



# Journal of NELTA

Volume 21 Number: 1-2 December 2016

## Advisor

Meera Shrestha

## Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Vishnu S Rai

## Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Laxman Gnawali

## Editors

Dr. Binod Luitel

Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey

Bal Ram Adhikari

Madhu Neupane

## Reviewers

Atanu Bhattacharya	Kashi Raj Pandey
Babita Sharma	Khagendra Acharya
Bal K. Sharma	Khagendra Raj Dhakal
Bal Krishna Sharma	Nasreen Hussain
Bandana Lunyal	Okon Effiong
Kalyan Chattopadhaya	Phiphawin S. Srikrai
Betty Orange	Prithivi Shrestha
Bimali Indrarathne	Suman Laudari
Chris Lima	Surabhi Bharati
Dharmendra Seth	Thinn Thinn
Gobinda Raj Bhattarai	Tika Ram Bhatta
Hemanta Raj Dahal	Tika Ram Poudel
Hima Rawal	

## Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA)

GPO Box No.: 11110, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: 977-1-44720455

E-mail: ccnelta@gmail.com

Price Rs. 650/-

*Journal of NELTA has been indexed in:*

• [Academicindex.net](http://Academicindex.net) • [Journalseek.net](http://Journalseek.net) • [Linguistlist.org](http://Linguistlist.org)

**Advisor**

Meera Shrestha

**Editor-in-Chief**

Prof. Dr. Vishnu S Rai

**Deputy Editor-in-Chief**

Dr. Laxman Gnawali

**Editors**

Dr. Binod Luitel  
Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey  
Bal Ram Adhikari  
Madhu Neupane

## Central Executive Committee 2015-2017

### President

Ms. Meera Shrestha  
meeranep@hotmail.com

### Senior Vice President

Ms. Motikala Subba Dewan  
motikala\_d1@hotmail.com

### Vice President

Mr. Ishwori Bahadur Adhikari  
ishwor555@hotmail.com

### General Secretary

Mr. Ishwori Bahadur Adhikari  
ishwor555@hotmail.com  
Mr. Padam Bahadur Chauhan  
padamchauhan77@gmail.com

### Secretary

Mr. Kunjarmani Gautam  
gautamkunjara@yahoo.com

### Membership Secretary

Mr. Ashok Sapkota  
assapkota@gmail.com

### Treasurer

Ms. Sarita Dewan  
dewansarita031@gmail.com

### Members

Mr. Hemanta Raj Dahal	hemanta_dahal@hotmail.com
Prof. Dr. Anju Giri	giri.anju1@gmail.com
Dr. Binod Luitel	binodluitel71@gmail.com
Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey	gpandeytu@gmail.com
Dr. Dinesh Kumar Yadav	aastic_y@yahoo.com
Mr. Nabin Prakash Mahat	nabin_215@yahoo.com
Mr. Laxmi Prasad Ojha	laxmiojha99@gmail.com
Mr. Jaya Ram Khanal	khanaljaya2004@yahoo.com
Dinesh Koirala/Mr. Damodar Regmi	damodar.regmi@gmail.com
Mr. Chet Raj Regmi	regmi9chetraj777@gmail.com
Mr. Prem Prasad Paudel	prempoudel95@gmail.com
Mr. Jagadish Poudel	paudeljaggu@gmail.com
Ms. Usha Kiran Wagle	wagleyusha@gmail.com
Mr. Keshav Prasad Bhattarai	kesarikeshav@gmail.com
Mr. Surya Prasad Ghimire	suryapdghimire@yahoo.com
Dr. Purna Bahadur Kadel	kadelpurna@yahoo.com
Mr. Kamal Raj Lamsal	lamsalkamalraj@gmail.com
Mr. Surendra Raj Ojha	ojha_sr@yahoo.com



# Editorial

---



English language teaching (ELT) is always on the shifting sands of ideology and practice. Such a shift is a global phenomenon which is conspicuously visible in the education policy, teaching and learning materials, classroom methodology, assessment system, and modes and methods of teacher education. ELT in Nepal is also moving ahead in tandem with the global trend. The articles in this volume of journal evince some of the aspects of the changing trend of ELT home and abroad.

In terms of their origin, these articles emanate from different yet highly overlapping areas of professional practice of ELT such as theories, classroom experiments, general surveys and classroom experiences. Accordingly, these articles can be categorized as the theoretical, the empirical and the experiential. In other words, they comprise theoretical and empirical information on the one hand and actual teaching-learning experiences, insights and intuition of teachers and teacher educators on the other. The themes that underlie these articles are ELT practitioners' perceptions, teaching techniques, English as a medium of instruction, teaching language skills and aspects, teacher professional development, interface between culture and language teaching, learner autonomy, the use of translation, functional domains of English in Nepal, teacher training and so on.

This volume is a meeting point of ELT practitioners who are in different phases of professional development. Some authors are beginners from pre-service and in-service teaching programmes. They are in their initial attempt to enter into the academic world of ELT through their writings. Others are highly academic and experienced in the field. They are in a position to inform, enlighten as well as guide other practitioners. Some of the

articles concern the application of different theories to classroom teaching, while others have attempted to theorize the practice. Readers can see the interface between different teaching - learning theories and practices in diverse contexts of teaching and learning of English.

The volume is also a meeting point of national and international practitioners of ELT. The rich professional experiences of the authors especially from the countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan and Nepal mirror the current trends and techniques of teaching English in the Asian region. It is the region that has the highest number of bilingual users and bilingual teachers of English. We hope that the systematic documentation of teaching English and its theorizing by such teachers will contribute to designing culture-embedded, culture-responsive and culture-sensitive methodologies. We also hope that these articles will be instrumental in guiding the coming generations of ELT practitioners globally.

We express our gratitude to all authors for their valuable articles. Grateful thanks are due to all reviewers, who supported the Editorial Team throughout the process. We are equally grateful to NELTA Central Committee for their continuous support. Thanks are also due to the designer, Raju Kapali for the elegant design.

Happy reading!

Prof. Dr. Vishnu S Rai  
Dr. Laxman Gnawali  
Dr. Binod Luitel  
Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey  
Bal Ram Adhikari  
Madhu Neupane



## Table of contents

Nursing English in Pakistan: Instructors' Perceptions about Language Curriculum <i>Adeel Khalid</i>	1-11
Visual Storytelling: Unlearning Gender Stereotyping Inside Classroom <i>Anita Dhungel</i>	12-22
English as a Medium of Instruction: My Experience from a Nepali Hinterland <i>Ashok Raj Khati</i>	23-30
Grammar Rules Matter: Should We Teach Inductively or Deductively? <i>Ganesh Bastola</i>	31-39
Teachers' Professional Development to Enhance ELT: Needs Analysis for Developing Teacher Training Program in an EFL Context <i>Janak Singh Negi</i>	40-53
Role of (Local) Culture in English Language Teaching <i>Kumar Shrestha</i>	54-60
Do Learners Know 'What they Know' in EFL Reading? <i>Madhu Neupane Bastola</i>	61-73
Effects of Written Corrective Feedback on Explicit and Implicit Knowledge <i>Mitra Samiei, Tam Shu Sim</i>	74-85
Extensive Reading in Foreign Language Classes <i>Nabaraj Neupane</i>	86-92
L2 Vocabulary Learning and Testing: Student Proficiency and the Use of L1 Translations versus L2 Definitions <i>Paul Joyace</i>	93-104
Role and Status of English and Other Languages in Nepal <i>Sagun Shrestha</i>	105-112



Techniques for Improving Speaking Fluency of Students <i>Sangita Sapkota</i>	113-120
Appositeness of Teacher Training for In-Service EFL Teachers in Real Teaching Context <i>Shankar Dhakal</i>	121-127
Learner Autonomy: A Western Hegemony in English Language Teaching to Enhance Students' Learning for Non-Western Cultural Context <i>Sarmila Pokhrel</i>	128-139
Reading as Multi-Tasking: Unravelling Invisible Cognitive Processes in Reading <i>Z N Patil</i>	140-151

## **Nursing English in Pakistan: Instructors' Perceptions of Language Curriculum**

*Adeel Khalid*

### **Abstract**

Nursing English in Pakistan is an important domain that comes under the ambit of ESP 'English for Specific Purposes'. English cogitates as a lingua franca and a cornerstone for success in any field. However, in ESL/ELT it is imperative to design a course that caters to the needs of the learners. Thereby this study attempts to evaluate the existing English for Nursing Purposes curriculum of BScN Programme prescribed by HEC/PNC to corroborate its relevancy and adequacy in preparing the nursing professionals for their professional English language requirements using Stufflebeam's curriculum evaluation framework. This investigative study measures the level of existing linguistic (in)adequacy of the professional nurses pertaining to the specific roles they are required to perform so that their problematical areas could be identified systematically and subsequently reported with recommendations. A qualitative research approach has been used to measure the needs of the nurses. Tools like open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews have been used to collect data from the sample sizes nursing heads and language instructors consecutively. The findings of the study divulge that the course is inadequate and yet relevant. It is recommended to review the English language curriculum considering the needs of the nurses for their work place that may improve the standards of nursing English in Pakistan.

**Key words:** Nursing English, perception, language curriculum.

### **Introduction**

A bird's eye view of the broader spectrum of Pakistan's post-secondary education system today, one would see the bright prospects provided by both Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) institutions for tertiary education. Each institution plays a significant role in developing informed and skillful human resource for national development. In line with this aspiration, the nursing as a profession in Pakistan is one of the focal fields of health care unit where there are bright prospects as well as opportunities at academic and professional

fronts. Thereby if the nursing professionals have to move up at the ladder, it is imperative to have good grip and grasp over English language in all the four skills. English as a lingua franca of the world evidently maneuvers to rule every profession as a prevailing means of communication. Hence it proves cornerstone for the success in any field.

There have been ongoing debates on the issues of the low English language proficiency level in the students amongst academicians, the community as well as the industry which is the prospective employers of the future graduates. One of the crucial aspects that nursing students at

medical institutes are lacking is having excellent proficiency in English. These students might be good in their subject matter but the same could not be said to English language. In 2006, a new curriculum for nursing education has been developed for the first time by Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) that is a generic curriculum leading to a BScN degree for the country which is referred to as the HEC/PNC curriculum. The practical application of this curriculum will be standardization and quality assurance especially that of language in nursing education in Pakistan. Most of the English as Second Language (ESL) programmes in Pakistan do not cater to the potential needs of the learners both in their academic as well as professional settings. This is mainly because the prescribed English syllabi are not in accordance with the specific needs of the learners. In addition, the teachers are not properly trained to teach the English language. As a result, these professional institutions remain inadequate in equipping their students with the required linguistic and communicative competence.

There are debates on the discrepancy between the expectations and the needs of the field. Therefore, the debates still prolong as to why the Pakistani graduates are still facing problems of low proficiency level of English language that hinders their ability to communicate effectively and adapts to the needs of the employers. In addition, the English language lecturers in medical institutes have never shared their views on the EOP 'English for Occupational Purposes' syllabi. Questions for example whether the content of the ESP nursing English for Occupational Purposes module is insufficient to prepare the students for the work place or whether the language skills of the ESP English for Occupational Purposes syllabus is sufficient in addressing

the actual problem faced by the students. Thus, the syllabus for the ESP Nursing English for Occupational Purposes course for the BScN Bachelor in Sciences Nursing Programme is chosen to gauge the scope of the course that is meeting the stated objectives as well as the needs of the employers and the industry.

A number of linguists such as Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) and Basturkmen (2006) laid emphasis on needs analysis as an insinuating point for devising syllabuses, courses, materials for specific audiences. Needs assessment could be defined as "the process of determining the needs for which the learner or group of learners required a language and arranging the needs accordingly to priorities ... [It] made use of both subjective and objective information" (Richards et al. 1992).

Munby (1978) stated that needs analysis could also help in evaluating an existing programme and if found deficient might help in establishing the need for introducing a change and what kind of change might appropriately match the needs of the learners and simultaneously be acceptable to teachers.

The classification of language and skills was used in determining and refining the context for the ESP course. This process was termed as needs analyses. This kind of needs analysis brought about the attitudes of the learners, instructors, donor agencies or employees of an organization towards introducing a needs-based English language course. Therefore, needs analysis had utilitarian purposes for altering, shaping, or reshaping the course according to the needs of the specific learners and demands of the specific situations in a systematic way. The first and foremost task of an ESP practitioner was to identify the needs of the learners and design a course around them.

## Objectives of the study

This research carries the following objectives:

- To assess the relevancy and adequacy of the ESNP 'English for Nursing Purposes' course being taught in Nursing Programmes.
- To propose a standardized professional language programmes for nursing

This study aims to examine the needs of the nurses' workplace requirements and to evaluate the existing English languages courses taught at different institutions. It attempts to identify the significance and relevance of the English language course vis-à-vis the specific professional requirements of the nursing staff and their assigned academic and professional roles, they have to assume once they enter into practical field. This research carries the rationale of ESP 'English for Specific Purposes' in the context of ENP 'English for Nursing Purposes'.

## Research question

The *overarching research question* is:

To what extent is the existing English Language Curriculum of BScN at the Nursing Institutes in Pakistan successful in preparing the nurses for using English in their academic and professional settings?

## Research methodology

The qualitative research paradigm is the technique of detailed analysis, in-depth narrative inquiry and investigation of the data that mainly contains words at a broader level (Ragin 1994, p. 91). This technique primarily seeks to amass information from an event, decision,

institution, geographical location, issue or piece of legation (Silverman 2000:2).

Robinson (1991) suggests a number of different methods for conducting needs analysis. These include questionnaires, interviews, case studies, tests, authentic data collection (e.g. analyzing actual manuals, written assignments). According to West (1994), the most widely used methods are these studies, interviews and questionnaires.

## Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the questionnaire, the third major data tool used in this study is semi-structured interview. Patton (2002) described semi-structured interviews as a natural extension of participant observation, because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork. He argued that they rely entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction. There are no official and agreed-upon guidelines for how to conduct an unstructured interview. But in practice, many researchers comply with the steps listed below (Fontana & Frey, 2005) when planning and conducting unstructured interviews.

There are various reasons for selecting semi-structured interviews as a method. It requires negotiation techniques and tactics to conduct an interview. The researcher takes a careful analysis of the possible political, legal, and bureaucratic barriers that may arise during the process of gaining access to the setting (Lofland, 2006).

The interview questions have been divided into these domains dealing with nursing English: in terms of their experience and qualification, need and importance of the

English language skills for the nursing students, problematic areas, relevancy and adequacy of the course and lastly their suggestions to improve the standard of existing language program.

The first type aims to trace the professional experience of the instructors who are important stakeholders in transmitting English language skills to the students. The second type is related to the importance and need of the English language skills for the prospective nursing professionals. The third type is to identify the problematic areas of the students among the four basic skills. The fourth type of questions is related to the relevancy of the English language curriculum for nurses to equip them for their professions. The fifth part deals with that of adequacy facet of the existing curriculum taught to these nurses whether these are sufficient in catering to the needs of the learners. The last category is to take their insight on this issue in the light of their experience as it is the most important component of this method. It has been observed that usually teachers do not get enough say in the curriculum designing stage. Since they are aware of the ground realities and there are bright chances of getting the required data through this technique (Flowerdew & Peacock: 2001).

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The research aimed to evaluate the English language courses taught at nursing institutes by investigating their linguistic needs required to perform the specific roles at their workplace, and effectiveness of the current English BScN curriculum (Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998). In order to investigate the above mentioned areas, the researcher decided to gather information from the instructors of

BScN English Language programme. Six language instructors took part in this study.

### **Nursing education in Pakistan**

The following Nursing diplomas, degrees and training courses have been offered by Pakistani universities.

**Table 1: Nursing education in Pakistan**

BScN Bachelor in Sciences Nursing Generic	4 Years
General Nursing & Midwifery Training Course	3 Years
Post RN B.Sc. Nursing Degree Programme	2 years
M.Sc. Degree Programme	2 years
Diploma in Psychiatry Health Nursing	1 Year
Diploma in Renal Nursing	1 Year
Diploma in Critical Care Nursing	1 Year
Diploma in Emergency & Disaster Management Nursing	1 Year
Diploma in Post Basic Nursing	1 Year

Aga Khan is the only institute where Masters’ degree in Nursing Sciences programme is offered to the students. It was started in 2001. Aga Khan is acknowledged as a top university in Pakistan because of its foreign affiliations.

### **Theoretical framework for undertaking this research**

As this study focuses on the evaluation of an ESP curriculum at an institution of higher learning, the CIPP Model by Stufflebeam (2003) was chosen (Figure 1). However, this study only emphasizes on the Product Evaluation which focuses on gathering inputs or feedbacks from the students who had undergone industrial training. In addition, views from English lecturers as well as analyses of the ESP syllabus were utilized to make the process of evaluating the ESP curriculum more comprehensive.

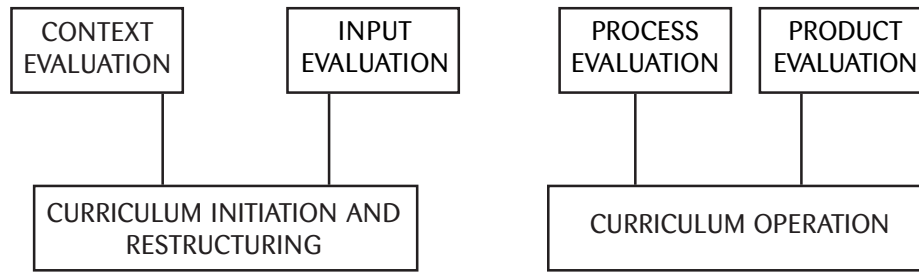


Figure 1: The framework of the CIPP model

According to Stufflebeam (2003), product evaluation “provides information for determining whether objectives are being achieved and whether the change procedure which has been employed to achieve them should be continued, modified or terminated”. The BScN English language curriculum that is under scrutiny has been taught to the nursing students throughout of their educational tenure at their respective nursing institutes in Pakistan. As these students have undergone their professional training and experienced themselves the relevancy and adequacy of the ESP curriculum, knowledge that they have learnt and their evaluations of the ESP BScN course would help the curriculum panel with decision-makers that redesign the ESP course to make appropriate amendments of the existing syllabus (Alexander, Argent & Spencer 2008).

### **Rationale for taking instructors’ perceptions of the English language**

Language instructors are selected because this group had firsthand knowledge of the learners’ inadequacies. For this research, the researcher selected population of ELT practitioners from various nursing institutes. These unstructured interviews took place vis-à-vis the instructors of the nursing English courses from various institutions of health care institutes of Lahore and the researcher himself. The purpose of having these semi-structured interviews was to get knows their

perceptions and perspectives of the exiting language curriculum and the requirements of the learners (Brunton, 2009). They were selected based on the criteria of having more than two years of teaching experiences at least in ESP English for Nursing Purposes to the students of the nursing programme curriculum.

### **Thematic analysis of the interviews**

First the data was collected through semi-structured interviews vis-à-vis the researcher and the nursing instructors. These interviews were transcribed and then analyzed according to thematic analysis.

### **Theme 1: Need of English language for nurses**

All the instructors unanimously agreed on this fact that nurses need English not only to fulfill their professional but their academic requirements too. They considered English as a lingua franca of the world and an operational language all over the world. They pointed out that written skills were required for their final summative assessment annually whereas active listening followed by speaking was required considering their professional requirements. Instructor Cathy enumerates the importance in these words:

*If you are good at language, then obviously you are good at everything. So it is equally good for the nurses too because most of the time, they have to communicate with their*

*health-care professionals in English, they have to communicate with doctors, they have to communicate with their managers, they have to communicate with other nurses, they have to communicate with their seniors, and they have to communicate with their teachers. So their medium of instruction is altogether is English and they have to appear for the exams in English language either they are to attempting their nursing subjects, their core subjects or their English as a subject.*

### **Theme 2: Problematic areas for nurses**

All the instructors felt that nurses had problematic areas. There were various reasons behind this factor. First nursing students came from different backgrounds both Urdu and English medium, rural and urban areas; therefore, their command over language was inadequate. Secondly these nursing students had science background and their inclination was more towards science subjects instead of language or arts. Instructor Cathy indicated that we as teachers didn't teach the language but we teach about language to our students to which instructor Aliyan also agreed. Hence the problem lay was not only with learners but also with the instructors' methodologies that caused problem for nurses.

### **Theme 3: Irrelevancy of the syllabus**

All the instructors felt that the existing nursing course was irrelevant to nursing students' needs. There was indeed no prescribed syllabus but only a course outline which was not only irrelevant to my students' needs but also outdated as avowed by instructor Aliyan.

### **Theme 4: Inadequacy of the course**

It was inadequate as well considering the needs of the learners because it only catered to the written skills for annual

examinations. Rests of the three skills were neglected out rightly. Instructor Aliyan said:

*The questions are repetitive in nature that promote rote-learning amongst students of nursing.*

So overall all the instructors felt the inadequacy of the course at large in align with the needs of the nursing students.

### **Theme 5: Suggestions to improve the syllabus**

When it came to suggestions, all the instructors were kind enough to give handful of suggestions to improve the syllabus for nurses in Pakistan. The main reason behind these suggestions emanated from the fact that mostly teachers were taken onboard when it came to either designing the curriculum or making policies at examination fronts. One of the major suggestions was concerning the improvement in the existing syllabus which should have been designed keeping in mind the needs of the learners in which all nursing instructors should be kept onboard and the syllabus should be compatible to the needs of the instructors.

The instructors also portrayed the same circumstances in which nurses needed the required language command to fulfill their specific roles. They unanimously termed English language skills are the most important for nurses specially and generally across disciplines. Instructor Daneen says:

*Academically they cannot prepare for their annual examination if they don't have good English. If they want to pursue their higher studies, they cannot move forward without having adequate linguistic abilities.*

Instructor Erum states:

*I have observed this profession in first hand. They now acquire innumerable outstanding degrees (post RN BSN, B.S.c.N Generic Engineering, M.S.cN and even PhD Nursing). While studying all these medical subjects, they have to understand, comprehend or perceive English language so all these skills are important for sound understanding.*

Overall, the students' English proficiency in all the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in the ESP BScN English for Nursing Purposes curriculum was still weak especially in speaking and writing skills. However, it also gave a fair glimpse of the English language needs of the professional nurses on basis of the English proficiency survey. It disclosed the need of speaking and writing skills for the nurses to fulfill their specific roles that they had to play as professionals at health care centers.

English language usages cause problems because speaking is the most neglected area for the instructors and students both. One of the instructors reveals that it is so because speaking skills are not given enough emphasis in our language classrooms and students are also not given ample opportunities to practice their speaking skills.

Another factor contributed to this factor is the assessment patterns that is followed and worked towards is for annual examination. In nursing examination, only written are required to take part and rest of all the skills are put aside.

Ahmed (2005) highlighted that language is not taught in context but in isolation in her study while evaluating the curriculum of Pakistan military personnel. Instructor Cathy also indicates the same issue and notes that;

*We don't teach language but we teach about the language. This is the dilemma.*

Responses from the English language instructors concerning the students' English proficiency validate the same scenario. They agreed that all the four skills were equally important for the students to excel in their future work place but they were more worried of the students' level of English proficiency. Although the students had put speaking skills as the most important skills that they had difficulty with, the English language lecturers indicated that the students were weak in all four skills. These judgments were based on the continuous monitoring of the students' progress during the instructional process, assigned tasks or projects, discussions as well as the annual examination carried out by UHS to the students in terms of written forms. As stated by the Instructor A in the interview sessions:

*Nursing students have science background whose language skills are primarily inadequate overall. Their major inclination has been towards science subjects; thus language remains at the backburners usually.*

Another English Language Instructor Faseeha added by saying:

*When it comes to speaking, they immensely/ enormously lack confidence moreover if they wish to express themselves in some form of speech (when giving answers orally or extempore speech), nurses lack vocabulary or appropriate choice of words.*

Hence English language skills are problematic areas for the nurses in which speaking and writing skills are on the top and reading and listening are somewhat in a better position. However, it is believed and also indicated by one of the instructors as well that good reading leads to good writing and good listening leads to good speaking skills.

Responses from the English language lecturers varied pertaining to the relevancy of the BScN English language curriculum. They consider it irrelevant to the specific



needs of the learners. They considered that it is still relevant only to the writing skills and other three skills are neglected at the expense of one skill.

As stated by Instructor Aliyan:

*That course outline is outdated but somehow relevant in many ways. However, it doesn't fulfill the criteria of learners' linguistic needs. The existing curriculum only aim to assess students' writing skills in their final examination that means it is only assesses writing skills only.*

This was added by Instructor Bashir, Fasheeha and Erum:

*The prescribed course is based on the concept of rote memorization; there is no creativity and various activities for student nurses in that book.*

Instructor Cathy concludes in these words:

*You see it should be taught under the umbrella of ESP and under the umbrella of ESP it should be taught under the umbrella of EOP instead of teaching them all the translations studies etc... so I would not suggest that our nursing students to be taught like this.*

Hence the findings disclosed that the English language curriculum is relevant as far as nursing professionals are concerned but for English language instructors, they had mixed perception based on their experience with nursing teaching and having adequate knowledge of the field.

The responses of the instructors were also similar to the findings of statistical analysis of the questionnaires. Instructor Aliyan states:

*It is not adequate especially when it comes to equipping students all four skills of language reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The course outline is quite obscure and doesn't define any rubrics at all. The questions are repetitive in the exams.*

Instructor Bashir observes:

*There is typical report writing, reading comprehension and essay writing and translation exercises which only needs to be learnt by heart and does not need any understanding in the true sense.*

Whereas Instructor Cathy presents the bleaker scenario in terms of its adequacy:

*There is no compatibility between nursing student's needs and the curriculum we have.*

All the instructors still considered that the current course needed to be reviewed so that the students could be better prepared to meet the demands of the industry as the complaint that mostly given by the industry was that the students were lacking communication skills in English language as well as soft skills.

The part is related to nurses' evaluation of the ESP BScN English for Nursing Purposes course after they had undergone their professional training to verify whether the course was adequate in preparing them for their future work place. All six items showed that the nurses felt some aspects were needed to be added in the course to give a better impact to the students.

This finding shows that the ESP BScN English for Nursing Purposes curriculum is adequate enough to prepare the students to meet the demand of their professional settings. Although some of the students were satisfied with the content of the course and feel that the course was sufficient to train them for their future work place, they were still some others who felt that certain aspects needed to be taken into considerations such as more contact hours and communication skills activities before they were completely ready and confident enough with their ESP training. As for the English language instructors, they still felt that the ESP BScN English for Nursing Purposes course was inadequate in preparing the students for the work place. Unless the course was reviewed for the

betterment of the students, for the moment they just have to make do with what they have and make the best out of it.

Instructor Aliyan said:

*All the four skills are skills are equally important for nurses. Listening skills for professional and writing skills for academic requirements are important.*

Instructor Bashir observed:

*All four skills are equally significant for nurses because they work in a diverse environment and encounter real life situations. They have to read documents, talk with patients, super-ordinates and sub-ordinates etc, listen and answer patient queries in the wards. Therefore, nurses need to acquire all skills effectively.*

Instructor Aliyan observed:

*Some students are poor at listening, some are poor at speaking, some are poor at reading, some are poor at writing but majority of the nursing students are poor at listening and speaking skills.*

## Conclusion

The basic objective of the research was to review the existing BScN curriculum English for Nursing Purposes that corroborated with that of the nurses' needs and the specific roles they were required to perform at their workplace on day to day basis so that their problematic areas could be analytically identified and subsequently reported with recommendations. As a result of this study the researcher proposed the following implications as a result of the study to improve the existing standards of nursing English in Pakistan. This study aimed to evaluate the relevancy and adequacy of the BScN English language curriculum in the light of needs of the nurses.

What the researcher observed while visiting several nursing institutes of Lahore that English as a course is taught by a visiting

faculty on weekly basis. So there is a dire need to establish a full-fledge English language departments with fully equipped language lab facilities. Permanent faculty should be hired to train nurses for their future professional settings. English for Nursing Purposes is a separate domain and it should be dealt accordingly by HEC/PNC in an appropriate way in which ELT and ESP experts should be taken onboard. The suggested course should be based on the needs of the learners.

Assessment standards need to be improved. As findings reflect that there is summative assessment instead of formative assessment but the course designed is according to the demands of semester system instead of fulfilling the demands of those who appear once in a year for final assessment. Instead of having annual assessment, it should be implemented in semester system at institutional level in which language teachers should be autonomous enough to tailor the course considering the needs of the learners. Meanwhile modes of assessment should be included to assess each skill separately. Rubrics for each skill should be vividly explained either by the HEC or respective institution.

Faculty should be trained with specifically keeping in mind nursing English. Refresher courses for language teachers should be introduced in which HEC can play a pivotal role. PNS/HEC should propose a clear language mandate for nurses and all nursing institutes should be binding members to follow and implement the same mandate for nursing English in Pakistan.

Authentic material/real life situations contents should be added. Classroom should be fully resourced with tech friendly laboratories to make the language classroom more communicative oriented. Instead of utilizing the methods of students-centered or lecturer-centered teaching and learning styles, students should be taught to be more autonomous in their learning so that they would learn

to be more independent in their learning and aware of the various choices they have to improve their English instead of depending totally on the lecturers. Lecturer's role is only to function as facilitators in helping them in their learning. This is when more hands-on activities and task-based activities could be carried out and to challenge the students to perform better. Indirectly this would train them to be autonomous and independent in preparing them for their future workplace.

## References

- Ahmed, N. (2005) *Legal English: A case for ESP*. PhD thesis, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan. Retrieved from <http://eprints.hec.gov.pk/>
- Alexander, O., Argent, S. & Spencer, J. (2008). *EAP Essentials: A teacher's guide to principles and practice*. Reading: Garnet Education.
- Basturkmen, H. (2006). *Ideas and options in ESP*. London: Routledge
- Brunton, M. (2009). An evaluation of students' attitudes to the general English and specific components of their course: A case study of hotel employees in Chiang Mai, Thailand. *ESP World*, 8 (25). Retrieved on November, 2014 from [http://www.esp-world.info/Articles\\_25/ESP%20world%20study.pdf](http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_25/ESP%20world%20study.pdf)
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M.J. (1998). *Developments in ESP: A multi disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flowerdew, J., & Peacock, M. (2001). *Research perspectives on English for academic purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J.H. (2005). The interview: From neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (pp. 695-728) (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hatam, A. H., & Shafiei, S. (2012). The evaluation of the effectiveness of ESP courses in enhancing technical translation proficiency: A case study of ESP course for mechanical engineering students. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (5).
- Johns, M. (2013). *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.) London. Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L., & Lofland, L.H. (2006). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today: A practitioner's guide*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). *The CIPP Model for Evaluation: An update, a review of the model's development, a checklist to guide implementation*. Retrieved March 2, 2015 from <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/pubs/CIPP-ModelOregon10-03.pdf>

**The author:** Mr. Adeel Khalid is a Lecturer at the Department of English Language and Literature at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore. He holds his M. Phil. TESL from Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. He graduated in English Literature and Political Theory from Forman Christian College and University of Punjab respectively. He has many scholarly publications in renowned international journals. His research focuses on the second language issues ranging from classroom discourse to the cultural politics of TESOL in Pakistan.

## Visual Storytelling: Unlearning Gender Stereotyping Inside Classroom

*Anita Dhungel*

### Abstract

This paper introduces ‘stereotype’, ‘prejudice’, and ‘discrimination’, and points out that the three revolve around and remain in a vicious association. Many stereotypical presentations found in educational materials have been explored in the article. The author has stressed the need for developing the qualities of compassion, tolerance, respect for individuals, and preserving their identity through education—so that stereotyping or discriminatory acts can be avoided altogether.

**Key words:** Visual storytelling, gender stereotyping

### Introduction

The terms ‘stereotype’, ‘prejudice’, and ‘discrimination’ are often used interchangeably in every day conversation. The strategy to stereotype is socially constructed by dominant mainstream power holding groups, to subjugate and humiliate the weak groups of people. So, the terms need to be discussed from a sociological perspective, hence it is important to define them here. Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people; prejudice refers to thoughts and feelings about those groups, while discrimination refers to actions toward them (Merriam Dictionary). Broadly speaking, stereotypes dominate human social life, where they are transformed into prejudices, and subsequently into acts of discrimination. Stereotypes can be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, or sexual orientation—almost any characteristic. Stereotypes can be positive (for example

when women are mentioned as less likely to complain about physical pain); but most often they are negative (women are stupid and lazy). In fact, people invent stereotypes when they are incapable of acquiring all information needed to make a reasonable judgment about a group of people or an individual belonging to a particular ethnic community.

In either case, stereotype is a generalization that does not take individual differences into account; moreover, new stereotypes rarely get created. Rather, they are recycled and repeated in new ways to describe, subjugate, and humiliate. Essentially, stereotypes spring out from prejudices. Prejudice refers to beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that someone holds about a group of people, for instance, crediting and taking the statement that “All Asians are whizz kids” as truth and certainty, creates prejudices. A prejudice is not based on

experience; instead it is a prejudgment, originating outside of actual experience. Prejudgment then leads to discriminatory acts against individuals, that again lead to stereotyping. All these three concepts – stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination – revolve around and remain in a vicious association. Conversely, today is the age of gender fluidity, which calls for compassion, tolerance, and respect for each body, form, figure, space, individuality, and identity, besides many other issues and concerns. That is why these values – essentially from preschool or primary level – need to be shared, absorbed, circulated, instructed, and taught through education systems, so that stereotyping or discriminatory acts can be avoided altogether.

### **Stereotypes in textbooks**

Sadly, many textbooks in Nepali schools teach stereotyped gender images and prejudices that discriminate with examples like, “Boys play outdoor games because they are physically strong”, and “Girls are gentle, because they love to play indoor games only.” These are some examples unmistakably present in *Samajik Sikshya* Class Five books, which are taught to the children particularly in government run schools. Out of the many stories included in an English textbook of Class Six, one story focuses on a Brave Female Pilot and the other on George Stephenson – the famous scientist. Both stories are pleasant, one talks about bravery, while the other hones.

One is about a female, while the other is about a male. The male, despite the adversities, yet manages to create something beneficial for mankind. The female, despite being brave, manages to crash the airplane. Though at surface level the stories look innocent, yet an evolving mind will undeniably read that females can

never be a competent pilot. This message is already inscribed in the mind by culture, and thus by reading these kinds of stories, stereotyping practice gets amplified. Consequently, this trains young minds to stereotype and always remain prejudiced towards females, career, and bravery.

Another instance on gender stereotyping, which the author has witnessed, is when she heard kindergarten students (in some English medium schools in and around *Bhatbhateni/Baluwatar*) being taught nursery rhymes that teach little minds the norms of simple differentiation. “What are little boys made of? Snips and snails, / and puppy dog tail’s, / That’s what little boys are made of” and “What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice, / And everything nice, / that’s what little girls are made of”. The purpose was very simple. Despite the intention being innocent, yet the consequences were that it prepared minds to stereotype, which could evolve into prejudices, thenceforth discriminatory acts later in life. What one must remember is that, whether it be the nursery rhymes, the word images, stories, case illustrations and activities taught inside a classroom to a budding mind, will be well remembered for an extended period of time.

This in turn will frame and shape sensitivity and thoughtfulness, which may or may not evolve to be heedful or sensitive towards gender differences. That is why gender sensitivity lessons must be given to a child from a very early age. Perhaps the best practices which can be used to instruct young children – so as to effectuate best results possible – would be via visual storytelling. For instance, bring in images of neutrality, or an image that goes against the grain, like a boy crying or playing with dolls and a girl playing football and the other image could be of a girl putting the ball inside the goal pit. This could generate an interactive environment. However, a

compelling story with a coherent narrative structure on gender sensitiveness requires a lot of attention to detail. Therefore, a teacher or an instructor must plan lessons well ahead of class time. Spending a little extra time on storytelling during lesson slating will keep the learning experience highly engaging, creative, and truly dynamic.

To begin, teaching instructors could take up common clichéd categorizations as examples to sensitize, train, and prepare young minds away from stereotyping and prejudices. For instance: “All blonde women are stupid,” “All red heads are fiery,” “All Indian women are wild, glamorous, and exotic,” “All Indians are deeply spiritual,” “Girls are only concerned about their physical looks,” “Women who smoke and drink do not have any decent values,” “All Asians are math wizards,” “All Latinos are good dancers,” etc. Teachers could ask students to identify whether the statements are true or false, and then instruct each student to discuss and write the why or why not’s.

Begley (2000) thinks discussing clichéd stereotypes will open up minds and broaden horizons not to make erroneous prejudices, hence discriminate. And these kinds of prejudgment can be found in the arts, myths, fairytales, poetry, fiction, biographies/autobiographies, etc., which actually shape a mind from a very early age. For instance, in Hansel and Gretel story, Hansel is shown as a boy with strong sense of leadership, whereas sister Gretel is dependent on brother Hansel to find the trail back home (Grimm & Grimm, 1812).

These kinds of stories create negative images of persons or individuals in a young and budding mind of child. Sharon Begley believes that stereotypes from ‘white men can’t jump’ to ‘girls can’t do math,’ are

“negative images that are pervasive in the culture (which) can make us choke during tests of ability. . . The power of stereotypes, scientists had long figured, lay in their ability to change the behavior of the person holding the stereotype. . .” (Begley, 2000, pp. 66). Stereotyping transpires in a similar vein, when what is written in literature conditions a mind to believing it as containing truth value.

For instance, in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Darcy is talking to Miss Bingley about a lady’s behavior and comments: “A lady’s imagination is very rapid; it jumps from admiration to love, from love to matrimony in a moment” (p. 88). These words put ideas into a person’s mind that a woman’s only preoccupation when meeting the opposite sex—that is male—is to get married to him. This is a prejudice which people have believed since ages and is practiced as containing commonsense truth value, even today, in certain societies or ethnic communities.

In the contemporary world, however, when women are so career-oriented and strive towards professionalism in any form/discipline or profession, this kind of definition no longer hold water. Yet, if these categories of ideas are held when hiring a woman for a particular job—as containing truth value—, then it is discrimination. Discrimination also consists of *actions* against a group of people. Discrimination can be based on different kinds of gender, age, religion, and health. So, when these kinds of definitions are circulated, discriminatory action against women is going to occur, and prejudices and stereotypes are going to be constructed repeatedly. Accordingly, gender stereotypes need to be dealt with strongly from early education.

## Gender stereotyping: A common experience

As exaggerated images of men/women or boys/girls are deployed repeatedly in routine life, it most obviously becomes an inherited habit—a legacy that each individual inherits. Surely, stereotyping arises outside of conscious awareness and as a part of “natural” social and cultural interface, which must be truly discarded. This is possible if gender conscientious education is initiated, which could eventually create level-headed individuals. In fact, stereotyping is not only hurtful, it is also wrong. Besides, it can also



**Figure 1** *Boys are active and dominant, whereas girls are submissive and domestic*

lead to bullying from a very young age, for an innocent mind may carry this “twisted” legacy into adulthood, which has the potential of turning into violence. This readily stereotyping behavior then can be warped around and used against a woman to exploit, subjugate and dominate her. Indeed, acceptance of images as customary and commonsensical confers their endorsement. By practicing them repetitively, however, stereotypes get normalized in life. Actually, by looking at these images, we get meanings and descriptions like: Girls are emotional, flirtatious, accepting; they like to cook, clean, sew, and stay at home, concentrate

on make-up, but excel in verbal skills, whereas boys are aggressive, dominant, brusque, confident, like to play outdoors, and excel in math skills.

A stereotyped image—of a man or a woman’s performance, behavior, attitude, and aptitude—in today’s world, is generally communicated via the visual mass media.



**Figure 2:** *Boys are encouraged to take careers where the demand is to be brave and daring, whereas girls are propagandized to take submissive and passive career roles*

The images—of both men and women in various activities—travel the cosmos and come to us through our TVs into our family room. Essentially, we are watching, perceiving, and consuming these similes obliviously, thousands and thousands of miles away, via virtual reality. We are then effectively manipulated by the portrayals; consequently, we begin to manage our life by performing or acting out in a similar manner, for instance, “Boys do not cry” and “Girls cry a lot”; “women love to shop; men hate shopping”; “parenting comes more naturally to women than it does to men.” The stereotypes are customarily fabricated to suggest “boys need to be tough,” whereas “girls are emotionally unstable.” Labeling occurs through unusual cases of fantasy, which is an overt form of

<sup>1</sup><https://mrlibrarydude.wordpress.com/tag/picture-book/>

<sup>2</sup><https://mrlibrarydude.wordpress.com/tag/picture-book/>



**Figure 3:** *Boys are imaginative and creative whereas girls are docile and unimaginative*

language game playing, and is actually one of the significant aspects in the pillar of socialization. For instance, in the poem "Girl," by Jamaica Kincaid – an Antiguan American Poet – the instructions below are advice given by an adult, probably the "Girl's" mother.

### Jamaica Kincaid's "GIRL"

this is how you smile to someone you don't like too much; this is how you smile at someone you don't like at all; this is how you smile to someone you like completely; this is how you set a table for tea; this is how you set a table for dinner; this is how you set a table for dinner with an important guest; this is how you set a table for lunch; this is how you set a table for breakfast; -----  
----- this is how to make a bread pudding; this is how to make doukona; this is how to make pepper pot; this is how to make a good medicine for a cold; this is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child; (Kincaid,1983)

We get illustrations of labeling in this poem. This abets stereotyping the girl's images and we accept all the form of work she is

advised to perform as common sense. And we believe that it is the proper and fitting way for a girl to perform as advised in the poem. In the poem, one observes gender stereotyping as "given," ideologically and materially. Consequently, society, too, organizes its structures and measurable services to accommodate these understandings.

The ideology in the poem is sure to generate some kind of hate, within the "Girl," which could move in any direction: The first step maybe towards fear and the second step she could take would be towards violence or with the suppression of her feelings and desires via instructions, thus she could be a violent person. Basically, she is imprisoned with words, which may lead to a total rejection of her situation and mutiny can yield various forms. To clarify, let me cite an example how stereotyping is closer to home and that which joins us all: the celebration of Mother's Day (*Matha Tirtha Aausi*) and Father's Day (*Kushe Aausi*) in Nepali society and culture. When we offer gifts to *Aama* it is typically a sari, or a dhoti, or *kurthasulwar*, which is pretty and colorful, or maybe something concerning makeup – all the girly and womanly stuff – ; whereas for *Buwa* it is usually a tie, a shirt, which has a dull and somber color, or a musk smelling *After Shave perfume*, which we regard as "boyish or manly" stuff.

This act of unconsciously choosing gifts is just one of the countless ways in which we perpetuate stereotypes and biases, on what men and women are supposed to be like and to like. Essentially, these biases filter down to us through media, marketing, language, society, culture, and educational institutes; these images condition us to assume deductions as true. Moreover, we then expect that this is the way we must act upon. The moment one does not follow norm, the individual then is quickly ostracized by society. Thus, the learnt

<sup>3</sup>Brannon, 2000.



gender roles structure the various “parts of actions” which individuals perform throughout their lives. These actions impact aspects of daily life from choice of clothing to occupation, which we begin learning from a very early age. Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman in “Doing Gender,” likewise state that the conditioning of a baby’s mind and thought processes activates itself in the delivery room—in infancy—from the moment of birth. Socialization of her/his body begins there—specifically, when the child’s parents or the nurses at the hospital dress little boys in blue and little girls in pink, to distinguish which sex the body of the baby belongs to.

The sooner the differentiation, the clearer will be the marks of society on the body (West & Zimmerman, 1987, pp. 129-131). The color functions like an index—a standardized rod—which people use to correlate, connect and interact with the baby. Social pacts locate the scripts and limit not only the bodies, but also those people surrounding them to interact with them in accordance with conventional norms created as suitable for a particular form of body. This highlights Simone de Beauvoir’s dictum and can be applicable to both genders: “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman or a man.” This dictum also establishes Judith Butler’s argument that sex and gender are not ontological originations, but are rather social constructs (584). J.E.O. Blakemore et al., (2009) state, “. . . that which we think as “womanly” or “manly” behavior is not dictated by biology, but rather is socially constructed. And a fundamental domain in which gender gets constructed is language use . . . Language does not merely reflect a preexisting sexist world; instead, it actively constructs gender asymmetries within specific socio-historical contexts” (119-120).

Brannon (2000) classifies how the cult of femininity or masculinity—and putting them in stereotyped typecasts—began with the invent of religiosity and its conviction by patriarchal structures. Thenceforth, through unconscious consensus and repetitive use of language descriptions, mankind trained themselves to label, classify, and place them within certain categories.

**Table 1: Cult of femininity and masculinity**

<i>The cult of true womanhood</i>	<i>Male sex role identity</i>
<i>Piety:</i> True women are naturally Religious	<i>No sissy stuff:</i> A stigma is attached to feminine characteristics
<i>Purity:</i> True Woman are sexually uninterested	<i>The big wheel:</i> Men need success and status
<i>Submissiveness:</i> True women are weak, dependent and timid	<i>The sturdy oak:</i> Men should have toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.
<i>Domesticity:</i> True women’s domain is in the home.	<i>Give “Em Hell:</i> Men should have an aura of aggression, daring, and violence.

