, plus the relationships among and between them” (p.62). Content knowledge is about knowledge of the subject matter, for example, the knowledge of English language grammar for English language teachers (Koehler, Mishra, & Cain, 2013; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Pedagogical knowledge refers to the ability to devise lessons to present content and scaffold students’ learning based on their previous experience. By the same token, technological knowledge relates to skills to use technology to maximise learning.

The TPACK framework models the interactions between technology, content, and pedagogy. The interactions between these three areas result in seven components (See Figure 1). They are pedagogical knowledge (PK), content knowledge (CK), technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological content knowledge (TCK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and technological pedagogical and content knowledge (TPCK). These components describe the sets of skills that teachers need to develop to teach specific content using technology, which aligns with their pedagogical practice (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

**Figure 1**

**TPACK framework**

Note. This figure is adapted from Mishra and Koehler (2006)
The TPACK is believed to be a comprehensive model in technology integration in teaching and learning in that it considers the complex relationships that shape the technology, content and pedagogical knowledge and how they interact when it comes to using technology in the classroom (Koehler et al., 2013). Further, while most technology acceptance frameworks do not consider the role of context, TPACK acknowledges the influence of contextual factors in the efficient use of technology in education.

However, there is dissonance on the definition of TPACK components as their boundaries are thought to be blurry (Angeli, Valanides and Chrisodoulou, 2016; Archambault, Wetzel, Foulger, & Kim Williams, 2010). Additionally, it is argued in the literature that knowledge and growth in each contributing knowledge base does not result in the growth of TPACK (Angeli et al., 2016). Therefore, for a balanced growth of skills in each of its components, explicit instructions need to be provided. This implies that teacher educators need to have very well-developed TPACK skills to help future teachers develop these skills in turn.

While a large number of studies have investigated pre-service teachers’ (e.g., Nelson, 2017; Voogt & McKenney, 2017) and in-service school teachers’ TPACK (e.g., Dalal, Archambault, & Shelton, 2017), only a few studies have actually measured teacher educators’ TPACK. Studies have also explored how pre-service teachers have been supported through teacher education courses to enhance their TPACK (e.g., Baser, Kopcha, & Ozden, 2016; Drummond & Sweeney, 2016; Khine, Ali, & Afari, 2016; Nelson, 2017; Voogt & McKenney, 2017). Likewise, teacher educators’ use and modelling of technology use have been studied from the perspectives of pre-service teachers (Baran, Canbazoglu Bilici, Albayrak Sari, & Tondeur, 2019) as well as from the perceptions of teacher educators themselves (Tondeur, Scherer, Siddiq, & Baran, 2019).

For example, Tondeur, van Braak, Siddiq, and Scherer (2016) examined how three teacher education institutes in Flanders promoted the TPACK knowledge in pre-service teacher training. The institutes were transitioning from an isolated ICT course to a technology-embedded teacher preparation course. However, pre-service teachers’ TPACK was stunted because their teacher educators lacked the appropriate skills and knowledge of ICT relevant to the curriculum and their practices. Similar findings were also reported by Tondeur et al. (2019). By analysing the interview data from pre-service teachers, they concluded that some “teacher educators seemed to lack ICT-competencies themselves in order to provide clear examples” of TPACK (p. 15).

The lack of teacher educator’s required competencies in technology use limits the development of TPACK elements in pre-service teachers (Albion et al. 2010; Krumsvik, 2014; Valtonen et al., 2017). Consequently, the pre-service teachers’ also miss out on the opportunity to experience how technologies should be used in teaching practices (Krumsvik, Jones, Øfstegaard, & Eikeland, 2016; Røkenes & Krumsvik, 2016) and the pedagogical principles that underpin such practices (Krumsvik, 2014). Therefore, teacher educators’ TPACK knowledge, which is an indicator of their digital competence, and their use of technology in teaching is significant.
The teaching of TPACK must go beyond the discussion on how to integrate the three separate knowledge bases; instructions need to target TPACK development specifically (Angeli et al., 2016). For such teaching to happen, teacher educators need to have these competencies themselves, be aware of the didactic underpinning of practices related to technology, and be able to explain those to the pre-service teachers (Krumsvik, 2014).

Whilst teacher educators’ digital competencies are important, very few studies have explored their perceived abilities to use and model technology use (Foulger, Graziano, Schmidt-Crawford, & Slykhuis, 2018; McGarr & McDonagh, 2019; Uerz, Volman, & Kral, 2018). It is necessary to understand teacher educators’ digital competencies as that reveals whether they can help pre-service teachers develop related competencies for their future practices (Nelson, 2017; Nelson et al., 2019). Hence, the findings of this study are significant in that they will contribute to the knowledge of teacher educators’ TPACK and what this means to teach with technology.

Research Methodology

In order to understand the TPACK profile of teacher educators, this study surveyed 163 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher educators from 63 teacher education campuses located in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Nepal. The survey participants were selected using a snowball sampling method (Bryman, 2015), primarily because the researchers were unable to access the database of EFL teacher educators across the country. Furthermore, due to a limited number of studies in the related field in Nepal, very little information was available on whether any teacher educators use technologies in pedagogical practices in teacher education practices.

As we were interested in collecting data from teacher educators who used technology, it would be hard to identify an appropriate population without a snowball sampling. Therefore, the first author contacted a few teacher educators teaching at the Central Department of Tribhuvan University for the survey. Those teacher educators helped the author to identify potential participants, who were later contacted by the author. Each potential participant was also requested to help to find participants in their professional circle.

However, a snowball sampling carries the risk of recruitment of participants with similar interests to the initial group of participants (Babbie, 2014). To minimise that risk, teacher educators in different contexts, such as teacher educators teaching in private, government and community-owned teacher education campuses in rural, urban and semi-urban were contacted. In total, 425 teacher educators who were identified to use digital technology in their pedagogical practices were invited to participate in a survey; 163 teacher educators returned the survey. Table 1 below presents a demographic summary of the participants.
Table 1 - Participation information table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience (in years)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>153</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus location</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>61</td>
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<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.Ed.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey Design

The survey tool consisted of three distinct parts (see Appendix-1). Participants’ demographic information was collected in the first part. The second part was an ICT confidence survey, which was adapted from Albion et al. (2010). The ICT confidence survey was added because it measured teacher educators’ confidence in using different kinds of digital tools. Besides, it indicated how confident the teacher educators felt to facilitate ICT integration with their students (Albion et al., 2010). The third part of the survey was a TPACK questionnaire, adapted from Mishra & Koehler (2006) and Baser et al. (2016). The TPACK questionnaire consisted of 39 items measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Before distributing the survey to the survey participants, they were validated with five expert EFL teacher educators. Discussions were held with each of these experts to test that the questionnaire was context-sensitive, and that each of the items was unambiguous.

As the survey was intended to be delivered to a large group of teacher educators, it was designed on Google Form and distributed electronically, through email, Facebook messenger and WhatsApp. The survey was also made available in print, at the request of some participants.

The data was collected between December 2017 and April 2018. Upon the completion of the data collection, they were checked for completeness. Any data set with incomplete or erroneous information was dropped. Overall, 10 of the 163 survey responses were incomplete. Therefore, they were not included in the analysis. Thus, the final data set
comes from 153 teacher educators. The data was imported to SPSS version 24.0 for a descriptive analysis.

To measure the internal consistency of the items, i.e. “the degree to which the items that make up the scale hang together” (Pallant, 2013, p. 97), a reliability analysis was computed. The reliability score, which is reported as Cronbach’s alpha (α), was α-0.813 for the whole questionnaire. This implies that the questions included in the survey were sufficiently reliable, the items in the survey had internal consistencies and were homogeneous in what they were intended to measure (Dörnyei, 2010).

Findings and Discussion

The findings from the survey and discussion are presented in this section. The discussion begins with an overview of the reliability score of the survey tool, which is followed by the results of descriptive analysis, such as mean, median and standard deviation. The analyses are used to comment on teacher educators’ self-reported ICT confidence and their TPACK profile.

ICT Confidence Survey

The first part of the survey consisted of an ICT confidence tool. The tool was designed to obtain information on teacher educators’ confidence in using different computer hardware and associated programs. This part of the survey, therefore, asked teacher educators to rate their confidence to use 14 different kinds of hardware and software (as shown in Table 1 below), on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from no confidence (1) to highly confident (4), for each application.

Some of the applications listed were related to using web-based tools (such as LMS and social networking sites), others were about using office-based applications, web-based search engine and different computer associated hardware. The results of the descriptive analysis are summarised in Table 1 below. The results of the descriptive test indicated that the mean scores ranged between 1.53 and 2.94.

Table 1

Results of the descriptive test for ICT confidence survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Word</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft PowerPoint</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreadsheets</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OneNote</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 1 suggest that the teacher educators’ ICT confidence, in general, was around or above midpoint (i.e. 2). The highest mean score was 3.03 for email, followed by 2.90 for the social networking sites (SNSs) and 2.80 for web search engines. The scores for Microsoft Word and PowerPoint were 2.64 and 2.54. Whilst web applications, such as email and social networking sites are related to communication, search engines are associated with information search and information processing, and Microsoft Office applications are related to productivity activities (Hughes, Liu, & Lim, 2016). Thus, the scores reported above suggest that the teacher educators had some confidence in using digital tools related to communication (e.g. E-mail), finding information (Google) and production (Microsoft Word). Email is a popular tool used in personal and professional communication and the Internet is used to find resources for personal and professional use, therefore the teacher educators may have displayed confidence in using them. As these tools are commonly used in day-to-day lives – not necessarily just in teaching and learning – the teacher educators may have shown higher confidence in using these tools.

Likewise, Microsoft applications (Words, PowerPoint and Excel) are some of the most frequently used tools in a computer. As all the teacher educators were computer literate, it can be reasonably assumed that they have seen and used these tools for different reasons. This is potentially the reason why they recorded higher confidence in the use of these tools.

As regards the tools related to content creation and publishing (e.g. YouTube and blog), and collaboration (e.g. OneNote), teacher educators’ self-reported confidence seemed to be below midpoint. For example, the mean score for OneNote use was 1.40 and for YouTube, it was 2.00. Teacher educators may have self-reported lowly regarding the use of those tools because they were not familiar with their use for content creation and publishing. This is because very few educational institutions use digital tools, such as OneNote, for collaboration, or own a YouTube channel to share self-created content (Laudari, 2019).
Unlike the common tools such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel, OneNote and video creation tools are primarily used in professional settings for file sharing, content creation and collaboration. None of these teacher educators had technology use experience as students, nor did they use these tools as teachers, so it was not uncommon to have low scores on the use of these tools. Because they lacked experience and did not have a need to use these tools in their practices, they lacked skills in using tools that are used in collaboration, content creation and sharing, which can be attributed as the reason for low scores in the use of digital tools related to content creation and sharing.

The scores in the confidence survey also need to be discussed in consideration of the context of the teacher educator. As stated in the introduction, most teacher educators had just started using digital technology in their practice. In the initial phase of technology use, it is common for teacher educators to use technologies to feature productivity tools more than creation and publication tools (Hughes et al., 2016). As observed by these authors, teacher educators in the study used productivity tools rather than creation and publishing tools (Gray, Thomas, & Lewis, 2010). Georgina and Olson (2008) argue that this is a common phenomenon when academics are new to technology or lack higher-order skills to use digital tools.

Therefore, the findings of the ICT confidence survey illustrate that the teacher educators’ lack of confidence to use tools for content creation and collaboration was not uncommon given their context, relatively new experience with technology and lack of competencies (e.g. TPACK) required to use technology. When teacher educators lack these skills, it can be safely assumed that they fail to demonstrate the use of these tools in practice. As a result, pre-service teachers will miss the opportunity to learn how ICT tools could be used for the creation of the content and to enhance collaboration in their teaching.

**Results of TPACK Survey**

The third component of the survey consisted of questions related to TPACK measurement, assessed in 39 five-point Likert items. The results of the frequency test are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TK</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.555</td>
<td>0.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CK</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.200</td>
<td>0.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PK</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>0.527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the results in Table 4 demonstrate, teacher educators’ self-rated scores in TPACK are slightly above mid-range on a 5-point scale, with a standard deviation lower than 0.8, which suggests that there was some homogeneity in teacher educators’ TPACK profile.

Generally, the scores for most of the components of the TPACK ranged around mid-level. PC and CK have mean scores of 4.0. These scores suggest that the teacher educators had relatively higher confidence in their pedagogical and content knowledge. This result might have because all the teacher educators in the data set had at least five years’ experience of teaching EFL subjects. Additionally, they also studied the subject they taught as students in the teacher education courses. It is argued that the experience gained as students gives a higher confidence in practice as teachers (Bandura, 1997; Ross, 1994) which may have been the reasons for high ratings in PC and CK components of TPACK. Additionally, the EFL teacher education course in Nepal is highly theoretical and content-driven, which might have contributed to them believing that their content and pedagogical knowledge is robust.

Whilst the mean scores were above mid-range, of the seven components in the TPACK survey, the lowest scores were for TPCK (3.0) and TCK (3.4). Likewise, the scores for TK and TPK were also lower than those for PK and CK. Relatively lower scores for the TK and related components suggest that the teacher educators were not as confident in integrating technologies as they were in the pedagogical and content knowledge. While this finding is similar to that of Instefjord (2015) and Instefjord and Munthe (2017), ICT use and availability in higher education are much lower in Nepal (Internet World Stats, 2017) than in Norway, where Instefjord and Munthe’s (2017) study is based. So, despite having high ratings for PK and CK, their TK or TPCK is rated lowly. When the finding of this study is compared against those of Instefjord and Munthe’s (2017), it alludes to the fact that the availability of technology does not necessarily result in higher TPACK in teacher educators.

Furthermore, as TPACK represents knowledge and skills required to use ICT in teaching and learning (Albion, et al., 2010), a low score in TPCK suggest that teacher educators lacked knowledge required to integrate technology in their teaching to enhance content presentation and student engagement. Without such knowledge, teacher educators are not able to demonstrate and discuss the didactic underpinning of their technological practice (Krumsvik, 2014).

Moreover, from a contextual perspective, it is only recently that policy discussion on technology use in higher education started (Government of Nepal Ministry of Education, 2015). Therefore, not all teacher educators had access to the digital tools,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCK</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCK</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPK</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPCK</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
training and support required to use ICT tools seamlessly in their pedagogical practices or to demonstrate how technologies are used in their practice (Laudari & Maher, 2019). So, it is common for teacher educators to feel that they lack the necessary skills to use digital tools (Laudari, 2019).

Additionally, when the mean scores in the TPACK survey, especially for the technological knowledge (TK) and related components, is read in conjunction with the results of the ICT (technology) confidence survey, it demonstrated that their confidence in using collaboration and content creation tools was low. Tools used for collaboration and content creation require advanced skills than the tools used for productivity, such as email and Microsoft Word. So, having low confidence to use those tools suggests that they had limited technological skills.

Furthermore, it is argued in the literature (e.g. Angeli & Valanides, 2013; Angeli et al., 2016; Mishra & Koehler, 2006) that for teachers to be able to teach with technologies, they need to possess technological skills, as well as competencies in how digital tools can be combined with pedagogy and content. Such knowledge is developed when explicit instruction is provided (Angeli et al., 2016; Krumsvik, 2014). As teacher educators in Nepal have limited training opportunities on the pedagogical use of technology as teachers and students (Laudari & Maher, 2019), their TK, TCK or TPCK may have been low. Unless teacher educators receive explicit instructions on technology use in teaching and learning, it is common for them to feel underprepared to use technology (Laudari, 2019).

Conclusions and Implications

The results of this study demonstrated that while many teacher educators possessed some ICT confidence around the use of the digital tools used for information search and communication, their skills in using tools related to information creation and publication was low. Likewise, the results of the ICT confidence survey showed that the teacher educators had low confidence in using digital tools that are used for collaboration. The results of the TPACK section also showed that the teacher educators had higher skills in pedagogy and content than in the technology domain. These results are similar to that of Tondeur et. al, (2016) and Tondeur et al. (2019). In addition, they suggest that teacher educators were not confident in how they could present content using technology and suitable pedagogical approaches.

The implication of the findings (i.e. teacher educators lacking ICT competencies) is that they cannot act as competent role models for their pre-service teachers when they cannot demonstrate how technologies should be used in teaching and learning (Krumsvik, 2014). Not experiencing technology use during teacher training course means that the pre-service teachers miss out on the opportunities to experience and develop competencies required to use technology seamlessly in their future practice (Krumsvik, 2014), in specific, their technology uptake and integration in their practice.
This will, in turn, influence the educational outcome of technology use in high schools (Ping, Schellings, & Beijaard, 2018).

Therefore, teacher educators have a need to enhance their digital competencies so that they can support pre-service teachers in developing their digital competencies (Laudari, 2019). Teacher educators could enhance their digital competencies by engaging in collaborative learning (Lindqvist, 2019). Likewise, teacher education institutes and policy-making bodies need to recognise that teacher educators may lack the skills to support the development of future teachers’ digital competencies by providing professional development opportunities and technical support (Laudari & Maher, 2019; Laudari, 2019).

Also, more research attention should be directed towards teacher educators’ digital competencies and their digital practices. With more dialogue and evidence-based empirical studies, we believe teacher educators’ digital competencies, as a field, will gain more discussion as the field is suggested to have paucity of research (e.g. see Flores, 2018; McGarr & McDonagh, 2019; Ping et al., 2018).

Future research, in fact, should consider doing ethnographic research by collecting evidence from classrooms and digital spaces to understand teacher educators’ actual practice. To understand the impact of teacher educators’ digital practices, data may be collected from their students as well. Likewise, national and international policies on ICT in education and the prominence of teacher educators’ digital competencies and practices need to be examined.

References


Appendix-1

Section 1 - About You

University: ______________________ Campus (if applicable) : ______________________
Course: ______________________ Year/Semester: __________________
How long have you been teaching? ______
Gender: Male _______ Female _____
Do you have an Email address? Y ___   N ___
Do you have a Facebook/Twitter account? Y____   N____
Do you have a Viber/Skype/WhatsApp account? Y_____   N______

Section 2 – ICT Confidence Survey

Please rate your confidence in using each of the following ICT application. As shown in the example, please put a cross mark (X) under the answer that best matches your confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Whiteboard</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>No Confidence</th>
<th>Some Confidence</th>
<th>Confident</th>
<th>Very Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Word</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft Power Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spreadsheets (Excel)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graphic creation (Adobe Photoshop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital image capture (Digital Camera &amp; Scanner)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email (Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web searching (Google, Google Scholar, Bing, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social networking site (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, ResearchGate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindle, iTunes Books, Amazon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning management system (Blackboard, Moodle, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Publishing (Blogs, podcasts, YouTube)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ipad, Ipod, MacBook</td>
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</table>
Section 3 – Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge Survey

As shown in the example, please put a cross mark (X) under the answer that best matches your opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: I own a smart phone</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - Strongly Disagree  2- Disagree  3 – Neither agree nor disagree  4 - Agree  5 - Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand the meaning of basic technological terms (e.g. operating system, wireless connection, virtual memory, etc.) and can use them appropriately.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can adjust computer settings such as installing software and establishing an Internet connection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can use devices such as a smart phone, laptops or iPad effectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I need help to troubleshoot common computer problems.*</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can use digital classroom equipment such as projectors and smart boards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can use Office programs (i.e. Word, PowerPoint, etc.) with a high level of proficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it challenging to create multimedia (e.g. video, web pages, etc.) using text, pictures, sound, video, and animation by myself. *</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I use collaboration tools (wiki, OneNote, Google Doc, Dropbox, etc.) when I need them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can learn software that helps me complete a variety of tasks more efficiently.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content Knowledge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it hard to express my ideas and feelings by speaking in English. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can express my ideas and feelings by writing in English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can read texts written in English with the correct pronunciation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I find it difficult to understand texts written in English.*</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can understand the speech of a native English speaker easily.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical Knowledge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I can use teaching methods and techniques that are appropriate for a learning environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can design a learning experience that is appropriate for the level of students.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can support students’ learning in accordance with their physical, mental, emotional, social, and cultural differences.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Content Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can collaborate with school stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, etc.) to support students’ learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can reflect the experiences that I gain from professional development programs to my teaching process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can support students’ out-of-class work to facilitate their self-regulated learning.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can manage a classroom learning environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can evaluate students’ learning processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use appropriate teaching methods and techniques to support students in developing their language skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can prepare curricular activities that develop students’ language skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can adapt a lesson plan in accordance with students’ language skill levels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological Pedagogical Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can take advantage of multimedia (e.g. video, slideshow, etc.) to express my ideas about various topics in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can benefit from using technology (e.g. web conferencing and discussion forums) to contribute at a distance to multilingual communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use collaboration tools (e.g. Second Life, wiki, etc.) to work collaboratively with other persons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can meet students’ individualized needs by using information technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can lead students to use information technologies legally, ethically, safely, and with respect to copyrights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can support students as they use technology such as virtual discussion platforms to develop their higher order thinking abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can manage the classroom-learning environment while using technology in the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can decide when technology would benefit my teaching of specific English curricular standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can design learning materials by using technology that supports students’ language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use multimedia such as videos and websites to support students’ language learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can use collaboration tools (e.g. wiki, 3D virtual environments, etc.) to support students’ language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can support students as they use technology to support their development of language skills in an independent manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I can use Web 2.0 tools (animation tools, digital story tools, etc.) to develop students’ language skills.

I can support my professional development by using technological tools and resources to continuously improve the language teaching process.

**Contributors**

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**Dr Julia Prior** is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Computer Science at the University of Technology Sydney. She teaches software development and innovation in various degree courses. Her research focuses on professional software development practice, as well as software and computer science education.
Thematic Analysis Approach: A Step by Step Guide for ELT Research Practitioners

Dr. Saraswati Dawadi

Abstract
The author, having drawn examples from her doctoral study, describes how a thematic analysis approach was employed to interpret raw data in her doctoral study which explored the impacts of a high-stakes test on students and parents in Nepal. As the main purpose of this paper is to provide some guidelines for English language teaching (ELT) practitioners and early career researchers to rigorously apply a thematic analysis approach, this paper presents a step-by-step guideline for the application of the approach. It also presents detailed examples of the processes the author followed during the analysis of her data (from familiarising with the data to identifying initial codes to preparing a final report) to reveal how analysis of the raw data (from interviews and oral diaries transcripts) progressed towards the identification of overarching themes that captured the nature of the test impacts in the Nepalese context described by participants in the study.

Keywords: rigor, flexibility, thematic analysis, qualitative research

Introduction
Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organise and analyse complex data sets. It is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets. It involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the transcribed data (King, 2004; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). A rigorous thematic analysis approach can produce insightful and trustworthy findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). However, there is no clear guidance for early career researchers to conduct rigorous thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is theoretically flexible for identifying, describing, and interpreting patterns (themes) within a data set in great detail. It fits well with any qualitative study which attempts to explore complex research issues. Indeed, it is so flexible that it “can be incorporated into any epistemological approach” (Chamberlain, 2015, p.68). Nevertheless, there is a potential limitation of thematic analysis, that is, its methodology is not often clearly reported although it has been widely used in
 qualitative studies. Highlighting the benefits of using thematic analysis in a qualitative study, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that this approach makes the analysis more valid because of its accessibility, transparency, and flexibility.

Thematic analysis can be made in both deductive (top-down) and inductive (bottom-up) way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the inductive analysis, the data is coded without trying to fit the themes into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s preconceptions about the research (Brown & Clark, 2006). So, themes emerge through the data itself without paying attention to the themes included in other studies. Themes are strongly linked to the data instead of the researcher’s theoretical interest in the topic. On the other hand, the deductive approach is explicitly researcher-driven allowing the researchers to analyse the data in relation to their theoretical interest in the issues being investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher using this approach usually begins the analysis with the themes that are identified by the researcher through a literature review.

In order to maximise the overall depths of the analysis, both deductive and inductive approaches can be utilised. A deductive approach can be used as the starting point which allows analysing data in relation to the themes that have emerged through the review of literature done for the study or the research questions designed for the study. However, each of the interesting or relevant information (themes) emerging through the data can also be considered. Even the unexpected themes can be taken into consideration for a better understanding of the phenomenon in question. Therefore, a large number of inductive codes may emerge when analysing data.

Thematic analysis is a constant-comparative method that involves reading and rereading the transcripts in a systematic way (Cavendish, 2011) and the most important aspect in the thematic analysis is that the analysis process should be systematic so that the final product is of good quality. In order to maintain necessary rigour in the analysis process, a study can adopt the six-phase process as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006); each of which is discussed below. Nevertheless, those analytic procedures are not a linear series of steps but rather an iterative and reflective process; it involves a constant moving back and forward between phases.

The application of a thematic analysis approach sounds challenging for early career researchers and/or ELT practitioners. Therefore, this paper aims at presenting a step-by-step guideline for the application of the approach. In the following section, the author describes the steps or the processes that the author followed during the analysis of qualitative data in her doctoral study which explored the impacts of the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) English test on English as a second language (ESL) learners (15 to 16 years old) and parents in Nepal. It is worth pointing out that ELT and testing have a very long history in Nepal but very little is known about testing practices in the Nepalese context. Therefore, the study explored the issues around the SEE English test which is conducted at the end of 10-year school education in Nepal. The study employed a mixed-methods approach and the qualitative data in the study included oral weekly diaries (n=72) intermittently recorded by six students over a year,
and semi-structured interviews with six students and their parents (n=24, one parent for each).

**Phase One: Familiarisation with the Data**

The first phase (familiarisation with the data), as its name suggests, begins with researchers’ interest in familiarising themselves with their data. This phase helps them to figure out the type (and number) of themes that might emerge through the data. Indeed, the phase is crucial as it guides further steps that the researcher may have to carry out to analyse the data in an appropriate way. The following section describes what the current author did during the first phase of data analysis in her doctoral study. At first, all the oral diaries and interviews were transcribed in full to have a sense of how the participants reacted to the test impact issues raised in this study. All the transcripts were transferred into NVivo 10 for the analysis. Then, a repeated careful reading of the transcript was made to read the transcripts as ‘things in themselves’ (Denscombe, 2007, p.77) and to avoid the influence of the author’s prior knowledge and experience in the field. While reading the transcripts, all the interesting information was highlighted; 507 points of interest in total were detected and cross-referenced against the Research Questions (see Table 1). The main purpose of going through all the data in such a way was to become fully immersed in the whole dataset and collect initial points of interest (Chamberlain, 2015). Thus, this step informed the author well about the depth and breadth of the content.

As indicated in Table 1, there were 5 uncertain points of interest. Those points were accepted after the discussion about the points with the supervisors; two were subsumed into the theme of career development, two into test preparation, and one into parental involvement.

**Table 1: Phase one: Familiarisation of Data - Points of interest linked to Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Initial points of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are students’ and parents’ pre-test and post-test attitudes towards the SEE English test?</td>
<td>Test quality, Test fairness, test accuracy</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the test motivate students to learn English? If yes, how does it affect students’ motivation to learn English in the pre-test and post-test context?</td>
<td>Motivation, test preparation strategies</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do students prepare themselves for the SEE English test?</td>
<td>Test preparation</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do students and parents suffer test pressure and anxiety? If yes, what sorts of pressure and anxiety do they suffer?</td>
<td>Test pressure, test anxiety</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do parents involve themselves in preparing their children for the test?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental involvement</th>
<th>49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What are the impacts of the test on students’ career and educational development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study at grade 11, learning English after the test, career development</th>
<th>52</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Uncertain points of interest

| 5 |

Total

| 507 |

**Phase Two: Generating Initial Codes**

The first phase of the data analysis (i.e. familiarisation with the data) allowed the richness of the initial findings to emerge. However, the importance of rereading the transcripts before creating codes was considered. Therefore, she reread the transcripts carefully and coded all the data. The NVivo coding feature, which is efficient, enabled multiple codes to be applied by selecting phrases or sentences/paragraphs that were of interest. All the transcripts were coded after reading the transcripts carefully for several times. A large number of codes (n=116) emerged, some containing just one phrase and others containing one or more sentences. Table 2 presents a few examples of how codes were applied to short segments in the data set.

**Table 2: Data Extracts and Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extracts</th>
<th>Coded for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mom is very much worried about me and she has a hope that I can do well on the test.</td>
<td>Test anxiety on parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am scared of the test.</td>
<td>Test anxiety on students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am also worried that there might be some carelessness when checking our answer sheets.</td>
<td>Test anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I do well on the test, people think that I am a smart girl and I will be praised by them. All the people in my village will know that I have done well on the test. So, the way they look at me will be different. I also think that they will present me as an example to other students for encouraging them to work hard and do well on the test.</td>
<td>Test and social prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that I must try my best to learn English and do well on the test. My parents also always tell me that I must practise hard for the test. So, I am working hard these days.</td>
<td>Motivation to learn English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test pressure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have told her that the SEE is an iron gate for her. If she cannot do well on the test, her future will be dark.</td>
<td>Test importance—parents’ view</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My mother has also guessed some of the important questions, especially essay topics, for the SEE and she has asked me to write the answers of those questions. I memorised a lot of answers for the test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental support</th>
<th>Memorisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The above table indicates the sorts of operations involved in the data coding process. In order to have an overall picture of the codes, all the 116 codes, along with some relevant extracts, were exported from the NVivo and presented on a table. The table supported her to further understand the nature of the data in the study.

**Phase Three: Searching for Themes**

This phase, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), began with a long list of the codes that were identified across the data set. The main purpose of this phase was to find out the patterns and relationships between and across the entire data set (Chamberlain, 2015). The codes had to be analysed considering how different codes could be combined to form an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, the major focus in this step was on the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes. As Brown and Clarke (2006) point out “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to a research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.10). Therefore, it was important to conceptualise those codes as the building-blocks and combine similar or multiple codes to generate potential themes in relation to the research questions (Ansari, 2015).

This phase was the most difficult phase in the analysis process. In order to ease the process, following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) suggestions, a list of the codes was prepared on a separate piece of paper and then they were organised into theme-piles which reflected on the relationship between codes and themes. Because of the explorative nature of the study, it was also important to return to and re-read all the transcripts before clustering codes according to the themes. Thus, the transcripts were re-read and different codes were combined into potential themes, collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. When developing the themes, the author could bring in the concepts and issues that she had previously identified in her literature review. She found that some of the themes from the literature review were truly meaningful and some codes could be subsumed under them.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that themes in a study should be prevalent in most or all of the data items. However, any sort of relevant information, though it appeared in a few sources, was considered in this study. In order to cluster all the codes, a thematic map was initially created (displayed in Figure 1) which contained 12 overarching themes (namely: test fairness, test accuracy, test difficulty, test support for educational development, test support for career development, doing well on the test, instruction clarity, psychological domain, importance of English, learning English after the test, test preparation, and parental involvement). As the main purpose of creating main
themes or categories was to capture the essence of the clustered codes, the main code would include all the related codes. For instance, the main code, test preparation would contain all the codes and sub-codes aimed at capturing students’ strategies to prepare themselves for the test preparation. It was found that all the codes were somehow connected to one of the main codes.

As seen in Figure 1, the first thematic map was huge because it included 12 main themes and 54 sub-themes along with their 14 lower-level codes that initially emerged through the data. All these initial themes were further refined at the next stage of the analysis. The process of refinement in the phase of the analysis is explained in the next section.

**Figure 1: Initial thematic map**

![Thematic Map](image)

**Phase Four: Reviewing Themes**

At this stage, all the themes (master themes, main themes and sub-themes) were intentionally brought together as it was aimed at the refinement of those initially grouped themes and presentation of those themes in a more systematic way. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that themes must be checked for internal homogeneity (coherence and consistency) and external heterogeneity (distinctions between themes).

This stage consisted of two levels. At level one, all coded extracts relevant to each initial theme were extracted from the NVivo file and pasted into a Microsoft Word document to facilitate cross-referencing of coded extracts with the themes and to carry out the retrieval, comparison and organisation of coded extracts and themes in a meaningful way. The author reread all the collated extracts for each theme, clustered all the themes and sub-themes to check whether they could form a coherent pattern. All the codes
and themes along with the collated extracts were considered to see whether they could form a coherent pattern adequately capturing the contours of the coded data.

At level two, a similar process was followed but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set was considered. It was very important to ascertain that the “thematic map ‘accurately’ reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.91). Therefore, all the transcripts were reread, (where appropriate, the extracts were also recoded) to ensure that the themes ‘work’ in relation to the entire data set. Some new codes emerged at this stage. Nonetheless, the last few codes did not add anything substantial. That is why, it was decided to stop recoding the data. Then, all the themes were put back together and the thematic map was refined which could reflect on the type of themes developed for the study, how the themes in the study fit together and the overall story the themes tell us about the data.

During the reviewing process, many of the themes or sub-themes were either merged with other (main) themes or discarded. For instance, ‘taking a bridge course’ did not appear to belong to any thematic category. Similarly, the theme ‘importance of English’, which contained five elements, was later considered not to be directly related to the objective of this study. Therefore, those two themes (taking a bridge course and importance of English) were later deleted on the ground that they were not directly relevant to the study. Similarly, ‘making schedule’ was found to have little data to stand as a separate sub-theme. There was only one student who made a daily schedule following her parents’ suggestion, so it was merged with ‘time spent’. Some new themes were also introduced to merge related themes. For instance, one new theme ‘memorising text’ was introduced to include four sub-themes: memorising stories, essays, letters, and description. Furthermore, five of the main themes: test fairness, test importance, test accuracy, instruction quality and test difficulty were merged in a new theme ‘perceptions of the test’. Moreover, since two of the main themes ‘educational development’ and ‘career development’ showed similar patterns, they were brought together within a new name as ‘test importance’.

Other themes and/or sub-themes were also reviewed, renamed, discarded or merged in the same way. The outcome of the whole process of revision is set out in Figure 2. Having clustered the themes together, five different categories/codes emerged: Test preparation, perceptions of doing well on the test, psychological domains, test importance and parental involvement (see Figure 2). Those five themes (in yellow colour in the Figure) were the master themes and 17 main themes (blue colour) subsumed under those master themes. Among them, four had several sub-themes (brown colour) and four of the sub-themes had also some lower level codes (green colour). Figure 2 captures all of them.
Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

This phase began with an aim of further refining and defining the themes, that is, “identifying the essence of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). Braun and Clarke argue that a theme cannot be too diverse and complex. Therefore, the author went back to collated data extracts for each theme and organised all the themes into a coherent and consistent account. Careful attention was paid to identify the ‘story’ that each theme told, and how it fitted into the broader overall ‘story’ that she wanted to tell about her data in relation to the research questions and to ensure that there was not too much overlap between the themes. The specifics of each theme were refined carefully.

The themes were further refined by reading through all the main themes and sub-themes, codes and extracts. Then, final name along with its definition was assigned to each theme to tell a story about the data. In this stage, some of the lower level themes were merged with higher-order themes as it was realised that those lower level themes would make the thematic map more complex and also add little to the story told by the data. For instance, the three lower level themes (job, school choice and subject choice) of the sub-theme ‘career development’ were merged in it. Furthermore, one of the sub-themes (i.e. tuition) of the theme ‘student strategy’ was considered to be a common sub-theme of the two main themes, student strategy and parental involvement, as it was found that both the students and parents followed this strategy. Similarly, the sub-theme ‘time spent on test preparation’ was considered to be a part of student test preparation strategy. However, after reading the extracts, it was realised that ‘time spent on test preparation’ was not clearly a strategy for the test preparation, rather it was related to the amount of time spent for the test preparation. So, it was treated as a...
separate theme. The final mind-map for the entire dataset resulted from this phase has been displayed in Figure 3. This has been interpreted to report the qualitative findings in her thesis.

**Figure 3: Final thematic map**

![Thematic Map Image]

**Phase Six: Writing Report**

The final phase of the analysis was to write down the report of the findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that report of a thematic analysis must convince the readers of the merit and validity of the analysis. Therefore, a great effort was made to provide a concise, coherent and logical account of the story that the data represented within and across themes by providing sufficient evidence and particular examples and/or extracts which could capture the essence of the point the author was demonstrating. The examples and extracts were embedded within the analytic narrative in such a way that they could make an argument in respect of the research objectives, besides illustrating the story being told.

**Practical Implications**

Teachers in this present era are (need to be) research oriented. It is crucial that they “have the necessary pedagogical skills and competency to improve not only students’ performance but also their ability to critically think, generate new knowledge and innovations” (Basaffar Almasri, & Almasri, 2017, p.171). In other words, their classroom practices have to be informed (or guided) by their research. As rightly pointed out by Rosenshine (2012), teachers can only come up with innovative teaching techniques or strategies if they have adequate research skills to critically analyze their own teaching strategies/practices and identify problems. This might indicate that teachers have to frequently conduct research (particularly action research) to identify the learning needs of their students and introduce remedial teaching (or to solve teaching related problems
in their local contexts). Indeed, the present scenario indicates that action research has a momentum in ELT; more and more teachers have been making efforts to make research-based remedial teaching plans in order to promote students’ learning. However, many teachers lack research skills (Şahan & Tarhan, 2015) and they usually find it difficult to analyse their classroom data. Indeed, analysing qualitative data can present a big challenge even to experienced researchers, let alone early career researchers and/or ELT practitioners. It is hoped that ELT practitioners (and early career researchers) might find this paper useful for them as it provides them a step-by-step guideline to analyse data in a qualitative study.

References


**Contributor:** Dr. Saraswati Dawadi has earned her doctorate in Language Assessment from The Open University, UK. She received the Hornby Trust Scholarship in 2013/2014 to study MA: TESOL at Lancaster University, UK. Her research interest sits broadly within language assessment, work-based learning, second language acquisition and equitable access to quality education.
The Hegemonic Domination of English over Bangla in Bangladeshi English Medium Contexts

Aprita Haque

Abstract

The paper reports on a study which investigated the status of English and Bangla among the English medium (EM) school students in Bangladesh. The main objectives of this study were to find out the attitudes of the English medium (EM) students and their parents towards Bangla and English language and culture, and to identify to which language and culture the students are most frequently exposed. The study also aimed at addressing the issue of hegemony related to English and Bangla language and culture. This study was based on a questionnaire survey. The participants in this study were 65 EM students and 23 parents. The results revealed that the students had highly favourable attitudes towards the English language and culture. Their attitudes towards Bangla were not negative but their responses about their cultural and recreational involvement showed that they were highly exposed to the English language and culture, not to Bangla. These in conjunction with the parents’ responses indicated that there is a potential linguistic and cultural hegemony at work for which the students are facing distancing from Bangla language and culture in favour of the English ones.

Keywords: English-only policy, Hegemony over L1, language and culture, English medium students, beyond-the-classroom contexts

Introduction

English has dominated the language domain all over the world for a long time. The importance of this language has grown so high that not only it has become a compulsory subject in numerous countries but also, according to a 2020 report by ISC Research, globally the number of registered English medium (EM) schools has more than tripled since 2000, bringing the total to 11,541 (Merriman, 2020). An EM school simply refers to an institution where the medium of instruction is English. Krashen (1977) claims in his input hypothesis that learners develop in their knowledge of the language when they comprehend language input that is slightly more advanced than their current level. This actually puts emphasis on keeping the learners exposed to the language so that they
get i+1 input of the language. With that view, EM schools apart from just instructing in English try to provide the students with an ‘English’ environment. Moreover, English has ‘power’ and parents want to equip their children with this powerful linguistic tool (Kachru, 1986) and it is also a sign of status and prestige (Tickoo, 2006). Therefore, parents prefer EM education for their children so that they always practice English for becoming better speakers. Hence, Bangla is highly discouraged in the EM school premises which Haque and Akter (2012) identify as a prohibition of Bangla. On the other hand, the students of EM schools in Bangladesh are frequently exposed to western culture instead of Bangladeshi culture which could have ‘repercussions’ in the long run according to Al-Quaderi and Al-Mahmud (2010).

This tension between English and the mother tongue(s) of the people of the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the Macaulay Minute of 1835 on Education which placed English literature as superior to its oriental counterpart (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). Moreover, Bangladesh is included in Kachru’s (1992) ‘outer circle’ and the country falls under the periphery-English countries as well which Phillipson (1992) refers to as countries on which English was imposed in the colonial times, and where the language has been successfully transplanted and still serves a range of international purposes. Therefore, certainly English has a colonial legacy in Bangladesh and it has been dealt with variously in different education policies over time (see Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). Overall, historically English was placed in an antagonistic position in Bangladesh and all EM schools were abolished in 1972 as part of the process of Bengalisation (Banu & Sussex, 2001)

However, English regained its importance in policy gradually from National Education Policy 2003 to 2010, and simultaneously EM schools began to emerge rapidly. At present, there are 143 private EM schools in the Metropolitan areas of Bangladesh (BANBEIS, 2019). The number of these schools will be much higher than those registered (Hamid, 2016). Now as the schools act freely, the question of the dominance of English has regained its importance. In fact, the issue of students’ getting away from Bangla language and culture has often been talked about in media (see Sultana, 2014) rather than in research. Among the two notable works in the Bangladeshi context, Al-Quaderi and Al-Mahmud’s (2010) work basically brings out the EM school teachers’ perspectives whereas Haque and Akter’s (2012) work addresses cultural imperialism. Therefore, there is a gap in the contemporary literature for a study that directly brings in the students’ and the parents’ attitudes and addresses the issue of hegemony. To fill this gap, the present study deals with the following research questions:

1. What are the major attitudes of the EM school students towards Bangla and English language and culture?

2. To what extent are these students exposed to Bangla and English language and culture in the contexts beyond the classroom?

3. Does English have any hegemonic domination over Bangla?
**Linguistic/ Cultural Hegemony**

The term was originally associated with hegemony, conceptualized by the Italian political writer Antonio Gramsci. According to Shannon (1995), Gramsci said that the intellectual leaders of a dominant group (representing the government, the church, etc.) function to persuade their followers to consent to domination. Namkung and Yoo (2012) remark that linguistic hegemony is a form of power that empowers some while disempowering others. Suarez (2002) interprets the Gramscian concept of hegemony, arguing that hegemony is established through consent and persuasion via the processes of leadership without force. According to Fontana (as cited in Mustapha 2014), this consent is secured through the manufacturing of mass consent, a mass belief of the naturalness and correctness of this social order. Suarez (2002, p.514) goes on to add that in a linguistically hegemonic situation “linguistic minorities will believe in and participate in the subjugation of the minority language to the dominant, to the point where just the dominant language remains.” The connection between linguistic hegemony and cultural hegemony is drawn by Macedo, Dendrinos, and Gounari (2003) who opine, “Since language is always intertwined with culture, the cultural invasion is intimately tied to linguistic invasion. Language is culture” (p. 34).