(Brannon, 2000)

Brannon’s (2000) diagram (below) suggests that we complete the action of stereotyping via physical appearance, traits, behaviors, and occupations. For example, we say and teach children with sentences such as: Boys are more resilient than girls; boys are fit to be doctors, and as girls are soft and emotional, they are fit to be nurses. We

teach these lessons through repetitive illustrations, whereby they acknowledge and confirm to them by acting out in a similar manner, believing it to contain truth-value, for it is apparent/teacher (commanding and authorial) who has taught them. Thus, the word game of stereotyping is repeatedly played out and subconsciously absorbed into our blood system, which in turn becomes a habit. In fact, an infant is exposed to these lessons from a very early age. S/he begins reading stories as a toddler through various images, where there is gender stratification. This

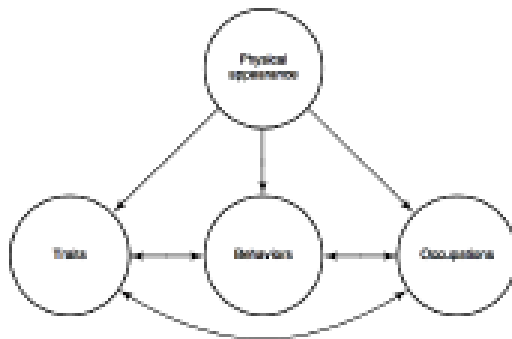


Figure 4<sup>1</sup>

ultimately leads to imprison, establish, and confirm personae within certain stereotype parameters. Actually, research has shown that by around age 3, for example, most children can accurately identify another child's sex and about half of them can correctly label toys by gender (Blumberg, 2008, p. 12). The next stage of learning to label and classify happens via language use when the infant grows and attends school.

Language/words allow/s children to differentiate and label genders based on expectations of society and culture in which they have been located in to learn. For instance, they base their decisions on the likes and dislikes of certain ideas which they may have picked up in a domestic

environment or in a classroom situation, through instructional materials. S/he is then taught norms, which convey the false message that the norm presented through these images and descriptions, is the natural, the real truth. Through these lessons, boys and girls are assigned the norms, roles, expectations and social spaces for male and female identity. Research has shown that by age 5 most children can do all of it flawlessly (Ruble & Martin, 1998) and children's toy preferences reflect these beliefs. Also, research has shown that girls are more likely to list dolls, stuffed animals and educational activities as their favorite toys, whereas boys are more likely to list manipulative toys, vehicles, and action figures as their favorites. Cherney and London (2006) in their research of young kids found that boys' preference for masculine television programs and girls' preference for feminine television programs increased with age.

Moreover, Levy, Sadovsky, and Troseth (2000) in their research entitled "Aspects of young children's perceptions of gender-typed occupations," also found that gender-associated beliefs could affect the roles children expect to fulfill when they imagine to become adults. For example, they found children's predictions about their happiness in future occupations reflected gender stereotypic beliefs; more boys expected to be happy in a masculine occupation and more girls expected to be happy in a feminine occupation and these were intensified by school lessons. Children develop dexterity and flexibility in pigeonholing as they approach adolescence, which confers them more room to play around with variations of stereotyping, prejudices, biases, and discriminations.

Horton (23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2016) narrates his story like this: "In the office where I worked at the

time my son was a baby, we had a dry-erase board to show where people were when out of the office. When female coworkers were out with their children, someone would write on the board “sick daughter” or something similar. When my son was sick, I would return to find a notice proclaiming I was out “babysitting.” . . . I was trying to raise awareness of the importance of fathering, but I generally only succeeded in raising a chuckle . . . I also noticed that when I went to a doctor’s visit with his mother, the doctor and nurses would speak to her even when I was closest or even when I was actually holding my son. It was clear that the mother was the default parent and the father, no matter how involved, could only provide auxiliary services. I . . . quit my job and stay home full time. . . . Many people would congratulate me on being in touch with my “feminine” side. Others would offer an indirect criticism with a loaded question such as, “How does your wife feel about you staying home full time?”

Any mention of something gone wrong with the baby that day, I was generally met with, “Well, now you know what women have faced for centuries! Women (and nurturing men) have suffered from bias and disrespect for centuries . . .” And imagine we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This story shows essentially how the tendency to make exceptions at stereotyping increases as the child grows and matures into adulthood. Because of this unseen omnipresent power of stereotyping boys/girls also come up with statements like insects always frighten girls or only boys are rough while playing; Or only fair and slim girls are pretty, whereas only dark boys with V-shaped bodies are handsome; Only girls can take care of babies, boys cannot; boys can repair cars and women can repair clothing, respectively. The children cannot escape the trap they have been located within, for without realizing they practice what they have been taught to take as truth-value. Moreover, these

images carry a truth-value for them, for it is in a textbook, recommended and prescribed to them as part of class syllabi/curricula, which they are supposed to read to gain knowledge.

Nepali schoolrooms and textbooks are not different. Primarily, books on English stories or Social Sciences are full of these kinds of stereotyping images: Women shopping; men taking control of accounts; girls shown cooking food or cleaning the house, or tending as a nurse to the sick and the elderly; whereas men as Presidents and in influential positions, a Gurkha soldier fighting in the armed services with a gun (never a woman with a gun), etc. Images and stories of these stereotyped lifestyles are represented unknowingly as part of the reading material. Basically, as children attend school, they are given instructions through textbooks—where boys/males, girls/females are typified in various social/cultural roles. Hence children become indoctrinated, brain-washed, trained and prepared to take on life via this process of socialization, plus the entire gamut of cultural responsibilities.

Shrestha (2016) comments: “More than 80 per cent of Nepali students go to government schools first, but Kathmandu’s neglect of public education is reflected in the mainstream media’s lack of interest in government schools and teachers.” Shrestha discusses this issue with Rajendra Dahal of *Shikshak Magazine* who adds, “The choice for a large number of students is government schools but public education has always remained in the shadows.” Rajendra Dahal had also examined the poor quality of Nepali textbooks and remarks: “The worst are the books for social studies in both English and Nepali. They show very poor understanding of Nepal’s geography, development and history.” However, the itemized, hence qualified gendered

stereotypes, coached and implanted into our psyche from a very tiny age across centuries through our own 'conformist educational systems' has resulted much of the prejudices and biases, thereafter effectuating violent intolerances in our conduct and outlook. We need to alter this outlook and take action immediately.

So, maybe as teachers we could help change the outlook of children by showing them images which are gender unbiased and impartial (Calvanese, 2007). Sharma (2015) writes:

Textbooks published by private companies are no better. *Health Population & Environment Education for Today* (re-published by *Ratna Pustak Bhandar*) defines virility as the "feeling of proudness on having children" and declares [that] "sterile people are hated by society." Warming up to the subject, the all-male writers of this textbook propose "educating women to get employed" as one measure to prevent HIV/AIDS. (7-13 August 2015)

Twenty-first century is a witness to a constellation of intellectual trends and rapid shifts in ideas, concepts, and its practices. Yet, we are still practicing the same old norms of stereotyping. The concurrent century certifies to the utilization of novel and state-of-the-art interactive pedagogic strategies, outside and inside a classroom. Yet, vast difference is clearly visible between statements (promises) and the implementation of these strategies inside a Nepali classroom specifically.

In fact, Sharma (2015) in his article provides examples of the erroneous labeling that he found in Nepali textbooks. He illustrates how stereotyped messages and examples that are taught inside a classroom.

The example he provides is that of a class eight textbook.

A couple's desire is to be a guardian of their child or children. This is their parental property. In the context of our society the *in-fecund or sterile couples or one of them are hated by their neighbors, relatives and others*. In this way there is a concept in a society that marriage is for bearing child. Parents having child after the short duration of marriage think of being fortunate in our society.

### Virility

*The feeling of proudness on having children is called virility*. Many people show their society being successful in life by giving birth to a child. *Sterile people are hated by society*. Such couples are always dominated by the couples or persons who have child or children.

### Flourishing family's prestige

*Family void of son is trivial*. The concept of male birth in a family is an orthodox view of traditional people. They are running after such belief; so do not accept the existence of that family which lacks son. Due to son preference, *many couples wait for son though they already have a half dozen daughters*. . .(Sharma, 2015)

Similarly, he says how in a Grade 7 Nepali language Social Studies textbook declares 'journalism is propaganda'; and then how in a recent Accounting textbook he found descriptions which read like this: "Secretaries should be good-looking and wear lipstick." He further gives examples of "other textbooks for Grade 9, children are seen asking their father for permission to watch TV and their mother for permission to eat bread." And then "One

question asks students to look at different pictures of Nepalese and guess their ethnicity. In an English textbook published by the government, a character named *Kaji Sherpa* climbs mountains. The book defines a Sherpa as 'a person who takes long walk in the hills and the mountainside (Sharma, 2015). The offered evidences depict that many Nepali textbooks do have descriptions which stereotype. These descriptions have not been identified as yet, for it is very difficult to distinguish, for many of the descriptions found in them have hegemonic influence. Most of the stereotypes are taken as common sense, hence not much action has been taken to neutralize them.

So, maybe an instructor could begin with different kinds of story; for instance, personal tales from a student's or a teacher's experience which could create bonding, while stories could stimulate imagination and move away from stereotyping. Humans are storytelling creatures for ages and we have been delving inside our core imagination to tell stories. Why not pick up those same stories – familiar to us, for instance, Laxmi Prasad Devkota's poem *Latoko Trisana* (1967) – and via its narratives try to identify diction/labels that stereotype. While stories do have a profound effect on us due to its emotional content, it is commonly known how once you pick up a story that interests you, it does not allow you to move away from it without reading it completely. Thus, identifying stereotypes within the narratives and examining, reviewing, and discussing it out in the open, I believe, would support in combating stereotyping, and would also facilitate to develop a gender-neutral and gender discerning world.

Maybe, by taking the same story of the female pilot in the English book of grade six, one could discuss that females are equally competent, and it was because of her quick thinking, the airplane could be

saved. Giving examples with positive and encouraging messages could also be one of the ways to neutralize stereotyping gradually. Another way could be by engaging students in a number of songs, which are popular in our daily lives – for instance Narayan Gopal's song, "*Mero Uthne Palo*" or Tara Devi's Song, "*Uukali Oraliharuma*" or even Kumar Basnet's song, "*Aamabhanda Chhori Taruni*," and through the songs teach/train students to identify stereotypes and then prepare them to undo the harm; or come up with activity as given in the table below and stimulate students to come up with the responses that do not discriminate nor stereotype.

### Activity

- Get two identical dolls, dress one in blue and the other in pink. Write down 12 mixed up gender stereotypical feminine and masculine words. Then get the students to assign 6 'words' to one of the dolls.
- The teacher will note that the student will assign words based solely on the color of the dolls clothes. Then the teacher can facilitate the class by talking about gender being assigned at birth, in the hospital room. Try to work them up to find the reasons why it has happened and whether color makes any difference to an individual's personality?
- An alternative method is to use pictures of male and female toys together with either a picture of a baby in pink or blue.
- Another activity involves gathering up a bunch of fashion magazines and randomly passing them out to class. Ask them what they think of the male and female models presented in these magazines (gender roles, body image, personality, career, etc.) (Cherney & London, 2006)

## Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to end with a series of thought provoking questions and some suggestions. Do you suppose your classroom teaching of gender stratification supported by the visual media images is doing disservice to all—men, women, and children? Do you believe that these sexualized, stereotyped but mythical impressions of masculinity and femininity are distorting our sense of truth and balance? Do you believe that we must do away with sexualized or stereotyped images? How do you suggest we move ahead and deal with these hegemonic power-vested images, which circulate freely, in our society?

## Questions for consideration

- In spite of the changes in our society, how seriously has the male breadwinner notion been dislodged?
- What are the traditional notions of a career path for Nepali womanhood as thought to be most appropriate?
- Would males in our society accept women as the *bread winner* of the family?
- How do we get to the point where we accept men as being strong?
- Would men in Nepal Army want to hold jobs alongside women—as *women in combat*?
- How do we get to the point where we accept that in spite of women bearing children and being perceived to be vulnerable, they are still equal strong partners of men? (Cherney & London, 2006)

Probably we could engage students in an interactive manner inside a classroom with some interesting and some constructive

decision making lessons, which would help them to throw away the blanket from their eyes. For instance: impartial story reading, role playing/acting with readings as well as with activities and questionnaires, etc. would help them to identify and wade out of the confusions that these stereotypes create in their minds. Conceivably again, then this gender tolerant and neutral world would look at humanity solely through the lens of creativity, capability, and competence.

## References

- Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and prejudice*. NY: Barnes & Noble Classics.
- Beauvoir, S. D. (2011). *The second sex*. NY: Vintage eBooks.
- Begley, S. (November 6, 2000). The stereotype trap. *Newsweek*, pp. 66-68.
- Blakemore, J. E.O., Berenbaum, S.A., & Liben, L.S. (2009). *Gender development*. NY: Taylor and Francis.
- Blumberg, R.L. (2007). Gender bias in textbooks: A hidden obstacle on the road to gender equality in education. *Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Brannon. (Nov 6, 2000). Gender stereotypes: Masculinity and femininity: The stereotype trap". Headline. *Newsweek*. [www.ablongman.com/partners\\_in\\_psych/PDFs/.../Brannon\\_ch07.pdf](http://www.ablongman.com/partners_in_psych/PDFs/.../Brannon_ch07.pdf). Accessed: 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. NY: Routledge.
- Calvanese, M. M. (2007). Investigating gender stereotypes in elementary

- education. Teacher gender and competency. *Connecticut State University: Journal of Undergraduate Psychological Research*, 2, 1-8.
- Campbell, A., Shirley, L., & Candy, J. (2004). A longitudinal study of gender-related cognition and behavior. *Developmental Science*, 7, 1-9.
- Cherney, I.D. & London, K. (2006). Gender-linked differences in the toys, television shows, computer games, and outdoor activities of 5- to 13-year-old children. *Sex Roles*, 54, 717-726.
- Devkota, L.P. (1967). "Latoko trisana: Pani-Haso. Manoranjan: Kavita Sangraha. Kathmandu: Nepal Sanskriti Sangha. p. 40-42.
- Grimm, J. & Grimm, W. (1812). *Hansel and Gretel*. Short Story America. [www.shortstoryamerica.com/pdf\\_classics/grimm\\_hanse\\_and\\_gretel.pdf](http://www.shortstoryamerica.com/pdf_classics/grimm_hanse_and_gretel.pdf). Accessed: January 2016.
- Horton, R. (Feb, 2016). Still not a babysitter: At-home dads, then and now. US: *The Huffington Post*. [www.huffingtonpost.com/randall-horton/still-not-a-babysitter-at-home-d...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/randall-horton/still-not-a-babysitter-at-home-d...) Accessed: 23 Feb 2016.
- Kinkaid, J. "Girl." (1983). <https://d2ct263enury6r.cloudfront.net/mAyAZX5yjR1CTUVTqlvLuDtnyDIATiYLqshuMelxmRxmz1AQ.pdf>. Accessed: 26<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2016.
- Levy, G.D., Sadosky, A.L., & Troseth, G.L. (2000). Aspects of young children's perceptions of gender-typed occupations. *Sex Roles*, 42. 993 -1006.
- Matlin, M.W. (2012). *The psychology of women* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Merriam Dictionary. <https://www.merriamwebster.com/>
- dictionary/stereotype. Accessed: 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016.
- Ruble, D.N., & Martin, C.L. (1998). Gender development. In W. Damon & N. Eisenberg(Eds.). *Handbook of child psychology volume three: Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 933-1016). New York: Wiley.
- — . (2004). Children's search for gender cues: Cognitive perspectives on gender development. *American Psychologist*, 13(2), 67-70.
- Schmitz, A. (2012). Gender Inequality. *A Primer on Social Problems*. Creative Commonsby-nc-sa 3.0 license. 2012 Book Archive. [2012 books.lardbucket.org/books/a-primer.../s07-gender-inequality.html](http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/a-primer.../s07-gender-inequality.html). Accessed: January 2016.
- Sharma, S.M. (August 2015). "Laughing it off." *Nepali Times*. #770. 7-13, p.10-11.
- Shrestha, S. (July 2016). "Teaching Teachers". *Nepali Times Buzz*. # 815, P.7.
- West, C. & Zimmerman, D.H. (June 1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society*. 1 (2), 125-151.
- The author:** Associate Professor Anita Dhungel (Ph.D.) is in teaching profession for past 20 years. At the moment, she is M.A. Coordinator for English Literature at Padma Kanya Campus, TU. She is the author of numerous critical literary articles and a couple of short stories. At present her book, *Silence in Poetry: A Trope* is in press.

## English as a Medium of Instruction: My Experience from a Nepali Hinterland

*Ashok Raj Khati*

### Abstract

I have observed that many public schools are adopting English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in Nepal for a decade. During my last visits to lower parts of Mt. Everest region, some school principals stated, with a great enthusiasm, that they are gradually replacing Nepali with English as the medium of instruction up to secondary level even though there is lack of research and case studies to find whether such a shift is a boon or bane. It is already the most discussed issue at both global and local educational discourses and policies. Based on my own experience, observation and theoretical knowledge, I, in this paper, make attempts to analyze the EMI situation in Nepal with reference to some questions associated with it. I also suggest that a transitional model of language education is appropriate for multilingual country like Nepal.

**Key words:** English as a medium of instruction (EMI), experience, Nepal

### Introduction

Being a teacher as well as teacher-educator, I have visited many public schools and interacted with guardians, students and teachers in Nepal. What I observed during my visits in past five years is that there is a growing attraction of EMI among most head teachers, parents and even some bureaucrats. Some of the head teachers and school management committee (SMC) members confidently pronounced that they have implemented EMI. Likewise, there has been a growing discussion among Nepali scholars over the EMI phenomenon in recent years. There is already the increasing shift to the use of EMI in South Asian context. With special focus on the university sector, Kirkpatrick (2014) mentioned that except for

a few universities which are employing and implementing their own language education policies, majority of the East and South-East Asian universities have increased EMI programs as to embrace internalization. He further found that these universities in Asia have adopted EMI programs to attract international students as well as to stop national students going overseas in Anglophone countries. At global ELT discourse too, it is a growing phenomenon in both public and private education in all stages of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) across the world (Dearden, 2014).

A medium of instruction (MI) is a language used in teaching. It may or may not be the official language of the country. Nepal, as one of the developing countries that has not yet



been able to sustain a single educational policy with full effects, is now implementing EMI education in public schools. It has also been receiving a huge attention from language policy researchers as well. (Shah, 2015). Therefore, it is an area worth to be discussed.

### **Looking EMI into back**

When reflecting back to the history of medium of instruction policy in Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana, a powerful Rana Prime Minister, had established Durbar (Palace) School after his return from Europe as he was greatly influenced by the use of English in the west. However, it was open only to members of the Rana family. Thus, the first government-run school in Nepal practiced EMI. Likewise, the first post-secondary educational institution in Nepal, Trichandra College, opened in 1918, also practiced EMI in its beginning days.

The government of Nepal showed interest in cultural unification only after 1950. The slogan of *ekbhasha, ekbhesh, ek dharm, ekdesh* (one language, one costume, one religion, one nation) summarized the goals of the *Panchayat* government, which attempted to spread Nepali, Hinduism, and other symbols of nation throughout the country to create a unified national identity (Rai et al., 2011). Throughout the *Panchayat* era, the goals of education were to promote development through unification of the nation under one language and culture. Education in Nepali medium of instruction became accessible to common people instead of a privilege for elites with the goal of bringing the whole population into a unified national identity (Weinberg, 2013). Thus, Nepali was the mandatory medium of instruction and all other languages including English were discouraged in the period 1952-1990. From the language policy perspective, Panchayat

was the darkest age as languages other than Nepali were banned not only in the classroom but also in the playground following the doctrine *ekdesh, ekbhasa, ek dharm* (one nation, one language, one religion) adopted by the country at the time (Phyak, 2015:269). After the restoration of democracy in 1990, many private English medium schools started EMI from grade one and public schools followed the same pattern.

### **Shifting into EMI**

During my visits to Solukhumbu in the last three years, I was able to produce data through open unstructured interviews and observation. I had talked to two head teachers, two parents, three teachers, two students and a teacher trainer in lower part of Solukhumbu. I took notes while I interviewed them and made observation of classrooms. I mostly maintained daily journal which was also a part of my job there.

My observation shows that many public school authorities are basically shifting their medium of instruction to English from Nepali in order to attract the large number of students who are now attracted to private English medium schools. Supporting this, one of the public school principals from Solukhumbu articulates his views in this way:

English is a global language, and it functions as an international lingua franca. EMI helps students connect countryside with the global world and offers them boundless opportunities. In addition, it is the language of global business and technology. If I had not implemented EMI in my school, many children would have joined the private school. Still, we are not able to increase the number of students at

primary level. The government has already cut down the teachers' quotas for primary section due to less number of students. EMI is producing better results to increase enrollment in my school.

Public schools are adopting EMI to increase the number of students so that they can retain quotas of teachers in school. Otherwise, schools lose the quotas of teachers from the government, if they do not have required number of students. More strikingly, teachers take for granted that teaching in English helps students find job and participate in global community. They also believe that students' progress in the English language contributes to wider access to information and knowledge.

Likewise, parents also consider EMI as a gateway to join the global academic and economic community. They think that English creates better academic and economic opportunities. A guardian from Solukhumbu puts his views in this way:

English is obligatory in this competitive world. I want my children to learn English so that they will receive better academic offers at national and international arenas. Ultimately, it leads to a better life. Therefore, EMI in school is a right approach now.

From the case above, it has been obvious that parents have placed heavy pressure on school to adopt EMI. Both the teachers and guardians mean EMI leads to quality education. On the other hand, there have been a lot of critiques regarding whether English when adopted as medium of instruction in the school contributes to quality education. But a teacher trainer working in rural parts of Nepal has a bit different view in this regard:

When I observed the EMI situation in Taplejung, Ramechhap and Solukhumbu districts, I found that schools really do not know why they are adopting EMI. They only believe that it will improve their children's English and further it will stop children going to English medium schools. The implementation part of EMI is horrible in relation to teachers' proficiency levels, interaction inside the classroom and content delivery. The only positive aspect is that children build a large English vocabulary.

The following table shows a brief explanation for adopting EMI in this region:

**Table 1: Reasons for adopting EMI**

SN	Participants	Reasons
1	Head teachers	EMI increases the number of students.
2	Teachers	English offers the opportunity of lucrative jobs and participation in global community.
3	Parents	English provides better academic and professional offers at national and international arenas.
4	Teacher trainer	EMI is a growing attraction for all stakeholders.

### **EMI and the classroom**

In the schools with EMI, teachers have to depend on the textbooks prescribed by the government alone. Sadly, there is no any pedagogical support or teaching resources

that can help the teachers to effectively conduct their classes in English medium. Very few teachers find EMI classroom pleasant and exciting in several content related subjects. Such teachers are either from English language teaching background or novice ones. They love speaking English in the classroom most of the time. They also invest more efforts to learn new words and phrases in English. On the other hand, most teachers who have been teaching in Nepali medium of instruction for decades in the past reported that they find EMI very challenging. They feel their schools adopting EMI has posed a burden in their profession. This tendency might hinder teaching learning activities. In this regard, a teacher from Southern part of Solukhumbu asserts:

I'm not confident enough to teach in English. I've been teaching in Nepali since last two decades. Now I am supposed to teach in English. Teaching in English is very challenging for me. I can't update myself at old age. Nor are we provided with any intensive training that can support and facilitate the EMI.

Another revealing part of my observation is that students are less involved in pair and group works. Nor are they found engaged in any type of project work as it is a must for learner centered approach. Generally, teachers introduce the lesson, talk to the students, explain the teaching items, translate them and provide little notes on the board. However, students' progress in building English vocabulary is a noticeable phenomenon through EMI. They generally seem to enjoy the lessons in all subjects with EMI in the beginning even if they can hardly read and write about social studies and science lessons.

Yet in another observation, use of translation method that was once abandoned by English

teachers was found in application in the schools adopting EMI. School teachers are largely translating English texts into Nepali during classroom teaching. While in others, teachers only use English.

During the interaction with teachers, they have revealed that they did not make any assessment to find whether the students had comprehended their teaching in English. If the students failed to understand, the teachers were yet to come up with a proper strategy to help the students in their difficulties. All the teachers do not possess required proficiency level in English. And they do not bother about learning English either. They argue that they give emphasis on content, not language while teaching subjects - like in the teaching of mathematics, science and social studies.

With special reference to the experience of implementing EMI programs in schools of Mt. Everest region, Kathet, (2015) admits that many remote village community schools are taking the risk of implementing EMI. He observes that lack of communicative skills in English among teachers is one of the major challenges. In this light, lack of EMI qualified teachers has become a global challenge. Even if the requirement of EMI qualified teachers is not clear yet, a study carried out by British Council in 2015 [in which 55 countries participated] also shows that 83% of the countries responded that they did not have enough qualified teachers to handle EMI situation.

### **The impact of EMI on learning**

The brief background of EMI setting might not capture all other contexts, but it certainly sets a scenario of EMI implementation and its impact on broader educational practices in Nepal. Parents and children have been influenced by the global

academic and career offers, advancement in technology and access to information. They firmly believe that English opens the door to build global networks, ties and relations. EMI has brought significant progress in increasing the learning achievements of students in some cases. Baral (2015) rightly mentioned that the SLC result of 2013/14 has shown that the schools that produced encouraging results were found to be adopting EMI, taking an example of *Kanti* and *Kalika* schools of *Butwal*, *Shanti* school of *Manigram*. Similarly, schools of *Biratnagar*, *Pokhara*, *Surkhet*, *Kathmandu*, *Bhaktpur*, *Lalitpur*, *Damak*, and *Hetauda* have proved the same level of results in Nepal. In the place where I visited in Solukhumbu, students' achievement in a few subjects like mathematics and English was found increased in lower grades, as no school had implemented EMI up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. It has also brought changes in English language being exposed to it and expressing the ideas in reading and writing in several academic subjects.

However, comprehension part of the students is not clear. The increased learning achievement might need further justification and statistics to see whether other factors or EMI alone contributes to this increase. Teachers report that many students from early grades fail in science and social studies because of the sudden shifting into EMI. Their views reflect that students understand the content better in their first language.

The other side of the impact is the growth of other national languages in which children are believed to learn and comprehend better than any other second or foreign language. In many cases of EMI in Nepal, students are punished if they use their mother tongue inside classroom or school. They are forced to generate knowledge and internalize the

meaning of content taught in English. It raises the question of cognitive development of learners. Hence, is EMI a medium of instruction for other academic subjects, or is it the sole objective at all? In a nutshell, the question of whether EMI is producing satisfactory learning outcomes still remains unanswered and needs further explorations.

### EMI ahead

There are questions regarding EMI implementation and the age of students. At which age is EMI to be incorporated? What is the justification for its appropriateness at grade one? What is the progress of students with EMI of different ages at different levels in relation to learning outcomes? These questions certainly need further inquiry. In addition, public schools do not have any definite guidelines to implement EMI. Policy only allows choosing English or Nepali.

The medium of instruction for school education shall be Nepali, English or both, whereas primary education can be provided in the mother tongue (first language). Language (as a subject) shall be taught in the same language (CDC, 2008).

The policy does not have comprehensive arrangement and facilitation plans to support the schools that implement EMI. In this connection, a few years ago, a famous applied linguist Alan Davies, who led the first ELT Survey in Nepal in 1983-1984, stated that the decisions regarding language education in Nepal are guided by sentimental role rather than instrumental. Sentimental role emphasizes the importance of a language to maintain group traditions and culture and to demonstrate differentiation from other groups while the instrumental role concerns

the value of language learning for job and other economic prospects (Davies, 2009).

Next element of the analysis is teachers' English language proficiency level required for EMI. My observation shows that teachers are forced to teach through EMI in many cases. Many public schools have been implementing EMI policy without qualified teachers. It is entirely unclear what the requirements are with reference to English language competence. Many EMI teachers do not see themselves as English language teachers. They consider their job as a facilitator of students towards better learning content deliberations through better comprehension.

On the other hand, teaching through second or foreign language is entirely a different issue from teaching academic subjects through the first language. As EMI is concerned with language teaching pedagogy, there are questions that require further discussion. Are teachers, dealing with EMI, aware of foreign language pedagogy in a multilingual context? Are they familiar with the process of communication through second or foreign language in the classroom? Is effective communication in English happening in those classrooms? In most instances, formulaic use of English is being observed. Students memorize the phrases and words, even sentences, most of the time. If the subject to be taught does not have meaningful relationship with the outside world, learning cannot take place. How we can ensure effective communication in the classroom in English among teachers and students in various academic subjects is a crucial issue in EMI settings.

The use of students' home or community language is seen in all EMI schools I have observed. In many classrooms excessive use of Nepali has been observed. If the teachers

are not proficient enough in English, they certainly use students' home language. In this regard, what is the effect of using and not using L1 in students' learning? A clear guideline is essential. With reference to teacher preparation, there has not been any uniform teacher training modality developed yet to assist EMI in Nepal. NCED (National Centre for Education Development), the apex body for human resource development in school education, has not institutionally materialized the teacher training model for EMI purpose. Nor there is any space for EMI in current 'teacher professional development' model of teacher training. It shows that EMI has not been a priority in policy under the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, on theoretical ground, there are doubts in the training manuals designed and implemented for EMI purpose by several organizations in Nepal. For example, some training sessions are merely translation while others are full of pair and group works. Ministry of Education and its associate agencies need to think over a uniform teacher training model for EMI purpose which can be a basis for training at different levels.

Similarly, many head teachers are found confused with which subjects to be taught through EMI. For instance, many private English medium schools teach social studies in Nepali medium, while this subject is taught in English in public schools. The basis for decision is not clear yet. The decisions are not based on the effectiveness of learning process and outcome from the medium of instruction implemented in schools.

Therefore, a few linguists and ELT professionals has always emphasized the effective teaching of compulsory English. Kansakar (2011) questions: how can we expect effective teaching and learning of

other subjects in English in the context that we are struggling hard to teach English as a compulsory subject from Grade 1 to university level?

With this backdrop, I conclude this section with Phyak (2015) who has aptly mentioned: "English language certainly has an important space in global multilingualism particularly to access globally available socio-economic and educational resources. However, this taken-for-granted assumption does not work quite well in education (teaching-learning process) particularly in the context where children speak languages other than English outside classroom (For many children in Nepal, English is the third language and they do not need to use English in their everyday social interactions)." The success in understanding of the contents of curricula largely depends upon whether or not the language used as the medium of instruction in school is comprehensible to students.

## Conclusion

EMI is unquestionably a growing phenomenon in public education in Nepal. It has been beneficial to improve the students' English as it provides maximum exposure to them through speech, reading and writing in several subjects. EMI is thought to open the door of possibilities for lofty academic and economic offers at local and international level; nonetheless there are suspicions over how many students from public schools have this opportunity. Furthermore, EMI in Nepal is being promoted very powerfully, and the phenomenon is more idealistic in nature. However, it has been a contested issue in Nepali academia for both political and pedagogical reasons. Most importantly, researchers have critiques on the weak pedagogical aspect of EMI in multilingual

situation, particularly on the process of communication inside the classroom. EMI has been implemented without any logical guidelines in public schools. It is being implemented with little or no preparation and planning at all. The phenomenon is not effective in terms of its impact on students' learning of several academic subjects.

With the increasing demand of English language for global integration, the choice of schooling children in English has been given a major priority in developing countries including Nepal. And, in fact, we cannot ignore the need for English as a global lingua franca. However, there are very limited success stories of EMI, and the successful countries evidently based the policy on appropriate educational principles. The ad hoc implementations are very likely to be counterproductive. (Shah, 2015) In Nepal's case, the policy regarding EMI is not comprehensive, nor is it academically and practically desirable. It is more covert in nature leaving the things up to the market. The English language related policies and practices have been implemented without considering the educational cost and benefit in Nepal. The sole logic behind the current shift is globalization and market forces.

Thus, EMI has also been a key selling point in the market in the guise of the ideology of quality education, which at present remains a myth. It has been projected as a commodity in the market. But very few students have access to the global and local market resources available in English. Incorporating a foreign language at the early foundation of education is not academically sound policy. Nepal needs to formulate multilingual model of language policy and planning. EMI planning, on the other hand, needs to be guided by the transitional model – from local language to

official language to international language from early grades to university level.

## References

- Baral, K.R. (2015). Parents have rights to choose medium of instruction: Executive Director of NCED [Blog article]. *ELT Choutari*. Retrieved from <http://eltchoutari.com/2015/08>.
- CDC (2008). *Curriculum Development Centre*. Author: Sanothimi Bhaktapur.
- Davies, A. (2009). Professional advice vs political imperatives. In J.C. Alderson (Ed.), *The politics of language education: Individuals and institutions* (pp. 45-63). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Dearden, J. (2014). *English as a medium of instruction- a growing global phenomenon*. London; British Council.
- Kansakar, T. R. (2011). The theory, practice and pedagogy of English as a foreign language in Nepal. In L. Farrell, U.N. Singh, & R.A. Giri (Eds.), *English language education in South Asia* New Delhi: Cambridge University Press. (pp. 123-135).
- Kathet, M. (2015). EMI in community schools: A case from Mt. Everest region. [Blog article]. *ELT Choutari*. Retrieved from <http://eltchoutari.com/2015/08>.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2014). English as a medium of instruction in East and Southeast Asian universities. In N.M. & A. Scarino (Ed.), *Dynamic ecologies: A relational perspective on languages education in the Asia-Pacific region* (pp. 15-30). Germany: Springer.
- Phyak, P. (2015). Reimagining EMI from multilingual perspective policies/practices, realities and looking forward. [Blog article]. *ELT Choutari*. Retrieved from <http://eltchoutari.com/2015/08>.
- Rai, V.S., Rai, M., Phyak, P., & Rai, N. (2011). *Multilingual education in Nepal: Hearsay and reality*. Kathmandu, Nepal: UNESCO.
- Shah, P.K. (2015, August). English medium instruction (EMI) in Nepalese education: potential or problem? [Blog article]. *ELT Choutari*. Retrieved from <http://eltchoutari.com/2015/08/english-medium-instruction-emi-in-nepalese-educationpotential-or-problem/>.
- Weinberg, M. (2013). Revisiting history in language policy: The case of medium of instruction in Nepal. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 28(1), 61-80.

**The Author:** Ashok Raj Khati is a faculty at the Department of English Language Education, Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus, Kathmandu affiliated with Tribhuvan University Nepal. He is a former central executive member of NELTA. He currently works for Rural Education and Environment Development Centre (REED Nepal), Pulchok Lalitpur in the capacity of a teacher training specialist. Mr. Khati is a promising academic writer.

## Grammar Rules Matter: Should We Teach Inductively or Deductively?

*Ganesh Bastola*

### Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze of Nepalese English language teachers perception of teaching grammar rules. This paper explores whether English teachers teach grammar inductively, deductively or using any other methods. It explores the arguments of teaching grammar rules based on teachers' perception and my experiences of teaching grammar. Teachers' perceptions were collected through a mini survey questionnaire. The study found that most of the respondents are in favor of deductive approach/method. A substantial majority of the respondents rated the relevance of GT method because it made learners learn theoretical and pedagogical components in easier manner. Most importantly, the majority valued its relevance abruptly considering a wide repertoire of methods, techniques, activities and resources. A small number of respondents perceived it to be somehow irrelevant and rated it low. In addition, this study reveals that teachers believe in deductive approach as the best way to teach grammar.

**Key words:** Grammar teaching, inductive, deductive, rules, perception

### Background

Grammar is a set of rules people use when they speak or write any language. Giri (2007) opines that it refers to the way in which morphemes are put together into words, words into phrases, phrases into clauses and clauses into sentences (p. 9). Formally, it is the description of a language.

Language teaching, at every step, deals with the grammatical conventions that are to be coped with. Language teaching is a way of spreading the skills, abilities, and proficiencies in a language where grammar plays a crucial role. To quote Thornbury (1999), grammar teaching has always been one of the most controversial matters and

least understood aspects of language teaching (p. ix). At different times during the long history of second language education, grammar has been regarded as a set of rules to be memorized. Today, grammar is still tested, taught and evaluated in this way in many parts of the world e.g. in the form of TOFEL, IELTS, etc. To achieve this objective, the paper sheds light on the present tendencies of learning and teaching grammar, its tenets and how grammar teaching is practiced for the development of proficiency of students. As a positive effect, teachers believe that learners have developed a strong grammatical proficiency since they need to know about the acceptability and unacceptability in terms of grammar use



and usage. Giri (2007) states that grammar is reflected in native speaker's competence when they distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable sentences and it is possible only when they deserve the overall grammatical ideology (p.11). However, as a prescription of rules or description of the language as it is, grammar always has significance in second/foreign language pedagogy.

### **Grammar rules and teaching English**

Developing confidence among learners in language skills is arguably the most important outcome of our teaching procedure. Adhikari (2012) states that from pedagogical perspective, communicative grammar should be given priority over other grammars, for it is not only about the rules of a language, but also about the rules of language use that takes into account sociolinguistic and discourse factors. Moreover, it treats grammar as a skill. The term 'language principles' refers to a body of the core essentials for understanding and manipulating one's language, and indeed, learning a foreign one and its grammar. Barbara (2007) states that scholars have set their own mark on the development of grammatical thought from a century. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates realized the importance of grammar for all forms of language expression, particularly public speaking (rhetoric) and debate. I am closer to Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1998) who opine that grammar is a type of rule-governed behavior. Grammar, then, is a subset of those rules which govern the configurations that morphology and syntax of a language assume. These rules are a part of what is 'known' automatically by all native speakers of a language; in fact, they do not exist outside of native speakers. A Roman, Marcus Varro, produced 25 volumes on the subject, translating the Greek and then applying the grammar to

Latin. Interest then spread around the world, with grammarians of other countries comparing the features of their languages with those of Latin. Slowly and gradually, its importance was realized and practiced accordingly all over the world to develop language skills on the part of ESL learners. A school in Kathmandu reputed for its quality of students' English did not teach grammar for more than 15 years to the learners in the language classroom (L. Gnawali, 6 January 2016, Personal communication). Later on, they realized that grammar was necessary on the part of learners and they adopted it. Now, the proficiency of our public school students is quite satisfactory in grammar. Adhikari (2012) states that grammar teaching should expose the students to the three different dimensions of language: form/structure, meaning and function. It means language teaching through Grammar Translation method has the pivotal role in language classroom in our Nepalese EFL context to make them aware of form/structure, meaning and function. However, we talk either CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) or TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching); but we practice GT method and deductive approach. Therefore, teaching English grammar and its rules have been essential to developing linguistic competence as well as performance on behalf of ESL/EFL (English as a Second/ Foreign Language) learners.

Language is a rule-governed phenomenon, in that it is totally regulated by its rules at various levels, i.e. phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and discourse. These linguistic rules constitute the grammar of a language. Therefore, grammar is the engine which drives language components together. Learning a language is a process of internalizing the grammatical rules of a language. Ellis (2006) states that second language grammar acquisition is a complex process;

and almost certainly it can be assisted best by a variety of approaches. But what is important is to recognize what options are available and what the theoretical rationales for these options are. Teaching and learning of any language are akin to teaching and learning of its grammar, which enables a learner to acquire the ability to produce and understand its well-formed and appropriate sentences. However, the position of grammar in the teaching of foreign language has shifted dramatically in the last few decades. Giri (2007) states, "the history of foreign language teaching is a history of shifting attitude toward grammar" (p.9). The history of language teaching shows that grammar is the term of great antiquity that has been understood and defined differently over time. As a result of this, there has been a paradigm shift in teaching methodology.

With the emergence of various methods, approaches, techniques and ideologies such as Grammar Translation (GT), Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task- Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Noam Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG), and Krashen's Five Hypotheses (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), there have been drastic changes in the process of language learning and teaching. We have experienced newer knowledge about grammar learning and teaching. We have realized that there is not a single method as 'one fits all' in EFL/ESL context. Language teachers adopt various methods as per the demand of the content. The concept of post-method pedagogy gives an abundance of autonomy to the teacher, whereby they use appropriate methods as per the need of the content and necessity of the learners. Teachers seem to be aware of both the usefulness of methods and the need to go beyond them for successful teaching learning activities (Barbara, 2007). There

was a great controversy between and among language scholars and grammarians. We find diverse thoughts, diverse grounded philosophies and underpinning principles they have developed about second language learners. Learning is something that happens automatically for many scholars and this is what it should be taught for others. Willis (2003) states that if we ask learners to listen and repeat a particular sentence, we are acting on the belief that such repetition is useful enough to justify the valuable classroom time it takes up, perhaps, the beliefs that it helps to rote learning which in turn promotes general language learning (p.1). In other words, some of the learners repeat the chunks and develop a conceptual framing very soon but another learner might take several attempts to understand the same concept. This indicates that teaching and learning of a language are the whole understanding of grammar rules principally. Teaching or learning a language without its grammar remains incomplete. We have experienced various procedures of teaching grammar explicitly or implicitly and deductively or inductively. Thornbury (1999) opines that grammar can be taught through a deductive approach since the teachers present the rules first, then teaching is followed by the examples in which the rule is applied (p. 29). Many grammarians advocate that grammar rules are to be taught to the learners directly and some of them oppose it. I am closer to the idea of Willis (2003) that if we give learners the grammatical rules or encourage them to discover the rules themselves, we are acting on the belief that rules make a valuable contribution to language description and that this kind of understanding helps promote learning (p.1). It is clear that rules need to be taught but indirectly. Grammar teaching either implicitly or explicitly is the matter of teaching and learning rules. As per my experience and understanding, in the context of ESL/EFL classrooms,

elementary level learners cannot achieve those grammatical entities through context compared to the advanced level learners. Therefore, the major concern of this study is whether the beginner learners of English, in the Nepalese context, feel comfortable to practice grammar through rules or not.

### **Issue statement**

In 2008, I appeared B.Ed. First- year examinations and started teaching, which was my stepping stone of teaching career. I started teaching in a private school, where medium of instruction was English.

At the beginning, teachers are typically less familiar with the subject matter, teaching method, teaching strategies, and teaching context, and lack adequate ways to plan and execute those (Richards & Farrell, 2010); they need a lot of support and cooperation from the institution. Despite this fact, the Nepalese context is found different in the sense that novice teachers are rarely guided and they are never provided with support and cooperation. I also experienced similar situation when I started my career in 2008. Neither the school where I began my teaching career had a culture of providing induction and orientation to the novice teacher nor did I have such proficiency.

My students had severe problems regarding grammar in general and the use of preposition, article and so on, in particular. At the very beginning, I was totally disappointed since I was not confident enough. And I decided to read many grammar books to tackle my students' problem. Once one of my students in my grammar class asked me why they had to use *an* with umbrella but not with Europe? That made me shocked and disappointed. It was due to an insufficient knowledge of grammar and its rules since I

never had an exposure to it. Nor my +2 level curricula had facilitated me about the grammar rules. Despite these facts, there were many things that would strike my mind such as second language acquisition and language teaching in general and grammar teaching i.e., grammar rules in particular. Burgess and Etherington (2002) conducted a research into teachers' attitudes to grammar and its teaching and learning. They found that the majority of teachers appreciated the value of grammar and had favorable attitude to Focus on Form. According to Thornbury (1999), the deductive approach is time saving in the sense that students do not go through the long stages of the inductive approach because the teacher presents the rule from the beginning. It is also time saving because the rule of form, for example, can be simply and quickly explained without trying to get them from examples. It also confirms many learners' expectations especially of those who do not like dealing with examples. I immediately made a kind of mini-research on the effectiveness of grammar teaching through rules on from students' perspective. I concluded that my students would learn no more, or they would progress no more until and unless I teach them grammar rules and their usage. I immensely experienced student's progress by teaching grammar rules.

Indeed, teaching grammar is one of the fundamental bases of our school and college curricula. After a few years of experience, I realized that learners are often confused with grammatical rules since grammar is prescribed from the elementary level in our context. The essence of grammar is felt necessary from the foundation level. For this, we can visualize the students' competence as well as performance which are not satisfactory. As a result, they fail to communicate among and between friends, colleagues and with the teacher in English. Moreover, they also

fail to accomplish different types of proficiency test such as TOFEL, IELTS, and so on. Therefore, these situations compelled me to conclude that our learners have the problems in grammar rules. In my opinion, language teaching without grammatical convention makes no sense at all. Teaching grammar and its rules seem to be very much crucial. Grammar is necessary but not sufficient. Grammar does not only include its structure. Rather, it incorporates vocabulary and other aspects of language. To cope with these phenomena, one has to have sound knowledge of phonology, morphology, semantics and syntax. Therefore, grammar can serve its purpose. That is why we need to diagnose the students' problems and should provide enough exposure to grammar teaching and learning.

Thornbury (1991) states that grammar is partly the study of what forms are possible in a language. Traditionally, grammar has been concerned almost exclusively with analysis at sentence level. Thus, a grammar is a description of rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed (p.1).

According to Kirkpatrick (2012), grammar is a system of rules which gives guidance on joining words together in a meaningful way, thereby giving the language a structure.

Grammar is a core of language teaching. In Nepalese context, grammar rules along with context are to be promoted among learners, and that helps them to grow. Grammar is fundamental not only to facilitate the learners to produce fine literature but also to encourage them to write and develop creativity in their writing.

Thus, a language without grammar is like a bird without wings. The learner can easily notice acceptability and unacceptability of the language spoken to them if they have grammatical knowledge.

## **Research purpose**

The main purpose of the study is to explore the perception and practices of English teacher towards teaching grammar rules.

## **Research question**

This study is based on the following research question.

- a. What are teacher's perceptions about teaching grammar rules?

## **Methodology**

The core issue of this study was to analyze teacher's perception of teaching grammar rules. It is a kind of mini-survey research design where the primary sources of data were employed. A semi-structured open-ended interview questionnaire was prepared as the research tool to elicit the data for the study. Five English teachers teaching at the secondary level to higher secondary level were interviewed by asking five questions. The questions were grouped in a section and their responses were transcribed.

## **Presentation of data**

The interviewed data were presented and analyzed using Seidel's (1998) model of data analysis. Seidel argued that qualitative data analysis is a process of 'noticing, collecting and thinking about an interesting thing' (1998, p.1). The respondents were grammar teachers teaching at higher secondary and secondary levels. Three of

the respondents were from Higher Secondary level and two of them were from Secondary level.

## **Analysis and interpretation**

To triangulate the data responses, their similar views were ranked in a hierarchy and distinct views were also given priority to enumerate the data received. The respondents' views were appreciated during the study to ensure confidentiality and I, as a researcher tried to analyze their views descriptively since the nature of the study was qualitative.

The method of teaching grammar was found similar. Only one grammar teacher was found to be teaching grammar inductively, and the rest followed the deductive approach. I noticed similarities and differences depending on the respondents' responses. The open-ended questionnaire was structured based on the research question that was to be addressed. All of the respondents responded in a similar way – saying that grammar for them was 'a set of rules'. Four respondents out of five agreed to be using 'deductive approach'. And only one out of five respondents said that he would employ inductive approach while teaching grammar. Regarding methodology, most of the respondents were found to have been using the deductive method. All of the respondents responded that they would present rules followed by examples. In a question about teaching, four out of five respondents responded that teaching grammar rules is a must in the Nepalese ESL context and they were found adopting the same method. Despite this fact, one of the respondents opposed it stating that he would never teach grammar rules deductively. Rather, he would teach inductively.

By the data elicited as aforementioned, I found that most of the English language teachers teach grammar rules in their language classrooms.

## **Findings of the study**

After the study, the following findings are derived.

- Almost all the English language teachers teach grammar in their practical classroom deductively.
- Most of the respondents stated that they agreed on the notion of 'Grammar is a set of rules'.
- Most of the teachers of grammar in ESL context agreed to teach grammar deductively. To quote one of them (R1), "Our students have a very poor background of English, so they cannot derive the structure from the given sentences. Therefore, I often teach them deductively".
- The majority of the respondents were in favor of deductive approach/method. Most of the respondents had the similar version. R2 said, "The students in the Nepalese EFL context love to practice along with the structure rather than examples".
- All of the respondents felt an essence of teaching grammar rules in ESL context. R3 said, "There won't be any problem to them if I provide the grammar rules to practice".
- The present study also showed that most grammar teachers adopt Grammar Translation (GT) method in their language classrooms. As R4 said, "I often start my grammar lesson with

the rules even if they want the translation into Nepali”.

- Thus, this study showed that teachers teach grammar deductively not because of the teacher’s will but because of the students’ desire.
- A substantial majority of the respondents rated the relevance of GT method because it made learners learn theoretical and pedagogical components in easier manner. Most importantly, the majority valued its relevance abruptly considering a wide repertoire of methods, techniques, activities and resources. A small number of respondents perceived it as somewhat irrelevant and rated it low.

## Conclusion

Teaching of grammar rules facilitates second or foreign language learners. It enables learners to learn the language within a short span of time. The teachers of English, in the Nepalese ELT scenario, are fond of teaching grammar rules in their actual classrooms. I myself with seven years of teaching experience feel that teaching grammar deductively makes better sense than teaching it inductively. This is what has been proved by sampled perceptions of professional teachers as well. It is because they believe their learners feel it comfortable while learning the language.

And teachers also feel very comfortable in adopting deductive approach rather than inductive approach. Their belief is that the limited number of grammar rules enables the learners to generate unlimited number of sentences and they are able to monitor and correct their own performance themselves.

Thus, it can be concluded that teaching grammar via deductive approach is more practical, effective and meaningful on behalf of students. Therefore, our learners can be facilitated to learn grammar adopting deductive approach. This study revealed that approach is not a big deal; rather, the students’ learning is.

Grammar provides a structured system for developing better linguistic competence, which helps to formulate a sound performance in second language learning. The systematic analysis and interpretation of a language is possible only if someone deserves and possesses a thorough knowledge of grammar. In such reality, grammar and its rule are inevitable in our context to develop all aspects of language from accuracy to fluency and from appropriateness to meaningfulness.

## References

- Adhikari, B.R. (2012). *English grammar: Views of student teachers and communication of grammar to their students*. A mini-research report submitted to University Grants Commission Sanothimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal.
- Barbara. S. (2007). *Grammar for everyone*. Hillroad: CER Press.
- Burgess, J. & Etherington, S. (2002). Focus on grammatical form: Explicit or implicit? *System*, 30, 433-458.
- Celce-Murcia, M & Hilles, S. (1998). *Techniques and resources in teaching grammar*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, 83-107.

Giri, A. (2007). Why teach grammar. *Young Voices in ELT*, 6, 9-12.

Kirkpatrick, B. (2012). *Modern English grammar*. United Kingdom: Media Light.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*.

Richards, J.C. & Farrell, T.S.C. (2010). *Professional developments for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seidel, J. (1998). *Qualitative data analysis: The ethnography*. Retrieved from <http://www.engine.umich.edu/teaching/crltengin/emgineering-education-research-resources/Seidel-qualitative-data-analysis.pdf>

Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to teach grammar*. England: Pearson Longman.

Thornbury, S. (1991). Metaphors we work by. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 45, 193-200. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/45.3.193>.

Willis, D. (2003). *Rules, patterns and words: Grammar and lexis in English language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**The author:** Ganesh Bastola is an M. Ed. graduate from Tribhuvan University. At present, he has been pursuing M. Phil. in ELE at Kathmandu University. He has about 10 years of teaching experience. Currently, Mr. Bastola has been teaching at Puspall Memorial College, and Orchid International College, in Kathmandu. His areas of interest are translation, second

language acquisition, professional development, and narrative inquiry.

## Appendix-1

### **A Survey Questionnaire – Teachers’ Views on Teaching Grammar**

Dear Teachers

I am Ganesh Kumar Bastola. I teach the course “English Grammar” in secondary school. I am carrying out a mini research study under Kathmandu University, (especially in partial fulfillment of the course EDUC 514, Writing for Professionals For M Phil in English Language Education), investigating teacher’s views on grammar and grammar teaching.

I’d like to request you to participate in my study by completing a survey questionnaire. The information you provide will be of great importance to shed light on ESL grammar teaching in the context of Nepal. I highly appreciate your cooperation. Your identity will not be stated in the report.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Institute: \_\_\_\_\_

Level at which you are teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is grammar?  
-----
2. Which method do you prefer while teaching grammar?  
-----
3. Which method is appropriate in our Nepalese ESL/EFL context?  
-----

4. How do you instruct your learners- deductively? /in-deductively or any other method else?  
-----

5. Are grammar rules to be taught to our students?  
-----

6. Mention any two methods you prefer to use to teach grammar to your students.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Mention any three resources you prefer to use to teach grammar to your students.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Mention any three techniques you prefer to use to teach grammar to your students.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_

- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

The researcher can be reached at [atganeshkumar.gb@gmail.com](mailto:atganeshkumar.gb@gmail.com) if you wish to know more about the study.

I will send you the findings of this research if you are interested.

Thank you for your cooperation!



## **Teachers' Professional Development to Enhance ELT: Needs Analysis for Developing Teacher Training Program in an EFL Context**

*Janak Singh Negi*

### **Abstract**

Developing any new teacher training program for Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) should start from where the teachers are and what they actually need, which is very essential to bring out innovation and improvement in the field of ELT. The present study represents teachers' voices from Far Western and Mid-Western part of Nepal based on the survey data collected from EFL teachers. The researcher reached to the conclusion that teachers should be trained and given opportunities on how to put the existing knowledge in to practice according to the learning context, needs and available resources creating their own context specific methodology keeping oneself up to date with global practices including the integration of ICT in the field of ELT.

**Key words:** Teachers' professional development, ELT, teacher training

### **Introduction**

There is a growing demand of English Language Teaching (ELT) worldwide. Hence, experts in the field of ELT are constantly developing new theories, methods and techniques, which have gone through a number of radical changes during the last few decades and still is in constant movement and change to improve the status of English language teaching and learning. Teachers are the key personalities to bring out these new innovations and improvement in this field. Moreover, in order to grow professionally and to adopt these innovative practices, teachers need to strengthen their professional expertise through the professional development opportunities.

### **Professional development**

Professional development is the process by which alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching, and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleague throughout each phase of their lives ( Day, 1999) to achieve the objectives of the teaching and learning process successfully (Shoquair & Shaaban, 2013). It has not fixed route and real end rather it is a lifelong process (Rodrigues, 2005 as cited in Shoquair & Shaaban, 2013) in which

teachers engage voluntarily to learn and adjust their teaching to the learning needs of their students (Diaz- Maggioli, 2003) and to keep their skills and career fresh (Alfaki, 2014). According to Blandford (2000) 'professional development refers to the planned activities practiced both within and outside schools to develop the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional staff in schools' (p. 6), in order to educate their learner more effectively and affirms the knowledge, experience and intuitive judgment they have cultivated during their career (Rodriguez & Mckay, 2010) to adjust their teaching to their students' needs (Diaz- Maggioli 2003). Furthermore, Feiman - Nemser (2001) talks about two aspects of professional development, First, he mentions the actual learning opportunities in which teachers engage in their time and place, content and pedagogy, sponsorship and purpose; and the learning that occurs from participating such activities; second, in the transformation in teachers knowledge, understandings, skills and commitments in what they do, want and able to do in their individual practice as well as their shared responsibilities.

In nutshell, we can say that 'professional development is a multi-faced life long experience, which can take place inside or outside the work place' (Hayes, 2014, p.5) undertaken to improve an individual's ability (Alfaki, 2014) to refresh their enthusiasm for teaching (Rodriguez & Mckay, 2010). At last we can say that professional development is the process of learning and learning again to apply new knowledge and skills that will improve their performance on the job. It is not limited to formal learning contexts only but also occurs in informal contexts such as discussing among teachers, independent reading, conducting action research, reviewing colleague's work or other learning from the teaching staffs and

students including reflecting on their own classroom teaching.

### **Professional development and innovative practices in ELT**

Past language teaching was mainly focused on the era of method. It was after the genesis of direct method in the 1920 which generally makes the beginning of this method era (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). During those days, for some policy makers and reformers, improving in teaching is mainly a matter of developing better teaching method (El-Fiki, 2012, p.3) as a result; language teaching pendulum has swung away from grammar translation to direct method then alternative methods (Richards and Rodgers, 2003) such as audio lingual, total physical response, communicative language teaching, to name only a few. These methods waxed and waned in popularity (Brown, 2001) as the changing winds and shifting sands (Marckwardt, 1972). Such shifts from one method to another only provide ample inferential evidence of lack of success (Sheen, 1994). As a result, ELT professionals realized that:

There never was and probably never will be a method for all and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities consonant with what we know about second language acquisition and which are also in keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself. (Nunan, 1991, p. 228)

Furthermore, 'one method that works well with a certain group of students may not be suitable for others' (Dincay, 2011, p.58). However, in course of finding better way of teaching ELT practitioners have made

the shift from teacher to learner (Freeman and Richards, 1993) from method based top down to teacher based bottom up approaches (Freeman and Richards, 1993) and holistic teaching (Myers and Hilliard, 1997) to integrated skill based approach (Oxford, 2001).

At last, It was at the end of 1980s, (Long, 1989 as cited in Fashim and Pishghadam, 2009) came up with an 'anti- methods' view of language teaching methodology and claimed that methods do not matter because they do not exist' (p. 39), which is also supported by (Parbhu, 1990) who claimed that there is no perfect method. So, the era of method is over (Brown, 1994b). This epoch was directly linked to the post method era: purchasing goods in super market according to your needs and money on your pocket! As a result, ELT professionals use a single or mixture of multiple ELT methods and techniques according to their needs/ demands, level of their students, available resources and so on. Some expert named it eclectic method and recently others e.g. Brown (2002), Kumarivadivelau (2001, 2006), Liu (2004), Akbari (2008) to name only a few advocate for post method pedagogy. It means there is not a single or perfect method for ELT rather we have to make our teaching perfect using various methods and techniques according to our own classroom context. Furthermore, these shifts and trends in instructional practices are regularly being changed and updated, which indicates the need of constant professional development opportunities for teachers

In recent years, development in ICT has expanded the horizons for teachers to learn, share and network (Hayes, 2014). New technologies like internet, twitter, you tube, skype blogs, mobile phones to name only a few have added not only stimulus but also

learners' engagement and interactivity within the classroom, on the way to school and at home, which has also transformed writing notes on blackboard to using a smart board or from audio cassette player to using multimedia technology. Moreover, today's teach-savvy students have a world of resources and information at their finger tips (Eaton, 2010) and use various kinds of technological devices that give language students the sense of freedom, motivation and encouragement (Genc-Ilter, 2009 as cited in Traone and Kyei-Blankson, 2011). Furthermore, various teaching websites provide training through webinars, share videos of classrooms and resources and encourage sharing among teachers across the globe through its face book and twitter comments (Hayes, 2014) as well. It means, there are many online recourses, where students can practice and learn language. In another words, web based learning provides new possibilities and trends for teachers and learners.

In conclusion, we can say that on the one hand, 'teaching is full of contingencies and it is also true that there is often a gap between our intentions and actions and that many decisions are outside the control of teachers' (Dincay 2010, p.59) on the other hand, successful teaching and teacher development cannot be managed by others rather it is the teacher who decides which activities and/or resources should be used and for how long it should last for his/her own development (Turhan & Arikan, 2009). There is an increasing demand worldwide for such competent teachers but there may not be sufficient professional teachers and they need to be professionalized and the current need is to develop teachers' professional expertise which can be enhanced through teacher's professional development.

## Review of related literature

Some of the recently carried out research in this field include Harwell (2003) who carried out the research entitled teachers' professional development: it's not an event; it's a process which refocuses on the importance of teachers' professional development in teachers' classroom behavior to improve the students' performance. Similarly, Moncada (2007) carried out the research on professional development of EFL teachers in Colombia: between colonial and local practices, the study suggested the need for more post method approaches, for locally produced knowledge to be recognized, and for the collaborative work of policy makers and national scholars to generate teacher development programs more adequate to our reality. In the same way, Kusumoto (2008) reached at the finding that adequate and appropriate teacher training is the key to any success in language education. In the field of TPD Shoquair & Shaaban (2013) carried out the research on strategies of professional development for EFL and technology teachers. The study revealed that conducting action research continually, using social networks (twitter, facebook and others) in exchanging viewpoints and experiences and participating in educational e-forums, were the most common strategies because they recorded high percentages of teachers' responses. Furthermore, Ahmed's (2014) study indicated that the trainers want training from native speakers to develop their listening skills, knowledge and attitude towards trainees. The same year Alfaki (2014), Khany & Darabi (2014), carried out researches on ELT and TPD. Alfaki reached at the conclusion that teachers have their own role to play in their professional development along with the role played with the government; and for professional development; both experience and reflective teaching are required,

sharing experience and ideas between colleagues gives teachers a feeling of community and belonging. The study by Khany and Darabi showed that principles-based and post method pedagogy were not highly applied in teachers' performance in the classroom. Furthermore, Ortactepe & Akyel (2015) highlighted the importance of awareness-raising activities for professional development programs as well as the need for multiple instruments to analyze the extent to which teachers' 'self-reported beliefs and practices concur with their observed teaching practice'. The present study attempts to investigate the training needs of teachers in an EFL context in Nepal.

## Objectives

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

- a) To investigate the training needs of teachers in an EFL context.
- b) To determine the training needs of the teachers to be incorporated in the training package.

## Significance of the study

Teacher training and professional development programs which depend on knowledge transmission models may not be effective in bringing about the desired change (Adey & Hewitt, 2004). So, the core of teacher education and professional development must centre on the activity of teaching itself, the teacher who does it, and the context in which it is done (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, Richards, 2008) and teachers voices should be heard clearly (Hargreaves, 1994) because they need wide variety of ongoing educational opportunities to improve their teaching skills. This study places the teachers in centre and tries to

investigate the training needs of teachers in an EFL context. I suppose, this study will provide teacher trainers with a wider repertoire of responses to be considered as they re-evaluate and reflect on their own training practices.

### **Methodology**

It was a survey. This study was carried out on 120 teachers. Those teachers were purposely selected from 60 different government schools of Baitadi and Surkhet districts of Far Western and Mid Western part of Nepal respectively. They were teaching English in grade 8-10 with at least five years of teaching experience and previous training experience. Out of 120 teachers 112 teachers returned the questionnaire.

For the collection of the data, questionnaire was designed to find out the teachers' beliefs, skills, practices and problems in their instructional practices to determine the training needs. Questionnaire consisted of the components of current instructional practices and issues in ELT such as 'integration of ICT in ELT, managing large classroom, students learning practices, assessing students, error correction and feedback including the medium of instruction, lesson planning and time management, action research and reflective practices as well as teacher training and post training support'. The questionnaire consisted of Forty-One closed ended questions which required the informants to indicate his/her response by putting the tick mark on one of the option given. Collected data was analyzed using the simple mathematical tool percentage.

### **The result and description**

Data obtained from the teachers was analyzed and interpreted as follows:

### **Integration of ICT in ELT**

Most of the teachers (72.32%) believed that computers and its applications can be very useful for language teaching and learning but they (64.28%) didn't know what kind of language teaching resources could be found on internet. Furthermore, teachers (62.5 %) were not familiar with technology. Moreover, large number (84.82%) of the teachers did not to know how to use ICT to improve students' learning. It showed that integration of ICT in ELT could be helpful for teachers' instructional practices but the bitter reality was that large number of teachers was neither familiar with ICT nor with its application in the field of ELT. It indicates the need of training on ICT and its integration in ELT. However, most of the (91.96%) teachers did not have computers at their home, but the data showed that they (60.71%) had internet access at least on their mobile phone. So, it is true to assume that they could use their mobile phone as a means of finding and sharing internet resources to enhance their professional expertise, which indicates the need of launching mobile Apps to enhance the qualities of ELT practices, especially in the remote and resource poor areas of the country where computers are not available at schools.

### **Managing large classroom**

The data showed that most of the (62.5%) teachers had more than 40 students in their classroom and they (98.92%) had to face a lot of difficulties in teaching such a large classroom, As the data revealed, large numbers of teachers need classroom management skills as well as designing multi-level teaching learning activities to handle the large classroom. Furthermore, 50 % of the teachers agreed that students learn collaboratively working in groups and pairs; however, they (64.28%) control the classroom and did not practice

interactive methodology because they (60.71%) thought that interaction among students in the classroom would disturb the other classes nearby. It means teachers had good sense of the positive aspects of collaborative learning; however, they were not skilled in managing students into pair/group and in the proper implication of interactive teaching methodology.

### **Students' learning practice**

Teachers (44.64%) agreed that students were not serious and pay much attention in their learning rather they gave much emphasis on solving old questions (model questions) and memorizing the same to pass the exam. As the data revealed, learning was considered as equivalent to pass the exam or grading up which was based on memorization of the fixed set of answers. Since the students did not pay much attention to their study it might be due to the lack of motivation. It indicates the needs of developing techniques and skills to motivate students in learning. It means teachers need skills to motivate their students in learning and teach them 'how to learn'.

### **Assessing students, error correction and feedback**

Analysis of the data showed that teachers (58.03%) were familiar with common students' mistakes and errors, however, large number (76.79%) of teachers were not confident in correcting students' mistakes and errors. Furthermore, they (48.21%) also knew how to evaluate students' language performance in a classroom. For example, they (55.35%) agreed that assessment for learning is an effective tool for improving teaching and learning. However, they (77.68%) did not practice these pedagogical skills very often in the classroom practically. It indicates that teachers possessed some skills related to student

assessment, error correction and feedback but they did not practice these skills in their instructional practices. It signals the need of training on how to put their professional skills in to practice. Moreover, large number of teacher (73.21%) did not ask Instruction Checking Questions (ICQ) and Concept Checking Questions (CCQ) to their students because they (73.21%) did not have any idea about it, but it is general truth that students cannot understand unless they get the concept and they cannot complete the task unless they understand the instruction clearly, but most of the teachers did not have the idea about ICQ and CCQ. It implies that teachers need training on asking ICQs and CCQs.

### **Medium of instruction**

Teachers (60.71%) had the opinion that English should only be taught through English but most of the time they (71.42%) use students' mother tongue to make students understand the text. It indicates that either teacher used too difficult language with their students in the classroom to understand or they did not follow the steps of teaching i.e. teaching pre vocabulary or setting the scene etc. It signals that teachers need to develop their skills to use simple 'classroom language' and to consider the stages of teaching language skills according to their students' language level and background.

### **Lesson planning and time management**

Teachers (49.10%) agreed that they were well skilled in preparing lesson plan and designing teaching learning materials however, they (49.10%) did not have time to prepare lesson plan. Furthermore, they (62.5%) could not manage time within one period (35 to 45 minutes) for effective teaching. It means, either teachers did not use their skills or they had to spend hours

to prepare a single lesson plan, though the interpretation is not straightforward, it indicates the need to strengthen teachers' skills in designing lesson plan practically in the real context.

### **Action research and reflective practice**

The result showed that only few (16.07%) teachers conducted the action research. However, large number (54.46%) of the teacher did not have the idea regarding action research. Furthermore, they (87.5%) did not carry out the self-reflection and share their (58.04 % of the teacher) teaching experiences among colleagues. However, they (66.07%) agreed that they had to face many problems in the classroom. All of which could not be solved in the training. The data showed that only few teachers conducted the action research and carried out self-reflection but the large number of teachers did not have even the idea of conducting the action research and practicing self-reflection. However, conducting action research and self-reflection are the key professional practices to improve teaching and bring out new innovation in the field of ELT. So, there is drastic need to train teachers on how to conduct action research and reflect on their own teaching to invent and practice their own context specific teaching methodology.

### **Teacher training and post-training support**

Most (64.28%) of the teachers agreed that they had learnt many teaching skills from the teacher training. However, they (75.89%) need guidance and feedback from the experienced teachers and trainers to put the theories into practice during classroom teaching, furthermore, they (75%) agreed that feedback from experienced teachers and trainers plays an important role in

successful language teaching and learning. Since large portion of the teachers need guidance and feedback, it implies that they were not confident in teaching and need further support. It signals the need to raise the confidence level of the teachers through mentoring and training.

### **Major findings**

Although teachers gain sufficient theoretical input in training programs, they have difficulties to put it in to practice. So, there is drastic need for training on ' professional skills management strategy including the integration of ICT in the field of ELT'. Besides, conducting action research is one of the key features that facilitates and hones teachers' expertise in their professional repertoire because it brings both action and reflection together in the pursuit of practical solutions which are directly related to the classroom teaching and brings changes in the way teachers perceive their teaching and improves teaching practices. (Negi, 2016). Action research also encourages teachers to collect and examine data about their teaching for critical reflection and improvement in their teaching which encourages teachers to become continuous learners with in their classroom and schools (Richards and Lockhart 1994, Mills, 2011 as cited in Negi, 2016). However, most of the teachers lack practical skills on conducting action research and reflective practice. So, they need training on conducting action research as well as practicing context specific teaching strategies including planning their lessons accordingly. Furthermore, most of the teachers are facing problems in large classrooms and are in sever need of training on designing multi-level activities, effective techniques to facilitate assessment for learning including asking CCQs/ICQs as well as the ways of giving adequate feedback to their students.

## Recommendations

There is an extreme need to integrate ICT in training module. Although, most of the teachers do not have computer at their home they have internet access on their mobile phone. So, mobile teach app should be launched for teachers and students to enhance their teaching and learning. In addition to the integration of ICT, effective strategies for teaching ELT in large classroom should be emphasized in TPD training programs. Most of the teachers have difficulties to apply the theoretical knowledge in their actual classroom. So, teachers' professional skills management scheme should be emphasized practically to put the theory into practice e.g. preparing lesson plan, effective use of available resources, increasing STT (Student Talking Time), motivating students in learning, checking students understanding i.e. asking ICQ and CCQs to name only a few.

During the training, it would be better to avoid giving too much emphasis on teaching, however it would be far better to focus on students' learning, conducting action research, sharing experiences, reflective practices and collaborative learning among teachers as well as teaching practices; consequently, teachers will generate theories themselves. Furthermore, it would also be better to focus more on what is happening in their (teachers') own classroom context, detect the problems and find the appropriate solutions. Moreover, training should not only be completed in the well facilitated training hall among teachers which is quite different from the real classroom context; conversely, trainers should follow up and help the teachers in their classroom while teaching in the real context.

## Conclusion

Teachers' professional development is essential for better learning output. Most of the teachers are trained and they have gained sufficient knowledge on ELT theory including new innovation in ELT but the bitter reality is that most of the teachers cannot put their theoretical knowledge in to practice. Most of the training program still give emphasis on introducing new techniques and innovations in ELT, but I reach the conclusion that teachers should be trained and given opportunities on how to put the existing knowledge in to practice according to the learning context, needs and available resources creating their own context specific methodology keeping oneself up to date with global practices in the field of ELT. The development of new training program should start from where the teachers are. And providing proper kind of follow up support and feedback is equally essential to help teachers to put theory in to practice.

## References

- Adey, P., & Hewitt, G. (2004). *The professional development of teachers: Practice and theory*. London: Kluwer Academic.
- Ahmed, R. (2014). Effects of BRAC training on secondary school teacher trainers. An unpublished masters' thesis, BRAC University, Dhaka. Retrieved from <http://dspace.bracu.ac.bd:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/3283/13177006.pdf;sequence=1>
- Akbari, R. (2008). Postmethod discourse and practice. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42(4), 641-652.
- Alfaki, I.M. (2014). Professional development in English language



- teaching: A teachers' view. *British Journal of Education*, 2(7), 32-49
- Blandford, S. (2000). *Managing professional development in schools*. New York: Routledge.
- Brown, H.D. (1994b) *Teaching by principles: Interactive language teaching methodology*. NY: Printice- Hall.
- Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New York: Longman.
- Brown, H.D. (2002). English language teaching in the post-method era: Towards better diagnosis, treatment and Assessment. In J. Richards & W.A. Renandya (Eds.) *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, C. (1999). *Developing teachers: The challenges of lifelong learning*. London: Falmer press.
- Diaz-maggioli, G.H. (2003). *Professional development for language teachers*. Retrieved from [http:// www.cal.org/resources/digest/0009diaz.html](http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0009diaz.html).
- Dincay, T. (2010). A quick chronological review of the ELT methods along with their techniques and principles: Choosing eclecticism from among language teaching methods Retrieved from <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/27/1603/17283.pdf>
- Eaton, S. E. (2010). *Global trends in language learning in the twenty-first century*. Calgary: Onate press.
- El-Fiki, H. (2012). *Teaching English as a foreign language and using English as a medium of instruction in Egypt: Teachers' perceptions of teaching approaches and source of change*. An unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Graduate department of curriculum, teaching and learning, Ontario institute for studies in education. University of Toronto. Retrieved from: [https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/32705/3/E1 - Fiki\\_Hana\\_A\\_201206\\_PhD\\_thesis.pdf](https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/32705/3/E1-Fiki_Hana_A_201206_PhD_thesis.pdf)
- Fashim, M., & Pishghadam, R. (2009). Post modernism and English language teaching. *IJALS*, 1(2), 27-54.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record*, 103 (6), 1037-1055.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K.E. (1998). Conceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 397-417.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J.C. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27 (2), 193-116.
- Freeman, D., & Richards, J.C. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2), 193-216.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell.
- Hayes, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Innovation in the continuing professional development of English language teachers*. British Council. Retrieved from: [https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/ec/files/E168%20Innovations%20in%20CPD\\_FINAL%20V2%20web.pdf](https://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/sites/ec/files/E168%20Innovations%20in%20CPD_FINAL%20V2%20web.pdf)

- Khany, R. & Darabi, R. (2014). ELT in Iran: Reflection of the principles-based and post method pedagogy in language teaching. *Procedia- social and behavioral sciences*, 98, 908-916.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward postmethod pedagogy, *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(4), 537-560.
- Kumarivadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, changing trends, *TESOL Quarterly*, 40, (1), 39-81.
- Kusumoto, Y. (2008). Needs analysis: Developing a teacher training program for elementary school homeroom teaching in Japan. *Second Language Studies*, 26 (2), 1-44.
- Marckwardt, A. (1972). Chinging winds and shifting sands. *MST English Quarterly*, 21, 3-11.
- Moncada, A.G. (2007). *Professional development of EFL teachers in Colombia: Between colonial and local practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/2550/255020488012.pdf>.
- Negi, J.S. (2016). Improving teaching through action research; perceptions, practices and problems (3Ps): Voices from secondary level teachers in an EFL context. *ELT Voices*, 6 (4), 18-30.
- Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. New York: Prentice- Hall.
- Ortactepe, D. & Akyel, A. (2015). The effects of a professional development program on English as a foreign language teachers' efficacy and classroom practice. *TESOL Journal*, 6.(4), 680- 706.
- Oxford, R. (2001). Integrated skills in the ESL/EFL classroom. *ESL Magazine*, 4(1), 18-20
- Parbhu, N.S. (1990). There is no best method- why?, *TESOL Quarterly*, 24(2), 161-176.
- Richards, J. (2008). Second language education today. *RELC Journal*, 39 (158), 158- 178.
- Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, Th.S. (2003). *Approaches and methods in language teaching (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Richards, J.C., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rodrigues, A.G. & McKay, S. (2010). Professional development for experienced teachers working with adult English language learners. Retrieved From: <http://www.cal.org/caelaneetwork/pdfs/ExpTeachersFinalWeb.pdf>
- Sheen, R. (1994). A critical analysis of the advocacy of the task-based syllabus. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28 (1), 127-153.
- Shoquair, M.S.A. & Shaaban, S.S.A. (2013). Strategies of professional development for EFL and technology teachers. *Educational Journal*, 2(6), 249-255.
- Traone, M., & Kyei-Blankson, L. (2011). Using literature and multiple technologies in ESL instruction. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(3), 561-568.
- Turhan, I.E., & Arikan, A. (2009). English language teacher development with

and without a teacher trainer: ELT instructors' perceptions. *E-journal of New World Sciences Academic*, 4(2). Retrieved from: [http://www.newwsa.com/download/gecici\\_makale\\_dosyalari/NWSA-1747-985-10.pdf](http://www.newwsa.com/download/gecici_makale_dosyalari/NWSA-1747-985-10.pdf)

**The author:** Mr. Janak Singh Negi is teaching faculty Asst. Professor at

Manilek Campus, affiliated to Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He has been involved in teaching and teacher training for last ten years. Mr. Negi is also a life member of NELTA and has served as a teacher trainer. He is particularly interested in ICTs for teacher development and young learners.

### Appendix 'A'

#### Needs of Training in an EFL context

S.N.	Scenario	Agree	NAND*	Disagree	No Idea
<b>Integration of ICT in ELT</b>					
1.	Computers and its application can be very useful for language teaching and learning.	72.32%	15.17%	0%	12.5%
2.	I want to learn about the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in English language teaching.	80.35%	13.39%	0%	6.25%
3.	I am quite familiar with technology.	25.89%	11.60%	62.2%	0%
4.	It is said that internet contains teaching and learning resources.	73.21%	17.85%	0%	8.92%
5.	I know what kind of language teaching resources can be found on internet.	11.60%	16.07%	64.28%	8.03%
6.	I can have internet access on my mobile phone.	60.71%	0%	39.28%	0%
7.	I know how to use ICT to improve my students' learning.	10.71%	4.46%	84.82%	0%
8.	I have both computer and internet access at my home.	8.83%	0%	91.96%	0%
<b>Managing Large Classroom</b>					
9.	I have to teach many (more than 40) students in my classroom.	62.25%	0%	37.5%	0%
10.	I face a lot of difficulties in teaching such a large classroom.	58.92%	16.96%	24.10%	0%
11.	I can easily control my students in the classroom.	64.28%	26.78%	8.92%	0%
12.	Students do not interact with each other in my classroom.	58.03%	26.78%	15.17%	0%
13.	Interaction among students in the classroom disturbs the other classes nearby.	60.71%	17.85%	14.28%	Uu
14.	My students learn working in groups and pairs.	50%	16.07%	22.32%	11.60%
15.	I have difficulties in classroom management.	56.25%	23.21%	16.96%	3.57%
<b>Students' Learning Practices</b>					
16.	Students give much emphasis on solving old questions (model questions).	42.85%	53.57%	3.57%	0%
17.	Students only memorize the answer to pass the	44.64%	28.57%	25%	8.92%

	exam.				
18.	Students are very serious in their learning.	17.85%	25.89%	44.67%	11.60%
<b>Assessing Students, Error correction and Feedback</b>					
19.	I know how to access/evaluate students' language performance in a classroom.	73.21%	26.78%	0%	0%
20.	I can access/evaluate students' achievement in various ways.	48.21%	43.75%	8.03%	0%
21.	Assessment for learning is an effective tool for improving teaching and learning.	55.35%	14.28%	1.78%	28.57%
22.	I am familiar with common students' mistake and errors.	50.03%	26.78%	4.46%	10.71%
23.	I am confident in correcting students' mistake and errors.	23.21%	41.96%	31.25%	3.57%
24.	Making mistake is harmful in language learning.	26.78%	0%	42.85%	30.35%
25.	I ask Instruction Checking Questions and Concept Checking Questions (ICQ and CCQ) to my students.	7.14%	4.46%	15.17%	73.21%
26.	I often practice the activities mentioned in the statements, 19, 20, 23, and 24.	22.32%	17.85%	49.10%	10.71%
<b>The Medium of Instruction</b>					
27.	I use students' mother tongue to make my students understand the text.	71.42%	20.53%	8.03%	0%
28.	English should only be taught through English.	60.71%	17.85%	16.07%	5.35%
<b>Lesson Planning and Time Management</b>					
29.	I am well skilled in lesson planning.	49.10%	33.03%	12.5%	5.35%
30.	I have enough time to prepare lesson plan	18.75%	12.5%	68.75%	0%
31.	35-45 minutes' time for per period is inadequate for teaching English effectively.	62.5%	17.85%	19.64%	0%
<b>Action Research and Self Reflective Practice</b>					
32.	Self-reflective practice is quite helpful to improve teaching and learning.	12.5%	14.28%	10.71%	62.25%
33.	I have conducted many action researches to improve my teaching	16.07%	6.25%	23.21%	54.46%
34.	Teachers Professional Development Training (TPDT) prepares teachers to use research based teaching strategies based on their own context.	2.67%	23.21%	55.35%	18.75%
35.	I face many problems while teaching in the classroom.	66.07%	14.28%	19.64%	0%
36.	All of my classroom problems are solved in the training.	13.39%	15.17%	71.42%	0%
37.	I share my teaching experiences with my colleagues.	41.96%	33.92%	21.42%	2.67%
<b>Teacher Training and Post Training Support</b>					
38.	I have learnt many teaching skills from the teacher trainings.	64.28%	20.53%	15.17%	0%
39.	It is difficult to implement new methods and techniques learnt in the training.	62.5%	19.96%	20.53%	0%
40.	I want regular mentoring from the experienced teachers and trainers.	75.89%	10.71%	12.5%	0.89%
41.	Feedback from experienced teachers plays an important role in successful language teaching and learning.	75%	10.71%	13.39%	0.89%

S.N.	Scenario	Agree	NAND*	Disagree	No Idea
<b>Integration of ICT in ELT</b>					
1.	Computers and its application can be very useful for language teaching and learning.	72.32%	15.17%	0%	12.5%
2.	I want to learn about the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in English language teaching.	80.35%	13.39%	0%	6.25%
3.	I am quite familiar with technology.	25.89%	11.60%	62.2%	0%
4.	It is said that internet contains teaching and learning resources.	73.21%	17.85%	0%	8.92%
5.	I know what kind of language teaching resources can be found on internet.	11.60%	16.07%	64.28%	8.03%
6.	I can have internet access on my mobile phone.	60.71%	0%	39.28%	0%
7.	I know how to use ICT to improve my students' learning.	10.71%	4.46%	84.82%	0%
8.	I have both computer and internet access at my home.	8.83%	0%	91.96%	0%
<b>Managing Large Classroom</b>					
9.	I have to teach many (more than 40) students in my classroom.	62.25%	0%	37.5%	0%
10.	I face a lot of difficulties in teaching such a large classroom.	58.92%	16.96%	24.10%	0%
11.	I can easily control my students in the classroom.	64.28%	26.78%	8.92%	0%
12.	Students do not interact with each other in my classroom.	58.03%	26.78%	15.17%	0%
13.	Interaction among students in the classroom disturbs the other classes nearby.	60.71%	17.85%	14.28%	Uu
14.	My students learn working in groups and pairs.	50%	16.07%	22.32%	11.60%
15.	I have difficulties in classroom management.	56.25%	23.21%	16.96%	3.57%
<b>Students' Learning Practices</b>					
16.	Students give much emphasis on solving old questions (model questions).	42.85%	53.57%	3.57%	0%
17.	Students only memorize the answer to pass the exam.	44.64%	28.57%	25%	8.92%
18.	Students are very serious in their learning.	17.85%	25.89%	44.67%	11.60%
<b>Assessing Students, Error correction and Feedback</b>					
19.	I know how to assess/evaluate students' language performance in a classroom.	73.21%	26.78%	0%	0%
20.	I can assess/evaluate students' achievement in various ways.	48.21%	43.75%	8.03%	0%
21.	Assessment for learning is an effective tool for improving teaching and learning.	55.35%	14.28%	1.78%	28.57%
22.	I am familiar with common students' mistake and errors.	50.03%	26.78%	4.46%	10.71%
23.	I am confident in correcting students' mistake and errors.	23.21%	41.96%	31.25%	3.57%
24.	Making mistake is harmful in language learning.	26.78%	0%	42.85%	30.35%
25.	I ask Instruction Checking Questions and Concept Checking Questions (ICQ and CCQ) to my students.	7.14%	4.46%	15.17%	73.21%

26.	I often practice the activities mentioned in the statements, 19, 20, 23, and 24.	22.32%	17.85%	49.10%	10.71%
<b>The Medium of Instruction</b>					
27.	I use students' mother tongue to make my students understand the text.	71.42%	20.53%	8.03%	0%
28.	English should only be taught through English.	60.71%	17.85%	16.07%	5.35%
<b>Lesson Planning and Time Management</b>					
29.	I am well skilled in lesson planning.	49.10%	33.03%	12.5%	5.35%
30.	I have enough time to prepare lesson plan	18.75%	12.5%	68.75%	0%
31.	35-45 minutes' time for per period is inadequate for teaching English effectively.	62.5%	17.85%	19.64%	0%
<b>Action Research and Self Reflective Practice</b>					
32.	Self-reflective practice is quite helpful to improve teaching and learning.	12.5%	14.28%	10.71%	62.25%
33.	I have conducted many action researches to improve my teaching	16.07%	6.25%	23.21%	54.46%
34.	Teachers Professional Development Training (TPDT) prepares teachers to use research based teaching strategies based on their own context.	2.67%	23.21%	55.35%	18.75%
35.	I face many problems while teaching in the classroom.	66.07%	14.28%	19.64%	0%
36.	All of my classroom problems are solved in the training.	13.39%	15.17%	71.42%	0%
37.	I share my teaching experiences with my colleagues.	41.96%	33.92%	21.42%	2.67%
<b>Teacher Training and Post Training Support</b>					
38.	I have learnt many teaching skills from the teacher trainings.	64.28%	20.53%	15.17%	0%
39.	It is difficult to implement new methods and techniques learnt in the training.	62.5%	19.96%	20.53%	0%
40.	I want regular mentoring from the experienced teachers and trainers.	75.89%	10.71%	12.5%	0.89%
41.	Feedback from experienced teachers plays an important role in successful language teaching and learning.	75%	10.71%	13.39%	0.89%

## **Role of (Local) Culture in English Language Teaching**

*Kumar Shrestha*

### **Abstract**

Since language and culture have muscle and bone relationship, the existence of one in the absence of another is unthinkable. But in practice, English language teaching has paid less attention to the local culture. It is commonly believed that the insertion of foreign cultural values is not in line with local cultural values. The insertion of local culture plays a vital role in the promotion of nationalism, different local cultures and local cultural wisdom. Similarly, it provides cultural identity and meaningful context for learning. Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to shed light on the importance of local culture in the English language classroom. In doing so, it aims at defining culture, language, shows the relationship between them and puts forth some pedagogical guidelines.

**Key words:** Culture, native culture, foreign culture, language

### **Introduction**

English is spoken all over the world. The spread of the English language began in the period of European colonization i.e. from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It eventually privileged the economic and political power of English speaking countries, especially Britain and America. English has been used for different purposes all over the world such as education, science and technology, commerce and tourism. The English language spread all over the world massively because of the fast pace of globalization. "This has helped them achieve the recognition of their identity from the global community and they are reciprocated by the knowledge and power" (Bhattarai & Gautam, 2008, p. 11). But, while teaching English as a target language

(TL) or foreign language (FL), a question arises whether to teach 'target language only', or 'target language and target culture, or 'target language and local culture' and so on.

The dialectical connection between language and culture has posed a challenge to the teachers and educators. Broadly, the issue of teaching culture with the English language can be categorized under four different views. They are:

1. Target language culture with English
2. No target language culture with English
3. Local culture with English, and
4. Culture free English.

The first group of scholars believe that 'target language culture' should be taught with English to acculturate learners into the English communities (Byram 1997, Byram & Flemming 1998, as cited in Choudhury 2014). The second group of scholars opine that there should not be any teaching of the 'target language culture' with English in the countries where English is an institutionalized variety (Kachru 1986, Kachru & Nelson 1996, Canagarajah 1999, as cited in Choudhury 2014). Similarly, the third view supports the teaching of local culture to facilitate foreign language learning (Kramch & Sullivan 1996, McKay 2003 as cited in Choudhury 2014). Lastly, the fourth group of scholars advocate that English has become a lingua franca, therefore, it should be taught in a culture-free way (Alptekin 2005, Jenkins 2005, Seidlhofer 2001, as cited in Choudhury 2014). These arguments, in for and against the teaching of culture, show that language comes with culture. In other words, language and culture are correlated and culture has roles to play in teaching language.

### **Culture and language**

Culture is the way of life of people who share it. It can be everything like language, religion, costume, food habits, social habits, music and arts. At first, Taylor (1871) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1). Culture is the way of thinking and understanding the world and our own life also. It can vary within a country, region, and society, sub-group and within a family as well. Culture is a crucial tool for survival too. Furthermore, culture is a civilization in itself since it is connected with the origin of people.

People not only use language as a means of communication, but they also express their values, belief and world views through it.

"When a language becomes extinct, a part of the cultural patrimony of humanity is lost" (Barfield & Uzarski 2009, p.2). In this regard, culture is a typical and a common identity of the people of the group who share the same world view. But it is a fragile phenomenon too since it is constantly changing and easily lost as it exists only in our mind. Since culture comprises language as its part and it finds its survival in the expression of language, it can be said that culture and language are intricately interwoven. Language has two roles: as a means of communication and a carrier of culture. Therefore, a particular language is a mirror of a particular culture.

### **Significance of local culture in English language teaching**

Generally, native culture of the foreign language learners can be understood as 'indigenous culture' or 'local culture' - though the two terms have slightly different connotations. The indigenous culture generally refers to the culture of indigenous people of a land employed for centuries for survival and everyday existence (Kramsch, 2011). Local culture refers to the culture of local people who have lived in a particular place for a period of time. These both can be the source of native culture while teaching foreign language because both can be sources of knowledge and can influence the language learners. Thus, throughout this article the author will use these terms interchangeably.