Hegemony, therefore, is a process of persuading others in such a way that the dominated class themselves contribute to the process of their own domination. In fact, when one language/ culture marginalizes the other, and the people of that marginalized language or culture participate in this process considering it as something for their own benefit, then the situation becomes linguistically and culturally hegemonic. In this article, linguistic and cultural hegemony will be referred to interchangeably since it is assumed that the existence of the latter is inevitable where the former exists.

**English Language Policy and the Hegemony of English**

The fact that there is a growing tension in the relationship between English and the mother tongue is evidently widely researched and well-documented (see, for example, Hamid & Erling, 2016). The policymakers in Japan and Malaysia have struggled to balance the policy emphasis on the national and the global language. The Japanese policymakers suspect that the wide acceptance of English may have undue impacts on the national language, although they cannot deny the importance of English as a language for economic development. Similarly, the Malaysian government cannot endorse English fully due to the political sensitivity around Malay, their national language. Bangladesh, however, has dealt with the politics of national language in a different manner. Hamid and Erling (2016) trace how in Pakistan days, Bangla was given the highest status because of its being a symbol of national unity and identity. English was demoted from the status of a second language to the position of a foreign language in order to uphold the prestige of Bangla. Gradually, as Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) rightly point out, the language policy changed over time and English began to gain its importance again. In the National Education Policy 2000, English was set as...
the medium of instruction for kindergartens. In 2003, the need for teaching English from the primary level was reemphasized and redevelopment of the entire English curriculum was stressed. Finally, the National Education Policy 2010 recognised English as an essential tool for building a knowledge-based society, and English was set as a compulsory subject and medium of instruction in the tertiary level and so on.

Hamid and Erling (2016) argue that Bangladesh maintains clear divisions between the public and private sectors maintains a clear division. As far as the public sector is concerned, the country pursued balanced planning for Bangla and English to ensure that the policy emphasis on English does not undermine Bangla. But the government has shown ‘laissez-faire’ attitudes to language issues in private sectors. The EM schools, for example, do not care about the national concern and thereby decides language policies on their own. While public schools generally produce linguistic competence in the form of grades, EM schools are seen to develop students’ practical competence in English (Hamid & Jahan, 2015). In fact, the EM schools being generated out of “the fear of the elite that the restricted access to English in the national curriculum would not cater to the needs of their children” (Hamid, 2016, p. 48) now provides westernized education to the children of the elites in order to produce world-class ‘products’ that fit in the global linguistic market.

Because of this endeavour to provide international standard competence in English to the students, the EM schools adopt completely English-only policy and prohibit Bangla in the school premises (Haque & Akter, 2012), and thus the issue of hegemony with regard to the EM students acquires importance in research. Al-Quaderi and Al-Mahmud’s (2010) study is probably the first work in Bangladesh that raised the question of culture in EM schools. It sampled 22 teachers and 94 students. The teachers had the experience of teaching in EM schools from four to twenty-two years. The study suggested that the question of culture was many a time silenced, elided, ignored, and not taken very seriously in teaching English literature at EM schools. Both the teachers and the students did not consider the hegemony of Western culture negatively. Likewise, Haque and Akter (2012) conducted a study by collecting data from both the students and the teachers through questionnaires and interviews. The participants of the study consisted of 400 students of class V and VI and 20 teachers. The study revealed that students of EM schools had the tendency to learn about western tradition, literature, geography, history, socio-political background, and lifestyle without emphasizing the Bangladeshi way of life. Rahaman, Quasem, and Hasam (2019) also found out that EM school is being largely dominated by language, norms, values, sanctions, and customs of the foreign culture and the English language is solely responsible for this. Although bringing a comparison between the practice by Bangla and English medium students is a strength of the study, it sampled only college-level students leaving scope for the examination of the secondary level context.

The question of the hegemony of the English language is also frequently addressed in research in other international contexts. Many scholarly articles including Wettewa
(2016), Boyle (1997), Safari and Razmjoo (2016), Freestone (2015), Troudi and Hafidh (2017), Guo and Beckett (2007), Anyanwu, Okecha and Omo-Ojugo (2013), Rugemalira (2005) bring in the question of hegemony. However, many of these works are knowledge-based reflections, not empirical studies. Most of these articles written in contexts of Sri Lanka, Iran, Hongkong, China, the Gulf, and so on focus mainly on the effects of hegemony including one common effect which is relevant to the current study—marginalization of mother tongue by the English language.

Wettewa’s (2016) study was based on case studies on four contrasting international schools from four different provinces of Sri Lanka. The case studies showed that international schools did not offer students enough opportunities to assimilate with the local culture. Because of the primary focus put on English, the mother tongue was often overlooked. In extreme cases, international school students had such poor local language skills that they found it difficult to communicate with locals. Similarly, Troudi and Hafidh (2017) in their scholarly reflection in the context of the Gulf opine that English as a medium of instruction was introduced to the students to better prepare them for tertiary education. However, in this process, many students began to see Arabic, the language in which their heritage and culture are rooted, as a language of the past. There were also signs of the gradual demise of Arabic. By the same token, Guo and Beckett (2007) cite Xu Jialu, a well-known Chinese linguist, who notices that the learning of English is valued more in China than Mandarin Chinese. He states that nowadays, even most well-educated Chinese cannot write or speak the Chinese language correctly; mistakes are found even in dictionaries.

All the aforementioned studies indicate that the research problem of the current study is significant not only in the context of Bangladesh but also in the field of scholarship. It is also seen that the teachers’ perspectives on the use of English as a medium of instruction and on the question of linguistic imperialism have been sufficiently represented in research whereas there is hardly any study that deals with the issue of hegemony related to the Bangladeshi EM school students based on data derived from both students and parents. The current study fills this gap in the literature.

**Methodology**

This is a quantitative study that relies on a questionnaire survey. The populations of the study are primarily the three important stakeholders of education: students, teachers, and parents. Accordingly, five EM schools were approached for permission to conduct the questionnaire survey. However, the authority of two of these schools seemed to be reluctant to co-operate. Half-yearly examinations were taking place in the other two schools. Since it was becoming really difficult to get permission for the survey, teachers were excluded from the scope of the current study considering that other works like Al-Quaderi and Al-Mahmud’s (2010) and Haque and Akter’s (2012) have sufficiently represented their voices. Finally, only one school allowed the author to conduct the survey among the students. Data from only one institution seems less representative
but Cresswell’s (2012, p.144) example on convenience sampling supports that data can be derived from one institution in case a large percentage of the population is available there and the researcher has permission. Although there was no direct research question on the parents, they were surveyed with a separate questionnaire because their responses were highly significant with regard to the third research question relating to hegemony.

**Samples**

The total number of participants in this study was 88. They were divided into two categories in this study. The first category consisted of 65 students of a private EM school located in Dhaka including 44 males (67.7 %) and 21 females (32.3%). They were students of standard VI, VII, IX, and X. It was the Principal of the school who guided the author to different classrooms and he skipped standard VIII students because their class test was going on. Although there is a gap in the academic year between the students of class Six-Seven and Nine-Ten, t-test results revealed no significant difference between the responses of these two groups. The second category comprised of 23 parents/guardians of EM school students. This group consisted of 19 females (82.6%) and only 4 males (17.4%). All the participants were selected by convenience sampling i.e. selecting participants because they were available to be studied, and this sampling, according to Cresswell (2012, p. 144), “can provide useful information for answering questions and hypotheses.” In the current study, convenience sampling was done because it was really difficult to manage permission from most of the school authorities and the author had to depend on the only available samples.

**Instrument**

Two separate questionnaires were designed for both the group of participants. However, they were finalized based on the analysis of the questionnaires already used in other published research works (Al-Quaderi & Al-Mahmud, 2010 and Haque & Akter, 2012). The first questionnaire (See Appendix-1) used in this study consisted of three sections. The first section (A) contained some demographic questions including the gender, age and academic level of the participants. The second section (B) contained 17 items on the students’ attitudes towards Bangla and English language and culture. For this section, the questionnaire items were designed on a five-point Likert Scale and the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the item statements by using the five-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree given after each statement. The responses were rated as strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral=3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1. The third section (C) contained 15 items to find out the frequency in which the students got exposed to English and Bangla language and culture. The items in this section were designed again by using the five-point Likert Scale ranging from always to never given after each statement. The responses were rated as always=5, usually=4, sometimes=3, often=2, and never=1.
For the second category of the participants (parents), a questionnaire (See Appendix-2) containing two sections was designed. Section-A contained some demographic questions and Section-B contained ten close-ended questions. The participants had to answer in ‘yes’, ‘no’. An option was also provided to give their opinion in a separate box titled ‘any other opinion’ in case the participant’s opinion was beyond ‘yes’ or ‘no’. The responses were rated as $\text{yes}=3$, $\text{no}=2$, $\text{any other opinion}=1$.

The questionnaire survey of the students was administered in a classroom setting. On the other hand, the parents were approached individually in an informal setting while they were waiting in the school premises to take their children home. The data generated from the questionnaire survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.

Results

Students’ major attitudes towards Bangla and English language and culture (Research Question 1)

In order to identify the students’ major attitudes towards Bangla and English language and culture, descriptive statistics were employed on each item from section B of the questionnaire. The results are presented below:

Table 1: Students’ major attitudes towards English language and culture (responses are shown in percentages and Means in descending order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I make more mistakes while writing in Bangla than in English</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>I feel proud of speaking in English</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My teachers encourage me to speak more in English than in Bangla</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Speaking in English makes me feel smarter</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I think English songs are more enjoyable than Bangla songs</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>I think English language is easier than Bangla</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I like English literary texts more than Bangla texts</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

The results as in Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics along with percentages of different attitudes. The results as shown, of all the items of Section B, item-11 “I make
more mistakes while writing in Bangla than in English” has the highest mean (M=3.95). It is followed by item-5 “Feeling proud of speaking in English (M=3.92) and item-10 “teachers’ encouraging students to speak more in English than in Bangla” (M=3.85).

Table 2: The participants have some favourable attitudes towards Bangla language and culture (responses are presented in percentages and Means in descending order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>I get poor grades in the course(s) on Bangla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I think ‘Lungi’ is a strange kind of attire</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I love to celebrate the 31st night more than Pahela Baishakh</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>I do not find Bangla language course interesting</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I know more about Halloween than ‘Nobanno’</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I think Bangla songs are backdated</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>I do not feel comfortable when I speak in Bangla in a social setting</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Learning Bangla language is not much important to me</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>I think my friends will criticize me if I talk much in Bangla</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

In Table 2, item-3 ‘I get poor grades in the course(s) on Bangla’ has a moderate mean (M=2.85) whereas item-7 has a low mean (M=1.78). Here it is seen that the participants have mostly disagreed with the statements suggesting Bangla is less important. Therefore, it can be said that the students’ attitudes towards Bangla language and culture are quite positive, if not highly favourable as towards English.

The extent to which the EM school students are exposed to Bangla and English language and culture in the contexts beyond the classroom (Research Question 2)

In order to find out to what extent the students are exposed to Bangla and English language and culture in the contexts beyond the classroom, descriptive statistics were employed on each item from section C of questionnaire-1. The results are presented below.
Table 3: The students are most frequently exposed to the English language and culture (responses are shown in percentages and Means in descending order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I watch English movies more than Bangla movies</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I listen to English songs more than Bangla songs</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>While talking in Bangla I use a lot of English sentences</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I read English novels/poems/short stories/comics, etc. which are not on the school syllabus</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5= always, 4= usually, 3= often, 2= sometimes, 1= never, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

The results in Table 3 show the items regarding the students’ exposure to Bangla and English language, item-2, 1, 15, and 5 have comparatively higher means. Item-2 “I watch English movies more than Bangla movies” has the highest mean (M=4.22). In fact, the items with higher means all referred to English language and culture which showed that the students are most frequently exposed to English language and culture in the contexts beyond the classroom. It is true that the same way, Bangla medium students might also be more exposed to Bangla language and culture than to English, but that would seem to be acceptable or obvious since Bangla is their mother tongue.

Table 4: Students are least frequently exposed to Bangla language and culture (responses are shown in percentages and Means in ascending order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I watch Bangla TV programmes</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I read Bangla novels/poems/short stories/comics, etc. which are no on the school syllabus</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I read Bangla newspapers</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I use ‘English to Bangla’ dictionary</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5= always, 4= usually, 3= often, 2= sometimes, 1= never, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

The results in Table 4 shows the items regarding the students’ exposure to Bangla and English language, item-3, 4, 6, and 7 had the lower means. Of the items related to the exposure to Bangla language and culture, item-3 (I watch Bangla TV programmes)
had the lowest mean (M=2.29). These results showed that the respondents are least frequently exposed to Bangla language and culture at home.

**Hegemonic domination of English over Bangla (Research Question 3)**

The answer to this third research question actually depends mostly on the results found under research question no. 1 and 2. The following graph shows how English is prioritized over Bangla in terms of the students’ frequency of encountering the two languages.

**Chart 1: Students’ greater use of English**

Chart-1 shows that the majority of the participants (81.6 %) watched English movies more than Bangla movies whereas at least 50.8% of participants reported that while talking in Bangla they used a lot of English sentences.

**Chart 2: Students’ preference for English**

Moreover, chart-2 demonstrates that 70.8 % of the participants always made more mistakes in Bangla than in English. It is followed by 64.6% of students feeling proud and 61.6% of students feeling smarter to speak in English.

Furthermore, the following questions asked to the parents also reveal the position of English and Bangla. The results shown in Table-5 came out after employing descriptive analysis on each item of the questionnaire for parents (Appendix 2).
Table 5: Major responses of the parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you try to talk to your child in English?</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do you think your child will not forget Bangla language because it is his/ her mother tongue?</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Do you want your child to study abroad?</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you think speaking in English makes your child smarter?</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3= yes, 2= no, 1= other opinion, M=mean, SD= standard deviation

The table shows that item-2 (Do you try to talk to your child in English?) had the highest mean (M= 2.78). Of all the items, item-7 (Do you encourage your child to talk more in English than in Bangla) had the lowest mean (M=1.87).

Discussion

Students’ highly favourable attitudes towards English language and culture

The results of the analysis employed on the items of Section-B of the questionnaire for the students indicated that the items related to the attitudes of the students towards the English language and culture had higher means. That means the participants’ attitudes towards the English language were very much favourable. The results of this section are consistent with other studies especially with Haque and Akter (2012) where it was found that teachers encouraged the students to talk more in English than in Bangla, and the students considered Bangla as a more difficult subject/language than English. Although the students’ mother language was Bangla, they agreed that they made more mistakes while writing in Bangla than in English. This finding is supported by Guo and Beckett’s (2007) article where they cited Xu Jialu who observed that even many well-educated people in China made mistakes while writing in Chinese. Mistakes were found in books, even in dictionaries.

On the other hand, the students’ attitudes towards Bangla language and culture was not that much favourable as towards the English ones because the means of the items referring to Bangla language and culture were lower. Yet good percentages of the participants expressed their disagreement with some items like ‘Learning Bangla language is not much important for me’ etc.

Students’ frequent exposure to English language and culture in the contexts beyond the classroom

Results of data analysis revealed that the participants were most frequently exposed
to the English language and culture at home. The majority of the participants watched English movies. They also listened to English songs more than the Bangla ones. Again, the students said in response to item-5 that they read English novels/ poems/ short stories which were not on their school syllabus. All of these are supported by Haque and Akter’s (2012) findings. This notion of the students’ greater involvement – voluntary or imposed – in the culture of the West, is similar to the findings of Wettewa (2016) who claimed that dominance of the English language created a Western cultural bubble around the learners.

In contrast, students were least frequently exposed to Bangla language and culture. The means of the items related to the use of Bangla language and access to the Bangla cultural domain were the lowest ones. Similar to the findings by Haque and Akter (2012), it was found in the current study that most of the respondents never watched any Bangla TV programmes at home. The majority of the students did not read Bangla literary texts like poems, short stories, novels. Only a few of them read the Bangla newspaper.

**Hegemonic domination of English over Bangla**

The question of linguistic and cultural hegemony is relevant to the results of this study. The results showed that the majority of the students (64.6%) felt proud of speaking in English and 61.6% of them also agreed that speaking in English made them feel smarter. This association of a language with smartness and feeling proud about that instantly creates a boundary between that particular language and other languages, in this case Bangla. Moreover, not only the students, even 56.5% of the parents thought that speaking in English makes their children smarter. Likewise, Troudi and Hafidh (2017) described that in the Gulf, sending one’s children to private EM schools is a sign of social prestige. Rugemalira (2005) also found that many parents do attach special significance to their children’s mastery of the English language. So it is perceivable that English has taken a prestigious position in the beliefs of the students and the parents which could be an indication of the potential existence of hegemony.

Moreover, many of the parents emphasised the importance of English in the international platforms of the globalized modern world. They acknowledged that Bangla was ‘also’ needed. The majority of the parent respondents also agreed that they wanted their children to study abroad. In fact, their trying to rationalize the overemphasis on English and their pride in English revealed that probably a false consciousness was at work in them regarding their children’s use of and exposure to English. This is what Phillipson (1999, p. 40) while discussing linguistic hegemony, calls “an ideology that glorifies the dominant language and serves to stigmatize others, this hierarchy being rationalized and internalized as normal and natural, rather than as the expression of hegemonic values and interests.”

Literature and the entertainment domain are inseparable parts of culture. The attitudes
of the participants of this study revealed that although all of them had a Bangladeshi cultural background, most of them (81.6%) watched English movies and listened to English songs. Though the majority of the students did not think Bangla songs are backdated, they considered English songs more enjoyable than the Bangla ones. 53.9% of the participants read English novels/poems/short stories which were not on their academic syllabus. On the other hand, 66.1% of the participants never read Bangla literary texts. These showed that the students were getting distanced from Bangla literature and culture in favour of the English ones. This finding is supported by Al-Quaderi and Al-Mahmud (2010, p. 121) who remarked, “The students remain comparatively unaware of other non-western literature, including to some extent, Bengali literature.”

In terms of language use, it was found that English was dominating over Bangla. In total 50.8% of the respondents used a lot of English sentences even while talking in Bangla. This is worth noting that this code-mixing is not in the level of words or phrases, rather in the sentence level. This situation is similar to the condition in Troudi and Hafidh’s (2017) article where a principal reported that the L1 vocabulary of the students was ‘suffering’. In addition, this notion is supported by Phillipson (1992) who remarks that because of the language policy of the inner-circle countries (based on Kachru’s concentric circles), the languages of the periphery countries were being displaced or were at stakes. The finding goes with Wettewa (2016), Safari and Razmjoo (2016), and Guo and Beckett (2007) as well.

“Hegemony invades private space as well” (Haq, 2007). It is noteworthy that 19 out of 23 parent participants (82.6%) were female. And the same percentage of parents said that they tried to talk to their children in English. Such a situation seems to be ironic because even when Bangla is the mother language of the participants, in a social setting like Bangladesh, most of the mothers (female parent participants) talk to their children in English, not in Bangla. Therefore, it is seen that such a private affair like the conversation between a parent and her/his child is being invaded by the English language and they are getting distanced from Bangla. And it is happening not because of any force; rather the students and the parents themselves are, with their consent, contributing to this process of getting away from their own mother language. This contribution by the speakers of Bangla in the subjugation of the same language is what Suarez (2002) would describe as a sign of hegemony.

**Implications of the study**

The findings indicate that the students of EM schools are getting distanced from their mother tongue Bangla both in terms of their beyond-the-classroom language activities and cultural involvements. Even the parents ignore the risk of getting away from Bangla. Therefore, the study implies that parents should encourage and the students themselves should enhance their interaction with the Bangla language and culture. Again, the situation seems to be a consequence of the English-only policy in
their schools. The teachers and the policymakers should not impose this policy since it impacts the normal linguistic and cultural practices of the students. The curriculum and textbooks of the EM schools should incorporate sufficient Bangla cultural materials which will ensure extensive exposure to Bangla for the students.

**Limitations of the study**

The current study definitely provides some insights into the linguistic and cultural dominance of English over Bangla in Bangladesh. It was a limited scale study and the generalizability of the findings may have its limitations. Firstly, it would have been better if more students and parents could be sampled from different schools. Secondly, along with the questionnaire data, if more data could be derived from classroom observations and focused group interviews, it would reveal to what extent the English-only policy and classroom practices can be set responsible for the English-centred linguistic and cultural activities of the EM students. Finally, the scope of the study did not include Bangla medium students. If the comparison with Bangla medium students could be drawn, it would make the findings of the study more reliable. There is, therefore, a need for further research in this area to determine the extent and type of domination English exerts in the linguistic landscape of Bangladesh.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, it is quite evident from the results of the study that the students of private EM schools are very much oriented to the English language and culture. They use English more than Bangla. The parents mostly try to rationalize the overemphasis on English by referring to globalization and the importance of English in international platforms. There is no scope of denial that they also consider Bangla as important or at least not ignorable. It cannot be claimed, based on the limited data of the current study, that linguistic or cultural hegemony is completely evident between Bangla and English in all the parameters. However, there are a number of signs that indicate that hegemony underlies the linguistic and cultural activities and exposure of the EM students.

To this respect, both Fanon (1963) and Said (1978) focus on dynamism as a key characteristic of culture. Said (1978), for example, describes culture as something which is influenced by some other cultures and also influences others in return. Taking that definition for granted, it can be said that by virtue of being in an English environment and taking education completely in English medium, the students of EM schools can be influenced by the English culture. However, if this transfer of cultural elements is only one way (from English to Bangla) in nature, then this will undoubtedly be imperialistic. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the students become competent in the Bangla language and remain exposed to the Bangla culture to such an extent that in a multicultural setting, like when they study in an English speaking country, they appear as a source of native culture with enough potentiality to influence back.
References


Appendix-1

Research Questionnaire for Students

Dear participant,

The information you provide will be used only for research purposes and will be kept confidential.

A. Personal Information:

Your Gender : ☐ Male ☐ Female
Your Age Range : ☐ 12-15 ☐ 16-20

The class you are in :

B. Please read the following statements and put a tick (√) in only one box to show your attitudes towards Bangla and English language and culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Speaking in English makes me feel smarter.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning Bangla language is not much important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I get poor grades in the course(s) on Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I do not find Bangla language course interesting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel proud of speaking in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I do not feel comfortable when I speak in Bangla in a social setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I think my friends will criticize me if I talk much in Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I think English language is easier than Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My parents always tell me to speak in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My teachers encourage me to speak more in English than in Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 I make more mistakes while writing in Bangla than in English.

12 I think Bangla songs are backdated.

13 I think English songs are more enjoyable than Bangla songs.

14 I love to celebrate the 31st night more than Pahela Baishakh.

15 I know more about Halloween than ‘Nobanno’.

16 I think ‘Lungi’ is a strange kind of attire.

17 I like English literary texts more than Bangla texts.

C. Please read the following statements and put a tick (√) only in one box to show about your experience of Bangla and English language beyond the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Always 5</th>
<th>Usually 4</th>
<th>Often 3</th>
<th>Sometimes 2</th>
<th>Never 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I listen to English songs more than Bangla songs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I watch English movies more than Bangla movies.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I watch Bangla TV programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I read Bangla novels/poems/short stories/comics, etc. which are not on the school syllabus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I read English novels/poems/short stories/comics etc. which are not on the school syllabus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I read Bangla newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I use ‘English to Bangla’ dictionary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I use English while talking to my teachers outside the classroom.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I converse with my school friends more in English than in Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>At home I talk more in English than in Bangla.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I participate in Bangla debates.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I prefer English to Bangla for chatting on Facebook and other social networking sites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I prefer English to Bangla for writing Facebook posts.

I can type in Bangla (Avro/ Bijoy etc.) on the computer.

While talking in Bangla, I use a lot of English sentences.

Thank you very much for your valuable time and co-operation.

Appendix-2

Questionnaire for parents

Dear Sir/ Madam,

The information/opinion you provide will be used only for research purposes and will be kept confidential.

A. Personal Information:

Your Gender : ☐ Male ☐ Female

Your Age Range : ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ Above 44

B. Please answer the following questions only by putting a (☐) before ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. If you have any other opinion regarding the questions, you can write them in the given boxes.

1. Do you think speaking in English makes your child smarter?

☐ Yes ☐ No Any other opinion:

2. Do you try to talk to your child in English?

☐ Yes ☐ No Any other opinion:

3. Do you try to introduce your child to Bangla literature, songs and other cultural aspects?

☐ Yes ☐ No Any other opinion:

4. Do you feel proud that your child can talk in English?

☐ Yes ☐ No Any other opinion:
5. Do you think English language has some connection with elitism?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

6. Do you think your child does not like the course(s) on Bangla language?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

7. Do you encourage your child to talk more in English than in Bangla?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

8. Do you think your child will not forget Bangla language because it is his/ her mother tongue?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

9. Do you want your child to study abroad?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

10. Do you think your child is getting distant from Bangla language and culture?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  

Any other opinion:  

Thank you very much for your valuable time and co-operation.

**Contributor:**

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Application of Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Teaching English at Early Grades in Nepal

Nani Babu Ghimire

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore practices of the teachers in teaching English at early grade through multiliteracies pedagogy in Nepal. The study was conducted in a community school in the central hilly district by adopting a critical ethnography research design in order to capture the rich and in-depth ideas of three teachers at early grade through ‘in-depth interviewing’. Interviews were audio-recorded, recorded data were transcribed assigning codes and three main themes were developed in terms of the codes during the data analysis process. The findings exposed that the teachers have engaged in bilingual practice using Nepali and English languages instead of creating multilingual space using students’ home language even if they belong to various ethnic groups such as Majhi, Danuwar, Tamang, Magar, and Newar. They have been adopting print literacy as teaching-learning practice such as reading the textbooks and asking the students to write the exercises of the textbook but they rarely use modern technology based multi-modal literacy. The school administration needs to be conscious to apply multiliteracies pedagogy by strengthening the capacity of the teachers on it. Likewise, the school has to establish a basic ICT lab with an internet facility enhancing teachers’ skills to use it appropriately.

Keywords: Multiliteracies pedagogy, early grade, bilingual practice, print literacy, multimodal learning

Introduction

Globalization and digitization have reshaped the communication landscape, affecting how and with whom we communicate, and deeply altering the terrain of language and literacy education (Lotherington & Jenson, 2011, p. 226). New and innovative technologies in today’s digital era have created changes in education and these innovations now suggest the possibilities of using new ways of teaching and learning (Navehebrahim, 2011, p. 865). To address this need, educators, researchers, and policymakers have been engaged in an ongoing dialogue about the need for students to develop a broad repertoire of literacy practices that are not confined to traditional views.
of literacy and traditional approaches of literacy instruction (Rajendram, 2015, p.1). Our classrooms have become more diverse by virtue of students’ social roles, gender, ethnic differences, life experiences, and cultural settings that essentials the teachers to take account of varied meaning-making patterns and practices in terms of the modes and social diversity of learning and communicating (Kulju, Kupiainen, Wiseman, Jyrkiainen, Koskinen-Sinisalo, & Makinen, 2018, p.81). In this sense, Eaton (2010) asserts that the focus on language education in the 21st century is no longer on grammar, memorization, and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge as a means to communicate and connect to others around the globe. Likewise, the rapid advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), accompanied with increased access to information and the emergence of global communities, have impacted on teachers’ pedagogical repertoires to move beyond traditional ‘literacy’ skills towards a comprehensive set of “Multiliteracies” (Ganapathy, 2015, p. 1). Regarding this aspect, New London Group (1996) has proposed the concept of Multiliteracies, which views literacy as continual, supplemental, and enhancing or modifying established literacy teaching and learning rather than replacing traditional practices (Rowsell, Kosnik, & Beck, 2008).

Nepal has been a multilingual country since the pre-modern era (Ghimire, 2011, p. 2) because the people of Nepal speak different languages that belong to various ethnic groups (Tobin, 2011). Explaining the diverse situation of Nepal, Ghimire (2012) says that the linguistic diversity and multilingualism of the country has been represented in the schools. Most schools have students from diverse language backgrounds, usually a language with a majority number of students and many languages with few numbers of students. The dominant language of the majority of students usually dominates the languages of a few students in the classroom. Malone (2005) suggests that the use of mother tongues during the early basic level can improve the quality of education as it bridges the homeworld to the outer world and the prior knowledge of children can become instrumental for learning.

In this context, the learners in Nepal need to be able to cope with different kind of texts, including multimodal, interactive, linear, and nonlinear texts, texts in different languages, texts with several possible meanings, texts being delivered on paper, screens, or live, and texts that comprise one or more semiotic system because as Elsner (2011, p.28) delivers that “monolingual children live and learn together with children of other languages in kindergarten and get into contact with many different languages and cultures from a very early age”. Multiliteracies pedagogy can support children in developing a strong sense of identity and well-being; feeling connected to their world; and becoming confident and involved learners who can communicate effectively using their preferred ‘languages’ of communication (Mills, 2009).

Although there is a growing use of multiliteracies pedagogy through the use of multimode and digital devices/ strategies in the world, very little practice has been done in Nepal. In this context, this study tried to explore the practices of multiliteracies
pedagogy in early grade in teaching English. The research questions of this study were as follows:

- How do the early grade teachers regard multiliteracy pedagogy in teaching English in Nepal?
- How do they practice multiliteracy pedagogy in teaching English at early grade in Nepal?

**Theoretical and Empirical Background to the Study**

Multiliteracies is a pedagogical approach developed in 1994 by the New London Group (NLG) that aims to make classroom teaching more inclusive of cultural, linguistic, communicative, and technological diversity. New London Group (1996) announces that multiliteracies pedagogy accepts and encourages a wide range of linguistic, cultural, communicative, and technological perspectives and tools being used to help students better prepare for a rapidly changing, globalized world. In order to continue helping students have the widest range of opportunities possible in creating their lives and contributing to their community and their future, the school must now adapt to the growing availability of new technologies for teaching and learning, communication channels, and increased access to cultural and linguistic diversity. Mills (2007) appends that:

> Multiliteracies are built on two key propositions. The first is the increasing importance of cultural and linguistic diversity as a consequence of migration and globally marketed services. The second is the multiplicity of communications channels and media tied to the expansion of mass media, multimedia, and the Internet. (p. 222)

Breidbach and Kuster (2014, p.136) describe multiliteracies as “the capacity of learners to negotiate and generate (new) meaning in linguistically and culturally heterogeneous lifeworlds, using ‘old’ and ‘new’ media and adopting responsibility for themselves as well as for the community”. Multiliteracies are also related to multimodality, as many modes are encouraged to be used in different forms of expression (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). The integration of teaching multiliteracies has the potential to adopt new ideas and overcome the limitations of traditional learning approaches in the 21st-century literacies. According to Cloonan (2008, p. 159), “becoming ‘multiliterate’ would require students to develop proficiency in meaning-making in linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, and multimodal designs; with multimodal being a combination of the other modes”. The use of multiple versions of literacy in classroom pedagogy against only print pedagogy can be referred to as multiliteracies pedagogy.

The Multiliteracies pedagogy envisages teachers as facilitators in classrooms that are rich with student-mediated collaborative learning activities (McClay, 2006). According to O’Rourke (2005, p. 10), multiliteracies pedagogy “encourages a broader perspective
of the student as a learner and values diverse ways of knowing, thinking, doing and being”. Moreover, Biswas (n. d.) adds that students learn to collaborate by sharing their thoughts with others in online spaces where they can engage in different forms or modes (texts, video, image, rhymes, and poetry) of learning processes. Today’s students must possess multiple literacy skills that can enable them to utilize the potential of the diverse modes of communication offered by new technologies (Chatel, 2002). In multiliteracy pedagogy teaching and learning involves drawing on a range of student-centered, active principles in the classroom.

Regarding the need for multiliteracies pedagogy in the classroom Rowsell and Walsh (2011, p.60) have reviewed it as is essential that educators learn to use digital communications technology for classroom learning. Rajendram (2015, p. 9) demonstrates that the potential of the multiliteracies pedagogy to equip students with multiple literacy skills is enormous because of the opportunities it provides for multimodal forms of expression through technology-based interdisciplinary explorations of texts. Puteh-Behak, Darmi, and Mohamad (2015, p.16) have suggested that the process of implementing western multiliteracies pedagogy in a Malaysian learning context requires deep deliberation and consideration of the students socio-cultural practices and cultures of learning to ensure that optimum result could be achieved from the introduction of the new pedagogy.

Navehebrahim (2011, p. 866) has concluded that as students become multiliterate, constructing meaning as they simultaneously draw on experiential, contextual, and disciplinary knowledge they have developed about the world, they enhance their ability to shape their own futures. Tan and Guo (2010) have investigated the experiences of a Singaporean teacher in implementing a multiliteracies approach in a Singaporean learning context where learning was still based on print literacies. Although the students were showing evidence of new literacies learning, the teacher expressed that it was quite challenging to implement the multiliteracies approach in Singaporean learning contexts as the emphasis on using multiple literacies contradicted the focus of the national assessment that was still based on print literacies.

In the same vein, talking about the shortcomings of implementing multiliteracies pedagogy, Rowsell, Kosnik, and Beck (2008, p. 121) have mentioned that there was a lack of clarity about the nature of the approach, still too narrow a range of literacy forms being fostered, insufficient explicit discussion of inclusion and critique, lack of attention to differences within groups and similarities across groups, and insufficient focus on the individual lifeworlds of pupils. Hesterman (2013) has found that each individual case study provided insight into a unique school context and classroom culture, factors which had a significant impact on ICT integration and its potential to support multiliteracies learning (p. 165).

The major theoretical foundation for this study comes from the theory of multiliteracies first introduced by the New London Group. Regarding the multiliteracy pedagogy, they have uttered that monolingual and monomodal strategies are not enough for
the proper mental and cognitive development of children for effective learning. For this, the emphasis should be given on multilingual and multimodality practice in the classroom. They asserted that the teachers have to focus on the following factors for effective learning:

- **Written:** before writing and reading, handwriting, the printed page and screen
- **Oral:** live or recorded speech, listening
- **Visual:** still or moving image (representing meaning to another); view, vista, scene, perspective (representing meaning to oneself)
- **Audio:** music, ambient sounds, noises, alerts (representing meaning to another); hearing, listening (representing meaning to oneself)
- **Tactile:** touch, smell, and taste. Kinaesthesia, physical contact, skin sensations (heat/cold, texture, pressure), grasp, manipulable objects, artifacts, cooking and eating, aromas.
- **Gestural:** movements of the hands and arms, expressions of the face, eye movements and gaze, demeanours of the body, gait, clothing and fashion, hairstyle, dance, action sequences, timing, frequency, ceremony and ritual
- **Spatial:** proximity, spacing, layout, interpersonal distance, territoriality, architecture/building, streetscape, cityscape, landscape.

I have observed and analysed the ideas of my participants regarding practices of multiliteracies pedagogy on the basis of these factors in this study. Likewise, the New London Group (1996) advocated for multiliteracies pedagogy that includes four components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. Situated practice depicts immersion in experience and the utilization of available discourses including those from the students’ varied lifeworlds. Overt instruction widens the systematic, analytic, and conscious understanding of the introduction of an explicit language to describe the design of meaning. Critical framing refers to interpreting the social and cultural context of particular designs of meaning; standing back from meanings and viewing them critically in relation to their purposes and cultural context. Transformed practice transfers in meaning-making practice, which puts the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites. I have employed these theoretical thoughts in course of analyzing the ideas of my participants in this study. Thus, for the current study, I have conceptualized the practice of multiliteracies pedagogy in teaching English in early grade as shown in Figure 1 in this study.
The review of the literature above shows that there is a primary and urgent need to bridge the large gap between the theories of multiliteracies and their practices in the context of the classroom. There is a dearth of studies on multiliteracies pedagogy in Nepal. Some scholars have researched multilingualism, diverse classroom, translanguaging, translingual practice in classroom pedagogy, but very limited studies have done regarding multiliteracies pedagogy in the Nepalese context. The policy documents of the Nepalese government have given the emphasis on the use of learners’ mother tongue in early grade but Nepali and English language are used as classroom pedagogy without paying attention to learners’ cognitive development. Monolingual classroom practice without using multimodal learning is the problem in the application of teaching-learning activities in teaching English at early grade in Nepal. Thus, I tried to explore the application of multiliteracies pedagogies in teaching English at an early grade in Nepal.

**Methodology**

I adopted a critical ethnography research design of qualitative research approach to capture the complexities of perspectives and experiences of teachers in the application of multiliteracies pedagogy in teaching English at the early grade because Rapport (2000) has emphasized that ethnographic studies normally concentrate on the routine, daily lives of people, allowing for a number of views to be examined at the same time. Harrowin, Mill, Spiers, Kulig, and Kipp (2010, p. 240) have opined that critical qualitative methodology provides a strategy to examine the human experience and its relationship to power and truth. It emphasises holistic human experience and closely

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**Figure 1. The conceptualization of multilingual and multimodal learning**

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examines the educational challenges from the perspective of those who live with them daily.

The educational context of this critical ethnographic study is “Shree Himalaya Secondary School (HSS) (pseudonym) which is situated in Central Hills in Nepal. The demographic landscape for this school involves upper-class community e.g. Brahmin, Kshetri, tribal community (Janajati) e.g. Danuwar, Majhi, Tamang, Magar, and lower class community (Dalit) e.g. Kami, Damai, Sarki. At the time of this research, HSS had approximately 500 students from multilingual, multiracial, and multicultural backgrounds. Most children enrolled in the school were from Janajati and Dalit. The school consisted of about 30 teachers who were predominantly of upper class such as Brahmin and Kshetri and of whom 8 were racial and/or linguistic minority teachers. The linguistic landscape of the school was diverse, with the four common home languages being Nepali, Danuar, Majhi, and Tamang. Students brought to school diverse cultures, religions and varying degrees of their first language literacies and English language skills.

I solicited volunteer teacher participation (Cakmak, 2013) for the study. As mentioned by Creswell (2012, p. 206), “in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon”, among 30, three teachers — one female, one janajati, and one Brahmin — who had been teaching English for at least five years in early grade at HSS, were selected as participants for this study. To maintain privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms as Devraj, Harikala and Makarlal were used for all participants involved in this study.

I had adopted a single-method and single sited ethnographic approach (McCarty, 2011) to collect data from teachers. The ‘in-depth interviewing’ enabled me to capture different sides and forms of participants’ multiliteracies practices in early grade. Two in-depth interviews were conducted with each teacher participant based on the 9 open-ended and semi-structured guideline questions in order to elicit in-depth data on their ideas on the practice of multiliteracy pedagogy in their class. The first interview was taken in the month of January and the second interview was conducted in March 2020 in the academic session of 2019/2020. These interviews provided me a more complete picture of their understandings and applications of multiliteracies pedagogy in early grade classroom. I also observed two classes (grades one and two) of my two participants for data triangulation purposes.

All interviews were audio-recorded after taking the participants’ permission. The audio-recorded data was transcribed using a play-script transcription approach (Midgley, 2010) because the participants said the current study focused on what rather than how they said it. I developed the codes to match the text segment for describing information based on transcribed data and generated codes were clustered into categories according to similarity and regularity. The main three themes such as ‘bilingual practice in the linguistically diverse classroom’, ‘maximum print literacy with visual and gestural practice’ and ‘little practice of technology-based multimodal learning’ were coined
following the clustered categories during data processing and they were analysed and interpreted with the help of participants’ claim that they had expressed in the in-depth interview. The participants’ ideas were also analysed reflecting my own experiences in teaching and research and the opinion expressed by different scholars in related literature found in digital sources.

Findings and Discussion

I have explored the practice of multiliteracies pedagogy in teaching English in early grade classroom in Nepal in the following three themes based on an in-depth interview of the participants:

**Bilingual Practice in Linguistically Diverse Classroom**

In a single society, various tribes of people live together and they speak separate languages in Nepal. As school is a unit of society, the same situation happens in HSS. The children from different languages and castes such as Brahmin, Kshetri, Dnuwar, Majhi, Tamang, and Magar come to school to study. They bring to school diverse cultures, religions, and varying degrees of their mother tongue literacies. According to Danzak (2011, p. 189), “Schools continue to become more and more diverse and, consequently, have a responsibility to provide inclusive, multicultural and multilingual contexts that support multiliteracies pedagogy”. In such situation, teachers need to be much more conscious to apply this pedagogy. For it, Devraj articulated as:

The students of ethnic groups such as Majhi, Danuwar, Tamang, Magar, Newar come to our school to study. Danuwar children speak their native language at home; the children of other ethnic groups speak their mother tongue neither at home nor at school. Almost all students understand the Nepali language and I feel comfortable teaching in it. I occasionally use the English language because I myself am not competent in English. (Interview, 22 January 2020)

Addressing the multilingual issues in the classroom is one of the agenda of multiliteracies pedagogy. The learners cannot understand if the teachers speak a language other than their home language. But, in HSS the situation is different. Most of the students of ethnic groups (janajati) do not know their own native language. Danuwar children can speak their mother language but they do not speak their language at school because school is not creating such space in the classroom. In this regard, SkutnabbKangas (2000) argued that schools are committing linguistic genocide every day. In this circumstance, UN (1948, as cited in Phillipson & Skutnabb Kangas, 1994) clarifies linguistic genocide as “Prohibition of the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group”. However, not paying attention to it, the teachers are using Nepali (the most dominant language of Nepal) and the English language as classroom language because almost all students understand Nepali and
Some students understand the English language. In fact, the teachers are doing bilingual practice in the classroom. Jhingran (2009) asserted that primary education through the medium of a dominant foreign language could encourage language shift, triggering language attrition at the group level as well as at the individual level. The school needs to be sensitive in case of the use of language that the language of the learners is to be practised in the classroom. Likewise, Giampapa (2010) noted that the multiliteracies teachers need to bring students’ linguistic and cultural identities to their classrooms through multiliteracies pedagogy. Concerning this aspect Makarlal alleged:

Different ethnic children come to our school but they speak only Nepali language at school premises. The parents of ethnic children (Majhi, Newar, Magar, Tamang) who have been living in this village for a long time have forgotten their native language because of the influence of the Nepali language and who have just migrated here speak their native language, but their children do not speak their mother tongue at school. I myself belong to the Majhi community but I cannot speak the Majhi language. (Interview, 10 March, 2020)

Even Nepalese society is multilingual; in some parts of the country, indigenous people have forgotten their native language because of the domination of the Nepali language. Indigenous people are not desired to speak their own mother tongue in the sense that they cannot get any opportunity in their own language. It is leading towards the extinction of their mother tongue/first language. Alternatively, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. 311) mentioned that if a minority group or an indigenous people are allowed to learn and transmit further their own language, they also reproduce themselves as a minority group or an indigenous people. Conversing in the language of minority groups using them as classroom pedagogy is one of the goals of multiliteracies pedagogy. Making discussion on the same concern Harikala uttered:

Our school has kept optional English as (a) course (instead) of (choosing a) local subject. The children do not speak their mother tongue and thus I do not use their native language during teaching. I use English and Nepali language in my class. (Interview, 22 January, 2020)

There is a provision for schools to select a “local” subject/course in the primary level that can include local culture, local agriculture, local language, etc. But HSS has taught optional English as a course instead of selecting a “local” subject/course to the students. It shows that the school administration has a dominant feeling towards the English language instead of local interests. The school has not made any plan to create a space for the use of all native languages of the indigenous children in school. Exploring this context Dunbar and Skutnab-Kangas (2008) has declared that education through the medium of a dominant language can have very serious mental harm: social dislocation; psychological, cognitive, linguistic, and educational harm; and, partially through its economic, social and political marginalization. To reduce the domination of powerful language, shrink mental and educational, and create multilingual space in the classroom
multiliteracies pedagogy need to be applied in early grade because in Kalantzis and Cope’s (2008, p. 197) words, “Multiliteracies describe growing significance of cultural and linguistic diversity”.