It is quite straightforward that teaching a language means teaching its culture too. The interdependence of language learning and culture learning is so evident that one can conclude that language learning is culture learning, and language teaching is cultural teaching (Goa, 2006 as cited in Choudhury 2014). Learning and teaching foreign language remains incomplete until and unless the learners learn culture



belonging to the language. Stressing the reality of foreign language teaching, Wang (2008, as cited in Choudhury 2014, p. 3) asserts, "Foreign language teaching is foreign culture teaching and foreign language teachers are foreign culture teachers". However, here arises a question whether foreign culture is enough to teach foreign language or not. What happens when the native (indigenous and/or local) culture of the learner is neglected while teaching a foreign language? For example, Sun (2007, as cited in Neff & Rucynsi 2013, p. 12) mentions that when a Chinese speaker asks "Have you eaten supper?", it is a conversation starter rather than a question regarding someone's eating habits. Similarly, in Nepali speaking community also, asking "Have you taken tea?" is not a question. Not knowing these sorts of cultural tidbits may cause problem in communication. Therefore, "in order to truly communicate effectively, the students of a foreign language need both linguistic and intercultural competence" (Neff & Rucynski 2013, p. 13). In this regard, a language teacher should be aware of both local culture, target culture and their norms and values. Along with target culture, s/he needs to integrate local culture and its norms and values in the foreign language classroom. Stressing on the need for local culture, Sudartini (2012) opines that the underlying reason of inserting local culture is for the sake of national identity. In this regard, local culture is local wisdom that promotes character education as well as assures national identity. The insertion of the local cultural values can be a way of preparing the learners' cultural background and identity that ultimately forms nationalism in their mind. Therefore, the sole emphasis on TL and target culture makes foreign language learning incomplete and handicapped. Highlighting the importance of native culture, Barfield and Uzarski (2009) say "integrating local indigenous culture into English language

learning not only educates learners about indigenous people in their own countries and through the world; it also makes learning English more relevant for indigenous students in those classrooms" (p. 2). Here local culture does not mean the culture of the foreign language learners only; it may mean the culture of his or her neighbouring regions. For example, Nepali speakers learning the English language can be taught through Maithili culture, Newari culture, and so on. These local or neighbouring cultures not only enhance their foreign language learning process, but also expand their knowledge of indigenous cultures. It evidently shows the need for employing the local culture along with foreign culture while learning a foreign language.

Teaching the local culture does not negate the value of teaching the target culture. Kramersch (1993) argues that a foreign culture and one's own culture should be placed together in order for learner to understand a foreign culture. Learners cannot fully derive the meaning in the absence of foreign culture. Similarly, local culture is necessary to construct their own meaning. It promotes the understanding of learners. On top of that, if the learners talk with the foreigner, the foreign culture and language is alright but if they talk about the local context in foreign language, the local culture is a must. Integration of native culture of the learners also helps promote the culture of learners. Showing the relationship between indigenous culture and foreign language, Barfield and Uzarski (2009) state:

Interestingly, despite the loss or future loss of an indigenous language, the 'roots' of that indigenous culture can be preserved through the learning of another language, such as English; just as the proper physical elements (sun, water, nutrients) allow prairie to regrow, linguistic and cultural

elements can be revived and reborn as well" (p. 8).

### **Guidelines for teaching (native) culture**

It is difficult to address a cultural issue in language classroom. It is challenging for teachers to have proficiency in target culture, TL, native culture and ways of teaching them. Byrnes (2008, as cited in Frank 2013) says many EFL teachers have had no formal training in incorporating cultural elements, and there is no universally accepted set of criteria that instructors can use as a guide. It demands research and renovation in the field of teaching cultural elements in foreign language classroom. Since the need of teaching native culture along with foreign culture appeared in the surface of ELT, different approaches have appeared on the surface. Choudhury (2014) claims that learners' own culture is not dealt with as an abstract concept; they need to be involved in it. He further says learners are encouraged to reflect their cultural experience in TL. It provides easy matters to express in the TL. It also raises the questions regarding which culture we need to teach first - whether the target culture or native culture. But it seems easy to begin with local one since the learners have its wider ideas. Byram (1997) urges teachers to start by reflecting on learners' own culture and only later introduce the target culture. The similarity between these two cultures can also help the learners to construct a mental framework and learn TL bits.

When the manner of teaching (pedagogy) comes, there comes the matter of teaching (contents) also. In this regard, Bodley (1994) states that culture is "what people think, make, and do" (p.22). For Bodley culture is a socially transmitted set of common belief that comprises mental behaviour, physical

concretization of mental behaviour and a framework for society to guide the way of doing. Therefore, the teacher can also make their students think what people 'think, make and do'. Teachers can make their students think about etiquette and manner, food and cuisine, religion, music, customs and traditions, etc. On top of this, teachers can ask their students to relate these practices of society with real life of the local people. Discussion of uniqueness of cultures, set values and beliefs, and their important aspects can make class lively and interesting. Regarding the 'what' aspect of culture teaching, Frank (2013) suggests, "Teachers need to go beyond introducing traditional holidays, food, and folk songs of the target culture and incorporate a framework that enables students to understand the social aspects of the culture as well" (p. 11). So, to provide comprehensive knowledge of culture, the teachers need to incorporate social norms, values, belief and other such practices in the classroom activities.

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (NSFLEP, 1999 as cited in Frank 2013, p.3) has provided a framework for students to integrate "the philosophical perspectives, the behavioural practices, and the products-both tangible and intangible-of the society". Frank has presented this idea as the 3P model of culture that includes: (a) *Perspectives* (what members of a culture think, feel and value); (b) *Practices* (how members communicate and interact with one another); (c) *Products* (technology, music, art, food, literature, etc.; the things members of a group create, share, and transmit to the next generation).

Here, the idea of Bodley (1994) 'think, make and do' seems similar to this. It is very difficult to recognize perspectives and practices since they are deep-rooted in the society. The product part of society is easy to identify through our sense organs.

Renaud and Tannenbaum (2013) have suggested four levels of cultural awareness. They believe that “cultural awareness is advanced through mutual reflection and interaction at four levels: (1) self, (2) family, (3) community, and (4) the region and world at large” (p. 25). Figure 1 below shows their concept vividly.

Figure1: Four levels of cultural awareness (Source: Renaud & Tannenbaum 2013, p. 25)



We feel comfortable with the culture and language of neighbouring areas. For example, if Nepalese students read any story from India, they feel and understand it very well. It is because there are cultural similarities, geographical proximity and even linguistic resemblance. The case cannot be same with any other British and American stories for Nepalese students. Thus, cultural, geographical and linguistic proximity also matter while learning foreign language and culture. Let's observe the level of cultural learning put forth by Renaud and Tannenbaum (2013) as discussed below.

### *Level 1 and 2: Self and family*

All people are members of at least one culture. Their culture affects how they think, interact, communicate and transmit knowledge from one generation to another. Therefore, in classroom, teachers should provide opportunities for students to talk about themselves and their families in TL. In a multicultural country like Nepal, sharing information about themselves with the peers brings diversity in the contents of the classroom along with cultural and linguistic tolerance. It also encourages the students to speak in the class in TL. At this level, teachers can encourage their learners to talk about their own and their family's likes and dislikes regarding food habit, music, sports, dress, work and duties, etc. using their TL.

### *Level 3: Community*

At this level, the students begin to relate themselves to the community in the classroom and the larger community around. Classroom in Nepal is like a community in itself since it embraces heterogeneous groups of students. Here, it is very difficult to find all students from mono-cultural and mono-linguistic background. Thus, the teachers can instigate the students to talk about their indigenous patterns of behaviour, values, belief, costumes, etiquette and manners, music etc. What differs in this level is it provides students with the opportunities to talk about their community in TL? On top of this, they share their ideas; may be the same ideas they practice at level 1 and 2 in pair and group also, and then with the whole class. Interview with the peer, telling stories that originate from the learners' shared personal experience (Language Experience Approach, Renaud & Tannenbaum 2013, p. 28) in the class are some of the techniques that teachers can use in the classroom.

#### *Level 4: Region/world*

Finally, students extend their cultural awareness as the participants of a larger region and the world. It helps them to find their identity and a sense of shared responsibility as citizens of the larger region. It enables them to extend their cultural knowledge and the knowledge of the world. It makes their language use flexible and versatile. This level can be taken as the threshold level between local and foreign cultures. At this level, the students not only talk about their own culture but also about foreign culture using TL. This level also shows the necessity of the local culture in foreign language learning.

The main aim of teaching culture in language classroom is to make students' intercultural communication possible. Byram (1997) suggests that interculturally competent people have a solid understanding of their own culture and how it has shaped them, and make connections between how cultural elements manifest in behaviour across cultures. For Byram, interculturally competent people are open and curious to other culture. They have the ability to critically evaluate the cultural practices and products of one's own culture and that of other countries. At this level, the students should have clear understanding of their own culture and the target culture. If so, they can make their culture comprehensible to the foreign language community. Similarly, they can make foreign culture comprehensible to their own community too.

#### **Conclusion**

Owing the inseparable relation between language and culture, teaching language is impossible without teaching its culture. It is widely known that the common practice of English language teaching has been focused for preparing the students to be

able to communicate effectively. On top of this, the students are also learning English culture. Although integrating English culture while teaching English is the necessary devil, teachers are rarely integrating local culture in it. Though further research should be carried out to know that fact, it can be inferred that the absence of local culture in foreign language classroom has created two problems. The first one is that the learners' foreign language competency remains incomplete. As different cultures may have something in common, the process of comparison and contrast can be an analytical tool to get mastery over the target culture/TL. Similarly, since TL learners already have a layer of world knowledge, sometimes the learners have to unlearn their previous knowledge and relearn new things. Their previous world view may have no roles or limited roles to play in learning TL. It can make their learning process slow and complex. The next thing is that it can make the students forget their own culture and adopt foreign culture as their own that can ultimately cause disappearance of culture and language. Therefore, keeping these facts in mind, all the teachers involved in foreign language teaching need to integrate the local culture while teaching foreign culture. However, caution is necessary while designing curriculum and teaching FL as this may inadvertently promote nationalism or ethnocentric view of the foreign language and culture. A delicate balance in the curriculum design and teaching learning process is required to ensure neither culture erodes the values of the other.

English is taught as an international language and/or lingua franca. Because of its wider use and popularity, it is unavoidable in our daily life. There are other ways round of using the English language. First of all, it can be considered that indigenous and local culture triggers

the learning process of foreign language by facilitating learning process. Proper use of cultural contents creates intercultural tolerance in the class, ultimately in the society too. It can also be a means to protect and promote indigenous and local language and culture. Similarly, insertion of indigenous and local culture preserves and promotes learners' cultural values and typical identities. It ultimately preserves their nationalistic feeling which is also one of the characters of educational goals.

## References

- Barfield, S. & Uzarski, J. (2009). Integrating indigenous cultures into English language teaching. *English Teaching Forum*, 47 (1), 2-9.
- Bhattarai, G.R. & Gautam, G.R. (2008). More eclectic and interdisciplinary approach to English: Call of time. *Journal of NELTA*, 13 (1-2), 11-14.
- Bodley, J.H. (1994). *Cultural anthropology: Tribe, states, and the global system*. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Choudhury, R.U. (2014). The role of culture in teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. *Express, an International Journal of multidisciplinary research*, 1 (4), 1-20.
- Die, G.S. (2011). Integrating local cultural knowledge as formal and informal education for young African learners: A Ghanaian case study. *Canadian and International Education/Education canadienne et internationale*, 40 (1), 20-40.
- Frank, J. (2013). Raising cultural awareness in English language classroom. *English Teaching Forum*, 51 (4), 2-35.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Neff, P. & Rucynski, J.J. (2013). Tasks for integrating language and culture teaching. *English Teaching Forum*, 51 (2), 12-23.
- Renaud, S. and Tannenbaum, E. (2013). Making connections: Language activities for creating interpersonal tolerance in the class. *English Teaching Forum*, 51(2), 24-31.
- Sudartini, S. (2012). Inserting local culture in English language teaching to promote character education. *Journal Pendidikan Karakter*, 2 (1), 45-54.
- Taylor, E.B. (1871). *Islam and Culture*. London: Cape.

**The author:** Kumar Narayan Shrestha, M.Ed. and M.A., is a faculty at T.U. and K.U., Nepal. He is an M.Phil. scholar at K.U. He has been associated with the field of teaching for seventeen years. He has published articles in different journals and presented papers in national/international conferences. His professional interests include ELT, research and translation.

## Do Learners Know 'What they Know' in EFL Reading?

*Madhu Neupane Bastola*

### Abstract

This research examines how realistic EFL learners are in making judgement of their EFL reading comprehension performance. Appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration have been used as frameworks in this study. Appraisal confidence refers to the degree to which learners believe that their answer to a test item is correct or appropriate. It is expressed in percentage terms (e.g., 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100%). Appraisal calibration examines the accuracy of learners' appraisal confidence. Being realistic about accuracy in performance (i.e. appraisal calibration) is considered to be an indicator of effective learning. However, despite its importance, appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration has gained little attention especially in EFL reading. In order to minimize this knowledge gap, this study examined the appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration of eighty-five EFL students studying Master of Education (M. Ed) with specialization in English in Tribhuvan University. An EFL reading comprehension test specifically designed for the study and appraisal confidence rating scales incorporated in the same EFL reading comprehension test were used as the tools for data collection. The findings of the study show that the students in general were not well calibrated. However, high performers were better calibrated than the low performers. The implications of the study for teaching and suggestions for further research are discussed.

**Key words:** EFL reading comprehension, appraisal confidence, appraisal calibration

### Introduction

In the present day knowledge based economy, knowledge plays a key role in academic, professional as well as economic success ( see Kumar & Welsum, 2013). In this context, the role of reading as a source of information and knowledge cannot be overstated as modern citizens are unlikely to succeed if they are not skilled readers (Grabe, 2009). In the same way, the need for being a skillful EFL reader has been a much desired goal for many especially in EFL context. As English is a global language, EFL reading plays a significant role in advanced studies, academic

success, cross-cultural awareness, economic, and professional competition as well as active and meaningful participation in modern societies (see Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Furthermore, it is an avenue for EFL learners to gain authentic exposure so as to increase their English language proficiency ( see Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Richards & Renandya, 2013). However, for an alarmingly large number of adult EFL learners, reading complicated texts is a daunting task, a great barrier for their success (Berne, 2004). For this reason, the pertinent question is: How can EFL learners' reading abilities can be improved?

For answering the question, first, we need to know what it means to be a skillful reader or to be successful in reading. Successful reading comprehension is usually defined as the reader's understanding of the message expressed by the writer (see Nuttall, 1996). Such understanding requires speed, efficiency, purpose, and constant interaction with the text on the part of readers (see Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). It also necessitates processing texts at lower levels (e.g., at the lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels) as well as at higher levels (e.g., understanding the overall organization of the text, interpreting the text according to the situation and context, using background knowledge, and making inferences). Though readers, through extensive practice, can develop automaticity in executing lower level processes in reading, their metacognition- knowledge about cognition-plays a significant role in the execution of higher level processes (Block, 1992; Casanave, 1988; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007). One of the components of metacognition that is shown to be positively associated with reading comprehension is learners judgement about what they can do and what they cannot do as readers (e.g Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010) and appraisal calibration (Phakiti, 2016). Therefore, in this study an attempt has been made to examine learners' appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration in EFL reading comprehension performance.

### **Appraisal confidence and its measurement**

Appraisal confidence is defined as learners' subjective expression of decisions about the likely outcomes of their performance in a test (see Harvey, 1997; Jonsson & Allwood, 2003; Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010; Phakiti, 2016; Stankov, Pallier, Danthair, & Morony, 2012). To examine appraisal confidence, learners are asked to report the accuracy of their performance immediately after they

provide a response to a test item (see Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010). For example, they may be asked to indicate their belief that a response to a test item is correct with a 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% probability (see Phakiti, 2016) as shown in the following example:

1. *According to the text, American dream refers to....*
  - a. *going to America for better life*
  - b. *having access to computer and the Internet*
  - c. *having a house, a car, and modern electrical appliances for having a better living standard*
  - d. *having per capita income equal to that of American people*

25%	50%	75%	100%
-----	-----	-----	------

Previous research shows that people usually overstate their knowledge which may be because of overconfidence effect (i.e. confidence judgement that is higher than accuracy in performance) or hard-easy effect (i.e. increase in overconfidence with the increase in the difficulty of question) (Gigerenzer, Hoffrage, & Kleinbölting, 1991). To explain the effect of spontaneous confidence, Gigerenzer et al. (1991) have proposed two theories: local mental model (LMM) and probabilistic mental model (PMM). They claim that learners first use LMM to solve the given problem. In doing so, they retrieve information from memory, and decide the most appropriate option by eliminating the options that they know are wrong. If these strategies work, learners can produce the correct answer with 100% confidence. However, sometimes memory fails and what is considered to be correct with 100% certainty may be wrong indeed. If

this happens, learners may come up with a wrong answer with a greater degree of certainty.

When LMM is not sufficient to come to an acceptable answer, PMM is constructed to answer the question. PMM is based on inductive inferences. According to Gigerenzer et al. (1991), to make inductive inferences various sources of information such as reference class (that is the class of reference that an answer belongs to) and probability cues. However, in such cases, as answers are based on inferences, uncertainty resulting in under or overconfidence is the outcome.

Phakiti (2016) has classified appraisal confidence in two types: single-case appraisal confidence and relative frequency appraisal confidence. The former refers to appraisal confidence related to a single test item whereas the latter refers to appraisal confidence associated with the whole test. In this research, the relative frequency appraisal confidence (i.e. the appraisal confidence associate with a test as a whole) has been examined. Appraisal confidence in a test as a whole refers to the average score for all the attempted test items (see Kleitman, Mark, Young, Lau, & Livesey, 2011).

### **Appraisal calibration and its measurement**

Appraisal calibration, which is based on appraisal confidence, refers to the match between the estimates of correctness and the accuracy of answers (see Harvey, 1997; Jonsson & Allwood, 2003; Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010). It expresses the correspondence between subjective and objective probability (Bjorkman, 1992). In calibration research, it is common to compare the mean scores of appraisal calibration and test success (Phakiti, 2016).

The same procedure has been followed in this research.

Computing calibration is fairly straightforward. First, both overall test scores and appraisal confidence in the overall test are converted into percentage. Then the overall performance in a test is subtracted from overall scores of appraisal confidence. On the basis of this calculation method, test takers are said to be well calibrated when their appraisal confidence level matches to their test performance (Harvey, 1997; Jonsson & Allwood, 2003; Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010; Phakiti, 2016). This occurs when the appraisal calibration score is zero. For example, if a learner's reported appraisal confidence is 75% and they secure 75% in the given test, the test taker is considered to be well calibrated ( $75\% - 75\% = 0$ ). In contrast, the mismatch between the accuracy of judgement and objective accuracy is called miscalibration (Maclellan, 2014; Phakiti, 2016; Stankov et al., 2012). For example, if the appraisal confidence is 75%, but the test performance is 50%, the learner is said to be overconfident ( $75\% - 50\% = 25\%$ ). In the same way, if the appraisal confidence is 50%, but the test performance is 70%, the learner is said to be underconfident ( $50\% - 75\% = -25\%$ ). As exemplified above, zero, positive, and negative calibration scores show perfect calibration, overconfidence, and underconfidence respectively. Research has shown that people are typically overconfident in the judgement they express about their performance (Arkes, Christensen, Lai, & Blumer, 1987). A group calibration diagram can be used to present test takers' appraisal calibration vividly.

Figure 1 presents an example of an appraisal calibration diagram in which the 45° line (called a unity line) represents the test performance. Calibration scores that fall on the line represent the learners who are perfectly calibrated. In contrast, the



calibration scores that fall above or below the unity line represent the learners who are overconfident and underconfident respectively. Though an ideal appraisal calibration score should be on or close to the unity line, a learner is considered to be well-calibrated when the appraisal calibration score is within  $\pm 5\%$  (Phakiti, 2016) or  $\pm 10\%$  (Stankov & Lee, 2008).

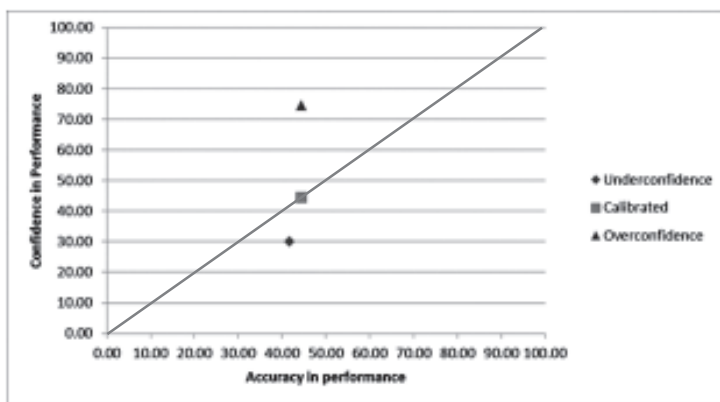


Figure 1. Appraisal calibration diagram for an individual (adopted from Neupane, 2016, p. 100)

## Review of related literature

Appraisal confidence has been widely researched in the area of psychology and is shown to be a component of metacognitive self-monitoring (Kleitman & Moscrop, 2010; Kleitman & Stankov, 2007). There is a body of research showing positive correlation between appraisal confidence and L2 proficiency (e.g. Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Stankov & Crawford, 1997). Clement et al.'s (1994) study on 301 secondary school children in Budapest concluded that self-confidence influences L2 proficiency both directly and indirectly through learners' attitude towards and efforts expended on learning English. Similarly, Stankov and Crawford's (1997) investigation of individual differences in confidence judgements showed significant positive correlation between vocabulary test score and confidence rating ( $r = 0.63$ )

though the learners' were somehow overconfident. Similar positive correlation between accuracy and appraisal confidence ( $r = 0.43$ ) was reported in Jonsson and Allwood (2003). Unlike in Stankov and Crawford's (1997) study, secondary school students' ( $N = 79$ ) in Jonsson and Allwood's (2003) study were found to be better calibrated.

Similarly, Stankov and Lee (2008) assessed confidence of 824 native speakers during the administration of reading and listening sections of Testing English as a Foreign Language Internet Based Test (TOEFL iBT). The participants took all the components of TOEFL iBT in the morning and participated in the selected versions of reading and listening along with

confidence rating during the day in the interval of four hours. The result showed somewhat stronger associations between reading accuracy and appraisal confidence scores (ranging from 0.469 to 0.605) than between listening accuracy and appraisal confidence scores (ranging from 0.358 to 0.490). Similarly, groups with lower performance accuracy showed higher overconfidence. More recently, Stankov et al.'s (2012) large scale study ( $N = 1,786$ ) examined the relationship between appraisal confidence and accuracy scores, prediction of achievement scores from appraisal confidence and self-beliefs of teenage secondary three (equivalent to Grade 9 in the USA) students in Singapore. Measures of self-belief questionnaires, achievement tests in English and appraisal confidence rating scales were administered online by using Qualtrics.Inc. The study showed a positive correlation between appraisal confidence and test scores ( $r = 0.56$ ), and the confidence to be a better self-belief predictor of achievement among the

other self-belief factors (self-efficacy, anxiety, and self-concept) included in the study.

Like appraisal confidence, appraisal calibration has widely been researched (see, Dinsmore & Parkinson, 2013) especially in the field of psychology. Some previous research on calibration has focused on methods of improving calibration (Arkes et al., 1987; Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser, 2009). Arkes et al.'s (1987) research which aimed at reducing the overconfidence of undergraduate students showed that by providing feedback on learners' performance (answer they provide to individual questions) and asking them to provide justification for the answer they provide, learners' calibration can be improved. However, Hacker et al.'s (2009) quasi-experimental study involving 137 college students showed no significant effect of asking learners to reflect on their confidence judgement and providing incentives in improving learners' calibration. The study showed that the learners' appraisal calibration differed significantly between higher-performers and low performers. They concluded that by increasing the subject knowledge of the learners, calibration can be improved.

Further research on calibration has focused on nature of learners' confidence (Dinsmore & Parkinson, 2013; Hadwin & Webster, 2013). Dinsmore and Parkinson's (2013) study on 72 (11 males and 62 females) university level students' calibration in reading using Bandura's (1986) (1986) model of reciprocal determinism showed that the participants level of calibration was at acceptable level and participants based their confidence ratings on prior knowledge, characteristics of the text, characteristics of the item, guessing, and combinations of these categories. Similarly, Hadwin and Webster

(2013) examination of the nature of confidence judgments associated with personal goal setting of 170 students enrolled in a first-year undergraduate course indicated that the learners who were performing better at university tended to be better calibrated. Previous research has also investigated the role of prior knowledge (van Loon, de Bruin, van Gog, & van Merriënboer, 2013) to primary-school children's (N = 103) commission of errors and overconfidence in these errors when learning new concepts. Findings showed that inaccurate prior knowledge affects children's learning and calibration as children were found more overconfident and less receptive to concepts from further study when they had activated inaccurate prior knowledge.

A very recent study by Phakiti (2016) explored the nature and relationships among test takers' performance appraisals, appraisal calibration, and reported cognitive and metacognitive strategy use in a language test situation. Two hundred and ninety-four English as a foreign language (EFL) students took an English test, which was designed to measure four language areas (listening, grammar, vocabulary, and reading). The students reported their level of appraisal confidence immediately after answering each test question. At the end of the test, they were asked to report their overall appraisal confidence and perceived cognitive and metacognitive strategy use in the test. The findings indicated that test takers were not well calibrated in all test sections and their appraisal confidence could predict just above one third of the test performance variance. Similarly, they tended to be underconfident in easy questions but overconfident in difficult questions and their appraisal calibration was not strongly related to reported metacognitive strategy use. Similarly, Neupane's (2016) study on master level students (N = 203) calibration on EFL

reading showed that they poorly calibrated as they were highly overconfident.

The review of literature shows that despite the abundance of research in appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration in the field of psychology, these aspects have got little attention in EFL reading. This lack of research warrants further research in these aspects.

### **Research questions**

The present study has addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of learners' appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration in EFL reading comprehension performance?
2. Do learners at different levels of reading comprehension differ in terms of appraisal calibration?

### **Methodology**

#### *Setting and participants*

This research was carried out at the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. The participants of the study were the students studying for the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree with specialization in English. About 100 students took part in the study but usable data came from just 85 students due to incomplete data. Out of 85 students, 46 (54.1%) were male and 39 (45.9%) were female.

#### *Research instruments*

In order to answer the research questions, an EFL reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence scales incorporated in the reading comprehension test were used.

### **EFL reading comprehension test**

For the purpose of this research, a reading comprehension test was prepared. Reading comprehension comprises a number of skills and strategies (see Alderson, 2000; Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Nuttall, 1996). For this research, the specifications of reading skills were prepared. Six different skills namely *identifying factual information*, *making inferences*, *getting meaning of words in a context*, *identifying main ideas*, *identifying purpose and attitude of the writer*, and *identifying references* were focused in the study.

An expository text - informational texts usually written in the present tense and containing a high number of technical words (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011)- was selected from Friedman (2008) for the purpose of the study. The rationale for selecting an expository text was that university students are required to read high number of such texts across the courses they take. The texts had the difficulty level of grade 13+, the basic level for university students, according to Fry's (1977) readability formula. In order to test the skills specified above, 20 multiple choice questions (each worth one mark) based on the selected reading text were designed.

### **Appraisal confidence rating scales**

Theoretically an appraisal confidence rating scale depends on the number of alternatives (k) given to a multiple choice question (i.e., 100/k) (Phakiti, 2016). Since all the multiple choice questions in the EFL reading test used in the current research had four alternatives, a four-point relative frequency appraisal confidence scales (i.e., 25%, 50%, 75% and 100%) were used. The relative frequency appraisal confidence scales were embedded into each test

question. The questions were designed to allow the learners to record both their answers and appraisal confidence estimates. The learners were instructed to rate their appraisal confidence immediately after they answered each question. Given the additional cognitive load that the students had in evaluating their confidence about the answer they had given, the learners were given one-hour time to complete the exam.

### **Data preparation and analysis**

To prepare the data collected from a reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence rating scales for analysis, three main steps were taken. First the data were entered into SPSS version 22 for PC. Overall scores for EFL reading comprehension test as well as appraisal confidence were converted into percentage. At item level each test score was dichotomous (0 or 1). However, at the test level as a whole the scores were continuous due to addition of the scores of series of questions (Phakiti, 2016). Appraisal confidence ratings were recorded at 25%, 50%, 75%, and 100%. At an item level, appraisal confidence was ordinal, but at a test level as a whole, appraisal confidence scores were also continuous because they were aggregated across various appraisal confidence ratings in a series of test questions. In SPSS spreadsheet, the score for a test item and its appraisal confidence were paired in the data entry. The descriptive statistics of each data set were first computed to examine central tendencies, variability, and distribution of raw data score. The reliability and internal consistency of the research instruments (i.e. the EFL reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence rating scales) were calculated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

To address research question 1 (the nature of learners' appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration in EFL reading comprehension), the mean percentage scores of the learners' EFL reading comprehension performance and appraisal confidence were computed for the whole test. Calibration scores were also computed to examine the extent to which learners were realistic in their appraisal confidence. Appraisal calibration diagrams were created by using Microsoft Excel. Pearson correlations were then computed to examine the relationship between test performance and appraisal confidence for the whole test. Similarly, in order to answer research question 2 (the differences between learners having different levels of reading comprehension performance in terms of appraisal calibration), a one-way analysis of variance (hereafter one-way ANOVA) with post hoc analysis (Bonferroni) was used as it is more robust than an independent sample t-test (Field, 2009; Phakiti, 2014).

### **Results and discussion**

First the preliminary analysis of the research instruments was carried out. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics as well as the Cronbach's alpha reliability of the EFL reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence rating scales. In reliability analysis four test items (q3, q7, q9, & q17) contributing negatively for the test reliability were deleted and only 16 items were submitted for further analysis. After removing the four test items, the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the EFL reading comprehension test was 0.60. It showed that the test was moderately reliable for the given participants. The moderate reliability estimate can be explained by the restricted range of variability in the students' performance (Phakiti, 2016). However, the reliability of the appraisal confidence rating scales was

very good (i.e.  $\alpha = 0.90$ ). The skewness and kurtosis statistics for EFL reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence were within the range of  $\pm 1$  indicating that the data were generally normally distributed.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and reliability of the EFL reading comprehension test and appraisal confidence (N = 85)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alpha
EFL reading comprehension test	25.00	100.00	66.39	16.92	-0.25	0.59	0.70
Appraisal confidence	42.19	100.00	82.58	13.80	-1.071	0.88	0.90

After the analysis of instruments, data were analyzed to answer the research questions raised in the study.

Research Question 1: What is the nature of EFL learners' appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration for the EFL reading comprehension test?

As discussed in the method section, the test scores and appraisal confidence scores were converted into percentage so as to make them parallel. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of students' scores on the EFL reading comprehension test. Despite the high observed maximum scores on EFL reading comprehension test (i.e. 100%), the test mean scores indicated that the performance of the students who participated in the test was moderate (mean score 66.39%). With respect to variability, the standard deviation was 16.92 and the scores ranged from 25% to 100%. As seen in Table 2, the students' appraisal confidence score ranged from 42.19% to 100% with the mean score of 82.58. This indicates that the students' average appraisal confidence score (i.e. 82.58) was actually higher than their

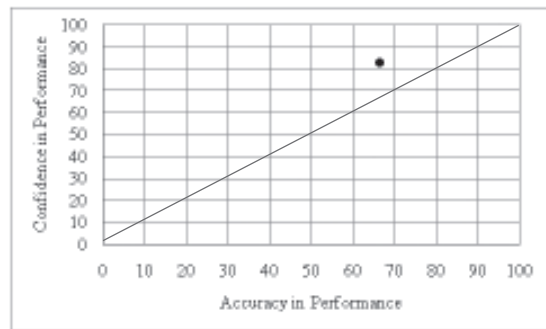
average performance (i.e., 66.39%) in the EFL reading comprehension test. Learners' appraisal calibration scores (obtained by subtracting test performance scores from appraisal confidence ratings in percentage terms) shows that they were overconfident in the EFL reading comprehension performance as the average calibration score was +16.19%. Figure 2 shows the group appraisal calibration graph of students in the overall test.

In the Figure the dot representing the mean appraisal confidence score is above the unity line showing that they were overconfident in judging their performance.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of EFL reading comprehension performance, appraisal confidence, and appraisal calibration (N=85)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
EFL reading comprehension test	25.00	100.00	66.39	16.92	-0.25	0.59
Appraisal confidence	42.19	100.00	82.58	13.80	-1.071	0.88
Appraisal calibration	-17.19	60.94	16.19	19.00	0.25	-0.64

Figure 2. Group appraisal calibration diagram (N = 85)



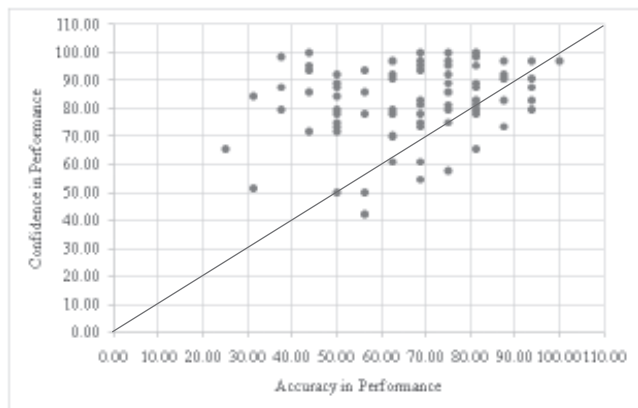


Figure 3. Appraisal calibration diagram of all students on the whole test (N = 85)

Correlational analysis between EFL reading comprehension performance and appraisal confidence

The correlation coefficient between learners’ appraisal confidence and actual performance can provide some indication about the calibration of the group (Phakiti, 2016). Table 3 shows the correlation between learners’ EFL reading comprehension performance and appraisal confidence.

**Table 3: Correlations between EFL reading comprehension performance and appraisal confidence (N = 85)**

	<i>Appraisal confidence</i>
EFL reading comprehension performance	0.25*

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As seen in Table 3, the correlation between EFL reading comprehension performance and appraisal confidence was 0.25 ( $R^2 = 0.06$ ). The correlation was significant at 0.05 level (i.e.  $p < 0.05$ ). This

statistically significant relationship implies that the students who performed better in the test tended to rate their appraisal confidence more highly. However, the correlation coefficient suggests that only 6% of reading comprehension performance in the test was explained by appraisal confidence. This shows poor calibration of the learners as correlation of 0.70 or above is considered to be an indicator of good calibration (Phakiti, 2016). In conclusion much lower correlation (i.e.,  $r = 0.25$ ) observed in the study suggests that the students were poorly calibrated. The findings are similar to those in the previous study (e.g. Hacker, Bol, & Bahbahani, 2008; Neupane, 2016; Phakiti, 2016).

Research question 2: How do learners at different levels of EFL reading comprehension performance differ in terms of calibration?

As discussed in methodology section, a one-way ANOVA was examined to investigate group differences in calibration in terms of their levels of performance in EFL reading comprehension test: high performers (70% and above), moderate performers (50 to 69%) and low performers (below 50%). Table 4 presents the summary of descriptive statistics different groups.

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics of group differences in appraisal calibration**

	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
High Performers	35	6.12	13.52	-17.19	53.13	1.04	3.06
Moderate Performers	40	18.00	16.92	-14.06	42.19	-0.59	-0.77
Low Performers	10	44.22	12.46	20.31	60.94	-0.77	0.18
Total	85	16.19	19.00	-17.19	60.94	0.25	-0.64

Table 4 shows that students with a high level of EFL reading comprehension were better calibrated (mean score 6.12%) than

the moderate and low performers. To find out whether the differences among groups were significant, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The skewness and kurtosis statistics were within the range of  $\pm 1$  to  $\pm 3$  suggesting that the group data for appraisal calibration was normally distributed. Table 5 shows the ANOVA of group differences.

**Table 4: ANOVA of group differences**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F ratio	Sig.	Eta squared ( $\zeta^2$ )
Between Groups	11539.13	2.00	5769.56	25.20	0.00	0.38
Within Groups	18773.39	82.00	228.94			
Total	30312.52	84.00				

According to Table 4, there were statistically significant differences between three groups of learners in terms of appraisal calibration ( $F [2, 84] = 25.20, p < 0.01, \zeta^2 = 0.38$ ). The eta squared of 0.38 shows 38% of differences in calibration can be explained by level of EFL reading comprehension performance. However, the ANOVA does not explain where the statistically significant differences occurred among the groups. To explain this, a Bonferroni *post hoc* test was performed. Table 5 presents the result of *post hoc* comparison.

**Table 5: Bonferroni post hoc test for multiple comparisons of groups**

	(I) Level of Comprehension	(J) Level of Comprehension	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Cohen's d	Percentage of Nonoverlap
High Performers	Moderate Performers		-11.88*	0.00	0.77	43%
	Low Performers		-38.10*	0.00	2.93	81.1%
Moderate Performers	Low Performers		-26.21*	0.00	0.37	21.3%

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As can be observed from result of the post hoc test in Table 5, statistically significant differences were observed between all levels of learners ( $p < 0.01$ ) in appraisal calibration. There was 43% difference between the mean calibration of high performers and moderate performers ( $p < 0.01, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.77$ ) and more than 81% difference between high and low performers ( $p < 0.01, \text{Cohen's } d = 2.93$ ) (see <http://www.uccs.edu/lbecker/effect-size.html> for the interpretation of Cohen's d). In conclusion, the one-way ANOVA shows that high performers (securing 70% and above) were better calibrated than the moderate performers (securing 50-69%) and low performers (securing below 50%) in EFL reading comprehension performance. In other words, it shows that EFL reading comprehension performance had significant effect on appraisal calibration. The findings corroborate to previous research (e.g., Hacker et al., 2008).

### Conclusions and implications

As discussed in the previous section reading comprehension is complex in nature. If reading comprehension is taken to be analogous to driving a car to reach a destination, lower level processes constitute the fuel and engine, while higher level processes refer to driving (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Appraisal confidence and appraisal calibration, which affect higher level processes, in reading show how good learners are in judging their performance. This research has shown that the learners in general were not realistic in making such judgement as they tended to

overstate their performance. In other words, they were not well-calibrated. One-way ANOVA analysis showed that high performers were significantly better calibrated than moderate and low performers. To put it differently, low performers thought they knew more than they actually knew.

Without being aware of what they know and what they do not know, EFL learners may not be able to bring improvement in their reading. As lack of calibration may have serious consequences, it is incumbent on teachers to promote learners' calibration. As previous research has indicated, teachers can provide feedback to learners and ask them to provide justification for their answers (Arkes et al., 1987) so as to help them bring improvement in their reading. They may also like to incorporate appraisal confidence rating scales in formative assessment (Kleitman & Stankov, 2007).

The present study had some limitations which future research may consider to address. First, all the participants in the study belonged to the same department. Incorporating large sample randomly selected from different contexts may improve external validity of the findings. Second, only single expository text was used in this research. As learners are required to read varied types of text, incorporating different types of texts along with different types of questions would be worth considering.

## References

- Akhondi, M., Malayeri, F. A., & Samad, A. A. (2011). How to teach expository text structure to facilitate reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(5), 368-372. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RT.64.5.9>
- Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arkes, H. R., Christensen, C., Lai, C., & Blumer, C. (1987). Two methods of reducing overconfidence. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 39*(1), 133-144. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(87\)90049-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(87)90049-5)
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.
- Berne, J. (2004). Think-aloud protocol and adult learners. *Adult Basic Education, 14*(3), 153-173.
- Bjorkman, M. (1992). Knowledge, calibration, and resolution: A linear model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 51*, 1-21.
- Block, B. L. (1992). See how they read: Comprehension monitoring of L1 and L2 readers. *TESOL Quarterly, 26*(2), 319-343.
- Casanave, C. P. (1988). Comprehension monitoring in ESL reading: A neglected essential. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*(2), 283-302.
- Clement, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1994). Motivation, self-confidence and group cohesion in the foreign language classroom. *Language Learning, 44*(3), 417-448.
- Dinsmore, D. L., & Parkinson, M. M. (2013). What are confidence judgments made of? Students' explanations for their confidence ratings and what that means for calibration. *Learning and Instruction, 24*, 4-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2012.06.001>



- Friedman, T. L. (2008). *Hot, flat, and crowded: Why we need a green revolution, and how it can renew America* (1st ed). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Fry, E. (1977). Fry's readability graph: Clarifications, validity, and extension to level 17. *Journal of Reading*, 21(3), 242-252.
- Gigerenzer, G., Hoffrage, U., & Kleinbölting, H. (1991). Probabilistic mental models: A Brunswikian theory of confidence. *Psychological Review*, 98(4), 506-528. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.4.506>
- Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching reading* (2nd ed). Harlow, England: Longman.
- Hacker, D. J., Bol, L., & Bahbahani, K. (2008). Explaining calibration accuracy in classroom contexts: The effects of incentives, reflection, and explanatory style. *Metacognition and Learning*, 3(2), 101-121. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-008-9021-5>
- Hacker, D. J., Dunlosky, J., & Graesser, A. C. (Eds.). (2009). *Handbook of metacognition in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Hadwin, A. F., & Webster, E. A. (2013). Calibration in goal setting: Examining the nature of judgments of confidence. *Learning and Instruction*, 24, 37-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2012.10.001>
- Harvey, N. (1997). Confidence in judgement. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 1(2), 78-82.
- Jonsson, A.-C., & Allwood, C. M. (2003). Stability and variability in the realism of confidence judgments over time, content domain, and gender. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 34, 559-574.
- Kleitman, S., Mark, K., Young, S., Lau, P., & Livesey, D. (2011). *Something about metacognition: Self-confidence factor(s) in school aged children*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Kleitman, S., & Moscrop, T. (2010). Self-Confidence and academic achievements in primary-school children: their relationships and links to parental bonds, intelligence, age, and gender. In A. Efklides, & P. Misailidi (Eds.), *Trends and prospects in metacognition research* (pp. 293-326). New York: Springer.
- Kleitman, S., & Stankov, L. (2007). Self-confidence and metacognitive processes. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 17(2), 161-173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2007.03.004>
- Kumar, K. B., & Welsum, D. van. (2013). Knowledge-based economies and basing economies on knowledge skills: A missing link in GCC countries. Washington: RAND Corporation RAND Corporation.
- Maclellan, E. (2014). How might teachers enable learner self-confidence? A review study. *Educational Review*, 66(1), 59-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2013.768601>
- Mills, N., Pajares, F., & Herron, C. (2007). Self-efficacy of college intermediate French students: Relation to achievement and motivation. *Language Learning*, 57(3), 417-442.

- Neupane, M. (2016). Calibration in EFL reading: Examining the nature of judgement of confidence. *Tribhuvan University Journal*, 29(1), 97-110.
- Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Phakiti, A. (2016). Test takers' performance appraisals, appraisal calibration, and cognitive and metacognitive strategy use. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 13(2), 75-108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2016.1154555>
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). (2013). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stankov, L., & Crawford, J. D. (1997). Self-confidence and performance on tests of cognitive abilities. *Intelligence*, 25(2), 93-109.
- Stankov, L., & Lee, J. (2008). Confidence and cognitive test performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 961-976. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012546>
- Stankov, L., Pallier, G., Danthiir, V., & Morony, S. (2012). Perceptual underconfidence: A conceptual illusion? *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 28(3), 190-200.
- van Loon, M. H., de Bruin, A. B. H., van Gog, T., & van Merriënboer, J. J. G. (2013). Activation of inaccurate prior knowledge affects primary-school students' metacognitive judgments and calibration. *Learning and Instruction*, 24, 15-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2012.08.005>

**The Author:** Madhu Neupane Bastola is a lecturer at the Department of English Education at Tribhuvan University where she lectures in interdisciplinary readings and second language research methodology to postgraduate students. She has completed M.Ed. in ELT and M.A. in English literature from Tribhuvan University, Nepal and M.Ed. (TESOL) from the University of Sydney, Australia. She is interested in second language reading, academic writing, self-assessment, and self-regulated learning.

## Effects of Written Corrective Feedback on Explicit and Implicit Knowledge

Mitra Samiei  
Tam Shu Sim

### Abstract

This study is an examination of the effect of the different degrees of explicitness of written corrective feedback (WCF) on implicit and explicit knowledge of the target structure (past simple tense) in the short term and long term. There were four experimental groups including a control group, in this quasi-experimental study which received different degrees of explicit WCF. This study sought to investigate whether or not written corrective feedback could also be effective in targeting the problematic error category in the texts of FL writers. Past simple tense was known as the problematic structure based on the result of the pre-test, though their level of proficiency was intermediate. It was found that both metalinguistic and direct WCF could affect the participants' explicit knowledge of the past simple tense in the short term and long term; the indirect WCF on the other hand, could only affect the explicit knowledge in the short term and the reformulation was the only kind of WCF that did not have any effect on the explicit knowledge of the past simple tense. Moreover, all the experimental groups' implicit knowledge improved in the short term; however, this improvement was sustained in the long term for the metalinguistic and indirect groups only.

**Keywords:** Written corrective feedback; explicitness of corrective feedback; explicit and implicit knowledge; experimental design; skill acquisition theory

### Introduction

Giving feedback is one of the most appropriate pedagogical techniques used in foreign language and second language writing. The underlying assumption for giving corrective feedback is that it will help learners to notice their errors and, subsequently, produce the correct forms. Corrective feedback is also a pedagogical technique teachers use to draw attention to students' erroneous utterances, which may result in learners' modified output. To date,

research on WCF has shown some interesting findings, but the contradiction of the results makes it clear that more research needs to be done. This study is an attempt to fill the gap in the literature on WCF and address the issues spelt out below.

#### *Degree of explicitness of written corrective feedback*

One of the aspects, which much debate has been centered on, is whether more or less explicit WCF is more beneficial in helping students improve their writing. It also led

us to provide a continuum of different degree of explicitness of WCF that will be explained later in the discussion. Following Norris and Ortega (2000), Polio (2012) uses DeKeyser's (1995) definition of explicit and says that feedback is explicit if either a rule is given or if the learner has been directed to pay attention to a specific form. This is what Polio (2012) believed that all methods of WCF are considered explicit including reformulation because students, at least in experimental studies (e.g., Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Sachs & Polio, 2007) are told to look at the reformulations and note what has been changed.

Bitchener (2012) believed that intuitively one might expect metalinguistic information to be the most effective type of CF because, if it provides explicit rules, explanations, and examples, learners might be able to increase their understanding and process more deeply the knowledge they have been provided with. However, this may be dependent upon (1) the nature of the information provided, (2) the frequency with which they receive it, (3) the proficiency level of the learner, (4) the ability of the learner to relate it to other linguistic knowledge that s/he may also be processing and consolidating, and (5) the complexity of the linguistic focus. Similarly, Ferris et al. (2013) assumed that more explicit WCF (with labels, codes, or other metalinguistic explanation) may be more valuable for some students than unlabeled CF. This finding may especially apply to L2 learners (e.g., those in EFL contexts) who have received a great deal of formal grammar instruction (that means grammatical rules are taught to them explicitly as a set of rules). They may benefit from WCF that includes specific terms or rule reminders, as the codes, corrections, or explanations may elicit their prior knowledge.

### *Explicit and implicit knowledge*

Another aspect of WCF that is considered in writing research is whether WCF helps to improve the learners' implicit or explicit knowledge. Krashen (1982, 1985) distinguished between acquisition and learning while Ellis (2004) and others have distinguished between implicit unconscious procedural knowledge and explicit declarative knowledge.

Ellis (2004) added Implicit language knowledge refers to knowledge of a language that may be accessed instantaneously during spontaneous comprehension or production. It differs from explicit language knowledge, which is knowledge about language and how the language can be used (Motoko, 2012). In general, disagreements concern the value of explicit and implicit knowledge in itself and the connection between explicit and implicit knowledge. This debate is important when exploring the effectiveness of error correction, because CF contestants (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1996) have stated that, if CF yields any L2 knowledge at all, this emerging knowledge could only be explicit in nature. However, Ferris (1999) believed that if the correction was clear and consistent, it would work for acquisition (implicit knowledge). Reviewing literature, Hyland and Hyland (2006) commented that "it is difficult to draw any clear conclusions and generalizations from the literature as a result of varied populations, treatments and research designs" (p. 84), implying that contextual factors influence the extent to which CF is effective.

Based on "Skill Acquisition Theory", Dekeyser (2001) asserts that explicit knowledge is needed for developing the implicit knowledge. He also claims that by deliberate and extensive practice the explicit knowledge can be changed to implicit knowledge. By practicing language

production, L2 learners are able to consolidate and automatize their linguistic repertoire and CF is believed to further assist this process (R. Ellis, 2010).

So, following Skill Acquisition Theory, Ellis (2004) and other researchers have differentiated between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. However, it is not known which knowledge (explicit or implicit) learners draw upon while they are writing and whether WCF is stored as unconscious procedural knowledge or explicit declarative knowledge in the students' memory (Sheen 2007; Bitchener 2008). There has been only one study (Shintani & Ellis, 2013) that has specifically addressed the effects of WCF on explicit and implicit knowledge. Therefore, this issue has yet to be investigated.

#### *Purpose of the study and research questions*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the different degrees of explicitness of WCF on explicit and implicit knowledge of the past simple tense in the short term and long term. The research questions are:

- 1) Is there any difference in the effect that different degrees of explicitness of feedback have on learners' explicit knowledge of past simple tense?
- 2) Is there any difference in the effect that different degrees of explicitness of feedback have on learners' implicit knowledge of past simple tense?

## **Method**

### *Participants*

The present study was conducted in the English language department of Payam-e-Noor University in Ardabil (Iran). One hundred and five intermediate level

learners (46 males, 59 female) participated in the study that ranged in age from 20 to 32 (average age: 23). Their first language was Azeri Turkish and second language was Persian, so the sample was hemoogeneous with regard to the language spoken. They were undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor's degree in translation studies. They were assigned to a writing proficiency test (PET), which proved that they were at intermediate level of writing. Then, students completed a background questionnaire, which revealed that all of them had received formal instruction in the English language for an average of seven years in high school and some of them had attended some English schools as well. Then, they were divided into five equal groups (20 in each experimental group and 25 in control group) randomly using numbers. There was a control group which did not receive any feedback and four experimental groups which received different degrees of explicit feedback on past simple tense which was problematic for them based on the pre-test. (It was believed that if teachers provide WCF on one or two targeted forms that were proved to be problematic for the learners, they could acquire a specific structure that they are ready to (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009), because the acquisition of some forms has been proven to follow a natural order (Clahsen et al., 1983).

One of the experimental groups received metalinguistic feedback (it provides learners with some form of explicit comment about the nature of the errors they have made) which is considered the most explicit written corrective feedback. The second one received direct feedback which is less explicit than the metalinguistic explanation; they received the correct form of the error they had made under the erroneous structure. The third experimental group got the indirect feedback which is less explicit than the direct

feedback, that is, it only specifies that in some way an error has been done by underlining the erroneous structure. The last group received the reformulation (which involves rewriting a learner's text, preserving all its ideas but removing their errors) of their writing which was handed to them in a separate paper.

### *Materials*

Four instruments of data collection were used in this study: 1) *Proficiency test*: PET (it focused on the underlying knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The exam included tasks such as completing gapped sentences, writing a short informal letter of 35 – 45 words based on 3 given instructions, and producing a longer piece of writing – either a long informal letter or a story of about 80-100 words) was administered and the result showed that there was no statistically significant difference among the groups ( $F = .24, p = .62$ ), 2) *Background questionnaire*: a structured short questionnaire adapted from Liebman (1992) was distributed to the participants to check for learner homogeneity, 3) *Picture description test*: picture composition tasks from Heaton (1975) were adapted to elicit stories from the students. Each picture sheet consisted of six pictures that described a short story. In accordance with N. Ellis' (2005) criteria, this test was designed to afford a potential measure of learners' implicit knowledge of the past simple tense, 4) *Error correction test*: this was adopted from the testing instrument used in Sheen (2007). It consisted of 16 items, each containing two related statements, one of which was underlined. The underlined sentence contained an error. The students were asked to write out the incorrect sentence correctly. The purpose of the test was to provide a measure of learners' explicit knowledge of the past simple tense.

## **Procedures**

### *Data collection procedure*

This study had a quasi-experimental design (a pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test design). The design of the study was similar to Shintani and Ellis (2013)'s study that compared the influence of direct WCF and metalinguistic explanation on explicit and implicit knowledge of the learners. In Shintani and Ellis' study, they had three groups that participated in three sessions: in the first session they completed a background questionnaire, the error correction test (as pre-test) and the first writing task (picture description). In the second session the groups received their respective feedback and were asked to revise and then write the second writing task. At the third session, the groups in Shintani and Ellis's study completed their third writing task, after completing the exit questionnaire and then sat for the same error correction test as at the first session (also used as post-test).

This study, on the other hand, was designed to take 11 weeks (Table 1). In the first week, a background questionnaire and the first pre-test were administered to find out the problematic target structure. This was followed closely by the second pre-test (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week) that was an Error Correction Test and first writing assignment (Picture Description Test). Then, the teacher collected the learners' written stories and the researcher provided the considered feedback (metalinguistic, direct, indirect, and reformulation for the experimental groups). After that the teacher handed the comments back to the learners in the next session that is week 3. Upon receiving the papers, the learners had time to examine the feedback and were asked to revise their writing. Then after a short break of 10 minutes in the same session, they were

asked to write the next story. The story was different from the first task. Then, in weeks 4, 5, and 6 the same pattern was followed. One week later (week 7), immediate post-test (same pre-test) was given to find out the effects of the treatment in the short term. Finally, in order to report the possible effects of the treatment over time, a delayed post-test (same pre-test) was given in the 11<sup>th</sup> week.

**Table 1: Procedure of the study**

Metalinguistic Feedback	Week 1	Week 2	Weeks 3,4,5,6	Week 7	Week 8
Direct Feedback	First pre-test (Picture-description test) and background questionnaire	Second pre-test (Error-correction) and first writing task (Picture description)	Receiving the respective feedback and revising the original writing followed by new piece of writing (Picture description)  *5 writing tasks totally	Post-test (Error-correction and picture-description test)	Delayed post-test (Error-correction and picture-description test)
Indirect Feedback					
Reformulation					
Control			No feedback		

**Data Analysis Procedure**

The scores of the Picture Description Test were calculated with regard to the percentages of forms correctly supplied in “obligatory occasions”. Pica’s (1994) “target-like use analysis” formula, i.e.

$$\frac{(n) \text{ number of correct supplies in contexts}}{(x) \text{ total number of obligatory contexts}} \times 100 = \% \text{percentage of accuracy}$$

was used to derive the accuracy percentages for all the participating individuals in the current study (e.g., [5/10] \*100 = 50). In the error correction test, however, one point was awarded for successful correction of the target form in each sentence. In consistency with the literature available on significant difference between the groups in terms of the accuracy in using past simple tense in the pre-test and delayed post-test. Conversely, the groups’ performance reached statistically significant difference in the immediate post-test. Table 3 below represents the descriptive statistics for the immediate post-test. It is revealed that the

*metalinguistic* group outperformed the other groups.

this type of test (e.g., Ellis et al., 2008), the distractor items which were not to contain any errors were excluded from consideration in scoring the correction test (that means the test consisted of 16 items and 12 of the 16 items contained sentences with past simple tense errors. There were also four distractors, i.e. sentences containing other kinds of errors. These

sentences were not given a point in the scoring. So the maximum number was 16.)

**Results**

*Effects on Explicit Knowledge*

A repeated-measures ANOVA was computed to show the difference across the three times (i.e. pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test), the five groups (four experimental groups and a control group), and the interaction of time and group for the Error Correction Test. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2: Repeated-measure ANOVA result for error correction test**

Effect	Value	F	Error	df	Sig.
Time	Wilks’ Lambda 0.338	97.037	99.000	0.000*	
Time × group	Wilks’ Lambda 0.498	10.318	198.000	0.000*	

The results revealed that there was significance for both the time-effect ( $F = 97.03, p = .00 (p < .05)$ ) and the time-group interaction effect ( $F = 10.31, p = .00 (p < .05)$ ),

but the effect of group was not significant. For a more in-depth analysis of the significance of time, the posthocpair-wisebetween group comparisons using Bonferroni adjustment is reported and interpreted. The preliminary results disclosed that there was no statistically

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics for the immediate post-test (error correction)**

Group	M	SD
Metalinguistic	9.55	1.43
Direct	8.7	1.65
Indirect	7.55	1.79
Reformulation	7.1	1.8
Control	6.4	1.97

However, based on the results of the post-hoc (Table 4), the *metalinguistic* group's mean score difference compared with the *indirect*, *reformulation* and control groups' scores was statistically significant. Moreover, the *direct* group had the second highest score in the immediate post-test and its difference with the *reformulation* and control group reached the significant level.

**Table 4: The effect of time\*group in immediate post-test (error correction)**

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Metalinguistic	Indirect	2.000	0.555	0.005*
Metalinguistic	Reformulation	2.450	0.555	0.000*
Metalinguistic	Control	3.150	0.526	0.000*
Direct	Reformulation	1.600	0.555	0.048*
Direct	Control	2.300	0.526	0.000*

### Effects on Implicit Knowledge

As it was already declared, in order to test the learners' implicit knowledge of the past simple tense, the Picture Description Test was given at three different times, as a

pre-test, as immediate post-test and as delayed post-test.

**Table 5: Repeated-measures ANOVA result for picture description test**

Effect	Value	F	Error df	Sig.
Time Wilks' Lambda	0.504	48.660	99.000	0.000*
Time×group Wilks' Lambda	0.752	3.797	198.000	0.000*

The scores obtained for the repeated-measures ANOVA clarified that there was significant effect for time ( $F = 48.66, p = .00$ ) and also a significant time-group effect ( $F = 3.79, p = .00$ ) but the group effect did not reach a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) (Table 5). Therefore, the post hoc pair-wise between group comparisons using Bonferroni adjustment were administered again similar to the Error Correction Test. The result is reported in Table 6 and 8.

**Table 6: The effect of time\*group in immediate post-test (picture description test)**

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Control	Metalinguistic	-20.109	3.823	0.000*
Control	Direct	-20.588	3.823	0.000*
Control	Indirect	-22.997	3.823	0.000*
Control	Reformulation	-16.297	3.823	0.000*

Post hoc pair-wise between group comparisons using Bonferroni adjustment revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups in the pre-test in terms of the accuracy in past simple tense. However, Table 5 reveals that in the immediate post-test there was statistically significant difference between the control group and all the experimental groups ( $p = .00$ ).



**Table 7: Descriptive statistics for immediate post-test (picture description test)**

Group	M	SD
Metalinguistic	79.57	14.17
Direct	80.05	11.49
Indirect	82.46	9.97
Reformulation	66.27	14.16
Control	59.46	9.45

As Table 7 illustrates, the descriptive statistics for the immediate post-test shows that all the experimental groups (*metalinguistic*, *direct*, *indirect*, and *reformulation*) outperformed the control group in terms of the accurate use of past simple tense. There was also a statistically significant difference between the control group and the *metalinguistic* group in the delayed post-test (Table 8).

**Table 8: The effect of time\*group in delayed post-test (picture description)**

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Control	Metalinguistic	-15.994	3.788	0.001*

**Table 9: Descriptive statistics for delayed post-test (picture description test)**

Group	M	SD
Metalinguistic	73.94	13.90
Direct	65.83	12.10
Indirect	65.94	11.58
Reformulation	75.76	17.58
Control	57.94	11.40

According to the Table 8, the descriptive statistics for the delayed post-test reveals that similar to the immediate post-test, the

control group had the lowest score compared to the experimental groups, though its difference only with the *metalinguistic* group was statistically significant (Table 8). To answer the research questions, the results suggest that there was a difference in the effect that different degrees of explicit WCF had on the development of the learners' explicit and implicit knowledge of the past simple tense. In the first place, both *metalinguistic* and *direct* WCF could affect the participants' explicit knowledge of the past simple tense in the short term effect and long term effect; the *indirect* WCF on the other hand, could only affect it in the short term and the *reformulation* was the only kind of WCF that did not have any effect on the explicit knowledge of the past simple tense (Table 10).

**Table 10: Summary of the results and answers to the research questions**

	Feedback Types	Explicit Knowledge	Implicit Knowledge
More explicit	Metalinguistic WCF	yes (short & long term)	yes (short & long term)
	Direct WCF	yes (short & long term)	no (short & long term)
	Indirect WCF	yes (short term)	yes (short & long term)
Less explicit	Reformulation WCF	No	no (short term only)

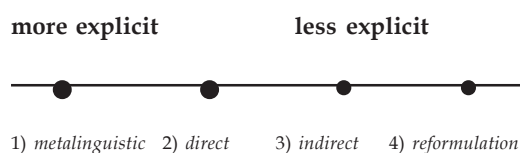
In the second place, all the experimental groups' implicit knowledge improved in the short term, but this improvement was sustained in the long term for the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* group. So, it suggests that the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF could be affective in improving the implicit knowledge of the past simple tense. The findings of the study propose, then, that if the goal of written error feedback is to develop learners' explicit knowledge, the *metalinguistic* and *direct* WCF may be a more effective means of achieving this than the *indirect* and *reformulation* WCF. Furthermore, if it aims to improve the

implicit knowledge, the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF might be more effectual.

## Discussion

### *Degree of Explicitness of WCF*

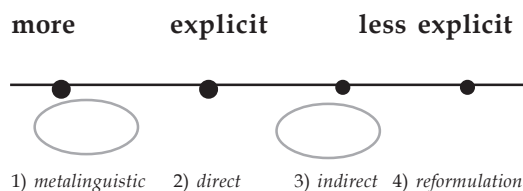
In this study, based on the information provided by the teacher about the error, each type of WCF is placed in a continuum ranging from more explicit to less explicit: 1) *metalinguistic* 2) *direct* 3) *indirect* 4) *reformulation* as the figure (1) below shows:



**Figure 1:** Continuum for the degree of explicitness of WCF

Although, there are studies that found no difference between the different types of WCF (e.g. Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984; Robb et al., 1986), different research findings in the literature suggest various implications on the superiority of WCF techniques (e.g. Bitchener et al., 2005; Chandler, 2003; R. Ellis, 2008). As far as can be determined, there is no single study which investigated the continuum of written corrective feedback from the perspective of the degree of explicitness specifically, although the degree of explicitness of oral corrective feedback has already been investigated in the literature (for example: Carroll and Swain, 1993). Their finding was different from the findings of this study. In this study, all the experimental groups performed better than the control group in the short term. The metalinguistic and indirect WCF did not lose their effect in the long term. The findings from the delayed post-test confirmed the superiority of the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF over

*reformulation* and *direct* WCF in the long term. *Metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF had durable positive effects on subject's performance in both of the tests.



**Figure 2:** Superiority of the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF

As the figure (2) above shows, there was not a linear pattern in the efficacy of the different degrees of the explicitness of WCF. While the most explicit kind of WCF (*metalinguistic*) was effective in improving the target structure (past simple tense), the less explicit kind of WCF (*indirect*) has the same effect as well. Although Sheen's (2010) postulation that the degree of explicitness plays a pivotal role in making feedback beneficial for the learners is seconded here; other reasons and factors for the different efficacy of each feedback type are possible and are explained below.

In this EFL study, one of the potential reasons for the efficacy of *metalinguistic* WCF over the other types of WCF could be due to familiarity. Most of the schools in Iran practice *metalinguistic* WCF. Another possible aspect is the selection of target form to be corrected. Further, Schmidt (1995, 2001) distinguished awareness at the level of noticing and at the level of understanding, which is a higher level of awareness. Noticing involves simply attending to exemplars of specific forms in the input, understanding entails knowing a rule or principle that governs that aspect of language. Thus, it can be argued that whereas both *metalinguistic* and *direct* WCF

are likely to promote awareness as noticing, only *metalinguistic* comments promote awareness with understanding. An important aspect of the metalinguistic feedback is that students examine and understand the rules governing the linguistic structures they used so that they can employ the correct forms in the future. Based on the results of the study it is apparent that direct feedback only is not enough for students to improve their writing skills because they do not have to reflect on the corrected mistakes. They simply copy the corrected speech into the new draft. Direct WCF is not as effective in helping students avoid errors because it only draws their attention to an error in grammatical category, but not to a rule. Besides the metalinguistic type of WCF, indirect WCF, which assigned the responsibility for correction to learners themselves was also effective in the long term. In this respect, the findings of this study seemed slightly different from the literature. Rare studies on comparing the durable effects of different types of WCF revealed the superiority of indirect corrective feedback over time (for example Ferris et al., 2000 and Chandler, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, in general, the *reformulation* and *direct* groups' performance was improved just in the short term. The possible explanation for the inefficacy of *reformulation* in the long term might relate to the very nature of the reformulation process which usually entails that students may not have noticed the correction of their errors. In addition, as noted by Sachs and Polio (2007) in relation to their own data, the greater visual saliency which characterizes error corrections may facilitate uptake. Along the same lines, Sheen (2010) goes as far as suggesting that more explicit CF types "enable learners to notice the gap between their non-target output and the correct form; this, in turn, facilitates interlanguage development" (p. 226).

Furthermore, a caveat suggested in research is that some types of feedback are more useful in treating some types of error than others, though there is no definite answer to it. In line with the Bitchener et al. s' (2005) findings, this study suggested that treatable errors such as verb tense should be treated with *metalinguistic* or *indirect* WCF for improving learners' performance in the long term.

Last but not the least, the degree of explicitness required may hinge upon other factors such as learners' levels of proficiency (e.g., Philp, 2003; VanPatten, 1990), readiness for certain linguistic features (e.g., Han, 2002, Mackey & Philp, 1998; Philp, 2003), the linguistic features targeted (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Gass et al., 2003; Schmidt, 1995; VanPatten, 1994), and the contexts where feedback is provided (e.g., Ellis et al., 2001; Nicholas et al., 2001; Oliver & Mackey, 2003). Such factors merit careful examination to isolate optimal ways to promote learners' noticing of the gap. Such explorations would form the basis for the future studies in WCF.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the different degrees of explicitness of WCF on explicit and implicit knowledge of the past simple tense in the short term and long term. The results confirmed the superiority of the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF over *reformulation* and *direct* WCF in long term. *Metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF had durable positive effects on subjects' performance in both of the tests. Moreover, the result of the Picture Description Test as a measure of implicit knowledge revealed that the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF were the most effective WCF types in developing the implicit knowledge of the learners. Measuring the explicit knowledge by the Error Correction Test, it was found that the

provision of more explicit WCF (*metalinguistic* and *direct*) resulted in significantly greater accuracy when the past simple tense was tested in the short term and long term. So, the more explicit types of WCF (*metalinguistic* and *direct*) could affect the explicit knowledge of the past simple tense positively. It is worthwhile to mention that the indirect WCF (less explicit than the metalinguistic and direct WCF) just has a short term effect on improving the explicit knowledge and the least explicit kind of the WCF, that is, reformulation had no effect on the explicit knowledge of the past simple tense.

Overall, the study favored written corrective feedback in general and *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF more specifically for the Iranian EFL context. The findings of this study not only indicate the immediate effect of written corrective feedback on writing but also the extent to which the level of accuracy was retained over a month period without additional corrective feedback and classroom instruction. *Metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF could lead to the improvement of the implicit knowledge of the past simple tense. It can be claimed that this long term effect means that the learners have acquired the target structure. Nevertheless, the findings of this study proposes that if the goal of WCF is to develop learners' explicit knowledge of the past simple tense, the *metalinguistic* and *direct* WCF may be a more effective means of achieving this than the *indirect* and *reformulation* WCF. Furthermore, if it aims to improve the implicit knowledge of the past simple tense, the *metalinguistic* and *indirect* WCF might be more effectual.

## References

- Bitchenner, J. (2008). Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17(2), 102-118.
- Bitchenner, J. (2012). A reflection on 'the language learning potential' of written CF. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(4), 348-363.
- Bitchenner, J., & Knoch, U. (2008). The value of written corrective feedback for migrant and international students. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 409-431.
- Bitchenner, J., & Knoch, U. (2009). The value of a focused approach to written corrective feedback. *ELT Journal*, 63(3), 204-211.
- Bitchenner, J., Young, S., & Cameron, D. (2005). The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14, 191-205.
- Carroll, S., & Swain, M. (1993). Explicit and implicit negative feedback: An empirical study of the learning of linguistic generalization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 357-386.
- Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 267-296.
- Clahsen, H., Meisel, J. M., & Pienemann, M. (1983). *Deutsch als Zweitsprache: Der Spracherwerb ausländischer Arbeiter*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- DeKeyser, R. (1995). Learning second language grammar rules: An experiment with a miniature linguistic system. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 17, 379-410.
- DeKeyser, R. (2001). Automaticity and automatization. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and second language instruction* (pp. 125-151). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

- Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, N. (2005). At the interface: Dynamic interactions of explicit and implicit language knowledge. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 27(2), 305-352.
- Ellis, R. (2004). The definition and measurement of L2 explicit knowledge. *Language Learning*, 52(2), 227-75.
- Ellis, R. (2008). A typology of written corrective feedback types. *ELT Journal*, 63(2), 97-107.
- Ellis, R. (2010). A framework for investigating oral and written corrective feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2), 335-349.
- Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Learner uptake in communicative ESL lessons. *Language Learning*, 51, 281-318.
- Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System*, 36, 353-371.
- Ferris, D. R. (1999). The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8(1), 1-11.
- Ferris, D. R., Liu, H., Sinha, A., & Senna, M. (2013). Written corrective feedback for individual L2 writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22, 307-329.
- Gass, S., Svetics, I., & Lemelin, S. (2003). Differential effects of attention. *Language Learning*, 53, 497-545.
- Han, Z. H. (2002). A study of the impact of recasts on tense consistency in L2 output. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36, 543-572.
- Heaton, J. (1975). *Beginning composition through pictures*. London: Longman.
- Hyland, F., & Hyland, K. (2006). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis*. Torrance, CA: Laredo Publishing Company.
- Lalande, J. F. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal*, 66, 140-149.
- Liebman, J. D., (1992). Toward a new contrastive rhetoric: differences between Arabic and Japanese rhetorical instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 1(2), 141-165.
- Mackey, A. & Philp, J. (1998). Conversational interaction and second language development: Recasts, responses, and red herrings? *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 338-356.
- Motoko, A. (2012). Evaluating the effectiveness of explicit instruction on implicit and explicit L2 knowledge. *Language Teaching Research*, 16 (1), 9-37.
- Nicholas, H., Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2001). Recasts as feedback to language learners. *Language Learning*, 51, 719-758.
- Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 50, 417-527.
- Oliver, R., & Mackey, A. (2003). Interactional context and feedback in child ESL classrooms. *Modern Language Journal*, 87, 519-533.

- Philp, J. (2003). Constraints on "noticing the gap". *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 25(01), 99-126.
- Pica, T. (1994). Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second-language learning condition, processes, and outcomes? *Language Learning*, 44, 493-527.
- Polio, C. (2012). The relevance of second language acquisition theory to the written error correction debate. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21(4), 375-389.
- Qi, D. S., & Lapkin, S. (2001). Exploring the role of noticing in a three-stage second language writing task. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10, 277-303.
- Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *Tesol Quarterly*, 20(1), 83-96.
- Sachs, R., & Polio, C. (2007). Learners' uses of two types of written feedback on an L2 writing revision task. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 29, 67-100.
- Schmidt, R. (1995). *Attention & awareness in foreign language learning*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- Schmidt, R. (2001). Attention. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Cognition and Second Language Instruction* (pp. 3-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Semke, H. (1984). The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17, 195-202.
- Sheen, Y. (2007). The effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners' acquisition of articles. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41, 255-283.
- Sheen, Y. (2010). Differential effects of oral and written corrective feedback in the ESL classroom. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32, 201-234.
- Shintani, N., & Ellis, R. (2013). The comparative effect of direct written corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on learners' explicit and implicit knowledge of the English indefinite article. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22, 286-306.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 269-327.
- VanPatten, B. (1990). Attending to form and content in the input: An experiment in consciousness. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 12, 287-301.
- VanPatten, B. (1994). Evaluating the role of consciousness in second language acquisition: Terms, linguistic features and research methodology. *AILA Review*, 11, 27-36.

**The authors:** Mitra Samiei is a PhD candidate in Language Learning and Assessment at the University of Malaya in Malaysia. She has been supervised by Dr. Tam Shu Sim during her PhD journey. She has done her Masters in English Language Education and Bachelors in English Language and Literature at Azad University in Iran. Her area of interest is Written Corrective Feedback.

**Tam Shu Sim** is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. The faculty is currently ranked top 100 in the QS ranking for the subject, English language. She publishes in the field of Applied Linguistics specifically, English as a second language and she supervises both MA and PhD students.

## Extensive Reading in Foreign Language Classes

*Nabaraj Neupane*

### Abstract

Extensive reading (ER) has been advocated for having numerous benefits and values to foreign language classes. The Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University has prescribed a wide range of textbooks, reference materials, and web-based materials, especially for Masters' students. Besides, these learners are required to read out-of-the-course materials, too. These contexts call for extensive reading on the part of the learners. Based on this background, the present study aimed to explore the learners' choice for reading materials, their purposes of reading, and the expected teacher roles. The study followed the survey research design. The respondents were 100 M.Ed. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year English students of the academic year 2014-15 A.D. of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. The respondents preferred easy, interesting, informative and enjoyable materials to read; their objective of reading was to obtain general information; and they expected teachers to be prompter, participant, counselor, and role model.

**Keywords:** Extensive reading, materials, objectives, teacher roles

### Introduction

The term 'Extensive Reading' was introduced by Palmer in 1917, distinguishing it from intensive reading in terms of the amount of reading, degree of depth, and the extent of comprehension. ER is founded in Krashen's (1982 & 1985) Input hypothesis which shows the necessity of comprehensible input for second language acquisition; and pleasure hypothesis which claims that the enjoyable activities provide comprehensible input and lower affective filters. ER is also associated to the Book Strap hypothesis which asserts on learners' initial successful experiences; and the Flow theory which concedes learners' deep involvement in reading (Chien & Yu, 2015).

Extensive reading (ER) is an approach to reading in which the readers enter into the text for obtaining pleasure and general information. ER is useful for setting reading habit and so it does not call for teacher's assistance in general. The readers can select the text themselves independently and read rapidly in a bird's eye-view. This is evidenced in Rivers' (1968) words, "The purpose of the extensive reading programme will be to train the students to read directly and fluently in the foreign language for his own enjoyment without the aid of the teacher (p. 229)." Thus, ER is also called independent rapid reading. For such a faster activity, silent reading is advisable, in which a good reader's eyes move fast in the text. Therefore, ER is "reading in

quantity" and is intended to "develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985, p. 100). Supporting these views, Harmer (2008a) purports that "a teacher encourages students to choose for themselves what they read and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement" (p. 283). Further, Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF, 2011) has put forth the view that in ER, the students "read quickly and enjoyably with adequate comprehension so they don't need a dictionary" (p. 1). ERF also labels ER as "individualized/self-selected reading", "sustained silent reading", or "drop everything and read" (p. 3). Thus, ER means: (i) to read for pleasure and information, (ii) to read without the help of the teacher, (iii) to read silently and quickly, (iv) to read without using a dictionary, (v) to read for setting habit, (vi) to encourage liking for reading, and (vii) to read for gaining taste of foreign language.

There is a good rationale to encourage learners to read extensively. ER, which is also considered one of the vital 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, is essential to develop good readers overall. When the readers read extensively in a foreign language, they can improve reading fluency, and build new vocabulary knowledge and structure. ER allows learners to improve their listening, speaking and writing abilities, too. ER also develops positive attitudes, and increases motivation and self-confidence in foreign/second language (Ono, Day & Harsch, 2004; Neupane, 2005; & ERF, 2011). In an empirical literature, Kalengkongan (2012) has exhibited benefits of ER in terms of spoken and written performance, learners' attitudes and fluency, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and text structure. In the similar reviews, Chien and Yu (2015) have observed impacts of ER on the following aspects: learners at different levels/contexts, both

L1 and L2, receptive and productive skills, general language competence, affective domains, learners' confidence and the like. These reviews give impetus to claim that ER is important to trace out the avenues to enter into the fertile ground of knowledge.

For encouraging ER, different tips and principles have been forwarded by several scholars. One of them is a set of top ten principles recommended by Day and Bamford (2002, pp. 2-6)), out of which, the first, the second and the third claim that ER materials should be easy and within the readers' comfort zone. Availability of the variety of materials encourages readers to follow a flexible approach. Then, the readers enjoy freedom of choice of the reading materials. The fourth, the sixth, the ninth, and the tenth indicate necessary conditions for encouraging ER. The readers should be provided with: opportunity and incentive to read more, chance for reading as an end itself, and allow the readers to go with "reading gain without pain" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 121). Further, the teachers should be readers themselves as "reading is caught, not taught" (Nuttall, 1996, p. 229). The fifth principle exhibits the purposes of ER, and the seventh and the eighth demonstrate the silent, individual and fast nature of ER. Therefore, ER is a silent, individual and fast reading, in which fluency is a key for extensive reader.

Following these ten principles, Ono, Day and Harsch (2004) have posited these ten tips for reading extensively: read more, read easy books, read interesting books, re-read interesting books, read for general understanding, skip the difficult words, avoid using dictionaries, expand reading comfort zone, set reading goals and keep a reading log, and enjoy reading. These tips show that ER means learning to read but not reading to learn. The former refers to extensive reading whereas the latter to intensive reading. Since ER is a quantitative



type of reading, purposes and materials are important. Using dictionaries to find the meaning of unfamiliar words is time consuming and this activity reduces reading speed. That is why, such words should be skipped for general understanding and the use of dictionary is discarded. Regarding the type of materials for ER, Neupane (2005) has also observed that materials for ER should be easy, pleasing, striking, resourceful, informative, interesting, and easy. If the text possesses these features, he purports, learners are encouraged to read extensively. However, not only materials but also settings and tasks play crucial role for ER. Tuning this view, Harmer's (2008a) advice is that learners should be provided with "appropriate materials, guidance, tasks, and facilities" (p. 283). Furthermore, the following four factors contribute to the success of ER: library, choice, feedback and time (Harmer, 2008b).

These delineations pave me a way to envisage into appropriate materials and goals to ER, expected teacher roles, and task to be done by the learners. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the nature of appropriate materials to ER, expected teacher roles, and reasons for reading extensively.

## **Methodology**

Since this study focused on learners' needs and interests towards extensive reading (ER), I adopted the survey research design. For the execution of this design, I selected one hundred students studying English at M. Ed. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara as a census because they were regularly present in their classes. The selected respondents were observed for their concepts and behaviours towards reading prescribed books, references, and additional/supplementary materials

extensively, which are mentioned in M. Ed. English Syllabus of annual exam system of T. U. The tool for collecting data was piloted questionnaire (Appendix A), which consists of five point Likert scale (Kumar, 2006) as SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, NAND- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, and SD- Strongly disagree. Of these, SA and A were treated as positive responses, SD and D as negative ones, and NAND as undecided ones. The data were collected in three parameters such as materials, objectives, and expected teacher roles. The study followed descriptive-analytical approach for the discussion/interpretation of results. Therefore, the collected data were presented, analysed, and interpreted based on the three domains respectively by means of tables to draw inferences.

## **Results and discussion**

The collected data were presented, analysed, and interpreted in terms of three parameters such as reading materials, objectives, and expected teacher roles, which reflected major needs, interests, concepts and behaviours of the learners towards ER.

### **Reading materials**

As the main purpose of ER is to read in quantity, reading materials should be motivating to the readers. This study also showed that the respondents preferred easy (65%), interesting (80%), informative (80%), and amusing/enjoyable (85%) materials for ER (Table 1). These data justify the claim that ER aims to please and inform the readers. These data also confirm that learners read only if the materials are within their comfort zone. The respondents showed their tendency to read accessible (70%) materials which are based on their needs, tastes, and interests (90%). This exhibits that the materials should be not only interesting and informative but also

accessible to the learners. It implies that if the learners have to wander, they cannot be motivated in reading such materials. Further, encroached, assigned, and sophisticated reading materials distracted the learners' interests. Therefore, reading materials should be captivating and easily accessible for learners.

**Table 1: Extensive reading materials**

Reading materials should be:	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Easy	45	20	15	15	5
Interesting	65	15	5	-	-
Resourceful	10	15	70	5	-
Informative	28	62	5	5	5
Amusing/ Enjoyable	30	55	2	8	5
Striking	5	8	80	2	5
Innovative	2	7	75	5	11
Accessible	20	50	15	5	10

Table 1, furthermore, demonstrates that the respondents were undecided towards resourceful (70%), striking (80%), and innovative (75%) materials. This shows that even M. Ed. students are not motivated and conscious to read resourceful and innovative materials, which is indicative of the fact that even the higher level learners prefer easy and informative materials. Therefore, this study also justifies the theoretical stances asserted in Day and Bamford (1998 & 2002) and Chien (2015), and empirical evidence presented in Kalengkongan (2012).

## Reading objectives

Unlike in the domain of reading materials, the respondents showed variations in responses in terms of ER objectives (Table 2). They read for obtaining general information (60%), but not for getting pleasure (60%). The results show controversy as it justified one major ER

objective, i.e. reading for general information but falsified the other, i.e. reading for pleasure. One possible reason behind this is that the respondents read for information as they were test-oriented and accordingly, they preferred the texts which were inevitable for their examinations.

**Table 2: Objectives of extensive reading**

ER is aimed to obtain:	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Pleasure	17	13	10	40	20
General information	20	40	17	13	10
Reading habit	5	10	60	18	7
Reading fluency	5	18	59	10	8
Other skills	12	18	68	5	7
Vocabulary and structure enhancement	5	9	30	39	17

The respondents were undecided for using ER in order to build reading habit (60%), increase reading fluency (59%), develop listening reading and writing skills (68%), and enhance vocabulary and structure (50%). These results can be interpreted to mean that even the masters' level students are unaware of the proficiency level to be acquired by the good readers. Until the learners obtain the general proficiency level in ER, they cannot develop these skills. Therefore, the respondents' ER proficiency level was poor. These delineations show that the theoretical stances of ER cannot be backed up by this study in terms of the objectives of reading extensively.

## Expected teacher roles

Teachers are dynamic powers of whole educational system as they are mobilisers of educational policy into the learners' level. They are at the core of teaching learning process. To put in Neupane's (2016) words, "Teachers are at the centre of concentric rings of education system. [...] the figure of teacher reflects some

spectra, which are essentials for professionalism” (p. 261). Out of some spectra, teacher roles are vital for learners. For this study, I have selected teacher roles from Kumaravadivelu’s (2003, p. 2) concept “strategic thinkers/practitioners” and of Farrell and Jacobs’ (2010, p. 2) “co-learners”. Table 3 shows the tested expected teacher roles in ER.

**Table 3: Expected teacher roles**

Learners want ER teachers to be:	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Authority/Controller	10	12	28	50	10
Prompter/Catalyst	33	27	11	19	10
Organizer	5	23	17	25	30
Participant	24	38	18	12	8
Administrator	9	21	15	28	27
Initiator	12	18	53	14	3
Counsellor	22	33	10	25	10
Role model	25	37	28	4	6

Table 3 exhibits that teachers were expected to be prompter/catalyst (60%), participant (62%), counselor (55%), and role model (62%). On the other hand, teachers were rejected as authority/ controller (60%), organizer (55%), and administrator (55%). However, teacher’s role as initiator (53%) was undecided.

The results showed that the respondents needed some “agency” (Harmer, 2008b, p. 21), i.e. they wanted to take responsibility for ER. They required relative freedom and responsibility for their sustained drive for reading extensively. Since the respondents desired to be self-administrators and self-organisers, they should have right to choose materials for “joyful reading” (Harmer, 2008b, p. 110), and they can select and organize reading materials themselves. However, the results also exhibited that the respondents wished teachers to prompt and to counsel for selecting and organizing these materials. Further, teachers were expected to be co-readers and role models for the learners.

## Conclusion

This study testified respondents’ ER concepts and behaviours in terms of reading materials, objectives, and expected teacher roles. The reading materials were preferred to be easy, interesting, informative and pleasing. It implies that ER materials should be easily accessible to the learners. They should also be in perfect harmony with the learners’ needs, tastes, and interests. In foreign language classes, the learners were observed not to have motivation for resourceful, striking, and innovative materials. Regarding objectives, the learners read for information because they were exam-oriented. So, they showed inclinations to be information-collectors rather than extensive readers. They did not read for pleasure and entertainment and so reading for them was only for passing exam rather than gaining true knowledge and obtaining pleasure simultaneously.

Furthermore, the learners did not desire to set reading habit, develop reading fluency, and used ER for enhancing vocabulary and structure of foreign language. In terms of teacher roles, the learners expected them to be prompters, counselors, participants, and role models. They did not expect teachers to be authority/controller, which is traditional role type. In a nutshell, the learners desired to take responsibility for selecting and organizing ER materials. Despite this, teacher role was facilitative of their extensive reading ability.

However, it is early enough to conclude this way as this study had limitations in data, time, and study area. This small scale study, yet, can leave trace-effects for further studies in this field of extensive reading.

## References

- Chien, C. K. C., & Yu, K. J. (2015). Applying extensive reading to improve unmotivated learners, attitudes toward reading in English. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching, and Educational Research*, 13 (2), 1-25.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14 (2). Retrieved from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rf/>
- Extensive Reading foundation [EFR] (2011). *Guide to extensive reading*. Retrieved from [www.erfoundation.org](http://www.erfoundation.org)
- Farrell, T. S. C., & Jacobs, G. M. (2010). *Essentials for successful English language teaching*. London & New York: Continuum.
- Harmer, J. (2008a). *The practice of English language teaching* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Pearson Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2008b). *How to teach English*. London: Pearson Longman.
- Kalengkongan, D. N. (2012). *Students' attitudes towards extensive reading*. An undergraduate thesis, Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga.
- Kumar, R. (2006). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners* (2nd ed.). New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Neupane, N. (2005). Encouraging extensive reading. *Educational Mirror*, 4 (1), 11.
- Neupane, N. (2016). Spectra of teachers: essentials for professionalism. *Pragyamanch*, 29 (14), 261-269.
- Nuttall, C. (1996). *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford: Heinemann.
- Ono, L., Day, R. R., & Harsch, K. (2004). Tips for reading extensively. *Forum*, 42 (4), 12-18.
- Rivers, W. (1968). *Teaching foreign language skills*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Richards, J., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics*. Essex, England: Longman.

**The author:** Nabaraj Neupane, a Reader of English Education at Tribhuvan University, is pursuing PhD in Translation Studies. To his credit, three dozens articles have been published in different journals. He has also published books, edited journals, translated literary texts, and presented papers in national and international conferences. His professional interests include Translation Studies, SLA, and Pragmatics.

**Appendix A**  
**Questionnaire for Students**

1 Extensive reading materials should be:

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Easy					
Interesting					
Resourceful					
Informative					
Amusing/ Enjoyable					
Striking					
Innovative					
Accessible					

2 I read extensively for:

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Pleasure					
General information					
Reading habit					
Reading fluency					
Other skills					
Vocabulary and structure enhancement					

3 What types of teacher roles do you expect for better extensive reading?

	SA	A	NAND	D	SD
Authority/Controller					
Prompter/Catalyst					
Organizer					
Participant					
Administrator					
Initiator					
Counsellor					
Role model					

*Note: SA- Strongly agree, A- Agree, NAND- Neither agree nor disagree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree*

## **L2 Vocabulary Learning and Testing: Student Proficiency and the Use of L1 Translations versus L2 Definitions**

*Paul Joyce*

### **Abstract**

This study examines the relationship between student proficiency and the use of first language (L1) translations versus second language (L2) definitions in the learning and testing of L2 vocabulary. For this study, 48 Japanese L2 learners of English studied 200 lexical items from the Academic Word List over a ten-week period. The language in which the meaning of the target vocabulary was presented and tested was manipulated such that the learners were given half in their L1 and half in their L2. The results showed that the low proficiency group learnt significantly more vocabulary than the high group. However, while student proficiency did not interact with study language, it was significantly related to testing language. That is, both overall and over time, the higher ability learners did relatively significantly better on the L2 definition tests and worse on the L1 translation tests, and vice-versa.

**Keywords:** L2 vocabulary, L1 translation, testing, intentional learning, proficiency

### **Introduction**

Vocabulary learning is essential to second language (L2) acquisition. And, among the many different elements of vocabulary knowledge, the form-meaning link is “the most essential lexical aspect which must be acquired” (Schmitt, 2008, p.333). In order to understand a range of written textual genres, it has been found that learners require comprehension of the 8000-9000 most frequent word families (Nation, 2006). One means of broadening L2 vocabulary knowledge is through intentional learning. Intentional vocabulary learning refers to working consciously to form associations between a word and its meaning. For learners from a wide range of proficiency

levels, it has been shown that the use of intentional study methods results in a greater vocabulary size expansion than a comparable time spent using an incidental approach (Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Prince, 1996). Thus, as a complement to incidental vocabulary learning, intentional study is a valuable means of achieving greater vocabulary breadth.

The most prevalent forms of intentional learning involve associating target vocabulary with L1 translations or L2 definitions. The use of L1 translations has been shown to be of tremendous value (Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009; Laufer and Shmueli, 1997; Prince, 1996; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). This is

likely due to translations being short, clear, and already existing in memory (Hall, 2002). Nevertheless, there remains a widespread belief that the L1 should not be used in the acquisition of L2 vocabulary (e.g. Gefen, 1987; Rivers & Temperley, 1978). This view frequently rests on the belief that L1 translations do not accurately represent the meaning of the word they are defining. While this sometimes can be the case, due to the tremendous conceptual commonality between languages, there is very often a close correspondence between the meaning of L1 and L2 words (Swan, 1997).

Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate regarding the importance of learner proficiency in deciding whether to use an L1 translation or L2 definition in the intentional study of vocabulary. To address this issue, it is worth considering how L2 learners represent language. Psycholinguistic studies have revealed that when processing L2 lexis, language learners from a wide range of proficiencies access their L1 (e.g. Hall, 2002). A conceptual paradigm that accounts for this is the word association model (Potter, So, von Eckardt & Feldman, 1984). This theory holds that L2 words are tied to conceptual representations via the corresponding L1 word. Thus, when requiring access to a L2 vocabulary item, learners are forced to first activate the equivalent L1 item. While the word association model refers to lexical access, it suggests that L2 words are most efficiently learnt by way of their L1 equivalents. In contrast, it has also been hypothesized that rather than being sequentially related to one another, L1 and L2 words are each directly associated with non-linguistic concepts. This is known as the concept mediation model (Potter, So, von Eckardt & Feldman, 1984).

The above models of bilingual memory representation offer a rationale why L2 beginners should pursue L2 intentional

learning through L1 translations and more advanced students should use L2 definitions. However, since the psycholinguistic studies are based on single word access rather than sentence-based L2 definitions, and refer to word retrieval rather than acquisition, they do not necessarily provide a reliable guide to how students should conduct L2 intentional study.

There have been a number of intentional L2 vocabulary learning studies that have explored the benefits of L1 translation as an aid to incidental L2 vocabulary learning. Ramachandran and Rahim (2004) taught the meaning of 20 contextualised target vocabulary items to 60 Malaysian learners of English. While half of the learners were provided with L1 translations, the other half were given L2 explanations. The post-test results revealed the effectiveness of the translation method over the L2 approach. Similarly, in a study involving 169 Laotian learners of English, Latsanyphone and Bouangeune (2009) also found that the L1 translation group significantly outperformed those learners who had been provided with L2 definitions. However, while these studies suggest the benefits of L1 translation over L2 vocabulary acquisition, they were both conducted with elementary level participants. Therefore, beyond low level learners, they offer little guidance to the optimal relationship between proficiency and study method. In addition, in both of the above studies, participants were evaluated using L1 based test items at the post-test stage. However, L1 translation tests have been shown to be easier than L2 definition vocabulary tests and students have been revealed to score higher when the study language and testing language are matched (see Author, 2015). Therefore, due to contamination from testing language and matching effects, there is some doubt over the value of the results from these studies.

In a study involving a broader range of proficiency levels, Author (2015) addressed the interconnected relationship between study language, test language, and study time on the intentional learning of L2 vocabulary. It was found that while there were substantial benefits to intentional study, the language in which the target vocabulary was studied did not affect learning. However, since the L2 proficiency of the participants varied widely, and the role of proficiency in L2 acquisition was not encompassed by the study, the research did little to shed light on the impact of proficiency on intentional vocabulary learning style.

In a research study that did compare participants of different proficiency levels, Prince (1996) divided 48 French learners of English into low and high proficiency groups. The students all studied 44 target vocabulary items that were considered unknown to them. Half of each proficiency group was told to learn the lexis using a translation and half through context. The results indicated that the students scored higher in the translation learning condition than the context learning one. And, when evaluated through the context learning test, the advanced learners fared far better than the less proficient group. However, surprisingly, the low students that studied the target language using translations performed better on the translation post-test than the high group in the same condition. Despite the study not including an L2 definition element, the results suggest that there is an interaction between study method, testing method, and proficiency.

Elgort (2013) researched the relationship between testing method and proficiency further. In this study, the 121 participants' results on the regular Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation & Beglar, 2007) were compared to their scores on a bilingual version (English-Russian). The findings showed that the

participants performed significantly more accurately on the bilingual test than the monolingual version. It was also found that as L2 lexical proficiency increased, the benefits of bilingual presentation declined. While this study shed light on the issue of testing language, the findings would benefit from being corroborated in different contexts, with different tests, and using alternative research methodologies.

From reviewing the literature, it is clear that the interaction between proficiency and intentional study methods remains insufficiently understood. As Folse (2004, p.68) notes, "Research should now move to...whether the value of L1 translation is as effective for higher-proficiency students as it is for lower-proficiency students". In addition, there is also a need to better understand the relationship between proficiency and testing language. Therefore, it was determined that the following research questions would be addressed:

1. At different levels of L2 learner proficiency, is there a significant difference in receptive L2 vocabulary learning through the use of L1 translations versus L2 definitions?
2. At different levels of L2 learner proficiency, is there a significant difference in receptive L2 vocabulary test scores when knowledge is evaluated through L1 translations versus L2 definitions?

## Methodology

### Participants

The study took place at a university specializing in foreign language studies in Japan. All of the 48 participants were native Japanese L1 speakers. They were enrolled as



freshman English language majors. Since one participant did not complete the study, results were only collected from 47 of the learners. The students who participated in the research were in two class groups that both used the same syllabus and course materials. However, in terms of their proficiency, one class could broadly be described as being of an intermediate standard while the other was other was at a beginner level. For the purposes of the study, the classes will be referred to as the low and high proficiency groups. The participants' English proficiency was measured through the university's in-house proficiency test; the Kanda English Proficiency Test (KEPT). Through standard multiple regression analysis, there has been found to be a high degree of predictability between scores on the KEPT and TOEFL tests (see Bonk, 2001). When KEPT scores are used to predict TOEFL scores, the TOEFL Paper-Based Test scores of the low group was predicted to average 444.69 (*SD* = 11.86) and the high group 492.87 (*SD* = 19.47) (see Bonk, 2001).

**Design**

The participants were divided into two vocabulary learning groups within their classes; Group A (23 members) and Group B (24 members). Group A contained 12 low and 11 high proficiency participants, and Group B included both 12 low and 12 high learners. The Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000) knowledge of each of the two proficiency sub-groups (low and high) was counterbalanced across Groups A and B. Further details on how this was done are given in the Placement Test section. Group A and B each studied the same 200 AWL vocabulary target items. Group A studied the meaning of the first 100 target words (List A) using an English definition (ED) and studied a second list of 100 words (List

B) using a Japanese translation (JT). On the other hand, Group B studied List A using a JT and List B through an ED. The learners' receptive knowledge of the target vocabulary was assessed through multiple choice pre-tests and post-tests. Half of these tests employed English definition test (EDT) items and half Japanese translation test (JTT) items. The language of testing was also manipulated within subjects. That is, the students conducted half of their study in the same condition as they were tested (i.e. ED-EDT and JT-JTT) and half in a different condition (i.e. ED-JTT and JT-EDT). The definitions and translations that were used in the tests were the same as those that were employed in the word lists. A summary of the research design is contained in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: The research design**

Group	Task	Vocabulary List A		Vocabulary List B	
A	Study	Use English definition (ED)		Use Japanese translation (JT)	
	Tests	Test 1a (EDT)	Test 2a (JTT)	Test 3a (EDT)	Test 4a (JTT)
B	Study	Use Japanese translation (JT)		Use English definition (ED)	
	Tests	Test 1b (JTT)	Test 2b (EDT)	Test 3b (JTT)	Test 4b (EDT)

**Materials**

**Placement Test:**The 36-item version of the Academic Vocabulary section of the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001) was used to evaluate the participants' prior knowledge of the AWL. The test was administered a week before the learning phase of the study (Cronbach's alpha = .90).To enable the results section to focus upon the answers to the research questions, the statistical basis for the placement of the students into Group A and B is provided in this section. Using a matched pair methodology, the participants were divided into Groups A and B such that the two sub-groups were counterbalanced for prior knowledge of the

AWL. The result of an independent samples t-test showed that there was not a significant difference between the low students in Group A (*Mean* = 15.54, *SD* = 4.64) and those in Group B (*Mean* = 15.30, *SD* = 4.56);  $t(22) = -.13, p > .05$ . Likewise, no significant difference was found between the high students in Group A (*Mean* = 26.00, *SD* = 4.38) and B (*Mean* = 26.00, *SD* = 4.73);  $t(21) = .00, p > .05$ . However, a statistically significant difference was found overall between the low (*Mean* = 15.42, *SD* = 4.50) and high (*Mean* = 26.00, *SD* = 4.46) proficiency learners;  $t(45) = -8.06, p < .001$ .

**Target vocabulary and the consolidation task:** As previously discussed, the study focused on the learning of 200 headwords from the AWL (Coxhead, 2000). The AWL is a compilation of 570 word families that occur with great frequency across a wide range of academic texts. Since the research centred on the initial stage of vocabulary learning, it was important that the target vocabulary was unknown to the participants. Therefore, the lexis considered least likely to be known was selected. The likelihood of being able to choose such vocabulary was considered high since experienced language teachers have been shown to be capable of predicting with which words students are unfamiliar (Brutten, 1981). For each of the two word lists (List A and List B), an equal number of verbs (60), nouns (20) and adjectives (20) was selected.

For each of the target words, the participants were provided with either an ED or a JT. The L2 definitions were based on learner dictionary entries. As the AWL assumes knowledge of the first 2000 word families, only words from this high frequency range of the BNC-COCA corpus

were included in the EDs. As words are frequently polysemous, care was taken to ensure that the L2 definition and L1 translation referred to the same aspect of meaning. This task was completed by a paid bilingual.

The 200 target vocabulary items were divided into 10 lists of 20 words. For 10 weeks, at the start of each week, the participants were each provided with a new word list that contained the same 20 new target vocabulary items. The only difference in the word lists given to the two groups was the language in which the meaning of the target vocabulary was provided. While one group received a list of 20 target words with an ED, the other studied the same lexis with a JT. Each week, for both groups, the language in which the meaning of the target vocabulary was given alternated. The participants were also provided with the target vocabulary item's part of speech, and an example sentence that contained the word. To encourage the participants to study the vocabulary, they were given a quiz at the end of each week. The 20-item quizzes required them to receptively match the target words with an ED or JT. The quizzes that the two groups received differed only in the language in which the meaning of the target words (the definition or translation) was supplied. When completing the quizzes, those students that had studied the target vocabulary that week using EDs were required to match the target vocabulary to EDs, and vice-versa.

**Pre- and post- vocabulary tests:** All of the participants took a pre and post-test. The tests assessed the students' minimalistic receptive word recognition. The pre-test that each of the two groups undertook was

identical to the post-test that they were given. There were 120 items on both the pre and post-test. As shown in Table 1, the pre and post tests were each sub-divided into four sub-tests. Each of the sub-tests contained 30 items and 50 answer choices. Each answer choice appeared only once in the pre-test and only once in the post-test. Therefore, all 200 target words appeared on the pre and post-test. Each of the four sub-tests was similar in design to the VLT in that the test items were divided into clusters. Each of the clusters contained six EDs or JTs which were identical to those provided in the word lists. The participants had to match the six EDs or JTs to the correct option from ten candidate target words. Within each cluster, the answer choices had distinctly different meanings, but were all from the same part of speech. An example of a cluster from an EDT is available in Appendix 1. Each of the sub-tests contained five clusters; three verbs, a noun, and an adjective test question cluster. As shown in Table 1, Group A was administered sub-tests 1a, 2a, 3a, and 4a, while Group B was given sub-tests 1b, 2b, 3b, and 4b. The only difference in the sub-tests that the two groups completed was the language in which the meanings (i.e. EDs or JTs) were provided. To control for any possible order effect, the sequence in which the students were administered the tests was carefully counterbalanced at both the pre-test and post-tests stages. The tests were delivered during class time and neither of the groups was informed in advance that they were to be administered. The purpose of the pre-test was to establish the students' baseline knowledge. And learning was defined as the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

**Proficiency test:** The participants' proficiency was measured through the Kanda English

Proficiency Test (KEPT). In essence, the KEPT is a university in-house norm-referenced general proficiency test of English as a foreign language. When the data was collected, it was comprised of five sections; listening (35-items), grammar (35-items), reading (35-items), writing, and speaking. It is administered routinely at the university where the research was undertaken. The test was administered within two weeks of the vocabulary post-test being given. To allow the Results section to concentrate upon the research questions, the results from the proficiency test are provided here. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the test sections was found to be consistently high, and ranged between .75 and .8.

There was not found to be a statistically significant difference in the overall proficiency scores of the low students in Group A (*Mean* = 62.18, *SD* = 4.02) and those of Group B (*Mean* = 63.81, *SD* = 6.15),  $t(22) = -.77, p > .05$ . Likewise, on the reading section of the test, no statistical difference was found (Group A; *Mean* = 21.95, *SD* = 2.68, Group B; (*Mean* = 22.06, *SD* = 3.91),  $t(22) = -.08, p > .05$ ). The same result was recorded for the high proficiency students across Groups A and B. There was neither found to be a statistically significant difference in their overall proficiency (Group A; *Mean* = 76.07, *SD* = 5.98, Group B; *Mean* = 77.48, *SD* = 5.22,  $t(21) = -.60, p > .05$ ) nor their reading proficiency (Group A; *Mean* = 26.20, *SD* = 4.66, Group B; *Mean* = 26.35, *SD* = 4.80,  $t(21) = -.08, p > .05$ ). On the other hand, as was expected, there was found to be a significant difference in the overall proficiency of the low (*Mean* = 63.00, *SD* = 5.15) and high (*Mean* = 76.81, *SD* = 5.51) proficiency groups;  $t(45) = -8.88, p < .001$ . And there was also discovered to be a difference in the reading ability of these two

sets of participants (Low; Mean = 22.01, SD = 3.28, High; Mean = 26.28, SD = 4.62,  $t(45) = -3.67, p < .001$ ).

## Results

As discussed in Methodology Section, in order to control for the participants' prior knowledge of the target vocabulary, the learners from the two proficiency groups were divided into groups of equal AWL vocabulary knowledge. To confirm that the group variable had been controlled within each of the proficiency sub-groups, a series of one-way repeated measures ANOVAs was conducted. The effect of the three within-subject's independent variables (study language, test language, and point in time (the start and end of the study)) and one between-subject's independent variable (proficiency group affiliation) on learning were compared. There was not found to be a significant effect of sub-group for the low students ( $F(1, 22) = .09, p > .05$ ), the high students ( $F(1, 21) = 1.61, p > .05$ ) or the total combined group ( $F(1, 45) = .50, p > .05$ ). As a result, group affiliation (Group A and B) was removed from the analysis. However, when the two proficiency sub-groups (low and high) were compared to each other, there was a main effect for group ( $F(1, 45) = 8.55, p < .01$ ). As expected, the more proficient students had outperformed the less able participants. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the eight 30-item vocabulary tests ranged between .87 and .93.

Research question one: *At different levels of L2 learner proficiency, is there a significant difference in receptive L2 vocabulary learning*

*through the use of L1 translations versus L2 definitions?*

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, the participants from both proficiency sub-groups substantially increased their knowledge of the target L2 vocabulary over the study period.

**Table 2: Low students - percentage of correct responses by study language, test language, and point in time**

Study Language	Test Language	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		mean%	SD	mean%	SD
English Definition (ED)	English Definition Test (EDT)	20.97	12.49	61.12	23.17
	Japanese Translation Test (JTT)	33.75	18.62	71.39	16.80
Japanese Translation (JT)	English Definition Test (EDT)	8.48	10.95	53.62	20.18
	Japanese Translation Test (JTT)	35.00	16.53	79.30	19.04

**Table 3: High students - percentage of correct responses by study language, test language, and point in time**

Study Language	Test Language	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		mean%	SD	mean%	SD
English Definition (ED)	English Definition Test (EDT)	42.47	18.52	69.57	25.28
	Japanese Translation Test (JTT)	54.78	19.03	69.41	22.03
Japanese Translation (JT)	English Definition Test (EDT)	44.35	19.13	62.47	22.94
	Japanese Translation Test (JTT)	58.41	17.73	79.71	19.77

The results showed that the low proficiency learners gained far more than the high sub-group over the course of the study. While the low students achieved an average percentage increase of 39.31% points (pre-

test: *Mean* = 27.05%; post-test: *Mean* = 66.35%), the high group only improved their performance by 20.29% points (pre-test: *Mean* = 50.00%; post-test: *Mean* = 70.29%). When the relationship between time and proficiency was evaluated through a factorial repeated-measures ANOVA, a significant effect was recorded,  $F(1, 45) = 19.73, p < .01$ , partial  $\zeta^2 = .31$ . The result indicated that the low proficiency sub-group increased their scores by significantly more than the high sub-group.

Next, the relationship between study language, time, and proficiency was explored. On average, after studying the target vocabulary with EDs, the low proficiency participants scored 38.89% points higher on the post-test than the pre-test (pre-test: *Mean* = 27.36%; post-test: *Mean* = 66.25%). This compared with a 39.72% point gain for the same students on vocabulary studied using JTs (pre-test: *Mean* = 26.74%; post-test: *Mean* = 66.46%). The high proficiency group's progress was also very stable across the study languages. They gained 20.87% points on words studied using EDs (pre-test: *Mean* = 48.62%; post-test: *Mean* = 69.49%) and 19.71% points when using JTs (pre-test: *Mean* = 51.38%; post-test: *Mean* = 71.09%). When the relationship between study language, time and proficiency was calculated through a factorial repeated-measures ANOVA, there was not found to be a significant interaction effect,  $F(1, 45) = .28$ . In other words, the effect on the participants' scores of studying through EDs or JTs did not differ depending upon their proficiency.

**Table 4: Within-subject's effects for study language, test language, time, and proficiency on test scores**

Effect	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	partial $\zeta^2$
Study * Proficiency	.86	1	45	.359	
Test * Proficiency	7.87	1	45	.007	.15
Time * Proficiency	19.73	1	45	.000	.31
Study * Test * Proficiency	.00	1	45	1.00	
Study * Time * Proficiency	.28	1	45	.598	
Test * Time * Proficiency	4.69	1	45	.040	.09
Study * Test * Time * Proficiency	.44	1	45	.512	

Research question two: *At different levels of L2 learner proficiency, is there a significant difference in receptive L2 vocabulary test scores when knowledge is evaluated through L1 translations versus L2 definitions?*

As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, the high proficiency students generally outperformed the low proficiency learners. However, the pattern of outperformance differed depending on proficiency. When the pre and post test scores are combined, the difference between the low proficiency sub-group's performance on the JTTs (*mean* = 54.86%) is 16.17% points higher than their EDTs scores (*mean* = 38.54%). On the other hand, for the high proficiency sub-group, the difference between their JTT (*mean* = 65.58%) and EDT (*mean* = 54.71%) scores was only 10.72% points. As shown in Table 4, there was consequently a significant interaction effect between test language and proficiency  $F(1, 45) = 7.87, p < .01$ , partial  $\zeta^2 = .15$ . Furthermore, this result could also be seen over time. That is, the low group increased their pre-test to post-test scores by more on the JTTs (+40.97% points) than the EDTs (+37.64% points). In contrast, the high sub-group followed the opposite pattern (JTT: +17.97% points, EDT: +22.61%). This pattern of relative performance on the two types of test differing over time depending upon proficiency was found to be statistically significant  $F(1, 45) = 4.69, p < .05$ , partial  $\zeta^2 = .09$ . Therefore, the results show that both overall and over time, the advantage of

taking the bilingual test declined as proficiency increased.

### Discussion and conclusion

The results from this study showed the relationship between proficiency, study language, test language, and study time on the intentional learning of L2 vocabulary. The intentional approach to L2 vocabulary learning was confirmed to be an effective means of vocabulary learning for both beginner and intermediate level L2 students. This result is consistent with previous direct vocabulary learning studies (e.g. Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Prince, 1996).

However, although the vocabulary knowledge of both groups was aided by intentional vocabulary study, the low students learnt significantly more than the high sub-group. This result is both consistent with Prince (1996) and accords with the widely held belief that shallower vocabulary learning activities are better suited to beginners (e.g. Schmitt, 1997). The reason for this could relate to the simplicity of the activity. For less proficiency students, since the target lexis was decontextualized, their limited cognitive resources were sufficient to retain the language. Furthermore, the lower group may have felt more suited than the higher proficiency group to the narrow task of establishing a form to meaning relationship between a word and its meaning.

Regarding the first research question, there was not found to be a significant difference in the amount of vocabulary learning achieved at different proficiency levels depending on whether the vocabulary was presented through L1 translations or L2 definitions. That is, each proficiency group

increased its scores by a similar degree in both the L1 translation and L2 definition learning condition. These results diverged from previous studies (Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004) in which participants were found to learn more vocabulary when studying through L1 translations than L2 definitions. However, as discussed in the Introduction, the value of the findings from these studies is undermined by their methodological shortcomings.

The answer to research question one can be better understood with reference to the models of bilingual memory representation that were discussed in the Introduction. Given that both proficiency groups in this study acquired a comparable amount of vocabulary regardless of the language in which the meaning of the target vocabulary was given, the results suggest that the learners had surpassed the ability threshold of the word association model (Potter, von Eckardt & Feldman, 1984). Therefore, consistent with the concept mediation model, both groups seem to have been sufficiently skilled to establish direct links between the L2 lexicon and conceptual understanding. However, the development of such connections may depend upon the mode of learning. As found in a previous study, although the degree of learning was not influenced by the language of study, there was a matching effect between study and test language (Author, 2015). In other words, when learners studied in the same language as they were tested, they were advantaged. Therefore, once learners exceed the word association model proficiency threshold, to help facilitate automaticity in L2 vocabulary retrieval, there is a basis to recommend vocabulary study through the L2.

As shown by this study, owing to the benefits accrued from direct vocabulary learning, this form of acquisition should form part of foreign language study, especially for elementary level students. Yet, despite the widely recognized benefits of intentional vocabulary study (see Folse, 2004), there is reason to believe that the percentage of words taught explicitly is extremely low (Tang & Nesi, 2003).

Concerning research question two, the low proficiency group was found to have been more advantaged by the bilingual tests than the high proficiency group. This finding matched that of Elgort (2013). Furthermore, during the study period, the low proficiency group improved by relatively more on the JTTs than the EDTs, and the high group progressed by relatively more on the EDTs than the JTTs. This result has implications for language testing. Owing to the ease with which large numbers of vocabulary items can be administered and scored, vocabulary testing is often used to indirectly measure general language proficiency. In such instances, such as in the case of many Japanese university entrance tests, L2 vocabulary receptive understanding is often evaluated through L1 translations. As previously discussed, both in this study and that of Elgort (2013), elementary students were advantaged by bilingual test items. Indeed, at the post-test stage, the lower proficiency group's average score on the JTTs (75.35%) exceeded that of the higher ability group (74.57%). Therefore, the results indicate that when vocabulary knowledge is being used as a proxy for overall proficiency, especially when students have the opportunity to study in advance, it is much better to administer an EDT.

In terms of study limitations, it should be noted that the time students spent studying the target vocabulary was not controlled in this study. Also, since the results are based on a sample of Japanese university students, the characteristics of this research population may reduce the generalisability of the findings to other learner groups with different L1s, cultural backgrounds or educational environments.

Given the paucity of research in this area, it should be stressed that the findings of this study are tentative and that further research is required to expand and deepen our understanding. For example, to address the study limitations mentioned above, it would be instructive to explore whether the results hold for learners of other nationalities, L1s, ages, and in different educational settings. Furthermore, there would be value in investigating the relationship between study method and part of speech. For example, could a potentially closer correspondence between the meaning of L2 nouns and their L1 translations mean that they are most suited to being studied through a learner's mother language? In addition, by collecting qualitative data, such as from questionnaires and interviews with students, a richer account of the relative advantages of L1 and L2 vocabulary study methods could be derived.

## References

- Bonk, W.J. (2001). Predicting paper-and-pencil TOEFL scores from KEPT data. *Research Institute of Language Studies and Language Education, Kanda University of International Studies*, 12, 65-85.

- Brutten, S.R. (1981). An analysis of student and teacher indications of vocabulary difficulty. *RELC Journal*, 12(1), 66-71.
- Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(2), 213-238.
- Elgort, I. (2013). Effects of L1 definitions and cognate status of test items on the Vocabulary Size Test. *Language Testing*, 30(2), 253-272.
- Folse, K.S. (2004). *Vocabulary myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Gefen, R. (1987). Increasing vocabulary teaching in Israel schools. *English Teachers Journal*, 35, 38-43.
- Hall, C. (2002). The automatic cognate form assumption: Evidence for the parasitic model of vocabulary development. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40(1), 69-87.
- Latsanyphone, S. & Bouangeune, S. (2009). Using L1 in teaching vocabulary to low proficiency level students: A case study at the National University of Laos. *English Language Teaching*, 2(3), 186-193.
- Laufer, B. & Shmueli, K. (1997). Memorizing new words: Does teaching have anything to do with it? *RELC Journal*, 28, 89-108.
- Nation, I.S.P. (2006). How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63 (1), 59-82.
- Nation, I.S.P. & Beglar, D. (2007). A vocabulary size test. *The Language Teacher*, 31 (7), 9-13.
- Potter, M.C., So, K.F., Von Eckardt, B. & Feldman, L.B. (1984). Lexical and conceptual representation in beginning and proficient bilinguals. *Journal of verbal learning and verbal behavior*, 23(1), 23-38.
- Prince, P. (1996). Second language vocabulary learning: The role of context versus translations as a function of proficiency. *Modern Language Journal*, 80, 478-493.
- Ramachandran, S.D. & Rahim, H.A. (2004). Meaning recall and retention: The impact of the translation method on elementary level learners' vocabulary learning. *RELC Journal*, 35(2), 161-178.
- Rivers, W.M. & Temperley, M.S. (1978). *A practical guide to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schmitt, N. (1997). Vocabulary learning strategies. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 199-228). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 329-363.
- Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D. & Clapham, C. (2001). Developing and exploring the behaviour of two new versions of the Vocabulary Levels Test. *Language Testing*, 18, 55-88.
- Swan, M. (1997). The influence of the mother tongue on second language acquisition and use. In N. Schmitt & M. McCarthy (Eds.), *Vocabulary: Description, acquisition and pedagogy* (pp. 156-180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



Tang, E.& Nesi, H. (2003). Teaching vocabulary in two Chinese classrooms: Schoolchildren's exposure to English words in Hong Kong and Guangzhou. *Language Teaching Research*, 7(1), 65-97.

**The author:** Paul Joyce is an Associate Professor at Kindai University in Osaka, Japan. He is from Britain. He undertook his M.A. (TESL/TEFL) studies from

Birmingham University in England and conducted his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics at Surrey University in England. His research interests include vocabulary acquisition, testing, and second language listening.

## Appendix-1

### Example Item Cluster

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1) A group of people or things that are similar to each other  | a) aspect      |
| 2) The central or most important part of something   | b) category    |
| 3) Numbers that have been collected in order to provide information about something                      | c) core        |
|  | d) criteria    |
| 4) The general rule that you use when you make a decision or form an opinion about somebody or something | e) guideline   |
| 5) One of the qualities or parts of a situation, idea, or problem  | f) instance    |
| 6) The printing a book, magazine, and making it available to the public                                  | g) philosophy  |
|  | h) psychology  |
|  | i) publication |
|  | j) statistic   |

# Role and Status of English and Other Languages in Nepal

*Sagun Shrestha*

## Abstract

This paper analyses the role and status of English and other languages in Nepal as well as talks about the attitude of several agents towards English and other languages when used in the domains such as education, media and business. Nepal is a culturally and linguistically diversified country and has undergone various socio-political changes in a very short span of time primarily beginning from 1950 as of now. These changes include abolition of Panchayat, a system in which the king ruled directly led to a democratic country and end of a decade long civil war as well as abolition of monarchy which led to a country as the federal republic. These socio-political changes have made a direct significant impact on language planning and policy. The official language, Nepali and the international language, English are the dominant languages in Nepal which in many cases overshadow the promotion of other vernacular languages. As a result, a majority of people opt for these dominant languages overlooking their own indigenous linguistic affluence. In this paper, as a conclusive remark, I also argue that some plans followed by pragmatic measures are needed to uplift the status of majority of other languages in Nepal.

**Keywords:** English and other languages, monolingual policy, multilingualism

## Introduction

Nepal, a small Himalayan country spreads across a total of 147,181 square kilometres. It lies in between the two big and economically powerful giants of Asia: China in the north and India in east, west and south. It is a landlocked country where 122 languages are spoken (Ethnologue, 2016). The data of the total number of languages varies as Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal (2011) records 123 languages in total. All these languages have been divided broadly into 4 language families except Kusunda, which is a language isolate. The languages are Indo-European

spoken by 82.10 percent, Sino Tibetan by 17.30 percent, Austro Asiatic 0.19 percent and Dravidian by 13 percent of the total population of Nepal that is, 26,494,504 (Yadav, n.d.). Nepali is the language spoken by the highest number of 11,826,953 speakers (Population Census, 2011) which falls on Indo European family, and it is followed by Maithili, 3,092,530 speakers, Bhojpuri, 1,584,958 speakers, Tharu, 1,529,875 speakers and Tamang 1,353,311 speakers which are the languages spoken by over one million people (Yadav, n.d.). The first three languages belong to Indo European family whereas the Tamang language belongs to Sino Tibetan family. Gadhawali is the least

spoken language and it records only 38 people as its native speakers. As far as the English language is concerned, Population Census, 2011 records 2,032 speakers using English as a mother tongue in Nepal.

As regards Nepal's geo structure, it is divided into Terai: the southern belt, the Hilly region: the midland and Mountain region: the northern belt bordering China which is the least populated region of Nepal. The population is dense in southern belt as it is the plain land having a plethora of industries, and so is in the hilly region as the capital and other small valleys locate in this region. The capital city, Kathmandu has people speaking almost all the languages since many people from all parts of Nepal migrated to this city once the civil war broke out in 1995; however, Newari speakers are considered as the native people of this city. In Terai belt, Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri and Tharu speakers constitute the large number, and in Mountain belt, there are mostly the Nepali, Tamang and Sherpa speakers (Population Census, 2011).

Despite Nepal's relatively small geographical area with a large number of languages, the international language English is considered the dominant language in this country due to its massive spread and use in media, education, diplomacy and tourism. "The spread of English across sectors and regions is rapid and systematic... has reached the lower strata of the population in urban, as well as rural regions" (Giri, 2009, p. 93). English is the most preferred language and people working in all areas put effort to speak English creating their own context. Eagle (1999) states "one encounters street peddlers, bicycle rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers, trekking guides, porters and street children who speak surprisingly fluent English. Most of them are unschooled" (p. 308). It is valid still at this point of time. The priority has been extended from common people to the intellects now. Feeling the strength of English in Nepal,

the Second National Convention of teacher of English recommended that English, being the only language of education and communication, should be given due credit in language policy documents and funds should be allocated accordingly (Yadav as cited in Eagle, 1999). In the following sections, I will describe the status and roles of English and other languages.

### **The status of English in Nepal**

Kachru (1992) referring to the sociolinguistic profile of English draws three concentric circles: the inner circle, outer circle and the expanding circle. He states that inner circle refers to the context of core countries in which English is spoken as their first language. The USA, the UK, New Zealand, Canada and Australia fall in this circle. Similarly, outer circle comprises the linguistic situation of those countries who have institutionalized English in their regions as they have passed through the colonization e.g., India, Ghana, Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria among others. The ultimate circle i.e., expanding circle represents the large linguistic context that includes the countries who treat English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and use extensively. Nepal falls in the expanding circle of Kachru's concentric division.

In 1892, the first contact that people of Nepal, particularly the elite, made with English was through the first school that was established then to give English Education to Rana children (The Times of India, 2011) but it was not spread out as Rana regime focused to educate only Ranas. Giri (2010) mentions "English soon became the symbol of status, power and privileges, and a means to divide people into the rulers and the ruled" (p. 93) and Rana enjoyed during their time. He furthers that English only came to formal education in the beginning of twentieth century. Primarily it began flourishing after 1990 in the changed political context. The schools followed the British Education

system that marched ahead with the English Education system of India where a goal of education was to yield the people having English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellects (Awasthi as cited in Giri, 2010). Then 1990 onwards, private schools start to mushroom which had a kind of brand that read 'English medium School'. In the recent years, the medium of instruction in private schools is English and following this trend, to compete with private ones, the state-funded schools have started shifting to English Medium Instruction (EMI). In this regard, referring to the entire Asian context, Philipson (1992) states "English has retained its privileged position in the education process in Asia" (p. 28), and Nepal is warmly welcoming this trend. This same tendency is massively present in media practice too. There are lots of programmes that are run only in English and a lot more are run in English and Nepali, the dominant languages in the present day socio-linguistic context. Likewise, since Nepal's economy is largely dependent upon tourism, most of the Nepalese living even in hinterlands have very basic English that serves meeting the purpose of mutual intelligibility to communicate with the foreign tourists.

Crystal (2003) claims that English has no official status in South Asian context like in Nepal; however, it is used as a medium in international communication. He further says "Increasingly it is being perceived by young South Asians as the language of cultural modernity" (p. 29) and it is true in Nepal. It is spoken by many Nepali youth taking it as a matter of pride. For them, speaking English is a prestige related new fad. In mass media, education and business too, English is given preference to other languages. Pointing out the importance of English in the country like Nepal, Phillipson (1992, p. 30) states:

The importance of English in such African and Asian Periphery-English countries is two-fold. English has a dominant role *internally*, occupying space that other languages could possibly fill. English is also the key external link, in politics, commerce, science, technology, military alliances, entertainment and tourism.

This is obvious that since Nepal had a monolingual language policy for quite a long time before 1990, English occupied the position of other languages and it was treated more like second language in many contexts and yes, it is a key link language in all the domains of socio-linguistic context. If so, what about other languages and how were they treated?

### **The status of other languages**

Like English, the use of Nepali is widespread across most domains such as, education, mass media, business and arts. It is the only official language as of now. Nepal experienced the democratic reigns twice, 1950-1960 and 1990-2002. However, as regards the language policy, there was no liberal planning but rather adopted Nepali-only language policy thereby banning the indigenous languages and other than the standard variety in English (Phyak, 2013) It was a kind of biased treatment to other vernacular languages. "Moreover, languages other than Nepali were assumed to be 'barbarian', 'uncivilized' and 'worthless'" (Sachdev as cited in Phyak, 2013, p. 130).

The linguistic issues in 1990 constitution is quite vague. It mentions:

1. The Nepali language in the Devnagari script is the language of the nation of Nepal. The Nepali language shall be the official language.

2. All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal. (part 1, Article 6)

It implies that Nepali is only the nation language. It didn't clearly articulate what it means to be national languages. It seems to have played with some linguistic terms rather than giving some kind of status to the languages. The further dispute that Giri (2010) mentions is about the 1999 verdict that Supreme court gave as using the Newari (also called Nepal Bhasha) as an official language in Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Maithili, another local language in Rajbiraj and Janakpur City Councils unconstitutional. This shows the unfair treatment made to the local/minority languages during these time. Because of such practice, "the identity discourse" against "traditionalist discourse" (Phyak, 2013, p. 130) advocating for the recognition of minority languages was loud enough. As a result, the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 addressed this issue which is clearly seen in article 5, clause 3.

#### **Language of the nation:**

- (1) All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal.
- (2) The Nepali Language in Devnagari script shall be the official language.
- (3) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2), it shall not be deemed to have hindered to use the mother language in local bodies and offices. State shall translate the languages so used to an official working language and maintain record thereon. (Part 1, Article 5)

The articles of the Interim constitution of Nepal related to language policy became liberal and opened the door for the use of minority languages in offices and similarly it also opened the possibility of Multilingual Education (MLE) which was practiced from 2007. However, the teaching learning materials and resources have not been sufficiently developed to promote MLE. As a result, this simply seems to be a sketchy provision for the local indigenous languages. It again reflects the same hierarchy that Nepali as the official language and English as the modern language enjoys as the dominant languages in Nepal.

#### **The role of English and other languages**

English being a very widely used international language in Nepal has a bigger role in education, media, business and tourism. Giri (2010) mentions that English functions as a power language working as a medium and resource for social mobility, linguistic superiority and educational and economic benefits. It has played the key instrumental role for education and further to socio-economic development. Similarly, from the list of other languages, Nepali and some other major languages have helped in business, education and arts. Nepali has played a key role performing as an official language and as a lingua franca within the nation whereas other languages have no as such bigger role than creating a kind of linguistic solidarity particularly serving for intra-ethnic communication, and these local languages have not been fully acknowledged yet having them used in various domains. Recently there has been an effort of the government of introducing MLE to promote local languages and it was piloted from 2007 to 2009 (Phyak, 2013). However, there have been several factors like the parents' interest to educate their

children in English, low-possessive attitude of the community towards local languages and lack of teaching learning resources in the local languages that have significantly affected MLE in Nepal. As a result, to a large extent, Nepali as an official language and English as an international language enjoy a kind of hegemony and regularly threatening the survival of local languages. Right now as per the Ethnologue (2016), two languages namely Waling and Pahari Palpa are the extinct languages, and the other languages viz., Baram, Kusunda, Saam and Ghandruk Sign languages are in the verge of extinction. They have been listed as nearly extinct by the Ethnologue (2016). Since English and Nepali are dominantly used in education, business, mass media and tourism, the new generation don't bother of learning their mother tongues and parents don't show the interest of teaching their languages either. In the following section, I will discuss the role of English and other languages critically in education, business and mass media and tourism.

### **Role in education**

This is the age of technological advancement and undoubtedly, English has a significant role to play. Nepal, in its own pace, is slowly walking towards such an advancement as a result, the people and academic institutions of this country have given a high priority to the English language. All the private schools are English-medium now, and even some state owned schools have already started this trend. Most of the state-owned schools' medium of instruction is in Nepali. There are only a few schools and few resources that target MLE. It seems the priority for mother tongue in education is so limited. Consequently, English and Nepali has got the bigger and significant role in education. (Phyak, 2013, p.131) states:

Due to its instrumental value, English is perceived as the most important language (even more important than Nepali) in education, mass media, and other job markets (especially due to technological requirements).

However bigger role they are having, Nepali and English should not be treated as "killer languages" (Phillipson, 1997, p. 243). Moreover, there has to be a planning of strengthening other languages by using them in several own local contexts.

### **Role in business and mass media**

Eagle (1999) claims the language of diplomacy and international affairs in Nepal is English, and communication with other countries is done in the same language. She adds that Nepal gets a lot of foreign aids in different domains like education, communication, engineering, medicine and the list goes on and on from the foreign countries or the institutions like World Bank and United Nations, and the language used is in English. That is true whereas in business at the local level, Nepali language is used as a local link language. Similarly, in mass media too, using English seems to be a kind of fandom, and several programs are run in English and there are a plenty of programs run in Nepali. State run media run a very limited programs in local languages and privately managed media do not have it in their priority. The state owned paper entitled 'Gorkhapatra' has dedicated a page for local languages to publish their news and articles in local languages once a month recently. This seems to be a praiseworthy step to give a kind of recognition to local languages.

## **Role in tourism**

Tourism is considered to be a major source of income in Nepal. "Since 1950, the tourist industry has grown rapidly in Nepal, accounting for 30 percent of the total foreign exchange entering the country" (Jha as cited in Eagle 1999, p. 315). Therefore, people in almost all touristic destinations speak basic English which has a kind of mutual intelligibility. It begins from the airport and continues up to the rural hinterlands. English has played a role of subsistence in the community level. These days, even some travel agencies focus on other international languages like Chinese and Spanish too. Likewise, at the local level for local tourist, Nepali is used for the communication. There is no any noticeable role of local languages in tourism.

## **Attitude towards English and other languages**

Phyak (2013) talks about monocentric nationalism which became dominant until 2006 and further maintains that as Nepal was dominated by monolingual policy or Nepalitization/Nepalification ideology during this time, it was an internal colonization of Nepali language overruling all other local languages which was considered as a threat to national unity and other public domains. In the same line, Eagle (1999) mentions:

The choice of Nepali as the sole national language of Nepal and the sole language to be used in the school system was, and continues to be, highly controversial. The central government rationale for this decision. was based on the fact that Nepali had been the lingua franca of the country for at least 150 years (1999, p. 288-289)

As monolingual policy was adopted, there was a massive spread of Nepali being the language of ruling class "which reinforces a stifling, oppressive and fatalistic caste system" (Eagle, 1999, p. 292). It has led to a serious repercussion. This monolingual policy happened to systematically suppress marginalized local languages in which speakers of these languages lost their faith in their languages and wanted to fall in the mainstream life to get benefitted from and adopt the cultures which are not theirs (Giri, 2010). This seems to be a kind of paradigm shift which can infuse "cultural anarchism" (Giri, 2010, p. 88) any time.

Phyak (2013) mentions that even in the changing context, the policy makers' will to remain in the status quo by not recognizing the value of literacy in mother tongues seems to be a mentality of hegemony. It is of a few dominant elites in political, economic, education and linguistic power that maximizes social exclusion and inequality as the local languages are sidelined. This is their "elite-injected backdoor language policy" (Phyak, 2013, p. 140). He says Ministry of Education has introduced a new-language-in-education policy in which it states that local languages should be used as a medium of instruction up to grade three, but there's a lack of scholarship that can explore how this policy is implemented and supported by the agents like teachers, parents and students. Although there's a kind of ideological space for the minority languages in the changing socio-political context after 2007, the private and public schools have given a bigger room for the expansion of Nepali and English.

English and Nepali are enjoying their heydays in Nepal as of now, and other vernacular languages are struggling for their status. The communities take their languages as the commodity that has been passed from

their elder generations rather than their linguistic affluence. Everyone seems to be joining the craze over learning and speaking English and parents don't care of transferring their local tongues to their children, rather they focus their children to be proficient in English and Nepali. Phyak (2013) mentions that there has to be a critical dialogue between agents like parents, students, teachers that can influence in policy making and implementation process.

### Conclusion

It is evident that the spread of English is rapid in Nepal due to its significant role in education, diplomacy, mass media, technology and tourism. Nepalese people's attitude is shifting, preferring to speak more English compared to any other languages. Similarly, as the Nepali language has got official status, there's no any as such threat to the Nepali language but the threat is there with other vernacular languages as Ethnologue (2016) records that 32 are in vigorous state, 54 languages are in trouble and 8 are dying out of 122 languages of Nepal. Therefore, without negating the fact that English and Nepali have bigger roles in this changing context, the government of Nepal has to start planning for standardizing some languages, probably by codifying (creating lexicography) introducing it in education at least beginning from a mono-lingual community and using it in a local media. If on one hand, the discourse on identity issue gets enlarged and on the other hand, the policy and planning of the country simply overlooks, it may bring a kind of linguistic tension which can provoke any kind of anarchism in the community in future. So the state needs to review its plan and practices in time to protect other vernacular languages without mitigating the role of official language as Nepali and International language as English. The policy in the paper

may not be enough; this has to be slowly put into practice. Linguistic and cultural diversity is the affluence of Nepal and the Nepalese and it has to be preserved well.

### References

- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2011). National Population and Housing Census 2011 (National Report). Retrieved from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Nepal/Nepal-Census-2011-Vol1.pdf>
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. England: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagle, S. (1999). The language situation in Nepal. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 20(4), 272-327.
- Ethnologue: Languages of the world. (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/NP>
- Giri, R. A. (2010). Cultural anarchism: The consequences of privileging languages in Nepal. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 31(1), 87-100.
- Interim Constitution of Nepal. (2007). Retrieved from January 24, 2016 from [http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nepal\\_Interim\\_Constitution2007.pdf](http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nepal_Interim_Constitution2007.pdf)
- Kachru, B.B. (1992). *The other tongue*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, R. (1997). Realities and myths of linguistic imperialism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 18(3), 238-248.



Phyak, P. (2013). Language ideologies and local languages as the medium-of-instruction policy: A critical ethnography of a multilingual school in Nepal. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 14(1), 127-143.

The Constitution of Nepal. (1990). Retrieved from January 24, 2016 from [http://www.constitutionnet.org/files/1990\\_constitution\\_english.pdf](http://www.constitutionnet.org/files/1990_constitution_english.pdf)

The times of India. (2011). *Nepal's oldest school starts sexual revolution*. Retrieved from <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/Nepals-oldest-school-starts-sexual-revolution/articleshow/9210209.cms>

Yadav, Y.P. (n.d.). Academia. *Language use in Nepal*. 51-72. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/21009495/LANGUAGE\\_USE\\_IN\\_NEPAL](https://www.academia.edu/21009495/LANGUAGE_USE_IN_NEPAL)

**Acknowledgement:** I would like to sincerely acknowledge Dr. Richard Smith, who first made me explore on this topic.

**The author:** Sagun Shrestha is a 2016 Hornby scholar for the postgraduate course in English Language Teaching at the University of Warwick, UK. He has served as the coordinator for Access Program and teacher trainer in Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA). Equally, he has worked as an English teacher for more than seven years in Nepal. An editor-in-chief of 'The GEM 2012', he has been co-editing the e-zines, 'NELTA ELT Forum' and 'The Warwick ELT' recently.