The society is multilingual and multicultural because the children from the diverse community such as Brahmin, Kshetri, Damai, Kami, Sarki, Danuwar, Majhi, Taman and Magar come to school, they follow their own cultures and Danuwar and some old Majhi people speak their mother tongue at home. Unfortunately, on the one hand, their children do not use their mother tongue at school premises and on the other hand, the teachers cannot speak the native languages of the children at school. Therefore, the teachers use the Nepali and English language in the classroom practice that I call, here, bilingual practice, an aspect of multiliteracies pedagogy. However, the school needs to create an environment to use mother tongues in the classroom, but, it is not found and this practice may lead to the demise of the mother tongue of a minority group in the future.

**Maximum Print Literacy with Visual and Gestural practice**

Print literacy is a traditional version of literacy, which includes mostly reading and writing. According to Cloonan (2008, p. 162), “Becoming ‘multiliterate’ would require students to develop proficiency in meaning-making in linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and multimodal designs; with multimodal being a combination of the other modes”. But in the Nepalese context, the scenario is different as many schools have been practicing print literacy rather than digital literacy. Concerning the practice of multiliteracies pedagogy in teaching English in early grade a participant of this study, Devraj exposed, “Primarily, I teach my students through print literacy (reading and writing practice). I read the books and ask the students to write the answers of the exercise that are given in the textbooks”. (Interview, 22 January 2020)

The remarks affirmed by Devraj show that the teachers are practicing print literacy focusing on reading and writing in Nepalese community schools because they do not have the skills to use the modern technology and the schools lack the proper equipment to implement technology-based teaching in the classroom. The ideas shared by Makarlal in this concern are similar to Devraj as he has also used print literacy except for other literacies in the classroom. When I observed a class of Makarlal I found that he had used only reading and writing strategies in teaching English in grade two. He used neither gestural activities nor visual practice in the class. He read the text and asked the students to write the text. He used both Nepali and English language while delivering the contents in the class. It is believed that print literacy alone cannot assist the students to construct meaning according to the context. For it, they need various modes of communication that need to be practiced in the classroom. According to Angay-Crowder, Choi, and Yi (2013, p.37), “New London Group claims that meanings are constructed through multiple representational and communicational modes and resources and further calls for the inclusion of multiple literacies and modes for making
meaning”. After clarifying the concept of multiliteracies pedagogy to Harikala I made a conversation with her as:

**Researcher**: How do you teach your students in the class?

**Harikala**: Most of the time I teach my students using reading and writing strategies. I teach the text and they solve the problems based on the text.

**Researcher**: Beyond it what strategies do you obtain in classroom teaching?

**Harikala**: I make picture to introduce the lesson in the beginning and I also get students to draw pictures related to the lesson. I make students prepare the rules of classroom in the chart paper. They discuss in the group and do the task.

**Researcher**: Is there any gestural practice in your class?

**Harikala**: Certainly, I ask the students to clap during teaching chant. I encourage the students do different gestures during teaching action verbs.

(Interview, 22 January 2020)

The thoughts expressed by Harikala demonstrate that the teacher’s focus is on text-based literacy for the children of early grade in Nepal. They also apply picture-based literacy practice, which supports the students to develop a concept on different objects that are related to visual literacy. New London Group (1996) claimed that visual literacies relate to learning of one of the modes of meaning from the Multiliteracies ‘multimodal schema’. Harikala engaged the students in a groupwork for making classroom rules and she also involved the students to draw colourful pictures of objects and animals according to the context as collaborative work. Ganapathy (2015) reported that the collaborative activities that integrate with visual mode as a pedagogical supplement can serve for teachers to promote students’ engagement and creativity and thus positively impact their learning outcomes. Harikala emphasized that she also applied gestural and body movement activities during teaching-learning activities in early grade, especially, to teach chant and action verbs in English. Gestural meaning-making embedded in visual resources, or gestural representations (Cloonan, 2008) helps the children to interpret, negotiate and make meaning from the images in the books, especially when reading in an unknown language (Elsner, 2011). Collaborative activities and visual and gestural practice enhance the learning achievement of the learners but the teachers have given much more focus on print literacy. The remarks made by my three participants denote that there is maximum use of print literacy in comparison to visual and gestural practice in teaching English in early grade.

**Little Practice of Technology-based Multimodal Learning**

The use of technology in teaching is also an important aspect of multiliteracies pedagogy. Hesterman (2013) argued that utilizing multiliteracies pedagogy is considered the
most effective way to integrate Information communication technology (ICT) in early childhood education in the sense that it seeks to create a more productive, relevant, innovative, creative, and even perhaps emancipatory, pedagogy. Devraj expressed his opinion on the use of technology in early grade in teaching English as:

There is the use of technology in Grade one through television. The Grade teacher, Susmita (pseudonym) plays rhymes, songs, short stories and cartoon stories for students with the technical help of one of our friends, Umesh (pseudonym). I cannot involve my students in technology-based multimodal learning because there is not a well-facilitated and equipped computer lab in our school. In the absence of computer, how can I apply Multiliteracies pedagogy? (Interview, 10 March 2020)

The observation made by Devraj shows that there is a use of technology-based teaching-learning practice for beginners through television. Cloonan (2008) remarked that the interplay of audio with visual meaning including speech, music, and sound effects in interplay with visual animation makes clear to the students to understand the teaching content through multimodal learning. Devraj regrets that he cannot involve his students in technology-based learning because the school lacks a well-equipped computer lab with a nice seating arrangement for students and a strong internet facility. I observed a class of Susmita at grade one in which there was a television. On that day, she did not use television and said to me that she could not operate herself. When another teacher assists, then she can use television. It shows that teachers are not technically trained to use multimodal activities in the class. In a study, Boche (2014, p. 123) pointed out that the school computer labs were too small to let every student have a computer, there was no wireless access in the classroom, and in general, the old school building was not equipped to handle new technologies or large amounts of students on the network at any given time. The same situation is found in HSS. There is no well-equipped computer lab with a sufficient number of computers for the students. There is only one teacher, Umesh (pseudonym) who has obtained training in ICT at school. He handles all the activities related to ICT either administrative work or pedagogical aspect at school. Concerning on the same aspect Harikala viewed as:

I have heard that many things are available on ‘Google’ and ‘youtube’ but I do not collect any things from there for teaching and learning purposes because I have no skill to do it. But one of our friends, Umesh (pseudonym) teaches using a laptop to present powerpoint through multimedia projector because he has received training of U-learning. But sometimes I play children’s songs through a speaker in early grades to entertain them. (Interview, 10 March, 2020)

The version of Harikala made it clear that she has only heard about modern ICT but is unable to use it in the classroom. She said the Umesh (pseudonym) usually teaches using ICT in school because he has trained in U-learning which is based on ICT. She
sometimes plays songs and rhymes through a portable speaker which an electronic device. Technology-based multimodal learning enhances the capacity of the students in learning contents and use of technology as Alghamdi and Hassan (2016) informed that there is the value of using new classroom technology, such as Smartboard, and computer software applications, such as PowerPoint, which gives affordance to students to produce multimedia presentations. Paying attention to it, I talked with Makarlal. The following is a transcription of the interaction:

Researcher : How do you use technology-based multimodal learning in the early grade?
Makarlal : Actually I am an old teacher. Neither I studied technology in my student life nor am I using modern technology in my class during teaching.
Researcher : Why? What do you think about it?
Makarlal : If I were well known about application of technology in classroom pedagogy, I would use it in the class but I have not any idea about it. Though my friend Umesh (pseudonym) assists me by bringing multidi projector and laptop to my class to teach the lesson which is related to technology. In my opinion, technology-based multimodal learning is essential and we need to apply in the class for effective teaching and learning purpose.

(Interview, 10 March 2020)

The interaction with Makarlal justifies that the teachers in HSS at early grade are old and not updated and trained on the use of ICT to apply multiliteracies pedagogy in the classroom. They can apply print, visual, audio, and gestural literacy but not modern technology-based multimodal literacy. But, Borsheim, Merritt, and Reed (2008, p. 90) insisted that “The ultimate goal of any literacy teacher is to —guide students to sophisticated engagement with a variety of technologies, literacies, and pedagogies”.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the teachers’ ideas on the practices of multiliteracy pedagogy at early grade in teaching English in Nepal on the basis of their understandings and experiences in teaching. The teachers are doing bilingual practice using the Nepali and English language even if the students of various ethnic groups such as Majhi, Danuwar, Tamang, Magar, Newar come to study in the classroom. Except for Danuwar children, no one speaks their native language at home. The teachers use most of the time Nepali and occasionally English language for teaching-learning purposes because they feel comfortable teaching in Nepali and they are not competent in English and they do not know other languages. But the theories of multiliteracies pedagogy tell that the teachers need to create multilingual space in the classroom in which all children can use their
own language to learn a second language. It is found that the parents of ethnic children (Majhi, Newar, Magar, Tamang) who have been living in this village for a long time have forgotten their native language because of the influence of the Nepali language and also their children cannot speak their mother tongue at school. This type of practice leads the language to diminish. In very simple words, languages cannot exist in society because of such trends. The school has also given priority to the English language by keeping it as an optional subject in the place of “local” subject/course instead of promoting linguistically and culturally diverse situations through the use of different local languages adopting multiple modes of learning based on modern technology.

It is found that there is maximum use of print literacy with visual and gestural activities as multiliteracies pedagogy in classroom practice. The teachers teach their students through print literacy by reading books and asking the students to write the answers to the exercise that are given in the textbooks. Concerning the use of multimodal technology I found that the teachers rarely use television, laptop, and multimedia projector for teaching purposes. The television is used to play rhymes, songs, short stories, and cartoon stories for small kids. The teachers cannot involve their students in technology-based multimodal learning because there is not a well-facilitated computer lab in the school. They have heard about Google and youtube but they cannot utilize them because they do not have the skill. Practically they are unable to apply technology-based pedagogy in the classroom but they believed that technology-based multimodal learning is essential for effective teaching and learning.

The teachers in a community school who are teaching English at early grade in Nepal are experienced having a long practice of teaching. They are much more familiar with print literacy rather than digital literacy. They have been adopting traditional teaching-learning practices such as reading the textbooks and asking the students to write the exercises of the textbook but they rarely use modern technology based multimodal literacy. They do not have the ideas and skills to apply modern technology in the classroom. They believe that they can do it if they are involved in the training of multiliteracies pedagogy. I think that the new and currently appointed teachers can apply multiliteracies pedagogy in the classroom but the old teachers cannot do it because they cannot handle modern technology because of their age. Although the teachers do not have knowledge and skills of digital literacy, they are positive to the application of multiliteracies pedagogy in early grade in teaching English.

**Pedagogical Implications**

In the context of Nepal multiliteracies pedagogy is not implemented exceedingly in school educations, especially at early grade. The responsibility to advocate for change to apply multiliteracies pedagogy lies not only with teachers and students but also with their families, headteachers, administrators, school supervisors, schools and governments, local, provincial, and federal. To properly implement this new pedagogy of literacy education, the collaboration should extend to families and communities too.
Some of the things that the School Administration can do are:

- Becoming more conscious and well equipped to apply it in the early grades.
- Providing training to the teachers about multiliteracies pedagogy, keeping in mind the classroom diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, rapid development of ICT and its connection to the classroom teaching.
- Encouraging teachers to create multilingual space in the classroom in which the students can use their home language and learn a second language by using their linguistic repertoire.
- Establishing basic ICT lab with internet facility by arranging technological devices such as computers, multimedia projector, laptop, smart television, video camera, pointer, and pen drive to deliver the contents with the modern technology.
- Developing the technical abilities and skills of the teachers on the use of ICT so that multiliteracies pedagogy can be easily applied at the early grade in teaching English.

Moreover, the central level government needs to revise the curriculum, textbooks, assessment system, teaching-learning methodology, strategies and techniques that are practiced in teaching English at early grade in Nepal to suit the multiliteracies pedagogy. This study would attract the attention of the teacher trainers, syllabus designers, and material developers, to build up materials for multiliteracies pedagogy that can assist to implement it effectively. Much of this study centered on unpacking the existing situation of multiliteracies pedagogy including the practice of multilingual teaching and the use of multimodal technology in teaching English at early grade in the community school of Nepal. Continued research is needed to see how many teachers practice multiliteracies pedagogy in secondary education in the Nepalese context. Further, the researchers can also unpack the provision of multiliteracies pedagogy in a pre-service teacher education course and its implementation during teaching practice as further study.

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Appendix I

Guideline Questions

1. Please tell me your name and experience of involving in teaching profession.
2. How do you perceive Multiliteracies pedagogy? Have you idea about it?
3. How many students use their mother tongue in school? Do you use learners’ mother tongue in the classroom?
4. If yes, why? If not, what circumstances hinder you to use learners’ mother tongue in classroom teaching.
5. Do you use only print literacy (reading and writing) or multimodes during teaching in the classroom?
6. Do you use oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial modes in teaching?
7. What is the condition of the use of ICT or modern technology in classroom in your school?
8. How do the students take part in learning via multimodal technology?
9. What activities do the students have performed using multimodal technology?

Appendix II

Transcription of the Interview

Interview with Devraj (22 January, 2020)

Researcher : Hajurko parichaya dinuna.
Devraj : My name is Devraj (pseudo name).
Researcher : Sirle padhauna thaleko kati barsha bhayo?
Devraj : 29 barsha, from 2049 BS (1993AD)
Researcher : yahi school maa maatra padhaunu bhaya ki anta pani?
Devraj : Maile amarpur (pseudo name) ma 17 barsha padhae ani yahoo ho.
Researcher : (haamile Nepalakaa schoolko early gradema padhaune teachers laai sahabhagiko rupamaa lier Multiliteracies pedagogy ko baarem wahako dhaaranaa, bujhaai, yasko laagi sipako bikas ra pryogako baastbik abasthaa bare bujha research garna laageko ho) aba ma sirlaai kehi prashna sodhchhu, hunch ni?
Devraj: hunch sir.

Researcher: Yas school maa kun kun jatikaa bachcha padhna aauchhan?

Devraj: Danuwar, Majhi, Magar, Newar, Bramhan and kshetri

Researcher: Tiniharule aafno matri bhaasa bolchhan?

Devraj: Danuwarle bachchale aafno bhaasa gharama bolchhan, arulai ta aafno bhaasa bolna audauna. Schoolama ta kasaile pani matribhaasa boldaina.

Researcher: bhane pchhi school maa vidhyaarthiko matribhasa prayog hudaina?


Researcher: Classroomma linguistic diversity huda pani vidhyaarthiko bhaasa kina prayog nabheko holaa?

Devraj: Matri bhaasa kasailai pani na aar ho bhanne laagchh. Yaha ta sabai Nepli matra bolchhan.

Researcher: sirlaai Multiliteracies pedagogyko barema kehi jaankari chha?

Devraj: yahi ho bhaner ta ma pribhasa nai bhanna sakdina tara pani literacy bhaneko padhna ra lekhnasakne kshamata ho. Yastai dherau bidhi jastai chitra sanket, haaubhauu garer siknu multiliteracie ho ki jasto laagchh.

Researcher: Tapaile bhane jasto garer padhaune garieko chh ta?


(10 March, 2020)

Researcher: Sir aaja hamip classroom teaching ma multimodal teaching kaa lagi technology ko prayogakaa baarema kura garchhau. Siler mera prashna ka uttar dinu nuechh bhanne aasa gareko chhu.

Devraj: hunchh sir sodhnu na.

Researcher: Multiliteracy pedagogy bhane pacchhi bibidh bhaasako prayog, multi modes prayog ra technology ko prayog bhanne ho? Ke yasko abhyas bhaeko chha ta yahale padhune class maa?

Devraj: bhaasako kuro ta maile aghinaai bhani hale. multi modes ko kuro pani maile aghinaai bhane jasto laagchh. Yo technology proga chai maile garne gareko chhaina.

Researcher: kina hola?
Devraj : pahilo kuro tam alai yasako pryog garna pani aaudaina ra haamro school ma subidha sampanna computer lab pani chhaina. Saamgri abhaabale pani ra sip ra dakshataaako kamile pani technology prayoga garer padhaaun sakieko chhaina?
Researcher : mukhya samsya ke hola? sip wa saamriko abhab?
Devraj : Mukhya ta sipa nai ho. Kasaile pani hamilai technology prayog sambandhi talima dieko chain. ysa barem siaket haami pani prayog garna sakne thiyaustasto lagchh ra multi mode tathaa technology prayog garer padhauuda vidhyarthilaai bujha sajilo pani hunchhr uni harule aadhunik prabidhi prayog sambandhi gyan ra sipa pani hasil garchhan nh.
Researcher : sadhan ra samagri ni?
Devraj : samanya khalakaa samagri t hamro school ko head sirle layanu hunchh tara dherai computers, Multimedia projector (MMP), laptop, internet ra ICT devices ta jutauna samasyaa nai hunchh ni. Ani kasari hamile prayog garna sakchh ra?
Researcher : Internet ko prog kattko hunchh i?
Devraj : hamro school ma internet jadan bhaeko chha tar power kam chh. mathillo kakshamaa sirharule kahile kahi youtube baat video lyaae MMP baat dekhaune gareko dekheko chhu. Sano kakshaama yasko prayog chhaina. Kakshaa 1 ma TV rakheko chh tyah proga garer padhainchh.
Researcher : sana kakshaama yaslai proga garna sakidaina ra?
Devraj : sakinchh sir tar haamro sip ra dakshaata bika s sangai aadhunik prabidhika samagri ko prabandha garnu paryo.
Researcher : tapai ta purano sikshak, budho huna lagiyo aba talip paudaimaa aadhunik prabidhi prayog gerer padhuna sakninchh ta?

Interview with Harikala (22 January, 2020)
Researcher : hajurko introduction ra experience bhani dinun.
Harikala : mero nam Harikala (pseudo name) ho. maile padhaun thaleko 30 baesha bho. Yahii school ma suru dekhai nai.
Researcher : Kun kun bisaya padhaaunu hunchh?
Harikala : English, sthniya subject ko rupama rakheko English.
Researcher : (haamile Nepalakaa schoolko early gradema padhaune teachers laai sahhabagiko rupamaa lier Multiliteracies pedagogy ko baarem wahako dhaaranaaa, bujhaai, yasko laagi sipako bikas ra pryogako

bhastbik abasthaa bare bujha research garna laageko ho) aba ma madam lai kehi prashan garchhu hai?

Harikala : hunchh sir.

Researcher : English padhauchhu bhannu bho, yahao kakshaama dherai bhasabhasika vidhyarthi aaudaa rahechhan tini harulai English kasari padhaunu hunchh?


Researcher : Vidhyarthi laai uniharuko bhasa kin bolna naaeko holaa?

Harikala : Uni harule gharam pani afno bhasa bldainan sir. Danuwarle gharam bole pani yaha boldainan.

Researcher : Danuwar vidhyarthilai uniharuko bhasa prayog gardai padhaun sakidain ra?


Researcher : Bibidh bhasa lai kakshaa kothama prayog gardai English padhaun sakidaina ra?

Harikala : Malai ta aaudain sir. Yasa sambandhi talim paaiema padhuna sakiela. tyasai padhauda bhaasa pani lop hune thiena hola.

Researcher : Vidyarthilai kasari sakriya banaubu hunchh ni?


Researcher : Yo local subject ma English bhaeko chai ke ho ni?

Harikala : Hamro school le local curriculum ko thauma English rakheko chha, tyahi ho

Researcher : Kin yaso gareko yasma local language padhaudaa hunthyo hola ni?

Harikala : English sike value hunchh bhaner ra abhibhawakle pani English mai jod garekole yaso bhaeko ho. hunt a local language padhaunu parne ho.

(10 March, 2020)
Researcher : Madam aaja ham classroom teaching technology ko prayogakaa baarema kura garchhau. Madamle mera prashna ko uttar dinu dinu hai ta.

Devraj : hunchh sir bhannu.

Researcher : Pathan Pathan maa prabidhiko prayog kattko hunchh ni?

Harikala : maile flash cards, pictures, word cards ko prayog garer padhaune gareko chhu. Prabidhi ko ta pragog garne gareko chhaina.

Researcher : Visual aids ko prayog kattiko hunchh ni?

Harikala : tyahi ho chitra dekhaune, cards haru dekhaune, hunchh ICT based visual t dekhune gareko chain.

Researcher : kina thaso nabheko hola?

Harikala : hamiko sikshak ma yas sambandhi sip ra dakshata nabhaer ho. yasa sambandhi hamro dakshaeta badhaema hamile pryog garna sakhchau. Sathai haro school ma ek jana sir le U-learning ko talim linu bheko chha wahale mathillo kakshama laptop prayog garer MMP marphat kahile kahi social issues maa class linu hunchh. Bivinna videos dekhaunu hunchha.

Researcher : vidhyarthilai khel, geet, nach ko maadhyam le padhaune chal chha ki chhaina?


Researcher : ICT ko prayog, youtube, Gogle ko prayog garer padhuna sakidaina?

Harikala : yasko barem suneko chhu tara prayog gareko chain. Yasa sambandhi prayog garne sip sikae garn sakine thiyo.

Interview with Makarlal (22 January, 2020)

Researcher : Hajurko prichaya ra anubhab bhani dinu na.

Makarlal : Mero nam Makarlal (Pseudo name) ho. Maile padhuna thaleko 30 barsha bhayo. 12 barsha Amarpur ma padhae ani ta yahi padhai raheko chhu.

Researcher : (haamile Nepalakaa schoolko early gradema padhaune teachers laai sahabhagiko rupamaa lier Multiliteracies pedagogy ko baarem wahako dhaaranaa, bujhaai, yasko laagi sipako bikas ra pryogako
baastbik abasthaa bare bujhma research garna laageko ho) aba ma sirlai kehi prashna sodhchhu, hai?

Makarlal : bhaihalchh sir.

Researcher : Yo schoolma aaune bivinna bhasabhasika vidhyarthilai kasri padhinchh?

Makarlal : sir huna ta yaha Danuwar, Majhi, Magar, Tamang laghetma janajatika bachchaa aauchhan tara Danuwaar bahek kasailai pani afno matri bhasa aaudaina. ma pai Majhi hu tara malai Majhi bhasa aaudaina. Vidhyarthimatra haina uniharuka abhibhawakalai pani aaafno matri bhasa bolna aaudaina.

Researcher : kin hola?

Makarlal : khai sir yaha dherai lamo samaya dekhi basdai aaek Majhi, Tamang, Magar samudayaka manisale Nepali bhasako prabhwahe hola aafno bhasa prayog nagarekole birsiekaa. Yah naya basai sarer aune le majhi bhasa boleko sune ko thie ahile t tyo pani sundaina. Jaba abhibhawakale nai aafno bhasa nbole pachhi ta kasari balbalikale bolchhan ra?

Researcher : Danuwarle ta bolchhan ni?

Makarlal : khai sabaile Nepali bolekale hola Danuwar balbalikale pani school ma Danuwar boldainan.

Researcher : Uni harulai sikn ta kathin hunchh hola ni?


Researcher : tapaile kakshaa ma padhauda chai ke garnu hunchh ni?


Researcher : Aru ke garnu hunchh?

Makarlal : Readymade saikshik samagri pni prayog garchhu.

(10 March, 2020)

Researcher : Sir aaja haami classroom teaching maa multimodal waa ICT ko prayogako baremaa kuraa garchhau, hunchh ni?

Makarlal : sodhnu na sir, janeko ra anubhab bhaeko kura bhani halchhu ni.

Researcher : Ahileo yug ta ICT ko ho, yasko prayog garer padhune garieko chha ki chhaina?

Makarlal : ICT ko barema suneko chhu ra kahikahi ta parayog pani bhaeko dekheko chhu tara hamro ma prayog bhaeko chain bhanda pani
हन्छ्छा।

Researcher : Kin tha yasto?

Makarlal : Yamaa 2 ta kura chh. Pahilo ICT tools ra lab ko abha ani kakshaan kothma yasko byabsthapan nanuhu. dosro hamim sikshakharuma ICT ka sambandhamaa gyan nahunu. Hami dharai pura ra budha sikshak chhau, haami nai ICT maa update chhainanu ani kasari padhunu?

Researcher : ICT tools ko abhab kin bhaeko hola?


Researcher : ICT saamgri ko prabandha bhayo bhane yasko prayog garer padhaun sakinchh ta?

Makarlal : sakinchh tara yaskaa barem talim aayojana gari sikaunu paryo. Hun ta hamid budh sikshaklai yasko prayogma samasyaa huna pani sakchh tara abhyas gardai janu parch.

Researcher : yas sambandhama ke saamgri chh ta school maa?

Makarlal : chha ni sir, 1 laptop, 1 MMP chha. Ekjana Umesh (Pseudo name) sir hunuhunchh wahale U-learning ko talim linu bhaeko chh waaahale prayog garer kahile kahi mathililo kakshaama padhunu hunchh. Niyamit prayog chhaina.

Researcher : Sana kakshaama yaslai kasari pryog garne hola?

Makarlal : khai sir pathyapustak pani tyahi khalko hunu parch holaa. ani haamro kshamata badhaiyo bhane ra saamgri bhema prayog garchhau ni.Umesh (Pseudo name) sir le kahile kahi 1-5 sammaka balbalika ekai thauma jamma parer MMP marphat ramaila videos dekhaune garnu hunchh. Tyastaile 1 ma TV chh tyasma pani balbalikalai bivinna balkathaa, baal geet ra cartoon chitra dekhaune garieko chh.

**Contributor:** Nani Babu Ghimire is a Lecturer at Siddha Jyoti Education Campus Sindhuli, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is currently a Ph. D. Scholar in English Education at GSE, TU. He is more interested to study in teacher professional development, the medium of instruction, teacher identity, teacher agency, and multilingualism. He is a Life member of NELTA.
Functional Analysis of ‘Teacher English’ Used by Content-subject Teachers: A Case Study

Kamal Kumar Poudel

Abstract

Providing ‘quality education’ through English is a challenge for the prestige and survival of private schools in Nepal. In this background, a private school in Kathmandu, having realized that its content-subject teachers had to be better-equipped with the classroom-based English language proficiency, offered the researcher to conduct a short-term teacher training program on ‘teacher English’ for them. With a view to preparing for the short-term ‘training course’, the researcher undertook to investigate the current status of the affairs. The present article reports on an observational case study, informed by the grounded theory methods, on the usual classroom teachings performed by nine content-subject teachers at the school. The major functions of the ‘teacher English’ served as the basis for the thematic analysis of the data. As the findings of the study, fifteen classroom functions of the ‘teacher English’, were identified, namely, greeting, introducing the lesson and lesson activities, defining, checking understanding, asking, instructing, giving feedback, encouraging, controlling, personalizing/labelling, asking for and giving permission, cautioning, thanking, attracting attention and closing the lesson. Finally, the study recommended that the forthcoming teacher training should target at these functions of teaching English with a view to building on and improving their classroom English.

Keywords: ‘Teacher English’, content-subject, case study, function, utterance.

Background of the Study

The study began as a project aiming at evaluating and helping to improve the ways in which the content-subject teachers used English at a private school in Kathmandu. Therefore, a thorough investigation into the existing state of what the school authority termed as ‘teacher English’ was the first step to take. The next step involved planning the modality and procedures of what was needed to overcome the problem. The final step was to implement the results in the real classroom situation so as to bring about the
desired improvement in the actual workplace. To my understanding as a researcher, an observational case study would serve best initially, followed by a teacher training program based on the case study results as an intervention. Differently put, it was an exploratory case study targeted at producing an outcome to be implemented later on as an intervention in the form of a teacher training program. The present article reports on the classroom observation-based case study carried out as a prelude to a teacher training program aiming to further capacitate the content-subject teachers for a better classroom delivery in the English language.

Prior to the observation, the purpose of the study was briefed to each of the participant teachers. The participants had varying expectations of the teacher training program, including “to communicate, teach and perform classroom activities in English properly and in a well-managed way” (Teacher 1) and “to help satisfy parents/community as an English-medium school” (Teacher 3). At this point, I could somehow envisage that one of the challenging tasks for me as the trainer, later on, would be to address the variety of individual needs and expectations of the participants in terms of their subject areas and levels. With the purpose of investigating the current statuses of the ‘teacher English’, I observed the participants’ (teachers’) class presentations prior to the actual training program, which took me three days.

**The case study was conducted to find out the answers to the following questions.**

i. How do content-teachers communicate with their students in English as they teach?

ii. What are the shortcomings and strengths of the English used by them for classroom communication?

iii. What are the language contents, stemming out of the ‘teacher English’, which need to be addressed in the forthcoming teacher training program as an intervention?

Thus, this study, though a small-scale one, is potentially beneficial for people associated with various aspects of classroom pedagogy in a number of ways. First, it explores and informs those people about the strengths and weaknesses of ‘teacher English’ employed by the content-subject teachers, and thus, provides the institution with insights into the formation of future policy, plans, and programs for improving the actual affairs. Secondly, it provides content-subject teachers (and English language teachers, too) with some ‘tools for action’- ‘teacher English’ in the form of the actual utterances useful for classroom communication. Thirdly, it provides pedagogic researchers with data that can be examined from perspectives other than the functional one (as in this study). Fourthly, and most importantly, this study illustrates the diagnosis and preparation of a resultant intervention for action research in similar situations.
Methodology

This section describes the methodology employed for the data collection and analysis processes which are discussed under the headings of ‘theory of the method’, ‘approach’, ‘design’, ‘participants’, ‘data’, ‘instruments’ ‘data collection procedure’ and ‘data analysis method’.

Theory of the method

The school authority’s notion of ‘teacher English’, which in general is called classroom English, is justifiable both theoretically and practically. Referring to a somehow similar notion, Mani and Deepthi (2010) observe that “in classrooms, it is essential that all teachers use appropriate language to set a model for their students” (p. 4). Moreover, as our experience suggests, appropriate classroom language largely determines the success of classroom activities. Right from the beginning of the research process, the actual use of ‘teacher English’ was observed. In its essence, the study was underpinned by the grounded theory method which, according to Glaser (1978), is guided by the fundamental query, “What is happening here?” (p. 25) and starts with the data rather than being based on any preconceived theoretical lenses as the priori.

As stated earlier, the data collection task was conceived as being pre-supplementary to the forthcoming teacher training. It was conducted as a prelude to the actual ‘action’- a study into the ways the teachers were naturally doing in their respective work stations (classrooms).

Approach

Consistent with the grounded theory methods, the study was predominantly guided by the qualitative approach to research which is to say that it was “based on textual rather than numerical data” (Howitt, 2016, p. 534). Since the only source of the data in this study was the teachers’ communicative utterances to be subjectively interpreted, it would be pointless to work out numbers and statistics while collecting the data and analyzing them. Therefore, in this report, verbal data were interpreted descriptively as opposed to numerical data analyzed statistically.

Design

At a more specific level, the study was based on the case study design which, to follow Silverman (2013), is the study of a case or a limited number of cases occurring in the natural setting. Indeed, the present research was an exploratory case study targeted at finding out the actual situation in which the English-medium classes were being operated. It was, in particular, an institutional case study in that the data were fully drawn from a single institution, i.e. a private English-medium secondary school located in Kathmandu.
The participants

The school had a total of nine content-subject teachers who had to be better equipped in terms of ‘teacher English’ as a result of the project. Their classes were observed in the respective classroom settings. Each subject was observed twice. If different teachers taught the same subject (in different classes) each of them was covered for variety. Table 1 provides a glance of the observation.

Table 1 Observation Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Teaching subject</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Participant code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>SoStT1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>SoStT2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>MathT1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>MathT2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Health &amp; Physical Education</td>
<td>Ten</td>
<td>HPET1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>HPET2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>SciT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Eight</td>
<td>CptrT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>Upper KG</td>
<td>UKGT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data

The entire data were extracted from the observation of nine classes, all in English-medium, taught by nine teachers of six content subjects (details in Table 1). The primary raw data were obtained to be processed and interpreted from the functional perspective to ultimately determine the functions of ‘teacher English’.

Instruments

The major instruments used for collecting the data were a diary and an electronic recording device.

Data collection procedure

During data collection, I recorded the class presentation using a portable electronic audio recorder, simultaneously noting down the data in a diary and preparing memos to remind myself of the context of the utterances. My diary recording concentrated solely on the communicative utterances used by the teachers. In this sense, the data were “unique (in the sense of singular) and bounded” (Casanave, 2015, p. 129). Therefore,
the findings should be understood as particular instances unique to the teachers in the given institution and they should not be generalized to any wider context. I obtained the whole data in three consecutive days.

Data analysis process

The individual utterances used by the teachers for classroom communication and activity were coded and categorized under the functions of ‘teacher English’. In other words, the data were thematically organized, presented, and interpreted as a process of analysis. In doing this, the contexts of the use of the utterances were carefully considered in line with the memos. As part of the analysis process, I identified the commonly observed classroom functions of ‘teacher English’ which were recorded and noted down out of the raw data. Then the data were coded under fifteen functional categories as presented in the text that follows. The forms actually uttered in the course of the classroom presentation have been presented under the respective functional category as the list of key utterances (LKUs). The specification in brackets at the end of each utterance indicates who uttered it (see Table 1).

Results

Fifteen themes of ‘teacher English’ emerged as a result of the analysis process. In this section, they have been categorized and presented as the functions of ‘teacher English’. So, the functional categories identified were: greeting, introducing the lesson and lesson activities, defining, checking understanding, asking, instructing, giving feedback, encouraging, controlling, personalizing/labelling, asking for and giving permission, cautioning, thanking, attracting attention, and closing the lesson.

1. Greeting

The participants used some stereotypical utterances, which functionalists call phatic expressions, just for establishing contact with the students in the beginning of the lesson, mainly for making rapport with them. The following list of the key utterances (LKUs-1) emerged.

LKUs-1

1) Good morning (HPE T1; Cptr T; Math T2).
2) Good morning, Class IX (SoSt T2).
3) Good morning, students (UKG T).
4) Good afternoon, students (HPE T2; Sci T)
5) Hey! How’re you? (SoSt T1)
6) Are you fine? (Sci T)
7) Grade X. How do you feel today? (HPE T2)
As LKUs 1 depicts, ‘Good morning’ (1) is the most commonly used expression for greeting. Notably, four of the expressions (1, 2, 3, 4) are verbless forms with three of them (5, 6, 7) being the interrogative form.

2. **Introducing the lesson or lesson activities**

As the data reveal, ‘teacher English’ was substantially employed for familiarizing the students with that day’s lesson. It was evident from the data that, while doing this, the participants employed it for marking transitions and signaling the activity just ahead. While introducing the lesson or lesson activities, they used it as pre-teaching strategies, mainly for recalling the previous lesson(s) and/or orienting the students to what they were going to learn/do in the lesson immediately ahead. Differently stating, these classroom utterances pointing either to the past or to the future were discursively apparent as outlined in LKUs-2.

**LKUs-2**

1) Last time we talked about… (Sci T).
2) Do you remember ….? (Sci T)
3) Today’s lesson is…. (Sci T).
4) We usually do ‘practical’ on Wednesday (Sci T).
5) We are going to….today (SoSt T1).
6) Today, we are going to learn about… (HPE T2).
7) Today, I’m going to teach you…. (HPE T1).
8) Shall we…? (Sci T)
9) We are discussing about#… today. (Math T)
10) We are entering to Unit 6. (HPE T2)
11) The topic is…. (HPE T1)
12) First of all… (Cptr T)
13) I’ll explain pictorially. (Cptr T)
14) Well, I’ll show you …. (Cptr T)
15) I’m going to ask the questions. (Math T1)
16) I’m going to define…. (Math T)
17) I’ll tell you a joke now. (SoSt T1)
18) Let me divide you into groups. (Cptr T)
19) Let me repeat….. (Sci T; HPE T1)
As LKU-2 shows, the first two utterances (1-2) are past-pointing and the rest of them future-pointing. It is also apparent that some utterances (3-11) were used for introducing the lesson whereas the others (12-19) either for signaling the activity that was to take place a few moments later and/or the one that was just at hand. Formally, fifteen of them (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) are in the declarative; two of them in the interrogative (2, 8); two in the imperative (18, 19) and one of them (12) in the discourse-marking phrasal form.

3. **Defining**

It was found that the participants used ‘teacher English’ for defining the meanings of words and objects so as to facilitate their concepts for the learners. In the present study, the utterances in LKUs-3 were found in service of this function.

**LKUs-3**

1) That word is EASE (HPE T2).
2) ‘Disease’ is the opposite of ‘ease’ (HPE T2).
3) ‘Moderate’ means…. (SoSt T1).
4) This word can be divided into ‘demos’+ ‘graphy’. ‘Demos’ means… (HPE T2).
5) The computer is just a machine (Cptr T).

LKUs-3 indicates that the teachers, even being non-language teachers, played with the meanings to clarify concepts. Nonetheless, the last utterance (5) was employed to define an object.

4. **Checking understanding**

The data paradoxically indicate that, in the classroom context, teachers simply asked what they already knew about. In a number of instances, the participants were found using ‘teacher English’ with a purpose of finding out whether the students knew something as general understanding (pre-existing knowledge); or whether they had understood the content being taught/already taught. The utterances under this function (LKUs-4) are queries intended for checking, rather than for knowing-so not for asking.

**LKUs-4**

1. The second word is …? (HPE T2)
2. What do you mean by….? (HPE T2)
3. How many words? What are they? (HPE T2)
4. Do you know the names of...? (HPE T1)
5. Can you tell...? (SoSt T2; Sci T)
6. Do you know about...? (HPE T)
7. Excuse me. What's a computer? (Cptr T)
8. What did we learn today? (HPE T)
9. Which letter is this? (UKG T)
10. What's the spelling of...? (UKG T)
11. Is she correct? (UKG T)
12. Can you say the letters? (UKG T)
13. Understood everybody? (Maths T2)

As can be seen in LKUs-4, some utterances (2, 4, 5, 6) were intended for checking the students’ pre-existing knowledge of the content whereas some others (1, 3, 7, 8, 10) for checking what was already taught to them, and the rest of them for checking what they had just been taught or being taught (9, 11, 12, 13) so as to ensure the students’ understanding of the content while keeping the lesson going. From the formal perspective, most of the utterances (2-10) are in the interrogative whereas a few (1, 12) are in the declarative—all realized as questions.

5. Asking

The data reveal that, in contrast to ‘checking understanding’, the teachers asked about things they were not informed about—thus to fulfill an information gap between them and the students. In a number of cases, as in LKUs-5, the teachers used ‘teacher English’ to get information about things related to the lesson and/or the students themselves.

LKUs-5

1) Have you done your homework? (SoSt T2)
2) Really? Can you do it now? (Cptr T)
3) Which page are we on? (HPE T2)
4) Which rhyme do you want to sing? (UKG T)
5) Can you spell...? (UKG T)

All of the utterances in this LKUs were intended as heuristic tools for discovering some information from the addressee(s), the students. Similarly, all of them are in the interrogative form. The verbless utterance ‘Really?’ (2) is a discourse marker.
6. **Instructing**

It comes from the data that the teachers used ‘teacher English’ for the regulatory purpose, which means that it in some way was used to control the students’ behavior/activity. LKUs-6 displays the utterances serving this function.

**LKUs-6**

1) Sit down, please (UKG T).
2) Open your exercise book (UKG T).
3) OK, take your seat (HPE T1).
4) See page no… (HPE T2).
5) Turn to page 30 (SoSt T2).
6) Please look at exercise 4 on page 30 (SoSt T2).
7) Please turn over the page (HPE T2; SoSt T1).
8) Find the exercise on page 29 (HPE T1).
9) Do exercise 6 for homework (HPE T1).
10) Get ready with your pen and paper (Math T1).
11) Note it down (HPE T1).
12) Do your class work within 15 minutes (Maths T1).
13) Follow me please (UKG T).
14) Work in pairs (Cptr T).
15) Discuss in groups (Cptr T; SoSt T2).
16) Hands up/down! (UKG T)
17) Raise your hands (UKG)
18) Repeat after me. (UKG T).
19) Keep quiet (SoSt T2).
20) Please keep quiet (Math T1).
21) Come and sit down here. (UKG T).
22) Please stand up (UKG T).
23) Everybody, sit down (UKG T).
24) …. Roll no five, please. (HPE T1)

All of the utterances in LKUs-6 were aimed at getting things done. A great majority of them (1-23) are in the imperative form whilst one of them (24) is a verbless, phrasal instruction.
7. Giving feedback

A considerable number of utterances were used by the teachers in the classrooms to provide the students with the knowledge of the result of their doing or performance. Utterances with this functional characteristic are presented in LKUs-7.

**LKUs-7**

1) Well done! (Cptr T)
2) Very good (UKG T; UKG T).
3) Great! /That’s great! (HPE T1; Math T1)
4) Excellent! (Cptr T)
5) You’ve done a good job (SoSt T1).
6) Good job everybody (UKG T).
7) That’s beautiful (SoSt T1).
8) Interesting/very interesting! (HPE T1)
9) Wow, how interesting! (HPE T1)
10) Nice work, Binit (UKG T).
11) Fantastic! (UKG T)
12) All right (Sci T).
13) You are a good boy (UKG T).
14) How beautiful!(SoSt T1).
15) Congratulation! You know the answer (HPE T1).
16) You’re right (Sci T).
17) Good enough (HPE T1).
18) It’s OK (MathT1; HPE T1).
19) Try once again (Math T2).
20) Well, it’s wrong …. (SoSt T2).
21) Wrong answer…(HPE T2)
22) Definitely not (HPE T2)

LKUs-7 demonstrates four functional sub-categories which I would call appreciation, information, reservation, and rejection. The utterances in the ‘appreciation’ category, which consist of most of them (1-15), are very highly positive in connotation. The ‘information’ category includes expressions of information (16, 17, 18) and is positively connoted. The ‘reservation’ category includes an utterance with mild rejection (19) but is still encouraging. However, the utterances under ‘rejection’ (20, 21, 22) are negative sounding and involve such words as ‘wrong’ and ‘not’.
Formally, most of the utterances in this list (1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 21, 22) are verbless phrasal exclamations used as discourse markers whereas some of them (3-the second part, 5, 7, 13, 15-the second part, 16, 18, 20) are the declarative and one of them (19) is imperative.

8. **Encouraging**

The participants also used ‘teacher English’ to encourage and prompt the students to perform some kind of task or continue it further. The utterances serving this function have been presented in LKUs-8.

LKUs-8

1) Please carry on (Cptr T).
2) Go on! Go on!! (Sci T)
3) Come on! (SoSt T2)
4) Never mind! (HPE T2)
5) Keep it up! (SoSt T1)
6) Try again (SoSt T1; Cptr T).
7) Don’t give up (HPE T2).
8) Go ahead (SoSt T2).
9) Give it a try (Sci T).

The utterances in LKU-8 are of two categories—performance and continuation. The utterances of the ‘performance’ category (1, 3, 9) encourage the students to do/start doing a task and those of the ‘continuation’ category (2, 4, 5, 6, 7) encourage them to keep the task longer. All of the utterances are in the imperative form.

9. **Controlling**

In loose contrast with ‘encouraging’, a set of utterances were found in association with controlling or stopping the students from doing something or performing a task. The utterances associated with this function of ‘teacher English’ are listed in LKUs-9.

LKUs-9.

1) Give up/Leave it (SoSt T2).
2) Let it be (HPE T2).
3) No need to go further (Math T1).
4) Stop it (SoSt T2).
5) Be quiet (SoSt T2; HPE T2).
6) No noise please (UKG T).
7) Wait until I tell you (SoSt T1).
8) Do your job/work (HPE T2).

On the surface, the last utterance (8) may seem to be out of this function. Yet, in its natural context of use, it was employed by the teacher to stop a student from side-talking while doing classwork individually, hence was associated with controlling. From the formal perspective, nearly all of the utterances (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8) excepting no. 6, which is a verbless phrase, are in the imperative form.

10. Personalizing/labelling

Some uncomfortable-sounding (if not rude) expressions were also uttered by the teachers while teaching. Those expressions were ‘uncomfortable-sounding’ in the actual context since they were used for personalizing, labelling or even accusing the students. The utterances under this functional code are presented in LKUs-10.

LKUs-10
1) You look very funny today. Yeah? (SoSt T2)
2) You funny girl! (SoSt T2)
3) Being the first girl you…… (HPE T2).
4) Are you making fun of me? (SoSt T2)
5) Who is that naughty student? (SoSt T2)
6) You always make disturbance. I know (SoSt T2).

What makes these utterances ‘uncomfortable-sounding’ is the use of the labelling words such as ‘funny’ (1, 2), ‘fun’ (4), ‘naughty’ (5) and ‘disturbance’ (6) further emphasized by ‘I know’. In utterance 3, the positive-sounding phrase ‘first girl’ was employed for a negative connotation. The forms the utterances are in include the declarative (1, 2, 3, 6) and the interrogative (4, 5).

11. Asking for and giving permission

Some permission-related expressions were noted down as data. In this analysis, they have been presented under two sub-categories: asking for permission and giving permission.

a. Asking for permission

In a few cases, the teachers asked for permission to do something from their students, as in LKUs-11.
LKUs-11
1) Shall we begin now? (HPE T1)
2) I’m sorry but I must go out (Cptr T).
3) Can I use your instrument box? (Math T2)

As is observable from LKUs-10, two of the utterances (1, 3) are in the interrogative form and one of them (2) in the declarative form.

b. Giving/denying permission

As opposed to ‘asking for permission’, some utterances were associated with giving or not giving permission. They are presented under LKUs-12.

LKUs-12
1) That’s OK (HPE T1; Math T1).
2) Yes, you can (SoSt T2).
3) I’m afraid not (HPE T1).
4) OK, sit down (Math T1).

Of these four utterances, three (1, 2, 4) are associated with giving permission and one (3) with denying it. Similarly, three of them (1, 2, 4) are in the declarative form and one (3) is a verbless phrase used as a discourse marker.

12. Cautioning

Probing into the data, it occurs that the teachers used ‘teacher English’ for notifying students for carefulness. The utterances expressing this function are displayed in LKUs-13.

LKUs-13
1) The bell is going to ring (HPE T2).
2) Why are you always late? (SoSt T2)
3) Why are you being lazy? (HPE T2)
4) Be careful. You may fail (Math T2).
5) Try to be on time (SoSt T2).
6) I’m telling up to 10. 1, 2, 3, 4……. (UKG T).

Most of the utterances (2, 3, 4, 5, 6) are self-evident of the function but the first one (1) seems, on the surface, to be informative. Nonetheless, contextually it is not because, in the classroom context, the teacher was alerting a student to finish the task fast, thus prompting him by using this. From the formal perspective, two of them (1, 6) are in the declarative form; two (2, 3) in the interrogative form and the rest (4-the first part, 5) in the imperative form.
13. Thanking

It was also explored that the ‘teacher English’ was also used for thanking either as formality in a phatic fashion or to express gratitude, as in the ways shown in LKUs-14.

**LKUs-14**

1) Thanks (Sci T; HPE T2).
2) Thank you (SoSt T1, SoSt T2, Cptr T; Sci T; HPE T1; HPE T2, Math2).
3) Thank you very much (UKG T; Math T1).

It is typical that the utterance ‘thank you’ was common to most of the cases—used by seven of the nine teachers. The utterances are in single-word (1) and multi-word (2, 3) phrasal forms.

14. Attracting attention

The utterances used by the teachers were meant for getting the attention of the students. Four utterances serving this function were explored (LKUs-15).

**LKUs-15**

1) Oi… (name)! (SoSt T2)
2) OK, UKG! (UKG T)
3) Listen to me please (Math T2).
4) Excuse me (Cptr T; UKG T; SoSt T1).

Interestingly, the form ‘oi’ in utterance 1 is a non-honoriﬁc (so, not very polite) vocative borrowed from the Nepali language. Utterance 2 is also a vocative. Although utterance 3 superficially seems to be an instruction, it was used for attracting the students’ attention. Utterance 4, which is a polite expression in English, was a commonly observed one. Formally remarking, the first two (1, 2) are verbless address words whereas the rest of them (3, 4) are imperative.

15. Closing the lesson

Among other functions, all of the participants in this case study used ‘teacher English’ to bring the class to a natural close in various ways as presented in LKUs-16.

**LKUs-16**

1) Your homework is… (SoSt T2; UKG T).
2) We conclude before the bell goes (HPE T2).
3) Thank you (HPE T2).
4) I think I have to conclude (HPE T1).
5) OK, this much today (SoSt T2; Math T2).
6) Now, note down your homework (HPE T1; SoSt T1).
7) Let’s conclude (Cptr T; Math T1).
8) Let’s not be very long. (Cptr T).

The utterances in LKUs-16 are of two categories which I call pre-closers and actual closers. The pre-closers are those which signal the closure of the lesson (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8) and the actual closers are those which declare the closure of the lesson (3, 5). A typical strategy of closing the lesson is assigning homework (1, 6).

Discussion

Consistent with the spirit of the grounded theory method, the study began with the data, thereby bracketing the relevant literature and theories earlier. In this phase of the article, I bring the postponements to the fore. Then the discussion follows through the evaluation of the functions of ‘teacher English’ with the complexity of the form-function relations in mind and then suggesting the potential re-integration of the functions of ‘teacher English’. Next, ‘teacher English’ has been discussed from the classroom management perspective. Finally, the major limitations have been pointed out, and some future directions stemming from the limitations have been suggested.

Linking the study to relevant theories and literature

The study, like a tripod, could be viewed with three theoretical lenses, namely, the human capital theory, the grounded theory, and linguistic functionalism.

The human capital theory views schooling and education as deliberate investment targeted at increasing the economic productivity of individuals (Muyia, Hairson, & Brooks, 2004). Interpreting the private school scenario from this perspective, like in a free-market, the parents and students are ‘clients’ and the principal is the ‘manager’, accountable for the wishes of the ‘clients’. This explains why parents choose a ‘good’ school for their children in the Nepalese context-a school that can identify itself best in terms of quality education through English as one of the strong measures. This also explains why, in the context of this study, the school authority realized the need for a good quality of ‘teacher English’ through a teacher training program.

Methodologically, grounded theory assumes that “people, including researchers,
construct the realities in which they participate” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187). That is to say, in grounded theory research, the researcher’s subjective interpretation objectified by context leads to theory formulation. That is why the study started with the data observed in the real setting of classroom teaching prior to preparing a strong theoretical and/or conceptual framework. In fact, it was aimed at investigating the real workplace problems to be addressed later through a teacher training program so as to bring about desired improvements in the current situation.

Linguistically, the study took its perspective from linguistic functionalism. Functionalists in linguistics propose that language exists to serve certain functions. From the functional perspective, we use language to replace activities which, in its absence, we would have to ‘do’. As we use language in its productive mode, we express some kind of purpose internal to us. There are almost an infinite number of such purposes for using language (Finch, 2003). More simply, language is a tool used for carrying out some kind of action realized as behavioral categories such as a request, an offer, permission, and the like, and is actualized in the form of utterances, if speech, and scripts, if writing. This explains that teachers use language (‘teacher English’ in this study) as the main medium of classroom communication and as an activity catalyzer.

The teacher in the classroom substantially uses language for a number of purposes, no matter what he/she is dealing with at hand-a content-subject or language itself as a subject. On such occasions, he/she mainly uses it for communicating with learners and for the implementation of teaching-learning strategies (Salaberri, 1995). As we can commonly observe, he/she uses it as an activity catalyzer. In the case of a content-subject, he/she uses language as a medium of instruction or content delivery whereas, on top of that, in a language classroom he/she uses it for language development in the learners. Language, as it is used by the teacher in the classroom for communicating with learners and for implementing teaching-learning strategies, and as an activity catalyzer obviously seems to be like ‘classroom language’, a typical variety of the language used by the teacher for classroom communication and activity catalyzing. Thus, we can make a claim that ‘teacher English’ exists as a form of classroom register.

Form-function relations and functional re-integration

To reiterate, the functionally oriented thematic analysis of the data resulted in fifteen classroom functions, namely, greeting, introducing the lesson or lesson activities, defining, checking understanding, asking, instructing, giving feedback, encouraging, controlling, personalizing/labelling, asking for and giving permission, cautioning, thanking, attracting attention, and closing the lesson. This section concentrates on the discussion of the results from the functional perspective.

The complexity of form-function relations could be observed in bulk in this research also. By this complexity, we mean that a linguistic form can convey a number of communicative functions, and contrarily, multiple forms can potentially be associated
with a single communicative function (Criper & Widdowson, 1974; Salager-Meyer, 1994). These kinds of overlapping relationships could be marked both with the functional categories (sub-headings under the ‘Results’ section) and the key utterances listed with them. As explored in this study, the form ‘Thank you’, for example, is associated both with thanking and closing the lesson. On the other hand, it is simply one of the three ways of thanking and one of the eight ways of closing the lesson.

The complexity mentioned above can be better managed by taking insights from the relevant literature in sociolinguistics. Thus, their number can potentially be reduced to five broad, macro-categories by integrating the similar ones together. For instance, the functional categories ‘greeting’ and ‘thanking’ can be merged as the ‘phatic function’ suggesting that language is used for social interaction (Crystal, 2007). Similarly, ‘instructing’, ‘encouraging’, ‘controlling’, ‘asking for and giving permission’, ‘cautioning’ ‘personalizing/labelling’ and ‘attracting attention’ can be organized under a single heading and conceptualized as the ‘regulatory function’, meaning that language is used to direct the addressee(s) to do something (Criper & Widdowson, 1974; Jakobson, 1973). Likewise, the categories ‘giving feedback’ and ‘closing the lesson’ can be integrated as the ‘communicative function’, which is to say that we transmit our statements, arguments, reports, ideas, analysis, synthesis, techniques of problem-solving, etc. to the receiver(s) (Robinson, 2003). The inquiry-oriented categories, namely, ‘asking’ and ‘checking understanding’ can be merged into the ‘heuristic function’ implying that language is used to investigate the speaker’s environment (Halliday, n. d., as cited in Keenan, 1975). In a similar vein, the category ‘defining’ largely overlaps with-so, can be coded as-the ‘metapedagogic function’ or “language for language teaching” (Poudel, 2017, p. 239).

The form-function complexity can also be identified at the level of the key utterances or ‘tokens’, to borrow Zhu’s (2014) term. To take a few examples, the utterance ‘Listen to me’ (LKU-15) has been attributed to the category ‘attracting attention’ on the basis of the context of use in this research but in other contexts, it might also serve as a token for controlling, instructing, and so on. Likewise, the expression ‘Good job everybody’ (LKUs-7), which has been interpreted as a tool for ‘giving feedback’ here, may also serve other functions such as thanking, appreciating, etc. in other contexts. What all this implies is that ‘teacher English’ needs to be contextually meaningful.

‘Teacher English’ and classroom management

The language used by the teacher in the classroom, both for communicative purposes and as an activity catalyzer, matters a lot for classroom management. Besides making teaching effective, many classroom problems can be solved with the use of appropriate language (Macias, 2018) on the one hand, and “… the fact that the teacher always shouts at the students is irritating” (Keser & Yavaz, 2018, p. 557), so is likely to result into classroom conflict, on the other. In this connection, some shortcomings inherent
in a few instances in this study can be pinpointed. In some cases, the utterances were impolite, harassing and even accusing. The category ‘personalizing/labelling’ itself is an irony in this regard. On the contrary, such positive categories as proposing, requesting and so on, which are desirable for a better classroom environment and more effective teaching and learning, were not especially noted. Direct, didactic (if not ‘barking’!) classroom language on the part of the teacher may help develop, in learners, negative attitudes toward the teacher, class, subject, institution and learning after all. Therefore, suggestions are extended to avoid using ‘uncomfortable-sounding’ (if not rude) ‘teacher English’. This, in turn, leads to the recommendation of teacher training and professional development aimed at addressing the issue of the existing ‘teacher English’.

Limitations and future directions

This study was conducted amid some limitations. First and foremost, it was limited to a single private school in Kathmandu. So, it was confined to nine teachers of six content-subjects operating in English as a medium of instruction. Methodologically, it was an institutional, exploratory case study based on a three-day classroom observation applying an electronic recording device and a diary as the equipment/tool for collecting the data, and was carried out by the researcher for conducting a three-day teacher training program to be held at the school with an objective of improving ‘teacher English’. Therefore, it will not be very reasonable to generalize the results of this study to the larger context. As a future direction, this study should be extended in terms of objectives, samples, procedures, time and other resources to achieve more varied and reliable results. Moreover, the data could have been interpreted from such perspectives as grammar, culture, aspects of pedagogy including teaching methodology, comparison, classroom management, subject specificity or further coverage, learner autonomy, and so on.

Reflection and Conclusion

To reflect, I was able to diagnose the real problem that existed in the content-subject classrooms. As the trainer, I would now plan to maintain and consolidate what the teachers already knew and was appropriate as ‘teacher English’ and what they did not. Now I was in position to better plan for the training. Initially, my aim in planning an intervention would be to transform the classroom from a place of tension and stress caused by the shortcomings inherent in ‘teacher English’ to a humanistic and joyful atmosphere by preserving and consolidating the strengths. The actual task for me, thus, would be to develop a teacher training program-an intervention that helps the concerned teachers to improve their classroom skills, and the institution to enhance their image as a provider of quality education in the medium of English.
References


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Uses of Preposition Combinations: An Error Analysis

Dr. J. Sravanan and Dr. B. Lakshmikanthan

Abstract

This study is an attempt to identify the difficulties in the use of the preposition combinations and analyze the causes of errors made by the Engineering students while writing. The subjects of the study comprised of 60 randomly selected first-year students from two engineering colleges located in Tirunelveli city, and they were asked to write an essay. To analyze the collected data, descriptive methods were used. The results show that the Engineering students made errors in the use of prepositions after nouns, verbs, and adjectives due to the mother tongue interference and ignorance of rules. The researchers recommended that the teachers should make an attempt to provide more exposure to the learners to use these combinations and actively engage them through various consciousness-raising activities. Teachers should highlight the collocation rules while teaching; the students will get exposure to collocation in their writing and speaking.

Keywords: preposition combination, error analysis, essay writing, teaching preposition

Introduction

Preposition combinations are one of the essential components in the English language and they appear in different situations and contexts. They enable the learners to relate two nouns in English. They help the learners and teachers not only to understand the importance of combinations but also to communicate ideas more effectively when they write and speak. However, second language learners of English face difficulties to master it as these combinations express a wide range of meanings as the function words (prepositions) combine with the words of other categories, such as noun, verb, and adjective (Curme, 1935). For instance, the noun and the adjective ‘afraid’ commonly occur with ‘of’. As Huddleston (1984) points out, ‘the Prepositional Phrase (PP) is a complement rather than an adjunct or a modifier; the choice of prepositions
is often determined or severely limited by the verb, adjective or noun head to which the prepositional phrase is a compliment. For instance, in the sentence “She relied on Max, similar to the other one, the author of the book” – the prepositions ‘on’, ‘to’ and ‘of’ are determined by ‘rely’, ‘similar’ and ‘author’ respectively (p. 336). Sometimes the combination of a verb with a preposition has its own particular meaning, such as “call on, look after, send for, care for, abide by, differ from, and bring about” and so on. Some nouns, verbs, and adjectives are often followed by particular prepositions such as “application for, demand for, resign from, prohibit from, doubtful about (Yu, 2014, p. 226). They can collocate strongly with nouns, verbs, and adjectives; and this has been a key point that makes prepositions so difficult to learn well (Lan, 2008, pp. 107-108).

As Kennedy (2003) states, the cause of difficulty in using prepositions is that the combinations of different prepositions are used with the same lexical word which has different and often confusing meanings. The meaning of the construction ‘look at’ changes completely if one substitutes ‘up’, ‘into’, ‘for’, ‘after’ and ‘on’ in the place of ‘at’. Secondly, sometimes the difference in meaning is so slight and it becomes very difficult for the learners to differentiate among the shades of meanings indicated by different prepositions in different contexts. So, learners take a long time to become aware of subtle differences in verb-preposition meanings. An example of this is the difference between ‘concerned about’ which means ‘worried about something’ and ‘concerned with’ which means, engaged in doing something. Thirdly, in some cases, different prepositions can be used without causing a change in meaning. For example, ‘He was angry at the weather’ and ‘He was angry with me for failing to keep our appointment.’ Finally, the factor contributing to the difficulty of the prepositions is that the different word classes of the same root word sometimes go with different prepositions. We use one preposition with the verb form, another with the adjective and still another for the noun form of the root word. For example, we use ‘sympathize with someone’, ‘sympathy for someone’ and ‘sympathetic to someone’ (Kennedy, pp. 246-257). These prepositions are sometimes so firmly conjoined with other words that they have practically become one word. This occurs in three word classes: nouns, adjectives and verbs. It is not always easy to know which preposition to use after a particular noun, verb or adjective.

**Nouns governed by prepositions**

Some nouns are followed by a prepositional phrase in order to demonstrate what they relate to, which cannot just stand by themselves. There is usually only one possibility of preposition which must be used after a particular noun. Occasionally alternatives are possible. But in either event, it is a matter of learning which prepositions can be used with which nouns. There are some common ‘noun plus preposition’ combinations. For instance,

Addiction to alcohol is perhaps as serious as an addiction to drugs in this country.

It was his contribution to molecular biology that won him the Nobel Prize.
Adjectives governed by prepositions

Certain adjectives require the use of a specific preposition with a pronoun or a noun phrase that follows. Here the preposition no longer indicates motion or location, and so again one needs to learn the use of each individual adjective plus preposition combination. The constructions are followed either by a standard Noun Phrase (NP), or a gerund (Cowan, 2008, p. 148). For example,

The manager was very sorry for the inconvenience.

He is not capable of doing something like that.

In English, the simple preposition ‘for’ is commonly used with the adjective ‘ready’. For instance; Are you ready for work? Some other adjectives have taken certain prepositions such as ‘angry about/at/with’, ‘capable of’, ‘dependent on’, ‘disappointed about/at/with’, ‘excited about’, ‘furious about/at/with’ and ‘mad about/at’.

Verbs governed by prepositions

‘Verb plus preposition’ combination consists of a lexical verb followed by a preposition with which it is semantically and/or syntactically associated (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1155). In the sentence ‘we are looking at her wonderful paintings’, ‘at’ is more closely related to the preceding word, i.e., the verb which determines its choice, than to the prepositional complement. Kennedy (2003) also states that prepositional verbs have a lexical verb followed by a preposition. For example, ‘look at’, ‘laugh about’, ‘complain about’, ‘sympathise with’ and ‘put up with’ are a few phrases where the combination of verb and preposition which makes a new verb with a distinct meaning (p. 249). The preposition in a prepositional verb is preceded by a noun or a pronoun. Thus, a prepositional verb is always transitive. In the case of such phrases, the object is also placed after the prepositional verb. For example Arun has cared for her sister. In this sentence, ‘cared for’ is the prepositional verb and ‘sister’ is the noun. Some other examples of prepositional verbs are ‘believe in’, ‘send for’, ‘rely on’, ‘look at’, ‘care about’ etc. The blunder in applying prepositions with verbs is probably due to the interference of a person’s mother tongue forcing to ignore some major combinations of prepositions and verbs.

Review of Literature

Few of the studies closely related to the preposition combinations as well as the difficulties in comprehending prepositions have been reviewed here. Deepa (2013) mentions that learners commit errors in using English prepositions, and at the same time certain strategies are mentioned by the teacher for the learners to overcome such errors, which should be applied if they want to speak and write English effectively. The study is mainly based on the learners’ difficulties in English prepositions while teaching.
Technical English to the Engineering students. The students understood something about prepositions but were not able to use prepositions in the correct places. Remedial measures are suggested for teachers to try to make students understand the language but not to make them memorize every aspect of the language. Kalaiselvi (2004) investigated the problems faced by college students in learning English. This study exhibits the language and linguistic errors made by college students. Her dissertation exhibits the gravity of errors made by the target group in the process of second language acquisition. Errors in prepositions were found more in number when compared to the errors made in other grammatical categories. Lakkis & Malak (2000) found Arab learners’ errors on prepositional knowledge in acquiring and understanding the prepositional usage in English. The researchers argued that the subjects rely on their first language to judge the appropriate usage of prepositions. The study recommended that the instructors facilitate the process of learning prepositions by pointing out the similarities and differences between the two languages with regard to their prepositional systems. Moreover, the researchers suggested that the students need to be continually exposed to correct prepositional usage which will result in better use of the structure ‘verb+ preposition’. The study recommends a better way of teaching prepositions which are chosen according to the preceding verbs, and nothing is mentioned about other cases in which the nouns and adjectives can determine the choice of the following prepositions. Kao (2001) in his study attempted to find out a few innovative ways to understand English prepositions by examining the acquisition of English prepositional verbs by Japanese learners of English as a foreign language. The subjects in the two groups were given a task involving grammaticality judgment and correction of individual sentences to test their knowledge of prepositional verbs. The researcher concluded that subjects rely on context when they use prepositional verbs. In other words, when the context makes the presence of prepositional verbs redundant, such verbs are omitted by the respondents. This study was concerned with the acquisition of English prepositional verbs and input enhancement in instructed second language acquisition, which paid more attention to the prepositions and the verbs which precede them without considering other types of prepositions which are determined by the preceding nouns and adjectives. Jansson (2006) examined the native Swedish speakers’ problems in the area of English prepositions. A total of 19 compositions written by native Swedish senior high school students were analysed as basic, systematic, or idiomatic. The researcher counted the errors of substitution, addition, and omission of prepositions from the compositions. The analysis of the data revealed that fewer errors were produced in the category of basic prepositions and more in the category of systematic and idiomatic prepositions due to L1 interference; and a few errors could be explained as intralingual errors. In Dessouky’s (1990) study, similar errors occurred in all levels of these subjects but the difference was in the frequency of their occurrence. The hierarchy of errors generated by her students was spelling, verb tense and prepositions. Considering the above fact, this study has made an attempt to identify difficulties in the use of preposition combinations made by engineering students. According to Liu (1999, as cited in Darvishi, 2011), the most noticeable pattern when it comes to grammatical collocations was ‘verb + noun + preposition’ and the most noticed source of error was
the negative transfer. While writing an L2 sentence in the course of learning, errors can occur in words or grammatical features. Incomplete knowledge is the main reason for the occurrence of such errors. The occurrence of mistakes may be due to the lack of attention on the part of a learner. Here in this research article, the researchers have proposed remedial measures to overcome the difficulties in the use of prepositions through repeated practice of the basic norms of using prepositions in sentences.

**Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are specified as follows:

1. To identify the difficulties in the use of preposition combinations; and
2. To analyze the cause of errors made by the Engineering students.

**Methodology**

The researchers have employed the descriptive method for data collection and applied qualitative analysis to analyze the data.

**Subjects of the study**

The subjects of the study were 60 randomly selected first-year students from two engineering colleges located in Tirunelveli city, Tamil Nadu, India. In the colleges, English is taught and used as the medium of instruction. Among the respondents chosen for the research, 25 and 35 were male-female respectively. A descriptive method was used for collecting data. The participants were pursuing an Engineering course in the batch of 2019-2023.

**Data collection and instrument**

All the respondents were requested to write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of using a mobile phone, within a period of 50 minutes and using a minimum of 250 words. Qualitative analysis was carried out in order to find the difficulties of using preposition combinations while writing. The figures are tabulated and scrutinized using the 16.0 version of SPSS. Then, the types of errors, the number of errors, and percentages are demonstrated using tables.

**Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the errors are tabulated and categorized into three distinct categories like ‘noun plus preposition’, ‘verb plus preposition’, and ‘adjective plus preposition’. The result reveals that the respondents have a high frequency of errors in preposition combinations. In this respect, Table 1 shows the analysis of errors based on
the type of errors, number of errors and percentage. The result shows that the highest percentage of errors (47%) was made by the students in the category of ‘verb plus preposition’, with 108 errors. Similarly, 35% of errors were committed in the ‘adjective plus preposition’ category, with 80 errors; and 43 errors (18%) have been committed in ‘noun plus preposition’. Thus, the table below indicates that more errors have been made by the respondents in the ‘verb plus preposition’ category compared to ‘adjective plus’ and ‘noun plus’ preposition. The possible reasons for the errors are L1 interference and complexity of the application of rules according to the context.

**Table: 1 Analysis of errors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of errors</th>
<th>No. of errors</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noun plus preposition</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb plus preposition</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective plus preposition</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>231</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Common errors of preposition combinations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of errors</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noun plus Preposition</strong></td>
<td>➢ Mobile phone helps us to get <strong>solution at</strong> our personal problems.</td>
<td>➢ Mobile phone helps us to get <strong>solution to</strong> our personal problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ The major <strong>cause in</strong> road accidents is due to the use of mobile phone while driving.</td>
<td>➢ The major <strong>cause of</strong> road accidents is due to the use of mobile phone while driving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Nowadays, mobile phone has positive and negative <strong>impact in</strong> students.</td>
<td>➢ Nowadays, mobile phone has positive and negative <strong>impact on</strong> students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ A <strong>reason from</strong> having a mobile phone is to communicate easily from one person to another.</td>
<td>➢ The <strong>reason for</strong> having a mobile phone is to communicate easily from one person to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Students use mobile phone for long hours nowadays because they have less <strong>interest to</strong> doing exercise.</td>
<td>➢ Students use mobile phone for long hours nowadays because they have less <strong>interest in</strong> doing exercise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mobile phone is cheaper when we compare for other means of communication. If students spend hours in their phones, they will not concentrate in their studies. Mobile phone helps to communicate through people who are far away from us. We need not worry for losing our way when we use the cell phone’s GPS system. Nowadays students get addicted towards mobile games like pubg, free fire, etc.

Nowadays mobile phones are available on various shapes and sizes in the market. The teachers were angry about their students for not doing their homework. Today, students are crazy upon using mobile phone such as listening to music, chatting and playing games. People should be aware about the evil outcomes of the mobile usage. Parents are responsible to keeping their children safe while using facebook, instagram, etc.

Nowadays mobile phones are available in various shapes and sizes in the market. The teachers were angry with their students for not doing their homework. Today, students are crazy about using mobile phone such as listening to music, chatting and playing games. People should be aware of the evil outcomes of the mobile usage. Parents are responsible for keeping their children safe while using facebook, instagram, etc.

Mobile phone helps us to get solution at our personal problems.

The major cause in road accidents is due to the use of mobile phone while driving.

A reason from having a mobile phone is to communicate easily from one person to another.

Students use mobile phone for long hours nowadays because they have less interest to doing exercise.

Nowadays, mobile phone has positive and negative impact in students.
In the first sentence mentioned above, the learners are not able to use the preposition correctly. In addition to noun + preposition, they have a problem in choosing the appropriate word according to the context. This error highlights the failure in identifying the right choice of preposition while constructing the sentence. The combination of noun + preposition ‘solution to’ denotes an answer to the problem. The above error may be due to a lack of knowledge and shows that the respondent is not sure of the use of noun + preposition. The incorrect noun + preposition collocation is clearly linked with the learners’ first language influence in the second sentence. The respondent might not be sure about the correct preposition that follows the noun ‘cause’. The correct noun + preposition collocation ‘cause of’ refers to the reason why something, especially bad, happens, whereas the received lexical category is ‘cause in’. Sometimes the respondents are unaware of the mismatches between their mother tongue and English that could violate the restrictions of collocation in L2 English. The erroneous construction is due to noun plus preposition, which has misled the meaning of the sentence. In the third construction, the respondents have selected the incorrect lexical item ‘reason from’ instead of the appropriate noun + preposition combination ‘reason for’. The above error is syntactically wrong because the respondent has not arranged the proper noun after a preposition. The noun + preposition combination ‘reason for’ denotes the cause of an event, situation, or something which provides an excuse or explanation. This error is due to a lack of knowledge to use the wrong noun + preposition combination. In the fourth sentence, the fixed combination of noun and preposition ‘interest to’ is unacceptable. An appropriate noun plus preposition in the above context ‘interest in’ refers to be intrigued by or curious about something. Such an error is attributed to the mother tongue interference and ignorance of rules. The fifth construction is grammatically wrong because the respondents have not selected the correct preposition after the noun. The correct noun plus preposition ‘impact on’ refers to a marked effect or influence. The learners framed the above construction due to the translation of thoughts from L1 to L2.

**Verb plus Preposition**

Mobile phone is cheaper when we **compare for** other means of communication.

If students spend hours in their phones, they will not **concentrate in** their studies.

Mobile phone helps to **communicate through** people who are far away from us.

We need not **worry for** losing our way when we use the cell phone’s GPS system.

Nowadays students get **addicted towards** mobile games like pubg, free fire, etc.

The above sentence indicates that second language learners face real difficulties in choosing the appropriate preposition after verb to express their ideas obviously. Instead of selecting the correct combination of the prepositional verb ‘compare with’,
the respondents have used the wrong prepositional verb ‘compared for’ which does not suit the above context. The expected prepositional verb ‘compared with’ refers to compare something with something else; as is to judge how the two ideas mentioned in the sentence are similar or different from each other. (LePan, 2003, p. 46). The respondents provided wrong lexical categories due to their mother tongue interference and lack of competence in the usage of prepositional verb. Apart from the troubles regarding the usage of prepositions as mentioned in the second construction, the second language learners appear to be troubled with their mother tongue and complex rules of the second language when dealing with the collocations involving verb after a preposition. The deviant verb + preposition collocation ‘concentrate in’ clearly showed by the respondents’ mother tongue influence. The correct lexical item ‘concentrate on’ refers to direct one’s attention and efforts towards a particular activity, subject, or problem. Some respondents having limited English proficiency may have a tendency to transfer these collocations to English, leading to the deviant combination. And also, the errors are attributed to the unconscious use of collocation according to the context. The lexical item ‘communicate through’ is wrongly constructed by the respondent in the third sentence, whereas the correct preposition after the verb is ‘communicate with’. It refers to share information with others by speaking, writing, moving our body or using other signals, make something known to others (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). Thus, the respondents transfer negatively while framing the sentence from their mother tongue into English. The lexical category ‘worry for’ in the fourth sentence is unacceptable. The correct verb after the preposition ‘worry about’ refers to a thing that could cause trouble, whereas the incorrect lexical category ‘worry for’ means something that you are concerned about, not that thing will do harm but that it will suffer harm. The verb plus preposition does not semantically suit the above construction. This error is due to the complexity of prepositional rules that leads to the respondents’ failure in acquiring the target language. The respondents need more instances of the proper use of preposition after the verb and the researchers have given exercises to overcome the difficulties in the use of preposition. In the last sentence, the respondents are not able to use the verb + preposition combination correctly. This error highlights the failure in identifying the right choice of preposition while constructing the sentence. The correct lexical category ‘addicted to’ which denotes compulsively or physiologically dependent on wrong habit – forming is due to L1 influence.

**Adjective plus Preposition**

Nowadays mobile phones are **available on** various shapes and sizes in the market.

The teachers were **angry about** their students for not doing their homework.

Today, students are **crazy upon** using mobile phone such as listening to music, chatting and playing games.

People should be **aware about** the evil outcomes of the mobile usage.

Parents are **responsible to** keeping their children safe while using face book, instagram, etc.
The respondents fail in the usage of a preposition after the adjective ‘available’, and wrote ‘available on’, instead of writing ‘available in’ which made the sentence erroneous. The correct adjective + preposition ‘available in’ refers to able to be used, or reached, whereas the lexical item, ‘available on’ does not suit the above context. The learners framed the above construction due to the translation of thoughts from L1 into L2. The lexical category ‘angry about’ in the second sentence is a wrong combination of adjective + preposition by the respondents because ‘angry at/about’ refers to something, whereas the expected lexical category, which suits the above context, is ‘angry with’; so the preposition ‘about’ has to be substituted for ‘with’ to make it acceptable. The expected combination of adjective + preposition is ‘angry with’, which denotes, having a strong feeling against someone for doing something (LePan, 2003, p. 44). The source of this error is attributed to mother tongue interference and ignorance of rules in the use of adjective plus preposition. The adjective plus preposition ‘crazy upon’ is rather uncommon since the correct preposition after ‘crazy’ should be ‘about’ or ‘for’ something in the above context. This error occurs when the learners do not apply a correct preposition after adjective. The combination of adjective + preposition ‘crazy about’ means, being highly interested in something or love someone very much. Students need to comprehend the combinations of a preposition, how they are formed and when to use them. The reason behind the erroneous usage is due to the mother tongue interference of learners in the fourth construction. The adjective + preposition combination ‘aware about’ is incorrect since the proper, widely-used preposition after ‘aware’ should be ‘of’. The appropriate adjective plus preposition in the above sentence is ‘aware of’, which means knowing that something exists, or having good knowledge (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Third Edition). Sometimes the learners of English are not aware of the mismatches between their mother tongue and the second language which could violate the combinational restrictions in L2. The deviant combination of adjective plus preposition is ‘responsible to’ instead of ‘responsible for’ in the final sentence. The expected lexical category ‘responsible for’ denotes a task that a person or group has to carry out; whereas the incorrect adjective plus preposition ‘responsible to’ refers to the person or group of people to whom you have a duty. The respondents might have thought in their first language and applied the wrong preposition in the above context. The solitary way is to drill them to ensure that they know the expressions by-heart of the prepositional combinations that they need in their target language.

Results and Discussion

As stated earlier, the present study is aimed at identifying the difficulties and analyzing the causes of errors made by the Engineering Students in the city of Tirunelveli. It is observed that the Engineering Students have encountered many difficulties while using prepositions along with its combinations. The results reveal that the respondents have made errors while writing an essay such as noun plus preposition, verb plus preposition, and adjective plus preposition. They have a few troubles in choosing the correct lexical categories due to the lack of knowledge regarding the usage and
complexity of rules in L2. Some respondents have placed prepositions inappropriately after the content words like verbs, nouns and adjectives as they are bizarre. The present study corroborates with the findings of the previous study. This finding is in line with the findings of Lakkis & Malak (2000) who have claimed that the subjects rely on their first language to judge the appropriate usage of prepositions. In addition, it is suggested that the students need to be continuously exposed to the accurate usage of preposition combinations which might result in a better comprehension of prepositional verbs. The result also supports the findings of Kao (2001) who have relied on the context while using prepositional verbs and other combinations of a preposition. The Teaching Community should make an attempt to find out the context where the students tend to confuse the use of syntactic rules of the other language. Such errors caused by the influence of L1 could be minimized only when the teacher gives special exercise guiding them to differentiate the rules governing L1 and L2.

After the analysis of errors, the findings reveal that errors that occurred in the essays written by the engineering students are noun plus preposition, verb plus preposition and adjective plus preposition. The researchers found that there were three types of errors to be the problematic areas and the most common errors made by the engineering students were verb plus preposition.

**Conclusion and Implications**

From the present study, it could be concluded that the preposition combinations are problematic for the respondents. It is revealed that their competence in using the combinations of preposition is limited. The errors committed by the students are prominently due to the complete or partial interference of L1. These fixed expressions with prepositions have to be learned by-heart because they cannot be meaningfully constructed. The errors identified are due to the wrong selection of prepositions after noun, verbs, and adjectives.

**Implications for teachers**

Students should be made aware of the nouns, verbs and adjectives which are followed by certain prepositions. In addition to some of these, verbs can be used with different prepositions which might have different meanings. Teachers ought to help the learners when they commit errors in using preposition combinations in the classroom, which might be helpful in overcoming the difficulty of using prepositions while writing. Moreover, teachers should make an attempt to provide better exposure to the learners to use these combinations and actively engage them through various consciousness-raising activities. In addition, teachers can highlight collocation rules while teaching spoken and written English. When they teach collocations properly, the students may possibly overcome prepositional errors.
Implications for students

Learners should pay more attention to the usage of these combinations and overcome their problems. Unless the students work hard to practice the multifarious combinations of prepositions, it might not be an easy chore.

References


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The Role of Grammar Instruction in Developing Communicative Proficiency: What the Secondary Level Teachers say

Prithvi Raj Bhatt

Abstract

Grammar instruction plays a pivotal role in an EFL context but the way grammar is taught depends upon the availability of teaching materials and resources, students’ expectations, teachers’ maxims and beliefs, and the organizational culture of schools. The present article is an attempt to find out secondary teachers’ views regarding the role of grammar instruction to develop communicative proficiency. The study also aimed at finding out what attempts they make for balanced language development (i.e., accuracy, fluency and restructuring). The study used purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews to generate data. After thematically and descriptively interpreting the data, the study found that teachers are positive towards the role of grammar instruction in EFL to develop communicative proficiency of the learners. The study also found that grammar error correction prevents learners from the risk of fossilisation. Furthermore, the teachers emphasised both accuracy and fluency for the organic development of English in learners’ minds and were aware of the use of various teaching of grammar resources for effective teaching. Finally, the article draws pedagogic and research implications for English language teachers.

Keywords: Fossilization, Communicative proficiency, Semi-structured interview, Instruction

The research context

The status of teaching grammar in language classes has been in the state of flux. Traditionally, the teaching of grammar was given heavy emphasis in language teaching. This trend was followed by ‘No Grammar Please’ approaches. Recently, however, literature shows that the teaching of grammar has revived. Lately, I have taught a course called Advanced EFL Grammar and Pedagogy to the graduate students in TESOL in the Far Western university. The M. Ed course is a kind of pre-service training to the would-be teachers. The general objectives of this course are (a) to make the student teachers practice various elements of English grammar, and (b) to provide the student teachers with the skills of teaching English grammar. Most of the students who have passed
M.Ed. have become secondary level teachers, and I was interested in finding out their view of the role of the teaching of grammar to enhance the communicative skills of their students. Likewise, I wanted to find out what techniques and resources the graduate teachers were employing. Therefore, I aimed at finding out teachers’ perceptions of how they transferred their training in their actual classes. In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

- How do the teachers view the role of grammar instruction in developing communicative competence?
- What techniques and resources do the TESOL graduate teachers use in teaching grammar?
- What is their perceived role of error correction in language teaching?
- How do they perceive the importance of teachers’ critical self-evaluation of their own classes in enabling the learners to achieve the outcomes?
- What challenges do they face while teaching grammar? What attempts are they making to address the challenges?

**Literature review**

Grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed. According to Thornbury (1999), “Grammar is partly the study of what forms (or structures) are possible in a language ... a description of the rules that govern how a language’s sentences are formed” (p. 1). Grammar acts as building blocks to make a language. It deals with acceptable and unacceptable forms and the distinctions of meaning these forms create. Ur (2009) says, “Grammar may roughly be defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (bits of words) so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone” (p. 3). In the words of Cowan (2008), “Grammar is the set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language.” (p. 3). In the second or foreign language (SL/ FL) situation, the value of grammar in teaching English cannot be ignored. Various scholars have put forward their views regarding teaching grammar from various perspectives. The Grammar Translation method believes that language teaching means teaching of its grammar rules. On the other hand, the Deep-end CLT advocated by N. S. Prabhu (Prabhu, 1987), the Natural approach advocated by Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) and the Direct Method reject the teaching of grammar because these approaches view that second language learning parallels first language acquisition. That is to say, some argue for the explicit teaching of grammar while others’ strongly put forward their views that grammar instruction is fragile.

According to Thornbury (1999), “The teaching of grammar has always been one of the most controversial and least understood aspects of language teaching” (p. ix). In the words of Ur (1991):
The place of grammar in the teaching of foreign languages is controversial. Most people agree that knowledge of grammar means, among other things, knowing its grammar; but this knowledge may be intuitive (as it is in our native language), and it is not necessarily true that grammatical structures need to be taught as such (p. 76).