## Techniques for Improving Speaking Fluency of Students

*Sangita Sapkota*

### Abstract

This paper presents an action plan and its implementation for enhancing speaking fluency of the EFL learners of lower secondary level. It is based on an action research, which presents my students' poor speaking fluency, my interventions and implementations. Similarly, it presents different techniques for developing English speaking proficiency, and their implication, effectiveness and ineffectiveness of them as well. It further shows the role of different techniques to help students for developing English speaking proficiency.

**Key words:** Speaking proficiency, techniques, fluency

### The context

In Nepalese context, there are two types of schools: Institutional and community. Institutional schools are also known as English medium or private schools, whereas community schools are Nepali medium schools. In institutional schools, teachers and directors all are required to speak in English except in Nepali subject, and even Nepali teachers are asked to speak in English outside the class. Likewise, students are enforced to speak in English from grade one. I have been teaching in an institutional school of Kathmandu valley for the last six months. The number of students in this school was comparatively high. I was newly appointed lower secondary English teacher of the session of 2015. There were each three different sections in grade six, seven and eight with around 30 students in a class. They were

from multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-class society. Some of them were Indian, and most of them were Nepali. Most of them belonged to upper middle class. None of them were from community school background. However, they were of mix-talent. I taught 'English II, The Spark English' in grade seven and eight. In grade seven this subject required six days a week including grammar text. So, I taught Spark English for four days in a week; and two days were required for grammar. The speaking environment of the school was English medium. So, students interacted in English with me from the beginning of my days in the school and even with their friends.

Though students were taught in English from the beginning of their schooling, I noticed that many of them did not have fluent English. Fluency is an individual skill,

whereby some students speak fluent English and others do not. So, students were of mixed ability. But, when I observed their speaking, I found that they did not have fluent English for speaking. As Fillmore (1979) proposes, fluency includes abilities to talk without awkward pauses for relatively long time. And talk in coherent, reasoned and semantically dense sentence (pp.85-102). My students could not continue their conversation fluently. I observed that their communicative English was improper. Likewise, when they had to speak in English on a given topic, or when they needed to answer the question they were not fluent, they took long pauses and could not share their ideas freely. They used the term 'only' redundantly. For instance, "I am not talking *only*." (I am not talking.), "There is written like this *only*", (there is written like this). They used Nepali conjunction like, "I'm *ta* not doing ma'am." (I am not doing, ma'am.) Likewise, they mostly used gerund form unnecessarily e.g. "Sound *coming* not *listening* ma'am, ma'am he is all the time *shouting shouting*." Then they used Nepali terms in initial and mostly in final position of an utterance. For instance, "La ma'am I told *na*..." (ma'am I have told.) *thyakkai* my copy" (exactly my copy.). When I asked them how they learnt such English, most of them replied that they did not know how they learnt but they felt comfortable in communication with Nepali words and English gerund forms. So, I assumed that most of my students could not speak fluently with proper English.

### **Problem statement**

I believe language is mostly about speaking and delivering our ideas fluently. However, when my students had to speak in English they were not fluent. According to Hartmann (1976), "A person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structure accurately whilst concentrating using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational

speed when they are needed." My students hardly used complete sentences without gerund, while communicating. Likewise, they used Nepali terms in English speaking and used the term 'only' unnecessarily. They were not confident to share their ideas from front. Mostly, they used gerund forms unnecessarily to express their ideas. They added Nepali (first language) conjunction marker '*Ta*' between the lines. Likewise, they added *na* (Nepali marker) at the end of the sentences. They wanted to live in comfort blanket, using mother tongue. So, we would be creating such environment which asks them to use proper English in class assisting them to reduce unnecessary use of the term 'only' in their speech. For instance, *I'm ta not doing ma'am., I'm not talking only*'. This improper use of words and structures were affecting the fluency of students' spoken English. It had been developed as their habit. Mostly, they could not stand in front when they had to tell us the answer. They spoke in a haphazard way. According to the CDC (Curriculum Development Centre), the aim of teaching English at lower secondary level is to make students able to communicate and express their ideas fluently with any foreign speakers who speak and write in English (2064). But my students were not able to express ideas fluently in real situation properly without using Nepali terms or *na* and gerund forms. I wondered, it would definitely hamper their interviews and other required English events. Hence, my students were facing crucial problem.

### **Data collection procedures**

My problem leads me to form the research question as: How I can help my students to improve their speaking fluency? As Cohen (2007) claims, "The relevant data from various streams provide collective answer to the research question (p.468)." Firstly, I kept note of their improper speaking to confirm the problem. I asked one of my

colleagues to observe my class. She prepared an observation list and I started to work on it. I also used observation note, interview, reflective journals, audio and video recordings as well as field notes. I used observation note for the data of inside classroom during 40 minutes, about the type of language they used and their fluency, whereas field note was used to record data of their speaking outside classroom. Reflective journals included both inside class and outside class activities regarding their speaking activities. I interviewed students about their feelings and perspectives towards different techniques implemented in class. They wrote answer. It was the written interview. I recorded audio and video for their performance in some interventions like group work, pair work, verbal boxing, and formal presentation along with sharing yesterday's event and end class summary. I observed almost every class and noted the reality of how they speak with friends sitting back. Likewise, I kept the field note even outside of the classroom. Most of the time, their speaking activities were noted down. During the action intervention, I recorded audio for their presentation and work in speaking. At the same time, I had video recording of students speaking and their communication. After the completion of each day's class and my intervention, I wrote reflective journals, where I could write our feelings and required revision for the way of presenting action in class as well. At the same time, I had asked our students to share their feelings for the class, after invention of different techniques.

### **Action plan implementation**

I implemented all the techniques in class 'Seven B' according to my action plan with slight modification. Larsen-Freeman (2007) talks about materials and techniques including "authentic materials, scramble stories, language games, picture story and role

play (pp. 132-134)." By studying the book of Freeman along with my own ideas, I intervened the following action for developing the fluency of my students:

- a) Sharing the events of previous day
- b) Peer work
- c) Verbal boxing
- d) Group discussion in complete English environment
- e) Formal oral presentation on textual topic
- f) Telling class summary at the end of the class
- g) Picture description
- h) Story telling

In my action plan, peer conversation and group work were separate action plans for different weeks, but as in the demand of content, in most of the weeks I asked students to do peer work and group work along with different interventions. The extreme point is that all the techniques were implemented in strict English speaking environment. The first intervention was 'sharing or expressing yesterday's events'. They could share both good and bad experiences. It was intervened for the first week. Then it moved to pair work and formal textual presentation. These two interventions were intervened together for the week. I felt the need to implement different action plans in a single day, which could go for longer days, since students were enjoying the class and asking me to do the previous activity. So, I implemented verbal boxing, end class summary and picture description together for many weeks. For a week, I made the classroom full of pairs and groups of learners, where they worked together and presented in front of the class. Likewise, storytelling technique was used for a week, where different students shared the story,

which they had heard in the past but not from the reading text. After that, again verbal boxing, end class summary, formal textual presentation, and expressing yesterday's class activities were intervened in smooth way. I modified the technique, expressing yesterday's event to expressing yesterday's class.

## **Outcomes**

I was able to make my class systematic with the intervention of eight different techniques in eight different weeks in a much planned way. In the beginning, I had informed them about their speaking picking up their own language and said, *"I am planning to do an action research to improve my students' speaking fluency, but I am confused in which class and in which section to do this."* Then all of them asked me to do it in their class. Bijaya and Patel said together, *"Ma'am, do in our class na."* And then, I made them to promise that they needed to be serious and disciplined. In addition, they kept their promise too in class. There were different outcomes and experiences of each technique in the class.

## **Expressing yesterday's event**

It was our first intervention of action research. With delimitation of our study, we asked two of our students Jeevan and Abhinav to go to the front and share what they had done after their school the previous day. For Jeevan it took around 20 seconds. He just spoke, *"..., I (auh) went and (stop). (auh) eat lunch at first. Then I went to homework. Then I start reading. Then, (Long pause) ma'am this much."* It took 0.59 minute to say these words. Then Abhinav started, *"I...(pause) played with my pet. Then I made my lunch and read."* It was the first day, so it helped us to prove our problem again that our students did not have good English speaking fluency. It was

very new for them and we shared that it was the first technique.

The next day, it was very surprising. When teachers' call the individual students in front of the class, the students usually seem nervous and hesitated; but when we called the name of Supreme then all of others started raising their hands saying *"ma'am call me too."* He said, *"The interesting thing was yesterday at COC when my toffee is 768, my toffee directly went to 800."* And Syujan, *"Yesterday, I got scold from my mother without any reason."* They did not worry about explanation, just came and said the specific event.

In the continuum of same technique, the next participant was Ujjwol. He spoke for 1.9 minute and said,

After. I leave for my home (auh) on the way near a home (auh) there was a big crowd, and (long pause) near an electric pole and I, I went there (auh) I saw that in that electric pole there was fire and it was burning. And... I immediately went to my home and asked my brother to off the main switch and, called the police... Then police came there after 15 minutes. That...police threw...that... fire and said we cannot do anything, call the electrician. And people called electricians.

Students were being familiar with the techniques, and their hesitation was eliminated and they were excited to share their previous day's events. In comparison to the first two days, students seemed ready for speaking. Most of them raised hands to share their previous day's experience. One of the students told me outside the class with dissatisfaction, *"ma'am I was being ready to share one event and I tried in home too but, you did not call my name."* As

Hedges (2010) defines, fluency is “the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness or undue hesitation (2010, p.54).” My students started developing their fluency. They seemed more confident and excited to share their ideas in front of the class.

### **Pair work/formal textual presentation**

The next intervention was pair work. This intervention was continued for two weeks along with other tasks. I asked my students to be in pair and managed pairs for those students who were not in pair. The topic of lesson was how to give instruction, so I gave them different topics. They were having content based English discussion. It was very satisfactory co-operative class, sharing their ideas in English. When the turn came for presentation, it was happy moment to see them standing in front with pair without having any hesitation. We did not find any Nepali words in between, and they did not explain in unnecessary gerund form. Even in between, students were not interrupting in Nepali. In each class, pair work went smoothly and effectively. However, in some places students used ‘only’ like, “I said same *only*.” But still there was management problem. When first pair was presenting, others were busy with their own task and were not listening to friends. Gradually, we made rule that some of them may re-explain what their friends had said. They would be asked questions from their friend’s presentation, and they had to make comment as well. This helped to manage the classroom and develop their attention. Pair work assisted students to be interactive in class for conclusive discussion. As they had to perform, all of them were active in discussion.

Before the intervention of formal oral textual presentation, students were already familiar with it since I used it previously in class.

However, it made oral textual presentation systematic. Firstly, Bijaya and Jeevan presented about the text ‘In the Farmyard’ (a poem). Rather, considering grammatical mistakes, our focus was on their content fluency and presentation skill. It was pair presentation; they spoke all in English to explain the text and they were good in content, where they just shared their understanding of the text within 1.42 minutes, without Nepali words, without ‘only’, and without gerund as well. When it was the formal presentation, they took it seriously and tried to make it fluent. With pausing, most of them covered the content of their given text. The next participant Samana gave textual presentation, which was comfortable and spoke for 1.37 minutes, who summarized and explained the text “A Loving Parents”. However, she used the discourse marker (auh.) many times, which still shows the lack of fluency.

The observation note presents that students were confident to go in front and share ideas, and the pronunciation of words were very comprehensible while having formal textual presentation. If we changed the technique, then they made us to remember the formal textual presentation. Their concern about presentation reveals their positive attitudes towards formal textual presentation.

### **Verbal boxing**

This technique is very common and influential all over the world, as I was informed by the trainer Tomes Jone, in a training. In this technique, two speakers become ready for speaking without listening to each other. The classroom students give two different topics for two different speakers, where they need to speak on their own topic at the same time. Whoever stops first, s/he is a loser. It is claimed to develop speaking fluency of the learners.

We intervened it in class. For the first time, we asked students to give the common topic where they could speak like *momo*, *panipuri* (The familiar eating items). It was very interesting, and they could not continue it for long time since they blasted into laugh. The next day, they were very excited and had tried in their home, so they really spoke without much laughing. Gradually, we made them speak in two different texts, which had already been discussed in class. They spoke so fast and fluently that they completed their textual information within 20 seconds, (Samana and Nischal) to a different text entitled 'In the farm yard and Rautes', and continued to add their own point. Including us, all of the class members were surprised since they did it without being disturbed.

Nischal once said, "The best activity was verbal boxing." The field note shows they were trying it with friends from different section even in lunch-break. They shared that they were practicing in home and wanted to show us. All the time they asked us to do that activity.

### **Group work/ picture description**

The next technique that we implemented in classroom was picture description. We simply asked our students to describe the textual pictures individually. They had to describe each aspect of picture according to their assumption and inference. But at first, they could not do it properly, they hardly inferred correctly. For example, there was the picture of a farmer separating paddy from straw; but Bijaya said, "What doing what doing..." It helped them to use their free language. Some students who were already prepared for speaking could describe it longer, whereas few students described the picture in one or two utterances. However, they did not use Nepali terms and could say without being disturbed and hesitated.

Group work was the familiar and continuous technique, which was intervened in our class. It makes them talk to each other and share their ideas to one another. According to Ur (1996), "Communication or the speaking in the learners can be fostered if learners talk a lot, motivation is high and language is of an acceptable level (p.120)." At first, it was time consuming. It took two classes for completing the group work for the first time. Then we created time limitation. During discussion, once or twice we could hear Nepali interjections "*Aiya* (auch!), *hya* (showing irritation)" but for the discussion, they were discussed in English because we had shared the different paragraphs of a text. To manage the classroom and time, we created the time limitation and they had to finish their work on time. Thus, language development was found clearly enhanced through collaborative group work. Like previously, they had to listen to different group's presentation and answer their questions. At the same time, they had to make comment on their friend's presentation.

### **End class summary**

The end class summary is one of the interventions implemented in the class. In this technique, after the completion of the classroom discussion, students need to share what happened in class and mention the core content of the class. At first, we asked one of the students who seemed less attentive, but he could not express. The next day, we asked one student, but he failed to cover the core content. It happened so as students were not habituated. Prashant said, "Today, ma'am came to the class. We greeted her and she started our class. She asked for our homework and taught for 35 minutes and then asked me to tell the summary." When we instructed them what to include and what not to include, they started to tell the core summary. Swekshya explained the activities of the classroom

with content, who spoke for 1.12 minutes. It had been the regular activity in the class. It was done only for five minutes at the end of the lesson.

### Story telling

Story telling intervention was implemented as a warm up activity for influencing the students' speaking fluency. Harmer (2007) states, "Students need to be able to tell stories." It is obviously connected with speaking fluency. When we introduced it first, most of the students were puzzled. For the first time, we let students to tell the plot of any textual story. It looked somehow related to the formal textual presentation. Before leaving class, we reminded them that we would ask any of them to tell any short story which is not from textbook. They could tell any ghost stories and others that they had heard or read somewhere out of text. Students started to come with different stories to share. Kirsch (2008) says, "Story encourages learners to tell, read, write and perform their own stories." It made them very creative and interactive. But we just allowed two short stories in a day. The other students had to comment and share their ideas. While telling stories students used Nepali terms, since the story was of Nepali language, where they could not find English equivalents of the Nepali rustic words. The class was communicative with short stories.

After the intervention of those techniques for eight weeks, I could find their ways of expressing ideas. As Selinker (2008) claims, "How much of language is learnt is seen in interaction of the speaker, the conversation that is made is the evidence of the language learnt." The observation list proves that my classroom was very interactive. Anjal had written, 'In my view, it was a really good way to boost our confidence and to help us talk confidently.' Abhinav has written, 'Wow! It was fun learning about so much. When I started speaking, my legs were trembling

because of fear. But when I kept on talking the fear disappeared'.

### Conclusion

There was a fluency problem among my students of grade seven, where students were from English medium school. They were of mixed ability, who could not express their ideas and understanding in proper English. Whenever they had to speak, they used Nepali terms and gerund form unnecessarily. With the expectation of improving their fluency, I implemented eight different interventions. Along with some management problems, I was able to develop my students' fluency, whereby they expressed their ideas in groups or in front with confidence and they did not use Nepali term while speaking. Along with fluency, those techniques helped to manage the classroom.

### Ways forward

These things improved their formal way of speaking with teachers and in contextual speaking in a fluent way without mixing Nepali and gerund forms. However, they still speak some code-mixing language while communicating with their friends. Now, new action research is required for addressing their communicative skill with friends.

### References

- Curriculum Development Centre (2004). *National curriculum of grade 8-10*. Bhaktapur, Sanothimi.
- Cohen, M. M. (2007). *Research methods in education*. USA: Routledge.
- Fillmore, C. (1979). On fluency. *Individual differences in language ability and language behaviour*. 85-102.



- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Pearson: Longman.
- Hartmann, R. (1976). *Dictionary of language and linguistics*. New York: Wiley.
- Hedge, T. (2010). *Teaching and learning in language classroom*. New York: Oxford.
- Kirsch, C. (2008). *Teaching foreign language in the primary school*. London: Continuum.
- Larsen -Freeman, D. (2007). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Selinker, G. (2008). *Second language acquisition (3rd ed.)*. New York: Routledge.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**The author:** Sangita Sapkota is the lecturer of English at undergraduate level. She teaches in different colleges of Kathmandu Valley. She has completed her Master's in English Language Teaching from Kathmandu University. She is keen on researching the English language classroom.

## **Appositeness of Teacher Training for In-Service EFL Teachers in Real Teaching Context**

*Shankar Dhakal*

### **Abstract**

There are various ways for EFL teachers to grow professionally. Attending workshops and training programs are believed to foster their upward mobility. At the same time, different teachers come up with numerous challenges in their classroom with the change of time. So, the learning they had in their college and university level may not always help them to dissolve all the problems in their diverse classroom settings. In this context, this small-scale study explores whether the insights teachers get from the workshops and the trainings conducted by Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) are applicable and they contribute to liquefy the challenges EFL teachers face in their classroom. Drawing on the findings of this study and the support from the literature, it has been justified that training programs help teachers to grow professionally, but they can hardly apply the knowledge and skills they learn in their real classroom situations. With the help of data collected through the interview, it is crystallized that trainings have been almost unsuccessful to help the teachers cope with ever changing professional world.

**Keywords:** Teacher training, EFL, professional development, transfer of training.

### **Backdrop**

Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) was established in 1992, with an objective of setting a common platform for all the teachers of English in Nepal, so as to support their professional development and enhance the overall ELT situation in Nepal. It claims to help English teachers to familiarise with the recent ELT pedagogy involving them in professional development activities such as teacher training programs, workshops, seminars, conferences and so on (NELTA, 2016).

NELTA conducts one-day workshop and training programs in various parts of the country. In these programs, they focus on the current ELT problems and issues and their practical solutions. Hence, it has been providing different training programs to EFL teachers around the nation for their professional development as well as to empower them with the recent developments in ELT in the globe. In this context, I would like to explore whether the insights the trainees get in the training programs and workshops are applicable and handy in their real teaching contexts or the trainings are conducted just for the sake

of training and what the trainers preach do not fit in the varied classroom settings.

### **Professional development of teachers**

Teachers have to develop themselves professionally during their teaching career because the knowledge they get about teaching in their college and university education is not sufficient for them for the whole teaching career. With the change of time, they might face new challenges and also new ideas and concepts will be emerging in the field of teaching. So, to keep themselves abreast of the recent methodologies and trends, they have to develop themselves. Stressing the importance of continuous professional development of the teachers, Underhill (1997) has stated that professional development involves teachers in a constant process of learning about their practice and discovering and using their own potential. Similarly, for Richards (1998), professional development requires teachers to create their own personal teaching methodology that takes into account their experience, beliefs and understanding about good teaching.

In addition, the need of the learners will also change with the time, since the change is a continuous process. For this, teachers need to update professionally as Pennington (1990) has stated that every teacher needs professional growth throughout her career.

Teachers can develop professionally in various ways such as taking a new responsibility, self-reading, reflective practice, collaborative learning, attending seminars, training programs, conferences and workshops and so on. In the same vein, Richards (1998) has added that reflection, self-inquiry, self-monitoring and self-

evaluation are necessary elements in fostering professional development since they help teachers to be better informed and to evaluate their professional growth, as well as to plan for development.

Additionally, teachers can develop themselves reflecting and evaluating their own practices and modifying them if need be, as Wallace (1991) has stated that teachers' self-evaluation involves reflecting, questioning or engaging in critical reflective inquiry over one's own practice. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) has stated that teachers' self-evaluation and their practice can be considered as a commitment to analysing and evaluating their own teaching acts. So, it helps them to be critical towards their self-practices and, ultimately develop them professionally.

### **Need of in-service teacher education**

In-service teacher education refers to training of teachers who are already in service. Hence, "It is a supplementary, additional training, which must be given in the teachers' spare time or in time made free by the school authorities" (Mohan, 2011, p. 92). Similarly, every experience he/she undergoes during his/her career, however irrelevant it may appear, may be described as in-service teacher education. In other words, in-service teacher education includes everything that happens to a teacher from the day he/she takes up his first appointment to the day he/she retires which contributes, directly or indirectly, to the way in which he/she executes his/her professional duties. "In-service" refers to professional development activities for all employed teachers, those with and those without formal qualifications. These programs range from occasional, ad hoc workshops to continuous, comprehensive, career-long programs of professional

learning. To manage the changes, to enhance professional competence and for professional satisfaction, teachers need continuing professional development for which, in-service training can be one of the ways. In-service teacher education helps in improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, understanding how children learn different subjects developing practical skills and competencies, learning new teaching strategies, learning how to use new technologies, strengthening professionalism and ethics, providing knowledge and skills linked to the ever-changing needs of a dynamic society as Uysal (2012) states, " In-service teacher education is a big opportunity for teacher development and for successful implementation of curriculum innovations" (p. 12).

### **Teacher training and/or teacher development**

Teacher training and teacher development are generally, taken synonymously. But, teacher training represents certain course designed for certain time duration, whereas, teacher development continues in the entire profession. However, both contribute to a teacher's improved performance. Highlighting the difference between teacher training and teacher development, Mann (2005) states that

The role of teacher training is to introduce the methodological choices available and to familiarise trainees with that range of terms and concepts that are that 'common currency' of language teachers. But, teacher development is a continuous professional and personal growth that teachers themselves undertake and that is guided by the teachers concerned. (Mann, 2005, p. 104)

Generally, teacher training is time bound with fixed agenda. It is hierarchical. On the contrary, teacher development is related to the need of the individual and it is a continuing process with no fixed agenda. It is a self-directed process. So, for Richards and Nunan (1990), teacher development work towards developing the teachers as an autonomous practitioner, who can independently make decisions, learn from their own actions and solve problems which are unique to their situations. Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2005) have asserted that teacher development involves teachers in understanding themselves and their teaching; in analysing their teaching practices, beliefs, values and principles; in keeping up-to-date with theories and trends; and sharing their experiences with colleagues. But, teacher training programs are mostly generic and designed basically, to address the common problems of the teachers.

### **Applying training knowledge in classroom context**

There are several ways for teachers to develop professionally. It is believed that attending workshops and teacher training programs help teachers to develop themselves professionally and make them aware of the recent teaching trends and practices around the globe thereby modifying their teaching practices for better performance. At the same time, when the teachers perform well, it is expected to contribute to the better result of the students. However, what the trainee teachers learn in training programs can be, sometimes difficult to apply in their real classroom context, because of social, cultural, economic and linguistic variations. At the same time, all the teachers have different and unique classroom environment, where the same methods and strategies may not be applicable all the time, as Maley (1990) stresses that the major drawback of traditional training program is

that they tend to prescribe what teachers need to do irrespective of the diverse working environment each teacher has to face.

Moreover, it is generally accepted that when teachers develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge through workshops and trainings, they perform better, and thereby contributing to the better result of the students. But, a study conducted by Jacob and Lefgren (2004) shows that in-service teacher trainings have no statistically or academically significant effect to increase the achievement of elementary schoolchildren. Similarly, Harris and Sass (2006) studied the effects of various trainings to promote student achievement. They found that there is no evidence that the trainings to the teachers increase student achievement. So, it can be discerned that teacher trainings may not always foster the performance of the teachers and contribute to promote students' learning.

### **Objectives of the study**

This is a small-scale research study conducted in the Chitwan district interviewing three in-service EFL teachers with an objective of investigating whether the learning the trainee teachers have in training programs and workshops, mainly conducted by NELTA help to foster the performance of teachers and are applicable and classroom-friendly or how practical they are in their real classroom context.

### **Research methodology and participants**

In this exploratory qualitative study, I have primarily used conversational interview to collect data as Rossman&Rall 1998 (as cited in Richards, 2003) state "Interviewing is the hallmark of qualitative research" (p. 47). I purposively selected three EFL teachers

teaching in different schools in Chitwan district, who attended minimum three training programs conducted by NELTA and interviewed them. In addition, I used different documents, reports and research studies as sources of information. This study adopts semi-structured interview, where "the interviewer is free to follow up a question with additional questions that probe further" (Perry, 2005, p. 119). There was no predetermination of questions, rather the researcher prepared some guidelines or interview themes before interview.

For this study, I purposively selected three EFL teachers having minimum five years of experience in teaching English and attended at least three trainings or workshops conducted by NELTA.

### **Data analysis procedure**

This section presents the analysis of qualitative data gathered during the face-to-face individual interviews. The data gathered from the interviews were coded and categorised under themes through qualitative techniques. These codes were organised around research objectives and for the ethical reasons, the real identity of the participants were masked using pseudonyms as T1, T2 and T3 while analysing the data.

### **Findings and discussion**

There may be many ways in which the information gathered in this research study could have been analysed. In this paper, I shall present the findings and discuss them establishing the following themes: Link between the training objectives and the trainees' needs; Feasibility of training in real classroom context; and role of training to improve teachers' performance and productivity.

## **Link between training objectives and trainees' needs**

When I asked the participants whether there was the link between objectives of the training programs they attended and their real needs, or whether the trainings were successful to meet their expectations, one of the participants said that he had expected a lot before he attended the session. But, he felt it incomplete after the training and he learnt only limited thing that he was longing for. In the same vein, T1 responded, *No, Never. I would be invited to attend the sessions but the details would not be given. I would know only the topics of the training. The details would be unfolded only after the training began. I have never found the training sessions valuing the need of the participants. Usually, the trainers come with their pre-designed training modules. The trainees do what the trainers ask them to do. I have never been asked about my needs before the training.*

From the discussion above, it can be inferred that training objectives in the training sessions were not designed keeping the real needs of the trainees in mind. The training programs are not contextual as T3 said, *The training sessions were very interesting. However, the participants' ability seems to have been increased and their need would be addressed if the real classroom situation was similar to the training hall situation.*

## **Feasibility of training in real classroom context**

Regarding the feasibility of the training in their real classroom context, the views of the participants were almost similar. One participant said that the trainings were mostly theoretical and they were hardly contextual. So, what he learnt in the training session was very difficult to apply in his classroom context since he did not get any practical tips to deal with different classroom situations. Similarly, when I

asked the next participant whether the training met his expectations to resolve classroom problems and situations, he said, *I am afraid they have not met my expectations. Despite participating in the training, the problems raised in the training halls were different from the ones we face in our classrooms and the solutions the trainers had given to us in the training halls did not solve our classroom problems.*

Similarly, T2 said, *Training programs help us grow professionally. They update us. They impart us new knowledge. But, the training programs I have attended were merely the waste of time because I could not apply them in my classroom situation. Frankly speaking, learning did not last for long. The only wealth is the certificate.*

Based on the discussion above, it can be inferred that in the present pattern of training, full transfer is a far cry. However, little transfer is a waste of resources. So, it is hard to expect that everything learnt in the training hall can be applied in the classroom. As the participants responded, what the participants learnt in the training sessions could not be transferred to the school situations because everything- the participants, materials, infrastructures, facilities and management was different from the training hall. As a result, the participants may try to apply the training hall learning to the real classroom situation for a couple of days after they return from the training, but the effort fails and they are back to the square one later.

## **Role of training to improve teachers' performance and productivity**

When the participants were asked whether the trainings helped them to improve their

classroom performance and productivity, almost all agreed with the opinion that trainings helped to increase their knowledge, but they did not improve their skills, attitude and sense of responsibility. According to them, most of the trainings focused on contents and they impart only content knowledge. They are highly theoretical and are hard to apply in diverse classroom setting. So, they have neither improved their classroom performance nor the result of the students. One of the participants said, *The trainers are expert on their own domain and they focus much on the area they are good at rather than addressing the problems teachers really face in the real classroom teaching.*

Similarly, T3 said, *I think training is a must for increasing the performance and productivity of the teachers. They should help teachers to come up with solutions for the problems they encounter in the classroom. They should also connect teachers to the wider community of practice and help them to update their professional practice, but I am afraid. Trainings are not able to address all these.*

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that theoretical aspects are prevalent in the training sessions, but practical aspects are not emphasised. Training sessions are good, but if they focus the contextual needs, it will be icing on the cake. As the participants said that the trainings always miss the context, due to which they are less helpful to the teachers to improve their classroom performance, even if they attend several training sessions.

## **Conclusion**

What is to be emphasized today is to encourage teachers to find a way of teaching that is appropriate to their own context. But, the training sessions which are thought to help the teachers to address their

daily classroom needs seem to be ineffective. According to the participants, teachers cannot apply all what they learn in the trainings. It is because training patterns have been de-contextualized since each classroom context is unique, which is different from the training context. So, taking training is one thing, but solving the real classroom problem is a different kettle of fish. In this way, on the basis of the findings, I hope that this mini research will help the EFL professionals and other stakeholders to rethink about the teacher training programs and their educational implication in a meaningful way.)†

## **References**

- Harris, D., & Sass, T. R. (2006). The effects of teacher training on teacher value added. *Department of Economics*. Florida State University. Available: <ftp://econpapers.fsu.edu>.
- Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2004). The impact of teacher training on student achievement: Quasi-experimental evidence from school reform efforts in Chicago. *Journal of Human Resources*, 39(1). University of Wisconsin Press. Available: <http://jhr.uwpress.org>.
- Kumaravedivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to post method*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Maley, A. (1990). Teacher development explained. *Practical English Teaching*, 10(4).
- Mann, S. (2005). *The language teachers' development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Mohan, R. (2011). *Teacher education*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Limited.

- NELTA (2016). *NELTA Objectives*. Available: <http://nelta.org.np>.
- Pennington, M. C. (1990). A professional development focus for the language teaching practicum. In J. C. Richards and D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perry, J. F. (2005). *Research in applied linguistics*. New York: Routledge.
- Richards, J. C. (1998). *Beyond training: Perspectives on language teacher education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Nunan, D. (1990). Issues and approaches in teacher education. In J. C. Richards & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second language teacher education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Underhill, A. (1997). (Ed.). The teacher development series. In K. Head & P. Taylor. *Readings in teacher development*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Uysal, H. H. (2012). Evaluation of an in-service training program for primary-school language teachers in Turkey. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(7). <http://dx.doi.org>.
- Wallace, M. J. (1991). *Training foreign language teachers: A reflective approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)†

**The author:** Shankar Dhakal is an M. Phil. (ELE) scholar at Kathmandu University. He has worked as an EFL teacher for more than a decade and a teacher trainer for about five years. He has conducted a mini-research in various EFL issues in Nepal. He is a life member of NELTA. His research interests include critical pedagogy and issues of large EFL classes.



## **Learner Autonomy: A Western Hegemony in English Language Teaching to Enhance Students' Learning for Non-Western Cultural Context**

*Sarmila Pokhrel*

### **Abstract**

The paper is concerned about the concept of learner autonomy as a western hegemony in English language teaching to enhance students' learning for non-Western cultural context. The concept of learner autonomy was developed in the Western countries creating independent and autonomous culture for learners to prepare them; learning to learn, however for it got its continuation as an innovative method to the non-Western countries of dependent culture where parents set up the cultural values and norms for children. Such practice of framing the norms for children is regarded against the cultural assumption of learner autonomy which is considered as Western hegemony for non-Western cultural context. Based on the literature and empirical evidences, the paper argues how learner autonomy as a Western hegemony in English language teaching enhances students' learning in diverse cultural contexts of non-Western countries. With the conceptual, theoretical and practical understanding, the paper explores how learner autonomy as a Western hegemony in English language teaching enhances students' learning for non-Western cultural context.

**Keywords:** Learner autonomy, western hegemony, innovative method, cultural context

### **Introduction**

Learner autonomy, comparatively an innovative and global concept in modern education, has been defined differently by different scholars. It was originated at the University of Nancy in the 1970s by the leadership of the influential figure Holec (1981). He proposes learners' ability of taking charge of their own learning. According to him, such ability is developed by the learners themselves in an autonomous learning environment where learners are skillful and responsible for taking charge of their own learning. In the same vein, Dewey (1966) pays attention to

the teaching environment to foster child's continuous development in language learning (Benson, 2001). For him, language learning in learning-friendly environment can support learners to learn themselves.

It shows that basic terminology for the concept of learner autonomy is full of diversity. For instance, Dickinson's (1987) learner autonomy is to the learning situation in which individual manifests an attitude of responsibility and self-direction which is different than Holec's (1981) learner's ability to be responsible for own learning (as cited in Palfreyman & Smith,

2003) however the value was given to learners and their learning culture instead of teachers' teaching. These thinkers of learner autonomy in 1970s contribute to shift the perspectives of teaching culture to learning culture creating awareness to the teachers for their teaching methods from teacher-centered to learner-centered in English language learning in the Western countries.

With the extension of value given to the persons or their schooling culture to the children as an independent learner in the society of Western countries prepared autonomous learners. It is thus, the concept of learner autonomy emerged as a real-world social phenomenon due to the contingent historical processes both within the life history of individuals and within the development of societies in the process of modernization (Anderson, 2011). It is meaningful to present the developmental process of autonomy as a linear concept of autonomisation that assumes the progression from heteronomy to autonomy (Schmenk, 2006).

Influence of different methods & techniques/ Hegemony to learners

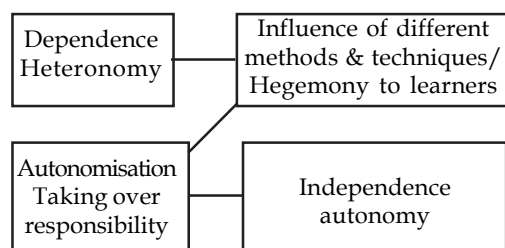


Figure 1. Progression from heteronomy to autonomy (Schmenk, 2006).

It shows that learner autonomy is a complex multidimensional concept that can be defined in terms of individual and socio-cultural context. Such concept of shifting the role of learning to the learners obviously

concerned with the autonomous learning culture that best help people to lead autonomous lives (Benson, 2008, as cited in Neupane, 2010) though it demands learners' capacity for action without intervention of others (Blin, 2005). It is because autonomous culture demands personal autonomy that prepares individual for critical reflection being free to choose what to do with one's life (Anderson, 2011). It got its popularity in teaching English language to enhance students' learning in the developed countries where learners were valued as independent personality.

With the pace of time, it obviously extended its arms to the developing countries in English language teaching though there was lack of autonomy friendly culture in teaching English language. Since all areas in schools, societies and countries of non-Western countries are inclined from the hegemony of Western countries, learner autonomy is also considered as the Western hegemony and it is a genuine concern to discuss its practicality in teaching English language in the non-Western cultural context.

### Practice of learner autonomy in English language teaching

Learner autonomy is obviously a Western concept that demands freedom for learners taking charge of own learning to learn. As it was practiced before four decades in developed countries, it is not out of question to its practicality in the socio-cultural context of non-Western countries in English language teaching to enhance students' learning. It is considered as a global concept in the field of English language teaching because the concept of learner autonomy has been widely referred in the field of English language teaching (Smith, 2008).

Learner autonomy thus directly focuses on English language learning being independent learner however it is not only confined within a particular method and the perspective of individualism (Little, 1991). It is also considered as a guiding concept that requires different forms of pedagogy and meets with different kinds of restriction according to context (Palfreyman & Smith 2003). From this perspective, learner autonomy needs the learning friendly cultural context especially for learning English language though it is cross-culturally valid phenomena.

To depict the clear picture of classroom practice of teachers and students in English language teaching, it is meaningful to present the research finding of Pokhrel (2013) who has exposed that English teachers are less motivated to participate students in activities. Due to the practice of teacher centered-teaching method, students wait for teachers to solve problem and they become reluctant to expose them with others using English language even in ELT classroom. It shows that there is lack of integrity in students' schooling, teachers teaching, demand of society and perspectives of contents in ELT. For instance, mother tong has been given emphasis for primary level in policy whereas parents prefer English as the medium of instruction and enroll their children in English school. Teachers and students also prefer English as the medium of instruction with the autonomy of learning. Exploring the perceptions and practice of teachers and students on learner autonomy in university students, Joshi (2011) has exposed that teachers and students are positive in their perceptions on learner autonomy though they have less practice in classroom. It shows that learner autonomy is out of the reach for the classroom practice of teachers and students in English language teaching in Nepalese

cultural context that signify the symptom of hegemony in English language teaching.

### **Learner autonomy as the Western hegemony to the non-Western cultural context**

As learner autonomy was developed in the western countries with their own cultural values, assumption, belief system to make it common for all that has the hegemonic power to influence others. Such power of hegemony lies in its invisibility and is therefore harder to notice and difficult to oppose it (Gramsci, n. d). It shows that hegemony is a process by which dominant groups seek to impose their belief structure on individuals for the purpose of solidifying their power over them (Kincheloe, 2004). It is said that most of our paradigms originated from North America in the 1950s to 1980s, inspired by the empirical phenomena and culture of that time and impose them on the remaining countries. It is not that non-Western countries are well equipped and independent. It is not contextual to adjust all the Western values to non-Western countries as there is contextual difference between the East and the West in terms of philosophies, cultural values and norms (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015).

Not only this, the superiority of the European heritage and Western knowledge is now a firmly re-entrenched notion that we might study the knowledge or entertain perspectives of peoples from other cultures, our ideological perspective is quickly fading the way morning star as the sun rises over Fallujah (Kincheloe, 2008). If this is the case, the Sanskrit saying '*paropakar punyaya, papaya para pidana*' (do something for others forgetting the self) will be replaced by the saying of Lekhnath Poudyal '*mai khau mai lau, sukha sayala ma moja ma garu, mai hasu mai nachu aru saba marun durbalaharu*' (do

something for the well being of self forgetting others).

In this sense, learner autonomy is also the Western construct developed with modern education giving the priority to the independent individual and became popular phenomena in post modern education in Western countries. It promulgated its arms with the mass education to the non-Western countries too. For instance, individual autonomy in projecting one's own destiny, creation of new knowledge and skills for better living and respect for dignity and egalitarianism are the major implications of postmodern education (Lamichhane & Wagley, 2008).

There have been various calls to go beyond the Western setting with empirical phenomenon of the East however there is strong application of Western theories (Barkema et al., 2015). For instance, it is a natural process that the privilege and their offspring of person can influence the discourses and makes individuals stop or frozen into position that hegemony them (Fleischer, 2013). Privileges and offspring of Western countries can influence and hegemony to the non-Western countries. They pay less attention to understand their cultural pedagogy and education that takes place outside of formal schooling. Fleischer (2013) further says that without understanding of cultural pedagogy, the role of shaping the individual identity and their life will be faded by the hegemony. If this is the case, practice of learner autonomy to promote learners learning in the non-Western countries is questionable.

### **Cultural, political, and economic contexts of learners**

*"Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me fishing and I eat for a lifetime"*. This proverb taken from Chinese culture is significant to

learner autonomy that expects the learners to be equipped with the required skills to run their life blissfully and quench their need throughout their life. But certain cultural values that state the yardstick for judging the child as the good or bad is the degree of obedience shown his/her parents (Dardjowidjojo, 2001) that can be obstruction to prepare autonomous learner in non-Western countries. Parents set up the norms and children are expected to adhere (Dardjowidjojo, 2001) so that their children can be obedient to follow the cultural trait continuously without any objection.

As we know that the world is full of diverse socially, culturally, politically and economically, obviously then, this Western learner-centered approach based on individualism may not work in non-Western country's education because there is difference in culture and context of learners where learners are compelled to adhere the parents' fixed values and norms (Dardjowidjojo, 2001; Smith, 2006). There is difference in orientation of parents where learners are not allowed to go outside the wall or they cannot think to go beyond the fixed border (Krishnamurti, 1987). It is of course the reality and styles are also different. If such differences exist, how the Western concept can be adjusted in non-Western countries. It is not that learner-centered values are not important. This is of course necessary for preparing autonomous learners from the very beginning of life but it comes to question to its implication. Krishnamurti (1987) also does not believe on autonomous cultural context in non-Western countries to prepare creative learners. In his dialogue with the learner he says,

I don't know if you are creative-probably not because your parents will not allow you to go outside the wall. You are fixed into a mould and there

you are struck for the rest of your life then such type of conditional minds can never go beyond its own border. (pp. 48-49)

That's why, certain aspect of a learners' cultural background can restrain the promotion of autonomy. Due to the cultural diversity in Asian context, it is important to explore the cultural backgrounds and find the way for adjustment because it can affect on learning of individual learners (Littlewood, 1999; Neupane, 2010). Krishnamurti (1987) also suggests the learner "If you don't revolt against this process, you become like automatic machine functioning without creativity and original thought and there is no meaning of being educated" (p.52). But Smith (2006) highlights the problems to practice learner autonomy in a variety of cultural contexts.

It is thus, we need to recognize the socio-cultural perspectives of learning (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003), learning resources and learners' identity to promote learner autonomy for many Asian learners (Dang, 2010), intelligent of learners. They must be free from all pseudo-religious, social values and cultural trappings to discover the thing that is real for them (Krishnamurti, 1987). For instance, Chinese teachers dominate the students as a result students become passive, dependent on teachers lacking the ability of managing own studies for autonomous learning (Zhung, 2010).

In such practice, teacher is expected to exercise complete authority and students tend to be dependent upon their teachers for learning (Dang, 2010). The purpose of cultural study in learner autonomy is to unpick the traditional tie between culture and nation. As it speaks the culture of classroom or school, these small cultures

may be influenced by national value system and they have their own implication for autonomy (Holliday, 1999, as cited in Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). Littlewood (1999) also informs that the great influence of cultural traditions and the socio-cultural process particular to Asian countries have an impact on learner autonomy. As a result, East Asian student's achievement is often socially motivated rather than individually oriented. This shows that many other cultures have favored more familial and communal relationships over individualism in contrary to what individualism that western cultures have valued (Chang, Scott & Decker, 2009). Obviously there is somewhat contradiction to the traditional beliefs of relational hierarchy and socio-cultural stimulus between Western and non-Western countries.

It is relevant to present an African saying "*A good father does not give his son meat. Instead, he gives him a bow and arrow, and teaches him to hunt*" (Kuchah & Smith, 2011). It is an example of orientation of parents for their children to prepare skillful learners in Africa. They believe that if pupils have learnt how to learn they can go on learning afterwards (West, 1960, as cited in Kuchah & Smith, 2011). Proposition of training the learners into better thinker and learner from the very beginning of life is deeply culturist vision of superior culture that is impossible to the learners of all other cultural contexts. To use the analogy of sexism, it is like men deciding how the freedom of women should be structured. It is possible for the educators to be learner-centered, in the same way as it is possible for men to be feminist (Holliday, 2005). It is an issue to explore how learner autonomy is thought and applied in teaching and learning activities (Littlewood, 1999) in Asian diverse socio-cultural, political and economic context.

In policy review, it has emphasized learners to manage own learning (Blin, 2005) however teachers and students are not able to stand in parallel position in Nepalese cultural context (Koirala, 2011) that might be the context to other non-Western countries. It is said '*Nothing wipes your tears away but your own hands*'. It means individual person must be ready for wellbeing of the self but not others that requires skills of self-learning that has not been practiced effectively in non-Western countries. Whereas in Western countries, democracy and political view of autonomy is primarily concerned with the autonomy of individual as it is constituted within social groups. Political questions about the broader principles of autonomy such as students' rights have been transformed into a psychological concern about how to develop strategies for learner autonomy (Holliday, 2005).

Political perspective of learner autonomy involves gaining access to cultural alternatives and power structure developing an articulate voice with competing ideology. It requires the context of the arrangement of ideological position in a specific interaction, relationship and setting (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). As the purpose of western education is to develop responsible individuals, society and school support to accomplish their policy of preparing independent learners who are able to think and decide for them while behaving as accountable, moral and unselfish citizens (Blin, 2005). Whereas socio-cultural value of non-Western countries is not autonomy friendly that consider learner autonomy as a laden value from the West (Jones, 1995, as cited in Littlewood, 1999) in which political and economic condition are attached in it.