The native speakers of English have tacit knowledge of grammar which they develop naturally and subconsciously without any role of formal instruction. On the contrary, SL/FL learners develop grammatical consciousness as a result of formal instruction. So, grammar needs to be taught formally to the SL/FL learners. Some experts, however, view L1 and L2 learnings as similar processes and avoid the teaching of grammar (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Prabhu, 1987). Despite the contentious issue as to whether grammar should be taught or not, several ELT methods give prime importance to grammar instruction – may it be deductive or inductive instruction or explicit or implicit instruction. In this regard, Ur (1988) says, “there is no doubt that knowledge – implicit or explicit – of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language” (p. 4). Thornbury (1999) provides the following seven arguments for putting grammar in language teaching:

a) **The sentence machine argument**

The sentence machine argument asserts that grammar is a sentence producing machine. It means innumerable sentences can be generated from the limited rules. The number of possible novel sentences is constrained only by the learners’ command over vocabulary items and his/her creativity. It follows that the teaching of grammar offers the learner the means for potentially limitless linguistic creativity.

b) **The fine-tuning argument**

The teaching of grammar makes the learners aware of the ambiguous and incorrect sentences. It also provides learners with corrective measures.

c) **The fossilization argument**

The argument asserts that language learning is not possible without mastery of grammar. In other words, the rate of language learning fossilizes if learners receive no instruction. Simply speaking, linguistic competence stops to foster if grammar instruction is totally rejected.

d) **The advance-organizer argument**

Formal instruction of grammar not only has a present effect but, it has a delayed effect also. Internalization of the rules of grammar in the initial stage works as a prerequisite for later acquisition of language. Schmidt (1990) from his own
experience of learning Portuguese in Brazil concluded that noticing is a prerequisite for acquisition.

e) The discrete item argument

Any language, if viewed peripherally seems gigantic which may create confusion for the learners. But this edifice of language can be reduced into simpler grammatical items since grammar consists of a finite set of rules. So, the mastery of grammar brings neatness in the use of language. By tidying language up and organizing it into neat categories (sometimes called discrete items), language can be made more digestible, and hence more teachable and learnable.

f) The rule of law argument

Grammar is a system of rules that are transmitted to learners from the teachers. This transmission is typically associated with the kind of institutionalized learning where rules, order and discipline are highly valued. The need of rules, order and discipline is particularly sharp in large classes of unruly and unmotivated teenagers – a situation that many teachers of English are confronted with daily. In this sort of situation, grammar offers the teacher a structured system that can be taught and tested in methodical steps.

g) The learner expectation argument

Learners come to the language classes because they have some expectations as to what they will do there. Learners expect to learn language through grammar rules in some contexts. If teaching goes beyond learners’ expectations, they get de-motivated and learning does not take place.

The teaching of grammar seemed to have gained its lost status from the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore, Tonkyn (1994, p. 1) rightly says, “Grammar is back!” It is also said that without the teaching of grammar, learners run the risk of fossilization (Selinker, 1972). Experts opine that for balanced language development, the teaching of grammar should not be de-emphasized. Recently the teaching of grammar has regained some of its lost prestige since research has shown that while not all grammar instruction impacts learning, exposure to explicit grammar does impact the students’ level of L2 proficiency (Purpura, 2014). The revival of grammar has been underlined by two theoretical concepts: focus on form and consciousness-raising. Recent approaches to teaching language focus on the teaching of forms and functions (i.e., rules as well as meaningful and contextually appropriate language). Chalker (1994) states that grammar rules should not be divorced from meaning, use and contexts. The lexical approach to teaching is equally useful for developing accuracy, fluency and restructuring in the learners. What Willis (1994) believes is that teaching grammar should be based on the meaningful words that help the learners develop insights into the target language. More
recently, it is thought that grammar is a valuable asset in language learning (Saaristo, 2015). It is believed that the formal study of grammar is essential to the eventual mastery of a foreign or second language (Zhang, 2009).

Ji and Liu (2018) conducted a study on the “Effectiveness of English: The teaching of grammar and Learning in Chinese Junior Middle Schools” and found that the effectiveness that junior middle school students show in English grammar learning was very low, and teachers’ current teaching strategies could not meet the standard of students’ communicative competence. Besides, the results of the survey demonstrated that there was a significant demand for teachers to encourage students to improve the efficiency and accuracy of English grammar from reading. It can now be said that teachers’ inappropriate teaching strategies may be the cause of students’ low achievement. Most of the teachers seem to fail to encourage their learners, which results in students’ poor communicative proficiency in English. While teaching grammar, students need to be taught how to learn. Similarly, Adhikari (2017) surveyed student-teachers’ views on grammar and the teaching of grammar, and its communication to their students. He found that his student-teachers preferred learner involvement, collaborative approach, task-based activities, and so on. In contrast, the classroom observation showed that their teaching was lacking learner-centeredness and that their teaching was totally teacher-centered and traditional. There was lack of compatibility in what the subjects said and did. Most of the teachers of Nepal are well acquainted with the terminologies like learner centeredness, learner autonomy, and eclectic approach, but they fail to practically apply these notions in their actual classes.

Bastola (2016) in a similar study found that almost all the teachers of English teach grammar in their classrooms deductively. The study also showed that the teachers were using the deductive method of teaching not because of their own will but because of their students’ desires. To interpret Bastola’s (2016) findings, it can be said that many teachers put learners at the centre of teaching and learning process and they teach according to their learners’ will and desires. However, they do not seem to make their learners explorers of knowledge. This is because traditional teaching is deeply rooted in our society and maybe it is difficult for the teachers to change the way teaching is being practiced.

Badilla and Chacon (2013) concluded through the survey that students mentioned their disappointment in the methodology used by most of the professors. It consisted of written activities that did not allow them to see the grammatical rules and sentence structures. It was suggested that the professors combine traditional teaching of the rules and the teaching of communicative activities to make grammar fun and catchy. It was also concluded that teaching grammar requires more than making students memorize lists of words, noun phrases, verbal phrases, prepositions, articles and other grammatical structures. Therefore, it can be said that students’ learning remains incomplete unless the teachers resort to forms; only teaching of functions eschewing the forms may produce linguistically and communicatively handicapped learners.
Teachers’ perceptions of their pedagogical skills have an impact on how they teach. Teachers are often guided by their own philosophy of what makes them a good teacher. Wong and Barrea- Marlys (2012) indicated that there was a mixture of perceptions regarding the inclusion of explicit grammar instruction in a CLT classroom. The findings also revealed that teachers’ perceptions of what they deem to be effective L2 instruction are influenced by their experience as learners as well as their observation of student learning. Generally, teachers’ beliefs are reflected in their classroom practices. Recently there has been a shift from product-based instruction to process-based instruction. ELT experts have found out that learning-centered approach, not the teacher-centered or learner-centered ones, have fruitful results. Following Lightbown and Spada (as cited in Cameron, 2001) children can attain native-like accent and listening skills but they lack accuracy if the input is provided focusing on meaning only. If meaning is only the focus, learners seem to bypass the grammatical aspects. As a result, language learning becomes severely handicapped. Cameron (2001) writes, “…grammar does indeed have a place in children’s foreign language learning, and skillful the grammar teaching can be useful” (p. 96). The study of Ji and Liu (2018) showed that the cause of students’ low achievement might be the teachers’ inappropriate teaching strategies. Adhikari (2017) showed incompatibility between what the teachers know regarding language teaching and what they do. Likewise, Bastola (2016) thinks that teachers tend to use the deductive approach because of their students’ desires. Badilla and Chacon (2013) stressed the need of teaching both forms and functions for developing communicative competence in EFL contexts. All these works inspired me to find out the secondary level teachers’ perspectives on the teaching of grammar in the EFL context.

This study investigates novice teachers’ perceptions of the role of grammar in developing students’ communicative competence.

**Study method**

The study adopted a narrative research design to accomplish the objectives of this study. It focused on what secondary level teachers’ do as told through their own stories. All the secondary level English teachers who studied the course of ‘Advanced EFL grammar and pedagogy’ in the Far Western university formed the population of the study. Out of the whole population, twelve teachers were purposively selected. Factors, such as geographical proximity, availability of respondents at a certain time, easy accessibility, and their willingness to volunteer (Dornyei, 2007) influenced their selection. Semi-structured interviews were used as a tool for eliciting and recording data. Prior to starting an interview with teachers, they were told about the purpose of the study. Once the data elicitation process was over, the audio recorded data was transcribed and analyzed descriptively. Then the transcribed data was categorised into different categories/ themes and the respondents’ stories were written down under appropriate themes.
Findings

The data obtained from semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed by using thematic analysis. The findings include the following themes: importance of teaching grammar in general, role of grammar instruction in EFL context, attitudes to grammar error correction, use of grammar: for introducing language items or for remedy, challenges in teaching grammar, ways to overcome the challenge, critical evaluation of one’s own classes, focus on accuracy or fluency, and resources for teaching grammar. In this study, pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identity of the participants and to maintain confidentiality. In this section, I have included teachers’ views verbatim with a view to maintaining the authenticity of their voice.

Importance of teaching grammar in general

Different people view the teaching of grammar differently. Some suggest that the teaching of grammar has a major effect in language learning, others advocate that the teaching of grammar is subservient to exposure, and some others claim that the teaching of grammar is harmful. Developments in early second language acquisition research suggest that direct grammar teaching is not only futile but also harmful since such teaching has a minor impact in face of more powerful naturalistic processes (Skehan, 1994).

“Grammar is the backbone of the language. In our case, students are not acquiring English but they are learning it. So, for teaching a foreign language the teaching of grammar is necessary.” - Naresh

“The teaching of grammar is necessary for primary, secondary and tertiary levels because it is the system of a language. It enables people to use language properly.” - Deepak

“It is the grammar that makes language meaningful. Grammar is the skeleton of language and knowledge of grammar enables learners to communicate effectively.” - Gopal

“Grammar brings accuracy in language and it develops fluency as well.” - Shyam

“Grammar governs language use. So, the teaching of grammar is essential.” - Anju

“Grammar is the basic unit of language teaching. We should teach grammar so that we can develop fluency and accuracy in our language. Language should be situationally appropriate and grammatically accurate. Therefore, the teaching of grammar is necessary.” - Pravin

From the views of these participants, it can be inferred that the teachers view the teaching of grammar as very important, and grammar knowledge as a requirement to develop accuracy as well as fluency as it functions as the backbone of language development.
Role of context in grammar instruction

Contexts in grammar instruction play a vital role. Students hardly get enough exposure to the foreign language outside the class. So, they do not get the opportunity to pick up language subconsciously in a natural setting. Therefore, they should be made conscious of L2 structures in their appropriate contexts.

“Well, the teaching of grammar should be context-dependent. However, only it is not sufficient if we do not teach grammar in context.” - Mahesh

“In foreign language teaching contexts, exposing learners to target language and teaching grammar both should be done.” - Bishal

“We should not focus on the teaching of grammar in isolation. Instead, we should create an appropriate context in class and teach grammar communicatively.” - Bishnu

“We are teaching in EFL scenario, so obviously our students are having very limited exposure and grammar knowledge does not develop in them naturally. So, if we ignore the teaching of grammar in contexts, our learners will not gain meaningful accuracy in language.” - Anju

While grammar instruction should never be ignored, it should not be taught without creating appropriate contexts. As learners do not get English exposure outside the classroom, they should be made conscious of grammar rules in contexts that help them differentiate between their L1 and L2 cues. Therefore, relating grammar instruction to an appropriate context is helpful for developing meaningful accuracy.

Attitudes to grammar error correction

There are several views regarding the correction of grammar errors. However, the gravity of error is significant. If an error is not impairing the communication flow, an immediate correction has to be avoided. On the other hand, serious errors should be handled with care in time. For some EFL teachers, immediate correction plays a crucial role in interlanguage development.

“I would like to say that grammar errors should be immediately corrected. We are in the EFL scenario and if we ignore the grammar errors, where will they learn from? They get very limited exposure and they hardly get the opportunity to correct themselves. So, grammar errors should be corrected on the spot.” - Anju

“We should correct the mistakes of the learners but not directly. We can make them correct their mistakes indirectly by giving some examples so that they can improve themselves. Errors should not be ignored.” - Bishal
“Errors should be immediately corrected as feedback. So, errors must not be ignored if we have to teach them correct English.” - Bishnu

“Errors should be neither ignored nor immediately corrected by the teachers. If one student makes a mistake, the teacher should ask other students to assist him or her. If it does not work, the teacher should correct their mistakes without demotivating them.” - Jamuna

“According to behaviourism, language learning is habit formation. So, if errors are not corrected, learners learn the wrong rules. Similarly, mentalism says that people learn language due to innate capacity (i.e., LAD). But LAD also has to be exposed to the correct language before it starts generating language. In foreign language teaching, errors should be immediately corrected because learners do not have English exposure outside the class.” - Gopal

“Errors are the gateway to success, no doubt. But, what I think is that errors should be immediately corrected. If learners continue using the inaccurate sentences time and again, then they internalize the wrong rules and wrong habit formation takes place.” - Mahesh

“Whether errors should be corrected or not depends upon the seriousness of errors. The serious errors should be corrected immediately because these errors hamper the learning process. Ignoring such errors is the main cause of fossilization.” - Naresh

Three different lines of thinking emerge from the teachers’ voices given above. The first of which may be termed as the traditional approach which recommends errors to be corrected immediately otherwise there is a danger for them to be fossilized. If errors are not corrected in time, learners fossilize at some point in their interlanguage (IL) development. The second line of thinking suggests that errors must be handled with care and done implicitly rather than explicitly. Direct error corrections may do more harm than good. The third view, however, advises that the technique of error correction may be different according to the gravity of errors, situation, learners’ personalities and styles. Appropriate error correction techniques can not only be a best pedagogical strategy to motivate the learners but also to foster their capacity to generate a new language.

**Accuracy versus fluency**

Whether to focus on accuracy or fluency is highly debatable. As it is noted in the sections above, some researchers contend that accuracy should be the primary goal of teaching English in the EFL contexts (Tonkyn 1994) It does not, however, mean that fluency should be ignored. Once learners are aware of the target structures, they should be given some proceduralization activities to developing fluency in the target language.

“I focus on accuracy because if their language is not accurate, the listeners may have difficulty understanding the meaning. If the intended meaning is not conveyed, there is no point in speaking. So, I focus on accuracy.” - Deepak
“I focus on fluency but I do not ignore accuracy at all. When they communicate with their friends or with me, they can get indirect feedback and develop accuracy as well. But, if they never take part in communication, focusing on rules is meaningless.” - Gopal

“Well, I focus both but I believe that their grammar should be correct. I do not mind if they commit pronunciation mistakes as this is the era of world Englishes but if they are making mistakes in grammar, I worry. So, I focus on familiarizing the learners with accurate sentences and at the same time I focus on fluency.” - Jamuna

“In spoken English, fluency is my focus. I encourage them to speak English so that they can communicate with each other. I note their mistakes and plan to deal with those mistakes sometime later in another class so that they will realize their mistakes. In this way, what I think is that they can develop accuracy as well.” - Bishal

“Actually, I focus both but I focus on accuracy more. When my students make mistakes, I correct their mistakes because if students learn correct grammar, they can improve their performance and fluency later. If they do not learn accurate grammar in time, their fluency will be adversely affected later on.” - Mahesh

“My focus is on fluency. Actually, if we just focus on forms, students may get discouraged and they do not like to do grammar tasks. So, in the very beginning, I focus on fluency and later on I make them aware of the formal aspects. In this way, what I think is that they can develop accuracy as well.” - Naresh

As can be deciphered from the teachers’ comments above, none of the teachers see to sacrifice one for the other. When some teachers focus on accuracy more and others emphasize fluency, they are not doing one at the cost of the other. Some teachers start with fluency and move towards accuracy while others do the opposite. This is because their students are at the different points of the accuracy-fluency continuum.

**Use of grammar: For introducing language items or for remedy**

Grammar instruction can be done for both preemptive targeting of errors (Cowan, 2008) and for remedial teaching. Preventive measures make learners aware of the possible errors before they commit them. As the teacher introduces language items, h/she makes the learners notice the possible gray areas. Remedial teaching is done to correct the mistakes after they have been committed. James (1994) claims both prophylactic teachings, which are done before the learners make errors, and remedial teaching, which is done after the learners have committed mistakes, play important role in an EFL milieu.

“The teaching of grammar should not only be done for language correction but also for introducing language items.” - Anju
“In my opinion, at first they should be asked to do their work and exercises themselves. If they make mistakes, remedial teaching is necessary.” - Bishal

“Language and grammar are not different things. Language teaching involves vocabulary teaching, pronunciation teaching, the teaching of grammar, and so on. So, it depends, you see.” - Bishnu

“Grammar should be used in remedial measures as well but it should be used in the language class from the time of introducing language items to show them the right path.” - Deepak

“First we should teach grammar so that they will remember the structures which they can use for language practice. If students are unaware of the structures, the intended meaning may be lost and communication breaks down.” - Gopal

“I think we should focus on the teaching of function, and while practicing various functions, they use various forms. So, I say that form derives from function. In case learners have problems in using correct form, grammar help can be used as a remedial measure.” - Naresh

From the opinions expressed above, what can be drawn is that both prophylactic and remedial measures are useful in language teaching. In foreign language teaching, if learners’ consciousness of the potential breaches of grammar rules is not raised; wrong learning may take place. So, students should be given the opportunity to notice the structures of the target language. This approach helps them to be aware of the ways language elements are structured into meaningful units of the language.

**Resources for teaching grammar**

For the effective teaching of grammar, we need to exploit various resources like poems, songs, rhymes, games and problem-solving activities. The use of such resources makes the class lively and interesting. Furthermore, it is sheer fun for students to learn grammar where they are not fully attending to grammatical aspects of the language. As is stated in the comments, using various resources breaks the monotony of the learners and adds variety to the class.

“It depends upon the situation. If there is a large class, I sometimes break the class into two or three groups. I then use poems in one group, games in another group, and problem-solving activities in the next group to teach the same grammar item. It takes time so the next day, I invite the group leaders to present what they have learned. If the class is small, I bring some scripts of drama and ask the students to act out.” - Shyam

“I generally use puzzles, games, and melodramas to teach grammar.” - Pravin
“Sometimes I use online resources and different books written by various scholars to teach grammar.” - Naresh

“To teach grammar, I use various resources. Sometimes I use poems, sometimes I crack jokes, and sometimes I sing songs.” - Mahesh

“I use games, authentic videos of English L1 speakers, and extracts from some movies.” - Gopal

“Dictionary is one resource I use. Sometimes I also take help from online resources.” - Deepak

“Sometimes I use songs, poems and rhymes.” - Bishnu

“Some grammar books and these days I also use online resources.” - Bishal

The teachers seemed to use different sorts of resources to make their teaching fruitful. They suggested that the resources aided them significantly to teach better.

Challenges in teaching grammar

In the EFL context, teaching grammar is a challenge mainly due to the differences in L1 and L2 forms. If L1 and L2 cues are similar, learning of L2 is facilitated whereas the differences in the cues result in L2 errors. The theory of L1 interference applies here as learners mind is full of L1 structures when they start learning L2. This is the main challenge though, as the teachers’ remarks below show, other challenges may also exist.

“If you see the prior knowledge of the students of government-aided schools, it’s very difficult to teach. They don’t know English vocabulary; they don’t have the knowledge of norms and rules of grammar; they are very weak. So, a secondary level English teacher faces a lot of problems. Besides this, students with multiple intelligences, multiple linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are a great challenge for a teacher because it’s very difficult to fulfill their needs, desires and demands.” - Naresh

“In private English medium schools, we face fewer challenges as the students are getting English environment and somehow, they are fluent in English. But, they don’t have deep knowledge of grammar rules, so some of them lack accuracy. Sometimes, they use their own structures which are not target-like. Sometimes, they use double negation, sometimes, double marking of tenses, and so on” - Pravin

“I have found my students overgeneralizing the rules. Teaching all the rules and exceptional cases is not possible and students overgeneralize what they have learnt. L1 interference is another problem. My students try to speak English but they use L1 kind of structures. Comprehension problem is another problem.” - Shyam
“The challenge I am facing is addressing the heterogeneous class. Due to learners’ L1 differences, some items are difficult for me to explain.” - Mahesh

“My students speak English but their English is not accurate.” - Anju

“Sometimes, I find it difficult to teach inductively through examples and sometimes, I find difficulty in teaching deductively through rules. So, choosing the correct methodology is my challenge.” - Bishal

Both the government-aided school teachers and private school teachers face challenges in teaching grammar. In government schools, the main problem for a secondary level English teacher is that learners’ level of English is poor. Students lack command in all areas of the language such as accuracy, fluency and comprehension. As the comments above suggest, in private schools, students are somehow fluent and can comprehend but they are not accurate in terms of grammar. Helping students overcome errors caused by L1 interference and overgeneralization is another challenge for the teachers.

Ways to overcome the challenge

The teachers use several techniques and strategies to overcome the problems. Learner motivation, rapport building, group work, pair work, and differentiated instruction, help them to overcome the challenges teachers are facing in teaching grammar.

“I teach according to situation. For example, when my students overgeneralise, I give several examples that fit the rule and I also provide them some exceptional cases so that they will form less errors. Similarly, when learners make mistakes due to mother tongue interferences, I show them the differences in students’ L1 and the TL (target language). In this way I help them internalize the rules and ask them to go for freer practice.” - Shyam

“Basically, I emphasize the areas where learners make mistakes in order that they can find out their mistakes. I also repeat the sentence if that is wrong rather than telling them their structure is wrong. When this happens, learners realize their mistakes and start correcting themselves.” - Pravin

“Actually, before I start teaching, I take some pre-tests to know the background knowledge of my students, to test their ability and capability. Then I use appropriate techniques to help my students. I also call my students other than the school time and give them extra classes to increase the level of their language proficiency.” - Naresh

“I simply repeat the topics so that students can revisit the topics they have already met.” - Anju

“Sometimes, I take the help of my senior teachers and sometimes, I use teachers’ guide to solve the challenges.” - Bishal
“Students are from heterogeneous groups and I always think of addressing all the students. By which way they can understand is always the focus of my teaching. I always make sure whether they are catching my points or not.” - Mahesh

Challenges can be overcome by getting ideas from other teachers, trying to better the methodology, exemplifying, revisiting and recycling the topics, taking pretests prior to teaching, and stressing on the learners’ problems to make them realize their weaknesses.

**Discussion**

From the analysis of participants’ views on the importance of teaching grammar, it has been found that grammar is the backbone of language which enables language users to use language properly. It is the skeleton of language which enables learners to communicate effectively. This resonates with Ur (1988) that knowledge of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language. It is grammar instruction that develops both fluency and accuracy. It is the basic unit of language which governs a language. Therefore, the teaching of grammar is of paramount importance in language classes. This is also highlighted in Chalker (1994) and Willis (1994). Grammar teaching is a must in the EFL context because learners do not get naturalistic exposure, which aligns with Purpura (2014), Saaristo (2015), Zhang (2009) and Cameron (2001). Learners may get English exposure from TVs, radios, movies, documentaries, newspapers but they lack exposure to day to day communication. So, the teaching of grammar should be done in order that they start to communicate using the basic structures of language. Errors should be corrected to prevent the learners from running the risk of fossilization (Selinker, 1972). In the EFL contexts, learners get almost no (or very little) opportunity to test their hypothesis and to amend their interlanguage, so the teacher needs to correct the mistakes using appropriate techniques. If errors are ignored, wrong habit formation takes place and once the habit is set, it is almost impossible to give it up. When learners fossilize, it is difficult to teach them target-like structures. However, in the name of correcting mistakes, learners should not be demotivated and discouraged.

According to Cowan (2008) and James (1994), both prophylactic teaching and remedial teaching should go side by side. Whether and to what extent one should resort to the teaching of grammar depends upon several factors. Learner issues, the gravity of error, the complexity of the topic, classroom setting and situation are some of such responsible factors. It was also found that all the teachers face challenges in teaching grammar. The major challenges include how to deal with the problems of L1 interference, overgeneralization, state of having very little (almost no) exposure to the target language, and so on. To reiterate Naresh’s words,

“...Students with multiple intelligences, multiple linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are a great challenge for a teacher because it’s very difficult to fulfill their needs, desires and demands.” Similarly, it was found that due to undue focus on fluency activities in the curriculum, learners’ accuracy is getting affected adversely, which has become a great
challenge for the teachers. Badilla and Chacon (2013), therefore, suggest that the teachers combine traditional teaching of the rules and the teaching of communicative activities to make grammar fun and catchy. The teachers are using strategies and techniques that fit the situation and learner-needs to overcome the challenges. They test the students’ comprehension level and provide the students with constructive feedback. They show the areas of grammar in which L1 and L2 differ. Similarly, they revisit and recondition learners’ learning so that knowledge can go to long term memory and that this knowledge will be available for spontaneous conversation. Using teacher’s guides and getting help from other teachers are also useful ideas that the teachers expressed. Their main challenge was to make balanced language development and they have been adapting the ways outlined above to overcome the challenges and to maintain a balance among accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and spontaneity. Teachers have their own ways of critically evaluating their classes. Most of them give tests to their students to check their understanding of the grammar lessons taught. In this way, they use a testing technique to evaluate the effectiveness of their grammar teaching. Some teachers keep the lesson reports while others ask students to express their opinion of the class at the end of the term. Similarly, teachers are also found to be collaborating with each other. The study also found that teachers valued both fluency and accuracy equally. Some emphasized accuracy over fluency and others did just the opposite only to fulfill the learner’s needs and expectations. Akin to the findings of Wong and Barrea-Marlys (2012), the study revealed that teachers’ perceptions of what makes L2 grammar instruction effective are influenced by their experience and situation. The study also found that teachers want to make their grammar classes learning-centered, interesting, and lively and to do so, they exploit a number of resources in their classrooms.

Conclusion

The teaching of grammar has a lot to do with accuracy incommunicative proficiency. It is grammar instruction that balances the language development. Learning of English in an EFL context is severely constrained without grammar instruction. Since learners do not have naturalistic exposure to the target language, they do not have sufficient data to work on. Consequently, organic language development does not take place if the teaching of grammar is eschewed. Grammar Instruction keeps learners on the right track and prevents them from fossilization. In the course of language teaching, learners commit several mistakes so learners should be scaffolded with grammar instruction at various stages of learning. Grammar instruction improves with critical reflection and self-evaluation. No method is perfect and subject to the changing context and learner needs. Therefore, teachers should think of appropriating their methodologies in terms of the context, aims and needs. The small-scale study was based on a limited number of interviews. Furthermore, the study has only dealt with the teachers’ perception of the role of grammar. What happens in the actual classrooms remains unexplored. Therefore, further research can be conducted to find out whether what teachers say and what they do match. The study employed purposive sampling for the ease and convenience of data generation. Therefore, the study cannot claim to represent the
voice of the wider population of M. Ed graduates who have completed the course. Larger scale research is needed in order to include a larger sampling. On the basis of the findings, the following research and pedagogic implications can be drawn:

• While planning, policymaking, curriculum developing and syllabus framing, it has to be deeply thought about what, why, wherefores and hows of grammar instruction in language classes.

• Teachers should use grammaring (Larsen-freeman, 2003) techniques in their classrooms for the effective delivery of their lessons.

• Teachers need to employ SARSing techniques in their grammar instructions. SARS stands for supplementing, adapting, rejecting and substituting.

• At the practice level, teachers should use a bottom-up approach for their professional growth. Sense of professional growth and professional ethics are at the roots of students’ progress.

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Appendix

1. Why is the teaching of grammar necessary?
3. Some people say that the teaching of grammar should not be focused in EFL classes. Do you agree?
4. Some people say that grammar errors should be ignored whereas others argue for immediate correction. Justify your point of view.
5. How can grammar be taught to enhance communicative competence? Please be
6. The teaching of grammar should only be used for remedy, not for introducing language items. What is your opinion regarding this?

7. What challenges do you face/ have you been facing in teaching English?

8. How do you deal/ are dealing with those challenges?

9. Do you try something new or follow the same methods of teaching grammar every year?

10. Have you ever critically looked at the effectiveness of teaching grammar in the classroom? How?

11. What is your viewpoint? Grammar should be taught or not? Explain.

12. Do you think that it is easier to present language items if we teach grammar? Why/ why not?

13. Do you believe that we should make our learners communicate in English no matter whether or not their utterances are grammatically accurate? Why/ why not?

14. Mention some resources that you are exploiting to teach grammar.

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Teachers’ Perception of the Students’ Readiness for Self-regulated Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Karuna Nepal and Saban Kumar KC

Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has detrimental impacts on the educational sector along with many other areas of human life. Virtual learning, though not a new topic, has occupied huge space in current pedagogical discourse. However, it has been criticized for exacerbating inequalities between well-resourced and under-resourced people, institutions and geographical location. In this scenario, we propose self-regulated learning as a viable solution to avert the learning gap during possible crises in the future. In this article, we explored how empowered are the learners for carrying out self-regulated learning. This qualitative study in which data were elicited through three focus group discussions with 15 ELT teachers revealed that the students having a lack of sufficient knowledge and skill for continuing learning in the absence of a teacher, indicated to the possible discontinuation of learning during the school closure circumstanced by COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Self-regulated learning, learning strategies, learner empowerment

Introduction

The global health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an educational crisis of unprecedented scale. The prolonged disruption in mainstream education has created a learning gap among learners. According to UNICEF (2020), worldwide more than one billion children are at risk of falling behind due to school closures aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19.

In Nepal, virtual classes have been started to mitigate the immediate impact of school closure. From the government sector, the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) has also started virtual classes for school children. Meanwhile, some private organizations like Karkhana, Deerwalk, Midas to name a few have come up with online learning resources and are offering free video resources for students up to grade 12 (Lamichhane, 2020). As a result, a few institutions are able to accommodate the sudden demand of the time without delay. The major attraction behind these efforts is the use of technology which has provided with improved access, flexibility of time and place,
and the potentiality of accommodating the change to some extent’ However, there arise various issues alongside such as internet connectivity, training for teachers and learners, the proliferation of technological equipment, online security, and so on. Until and unless these issues are convincingly ensured, the effectiveness of virtual classes is put on suspicion.

The distance learning initiated by the Government of Nepal has not been effective as expected. There are several reasons behind this. The most important one is that the students have collected idiosyncratic experiences while coping with the abrupt changes imposed upon them during this pandemic. Hence, they should be allowed to follow their personalized interest, need, and style. In this situation, generalized learning plans have not been fully supportive for them. Thus, conceptualizing, developing, and implementing distance learning in a full-fledged manner is challenging. Moreover, it has been argued that the inability to create an equitable and accessible channel of virtual classes would lead to digital division ‘yet’ another form of marginalization. Here, the possible exclusion of students studying in community schools representing vulnerable and disadvantaged communities cannot be ignored.

Pointing out the challenges of virtual classes we do not intend to indicate that the continuation of learning is impossible during this pandemic. It is because the closure of school does not necessarily imply the stoppage of learning since learning continues beyond the classroom setting and even in the absence of teachers. Here, we propose self-regulated learning as a viable solution for bridging the learning gap among the learners in our context. According to Knowles (1975), self-directed learning strategy is a process in which individuals take initiative, with or without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and mental resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. Seen from this way, a self-regulated learner is able to analyze the situation and need, explore and exploit the available resources and opportunities and continue learning independently.

But this is possible only when the students are prepared enough to handle these types of unpredicted situations and plan for their learning after evaluating the circumstances that they are in. Hence, the present study attempts to explore how prepared the learners are for continuing learning during the school closure conditioned by COVID-19 Pandemic.

In general, the purpose of the study is to bring out the reflection of ELT teachers regarding the classroom activities taking place prior to the school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the study specifically focuses on the identification of the strategies that the teachers inculcated in the learners, evaluating their effectiveness for developing self-regulated learning and exploring the plans of the teachers for enabling the learners to learn independently in the possible school closure in the future.
Literature Review

This section provides a review and synthesis of the literature related to the present study and intends to establish a theoretical foundation for the problem we unravel in this research paper.

Self-regulated learning

Self-regulated learning is an active constructive process in which the learners take charge of their learning. The learners are characterized by high motivation level and actively involved in planning, setting goals, implementing and monitoring, and evaluating the entire process and their achievement. According to Zimmerman (1990) self-regulation refers to the self-directive process through which learners transform their mental abilities into task-related academic skills. He views that learning takes place as an activity that students do for themselves in a proactive way, rather than as a covert event that happens to them reactively as a result of teaching experiences. In the same vein, Leaver (2009) connects self-regulated learning and learner autonomy and predicts that self-regulated learning might result in a person who autonomously learns at different levels. The specific characteristics mostly attributed to self-regulated learners concern their motivational beliefs or attitudes, their cognitive strategy use, and their metacognitive abilities (Wolters, 2003, p.189). Hence, self-regulated learners are able to skillfully managing resources, exploiting the learning environment effectively, taking ownership of learning, are independent and highly motivated.

For developing self-regulated learning habits, it is essential to equip learners with self-regulated learning strategies. Zimmerman (1990, p.5) defines self-regulated learning strategies as ‘actions and processes directed at the acquisition of information or skills that involve agency, purpose, and instrumentality perceptions by learners. Self-regulated learners possess an awareness of the strategic relations which exist between the regulatory process or responses and learning results. Similarly, they can make use of the strategies they are aware of to achieve pre-established objectives (Bramuci 2013). Discussing the relation between learning strategies and self-regulated learning, Dornyei (2005, p. 195) considers the learning strategies to be “a useful kit for active and conscious learning and these strategies pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self-regulation”. Thus, learning strategies form the foundation of self-regulated learning.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are commonly defined as deliberate attempts that learners make in order to facilitate learning. They include the techniques, approaches and tactics used for optimizing learning. In this light, Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as specific actions, behaviors, or techniques that the learners use to improve skills in
second language learning. Similarly, according to Rubin (1987), learning strategies are “any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information” (p.19). Effective learning strategies enable the learners to expand their knowledge horizon, grow more independent and autonomous through enhanced learning experiences. Discussing the significance of learning strategies Kalati (2016) writes that effective learning occurs when learners often use organizing, assessing, and planning which are the meta-cognitive strategies and accompanied by cognitive strategies such as analyzing, reasoning, transferring information, taking notes, and summarizing.

It has been critical to empower learners for fostering self-directed learning. Discussing the need for 21st century learners, Harari (2018) notes that children need to learn adoptability, learning how to learn, resilience, curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective collaboration. The availability of teachers at every step of life is nearly impossible and beyond imagination too. Meanwhile, a teacher can’t satisfy the learners providing every bit of knowledge. Considering this fact current pedagogy has recommended learner autonomy to be one of the targets of teaching-learning activities. In a similar vein, Wegner, Minnaert and Strchlik (2013) explain that in modern education systems learners are expected to possess an increased degree of autonomy and show initiative in learning processes, inspecting learning materials and understanding contents. Efficient growth of knowledge inside and outside of school is only possible if students have skills that initiate, guide, and control the search for information and later on its processing and storage. They discuss six broad categories of learning strategies for making the learners automated. They are cooperation strategies, elaboration strategies, motivational and emotional strategies, revision strategies, organizational strategies and control strategies.

Strategically empowered learners know how to learn the best and can take the responsibility of learning. They can analyze their needs, plan for learning and reflect and evaluate the entire process. Strategy instruction can contribute to the development of learner mastery and autonomy and increased teacher expertise (Chamot 2005). Learning strategies are important in second language learning and teaching for two major reasons. Firstly, by examining the strategies we gain insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social and affective processes involved in language learning. Secondly, less successful language learners can be taught new strategies for helping them to become better language learners (Grenfell & Harris 1999 as cited in Chamot 2005). Thus, empowering the learners is a pre-requisite to self-regulated learning which has been critical in the current scenario.

**Learner empowerment and learner training**

The transformation of learning to the real world situation is the primary goal of education. Wagner and Dintersmith (2015) suggest that the purpose of education is to engage students with their passions and growing sense of purpose, teach them critical
skills needed for career and citizenship and inspire them to do their best to make their world better. For realizing these purposes empowering learners is crucial. Learner empowerment is a process of supplementing the learners with autonomy, motivation, and ownership which in turn results in active learning. In this regard, Sewagegn and Diale (2019) explain empowerment as a process that enables the learners to think, believe and carry out an activity and criticize his/her own work and make decisions autonomously. There are many areas where a learner can be empowered. Stone (1995, p. 294) identifies three main areas as respect, validation and success. She further asserts that students can be further empowered through ownership, choice, autonomy, decision making, responsibility, independence, risk-taking, collaborating, and self-evaluation.

Promoting learning strategies should be carefully guided by the theory of particularity that is what works best for an individual learner in a particular context. It is because there are no intrinsically good strategies. People need to discover them (Mariani, 2002). The choice of strategies depends on a number of factors, including the language being learned, the level of proficiency, the learning goals, and the learners’ characteristics, such as age, sex, learning style, beliefs and motivations (Oxford, 1989). Thus, a creative teacher needs to supplement the students with a full range of strategies they could be choosing from and direct the learners towards personalized learning. Kallick and Zmuda (2017) define personalized learning as an umbrella term under which many practices fit, each designed to accelerate student learning by tailoring instruction to individuals’ needs and skills as they go about fulfilling curricular requirements. Stressing on the need for personalized learning they state that we must move towards schools that offer students more choices as they learn how to fully develop their voice, hone their capacities to co-create, and explore the benefits of social construction and self-discovery. Discussing the implementation of this type of learning they further write that there will be many different projects going on simultaneously in the class. The choices that the students will make will be based on their curiosity and interest. In short, varieties and flexibility are the main attributes of personalized learning.

For promoting self-directed learning, the teachers must design the lesson in such a way that they can inculcate in the learners the attributes like initiating, risk-taking, collaborating, and taking responsibility and so on. In this regard, Hedge (2008) discusses three types of learner training activities that have significant implications for developing self-directed learning. These include activities that help learners to reflect on learning, activities which train strategies and equip learners to be active and activities which encourage learners to monitor and check their own progress. These broad categories incorporate the activities which promote reflection, feedback, motivation, collaboration, scaffolding, critical thinking, taking responsibility, evaluation, planning, making choices and many more.

It is not necessary that the strategy training takes a separate space and be introduced directly. That is to say, a proficient teacher can cultivate the desired strategies indirectly too. The teachers can weave learning strategy training into regular classrooms even
in a natural but highly explicit way, providing ample opportunity for practicing strategies and transferring them to new tasks (Oxford 2002, p.130). Discussing the ways of directing learners towards self-regulation. McGarry (1995) explains that students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, by being given some control over what, how and when they learn, are more likely to be able to set realistic goals, plans, programs of work, develop strategies for coping with new and unforeseen situations, evaluate and assess their own work and generally, to learn from their own successes and failures in ways which will help them to be more efficient learners in the future.

To put in a nutshell, self-regulated learning is self-planned and self-initiated learning in which learners bear the primary responsibility of learning. A self-regulated learner is supposed to analyze the learning context, make learning plans, exploit the materials available, and reflect on the entire process. He/she takes increasingly more responsibility for the decisions associated with learning endeavor. For this to happen the teachers are supposed to inculcate in the learners’ self-regulated learning strategies such as planning, risk-taking, initiating, exploring, co-operating with others, making choices, reflecting and so on. Empowered with these strategies the learners would be independent and autonomous who can think critically and can continue learning even in the absence of teachers during the time of crisis, for example, the one we are facing today due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methods and Procedure of the Study**

As this research solely builds on the teachers’ reflection on empowering the students with learning strategies, this study is naturally guided by the qualitative method of inquiry. This research tries to make an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon by exploring subjective opinion assuming that reality is subjective (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Focus group discussions were used as a tool for eliciting data. Focus group discussion is a form of group interview but does not reflect the forward and backward turn-taking between interviewer and group. Rather, the data emerge from the interaction of the group (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The interaction allows a researcher to elicit a multiplicity of views. In this regard, Kitzinger (1995) features interaction as a crucial attribute of focus groups because the interaction between participants highlights their view of the world, the language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about a situation.

We conducted three focus group discussions virtually among fifteen ELT teachers teaching at secondary level. Each group consisted of five participants. We purposively selected the teachers teaching in public schools in the Bhaktapur district who have not been able to communicate with their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure online security during the meeting, we used the Microsoft - Teams application (Tung, 2020).
Prior to the discussion, we briefed them on the nature of the discussion and its general purpose. Regarding ethical consideration, informed consent was sought (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Then we put forward the matter of discussion (Morgan 1997). The discussions lasted for fifty to seventy minutes.

The responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis and interpretation. The transcription was carried out as succinctly as possible. The data were further analyzed using a descriptive approach to data analysis. For this, we first noted down the points and categorized them broadly under three headings namely learning strategies, teachers’ reflection on classroom activities and perceived roles of teachers.

**Findings and Discussion**

In this section, we present the findings and discussion under three subheadings: learning strategies, teachers’ reflection on classroom activities and the perceived role of teachers. Here, under each heading, we have included both the reflection of the teachers about their classroom activities carried out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and their plans for the post-pandemic situation.

**Learning strategies**

Reflecting on the teaching-learning activities prior to the pandemic it was revealed that the common strategies the participants intended to inculcate in the learners were exploration, collaboration, taking notes, summarizing, revision and self-evaluation. While discussing on these strategies, majority of the teachers emphasized that they focused on the general learning strategies that English language teachers commonly intend to promote in the learners which contradict with an argument made by Chamot (2005) that learning strategies are sensitive to the learning context and to the learner’s internal processing. The majority of the participants were not selective and agreed that they followed the general techniques and tried to inculcate similar types of strategies as other language teachers commonly do.

Meanwhile, all the participants admitted that the pandemic caught the students not well prepared. They agreed that the strategies were not sufficiently practiced enabling the learners to feel complete independence and develop the ability to engage in learning on their own without much guidance. Thus, the teachers expected that learning might have been continued despite the school closure during the COVID-19 pandemic but could not be sure about that.

While talking about the future plan, firstly the participants expressed their regret for not directing their teaching-learning activities towards self-regulation. They further confessed that they could not prepare the learners for the initiation, planning, organizing, monitoring, risk-taking, making the choices, engaging in self-learning
and taking responsibility and ownership in learning. These strategies are key to self-regulated learning and partially cohere with strategies prescribed by Wang (2004) who categorise the self-regulated learning strategies under eleven broad headings. These include self-evaluation, organizing and transforming, goal setting and planning, seeking information, keeping records and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-consequences, attentional control, rehearsing and memorizing, and seeking assistance. In this regard, most of the participants emphasized on the fact that these strategies are difficult to empower in the learners, hence need rigorous planning and efficient implementation. For them, the teaching-learning activities taking place prior to the pandemic was not efficient enough to develop learner autonomy and self-regulation among the learners. They further admitted that only those who were empowered with learning strategies like reflecting, evaluating, and initiating can exploit virtual classes and other learning opportunities even in the absence of teachers during the school closure.

**Teachers’ reflection on classroom activities**

While reflecting on the activities carried out in the classroom it was found that most of the teachers used similar types of activities in the classrooms. They are pair and group work, role-play and simulation, games and puzzles, reading supplementary books, group discussion and dictionary work. To be specific, some of them made their learners choose any two words daily and present them in the class with their meaning and usage. Similarly, the majority of them also encouraged the students to watch English movies and speak English among their friends even in the absence of teachers. Here, the participants intended to promote the learning strategies used by good language learners like collaborating (playing language games and puzzles), accountability and responsibility (choosing any two words daily and presenting them in the class with their meaning and speaking English among their friends even in the absence of teachers), exploiting learning opportunities outside the classroom (watching movies and reading supplementary books). However, they admitted that the learners are hugely dependent on the teachers while performing these activities. They can rarely choose any materials for their learning. It indicates that the teachers tried to inculcate some good learning strategies through common learning activities but were not able to empower the students with learner autonomy.

Similarly, the finding demonstrates the teachers’ dependence on common learning activities without rigorous effort on developing individualized skill on reflecting, monitoring and taking responsibility. The findings here aligned with McCarthy’s (1995, p.1) argument that the majority of students are still being taught in ways that promote dependence and leave them ill-equipped to their school-learned knowledge and skills to the world beyond the classroom. This revelation indicates to the fact that English language learning has not been significantly undertaken during this pandemic.
The perceived role of teachers

Regarding the roles of the language teachers for empowering the learners with learning strategies, it was found that the teachers have a significant role in motivating and inspiring the learners. In this regard, all the participants agreed that the students were more teacher dependent. Thus, it is possible that they might have been waiting for the teachers’ assistance in selecting the learning materials and prescribing the strategies for dealing with them. For getting rid of this in the future they avowed that they would play the role of facilitator rather than that of director and controller. This resonates with Kalati (2016) who argues that teachers are responsible to facilitate learning besides awakening curiosity and inspiring creativity in learners. Furthermore, all the participants agreed that the teachers are responsible for teaching the strategies like planning, monitoring and evaluating for making them autonomous. It conforms to the findings of Picon-Jacome (2012) who claims that these strategies are responsible to enhance learners’ autonomy, boost their metacognitive skills, and enhance their personality so that they can fight for their rights.

The participants further opined that the pandemics and catastrophes are abrupt, but the preparation needs to be done in advance. Tracking the various possibilities and challenges of sudden catastrophes in a creative way is the responsibility of a teacher primarily. Thus, they should craft their classroom in such a way that they could inculcate the qualities of autonomy and independence in the learners and prepare them for self-learning during uncertainties.

For this, the ELT teachers should bear the primary responsibility of empowering the learners with learning strategies that help the learners accommodate change, best utilize the resources available and exploit the opportunities at hand on their own. In this regard, Harari (2018) broadly argues that schools should downplay technical skills and emphasize the general purpose of life skills. Most importantly, learners should be able to deal with change to learn new things and preserve their mental balance in unfamiliar situations.

As an ELT teacher, it is our first priority that we ensure to facilitate the continuity of education for all. For this, empowering the learners with learning strategies can be a viable solution. The proliferation of technology equipped instructional setting is the demand of the day, however, this is not an end. Similarly, the transition from a face-to-face class to a virtual class is a daunting task. For exploiting the advanced technology as a support for their learning process equipping the learners with efficient learning strategies would be helpful. It is because learning strategies are one of the most important determinants leading to learning autonomy; an ability to take charge of one’s own learning (Holec 1983, as cited in Benson and Voller, 1997, p.1). Moreover, autonomous learners bear the highest responsibility of learning from initiating to evaluating themselves.
Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic, in most cases, caught the stakeholders of education including students and teachers not well prepared. On the one hand, the possible discontinuation of learning is worrying everyone concerned. And on the other hand, with the growing complexities and uncertainties this crisis has created, it has been critical to rethink and transform our ways of customizing learning. We are compelled to plan for the educational paradigm shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. For this, it is necessary to make learners aware of multiple strategies and let them decide which works best for them. Flexibility is key when planning to facilitate learning strategies. Similarly, the learners should be actively involved in the entire learning process from goal setting to evaluation. And once the students internalize the strategies practiced in language classes they will be able to replicate and adapt them to some extent even in the absence of the teachers, hence, will achieve self-regulation and autonomy in learning.

Had the learners been empowered sufficiently, the probable learning gap in the learners would not have been something to worry about. Thus, anticipating possible crises in the future and preparing the learners for it would be worthy. Here, empowering the learners and getting them ready to take the responsibility of learning is one of the best things an ELT teacher can do. It is because by equipping the students with learning strategies we equip them with learning tools for the rest of their lives.

Though catastrophes are abrupt and unintentional preparation can be gradual and deliberate. Teaching may stop during these types of crises but learning would not be paused if the teachers can plan efficiently and prepare the learners. Preparedness can bridge the learning gap especially in the resource-constrained countries like Nepal. For this, teachers’ planning and facilitation play the key role.

References


article/microsoft-teams-vs-zoom-microsoft-touts-its-superior-security-and-privacy/


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Teachers’ Perceptions of Critical Pedagogy in English Language Teaching Classroom

Purna Bahadur Kadel

Abstract

Critical pedagogy practices are rarely followed in the traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) classes in which the focus is on transmitting knowledge to the learners, rather than transforming it. This study is an attempt to explore teachers’ experiences in and their perceptions of the existing practices of critical pedagogy and on its usefulness in ELT classrooms. This is qualitative research in which phenomenological research design was adopted to accomplish this study. Six respondents were selected from three secondary schools of Kathmandu district as a sample through a purposive non-random sampling procedure. In-depth-interview was used as a tool to assemble the required data to answer the research questions of this study. The findings of the study show that the ELT classroom in the district is teacher-directed but not learner-centered; the textbooks, teaching strategies, and methods are partially focused on marginalized groups and underprivileged learners. The ELT practices at the secondary level do not address multiple intelligences; and critical pedagogy is not adopted for the elevation of the marginalized learners though the teachers are aware of its usefulness.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, transform, phenomenological, teacher-directed, multiple intelligence, and equity pedagogy.

Introduction

Critical pedagogy (CP) is an approach that makes the marginalized, underprivileged, and disabled groups aware of their fundamental rights, equality, and culture as the mainstream of society. These underprivileged and marginalized groups may include female children who belong to underprivileged groups of people in remote areas, children with different abilities and refugees/internally displaced persons or returnees, or those affected by armed conflicts. According to UNICEF’s (2003), human rights principle of universality means, the well-being of all children is important and applying the right approach that helps achieve inclusion and equity. CP as a teaching method is essential to provide inclusive education and equitable learning to all genders, classes, and groups of children.
Critical pedagogy is increasingly used in English language teaching (ELT) to encourage textbook writers and material developers to incorporate the local cultures and indigenous knowledge in the content of textbooks and reference books. It brings changes by replacing the traditional educational system with the broad practices of critical thinking. Nepal is a multilingual, multi-ethnical, multi-cultural and multi-religious country. Several castes and religious diversities define our social fabric. The national vision in education addresses education for all and appropriate approaches to teaching and learning have been recommended for doing so. Several educational documents have appropriated critical pedagogy to address the diversity of learners, encourage their active participation and collaboration, create a child-friendly environment and child-centered pedagogy, and respect individual differences in schools as well as in the classrooms.

The practice of critical pedagogy in English language teaching in Nepal is being introduced. The new textbooks for the secondary and higher secondary levels have been prepared and/or modified in order to accommodate the changing socio-political scenarios of Nepal. There has been a lot of discussions about reforming existing/traditional pedagogy in school. Despite the fact that teachers have been advised, encouraged and sporadically oriented to use critical pedagogy for teaching English at the (higher) secondary level how teachers view the application of CP in English classrooms, what their experiences are in conducting inclusive and equitable lessons, and above all, if they are supported for conducting such lessons have not been explored. This study is an attempt to look into the secondary level English language teachers’ perceptions of critical pedagogy.

**Literature Review**

Relevant literature for this article has been reviewed in two ways. First, some basic and notable works have been reviewed in order to provide a general introduction to critical pedagogy, and second, other related literature has been embedded in the discussion of themes. The practice of critical pedagogy was first introduced by Paulo Freire through the publication of his book ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1970). Henry Giroux, Peter Mclaren Suresh Canagarajah, and many other scholars in the line contributed to developing concepts and practices of critical pedagogy in education. Critical pedagogy refers to liberator teaching, radical pedagogy and post-modern pedagogy. When the reality of the oppressed was unveiled, it became an instrument for liberation and humanization. According to Freire (1970), the traditional education system is a banking depositing system in which the students are depositories and the teacher is a depositor by filling in their mind with static and preoccupied knowledge. In addition, he states that traditionally teacher-dominated education is the banking concept of education. After an in-depth observation of the traditional education system, Freire pioneered in conceptualization and development of critical pedagogy. The learners cannot learn through the traditional teacher authoritative classroom. Similarly, Dewey (1933)
states that social and cultural values might be learned by individuals through their own reflective inquiries rather than through imposed previously determined social programs.

In this regard, Giroux argues that “the concept of emancipating authority suggests that teachers are bearers of critical knowledge, rules, and values through which they consciously articulate and problematize their relationship to each other to students, to subject matter, and to the wider community” (1997, as cited in Kareepadath, 2018, p. 48). It criticizes the curricula from primary to university levels regarding the education system of marginalized groups which should be shaped by socio-political realities. CP emphasizes the liberation, equal opportunities, and justice to the oppressed people to whom the mainstream authority thinks as lazy, unproductive, savages, barbaric, wicked, ferocious, divided beings, stupid, drunkard, uncultured, uneducated, incompetent, and undisciplined people. Freire (1996) argues that critical pedagogy liberates the oppressed people from the social structure of oppression.

Canagarajah (2005) also argues that critical pedagogy has shifted the paradigm from colonial to post-colonial, structuralism to post-structuralism, modernism to post-modernism, feminism to post-feminism, etc. According to him, knowledge for critical pedagogy is not value-ridden in which knowledge is shaped by the majority of people who are rulers and elite rather knowledge is value-laden in which knowledge is socially constructed. It is argued that classroom practice must have implications in the learners’ life and society since the classroom is a miniature. Self-employed generated education is more important than a job-seeker education system to change society. Therefore, critical pedagogy should be compatible with changing global educational and political changing scenarios. Classroom pedagogy addresses the changes in society in terms of employment, social, moral, and political. In the second language teaching, it focuses on language learning as well as social changes because language learning is not only a means of communication but also a means of understanding the learners’ social surrounding, educational histories, and social dynamics. Social relationships and social practices, in this way, are conveyed through language since language and cultural practices are inseparable. CP also focuses on a better understanding between writers and readers, teachers and students, test-makers and test-takers, teacher educators and student teachers, and researchers, and experts.

Similarly, Norton and Toohey (2004) state that critical pedagogy scrutinizes the way government provides teaching materials, textbooks, and teacher training to teachers and assessment systems, to marginalized/disadvantaged groups: ethnic groups, untouchable class, disabled groups, as well as far and wide people across the country. It observes the main causes of disempowerment of the cultures and the languages of marginalized groups by the mainstream education system. The marginalized learners are sensitized regarding their culture, linguistic awareness, the notion of liberation, and their vernacular languages, and they are made aware of killer/genocide languages in their respective societies. Critical Pedagogy, thus, aims to raise students’ consciousness
about unjust social practices and helps them become proactive agents for social changes through classroom practices. It advocates that whole social construction and social reality can be shaped and transformed by classroom practices. Critical pedagogical practice, in this sense, supports and critiques classroom practices in terms of their social visions. For example, it argues that there should be gender-free education. All genders and learners from diverse groups and all of the students regardless of their grades should have been provided equal opportunities to study any subject without any conditions. Scholarships and stipends, therefore, should be provided on the basis of quality, but not in terms of gender, caste race, class, and location of geography.

Inclusive Education (IE) is one of the domains of critical pedagogy that has been defined as a learning environment that promotes full personal, academic and professional development of all learners regardless of their race, class, color, gender, disability, sexual preference, learning styles and languages. It welcomes all learners without any discrimination. It provides education with capabilities as an equity-based. In this respect, Groenke (2009) argues that social inequalities can be corrected through classroom practices. The society, thus, can be reconstructed through the teachers’ critical pedagogy in the classroom. It not only concerns theoretical perspective; but also emphasizes classroom practices for addressing and responding to the diversity, and the needs of all the learners in the classroom, in the school, and in the society.

Social Constructivism

Vygotsky (1978) claims that cognitive development and learning originate in a social context. More importantly, he argues, children’s cultural, mental, and social development takes place on two planes, viz. the social plane and the psychological plane. Children usually get knowledge regarding various things firstly through the social plane, subsequently in the psychological plane. According to social constructivism, learning is possible through social interaction in the social context. Children acquire language and cognitive activities through interpersonal activities particularly in the social context like the classroom scenario. The children’s mental function and cognitive development need adults’ scaffolding before they become self-regulated learners.

Vygotsky’s ‘Zone of Proximal Development’ (ZPD) means that children who reach higher or more abstract ground via interaction with the teacher become capable learners of solving any problem independently. He opines that “I will discuss one study of preschool children to demonstrate that what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual development level tomorrow (p. 87).” Children can solve any problem in the actual development level independently when they reach ZPD.

Multiple Intelligence Theory

In a similar vein, Gardner (1983) claims that individuals possess eight or more relatively autonomous-intelligences which CP addresses through teaching and learning strategies.
CP, thus, helps the learner develop their intelligences by identifying learners’ multiple intelligences enhancing them in the classroom (Fleetham, 2006). There are eight types of multiple intelligences viz. linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Some learners are very good at holding interaction and dialogue whereas others are good at contemplating, or at music, mathematics, and so on. The English language teachers, as practitioners of CP, identify each of the learners’ intelligence in class. They teach on the basis of their students’ individual differences focusing on their intelligence.

**Equitable Pedagogy in ELT Classroom**

Equitable pedagogy is necessary to provide strong support to all diverse learners in the classroom. In the equitable classroom, students are enforced not only to develop basic skills but also to apply those skills to become an agent for social transformation (Blanks & Blanks, 2009). CP based teaching, thus, develops students’ self-concepts and respects their ideas and values. To create an equitable classroom, the teacher generates a work-centered optimum interactive, and equitable classroom environment. Meaningful and contextualized learning strategies are employed for equitable pedagogy which strengthens democracy and social justice in the classroom (Tutak, Bondy & Adams, 2011).

The existing literature provides an abundant discussion on how teachers can practice critical pedagogy in English language classrooms. However, there is a dearth of literature on how teachers perceive and practice CP in developing contexts such as Nepal. The present study addresses the gap in the existing literature by studying and providing insightful discussion in English language teachers’ perceptions of critical pedagogy and their experiences on critical pedagogy at the secondary level in Nepal.

**Statement of the Problem**

As it is common knowledge, in the traditional system, students record, memorize, repeat and regurgitate in the examination without perceiving and internalizing what they mean. They receive, memorize, and repeat passively without any two way of interaction and negotiation constructively. The traditional classroom is teacher-centered and authoritative in which every learner from a diverse society is given chance to construct knowledge without collaboration. Learners are rarely made aware of active members of mainstream society, equal education, freedom, and justice. Teachers’ own perception of CP and the ways in which they experience it play an important role in how they practice CP in English language classrooms. The study explores secondary English language teachers’ perception of CP and their experience of practicing it. The study attempts to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the secondary teachers’ perceptions of critical pedagogy in ELT classrooms?

2. What are secondary English language teachers’ experiences in practicing inclusive pedagogy?

**Methodology**

Based on a phenomenological research design, this study applied critical approaches to find out teachers’ values and beliefs that underpin their seemingly natural teacher-centered classroom roles (Taylor, 2008). A critical perspective is introduced to stimulate teachers’ thinking about designing and assessment that are more student-centered inquiry-oriented, culturally sensitive, community-oriented, and socially responsible (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Six English teachers, 2 each from 3 community schools located in Kirtipur Municipality of Kathmandu were selected using purposive sampling. The study also employed semi-structured interview protocols to conduct in-depth interviews which lasted for 30 minutes approximately.

In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, respondents were given pseudonyms as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6. I recorded and transcribed the interviews in English. I was always aware of my researcher’s biases. I prepared the guideline questions for employing in-depth interviews with the respondents. I transcribed the recorded interview into written text. To maintain the authenticity of the raw data. I followed the ethical procedure for administering interviews.

**Results and Discussion**

To address the research questions, five global themes out of 12 basic themes were developed, which are analyzed and interpreted thematically as follows:

**ELT and the teacher-directed culture**

Pedagogy of English at the secondary level is teacher-directed. The classes were still dominated by teacher-centered techniques rather than the learner-centered ones in the classroom. One of the respondents, T1 argues that -

> students are asked to share their understandings with each other but they are reluctant to share their opinions regarding the issues of the topic and arguments in the text. All of the learners are passive, introverted, and lazy in the classroom. They cannot construct ideas through peer talking and group discussion. I should follow the lecture method, time and again Grammar Translation Method, and teacher-centered techniques to make them understand the subject matter. The classroom is absolutely teacher-directed, but not learner-self-regulated.
ELT at three secondary schools at Kirtipur is traditional and teacher-directed. English language teaching, therefore, does not develop students’ critical thinking. This is in line with Freire’s (1970) argument that a teacher-dominated education system is the banking concept of education. The learners cannot develop their critical and creative thinking through such a traditional banking system. Acknowledging this in this regard, T3 states that -

*the learners should share their own opinions and experiences on a particular topic with their colleagues. They are to be rather critical in the classroom instead of depending on teachers’ lectures. They should be able to make meaning and understanding through their own reflections.*

It can be inferred that there is no self-regulated learning culture in secondary schools of Kirtipur. Dewey (1933) states that social and cultural values might be learned by individuals through their own reflective inquires rather than through imposed previously determined social programs. In such inquiries, learners are proactive in the course of learning in sharing their understandings on the topic to each other through group discussion and peer talking which promotes critical pedagogy in the classroom.

**The existing provisions and practices, and the issue of inclusion**

The curricula of compulsory English at the secondary level have been modified to promote critical practices as they are prepared for learner-centered classrooms. One of the respondents, T4, for example, claims that “the textbook of grade 9 has been modified and implemented across the country recently. The teaching and learning materials of the textbook are learner-centered, inclusive and gender-unbiased”. Similarly, T5 argues that -

*I have been adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and beyond method incompatible with the teaching items of the textbook. The textbook of grade 11 is also in the process of revision. I think it will be implemented from the upcoming academic session.*

The textbooks of compulsory English as well as major English have been modified in accordance with the level of proficiency of the learners and changing political context, socio-economy, and dominance of information communication technology (ICT). This was necessary because the textbook of English of grade 11 was prepared approximately three decades ago. The contents in the existing textbooks have now been updated (see moe.gov.np). The prescribed stories, essays, poems, and grammar are not compatible with the present socio-political context of the learners. These textbooks, however, need to be inclusive. For example, the major English textbooks contain only British literature and Commonwealth literature, and American literature is excluded.
Similarly, the textbooks of grades 9 and 10, which are prepared in line with CP, focus on language functions avoiding exclusions, such as marginalized, differently-abled, and minority learners. According to Norton and Toohey (2004), critical pedagogy scrutinizes the way government provides teaching materials, textbooks, and teacher training to teachers and assessment systems, to marginalized groups such as ethnic groups, disabled groups, untouchable as well as far and wide learners across the country. The teachers agree that the textbooks and teaching strategies and pedagogy are focused on marginalized groups. The Nepalese classroom is diverse in terms of caste, religion, language, and ability of the learners. The teachers are to be very sensitive and professional with sound knowledge to make the ELT classroom inclusive. The teachers are prepared not to focus on the mainstream learners and bright learners in the class only, but other groups in class also. In this regard, one of the respondents, T6 argues that:

> after the promulgation of the new constitution of Nepal in 2072, the ELT paradigm has changed. All of the learners are treated by each respective teacher equally and fairly in course of teaching and learning in the classes. The low and marginalized learners are settled and arranged in the first and second rows in the class to promote their learning.

T2 also states that the scholarship and stipend are allocated to those marginalized learners by the government, non-governmental organizations, and private organizations to facilitate their learning. Teachers, as Groenke (2009) argues, can address social inequalities through teachers’ critical pedagogy. The environment of the classroom is interesting and inviting for all students. SSDP (2016-2023) has focused on access of free and compulsory education in order to increase the relevancy of education, social inclusion, and equity issues (moe.gov.np, 2016). The current pedagogic practices and arrangements allow all members of the class to participate in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities equally regardless of their current achievement levels and belonging to the marginalized community.

**Critical Pedagogy in the ELT Classroom**

Critical pedagogy in the classroom is essential in the changing political context of Nepal as well as the world. The classroom is the right platform to make the learners aware of the right of marginalized people in society. The secondary ELT teachers are aware of the fact that classroom dynamics should change in the changing role of teaching. In this regard, one of the respondents, T3, states that “the learners are the prospective pillars of the country for every walk of life. If the learners get practices of equality, inclusiveness, and democratic spirit in the class through the classroom pedagogy, they will be good citizens in society.” In fact, the classroom is the miniature through which injustice, inequality, malpractices, and the undemocratic culture of the society can be transformed into social justice and democratic society.
The teachers interviewed viewed that critical pedagogy was against the traditional, teacher-dominated educational system. T2, for example, argues that “I ask the learners to personalize some of the events in the text. I frequently encourage them to use their critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills instead of rote learning and memorization of the grammatical patterns and contents delivered by the teachers.” They acknowledge the fact that critical pedagogy is very useful even to develop the learners’ own critical thinking skills and self-monitoring skills to be regulated, learners. Such skills enhance their augmentative abilities through the classroom discussion. According to the teachers, every learner is the source of knowledge so the learners can accumulate an abundance of information on the particular issue in the classroom.

**Equity Pedagogy**

Equity refers to positive discrimination for social justice. For the equity of ELT classes, teachers provide strong support and keep high expectations for all learners regardless of their grading, religions, classes, castes, etc. One of the respondents, T2 argues that “inequity pedagogy, all of the learners who are from diverse cultures are encouraged to foster their learning abilities. In the classroom, each student enjoys the equal opportunity and equitable treatment by the teachers in learning”. This is in line with Tutak, Bondy, and Adams (2011) who argue that the aim of equity pedagogy is to strengthen democracy and social justice in the classroom. In other words, every learner, including the marginalized learner, has to be given equal opportunity to share his/her opinion without consulting potentiality, caste, class, and gender in the class. In this regard, T6 claims that

> I do not discriminate the learners in terms of their genders, castes, ethnic backgrounds, and proficiency level of English as well as their grades. I treat everyone in the ELT classroom equally and democratically to upgrade their learning and insights. I will be free from any type of prejudices and biases in course of providing teaching materials and affording them marks based on their reflection on the answer papers.

According to Blanks and Blanks (2009) in an equity classroom, teachers must enforce students not only to develop basic skills but also to apply those skills to become active agents for social transformation. The main essence of critical pedagogy is to promote the marginalized students in learning proactively as the mainstream ones in the ELT classroom. Specifically, marginalized learners, such as girl learners, learners from the underprivileged community, and ethnic community as well as differently-abled learners have to be made the center of teaching and learning. One of the respondents T5 argues that -

> those marginalized learners are encouraged to share their understandings of each particular learning item freely. The classroom is a miniature of society. If the learners actively participate in the classroom liberally, they will reflect the classroom experiences in society when they become social workers, politicians, employees, and employers in their adulthood.
Freire (1996) argues that critical pedagogy liberates the oppressed people from the social structure of oppression. The respondents of my study suggested that the majority of the teachers attempt to promote the marginalized learners in the ELT classroom despite their limited training.

**Lack of training for equity pedagogy**

In order to consolidate critical pedagogy and address the learning unique needs of the multi-dimensional learners, the teachers need the training to recognize their special abilities and treat them accordingly in the course of teaching. They need to observe and diagnose the multiple intelligences of the learners and design their teaching accordingly to address their learning needs. In this respect, Fleetham (2006) argues that classroom pedagogy should help the learners to develop their varying intelligence. However, teachers are not provided enough opportunity to train themselves. One of the respondents, T4 argues that -

> our educational management system has not practiced teaching the students as per their multiple intelligences. I have not got such training and induction from any formal workshop, seminar, and conference to apply the theory of multiple intelligences of Gardner. All of the learners are taught and behaved using the same style of teaching and learning strategies. In fact, learning strategies are to be applied according to, matching the personality and style of the learners. However, there is a lack of special teaching and learning in terms of the learners’ multiple intelligences and personalities and styles.

In school education, due to the lack of adequately trained ELT teachers, there is no teaching and learning based on the individual differences of the learners. The ELT of the secondary level lacks emphasis on the teaching of multiple intelligence.

**Conclusion and implications**

English language teaching in Nepal needs a new approach and a new direction. Critical pedagogy, as an emerging approach can help revamp the ELT situation of the secondary level in Nepal. This new paradigm can transform all English language teachers into professional pedagogues through the spirit of critical pedagogical practices. The study explored what secondary level teachers of English think about an effective execution of critical pedagogical practices in teaching and learning, materials development, and ICT; and what their experiences have been in using inclusive methods for teaching. The study found that most teachers are aware of the CP approach; however, their own practices have been severely limited due to the lack of adequate training. The implications of the findings are that the local authorities should be made accountable for the implementation of the practices of critical pedagogy in schools. Teachers and material developers should be adequately trained to develop and use inclusive and
equitable teaching practices and learning materials. This study has limitations of being conducted on a small-scale population. Further research can be conducted on a larger scale involving the public (community), institutional and private schools.

References


**Contributor:**

**Dr. Purna Bahadur Kadel** has been teaching as an Associate Professor in the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University for about two decades. His areas of expertise are teaching language through literature, critical discourse analysis, mother tongue-based multilingual education and linguistic in application. He spoke about mother tongues-based multilingual education in Nepal as one of the plenary speakers in the AINET conference in 2020 in Hyderabad, India.
Journal of NELTA Forum

[The present 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]

My Teaching Philosophy: Theoretical Musings of a South Asian-educated Instructor at an American University

Jagadish Paudel

Abstract

For a prospective teacher at almost any level, clearly defining one’s teaching philosophy has long been a mandatory requisite for applying and obtaining a teaching position in the US schools and colleges. However, in Nepal, this requirement is as yet unknown, and the demand to define one’s teaching philosophy and set it to writing may pose a novel challenge for even the most experienced and cherished educator. In this paper, along with briefly introducing the current North American theory of teaching philosophy, I present a statement of my teaching philosophy, my evolving beliefs towards teaching writing, and my personal approach to teaching writing. Finally, I theorize my philosophy of teaching, drawing ideas from some renowned critical pedagogy scholars. I believe that these musings are worthy of reading for prospective and experienced educators who have not yet systematized their teaching philosophy, specifically, teachers of English who teach or wish to teach writing courses, stimulating them to be more closely focused on their approach to teaching and to carefully situate their teaching-learning activities within their teaching philosophies.

Keywords: Teaching Philosophy, Writing, Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

A “teaching philosophy” is a teacher’s professional beliefs about the nature of his/her teaching and the actual practices s/he enacts in his/her teaching activities (Andrea, 2009). Defining teaching philosophy, Schonwetter, Sokal, Freisen, and Taylor (2002) state that it is “a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components
defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional contexts” (p. 84). A teacher’s teaching philosophy makes a major impact on students’ learning, as it assists the teacher to embrace a clear, conscious, coherent, systematic, and critical pedagogical approach. By creatively employing this sort of approach the educator can make students better engage and be drawn into teaching-learning activities, and this in turn helps learners to flourish and develop their potentials to full measure. In recent times, virtually all the North American institutions of higher education ask their applicants to submit statements of their teaching philosophy (Payant, 2016; Chism, 1997–1998; Peters, 2009), along with proof of academic credentials. It is one of the key requirements for hiring instructors and for teaching assistantships at most American universities. Further, faculty are required to submit “their personal philosophies of teaching when they are reviewed for reappointment, tenure, or promotion” (Pratt, 2005, p. 32). A teaching philosophy predicts to a great degree how a teacher views teaching, and how s/he intends to teach once s/he is in the actual classroom. Asking applicants to enunciate a defined teaching philosophy can help in the process of selection and hiring of educators, and perhaps can also help morally guide new teachers to translate their philosophy into practice in the classroom.

A well-defined teaching philosophy provides teachers with general guidelines to self-assess their teaching approach, and enables them to articulate their teaching beliefs and values to their students, their colleagues, and to search or teaching award committees (Iowa State University, 2020, np.) The root purpose of drafting a teaching philosophy statement is to have a clear perspective on teaching-learning. For Faryadi (2015) the principal purpose of a teaching philosophy statement is two-fold: “From the perspective of the academician, it is important that the teacher understands and selects suitable theories and guidelines for teaching; it is equally important to state clearly his [sic] own philosophy as an educator so that his actions in the classroom reflect his beliefs” (p.63). Of course, a teaching philosophy helps a teacher to choose appropriate teaching theories and guidelines and to determine his/her philosophical orientation to teaching.

Often, teaching philosophy statements are criticized for not having a standard format or content (Pratt, 2005). Yet teaching philosophy statement is not ordinarily guided by any specific genre theory of writing. There are no fixed or generally expected parameters or formats for writing a teaching philosophy statement; however, several items are usually embedded into it, such as a primary goal of teaching, approaches, and methods to teaching, the role of a teacher, and ways of dealing with students, understanding students and evaluating their work (Crookes, 2003; Kearns and Sullivan, 2011). Stylistically, a statement of teaching philosophy is ordinarily written in the first person (I, my, mine) in the present tense, ranging between one and two pages (Coppola, 2002; Korn, 2012). Teaching philosophy varies widely from one teacher to another; for example, one may want to embrace an experiential teaching philosophy, another a more reflective teaching approach, some favor critical pedagogy, some a consciously constructivist philosophy, and there is an endless variety of other platforms, pedagogies, and approaches. An experienced educator may well have his or her teaching philosophy, without being
strictly aligned with a single defined pedagogical or philosophical school. Qais Faryadi (2015) writes, “Teaching philosophy statements are solely individualistic as they reflect personal values and artistic preferences. How they are structured also depends on the learning environment and the needs of students” (p.65). Of course, as per need and milieu, a teacher can and must freely devise his or her teaching philosophy.

Some teachers articulate their teaching philosophy as a teaching philosophy statement while some do not articulate in the statement, but they have their clear teaching philosophy. To have one’s teaching philosophy is considered important for the professional development of teachers as this works as a tool for reflecting on teaching for formative purposes (Payant, 2016). Reflecting on own teaching can involve teachers in exposing “their own beliefs of teaching and learning to critical examinations, by articulating these beliefs and comparing these beliefs to their actual classroom practices to see if there are any contradictions between practice and underlying beliefs” (Farrell, 2007, p. 9). To reflect individuals’ teaching enactment, they can record their audio and video of a mini-lesson, keep a teaching journal and/or a language-learning journal, describe critical incidents, and identify teaching maxims (Farrell, 2007, 2014; Payant, 2014; Richards, 1996; Richards & Farrell, 2011). And in their leisure time, the teachers can reflect on their teaching--what went well and what did not go well and can devise a plan for further improvement of their teaching-learning activities. When teachers involve in reflecting on their teaching and update their knowledge and skills through professional development activities, their teaching philosophy naturally changes over time. Payant’s (2016) study revealed evidence that in-service EFL teachers make ongoing amendments to their teaching philosophy statements for bureaucratic and reflective purposes. Indeed, teachers’ teaching philosophy does not remain the same all through their professional life.

In the following sections, I present my own teaching philosophy statement, what writing instruction is for me, my approach to teaching writing, and the theoretical platform upon which my teaching philosophy is built. To argue my point regarding teaching-learning writing, I have incorporated ideas from the various composition (writing) pedagogies and theories, and for theorizing my teaching philosophy I have drawn ideas from seminal works that deal with critical pedagogy.

**My teaching philosophy statement**

I am guided by the philosophy of Paulo Freire--critical pedagogy, which follows the generative mode of teaching,prizing students’ own views, experiences, learning styles, and cultures. I particularly value-generating ideas with students, motivating them to come up with critical views, and encouraging them to work in groups. Flexibility is my main principle which I always strive to embrace in my teaching-learning activities. I believe that simply being strict, not offering students the broadest possible options to learn, and imposing tasks without understanding students’ feelings will not lead to accomplishing the greater objectives of education. So, in my classroom, I provide
students with ample opportunities to learn through favored routes, rather than being stuck on strict rules. I am never a blind follower nor am I ever blindly oppositional on issues and ideology; rather, I always try to look at teaching through a critical lens, and always contextually. Similarly, leading students to learn through dialogue with each other, relating content meaningfully to daily life events, and making students accountable for their work are also among my favored teaching techniques.

I believe that teaching, especially in higher education, is a process of making my students independent and analytical in their fields of study by valuing their knowledge, skills, experiences, and culture and enabling them to contribute to the knowledge-making process. Students come with great potential to work independently and think critically in class. For me, teaching is never to make students rote-learn and recite back a given text; rather, it is the sharing of experiences, experimenting with new practices, exploring new ideas, offering opportunities to engage in the work of learning. Offering students, a chance to put forth their views, to question, generate and inculcate ideas, to collaborate, share, reflect, and be accountable are the principles that have guided my teaching journey. Similarly, for evaluating and assessing students’ work, I embrace the labor approach of Asao B. Inoue (2014). That is, along with the product of students’ writing, I value their labor, sweat, honesty while grading their papers. I grade students’ papers based on multiple drafts and multiple assignments.

The evolution of my beliefs towards writing

When I was a high school student and a beginning university undergraduate, I was led to believe that writing was merely reproducing. My belief in writing was shaped by the teaching I received. At that time, most, if not all, students in the milieu in which I studied (Nepal) were only taught to reproduce writing. Teaching writing was guided through a product-based approach both in high school and in college. Teachers would write ready-made essays on the traditional blackboard and students would happily copy them word-for-word. And, students would recite and attempt to replicate the model essays in the final examinations, believing them to be the most authentic, most powerful “Mantra” for fetching a good score on the examinations.

My beliefs towards writing changed when I started to teach at a college level. Through my reading, I came to know that writing is a process. Then, I tried to follow the process of my writing. I did much self-practice and a lot of struggle to produce better writing. I learned writing (the writing skill that I have currently) through observation, i.e. how other people have written articles, their ideas and structure of the articles, their sentence structures, words, punctuation, and other mechanics. I would try to practice accordingly. So, for me, in recent years, writing has been an “observation” and “matter of practice.” Now I believe that writing is not an outcome of an individual autonomous entity, but rather is an upshot of a collective entity. Going through some writing theories has led me to conclude that a writer’s experience, culture, context, audience, people, race, politics, subjective position, and many other factors come into play in writing.
Currently, I am guided by the following concepts of writing excerpted from the book, Naming what we know: Threshold concepts of writing studies (2016) edited by Adler-Kassner, and Wardle:

- Wring is a social and rhetorical activity (by Kevin Roozen in Adler- Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.17).
- Writing represents the world, events, ideas, and feelings (Charles Bazerman in Adler- Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.37).
- Writing is performative (Andrea A. Lunsford in Adler- Kassner, and Wardle, 2016, p.43).
- Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies (Tony Scott in Adler-Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.48).
- Writing is informed by prior experience (Andrea A. Lunsford in Adler-Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.54).
- Failure can be an important part of writing development (Collin Brooke and Alison Carr in Adler- Kassner, and Wardle, 2016, p.62).
- Revision is central to developing writing (Doug Downs in Adler- Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.66).
- Reflection is critical for writers’ Development (Kara Taczak in Adler- Kassner and Wardle, 2016, p.78).

My approach to teaching writing in the classroom

I am very eager to build my students’ ability in writing by valuing their own experiences. My first job is to identify what experiences, skills, and understandings they have in writing. For instance, early-on I diagnose (asking questions) whether the students are familiar with the basic processes of writing and conventions such as brainstorming, generating ideas, preparing rough drafts, revising, editing, maintaining unity and coherence (flow); writing a thesis statement, topic sentence, and supporting details; writing an introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion, etc. After this, based on the students’ past experiences and current skills, I proceed with my teaching and enable students to involve themselves in the knowledge-making process by bringing their thoughts and experiences to the table.

My foremost priority in teaching writing is to encourage students to pursue goals and ask questions. I consider that if there is no encouragement, students, in general, do not show their potentiality, nor do they feel confident in the learning process. Whenever appropriate I use encouraging words to respond to students’ contributions. I believe that responding using encouraging words helps encourage students to make a continuous effort in their learning. Similarly, I encourage my students to be critical as well as promote them to be aware of societal inequity by providing them preferential
options in their writing assignments. That is to say, along with teaching writing skills, I encourage them to interrogate situations of injustice and unequal power relations in terms of race, caste, culture, and learning. Thus, my job is double: to teach students to “read their world while reading their word” (Rashidi and Safari, 2011, p. 254). I give assignments relating to their own culture and previous experiences because doing so helps develop and reveal students’ voices in their writing. I consider that every student has a multitude of lived experiences that have a key impact on their life. Making meaning from such experiences could be crucial for them because in learning to write they can often distinguish real-life learning that could transform their future. “Writing from Experience” is an assignment that encourages students to write an essay from their personal experiences (for instance, their home literacy experiences, school literacy experiences, society literacy experiences), which in turn enables them to make meaning which can be inspirational for their future.

I believe that students perform best when offered opportunities to engage in teaching-learning activities with appropriate methodology and support. A teacher’s duty is to engage students in this work. Therefore, in my teaching, I typically ask students to work in pairs or groups. Allowing them to share experiences in this way helps them to learn from each other through joint collective work. Giving them a chance to interact with their classmates helps them to learn writing from each other as well as to build confidence in their own and each other’s work. Additionally, they learn the essential skill of working in groups. From a class observation with instructor John Viener (pseudonym) at a university in the US, I have learned skills in conducting group work. I would like to use his technique to make my classwork more successful and meaningful. After assigning the classwork, he was moving around the classroom and monitoring students’ work; helping students who were struggling to do the task. He was also reminding the class of the time remaining to perform the assigned work. After the stipulated time, he asked students to share their work with a classmate beside or nearby them. Following this, he asked the students to voluntarily share the task product they had produced — two students told what they had written on their papers (observation, September 26, 2019). In my classes, I would like to devise in-class writing activities for students to keep them busy with true learning, never mere “busy-work.” I consider that asking students to work in the class makes them learn through “learning by doing.” Similarly, I ask students to work with peers and in groups so that they can learn the skill of working together and get a chance to learn from their classmates.

I put effort to make class delivery variegated. For instance, sometimes presenting information through audio-video recordings, podcasts, and digital media, sometimes writing main points on the board, sometimes modeling, sometimes using students to model, sometimes asking a student to complete a classmate’s incomplete writing, and many more ideas. I prefer to embrace Shipka’s (2005) multimodal task approach in writing as it allows students to express their ideas through different semiotic modes such as pictures, videos, colors, songs, and other media. I find it a more flexible approach than traditional text-only composition pedagogy since it provides justice to students
who are good at other modes of communication besides simple written composition. As digital technology has now become pervasive in every part of life, it is worthwhile to embrace the widest possible variety of different modes (visual, audio, color, and sign) in teaching. Sometimes, some ideas are very difficult to express in words alone. In such situations, visual, audio, pictures, etc. can be good means of expressing and communicating ideas.

Usually, class is filled with challenges as students come in with different levels of understanding, knowledge, experience, and cultural sophistication. I believe that the challenges can be addressed in writing class through student engagement. But before the students’ engagement, it is vital to understand what may cause them difficulty: Is it due to language, or the theme or content of the writing, or delivery, or other factors? After ascertaining their challenges, I encourage students to become more engaged by asking them to help each other. For example, students who are familiar with the cultural aspect of the content can help their classmates by explaining cultural matters; similarly, students can be asked to peer-review each other’s work, an activity which assists them to find their errors and some of the problems in their writing. This work helps them to see their writing from a reader’s perspective and also to get feedback and comments from their classmates in a non-threatening, non-instructor-driven context. Before asking the students to work and help each other, in order to avoid the typical weak and useless (for instance, “this is the best writing I’ve ever seen!”) type of peer feedback, I provide students with well-defined, lucid rubrics for their peer review activities.

I am aware of the reality that university students usually come from diverse cultural backgrounds, experiences, and linguistic backgrounds. So, I strive to give space to their cultures, experiences, knowledge, and skills. Experiences and examples from their culture are cherished in my writing assignments and classes. Similarly, as Matsuda (2006) advises, “all composition teachers need to reimagine the composition classroom as the multilingual space” (p. 649), I take my class as a multilingual class and deal with students accordingly. Understanding multilingual students’ attitudes, educational experiences, interests, and needs is a big asset for me since they guide me to devise teaching-learning activities as per their needs. Likewise, I consider that teaching multilingual students is always beneficial to instructors as these diverse learners almost always bring along different cognitive understandings, cultural practices, life experiences, and a different perspective toward teaching-learning activities. I believe that multilingual students’ varying experiences and skills assist instructors to have a wider understanding of teaching.

In teaching writing, valuing and generating ideas from students is my first priority, while mechanical aspects, superficial issues, and so-called “standardness” are secondary. I consider that when there is no idea, there is no real writing. I believe that focusing on surface features such as word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and format too often kills students’ ideas. For me, text without ideas is like a dead body. So, I deal with the mechanical aspects and grammar last. In this regard, I emulate the idea of
Suresh Canagarajah (2006). He maintains that rather than focusing on correctness, we should perceive “error” as the learner’s active negotiation and exploration of choices and possibilities. Relating to this, I also like to follow Lauren Rosenberg’s (2019) idea:

It is important to teach students not to get hung up on correctness and rules of grammar. These issues can be reviewed during a late editing session. Of course, there is much to learn in terms of grammar mechanics and usage, but that is less of a concern than encouraging the student to write comfortably and confidently in the new language. (np)

Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and Council of Writing Program Administrators joint statement (2020) states, “A process-based approach to writing signals occasions for writers to write iteratively (repeating steps or redrafting), incrementally (breaking large tasks into smaller pieces), and socially (giving and receiving feedback and making decisions about which feedback to heed)”(np.). Yes, the process approach to teaching writing allows student-writers to write recursively and give them chance to work through a smaller section of writing projects. So, I embrace the writing process theory in teaching at the undergraduate level. When students know how to process their writing, no matter what language level they have, they can bring their voices out in their writing. I focus more on the composting process rather than the final product of writing. The process provides writers with a road to travel down. When they know the writing road, they are more likely to produce good writing. Along with the process, I make them practice writing. Without abundant writing practice, most students cannot produce good writing. Giving them ample practice makes them experience writing through the given road and see the difficulties they have to travel through. Similarly, in teaching writing, a teacher can follow heuristic procedures or systematic strategies as it helps the teacher to be on track. Though this is old fashioned, it has generative and evaluative power (Gleen and Goldthwaite, 2014), and some students may find it easier to follow in the initial days. Like Robert Graves, a great British literary figure says, I also consider that “no writing is good writing, only rewriting is good writing.” So, I ask my students to rewrite and reread their work over a couple of drafts. Sondra Perl, in her article, Understanding Composing (1980), states that writing necessarily involves a highly recursive process, that is, “there is a forward-moving action that exists by virtue of a backward-moving action” (p. 36). I require that my students take this recursive approach, even though it most often requires overcoming significant initial student resistance.