It is also true that skill of learner is not considered as education as well as the good source of income because knowledge,

wisdom and skills are regarded as separate entities in society. Knowledge is linked with liberation after death, skill is linked with livelihood and wisdom is linked with the process. Those who are equipped with skills are not called '*thulo manche*' (honorable persons) in the society though they have earned more. But knowledge, skill and wisdom all are integrated in education in Western countries (Koirala, July, 12, 2015 from the discussion with BBC program) which can be the source to be independent whatever they choose in the society.

As a result, it is easier for the learners to be independent in the Western countries in comparison to the non-Western countries. Perhaps it might be the attitude to observe with this lens that there should be rich and poor so that rich can manipulate poor for their own behalf like big fish sustain with the small one. Or there is a cultural practice of respecting the difference in the society. This shows that cultural, political and economic context of non-Western countries need to be considered for the implementation of learner autonomy to promote autonomous learning.

### **Theoretical standpoint of learner autonomy in ELT**

The notion of learner autonomy in ELT exposes the philosophical assumption of constructivist epistemology in which teachers have to regain their capacity for their students' learning and give them opportunity for decision making being autonomous learner. It comes under the theoretical assumption of post method pedagogy that places a great deal of focus on the autonomy of learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). It is because learner-focused lessons not only access higher-order thinking and language skills through the use of problem-solving, inquiry, synthesis of ideas, and inference but also students' background knowledge,

experience, and cultures as foundational elements of instruction, interaction, and assessment (ibid) that further demands to think beyond the single method (Kumaravadivelu, 2002). It is also necessary to think culturally relevant methods because autonomous culture based method might not be applicable to other diverse cultural context (Walker & Dimmock, 2000, as cited in Nguyen, Terlouw, & Pilot, 2006).

It is thus post method pedagogy allow for learners to experience learning by actively pursuing, processing and obtaining knowledge. This process of discovery is a key to autonomous learning. It is effective both in convincing the learners of the knowledge they themselves have created, and the validity of it (Knaldre, 2015). The efforts of researchers to the promotion of learner autonomy through the classroom-oriented theories and principles toward learner autonomy reached a new level to this era (Benson, 2009).

This shows that learner autonomy has had a complex and multi-faceted development towards its present status as an internationally recognized aspect of foreign language learning. That's why Little (1994, as cited in Bayat, 2008) informs that autonomy is not a single easily described behavior. The process has been driven by socio-cultural changes, shifting psychological paradigms and learning theories. It has some sort of mismatch between theoretical and pedagogical assumptions. It is thus to promote principles of learner autonomy requires not only change in teaching techniques but also change in teaching perspectives (Aoki, 2008). But in the non-western society, the benchmarks for good behaviors are the principles of total obedience, and the unquestioning mind is sustained with the belief that teachers cannot do wrong. That's

why such Western concept in ELT is not without problem in non-Western cultural context.

## **Research findings on learner autonomy in ELT in Asian context**

The concept of learner autonomy in language learning is considered a Western construct or Western origin. Consequently, it has led some thinkers to view it as a cultural-imperialist imposition on non-Western cultures (Smith, 2002, p. 8). Learner autonomy has now become a global educational issue, with a number of recent publications focusing on the status and challenges of learner autonomy in different educational cultures in the world (Benson, 2007, p. 25). While the first few decades the concept of learner autonomy in language learning was dominated by European initiatives. Later, it went on to gain traction in other parts of the world and got spread to Asia in the 1990s as a prominent concept in international conferences that was held in cities like Hong Kong, Bangkok and Tokyo (Smith, 2008).

Especially, researchers have explored the relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency. They have found that autonomous learners are the learners of high language proficiency and different high-achievement students apply different autonomous strategies (Dafei, 2007). Autonomy is an essential characteristic for a good language learner. Especially for those who learn a language as a foreign language do not have the opportunity to hear or use the language in the real world. It is their own responsibility to create and be in environments where the target language is used (Bayat, 2008).

The students having low autonomy perception have more negative classroom behaviors compared to the students having high autonomy. The students who have high autonomy perception have more positive classroom behaviors compared to

the students having lower autonomy perception. It also appears that most of the students are ready to learn autonomously and they are good at using opportunities in different learning environments. Knowing about how autonomous learners behave may help them improve their autonomous learning skills (Bayat, 2008). But there is some sort of mismatch between theoretical and pedagogical assumptions of learner autonomy that's why little autonomy is possible in Asian context (Aoki, 2008). If this is the situation how we practice autonomy oriented activities in the classroom.

It is reported that some aspects of Chinese culture can impede learner autonomy however teachers still foster learner autonomy by using appropriate teaching strategies (Ho & Crookall, 1995, as cited in Neupane, 2010). In his research about learner autonomy in Nepalese cultural context, Joshi (2011) found that it is teachers' responsibility to make them autonomous with the content and process of learning. Students also agreed that a lot of learning can be done without a teacher (p. 23). It can support for the necessity of implementation of autonomy in Nepalese context. Smith (2006) also informs that students from various East Asian Countries are able to be autonomous with the pressure to be autonomous. Learners perceive themselves as being capable of more involved in their own learning (Johnston et al., 2014). So, it is very important for teachers to set about unconditioning themselves and also help the children to be free of conditioning. Knowing the conditioning influence of parents, of tradition, of society, the teacher must encourage the children not thoughtlessly to accept, but always to question, investigate and be in revolt (Krishnamurti, 1987).

Being conscious about the influence of learners' culture, Khaki (2013) has

researched about Iranian learners on English as first language learning. He suggests that culture is a set of rules that have to be known to be able to live in a society because certain cultural traits might either facilitate or inhibit learner autonomy. He also suggests that there is no significant difference between learners from China, Taiwan and Hongkong. Only individual differences do exist. The study highlights problems in the implementation of practices connected with the development of learner autonomy in a variety of contexts. If autonomy is developed and enhanced in learners, they will achieve their learning goals and if they will achieve their learning goals, they will have a positive attitude toward their future learning. Therefore, developing and enhancing learner autonomy would be considered as a guarantee for learner's present and future success (Khaki, 2013). Holliday (2005) says that the pupils' choice of learning style was in itself autonomous even though it would not be seen as autonomous within the dominant educational ideology.

Aliya, a teacher explains that students from cities and well-off families are autonomous and they take responsibility for their own learning but rural students mostly girls never look at the teachers to show respect. Such students have to be taught to be autonomous (Holiday, 2005). There is particular social group will have problems with autonomy because of previous schooling experience and expectations (ibid). For this, research has approached the notion of fostering learner autonomy in educational contexts, saying that learners could be trained differently to be autonomous. Johnston et al. (2013) updates the example that East Asian autonomy is not proactive because students' knowledge is not considered as the source of learning.



As one of the purposes of learner autonomy is to develop learners to be critical citizens capable of independent participation in democratic processes, it has been discussed whether learner autonomy is exclusively a Western goal that would be unattainable in countries and cultures with different political systems and paradigms. But it has been pointed out that autonomy is a common ideal even in non-Western cultures (Littlewood, 1999, p.12). Furthermore, it is evident that cultural differences, however great they may seem, generally do not override universal human needs such as the need to experience autonomy and develop as an autonomous being. Learner autonomy is an appropriate & potential in education goal even in Taiwan, China, Syria (Smith, 2008). Learner autonomy is therefore a universally valid goal, although approaches to promote it have shown to vary according to cultural context (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003, p.7).

As we know that everything has positive and negative aspects. So is the case in learner autonomy to this era. It is said that concept of learner-autonomy is laden with cultural values of West and it is inappropriate to expect full autonomy not only of Cambodians who are dependent and authority-oriented but of people from many countries between Morocco and Japan. They find it difficult to accept the individual responsibility and freedom derived from Western values (Jones, 1995, as cited in Holliday, 2005). In this sense, cultural bias in more self-directed learning has originated in Western cultures and does not fit with non-western philosophies. But the teacher proposes a definite need to bring Asian students round with the help of Asian teachers who have studied in the West to mediate between cultures to find a way forward (Hedge, 2000, as cited in Holliday, 2005). Because one size can't fit all and each culture has the right to develop what is best for its own particular culture

(Witty et al., 1998, as cited in Nguyen et al., 2006).

In order to address such diversity and cultural problem, it is better to build trust with them and become familiar with their culture building intimate relationship so that teachers can talk with question technique and provide feedback to establish positive home-school relationship. It is not better to generalize the cultural practice of a community to other community without recognizing their distinctive cultural dimension because adopting policies, theories and practices across cultures may create problems (ibid). This shows the importance of learner autonomy but it is not out of question to its implication in Asian cultural context.

### **Learner autonomy and students' learning in African context: Research findings**

Pedagogy of autonomy is considered the first and foremost as a pragmatic strategy to promote learning in African context. They seem to provide evidence of appropriateness of a particular form of autonomy-related practice in an African school setting (Kuchah & Smith, 2011). It is contrast with the argument of Sonaiya's (2002) who says that pedagogies for engaging with the practice of learner autonomy are inappropriate in African contexts due to large class, lack of resources, technology, multilingual backgrounds of many sub-Saharan classrooms, to name a few. It is particularly difficult to sustain when we consider such contextual factors. It makes difficult for teachers to claim complete responsibility for what learners learn.

In the same way, Kuchah's experience in teaching is related to learner autonomy. His innovative practice was developed as a pragmatic response to the learner

autonomy that provides a rare insight into the realities of the different cultural context where most English teaching goes on in the world (Kuchah & Smith, 2011). Beyond this, it presents pedagogy of autonomy as an innovative method to address problem in different cultural context.

## Conclusion

The paper has analyzed the concept of learner autonomy as a western hegemony for non-western cultural context in English language teaching. Based the above discussion, it concludes that the concept of learner autonomy was developed in the western countries with the perspectives of schooling their children developing autonomy friendly culture in the society. They assumed to extend its perspective in school education system to prepare learner as an independent person in the society. In non-Western cultural context, there is lack of integration with the perspectives of society and education for schooling their children. It is because parents set up the norms and values for their children whereas formal system education is based on Western trend that is considered a key to transform the society. It shows that the education system and its transformation is just opposite in the Western countries. It is thus learner autonomy is considered as a western hegemony in English language teaching however it enhances learning competency of students for non-Western cultural context. From this perspective, learner autonomy needs learning friendly cultural context especially for learning English language though it is considered cross-culturally valid phenomena.

It also concludes that autonomy friendly culture and environment of Western countries should not generalize in ELT to non-western cultural context where there is lack of autonomy friendly culture, environment, technology, facilities and classroom situation for learners to develop the competency of learning to learn. It is

thus classroom oriented, culture oriented and facility oriented autonomy is considered the best way in non-Western countries to prepare autonomous learners to learn English language themselves. It comes under the philosophical assumption of constructivist epistemology and theoretical perspective of post method pedagogy and the pedagogy of autonomy. It allows learners to experience learning by pursuing, processing and obtaining knowledge through self learning process to get the mastery of own learning in which teachers try their best to develop autonomy friendly culture and environment in English language teaching to enhance students' learning as far as possible. It also concludes that it is better to consider the socio-cultural context along with the learning theories and learning perspectives that help them to reach a new level of learner autonomy to practice in English language teaching to enhance students learning competency based on local demand of non-Western cultural context.

## References

- Anderson, J. (2011). Autonomy, agency and the self. In B. Fultner (Eds.). *Jurgen Habermas: Key concepts* (pp. 91-115). New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Aoki, N. (2008). Teacher stories to improve theories of learners/teacher autonomy. *Independence*, 43,15-17. Retrieved from: [http:// learnerautonomy.org/aoki2008.pdf](http://learnerautonomy.org/aoki2008.pdf).
- Barkema, H.G., Chen, X-P., George, G. Luo, Y., & Tsui, A. (2015). West meets East: New concepts and theories. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(2), 460-479.
- Bayat, U. A. O. (2008). *The relationship between autonomy perception and classroom behaviors of English language learners* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). School of Education, Bilkent University, Turkey.

- Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Benson, P. (2007). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *State of the Art Article, Language Teaching*, 40 (1), 21-40.
- Blin, F. (2005). *CALL and the development of learner autonomy: An activity theoretical study* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Institute of Educational Technology, The Open University, Paris X-Nanterre, France.
- Chang, V., Scott, S. & Decker, C. (2009). *Developing helping skills: A step-by-step approach*. USA: Brooks
- Dafei, D. (2007). An exploration of the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency. *Asian EFL Journal Professional Teaching Articles*, 7 (1). Retrieved from [www.asian-efl-journal.com/ppta\\_Nov\\_07\\_dd.pdf?origin=publication](http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/ppta_Nov_07_dd.pdf?origin=publication)
- Dardjowidjojo, S. (2001). Cultural constraints in the implication of learner autonomy: The case in Indonesia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Education*, 2(2), 309-322.
- Dang, T. T. (2010). Learner autonomy in EFL studies in Vietnam: A discussion from socio-cultural perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 3(2), 3-9.
- Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Fleischer, L.E. (2013). *Counter-hegemonic teaching*. New York, NY: Sense Publishers.
- Gramsci. A (n.d). *Theory: Cultural hegemony*. <http://beautifultrouble.org/theory/cultural-hegemony/>
- Halliday, A. (2005). *The struggle to teach English as an international language*. New York, NY: Oxford.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Johnston, C., Aliponga, J., Koshiyama, Y., Ries, T., & Rush, T. (2014). Learner autonomy in university English classes. In Nozomu Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT 2013 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.
- Joshi, K. R. (2011). Learner perceptions and teacher beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning. *Journal of NELTA*, 16(1-2). 13-29.
- Khaki, S. (2013). The relationship between learner autonomy and willingness to communicate (WTC) in Iranian EFL learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 2(5), 97-109.
- Kincheloe, J. (2004). Iran and American miseducation: Cover-ups, distortions, and omissions. In J. Kincheloe & S. Steinberg (Eds.). *The miseducation of the West: Constructing Islam*. NY: Greenwood.
- Kincheloe, J. (2008). Critical pedagogy and knowledge wars of the twenty-first century. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 1(1), 1-22.
- Knaldre, H. (2015). *Learner autonomy promotion: A qualitative document analysis of two Norwegian national curricula* (Unpublished master' thesis). School of Education, Bergen University, Norway.
- Koirala, B. N. (2011). *Alternative thinking in education*. Kathmandu: Afo Publication.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1987). *Life ahead*. USA: Krishnamurti Foundation of America.

- Kuchah, K., & Smith, R. (2011). Pedagogy of autonomy for difficult circumstances: from practice to principles. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 119-140.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2002). *Beyond methods: Macrostrategies for language teaching*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). A postmethod perspective on English language teaching. *World Englishes*, 22(4), 539-550.
- Lamichhane, S. P., & Wagley, M. P. (2008). Post-modernism and Nepal's education. *Journal of Education and Research*, 1(1), 9-12.
- Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, 20, 71-94.
- Neupane, M. (2010). Learner autonomy: Concept and considerations. *NELTA Journal*, 15(1-2), 114-120.
- Nguyen, P. M., Terlouw, C., & Pilot, A. (2006). Culturally appropriate pedagogy: The case of group learning in a Confucian heritage culture context. *Intercultural Education*, 17(1), 1-19.
- Palfreyman, D., & Smith, R. C. (2003). *Learner autonomy across cultures: Language education perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pokhrel, S. (2013). *Classroom practices of public school teachers in Kathmandu*. (Unpublished thesis of Master in Philosophy in Education of Tribhuvan University)
- Poudel Gharti, B.U. (2006). *Learner centered teaching: Teacher perceptions and practices*. Unpublished Thesis of Master in Philosophy in Education. Kathmandu University
- Smith, R. (2008). Key concepts in ELT: Learner autonomy. *ELT Journal*, 62(4), 395-397. doi:10.1093/elt/ccn038
- Smith, R. C. (2006). Developing teacher-learner autonomy: Constraints and opportunities in pre service training. In L. Bobb-Wolf & J. L. Vera Batista (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Canarian conference on developing autonomy in the FL classroom*. La Laguna: University of La Laguna.
- Smith, R. (2002). Autonomy, context, and appropriate methodology. In F. Vieira, M. A., Moreira, I. Barbosa, & M. Paiva (Eds.), *Pedagogy for autonomy and English learning: Proceedings of the 1st Conference of the Working Group - Pedagogy for Autonomy*. Braga: Universidad do Minho.
- Sonaiya, R. (2002). Autonomous language learning in Africa: A mismatch of cultural assumptions. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 15(2), 106-116.
- Stefanou, C. R., Perencevich, K. C., Dicintio, M., & Turner, J.C. (2004). Supporting autonomy in the classroom: Ways teachers encourage student decision making and ownership. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(2), 97-110.
- Zhuang, J. (2010). *The changing role of teachers in the development of learner autonomy based on a survey of English dorm activity*. Retrieved from [www.academypublication.com/issues/past/jltr/vol01/05/07.pdf](http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/jltr/vol01/05/07.pdf)
- The author:** Sarmila Pokhrel, PhD student in Kathmandu University, has been teaching English in secondary level for around 20 years. Involved in various English teaching related research activities throughout her teaching profession, her major area of interest is learner autonomy. She has already published a paper about the concept and methods related to learner autonomy.

## **Reading as Multi-Tasking: Unravelling Invisible Cognitive Processes in Reading**

*Z N Patil*

### **Abstract**

When we read a text, several processes take place in our mind simultaneously. As we know, the first is the visual process which enables us to read graphic marks or letters that make words on paper or on screen. The writer's words, phrases, clauses, and sentences fall onto the reader's eye screen. This, as we know, happens almost automatically and effortlessly unless the handwriting is illegible. As soon as words fall onto our eyes, the process of interpretation begins. A competent reader, if s/he is a competent user of the language as well, does several things synchronously. S/he mentally registers the speaker's use of norm-deviating and norm-approximating features. An expert reader is sensitive to all these features as well as grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural subtleties and nuances. Each of these features deserves an independent treatment and is worth a separate research project. The present paper focuses on appropriate use of vocabulary or use of appropriate vocabulary in writing. Understandably, not every writer is a proficient user of the language and so when a competent user of the language reads a text produced by a not-so-competent writer, the former goes through several processes such as (1) identification of an inappropriate word or expression, (2) crowding of synonyms, (3) clustering or bunching of synonyms, (4) intergroup competition of synonyms, (5) de-crowding by less appropriate bunch(es), (6) intra-group competition of synonyms, (7) selection of an appropriate word, (8) de-crowding by some items of the chosen group, (9) erasure of the inappropriate word used by the writer, and (10) replacement of the inappropriate word with what the reader thinks is an appropriate word or phrase. We can group these ten processes into three main categories-catapulting, centripetal process and centrifugal process.

**Key words:** Spotting/detecting, crowding, clustering, competing, selecting, erasing, replacing; catapulting, centripetal and centrifugal processes

### **Nature of reading skills**

As we know, reading is a receptive and interactive skill. In fact, reading is not only a receptive but also a productive skill because when we read, we produce meanings and messages. That is why my interpretation of a text may differ from your interpretations of the same text. In this

sense, a reader is not just a receiver of a meaning or message but a constructor of a meaning or message. Reading is a process of meaning making. When we read a text, the text interacts with us. It is not only the reader who interacts with the text. While reading, we anticipate certain linguistic items and moves. Sometimes texts flout our expectancies. O' Henry short stories usually

have a surprise ending. The unexpected endings of his stories surprise us. However, the unexpected endings offer us a satisfying feeling. Thus reading is a process that arouses expectations. It is a process in which we need to adjust our interpretations within the framework of fulfilled or unfulfilled predictions. Reading skills enable readers to decode texts and discover meanings.

### **Reading as a guessing game**

As we have noted above, reading is a receptive, interactive and productive skill. We interpret things in our own way. We interact with the text we are reading. The text we are reading also interacts with us. When we read a text, we produce meanings and messages. Reading is a process, a journey into the unknown. Now you are reading this present sentence. While reading this sentence, you anticipate the next sentence. Your prediction may or may not come true. For example, when we read a typical O' Henry story, we expect one thing to happen, but another unexpected thing happens. Let us cite the example of James Thurber's *Unicorn in the Garden*. The story goes like this:

One morning, a man tells his wife that he saw a unicorn in their garden. The wife does not believe him; she says a unicorn is a mythical beast and calls the husband a "booby" and threatens to put him in "a booby hatch". When the husband goes back to the garden she telephones the police and a psychiatrist and asks them to bring a straight-jacket.

At this point, we predict that the police and the psychiatrist will take the man to a lunatic asylum. But, the man turns the tables when he says that he did not tell his wife that he had seen a unicorn. The police and the psychiatrist think that it is the wife who is

crazy and so they take her to a mental hospital.

Reading is a guessing game. We guess the meanings of unfamiliar words. The physical, psychological and linguistic contexts help us in our guesses. Let us illustrate this point with the help of *Unicorn in the Garden*. Our students may not know the words 'booby' and 'booby hatch' in the story. However, they do not have to rush to a dictionary every time they come across a new word. The situation in the story can help them. There are other words in the story that can help them. Words like 'police', 'psychiatrist', 'crazy', 'jay bird' and 'strait-jacket' help them to understand the words 'booby' and 'booby hatch'. Students follow certain steps in the process of understanding such new words. First, they do not think these two words are positive; they are negative in their meanings. Then, they zoom in and conclude that a 'booby' means 'a crazy person' and a 'booby hatch' means 'a lunatic asylum'.

Thus we understand the local meaning of a sentence or expression in the context of the global meaning of the story. Usually, a global meaning refers to the overall general meaning of a text. Thus when we ask a question about the moral of a story, we look for its global meaning.

### **Reading as multi-tasking**

Reading was once considered a passive skill because it was thought that the reader was a receiver and was not required to do anything. The idea was that things were done to the reader, that s/he was an object and not a subject. Subsequently, it was described as a receptive and active skill. I consider it a productive skill because as readers we produce meanings and draw messages. It is an interactive skill; readers interact with writers and their words. It is

a proactive skill; on the basis of what the writer has already said, readers can predict. This is very similar to our predictions while we are listening. Reading is a reactive skill; we react to what the writer has said. We may partly agree or fully agree; we may partly disagree or completely disagree. We use our knowledge of the world, knowledge of the language and knowledge of the rules of logic to produce meanings, to predict things, and to agree or disagree. It is a continuous process of meaning making. When we read a text, we think of the writer's choice of words and choice of grammatical structures. Simultaneously, we sense, recognize, interpret, evaluate, appreciate, sympathize, empathize, accept, reject, agree, disagree, connect, correct, question, select, filter, personalize, generalize, particularize, organize, reorganize, anticipate and recollect, and so on.

Let me take up the function of recollection. Reading is a re-collective skill. *While we are reading, we may remember a whole bunch of things.* Let me substantiate this point with examples of interlingual taboo words. For instance, when a writer writes in English, s/he may occasionally use words that resemble some taboo words in our first language (Mahmoud 2000 & Patil 2006). In such a case, we are reminded of those words and are momentarily distracted from the act of reading. We can call this language transfer (Odlin, et al. 1989 & Mahmoud 2002).

Japanese students, for example, hesitate to pronounce and read the English words *mango* and *chin* because they sound like the Japanese words *manko* and *chin* or *chinpo*, which refer to those female and male body parts respectively, which even the most isolated primitive people would cover with tree leaves. The English word *mango* (a fruit) in Japanese variety of English sounds like *manko* (female private body part) and

that of the word *chin* (the lower end of the face) sounds like *chin* (male private body part).

In this context, it is worth noting that school textbook writers 'purify' teaching materials by deleting or at least replacing taboo words with euphemistic expressions. The issue of taboo expressions is of vital significance in the context of teaching English as a second or foreign language, especially in Asian countries. Textbook writers delete 'objectionable' material from a work of literature to 'purify' it and to make the selection 'clean'. That is what Bowdler did in his **Family Shakespeare**. He removed or modified everything that was offensive and brought out a children's edition of William Shakespeare. Similarly, our textbook writers follow some guidelines given to them for selecting and editing materials. School boards, university boards, parents and governments expect them to select 'good', 'clean', 'pure' materials and to 'purify' the originally 'impure' materials. It is usually quite easy for the materials writer to follow the guidelines and produce 'chaste' teaching materials. It is a physical, visible process and hence easy to follow.

Since there are no obscene and vulgar words in school textbooks, the issue here is not that of offensive words in the language that is being taught. In other words, the issue is not Arabic taboo words in Arabic reading materials or English taboo words in English language textbooks. Here we are talking about interlingual taboo expressions. This subject is obviously of potential interest from the point of view of teaching English as a second or foreign language, and can be usefully discussed only if serious conferences are prepared to hear such words in obviously serious and relevant contexts. Now, the question is: What is an inter-lingual taboo expression? An inter-lingual taboo expression is a normal, non-taboo expression in one language that resembles the

pronunciation of a taboo expression in another language.

But how can we control reading processes, which are psycholinguistic guessing games? How can we prevent the learners from associating words and expressions in one language with those in another? For example, how can we prevent Japanese learners from remembering the Japanese word *manko* when they come across the English word *mango*? What can we do when Vietnamese learners come across the English word *tea* and remember the Vietnamese homophone that refers to the baby-feeding parts of a woman's anatomy? I suppose every language has some taboo words that sound like non-taboo words in English. In Arabic too there are taboo words that sound like the English words *ear*, *unique*, *maniac*, *bus*, *noon*, *nick*, etc. Smith (1987) cautions us about the use of such words in an Arab classroom: "The following English words sound similar to vulgar words in Arabic, and sensitive teachers should avoid them if possible: *zip*, *zipper*, *air*, *tease*, *kiss*, *cuss*, *nick*, *unique*." (p. 154). Thus it is in the teacher's hands to avoid saying such sentences as: "Lend me your *ears*. I want to tell you a *unique* story. The police were looking for a criminal *maniac*. They travelled by a special *bus* and reached a village. She was having a free *noon* when the police *nicked* (arrested) her. But when Arab learners read the following passage, they may regress several times because the passage contains words that sound like vulgar and obscene words in their language. Here is a made up example:

She'll be travelling by a *uniquebus* that doesn't pollute the *air* to a place that doesn't have a *zip* code. She'll be accompanied by a *maniac* who has stolen some bowls of shells.

My experience of teaching Arab learners confirms my belief that most Arab readers of the above passage regress several times and linger on certain words due to their resemblance with vulgar and obscene words in Arabic. If each regression takes roughly two seconds, and nine regressions are made per three lines, then on an average page of 30 lines, one minute thirty seconds are wasted. Consequently, reading speed and comprehension slow down.

People generally tend to regard reading as a passive process that just happens rather than as a skill that is essential for effective communication. Yet in reality effective reading is a skill that needs to be developed as a prerequisite for successful speaking and writing. Reading involves a simultaneous orchestration of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic skills. Let me take up these points one by one.

One, when we read, we are sensitive to *the syntax* used by the writer. One case in point is syntactic ambiguity. For example, in the following case the reader has to understand whether the writer is talking about guests as a nuisance or visits as a nuisance when he says, 'Visiting guests can be a nuisance.'

The sentence is ambiguous if and when stripped of its context. The reader has to interpret it in the context of the preceding discourse. Literature abounds in examples of ambiguity of different types. A reader has to exploit the conventions of literary creation, and grammatical, semantic and pragmatic resources to interpret what the writer is saying. Let us look at the following examples from Trask and Mayblin (2009, p. 126):

Susie had a shower after she got up.  
After she got up, Susie had a shower.  
After Susie got up, she had a shower.  
She had a shower after Susie got up.



Two, when we read, we are sensitive to *connotation of words*, not just their denotation. Words have significances and values. The value of a word depends on the context in which it is embedded. Thus when Robert Frost says, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep!" he is talking about the literal woods, miles and sleep; but more importantly, he is also talking about metaphorical woods, miles and sleep, about his obligations, about the journey of life and about death. It is a two-tier or perhaps a multi-tier communication. Such multi-level communication occurs in everyday situations too. An intelligent listener understands the complexity of the whole process and interprets utterances using knowledge of the world, the language, and logic.

Three, when we read, we read *the pragmatic force of the writer's sentences*. Let me illustrate this point. Once my neighbour, who was a diabetic, asked his daughter about his box of chocolate? The daughter replied, "Show me your diet sheet, please!" Now, the daughter could have said that she had eaten his chocolate or that she had hidden the box. The question is: what did the girl mean when she said that? What did the old man understand? Evidently, what the daughter meant was that being a diabetic he was not supposed to eat chocolate. When we read this dialogue between the old man and his daughter, we understand the locutionary force as well as the illocutionary force of the daughter's imperative sentence.

Four, *we respond to what words say when they occur in the company of other words*. We can say that words are known by the company they keep. Human beings seem to possess this innate ability to connect words. Words acquire their special meanings when we connect them with each other or when

words connect themselves with each other. Let us look at the following examples given by Trask and Mayblin (2009: p 110):

(A) Susie took her coat off.

Susie took her coat off the peg.

(B) Natalie ran out of the room.

Natalie ran out of flour.

(C) Alice lost her toothbrush.

Alice lost her virginity.

Five, *we read words and utterances in context*. Human beings have the innate ability to connect events to a larger scheme of things or the context. In the absence of this schema it would be difficult to understand what the writer is talking about. Let me give an example to clarify the idea of schema. Let us imagine a situation where two people are talking about something. When a third person arrives, this is what he hears:

A: How did it go?

B: Not so bad. But I'm glad it's over.

A: Was it the last one?

B: Yes, for the time being.

Now what do we figure out? What are these conversational partners talking about? Are they talking about extraction of a tooth, a test or examination, a delivery of a child, etc? An intruder has no clue what they are talking about because he does not share the background knowledge. Thus effective listening needs background knowledge: knowledge of events, people involved, their motives, and knowledge of the world at large.

When we read a scripted telephone conversation, we see only what one person says; we do not have access to what the person at the other end says. The statements, questions, exclamations and commands uttered by the person in the written text

help us guess what the absent interlocutor probably has said. Let us illustrate this point. Let us read (imagine we are hearing what we are reading) the following telephone conversation and fill in the gaps.

Miss Green: Hello? Yes, this is Professor Hunter's house. Yes, Miss Hunter is here. One moment please. (She gives the telephone to Mary Hunter). It's for you dear. I think, it's Dr. Smith.

Mary: Good morning. Yes, Miss Hunter speaking. Yes, Dr. Smith, I'm very well. Thank you. Yes, father's well too. He's excited this morning, but we'll look after him. What's that? Freda's in hospital? Yes, of course, I'll come. I wanted to stay with father, but it doesn't matter. Yes, I'll be there in an hour. Goodbye. (She cradles the telephone)

We can fill the gaps as follows:

Dr. Smith (Dials Professor Hunter's telephone number; the phone rings. Miss Green picks up the receiver and answers the call)

Miss Green: Hello?

Dr. Smith: Is that Professor Hunter's house?

Miss Green: Yes, this is Professor Hunter's house.

Dr. Smith: Is Miss Hunter at home? / Can I speak to Miss Hunter please?

Miss Green: Yes, Miss Hunter is here. One moment please. (She gives the telephone to Mary Hunter).

Miss Green (To Miss Hunter): It's for you dear. I think, it's Dr. Smith.

Mary: Good morning.

Dr. Smith: Good morning. I am Dr. Smith speaking. Am I talking to Miss Hunter please?

Mary: Yes, Dr. Smith. This is Miss Hunter speaking.

Dr. Smith: How are you, Miss Hunter?

Mary: Yes, Dr. Smith. I'm very well. Thank you.

Dr. Smith: How's Professor Hunter?

Mary: Yes, father's well too. He's excited this morning, but we'll look after him.

Dr. Smith: I'm sorry to tell you that Freda's in hospital.

Mary: What? Freda's in hospital?

Dr. Smith: She remembers you. Can you come to the hospital please?

Mary: Yes, of course, I'll come. I wanted to stay with father, but it doesn't matter.

Dr. Smith: Please come as early as possible.

Mary: Yes, I'll be there in an hour.

Dr. Smith: Thanks and good bye.

Mary: Goodbye. (She cradles the telephone)

Words have context-sensitive personalities. Words have signification in isolation, but they acquire value in contexts. Let us read the following paragraph in which the authors of this article have used the nonsense word *zreastra*. When we read this word in isolation, we do not know what it means, but when it occurs in a context, we can interpret it almost accurately. We may not understand it at its first occurrence; however; however, as we progress in our reading, we are able to narrow its scope, zoom in and interpret it correctly:

We see many international travellers buying **zreastras** from Duty Free shops inside departure and arrival terminals at airports. They buy **zreastras** for themselves or as gifts for their friends and acquaintances. In the past, **zreastras** were available in attractive and luring packets. These days, **zreastras** are available in packets, which bear horrifying pictures, because World Health Organization and governments have made it mandatory for **zreastra** manufacturers to have such terrifying pictures on **zreastracartons**. Millions of people across the world are addicted to **zreastras** though they know **zreastraining** is injurious to health. However, because **zreastracartons** and packets carry a statutory warning that **zreastraining** is injurious to health, that it causes cancer, especially lung cancer, the number of **zreastra** buyers has gone down (Patil, et al. 2015, p. 120).

Or let us read this one:

I have a **fleep** with me every day. This **fleep** goes with me everywhere, and I consider it an indispensable part of my life. In appearance it offers an attractive contrast: one part is bright and shiny, the other quietly dull. My **fleep** outlasts the other parts of my wardrobe, and I can often wear it for several years. Being unobtrusive, it seldom goes out of style. Some people like a stretchy **fleep** but I prefer the traditional kind. The leather of my **fleep** is soft and supple so that it gives with every movement of a part of my body. This **fleep** is very important to my wellbeing, for without it my trousers would come down. So every morning I buckle it around my

waist and step forth to meet the world with a feeling of confidence.

Six, when we read something, we do not read words or lines alone; we read between and beyond words and lines. No wonder people say that speech is silver but silence is golden. John Keats in his *Ode on a Grecian Urn* says that heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.

Now let me discuss the main idea of (1) detection of error, (2) crowding of synonyms, (3) clustering or bunching of synonyms, (4) intergroup competition, (5) de-crowding of less appropriate bunch(es), (6) intra-group competition, (7) selection of the most appropriate word or expression, (8) de-crowding of less appropriate synonymous words from the chosen bunch, (9) erasure of the wrongly used word or expression, and (10) replacement of the wrong word with the right one. When we come across a wrongly used word, detecting stage is usually followed by crowding, clustering and selecting stages. In other words, crowding, clustering and selecting precede erasing and replacing stages. Here, we must remember that detecting, crowding, clustering, erasing and replacing are not distinctly sequential or linear stages as if these were loops of a chain. These stages are like the colours of a rainbow. We don't know where one colour ends and another begins.

The words that crowd, that swarm, and then cluster together on the mental map are predominantly paradigmatic or collocation choices. We read a wrong word or a wrong use of a word, and within a fraction of a second some other words crowd around the one which has been wrongly used or has been used in a wrong position. There is a centripetal movement of semantically and grammatically similar words. Within a millisecond the mind erases the wrong word

and superimposes the right word from among the crowding words. As soon as the erased word is replaced by an accurate and appropriate word, the remaining members of the crowding group of words flee. There is a rapid centrifugal movement.

The crowding, erasure and substitution happen within a millisecond. In some cases, there is no crowding because there is only one available or suitable alternative as in the case of the first example given below. In other cases, there is crowding because there are more than one suitable candidate as in the second example listed below. In a few cases, there may not be any crowding; there may just be a mere repositioning of constituent parts. It may be a repositioning of a single item or multiple items as in the third and fourth examples.

- (1a) Like their ancestors the tribals had no control over the forest.
- (1b) Unlike their ancestors the tribals had no control over the forest.
- (2a) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He spoils all rules and regulations.
- (2b) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He spoils all rules and regulations.
- (2c) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He \_\_\_\_\_ all rules and regulations.
- (2d) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He *violates, breaks, flouts, disrespects, disregards, transgresses* all rules and regulations.
- (2e) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He *violates/breaks/flouts*, all rules and regulations.
- (2f) Pratab Goldar owns a village. He *violates* all rules and regulations.

(3a) Now how the rhetoric in animal communication *can* be understood?

(3b) Now how *can* the rhetoric in animal communication be understood?

(4a) Mulk Raj Anand was among the first to speak of the margins... who were thrown to the margins of society *through his writings*.

(4b) Mulk Raj Anand was among the first to speak *through his writings* of the margins... who were thrown to the margins of society.

Now let me illustrate the processes of detecting, crowding, bunching/clustering, competing, de-crowding, erasing and replacing. Let me take up the second example. First our mind quickly detects that 'spoils' is wrongly used in this sentence. It is a wrong choice, a wrong collocation. Immediately, other words like 'breaks', 'disregards', 'transgresses' 'violates', 'disrespects', and 'flouts' vie for the position. Each one of these words seems to be saying, "Use me. I am available". They try to swarm around that coveted position. Then immediately they cluster into bunches like 'breaks, violates, flouts' as one group, 'disrespects' and 'disregards' as another bunch, and 'transgresses' as an independent candidate. Within a millisecond, our mind makes a decision and chooses one of these bunches. As soon as we choose one bunch, other bunches run away. If we choose 'breaks-violates-flouts' bunch, the 'disrespects-disregards' bunch disappears, and so does the word 'transgresses'. Now, out of the chosen bunch, depending upon the formality-informality axis, solidarity-power axis, and the required register, our mind selects either 'breaks' or 'violates' or 'flouts'. The moment we choose, 'violates', the other candidates vanish. The word 'spoils' is then replaced with either 'breaks', or 'flouts', or 'violates'.

These processes of detecting, crowding, competing, selecting, de-crowding and replacing can be reduced to catapulting, centripetalizing and centrifugalizing. I use catapulting to refer to detecting a wrong word as well as choosing a right one. I use centripetalizing to refer to crowding, competing and replacing, and centrifugalizing to refer to de-crowding.

It took me about fifteen minutes to write about the whole process. But it takes a millisecond for the process to happen. It happens like a flash of lightning, within no time. Now let us do some more examples of (a) detecting, catapulting, erasing, and replacing, (b) detecting, crowding, bunching, inter-bunch competing, inter-bunch de-crowding, intra-bunch competing, intra-bunch de-crowding, erasing and replacing, and (c) repositioning of single or multiple elements.

(A) Detecting, catapulting, erasing and replacing

Single Alternative

(1a) This simple *better* economy was later replaced by currency-oriented economy.

(1b) This simple *barter* economy was later replaced by currency-oriented economy.

(2a) Bashai Tudu in 'Agnigarbha' by Mahasweta Devi *rejects* to surrender.

(2b) Bashai Tudu in 'Agnigarbha' *refuses* to surrender.

(3a) Mahasweta Devi comments on the *insensitivity* of the system towards tribals.

(3b) Mahasweta Devi comments on the *insensitivity* of the system towards tribals.

(4a) It is *impracticable* to categorize Mahasweta Devi under one *title*.

(4b) It is *impossible* to categorize Mahasweta Devi under one *label*.

(5a) There are difficulties in identifying certain *alphabets*.

(5b) There are difficulties in identifying certain *letters*.

(6a) These waves have been discussed *further* in this paper.

(6b) These waves have been discussed *later* in this paper.

(7a) The disorganized and scattered mass of ideas can be given shape *latter*.

(7b) The disorganized and scattered mass of ideas can be given shape *later*.

(B) Detecting, crowding, bunching, inter-bunch competing, inter-bunch de-crowding, intra-bunch competing, intra-bunch de-crowding, erasing and replacing

Multiple Alternatives

(1a) In the course of the novel, the boy is *encountered* by the politician and his goons.

(1b) In the course of the novel, the boy is *killed / murdered* by the politician and his goons.

(2a) The rebellions indicate *interchange* between the mainstream culture and the subaltern culture.

(2b) The rebellions indicate *enmity, animosity, rivalry, antagonism*

- between the mainstream culture and the subaltern culture.
- (3a) Mahasweta Devi comments on the *status* of the tribals.
- (3b) Mahasweta Devi comments on the *condition/plight/predicament* of the tribals.
- (4a) The government and the missionaries were indifferent to the claims made by the Mundas. The *alteration* was to drive away those in authority.
- (4b) The government and the missionaries were indifferent to the claims made by the Mundas. The *alternative/option/choice* was to drive away those in authority.
- (5a) Even today villagers are under the *spell* of village owners.
- (5b) Even today villagers are under the *domination/control/subjugation* of village owners.
- (6a) Their answers *say* that they know the grammatical rules.
- (6b) Their answers *indicate/suggest/imply* that they know the grammatical rules.
- (7a) This *bespeaks for* pedagogical reforms.
- (7b) This *implies/suggests/necessitates/callsfor/requires/entails* pedagogical reforms.
- (8a) The narration is *disturbed*.
- (8b) The narration is *disrupted/ruptured/fractured*.
- (9a) The narrative *sways* from the subaltern to the mainstream society.
- (9b) The narrative *swings/oscillates* from the subaltern to the mainstream society.
- (10a) The *situation/ position* of the tribals became *like King Lear*.
- (10b) The *condition/plight/predicament* of the tribals became *like that of King Lear*.
- (11a) Only one rhetoric is focused on and the benefits of *alternate* rhetoric are often overlooked.
- (11b) Only one rhetoric is focused on and the benefits of *alternative/other* rhetoric are often overlooked.
- (12a) Extrinsic motivation is an *outward* push.
- (12b) Extrinsic motivation is an *outside, external* push.
- (13a) They were asked to *write* a piece of narrative writing.
- (13b) They were asked to *produce/come up with* a piece of narrative writing.
- (C) Repositioning
- (i) Repositioning of a Single Item
- (1a) Very rarely Mahasweta Devi *has* talked about urban life.
- (1b) Very rarely *has* Mahasweta Devi talked about urban life.
- (ii) Repositioning of Multiple Items
- (1a) Ranade, Agarkar, etc. advocated the importance of education as *liberating power* from the clutches of unjust systems.
- (1b) Ranade, Agarkar, etc. advocated the importance of education as a *power liberating* people from the clutches of unjust system.
- (2a) In some cases Mahasweta Devi makes use of supernatural assumptions normally believed in by Adivasi cult *to approximate their experiences*.

(2b) In some cases, to approximate their experiences, Mahasweta Devi makes use of supernatural assumptions normally believed in by Adivasi cult.

(3a) The questionnaire that we had distributed of twenty open ended questions...

(3b) The questionnaire consisting of twenty open ended questions that we had distributed...

### **Pedagogical implications**

This analysis helps us to design and administer activities that enrich learners' vocabulary, to sensitize learners to semantic nuances, and to develop their collocation competence. Teachers can offer samples of improper choice of words covering single as well as multiple alternatives. Similarly, we can give them sentences which contain segments that are placed in wrong positions. Learners can work in pairs or groups and suggest alternatives and justify their choices in the light of contextual factors such as solidarity principle, power principle, cultural propriety, pragmatic considerations such as politeness, conversational cooperation, etc.

### **Conclusion**

Precise vocabulary is one of the keys to good speaking and writing. The richer our vocabulary and the greater the precision with which we are able to use it, the better will be the talk we give or the letter we write. A larger and richer vocabulary is very important. It makes our speech and our writing easier and more effective. Every word has a personality and if we do not respect it, words will take revenge and if we continue disrespecting them, they will take revenge with vengeance. A good conversationalist or speaker develops a feeling for words and selects the right synonym or antonym. For example, a price is sometimes *high*, sometimes *exorbitant* and

sometimes *astronomical*. A salary can be *fat*, *handsome* or *seductive*.

When we listen to a speaker or read a paper or thesis, we sometimes come across wrong use of a word or use of a wrong word. When that happens, several processes happen in a millisecond. Our mind immediately identifies the problem and places alternatives before us. These alternatives rush to us in a crowd and form their families or communities. These families or communities compete among themselves. As soon as our mind chooses the best member of a particular family, three things happen. The wrong word disappears; the rejected word families disappear; other members of the chosen word family disappear. The competition is over. All this happens within a fraction of a second.

### **References**

- Mahmoud, A. (2000). *Interlingual errors of Arab students: A course-book for education majors* (Unpublished Manuscript). Muscat: Sultan Qaboos University.
- Mahamoud, A. (2002). Interlingual transfer of idioms by Arab learners of English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 8 (12).
- Odlin, T., Long, M. & Richards, J. (1989). *Language transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Patil, Z. N. (2006). Inter-lingual phonology and the reading process: Some reading problems of Arab learners of English. *Proceedings of the International Conference on ELT*. Muscat: Sultan Qaboos University.

Patil, Z. N. & Patil K. (2015). The role of context in comprehension. *NELTA ELT FORUM* (115-121). Kathmandu: Nepal EnglishTeachers' Association

Smith, B. (1987). Arabic speakers. In M. Swan & B. Smith, *Learner English* (pp. 142-157). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trask, R. L. & Mayblin, B. (2009). *Introducing Linguistics: A Graphic Guide*. USA: Totem Books.

**The author:** Professor Patil has delivered sponsored keynote addresses in Bangladesh, Canada, China, Dubai, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Turkey; authored many reference books and textbooks and published eighty articles in national and international journals. He worked as an English Language Specialist and Senior English Language Advisor in Vietnam and Japan respectively for six years.