I find a repeating strategy very useful to reiterate the main message of a lesson (Martis, 2018) and to stick with the purpose of the lesson. I learned this idea from a class observation of Instructor Rossana Rivas (pseudonym) (2019) on “Proposal Writing”. She was repeating the points that are required to consider while carrying out the research project she asked her students to execute (i.e. The first step is ….the second step is, the third step is ….). Likewise, she summarized her lesson in the end. In my classes, I would also like to summarize my lesson at the end of class, as this helps
students remember and note down the key points they have been taught during the
day’s lesson (observation, September 29, 2019). To make sure whether the students
understand my teaching or not, at the end of each lesson I ask students to write or tell
in a brief sentence what they understood as the key point from the lesson that I taught.

For me, evaluation is the rating of the efforts the students have put in from the beginning
to the end of the project. So, while evaluating or grading their work I do not solely
evaluate their product but I also evaluate the processes used, effort expended and sheer
labor they invest in the process of carrying out the assignment. Their honesty, sweat,
and sincere efforts are important aspects that need to be taken into account (Inoue,
2014) since, I believe, if their efforts are cherished they will be encouraged to make even
more efforts to improve their writing. Likewise, responding to students’ writing is
extremely important. While giving feedback on students’ writing, I embrace the idea of
commenting on strong aspects of students’ writing first (Gleen and Goldthwaite (2014). I
believe that positive, specific feedback leads them to stay strong and can be instrumental
for their further effort and work. In providing feedback, I prefer to follow an indirect
and gentle approach. Similarly, I ask them to reflect on their project. Concerning
reflection in writing class, CCCC and CWPA joint statement (2020) suggests writing
instructors “establish occasions for reflection whereupon writers engage questions of
self-awareness, messiness, decision and indecision, and the realization of self-set goals
and/or course goals. Reflection serves broad goals of habit formation and attentiveness
to development as recursive” (np). So, I teach my students how to reflect while they
write (metacognition) as well as afterward. This leads them to think and analyze, and
to note what went well and what did not go so well in their writing.

**Theorizing my teaching philosophy**

I have theorized my teaching philosophy based on critical pedagogy. The concept of
critical pedagogy was originally propounded by the late Brazilian educator, Paulo
Freire. Earlier, a similar approach was advocated and promoted by Antonio Gramsci
as well as key thinkers from the Frankfurt School (Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar,
2011). The tradition that is today known as “Critical Pedagogy” has appeared over
recent decades in “diverse incarnations” (McLaren, 2002, p. 83) such as post-modern
pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, radical pedagogy, pedagogy of empowerment,
transformative pedagogy, pedagogy of possibility, marginalized pedagogy, learner
autonomy (Sharma, 2014), and the like. I keep all of these approaches in my theoretical
toolbox for use when necessary.

Critical pedagogy entered the field of real-world education after the publication and
rejects the old “banking model” (Freire, 1972) of education; rather it follows a generative
mode of teaching and advocates in favor of the interests of the marginalized and neglected
in teaching-learning. It is a “decentering” pedagogy (Daspit & Weaver, 2000). In fact,
by de-centering, the instructor strives to empower students for social transformation
and seeks to develop humanization in the education sector. Freire (1972) says critical pedagogy is for “personal liberation.” That is, it offers favored preferences for students in teaching-learning activities. Thus, it is considered a democratic approach to teaching (Paudel, 2014). Monchinski (2008) writes “critical pedagogy is a form of democratic schooling” (p.203). As such, it is necessarily against the mainstream or “current traditional” pedagogy. Giroux (2002) writes that critical educational theorists attempts “to empower the powerless and to transform social inequalities and injustices” (p.29). Situating education in the context of social justice and students’ empowerment is the aim of critical pedagogy (Paudel, 2014). Mclean (2006) remarks, “critical pedagogy has as its final aim changes in society in the direction of social justice. It has a respectable lineage” (p.1). Giroux, in a book chapter edited by McLaren (2002), notes critical pedagogy offers “preferential options” for the weak and for marginalized students. He further states that critical theorists focus on the shortcomings of “individualism and autonomy,” thus liberal democracy (p.31). Giroux (2002) writes: [Critical pedagogy] entails a preferential option for the poor and the elimination of conditions that promote human suffering. Such theorists are critical of liberal democracy’s emphasis on individualism and autonomy, questioning the assumption that individuals are ontologically independent or that they are the autonomous, rational, and self-motivating social agents that liberal humanism has constructed (p. 31).

Critical pedagogy is guided by context (kairos). Monchinski (2008) writes “All forms of critical pedagogy respect the context in which knowledge creation and transmission occur. Knowledge in critical pedagogy is situated and context-specific...[it] attempts to organize the program content of education with the people, not for them” (p.123). By focusing on the context and local realities, critical pedagogy also reintroduces pluralism and decentralization (Holliday, 1994).

Critical pedagogy performs some functions in education. For instance, critical pedagogy does not take anything as hallowed; rather it examines and sees every assumption with critical eyes (Monchinski, 2008). Another function of critical pedagogy is to raise awareness among students, it functions as a form of “conscientization”. And this conscientization “represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness” (Freire, 2005, p.15). Giroux (2002) writes that “the task of critical pedagogy is to increase our self-consciousness, to strip away the distortion, to discover modes of subjectivity” (p.54). Critical pedagogy, along with the teaching context and skill of a particular instructor and course, aims to develop students’ awareness of social structures. Thus, this pedagogy pursues a “joint goal” (Crookes & Lehner, 1998, p. 320), where teachers should have the double mission of making learners “read their world while reading their word” (Rashidi and Safari, 2011, p.254). Discussing educators’ job, Giroux (2004) writes:

Educators need to develop a language of possibility for both raising critical questions about the aim of schooling and the purpose and meaning of what and how educators
teach... In doing so pedagogy draws attention to engaging classroom practice as a moral and political consideration animated by a fierce sense of commitment to provide the conditions that enable students to become critical agents capable of linking knowledge to social responsibility and learning to democratic social change (p. 41).

Looking at education as a political enterprise, critical pedagogy aims to raise learners’ critical consciousness to be aware of their socio-political surroundings and to fight against the status quo. The intent is transformation both in the classroom and in the society (Norton and Toohey, 2004) by giving space to a “transnational perspective” while embracing “flexibility and innovativeness” in teaching-learning activities (Lissovoy, 2008, p.160).

Critical pedagogy [CP] is a praxis that demands “action and reflection” (Freire, 1985). This makes teachers theorize their practices while at the same time, it says to the teachers to practice theories. Similarly, praxis gives chance to teachers to reflect on their practices. Regarding this forever-fluid dynamic, Monchinski (2008) writes:

Praxis involves theorizing practice and practicing theory... CP involves an ever-evolving working relationship between practice and theory. It is a relationship that is always in progress, involving a constant give-and-take, a back-and-forth dialectical informing of practice by theory and theory by practice. As praxis, CP cannot be stagnant. It demands reflection and reconceptualization between what goes on in our classrooms, why it goes on, and what and whose ends are served (p.1).

The praxis of critical pedagogy refers to “action and transformation.” It values the importance of the individual and her interests which demands “thought and deed together, reflection and action” (Monchinski, 2008). Critical pedagogy values a dialogical praxis and formulates a scientific conception in which both teachers and students engage in analyzing a dehumanizing ontology and condemning it, opting instead for transformation, for liberating human beings (Freire, 1985). Dialogue increases the creative power of the teacher as well as students, and “thereby reflects the democratic commitment of both” (Monchinski, 2008, p.133). Dialogue reveals the love “of responsible subjects and cannot exist in a relation of domination” (Freire, 1997, p. 70). It makes the participants humble, as no one attempts to dictate for all. Dialogue allows for the free exchange of opinions, the airing of differences, the reaching of consensus, and reflection upon action. An ethic of care stresses the need for teachers to be attentive. This means teachers must be active listeners who take seriously what their students say, are able to read between the lines, and hear what is not said (Shor, 1980, p.101). Modeling democratic practice is one of the goals of a teacher-student relationship where democracy acknowledges a place for expertise while respecting everyone’s right to a voice. In fact, dialogue between teachers and students is a part of the democratic form we wish to model for our students. Only through dialogue and critical thought will our students and we arrive at conscientization, or consciousness-raising (Monchinski, 2008).
In critical pedagogy, teachers adopt the role of transformative intellectuals, since they seek to act as agents of transformation in their society. Smyth (2011) writes “Teachers must go beyond the roles of technicians, managers or efficient clerks imposed upon them by others and be unwilling to continue to accept the way things are in schools” (pp.23-24). So, often it can be challenging or even dangerous for teachers when they choose to or are required to play a dynamic role. Thus, teachers must be willing and able to situate their teaching on the basis of realities, and they should be trusted to devise their own praxis of teaching-learning activities (Mclean, 2006). Critical pedagogy demands work from the teacher--teachers need to be engaged and should be imaginative, not frightened of leaving their “comfort zones” and “taking risks” in the classroom. Critical pedagogy stresses a commitment to education, by teachers who will link the subject matter both inside and outside the classroom (Monchinski, 2008). That is, teachers should be able to bring societal and cultural issues into the classroom. Simon (1992) presumes that “teachers are cultural [and political] workers’ and, as such, they engage in a process of helping students, ‘challeng[ing] and assess[ing] existing social conventions, modes of thought, and relations of power” (p. 35). Of course, teachers’ job is to encourage students to investigate their own cultural practices, and thus, should ask students to challenge and evaluate their own practices in terms of power relations in society. Nemirof (1992) argues that the role of the teacher is not that of one who imposes beliefs and opinions, nor one who is seen as the owner of the Truth, but the one who mediates discussions, listens and questions, and, most important, creates a space in which students are allowed to learn, speak and change their minds without being judged by others. Regarding teachers, Kohl’s (1983) argument is that teachers should form theories for themselves and test them by translating theory into their practices, fulfilling their responsibility as intellectuals. Along this line, Kohl writes that an intellectual is a person who knows about his or her field, has a wide breadth of knowledge about other aspects of the world, who use the experience to develop theory, and questions theory on the basis of further experience. But, more importantly, as Kohl argues, an intellectual is above all one who dares to interrogate authority and who refuses to act counter to his own personal experience and judgment. Smyth (2011, p.2) envisions a best-case where teachers function as intellectuals; students are activists, and communities are politically engaged and connected.

Critical educators must thus be “transformative intellectuals” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) who should be interested in individual students’ success as well as being concerned in their teaching with enabling students to think critically and act critically, to lead them for social transformation. Foucault (1980) argues the teacher as a critical educator should play the role of the specific intellectual. S/he should relinquish any claims to universality and objectivity and instead engage in local cultures and realities. All pedagogy, like all politics, is local. Valuing local exigency, Kumaravadivelu (2001, p.539) writes “To ignore local exigencies is to ignore live experiences”. In fact, in a critical pedagogy framework, the class works as a learning community (Crookes & Lehner, 1998) and the teacher should be considered as an integral member of the community, who would also engage in the praxis of teaching.
Conclusion

In this paper I presented my teaching philosophy statement, what writing is for me, my evolving ideas for teaching writing at the undergraduate level, and then, I theorized my teaching philosophy, drawing ideas from renowned scholars of critical pedagogy. The ideas about teaching writing were incorporated from some seminal works from composition theory and pedagogy.

I argued that teachers should follow a process approach to teaching writing and students should be supported by instructors, something which can be done by offering learners alternative options to carry out their assigned writing tasks, giving space to their cultural practices and previous experiences in writing classes, asking students to learn by peer-reviewing each other’s papers, giving them multiple opportunities to improve their writing, providing lucid instructions and rubrics for carrying out, and evaluating their assigned writing projects.

Further, to develop students’ writing ability, I argued that teachers should prize students’ sweat and effort over their mere final product, their ideas and voices over bare mechanical and grammatical accuracy. Based on experience I believe that the best and most practical way for interested students to improve their grammatical and mechanical accuracy is through “learning by doing” in the process of their reading and studying, and through intensive guided writing practice over time.

As in some countries like Nepal, the idea of conscious and systematic teaching philosophy is still considered a new concept, this paper provides some ideas on teaching philosophy, teaching writing, and theorizing teaching philosophy and contributes to those professionals who want to determine their teaching philosophy and translate it into practical teaching-learning activities. I believe that in Nepal and elsewhere, future researchers have broad opportunities to extend this study, for instance, unpacking school-level teachers’ teaching philosophy in ELT, or English teachers’ attitude and beliefs towards a teaching philosophy.

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Developing L2 Oral Proficiency through Personal Anecdotes

Joachim Castellano

Introduction

Teaching students how to tell a personal anecdote has many benefits in second language development. This account shares three lesson ideas culminating in a class presentation in which students will share an anecdote. The lessons aim to develop language content and vocal delivery of an anecdote.

Oral storytelling has been an important form of communication across time and cultures. There are many varieties of storytelling; genres include fables, epic poems, and legends. These served as ancient instructional tools: it has been widely established that the oral storytelling tradition was means of passing down customs, cultures, and history before the rise of written language. About this local context, Bidari (2019) wrote, “Even in Nepal, much before the formal education began; the elderly members often told stories to educate younger members in the family” (p. 233).

Even after the industrial revolution, storytelling continued to have a place in formal education. Marie Shedlock, a schoolteacher who became a professional storyteller in the late 19th century, promoted it as an educational tool (Shedlock, 1951). Storytelling remains ensconced in modern classrooms as well, with particular relevance to the language arts and literature. Particularly in the foreign language realm, Lucarevschi (2016) reviews several studies relative to storytelling and L2 learning, including its effect on the development of specific language skills.

The pedagogical idea presented here is a story-based classroom project, however it does not focus upon fictional tales. Teaching and telling of personal anecdotes has received less attention in the foreign language field. Instead of focusing on famous stories by established authors, this project prioritizes the real-life experiences of students. In addition to empowering students’ voices, teaching anecdotes has a practical value as telling anecdotes are often required tasks of standardized tests such as the IELTS examination.

What follows below are descriptions of three lessons in which students create anecdotes and perform them in a class project. The lessons target the development of several language skills: grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking fluency. This pedagogical idea was introduced as a pilot project at the NELTA-TESOL Conference in 2019.

**Proficiency level**: Intermediate and Higher  
**Age Group**: High School and Higher  
**Class Time**: Three 45-60 minute lessons

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to transform a memorable life experience into an entertaining anecdote.
2. Students will organize the content of an anecdote and strategically use words, phrases, and grammatical forms to create a cohesive narrative structure.
3. Students will manipulate their voice (vocal prosody) in multiple ways in order to engage audience.
4. It is hoped students will value their own life experiences as one is worthy of sharing and reporting to others through anecdotes, and as a result, making better interpersonal connections.

**Resources:**

1. Worksheets from the British Council (available: https://learnenglishteen.britishcouncil.org/exams/speaking-exams/tell-story-or-personal-anecdote)  
2. YouTube Clips  
3. Audacity audio editing software (available at: https://www.audacityteam.org/)

**Procedure:**

**PREPARATION:**

1. Review lesson plans available online from the British Council Speaking
Exams “Tell a story or personal anecdote” webpage. Locate the “Worksheets and downloads” section in the middle of the webpage. Print the following worksheets titled: planning sheet, tips, and exercise. Teachers should prepare 2-3 anecdotes of their own. Consider story content that is surprising, triumphant, heart-warming, or other noteworthy experiences from your life.

CLASS 1 - Script Development

1. Introduce the concept of anecdotes by telling 1-2 from your life. After each anecdote have students discuss in pairs 2-3 questions. For example, “How did the story make you feel? What would you have done in this situation?”

2. Introduce the concept of how to tell a good anecdote from a life event. First, stress that a good anecdote begins with selecting a memorable life event. Have students complete with the following introduction prompt, “I felt most ________ in my life when…” in just one sentence three separate times. The point here is for students to recall three different memories from their lives. After they complete the three total sentences, have the students tell the rest of the story which was introduced by the introduction sentence to a partner. Change partners two times so that all three stories are told.

3. Before the students write a complete anecdote, you will teach them about content structure and language. Distribute the British Council’s “tips” worksheet and demonstrate how you used tenses, adjectives, and adverbs strategically in your anecdotes from Step 1. Provide printed scripts of your anecdotes and have students highlight targeted grammatical forms.

4. Pass out the British Council’s “exercise” worksheet. The worksheet has useful phrases to indicate narrative sequencing. Have the students complete the worksheet (confirm responses in the “Answers” worksheet).

5. Teach the students that good anecdotes should include particular information in the three parts of a story: beginning, middle, and end. Instruct them to write details in the following sections: establishment of characters, setting, and conflict (beginning), a sequence of actions (middle), and a clear conclusion (end).

6. Provide other tips for sparking interest within the audience. These include other characters, monologues of the main character’s thoughts, dialogues with other characters, and sound effects. Also, if applicable, a lesson learned or moment of realization provides a clear ending.

7. Instruct the students from the three sentences they completed in Step 2, they will chose one to develop into a complete anecdote. Encourage them to select the story they feel will be most engaging to an audience. For the remainder of the class, allow students to write their scripts for their chosen anecdote.
Students can now write the first draft of their anecdote’s script using the British Council “Planning Sheet” printout. Walk around the classroom and provide feedback individually. Students must finish their scripts for homework.

8. At the end of class, provide information about the project “The Anecdote Show” and the schedule for the forthcoming classes: after two classes an oral presentation will be due: a two-minute anecdote, without any slides or technology. The grade will be determined according to three criteria: content, language control (vocabulary and accuracy), and voice control (variety of vocal prosody). Their peers will provide additional comments and scores.

CLASS 2 - Vocal Development

1. Start the class by having the students exchange their completed scripts with a partner. They will read and then provide feedback to each other. In order to maximize feedback, have students analyze the scripts with a checklist from the British Council “Tips” worksheet, or one that you have created. Return the scripts to the original student and instruct the students to revise the content of the script for homework.

2. Play two YouTube videos to demonstrate effective ways to use one’s voice. First play the vocal warm up section from Julian Treasure’s How to Speak So Others Will Listen Video (available: https://youtu.be/Dtn0s1bxuPU).

3. Next play Richard Butterworth’s video Change Your Voice, Change Your Life: From Monotone to Magical (available: https://youtu.be/Dtn0s1bxuPU), and do the vocal exercises together. Note how manipulating vocal prosody can achieve certain psychological effects on a listener. The vocal prosodic effects include volume, pitch, inflection, and speed. For instance, loud volume elicits alarm or attention, and a rising inflection indicates a question or doubt.

4. Deliver sentences with different prosodic qualities as in Figure 1. Have the students repeat after you. Explain the original notation system developed by the researcher in Figure 1.

5. Have students apply vocal notation and practice the sentences in pairs as in the Appendix.

6. For the remainder of the class time, allow the students to revise their scripts. They can edit it based on the feedback from Step 1. Next be sure to have the students apply the vocal notation system to their own scripts.

7. Assign homework to the students to finish their script and memorize their anecdote for the next class.
Figure 1

Vocal Notation and Example Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocal Patterns</th>
<th>Example Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volume - level of sound intensity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❌❌❌</td>
<td>loud - excitement, attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❌❌</td>
<td>soft - closeness, secret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I just won the lottery!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I’ll give you a special price.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pitch - overall tone</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬅️</td>
<td>high - stress, anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬇️</td>
<td>low - sadness, serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How could you forget my birthday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This is the saddest day of my life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inflection - ending tone movement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬆️</td>
<td>upward - question, disbelief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⬇️</td>
<td>downward - command, power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Would you like something to drink?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Give me your money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed - rate of words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➔</td>
<td>fast - high tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢</td>
<td>slow - emphasis, clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‹‹</td>
<td>pause - focus/emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Time is running out!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Don’t ever do that to me again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Study your notes because there will be a…quiz.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix

Add vocal notations to the following sentences and practice saying them aloud.

1. Stop! Red light, red light!
2. Be quiet while the baby is sleeping.
3. Would you like some tea?
4. Give me some money.
5. Surprise! Happy birthday!
6. My pet dog died today.
7. The train is coming!
8. Don’t forget to study.
9. Tomorrow there will be a….quiz.
CLASS 3 - Class Presentation

1. In this final class the students will present their anecdotes. Remind students that they are not permitted to read their scripts while presenting. It is not necessary to remember their scripts word-for-word. Encourage them to improvise if necessary.

2. Prepare an entertainment show atmosphere in the classroom. Set-up a microphone and recording equipment. If such equipment is not available, use a smartphone or other device to record the audio stories. The students could use a big black marker to simulate a microphone.

3. Become a host of the “The Anecdote Show” and embrace the role of master of ceremonies.

4. Invite students “on stage” to deliver their anecdotes. After finishing, have the audience input scores and feedback on paper or digitally using survey software such as Google Forms.

5. After the class, edit all the audio files using software such as Audacity (free) or Apple’s Garageband. Distribute the audio file, grades and comments to all students.

References


Contributor: Joachim Castellano is an Associate Professor at Aichi Prefectural University outside of Nagoya, Japan. He specializes in media literacy and technology. His current research focuses on the learning affordances of storytelling. In 2013, his work in technology and education in Japan was recognized when he was selected as an Apple Distinguished Educator.
Peer Correction with Symbols at Secondary Level

Amar Bahadur Sharma

Peer correction can be considered to be an essential component of writing sessions because good writing does not happen overnight. Hinkel (2015) says writing is not just about putting ideas into paper, but choose words carefully so that it represents the very ideas of a particular writer. A lot of patience, reading and creativity are a must to improve writing skills. A fine piece of writing has to go through a rigorous process—brainstorming, first draft, first editing, peer correction, proofreading final draft and submission. These stages may help secondary level students and above polish and improve writing skills. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that teachers and students find it frustrating and may overlook multiple revisions of their writing. To make the best use of the ongoing lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, I redesigned a traditional in-class peer feedback task, during which students exchanged their papers with each other, read the papers and then discussed the grammatical errors they noticed.

It was working well quite a few years ago in my class. However, it was difficult to generate students’ interest in writing. Students were inclined more to fixing language errors rather than commenting on content and organisation. No correction symbols were used and the papers used to be defaced by doodles and corrections. But this technique does not expect any papers or answers (soft copies) to be rough. Rather, this technique keeps peers engaged with each other’s task through the use of checklist and a table of symbols. Students just check their checklists, use symbols, offer constructive feedback in a feedback box and email each other. This activity is not over after exchanging emails. They are encouraged to have more discussion on each other’s writing using online platforms.

Note that the activity below is described for both paper-based and digital exchanges. And students should not be that digitally savvy. Students can exchange their stories accompanied by a feedback form and a checklist via email. Digital exchange can also be implemented through Google Docs, which allows multiple users to access the same document. In any digital exchange, though, it is crucial for teachers to demonstrate how to use that certain digital platform in class so that students know how to access the story, make comments, track changes, and accept or reject changes.

Proficiency level : intermediate to advance
Age group : 14+
Teaching hours : N/A
Objectives:

This activity has five objectives. On completion of this lesson, students are expected to: 1. identify different areas of errors and use correction symbols, 2. exchange emails, 3. master reading techniques like skimming, scanning, proofreading, etc., 4. learn how to incorporate five elements of a short story into their original story, and 5. offer constructive advice on the quality of a story.

Resources: Slides, handouts and worksheets

Procedure during the session

The task is comprised of four stages.

**Step 1:** Start your class (Zoom Meeting, Microsoft Meeting Team, Google Classroom, etc.) talking about the tradition of storytelling and story writing, and how fun it is to read a short story. A short story is a piece of prose fiction that can be read in one sitting. One sitting may take place for 2 hours. It also depends on one’s reading pace. Charles (2002) defines that the short story focuses on a single event and a single effect. Short stories have fewer characters. That is why short stories are simpler than novels. Also, tell them why you personally love reading stories. This helps you to set a scene in class. As you know short stories generally consist of 5 elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict and theme. Show or send them a sample story each, where the aforementioned five elements are integrated (see appendix -1). But do not tell them what five elements of a short story are. Then, instruct students to read the sample story thoroughly.

**Step 2:** Tell students to think of or note down five elements of a short story within 5 minutes. Allow them to use any means/sources that they are comfortable or familiar with. They can communicate using the chat box. This hones their collaborative skills. After the allotted time is over, ask them to share their answers. Ask few not all students.

**Step 3:** Define each element of a short story. Simple definitions work better because every student may not be interested in this genre of literature. After you define each of them, you can ask some of your students to label the elements in the sample story. FIVE ELEMENTS OF A SHORT STORY:

- **Characters** are the heart of the story. A person, animal or nature that has a role is a character. The protagonist is the main character, whereas the antagonist is the villain.

- **Setting** is the place and time of the story. Setting suggests a place where action takes place like cave, jungle, island, 19th century, etc.
Plot is the systematic arrangement of the events in the story. In general, a plot consists of a beginning, middle and an ending. Plot makes stories interesting.

Conflict is a problem in a story. The main character has to undergo some challenges and overcome them. There are four basic conflicts to look for that may trouble the main character:

a. Man versus man  
b. Man versus nature  
c. Man versus himself/herself  
d. Man versus society

Theme is the controlling idea or the insight that the writer expects his or her readers to understand at the end of the story. The theme is often the writer’s message.

Step 4: Now, instruct them to write their own story. It is better to set word limits of 300 words or more. It is not surprising to find some students who write a story as short as a paragraph. Once they are done, they should exchange stories with a partner of their own choice via email.

The steps to be followed at home by peers:

Give them the following instructions clearly.

Step 1: SKIM:

At home, skim your partner’s original story with a red pen preferably. When you go through the story of your partner, do not doodle or scribble. It has to be as neat it was before. Then, briefly write your first thought about the content of the story in your notebook or a piece of paper. Consider whether and in what ways the story aligns with the checklist provided (see appendix-2).

Step 2: SCAN:

Scan the entire story and tick the five elements of a short story by ticking (√) the checklist. If any element is missing in the story, mark (X). Put a question mark (?) if any of the elements is not clear.

Step 4: REREAD:

Re-read your partner’s story one more time, focusing on strengths of the story and points to consider for improving it. You can take notes on the story because humans tend to forget if not noted.
Step 5: FILL OUT:

Fill out the feedback form (see appendix-3). After reviewing your notes, list what you feel are the story’s strongest points and explain the reasons why you find them good. Then, choose points that need improvement. Do not focus only on weaknesses. I strongly suggest that you start with strengths. Some of your classmates may be too sensitive!

Step 6: CORRECT:

Edit the partner’s story. Apply the correction symbols technique (see appendix-4) in the story using a red pen preferably. Do not add or remove words but circle and underline (see appendix-5). After correction, exchange each other’s corrected story along with the checklist and the feedback form.

Step 7: SHARE WITH YOUR PARTNER:

In next session, you and your partner will talk about your feedback. Read what you have written in the feedback form. Before the next session, you may have a conversation in any digital platforms to discuss each other’s feedback and correction. In next session, if your partner has difficulty understanding your comments, try to explain them in a different way. You may also ask me (your teacher) for help. Please remember that your goal is to help your partner notice the story’s strengths and the points to improve in order to continue to develop the story before the final draft.

Note to the teacher: The purpose of this activity is to engage students in writing and enable them to communicate with each other about their work. Sultana (2009) says peer correction enhances learner autonomy, cooperation, interaction and involvement. Contrarily, there may exist inferiority-complex problem between peers. Jeremy Harmer (2004) claims that we cannot overlook a possible problem with peer correction. Any student after getting corrected by a peer may feel inferior to his/her peer. Teachers need to teach students gently what the purpose of this task is and why s/he is employing this technique in their writing class. This will work. They are not real editors. Later, it is teachers’ responsibility to go through their stories and give them final feedback on their draft for quality product.

Reflection

As a high school teacher, I implemented this activity with 14-16 year olds of English as a foreign language and received positive comments from the students, but the activity can also be adapted in diverse contexts to suit the need and standards. One reason this activity worked well in my classes is that students realised that peer feedback does not equal error correction.
References:


Appendix 1: Sample story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting: a landlord’s house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters: the old cat and rats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot: The cat grew old. Then, he played a trick on rats. He survived by killing gullible rats.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict: the old cat versus rats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gullible Rats

A very long time ago, there was an old yet clever cat. He used to live in a landlord’s house. The cat had no children. He enjoyed his youthful life to the fullest. He used to behave like a king. At that time, he used to run after rats and eat them without any mercy.

As time went by, the cat grew too old to look after himself. Earlier, the cat went to different places to find food. But, now, it was old. It was deserted by other young friends. To survive he devised an idea of trapping rats. He wore garlands of flowers around his neck and walked ringing the bell.

On hearing the sound, rats hiding in the holes came out. The rats were surprised to see the cat with garlands. The cat stood his eyes shut. A curious rat went up to him and asked him, “Why are you wearing garlands of flowers around your neck? Have you done something remarkable?” The cat cleverly replied, “I have stopped committing crimes. I am a vegetarian now. I want to live a peaceful life. I am a true devotee of God.” Rats trusted him and started walking fearlessly. For few days, the cat did no harm to rats. But later the number of rats was falling day by day. He was happy even in his old age.

Moral: We should not trust others too quickly.
Appendix 2: Checklist

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
a. The story has an introduction. |
b. The story has characters: one of animals, humans, things, etc. |
c. The story has a setting. |
d. The story has a plot. |
e. The story has dialogue. |
f. The story ends with suspense. |
g. The story has a clear ending. |
h. The story is interesting to read. |
i. The story is of a reasonable length. |
j. The story develops smoothly. |
k. The story contains appropriate words, phrases, and sentences. |

Appendix 3: Feedback form

Your constructive feedback:

Dear …………………....,

I enjoyed reading your story. I think your hook is captivating! You also ended your story with a happy ending. In addition, I really liked that you varied your use of words. Your language was clear and to the point. I would like to make suggestions on how to improve your story for the final draft. First, I think that you should work on your punctuation.

Second, in this genre, you are expected to create more thrill and sensation to grip the attention of your readers. Your reader needs to be spellbound by your narrative.

At some points, you have used big words. For example, in paragraph 2, you have used big words like ‘deserted’ and ‘devised’. However, your story contains very ordinary words which make your writing very simple for high school students.

Lastly, your story ends quite abruptly. If I were the writer, I would also mention what the old cat did after he finished killing the rats and where and how he died.

This is my feedback on your writing. Thank you for sharing it with me. If you have any questions, please feel free to communicate with me via Viber, email or Messenger.

Best,

………………..
Appendix 4: Correction symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of correction</th>
<th>Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>full stop</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question mark</td>
<td>(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclamation mark</td>
<td>(!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comma</td>
<td>(,)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other punctuation marks</td>
<td>Pn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tense</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>space</td>
<td>&lt;&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articles</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preposition</td>
<td>Pr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>Adv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>Adj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>Prn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replacement</td>
<td>^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deletion</td>
<td>✕</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confusion</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add</td>
<td>⊕</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capitalisation</td>
<td>©</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 5: Corrected story

Gullible Rats

a very long time ago, there was an old yet clever cat. He used to live in a landlord’s house. The cat had no children. He enjoyed his youthful life to the fullest. He used to behave like a king. At that time, he used to run after rats and eat them without any mercy.

As time went by, the cat grew too old to look after himself. Earlier, the cat went to different places to find food. But, now, it was old. It was deserted by other young friends. To survive he devised an idea of trapping rats. He wears garlands of flowers around his neck and walked ringing the bell. On hearing the sound, rats hiding in the holes came out. The rats were surprised to see the cat with garlands.

The cat stood his eyes shut. A the curious rat went up to him and asked him, “Why are you wearing garlands of flowers around your neck? Have you done something remarkable?” The cat cleverly replied, “I have stopped committing crimes. I am a vegetarian now. I want to live a peaceful life. I am a true devotee of God.” Rats trusted him and started walking fearlessly. For few days, the cat did no harm to rats. But later the number of rats was falling day by day. He was happy even in his oldage.

Moral: We should not trust others too quick.
Contributor:

Amar Bahadur Sherma is an MA from Tribhuvan University and TEA fellow 2018 at California State University. He writes English textbooks, teaches English and blogs. His areas of interest include language acquisition, curriculum development, material development, translation, research, and so on.
Rationale for Teaching Phonemic Symbols to Foreign Language Learners of English

Rishi Ram Paudyal

Pronunciation is a very important part of a language. ‘Pronunciation plays a central role in both our personal and our social lives: as individuals, we project our identity through the way we speak, and also indicate our membership of particular communities. At the same time, and sometimes also in conflict with this identity function, our pronunciation is responsible for intelligibility: whether or not we can convey our meaning. The significance of success in L2 (second language) pronunciation learning is therefore far-reaching, complicated by the fact that many aspects of pronunciation happen subconsciously, and so are not readily accessible to conscious analysis and intervention’ (Seidlhofer, B. 2001). However, Mompean, J., and Lintunen, P. (2015) maintain that pronunciation is often ignored due to many teachers’ insufficient training in phonetics, phonology or pronunciation-related content.

Pronunciation consists of different sounds and these can be represented by phonemic symbols. It is a valuable tool for students of English as a foreign language. Although English has 26 letters, the British English has 44 sounds – 20 vowels and 24 consonants.

Unlike Sanskrit which is pronounced as it is written, English can’t be pronounced just looking at the spellings or pronouncing as single alphabets are pronounced. In English, there are all sorts of letters – some are not pronounced at all, some have more than one sound and sometimes the same letters bear different pronunciation. For example in the word ‘enough’ the last two alphabets ‘gh’ make the sound of /f/ as /ɪˈnʌf/. Similarly, in the word ‘ghost’, the first two alphabet are pronounced only as /gəʊst/ -- the alphabet /h/ is not uttered. Similarly, the ‘gh’ in ‘through’ does not appear to have any place in pronunciation as it is uttered /θruː/ phonemically. At other times it is hard to find out how many syllables are there in a word. For example, ‘do’ has one syllable, ‘happy’ has two syllables, and ‘important’ has three syllables. However, having as many alphabets (9) as the word ‘important’, the word ‘chocolate’ has only two syllables. As we can see, the pronunciation of English words is not based on letters. English pronunciation can be unpredictable and sometimes tricky. With the ability to recognize the phonetic symbols, the learners can understand the pronunciation written in International Phonetic Alphabets (IPA) in English dictionaries and improve their pronunciation. Having good pronunciation gives learners more confident in their oral
communication and encourages more interaction in the language they are learning. It should be borne in mind that pronunciation is an important skill in learners’ L2 competence (Mompean & Lintunen, 2015). Therefore, it is important for teachers of English to teach English phonemes to their students who are learning English as a second or foreign language. In this article I have planned a two-hour session to teach phonetic symbols of English vowels.

**Topic**: Teaching Phonetic Symbols (vowels)  
**Time**: 2 hours  
**Level**: Secondary

### Introduction

Knowledge of phonetic symbols is very important part of language learning. However, to achieve pronunciation skill, the learner has to be familiar with phonetic symbols.

### Session objectives

By the end of this session, the participants will have:

- recognized vowel sound symbols.
- pronounced vowel sounds.
- drawn vowel sound symbols.

### Strategies: miming, drilling, transcribing, gaming

### Contents

1. **vowel symbols**  
   Activity 1. Short Vowels  
   Time: 25 minutes  
   Materials: Six short sounds e, æ, ʌ, ʊ, ɒ, ə, ɪ written in separate A4 size paper.

### Procedures

*The following word groups are written in rectangular 6 pieces of paper.*

- In the first paper, write ‘went, intend, send, letter’. In the second paper write ‘cat, hand, nap, flat, have’. After that, write ‘fun, love, money, one, London, come’ in the third paper. Likewise, in the next paper write ‘put, look, should, cook, book, look’. Next, in the next paper, write ‘rob, top, watch, squat, sausage’. Further, in the next paper write ‘alive, again, system’. Lastly, write ‘pick, sit, fit, bit, difficult’ in another paper.

- First of all, show /e/ to the class. Then ask the participants if they can
pronounce it. After that, pronounce it and ask the participants to repeat. Now show e, æ, ʌ, u, ə, ɪ individually and ask the participants to pronounce. Give six-time practice for each vowel sound. Finally, select a few participants randomly and ask them to pronounce.

- Give these six words to participants to transcribe: bend, capital, pun, shook, cob, ahead.
- Divide the participants into two groups and give them each a word. Each person has to act out while another person from another group transcribes.
- Ask them to check if the acting and the transcriptions match.

**Worksheet 1 Short Vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA Symbol</th>
<th>Word Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>went, intend, send, letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ</td>
<td>cat, hand, nap, flat, have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʌ</td>
<td>fun, love, money, one, London, com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>put, look, should, cook, book, look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>rob, top, watch, squat, sausage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ə</td>
<td>alive, again, system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɪ</td>
<td>pick, sit, fit, bit, difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of worksheet 1: https://www.londonschool.com/blog/phonetic-alphabet/

**Note:** At last there was a word ‘mother’ in the group of ‘alive, again’ which has been avoided as it does not represent that sound. Instead of that ‘system’ has been included. And also there was one short vowel /ɪ/ was missing. So that vowel has been added with other words namely pick, sit, fit, bit, difficult, that contain the concerned sound.

**Activity 2: Becoming poetic**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** A sheet of paper where 34 words are written and transcribed sentence examples are given.

**Procedures**

- Give a sheet of paper where 34 words are written and example sentences are transcribed to each of the participants. Ask them to make a meaningful sentence using the words that are given in the list. In case they want to use new words to make a sentence, the words should bear at least one of the seven
short vowel sounds e, æ, ʌ, ʊ, ɒ, ə, ɪ.

• After they finish transcribing, ask them to share with their partners. If time allows, ask any volunteers who would like to share their composition.

**Becoming a poet**

Using the following words composed just one meaningful sentence and transcribe it phonetically. Then share it with your partner. In case you need to bring in new words, ensure that they bear one of these seven symbols: e, æ, ʌ, ʊ, ɒ, ə, ɪ. To get an idea, you may refer to examples given below.

**Example sentences.**
1. A cat had a nap on a flat.
   ə kæt hæd ə næp ɒn ə flæt
2. Mother loves money.
   mʌðə(r) lavz 'mʌni
3. Come on, have a look at the book.
   kʌm ɒn, hæv ə lʊk æt ðə bʊk

**Worksheet 2**

**Becoming Poetic**

**Activity 3. Long Vowels**

Materials: Five long vowels iː, ɔː, ʊː, uː, ɑː are written in separate A4 size paper. The following word groups are written in rectangular 5 pieces of paper.

**Procedures**

• First of all explain what it means by ‘long vowels’. The definition is given as follows: Long vowels are vowel sounds that are longer than normal, or short, vowels. In RP English the long vowel sounds are those in ‘seat’, ‘suit’, ‘sort’, ‘shirt’ and ‘start’. Phonemic symbols for long vowel sounds have a /ː/ to indicate length.

**Example**

The word ‘kiss’ has a short /i/ sound, whilst the equivalent long sound /iː/ produces the word ‘keys’. (Source: http://teachingenglish.britishcouncil.org.cn/article/long-vowels)
• In the first paper write, ‘need, beat, team’. In the second paper write ‘nurse, heard, third, turn’. After that, in the third paper write ‘talk, law, bored, yawn, jaw’. Likewise, in the next paper write ‘few, boot, lose, gloomy, fruit, chew’. Finally, in the next paper, write ‘fast, car, hard, bath’.

• First of all, show /i:/ to the class. Then ask the participants if they can pronounce it. After that pronounce it and ask the participants to repeat. Now show /ɪː, ɜː, ɔː, uː, ɑː/ individually and ask the participants to pronounce. Give six-time practice for each long vowel. After that pronounce each of them asking participants to repeat. Finally, select a few participants randomly and ask them to pronounce.

• Give these six words to participants to transcribe: beat, heard, yawn, gloomy, hard, law.

• Divide the participants into two groups and give them each a word from the above list. Each person has to act out while another person from another group transcribes.

• Ask them to check if the acting and the transcriptions match.

Worksheet 3  Long Vowels

IPA Symbol  Word examples

i:  need, beat, team
ɜː:  nurse, heard, third, turn
ɔː:  talk, law, bored, yawn, jaw
uː:  few, boot, lose, gloomy, fruit, chew
ɑː:  fast, car, hard, bath

Source of worksheet 2: https://www.londonschool.com/blog/phonetic-alphabet/

Activity 4. Becoming a poet  Time: 15 minutes

Materials: A sheet of paper where 22 words are written and transcribed sentence examples are given.

Procedures

• Give a sheet of paper where 22 words are written and example sentences are transcribed to each of the participants. Ask them to make a meaningful sentence using the words that are given in the list. In case they want to use new words to make a sentence, the words should bear at least one of the five long vowel sounds iː, ɜː, ɔː, uː, ɑː:
After they finish transcribing, ask them to share with their partners. If time allows, ask any volunteers who would like to share their composition.

**Worksheet 4**  
**Becoming a poet**

Using the following words compose just one meaningful sentence and transcribe it phonetically. Then share it with your partner. In case you need to bring in new words, ensure that they bear one of these six symbols: 

\( \text{iː, ɜː, ɔː, uː, ɑː} \): To get an idea, you may refer to examples given below.

**Example sentences**

1. Chew your food.  
   \[ tʃuː jɔː(r) fuːd \]
2. Third, your turn.  
   \[ θɜːd, jɔː(r) tɜːn \]
   \[ bɔːd?  iːt fruːt \]

**Activity 5. Diphthong Vowels**  
Time: 25 minutes

**Materials:** Eight diphthong vowels \( ɪə, eə, eɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, əʊ, aʊ, ʊə \) written in separate A4 size paper.

**Procedures**

- First of all explain what it means by diphthong. The definition is given as follows: A diphthong is a sound made by combining two vowels, specifically when it starts as one vowel sound and goes to another, like the \( oy \) sound in \( oil \). 
  
  **Diphthong** comes from the Greek word \( diphthongos \) which means “having two sounds.” Notice the di- for “double.” So diphthongs are double vowel sounds in words like \( late, ride, or pout \). If two vowels in a row are the same, as in \( boot \) or \( beer \), then it’s not a diphthong.  

  (Source: https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/diphthong)

- Write the following word groups in rectangular 8 pieces of paper. In the first paper write, ‘near, ear, clear, tear (n. from eye), beer, fear’. Next write ‘hair, there, care, stairs, pear’ in another piece of paper. In the third paper write ‘face, space, rain, case, eight’. Likewise, in the next paper write ‘joy, employ, toy, coil, oyster’. Further write ‘my, sight, pride, kind, flight’ in another piece of paper. Next, in the next paper write ‘no, don’t, stones, alone, hole’. Further, write ‘mouth, house, brown, cow, out’ in a piece of paper. Lastly, write ‘pure, cure, mature, lure’ in another paper.

- First of all, show \( /ɪə/ \) to the participants. Then ask them if they can pronounce...
it. After that pronounce it and ask the participants to repeat. Now show ɪə, eə,
eɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, əʊ, aʊ, ʊə individually and ask the participants to pronounce. Give
six-time practice for each diphthong. After that pronounce each of them asking
participants to repeat. Finally, select a few participants randomly and ask them
to pronounce.

- Give these eight words to participants to transcribe: clear, care, rain, toy, pride,
don’t, house, lure.

- Divide the participants into two groups and give them each a word from the
above list. Each person has to act out while another person from another group
transcribes.

- Ask them to check if the acting and the transcriptions match.

**Worksheet 5**

**Diphthong Vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA Symbol</th>
<th>Word examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɪə</td>
<td>near, ear, clear, tear (n. from eye), beer, fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eə</td>
<td>hair, there, care, stairs, pear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eɪ</td>
<td>face, space, rain, case, eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔɪ</td>
<td>joy, employ, toy, coil, oyster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aɪ</td>
<td>my, sight, pride, kind, flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>əʊ</td>
<td>no, don’t, stones, alone, hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aʊ</td>
<td>mouth, house, brown, cow, out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʊə</td>
<td>pure, cure, mature, lure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of worksheet 3: https://www.londonschool.com/blog/phonetic-alphabet/
Note: To the fourth word in the first row more information is added in parentheses
to avoid different pronunciation of ‘tear’. Further there was diphthong /ʊə/ missing so
it has been inserted with these words ‘pure, cure, mature, lure’ that contain the related sound.

**Activity 6. Becoming a poet**

**Time:** 15 minutes

Materials: A sheet of paper where 40 words are written and transcribed sentence
examples are given.

**Procedures**

- Give a sheet of paper where 40 words are written and example sentences are
transcribed to each of the participants. Ask them to make a meaningful sentence
using the words that are given in the list. In case they want to use new words to make a sentence, the words should bear at least one of the eight diphthongs i.e. ɪə, ɛə, ɛɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, əʊ, aʊ, ʊə. However, tell them they can use one of these be verbs ‘am, is, are’ to make a sentence, though they are not diphthongs. Tell them not to transcribe ‘am, is, are’ as they are not diphthongs.

• After they finish transcribing, ask them to share with their partners. If time allows, ask any volunteers who would like to share their composition.

Worksheet 6

Using the following words compose just one meaningful sentence and transcribe it phonetically. Then share it with your partner. In case you need to bring in new words, ensure that they bear one of these eight symbols: ɪə, ɛə, ɛɪ, ɔɪ, aɪ, əʊ, aʊ, ʊə To get an idea, you may refer to examples given below.

Example sentences
1. I am my pride. 
   aɪ ɪə maɪ prɑɪd
2. There are brown cows.
   ðeə(r) ɛə braʊn kɔʊz
3. Here is my joy.
   hɪə(r) maɪ dʒɔɪ

References


Contributor:

Rishi Ram Paudyal is an ELT scholar, freelance writer, and poet. He has given presentations in national and international forums including IATEFL and conducted workshops. His specific areas include teacher professional development, training, English and Nepali languages, translation, and interpretation. He also has experience in editing Nepali and English texts.
Teaching of Integrated Language Skills: A Sample Lesson Plan

LEVEL : Upper Elementary  
AGE : Teenagers  
TIME NEEDED : 90 minutes + project  
LANGUAGE FOCUS : Countable and uncountable nouns, understanding vocabulary in context, topic words, listening, reading

Lesson Objectives: At the end of the lesson students should be able to
a. use topic related target words in their own sentences,
b. read and complete the follow up exercises.

LEAD-IN

T (teacher) asks students to look at the pictures and elicits ideas from them about the topic. Write some of the ideas on the board.

Activity 1: T puts the students in pairs and ask them to match the words to the correct pictures (What is the (photo source: Internet)
Activity 2: LISTENING

(T records the conversation below on a computer or any other device before class).

Ask students to listen to a short recording and decide which of the four letters from the Reading: Letters exercise it is most closely related to.

Transcript:

Host: On the show today we have Dr Bina to answer all your health questions. Good afternoon, Dr Bina.

Dr Bina: Good afternoon.

Host: OK, here’s our first caller.

Mohan Yadav: Hello, my name is Mohan Yadav and I’m phoning about my son.

Dr Bina: What seems to be the problem, Mohan?

Mohan: Well, he’s had asthma since he was very little but now he wants to play football with his friends.

Dr Bina: Does he have an inhaler?

Mohan: Yes, he does.

Dr Amy: That’s good. So, it’s fine for him to play but make sure he takes his inhaler.

Mohan: But he’s never wanted to play before.

Dr Bina: Yes, but he’s growing up and probably wants to do what his friends are doing.

Mohan: But, will he be ok?

Dr Bina: Yes, I’m sure he will. He might be a bit out of breath, but there won’t be any problems.

Mohan: Oh, that’s good news! Thank you very much.

Host: OK, let’s go to our second caller

Activity 3: READING: LETTERS

3.a. Read the letters sent to a doctor who provides advice in a magazine column. What are the health issues specified in each one? What advice do you think the doctor will give? [Teacher to allow 10 mins to discuss the answers of the two questions in small groups.)

A. Dear Dr Bina

I’m worried about my ten-year-old daughter. After she plays in the garden she’s out of breath. She is usually very healthy and loves playing sports, so I’m very
concerned about this. Do you think it’s serious and can you give us some advice?
Mrs M Dawadi

B. Dear Dr Bina,
I’m fifteen years old and I’ve got lots of spots! Some of my friends don’t have any spots, but mine are really bad! I use creams and lotions and wash my face regularly, but the spots are just getting worse. My mum says I shouldn’t worry as all teenagers get spots but it’s making me feel depressed. What can I do? J. Pradhan

C. Dear Dr Bina,
In February, I broke my arm when I slipped on some ice. Last week, I had the plaster removed but now there’s a very bad rash. Before I left the hospital, I was given some cream but it isn’t helping and my arm is sore. Do you think I need to go back to the hospital or will it get better with the cream? P. Chaudhury.

D Dear Dr Bina,
In a few weeks I’m moving abroad with my family because my husband has got a new job. The problem is that I need lots of injections but I don’t like needles – in fact, they terrify me! Is there any alternative? Mrs S. Shakya

3.b. Read the letters again and choose the correct answer for each question.
1. Who has already spoken to a doctor or nurse? A / B / C / D
2. Who doesn’t know what the problem is? A / B / C / D
3. Who needs something to stop them becoming ill in the future? A / B / C / D
4. Who feels very upset because of their problem? A / B / C / D

3.c. Now read Dr Bina’s replies and match each one to the correct letter. Be careful!
There are four letters but only three replies.

1. Dear......................
Don’t worry too much. It’s usual for this to happen and if you use the cream it should clear up. Wait a few more days and, if there is no change, then go and show it to a doctor.

2. Dear ......................
It sounds like she has asthma. Many children develop it as they get older but it’s nothing to worry about. Go and see the doctor and they will give her an inhaler to use, which will make a big difference. As long as it isn’t too bad, she will still be able to play sports.
3. Dear ………………….

Yes, your mother is right, but I understand it’s still upsetting. There’s not much more you can do other than keep your skin clean and dry. It’s a good idea to ask your doctor to recommend the best cream for you.

**Activity 4 Working with the language [T revises the grammar point of countable and uncountable nouns before the exercise].** Are these nouns countable (C) or uncountable (U) when they appear in the letters?

1. advice          2. rash          3. ice          4. spot          5. injection

**Activity 5 Working with vocabulary Focus: Meaning**

*Find words or phrases in the text that match the definitions below.*

1. worried about something
2. bad or dangerous enough to make you worried
3. a thick liquid that you put on your skin
4. lose your balance and fall
5. painful and uncomfortable, usually as a result of an injury or infection
6. to make someone very frightened
7. make a problem go away or disappear
8. to start to exist, or to start to be noticed
9. to give advice about what is good

**Activity 6 SPEAKING**

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together. Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

**Activity 7 WRITING** Ask students to write a short reply to Mrs. S. Shakya (letter D) in the style of Dr Bina. Give them around ten minutes to do this and monitor and help if necessary. You could display the letters on the classroom walls and then vote for the best one.

**Activity 8 PROJECT** Encourage students to research their chosen medical condition on the internet or at their local library to complete the project for homework.
Appendix - A Theoretical aspects of integrated teaching

Language is not the sum of its discrete parts and is best learned when…… its skills are integrated. (-Richards & Renandya, 2011)

- English becomes a real means of interaction and sharing among students.
- Allows teachers to track students’ progress in multiple skills at the same time.
- Highly motivating to students of all ages and backgrounds.

Types of Integration:
- Skills integration
- Theme integration (integrated curriculum)
- Content-skills integration
- Task-skills integration

**Integrated Teaching of English Language Skills**
Appendix – B Keys:

Lead-in Key 1. a doctor; 2. a thermometer; 3. pills; 4. an ill child being given medicine

Activity 1 Key 1. pills – 3; thermometer – 2; medicine – 4; stethoscope

Activity 2: [Key - letter A]

Activity 3.a

Key a

A. a breathing problem, probably asthma; B. spots;

C. a rash; D. fear of needles / needs injections

Activity 3.b

Key b


Activity 3.c

Key c


Activity 4 Working with the language


Activity 5 Working with vocabulary

Key

1. concerned; 2. serious; 3. lotion; 4. slip; 5. sore;

6. terrify; 7. clear up; 8. develop; 9. recommend

Contributor: A sample compiled from the Internet sources.

Haris Adhikari


A History of Applied Linguistics (2015) authored by Kees de Bot is an important book, not only because it covers the overall historical development of applied linguistics (AL), from 1980 until 2010, as a nascent field of research in language acquisition and application, but also because it is based on data gathered through survey questionnaires, interviews, and systematic reviews. Written in lucid language, the book is divided into eleven parts, and is largely inductively grounded. Students, teachers, teacher trainers, and researchers—of all levels—may find it quite helpful.

de Bot tries to make the book as authentic as possible by incorporating voices of scholars working in the field of (second) language teaching and learning and research on language use. In addition, he maps the field of AL and analyzes the areas covered or not covered by it, scanning through different conference themes, research papers, book chapters and books published in the field of (second) language teaching and research on language use. Alongside, he tries to demarcate the field of applied linguistics and its scope by considering or comparing different factual as well as conceptual variables that come from his research data and the leading scholars he consults. Overall, the book covers language acquisition theories, pedagogical developments, newer approaches in AL research, and issues of AL’s impact in the domains of language teaching and learning.

de Bot synthesizes three definitions of AL out of the interviews and surveys he conducts with experts, teachers and researchers—those who mainly work in the field of second
language acquisition (SLA). First, AL concerns real world problems, with multiple languages, with ways to solve them on the basis of linguistic knowledge and tools; second, it overlaps with SLA; and third, it is everything that has to do with language, apart from theoretical linguistics. His informant scholar William Grabe points out that AL addresses real world problems as they relate to discrimination, language learning problems, attrition, aging migrants, instruction, and assessment, among others.

Alongside, de Bot warns us that these views might have been biased because they mainly come from SLA experts. His first demarcation regarding the selection of his participants functions as a clear line between AL or American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and TESOL. He observes TESOL is all about English, as its name suggests, while AAAL aims at a larger range of languages. And most of his informants come from AL or AAAL. de Bot’s second demarcation concerns a large group of researchers doing experimental work on multilingual processing. He says their works have been influential and sometimes address core AL issues as well. Yet, they have not been included in the list of his participants because they would not define themselves primarily as applied linguists. The third category concerns with researchers doing neurolinguistics research, which includes works both on language pathology (bilingual aphasia, bilingual aspects of neuro-degeneration, including aging) and neuro-imaging. de Bot observes that this is a world of its own where many researchers’ works have been influential; but their works are not essentially AL, so he does not include them. Overall, for the surveys and interviews, he selects researcher-participants who have engaged themselves in more than one language.

On the other hand, de Bot consults two other reliable sources: International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) and American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). AILA defines applied linguistics as something that differs from linguistics in general, mainly with respect to its explicit orientation towards practical, everyday problems related to language and communication. AAAL defines it as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that addresses a broad range of language-related issues in order to improve the lives of individuals and conditions in society. de Bot himself views AL as quite close to SLA. He himself defines AL as development and use of multiple languages.

Applied linguistics’ different distinct features, scopes, theoretical and methodological trends, and future directions are also highlighted by way of comparison, survey analysis and synthesis. The book provides findings-based arguments. The data gathered from his informants hold differing views on the question of AL’s autonomy and associations. From them, primarily three categories emerge: unity, fragmentation and compartmentalization. But most informants focus on its openness. de Bot uses the major categories of his data to make distinctions among disciplines clear. For example, he points out that TESOL is closer to teaching and learning (pedagogies) or SLA; whereas AL is closer to different uses of language and applied linguistic research.

The book touches upon how modern theoretical developments in AL came about through
mid-twentieth century developments of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, Chomsky’s Generative Grammar (GG), Usage based (UB) approaches with cognitive linguistics as its main component, Social Cultural Theory (SCT), Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), Complex Dynamic Systems Theory, and Corpus linguistics. de Bot observes that all of these paradigms or approaches focused on one or the other areas of their own interests, often criticizing their precedents. Later, from the 1990s, direction of and influences over AL changed every seven years or so, and since then, the field has fragmented significantly. Therefore, it has become harder to identify clear influential leaders in the field of AL. Yet, there are prolific leading researchers in different domains of AL.

His informants emphatically highlight the growing importance of a number of areas, namely, language shifts in migration settings, language attrition, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), conservative and liberal lines of accepting and undermining varieties of English used across the world, variability and variation in interlanguaging, linguistic landscapes, role of AL in language teaching, enormous revival in attention to vocabulary, growth in content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and teacher education or empowerment. Together, the author devotes some space to AL’s ever-growing interest in corpus linguistics, pragmatics, use of technology, meta-analysis and overview studies, and generalizability as a far cry in AL, among others.

de Bot contends that the definition of psycholinguistics in AL is not clear, for it seems to refer to all the approaches that see language primarily as an individual’s commodity that is in the brain. For example, Universal Grammar (UG) and cognitive linguistics talk about an innate, special language acquisition device. He points out its main concern: How humans develop and use languages, which is quite the same also in SLA. In recent times, its major preoccupation, apart from the role of linguistics input, has been to see how L2 acquisition is different from L1 acquisition.

His participants view the recent development of multilingualism not as a deficit but as a resource. In particular, de Bot highlights Vivian Cook’s idea of ‘multiple competence’ in multilingualism, which hints at the fact that the bilingual (or trilingual, quadrilingual and so on) is not two monolinguals in one, or two separate languages in one brain. Instead, it is the acquisition of a second language that leads to a reorganization of the language system with different languages influencing one another. His participants also observe that L3 community is a major development in this area, for it has grown considerably and shows good promises.

His informants opine that, though long in use until recently, Chomsky’s GG or UG (Universal Grammar) is no longer in the trend, as it was earlier. Chomsky observed that children are born with an understanding of how languages work, which is referred to as UG, and this helps them to quickly identify and follow the principles and parameters of those languages. Therefore, this is driven more by assumptions than by empirical data, and generalizes how only in linear ways all children and people learn languages. However, some scholars view that the developments of generative linguistic approaches
have benefitted a lot in L2 and L3 research.

To go with de Bot, Usage Based (UB) approaches like Social-cultural Theory came as reactions to GG and other neo-behaviorist psycholinguistics. These approaches claimed that grammar is not innate, as GG assumed, and language development occurs rather as a result of (purposeful) interaction and environment. They stressed that patterns of use emerge through interaction and input, and not from rules. Together, he presents his informants’ observations that highlight the emergence and growth of SCT as one of the most popular trends in AL in the last decade. SCT had remained marginal in earlier decades. Similarly, his participants take cognitive linguistics, SCT and SLA as complementary to one another.

In addition, de Bot’s informants observe that Halliday’s SFG is the study of how people exchange meaning by languaging. In SFG, grammar is viewed as functional, and language as the product of human interaction, i.e., in the process of carrying out certain functions in eco-social environments. Purpose in language use and its functions hold central place in this approach. But according to William Grabe, SFG is not sufficiently based on empirical evidence, and therefore, the theory is arcane, its terminologies are complex, and the texts based on it are often painful to read.

Then what follows is the emergence of the dynamic perspective on cognition in general and language processing in particular, which has been viewed as the most influential development in AL. According to de Bot’s informants, the rise of the view of language as a complex dynamic system (CDS), with its reliance on Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), has cast doubt on the validity of the more traditional models of language acquisition and use. CDST views cognition as a result of interactions among mind, body and environment. It views language processing as incremental and there is no internal feedback or feedforward, but linguistic communities and environment at play. It views that any open complex system, such as the bilingual mind, interacts continuously with its environment and will continuously change over time. Many of de Bot’s informants see the use of CDST in language as a new paradigm shift that fills the gap left by formal or linear linguistic models like psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics or GG (including UG). In the beginning of the chapter titled ‘Dynamic Turn’, de Bot informs that he speaks in the chapter from his interest and expertise in CDST. He concedes that CDST truly represents a paradigm shift. He says that CDST perspective provides us with concepts and tools for various aspects of AL that other theories have simply overlooked.

In recent times, corpus linguistics (CL) is another influential trend in AL, as claimed by de Bot in chapter six, which is devoted to theoretical aspects and research methodology. CL claims that corpora are based on authentic language use. So, language teaching materials should be based on such language. However, he buys into the idea that what is relevant and authentic for a native speaker in a specific situation is not necessarily relevant for a learner who is in a totally different situation. In this sense, CL has not
properly considered contextual factors that may have important roles to play. In this connection, he observes that what makes language authentic is not its co-occurrence as text but its use as discourse. In this sense too, contextual factors can never be undermined. On the other hand, it just happens to quarrel with the growing area of the varieties of a particular language, and this is evident in CL’s relation with the English language and its global varieties.

Then, in this connection, de Bot moves on to discourse or conversational analysis, which in the 1960s and 1970s focused merely on syntactic/grammatical factors. Now it takes deep interest in pragmatics. Earlier structurally linear, now it embraces non-linearity with a broad view, and considers multimodality of language use as its study area. In addition, de Bot devotes some space to critical approaches (CA), such as critical discourse analysis (CDA). His informants observe that AL has not yet fully embraced critical approaches in real sense; it only has flirted with CA. In this respect, Albert Weideman remarks that a post-modern analysis without political action is vacuous. Similarly, Robert Phillipson observes that there is a reluctance to be multi-disciplinary and more critical in the field of AL in general. This is followed by what de Bot’s participants have to say about neurolinguistics and neurobiology of language.

John Schumann, the only leading scholar in the field according to de Bot, observes that the main aim of neurolinguistics has been to show that there is a neural correlate of the language acquisition device in the brain. He says this approach presents subjects with specific stimuli representing certain linguistic phenomena or rules and sees how specific parts of the brain show activity. The view on the brain is essentially modular, i.e., there are parts of the brain that are dedicated to certain tasks. But de Bot observes that researchers in neurobiology of language take a different perspective: the brain is degenerate, in no way modular. Through use, parts of the brain become functional, and they can do various things and are colonized and reused according to need. But the entry fee to do proper research in the area of neurobiology is high, as Schumann mentions, and it is not clear whether the investment is worthwhile.

Overall, the majority of de Bot’s informants see a growth of research with a relativist perspective, than with a rationalist one, and a substantial development of the SCT community in the field of AL. So is the case with CDST, as claimed in the chapter titled ‘Dynamic Turn’.

The author observes that research methods in AL, which were initially imported from other disciplines like sociology, anthropology, psychology and neuroscience, now range from grammaticality judgments to think aloud protocols and very detailed conversational analysis techniques, surveys and various neuro-imaging techniques. At present, multi-method approaches are becoming popular, such as neuro-imaging combined with eye movement registration, or variation analysis and reaction time data. Similarly, multilevel analysis, time series analysis, log-linear modeling, and Monte Carlo iterations, among others, can now be found in many more recent publications.
According to Peter Robinson, there has been so much growth and sophistication in AL research methods and tools, also of interdisciplinary nature, and this is a major development. This is followed by the politics involved in citations, role of publishers, databases and data sources for citation analysis, AL journals and their impact, and helpful insights into publication dynamics.

de Bot then turns to the impact of AL in teaching and learning practices, which is analyzed through the participants’ varied and multiple voices ranging from no application of AL to its substantial huge impact in teaching and learning. But very few of the participants see AL’s real impact in teaching and learning. Most of the participants observe that, though a hot cake in theories and policies, AL still lacks its presence in practices, for it does not care to use its findings in real sense. Its researchers still do things for themselves and to not really help improve teaching and learning in classrooms. Traditional practices are still being used, even online—such as structural online grammar practice lessons. Therefore, it is still not the dominant trend in teaching and learning.

Jim Lantolf and Norbert Schmitt feel that the impact of AL on teaching should go through teacher education; but they do not see such things happening. However, Patricia Duff observes that immersion programs, CLIL, and corpus-based, data driven, usage-based, and multimodal approaches have definitely improved—because of AL research. Other participants observe that project oriented approaches, growth of the scope of L2 and L3, agentic learning, inclusive and holistic approaches, and language testing modalities and their use have benefitted from AL research.

**Some problems and gaps in AL de Bot cites from his informants:**

1. L2 or L3 learning is often depicted as complex and difficult when compared to L1 learning. This is a negative and dangerous framing, according to Lourdes Ortega, because they can unwittingly perpetuate a deficiency view of multilingualism and encourage disciplinary isolationism.

2. There is much to be done as to why language users code switch. These phenomena are largely unclear, according to Bot and his participants.

3. Barbara Seidlhofer says that some approaches to language and multilingualism claim to be linked to neuroscience without being sufficiently well informed. This is dangerous. This sometimes leads to claims being made that go well beyond the data. Similarly, other participants observe that there is a fashion of linking different linguistic issues, say, in multilingualism, to neurolinguistics and neurobiology of language. This should not be done unless one’s data actually supports what one has claimed.

4. CDST says that complexity emerges out of the iterative application of simple
procedures, so it is not necessary to postulate innate knowledge. Instead, the
dynamics, the flux and the fluidity of the phenomena under study should be
valued. But in practice these assumptions are often ignored. Also, some of de Bot’s
scholar participants are not clear whether CDST is a theory or a metaphor.

5. Rod Ellis says that the interconnectedness between components of linguistic study
should include a link between the social, the cognitive and the linguistic aspects of
language use. So far, he observes, no study has shown that convincingly.

6. Variation in the data is usually taken as clouding the real data. This understanding
should change. Every single context should be valued, and multiple approaches
and multi-layered lenses should be adopted. These things are important at least in
multilingual approaches to SLA, CDST, CT or CDA.

7. William Grabe feels that SCT needs to be based on empirical research; introspection
is not enough. However, de Bot’s other participants take introspective thinking
(data) as equally valid to be taken as empirical data as are quantification, statistics,
stimulated recalls, and thinking aloud protocols.

8. One of the major trends in AL is the move from seeing language as a more or
less stable formal system to viewing it as a dynamic, adaptive, process-oriented
system whose acquisition is usage based, as is evident in CDST, SCT, Cognitive
Linguistics or Systemic Functional Linguistics. This view is endorsed by many of
de Bot’s informants. However, Diane Larsen-Freeman expresses her worries about
this new perspective. She says that it is difficult to convey the power of this new
approach to conceiving familiar phenomena, and ironically, we are limited by our
language itself in reflecting its dynamaticity.

9. de Bot observes that there is a problem in corpus linguistics: the accessibility of
data has led to a substantial growth of language description at the expense of
theorizing. Barbara Seidlhofer puts it thus: Digging deep in corpus data is easy,
even a BA student can do it, because corpora are very accessible, but the reflection
on those data is lacking.

10. His participants also point at the fact that replication of corpus linguistics or
descriptive grammar is difficult in classroom practices, as it keeps on varying.

11. There should be more serious (not light as in current practice) use of critical
approaches in AL. AL should also openly embrace interdisciplinary or even
transdisciplinary approaches.

12. de Bot’s informants observe that because individuals differ in their developmental
paths, there should be even more rise in longitudinal case studies.
13. More research should be done on the interconnectedness of embedded subsystems in a language, because changes in one system may lead to changes in other systems.

14. Even the ever-growing advancement of technology, computers and the Internet have not been able to obliterate traditional ways of teaching, such as the use of structural online grammar teaching or monolingual teaching approaches.

15. Even with the rise of CDST or CT, grammar still dominates; and there is still much to be done in AL’s area of vocabulary acquisition. Bot cites Norbert Schmitt as saying that there is a need for an overall theory of vocabulary acquisition.

16. People working within TBLT (task-based language teaching) rarely come up with limitations on the use of tasks in classrooms, or on the use of different types of tasks. Having clarity about these issues is important.

17. de Bot’s informants observe that AL researchers, teacher trainers and teachers should work in harmonious unity. Dictation will not work. But there are quarrels among them. Teachers blame teacher trainers and AL researchers blame the rest of them. Teachers should stop focusing only on fluency and teacher trainers should train teachers also about innovative language teaching synthesized from the findings of AL research, apart from what they usually teach about adolescent psychology and classroom management. AL researchers also should take teachers’ questions on their research agendas. To this, Donald Freeman adds that teaching is not only a matter of trainable behavior but individual and collective sense making through social activity.

18. Teachers as well as educational institutions have also not been to fully able to use newer developments like the principles and parameters of language testing and washback.

As revealed so far, de Bot has taken a safe approach to probing into different aspects of AL by resorting to the ‘for and against arguments’ provided by his informants as well as other available suitable data. This helped me read AL’s important ideas critically or contextually, that is, in the frame of its historical development from 1980 till 2010. Similarly, the book provided me with reasons for why certain theoretical trends or models in AL and SLA lost their grounds or became popular. This too was helpful for me to figure out a logical advancement in these fields.

I also found the book helpful to understand the ongoing dialectics in AL’s relation to other fields and disciplines, for it offers a window to the major crucial issues that AL has long confronted (for example, compartmentalization, representation, hostility, collaboration, application, and impact). Similarly, de Bot’s survey into the most impactful journals in the field of AL is highly informative.
I am really inspired by how the book has been prepared. Thoroughly research-based books as this are rare. This is more so in Nepal. Nepali writers and publishers who publish educational textbooks can learn a lot from it.

However, de Bot’s three demarcations concerning his selection of participants in chapter two exclude areas of first language acquisition, conversational analysis, discourse analysis, forensic linguistics, text linguistics, and stylistics, among others. That is, all of his participants come from areas where they work in more than one language. Here, de Bot is clearly biased for SLA. In a way, this approach itself can be seen as quite linear, which excludes so many other areas where linguists have been working on pragmatic sides of linguistics. I felt that he should have devoted one or two chapters in the book on linguists working on singular languages as well. That would have made the book even more interesting.

Personally, I became curious about the usefulness of L3 in the field of translation, apart from teaching. How is the knowledge and skills gained from L3? Do they help to do better translation? This is going to be one of my next ruminations, inspired by the book. Another major topic of inquiry I plan to probe into is as follows:

In the book, what I found confusing is de Bot’s unquestioning citation of Bak et al.’s (1987) concept of self-organized criticality (SOC), which results from a system developed out of interactions with environment and internal reorganization. Such a system tends to be attracted to critical states in which even a minor change can create unpredictable effects on the system. The confusion is that the evolution to such a delicate state occurs without design from any outside agent; such a delicate, critical state is established solely because of the dynamical interactions among individual elements of the system (pp. 95-96). The contradiction here is this: The system is in the environment, and the environment and the system are in constant interactions. How come SOC is intrinsic only to the system and not the environment?

Contributor:

Haris C. Adhikari is a widely published poet and translator from Nepal. A lecturer of English at Kathmandu University, Adhikari co-edits Polysemy, a journal of interdisciplinary research and writing published out of DoMIC, KU. He has three books of poetry and translation to his credit, and is currently working on his upcoming book of Nepali poetry and an experimental poetry project– cli-poetry, apart from works of research. He has served as a researcher, interviewer, translator and contributor for Nepal Monitor, a semi-scholarly online journal from Nepal, and has been a guest translator for Grey Sparrow, a US based literary journal.
Successful language teaching begins with various factors such as proper lesson planning, selecting materials, developing activities, and adopting effective textbooks. Graves (2009, p. 11) states, “The text is not the course; rather, what the teacher and the students do with the text constitutes the course.” Hence, the importance of “trialing” new books cannot be overemphasized. The proper analysis of texts can provide initial ideas to evaluate if the books meet the criteria for teaching. This review compares two EFL textbooks designed for young learners of the third grade with the age range of 8-10 years. The first book is Our World (Pinkley & Rossi, 2014), and the second book is Let’s go (Frazier & et al., 2006). Even though both texts provide multiple opportunities for young learners to develop all four skills, there are notable differences in the approaches and content of the books. Both textbooks offer workbooks, one attached to the main book, and the other one in a separate book to improve writing skills. The uniqueness of those books is both equipped with technological aid, i.e. CD for students to listen and practice pronunciation and sing songs. For writing practice, both provide supporting
workbooks. This review analyzes the texts on four points of comparison from *Designing Language Courses* (Graves, 2000), they are goals and objectives, the context of the texts, type of syllabus, and approach to learning.

The first aspect of comparison is the goal and objectives. Graves (2000) defines goals as an overall statement of the long-term purpose and objectives of a course as a precise direction in which the teaching goals can be achieved. The goal of *Our World* is to educate children with 21st-century skills and to make them knowledgeable and caring citizens of our planet by providing explicit language learning goals. Each unit begins with a two-page picture and clearly-written sentences, “In this unit, I will…”, which provides students with a clear understanding of objectives expected to be attained in that unit. *Our World* includes four units, and each unit has a target set on vocabulary and grammar. Each unit allows students to work with a partner and work in groups, encouraging collaborative language learning processes. At the end of the unit, the checklist reads, “Now I can…”, ensuring the students, as well as teachers if the goal of the entire unit and objective of each lesson have been achieved.

The overall goal of *Let’s Go*, on the other hand, is to improve oral and functional communication skills, promote learner autonomy, develop reading strategies, and practice writing in a workbook. Beginning with the first unit, students are provided with a variety of activities that focus on interactive communication. The vocabulary and the grammatical structure gradually increase in difficulty levels. *Let’s Go* includes eight units, each unit has a target set of vocabulary and grammar phases. Each unit comes with an objective and emphasizes a general update of language mainly through vocabulary and expressions and communication within a carefully controlled grammatical syllabus. Each unit is organized around a lesson objective and is divided into four sections to be covered in four lessons: *Let’s Start*, *Let’s Learn*, *Let’s Learn More*, and *Let’s Build*. The first part, *Let’s Start*, builds functional fluency through *let’s talk, let’s sing, let’s move*. The second part, *Let’s Learn*, builds grammatical accuracy and additional vocabulary. In the third part, *Let’s Learn* expands more on the language introduced in the previous section, with additional vocabulary and phrases. Finally, *Let’s Build* reviews, recycles, and recombines language, which is already learned.

The second point of comparison in the context on which the two texts are based. Context helps in the process of decision-making. It is an important aspect of how textbooks can utilize learning and benefit students. There are several elements of the context that can be understood through analyzing the books. Most of the elements are related to the students’ background, proficiency level, age, and cultural background. *Our World* and *Let’s Go* are both EFL series designed for primary level young learners, more specifically, the third-grade elementary school students. *Our World* is contextualized by real-life situations or language functions. Each unit offers students to see something real with fantastic photography, colorful animated images, videos, and audio CDs. *Our World*, learners experience the world as it is and life as people all over the world live it through authentic contents, and relevant readings. Every lesson is an opportunity for
students to see something real and expand their world and build on communication skills. In addition to balanced skills, the authors have also emphasized vocabulary development and grammar. Each topic allows teachers to add materials to supplement the text as well as students to have more discussions, hence enabling an opportunity for comprehensible input. Activities are scaffolded by meaningful and purposeful steps. Most of the activities are hands-on activities and are enjoyable and exciting to engage the attention of young learners. However, the cost of materials to perform these activities may not be affordable in an economically challenging situation.

On the other hand, *Let’s Go* features beautiful full-color illustrations in a bright and attractive format. Creative activities, utilizing a wide range of skills engage young learners in a variety of learning experiences. This book consists of eight units, beginning with the first lesson, students are introduced to a variety of activities and exercises. These are written to cater to engaging interaction with one another in the classroom. This text would be appropriate in a context where there are not enough funds to buy materials for the activities as most of the activities do not require specialized materials. Most activities can be followed according to the instruction provided in the textbook. Therefore, *Let’s Go* is very practical and could be beneficial in terms of school with minimum resources or facilities. However, the outlook of the book looks like a traditional children’s book.

The third point of comparison is the type of syllabus applied in the texts. The first book, *Our World*, has a thematic syllabus with a total of four-units. The first unit is about classroom objects where the vocabulary of school-related objects and simple questions and answer phrases (such as “What’s this? It’s a ….” or “is it a …?” “Yes, it is” or “No, it isn’t”) are repeatedly used. The second unit is about the vocabulary of nature, animals, and plants, and the additional target question and answer phrases are leveled up from unit one, and the introduction of singular and plural noun forms are addressed. Here the students learn to question and answer phrases such as, “What are they? They’re …..s or where is the bird? It’s on/in/under/by the….”. The third unit is about the vocabulary of my family, where the students can learn about questions and answers (such as’ “How many brothers do you have? I have ….. or who’s she? She’s my sister) can be practiced repeatedly. The last unit is about the vocabulary of the house, where the students can learn about the name of rooms, furniture, and action verbs. Target questions and answer phrases (such as’ “Is there a table in the kitchen? Yes, there is. No, there isn’t. or Where is your mother? She’s in the kitchen”) are covered. Besides the main content of the unit, students are provided with the relevant activities, a project, and values of human life that can be taught. For example, values such as, work hard in school, enjoy your nature around you, love your friends and family, tidy your surroundings, etc. can be taught. With the help of a CD, students can practice songs, vocabulary, and other listening strategies. Writing in the workbook portion can enhance reading as well as writing.

In a similar vein, *Let’s Go* covers the thematic syllabus as well and comprises eight units. The first unit is about things for school; the target question and answer phrases
do not differ much from the first unit of the first book. The second unit is about colors and shapes, and the third unit is about at the store, the fourth unit is about people at home, the fifth chapter is about birthday and toys, the sixth unit is about the outdoors, the seventh unit is about food, and the last group is about animals. Each unit has at least 12 new vocabularies and four grammatical structure to be covered. This syllabus and content of this book are more detailed and constrained, as the content to be included vast in number, where the teacher cannot show flexibility and bring in their innovative ideas. For listening practice, attached CDs can be a supportive tool, and for the writing practice, the separate workbook is used. However, almost all the units of both the books overlapped each other, but the approach to teaching both the book could be extremely different.

Approach to Learning

The last point of comparison is the approach to language learning. The process of language learning consists of an inductive and deductive approach. An inductive approach involves the students finding, styles, and working out a rule for themselves before practicing the language, whereas a deductive approach comprises the students being provided with a general rule, which is applied to the exemplification of specific style and honed through attempting exercises as well as activities. In analyzing the first text, My World, the overall approach is inductive as the hands-on activities, and the exercises demand learning as a process of problem solving and discovery by the students. This text provides effective materials that enhance the critical thinking of young learners. Critical thinking is a higher order of thought that involves analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information. On the other hand, Let’s Go, incorporates technique from a deductive approach. The content of the text provides proper models to enhance learning setting up the best neutral pathways for language processing. This is the basic approach that has been implemented for years in language teaching.

In conclusion, various aspects of the two texts can be analyzed and compared. There are some similarities between the two texts in terms of context, syllabus, and some of the approaches. What they needed is to be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of students, teachers, and curriculum demands. While there is some logic in the sequencing of topics covered in a text, the suggested topical sequence is for an imaginary class. As, Graves (2000) states, “this text is written for everyone, and this text is written for no one.” It is in the hand of the teachers, they can either adopt it or adapt it to bring varieties and uniqueness into their teaching.

References


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**Ms. Samikshya Bidari** is from Nepal, currently pursuing M.A, TESOL at Soka University, Japan. With a prior TEFL certification and MBA from Bangalore University, she has many years of teaching experience in Japanese Government Schools. She is now collecting practical pedagogical ideas from Japan to spread it in the schools of Nepal.
FROM THE ELT BLOGS

ELT Blogs
We have provided a selection of popular ELT blogs created either by teachers or for teachers. In order to access them, one can type the name of the blog on the search bar to preview and explore.

1. An A – Z of ELT

This blog, explains Scott Thornbury, acts as a companion to his dictionary-encyclopedia of English language teaching called An A-Z of ELT published by Macmillan in 2006.

2. Adaptive Learning in ELT

Teacher trainer, lecturer and materials writer Philip Kerr addresses some of the issues raised in his guide to adaptive learning in ELT.
3. The Digital Counter-Revolution
Articles that cast a critical eye over the so-called digital revolution and explore its significance for the development of ELT.

4. ELT Research Bites
Offered with the aim of presenting language and education research in a digestible format, the blog aims to help teachers benefit from academic research without taking too much of their time away from the classroom.
5. **elt-resourceful**

Teacher trainer and materials writer Rachel Roberts shares tips and ideas for making materials.

6. **English Teaching professional**

In this ETp magazine sponsored blog, intercultural skills trainer and materials developer, Chia Suan Chong regularly shares her take on ELT related issues.
FROM THE ELT WORLD

Events from From the ELT World

TESOL 2021 Conference International Convention
“Come Inspired Emerge Empowered.”
Houston, TX, USA
March 23 – 26, 2021

AILA World Congress
“The dynamics of language, communication and cultura in a changing world”
Groningen, the Netherlands
August 15 – 20, 2021

CLESOL 2021
“Weave the language, weave the people.”
St Cuthbert’s, Auckland, New Zealand
October 8 – 10, 2021

ACTFL Annual Convention 2021
San Diego Convention Center and Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina
San Diego, CA, USA
November 19 – 20, 2021

International Conference on Diversity and Inclusivity in English Language Education
Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
December 10- 11, 2021

TESOL International Convention 2022
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
March 22 – 25, 2022
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 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 is a peer-refereed journal 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.

Practical Pedagogic Ideas (2000 words):

• Many teachers look for ideas on the daily/regular basis which they can quickly adapt and put to practice. A short and simple teaching idea, which is illustrative and supported with relevant activities and materials, can address the need.
A pedagogical idea addresses any element/aspect/skill of the English language. As a micro-level teaching tip, the idea is purposeful and principled in the sense that it addresses a particular teaching objective and is based on or guided by some pedagogic principles.

• The write up of the idea may be 1500-2000 word long plus references (3-5 references only) and appendices.

• Ideas that are useful for teachers in the classroom (e.g., tips for teaching particular skills/aspects of language, lesson plans, tasks for teaching poetry, etc.) may be submitted under this category. A template is available in the Journal of NELTA website.

**Book reviews (1500 words):**

• Reviews of recently published ELT books that are of professional significance to the readers. Reviews should generally provide a short introduction of the author and the purpose of the book, its descriptive summary, followed by its evaluative comments and its significance to the researchers and practitioners in Nepal. Reviews should not exceed 1,500 words including references.

**C. Submission Guidelines**

Submissions must follow the guidelines provided by NELTA. To access submission guidelines, authors should visit the Journal of NELTA website under www.nelta.org. 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 ©**

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**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).
Submission guidelines for Journal of NELTA

Submission Guidelines

As a peer reviewed professional journal, the Journal of NELTA requires contributors to follow the guidelines given below for their submissions to be considered for publication by the editorial board. Please note that selection for consideration for publication does not guarantee publication. Contributors are encouraged to work with the Editorial Board to make their work publishable.

Articles

1. Please do not write author’s name in the manuscript until the editorial board has selected the article for consideration towards publication.

2. Articles should be 5000 words (excluding references and appendices).

3. Articles should be related to an area of Applied Linguistics, ELT, SLA, Sociolinguists, Teacher Education, 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. Any 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, and printed or printable in A4 paper. Manuscript should be sent as an e-mail attachment in 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 August 31. However, we encourage authors to submit the article as soon as possible. Reviewers will be able to give you more substantial feedback if you submit early, although early submission will not affect the selection process itself.

Practical Pedagogic Ideas:

- The writing of the idea may be 1500-2000 word long plus references (3-5 refs only) and appendices.
• Ideas that are useful for teachers in the classroom e.g., tips for teaching particular skills/aspects of language, lesson plans, tasks for teaching poetry, etc. may be submitted under this category. A template for this may be provided upon request.

Book reviews:

• 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.

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 a work.

• Authors must submit a 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.

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. Cover letter email will include author’s full name, institutional affiliation, title of the paper, and a short biodata.
A manuscript will be accepted on the understanding that it is 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).

**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.

   • 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 research questions or objectives, rationale and significance of the work, a review of literature along with the theoretical framework, research design and procedure, findings of the study and discussions. 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 the 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.

   • Key words: Authors should list up to five keywords related to their article.
• Style of Documentation: APA 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 authors have table in their manuscripts, they should be numbered and given a brief title.

• Figures: If there are figures and maps in your manuscript, please include under each figure a clear and brief caption describing it.

3. STYLE OF REFERENCE/DOCUMENTATION

REFERENCE ENTRIES

Journal Articles:


Books:


Edited books:


Chapters in Books:


Online resources:


IN-TEXT CITATION

Short Quotations (less than 40 words)

Lave and Wenger (1991) argues for ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (p. 34).

Long Quotations (more than 40 words)

Eckhert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) define community of practice as follows:

An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. Likewise, there must be a mutual interaction among the members. (p. 464)

Paraphrasing:

Single author:

The construction of teacher identity is a process in which teachers engage in interaction not only with other members but also with broader socio-cultural context (Wenger, 1998).

Multiple authors:

Identity is constructed through the reflective practice in which teachers listen to opinions of students in the classroom and change contents and methods of teaching for better learning (Richards, 1990; Bartlett, 1990).

(Note: if you are citing more than one work of the same author published in the same year, please put a, b, c after the date of the publication in a chronological order).
Three to Six Authors


More Than Six Authors


Newspaper article:


(Note: For more details on APA style, please go to http://www.apastyle.org/).

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1 Note: Teachers of non-language subjects ranging from Grade Nursery to Grade Ten